

Saint Rabano Mauro

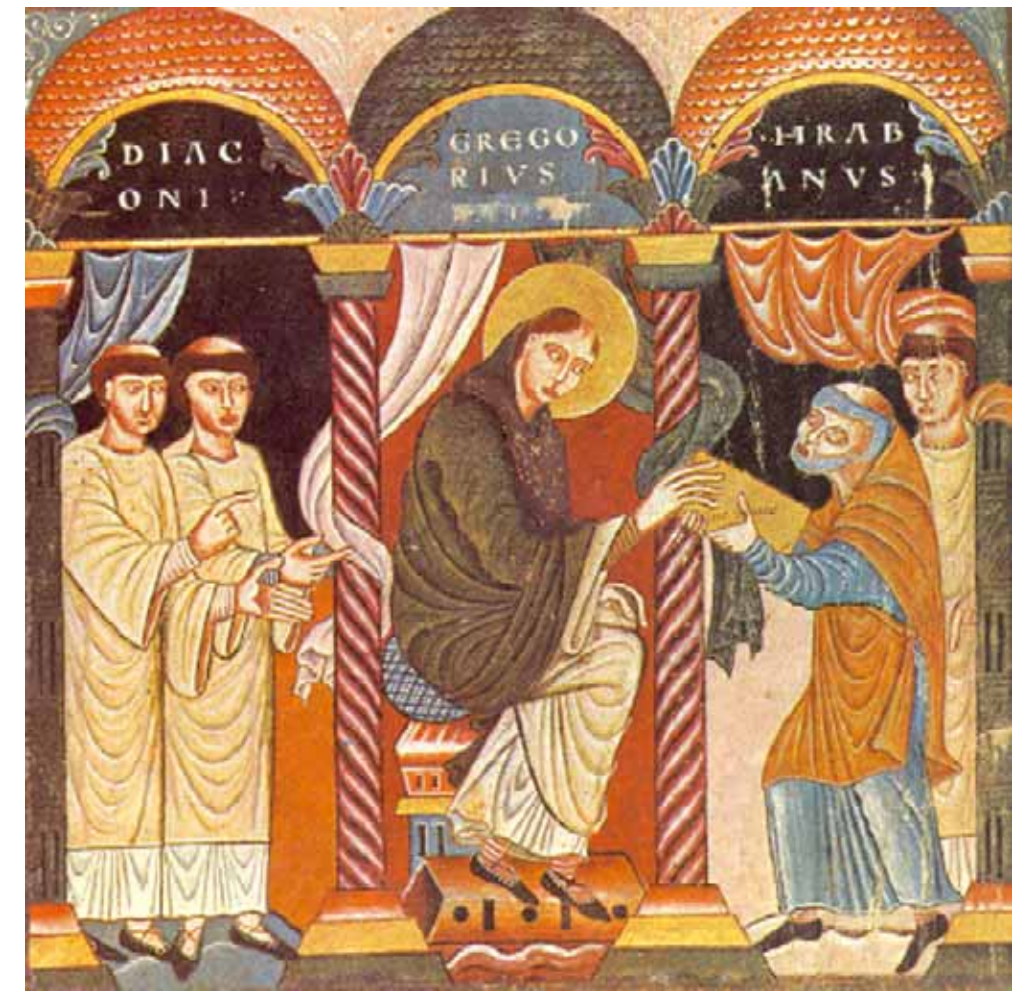
780 - 856

PURGATORY

Saint Rabano was born in 780 at Magonza, Germany. He pursued his studies at the renowned Benedictine Monastery at Fulda. Later, he was sent to Tours where he succeeded Alcuin. On his return to the abbey at Fulda, he became its Abbot and initiated a great spiritual reform. In 847, he became the Archbishop of Magonza. He died in 856 while he was still its Archbishop. He was known as the “Teacher of Germany” and even during his lifetime he was considered the most erudite and learned theologian of the west. The hymn “Veni creator” is attributed to him by many.

Rabano Mauro was greatly devoted to the souls in Purgatory. According to the Constitutions to the Rule of St. Benedict, when a monk died, his portion of food was to be distributed to the poor as his suffrage in Purgatory. In 830, a plague broke out which caused the death of many monks, including the Superior. Rabano Mauro, then summoned Edelard, who was the procurator of the monastery and charged him with the distribution of the food in strict accordance to the Constitutions. But Edelard did not obey the wishes of the Abbot. One evening he stayed behind the usual time prescribed by the Rule and he observed the Abbot surrounded by monks in Chapter session.

As he approached to observe what was actually going on at that time of night, he noticed that it was not Rabano Mauro who was presiding but a deceased Abbot, together with all the monks who had perished during the plague. Two of them approached him and after disrobing him, administered the penitential discipline, crying out as they did: “Receive, wretched one, the punishment of your avarice and realize that this is nothing compared to what you will experience in the next life. You will die in three days and all of the suffrages and prayers that are due to you will be given to all those monks who were deprived because of your disgusting avarice.” At midnight, when the monks arrived to chant the Hour of Matins, they came upon the body of Edelard, bleeding and severely wounded. As they took him to the infirmary, he told them: “Notify my Superior at once, because right now I have more need of spiritual rather than physical healing. These infested and bloody wounds will never heal and they will soon accompany me to the grave.” When the Abbot finally arrived, and in the presence of his fellow monks, Edelard recounted all that had happened and in three days, after receiving the Sacraments, he died. A High Requiem Mass was at once chanted not only for the repose of his soul but also for the



other thirty monks as prescribed by the Rule. For a month after that, his portion of food was distributed to the poor. One day he appeared to Rabano Mauro in great distress and he implored him to help him in some way, crying out: “O my good Father, I am grateful for your concern as well as those of your fellow monks, but I must tell you that all your prayers and those of the living whom I deprived that were offered for me to divine justice up to this moment have not resulted in freeing me from my suffering. I implore you to double your prayers and almsgiving, so that when they are all finally freed, I too might leave this prison.” Rabano Mauro had the monks pray with a renewed fervor and, after a month’s time, he saw Edelard ascend to heaven.

