

There have been many great popes throughout the history of the Catholic Church. Although there are an enormous number of them, I have three favorites among all. All three are known for their courage and faith in God, and they are some of the most extraordinary popes to have ever lived. These three popes are Leo the Great, Pope Pius XII, and John Paul II. These men went through the hardest of times, yet never faltered in their faith and love for God.

Pope Leo the Great lived in the 5th century. He was born in 391 and was Pope from 440 to 461. During his time as pope, he accomplished many things for the Catholic Church. Perhaps one of the most heroic acts performed by him was when he confronted Attila the Hun face to face. Though no one knows what was said, it is known that Pope Leo the Great persuaded Attila not to attack Rome. After their conversation, Attila left without even entering the city. Pope Leo the Great is one of only four Popes called Great, and in every way he is worthy of that title.

Another amazing pope is Pope Pius XII. He was born in 1876 and was pope from 1939 to 1958. He became pope right at the beginning of World War II. He was faced with difficult times against the Nazi regime, but he remained resilient against the terror of Hitler. He encouraged the Catholics to keep their faith and hope in God during the war, and especially helped the Jews who were facing persecution from the Nazis. He defied Hitler and refused to submit to his power. Pius the XII showed courage and fortitude in the darkest of times. He is a great role model for young men and women especially in this time period, where there is so much darkness.

Finally there is Pope John Paul II. He was born in 1920 and was pope from 1978 until 2005. Like Leo the Great and Pius XII, he was faced with difficult times as well, because of the Iron Curtain which had fallen upon Eastern Germany and the Berlin Wall as a cause of the Iron Curtain. John Paul II accomplished many tasks as a faithful servant of God. One of his greatest was the role he played in ending the Cold War. Working closely with Ronald Reagan, he achieved the collapse of Communist oppression and finally brought peace to Eastern Germany. John Paul II was fearless. He confronted Communism with great courage and helped many people to fight it as well. Through his papacy, he worked tirelessly to oppose the error of Communism and to put an end to it. John Paul II inspired so many young people and made a great difference in the church.

Pope Leo the Great, Pope Pius XII, and Pope John Paul II all showed incredible courage, faith and trust in God. These three popes made a great impact on the Catholic Church. They helped and saved so many people during their pontificates. These three popes are amazing role models for young people struggling in modern society today. Perhaps we can look upon these popes and act as they would, because now more than ever the world needs courage and faith in God.