

## **Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Pius, and Saint Gregory**

The contract for these works was drawn up in 1501 with the client Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini and Jacopo Galli as guarantor. Michelangelo undertook to carve fifteen statues to complete the Piccolomini altar in Siena's Cathedral, designed in 1483 by Andrea Bregno. The arrangement of the statues in their niches was decided by the client himself, who was elected pope in 1503 under the name of Pius III. The four statues that we see, the fruit of a later renewal of the contract after the pope's death in 1504, were the only ones the artist made since, overloaded with work, he asked to be released from the contract. The four sculptures are set in niches on the altar and have recently been rearranged so that there are two in the first row and two in the second. In spite of the existence of documents, the four works have only recently been included in Michelangelo's «corpus.» At present, scholars while recognizing the intervention of assistants, agree in considering them to have been carved by Michelangelo himself. Some have even seen the artist's first self portrait in the face of *Saint Paul*.