

Lesson 12
The Early Church To
Early Reformation

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Class Schedule

- **The Ancient Church (100 – 313 A.D.)**
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- 2. The Church in Jerusalem and the Mission to the Gentiles
- 3. 1st & 2nd Century Conflicts with the State
- 4. Early Apologists
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Class Outline

- **The Imperial Church (313 to 476 A.D.)**
- 7. The End of Persecution and Beginnings of the Imperial Church
- 8. The New Order
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Class Outline

- **Medieval Christianity (476 to 1521 A.D.)**
- 11. The Western church, the Eastern church and the Arabs
- 12. **The Late Middle Ages & the Great Western Schism**
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The Late Middle Ages & the Great Western Schism

Lesson 12

“What would the bishops of yesteryear have done, had they had to live through all of this?....Every day a banquet. Every day a parade. On the table all sorts of delicacies, not for the poor, but for sensual guests. Meanwhile, the poor, to whom these things rightfully belong, are not allowed in, and they perish in hunger.”

– Peter Damian

A New Western King

- On Christmas Day 800 Pope Leo III took a crown and placed it upon Charles (Charlemagne), King of the Franks.
- 324 years earlier the last emperor of the West had been deposed.
- Except of the British Isles, almost all of Western Christendom was under the control of Charlemagne.
- Charlemagne felt called to rule his people in both civil & ecclesiastical matters.
- He enacted laws ordering there be preaching in the language of the people, that Sundays be kept as a day of worship & rest, and that tithes be collected as if they were a tax.

The Holy Roman Empire

- 800 Charlemagne until 1917
- For centuries a love – hate relationship between church & empire existed.
- At times the church (pope) held the upper hand and at other times the emperor held sway.
- At few times could an emperor be an autocrat. Generally an effective emperor was the one who could balance the demands of the nobles & popes.

Impacts on the Church

- Internal divisions, invasions of Norsemen (800 – 1000) & Arabs interrupted trade on a large scale. W. Europe moved to a barter economy. Land became the primary source of wealth. Out of this feudalism was born.
- Since bishoprics & abbeys often had vast holding of land, bishops & abbots became magnates whose support everyone sought. The question became who possessed the authority to name who would fill such positions.
- Popes & bishops became feudal lords.

Theological Debates

- **Predestination**
- **Christ in Communion** – “although this transformation takes place mysteriously, & human senses cannot usually perceive it, there are extraordinary cases in which a believer is allowed to see the body & blood of the Lord instead of bread & wine.” In 1215 the 4th Lateran Council would proclaim the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Decline

- Pope succeed pope in rapid sequence. Their history of intrigues too complicated to follow here, as the papacy became the prize which the various rival parties in Rome & beyond the Alps fought.
- Popes were strangled, or died of starvation in the dungeons where they had been thrown by their successors.
- At times there were two popes, or even three, each claiming to be the one true successor of St. Peter.

Decline

- **Simony** – the buying & selling of ecclesiastical post
- **Clerical celibacy**
- Monks **departed from the “Rule” of Benedict**. It was justified by arguing that the monks’ function was to pray & to praise God, & that they could do this with more purity if they were not soiled in the fields. Frugal living became frivolous.
- Wealth of the church made it difficult to set aside intrigues of the powerful, & take the side of the poor & oppressed.

Decline

- **Indulgences** – meaning that when someone died they would be spared the time they would otherwise have to remain in purgatory being cleansed of their sins.
- The **Bible should not be translated into vernacular languages**, for the ministry of teaching & interpretation must be in the hands of Rome.
- **Clerical office holding**

The Fight Over Investitures

- **Investitures** was important for civil authorities, especially the Emperor, because the church had become so rich & powerful that an unfriendly bishop was a political power to be feared.
- In the interest of self preservation, rulers had to make sure that church leaders who occupied such important positions were loyal to the civil authority(ies).
- As popes saw the matter, the possessions of the church belonged to Christ & the poor, & therefore could not be relinquished to civil authority.
- In fact those possessions were used for personal profit, & for achieving the ambitious personal goals of bishops & others who in theory were not owners, but guardians.
- The Concordat of Worms (1122) granted the Emperor the power to invest bishops with secular authority, but not with sacred authority. This did not put an end to the difficulties of the papacy.

Efforts at Reform

- As would be expected, most of those who yearned for reform had taken up the monastic life.
- Thus, it was out of the monasteries that a waves of reform arose & attempted to conquer the papacy.
- Though there were periods of reform the power of the papacy continued to grow until it reached it apex in the 12th century.

Achievements

- **Universities** – These were not so much institutions like our modern universities as they were guilds of scholars, both teachers & students, organized in order to defend the rights of their members, & to certify the level of proficiency achieved by each. The primary theological schools were in Paris & Oxford.
- **Architecture**
- **Missionary endeavors**

The War Between France & the Papacy

Late Middle Ages

- The 13th century was the high point of medieval civilization.
- With Innocent II, the papacy reached its apex of power.
- France, England & the Scandinavian countries were the 1st to be united under relatively strong monarchies.
- Nationalism became a significant factor during this period.
- Nationalism in turn undermined the papal claims to universal authority.
- It was the time of Joan of Arc.
- The Great Plague of 1348 – 1350 killed 1/3 of the population.
- The Byzantine Empire, in spite of its high sounding name, was little more than the city of Constantinople & its surroundings.
- In 1453 Muhammad II laid siege to the city.

The Papacy & France

- The following series of events took place during the 13th & 14th centuries.
- Boniface VIII (1294 – 1303) was one of the haughtiest popes. He sought the universal power of the pope.
- Relations with France quickly grew tense.

King Phillip

- King Philip IV of France (1285 – 1314) granted asylum to some of Pope Boniface's bitterest enemies.
- He confiscated church lands.
- He offered his sister in marriage to the German Emperor, one of Boniface's significant rivals.
- Philip got the French parliament to support his policies.
- Philip's supporters arranged for a council to judge the "false pope." To insure himself of support Philip reaffirmed all the ancient privileges of the French clergy.

Boniface's Reaction

- Boniface called a meeting in his native town of Anagni.
- The day before the planned sentence of excommunication, pro-Philip supporters kidnapped the pope, while his home & that of his relatives were sacked by mobs.
- They tried to force Boniface to abdicate, but the elderly pope stood firm.
- Soon Boniface's supporters freed the pope & expelled the French from the city.
- Boniface died shortly after this episode.

Going From Bad to Worse

- Each party insisted that one of its members be elected pope.
- The pro-French party obtained agreement from the cardinals on the election of Clement V.
- During his reign (1305 – 1314) Clement V did not once visit Rome. Philip kept him in France & under his thumb.
- The citizens of Rome insisted on his residence in their city.
- Clement V appointed 24 cardinals, all but 1 was French.
- By 1309 Clement V had begun residing in Avignon, a papal city at the border of France.

The Babylonian Captivity of the Church

- For almost 70 yr., while claiming to be the Bishop of Rome, a succession of popes would reside in Avignon.
- This period was called the “Avignon Papacy” or “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church.”
- This period was marked by each pope’s willingness to serve as a tool of French policy.

Benedict XII

- Benedict XII (1334 – 1342), while promising to return to Rome, built a great palace in Avignon & moved the papal archives to that city.
- His reign was marked with nepotism, & great courts of pomp & luxury.
- Since this was the time of one of the great plagues, many believed that this was divine punishment for the popes' absence from Rome.

The Impact of the Avignon Papacy

- The long period of Avignon residency had disastrous consequences for the life of the church.
- It was during the time of the 100 Years War between France & England, & their related allies.
- Those countries that were at war with France grew accustomed to seeing the papacy as a foreign power, and their nationalism was soon linked with resentment toward the papacy.

The Impact of the Avignon Papacy

- Since the court at Avignon was in constant need of funds, when a church position became vacant, its income was sent to Avignon.
- The pope had a vested interest in frequent & unfilled vacancies in the local clergies.
- There was an increase in the sale of church positions (simony).
- There were some who held more than one position creating long absences from their charges.
- Nepotism became the rule of the day.

The Impact of the Avignon Papacy

- Many began clamoring for a reformation of the church, & specifically for the papacy itself. This clamor was often joined by attempts to limit the power of the popes, or to restrict the hand of the papacy to purely spiritual matters.

The Great Western Schism

The Great Western Schism

- Gregory XI (1370 – 1378) brought the papacy back to Rome, but he died soon after.
- The French cardinals vastly outnumbered the Italians, so there was great possibility that the cardinals would leave Rome for French protection & elect another French pope.
- A mob soon began to clamor for the election of a Roman, or at least an Italian.
- Under such circumstance the cardinals did not elect a French pope. They elected Urban VI.

Urban VI

- The crowning of Urban VI (1378 – 1389) seemed to be the beginning of a new age. He was a man of humble beginnings & lead an austere life. He was expected to began reforms so long awaited by many.
- He quickly clashed with many cardinals who were used to luxury, & for whom their office was a means to riches for themselves & their families.
- Urban quickly put an end to simony, absenteeism, & preached against the cardinals' excesses.
- Trying to wrest power from the French he appointed a vast number of Italian cardinals.

The Clash

- As an ever increasing number of cardinals joined the opposition, including many Italians, they fled to Anagni.
- There they declared their election of Urban was under coercion & that his election was not valid.
- They conveniently forgot that after the election all participated in his coronation, and did not raise one single objection.
- Urban quickly appointed 26 new cardinals from among his supporters.
- The opposition said a false pope could not appoint true cardinals, & called for the election of a new pope.

The Wheels Fall Off

- The same cardinals who elected Urban VI elected a new pope Clement VII (1378 – 1394).
- On several occasions there had been more than one claimant to the papacy.
- This however was an unprecedented situation in which 2 popes were elected by the same group of cardinals.
- Western Christendom was now forced to take sides.
- Clement took up arms against Urban & attacked the city of Rome. The attack failed.
- The pope in Rome & the pope in Avignon began seeking recognition from the various courts in Europe.

Choosing Sides

- Obviously France opted for the pope in Avignon, Clement. Scotland followed due to their conflicts with England, the enemy of France.
- England took the side of Urban in Rome. England's allies Germany, Scandinavia, Flanders, Hungary & Poland followed suit.
- Each city in Italy followed its own course.
- Portugal & the Kingdom of Naples changed sides repeatedly.

Attempt at Compromise

- The schism itself encouraged simony, with each rival pope needing funds to compete with his adversary.
- The schism went beyond 2 rival popes, for when each died others would be elected to continue their line.
- The University of Paris presented a proposal to the king that both popes resign & a new one be elected.
- King Charles VI (1380 – 1422) took the advice & tried to persuade the various courts in Europe to pressure both popes into resigning. This went no where & eventually Charles once again favored the Avignon papacy.

Ripe For Reform

- Europe was growing weary, the Roman cardinals broke with their pope & began their own negotiations with the Avignon party.
- France then withdrew their support for the Avignon line of popes.
- The reform movement that had been simmering over the years was about to have its day.

diuacur. des. di. l. omnes. x. p. i. a.
circo ego ioh. anes andree bono
nibus iudicem sinter dectorum
... beret. quicere uacantibus etis
... ul ab alms. no. p. d. n. tenen. que



Bonus Notes

Formalizing Western Church Practices
in the Late Middle Ages
1000 to 1400

Formalizing Western Church
Practices in the Late Middle Ages
1000 to 1400

Introduction

- Many of the practices listed here had been around from, in some cases, the Constantine Era. However, many of the practices had not been generally accepted or was only localized.
- As the papacy and church government strengthened the practices become more formalized, canonized or widely accepted during the years from 1,000 to 1,400.
- In almost all cases there were those who cried for reform.
- It should be noted that these practices do not refer to the practices of the modern Roman Catholic Church. The following only refers to the beliefs & behaviors of the Western Roman Church of the mid to late Middle Ages.

Lay Investitures

- **Lay investitures** – secular princes giving churchmen the symbols of their office – often purchased.
- Since the collapse of the Western Empire civil functions were attended to by clergy. The church & state had become intertwined in a great variety of societal functions.
- At the Concordat of Worms in 1122 it was resolved that monarchs give up the custom of investing churchmen with the symbols of church office. But, the monarchs kept their influence in the choice of churchmen & their authority to bestow non-ecclesiastical office, property and material possessions to clergy.
- Lay investiture in the narrow sense was abolished, but the conflict between empire & papacy continued throughout the Middle Ages.

Penance

- **Penance** - is the name given to the procedures for obtaining forgiveness of post-baptismal sins & so the means for the removal of an excommunication.
- Although the guilt of sin was forgiven on the basis of penitence & confession, the medieval practice was influenced by Germanic legal theory, which required punishment or “satisfactions.”
- These punishments for sin might be worked off either on earth or in purgatory, which received greater stress in the 12th century.
- In the beginning of the 11th century it was customary to grant absolution after confession & before imposing the satisfaction. From the 12th century a declarative formula instead of a prayer was in use, and by 1350 “I absolve you” was the common formula.
- The concept of penance turned into a act of military service when Pope Gregory VII turned it against his opponents with the concept of “Holy War.” This concept underpinned the Crusades.

Indulgences

- **Indulgences** – was the remission of temporal punishments (whether inflicted on earth or in purgatory) for sin.
- The guilt of sin (eternal punishment) was forgiven by absolution in response to the contrition & confession of the sinner, but the satisfaction (temporal punishment) still had to be made for sins.
- In the 11th century bishops in France & Spain had granted indulgences to those who contributed to church buildings.

Transubstantiation

- **Transubstantiation –**
- Since the controversy of the 9th century the idea of the real physical presence of the body & blood of Christ in the Eucharistic elements had grown in popularity as the center of devotional piety.
- Advocates for real physical presence succeed before the end of the 11th century in establishing the theory of transubstantiation.
- The 4th Lateran Council of 1215 used the word transubstantiation in its statement of the change of the bread & wine by divine power into the physical body & blood of Christ.
- From the 12th century the practice of “communion in one kind” by the laity (bread) was accepted. When the whole Christ was communicated in one element, there was less danger of spilling or contaminating the wine if it was taken only by the priest.

The Immaculate Conception of Mary

- **The Immaculate Conception of Mary –**
- The cult of Mary became prominent in the 11th & 12th centuries.
- The recitation of “hail Mary, full of grace....” came into use in the late 12th century.
- From the 12th century the thought that Mary had been preserved from original sin “immaculate conception” gained ground.
- It was opposed by all the leading theologians until the end of the 13th century.

Forgiveness of Sin

- **Forgiveness of Sin -**
- In the ancient church the principal point in a person's religious life & the means by which forgiveness was obtained was baptism.
- Baptism became a routine act administered to infants. Access to the altar where communion with the death & resurrection of Christ was obtained now came by penance. This became the sacrament where a person became conscious of having his or her sins declared forgiven.
- In the 11th & 12th centuries the doctrinal formulation of transubstantiation and penance insured the concepts "sacrifice or satisfaction" becoming key to forgiveness of sin.

View of the Cross

- **The Cross as an Icon -**
- The view that the Eucharist is one & the same with Jesus Christ, offered more of a participation with Christ than was associated with infant baptism.
- This participation was not with the victorious Christ of early Christian baptism, but with the sinless humanity that went to the cross. The center of interest now was Christ on the cross.

Monks

- **Monks & Monasteries -**
- During the 12th century the distinctions between monks & clergy lessened with a considerable increase in the percentage of monks who received priestly ordination & with the increase in the number of parish & diocesan clergy who lived under a monastic type rule.
- Many monastic orders sprung up during this time.

Music of the Church

- **Music in churches -**
- In the early Middle Ages, church music continued to be monophonic.
- Polyphony develop principally in the 11th & 12th centuries, although it is attested as early as the 9th century.
- It was not until the 13th century that there is clear evidence of the organ being used regularly in worship. It replaced the singing of some liturgical texts in the late 14th century.

The Cult of the Saints

- **The cult of the Saints** – continued to be central in popular piety. The annual saints' feast days were the occasion for local & regional fairs combined with trade, entertainment, & social gathering.
- Every illness had its own saint who specialized in its treatment
- During the age of martyrs recognition as a saint was a spontaneous response by fellow believers. Later local saints became a decision made by the bishop.
- Since the 5th century the word *sanctus* or "saint" had not been used for all the devout dead, but was limited to official saints.
- In the 12th century canonization of saints became the prerogative of the pope.

The Cult of the Saints

- The possession of relics of saints had not only spiritual, but also economic value. There were many pilgrimages to relic sites. The sale or theft of relics became common.
- Pilgrimages were often acts of penance.
- Pilgrims often purchased hat pins to show the sites they had visited. Jerusalem was held the highest place of recognition.
- Relics occupied the place in piety in the West that icons (pictures not sculptures) did in the East.

Purgatory

- **Purgatory** – was the notion of an intermediate place of purging of lesser sins before entrance into heavenly bliss. The idea had been around for centuries. It was popularized by Pope Gregory cir. 600.
- Theologians of the 12th century formulated the view that in purgatory were completed the punishments for sins not satisfied by penitential acts in this life.
- The doctrine of purgatory was officially defined at the Council of Lyons in 1274.
- Pious activities such as the sacrifice of the mass, veneration of saints & relics, and confession & works of satisfaction in the sacrament of penance, came in the 12th century to be related to a more concrete understanding of purgatory.

Friars

- **Friar** – became a new expression of monasticism.
- Friars were not bound to the old requirement of staying in one's "monastic place" as in the Rule of Benedict developed in the late 6th century.
- Their itinerant preaching meant that new recruits, unlike earlier monks, entered an order rather than an individual monastery. They now professed obedience to the order's superior rather than to the abbot of a local monastery.
- It was now necessary to go to where the people were to bring the Christian message to them.
- The friars, no longer bound by the limitation of traditional monastic orders, were available to move their best minds to the opportunities that universities, flushing in this period, provided for their preaching mission.

Dissent & Heresy

- The Western church came to apply the reproach of “heresy” not only to those doctrinally deviant, but also **to those who did not conform or submit to the hierarchical church.**
- The Inquisition was an ecclesiastical institution to search out heretics & bring them to punishment.
- Since heresy was considered the equivalent of witchcraft sometimes the accused were punished by death.
- In the late 12th century bishops were expected to make legal inquiry of heretics in their dioceses & hand over the accused to secular authorities for punishment.
- The 4th Lateran Council (1215) confirmed these regulations & threatened excommunication of civil rulers who failed to rid their territory of heresy.

Dissent & Heresy

- The charges brought, and the names of accusers & witnesses were kept secret. Wide powers of arrest & imprisonment were granted. No witnesses were called for the defense, nor was there counsel for the defense. Torture was used, and the death penalty was brutally applied.
- Some began to regard the instructions of the Gospels and apostles as more important than ecclesiastical office in authorizing a person to preach and minister.

Corporate Worship

- The traditional methods of the church were ineffectively utilized to communicate the Christian gospel & Scriptures and to include the people in worship.
- There was a general failure of Biblical teaching and pastoral care that became even more pronounced in the late Middle Ages.
- The liturgy continued in Latin, which by the late Middle Ages was less & less understood by ordinary people of the local languages of Europe.
- Attendance at the celebration of the Mass did not involve communion.
- The 4th Lateran Council (1215) required that confession & communion was to occur only once each year. It was intended to be an improvement.

Corporate Worship

- The Mass was a ritual celebrated for the people rather than with the people.
- Those who could afford to do so set up endowments to support a priest to say frequent Masses for the benefit of their souls.
- Most of the sermons that survive from the 13th century, generally delivered at Lent, are exhortation to make confession.
- Little preaching was done in church. The order of Friars was a refreshing revival of preaching for many.
- The interest in the saints as models of Christian life remained high, and on the positive side, many people honored their virtues.