

FOUNDED UPON ROCK: PART IV  
THE STRIFE AND THE GLORY: THE HIGH AND LATE MIDDLE AGES

I. Historians often divide the latter half of the Middle Ages into the High Middle Ages, which roughly span from 1000 to 1300, and the Late Middle Ages, which roughly span from 1300 to 1500.

A. Most people's idea of medieval society comes from the religious and cultural situation of the High Middle Ages. The High Middle Ages was a time of economic growth, increase in scholarship, and theological and technical advancement, but also an era of increasing strife as great powers came into conflict with each other and with the Church.

1. It was the era when feudalism was at its height and the ideals of chivalry came into focus. The Popes, the kings and the bishops both increased in power and were able to use the better transportation and communication to promote their causes. This increased control would sometimes lead to cooperation between the ecclesial and civil realms and sometimes bring them into conflict.

2. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches became formally separated in 1054. There would be continuous efforts to unite them again, with some failures and some successes.

3. The Crusades started in 1095 and continued into most of the thirteenth century. After an initial success, they failed in their effort to keep control of the Holy Land and to unite East and West. But, for a time, they did stave off the attacks on the Byzantine Empire. And one unforeseen result was the introduction into Europe of more learning, technology and trade with the Muslim world.

4. The great universities flourished, and theology advanced rapidly in this era. The scholastic approach to theology and philosophy and the notion of the liberal arts came from this time. Seven of the Church's 36 officially declared Doctors of the Church come from these 300 years.

5. With the increased technology and trade, the economy flourished. And the additional wealth likewise led to more magnificent churches and castles. However, the resulting worldliness also led to much criticism.

6. Responding to all of the great issues, saints founded many of the great religious orders, such as the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Carmelites.

B. The Late Middle Ages was a time of more struggle, but also arguably a time of increase in popular piety.

1. The kingdoms of increasingly got into conflicts with each other and sometimes with the Church. The Church herself endured a time of schism that divided Christendom as two lines of claimants for the papacy developed.

2. The bubonic plague (also called the Black Death) swept through Europe and killed off a third of the population. The resulting crisis led to great social and economic shifts.

3. There was an increasing learning among the upper classes, which arguably led to a great increase in works of popular piety. The likes of St. Catherine of Siena, St. Julian of Norwich, Dante and Geoffrey Chaucer reflect the popular piety of this age.

II. Politically and economically, the Church and the monarchs became more organized, which led to a greater capacity to advance religious and political unity, but also to greater conflict.

A. Beginning in the early eleventh century, the Popes were able, with better roads and means of communication, and well as better candidates for the papacy and episcopacy, to exert more authority over bishops, which led to an increasing ability to insist on discipline and learning.

B. However, this very increased control led to more conflicts with the civil authorities, as both sides wanted to govern appointments.

1. Typically, when a diocese needed a new bishop, the priests, or the central priests of a diocese (sometimes the canons of the cathedral) would nominate a successor. However, the election needed direct or indirect papal approval. Likewise, the monks of a monastery and the nuns of a convent would select the abbots and abbesses. However, from a practical standpoint, the monarch, the local nobles, other influential families, and popular opinion would also often play a large role. This situation sometimes led to conflict, including the strife between the Emperor Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire and Saint Pope Gregory VII.

2. Once Gregory VII was forced from Rome by outrage over the pillaging done by his allies the Normans in 1084, Henry VII tried to install an antipope, who took the name Clement III. However, Pope Urban II (1088-99) was able to force Clement out of Rome and into obscurity.

3. Another famous conflict between Church and state involved King Henry II of England St. Thomas a Beckett, the archbishop of Canterbury and leading prelate of that land.

a. Henry II arranged for the election of his good friend Thomas a Becket to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, when Thomas took charge, he began defending the independence of the Church, which led Henry II to retaliate and at one point force Archbishop Thomas into exile.

b. In 1170, some of Henry II's knights took a statement of his to be a call to assassinate Thomas a Beckett, which they did in the cathedral of Canterbury. This murder led to a revolt in England, which forced Henry II to capitulate and give the Pope and other ecclesiastics control over these appointments, at least for the time.

B. Popes and monarchs also clashed over other issues, with Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) taking a leading role.

1. One conflict occurred when, due to disputes over imperial control over northern Italy, the German Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa invaded that area in the 1170s. Pope Alexander III organized the successful resistance for the time. The Pope wanted to defend the independence of northern Italy, both because he thought those city states should be independent and because he was worried about having the Emperor with possessions just to the north of his lands. To make matters worse, the German Emperor (also called the Holy Roman Emperor) began to gain control of the Kingdom of the Normans to the south of the Papal States.

2. A similar issue arose as the Emperor Otto of Brunswick invaded Italy in the first decade of the 1200's. Pope Innocent III, who would become the very model of powerful Popes, excommunicated him. This move eventually led to his overthrow by Frederick II Hohenstaufen, who at first seemed like a great ally of the Church, although things would later turn out very differently.

3. Meanwhile, in England Innocent III took on King John when he tried to override the vote of the canons of Canterbury for their next archbishop. The Pope sided with the bishop chosen by the canons. As with the Holy Roman Empire, the nobles began to rebel against the king when they heard of the excommunication. Under that threat as well as a threat of invasion from France, King John reversed course, allowed the Pope's choice to prevail, and in fact granted Pope Innocent III at least theoretical authority over England. When the nobles continued to resist King John, Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, worked out a compromise document now known as the Magna Carta.

4. In France, King Philip Augustus wanted an annulment of his marriage, for he had fallen in love with another woman. Pope Innocent refused, but King Philip remarried anyway. When Pope Innocent III excommunicated him, King Philip eventually capitulated and took his first wife back.

C. Meanwhile, the tensions between the Pope and the eastern patriarchs came to a head with the filioque controversy, which became central in the formal break between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches that continues to this day.

1. In 1024, Patriarch Eustatius and the eastern Emperor Basil II proposed an agreement that acknowledged the primacy of the Pope, but recognized little of his authority. The Pope could not accept this formula, and negotiations broke down, but there was no actual schism.

2. Tensions with the Normans who controlled southern Italy led Pope Leo to try to form an alliance with the Byzantine Emperor in the 1040s, for the Byzantine Empire was beginning to gain control again in southern Italy. However, that

effort faltered over the issue of the areas the Byzantine Emperor controlled would be Latin or eastern rite.

3. In 1043, Michael Cerularius became the Patriarch of Constantinople, and was more directly critical of Latin customs, such as the filioque formula and the use of unleavened bread at Mass.

4. Pope Leo IX's secretary Cardinal Humbert of Moyen-Moutier wanted to assert the Pope's position more forcefully. In 1054, Pope Leo sent him and another legate to Constantinople to argue for the Pope's views and negotiate with the Emperor and the Patriarch. Negotiations broke down badly, and Cardinal Humbert excommunicated Patriarch Michael, accusing him of heresy and misconduct in office. The leaders of the church in Constantinople then excommunicated Cardinal Humbert and his party, who had just left town.

- It turns out that Pope Leo had actually died before Cardinal Humbert arrived in Constantinople, and so all of his actions were actually void. But that detail did not prevent the break from occurring.

III. Popes did try to reestablish a unity between east and west, and the Crusades largely began as such an effort.

A. During the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslim Sultan of Bagdad was increasingly threatening both the Byzantine Empire and Christians' access to the Holy Land.

1. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century the eastern Christian Byzantine Empire was increasingly losing ground to the Ottoman Turks, who had already gained control of the Holy Land. In 1084, the city of Nicea fell to the Turks, and Constantinople itself seemed to be at risk.

2. Also in the late 10th century, the Ottoman Turks gained control of the Holy Land. At first they allowed Christians in the Holy Land to practice their faith, albeit with civil disabilities. However, as the 11<sup>th</sup> century began, they increasingly tried to suppress the Christian faith. Thus, starting in 1009, the Caliph Halim destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and began a systematic destruction of the churches in the Holy Land.

3. In the 1090s, the Byzantine Empire appealed to the west for help. That request, as well as the rising prestige of the Pope and a desire for access to the Holy Land, led Pope Urban II to call for a crusade to drive the Turks back in 1095. When he made this call, the crown responded enthusiastically, "God wills it."

4. There was precedent for this idea of a re-conquest, for the Christians in Spain were gradually retaking that peninsula. Starting in 798 King Alfonso of the kingdom of Asturias in northern Spain began reconquering the Iberian peninsula. Throughout the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, three Christian kingdoms, called Aragon, Castile and Leon, expanded their domains. In 1086, a large

Muslim force led by Yusuf ibn-Tashfin invaded Spain again. But, led by Rodrigo Diaz, better known as El Cid Campeador (meaning Lord and Master Warrior), the Christians beat back the attacks.

B. Surpassing expectations, many younger sons of the nobles of Europe organized what would become known as the First Crusade was quickly organized.

1. The first attempt at a crusade was led by Peter the Hermit, who led many commoners with little military experience into a disastrous expedition. However, soon a more organized crusade developed with more experienced leaders and knights.

2. After some initial setbacks, the crusaders began winning victories and conquered Jerusalem in 1099.

3. It was a rather brutal war, and the Crusaders slaughtered most of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But most of Christendom rejoiced to see the Turks driven back and Jerusalem, along with the Holy Land in general, once more under Christian control.

4. The initial idea was that the Holy Land would once again become a part of the Byzantine Empire, an arrangement that was supposed to help unite east and west. However, instead, the Crusaders established four Latin kingdoms in the Holy Land. What is worse, these kingdoms soon began feuding and were thus weakened.

C. The Muslims took advantage of the situation and soon started making advances. The weakest kingdom, Edessa, fell in the 1140s, sending shock waves throughout Europe. And so the second Crusade was organized in 1144, headed by the kings of England and France and the Holy Roman Emperor. Unfortunately, when they arrived in the Holy Land in 1146, the monarchs argued among themselves and the Crusade soon broke up, having accomplished nothing.

D. In 1187, the Turks, now led by the famous general Saladin recaptured Jerusalem. And England, France, and Germany again organized the Third Crusade, headed once again by those nations' leaders and other high nobles. The Crusaders fought in the Holy Land from 1189 to 1192, with some successes and some failures. However, the kings and nobles soon had to go back and govern their lands again. And when they departed, that Crusade too fell apart.

E. Pope Innocent III then called for the Fourth Crusade, which turned out to be the greatest disaster of his papacy.

1. This crusade was not led by nobles, but rather mostly by mercenaries, who began by invading Christian cities to pay for their way.

2. Then, in 1204, they found a claimant to the throne of the Byzantine Empire,

and invaded the city to put him on the throne. The effort succeeded briefly, and they took over the Empire for a few years.

- Even though it was totally contrary to Innocent III's wishes, this treachery set reconciliation efforts back further than ever. A few years later, the Byzantine nationals retook control, and divisions between east and west were even worse than before.

F. There were four other efforts at Crusades, two by the German Emperor Frederick II, who conducted them reluctantly, and two by St. Louis IX, king of France, who conducted them enthusiastically, but unsuccessfully. These efforts did not regain much land, and the crusading effort faltered, at least with regard to the Holy Land. Finally, in 1291, the city of Acre, the last crusader holdout, fell to the Muslims.

G. Although the Crusades in the end failed in the effort to regain the Holy Land or unite east and west, there were other ways in which the Crusades had a very positive impact on Europe.

1. Many philosophic ideas, especially from Aristotle, had been lost to Europe for centuries, but now were rediscovered in the Byzantine Empire and in Muslim lands. In addition, the need to respond intellectually to Islam, as well as the challenges posed by this newly rediscovered philosophy, led to an increase in scholarship.
2. Furthermore, as fighting in the east increased, fighting among the nobles in the West decreased, partially because their military ventures were elsewhere, and partially because the monarchs were becoming more powerful.
3. Many technological innovations in such fields as medicine, mathematics and architecture came into Europe and led to an increasing prosperity.
4. When people from Christian and Muslim lands came in contact with each other, there was also an increased desire for each others' goods and talents, which increased trade between the sides.
5. Furthermore, Muslims did start letting Christians visit the Holy Land again, although often with a great many fees. St. Francis of Assisi particularly impressed the Sultan, who allowed the Franciscans to establish many sites in the Holy Land. And in fact, to this day, the Franciscans of the Holy Land run most of the Catholic pilgrimage sites there.
6. Furthermore, the idea of a noble warrior fighting for the faith would join up with the notion of chivalry to give a greater sense of moral nobility to the warrior classes.

IV. The overall increase in prosperity and learning led to a certain flourishing of cultural life, although also to more worldliness.

A. The relative peace within Europe, as well as the knowledge and goods coming in from the East led to an increase in trade and prosperity.

B. The greater level of technology resulted in building on a greater scale than ever before.

1. Thus, starting with the renovation of the Basilica of St. Denis in 1140, Gothic architecture began to become very prominent, particularly in France, the German lands and England. Innovations allowed much more light, higher ceilings and complex stained glass windows. Cities prided themselves on having the largest or finest cathedral in the area.

2. Castles likewise became more comfortable and ornate, leading to a greater emphasis on culture.

C. Devotional life in general was increasing, with such devotions as pilgrimages, processions, organized prayers such as the rosary, and Eucharistic Adoration rapidly gaining force.

D. The Church began developing the notion of chivalry to bring about Christian ideals among the warrior class.

1. In the tenth century, knights became central to warfare as technological developments made the mounted knight a fearsome force in battle, as tanks would later become. However, initially knights were basically hired as mercenaries and did not have a moral good reputation.

2. The Church gradually developed codes of conduct fitting to a knight. And the process of dubbing a knight took on a religious quality, complete with vows to take up arms only in a just cause, and to protect women, the poor and all in need.

3. Popular literature, such as the Arthurian legends, the Song of Roland, and the accounts of El Cid, helped established the chivalric ideal as central to the concept of knighthood.

E. Universities also expanded rapidly as education, especially for the clergy and nobles, was increasingly valued.

1. Great universities flourished in cities such as Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge and Padua.

- In the early middle ages, cathedral schools had gradually grown up to educate the clergy, monks and also some nobility. Some of these schools began taking on professors and students from all over the world and would eventually be recognized as universities.

2. The idea of the liberal arts developed, with specialties built upon them

- a. The basis for the liberal arts was studies in grammar, rhetoric and logic.

- b. The fields of mathematics, music, geometry (involving engineering) and astronomy filled out the basic classes.
- c. There were also specialties in law, medicine, and theology.
- d. Philosophy was not thought of so much as a separate field, but rather tied in with all the other fields.
- e. Science came to be much more appreciated, especially under the influence of the great thirteenth century Dominican St. Albert the Great, who argued that people honored God by studying His creation.

3. The academic method of scholasticism rose under the influence of the likes of the volatile Peter Abelard and the venerated Peter Lombard from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Scholasticism is a method of looking at seemingly contradictory views, and especially views contrary to one's own, and developing ideas by responding to or resolving such contradictions.

G. The increasing wealth and power of the government and the Church led to some problems, as many ecclesiastics and lords lived in opulence, sloth, and sometimes decadence. That development in turn led to some cynicism and the ability of nobles and monarchs to play a larger role in the Church.

H. Largely in reaction to such developments, the mendicant orders were founded. These mendicant orders relied on free donations, rather than revenues from lands and taxes.

1. The Franciscan order was founded by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare of Assisi, who focused strongly on being radically open to the callings of God through a life of extraordinary simplicity and contact with God.

a. St. Francis (1181-1225) was born to a wealthy family of merchants. He was at first a generous, but often vain, young man and a soldier who desired to be a knight. He was not particularly successful in battles, but was still honored for his chivalry. After a couple of military adventures, he received a vision of Jesus in a church near Assisi, in which Jesus told him, "Rebuild my church." And he saw a vision of Lady Poverty, whom he found to be supernaturally beautiful.

b. Attracted to this call, and believing that it was to be fulfilled in his home town, he left everything to rebuild a church near Assisi called San Damiano. He endured public ridicule for a time, but soon his joyfulness of life attracted others to him. Eventually, his followers wanted some organization in the form of a religious order. And so he quickly wrote a rule and went to Rome to gain approval for the new order, which he had not thought he was going to found. Pope Innocent III was at first reluctant to approve this strange new order, but a vision in a dream and the efforts of Cardinal Ugolino (later Pope Gregory IX) persuaded him that the idea



was from God.

c. A few years later, his good friend St. Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) was from one of the noble families of Assisi. She was devout from a young age and defied her parents' desire for her to "marry up," instead choosing religious life. With the help of St. Francis and his brother friars, she founded the women's side of the order. She was, through great penance and austerity of life, able to show forth the power of God to the world.

d. The order soon flourished and the Franciscans formed numerous smaller groups. St. Bonaventure was elected Minister General in 1257 and organized the order into more of what we see today.

2. The Order of Preachers (commonly known as the Dominican Order) was also founded in the early thirteenth century to focus on receiving and sharing the light of heaven through a disciplined life of prayer, study, teaching and service.

a. Saint Dominic de Guzman (1170-1221) was a canon of a cathedral in Osma, Spain at about the same time as St. Francis' life.

b. In 1204, while traveling with his bishop Diego to help arrange a royal wedding, he was passing through southern France, where Albigensians (a sort of Gnostic sect) held sway. By prayer, argumentation, patience and an exemplary life, they were able to reconvert most of the heretics.

c. From this experience, St. Dominic realized his mission to form a preaching order. This order, called the Order of Preachers was confirmed by Pope Innocent III and, when he died, Pope Honorius III in 1216.

3. The Franciscans and Dominicans were the most famous examples of the mendicant orders. The mendicant orders were set off from both the dioceses and the established religious orders in part because they would not own large estates, but instead depended on alms from the people. In addition, they elected their own superiors in a kind of democratic process, with more of a notion of brotherhood than hierarchy; that is why they would call each other friars, or brothers. Along similar lines, they resisted being a part of the feudal system. Such factors put them largely outside of the established order; and as a result, some tensions arose between them and the other clerics.

4. Both the Dominican Order and the Scholastic style of teaching and writing came to their heights with St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 -1274.)

a. Thomas of Aquino a member of a high noble family in central Italy; and his family had arranged that he would be the abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino, one of the two most prominent monasteries in Europe, the other one being in Cluny.

b. But, after studying with Dominicans, he instead decided to join that new order, a decision that his family tried unsuccessfully to prevent.

c. At first, he was called “the dumb ox” by his fellow Dominican students. because of his slow gait and his quiet demeanor. Soon, however, his brilliance was recognized, especially by his most brilliant teacher St. Albert the Great.

d. St. Thomas’s systematic texts, especially his great work the Summa Theologica, are still central texts in teaching to this day. In such fields as Eucharistic theology and the virtues based approach to morals, his insights advanced Catholic thought to great heights.

e. He died on his way to a council at Lyons that was called in part to try to reconcile East and West. Shortly before his death, he received a vision of heaven, about which he said, “I have seen things and things have been revealed to me that make everything I have written look like straw.”

V. As this flourishing of theology, culture and the economy was occurring, more problems with the states of Europe were developing

A. Pope Innocent III and the Emperor Frederick II fought each other over control of the Church and of Italy, and their successors continued the struggle throughout most of the thirteenth century.

1. When Pope Innocent III favored young Frederick II as Holy Roman Emperor over Otto of Brunswick in the late twelfth century, he thought that Frederick would be an ally. Among other things, Frederick promised to give up his claim on Sicily and southern Italy and launch another crusade to regain the Holy Land.

2. Frederick became a very powerful, but also very arrogant monarch, referring to himself by such titles as “the Divine Emperor” and “the Invincible Sun.”

3. Eventually, he not only failed to lead the promised crusade, but invaded northern Italy. Pope Gregory IX took him on and excommunicated him in 1227.

4. The situation went back and forth, with some temporary reconciliations and a launching of the promised crusade.

5. However, Frederick continued trying to control the Church and northern Italy, and also settled with the Muslims by exchanging land in Italy for some land in the Holy Land.

6. And so in 1245 Innocent IV, a former friend of Frederick, reinstated the excommunication. Frederick then invaded all of Italy, plunging the peninsula into a war that would last for most of the century.

7. The kings of France, including St. Louis IX, assisted the Popes. The struggle continued throughout the thirteenth century until the line of Frederick II died out.

8. But in the meantime, Italy had suffered ruinous damage; and the Popes had become very dependent on outside revenues and especially the kings of France.

B. In the 1290s, conflicts with France would arise as King Philip IV began taxing clergy in order to finance his increasing government

1. Pope Boniface VIII condemned this taxation in 1296, saying that clergy could only be taxed with the consent of the Church.

2. Philip IV responded by cutting off revenues from French churches to the Papal States; and the Pope gave his consent for the taxation, while still claiming a right to prevent any future taxes.

3. But conflicts arose again in 1301 when Philip IV arrested the bishop of Palmiers for misconduct. Again, Pope Boniface VIII condemned the actions saying that such moves were the Church's province.

4. Both sides started a propaganda war against each other. And, after further escalation, Philip IV invaded Italy and briefly captured Boniface VIII. The Italian populace rose up and rescued the Pope, but he died soon thereafter at the age of 85.

C. The attempt to settle things with France then led, through no intentional plan, to the movement of the Papal Court to Avignon, France for 70 years.

1. After the death of Boniface VIII in 1305, the cardinals wanted to put an end to the strife with France. And so they elected a Frenchman Bertrand de Got as the next Pope, Clement V. Clement V decided to stay for awhile in Avignon, territory in southern France that the Papacy controlled, in order to deal with the problems in France. But he never moved back.

2. When he died in 1304, his successor Pope John XXII, also a Frenchman, simply stayed there, preferring that environment to Rome.

3. The papal court stayed there in Avignon until 1378, for the location was more central, more pleasant to live in, and easier to manage than Rome. In Avignon, the papal court was resolving more church cases than ever.

4. But Avignon had nothing to do with the tradition of the Church and the life of Saints Peter and Paul. And, the Church became ever more bureaucratic, taking on larger and larger expenses and paying them through indulgences and heavier taxes on the dioceses around Europe. In addition, the papacy was becoming more and more dominated by the French, which made the rest of Europe suspicious.

5. The result was that the many people around Europe were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with this more worldly bureaucracy.

VI. The return of the Papacy back to Rome caused controversies that would lead to the greatest schism in the West.

A. Under Gregory IX, the papal court returned to Rome, but the next election there led to a disputed result,

1. Due to the protests against the Avignon Papacy, and with the strenuous urging of St. Catherine of Siena, a third order Dominican, Gregory XI moved back to Rome in 1376 and 1377. Most of the papal court and the cardinals opposed this move.

2. Soon after the move, Gregory XI died in 1378; and the Roman people were determined that the cardinals would elect an Italian Pope, who would be more likely to keep the papacy there in Rome.

3. And, so, under heavy pressure from the crowds, who were threatening to riot, the cardinals elected Bartholomew Prignano, the archbishop of Bari in southern Italy, as Pope. He took the name Urban VI and things seemed to be resolved. But he turned out to be very anti-French and ridiculed the French cardinals routinely.

4. In response, about half of the cardinals went to a small town outside of Rome and declared that the election of Urban VI was invalid due to coercion by the mobs. They then elected Robert of Geneva, who sympathized with the French. He took the name Clement VII and immediately went back to Avignon with his cardinals.

B. Now there were two plausible claimants to the papacy, and the Europeans were divided on which one was legitimate. Most of the Italian kingdoms, Germany, England (and its Irish possessions), Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Norway and Sweden were behind the Roman line. France, Scotland, the independent part of Ireland, the Spanish kingdom of Castille, southern Italy (the Kingdom of Naples) and Austria were behind the Avignon line.

C. This situation continued into the fifteenth century, as a claimant named Benedict XIII succeeded Clement VI, and Boniface the IX, Innocent V, and Gregory XII succeeded Gregory XII.

D. In 1410, a number of intellectuals in Europe, including some cardinals, called a council at Pisa, declared both lines illegitimate and elected as Pope Baldassare Cossa, who took the name John XXIII. However, he soon engaged in nepotism, selling offices, and the like, which prevented him from getting much support.

E. A solution began when the German Emperor Sigismund called another council at Constance in 1414.

1. Sigismund both wanted peace in the Church and the legitimacy of being crowned Emperor by the universally recognized Pope.
2. Instead of trying to elect its own Pope, which would simply have created a fourth claimant, the Council began negotiations with the men who claimed to be Pope. Eventually, Gregory XII agreed that, if the council recognized him as the true Pope, he would resign. Then his cardinals and the council's representatives would get together to elect a new Pope.
3. The council agreed with this solution. And in 1417, the council elected Martin V as Pope after calling for more councils to be held with some frequency in the future.
4. The other two claimants gradually lost support and the Church was again unified under one Pope. In accordance with the agreement that the Council of Constance came up with, Pope Marin V called a universal council in Basle in the 1431.

F. Another problem arose from this solution, the issue of conciliarism.

1. Many people began to argue that, councils were superior to Popes and could remove them. This view was opposed by the Popes, but supported by many of the bishops at the Council of Basle.
2. To prevent the Council from going in the wrong direction, Pope Eugene IV transferred the Council to Ferrara and then Florence in 1437. Some members of the Council stayed in Basle and tried to depose the Pope, but their efforts were mostly ignored.

VI. Meanwhile, issues in the east both reflected threats to Christendom from without, but also led to efforts at unity within..

A. In the 1430s, the Muslim Ottoman Turks (successors of the caliphate of Bagdad) were advancing toward Constantinople. The Byzantine Emperor Michael Paleogolus and the Patriarch Joseph II of Constantinople, who was the leading prelate in the East, came to Italy to seek the assistance of the Pope and the western nations, offering reunion of East and West if the West would provide military help. Representatives from Syria, Egypt, and Ethiopia also came on behalf of the Orthodox churches

B. A strong central figure was needed in the Church for the discussions, and so the Pope's prestige increased quickly. A Council was meeting in Florence, and the occasion was a good forum for discussing the issues with the east. And so the Pope took the lead in the negotiations.

C. In 1439, the Pope and most of the eastern representatives agreed to the decree Laetentur Caeli. The eastern representatives agreed to reunite with the West under the rule of the Pope. And the Pope agreed to rally the west to the support of Constantinople.

D. Unfortunately, when the eastern patriarchs returned home, they could not persuade most of the eastern Christians to return to the Catholic Church. And, for his part, the Pope could not persuade many of the Western leaders to send help to Constantinople. And so, Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453.

E. Nevertheless, the attempt did have some rewards. Many eastern Christians did return to the Catholic Church and formed most of what we now call the eastern rites of the Catholic Church. And the Western leaders began to develop a better defense against the Turks, that would repulse attacks into the rest of Europe.

VII. In the fourteenth and early fifteenth century, the cultural situation in Europe had been getting rather pessimistic as the optimism of the thirteenth century faded.

A. The plague called the Black Death came into Europe in 1347 and within three years wiped out a third of its population.

1. Trade had developed with nations far to the east. But with that trade came diseases as well. The worst of them came over on a ship to Sicily in 1347, probably due to fleas that tended to feed off of rats.

2. The disease was fatal most, but not all, of the time. It destroyed half or more of the population in the warmer environments and very large segments in the colder environments throughout Europe. The disease spread rapidly, and the lack of understanding about how it spread led to further panic.

3. The disease had the effect of increasing piety among some people, but also of creating cynicism and despair, as well as superstition, among others.

4. Gradually, the disease subsided, although versions kept coming back into the eighteenth century.

5. The Black Death shook up Europe, as laborers became scarce and land now relatively plentiful, compared to the population. The effect diminished the power and wealth of the landed aristocracy, and led to improved conditions for laborers, as well as merchants and anyone with innovations.

6. Within the Church, the Black Death led to the death of many clergy, as they died while ministering to victims. Their deaths led to an increased respect for clergy, but also led many dioceses to ordain new priests too quickly.

B. The Hundred Years War raged between France and England from 1337 to 1453,

1. Due to the Norman Invasion of England in 1066, the Dukes of Normandy were also the kings of England. This situation led to a paradox, wherein the king of England was in theory also a vassal of the king of France. Practically, they often ran the Duchy of Normandy, which would eventually encompass most of western France, as part of their own kingdom.

2. Eventually, the kings of France tried to force more obedience from the Dukes of Normandy, who were also the kings of England. When, in the 1330s King Edward III of England began opening defying King Philip VI of France, Philip VI deposed him as Duke of Normandy and claimed his possessions in France. Edward III then claimed to be the rightful king of France because of he was the nephew of the previous king Charles VI, and thus more closely related than Philip VI.
3. The dispute continued for 116 years with the advantage going back and forth. Toward the end of the war, St. Joan of Arc led the French forces to victory before being captured and burned at the stake.

C. Within the Church, there was both a certain dissatisfaction, but also an increase in popular piety.

1. On the one hand, many prelates began acting more like noble lords and princes than spiritual leaders, often living high on the hog and concerning themselves more with political advancement than the salvation of souls.
2. This situation led to much popular discontentment. For example, in the Divine Comedy, Dante places numerous recent prelates, including 4 of the last 7 Popes in hell. (It should be noted that one of those four, Celestine V was later canonized.) The Canterbury Tales, written at about 1400 contains numerous negative descriptions of secular and Church leaders alike, such as a worldly abbot, a vain prioress, a lecherous friar, and a pardoner who sells false indulgences and fake relics.
3. However, that there was also a solid basis of piety amidst all of the troubles.
  - a. Pilgrimages and devotions to saints were becoming more and more popular.
  - b. The first book off the newly invented printing press was the Bible. And, with the increased availability of books, spiritual writings, such as the works of St. Julian of Norwich, Piers Ploughman, and The Cloud of Unknowing become much more widely read.
  - c. The idea of Bible studies was increasing and research of the Bible, especially in its original languages, advanced significantly.
  - d. Even those who criticized the Church, such as Dante and Chaucer, were devout Catholics. The Divine Comedy is a profoundly Catholic work. And The Canterbury Tales, for all of the criticism of Church officials, is centered on a pilgrimage and describes a holy, learned, devoted parish priest and a very intelligent, devout clerical student.

e. As the Middle Ages ended, there was a solid faith in Europe, but also a lot of restlessness in the ranks.