

## **CHURCH HISTORY Part 2**

### **Chapters 8-14**

*(c 840-1580 AD)*

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## **CHURCH HISTORY 8**

### **THE DECLINE OF THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE AND THE PAPACY**

The time from the death of the son of Charlemagne, Louis the Pious (814-840), until the beginning of the eleventh century saw many problems for the church in the West, just as the previous hundred years had for the church in the east under the iconoclastic rulers. The Carolingian empire was now divided into three kingdoms, essentially Germany, France and Burgundy with the Italian parts of the former empire also having a separate ruler at times. The weakness of these divided kingdoms made them vulnerable to invasion from outside the former empire. The Vikings succeeded in taking control of a large part of Northern France which came to be called Normandy as well as large parts of England and Ireland. In the east the Magyars invaded Germany and penetrated as far as Burgundy. In the south the Saracens, Moslem pirates, raided the coasts of Italy from North Africa.

Under pressure from these and other invasions the Franks developed a system of defence which would become known as feudalism, a system which was to be the driving force of mediaeval history. As authority broke down in the various kingdoms, men began to form allegiances in the localities for self-defence. A local landowner would build a fortress which could be defended and in time of invasion the people from that area would take refuge in the fortress swearing an oath to the landlord to be true to him. This local landowner in turn would swear an oath to a more powerful lord who would give him possession of more land in return for military service - by this process the smaller landowner became the vassal of the larger, creating a hierarchy of warriors and landowners.

Because the church was one of the largest landowners in the west, it became involved in this feudal system. The bishop of a diocese or abbot of a monastery acted like any other landowner, being both a lord and a vassal for the lands which he controlled. As a result, he controlled an army like other landowners and so ecclesiastical office became a desirable thing to own for worldly reasons. Because these offices, unlike secular fiefdoms, were not hereditary they were redistributed on the deaths of their holders by the lords and kings under whose vassalage they fell. Every church office had both a spiritual and temporal jurisdiction and, since the lord bestowed the temporal jurisdiction, the practice of lay investiture grew up whereby the lord bestowed the cross and ring on his candidate. This meant that the church gradually lost her independence since her bishops and abbots were appointed no longer by canonical election but by lay rulers. It also meant that men were appointed often not because of their spiritual qualities but because of their loyalty to the king or lord. Worse still this system easily gave way to the sin of simony since men would pay to obtain the valuable offices which they sought. Concubinage and clerical marriage also became prevalent as a result of this system, since unspiritual men appointed corruptly to priestly office were hardly likely to follow the law of celibacy.

The papacy itself fell into great degradation during the later half of this period. In Italy the two most powerful vassals were Duke Berengar of Friuli and Duke Guido of Spoleto and they contended for the crown of Italy after the death of Charles the Fat. Guido was victorious and in 891 Pope Stephen VI crowned him king. In 892 Pope Formosus was forced to crown his son Lambert but called on King Arnulf of

Germany to free him from this Spoletan ruler. Arnulf came to his rescue but then returned quickly to Germany after which Formosus died a violent death. The Italian party was furious with Formosus and appointed Pope Stephen as his successor.

There followed a period of great corruption during which a series of terrible popes were appointed. The Theophylact family was one of the most powerful in Rome and turned the papacy almost into a personal fiefdom. In 904 Theophylact had the two contenders for the papal throne strangled. In 911 Pope Sergius was appointed and Theophylact's wife, Theodora, took control of the papacy. In 914 she effectively appointed Pope John X to succeed to the papal throne. Theodora's daughter, Marozia, took on her mother's role after her death and in 928, when Pope John tried to free himself from her control and that of her husband, Guido of Tuscany, they had him thrown into a dungeon and smothered. Marozia then appointed first Leo VI and then Stephen VII in rapid succession after which she raised her own son to the papacy as John XI. In due course her other son, Alberic the Younger, rebelled against her rule and had both Marozia and Pope John imprisoned. Alberic was relatively benign in his early dealings with the papacy and appointed some good men, however shortly before his death in 955 he gathered the Romans in St Peter's and made them swear to appoint his son as pope on the death of the reigning pontiff. His son became pope as John XII when he was only 16 years old and was probably the most disgraceful pope in history.

Liudprand of Cremona, a follower of the Emperor Otto I, wrote the following account of the charges made against Pope John at the 963 Synod of Rome which had been summoned by the Emperor:

*"Then, rising up, the cardinal priest Peter testified that he himself had seen John XII celebrate Mass without taking communion. John, bishop of Narni, and John, a cardinal deacon, professed that they themselves saw that a deacon had been ordained in a horse stable, but were unsure of the time. Benedict, cardinal deacon, with other co-deacons and priests, said they knew that he had been paid for ordaining bishops, specifically that he had ordained a ten-year-old bishop in the city of Tody ... They testified about his Adultery, which they did not see with their own eyes, but nonetheless knew with certainty... They said that he had gone hunting publicly; that he had blinded his confessor Benedict, and thereafter Benedict had died; that he had killed John, cardinal subdeacon, after castrating him; and that he had set fires, girded on a sword, and put on a helmet and cuirass. All, clerics as well as laymen, declared that he had toasted to the devil with wine. They said when playing at dice, he invoked Jupiter, Venus and other demons. They even said he did not celebrate Matins at the canonical hours nor did he make the sign of the cross."*

The Emperor Otto was the son of St Mathilda, the husband of St Edith and the brother of St Bruno of Cologne. He sincerely wished to reform the papacy and put an end to its corruptions. However, as soon as Otto died the Tusculum family again took control of the papacy, having some expelled from Rome and others put to death. During this period there were two good and saintly popes, Gregory V and the great scholar Sylvester II, but the latter died in 1003 whereupon the Crescentius and Tusculum families once again terrorised the papacy. On the death of John XIX in 1033 his nephew Theophylact, a boy of 11 years old, became pope as Benedict IX. After committing abuses of every kind which led at one point to his deposition and

temporary replacement by Sylvester III, he ended up selling the papal office to John Gratian who became Pope Gregory VI. To make matters worse Benedict then rescinded his abdication meaning that there were now three separate claimants to the papal throne.

At this point the new emperor, Henry III, intervened, summoning a council at Sutri which deposed Sylvester III and accepted the resignation of Gregory VI. A second synod deposed Benedict. There followed a series of saintly men on the papal throne who sought to bring about great reforms.

One of the great miracles of the Church is that God preserves her even when wicked men are presiding as popes and bishops. Never has this been more clearly demonstrated than in the dark days of the ninth and tenth century papacy when God raised up many saints in the Church and brought new nations to the Gospel despite the corruptions in Rome. One illustration of this is the fact that the great Archbishop of Canterbury, St Dunstan, received the pallium in Rome from the worst of all this period's pope, John XII. It was also precisely during these years that the Church experienced the greatest expansion of her borders since the conversion of Constantine, with the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Poles, Moravians, Bohemians, Hungarians, Serbs and Russians embracing the Gospel.

One of the great heroes of the faith in these lands was Saint Ansgar. He was a young monk of the Benedictine Abbey of Corvey in Germany and, following a vision, volunteered as a missionary. For almost 40 years he laboured for the conversion first of the Danes and then of the Swedes. King Harald of Denmark had been driven out of his kingdom and sought help from Louis the Pious. Louis promised this in return for Harald's accepting baptism and promoting the spread of Christianity. It was this which enabled St Ansgar to begin his mission to the Danes. Many Danes were converted and churches, hospitals, schools and monasteries were founded although many of these were subsequently destroyed by Viking raiders. It was in the following century that Denmark was finally won for Christ under King Harald Bluetooth (958-86). There are several stories about his conversion. One says that he asked a priest called Poppo to prove that his God was the true one, and that he picked up and carried a great iron weight heated in fire without being burned. His son, Sweyn Forkbeard, became King of England and under him there was a large emigration of Danes to England which was a further Christianising influence on Denmark. By the 11th century, under King Canute IV (canonised as Saint Canute) Denmark was a Christian country.

In 829 St Ansgar sailed to Sweden. His boat was attacked by pirates, and he was robbed of his possessions, including his books, but continued on his journey and was received by King Bjorn. Although he established the seeds of Christianity, Viking raiders again destroyed much of what he created and only in 1000 was Christianity triumphant in the lowlands of Sweden under King Olaf III. Even then the heathens of Upsala held out against Christianity. In 1078 the pagan ruler, Svend the Bloody, was killed by King Inge and paganism was overthrown. The great temple dedicated to the pagan gods, Thor, Odin and Freya at Upsala, in which animal and human sacrifices had been made, was dismantled.

In Norway missionaries began their work under King Haakon the Good (938-961). He had received a Christian education in England and invited English missionaries

into his country. On his death there was a series of pagan rulers who destroyed much of his work, but under King Olaf I Tryggvasen (995- 1000) Norway was transformed into a Christian country. Olaf had been a wild raider in his youth. In 982 he had been caught in a storm and made port in Wendland where he met Queen Geira whom he married. On her death he began raiding again and landed on the Scilly isles. There he met a seer who made the following prediction:

"Thou wilt become a renowned king, and do celebrated deeds. Many men wilt thou bring to faith and baptism, and both to thy own and others' good; and that thou mayst have no doubt of the truth of this answer, listen to these tokens. When thou comest to thy ships many of thy people will conspire against thee, and then a battle will follow in which many of thy men will fall, and thou wilt be wounded almost to death, and carried upon a shield to thy ship; yet after seven days thou shalt be well of thy wounds, and immediately thou shalt let thyself be baptised."

As predicted, he was attacked by mutineers and defeated them after which he was baptised. Olaf II (1016-29) spread the faith to every part of Norway with the help of English missionaries. He was killed in battle by pagan rebels and was canonised in 1164 as the patron saint of Norway.

The Slavic people were also converted at this time. They practised a primitive paganism which included the toleration of a mother's right to expose or kill an unwanted girl-child. The two brothers, SS Cyril and Methodius were the great apostles of the Slavs. They were both born in

Thessalonica in Greece but it is unclear whether they were themselves of Greek or Slavic origin. In 862 they began their lives' work amongst the Slavs of the east. Prince Ratislav of Great Moravia asked the Eastern Emperor and the Patriarch Photius to send missionaries to his country. Because at that time Ratislav was asserting his independence from the Frankish empire he turned to Constantinople. Cyril and Methodius translated the Bible and the liturgy into Slavonic and devised the Glagolitic alphabet from which Cyrillic is derived. They soon encountered conflict with other missionaries from the west and in 868 travelled to Rome to seek the Pope's support. Pope Adrian II made Methodius Archbishop of Sirmium (in Serbia) and sent him back with jurisdiction over all of Moravia. Cyril stayed on in Rome where he became a monk shortly before his death in 869. Methodius died in 885.

Other nations also became Christian in this period. The Czechs were converted between 900 and 1000 thanks to Moravian missionaries. In Poland Duke Mieczyslaw (962-992) was converted by his Christian wife and most of his subjects followed him, although pagan uprisings continued until the time of King Casimir I (1040-58) . The Magyars in Hungary converted from paganism under King St Stephen (997-1038). Paganism asserted itself after his death but was finally defeated under St Ladislav (1077-95).

## **CHURCH HISTORY 9**

### **THE GREAT SCHISM**

The Catholic Church had its origins in the east. She was born in Palestine and spread throughout Asia Minor before being planted in Europe. Many of the greatest Fathers of the Church from Saint Ignatius of Antioch, through St Athanasius to St Cyril had been bishops of eastern dioceses. All of the first eight ecumenical councils of the Church had been held in the east at places like Nicaea, Chalcedon and Constantinople. The great Christological and Trinitarian doctrines had been hammered out by the Church as the result of a highly productive co-operation between theologians in the east and the west. Although most of the early theological battles were fought in the east, the Popes of Rome lent their authority to the condemnation of Arianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism and Iconoclasm. It was therefore the greatest of disasters for the Church that in the eleventh century the eastern part of Christendom split from the Church in what is known as the Great Schism.

There had been schisms from the Church in the past, but these had usually been relatively local in character. The Egyptian Church had been lost as the See of Alexandria fell to Monophysitism after the Council of Chalcedon. In Africa the Donatist schism divided Christians up to the time of the Islamic invasions. There had also been times before when Constantinople had been out of communion with Rome but these schisms had been temporary and had usually been healed relatively quickly. The schism of the eleventh century, by contrast, was to sever the entire east of Christendom from the west in a schism which has lasted to this day, other than for a few brief periods of time with the exception of a small number of eastern Catholic communities.

One of the main differences between the eastern and western parts of the Church had long been their relationship with the secular power. The conversion of Constantine had led to the secular power asserting its rights against the Church on numerous occasions. At its extreme this led to the system known as Caesaro-Papism under which the emperor acted as if he were head of the Church. Many emperors intervened, sometimes ruthlessly, in favour of Arian and Monophysite bishops in the fourth and fifth centuries. Iconoclastic emperors imposed their will on the eastern part of the Church to forbid the worship of icons in the eighth and ninth centuries. Meanwhile, in the west the disintegration of the empire left the Church relatively autonomous under the guidance of her bishops and especially the pope or Bishop of Rome.

Over time the Bishop of Constantinople had come to be regarded as the chief bishop in the east. Originally the three apostolic sees of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem had enjoyed the primacy of honour in the east but with the move of the capital of the empire to Constantinople this began to change and in 381 the Council of Constantinople decreed that Constantinople was the New Rome and the second see after Rome itself. At Chalcedon in 451 the bishops were made Patriarchs with jurisdiction over many other sees. By the sixth century they were calling themselves Ecumenical Patriarchs. Constantinople's dominance in the east was reinforced further by the loss of the other three patriarchates and over half of the eastern

empire's territory to Islam. At this time Rome and Constantinople had a natural affinity. The Emperor Justinian (527-565) had reconquered from the Ostrogoths large parts of Italy including Ravenna and Rome making Rome and Constantinople once again parts of the single Roman empire.

Rome itself was, at this time, home to many Greeks and other eastern Christians who had fled from the Islamic invaders. Even the popes themselves were often eastern; between 654 and 752 only five out of seventeen popes were of Roman origin; five were Syrian, three Greek and three from the strongly Greek island of Sicily. However, gradually the churches of Rome and Constantinople were to drift apart, especially after the loss of Italy by the Byzantine empire to the Lombards in 756. After this date the popes turned increasingly to the Frankish rulers for protection. As the popes increasingly looked west rather than east for political protection, so too their own racial origins changed. Between 752 and 1054 there were no Greek or eastern popes but rather forty-four Romans, eleven Italians, four Germans, one Frenchman and one Sicilian.

An early sign of growing theological estrangement was the so-called Council in Trullo, named after the shell-like dome of the church in Constantinople in which it was held, which, in 692, presumed to lay down universal canons, many of which opposed the practice of the western Church. One canon specified that priests (though not bishops) could marry even though the rule of celibacy applied in the west. It also imposed fasting rules for Lent which contradicted those in force in the west. When Pope Sergius I (687-701) heard about these canons he said that he preferred to "die rather than consent to such erroneous novelties".

The Iconoclast period brought further divisions between Rome and Constantinople as Rome consistently refused to accept the outlawing of icons whereas Constantinople frequently accepted the decrees of the iconoclastic emperors. This division was healed by the restoration of the icons in 843. In the meantime, however, the east had taken great offence at Pope St Leo III's coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor in 800. The eastern emperors still saw themselves as the Roman Emperor and they saw the pope's action as attempting to remove the western part of the empire and to place it in the hands of a Frank, whom they regarded as a barbarian. They also thought that the pope had shown arrogance in presuming to have the right to crown an emperor.

Charlemagne was also to play an important part in the theological estrangement of east and west because of his support for the filioque clause. This had been added to the Nicæan creed by some unknown western church in the seventh century. It was not accepted in Rome at this time and might have remained insignificant had one of Charlemagne's advisors not introduced it into the mass at the royal court chapel. Pope Leo III advised Charlemagne to drop this novelty but the emperor's influence was such that it quickly became commonly adopted everywhere save in Rome itself where, at that time, the creed was not recited in the Mass. Only in the early eleventh century, probably at the request of Emperor Henry II, did the papal mass adopt the creed with the filioque. At first the clause did not seem to create an insuperable doctrinal quarrel. As late as 1050 Pope Leo IX could defend the orthodoxy of either using it or not using it saying that just as a fruit could be said to come either from the trunk of a tree, or from its branch and so from the trunk through the branch, so the

Holy Ghost could be said to come from the Father or from the Father through the Son.

In the middle of the ninth century the Patriarch Photius of Constantinople deliberately detached the eastern Church from communion with Rome. The previous patriarch, Ignatius, had been persuaded to resign by his fellow bishops and replaced by Photius. He sent letters to Pope Nicholas I notifying him of his election but the pope reacted by sending legates to Constantinople to investigate the deposition of Ignatius and the fact that Photius had been promoted from layman to bishop in just one week. Photius wrote to the bishops of the east condemning the pope's presumption especially as his predecessor had crowned a barbarian emperor. He accused Rome of heresy for adding "filioque" to the Creed and condemned those Roman practices which contradicted the Council in Trullo. Finally, he pronounced the pope deposed as a heretic. Shortly after this Emperor Michael was murdered in 867, Photius deposed and St Ignatius restored. He was condemned by the eighth ecumenical council which met in Constantinople in 869 and communion was restored between Rome and Constantinople. After Ignatius's death Photius again became patriarch but was deposed again in 886 and banished to a monastery. During his second patriarchate, Photius wrote several treatises against the filioque doctrine which made it more difficult for the eastern theologians to accept the legitimacy of the Latin position.

Although east and west were now once again in communion there was little love lost between Rome and Constantinople. The terrible disrepute into which the papacy fell during this period severely damaged its prestige in the east. Under Patriarch Michael Cerularius open hostilities again broke out. In 1052 he sought to impose leavened bread on all the churches in Constantinople and, when the Latin churches refused, he ordered their closure. At this time the church of southern Italy was under Greek control and in 1053 the metropolitan of Bulgaria wrote to the Bishop of Trani in Apulia condemning the Roman practice of using unleavened bread in the mass and asking him to bring this to the attention of the pope. It was at this very point that the pope, who was in captivity by the Normans and wanted to appeal to the eastern emperor to make common cause against them, sent his legates, led by Cardinal Humbert, to Constantinople. Cerularius refused to see the legates and on 16th July 1054 they laid a document on the altar of Hagia Sophia proclaiming Cerularius's excommunication. In return Cerularius excommunicated the legates.

There is a strong argument that these events did not in themselves constitute a schism between the whole of the east and the west. The pope had died by the 16<sup>th</sup> July, so the legates' authority had expired which would make the excommunication invalid. On the other hand, the excommunication of the legates was personal to them and did not entail an excommunication of Rome, still less of the whole Latin Church.

Unfortunately, a series of events after 1054 cemented the separation of the two parts of Christendom. The worst of these was the Fourth Crusade Of 1204 during which the Latins sacked Constantinople and looted the church of Hagia Sophia converting it, and other Byzantine churches, to Latin worship. They also appointed a Latin rite patriarch and set up a Latin emperor on the Byzantine throne. Although the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Paleologos was restored to the throne in 1261 the Latin impositions on Byzantium left a lasting memory of hostility which made it very difficult for the schism to be healed.



The first major attempt to bring about an end to the schism was the Council of Lyon held in 1272. This was largely the result of the weakness of the Byzantine empire. Over 60% of its former territory had been lost to the Muslims, whilst most of mainland Greece remained in Latin hands. Michael VIII appealed to the pope in the hope that by offering reunion of the churches he might prevent further western aggression against him and gain support against rival claimants to the throne. Many in the west responded positively to the idea of a reunion council. The head of the Dominicans Humbert wrote to Pope Gregory X:

*"Christ came down from Heaven in order to make both one (that is Jews and Gentiles), and therefore his vicar ought not to refuse, if it is necessary, to travel into Greece if there is hope in so doing that he might be able to unite the Greeks and the Latins. He is the father not only of the latter but of the former as well, although they are less dutiful sons."*

During the preparations for the council, the greatest source of division was over the position of the pope himself. Michael sought to acknowledge papal primacy in the following terms:

*"Our holy church [will] ... conserve and accord to the apostolic throne those innumerable prerogatives observed in accordance with the jurisdiction observed from the beginning... right up to the time of the division."*

The Second Council of Lyon reached an agreed formula of faith on the four issues: the filioque clause, the primacy of the pope, the validity of using unleavened bread for the mass and the doctrine of Purgatory. However, only a small number of Greek bishops attended and when they returned home they met huge opposition which resulted in 1277 in a Byzantine synod which repudiated the formula and excommunicated the emperor and his unionist supporters.

With the renewed separation of east and west the divisions grew deeper. Catholic converts to Orthodoxy, for example, were now specifically made to renounce the *filioque* doctrine. However, the weakness of Byzantium was increasing as the Turks drew near to Constantinople and by 1437 the emperor, John VIII, was once again keen to court papal support for his defence of the city. In that year Pope Eugenius IV invited the Byzantines to send representatives to yet another Council at Florence. Unlike Lyons, this council had a large number of eastern bishops - perhaps 700 as against 360 Latins. All four points of dispute were debated in detail. The consular decree made the *filioque* a matter of dogma but allowed two ways of understanding it: for the Greeks that the Son is in a certain way (*quidem causa*) a cause of the Holy Ghost whilst for the Latins He is the very source of the Holy Ghost (*vere principium subsistentiae*). All of the Greek bishops save one signed the decrees. However, the failure of western help to save Constantinople and the almost unanimous rejection of union by the population of the city ultimately doomed the dream of union. The city fell to the Turks in 1453 and in 1484 a Byzantine synod repudiated the Council of Florence.

Since that time Catholics and Orthodox have been separate churches save for a small number of eastern rite Catholics - so called Uniates - who are groups of eastern Christians who have come back into communion with the catholic Church. These

include the Maronites in Lebanon, Byzantine Greek Catholics and, the largest group of all, Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholics.

In recent times the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have worked hard to repair the damage caused by the events of the middle ages. Pope St Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras made the following declaration together:

*"Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I, with his synod, are aware that this reciprocal gesture of justice and pardon is not enough to put an end to the differences, older or more recent, which exist between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church and which, by the action of the Holy Ghost, will be surmounted through the actions of hearts, through regrets for the wrongs of history, and a positive concern to arrive at a common understanding and expression of the apostolic faith and its demands."*

## CHURCH HISTORY 10

### THE GREGORIAN REFORMS

The tenth and early eleventh centuries had seen great corruptions enter into the fabric of the Church. Although this was also an era of growth with the conversions of many peoples, it saw a growth in simony, lay investiture and concubinage at all levels of the Church as well as huge corruption at the papal court. There was urgent need for reform and this came about with great energy in the middle of the eleventh century. The central figure in this reform was the great Hilderbrand, Pope St Gregory VII.

The line of corrupt popes who had reigned during the tenth century continued, with a few exceptions, well into the eleventh. The Tuscan aristocratic faction appointed a youth of 18 as Pope Benedict IX in 1032 and his behaviour was so scandalous that the Romans themselves set up a rival pope, Sylvester III. When Benedict then sold the papacy for 1,000 pounds of silver to his god-child, John Gratian, who became Pope Gregory VI the Church had three rival popes. The Emperor Henry III, following in the reforming footsteps of Emperor Otto, brought an end to the line of corrupt popes by summoning the Council of Sutri which deposed Pope Sylvester III and accepted the resignation of Gregory VI. This cleared the way for a series of great reforming popes. These popes were themselves influenced by the reforming ideals which sprang from the monastery of Cluny.

The Benedictine monastic movement had been a great conduit of classical and Christian learning from its foundation. It had itself suffered from some of the corrupt practices of the early feudal era but, from its foundation in 910, Cluny exemplified purified Benedictine ideals. The abbot was to be freely elected, thus freeing the monastery from secular, feudal control. It observed a strict and direct obedience to the pope and so, as a network of Cluniac houses spread up throughout Europe, the papacy benefitted from a spiritual alliance in every land. At its peak the Cluniac alliance comprised 50,000 monks spread throughout 300 monasteries. The mother house was ruled by a series of long lived, powerful abbots, Majolus (948-994), Odilo (994-1049), Hugh (1049-1109) and Peter the Venerable (1122-1156). The adherents of Cluny sought the reform of the whole of society starting with the clergy.

If the Cluniac movement was the most important factor favouring the reform of the Church, it was not alone in exhibiting the spirit of reform. A series of other monastic foundations date from this period. In 1084 St Bruno founded La Chartreuse, which combined the eremitic and cenobitic life and gave birth to the Carthusian movement. St Norbert founded the Premonstratensians, an order of canons following the rule of St Augustine. In 1098 Robert of Molesmes founded the abbey of Citeaux which gave rise to the Cistercian reform within the Benedictine Order seeking to recapture the spirit of austerity which, by then, seemed to have been forgotten by Cluny. The Cistercians simplified monastic dress, food, buildings and liturgy. One of the greatest of the Cistercians was St Bernard who, in 1115, founded the abbey of Clairvaux as well as 66 other abbeys.

Another new order which combined the eremitic and cenobitic life was that of the Camaldolese, established by St Romuald in 1012. He belonged to the ducal house of

Ravenna but gave up his riches to devote himself entirely to the service of God. He originally joined a Cluniac house but later wanted greater austerity and so moved around Italy founding movements of hermits. Finally, he established a house in Camaldoli in Tuscany where hermits lived separately but came together for worship. They were very austere and abstained totally from meat.

Against this background of reform there arose the mighty figure of Hildebrand. He was born in 1020 of poor parents in Tuscany. As a boy he was called to Rome by his uncle, Lawrence, who was abbot

of the Cluniac monastery of St Mary on the Aventine and educated at the Lateran Palace. He soon discovered an intense love for Rome which was to last all his life. As he would later write:

*"The Prince of the Apostles nourished me from my infancy and kept me in the lap of his kindness."*

He was secretary to John Gratian who became Pope Gregory VI, whom he accompanied on his banishment to Cologne. After Gregory's death in 1047 he went to France and lived for a time at Cluny where the new pope, Leo IX, found him and took him back to Rome. Leo ordained Hildebrand a subdeacon and admitted him to the College of Cardinals. He became the backbone of Leo's reforming policies, along with several other able men whom the pope recruited from various monasteries beyond the Alps. In 1049 Hildebrand advised a Roman Synod which made strict laws against simony and deposed all ecclesiastics who had obtained office by payment. Leo then travelled around Europe holding councils, correcting abuses and deposing unworthy bishops.

Leo was followed by other reforming popes, Victor II, Stephen IX and Nicholas II. On the death of Stephen IX the Tusculan party, who had presided over the corrupt papacy of the previous century, set up Benedict X as pope, but Hildebrand arranged a canonical election at Siena which elected Nicholas and with the support of the German king Benedict was deposed. At Hildebrand's suggestion the new pope published his Constitution on the Election of the Sovereign Pontiff. For the first time this set the papacy free from the Roman aristocracy as well as from the German kings and put the election of the pope into the hands of the Cardinals of the Roman Church. The office of Cardinal had existed since at least the sixth century. By the eleventh century there were seven cardinal-bishops presiding over the Sees outside the city of Rome, 28 cardinal-priests who were the heads of ancient churches within the city and 18 cardinal-deacons in charge of lesser churches. By putting the election of the pope into their hands, Leo freed the papacy from the control of both the Roman lay aristocracy and the German kings who between them had appointed all of the popes of the previous 150 years. On Nicholas's death the new system was used to elect Alexander II (1061- 73) whilst the Roman aristocracy tried to reassert its rights by setting up Honorius II as anti-pope. Alexander appointed Hildebrand as Papal Chancellor .

On Alexander's death Hildebrand was acclaimed by the people as the new pope and approved by the Cardinals. He reigned for 12 years until 1085. With the Cluniac houses as his allies, Gregory took on all the corrupt elements within the Church. At the Lenten Synod of 1074 he attacked simony and clerical concubinage. Married

priests were forbidden to celebrate Mass and simony was to be punished by deprivation.

*"Anyone who has been promoted by simony, that is to say at the price of money, to one of the sacred orders or to a position in the church, shall not be able henceforth to exercise any ministry in the holy church."*

Gregory appointed excellent and strong legates to supervise the carrying out of these orders despite strong opposition. Many of the people supported the orders, driving married priests out of office. Simony was more difficult to detect and at its root lay the system of lay investiture (the so-called proprietary church system under which rulers and lords had the right to appoint and invest clerics to churches on their land) which Gregory now set out to destroy.

At the Lenten Synod of 1075 Gregory made a momentous proclamation against lay investiture, even where simony was not involved, stating that:

*"lay investiture makes all appointments null and void; whoever receives a spiritual office at the hands of a layman, whether he be baron, duke, king or emperor is to be deposed, and a layman who dares to confer a spiritual office is to be excommunicated".*

Around the same time Gregory issued his famous *Dictatus Papae*, which consisted of 27 statements of papal powers and which stand as the chief manifesto of the Gregorian reforms. These statements include:

1. That the Roman church was founded by God alone.
2. That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal.
3. That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.
4. That, in a council his legate, even if a lower grade, is above all bishops, and can pass sentence of deposition against them.
5. That the pope may depose the absent.
6. That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors.
7. That no synod shall be called a general one without his order.
8. That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to alleternity, the Scripture bearing witness.
9. That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered Catholic.
10. That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men.

Until now the German kings had been supporters of the reforming popes, but this attack on lay investiture struck at the heart of the feudal system of which they were

head in Germany. Henry IV continued the practice of appointing bishops in Germany and investing them with the crosier and the ring. Gregory wrote to him exhorting him to confess his sin and do penance, failing which he was summoned to Rome on pain of excommunication. Henry responded by summoning his bishops to Worms where he announced Gregory's deposition on the grounds that he had been invalidly elected and had usurped power over temporal rulers. A letter was sent to Gregory addressing him as "not pope but false monk". Gregory responded by excommunicating Henry and absolving his subjects of their allegiance to him. This was a dramatic development; no king had previously been excommunicated or deposed by a pope and only 30 years earlier emperors had freely deposed popes. Gregory's judgement was couched as an appeal to St Peter:

*"O St. Peter, chief of the apostles, incline to us, I beg, thy holy ears, and hear me thy servant whom thou has nourished from infancy, and whom, until this day, thou hast freed from the hand of the wicked, who have hated and do hate me for my faithfulness to thee. Thou, and my mistress the mother of God, and thy brother St. Paul are witnesses for me among all the saints that thy holy Roman church drew me to its helm against my will; that I had no thought of ascending thy chair through force, and that I would rather have ended my life as a pilgrim than, by secular means, to have seized thy throne for the sake of earthly glory. And therefore I believe it to be through thy grace and not through my own deeds that it has pleased and does please thee that the Christian people, who have been especially committed to thee, should obey me. And especially to me, as thy representative and by thy favour, has the power been granted by God of binding and loosing in Heaven and on earth. On the strength of this belief therefore, for the honour and security of thy church, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I withdraw, through thy power and authority, from Henry the king, son of Henry the emperor, who has risen against thy church with unheard of insolence, the rule over the whole kingdom of the Germans and over Italy. And I absolve all Christians from the bonds of the oath which they have made or shall make to him; and I forbid any one to serve him as king. For it is fitting that he who strives to lessen the honour of thy church should himself lose the honour which belongs to him. And since he has scorned to obey as a Christian and has not returned to God whom he had deserted-holding intercourse with the excommunicated; practising manifold iniquities; spurning my commands which, as thou dost bear witness, I issued to him for his own salvation; separating himself from thy church and striving to rend it-I bind him in thy stead with the chain of the anathema. And, leaning on thee, I so bind him that the people may know and have proof that thou art Peter, and above thy rock the Son of the living God hath built His church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."*

Henry was now deserted by his bishops and barons as an excommunicate. He decided to cross the Alps to appeal for a release from excommunication from Gregory. He did so in great hardship in the cruel mid-winter of 1077 when even the Rhine froze over. When he arrived at the castle of Canossa where the pope was staying with his great supporter Countess Matilda of Tuscany, he did penance for three days barefooted in the snow, dressed in penitential garb and holding a lighted candle. Although this was humiliating for Henry it put Gregory in the position of having to grant absolution to a penitent sinner rather than crossing into Germany to enforce his decrees. It was, nevertheless, a huge demonstration of the newly

established power and prestige of the papacy, since by doing penance Henry had effectively conceded Gregory's claims set out in the *Dictatus papae*.

Once Henry had returned to Germany he again began to invest bishops as before and in 1080 Gregory again excommunicated him. Henry retaliated by setting up another anti-pope and marching against Rome. His Norman and Saracen allies attacked the city, violating many of its inhabitants and Gregory had to flee to Salerno where he died in 1085. His last words were "*I have loved justice and hated iniquity: therefore, I die in exile.*"

In many ways Pope St Gregory VII was the greatest of all the popes. He was the leading figure in the reform of the Church in the eleventh century. His ideal that secular rulers were subject to the spiritual power was to be the foundation of the mediaeval order and held in check the wilder excesses of rulers and the feudal aristocracy. Although Gregory died without living to see his triumph, the papacy was eventually to win the battle of the investiture contest. The Concordat of Worms in 1122 finally settled the issue in the empire. Pope Calixtus II made the concession of allowing bishops to be elected in the presence of the emperor and invested with the sceptre as princes of the empire whilst the emperor agreed to give up the right to invest with ring and crozier and to allow free elections. Although this was a compromise, it was a major victory for the papacy and a blow to royal power. Lay investiture had finally been brought to an end and the relative positions of pope and king had been radically altered to the advantage of the former and this would shape the political landscape of the whole of the middle-ages.

## CHURCH HISTORY 11

### THE CRUSADES

There are a number of factors which came together in the late eleventh century to make the movement known as the Crusades possible. Pilgrimages to Jerusalem and to the other sites of the Holy Land had been of paramount importance to Christians since the first centuries and did not cease to be so after the Holy Land was lost to Islam in the seventh century. Without this tradition many of the crusading ideals – the desire to protect the Holy Places, the vision of a crusade as an armed pilgrimage and the importance of pilgrimage as part of the penitential system – would not have been possible. Secondly, the Church had developed several ideas as a way of curbing the bellicose habits of mediaeval knights. Under the rules of the Pax Dei, knights were supposed to spare the lives of the innocent and defenceless. A Treuga Dei (Truce of God) sought to outlaw fighting on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays and during Advent and Lent. Knighthood itself was raised to a quasi-sacred level with masses and prayers preceding and accompanying the dubbing of knights. These Church ideals were far from universally observed but they set a framework which made it possible for the Church to harness armed pilgrims to Her service when the Crusades began.

After the Seljuk Turks conquered the Holy Land in 1070 many of the sacred places were desecrated and it was made more difficult for pilgrims from the west to reach them. One of Pope St Gregory VII's dreams was that, after solving the problems of the divisions in the west, a Holy War might be fought to rescue the Holy Places from Islam and to reunite the eastern and western Churches. It fell to Pope Blessed Urban II to respond to the appeal from the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus in 1095 at the Council of Clermont. There he appealed to Western knights to liberate Jerusalem. He followed this up with a year long preaching tour of France; Urban was the first of many men to "preach the Crusade". He spoke with great passion about the outrages done to the Holy Places and called on men to "take the Cross" and there was a huge outburst of enthusiasm for the cause. It is believed that as many as 130,000 men and women joined the armies which left for Jerusalem in the next 6 years, sewing crosses onto their right shoulder as a sign of their vow.

What was to become the First Crusade was led by nobles and knights, who made up perhaps 10 per cent of the numbers. For them enormous financial hardships were involved. Many had to mortgage or sell lands in order to cover their expenses, buying food, animals and equipment for themselves and their followers. Although some may have hoped to benefit materially from the war, there was great uncertainty about this and undoubtedly it was religious fervour which motivated most of them. They faced great hardship; the journey was long and for the most part through the lands of the semi-hostile Byzantines and then the extremely hostile Muslims. Certainly, Urban left them in no doubt what would be involved. One chronicler describes the words of his preaching thus:

*"Whoever wishes to save his soul should not hesitate humbly to take up the way of the Lord, and if he lacks sufficient money, divine mercy will give him enough." Then the apostolic lord continued, "Brethren, we ought to endure much suffering for the name of Christ - misery, poverty, nakedness, persecution, want, illness, hunger,*



*thirst, and other (ills) of this kind, just as the Lord saith to His disciples: 'Ye must suffer much in My name.'*"

The first wave arrived at Nicaea in June 1097 and captured the city. There followed the siege of Antioch which lasted for 7 months by which time 4 out of 5 knights had lost their horses and food was very short. Finally, Antioch fell and after that Jerusalem was captured on 15 July 1099. This achievement was so momentous that even the Crusaders could hardly believe it and ascribed it to Divine intervention. Unfortunately, the desperation, hunger and fear of many of the Crusaders gave rise to many acts of inhumane slaughter, especially after the great sieges and against Jews and Muslims. An eye witness, Raymond of Aguilers, describes both the horror and the joy of the capture:

*"What an apt punishment! The very place which had endured for so long blasphemies against God was now masked in the blood of the blasphemers... Once the city had been captured it was most rewarding to see devotion of the pilgrims before the Holy Sepulchre; how they clapped in exultation singing a new song to the Lord."*

The Crusaders now established four states in Palestine based on the same feudal system as the one which prevailed in the Europe from which they had come. The largest of these was the Kingdom of Jerusalem which was divided into a number of feudal Lordships ruled by the king's tenants-in-chief who in turn set up rear-vassals. The other states were the counties of Tripoli and Edessa and the principality of Antioch. These new states needed help from the west and a series of further armed expeditions followed. Pope Calixtus II proclaimed a Crusade which lasted from 1122-26. In 1128-29 a Crusade attacked Damascus. It is, therefore, a misnomer that the Crusade of 1147-8, which these others foreshadowed, is known as the Second Crusade.

One of the great achievements of the Crusaders was to restore the Holy Sites, rebuilding or repairing the churches which had been built over these sites before the Muslim conquests. This was particularly true in Jerusalem. It was 450 years since the city in which Our Lord had been crucified had been in Christian hands. Now a royal palace was built in what was believed to have been the precinct of the ancient Jewish Temple. The most holy site of all was that of the Holy Sepulchre where Christ had been laid to rest and the site of His Resurrection. Under Constantine the pagan temples of Jerusalem's pagan forum had been cleared, Our Lord's tomb exposed, and a church built over it. When Jerusalem had fallen to the Muslims in 638 Christian worship had been allowed to continue until 1009 when the mad caliph, al-Hakim, destroyed Constantine's church and the Tomb itself. A replica of the Tomb was rebuilt by the Byzantine emperor between 1042 and 1048 and another church constructed above it. Once the Crusaders had recovered Jerusalem it was necessary to increase the size of the church enormously to accommodate the huge number of pilgrims.

The new and enormous Church of the Holy Sepulchre contained within it numerous holy sites. The chapel of St Helena contained the rock cut cistern which was believed to have been the site where St Helena had found the three crosses and the instruments of the Passion in the fourth century. The site of Calvary itself was situated in the north of the church and directly below the dome of the church was the

spot which was said to mark the centre of the world near to the place where Our Lord's body had been anointed for burial. Beyond this was the rebuilt replica of Christ's sepulchre itself.

The Crusader states soon came under great pressure from the Muslims. In 1144 the city of Edessa, which had been in Latin hands since 1098, fell to the Muslim ruler of Aleppo and Mosul, Imad al-Din Zangi. Pope Eugenius III called for a new Crusade and his letter, '*Quantum praedecessores*', listed for the first time the spiritual and material privileges of the Crusaders. It decreed a moratorium on interest of the debts of those taking the Cross and Church protection of their property. Most significantly it granted a full absolution of all sins for those who died on Crusade. The great St Bernard of Clairvaux enthusiastically took up the preaching of this Crusade and created enormous fervour for the cause. He was the greatest Christian of his age, being the chief force behind the explosion of Cistercian houses all over Europe, and the greatest preacher. At Vezelay, with King Louis VII of France at his side, he preached his first crusader sermon and the response of the crowd was so enthusiastic that he ran out of the cloth he had brought to make crosses and had to tear cloth from his own garments. He followed up with many letters and other sermons describing this as a golden age in which God had granted people a unique opportunity for salvation through taking part in a Crusade:

*"This age is like no other that has gone before; a new abundance of divine mercy comes down from Heaven: blessed are those who are alive in this year pleasing to the Lord, this year of remission... I tell you the Lord has not done this for any generation before, nor has he lavished on our fathers a gift of grace so copious."*

He described the Holy Land which was at stake as follows:

*"His land... where He was seen and in which He lived among men for more than thirty years. His land which he honoured by His birth, embellished by His miracles, consecrated with His blood, and enriched by His burial... His land, where the first flowers of His Resurrection appeared."*

After winning over many Frenchmen under the leadership of their king, Louis VII, Bernard began to preach in Germany where Conrad III agreed to join the Crusade.

Although both kings led mighty armies east the Crusade ended in disaster. Conrad was defeated at Dorylaeum and Louis abandoned his original plan of recapturing Edessa. Both crusader armies then agreed to attack the powerful Muslim stronghold of Damascus where they suffered a humiliating defeat.

One of the most lasting results of the Crusades was the establishment of the two military orders, the Templars and the Hospitallers. The origin of the Templars goes back to 1119 when a French knight called Hugh of Payns started a brotherhood to defend the pilgrim routes to Jerusalem. King Baldwin II of Jerusalem gave the knights a part of the Temple enclosure as their headquarters, hence the name by which they soon came to be known. The Hospitallers have an even earlier origin in the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem established in the 11th century. They added military duties to their hospitaller duties in the 1130s. Both orders soon acquired extensive properties and enormous wealth throughout western Europe. This enabled them to recruit many more knights and the rulers of the new Latin states in the east entrusted the defence of large territories to them and came to rely increasingly on

them. They built many of the most impressive Crusader castles, such as Krak des Chevaliers.

After the defeat of the Second Crusade the Latins in the east were increasingly on the defensive. One of the factors which had favoured the early Crusades, the division in Islam between the caliphates of Syria and Egypt, was removed with the conquest of Fatimid Egypt by the Sunnis of Damascus and the reuniting of the two parts of Islam. Saladin, a Kurd from northern Iraq, had been put in charge of the Sunni armies in Egypt in 1169 and he used his power base there to take control of Syria too. This put Saladin in charge of a huge area which encircled the Crusader states.

In 1187 Saladin crossed the River Jordan with an army of 30,000 including 12,000 cavalry. The Christians, under the King of Jerusalem, Guy de Lusignan, had only 20,000 of whom only 1,200 were knights. At first, however, they had a good defensive position with a plentiful supply of water. In order to lure them away from this, Saladin attacked Tiberias and the Christians left their defensive position to go to its relief. Harassed by Saladin's archers the Christians soon began to suffer from thirst and exhaustion and decided to strike north in search of water. Their lines became dangerously extended and the Muslims surrounded them at the Horns of Hattin. There almost the entire Christian army was destroyed and the True Cross, which they had carried into battle, was captured. The consequences were disastrous. Saladin was able to march through most of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. He took 50 crusader castles and on 2nd October the city of Jerusalem itself surrendered to him.

The response of the west to the fall of Jerusalem was one of shock and despair. Pope Urban III died of shock on hearing the news. His successor, Gregory VIII, proclaimed a new Crusade – the Third Crusade. Many took the Cross including the kings, Richard I of England, Philip II of France and the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. The first troops set out in 1189. The Germans suffered a disaster when Barbarossa drowned. However, the other Crusaders saw early successes, capturing Acre and managing to recover most of the coast. Richard I won some great victories and got within a few miles of Jerusalem. By the time Richard left the Holy Land in 1192 he had secured a truce under which Christians were allowed to keep control of the coast between Acre and Jaffa and to visit the Holy Places in Jerusalem.

The early thirteenth century saw a number of popular crusades including the children's crusade of 1212. A contemporary chronicler describes this as follows:

*“In this year occurred an outstanding thing and one much to be marvelled at, for it is unheard of throughout the ages. About the time of Easter and Pentecost, without anyone having preached or called for it and prompted by I know not what spirit, many thousands of boys, ranging in age from six years to full maturity, left the ploughs or carts which they were driving, the flocks which they were pasturing, and anything else which they were doing. This they did despite the wishes of their parents, relatives, and friends who sought to make them draw back. Suddenly one ran after another to take the cross. Thus, by groups of twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, they put up banners and began to journey to Jerusalem. They were asked by many people on whose advice or at whose urging they had set out upon this path. They were asked especially since only a few years ago many kings, a great many dukes, and innumerable people in powerful companies had gone there and had returned with the business unfinished. The present groups, moreover, were still*

*of tender years and were neither strong enough nor powerful enough to do anything. Everyone, therefore, accounted them foolish and imprudent for trying to do this. They briefly replied that they were equal to the Divine will in this matter and that, whatever God might wish to do with them, they would accept it willingly and with humble spirit. They thus made some little progress on their journey. Some were turned back at Metz, others at Piacenza, and others even at Rome. Still others got to Marseilles, but whether they crossed to the Holy Land or what their end was is uncertain. One thing is sure: that of the many thousands who rose up, only very few returned.”*

In 1198 Pope Innocent III proclaimed a new Crusade, which was to be known as the Fourth Crusade. This was to be a disaster for the Church in many ways. Its target was Egypt and Venice provided much of the money and manpower. At this time there was a dynastic crisis in the Byzantine empire. The emperor, Isaac Angelus, was deposed and blinded by his brother Alexius III. Isaac's son, Alexius IV, fled to the west and offered to pay an enormous sum if the westerners would restore him to his throne. The Venetians agreed to this and sailed to Chalcedon and prepared to attack Constantinople. Alexius III fled and Alexius IV was proclaimed king. However, anti-western feeling meant that he was unable to keep his side of the deal and riots broke out against him. He and his father Isaac were murdered. The crusaders invaded the city and cruelly pillaged it before deposing the new Greek emperor, Alexius V, and setting up a Latin empire under Baldwin of Flanders.

In 1213 Innocent III called for yet another crusade but he died in 1216 before it could take place. This, the Fifth Crusade, reached Egypt but the crusade ended in failure and Egypt was abandoned in 1221. There was, however, some revival in the crusaders' fortunes. In 1228 Frederick II was able to negotiate a treaty under which the control of the coast was extended to other parts of the Holy Land including Jerusalem.

Later in the century the new Mamluk dynasty in Egypt fought back successfully against the crusaders. In 1265 they attacked the Palestinian coast and took Caesarea. In 1268 they destroyed the great city of Antioch. Finally in 1291 Acre fell. It was the last great Christian stronghold in Palestine. The crusading ideal did not die and was to be continued against pagans and heretics in Spain, France, Italy and the Baltic, but the dream of recapturing the Holy Land slowly died away. There can be no greater symbol of this death of the dream than the fall of the Templars in 1307 when Philip IV of France arrested all Templars in France on charges of heresy. In 1312 the pope suppressed the Order and in 1314 the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burnt at the stake.

## CHURCH HISTORY 12

### BATTLE BETWEEN THE PAPACY AND SECULAR POWERS

The Gregorian reforms had established the principle that the Church should be independent of secular control. It fell to Gregory's successors to take this further and to put forth a vision under which the papacy should enjoy a supremacy over other rulers. The development of that vision was greatly assisted by the crusades. They had been set in motion by the papacy and the pope's representatives. At the Council of Clermont Pope Urban II had placed himself at the head of Christendom and his legate had marched at the head of the troops who had won the Holy City. The monastic and military orders enjoyed a growth in their power and they looked to the papacy for leadership. The papal chancery had developed the machinery of government more efficiently than had most secular powers. All of this meant that by the middle of the twelfth century the papacy enjoyed a practical supremacy over secular rulers.

This posed a challenge for the Holy Roman Emperors who claimed in theory to hold the universal secular power in the west. Under the first Hohenstaufen ruler, Conrad III, there was peace between pope and emperor but with the accession of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1152 there arose a fierce struggle between the papacy and empire which was to last for over one hundred years especially in Italy where the factions of the Ghibellines (supporting the emperor) and the Guelfs (supporting the pope) developed. Whereas the earlier battle had been over religious matters (how much control should the secular power have over ecclesiastical affairs and honours), the new battle was to be over whether pope or emperor had ultimate supremacy. This battle was to be fought between men of great ability and energy on both sides (Barbarossa, Henry VI and Frederick II on the imperial side and Alexander III, Innocent III and Gregory IX on the papal side).

In 1154 Nicholas Breakspear became pope as Adrian IV. He was the only Englishman ever to be pope. In the following year his legate, Cardinal Roland, presented a letter from the pope to the emperor in which the Empire was described as a *beneficia* conferred by the pope. The barons of Frederick Barbarossa objected to this since they took it to imply that the empire was a fiefdom of the papacy. Adrian restored the peace later by explaining that he had meant the term to mean not benefice but merely benefit. However, when the emperor visited Italy in 1158 he reversed the implied earlier claim by stating that he was the source of all feudal rights in Italy. When the pope said that this was not true in Rome and the papal states, Barbarossa replied:

"Since by the ordination of God I both am called and am emperor of the Romans, in nothing but name shall I appear to be ruler if the control of the Roman city be wrested from my hands."

To which Adrian replied:

"What were the Franks till Pope Zacharias welcomed Pippin? What is the Teutonic king now till consecrated at Rome by holy hands? The Chair of Peter has given and can withdraw its gifts."

Adrian had been about to excommunicate Frederick when he died at Anagni. This was followed by a disputed papal election which was to lead to an even greater battle. Cardinal Roland was elected as Pope Alexander III. A minority of the cardinals voted for Cardinal Octavian who claimed to be pope as Victor IV. Frederick now claimed the right to adjudicate between the rival claimants as emperors had done in the days from Charlemagne until the time of the Gregorian reforms. He said that:

“Divine Providence had specially appointed the Roman Empire as a remedy against continued schism.”

Alexander replied:

“No one has the right to judge me who am the supreme judge of the world.”

Frederick ignored this and recognised Alexander’s rival as Pope Victor IV. Alexander excommunicated the anti-pope and emperor, and a schism began which lasted for 17 years. France, Spain, England and Sicily and the cities of the Lombard League supported Alexander. Frederick was defeated at the Battle of Legnano and in 1177 the Peace of Venice ended the schism. Frederick knelt before the pope in the portico of St Mark’s, thus symbolically accepting the claims of the papacy. Whether or not it is true, as later legend has it, that Alexander put his foot on Frederick’s neck, this was a great triumph for the papacy. There followed the Third Lateran Council, at which the decrees about papal elections made in 1049 were amended to require a two thirds majority of cardinals to elect a pope. No imperial confirmation was required.

In England similar struggles to those which had been fought in Italy and the empire had taken place. Henry I (1100-1135) had agreed to give up lay investiture but there remained a dispute about the jurisdiction of the king’s courts over clerics. Henry II came to the throne in 1154 determined to assert this jurisdiction. His great opponent was to be St Thomas Becket. Becket was born around 1118 of Norman parents and educated by Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury. He became Archdeacon of Canterbury and was appointed Lord Chancellor by Henry II whose close friend he became. As Chancellor he lived in great wealth and pomp and accompanied the king on many journeys abroad. However, when Theobald died in 1161 Becket was raised under protest to be Archbishop of Canterbury. His consecration seems to have brought about a total conversion of St Thomas and he began to live an austere life. He resigned his chancellorship and dedicated himself to the service of the Church. In 1163 at the Parliament of Westminster Henry demanded that clerics charged with certain offences should be degraded from their office and handed over to the secular courts for trial. St Thomas objected but agreed to meet the king at Clarendon to try to find a settlement. There the Constitutions of Clarendon were drawn up. They demanded that the king’s approval be granted before a new bishop or abbot be appointed, that no bishop or abbot should leave the kingdom without royal permission, that no one should be allowed to appeal to Rome without the king’s licence and that disputes about ecclesiastical office should be decided in the royal courts.

St Thomas reluctantly bowed to pressure and accepted these constitutions, but on returning to Canterbury he regretted his weakness, asked forgiveness from Pope

Alexander and sent a letter to Henry revoking his consent. Henry's fury was such that Becket fled to France for safety. Finally in 1170, threatened with excommunication, Henry at last agreed to let Becket return under safe conduct. When Becket then excommunicated some of the bishops who had sided with the king during his exile Henry asked "Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?" Four knights, hearing these words, crossed the Channel and murdered St Thomas in his own cathedral.

Pope Alexander excommunicated all who had been involved in the murder. Henry did public penance for his words at Avranches in 1172. Miracles soon began to occur in great number at St Thomas's tomb and his shrine became one of the greatest places of pilgrimages in the whole of Europe until it was destroyed at the Reformation. Although Henry did not give up his policies towards the Church, and under his son, King John, further battles were to be fought over the same issues, St Thomas had died a martyr for the freedom of the Church in England.

Under King John the struggles between king and Pope again broke out when John refused to accept the election of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1205. Both king and canons appealed to Pope Innocent III and he set aside both candidates and appointed the learned Stephen Langton. John refused to admit him into the Kingdom and in 1208 the Pope put the whole of England under an interdict. Finally in 1211 he absolved the king's subjects from their oath of allegiance and pronounced him deposed. At this point John, who was facing a major rebellion from his barons, surrendered to the pope, surrendering his crown to him and receiving it back as a papal vassal. Pope Innocent reinforced his overlordship in 1215 when he annulled Magna Carta on the grounds that the king had signed it under duress and that the barons had not sought the approval of the pope as feudal lord of England.

Frederick Barbarossa's son, Henry VI, was ambitious and brave but lacked his father's nobility and honour of character. He married Constance of Naples and Sicily and thereby added Southern Italy to the already huge territories of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. By forming an alliance with the cities of the Lombard League he surrounded the territories of the papacy. However, he died aged only 33 in 1197 before he was able to realise many of his ambitions. Shortly afterwards Lothario di Segni was elected as Pope Innocent III. He was a brilliant administrator and had become a cardinal at the age of only 29. He was elected pope on the first ballot when still only 37. He immediately set about the re-establishment of papal authority and was to be one of the greatest popes of the Middle Ages.

He quickly won the hearts of the Roman people by his generosity towards them. During the famine of 1202 he fed 8,000 people at his own expense. In 1204 he founded the great Hospital of the Holy Spirit. He quickly put the Papal States on a firm footing. From Queen Constance he won recognition of papal suzerainty in Sicily thereby weakening the Hohenstaufen supremacy in Italy. She also entrusted her son, Frederick II, to his wardship before her death in 1198.

In Germany there were two rival claimants to the throne of Henry VI, Otto of Brunswick and Philip of Swabia. This dispute helped Innocent to assert papal authority since each claimant sought his support. Innocent decided in favour of Otto and when Phillip's supporters complained that he ought not to have interfered in

German affairs, he stated that he had no intention of deciding who was king of Germany but that he did have the right to determine who should be Roman Emperor since he alone had the right to crown him as such. However, no sooner was Otto emperor than he started to act against the pope, seizing some of the papal states and attacking parts of Southern Italy which belonged to his ward, Frederick II. In 1214 Otto was defeated at Bouvains and Frederick II established as emperor.

As well as taking a strong stance against the abuse of secular power in England and the Empire, Innocent asserted himself against the rulers of many other countries. He excommunicated Alfonso IX of Leon for marrying within the prohibited degrees without a papal dispensation. He proclaimed a crusade against the Moors in Spain and the Albigensian heretics in France. He placed an interdict on the whole of France when King Philip Augustus divorced his wife and remarried.

His supreme achievement was the calling of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. It was the greatest council of the Middle Ages and was attended by 71 patriarchs and archbishops, 412 bishops and 900 abbots and priors. The council passed 70 decrees or canons on a huge range of subjects. It proclaimed the dogma of transubstantiation, condemned certain heresies, set out the basis for papal primacy and called for another crusade.

Innocent's ward, Frederick II, had made two great promises to him: first, he would go on crusade and secondly he would hold the kingdom of Sicily separately from the empire so that the Papal States would not ever again be surrounded. After Innocent's death and the election of Pope Honorius III things remained relatively peaceful for a time and Frederick even managed to have the pope crown him emperor in 1220 despite his having remained King of Sicily. However, in 1227, Gregory IX came to the papal throne. Frederick's repeated delay in taking the Cross was a source of contention and eventually led to his excommunication. Frederick angered the pope further by eventually going on crusade whilst still excommunicated but on his return to Italy a time of peace followed. This broke down again when Frederick began to take action in Lombardy against those cities which had supported his rebellious son, Henry, in Germany. In 1239 the pope again excommunicated him and he responded by invading the papal states. In 1243 Innocent IV became pope and in 1245 he fled across the Alps and summoned the Council of Lyons which again excommunicated Frederick and deposed him. The effect of this was to lead to a rising in Germany in support of an anti-king and, when Frederick died in 1250, the papacy had achieved its goal of separating Sicily and the Empire.

It can be argued that the popes after Innocent III had lost the zeal for reform which had motivated the papacy for the previous hundred and seventy years and became too focused on the power structures of Italy and the empire. Although by 1250 the papacy had won the upper hand in the struggle it was now to find a new and more deadly enemy in the kings of France, and this was eventually to lead to the disastrous exile of the papacy to Avignon.



## CHURCH HISTORY 12

### THE RISE OF THE MENDICANT ORDERS

We have seen many times how at times when the Church was faced with great difficulties, God would raise up saints to come to her aid. In times of persecution God gave the grace of martyrdom to many. In times of heresy, he gave the Church the great doctors. When the papacy had fallen into such corruption in the tenth century that it seemed it could never effectively exercise the Petrine ministry again, he gave us Pope St Gregory the Great. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Church was once again plagued by heresy which arose in large part in response to the corruptions in the Church. The wealth of the Church could be a great scandal to the poor people and a large part of the appeal of Waldensians and Cathars was their embrace of poverty and simplicity which could easily make their clergy seem closer to Our Lord than were the priests of the Church. At this critical point God raised up two men who were to transform the Church by their fervent devotion to the truth and their embracing of simplicity and poverty for Christ's sake.

It has been said of St Francis that, with the exception of His Holy Mother, no Christian has ever more closely resembled his Master than he. His father was a rich merchant, Pietro Bernardone, and his mother Donna Joanna Pica. Later legend tells us that when she was giving birth she asked to be taken down to the stable and there Francis was born so resembling Our Lord from the very first. He was baptised John after the Baptist but, because his father had been away on business in France when he was born, he gave him the nickname of Francesco. Francis was brought up by his father to learn his trade of being a merchant. One day a beggar came into his father's shop and Francis turned him away. The moment he had left Francis said to himself *"If this beggar had asked for something in the name of some great lord of the world, I'm sure I would not have turned him out. But he asked me in the name of Christ – how could I be so hard hearted."* Francis would not rest until he had found the beggar and made him a gift and from that day he never turned anyone away.

During his youth many of the city states of Italy were at war with one another and in 1202 Francis, then 16, fought for his city of Assisi against Perugia. He was captured and taken prisoner for three months. During this time he became gravely ill but he recovered and prepared to leave for other wars in the south of Italy. He got as far as Spoleto when he heard Christ speaking to him in a dream saying "Which is it better to serve, the master or the servant? Why do you serve the servant instead of the rich?" Christ told him to return home where he would be told what to do.

Francis had always led a life of great friendship, going to lavish banquets and celebrating. Now his friends noticed that he had become very serious and when they asked him if he had fallen in love he said "Yes, I have; and she is nobler, richer and lovelier than any other." He was referring to Lady Poverty. In Assisi he began to devote himself more and more to prayer. One day he heard these words:

*"Francis, you must now learn to despise and hate what you have hitherto loved in the flesh, if you will understand my will. And once you have begun to do this, you will find that all that was bitter and hard becomes sweet and pleasant, and all that you thought of with terror and gloom will bring you happiness and peace."*

Shortly after this he was riding near Assisi when he met a leper. Until now he had been horrified by lepers and had always sought to avoid them. Now, inspired by what he had heard, he dismounted and kissed the leper. In his last will and testament he tells us that from this moment onwards he loved lepers and found Our Lord in them.

The next great revelation to Francis came when he was praying in the church of San Damiano before a painted Crucifix. The church was crumbling through age and Christ asked him "Francis, don't you know that my house is falling down? Go and build it up again." Francis at once sold some of his personal possession and gave the money raised to the priest at San Damiano. He lived in a cave near the church so that he could rebuild it by day from old stones which he begged around the town, but his father, who was growing angry with him by now for his unusual way of living, summoned him before the bishop of Assisi. The bishop ordered him to return the money to his father to which Francis replied:

*"Not only the cash, you might as well take my clothes too! I will now no longer say, My father Pietro Bernadone, but Our Father who art in Heaven."*

And with that took off his clothes and stood naked before them until one of the bishop's servants gave him an old tunic on which he chalked a cross.

On the Feast of St Matthias, February 24th 1209 Francis heard at Mass the words of the Gospel

*"Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money for your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats, nor shoes nor a staff".*

He immediately abandoned all save the strictest necessities. His austere and holy life now began to attract followers starting with Brother Bernard of Quintavalle and then Brother Peter of Cattaneo. Soon there were 12 including men who had been rich but who now gave away all their possessions. They were named Fratres Minores, Friars Minor, since their mission was to the lesser people. They wore a grey gown of coarse cloth with a pointed hood or capuche and a knotted cord around their waists. They refused to have houses, but lived in caves or shacks in the fields outside Assisi. Francis wrote the most simple rule and went to Rome to seek Innocent III's approval in 1212. The pope thought it too strict in its requirement for utter poverty so at first refused to approve it, but he then had a dream in which the Lateran Basilica was falling down and being held up by Francis. The next day he called Francis back and approved the rule. They returned to Assisi and settled down in huts around the tiny church of Saint Mary of the Angels at the Porziuncula. A longer rule would later be approved by Pope Honorius III.

In many ways St Francis resembled some of the evangelical poor preachers of the previous centuries. However, whereas they had all acted against the authority of the Church to some extent or other and, in many cases, had fallen into heresy, Francis was always scrupulous in his obedience to Church authorities, especially his bishop and the pope. He was also deeply orthodox showing a profound respect for the Holy Mass and for the priests who offered it.

One of Francis's greatest disciples was to be St Clare. She had very wealthy parents but heard Francis preaching one day and left her home secretly by night to go to the

Porziuncula. Francis and his friars came out to greet her with torches, Francis cut off her hair and dressed her in the same coarse habit as the friars wore. She swore obedience to Francis. Despite her parents attempts to recover her she remained in Francis's service and settled in the church of San Damiano with other female followers. The Poor Clares date the foundation of their order from that night, 18th March 1212 which was Palm Sunday that year.

In 1219 Francis made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He longed to die as a martyr but God had different plans for him. From the Holy Land he went to Egypt and, at Damietta, he walked into the camp of the Muslim Sultan and called on him to forsake Mohammed for Christ. The Sultan was not converted but treated Francis kindly and gave to the Franciscans the guardianship of the Holy Sepulchre which they still retain.

Three years before his death Francis spent Christmas at Greccio. He said to Brother John Velitta that he wanted the people to know exactly what the birth place of Christ was like. This led to the construction of the first crib. Francis was deacon at the solemn Mass and he read the Gospel with great joy. Every time he spoke the Name of Jesus he was overwhelmed with great joy.

A wealthy count, named Orlando, gave to Francis and his followers a mountain which he owned in Tuscany, Mount La Verna. In 1224 Francis went there to celebrate the Assumption. There Francis prayed in solitude for many days with only Brother Leo permitted to bring him bread and water. One day Francis withdrew to an even more lonely spot where he found a ledge of rock with a one-hundred foot drop beneath it and a chasm separating it from the mountain. A tree was laid across the chasm and Francis alone passed over onto the ledge. On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Francis had a vision of what was both man and seraph, his body fastened to a cross, arms extended with six wings. Suddenly Francis's body was pierced with pain which made him unconscious. When he came to himself, he found wounds in his hands and feet with nails through them and a wound in his side. He asked Brother Leo to anoint the spot on which this had happened with water, wine, oil and balsam. Francis was so wounded that he was unable to walk but was escorted from the mountain on a beast of burden. He bid farewell to his beloved brothers and to the mountain itself, knowing that he would never return.

Francis chose to die at the Porziuncula. From there he wrote a testament to St Clare and her sisters:

*"I, your little brother, Francis, declare my desire to follow the life in poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and his most holy Mother, and to persevere in this desire until the end. I am asking you, my ladies, and I am recommending you, to remain true to this holy life of poverty and never to abandon it."*

When death was near, he asked to be laid on the bare earth. As he died his brethren saw his body bathed in light, the suffering vanished from his face and his five wounds shone like jewels. Less than two years after his death Pope Gregory IX came to Assisi in 1228 and declared Francis to be a saint in a ceremony of great solemnity.

The origin of the Dominicans, or Preaching Friars, was very different from that of the Franciscans. This was the time of the Cathars, shortly before the start of the Albigensian Crusade. The Abbot of Citeaux had gone south to try to convert Cathars

and he encountered the Spanish bishop, Diego of Osma, and the canon, Domingo de Guzman. Dominic realised that it was no good to preach surrounded by a glorious retinue as did the Abbot, so he began a tireless preaching campaign. He was joined in this by a few other priests and, when they were not preaching, they lived together in a community which adopted the rule of St Augustine. St Dominic took the idea of absolute poverty from St Francis, but whereas for the latter poverty had been the supreme spiritual goal of his movement, for Dominic it was the means to the end of more effective preaching to those heretics who rejected the wealth of the Church. Their rule was approved in 1216 and they were called Fratres Praedicatores, Preaching Brothers. They wore a white habit but with a black mantle, after which they are called Black Friars.

In 1217 Dominic held a chapter at Toulouse at which the concentration on the Albigensians was abandoned and friars sent in all directions around Europe. By the time of St Dominic's death in 1221 the Order had 60 convents and had spread as far as Poland, Denmark and Greece. The Franciscan movement seems to have grown much more quickly than the Dominican. By the early fourteenth century there were 600 Dominican houses throughout Europe compared to 1,400 Franciscan. This probably meant 28,000 Franciscan friars to 12,000 Dominican. Because the friars depended on begging their houses were always situated within towns, unlike most monasteries which were very often based in the countryside living off large endowments.

There were two vital differences between the two orders at the beginning, but both of these came to reduce over time. The Dominican Order was from the start a learned order, theological education being necessary for effective preaching against heresy. By contrast St Francis was distrustful of anything which might lead to his friars having possessions, including books. Secondly, the attitude of the founders to poverty had differed, it being the ultimate virtue for St Francis and merely a means to an end for Dominic. As both Orders grew it became necessary for them to acquire properties and, although they both sought to restrict the extent of this in different ways, both came to be substantial owners of churches and other buildings. Similarly, the Franciscans gravitated to the Universities almost as much as did the Dominicans and by the early fourteenth century Oxford had 90 Dominicans to 84 Franciscans, between them making up about ten percent of the academic population. They became the bedrock of theological study and almost every great theologian of the middle ages belonged to one or other of the Orders of Friars: Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart among the Dominicans, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham amongst the Franciscans.

## CHURCH HISTORY 13

### THE PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

The papacy's conflict with the German Hohenstaufen dynasty had led the popes of the thirteenth century to ally themselves with the kings of France which was the most powerful state in Europe at the time. Whereas Germany and Italy consisted of many separate states, France had become a national state with clearly defined borders. This alliance with France had been a great asset for the papacy while French kings co-operated with the Church and ruled by Christian principles. St Louis IX (1226-1270) was particularly favourably disposed towards the papacy. However, things changed once French kings began to enslave the Church as did Philip the Fair (1285-1314). Whereas the Church had always benefitted during the struggles of papacy against emperor from the fact that papal co-operation was needed for the crowning of an Emperor and from the idea that the temporal power was subject to the spiritual, these later medieval French kings sought an absolute power which would not accept the Gregorian concept of the pope as the final court of appeal.

In 1294 Boniface VIII came to the throne of St Peter. He was a man of great learning and an expert in canon law. He was also very cultured and attracted many artists to Rome, such as Giotto. Unfortunately he had a violent temper and soon found himself in conflict with Philip the Fair over the question of the taxation of the clergy. The established principle was that the Church did not pay taxes on her revenues or land values as did other land owners. Instead, she paid supposedly voluntary tithes (one tenth of her revenues) when the king was in need. In reality, this meant that the Church made a major contribution to royal finances and the exemption was largely a theoretical privilege. However, in 1296 Philip the Fair violated this privilege and imposed a tax on the clergy to finance his war with Edward I of England. Boniface responded with the bull *Clericis Laicos* in which he forbade clergy to pay taxes without papal permission and excommunicated lay rulers who sought to impose such taxation. Philip responded by forbidding money to be carried out of France, thus preventing any flow of funds to the papal coffers from the French Church. This forced Boniface to suspend his bull and make concessions to Philip.

One of the few great triumphs of Boniface's reign was his proclamation of the Jubilee in 1300. This was the first time in history that we have clear evidence of a pope proclaiming a jubilee. The concept of a jubilee, a year of rejoicing, was taken from the Old Testament Jewish practice of celebrating every fiftieth year as a year of universal pardon. In his bull for 1300, Boniface promised a full pardon of their sins, both guilt and punishment, to all going on pilgrimage to Rome during that year on the condition that they confessed their sins and visited the basilicas of St Peter and St Paul at least once a day for fifteen days. This was effectively to give a plenary indulgence as had been given to crusaders. The chroniclers describe enormous crowds passing over the bridge of St Angelo to get to St Peter's and some estimate that up to two million people might have visited Rome during that year. When Boniface closed the year on Christmas Eve 1300, he could look back on it as a great success. Disaster was to follow quickly.

When Boniface sent his legate to France to protest at Philip's continued financial oppression of the Church, largely through the exploitation of the revenues of vacant dioceses, Philip had him arrested for supposedly insolent language. Boniface now issued another bull, *Ausculta filii*, in which he invites Philip to come to Rome where a great council of bishops will judge his actions in oppressing the Church. The language is very much that of Gregory VII and Innocent III. The pope is said to be above kings and emperors and to be judge of the whole world as Vicar of Christ *ratione peccati*. Philip had the bull burned and confiscated the estates of all French bishops who travelled to Rome to take part in the council. Boniface now issued the most famous bull of the Middle Ages, *Unam Sanctam*, in which he declared that there is but one Church, outside of which there is no salvation, and of which the pope is head so that anyone who does not submit to him is cut off from the Church. It also puts forward the theory of the two swords (based on Luke 22:38), the spiritual one born by the Church and the temporal one born by the state on behalf of the Church. "To be subject to the Roman Pontiff is for every human creature necessary for salvation." If Philip were to refuse to submit to this, he was to be excommunicated and deposed.

Far from submitting, Philip responded by holding a council of state which brought false charges against Boniface. He was accused of simony, heresy, immorality, idolatry and magic. Many French bishops sided with the king and some who refused to do so were imprisoned. Boniface prepared to excommunicate Philip in 1303, but a band of mercenaries, shouting "Long live the King of France and Colonna", attacked the papal palace at Anagni and broke into the throne room where Boniface awaited them. Boniface declared "Since I am betrayed like the Saviour, and my end is nigh, at least I shall die as pope". He ascended the throne wearing the tiara and carrying the papal keys and a cross. Two of Philip's supporters, William of Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna, brutally mistreated him and held him captive for three days. Eventually the citizens of Anagni rescued him and returned him to Rome but he died shortly afterwards from the trauma he had suffered.

There now began what is known to history as the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. Benedict XI succeeded Boniface and he excommunicated Nogaret and some of his accomplices, but he died within a few weeks. It was rumoured that he had been poisoned. After an 11 month conclave the French Archbishop of Bordeaux was elected as Clement V. His reign of 9 years, 1305-1314, was a disaster. He declined to go to Rome for his coronation but was instead crowned at Lyons. He then resided at various places in France, Bordeaux, Poitiers and Toulouse, before establishing the papal court at Avignon. By so doing he exposed the papacy to control by the French king.

Clement abrogated *Clericis laicos*, interpreted *Unam Sanctam* in a spiritual sense and aided Philip in his persecution of the Knights Templar. On his death there followed a two-year interregnum before John XXII was elected. He reigned from 1316 to 1334 during which time Avignon became firmly established as the papal court and a huge palace would soon be built. Petrarch described Avignon as the Babylon of the west because of the corruptions of the papal court.

*“Avignon is impious Babylon, a living hell, a sink of iniquity. There one finds neither faith, nor charity, nor religion, nor fear of God nor shame: nothing is true, nothing is holy... Of all the cities I know it is the most corrupt.”*

All seven popes from Clement V on wards were Frenchmen and the papal court was dominated by the French who, of course, were prone to follow the desires of the king of France, including the financing of his wars.

John's reign and that of his successors was marked by another struggle with the Empire. A number of anti-papal writings come from this period. The Franciscan, William of Occam, claimed that the emperor had the right to depose a pope in certain circumstances. Marsilius of Padua went even further in his *Defensor Pacis* and declared that the Church was subject to the state in all things with the bishop of Rome having no more authority than any other bishop. The long exile of the papacy in France undermined the Gregorian principles of papal theory and the papacy was in great danger of losing its spiritual as well as its temporal authority.

It fell to the great St Catherine of Siena to save the papacy from this disastrous period. She was the youngest of the 25 children of Giacomo di Benincasa, a dyer, born in 1347. From her earliest childhood she began to have visions and to practise austerities. At the age of 7 she became consecrated to virginity and at 16 became a member of the Third Order of St Dominic. For many years she lived as a recluse within her family's home. Around 1366 she experienced the spiritual espousals with Christ. She lived for long periods of time on little food other than the Blessed Sacrament. In 1370 she experienced a mystical death in which she had visions of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven and heard a divine command to enter the public life of the world. Now began her activity of writing to many of the rulers of the Italian city states as well as to kings and cardinals. In 1375 war broke out between the Republic of Florence and Pope Gregory XI. Catherine hurried from town to town preaching a mission of peace. In 1376 she went to Avignon and begged the pope to return to Rome. In September he agreed and set out for Rome which he reached on 13th January 1377. Shortly after this her great triumph was largely undone by the outbreak of the Great Schism and St Catherine began to work tirelessly to defend the rightful pope and to bring others to his cause. However, in 1380 she died worn out by her efforts and a long illness.

The Babylonian Captivity had been bad for the papacy but even worse was to follow with the Great Schism. After the death of Gregory XI the cardinals chose an Italian as Urban VI. Rome had physically decayed during the absence of the popes from Rome and the French cardinals wanted to return to Avignon to escape from this decay as well as the uncomfortable climate and unruly populace. Urban VI, who was stubborn and easily provoked to anger, was determined to stay and to reform the curia which led the French cardinals to flee to Fondi in the Kingdom of Naples where they declared Urban's election invalid on the grounds that they had been intimidated by the Roman mob into choosing an Italian. In 1378 they elected an anti-pope, Clement VII. They wrote to the rulers of Europe explaining their actions. Charles V and the French nation accepted the new pope as did Flanders, Spain and Scotland. The Empire and England stood by Urban VI meaning that the European Church was divided by schism. The anti-pope then fled to Avignon and for the next forty years the Church remained divided. Each pope excommunicated the other, each appointed their own college of cardinals and each claimed the right to appoint

bishops. Although there had been anti-popes before, never had there been two complete, separately constituted Churches in Western Europe.

When each pope died the relevant cardinals appointed a replacement so that the schism was continued and reinforced. The University of Paris now called for a General Council to meet to resolve the issue and in 1409 it met at Pisa and cited both popes to appear before it. Neither pope accepted that a Council could judge them and so both refused to attend. The cardinals therefore deposed both popes and elected Alexander V instead. Far from healing the schism this merely resulted in there being 3 popes instead of 2. This third split was also continued with the election of a second Pisan pope on the death of Alexander.

Finally in 1414, under pressure from the Emperor Sigismund, the Pisan pope, John XXIII, agreed to convoke the Council of Constance and to attend it in the hope of being confirmed as true pope. It was a huge council attended by 18,000 clerics. It's first task was to deal with the Bohemian heretic, John Hus. Hus had adopted the heresies of the Englishman, John Wyclif, which included the denial of the validity of Holy Communion under one kind, the divine institution of the hierarchy, auricular confession and extreme unction. John Hus had been granted safe-conduct to come to Constance but not a guarantee of immunity so, when he refused to recant, he was handed over to the secular arm and burnt as a heretic.

John XXIII soon saw that his hopes of being confirmed as pope were in vain and fled the city. The Roman pope, Gregory XII, confirmed the council and then agreed to resign. In 1417 the Avignonese pope, "Benedict XIII", was deposed, although he continued to claim to be pope until he died in 1422. Finally, the council elected Cardinal Colonna as Martin V bringing the schism to an end.

One of the unfortunate aspects of the Council of Constance was that, in judging between popes, it set itself up as above the popes. This played into the hands of the conciliarist movement which was based on the idea that ecumenical councils were superior in authority to the pope. In its decree, Sacrosancta, it claimed that its power came directly from God and all men, including popes, had to obey it. This challenged the doctrine of the Church that the decrees of ecumenical councils are valid only when confirmed by the pope. Nicholas V potentially aided this movement by agreeing to call another council in ten years' time. This met at Basel, however Nicholas died before the end of the council and his successor, Eugenius IV, suppressed the council. At first the council tried to preserve itself and deposed Eugenius, electing another anti-pope, Felix V, the last in history. In 1449 the council dissolved itself and Pius II forbade appeals to councils in future, bringing the conciliarist movement to an end.



## CHURCH HISTORY 14

### THE REFORMATION

Western Christianity had experienced many heresies in the five hundred years before the Reformation but always they had been defeated and little had remained of them. Unfortunately, the sixteenth century was to see the advent of new heresies (collectively known as Protestantism because they protested against what they saw as the Church's corruption of the Gospel) and a combination of circumstances meant that they would lead to a permanent loss to the Church of large numbers of souls and often of entire regions and countries. One powerful factor in the spread of Protestantism was the invention of the printing press in the late fifteenth century. This meant that attacks on the Church in writing could reach a much larger audience than would previously have been the case. The Renaissance had also led to the spread of humanism. This movement was originally a great asset for the Church. In the hands of great humanists like St Thomas More, and Erasmus of Rotterdam it was a powerful movement for reform in the Church. It brought a rediscovery of the Greek and Hebrew languages in the west and this in turn led to the reading of ancient classical and Christian texts which had long been forgotten. However, in criticising the corruptions of the Church and laying the ground for vernacular translations of the Scriptures, humanism could become a weapon to be used against the Church by Protestants.

The first and greatest challenge to the authority of the Church came from Martin Luther. He had been born of poor parents in Saxony in 1483. His father wanted him to become a lawyer but Luther was obsessed by a need to protect his soul's salvation and, without his parents' permission, became an Augustinian friar at Erfurt in 1505. In the convent he was not able to find peace for his soul as he had expected and, in spite of fastings, scourgings and other mortifications, he remained in a state of anxiety about his sins. Once he had become a priest, he was sent to teach philosophy and Sacred Scripture at the newly founded University of Wittenberg. In 1510 he was sent to Rome and there made a general confession in the hope of finding peace. However, he continued to feel the same sense of overwhelming guilt and his fear of Hell became more and more burdensome to him.

The catalyst for Luther's rebellion against the Church was the selling of indulgences to finance the building of St Peter's basilica. Pope Julius II had proclaimed a plenary indulgence and the Archbishop of Mainz undertook to publish it in Germany. John Tetzel was sent to Wittenberg to offer the indulgence there and Luther was scandalised by what he saw as a corrupt practice. In October of 1517 Luther wrote his 95 Theses and nailed them to the door of Wittenberg cathedral. The 27th thesis read:

*“Those who assert that a soul straightway flies out [of purgatory] as a coin tinkles in the collection box are preaching an invention of man”.*

Relatively few people would have read what was nailed to the cathedral door had it not been for the printing press. This enabled Luther's supporters to print hundreds of copies which were, by 1518, widely circulating in Germany and then beyond. Luther soon moved on from his attack on the doctrine of purgatory to putting forward a new doctrine of grace which put an end to his doubts about his salvation.

His novel idea was that anyone who had faith in Christ could be certain that he was saved and in a state of grace. There was no need for good works because justification was solely the work of God in bestowing the gift of faith. This came to be known as solifidianism, or justification by faith alone. It was a complete break with the Catholic doctrine of grace which taught that God's sanctifying grace would bring about good works and that these, as well as faith, were necessary for salvation. Luther thought that this was a Pelagian view of salvation, but the Church was always clear that the saving works were carried out by grace and not by man's unaided efforts. Luther's new doctrine struck at the very heart of the Catholic sacramental system because if faith alone brought salvation, then not only indulgences, but all penance, confession and ultimately all sacraments were unnecessary.

Luther soon won huge support in Germany and the protection of the ruler of Saxony, the Elector Frederick. At first his supporters thought in terms of reforming the church rather than breaking from it and many humanists embraced this hope. In 1520 Luther's ideas were examined in Rome and 41 of his doctrines were condemned in the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*. Luther was given 60 days to retract the doctrine or face excommunication. By this point Luther had become convinced that the pope was the anti-Christ and his response was to invite the people of Wittenberg to come to witness the burning of the bull which was carried out in December 1520.

The emperor since 1519 had been Charles V. He ruled a vast empire having inherited through his mother the kingdoms of Spain, the Netherlands and Naples as well as ruling Germany as emperor. He was deeply devoted to the Catholic Church and it is thanks to him that even more land was not lost to the Church. Unfortunately, he was handicapped by revolts in Spain, war with France and rebellions within Germany. In 1521 he opened the Diet of Worms to which Luther was summoned. There he refused to retract his errors and was placed under the ban of the Empire. He was given 21 days to return to Wittenberg after which he was liable to be seized as a heretic. Back in Wittenberg under the Elector's protection, Luther laid aside his religious habit and married an ex-nun, Catherine Bora, urging all monks, nuns and priests to follow his example. The whole of Saxony now broke from Rome and set up a national Lutheran church. Many other central German states soon followed Saxony into schism. In 1530 at the Diet of Augsburg, Charles V appeared in person and the Lutherans drew up the Augsburg Confession laying down Lutheran doctrine. The Emperor urged the schismatic princes back to the Church but they formed the Schmalkalden League to resist him. Charles fought against them to try to restore the Church but, with the treacherous help of Henry II of France, the League was able to hold its ground. Later, when Charles had abdicated in favour of his brother, Ferdinand, in 1555, the latter agreed to the Peace of Augsburg under which each ruler was allowed to determine the religion of his people.

As well as losing large parts of Germany, the Church also saw the end of Catholicism in many other lands as Lutheranism was imposed by King Christian III on Denmark, on Sweden by King Gustavus Wasa and on Norway and Iceland by the Danish overlords. At the same time as Luther began his revolt, Zwingli began to preach against the Church's doctrine in Zurich. He was more radical than Luther, rejecting all but two sacraments, baptism and the eucharist. Like Luther he

abandoned celibacy and took a wife. Whereas Luther had had some respect for Church buildings and art, Zwingli's supporters broke into churches, destroying altars, statues and pictures. He set up plain tables on which the Lord's Supper could be celebrated. The greatest disagreement between the two sets of heretics was over the Lord's Supper. Luther continued to believe in a Real Presence, although repudiating transubstantiation, whilst Zwingli denied any kind of presence, making the eucharist purely symbolic. Luther violently disagreed with this and Swiss and German Protestantism took separate paths.

Unfortunately, this period also saw the birth of yet another heresy, Calvinism, and this was to become the most widespread form of Protestantism, taking over other parts of Switzerland, Holland, England, Scotland and America. It also posed a huge threat to the Faith in France. In 1535 Calvin wrote his Institutes in which he taught that because of Adam's sin man is totally evil. His evil is such that he cannot even turn to God. Calvin taught double predestination whereby God chooses who should be saved and who damned based purely on divine election and not on anything which a person chooses to do. Whereas the Church teaches that by mortal sin a Christian can lose his salvation, Calvin taught that once a person was predestined to salvation, nothing he could do would change this. Unlike Luther, who retained bishops (although without continued apostolic succession from their Catholic predecessors) Calvin thought that the Church should be governed by the parish elders or presbyters (hence Calvinism is often called Presbyterianism). Calvin's ideas took control in Geneva in 1541 but also spread to France where his followers were known as Huguenots. A number of prominent people in France adopted Calvinism and by 1569 a third of the nobility were Huguenots. In Huguenot regions Catholic churches were attacked and statues destroyed, monks and nuns were expelled from their convents and some cathedrals even demolished. From 1562 France suffered the Wars of Religion between Catholics and Protestants while Queen Catherine de Medici ruled the country in the name of her three successive youthful sons. It was she who engineered the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve in 1572 when two thousand Huguenots in Paris were killed. In 1589 Henry III was murdered and succeeded by his distant cousin Henry IV who was a Huguenot. However, he renounced his Calvinism and embraced Catholicism. In 1598 he granted full toleration to Huguenots in the Edict of Nantes.

In England the Reformation came much more as an act of state than it had done in other countries where it had been more the product of popular response to preaching. Henry VIII came to the English throne in 1509 and when Lutheranism first raised its head he was a loyal defender of the Church's doctrines. He had Luther's writings publicly burned and personally wrote a book defending the Church's seven sacraments for which Pope Leo X rewarded him with the title of Defender of the Faith. Unfortunately, by 1527 he was becoming unhappy with his marriage to Queen Catherine. On the one hand the Queen had given him no male heir but only a daughter, Princess Mary. At the same time he had fallen for a maid of honour of the queen's, Anne Boleyn. Henry asked the pope for an annulment of his marriage on the grounds that Queen Catherine had been married before to his elder brother, Prince Arthur. On Arthur's death the then pope, Julius II, had granted a dispensation from the prohibition on marriage to a brother's widow but Henry now argued that the pope was wrong to have done so because the prohibition was a matter of divine law and so not something which could be dispensed even by a pope.

Pope Clement VII appointed Cardinals Campeggio and Wolsey as his legates to try the case in England in 1529. Queen Catherine made a dramatic appearance in the court at which she declared her love for the king, reminded him that God had granted them sons but had chosen to call them from this world which was no fault of hers and testified that she came to Henry as a pure maid. She then curtsied low to the king and left the court never to return. After the first term of hearings the case was revoked to Rome. Wolsey was disgraced by his failure to obtain for the king the annulment he had promised him. Two new men now came to the fore, Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell. Advised by them Henry first sought and obtained favourable opinions about his marriage from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He then began a campaign against the Church in an attempt to force the pope to decide in his favour. In 1531 Convocation was forced to declare Henry "supreme head of the Church of England" though they added the phrase "as far as the law of Christ allows". Shortly afterwards Archbishop Warham died and Henry nominated Cranmer as his successor. Cranmer took the oath of allegiance to the pope but he swore falsely and one of his first acts was to annul Henry's marriage while the case was yet to be heard in Rome. In 1533 Anne Boleyn was crowned queen. The following year the pope finally gave his verdict that the marriage to Catherine was a true marriage, but it was too late and Henry broke with the pope passing a law through Parliament (the Act of Supremacy) which declared that the king was Supreme Head of the Church in England and that the pope had no authority in the realm. The Act included an oath which all Englishmen were required to swear. Apart from John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, all of the bishops accepted this and swore the oath to Henry.

Henry's usurpation of papal authority produced a few outstanding heroes for the faith. Two of the greatest of these were St Thomas More and St John Fisher. More had become Lord Chancellor of England on the fall of Wolsey, but he had resigned in 1531 when Henry forced the clergy to submit to his authority. He had then spent three years living quietly at his house in Chelsea, writing great works against heresy but trying not to interfere in matters of state. When he was required to take the oath, however, he could not in conscience do so and he was arrested and sent to the Tower along with Fisher in 1534. The penalty for refusing the oath was life imprisonment and both men spent the next 15 months in the Tower. In 1535 a new Treason Act was passed by Parliament which made it High Treason "maliciously to deny the king's title" as Supreme Head of the Church. Neither man had made such a malicious denial and St Thomas More had been particularly careful not to give his reasons for refusing the oath. However, false witnesses were brought against them and both men were beheaded. In an attempt to save him the pope made Fisher a cardinal hoping that even Henry would not dare to execute a prince of the church but this merely enraged Henry who declared that by the time his cardinal's hat arrived he would not have a head on which to wear it.

Unlike the rulers of the German Protestant states, Henry did not espouse Protestant doctrine even after he had broken with Rome. England continued to celebrate the old Mass and Henry himself paid for a huge number of requiems to be said for his own soul after his death. The main casualty of Henry's reformation were the monasteries. Although the vast majority of monks took the oath the greatest resistance to it came from religious. The Carthusians of the London Charterhouse, the Observant Franciscans of Greenwich and the Bridgettines of Syon all produced great martyrs for the faith, men who would die rather than renounce the Church of

Christ. Before his own death St Thomas More had been visited by his daughter Meg. Through his cell window he saw St Richard Reynolds of Syon, together with the Carthusians, St John Houghton, St Robert Lawrence and St Augustine Webster leaving the Tower for their executions. Turning to Meg he said “Lo does't thou not see, Meg, that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to their marriage”.

In order to rid himself of any such opposition in the future, but also to enrich himself and his supporters, Henry dissolved all of the many monasteries which had existed throughout the length and breadth of England for centuries. The first, smaller, monasteries were suppressed in 1536 and this led to a rebellion in the north of England called the Pilgrimage of Grace and by 1540 all 645 monasteries were suppressed leaving empty shells robbed of all their precious religious possessions where once God's praises had been sung seven times a day. Under Henry's son, Edward VI, the Reformation went a stage further and England embraced Calvinism as its religion. The Old Mass was abolished and replaced with a Prayer Book, holy images were demolished and stained glass windows smashed, altars were pulled down and replaced with bare Communion tables.

The Faith was briefly restored after 1553 when Queen Mary I succeeded her brother Edward VI and returned England to the communion of the Catholic Church. Cardinal Pole was sent to England to absolve the people of schism and he set about restoring the practise of the Faith. Several of Henry and Edward's bishops, including Cranmer, were burnt for heresy along with many others. Unfortunately, Mary died in 1558 and her sister Elizabeth I reverted to the religion of her brother Edward making herself Supreme Governor of the Church of England by the 1559 Act of Supremacy and again abolishing the Mass and imposing a Prayer Book by the Act of Uniformity.

The bishops were much less subservient that they had been under Henry VIII and all but one of Mary's surviving bishops refused to submit. Twelve of them were imprisoned until death. Some of the Catholic clergy continue to say Mass secretly. In 1570 Pope St Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth and absolved Catholics from their oath of allegiance. Persecution of Catholics began at this time but became much more severe after 1581 when it was made High Treason for a Catholic priest to enter England and a felony to hear Mass or harbour a priest. Over 600 priests were put to death under these laws over the next hundred years but through their brave witness they kept the Faith alive in this land until better days came.