

SECTION
3



Stained-glass illustration of pilgrims to Canterbury and a pilgrim badge (upper right) showing the saint Thomas Becket

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

On Pilgrimage

In the Middle Ages, most Western Europeans were devout Christians, and many of them went on pilgrimages to visit holy places. The medieval writer Geoffrey Chaucer noted that, when spring comes,



“Then people long to go on pilgrimages . . .
In England, down to Canterbury they wend
To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick
To give his help to them when they were sick.”
—Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*

Focus Question How did the Church play a vital role in medieval life?

The Medieval Church

Objectives

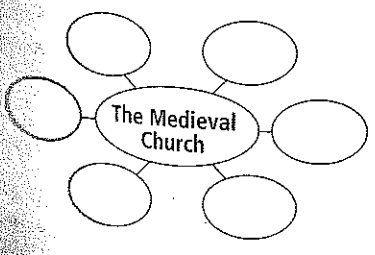
- Explain how the Church shaped medieval life.
- Understand monastic life and the influence of medieval monks and nuns.
- Analyze how the power of the Church grew during the Middle Ages and how reformers worked for change in the Church.
- Describe the situation of Jews in medieval Europe.

Terms, People, and Places

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| sacrament | excommunication |
| Benedictine Rule | interdict |
| secular | friar |
| papal supremacy | Francis of Assisi |
| canon law | |

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas Copy this concept web. As you read, fill in the main idea of each red heading. Add circles to record main ideas for the boldfaced headings.



Pilgrimages were only one way that medieval Christians showed their devotion to their faith. The Church and its teachings were central to medieval life. It took centuries for Christian missionaries to spread their faith across Europe. But in time, the Roman Church emerged as the most powerful force in the region. Religion shaped the everyday lives of Christian Europeans, and the Church hierarchy came to exert considerable economic and political power.

The Church Dominates Medieval Life

During the early Middle Ages, the Church's most important achievement was converting the diverse peoples of Western Europe to Christianity. In 597, Pope Gregory I sent St. Augustine to convert the Anglo-Saxons in England. From Britain, later missionaries went back to the continent to spread their faith among Germanic tribes. By the late Middle Ages, Western Europe had become a Christian civilization. Anyone who did not belong to the church community was viewed with suspicion.

The Role of the Parish Priest Christian rituals and faith were part of the fabric of everyday life. In villages, the priest of the parish, or local region, was often the only contact people had with the Church. The priest celebrated the mass and administered the sacraments, the sacred rites of the Church. Christians believed that participation in the sacraments would lead them to salvation, or everlasting life with God. Priests also preached the teachings of the Church and explained the Christian Bible, which was in Latin only. They guided people on morality and offered assistance to the sick and needy. In the later Middle Ages, some parish priests ran schools.

Spread of Christianity in Europe

Geography Interactive
For: Audio guided tour
Web Code: nap-0731

Map Skills Missionaries helped spread Christianity throughout medieval Europe.

- 1. Locate** (a) Canterbury (b) Rome (c) Cluny (d) Assisi
- 2. Region** (a) Name three areas of Europe that became Christian between 476 and 1050. (b) Which areas of Europe came under Muslim control?
- 3. Apply Information** (a) How does this map indicate the sequence of events? (b) What can you conclude about the spread of Christianity from this map?



The Importance of the Village Church The church was a social center as well as a place of worship because it was often the largest public building in a village. Daily life revolved around the Christian calendar, which included many holidays, such as Easter, and local holy days dedicated to saints. The main events of each person's life took place at the church. Baptism marked entrance into the community, marriages were performed on the church steps, and the dead were buried in the churchyard.

Villages took pride in their church buildings and decorated them with care. In later medieval times, prosperous communities built stone churches rather than wooden ones. Some churches housed relics, which could be possessions or remains of saints. Many people made pilgrimages, or religious journeys, to pray before the relics. The Church required Christians to pay a tithe, or tax equal to a tenth of their income. In the early Middle Ages, the tithe supported the local parish. Later, increasing amounts of money were sent to Rome.

The Rise of Cathedrals Bishops, who supervised parish priests, managed larger churches called cathedrals. By the 1100s, communities used new technology to build huge cathedrals in the ornate, buttressed form known as the Gothic style. These magnificent buildings were a source of pride to the communities that built them. Cities all over Europe competed to build grander, taller cathedrals. Members of the Church contributed money, labor, and skills to help build these monuments glorify their god.

Vocabulary Builder

doctrine—(DAHK trin) *n.* something taught as the principle of a religion

Church Attitudes Toward Women Church doctrine taught that men and women were equal before God. But on Earth, women were

viewed as weak and easily led into sin. Thus, they needed the guidance of men. At the same time, the Church offered a view of the ideal woman in Mary, whom the Church believed to be the modest and pure mother of Jesus. Many churches were dedicated to the “mother of God” and “queen of heaven.” Men and women asked Mary to pray to God on their behalf.

On the one hand, the Church tried to protect women. It set a minimum age for marriage. Church courts could fine men who seriously injured their wives. Yet they often punished women more harshly than men for similar offenses.

Checkpoint What role did the Church play in the daily lives of medieval Christians?

Monasteries and Convents

During the early Middle Ages, some men and women withdrew from worldly life to the monastic life. They became monks and nuns. Behind the walls of monasteries and convents, they devoted their entire lives to spiritual goals.

Monastic Life: The Benedictine Rule About 530, a monk named Benedict organized the monastery of Monte Cassino in central Italy. He created rules to regulate monastic life. In time, the **Benedictine Rule** was used by monasteries and convents across Europe.



▲ The ivory carving above shows monks at work in the scriptorium.

INFOGRAPHIC

Life in a Monastery

Monasteries were not only places where monks lived and prayed, they were also places of work and study. Many monasteries, or abbeys, housed self-contained communities that grew their own food and made many of the objects they used. Monks worked in the fields, in workshops, and in scriptoria, or writing rooms, where they copied and decorated manuscripts. Music was important to monastic life; and chants marked the canonical hours, or religious divisions, of the day.



▲ This picture of monks singing is in the center of the letter “C” in an illuminated manuscript.




◀ This church altar painting shows monks harvesting crops.

Thinking Critically

- 1. Make a Reasoned Judgment**
Which of these activities do you think was most useful to medieval society as a whole? Explain.
- 2. Make Comparisons** How were monasteries like manors?



An Educated Woman

Hildegard of Bingen was from a noble family. She founded an abbey, wrote plays, and composed music.  AUDIO

Under the Benedictine Rule, monks and nuns took three vows. The first was obedience to the abbot or abbess who headed the monastery or convent. The second was poverty, and the third was chastity, or purity. Each day was divided into periods for worship, work, and study. Benedict required monks to work in the fields or at other physical tasks. As part of their labor, monks and nuns cleared and drained land and experimented with crops. Because they developed better agricultural methods, they helped improve the economy of the Middle Ages, which was based on farming.

Service and Scholarship In a world without hospitals or schools, monasteries and convents often provided basic health and educational services. Monks and nuns looked after the poor and sick and set up schools for children. They gave food and lodging to travelers, especially to Christian pilgrims traveling to holy shrines. Some monks and nuns became missionaries. These missionaries spread Christianity throughout western and central Europe during the early Middle Ages.

Monasteries and convents also performed a vital role in keeping learning alive. Their libraries contained Greek and Roman works, which monks and nuns copied as a form of labor. Educated monks and nuns also wrote and taught Latin, which was the language of the church and educated people. In Britain, the Venerable Bede wrote the earliest known history of England.

Opportunities for Women Although women could not become priests, many did enter convents. There, capable women could escape the limits of society. In the 1100s, Abbess Hildegard of Bingen composed religious music and wrote books on many subjects. Because of her mystical visions, popes and rulers sought her advice.

In the later Middle Ages, the Church withdrew rights that nuns once enjoyed, such as preaching the Gospels, and placed most independent convents under the control of Church officials. It frowned on too much learning for women, preferring them to accept Church authority.

✓ **Checkpoint** Describe monastic life according to Benedictine Rule.

Church Power Grows

In the centuries after the fall of Rome, the Church hierarchy carved out a unique position in Western Europe. It not only controlled the spiritual life of Christians but gradually became the most powerful secular, or worldly, force in medieval Europe.

The Church's Role in Society During the Middle Ages, the pope was the spiritual leader of the Western Christian Church, based in Rome. Declaring themselves representatives of God on Earth, medieval popes eventually claimed **papal supremacy**, or authority over all secular rulers, including kings and emperors. The pope headed an army of churchmen who supervised church activities. High clergy, such as bishops and archbishops, were usually nobles. Like other feudal lords, they had their own territories and armies. The pope himself held vast lands in central Italy, later called the Papal States. Some monasteries also held large tracts of land, which gave them considerable economic and political power.

Church officials were closely linked to secular rulers. Churchmen were often highly educated, so feudal rulers appointed them to government positions. In addition, Church officials were often relatives of secular rulers.

Religious Authority and Political Power The medieval Christian Church was dedicated to the worship of God. At the same time, Christians believed that all people were sinners and that many were doomed to eternal suffering. To avoid the tortures of hell, one had to do good works, believe in Jesus as the son of God, and participate in the sacraments. Because the Church administered the sacraments and could deny them as a punishment, it had absolute power in religious matters.

The Church developed its own body of laws, known as **canon law**, as well as its own courts. Canon law, based on religious teachings, governed many aspects of life, including wills, marriages, and morals. Anyone who disobeyed Church law faced a range of penalties. The most severe and terrifying was **excommunication**. Those who were excommunicated could not receive the sacraments or a Christian burial, which condemned them to hell for eternity. A powerful noble who opposed the Church could face the **interdict**, an order excluding an entire town, region, or kingdom from receiving most sacraments and Christian burial. Even the strongest ruler gave in rather than face the interdict, which usually caused revolts by the common people.

A Force for Peace The Church tried to use its great authority to end warfare among nobles. It declared periods of temporary peace known as the Truce of God. It demanded that fighting stop between Friday and Sunday each week and on religious holidays. Such efforts may have contributed to the decline of warfare in Europe during the 1100s.

Checkpoint How did the Church gain secular power?

Corruption and Reform

The very success of the Church brought problems. As its wealth and power grew, discipline weakened. Pious Christians left their wealth and lands to monasteries and convents, leading some monks and nuns to ignore their vows of poverty. Some clergy lived in luxury. Priests could marry, but some spent more time on family matters than on religious duties, and some even treated the priesthood as a family inheritance. Throughout the Middle Ages, there were calls for reform in the Church.

Two Movements for Reform In the early 900s, Abbot Berno set out to reform his monastery of Cluny in eastern France. First, he revived the Benedictine Rule of obedience, poverty, and chastity. Then, he refused to allow nobles or bishops to interfere in monastery affairs. Instead, Cluny was placed under the direct protection of the pope. Over the next 200 years, many monasteries and convents copied these reforms.

In 1073, Gregory VII, a former monk, became pope and began another push for reform. He wanted to limit secular influence on the Church. Gregory insisted that the Church alone choose Church officials such as bishops. That policy eventually sparked a bitter battle of wills with the German emperor. Gregory also outlawed marriage for priests and prohibited simony (SY muh nee), the selling of Church offices.

New Preaching Orders Friars, monks who did not live in isolated monasteries, took a different approach to reform. They traveled around Europe's growing towns, preaching to the poor. The first order of friars, the Franciscans, was founded by a wealthy Italian now known by Christians as St. Francis of Assisi. Giving up his comfortable life, he preached the

BIOGRAPHY



Francis of Assisi

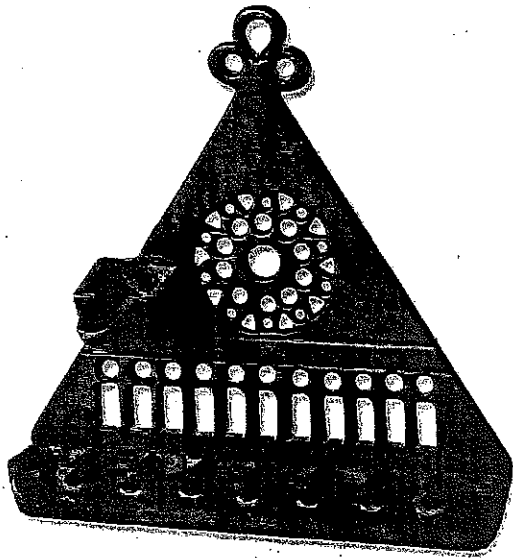
Famous stories about Francis of Assisi (1181?–1226) tell of him preaching to the birds and convincing a wolf to stop attacking townspeople if they, in turn, would feed the wolf. Francis regarded all nature as the mirror of God, and he called animals his brothers and sisters.

Francis came from a wealthy family and had been a fun-loving and worldly young man. Then, in his mid-20s, he heard a voice speak to him while he was praying. He gave up his wealth to "walk in the footsteps," or example, of Jesus. He was soon joined by a small group of followers—the first Franciscan friars—and together they lived a life of service to the poor and the sick. The Church made him a saint in 1228. **What great changes did Francis make in his life?**

Gospels and taught by his own example of good works. Dominic, a Spanish priest, founded the Dominican order of friars. Dominicans dedicated themselves to teaching official Christian beliefs in order to combat heresies, religious doctrines that differed from church teachings.

Women also supported the reform movement. Some became Dominican nuns and others joined the Poor Clares, linked to the Franciscans. Often these orders welcomed only well-born women whose families gave a dowry, or gift, to the church. Another group, the Beguines, welcomed poor women who could not be accepted by other religious orders.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did monks contribute to the reform of the Church?



Preserving Jewish Culture

In spite of living in predominantly Christian areas, Jews celebrated their own religious holidays during the Middle Ages. This 1300s menorah, or Hanukkah lamp, is from France. *Why do you think it might have been difficult for Jews to continue these celebrations?*

Jews in Medieval Europe

In the Middle Ages, Jewish communities existed all across Europe. Jews flourished in present-day Spain, where Muslim rulers were somewhat tolerant of both Jews and Christians. Spain became a center of Jewish culture and scholarship, and Jews served as officials in Muslim royal courts. In other parts of Western Europe, Christians and Jews lived side by side in relative peace for centuries. Early German kings gave educated Jews positions at court. Many rulers in northern Europe valued and protected Jewish communities, although they taxed them heavily.

By the late 1000s, Western Europe had become more christianized, and prejudice against Jews increased. When faced with disasters they could not understand, such as illness or famine, Christians often blamed Jews. Jews were not part of the parish structure that regulated Christian lives. Therefore, they had little interaction with the Christians who were suspicious of a culture they did not understand. As the Church grew in power, it issued orders forbidding Jews to own land or practice most occupations. Yet popes and rulers still turned to educated Jews as financial advisers and physicians. In response to growing persecution, thousands of Jews migrated to Eastern Europe. Large Jewish communities developed there and experienced periods of relative tolerance and prosperity and periods of persecution.

✓ **Checkpoint** How were Jews treated in medieval Europe?

Unit 3 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-0731

• Terms, People, and Places

1. What do the key terms listed at the beginning of this section have in common? Explain.

• Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas**
Use your completed concept web to answer the Focus Question: How did the Church play a vital role in medieval life?

• Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Synthesize Information** How did monks and nuns contribute to medieval life?
4. **Recognize Cause and Effect** (a) How did the Church increase its secular power? (b) How did riches and power lead to Church abuses and then to reforms?
5. **Draw Conclusions** Why did attitudes toward Jews change in medieval Europe?

• Writing About History

Quick Write: Write an Introduction
Write a working thesis statement about a person or group discussed in this section. Then use a quotation or dramatic event to grab your audience's attention and introduce your thesis. For example, a paper on Abbess Hildegard might begin with her words to a ruler:

"Take care the Highest King does not strike you down because of the blindness that prevents you from governing."