

Popes, Bishops, Priests, and Monks: the Medieval Church

Introduction

- **Remember the Church served as the cultural matrix for the First Europe.**
 - **This focuses on the structure of the Church, as an institution.**
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I. The Church as a Hierarchy

- **Parishes, Dioceses, Archdioceses, the Papacy**
 - **A. Lowest unit is the parish. Care of a priest. Called cure or curate from “care”.**
 - **Priest belonged to secular clergy. “Secular” meaning in the world. He had the care of souls in the parish.**
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I. The Church as a Hierarchy

- **4. Seven Sacraments.**
 - **(1) Baptism.**
 - **(2) Penance - confession and absolution. But sins required satisfaction: penance (fast, pilgrimage). Church also taught Purgatory for cleansing. Prayers and indulgence could release them earlier. Pope alone could grant indulgence. (Began with Crusades). But Priest did prescribe penance.**
 - **(3) Extreme Unction - anointing at point of death.**
 - **(4) Mass or Holy Eucharist. Continuing sacrifice of Christ on cross. “Hoc est corpus meum” - transubstantiation. “Hocus pocus”.**
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- **(5) Marriage.**
 - **Besides administering sacraments, priest an educator, social worker. Some abuse. Chaucer's Parson good example of caring priest.**
 - **B. The Diocese. Above the priest was the Bishop.**
- Successor of Apostles. See or seat in town. Also administered 2 sacraments priests could not perform**
- **(6) Confirmation.**
 - **(7) Holy orders.**
 - **Held court to try cases not heard in secular courts.**
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I. The Church as a Hierarchy

- **Try clergy. Divorce, usury cases. Dispute with secular authorities over “benefit of clergy”.**
 - **C. The Archdiocese. Bishop’s superior was Archbishop. His see in an important town (thus sometimes called metropolitan). His archdiocese included several dioceses.**
 - **D. Monastic clergy separate arm. Regular clergy (from regula, rule). Their superior was an abbot (from abba, father). Reported to Pope.**
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I. The Church as a Hierarchy

- Purpose was regular, corporate prayer. Other work was secondary, though important to society.
 - E. At summit was Pope (papa). Supremacy in Church came from “Petrine theory” Matt 16: 17-19. Pope had absolute power over faith and morals. Popes using this doctrine claimed universal rule in 11th - 14th centuries.
 - F. How significant was the Church? Cultural matrix. Churchmen as leaders, intellectuals. Drama and the arts.
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The Church

Question

- **How important was the Church in pacifying society? Did it make any difference? Does it today?**
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The Church as a Hierarchy

- **G. The Church's civilizing, pacifying influence. Truce of God. Peace of God. Prohibited ordeals. Sent out friars or lay brothers--Franciscans and Dominicans.**
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