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chapter seven

RELIGION

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## IMPORTANT EVENTS *in Religion*

- 800 Charlemagne is crowned emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III, creating a linkage between spiritual and temporal powers.
- 813 Charlemagne requires all Christian altars to contain holy relics.
- 815 Byzantine iconoclastic policies (removal of sacred images from church decoration) are revived by Emperor Leo V.
- 843 The iconoclastic controversy in Byzantine Christianity comes to an end, and the use of icons is restored.
- 860 Russian ambassadors to the court of Constantinople embrace Christianity.
- 909 The founding of the famous Benedictine monastery of Cluny, France, occurs in this year.
- 945 A Christian church is built in the Russian city of Kiev.
- 962 The coronation of the German ruler Otto I as emperor of the Romans occurs in this year, reestablishing strong ties between spiritual and temporal powers.
- 990–1096 Local church councils address Peace of God and Truce of God legislation attempting to lessen medieval violence.
- c. 1000–1080 This is the early period of revival for women’s monastic life in Europe.
- 1027 The Danish king Canute makes a famous pilgrimage to Rome.
- 1054 Rome’s excommunication of the patriarch (a bishop in Eastern Orthodox sees) of Constantinople marks a significant early break between Latin and Greek Christian institutions.
- 1059–1080 The height of papal legislation concerning conflict between secular and religious authority (which historians often label as the “Investiture Controversy”) is reached. The contest over various influences and powers in society culminates in a disagreement between churchmen and powerful princes concerning the authority to invest new bishops with their symbols of office.
- c. 1075 The military religious order of Hospitallers begins its work in the Holy Land, providing comfort and assistance to pilgrims.
- 1080 Bruno of Cologne founds the Carthusian Order of hermits, combining the communal (cenobitic) lifestyle with solitary (eremitic) practice.
- 1095 The First Crusade, a Christian military expedition to free the Holy Land from Muslim domination, is promoted by Pope Urban II.
- 1098 The formation of the Cistercian Order attempts to reform the abuses of medieval monasticism and return it to a purer interpretation of the Benedictine Rule.
- 1110–1143 Persecution of the Bogomils, a religious movement holding that the earth was created by Satan, takes place in the Byzantine Empire.
- 1121 The Premonstratensian Order is founded. The order is unique in that it accepts both men and women and attempts to accommodate them in the same monastery.
- 1128 The Council of Troyes approves plans for the establishment of the Knights Templar, an order of knights which protected pilgrims and settlers in the Holy Land following the ousting of Muslim forces from the area during the Crusades.

- 1143 The Cathar movement begins in France. The Cathars desire to purify the church from worldly elements and the corruptions of the flesh.
- 1145 The Second Crusade, to rescue the city of Edessa in Greece from Muslim control, is preached by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, while simultaneous crusades are planned against European non-Christians (Bohemians, Wends, and Moors).
- 1170 Archbishop and former English chancellor Thomas Becket is murdered at Canterbury Cathedral following a conflict with the king over the rights and authority of the church.
- 1184 The papal bull *Ad Abolendam* condemns the teachings of the Waldensians (who preached against clerical corruption), Cathars (who rejected the bodily resurrection of Christ), and certain Humiliati (a lay order).
- 1189–1192 The Third Crusade is undertaken against the Muslim leader Saladin, and some coastal territory is recovered.
- 1199–1204 The Fourth Crusade, intended to fight Muslims in Egypt, goes off course and ends with the sacking of Constantinople and establishment of the Latin Empire, which lasts sixty years.
- 1200 Masters at the University of Paris receive royal charter, which will be approved in Rome in 1231.
- 1201 The lay spiritual Humiliati movement receives papal recognition.
- c. 1205 The lay women's movement of Béguines begins in Germany and the Lowlands.
- 1209 The Albigensian Crusade is launched against heretical Cathars, and is carried out over the next twenty years with great cruelty.
- 1210 Pope Innocent III grants Francis of Assisi permission to found an order of mendicants (later called Order of Friars Minor).
- 1215 The Fourth Lateran Council convenes and implements major reforms for secular clergy.
- The Poor Clares, a Franciscan order for women, is formed.
- 1217 The Dominican Order of Preachers receives papal confirmation.
- 1232 Pope Gregory IX grants the constitution for the foundation of Dominican nuns.
- 1249 Oxford University is founded in England. It later becomes one of the institutions where religious orders send their most talented brethren to teach and study.
- 1250 The Carmelites, who had been hermits in the Holy Land, are approved as an order of friars in European communities.
- 1265 Thomas Aquinas begins to write the *Summa Theologiae*, which organizes arguments reconciling faith and reason.
- 1298–1350 This period marks the height of the lay Humiliati movement.
- 1309 The pope, involved in struggles between religious and secular authority, begins to reside in Avignon, France, where the papacy would remain until 1377 (1408 including anti-popes).
- 1315–1317 Famine strikes Europe, triggering a heightening of spirituality.
- c. 1325 The Cistercian movement peaks in influence, with some 700 male abbeys and 900 women's houses.
- 1347 The advent of the Black Death (the bubonic plague) reinforces the idea that the world is transitory and only the spiritual life has true value.
- 1373 The mystical visions of the English anchoress Julian of Norwich begin.
- 1378 The Great Schism occurs over rival claims to the papacy, dividing Europe's allegiance

- between two (and at times even three) different popes.
- 1382 The teachings of the English reformer John Wyclif, who rejects transubstantiation and supports vernacular Bibles, are condemned.
- 1416 The Czech reformer Jan Hus, a follower of Wyclif's teachings who preached against clerical corruption, is burned as a heretic.
- 1417 The Great Schism comes to an end with the Council of Constance.
- 1453 The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans diminishes the link between Eastern and Western Christianity.
- 1455 The Gutenberg Bible is first printed, beginning an era when ordinary people will be able to read and interpret scriptures for themselves.

## OVERVIEW *of Religion*

**A PERVASIVE PRESENCE.** The importance of religion in all facets of medieval life can hardly be overestimated. One of the reasons for the pervasive presence of religious ideology was that the dominant or most influential figures (often those in power) in Western European, Byzantine, and Muslim cultures each lived according to a revealed religion that reached deeply into every aspect of daily life. Many historians have attributed the early growth of such influences in northern Europe to the efforts of Christian missionaries, most of whom were members of monastic orders from the remnants of the western Roman Empire. In the Byzantine Empire (the former eastern part of the Roman Empire, centered in what is now Istanbul, Turkey) and areas dominated by Islam, organized religion was connected to the offices of both emperor and caliph (the spiritual and political head of Islam). The shaping of culture was clearly tied to the way each of these religions became a part of people's lives. Substantial support from the monarchies of northern Europe would not become the norm until the ninth century when the scope of secular administrative power became more widespread. Some of the northern European kings were profoundly affected by the Christian message, while others were mainly concerned with making alliances with church leaders who had significant authority, thus assisting the development of the prominent position of religion in the social and ideological landscape.

**THE CAROLINGIANS AND THE FRANKISH ROMAN EMPIRE.** The great rise of religious influence in northern Europe took hold during the Carolingian period in the late 700s and is often considered to have begun with the reign of the Frankish king Charlemagne (768–814). Charlemagne's successors and the legacy he left behind ensured the ongoing dominance of Christianity by bringing it to both the common people and the nobility. This was done in a variety of ways: through education, personal example of the secular rulers, and church leadership, as well as infusing Christianity into the system of

social obligations, particularly those associated with lordship. Fostering the growth of monasteries along with local secular churches ensured a more even distribution of religious program. Strong links to Latin (that is, Roman) Christianity were established by adopting many of the Roman traditions for religious ritual, but a political relationship with the papacy was also forged via the institution that was later called the Holy Roman Empire (a realm centered in the areas that are now France, Germany, Benelux countries, Switzerland, Austria, Bohemia, and northern Italy), whose heads of state, beginning with Charlemagne, were crowned by the pope himself.

**MEDIEVAL RELIGION OUTSIDE THE FRANKISH ROMAN EMPIRE.** During the tenth century, missionaries continued to facilitate the spread of Christianity outside of the Frankish Roman Empire, particularly in areas to the east of Germany. As bishoprics and their jurisdictions were created, they brought with them certain social structures (such as ecclesiastical courts) and official channels that encouraged the expansion and growth of new Christian states. At the same time, pervasive incursions, attempts at settlement, and large-scale invasions by polytheistic Vikings from Scandinavia and Magyar groups from what is now Hungary proved to be both an interruption to the progress of Christian development and an opportunity for further evangelization. Conversions of Danes, Swedes, Norse, and Magyars, both in their native regions and among those who settled in England, France, and Germany, were attempted with varying degrees of success between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Spain continued to be dominated by Islam at this time, although there were large numbers of Jews and Christians living in the Iberian Peninsula. Jews also had settled early on in the areas that are now Italy, northern France, and Germany, after being displaced from the Holy Land by Muslim invaders, and they remained an important, if marginalized, presence in most areas of Europe throughout the Middle Ages.

**BYZANTINE CHRISTIANITY.** While the heirs of the ancient Western Christian empire had suffered a period of social and political decline following the final fall of Rome in the fifth century, Eastern Christianity, centered in the capital city of Constantinople, had continued to develop in power, wealth, and influence. The stability of Eastern (Byzantine or Orthodox) Christianity was tested, however, in the ninth century when church authorities revisited the question of whether or not icons—that is, religious images such as wall paintings, panel paintings, and statues—should be allowed in churches. The controversy, essentially a question of what constituted idolatry, caused tension between the crown and the

monasteries, whose members were supporters of the icons. At the same time, theological disagreements between the Eastern (Greek) and Western (Latin) church over the relationship between Trinitarian elements (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) reappeared and continued to be a source of division throughout the Middle Ages, contributing to the separation between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians that continues today.

**EARLY RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR CONFLICTS.** Tensions between the Latin Christian religious and temporal authorities increased during the eleventh century, particularly in the growing German Empire and in England. Quite visibly, some of this struggle for control came to a head over the issue of powerful laity—lords and kings—insisting upon having the power to invest new bishops with their symbols of office. This particular conflict (known under the umbrella of “Investiture”) culminated in the debate over whether or not church leaders should swear oaths of loyalty to secular leaders. The relationship between temporal and spiritual powers, kings and popes, bishops and nobles, generally was not characterized by smooth cooperation. As both secular leaders and churchmen became more powerful, each attempted to come to terms with the problems and benefits of the system of lordship. In this system, advantages like wealth, power, and influence were tied to the ownership and management of land, particularly as it related to sources of income. But when sons and daughters of nobles became bishops, abbesses, abbots, cardinals, and popes, there was bound to be a complexity of ideological tension. During the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the following basic questions would resurface in a variety of ways: Were church leaders superior because of their spiritual connection to God? Should “religious” nobles relinquish or diminish their hereditary stations, step aside, and allow secular leaders to guide and govern? How should church and state cooperate in the promotion of a better Christian society? What was to be done about the problem of violence between various factions of Christians?

**MEDIEVAL SPIRITUALITY, LITURGY, AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP.** Aspects of spirituality changed gradually during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Benedictine Order, with its *Rule* for monastic life stressing a corporate existence of prayer, work, humility, and stability under the leadership of an abbot, grew tremendously and became quite popular. As monastic “franchises” such as the houses of Cluny and Gorze began to develop, greater attention was paid to proper practice and the material aspects of worship, including more extensive and elaborate and formulaic prayer, as well as the decoration and

enlargement of worship spaces and rubrics for their use. The secular churches underwent their own reforms, which were instituted from the top down (popes to bishops to local priests) to deal with moral and economic abuses. Among the improvements was a new emphasis on education, which was intended to broaden and deepen the clergy’s understanding of the sacraments and improve their ability to communicate this knowledge to others. Specialized liturgical books such as the *pontifical* (a comprehensive book of sacraments, ceremonies, and rites performed by bishops) and the *ordo* (a book of directives for the celebration of liturgies) reflected the desire to make Latin Christian worship more uniform throughout all of Europe. As the clergy became more and more elite, however, changes in the liturgy increasingly diminished the role of laity in communal celebration.

**MONASTIC REFORMS AND THE RISE OF THE FRIARS.** By the twelfth century, there were major attempts on the part of reform orders such as the Cistercians, Carthusians, and Premonstratensians to bring monasticism back to the model of simpler communities or even eremitical (hermit-like) roots. Existing orders, especially the Cluniacs, had grown rich in their control of lands and properties, and seemed to lack the spiritual dimensions intended by the Benedictine Rule. These new orders attracted large numbers of adherents, suggesting some degree of success in dealing with the problems, but by the early thirteenth century, a new major religious movement arose, taking Christian existence out of the formal monastic establishments altogether. Under the leadership of two charismatic preachers, later to be canonized as St. Dominic and St. Francis, these new orders, known as the Dominican and Franciscan friars, emphasized poverty and service to the world. Friars lived on the edges of cities, begged for their sustenance, and spent their time preaching and hearing confessions. While the Dominicans were later associated mainly with education, Franciscans became missionaries, expanding the scope of their activities as far as Mongolia. Among lay Christians, the Béguines sought to de-institutionalize Christian apostolic standards and took on many aspects of Christian discipline without joining formal monastic orders.

**RELICS, PILGRIMAGES, AND CRUSADES.** During the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, holy relics and the miracles associated with them inspired a great proliferation of pilgrimages within Europe and to the Holy Land. The veneration of the relics in altars contributed to the growing number of private masses in monasteries and churches where there were numerous priests and multiple altars. Popular piety and devotion toward relics

and pilgrimages also helped fuel the crusading movements, which promised to free the Holy Land from Muslim domination and keep it accessible to travelers. The appearance of military orders in the twelfth century primarily arose in response to perceived needs connected to both the Crusades and the Reconquista (Christian Reconquest) in Muslim Spain. Medieval Christianity was not very tolerant of divergent theological opinions. In addition to the struggle for control of the Levant (an area on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, located between western Greece and western Egypt), Crusades were launched against Christian heretics such as the Cathars and pagan polytheists like the Wends. There were even localized persecutions of Jews, lepers, and homosexuals during this period. While Christians, Muslims, and Jews found it easier to coexist on a daily basis under Muslim rule in Spain, North Africa, and the Middle East, concerted conflict was bound to arise linked to the expansion of political and religious power structures.

**CRITICISMS OF CHURCH INSTITUTION AND HIERARCHY.** By the thirteenth century, the institutional factors that had contributed to the church's growth, wealth, and influence were being called into question by Christians from all walks of life. The emerging new universities began to pull away from strictly church-centered types of education to accommodate the study of law, rhetoric, medicine, and mathematics required by a more mobile and commercially vibrant Europe. By the thirteenth century theology had begun to emerge as one of the central disciplines within the realm of formal education. Scholastic approaches to philosophy and theology that developed as a result of university influences during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries continue to serve today as a hallmark of medieval intellectual activity. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries also marked a rich period for the development of Gothic architecture, a style in which soaring heights, open space, and increased light created a more inviting and invigorating place for the glorification of God. In addition to church and state struggles, the church in the fourteenth century now faced an ecclesiastical political crisis from within, as disputes over papal elections resulted in a schism or split between several factions who each claimed to have elected legitimate popes. The Avignon Papacy and Great Schism once again raised the issue of secular influences upon church elections, causing Christians to seriously reconsider the nature of papal power and supremacy.

**LATE MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS.** The ravages of famine and plague (the Black Death) during the early and middle fourteenth century gave medieval Christians pause to reexamine the idea of the afterlife,

the worth of the human soul, and the fleeting nature of all things temporal. In such times of crisis, people turned to religion once again to provide comfort to the afflicted. In the wake of the plague, the penitent act of flagellation, the desire to seek a personal mystical experience with God, and the organization of groups expressing dissatisfaction with the "human" elements of Christian leadership all influenced the Protestant Reformation that was soon to come. While humanism—a secular cultural and intellectual movement stressing the artistic and philosophical achievements of the Greeks and Romans—flourished in Italy and was beginning to take hold in northern Europe, the papal schism was being healed. But reformers like John Wyclif (in England) and Jan Hus (in Bohemia) were tenacious in protesting the ongoing abuses and corruption of the clergy, and many of Hus's fifteenth-century followers paid with their lives for opposing hierarchical church control. These major movements and events, coupled with an improved economy and the invention of the printing press, eventually set the stage for the great Reformation ideals of sixteenth-century Latin Christendom. The mid-fifteenth century religious climate was imbued with complex and often contradictory attitudes of suspicion, desire to hold on to tradition, optimism, enthusiasm for education, and an impulse towards personal freedom, the combination of which led many to distrust ecclesiastical authority and seek a return to Christianity's earliest roots.

## TOPICS *in Religion*

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### EARLY LATIN CHRISTIANITY IN NORTHERN EUROPE

**FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.** Although medieval Europe is often associated today with the dominance of Christianity, the beginning of the Middle Ages was a period of competing religions when many of the pre-Roman inhabitants and invading tribes who had helped bring about the end of the Roman Empire continued to practice polytheism. Latin Christianity had been established in parts of Western Europe outside of Italy during the time of the Roman occupation (especially from the second through fifth centuries C.E.), and centers of Christianity continued to exist in such cities as Lyon, Arles, Tours, Poitiers, Marseilles, Reims, and Provence (all in modern France); in Silchester, Dorchester, Water Newton, and St. Albans (in Britain); Trier,

Cologne, and Mainz (in modern Germany); and in Toledo, Córdoba, and Elvira (in modern Spain). The increasing presence on the part of bishops, theologians, and monastics fueled growing support for Christian ideas and practices throughout parts of northern Europe. Moreover, during the period of decline and deterioration of the Roman Empire, many members of the invading tribes—including the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Huns, Franks, and Saxons—accepted Christianity in one form or another. However, the key to Christianizing the north seemed to be the conversion of the tribal leaders, as happened when the Merovingian (Frankish) king Clovis—who ruled over what is now Belgium, northern France, and parts of Germany—and some of his followers were baptized in the mid-490s. A century later, with Rome still serving as the center of Western Christianity, Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) sent monks from the relatively new Benedictine Order to function as missionaries, priests, bishops, and even ambassadors to parts of northern Europe. The influence of the Irish monk St. Columbanus (d. 615) spread more Eastern (Orthodox) traditions of Christian monasticism into centers like Bangor (in Ireland) and Whitby (in Northumberland), as well as Annegray, Fontaine, and Luxeuil (in France). St. Boniface and St. Willibrord had helped spread Christianity in the Germanic regions, while Patrick (d. circa 460), Augustine of Canterbury (d. before 610), Abbess Hilda of Whitby (d. 680) and Columba (d. circa 597) facilitated such growth in the British Isles. By the ninth century, Christianity began to proliferate in parts of France, Britain, Ireland, Germany, and Spain.

#### MEROVINGIAN AND CAROLINGIAN INFLUENCE.

An eighth-century alliance that was formed between the Frankish kings and the bishops of Rome did much to secure the place of Christianity within the circles of the ruling class as they expanded their territory in northern Europe. A forged document known as the *Donation of Constantine*, which asserted that in the fourth century Constantine himself had given the bishop of Rome authority to govern over all territories in the western empire, may have helped legitimize the series of agreements between the Roman pontiffs and the Franks to provide each other with mutual support. In any case, over the last several decades of the eighth century the Carolingian family—rivals of the Merovingians—used their military power to come to the defense of the papal territories in Italy. In return for such protection and support of the papacy, along with support for certain papal claims of jurisdiction, Rome continued to give its blessing to the Carolingians in their usurpation of the Frankish throne from the previous Merovingian line. This alliance (which some have viewed as morally suspect) went on to create



God the father with crucified son and dove as Trinity, Throne of Grace type, The Bolton Hours, York Minster Library MS Additional 2, folio 33, after 1405. BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE DEAN AND THE CHAPTER OF YORK. PHOTO BY JOHN B. FRIEDMAN.

a period of stability that would foster the development of Christian education, ideas, and institutions in the Frankish kingdom. It also set a precedent later on for providing the church with military assistance from Christian kings who were seen as God's representatives, ruling through "divine right." In thanksgiving for the continued support, at a Christmas celebration during the year 800, Charlemagne, the king of the Franks (whose Latin name "Carolus" was the source of the term "Carolingian"), was given the title "Emperor of the Romans" by Pope Leo III. The title linked the Franks to the former Roman Empire in an idealization of the place formerly occupied by Constantine the Great and his important relationship with the Christian church. Within the next century this title would be passed to the German kings (later called "Ottonian") who succeeded the Carolingian line.

**CONQUEST AND CONVERSION.** The coronation of Charlemagne as emperor of the Romans on Christmas

## MEDIEVAL Religion Terms

**Ascetic:** Devoted to solitude, contemplation, discipline, fasting, denying the body in order to derive spiritual benefits.

**Augustinian Rule:** A set of guidelines devised by St. Augustine of Hippo in the fourth century for the common life of religious and often used by the canons regular or Austin Friars.

**Benedictine Monasticism:** Western communal practice begun in the sixth century by Benedict, the abbot of Monte Cassino in Italy. *The Rule of Benedict* stressed a corporate life of prayer, work, humility, and stability under the leadership of an abbot.

**Benefice:** Certain church offices, such as the rectorship of a parish church, with particular duties for which one would be granted revenues.

**Canonical hours:** The Divine Offices or daily prayers usually sung or recited by religious (often seven times a day).

**Canon Law:** The body of church law imposed by the authority of councils and bishops, particularly pertaining to matters of belief, morals, and discipline of the Christian faithful.

**Cenobitic:** A communal monastic lifestyle.

**Chapter:** The assembly of a monastic community (often daily) where a chapter of their rule was read, official business was dealt with, and faults of the monks were addressed.

**Cloistered:** Enclosed in a monastery, literally in the cloister space that forms part of a monastery; not free to leave or have visitors due to one's monastic status.

**Crozier:** The staff of a bishop, abbot, or abbess, sometimes bearing their insignia, commonly depicted in the form of a shepherd's staff signifying pastoral powers.

**Diocese:** A geographic division or extent of a bishop's jurisdiction.

**Ecumenical:** Worldwide, as in a general synod or council called by bishops, church leaders, or a pope.

**Episcopal:** Having to do with a bishop.

**Eremitic:** Having to do with the life of a hermit or solitary.

**Eucharist:** The celebration or reenactment of the Lord's Supper using bread and wine consecrated by a priest.

**Excommunication:** Church censure imposed by an authority which excludes individuals from communion and deprives them of rights to certain sacraments.

**Filiations:** Daughter houses, often founded or adopted by the mother monastery. A group of daughter houses dependent upon a main house or linked together in a system.

**Filioque:** A Latin phrase (literally meaning "and the son") referring to an argument as to whether or not the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father or emanates from both the Father and the Son. The Latin Church seems to have added the notion that the Holy Spirit can also proceed through Jesus as well as God the Father.

Day of 800 provides a watershed date for the development of a Christianity in northern Europe that had begun to be linked to the monarchy. This Latin Christianity, which was increasingly being embraced by European kings and lords, also began to be urged by the nobility upon the general populace. While Christianity had been firmly in place in northern Europe for several centuries, a majority of people in the areas of the British Isles, France, and Germany had still not embraced the faith. These cultures still retained a mix of polytheistic remnants from the pre-Roman era. Particularly along the border regions of the empire (north of Thuringia and in the east between the Rhine and Elbe Rivers of present-day Germany), groups like the Saxons were forcibly converted to the Christian faith. Saxons could be put to death for following their own traditions and ritualistic religious practices, such as cremation of the dead and human sacrifice, or even for the refusal to observe the Christian Lenten season. Many

who were unwilling to submit to Christian baptism or pay tithes (one tenth of their produce or income) to the church were also killed. One of the leading churchmen in Charlemagne's court, Alcuin of York, raised objections to the practice of forced conversion. He wrote:

Converts must be drawn to the faith and not forced. A person can be compelled to baptism and still not believe. The adult convert should profess a true belief and if he lies, he will not reach salvation.

During the conquest and conversion of the Avars in the southeastern marches of Bavaria and in lands such as Pannonia beyond the Danube River, Alcuin more carefully directed the prelates of the Carolingian realm:

Be preachers of piety and not exactors of tithes, slowly suckling souls with the sweet milk of apostolic gentleness, lest these new converts to the faith choke upon and vomit the Church's harsher teachings.

**Flagellation:** Whipping or beating oneself in punishment for sins, or to commiserate with the suffering of Christ.

**Host:** The consecrated bread at the Mass which medieval Christians believed was changed into the body of Christ in conjunction with the action of the celebrant.

**Iconoclast:** One who literally would smash religious statues and icons, based on the belief that they were idolatrous.

**Indulgence:** After the confession of sin, the substitution of penance by another act, such as almsgiving, pilgrimage, crusade, or financial contribution for the construction of a church.

**Inquisition:** The juridical persecution of heresy by special church courts.

**Investiture:** The investing or conferring of authority to a church official by a superior in a ceremony involving presentation of the symbols of office, including an exchange of homage before consecration.

**Laity:** Secular persons, not members of the clergy (monks, priests, canons, bishops, deacons, etc.).

**Limbo:** An abode of souls for those who, through no fault of their own, are barred from salvation because they were not baptized (as in the case of infants or people who lived before the time of Christ).

**Mass:** The liturgical rite of Christianity connected to the blessing or consecration of bread and wine along with the conventional prayers, songs and readings which accompany it.

**Mendicants:** Those religious, specifically friars, who depend upon begging for their support.

**Missal:** A book containing the complete rite of the Mass, with all prayers, readings, and chants.

**Office:** From Latin *officium* or duty, the prescribed daily round of prayers, mainly psalms, recited seven times a day in community, called for in the *Benedictine Rule*.

**Office of the Dead:** Prayers said on behalf of the deceased, often for individuals connected by membership or patronage to the monastery or community offering the prayer.

**Papal bull:** A written pronouncement or mandate from the pope. In the early days they were sealed with the stamp of the pope's ring (from the Latin *bullā* or seal).

**Penance:** The sacrament of forgiveness (that is, forgiveness by God through the action of a priest), which in the Middle Ages involved confession of sins followed by an act of restitution.

**Psalter:** A book of the psalms.

**See:** Literally, the official seat (from the Latin *sedes*) of a bishop, hence the place where the bishop sits or resides.

**Simony:** The sale or purchase of a church office.

**Stigmata:** Bearing the wounds of Christ.

**Transubstantiation:** Conversion of the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, with appearances of bread and wine remaining.

**Votive:** A liturgy or offering of prayer that is done with a particular intention in mind.

**SCHOOLS AND LAWS.** In developing a formal link with the papacy (the bishop of Rome who had authority over Western Christianity) and becoming a defender of the papal holdings of land and interests in northern Italy, Charlemagne and his Carolingian Dynasty, which ruled until the tenth century, united with the legacy of the old Roman Empire as well as the traditions and administration of Western Christianity. Taking this role seriously, Charlemagne sought to establish schools that would be located in the cathedral city centers and at monasteries where boys (mostly from the upper class) could be instructed in mathematics, grammar, and music, as well as in reading from church books such as gospels, psalters, and missals (if such manuscripts were available). Scholars such as Alcuin of York were brought into the kingdom from other lands to serve as teachers in the Frankish schools. Charlemagne also attempted to ensure that Sunday be observed as a holy day and kept

free from work. Activities like hunting, farming, construction, gathering for legal procedures, weaving, tailoring, and even doing laundry were discouraged. People throughout the new empire were urged to attend Mass on “the Lord’s Day.” During the services priests were encouraged by royal directives to teach the notion of the Trinity—made particularly visual in an image from an English book of hours from York—and introduce doctrines associated with judgment, salvation, hell, faith, hope, and charity, as well as the love of God and neighbor. As the influence of Christianity became more pervasive, it appears that a fusion of church traditions and the laws of the Carolingian realm began to intertwine. However, it is not clear as to the extent to which these laws were actually enforced, since a number of forged collections of laws from the period (among them the Pseudo-Isidorian *Decretals*) dominate those that have survived. While some of the false decretals, particularly

## THE Monastic Day

One part of the monastic rule required monks to sing the divine offices at specific times during the day and night. The schedule for this activity (which changed according to the time of year), as well as mealtimes and work periods, is given below with the names of the “canonical hours” of the day. Said privately, the prayers would take up a total of about one and a half hours, but sung in the choir, they would take much longer. “Lauds” are said at first light, “compline” at sunset, with the times for other services determined by dividing the hours of daylight into twelve, so that in summer each daylight hour is longer than each night hour, and vice versa in winter. The version here is based on the Rule of St. Benedict as observed by the Cistercians.

	June	December
Rising	1:45 a.m.	1:20 a.m.
Vigils	2:00–3:00 a.m.	1:30–2:50 a.m.

		[Reading]
Lauds	3:10 a.m.	7:15 a.m.
Prime (first hour)	4:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
		[9:20 a.m.–Terce]
Chapter	4:15 a.m.	9:35 a.m.
Manual labor	4:40–7:15 a.m.	9:55 a.m.
Terce (Third hour)	7:45 a.m.	
Sext (Sixth hour)	10:40 a.m.	11:20 a.m.
Dinner	10:50 a.m.	
	[Reading or sleep]	[11:35 –Manual labor]
None (Ninth hour)	2:00 p.m.	1:20 p.m.
		[1:35 p.m.–Dinner]
Manual labor	2:30 p.m.	
Vespers	6:00 p.m.	2:50 p.m.
Supper	6:45 p.m.	
Compline	7:50 p.m.	3:55 p.m.
Sleep	8:00 p.m.	4:05 p.m.

those that favored a strong papacy, were promulgated during this period, there was actually no one official and universally accepted body of canon law until the Decretals of Gregory IX in 1234.

**A RULE FOR MONKS.** Under the Carolingian kings there was an attempt to create a uniform rule for monks throughout the empire. Charlemagne favored the *Rule of Benedict*, which had been developed in Italy in the sixth century, and encouraged those monastic houses (especially those east of the Rhine River) that were not in compliance to consider seriously adopting this lifestyle of stability and obedience, lived out in a balanced daily spiritual experience of work, study, and prayer. However, it was not until the time of Charlemagne’s son Louis the Pious (778–840) that a reformed version of the Rule of Benedict was established. These revisions to the Benedictine lifestyle were introduced by a monk named Benedict of Aniane (750–821) and became universally adopted throughout the Frankish empire. Under these ninth-century monastic reforms additional prayers were included alongside the original sixth-century Benedictine Office. This kept the monks much busier in prayer, often too preoccupied with the Daily Offices to comply fully with the directives for manual labor that were an essential component of the earliest Benedictine Rule. The Frankish crown’s endorsement of the Monastic Capitulary of 817, which en-

sured enforcement of Benedict of Aniane’s revisions, is most likely responsible for the eventual standardization of the Benedictine Rule throughout Western Europe.

**THE MULTIPLICATION OF PRIVATE MASSES.** Interestingly, it was also during this time that the number of monks who were also priests (a minority in early monasticism) began steadily to grow. The shift to larger numbers of ordained priests encouraged a more formal liturgical emphasis in the monastic lifestyle, which increasingly attracted members of the nobility. This tendency for some monks to spend most of their time on liturgical duties also left the door open for the appearance of lay brothers (members of a lower class in society whose focus was predominantly on labor), as well as the use of peasants to work on monastic lands and estates. With the increase in monks who were also priests came the development of private masses, where priest-monks would celebrate liturgies ostensibly by themselves, but usually with a lone attendant such as an oblate or lay brother. In cathedrals and larger churches, the presence of multiple altars containing relics of saints requiring veneration on a regular basis also helped create the occasion for private masses. Eventually numerous requests for votive liturgies—those conducted with a particular intention in mind, usually at the behest of wealthy laity—gave rise to the multiplication of private masses

## ROLES and Occupations in the Latin (Western) Christian Church

**Acolyte:** A person in the beginning stages of the priesthood delegated to assisting priests and deacons in masses of the Latin Church.

**Anchoress (f.)/Anchorite (m.):** A solitary or hermit who pledges her or his life to prayer and contemplation. Anchoresses often lived in a small room attached or “anchored” to a church or public building. Visitors could come and speak with them and receive spiritual direction.

**Archdeacon:** The bishop’s principal assistant or officer.

**Bishop:** A senior cleric in charge of the spiritual life and administration of a region known as a diocese.

**Canon:** A member of the clergy following a rule like those followed by monks but often attached to a cathedral or large urban church; the canon is responsible for the daily running of the church and for educating the children of the nobility (sometimes called “canons regular” because they lived according to a rule and formed groups called “colleges”).

**Cardinal:** A member of the college of Roman princes who are the immediate counselors of the pope and rank second only to the pontiff in the church hierarchy. At various times they meet in conclave to elect new popes. There are also various local and episcopal offices, most in the city of Rome, to which the term “cardinal” is attached: cardinal deacons who took care of the poor in Rome, cardinal priests who were priests of the various Roman churches or parishes, and cardinal bishops (mostly outside of Rome) who were needed for service as the pope’s representatives.

**Chancellor:** A church officer in charge of a university.

**Conversi:** Lay brothers, or adult converts to religious life, as opposed to those oblates who were raised in the monastery as children.

**Deacon:** Literally, the servant of the bishop in early Christianity. The status of deacon was one of the early steps on the way to priestly ordination in the medieval period. The deacon could have specific liturgical functions associated with the Eucharist and dismissal at Mass.

**Friar:** A member of one of several religious orders who served as missionaries, teachers, and confessors; friars (brothers) did not live a cloistered life, but rather lived together in convents on the edges of cities.

**Lay brother:** A person associated with monastic life, but often of a lower social class than the other monks; lay brothers were commonly less educated or unable to recite in Latin, were not part of the choir, and spent much of their time in manual labor.

**Monk:** A member of an all-male religious order who follows a Rule requiring withdrawal from society and devotion to prayer, solitude, and contemplation.

**Nun:** A member of a religious community of women living a cloistered life of religious devotion in a convent or double monastery.

**Oblate:** A lay person who is part of a religious community. From the Latin word *oblatio*, meaning to offer, this term often refers to children who were “offered” by their families to the service of God in a monastery or convent, to be brought up as a monk or nun.

**Pope:** The head of the Roman Catholic Church. The pope, or pontiff, was also called the Bishop of Rome since he presided over the entire Latin Church due in part to his authority over the local Roman episcopal see.

**Postulant:** A person seeking admission to a religious order. Often he or she was allowed to try out monastic life for a brief time.

**Secular clergy:** Priests living in the world, as opposed to “regular” clergy, living under the rule of a religious order.

**Sub-deacon:** A minor order of cleric who could not administer sacraments (only sacramentals) and who prepared bread, wine, and vessels at Mass.

in the monasteries. Papal records during the ninth century indicate that certain priests celebrated the liturgy as many as nine times each day.

**THE GROWTH OF THE SECULAR CLERGY.** Alongside the growing monastic movements, a separate group of secular clergy (those living out in the world rather than in a cloister) ministered to the laity in local parish churches and in large urban cathedrals. The English called these secular churches “proprietary” while the Germans referred to them as *Eigenkirchen* (churches under

private control or ownership), since often the local lords helped support them and would commonly appoint the parish priests. The cathedrals—large, important churches, usually in urban areas—often had a number of priests who might reside in the household of the bishop, the senior official in charge of the region or diocese. Eventually the term *canon* was applied to the clerics who lived at the cathedrals because it was said that they were living according to the canons (traditions and laws) of the church. According to the rule developed by Chrodegang



Bishop performing exorcism, bas relief of font, Modena Cathedral, Museo Civico, Modena, Italy, 13th century. THE ART ARCHIVE/MUSEO CIVICO, MODENA/DAGLI ORTI.

of Metz, the canons, unlike monks, could own their own property and were not always required to live under the same roof with their fellow clergy. But like the cloistered monks (those who lived beyond the monastic *cloister*—that is, enclosed space—and took the Benedictine vow of stability), the canons assembled each day to hear a reading of a chapter of sacred scripture and thus were said to belong to a community or *chapter* of canons. Houses for canons began to become more popular by the mid-eleventh century. This communal arrangement worked well for urban dwellers but proved to be difficult for rural clerics. Customs seemed to differ from house to house. They would eventually come to prefer the Rule of Augustine by the twelfth century.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF SACRAMENTARIES.** The Carolingian era was an important time for Western liturgical development. Books called *Sacramentaries* which contained prayers and guides for the celebration of Mass and other religious rites began to become common throughout France. However, there seemed to be little uniformity in the way each community used the liturgi-

cal prayer books. Alcuin of York, the primary teacher at Charlemagne's palace school and abbot at several monasteries, began the process of making revisions to the Roman Sacramentary sent to the Franks by Pope Hadrian I (772–795) as usages became refined in the Christian empire over the next two centuries. The Frankish version of the Sacramentary eventually became the standard throughout Europe (preferred even to the Roman text) and continued to be the basis for practice in the Western church right up until the mid-twentieth century.

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