

The History of the Catholic Church

The 15th Century: The Renaissance

Events:

1402: The settlement of the Canary Islands by the Spanish Empire

1408: The last recorded event to occur in the Norse settlements of Greenland

1410: The Battle of Grunwald is the decisive battle between the Polish-Lithuanian-Teutonic War

1410-1413: Foundation of St. Andrews University in Scotland

1414-1418: The Council of Constance

1415: Henry the Navigator leads the conquest of Ceuta from the Moors marking the beginning of the Portuguese Empire

1415: The Battle of Agincourt between the Kingdoms of England and France

1415: Jon Hus is burned at the stake as a heretic from his condemnation at the Council of Constance

1420: The construction of the Forbidden City in China

1425: The Catholic University of Leuven is founded by Pope Martin V

1429: Joan of Arc ends the Siege of Orleans marking a turning point in the Hundred Years War

1431: Joan of Arc is tried and burned at the stake

1431: Henry VI of England is crowned King of France

1438: Pachacuti founds the Incan Empire

1441: Portuguese navigators cruise West Africa and reestablish the European slave trade.

1444: The Ottoman Empire defeats the Polish and Hungarian armies.

1450: Machu Picchu is constructed

1453: Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Empire marking the end of the Byzantine Empire

1453: The Battle of Castillon marks the traditional end of the Hundred Years War

1455: Johannes Gutenberg invents the printing press

1455-1485: The Wars of the Roses: English civil war between the House of York and the House of Lancaster

1456: The Siege of Belgrade halts the Ottomans' advance into Europe

1469: The marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castille leads to the unification of Spain

1474-1477: Burgundy Wars of France, Switzerland, Lorraine, and Sigismund

1481: The Spanish Inquisition begins in practice

1492: Ferdinand and Isabella sign the Alhambra Decree expelling all Jews from Spain unless they convert

1492: Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas from Spain

1494: Spain and Portugal sign the Treaty of Tordesillas and agree to divide the world outside of Europe between themselves

1494-1559: The Italian Wars lead to the downfall of the Italian city-states

1499: The Ottomans defeat the Venetians at the Battle of Zonchio

Notable inventions: in art: linear perspective, depth, and naturalism; modern English, public banks, Scotch Whisky, psychiatric hospitals, printing press, harpsicord

Politics:

The Ottoman Empire was founded by Turkoman in the mid-13th century. At its inception, the Turkish, later to be called the Ottoman Empire, consisted of a series of city states that were culturally united but politically disunified. Under the next leader, Osman, whose name would change the name of the Empire to Ottomans, he unified these city states into the Ottoman Empire. Over the next two centuries, the Ottoman Empire will recruit renegades from Byzantium as well as Islamic forces to aid their military efforts. Until the 15th century, most of the territory gained was in the Balkans, middle east, and the very eastern edge of Europe from Serbian controlled areas. The combination of the Black Death in the 14th century, lack of strong leadership, and continual wars with their eastern neighbors greatly hindered western expansion. All this changed in the 15th century due to the rise of several great sultans, the most notable being Suleiman the Magnificent. Under these powerful sultans, the Ottoman Empire will successfully conquer Constantinople, Greece, North Africa, and the Middle East. The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 was a turning point in European history. Constantinople remained one of the center points of Christianity and was never conquered by a foreign power. With this successful conquest, the Ottoman Empire reached a new golden age and continued to push westward. Their westward expansion was not successful with attempts at Italy, Germany, and Hungary. They would successfully conquer Hungary in 1521 and Vienna in 1532 before their expansion efforts ended. The Ottomans will become one of the most powerful empires in Europe and continue to rule until the 18th century.

The Hundred Years War: its conclusion and aftermath

In the previous section I covered the beginning and middle parts of the Hundred Years War. The conclusion and aftermath of this war extended throughout the entire 15th century leading to important political events. The first half of the 15th century is dominated by skirmishes between the English and the French. A pivotal moment in this war came with a well-known figure Joan of Arc. Joan of Arc convinced the Dauphin that she was sent by God to lead the French to victory

over the English. Eventually convinced, she led the French into a massive victory over the English. After this success, Charles VII was crowned King of France. His reign was short lived as the English came back for a second round and defeated the French troops. With the French defeated, Joan of Arc was captured, tried as a heretic, and burned at the stake. Henry V was crowned King of England and King of France in 1431. King Charles VII, still one of the kings of France, came back with a vengeance and defeated the English and reclaimed the lost territories of France. The battle came to a hiatus with the Battle of Castillon in 1453. The war was not over, just paused for 20 years.

Off in England a new series of problems caused the English to withdraw from the war. A feud between the Houses of York and Lancaster led to an English civil war. The dispute was caused by the socio-economic downturn of England due to the constant war with France. Many believed that the king was no longer seeking the best interests of people and that the feudalistic system was broken. A desire for the king to come from the House of York fueled this conflict leading to 30 years of war. Over the next 30 years several wars will be fought between the House of York and the House of Lancaster over the proper person to reign as King of England. When Henry VII married Elizabeth of York, he united to two warring families but didn't end the war. Edward threw Henry into prison, who was eventually released. The war ended when the Earl of Lincoln defeated himself and caused Henry to be the only ruling authority. After that war in 1487, Henry no longer received opposition and the war came to an end.

The combination of 130 years of war, the Black Death, and the internal civil war in England greatly hindered England and France from continuing the Hundred Years War. Following the end of the Wars of Roses in England, the two nations signed an official peace treaty bringing peace back to France and England.

Off in Spain and Portugal many new ideologies and conflicts are emerging. Both of these kingdoms managed to remain out of the European politics and fights for centuries. Now they are engaged in their new pursuits. Spain was at war with the Moors, Islamic forces, for about 500 years. The kings of Aragon and Castille hoped for union between the two kingdoms and a united Spain so they betrothed their children, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castille at the age of 6. These two children will become one of the most power rulers of Spain and bring Spain to a golden age. Most think that an arranged marriage of this sort would cause problems. Instead these two, deeply devout Catholics, led to a resurgence of Catholic identity and power in Spain.

Isabella was named Henry IV's, her father, successor in 1474. King Alfonso V of Portugal had plans for his son to marry the daughter of Isabella's uncle and therefore become King of Castille. Isabella, with threats against her from within Castille, led an army against Alfonso and won the war after a year of fighting. Isabella had proved herself and will prove herself several more times. She immediately convened a council, named a successor, quelled several rebellions, and established herself as Queen of Castille. King Alfonso tried one more attempt with a naval battle. After four years of battle, several peace treaties were signed naming Isabella the rightful Queen of Castille and preventing Portugal from engaging in war with Spain again. The wars were finally over and Isabella now had the full backing as queen and the support of her people.

Their first act was to reunite Spain. Then they formed Spain as a Catholic Empire with the goal of being directly under papal authority. Throughout their time, they would help to launch wars for the pope, establish Catholic authority in Spain, and lead to the evangelization of the world. Part of the reconquest of Spain was to remove all Muslim influence. By the end of the 14th century, the Islamic forces were confined to the state of Granada. With the new united Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella fought a war against the last stronghold of the Muslims and kicked them out of Spain for the final time. They then turned on the Jews and either forced them to convert or expelled them from the lands.

With the wars between Portugal and Spain ended, the Kingdom of Spain united, the Moors and Jews expelled, both Portugal and Spain turned their attention to the unexplored world. The exact intentions of these national is debated. Some claim their goal was territory expansion. The treaty signed between Portugal and Spain that divided the world between themselves would give evidence for this conclusion. As monarchs for the Catholic Church, some claim their goal was the evangelization of the world and to find peoples and bring them to the Church. Their expansion efforts always involved priests and missionaries giving evidence to this reason. No one can ignore the immense wealth that came to Spain and Portugal during these times of expansion and conquest. The amount of gold that came from the Americas brought exceptional wealth to Spain and led it to one of its greatest golden ages. From the time of peace around the 1480's until the 17th century, Spain continued to explore the world, colonize it, and grew wealthy through these conquests. In order to grasp the gravity of these events, we need to understand the history of the Americas. For the last 200 years, the Incan Empire was working towards unification. For the most part this empire had been stable for centuries and was on the midst of its golden age. They had no rivals and no wars for centuries. Everyone on the South American continent worked together and built one of the greatest civilizations in history. When the Spanish explorers reached the continent, they encountered hostile but peaceful people. The Incans were surprised by foreigners having not met any for many centuries. Unfortunately for them, the Spanish brought more than simply connections with Europe but disease. A Small Pox epidemic hit the Incans making them easy to invade. From this point the Spaniards continued north into the Aztec region. The Aztec and Mayans are the complete opposite of the Incans. Whereas the Incans were largely peaceful for most of their history, the Aztecs and Mayans were warriors and were constantly at war with each other. The war mentality of the Aztecs and Mayans led to war with the Spaniards who were significantly better and more equipped at war. Although the battles favored the Spaniards, the people refused to convert. Many attempts were made for forced conversions, yet most of them failed. The Spaniards attempted to enslave the natives whom they saw as barbarians and non-human. Through the work of the missionaries, word was sent to Rome that the natives were human and therefore should not be enslaved. Rome responded with a prohibition on enslaving the natives of the Americas.

The same was not the case for the Africans. Whereas the Spaniards went west, the Portuguese went south. The Portuguese began colonizing the African kingdoms and nations and beginning anew a slave trade. They didn't begin the slave trade. Since the Roman times, Europeans have been taking Africans as slaves. Some of the great saints went to minister to the slaves brought from Africa. Imagine if the same letters from the Spanish priests from the Americas were sent by

Portuguese priests in Africa how the world would have been different. The slave trade may have never happened and United States history would be radically different. Nevertheless, the Portuguese became wealthy and prospered from the economic and expansion aims in Africa.

With new lands, new people, and new cultures affecting Spain, Isabella and Ferdinand began an effort to unify the country under Catholicism and root out any opposition to the Church in what is called the Spanish Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition has a negative tone based on misconceptions of the processes involved in the Inquisition. The first of the inquisitions was begun in the 13th century against the Albigensians. This inquisition attempted to convert people and stop the spread of heresy. The Spanish Inquisition had the same aims. The most notable moment of the Inquisition was the royal decree that all Jews and Muslims must convert or be expelled. This led to the mass conversion of 1000's of people. From here, the focus of the inquisition is on the old Christians, the ones who had defected from the faith. Over the next 400 years, before it was disbanded in 1834, 3000-5000 will be executed for failing to convert, roughly 2.7% of all cases. Through the efforts of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, Spain will remain the most Catholic country in Europe until the Spanish Civil War in 1938. Whereas the other European kingdoms and nations will fall to the effects of the Enlightenment and Modernism, Spain will remain Catholic and predominantly Catholic.

The Renaissance

The Renaissance is a misnomer. Many assume that the Renaissance was a unified movement or that it was the same across Europe. This is not the case. The Renaissance, as told in history classes, is the Italian Renaissance. The 15th century saw a revival in Classical Greek culture, art, and literature. Sparked by new art and resources coming into Europe, the Italians became enamored by everything that classical Greece had to offer. Plays, works of literature, and art dominated Italian life. Painters and artists attempted to copy the forms of Greek art. In this midst of this revival came some of the greatest artists in history including, Michelangelo, Donatello, Da Vinci, and Rembrandt. The developments in art are drastic. Linear perspective, the focus of the details of human form and movements, the advances in color, and the ability to tell stories through art led to an explosion in art and the quality of art. The popes following from the great western schism turned inward toward Italy to finance these great projects. From the 1440's through the next century, the popes will become the greatest patrons of art. They will finance the restoration of classical Roman architecture and buildings, art project and artists, and new churches.

Art of the Renaissance is drastically different from modern day art. In our modern day, artists are paid based on their artwork or for fulfilling a specific function within a company. For the most part artists are based on their works. In the Middle Ages, artists were patronized by wealthy nobles. A noble would find an artist he or she liked and then hire them as his/her personal artist. The artist would then be at the whim of the noble to paint, sculpt or design whatever the noble wanted. Some artists decorated churches and others painted paintings for the houses of the nobles. As long as the noble liked you, you had employment and an income.

The Renaissance was not the same across Europe. In Germany the focus became the written word. The intellectual movements of the previous two centuries led to a fascination with truth and the academic side of the Renaissance. Whereas Italy focused on art, Germany focused on manuscripts and purity of faith. Many German thinkers became enamored by the many different copies of texts that came to Europe with the desire to determine the accuracy of the Bible. As more Bibles came to Germany, they were compared against one another with the goal of finding the words of the 1st copies and the words of Jesus. This religious Renaissance led to several important innovations and ideologies. The first, and most notable, was the printing press. The printing press allowed more people to access written words and more cheaply. Fliers, pamphlets, and books could be more widely distributed and more quickly. The second ideological change was the focus on the Bible. German thinkers and historians centered all their work on the Bible itself. Many attempted to find the original Greek translation of Scripture to study it. Some started translating the Bible into the vernacular so the common person could read it. Although these practices were forbidden by the church, they continued to persist throughout the century. This flowering of a desire to know the accuracy of Scripture and to let common people read the Bible, is the foundation of the Protestant Reformation.

Church:

The 14th century ended was immense political problems for the church. Two lines of popes existed with one in Avignon, France and the other in Rome, Italy. The church quickly realized that this situation was highly problematic. The first attempt at reconciliation came from a council called in Pisa, Italy. Those who met for this council concluded that since the legitimacy of the pope is in question, then we declare the papal seat to be vacant. The conclave called in Pisa elected a new pope, Alexander V who died a year later and they named John XXII as pope. Both the Avignon line and the Roman line as well as the leaders of Europe refused to accept the Council of Pisa with some claiming that the council is not legitimate. The council resulted in three popes instead of two further increasing the problem. Frustrated by the results from the Council of Pisa and realizing that reconciliation was necessary, the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund and the Pisan Pope called the Council of Constance in 1414. Unlike most of the councils up to this point in history, this council lasted a long time, four years. This council accepted itself as the highest ruling authority of the church and deposed all three popes. Then the council named a new pope who took the name Martin V. The Avignon-Roman schism came to an end and the church was untied again under one pope.

The effects of the Council of Constance will lead to lasting effects on the church. For the first time in church history a council superseded the pope. The authority that the council gave itself in deposing a pope, and not just one but three, resulting in a movement called conciliarism. Conciliarism is based on the idea that the united voice of the bishops or the decrees of a council have higher authority than the pope. Therefore the true ruling authority of the church is no longer the pope in office but the councils and the body of bishops. This movement towards conciliarism, as a reaction to the great western schism, will cause tensions within the church for the next two centuries. Even today the idea of conciliarism causes issues between individual bishop conferences and the authority of the pope.

The church came to a sorry plight in the midst of the Renaissance. As the popes focused inward on Italy and continued to finance the immense explosion in art and culture, they ignored most of the major events happening throughout Europe. In order to finance these major building and art projects, the popes required more financial support from Dioceses and the people. The sale of indulgences took a new turn with the bishops and priests preaching their necessity and the cost of indulgences rising. The emphasis on the sale of indulgence and the way the money was being used greatly impacted the general sense of the church and led many of the reformers of the next century to criticize their use. As the printing press revolutionizes Europe and the Germans are retranslating the Bible, the Church issues her decrees against their work and leaves it at that assuming that these issues will eventually resolve themselves.

Key Figures:

Leonardo Da Vinci: Leonardo was born in the Italian town of Vinci in 1452. His family was on the lower end of society with his parents not married, Leonardo born out of wedlock, and the family was poor. After a few years in Vinci, the family moved to Florence where, at the age of 17, Leonardo became the apprentice to the greatest painter and sculptor of Florence, Verrocchio. From this early start, Leonardo became a master painter and sculptor. By the end of his life he will be known as an anatomist, painter, sculptor, engineer, scientist, architect, and theorist. His notebooks contain some of his most brilliant work which combines natural sciences and engineering as well as detailed sketches and drawings.

Michelangelo: Born in Tuscany in 1475, his father was a banker. When the bank failed, his father took a government position before the family moved to Florence. In Florence Michelangelo took an apprenticeship from the great humanist artist Francesco da Urbino. Francesco soon understood that Michelangelo had no interest in school or studying but preferred to copy art. At this time, the Vatican commissioned Domenico Ghirlandaio to paint the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo studied under Domenico. Michelangelo's father convinced Domenico to pay Michelangelo as an artist. He was then commissioned to sculpt a statue of David, the patron of Florence, which had not been finished after 40 years of work. This statue became his masterwork. From here Michelangelo's fame spread. He will be commissioned to paint the Sistine Chapel, one of his most prominent works. One of the attributes that most people don't realize about Michelangelo is the depth of his theology and understanding of the Bible. In each of his works for churches, he imbues the paintings with biblical theology and brings themes together that we often miss in the artwork at first glance.

St. Rita of Cascia: she was born in Italy to a pious family. At a young age a swarm of white bees came into and out of her mouth without causing her harm. Her parents, instead of being alarmed, realized this was a sign of her virtue. She wanted to become a nun but her parents married her off at the age of 12. So at the age of 12 she became a wife and mother to a man who was known to have a violent temper. Rita had a profound effect on her husband helping him to resolve feuds due to his temper. One feud got the best of him costing him his life and the lives of their four sons. Dejected, poor, and alone Rita wandered the world hoping to enter the convent but was refused entry due to the immense pain she suffered at the loss of her family. After years of poverty, the man who killed her family lay dying and asked for Rita to come heal him. She

agreed to, which most people would not do. She healed him, forgave him, and this moment allowed her entrance into the convent. She had a deep desire to experience the Passion of Christ and got her wish. She received a wound on her forehead that never healed and smelled foul causing many people to avoid her. Upon her death, the wound healed and smelled like roses.

St. Joan of Arc: She was born into a peasant family in Domremy, France, where she began experiencing visions and hearing the voices of St. Michael the Archangel, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret. The visions started personal and then became a call to lead the French to victory over the English. At first the French did not believe this 16 year old peasant girl. Eventually she won over the military commanders and the king of France. She would lead the French to a significant victory over the English at the Battle of Orleans. Once the English had retreated, they thought the war was over. When the English returned, they recaptured the land and captured Joan. Back in England she was put on trial, condemned as a heretic, and burned at the stake.

Johannes Gutenberg: He was born in Mainz where his family had to flee from violence and move to Strasbourg. In Strasbourg he continued his studies at the University of Erfurt. Much of Gutenberg's life is unknown. At some point while in Strasbourg he had a failed financial enterprise in making polished metal mirrors. Shortly after this adventure he invented the printing press. Due to a feud between a money lender and Gutenberg, who had financed his endeavors, Gutenberg lost the trial and was bankrupted. He would spend the rest of his life impoverished, die, and be buried in a cemetery that was later destroyed.

Pachacuti: His name in Quechua means "reformer of the world" and "with honor." Pachacuti united the Incan states into the Incan Empire and created one of the greatest and largest empires of the world. The Incan Empire under Pachacuti knew no hunger and worked together to build some of the greatest works in the world, notably Machu Pichu.

Thomas a Kempis: His father was presumed a metal worker and his mom a school teacher. Little is known about his earlier life. Eventually he came to Deventer, Holland where he received an education. He entered the Congregation for the Brothers of the Common Life through the introduction and letter of his brother. This group was forbidden to beg but expected to earn their income through the work of their hands and live a simple life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. At Deventer, he became a copyist, which became a great love of his life. He wrote several of his own books while also spending many hours copying manuscripts and books. He is best known for his work *The Imitation of Christ*. Many had zeal upon his death of canonizing him but nothing ever came of their efforts.

Art

The advances in art cannot be understated. After centuries of 2 dimensional art and with very flat, emotionless people, the Renaissance is truly a time to marvel at. The first major innovation in art is called linear perspective. The main idea behind linear perspective is to pick a focal point in the piece of art. This could be a person's face, or an image, or something in the foreground or background. This focal point is the main place the viewer's eyes will focus on. From this point, all the painting centers around it. All the lines to create the foreground and background, the images within the painting, and centers everything on this focal point. Using this technique the painter

adds exceptional depth to the painting allowing for 3 dimension as well as layering. The second innovation came from the humanistic movement of the 12th century. Fifteenth century art tried to capture the musculature of a human being, the emotions a normal person would experience, and the fluidity of motion. The third innovation was the desire to tell a story. Telling a story in art is not new and came from the 2nd century. Fifteenth century art tried to capture emotions as well as the drama around the story so that each piece of art is read as a story not understood as a story.





THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

THE FIRST BOOK

ADMONITIONS PROFITABLE FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

CHAPTER I

Of the imitation of Christ, and of contempt of the world and all its vanities

He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,(1) saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ; and they teach us how far we must imitate His life and character, if we seek true illumination, and deliverance from all blindness of heart. Let it be our most earnest study, therefore, to dwell upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. His teaching surpasseth all teaching of holy men, and such as have His Spirit find therein the hidden manna.(2) But there are many who, though they frequently hear the Gospel, yet feel but little longing after it, because they have not the mind of Christ. He, therefore, that will fully and with true wisdom understand the words of Christ, let him strive to conform his whole life to that mind of Christ.

3. What doth it profit thee to enter into deep discussion concerning the Holy Trinity, if thou lack humility, and be thus displeasing to the Trinity? For verily it is not deep words that make a man holy and upright; it is a good life which maketh a man dear to God. I had rather feel contrition than be skilful in the definition thereof. If thou knewest the whole Bible, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what should all this profit thee without the love and grace of God? Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, save to love God, and Him only to serve. That is the highest wisdom, to cast the world behind us, and to reach forward to the heavenly kingdom.

4. It is vanity then to seek after, and to trust in, the riches that shall perish. It is vanity, too, to covet honours, and to lift up ourselves on high. It is vanity to follow the desires of the flesh and be led by them, for this shall bring misery at the last. It is vanity to desire a long life, and to have little care for a good life. It is vanity to take thought only for the life which now is, and not to look forward to the things which shall be hereafter. It is vanity to love that which quickly passeth away, and not to hasten where eternal joy abideth.

5. Be oftentimes mindful of the saying,(3) The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. Strive, therefore, to turn away thy heart from the love of the things that are seen, and to set it upon the things that are not seen. For they who follow after their own fleshly lusts, defile the conscience, and destroy the grace of God.

(1) John viii. 12. (2) Revelations ii. 17. (3) Ecclesiastes i. 8.

CHAPTER II

Of thinking humbly of oneself

There is naturally in every man a desire to know, but what profiteth knowledge without the fear of God? Better of a surety is a lowly peasant who serveth God, than a proud philosopher who watcheth the stars and neglecteth the knowledge of himself. He who knoweth himself well is vile in his own sight; neither regardeth he the praises of men. If I knew all the things that are in the world, and were not in charity, what should it help me before God, who is to judge me according to my deeds?

2. Rest from inordinate desire of knowledge, for therein is found much distraction and deceit. Those who have knowledge desire to appear learned, and to be called wise. Many things there are to know which profiteth little or nothing to the soul. And foolish out of measure is he who attendeth upon other things rather than those which serve to his soul's health. Many words satisfy not the soul, but a good life refresheth the mind, and a pure conscience giveth great confidence towards God.

3. The greater and more complete thy knowledge, the more severely shalt thou be judged, unless thou hast lived holily. Therefore be not lifted up by any skill or knowledge that thou hast; but rather fear concerning the knowledge which is given to thee. If it seemeth to thee that thou knowest many things, and understandest them well, know also that there are many more things which thou knowest not. Be not high-minded, but rather confess thine ignorance. Why desirest thou to lift thyself above another, when there are found many more learned and more skilled in the Scripture than thou? If thou wilt know and learn anything with profit, love to be thyself unknown and to be counted for nothing.

4. That is the highest and most profitable lesson, when a man truly knoweth and judgeth lowly of himself. To account nothing of one's self, and to think always kindly and highly of others, this is great and perfect wisdom. Even shouldst thou see thy neighbor sin openly or grievously, yet thou oughtest not to reckon thyself better than he, for thou knowest not how long thou shalt keep thine integrity. All of us are weak and frail; hold thou no man more frail than thyself.