

A photograph of a large Gothic cathedral, likely a European one, featuring a prominent rose window and flying buttresses. The building is constructed from light-colored stone and is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text "The Role of the Church in Medieval Europe" is overlaid in red on the image.

The Role of the Church in Medieval Europe

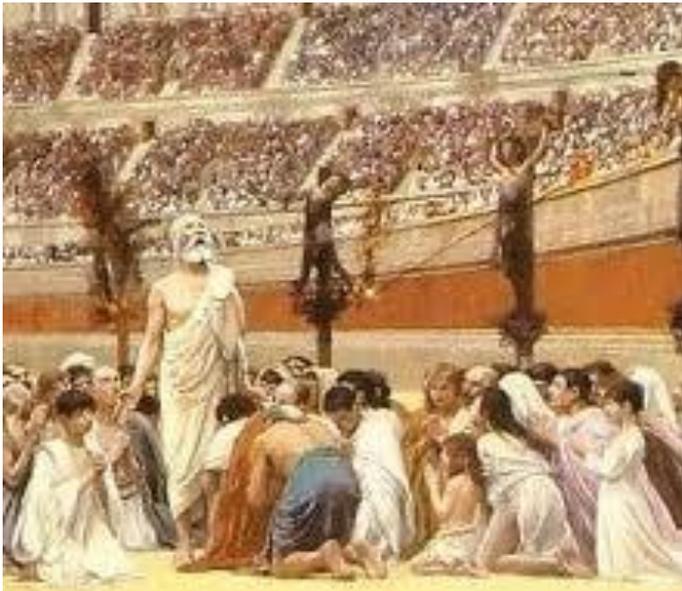
Introduction

- The church was the center of medieval life.
- It was the center of activity in the community, provided education, explained world events (like what?), and taught salvation belonged to those who followed its teaching.



How Did the Christian Church Take Shape?

- Originally Christians were persecuted in Rome, but by 395 it became the official religion of Rome.
- After the fall of Rome, all Christians belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, which provided stability (leadership, food for poor, kept learning alive).



What Was the Organization of the Church?

Pope

(Head of the church)



Cardinals

(Appointed by Pope, assisted him)



Archbishops

(Oversaw large areas called *archdioceses*)



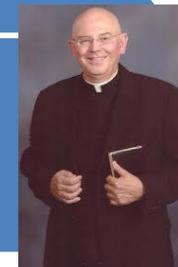
Bishops

(Governed areas called *dioceses*)



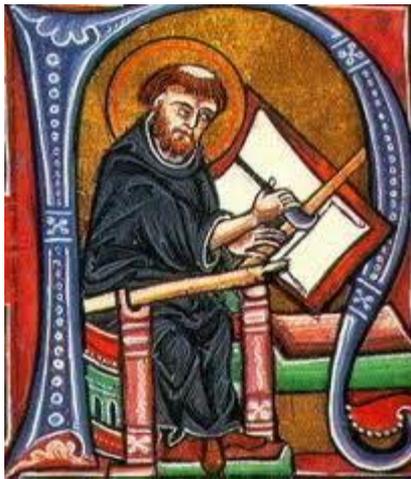
Priests

(Served local communities called *parishes*)



How Did the Power of the Church Increase?

- By 1050 the church became an economic power: largest landholder, collected tax (tithe).
- **Anybody know how much the tax was?**
- Became a political power, usually only ones who could read and kept records for king.
- In 1073 the Pope strengthened the church by: outlawing selling church positions, banned kings from appointing priests & bishops, excommunicated Henry IV.
- **How do you think Henry responded to that?**



German King Henry IV



Henry IV, barefoot and wearing only a hair shirt, begging at the gates for forgiveness from Pope Gregory VII.

After learning that the pope excommunicated him, Henry became furious, but also learned that the Pope had far greater power than he. Many nobles took the pope's side, along with the Saxons. Henry had no friends and no choice but to beg for the Pope's forgiveness. He traveled across the snowy Alps in the middle of winter with his wife, 3 year old son, and other excommunicated bishops. When he arrived he had to wait for three days outside the gates, in the snow before the Pope would agree to forgive him.



What Were Sacraments and Salvation?

- Church taught that receiving the 7 sacraments (sacred rites) was a must for salvation.
- **Anybody know what some of these rites are?**
- **1. Baptism:** Entry into church
- **2. Confirmation:** Formal declaration of belief
- **3. Eucharist:** Consecration of bread & wine
- **4. Matrimony:** Marriage blessed by church
- **5. Holy Orders:** Man becomes a priest
- **6. Penance:** Confession of sins
- **7. Extreme Unction:** Blessing to someone dying



What Were Pilgrimages and Crusades?

- To show their dedication to God, many people hoped to go on pilgrimages or to visit churches that housed relics.
- **Where do you think they went**
- Between 1095 and 1270, many people fought in crusades, in which Christians tried to take back the Holy Land from the Muslims
- **Why do you think they went on crusades?**

Through the ages



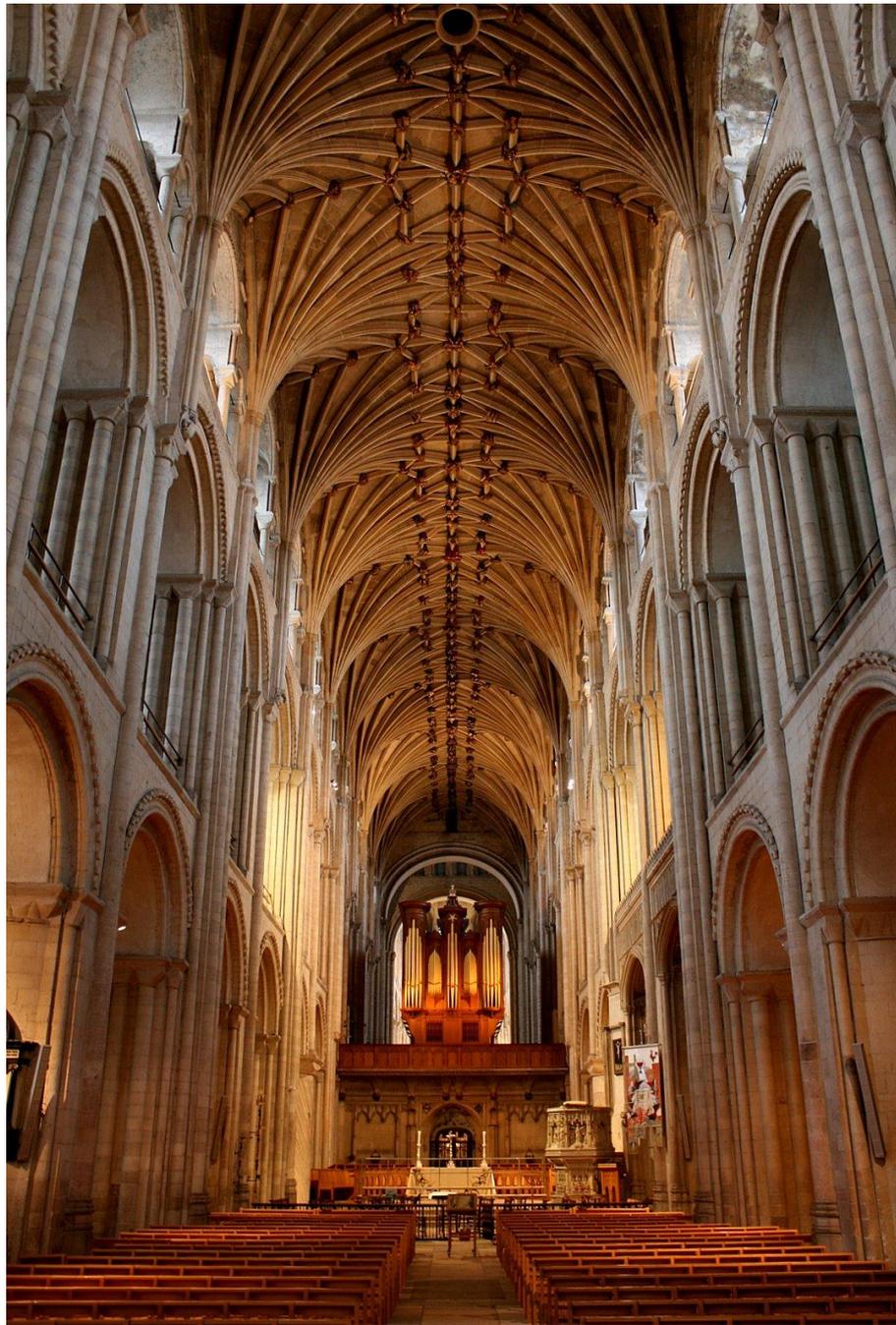


What Was Art and Architecture Like?

- Most art was made for religious purposes.
- Paintings would often tell a religious story.
- Why?
- Because most people couldn't read.
- Most beautiful examples were cathedrals, usually tall and in the shape of a cross. Most had spires, pillars, stained glass, and gargoyles.
- How long do you think it would take them to build a cathedral?

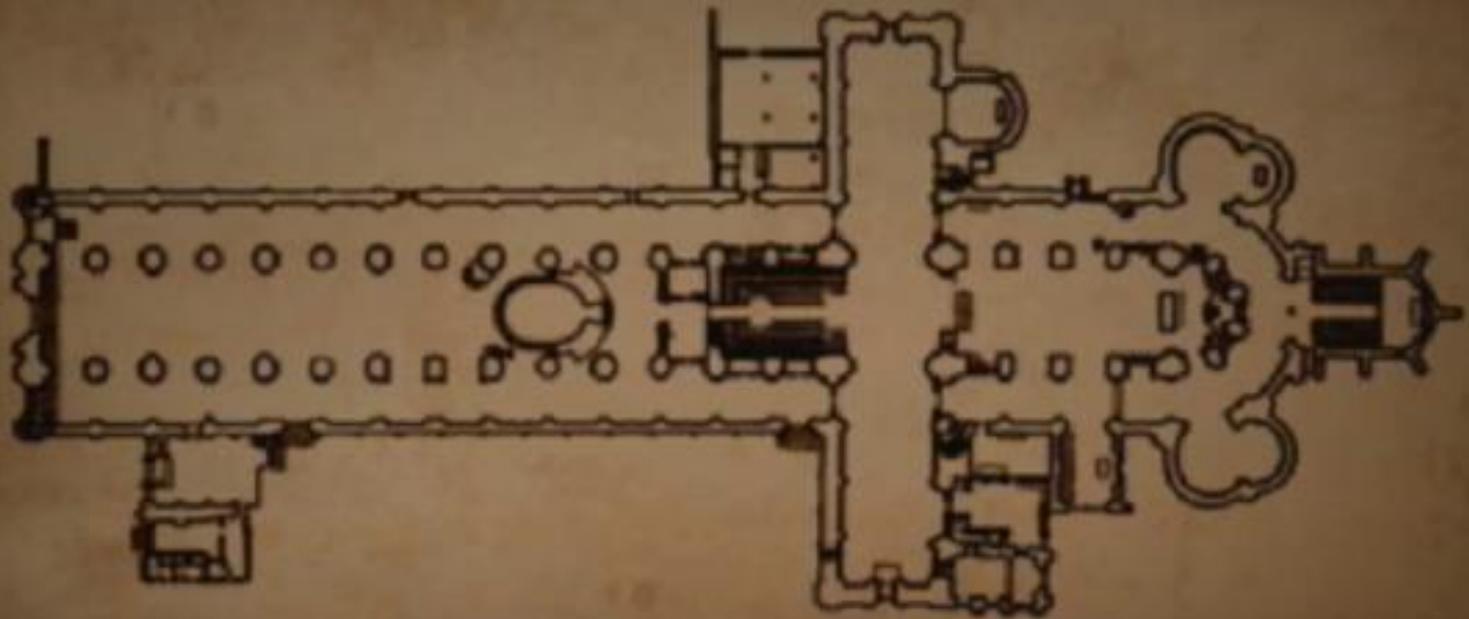








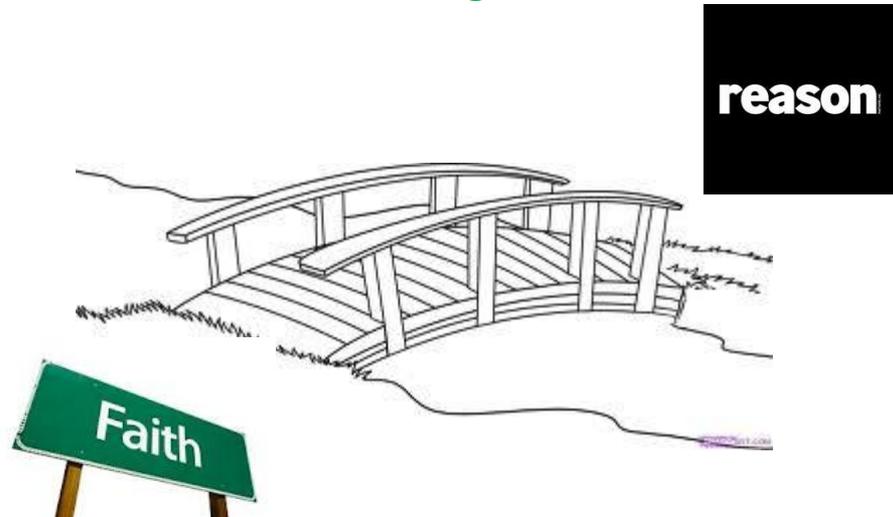
BBC





What Was Education Like?

- Most schooling took place in monasteries, convents, and cathedrals.
- The clergy were the ones most likely to be educated.
- Cathedrals schools gave rise to universities.
- **What do you think they would teach?**
- St. Thomas Aquinas tried to bridge the gap between faith and reason.
- He also believed in natural law, that nature had order and could guide a person's thinking on right and wrong.
- **How do you think the church felt about his teachings?**

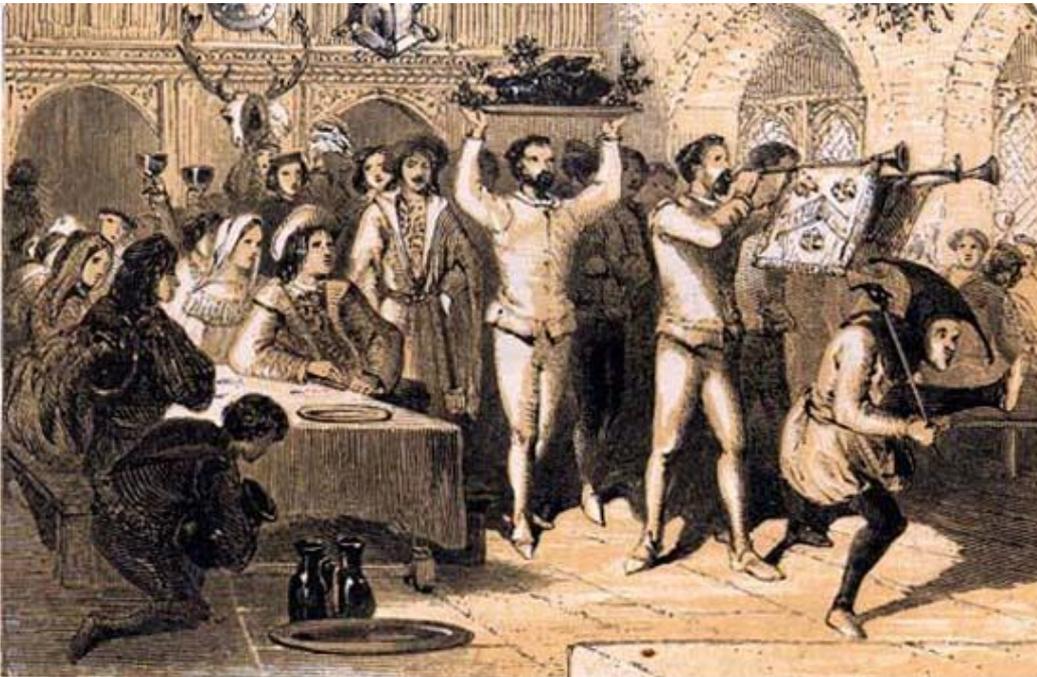


Medieval Universities



What Were the Holidays?

- Almost every day of the year was dedicated to a saint, Jesus, or important religious concept.
- Christmas and Easter were the most important; Christmas lasted for 12 days.
- Can anybody think of a Christmas song with 12 days of Christmas?



Carrying in the Boar's Head



What Were Monks, Nuns, and Mendicants?

What Was the Monastic Way of Life?

- Refers to monks who joined monasteries and devoted their life to prayer and service.
- St. Benedict founded the first one; his followers promised chastity, poverty, and obedience.
- What do you think monks spent their days doing?
- Women who became nuns joined convents.

