

**History 7: Medieval Europe**

April 27 – May 1

*Time Allotment: 30 minutes per day*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Packet Overview**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Monday, April 27	1. Draw a Norman church. 2. <b>Quiz</b> Essay: How did the Normans come to power in England and what were some of the lasting influences of their rule?	2
Tuesday, April 28	1. How was the Monastery at Cluny able to remain uncorrupted from outside influences? 2. How did Cluny serve to strengthen Benedictine monastic communities across Western Europe?	5
Wednesday, April 29	1. Explain how feudalism is manifested in the power and will of William I, Duke of Aquitaine? 2. What ultimately motivates William to give of his resources to found Cluny Abbey?	7
Thursday, April 30	1. Describe the showdown between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV. 2. Give the reasons why both Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV each thought they were right.	11
Friday, May 1	1. Explain the spiritual and the temporal reasons Henry IV decided to go to Canossa. 2. Who ultimately “wins” the showdown between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV?	16

**Academic Honesty**

I certify that I completed this assignment independently in accordance with the GHNO Academy Honor Code.

*Student signature:*

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I certify that my student completed this assignment independently in accordance with the GHNO Academy Honor Code.

*Parent signature:*

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## **Monday, April 27**

History Unit: The Norman Conquest of England  
Lesson 3: Norman Architecture, Quiz

**Lesson 3 Socratic Question(s):** Keep this question in mind as you study this lesson!  
What does a building reveal about the people that built it?

**Objective:** Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Draw a Norman church.
2. Quiz Essay: How did the Normans come to power in England and what were some of the lasting influences of their rule?

### **Introduction to Lesson 3**

On Thursday last week, you learned about the Norman Conquest of England. After victory at the Battle of Hastings, William “the Conqueror”, Duke of Normandy, was crowned the king of England. This inaugurated French rule in England, which was at times harsh towards the English and initially hated by the English people. The descendants of this ruling class are actually the roots of the English royalty today. The Old English and French languages began to merge, which gives us the Latin roots in English words today. Yet although they were harsh, especially at the beginning, the Norman rulers created a strong kingdom and supported the Church in many ways. The clearest way in which their support for the Church can still be seen today is in all the monasteries, churches, and cathedrals they built. Though many of these Churches were destroyed during the Reformation, the English Revolution, or the World War II bombings, thousands have been preserved and can still be seen dotting the countryside today. Indeed, the foundations of many of these churches and monasteries were too strong to be completely destroyed by history, and still stand as a memorial to the strength and religious fervor of the Anglo-Normans.

### **Norman Architecture**

On the next page are images of several churches and monasteries built by the Normans. Your assignment is to choose one and draw it to the best of your ability. You may do this on the blank page 4 or you may do it on a separate sheet of paper. No imagination is needed, just keen observation and effort at drawing the same image. You may use a pencil, charcoal, colored pencils, watercolor, or any other normal artistic medium. Take note of the details. You may spend more time if you like, but you are only expected to spend a minimum of 10-15 minutes drawing. The other 15-20 minutes should be spent writing the essay for your quiz.

**The Abbey of Saint-Étienne**, also known as Abbaye aux Hommes ("Men's Abbey") by contrast with the Abbaye aux Dames ("Ladies' Abbey"), is a former Benedictine monastery in the French city of Caen, Normandy, dedicated to Saint Stephen. It was founded in 1063 by William the Conqueror and is one of the most important Romanesque buildings in Normandy.



**The Nave of Durham Cathedral:**



The Cathedral Church of Christ, Blessed Mary the Virgin and St Cuthbert of Durham, commonly known as Durham Cathedral and home of the Shrine of St Cuthbert, is a cathedral in the city of Durham, England. The present cathedral was begun in 1093, replacing the Saxon 'White Church', and is regarded as one of the finest examples of Norman architecture in Europe. Durham Cathedral holds the relics of Saint Cuthbert,

transported to Durham by Lindisfarne monks in the ninth century, the head of Saint Oswald of Northumbria, and the remains of the Venerable Bede. In addition, its library contains one of the most complete sets of early printed books in England, the pre-Dissolution monastic accounts, and three copies of Magna Carta.



**Rievaulx Abbey** was a Cistercian abbey in Rievaulx (the Cistercian order was a reform of the Benedictines), situated near Helmsley in the North York Moors National Park, North Yorkshire, England. It was one of the great abbeys in England until it was seized under Henry VIII of England in 1538 during the dissolution of the monasteries.





## **Tuesday, April 28**

History Unit: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century Church Reform and Controversy  
Lesson 1: The Abbey (Monastery) of Cluny and Cluniac Reform

**Lesson 1 Socratic Question(s):** Keep this question in mind as you study this lesson!

How did Coenobitic monasticism become corrupted during the latter half of the ninth century (800's)? How did the Cluniac movement help stimulate the reform of Benedictine monasticism?

**Objective:** Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. How was the Monastery at Cluny able to remain uncorrupted from outside influences?
2. How did Cluny serve to strengthen other Benedictine monastic communities?

### **Cluny Abbey**

**A.** In the early 10th century, Western monasticism, which had flourished several centuries earlier with St. Benedict of Nursia (480-547) was experiencing a severe decline due to unstable political and social conditions resulting from the nearly continuous Viking raids, widespread poverty and, especially, the dependence of abbeys on the local nobles who controlled all that belonged to the territories under their jurisdiction.

**B.** During the invasions and civil wars of the latter half of the ninth century, many of the monasteries of western Europe had fallen under the control of corrupt laymen<sup>1</sup> (both words) who used them mainly to satisfy their greed or ambition, and in consequence by the time that Cluny was founded the standard of monastic life and service had been seriously impaired. The monks had grown worldly, their religious formation and education was neglected, and religious services had become empty formalities. Powerful nobles used their positions of advantage to influence, and often to dictate, the election of bishops and abbots, and the men thus elected were likely enough to be unworthy of their offices in both character and ability.

**C.** As such, many of the monastic communities did little to follow the spirit and the law of Benedict's Rule. The laws for manual labor, for example, would be relaxed by a community. Too often such relaxation was but a pretext for the indulgence of idleness or vice. The disrepute into which such tendencies brought the monastics in the tenth and eleventh centuries gave rise to numerous attempts to revive the primitive Benedictine discipline, the most notable of which was the so-called "Cluniac movement."

**D.** The monastery of Cluny, on the borders of Aquitaine and Burgundy, was established under the terms of a charter issued by William the Pious, duke of Aquitaine and count of Auvergne, September 11, 910. The conditions of its foundation, set forth in the text of the charter given below (for tomorrow), were in many ways typical. The history of the monastery was, however, quite exceptional. The charter of the Cluny monastery expressly provided that the abbot should be chosen by canonical election, i.e., by a vote of the monks, and without any sort of outside interference. The life of the monastery was to be regulated by the Benedictine Rule, though with rather less stress on manual labor and rather more on religious services and literary employment. Cluny, indeed, soon came to be one of the principal centers of learning in western Europe, as well as perhaps the greatest administrator of charity (alms for the poor and the like).

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<sup>1</sup> "Laymen/lay/laity" refers to anyone who is not a bishop/priest/deacon.

**E.** Another notable achievement of Cluny was the building up of the so-called "Congregation of Cluny." Hitherto it had been customary for monasteries to be entirely independent of one another, even when founded by monks sent out from a parent establishment. Cluny, however, kept under the control of her own abbot all monasteries founded by her agents and made the abbots of these monasteries directly responsible to him. Many outside abbeys were drawn into the new system, so that by the middle of the twelfth century the Cluny congregation was comprised of more than two thousand monasteries, all working harmoniously under a single abbot-general. The majority of these were in France, but there were many also in Spain, Italy, Poland, Germany, and England. It was the Cluny monks who gave the Pope his chief support in the struggle to free the Church from lay investiture and simony (both explained on pp. 11-12) and to enforce the ideal of a celibate<sup>2</sup> clergy. This movement for reform may properly be said, indeed, to have originated with the Cluniacs and to have been taken up only later by the popes, chiefly by Gregory VII. By the end of the eleventh century Cluniac discipline had begun to grow lax and conditions were gradually shaped for another wave of monastic reform, which came with the establishment of the Carthusians (in 1084) and of the Cistercians (in 1098).

1. According to the charter of the Cluny monastery, (and in line with the *Rule of St. Benedict*) who chooses the abbot? (Letter D) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What sorts of outside intervention (who) had grown accustomed to choosing abbots in other monasteries? (Letter B) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What was the "Congregation of Cluny?" How many Benedictine monasteries were part of it? (Letter E)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Who was the person in charge of the "Congregation of Cluny?" In which countries were some of these Benedictine monasteries found? (Letter E) \_\_\_\_\_  
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<sup>2</sup> Not married



## Wednesday, April 29

History Unit: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century Church Reform and Controversy  
Lesson 2: Feudalism and the Church

**Lesson 2 Socratic Question(s):** Keep this question in mind as you study this lesson!  
How did Feudalism make possible a reform of monastic life and stabilize civic life?

**Objective:** Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Explain how feudalism is manifested in the power and will of William I, Duke of Aquitaine?
2. What ultimately motivates William to give of his resources to found Cluny Abbey? Explain.

### **Introduction to Lesson 2**

**A.** William I, Duke of Aquitaine, (935–963) had acquired a piece of land in Burgundy (modern-day France). In 910 he founded Cluny Abbey and asked Abbot Berno of Baume Abbey to preside. The Abbot of Cluny retained authority over the daughter houses his order founded. By the twelfth century, the Congregation of Cluny included more than two thousand monasteries.



(An excerpt from) *The Foundation Charter of the Monastery of Cluny* (910)

**B.** To all who think wisely it is evident that the providence of God has made it possible for rich men, by using well their temporal possessions, to be able to merit eternal rewards.... I, William, count and duke, after diligent reflection, and desiring to provide for my own safety while there is still time, have decided that it is advisable, indeed absolutely necessary, that for Duke William's benefaction from the possessions which God has given me I should give some portion for the good of my soul. I do this, indeed, in order that I who have thus increased in wealth may not at the last be accused of having spent all in caring for my body, but rather may rejoice, when fate at length shall snatch all things away, in having preserved something for myself. I cannot do better

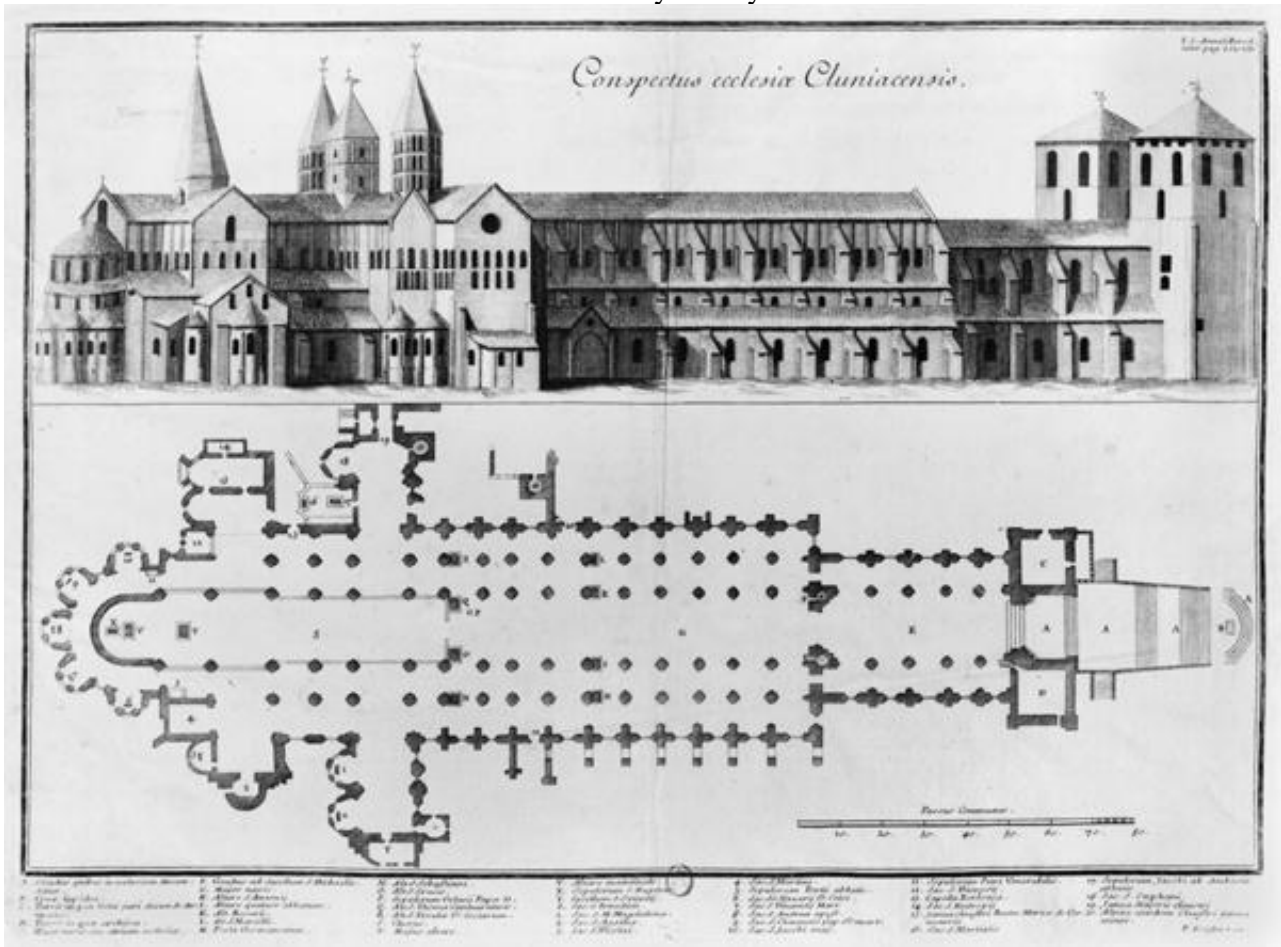
than follow the precepts of Christ and make His poor my friends. That my gift may be durable and not transitory I will support at my own expense a congregation of

**B. (cont.)** monks. And I hope that I shall receive the reward of the righteous because I have received those whom I believe to be righteous and who despise the world, although I myself am not able to despise all things.

**C.** Therefore be it known to all who live in the unity of the faith and who await the mercy of Christ, and to those who shall succeed them and who shall continue to exist until the end of the world, that, for the love of God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, I hand over from my own rule to

the holy apostles, namely, The land and other property ceded Peter and Paul, the possessions over which I hold sway—the town of Cluny, with the court and demesne manor, and the church in honor of St. Mary, the mother of God, and of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, together with all the things pertaining to it, the villas, the chapels, the serfs of both sexes, the vines, the fields, the meadows, the woods, the waters and their outlets, the mills, the incomes and revenues, what is cultivated and what is not, all without reserve. These things are situated in or about the county of Mâcon, each one marked off by definite bounds. I give, moreover, all these things to the aforesaid apostles—I, William, and my wife Ingelberga—first for the love of God; then for the soul of my lord King Odo, of my father and my mother; for myself and my wife,—for the salvation, namely, of our souls and bodies; and not least, for that of Ava, who left me these things in her will; for the souls also of our brothers and sisters and nephews, and of all our relatives of both sexes; for our faithful ones who adhere to our service; for the advancement, also, and integrity of the Catholic religion. Finally, since all of us Christians are held together by one bond of love and faith, let this donation be for all—for the orthodox, namely, of past, present, or future times.

Plan of Cluny Abbey



**D.** I give these things, moreover, with this understanding, that in Cluny a monastery shall be constructed in honor of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and that there the monks shall congregate and live according to the rule of St. Benedict, and that a monastery be established.

They shall possess and make use of these same things for all time. In such wise, however, that the venerable house of prayer which is there shall be faithfully frequented with vows and supplications, and that heavenly conversations shall be sought after with all desire and with the deepest ardor; and also that there shall be diligently directed to God prayers and exhortations, as well for me as for all, according to the order in which mention has been made of them above. And let the monks themselves, together with all aforesaid possessions, be under the power and dominion of the abbot Berno, who, as long as he shall live, shall preside over them regularly according to his knowledge and ability. But after his death, those same monks shall have power and permission Election of abbots to be "canonical" to elect any one of their order whom they please as abbot and rector, following the will of God and the rule promulgated by St. Benedict—in such wise that neither by the intervention of our own or of any other power may they be impeded from making a purely canonical election. Every five years, moreover, the aforesaid monks shall pay to the church of the apostles at Rome ten shillings to supply them with lights; and they shall have the protection of those same apostles and the defense of the Roman pontiff; and those monks may, with their whole heart and soul, according to their ability and knowledge, build up the aforesaid place.

**E.** We will, further, that in our times and in those of our successors, according as the opportunities and possibilities of that Works of charity enjoined place shall allow, there shall daily, with the greatest zeal, be performed works of mercy towards the poor, the needy, strangers, and pilgrims. It has pleased us also to insert in this document that, from this day, those same monks there congregated shall be subject neither to our yoke, nor to that of our relatives, nor to the sway of the royal might, nor to that of any earthly power. And, through God and all His saints, and by the awful day of judgment, I warn and admonish that no one of the secular princes, no count, no bishop, not even the pontiff of the aforesaid Roman see, shall invade the property of these servants of God, or alienate it, or diminish it, or exchange it, or give it as a benefice to any one, or set up any prelate over them against their will.

1. How does William, count and duke, exemplify feudalism in *The Foundation Charter of the Monastery of Cluny* (910)? Specifically, how does his charter establish a feudal order for the lands given to the monastery and all who live on them? Please give examples using three sentences. (Letters C & D)

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2. What is Duke William's motivation for giving of his lands to create the Abbey of Cluny?  
Please explain in three sentences while using one quote as evidence. (Letter B)

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3. In addition to their daily prayer life, what daily activities does Duke William think that monks should be spending their time doing? (Letter E)

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4. Who shall be prevented from holding any outside influence over the monks? (Letter E)

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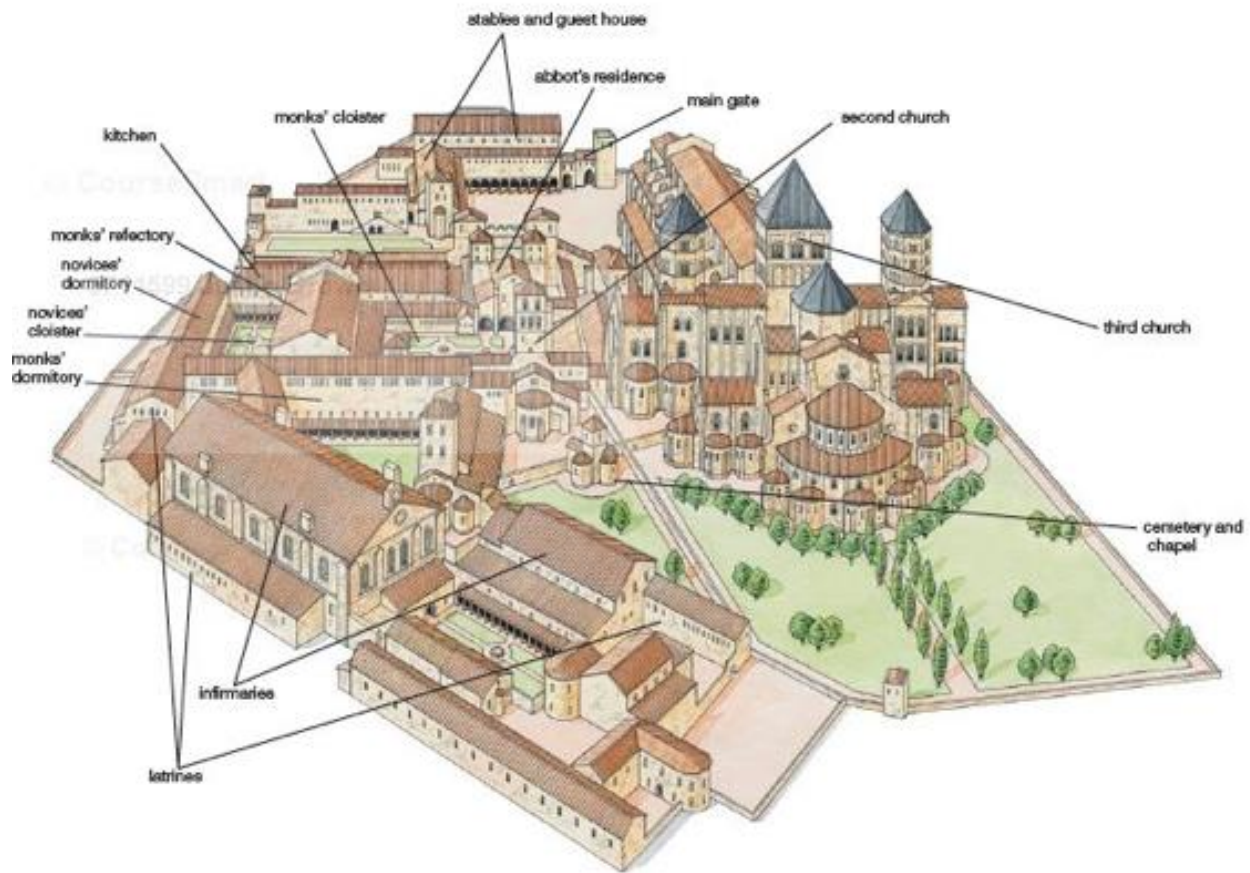
5. Who does Duke William say shall be in charge of the monastics at Cluny? (Letter E)

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## Cluny Abbey



### Thursday, April 30

History Unit: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century Church Reform and Controversy  
Lesson 3: The Conflict Over Lay Investiture

**Lesson 3 Socratic Question(s):** Keep this question in mind as you study this lesson!  
Who has the ultimate authority in the high middle ages: a king, or a pope?

**Objective:** Be able to do this by the end of this lesson. – And be sure to make annotations!

1. Describe the showdown between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV.
2. Give reasons why both Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV thought they were right.

### **Introduction to Lesson 3: The Problem**

“Investiture” is the ceremony of clothing a person in the insignia or clothes of the office (> Latin “investire” – to clothe). Just as when someone becomes king or queen, (s)he is crowned, so when someone becomes a bishop, he is clothed or “invested” with the garments of a bishop. Remember when Pope Agapetus deposed the bishop of Constantinople and Emperor Justinian was outraged? And after that Theodora used her wiles to get Vigilius elected as Pope? Ever since Christianity was legalized at the Edict of Milan, there were disputes as to who has the authority to appoint bishops: the Church or the State? While the Church (i.e. the pope or other bishops)

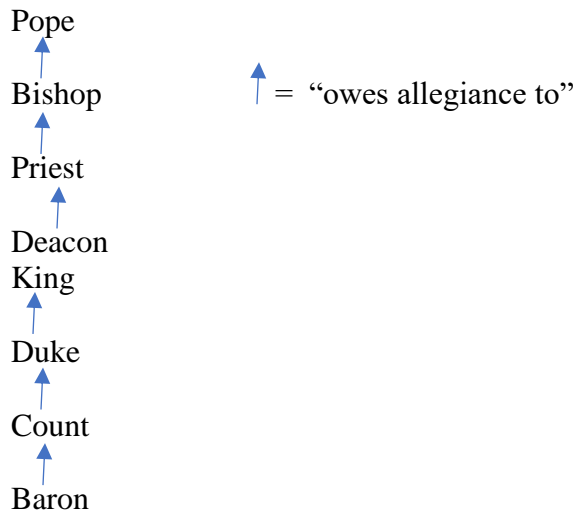
always claimed to have the ultimate say, the Church often allowed secular leaders to influence their decisions. Sometimes this practically meant that the secular authorities such as kings, dukes, and emperors were the ones appointing the bishops (which was known as “lay<sup>3</sup> investiture”).

What is “investiture”?

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The roots of the Investiture Controversy arose from the fact that many bishops, especially those in the Holy Roman Empire (present day Germany) under King/Emperor Henry IV, had gained an immense amount of temporal power (land, money, etc.), and became part of the ruling nobility—acting in many ways as Feudal lords (Dukes, Counts, barons, etc). While you can imagine bishops doing a lot of good with this kind of power (like giving money and land for Churches, giving alms to the poor, etc.), you can also imagine it becoming problematic. For example, if a Bishop also happened to be a Duke...



...what problems might arise?

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One problem that could arise is this: who is this Bishop/Duke ultimately loyal to? The King or the Pope? What if the King and the Pope have a disagreement? Specifically, the biggest question was, who would appoint bishops: the King or the Pope? In theory, bishops were supposed to be chosen by the other bishops of the Church, but remember the money and land that went along with some of those positions at this time. The control of these great units of economic and military power was for the king a question of primary importance, affecting as it did the foundations and even the existence of the imperial authority. To allow someone other than the

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<sup>3</sup> “Lay” means not a bishop/priest/deacon.

emperor to have the final say in choosing these Duke-Bishops could undercut the political stability of society.

Another difficulty arose from the fact that usually the Feudal titles of Duke, Count, etc. were hereditary, or passed on from father to son. But in theory, bishops, priests, and deacons were supposed to be celibate (unmarried in the literal sense of the word but “married” to the Church, like Jesus), and so wouldn’t have an heir to pass on their Feudal title to. Without going into too many details here, two related problems arose from this difficulty. One, some bishops and priests were not held to the standard of celibacy but were allowed to marry, which was contrary to the long-standing tradition of the Church. Some bishops were lax in their discipline and became more and more worldly, not living up to their calling. Many people saw this as the secularization of the Church. Another problem that arose was that *simony*—the selling of Church offices such as the position of priest or bishop<sup>4</sup>—became widespread. This was particularly true where families had established a church or abbey on their estate which was part of their property. Since a substantial amount of wealth and land was usually associated with the office of a bishop or abbot, simony had become an important source of income for leaders among the nobility, who themselves owned the land and by charity allowed the building of churches.

### **The Investiture Controversy**

In response to the problems of simony and overly worldly bishops and in order to ensure the Church’s right to appoint bishops came Pope Gregory VII. Born Hildebrand of Sovana, he was the son of a blacksmith, and as a young man began working for important officials within the Catholic Church. Having experienced corruption within the Church hierarchy as well as the attempts of secular leaders to control the papacy, Gregory was zealous to reform.

Meanwhile, the Holy Roman Emperor (king in Germany and the surrounding areas) at the time was the young Henry IV. He was only five-years old when his father, Henry III, died in 1056. Nearly all of his reign to this point was spent trying to maintain his power against the nobility of the empire. He was also eager to continue the practice where emperors chose who would be the bishops in various German cities.

In 1075, Pope Gregory demanded this practice stop, and after Henry continued to appoint bishops in Germany and Italy, Gregory threatened that if he did not stop, he would be “excommunicated<sup>5</sup> until he had given proper satisfaction, but also deprived of his kingdom without hope of recovering it”. We must bear carefully in mind that in the given circumstances there was a certain justification for both parties: the pope’s object was to save the Church from the dangers that arose from the undue influence of the laity, and especially of the king, in strictly ecclesiastical affairs; the king, on the other hand, believed that he was fighting for the necessary means of civil government, apart from which his supreme authority was at that period unthinkable.

What is Excommunication?

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<sup>4</sup> Simony is named after Simon Magus who is described in the Acts of the Apostles (8:9-24) as having offered two disciples of Jesus payment in exchange for their empowering him to impart the power of the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom he would place his hands.

<sup>5</sup> Excommunication – (< Latin, “out of communion”); someone who has been excommunicated is not allowed to receive the Eucharist (Communion) and is thus outside of the body of the Church.





Henry responded by calling the Synod of Worms, where the majority of German bishops and two archbishops declared that they would no longer be bound to the Pope and no longer obey him. In addition, Henry wrote a letter to Pope Gregory VII:

*“Henry, king not through usurpation but through the holy ordination of God, to Hildebrand,<sup>6</sup> at present not pope but false monk. Such greeting as this hast thou merited through thy disturbances, inasmuch as there is no grade in the church which thou hast omitted to make a partaker not of honor but of confusion, not of benediction but of malediction.”*

Henry goes on to make the case that royal power is conferred on the secular leaders by God in divine appointment. He also says Gregory is acting as if he was God himself and he had given the kingdoms to the nobility of Europe. Henry goes on to level charges against Gregory saying he is a false Pope and is not worthy of being the Pope. The Emperor sums up his letter in this way:

*“Thou, therefore, damned by this curse and by the judgment of all our bishops and by our own, descend and relinquish the apostolic chair which thou hast usurped. Let another ascend the throne of St. Peter, who shall not practice violence under the cloak of religion but shall teach the sound doctrine of St. Peter. I Henry, king by the grace of God, do say unto thee, together with all our bishops: Descend, descend to be damned throughout the ages.”*

Summarize King Henry’s letter to Pope Gregory.

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If the king believed that such a deposition, which he was unable to enforce, was of any effect, he must have been very blind. On February 22, 1076, Pope Gregory VII responded by making the following pronouncement at Rome:

*“...in the name of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and by your power and authority, I deny to King Henry, son of the Emperor Henry, who with unheard-of pride has risen up against your church, the government of the whole kingdom of the Germans and of Italy; I release all Christians from the bond of any oath that they have made or shall make to him; and I forbid anyone to serve him as king.*

*For it is fitting that, because he has striven to diminish the honour of your church, he himself should forfeit the honour that he seems to possess. Finally, because he has disdained to show the obedience of a true Christian and has not returned to the God whom he forsook by communing with excommunicated men, by – as you are my witness – disdaining my advice which I sent him for his salvation, and by attempting to rend your church and separating himself from it, by your authority I bind him with excommunication.”*

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<sup>6</sup> This is the utmost insult to Gregory to not be referred to by his papal name but instead the name he gave up when he became pope.



Summarize Pope Gregory's response:

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### **Friday, May 1**

History Unit: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century Church Reform and Controversy

Lesson 4: The Politics of Humility

**Lesson 4 Socratic Question(s):** Keep this question in mind as you study this lesson!

What drives Henry IV's choice to walk barefoot in the snow to Canossa?

**Objective:** Be able to do this by the end of this lesson.

1. Explain the spiritual and the temporal reasons Henry IV decided to go to Canossa.
2. Who ultimately "wins" the showdown between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV?

### **Introduction to Lesson 4**

To rehearse the story from yesterday, the political dispute between Pope and Emperor began to erupt. The sparks were flying as Gregory was accused of practicing necromancy (conjuring up the dead), hiring assassins, and even destroying the Eucharist; meanwhile the Pope excommunicated Henry's supporters and threatened to do so with the Emperor. The pro-Imperial side eventually renounced the Pope, claiming he had never been elected properly, and called him to step down from his position in Rome. After Pope Gregory demanded Henry to stop appointing bishops, Henry ignored this demand and responded with a fiery letter, literally calling the Pope damned. Gregory responded in a letter, both excommunicating the emperor and attempting to remove him from the throne in early 1076.

### **Penance at Canossa**

It was a bold move for a Pope to say that he could deprive an emperor of his right to rule, when it was just a generation ago that the emperors were determining who could sit on the Papal throne. As one historian noted, "the papal ban was seen to be speedily efficacious. It frightened the more timid of Henry's adherents, it impressed moderate men who had been horrified by the king's attack on the Pope. Moreover, it gave the excuse for revolt to raise its head in Saxony once more, and to win adherents from the among the higher nobility in the rest of Germany, alienated by the high-handed measures of the king in his moment of triumph and resenting their own lack of influence in the affairs of the kingdom."

Throughout the summer and fall of 1076 the supporters of Henry abandoned him, while his foes became more brazen. At a council held in Tribur the German princes made a demand of the emperor – if Henry had not received absolution from the Pope by February 22, 1077, he would automatically be deposed and replaced by a new candidate. They even invited Gregory to come to Augsburg to preside over a meeting that month where they would make the choice on who the new emperor would be.

The Pope was delighted by this news, and as winter approached he left Rome in the company of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, who had been fighting the Emperor over her lands in Italy (the pro-Imperial side also sent out rumors that Gregory and Matilda were more than just allies). They headed to northern Italy, waiting for the German princes to send them an escort to take them through the Swiss Alps.

Meanwhile Henry IV faced with the real possibility that he would be deposed in just a few months, and with little support in Germany, he decided on a bold move – he would go to Italy. While most of passes over the Alps were guarded by his opponents, he found one guard who could be bribed to allow Henry passage. In December, with an entourage of only about 50 people, including his wife and infant son, Henry began his trek southwards.



On January 25, 1077, Emperor Henry IV walked barefoot through the snow to Canossa, where Pope Gregory VII awaited him.

Chroniclers report that the winter of 1076-7 was one of the harshest they had ever seen, and Henry had to cross the formidable Swiss Alps. Lampert of Hersfeld, whose *Annals* is one of the best sources for the events of this episode, reports:

*He therefore hired certain natives of the region, who were skilled and well accustomed to the rugged summits of the Alps. They were to lead his entourage over the steep mountains and the huge mass of snow and to smooth the unevenness of the path by whatever means they could for those who were following. When, with these men as their guides, they had with great difficulty reached the summit of the mountain, there was no possibility of advancing further. For the mountain side was precipitous and, so they said, slippery because of the icy cold and seemed to rule out entirely any hope of descent. In that situation the men tried to overcome every danger using their own strength, now crawling on their hands and feet, now clinging to the shoulders of their guides and also occasionally, when a foot slipped on an icy surface, falling and rolling down for a considerable distance. At last with difficulty and for a time at serious risk of their lives they reached the plains. The queen and the other women who were in her service were placed in the hides of oxen and the guides who had been hired to lead the expedition dragged them down behind them. Some of the horses they lowered down the mountainside by means of certain contrivances; others they spancelled<sup>7</sup> and dragged down but many of these died while*

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<sup>7</sup> Bind with rope so as to drag.

*they were being dragged and very many were crippled: very few were able to escape the peril safe and sound.*

News soon spread of his arrival in Italy, and the Pope feared that he might be coming to capture him (or do even worse). The Emperor had many supporters among the Italian nobility, enough to raise an army. Countess Matilda took Gregory to her castle at Canossa, where they waited to see what Henry was planning.



On January 25, 1077, with a blizzard raging, Henry arrived at the gates of Canossa. Here is Gregory's own account, written just weeks after, of what happened:

*Finally he came in person to Canossa, where we were staying, bringing with him only a small retinue and manifesting no hostile intentions. Once arrived, he presented himself at the gate of the castle, barefoot and clad only in wretched woollen garments, beseeching us with tears to grant him absolution and forgiveness. This he continued to do for*

*three days, until all those about us were moved to compassion at his plight and interceded for him with tears and prayers. Indeed, they marvelled at our hardness of heart, some even complaining that our action savored rather of heartless tyranny than of chastening severity. At length his persistent declarations of repentance and the supplications of all who were there with us overcame our reluctance, and we removed the excommunication from him and received him again into the bosom of the holy mother church.*

Once that was done the Pope held a mass and gave communion to Henry. Afterwards they had dinner, and according to another chronicler the Emperor was in such a bad mood that he did not touch his food, but instead spent his time grinding his fingernails into the wooden table. With a final blessing from Gregory, Henry departed Canossa and headed back to his supporters.

1. Why do you think King Henry IV walked barefoot in the snow to Canossa to see the Pope? Out of a true desire to obtain forgiveness or simply for political reasons? Provide evidence to support your claim.

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Almost as soon as the event happened, people were debating what was the real significance of the Walk to Canossa. Had Henry humiliated himself and become subservient to the Papacy? Or was he deft enough that he framed the issue around his personal repentance and this situation had no bearing on his right to kingship? Medieval chroniclers (and modern historians) have argued about this, but the immediate effect was the threat from the rebellious German nobility collapsed – only a few diehards continued to oppose him. Meanwhile, the Pope tried to explain that just because he absolved Henry that did not mean he was still allowing him to be emperor.

Within three years the Emperor and the Pope were fighting again, with Gregory excommunicating Henry for a second time. However, by this time the bitterness between the two men had only grown, and Henry would not return to seek forgiveness. Instead both sides fought to depose each other, and war would be waged in both Germany and Italy. The fighting over the Investiture Controversy would continue long after both Gregory and Henry were dead.

The Walk to Canossa has been remembered by historians and artists, and continues to be seen as one of those fascinating episodes that make the Middle Ages so interesting. The broader implications, however, are less clear, but reflect on how the conflict between church and state would remain one of the main themes in the history of medieval Europe. In the end, the Investiture Controversy showcased the political power of the Pope through excommunication, but also brought to the fore the question of the limits of his power: did the Pope really have the authority to depose the king from his earthly throne? The controversy also showed that the Pope’s power could be strongly contested by the kings of the world. We may perhaps even see a prelude to the Protestant Reformation in the German bishops’ defiance of the Pope, even though it was only temporary.

1. Who ultimately “won” the showdown between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV? Provide good evidence supporting your answer.

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