

Topics

- Introduction
- Transitioning from “Ancient” to “Medieval”
- The Byzantine Empire and Eastern Orthodoxy

THE MEDIEVAL WESTERN CHURCH

- Spread of Christianity
- Early Medieval Learning & Theology
- Monasticism
- Church and State
- The Sacramental System & Medieval Doctrine
- The Papacy
- Sneak Previews of The Reformation



Background

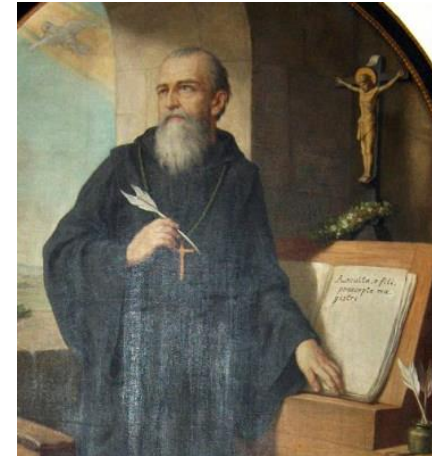
- Factors leading to monasticism
 - Conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity leads to nominal (raccoon) Christians
 - Dissatisfaction with institutional church (e.g., resolution of Donatist issue)
 - ❑ “orthodox” church too lax allowing sinners in leadership positions
 - ❑ Donatists too focused on finding and expelling sinners from church
 - God’s calling, application of scripture
- Pre-medieval Christian monks
 - Anthony of Egypt (~251 – 356)
 - ❑ Ca. 270 heard **Luke 18:22** and decided to follow it literally
 - ❑ Practiced solitary monasticism
 - ❑ First of many Desert Fathers – some solitary monasticism, some communal monasticism
 - Stylites of Syria (e.g., Simeon 390 – 455)
 - ❑ Lived alone atop pillars for decades
 - ❑ Often consulted for advice, prayer requests
- Characteristics of western medieval monasticism vs. eastern monasticism
 - Practical – training for interaction with the world vs. punishment / total renunciation
 - Community (cenobitic) vs. solitary monasticism
 - Less tension with the church hierarchy than in the east (monks often become priests, bishops, and Pope)



Luke 18:22 - Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

Benedict of Nursia (480 – 547)

- Born in Arian, Ostrogothic Italy
- Set out to become a hermit at age 20
- Attracted followers and with them set up monastery at Monte Cassino displacing pagan worship site
 - Sister Scholastica set up community for women there also
- *The Rule of St. Benedict* becomes the standard set of rules for western monasteries until the 12th century
 - Obedience to God, the rule, the abbot, other monastic officers, other brothers – No grumbling!
 - Stay busy
 - ❑ Communal prayer at regular times
 - ❑ Manual labor in fields or skilled crafts
 - ❑ Study of Psalms and other readings
 - Regulations for running a monastery
 - ❑ Importance of the monastery abbot
 - ❑ Each monastery as its own cell (i.e., no overriding central authority)



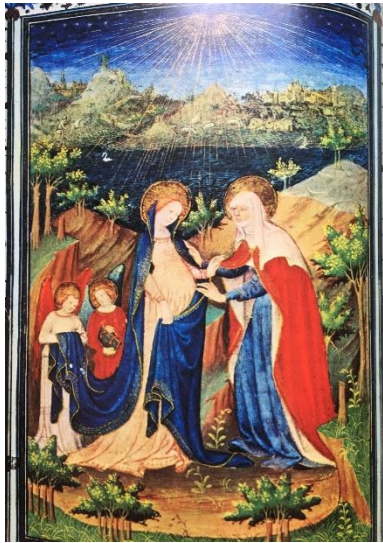
St. Benedict of Nursia



*Monte Cassino Abbey
reconstructed in the 1940s*

*“They should prefer nothing whatsoever to Christ,
so that he may bring us together to everlasting life!”
– Ch. 72, The Rule of St. Benedict*

Communal Prayer at Regular Times



Early 15th Century Book of Hours - Visitation

“AT MIDNIGHT I WILL RISE ...”

Vigils (after late evening meal digested)

“SEVEN TIMES A DAY DO I PRAISE THEE ...”

The Divine Hours

Matins (middle of the night)

Prime (~ 3 hour interval)

Tierce (~ 3 hour interval)

Sext (Noon)

None (mid afternoon)

Vespers (sunset)

Compline (evening before retiring)

Matins on Sunday

Psalm 66 (no antiphon)

Psalm 50 with Alleluia

Psalm 117

Psalm 62

Benedicite (Daniel 3)

Laudate Psalms (148-150)

Revelation recital

Ambrosian Hymn

Gospel canticle (Luke 1:68-79)

Litany (or Kyrie Eleison only)



Early 15th Century Book of Hours – Flight into Egypt

- Observance of the divine hours spreads from monasteries to church and from church to laity
 - Pope Urban II (1088-1099) ordered clerics to recite shortened version in honor of the Virgin Mary for the success of the First Crusade
 - Shortened version becomes basis for books of hours among wealthy laity in the 13th century
 - 15th century – rosary beads begin to rival books of hours as reminders of when and what to pray

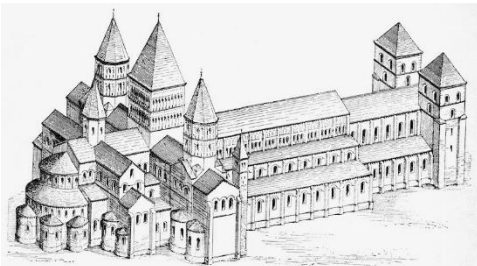
Psalm 119:62 - At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

Psalm 119:164 - Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

The St. Bernards & the French Reforms

Bernard of Cluny (12th Century)

- Most famous leader of Cluniac movement - a reform movement based on the Benedictine Rule
- Authored *De Contemptu Mundi* contrasting monastic corruption and transient pleasures of life with the glories of heaven
- Order constructs the great Abbey of Cluny which is the largest enclosed area in the 11th and 12th centuries
- Order eventually becomes as famous for splendid churches as for its original mission



“O sweet and blessed country, the home of God’s elect; O sweet and blessed country, that eager hearts expect; Jesus in mercy bring us to that dear land of rest, who art with God the Father and Spirit ever blessed.”

*.- Jerusalem the Golden based on *De Contemptu Mundi**

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153) – “Last of the Church Fathers”

- Extremely influential reformer of monasteries and the Church
- His Cistercian movement was a reform movement in response to Cluniac’s straying from Benedictine Rule
- Authored *On Consideration* to member of his monastery who was becoming Pope Eugene III
 - “Lordship is forbidden. Ministry is bidden.”
- “We must not pass over in silence the decay of the church. Better to provoke a scandal than abandon the truth.”
- Mystic – authored *On Loving God*
- *On Grace and Free Choice* – true medieval Augustinian

*“Draw me, however unwilling, to make me willing.
Draw me, slow-footed, to make me run..”*

*.- Bernard of Clairvaux in *On Grace and Free Choice**

Franciscans & Dominicans

Francis of Assisi (1181 - 1226)

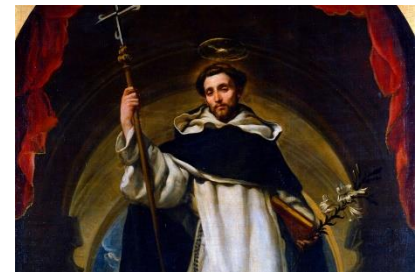
- Ordo Friars Minores (OFM) – aka Franciscans
- Stressed poverty and service
- Love God and love people
- Wrote prayers / hymns not books
 - The Canticle of Brother Sun is basis for Draper's All Creatures of our God and King
- His followers produced *The Little Flowers* after Francis' death
 - Stories of Francis' preaching even to animals
- Followers struggled defining how much poverty is enough



Matthew 22:36-39 - Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Dominic (1170 – 1221)

- Ordinis Praedicatorum (OP) – aka Dominicans
- Focused on teaching and preaching to evangelize pagans and reclaim heretics
- Great scholars – strove to infiltrate and influence medieval universities as teachers
 - Thomas Aquinas (scholasticism)
 - Master Eckhart (mysticism)
- Domini Canus (“Watchdogs of God”) – tasked with identifying and rooting out heretics; the inquisitors of the Middle Ages.
 - Targets – Albigensians and Waldensians



Titus 3:10-11 - A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Random Closing Thoughts

- Monasteries were popular with leaders of society throughout the Middle Ages
 - Nobility guilt over success through force
 - Seen as reservoir of spiritual strength and prayer to protect and bring good will to the area
- Adverse impact to original mandate of monastic movement
 - Monasteries accumulate wealth and land
 - Membership and leadership to those who endow monastery with wealth and land
 - Time for a reform movement

“It is possible for Protestants to dismiss the history of monasticism as worthless. That would be a false impression. It is possible for Catholics to glamorize it all as wonderful. That would be a false impression as well.

Nobody would accuse Robert Lewis Dabney, a southern American Presbyterian, of being soft on Catholicism or on monasticism. He wrote wisely, “Monastic life, with all its perversions, **produced not a little of the moral heroism in the Middle Ages.**”

By the time of the Reformation, much of that was lost. Monasticism was not nearly as noble in the sixteenth century as it was in some earlier centuries. **Like much of church history, we try to see the good with the bad and learn from both.**”

– David Calhoun in lecture on Medieval Monasticism, 2006

Recommended read – [The Benedictine Option: a Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation](#), Rob Dreher, Published by Sentinel, 2017.

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