

CHAPTER 13 Section 4 (pages 370–373)

The Power of the Church

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about knighthood and the literature of chivalry.

In this section, you will learn about power struggles between church leaders and political leaders.

AS YOU READ

Use the chart below to take notes on the authority of the Church.

TERMS AND NAMES

clergy Religious officials

sacrament Important religious ceremony

canon law Law of the church

Holy Roman Empire Kingdom originally made up of what is now Germany and Italy

lay investiture Appointment of religious officials by kings or nobles

CHURCH STRUCTURE	CHURCH LAWS
<i>Different ranks of clergy—priest, bishops, pope</i>	

The Far-Reaching Authority of the Church

(pages 370–371)

How did the Church control most aspects of life?

With the central governments of Europe weak, the Church became the most important force in *unifying* European society. An early pope believed that God had made two areas of influence in the world—religious and political. The pope was in charge of spiritual matters. The emperor and other rulers were in charge of political affairs. Over the years, though, the difference was not so clear. Popes often tried to influence the actions of rulers, who *clashed* with them in struggles for power.

The Church established its own organization. It consisted of different ranks of **clergy**, or church officials. At the bottom were the priests who led services at local churches. Above them were bishops, who oversaw all the priests in a large area. At the top was the pope. He was the head of the Church.

The Middle Ages was an Age of Faith. People were bound together by their belief in God and the teachings of the Church. Though their lives were hard, Christians during this time hoped for *salvation*—eternal life in heaven. One path for achieving this goal was through the **sacraments**. These were important religious ceremonies.

The law of the Church, called **canon law**, was a set of standards that applied to all Christians during

the Middle Ages. These standards guided such matters as marriage and religious practices. The Church also set up courts. People who broke canon law were put on trial.

Two punishments were especially harsh. If the Church *excommunicated* a person, he or she was out of the Church forever. The person was denied the chance for eternal life in heaven. Popes often used this power to threaten rulers. The other punishment was interdiction. When a ruler disobeyed the pope, the Church leader could place the land under *interdiction*. That meant that no sacred actions of the Church could officially take place there. The people of the area deeply feared this. They might then be doomed to eternal suffering in hell.

1. What powerful punishments could the Church hand down?

The Church and the Holy Roman Empire; The Emperor Clashes with the Pope (pages 371–372)

How did conflict develop between the pope and the Holy Roman emperor?

Otto I was the strongest ruler of medieval Germany. He set up an alliance with the Church. In 962, the pope crowned him emperor of what became the Holy Roman Empire.

The **Holy Roman Empire** was the strongest kingdom that arose from Charlemagne’s fallen empire. It was mainly made up of what is now Germany and Italy. One of Otto’s successors was Henry IV. He and Pope Gregory VII became caught in a conflict.

For a long time, rulers had the power to name the bishops who led the Church in their lands. This power was known as **lay investiture**. In 1075, Pope Gregory VII *banned* this practice. Henry IV was angry. He persuaded his bishops to say that this pope had no real authority. Gregory then excommunicated Henry. Henry’s nobles supported Gregory. So Henry begged the pope for forgiveness. The pope forgave him.

The larger issue of lay investiture was left open until 1122. Then an agreement stated that only the pope could name bishops. However, the emperor had the right to turn down any appointment he did not like.

2. Why did Henry IV beg Pope Gregory VII for forgiveness?

Disorder in the Empire (page 373)

Who was Frederick I?

In the late 1100s, a strong German king came to power. His name was Frederick I. He repeatedly invaded the cities of Italy but lost an important battle in 1176. He then made peace with the pope.

When Frederick died in 1190, his empire fell apart. It was broken up into feudal states. These German states did not unify during the Middle Ages.

3. What happened to the Holy Roman Empire after Frederick I’s death?
