Lesson 1

MAIN IDEAS

1. **Belief Systems** The Catholic Church was very influential because of its structure and leadership.

2. **Government** Monarchs and popes struggled with each other for control of society.

3. **Belief Systems** The Catholic Church took a leading role in education as well as religion.

TAKING NOTES

**Reading Skill: Summarizing**

Summarizing is restating a passage in fewer words, including only the main ideas and most important details. In Lesson 1, summarize each of the main sections using a chart like the one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power of the Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Between Monarchs and the Papacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church and Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skillbuilder Handbook, page R3

**St. James Cathedral, Compostela, Spain** The Church was an important part of life in the Middle Ages. Many Christian pilgrims came to this cathedral. The cathedral is said to contain the body of St. James, one of the apostles of Jesus.

**CALIFORNIA STANDARDS**

7.6.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the conflict and cooperation between the Papacy and European monarchs (e.g., Charlemagne, Gregory VII, Emperor Henry IV).

7.6.8 Understand the importance of the Catholic church as a political, intellectual, and aesthetic institution (e.g., founding of universities, political and spiritual roles of the clergy, creation of monastic and mendicant religious orders, preservation of the Latin language and religious texts, St. Thomas Aquinas’s synthesis of classical philosophy with Christian theology, and the concept of “natural law”).
The Role of the Catholic Church

Build on What You Know  Is there one type of church in your area, or are there many different churches? In all of Medieval Europe, Catholicism was the dominant religion.

Power of the Roman Catholic Church

ESSENTIAL QUESTION  Why was the Catholic Church so powerful?

From the 11th through 15th centuries, some aspects of feudalism could still be found in Europe. For example, nobles still ruled much of the countryside. However, both the Roman Catholic Church and European monarchies, such as those of France and England, were increasing their power. The Church and European monarchies were also trying to centralize political and religious authority.

Church Organization  The Roman Catholic Church needed strong organization to efficiently serve laypeople, or its worshipers. This service included providing people with the sacraments (SAY•ruh•muhnts). These were religious ceremonies, such as baptism, in which a member received the grace of God.

The Church had many different levels of leadership among the clergy, or people given priestly authority by the Church. The pope was the spiritual and political leader of the Church. His office was called the Papacy. Below him were the various ranks of the clergy, shown in the illustration on the following page.

TERMS & NAMES

clergy
Pope Gregory VII
Emperor Henry IV
religious order
Francis of Assisi
Thomas Aquinas

Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, France  Notre Dame was built in the Middle Ages and is an outstanding example of Gothic architecture. The exterior supporting structures are called flying buttresses.
Political Role of the Clergy  The men who filled important positions in the church had strong social and political ties to Europe’s nobility. In fact, local princes were also often bishops. Many nobles and religious leaders had gone to school together. As a result, European nobles and Church leaders had much in common, and they often supported one another.

Many Church officials helped European political leaders run their kingdoms. For example, local priests kept records of births and deaths in their parish, or area served by their church. Monarchs needed this information to more effectively run their kingdoms.
The Church also had great wealth, which made it an even more powerful institution. The Church earned income from property it owned. The wealth of the pope was greater than that of any individual European monarch. Also, the Papacy’s authority was often greater than that of kings and emperors. The pope’s power caused many monarchs to cooperate with the Church, but it also caused conflict.

**REVIEW** What was the structure of the Church in the Middle Ages?

## Conflict Between Monarchs and the Papacy

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** Why did monarchs and popes struggle with each other for control of society?

For a long time, Church leaders and European monarchs and nobles saw that it was in their best interest to cooperate with each other. But they eventually came into conflict. In the 11th century, a dispute between Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV reached a crisis point.

### One Cause of Conflict

The Holy Roman Empire, which began around 962, included much of central and western Europe. Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV had built up political power by appointing Church officials. Monarchs such as Henry IV relied on literate and efficient Church officials to help run their kingdoms. They wanted as much control over those officials as possible. In 1075, Pope Gregory said that laypeople—including Henry IV—could no longer appoint people to Church offices.

### The Outcome

The pope’s decision made Henry furious. He called together the bishops that supported him. Together, they declared the pope’s election invalid. Pope Gregory responded by excommunicating, or banishing, Henry from the Church for violating the pope’s order. He told Henry’s subjects that he was no longer emperor, and they did not have to obey him.

Many nobles and church officials then turned against Henry. Henry cleverly chose to ask the pope to forgive him. Some accounts say that to seek forgiveness, Henry stood barefoot for three days in the snow outside the castle where the pope was staying. As a priest, Gregory had to forgive Henry. Henry regained his title and control over his subjects, but conflict between European monarchs and the Papacy would continue.

**REVIEW** Why was appointing Church officials important to Henry IV?
The Church and Society

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did the Catholic Church support education?

The medieval Church played a dominant role in education. Religious orders were the Church’s most important educational institutions.

Religious Orders A religious order is a group of people who live by rules specific to their order. Monastic orders are religious orders that largely separate themselves from the rest of society to focus on prayer and service to God—a Christian ideal. Men who joined monastic orders were called monks. They lived in monasteries. Women who joined monastic orders were called nuns, and they lived in convents. Nuns in the convents often had great control over their daily lives, something very few women outside the convents had.

Friars formed another type of religious order. They traveled to preach the word of God. Friars were mendicants. That is, they owned nothing and primarily lived by begging. Franciscans were the most important mendicant order. Francis of Assisi, an Italian, founded this order in the early 1200s. He called on his followers to live without property and serve as teachers, healers, and friends to all living things. The Church later named him a saint.

The Founding of Universities Schools were established at cathedrals, the center of power for bishops. As you read earlier, students of these schools were usually the sons of European nobles who often became religious or political leaders. As the cities grew, these cathedral schools expanded as early forms of universities. Instructors taught their students in Latin. The Church was also an intellectual institution that worked to preserve the Latin language and religious texts.

Scholars studied classical philosophers. Muslim scholars preserved and interpreted ancient Greek texts, lost for centuries in the West. Church scholars translated the texts into Latin and made them available at the new universities. But some Church officials worried that some classical ideas went against Church teachings about faith.
In the mid 1200s, an Italian scholar named Thomas Aquinas (uh-KWY-nuhs) began studying the writings of a Greek philosopher named Aristotle. Aquinas argued that classical philosophy could exist in harmony with Christian faith and natural law, which he said came from God and was about moral behavior. His work is a synthesis, or combination, of classical philosophy with Christian theology. He is remembered as a great religious scholar. You will read more about reason and faith during the European Renaissance in Chapter 13.

**Lesson Summary**

- The Church as a political institution in Medieval Europe was powerful and organized.
- Church leaders and monarchs came into conflict when they could not agree on who had authority.
- The Church was a powerful intellectual institution in Medieval Europe that helped establish universities.

**Why It Matters Now . . .**

Teachers at medieval universities developed a new teaching method using lectures and textbooks—a method that is still used in universities today.

**Terms & Names**

1. Explain the importance of clergy, religious order, Pope Gregory VII, Francis of Assisi, Emperor Henry IV, Thomas Aquinas.

**Using Your Notes**

**Summarizing** Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

2. Why did Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV come into conflict? (7.6.4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power of the Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Between Monarchs and the Papacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church and Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Ideas**

3. Why was the Roman Catholic Church so powerful in Medieval Europe? (7.6.8)
4. Why did Pope Gregory VII excommunicate Emperor Henry IV? (7.6.4)
5. Why is Thomas Aquinas important? (7.6.8)

**Critical Thinking**

6. **Drawing Conclusions** Why might Church leaders and Europe’s traditional nobility have cooperated for so long? (7.6.4)
7. **Comparing and Contrasting** What were the similarities and differences between priests and monks or nuns? (7.6.8)

**Activity**

**Creating a Brochure** Research to learn more about life in a medieval monastery. Create a brochure that shows the activities performed by the monastery’s inhabitants. Include descriptions of each activity. (7.6.8)