

# A Light in Darkness: Part II

Working on the school newspaper used to be fun for Colleen. Everyone on the team got along very well. They did not always agree, but they shared ideas and made decisions together. Colleen and everyone else knew that Josh was the editor and a good leader. Everything changed, however, when a new teacher, Mr. Tracy, became moderator of the school paper and appointed Linda, a new student, as the editor. The problem was that Linda had no experience with the newspaper. All the veteran members of the team continued to look to Josh for leadership, while the new members looked to Linda. This led to a power struggle between Josh and Linda.

**What effect do you think this power struggle had on the quality of the school newspaper?**

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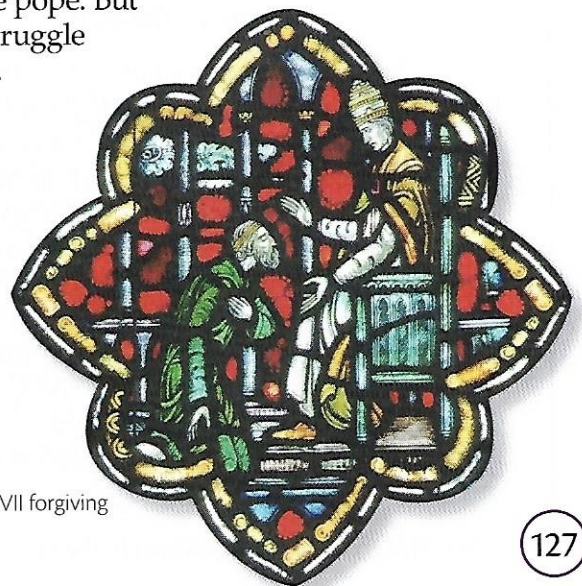
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## Losing and Regaining Focus

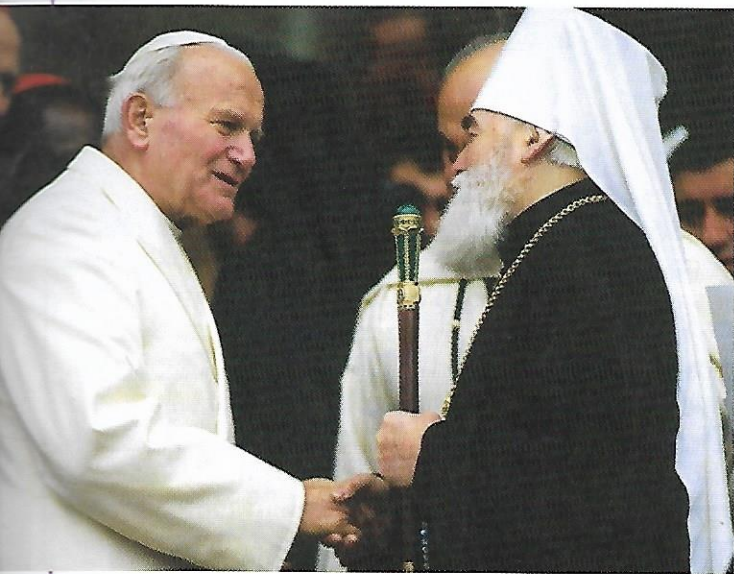
Between A.D. 500 and 1000, the Church became involved in a serious power struggle that hurt the Church's ability to carry out Jesus' mission. Because there were no political structures to hold society together, bishops assumed many of the responsibilities once held by government leaders. This was in keeping with the Church's mission of safeguarding the dignity of all people. When Church leaders became political leaders, however, abuses crept in. A bishop appointed by

the king became responsible to the king, not to the pope. This practice of having political leaders assign jobs to bishops and priests is called lay investiture. Under lay investiture, it was easy for bishops to become rich landowners and to forget about being spiritual leaders.

The Holy Spirit called forth saints to bring the Church back to holiness and to its spiritual responsibilities. Pope Gregory VII knew that the pope alone has full authority to care for souls and that he alone should appoint bishops, make Church laws, and form dioceses. He fought to end lay investiture. King Henry IV of Germany defied Pope Gregory and continued to name bishops. The pope told the king that he would no longer be a member of the Church if he continued to interfere in Church government. King Henry IV visited the pope, stood barefoot in the snow, dressed in monk's robes, and begged forgiveness. The pope forgave him, and for a while King Henry IV obeyed the pope. But then the struggle continued.



Pope Gregory VII forgiving King Henry IV.



## A Serious Break

While Christians in western Europe were occupied with the invasion of Germanic tribes, communication had been cut off with the Church in the East. Over the centuries, differences began to divide the eastern and western parts of the Church. The Church in the East used Greek and other languages for the liturgy. The Church in the West used Latin. Eastern priests were permitted to marry, while those in the West were not. The Christians in the eastern and western parts of the empire tended to think differently about some important issues, such as Original Sin, the use of pictures and statues, the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, and the authority of the Bishop of Rome. There was another thing pulling them apart: the political rivalry between the two great cities of Constantinople in the East and Rome in the West.

Both Churches became suspicious and fearful of each other. Finally, in 1054, a serious break happened between the East and the West. While the Patriarch of Constantinople prepared for the celebration of liturgy, an ambassador from the pope arrived and placed on the altar a papal letter of **excommunication** of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Excommunication means that a person is separated from the Church, especially from the Eucharist. A few days later the Eastern bishop responded with his

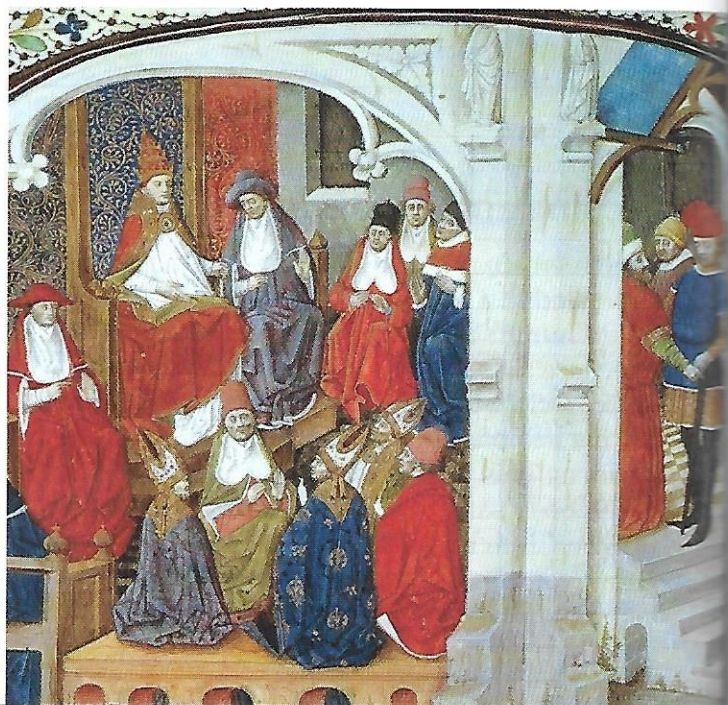
own letter of excommunication of the pope in Rome. The Eastern Church became known as the Orthodox Church, while the Western Church became known as the Roman Catholic Church. This tragic separation is called the Great Schism. A **schism** is a split or division.

Present-day popes and Orthodox Church leaders have met to discuss reconciliation. In 1965 the excommunications between the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople were removed. Every January during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we pray that the oneness of Christ's Church will be proclaimed more effectively through reconciliation. We also pray that Jesus' prayer that we "may all be one" (John 17:21) will be realized.

## The Crusades

At the end of the 10th century, the spread of Islam had slowed, and a period of generally stable relations among Jews, Christians, and Muslims existed. Although Muslims were in control of the Holy Land, Christians were generally able to safely make pilgrimages to sacred sites. This came to an end when the Turks, who were aggressively expanding in the Byzantine (Eastern) Empire, began to ambush Christians who made pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Desperate for help, Byzantine emperor Alexius asked Pope Urban II for assistance. As a result, the Crusades began. The Crusades

Pope Urban II announcing the first Crusade.



were expeditions, “holy wars,” to regain the Holy Land. There were eight Crusades over 200 years. The Crusaders were only able to regain control of the Holy Land for a short time (1099–1187) before the Muslims took control again.

On the one hand, the Crusades stirred up enthusiasm for the Christian faith and opened the doors between East and West. Pilgrimages were promoted, as was a renewed devotion to the passion and Death of Jesus. Likewise, the Way of the Cross was introduced to Europe. On the other hand, many atrocities were committed by both Christians and Muslims during the Crusades. Some participated only to get rich. The Crusades led to suffering and death for many. During one Crusade, Western Christians attacked Eastern Christians in Constantinople. This caused further damage to the already strained relationship between the Roman Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

In 2000, Pope John Paul II issued an apology for the wrongs committed by some members of the Church during the Crusades.

### A Moment with Jesus

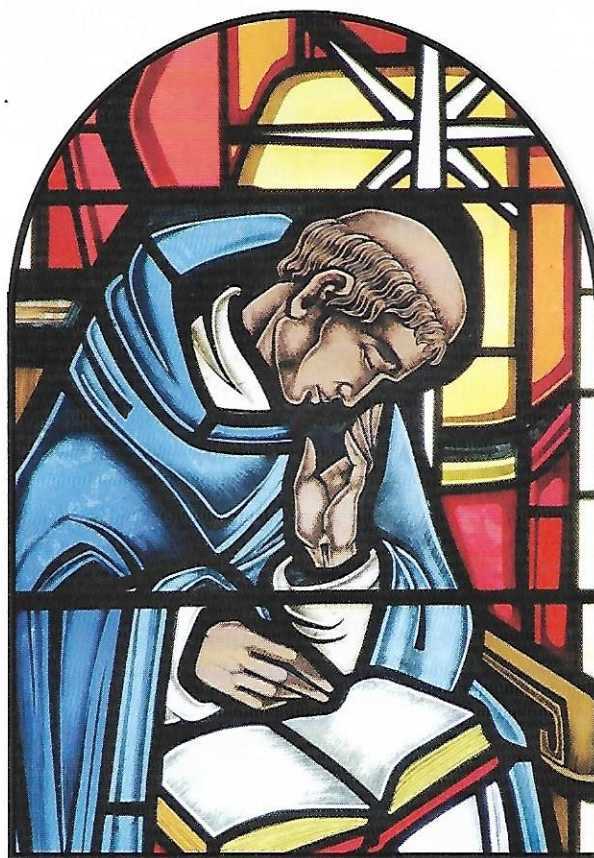
During the Middle Ages, the Church often served as a beacon of light in the darkness. Jesus told his followers: “You are the light of the world . . . your light must shine before others.” (Matthew 5:14,16) Take a moment to thank Jesus for these words. Ask him for the strength you need to be a light to others who are experiencing darkness.

### In Search of Heretics

Jesus taught us that the first and greatest commandment is to love God “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37) The First Commandment calls us to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him above all else. When a baptized Catholic denies a truth about God that the Church teaches, we call that a heresy. During the Middle Ages, heresy was looked upon as a great evil, and heretics were considered traitors. Therefore, in some countries, heretics were put

on trial in hopes that they would change their minds. Those who did not were punished.

In the 13th century, the Church established an official Catholic court, the Inquisition, to examine, investigate, and sometimes punish those accused of heresy. Unfortunately, sometimes that punishment was excessive. The Inquisition was generally successful in halting heresies and protecting suspected heretics from more severe penalties by civil officials. However, the Church has expressed regret for the court’s excesses.



Saint Dominic.

### A Blend of Church and State

In medieval times, the Church influenced life greatly. All were governed by Church law, celebrated Church feasts, and attended Church schools. People looked to the Church to meet their material and spiritual needs. The Crusades brought more commerce and led to more people moving to the city and needing education. Two great men, Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Dominic, helped the Church enlighten and guide the world.



## A Light to Those in Need

Born in Italy in the late 12th century, Saint Francis of Assisi was a high-spirited, rich young man. He followed a call from God to give up his carefree life and live according to the Gospel. Francis sold everything he owned, wore a rough brown robe, and went about preaching, teaching, and caring for those who were poor. Many men were so impressed with his holiness that they joined him. They came to be known as Franciscans. Because Franciscans lived like Christ, without land or money, they were the first **Mendicant Order**. Francis's way of living reminded the Church to live the Gospel value of poverty and to be concerned for people who were poor.

In addition to the Franciscans, other new religious orders, such as the Dominicans, Carmelites, Capuchins, and Augustinians, came into existence. Like other religious communities, members of these orders took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Unlike the Benedictine monks who seldom left their monasteries, however, members of these communities lived in the cities. These orders also were known as Mendicant Orders because they begged for their food. Their lifestyle made them available to help people in their daily lives. The Mendicant Orders serve as guides for **spirituality** and are good examples of how the Church adapts to the times.

## Centers of Light: The Universities

Saint Dominic was a wealthy Spanish noble who became a priest. In the early 13th century, he became convinced of the need for scholars and preachers of the Gospel who lived poor and simple lives. Dominic gave the men who followed him an appreciation for study of the Gospel and Catholic teaching. This group of men later called themselves Dominicans. One holy Dominican teacher was Saint Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the 13th century. When Thomas was a student, he was very large and slow in giving answers. The other students nicknamed him the "dumb ox." But Thomas Aquinas went on to become one of the Church's greatest thinkers and writers. His brilliance showed itself in his 21-volume work, *Summa Theologiae* (Summary of Theology), in which he explained Catholic beliefs. Through the Dominicans, many universities were founded to teach the faith.

## The University of You

Universities often have mission statements that briefly explain who they are, who they serve, and why they exist. If you were to found a university to teach people about God and the Catholic faith, what would be your mission statement? Keep in mind that your university is dedicated to charity as well as education.



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## Remember

How did some leaders in the Church lose their focus during the Middle Ages?

When Church leaders became political leaders, abuses crept in. A bishop appointed by the king became responsible to the king, not to the pope.

How was the Church a light during medieval times?

The Church was a light through saints who explained and lived the teachings of Christ.

What are some of the reasons that led to the Great Schism between the East and the West?

Over the centuries, differences in beliefs and practices began to divide the eastern and western parts of the Church. Likewise, there was a political rivalry between the two great cities of Constantinople in the East and Rome in the West.

## Words to Know

excommunication

Mendicant Order

schism

spirituality

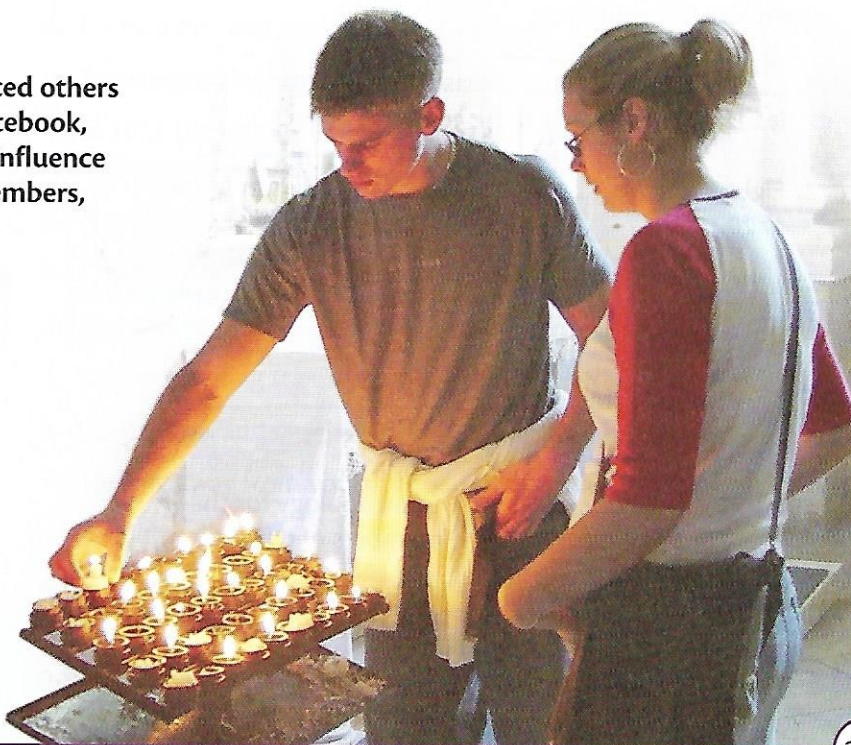
*Summa Theologiae*

## Respond

The saints of the Middle Ages influenced others in positive ways. In your reflection notebook, write ways that you can be a positive influence on your friends, classmates, family members, and others.

## Reach Out

1. Go grocery shopping with your parents or guardians and pay attention to the quantity of food they buy. When you get home, talk about what it must be like for members of Mendicant Orders to beg for their food.
2. With a parent or guardian, search the Internet for information about the spiritual heritages of the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Dominicans. Report your findings to another person.
3. Write a report on Islam. Include how it started, what Muslims believe, and how they practice their faith.
4. Visit the Web site of the Catholic University of America to gain an awareness of how Catholic universities continue to be centers of light.
5. Together with your family, learn the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis. Pray this prayer together regularly as a family.
6. Ask your parents or guardians to describe who has been a beacon of light for them during moments of darkness.



## CHAPTER 14 Review Activities

**Spot the Flaw** Correct the word or phrase that makes each sentence untrue.

1. In 1054 the Church experienced the Great Schism, when the Eastern churches joined the Western Church.
2. The Crusades were intended to regain Rome for Christians.
3. The Inquisition was meant to change the lives of thieves.
4. The Benedictines were the first Mendicant Order.
5. Thomas Aquinas founded the Dominicans, an order of preachers.



**People of Note** Match each name with its description.

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Saint Gregory VII       | a. Was convinced of the need for scholars and preachers |
| _____ 2. Pope Urban II           | b. Founded the first Mendicant Order                    |
| _____ 3. Saint Francis of Assisi | c. Sought to end lay investiture                        |
| _____ 4. Saint Dominic           | d. Became one of the Church's greatest thinkers         |
| _____ 5. Saint Thomas Aquinas    | e. Called for the first Crusade                         |

**Theology Detective** Find the missing information and use it to complete the sentences.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was the practice in which political leaders assigned jobs to bishops and priests.
2. Eight \_\_\_\_\_ took place over a span of 200 years.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ impressed so many people with his holiness and example of Gospel living.
4. The Church established an \_\_\_\_\_, known as the Inquisition, to halt heresies.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ issued an apology for the wrongs committed by some members of the Church during the Crusades.

