

The covers of these hand copied books were usually works of art in their own right. They were made of wood, ivory, and gold, crusted with precious stones. They reflected the importance of the book, and, more than that, they provided additional devotional material. Even for those who couldn't or didn't want to read, the covers provided a series of religious pictures to study and think about.



Some of the hand copied manuscripts were **Psalters**. A **Psalter** is a copy of the book of Psalms bound separately as a song book.

Psalters bear special notice because they were usually very small books intended to be held in the hand while you sang. Their covers are frequently very beautiful and elaborate. They are often carved ivory miniatures. The covers often show events from the life of Christ or images of the saints.



Song of Roland

The **Song of Roland** is an epic medieval poem which re-tells a historic battle between Charlemagne's brother and the Muslims. In fact, the battle was not with the Muslims, and the historical events don't much resemble the events of the poem, but the poem itself is an important part of history.

The Song of Roland reflects the medieval desire for honor, chivalry, and bravery. It also reflects the ideological connection between serving the king and serving God as well as the willingness of a good knight to sacrifice himself in that service.

In the poem, Roland's forces are cut off from the main part of the army. Roland at first refuses to sound his horn, calling for backup. Finally, however, as his men die around him, he sounds his horn to call the main part of the army. The call is too late, but Roland fights on in spite of mortal injuries. With superhuman strength he kills or routs the last of the attackers and dies. Charlemagne arrives to see the dead body of his heroic brother and swears revenge, routing the Muslims and chasing them out of Zaragoza, an important city in Spain.



Monasticism

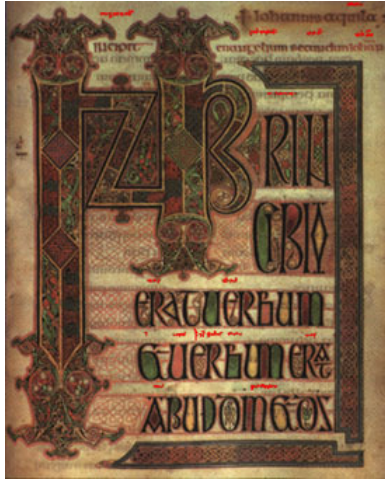
During the medieval period, the concept of monasticism spread and grew. No longer the crazy hermits in the caves, monks were groups of individuals working together to serve God through self-restraint and hard work.

During the medieval period, the largest and best organized group of monks were known as the **Benedictines**, named after their patron and founder, St. Benedict. The set of rules that governed Benedictine life became very important and was used as a guideline for other monastic orders.

The set of 3 vital vows taken by monks is important, as is understanding the monk's day:

- Poverty – Monks gave up all earthly possessions. They held all things in common and shared everything.
- Chastity – Monks were not allowed to have sex or sexual fantasies. They were to focus on God rather than on physical concerns, and sex was considered the ultimate physical concern.
- Humility – Monks were to focus on working, helping others, and serving God, not getting ahead in life.

1. Concerning the Kinds of Monks and Their Manner of Living.
2. What the Abbot Should Be Like
3. About Calling in the Brethren to Take Council
4. What are the Instrument of Good Works
5. Concerning Obedience
6. Concerning Silence
7. Concerning Humility
8. Concerning the Divine Offices at Night
9. How Many Psalms Are to Be Said at Night.
10. How in Summer the Nocturnal Praise Shall be Carried On
11. How Vigils Should Be Conducted on Sundays
16. How Divine Service Shall Be Held through the Day.
18. In What Order the Psalms are To Be Sung
19. Concerning the Art of Singing
20. Concerning Reverence for Prayer
21. Concerning the Deans of the Monastery
22. How the Monks Shall Sleep.
23. Concerning Excommunication for Faults
24. What Ought to Be the Measure of Excommunication
25. Concerning Graver Faults
26. Concerning those Who, Without Being Ordered by the Abbot, Associate with the Excommunicated
27. What Care the Abbot Should Exercise with Regard to the Excommunicated
28. Concerning those Who, Being Often Rebuked, Do Not Amend
29. Whether Brothers who Leave the Monastery Ought Again to Be Received
30. Concerning Boys under Age, How They Shall Be Corrected
31. Concerning the Cellarer of the Monastery, What Sort of a Person He Shall Be
32. Concerning the Utensils or Property of the Monastery
33. Whether the Monks Should Have Anything of Their Own.
34. Whether All Ought to Received Necessities Equally
35. Concerning the Weekly Officers of the Kitchen
36. Concerning Infirm Brothers
37. Concerning Old Age and Infancy
38. Concerning the Weekly Reader
39. Concerning the Amount of food
40. Concerning the Amount of Drink.
41. At What Hours the Brothers Should Take Their Refection
42. That After the "Completorium" No-one Shall Speak
43. Concerning Those Who Come Late to Divine Service or To Table
44. Concerning Those Who Are Excommunicated, How They Shall Render Satisfaction
45. Concerning Those Who Make Mistakes in the Oratory
46. Concerning Those Who Err in Any Other Matter
47. Concerning The Announcement of the Hour of Divine Office
48. Concerning the Daily Manual Labour.
49. Without title
50. Concerning Brothers Who Labour Far from the Oratory or Who are On A Journey
51. Concerning Brothers Who Do Not Journey Very Far
52. Concerning the Oratory of the Monastery
53. Concerning the Reception of Guests
54. Whether a Monk Shall be Allowed to Receive Letters or Anything
55. Concerning Clothes and Shoes
56. Concerning the Table of the Abbot
57. Concerning the Artificers of the Monastery
58. Concerning the Manner of Receiving Brothers
59. Concerning the Sons of Nobles of of poor Men Who Are Presented
60. Concerning Priests Who May Chance to Desire to Dwell in the Monastery
61. Concerning Pilgrim Monks: How They Shall Be Received
62. No title - concerns ordination by abbots
63. Concerning Rank in the Congregation
64. Concerning the Ordination of an Abbot
65. Concerning the Provost of the Monastery
66. Concerning the Doorkeepers of the Monastery
67. Concerning Brothers Sent on a Journey
68. If Impossibilities Are Enjoined on a Brother
69. That, in a Monastery, One Shall Not Presume to Defend Anothers
70. That No-one Shall Presume to Strike Promiscuously
71. That They Shall Be Mutually Obedient
72. Concerning the Good Zeal Which monks Ought to have
73. Concerning the Fact That Not Every Just Observance is Decreed in This Rule



Illuminated Manuscripts

One of the primary works of the monks was the creation of illuminated manuscripts. Since all books were hand copied, copying the Bible seemed a logical activity for a monk.

However, the monk's work went beyond copying. Their reverence for the scriptures reached out into artistry, and they created elaborately decorated books where each page had an elaborate border pattern, and the letters were carefully drawn and decorated with brilliant, expensive colors. These copies were called **Illuminated Manuscripts**.



Monasticism is a huge part of the middle ages, and, to a degree, the renaissance. To the modern mind, that makes no sense, and it brings up an important question:

Why become a monk?

Why become a monk?

How do we reach them?

- **Fear**
- **Example**
- **Promise**

Memento Mori



Another concept which winds its way through the Middle Ages and into the renaissance is the constant reminder that we are mortal, which, translated into Latin, reads **Memento Mori**.

The origins of Memento Mori are easy to understand – death was a constant companion in the middle ages; the infant mortality rate was about 1 in 3.

However, the concept of Memento Mori also fit in well with the pragmatic Christian ideology of the church. In a society where the church was engaged in a constant struggle with superstition and vice, the reminder of the threat of death was a great motivator for people to live “the right way.”

The concept of memento mori spawned an entire genre of art all pointing out the vanities of earthly wealth, pleasure, and knowledge in the light of death.

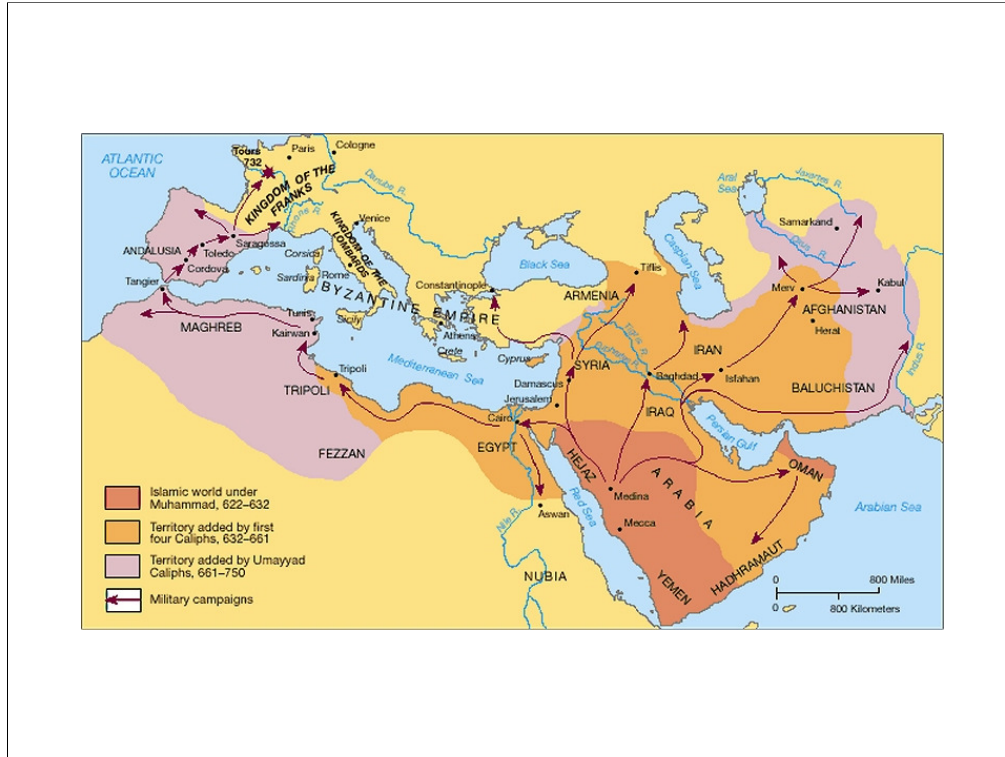


Theatre was an important part of Medieval culture. In small farming communities, stories and legends were the height of entertainment. Wanderers made their livings performing plays at town centers.

Wandering storytellers and singers known as **Minstrels** would come into local bars and village squares and sing songs of heroism, trickery, and warning.

These theatrical troupes were quickly seized upon by the church as a good way of getting moral messages and warnings to the common people. These plays were known as **Morality Plays** because they taught a lesson or moral. Stiff and obvious to us, the plays were fascinating and popular to their original audiences who were totally unaccustomed to drama.

The best known of these early plays is a show called **Everyman**. Everyman is the story of, well, Everyman, a character who represents Generic Mankind. Death comes to collect his soul and he looks for someone to go with him into the dark night. He tries to persuade a variety of folks such as *Fellowship*, *Kindred*, *Cousin*, *Goods*, and *Knowledge* to go, but they refuse him. It is *Good Deeds* (or *Virtue*), who finally supports him and who agrees to argue for him before God.



The Arabs, following the submission of Islam, had swept across the southern parts of the Mediterranean, taking over much of what Rome had left behind. The Muslims prized knowledge and its use in Allah’s service above all else, and they were well organized.

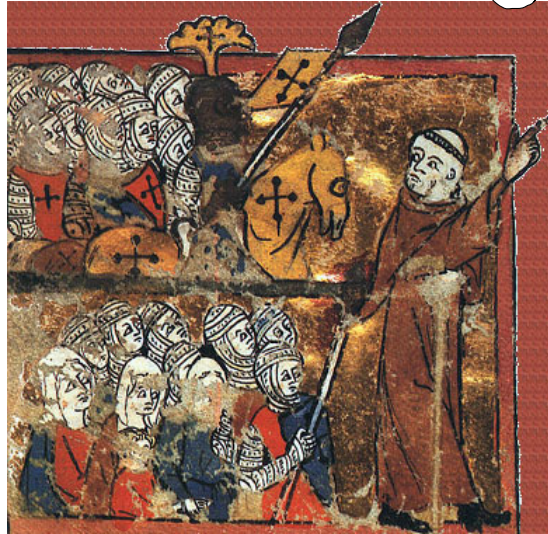
They knew the basics of biology and chemistry. They understood warfare. There were still internal conflicts and power struggles, but in the face of infidels they were united.

Jerusalem, Palestine, and the cradle of Christianity had been taken over by the Arabic world shortly after Mohammed’s death and infidels were discouraged from visiting. However, many Christians, as part of their worship wanted to make visits or pilgrimages to sacred sites in Palestine.

Charlemagne opened negotiations with the Arab world, for political, economic, and trade reasons. His negotiations were largely successful, and he gained permissions for pilgrims to visit the holy sites.

He never, however, gained respect – white elephant.

Crusade



During the middle ages, as the church gained in power, the struggle between the Christians and the Muslims came to a head.

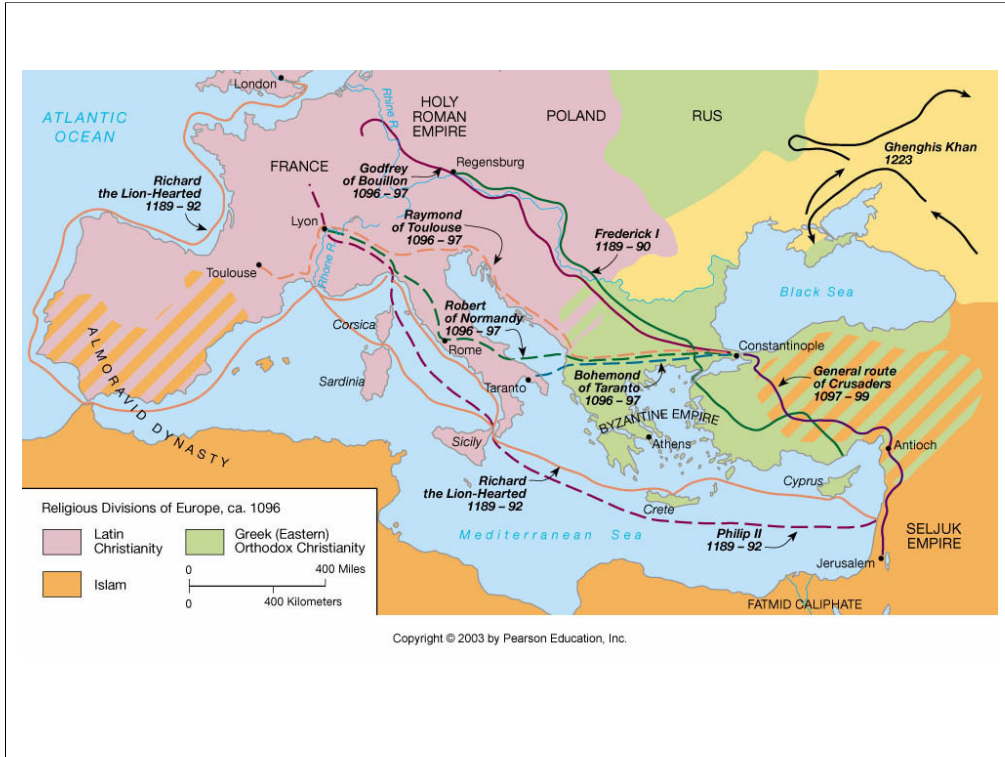
The **Crusades** were a series of holy wars fought between the Christians and the Muslims over supremacy of religion.

There were a lot of crusades, started for a lot of different reasons. Some were really stupid. Others were pretty justified.

On the Good Side – the crusades can be seen as necessary; the Muslims were expanding aggressively. They owned the Middle East, northern Africa, and were moving into Spain.

On the Bad Side – the crusades were frequently treasure-hunts. The crusaders not only attacked the Muslims, they besieged and trashed Christian cities too for profit.

The crusaders were frequently induced by profit and heavenly brownie points.





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They went with the virgin Mary. A devotion that became known as the **Cult of the Virgin.**

Jesus’ human mother; Catholics believed in perpetual virginity

Jesus’ human mother had already shown up in Christian art as a part of the story of his life. However, in the middle ages, she was elevated to the second most important person in the afterlife – the queen of heaven. She became the saint to whom cathedrals were dedicated and windows were made.

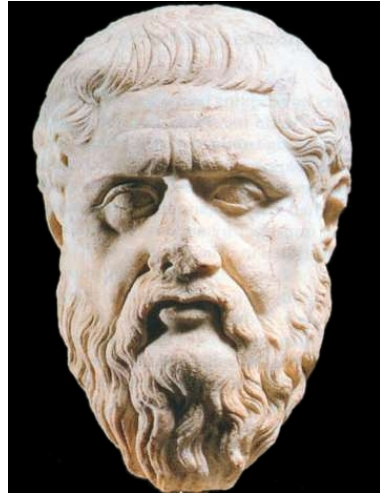






Plato

- World of forms is the “true” world
- Real world is merely a reflection
- Beauty is good
- Light = Knowledge & Truth



Neo-Platonism

- Light = God
- Beauty leads to God
- Division between physical and spiritual
- Connected together by the spirit & Christ's sacrifice
- Truth is found in the spiritual – ideal



Abbot Suger

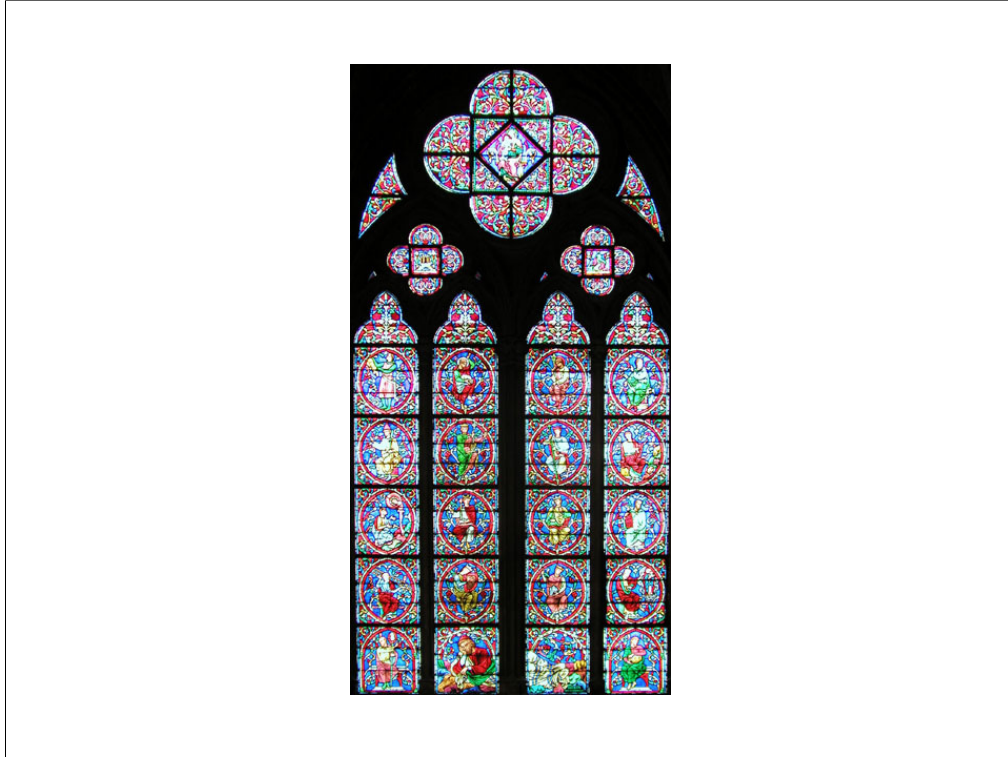


St. Denis

One of the greatest feats of architecture in history came about in France. **Abbot Suger**, advisor to the king of France, was given the duty of rebuilding the church of **St. Denis**.

In rebuilding St. Denis, Suger pulled out all the stops. He incorporated his own scholarship, building on the ideas of Plato. He added to the traditional design work, figuring ways to make the cathedral bigger and more beautiful.

Fiat Lux



That idea was known as the mysticism of light

- Every created thing takes part in God's presence through light
- Light is ultimate purity
- God is pure light – lux nova

Since the cathedral was the house of God, it was important that it was filled with light.

Not only that, the light became a symbol. The medium of stained glass became important as an object lesson, a way of explaining how God came to earth.

In the symbolism of the mysticism of light, the light represents the purity of God. The stained glass represents the physical form through which Jesus came.



St. Denis

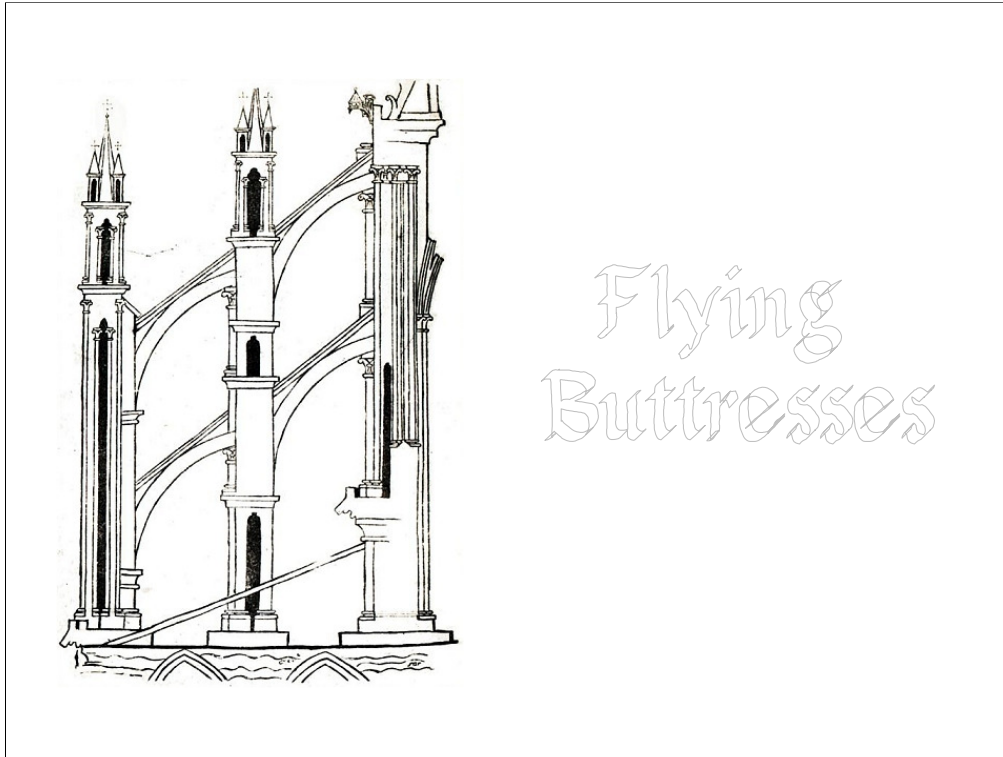
Let's take a quick look at 3 of the greatest Gothic cathedrals.

Cathedrals were also tourist attractions and sources of pilgrimage income.

St. Denis is the “original” cathedral, and as such is simpler than many later cathedrals. It has fewer windows and lacks flying buttresses around the aisles.



It is, however well lit, has a groin vault, and there is a high concentration of windows at the apse supported by the buttresses.



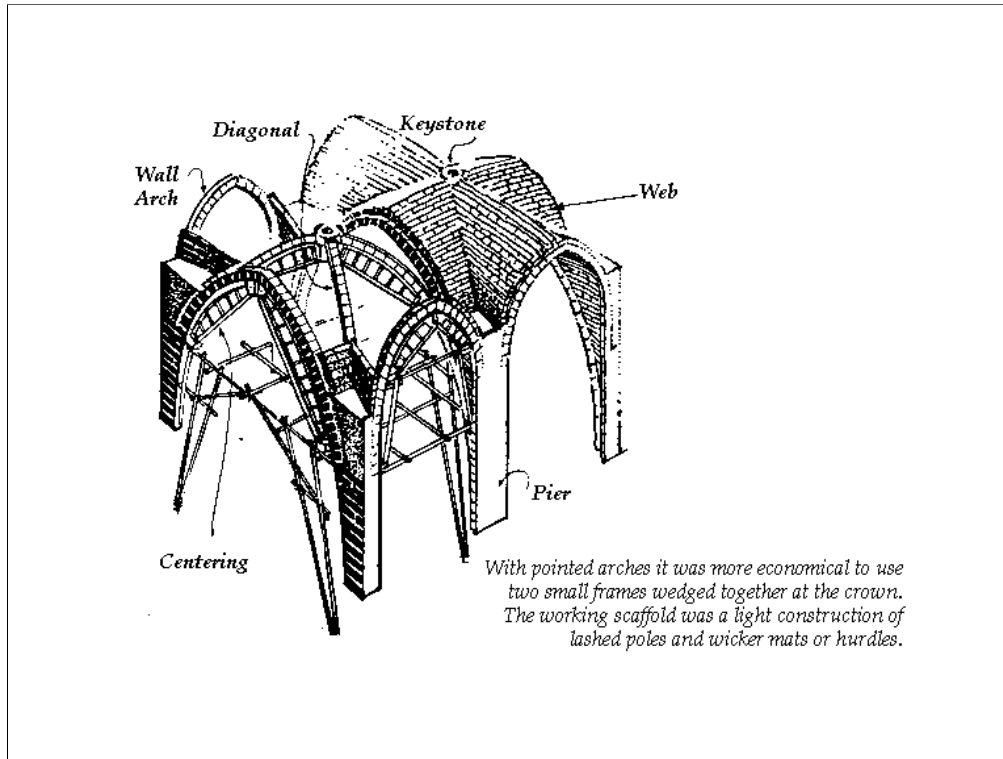
The roofs of cathedrals were made of stone, just like the rest of the cathedral. That made them extremely heavy. In earlier designs, known as Romanesque style churches (like the Hagia Sophia), the walls were very heavy and were designed in a trapezoid shape. The walls were only broken in a few places for windows, and they were incredibly thick at the base, tapering toward the top.

The weight of the roof in a Romanesque cathedral was balanced straight down into the ground through a constant stretch of wall.

With the large window space in a gothic cathedral, the walls could not support the roof. Therefore, the architects added external supports called **flying buttresses**. Flying buttresses were large, arched bridges attached to piers or poles set into the ground outside the cathedral. The weight of the cathedral roof was carried down through the flying buttresses at an angle and then down into the ground.

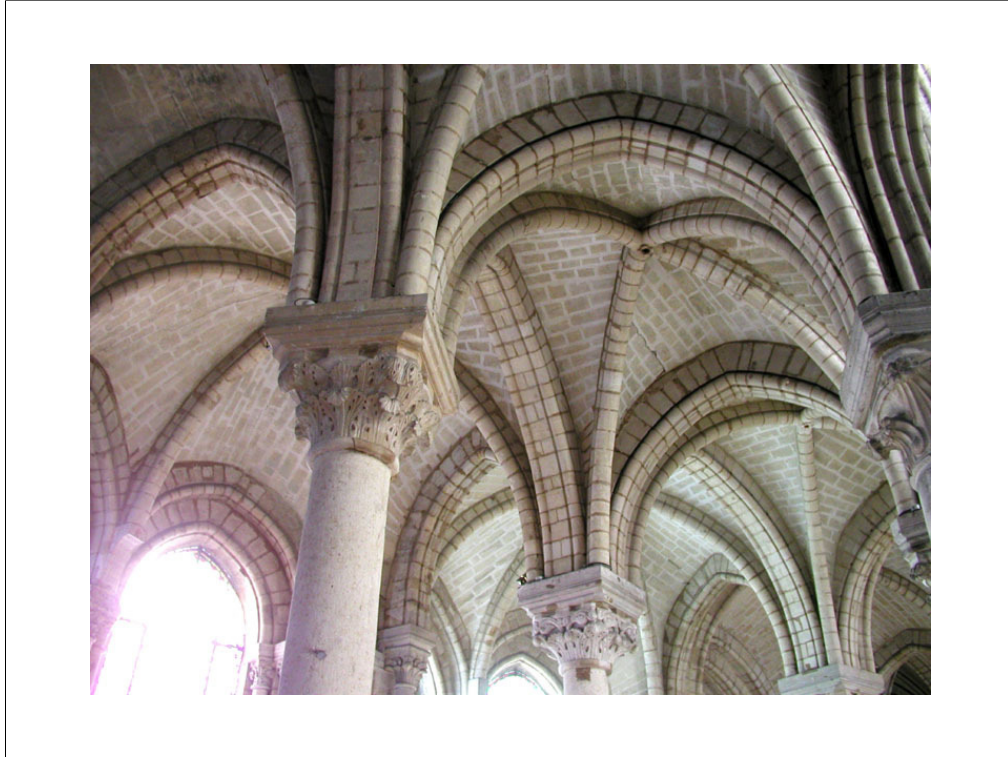


Flying buttresses were a practical invention, but they gradually became an aesthetic part of cathedral building as well. The lacy piers created by the buttresses supported the roof of the cathedral, freeing the architects to include the stained glass windows, and also created a space around the cathedral, dividing the ambulatory, chapels, and aisles into sections.



With this new design supported by flying buttresses, the idea of a barrel vault became outdated. The weight of the cathedral roof no longer had to be perfectly balanced to travel directly downward. Instead it could be distributed into 4 different directions.

A new type of vault known as a **Groin Vault** was introduced. The groin vault was essentially the meeting of two barrel vaults at right angles, creating a cross section.



A groin vault was more secure than a barrel vault because it distributed the weight in 4 different directions, dividing it equally amongst the piers.



The differences between the **Romanesque** style of cathedral and the **Gothic** cathedral are easily recognizable to the trained eye.

Romanesque

- Barrel vault
- Thick, heavy, constant walls
- Darker interior
- “Round” shapes

Gothic

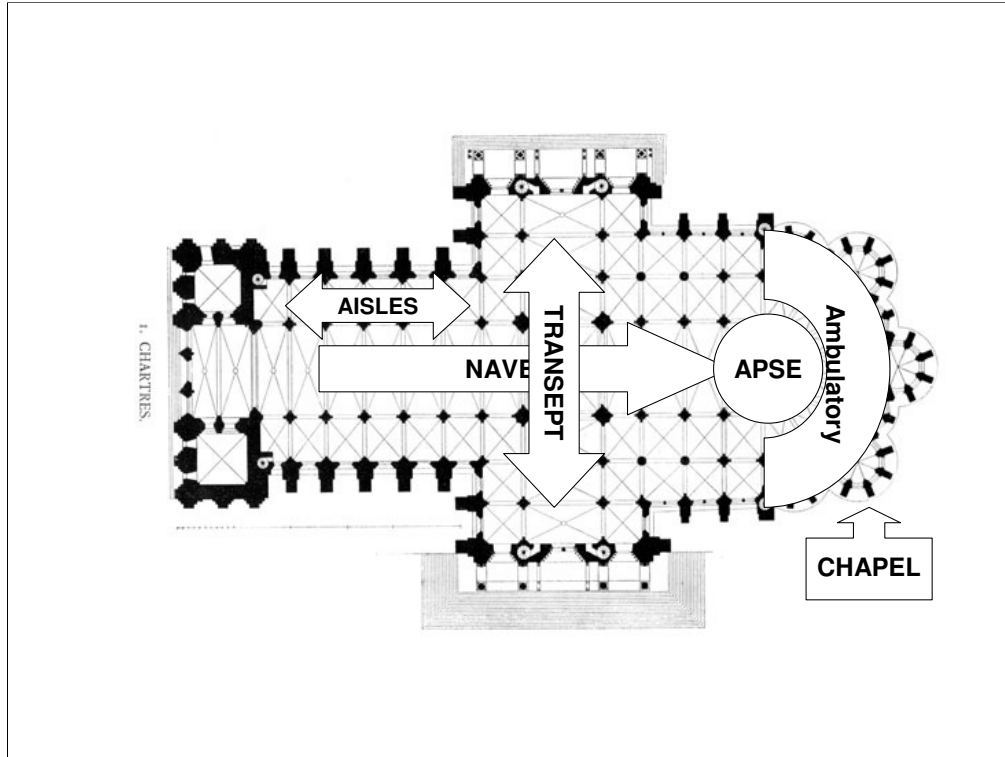
- Groin vault
- Many stained glass windows
- Minimal wall space/thin piers of wall
- Light interior
- Pointed shapes and arches



In the high middle ages, the Gothic cathedral was an object lesson. It was meant to do several things for the serfs who visited it as well as to serve several purposes in the community:

- Present the worshippers with a glimpse of what heaven might be like
- Teach basic Bible stories and lessons through pictures
- Present doctrines through object lessons
- House relics
- Attract tourism
- Serve as a central gathering area and marketplace





The structure of a Gothic Cathedral draws heavily upon the basilica style. The shape of the cross is retained. Many of the “pieces” have the same names, but the basilica was enlarged and made more practical in the Gothic style.

- **Nave** – same as it was before. Main portion of the cathedral, where worship takes place.
- **Aisles** – same as before – walkways for access to the front of the cathedral. In later Gothic cathedrals, the walls along the aisles also contain chapels.
- **Transept** – same as before. The crosspiece of the cross shape of the church. The priest’s pulpit is usually located at or around this point.
- **Apse** – the point of the cross. The apse is where the choir and church officials are seated for services
- **Ambulatory** – a new walkway around the front of the church. The ambulatory and aisles were increasingly important as more additions were built on and around the church.
- **Chapel** – chapels were small, private worship areas. They were frequently sponsored by **guilds** or wealthy patrons.



Mysticism of Light

One of the largest changes in church structure was the amount of light in the church.

Suger, and most medieval thinkers were big on the ideas of Plato. If you recall, Plato believed in a perfect realm of ideal forms. This world was only a shadow of the “real” world. For Plato, light was symbolic of knowledge, and of the divine. Medieval thinkers got into that idea; it seemed to fit in really well with Christianity. Light was a great symbol for God; that idea had been important in churches like the Hagia Sophia; in medieval churches, it got even more important.



The ideas in the mysticism of light required massive amounts of stained glass incorporated in the cathedral.

This required a lot of structural rethinking. If you want to build a building over 100 feet high with almost all the wall space taken up by windows, you're going to have to change the way the building is supported.

In a Gothic Cathedral, the actual amount of weight bearing wall space is usually 50% or less than the actual wall space.



As part of that “story book,” the exterior carvings of the cathedral also served as warnings.

In the medieval world, Evil was a very real and present thing. The people believed in demons, ghosts, and monsters. The water spouts of the cathedrals were frequently carved into the shape of ugly monsters known as **Gargoyles** and other ugly creatures known as **grotesques** also sat at the edges of the buttresses and layers of the cathedral.

These creatures face away from the cathedral, indicating that evil does not face the house of God and warning evil away. The Gargoyles also acted as reminders to the worshippers of their old ways of worship and the demons that the church claimed they had served.

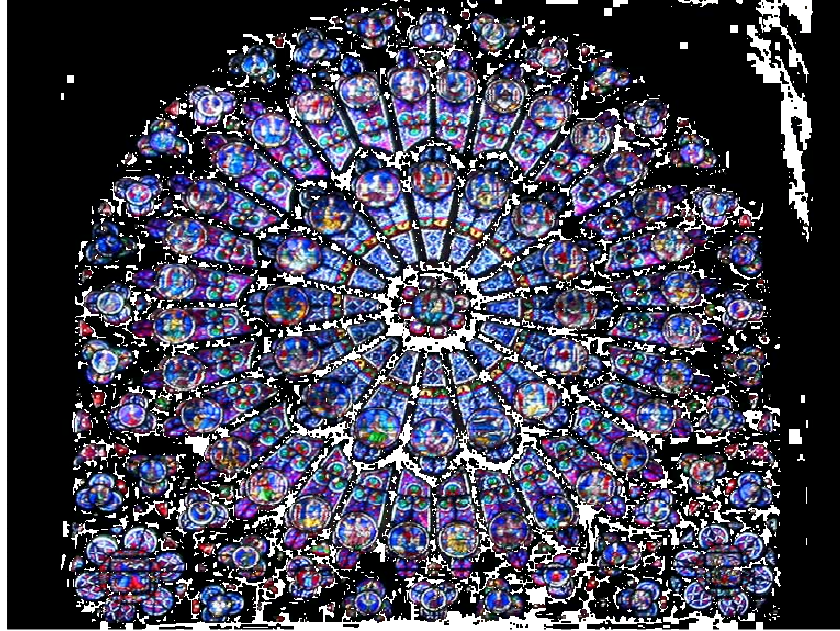
Notre Dame



Notre Dame (our lady) is probably the best known gothic cathedral.

It is known for its lacy buttresses, classical cross shape, and massive rose window





These beautiful windows represent a great artistic achievement. The creation of stained glass is an art form as is the creation of the leaden framework that holds the glass.

Not only is the glass an analogy, it is also a teaching tool. Scenes from history, the Bible, the lives of the saints were portrayed in the stained glass for parishioners to learn from.

One of the new forms of the windows was known as a rose window. It is a circular design with elaborate stained glass panels. Circle = symbol of deity/ infinity – no beginning and no end

Rose windows are enormous

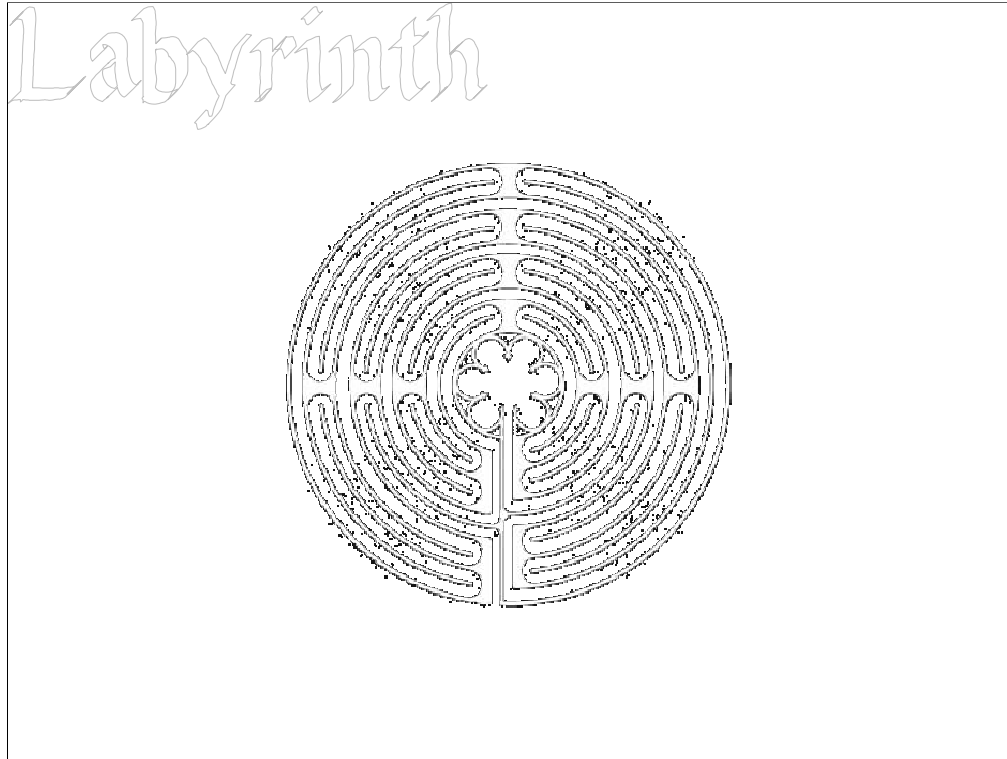


Notre Dame is filled with light and with tiers of windows. It features chapels all around the aisles and ambulatory as well as a series of windows along its sides and a groin vault that soars 2 ½ stories above the ground.



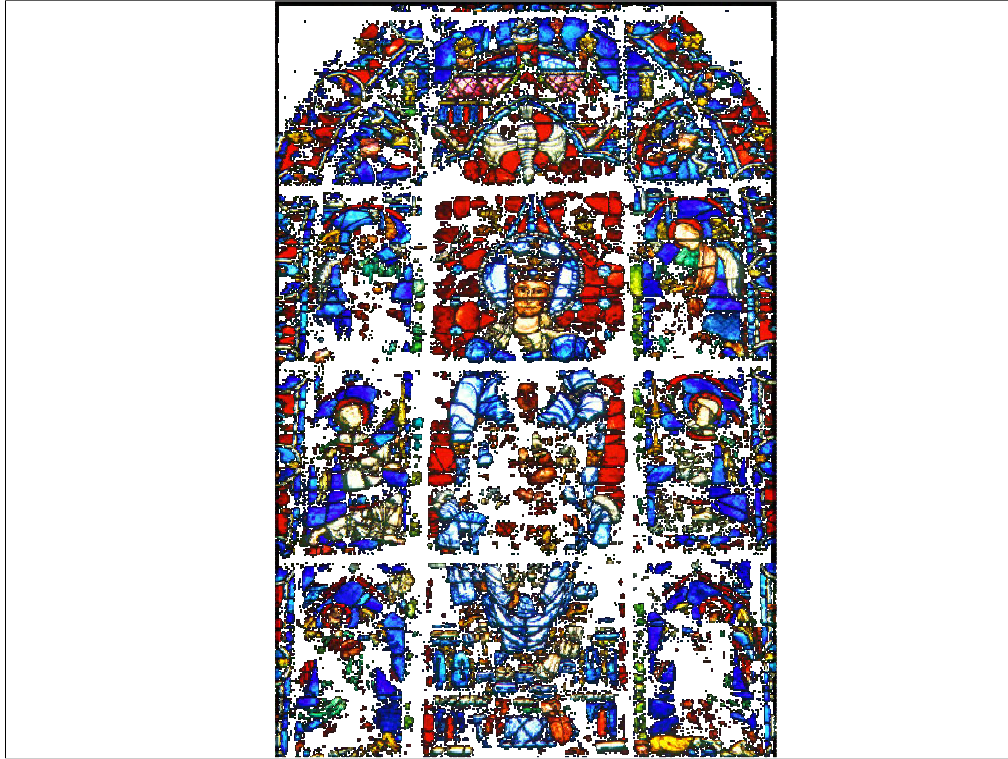
Chartres cathedral is one of the most respected and studied Gothic cathedrals. More than any other cathedral, it is the story book of the poor man. In its day, Chartres was particularly rich in relics and was a major tourist attraction in its day, bringing in huge amounts of money for the town.

One of the most famous of Chartres relics was a shirt supposedly worn by the Virgin Mary.



That design, known as the Chartres Labyrinth is intended to be walked by pilgrims. The shape of the cross is visible in the divisions, and the 4-fold division of the labyrinth was symbolic of the earth. The winding pattern is supposed to allow introspection, leading the person who walks it further and further inward in a search for enlightenment.

There were many labyrinths, but the Chartres labyrinth is the most famous. Some companies still make desktop copies of the labyrinth which can be traced with a wooden stylus. The idea is that the labyrinth still can bring order to the mind and improve concentration.



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Medieval cities were an anomaly – in a feudalistic society where all wealth was measured by how much land you owned, city dwellers relied upon money rather than land. They had liquid assets.

Cities became centers because they offered things no one else could. Merchants and craftsmen bonded together into organizations called **guilds** which regulated advancement, training, and protection.

The merchants, originally outcasts began to become more important in society, and their class began to open the door to social advancement based in cunning rather than birth.



Elsewhere in the medieval world, things were changing a bit. Since the right of **Primogeniture** – or all goods being inherited by the firstborn son – was going strong, there was a problem. Families had lots of children b/c of high infant mortality. You needed to make sure that a boy survived. The problem was actually if too many boys survived.

Second and third sons were sent into the military, the church, or sent off to work someone else's property. However, those sons got fed up with their options. Some of them became traders, shuttling goods from one place to the other. These new traders were minimally educated, and had some money due to offering a service that no one else did and that everyone needed. The only problem was that in a land based society, merchants owned no land.

They shared that in common with many tradesmen who manufactured goods. The merchants and craftsman bonded together, setting up an area of tightly-packed homes and a system of mutual protection, and the city was reborn.

University



Universities grew out from Charlemagne's idea of cathedral schools. As more and more specialized instruction became required in certain areas (law, medicine, etc) universities rose up to fill the need for higher education. Gradually, universities teaching more advanced versions of the liberal arts curriculum arose. And the greatest of those universities was in Paris.

In the twelfth century Paris began to become a recognized centre of northern intellectual life. One reason for this was that scholars there found the necessary conditions of peace and stability provided by the increasingly strong French kingship; another was that food was plentiful because the area was rich in agricultural produce; and another was that the cathedral school of Paris in the first half of the twelfth century boasted the most charismatic and controversial teacher of the day, Peter Abelard (1079-1142).

Universities were a Medieval invention – ancient schools were not organized

4-years of study = BA, a general degree in language & logic

3-4 years additional = MA in law, medicine, theology, etc.

Abstract not practical knowledge

In their free time, students partied. **Carmina Burana**, is a series of very dirty poems originally sung in bars. Later on, a composer set them to classical music...creating a very serious-sounding musical piece.

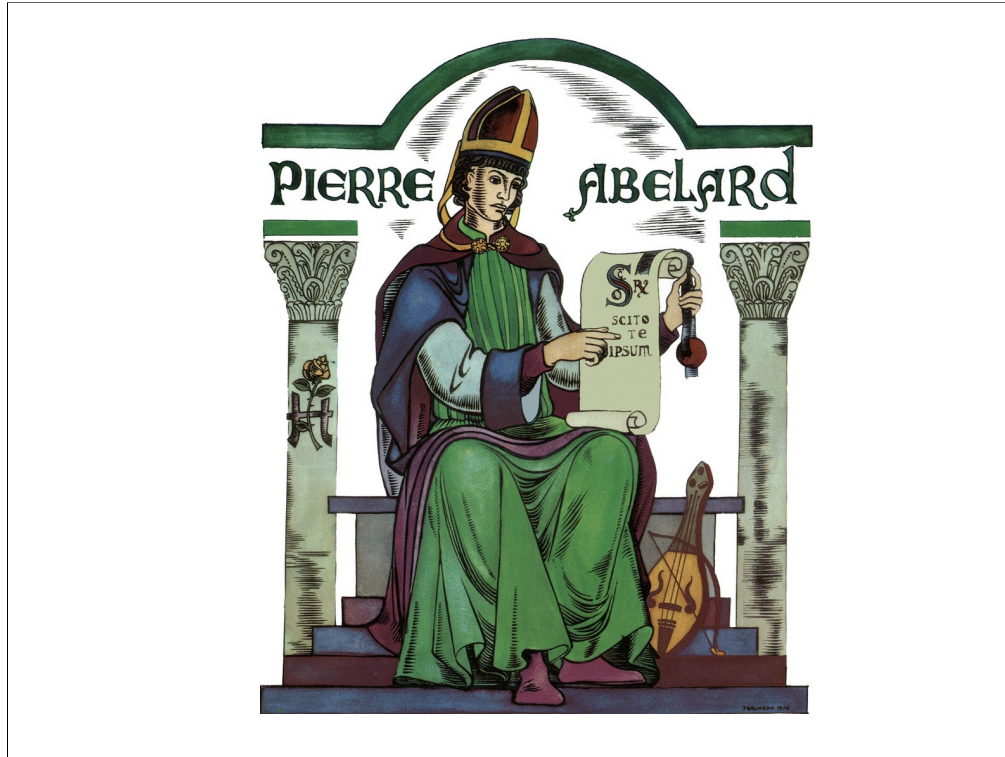
Heloise



Abelard

Heloise was a young daughter of a nobleman. Her father, being a unique man in his time decided to have her educated and hired a young man named Abelard.

The rest is history.



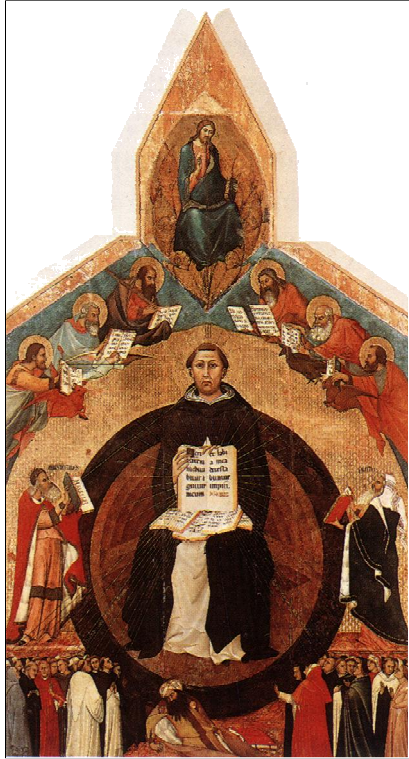
Peter Abelard was one of the greatest teachers of the medieval period. During his Master's degree studies he managed to argue one of his own teachers to a standstill.

Abelard was one of the most dynamic teachers of his day, attracting thousands of students from across Europe.

He taught a new concept of Platonic philosophy which was influenced by the works of Aristotle called Conceptualism. Abelard taught that ideals were extant only in the mind and had no actual secondary reality.

Abelard was a master of **dialectic** – a method of learning that relied upon “argument.” In dialectic, one person proposes a statement or makes an assertion. The second person challenges or argues against part of that. The two speakers argue back and forth until they find a middle ground or one acknowledges the correctness of the other.

Sit et Non – Abelard's great work – an attempt to reconcile Church teachings with Biblical teachings



St. Thomas Aquinas

Dedicated to monastic orders from an early age against the wishes of his family.

Began to integrate Aristotle with belief.

His greatest work was **Summa Theologica** which was an enormous work covering almost all points of Catholic belief. The Summa has a particular format. A statement is made, then a list of objections to that statement is given, and then Aquinas tries to reason down to a common point.

Aquinas dealt with the opposing ideas of fideism and rationalism in his book.

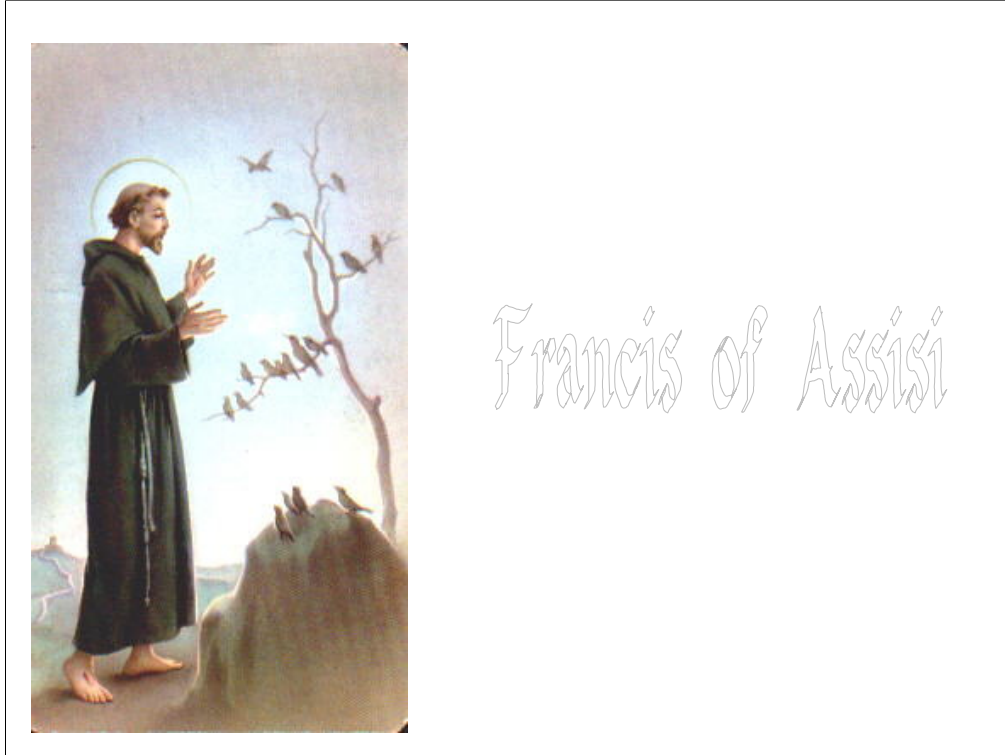
- Fideism** is belief based totally on faith. It does not require any rationality or logic; it simply relies on blind belief.

- Rationalism** relies totally on logic to prove religious points. If a point cannot be proved by logic, it is discarded or doubted.



The pope had incredible power and temporal wealth. Upon their deaths many people left their lands to the church. In the middle ages, leaving land meant also leaving contracts of fealty and serfs. The church became administrators of money as well as belief.

One of the trump cards in this power was a document known as the **Donation of Constantine**. The document, supposedly written by Constantine's secretary gave the Pope the ultimate spiritual authority as well as the deed to Europe. Under the provisions of the donation, the Pope owned Europe. If a king took office, he was only there under the grace of the Pope – his land was on loan. He took an oath of fealty to God and the Church, and thereby to the pope.



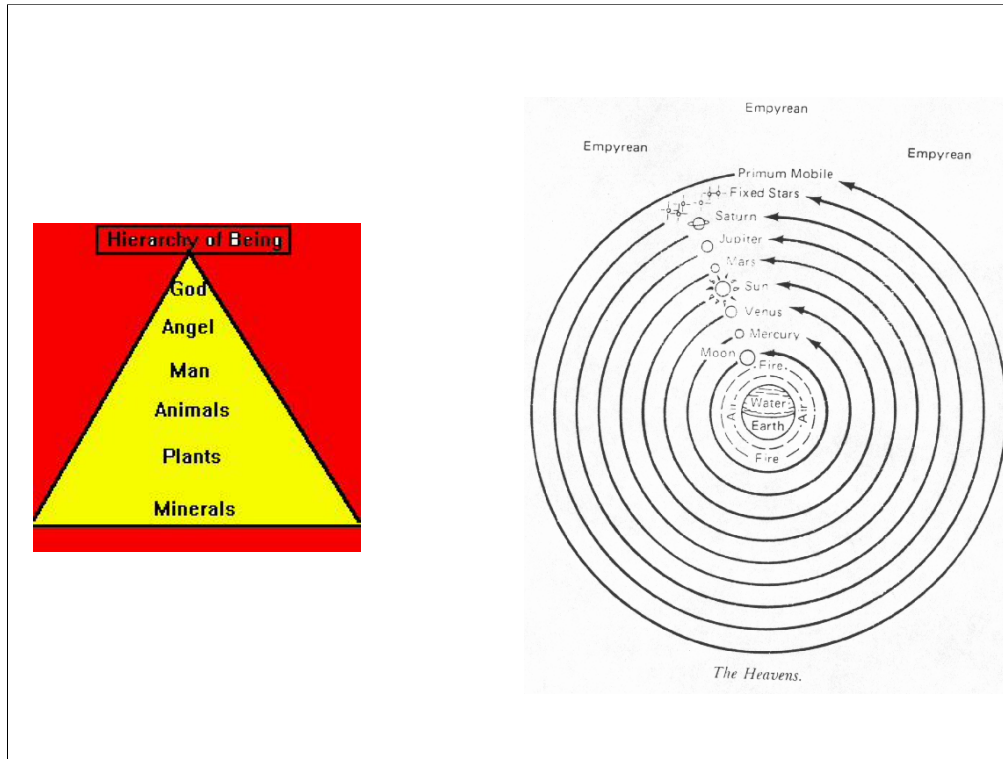
Son of a wealthy merchant. Dedicated himself to the church against his father's wishes.

St. Francis, unlike other monks of his day sought to be as much like Christ as possible. He gave up all his possessions and wandered the countryside. He would work and then donate all of his earnings to the poor. He considered all of creation as a part of God's plan and preached to everything, including birds and rocks.

Because of St. Francis' kindness, he gathered a huge following. The poor followed him and tried to emulate his actions. The papal court in Rome condemned him, but public opinion supported him.

Eventually, St. Francis, while praying was touched with the **stigmata** – the wounds of Christ's crucifixion. He died of the wound in his side.

Francis was canonized and his order was approved because of overwhelming public pressure. Frequently Francis is portrayed at the feet of the cross, crucified below Christ because he tried so hard to emulate Jesus' life.



The Medieval world was a hierarchical place. Francis defied that logic, which is why, in his time, preaching to animals was so outrageous.

Medieval thinkers believed in a **hierarchy of being** that classified all things in a pyramid order. Man was at the top of the heap, and all things were under his rule. Therefore, to the medieval/ renaissance mind, man could dominate creation.

In the hierarchy of being, minerals were at the bottom, followed by plants, animals, women, children, men, the pope, angels, and finally God.

The vision of the universe at the time was also hierarchical and **Geocentric**. Scientists (if you can call them that) believed that the earth was at the center of the universe, surrounded by the 4 elements. Beyond lay the planets and then heaven.