

June 2011

A.D.:Anno Domini

A Church history supplement for adult Catholics

This Month's Focus: A.D. 1100-1200



Diocesan Mission Statement

"We the Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Scranton, in union with our Holy Father, the Pope, are called through baptism to share in the mission which Jesus Christ has entrusted to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Priests, deacons, religious and laity, under the leadership of our Bishop, cooperate to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the teaching of the Church to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, for the salvation of all, and to witness by grace to the Kingdom of God so as to promote a culture of life, justice and peace."

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Key Events: A.D. 1100-1200

1123: The First Lateran Council (9th ecumenical) takes place. The Council brought an end to the investiture conflict—a conflict between the Church and the emperor (and some other nobles) who believed that they should be the ones to appoint bishops in their realm.

1139: The Second Lateran Council (10th ecumenical). The Council sought to reform the Church in the wake of a schism that had taken place after Innocent II was elected Pope.

1150: Peter Lombard writes *Book of Sentences*. This book was the standard textbook for theology

during the Middle Ages until St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*."

1070: St. Thomas Becket is martyred. Once a friend of King Henry II, Becket strenuously opposed the king's attempts at controlling the life of the Church in England. After asking aloud whether anyone could "rid him" of this troublesome priest, several of the king's knights murdered St. Thomas in his own cathedral. Public sentiment quickly turned against the king, who did public penance at Becket's tomb. His grave became a famous place of pilgrimage (*The Canterbury Tales* describes a group of pilgrims on

the way to St. Thomas' shrine).

1170: St. Dominic, founder of the Dominicans, is born.

1179: The Third Lateran Council (11th ecumenical) takes place. It's most important decisions involved establishing the practice of the College of Cardinals electing the Pope and the need for a 2/3 majority. It also established a school for clerics at each cathedral.

1181: St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscans, is born.

1190: University of Paris develops around Notre Dame.

1194: St. Clare of Assisi, founder

Key Concept: Universities

The university system was formed during the 12th century as the number of clergy and nobles seeking formal education increased. The previous cathedral and monastic schools were no longer able to keep up with the demand but, in many cases, the early universities (such as the famous University of Paris) began when two or more famous cathedral schools merged. Teachers' guilds—organized ac-

cording to academic discipline—quickly formed and eventually developed into faculties which were led by a dean (just like modern universities). After a certain period of time the universities achieved independence from local secular and religious authorities, which led to a spirit of free inquiry within their walls. Academic coursework revolved around theology, philosophy, civil

and canon law, medicine ("physics"), and the arts. The arts were divided into two main sections: the *trivium* (Latin grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). The universities were immensely influential and would go on to produce the majority of the primary religious and secular figures of the age.



St. Thomas Becket's dying words were, "For the name of Jesus, and in defense of the Church, I am willing to die."

"Remember how the crown was attained by those whose sufferings gave new radiance to their faith."



St. Thomas Becket's tomb became the most famous pilgrimage site in England. King Henry VIII had it destroyed in 1538. Above is what it looks like today.

Get to Know: St. Thomas Becket (A.D. 1118-1170)

St. Thomas Becket was born into a good family and received a strong early education—including a degree from the University of Paris. Descriptions of him from his younger days tend to emphasize his love of the outdoors and his impetuous nature. He once almost drowned after jumping into a swift river to save a valuable hunting hawk.

At the age of 24 St. Thomas appears to have decided that his life was to be in the service of the Church, as he took on a position in the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury and studied Canon Law at the University of Bologna. When Henry II

became king he appointed St. Thomas his chancellor. The two were close friends who shared many interests in common—including the love of luxury. As Chancellor, St. Thomas' home was said to be even more luxurious than the king's.

When the archbishop of Canterbury died, Henry II nominated St. Thomas as his successor. Thomas sought to change his mind, saying "Should God permit me to be the archbishop of Canterbury, I would soon lose your Majesty's favor, and the affection with which you honor me would be changed into hatred. For there are several things you do now in

prejudice of the rights of the Church which make me fear you would require of me what I could not agree to; and envious persons would not fail to make it the occasion of endless strife between us." These words were prophetic. St. Thomas immediately reformed his life. He studied Scripture, celebrated Mass daily, gave his money to the poor, and did penance. He also opposed the king's efforts to control all the dioceses and monasteries in England, including the appointment of bishops and abbots. On December 29 several of the king's knights murdered St. Thomas so as to remove him as an obstacle to Henry's plans.

In Their Own Words: From a letter by St. Thomas Becket

"If we who are called bishops desire to understand the meaning of our calling and to be worthy of it, we must strive to keep our eyes on him whom God appointed high priest for ever, and to follow in his footsteps. For our sake he offered himself to the Father upon the altar of the cross. He now looks down from heaven on our actions and secret thoughts, and one day he will give each of us the reward his deeds deserve. As successors of the apostles, we hold the highest rank in our churches; we have accepted the responsibility of acting as Christ's representatives on earth; we receive the honor belonging to that office, and enjoy the temporal benefits of our spiritual labors. It must therefore be our endeavor to

destroy the reign of sin and death, and by nurturing faith and uprightness of life, to build up the Church of Christ into a holy temple in the Lord.

There are a great many bishops in the Church, but would to God we were the zealous teachers and pastors that we promised to be at our consecration, and still make profession of being. The harvest is good and one reaper or even several would not suffice to gather all of it into the granary of the Lord. Yet the Roman Church remains the head of all the churches and the source of Catholic teaching. Of this there can be no doubt. Everyone knows that the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given to Peter. Upon his faith and teach-

ing the whole fabric of the Church will continue to be built until we all reach full maturity in Christ and attain to unity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God...

Remember then how our fathers worked out their salvation; remember the sufferings through which the Church has grown, and the storms the ship of Peter has weathered because it has Christ on board. Remember how the crown was attained by those whose sufferings gave new radiance to their faith. The whole company of saints bears witness to the unfailling truth that without real effort no one wins the crown."