

SUMMARY

During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had enormous power and influence. Its power rested not only on its control of religious life but also on its secular role. During this period, thousands of devout Christians came together to live in religious communities called monasteries. The most influential monastic rule was established by Saint Benedict. New monastic orders continued to be founded, especially when abuses in the older orders led to calls for reform. In the 13th century, two non-monastic orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, were founded to work and live among the people.

Late in the 11th century, the Church launched the Crusades to rescue the Holy Land from the Turks. The Crusades lasted for two centuries. Although in the end the Moslems regained possession of the Holy Land, the Crusades had far-reaching effects on western Europe.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Compare the role of the Church in the early Middle Ages to that of the Roman emperor at the time of Augustus. How were they similar? How were they different?
- 2 Why has the Middle Ages often been called the "age of faith"?
- 3 What contributions did monasteries make to medieval civilization?
- 4 Why was the reform movement in the Church so necessary in the 10th and 11th centuries?
- 5 What motivated people to go on the Crusades? How was the Fourth Crusade different from the earlier Crusades? Describe a cause that might motivate people today to join a crusade.
- 6 Why are the Crusades often called a "successful failure"?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Which books might describe the growth of monasteries?

- DUBY, GEORGES. *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*. Translated by Barbara Bray. New York: Pantheon Books, 1983. A fascinating survey of how the laws created by the Church during the Middle Ages influenced society and still effect our lives today. Contemporary chronicles explain the status of women in medieval times and the appeal of convents and monasteries.
- KNOWLES, DAVID. *Saints and Scholars*. Cambridge University Press, 1962. A portrayal of monastic life from the 6th to 16th centuries. Examines outstanding spiritual leaders, writers, artists, and politicians; provides insights into the medieval mind.
- OAKLEY, FRANCIS. *The Medieval Experience*. New York: Scribner's, 1974. A review of the medieval world that shows how much the Church dominated society. Provides insights into the important changes in religion, economy, and politics that occurred during this long period.
- PRAWER, JOSHUA. *The World of the Crusaders*. New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972. An examination of this period through the eyes of the Crusaders, Byzantines, and Jews. Details the chivalry as well as the barbarism of the age; the military strategies and weapons used; and the culture of the Crusaders' world.
- THEIS, DAN. *The Crescent and the Cross*. New York: Thomas Nelson, 1978. An account of the struggle for the possession of the Holy Land from the Crusades to today. Examines the careers of medieval heroes such as Bohemond, Raymond of Toulouse, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Frederick Barbarossa.