RS Notes: The Late Middle Ages

Reform of the Papacy

* The popes controlled the Papal States, so were involved in European politics (especially feudal politics)
  + Bishops and abbots came to hold their offices as grants from nobles, and so were vassals.
    - So, they are indebted to political leaders, not the Pope
  + Pope Gregory VII decided to get rid of the practice of **lay investiture**
    - If secular rulers did not accept this, the pope would remove them
  + Henry IV (German) didn’t like this
    - He used the clergy to fight the power of the nobles
* The struggle between Gregory VII and Henry IV became known as the **Investiture Controversy**
  + **Concordat of Worms-** a new bishop paid homage to the king as his lord, and the king invested him with the symbols of earthly office
  + A representative of the pope then invested the bishop with symbols of his spiritual office

The Black Death

* The most devastating natural disaster in European history
* **Bubonic Plague-** caused by black rats w/fleas
  + Italian merchants brought it from Caffa by the Black Sea
    - Followed trade routes
    - (1347-51)- 75 million people died
* Believed it was a punishment from God
  + Led to anti-Semitism (hatred of Jews)
    - Worst in Germany (fled to Poland)
* Because of the plague, trade declined, shortage of workers and less demand for food
  + Land lords paid more for labor
    - Some peasants began paying rent… ending serfdom!!!

Decline of Church Power

* 13th century- Popes reached the height of their power
  + Kings wouldn’t accept their political authority
  + Pope Boniface VIII v. King Philip IV of France
    - Philip wanted to tax the clergy
      * Boniface said he needed papal permission
    - Philip sent troops to bring Boniface to France
      * He escaped, but died of shock
    - Philip made Clement V pope
      * He established himself at Avignon
      * Popes stayed their from 1305-1377
    - Gregory XI moved to Rome, but soon died
* Citizens of Rome told the cardinals to elect an Italian pope.
  + Urban VI (Italian) became pope
  + A group of French cardinals declared the election invalid
    - They elected a Frenchman
    - He lived in Avignon
* Began the **Great Schism** (1378-1417)
  + Each pope denounced the other as the Anti-Christ
    - Each lost power
* 1417- a pope was elected everyone agreed to
  + Great Schism led to protests wanting to end church corruption
    - The Church lost much of its power

Hundred Years War

* Political instability also plagued the Middle Ages
  + England controlled a small area in France (Gascony)
  + Philip VI tried to take it back
    - 1337- Edward III declared war (lasted until 1453)
  + Turning point in warfare
    - Peasant foot soldiers won chief battles
    - English foot soldiers armed w/ pikes and longbows
  + 1st major battle- Crecy in 1346
    - English archers slaughtered French cavalry
    - King Henry V was eager to conquer France
      * Not enough resources
  + Battle of Agincourt- 1,500 French nobles died
    - England controlled N. France
* **Joan of Arc-** stepped in to help France and timid ruler, Charles
  + Born 1412- deeply religious
  + Believed saints came to her and told her to free France
    - Charles let her go to Orleans
      * She inspired the army and captured the city (17 yrs. old)
  + 1430- The Inquisition tried her for witchcraft and executed her
    - French won the war in 1453
      * They were inspired by her
        + (used gunpowder for cannons for the 1st time)
* The Hundred Years War left France exhausted, but w/ a sense of nationalism
  + King Louis XI (ruled 1461-83)
    - Used the **taille** (direct tax on property)
      * Income allowed him to build a strong government
* The war drained England’s economy
  + War of the Roses- nobles tried to control monarchy
    - 1485- **Henry Tudor** (Henry VII) became king
    - He abolished nobles’ armies and won support by not overtaxing