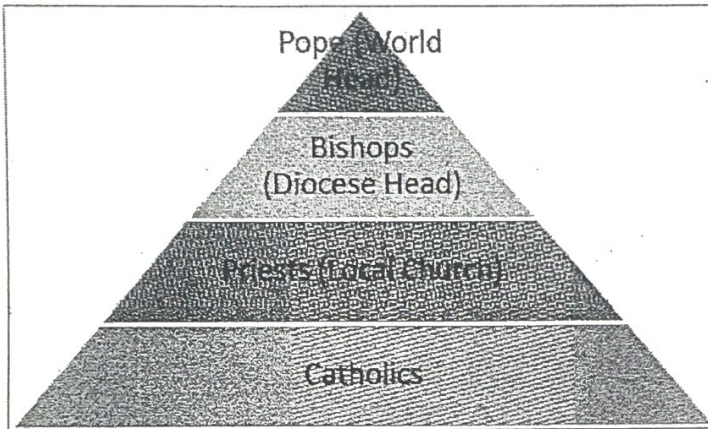


The Lay Investiture Controversy: The Struggle Between Earthly Leaders and the Pope

In the Middle Ages, the two sources of centralized power were the earthly (**lay**) rulers such as kings and princes and the pope – the head of the Roman Catholic Church (based in Rome).

The Catholic Church had a complex structure. **Bishops** were influential officials who controlled the nuns, priests, monks, and abbots.



The lay rulers, seeking to increase their power, began to invest (give a job to) bishops (a high-ranking position in the Catholic Church) themselves. This was called **lay investiture**. Lay rulers wanted to make sure that Church officials (aside from the pope, who reigned as God's representative on Earth) were loyal to them.

Obviously, the pope was vigorously opposed to this, and a struggle ensued between lay leaders and the pope.



A woodcut of a king (wearing a crown) giving the staff (a symbol of the office) to a bishop)

Pope Gregory VII was particularly mad at rulers engaging in lay investiture. In 1075, he banned the practice.

The emperor of the German states (Germany was not yet a unified country, but a collection of small regions), Henry IV, challenged this, and the two leaders – one earthly, one spiritual – became locked in a power struggle.

Of course, the pope's ultimate weapon was (and, even today, is) **excommunication** – the act of throwing someone out of the Church (and the person would then have no chance of entering Heaven).

Emperor Henry called the bishops he had appointed together in a meeting and they demanded that Pope Gregory abdicate (give up the throne). In retaliation, the pope

excommunicated Henry. Henry, afraid of losing his throne, crossed the Alps to the Italian town of Canossa, where Pope Gregory was staying, and begged forgiveness. The pope forgave Henry – but made him wait in the snow outside the castle for three days before receiving him and forgiving him.

A Compromise is Reached

The struggle between emperors and popes dragged on long after Gregory and Henry died. But in 1122, representatives of the Church and the German emperor met in the town of Worms ("wurms") and signed a **concordat** (agreement). The Concordat of Worms decreed that the Church would select bishops, but emperors had the right to veto the Pope's choice. This agreement, though, did not end the suspicion and rivalry between the Church and lay rulers.

DIRECTIONS: Read each selection and answer the questions that follow. Be complete in your answers.

The Pope's Prerogatives [privileges that come with a position or office] According to Gregory VII

Background Information: *Gregory declared the pope head of all society, and the Church was superior to the secular [non-religion-related] world. His concept of his office and papal power is outlined below.*

The Roman church was founded by God alone. The Roman bishop [the Pope] alone is properly called universal. He alone may [install] bishops and reinstate them... . The pope is the only person whose feet are kissed by all princes. His title is unique in the world. He may [install] emperors. No council may be regarded as a general one without his consent... . He may be judged by no one... .

...We have learned that, contrary to the ordinances [laws] of the holy fathers, the investiture with churches is, in many places, performed by lay [non-religious-office] persons, and that from this cause many disturbances arise in the Church by which the Christian religion is degraded, we decree that no one of the clergy shall receive the investiture... from the hand of an emperor, or king, or of any lay person, male or female. If [a lay ruler] shall presume to do so, let him know that such investiture is void by [papal] authority, and that he himself shall lie under excommunication [being thrown out of the church] until [proper apology and withdrawal] shall have been made.

...If anyone shall receive a bishopric [bishop's office] or abbey from the hands of any lay person, he shall by no means be reckoned among the bishops and abbots, nor shall any hearing be granted him as bishop or abbot. Moreover, [the pope] shall further deny him the favor of St. Peter and entrance to the Church, until, coming to his senses, he shall surrender the position that he has appropriated [taken] through criminal ambition and disobedience... . We decree, moreover, that the same rule be observed in the case of inferior [lesser] ecclesiastical [church] positions.

Likewise if any emperor, king, duke, margrave, count, or any secular dignitary [important person] or person shall presume to bestow the investiture with bishoprics, or with any ecclesiastical office, let him know that he is bound by the bonds of the same condemnation.

NAME: _____ PER. _____

Background Information: German Emperor Henry V agreed to the Concordat of Worms (1122).

The Promise of Henry V

For the love of God and his holy church and of Pope Calixtus, and for the salvation of my soul... hereby surrender to God and his apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, and to the holy Catholic Church, all investiture... I agree that elections and consecrations (installation of holy office) shall be conducted canonically and shall be free from all interference... .

Finally, I make true and lasting peace with Pope Calixtus and with the holy Roman Church and with all who are or have ever been of his party. I will aid the Roman Church whenever my help is asked, and will do justice in all matters in regard to which the church may have occasion to make complaint.

The Pope's Prerogative [ON PAGE 2]

1. What is being said in this excerpt?
2. What is the writer's intent or purpose?
1. Which of the provisions above would be the greatest threat to imperial authority?
2. Why is the act of investiture so important and significant?

NAME: _____ PER. _____

The Promise of Henry V [ON PAGE 3]

1. What is being said in this excerpt?
2. What is the writer's intent or purpose?
3. Why has Henry done this?
4. Is this a "surrender" on Henry's part or a smart move to protect his earthly powers?
Explain your answer.

TASK: Write a response to the following question. Be as full and complete as possible (you may use the back side of this sheet if needed).

"Was the Concordat of Worms the beginning of the separation of church and state? Why or why not?"