

Kings and nobles begin to be more skeptical of the Pope and his power. This developing conflict between the church and state in the Middle Ages would have a great effect on the church's influence as the sixteenth century and the Protestant Reformation approached.

The Catholic Church has been remembered for many activities involving persecution of heretics, who were persons who did not conform to any of the Church's articles of faith; but one activity in particular that stands out is the Inquisition that started in France in the twelfth century. The infamy of this institution has left its mark on the memories and vocabularies of men everywhere, being equated with the ruthless miscarriage of justice. It began with Bishops of the Church but was taken over by the Pope, who turned it over to the Dominicans (Field, 2012). These inquisitors were subject to no law, only to the Pope, and he would be the judge and jury of the guilty or innocent, if there were any. The Inquisition created fear within the people but not the respect that the Church might have desired to achieve. Some form of the European Inquisition would last well into fifteenth century and would have some effect, but would eventually lose its power as the Papal office would lose some of its esteem.

The Catholic Church had its challenges coming from the secular side of the culture, but in some instances the church would create its own problems emanating from within the leadership itself. Such was the case of the event known as the Papal Schism, which occurred in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In the Papal Schism, rival groups within the cardinal leadership created two Popes at the same time, with one residing in France and the other living in Rome, the designated home of the Church itself (Salembier, 1912).

This intriguing situation within the Catholic Church involved the King of France and political issues such as taxes, as well as property. This schism was not just a small matter to be overlooked because it involved the relationship with the state and the church, as well as creating a serious view of the authority of the Pope. If the Pope was supposed to be appointed by God, how could there be two at the same time? Because of this Papal Schism and the politics involving the state and its rights, there were some lasting consequences that would set the stage for the Protestant Reformation and the issues revolving around them. It revealed that European Christians in some cases would not let the Pope interfere in what they regarded as purely political matters (Pettegree, 2000). The King's power within a country began to be a generally accepted fact. Men and women in the fourteenth century noticed a crack developing in the union of the church and state relationship, and they begin to be able to distinguish the authority and rights of each (Mixson, 2009). The confusion created by this action of the Roman Catholic Church leadership also created an underling idea of a national church with a state. The Papal leadership up until the Protestant Reformation was weak and did nothing to help in the loss of the prestige of the church or the Papal office.

England was not left out in this gradual separation from the Catholic Church. The Church for centuries had tremendous influence in the political and social aspects of the English culture. The Catholic Church had long claimed a form of temporal sovereignty over England and Ireland, and Papal intervention had been active