



*St. John in the Wilderness*

# **What Are We Protesting About?**

**Martin Luther  
and the  
Reformation**

# What are We Protesting About?: Martin Luther and the Reformation

- **4/26/2009: The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation**
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- 5/17/2009: Other Reformations and the Counter-Reformation

# What are We Protesting About?: Martin Luther and the Reformation

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 867: “As established by the Bishops, the Clergy, and the Laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America...”
- Book of Common Prayer, p. 854: “The Church is described as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.”
- The Episcopal Church attempts to find a *via media*, a middle road, between Protestantism and Catholicism, but our church is certainly founded on some protestant ideals.

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- A brief look at Catholicism from AD 313 to 1513, including the Edict of Milan, Pepin the Short, the Donation of Constantine and the Papal States, the Avignon Papacy, the Medici family, and Indulgences.

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- AD 313: Constantine the Great, co-Emperor (with Licinius) of the Roman Empire, proclaims the *Edict of Milan*, declaring religious tolerance for Christians throughout the Empire.
- Defeated Licinius in 324, moved capital east to Byzantium and renamed the city Constantinople
- Began work on the Old St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (completed by 363)



•Image: Mosaic of Constantine the Great in Hagia Sophia c. 1000, from Wikimedia Commons

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation



- 400 years later...
- Paris, 743: Pepin the Short (pictured) was Mayor of the Palace. The King of the Franks was basically a figurehead—the throne had been vacant from 736 to 743 with the Mayors of the Palace running the country just fine.
- In 743, Pepin and his brother and co-Mayor, Carolman, selected Childeric III to be King of the Franks. Carolman retired to a monastery three years later, leaving Pepin as the sole Mayor, with a King who took no active role in governing his kingdom.

Image: Pepin le bref, by Louis Felix Amiel, 1837, in le musee historique de Veseilles. Via Wikimedia commons



# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- Around 750, Pepin sent letters to Pope Zachary posing a question: Should the title of “King” belong to the one with the royal lineage, or to the one with the real power?
- The Pope responded that the true King was the one with the power. With this Papal endorsement, Pepin had Childeric deposed and confined to a monastery in 751 and assumed for himself the title of King of the Franks.

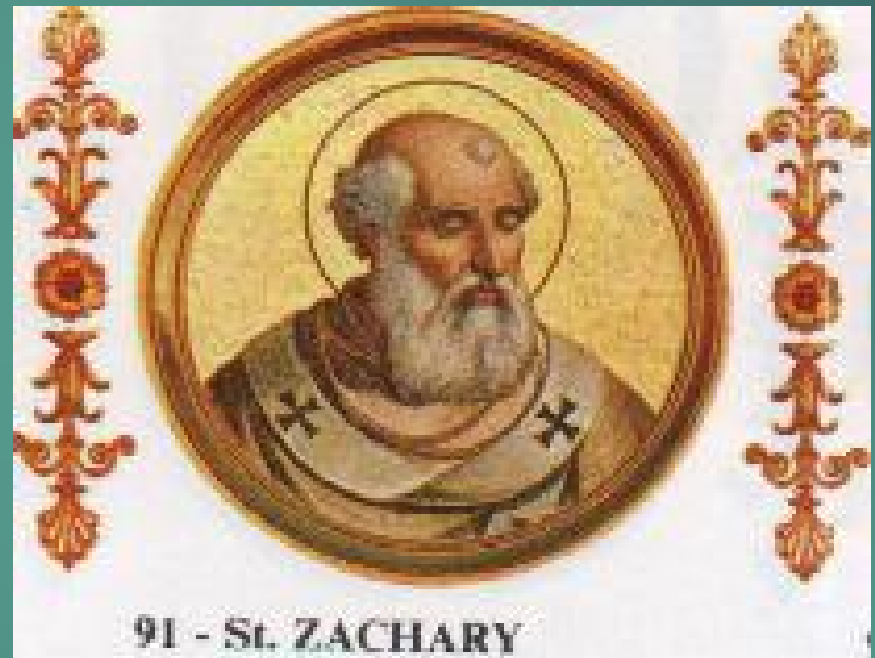


Image: Pope Zachary, copy of an icon from inside the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Via Wikimedia commons

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- The Popes had been having problems with the Kingdom of the Lombards, which was situated in the northeast of present-day Italy. Up until this time, Rome (and the Pope) were subjects of the Byzantine Empire, centered in Constantinople, with an Exarch (Emperor's representative) ruling Italy.
- The Lombard King Aistulf conquered Ravenna in 751, deposing the Exarch. He demanded tribute from Pope Zachary, the biggest landowner in the territory.
- Zachary died in March of 752, and his eventual successor, Stephen II, made the treacherous journey through Lombard territory, across the Alps and into Gaul, to meet with Pepin and show him a document known as the "Donation of Constantine."



# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- The Donation of Constantine, purportedly written by Constantine himself (but actually a forgery ready-made for this trip) claimed that in return for curing Constantine of leprosy and baptizing him, Constantine gave the lands surrounding Rome to Pope Sylvester and his successors.
- Pepin (who owed his title to the Papacy) went to war against the Lombards on behalf of the Pope, and defeated them. In 756, Pepin formally granted their territories to the Pope and his successors, in what is now known as the Donation of Pepin.



•Image: The Donation of Pepin (kneeling) to Pope Stephen II.  
Via Wikimedia Commons

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- Aside: Pepin died in 768. His two sons, Carolman and Charles, became co-Kings of the Franks. Carolman died in 771. Charles continued to fight against the Lombards on behalf of the Pope.
- On Christmas Day in 800, at St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great (French: *Charlemagne*) as Emperor of the Romans, marking the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire.



•Image: Coronation of Charlemagne by Raphael (1516-1517), via Wikimedia Commons



# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation



- Over the next 400 years, the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor tended to have some disagreement over who truly ruled these lands.
- Beginning in 1095, the Popes began declaring various crusades against Muslims in the Holy Land and elsewhere, and the success of some of the early Crusades added greatly to the Pope's prestige. By 1300, the Pope had true sovereignty over what became known as the Papal States.

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- The death of Pope Benedict in 1304 caused a problem in the conclave of Cardinals, in that the conclave was nearly evenly divided between French and Italians and they couldn't decide on a successor.
- Finally, in June 1305, Raymond Bertrand de Got, archbishop of Bordeaux (not even a Cardinal), was selected as Pope Clement V.
- Clement decided against moving to Rome, and established the Papal court at Avignon. The following six Popes also held court at Avignon rather than Rome.



•Image: Pope Clement V, from the French National Library, via Wikimedia commons

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

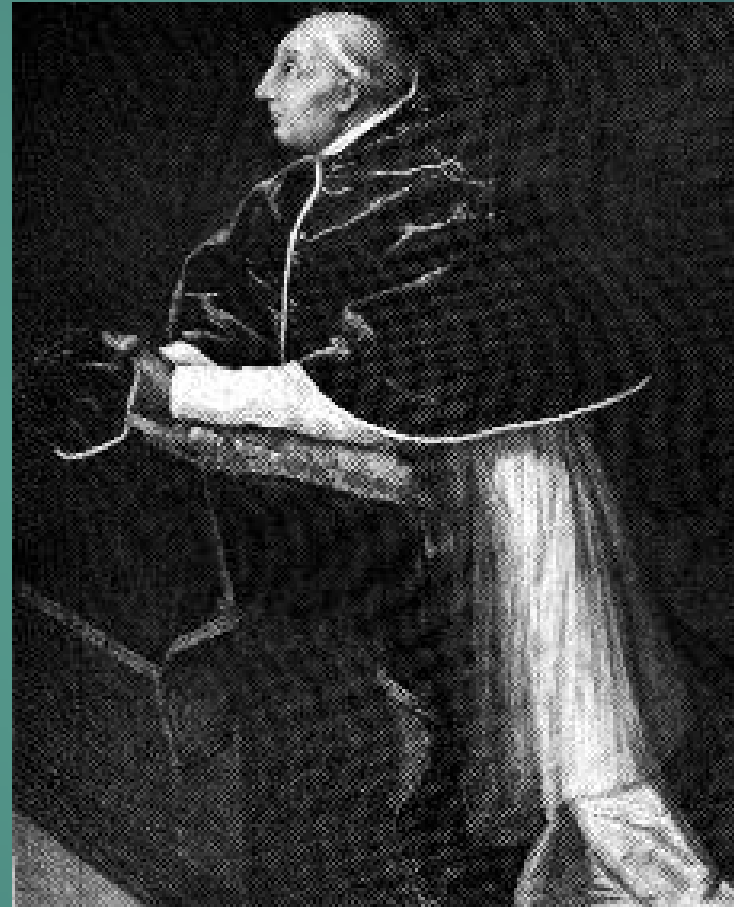
- In 1378, Pope Gregory XI returned to Rome (and died shortly thereafter). The Cardinals selected a Neopolitan as Pope Urban VI.
- A few months later the conclave met again and selected another, rival Pope (Clement VII), who re-established the court at Avignon.



•Images: (l) Pope Urban VI, by Grabado del Siglo XVII, from Wikimedia Commons; (r) Antipope Clement VII, in the Musee de Petit Palais in Avignon, photographed by David P. Henry (<http://www.davidpherry.com/MedFrance/index.htm>)

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- For the next 30 years, rival popes ruled in Rome and Avignon, with various kings supporting one or the other. In 1409, a church council tried to resolve the matter but wound up adding to it by electing a *third* pope, Alexander V.
- Finally, the Council of Constance in 1414 resolved the matter by convincing two of the three popes to resign, excommunicating the third, and electing Pope Martin V.

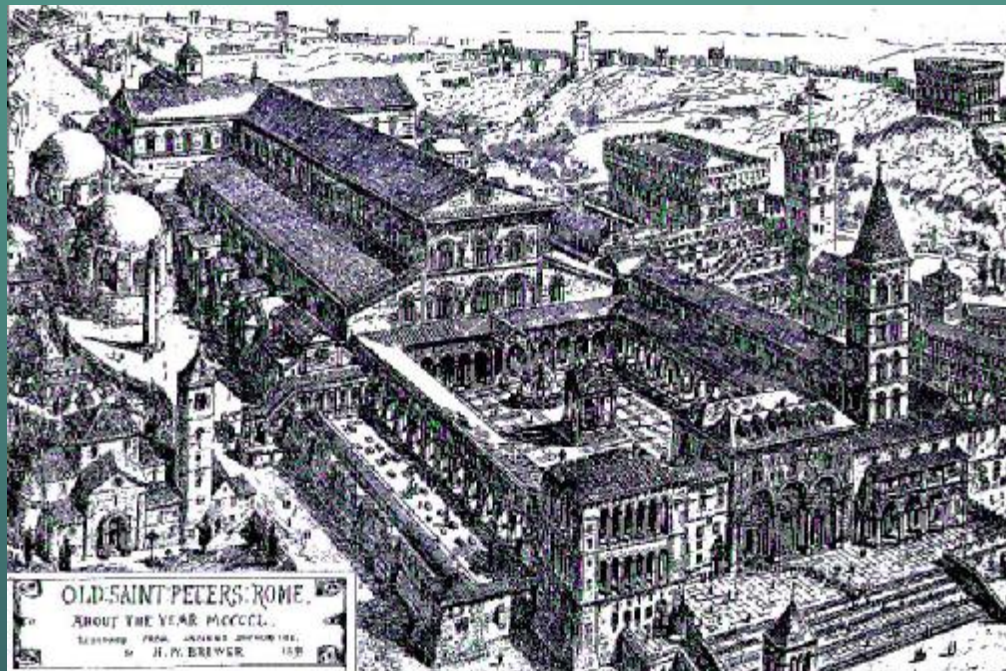


•Image: Pope Martin V, via Wikimedia Commons



# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- There were many problems with the 75+ years of the Church being centred outside of Rome. Among them was that the Basilica of St. Peter was in poor condition.
- By the early 16th century, it was in desperate need of repair. Pope Julius II (1503-1513) commissioned and began construction of a completely new building, which continued for about 150 years.



•Image: Old St. Peter's Basilica, by H.W. Brewer, 1891, via Wikimedia Commons

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation



- In 1513, Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici—son of Lorenzo de' Medici, ruler of the Florentine Republic—became Pope Leo X.
- Leo was a big spender, not only on ostentatious displays and ceremonies (e.g., an actual “white elephant”) but also on many building projects, including lavish funding of the new Basilica.

•Image: Pope Leo X, detail of painting by Raphael, 1518-1519, via Wikimedia Commons

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- Leo X had completely exhausted the papal savings within two years. He then turned to several novel methods of fundraising: creating and selling offices, selling cardinals' hats, and indulgences.



Image source: Portion of photo of Cardinal Angelo Sodano, taken 15 January 2006 by Wikipedia user "Starlight," who has released it into the public domain.

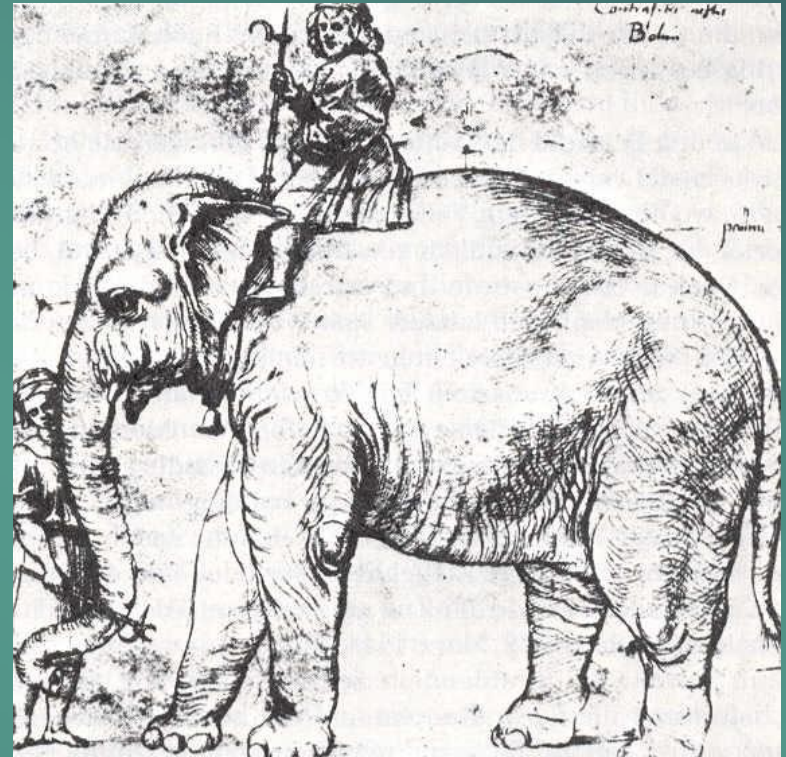
# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- An indulgence is an act by the Church which reduced a person's time in Purgatory.
- According to Catholic doctrine, faith alone is insufficient to get one into heaven—as James said, “Without works, faith is nothing.”
- Someone who commits a venial sin (i.e., not a mortal sin) would still receive punishment for that sin, even after absolution.
- That punishment could be worked off either during life or after death, in Purgatory.



# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation

- The church offered “indulgences,” which basically certified that someone had worked off some of the debt during their lifetime and thus would spend less time in Purgatory.
- Pope Leo X hit upon the idea of selling indulgences, so someone who donated to the Church or to one of his many projects, including the new Basilica, could get something in return.



•Image: Hanno, Leo X's White Elephant. Sketch by Raphael, c. 1516. Via Wikimedia Commons.

# The Medieval Church and the Seeds of Reformation



- More than any other issue, it was the selling of God's grace which bothered a German monk named Martin Luther and caused him to enumerate his problems with the Church.
- *To be continued...*