

Debunking Anti-Catholic Myths, Part 1



No other institution in the world has contributed as much as the Catholic Church to human rights, international law, education, social services and organized charity.

Mainstream Media “History”

1. The Church supported the persecution of Jews since they were the ones who crucified Christ.
2. The Dark Ages were a time of ignorance and barbarism perpetuated by an oppressive Church.
3. The Church supported slavery.
4. Catholic missionaries in the New World forcibly converted the indigenous peoples and suppressed their culture.

Anti-Semitism

Matt. 27:24-26 “His blood be on us and on our children.”

Matt. 23:37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.”

John 5:16-18 “For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him...”

- People's Crusade, 1096
- What about the first 1,000 years of Christianity?
- Count Emicho of Leiningen, 1096
- He wanted to slaughter “Christ's enemies in the West” before marching off to fight them in the East.

- Speyer: the bishop protected most in his palace; 12 were killed.
- Worms: the bishop tried, but Emicho broke in and killed 500.
- Mainz, Cologne, Metz: same as Worms.
- Moselle Valley: Emicho attacked only towns that had no resident bishop, killing several thousand.
- Volkmar and Gottschalk did the same in Prague and Regensburg.
- Hungarian knights put an end to the slaughters.
- Pope Urban II, who had launched the First Crusade, vehemently condemned these attacks.
- Radulf the Monk, 1146

- Same five towns, same reason, no permission.
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux put an end to the slaughters.
- Five Rhine Valley attacks in the 13th century, due to political instability.
- Black Death, 1347: Jews were accused of poisoning the wells, sporadic Rhineland attacks ensued.
- Pope Clement IV issued a bull denouncing the poisoned well theory and excommunicating the attackers, but the problem persisted until the early 15th century.
- Pope Pius XII: “Hitler’s Pope.”
- The truth is completely the opposite!

- Pius XII was praised by Jews for saving their lives during World War II.
- 1943, Chaim Weizmann (first president of Israel) wrote: “the Holy See is lending its powerful help wherever it can, to mitigate the fate of my persecuted co-religionists.”
- 1944, Rabbi Israel Zolli (chief rabbi of Rome): “The Vatican has always helped the Jews and the Jews are very grateful for the charitable work of the Vatican, all done without distinction of race. The Pope and the Vatican were indefatigable in working to save Jews, and many hundreds were sheltered in monasteries and convents in Rome and in Vatican City.”

- 1945, Rabbi Zolli converted to Catholicism, taking the baptismal name Eugenio (Eugenio Pacelli).
- 1945, Moshe Sharett (first foreign minister and second prime minister of Israel): “I told him that my first duty was to thank him, and through him the Catholic Church, on behalf of the Jewish public for all they had done in various countries to rescue Jews.”
- 1958, Golda Meir (fourth prime minister of Israel) called Pius XII “a great servant of peace.”
- Pius XII saved an estimated 860,000 Jews, according to Pinchas Lapide, an Israeli ambassador and historian.
- So how could Pius XII be accused of collaborating with Hitler?

- 1963, *The Deputy*, by Rolf Hochhuth. Critically acclaimed, everyone swallowed its lies.
- Qualified historians, prominent Jews, and the Anti-Defamation League all refuted *The Deputy*. But the lies re-emerged 30 years later.
- 1999, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, by John Cornwell.
- 2001, *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews – A History*, by James Carroll.
- Five other similar books were written in the early 2000's: just rehashes of the same lies.
- Pius XII was a hero: speaking out against Nazism, hiding Jews all over Rome and the Vatican, and even converting his Castel Gandolfo bedroom into a maternity ward.

- The Church has always opposed the persecution of Jews.
- St. Augustine, in *Contra Faustus*: “Whoever destroys Jews in this way shall suffer sevenfold vengeance, that is, shall bring upon himself the sevenfold penalty under which the Jews lie for the crucifixion of Christ.”
- Vatican II, in *Nostra Aetate*: “True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jew of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should

not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ. Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone."

The Church in the Dark Ages

Daniel Boorstin, *The Discoverers*: “Christianity conquered the Roman Empire and most of Europe. Then we observe a Europe-wide phenomenon of scholarly amnesia, which afflicted the continent from AD 300 to at least 1300.” This occurred because “the leaders of orthodox Christendom built a grand barrier against the progress of knowledge.”

Cambridge historian J.B. Bury: Constantine’s adoption of Christianity “inaugurated a millennium in which reason was enchained, thought was enslaved, and knowledge made no progress.”

How did this myth begin? With the influence of Renaissance humanists and the anti-Catholic Enlightenment: Voltaire, Rousseau, and Gibbon.

- Romans lived all over the Empire, and many Goths were already Romanized, including Alaric.
- There was less literacy among them, and less awareness of Greek thought, but they were civilized and many were Christian (albeit Arian).
- The fall of Rome was not a sudden lapse into barbarism; it was a shifting of the population away from large cities.
- The so-called Dark Ages were a time of unprecedented progress in morality, agriculture, technology, music, art, literature, education, and science.
- A major force in this progress was Benedictine monasticism.

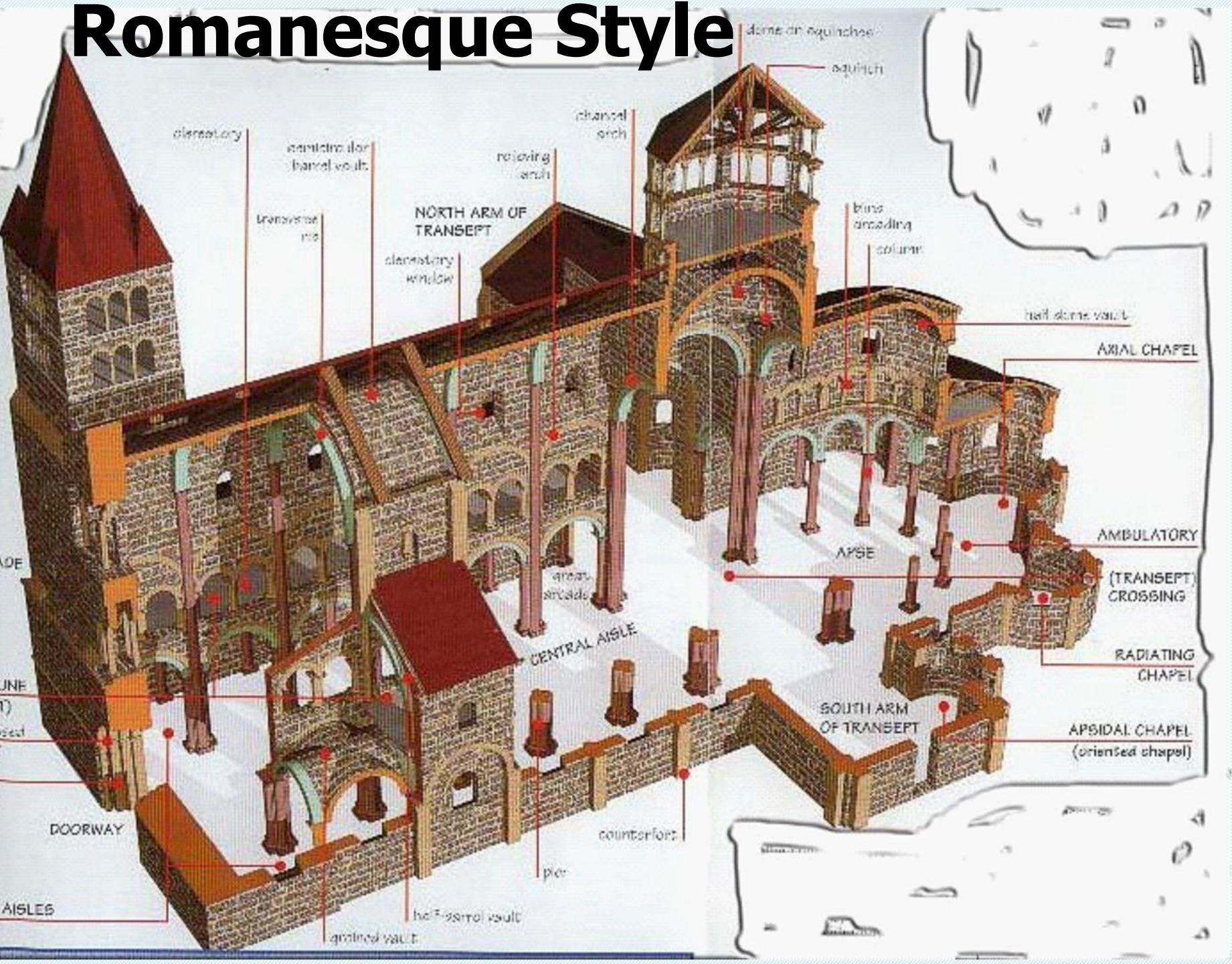
- ▶ Monks withdrew from the world to seek holiness through prayer, work and community life
- Effects of monasticism on Europe: improvement of agriculture, preservation of classical writings, evangelization of the Goths.
- Morality: the abolition of slavery through sacramental equality and spiritual persuasion.
- Agriculture: heavy plow, horse collar, water mills and windmills, better beer, wine, and cheese.
- Technology: clocks, chimneys, eyeglasses, better saddles and stirrups (how Charles Martel won the Battle of Tours), sailing ships, cannons.
- Architecture: Romanesque and Gothic styles
- Painting: canvas, emotion (Giotto)

- Literature: Beowulf, Dante, Chaucer, Song of Roland, El Cid
- ▶ Education: universities, Scholasticism.
- Science: discussed in a previous lesson.
- Music: polyphony
- Example: *Sederunt Principes*, by Perotinus



Romanesque style (besides nave, transept, apse, columns, side aisles): barrel vaults, thick walls, few windows, bell towers, arcades everywhere

Romanesque Style



Cathedral of Pisa



Gothic style: (besides nave, transept, apse, columns, side aisles): pointed arches, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, large stained glass windows

Notre Dame Cathedral (Paris)



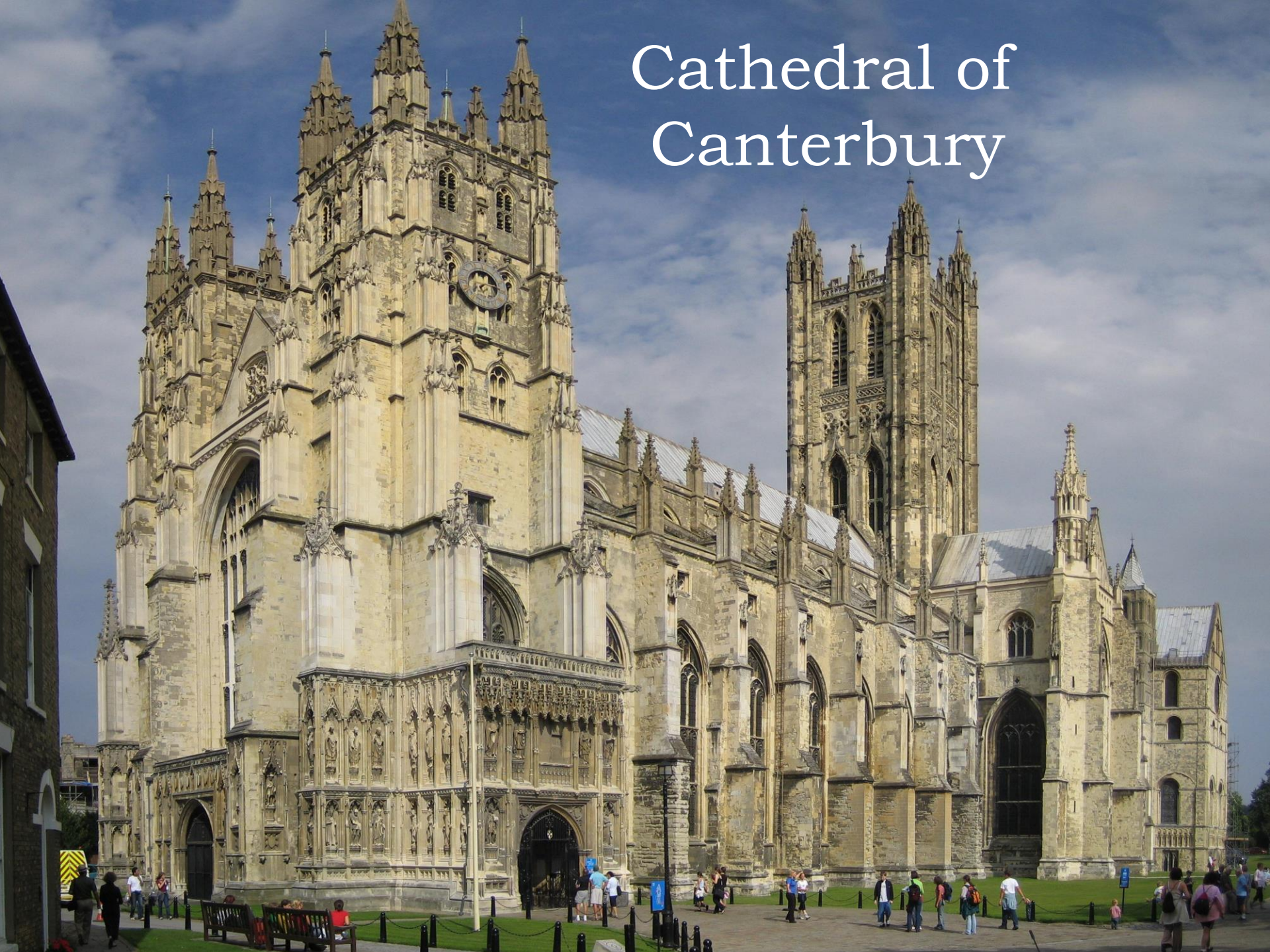


Sainte Chapelle
(Paris)

Chartres Cathedral



Cathedral of Canterbury





**Santa Maria
sopra Minerva**

Scenes from the Scrovegni Chapel

Padua, Italy





