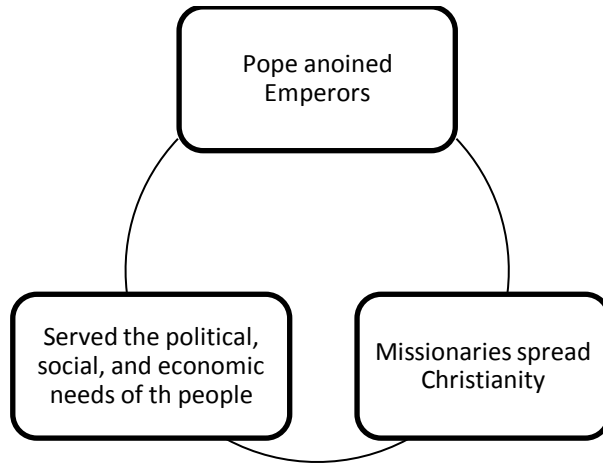


### WHI.9a in a Nutshell

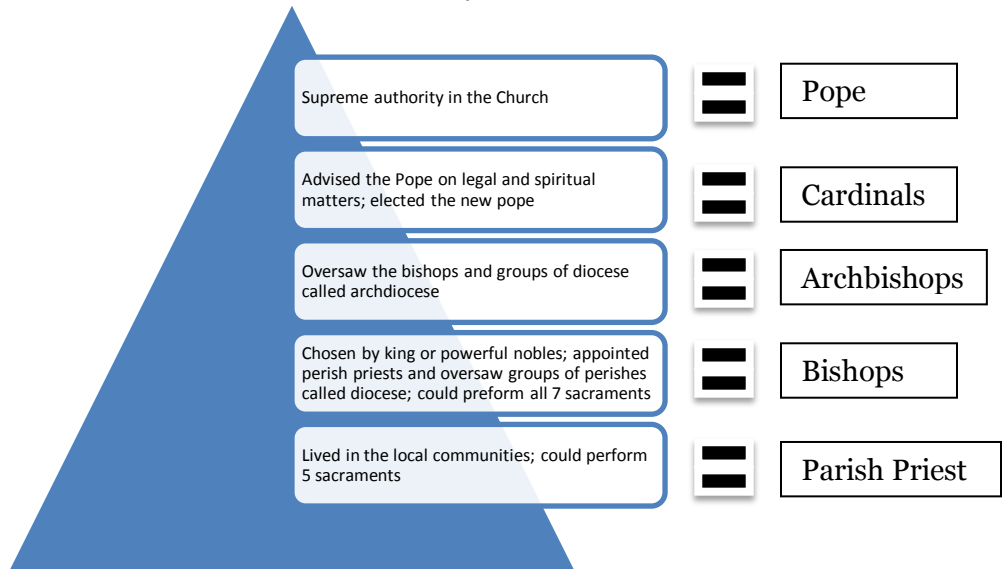


During the Early Middle Ages, the **Roman Catholic** Church grew in importance and became the unifying force in Western Europe. This is why the Middle Ages is also called the **Age of Faith**.

#### *What was the Church's role in Medieval life?*



#### The Church Hierarchy



All medieval Christians had to follow **Cannon Law**, including kings.

There were two main punishments for breaking Cannon Law:

1. **Excommunication** - banishment from the Church
2. **Interdict** - prohibited many sacraments and religious services from being performed

People feared these punishments because they denied **salvation**. The Church also had the power to collect **tithes**, or taxes.

During the Middle Ages, religious communities of individuals who withdrew from the outside world to devote themselves to spiritual lives. Men called **monks**, lived in **monasteries**. Women called **nuns**, lived in **convents**.

Monasteries became centers of **learning**. Monks opened **schools** and **libraries**. They preserved Greco-Roman culture by creating **illuminated manuscripts** by hand.

**Missionaries** carried Christianity and the Latin alphabet throughout Europe – such as **St. Patrick** who brought Christianity to Ireland in 432 AD.

The increased power and influence of the Church led to some conflicts. Some **emperors** resented the wealth and influence of the church. Church officials resented limits on their powers such as **lay investiture**, where kings and nobles appoint church officials. There was also some corruption within the church due to the practice of **simony**, or the buying of high positions within the church hierarchy.