**Power of Church Documents**

Source: Cantor, Norman, F. The Medieval Reader. New York: HarperCollins. 29-88. Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Objective: Examine the role of the church within European culture.

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| ***What do we know so far*?** – Write out what you know about the power of the church in the Middle Ages… |

***Next –*** *These are a collection of important documents that show, according to the church, the power of Rome and the pope. Critically read and mark up each document. Then answer the questions following the document. Use extra paper if necessary, but you really should not need it.*

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| **Document One**  **Title: Leo I Petrine Doctrine (451 CE)**  **Background:** *This is based on the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus says to Peter that he (peter is a rock both spiritually and the rock on which a foundation will be built), “I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth will loosed in heaven.”*  The dispensation of Truth therefore abides, and the blessed Peter persevering in the strength of the Rock, which he has received, has not abandoned the helm of the Church, which he undertook. For he was ordained before the rest in such a way that from his being called the Rock, from his being pronounced the Foundation, from his being constituted the Doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven, … And still to-day he more fully and effectually performs what is entrusted to him, and carries out every part of his duty and charge in Him and with Him, through Whom he has been glorified.  **Literal questions:** Who is “Peter”? Why is “Him” capitalized? See is a church word—what does it mean? Who are the “rest”? What power is being given to Peter?  **Ruminating questions:** What do you think is meant by the rock? What image is presented by the “Doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven”? What does this say about the role/power of the Pope and the Church?  **Document Two**  **Title: Donation of Constantine (c. 750-850)**  **Background:** This document was said to be written by Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of Rome. Constantine was said to be dying from leprosy when Pope Sylvester I cured him. The Emperor then gave the church a gift. The church later used this document to claim authority over all of Europe.  While the blessed Sylvester was preaching these things I understood them and found that I was restored to full health by the beneficence of the same blessed Peter. So we, together with…the whole Senate…judged it in the public interest that…the Pontiffs, may obtain from us and our Empire greater governmental power than the earthly clemency of our Imperial serenity has so far conceded to them…  And we command and decree that he should have primacy over the four principal Sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, as well as over all the Churches of God throughout the whole world…  We have [also] bestowed on these churches the revenues of estates to provide lights, and have enriched them in various respects. And through our sacred Imperial orders we have conceded to them lands in the East as well as in the West and even on the northern and southern coasts, that is to say in Judaea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa and Italy and the various islands under the condition that all shall be governed by the instrumentality of our most blessed father Sylvester the Pontiff and his successors.  **Literal questions:** Why is Constantine giving this gift? Where are Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem?  **Ruminating questions:** Why would the Church be interested in actively promoting the ideas in this document? Why is it Important that Constantine is the one the church claims gave the gift?  **Document Three**  **Title: Boniface VIII’s Defense of Papal Supremacy – Unam Sanctam (1302)**  WE ARE COMPELLED, OUR FAITH URGING us, to believe and to hold… hat there is one holy Catholic… Church, outside of which there is neither salvation nor remission of sins… In this Church there is one Lord… Christ, namely, & the vicar of Christ, St. Peter, & the successor of Peter.  We are told by the word of the Gospel that in this His fold there are two swords—a spiritual, namely, and a temporal…Both swords, the spiritual and the material, therefore, are in the power of the Church; the one, indeed, to be wielded for the Church, the other by the Church; the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the will and sufferance of the priest. One sword, moreover, ought to be under the other, and the temporal authority to be subjected to the spiritual…  Therefore if the earthly power errs, it shall be judged by the spiritual power; but if [the Church] errs it can be judged by God alone, not by man… A spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one. This authority, moreover, even though it is given to man and exercised through man, is not human but rather divine, being given by divine lips to Peter and founded on a rock for him and his successors through Christ Himself whom He has confessed; the Lord Himself saying to Peter: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," etc. Whoever, therefore, resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordination of God…  Indeed we declare, say, pronounce, and define that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff  **Literal question:** What is the Gospel?  **Ruminating questions:** Again, why the reference to Peter? What’s the deal with all these swords? Explain. What is the rationale (argument) Boniface uses? Why is erring an important part of this document? What point is driven home by the last sentence? | **Your notes** |