

Chapter 1 : Women and Religion in the Middle Ages

From an analysis of the architecture and economic organisation of nunneries, to an assessment of the medieval Church's response to the pain and perils of childbirth, these papers consider the influence of the church on the lives of women, and the influence that women had on the life and worship of the Church.

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Chapter 2 : Medieval Women - History Learning Site

Nuns and devout noblewomen were sometimes celebrated for their achievements in the literature of the medieval period, but more often than not these women only appear on the side-lines of history, while the ordinary wife and mother is virtually invisible.

Augustine, every person was born guilty of original sin. This is the sin committed when Eve tempted Adam in the story of the Garden of Eden from the Christian religion. Eve, therefore, was responsible for the inherent sinfulness of mankind, the sufferings of the human race, and the death of Christ on the cross. The Virgin Mary on the other hand was considered responsible for the salvation of humankind because she gave birth to the Son of God. The early Middle Ages gave birth to the view of the woman as the instrument of evil. The Virgin Mary was the ideal woman. Mary worship translated into another phase of medieval life, the so-called "courtly love" in which a man preserved a supposedly chaste devotion to a lady of higher rank. The Nunneries Many women chose to dedicate themselves to the Church, for any of many reasons. Some nuns were dedicated at young ages by their families, who wished to do good for the Church. However, nuns could enter convent at any stage in life from young childhood to old age. In other cases, monasticism was an escape from a life of shadows and insecurity, childbearing and degradation, and seeing a potential they were taught they did not have go unfulfilled forever. Prior to the 12th Century, religious houses were independent of one another. During the 12th Century, orders arose which set a standard of life and behaviour for groups of houses. In denying marriage and dedicating their lives to the Church, women were able to preserve both their minds and their bodies. It gave ordinary women a chance to examine the makeup of the soul, and in its own silent way encouraged them to make choices for themselves. The Church became an asylum where men had access to education -- and if men, why not women? Many women realized that as long as they remained uneducated, they would be regarded as inferior. Armed with intelligence and knowledge, women could outwit the witty. Literacy was a privilege that many took advantage of. However, in many cases, it was not to be. Few women who devoted their lives to the Church ever learned how to write. Priests did not see the need for nuns to write. What little writing we have today are endeavours stemming from the desire of certain individuals to have their messages transcend time. Another advantage to joining the church was celibacy, which, like literacy, elevated women in medieval society to a point of high regard. Remaining chaste supposedly saved a woman from becoming as sinful as Eve. Nunnery Life The life of a nun was based on routine and regularity. The most austere orders of nuns spared themselves no hardship observed in male religious houses. Tierce, sext, none, vespers, and Compline followed throughout the day. In winter, when it got dark earlier, nuns retired to bed at 7 p. Nuns had a degree of freedom when they were allowed to choose their own abbesses and prioresses. Many times they petitioned a local male church official to have their choice supplant his. However, many abbesses, whoever appointed them, were poor businesswomen. Nunneries often suffered from excessive poverty i. Demands made by locals often drained their resources. As time went on, educational and moral standards declined. Many male Church officials were vexed because nuns could no longer read Latin, only French -- and then, horror of horrors -- English. Nuns became more careless about keeping the services. They also enjoyed such forbidden luxuries as dancing, pretty dresses, and lapdogs. The Beguines In the 13th Century a female religious movement swept across northern Europe. The Beguines were not nuns, and they were not under the command of a male abbot or priest. They were lay women who adopted a nun-like lifestyle voluntarily. Less expensive than the dowry paid for a nun, a true bride of Christ, the Beguine houses were able to accommodate women from the middle and lower classes of society. Beguines supported themselves by weaving, doing housework, and the like. Members of the order were free to leave -- their vows could be rescinded -- and even to marry. The Cathars Catharism was a dualist sect that originated in Bulgaria. They believed in a balance of good all things spiritual and, therefore, pure and evil all things of the earth and, therefore, materialistic. After death, souls were placed in new bodies reincarnation. Reincarnation continued, increasing in spirituality, until the highest level was reached -- a European nirvana. The Jews Jews were scattered throughout Europe, and they tended to form close communities and keep to themselves in the hope

of avoiding dangerous attention. They were regarded with suspicion not only because of their religion, but also because Jewish moneylenders charged interest and Jews as a whole kept clean. Though neither of these activities sounds particularly suspicious to modern people, the medieval Christian majority thought both were highly questionable. Charging interest was called usury and was forbidden by Christian law. Jews, exempt, saw nothing sinful in turning a profit. The Jewish religion requires its members to observe personal cleanliness, which helped many Jews avoid the plague. Consequently, Christians thought that the Jews practiced witchcraft to avoid sickness or actually caused it. Sometimes whole countries would exile Jews. England did it in the fourteenth century and Portugal did it some centuries later. In terms of persecution, for the Jews the Middle Ages was much like any other time. Jews could be persuaded or forced to apostatise i. The Jewish government in most regions meshed with the religion, creating a legal system based on laws set down by the Torah. For example, the provisions for marriage were set down by religious documents which state exactly what each spouse can expect and demand from the other. Jewish women could exercise greater freedom in marriage Christian women. A woman is entitled to ten things in marriage: A man can expect only four things: Each spouse could restrict the distance the other travelled and who he or she allowed to live in the house -- including in-laws. If a woman grew to hate her husband, she could divorce him. This, too, is a freedom few Christian women enjoyed. Jews had their own sumptuary clothes-restricting laws as well. Any clothing that seemed arrogant or ostentatious was forbidden, except on holidays. This included silk-lined sleeves, fur-lined jackets, and girdles and belts weighing more than ten ounces. T he Moslems Moslems, though not as widespread in medieval Europe as Jews, not to mention Christians. They were the "infidels" in the Holy Land, the target of the Crusades. Some of them settled in southern Europe, especially in the countries of the Iberian peninsula. If Jewish women had some more freedoms than Christian women, Moslem women had decidedly less and often still do. Medieval Moslem documents were therefore not addressed to women but to men, instructing the men how they may and may not treat women and how women may and may not act. A husband could visit a variety of punishments on a truculent wife, including beating. However, if the wife was obedient, her husband was forbidden to abuse her. Polygamy was permitted to Moslem men. A man could marry any woman he wished -- any woman, that is, except his mother, aunts, sister, cousin, mother-in-law, any woman nursed by the same wet-nurse, and stepdaughters if his marriage to their mother had been consummated. Married women were also forbidden, unless they were married to non-Moslem enemies -- i.

Chapter 3 : Women in Medieval England - Helen M. Jewell - Google Books

"These papers, written by historians and archaeologists, discuss the religious devotion and spiritual life of medieval women from all walks of life.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Carole Levin Christine Peters. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, Peters has written an important book about religion in late medieval and early modern England. Her discussion of the implications for women and gender in the transition in England from Catholicism to Protestantism is ingenious, thoughtful, and elegant. It is thoroughly researched and beautifully written. Peters begins the book with the question what was the impact of the English Reformation on women? As she admits, this is a far more difficult question that she had anticipated. As she notes, it is difficult for the historian who is researching individual acts of piety because most of that behavior, such as frequency of prayer, is unrecoverable. Peters demonstrates how subtle the issues are through her thorough and exhaustive scholarship. Most of the acts of piety that were documented involved some material investment and may have been influenced by such worldly concerns as status and display. Peters complicates the discussion by focusing on gender and women and by examining the period through that lens the importance of change over continuity becomes more clearly focused. Peters also refuses to accept the argument that in this period the laity was passive. Margery Kempe, far from passive, plays quite a role in the text. Peters examines how these attitudes changed from the fifteenth century onward. But [End Page] Peters is not interested only in how women responded to the Virgin and other female saints. She also discusses the male response to the Virgin Mary as well. Peters discusses the integration of the cults of Mary and of Christ into the concern for the salvation of the soul. This Mary was not only Queen of Heaven and Lady of the World, but was also the Empress of Hell, who could even command the obedience of demons. The powerful Mary during the Reformation becomes reframed as a representative grieving Christian, with Christ as the emblemized suffering reformer. Peters demonstrates how Christocentric piety developed throughout the Reformation period. Peters suggests that as a result women did not experience the Reformation as an alien male environment, but rather as one where women could feel comfortable and at home with the representative frail Christian, a woman devoted to Christ. What caused women to limit in their involvement in congregations was not, Peters carefully demonstrates, the break of the Reformation, but rather the tendencies within an increasingly dominant Calvinistic strain of Protestantism. Peters used churchwarden accounts extensively for her research. She also examined wills of both men and women and many printed sermons and other theological works of the period. This book is beautifully produced with many illustrations and a full bibliography as well as notes. It deserves to be widely read. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 4 : England in the Middle Ages - Wikipedia

Women and Religion in Medieval England Monastic Matrix - Monastic Matrix A scholarly resource for the study of women s religious communities from to CE Monastic Matrix is an ongoing.

The signs of chastity are as follows: Some women are so clever. Rather than being binaries of virgin and whore, women of courtly literature are divided between attainable and unattainable. The "cult" of courtly love caused a great deal of controversy when it first began to emerge in French literature during the lifetime of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The unfriendly and unsympathetic lady is most often found in the lyric poetry of courtly love, where she remains distant from the narrator, spurning all his advances and scorning his company. If the woman is indeed sympathetic to her wooer, and welcomes his advances, there may be other impediments to the union, such as an existing marriage on her part. This does not, however, always put a damper on the relationship. Literature of courtly love often encourages adultery; in I. The Roman caused a bit of controversy in its time, as it portrays albeit through allegory actions and ideas of questionable morality and truth. Many writers jumped into the intellectual fray either to condemn or praise the text see the Christine de Pizan section below. Historians examining town records have found that most towns and cities had some sort of brothel, often an official one that was actually publicly owned, though this was more common on the continent than in England. Prostitutes, while an inevitable part of urban and town life, existed in a rigorously restricted space, both in a physical sense and in less tangible but no less noticeable ways. In most places, common women were only allowed to sell their "wares" on certain streets or in certain neighborhoods, and sumptuary laws i. So why did medieval women go into prostitution? As for the actual reason, Karras makes this observation: Whereas for men prostitution sometimes substituted for marriage as a sexual outlet, for women it substituted for marriage as a means of financial support. It was difficult for a woman to support herself outside the conjugal unit. Prostitution may have been the only acceptable way for some women to support themselves in the absence of a husband who would provide for them economically. Historians must generally rely on court records that mention women accused of whoredom; very rarely do records detailing the workings of actual brothels still exist. Contributing further to the confusion in England, at least, is that for most women in the trade, prostitution was not their sole occupation. Therefore, prostitution may have even been, for many women, a cyclical income source undertaken during whatever was the "off" season for their regular occupations Karras, Real Women of the Middle Ages Despite the disparity in the ways in which medieval women were depicted, actual medieval women inhabited a fairly continuous range that not only included the extremes of virgin and whore but also spanned the gap between the two. In between the two margins were found visionaries, queens, scholars, and warriors. Hildegard of Bingen Hildegard was a twelfth-century Benedictine nun who not only established herself as a notable mystic and prophet but also as a writer, scientist, composer, and linguist. She was very prolific during her lifetime, writing not only on health and medicine, but also recording religious visions complete with detailed descriptions for illuminators , composing hymns, and creating her own language known as the Ignota Lingua. Her immense talent gained her enough respect in her own time that her sometimes unorthodox and disobedient behavior never garnered any sort of permanent punishment excepting, possibly, a refusal by the Catholic church to canonize her. A notable episode occurred near the end of her life, when Hildegard and her monastery were placed under interdict for allowing the Christian burial of an excommunicate. She even went so far as to reproach the bishop of Mainz for greed and un-Christian behavior. Eleanor of Aquitaine Eleanor was one of the more unusual queens in English history. She began her public life as the Queen of Louis VII of France, but their marriage was an unhappy one that produced only two daughters. Very soon after obtaining an annulment of the marriage, Eleanor married Henry, the young Duke of Normandy and heir to the English throne. Between the two of them, they controlled a much greater portion of France than did Louis himself, a fact that caused much strife between them and Louis. As Queen of England, Eleanor was quite prolific in the most important way: She herself outlived not only her younger husband, but also all her sons excepting John. She was strong-willed, and refused to see her husband as anything other than an equal, going so far as to join three of their four sons

in rebellion against Henry in . Despite this long imprisonment, she had lost none of her ability to lead, and when her son Richard, now king, went on crusade, he left Eleanor in control of all England. In addition to being one of the most politically powerful women of her time and place, Eleanor was also an important figure in the burgeoning literary and artistic movement of courtly love.

Chapter 5 : Women and Religion in Medieval England - Google Books

Women and Religion. Nunneries Beguines Cathars Jews Moslems. According to St. Augustine, every person was born guilty of original sin. This is the sin committed when Eve tempted Adam in the story of the Garden of Eden from the Christian religion.

C N Trueman "Medieval Women" historylearningsite. The History Learning Site, 5 Mar Medieval England was not a comfortable place for most women. Medieval women invariably had a hard time in an era when many men lived harsh lives. A woman milking a cow Medieval society would have been very traditional. Women had little or no role to play within the country at large. Within towns, society would have effectively dictated what jobs a woman could do and her role in a medieval village would have been to support her husband. As well as doing her daily work, whether in a town or village, a woman would have had many responsibilities with regards to her family. Within a village, women would have done many of the tasks men did on the land. However, they were paid less for doing the same job. Documents from Medieval England relating to what the common person did are rare, but some do exist which examine what villages did. For reaping, a man could get 8 pence a day. For the same task, women would get 5 pence. For hay making, men would earn 6 pence a day while women got 4 pence. In a male dominated society, no woman would openly complain about this disparity. In medieval towns, women would have found it difficult to advance into a trade as medieval guilds frequently barred women from joining them. Therefore, a skilled job as recognised by a guild was usually out of reach for any woman living in a town. Within towns, women were usually allowed to do work that involved some form of clothes making but little else. For many women, a life as a servant for the rich was all they could hope for. Such work was demanding and poorly rewarded. The law, set by men, also greatly limited the freedom of women. Medieval society had a different outlook to children when compared to today. Many girls from poor families did not get married until they were in their twenties. Girls from richer families tended to marry earlier than girls from poor families. The poorer families needed as many working for them as was possible, so a daughter getting married at an early age would have deprived them of a worker. This was not true for a rich family. Once married, the young lady came under the control of her husband. Producing a male heir within a rich family was considered vital. So many women spent a great deal of their married life pregnant. However, childbirth was dangerous as medical care was so poor. Wives from a rich family usually did not look after their children. This was done by a wet nurse. Women from a poor family not only had to look after the children but had to continue doing her day-to-day work both in the home and on the land. Many women from poor families did not live past the age of forty.

Chapter 6 : Women and Religion in Medieval England | Monastic Matrix

Monastic Matrix: A scholarly resource for the study of women's religious communities from to CE; Monastic Matrix is an ongoing collaborative effort by an international group of scholars of medieval history, religion, history of art, archaeology, religion, and other disciplines, as well as librarians and experts in computer technology.

The History Learning Site, 5 Mar All Medieval people “ be they village peasants or towns people “ believed that God, Heaven and Hell all existed. From the very earliest of ages, the people were taught that the only way they could get to Heaven was if the Roman Catholic Church let them. Everybody would have been terrified of Hell and the people would have been told of the sheer horrors awaiting for them in Hell in the weekly services they attended. The control the Church had over the people was total. Peasants worked for free on Church land. This proved difficult for peasants as the time they spent working on Church land, could have been better spent working on their own plots of land producing food for their families. Tithes could be paid in either money or in goods produced by the peasant farmers. As peasants had little money, they almost always had to pay in seeds, harvested grain, animals etc. This usually caused a peasant a lot of hardship as seeds, for example, would be needed to feed a family the following year. A failure to pay tithes, so the peasants were told by the Church, would lead to their souls going to Hell after they had died. Now a museum, this building was once a tithe barn serving Maidstone, Kent This is one reason why the Church was so wealthy. People were too scared not to pay tithes despite the difficulties it meant for them. You also had to pay for baptisms if you were not baptised you could not go to Heaven when you died , marriages there were no couples living together in Medieval times as the Church taught that this equaled sin and burials “ you had to be buried on holy land if your soul was to get to heaven. Whichever way you looked, the Church received money. This saved them a vast sum of money and made it far more wealthy than any king of England at this time. The sheer wealth of the Church is best shown in its buildings: In Medieval England, peasants lived in cruck houses. These were filthy, usually no more than two rooms, with a wooden frame covered with wattle and daub a mixture of mud, straw and manure. No cruck houses exist now “ most simply collapsed after a while as they were so poorly built. However, there are many Medieval churches around. The way they were built and have lasted for centuries, is an indication of how well they were built and the money the Church had to invest in these building. This church in Rottingdean, East Sussex, is nearly years old. It was made of stone and built to last. Important cities would have cathedrals in them. The most famous cathedrals were at Canterbury and York. After the death of Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral became a center for pilgrimage and the city grew more and more wealthy. So did the Church. They are big by our standards today, but in Medieval England they were bigger than all buildings including royal palaces. Their sheer size meant that people would see them from miles around, and remind them of the huge power of the Catholic Church in Medieval England. This entrance to Amiens Cathedral in France shows just how vast cathedrals were. To work on the building of a cathedral was a great honour. Those who did the skilled work had to belong to a guild. They would have used just the most basic of tools and less than strong scaffolding to do the ceilings. However, if you were killed in an accident while working in a cathedral or a church, you were guaranteed a place in Heaven “ or so the workers were told.

Chapter 7 : The Medieval English Church

Hundreds of these cells dotted medieval England. Inhabited equally by men and women in the twelfth century, they came increasingly to be occupied by women in the thirteenth. At the same time many new cells were built to provide spaces for the growing number of women desiring an anchoritic life.

Two years later her family, an upper-class, Anglo-Saxon family in England, forced Christina into a betrothal. She was kept in physical custody for a year, during which an ecclesiastical judge was bribed to set aside her vow of virginity. The marriage took place at last. The resisting bride, however, would not consent to its physical consummation. She spent the night prepared for her deflowering recounting to her husband the story of St. Cecilia—the saint who had convinced her husband, Valerian, to live with her chastely until each could enter a monastery. The situation was at an impasse. Christina then fled, with the aid of a local hermit. An anchoress named Alfwen hid her for two years. Christina was then moved to a hermitage at Markyate, where some male hermits lived, and they secreted her for four more years. Ultimately her family accepted that her resolve would not weaken. By this time, however, the solitary lifestyle had become established. She became a hermitess, inheriting the site where she had hid for four years. In time a group of disciples formed around her, the hermitage becoming first a group household and ultimately a convent with Christina as abbess. She was in turn a consecrated virgin, a recluse, a hermitess, and a nun. A traditional anchoress figures in her story as well. As her life illustrates, to be a bride of Christ was not necessarily to be a nun. Especially in the later Middle Ages, women pursued the religious life in a variety of forms. Nuns Most medieval women married the men their families chose for them or peaceably accepted consignment to the convent, the fate of many upper-class women of the High and Late Middle Ages. Such marriages, whether to men or to Christ, were reasonably successful. Nuns were regulars, that is, they lived communally under rule Latin *regula* and took the three monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. They came to the convent, often as children, from the households of the rich and powerful; the shelter of a medieval nunnery was available to the daughters only of those who had the resources to build and endow them. One example was the great Hildegard of Bingen, famed mystic, author, and adviser to popes, kings, and emperors. As a frail child, she was dedicated to the church by her family, minor nobles in Rhineland Germany. At age 8, Hildegard was delivered into the care of a woman named Jutta, the daughter of the regional lord and a hermitess or anchoress. In her youth, Jutta had refused both marriage and the convent. She chose the solitary life and the anchorhold. Her father provided the setting and financial support. What had been a cell for a solitary gradually became an irregular without rule household for a group. By the time Hildegard was old enough to take vows, the household had been formally constituted as a convent with Jutta as abbess. So it was that Hildegard rode out her career as a nun and later as an abbess. They demanded the right to be religious and if necessary connived to achieve it. Women may have been consigned to a nunnery, but never to any of the following professions. These were all lives of choice, lives embraced and desired, often against familial wishes. Hermitesses Occasionally women chose to be hermitesses. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, some women of religious bent rejected the communal and regulated life of the convent for the desolation and difficulty of a solitary life in the wilderness. Like many men in this period of religious revival, they took to the forests, the deserts, and the bogs. Alone or with a small group of like-minded individuals, they lived in makeshift dwellings and sought a mystical relationship with God. These hermitesses stood largely outside the formal organization of the church, unless they chose to accept the counsel of a caring clergyman. The nunneries of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the hermitages that grew in this same period, were aspects of a society almost completely rural. There remained abundant land, yet uncleared, on which a pious noble might found a convent for his daughter; there were forests within which an enterprising hermitess might establish herself. Towns were few, the distances between them long. These religious movements of withdrawal, paradoxically, gradually tamed and eliminated the environment to which they had fled. They cleared the land and provided outposts of civilization, encouraging and aiding the growth of towns and cities. By the thirteenth century western Europe was considerably deforested. The eremitic age was over, and new religious vocations for women emerged. The thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries, a more urban age, was the age of beguines and tertiaries. Beguines The beguine was merely a religious woman, mulier religiosa. She took temporary vows, usually of chastity and simplicity of life, donned some kind of identifying habit, and dedicated herself to good works. The beguine, a product of the growing cities of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe, worked in those cities, answering the needs of the displaced poor and sick. She was bound to no order. She might live at home or with a group who shared her values. She could later renounce her vows and marry without difficulty. The beguine movement was the only religious current of the Middle Ages that was female in conception. It did not owe its impetus, its main support, or its direction to men. Pressure for the beguine movements and the tertiary movements was generated in part by an imbalance in the numbers of men and women of marriageable age. From this pool of unattached women arose more women who wanted to assume religious lives and more women available because unmarried to lead them. They awaited only the right stimulus to aid them in focusing their lives religiously. That stimulus emerged in late twelfth-century Belgium, from two women: Ivetta of Huy and Mary of Oignies. Ivetta of Huy was born to an affluent family near Liege. She was married at 13 and widowed at 18, already the mother of three sons. She gave the care of her children to her father and spent the next ten years using her home as a hostel for pilgrims and travelers and working in a nearby leper colony. Still feeling too much contact with worldly affairs, Ivetta then moved to the leper colony, enclosed herself in a cell, and lived there as an anchoress until her death forty-eight years later, by then famed as a mystic. Mary of Oignies also was born to wealth in the Brabant region. She was married at 14, against her will. More successful than Christina of Markyate, she was able to convince her husband that they live in continence and share a religious vocation. They worked together caring for lepers. In , after about fifteen years of work with the lepers and of exercising a kind of moral leadership over the amorphous community that had grown up around her, she retired to an anchorhold near Oignes. She lived in the cell only six years before dying at the age of Mary and Ivetta both began their religious lives in the world. Though both gradually withdrew from the world, the concept that a religious life could be lived in the world was central to their perception. Poverty was also a tenet of their ideology; the families of these women had to constantly stand guard that they not decimate the family fortune with excessive almsgiving. Combining apostolic poverty and service in the world, they thus shared characteristics of the movements spurred later by St. From these women the beguines developed. The movement swept through the Low Countries and Germany in the thirteenth century, centered in the cities. The beguine movement accommodated women of more middling status than those who filled the nunneries. The beguines lived in the world, supporting themselves with any manner of honest work and spending the remainder of their time in charitable works. They served the poor and the sick in the urban environment. They banded together, unattached women of the cities, living separately or communally in houses later called beguinages built or bought with their own resources. To get a sense of how many there may have been, by the end of the fourteenth century there were about 1, beguines living in Cologne, a city whose general population was only about 20, Over a two-hundred- year period, on average, perhaps one in ten residents was a beguine. While acknowledging the social and demographic components of the movement, it is important to stress that this was essentially a religious happening, a great outpouring of religious fervor. These women, who stood apart from hierarchy and structure, were degraded by many. Tertiaries Following upon the success of Francis of Assisi in the early thirteenth century, a number of mendicant communities those who begged alms for a living arose. These quickly organized into three orders. First Orders were the friars themselvesâ€”groups of wandering male preachers vowed to absolute poverty and complete dependence upon alms. Second Orders were for women in enclosed nunneries who sought to participate in the voluntary poverty of the friars, but in traditional form as nuns vowed to obedience. Third Orders took in laypersons, male and female, married and single, who in some measure identified with the reformist ideals and apostolic fervor of the early followers of Francis. Among these were many women, virgins as well as widows, who took vows revocable , donned habits, and led religious lives of varying intensity. A tertiary was a member of such a Third Order. One of the most famous tertiaries was Catherine of Siena The twenty-fourth of twenty-five children, her family was of a middling class. At 6 she had a mystical experience; at 7 she consecrated her virginity to Christ; at 16 she received the habit of a Dominican tertiary and then withdrew to a cell-like room in her family home for a

prolonged period of intense mystical activity. She emerged after three years, committed to a religious life in the world. It was a brief life, but it took her into conversation and concert with princes and the popes of Avignon and Italy. Like the beguine movement, the tertiaries were a natural development, hard to date and hard to fully account for in their sudden explosion. Certainly the Franciscan movement had awakened a hunger in many for a return to the apostolic ideal of Scripture. More secure than the beguines, because they had the religious protection of the orders to which they were attached, tertiaries organized in several ways.

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Medieval England was not a comfortable place for most women. Medieval women invariably had a hard time in an era when many men lived harsh lives. A few women lived comfortable lives but Medieval society was completely dominated by men and women had to know 'their place' in such a society.

Chapter 9 : Religion in Medieval England by Emily Percak on Prezi

The Medieval Church played a far greater role in Medieval England than the Church does today. In Medieval England, the Church dominated everybody's blog.quintoapp.com Medieval people - be they village peasants or towns people - believed that God, Heaven and Hell all existed.