

# Connecting with History

A GUIDE TO SALVATION HISTORY  
HIGH MEDIEVAL THROUGH POST-REFORMATION

## Companion Reader

Volume 3

Connecting with History  
A Guide to Salvation History: High Medieval Through Post-Reformation  
Companion Reader  
Volume 3

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# Introduction

The books in this series are anthologies – collections of articles about cultures, places, and events from history; stories to illustrate themes contained in the Connecting with History units; and short historical stories written in a friendly, conversational style about real people and events.

One of the goals of the Connecting with History program is to help young people encounter history from many different angles. Rather than reading one book written in one author's style, we provide a variety of voices, each with a story to tell in his or her own way. We believe that this method deepens the reader's interest, enjoyment, and understanding of history. It also recognizes that some children respond to one type of writing over another. Some prefer informational articles while other children learn better from a story-telling approach.

Each chapter of this book corresponds to a unit in *Connecting with History, Year Three: High Medieval through Post-Reformation*. Because this is an anthology, at times the transition from one subject to another may seem abrupt. There may be a longer selection to read on one day, while the next may contain just a few short paragraphs. The purpose of the book is not to present every fact and date in a given time period, but to present an introduction. It is one part of the process of learning. The Connecting with History program encourages using a rich variety of reading that includes non-fiction, literature, and historical fiction, accompanied by activities that support and encourage the child's growing understanding.

After long searching and sifting through classic books, we have edited them to update any archaic language, punctuation, and spelling while being careful to retain the author's voice. When necessary, historical facts have been updated. In some cases, we have combined two or more sources into one story or article. It has been widely recognized that writing from one hundred or more years ago assumed a higher reading level than much of what is written for children today. The authors use a rich vocabulary, speak directly to the child, respect their intelligence, and never talk down to them.

Above all, the purpose of this book is to make history come to life: to make it interesting, relevant to a child's daily life, and enjoyable. Approach it, not just as a textbook, but as a guide to the fascinating world of places and times in which very real people lived before us.

Sonya Romens  
*Author of the Connecting with History Program*

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# Unit One: The Church Militant

LATE 11<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

## HYMN TO THE CHURCH

*By The Catholic Publication Society*

Who is she that stands triumphant,  
A rock in strength upon the Rock,  
Like some city crowned with turrets,  
Braving storm and earthquake shock?  
Who is she, her arms extending  
In blessing o'er a world restored,  
All the anthems of creation  
Lifting to creation's Lord?  
Hers the kingdom, hers the scepter!  
Fall, ye nations, at her feet!  
Hers that truth whose fruit is freedom;  
Light her yoke, her burden sweet!

As the moon its splendor borrows  
From a sun unseen all night,  
So from Christ, the Sun of Justice,  
Draws His Church her vestal light  
Touched by His, her hands have healing,  
The Bread of Life, the absolving Key;  
The Word Incarnate is her Bridegroom;  
The Spirit hers; His Temple she.  
Hers the kingdom, hers the scepter!  
Fall, ye nations, at her feet!  
Hers that truth whose fruit is freedom:  
Light her yoke, her burden sweet!

Empires rise and sink like billows;  
Their place knoweth them no more;  
Glorious as the star of morning  
She o'erlooks their wild uproar.  
Hers the household all-embracing;  
Hers the vine that shadows earth;  
Blest thy children, mighty mother!  
Safe the stranger at thy hearth!  
Hers the kingdom, hers the scepter!  
Fall, ye nations, at her feet!  
Hers that truth whose fruit is freedom;  
Light her yoke, her burden sweet!

Like her Bridegroom, heavenly, human,  
Crowned and militant in one,  
Chanting Nature's great Assumption  
And the abasement of the Son;  
Her Magnificats, her dirges  
Harmonize the jarring years;  
Hands that fling to heaven the censor  
Wipe away the orphan's tears.  
Hers the kingdom, hers the scepter!  
Fall, ye nations, at her feet!  
Hers that truth whose fruit is freedom;  
Light her yoke, her burden sweet!

members read aloud from the Bible or some other religious book.

Other parts of the monastery were the writing rooms, the hospitals where the sick were cared for, the abbot's house, the chapter house where the monks met together, and the guest house where travelers might find lodging. There were also sheds where the cows and other animals of the monastery were kept.

**Daily Life in a Monastery.** The monks arose very early for Mass. They breakfasted on wine and bread and were at work by sunup. Some worked in the gardens and fields, some cultivated the vineyards and made the wine, others preached, taught, wrote manuscripts, or tended the sick. Each did the work given him since obedience was one of the things he had promised when he became a monk.

When a new monastery was established, the monks did most of the construction work. The monks thought manual labor was honorable for a man. One of the great things that the monks taught to the peoples of Europe was the dignity of labor. In all previous civilizations, the hard work was done by slaves or women. Following the example of the monks, the freemen of the Middle Ages began to have great pride in their work.

The monks' dinner, their only real meal of the day, was at noon. In some monasteries, only the sick monks were allowed meat. The others had vegetables, bread, wine, and cheese. We must remember that all Europeans drank wine or ale because in many places there was no pure drinking water. They had not learned how to keep wells pure and clean.

After dinner, the monks were allowed to rest or to read for an hour or two before returning to their work. There was a service in the church called Vespers in the late afternoon. This was followed by supper of bread and wine; then came evening prayers. By 8:30, they were ready for bed. In most monasteries, the monks were awakened at midnight for another church service called Matins, which was like morning prayers. Then they returned to their beds until early Mass.

### *The Preservation of Learning*

**Copying Manuscripts.** Any man who wished might become a monk if he were found worthy. So, all classes of men from serfs to the sons of kings were in the monasteries. All were supposed to be treated alike. Naturally, however, some were better fitted for certain tasks than others. Those who read and wrote well were usually set to copying manuscripts. This was important work since most of the Greek and Roman and early Christian writings had been written on papyrus. In time this began to crumble, and the books would have been lost forever if the monks had not copied them. In this way, the monks preserved for us a knowledge of the ancient world.

The monks made their copies of books on long rolls of parchment. Parchment was made from sheepskin or calfskin by washing, scraping, and drying it several times. Then it was dusted with powdered chalk, rubbed smooth, and stretched on frames to dry. These parchment sheets were strong and lasting.

Later in the Middle Ages, the sheepskin was cut into pages and bound together. Thus,

## A STORY OF ROBIN HOOD

*Retold by James Baldwin*

In the days of King Richard and King John, there were many great forests in England. The most famous of these was Sherwood forest, where the king often went to hunt deer. In this forest there lived a band of daring men called outlaws.

They had done something that was against the laws of the land and had been forced to hide themselves in the woods to save their lives. There they spent their time roaming about among the trees, in hunting the king's deer, and in robbing rich travelers that came that way.

There were nearly a hundred of these outlaws, and their leader was a bold fellow called Robin Hood. They were dressed in suits of green and armed with bows and arrows; and sometimes they carried long wooden lances and broadswords, which they knew how to handle well. Whenever they had taken anything, it was brought and laid at the feet of Robin Hood, whom they called their king. He then divided it fairly among them, giving to each man his just share.

Robin never allowed his men to harm anybody but the rich men who lived in great houses and did no work. He was always kind to the poor, and he often sent help to them; and for that reason, the common people looked upon him as their friend.

Long after he was dead, men liked to talk about his deeds. Some praised him, and some blamed him. A great many songs were made up about Robin Hood, and these songs were sung in the cottages and huts all over the land for hundreds of years afterward.

Here is a little story that is told in one of those songs:

Robin Hood was standing one day under a green tree by the roadside. While he was listening to the birds among the leaves, he saw a young man passing by. This young man was dressed in a fine suit of bright red cloth; and, as he tripped gayly along the road, he seemed to be as happy as the day.

"I will not trouble him," said Robin Hood, "for I think he is on his way to his wedding."

The next day Robin stood in the same place. He had not been there long when he saw the same young man coming down the road. But he did not seem to be so happy this time. He had left his scarlet coat at home, and at every step, he sighed and groaned.

"Ah, the sad day! the sad day!" he kept saying to himself.

Then Robin Hood stepped out from under the tree, and said, "I say, young man! Have you any money to spare for my merry men and me?"

"I have nothing at all," said the young man, "but five shillings and a ring."

"A gold ring?" asked Robin.

"Yes," said the young man, "it is a gold ring. Here it is."

"Ah, I see!" said Robin. "It is a wedding ring."

"I have kept it these seven years," said the young man; "I have kept it to give to my bride on our wedding day. We were going to be married yesterday. But her father has promised her to a rich old man whom she never saw. And now my heart is broken."

## THE STORY OF MARCO POLO

*Adapted from the works of Rev. Monsignor Edmund J. Goebel Ph. D,  
Eugene C. Barker, Marie Alsager, and Walter P. Webb*

**How Marco Polo Began His Travels.** The most famous of all the early travelers was Marco Polo. He was born in the city of Venice. When he was fifteen years old, his father and one of his uncles returned from the East. They had been to the court of Kublai Khan and had been absent many years. Kublai Khan was the new ruler of Asia. His subjects boasted that his empire extended “wherever ears could hear, wherever horses could travel.” He had built for his capital a magnificent city in the far northeastern corner of China. He called it Cambaluc, but we now know it by the name of Beijing.

Kublai Khan had treated the Polo brothers with great kindness. He had often talked with them and asked them to tell him about their country and about the strange things that they saw on the road to Cambaluc. When they left, he gave them a golden tablet with writing on it, commanding his officers to protect them and help them on their way. We would call it a passport. He also gave them a letter to the pope, asking the pope to send him a hundred Catholic missionaries to teach the people of China the Faith.

There were troubles in the church and the pope could not send the missionaries, but the Polos went back to China, and Marco went with them.

**Marco Polo Traveled to the Far East.** A marvelous life began for the young Italian who had grown up in Venice. His father and uncle went first to the Holy Land, where they got a bottle of oil from the lamps that burned on the altar of the church in Jerusalem. Kublai Khan had expressed a wish for some of this oil, and they wanted to take him a present.

From the Holy Land, they took the long, winding road to Cambaluc. They were three years on the way. They traveled through sunbaked lands so hot that Marco nearly died; over mountains so high that the ice and snow never melted; and then across part of the trackless Gobi desert, where travelers had to put a signboard at night to show the direction that they wanted to travel in the morning.

Marco saw many strange things. Not long after leaving the Holy Land, he saw springs of burning oil. These springs are now in the very important oil fields of Iraq and western Persia. In the high mountains, he saw bighorn sheep, with horns measuring thirty-six inches from tip to tip. He saw black rocks that men dug from the earth and burned. “If you make a fire with them at night and get them well kindled, you will find that they will still be burning in the morning. And they make such good fuel that no other is used in all the land. They have wood, but this they do not burn, for those stones burn better and are cheaper.” This is the way Marco Polo described the first coal that he ever saw.

At Cambaluc, the Khan welcomed the Italians as old friends. Then he saw Marco and liked him at first sight. He gave the older men offices at court, where he could see them every day, for he liked to hear them talk. To Marco, he gave a traveling job. It was his business to travel all over the Khan’s empire and report how the officers were attending to their duties.

## HOW THE BOY SAINT VINCENT LOVED GOD'S POOR

*By Rev. D. Chisholm*

In his boyhood, Vincent de Paul had a great love for the poor. One day his father sent him to the mill for some flour. On the way home, he happened to meet some poor people, and as he had nothing of his own to give them, he opened the sack he was carrying and gave them some handfuls of the flour.

When he reached home, his father saw that some flour was missing from the sack, and he asked Vincent what he had done with the rest.

Vincent at once told what had happened. His father did not punish him; on the contrary, from his heart, he gave thanks to God for giving him a son who loved the poor so much.

Another time, when he was about twelve years old, he was sent to do some work, and when the work was done, he got about fifteen pence as his wages. It was his first earnings, and he felt proud as he held in his hands a few pieces of money which were really his own.

His first thought was about what he would do with them. "I will take them home," he said to himself, "and put them away carefully." On the way home he met a poor man, and when he saw the man's misery, Vincent at once gave him all of the money he had earned without keeping as much as one penny for himself.

## WATCHING THE HEAVENS

*By Rev. Monsignor Edmund J. Goebel, Ph. D.*

Men became interested in studying the position of the stars. Sailors at sea charted the position of their ship in relation to the stars each night. Then they could compute how far they had traveled in a day. They were also able to figure out the degrees of longitude more exactly.

One of the scientists who studied the stars was a priest in Poland. His name was Copernicus. He made an important discovery. The ancient Greeks had taught that the sun and the other stars moved around the earth. For two thousand years, all students were taught this same idea. Copernicus studied the movements of the stars for many years. He decided that the earth was one of the planets and that all these planets moved around the sun in a regular order. He wrote a book explaining these ideas and dedicated the book to the pope.

It took a long time to make people change their ideas on this point. They wanted more proof. About fifty years later, an Italian astronomer named Galileo improved the telescope. With this instrument, Galileo could see the stars and planets more clearly. He saw that some of them moved as Copernicus thought they did. It took a long time, however, before most people would accept the new ideas.

The increased study of astronomy revealed that the calendar which was in use did not agree with the movements of the sun. This was the calendar that had been drawn up under Julius Caesar and was called the Julian calendar. This calendar was now ten days ahead of