



# MIDDLE AGES



# MIDDLE AGES

- Less often called Medieval times

**DARK AGES/ANGLO SAXON** – 449 to 1066

**MIDDLE AGES-1066-1485**

# Fall of Rome / Middle Ages

- In 476 C.E., warriors attacked the city of Rome and ended more than 800 years of glory for the “eternal city.” Historians mark the **fall of Rome** as the end of ancient history. The next 1000 years were called the Middle Ages.
- The beginning of the Middle Ages is often called the Dark Ages because Rome had fallen and life in Europe was hard. Very few could read and write, and no one expected conditions to improve. The only hope for most was their belief in Christianity, and the hope that life in heaven would be better than life on earth.

## POLITICALLY:

### Chaos and Reorganization

- Barbarian invasions
- Merged in with existing populations
- feudalism



## RELIGIOUSLY:

### Age of Faith

- Roman Catholic church was a strong institution that created stability in the face of rapid secular change.
- Church was often the only way to get an education.

# MONKS: SCRIPTORIUM

## **ILLUMINATION:**

Decorative borders on manuscripts the monks copied.

## **CALLIGRAPHY:**

Fancy script used by monks.

Monasteries produced many well-educated men prepared to serve as administrators for uneducated kings and lords.



# FEUDALISM:

- Hierarchical system in which every man is another man's vassal (or servant)
- hardly any movement at all through the system in early MA
- A bit more movement in high and late MA



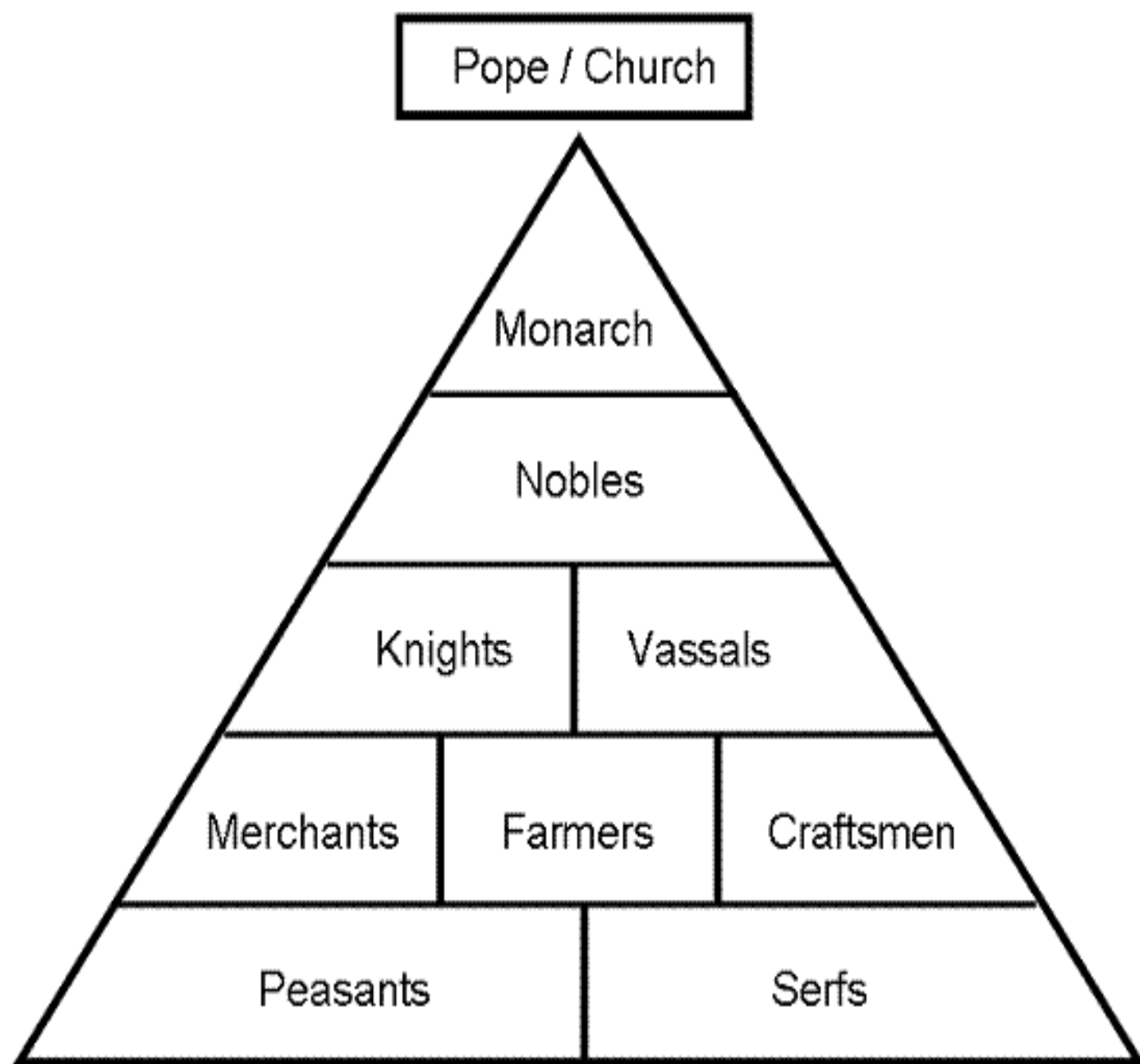
# Feudalism, cont.

## **Monarchs (KINGS):**

- Kings at top of hierarchy; collected from nobles
- As God's deputy on earth ("divine right of kings"), can't question the king's authority

## **Nobles (BARONS):**

- Important noblemen
- Rich and powerful
- Nobles collected from knights, knights collected from peasants, etc.
- Land was almost the only form of wealth; Rank and power were determined by the amount of land you had.





# Feudalism, cont.

## **KNIGHTS (Lords):**

- first and foremost a lord was a knight by profession: provided men and arms for baron and king.
- Also often raided each others' properties.

- **Chivalry:** medieval institution of knighthood; qualities idealized by knights—bravery, courtesy, honesty

# **MERCHANTS, FARMERS, CRAFTSMEN (FREEMEN)**

- owned their own land independently of knights (Lords)

# PEASANTS/SERFS

## PEASANTS

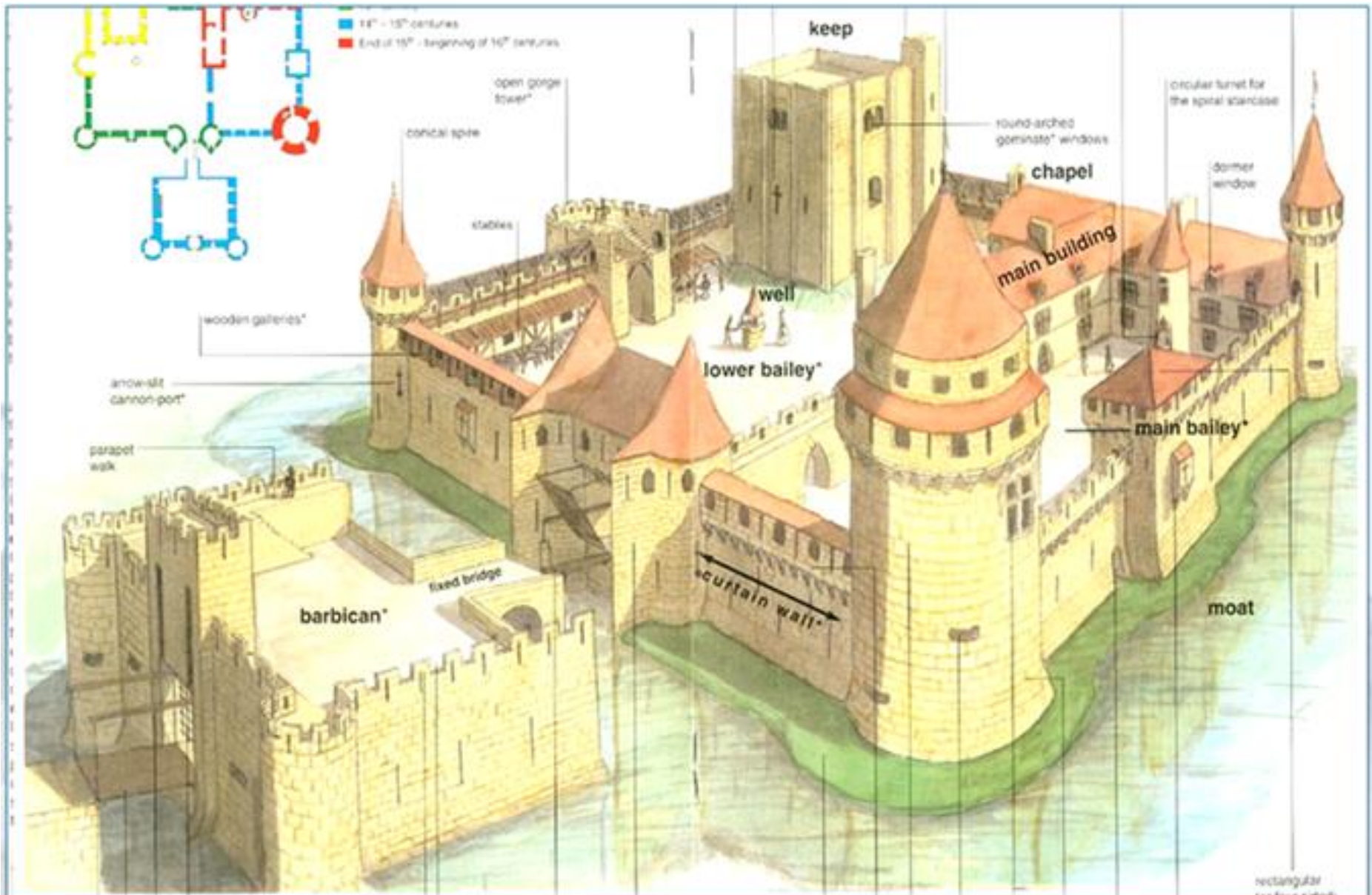
- Free to leave
- Might own a business or have their own garden
- Escaped some of the hard work by working in the church

## SERFS

- Bound to the manor
- Were not “slaves”-could not be bought/sold

peasants and serfs basically had the same life.

# PARTS OF A MEDIEVAL CASTLE



# **SOME IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS:**

- 1066 Norman Conquest
- Domesday Book
- Crusades
- Plague

# **SOME IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS:**

## **1066 NORMAN CONQUEST**

### **KNOW THIS DATE**

- William of Normandy (called William the Conqueror), who already controlled northern France, invaded and conquered England in 1066 C.E., with the decisive victory at the Battle of Hastings.

1. Old French became language of power, commerce, and religion in England
2. End of Old English (looks/sounds very German; the language of Beowulf)
3. French merged with Old English to produce Middle English, the language of Chaucer—close enough to modern English that we can recognize it.

## **SOME IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS:**

# **DOMESDAY BOOK** commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1087:

- Census, land register, and income record to create a tax roll
- Can learn a lot about commerce, absolutely everything that everyone owned
- Learn a lot about common names and daily life



## SOME IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS: **CRUSADES:**

- 1095
- Pope Urban II called for a holy war against the Muslim Turks who controlled what he saw as the Christian Holy Land of Palestine.
- Pope said if you died fighting in a crusade, you would go to heaven.
- 8 crusades in total over 200 years—the last 7 failed horribly due to **disease**, cold, hunger, and battles.

# PLAGUE/BLACK DEATH:

- Took out 54 million
- 1/3 of population wiped out
- Defining event(s) of the Middle Ages
- Spread by fleas which lived on rats
- A lack of cleanliness added to their vulnerability: crowded with poor sanitation; ate stale or diseased meat; primitive medicine (people were often advised to not bathe b/c open skin pores might let in the disease).
- Highly contagious disease nodules would burst around the area of the flea bite.



In 1347, Italian merchant ships returned from the Black Sea, one of the links along the trade route between Europe and China. Many of the sailors were already dying of the plague, and within days the disease had spread from the port cities to the surrounding countryside. The disease spread as far as England within a year.

# Why did the bubonic plague spread so quickly?

- In towns and cities people lived very close together and they knew nothing about contagious diseases. Also the disposal of bodies was very crude and helped to spread the disease still further as those who handled the dead bodies did not protect themselves in any way.
- The filth that littered streets gave rats the perfect environment to breed and increase their number. It is commonly thought that it was the rats that caused the disease. This is not true – the fleas did this. However, it was the rats that enabled the disease to spread very quickly and the filth in the streets of our towns and cities did not help to stop the spread of the disease. People threw out morning waste yelled “ Guardaloo!”
- Lack of medical knowledge meant that people tried anything to help them escape the disease. One of the more extreme was the **flagellants**. These people wanted to show their love of God by whipping themselves, hoping that God would forgive them their sins and that they would be spared the Black Death.

# BLACK DEATH (BUBONIC PLAGUE)

- Its symptoms described→



- "The first signs of the plague were lumps in the groin or armpits. After this, livid black spots appeared on the arms and thighs and other parts of the body. Few recovered. Almost all died within three days, usually without any fever."

# **SOME IMPORTANT CULTURAL CHANGES:**

1. Flowering of Poetry about Courtly Love
2. Peasant Uprisings and Plague (1/3 of population at one point)

# **SOME IMPORTANT CULTURAL CHANGES: FLOWERING of POETRY ABOUT COURTLY LOVE:**

- For nobles only
- Troubadours (professional singers) sang of courtliness, brave deeds, and Romantic love accompanied by a harp or lute.
- Courtly love poetry praised an idealized, distant, unattainable lady love





# FLOWERING of POETRY ABOUT COURTLY LOVE, CONT.:



- Hearty, masculine culture of early Middle Ages was giving way to a more tranquil, confident, and leisurely society.
- Over time, a noble's castle became more of a theater for refined pleasures than a barracks for fighting men.

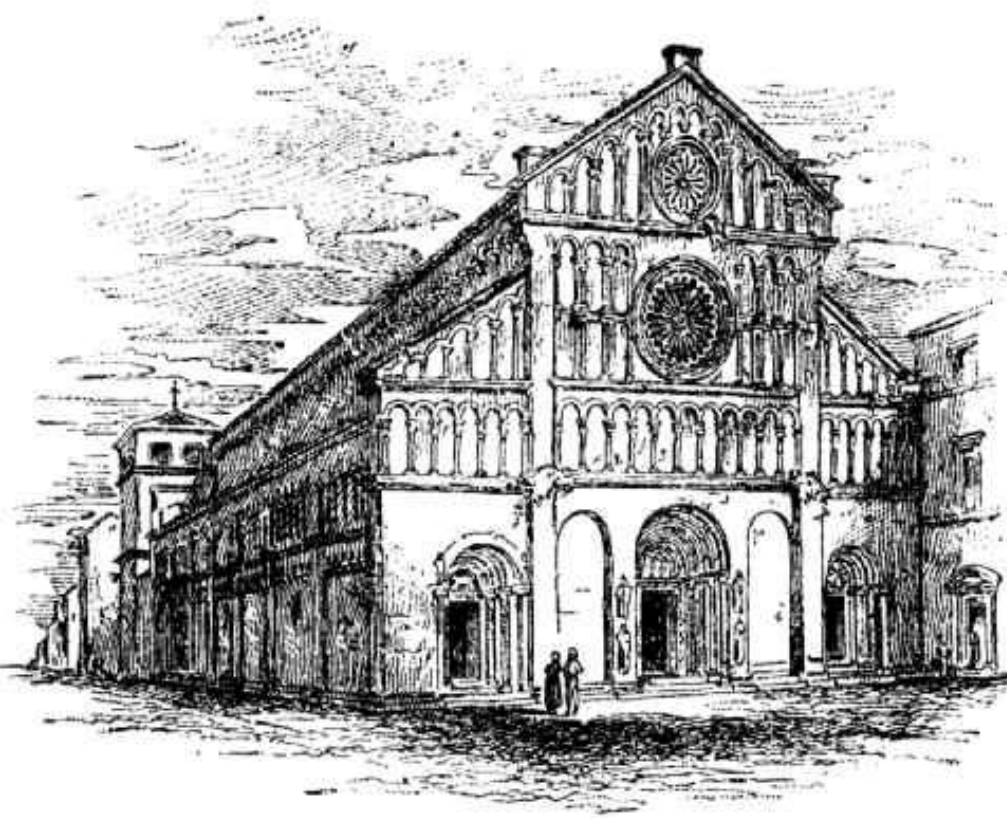


# COMMON ELEMENTS BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR IN THE MIDDLE AGES:

- Subservience to God's church
- Church played a big role—birth, baptism
- Belief that great cathedrals should be erected
- Belief in God, heaven, and hell
- All actions had consequences (good life led to a good experience in heaven).

# ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE:

prevalent during 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century

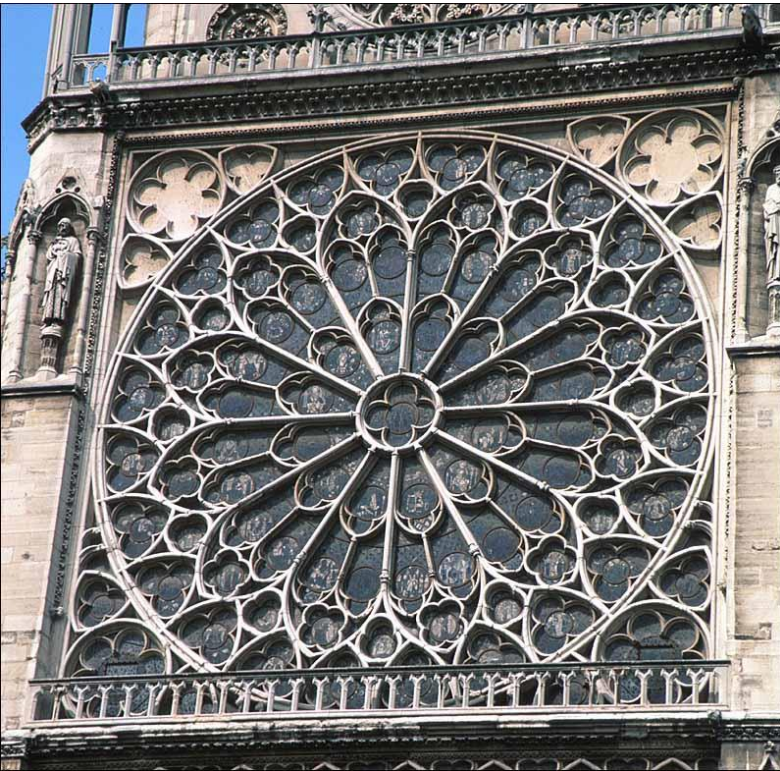


- Rounded Arches
- Barrel Vaults
- Thick walls
- Darker, simplistic interiors
- Small windows usually at the top of the wall
- Circular Rose Window usually on the West Side



# Rose Window

- The basic round rose window was developed as part of the Romanesque period but developed further and was used in Gothic Architecture.
- Notice the Romanesque style top left versus the Gothic style bottom left (from the cathedral of Notre Dame). Intricate stone tracery is used in the Gothic style.



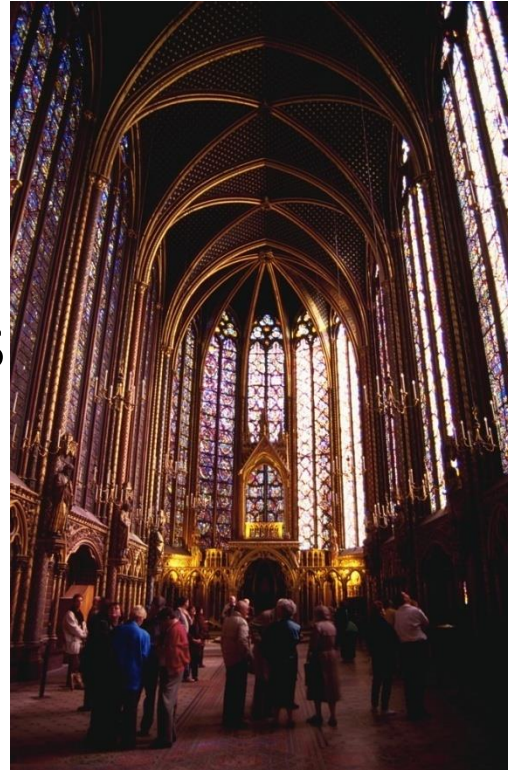


# GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE:

prevalent in W. Europe from 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Cen. C.E.

## FEATURES:

- Pointed arches
- High, narrow vaults
- Thinner walls
- Flying buttresses
- Elaborate, ornate, airier interiors
- Stained-glass windows



• Everything reaches to heaven, to God

