

## **Confirmation Work to do by May 16**

1. **Read** about pilgrimages on the Camino de Santiago (below)
2. **Attend Maria's presentation** on her walk on the Camino de Santiago (May 5 after church) - if you can't attend Maria's presentation, let me know and we'll figure something out.
3. **Answer** the following questions in writing or in a video of you talking or in another way
  - a. Why do you think people do pilgrimages?
  - b. How does it impact people's faith?
4. **Read** the below about monks and nuns & **watch** one (or more!) of these videos about monks and/or nuns:
  - a. Life of [St. Benedict](#) - the founder of Christian monasticism
  - b. [Overview of English monasteries and practices](#) - how monasticism relied on St. Benedict and different applications
5. **Answer** - what was important about monasticism? What was the most surprising thing in the video you watched? Was anything interesting about the way they connect to God?
6. **Read** the below about mystics
7. **Choose** one mystic to learn more about **and share** what you learn in some way (comic, writing, video, drawing of your mystic, etc.)
8. **Watch** [this video on the crusades](#). We'll discuss when we meet. What questions do you have?

Then in class we will share our findings and start our work on the reformation and Martin Luther. We will continue on the reformation in June, and you will have a project to work on in July (no meeting!) that we'll review when we meet in August.

After that we'll have two more regular meetings, in September and October, in addition to our retreat the first weekend of October.

## **Readings**

### **Monks and Nuns (From *learner.com*)**

#### **“Monks and Nuns**

Monasteries in the Middle Ages were based on the rules set down by St. Benedict in the sixth century. The monks became known as Benedictines and took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to their leaders. They were required to perform manual labor and were forbidden to own property, leave the monastery, or become entangled in the concerns of society. Daily tasks were often carried out in silence. Monks and their female counterparts, nuns, who lived in convents, provided for the less fortunate members of the community. Monasteries and nunneries were safe havens for pilgrims and other travelers.

Monks went to the monastery church eight times a day in a routine of worship that involved singing, chanting, and reciting prayers from the divine offices and from the service for Mass. The

first office, "Matins," began at 2 A.M. and the next seven followed at regular intervals, culminating in "Vespers" in the evening and "Compline" before the monks retired at night. Between prayers, the monks read or copied religious texts and music. Monks were often well-educated and devoted their lives to writing and learning. The Venerable Bede, an English Benedictine monk born in the seventh century, wrote histories and books on science and religion."

## **Mystics of the Middle Ages**

Mysticism is a movement that is rooted in aspects of Judaism and parts of early Christianity. Mystical movements are focused on the "experience" of God. That is, they have spiritual experiences that are based on a sense of knowing God through direct experience. Mystics directly experience the presence of God and are transformed by that presence. Many mystics experience visions as a part of their experience.

[Here's a video that summarizes what mysticism is.](#)

Some of the mystics of the Middle Ages we remember and from whom we still learn are listed below - I only included folks about whom I could find a decent video! Note that many of them were also monks or nuns.

- [St. Hildegard of Bingen \(1098-1179\)](#) (Super-interesting! About 30 minutes) or [St. Hildegard - Saint of the Day](#) (much shorter)
- [Mechtild of Magdeburg](#) (1210-1279) (includes excerpts of her work)
- [Meister Eckhart](#) (c. 1260 - 1327/8) (A professor talks briefly about Meister Eckhart)
- [St. Bridget of Sweden](#) (1302-1373)
- [St. Julian of Norwich](#) (1342-c.1416) or [What Can We Learn from Julian of Norwich](#)
- [St. Margery Kempe](#) (c.1373-1438) (Women's History - Margery Kempe)

## **Interested in More?**

*More from Extra History:*

On schisms:

[Early Christian Schisms - Ephesus, the Robber Council, and Chalcedon - Extra History - Part 4](#)  
(also see Part 5)

On the crusades:

[First Crusade](#) (part 1 of series)

Longer info on mystics:

[Joan of Arc](#) series (she's a mystic!) (part 1 of series)

**Pilgrimages - the Camino de Santiago - excerpt from Wikipedia entry**

## Medieval route history



Marker of the Camino near the entrance to the [Taboada Bridge](#), a X-Century bridge located in the [Silleda Council](#) of [Pontevedra Province](#) in [Spain](#). The bridge is still used today by the pilgrims on their way to Santiago using the Silver Way (Vía de la Plata).



Saint James with his pilgrim's staff. The hat is typical, but he often wears his emblem, the scallop shell, on the front brim of the hat or elsewhere on his clothes



Way of St. James pilgrims (1568)

The earliest records of visits paid to the shrine at [Santiago de Compostela](#) date from the 9th century, in the time of the [Kingdom of Asturias](#) and [Galicia](#). The pilgrimage to the shrine became the most renowned medieval pilgrimage, and it became customary for those who returned from Compostela to carry back with them a [Galician scallop](#) shell as proof of their completion of the journey. This practice gradually led to the scallop shell becoming the badge of a pilgrim.<sup>[18]</sup>

The earliest recorded pilgrims from beyond the [Pyrenees](#) visited the shrine in the middle of the 11th century, but it seems that it was not until a century later that large numbers of pilgrims from abroad were regularly journeying there. The earliest records of pilgrims that arrived from [England](#) belong to the period between 1092 and 1105. However, by the early 12th century the pilgrimage had become a highly organized affair.<sup>[19]</sup>

One of the great proponents of the pilgrimage in the 12th century was [Pope Callixtus II](#), who started the Compostelan Holy Years.<sup>[20]</sup>



Early 18th century facade of the San Marcos Monastery in Leon, which provided care for pilgrims over many centuries



St James the [Moor](#) Slayer ([Carrión de los Condes](#))

The daily needs of pilgrims on their way to and from Compostela were met by a series of [hospitals](#). Indeed, these institutions contributed to the development of the modern concept of 'hospital'. Some Spanish towns still bear the name, such as [Hospital de Órbigo](#). The hospitals were often staffed by Catholic orders and under royal protection. Donations were encouraged but many poorer pilgrims had few clothes and poor health often barely getting to the next hospital. Due to this, [María Ramírez de Medrano](#) founded one of the earliest hospitals of San Juan de Acre in [Navarre](#) and a [commandery](#) for the protection of pilgrims on the Compostela route.<sup>[21]</sup>

[Romanesque architecture](#), a new genre of ecclesiastical architecture, was designed with massive archways to cope with huge crowds of the devout.<sup>[22]</sup>

There was also the sale of the now-familiar paraphernalia of [tourism](#), such as badges and souvenirs. Pilgrims often prayed to [Saint Roch](#) whose numerous depictions with the [Cross of St James](#) can still be seen along the Way. On the Camino, the cross is often seen with a [Pilgrim's scallop](#) to mark the way of the pilgrimage.<sup>[23]</sup>

The pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela was made possible by the protection and freedom provided by the [Kingdom of France](#), from which the majority of pilgrims originated. Enterprising French (including [Gascons](#) and other peoples not under the French crown) settled in towns along the pilgrimage routes, where their names appear in the archives. The pilgrims were tended by people like [Domingo de la Calzada](#), who was later recognized as a saint.

Pilgrims walked the Way of St. James, often for months and occasionally years at a time, to arrive at the great church in the main square of Compostela and pay homage to St James. Many arrived with very little due to illness or robbery or both. Traditionally pilgrims lay their hands on the pillar just inside the doorway of the cathedral, and so many now have done this it has visibly worn away the stone.<sup>[24]</sup>

The popular Spanish name for the astronomical [Milky Way](#) is *El Camino de Santiago*. According to a common medieval legend, the [Milky Way](#) was formed from the dust raised by travelling pilgrims.<sup>[25]</sup>