

WC 275-296 PP 318-320: Papal Bull *Unam Sanctum*

## Chronology

1198-1216	Reign of Pope Innocent III
1209	Franciscan monastic Order established
1215	Magna Carta signed
1215	Fourth Lateran Council called together by Innocent III
1219	Dominican monastic Order established
	<i>Unam Sanctam</i> issued by Pope Boniface VIII

<b>Star Terms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pope Boniface VIII</li> <li>• Fourth Lateran Council</li> </ul>	<b>Geog Terms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingdom of France</li> <li>• Papal States</li> <li>• Kingdom of the Two Sicilies</li> </ul>
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A. Fresco of Pope Innocent III, Monastero di San Benedetto, Subiaco. late 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Innocent III was one of the most powerful and influential popes of the Middle Ages. He sponsored the Fourth Crusade and the Albigensian Crusade, he approved the work of Saints Dominic and Francis, he convoked the Fourth Lateran Council, and he built the papacy into a more powerful, prestigious institution than it had ever been before. Innocent viewed the role of the pope as not merely a spiritual leader but a secular one as well, and while he held the papal office he made that vision a reality. Almost immediately upon his election as pope, Innocent sought to reassert papal rights in Rome, bringing about peace among the rival aristocratic factions and gaining the respect of the Roman people within a few years. Innocent also took a direct interest in the German succession. He believed that the pope had the right to approve or reject any election that was questionable on the grounds that the German ruler could claim the title of "Holy" Roman Emperor, a position that affected the spiritual realm. At the same time, Innocent explicitly disclaimed secular power in most of the remainder of Europe; but he still took direct interest in matters in France and England, and his influence in Germany and Italy alone was enough to bring the papacy into the forefront of medieval politics.

## B. Magna Carta, written 1215 in England

On June 15, 1215, in a field at Runnymede, King John affixed his seal to Magna Carta. Confronted by 40 rebellious barons, he consented to their demands in order to avert civil war. Just 10 weeks later, Pope Innocent III nullified the agreement, and England plunged into internal war. Although Magna Carta failed to resolve the conflict between King John and his barons, it was reissued several times after his death. On display at the National Archives, courtesy of David M. Rubenstein, is one of four surviving originals of the 1297 Magna Carta. This version was entered into the official Statute Rolls of England. This document was written to protect their rights and property against a tyrannical king. It is concerned with many practical matters and specific grievances relevant to the feudal system under which they lived. The interests of the common man were hardly apparent in the minds of the men who brokered the agreement. But there are two principles expressed in Magna Carta that resonate to this day:

*"No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, disseised, outlawed, banished, or in any way destroyed, nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers and by the law of the land."*

