



# Papal Conclave

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## Content Disclaimer

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As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the real-world implications of issues, our committees' contents may necessarily involve sensitive or controversial subject matter strictly for academic purposes. We ask for delegates to be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

The below content warning is meant to warn you of potentially sensitive or triggering topics that are present in the formal content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of committee (e.g., debate, crisis updates, directives), so that you can either prepare yourself before reading this background guide or opt-out of reading it entirely:

Some of the content discussed throughout this guide and the committee contains topics which are sensitive. The committee focuses on the political nature of the Papacy, and therefore may contain discussion on corruption, abuse of power and military behaviour within the Catholic Church. Military activity debated within the committee may also contain conversation on civilian casualties. Given the period of time and nature of the committee, religious discrimination against minority groups, violence, and classism are all realities which can not simply be avoided; however, the staff of the committee expects delegates to approach sensitive topics as such with the utmost seriousness and respect.

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We ask for your cooperation in maintaining order, both inside and outside of committee session, so that we may provide a professional, safe, inclusive, and educational conference.

Throughout the conference, please note that delegates shall only:

1. Wear Western Business Attire (i.e., no costumes, no casual wear)
2. Embody their assigned country's/character's position, not their mannerisms (e.g., no accents, no props)
3. Use laptops or electronic devices during unmoderated caucuses to draft paperless resolutions/directives (subject to their committee director's permission)
4. Opt for diplomatic, respectful, and tactful speech and phrasing of ideas, including notes (e.g., no foul language, suggestive remarks, or obscene body language)
5. Make decisions that contribute to a professional, safe, inclusive, and educational space for debate

The rest of our conference policies can be found on our website at <https://www.utmun.org/conference-policies>. By attending all or part of a UTMUN conference, attendees agree to abide by all of our conference policies.

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If you have any equity concerns (e.g., concerns about barriers to participation) or accessibility needs now or during the conference, please do not hesitate to contact your committees' dais and/or our Equity Officer at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org).

## A Letter from Your Director

Dear Delegates,

My name is Callum Shepard and I have the honour of serving as Director of the Papal Conclave Committee for UTMUN 2019. With my wonderful staff, I look forward to exploring a fascinating and pivotal time in the development of Italy, the Roman Catholic Church, and the entire Western world.

In 1503, Italy is in turmoil and anger at the corruption and stagnation of the Church will soon boil over during the Reformation. You face numerous issues as a committee, but also must grapple with electing one of your own Pontiff.

This committee will be fast paced, complex, and unique; it will require you to be informed and active participants. You also will be representing historical figures, each with their own personal motives which oftentimes come into conflict with the interests of the committee as a whole. I wish you all the best in committee and look forward to your politicking, plotting, and persuasion as you seek to bring your vision of the papacy to fruition!

Best regards,  
Callum Shepard  
callumshepard@gmail.com

## Introduction

In the year 1503, the Papacy stands at a crossroads: Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia, proved himself to be an incredibly adept political actor and has entangled the Papacy in the power politics of Renaissance Europe. Yet, despite— or perhaps because of— the Papacy's renewed temporal power and independence, Italy is far from peace.

The conflict between France and Spain for Italian dominance rages while the Borgia plot for a more independent, Papal led Italy is left adrift with the death of Alexander. All the while, there are stirrings throughout the Christian world of dissatisfaction with the corruption, nepotism, and politicking which dominate the Church of the Renaissance. Calls for reform and reflection have gone unheeded— the Church may need to reform itself, or the push for reformation may be taken up by those outside the Vatican.

You must consider the spiritual fate of your flock all while dealing with the tense geopolitical situation. All the while, you are headless until you elect a member of your committee the next Pontiff. This choice is not one to be taken lightly, however, as the delegate elected Pope will wield considerable power and influence. Power and influence which may be necessary to address the crises gripping the Papacy in 1503.

## Historical Background

### Early Church History

The foundations of the Catholic Church emerged in the centuries following the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth in Jerusalem. Starting out as a sect of Judaism, differences emerged between mainstream Jewish thought and the priorities of the followers of Christ. Inspired by the surviving apostles, relatives of Jesus, and newer converts, notably figures such as Paul and Peter, Christianity would spread westward towards the Eternal City, Rome, heart of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> Through Peter and verses in the Bible,<sup>2</sup> the Church would later claim direct authority from Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Initially, Christians were persecuted within the Roman Empire, notably by Diocletian in 299, requiring sacrifices to the pagan Roman gods.<sup>4</sup> Eventually, an Emperor sympathetic to Christianity emerged, Constantine, who later converted to the faith on his deathbed. Constantine would call for the Council of Nicaea in 325CE which would define early Church doctrine.<sup>5</sup> Alongside this, the office of the bishop of Rome (and therefore the Pope) was developing in the first and second centuries, replacing the Pagan position of Pontifex Maximus.<sup>6</sup> The ties to Peter would be made mainstream by Pope Leo I in around 440 and his emerging powers would include making decisions on doctrine.<sup>7</sup> The actual territory called the 'Papal States' would be created shortly after 756 through the 'Donation of Pepin', where Pepin, a Frankish king that had had his legitimacy established by the Pope, conquered and transferred the lands around Rome to the Pope.<sup>8</sup> The authority of the Pope in the east deteriorated and was eventually completely lost during the East-West Schism in 1054, after which the modern Orthodox Church separated from the Catholic Church.<sup>9</sup>

The Crusading era began in 1095 under Pope Urban II with participants being offered indulgences, a replacement for traditional acts of penance normally performed after sinning. The goal was to take control of Jerusalem for Christendom which was successfully achieved.<sup>10</sup> Later Crusades would be significantly less effective such as the Fourth Crusade in 1202 which sacked the Christian city of Constantinople despite the Crusaders setting out to take

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1 Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 3-4, accessed November 3, 2019. ProQuest Ebook Central.

2 Specifically Matthew 16:13-23

3 Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 4

4 Allen M. Ward and Fritz M. Heichelheim, and Cedric A. Yeo, *A History of the Roman People*, (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2003), 429-430

5 Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 28-30

6 Ibid. 13

7 Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 43-45

8 Ibid. 86-88

9 Ibid. 116-117

10 Ibid. 136-137

Jerusalem once again.<sup>11</sup> In the early 1300s, the Papacy controversially moved to Avignon in France, due to political issues during the election of Clement V. During this period, the Popes would have to struggle against the political desires of the French monarchs, partially due to their personal conflicts with previous Popes.<sup>12</sup> The Popes would remain there until 1377 when they would return to Rome.<sup>13</sup>

## The 14th Century

The 14th Century brought new challenges to the legitimacy of the Papacy. The Black Death had joined forces with famines to ravage Europe, killing an estimated third of the population.<sup>14</sup> This was combined with one of the major schisms in the history of the Church, the Great (Western) Schism. In the run up to the Schism, the Papacy had moved from Avignon in France to Rome, upon which the Pope that led the move, Pope Gregory XI, promptly died. An election was held, and a controversial reformer was chosen, Pope Urban VI. Electors from France disliked the result and eventually appointed their own Pope to rule from Avignon, Pope Clement VII. Both Popes claimed to be the rightful heir to the Church, forcing Europeans to pick sides.<sup>15</sup>

The Council of Pisa in 1409 attempted to resolve this issue by deposing both Popes and appointing a new one, Alexander V. However, both Urban VI and Clement VII refused to resign, leading to three competing claims to the Papacy. The Council of Constance, starting in 1414, deposes all three and successfully replaces them with Pope Martin V. However, damage had been done to the legitimacy of the Papacy, viewed as being corrupted with worldly influences by the commoners.<sup>16</sup>

## Corruption and Reformers

The perception of the clergy and the Papacy deteriorated in the minds of the common people, the laity. Corruption in elections became more and more common, with Popes like Alexander VI bribing the electors with his lands.<sup>17</sup> Indulgences, the practice of releasing one's soul early from Purgatory, often via the payment of money, had become common to raise money for Church projects.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 150

<sup>12</sup> Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 163-165.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 168

<sup>14</sup> John Merriman, *A History of Modern Europe: Volume One - From the Renaissance to the Age of Napoleon*, (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2009), 4

<sup>15</sup> Merriman, *History of Modern Europe*, 86-87

<sup>16</sup> Merriman, *History of Modern Europe*, 87-89

<sup>17</sup> Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 193-194

<sup>18</sup> Merriman, *History of Modern Europe*, 90



Many figures emerged with ideas of how to solve these key issues with the Church. Girolamo Savonarola, an early critic of the Papacy and early European financial families, was executed in 1498 after being excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI. He had claimed that the Pope was illegitimate, called for reforming the Church, and had run Florence as a theocratic society for several years.<sup>19</sup> Another early figure was the English John Wyclif, who criticized the legitimacy of the Pope and who focused heavily on salvation through faith, rather than focusing on good deeds. A final notable pre-Reformation figure, Jan Hus, preached in Bohemia, now the Czech Republic. He was a follower of Wyclif who did not accept the legitimacy of the Pope and who called for fixing issues such as corruption within the Church and reducing the separation between the priesthood and the laity. After he was burned at the stake, his ideas led to several wars with his followers, the Hussites, who achieved significant military successes.<sup>20</sup>

### The History of Papal Elections

The early Popes did not have a consistent method of election. This issue was partially resolved in April of 1059 at which the responsibility of choosing the next Pope was given to the cardinal bishops.<sup>21</sup> Additional restrictions emerged in the following century including the requirement for a two-thirds majority.<sup>22</sup> The first Papal Conclave, where electors are cloistered while making the decision, took place after the death of Pope Gregory in August of 1241.<sup>23</sup>

### The Papacy of Alexander VI and the Rise of the Borgia

The papacy of Alexander VI was one of magnitude for its influence on the politics of the Roman Catholic Church and Europe during the Renaissance. Born into a powerful Spanish family, Rodrigo de Borja y Doms (known in Italian as Rodrigo Borgia) was appointed cardinal in 1456 and vice chancellor in 1457 by his uncle, Pope Calixtus III. Following the death of Pope Innocent VIII, Rodrigo was elected to the papacy amidst accusations of bribery, becoming Pope Alexander VI in August 1492 and serving until his death in August 1503.<sup>24</sup> To understand the papacy of Alexander VI is to understand the artificial distinction among Renaissance popes between "... ecclesiastical responsibilities and relations with secular powers."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, Alexander VI's legacies of controversy, nepotism, and forceful politics must consider the papacy as both a State and a Church.

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19 Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 196-197

20 Merriman, *History of Modern Europe*, 88-89

21 Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 118

22 Ibid. 130

23 Ibid. 153

24 CSUS Edu. n.d. *Alexander VI: (1431 - 1503, Pope from 1492 - 1503)*. Accessed Nov 4, 2019. <https://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/craftg/hist127/ALEXANDER%20VI.pdf>.

25 Fletcher, Stella. 2017. *Pope Alexander VI*. Aug 23. Accessed Nov 4, 2019. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0357.xml>.

A distinguishing element of Alexander's reputation among his contemporaries was his slew of sexual affairs in violation of the priestly vow of celibacy. A public understanding of Alexander's long line of mistresses, illegitimate children (born out of wedlock), and organized orgies created conflict within the Church. Among Alexander's most notable contemporary critics was Girolam Savonarola who advocated for church reform on the basis that his sexual behaviour violated Christian values.<sup>26</sup> Challenging historical precedent, however, Alexander acknowledged his illegitimate children and used many of them to achieve political gains. Most notable in this effort include his children with mistress Vannozza de Catanei: Juan, Cesare, Jofré, and Lucrezia.<sup>27</sup> To this end, nepotism to reinforce political and military power distinguished Alexander's papacy.<sup>28</sup> Over his eleven year reign, Alexander "... raised five blood relatives to the cardinalate" including his eighteen-year-old son Cesare that would later serve as one of his closest allies and Captain General of the Church's military.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, marriage of Alexander's children served as a diplomatic mechanism to secure strategic alliances. For example, Alexander arranged for the marriage of daughter Lucrezia to Giovanni Sforza, cousin of the power cardinal Ascani Sforza; son Juan to a cousin of King Ferdinand IV of Castile; and son Jofré to the granddaughter of the King of Naples.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most notable legacy of Alexander's papacy is the culture of ruthless politics. First, in a move considered hypocritical, following the murder of his son Juan in 1497, Alexander announced reforms to "... restrain the luxury of the papal court, reorganize the Apostolic Chancery, and repress simony and concubinage."<sup>31</sup> Second, there are many accounts of Alexander threatening and silencing his political adversaries. For example, Savonarola, an outspoken critic of the pope, often delivered sermons that included blasphemous prophecies which prompted riots. Alexander responded by putting Savonarola on trial for heresy, and following his conviction, hung him. This action had lasting impacts on Alexander's reputation with "... accounts of Alexander [having a] pact with the devil... spread abroad by the followers of Savonarola..."<sup>32</sup> The image of Alexander as a ruthless figure was encouraged by rumours of political murders. In fact, Alexander died following a dinner with Cardinal Adriano Castellesi, where it is speculated that he had attempted to poison the cardinal and instead drank his own poison. It is important to note, however, the nuances of Alexander's reputation. Many of his most wicked accusations lack evidence and may just be slander.

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26 Renaissance and Reformation Reference Library . 2019. *Alexander VI*. Nov 4. Accessed Nov 6, 2019. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/alexander-vi>.

27 Murphy, Francis Xavier. 2019. *Alexander VI*. Aug 14. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alexander-VI>.

28 DeSilva, Jennifer Mara. 2016. "Articulating Work and Family: Lay Papal Relatives in the Papal States, 1420–1549." *Renaissance Quarterly* 1-39.

29 DeSilva

30 CSUS Edu

31 Murphy

32 Hillgarth, J. N. 1996. "The Image of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 119-129.

## French Interests in Italy and Recent History

As both France and Spain had claims to the Kingdom of Naples and other city states in Italy, each would invade Italy repeatedly throughout Alexander VI's papacy, trying to act on their claims and conquer more land.<sup>33</sup> The first major invasion of this kind was by King Charles VIII, who invaded Italy in 1494, capturing Naples and causing destruction on his way there.<sup>34</sup> However, the capture of Naples was short-lived, and the French forces were forced out by the League of Venice, an alliance of Italian states led by Alexander VI created to combat the French forces storming the country.<sup>35</sup> This invasion was the first of many invasions by France which caused significant turmoil and destruction in the country. City states were severely weakened from the damage of the invasion itself, as well as the pillaging that occurred as the forces passed through the country. Beyond this, states like Florence, which were unprepared for invasion and forced to submit to the French forces, were humiliated by the takeover; this left public morale and view of authority low.<sup>36</sup>

In 1498, Louis XII succeeded Charles VIII as King of France.<sup>37</sup> Soon after, in January of 1499, Pope Alexander VI allied himself and the papacy with the King, hoping it to be a more profitable relationship for him than it was with King Charles VIII.<sup>38</sup> But, in the fall of the same year, King Louis XII invaded Italy, taking over Milan.<sup>39</sup> However, with the help of Alexander VI's son Cesare Borgia — who was in favour with the French, the French forces were temporarily expelled from the country.<sup>40</sup> The following April, French forces re-entered the country and again occupied Milan, this time indefinitely.<sup>41</sup> By 1500, King Louis XII had established control of Milan and much of northern Italy, and then he decided to try to take more southern territory, namely Naples, to which he had a very distant claim to the throne through his predecessor, King Charles VIII.<sup>42</sup> King Louis XII proceeded to establish a treaty dividing the kingdom of Naples with Spain - a treaty approved by the Pope.<sup>43</sup> However, upon taking the kingdom, tensions between King Louis XII and Spanish forces rose.<sup>44</sup> This sparked

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33 Lovett, Clara M. "Savonarola." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., October 30, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy/Savonarola>.

34 "Alexander VI." New World Encyclopedia, March 1, 2019. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander\\_VI#Death\\_and\\_reputation](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander_VI#Death_and_reputation).

35 "What Was the Impact of Charles VIII's Invasion of Italy (1494) on the Renaissance?" Daily History. Accessed November 5, 2019. [https://dailyhistory.org/What\\_was\\_the\\_impact\\_of\\_Charles\\_VIII's\\_invasion\\_of\\_Italy\\_\(1494\)\\_on\\_the\\_Renaissance?](https://dailyhistory.org/What_was_the_impact_of_Charles_VIII's_invasion_of_Italy_(1494)_on_the_Renaissance?)

36 Lovett, Clara M. "Savonarola." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., October 30, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy/Savonarola>.

37 "Alexander VI." New World Encyclopedia, March 1, 2019. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander\\_VI#Death\\_and\\_reputation](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander_VI#Death_and_reputation).

38 IBID

39 IBID

40 IBID

41 IBID

42 "Italian Wars." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. Accessed November 4, 2019. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_Wars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Wars)

43 "Alexander VI." New World Encyclopedia, March 1, 2019. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander\\_VI#Death\\_and\\_reputation](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander_VI#Death_and_reputation).

44 "Italian Wars." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, November 4, 2019. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_Wars#Aftermath\\_and\\_impact](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Wars#Aftermath_and_impact).

a war between the two opposing forces, which Alexander VI takes advantage of, offering to side with whichever force offered him the most.<sup>45</sup> Negotiations to end this conflict stretched on with little reconciliation, until the Pope's death in 1503; this coincided with the end of the war, when the King of Spain invaded and captured Naples from King Louis XII.<sup>46 47</sup>

## Spanish Interests in Italy and Recent History

The 'Catholic Monarchs' Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragón were the rulers of Spain during the late 15th century and early 16th century. The unity of these two political sides marked the beginning of what we know as Spain today.<sup>48</sup> Isabella and Ferdinand were particularly content of Pope Alexander VI position in the church. The main reason for this being that Alexander VI was of Spanish blood, ensuring continuous support from the church. Prior to the Pope's death, the Kingdom of Spain found itself in a place of self-accomplishment with the 'discovery' of America in 1492 by Christopher Columbus.<sup>49</sup> This meant that Spain was perceived as a powerful nation by the rest of Europe at the time.

Spain's economy was flourishing as the Catholic Church continued to approve their expeditions to the 'New World'. Yet, conflict arose over the title of this new land between Spain and Portugal. Ferdinand and Isabella were determined to conquer as much land as possible, something they could achieve by having a large influence over the papacy. As an answer to Spain's requests, Alexander VI created a line that separated Spanish and Portuguese territories, in order to settle the conflict.<sup>50</sup> Still, Portuguese rulers were infuriated with the position of the line, since it did not allow enough space for their voyages to Africa. It was clear that the church was biased towards Spain, allowing them to expand their power over the world and leaving Portugal behind. As a result of this inequity, Spanish and Portuguese diplomats developed the Treaty of Tordesillas to move the line to a fair position on the map.<sup>51</sup>

In 1503, the death of Alexander VI revealed the immense corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. Rumours of him being poisoned circulated Europe, yet this was disproven and it was suggested he died of malaria. Nevertheless, Alexander act to divide the land was one of his most lasting acts, seeing as it left an enormous impact on Spain and Portugal.<sup>52</sup>

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45 "Alexander VI." New World Encyclopedia, March 1, 2019. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander\\_VI#Death\\_and\\_reputation](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alexander_VI#Death_and_reputation).

46 Ibid.

47 "Italian Wars." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. Accessed November 4, 2019. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_Wars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Wars)

48 "16th Century- The Spanish Empire Expands." *Spanish Wars*, <https://www.spanishwars.net/16th-century-the-empire-expands.html>.

49 "History of Spain. 16th Century Overview." Spain Then and Now - Spain Then and Now. An overview of the history, literature, architecture, art and culture of Spain. Accessed November 1, 2019. <http://www.spainthenandnow.com/spanish-history/16th-c-spain-overview-politics>.

50 Bergreen, Laurence. "Over the Edge of the World." The New York Times. The New York Times, December 7, 2003. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/07/books/chapters/over-the-edge-of-the-world.html>.

51 The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica. "Treaty of Tordesillas." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 July 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Tordesillas>.

52 "Alexander VI." *Renaissance and Reformation Reference Library*, Encyclopedia.com, 27 Oct. 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/philosophy-and-religion/roman-catholic-popes-and-antipopes/alexander-vi>.



A map of Italy, 1494



## Key Issues

### Foreign Armies

At the time of Pope Alexander VI's death, both French and Spanish forces occupied significant areas of Italy. Notably, Spain controlled Naples after capturing it from the French, along with much of the North of Italy, including Siena, Pisa, and Bologna.<sup>53</sup> The French controlled Genoa, and Milan.<sup>54</sup> Though uncaptured, Rome was still affected by the damage of the ongoing invasions throughout the country and was in a perilous position as it could be the next target of conquest by either of these forces. Without a Pope, Rome was weak and unguided, left exposed to the external forces in the country. As the temporal rulers of the Papal States, you must choose how to balance these armies against each other to maintain independence or counteract enemy factions.

### Cesare Borgia's Army

In the years before Alexander VI assumed the papacy, local nobles had taken control of the Church states in Italy.<sup>55</sup> To regain control of these territories, Alexander appointed his son, Cesare Borgia, as the Captain General of the armies of the Church in 1498, a role that he fulfilled and became known for in Machiavelli's *The Prince* for his efficient, effective, and at times ruthless pursuit of security and state building.<sup>56</sup>

The most significant strategic alliance that Cesare enjoyed in his first year as Captain General was that of France, solidified through his marriage to Charlotte d'Albret, a French noblewoman.<sup>57</sup> Cesare began in 1499 alongside assistance from French troops with the occupation of Romagna, a region in Italy the Church had claimed rights to "... on the basis of the Donation of Pepin (756)."<sup>58</sup> Cesare's military prowess in the region expanded over the year: in September, Milan was captured and its ruler Lodovico Sforza defeated.<sup>59</sup> Although the first invasion of Romagna ended in January 1500 due to a retreat of French troops, between 1500 and 1501, Cesare effectively captured the cities of Rimini, Pesaro, and Faenza.<sup>60</sup> By June 1502, in his third campaign in Romagna, Cesare had captured the entire region of Romagna in addition to the cities of Urbino, Camerino, and Senigallia.<sup>61</sup> At the time of his

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53 "Italian Wars." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., March 4, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Italian-Wars>.

54 "Italian Wars." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., March 4, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Italian-Wars>.

55 Renaissance and Reformation Reference Library

56 Mallett, Michael Edward. 2019. *Cesare Borgia*. Jul 18. Accessed 6 Nov , 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cesare-Borgia>.

57 Encyclopedia of World Biography. n.d. *Cesare Borgia*. Accessed Nov 6, 2019. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/cesare-borgia>.

58 Encyclopedia of World Biography

59 Encyclopedia of World Biography

60 Mallett

61 Encyclopedia of World Biography

father's death, Cesare's army was immensely powerful and was speculated to be planning an attack on Tuscany.<sup>62</sup> The committee must consider both the risk and opportunity posed by Cesare's army— is it a valuable tool to prevent foreign domination and strengthen God's kingdom on earth, or will it be used against the Papacy?

### Corruption and Calls for Reform

Even before the death of Pope Alexander IV, his reign was infamous for corruption and his devious habits. Rodrigo Borgia created scandals and bribed cardinals throughout his time as pope, causing public distrust for the Church and divisions within Italy.

Pope Alexander IV himself abused much of his wealth and power for personal gain. Notorious for his cunning political tactics, the pope was repeatedly accused of paying cardinals for votes, giving away positions of power and wealth in order to gain the position as pope.<sup>63</sup> To raise the Borgia family power, Pope Alexander IV married his sons to people of foreign royalty. He is also known for marrying his daughter, Lucrezia, three times for political gain and alliances, breaking and arranging marriages with France, Aragon, and Ferrara.<sup>64</sup> Alexander VI's papacy was known for nepotism and conflicts over power along with constant bribery.

Pope Alexander's scandalous reputation was enough to create unrest within Italy. The Church was also able to prosper from his actions through the assurance of indulgences. Indulgences served as payment to the Catholic Church in order to escape Purgatory and go to Heaven. The corrupt Church would often take these indulgences as their own revenue and take advantage of the people.<sup>65</sup> Many individuals, tired of the corruption and injustice of the Catholic Church, called for change. Amongst them were Girolamo Savonarola and Jan Hus who were discussed above. As the highest body of the Catholic Church, you must address these calls for reform: you must choose to either lead from above, or to stamp down on these growing movements.

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<sup>62</sup> Mallett

<sup>63</sup> "The Death of Pope Alexander VI, 1503" *EyeWitness to History*, 2007, [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com). (accessed November 5, 2019).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Gerald Posner, *God's Bankers: A History of Money and Power at the Vatican* (Philadelphia: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 8-11.

## The Election

In this committee, you— the college of cardinals— will be tasked with electing the next Pope. What follows is a brief history of the elections and then a description of the process for the committee.

### The Electoral Process

Historically, in the event of the death or resignation of an acting Pope, the dominion of the Catholic church transfers to the College of Cardinals, whose primary duty is to elect the new pope. The electoral process begins with the Cardinals' general congregations in the Vatican where the emphatic needs and ongoing challenges of the global Catholic church are examined. Approximately 15 days after a vacancy arises, a significant mass is held in Saint Peter's Basilica where the Cardinals seek aid from the Holy Spirit to guide their decision.<sup>66</sup>

The Cardinal electors - those under the age of 80 who are eligible to vote - must enter the Sistine Chapel and swear to a vow of secrecy before casting their ballot. As each ballot is completed, the Cardinal electors say a prayer, fold their ballot twice, and place their vote in a chalice.<sup>67</sup> This process is repeated up to four times daily. Proceeding each failed ballot, a nearby stove is used to produce black smoke to alert the public. Eventually, after a two-third majority is achieved, the stove will be used to communicate their success with the production of white smoke. Next, the dean of the College of Cardinals will ask the selected Cardinal if he accepts, and will have him choose his papal name.

### Historical Flaws in the Papal Conclave

As can be seen throughout past papal conclaves, too often external factors and unethical actions have had a forceful sway on the outcome of the election. Some historical examples of such includes threats of violence and war, the use of pressure tactics through the drafting of policy, and, of course, nepotism and excessive wealth in the instance of the Borgia election that produced pope Alexander VI.<sup>68</sup> Rodrigo de Borja y Doms, as he was formerly known, was made Cardinal by his influential uncle, and was not discrete, nor humble, about his collection of riches. When the papal conclave converged in 1492 to choose the successor of Pope Innocent VIII, the Borgia family recognized this as a prime opportunity to expand their influence and wealth; Rodrigo viewed this as the event that could expedite his realization of his goal to become Pope.

Borgia was identified as an early favourite in the election, alongside his opponent Cardinal Asciano Sforza. Immediately, Borgia used a show of wealth to his advantage in

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<sup>66</sup> How Is a New Pope Chosen? Accessed November 3, 2019. <http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/francis/how-is-a-new-pope-chosen.cfm>.

<sup>67</sup> How Is a New Pope Chosen?

<sup>68</sup> Jimenez, Larry. "10 Papal Elections As Corrupt As Anything In Politics." Listverse, October 14, 2014. <https://listverse.com/2014/10/14/10-papal-elections-as-corrupt-as-anything-in-politics/>.



his meeting with Sforza, outlying an array of money, jewels, land, palaces, and more. Not surprisingly, Borgia was victorious; and by no coincidence, Sforza was declared vice chancellor and received a handsome payment of four mule loads worth of silver and gold.<sup>69</sup>

The other Cardinals were not forgotten about, of course; Borgia engaged in simony like no other. Thus, the papal conclave of 1492 is a precise illustration of the true underlying determinant of a successful elector: the amount of revenue he is able to generate for the Church, and, in turn, those who govern in. Often, this factor weighs greater than the fitness of an elector to be a guiding spiritual leader.

### Implications After a Successful Election

Following a successful election, the fortuitous elector must assume the role and adequately meet the expectations and obligations of a Pope. The Pope has a primary duty to act as the supreme pastor; meaning he must strive to embody Christ's love and compassion for every individual.<sup>70</sup> He must also act as a balancer to maintain the common good of the global Catholic church, while preserving autonomy within separate regions. The Pope must be temperate and have substantial communication skills to uphold friendships and ties to various leaders of the Church located around the world. Most importantly, the Pope is the primary witness to faith, and must preach the Word of God to non-believers, as well as teach a relevant interpretation of the scriptures to the members of the Church.

Evidently, the Pope represents a critical role as the figurehead of the Church and should be elected in good faith with the intention of appointing the elector who has proven to be an upstanding delegate of the Catholic faith and its values. If the electors fail to do so, due to the influence of temptation, the consequences will be widespread as respect for the Church dwindles, and populations become angry with the Churches errs.

### In Committee

In this committee, you will be electing one of your committee members Pope. This will take place simultaneously to your problem solving with the other issues. Given the sensitive nature of the circumstances, you won't be fully cloistered and will be able to direct Papal affairs from your seclusion. In committee, any delegate may motion to have a vote for Pontif. If this procedural motion is supported, requiring a two-thirds majority, an election will take place. This election will involve each delegate writing their vote on a piece of paper and having the dais collect and count them. If a committee member receives two-thirds support, they will become Pope; else-wise, committee will revert to debate as usual. The dais reserves the right to deny the procedural motion to initiate voting at any time but also reminds the delegates that a headless Church may have difficulty navigating such a tumultuous state of affairs.

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<sup>69</sup> Jimenez, Larry. "10 Papal Elections."

<sup>70</sup> The Role of the Pope. Accessed November 5, 2019. <http://www.churchauthority.org/blueprint/pope.asp>.

## Further Reading

For further research, we recommend the following books to help provide background. Online sources can also be valuable, and we recommend you check out the bibliography as well.

- Saints and Sinners: A history of the popes by Eamon Duffy, A History of Modern Europe: Volume One - From the Renaissance to the Age of Napoleon by John Merriman.
- The Encyclopedia Britannica entries on the Italian Wars, Alexander VI, and Cesare Borgia.

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