King Arthur And The Catholic Church Essay, Research Paper

Daniel Cappadora

Monsignor Farrell

Ms. Brickey

The Catholic Church has many influences on King Arthur and the rest of his Knights of the Round Table. The knights depended on the church for its teachings and the great power the church held in society. The Knights of the Round Table pledged great loyalty to the church. Also the knights held the teachings of the church in great reverence and were never disloyal to the church. There are many links between the Catholic Church and the way that Camelot (the land of King Arthur and his Knights) was ruled.

One link between the Legends of Arthur and the Catholic Church was Chivalry (the oaths of a knight). Arthur made all his knights take these oaths, which for the most part had to do with the teachings of the church. They were to remain loyal to the church and always obey its teachings and direction. A knight had a strong belief in Christ and other biblical figures. Some knight were even ordered to do a specific job for the church such as defend the church.

Another link between the Legends of Arthur and the Catholic Church is the Holy Grail. The Grail was said to be the cup that Jesus used at the Last Supper and at the Crucifixion to have received blood flowing from Christ’s side. At the round table there was an extra seat reserved for the finder of the Holy Grail. The grail was an important object in King Arthur?s Court because whoever did find it was considered a great knight. The church also thought the Holy Grail to be an important object because of its spiritual value and its importance in the history of the church. Another important tie that the Holy Grail has with the church is its significance in the modern day ceremony of the Eucharist at church.

Another link between the Catholic Church and the Legends of Arthur is that Merlin was a wizard, or Druid. There were no practicing wizards in England in 500 AD, the Roman Catholic Church had killed them all off, or drove them into hiding. They did not take kindly to wizardry. The Christians who were killing the wizards were considered to be bad Christians. Christian Law teaches that you are not supposed to kill your enemies.

A further link between the Legends of Arthur and the Catholic Church was the observance of Christian holidays. One of these holidays was Pentecost. Every year on the night of Pentecost all the Knights of the Round Table returned home to Camelot to have a meal with each other. This strongly resembles the meal that Jesus had with his apostles the night before his crucifixion. Christian holidays were very important to both the Knights of the Round Table and the Catholic Church.

One last link between the Catholic Church and the Legends of Arthur is the notion of betrayal. King Arthur was betrayed by his illegitimate son Sir Modred. While Arthur was away, Modred took over the thrown claiming that Arthur had been killed. In the Church History, Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, which led to Jesus? Crucifixion. These two signs of betrayal have a direct connection with one another.

By the ideas presented in this report, one can see the strong influence the church had on King Arthur?s Court and on all forms of politics. The Church was a very powerful figure in the times of King Arthur and the decline of its power in politics can also be recognized. The most important thing that should be brought to the attention of the reader is the obvious connection of the Catholic Church and the Legends of Arthur.