

Joan of Arc (1412-1431)

I will say a few things about Joan...her youthfulness at the time of her fame and her religious and national apprehensions. She was condemned for witchcraft and burned at the stake...an extremely unfair sentence as later recognized and corrected in 1456...but too late to do her much good and she was canonized in 1920. A short life with a lot of action in it.

VI.4 Missions

Missions in the Medieval church

There is not a lot to say about missions that we have not already touched upon. Remember the work of Francis with regard to Islam and note these two incidents:

The Marco Polo journey

Marco Polo (1254-1324) toured the orient with his uncle's trading party in the last part of the 13th century. Discovering a very impotent church in China, vestiges of earlier ministries, the Polos returned in about 1269 with a mandate from Genghis Khan to bring back 100 missionaries to fan up the old Chinese establishment. In 1271 they returned to China but only two mission workers went with them and these left the tour before they got to China. It is interesting to speculate on what the work and growth of the church might have been had there been some who would have acted positively on this challenge. The whole thing is interesting to us for the history of Christianity in the east.

Ramon Lull (d. 1315)

Very different was the work of Ramon Lull, a truly evangelical spirit from Majorca. Lull was a classicist before his conversion and afterwards felt called to work with the Muslim nations. He learned Arabic and attempted to start missions in Tunisia and Algeria. Expelled three times from Tunis, he labored to have the pope get more workers (no real success) and finally was martyred on a 4th missions effort. Lull was Augustinian in theology with philosophical ideas from Aquinas. His message, we are told, to the Islamic peoples concentrated on the idea that God was a God of love...not a fatalistic Allah.