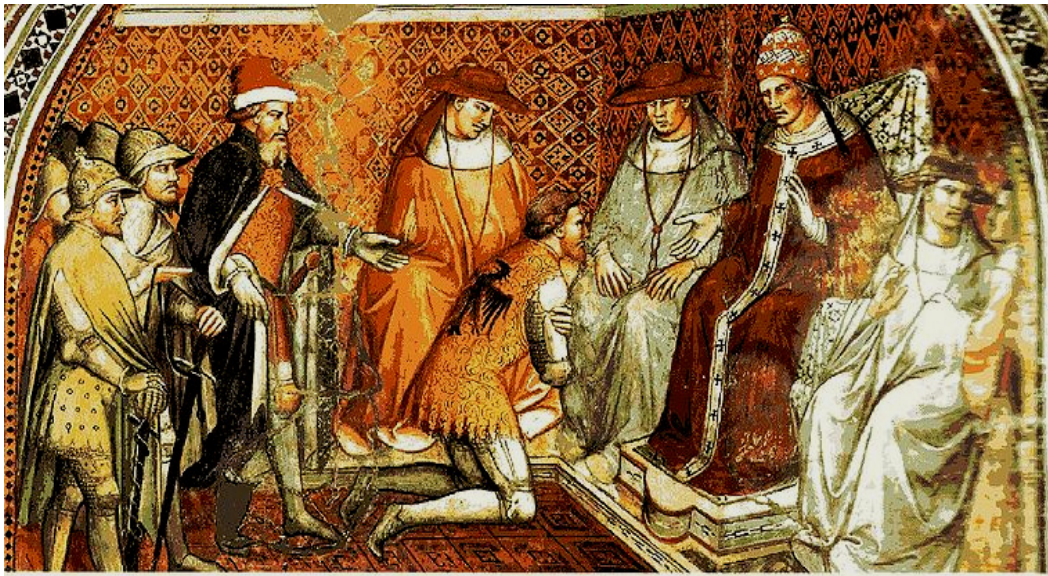


# The Third Council of Lateran

1179

In 1159, a contentious papal election provoked a 20 year schism. The majority of cardinals elected Alexander III, but a minority elected an antipope, Victor IV. German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa opposed Alexander and convened a synod of approximately 50 German and Italian Bishops that endorsed Victor and excommunicated Alexander. Alexander had already excommunicated Victor and also condemned Frederick. In Oct of 1160, bishops & heads of monasteries in most western countries met at Toulouse in the presence of English King Henry II and French King Louis VII. After hearing arguments from both claimants, they declared their support for Alexander III and condemned Victor IV. Alexander III went on to a strong papacy. Following military defeat in southern Italy, Emperor Frederick acknowledged Alexander II as pope. Voltaire regarded Alexander III *'as the man who in medieval times deserved best from the human*



*race, for abolishing slavery, for overcoming the violence of the Emperor Barbarossa, for compelling Henry II of England to ask pardon for the murder of Thomas Becket, for restoring to men their rights, and giving splendour to many cities' \**. In 1179, Alexander called *Lateran III* and presided over it. Over 300 Bishops from the western church attended the council that lasted only 14 days.

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa submits to the authority of Pope Alexander III

## The Third Council of Lateran

Resolved the papal issue and continued with other reforms:

Papal Schism → Ended the twenty year Schism.

Papal Election → Staved off future controversies by decreeing that a 2/3 majority was required for election of the Pope.

Intellectual Pursuit → Encouraged universities, cathedrals to maintain schools

Heresies → Provided for minimizing heresies such as that promoted by the Albigenses who advanced puritanism and dualism.

Muslims → Prohibited Christians from 'aiding and abetting' Muslim armies.

## Practical results of *Lateran III*

A university would provide St. Thomas Aquinas a platform to produce his great theological works. St. Dominic would start the Dominicans largely to combat the Albigensian heresy.

\* Catholic Encyclopedia , Pope Alexander III (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01287a.htm>).