

Concilium Lateranense IV: Commemorating the Octocentenary of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (Rome, 24-29 November 2015)

On Monday 30 November 1215 in the Basilica of St John Lateran, Innocent III brought the first assembly of the whole Church since the Council of Chalcedon (451) to a rousing finale by summoning all the delegates to unite in faith and by issuing *Ad Liberandam*, an encyclical calling for a crusade to liberate the Holy Land. This Council, fourth in the Lateran series but the twelfth ecumenical gathering of the Church in the Western tradition, included the five patriarchs or their representatives, together with more than one thousand bishops, abbots and other dignitaries, both ecclesiastical and secular. At each of the three plenary sessions held on 11, 20 and 30 November respectively, Innocent preached a set-piece sermon whilst, behind the scenes, delegates debated such major issues as who was more worthy to lead the Empire and how to contain the Albigensian heresy.

The accounts of eyewitnesses reveal that Innocent's consecration of Santa Maria in Trastevere and celebrations for the anniversary of the dedication of the Vatican Basilica served not only to emphasize the history, majesty and ritual of the Church but also offered a welcome respite from the intensive discussions in the Lateran Palace. The Fathers of the Council promulgated seventy decrees, covering topics as diverse as heresy, Jewish-Christian relations, pastoral care and Trinitarian theology as well as ecclesiastical governance. Monks and secular clergy were to be reformed, the nascent mendicant orders welcomed to the Church and diocesan bishops instructed to implement far-reaching conciliar decisions across Christendom.

Eight hundred years on, Lateran IV still stands as the high-water mark of the medieval papacy, its political and ecclesiastical decisions enduring down to the Council of Trent whilst modern historiography has deemed it the most significant papal assembly of the Later Middle Ages. In November 2015, we have a unique opportunity to re-evaluate the role of this Council in the reform of the universal Church. Taking an inter-disciplinary approach, we shall investigate how its decisions affected the intellectual, cultural, social and religious life of the medieval world. We particularly encourage individual papers from disciplines such as art history, theology, canon law, crusade studies, literature and from those who work on relations between Jews and Christians, which we hope will broaden current interpretations of the events of the Council, their subsequent importance and long-term impact. Alternatively, three-paper session proposals on a common theme will also be most welcome.

Papers may be delivered in English, French, German, Italian or Spanish but must be limited to 30 minutes. Abstracts of no more than 200 words with all the necessary contact details should be submitted no later than 1 November 2014 via the conference website:

<http://www.lateraniv.com>

(click on the tab 'Call for Papers' and follow the on-screen instructions to submit).

Please direct any questions or expressions of interest to fourthlateranat800@gmail.com.