

HUMANISM

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY – FALL 2023

THE RISE OF HUMANISM

- Began in 14th century Italy
- Decline of the Catholic Church (Black Death, Great Schism, early Reformers)
- Decline of feudalism (labor shortages, commerce, centralized monarchies, gunpowder)
- Rise of the merchant class and patronage
- Invention of the printing press
- Resurgence of classical literature

KEY IDEAS

- Emphasis on human reason
- Value of every individual
- Value of education
- Study of classical literature

KEY PEOPLE

- Petrarch (d. 1374) – poet, scholar, and collector of classical manuscripts
- Boccaccio (d. 1375) – poet, scholar, promoter of vernacular use in literature
- Thomas More (d. 1535) – English statesman, lawyer, and writer of *Utopia* (1516), which describes an ideal society based on humanist principles.
- Erasmus of Rotterdam (d. 1536) – Dutch scholar and translator, helped make classical texts available to Europe, including the first Greek New Testament

IMPACT

- The Renaissance (14th-16th centuries)
- Protestant Reformation (16th century)
- The Scientific Revolution (16th-18th centuries)
- The Enlightenment (17th-18th centuries)
- Modern Democracy (The American and French Revolutions)

Do we still see the effects of Humanism today? In American culture? In the church?

In what ways can we appreciate Humanism? In what ways might we critique it?