

# Cathars and Cathar Beliefs in the Languedoc - Official and Cathar views



Cathardom represents the true Christianity. Its logical and coherent account of the Universe with the clear understanding of who and what is God exposes the dogma of the Church as false. The prophesy about the Return of the Cathars is fulfilled. God will bring the Church to Justice over 2000 years of lies and abuse in His name.



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*The following is lifted from [www.cathar.info](http://www.cathar.info)*

## A historic view

Medieval Cathars spoke of a good God and his evil adversary (much like God and Satan of mainstream Christianity). Their neighbours distinguished Cathars as "Good Christians".

They were a theist group who appeared in Europe in the eleventh century, their ideas came from Persia by way of the Byzantine Empire, the Balkans and Northern Italy. Records from the Roman Catholic Church mention them under various names and in various places. Catholic theologians debated with themselves for centuries whether Cathars were Christian heretics or whether they were not Christians at all. Roman Catholics still refer to Cathar belief as "the Great Heresy" though the official Catholic position is that Catharism is not Christian at all. The Cathar teaching embodied the greatest doctrinal challenge that Rome has ever faced and that manifested in the velocity with which papacy set itself to the extermination of the Cathars.

Cathars maintained a Church hierarchy and practiced a range of ceremonies, but rejected any idea of priesthood or the use of church buildings. They divided into ordinary believers who led ordinary medieval lives and an inner Elect of Parfaits (men) and Parfaites (women) who led extremely ascetic lives yet still worked for their living - generally in itinerant manual trades like weaving. Cathars believed in reincarnation and refused to eat meat or other animal products. They were strict about biblical injunctions - notably those about living in poverty, not telling lies, not killing and not swearing oaths.

Basic Cathar tenets led to some surprising logical implications. For example they largely regarded men and women as equals, and had no doctrinal objection to contraception, euthanasia or suicide. In some respects the Cathar and Catholic Churches were polar opposites. For example the Cathar Church taught that all non-procreative sex was better than any procreative sex. The Catholic Church taught - and still teaches - exactly the opposite. Following their tenet, Catholics concluded that masturbation was a far greater sin than rape, as mediaeval penitentials confirm.

The Cathar view of the Catholic Church was as bleak as the Catholic Church's view of the Cathar Church. On the Cathar side it manifested itself in ridiculing Catholic doctrine and practices, and characterising the Catholic Church as the "Church of Wolves". The Catholics accused Cathars of heresy or apostasy and said they belonged to the "Synagogue of Satan".



The Pope, Innocent III, called a formal Crusade against the Cathars of the Languedoc. The war against the Cathars of the Languedoc continued for two generations. In the later phases the Kings of France would take over as leaders of the crusade, which thus became a Royal Crusade. Persecutions of Languedoc Jews and other minorities were

initiated.

With the demise of the Cathars, the culture of the troubadours was lost. Their characteristic concept of "paratge", a whole sophisticated world-view, was almost destroyed, leaving us a pale imitation in our idea of chivalry. Tithes were enforced. Lay learning was discouraged and the reading of the bible became a capital crime. Voltaire observed that "there was never anything as unjust as the war against the Albigensians".

There are Cathars alive today, or at least people claiming to be modern Cathars. There is a flourishing, if largely superficial, Cathar tourist industry in the Languedoc, and especially in the Aude département. As we see the eight-hundredth anniversary of important events, more and more memorials are springing up on the sites of massacres. There is also an increasing community of historians and other academics engaged in serious Cathar studies. Interestingly, to date, the deeper scholars have dug, the more they have vindicated Cathar claims to represent a survival of the Earliest Christian Church.

Arguably just as interesting, Protestant ideas share much in common with Cathar ideas, and there is some reason to believe that early reformers were aware of the Cathar tradition. Even today some Protestant Churches claim a Cathar heritage. Weavers were commonly accused of spreading Protestant ideas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, just as their antecedents in the same trade had been accused of spreading Cathar ideas in Medieval times.

It can even be argued that in many respects Roman Catholic ideas have shifted over the centuries ever further from the Church's medieval teaching and ever closer to Cathar teaching.

