

AGE OF ABSOLUTISM

Since Middle Ages, the power of European Monarchs had been limited by the Church and/or Feudalism (power of lords), BUT gradually monarchs increased their power:

1. **Weakening Feudal System**
 - a. **Black Death**
 - i. reducing power of lords
 - ii. weakened Church because Church did not have answers to reasons for or solutions to the plague
2. **Protestant Reformation weakened the power of the Church over leaders**
3. **Religious Wars**
 - a. Many viewed Absolute Monarchs as the solution
 - i. Many Europeans were happy to give up power for peace and safety
 - ii. Establish a Bureaucracy with power over all parts of society which answered only to the King
4. **Wealth** (Gold/Silver) from exploration (New World) went directly to monarchs

RISE OF SPANISH ABSOLUTISM

Spain became Europe's 1st modern country

1479 **Ferdinand and Isabella**

- Unified Spain
 - Inquisition
 - Exploration
 - Christopher Columbus

1516 **Charles V**

- Became also emperor of HRE
- Increased gold/silver coming into Spain

1556 **Philip II – King of Spain – “The Most Catholic King”**

- son of Charles V (HRE)
- ruled 42 years
- **Escorial** – palace
- brought Spain into “**Siglo de Oro**” = “Golden Century”
 - El Greco
 - Cervantes – “**Don Quixote**”
 - Cervantes began writing while in prison
 - Obsessed with the chivalrous ideals in books he has read, he decides to take up his lance and sword to defend the helpless and destroy the wicked
 - fights windmills that he imagines to be giants
- Absolute Monarch
 - “**DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS**”
 - **Jacques-Benigne Bossuet** – right to rule came from God and should be obeyed absolutely
 - opposition to a monarch is viewed as “sin”
 - ALLOWED MONARCHS TO ESTABLISH **ABSOLUTISM**

Tools for Expanding Power

1) **Marriage** – 4x – for alliances and pacify enemies

- Maria – alliances w/ Portugal
- Mary Tudor – alliances w/ England
- Elizabeth Valois – alliances w/ France
- Anna – alliances w/ Austria

???What is problem w/ expanding power through marriage???

2) **War** – “*When Spain Moves, the Whole World Moves*”

- strong military

3) **Support of Catholic Church**

- **Inquisition**
 - Protestants
 - Marranos
 - Jews converted to Christianity
 - Moriscos – Muslims converted to Christianity
- **Battle of Lepanto** (1571) – defeated Turks [Muslims]

4) **Wealth** [Silver/Gold]

DECLINE OF SPAIN'S POWER

1. 1588 Defeat of Spanish Armada to England
 - i. Damaged Spanish pride and confidence
2. Lack of Strong leadership after Philip II
3. Economic Problems
 - a. Costly wars
 - b. Influx of gold/silver caused Spain to
 - i. neglect farming
 - ii. neglect industry
 - iii. spend too much money
 - c. Gold/silver mines gradually declined and Spain never built a strong “infrastructure”
 - d. Inquisition caused Jews/Muslims to flee and many were skilled workers
 - e. Weakening of navy to compete for colonies
 - f. Revolt by Spanish wanting greater freedoms