Evaluate the extent in which the Protestant Reformation was a radical challenge to the established hierarchies.

Prior to the Reformation, Europe had experienced the Renaissance. This was a rebirth of classical culture and art. Great artists such as da Vinci and Donatello became popular during this time. There was an extensive patronage of the arts, especially from the Medici family in Italy, for example Brunelleschi’s dome. In the Northern Renaissance the idea of mysticism emerged. This was the idea that people did not need a priest to lead them to salvation. This laid the seeds for the Protestant Reformation. Although some argue against it, the Protestant Reformation was a radical challenge to established hierarchies because it called out the Church/clergy for their corruption and deviated from the practices of the Church.

The Protestant Reformation called out the church and clergy for their corruption. In document 1 two pictures are shown, one which shows Jesus working for his disciples and the other which shows the Pope behaving like a king, getting his feet kissed. This highlights the clergy behaving like they are royalty, much different from how biblical figures behaved. This is evidence of the church being called out for corruption because it shows the Church’s practices being much different those from the Bible. The audience of this document is the German people living in the HRE. This pamphlet is showing them the injustices/ wrongdoings of the Church and trying to get people to follow Luther and become

Protestant/ Lutheran. In document 2 a theological university is being requested to list all the claims that were made by Luther. This is evidence of the church being called out because the Church refers to how Luther’s statements against them are painting a negative image. The purpose of this document is for the Church and HRE to know all of the claims made against them, so that they may refute/ challenge Luther and defend the reputation of the Catholic Church and religion. The statements made against them by Luther were listed in the 95 Theses which Luther nailed to a Church door (Evidence Beyond the Docs).

The Protestant Reformation led to protestant churches deviating from Church practices and doing their own thing. In document 5 a law states that pastors must advise people to send their children to school so that they can grow up learning about God and other useful information. This is evidence of Protestants deviating from Church practices because Catholics wanted to be the sole interpreters of the Bible, while Protestants wanted people to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. Sending children to school allows them to be able to learn to read which will help them be able to read the Bible for themselves. The purpose of this document is to help spread the Protestant faith to the younger generation. Sending them to schools that are run by Protestants will make them be involved with the Protestant (Lutheran,Calvinist,etc) faith at a young age. This will make them more likely to follow the Protestant faith than Catholicism. Martin Luther knew the effects of education and established gymnasiums, secondary schools where children were taught how to read in classical languages so that they could interpret the Bible (Evidence Beyond the Docs). In document 3 a Catholic priest tells about how the Anglican Church doesn’t pass the blessed hosts of bread and water during their service. This is evidence of deviation from practices of the Catholic church because this Anglican church wasn’t doing one of the featured practices of the Catholic church, passing around the bread and water/ wine which symbolizes the body of Jesus. The author of this document is a Catholic priest. This leads to his bias and calling the practices of the Anglican Church “villainous” as they are different from his religion,

Catholicism.

This Catholic and Protestant arguments continued on in the following centuries, but becomes more bloody. The Schmaldalik Wars in the HRE, The thirty years war across the European continent, all lead back to the radical changes taken by Protestants during the Protestant Reformation. It continued on even into the age of exploration, where many protestants fled to the New World to be able to practice their oppressed religion.