

fifteenth century suggests that a renewal of cultural vitality was taking place in the Church at Turin. The even, placid tone of the city's spiritual life continued as before; Turin produced neither saints nor heretics; the parish clergy attended to their pastoral duties. But something new was stirring. Several new devotional cults had begun to develop, which were destined to occupy a central place in the spiritual life of the city until modern times. Rooted in the city's social and political structures, these cults expressed the self-awareness of the urban community, while also fostering support for the House of Savoy. Duchess Yolanda of Savoy deliberately promoted the cult of her late husband, the Blessed Amadeus IX, in an effort to deepen popular support for the dynasty. It was far outshone, however, by the cult of the Virgin of the Consolata, centered at a shrine in the ancient church originally dedicated to Sant'Andrea in the northwestern corner of the city. This cult was actively promoted by both the city council and the ruling dynasty. Its devotees venerated a miracle-working image of the Virgin, which had originally been discovered in the early twelfth century by a blind man, according to a legend that gained increasing currency through the fifteenth century as the cult grew in popularity. The city council mounted processions to invoke the protection of the Virgin of the Consolata when the plague struck or when bad weather threatened the harvest. Along with the Consolata, another cult was growing up around the Holy Sacrament, or Corpus Domini, as the result of a miracle that supposedly took place in Turin's main marketplace, close to the city hall, on June 6, 1453. The story goes that a soldier had stolen a vessel containing the sacred Host from a church at Exilles in the mountains to the west, and was on his way through the city, when the mule carrying his plunder balked and fell, scattering its load on the ground. The Host however remained miraculously suspended in the air, shining with a supernatural light, until the bishop and a group of priests were able to coax it safely into a chalice. They then carried it in a triumphal procession to the cathedral. This miraculous event quickly gave rise to a civic cult, fostered and patronized by the city council. Within a short time a commemorative pavilion was erected on the site of the miracle, and every year the council organized a procession of the city's clergy and religious brotherhoods in its honor. Eventually, as the pavilion fell into disrepair, the council took charge of building a church dedicated to the Corpus Domini on the site. It was completed early in the seventeenth century as the city's own church, where the city council held official services on feast-days.

In 1513 the diocese of Turin was elevated to the rank of archbishopric