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Letter of Martin Luther to Pope Leo X, 1520

For many years now, nothing else has overflowed from Rome into the world…than the laying waste of goods, of bodies, and of souls, and the worst examples of all the worst things. These things are clearer than the light to all men, and the Church of Rome, formerly the most holy of all churches, has become the most lawless den of thieves…the very kingdom of sin, death and hell…

Guiding Questions

1. What does the word "overflowed" mean in the first line?

2. Why does Luther state the Church of Rome has become a "lawless den of thieves"?

3. What is Luther's main criticism of the Catholic Church in this excerpt?

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