

Primary Sources: Council of Trent

Profession of Faith issued by the Council of Trent, 1545-63

I recognize the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church as the Mother and mistress of all churches; and I vow and swear true obedience to the [Pope], the successor of blessed Peter, the chief of the Apostles and the representative of Jesus Christ. I accept and profess, without doubting the traditions, definitions and declarations of the sacred Canons and Councils and especially those of the holy Council of Trent.

Decree Concerning Indulgences, Session 25, December 4th, 1563.

Whereas the power of conferring Indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church... the use of Indulgences... is to be retained in the Church... [The Church] condemns those who either claim that [indulgences] are useless or who deny that [the Church has] the power of granting them. [However], moderation be observed... [The Church desires] that the abuses which have [led to] Indulgences [being protested] by heretics, be amended and corrected, [and] commands all bishops, diligently to collect, each in his own church, all abuses of this nature, and to report them [so that] the gift of holy Indulgences may be dispensed (given out) to all the faithful, piously, holily, and incorruptly.

Primary Sources: The Jesuits

Constitution of the Society of Jesus (The Jesuits), 1540.

All the members shall realize that this society is fighting for God under faithful obedience to one most holy lord and the pope. We should each be bound by a peculiar vow that whatever the present Roman Pope, or any future one, may from time to time decree regarding the welfare of souls and the propagation of the faith, we are pledged to obey without evasion or excuse.

Ignatius Loyola, Founder of The Jesuits: Obedience to "Our Holy Mother, the Hierarchical Church" and "Rules for Thinking with the Church" 1540.

The following rules should be observed:

1. We must put aside all judgment of our own, and to obey in all things, our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church...
4. We must praise highly religious life, virginity, and contingency...
5. We should praise vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and vows to perform other works to help us improve ourselves...
10. We should approve and praise the orders, recommendations, and way of acting of our superiors rather than to find fault with them...
13. We must follow this principle: What seems to me white, I will believe black if the Church says so. For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord and His Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls...

Primary Sources: Forbidden Books

The Tridentine Index of Forbidden Books, 1564.

2. The books of those who originated or revived heresies such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Balthasar Friedberg, Schwenkfeld, and others like these are absolutely forbidden. The books of other heretics, moreover, which deal professedly with religion are absolutely condemned.
4. If the Sacred Books are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the vernacular, there will by reason of the boldness of men arise there from more harm than good. Those who read or possess them without permission may not receive forgiveness from their sins until they have handed them over to the authorities. . . . '
7. Books which professedly deal with or teach things [sexual] or obscene are absolutely prohibited, since not only the matter of faith but also that of morals, which are usually easily corrupted through the reading of such books, those who possess them are to be severely punished by the bishops. Ancient books written by heathens may by reason of their elegance and quality of style be permitted, but may by no means be read to children.
8. Finally, all the faithful are commanded not to presume to read or possess any books contrary to the prescriptions of these rules or the prohibition of this list. And if anyone should read or possess books by heretics or writings by any author condemned and prohibited by reason of heresy or suspicion of false teaching, he incurs immediately the sentence of excommunication.

Secondary Sources: Catholic Reformation

World History: Patterns of Interaction, Roger B. Beck, Linda Black et al., McDougal Littell

The Catholic Reformation

While Protestant churches won many followers, millions remained true to Catholicism. Helping Catholics to remain loyal was a movement within the Catholic Church to reform itself. This movement is now known as the **Catholic Reformation**. Historians once referred to it as the Counter Reformation. Important leaders in this movement were reformers, such as Ignatius (ihg•NAY•shuhs) of Loyola, who founded new religious orders, and two popes—Paul III and Paul IV—who took actions to reform and renew the Church from within.

Ignatius of Loyola Ignatius grew up in his father's castle in Loyola, Spain. The great turning point in his life came in 1521 when he was injured in a war. While recovering, he thought about his past sins and about the life of Jesus. His daily devotions, he believed, cleansed his soul. In 1522, Ignatius began writing a book called *Spiritual Exercises* that laid out a day-by-day plan of meditation, prayer, and study. In it, he compared spiritual and physical exercise:

PRIMARY SOURCE

Just as walking, traveling, and running are bodily exercises, preparing the soul to remove ill-ordered affections, and after their removal seeking and finding the will of God with respect to the ordering of one's own life and the salvation of one's soul, are Spiritual Exercises.

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, *Spiritual Exercises*

For the next 18 years, Ignatius gathered followers. In 1540, the pope created a religious order for his followers called the Society of Jesus. Members were called **Jesuits** (JEHZH•u•ihts). The Jesuits focused on three activities. First, they founded superb schools throughout Europe. Jesuit teachers were well-trained in both classical studies and theology. The Jesuits' second mission was to convert non-Christians to Catholicism. So, they sent out missionaries around the world. Their third goal was to stop the spread of Protestantism. The zeal of the Jesuits overcame the drift toward Protestantism in Poland and southern Germany.

Reforming Popes Two popes took the lead in reforming the Catholic Church. Paul III, pope from 1534 to 1549, took four important steps. First, he directed a council of cardinals to investigate indulgence selling and other abuses in the Church. Second, he approved the Jesuit order. Third, he used the Inquisition to seek out heresy in papal territory. Fourth, and most important, he called a council of Church leaders to meet in Trent, in northern Italy.

From 1545 to 1563, at the **Council of Trent**, Catholic bishops and cardinals agreed on several doctrines:

- The Church's interpretation of the Bible was final. Any Christian who substituted his or her own interpretation was a heretic.
- Christians needed faith and good works for salvation. They were not saved by faith alone, as Luther argued.
- The Bible and Church tradition were equally powerful authorities for guiding Christian life.
- Indulgences were valid expressions of faith. But the false selling of indulgences was banned.

The next pope, Paul IV, vigorously carried out the council's decrees. In 1559, he had officials draw up a list of books considered dangerous to the Catholic faith. This list was known as the Index of Forbidden Books. Catholic bishops throughout Europe were ordered to gather up the offensive books (including Protestant Bibles) and burn them in bonfires. In Venice alone, followers burned 10,000 books in one day.

Global Impact



Jesuit Missionaries

The work of Jesuit missionaries has had a lasting impact around the globe. By the time Ignatius died in 1556, about a thousand Jesuits had brought his ministry to Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Two of the most famous Jesuit missionaries of the 1500s were Francis Xavier, who worked in India and Japan, and Matteo Ricci, who worked in China.

One reason the Jesuits had such an impact is that they founded schools throughout the world. For example, the Jesuits today run about 45 high schools and 28 colleges and universities in the United States. Four of these are Georgetown University (shown above), Boston College, Marquette University, and Loyola University of Chicago.

The Legacy of the Reformation

The Reformation had an enduring impact. Through its religious, social, and political effects, the Reformation set the stage for the modern world. It also ended the Christian unity of Europe and left it culturally divided.

Religious and Social Effects of the Reformation Despite religious wars and persecutions, Protestant churches flourished and new denominations developed. The Roman Catholic Church itself became more unified as a result of the reforms started at the Council of Trent. Both Catholics and Protestants gave more emphasis to the role of education in promoting their beliefs. This led to the founding of parish schools and new colleges and universities throughout Europe.

Some women reformers had hoped to see the status of women in the church and society improve as a result of the Reformation. But it remained much the same both under Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Women were still mainly limited to the concerns of home and family.

Political Effects of the Reformation As the Catholic Church's moral and political authority declined, individual monarchs and states gained power. This led to the development of modern nation-states. In the 1600s, rulers of nation-states would seek more power for themselves and their countries through warfare, exploration, and expansion.

The Reformation's questioning of beliefs and authority also laid the groundwork for the Enlightenment. As you will read in Chapter 22, this intellectual movement would sweep Europe in the late 18th century. It led some to reject all religions and others to call for the overthrow of existing governments.

Secondary Sources: Catholic Reformation

World History: Human Legacy, Susan Elizabeth Ramírez et al., Holt

Reforming the Catholic Church

Protestant reformers were not the only ones who were dissatisfied with the state of the Catholic Church. Even before Martin Luther posted his theses, some Catholics had been working toward reform of the church itself. Later, in response to the spread of Protestantism, the church began a series of reforms known as the **Counter-Reformation**.

Early Reformers A monk named Girolamo Savonarola (sahv-oh-nuh-ROH-luh) was one of the first reformers to try to change the church from within. During the late 1400s, he preached fiery sermons against the abuses of the church. He called for churches to melt down their gold and silver ornaments to buy bread for the hungry and poor members of the church.

Savonarola convinced people to gather and burn jewelry and trinkets. This enormous fire was known as “the bonfire of the vanities.” Pope Alexander at first allowed Savonarola’s work but eventually excommunicated him for spreading ideas the pope thought dangerous. In 1498, Savonarola was executed at Florence.

Jesuits Other leaders formed new religious orders whose members worked to reform the church. Their work renewed the church’s emphasis on spirituality and service. The most

influential of these groups was the Society of Jesus, or the **Jesuits**.

The Jesuit order was founded in 1534 by **Ignatius of Loyola**, a Basque nobleman and former soldier. The order was approved by the pope in 1539. Loyola, the Father General, ran the Jesuits like a military organization, emphasizing obedience to the church above all. The Jesuits concentrated on education as a means of combating the Protestant Reformation. They established missions, schools, and universities. With such effective organizations, the Catholic Church began to regain ground against Protestantism.

The Council of Trent Recognizing the need to redefine the doctrines of the Catholic faith, Pope Paul III convened the **Council of Trent** in 1545. It met on and off until 1563. Its delegates examined the criticisms made by Protestants about Catholic practices. In doing so, they clarified Catholic teaching on important points.

The delegates addressed the abuses that had weakened the church over the past century. A series of reforms addressed the corruption of the clergy. The training of priests was regulated and financial abuse was curbed. The sale of indulgences was abolished.

Above all, the Council of Trent rejected the Protestants’ emphasis on self-discipline and individual faith. The council argued that the

church could help believers achieve salvation by using mystery and magnificent ceremonies to inspire faith. This was consistent with the beliefs of millions of people, indeed the majority of Europeans, who remained Catholic.

The pronouncements of the Council of Trent meant that there would be no compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. The council's bold action was a great boost to Catholicism. Austria, Poland, and other parts of Europe returned to the Catholic Church. In addition, Catholics everywhere felt renewed energy and confidence.

The Jesuits used this renewed spirit to expand the scope of the church. By 1700, they operated 669 colleges in Italy, Germany, and other places. Many future leaders were educated at Jesuit schools. In this way, the order had some influence over political affairs. As they worked in India, Japan, China, and other places, the Jesuits also gained and passed along information about the cultures of other lands.

Reforming Catholics Several important figures in the Catholic Church helped to carry out the reforms decreed by the Council of Trent. **Charles Borromeo** (bohr-roh-MAY-oh) was the archbishop of Milan from 1560 to 1584. He took decisive steps to implement the reforms ordered by the council, such as building a new school for the education of priests.

In France, **Francis of Sales** worked to regain the district of Savoy, which had largely turned to Calvinism. As a result of his missionary work, most of the people of Savoy returned to the Catholic Church. He later founded a religious teaching order for women.

Women and the Church During the Renaissance, women in religious orders began to take on more active roles in the Church. Before the Renaissance, they lived in secluded convents. By the late Middle Ages, it was acceptable for nuns to help the poor, orphaned, or sick.

The Council of Trent

Members of the Catholic clergy met in the Italian city of Trent to decide how to react to the rise of Protestantism. Members of the council signed decrees that outlined specific rules that Catholics were to follow.



Many women had a profound and important influence on others through their work with the church. In 1535 Italian nun Angela Merici began the Company of Saint Ursula, an order of women dedicated to teaching girls. Jane of Chantal and Francis of Sales cofounded the Visitation of Holy Mary order, which trained women to be teachers. Mary Ward of England began a network of schools for girls throughout Europe. At first her work was denounced by anti-Jesuits and the church because Ward's ideas about women were considered dangerously new. Later, however, her missionary influence was formally recognized by the church.

Perhaps the most famous female spiritual leader was **Teresa of Avila**. Born in Spain in 1515, Teresa decided to become a nun about the age of 20. Her father opposed her plan, but Teresa ran away to a convent about 1536. At the convent, after deciding that the practices were too lax, she followed her own strict rules regarding fasting, prayer, and sleep. Eventually the church gave her permission to reform the Carmelite order. Teresa's deep spirituality, reported visions of Christ, and fervor for the Catholic faith inspired many would-be Protestants to remain in the church.

The Inquisition To counter the Reformation, the church established a church court, called the Roman Inquisition, in 1542 to fight Protestantism. Later popes increased the Inquisition's power. They tried people who were accused of being Protestants, of practicing witchcraft, or of breaking church law.

The Spanish monarchs set up and controlled the much harsher Spanish Inquisition in 1478. They used the Inquisition to impose religious uniformity, especially on converted Jews and Muslims, and later, on Protestants.

The church also tried to stamp out rebellion through its *Index of Forbidden Books*. The church warned the people not to read books on the lists or they would lose their souls. Accounts of torture and executions by the courts damaged the church's image. The Inquisition's actions during the Counter-Reformation are still seen as an abuse of the church's power.