

Counter Reformation, Loyola and the Jesuits

Historical Theology

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I. COUNTER REFORMATION

A) CATHOLIC REFORMATION

1. Acts of change, correction or reformation undertaken by Roman Catholic leaders to improve Roman Catholicism after 1517.

B) COUNTER REFORMATION

1. Acts undertaken to directly address the spread of Protestantism after 1517.

C) IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND GROUPS

1. Pope Clement IV
2. Pope Paul III
3. Pope Paul IV
4. Oratory of Divine Love
5. Papal Reform Commission
6. Ignatius de Loyola
7. Theresa Avila
8. Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
9. Council of Trent

D) COUNCIL OF TRENT RECAP

1. Originally called by Pope Paul III in 1545, eventually there would be 3 sessions.
 - a. Session 1: 1545-47
 - b. Session 2: 1551-52
 - c. Session 3: 1562-63
2. Originally tasked with addressing some of the more egregious problems within Catholicism and developing the official Papal response to Protestantism. Some hoped to be able to return the Protestants to the fold.
3. Some Protestants did attend the 2nd session, but they were not granted any votes. After a few months they became convinced that they would not be able to accomplish anything and left.

4. The Council of Trent has a number of key outcomes causing it to be considered the most significant such council between the Council of Nicea (325) and Vatican 2 (1965).
 - A. Confirmed: Transubstantiation, Salvation by faith *and* works, Latin Mass, Latin Vulgate as official Bible Translation, Inclusion of the Apocryphal Books, 7 Sacraments, Purgatory, Renewed importance of celibacy among clergy, Confirmed indulgences (but abolished the office of Indulgences Seller)
 - B. Strengthened Papal power by granting the Pope enforcement power and demanding that all clergy take an oath of obedience to the Pope.
 - C. Declared *ANATHEMA* on anyone who opposed the dictates of the council. (These have never been rescinded.)

II. IGNATIUS de LOYOLA (~1491-1556)

- A) Spanish Noble and Professional Soldier
- B) Suffered a career ending leg wound in 1521.
- C) While recuperating he studied biographies of saints and admired their soldier-like commitment to Christ causing him to seek new meaning in life through service to the church and spirituality. At this time he wrote Spiritual Exercises.

- D) With his newly established commitment and mission he set about finding a group of men who would join him and seek official recognition of his new order.
- E) He found 5 men who also desired the military-like regimentation, an unwavering commitment to Jesus through total obedience to their leader and the Pope. They called their group "The Society of Jesus."

III. SOCIETY OF JESUS (AKA JESUITS)

- A) Granted official approval by Pope Paul III in 1540.
- B) The Constitution which serves as the founding document of the Jesuits includes expectations that these men be handsome, above reproach, well trained and in addition to the standard 3 vows of chastity, charity and obedience take a 4th vow of absolute obedience to the Pope.
- C) They still use Loyola's Spiritual Exercises as the initial foundation of the training and discipline of new members of the Society. As do other Catholic orders and lay people both within and without of Catholicism.

- D) Where other orders were obedient to the Church but mostly independent, the Jesuits have a very militaristic chain of command approach with the highest ranking member being the General who takes orders directly from the Pope.
- E) Being established just before the Council of Trent they became very important to the Popes as they sought to fulfill the dictates of the Council. Additionally their ranks swelled rapidly. What started as a group of 6 in 1540 swelled to more than 1000 by 1556 and more than 15,000 by 1626. Essentially being the Pope's unquestioning lackeys they became a force to be reckoned with.
- F) Their philosophy that the end (expansion of Catholicism and repression of Protestantism) justifies the means and obedience to the General and the Pope as unquestioningly "as a corpse" have provided many opportunities for conspiracy theories and accusation, but solid evidence of nefarious activities is definitely lacking.
- G) What did they actually do?

1. They created schools initially for the training of their own and then expanding them rapidly with the realization that with education there is

the opportunity for indoctrination. One proverb attributed to them is, "Give me a child until he is 7, and he will remain a Catholic all of his life." They also went far and wide spreading Catholicism throughout Africa, the Americas and Asia.

2. They also worked to refute Protestant doctrines. Here are a couple of examples:

- D. A popular Protestant belief at the time was that the Pope was the Antichrist described in Revelation. One Jesuit theologian, John Bridgewater, worked to promote an idea that the Antichrist was a specific man who would be unveiled at some future date and his initial work receives some credit for being the foundation of several popular eschatological views today. (**Encyclopedic Dictionary of Bible and Theology; "Bridgewater, John;"** <https://www.bibli.work/dictionaries/bridgewater-john/>)
- E. Luis de Molina either honestly believed or in seeking to destroy the popular Protestant view of the day of God as sovereign over all things taught that God only got to select his favorite potential outcome from all the possible

outcomes. The idea of Molinism still bears his name and is fairly unchanged more than 400 years after he first proposed it.

(Wikipedia, "Luis de Molina,"

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_de_Molina)

IV. OTHER CATHOLIC REFORMATION EFFORTS

A) INQUISITIONS

1. The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (AKA Roman Inquisition) which is still in effect. Cardinal Ratzinger (AKA Pope Benedict of late) was the head inquisitor until his appointment as pope.
2. Instituted in 1542 used heavily in Italy and Spain and to a lesser degree in France. The English monarchy did not permit the Inquisition to function in England.

B) MYSTICISM

1. The Papacy was not fond of mystics because they believed they communed directly with God which taken to its logical conclusion makes the Papacy and church tradition unnecessary.
2. Teresa Avila (Carmelite Nun)
3. John of the Cross (Priest who later assisted Teresa Avila with reforming the Carmelite Order and later became confessor of the Convent of the Incarnation of Avila.)
4. Ignatius de Loyola

V. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity, "Rome Responds" by Linder, Robert D. (and additional embedded articles); pages 404 - 421