

The Counter-Reformation

The Catholic Church's response to the
Reformation and the Protestant
Churches



This is a meeting of the Catholic Church's most influential members. Why might they have all gathered here?

What is the Reformation?

What do you think the Catholic Church's response was to the new Protestant churches?

Pope Paul III

Pope from 1534 – 1549



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Paul III realized the need for reform and renewal in the Catholic Church. Encouraged by Paul III's leadership, and by the arrival of several dynamic Catholic thinkers, the Church experienced a resurgence of energy and growth that led to reform.

There were reform movements in the Catholic Church before Luther posted his 95 Theses.



In 1495, a Spanish monk named Francisco Jimenez was appointed the Archbishop of Toledo by Queen Isabella I (of Spain). Jimenez exiled the monks who did not lead a chaste life, and forced all Spanish priests to learn to read and write.



He established the University of Alcalá to encourage religious studies in Spain. He reformed the finances of the Spanish Church.

There were other early attempts at reformation in Italy. But it wasn't until people were leaving the Catholic Church for the new Protestant Churches that something was done.

Alarmed by the spread of Protestantism, the Church initiated a number of reforms and other actions to strengthen and spread the Catholic religion.

This is called the Counter Reformation, or the Catholic Reformation.



Map 27.1 Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians in Europe by 1550

In 1540, Pope Paul III approved a new order of Catholic priests called the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. The Jesuits became the most dynamic force in the Church's effort to rebuild its following.

Ignatius Loyola was the founder of the Jesuits. He was a Spanish nobleman and a soldier, who, in 1521, was injured while defending the Spanish town of Pamplona. As he was healing from his injury, he read and reread the only two books in the house: a life of Christ and a collection of stories about the lives of Christian saints. He then decided to dedicate his life to the Church.



He went to the University of Paris and studied: Latin, Greek, philosophy, and theology.
What type of scholar was he?

Jesuits:

The Jesuits became known for their discipline and education. Influenced by Humanism, they required their prospective priests to receive three academic degrees – a Bachelor of Arts, a Masters in Philosophy and a Doctorate in Theology, before their ordination as priests.



Jesuits built schools, counseled monarchs, sailed with the explorers, wrote treatises on theology, science, philosophy and history, and fought the spread of Protestantism.

This new order formed an army of scholars and teachers who helped revitalize the Church in Europe. They also helped spread the Christian message across Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Notes:

How did the Catholic Church respond to the Reformation?

Jesuits were established (1540)

- A disciplined and well-educated order of Catholic priests
- They spread the Christian message across Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Pope Paul III:



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He was actually a product of the corrupt Church. He was made a cardinal at the age of 25, before he was ordained as a priest. He also fathered 4 children. He knew, however, if the Catholic Church was to survive, it needed to REFORM!

His first action was to promote reform-minded men to the College of Cardinals, the Curia. He then appointed a committee of cardinals to catalogue all the abuses of the Church.

Once this was done, he assembled a council of Church leaders at Trent, to stop the spread of Protestantism.

Notes: The Counter-Reformation:

Pope Paul III (1534 – 1549):

- He led the Counter, or Catholic, Reformation
- He called a meeting at Trent to deal with the growth of Protestantism.

Council of Trent

It met periodically from 1545 to 1563. The Council defined Catholic beliefs:

- The Bible could be interpreted
- Both faith and good works were necessary for salvation
- Rituals and tradition were to remain an integral part of Catholic worship
- The pope was the head of the Catholic Church on earth

The Council also corrected abuses:

- The selling of indulgences were outlawed
- Simony was outlawed
- Seminaries were opened for the proper training of prospective priests



The Council of Trent also reinstated the Inquisition, which was designed to stamp out heresies by interrogating all people suspected of unorthodox views.

In Spain, the Inquisition had been active since 1480, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella used it as a tool to create homogeneity throughout their newly formed nation. The Spanish Inquisition was infamous for its methods of torture.

Under Pope Paul III, and his successor, Paul IV, the Inquisition was less brutal than the Spanish version. Many people, however, were imprisoned, exiled, or even executed for their unorthodox views.

In 1559, the Council established the Index of Forbidden Books, a list of banned books Catholics were not allowed to read, buy, or sell. These books included:

- Protestant Bibles
- Scientific treatise written by Copernicus and Galileo
- Other scientific treatise that contradicted Church teachings.

Notes: The Counter-Reformation:

Council of Trent (1545 – 1563):

- It defined Catholic beliefs and corrected abuses
- The sale of indulgences was prohibited
- Simony was outlawed
- Seminaries were established to train parish priests.

Index of Prohibited Books (1559)

- List of banned books which Catholics were forbidden to read
- List included the Protestant Bibles and some scientific writings.