

The Reformation

Context, Characters

Controversies, Consequences

Class 10: The Catholic Reformation and
the Council of Trent

Class 10 Goals

- Explore Catholic reform movements prior to the Protestant Reformation.
- Look at the new piety associated with the Catholic Reformation.
- Examine the settlement of the Council of Trent.

Opening Question

- How do large and powerful organizations and religious groups tend to respond to criticism?
- How do you evaluate whether criticism is valid and worth accepting?

A Question of Terminology

- Counter-Reformation – A Catholic reaction to a Protestant challenge.
 - The term was developed by Protestant historians and assumed the correctness of Protestant views.
- Catholic Reformation – A description of renewal movements and reforms within the Catholic Church – some of which preceded the Protestant Reformation.
 - A more neutral (and accurate) approach

Precursors

- Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517)
 - “Unless . . . we place a limit on our morals, unless we force our greedy desires for human things, the source of evils, to yield to the love of divine things, it is all over with Christendom.” Giles of Viterbo to Pope Julius II
- Emphasis on reform of self not of church.
 - Catholics emphasized greater personal piety for salvation, Luther emphasized faith alone.
- Catholic Reformers
 - Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98) – excommunicated and executed for pushing for greater piety and criticizing Alexander VI

Catholic Reformers

- Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros: Helped found university of Alcalá – taught Hebrew Greek and created a new translation
- Formation of Confraternities or Oratories of Divine Love in Genoa and Rome (pre 1517) – emphasis on works of charity.
- Formation of Capuchins - (1525) – Attempted to more faithfully follow the Franciscan rule – emphasized preaching and care for the sick and poor – Stress on Scripture offended Church hierarchy – some took refuge in Geneva.
- Formation of the Ursalines – 1535 – focused on Christian education of girls for moral reform of families.

Other Catholic Reformers

- Theresa of Avila – and others led female reform, charitable, and educational groups, but placed under male episcopal control.
- Matteo Giberti, Bishop of Verona, improved education and morality of clergy – published Greek fathers.
- Emperor Maximilian – called for church reform in 1509.
- In 1522 – Cardinal Adrian Floriszoon of Utrecht becomes Pope Adrian VI
 - Calls for thoroughgoing reform – but sale of offices funded the papacy and many Italians rejected the outsider. He soon sickened and died.

Bernini – *Ecstasy of St Theresa*



Considering a Source

- What do you notice about the devotional excerpt from Theresa of Ávila's *Interior Castle*?
- What strikes you about her theology? Does it seem to be Protestant? Catholic? Orthodox?
- Could you imagine yourself using this work as a devotional?

Reform under Later Popes

- Leo X (1523-1534)
 - More concerned with patronizing the arts than reform.
 - Misunderstood Protestant concerns, promised an ecumenical council but died without calling it.
- Paul III (1534-1549)
 - Made his teenage sons Cardinals
 - Attempted to reach out to Melanchthon and Bucer
 - Called the Council of Mantua (1537) – Criticized nepotism, simony, plural benefices, clerical immorality, venality, excessive papal power.
 - Proposed better discipline and management of the church
 - Some Catholic leaders accepted Protestant theological points and sought a Middle Way.

Paul IV and Counter-Reformation

- Index – A list of banned books (and authors) to be burned
 - Protestant Works, Boccaccio's Decameron, some of Erasmus' works. (Some latitude allowed.)
- Inquisition – had roots back to the thirteenth century to suppress heresy.
 - Expanded in Spain in 1478 after forced conversion of Jews. Persecuted *Conversos* and *Moriscos*, Protestants and Mystics illuminated by the Spirit of God.
 - Utilized physical and psychological torture (water boarding and the rack), rarely used, typical of secular justice.
 - Expanded to Italy in the 1530s.
 - Franciscans applied it in Mexico.
 - Primarily relied on fear of public shame.



The Council of Trent (1545-1563)

- Most important Council since Nicea (325)
- Met in three separate sessions (1545-47) (1551-2) (1561-3)
- Trent is in Northern Italy (but technically Germany)
- Gives name to “tridentine” also creates the oxymoronic term “Roman Catholicism”
- Decision Making — delegates voted as individuals, not by nations. (the Pope benefitted with heavy Italian attendance)
- Spain was also heavily represented.
- Some delegates wanted significant reform of the Church

Reaffirming Catholic Theology

- *Sola Scriptura* – rebutted with Scripture and Tradition as interpreted by the Magisterium (teaching authority)
- The Vulgate is accepted as the only authoritative translation, more authority than Greek or Hebrew originals (includes the apocryphal books.)
- Instead of Grace Alone – humans freely cooperate with God's grace in salvation. (almsgiving a crucial example)
- Prayers for the dead are an individual and communal responsibility.
- Seripando's middle ground Christians transformed by the Gift of Christ and saved by God's mercy – was rejected.

Reaffirming Catholic Theology II

- Reaffirmed seven sacraments (baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, matrimony) effect *ex opere operato* not by faith.
- Continued transubstantiation and receiving only the host
- In later sessions:
 - Bishops must reside in their sees
 - Power of pope reaffirmed over national churches
- The decrees were confirmed by the Pope helping to lead to papal infallibility in 1870

Results

- Led to a renewal in theological scholarship, education, moral reform, and spiritual growth.
- Increased emphasis on clerical celibacy and chastity
- Personal vision for reform —
 - Elite leaders would provide the model of faith
 - Members were to follow their model of personal holiness
 - Confessional box introduced at this time
 - Emphasis on reading lives of the saints — focus on bishops, missionaries, and founders of monastic orders (deemphasized female religious leaders)
 - Instead of renewing corporate worship emphasized individual “spirituality” which was ascetic, subjective, and mystical.

El Greco



Next Week

- The Jesuits and Global Christianity