



The Roman Catholic Church and the Counter-Reformation 1500s-1600s

- The Counter-Reformation (Latin: *Contrareformatio*), also called the Catholic Reformation (Latin: *Reformatio Catholica*) or the Catholic Revival, was the period of Catholic resurgence that was initiated in response to the Protestant Reformation.
- It began with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and largely ended with the conclusion of the European wars of religion in 1648.
- Initiated to address the effects of the Protestant Reformation, the Counter-Reformation was a comprehensive effort composed of apologetic and polemical documents, and the re-structuring of the church as decreed by the Council of Trent.

- Important re-structuring efforts included:
 - ✠ Imperial Diets of the Holy Roman Empire.
 - ✠ Exiling/forcibly converting Protestant populations.
 - ✠ Heresy trials and the Inquisition.
 - ✠ Anti-corruption efforts.
- Such policies had long-lasting effects in European history with exiles of Protestants continuing until the 1781 Patent of Toleration, although smaller expulsions took place in the 19th century.

- Reforms also included the foundation of seminaries for the proper training of priests in the spiritual life and the theological traditions of the Church.
- Reform of religious life was instituted by returning the monastic orders to their spiritual foundations.
- New spiritual movements focused on the devotional life and a personal relationship with Christ, fostered by the work of Spanish mystics and the French school of spirituality.
- Pope Paul III (1534–49) is considered the first pope of the Counter-Reformation, and he also initiated the Council of Trent (1545–63), tasked with institutional reform, addressing such issues as corrupt bishops and priests, the sale of indulgences, and other financial abuses.



POPE PAUL III –1534 TO DEATH IN 1549

Pope Paul III served as Pope from 1534 to his death in 1549. In addition to calling the Council of Trent, he promoted wars in Germany against Protestants. He recognized new Catholic religious orders and societies such as the Jesuits, the Barnabites, and the Congregation of the Oratory. He also advanced the career of his illegitimate son in the Church.

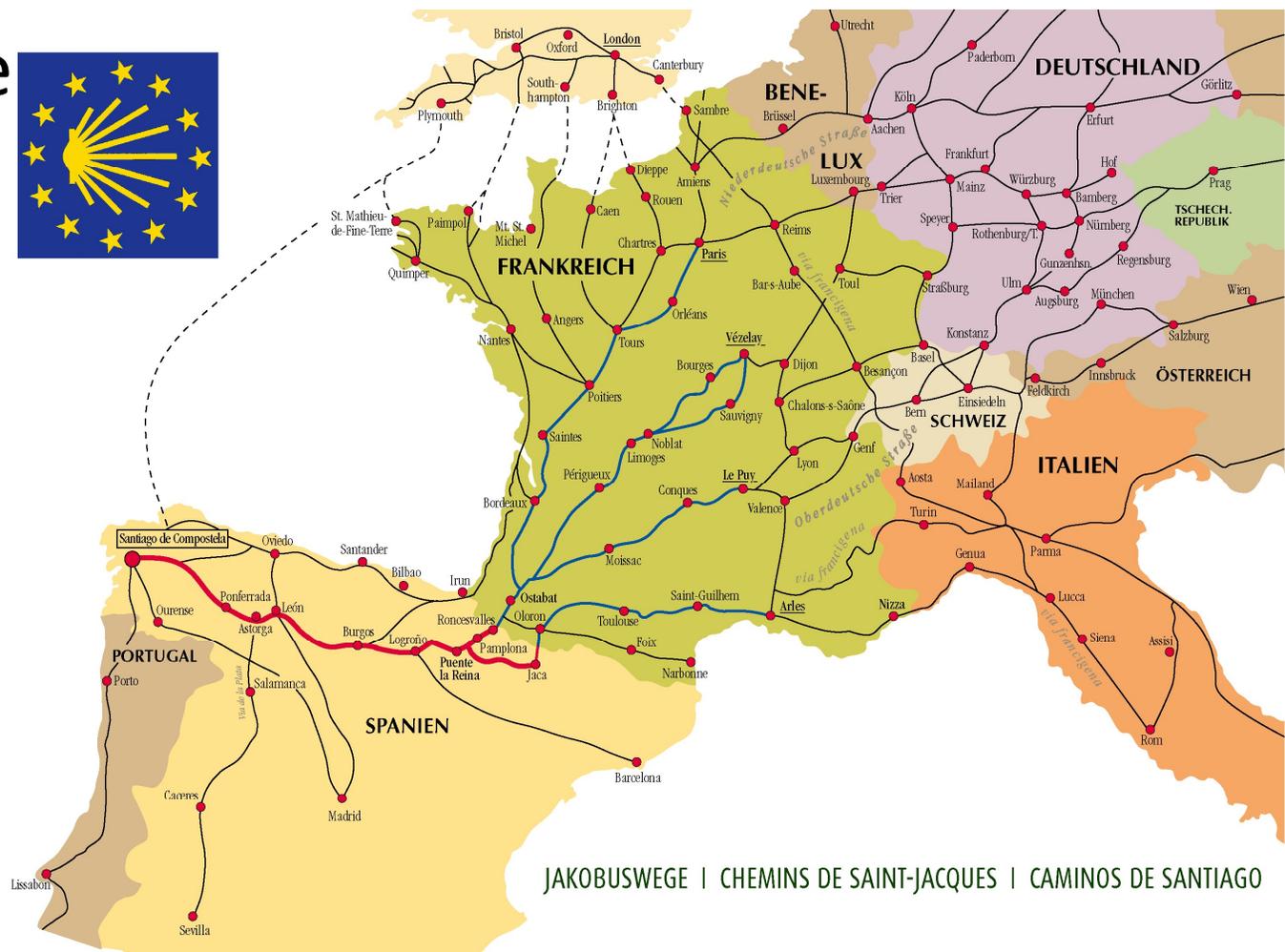
- The Counter-Reformation also involved political activities that included the Spanish Inquisition and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1559–1967).
- The *Index* was a directory of prohibited books which was updated twenty times during the next four centuries as books were added or removed from the list by the Sacred Congregation of the Index.
- Literary works that were deemed heretical or contrary to morality were placed on the list, and Catholics were forbidden to read them without permission.
- Another primary emphasis of the Counter-Reformation was a mission to reach parts of the world that had been colonized by Europeans to promote Catholicism there.⁶

- Efforts were made to reconvert areas such as Sweden and England that once were majority Catholic but had been lost to the Reformation.
- The Council of Trent upheld the basic structure of the medieval church, its sacramental system, religious orders, and doctrine.
- It recommended that the form of the Mass should be standardized, and this took place in 1570, when Paul V made the *Tridentine Mass* obligatory.
- This form of the mass was always conducted in ecclesiastical Latin, never in a vernacular language.

- The Council rejected all compromise with Protestants, restating basic tenets of the Catholic Faith.
- It upheld the doctrine of salvation appropriated by grace through faith **and works of that faith** (not just by faith, as the Protestants insisted) because "faith without works is dead", as the Epistle of James states (2:22–26).
- *Transubstantiation*, according to which the consecrated bread and wine are held to have been transformed really and substantially into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, was also reaffirmed, as were the traditional seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

- Other practices such as pilgrimages, the veneration of saints and relics, the use of venerable images and statuary, and the veneration of the Virgin Mary were strongly reaffirmed as spiritually commendable practices.
- These practices were often opposed by Protestant reformers, but the Council of Trent reaffirmed these for faithful Catholics.
- The *Canon of Trent* officially accepted the Vulgate listing of the Old Testament Bible, which included the *deuterocanonical* works (called *apocrypha* by Protestants) on a par with the 39 books found in the Masoretic Text.

This map depicts one of the most popular and important religious pilgrimages in Europe, the Way of St. James, ending at Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain.



The map shows pilgrimage routes beginning in many European cities, from the Middle Ages to present times.

- Trent reaffirmed the previous Council of Rome and the Synods of Carthage (both held in the 4th century AD), which had affirmed the Deuterocanon as scripture.
- The council also commissioned the Roman Catechism, which served as authoritative Church teaching until the 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- To counter the Protestant Augsburg Confession, the Church developed the 1530 Confutatio Augustana.
- The Confutatio, like much of the pronouncements from the Council, reaffirmed traditional Catholic theology and doctrine and yielded no ground to Protestant theology.

- While the traditional fundamentals of the Church were reaffirmed, there were noticeable changes to answer complaints that the Counter-Reformers were willing to admit were legitimate.
- Among the conditions to be corrected by Catholic reformers was the growing divide between the clergy and the laity.
- Many members of the clergy in the rural parishes had been poorly educated. Often, these rural priests did not know Latin(!) and lacked opportunities for proper theological training.
- Addressing the education of priests had been a fundamental focus of the humanist reformers in the past.

- Parish priests were to be better educated in matters of theology and apologetics.
- Papal authorities sought to educate the faithful about the meaning, nature and value of art and liturgy, particularly in monastic churches (Protestants had criticized them as "distracting").
- Notebooks and handbooks became more common, describing how to be good priests and confessors.
- However, the worldly excesses of the secular Renaissance Church, epitomized by the era of Alexander VI (1492–1503), had intensified during the Reformation under Pope Leo X (1513–21).

- Leo's administration, whose campaign to raise funds for the construction of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome by supporting the use of indulgences, had served as a key impetus for Martin Luther's *95 Theses*.
- The Council of Trent, by virtue of its actions and documents, repudiated the pluralism of the secular Renaissance that had previously plagued the Church.
- The organization of religious institutions was tightened, discipline was improved, and the parish was emphasized.
- The appointment of bishops for political reasons was no longer tolerated.

- In the past, large landholdings of the aristocrats in many areas forced many bishops to be "absent bishops" who at times were property managers trained in administration.
- The Council of Trent combated "absenteeism", which was the practice of bishops living in Rome or on their landed estates rather than in their dioceses.
- The Council gave bishops greater power to supervise all aspects of religious life.
- Zealous prelates, such as Milan's Archbishop Carlo Borromeo (1538–84), later canonized as a saint, set an example by visiting the remotest parishes and instilling high standards.



Carlo (Charles) Borromeo was archbishop of Milan from from 1564 to 1584 and was also a cardinal of the Catholic Church. He also supervised the Franciscan and Carmelite monastic orders, and the Knights of Malta. He promoted increased Catholic learning in the priesthood.

- An important Catholic institution during this period was the Inquisition.
- Referred to as the "Holy Inquisition" within the Church, the aim was to combat heresy.
- Torture and violence were used by the Inquisition for eliciting confessions from heretics.
- The Inquisition started in 12th-century France to combat religious dissent, particularly among the Cathars and the Waldensians.
- The inquisitorial courts from this time until the mid-15th century are together known as the Medieval Inquisition.

- Other groups investigated during the Medieval Inquisition, which primarily took place in France and Italy, including the Spiritual Franciscans, the Hussites (followers of Jan Hus), and the Beguines.
- Beginning in the 1250s, inquisitors were generally chosen from members of the Dominican Order, replacing the earlier practice of using local clergy as judges.
- During the Late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, the scope of the Inquisition grew significantly in response to the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. It expanded to other European countries.

- The expansion of the Inquisition to the Iberian peninsula resulted in the Spanish Inquisition and the Portuguese Inquisition.
- These focused particularly on the *anusim* (people who were forced to abandon Judaism against their will) or as they were sometimes called, the *conversos*, and on Muslim converts to Catholicism.
- During this time, Spain and Portugal operated inquisitorial courts not only in Europe, but also throughout their empires in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This resulted in the Goa Inquisition in southern India, the Peruvian Inquisition, and the Mexican Inquisition, among others.

“Galileo
before the
Holy
Office” by
Joseph-
Nicolas
Robert-
Fleury
(1847)



THE JESUITS – THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

- The Society of Jesus is a religious order of the Catholic Church headquartered in Rome.
- It was founded by Ignatius of Loyola and six companions with the approval of Pope Paul III in 1540. The members are called Jesuits.
- The society is engaged in evangelization and apostolic ministry in 112 nations. Jesuits work in education, research and cultural pursuits.
- Jesuits also give retreats, minister in hospitals and parishes, sponsor direct social ministries, and promote ecumenical dialogue.

- Members of the Society of Jesus were expected to accept orders to go anywhere in the world, where they might be required to live in extreme conditions.
- This was so because St. Ignatius of Loyola, its leading founder, was a nobleman who had a military background.
- The opening lines of the founding document declared that the society was founded for "whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God, to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine".



Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a Navarrese nobleman from the Pyrenees area of northern Spain, founded the society after discerning his spiritual vocation while recovering from a wound sustained in the Battle of Pamplona. He composed the Spiritual Exercises to help others follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. In 1534, Ignatius and six other young men, including Francis Xavier and Peter Faber, gathered and professed vows of poverty, chastity, and a special vow of obedience to the Pope.

- Ignatius's plan of the order's organization was approved by Pope Paul III in 1540 by a bull containing the "Formula of the Institute".
- Religious orders established in the medieval era were named after particular men, for example, St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan monastic order.
- Ignatius of Loyola and his followers appropriated the name of Jesus for their new order, provoking resentment by other orders who considered it presumptuous.
- Initially, like the military orders, the Jesuits wanted to go to the Holy Land to fight for the faith.

- But the Italian Wars of 1535-1538 were in progress between Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, the Pope, the City of Venice and the Ottoman Empire and this rendered any journey to Jerusalem impossible.
- So the Jesuits devoted themselves to preaching and charitable work in Italy.
- In the papal bull, or proclamation, titled "To the Government of the Church Militant", issued on Sept. 27, 1540, the Jesuits were organized to "serve as...soldier[s] of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society," "to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith...."

- In fulfilling the mission of the "Formula of the Institute of the Society", the first Jesuits concentrated on a few key activities.
- They founded schools throughout Europe. Jesuit teachers were trained in both classical studies and theology, and their schools reflected this.
- They sent out missionaries across the globe to evangelize those peoples who had not yet heard the Gospel, founding missions in widely diverse regions such as modern-day Paraguay, Japan, Ontario, and Ethiopia. One of the original seven arrived in India as early as 1541.

- Finally, though not initially formed for the purpose, they aimed to stop Protestantism from spreading and to preserve communion with Rome and the successor of Saint Peter, the Pope.
- The zeal of the Jesuits overcame the movement toward Protestantism in Poland, Lithuania, southern Germany and other countries.



Symbol of the Society of
Jesus

- The Jesuits seemed tailor-made for the European Age of Exploration that was flourishing beginning in the late 1400s.
- With the *Reconquista* of Spain for Catholic Christianity finally having achieved the end of Moorish rule, Catholicism in Spain, along with the energy of the Jesuits, entered a period of religious and cultural imperialism.
- It seemed that Northern European Protestants were not the only zealous evangelists in the world.
- By the time of Ignatius' death in 1556, the Jesuits were already operating a network of 74 colleges on three continents.

- Ignatius and the Jesuits who followed him believed that the reform of the church had to begin with the conversion of an individual's heart.
- One of the main tools the Jesuits have used to bring about this conversion is the Ignatian retreat, called the Spiritual Exercises.
- During a four-week period of silence, individuals undergo a series of directed meditations on the purpose of life and contemplations on the life of Christ.
- They meet regularly with a spiritual director who guides their choice of exercises and helps them to develop a more discerning love for Christ.

- The retreat follows a "Purgative-Illuminative-Unitive" pattern in the tradition of the spirituality of St. John Cassian and the Desert Fathers.
- Ignatius' innovation was to make this style of contemplative mysticism available to all people in active life. Further, he used it as a means of rebuilding the spiritual life of the church.
- The Exercises became both the basis for the training of Jesuits and one of the essential ministries of the order: giving the exercises to others in what became known as "retreats".

- The Jesuits' contributions to the late Renaissance were significant in their roles both as a missionary order and as the first religious order to operate colleges and universities as a principal and distinct ministry.
- A precursor to liberal education, the Jesuit plan of studies incorporated the Classical teachings of Renaissance humanism into the Scholastic structure of Catholic thought.
- In addition to the teachings of faith, the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* (1599) would standardize the study of Latin, Greek, classical literature, poetry, and philosophy as well as non-European languages, sciences, and the arts.

- Furthermore, Jesuit schools encouraged the study of vernacular literature and rhetoric, and thereby became important centers for the training of lawyers and public officials.
- Today, Jesuit colleges and universities are located in over one hundred nations around the world.
- Under the notion that God can be encountered through created things and especially art, they encouraged the use of ceremony and decoration in Catholic ritual and devotion.
- As a result of this appreciation for art, coupled with their spiritual practice of "finding God in all things", many early Jesuits distinguished themselves in the visual and performing arts as well as in music. The theater was a form of artistic expression especially prominent in Jesuit schools.



← Jesuits at Akbar's court in India, c. 1605 –
Unknown artist

Jesuit priest →
Matteo Ricci (left)
and Xu Guangqi in the
1607 Chinese
publication of *Euclid's
Elements* - Athanasius
Kirchner, Netherlands



- After much training and experience in theology, Jesuits went across the globe in search of converts to Christianity.
- Despite their dedication, they had little success in Asia, except in the Philippines.
- Early missions in Japan resulted in the government granting the Jesuits the feudal fiefdom of Nagasaki in 1580. But this was removed in 1587 due to fears over their growing influence.
- Jesuits did, however, have much success in Latin America.

- Their ascendancy in South American lands accelerated during the seventeenth century.
- Jesuits created new missions in Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia; as early as 1603, there were 345 Jesuit priests in Mexico alone.
- Jesuits attempted to intervene between the Spanish and Portuguese *conquistadors* and the indigenous peoples to prevent their enslavement.
- Francis Xavier, one of the original companions of Loyola, arrived in Goa, in Portuguese India, in 1541 to consider evangelical service in the Indies.

- The Jesuits first entered China through the Portuguese settlement on Macau, where they settled on Green Island and founded St. Paul's College.
- The Jesuit China missions of the 16th and 17th centuries introduced Western science and astronomy, then undergoing its own revolution, to China.
- The scientific revolution brought by the Jesuits coincided with a time when scientific innovation had declined in China.
- The Jesuits were active in translating Chinese works into European languages, and European texts into Chinese.

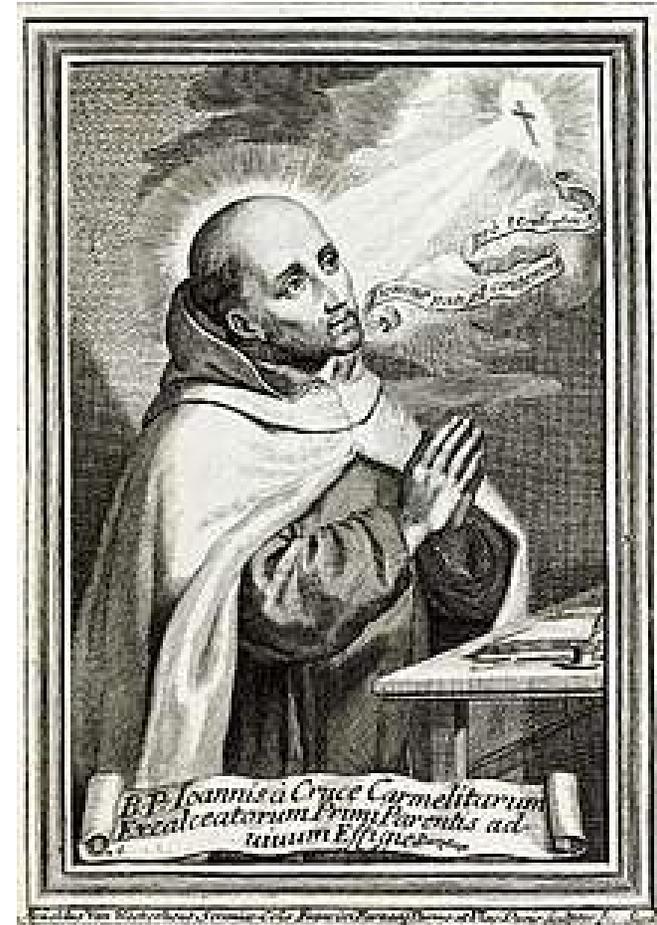
THE SPANISH MYSTICS

- The Spanish mystics are major figures in the Catholic Counter-Reformation of 16th and 17th century Spain.
- The goal of this movement was to reform the Church structurally and to renew it spiritually.
- The Spanish Mystics attempted to express in words their experience of a mystical communion with Christ.
- These writers had a strong influence on the development of the Spanish language and were said to have ushered in the "Golden Age of Spanish Literature."
- At the beginning of the time period, Spanish was viewed as "coarse," for people of the lower classes.

- By the end of this period, the language had achieved what is called "the high baroque style of Spanish," which in certain forms continues to influence Spanish usage to the present.
- Perhaps one of the most well-known Spanish mystics is **St. Teresa of Ávila**, also called Saint Teresa of Jesus (Mar. 1515 – Oct. 1582)
- She was a Spanish noblewoman who felt called to convent life in the Roman Catholic Church.
- A Carmelite nun, prominent Spanish mystic, religious reformer, author, theologian of the contemplative life and of mental prayer, she was canonized in 1622.

- She was considered for the position of national patron saint of Spain, but that honor went to St. James the Apostle.
- She was a prolific writer and reformer within Catholicism, and studied medieval Catholic religious literature.
- *The Way of Perfection*, perhaps her best-known work, was inspired by *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis.
- She also wrote *The Interior Castle, or The Mansions*, which depict the human heart as having seven chambers through which the saint must progress in a spiritual journey toward God.

- **St. John of the Cross** was a Spanish Catholic priest, mystic, and Carmelite friar of *converso* origin.
- He is a major figure of the Counter-Reformation in Spain, and he is one of the thirty-six Doctors of the Church.
- He was mentored by, and corresponded with, St. Teresa of Ávila.
- His poetry and studies on the development of the soul are considered the best of the Spanish mystical tradition.



Along with St. Ignatius of Loyola, other noted Spanish mystics are:

Theresa de Cartagena, a Cistercian nun who wrote *Wonder at the Works of God* and *Grove of the Infirm*.

St. Francis de Borgia, Duke of Gandía in Valencia, later a prominent Jesuit second only to Ignatius, writer, administrator and advisor to kings and popes.

Luis de León, Augustinian friar, lyric poet, theologian and academic.

Mary of Jesus of Ágreda, Franciscan abbess and spiritual writer; author of *The Mystical City of God*.