

## ***The Counter (Catholic) Reformation***

### *Sources*

- A. G. Dickens, *The Counter-Reformation* (1969)  
William Webster, *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* (1997)  
James McCarthy, *The Gospel According to Rome* (1995)  
James Brodrick, *The Origin of the Jesuits* (1986)  
Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (1997)  
Peter Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensburg* (1972)

### I. Nature of the Catholic Reformation

- A. Traditional Form of Catholic Reform
  - 1. Usually moral (e.g., Savonarola)
  - 2. Identify and clear up abuses (e.g., Erasmus)
  - 3. Often monastically centered (e.g., Franciscans, Jesuits)
  - 4. Promote/deepen personal piety—But no doctrinal reform
- B. Motivating Forces (By Means of “Sticks and Carrots”)
  - 1. “Sticks” = means of enforcing obedience and discipline
  - 2. “Carrots” = means of attracting adherents to the church
- C. “Catholic Reformation” or “Counter-Reformation”?
  - 1. Some traditional reform predated Protestantism
  - 2. Arguments for a *Counter-Reformation*
    - a. Chronology of major institutions
    - b. In format of doctrinal statements
    - c. In attitude of conscious competition—*recapturing*

### II. Means of the Catholic Reformation

- A. “Reform” popes
  - 1. Shift from worldliness of Renaissance papacy
  - 2. Paul III: Most significant reform pope
    - a. Elevated more moral, spiritual men to high office
    - b. Set up commission to investigate abuses
    - c. Approved Jesuits
    - d. Called Council of Trent
- B. “Carrots”
  - 1. Mysticism
    - a. Response to justification by faith—personal means of experiencing God
    - b. Major figure: Teresa of Avila
  - 2. Sincere Reform: e.g., “Catholic Evangelism”
    - a. “Evangelism” = “Gospelism”—the idea of getting back to the gospel
    - b. Gaspar Contarini
      - 1) Devout Venetian diplomat w/ “Luther-like experience”
      - 2) Elevated to cardinal’s office
      - 3) Regensburg Colloquy (1541)
        - a) Met w/ Melancthon to find agreement on justification
        - b) Repudiated by Catholics and Protestants
  - 3. Use of arts → Attract through aesthetics
- C. “Sticks”

1. Index of Prohibited Books
2. Inquisition
  - a. Spanish Inquisition: Perhaps the most terrible of all the inquisitions
  - b. “Holy Office”—the Roman inquisition
  - c. At its mildest—collect information; at its worst—torture and execution
- D. Jesuits
  1. “Shock troops” of the Counter-Reformation
  2. Founded by Ignatius Loyola, author of *Spiritual Exercises*
  3. Character
    - a. Special vow: obedience & submission to church & pope
    - b. Stressed unquestioned authority of the church
    - c. Takes on trappings of a military organization
    - d. Jesuit ethics—“The ends justifies the means”
  4. Missions
    - a. Here the church went beyond *recapturing* to *expanding*
    - b. Most famous: Francis Xavier in Asia
  5. Stress on Education
- E. Council of Trent (1545-63)
  1. Agendas
    - a. Everyone: Reform the church
    - b. Emperor, some Protestants, and Catholic reformers: Heal the schism
    - c. Hardliners: Eliminate heresy
    - d. Papacy: Protect own power
  2. Work
    - a. Improved church discipline
    - b. Issued canons and decrees reaffirming Catholic dogma
  3. Effects
    - a. Represented triumph of papal/Jesuit party
    - b. Crushed mediating movements such as Catholic Evangelism
    - c. Affirmed Thomist scholasticism over humanism
    - d. Expressly affirmed traditional Catholicism & expressly rejected Protestantism

### III. Evaluation

- A. Successes and Failures
  1. Success: Poland recaptured
  2. Failure: England
- B. Final Judgment
  1. Council of Trent (and to my way of thinking, the whole Counter-Reformation) “was a *reaffirmation* more than a *reformation*”
  2. Set course for Catholicism for 400 years—and still the doctrinal standard
  3. A leaner, meaner Catholic Church