



World History From A Catholic Perspective #8: The Early Modern Period (1500 AD – mid 1700s AD)

Introduction:



St. Charles Borromeo in Glory

Since the very beginning mankind has proven to be prideful, unappreciative, and rebellious. Our First Parents were literally given everything they needed to prosper and succeed. They had dominion over God's creation with one seemingly simple command to not eat the fruit of the tree at the center of the Garden. However, they were given the freedom to either accept or reject this great gift. Their thankfulness was challenged by the Serpent who used pride as his weapon of choice. He succeeded as Adam and Eve seized on the false opportunity to be like gods (cf. Gen 1-3).



The essence of this scenario plays out over and over throughout the Old Testament. Moses is sent by God to lead the Israelites out of their Egyptian bondage and slavery. They grumble and complain the whole way, even after witnessing their own spectacular rescue at the Red Sea. The Book of Judges presents a series of events wherein the Israelites are enjoying a time of peace and prosperity only to reject God's kindness and fall into disfavor and are conquered. He sends them a Judge to tell them what they need to do in order to be rescued. They follow the Judge's instructions, enjoy a time of peace and prosperity, only to rebel once again with the same result. The cycle repeats numerous times until Jesus comes with the mission to restore what was lost at the Fall.

When God created our First Parents, He blessed them saying, "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it" (Gen 1: 28). He also told them to dress and keep the Garden (Gen 2:15). In other words, God has given us permission to improve our lot on earth, to make life better. However, as it is in all cases, there are parameters as to what we can accomplish and do.

As we enter into the "early modern period" there is a definitive up-tick in technology grounded in scientific research and implementation. As with any human endeavor, God is the initiator. The work of the scientist is to uncover the wonders God has placed in nature for our use. The parameters for their use are found in the Laws of Nature and the Natural Law. There are many medicines that we have for our use. Taken in the proper dosages, they can be of great benefit. However, to exceed the proper dose may well lead to sickness, even death.

In order for technology and science to properly serve mankind, there needs to be a harmony of the Laws of Nature and the Natural Law. When driving a car, the Laws of Nature allow for certain safe speeds. The Natural Law dictates that you attend to the well-being of others. If one drives too fast or too close to another car the distance required to stop may be insufficient resulting in a collision that damages the other's property and person.

The advances and progress of technology and science by Man coupled with his pridefulness, unappreciativeness, and rebelliousness (i.e., sinfulness) has resulted in the idea that Man has done this on his own, without God. What has developed in the centuries since the Early Modern Period is a separation, even a hostility of Science toward Religion. This failure of science to recognize that God put into place all the wonders they have uncovered for our benefit is to their detriment.

This ongoing and ever-growing tension of technology and science with what is truly for the benefit of the human person and his eternal destiny, fulfilling The Divine Plan, for us to be with Him forever in Heaven.



Opening Prayer:



St. John the Evangelist Appearing to Galla Placidia

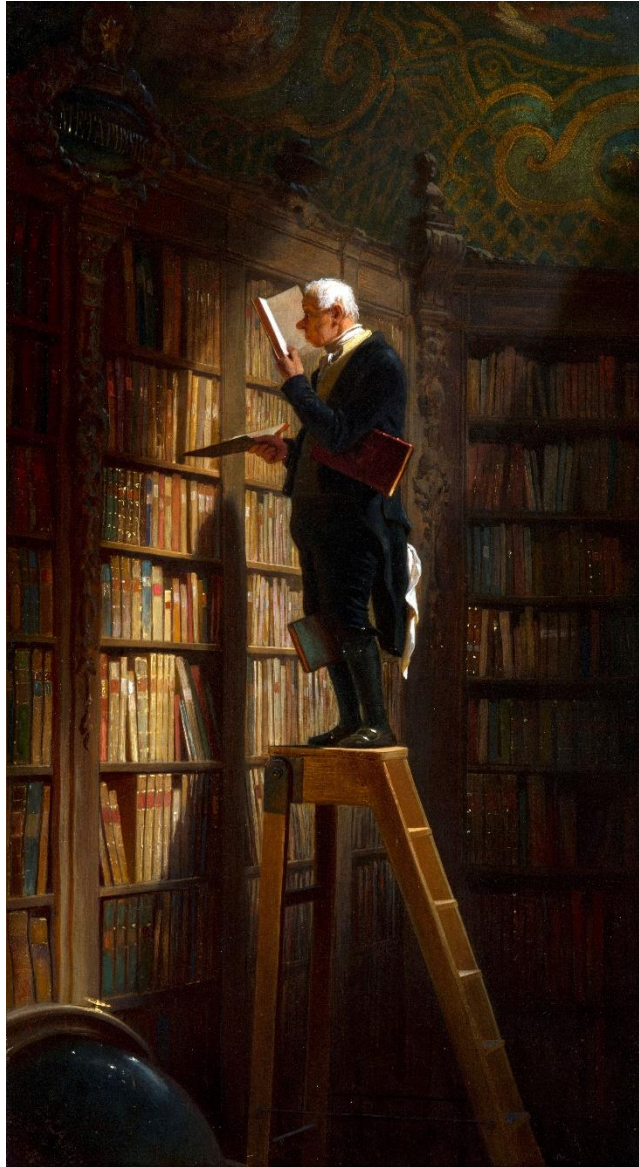
Prayer 207 for the Conversion of Heretics and Schismatics from the Raccolta of St. Pius X:

O Mary, Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners, we beseech thee to look with pitying eyes on heretical and schismatical nations. Do thou, who art the Seat of wisdom, illuminate their minds, wretchedly involved in the darkness of ignorance and sin, that they may know the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church to be the only true Church of Jesus Christ, out of which no sanctity or salvation can be found. Finally, complete their conversion by obtaining for them the grace to believe every truth of our holy Faith, and to submit to the Sovereign Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, that thus, being soon united to us by the bonds of divine charity, they may make with us but one fold under one and the same pastor, and that we may thus, O glorious Virgin, all sing exultingly for ever, "Rejoice, O Virgin Mary! alone thou hast destroyed all heresies in the whole world." Amen.

Ave Maria, *three times.*



Sacred Scripture:



Gen 3:1-23 Now the Serpent was more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth which the Lord God made. And he said to the woman: Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? And the woman answered him, saying: Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die. And the Serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves aprons.



And when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in paradise at the afternoon air, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God, amidst the trees of paradise. And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him: Where art thou? And he said: I heard Thy voice in paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. And He said to him: And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And Adam said: The woman, whom Thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the woman: Why hast thou done this? And she answered: The serpent deceived me, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and the beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.

To the woman also He said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee.

And to Adam He said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.

And Adam called the name of his wife Eve: because she was the mother of all the living. And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife, garments of skins, and clothed them. And He said: Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil: now, therefore, lest perhaps he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken.

Ex 14:10-12 When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel, lifting up their eyes, saw the Egyptians behind them: and they feared exceedingly, and cried to the Lord. And they said to Moses: Perhaps there were no graves in Egypt, therefore thou hast brought us to die in the wilderness: why wouldst thou do this, to lead us out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spoke to thee in Egypt, saying: Depart from us that we may serve the Egyptians? for it was much better to serve them, than to die in the wilderness.

Ex 16:1-3 And they set forward from Elim, and all the multitude of the children of Israel came into the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai: the fifteenth day of the second month, after they came out of the land of Egypt. And all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them: Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat over the flesh pots, and ate bread to the full. Why have you brought us into this desert, that you might destroy all the multitude with famine?

Ex 32:1-6 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." And Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the



rings of gold which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord." And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Jgs 2:11-29 The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they served Baalim. And they left the Lord the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt: and they followed strange gods, and the gods of the people that dwelt round about them, and they adored them: and they provoked the Lord to anger. Forsaking Him, and serving Baal and Astaroth. And the Lord being angry against Israel, delivered them into the hands of plunderers: who took them and sold them to their enemies, that dwelt round about: neither could they stand against their enemies: But whithersoever they meant to go, the hand of the Lord was upon them, as He had said, and as He had sworn to them: and they were greatly distressed. And the Lord raised up judges, to deliver them from the hands of those that oppressed them: but they would not hearken to them, Committing fornication with strange gods, and adoring them. They quickly forsook the way, in which their fathers had walked: and hearing the commandments of the Lord, they did all things contrary. And when the Lord raised them up judges, in their days He was moved to mercy, and heard the groanings of the afflicted, and delivered them from the slaughter of the oppressors. But after the judge was dead, they returned, and did much worse things than their fathers had done, following strange gods, serving them and adoring them. They left not their own inventions, and the stubborn way, by which they were accustomed to walk. And the wrath of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He said: Behold this nation hath made void My covenant, which I had made with their fathers, and hath despised to hearken to My voice: I also will not destroy the nations which Josue left, when he died: That through them I may try Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, and walk in it, as their fathers kept it, or not. The Lord therefore left all these nations, and would not quickly destroy them, neither did He deliver them into the hands of Josue.

1 Sam 8:4-9 All the ancients of Israel being assembled, came to Samuel to Ramatha. And they said to him: Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: make us a king, to judge us, as all nations have. And the word was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel, that they should say: Give us a king, to judge us. And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel: Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to thee. For they have not rejected thee, but Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all their works, they have done from the day that I brought them out of Egypt until this day: as they have forsaken Me, and served strange gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken to their voice: but yet testify to them, and foretell them the right of the king, that shall reign over them.

Lk 12:54-56 Jesus said also to the multitudes: When you see a cloud rising from the west, presently you say: A shower is coming and so it happeneth: And when ye see the south wind blow, you say: There will be heat: and it cometh to pass. You hypocrites, you know how to discern the face of the heaven and of the earth: but how is it that you do not discern this time?



Catechism References:



St. Peter Canisius

Catechism of Saint Thomas Aquinas

THE FIRST ARTICLE: "I Believe in One God."

Among all the truths which the faithful must believe, this is the first-- that there is one God. We must see that God means the ruler and provider of all things. He, therefore, believes in God who believes that everything in this world is governed and provided for by Him. He who would believe that all things come into being by chance does not believe that there is a God. No one is so foolish as to deny that all nature, which operates with a certain definite time and order, is subject to the rule and foresight and an orderly arrangement of someone. We see how the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all natural things follow a determined course, which would be impossible if they were merely products of chance. Hence, as is spoken of in the Psalm, he is indeed foolish who does not believe in God: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God" (Ps 13:1).

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."

The obligation to honour our parents rests upon the Natural Law

The Different applications of Father



Rulers and kings are called fathers: "Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it" (4 Kgs 5:13). We call them fathers because their whole care is the good of their people. And we honour them by being subject to them: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers" (Rom 13:1) We should be subject to them not merely through fear, but through love; and not merely because it is reasonable, but because of the dictates of our conscience. Because "there is no power but from God" (Rom 13:7). And so to all such we must render what we owe them: "Tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour" (Rom 13:7). And again: "My son, fear the Lord and the king" (Prov 24:21).

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT: "Thou Shalt Not Kill."

The Sin of Killing

In the divine law which tells us we must love God and our neighbour, it is commanded that we not only do good but also avoid evil. The greatest evil that can be done to one's neighbour is to take his life. This is prohibited in the Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."

THE NINTH & TENTH COMMANDMENT: "Thou shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbour's Goods."

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods." There is this difference between the divine and the human laws that human law judges only deeds and words, whereas the divine law judges also thoughts. The reason is because human laws are made by men who see things only exteriorly, but the divine law is from God, who sees both external things and the very interior of men. "Thou art the God of my heart" (Ps 72:26) And again: "Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (1 Kgs 16:7). Therefore, having considered those Commandments which concern words and deeds, we now treat of the Commandments about thoughts. For with God the intention is taken for the deed, and thus the words, "Thou shalt not covet," mean to include not only the taking by act, but also the intention to take. Therefore, it says: "Thou shalt not even covet thy neighbour's goods."

Catechism of Trent

ARTICLE I: "I BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH"

Why Omnipotence Alone Is Mentioned In The: Creed

Nothing tends more to confirm our faith and animate our hope than a deep conviction that all things are possible to God; for whatever may be afterwards proposed as an object of faith, however great, however wonderful, however raised above the natural order, is easily and without hesitation believed, once the mind has grasped the knowledge of the omnipotence of God. Nay more, the greater the truths which the divine oracles announce, the more willingly does the mind deem them worthy of belief. And should we expect any favour from heaven, we are not discouraged by the greatness of the desired benefit, but are cheered and confirmed by frequently considering that there is nothing which an omnipotent God cannot effect.

Production Of Man

Lastly, He formed man from the slime of the earth, so created and constituted in body as to be immortal and impassible, not, however, by the strength of nature, but by the bounty of God. Man's soul He created to His own image and likeness; gifted him with free will, and tempered all his



motions and appetites so as to subject them, at all times, to the dictates of reason. He then added the admirable gift of original righteousness, and next gave him dominion over all other animals. By referring to the sacred history of Genesis the pastor will easily make himself familiar with these things for the instruction of the faithful.

God Preserves, Rules And Moves All Created Things

We are not, however, to understand that God is in such wise the Creator and Maker of all things that His works, when once created and finished, could thereafter continue to exist unsupported by His omnipotence. For as all things derive existence from the Creator's supreme power, wisdom, and goodness, so unless preserved continually by His Providence, and by the same power which produced them, they would instantly return into their nothingness. This the Scriptures declare when they say: How could anything endure if thou wouldst not? or be preserved, if not called by thee?

Not only does God protect and govern all things by His Providence, but He also by an internal power impels to motion and action whatever moves and acts, and this in such a manner that, although He excludes not, He yet precedes the agency of secondary causes. For His invisible influence extends to all things, and, as the Wise Man says, reaches from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly. This is the reason why the Apostle, announcing to the Athenians the God whom, not knowing, they adored, said: He is not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and are.

ARTICLE III: "WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY"

Christ Compared to Adam" Mary to Eve

The Apostle sometimes calls Jesus Christ the second Adam, and compares Him to the first Adam; for as in the first all men die, so in the second all are made alive: and as in the natural order Adam was the father of the human race, so in the supernatural order Christ is the author of grace and of glory.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

Greatness Of This Power

This power far excels that given under the law of nature to certain ones who had charge of sacred things. The period previous to the written law must have had its priesthood and its spiritual power, since it is certain that it had its law; for these two, as the Apostle testifies, are so closely connected that if the priesthood is transferred, the law must necessarily be transferred also. Guided, therefore, by a natural instinct, men recognised that God is to be worshipped; and hence it follows that in every nation some, whose power might in a certain sense be called spiritual, were given the care of sacred things and of divine worship.

THIRD COMMANDMENT: *"Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day.*

How The Third Differs From The Other Commandments



With regard to the exposition of this Commandment, the faithful are carefully to be taught how it agrees with, and how it differs from the others, in order that they may understand why we observe and keep holy not Saturday but Sunday.

The point of difference is evident. The other Commandments of the Decalogue are precepts of the natural law, obligatory at all times and unalterable. Hence, after the abrogation of the Law of Moses, all the Commandments contained in the two tables are observed by Christians, not indeed because their observance is commanded by Moses, but because they are in conformity with nature which dictates obedience to them.

This Commandment about the observance of the Sabbath, on the other hand, considered as to the time appointed for its fulfilment, is not fixed and unalterable, but susceptible of change, and belongs not to the moral, but the ceremonial law. Neither is it a principle of the natural law; we are not instructed by nature to give external worship to God on that day, rather than on any other. And in fact the Sabbath was kept holy only from the time of the liberation of the people of Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh. The observance of the Sabbath was to be abrogated at the same time as the other Hebrew rites and ceremonies, that is, at the death of Christ. Having been, as it were, images which foreshadowed the light and the truth, these ceremonies were to disappear at the coming of that light and truth, which is Jesus Christ. Hence St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, when reproving the observers of the Mosaic rites, says: You observe days and months and times and years; I am afraid of you lest perhaps I have laboured in vain amongst you. And he writes to the same effect to the Colossians.

How The Third Is Like The Other Commandments

This Commandment is like the others, not in so far as it is a precept of the ceremonial law, but only as it is a natural and moral precept. The worship of God and the practice of religion, which it comprises, have the natural law for their basis. Nature prompts us to give some time to the worship of God. This is demonstrated by the fact that we find among all nations public festivals consecrated to the solemnities of religion and divine worship. As nature requires some time to be given to necessary functions of the body, to sleep, repose and the like, so she also requires that some time be devoted to the mind, to refresh itself by the contemplation of God. Hence, since some time should be devoted to the worship of the Deity and to the practice of religion, this (Commandment) doubtless forms part of the moral law.

PART III: THE DECALOGUE

Importance Of Instruction On The Commandments

St. Augustine in his writings remarks that the Decalogue is the summary and epitome of all laws: Although the Lord had spoken many things, He gave to Moses only two stone tablets, called "tables of testimony," to be placed in the Ark. For if carefully examined and well understood, whatever else is commanded by God will be found to depend on the Ten Commandments which were engraved on those two tables, just as these Ten Commandments, in turn, are reducible to two, the love of God and of our neighbour, on which "depend the whole law and the prophets."

The Decalogue is a summary of the whole Law.

God Is The Giver Of The Commandments



Now among all the motives which induce men to obey this law the strongest is that God is its author. True, it is said to have been delivered by angels, but no one can doubt that its author is God. This is most clear not only from the words of the Legislator Himself.

Who is not conscious that a law is inscribed on his heart by God, teaching him to distinguish good from evil, vice from virtue, justice from injustice? The force and import of this unwritten law do not conflict with that which is written. Who is there, then, who will dare to deny that God is the author of the written, as He is of the unwritten law?

But, lest the people, aware of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law, may imagine that the precepts of the Decalogue are no longer obligatory, it should be taught that when God gave the Law to Moses, He did not so much establish a new code, as render more luminous that divine light by which the depraved morals and long continued perversity of man had at that time almost obscured. It is most certain that we are not bound to obey the Commandments because they were delivered by Moses, but because they are implanted in the hearts of all, and have been explained and confirmed by Christ our Lord.



Baltimore Catechism:

Q. 1266. If parents or superiors neglect their duty or abuse their authority in any particular, should we follow their direction and example in that particular?

A. If parents or superiors neglect their duty or abuse their authority in any particular we should not follow their direction or example in that particular, but follow the dictates of our conscience in the performance of our duty.



Lesson:



1500 AD Europe

When Jesus gave His disciples the command to go out and teach all nations (cf. Mt 28:19), He did not mention that He will have a unique relationship with each person and that each person would learn about and develop their own unique relationship with Him. Teaching the world about Him would be a complex, at times frustrating, and for a few, deadly enterprise. The audience is human but there is one teaching delivered by the Lord to His Apostles that was handed on to their followers. This one teaching was delivered from the five centers of catechesis: Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Ephesus. They formulated a teaching method based on the instruction of Saint Paul that there was a standard form of teaching (*typon didaches*) (cf. Rom 6:17) and a singular content (*paratheke*) (cf. 1 Tim 6:20). This was the beginning of the ever-on-going effort of the followers of the disciples and the successors to teach about Him. As is always the case; the Holy Ghost plays an important role in the inspiration of the Church Fathers and ensuring that what they present is the Truth (cf. Jn 16:13).

During the time of the Roman persecution the exchange of information was limited, so the teaching about Jesus remained focused on the writings of the Apostles and their immediate successors, the early Fathers or *Patristics*. The declaration of the Edict of Milan allowed Christians to freely move about the empire and gather together to engage in dialogue about the Faith.

This movement of gatherings and exchange of ideas lead to the growth of universities as centers of learning. The era of *Scholasticism* gave Christian thinkers and teachers a chance to speculate about the things of God and Christ advancing in understanding and practice of theology, philosophy, and other disciplines, all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, it also led to the idea that the universities were a place for the elite, both clergy and laity.



Just as the pendulum of history and learning swung to ideals of Scholasticism that their dialogues and ideas can be brought into everyday life did not meet the needs of the people who were rooted in the physical and secular world. The *Renaissance* issued in the response to Scholasticism a return to classical training of ancient Greece, unfortunately, rooted in paganism and philosophy (study of man).

The primary movement within the Renaissance was Humanism. This led to a very temporal view of the Church and her place in the world. Far too many of the hierarchy adopted the idea that the church was more of a secular organization than a part of the Kingdom of God. That idea was Humanism which the Catholic Encyclopedia defines:

Humanism is the name given to the intellectual, literary, and scientific movement of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, a movement which aimed at basing every branch of learning on the literature and culture of classical antiquity. Believing that a classical training alone could form a perfect man, the Humanists so called themselves in opposition to the Scholastics, and adopted the term *humaniora* (the humanities) as signifying the scholarship of the ancients. Though the interval between the classical period and their own days was regarded by the Humanists as barbarous and destructive alike of art and science, Humanism (like every other historical phenomenon) was connected with the past. The use of Latin in the Liturgy of the Church had already prepared Europe for the humanistic movement. In the Middle Ages, however, classical literature was regarded merely as a means of education; it was known through secondary sources only, and the Church saw in the worldly conception of life that had prevailed among the ancients an allurements to sin. On the rise of secularism these views underwent a change, especially in Italy. In that country the body politic had grown powerful, the cities had amassed great wealth, and civic liberty was widespread. Worldly pleasure became a strong factor in life and freer play was given to sensory impulse. The transcendental, unworldly concept of life, which had till then been dominant, now came into conflict with a mundane, human, and naturalistic view, which centered on nature and man. These new ideas found their prototypes in antiquity, whose writers cherished and extolled the enjoyment of life, the claims of individuality, literary art and fame, the beauty of nature. Not only ancient Roman culture but also the hitherto neglected Greek culture was taken up by the movement. The new spirit broke away from theology and Church. The principle of free, scientific inquiry gained ground. It was quite natural that the value of the new ideal should be exaggerated while the medieval national culture was undervalued.

As the fifteenth century gave way to the sixteenth two events took place that would be intertwined as an ongoing integral part of world history.

The first was the 1492 discovery of the new world by Christopher Columbus. The second was the Martin Luther's 95 Theses against the Catholic Church and the beginning of the Protestant Revolt. The attack against the Church eventually became a revolt against the state that led many to travel across the Atlantic Ocean seeking freedom, religious and otherwise. The freedom the pilgrims enjoyed was not to be diminished by the crown. They successfully established a new country producing a new system of government based on sound biblical principles, some of which are very Catholic.



The New World 1500 AD

The New World

Upon his return home after his 1492 discovery of the new world, many of Christopher Columbus' country men also crossed the Atlantic, including missionaries. Though there were struggles there were also successes, as a diocese was established in Mexico City (1530).

In December of 1531 the Blessed Mother appeared to an Aztec convert, Juan Diego. Her apparition was verified by the miracle of roses that Juan Diego collected in his tilma were presented to the bishop, the image of Our lady of Guadalupe appeared. Millions of Aztec Indians were converted over the following decade and a potential bloody revolt of the Aztecs against their Spanish conquerors was prevented.

Since the very founding of the New World, The Holy Trinity and the Blessed Mother have had a special interest in the well-being of what is now known as the Americas.

The Swiss Guard Is Formed

The Swiss Guards are a unit of the Swiss Army that is responsible for providing security for the Pope and the Vatican City State. They were founded in 1506 by Pope Julius II, who hired a group of Swiss soldiers to protect him and the Vatican. The Swiss Guards are known for their distinctive uniform, which features a blue, red, and yellow striped uniform with a black beret and a prominent white ruff collar. The uniform is based on the traditional clothing worn by Swiss mercenaries during the Renaissance era.

Candidates must also have completed their basic military training in the Swiss Army and have a good record of service. They must be unmarried and commit to remaining celibate during their



service as Swiss Guards. Additionally, candidates must undergo a rigorous selection process that includes physical and psychological evaluations, as well as an interview with the Commander of the Swiss Guard. Only a small percentage of applicants are accepted into the Swiss Guard each year.

In May 1527, the Swiss Guards were put to their greatest test with the Sack of Rome, which was combined assault of various European nations, including German and Spanish troops, who attacked and overran the city of Rome. The troops were under the command of Emperor Charles V, who was fighting against the Papal States, led by Pope Clement VII. The Pope had sided with Charles' enemy, the French, in the ongoing political conflict. The attack lasted from May 6 – May 14th.

During the attack, the Swiss Guards, who were tasked with protecting the Pope, put up a fierce defense. However, they were vastly outnumbered and outgunned, and many of them were killed or captured. It is estimated that around 147 Swiss Guards died during the Sack of Rome. It remains the largest loss of life by Swiss Guards to date. In honor of their sacrifice, new Swiss Guards are sworn in each year on May 6th, the anniversary of the attack.

The Reformation

The Poor Man Movement exposed a weakness in the Church on earth - primarily that those in authority had an obligation to conduct themselves as examples of Christian living. Due the lavish lifestyle of many bishops made it difficult to counter the claims of the leaders of the Movement as they lived lives in considerable contrast to what they believed Scripture required.

As for the Church in the years following the Inquisition, her doctrine remained true and pure; saintly lives were yet frequent in all parts of Europe, and the numerous beneficial medieval institutions of the Church continued their course uninterrupted. Ecclesiastical and religious life exhibited in many places vigor and variety; works of education and charity abounded; religious art in all its forms had a living force; domestic missionaries were many and influential; pious and edifying literature was common and appreciated.

Despite all the good works and human advancement that took place because of the Church there remained the battle for many of the hierarchy to be in the world but not of the world. The shepherding of souls came second to their desire for worldliness. As their secular “success” increased with wealth and power, their ecclesial status in the eyes of the laity decreased.

The word of the Lord that had been declared to Ezekiel seems quite appropriate to the Protestants:

“Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves: should not the hocks be fed by the shepherds? You ate the milk, and you clothed yourselves with the wool, and you killed that which was fat: but my flock you did not feed. The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed, that which was broken you have not bound up, and that which was driven away you have not brought again, neither have you sought that which was lost: but you ruled over them with rigour, and with a high hand. And my sheep were scattered, because there was no shepherd: and they became the prey of all the beasts of the field, and were scattered. My sheep have wandered in every mountain, and in every high hill: and my flocks were scattered upon the face of the earth, and there was none that sought them, there was none, I say, that sought them” (Ezek 34:2-6).



At times the best way for a problem to be solved is for the emergence of a crisis. This may well have been one of those times for the Church. God's chosen instrument to initiate a crisis that would lead to reform in the Church was an Augustinian monk, Martin Luther.

At eighteen years of age, Martin Luther entered the University of Erfurt and took the various degrees in an unusually brief time. His father, whose fortunes had in the meantime improved, wished him to study law; but his fond hope of one day seeing his talented son a famous lawyer, was frustrated. Martin, who was harassed with constant fear for his soul's salvation, suddenly resolved to leave the world and become a monk.

In the convent, Luther did not find the peace of soul and the assurance of salvation which he had come to seek. He fasted and scourged himself, practiced all kinds of mortification, and made frequent general confessions. All to no purpose. He advanced to the priesthood in 1507, received the degree of Doctor of Theology in 1512, and in the same year was sent by his superior to teach philosophy and Sacred Scripture at the newly founded University of Wittenberg. He plunged headlong into his duties; but no amount of work could allay the tumult of his morbid conscience. In 1510 he was dispatched to Rome on some business connected with his Order. While there he made a general confession, hoping it would bring him peace. Just the contrary happened: he was more discontented than ever with the state of his soul. All his efforts to attain holiness seemed to him of no avail. His fear of hell and eternal damnation almost drove him to distraction. The prescriptions of the Rule became an intolerable burden to him. He fought hopelessly against the temptations that assailed him. Tiring at last of this constant warfare, he persuaded himself that good works, since they had failed to give him the desired inward peace, were useless for salvation; that faith alone justified before God; that God's pardon could be won only by trusting to His promises. This false view of justification led to another equally false: that man has become, in consequence of Original Sin, incapable of willing or doing anything good: all his acts are sins; he became a rotten tree by Original Sin and cannot bear good fruit. These doctrines, which he believed he had found in the Epistles of St. Paul, and which became the fundamental dogmas of the New Gospel, were publicly taught by Luther in his lectures at Wittenberg as early as 1516, if not earlier. In 1517 an occasion presented itself of giving them still greater publicity.

Pope Julius II (d. 1513), anxious to secure funds for the building of St. Peter's, had proclaimed a Plenary Indulgence throughout Europe which all could gain who confessed their sins, received Holy Communion, and contributed according to their means towards the erection of St. Peter's. Luther, who had long since thrown indulgences along with all other good works overboard, nailed his famous Ninety-five Theses, most of which were directed against indulgences, on the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg (Nov. 1, 1517), where everyone could see and read them. He offered to defend them against all comers. The Theses were drawn up very skillfully and, in a style, likely to deceive the unwary. Many of them were quite orthodox, while not a few were clearly opposed to the teachings of the Church on Indulgences and Purgatory. Unfortunately, the Church hierarchy was slow to react to the stirring rebellion. When the movement initiated by Luther was seriously addressed the damage had been done.

The publication of the Theses aroused great commotion in Germany. Everyone wanted to read them. In less than a fortnight they were known throughout the country. Within a month they had been heard of all over western and southern Europe. All who were dissatisfied with the Papacy, especially many humanists, hastened to assure Luther of their approval. Tetzl himself, Professor Eck of Ingolstadt, and other Catholic theologians published very learned rejoinders; but while the defenders of the faith were wasting their time preparing erudite dissertations which only a few would read, Luther was employing his extraordinary powers as a popular orator and writer to win support. He succeeded beyond his expectations. In a short time, he had secured an enormous



following, most of whom, however, regarded him merely as a reformer anxious to put an end to abuses in the Church. The Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony and Luther's own Provincial Staupitz openly sided with him. This increased Luther's self-confidence.

A meeting was arranged between the Papal Legate, Cardinal Cajetan, and Luther at Augsburg in the autumn of 1518. The interview produced little effect. Luther refused to admit that the merits of Christ and of the saints constitute the treasury out of which the Church takes her indulgences, and insisted that the sacraments work merely in proportion to the faith with which they are received. He promised, however, to be silent if his opponents also remained silent. Before leaving Augsburg, Luther published two appeals—one from the Pope ill-informed to the Pope well-informed, and another to a General Council. The next year, however, he was induced by the Papal Chamberlain Charles von Miltitz to write a most respectful letter to the Pope, assuring him of his loyalty and devotion. How sincere these protestations were, may be judged from the fact that three days after he had written to the Pope, he wrote to Spalatin, the chaplain and private secretary of Frederick the Wise: "I am not sure whether the Pope is anti-Christ himself, or only one of his apostles."

Following an attempt to censure Luther he wrote a series of pamphlets—"An Address to the Nobility of the German Nation," "On the Liberty of a Christian Man," "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church of God"—written in a terse and popular style, he exposed the abuses rampant in the Church, but also attacked the divine foundations of her constitution. He declared that the priesthood and the episcopal office must be done away with; that the secular power must have the right to decide also in spiritual matters. This idea was ultimately adopted by the civil leaders who had been struggling with Church hierarchy that would exercise secular authority. They would reject the authority of the Church and declare themselves heads of all aspects of life secular and religious. Unknown to even many protestants, [Luther himself admitted that some of his ideas came from conversations he had with satan himself!](#)

As the Protestant movement gained momentum throughout Europe, there was discontent with the Church growing in England. The Protestant Revolt resulted from the work of the enemy within the Church. Far too many in the hierarchy were more interested in their own aggrandizement than shepherding the people of God. In England, King Henry VIII became the enemy outside the Church.



King Henry VIII of England



Henry VIII was a staunch defender of the Faith. Unfortunately, he came under the influence of the deadly sin of Lust. Though he was married to Catherine of Aragon, he was known to have relations with several other women. One of the women, Anne Boylien, he wanted to marry. He requested a declaration of annulment from Pope Clement VII. The declaration was not granted. Despite the heroic efforts of Sts. Thomas More and John Cardinal Fisher, Henry declared himself the head of the Church in England. Much to the chagrin of the populace, who found themselves separated from the Church. Defiance of the king's order resulted in martyrdom. In 1538, Pope Paul III, excommunicated Henry and released his subjects from their oath of allegiance to him.

As this took place in England, the results of Luther's revolutionary teachings—his denial of free will, his assertion of the complete corruption of human nature by Original Sin, his doctrine of justification by faith alone, his stand on the Scriptures as the sole authority in religious matters, his wild onslaughts on all authority, both ecclesiastical and civil—soon made themselves felt. Tradesmen and day-laborers publicly interpreted the Bible, which had suddenly become intelligible to everyone. Babies would need to be re-baptized since they could not themselves express belief.

He also taught that an interior light is given by God to each one to interpret the Bible; that there is no spiritual or temporal authority; that all things must be possessed in common by all men, who form one large community of brethren enjoying equal rights and exercising conjointly both sacerdotal and royal powers.

Eventually Luther, much to the disgust of his friends, laid aside his religious habit and married the ex-Cistercian nun, Catherine Bora, and urged all monks, nuns, priests, and even the Archbishop of Mainz, to follow his example. After he had thus definitely set himself against the whole Roman position, he began to organize his followers into a new church. He had discarded the original constitution of the Catholic Church and had preached the "universal priesthood" of all the faithful; logically he now turned over to the individual congregations the management of their ecclesiastical affairs and gave the supreme control over all the congregations into the hands of the civil rulers. From now on, freedom of conscience was a privilege enjoyed only by the secular rulers; the subjects had to believe what he believed—*cuius regio, eius religio*. Religion was delivered over to the state. Not the bishops as the successors of the Apostles, but the princes as the absolute masters of their subjects ruled the Church. Before long, nearly every petty principality in central and northern Germany had its own "State Church," with the landgrave, margrave, duke, grand-duke, elector, or prince as its chief bishop—*summus episcopus*. The Church of Christ had lost, in these lands, all its characteristic marks—unity, Catholicity, apostolicity—and, of course, its sanctity also.

Luther lived to see his doctrines accepted by all the German nations of the north. Lutheranism was forced upon Denmark by the tyranny of King Christian III (1534-1559) who saw in the new doctrine a means for increasing his authority and replenishing his exchequer at the expense of the power and the possessions of the Church. All the bishops were cast into prison on one day. Christian then offered them their liberty if they agreed to resign their sacred dignity and promised to abstain from all opposition to his policy. Only one had the courage to resist to the end. All were replaced by superintendents, or Lutheran bishops, who were absolutely dependent on the Crown. This measure was followed by others, whose purpose it was to stamp out every vestige of the old religion: the death penalty was decreed against every priest taken within the realm; Catholics were deprived of all political rights; every Lutheran who embraced the Catholic faith was subject to banishment. Catholicity was practically annihilated, for these penal laws were rigorously carried out and remained in force till 1849.

What began in Germany as a work of the enemy within the Church, transformed into an assault on the Church from outside forces, primarily the civil authorities.

In England, Henry VIII's son, Edward VI disavowed many of his father's edicts bringing in Lutheran and Calvinist professors to teach theology at Oxford and Cambridge. A communion service in English was inserted in the Mass. The Mass was abolished as idolatrous, and a new creed consisting of forty-two articles was drawn up as the official creed of the English Church. The work of pulling down altars, destroying ornaments, pillaging churches, went merrily on. . . Foreign sectaries of every description, Lutherans, Calvinists, Zwinglians, Anabaptists, Waldensians, Arians, swarmed in London. "The common faith of England was submerged in strife. The majority of the people went about their work and endured the changes in religion. There is no evidence that any considerable number of the clergy welcomed the new religion. Generally, they conformed, waiting for the storm to pass."

Edward's decimation of the Faith was restored by his successor, Mary Tudor. Queen Mary brought back the old order. The monks returned and the Mass was said. The anti-Papal legislation was repealed, and many men who had been prominent in promoting the new religion were reconciled to the faith. As the nobles were allowed by Rome to keep the Church lands which they had stolen, they were perfectly willing, if a Tudor ordered it, to vote the reconciliation of England with the Pope. Cardinal Pole was sent into England as Papal Legate to absolve the country from censure and to restore it to communion with Rome.

Unfortunately, she made two devastating mistakes. She made the unprecedented and very damaging mistake of ordering the bishops that were appointed by Edward VI to be burned at the stake for heresy. She also wed Spain's Phillip II. All of England feared that England would come under Spanish rule. These blunders led to her falling out of favor with the people of England and paved the way for Elizabeth I.



Monasteries Dissolved by Henry VIII



In rather swift order, Elizabeth was declared supreme governor of temporal and spiritual matters. The suppression of the Church took place in earnest. Altars were destroyed and the celebration of Mass forbidden. This time the bishops were not so subservient as in the time of Henry VIII. They realized what they had to do with heresy and refused to make any compromise. Of the sixteen Catholic bishops all except one steadfastly refused to submit. Two died in exile, one died in his home, the other twelve were imprisoned until death. They were replaced by invalidly consecrated Calvinistic laymen. Of the Catholic clergy one thousand resigned or were forcibly deprived of their parishes. Many priests conducted the Protestant service and said Mass afterwards for the faithful.

The real era of persecution, however, began in 1581, when Parliament passed an Act making it high treason to return to the old religion, and felony to say or hear Mass, to go to confession, or to harbor a priest. It was in this year that the heroic Jesuit Blessed Edmund Campion was put to death. The total number of men and women, priests, monks, etc., who suffered death in England for the Catholic faith from 1535 to 1681 is over six hundred, several hundred of whom have been beatified.

What took place in Elizabethan England occurred in all of Europe. Civil leaders would declare themselves head of the church in their country, established one of the “reformers” doctrine and practice as the states, in turn, wiped out virtually all vestiges of the Catholic faith.

A very important technology that was instrumental in Luther and the other “reformers” being able to pass on their heresies and discontent was the printing press. Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in mid-fifteenth century. Luther used this to inform the populace about what he saw were problems in the Church. Unfortunately, some were accurate and warranted. Others were specious and could well have been handled in a different way.

This was the perfect storm. The civil leaders were growing more and more discontented with the clergy interfering with their rule. The populace did not know exactly who was in charge and what was expected of them. Far too many priests were unprepared for their duties as the shepherds of souls. It was time for the Church to take a look at herself and make necessary corrections.



St. Charles Borromeo

The Catholic Reformation

Long before the Protestant revolt, all serious-minded Catholic men and women were convinced that the Church needed to be thoroughly reformed. Not the Catholic religion, as the Protestants maintained, but the people who professed that religion, required reformation. "Men must be changed by Religion," as one of the champions of true reform remarked, "not Religion by men." Reformation of the Church in her Head and in her members, this was the first part of the Catholic program of Reform. The spread of error by the religious innovators, who attacked the Divine Constitution of the Church and many of her fundamental doctrines, imposed upon the Catholic leaders the duty of setting forth in unmistakable and authoritative terms the true doctrines of Christianity contained in Scripture and Tradition. There is no better proof for the divine origin and guidance of the Church than the fact that she not only survived the great apostasy of the 16th century but emerged from the conflict rejuvenated and prepared to meet new ones.

In Rome, priests and laymen founded the "Oratory of Divine Love." Their purpose was to labor for their own sanctification and that of their friends and acquaintances. They held meetings in a little church and gave themselves up to works of charity. The guiding spirit of this pious company was St. Cajetan of Tiene (1480-1547). Filled with the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, he wrote: "I see Christ poor and myself rich; I see Him despised and myself honored; I want to draw a step nearer



to Him and have therefore resolved to rid myself of all that I still possess." In 1523 Cajetan founded the Congregation of Regular Clerks, known as Theatines, because John Peter Carafa, bishop of Theate and later Pope Paul IV, was its first Superior-General. The new Order set itself the task of recalling the clergy to an edifying life and the laity to the practice of virtue. Despite its severe rule, it developed rapidly and was a powerful agency for true reform in Italy and in every country of Europe.

Spain's rise to world-power was of paramount importance for the history of the Church at this crucial time. If the Protestant revolt in Germany was brought to a halt, this was due in the first place to the King of Spain, who as Charles V succeeded his grandfather Maximilian I to the Imperial Crown. Spain was the cradle of the Religious Order which was to become the chief instrument of reform—the Society of Jesus. The colonial policy of Spain (and of her sister-kingdom Portugal) brought the Church face to face with an entirely new problem—the evangelization of the pagans in every quarter of the globe.

The reign of Clement VII marks the passing of the Renaissance. With Pope Paul III (1534-1549) a new era in the history of the Papacy begins. Although his early life had not been beyond reproach, and his pontificate was not free from the blemish of nepotism, Pope Paul III saw the necessity of a prompt and efficacious reform of the Church. He began by reforming the Papal Court. He opened the portals of the Sacred College of Cardinals to men of solid learning and unblemished morals, to John Fisher of Rochester, who by his martyr-blood was to give back to the red hat and cassock of the cardinal their deeper meaning. Though his attempt to call a General Council was unsuccessful, he did reform of the Roman Court by blessing and favoring with his protection the newly established Orders of Theatines, Capuchins, Barnabites, Ursulines, and Jesuits, he helped to prepare the men and women who were to form the shock-troops of the Church's spiritual army.

Of the many new religious congregations founded in the time of the Church's direst need, the most illustrious was the Society of Jesus. By the "Spiritual Exercises" of its founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Church was enriched with a new and most excellent method for the guidance of souls. In the field of modern education, the sons of Ignatius were pioneers par excellence, and in the propagation of the faith they blazed a trail which missionaries have followed ever since.

During the closing years of the 15th century daring European sailors had discovered and explored vast countries in the South, the East, and the West. The Portuguese, who had sailed south along the western coast of Africa, doubled the Cape of Good Hope in 1487 and, ten years later, under Vasco da Gama, reached India. The Spaniards, under Christopher Columbus, sailing west, had already touched the portals of the New World. A new task thus confronted the Church: the evangelization of the heathen inhabitants of the newly discovered Continents. In America and Africa, it was mainly primitive peoples that had to be Christianized and civilized; in East Asia the Gospel had to be brought to nations that had already reached a high level of culture.

Jesus' parting words to His disciples were, "Go forth to teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). This is exactly what the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits did; they went to the newly discovered, but not yet conquered, territories of the East and the New World. The East had already developed sophisticated societies and cultures with their own established religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto which made the work of the missionaries more complicated. They were successful in their efforts as Japan had nearly 200,000 Christians when a 1587 prescription was declared by a Buddhist mink to eradicate them. The shoguns carried this out for decades beginning in 1597 at Nagasaki. The missionaries



had done their work well, for in 1865 the Christians of Japan let themselves known to a priest in Nagasaki. The Faith was kept alive via verbal instruction, baptism and matrimony.

Tertullian's declaration that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church (Apologeticus, L. 13) was proven true again as the Faith grew in the East and the Americas. Missionaries were very aware of the dangers they would face, and that torture and martyrdom could well be awaiting them. And yet they persisted for the True Faith and never wavered in dogma but persisted in confronting the sinister errors of Protestantism while saving pagan souls.



The Council of Trent

At the beginning of the Council (1542-52, 1563) the question was warmly debated whether the reform of the Church should be taken in hand first, as the Emperor Charles V desired, in order to win over the Protestants, or whether the dogmatic decrees should take precedence. It was finally decided that the work of defining the Faith and of reforming discipline should proceed side by side. In the dogmatic decrees the Catholic faith is usually first stated in a positive form called *Capitula* (chapters), and then the contrary errors are condemned in brief and precise terms (*canones*, canons). The *Capitula* and the *Canons* are of equal authority; both are definitions of faith.

Against the Protestants the Council declared that Scripture and Tradition are the two sources of Divine Revelation, that all the books of the Old and the New Testament are equally inspired because they have God for their author, and that the Scriptures, in matters pertaining to faith and morals, cannot be interpreted against the authoritative interpretations of the Church or against the unanimous consent of the Fathers. The Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate, is declared to be the only authentic Latin version, and the one to be used in public in the Western Church. The other dogmatic definitions concern Original Sin, Justification, the Sacraments in general and each Sacrament in particular, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Purgatory, the Invocation and Veneration of the Saints, the Relics of the Saints, Sacred Images, and Indulgences.



The Reform Decrees embrace a large part of Christian life and still form the basis of ecclesiastical discipline in the Latin Church. Some regard the laity exclusively. Thus, the indissolubility of the marriage bond is insisted upon, the matrimonial impediments are specified and classified, clandestine marriages are declared invalid, dueling is forbidden under pain of excommunication. More important, still, is the legislation affecting the clergy. The College of Cardinals should be representative of the whole Church; bishops should be obliged to live in their own dioceses, to preach to their flocks, and to make periodical visitations of their parishes; diocesan and provincial synods should be held at regular intervals; priests in charge of parishes should instruct their people in Christian Doctrine; seminaries should be established in each diocese for the education of the clergy; no bishops or priests or other clerics should be allowed to hold more than one benefice. The medieval practice of Papal Indulgence preachers (pardoners, as they were called in England) is abolished. Strict laws regulate the admission of new members into a Religious Order, as well as the choice of Superiors and the observance of the vows.

The decrees of the Council of Trent do not contain the complete Catholic faith, but only that portion of it which it was thought necessary to define in answer to the heretical attacks of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the other so-called Reformers. The Council, however, ordered the preparation of a Catechism containing an exposition of Christian Doctrine, designed especially for the use of parish priests and other teachers of religion. It is usually called the Catechism of the Council of Trent, or the Roman Catechism, and was first published in 1566 by Pope Pius V. It brought about a much-needed uniformity in the teaching of Religion.¹

The Inquisition Explained

Of all the calumnies hurled against the Catholic Faith by those opposed to Her, allegations regarding the Inquisition are some of the most notorious. Yet history shows them, like the lies regarding the Crusades, to be false. It is common to claim that during the Inquisition, individuals accused of heresy were put on trial, and if found guilty, they could face punishments ranging from fines and public penance to imprisonment, torture, or extreme execution.

The Spanish Inquisition, which is perhaps the most well-known and mentioned was established in the late 15th century and allegedly targeted Jews, Muslims, and conversos (Jews who had converted to Christianity) who were suspected of secretly practicing their former religions. Anti-Catholic allegations alleged that thousands of people (if not more) were executed during this period and many more faced expulsion or imprisonment.

What Was the Inquisition Really? The Inquisition had its roots in the early 13th century, with the establishment of the Papal Inquisition by Pope Gregory IX in 1231. The Inquisition marked the formalization of an organized effort to combat heresy within the Church. The Papal Inquisition aimed to identify and suppress heretical movements, particularly those associated with the Cathars and other dissenting groups in Southern France, whose ideas were infecting many. For instance, the Cathars believed suicide was good since it freed man's soul from his body! They also believed there were two gods: A good one who presided over the spiritual world, and an evil one who ruled the physical world. Cathars viewed sex within marriage and reproduction as evil, though they supported fornication if done in secret! Such insidious ideas had to be suppressed.

Over time, the Inquisition expanded and evolved, leading to the establishment of various regional inquisitions. Each Inquisition had its own specific jurisdiction, procedures, and methods of

¹ *The Catholic Reaction and Revival: Council of Trent*



operation, which resulted in differences in their histories and practices. The most well-known among them is the Spanish Inquisition, which was established by the saintly rulers Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile in 1478.

There was also the separate Roman Inquisition which began in 1542. St. Robert Bellarmine is most well-known for his role as examiner of bishops and consultor of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition in 1597 where he was strongly concerned with discipline among the bishops. Created a Cardinal-priest on March 3, 1598, by Pope Clement VIII, he continued to live an austere life in Rome, giving most of his money to the poor. At one point he used the tapestries in his living quarters to clothe the poor, saying that “the walls won’t catch cold.” Not what you would expect from someone leading an Inquisition!

The Inquisition continued to exist in some form until the 19th century, though its power and influence gradually declined over time. In 1908, Pope St. Pius X officially abolished the Holy Office of the Inquisition, replacing it with the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, which later became the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1965. Recently in 2022, it was renamed the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.



Cristopher Columbus Prepares To Set Sail for the Americas

The New World

The discovery of the Americas resulted in many European countries sending explorers and soldiers to settle a part of the new land. Among this were Catholic Missionaries who set upon the task of “teaching nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Mt 28:19).



Please read the following account of [The Catholic Church in the United States of America](#)



The Influence of the Church Diminishes

The most important conversation in all of history took place on Mount Horeb when Moses said to God: *“Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The God of your fathers hath sent me to you.’ If they should say to me: ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”* God said to Moses: *“I AM WHO AM.”* He said: *“Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS, hath sent me to you”* (Ex 3:13-14).

God reveals to Moses and to us who He is and what He is.

The second most important conversation took place in the Garden: The Serpent said to the woman: *“Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise?”* And the woman answered him, saying: *“Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.”* And the Serpent said to the woman: *“No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.”* And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves aprons (Gen 3:1-7).

Satan reveals his strategy to turn us away from God: persistence, to tell part of the truth that suits his purpose, to use objects of the world that are appealing, and to go after those who appear to be weak to elicit what he wants.



Ancient philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato, came to understand that there was something out there greater than the human person, a First Cause, that initiated everything. Therefore, there was a reason for existence, they just were not able to discern its identity. Jesus brought the First Cause into reality and gave it a name and purpose. Catholic Philosophers such as Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas used this knowledge of the final end (heaven) as they developed their own philosophy.

When Martin Luther successfully infected the world with his idea of separating the interpretation of Scripture from the Church to the individual, it provided the catalyst for others to remove God or a higher power from philosophy. This initiated the thinking that became the underlying foundations of Modern Philosophy.

Two of the pioneers in Modern philosophy were Descartes and Bacon.

René Descartes (1596–1650) In his natural philosophy, he differed from the schools on two major points: first, he rejected the splitting of corporeal substance into matter and form; second, he rejected any appeal to final ends, divine or natural, in explaining natural phenomena. In his theology, he insists on the absolute freedom of God's act of creation. Refusing to accept the authority of previous philosophers, Descartes frequently set his views apart from the philosophers who preceded him.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) Bacon has been called the father of empiricism. He argued for the possibility of scientific knowledge based only upon inductive reasoning and careful observation of events in nature. He believed that science could be achieved by the use of a skeptical and methodical approach whereby scientists aim to avoid misleading themselves. Although his most specific proposals about such a method, the Baconian method, did not have long-lasting influence, the general idea of the importance and possibility of a skeptical methodology makes Bacon one of the later founders of the scientific method. His portion of the method based in skepticism was a new rhetorical and theoretical framework for science, whose practical details are still central to debates on science and methodology. He is famous for his role in the scientific revolution, begun during the Middle Ages, promoting scientific experimentation as a way of glorifying God and fulfilling scripture. He was renowned as a politician in Elizabethan England, as he held the office of Lord Chancellor.

In the Early Modern era the Church appeared to be getting smaller due to the diminishing of territory and numbers. However, her influence and status begin to grow as she is quickly becoming the only voice speaking and declaring that everything begins with God and exactly who He is and who we are made in His image and likeness. The ever-growing number of Protestant sects in one form or another follow Luther's blueprint and appeal to the human mind and human action to increase their numbers. The overriding attraction is that God will readily accept what we do as long as one believes in Him. And history continues to show increasing attacks on the Order established by God in the subsequent centuries...



Activity:



Pope Gregory XIII

The Early Modern Era saw significant changes to the lives of many Catholics in the form of fasting and abstinence. These practices, which went back for centuries, were weakened due to the reluctance of modern man to do penance. [Read about this forgotten history in the two-part article at A Catholic Life.](#)



Closing Prayer:



Let us pray for the conversion of all separated from the Church established by Christ using some of the prayers taken from the traditional Good Friday Liturgy:

Almighty and eternal God, who in Christ hast revealed Thy glory to all nations, preserve the works of Thy mercy, that Thy church, spread over all the world, may persevere with a steadfast faith in the confession of Thy name. Through the same our Lord. Amen

O almighty and eternal God, who savest all, and willest not that anyone should perish; look down on the souls of those deceived by wiles of the devil; that the evil of heresy being removed from their hearts the erring may repent and return to the unity of Thy truth. Through our Lord. R. Amen.