

# Jesuits

Ignatius of Loyola grew up in his father's castle in Loyola, Spain. The great turning point in his life came in 1521 when he was injured in a war. While recovering, he thought about his past sins and about the life of Jesus. His daily devotions, he believed, cleansed his soul. In 1522, Ignatius began writing a book called *Spiritual Exercises* that laid out a day-by-day plan of meditation, prayer, and study. In it, he compared spiritual and physical exercise. For the next 18 years, Ignatius gathered followers. In 1540, the pope created a religious order for his followers called the Society of Jesus. Members were called Jesuits (JEHZH•u•ihts). The Jesuits focused on three activities.

- First, they founded superb schools throughout Europe. Jesuit teachers were well-trained in both classical studies and theology.
- The Jesuits' second mission was to convert non-Christians to Catholicism. So, they sent out missionaries around the world.
- Their third goal was to stop the spread of Protestantism. The zeal of the Jesuits overcame the drift toward Protestantism in Poland and southern Germany.

With such effective organizations, the Catholic Church began to regain ground against Protestantism.

(Source: World History: Patterns of Interaction, Roger B. Beck, Linda Black et al., McDougal Littell, adapted)

# Council of Trent

Recognizing the need to redefine the doctrines of the Catholic faith, Pope Paul III convened the **Council of Trent** in 1545. It met on and off until 1563. Its delegates examined the criticisms made by Protestants about Catholic practices. In doing so, they clarified Catholic teaching on important points.

- The Church's interpretation of the Bible was final. Any Christian who substituted his or her own interpretation was a heretic.
- Christians needed faith and good works for salvation. They were not saved by faith alone, as Luther argued.
- The Bible and Church tradition were equally powerful authorities for guiding Christian life.
- Indulgences were valid expressions of faith. But the false selling of indulgences was banned.

However, even though they did not accept Protestant beliefs, the Church did accept some of the Protestant criticisms. The Council of Trent recognized that abuses had weakened the Church over the past century, so they began a series of reforms to deal with the corruption of the clergy. The training of priests was regulated, financial abuse was curbed, and the false selling of indulgences was banned.

The decisions of the Council of Trent meant that there would be no compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. The council's bold action was a great boost to Catholicism. Austria, Poland, and other parts of Europe returned to the Catholic Church. In addition, Catholics everywhere felt renewed energy and confidence.

(Source: World History: Human Legacy, Susan Elizabeth Ramírez et al., Holt, adapted)

# Roman Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books

To counter the Reformation, the church established a church court, called the Roman Inquisition, in 1542 to fight Protestantism, which they saw as heresy (beliefs that went against Catholic teachings). Later popes increased the Inquisition's power. They tried people who were accused of being Protestants, as well as those accused of practicing witchcraft or of breaking church law. In 1559, Pope Paul IV had officials create a list of books considered dangerous to the Catholic faith. This list was known as the Index of Forbidden Books. The church warned the people not to read books on the lists or they would lose their souls. Catholic bishops throughout Europe were ordered to gather up the offensive books (including Protestant Bibles) and burn them in bonfires. In Venice alone, followers burned 10,000 books in one day. Anyone found with books that were seen as heretical, including not only Protestant book but also many books of science, might be put on trial in front of the Roman Inquisition. Italian historian Andrea Del Col estimates that, out of 51,000-75,000 cases judged by Inquisition in Italy, around 1,250 resulted in a death sentence. Accounts of torture and executions by the courts damaged the church's image. The Inquisition's actions during the Counter-Reformation are still seen as an abuse of the church's power.

(Source: World History: Human Legacy, Susan Elizabeth Ramírez et al., Holt, adapted)