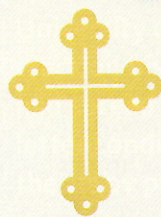


## 3.3

# The Counter Reformation



After the Reformation, the Catholic Church was down but certainly not out.

Millions of faithful followers remained loyal. They continued to recognize the pope as their leader and trusted their priests' interpretation of the Bible. But Church officials knew that to keep their members and bring Protestants back to the fold, they had to stop the spread of Protestantism. To do that, they had to make some changes.

### MAIN IDEA

Reforms and a new religious order established during the Counter Reformation helped strengthen Catholicism.

### REFORM FROM WITHIN

The changes the Catholic Church made were part of a movement called the Catholic Reformation—sometimes also called the **Counter Reformation**. (In this use of the word, *counter* means “against.”) A meeting of Church officials and scholars summoned by the pope in 1545 was a key element of the movement.

The meeting, which came to be known as the **Council of Trent**, met for 26 sessions over 18 years, mostly in the northern Italian

city of Trent. During that time, the council worked to define Catholic beliefs and practices and determine how the Church needed to change. Council members also sought to clarify how Catholicism differed from Protestantism. For example, while Protestants believed that the Bible could be understood directly by individuals, the Church taught that it must be interpreted and understood in light of tradition.

To make sure Catholics didn't stray from their faith, the Church also established a Roman Inquisition. Like the Spanish Inquisition discussed in the previous chapter, the Roman Inquisition used harsh methods, including torture, to force a confession and punish **heresy**, or a denial of Church teachings. Protestants were, of course, considered to be guilty of heresy.

In addition, Church officials created a list of books they objected to. Followers of Catholicism were forbidden to read the books, which included Bibles in the vernacular as well as most anything written by Luther, Calvin, and Erasmus. The books were collected by Church clergy and burned.

On the other hand, the Church also applied gentler methods to broaden its appeal. It built new, larger churches to hold more worshippers. In addition, priests sometimes delivered sermons in the vernacular.

### A NEW RELIGIOUS ORDER

The struggle to revive Catholicism was aided by the development of a new religious order called the Society of Jesus, whose followers were known as **Jesuits** (JEHZH-oo-ihts). A former Spanish knight named Ignatius of Loyola formed the order, and he insisted on strict obedience.

Beginning in 1540, Ignatius commanded his followers as their “Superior General,” and the Jesuits carried out their duties with great discipline. They also took vows of poverty and obedience, promising to fight “for the greater glory of God.”