

History 2P91: Catholic Reform? Or Counter Reform? - Rome Reacts  
End of Lecture  
11 February 2008

**\*\* please note you ARE responsible for this material\*\***

*Implementing Trent: Clerical Discipline and Episcopal Oversight*

In conjunction with these new orders post-tridentine Bishops tended to be resident in their dioceses rather than at courts or at Rome.

This had a grave impact on the state of affairs of catholic churches as it placed a shepherd back in the flock.

The austerity of catholic reformers finally reached the point at which morality became an integral aspect of the catholic reform. Like protestant reformers the question of godliness mattered in day to day lives – discipline mattered.

Here we have the full effect of the observant movement – not only did it change how priests and monks lived, when those priests and monks became bishops, it affected the lives of everyday Christians as well.

An early leader in this regard was Cardinal Carlo Borromeo of Milan, who as archbishop instituted reform of his diocese even before the council of trent was concluded.

Like bishops who would follow, Borromeo was a pastor to his flock – and was concerned with not only what they believed as catholics, but what they did.

As Archbishop of Milan from 1565-1584, Borromeo instituted complete reforms of not only the institutions of the church, but sought to reform Milanese society as well. He is held up as the perfect counter-reformation Bishop.

He was resident, he preached and taught, conducted oversight of his parishes and priests, established a seminary for clerical education, ran charities to fund social welfare, and scrutinized candidates for ordination to the priesthood.

He was Trent in action. Although the archdiocese was immense, 3000 priests, 800000 people, 15 dioceses, he was systematic in instituting reforms that ended simony, nepotism, pluralism and absenteeism. In 1572, for instance he set up a scheme for feeding 3000 people during a famine.

His life and work can be cast against the likes of Albrecht of Hohenzollern.

*Spreading the Catholic Message*

The messages of Trent – the end of indulgences and abuses, obedience to the church, the training and education of priests, oversight of educated bishops, social welfare combined with religious education, and the collegiate models of the Jesuits and the Ursulines – were taken across not only Europe but around the globe.

The backdrop to the crisis in Europe over faith was the exploration of not only the new world, where Franciscans and Dominicans had begun to venture, but soon the Jesuits would take up leadership, but also to Asia.

The Jesuit Francis Xavier founded a Jesuit college in Goa, India, while he also made way to Japan.

Missionary work went hand in hand with catholic reform.

In this sense catholic reform was not only a counter-reformation in response to the challenges placed by Luther's issues and Protestantism, it was a reawakening of the institutional church based in Rome.

Its missions therefore were no limited to areas it had lost in Europe – though importantly the same models were used there as elsewhere – education, austerity and charity – they were employed the world over.

The interactions between this new Catholicism and the increasingly well identified and defined camps of Protestants across Europe meant that the battle for control over Christianity was waged not only with the sword, it was also a highly intricate cultural battle.

As we shall see the role these new orders of priests played in reconverting otherwise protestant populations – especially in eastern Europe – was key to the developments of the seventeenth century.