



## Task: Analyze the Catholic Church's response to the Reformation

### Historical Context:

Early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the "Reformation" movement could no longer be ignored by the Catholic Church. The movement started by religious reformers such as Martin Luther and straying rulers such as King Henry VIII had to be addressed by the Church. They had to make changes or their loss of power and influence would continue.

The **Counter Reformation** (or **Catholic Reformation**) had two main objectives: regain its religious *and* political influence. In order to regain religious influence the Church had to convince people it was still a moral authority. The church was not bowing to the complaints of Protestants, but reaffirming their status. They changed their policy on indulgences, they made priests not just preach about a religious lifestyle, but live it themselves.

Two important "influences" in the success of the Counter Reformation was the founding of the **Jesuits** and the **Council of Trent**. A religious leader named Ignatius Loyola started the Jesuits as a group intended to teach about the works of Jesus and the importance of leading a moral life. The Council of Trent was a Church organization created to clarify the Catholic Church's position on religious questions such as indulgences. The Council ran from 1545 to 1563. While clarifying old positions the Council also persecuted and punished those people who they considered "heretics" going against the official doctrines of the church or imposing any sort of threat to the Church.

Document #1 Constitution of the Society of Jesus [Jesuits], 1540.

All the members shall realize that this society is fighting for God under faithful obedience to one most holy lord and the pope. We should each be bound by a peculiar vow that whatever the present Roman Pope, or any future one, may from time to time decree regarding the welfare of souls and the propagation of the faith, we are pledged to obey without evasion or excuse.

Document #2 Ignatius Loyola: Obedience to "Our Holy Mother, the Hierarchical Church" and "Rules for Thinking with the Church" 1540

The following rules should be observed:

1. We must put aside all judgment of our own, and to obey in all things, our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church.
4. We must praise highly religious life, virginity, and contingency
5. We should praise vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and vows to perform other works to help us improve ourselves
10. We should approve and praise the orders, recommendations, and way of acting of our superiors rather than to find fault with them.
13. We must follow this principle: What seems to me white, I will believe black if the Church says so. For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord and His Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls.

### Document #3 Torture Chamber used during the Roman Inquisition



The Big Book of Pain: Torture & Punishment Through History By Daniel Diehl, Mark P. Donnelly

### Document #4 Profession of Faith issued by the Council of Trent, 1545-63

I recognize the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church as the Mother and mistress of all churches; and I vow and swear true obedience to the Roman Pontiff, the successor of blessed Peter, the chief of the Apostles and the representative [vicarious] of Jesus Christ. I accept and profess, without doubting the traditions, definitions and declarations of the sacred Canons and Councils and especially those of the holy Council of Trent.

## Document #5 Official statements from the Council of Trent

In order to maintain control of Christian doctrine, the Catholic Church decrees no one shall presume to interpret Christian doctrine contrary to what has been said by the holy mother Church. It is the church's position to interpret holy Scriptures. Those who break these laws shall be punished with the penalties by law established.

### DECREE CONCERNING INDULGENCES

The power of conferring Indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church. Christians benefit from the use of Indulgences by the Church. The Church condemns with those who either claim Indulgences are useless; or who deny that the Church the power of granting them.

In granting them, however, moderation must be observed; The abuses which have caused Indulgences to be the target of blaspheming heretics must be amended and corrected, and all evil gains for the obtaining thereof, -be wholly abolished.

As for the other abuses which have developed from superstition, ignorance and disrespect, The church commands all bishops to report all abuses of this nature.

Thus the gift of holy Indulgences may be dispensed to all the faithful, piously, holily, and incorruptly by the Catholic Church and the Roman Pope....

Amen.

Document #6 The Tridentine *Index of Books*, 1564

2. The books of those who originated or revived heresies such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Balthasar Friedberg, Schwenkfeld, and others like these are absolutely forbidden. The books of other heretics, moreover, which deal professedly with religion are absolutely condemned.

4. If the Sacred Books are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the vernacular, there will by reason of the boldness of men arise there from more harm than good. Those who read or possess them without permission may not receive forgiveness from their sins until they have handed them over to the authorities. . . . '

7. Books which professedly deal with or teach things lascivious or obscene are absolutely prohibited, since not only the matter of faith but also that of morals, which are usually easily corrupted through the reading of such books, those who possess them are to be severely punished by the bishops. Ancient books written by heathens may by reason of their elegance and quality of style be permitted, but may by no means be read to children.

8. Finally, all the faithful are commanded not to presume to read or possess any books contrary to the prescriptions of these rules or the prohibition of this list. And if anyone should read or possess books by heretics or writings by any author condemned and prohibited by reason of heresy or suspicion of false teaching, he incurs immediately the sentence of excommunication.