

## **Counter Reformation-Causes and Success**

The success of Protestant revolt or Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century clarifies that Roman Catholic Church needed reformation for its survival. The critics of the ecclesiastical abuses of Roman Catholic Church were not confined to Protestants only. There were many persons who demanded religious reforms, yet believed that whatever change was desirable could best be achieved by means of reformation within the Catholic Church. This movement came to termed as counter reformation or Catholic reformation.

Thus, while the religious energy of part of Europe went into the revolutionary creation of Protestant churches and sects, that of another part fashioned a reformation of catholic system. And this Catholic reformation, on its religious side, was brought to a successful issue by means of the improved condition in the papal court, the labors of the great Church council, and the activity new religious sect.

### **Council of Trent:**

The reforming zeal of the individual Popes was stimulated and reinforced by the Council of Trent(1545-1565).The Holy Council of Church was called at Trent in Italy in 1545.From time to time , the council held several sittings between 1545 and 1565.The council of Trent effected great reform in the Church and contributed materially to the preservation of the Catholic faith. The work of the Council was twofold-dogmatic and reformative. Many Catholic Scholars participated in the Council and many important decisions were taken:

- (1). No office of the Church is to be sold in the long run.
- (2).All bishops will have performed their duties with utmost integrity.
- (3). Priests would be trained.
- (4). Latin was retained as official language but Wherever necessary the preaching should be done in native language.
- (5). Priests will have to lead a simple and austere life,
- (6). A list, called index, was prepared of the dangerous and heretical books, which Catholics were prohibited from reading.

With the declaration of reforms, the Trent council interpreted and approved the doctrine of the Catholicism. It was announced that the Pope is entrusted only to the Church. The activities and decisions of the council revived the self-confidence of the church. With the removal of the evils which threw accusation at the church the church revived its old dignity and course of action, that is why the Trent council has an important place in the history of Catholic church

### **Jesuit Order:**

one of important factor for the Catholic revival was the establishment of society of Jesus whose members were commonly known as Jesuits. The society was founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1534 and its constitution was formally approved by Pope six years later. Loyola was a brave Spanish soldier who fought in the army of Emperor Charles v against the French.But while he was in hospital, suffering from wound, he chanced to read a life of

Christ and biographies of several saints, which, he tells us worked a profound change within him. Loyola then dedicated his whole life to the church.

The administration of the Jesuit order founded by him was based on military pattern. Every member of the Jesuit was required to maintain strict discipline and take avow of humility, piety, obedience and devotion of Pope. This institution prepared its followers not only for the pious life but for the safeguard of the Church also. The Jesuits were assigned the most important mission of propagating Christianity abroad. The Jesuit spread Catholic philosophy in china, Japan and America. It disseminated Christianity in Muslim countries in Muslim Countries also.

### **Inquisition:**

It proved to be the most powerful and influential institution that hindered the progress of the Catholicism. It was a special religious court invested with supreme rights. Pope Paul III revived it in 1542 in Rome. This supreme religious court was established to search out the atheist and suppress their activities ruthlessly, to enforce the orders of the Catholic Church forcibly, to trample the revolt of the heretics and to pass orders on the religious appeals referred to by foreign countries. This religious court meted out rigorous punishment to the Protestants. The immediate effects of such measures strengthened the power of Catholic Church. But after sometimes, the Inquisition became the source of disrepute for the Church.

All the above innovations mentioned above rejuvenated Catholic Church to such an extent that it became ready to face the reformatory pressure in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The Rapid Diffusion of Protestantism was due to the economic and political as well as to religious causes. It may be said with equal truth that political and economic causes cooperated with religious developments to maintain the supremacy of Catholic Church in at least half of the Countries over which it had exercised sway in 1500.

In France, a treaty-or concordat- of 1516 between Pope and King had peacefully secured for the French monarch appointment of Bishops and control of the benefices with in his country, powers which German Princes and the English Sovereigns secured by revolutionary change. Moreover, French Protestantism, by its political activities on behalf of effective Check on royal authority, drove King in Catholic arms. The Cause of strong government in France became the cause of the Catholicism, and the latter was bound up with French patriotism to much the same extent as English patriotism became linked with Anglicism.

In Spain and Portugal, the monarchs obtained concessions from the Pope like those accorded the French Sovereigns. They gained a large measure of control over the Catholic church within their countries and found it most valuable ally in forwarding their political policies, Moreover, the centuries-long struggle with Islam had endeared Catholic Christianity alike Spaniards and to the Portuguese and rendered it an integral part of their national life. Spain and Portugal remained strongly Catholic.

Somewhat similar was the case of Austria. Fear of the advancing Moslem Turk, joined with the political exigences of the Hapsburg rulers threw that duchy with most of its dependencies into the hands of the Pope. If the bishop of Rome, by favouring the Hapsburgs, lost England, he at least saved Austria and most of central Europe.

Ireland and Poland (Lithuania)-those extreme out post of Catholic Christendom-in course of time found in the Catholic faith an effectual safeguard of nationality, a useful weapon against aggression or assimilation by powerful neighbors.

**Conclusion:**

Counter reformation was started to rejuvenate the Catholic religion and to recover the lost faith of the people who were follower of this philosophy. Through these self-designed reforms the catholic religion and Roman Catholic Church not only recovered the lost but also through Jesuit order it was able to gain followers in Asia and Africa.