

# The Council of Trent

1545-1563

Protestant reformers had started new churches and preached a theology emphasizing individual (private) interpretation of Scripture (i.e. teaching by Church not needed), that Scripture was the sole source of truth – called *'sola scriptura'*, that works had no value for justification but only faith alone – called *'sola fides'*, that neither priests nor the sacraments were needed.

Pope Paul III Confirms  
the Society of Jesus

*Trent* was also aware of reformers within the Church:

St. Angela Merici



St. Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1540. The order stressed Jesus' work 'in the world'. The Jesuits would become the 'greatest reformers of the church for the next 400 yrs'.

Paul III confirmed the first order of teaching women in 1525. They were founded by Angela Merici and would soon have some 500 religious houses and tens of thousands of professed women.



The *Council of Trent* dealt with the Protestant Reformation:

The Protestant Reformers



Offered 'generous' invitations to Protestants to attend the Council. *'to propose and offer as many points as you choose, and to hold debate without any .. invective'*

The Church's teaching authority



Proclaimed the Nicene-Constantinople Creed as the mainstream of Christian tradition.

Scripture as the sole source of truth



*'...truth and rule are contained in written books and in unwritten traditions which were received from the mouth of Christ himself... handed on from the apostles...'*

Good works of no value to attain salvation



We have a role in *'giving free assent to and cooperating with the grace of God through Jesus Christ..'* *'you see that that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone'* \*

The above are examples only. It has been said that: "*Trent dealt with everything*". Decrees covered both doctrine and conduct. Other examples: Setting standards for seminaries; No purchasing of indulgences; Bishops could no longer receive gifts nor tax parishes for visits, this was part of their job; The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist; Purgatory; The intercession of Saints; etc.

*Trent* was not a simplistic rejection of the Reformation. *'There was a significant group in the Council, whose leaders included Augustinian Friar Girolamo Serpando, Cardinal Giovanni Morone, and the English Cardinal Reginald Pole, who wished for what they regarded as the better elements of the Reformation to be taken into consideration; and their views were well represented in the early decrees of the Council'* \*\*

\* James 2:24

\*\* "Councils of the Church", Norman Tanner (2001)