The Catholic Reformation
Art, piety, and the fight for renewal

Fourth in a four-part series on the Reformation

Caravaggio, *Supper at Emmaus* (1601)
**Did you know?**

WE HAVE THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY TO THANK FOR STARBUCKS, SOME FAMOUS MUSIC, AND YOUR BUSY CALENDAR

**ONE LATTE AND A MONK, PLEASE**
The word *cappuccino* is originally an Italian word deriving from, surprisingly, the order of Capuchin friars. This reforming order arose in the 1520s when Matteo da Bascio (1495–1552), a Franciscan, sought to return his fellow Franciscans to the primitive ideals of St. Francis of Assisi. At first they were suppressed, but in 1528 the pope approved them. Although their official name was the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, everyone called them simply “Capuchins” after their distinctive brown hoods (*cappuccio*). Somehow, the name migrated to the drink—and also to the animal kingdom, where it is the name for a kind of monkey. Now you have a little background for your next coffeeshop order.

**IF IT’S REALLY BAROQUE….**
The Catholic Reformation encouraged the arts, and it helped touch off a flowering of art, music, and architecture that would extend into the seventeenth century and was eventually given the name “Baroque.” The word itself came from the Portuguese *barroco*, or “oddly shaped pearl”—originally an insult leveled by later critics against the dramatic, colorful, and exuberantly over-the-top approach to art used during this period (see “Editor’s note,” p. 4, and “Picturing saints,” pp. 16–18). Protestants were not immune to the trend, as the examples of Bach, Handel, and Rembrandt testify.

**….THEN LET’S FIX IT**
You can thank the Council of Trent for the calendar on your wall. The Julian calendar, established by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C., had gained about three days every four centuries in comparison to where the seasonal equinox should be. Since the church used the equinox to set the date of Easter, Easter had been slowly occurring later and later in the spring. In 1563 the Council of Trent approved a plan to correct these errors. It took over 20 years and a team of expert mathematicians, but in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII released a bull announcing the changeover. According to his instructions, the world should jump directly from Thursday, October 4 to Friday, October 15 (playing havoc with everyone’s birthday in the process).
Actually changing over, though, became a casualty of religious infighting. Most Catholic countries made the change right away, but most Protestant ones did not do so until the eighteenth century. Many Orthodox countries adopted the new calendar for civil matters in the twentieth century, but Orthodoxy still retains a version of the Julian calendar for church matters.

CATHOLIC REFORMERS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

- Out of gratitude and love for God we should desire to be reckoned fools.—Ignatius of Loyola, Sacred Constitutions
- Everyone had “justification,” “faith,” “love” on their tongue, but few understood what those things were, about which they made such a noise and wrote so much.—Gaspardo Contarini, “Letter on Justification”
- Strong in faith and hope, let us direct our voyage, so we may arrive at the port of salvation for the glory of God. . . . Truly we the shepherds are the cause of the evils now oppressing the Church.—Reginald Pole, address written for the Council of Trent
- As for myself I am weak, but with God I am right strong. By his comfort I may do all things, for his love is so steadfast and everlasting.—Marguerite de Navarre, Mirror of a Sinful Soul, in a translation made by the future Queen Elizabeth I in 1545
- Although from Rome to Japan there are 8,000 leagues of journey, yet to those who love God and the salvation of souls all the toils and dangers of the world are pleasures.—Francis Xavier, “Account of Japan”
- Gaze often inwardly upon Jesus Christ crucified, naked, blasphemed, falsely accused, forsaken, overwhelmed with every possible grief and sorrow, and remember that none of your sufferings can ever be compared to His, either in kind or degree, and that you can never suffer anything for Him worthy to be weighed against what He has borne for you.—Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life
- If preaching is your job, then prepare diligently and study well. But be sure that you first preach by the way you live. If you do not, people will notice that you say one thing, but live otherwise.—Charles Borromeo, sermon, 1599
- The school of Christ is the school of charity. On the last day, when the general examination takes place, there will be no question at all on the text of Aristotle, the aphorisms of Hippocrates, or the paragraphs of Justinian. Charity will fill the whole syllabus.—Robert Bellarmine, sermon preached at the University of Louvain

UP, UP, AND AWAY This 17th-c. engraving of Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola imagines him so rapt in contemplation he doesn’t notice he’s levitating.

I WOULD WALK 8,000 LEAGUES This 19th-c. print pictures Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier preaching in Asia.
Costly Love
The Way to True Unity for All the Followers of Jesus

“What does it mean to believe that God is love, and what does it mean for the church of Jesus Christ to live this love? Extravagant love is costly. It was won at the great price of Christ’s sacrifice; thus, its value is beyond words.”

- John Armstrong

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John H. Armstrong is the president and founder of ACT 3 (Advancing the Christian Tradition in the Third Millennium) in Carol Stream, Illinois. An experienced pastor, professor, speaker, and author, John now devotes his life to promoting the unity of the church of Christ through love that is “costly.” Learn more about ACT3 at www.act3online.com.
Letters to the editor
Readers respond to Christian History

OUR READERS SEND GOOD IDEAS
Have you ever considered an issue on groups who have observed the seventh-day Sabbath over the centuries? —John Lemley, Vancouver, WA

I would be interested in a magazine devoted to the Shroud of Turin and Sudarium of Oviedo. —Brian Huffmann, Clayton, NC

We appreciate the ideas that are sent in and add many to our list of potential issues (which is quite long—we have ideas to keep us going for many years!).

AND THEY ALSO SEND US LOVE
Dear CHI Team, please allow me to thank you for the tremendous job you are doing with the Christian History magazine. It is a huge joy every time I open the mailbox and find a new issue. I admire the way you are always able to present a unique topic in an interesting, informing and relevant way. Thank you. —Gernot Elsner, Karlsruhe, Germany

Thank you for issue 119, The Wonder of Creation. This was an issue and a topic not often lately mentioned in Christian circles. It was a great reminder for me of the Glory of God and His peace in nature as well as His power displayed. I enjoyed it immensely. —Nancy Hennis, Jourdanton, TX

I’ve finished reading issue 119, and I appreciate it very much. The issue covers the topic with breadth and clarity. . . . Another book worth including in the Recommended Resources is Belden Lane’s Ravished by Beauty (2011).—Doug Anderson, Orange City, IA

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY
I do enjoy the magazine and share it with others as well. The only thing I don’t enjoy are the pictures from ages past of the horrible things people did to other people. . . . Knowing what those behind us had to endure because of their faith makes me appreciate the freedom we have in this country as a believer in Christ all the more. I especially loved the Creation issue—that was a work of art and so beautifully done. Thank you for this ministry to so many of us. I will try to send you a donation, as you truly deserve it for all the good work you do so faithfully. —Sheryl Carter, Sully, IA

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY
I just got the newest CH magazine, and I’m very disappointed. In this, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation there were many subjects, people, events you could have done, and you chose to do one on Faith in War. —Elliott Pollasch, Cambria, WI

Yes, the 500th anniversary is a huge event, one that we are committed to covering well! You are holding the final issue in our four-part Reformation series, meaning the full set is now available for study. Also find our award-winning documentary, This Changed Everything, and many other Reformation resources in the center pull-out order form and on christianhistoryinstitute.org. Note that 2017 is also the 100th anniversary of the United States’ entry into World War I, hence the world wars issue.

ASBURY ENCOURAGES A MODERN PREACHER
After reading your magazine on Francis Asbury (#114), I ran across a church planter who was discouraged because he didn’t speak well. I assured him with the story of Asbury’s life: here was a man who was not particularly graceful in speech or profoundly intellectual in his teaching, but he loved people. And look at Asbury’s fruit!—Zack Shaffer, Kennesaw, GA

THE FIX IS IN FOR ISSUE 121
Although Woodrow Wilson’s Democratic Party was indeed defeated by Warren G. Harding in 1920 and Harding’s “return to normalcy” slogan focused the campaign on Wilson’s record, the Democratic candidate was James Cox. We also misidentified the Nazi party’s percentage of the vote in 1933 as a majority (it was a plurality, 44%). Finally, Mitsuo Fuchida died in 1976, not 1906. (He would have been a very accomplished four-year-old!)

WHO KEEPS CH IN PRINT? YOU!
A caller recently asked, “Is there a foundation that underwrites Christian History?” This is a question we hear a lot, and it’s no wonder since our donation-based system is so unusual! While we greatly appreciate organizations who’ve helped cosponsor some issues, we do not have a regular financial sponsor. Rather we treasure donations large and small from thousands of faithful readers. Without your support, CH would not be in print today.
Editor’s note

AS THE ART STAFF and I were choosing the (amazing) pictures for this issue, we noticed a theme. Red. Lots of it. Mostly in the vestments of Catholic cardinals, whose stories thread through the following pages. Not every Catholic reformer was a cardinal, and not every cardinal was a reformer. But as we sorted through portraits and altar panels, sculptures and ceiling frescoes, I saw red, in a very good way: a tangible indicator of the vibrancy of the people and events we are unveiling.

I’m deep in the sixteenth century by now, after three issues of our Reformation series, and this issue looks different from all the others. The Protestant Reformation had notably great artists: Lucas Cranach and Hans Holbein come to mind as giving us indelible images of nearly all major Protestant figures of the sixteenth century. But somehow the art for this issue is different: dramatic, rich in color and texture, and unabashedly emotional. Our cover illustration, Caravaggio’s *Supper at Emmaus* (1601), is a perfect example of a vibrant painting in this style with a fresh interpretation of the biblical narrative.

It turns out (as you’ll read shortly) that sixteenth-century Catholic art was this way on purpose. And it also turns out, for me, to be a good metaphor of how the issue struck me. Catholic reform was not merely a response to Luther’s dramatic moment, or to Zwingli’s fiery preaching, or to Calvin’s religious metropolis in Geneva. It was something that began before 1517 and something that went on throughout the sixteenth century, sometimes in response to Protestantism but sometimes almost in isolation from it.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

The vibrant art was only a taste. As I immersed myself in the Catholic Reformation, I felt as though I had stepped through the looking glass. Here was the same century I thought I knew well, but with an entirely different cast of characters, an entirely different set of events, all seeking an answer to the same question that troubled Protestants: *Something has gone wrong here—how can we fix it?*

In service of that question, religious orders reformed and new ones emerged—not least the Jesuits, founded by the high-living soldier, Ignatius of Loyola, who turned from dueling to fighting for Jesus. In service of that question, Loyola’s Jesuits circled the globe. In service of that question, mystics and writers gave to their age, and to our own, timeless devotional classics seeking a life of prayer and union with God.

In service of that question, leaders formed reform commissions, dialogued with Protestants, rooted out heretics, and eventually convened the Council of Trent, which forged a uniquely Catholic way of reform. We tell all those stories here—as well as following the Protestant story to the seventeenth century, when it began to impinge upon the New World as well as the old.

If you, like me, are a Protestant, then reading this issue will require you, as it did me, to think differently about what reform looked like in the sixteenth century, where it happened, how, and why. But if we are to explore the vision expressed on p. 46 in our final round table—of healing these old wounds and cooperating in the Gospel’s spread—then we need to begin by hearing one another’s stories. Let this issue—and all its vibrant red—be a start.

Jennifer Woodruff Tait
Managing editor, *Christian History*
The Catholic Reformation

6 Helping souls
Religious orders of the sixteenth century pursued reform and holiness
Katie M. Benjamin

12 The road not taken
“Evangelical Catholics” worked for reform without leaving their mother church
Edwin Woodruff Tait

16 Picturing saints
What Catholic piety in the sixteenth century looked and felt like
Virginia C. Raguin

19 The persistent council
Catholic reform came to a head at the Council of Trent
Martin J. Lohrmann

23 A renewed and global faith
After Trent, changes were in the air for Catholicism
Thomas Worcester, S.J.

28 Reasons of state
Europe’s last religious war
Roger G. Robins

33 Defender of God’s justice
Arminius questioned some aspects of Reformed faith but never meant to launch a movement
William den Boer

36 Coming to America
The Puritans left a profound, ambiguous legacy
Malcolm Foley

40 Remaking the world
Five men with very different ideas on the reform of sixteenth-century Catholicism
Edwin and Jennifer Woodruff Tait

46 The ecumenical dilemma
Protestants and Catholics discuss the intersection between the two groups from the Reformation until the present day
John W. O’Malley, S.J., Paul Rorem, Ernest Freeman, John Armstrong, Thomas A. Baima

Also:
• Did you know?, inside front cover
• Letters, p. 3 • Editor’s note, p. 4
• Timeline, p. 26 • Recommended reading, p. 50

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Helping souls
HOW RELIGIOUS ORDERS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY PURSUED REFORM AND HOLINESS

Katie M. Benjamin

SEVERELY INJURED BY A CANNONBALL that had wounded both his legs, the young Spanish man knew his military career was over. In spite of the doctors’ dire predictions, he had survived surgery (no easy feat in a pre-anesthesia era) and was now learning to walk again.

This young man, of wealthy birth and luxurious tastes, had once longed only for battle and tales of chivalry, but he now had a growing interest in spiritual things; he was beginning to pray and meditate, desiring to follow God. He would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he decided.

His first stop was the monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat in Catalonia, Spain. There in March 1522, he bowed before an image called the “Black Madonna,” a statue of the Virgin Mary. He left his military cloak and his sword before the image. When he arose it was to become a warrior in a different battle: the battle for the soul.

A DIFFERENT REFORMATION
The young man—Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556)—and the movement he founded in 1540, the Society of Jesus or the Jesuits, need to be seen as part of a larger move of reform sweeping sixteenth-century Catholicism. Many Catholics had been asking throughout the Middle Ages how they might bind themselves to a more pious way of life, as well as criticizing the monks and priests of their day as comfortable, lazy, hypocritical, and illiterate.

This desire to cast off complacency and comfort, to dive deeply into the Scriptures and the contemplation of God’s grace, to explore a depth of relationship with God that others of their generation manifestly lacked, was the impetus that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation. But it was also the story of the Catholic Reformation.

Well before Luther and Zwingli, reform movements of the medieval period had already charted a similar course. In the late eleventh century, for example, a Benedictine abbot, Robert of Molesme (1028–1111) and several of his monks found their abbey too worldly. They left to build a life where Benedictines would actually follow the Rule of Benedict. The resulting order became known as the Cistercians. (By the seventeenth century, the Cistercians themselves became subject to

ONE LATTE AND A REFORMATION, PLEASE Above: Paul III approves the founding of the Capuchins (see “Did You Know?,” inside front cover).

BATTLING FOR SOULS Right: This famous painting by Rubens shows Ignatius of Loyola performing several of his healing miracles—all at once.
an even stricter reform, known as the “Trappists” after the Abbey of Notre Dame de la Grande Trappe, the center of the reform.)

The Carthusian Order, founded by Bruno of Cologne (c. 1030–1101) in 1084, also returned to the Rule of Benedict but upped the ante with stricter practices of solitude and silence. (Henry VIII of England would later martyr 18 London Carthusians who refused to agree with his divorce from Catherine of Aragon.)

But now, contributing to the sixteenth century’s reforming spirit, many reacted to their own generation’s culture of rule-bending monks—loudly denounced by Protestants and unflatteringly depicted in woodcuts as well.

For example many Catholic authorities attempted to straighten out already existing religious orders that had grown lax in their disciplines of poverty, chastity, and obedience. (Henry VIII of England would later martyr 18 London Carthusians who refused to agree with his divorce from Catherine of Aragon.)

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Members were enjoined to imitate Christ; that is, to meditate on Christ’s passion and observe the virtues Jesus displayed in his suffering, such as obedience, self-mastery, and self-denial. That force animated the words of Gian Pietro Carafa (later Pope Paul IV) in the original rule of the Theatine Order. There he stated that members will be taught daily through experience the Lord’s word and its power as he says: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).

This brings us back to Ignatius of Loyola, perhaps the greatest example of the reawakening of piety and contemplation of the life of Christ in sixteenth-century Catholicism. Born in the Basque region of northern Spain, Iñigo Lopez de Oñaz y Loyola (Ignatius is the Latin version of his name) was the youngest child of the noble Loyola family. His mother died when he was young, and his father when he was 16.

Despite his personal tragedies, the young man enjoyed all the privileges and recreations of the aristocracy, from nights on the town to the courting of beautiful ladies. One biographer later described him as a “fancy dresser, an expert dancer, a womanizer, sensitive to insult, and a rough punkish swordsman who used his privileged status to escape prosecution for violent crimes committed with his priest brother at carnival time.”

Ignatius showed little serious religious inclination until the catastrophic events of the Battle of Pamplona in 1521. He was defending a fortress from the French when a cannonball injured his legs—and the rest of his career as a soldier.

He ended up with one leg shorter than the other and asked the doctors to perform surgery to bring them closer to the same length, since he now wanted to become a courtier and diplomat. As a result of the surgery he spent months in recovery at the Loyola castle, with only two books to distract him from his world of pain: The Golden Legend (c. 1260) and Ludolph of Saxony’s The Life of Christ (1374). He asked for books of chivalry, but there none were available.

“AN EMBASSY OF TEARS AND GOOD WORKS”
The first of the books given to Ignatius was a best-selling collection of stories of the saints. The second was a commentary on Jesus’ life, a harmony of the Gospels that drew on the writings of the church fathers. Ludolph included there this prayer:

ONWARD, WORLDLY SOLDIER Ignatius of Loyola wears his armor as a young man. He later described himself as having been “enthralled by the vanities of the world” until he turned 26.

CHAPTER I: Since the holy council is not ignorant of how great a splendor and usefulness accrues to the Church of God from monasteries piously regulated and properly administered, it has, to the end that the old and regular discipline may be the more easily and promptly restored where it has collapsed, and may be the more firmly maintained where it has been preserved, thought it necessary to command, as by this decree it does command, that all regulars, men as well as women, adjust and regulate their life in accordance with the requirements of the rule which they have professed, and especially that they observe faithfully whatever pertains to the perfection of their profession, as the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and any other vows and precepts peculiar to any rule and order and belonging to the essence thereof, as well as the preservation of common life, food and clothing.

CHAPTER V: The holy council, renewing the constitution of Boniface VIII, which begins “Periculoso,” commands all bishops that by the judgment of God to which it appeals and under threat of eternal malediction, they make it their special care that in all monasteries subject to them by their own authority and in others by the authority of the Apostolic See, the enclosure of nuns be restored wherever it has been violated and that it be preserved where it has not been violated.

— Excerpted from the Canons and Decrees of the Councils of Trent
**Ignatius of Loyola,**  
*“Contemplation to Attain Divine Love,”*  
*The Spiritual Exercises* (1541)

The first point is to call to mind the benefits that I have received from creation, redemption, and the particular gifts I have received. I will ponder with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how many of His graces He has given me. I will likewise consider how much the same Lord wishes to give Himself to me in so far as He can, according to His divine decrees. I will then reflect within myself, and consider that I, for my part, with great reason and justice, should offer and give to His Divine Majesty, all that I possess and myself with it, as one who makes an offering with deep affection, saying:

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me, to Thee O Lord, I return it. All is Thine; dispose of it according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me.

The second point is to consider how God dwells in His creatures: in the elements, giving them being; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in men, giving them understanding. So He dwells in me, giving me being, life, sensation, and intelligence, and making a temple of me, since He created me to the likeness and image of His Divine Majesty. —Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (1541), trans. Anthony Mottola

**Lorenzo Scupoli,**  
*The Spiritual Combat* (1589)

This crucified Lord... is a book that I give you to read. You will be able to draw from it the true portrait of every virtue. Because it is the book of life, it not only instructs the intellect with words but also inflames the will with living example. All the world is full of books, but... all of them taken together cannot so perfectly teach the way to acquire all virtues as the contemplation of a crucified God.

You know, daughter, that there are some who spend many hours weeping over the passion of our Lord, considering His patience, and then when adversities overtake them demonstrate impatience, as if they had thought of everything but the passion during prayer... What is more foolish and miserable than this—to see the virtues of the Lord with crystal clarity, to love and admire them, and then to completely forget or discount them when an occasion to exercise them arises?


Lord Jesus Christ, splendor of the Father’s glory, send down upon me the intense fervor of the Holy Spirit to enkindle, increase, and perfect in me the love of God and my neighbor. Sever me from carnal affections and sensual pleasures.

Impart the grace to love thee above all things; with thy help to exercise prudence in all my duties; never to rely upon my own strength or merits; but ever and anon to send to thee an embassy of tears and good works; to seek and to bring back, peace from thee.

And help me to renounce all in spirit and actually forsake all to be thy true disciple. Amen.

**HERBS AND AUSTERITIES**

Together these books changed Ignatius’s life. In contrast to the dread and depression he experienced when he thought of returning to his old way of life, the lives of Christ and the saints filled him with a sense of “consolation.” In his autobiography dictated to one of his followers he said, speaking of himself in the third person:

When he thought of worldly things it gave him great pleasure, but afterward he found himself dry and sad. But when he thought of journeying to Jerusalem, and of living only on herbs, and practising austerities, he found pleasure not only while thinking of them, but also when he had ceased. Ignatius decided that he wanted to spend the rest of his life ministering to others, or as he called it, “helping souls.” Upon his recovery he spent time in retreat and prayer and pilgrimage.

In this period he crafted the guides to devotion known as the *Spiritual Exercises* (eventually published in...
1541). Even before he brought together the Society of Jesus, whose members would work through the Exercises systematically while on retreat, Ignatius led individuals through them, aiming to foster the same religious conversion and “discernment of spirits” he had experienced.

Ignatius decided that he would need more theological education and formation himself if he was going to dedicate his life to “helping souls,” and he enrolled first at the University of Alcalá and later at the University of Paris to get it. In Paris he connected with other students who would form the original core of the Jesuits, spending time in prayer and leading them through the Exercises.

**MOMENTOUS MEETING**

On August 15, 1534, Peter Faber (1506–1546) and Francis Xavier (1506–1552) met with Ignatius and four other students in a crypt beneath the Church of Saint Denis in Montmartre and vowed to obey the pope, practice poverty and chastity, and make a missionary voyage to the Holy Land. Upon graduation the group’s first ambition was to put their Holy Land plan into practice.

Finding delays at every turn, they spent their days in ministry in Venice instead, and then in Rome, where, through prayer and discussion and discernment, they decided to seek papal approval of their new order. In 1540 they secured this approval from Pope Paul III, swearing to obey any call to be sent anywhere in the world to preach the Gospel and care for the sick.

This willingness to travel would see the early Jesuits establishing missions as far afield as South America, India, China, Japan, and the Philippines. Comparative flexibility in the order’s rules, the lack of a required religious habit, and a special emphasis in the Spiritual Exercises on finding God in all things frequently led the Jesuits to adapt to their diverse contexts, a practice often referred to today as “inculturation.” (The famed adaptability of the Jesuits makes them the obvious choice to undertake a fictional mission to outer space in Mary Doria Russell’s 1996 novel The Sparrow.)

**PUTTING ASIDE PRIVATE JUDGMENT**

Despite this flexibility, however, members of the Society of Jesus maintained as a core principle their vow of obedience to the pope, also expressed in Ignatius’s encouragement to his followers in the Spiritual Exercises to “think with the Church.” Among the rules for this practice were not only “putting aside all private judgment,” but even, famously, being prepared to “believe that the white that I see is black, if the hierarchical Church so defines it.”

Such ready obedience tended to spook Protestants, who sometimes saw the renewed vigor of Catholic pursuit of holiness as a new version of works-based righteousness. But to sixteenth-century Catholics, reeling from the devastating divisions wrought within the Western church, the surest way to heal seemed to be to instill in priests and laypeople “the desire for a more devout life.” Or in other words, to teach them to pray to God with Ignatius, “Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me.”

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The road not taken

EVANGELICAL CATHOLICS WORKED FOR REFORM WITHOUT LEAVING THEIR MOTHER CHURCH

Edwin Woodruff Tait

LUTHER’S TEACHINGS SPREAD like wildfire in the 1520s throughout Europe, attracting sympathetic, enthusiastic readers. From 1523 on they also created martyrs; both civil and religious authorities responded with violence to the threat to religious stability.

These early martyrs were not yet known as “Protestants,” a term first used in 1529 for German princes who protested an imperial order to stop making religious changes. Catholic opponents called anyone sounding even remotely like Luther a “Lutheran.” The martyrs called themselves “evangelicals,” dying for a life-giving message of free grace in Christ. Thomas Bilney, burned at the stake in 1531 after earlier recanting, insisted he was not a “Lutheran,” although he had attacked typical Protestant targets such as the penitential system and devotion to saints.

The larger network of reform-minded people who found Luther’s ideas exciting and life-giving had this in common: they understood the Gospel to be the proclamation of God’s free forgiveness of sinners, based on Christ’s righteousness received by faith. This, in the famous words of the English martyr William Tyndale,

“maketh a man’s heart glad, and maketh him sing, dance, and leap for joy.”

GOD’S FREE FORGIVENESS

This experience of joyful assurance was the spiritual heart of what would become Protestantism. But it was not confined to Protestantism; many in the early sixteenth century shared it while staying loyal to the structures and traditions of medieval Catholicism. Typically these people were also deeply influenced by humanist reformers, particularly Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536; see CH 115), whose gentle, refined, Christ-centered piety had spread throughout educated circles.

One of the most important of these “evangelical Catholics” was Venetian diplomat Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542). In a 1511 letter to friend and monk Tommaso Giustiniani, Contarini recounted how once, when he went to confession on Holy Saturday, his confessor...
assured him that God’s grace was enough to cover his sins and he did not need to worry about “doing enough” good works. For the rest of his life, Contarini lived by and promoted this message of God’s free forgiveness through faith in Jesus. When Luther began teaching something similar, Contarini did not find it particularly shocking, even if he differed with Luther on the details.

Contarini was, initially, not that unusual. The earliest Catholic writers against Luther consistently focused on Luther’s attack on traditional sacramental practices as his fundamental heresy. They did worry that Luther’s teaching on faith might lead to neglecting good works, but they did not at first see it as a blatant contradiction to Catholic teaching.

Soon, in much of northern Europe, rulers and city councils moved to reform their territories along lines proclaimed by the “evangelicals.” That message soon became institutionalized as “Protestantism,” a new state religion with its own doctrines, structures, and worship practices. In France, Italy, and Spain, on the other hand, people sympathetic to evangelical ideas remained institutionally Catholic through the middle of the century.

Marguerite of Navarre (1492–1549), sister of King Francis I of France and wife of King Henry II of Navarre, was a prime example of an evangelical Catholic. Theologians of the University of Paris condemned as heretical her Mirror of the Sinful Soul (1531), and one of her critics supposedly said that she should be tied in a sack and thrown into the Seine. (The future Queen Elizabeth I of England, on the other hand, made an English translation of the book when she was only 11!)

Mirror shows the influence of Luther and other evangelical authors and combines language about faith and forgiveness with feminine imagery:

My soul, poor, ignorant, and powerless
Feels itself in you rich, wise, and mighty,
For you have written in her heart the document
Of your Spirit and holy Word,
Giving her faith to receive that Word,
Which has made her conceive your Son. . . .
Thus you assure her that she is the Mother
Of your Son, of whom you are the only Father.

THE CHILDREN AND THE INQUISITOR
Marguerite corresponded with French-speaking Protestants such as John Calvin and abbess-turned-activist Marie Dentière (c. 1495–1561); a number of the French evangelicals she encouraged were eventually executed as heretics. But as sister and wife to kings, she herself was too powerful to touch and perhaps helped hold off civil war between Protestants and Catholics.

One of Marguerite’s more polemical plays, The Inquisitor (1536), features a rigid theologian interrogating a group of children who may represent the evangelical theologians she had patronized but frequently been unable to save. The children confound the inquisitor with their simple faith and their knowledge of Scripture, and at the end, everyone exits joyfully singing a French psalm. Marguerite herself exited this life in good Catholic fashion in 1549 with a Franciscan priest holding a crucifix to her lips, after she received the last rites and shouted the name of Jesus three times.

Meanwhile, to the south in Spain, Erasmus’s influence had led to the formation of small groups of spiritually serious Christians who studied Scripture. Spanish Catholicism’s level of internal zeal for reform was great, but Spain’s was a highly authoritarian society: the powerful Spanish Inquisition (under the direct control of the monarchs rather than of the pope) suppressed anything remotely smacking of heresy. The appeal of Protestantism was small, and the little groups of “Lutherans” authorities uncovered generally insisted that they were not “Lutherans” at all.
The Inquisition uncovered and destroyed the most important such group in the 1550s in Seville. Its prestigious and popular preacher, Constantino Ponce de la Fuente (1502–1560), attracted suspicion. Though he was careful to avoid contradiction of Catholic teaching, he emphasized faith in Christ without mentioning important Catholic doctrines such as transubstantiation, devotion to the saints, and the penitential system.

Ponce de la Fuente died in prison, without being brought to trial or condemned as a heretic. His most important book, *The Confession of a Sinner*, was published by French Protestants after his death, together with a preface claiming him as a closet Protestant. Allegedly the inquisitors had found a secret stash of Protestant writings in his house, but the authenticity of the story is questionable.

**A PRACTICAL PIETY**

Given Spain’s repressive atmosphere, it’s not surprising that the most influential Spanish evangelical, Juan de Valdés (c. 1500–1541), spent his theologically productive years in Italy—mostly Naples, outside the scope of the Inquisition. Like Erasmus and other humanist evangelicals, Valdés focused on a practical piety based on trust in Christ’s mercy rather than on arguing the fine points of doctrine. He demonstrated the possibility of holding to evangelical faith without going into schism from the traditional structures of the church.

Valdés had an immense influence among upper-class Italian spiritual seekers such as the two aristocratic sisters Vittoria Colonna (1492–1547) and Giulia Gonzaga (1513–1566). Through Colonna “Valdesian” spirituality became an important part of the intellectual and cultural atmosphere of midcentury Italy. Others influenced by Valdés included theologian and reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562; see CH 118) and Bernardino Ochino (1487–1564), head of the Capuchin Order. They intersected with the most prominent group of Catholic evangelicals in the sixteenth century, the *spirituali* of northern Italy, who included Contarini. This group represented the best hope evangelical piety had of gaining a stable place within Catholicism.

From 1535 to 1537, Pope Paul III appointed several new cardinals he hoped would spearhead reform within the church: Contarini; English exile Reginald Pole; Bishop of Carpentras (near Geneva) Jacopo Sadoletto; and Gian Pietro Carafa (see “Remaking the world,” pp. 40–43). These new cardinals, along with a few older hands, were tasked with drawing up a document laying out necessary reforms.

The resulting *Consilium de Emendanda Ecclesia* (*Counsel on Reforming the Church*, 1536) pulled no punches: it called the overblown and worldly papacy the root of church corruption. Its recommendations would have seriously harmed the papacy’s financial and political resources, and Pope Paul III did not follow through. But in the years following, Contarini, Pole, and Girolamo Seripando (general of the Augustinian Order) all sympathized with Protestant teaching on justification even while condemning Protestants for splitting from the church and for rejecting Catholic teaching on the sacraments.

A high point of evangelical influence came in 1541: Contarini was sent to Regensburg as papal legate to oversee a dialogue between Catholic and Protestant theologians designed to avert war within the Holy Roman Empire. Contarini did not himself negotiate with Martin Bucer and Philip Melanchthon, but the negotiators reported back to him, and he had authority from the pope to confirm or overrule their agreements. The dialogue did reach agreement on the central issue of justification, and those on both sides who longed for unity rejoiced.

However Contarini refused to compromise Catholic teaching on the Eucharist, insisting that the language of transubstantiation had to occur in the document to rule out what he saw as heretical views of more radical Protestants. Negotiations broke down. Then both Luther and the pope refused to accept the groundbreaking agreement on justification. Until his death in 1542, Contarini strove to convince his fellow Catholics that the compromise position he had approved was orthodox.

Regensburg’s doctrine of “double justification” was the most precise doctrinal statement evangelical
Catholics produced. It held (uncontroversially) that initial justification was by faith alone, but it also insisted on the necessity of good works as a partial cause of final acceptance by God; at the point of death, however, the good fruit produced in us by the Holy Spirit will not suffice. Thus in the end, even the holiest believer must (as Luther insisted) rely on the merits of Christ. The Council of Trent, on the other hand, insisted that the work done in us by the Holy Spirit is enough to make us acceptable to God.

The failure of Regensburg ended the relatively conciliatory policy of Contarini and Pole. Now the initiative passed to their fellow cardinal, Carafa. To him reform meant tightening moral and doctrinal standards, condemning anything that smacked of Protestantism, and allowing heretics no loopholes. In 1542 Pope Paul III established a Roman Inquisition to investigate and try heresy, witchcraft, and other “religious” crimes and made Carafa one of the inquisitors-general.

Among its first targets were prominent Italian evangelicals such as Vermigli and Ochino, whose teachings sounded less and less distinguishable from those “heretics” north of the Alps. Both fled to Protestant territories and broke with Catholicism. Those remaining in Italy had to watch their step; several more radical evangelicals were executed, including an associate of Juan de Valdés.

Cardinal Pole, the most prominent evangelical in Italy after Contarini’s death, was nearly elected pope in 1549–50, probably the last chance for the evangelical movement. Five years later Carafa became pope as Paul IV, and the crackdown on anything looking remotely like Protestantism intensified. Europe descended into a century of brutal religious conflict, with each side seeing the other as enemy of the Gospel.

A UNION OF FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE

Over 400 years later (2005), the preacher to the papal household (an advisor to the pope) would remark ruefully that “the great majority of Catholics have lived entire lives without having ever heard a direct announcement of gratuitous justification by faith.” While much attention has been paid to official ecumenical efforts, perhaps more significant in recent decades is the rebirth of an evangelical spirituality within Catholicism.

To Protestants committed to justification by faith alone, this modern renewal may seem too loose and undefined. But Contarini, Marguerite, Ponce de la Fuente, and others who longed for a union of evangelical faith and Catholic allegiance in the sixteenth century would, I think, be pleased. Perhaps the inquisitor can learn to sing with the children after all.

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The Catholic Church responded to Protestant critiques of its piety, in essence, by doubling down on the role of art and music as well as by convening the Council of Trent (1545–1563; see “The persistent council,” pp. 19–22). Pope Pius IV promulgated the Tridentine Profession of Faith, a product of the Council, on November 13, 1564. Explicit references to images and to the intercessions of the saints were included in the declarations it asked Catholics to subscribe to:

I steadfastly hold . . . that the saints reigning together with Christ should be venerated and invoked, that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics should be venerated. I firmly declare that the images of Christ and of the Ever-Virgin Mother of God and of the other saints as well are to be kept and preserved, and that due honor and veneration are to be given them…

STEP INSIDE THE STORY

Where did these images come from? Artists created them, as they had for centuries. As the Catholic Reformation unfolded, many Catholic artists adopted dramatic presentations to persuade the viewer of Catholic truths, with large, allegorical themes and complex, dynamic compositions. This realism was heightened by strong contrasts of light and shadow, a technique whose greatest master was the influential Italian Baroque painter Caravaggio (1571–1610; see the cover and p. 24). Artists presented emotionally resonant characters, endeavoring to help the spectator empathize with the story.

For example Mary Magdalene is one of the most beloved of Christian saints. Her character, as represented by artists, drew on different sources: the female sinner who washed Christ’s feet with her tears (Luke 7:36–50), the woman who stood beneath Christ’s cross (Matthew 27:56), and the Mary who came to anoint Christ’s body at his tomb to find that he had risen (John 20:14–16).

We see the dramatic way Catholic artists portrayed her in the sixteenth century in The Repentant Magdalen, about 1577, by El Greco (p. 17). Born Doménikos Theotokópoulos (1541–1614) in Greece, he migrated to Madrid, ultimately settling in Toledo, at that time the religious capital of Spain. (El Greco is Spanish for “The Greek,” as he became known.) In the painting at right, we see her unguent jar (for anointing Christ) and a skull, a symbol of meditation on judgment and death.

Spain continued to be a center of Catholic art as it continued to staunchly support the Catholic faith throughout the sixteenth century and into the
seventeenth (see “Reasons of state,” pp. 28–32). A key Spanish artist, Francisco Pacheco (c. 1564–1644), highly intelligent and deeply devout, wrote a number of works on painting, including appropriate ways to represent the stories of the Bible and of the saints. He advocated the importance of modest clothing and of showing the nobility of holy figures, even when subject to torture or death. The figures, he argued, should be anatomically correct, different from the elongated proportions of El Greco.

Pacheco was influential for two reasons. The first was his pupils, especially famed painter Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), who married Pacheco’s daughter. The second was because he held the post of censor for the Inquisition in Seville. (The Spanish Inquisition had been established in 1478 to combat heresy in Spain; in 1538 and 1542 similar groups came into being in Portugal and Rome.)

Christ Carrying the Cross, by Alonso Cano (1601–1667; see p. 18), exemplifies Pacheco’s directives. Christ is dignified and clothed in a long tunic, although we also see realistic details such as the rope around his neck, the crown of thorns on his head, and his blood-stained brow.

**SEEING VISIONS**

The Catholic Reformation also wished to depict its major thinkers. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) was certainly one of its brightest lights (see “Helping souls,” pp. 6–11). After an early career as a soldier, a serious wound led Ignatius to the decision to enter the church. His Society of Jesus became one of the most successful proponents of a reinvigorated Catholic spirituality, one that stressed individual discernment linked to rigorous training in argument and rhetoric.

The Jesuits became missionaries in the Far East and the New World, developing the church’s most prestigious educational systems. Giovanni Battista Gaulli (1639–1709), known as Baciccio, was chosen to paint the ceiling decoration of the mother church of the Jesuits (known as the Church of the Gesù) in Rome between 1681 and 1685. Gaulli’s ceiling frescoes create the illusion that the viewer is witnessing God blessing the triumph of the work of the society. Sculptures at the edges blend with painted figures, which heightens the illusion of an actual glimpse into heaven.

Baciccio’s The Vision of Saint Ignatius (1684–1685, above) is a preparatory study for a wall painting at the Gesù, apparently not executed. It demonstrates typical Counter-Reformation art: energetic compositions invariably structured along dramatic diagonals. The image shows Ignatius in 1537, north of Rome in a place known as La Storta. There he recorded that he received a vision of God the Father and Christ, who instructed him to establish the society.

**SPEAK, LORD** Above: Baciccio’s Vision shows Ignatius kneeling in awe; amid rosy-hued angels and saints, Christ gestures and God the Father observes majestically.

**TURN BACK, O MAN** Left: In El Greco’s painting of Mary Magdalene, her contemplative expression encourages viewers to meditate on and acknowledge their sins.
Alongside the flowering of art and music, a passionate and dramatic mysticism flourished in the Catholic Reformation, exemplified especially by Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582). This Spanish mystic and reformer joined the Carmelite Order in 1535. One year later she experienced significant illness, including partial paralysis. During her healing process, she meditated on Christ’s Passion and, as she wrote later, saw visions of him to which she attributed her healing.

**A LONG SPEAR OF GOLD**

Teresa’s campaigns to reform her order faced opposition but were ultimately successful; she founded the convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns of the Primitive Rule of Saint Joseph at Ávila in 1562. Along the way, she became friends with Carmelite priest Juan de Yepes y Álvarez (1542–1591), who founded a monastery for men along the lines of Teresa’s reforms and changed his name to Juan de la Cruz (John of the Cross) in 1568.

Teresa’s influence extended to religious and secular leaders of her time through numerous writings, including *The Way of Perfection* (1583), *The Interior Castle* (1588), and her widely read autobiography, *The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself* (1565). One of her best-known poems states: “Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing make you afraid. All things are passing. God alone never changes.” Her disciple John’s poem “The Dark Night of the Soul” and mystic treatises *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Spiritual Canticle* (all first published in 1618) had a profound influence on later Christian spiritual reflections.

Artists picked up on these mystical themes. Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680; see p. 16) depicted a well-known vision of an angel described in Teresa’s autobiography some decades after her death in a renowned Baroque sculpture in the church of Santa Maria de Vitoria in Rome. The sculpture *Ecstasy of St. Teresa* (1647–52) echoes her text: “I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart, and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God.”

On either side Bernini gives the impression that spectators are looking on from illusionary balconies. The original spectators are long gone: it is left to us to observe, as they did, Teresa on fire for the love of God.

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**INWARD STRUGGLE . . . Above:** John of the Cross (shown in a 17th-c. French painting) told in his writings of a “dark night,” devoid of all comforts, by which the soul comes to union with God.

**. . . AND UPWARD STRIVING Left:** In Cano’s *Christ Carrying the Cross*, the figures are almost life-size, bringing the faithful close to the depiction of Scripture.

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The persistent council

CATHOLIC REFORM CAME TO A HEAD AT THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

Martin J. Lohrmann

THREE AND A HALF YEARS after its opening was first announced, a little over three years after bishops began trickling in, two years after it was suspended, one year after it was convoked again (producing a new trickle of bishops), and 10 months after its announced opening date, at 9:30 in the morning on December 13, 1545, the Council of Trent actually began. Four hundred bishops assembled in the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, sang the hymn “Come, Holy Spirit,” heard a reading of the papal bull Laetere, Jerusalem (1544) and a sermon, and celebrated Mass. The whole service took four and a half hours.

GETTING OFF TO A SLOW START

The council had trouble keeping going as well as getting going: it eventually met in three phases, 1545–1549, 1551–1552, and 1562–1563. Before his excommunication in 1521, Luther had formally appealed for a church council. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V condemned Luther, but also seconded Luther’s call for a council as the best way to settle the major religious divisions spreading across Europe. But popes in the early years of the Reformation refused to hold a council for several reasons. First, councils potentially undermined papal authority; all remembered the debates surrounding the Council of Constance in the early 1400s.

Second, even though Charles V was a devoted Catholic, he was also the king of Spain and head of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire. His immense political and religious power worried leaders in places like Italy, France, and England. The emperors had long-standing claims to leadership of the Christian world that rivaled those of the popes, and they had called Constance and other councils. If the emperor called a council in Germany, it might well be the beginning of a revived conciliarism (rule...
of the church by councils) that would definitively sideline the papacy.

Third, Catholics across Europe had diverse ideas about reform. Popes feared that a council might foster new conflicts rather than settle existing ones.

**COMPROMISE AND PLAGUE**

By the middle 1540s, when Pope Paul III (1468–1549) finally called the council, Protestantism was becoming established in northern Europe and England; the council focused more on reforming the Roman Catholic Church than finding unity with Protestants. The small city of Trent in northern Italy was selected as being within Charles's lands but close to Rome and the Papal States. (Charles insisted on a location in the Holy Roman Empire to show his German subjects that this was indeed an open, universal council.)

Most bishops who attended the council came from Italy and Spain. Spain had already reformed its churches in previous decades, and Charles strongly supported the participation of Spanish bishops. Although no sitting popes visited the council, they oversaw it through the work of their legates (cardinals who set the agenda and wrote reports back to Rome).

The papal legates in the council’s first phase were Giovanni Maria Del Monte (1487–1555), Marcello Cervini (1501–1555), and the English exile Reginald Pole (1500–1558). Del Monte and Cervini later became popes themselves, and Pole served as the last Catholic archbishop of Canterbury under Mary I. Papal legates had a challenging dual role: keeping the popes satisfied that the council was not growing too independent, while assuring council participants of their freedom to deliberate and make decisions without papal interference.

Neither the pope nor the French liked having conceded to Charles V that the council take place in his domain. In early 1547 an outbreak of typhus threatened Trent; though the disease did not spread as feared, the legates used the excuse to move the council to the university town of Bologna, squarely within the Papal States.

This move met with majority approval from council participants and Pope Paul III. Nevertheless it dimmed the council’s prospects of coming to a swift and efficient close. Several bishops loyal to Charles remained in Trent out of protest. The council also moved during the exact months when Charles finally won a decisive military victory over German Lutheran princes. The result: extended delays and a suspension in 1549.

After Paul III’s death, Del Monte was elected pope. As Julius III he convened the council’s second period. Charles’s recent victory had now made it possible to invite Protestant theologians to attend the council without needing to guarantee them voting rights; a handful
TURN LEFT AT ROME  Bishops make their way to the council.

did so starting in 1551. In 1552, however, a military alliance between Henry II of France and German princes led by Maurice of Saxony undid Charles's earlier victory. The new freedoms won by Protestants, along with renewed French-German hostilities, made continuation of the council unrealistic. It would not meet again for a decade.

Cervini, another former legate, was elected pope after Del Monte’s death and took the name Marcellus II, but died within the month. His successor, Paul IV (Gian Pietro Carafa), had attended the first session of the council and worked for reform, but his immoderate policies (see p. 44) and dislike of Charles meant he did not reconvene the council. Pope Pius IV (1499–1565), protegé of Paul III and uncle of Catholic reformer Charles Borromeo (1538–1584), finally opened the third period. It featured increased French participation and new leadership from the Jesuit order.

LET’S CLEAN HOUSE

The Council of Trent took a twofold approach to reform. One group of participants—usually theologians and bishops with formal training—discussed doctrine, producing “canons,” while another group of bishops and advisors addressed worship and institutional reform in “decrees.” Occasional meetings known as “chapters” provided additional explanation of the issues. Finally both sets of drafting groups presented their statements to “sessions” (25 over the 18 years) where all voting members heard the proposals and voted on them.

Even before the Reformation, many had longed for a reform of institutional corruption and problematic worship practices. Particularly pressing issues included the ways popes like Alexander VI (1431–1503) and Julius II (1443–1513) had infamously used the papacy to promote family members and enrich their households. The papacy also charged fees for offices, especially additional dioceses. Trent renewed denunciation of simony (selling church offices) and nepotism (appointing family members)—though in practice even reforming popes like Paul III and Pius IV continued to privilege their relatives with jobs and finances.

The need for priests and bishops to live and work in their assigned dioceses was another key aspect of institutional reform. Over time the incomes and titles attached to congregations and dioceses had separated from the actual work of serving as parish priest or local bishop. A number of bishoprics and priestly offices suffered extended vacancies in which the appointed clergyman would never reside in the area, even though he received income for “holding the title.”

Priestly education was also very uneven. Though priests could study in universities or monastic communities, not everyone had access to or interest in such programs. No educational standard existed, either. Luther’s work at the University of Wittenberg, the circle of English reformers who gathered in Cambridge, and Calvin’s teaching ministry in Geneva had all spread by means of educational channels; in response the Council of Trent established strong seminaries to meet the need for an educated and pious Catholic clergy.

HAUNTED BY LUTHER

Decrees on reform usually passed the voting sessions relatively easily, but canons on doctrine tended to cause more controversy. The specter of Martin Luther, who died just as the council was getting underway, haunted many of the theological issues debated: the canon of Scripture, the relationship between Scripture and tradition (the council reaffirmed the idea that the Word of God is found in both), and—of course—the doctrine of justification.

Many of the assembled theologians were familiar enough with Protestant writings that they could avoid overly simplistic caricatures of Protestant views. Among these were Pole and Girolamo Seripando (1493–1563), who was head of the Augustinian Order—the order to which Luther had belonged. Seripando was one of the few theologians to attend each period of the council.

The debate on justification included one of the wilder moments in the council’s history. Having used the phrase “by faith alone” in regard to justification, Bishop Tommaso Sanfelice overheard Bishop Dionisio de Zanettini call him a “knave or a fool.” Sanfelice confronted de Zanettini, grabbed his beard, and shook him.
focus on bishops and priests serving local communities brought renewed attention to grassroots faith; the invention of seminaries gave new shape to the formation and education of clergy; and the church's patterns of doctrine and worship remained unchallenged until the equally monumental Second Vatican Council 400 years later.

On December 4, 1563, according to the council's minutes, it was asked in conclusion:

Most illustrious lords and most reverend Fathers, doth it please you, that, to the praise of Almighty God, an end be put to this sacred ecumenical synod? and that the confirmation of . . . the things which have therein been decreed and defined . . . be requested . . . from the most blessed Roman Pontiff?

After the bishops answered in the affirmative, the minutes continue: “After having given thanks to God, most reverend Fathers, go in peace.”

Trent had a long-lasting, unifying effect. The primacy of the pope survived a great challenge; the

WHERE’S WALDO? Few people made it all the way from the opening (1545, left) to the closing (1563, above) sessions of the Council of Trent

“IT PLEASETH US TO GO IN PEACE”

violently. Sanfelice was expelled, not for his theology but for his unruly beard pulling.

Even after everyone calmed down, the canons on justification took nearly a year to formulate. They largely affirmed the standard teachings of late medieval Scholasticism. Trent agreed with the Protestants that we cannot save ourselves, but it affirmed that God's sanctifying grace working in us, with our free cooperation, makes us worthy of eternal life. While the council did not identify Luther by name, it rejected outright central Lutheran teachings such as passive righteousness, justification by faith alone, and the certainty of faith.

Luther's reform implicitly shaped much of the council's agenda. The Roman Catholic Church had to take clear positions on issues such as the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, the marriage of priests, giving lay people the Eucharistic cup (not just the bread), indulgences, and purgatory. Nevertheless the Council of Trent in the end was not merely a reaction to Protestantism but an occasion for clarification and affirmation of Catholic teachings. Some practices associated with the period—the papal list of prohibited books and the insistence upon using the Latin Vulgate—took shape more under Pope Paul IV than as a result of Trent itself.

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A renewed and global faith

AFTER TRENT, CHANGES WERE IN THE AIR

Thomas Worcester, S.J.

IMAGINE A CONFESSIONAL: the rows of little doors; the dark ornate wood; the screens that hide the confessor from the penitent. Whether you’ve knelt inside one on a Saturday afternoon or merely seen one as a tourist or in a movie, they represent the Catholic Church in the minds of many. And until the Council of Trent, they didn’t exist.

I DO CONFESS

Confessinals were created after Trent for women penitents, lest their confession of sexual sins be impeded by the awkwardness of speaking face to face with a man. (Later the confessional box came to be used by male penitents as well.) In fact much of what shaped Catholicism between the sixteenth century and the twentieth traces back to the bishops at Trent and their hopes of preventing a wide range of abuses among the clergy: ignorance, fornication, greedy careerism, and absenteeism.

Trent transformed and standardized the priesthood itself with the creation of seminaries to educate diocesan priests. Though men could still be ordained at a bishop’s discretion even if they had not attended seminary, the new mandate did, over time, help to create a better-educated priesthood.

Seminaries also enforced celibacy and helped to stamp out clerical misbehavior. A new ideal arose of the austere, sober, prayerful parish priest, who lived in a rectory, wore clerical garb, and devoted countless hours to pastoral work such as administering the sacraments.

As in Protestant territories, so too in Catholic ones—enforcement of doctrinal orthodoxy became in the sixteenth century a major concern of both church and state. In the late fifteenth century, the Spanish Inquisition had been founded by the Spanish monarchy as part of its efforts to create a united Spain,
uniform in religion. This meant, in practice, persecution and expulsion of Jews and Muslims.

Pope Paul III founded the Roman Inquisition in 1542 and charged it with rooting out supposed heresies, Lutheran or otherwise. But because of the aggressive guarding of royal prerogatives in Catholic kingdoms such as France, Portugal, and Spain, the Roman Inquisition had little authority outside central Italy. Catholic kings wanted to persecute their own heretics.

Though at times savage in their methods, both Inquisitions largely avoided the prosecution and persecution of alleged witches—otherwise a rampant activity in northern Europe, both Catholic and Protestant.

WHO’S IN CHARGE HERE?
Protestant reformers disagreed among themselves about many things, but they all agreed on rejecting the papacy, either because it taught doctrinal error, set an appalling example of moral decay, or imposed an oppressive Roman bureaucracy on Christendom—exact ing taxes and fees from poor Christians for the benefit of a worldly, war-mongering pope and his curia (court).

Yet the Council of Trent said little about the papacy. Bishops themselves disagreed about how papal authority related to the authority of heads of state and of national and local churches. The council did, in its closing session, ask for papal approval of its decrees, effectively placing implementation under papal control.

Popes often played a key role in fostering the development of new religious orders and reforming old ones. Paul III approved the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in 1540 (see “Helping souls,” pp. 6–11). Unlike monks who belonged to a specific monastic community, Jesuits were to be tied to no particular place but rather available to be sent anywhere in the world where the needs were greatest. The pope, not the local bishop, was to do such sending.

Older religious orders also saw new reform movements emerge from within their ranks. The Capuchins, founded in 1528, aimed at making Franciscans more faithful sons of St. Francis of Assisi. Carmelite nuns, who had come into being in the fifteenth century, were reformed in the sixteenth by Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) in Spain. In 1562 she founded a branch of the order devoted to silence, prayer, and poverty in a cloistered community.

Other women founded new communities that worked outside the boundaries of cloisters as teachers and nurses among the people, especially the poor. The Daughters of Charity, founded by Louise de Marillac and Vincent de Paul in 1633 in France, was an excellent example of this new model of female religious life.

Priests were also newly exhorted by the council to explain what the church taught about faith and morals; lay catechists were trained to do this as well. The Catholic catechesis focused intensely on the seven sacraments, especially the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance.

An emphasis on the Word and on preaching is often, and rightly, associated with the Protestant Reformation, but Catholic reformers also insisted on the centrality of the pulpit in explaining Scripture, teaching doctrine, and encouraging people to reform and correct their sinful, immoral lives.
seeking to live a holy life in the world: “It is an error, or rather a heresy, to wish to banish the devout life from the regiment of soldiers, the mechanic’s shop, the court of princes, or the home of married people.” Jean-Pierre Camus (1584–1652), a disciple of de Sales and also a bishop and popular preacher, published some 250 books in his lifetime, many going through multiple printings and translations.

TO BOLDLY GO
Meanwhile, from the early 1500s, Catholic missionaries had been voyaging with Portuguese and Spanish explorers and colonizers to the Indian and Pacific Oceans and across the Atlantic. Soon European Catholic intellectuals were struggling with new questions not dealt with at Trent. Was enslavement of natives in the Americas morally acceptable? Were non-European races fully human? Could Mass be celebrated in Asian languages? Could Christianity be distinguished from European culture? For Catholics the challenges posed in northern Europe by the Protestant Reformation and addressed at Trent were eventually eclipsed by matters more global.

The Council of Trent identified preaching as the principal duty of bishops, a major change for many sixteenth-century bishops—who had been accustomed to spending little time on pastoral duties while they lived in luxury, frequented prostitutes or mistresses, and perhaps did not even set foot in their dioceses.

SAINTS AND ANGELS
Protestant reformers had stressed Christ alone as mediator between God and humanity; Luther, Calvin, and others rejected a cult of the saints that emphasized praying to saints as intercessors and as miracle workers who could obtain cures and other favors from God. After Trent came a major renaissance of this Catholic devotion to saints as intercessors and exemplars of Christian life. Saints were understood by the devout to bridge the gap between heaven and earth, accessible and available in ways a more distant God might not be.

In the post-Trent era, bishops were supposed to root out any superstitions in devotion to saints, even as they promoted a renewed attention to this devotion. Angels were also imagined as filling the space between earth and heaven, descending from heaven as God’s messengers and ascending with humanity’s prayers to God. Children were taught that they each had a guardian angel looking after them and helping them to be good.

Concerned with idolatry, some Protestant reformers encouraged iconoclasm, the destroying of images of God, Christ, or the saints (see CH issue 118). But after Trent, Catholics ushered in a sustained renaissance of visual arts. Michelangelo (1475–1564), Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610), Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), and others created new representations of Christ, Mary, and the saints—including freshly canonized ones such as Ignatius and Teresa—in painting, sculpture, stained glass, and other media (see “Picturing saints,” pp. 16–18).

The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century has often been cited as indispensable to the Protestant Reformation. Could Luther have accomplished much without it? One could ask the same question about Catholic reformers. Bishop Francis de Sales (1567–1622; see “Remaking the world,” pp. 40–43) first published the best seller Introduction to the Devout Life in 1609 in French. Translated in his own lifetime into other major European languages, it was aimed at laity seeking to live a holy life in the world: “It is an error, or rather a heresy, to wish to banish the devout life from the regiment of soldiers, the mechanic’s shop, the court of princes, or the home of married people.” Jean-Pierre Camus (1584–1652), a disciple of de Sales and also a bishop and popular preacher, published some 250 books in his lifetime, many going through multiple printings and translations.

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The century that changed the world

1440: Gutenberg invents the printing press.

1453: Turks capture Constantinople.

1476: Gian Pietro Carafa is born.

1478: Spanish Inquisition begins.

1483: Martin Luther and Gasparo Contarini are born.

1492: Columbus makes first voyage to the Americas.

1498: Girolamo Savonarola is burned at the stake in Florence.

1500: Reginald Pole is born.

1509: John Calvin is born; Henry VIII becomes king.

1512: Fifth Lateran Council begins.

1513: Leo X becomes pope.

1515: Teresa of Ávila and Philip Neri are born.

1517: Fifth Lateran Council ends; Luther writes 95 Theses.

1519: Eck debates Karlstadt and Luther at Leipzig; Charles I of Spain is elected Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

1520: Papal bull gives Luther 60 days to recant; Luther burns papal bull and canon law.

1521: Luther excommunicated; Leo X titles Henry VIII “Defender of the Faith.”

1522: Hadrian VI becomes pope.

1523: Clement VII becomes pope.

1524: Carafa helps found the Theatines; Diet of Nuremberg fails to enforce Edict of Worms.

1527: Imperial troops sack Rome.

1529: Protestant first used; Second Diet of Speyer enforces Edict of Worms; Turks lay siege to Vienna.

1530: Diet of Augsburg attempts to end division.

1531: Schmalkaldic League forms against Charles V.

1532: Diet of Regensburg and Peace of Nuremberg guarantee religious toleration.

1534: Ignatius Loyola and others pledge themselves to fellowship; Henry VIII declares himself supreme head of the Church of England; Paul III becomes pope.

1535: Thomas More is executed; Ursuline religious order is founded; Charles V forms Catholic Defense League.

1536: Pope Paul III commissions a report on abuses in the church.

1538: Charles Borromeo is born.

1540: Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is formed; conferences at Haguenau and Worms fail to reconcile Protestants and Catholics.

1541: At Colloquy of Regensburg, Melanchthon and Bucer reach agreement with Catholics on most doctrines, but Luther and Rome reject their work.

1542: John of the Cross is born; Robert Bellarmine is born.

1543: Thomas More is executed; Francis Xavier sails for India; Carafa persuades Paul III to set up the Roman Inquisition.

1546: Martin Luther dies.

1546–1547: Schmalkaldic War is fought between Protestant and Catholic territories in Germany.
1547: Edward VI succeeds Henry VIII.

1548: “Armed Diet” attempts to nullify Lutheran reforms; many Catholic and Protestant leaders refuse to accept Augsburg Interim. Ignatius’s Spiritual Exercises is published.

1549: Francis Xavier reaches Japan.

1550: Julius III becomes pope.

1551: Francis Xavier dies; Council of Trent is suspended and will not meet again until 1562.

1553: Mary I succeeds Edward VI.

1555: Mary burns Latimer and Ridley at the stake; Peace of Augsburg allows German rulers to determine religion of their regions; Marcellus II becomes pope but dies 22 days later; Carafa becomes pope as Paul IV.

1556: Ignatius of Loyola dies.

1558: Elizabeth I succeeds Mary I.

1559: Final edition of Institutes is published; Pius IV becomes pope.

1560: Scottish Parliament abolishes Catholicism in Scotland.

1562: Teresa of Ávila establishes the first Discalced Carmelite convent.

1563: Thirty-Nine Articles drafted by the Church of England; Council of Trent concludes.

1564: Francis de Sales is born.

1565: Charles Borromeo goes to Milan as archbishop; Pius V becomes pope.

1566: Teresa publishes The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila by Herself.

1567: Francis de Sales is born.

1568: John of the Cross establishes Discalced Carmelite order for men.

1569: John Calvin dies.

1572: Gregory XIII becomes pope.

1573: Philip Neri founds Congregation of the Oratory.

1577: Teresa of Ávila writes Interior Castle; around this time John of the Cross begins “Dark Night of the Soul” and Ascent of Mount Carmel.

1580: Edmund Campion arrives in England as a Jesuit missionary.

1582: Teresa of Ávila dies; Gregorian calendar is introduced by Pope Gregory XIII.

1585: Sixtus V becomes pope.

1590: Urban VII becomes pope, dies after 12 days and is succeeded by Gregory XIV.

1591: John of the Cross dies; Innocent IX becomes pope.

1592: Clement VIII becomes pope.

1595: Philip Neri dies.

1603: James I succeeds Elizabeth I.

1616: The church forbids Galileo to teach the Copernican theory.

1618: Thirty Years’ War begins.

1621: Robert Bellarmine dies.

1625: Charles I succeeds James I.

1629: Emperor Ferdinand II issues Edict of Restitution.

1633: Galileo is called before the Roman Inquisition.

1642: English Civil War begins.

1648: Peace of Westphalia concludes Thirty Years’ War and Eighty Years’ War.

1649: Charles I is executed.

1660: The monarchy is restored in England.
Reasons of state

THE THIRTY YEARS’ WAR: EUROPE’S LAST RELIGIOUS WAR

Roger G. Robins

“EVERYWHERE THERE IS ENVY, hatred and greed: that’s what the war has taught us… We live like animals, eating bark and grass…. Many people say that there is no God….” These lines, inscribed in a family Bible in a small south German town in 1647, bear witness to the profound trauma inflicted by the waves of warfare that swept central Europe between 1618 and 1648.

Known collectively as the Thirty Years’ War, these conflicts began as a civil disturbance within a single dominion of the Holy Roman Empire. But they evolved into an existential struggle over the constitution of the empire and the balance of power in seventeenth-century Europe. They ended as the most destructive war the continent had yet known and the first to ensnare, directly or indirectly, virtually every European power of note. The terms of its conclusion would transform the social, religious, and political landscape of Europe—and, some would say, of the world.

LOOK OUT BELOW

Unlike the First Defenestration of Prague in 1419, no one died when Bohemian nobles threw their opponents out a window in 1618, but war began.

Holy Roman Empire. By law the empire was an elective monarchy, but Europe’s most powerful family, the Habsburgs, ruled it as if by hereditary right. Just below the emperor in the hierarchy were seven prince-electors, who ranked above a host of other princely states and several free cities. An imperial diet gave representation to all of these parties. The states were further organized into circles, each with its own diet, and each state or free city also had internal hierarchies.

To compound the complexity, centuries of alliances and transactions had produced a host of overlapping jurisdictions and interlocking chains of allegiance. And that was all before the Protestant Reformation.

After 1517 religious strife and competition for power and property splintered this intricate organism into rival networks, largely along confessional lines. But the Peace of Augsburg (1555) brought a durable if uneasy coexistence—Lutheranism was legally recognized; princes determined the religion of their own
states; Protestants could retain church lands they had taken before 1552, but not after; and Protestantism was permitted in certain Catholic cities where it had been long established.

For 63 years those terms largely held. But as the seventeenth century dawned, the empire found itself increasingly vexed by discontent. Catholics resented Protestants continuing to appropriate ecclesiastical holdings, contrary to Augsburg’s terms. Meanwhile Protestants objected to Catholic efforts to curtail Protestant privileges and re-Catholicize Protestant princes and their subjects. The spread of Calvinism—not recognized at Augsburg—caused additional strains. By 1609 two opposing defensive alliances, the Protestant Union and the Catholic League, had mobilized. As tensions rose the mechanisms for resolving them diminished. Protestant-Catholic distrust paralyzed the court system, and after 1613 the imperial diet ceased to convene. Increasingly the Peace of Augsburg seemed less a peace and more a long deferment of war.

OUT THE WINDOW WITH YOU

Issues came to a head in 1618 in Bohemia, where a Catholic king ruled a largely Protestant people whose nonconformity traced back to the Hussite movement of the early 1400s. To complicate matters Bohemia was one of the empire’s seven electorates and had, since the early 1500s, been governed by the Habsburgs, giving them a decisive edge in the imperial electoral process. The Catholic Austrian Habsburgs had indulged their Protestant Bohemian subjects as long as the peace of the realm went undisturbed. In fact, in 1609, Emperor Rudolf II issued a “Letter of Majesty” that guaranteed religious freedom in Bohemia, permitted new Protestant chapels on royal lands, and commissioned an assembly of “Defenders” to protect these liberties.

In 1612 Rudolf’s brother Matthias ascended to the Bohemian throne, aged and childless. More zealous members of his family, with Spanish Habsburg support, promoted as his successor Jesuit-trained Archduke Ferdinand of Inner Austria (1578–1637)—who dreamed of uniting the Holy Roman Empire under a single ruler and a single church. Ferdinand was appointed crown prince of Bohemia and heir apparent to Matthias in 1617. Working through regents he quickly cracked down on Protestant liberties he deemed excessive.

On May 23, 1618, having in hand a threatening letter under Matthias’s name that the Defenders felt sure had been penned by Ferdinand’s regents instead, the furious lords stormed the royal palace in Prague and burst into the council chamber. There, in conscious imitation of fabled Hussite revolutionaries almost exactly two centuries before, they seized three of their tormentors and tossed them out the window. Known as the Second Defenestration of Prague, the event by general agreement marks the beginning of the Thirty Years’ War.

These defenestratees survived the fall and escaped. Yet the Bohemian nobility and their allies, chiefly Frederick V of the Palatinate (1596–1632), now hoped to inspire an international Protestant alliance against the Habsburgs. Early returns were favorable: aid arrived from the Palatinate, Selisia, and Savoy, and, after the
Protestants took control of Bohemia and pressed into Austria, still others joined the alliance. The political calculus shifted, however, when Matthias died early the next year. Ferdinand was officially installed as king of Bohemia, and all signs pointed to his election as Holy Roman emperor. Shortly before that election, the Bohemian nobles, claiming a constitutional right to elect their own king, deposed Ferdinand and elevated the Protestant Frederick V. This was a provocative move which transferred Bohemia to a Palatine Calvinist and made Frederick a “double elector,” eligible to cast two votes in imperial elections. Already three of the seven electors, including Frederick V himself, were Protestant. A Protestant might soon reign over the Holy Roman Empire.

The ploy backfired. Armies from Spain and Bavaria raced to defend Ferdinand, duly crowned emperor as Ferdinand II. The Protestant Union chose neutrality, and some Protestants even sided with the emperor. The imperial coalition eventually routed the Bohemian army just west of Prague. Frederick fled into exile, and, by the end of 1622, Austria, Moravia, and Bohemia had been reconquered. Protestant nobles were exiled, their property seized, and Catholicism uniformly stamped on the realms. By 1624 the Palatinate lay firmly in imperial hands. The revolt had been utterly crushed.

The emperor’s very success now worked against him. He rewarded his most powerful supporter, Maximilian of Bavaria, with the lands and electoral dignity of Frederick V. This antagonized other German princes who were afraid of an emperor who could remove or install an elector at his pleasure. Protestants felt betrayed at the Palatinate being given to a Catholic prince. And the near total triumph of the Habsburgs raised alarm among their rivals, especially France. Their only hope: a new Protestant champion.

SNATCHING DEFEAT FROM VICTORY
Christian IV of Denmark (1577–1648) answered the call. As duke of Holstein, he was also a prince of the empire, and in 1625 he raised an army to redeem Protestant losses and restore the injured rights of German princes. Christian internationalized the war, winning troop commitments and subsidies from England, Scotland, the Netherlands, and France.

Despite these advantages the Protestant cause promptly unraveled. The timing was inauspicious. Alongside Maximilian’s army Ferdinand II had also commissioned an imperial force under the brilliant, controversial Albrecht von Wallenstein, a minor Bohemian nobleman. Christian, expecting to face one army, found himself facing two. Then crises beset his international allies and delayed or reduced their promised contributions. After three costly years of battle, both sides took to the negotiating table where, in the Treaty of Lübeck (1629), Christian renounced future intervention in the empire.
Once again Ferdinand II stood at the brink of consolidating central Europe into a united Catholic empire. But once again he overplayed his hand.

First in 1628 he provoked the German princes by banishing the dukes of Mecklenburg, who had supported Christian, and giving their duchies to the deeply disliked Wallenstein—constitutionally irregular and politically unwise. A year later he issued the Edict of Restitution, demanding that Protestants return all lands taken from the Catholic Church since 1552 and targeting Calvinism for repression. The edict sent shock waves through the Protestant world, and even some Catholics saw it as a destabilizing attempt to undo 70 years of history.

Now King Gustavus Adolphus II (1594–1632) of Sweden arose to defend the Protestant cause. At his back was major financial sponsor France, fearful of Habsburg power. Furthermore the Edict of Restitution had outraged German Protestants; the combined effect of Catholic atrocities (most famously the brutal sacking of Magdeburg) and Swedish persuasion soon brought most to Gustavus’s side.

Gustavus’s expertise in the art of war proved advantageous, and, in contrast to Christian, he benefited from good timing. In 1630 the imperial electors at last persuaded Ferdinand II to remove the hated Wallenstein. Christian had invaded just as Wallenstein’s fearsome army was being deployed. Gustavus invaded just as it was being decommissioned.

Within two years Gustavus routed the imperial forces. Protestant armies occupied Bavaria and Bohemia, and Maximilian fled into exile. Facing defeat Ferdinand II turned again to Wallenstein. With the malignzed general back in the field, the tide shifted once more. Imperial forces reclaimed lost ground, then pressed into Saxony. When the two great armies converged at Lützen in 1632, the Protestant army managed to prevail, but at an intolerable cost: alongside thousands of his troops, Gustavus Adolphus fell in battle.

A PEACE THAT WAS NO PEACE

With costs mounting and neither side able to secure victory, secret negotiations began even as the battles raged. Internal divisions surfaced among Protestant princes. On the imperial side, Wallenstein’s enemies at court and his own erratic behavior poisoned his relationship with the emperor. In early 1634 Ferdinand II deposed Wallenstein and declared him guilty of treason. He was assassinated while attempting to escape.

In May of 1635, John George of Saxony, acting on behalf of the majority of the Protestant princes of Germany, agreed to the Peace of Prague. It suspended the Edict of Restitution for 40 years, enlisted all in a united imperial army, and forbade states to form alliances among themselves or with foreign powers. The German civil war seemed over, on terms favorable to Ferdinand II. Yet a Swedish army still encamped on the Baltic coast. And a great superpower, France, lay brooding. The longest and deadliest phase of the war was about to begin.

Catholic France’s stated aim was to defend German Protestant liberties, but it had few German allies and much interest in opposing the Habsburgs. The battle plan called for Sweden, aided by princes excluded from or disadvantaged by the Peace of Prague, to campaign in
the east while France invaded the Spanish Netherlands and fought Habsburg armies along the Rhine.

At first this French-led alliance made only fitful advances. Before long however the complexion of the war turned. In 1637 Ferdinand II died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Ferdinand III (1608–1657). Calvinist countess Amalia Elisabeth, regent for her recently deceased husband, sought terms from Ferdinand III that would have removed her powerful Hessian army from the field. But he refused to grant legal recognition to Calvinists, so Amalia recommitted to the French alliance.

Now the alliance made great gains, and setbacks in the Netherlands and the New World and rebellions in Catalonia and Portugal forced Spain to withdraw. With all sides weary of war, treaty negotiations began in 1643, first at Frankfort, then at Osnabrück and Münster, in Westphalia. The talks stretched on, shaped and reshaped by the battlefield. "In the winter we negotiate," remarked one participant. "In summer we fight." On October 23, 1648, after five years of negotiation among almost 200 states and principalities, final terms were signed as the Peace of Westphalia.

Westphalia remade the status quo of central Europe. The long dispute over church property was resolved (Protestants retained lands confiscated prior to 1624). Historic religious concessions included legal recognition for Calvinism and toleration of private worship. Political adjustments were sweeping: formal independence for the Dutch Republic and Switzerland; limited autonomy for German states. And constitutional reforms required the emperor to win consent from the diet for major political decisions and subjected confessional disputes to resolution by "amicable" consensus, not majority vote. An eighth electoral vote re-enfranchised the Protestant elector Palatine.

As a whole these terms shifted power from the emperor to the German states, and from the Habsburgs to France and its allies. Implementation dragged on for years, and France and Spain would fight for another decade, but the Thirty Years’ War was over.

“SORELY WHIPPED”

Three decades of slaughter, forced flight, and destruction took a horrific toll. “Some nations are chastised with the sword, others with famine, others with the man-destroying plague,” wrote English minister Edmund Calamy. “But poor Germany hath been sorely whipped with all these three.” Disease, famine, and war-related violence on the battlefields and in countless skirmishes, riots, and uprisings cost the empire millions of lives, perhaps a quarter of its population.

But history has remembered the Thirty Years’ War mostly for its peace treaty. Westphalia encouraged allegiance to territorially defined states above all else—perhaps the decisive moment in the transition from medieval political structures to modern nation-states. It also marked a pivotal step toward norms of modern diplomacy: equality among sovereign states, reliance on international conferences, and balance-of-power politics. And it signaled the triumph of political pragmatism over religious authority. “Reason of state is a wonderful beast,” quipped one contemporary observer, “for it chases away all other reasons.” A powerful trend of political secularization had begun, continuing virtually unabated until the late twentieth century. By then it had come to be seen, mistakenly, as inevitable.

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Defender of God’s justice

ARMINIUS QUESTIONED SOME ASPECTS OF REFORMED FAITH, BUT HE NEVER MEANT TO LAUNCH A MOVEMENT

William den Boer

THE NAME JACOB ARMINIUS (1559–1609) still provokes resistance in Calvinist circles, most notably because many Calvinists say he awarded a decisive role to man’s free will in salvation at the cost of God’s sovereign grace. The real story, as so often is the case, is more complex.

WHEN DID GOD CHOOSE?

Though we know him today by the Latin version of his Dutch name, Arminius was born Jakob Hermanszoon in 1559 in Oudewater in the Netherlands. His father died around that time; later he lost his mother, sister, and older brothers in the Spanish massacre of Oudewater in 1575, escaping because he was studying at Marburg. In 1576 Arminius enrolled at the University of Leiden; in 1582 he moved to the University of Geneva under Calvin’s renowned disciple Theodore Beza; and six years later, he was ordained in Amsterdam.

Around 1590 Arminius started to doubt Beza’s influential “supralapsarian” doctrine of predestination—the idea that God’s election to salvation logically preceded God’s knowledge of the Fall. Dutch theologian Dirck Coornhert (1522–1590) objected that Beza’s doctrine made God unjust: if God elected or rejected people who are not yet fallen, the Fall would necessarily result, making God, and not humans, responsible for sin.

Some who wanted to take the sting out of Coornhert’s criticism proposed that predestination was God’s gracious response to his foreknowledge that the Fall would occur (“infralapsarianism”). Arminius agreed with Coornhert’s criticism of Beza, but not with the alternative solution.

God’s justice increasingly became the foundation of Arminius’s theology. He argued that God is just in his very essence; his justice is so fundamental that it characterizes all God’s will and actions. God’s will is completely free, but this can never result in God willing something unjust.

Arminius outlined salvation this way: God gave us free will and made an agreement that, on condition of total obedience, we would be joyfully united with God. He gave us all we need to stay obedient, but voluntarily we broke the covenant, deserving damnation. Nevertheless God wanted to show mercy. The only way to do this without compromising justice was through the substitutionary suffering and death of Jesus as mediator, appeasing God’s justice in our place.

Through faith Christ’s righteousness would be applied to us: God elects believing sinners and rejects unbelieving sinners. The new covenant that God made with us after the Fall included the gift of all the means of grace that we need to believe in Christ, to repent, and to be saved.

For Arminius this, too, was linked to God’s justice: God did not exclude anyone when he made the new covenant. God demands faith in Christ from all people, and it would be unjust if God did not grant the grace.
necessary to meet the demand. Moreover God determined that those who do not believe in Christ should be punished eternally, and it would be unjust if God punished us for not doing something when we had no possibility whatsoever to act differently.

Following the teaching of theologian Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499–1562), the predominant opinion in Arminius’s day was that the absence of coercion establishes responsibility. If you do something spontaneously, you are responsible, even if you don’t have the ability to act differently. Arminius did not share this opinion. But he was convinced (as were his colleagues) that the Fall had very serious consequences: despite free will, we could never choose the good if God through grace did not free the will from the bonds of sin.

**GOD’S TWINFOLD LOVE**

Arminius described the foundation of Christian religion as God’s twofold love. God wants all to be saved (his second love), but not at the expense of his justice (his first love). Arminius thought that the doctrine of unconditional predestination reverses the priority of the two aspects, asserting that God loves humans and wills their salvation before God’s justice has been logically satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ.

Arminius did not want anyone to think God could be the cause of sin and evil. To him such a thought was the greatest blasphemy imaginable. Calvin, especially, had been accused that his theology made God the cause of sin. Calvin responded: who are we to measure the justice of God’s actions? God determines what is just. Other Reformed theologians were not satisfied with this appeal to mystery. Many very subtle distinctions were put forward to prove that God, in spite of appearances to the contrary, is not the author of sin.

But the view propounded by Calvin, Beza, Vermigli, and others was increasingly accepted. For theologians who thought differently, this sometimes led to a voluntary—or forced—departure of the dissenters from their posts or from the church.

Arminius recognized that it was not Calvin’s intention, nor that of his colleagues, to make God the author of sin. Yet he was convinced that this was causing many to turn their backs on the Reformed Church and creating a stumbling block for others who wished to join. For Arminius God’s justice was not a confession of faith that must be adhered to against all apparent injustice by God, but a revelation from God that formed the grounds for faith and trust in him and his honor.

Criticism of Arminius, already present when he was minister in Amsterdam, intensified when he was appointed professor of theology at the University of Leiden in 1603. Although his colleague Franciscus Gomarus (1563–1641) resolved the clashes, the same
Gomarus sharply criticized Arminius for his view of predestination as early as 1604.

This caused much uneasiness at the university, in the church, and in local politics. The States (representatives of Holland and West-Friesland) tried to mediate. Arminius made a theological declaration before the States in 1608. It was one of his last writings: tuberculosis, from which he had suffered for years, killed him in 1609.

**FIVE FLOWERING POINTS**

Arminius's death did not bring about the end of the conflict. In January 1610 around 40 ministers, led by Johannes Wtenbogaert (1557–1644), summarized their views on these themes and presented their document to the States. The five points in which they disclosed their views became known as the Five Articles of Remonstrance. Those who held them became known as “Remonstrants.” The opposition was called the “Counter-Remonstrants.”

The five controversial themes for the most part derived directly from Arminius's views on predestination, atonement, grace, the operation of grace, and perseverance. With the early Remonstrants, one could still recognize Arminius's attention to God's justice, but eventually this framework vanished. Nor did the Counter-Remonstrants use God's justice as their starting point. The controversial themes started to have a life of their own.

Finally a synod was called in November 1618 by the Dutch Reformed Church at the city of Dordrecht, or Dort, to deal with the matter. Reformed theologians from eight foreign churches (including the Church of England) also attended. The synod met until May of 1619 and, after debate, condemned the Remonstrants' position in terms that would become famous as the “five points of Calvinism.”

The Remonstrants who had attended the synod were told to cease from serving as ministers (they agreed) and to stop spreading their doctrines (they resisted). Their political protector, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547–1619), was beheaded shortly after the synod ended, and across Holland over 200 Remonstrant pastors were deprived of their positions and in some cases imprisoned or banished. The Remonstrant position would not become legal in Holland until 1795.

Meanwhile Arminianism (as it became called) lived on outside Holland. The Remonstrant version grew in influence in the Church of England; and the early English General Baptists, especially Thomas Helwys (c. 1575–c. 1616), expressed a version closer to Arminius's own. And a little more than a century later, another theologian, who didn't mean to launch a movement either, would use the term to describe his thoughts on predestination—whether thoroughly reconcilable with Arminius's original teachings or not. You may have heard of him. His name was John Wesley.

William den Boer is a postdoctoral researcher in church history at the Theological University of Kampen and the author of God's Twofold Love: The Theology of Jacob Arminius (1559–1609).
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The timeline

A century of reform

1440 Church and State
1490 Works and Culture
1500 World Events

1510
1520
1530
1540

1550
1560
1570
1580

1590
1600

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This page advertises DVDs, magazines, & timeline—alone or in bundles. It features various historical figures and events, such as Martin Luther, God's Outlaw, Zwingli & Calvin, The Radicals, and Cranmer. There is also a mention of the Reformation overview and teaching pack, as well as back issues on the Reformation available from ChristianHistoryInstitute.org.
Coming to America
THE PURITANS LEFT US A PROFOUND, AMBIGUOUS LEGACY

Malcolm Foley

THE WORD “PURITAN” invokes many reactions, not all of them pleasant—as seen in H. L. Mencken’s famous quip that Puritanism is “a haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.” But such simplification does not do justice to the complicated story, both beautiful and ugly, of these English Dissenters. When their situation in England got too intense, the Puritans took their religious ambitions, ideas, and practices to America. The effects on American culture were profound.

A THOROUGHLY PROTESTANT CITY
Their story begins in the reign of Queen Mary I of England (1516–1558). Mary, later referred to by Protestants as “Bloody Mary,” sought to take England back for Catholicism—executing almost 300 Protestants along the way, including Thomas Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury. While her reign only lasted five years (1553–1558), the ferocity of her persecution had unforeseen effects. Hundreds escaped her grasp and ran to the Continent: to the Netherlands, to Germany, and to Switzerland, especially the city of Geneva. So many ran in fact that they became known as the “Marian exiles.”

Studying under continental Reformed theologians like John Calvin (1509–1564) and Theodore Beza (1519–1565), these exiles adopted certain understandings of Protestantism and its role in the world. In Calvin and his “perfecte schoele of Criste” (as the Scottish reformer John Knox called the city of Geneva), Englishmen and women saw an example of a more thoroughly Protestant city than any that had previously existed.

State and church intertwined everywhere in the sixteenth century, but in Geneva a Protestant church was in the driver’s seat. Church discipline sniffed out even hints of “papist superstition” (like naming your child after a non-Biblical saint). When the exiles returned to England after Mary’s death, they came back with a mission: to make England a thoroughly Protestant nation.

FROM KING TO COMMONWEALTH The Puritan ascendency in English politics resulted in the execution of Charles I in 1649.

Malcolm Foley

Christian History
Upon Mary’s death her Protestant sister, Elizabeth (1533–1603), took the throne. Elizabeth did not want to alienate either her Catholic or her Protestant subjects, so she attempted to please the latter without expelling the former—supporting Protestantism theologically but allowing many Catholic practices to continue.

To the newly returned exiles, allowing “popery” a foothold was almost as bad as affirming it outright. There were still bishops. Clergy still wore Catholic vestments. Cathedrals still stood, monuments to late medieval Catholicism. A group of English Protestants influenced by the exiles refused to accept this. They called themselves “the godly.” Others sneered at them, giving them an epithet that would become the name by which we know them: “Puritans.”

By the mid-seventeenth century, tensions over church organization and polity, vestments, and the prayer book reached full boil, as James I of KJV fame (1566–1625) and Charles I (1600–1649) followed Elizabeth and maintained her middle-of-the-road policies.

Many Puritans thought polity ought to be Presbyterian—using Calvin’s fourfold offices of doctors, preachers, elders, and deacons. They denounced the Anglican hierarchy of bishops and archbishops as oppressive and unbiblical, and they argued that vestments suggested visibly that clergy and laity were two separate spiritual categories. They thought of the Book of Common Prayer as, in the famous words of one critic, “an unperfect book, culled and picked out of that popish dunghill the Mass book, full of all abominations.” Its prescription of a closely ordered service was needlessly restrictive and, to some, Holy-Spirit-quenching.

**FIGHT, FLEE, OR CONFORM**

As resistance from the king and the archbishops of Canterbury, especially William Laud, ramped up, nonconformists had the option of conforming, fighting, or fleeing to build their homes elsewhere. Some attempted to conform and maintain their distinctive piety underground. The English Civil War between 1642 and 1651 was the triumph of the fighters, who saw the marriage of church and state as the proper way to establish a thoroughly Protestant nation. For those who chose to flee, North America was an enticing option.

When they went to America, the Puritans bore their distinctive piety with them in a body of literature that painstakingly treats spiritual malaise, stagnation, and conflict. Is there a sin that continues to loom over your head, day after day, week after week? See John Owen’s *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers; the Necessity, Nature, and Means of It* (1656). Are envy and restlessness your problems? Read Jeremiah Burroughs’s *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (1648). Are you suffering and struggling to understand what Romans 8:28 means? See Thomas Watson’s *All Things for Good* (1663).
The piety of these pages illustrates the Puritans’ continual discernment of sin and unrelenting personal struggles against it. For “godly” men and women, holiness was not an option, but a requirement, an act of gratitude for the salvation that they enjoyed in Jesus Christ. Their Calvinism was lively, penetrating their minds, emotions, and souls.

The Puritan embrace of Reformed orthodoxy manifested itself in a relentless drive for consistent scriptural application. Spiritual renewal was not merely an individual project, but a communal one rooted in the covenants that God made with his people.

One of the most concrete examples of this commitment was advocacy for the Christian Sabbath. In England this was one desired Puritan reform that lasted beyond the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660 following the Civil War and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658). The Puritans took the Sabbath wholesale to the American colonies.

Theologically this was rooted in obedience to the Fourth Commandment, linking Sabbath rest to God’s rest on the seventh day of creation. Puritans, as many Christians before and after, celebrated their Sabbath on Sunday, viewing God’s initial creation in Genesis as parallel to the new creation inaugurated by Christ upon his Resurrection. That Resurrection put Christians under a light yoke, Puritans thought: to observe the Christian Sabbath by sanctifying it entirely to God, resting from work, and devoting it to worship, fellowship, and gratitude.

For the Puritans communal spiritual renewal did not stop with the community of faith. They ultimately failed to gather the power to consistently apply many of their principles to the government of England, even when they controlled Parliament (1649–1660). But even as they were failing in “Old England,” in New England they had a new opportunity to test the marriage of church and state.

“HAIL, HOLY LAND”
John Winthrop (1587–1649), lawyer and first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, preached about New England as “a city upon a hill”—hoping it would be a Christian society, inhabited and led by godly Christians committed to applying God’s word to the structures of society. John Cotton (1585–1652), another famous New England preacher, linked the settling community in New England to Israel explicitly. Just as Israel was God’s chosen people, run as a theocracy—a form of government where all authority derives from God—so the Puritans thought they were God’s chosen people and should govern themselves in the same way.

Poet Thomas Tillam wrote in “Upon the First Sight of New England” (1638):
Hail, holy land, wherein our holy Lord
hath planted his most true and holy Word.
Hail, happy people, who have dispossessed
yourselves of friends, and means, to find some rest
for your poor wearied souls, oppressed of late
for Jesus’ sake, with envy, spite, and hate....
Possess this Country; free from all annoy,
Here I’ll be with you, here you shall enjoy
my Sabbaths, sacraments, my ministry
and ordinances in their purity.

This Puritan vision inspired later ideas of America as a “Christian nation.” But though many original immigrants were faithful Christians, settlement required childbearing and new generations. Unfortunately nothing guaranteed these new generations would be as faithful as the first. The Puritans vigorously attempted
to guard against this, writing catechisms like John Cotton's *Milk for Babes, Drawn Out of the Breasts of Both Testaments* (1646) and books on family worship. But as children were born into covenant communities, they had to negotiate their own faith. It did not always turn out the way that their parents wanted.

**DANGER IN THE PROMISED LAND**

This was not the only danger. Those who did not conform to the Puritan religious establishment suffered persecution at the hands of the very people who had faced such persecution in England. Some fled the Massachusetts Bay Colony to places like Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.

And of course the “New World” was not really new. The Puritans constantly preached about the humanity of Native Americans and the need to evangelize and Christianize them, while they also slaughtered them and took their lands. Here their self-understanding as Israel led them to identify the Native Americans as Canaanites, obstacles to the Promised Land. After all if God had given them this land, who would dare stand in their way?

Interaction with Africans became an even deeper tragedy. Many of the early Puritan settlers had slaves and argued that the practice was justified. Darker African skin took on a meaning of impurity, amplified by Puritan readings of Aristotle and of contemporary English chroniclers of African life. Even while Puritans consistently preached the democratizing nature of sin and the universal invitation of the Gospel, the bodies of their neighbors were still treated as inferior under the biblical injunctions affirming slavery.

Stories range from Jonathan Edwards's cousin Stephen Williams who beat two slaves so severely they took their own lives, to William Billing's slave Caesar, publicly whipped and then sold after Caesar and Billing's daughter Lucy had a little girl together whom they named Patience. (Or as it was entered in the legal records, Caesar “wickedly and willingly had carnal knowledge of the body of Lucy Billing an English woman an infant and Daughter of William Billing.”) Lucy too was whipped. Two years later Patience died.

A few Puritans, like Judge Samuel Sewall in *The Selling of Joseph* (1700), spoke out against slavery:

> All Men, as they are the Sons of Adam, are Coheirs; and have equal Right unto Liberty, and all other outward Comforts of Life… Originally, and Naturally, there is no such thing as Slavery. Joseph was rightfully no more a Slave to his Brethren, than they were to him: and they had no more Authority to Sell him, than they had to Slay him.

But they were few and far between. Africans and Native Americans, perhaps more than any, knew whether the Puritans truly, holistically practiced what they preached. On one hand Puritan piety was impressive, and their zeal for Christ and steadfastness in the midst of persecution were admirable. On the other hand, they left a legacy of relationship with other races and faiths that never fully lived out the promise with which Tillam’s poem continues:

> But yet beware of Satan’s wily baits. He lurks among you. Cunningly he waits to catch you from me. Live not, then, secure but fight ‘gainst sin, and let your lives be pure.

Malcolm Foley is a Ph.D. student in the history of Christianity at Baylor University.
Remaking the world

FIVE MEN WITH VERY DIFFERENT IDEAS ON THE REFORM OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CATHOLICISM

Edwin and Jennifer Woodruff Tait

GIAN PIETRO CARAFA (1476–1559)

Of the man who became Pope Paul IV, a later writer said, “How so austere a person could be chosen pope was a mystery to everyone, especially to himself.” A member of a wealthy Neapolitan noble family, his uncle, cardinal and diplomat Oliviero Carafa (1430–1511), mentored him from a young age. Gian Pietro tried to join the Dominicans as a teenager, but his family objected. However he soon became a priest and was introduced into the papal court.

When Gian Pietro was about 30, Oliviero resigned the bishopric of Chieti (Theate) to allow his nephew to assume the title. The younger Carafa also served as papal ambassador to England and Spain, but in 1524 he resigned all his titles and benefices to help found a new religious order, the Theatines, which hoped to call both clergy and laity to a more virtuous and moral life. With a focus on founding oratories (chapels) and hospitals, the Theatines appointed Carafa as their first general.

In 1534 the newly consecrated Pope Paul III placed Carafa and other reform-minded clergy such as Gasparo Contarini and Reginald Pole on a commission charged with reforming the papal court (see “The road not taken,” pp. 15–18). The commission’s report, though never put into effect, did influence later changes. In 1542 Paul III reconstituted the Roman Inquisition and made Carafa (now a cardinal) inquisitor general.

After the 22-day pontificate of Marcellus II in early 1555, it surprised everyone when the 80-year-old Cardinal Carafa was elected pope as Paul IV. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who knew of Carafa’s anti-Spanish prejudices, tried to veto the election, but failed.

Carafa’s desires for reform were by all accounts sincere, but his unbending attitude toward Protestants and others and his inability to practice diplomacy created many enemies. He denounced the Peace of Augsburg between Lutherans and Catholics as heresy; attacked Pole because he disagreed with Pole’s handling of England’s return to Catholicism; refused to reassemble the suspended Council of Trent; encouraged the
Inquisition; promoted his young nephews (he made one a cardinal) despite their scandalous behavior; introduced the *Index of Prohibited Books* (which banned all Protestant books as well as translations of the Bible into Italian or German); made an alliance with France which renewed war between France and Spain; and forced Jews in Rome to live in a ghetto.

When he died in 1559, crowds rioted in Rome, pulled down his statue, and chanted the following poem: “Carafa, hated by the devil and the heavens / is buried here with his rotting corpse. He hated peace on earth, our faith he contested. / He ruined the church and the people.”

**FRANCIS XAVIER (1506–1552)**

Xavier’s early life gave no signal of his future as a traveling evangelist; he was born into wealth and privilege as the son of a high-ranking noble in Navarre (an independent kingdom between France and Spain). Spain’s conquest of much of the kingdom reduced the family’s power, and his father died when Francis was only nine. However the Xaviers were still able to send Francis to the University of Paris. There, in 1529 at age 23, he roomed with a friend, Pierre Favre (we know him in English as Peter Faber). Soon the two young students welcomed a third roommate—38-year-old Ignatius of Loyola (see “Helping souls,” pp. 6–13).

Xavier did not think much of Ignatius at first, but his influence on the two roommates was so profound that five years later, on August 15, 1534, both Faber and Xavier met with Ignatius and four other students in a crypt beneath the Church of Saint Denis in Montmartre. They vowed obedience to the pope, poverty, chastity, and the intention of making a missionary voyage to the Holy Land. This marked the beginning of the Jesuits.

The accidental Jesuit soon became an accidental Jesuit missionary. King John of Portugal wanted to send missionaries to India and had been favorably impressed by the young students. One student chosen for the mission became sick at the last moment, and Ignatius appointed Xavier in his place.

Xavier sailed for India in 1542; he began his ministry there by preaching, visiting the sick, and walking through the streets ringing a little bell to attract children to catechism lessons. In the next 10 years, he journeyed throughout India, to the Maluku Islands and other Southeast Asian islands, deep into Japan, back to India, and finally toward China.

He got as far as Shangchuan Island off of the mainland and died there while waiting for a boat. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* said in tribute, “It is truly a matter of wonder that one man in the short space of ten years . . . could have visited so many countries, traversed so many seas, preached the Gospel to so many nations, and converted so many.”

**FRANCIS DE SALES (1567–1622)**

The second of the sixteenth century’s notable Francises, Francis de Sales was born into a noble French family. His father wanted his oldest son to become a lawyer or magistrate, and de Sales took lessons in riding, dancing, and fencing to please him, but he also began a
theology degree, eventually graduating with a doctorate in law and theology at 25. His father got him a plum political appointment as a senator and arranged a marriage with a wealthy young noblewoman. But de Sales wanted to be a priest.

Ordained in 1593 he began missionary work in Chablais on the south shore of Lake Geneva, a Reformed area newly re-annexed by the Catholic duke of Savoy. He traveled on foot preaching and distributing short tracts. (For these efforts Catholics many years later made him the patron saint of journalists.) A large portion of the population eventually reconverted. In 1597 he even visited Geneva and debated Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza, on a commission from Pope Clement VIII to try to win Beza back to Catholicism.

In 1602 de Sales was named bishop of Geneva. (He actually lived in Annecy, because the Reformed controlled Geneva.) Two years later he became spiritual director to widow Jane de Chantal (1572–1641). With his help she founded the Order of the Visitation in 1610, which worked actively in the world (they were later forced to become cloistered) and took in women too old, too young, or too sick to join other groups.

In his own day, de Sales was renowned as a preacher, spiritual director, and faithful bishop. Today he is most famous for his *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609). Ironically for someone who had left law for religion, he wrote the book to encourage laypeople to seek holiness in their daily lives, noting: “It has happened that many have lost perfection in the desert who [would have] preserved it in the world.”

**CHARLES BORROMEO (1538–1584)**

Borromeo decided on a church career at the age of 12. His family was related to the Medicis, one of Italy’s most notable political dynasties, but Borromeo supposedly told his father to spend on him only what was needed for his education and to give the rest to the poor.

In 1559 Borromeo’s uncle, Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Medici, became Pope Pius IV, succeeding the much-hated Paul IV (see above). He brought his 21-year-old nephew to Rome and made him “cardinal-nephew”—an official term denoting relatives of popes made cardinals, usually nephews or illegitimate sons.

Borromeo was charged with governing the Papal States and supervising the Franciscans, Carmelites, and other orders. He also helped his uncle organize the Council of Trent’s final session and handled its correspondence. One critical nobleman remarked, “Carlo Borromeo has undertaken to remake the city from top to bottom,” adding that the young bureaucrat would “correct the rest of the world once he has finished with Rome.”

When Borromeo’s older brother died in 1562, his family tried to get him to carry on the family name, but he rededicated himself to church service. Already administrator of the Diocese of Milan, he asked to be ordained a priest and made archbishop. His uncle the pope did not let him take up his duties until he had finished up details of the Council of Trent in 1565.

The new archbishop found his diocese in terrible moral and organizational shape. An archbishop had not visited for 80 years. Borromeo reduced the size of the archbishop’s household, reformed worship according to Trent’s decrees, and established seminaries for clergy. He also founded the Confraternities of Christian Doctrine, a Sunday school that grew to over 40,000 students in 740 schools with 3,000 teachers.

One powerful group who opposed Borromeo arranged to have him shot in the arch-episcopal chapel; fortunately the assassin missed. But many loved him, especially after he remained in Milan during a 1576 famine and plague, donating money to feed 60,000 people and repurposing church hangings to clothe them. In 1583 he cruelly attempted to suppress both Protestantism and witchcraft in Switzerland and also founded the Collegium Helveticum to educate Swiss Catholics. The next year, worn-out, he died of a fever at age 46.

**ROBERT BELLARMINE (1542–1621)**

Bellarmine’s parents were well-connected but impoverished Tuscan nobles (Pope Marcellus II was...
his uncle). He joined the Jesuits in 1560 at age 22 and began to study philosophy at various universities, finally ending up at the University of Leuven in Flanders.

In 1576 Pope Gregory XIII recalled him to Rome to teach at the Jesuits' Collegio Romano; Pope Sixtus V sent him to France in 1590 to assist in a diplomatic mission; and Pope Clement VIII gave him back his teaching job in 1592, then made him successively supervisor of a Jesuit province, papal theologian, examiner of bishops, and finally—saying he “had not his equal in learning”—a cardinal in 1599.

Sometime before 1593 Bellarmine completed his most famous work, *Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith*, arguing against the divine right of kings and the supreme power of the pope in temporal affairs (it did not much please his boss).

After Sixtus died the count of Olivares wrote to King Philip III of Spain regarding Bellarmine as a possible new pope: “Bellarmine is beloved for his great goodness, but he is a scholar who lives only among books and not of much practical ability. . . . He would not do for a Pope, for he is mindful only of the interests of the Church and is unresponsive to the reasons of princes. . . . He would scruple to accept gifts. . . . I suggest that we exert no action in his favor.” Bellarmine continued to receive votes in conclaves as first Leo XI, then Paul V, then Gregory XV were elected—but never enough for election.

Today we remember Bellarmine most for an event that occurred in 1616. Pope Paul V asked the 74-year-old cardinal to speak to and correct the scientist Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), Bellarmine’s friend. The church was about to issue a decree condemning the Copernican “heliocentric” theory that the earth moved around the sun—a theory Galileo defended.

Bellarmine wrote to another heliocentric scientist, Paolo Antonio Foscarini: “If there were a true demonstration that the sun is at the center of the world and the earth in the third heaven, and that the sun does not circle the earth but the earth circles the sun, then one would have to proceed with great care in explaining the Scriptures that appear contrary. . . . But I will not believe that there is such a demonstration, until it is shown me.”

Five years later Bellarmine was dead. He did not live to see his friend Galileo called before the inquisition and convicted of heresy in 1633.

Edwin Woodruff Tait is contributing editor at Christian History. Jennifer Woodruff Tait is managing editor at Christian History. Visit ChristianHistoryInstitute.org to read bonus profiles of Reginald Pole and Gasparo Contarini, reprinted with permission from David C. Steinmetz’s Reformers in the Wings.
THE GLORIOUS TRUTH
of CHRISTIANITY

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The ecumenical dilemma

PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS—FROM THE REFORMATION UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY

John O’Malley, S.J., is University Professor in the Theology Department at Georgetown University, a Catholic priest, and a member of the Society of Jesus. Illness prevented our originally scheduled interview, but we are pleased to reprint some of his reflections from Trent and All That (2000) on how the Catholic and Protestant Reformations differed.

Since at least the early nineteenth century until recently, the questions historians of all persuasions asked was “What caused the Reformation?” . . . The answer, from all sides, was “abuses.” The next question, when one bothered to ask it, was “What impact did the Reformation have on the Catholic Church?” No matter how this question was answered, its starting point was the Reformation . . .

To be sure, Catholicism is diffuse, complex, and incoherent in ways different from early modern Protestantism. It was, for instance, doctrinally diffuse in that it did not have a single, clearly formulated teaching like justification by faith alone or, perhaps more significantly, “Scripture alone,” to give it center, and it rather gloried in the fact. The doctrinal assertions at Trent covered a wide range of teaching with a seemingly even hand. These assertions found expression, moreover, in subtle and technical “committee documents” that represented compromises and were thus incapable of packing the wallop of Luther’s tracts and polemics or even of Calvin’s Institutes. With both doctrine and discipline Trent sent out the difficult message: you must stand pat—yet things are not going to be the same . . .

Few of the popes . . . took “Catholic Reform” as the emotional center of their lives . . . With the exceptions of Paul IV and Pius V, the all-consuming passion for reform was to be found in officers outside the papacy, in prelates like Archbishop Carlo Borromeo in Milan, whose assumption of authority to reform clashed with Roman claims to rule . . . The accumulated tangle of papal bulls and briefs, canons of councils and synods, royal and ducal prerogatives, and the claims to autonomous action of cathedral chapters, local traditions, and similar titles was impossible to sort out.
Paul Rorem is Princeton Theological Seminary’s Benjamin B. Warfield Professor of Medieval Church History and an ordained Lutheran minister.

As a born, bred, and trained Lutheran I naturally approve of Luther’s biblical re-appreciation of a radically Christocentric message. Much of Luther’s writing, including hymns, resonates with me personally. As the Warfield Professor, I’m reminded of B. B. Warfield’s quip that the Reformation was “just the ultimate triumph of Augustine’s doctrine of grace over Augustine’s doctrine of the church.” Luther does stake out some territory that is not simply Augustinian, for we are put right with God (justified) by grace, not through “faith formed by love,” Luther said, but “through faith alone.”

I do see among Protestants a misperception of abrupt discontinuity between Luther and prior Christian tradition. Luther did not rediscover the Bible. Think of all the centuries of Benedictine women and men who spent their days in biblical prayer. They could sing the Psalms by heart! Nor was Luther novel in emphasizing Christ and the cross. He loved exactly that about Bernard of Clairvaux and Saint Bonaventure.

In my view the Joint Declaration brought recent ecumenical dialogues into broader public view, but was seriously over-hyped as a breakthrough agreement. “Faith alone” is still in contention, as is the enormous question of whether justification is a criterion for deciding other doctrines, such as indulgences or the Lord’s Supper. Lutherans said and say it is decisive; Roman Catholics said and say it is one doctrine among others. This impasse was evident even during the Reformation itself. When I first became editor of Lutheran Quarterly, we published a statement from hundreds of German theologians dissenting from the Joint Declaration, but that dissent was barely noticed, then or now.

There is one thing coming out of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity that gives me hope for better understanding. For generations Lutherans have perpetuated a biased story of Luther the heroic individual breaking with the distorted institutional church of the “Dark Ages,” while Roman Catholics have told of a renegade who went off the rails and led others astray. (When I first met the Roman Catholic woman who became my mother-in-law, she asked, “So, Paul. Martin Luther. He was a monk, and he went mad, right?”) It might seem impossible to do justice to both sides, but the commission’s book From Conflict to Communion (2013) does so. Credit is due to its two historian consultants, Theodor Dieter and Wolfgang Thönissen.

Ernest Freeman, father-in-law of CH picture researcher Jennifer Aves Freeman, was an Assemblies of God pastor who became Catholic in 2010. His thoughts are excerpted from the article “The Full Gospel” with his permission.

The Drill Sergeant walked into the barracks and yelled, “Who wants to go to church? Be out front in 10 minutes!” Being an 18-year-old raw recruit in desperate need of a break from military training, I decided to go. I assumed it would be a Protestant gathering; to my astonishment it was a Roman Catholic Mass. A sense of alienation set in as the Mass began; it was as if I had been transported to an alternate universe. I didn’t know what to say, what to do, or when to do it.
However, in the midst of my confusion I was stirred by the deep reverence and quiet devotion.

Although Pentecostals also had a commendable concern for holiness and obedience to scriptural precepts, it seemed to my limited understanding that in order to maintain holiness and be sure one remained a Christian, it was necessary to adhere to a list of prohibited practices—laughingly called the “Big Five”—no dancing, smoking, card playing, going to the movie theater, or drinking alcoholic beverages. Catholics did all of these things. I was taught, and believed, that Catholics were deceived, generally led dissolute lives, and likely weren’t “saved.” The first encounter with the Mass didn’t alter my thinking, but it did become part of a curiosity that took decades to flower.

Entrance into the Catholic Church is not [for me and my wife, Lois] a repudiation of our Evangelical heritage. We are humbled and thankful to God for the opportunity of service afforded us there; that tradition introduced us to the triune God, taught us to embrace the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ, and nurtured a desire to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for worship and service. For this we are eternally grateful. Not only to God, but also to the family and friends who were His instruments on our behalf.

John Armstrong is the president of ACT3 Network, an adjunct professor at Wheaton College, and an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America.

I was born into a solidly Christian home in the South. I grew up questioning injustice, prejudice, and racism—and how my church lived as if we were the best Christians in our community. I had a close friend who was a devout Catholic, and we talked a great deal about faith and practice. In 1960 my pastor told us we should not vote for a Catholic for president.

I began to doubt this anti-Catholic narrative deeply, just as I began to question the stories I’d heard about race. The more I spent time with other Christians, the less I doubted their faith. Finally, in 1992, John 17:21 profoundly altered me. I knew I had to live my life in answer to Jesus’ prayer for unity of all believers. The Holy Spirit showed me amazing and costly ways to invest my life in Christian unity.

I’ve learned to deeply love other Christians by receiving them as others loved by God and then by entering into profound friendship. From this I learned to engage in true dialogue. This opened every door that I have been through in ministry for the last 20-plus years. We need to stop telling each other what each other’s church believes and instead, take time to truly listen. Only in listening can we engage in what is called receptive ecumenism, where we receive the other and lovingly learn their faith, language, and culture. This allows us to be transformed together.

I see a growing number of young Christians who hunger for love and thus desire that we turn away from
our broken models of church as fad, function, and religion. We are family; without this costly love our family will not be healed. Costly love is the power that will bring about meaningful unity.

Thomas Baima is vice rector for academic affairs, dean of the seminary and graduate school, and professor in the Department of Systematic Theology at the University of St. Mary of the Lake, and a Catholic priest.

I was asked to fill a spot on a church commission that had to do with relations with other religious bodies. I'd never had much interest in being an “ecumenical operative”; my interest was theoretical and academic. But you don’t actually understand another community if all you do is read about them.

It became a fixed principle for me: if I was going to be in relationship with another community I had to experience them as community in their own setting, attending worship, and being with them. I think apologetics is important, and any religion has to do it. But the audience of apologetics is first of all your own co-religionists, to equip them to properly understand their own identity and faith. This is a valid and important role. But arguing others into community is not effective.

Christians should go in search of what other ecclesial communities have preserved from the apostolic tradition and be prepared to esteem them when they have preserved the gifts well. Yves Congar once said he believed the Catholic Church had preserved all of the gifts; but he added that some of the churches, though they retained only a few, had better actualized them in their ecclesial life. That got him in a little trouble in the 1930s. One of his examples was that Protestants have preserved a piety around the Scriptures which leads them to daily seek nourishment in the sacred page, to let it guide and govern their lives.

One of my friends from ecumenical work, a Baptist minister, invited me to come teach their Sunday school. On their literature rack, the first sentence of almost every tract was “Protestants broke away from Catholics during the Reformation.” I went into Sunday school and asked, “If we could get the phantom zone projector from Superman, and send the Catholic Church into the phantom zone so we aren’t here, how would you describe yourself if you couldn’t say ‘We’re not Catholic?’” This led to a fascinating conversation.

People outside the church don’t care who we’re not. We have to develop our identity with reference to Christ and Christ’s desire for the church. We all have some converting to do. Not that you have to become like me, but we both have to become what Christ originally wanted. And when we do, perhaps we can commend the good and holy in one another.
Recommended resources

Here are some recommendations from CH editorial staff and this issue’s authors to help you navigate the landscape of the Catholic Reformation and the effects of reform on into the seventeenth century.

Books


Trace Catholic attitudes toward the visual arts and piety in Franco Mormando, ed., Saints and Sinners (1999); John O’Malley et al., eds., The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773 (two volumes, 2000 and 2006); and Virginia Raguin, ed., Art, Piety, and Destruction in the Christian West, 1500–1700 (2010).

A good place to find the writings of Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross is the Classics of Western Spirituality series. Biographies of the two include Silvano Giordano, God Speaks in the Night (1991); Kieran Kavanaugh, John of the Cross (2000); Cathleen Kavenagh, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila (2002); Rowan Williams, Teresa of Avila (2004); Peter Tyler, John of the Cross (2010) and Teresa of Ávila (2014); and William Meninger, St. John of the Cross for Beginners (2014).


Graphic novels for young people are even available about Teresa (God’s Trouble-
maker by Song-I Yun) and Neri (Laughing Saint by Hyon-Ju Yi).

The Council of Trent is ably explained in John O’Malley’s Trent: What Happened at the Council (2013); for a more detailed look, consult Hubert Jedin’s multivolume The History of the Council of Trent (1951–1976). The Canons and Decrees and the Catechism of the Council of Trent are available in several English translations.

Read more about the Thirty Years’ War in C. V. Wedgwood’s classic The Thirty Years War (1938); Ronald Asch, The Thirty Years War (1997); Geoffrey Parker, The Thirty Years’ War (1997); Richard Bonney, The Thirty Years’ War 1618–1648 (2002); Peter Wilson, The Thirty Years’ War: Europe’s Tragedy (2009); and Tryntje Helfferich, The Essential Thirty Years’ War (2015).

The story of Arminius and his followers is told in Carl Bangs, Arminius (1985); Keith Stanglin, Arminius on the Assurance of Salvation (2007) and (with Thomas McCall) Jacob Arminius (2012); William den Boer, Arminius and His Declaration of Sentiments (2012).


CHRISTIAN HISTORY ISSUES
Read these past issues of Christian History online; some are still available for purchase:

- 8: Jonathan Edwards
- 28: 100 Events
- 35: Columbus
- 41: The American Puritans
- 83: Mary
- 89: Richard Baxter and the English Puritans
- 91: Michelangelo
- 100: The King James Bible
- 115: Luther Leads the Way
- 116: 25 Writings
- 118: The Peoples’ Reformation
- 120: Calvin, Councils, and Confessions

VIDEOS FROM VISION VIDEO
Videos on people and movements featured in this issue include The Agony and the Ecstasy; Catholicism; Common Ground; Ignatius of Loyola; the Pioneers of the Spirit episodes Loyola and Teresa of Ávila; Saint Philip Neri; Saints and Strangers; and This Changed Everything, the new award-winning presentation of the Reformation at 500 years.

WEBSITES
The main Jesuit website is Jesuit.org. Discalced Carmelites are at Carmelite.com (and Carmelite.org). Jesuit studies is a vast area: some websites especially helpful here are the Boston College Jesuit Bibliography; Jesuit Resource at Xavier University; Ignatian Spirituality from Loyola Press; and the Letters of Ignatius at Georgetown.

You may also find helpful some resource lists on Ignatius and early modern Catholicism and Reformation spirituality compiled by William Harmless, S.J. (They are part of bibliographies on every aspect of church history, well worth looking into.) For more on Galileo and the church, check out The Galileo Project. A list of resources on Christian ecumenism can be found at Act3Network; the Joint Declaration and From Conflict to Communion are also online.

As always, many of the Christian writings mentioned in this issue can be found at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library, at Project Gutenberg, and at the Modern History Sourcebook at Fordham University. Despite its title, the Post-Reformation Digital Library has many texts from this period available. The Wesley Center at Northwest Nazarene University has put Arminius’s works online.
Reformation Dramas 5-DVD Pack

This collection includes five classic dramas on key leaders of the Reformation:

**John Wycliffe**
This award-winning film provides valuable insight into conditions in the fourteenth-century pre-Reformation church and shows why John Wycliffe is hailed as the “Morningstar of the Reformation.” 75 minutes.

**God’s Outlaw**
William Tyndale is distinguished as the “Father of the English Bible.” This award-winning film will cause everyone to appreciate the marvel of the English Bible. Features a cast led by Roger Rees. 95 minutes.

**Martin Luther**
This dramatic black-and-white film traces Luther’s life from a guilt-burdened monk to his eventual break with the Roman Church. This SPECIAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION includes the behind-the-scenes 50-year story of the film. 105 minutes.

**The Radicals**
Discover the humble and courageous origins of the Anabaptist movement and two of its first leaders, Michael and Margaretha Sattler. Viewer discretion advised; some graphic depiction of historical persecution. 100 minutes.

**John Hus**
One hundred years before Martin Luther, John Hus’s relentless pursuit of God’s truth planted the seeds for the Reformation. He was burned at the stake in 1415, where he died singing. 55 minutes.

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Included on the DVD are PDFs of the 48-page leader’s guide with background information, discussion questions, and optional Bible study for each session, along with the 24-page student workbook.

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This Changed Everything

In anticipation of the fast-approaching 500th anniversary of one of the most important events in world history, Christian History Institute presents a new three-part documentary on the Reformation. *This Changed Everything*, hosted by actor David Suchet (star of PBS’s *Poirot* series), explores the roots and the fruits of the Reformation while grappling with difficult questions about the legacy of division.

Leading scholars from a broad range of perspectives tell the dramatic story of the Reformation, analyze its effects, and address vital questions about unity, truth, and the future of the church. The three-hour documentary also includes five hours of bonus materials, a companion guide in PDF, and optional English subtitles.

Two-Disc DVD – $24.99, #501646D

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**Luther: His Life, His Path, His Legacy**

Trace the footsteps of the great reformer, and reflect upon the places that have become inseparably connected with his name. The program combines footage from the film *Luther* with expert commentary. 90 minutes. $12.99, #501581D

**Calvin, Zwingli, and Brother Klaus**

John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and Brother Klaus (Niklaus von Flüe) were three very different men who shaped the Christian faith in Switzerland and ultimately impacted the entire world. Docu-drama, 60 minutes. $14.99, #501730D

**NEW! John Hus: A Journey of No Return**

This historically based documentary produced for Czech television features outstanding dramatized scenes that reveal Hus’s humanity and depict his unwavering commitment to God’s mercy and justice. 51 minutes. $14.99, #501736D

**Knox**

This presentation follows John Knox as he makes his epic journey from Catholic priest to passionate Protestant preacher facing down the most famous Scottish queen of all time. 77 minutes. $14.99, #501677D

**A Man Named Martin, Part 1**

This program gives important historical background and explains the key doctrines expounded by Luther. Luther’s tenacity and bravery inspired a Reformation that reverberated throughout the centuries. 80 minutes. $12.99, #501661D

**A Man Named Martin, Part 2**

Examine the semiscriptural and oft-times unethical teachings and doctrines of the late medieval church and how Luther addressed them. Discover the cultural and religious milieu in which Luther operated. 65 minutes. $14.99, #501713D

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All 7 DVDs above for only $59.99, #97443D. Save $51!

for only $89.99, #97442D. Save $71!

Isaac Hecker and the Journey of Catholic America

The United States was founded on the ideals of religious liberty and individualism, concepts that to many seemed diametrically opposed to Roman Catholicism. But one man sought to show that the Catholic faith and American values are not incompatible. Using popular communication methods of his day, Isaac Hecker became a courageous voice for Catholicism in nineteenth-century America. Given the hostility between the Old World and the New, Hecker’s ministry earned the derision of both his fellow Americans as well as many in the Catholic hierarchy in Rome.

*Isaac Hecker and the Journey of Catholic America* features the voices of Martin Sheen (*The West Wing*), Matt McCoy (*The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*), Bob Gunton (*The Shawshank Redemption*), Jay O. Sanders (*JFK, The Day After Tomorrow*), and David Ushery (*WNBC, News 4 New York*) as well as interviews from some of the leading historians and clergy in North America.

Isaac Hecker’s story is ultimately an American story about someone who not only spent his life trying to experience God acting in the world, but who also tried to build bridges so others could join him on that journey. No matter what one’s religious background might be, *Isaac Hecker and the Journey of Catholic America* is a story for all spiritual seekers about someone whose life continues to impact our society today.

**Order this 52-minute DVD for only $14.99, #501755D.**