

YEAR TWO / SECTION TWO

REFORMATION & COUNTER-REFORMATION

What was the Reformation?

The Reformation was a time in the History of Europe, when some people began to question some of the Teachings of The Catholic Church and to challenge the authority of the Pope. It began in Germany in 1517 as a protest against abuses in the Church. The supporters of this desire for reform were called “**Protestants**”.

What caused the Reformation?

- ❑ The abuses within the Church – **SIMONY** – The selling of positions/jobs in the Church. **NEPOTISM** – The giving of positions in the Church to members of one’s family. **ABSENTEEISM** – The practice of Bishops never visiting their dioceses. **PLURALISM** – The practice of Bishops being in charge of many dioceses at the same time.
- ❑ The wealth of the Church.
- ❑ The Catholic Church was badly organised [a] Popes and Bishops paid no attention to their duties as Churchmen and instead lived like Princes, fighting and spending vast amounts of money. [b] Priests were uneducated and often could not even read the Bible. [c] People were ignorant of their religion.
- ❑ The influence of the ideas of The Renaissance.
- ❑ The Printing Press.
- ❑ The desire of the Kings of Europe to extend their power.

All of these abuses came together in Germany in the 16 century when an Augustinian Priest called **Martin Luther** questioned the way the Church was being run.

MARTIN LUTHER- 1483 – 1546.

Born in Saxony in 1483 he first studied to become a lawyer but after a life threatening experience he changed his mind and became a priest. He eventually became Professor of Theology at **Wittenberg University**. Luther was a holy man who worried about the salvation of his soul; he believed that only Faith in God could get a man to heaven. In 1517 a monk called John Tetzel arrived in Wittenberg selling Indulgences (forgiveness for all the sins a person had committed in life). Luther protested and nailed **95 Thesis** to the door of the Cathedral. In 1520 the Pope sent a letter to Luther called **Exurge Domine**, threatening to throw Luther out of the Church. Luther burned the letter in public.

In 1521 Luther was summoned to the **Diet Of Worms** by the Emperor Charles V to discuss the situation. Luther refused to withdraw his ideas unless he could be proven wrong by the Bible. After this Luther took refuge with **Frederick of Saxony**, he spent a year here translating the bible into German and refining his ideas.

Luther's main ideas;

- Justification by Faith alone.
- There were only two Sacraments, Baptism and The Eucharist.
- The bible is the only source of Christian Teaching, not the Bishops.
- Clergy should be allowed to marry.
- Luther replaced the Latin Mass with a Communion Service in German.
- He rejected the Church's belief in **Transubstantiation**, {the belief that at communion The Bread and Wine are totally replaced by the Body and Blood of Christ}. He chose instead to believe in **Consubstantiation** – That both the Bread and Wine and The Body and Blood of Christ are present at Communion.
- Kings should be the Heads of the church in their own Kingdoms.

After this Luther's ideas spread rapidly. His new religion became known as Lutheranism and eventually became the main religion in Northern Germany, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. Luther himself married a nun named Catherine Von Bora and he died in 1546.

The Results of Luther's Reformation.

- Germany was divided – the North became Protestant while the South remained Catholic.
- In 1546, after Luther's death war broke out between the Catholics and Protestants. It lasted nine years and neither side won, this led to **The Peace of Augsburg**, which stated that each King could decide the Religion of his own Kingdom.
- The bible was translated into most European languages for the first time and its use became widespread.
- Education and the ability to read became more widespread.

THE CATHOLIC COUNTER – REFORMATION;

As Protestantism spread across Europe, the Catholic Church was faced with a crisis. It had to reform. The efforts the Catholic Church made to reform itself and to stop the spread of Protestantism are known as the Counter – Reformation. These efforts included;

- The Council of Trent 1545 – 1563.
- The founding of new Religious Orders, such as the Jesuits.
- The Court of the Inquisition.

The Council of Trent 1545 – 1563;

This was a meeting of all of the Bishops in the Catholic Church to decide what to do. It met on three separate occasions over 18 years. It ruled on two topics;

- **Matters of Faith.**
 - (1) Faith **and** Good Works are necessary for Salvation.
 - (2) The Word of God is found in the Bible **and** the Teachings of the Church.

- (3) There are **seven Sacraments**.
- (4) Priests are special people – they cannot marry.
- (5) The Pope is the only head of the Church on Earth.

- **Matters of Discipline.**

- (1) Simony, Pluralism, Nepotism and Absenteeism were abolished.
- (2) Catholics must study the Catechism.
- (3) Bishops are not called to be wealthy, but to serve the Glory of God.
- (4) Catholics were forbidden to read certain books.
- (5) The images of Jesus and Mary were to be venerated in all Churches.

The Results of The Council of Trent.

- 1) The Catholic Church became better organised.
- 2) Catholicism remained the most important Christian Religion in Europe.
- 3) Divisions between Catholics and Protestants became more clearly defined.

New Religious Orders – The Jesuits.

Ignatius Loyola 1491 – 1556;

Ignatius Loyola was born in 1491 in the North of Spain. He became a soldier, who had no time for religion. At the age of 30 in 1521 his leg was smashed by a cannonball at the Battle of Pamplona. He moved in with his sister while recuperating and it was here that he asked for something to read to relieve the boredom. She gave him a book on the life of Jesus Christ – it changed him forever. When he was recovered he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and while there he resolved to dedicate his life to God by becoming a priest.

In 1534 while studying at the University of Paris he and six friends decided to take Religious Vows. Ignatius wrote a book called “The Spiritual Exercises” to help Catholics guide their lives as followers of Jesus Christ. In 1540 Pope Paul III, the Reforming Pope approved the rules which Ignatius had drawn up for his followers and the Jesuits were born. Ignatius died in 1556. The Jesuits were organised like an army, its members following very strict discipline.

The Work of the Jesuits;

- They saw their job as “spreading the Christian Faith through public preaching, spiritual exercises, deeds of charity and the training of the young and the ignorant in Christianity”
- They formed schools and colleges to teach the sons of the wealthy, believing that these men were the future people of influence in their countries.
- They became missionaries through out the world, where they spread the Catholic Faith. The best known of these was St. Francis Xavier who went to India.
- All Jesuits were to be educated to the highest possible standard so that they could defend the Catholic Faith against the new Protestant ideas in public.

The Court of The Inquisition;

These were special Church Courts set up to deal with those people who had been accused of Heresy. People were tortured to confess and encouraged to spy on their neighbours. Anybody who came before the Court was presumed to be guilty and had to prove their innocence. Various punishments were used including flogging and burning at the stake known as Auto Da Fé. The Court was especially strong in Spain and Italy and as a result Protestantism was wiped in both of those countries.

THE RESULTS OF THE REFORMATION;

- ❑ Europe was divided, with the North becoming Protestant and the South remaining Catholic.
- ❑ Many Civil Wars broke out over which Religion a Country should adopt e.g. The 30 Years war.
- ❑ Intolerance and persecution increased as each Religion tried to destroy the other.
- ❑ Art and Architecture changed as Catholic Churches became more richly decorated and Protestant Churches were very plain.
- ❑ Education became very important – Protestants wanted everyone to be able to read the Bible, while Catholics wanted everyone to be able to understand the arguments of the Protestants.

Sources' used include; "Door to the Past" R.Quinn & D O Leary, Folens 2002 and "Focus on the Past", G.Brockie & R Walsh Gill & McMillan 1997.