

Councils, Confessions, Creeds, and Catechisms

The Council of Trent – 1545-1563 (25 sessions)

Historical context:

The Reformation:

Saturday, October 31, 1517, Luther posted his 95 theses in Wittenberg
John Calvin, Philip Melancthon, Heinrich Bullinger, and Martin Bucer were
the prominent voices in the reformation movement.

The establishment of the five solas: *Scriptura, Fide, Gracie, Christus, Deo Gloria*

The traditional practices of the Roman Catholic church:

The abuse of the authority of the priests.

The absolute authority of the church by tradition and papal headship.

The sale of indulgences.

The exploitation of an illiterate audience.

The ecumenical goal of the council:

The council was called by and for the Roman Catholics to respond to prevalent reformed doctrine.

The council wished to hear from prominent reformers, but there was mistrust among the reformers.

Reactionary issues:

Concerning the Scriptures:

- * The church has ultimate authority in Bible interpretation
- * The Bible shares authority with church tradition
- * The Apocrypha is to be included in the Bible

Concerning salvation:

- * Justification comes by faith AND works
- * The sacramental (not ordinance) eucharist is a repetitive propitiatory sacrifice of Christ because of transubstantiation resulting from the priest's prayer of consecration.

Concerning church polity:

- * Reforms in the sale of indulgences. (Does the Roman Catholic church still sell indulgences? Pope Paul VI made the last reforms in 1967. See https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-vi_apc_01011967_indulgentiarum-doctrina.html)
- * Ordination of priests conveys a higher element of holiness.

General concerns:

- * The reality of purgatory as an intermediate state where remaining sins of life can be atoned
- * The invocation of saints as better intermediaries before God
- * The veneration of relics wherein physical things have spiritual ability, content, or potential. (This connects to the seven sacraments that spiritualize physical elements. Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme unction, Holy Orders, Matrimony)