

CHAPTER 5

ROME'S COUNTER REFORMATION AND THE JESUITS

ROME IN TROUBLE

The "Beast" was 'wounded', and it struck out in every direction, but the seeds of Protestantism spread like a prairie fire, all over Europe; it could not be contained. Rome was in deep trouble, a serious crisis, unlike any before. What to do, what to do? To Rome there was only one answer; more force, more brute force, to make all comply; so the Inquisition was revitalized. The minds of the people had been opened to great understanding, and in face of the most fiercest and savage oppressions, to the cruelest tortures and the most horrible of deaths, they fearlessly met them all for the sake of truth; to breathe liberty, to live a life free from Rome's corruption and bondage was valued greater than life itself.

America has always been hailed as the nation which offered refuge and a haven of liberty and freedom for those who were persecuted and oppressed. It was the land of the free and home of the brave, where liberty and freedom rings. Over and over this American virtue is brought to our attention, so as to contrast it with other nations, and rightly so. But have you ever considered this: if people were seeking liberty and freedom, they must have been fleeing a land that prohibited it. And so a very sober and profound question must be asked; who and what were they running away from? If you know history, especially Church history, then you know what the answer is.

Most today can not give the correct answer, and there is a reason for that. Obviously, so that the answer becomes vague and confused in our minds, no longer is the history of the Reformation taught, or the Inquisition explained, or the 'battle-name' Protestant used. Nor is it explained today, that because Roman Catholics are taught and believe that their allegiance is 'first' to Rome, instead to the country where they live, they were during the colony years of this nation, forbidden to hold public offices. What is gained by clouding these issues? It is simply this. Because this history, these terms, this fearsome struggle, that was won at such an awesome price, must be erased from our thinking. We must now be led to believe that Rome has changed, that her past has actually been maligned, and that she is really good, innocent, and benevolent.

Rome was shaken terribly by the advances of the Protestant Reformation, and vigorously entered into a counter offensive; what history records as the Counter-Reformation. But with the resurgence of sheer force, Rome fully underestimated those who had been enlightened, who had tasted the freedom of conscience in the true worship of Christ, who could no longer accept Rome's absurdities, or be forced by her brutalities as a means to exploit them. And so Rome after many horrifying years, finally came to realize, if the "wound" was to be "healed", she must change her tactics. It became expedient then, in order to gain confidence and win the world back into her fold, she must alter her course, she needed to implement a very different stratagem. Marvelous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Roman Church. It is a part of Rome's policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose, but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon, she conceals the deadly venom of the viper.

JESUITS FOUNDED

Martin Luther was excommunicated in 1521. In 1540, a former military man named Ignatius Loyola, mortified by the advances of Protestantism, resurrected the original Templar ideal of the warrior-monk, the soldier of Christ, and created his own such soldiery. Unlike the Templars however, Loyola's soldiery would crusade not with the sword (though perfectly prepared to let others wield it on their behalf), but with the word.

Thus was born what Loyola called the Company of Jesus — until the Pope, recoiling from the explicit military connotations of 'Company', insisted it be changed to 'Society'. In their martial structure and organization, in their far-flung network of 'provinces', in their rigid discipline, the Jesuits were, by Loyola's own admission, modelled on the Templars. Indeed, they often acted as military advisors and ordnance experts, as well as high level diplomats and ambassadors. Like the Templars, the Jesuits were nominally subject only to the Church; but like the Templars, the Jesuit Order is an absolute monarchy. Their General, who they affectionately call "the Black Pope", (because of his black robe) rules for life. The pattern of their own Order has molded their thinking about all other political structures, including the Vatican.

The Jesuits are different. Every Catholic priest knows this. They are so different in their priestly deportment and social conduct, that other priests feel ill at ease and uncomfortable in their presence. Lay people also think that Jesuits are different. They speak of the Society of Jesus as the "educated clergy" — the "teaching arm of the church". They have the most schools — which is true. The Jesuits write the most books — which is also true. In fact it is said that any Jesuit who can pen one word after another seems forced "under obedience" to write a book. And in return, mountains of books have been written about the Jesuits. However, there can be no denying the fact that the Jesuits possess a hard core of extremely intelligent, intensely loyal, politically shrewd, carefully calculating individuals. This has been so since the days of their founder, Ignatius of Loyola, began leading his fellow-students into his peculiar methods of indoctrination: the "Spiritual Exercises".

Strict unconditional obedience and submission to one's superior is incontestable the 'first' in the summary of Jesuit Order rules. Not the same as regular military obedience which controls only exterior acts, but it requires the sacrifice of the will and laying aside of one's own judgement. Besides, amongst the Jesuits, not only the will, but also reasoning and even moral scruples, must be sacrificed to the first virtue of obedience, which is the strongest rampart of their Society. The Jesuits must be in the hands of their superiors as 'a corpse in the undertaker's hands', as a staff obeying every impulse, as a ball of wax which can be shaped and stretched in any direction.

Loyola wrote, "Let us be convinced that all is well and right when the superior commands it" and "we must see black as white, if the Church says so". The Jesuit must be totally subjected to his masters; any doubt or any scruple would be imputed to him as sin. And something even better: the Jesuit must see in his superior not a fallible man, but Christ Himself. Here is a proven fact: in their "Constitutions" it is repeated five hundred times that one must see Christ in the person of their General. Thus with fourteen years of this intense brand of education, the Jesuit is prepared as the 'strike force' for the Roman Church.

The Spiritual Exercises become the initiation which begins the development of the Jesuit recruits. From the very beginning, they are carried off into Occult hallucinatory mysticism. It is not needed to explain to any student of Scripture what 'spirit' this mysticism comes from. Religious mystics normally interpret their ecstasy or trances in terms of real contact with God. Preceded by intense meditation and profound concentration, with the aid of a "director", the individual becomes oblivious to the world of external reality, and enters into an altered state of consciousness.

The sincere Mystic while in this state, may experience deep emotional revelations or intellectual adventures of great significance to him. When produced by more emotionally and demanding techniques, such as Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, the effects become more permanent. The candidate's sensitiveness becomes impregnated with these spiritual forces, whose persistence in his memory, and even more so in his subconscious, will be as strong years later as at the beginning; they coming up to the surface, and being unable to oppose, he will have to follow their irresistible impulses. It is understandable that after four weeks devoted to these intensive Exercises with a director as his only companion, the candidate would be ripe for his subsequent training in discipline and subordination.

COUNCIL OF TRENT

To stem the increasing tide of the advancing work of the Reformation, three main efforts were employed by Rome as it embarked on its Counter-Reformation. These were the Inquisition, the newly authorized Jesuit Order, and the calling

of a Church council, which was held in Trent, Italy. Pope Paul III, on 21 June 1542, issued his proclamation announcing the establishment of the Inquisition in Rome as a central authority for all countries committed to the struggle against those who were accused of "heresy". The call for a new council was voiced increasingly by both secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries, while in Rome the Papal Inquisition began its work. After several set backs, the Council of Trent began its deliberations in 1545. The council was in session, on and off, for 18 years until 1563, although the actual working time was only about 4 1/2 years.

The excommunication and condemnation of Martin Luther and his teachings, 25 years earlier, failed utterly to have its desired effect. Since 1520, Paul III's entire Catholic world had been falling down around his ears where nearly half of Europe had turned away from the "one holy Catholic Church". The Protestant revolt in Germany and England had rapidly eaten its way into France, Holland, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia, and had infected every other country. It had shattered the once universally accepted papal authority; successfully attacked basic Catholic notions about priesthood, Eucharist, Sacraments, grace, episcopal office, emptied thousands of convents and monasteries, liquidated the unity of Catholic belief, converted whole nations to the new faith, and inspired both political and military alliances aimed at the physical destruction of Pope Paul III's papacy.

There was a great and urgent need for the Council of Trent, in that Rome was foundering terribly, and the success of that Council ranks as one of the most important in the history of Catholicism. Its great priorities were to state Catholic doctrine in view of the Protestant position, to fully reassert her authority among dissenting factions, and give the appearance of reforms where needed. The career of the new Jesuit Order was launched when Pope Paul III chose them to represent him in the capacity of "pontifical theologians".

Pope Paul III was not disappointed in his choice in employing the Jesuits to become the champions of Catholic unity. The Jesuits Lainez and Salmeron entered upon their work at the Council of Trent with so much promptitude and great zeal, that they won for their Order the confidence of the Popes and Church for all time. Working untiringly, and with much

cunning and clever maneuvers, they succeeded in defeating the opposition and all "heretic" claims, especially any reform of the papacy. Lainez himself, by a forceful counter-attack, upheld pontifical infallibility, asserting that Catholic unity can be assured only through an effective submission to Christ's vicar, the pope. The Holy See emerged from the Council of Trent strengthened from the crisis where it nearly foundered, as a result of the steadfast actions of the Jesuits. The Holy See recognized the strength and power this new Order would bring to the Church.

The so called reforms of the Roman Church during the Council of Trent, were emphatically not changes or reforms in her false doctrines; theological topics, according to Scripture, were put aside. Instead, it was internal reforms that strengthened and consolidated the discipline of the priests, the monitoring of heretics, the need for dioceses to be visited regularly and reported on, the authorization procedure for publication of books, especially the Bible, the legal powers of the bishops, the supervision of education in the schools, among many other issues; so that direct control could be tightened and the well-being of the Church ensured. Above all, was the Council's definition of heresy made paramount, with new ways for combating it devised.