Chapter 4

Early Modern Catholicism 1500–1800

Most books until recently have given the title ‘Counter-Reformation’ to this period of Catholic history, at least to the part of it covering 1540 to 1700. The description ‘Early Modern Catholicism’ has been favoured of late and it seems to me better, especially for a chapter covering all three centuries. Responding to the Protestant challenge was at the forefront of Catholicism for a long time, but much else was happening within the Catholic church.

The sections in the chapter cover, accordingly, both developments within Catholicism that were responses to the Protestant Reformation and those that depended on other factors. Section i surveys the fortunes of the Catholic church within the countries that made up western Christendom in 1500: the geography of contraction and some recovery. The second to fourth sections focus on the papacy, the council of Trent, and religious orders. Section v turns to missionary work and the establishment of the Catholic church outside Europe. Section vi surveys developments in popular religion and the arts. A brief conclusion summarizes the significance of the period.

i. Extent of Catholicism within Europe

The beginning of the Protestant Reformation is usually dated to the year 1517 when Martin Luther – according to the traditional account – nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg in Germany. The theses were primarily an attack on indulgences, in particular those that were being offered by the Dominican preacher Johann Tetzel and his companions in return for suggested money offerings to help pay for the rebuilding of St Peter’s church in Rome. To this emotive issue of indulgences Luther soon added many others: the papacy and other aspects of church organization, the sacraments, much of Catholic piety and devotional life including religious orders. At root were his emphases upon Scripture almost to the exclusion of Tradition and church authority, and upon justification by faith almost to the exclusion of good works. Martin Luther was a brilliant preacher and writer, a master of the German language, which he used to great effect in writing hymns and translating the New Testament into his native language. Long before his death in 1546, he was the undisputed leader of the Reformation, with appeal well beyond the German-speaking world.

John Calvin emerged as the second major founder of the Protestant Reformation. He followed Martin Luther in many respects while taking these positions to what he considered their logical conclusions. He was an able organizer and made Geneva (now in Switzerland), where he lived from 1541 until his death in 1564, the centre of his influence. There he established the Genevan Academy, which acted as a college for training Reformed ministers throughout Europe. His *Institutes* provided in a single volume a comprehensive compendium of teaching, whose enormous circulation was unmatched by any other work of the Reformation. Besides Luther and Calvin, there were many other personalities of note, but the third crucial contribution to the

Reformation came from England. There the Anglican Church emerged gradually during the sixteenth century, beginning with king Henry VIII's breach with Rome in 1534 over the matter of his divorce and taking more definitive shape during the long reign of queen Elizabeth (1558–1603).

The Catholic church was slow to confront the challenge. Despite many virtues in the Renaissance papacy, worldliness and immorality persisted during the reigns of Leo X (1513–21) and Clement VII (1523–34). As a result, the papacy remained open to many of the criticisms that Reformers were making. Early on Luther appealed to a general council to resolve the crisis, though quickly he moved his appeal to Scripture. The papacy also proved reluctant to call a new general council partly from fear that it might revive the ghost of conciliarism and partly because Lateran V (1512–17), a general council of the western Church, had only recently completed its work. In its final decree, just three months before Luther posted his ninety-five theses at Wittenberg, this council declared as follows, in eerie unawareness of what would soon occur:

> *Finally, it was reported to us (pope Leo X) on several occasions, through the cardinals and prelates of the three committees (of the council), that no topics remained for them to discuss and that over several months nothing at all had been brought before them by anyone.*

Another reason for the slowness of the Catholic church's response to the Protestant challenge was widespread sympathy, even among those who would remain Catholic, for many of the Reformers' criticisms of a more practical nature, while the seriousness of the doctrinal issues became fully apparent only gradually.

Calls for reform had featured within the late medieval Church, as we have seen in the last chapter, and they continued thereafter. As a result, some historians prefer to speak of 'Catholic Reform' throughout the sixteenth century on the grounds that the reforms emerged essentially from within the Catholic community. This analysis is partly correct. Nevertheless reforms especially after about 1540 were much influenced by the Protestant Reformation, as responses to this challenge, so the term Counter-Reformation is also appropriate. Three crucial elements in this Counter-Reformation will be discussed in the following sections of the chapter: the reformed papacy, the council of Trent, and new religious orders. Gradually the Catholic church regained confidence and initiative.

Borders ebbed and flowed considerably during the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth. There were religious wars within Germany and Switzerland; the prolonged 'Wars of Religion' in France during the second half of the sixteenth century; the struggles which brought about the Dutch republic, its independence from Spanish rule and the establishment of a Calvinist church there. The development of the Anglican Church in England was interrupted by the Catholic reign of queen Mary (1553–8). Many were killed on both sides in the various countries, as combatants or casualties in the fighting and some more directly as martyrs for their faith. In England there were between 250 and 300 Protestants martyrs during the reign of Mary and approximately the same number of Catholics in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

When the Thirty Years War ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, roughly half the countries of western Christendom were officially or predominantly Protestant, principally in a Lutheran, Calvinist or Anglican form: much of Germany, all of Scandinavia, the (northern) Netherlands, England and Scotland, much of Switzerland, significant groups in France and in many other countries. Spain, Portugal, Belgium (the southern Netherlands) and Italy remained Catholic; France, too, with the conversion of king Henry IV in 1593 proving a decisive moment – 'Paris is worth a Mass', he is reported as saying – though the Protestant 'Huguenot' communities were accorded a measure of official protection until king Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Ireland remained predominantly Catholic, though the country was ruled mainly by Protestant Anglophiles. Poland and much of eastern Europe, and many of the states into which Germany was divided, also remained officially or predominantly Catholic. In addition, there were Catholic minorities in all the Protestant countries, varying in size and in the toleration which they were accorded; likewise Protestant minorities, though for the most part rather smaller, in Catholic countries.

After 1648, changes in the overall geography of Catholicism in Europe were relatively minor. England briefly had a Catholic king, James II who reigned from 1685 until his expulsion in 1688. Catholic minorities in some Protestant countries grew in size, though for the most part very slowly. Muslim advances continued to impinge upon the eastern frontiers of western Christendom. Vienna was besieged by a large Turkish army in 1683 and relieved only with great difficulty by the Catholic army led by John Sobieski. This was the furthest west into central Europe that Muslim forces would reach, but the slow decline of the military threat from Islam took time to become evident. Within Catholic countries there was some distancing from Rome and the papacy, a move towards national churches: Gallicanism in France, Febronianism in Germany, and similar movements in Spain, Portugal and Austria. Despite the tensions, all these countries remained within the Catholic church.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century much of Europe, including many Catholic countries, was convulsed by the French Revolution of 1789 and its repercussions abroad. For a time the survival of the Catholic church, almost the continuity of Christianity, seemed threatened. The threat passed, as we shall see in Chapter 5. Regarding population, we have already noted the peak in the Catholic population of around sixty million in 1300. By 1750 the worldwide Catholic population may be estimated to have grown to some one hundred million, the large majority living in Europe, a rise therefore of some 50 per cent or more.

ii. Papacy

The popes of the early sixteenth century retained many of the features of their immediate predecessors, including their patronage of the arts. Regarding the Protestant challenge, pope Leo X took the decisive steps of condemning various of Luther's teachings in 1520 in the bull *Exsurge Domine*, and excommunicating him in the following year after Luther had publicly burnt a copy of the bull. He also bestowed the title *Defensor fidei* on king Henry VIII of England in 1521 in recognition of the book he published in defence of the seven sacraments against the criticisms of Luther, a title that still remains today on British coins in the discreet

form of ‘F.D’. The pontificate of Clement VII was devastated by the sack of Rome in 1526, when the Catholic troops of Charles V, king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, plundered the city and held the pope captive for over a year. During Clement’s reign, too, England moved towards schism as the pope refused to annul king Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon and thereby allow him to wed Anne Boleyn.

The years of Paul III (1534–49) proved decisive for Catholic reform. In many ways Paul was typical of the Renaissance popes in his patronage of architects and artists, notably Michelangelo, the promotion of his relatives to offices, the lavish style of his papal court and, in earlier life, his moral laxity – he had kept a mistress who bore him three sons and a daughter. As pope, however, his personal morality was austere and he set the tone for a succession of determined and able popes. Very important, too, was his summoning of the council of Trent, which first met in 1545, and his promotion of new religious orders, including the Society of Jesus which he formally approved in 1540. He was responsible for the reorganization of the Inquisition into a Congregation of the Roman curia, ‘The Inquisition or Holy Office’ (*Sacra Congregatio Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis seu Sancti Officii*), thereby increasing the scope of its authority and its direct links with the papacy. A large building to accommodate the Congregation was constructed later in the sixteenth century. It can be seen today, still the office of the Congregation – which was renamed ‘The Holy Office’ (*Congregatio Sancti Officii*) in 1908 and ‘Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’ (*Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei*) in 1965 – to the left of the colonnade in front of St Peter’s church.

Throughout the following century the papacy bore many of the characteristics of Paul III’s pontificate. Popes Julius III and Pius IV maintained the council of Trent in session until it completed its monumental work in 1563. The papacy then played a key role in the implementation of the council’s decrees. A succession of popes continued to promote religious orders, both the older orders and some of those newly founded. Missionary work beyond Europe was encouraged. Paul III’s establishment of the Inquisition congregation was complemented by a wider reorganization and strengthening of the Roman curia under pope Sixtus V (1585–90), with arrangements that entitle Sixtus to be considered the founder of the modern Curia. An important addition in 1622 was Propaganda congregation (*Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei*), which was established by pope Gregory XV for the Church’s missionary territories.

The papacy became involved in various theological controversies within the Catholic church. Clement VIII established a committee (*Congregatio de Auxiliis*) in 1597 to deal with the heated debate between Jesuit and Dominican theologians regarding the relationship between divine grace and human free will. Finally, after ten years of discussion, pope Paul V ruled eirenically that the Dominicans could not be justly accused of Calvinism nor the Jesuits of Pelagianism, and neither side should pronounce the other teaching heretical. Very unfortunate, however, was the condemnation by the Inquisition, acting with papal approval, of Galileo’s teaching of heliocentrism (that the earth moves round the sun). A series of judgments, during the pontificates of Paul V (1605–21) and Urban VIII (1623–44), preferred a literal interpretation of some biblical passages to Galileo’s observations through the telescope. Only recently has

the papacy openly acknowledged the mistaken nature of this condemnation. Widely praised and eventually followed in Protestant countries was pope Gregory XIII's reform of the Calendar in 1582. The core of the reform consisted in dropping ten days (5–14 October 1582) so that the calendar was brought up to date with the reality of the seasons.

In treating with Protestant rulers, popes showed firmness more than accommodation. Pope Pius V's bull *Regnans in excelsis* in 1570 declared queen Elizabeth of England excommunicated on the ground of heresy. More controversially, it declared her right to the English throne forfeit and laws made by her invalid and it encouraged English people to depose her. As a result, Catholics could be regarded as traitors and most of the English martyrs met their fate in this way, suffering the horrible death proper to traitors of being hung, drawn and quartered. The papacy gave encouragement to the king of Spain to depose Elizabeth and to the ill-fated Spanish Armada in 1588. In France, Henry of Navarre had to wait for two years, following his conversion to Catholicism in 1593, before pope Clement VIII would recognize him as the legitimate king.

Popes continued to support Christian crusades against Muslim forces, even though by now the hope of recapturing the Holy Land and Jerusalem was little more than a dream. Pope Pius V contributed both moral and material support to the 'Christian League' which gained in 1571 an important naval victory over the Turkish fleet near Lepanto in the eastern Mediterranean. In the seventeenth century, the papacy supported Catholic countries during the Thirty Years War and refused to accept the concluding Peace of Westphalia in 1648 because it recognized the existence of Protestant countries and governments. However, the Peace proved a turning point for the papacy. Popes thereafter gradually came to terms with the permanence of Protestant countries, yet finding them right outside their authority they turned their attention more exclusively to Catholic affairs.

In important ways the period up to about 1750 saw a strengthening of papal authority within the Catholic church. The continuing and radical criticisms of the papacy on the part of Protestant reformers led most Catholics, in reaction, to emphasize loyalty to the pope and the crucial importance of the papacy within the Church. Important, too was pope Pius IV's establishment in 1564 of a Congregation of the Roman curia (subsequently called *Congregatio concilii*) to rule on any disputed points regarding the interpretation of the decrees promulgated by the council of Trent. In this way the papacy gained an important measure of control over the implementation of this hugely influential council. Doctrinal disputes within the Catholic church were quite restricted, partly as a result of Trent's comprehensiveness and partly because Catholics valued their doctrinal unity in the face of the continuing Protestant challenge. The papacy was considered a central feature of this doctrinal unity. Those doctrinal disputes that occurred were confined to particular groups and did not seriously call into question papal authority as such: the *De auxiliis* dispute and the controversy over Galileo, just mentioned; Jansenism, mainly in France, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: and the Chinese rights controversy in the eighteenth century. Indeed, inasmuch as the papacy was recognized as an arbiter in these controversies, papal authority was enhanced.

Conciliarism remained alive but it did not constitute a serious alternative to papal government,

such as it had been in the fifteenth century. The success of the council of Trent meant there was no urgent need of another general council for a long time: paradoxically the success of this council reduced the threat of conciliarism. The college of cardinals never regained the high measure of authority it had held during the papal schism and the ensuing councils of Constance and Basel. Cardinals remained important but more as individuals in the countries in which they resided or in the Roman curia, where they were firmly subject to papal authority. They came together only to elect a new pope.

The papacy entered again into seriously troubled waters in the second half of the eighteenth century. The new threats came principally from Catholic countries. National churches, with a fair measure of autonomy from Rome, had been a feature of much of western Christendom in the later Middle Ages, as we have seen. This pattern continued in many Catholic countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the Gallican church in France, for example, or in Spain where the monarchy exercised much control over the church. Events took a more radical turn around 1750. Authoritarian monarchs in France, Spain and Austria wanted further control over the Catholic church within their dominions. Febronianism in Germany took its name from Johann von Hontheim, suffragan bishop of Trier, who acted as ecclesiastical adviser to the three prince-archbishops of Mainz, Trier and Cologne and who wrote under the pseudonym 'Justinus Febronius'. Von Hontheim attacked what he regarded as medieval and later accretions of papal power and sought to restrict papal authority to purely spiritual matters. The three prince-archbishops, joined by the archbishop of Salzburg, formally endorsed these views in 1786 in a document known as the 'Punctation of Ems' – Ems being the city where the document was drawn up. Various Catholic monarchs and their advisers, notably the Marquis of Pombal in Portugal, showed particular hostility to the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) on account of the order's supra-national character and its loyalty to the papacy. Pope Clement XIV was persuaded to suppress the order in 1773.

Following the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, events took a still more serious turn for the papacy. Napoleon's army occupied the Papal States and Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner. He was transported to France, eventually to Valence, where he died in 1799. The demise of the papacy seemed a real possibility.

iii. Council of Trent

The council of Trent ranks among the half-dozen most influential councils in the history of the Church. Convoked by Pope Paul III, it first met in 1545 and eventually concluded its work in 1563. The Protestant challenge was the principal reason for convoking the council, even though Luther, Calvin and other leaders of the Reformation were not mentioned by name in the conciliar decrees.

Trent lies within the German-speaking part of northern Italy and was chosen as a compromise between the pope and the German emperor Charles V. The city was a papal fief, so the pope felt he had adequate control over it even though he would have preferred somewhere nearer Rome. Charles V urged that the council take place within the German-speaking world if it was

to have credibility in tackling the issues raised by the Protestant Reformation, which had its origins in Germany and still remained centred there. None of the popes attended the council in person but the papacy was directly represented by three cardinal-presidents who, acting in the name of the pope, presided over the conciliar sessions and were responsible for the conduct of business. The decrees emerged from debates within the council. In this way Trent was closer to the ecumenical councils of the early church than to most of the general councils of the medieval period, when decrees were prepared beforehand and the council's role was largely to approve these drafts. The opening of the council and solemn sessions were held in the cathedral, while other meetings were held in various houses and churches in the city. The language of the council, of the debates as well as of the decrees, was Latin.

At first attendance was slight. Some thirty bishops, mostly Italians, were present at the early sessions but gradually numbers built up to over two hundred bishops – a decently representative figure for the Catholic hierarchy of the time. The eighteen years of the council's existence divided into three periods. After two years of work, the council was prorogued in 1547 on account of a plague threatening the city. Four years later the bishops reassembled, first in Bologna and then back in Trent. After a year's work, the council was prorogued again in 1552 when various German princes revolted against the emperor Charles and a Lutheran army drew near to the city. A gap of ten years followed, during which pope Paul IV (1555–9) showed no inclination to recall the council. Finally, Pius IV summoned the council again in 1562 and its work was completed the following year.

The council quickly attended to the key issue of Scripture and Tradition, asserting the role of both in the Church's teaching and thereby censuring the Reformers' almost exclusive emphasis upon the Bible. The central paragraph of the relevant document reads as follows, in English translation:

> *Our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, first proclaimed with his own lips this gospel, which had in the past been promised by the prophets in the sacred Scriptures; then he bade it be preached to every creature through his apostles as the source of the whole truth of salvation and rule of conduct. The council clearly perceives that this truth and rule are contained in written books and in unwritten traditions which were received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or else have come down to us, handed on as it were from the apostles themselves at the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*. (4th session, 1546)

Attention was then directed to the second key issue in the Reformation debates, that of justification. The need for both faith and good works was asserted, and the role of human free will, yet the emphasis upon God's initiative in our justification accords with Protestant teaching:

> *Justification in adults takes its origins from a predisposing grace of God through Jesus Christ, that is, from his invitation which calls them, with no existing merits on their side. Thus those who have been turned away from God by sins are disposed by God's grace inciting and helping them, to turn towards their own justification by giving free assent to and cooperating with this same grace*. (6th session, 1547)

There follows a fine passage on how those already justified can grow further in holiness and in friendship with God and humanity:

> *So those justified in this way and made friends and members of the household of God, going from strength to strength, are – as the Apostle says (2 Corinthians 4, 16) – renewed from day to day by putting to death what is earthly in themselves and yielding themselves as instruments of righteousness for sanctification by observance of the commandments of God and of the church. They grow in that very justness they have received through the grace of Christ, by faith united to good works … .* (6th session, 1547)

Many other topics in the Reformation controversies hinged on the two issues of the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, and that between faith and good works. Trent issued a wide range of decrees on these other topics, justifying teaching and practices that had become traditional in the Catholic church and showing their roots in the early Church, while seeking to purify both teaching and practice of abuses that may have crept in.

There were decrees on each of the seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, penance or confession, Eucharist, last anointing, marriage and orders. The Eucharist was treated in particular detail. While traditional Catholic doctrine on this sacrament was reaffirmed, attention was paid to some of the Reformers' emphases. The resulting teaching is profound and full of devotion, careful theology and attention to Scripture. The chapter entitled 'The reasons for the institution of the Eucharist' provides a fine summary:

> *Our saviour, about to depart from this world to the Father, instituted this sacrament in which he, as it were, poured out the riches of his divine love towards humanity, causing his wonderful works to be remembered (Psalm 110.4), and he bade us cherish his memory as we partake of it (Luke 22.19; 1 Corinthians 11.24) and to proclaim his death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11.26) to judge the world. He wished this sacrament to be taken as the spiritual food of souls, to nourish and strengthen them as they live by the life of him who said, he who eats me will live forever because of me (John 6.58), and as an antidote to free us from daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins. He further wished it to be a pledge of our future glory and unending happiness, and thus a sign of that one body of which he is the head (1 Corinthians 11.3; Ephesians 5.23) and to which he wished us all to be united as members by the closest bonds of faith, hope and love, so that we should all speak with one voice and there might not be division among us (1 Corinthians 1.10).* (13th session, 1551)

Transubstantiation was reaffirmed but, as at Lateran IV, other fitting descriptions were not excluded.

In addition to doctrinal statements, Trent enacted a wide range of decrees for the moral reform of the Church. Early on the council spoke of 'the dual purpose for which the council was primarily brought together: rooting out of heresy and reform of conduct' (3rd session, 1546). One important reform decree, known as 'Tametsi' from its opening word, provided laws for marriage which still remain largely normative today: 'banns' announcing a forthcoming

marriage, degrees of affinity and consanguinity within which marriage is not permitted, the presence of the parish priest at the wedding service. Many of the other reform decrees concerned the diocesan clergy – the duties and lifestyle of bishops and parish priests – and religious orders, both male and female. Particularly important was the decree on seminaries, which provided for the first time a recognized system of education for all prospective diocesan priests. It described the academic and religious formation thus:

> *The bishop will divide the boys and young men into the number of classes he thinks fit, according to their number, age and progress in ecclesiastical learning. Some he will assign to service of the churches when he considers the time is ripe, others he will keep for education in the college. He will replace those withdrawn with others, so that the college becomes a perpetual seminary (Latin* seminarium*) of ministers of God. In order that they may be more appropriately grounded in ecclesiastical studies, they should always have the tonsure and wear clerical dress from the outset; they should study grammar, singing, keeping church accounts, and other useful skills; and they should be versed in holy Scripture, church writers, homilies of the saints, and the practice of rites and ceremonies and of administering the sacraments, particularly all that seems appropriate to hearing confessions.*
>
> *The bishop should ensure that they attend Mass every day, confess their sins at least every month, receive the body of our lord Jesus Christ as often as their confessor judges, and serve in the cathedral and other churches of the area on feastdays … They (bishops) will punish severely the difficult and incorrigible and those who spread bad habits, and expel them if need be. They will take the utmost care to remove all obstacles from such a worthy and holy foundation and to promote all that preserves and strengthens it.* (23rd session, 1563)

For the establishment of seminaries, particularly important were various energetic bishops and some of the new religious orders. Among the bishops, most notable was Charles Borromeo (1538–84), who established several seminaries in his huge archdiocese of Milan. They became models for seminaries elsewhere. Among religious orders, the Society of Jesus and the Vincentians were in the forefront in establishing and running seminaries for the diocesan clergy. Their work in this apostolate will be treated in section iv.

During its final session in December 1563, the council issued a decree which commended indulgences while urging moderation in granting them. Thus the immediate cause of the Protestant Reformation was almost the last issue to be treated by Trent. We can see paradox here but also the fact that the Reformation had expanded to so many other issues by the time of the council. The decree taught thus:

> *The practice of indulgences should be retained in the Church, very salutary as it is for the Christian people and approved by the authority of holy councils … But the council desires that moderation be used in granting them, according to the ancient and approved custom of the Church, so that ecclesiastical discipline be not sapped by too easy conditions.* (25th session, 1563)

Also at the last session, the council decided that four topics should be entrusted to the pope because it did not have time to discuss them properly: the Index, Catechism, Breviary and Missal. The first 'Index of Prohibited Books' (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*), listing the books which Catholics were forbidden to read or own, had been published by pope Paul IV in 1557. In the light of Trent's decree, a fuller list was issued by a new congregation of the Roman Curia, *Sacra Congregatio Indicis Librorum Prohibitorum*, which was established by pope Pius V in 1571. This 'Index' was updated regularly until its 'suspension' – in effect its abolition – by pope Paul VI in 1966. The 'Roman Catechism' or 'Catechism of the Council of Trent' was published in Latin in 1566, principally for the use of parish priests. It influenced the many catechisms which were subsequently written at a more popular level in the vernacular languages. The reform of the Breviary led to the 'Roman Breviary', which was promulgated by Pius V in 1568 and remained normative for the daily prayer of diocesan priests, and of many in religious orders, until after the second Vatican council. The reform of the Missal led to the 'Tridentine Mass', which was published by Pius V in 1570 and remained normative for the large majority of Catholics until the liturgical reforms following Vatican II.

The establishment in 1564 of *Congregatio concilii*, for the interpretation and implementation of the council's decrees, has been mentioned (see p. 172). Altogether the council of Trent exercised a huge influence upon Catholicism throughout the rest of the period covered in this chapter and beyond it. Its doctrinal and reforming decrees provided remarkably comprehensive guidance to the Catholic church for a long time and at many levels: theological, sacramental, vocational, devotional and practical. It lies at the centre of the development of post-medieval Catholicism.

iv. Religious orders

Religious orders encountered fierce criticism during the Protestant Reformation. It came partly on grounds of principle, that their lifestyles were elitist and not supported by Scripture. But many of the Reformers had once been members of religious orders, so there was also personal sharpness in their criticisms. Martin Luther had been an Augustinian friar and later married a former nun, Catherine von Bora. In all the countries in which the Reformation took root, religious orders were suppressed – in England the dissolution of monasteries and religious houses took place under king Henry VIII.

The response of the Catholic church was both to justify religious life in principle, as was done at the highest level by the council of Trent, and to encourage religious orders in a variety of ways, both the older orders and the new foundations of the sixteenth century onwards.

New religious orders

Two of the earliest new male orders in the sixteenth century were Theatines and Barnabites, founded in 1524 and 1530. Theatines were called after one of their four founders, Gian Pietro Caraffa, who at the time was bishop of Chieti (*Theate* in Latin) in Italy and later became pope Paul IV. Barnabites took their name from the church of St Barnabas in Milan, which was the

first church staffed by the order. Both orders emphasized a strict way of life and the importance of work – especially education, caring for parishes and missionary work. Both orders, too, spread beyond Italy to various countries of Catholic Europe and Theatines established communities further afield in the 'New World'

Oratorians emerged from the group of priests who gathered round Philip Neri (1515–95), an energetic and charismatic priest in Rome. Houses of the order, called 'Oratories', were established mainly in the larger cities of Europe and a few in the New World. Their work consisted principally in offering to Catholics an intelligent and attractive Christianity: good church services, with special attention to preaching and music; hearing confessions; group meetings for prayer, talks and discussion. Some Oratorians became important scholars, notably Cardinal Baronius (1538–1617), the church historian. Pierre de Bérulle, founder and head of the influential Oratory in Paris, was famous as a preacher, spiritual writer and counsellor. The order played a notable and distinctive role in the renewal of Catholic life.

Best known and largest of the new orders of men was the *Society of Jesus*, whose members were known as Jesuits. Ignatius of Loyola (1492–1556), founder of the order, underwent a religious conversion while convalescing from a wound he received as a soldier. There followed deep religious experiences, wanderings, including a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and years of study for the priesthood at Paris University. At Paris a group of like-minded men gathered round him and together they formed the Society of Jesus, which was approved by pope Paul III in 1540. Ignatius spent the last sixteen years of his life in Rome, guiding and governing the new order. There he finalized *Spiritual Exercises*, a guide and stimulus to living a good life in harmony with God's will, which was based on his own experiences of religious conversion and had great influence within and beyond the Jesuit order.

The best known of Ignatius's early Jesuit companions was Francis Xavier, who came from the same Basque region of Spain as Ignatius. Xavier left Rome in 1541 and embarked upon missionary journeys that took him to India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan. He died on his way to, and within sight of, mainland China. The extent of his journeys and the number of people who converted to Christianity through him – an estimated 700,000 – are remarkable. He was a vigorous preacher, inventive in his methods of evangelization, and his organization of new converts into Christian communities produced lasting results. Francis Xavier was soon recognized as one of the most outstanding Christian missionaries of all time.

The Society of Jesus expanded rapidly in numbers and influence, growing to some 8,500 members in 1600 and nearly 23,000 in 1773. Work was given much attention, following Ignatius's recommendation that Jesuits should pray as if all depended on God and work as if everything depended on them. The order was flexible regarding the types of work it undertook, trying to select them according to the maxim *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (For God's greater glory). Education soon became an important apostolate and Jesuits established a network of schools and universities throughout Catholic Europe and beyond. Their pupils came largely from the middle and upper classes and subsequently exercised great influence in many walks of life. René Descartes (1596–1650), the philosopher, was a devoted pupil of La Flèche, the prestigious Jesuit school near Angers in France. The order also established seminaries for

training priests, following the council of Trent's decree on seminaries. The best known was the *Collegio Romano* (Roman College) in Rome, which later became the Gregorian University. The college provided for the training of diocesan seminarians from many countries as well as student Jesuits and it came to exercise much influence upon Counter-Reformation Catholicism.

Jesuits worked as writers and scholars – notably the theologians Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) and Francisco Suarez (1548–1617), the astronomer and mathematician Christopher Clavius (1537–1612), and the Bollandists (called after their founder John van Bolland) who brought scholarly standards to the study of hagiography (lives of saints) – and as preachers and counsellors. They were active as missionaries both in Catholic and Protestant Europe and in the 'new' worlds of America, Africa and Asia. Robert De Nobili (1577–1656) in India, and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in China, were persistent and inventive in their efforts at inculturation – that is, in enabling people of these countries and cultures to feel at home in the ways they lived and expressed Christianity – as were the Jesuit missionaries who established villages (called 'Reductions') for the indigenous people of Paraguay in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Numerous Jesuit martyrs – Edmund Campion (1540–81), Robert Southwell (1561–95), John Ogilvie (1580–1615) and some thirty others in Britain, and many others elsewhere – witnessed to the dedication of the order.

Jesuits, nevertheless, were opposed by many Catholics. Some criticized them for being too close to the wealthy and powerful, others for being too flexible in the morality and inculturation they advocated. However, it was their supra-national character and loyalty to the papacy that were the principal reasons for the suppression of the order in 1773. The order survived tenuously in various non-Catholic countries where the papal bull of suppression was never promulgated, notably in Russia and England, but full restoration was granted by the papacy only in 1814.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced several important new orders of men which remain vigorous today. The Congregation of the Mission (CM) – sometimes called the Vincentian order after its founder Vincent de Paul (1581–1660), and sometimes the Lazarists after the priory of St Lazare which was Vincent's headquarters in Paris – specialized in preaching missions, especially in country districts, and the education of the diocesan clergy in seminaries. By the mid-eighteenth century they were responsible for many seminaries in France as well as others in Italy, Poland, Spain and Portugal. Paul of the Cross (1694–1775) founded the Passionist congregation for giving missions and retreats to the laity, while members of the order led a strict contemplative life when not engaged in apostolic work. Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787) founded the Redemptorist congregation, also for the preaching of missions. He is perhaps the most famous Catholic moral theologian and members of the order continued his tradition of studying, teaching and writing on moral theology.

For women, the early modern period saw the foundation of several important new orders. The Ursuline order, named after the martyr Ursula, was founded at Brescia in Italy by Angela Merici in 1535. Originally the lifestyle was somewhat similar to that of beguines, but gradually the order was required by the papacy to become more institutional and convents replaced private houses for living. The education of girls became the main apostolate. Schools were

established principally in Catholic Europe, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries two were founded in North America, in Quebec and New Orleans. Also focusing on female education was the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose founder was Mary Ward (1585–1645) from England. The order of 'Sisters of Charity' was founded in France jointly by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, for the care of the sick and the poor. It came to have an enormous influence upon the charitable work of the Catholic church. The Visitation order ('Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary') also originated in seventeenth century France, with Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal as its joint founders. A contemplative order, its most renowned saint was Margaret Mary Alacocque (1647–90), whose visions had a decisive influence upon Catholic devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In addition, both the Passionist and Redemptorist congregations had associated orders of nuns.

Reforms of medieval orders

The Counter-Reformation had a deep influence upon all the religious orders that survived from the Middle Ages. Many of them were able to reform themselves and to adapt to the changed situations of the early modern period. Tertiaries of these orders, too, continued to play an important role in the life of the Church. Particularly remarkable was Rose of Lima (1586–1617), who led a saintly life as a Dominican tertiary in Peru.

There were a number of splits in these older foundations, resulting in new reformed orders that have greatly influenced the Catholic church. Already in the medieval period there had been tension among Franciscan friars regarding the character of the order, between clerical and more charismatic approaches. In 1517 the order was formally divided into two: the Conventual Franciscans and the Order of Friars Minor (OFM). Shortly afterwards another reform, introduced by Matteo di Bassi, led to the establishment of the Capuchin friars (called after their pointed cowl, *capuche*), whose Rule was drawn up in 1529. The order was temporarily suppressed following the conversion to Lutheranism in 1541 of its third minister-general Bernardino Ochino, but it was restored again and received full recognition as a religious order in 1619. The enthusiastic preaching and missionary work of the Capuchin friars received wide popular support and made them a potent force in the Catholic revival in Europe and the New World. There were many further splits within the Franciscan family. Reunification into the three branches of Conventual, OFM and Capuchins was only achieved in the late nineteenth century and confirmed by pope Leo XIII in 1897. Yet the divisions were in many ways creative, reflecting tensions that lie at the heart of human endeavour to live the Gospel message: the Franciscan family acted as a kind of fulcrum for the entire Christian community.

Two remarkable Spaniards, Teresa of Avila (1515–82) and her disciple John of the Cross (1542–91), initiated the Carmelite reforms. After some years as a Carmelite nun, Teresa felt the call to a stricter way of life and to found a house where the original rule of the order would be better observed. As a result, despite strong opposition, she founded a reformed convent in the town of Avila in 1562. Much of the rest of her life was devoted to establishing other convents in the reformed order. At the same time Teresa devoted herself to long hours of prayer, during which she experienced the closeness and friendship of God in an exceptional

way. She wrote down these experiences in a series of works that make Teresa one of the most important authorities on prayer in the Christian tradition: her *Life* (autobiography), *The Way of Perfection* (written for her nuns), *Foundations*, and, perhaps most popular, *The Interior Castle*.

John of the Cross studied theology as a Carmelite friar at Salamanca university and was ordained priest in 1567. He came to know Teresa of Avila and, becoming dissatisfied with the laxity of his order, tried to introduce her reforms to the Carmelite friars. He met with much opposition and was held for almost a year in a prison of the order, from which he managed to escape. Soon afterwards the reformed Carmelite friars were established as a separate religious order. John's sufferings continued as he was partly disowned by other leaders of the new order, and he died more or less in exile from his order after severe illness. He wrote some beautiful and very influential works on prayer, much of it in the form of poetry: *Spiritual Canticle*, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, in which he describes the 'dark night of the soul' through which a person intent on God must normally pass, and *Living Flame of Love*. The two reformed orders of Carmelites grew thereafter and they have had a deep influence upon the spirituality and prayer of the Catholic church. Through their writings, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila had a major influence upon the development of the Spanish language.

Within the Benedictine family, Armand Jean de Rancé, abbot of La Trappe monastery in France, sought to restore the original Cistercian discipline to his community. Eventually his reforms led in the nineteenth century to the Trappist order, more correctly styled Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (OCSO). Also in France, the Congregation of St Maur emerged in the seventeenth century as a reform of the Benedictine rule. Its most famous abbey was St-Germain-des-Près in Paris and its best known monks were scholars. Jean Luc d'Achery (1609–85), Jean Mabillon (1632–1707), Edmond Martene (1645–1739), Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), Thierry Ruinart (1657–1709) and others, contributed greatly to Christian scholarship through their new and more critical editions of theological, historical and liturgical texts. Subsequently the Congregation was beset by internal divisions and was dissolved by pope Pius VII in 1814. Benedictine reforms did not always lead in the same direction: De Rancé was sharply critical of the Maurists' engagement in scholarly work, provoking Mabillon's spirited response in *Traité des études monastiques*.

Summary

Religious orders played a very important role in Catholicism in the early modern period. Most of the older, medieval orders survived in Catholic countries and they made a major contribution to early modern Catholicism. They were supplemented by new foundations of men and women: both new orders, such as the Jesuits, and reforms of older orders, such as the Capuchins. Whereas most of the medieval orders of women were branches of male orders, new foundations for women in the early modern period were more independent. In addition to full members of the various orders, it is important to remember tertiaries and others with varying degrees of affiliation, as well as the huge number of people who were affected by the orders and their ministries. Notwithstanding limitations and failures, and they were plenty,

religious orders contributed greatly to the development of Catholicism both in Europe and in the newly evangelized countries of Asia, Africa and America. Almost every corner of the Catholic church was affected as well as many people outside it.

v. Missionary work and Catholicism outside Europe

We have seen that Christianity flourished in north Africa and western Asia during the first six centuries AD. The expansion of Islam radically altered the situation in north Africa while the schism between Rome and Constantinople, beginning in 1054, meant that most Christians in Asia were separated from the Catholic church. The situation changed again dramatically after the arrival of Christopher Columbus in America in 1492. Christianity reached America for the first time, at least as an organized church. Shortly afterwards there were major developments for the Church in Africa and Asia. As never before Christianity could be described as a world religion. Catholicism is the focus of our attention, but it is important to remember the great contributions of other missionaries, principally those of the Protestant churches.

America, Africa and Asia will be considered in turn, beginning with America where the novelty of Christianity was most dramatic. Australasia, which was discovered by westerners in the late eighteenth century, belongs to the next chapter. The geographical areas were vast and there were huge ethnic and cultural variations between and within all three continents. Yet there was basic unity in the missionary work inasmuch as it was held together by the doctrines and institutions of the Catholic church. Accordingly, the developments outlined in the last three sections of this chapter regarding the papacy, the council of Trent and religious orders had important ramifications for missionary work. The decrees of the council of Trent remained fundamental to teaching and discipline in the missionary countries while much of the work of evangelization was done by members of religious orders – Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians, Jesuits and others. Very important, too, was the constant support given to missionary work by the popes of the time; though they had to make difficult decisions in defending faithfulness to the gospel and church traditions while promoting appropriate adaptation and inculturation. Particularly important in this respect was the establishment of Propaganda congregation (above, p. 170).

America

The growth of the Catholic church in South and central America was extraordinarily rapid and the evangelization, despite many difficulties, remarkably profound. For the first time in the history of the Church since the conversion of the western Europe in the early Middle Ages, an entire sub-continent largely converted to Christianity. The early missionaries were mainly Dominican and Franciscan friars and they came principally from the two countries to which pope Alexander VI had granted sovereignty over the New World in 1494: Portugal, to which the vast territory of Brazil was granted, and Spain, which was given almost all the other lands.

By 1515 the Spanish occupation of the West Indies was almost complete. Hernán Cortés entered the Aztec's civilization of Mexico in 1519 and within two years his army had

conquered the country. Ten years later Gonzalo Pizarro entered the realm of the Incas in Peru and his forces subdued the people within five years. Brazil was discovered by Pedro Cabral in 1500 and within half a century the Portuguese had stations at intervals along the whole coastline. Further south, the regions of La Plata, now Argentina and Paraguay, were occupied by the Spaniards.

How deep were the mass conversions to Christianity that followed? Enforced conversions are regarded today as particularly repugnant, but we must be careful that present concerns do not overwhelm our judgement of the past. The conversions were encouraged and often imposed by the 'conquistadores', yet most of the indigenous tribes had earlier been conquerors themselves who may have imposed their beliefs upon others – so they probably had some understanding, even sympathy, for the new situation. The aspect of enforcement, moreover, should not be allowed to overshadow other considerations. In particular, the native peoples seem to have possessed a genuine affinity with Christianity at its best. Only thus can such enduring results be explained, making South and central America the most Catholic region in the world today.

In terms of organization, the first bishoprics west of the Atlantic, those of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), Concepción de la Vega (Haiti) and San Juan in Puerto Rico, were established in 1511. By 1522 the organization of the Antilles was complete with eight bishoprics. The first diocese in Mexico was Tlaxcala in 1525, to which Mexico City was added in the following year, the latter becoming the metropolitan see in 1548 with seven dioceses under it. In South America, Caracas (Venezuela) was the first diocese. Lima followed in 1541 and by 1575 it was the metropolitan see of an enormous province extending over the countries that are now called Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru and Chile. In the La Plata region, four bishoprics were established, the first Asuncion in 1547, the fourth Buenos Aires in 1582. Brazil received its first bishop in 1552, for the new diocese of San Salvador de Bahia. In these countries parishes were established as well as churches, hospitals, convents and schools. The first university in the Americas was founded in 1553, in Mexico City.

There were many remarkable and holy individuals: Alfonso Toribio de Mogrovejo (1538–1606), the heroic and energetic archbishop of Lima; Francis Solanus (1549–1610), the Franciscan missionary and preacher who facilitated the conversion of numerous Indians of the Chaco region; saints Rose of Lima, Dominican tertiary, and Martin de Porres (1579–1639), Dominican lay brother. There was great reluctance to ordain native Americans to the priesthood – bishops and priests were almost exclusively from Europe or of European extraction – or to depart from western European formulations of Catholic doctrine. But within this framework there were shining examples of sensitivity to the rights of the indigenous peoples. Notable in this respect was the mercurial diocesan priest Bartholomew de Las Casas (1474–1566), who valiantly defended the rights of Indians, by word and in numerous publications, both in his native Spain and in many countries of South and central America to which he travelled.

The most famous attempt to both Christianize and protect indigenous culture came about through the so-called 'Reductions' of Paraguay, which have recently been portrayed in the film 'The Mission'. The settlements were established by Jesuit missionaries among the Guarani

people in Rio de Plata (covering areas now in southern Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and north Argentina) between the early seventeenth century and 1768, when the Society of Jesus was expelled from Spanish colonies in America. In the peak period of 1730 to 1740, there were more than 100,000 native people in about thirty missions. European settlers were excluded from them, but the arrangements were approved and generally supported by successive Spanish governors of Paraguay and by the local bishops. The settlements were organized according to a combination of private and collective property. Domestic industries were encouraged and their products, as well as agricultural surpluses, were sold by the Jesuits to the outside world to procure any items needed for the mission economy. At the centre of each mission stood the parish church. The indigenous people were taught Christian doctrine, reading, writing and singing, while their abilities in painting, sculpture and music were encouraged. Notable are the operas which Domenico Zipoli, the Jesuit missionary from Italy, wrote for them to perform. Work and play were generally tied in with communal religious prayers, songs and processions. The arrangements may have been paternal but they seem to have been genuinely appreciated by the Guarani people.

In North America, California and the surrounding areas then formed part of the Spanish colonial empire. Franciscan missionaries were particularly active there and many of the elegant churches they built, for large congregations, can be appreciated today. The eastern seaboard was colonized by English Protestants dissatisfied with the Anglican church but Catholics were soon present among them. John Carroll, from Maryland, was the first Catholic bishop in the USA, being appointed bishop of Baltimore by pope Pius VI in 1789. A strong supporter of the colonies' independence from Britain and friend of the first president George Washington, he helped to smooth the path for Catholicism in the new republic. He was, too, a gifted administrator who prepared the way for the excellent organization of the Catholic church in the USA. Further north, the traveller Jacques Cartier entered Canada in 1534 and called the country 'New France'. A century later Catholic evangelization of the country began in earnest. Already in 1639 groups of Ursuline and Augustinian nuns had arrived from France to establish a school for girls and a hospital in Quebec. Particularly heroic were John de Brébeuf and seven other Jesuits who suffered martyrdom at the hands of Huron and Iroquois Indians in the 1640s. By the time Canada passed to British rule in the eighteenth century, Catholicism was firmly established in the French-speaking parts of the country.

Africa

In Ethiopia, Egypt and along the north African coast Christianity was maintained during this period, amid many difficulties, through the Ethiopian and Coptic churches. There were very few Catholics in these regions. In other parts of Africa, however, European explorers and colonizers, beginning with the Portuguese, brought the Catholic church to many coastal regions and to some parts of the interior.

Already in the fifteenth century there had been some movement. Bishoprics were established in the small Portuguese enclaves of Ceuta and Tangier, along the north African coast, in 1421 and 1468. To the west, a bishopric was established in the Canary Islands in 1404 and the

conversion of the people to Christianity was almost complete by the end of the century; at least two Dominican friars were martyred in the process. Further south, Madeira and the Azores islands were evangelized during the fifteenth century.

A Portuguese expedition reached the mouth of the Congo river in 1482. Soon missionaries from Portugal, principally from the orders of friars, entered the country and the ruler of the ancient kingdom of Congo, Nzinga Nkuvu, was baptized in 1491. Although he reverted to paganism, his son had also been baptized a Christian. During the latter's long reign as king Afonso I (1506–43), Christianity grew in a remarkable way. Churches were built in the capital city, San Salvador, and a number of Congolese men were ordained priests after studies in Portugal, including the king's brother Henrique, who was consecrated a bishop and eventually returned to Zaire. King Afonso was courageous in complaining of the grievous effects of the slave trade. He was not succeeded by rulers of similar authority, nevertheless the Catholic church saw important developments. Pope Clement VIII created the diocese of San Salvador in 1596, though effectively the diocesan centre soon moved to the Portugese colonial town of Luanda. A Jesuit college was opened in San Salvador in 1625 and a catechism in Kikongo was printed around the same time (much the earliest literary work in any Bantu language). A number of local men (mostly of mixed African-European descent) continued to be ordained priests. In 1645 a Capuchin mission, mostly of Italian friars, arrived in the country and for a long time many Capuchins worked in the country. King Antonio I and most of his nobility were killed in a crushing defeat by the Portugese army in 1665 and thereafter the kingdom was much weakened. Christianity, too, suffered as a result. During the eighteenth century the supply of missionaries faded away and it was not replaced by the ordination of local men. Christian life was in serious decline almost everywhere, though it was partly sustained by catechists who led the Church through these difficult years.

Other countries in the west of Africa that were evangelized by Catholic missionaries during this period, though with precarious results, were Angola, Benin and Sierra Leone. Dutch settlers colonized south Africa from 1652 onwards but they were staunchly Calvinist. Along the east coast, the Portugese occupation of Mozambique and neighbouring countries began in 1505 and spread up the Zambezi valley. Dominican, Augustinian and Jesuit missionaries arrived in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The results, however, were limited. The links between the Catholic church and colonialism appear to have been particularly strong there – indicated by the massive 'Bon Jesu' fort which survives today in Mombasa, Kenya – and may have worked against more widespread conversions. In Ethiopia, there was a prolonged missionary effort led by Jesuits and supported by Portuguese authorities in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, when king Susenyos announced in 1626 his abandonment of monophysite and other teachings of the Ethiopian church and his conversion to Roman Catholicism, such was the public outcry that the Jesuits were soon forced to leave the country and Ethiopia became almost closed to Catholic missionary work until the nineteenth century.

In the island of Madagascar, French colonization began in the middle of the seventeenth century. Carmelite and Vincentian missionaries were sent to care for the pastoral needs of the colonizers and to evangelize the indigenous peoples. Progress in evangelization was slow. In

1674 the local inhabitants murdered some seventy-five of the colonists and most of those remaining withdrew from the island. There were sporadic fresh attempts at missionary work in the eighteenth century but widespread conversions to Catholicism in Madagascar had to wait until the nineteenth century.

Asia

The vast continent of Asia was even larger than Africa or America and its peoples still more diverse. Asia contained, too, many ancient civilizations which were documented by extensive literatures and clearly visible in many temples and other buildings – far more so than in Africa or America. The dilemma facing Christian missionaries was acute. Should they follow the prevalent approach of missionaries in Africa and America, discounting existing religious traditions and starting afresh with the teachings and practices of Christianity, which in effect meant those of the Catholic church of the time? Or should they regard more positively Hinduism and Buddhism and the many other religions – with Islam some accommodation had been attempted much earlier and largely abandoned, as we have seen – and seek to reconcile them as far as possible with Christianity? While many Catholic missionaries favoured the more confrontational approach, others proposed various forms of inculturation, mainly in terms of techniques of evangelization but in some cases more profoundly in terms of doctrine. During the three centuries under consideration, almost every country of Asia was reached by Catholic missionaries in some measure and at some time, even though in many cases the results were transitory or fragile.

In India, western Christianity arrived with the fleet of Vasco da Gama in 1498. Franciscan friars came in 1518 as the first large group of missionaries. They and their successors worked in various places including Goa and Cochin and parts of Tamil Nadu, with considerable success. Dominican and Augustinian friars were among those who followed. Francis Xavier was the first Jesuit to arrive, in 1542. He laboured for seven years among the indigenous people – especially those engaged in fishing – in Travancore, Malacca, the Molucca islands and Sri Lanka, resulting in many conversions to Christianity. The best known attempt at inculturation in India was made by Robert de Nobili (1577–1656), who joined the Society of Jesus in his native Italy and set out for India in 1596. He adopted the lifestyle of a Brahmin and was respected by many individuals of his adopted caste as well as by others. But objections were made to his lifestyle and teachings by some of his fellow missionaries as well as by the archbishop of Goa. Pope Gregory XV ruled in his favour in 1623 but pope Benedict XIV condemned various of his innovations in 1744, thereby limiting the process of inculturation. Remarkable too was the English Jesuit Thomas Stephens (1549–1619), author of the long epic *Purana Christao* which combines Vedic content and style with Christian inspiration. In the eighteenth century, Capuchin friars established a flourishing church among the Bettiah people in Bihar. Conversions to Catholicism, however, were limited to individuals and groups of people; there was never much likelihood of more widespread conversions. Catholic missionaries had to contend with Muslim rule of the country and later with British colonial government, which preferred Protestant evangelization, as well as with the profundity and relevance of the religions that India already possessed.

In 1549 Francis Xavier had voyaged from India to Japan and established there the first Christian communities. By the early seventeenth century there were more than 400,000 Catholics, principally in the south of the Japan and centred on the city of Nagasaki. Persecution began in 1587 and increased in the early seventeenth century, resulting in many martyrs. Thereafter, until the mid-nineteenth century, Catholics in Japan were almost completely cut off from the wider Church, yet some communities survived in a remarkable way in the Goto islands and other parts of Kyushu region. In neighbouring Korea, some inhabitants were baptized during the Japanese invasion of the country between 1592 and 1599, probably by Christian soldiers in the invading army. During the following two centuries progress was very slow, resulting partly from Korea's isolation from the western world and intermittent persecution. Nevertheless a substantial underground church remained, to provide some basis for the Catholic revival in the nineteenth century.

In China, the fragile presence of Christianity during the Middle Ages has been mentioned. Francis Xavier sought to enter the country but died on the island of Sanchwan, within sight of the mainland. Catholic missionaries succeeded in entering mainland China from 1580 onwards. There followed remarkable achievements as well as disappointments and persecution. Among the Jesuit missionaries, Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) recommended extensive adoption of the Chinese language and local religious customs; Giacomo Rho and Adam Schall, assisted by the Chinese Christians Hsii Kuang-ch'I and Li Chih-tsao, elaborated a reform of the Chinese calendar which was approved by the emperor in 1634, thus gaining favour for the missionaries throughout the country. Important, too, were the contributions of Dominican and Franciscan missionaries from the 1630s onwards, and subsequently those of Augustinian friars and the Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP). However, the extent of religious inculturation proved divisive. In the 'Chinese Rites Controversy', Rome eventually ruled against the adaptations recommended by Valignano, Ricci and others in a series of judgments, culminating in the decree *Ex quo singulari* of 1742. There were also political complications arising from Portugal's claims to sovereignty over parts of the country and therefore to control over the Church. The number of Catholics reached a peak of some 300,000 around 1700. Thereafter persecution, which had been sporadic in the seventeenth century, became more frequent and the attitude of the emperors more hostile, culminating in the prolonged sufferings of Catholics during the reign of Chia Ch'ing (1796–1820).

In most other countries of Asia reached by Catholic missionaries, the results were quite limited; though in some cases seeds were sown that bore fruit later. In the mountainous kingdom of Bhutan, situated between India and China, two Portuguese Jesuits, Stephen Esteuao Cacella and John Joao Cabral, were the first Europeans known to have entered the country, in 1627. They were well received but conversions did not materialize and so the two men departed within a year. Thereafter missionary work was interrupted for several centuries. MEP priests established a seminary for local clergy in Siam (Thailand) in 1665. The work was difficult but today the same seminary – following various migrations – flourishes nearby in Penang, Malaysia. In Indonesia, already visited by Franciscan missionaries in the fourteenth century, the Catholic church became well established in several regions in the sixteenth

century. But this promising start was halted abruptly in the following century with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company, which effectively forbade the practice and spread of Catholicism. Many other examples of precarious beginnings could be mentioned.

The greatest success came in the Philippines, which remains today the only large country in Asia that is predominantly Catholic. The archipelago was first conquered by Spanish forces sent from Mexico in 1564 and was named after the king of Spain, Philip II. Royal control over the Church remained strong and the status of native clergy was inferior to that of Spanish missionaries. Nevertheless the extent and depth of evangelization was remarkable. Augustinian friars accompanied the expedition of 1564 and they were followed by members of other religious orders, both men and women. The first bishopric was established at Manila in 1579 and the Dominican university of St Thomas was founded in the same city in 1611. Parishes, schools, hospitals and other institutions were established on a grand scale, local languages were encouraged, and much attention was given to popular religion in terms of both liturgy and devotions. Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of Manila, represented the colonial church at its best. A Spanish Dominican, he was a missionary in Mexico and briefly in Florida before coming to the Philippines. As bishop, he was responsible for building the cathedral and a hospital as well as for the diocesan synod of 1582 which attempted to clarify, in accordance with Christian principles, many contentious issues regarding the conquest, settlement and administration of the country. He was a stout defender of the rights and dignity of the Philippino people, notably against the oppressive measures of the Spanish governor Gómez Pérez Dasmarinas, and he promoted Catholicism in tune with their desires and aspirations.

vi. Popular religion and artistic developments

The previous sections of this chapter show the wide popular appeal of early modern Catholicism. A key thesis of the Counter-Reformation was that Christianity should be believed and lived in depth by Catholics, and in these respects there was notable success. Was this popular engagement and support new? There were vested interests in proclaiming the novelty, as we have seen. In particular, in order to explain the widespread success of the Reformation, there was a tendency to downplay late medieval religious practices, to argue that popular religion had then been in urgent need of reform. Thereby the appeal – though misguided – and success of the Protestant Reformation could be explained and, more subtly, the arrival of new religious orders of the Counter-Reformation and their methods of evangelization could be justified.

Yet in many ways popular Catholicism in the early modern period remained thoroughly medieval. Almost all the devotional practices and lifestyles that were outlined at some length in Chapter 3, for the central and later Middle Ages, continued into the early modern period: the centrality of the Mass and sacraments, the divine office and prayer in its many forms, religious orders of men and women, pilgrimages and devotions to the saints, guilds and confraternities, and much else. The council of Trent, which remained authoritative in these matters throughout the early modern period, had urged various reforms but the council's proposals were essentially for a return to medieval practices at their best rather than for novelty.

Devotion and doctrine are inextricably linked. Trent's reinforcement of medieval doctrine – regarding Scripture and Tradition, faith and good works, the sacraments, the teaching of councils, and other matters – had the effect of reaffirming medieval devotional practices, even while some purification was enacted. Regarding missionary work beyond Europe, there were some bold attempts at adaptation and inculturation, principally in parts of Asia. But the prevalent approach in these missionary lands was to export western devotional practices and lifestyles, so this approach too entailed continuity with the Middle Ages.

In the visual arts and music – dimensions of life that exercised profound influence upon Catholicism at all levels – continuity between the late Middle Ages and the early modern period is evident. The last chapter outlined in some detail the earlier achievements. For the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries there were changes of nomenclature – from 'late medieval' and Renaissance to Baroque and Rococo, changes which partly reflect the desire of art historians to categorize periods of time – yet continuity was more striking than discontinuity: the foundations had been laid in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

This continuity in *art* is underlined by the three most famous Italian artists of the Renaissance, who were born in the fifteenth century and lived into the sixteenth, all three remaining Catholics: Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael. The first two were introduced in the last chapter. Leonardo's painting continued with his portraits of St Anne, *Mona Lisa* and St John the Baptist. He also devoted himself to scientific and scholarly work, making creative contributions to such diverse branches as geological research and the construction of guns and air-machines. There is religious genius in his paintings, yet Leonardo's varied activities shows how the Renaissance comprised a wide range of interests beyond the more obviously religious. Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) came into contact with both Leonardo and Michelangelo in Florence and there he produced several of his best known paintings. From 1508 he worked in Rome, principally under the patronage of pope Julius II, for whom he executed exquisite paintings to decorate the papal apartments in the Vatican. In 1514 Pope Leo X appointed him chief architect of St Peter's church in succession to Bramante. He died, still a young man, in 1520. Michelangelo returned to Rome in 1505, summoned by Julius II to carve the pope's tomb. Under the same pope's patronage, he painted the celebrated frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and later, under pope Paul III, the monumental *Last Judgment* in the same chapel. Subsequently he was appointed chief architect for the rebuilding of St Peter's and he was engaged on this work until his death.

Both artist and architect, and with many other interests, Michelangelo possessed genius that remains undimmed today, alongside his contemporaries Leonardo and Raphael. Italy produced many other notable Catholics artists and architects through the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. They contributed to the growing confidence of the Catholic church during the Counter-Reformation period, yet more importantly they reflected values that are inherently Christian and Catholic: reverence for the divine together with respect for all that is truly human, work that is both sublime and mundane, humour too and sensitivity to the mysteries of life, enjoyment of colour and the senses, yet also wariness and the recognition of sin.

In the Low Countries (modern Belgium and the Netherlands), the other main centre of late

medieval and early Renaissance art, the two best known artists of the early modern period are Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Rembrandt (Rembrandt Hermanszoon Van Rijn, 1606–69). Their paintings reflect the religious divide that separated the region into a Catholic south and predominantly Protestant north: Rembrandt from the north, Rubens from the south. Rembrandt's many powerful and exquisitely executed religious works, such as his *Return of the Prodigal Son*, reveal God's love and compassion for humankind as well as our sinfulness and fragile condition. The young Rubens, who was born and brought up in Flanders, spent eight years in Italy where he developed his artistic style, influenced especially by the works of Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian. He returned to his homeland and quickly became its most famous artist, principally through paintings but also through his designs for tapestries. Like Rembrandt, Rubens is sensitive to the divine, but he gives full attention to the corporeal. His religious paintings express the new-found confidence of the Counter-Reformation, even aggressively so in his 'Triumph of the Eucharist' in which Protestants are crushed beneath the advancing chariot of Catholicism.

Religious art flourished in all the countries that remained Catholic and the influence of Italian and Flemish artist remained powerful for a long time. The brilliant Caravaggio (1573–1610) worked mainly in Italy, Sicily and Malta; while Velasquez (1599–1660), the leading Spanish artist, paid two extended visits to Italy where he learnt much. The Italian Jesuit lay-brother Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709) well illustrates the worldwide influence of Italian Baroque art. He is best known for his painting of the ceiling of Sant'Ignazio church in Rome but he was directly responsible for many other works of art in Rome and elsewhere in Italy as well as in Vienna, where he resided towards the end of his life. Through Jesuit missionaries stationed in other countries, who asked him for designs or were affected by his work, his influence spread far and wide within Europe and beyond into America and Asia. A master of perspective, he published in 1693 a classic on the topic, *Perspectiva pictorum et architectorum*, which was translated into French, English, Dutch and Chinese.

Regarding religious *music*, developments had centred on the Low Countries and northern France during the late Middle Ages. Much of what followed was inspired by these earlier developments and music continued to play a vital role within Catholicism. Papal patronage was key to the career of Palestrina (Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, 1525–94), who was supported by the Oratorians and other ecclesiastics. He was choir-master of various churches in Rome, including St Peter's, and in this city he wrote his most famous compositions, including *Missa Papae Marcelli* (Mass of pope Marcellus) and *Improperia* (Reproaches) for the liturgy of Good Friday. Palestrina's music is suffused with deep spirituality and the polyphony is restrained. It suited well Tridentine Catholicism and won the approval of church authorities: for many it represented the ideal of sacred music, never more so than in the nineteenth century.

Thomas Tallis (1505–1585) and William Byrd (1543–1623) were two very talented composers in the Royal Chapel of queen Elizabeth I of England. Both remained Catholics while enjoying the queen's support and they wrote a wide range of pieces for Masses and other Catholic services. Byrd was particularly diverse in composing scores for string, keyboard and choral music, including madrigals. Both men developed polyphony, elaborating beyond the

relatively austere standards of Palestrina. However, as Catholics living and working in Protestant England, their influence was restricted and never compared with that of Palestrina. .

The development of music in the Catholic church beyond Europe is well represented by Domingo Zipoli (1688–1726), missionary in South America. Born in Prato in northern Italy, Zipoli became a well-known composer of music as well as organist at the Jesuit church in Rome, *Il Gesù*. He was in Spain when he entered the Society of Jesus as a novice and almost immediately he was sent to South America, arriving in Buenos Aires in July 1717. Although frail in health, he continued to work as composer, organist and choir-master. His compositions, including operas, were well received by the indigenous Americans in the Jesuit 'Reductions' in Paraguay and Peru. Three of the operas that he wrote for them to sing have survived: *El rey Orontes de Egipto*, *Los pastores en el nacimento de Cristo*, and *Felipe IV*. In recent years the operas have been staged again in Rome, the USA and elsewhere.

Within eighteenth-century Europe, the accolade for the most famous Catholic musician must surely go to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91). The son of a respected composer and violinist, Wolfgang was a prolific composer of religious music from his childhood onwards and he continued thus during eleven years, from 1769 to 1781, in the employment of archbishop Colloredo of Salzburg. During this time he composed a remarkable range of scores for Masses and other liturgical settings. Perhaps best known are his Requiem Mass, which was completed by his pupil Franz Süssmayer, and his motets *Alleluia* and *Ave verum corpus*. Mozart left Salzburg for Vienna in 1781 and his writing of church music for Catholic settings virtually came to a halt. His involvement with Freemasonry during this later period influenced his musical work but he continued to consider himself a believing and practising Catholic. The contrast between Catholic and Protestant church music during the eighteenth century is well illustrated by comparing the early Mozart with the brilliant but more sombre and interior music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750).

vii. Conclusion

The period covered in this chapter is bounded by two momentous events: the Reformation beginning in 1517 and the French Revolution of 1789. The challenges posed by the Protestant Reformation, and the Catholic response through the Counter-Reformation, greatly influenced the development of Catholicism at all levels during the three centuries. Protestant churches replaced the Orthodox church as the principal preoccupation of Catholicism that lay outside the Catholic church but within the Christian community. The council of Trent, and many sharp controversies, show how important the doctrinal, institutional and moral issues were considered to be. Prolonged wars, which certainly had religious content even if many other factors were involved, revealed the profound personal and practical effects of these controversies, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

However, many factors besides responding to the Protestant Reformation were involved in the history of the Catholic church during this epoch. There existed a variety of tensions – some creative, others limiting – within the Catholic community. New religious orders of both men

and women gave fresh impetus to early modern Catholicism, both through the members themselves and through their wide and varied apostolates. Intellectual developments, as well as those in liturgy and prayer, and in art and architecture, were influenced by both Reformation and Counter-Reformation, but also by late medieval developments and by other factors in early modern Europe. Finally and crucially, the discovery of the New World projected Catholicism for the first time into a truly world religion.