

Catholic Reformation

The **Catholic Reformation** or the **Counter Reformation** was a strong reaffirmation of the doctrine and structure of the Catholic Church, climaxing at the Council of Trent, partly in reaction to the growth of Protestantism. Even before the posting of Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in 1517, there had been evidence of internal reform within the Church, combating trends that heightened radical demands to fundamentally alter the doctrine and structure of the Medieval Church and even contributed to the anticlericalism of figures such as John Huss and John Wycliffe in the late fourteenth century. The Catholic Reformation, aimed at correcting the sources of the Reformation, and pronounced since the pontificate of Pope Paul III, was both retaliatory, committed to protecting Catholic institutions and practices from heresy and Protestantism, but also reformist, committed to reform the Church from within to stem the growing appeal of Protestantism. Broadly speaking, the Catholic Reformation, represented a three-sided strategy: an autocratic church at the top linked to the individual by the parish church. The Catholic Reformation was a strong reaffirmation of the doctrine and structure of the Medieval Church, presiding over reforms that would preserve its effectiveness.

The Council of Trent

The pontificate of Paul III (1534-1549) culminated in the Council of Trent, who appointed a commission of cardinals to look into the need for institutional, but certainly not doctrinal, reform, uncovering the appointment of corrupt and worldly bishops and priests, traffic in indulgences, and other financial abuses. The Council of Trent, meeting in three sessions between 1545 and 1563, was the climax of the Catholic Reformation. The Council clearly repudiated specific Protestant positions and upheld the basic structure of the Medieval Church, its sacramental system, religious orders, and doctrine. It rejected all compromise with the Protestants, restating basic tenants of Catholicism. The Council, using vehicles such as the Tridentine Creed, strongly reaffirmed as spiritually vital:

- the dogma of salvation by faith and works,
- the authority of unwritten tradition,
- transubstantiation of the consecrated bread and wine into the substantial body and blood of Christ,
- seven sacraments
- indulgences,
- pilgrimages,
- the cult of saints, relics, and the Virgin.

Reform

While the basic structure of the Church was reaffirmed, there were noticeable changes to answer complaints that the Catholic Reformers tacitly were willing to admit were legitimate. Among the conditions to be corrected by Catholic reformers was the growing divide between the priests and the flock; many members of the clergy in the rural parishes, after all, had been poorly educated. Often, these rural priests did not know Latin and lacked opportunities for theological education at the time. (Addressing the education of priests had been a fundamental focus of the humanist reformers in the past.) Parish priests now became better educated, while Papal authorities sought to eliminate the distractions of the monastic churches. Notebooks and handbooks thus became common, describing how to be good priests and confessors.

In addition, between 1512 and the 1560s a movement of 'evangelical Catholics' of high-ranking member of the curia, called Spirituali, actively tried to reform the church through reform of the individual. Members of orders active in overseas missionary expansionism often expressed the need that the rural parishes, whose poor state of affairs contributed to the growth of Protestantism, often needed Christianizing as much as heathens of Asia and the Americas, thus contributing to recovering significant territories that would have otherwise been lost to the Protestants. The Ursulines focused on the special task of educating girls, and other Protestant sects. Not only making the Church more effective, they reaffirmed fundamental premises of the Medieval Church.

Sacraments of the Catholic Church

Seven Sacraments - <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/sacrament.php>

The liturgical life of the Catholic Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. There are seven sacraments in the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

The purpose of the sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God; but being signs, they also have a teaching function. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and object, they also nourish, strengthen, and express it; that is why they are called "sacraments of faith." The sacraments impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them disposes the faithful most effectively to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God rightly, and to practice charity.

Worship is integral to our lives as Christians. When we engage in the prayer and ritual of the Church, we are formed as Church. Our sacramental rites are of primary importance while we are gathered.

The history of human salvation is the history of the way God came to men. The first step on this way was the bridging of the gulf separating God and man in the person of the one Mediator Jesus Christ and by his work of redemption. By means of his Church Christ makes his grace available to all. Only in this application of redemption to mankind is the redemptive action of Christ completed. The doctrine of the sacraments is the doctrine of the second part of God's way of salvation to us. It deals with the holy signs which Christ instituted as the vehicles of his grace.

The great mystery of the union in Christ of a human nature with the second Person of the Godhead is that the human actions and sufferings of Christ are divine actions and sufferings. The sacraments are a living continuation of this mystery. There are earthly, external signs here which, of themselves, could never acquire any supernatural significance, but the signs of the sacraments have been made by Christ into vehicles of his grace. They effect in men the grace for which Christ made them the sign.

So there are two fundamental ideas which constantly recur in the Church's teaching, on the sacraments. First there is the Church's concern for these instituted by Christ, their number, and their proper preservation and administration; then the grace which Christ has for all time linked with these signs and which is communicated by them.

The second is the effect of the sacraments. They are the signs of Christ's work; the effectiveness of Christ's continuing work in his Church cannot be dependent on man's inadequacy. A sacrament, administered properly in the way established by Christ and with the proper intention, gives the grace it signifies. It is effective not by reason of the power of intercession of priestly prayer nor on account of the worthiness of the recipient, but solely by the power of Christ. The power of Christ lives in the sacraments. The effect of the sacrament is independent of the sinfulness or unworthiness of the minister. The Church has never tolerated any subjective qualification of the objective effectiveness of the sacraments *ex opere operato*. This would ultimately be to conceive the way of salvation as being man's way to God and not God's way to man.

The Church Thus Teaches: There are seven sacraments. They were instituted by Christ and given to the Church to administer. They are necessary for salvation. The sacraments are the vehicles of grace which they convey. They are validly administered by the carrying out of the sign with the proper intention. Not all are equally qualified to administer all the sacraments. The validity of the sacrament is independent of the worthiness of the minister. Three sacraments imprint an indelible character.

Sacramentals are instituted by the Church and are effective by virtue of the Church's intercession. Institution and alteration of them is reserved to the Holy See.

Although it is not a sacrament, Christian Burial will be addressed in this section.

Baptism

Baptism, the first and fundamental sacrament and the gate to the other sacraments, is the purifying and sanctifying sacrament of rebirth. It is the means by which its recipients are incorporated into the church in a sacramental bond of unity.

Confirmation

By a signing with the gift of the Spirit, confirmation enriches the baptized with the Holy Spirit, binding them more perfectly to the Church, and strengthening them in their witness to Christ by word and deed and in their work to bring to its fullness the Body of Christ. Confirmation is conferred through anointing with chrism and the laying on of hands.

Eucharist

The Eucharist is the most august sacrament, in which Christ himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church constantly lives and grows. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated over the centuries, is the summit and source of all Christian life and worship; it signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and achieves the building up of the Body of Christ.

As children reach the age of reason, generally around age seven, the Church extends to them an invitation to celebrate the sacrament of Eucharist. The initiation into the Christian community that took place at baptism is further extended by inviting children to enter fully into the heart of Christian faith through participation in the Eucharist.

Penance

Through penance, the faithful receive pardon through God's mercy for the sins they have committed. At the same time, they are reconciled with the Church community. The confession, or disclosure, of sins frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others.

Anointing of the Sick

Through the sacrament of anointing, Christ strengthens the faithful who are afflicted by illness, providing them with the strongest means of support. Jesus showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded his followers to do the same. The celebration of this

sacrament is an opportunity for the deepening of the faith of the community who are able to witness the faith and devotion of those being anointed.

Marriage

The Church has a rich tradition in its teaching on sacramental marriage and covenantal union. The Old Testament authors write of God making a covenant with the chosen people and promising them that they will never be forsaken. The New Testament authors write of Jesus as the new covenant and compare the relationship of Jesus with the Church to the relationship of a husband and wife. The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership for the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring.

Holy Orders

Holy Orders is the sacrament by which bishops, priests and deacons are ordained and receive the power and grace to perform their sacred duties. The sacred rite by which orders are conferred is called ordination. The apostles were ordained by Jesus at the Last Supper so that others could share in his priesthood.

Christian Burial

The Church asks spiritual assistance for the departed, honors their bodies, and at the same time brings solace of hope to the living. The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to the Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgement and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults includes the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, but also all of the rites of the catechumenate. The initiation of adults is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful.

Together with the catechumens, the faithful reflect upon the value of the paschal mystery, renew their own conversion, and by their example lead the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously.

Here we consider five differing views on the significance of the Eucharist.

Roman Catholic

The Eucharist (Greek: 'thanksgiving') is a Sacrament, and like all Sacraments, it conveys grace to all who receive it worthily. The Eucharist also makes present Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in an unbloody manner, for that reason it is sometimes known as the **Holy sacrifice of the Mass**. Through it, forgiveness of sin may be obtained.

On consecration, the bread and the wine change completely into the actual body and blood of Christ. This change is known as **Transubstantiation** and Christ's presence in the elements is called the **Real Presence**.

From the Council of Trent (1545-1563):

"...By the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."

Orthodox

The Orthodox church accepts the Eucharist as a Sacrament (though it uses the term 'Mystery' instead of 'Sacrament') and also accepts the doctrines of the Real Presence and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. However, it does not make any attempt to explain how the change occurs, preferring to regard it as a divine mystery.

The Eucharistic service is commonly known as the **Divine Liturgy**.

Lutheran

In Lutheranism, there is a **Sacramental Union** of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ. In other words, Christ's body and blood are present "*in, with and under*" the forms of bread and wine. This is sometimes known as **Consubstantiation** (although Luther himself did not use this term).

Luther explained his view by using an analogy of an iron rod placed into a fire: both are united in the red-hot iron, yet both are also distinct.

Lutheranism rejects the view of the Eucharist as "making present" Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Reformed and Presbyterian

The Reformed and Presbyterian view derives from the teachings of John Calvin: Christ is not present literally in the elements, but he is spiritually present.

Those who receive the elements with faith can receive the actual body and blood of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit which works through the sacrament, a view sometimes known as **Receptionism**.

Calvin explained his view of the Eucharist in his *Institutes*:

"The rule which the pious ought always to observe is, whenever they see the symbols instituted by the Lord, to think and feel surely persuaded that the truth of the thing signified is also present. For why does the Lord put the symbol of his body into your hands, but just to assure you that you truly partake of him? If this is true let us feel as much assured that the visible sign is given us in seal of an invisible gift as that his body itself is given to us."

Other Groups

Many other groups (e.g. the Baptists) refer to the Eucharist as the **Lord's Supper** or **Holy Communion** and deny any form of physical or spiritual presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Rather, the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of Christ's suffering and a reminder of his power to overcome sin and death. This view derives from the teachings of the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli and is commonly known as **Memorialism**.

The Anglican and Methodist Churches have a wide variety of views on this subject.

What do Catholics *really* believe about Salvation?

July 15 by C. C. Evans <https://protestantnomore.wordpress.com/2010/07/15/what-do-catholics-really-believe-about-salvation/>

When speaking theologically, one can rarely say “Protestants believe” since there are many variables among different denominations, churches and individuals. Many Protestants claim that Catholics preach a false gospel, and many Protestants claim the same thing about other Protestants (although both groups usually believe in *sola scriptura*). Finding a Protestant who truly understands Catholic soteriology – the study or doctrine of salvation – is extremely rare. The straw-man logical fallacy of a “works-based salvation” is the most prevalent misapprehension (more on that later).

To understand what people believe, understanding their definitions of words is crucial. Misunderstanding terminology causes confusion among Protestants, and between Catholics and Protestants, since the same theologically technical term is often used to mean different things. For instance, the Protestant reformers developed a new concept of justification called “forensic justification” – which created an ontological and chronological dichotomy between justification and sanctification (note that this was an historical invention). When a Protestant uses the word “justification” they might mean “salvation”, “forgiveness”, “regeneration” or “belief” (with or without “repentance”) or they might mean “forensic justification”, as distinct from “actual sanctification” (being considered holy, rather than made holy). However, Catholics might mean “justification” as something which is both “imputed” and “infused,” and/ or as something “intertwined with regeneration and sanctification”. As the Catechism defines it, “Justification includes the remission of sins, sanctification, and the renewal of the inner man” (CCC 2019). So, for the Catholic, justification involves an actual regeneration, an actual rebirth, not just a forensic declaration of justice with an imputation of Christ’s righteousness alone, but a real being made just, and an infusion of Christ’s actual righteousness accompanying the imputation. Behold all things are new, and the being made righteous is as actual as the forgiveness, not the “dung heap covered in snow” that Luther spoke of.

Even common terms can cause misunderstandings. For instance, the word “salvation”. Some Protestants think “salvation” is a once-for-all, punctiliar event (I was saved on Wednesday) – a thing you are (saved) or aren’t (unsaved). Other Protestants think “salvation” is a process (sometimes started by a punctiliar event like belief, or baptism of water, or baptism of the Holy Spirit) – a thing you currently are (if you have confessed your sins, and aren’t living in sin), and hope to continue to be (the hope of salvation), but might choose to reject (by sinning against your faith, or becoming apostate) since you haven’t yet persevered until the end. Catholics are closer to the second kind of Protestants, and will say things like, “I was saved, am being saved and will be saved” – being “saved” is a thing you currently are (by the regeneration of the Spirit in the waters of baptism) and hope to continue to be (the hope of salvation), but might choose to reject (by sinning against your faith) since you haven’t yet persevered until the end. Note that this doesn’t mean that we are unsure of our “salvation” (we know when we are in a state of grace) – we simply don’t presume we will persevere to the end (Hebrews 3:14), or that God will force us to be with him even if we choose to reject him (Hebrews 3:18). We don’t lose our faith in such a rejection, but, unless we repent, and confess, such a rejection might be our final answer (Hebrews 3:12; I John 1:9).

The Catholic Church has always taught that we are saved by grace alone. Earlier I mentioned the straw-man logical fallacy of a “works-based salvation” (“semi-Pelagianism”). Protestants who make this accusation confuse soteriological terminology – particularly the distinctions between “grace” and

“faith”, and the relationship between “justification” and “sanctification”. They also ignore the historical meaning of all pre-Protestant theology, and current Catholic definitions, to “prove” the “errors” they presuppose. It’s salient to note that there are some (very few) Protestant groups who are “legalistic” and believe that following certain “laws” will obligate God to save them; however, most who are accused of believing a “works-based salvation” are theologically misunderstood. Naturally, I am speaking of the theologically adept, not those who are simply poorly educated – Catholic and Protestant – and think things like, “My good deeds will outweigh the bad stuff I’ve done” rather than trusting in Christ alone for salvation.

Catholics do believe that our works (good or bad) have consequences (Matthew 7:15-27). We also believe that our good works are meritorious (not filthy rags¹), that is to say, that God rewards them – not just in heaven, but here and now as we are being saved (Hebrews 11:6). We also believe that merit (grace made operative through faith and works) helps us be saved (made just – justified, not merely reckoned just, and made holy – sanctified, not merely reckoned holy) because, by God’s grace, our cooperation with grace activates its saving power (the power is inherent in the grace, not our cooperation), infusing holiness (sanctification) and growing deep roots which enable us to persevere and bear good fruit.

To put it more simply, *Catholics believe that all acts of faith, hope and love toward God, and our neighbors, are preceded and enabled by God’s grace* (Ephesians 2:8-10; CCC 1996). Thus, it isn’t correct that we trust in our works for our salvation – Catholicism is not legalistic. Rather, our works (prepared by grace for us to walk in) help us by sanctifying us, building up the body of Christ and worshiping God in a manner that pleases him.

The Sacraments hold a special place in Catholic soteriology. “Sacraments are outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification” (Catechismus concil. Trident., n. 4, ex St. Augustine, “De Catechizandis rudibus”). Although the manner of their instrumental causality is a mystery, it is clear that the instrumental causality is through grace alone, “And man is made a member of Christ through grace alone.” (St. Thomas, *Summa*, A[1]; Q[62], A[1]).

So you see, Catholics believe in one faith, which works (not to be mistaken by sound exegesis with “works of the [Jewish] law”), but the charges that this (somehow) negates grace, or that we believe in grace plus works, are false. Some say that faith plus works is the same thing as grace plus works, but they are in error – because it would be inconsistent to say that the faith itself can be a gift of grace, but works cannot be. Furthermore, truncating faith and works does not prevent the error of boasting – one could boast in their faith just as much as they could boast in their works (as if our belief contractually obligated God to save us apart from the law of grace, or made us superior to those without faith). It is the grace that prevents us from boasting, so even though we work to cooperate with that grace in what we believe and what we do, it is “all of grace” not of our faith alone, nor of our works alone; not done in ourselves, but in Christ.

We are saved by the law of grace, through the gift of grace: an actual faith which works. The doctrine of salvation by grace alone is clear in scripture, the fathers, the councils and papal teaching; one of the clearest articulations came from the Council of Trent (Decree on Justification: Chapter V; Canons I, II and III on Justification).

A formulation that would be accurate, but not official, since it is my own, is that man is saved by Jesus Christ alone, by the grace of God alone, through the gift of actual grace in faith and works. Our

righteousness is imputed (made possible by Christ) and infused (activated to the full strength the grace contains) by our faith and works. Again, both the faith and the good works are gifts of grace, as it is written,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10 RSV-CE).

Not everything the Catholic church teaches about soteriology – the study of salvation – is dogmatic, so you will find variations within some aspects of Catholic soteriological doctrine. However, in addition to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (esp. Article 2, Grace and Justification – CCC 1987 – 2029), the Council of Trent clarified Catholic soteriology regarding the new ideas of the reformers, and the Decree and Canons on Justification from the Sixth Session are succinct and delightfully dense – if you would like the clarity of context and are theologically minded, you ought to read them in their entirety. In addition to the authoritative, decedral documents from Trent, there are a few significant times when the Catholic Church has met with Protestant leaders to discuss key differences like justification. Perhaps the earliest was the Diet of Ratisbon (also called the “Diet/ Colloquy of Regensburg”) in 1541 (the fifth article discusses justification), but there are also more recent meetings which resulted in documents like the document “Salvation and the Church” written with Anglicans in 1986, the Evangelicals and Catholics Together document in 1994, the follow-up document entitled “The Gift of Salvation” in 1998, The Joint Declaration on Justification with Lutherans in 1999 and the Official Response to that Declaration. Some pertinent quotes from those documents are as follows:

It is secure and wholesome teaching that the sinner is justified by a living and effectual faith, for through such faith we will be acceptable to God and accepted for the sake of Christ.

A living faith, therefore, appropriates the mercy in Christ and believes that the righteousness which is in Christ will be freely reckoned for nothing and also receives the promise of the Holy Spirit. (Regensburg, Article 5)

Justification and sanctification are two aspects of the same divine act (1 Cor 6:11). This does not mean that justification is a reward for faith or works: rather, when God promises the removal of our condemnation and gives us a new standing before him, this justification is indissolubly linked with his sanctifying recreation of us in grace. This transformation is being worked out in the course of our pilgrimage, despite the imperfections and ambiguities of our lives. God’s grace effects what he declares: his creative word imparts what it imputes. By pronouncing us righteous, God also makes us righteous. He imparts a righteousness which is his and becomes ours[2]. (ARCIC II, Salvation and the Church, 15)

Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works (JDDJ, 15).

The following are some further technical areas of high theology that cause confusion between Catholics and some of our separated Protestant brothers and sisters:

1. The concept of *sola fide* – salvation by faith alone – was condemned at Trent (Decree on Justification Chapters VI, X and XI; Canons IX and XIX on Justification).
2. The concept of forensic justification, that righteousness is imputation alone was condemned at Trent

(Decree on Justification Chapter VII; Canons XI, XXV and cf. Canon XXXI on Justification).

3. The concept of Free Grace Theology (pejoratively called “Easy Believism” by some who call their view “Lordship Salvation”) – that belief alone, apart from obedience, ensures salvation – was condemned at Trent (Decree on Justification Chapter IX and XII; Canons XII, XIII, XIV, XIV and XXI on Justification). However, this does not rule out the Arminian concept of “free will” which is compatible with the Molinist² and Congruist² concepts of how grace and free will meet (predestination based on foreknowledge).

4. The modern concept of Eternal Security – once saved, always saved – was condemned at Trent (Decree on Justification Chapter XI, XIII, XIV and XV; Canons on Justification XVI, XXIII, XXVII and XXVIII).

5. The supralapsarian concept of unconditional reprobation (double-predestination: the concept that some are predestined to heaven – the elect, and others are predestined to hell – the reprobate) was anticipated and condemned at Trent (Decree on Justification Chapter VIII, Canon VI, X and XVII on Justification). However, this does not rule out the Calvinist concept of “unconditional election” which is compatible with the Thomistic² (via physical change of the will of the elect) and Augustinian² (via moral pressure on the will of the elect) concepts of how grace and free will meet.

6. The Calvinist concepts of “irresistible grace” and “total depravity” were condemned at Trent (Decree on Justification Chapter I, Canons IV, VII and XXII on Justification).

7. The Calvinist concept of “Limited Atonement” – that Christ only died for the elect – was condemned at Trent (Decree on Justification Chapter II; Canon XVII on Justification).

¹“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away” (Isaiah 64:6 RSV-CE). Eisogetes of this verse try to claim that this is a definition of righteous deeds rather than taking the verse in context. In context, the verse communicates a simile (which could be considered hyperbolic prose) expressing a lament about a people who have fallen into iniquity, not a gloss of what “righteous deeds” are.

²For more information on different Catholic ideas regarding the mysteries of where divine grace and human free-will meet see the Catholic Encyclopedia’s articles on Controversies on Grace and the *Congregatio de Auxiliis*.

9 Things You Should Know About the Council of Trent

December 5, 2013 <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-you-should-know-about-the-council-of-trent>

Yesterday marked the 450th anniversary of the closing of the Council of Trent, one of the most significant series of meetings in Christian history. Here are nine things evangelicals should know about the Council and the decrees that it issued:

1. The Council of Trent was the most important movement of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church's first significant reply to the growing Protestants Reformation. The primary purpose of the council was to condemn and refute the beliefs of the Protestants, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, and also to make the set of beliefs in Catholicism even clearer. Approximately forty clergymen, mainly Catholic bishops, were in attendance during the twenty-five times over the next eighteen years that the Council convened.

2. Protestants endorse justification by faith alone (*sola fide*) apart from anything (including good works), a position the Catholic Church condemned as heresy. During the the sixth session, the Council issued a decree saying that, "If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema."

3. The Protestant Reformers rejected the Apocrypha as part of the biblical canon. (The term Apocrypha (Gr., hidden) is a collection of ancient Jewish writings and is the title given to these books, which were written between 300 and 30 B.C., in the era between the Old and New Testaments.) During the the fourth session, the Council issued a decree damning anyone who rejected these books:

... if any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin vulgate edition; and knowingly and deliberately contemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema.

Many doctrines unique to Catholicism, such as the teachings of purgatory, prayers for the dead, and salvation by works, are found in these books.

4. During the Protestant Reformation, the doctrine of transubstantiation was heavily criticized as an Aristotelian "pseudophilosophy." The 13th session reaffirmed and defined transubstantiation as "that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood - the species only of the bread and wine remaining - which conversion indeed the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation."

5. Protestants claimed that the only source and norm for the Christian faith was Holy Scripture (the canonical Bible without the Apocrypha). The doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* was rejected at Trent. The Council affirmed two sources of special revelation: Holy Scripture (e.g., all the books included in the Latin Vulgate version) and traditions of the church (including the "unwritten traditions").

6. In Catholic theology, an indulgence is a remission of temporal punishment due to sin, the guilt of which has been forgiven. Under Catholic teaching, every sin must be purified either here on earth or after death in a state called purgatory. The selling of indulgences was not part of official Catholic teaching, though in Martin Luther's era, the practice had become common. (Luther was appalled by the sermon of an indulgence vendor named John Tetzel who said, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.") The Council called for the reform of the practice, yet damned those who "say that indulgences are useless or that the Church does not have the power to grant them."

7. In Catholic theology, purgatory is a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who denied yet were not free from "venial" sins (a lesser sin that does not result in a complete separation from God and eternal damnation in hell). The council affirmed the doctrine of purgatory and damned anyone who claimed "that after the grace of justification has been received the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out for any repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be paid."

8. In the 24 session, the council issued decrees on marriage which affirmed the excellence of celibacy, condemned concubinage, and made the validity of marriage dependent upon the wedding taking place before a priest and two witnesses. In the case of a divorce, the right of the innocent party to marry again was denied so long as the other party was alive, even if the other party had committed adultery.

9. At the request of Pope Gregory XIII, the Council approved a plan to correct the errors to the Julian calendar that would allow for a more consistent and accurate scheduling of the feast of Easter. The reform included reducing the number of leap years in four centuries from 100 to 97. Although Protestant countries in Europe initially refused to adopt the "Gregorian calendar" (also known as the Western or Christian calendar), it eventually became the most widely accepted and used civil calendar in the world.

(Note: The declarations and anathemas of the Council of Trent have never been revoked. The decrees of the Council of Trent are confirmed by both the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the official "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (1992).)