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History 114s

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### Response Paper 10

In an effort to counteract the Protestant Reformation, Pope Paul III convened the Council of Trent in 1545. Over the next eighteen years the Council discussed and addressed various issues that afflicted the Church. One major issue at hand, was how to combat heresy as it pertained to the Protestant faith. In 1563, under Pope Pius IV, the Council put forth the Tridentine Creed. A Counter-Reformation initiative, the Creed served as a response to Protestant Reformers by renouncing explicit Protestant doctrinal beliefs and defended the fundamental formation of the church, its sacraments, organizational orders and tenet.

During the Protestant Reformation many reformers claimed the only valid sacraments were Baptism and Communion. They believed the other five rites should be considered ordinances and not sacraments. To support their claim, Protestant Reformers cited the Bible pointing out that the only sacraments performed by Jesus were Baptism and Communion. In the Tridentine Creed it states "I also profess that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new Law instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not for everyone."<sup>1</sup> The writers of the Creed adamantly protected the Catholic Church's belief in the seven sacraments. They asserted that Jesus is responsible for the institution of the seven sacraments. In making this assertion, the writers made an attempt to make the Catholic Church's

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<sup>1</sup> "Tridentine Creed." Tridentine Creed. April 17, 2016. [http://www.traditionalcatholic.net/Tradition/Prayer/Tridentine\\_Creed.html](http://www.traditionalcatholic.net/Tradition/Prayer/Tridentine_Creed.html).

position irrefutable. The mere act by a Protestant reformer of refuting Jesus essentially is the same as refuting God, thus it was perceived as heresy. By presenting a strong belief in the seven sacraments, the Creed made it clear that salvation is reliant on those sacraments and anything less, is in opposition and does not comply with accepted doctrine. The Creed further attacked Protestant Reformers by scrutinizing their stance on Communion and the Eucharist.

The Catholic Church opposed the Protestant stance on Communion and the Eucharist. Protestant Reformers contended that the sacrament of Communion should function as a memorial service. They further argued that the Eucharist is symbolic of Jesus's sacrifice, and not the true body of Christ, disagreeing with Transubstantiation. In the Tridentine Creed it states "that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially, the Body and Blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup> Like their defense of the seven sacraments the writers of the Creed emphatically defended the Eucharist as the body and blood of Jesus. It further states "that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation."<sup>3</sup> Catholics firmly believed that the elements of Eucharist, wine and bread literally became Christ and by its consumption they were partaking his body and blood. Whereas, Protestants opposed the scriptural interpretation and embraced consubstantiation in which the body coexists with the wine and bread, united but unaltered. The Creed delineated the Catholic Church's stance on the sale of indulgences against Protestant Reformers.

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<sup>2</sup> IBID

<sup>3</sup> IBID

Before the Protestant Reformation the Catholic Church sold indulgences. Many protestant reformers viewed the sale of indulgences as a corrupt practice. For Protestants, the sale of indulgences was designed for monetary benefit of the Pope and the Church. The Tridentine Creed states “I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the Church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.”<sup>4</sup> The Catholic Church sold indulgences to permit the abeyance of punishment for sins and convinced the buyers that its purchase would provide them with salvation. In the Creed they proclaimed that Christ had given them the power to sell Indulgences. Therefore, the sale of Indulgences was permissible and approved through the power of Christ.

The Protestant Reformation prompted a counter reformation. As a result, the Council of Trent was assembled by Pope Paul III in 1545. The Council commenced in 1545 and lasted through 1563. In the course of those years the Council debated and confronted several matters that plagued the Church. One bone of contention was the crusade against heresy by Protestant ideology. In 1563, under the auspices of Pope Pius IV, the Council effectuated the Tridentine Creed. It was used as a stratagem to challenge the theology of Protestantism. The Creed served as a response to Protestant Reformers by rejecting specific Protestant canon doctrine and defended the basic principles of the church, its sacraments, framework and axiom.

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<sup>4</sup> IBID