CATHOLIC OR COUNTER REFORMATION?
OVERVIEW

In what ways, and with what success, did the Roman Catholic Church react to the challenges to its authority?	Catholic reform in the early 16th century; the reaction of the Catholic Church to the challenge of Lutheranism and Calvinism as illustrated by the Council of **Trent** and its effectiveness; the work of individual **popes**; Loyola and the **Jesuits**; the **Index** and the **Inquisition**; the growth and work of **religious orders**.

Historiography

▪ The term "Counter-Reformation" was first used 1776 by Putter. He argued that until the 1530's a corrupt Papacy was scared of a General Council being called and secular rulers were too self-interested to want one. In other words, the whole process of change in the Catholic Church was driven by necessity and fear – it was a reaction to Luther.

▪ The term "Catholic Reformation" started to be used in the 1970's – Dickens and Bossy highlighted the process of reform taking place even before Luther emerged. Moreover, they make the point that the Catholic Church was inspired and active in the New World and Asia, which clearly had nothing to do with Lutheranism.

The theoretical process of reform can be traced to changes in the Papacy.

External Pressures:

• Mid-Term: In the early 16th Century the Papacy was in a bad way:

- Indulgences controversy
- The Borgia Popes (e.g. Alexander VI – Romagna, Cesare, Lucrezia)
- The Medici Popes (e.g. Julius II – warrior pope, Julius Exclusius)

• Short-Term: The turning point was The Sack of Rome (1527) which convinced the Papacy of the need for reform.

Internal Reform:

• Adrian VI was the first Pope to sow the seeds of reform. Died swallowing a wasp.

• Paul III watered them by

- Reforms of the Ecclesia
- The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent was the ultimate expression of this new Papacy.

Why was it called?

Where did it meet? Who had control?

How long did it actually sit?

What progressive reforms were passed?

Were there clear elements of reaction too?

The extent to which Trent's reforms were actually enforced is important to examine.

Negative, reactionary:

- Papal Inquisition
- Censorship – the Index

Positive, progressive:

- Impact on the Papacy in the later sixteenth century (e.g. Sixtus V)

Conclusion:

- Difficult to draw clear distinctions between progressive and reactionary tendencies. The Catholic Church seems to have adopted a "Stick and Carrot" approach which both punished opponents and made Catholicism more appealing e.g.
  - Paul III
  - Paul IV
  - Borromeo in Milan

The Enforcement of Reform in Other States is equally complex.

Germany: Success (Canisius)

Spain: Success (but political – Spanish Inquisition)

France: Failure (nationalism and statehood)

Elsewhere – **Japan** (Xavier), **China** (Ricci)…

Perhaps the most important impact was the long-term spread of reform amongst different groups in the general population.

…The role of the Jesuits:

- **Princes**: Loyola, the Spiritual Exercises, the Client system and the Constitutions, the Collegium Germanicum
- **Lower levels**: Propaganda, Changes in superstition, popular beliefs, the New Orders.

Task: Each member of the class should research a different key event / person / concept and produce an arresting handout / worksheet / piece of display work.