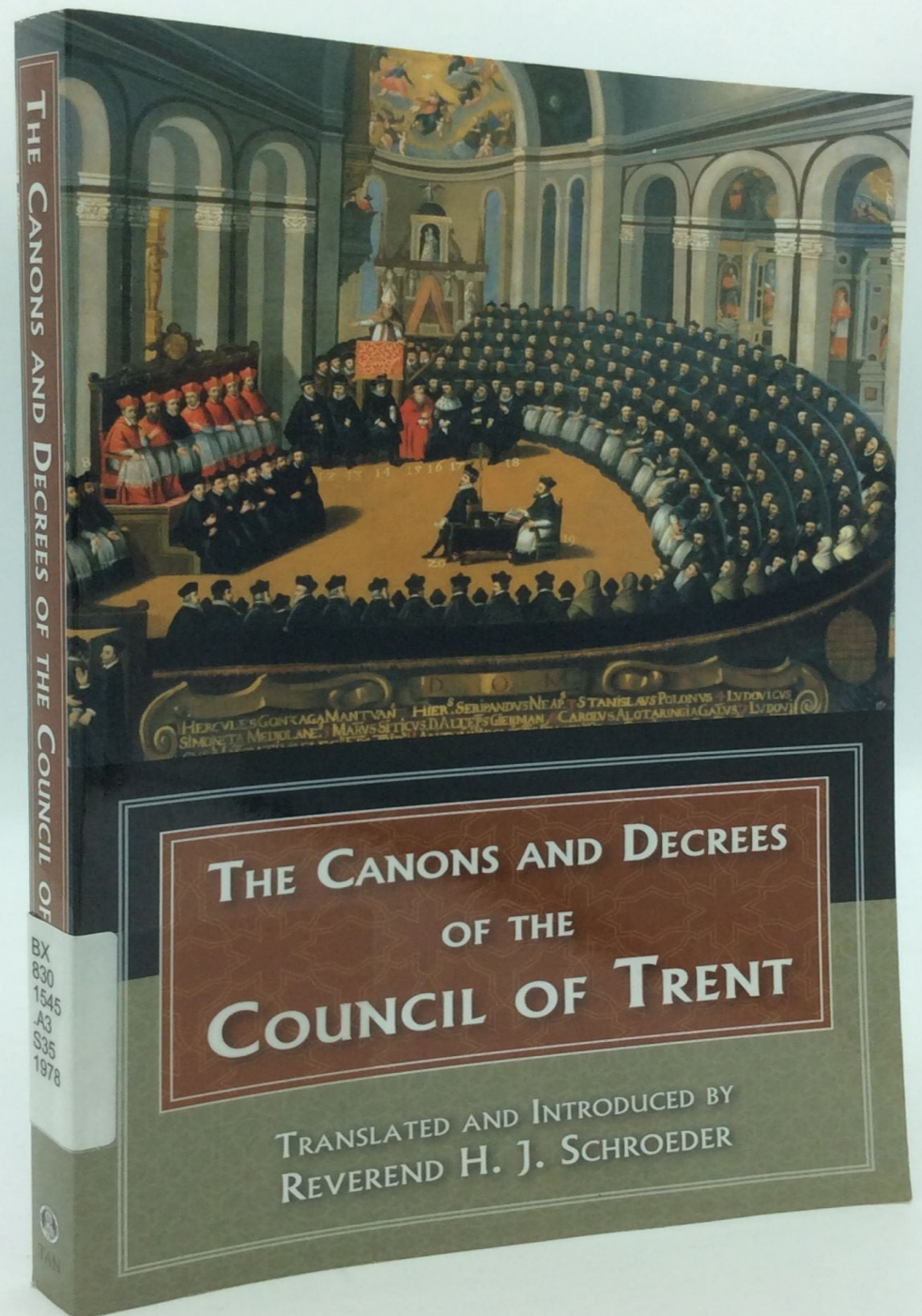


CANONES, ET DECRETA  
SACROSANCTI OECUMENICI,  
ET GENERALIS CONCILII  
TRIDENTINI  
SVB PAVLO III, IVLIO III, PIO IIII,  
PONTIFICIBVS MAX.



ROMAE,  
Apud Paulum Manutium, Aldi F.  
M. D. LXIII.

Cum priuilegio Pii III. Pont. Max.



# The Canons and Decrees of The Council of Trent

This is how the Council opened in December 1545:

- DECREE TOUCHING THE OPENING OF THE COUNCIL

Doth it please you, unto the praise and glory of the holy and undivided Trinity, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; for the increase and exaltation of the Christian faith and religion; for the extirpation of heresies; for the peace and union of the Church; for the reformation of the Christian clergy and people; for the depression and extinction of the enemies of the Christian name, to decree and declare that the sacred and general Council of Trent do begin, and hath begun?

# References

- A.G. Dickens, *The Counter-Reformation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968).
- Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490–1700* (London: Allen Lane, 2003).
- John Julius Norwich, *Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy* (New York: Random House, 2011).

# The Popes and Monarchs

- The Council of Trent completed its task under three Popes: Paul III, 1534–1549; Julius III, 1550–1555; and Pius IV, 1559–1565.
- The proceedings spanned three periods of the Council: from 1545–1549, 1551–1552, and 1562–1563.
- The last period has about a decade's delay, 1552-62, attributed to a fourth Pope, Paul IV..

# The Popes and Monarchs

- Between Julius III and Pius IV, Pope Paul IV reigned from 1555–1559 but did not reconvene the council because of instability in Europe and his hostility toward it.
- Pope Paul IV suspended the Council and replaced it with a commission to investigate the problems that the church faced.
- He diligently pursued the Roman Inquisition, attending its weekly meetings most regularly. Part of it, he introduced the index of Forbidden Books, including the complete works of Erasmus (Norwich, 316).
- His death in 1559 and succession enabled the Council to resume.

# The Popes and Monarchs

- The Monarchs of the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, and France, absent just like the Pope, impacted the proceedings.
- At the last stage as well, Pius IV had to dispatch a legate to Innsbruck to win over the Holy Roman Emperor.
- The vote invalidating the clandestine marriages in 1563 was 133 to 59, which gives an idea of the number of participants in the last session.
- Compared with it, the first session had a thinner attendance of one Cardinal, four archbishops, and thirty-one bishops (Norwich, 312).

# Council Rules

## DECREE TOUCHING THE MANNER OF LIVING, AND OTHER MATTERS TO BE OBSERVED, DURING THE COUNCIL

The organizers were aware of the challenges the convening of a large conference posed. Here are some of the rules the decree of January 1546 laid down regarding the proceedings of the Council:

- ... above all things, each observe sobriety at table, and moderation in diet; further, that, since idle conversations are often wont to arise there, the reading of the divine Scriptures be introduced, even at the tables of bishops; and let each teach and instruct his servants not to be quarrelsome, given to wine, immodest, covetous, haughty, blasphemous, and lovers of pleasures; in fine, let them shun vice and embrace virtue, and in dress, appearance, and in all their actions show forth modesty, as becomes the servants of the servants of God.”



## Council Rules

### DECREE TOUCHING THE MANNER OF LIVING, AND OTHER MATTERS TO BE OBSERVED, DURING THE COUNCIL

- ... But in delivering their sentiments, when the priests of the Lord are sitting together in the place of benediction, no one, according to the statute of the Council of Toledo, ought either to be boisterous by immoderate outcries, or cause disturbance by uproar; none to be contentious with false, vain, or obstinate disputations; but let whatsoever is said be so tempered by the mildest utterance of the words spoken, that neither the hearers be offended, nor the clear perception of a correct judgment warped by the mind being troubled.”



# Major Decisions Denied

Here are some examples of suggestions turned down in the last days:

- Allow clerical marriage.
- Limit the financial and judicial powers of the Curia.
- Recognize episcopal divine right and elevate bishops as brothers, not sons of the Pope.
- Increase the use of vernacular.
- Elevate the Councils as superior to the Pope, like the Conciliar Movement had envisaged (Dickens 124-127).

# Major Landmarks: The Seminaries

- Dickens considers that the decree on opening the seminaries had the most lasting impact of any other (128). The reform honored, unwittingly, Erasmus, Loyola, and Clavin simultaneously.
- The instructions are in Chapter XVIII of the XXIII Session, with a long but comprehensive title:

“Methods of erecting a Seminary for Clerks, especially of the Poorer Classes; in the said Erection many things to be observed; touching the Education of those to be promoted to Cathedral and [other] greater Churches.”

# Counter-Reformation: The Seminaries

This is what it says:

- “Whereas the age of youth, unless it be rightly trained, is prone to pursue the pleasures of the world; and unless it be formed, from its tender years, unto piety and religion, before habits of vice have wholly taken possession of men, it never will perfectly, and without the greatest, and almost singular, help of Almighty God, persevere in ecclesiastical discipline; the holy synod ordains, that all cathedral, metropolitan, and other churches greater than these, shall be bound, each according to the measure of its means and the extent of the diocese, to maintain, to educate religiously, and to instruct in ecclesiastical discipline, a certain number of youths of their city and diocese, or, if [that number] cannot there be found, of that province, in a college to be chosen by the bishop for this purpose near the said churches, or in some other convenient place.”

# Counter-Reformation: The Seminaries

- The criteria for admission are to be twelve years old, born in lawful wedlock, literate, and religiously inclined.
- The preference goes to the poor.
- The diocese must build a talent pool, “so this college may be a perpetual seminary of ministers of God.”
- The trainees must “wear the tonsure and the clerical dress; they shall learn grammar, singing, ecclesiastical computation, and the other liberal arts; they shall be instructed in sacred Scripture; ecclesiastical books; the homilies of the saints; the manner of administering the sacraments, especially those things which shall seem suited unto hearing confessions; and the forms of the rites and ceremonies.”

# Counter-Reformation: The Seminaries

- They must confess “their sins at least once a month.”
- Punish sharply the “incorrigible, and the disseminators of evil morals, ...if necessary by expulsion...”
- The Council spells out detailed instructions on allocation of funds out of existing resources for the seminaries, excluding the cases where they could be “wholly or in part endowed,” then shall the portion, deducted as above from all benefices, and incorporated by the bishop, be remitted, either wholly or in part, as the actual circumstances shall require.”

# Counter-Reformation: The Seminaries

- The bishops must supervise and secure the funding, and compel those who can teach to educate the trainees at the Seminary.
- The Council also decided that Professorships of theology shall not be conferred on any but doctors, or masters, or licentiates in sacred letters or canon law.

# The Seminaries: Italy

- As the Archbishop of Milan, later Cardinal, Charles Borromeo (1564-84), opened one of the first diocesan seminaries as decreed by the Council of Trent.
- The church canonized him as the patron Saint of Seminarians.
- The Cardinal leveraged existing church resources to achieve the Council's objectives, including the friars of the mendicant orders and the female communities of the Ursulines.



# The Seminaries: Italy

- Having achieved this, the Cardinal ordered that all the dioceses in his province should support their work in the parallel task of educating boys.
- Milan achieved astonishing results.
- By the time of Cardinal Borromeo's death, the Diocese of Milan had 740 schools, around 3000 teachers, and 40,000 pupils under instruction.

# The Seminaries: Spain

- Castile was another example of success. The parishes' seminaries were set up in an impressive 23 dioceses in Castile, between 1564 and 1610.
- There were soon perceptible effects on the education of the lower clergy.
- In 1563, the Vatican acquired its own printing press, Tipografia Vaticana, and the Church authorities were now assiduous in using the printing press to produce their tracts and primers, spreading the basic content of the faith or publicizing the burgeoning number of holy places.
- There was also much commercial competition to supply this booming market.

# The Seminaries: France

- In France, the seminaries found several enthusiasts, but they flourished under St Vincent de Paul (1580-1660). Dickens calls him “the final great saint of the Counter-Reformation” (176).
- Like the Jesuits who did it selectively, Vincent de Paul organized rural missions at the national scale. He founded the Congregation of Missions in 1625. They established 53 houses by 1700.
- In his lifetime, Vincent de Paul directed eight hundred rural regional missions, sending letters and instructions.
- He initiated the retreats for ordinands (candidates for ordination) in 1628, soon to be followed by a good third of the dioceses of France.
- By the time of his death, some 400 priests were issuing from his colleges.

# The Seminaries: France

- Distancing from Trent's directive to combine the students of all ages, Vincent de Paul began to separate them into age groups.
- Besides the seminaries, he firmly believed in “social Christianity,” reaching out to the needy.
- He had founded the Ladies of Charity in 1617 to work among the poor and sick. In 1633, his organization decided to recruit country girls “brought up to hard labor and irksome tasks” (179).

# The Seminaries: France

- They called them Daughters of Charity, known to the public as ‘Grey Sisters.’
- Never before, says Dickens, had the women of the people given a chance to serve humanity at this scale. They responded to every place that required charitable action, “in hospitals and schools, amid the victims of war, famine and epidemics, even in the galleys and on the battlefield” (180).

# The Seminaries: France

- The Society of Jesus had a leading role in the establishment of colleges, which had a different impact in various locations.
- In France, a remarkable number of Jesuit colleges made their appearance but suffered from a rude shock in 1594 when a former pupil of the college de Clermont tried to assassinate Henry IV.
- The enemies of the Society of Jesus took this opportunity to procure the brutal closure of many of its establishments, and their restoration was delayed until 1603 (Dickens 173).

# Reformation or Counter-Reformation

- MacCulloch believes that Trent focused on reforming the Church, aimed at its own reform, with little to do with the Counter-Reformation.
- Dickens considers that the Council did “ a series of definitions plainly arising from dogmas universally held throughout the medieval centuries. The Council pronounced in fact upon some basic issues concerning which its members held divergent views, issues upon which a measure of speculative freedom had hitherto existed in the universities and elsewhere” (130).



# Protestantism: No Reconciliation

- Making no concessions to Protestantism, “Trent carefully avoided Erasmus while yet travelling as far as possible in the opposite direction from Luther’s imputation and his extrinsic righteousness. By placing ecclesiastical tradition on a level with the Bible, it defied the whole protestant concept of evidence and authority... It was a triumph of the medieval concept of priesthood, an apotheosis of clericalism as well as of papalism” (Dickens, 132).

# Purgatory

- The Catholic Reformation, therefore, essentially focused on its strongholds or the areas where it could see some hope. It had no interest in reconciliation with the Protestants. Instead of it, the Council affirmed and refined its positions on issues that Protestants had been agitating. Examples:
- In 1562, the Council abolished the office of the questor or indulgence seller, but finally, it did not outlaw selling them, given existing commitments of the church. The council condemned, nonetheless, “all evil gains the obtaining thereof.”
- An attempt to forbid all money payments for the indulgences narrowly failed (Dickens, 129).

# Purgatory Reaffirmed

- Trent rejected the *sola scriptura* principle and reaffirmed the scripture and the practices of the religious leaders as sources of guidance. During the twenty-seventh session, therefore, Trent rejected the criticism of Purgatory and decreed,

“Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this ecumenical synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful, but chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently strive that the sound doctrine touching Purgatory, delivered by the holy fathers and sacred councils, be believed, held, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ...

# Sacraments Reiterated

Protestantism had no right to bring down the sacraments to two. In the seventh session, Trent, therefore, began the work to reiterate the sacraments, stating,

“...it hath seemed fitting to treat of the most holy Sacraments of the Church, through which all true justice either begins, or being begun is increased, or being lost is repaired...(for) the purity of the Catholic Church, and to the salvation of souls...”

# Reform the Clergy

- The church sought to optimize the clergy's role. Here are some of the measures taken during the sixth session at Trent:
- Prelates must reside in their own Churches; if they shall do otherwise, the Penalties of the Ancient Law are renewed against them, and new ones decreed. They must not abandon the flocks committed to them.

# Reform the Clergy

- If they are absent for six consecutive months, they “incur the penalty of the forfeiture of a fourth part of one year’s fruits...”
- If the contumacy increases, “a severer censure of the sacred canons” would apply.
- Dickens also surmises that the Council strengthened the Bishops’ role and made them masters of their own houses (130). For the Seminaries, for example, the Council made them fully autonomous.

# Reform the Clergy

- Like the Seminaries, Cardinal Borromeo, following Trent, also enforced rules for the clergy.
- He ordered all priests with pastoral charges to preach every Sunday and feast day and even organized monthly congregations of these clergy in which, after discussion, reports on the parishes, they practiced their preaching in front of them.
- Afterwards, they had to deposit their text with the archbishop for inspection.



# Reform the Clergy

- Cardinal Borromeo was convinced that confession had a crucial role in regulating the lives of the faithful. So, he attempted to keep it under his close control.
- He introduced the confessional box to churches and paid close attention to the quality of clergy hearing confessions. They were forbidden to operate without his license and were given frequent and detailed instructions, including attending weekly classes in confessional technique.

# Counter-Reformation: Italy

- Cardinal Borromeo also tried to turn one-to-one confessions towards social engineering.
- From 1576, he ordered confessors to check whether women were obeying an ecclesiastical order to keep their babies in a separate cradle rather than sleeping with them in their own beds to reduce infant mortality.
- Borromeo also ordered that dancing should cease on Sundays and feast days.

# Counter-Reformation: The Catacombs

- The Council's follow-up period coincided with a significant archaeological discovery of catacombs during the rebuilding of the city of Rome.
- The early Christians tunneled into underground labyrinths of tombs. The bodies had been interred in them. Many tombs became the object of early pilgrimage.
- During Rome's 8th and 9th-century troubles, devotions concentrated in more secure locations, and the catacombs were abandoned and nearly all forgotten.

# Counter-Reformation: The Catacombs

- The first major rediscovery was in 1578 and was quickly followed by others. These catacombs were witnesses to the early church's heroic days of persecution.
- In the catacombs, God revealed a new supply of authentic Saints who mocked the Protestants' claims to be the new martyrs of the church.
- Symptomatic of the revival of confidence and the renewed interest in Saints is that a new canonization of a Saint by a Pope took place in 1588 after an interval of 63 years.

# The North-South Divide

- By the 1570s, Southern Europe was secured for the old western church from the Atlantic coasts of Spain and Portugal to the Venetian towns and territories on the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic Sea.
- MacCulloch finds the great majority of European dioceses not lost to the Protestants located in the South.
- Out of a total of around 620 surviving Roman Catholic bishoprics around 1600, he tells us, no fewer than 315 were Italian and 67 were in Spain, where dioceses had always been larger and wealthier, compared with rather fewer than 60 in total surviving in northern Europe, eastwards from the Spanish Netherlands to the Holy Roman Empire and to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

# Counter-Reformation: Anglican Challenge

- The church's effort to regain a foothold in England offers a sad example.
- Trent had emphasized educating and training the clergy. Several of the British clergy trained in Flanders, and beginning in 1574, some of them returned to England.
- The authorities in England considered returning priests as traitors and severely punished them and their hosts if they were caught.

# Counter-Reformation: Anglican Challenge

- MacCulloch records high numbers of catholic persecution between 1570s and 1580s, backed by the parliamentary legislation which ordered death, banishment, life imprisonment, forfeiture of property, or fines.
- The believers had to hide the returning priests in priest holes. A Jesuit, Edmund Campion, once found was horribly tortured before his execution.
- Between 1581 and 1590, England executed 78 priests and 75 lay people; and, from 1590 to 1603, 53 priests and 35 lay people. Another 70 priests were executed between 1601 and 1680.



# Counter-Reformation: Success in Ireland

- The Irish had held on to Catholicism as a symbol of resisting the colonial Protestant British landowners.
- In 1621, the Dublin secular administration officially suspended enforcement of the monetary fine for Catholic recusants. The established Church of Ireland thus grudgingly admitted defeat and handed over pastoral responsibility for most of the population to Roman Catholics, who by now had roughly the same number of clergy working within the island as the Protestants.

# Counter-Reformation: Success in Ireland

- By 1635, there was a newly built Jesuit church in Dublin.
- Thus, in Ireland, the counter-reformation achieved one of its greatest victories, says MacCulloch, although the misguided actions of a Protestant government were probably an indispensable prerequisite for this Catholic success.







# Counter-Reformation: The Triumphal Art

- MacCulloch terms new church buildings in Rome as the “triumphalist architecture,” referring to what he calls, “the sensationally monumental as well as sensationally expensive rebuilding of Saint Peters,” including the Latin proclamation, “Thou art Peter and upon this rock will I build my church,” which reminded the flock about the biblical basis of the Pope's power, founded on the earliest days of Christianity.

# Counter-Reformation: The Triumphal Art

- MacCulloch argues that the church patronized and reinvigorated art to depict the themes of sainthood, martyrdom, and sacrifice, emphasizing the contribution of the twelve apostles and more recent lives of Christian leaders lost to persecution, for example, in England.
- One artist that the Jesuits, the Society of Jesus, commissioned to do such work was Niccolò Circignani, who also created frescoes of ancient and modern English martyrs in the Chapel in the English College at Rome.

# Inquisitions

- In Spain and Italy, the Inquisitions dominated the Reformation.
- The Spanish Inquisition had been in place since 1478, under direct royal control. Although it originally targeted Jewish and Muslim minorities, it expanded to include religious dissent in its mandate.
- The Roman Inquisition dated to 1542 when Pope Paul III established it. , It sought to enforce Catholic orthodoxy.
- We will see how the Inquisitions impacted the Counter-Reformation.

# Counter-Reformation: Spain

- Phillips' support for the Spanish Inquisition's work and auto da fe was evident.
- In 1559, the Spanish Inquisition produced its own index of prohibited books for Spain.
- MacCulloch says that they even banned Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*.
- All Spanish books printed outside Spain were banned from the Peninsula.
- Moreover, a blanket ban was imposed on Spaniards studying abroad. All teachers or students currently abroad were ordered to return home.

# Counter-Reformation: Spain

- Probing it since 1556, Grenada placed the entire work of Erasmus on the Spanish Index in 1559.
- Another target of the Inquisition was a Dominican, Bartolome Carranza. He had been Pope's legate to England under Mary I, and played a prominent part in both the 1st and 2nd sessions of the Council of Trent.
- Philip made him Archbishop of Toledo in 1558.
- Suddenly, in summer 1559, the Spanish Inquisition arrested him on suspicion of heresy.



# Counter-Reformation: Spain

- The Spanish Inquisition determined that while combating Protestantism in northern Europe, Bartolome Carranza read a great deal of Protestant literature. They scanned his private files and found detailed notes on heretics in whom no decent Spaniard should take even a critical interest.
- He suffered imprisonment and marginalization for seventeen years, some in Spain, others in a Dominican monastery in Rome.
- Pope Gregory XIII absolved him of all charges of heresy.

# Counter-Reformation: Italy

- In Rome, one impact of the Counter-Reformation, says MacCulloch, was the total disappearance from Italy of any vernacular Bibles.
- One of the tasks of the 1564 Tridentine Index had been to keep the vernacular Bibles away from the faithful. Anyone wanting to read the Bible in a modern language required permission from the local Bishop.
- In the 1596 Roman index, the ban became complete and without exception.

# Counter-Reformation: Rome

- In Italy, imposing the Index ban, vernacular Bibles were publicly and ceremonially burned like heretics. Even literary versions of scriptural stories in drama or poetry were frowned on.
- As a result, between 1567 and 1773, not a single edition of an Italian-language Bible was printed anywhere in the Italian peninsula.

# Who Wins?

- Dickens understands that, unlike the Conciliar Movement's hope, the Council implicitly recognized the primacy of the Pope. He adds, "... the Council appears as both creature and creator of the modern Papacy. It ended the long campaign of conciliarism by delivering the church to a monarchy, one which summoned no other Council for over three hundred years. It led to an apotheosis of papalism more spectacular than the Trent Fathers desired or envisaged..." (129).

# A Historian's Tribute to the Council

Dickens pays a rich tribute to the Council, nonetheless, saying,

- “The canons and decrees remain one of the greatest monuments of committee-thinking in the whole history of religion. Given their general purpose and outlook, their technical perfection and consistency are worthy of the highest admiration. In form and language, they are models of clarity and care. They are serviceable documents well abreast of the modern idiom of their day; whatever their debt to scholastic theology, their language is uncluttered by the scholastic habits...To study them can be a fruitful, almost a moving experience, and this even for readers who normally inhabit very different worlds of thought” (133).

# Conclusion

- The Catholic Church had irretrievably lost northern Europe, except for France and Belgium, by the end of the seventeenth century.
- Simultaneously, however, new opportunities emerged in the New World, Asia, and Africa, where European colonialism entered most forcefully but also allowed the church to save its souls.
- The expansion enabled Catholicism to retain its leading role as the biggest and most organized religious organization in the world. Latin America has already elected a Pope. Africa and Asia will get their chance as well.