

THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION: THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

Church Authorities consider the Council of Trent the most important council in modern history of the Roman Catholic Church. The following passages are taken from the council's decrees.

Let the following be cursed: anyone who says that the New Testament does not provide for a distinct priesthood; anyone who says that priests do not have the power of bringing about the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; anyone who preaches that priests do not have the power of forgiving or not forgiving; and anyone who says on the other hand that a priest is merely a minister whose only duty is to preach the gospel.

If anyone says that a man can be justified before God by doing good works without also having the divine grace of Jesus Christ, let him be cursed.

If anyone says that a sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that it is not necessary for him to receive sacraments to prepare for grace, let him be cursed.

If anyone says that a man's justification before God is not increased by his good works, let him be cursed.

In order that Christians may receive the sacraments with greater devotion, this holy council commands that bishops and priests should explain the purpose and use of the sacraments in a way that the congregation can understand, using the native tongue of the people if it is necessary.

It is to be desired that all who become bishops should understand what portion of their income should be devoted to their own maintenance, and to comprehend that they are called to the office of bishop not for riches or luxury, but to the labors and cares for the glory of God.