

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEMINARY

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TRENT AND ALL THAT FIFTY YEARS TRYING TO NAME IT

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I am delighted to have been invited to deliver the Archbishop Gerety Lecture in Ecclesiastical History at the School of Theology of Seton Hall University, and I want to thank you for having me come. I have put the Council of Trent in my title for this occasion for several reasons. The most fundamental is the intrinsic importance of the Council of Trent for the history of the Catholic church. The words Trent and Tridentine figure in all serious Catholic theological discourse, but they are also invoked outside academe, sometimes as battle cries, even by people who have never read a line of the council's decrees.

The Council of Trent, as you know well, was an official gathering principally of Roman Catholic bishops, who met in the little town of Trent in northern Italy. Their meeting stretched out intermittently over eighteen years, 1545-63, and issued a volume of decrees dealing with a large number of issues related to the Roman Catholic Church, to a great extent in response to Luther and other Protestant Reformers. Historians disagree about a lot of things and interpret events differently, but no historian has ever denied that Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and King Henry VIII set off an explosion that rocked the history of Europe. Among other things, we are told, they were reacting to the degenerate state of the Catholic church, which was rotten with abuses.

What about the Catholics? How did they respond to these challenges? Well, they responded in many ways, but the one historians have tended to give most attention to is the Council of Trent. What did the Council of Trent try to do? We are told it did two things: (1) it rejected Protestant teaching, and (2) it set about reforming the Catholic church of abuses. Some historians deem the impact of the council so profound and pervasive that they have called the hundred years from 1545 to 1648 'the era of the Council of Trent' or, more briefly 'the Tridentine era' (tridentinum), thus suggesting the Council affected almost every aspect of culture. Among the council's decrees, for instance, was one on religious art, which is often interpreted as inhibiting and restrictive, as putting the lid on the free creativity of artists, as an attempt to rein in the achievements of the Renaissance.

My second reason for choosing this topic concerns an anniversary. Three years ago was the 450th anniversary of the opening of the Council of Trent, 1545. I thought the anniversary provided an occasion to take a closer look at early modern Catholic culture, usually called Counter Reformation or Catholic Reformation, and what has been attributed to it. This is important and appropriate because in my opinion we are right now at a new historiographical moment regarding that phenomenon, as historians pursue the subject with an interest and zeal never known before and apply new categories of interpretation to it.

Two years ago marked another anniversary that even more directly provided me with my topic and title and also with a procedure that might allow me to deal intelligibly with such a vast topic in the short space of a lecture. In 1946, on the occasion of Trent's 400th anniversary, Hubert Jedin, a German Catholic priest, published a famous pamphlet entitled *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation?* (Catholic Reformation or Counter Reformation?). Jedin's subtitle was "an essay toward the clarification of the concepts."¹ In other words, he was trying to find out what these terms might mean. Jedin was forty-six at the time of publication, on his way to becoming perhaps the most important historian of Catholic Church History in this century. He was within three years of publishing the first of the four volumes of the great project of his life, the standard history of the Council of Trent, which he completed in 1975, five years before his death in 1980.²

What Jedin tried to do in his essay was lay to rest the confusion and controversy that up to that point had reigned among historians over what to call "the Catholic side" during the Reformation epoch. His essay remains the most authoritative statement on the topic, the classic point of reference for all subsequent discussion. And for fifty years discussion there has certainly been! Whatever Jedin's essay accomplished, it did not lay the problem to rest, even though it continues to have considerable influence, often on scholars and students unaware they are following Jedin's lead.

Hence my subtitle: 'Fifty Years Trying to Name It.' What I am going to concentrate on this afternoon is the confusion among historians during the past half-century about what to call 'the Catholic side' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the almost contradictory interpretations their names for it imply. This may sound abstruse and irrelevant to you, far removed from what actually happened in those centuries. In my defense I will simply say to you what I often say to my students, 'What happened is sometimes less important than what people think happened.' What historians do is tell us what they

think happened, and the first way they do this is by assigning names to what happened...for instance, by 'Middle Ages' historians originally meant a degenerate slump between the greatness of ancient Rome and Greece and the greatness of modern times. It was not a neutral term or a term without content. Terms like "Middle Ages" that we blithely toss around to designate historical eras did not fall from heaven. They were created at a certain time and place by flesh-and-blood historians, who operate to a greater or lesser extent out of the prejudices and limits of their own cultural situation.

In Jedin's essay he first reviewed the history of the terms or concepts for designating the Catholic side of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Here are the highlights of that history. By the middle years of the eighteenth century Lutheran historians had appropriated Reformation as the designation for the Protestant side. No term existed for the Catholic side until in 1776 a German Lutheran jurist named Johann Stephan Pütter coined *Gegenreformationen* to mean the return to the practice of Catholicism in areas once Lutheran imposed by force by Catholic kings and nobles. Note that Pütter used the word in the plural (*Counter Reformations*), for he meant to indicate a series of unconnected actions, and note also that he gave the word a quite precise and narrow definition. *Counter-Reformation* meant exactly what the words say, *Anti-Reformation*--more specifically, the military, political and diplomatic measures Catholics in certain localities were able to marshal against German Lutherans, measures that culminated in the Thirty Years War, 1618-48, when Catholics and Lutherans fought each other furiously and wrought terrible destruction on Germany.

Leopold von Ranke, perhaps the most important and influential historian of the past two centuries, mediated the entrance of the word *Counter Reformation* into the mainstream of historical vocabulary in the early 19th century. He sometimes used it in the singular, thus postulating a certain unity in Catholic efforts that sprang from three major sources--the Council of Trent, the Jesuits, and the papacy. He promoted the tendency to move the term out of its originally narrow definition, almost identifying it with Catholicism of the late 16th and early 17th century. For him it meant not merely a phenomenon but also defined an era of European history: "After the era of the Reformation [1517-1555] came the era of the Counter Reformation," which he understood to stretch from 1555 to 1648, the end of the Thirty Years War.

By the end of the 19th century the term had begun to wend its way into other languages, taking on connotations consonant with these different cultures--*contre-réforme* in France, *controriforma* in Italy, *contrarreforma* in Spanish-speaking lands, and *Counter Reformation*. In Italy, for instance, where the nineteenth-century battles of the *Risorgimento* for Italian unity (which the papacy opposed) were far from forgotten, Francesco De Sanctis early on and Benedetto Croce later interpreted the term to signify not so much the opposition of the church to Protestantism as its opposition to the freedom of the human spirit, which caused Italy to fall from its cultural preeminence during the Renaissance into the backwardness, as well as into the literary and artistic ugliness of the Counter Reformation.

Meanwhile in Germany in the late nineteenth century Eberhard Gothein and Wilhelm Maurenbrecher, two German Lutherans, picked up on von Ranke's thesis that the Catholic phenomenon was propelled in part by spiritual and religious forces--it was not just brute force--and in 1880 Maurenbrecher coined the new term, *katholische Reformation*, *Catholic Reformation*. Maurenbrecher was by the very employment of the term the first historian to parallel in a broadly influential way the Reformation with a "Catholic Reformation." Maurenbrecher's usage enraged many of his fellow Lutherans, for Reformation was so laden with theological presuppositions in Protestant circles as to mean no rival was possible. Some Catholic historians also rejected the term, suspicious of its Protestant origins and assumptions, even denying the possibility that the church might need reform.

Other historians began using "Catholic Restoration" and "Catholic Renaissance." Art historians spoke of 'baroque catholicism' and "baroque" in those days was not a complimentary term as an artistic style, for baroque implied overwrought and florid emotions, bizarre deviations from classical norms. French historians eschewed *Counter Reformation* and *Catholic Reformation*, preferring terms like *Pré-réforme*, *Évangélisme*, and for the seventeenth century *le grand siècle*.

British and American historians showed inconsistencies similar to those in most other cultures but with *Counter Reformation* tending to predominate. With volume four of *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1908, "*Counter Reformation*" received a resignedly reluctant approval in a long and influential article by J. H. Pollen, an English Jesuit historian specializing in the Elizabethan period. For Pollen *Counter Reformation* actually meant *Catholic Reform* in the sense of a strictly spiritual renewal or revival, inspired by saints like Ignatius of Loyola, whom he calls "its pioneer." It was carried forward by Trent and "great reforming popes." Pollen never mentioned any punitive institutions like inquisitions or the banning of books; he paid no attention to art or literature.

You can see from even such a rapid survey the multiplicity of terms designating the Catholic side but betraying only the slightest hint of the almost massive confusion that reigned about what any single term signified--are we talking about an era or a phenomenon, are we talking about sainthood or military machines, are we indicating parallels with Protestantism or radical difference from it, are we talking about culture or ecclesiastical politics--and, whatever we are talking about, when did it begin, when end, what was its significance and impact? Despite the vast diversity within the Reformation, historians of it then and now seem to have better conceptual instruments for naming it than those dealing with Catholicism.

It was out of this mess, in any case, that Jedin tried to create order in 1945. He winnowed through the many terms and then sanctioned *Catholic Reform(ation)* and *Counter Reformation* as best capturing the reality. He gave them, however, his own definitions and even chronological boundaries--*Catholic Reformation* indicated the impulses toward reform of abuses in the church that began in the late Middle Ages and continued even into the modern era; *Counter Reformation* meant the defence of itself that the Catholic Church had to mount against the Protestant attack, which first took shape in the middle of the sixteenth century. You will note that in designating *Counter Reformation* a "defence," Jedin deftly redefined the term, which both etymologically and historically meant not defense but attack.

Although according to Jedin these two realities were in general related to one another like soul (*Catholic Reform*) to body (*Counter Reformation*), they were sometimes separable. With impeccable logic Jedin pointed out that Saint Bernardine of Siena, who died in 1444, obviously had nothing to do with *Counter*

Reformation, but Bernardine was part of Catholic Reform, part of a spiritual revival that wanted to eliminate abuses. Moreover, both the Council of Trent and the Society of Jesus could be described as embodying now Catholic Reform, now Counter Reformation. The solution he hit upon for the problem was to accept both terms: the correct designation for the Catholic side was "Catholic Reformation and Counter Reformation."

Jedin concluded with an assessment of the importance of the Council of Trent for the phenomenon that allowed him at least implicitly to introduce and justify a shorter designation for his long-winded "Catholic-Reformation-and-Counter-Reformation." That designation was "The Tridentine Era," or the Era of the Council of Trent." With Jedin Trent held center stage for whatever happened in Catholicism. He concluded the essay with a resoundingly positive assessment of Catholic-Reformation-and-Counter-Reformation as a kind of spiritual miracle--ein Wunder--as the Church was rescued from what was, for all the pre-1517 attempts at reform, a morass of moral, doctrinal, and disciplinary abuses.

To read the essay today is to be struck again by Jedin's erudition and careful scholarship but also to realize not only how much more we know about so many aspects of the sixteenth century than did Jedin and his generation but especially how the very practice of history has changed. For all Jedin's learning, he in the essay, as was true of him until his death, ignored and even disdained French historical writing, which was on the verge of reshaping the historian's craft. He worked with an essentially political model of history and took no account of literature or art or religious sentiment. Moreover, his definition of the key concept "reform" lacked sharp edge. His essay is badly out of date--yet we still use the terminology that he inherited, reinterpreted and, along with many others of course, transmitted to us.

What difference does it make what label we use, I hear you asking? What's in a name? ("You know what I mean?" as we so often say in conversation...which usually means we don't know what we mean because we can't name it). In any case, I pretty much shared that nonchalant attitude until a few years ago I had several experiences that made me conclude that there's very much indeed in a name, especially in the names Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation. I have time, however, to mention only the most ongoing of these experiences, researching and writing my book, *The First Jesuits*. As is often true of historical research, the book led to me to conclusions I had not altogether anticipated. Among these was the necessity of jettisoning the two reasons historians, including Jedin, have for generations adduced as the reasons the Jesuits came into being, namely, combatting the Reformation and reforming the Catholic Church. These are the categories, please observe, applied to Catholicism in general, and then applied to the Jesuits by osmosis, I came to believe, rather than consideration of the evidence.

The Jesuits were an association of Catholic priests founded by a Spaniard named Ignatius of Loyola in the mid-sixteenth century that quickly spread throughout Europe and sent missionaries to the New World and Asia. Although historians have often recognized that opposition to the Reformation was not uppermost in the minds of Loyola and his companions in their earliest days together, beginning about 1534, I was surprised to find out just how incidental it was in their program until about 1555 and how in many or most parts of the world it was a secondary or non-existent aspect of it even after the date. What did it mean to missionaries like Francis Xavier in India and Japan, to Matteo Ricci at the imperial court in Beijing? It never occurred to me to question, however, that they had always had reform of the church as one of their great aims. Nonetheless, I gradually began to see how inadequate--nay, how misleading--"reform of the church" was as a way to describe the agenda the Jesuits set for themselves. Not only did they never ascribe to themselves the task of reforming the church or use the expression in relationship to their Society, but by virtue of certain practical decisions they took about their way of life they effectively shut themselves out from undertaking most aspects of that task, as the expression was understood in the sixteenth century, most notably at the Council of Trent. Trent's instruments for its reforms were disciplined bishops and pastors of parishes--Jesuits refused for themselves both offices, that is, they stayed out of the hierarchy. They steered clear of "the church," in that sense. The Jesuits did not want to reform the church, that is, the institution; they wanted to make people better human beings by being better Christians--which is not the same thing.

Jedin, following on von Ranke, singled out three agents for Catholic-Reformation-and-Counter-Reformation--the popes, the Jesuits, and the Council of Trent. At a certain point he practically identified them with each other, never suggesting that their interests might be different, even conflicting. What Trent intended the popes carried out, with the Jesuits "a powerful instrument in their hands."

But I had come to the conclusion that as a primary designation for the Jesuits, Jedin's categories were distorting. At about the same time, a distinguished Italian scholar, Paolo Prodi, published his book called *The Papal Prince*, the first really serious examination of the early modern papacy in almost a hundred years. For Jedin the "renewed" papacy was the driving force behind both Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation after 1555. What defined the papacy was that it was animated by religious and disciplinary ideals of Trent and made decisions according to them. But according to Prodi, a disciple of Jedin, the papacy evolved and acted, rather, as a creature of the new social, political, and cultural situation at the end of the Middle Ages. Prodi of course does not deny that the popes took an energetic role in interpreting and enforcing Tridentine legislation, but his thesis is that the papacy in the early modern era was a protagonist in the new political reality of Europe and that it began to look like and act like a modern bureaucratic state. Its reorganization in 1588, after Trent, for instance, had nothing to do with Trent--that is, with Catholic Reform or Counter Reformation--but was the result of this bigger situation.

If Jedin's categories do not adequately capture the Jesuits or the papacy, I began to suspect that we needed to question the whole construct--and even devise new terms. This is, in fact, precisely what some historians had already been doing, beginning long before I caught on, beginning almost at the moment fifty years ago that Jedin hoped he had resolved the problem. Even when historians continued to use Catholic Reform or Counter Reformation or Jedin's combination of the two, they disturbingly often expressed uneasiness and felt they had to justify their usage. So often one reads in books: "Yes, I'm calling it Counter Reformation [that is Anti-Reformation], but I don't mean it." What this indicates to me is that we are not here dealing with a dead metaphor, as wit Middle Ages, but with a live issue where discontent and discussion over naming indicate a deeper problem seeking resolution.

Here is the point. All our historiographical categories are of course impositions on a fluid reality that can never be fully and adequately captured by them. Nonetheless, among live categories some of more helpful or at least less misleading than others. It is no accident that everybody accepts Reformation for

"the Protestant side" of early modern history, even when further categories of analysis like "social disciplining" help reveal what was going on. It is no accident that none of the traditional terms for the Catholic side--Catholic Reformation, Counter Reformation, Catholic Restoration, Baroque Catholicism, Tridentine Catholicism, and so forth--never seem precisely to fit.

What's in a name? How serious an issue is this? Is it a mere verbal quibble? I cannot let it go that easily, for I have come to agree with what the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said many years ago, ". . . definitions--though in form they remain the mere assignment of names--are at once seen to be the most important part of the subject. The act of assigning names is in fact the act of choosing the various complex ideas which are to be the special object of study. The whole subject depends on such a choice." Names are the definition of what we are talking about. If name and subject matter do not match, confusion results.

I think Whitehead's reflections correspond exactly with historians' experience of writing and research. The important thing is to get the questions straight--long, arduous and precarious undertaking in which one can slip at almost any step. Names are implicit questions, or answers to implicit questions. Even if they are dismissed as not meaning what they seem to say (as, for example, historians so often try to do when they use "Counter Reformation"), I believe they have a subtle way of focusing attention on certain issues whilst they distract us from others. They give direction to our research. They can lead us, among other things, to take the part for the whole. They can seduce us into that common but most pernicious fallacy in historical writing, the fallacy of misplaced emphasis.

They sometimes blind us to incongruities staring us in the face, as I believe happened, for instance, with a placard and painting at the magnificent "Age of Rubens" exhibit at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts in the fall of 1993. Rubens, the great Dutch artist of the early seventeenth century, was a devout Catholic. The placard entitled "Painting and the Counter Reformation" described a newly vigorous Catholic Church that, unlike most Protestant churches, aggressively brought art and artists into its service and patronized them. It concluded, however, with the qualification: "Bishops and Church leaders constantly monitored the 'decorum' of religious painting, guarding against inappropriate imagery and unconventional interpretations." In other words, they censored it. They censored it to eliminate 'inappropriate imagery,' that is pictures inappropriate for a church setting. Within three feet of the placard hung Rubens' "The Holy Family with Saint Anne" from the Prado, done probably in the late 1620's--by Rubens, the devout Catholic and artist employed on an international basis by Catholic prelates and princes for just such paintings. In this painting a frontally nude Jesus stands on his mother's lap with his left hand caressing her neck. The Virgin Mary is one of Rubens' typically ample young women in contemporary dress. To steady himself, her infant son rests his left hand on her exposed right breast. To me, somehow, the placard and the painting did not quite seem to go together! This is Counter-Reformation censorship? I cannot imagine the painting (lovely as it is) being tolerated today in the United States in any church, Protestant or Catholic.

I am sure that the text that ultimately begot that placard in the Boston Museum was the single but often quoted line from Trent's decree on sacred images, which goes, ". . . in the painting of sacred subjects all sensual appeal must be avoided, so that images are not painted or adorned with seductive charm."

Did that line from Trent inhibit artists and result in 'reformed' art? The line was much commented upon in the years immediately after the council and taken seriously, but it was interpreted differently at different times and in different places. If the elimination of seductive charm means covering the human body from head to toe the line does not seem to have influenced Rubens, or any number of other artists painting religious, to say nothing of secular subjects under Catholic auspices. How 'tridentine,' how 'counter-reformation,' I ask, is the art of the so-called Counter Reformation?

Well, what has been going on with naming since 1946? The debate continues over the traditional terms. Out of the many scholars I might mention, I will single out Paolo Simoncelli, a distinguished and prolific Italian historian who in the course of a long and important article ten years ago took sharp issue with Jedin's distinction between Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation, and especially attacked "Catholic Reform" as a deceitful euphemism. What Jedin failed to do, even tried to hide, says Simoncelli, was the intrinsic relationship between repression and so-called Catholic Reform. Simoncelli thus rejects the definition of Catholic Reform as Jedin proposed it to mean essentially a spiritual revival, and he makes it indistinguishable from the old fashioned definition of Counter Reformation--that is, the repressive and retrograde actions of the Catholic Church after 1542 or 1555 that turned it into an essentially repressive and retrograde institution, squashing human freedom and inhibiting cultural achievement.

Mention of Simoncelli provides an occasion to note that even today these historiographical debates sometimes seem as much related to contemporary politics and ideologies as to the religious issues of the past, a phenomenon especially pronounced in Italy with its almost impassible line of demarcation between secular and Catholic intellectuals that goes back at least to the Risorgimento, 150 years ago. On the secular side especially, the resentments still smolder. Moreover, although Simoncelli differs utterly from Jedin in his assessment of what was happening, he argues within the same institutional framework as Jedin did, that is, he deals directly and head-on with church institutions like the inquisition and with churchmen like the popes and cardinals. His is, like Jedin's, an ecclesiastical approach, by somebody who is not himself an ecclesiastic.

Besides this ongoing but, I believe, increasingly sterile debate over the terms Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation, some historians in the past fifty years have devised categories that are either more sharply defined or at least try to be less loaded with ideology. The most important break-throughs came from Germany and France and began to appear at about the same time, although the historiographical situation in France in which that break-through occurred was more radical and longer in the making.

Let's look at Germany first. Beginning in the late 1950's several German Catholic historians, notably Ernst Walter Zeeden and Wolfgang Reinhard, asserted that what is most striking at a distance of 400 years was not how the Lutheran, Calvinist and Catholic churches differed from one another but how much they resembled each other in their basic structures and assumptions, in their basic religious and moral styles, in their efforts to discipline their own members and repel threats from the outside, in their formulating their own creeds, sometimes called confessions. These historians speak not of the Age of the

Counter Reformation, not of the Tridentine Age, but of the Confessional Age--as a more neutral, more precise and at the same time more comprehensive name than either of the others.

Reinhard and with him the German Lutheran Heinz Schilling have also given prominence to the term 'social disciplining' as an almost defining characteristic of the Confessional Age. By social disciplining they mean the imposition of standards of behavior on the laity and lower clergy of both Catholic and Protestant churches that make them conform to some abstract norm. It meant restriction and restraint, almost puritanical observances, and is now being taken as practically a synonym for the older term, reform. In other words, the upper classes--princes and the higher clergy of all the churches--tried to make the lower classes behave.

Characteristic of this approach, which has a wide diffusion especially in Italy and in scholars studying Italy--and, hence, is particularly relevant to our subject--is the focus on the institutions that have traditionally occupied the historians of the religious upheavals of the 16th century--the church and the state--and by church I mean the official and public institutions of the church in question, for example, bishops, pastors, elders, tribunals, and, of course official legislative bodies of the churches like consistories, synods and councils. In other words, this approach also is strongly ecclesiastical.

Altogether different is the "French approach," of which the so-called Annales school and its kin are emblematic. The approach was born at the University of Strasbourg in the 1920's, and created an approach to the past that differed in almost every respect from what until then was the reigning orthodoxy, namely, that the proper subject of history was politics, important events, great men. The new approach would be multi-disciplinary--economics, sociology, geography, psychology would all be brought into play. Perhaps even more important, as we see clearly in retrospect, it set out to dethrone politics-centered, event-centered, great-men-centered history. It set out to dethrone the unquestioned primacy of the written political document as the proper source the historian used--and "political" included the documents of ecclesiastical politics, broadly understood. To some extent, it set out to study what we used to call "the common people."

In 1929 Lucien Febvre, a founder of the approach, published one of the most famous articles ever written about historical approaches to the Reformation and its Catholic counterpart, whose full title rendered into English is "A Badly Put Question: The Origins of the French Reformation and the Problem of the Causes of the Reformation." This passionate article dismissed as ridiculous the standard thesis that revulsion at ecclesiastical abuses caused the Reformation.

For Febvre, who had an amazingly positive and uncritical attitude toward the doctrines and ethos of early Protestantism, the Reformation was spiritually too powerful to have been caused simply by a reaction to a bad state of affairs. To understand what happened we must, according to him, set aside our preoccupation with such institutional factors and turn to the thoughts, aspirations, and desires of the men and women of the time. The Reformation succeeded not because it dealt with abuses but because "it was the outward sign and the work of a profound revolution in religious sentiment." We must, therefore, study religion, not churches--sentiment, not institutions--if we hope to understand the sixteenth century.

Of all the points Febvre scored in his article, one stands out especially for Jedin's essay and our subject: "abuses" do not explain what happened. Febvre did not deny that abuses existed, or that both Martin Luther and the Council of Trent tried to deal with them, but he displaced them from center to periphery. If what he postulated was true, then the concept and term "reform," which is nothing other than response to abuses, needs to move to the background.

Febvre, his disciples, and his fellow travelers--and other French historian-sociologists like Gabriel Le Bras--nudged scholarship away from church history to the history of Christianity, from the history of churchmen to the history of practicing Christians, from the history of laws, regulations, doctrines and decree to the history of religious culture and to the social history of Christianity. In Italy they helped inspire Don Giuseppe De Luca to formulate a project for the history of piety, as a history of the love of God.

Of the immense number of historians today influenced by these developments, two are especially famous--Jean Delumeau and John Bossy. In 1970 Delumeau published his *Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire*. The title itself is significant--"Catholicism," not Catholic Reformation, not Counter Reformation, not even Catholic Church. Delumeau's approach scuttles that older terminology--a development whose significance the English-language editors obliterated when they took it upon themselves to add a subtitle not found in the French original *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter Reformation*--an indication of just how difficult it is to effect a shift in historiographical tradition and nomenclature.

In 1985 John Bossy published his book *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700*. The very title suggests his relationship to "the French school." One of the major aims of his book is, like Delumeau, to show that in the 16th century Christianity underwent a significant change that had both Protestant and Catholic modes. But Bossy repudiates words like "abuses," and "reforms"--and he refuses, for reasons that I hope are clear by now, to use the names he earlier used freely--Counter Reformation and even Tridentine Catholicism. He dislikes almost any use of reform or reformation since it implies, for both Protestantism and Catholicism, that a bad form of Christianity was replaced by a good form. What he sees happening in the sixteenth century into the seventeenth, rather, is a movement from more natural, spontaneous, fraternal realities to things more rationalized, impersonal, individualistic and bureaucratic. Religion did not of itself cause this movement but was, rather, one of its many manifestations. It was both agent and patient in the process.

The most obvious thing I have tried to show in this rapid and highly selective review of the past fifty years is how little Jedin's essay really settled regarding naming the Catholic side. (Just a few months ago, for instance, R. Po-chia Hsia's new book appeared entitled, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*.) There is much, much more that can and should be said on this subject, but--breathe a sigh of relief--not on this occasion. Let me at this juncture move on to

indicate, in eight points, where we are today and where we need to be heading in this problem of naming, i.e., interpreting, Early Modern Catholicism. By indicating the problem with the term Early Modern Catholicism, I have of course tipped my hand as to how we might better deal with it, but more about that later. Here are the points.

1. The basic question has changed. Fifty years ago the question historians of all persuasions asked was "What caused the Reformation?" This meant for our subject, "What in the Catholic Church caused--allowed or occasioned--the Reformation?" The answer was "abuses." The next question was "What impact did the Reformation have on the Catholic Church?" The answer was, it made it reform itself. These questions resulted in a focus on the church, on "abuses," and on their remedies.

The new question historians are asking, or need to ask, is, quite simply, "What was Catholicism like?" This new question puts the subject on an radically new footing. It releases it from the constrictions of "Catholic Reformation" and "Counter Reformation," Lutheran in origin, you remember, and also (almost thereby) releases it from the necessity of attributing everything to the Council of Trent. "What was Catholicism like--not just in its laws and dogmas, not just in its discipline, but in its art, in its festivals, in its mystics, in its attitude toward life and death, in its ordinary folk?" That is what many historians are asking today.

2. The basic focus has thus to a large extent changed. The traditional focus was "the church," understood as the institution comprising popes, bishops, councils and inquisitions (often seen as working hand in glove with "the state"). Although this focus persists in much German and Italian historical writing, and in some ways seems to be gaining force through exploitation of the category of social disciplining, in French and English-language scholarship attention is being given to "religion." This means that after seventy years Lucien Febvre's call to study not church but religion is in some quarters being heeded.

3. These shifts of course point to basic shifts in method. From traditional "church history" based on a political model (that is, the church treated like a state) we have moved ever more toward social history in its various forms, to at least taking some account of cultural anthropology, to a growing awareness of the contribution of art history and literary history, and to attending to feminist perspectives, especially on seventeenth-century France--in other words, to a more comprehensive approach. This shift has of course occurred in the study of all historical subjects, so that scholars in our postmodern times realize they must reckon with a rich multiplicity of perspectives. This is confusing but unavoidable as well as extremely helpful.

4. These shifts have led to a change in terminal date. Although Jedin showed some flexibility in this regard, historians and their textbooks insisted the Counter Reformation ended in 1648, with the end of the Thirty Years War. This was a legacy, of course, of the eighteenth-century and German origin of the term, because that's when the Thirty Years War ended in Germany. For Germany and perhaps even for "church" this may make some sense, but not for Catholicism, whose character evolved along a fairly continuous course until at least well into the Enlightenment, perhaps until the French Revolution, that is throughout early modern history--the dates in Hsia's title, you recall, end with 1770.

5. A shift is taking place towards a multi-cultural perspective. We now see that we need to integrate into our purview of Catholicism the realities symbolized by Bartolomé de las Casas in Latin America, by the Jesuit painting academy in Nagasaki, Japan, and by Matteo Ricci's experiment in Beijing, where in the 17th century the Jesuits tried to assimilate into Christianity what they found best in Chinese Confucianism. We need to integrate into our understanding not simply how the European missionaries saw their enterprise but the indigenous peoples saw the missionaries.

6. A basic shift in perception has taken place. Traditionally the Catholic phenomenon has been viewed as more monolithic than its many Protestant counterparts. Fifty years ago Jedin saw the Catholic Church moving after 1563 with monolithic splendor through three agents: (1) the decrees of Trent, (2) a implemented by "a renewed papacy," (3) who used the Jesuits as their agents. This was the "Tridentine Church." This was Catholicism.

Today we are much more aware of the seemingly endless variety and diversity within Catholicism. Moreover, many of the characteristics attributed to Trent and its implementation, such as increased bureaucratization, surveillance, and punitive institutions are seen now rather as across-the-board traits of early modern culture and early modern religion.

Is, for instance, the "severe morality" that supposedly gripped Catholicism in the late sixteenth century the result of Trent, popes or Jesuits? Why is it even stronger in John Calvin's Geneva, and why does it sound so much like Erasmus, the supposedly playful author of 'The Praise of Folly,' the supposedly easy-going humanist? If I had to point a finger at one person, I would point it at him, the Prince of the Humanists, who inculcated a stringent morality in season and out of season when his books were in everybody's hands for a generation and a half. His repeated excoriations of a supposed lasciviousness in religious paintings make Trent's few words on the subject seem lily-livered indeed.

Moreover, while there's no denying in some places and circumstances a morality and religious sentiment in which skulls, hellfire and brimstone play a determining part, there's also no denying a more optimistic side, especially as we enter the seventeenth century. Pamela Jones's recent study of Federico Borromeo speaks of his "Christian optimism," in striking contrast to his dour cousin, Saint Charles. This side is perhaps most manifest in the two greatest Catholic artists--Bernini and Rubens--working out of the two great centers, Rome and Antwerp. The art historian John Martin speaks of their "exuberance and voluptuousness," of their outlook as "optimistic and expansive."

7. Basic shifts have occurred in our ideas about the agents, process and rate of change (or continuity). For Jedin the papacy with its Jesuit agents successfully established the Catholic Reformation as proposed by Trent. Today we are more aware of resistance to any kind of "reform" imposed by "the church" and even to "social disciplining" attempted by any social, ecclesiastical or intellectual elite. "Negotiation" took place, it seems, at all levels--of bishops with Rome of pastors with bishops on the one hand and with their flocks on the other, of accused with inquisitors, and so forth--with even illiterate villagers emerging

as effective negotiators when their interests were at stake. At the same time we have become ever more aware especially within Catholicism of duration and persistent continuity of many of its institutions, slowing down and conditioning whatever changes took place.

8. A basic shift has occurred in evaluating the character of the changes within Catholicism. Fifty years ago Catholics seem to have been taken seriously when they maintained that, while their church might have now more, now fewer sinners among its members, it did not change in other ways. Any change that occurred was measured in terms of spiritual, moral or disciplinary decline or improvement, suggested by Jedin's evaluation in 1945 of the final result of the Tridentine reform as *Ein Wunder*--a moral miracle!

The shift in evaluation that has taken place has two aspects. First, historians have shown how change occurred on the deeper and more pervasive levels of basic structures of society and mentality that affected every aspect of Catholicism--even spirituality was different. Second, while wary about evaluating with categories like better and worse, historians have in certain areas rehabilitated the fifteenth century, seeing religious practice as less superstitious and ignorant than earlier historians would have conceded--and no reputable historian, so far as I know, would still see the post-Trent situation as *Ein Wunder* in Jedin's sense of almost a moral miracle.

If these are eight ways in which our historiography has changed in the past fifty years, it has remained consistent in its inconsistency about how to name "the Catholic side." Still predominating are the old war-horses Catholic Reform/Reformation and Counter Reformation, but with the latter rarely appearing in Anglophone authors without a word of explanation or, more usually, embarrassed apology. Catholic Reform/Reformation fares somewhat better in North America in this regard, but with more and more historians either avoiding or explicitly repudiating it for reasons I have been able only to suggest.

Tridentine Reformation also harkens back to Jedin and, in my opinion, labors under even more problems than Catholic Reformation. It is truly amazing, for instance, how many characteristic features of early modern Catholicism Trent bypasses without mention, such as missionary evangelization in the newly discovered lands, surely one of the most distinguishing and important characteristics of early modern Catholicism. What allowance does Trent make, indeed for the poet/mystic John of the Cross? Moreover, the many so-called active orders of nuns that sprang up in the seventeenth century, like the Daughters of Charity--few things more tellingly characteristic of modern Catholicism!--did so despite Trent, not because of it, for Trent decreed that nuns be strictly cloistered in their convents.

Does all this mean, therefore, that we should utterly jettison Catholic Reform/Reformation and Counter Reformation, as somebody as distinguished as Paolo Prodi has recently advocated? I think that would be a mistake, for when taken in a specific sense, they capture some utterly crucial aspects of Early Modern Catholicism.

Was there a "Catholic Reform" or, better, Catholic Reforms? The word *reformatio* appears too often in the sources to be dismissed, but it had the rather precise meaning of changes in systems, whether of theology or discipline, self-consciously undertaken by leadership in order to improve the behavior and morals of both clergy and laity. That is, by and large, what the sixteenth century meant by reform, even if we want to call it social disciplining. There are numerous examples of it, like John Calvin on the Protestant side. Among Catholics the best known would be Saint Charles Borromeo's attempt to implement the disciplinary canons of Trent in the archdiocese of Milan beginning in 1565.

Calvin and Borromeo were thus surely reformers. But was Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits? Only if we wish to apply the name "reformer" to every religious figure of great intensity and influence, so that it would apply to Saint Augustine or Saint Francis of Assisi or Billy Graham. But, if we wish to use the term in an historically precise way, Ignatius was not a reformer because he was not about a self-conscious change in system, especially a legal and disciplinary system. In other words, reform is an appropriate way of naming certain realities within Early Modern Catholicism, roughly 1400-1700, but it should not be applied with slap-dash promiscuity. Social disciplining has the advantage of more precise definition, but it carries with it an anthropology that tends to reduce all motivation to the will to power.

What about Counter Reformation? It is a bad name for the Catholic reality after 1550 taken as a totality but a good name for an important aspect of it. It is species of those changes self-consciously undertaken by leadership, in this case, to repel a hostile system and, if possible, destroy it, or at least to protect the native's against the enemy's onslaught. It is incontestable this happened in Catholicism and that it permeated into institutions that antedated 1517 and affected them, just as it happened in analogous ways in the other churches--or "confessions"--in the "Confessional Age."

The term should not, however, be used as a synonym for Early Modern Catholicism. Nor should it be sloppily extended to include everything that historian might find repressive or artificial or impersonal or centralizing or bureaucratic or whatever about later Catholicism. These general characteristics, undoubtedly more prominent than before, were often riding the tide of larger cultural movements--and can be found in other churches and in secular political entities. "Confessionalization" is a wonderful category of analysis, but it moves within the church-state spheres and it slights the continuity between the pre-Reformation and the post-Reformation situation in Catholicism.

In a word, Catholicism with its sluggish continuities as well as its new realities, was bigger than "Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation," too big as well to be called "Tridentine," too complex to be reduced to "social disciplining." Building on recent research and naming, I propose adding Early Modern Catholicism as an umbrella designation that contains and validates all the others while at the same time going beyond them. It suggests both change and continuity and leaves the chronological question open at both ends, so that it can be further determined for a given issue in a given locality. It implicitly includes Catholic Reform and Counter Reformation as important categories of analysis when precisely defined, while surrendering the attempt to draw too firm a line between them. It welcomes further categories like confessionalization and social disciplining, which help offset its blandness. It is neutral on whether before 1517 all forces were tending, inevitably and ineluctably, toward the Protestant Reformation and on how much afterwards in Catholicism was

due to it.

It seems more welcoming to the results of history about ordinary men and women than any of the above categories, which indicate more directly concerns of ecclesiastical officialdom. It includes better the burgeoning realities of missions, ministries, art, mysticism, and the new roles played by women. It is less obviously Eurocentric and can more easily handle realities symbolized by las Casas in Latin America and Ricci in China. Even more important, it suggests that important influences on religious institutions and mentalities were at work in early modern culture that did not originate with religion and church as such but that had great impact on them.

At this late point in my lecture, many questions are doubtless occurring to you--at least I hope they are. For some of you I imagine I see gently wagging heads, knitted brows and lips pursed to ask, for instance, "What do we mean by Early?" or "What, by Modern?" or even "What indeed is Catholicism?" "Our lecturer surely does not think, does he, that Early Modern Catholicism is an ideologically neutral term?" Or, from those of you forced by your professor to attend this lecture, "Who cares?"

But maybe there is another question. Does our esteemed lecturer really believe that Early Modern Catholicism has the slightest chance of carrying the day? Does he seriously think that his solution will clarify rather than further obfuscate the problem? Whence and whither this pride?

Your question, patient listeners, does not come as a surprise to yours truly. No, I have given it thought. And I have to admit, given the sad history of the other terms I have described to you, I can hardly be optimistic about the fate of the term Early Modern Catholicism. All I can say is that I did not settle upon it a few years ago in order to back a winner in the naming sweepstakes. I did not enter this fray because I like a fight but because I found myself unable to avoid it--as I struggled to define what I was writing about. I settled on Early Modern Catholicism because for me it captured the breadth of "the Catholic side" in ways more helpful and less distorting than other names that I encountered and ultimately had to reject as comprehensive designations.

The more realistic hope I have is not that Early Modern Catholicism would triumph as oil upon troubled waters--quite a long shot--but that by simply proposing it and arguing for it I might move you to look at the Catholic side more closely and then to speak of it with greater precision and with greater awareness of its complexity and variety--that I might alert you to the advantages of the other terms but also to the subtle but serious problems they pose. Ah, my term still may not be the best, but perhaps you will at least grant me that it is better than what I started with--"Trent and All That."

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