Outline:

The Roman Catholic Renewal 
and Counter-Reformation of the 16th Century

I. Introduction.
   A. Changes happening in the Roman Catholic Church were not just a reaction to the Protestant Reformation.
      1. At the time of the reformation, the acrostic for Rome was: (R)adix (O)mnium (M)alorum (A)varitia: “love of money is the root of all evil.”

II. The Roman Catholic Renewal/Reform Movements
   A. Spanish Mysticism
      1. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) and John of the Cross (1542-1591) brought about a renewal movement in 16th Century Spain.
      2. They emphasized emotion and a personal religious passion or experience of God
      3. Church feared mysticism because it did away with the need for the priesthood, the sacraments, and scripture — the mediators between the individual and God.

   B. The Society of the Oratory of Divine Love
      1. Formed in 1517 and operative for 10 years, this society stressed renewal.
      2. They often met together for prayer, meditation, and mutual encouragement.
      3. Two leaders were Caraffa (Paul IV, 1555-59), and Contarini (1483-1542).
         a. Cardinal Contarini influenced Pope Paul III to bring about reforms.
         b. He was appointed as chair of a papal reform commission.
         c. He represented the Roman Catholics at the Colloquy of Regensburg (1541).
         d. There, Melanchthon and Contarini hammered out an agreement on justification acceptable by both, but they did not reach agreement on other issues such as transubstantiation or the authority of the pope.
            (1) The Roman Curia and the Lutheran theologians did not support the agreement, setting the stage for Roman Catholic militant hardliners

   C. The Founding of New Orders
      1. The Theatines are founded in 1524 by Caraffa, as a community for priests
      2. The Capuchins (founded in 1525), and so-named because of its square hood (cappuccio), accepted the Franciscan rule.
         a. They grew rapidly, through their preaching, emphasis on scripture, and the care for the sick and poor.
      3. The Reformed or barefoot (Discalced) Carmelite Order - co-founded by John of the Cross

   D. Papal Reforms
      1. Popes Clement VII (1523-1534), Paul III (1534-1549), and Paul IV (1555-1559), were the most influential reforming popes of this period.
      2. The most significant reforming moves Paul III made were:
         a. to appoint reform-minded people to the College of Cardinals
         b. Calling the Council of Trent, and
         c. the setting up of a Papal Reform Commission in 1536:
            (1) Their report was blunt. Declared that:
               (a) The papal office had become too secular
               (b) The popes and cardinals needed to attend to spiritual matters
               (c) The cessation of bribery and the financial abuses in the church
III. The Counter Reformation

Besides renewal, the Roman Catholic Church also set out to counter the Reformation. Did this in a variety of ways:

A. The Council of Trent (1545-1563)
   1. This was the most significant council in the western church since Nicea (324).
      b. The third session was most productive. Medieval orthodoxy was re-affirmed:
         (1) transubstantiation
         (2) justification by faith and works
         (3) teachings on the mass
         (4) the seven sacraments
         (5) celibacy of the clergy
         (6) existence of purgatory
         (7) indulgences
   2. This laid the foundations of the Roman Catholic Church for the next 4 centuries.

B. Society of Jesus (Jesuits), organized and given Papal blessing in 1540.
   1. Founded by Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). Because of a leg injury, he went from being a member of a military order to the leader of an ‘army of the Lord.’
      a. Loyola embodied Catholic renewal and the Counter-Reformation.
      b. Primary purpose was not to battle the Protestants, but simply to “help souls.”
      c. The “Spiritual Exercises” sought reform of individuals
      d. Emphasized mission and education — action in the world rather than withdrawal
         (1) Francis Xavier (1506-1552) served in Indonesia, India, and Japan

C. The Index, the Inquisition, and the Beginnings of the Religious Wars
   1. The Index. Created to destroy heresy, that ‘infectious disease’ “transmitted above all by the printing presses from one part of Christendom to another.”
      a. The first official Index of Prohibited Books was published in 1559.
   2. The Inquisition. By the 1530’s is a move to direct the Inquisition against the Protestants. The collapse of the negotiations at the Colloquy of Regensburg (1541) justified this application of the Inquisition against the Protestants
   3. Religious Wars. War broke out in 1546 between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The Protestants were defeated within a year.
      a. The Peace of Augsburg of 1555 declared “the religion of the ruler is the religion of the region.”
      b. The 30 Years’ War (1618-1648), originally a war over religious convictions, became the pretext for political power grabs. A third of the population of Europe died as a result of these wars.

IV. Summary

A. The reform movement within the Roman Catholic Church and the counter-reformation decisively shaped the Roman Catholic church up to the Second Vatican Council. As a result of the Council of Trent, the western catholic church developed formally into the Roman Catholic, or Tridentine, Church.

B. By the end of the Council of Trent, the ‘split’ in the Western church catholic became irrevocable. The significance of this would shape the church’s history from the 16th Century to the present.