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Mr. Palmer - ab actu ad posse valet illatio

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A.M.D.G.

FRQ #1 St. Loyola and the Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation

Never has a revolution been as ferocious as the Protestant Reformation. But, never has a recovery been as unexpectedly successful as the Catholic response. The tumultuous times seen everywhere throughout Europe in the early 16th Century were a direct result of years of abuses and shortcomings on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. On the eve of All Saints Day in the year 1517, the flood gates would open. Formerly timid frustrations against nepotism, pluralism, simony, and other bureaucratic gaffes on the part of the Church now became outspoken challenges against authority. However, the bloodshed of peasant revolts and the slaying of rebellious faiths could not match the fervor so forcefully brought back by various Catholic reformers and Church leaders. The nature of the Catholic recovery and response to the swift and fierce Protestant Reformation was shockingly militant and disciplined in its successes.

Regimini militantis Ecclesiae was the Papal Mandate that instigated a new arm of Roman authority called the Society of Jesus. Even in the name of the decree, this new reform-minded organization was militant and regimented. Two words which could just as easily describe the founder of the Jesuits: Saint Ignatius Loyola. Wounded in battle and spiritually rejuvenated by the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, Ignatius would begin his faith journey with pilgrimages to the Holy Land and then to other Catholic strongholds of faith throughout Europe. Borrowing from his military expertise, Loyola would provide to Pope Paul III exactly what was needed

during the Protestant Reformation of which great turmoil and pandemonium reigned: undying faith and unquestioning obedience. Taking only the most dedicated and fired up priests with him, Ignatius directly combated the dissenting petitions about clerical ignorance by building schools, colleges, seminaries and laying the foundation for what would become the most influential educational system in the world. The compounded effect of a more strict adherence to core Catholic values, achieved at Pope Paul III's Council of Trent, and the spectacular success of Jesuit teachings and missionary work truly brought *the greater glory of God* to the world.

Where the Catholic response was an attempt to bolster the flood gate of faith against dissent, the Protestant Reformation saw to the stripping away of any Roman Catholic barriers toward salvation. Rather than relying on a conduit to god in the form of the clergy, Luther championed the idea of the priesthood of all believers. However, contrary to the careful and meticulous raising of Church standards by the Jesuits, Luther and the Protestant Reformation would see to the hasty tearing down of clerical hierarchies and the subjugation of Roman property. No dissident against the Papacy, and all the abuses associated with it, wanted to see Bishops or Cardinals or confusing Latin liturgies stand in the way of their salvation.

As most revolutions are, the Protestant reformation was long coming and quick in fruition. However, the sudden and effective ferocity that tore down and wounded the most influential institution of all time, would only be exceeded by the steady and persistent faith, determination, and zeal of Catholic reformers like Saint Ignatius Loyola and Pope Paul III.