



The Reformation
History – Junior Cert
Quick Notes

The Reformation

For many centuries, the Catholic Church, led by the pope in Rome had been riddled by problems and abuses. These included nepotism, pluralism, simony and absenteeism and indulgences. So, people decided that things should be done to fix this. Martin Luther was one of these protestors who strongly believed that faith alone could achieve salvation and this belief became known as justification by faith alone. Luther also developed the theory of the priesthood of all believers which implied that each person's salvation lay in their relationship with God. Luther protested because he disagreed with the preaching of indulgences of John Tetzel, so he nailed the 95 theses to the door of the University Church. This listed abuses and questioned church beliefs. In 1520, Luther began to write down his beliefs. He believed that clergy should be allowed to marry, and that truth is found only in the bible. Pope Leo X sent Luther a Papal Bull, this was a letter threatening Luther with removal from the Church if he did not recant his teachings but Luther simply burned it. The Diet of Worms was a parliament that declared Luther a heretic, however, he went into hiding with the help of Frederick of Saxony. It was then he translated the Bible into German. The Peasants Revolt broke out in 1525 but it was soon crushed whilst the Religious war broke out in 1529 between Catholics and Protestants. The Peace of Augsburg only settled this war in 1555. The peace was a fragile one and almost a century later, Europe was torn apart by the 30-year war. In his later life, Luther married and had six children, he completed The Confession of Augsburg which contained all of his teachings and his followers became known as Protestants. The years 1520-46 saw the spread of Protestantism throughout Europe.

The reformation in Switzerland was spurred on by Ulrich Zwingli and so the country was split in two- one half was Catholic and the other half was Protestant. Both sides formed armies and Zwingli was killed in the Battle of Kappel in 1531. John Calvin was also involved in the reformation in Switzerland. He drew up teachings that became the basic beliefs of Presbyterianism AKA Calvinism. He set out the theory of predestination which meant that God has decided, even before a person is born, whether he or she would go to heaven or hell. Calvin moved to Geneva before long and that became known as the city of God. Soon Presbyterianism spread to Scotland, France and England. The Reformation in England was led by King Henry VIII who at the beginning was strongly against any reformation. But soon he declared himself Head of the Church in England and the church

became known as the Anglican Church or the Church of England. Religion in England then underwent many changes becoming protestant, then catholic and back to protestant again. The 39 articles published in 1563 outlined the main beliefs of the Anglican church. In 1536, the Irish Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, which made Henry VIII the head of the church of Ireland. Protestant beliefs and services were soon introduced. However, Catholic beliefs were reintroduced during the reign of Queen Mary. Queen Elizabeth passed the Act of Supremacy, making her Supreme Governor of the Church of Ireland. The Act of Uniformity ordered all the people of Ireland to attend a protestant church service on Sundays. The spread of Protestantism was associated with the spread of English rule in Ireland and so was not welcomed. In 1545, Pope Paul III established the Council of Trent to make reforms in the Catholic Church. It aimed to define the teachings of the Church and to correct the abuses in the Church. There were decisions made on discipline e.g. bishops must live in their dioceses and there were decisions made on doctrine e.g. there are seven sacraments. Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1521 and his followers became known as the 'Soldiers of Christ', They were responsible for stopping the spread of Protestantism in Europe; they managed to restore the Catholic religion in Austria and Poland. Pope Paul III approved these Jesuits in 1540. In religious terms, Europe divided into four camps: Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and Calvinist.

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