

The Council of Trent, held between 1545 and 1563 in northern Italy, was one of the most important gatherings in the history of the Roman Catholic Church and contained what the Church had to say in response to the Protestant Reformation. By examining the statements that came out of this church council, one can discover the differences in beliefs and practices between Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians.

Eight Statements from the Council of Trent

(*Creeds of the Churches*, edited by John H. Leith, 3rd edition, John Knox Press, 1982, pages 403-404, 408, 421, 423, 427, 429, 441.)

1. ...no one relying on his own judgment shall, in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, distorting the Holy Scriptures in accordance with his own conceptions, presume to interpret them contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge of their true sense and interpretation, has held and holds...
2. ...it is not its intention to include in this decree, which deals with original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the mother of God...
3. If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to obtain the grace of justification,...let him be anathema.
4. If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, let him be anathema.
5. If anyone says that baptism is optional, that is, not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema.
6. ...after the consecration of bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is truly, really and substantially contained in the august sacrament of the Holy Eucharist...
7. I firmly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful. I likewise hold that the saints reigning together with Christ should be honored and invoked, that they offer prayers to God on our behalf, and that their relics should be venerated... I affirm that the power of indulgences was left in the keeping of the Church by Christ, and that the use of indulgences is very beneficial to Christians.
8. I acknowledge the holy, Catholic, and apostolic Roman Church as the mother and teacher of all churches; and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman Pontiff, vicar of Christ and successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles.