

## THE HOLY INQUISITION - the ultimate religious murder machine

The Catholic Church tends to play down the evil of the Inquisition which was set up by her to destroy anybody who differed from her. You will read in books like Apologetics for the Pulpit that it was not the fault of the Inquisition which was a legitimate arm of the Church that the secular powers went too far in killing heretics for the Church (page 431). But the fact is that excommunication in those days made you a complete outcast and if you were an excommunicated king you had no authority so the Church could have used excommunication to deter Inquisitors from going too far. And besides the Church was not forced to hand heretics over to the state for punishment. The state would not have been so keen to destroy heretics had it not been for the Church teaching that the heretic was a powerful instrument of the Devil and had to be destroyed for to destroy him was to weaken the Devil and destroy his plan. They knew fine well that there were plenty of harmless heretics and a large chunk of the population was made up of closeted heretics and no harm had come. It is a fact that no pope for centuries condemned the view that heretics have no rights while the Inquisition was in force (page 227, Vicars of Christ). They encouraged the Inquisition by their silence.

The Fourth Lateran Council which took place in 1215 AD in Rome, stated that all who disagree with the Catholic Church in any way are heretics and all heretics are as bad as each other and their goods must all be taken from them and if they are priests or princes they must lose their authority and it shall be taken from them and heretics have no right to testify legally and they must be rooted out and excommunicated (page 287, Fifty Years in the "Church" of Rome). The Council offered a plenary indulgence to Catholics who took it on themselves to exterminate heretics. They were granted the same spiritual benefits as those who fought in the Crusades. (The decree can be read in the book, Documents of the Christian Church, pages 132-133.)

The Catholic doctrine that even an apparition of Jesus or the Virgin Mary must be ignored if it commands what is contrary to the will of the Church or the parish priest or bishop or anybody in authority in the Church obviously shows that the Church is claiming a monopoly on the right to tell people what they should believe. If the Church commands the slaughter of heretics even Jesus is forbidden to say nothing against her. So the Church is not so worried about the will of God after all! Well that is assuming God has any kindness in him at all.

Today, the Church says that to be a heretic in those times was to be willing to take up arms against the innocent members of the Church and to kill them was right. But Lateran 4 never says that. It tars all heretics with the same brush. Most heretics are not murderous or traitors. The Church is lying to cover up the evil of the past. To do that dishonours the murdered heretics intensely and shows how much hate festers inside the façade that is Roman Catholicism.

Pope Boniface VIII stated that the Church should hand heretics over to the secular powers even when it knows that its request that they will not be executed will not be fulfilled (page 72, Crisis of Moral Authority, Don Cupitt, SCM Press, London, 1985). The Church even granted an indulgence to those who gave wood to the executioners to burn heretics (page 242, A Handbook on the Papacy).

Strictly speaking, there were five different Inquisitions. The first one was created by bishops in 1184. Innocent III set up the legatine Inquisition which was supervised for him by the Cistercians in 1198. Gregory IX established the monastic one in 1231 which was operated by the Dominican order. Paul III founded the Roman Inquisition in 1542. The worst one was the Spanish Inquisition which started in 1478. It was the arm of the state for destroying Jews and Moors who faked conversions to Roman Catholicism. It was driven by the knowledge that if the enemies pretend to be friends they can do the faith a great deal of damage. In 1480, Pope Sixtus IV approved the Inquisition in Spain (Vicars of Christ page 237).

Juan Antonio Llorente worked for the Inquisition gave the world the evidence that the Inquisition murdered millions. 105,285 victims were killed by the Inquisitor Torquemada alone. Llorente was accused of embezzlement but it is wrong to say that that has anything to do with his reliability as a historian. Anyway, the accusation was not proven. The documents he had consulted were burned by him. This is held by Roman Catholics like Karl Keating (Catholicism and Fundamentalism, page 292) to cast doubt on his reliability. But these documents were stolen and he had to destroy the evidence for the Church that would come after him. He knew that the Church could not get him arrested and jailed if he got rid of the documents for then she would have to make other documents that proved the information in his books was right and came from purloined papers in order to establish his guilt.

Keating tells us that according to some Catholic scholars the Inquisition only killed about 4000 people all the time was extant (Catholicism and Fundamentalism, page 296).

It does not really help the Church if the numbers murdered were low for it was still evil and intolerant for her to kill them

and shows what he would like to do to heretics.

But many Catholic scholars who know a thing or two believe that the horrific and unbelievable account of the Inquisition put together by Henry Charles Lea who many Catholics disparage is the truth. Lord Acton endorsed it and he was hard to please (page 637, Vicars of Christ).

The accused would never have been sure about what he was supposed to have done for he was never fully informed (Difficulties, page 14). The Inquisition hypocritically forbade anybody from being tortured more than once but allowed the torture to go on indefinitely. We know that "a Toledo record which extends over forty years (1648-1694) contains 1,205 cases (2 cases per month, almost exactly) of which only six ended in complete acquittal" (Difficulties, page 14). The Inquisition did not mind if it made mistakes and killed good Catholics for it felt it was better to do that than to let one heretic escape (Difficulties, page 16). All Mgr Knox can do in response to all this is appeal to the Chambers Encyclopaedia of 1860 which stands refuted by the historical evidence.

The Inquisitor, Bernard Gui, said that even the testimony of a notorious perjurer against a person should be accepted and the names of the witnesses were never disclosed to the accused (Difficulties, page 36). In Difficulties it will be seen that the Catholic Fr Knox does not really make an answer to any of that. He tries to claim that the papal protests against the Inquisition were ineffective not because the pope didn't want them to work but because it is sometimes hard for even the pope to influence the Church. He says that Rome forbade duelling and few listened (page 39). Surely he knows that the nations obeyed the pope when he wanted the Inquisition established though it was an inhuman institution that had a different legal procedure from that of the state. A lot of countries wouldn't have wanted it for that reason but still they accepted it to please the pope. Some of the popes did not like innocent Catholics being jailed and tortured just because they were accused and tried to PARTLY restrain the evil urges of the Inquisition but what does that do to redeem them from the charge of wickedness and fanaticism? Nothing. Excommunication was the weapon used by the popes to enforce obedience for once a person was an outcast from the Church the person had no rights at all so the pope could have forced the Inquisition to disband. The idea that its cruelty was right was not regarded as heretical but orthodox. But when the popes themselves complained at times it shows they knew the Inquisition was partly heretical and did not care enough to stop it by force. And the pope was not interested in stopping duelling for sin was forbidden but people were given the freedom to commit it. Knox knows fine well that this issue has nothing to do with proving papal inability to stop the Inquisition.

In The Inquisition and Liberty (page 125) we learned that hardly anybody who was accused by the Inquisition was acquitted. If the popes were really that good there would have been plenty especially in the early days. Gregory IX made the fanatical murderer Conrad of Marburg lead the Inquisition in Germany knowing what he was like (Handbook on the Papacy, page 236).

The prisons were terrible beyond belief (Handbook on the Papacy, page 237). And how can the likes of Knox try to say that the popes sincerely meant their denunciations of the cruelty of the Inquisition when the pope had the money and power and influence to ensure that the prisoners had some comforts?

The Franciscan monk, Bernard Delicieux, who tried to stop the inhumanity of the Inquisition became its victim thanks to the pope just for saying the system was unchristian (Handbook on the Papacy, page 238).

Most people would have seen the Inquisition for what it really was and would have inwardly frowned on its speciality, forcing people to confess under torture to things they never did. They could have torn it down but did nothing because they believed the pope who said that all this was right. The papacy is certainly mainly to blame for the excesses of the Inquisition.

The Roman Inquisition in Spain was told to stop using torture by Pius VII in 1816. This was not out of kindness but out of a desire to prevent fanatical Catholics from being forced to confess to what they never did. A dead devotee was not use to the pope. The torturing, however, did not stop for at least two more decades proving that the pope did not mind that much if it continued. Perhaps he only forbade the torturing to give the Church a better image for it had many troubles and did not mean it.

Catholics often try to blame the evil of the Church on the barbaric climate of the times. That is offensive to us for even the blind can see that the things she did were wrong as the Protestant Hubmaier wrote in 1524 (Vicars of Christ, page 247).

Torquemada and the Inquisitors by John Edwards tells us a lot of interesting things about the Inquisition. Muslims in Valencia were forcibly converted to the Catholic Church in 1521 (page 77). French and German Jews had been forcibly converted to the Church during the First Crusade in 1096 and at that time the Church decreed that only people who physically resisted baptism could be considered to have received an invalid baptism and to be free of any obligation to obey the Church – an obligation conferred by valid baptism (page 78). So if you were forced to be baptised and didn't struggle then in Catholic doctrine the baptism made you a Catholic bound to obey the rules of the Church and bend the knee to the

pope. This legislation according to the book was still in force in 1521! There can be no doubt that it was official Catholic doctrine that enforcement was good and acceptable and effective. The Church claims that what it officially accepts is what God has revealed for God doesn't let the Church err. So the Catholic Church can be justly condemned as believing in forced conversion despite anything it says today. Its standard says that forced conversion is what the Church must believe in.

St Pius V almost decreed in 1570 that any married woman who sold herself for sexual favours was to be executed for adultery. He appealed to the Bible for support. Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva, Robert M. Kingdon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

## CONCLUSION

Roman Catholicism is the most murderous religion in history. Its thirst for blood was sanctioned in its holiest decrees and when it killed once it can do it again.

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