

The sixteenth century was according to Dionysius Exiguus the end of the millenium and the beginning of the end when fire or brimstone would destroy the world. According to his calculations many centuries earlier the Redemption had come when the world was exactly four thousand years old, and after that two thousand more years remained before the last judgement of the good and evil that men had done during their lives. It was also the time of the Renaissance artists. Human minds had grown wary of everything that Aritstotle had said and cautiously many dared to question some of the apparent facts at the risk their reputations and lives. The great entente known as Christendom was on the verge of collapse or had already collapsed in the throes of the Reformation, whether under the leade ship of the king, Henry the Eight, known as Defender of the Faith or under Martin Luther, the former Augustinian monk. It was a time of great explorations and greedy kings and conquistadores were raking over the soils of new worlds in quest of gold for their soverigns and colonies to add to an empire.

In the midst of this new age a group of men had come into exitence as a religious order under a crippled Spanish knight, whose name was Ignatius of Loyola. He wanted his group to be known as "insignes" or leaders who would meet the new tasks that confronted the whole civilized world in a way that would make for progress and achievement instead of conservatism and chaos.

Among them were men like St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez who sat with the cardinals and bishops during the Council of Trent as theologians. There was St. Peter Canisius who set up colleges and taught the youth according to a system of education that fitted the day better than the restless curricula of the big universities at Paris and elsewhere. The new colleges produced Jesuit professors of mathematics and experimental sciences who speculated on actual observations rather than on the speculations of ancient Greek philosophers.