



CHAPTER 20

The Catholic Reformation and the Baroque Style

"So sweet are the colloquies of love which pass between the soul and God ..."
Saint Teresa of Avila

The Protestant Reformation created a religious upheaval unlike any other in the history of Western Christianity. Luther's criticism of the Roman Catholic Church had encouraged religious devotion free of papal authority and had prepared the way for the rise of other Protestant sects (see chapter 19). The rival religious beliefs that fragmented Western Europe quickly accelerated into armed combat. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), which ended with the establishment of Protestantism throughout most of Northern Europe, caused the death of some five million Christians. During the sixteenth century, as Protestant sects began to lure increasing numbers of Christians away from Roman Catholicism, the Church undertook a program of internal reform and reorganization known as the Catholic Reformation, or Counter Reformation. Further, by the 1540s, the Church launched an evangelical campaign to win back to Catholicism those who had strayed to Protestantism. These two interdependent movements gradually introduced a more militant form of Catholicism that encouraged intensely personalized religious expressions. Initiated in Spain, Italy, and Latin America, a vigorous new style—the baroque—became the vehicle for this new, more dynamic, outpouring of religious fervor.

The Catholic Reformation



Confronting Protestant challenge, the Roman Catholic Church pursued a path that ensured its survival in the modern world. Between 1540 and 1565 churchmen undertook papal and monastic reforms that eliminated corruption and restored Catholicism to many parts of Europe. The impetus for renewal came largely from fervent Spanish Catholics, the most notable of whom was Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556). A soldier in the army of King Charles I of Spain (the Holy Roman emperor Charles V; 1500–1558), Loyola brought

to Catholicism the same iron will he had exercised on the battlefield. After his right leg was fractured by a French cannonball at the siege of Pamplona, Loyola became a religious teacher and a hermit, traveling lame and barefoot to Jerusalem in an effort to convert Muslims to Christianity. In the 1530s he founded the Society of Jesus, the most important of the many new monastic orders associated with the Catholic Reformation. The Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, followed Loyola in calling for a militant return to fundamental Catholic dogma and the strict enforcement of traditional Church teachings. In addition to the monastic vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience, the Jesuits took an oath of allegiance to the pope, whom they served as soldiers of Christ.

Under Loyola's leadership, the Jesuit order became the most influential missionary society of early modern times. Rigorously trained, its members acted as preachers, confessors, and teachers—leaders in educational reform and moral discipline. Throughout Europe, members of the newly formed order worked as missionaries to win back those who had strayed from "Mother Church." The Jesuits were fairly successful in stamping out Protestantism in much of France, Southern Germany, and other parts of Europe. But their reach extended further: as pioneers in learning the languages and customs of India, China, and Japan, the Jesuits were the prime intermediaries between Europe and Asia from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century. In the Americas, which became prime targets for Jesuit activity, missionaries mastered Native American tribal languages and proceeded to convert thousands to Roman Catholicism. Their success in Mexico and Central and South America has stamped these parts of the world with a distinctive cultural character.

The Jesuit order was a fascinating amalgam of two elements: mysticism and militant religious zeal. The first emphasized the personal and intuitive experience of God, while the second involved an attitude of unquestioned submission to the Church as the absolute source of truth. These two aspects of Jesuit training—mysticism and

militancy—are reflected in Loyola’s influential handbook, the *Spiritual Exercises*. In his introductory observations, Loyola explains that the spiritual exercises should do for the soul what such physical exercises as running and walking do for the body. As aids to the development of perfect spiritual discipline, these devotional exercises—each of which should occupy a full hour’s time—engage the body in perfecting the soul. For example, in the Fifth Exercise, a meditation on Hell, each of the five senses is summoned to heighten the mystical experience:

FIRST POINT: This will be to see in imagination the vast fires, and the souls enclosed, as it were, in bodies of fire.

SECOND POINT: To *hear* the wailing, the howling, cries, and blasphemies against Christ our Lord and against His saints.

THIRD POINT: With the sense of *smell* to perceive the smoke, the sulphur, the filth, and corruption.

FOURTH POINT: To *taste* the bitterness of tears, sadness, and remorse of conscience.

FIFTH POINT: With the sense of *touch* to feel the flames which envelop and burn the souls.

Loyola also insists on an unswerving commitment to traditional Church teachings. Among the “rules for thinking with the Church” is Loyola’s advice that Christians put aside all judgments of their own and remain obedient to the “holy Mother, the hierarchical Church.”

READING 4.1 From Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* (1548)

The following rules should be observed to foster the true attitude of mind we ought to have in the church militant.

- 1 We must put aside all judgment of our own, and keep the mind ever ready and prompt to obey in all things the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church.
- 2 We should praise sacramental confession, the yearly reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and praise more highly monthly reception, and still more weekly Communion, provided requisite and proper dispositions are present.
- 3 We ought to praise the frequent hearing of Mass, the singing of hymns, psalmody, and long prayers whether in the church or outside; likewise, the hours arranged at fixed times for the whole Divine Office, for every kind of prayer, and for the canonical hours.¹
- 4 We must praise highly religious life, virginity, and continency; and matrimony ought not be praised as much as any of these.
- 5 We should praise vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and vows to perform other works . . . conducive to perfection. . . .

¹The eight times of the day appointed for special devotions; see chapters 9 and 15.

- 6 We should show our esteem for the relics of the saints by venerating them and praying to the saints. We should praise visits to the Station Churches,² pilgrimages, indulgences, jubilees,³ crusade indulgences,⁴ and the lighting of candles in churches.
- 7 We must praise the regulations of the Church with regard to fast and abstinence. . . . We should praise works of penance, not only those that are interior but also those that are exterior.
- 8 We ought to praise not only the building and adornment of churches, but also images and veneration of them according to the subject they represent.
- 9 Finally, we must praise all the commandments of the Church, and be on the alert to find reasons to defend them, and by no means in order to criticize them. . . .
- 10 If we wish to proceed securely in all things, we must hold fast to the following principle: What seems to me white, I will believe black if the hierarchical Church so defines. For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the bridegroom, and in His spouse the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord who gave the Ten Commandments that our holy Mother Church is ruled and governed.



Q What is meant by “the true attitude of mind?” What by “the church militant?”

Loyola’s affirmation of Roman Catholic doctrine anticipated the actions of the Council of Trent, the general church council that met between 1545 and 1563 to make reforms. The Council of Trent reconfirmed all seven of the sacraments and reasserted the traditional Catholic position on all theological matters that had been challenged by the Protestants. It also set clear guidelines for the elimination of abuses among members of the clergy, emphasized preaching to the uneducated laity, and encouraged the regeneration of intellectual life within Catholic monasteries. Church leaders revived the activities of the Inquisition (see chapter 12) and established the *Index Expurgatorius*, a list of books judged heretical and therefore forbidden to Catholic readers. The Catholic Reformation supported a broadly based Catholicism that emphasized the direct and intuitive—hence, mystical—experience of God. Although the Church of Rome would never again reassume the universal authority it had enjoyed during the Middle Ages, both its internal reforms and its efforts to rekindle the faith restored its dignity in the minds and hearts of its followers.

²Churches with images representing the stages of Christ’s Passion.

³A time of special solemnity, ordinarily every twenty-five years, proclaimed by the pope; also, special indulgences granted during that time. The jubilee principle is based on a biblical injunction to free slaves, return land to its original owners, and leave fields untillied once every fifty years (Leviticus 25).

⁴Church indulgences granted to Christian Crusaders.

Catholicism's Global Reach

The evangelical activities of the Jesuits and other religious orders were widespread, but not uniformly successful. In China, where European traders were regarded as “ocean devils,” the Catholic missionaries assumed a cordial relationship with the intellectual classes and succeeded in converting a number of Chinese scholars. By the eighteenth century, however, disputes between the Jesuits and the Dominicans over the veneration of Confucius (aggravated by papal condemnation of Confucian rites in 1744) weakened Catholic influence. In Japan, the first Jesuit missionaries, admirers of Tokugawa culture (see chapter 21), diligently mastered the Japanese language and culture. While the Jesuits introduced the Japanese to European styles of painting and music, the Portuguese (and thereafter, Dutch and English) merchants brought imperialistic commercial interests to Japan, thus clouding the evangelical aims of the Jesuits with European material ambitions. The Jesuit efforts at conversion were also frustrated by rival Franciscan missionaries. Over time, the Jesuits fell into disfavor with Japanese Buddhists, who came to view all Christians as potentially subversive to the traditional social order. By 1606, following decades of disruption caused by European efforts to win trading privileges in Japan, the Japanese outlawed Christianity.

Figure 20.1 *The Virgin of Guadalupe*, 1746. Oil on wood. National Palace, Mexico City, Dagli Orti. The Art Archive.



The country expelled almost all Western foreigners from Japanese soil by 1624, after a wave of brutal persecutions of both European Christians and Japanese converts to Catholicism.

Christian evangelism in the Americas proved to be far more successful. In sixteenth-century Latin America, where Spanish political authority went largely unchallenged, Catholicism went hand in hand with colonization. The arrival of the Jesuits in Mexico in 1571 followed that of the Augustinians, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans in a vast program of Christianization. Just as the convergence of Europeans and Indians came to produce a unique new “Latin American” population, so the blend of European Catholic and native religious traditions produced a unique synthesis in the culture of Mexico. A formidable example of this creolizing phenomenon, and one that testifies to the powerful religious impact of Catholicism, is the Miracle of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In 1531, ten years after the conquest of Mexico by Cortés, on the site of a former shrine to the Aztec mother-goddess, a dark-skinned Virgin Mary appeared in a vision before a simple Mexican peasant. The legend of this miraculous apparition of the Mother of God, commemorated in hundreds of carved and painted images (Figure 20.1), became the basis for the most important religious cult in Mexican history: the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The colonial cult of Guadalupe worships the Virgin in the traditional medieval guise of mother, intercessor, and protector, but it also exalts her as the symbol of Mexican national consciousness. At her shrine—the goal of thousands of pilgrims each year—and at hundreds of chapels throughout Mexico, the faithful pay homage to the Black Madonna, who is shown standing on a crescent moon, surrounded by a corona of sunrays and angels bearing the colors of the Mexican flag. The significance of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a Christian devotional image, enthusiastically promoted by the Jesuits beginning in the late sixteenth century, and her widespread popularity as protectress of Mexico have persisted even into modern times: in 1910, she was made an honorary general of the Mexican Revolution.

Literature and the Catholic Reformation

The passionate mysticism of the Catholic Reformation infused the arts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In literature, there appeared a new emphasis on heightened spirituality and on personal visionary experience acquired by way of the senses. One of the most colorful personalities to emerge in forging the new language of mysticism was the Spanish Carmelite nun Teresa of Avila (1515–1582), who was canonized in 1622. Teresa’s activities in founding religious houses and in defending groups of Carmelites, who symbolized their humility by going without shoes, took her all over Spain and earned her the nickname “the roving nun.” It was not until she was almost forty years old that her life as a visionary began. Teresa’s

Figure 20.2 GIANLORENZO BERNINI, *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*, 1645–1652. Marble, height of group 11 ft. 6 in. Altar of Cornaro Chapel, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome. © 1990 Scala – Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali.



visions, including the one described in the following autobiographical excerpt, marry sensory experience to spiritual contemplation. They address the intriguing kinship between physical suffering and psychic bliss and between divine and erotic fulfillment. For Saint Teresa, love is the desire for oneness with God. The language by which the saint describes that union is charged with passion, for instance, when she relates how God's flaming arrow leaves her "completely afire."

READING 4.2 From Saint Teresa's *Visions* (1611)

It pleased the Lord that I should sometimes see the following vision. I would see beside me, on my left hand, an angel in bodily form—a type of vision which I am not in the habit of seeing, except very rarely. Though I often see representations of angels, my visions of them are of the type which I first mentioned. It pleased the Lord that I should see this angel in the following way. He was not tall, but short, and very beautiful, his face so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest types of angel who seem to be all afire. They must be those who are called cherubim: they do not tell me their names but I am well aware that there is a great difference between certain angels and others, and between these and others still, of a kind that I could not possibly explain. In his hands I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by this intense pain that one can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God. It is not bodily pain, but spiritual, though the body has a share in it—indeed, a great share. So sweet are the colloquies of love which pass between the soul and God that if anyone thinks I am lying I beseech God, in His goodness, to give him the same experience. ...



Q Which strikes you as more affective: the written or the visual version of Saint Teresa's vision? Why so?

The sensuous tone of Teresa's visions enriched the religious verse of the age, including that of her Spanish contemporaries, Saint John of the Cross (1542–1591), also a Carmelite, and Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561–1637). Similarly, in the poetry of devout English Catholics such as Richard Crashaw (1613–1649), the language of religious ecstasy swells with brooding desire.

Born into a Protestant family, Crashaw converted to Catholicism early in life. His religious poems, written in Latin and English, reflect the dual influence of Loyola's meditations and Teresa's visions. At least two of his most lyrical pieces are dedicated to Saint Teresa: *A Hymn to the Name and Honor of the Admirable Saint Teresa* and *The*

Flaming Heart, upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Teresa, as She Is Usually Expressed with a Seraphim beside Her. The latter poem suggests that Crashaw was familiar with Bernini's sculpted version of Teresa's vision before it was publicly unveiled in Rome (Figure 20.2). Representative of this visionary sensibility, the last sixteen lines of *The Flaming Heart*, reproduced in Reading 4.3, are rhapsodic in their intense expression of personal emotion. Erasing boundaries between erotic and spiritual love, Crashaw pleads that Teresa ravish his soul, even as she has been ravished by God.

READING 4.3 From Crashaw's *The Flaming Heart* (1652)

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thou dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and sealed thee His;
By all the heavens thou hast in Him,
Fair sister of the seraphim,
By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me!
Let me so read thy life that I
Unto all life of mine may die.



Q What is the nature of the love that Crashaw describes?
Q Which images in this poem contribute to its erotic undertone?

The Visual Arts and the Catholic Reformation

Mannerist Painting

The religious zeal of the Catholic reformers inspired a tremendous surge of artistic activity, especially in Italy and Spain. In Venice and Rome, the centers of Italian cultural life, the art of the High Renaissance underwent radical transformation. The clearly defined, symmetrical compositions of High Renaissance painters gave way to *mannerism*, a style marked by spatial complexity, artificiality, and affectation. Mannerist artists brought a new psychological intensity to visual expression. Their paintings mirrored the self-conscious spirituality and the profound insecurities of an age of religious wars and political rivalry.

The mannerist style is already evident in *The Last Judgment* that the sixty-year-old Michelangelo painted on the east wall of the Sistine Chapel (Figure 20.3). Between 1534 and 1541, only a few years after the armies of the Holy



Figure 20.3 MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI, *The Last Judgment* (after restoration), 1536–1540. Fresco, 48 × 44 ft. Altar wall, Sistine Chapel, Vatican Museums, Rome. Nippon Television, Tokyo.



Figure 20.4
PARMIGIANINO, *Madonna of the Long Neck*, 1534–1540. Oil on panel, 7 ft. 1 in. × 4 ft. 4 in. Uffizi Gallery, Florence. © 1996 Scala – Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali.

Roman Empire had sacked the city of Rome, Michelangelo returned to the chapel whose ceiling he had painted some twenty years earlier with the optimistic vision of salvation. Now, in a mood of brooding pessimism, he filled the altar wall with agonized, writhing figures that press dramatically against one another. Surrounding the wrathful Christ are the Christian martyrs, who carry the instruments of their torture, and throngs of the resurrected—originally depicted nude but later, in the wake of Catholic reform, draped to

hide their genitals. Reflecting the anxieties of his day, Michelangelo has replaced the classically proportioned figures, calm balance, and spatial clarity of High Renaissance painting with a more troubled vision of salvation.

The traits of the mannerist style can be seen best in the *Madonna of the Long Neck* (Figure 20.4) by Parmigianino (1503–1540). In this work, the traditional subject of Madonna and Child is given a new mood of theatricality (compare Raphael’s *Alba Madonna*; see chapter 17). Perched

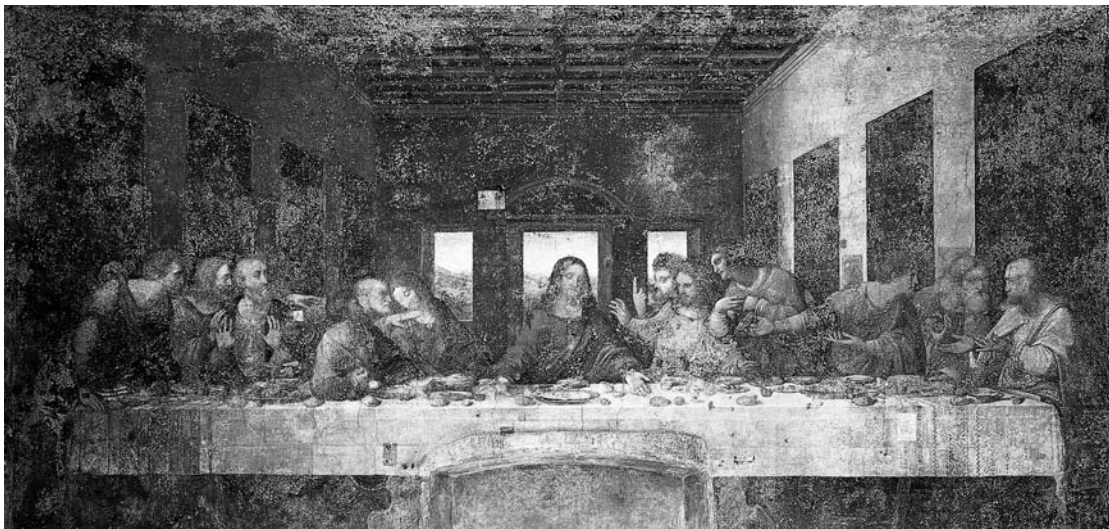


Figure 20.5 JACOPO TINTORETTO, *The Last Supper*, 1592–1594. Oil on canvas, 12 ft. × 18 ft. 8 in. San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. © 1990 Scala, Florence.

precariouly above a courtyard adorned with a column that supports no superstructure, the unnaturally elongated Mother of God—her spidery fingers affectedly touching her chest—gazes at the oversized Christ child, who seems to slip lifelessly off her lap. Onlookers crowd into the space from the left, while a small figure (perhaps a prophet) at the bottom right corner of the canvas draws our eye into distant space. Cool coloring and an overall smoky hue make the painting seem even more contrived and artificial, yet, by its very contrivance, unforgettable.

The degree to which the mannerists rejected the guiding principles of High Renaissance painting is nowhere better illustrated than by a comparison of *The Last Supper* (Figure 20.5) by the Venetian artist Jacopo Tintoretto (1518–1594) with the mural of the same subject by Leonardo da Vinci (see chapter 17) executed approximately a century earlier (Figure 20.6). In his rendering of the sacred event, Tintoretto renounces the symmetry and geometric clarity of Leonardo's composition. The receding lines of the table and the floor in Tintoretto's painting place the viewer

Figure 20.6 LEONARDO DA VINCI, *The Last Supper*, ca. 1485–1498. Oil and tempera on plaster, 14 ft. 5 in. × 28 ft. Refectory, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan. © 2002 Scala, Florence.



above the scene and draw the eye toward a vanishing point that lies in a distant and uncertain space beyond the canvas. The even texture of Leonardo's fresco gives way in Tintoretto's canvas to vaporous contrasts of dark and light, produced by a smoking oil lamp. Clouds of angels flutter spectrally at the ceiling, and phosphorescent halos seem to electrify the agitated figures of the apostles. At the most concentrated burst of light, the Savior is pictured distributing bread and wine to his disciples. While Leonardo focuses on the human element of the Last Supper—the moment when Jesus acknowledges his impending betrayal—Tintoretto illustrates the miraculous moment when Jesus initiates the sacrament by which the bread and wine become his flesh and blood. Yet Tintoretto sets the miracle amidst the ordinary activities of household servants, who occupy the entire right-hand portion of the picture.

The mannerist passion for pictorial intensity was most vividly realized in the paintings of Domenikos Theotokopoulos, generally known (because of his Greek

origins) as El Greco (1541–1614). A master painter who worked in Italy and Spain in the service of the Church and the devout Philip II (1527–1598), El Greco preferred the expressive grace of Tintoretto to the more muscular vitality of Michelangelo. With the inward eye of a mystic, he produced visionary canvases marked by bold distortions of form, dissonant colors, and a daring handling of space. His elongated and flamelike figures, often highlighted by ghostly whites and yellow-grays, seem to radiate halos of light—auras that symbolize the luminous power of divine revelation. In *The Agony in the Garden*, the moment of Jesus' final submission to the divine will, El Greco created a moonlit landscape in which clouds, rocks, and fabrics billow and swell with mysterious energy (Figure 20.7). Below the tempestuous sky, Judas (the small pointing figure on the lower right) leads the arresting officers to the Garden of Gethsemane. The sleeping apostles, tucked away in a cocoonlike envelope, violate rational space: they are too small in relation to the oversized image of Jesus and

Figure 20.7 EL GRECO, *The Agony in the Garden*, ca. 1585–1586. Oil on canvas, 6 ft. 1 in. × 9 ft. 1 in.
Courtesy of the Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio. Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey.



the angel who hovers above. El Greco's ambiguous spatial fields, which often include multiple vanishing points, his acrid greens and acid yellows, and his "painterly" techniques—his brushstrokes remain engagingly visible on the surface of the canvas—all contribute to the creation of a highly personal style that captured the mystical fervor of the new Catholicism.

Baroque Painting in Italy

If mannerism was the vehicle of the Counter-Reformation, the *baroque style* conveyed the dynamic spirit of an entire age. Derived from the Portuguese word *barocco*, which describes the irregularly shaped pearls often featured in ornamental European decoration, the term *baroque* is associated with such features as ornateness, spatial grandeur, and theatrical flamboyance. In painting, the baroque is characterized by asymmetric compositions, strong contrasts of light and dark, and bold, illusionistic effects.

The baroque style originated in Italy and came to dominate artistic production in the years between 1600 and 1750 throughout Europe and in those parts of the Americas colonized by Spain. Italian baroque artists worked to increase the dramatic expressiveness of religious subject matter in order to give viewers the sense that they were participating in the action of the scene. They copied nature faithfully and without idealization. Such was the ambition of the North Italian artist Michelangelo Merisi, better

known as Caravaggio (1571–1610). The leading Italian painter of the seventeenth century, Caravaggio flouted Renaissance artistic conventions, even as he flouted the law—he was arrested for violent acts that ranged from throwing a plate of artichokes in the face of a tavern keeper to armed assault and murder. Having killed a tennis opponent in 1606, he was forced to flee Rome. In his paintings, Caravaggio renounced the grand style of the High Renaissance, which called for dignity, decorum, and the idealization of figures and setting. Rather, he recreated the early Christian past as though its major events were occurring in the local taverns and streets of sixteenth-century Italy. Caravaggio dramatized these events with strong contrasts of light and dark that give his figures a sculptural presence. A golden light bathes Christ and his disciples in *The Supper at Emmaus* (Figure 20.8); Caravaggio "spotlights" Jesus at the moment when, raising his hand to bless the bread, he is recognized as the Christ (Luke 24:30–31). Caravaggio underscores the moment of recognition by means of vigorous theatrical gestures and by the use of a perspective device known as **foreshortening**: Christ's right arm, painted at a right angle to the picture plane, seems to project sharply outward, as if to bless us as well as the bread. At the moment of recognition, the disciple at the right flings his arms outward along a diagonal axis that draws the viewer into the composition, while the figure at the left grips the arm of his chair as though

Figure 20.8 CARAVAGGIO, *The Supper at Emmaus*, ca. 1600. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 7 in. × 6 ft. 5½ in. National Gallery, London.





Figure 20.9
CARAVAGGIO, *The Crucifixion of Saint Peter*, 1601. Oil on canvas, 7 ft. 6 in. × 5 ft. 9 in. Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome. © 1990 Scala, Florence.

to rise in astonishment. Unlike the visionary El Greco, Caravaggio brings sacred subjects down to earth with an almost cameralike naturalism. Where El Greco's saints and martyrs are ethereal, Caravaggio's are solid, substantive, and often quite ordinary. Their strong physical presence and frank homeliness transform biblical miracles into human narratives—a bold repudiation of Italian Renaissance conventions of beauty.

Caravaggio organized traditional religious compositions with unprecedented theatrical power and daring. In *The Crucifixion of Saint Peter* (Figure 20.9), he arranged the figures in a tense, off-centered pinwheel that catches the eccentricity of Saint Peter's torment (he was crucified upside down). The saint's powerful physique is belied by the expression of vulnerability on his aging face. By placing the vigorously modeled figures close to the viewer, Caravaggio reduces the psychological distance between viewer and subject. By illuminating them against a darkened background, he “stages” the action so that it seems

to take place within the viewer's space—a space whose cruel light reveals such banal details as the executioner's dirty feet. True to the ideals of the Catholic Reformation, Caravaggio's paintings appealed to the senses rather than to the intellect. They also introduced into European art a new and vigorously lifelike realization of the natural world—one that daringly mingled the sacred and the profane.

Caravaggio's powerful style had considerable impact throughout Europe; however, his most talented follower was also Italian. Born in Rome, Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653) was the daughter of a highly esteemed painter, himself a follower of Caravaggio. Artemisia was trained by her father, but soon outstripped him in technical proficiency and imagination. Since women were not permitted to draw from nude male models, they rarely painted large-scale canvases with biblical, historical, or mythological themes that usually required nude figures; instead, their efforts were confined to the genres of portrait painting and



Figure 20.10 ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, ca. 1614–1620. Oil on canvas, 6 ft. 6½ in. × 5 ft. 4 in. Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

still life (see chapter 23). Gentileschi's paintings, however, challenged tradition. Her powerful rendering of Judith slaying Holofernes (Figure 20.10), which compares in size and impact with Caravaggio's *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* (see Figure 20.9), illustrates the decapitation of an Assyrian general and enemy of Israel at the hands of a clever Hebrew widow. A tale found in the Apocrypha (the noncanonical books of the Bible), the slaying of the tyrannical Holofernes was a favorite Renaissance allegory of liberty and religious defiance. Gentileschi brought to this representation the dramatic techniques of Caravaggio: realistically conceived figures, stark contrasts of light and dark, and a composition that brings the viewer painfully close to the event. She invested her subject with fierce intensity—the foreshortened body of the victim and the pinwheel arrangement of human limbs forces the eye to focus on the gruesome action of the swordblade as it severs head from neck in a shower of blood.

Gentileschi's favorite subjects were biblical heroines—she painted the Judith story some seven times. The violence she brought to these depictions may be said to reflect her

Apocrypha, Book of Judith, 12:16–20; 13:1–10

¹⁶Holofernes' heart was ravished with [Judith] and his passion was aroused, for he had been waiting for an opportunity to seduce her from the day he first saw her. ¹⁷So Holofernes said to her, "Have a drink and be merry with us!" ¹⁸Judith said, "I will gladly drink, my lord, because today is the greatest day in my whole life." ¹⁹Then she took what her maid had prepared and ate and drank before him. ²⁰Holofernes was greatly pleased with her, and drank a great quantity of wine, much more than he had ever drunk in any one day since he was born.

¹When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew. . . . They went to bed, for they all were weary because the banquet had lasted so long. ²But Judith was left alone in the tent, with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was dead drunk. . . . ⁴Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord God of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. ⁵Now indeed is the time to help your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us."

⁶She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there. ⁷She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!" ⁸Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. ⁹Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterward she went out and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, ¹⁰who placed it in her food bag.

profound sense of victimization: at the age of eighteen, she was raped by her drawing teacher and (during the sensational trial of her assailant) subjected to torture as a test of the truth of her testimony.

Baroque Sculpture in Italy

Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), Caravaggio's contemporary, brought the theatrical spirit of baroque painting to Italian architecture and sculpture. A man of remarkable technical virtuosity, Bernini was the chief architect of



Figure 20.11 GIANLORENZO BERNINI, *Fountain of the Four Rivers*, 1648–1651. Travertine and marble. Piazza Navona, Rome. © Vincenzo Pirozzi, Rome fotopirozzi@inwind.it.

seventeenth-century Rome, as well as one of its leading sculptors. Under Bernini's direction, Rome became the "city of fountains," a phenomenon facilitated by the early seventeenth-century revival of the old Roman aqueducts. Richly adorned with dolphins, mermaids, and tritons, the fountain—its waters dancing and sparkling in the shifting wind and light—was the favorite ornamental device of the baroque era (Figure 20.11).

Just as Caravaggio reshaped the tradition of Renaissance painting by way of pictorial illusionism, so Bernini challenged Renaissance sculptural tradition by investing it with a daring degree of dramatic theatricality. His life-sized marble sculpture of David (Figure 20.12) renders this favorite biblical personality in a manner that recreates the very action of his assault; and since the object of that assault, Goliath, lies outside the boundary of the sculpture itself, the viewer is drawn into the space "implied" by the explosive action. In contrast with the languid and effeminate David of Donatello (see Figure 17.1) or the classically poised hero of Michelangelo (see Figure 17.35), Bernini's David appears in mid-action, stretching the slingshot behind him as he prepares to launch the rock at his unseen adversary: his torso twists vigorously at the waist, his face contorts with fierce determination, and his muscles strain with tense energy. Determined to "render marble flexible" (as he himself stated), Bernini animates this figure with an unparalleled athletic vitality that directly engages the beholder.

Bernini's most important contribution to baroque religious sculpture was his multimedia masterpiece *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (see Figure 20.2), executed between 1645 and 1652 for the Cornaro Chapel of Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome (Figure 20.13). The visually compelling piece illustrates Bernini's dazzling skill in bringing to life Saint Teresa's autobiographical description of divine seduction (see Reading 4.2). Bernini depicts the swooning saint with head sunk back and eyes half closed. A smiling angel, resembling a teenage cupid, gently lifts Teresa's bodice to insert the flaming arrow of divine love. Bold illusionism heightens the sensuous effect: the angel's marble draperies flutter and billow with tense energy, while the slack and heavy gown of Teresa echoes the emotion of ecstatic surrender. The vision takes place on a marble cloud, which floats in heavenly space, while the uncertain juxtaposition of the saint and the cloud on which she reclines suggests the experience of levitation described in her vision. Sweetness and eroticism are the central features of this extraordinary image.

But Bernini's conception goes beyond the sculpture of the two figures to achieve a dramatic unity of figure and setting. To capture the theatrical intensity of Teresa's mystical experience, Bernini engages the tools of architecture,

sculpture, and painting: he situates Teresa beneath a colonnaded marble canopy from which gilded wooden rays appear to cast heaven's supernatural light. Real light entering through the glazed yellow panes of a concealed window above the chapel bathes the saint in a golden glow—an effect comparable to the spotlighting in a Caravaggio painting. From the ceiling of the chapel a host of angels both painted and sculpted in *stucco* (a light, pliable plaster) miraculously descends from the heavens. Agate and dark green marble walls provide a somber setting for the gleaming white and gold central image. On either side of the chapel, the members of the Cornaro family (executed in marble) behold Teresa's ecstasy from behind prayer desks that resemble theater boxes. These life-sized figures extend the supernatural space of the chapel and reinforce the viewer's role as witness to an actual event.

It is no coincidence that Bernini's illusionistic tour de force appeared contemporaneously with the birth of opera in Italy, for both share the baroque affection for dramatic expression on a monumental scale.



Figure 20.12
GIANLORENZO BERNINI, *David*, 1623. Marble, 5 ft. 7 in. Galleria Borghese, Rome. © 2000, Photo Scala, Florence, courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali



Figure 20.13 Anonymous, *Cornaro Chapel*, ca. 1644. Oil on canvas, 5 ft. 6¼ in. × 3 ft. 11¼ in. Staatliches Museum, Schwerin, Germany. © Vincenzo Pirozzi, Rome fotopirozzi@inwind.it.

Baroque Architecture in Italy

The city of Rome carries the stamp of Bernini's flamboyant style. Commissioned to complete the *piazza* (the broad public space in front of Saint Peter's Basilica), Bernini designed a trapezoidal space that opens out to a larger oval—the two shapes form, perhaps symbolically, a keyhole. Bernini's courtyard is bounded by a spectacular colonnade that incorporates 284 Doric columns (each 39 feet high) as well as 96 statues of saints (each 15 feet tall). In a manner consistent with the ecumenical breadth of Jesuit evangelism, the gigantic pincerlike arms of the colonnade reach out to embrace an area that can accommodate more than 250,000 people (Figure 20.14)—a vast proscenium on which devotional activities of the Church of Rome are staged to this day. The Saint Peter's of Bernini's time was the locus of papal authority; then, as now, popes used the central balcony of the basilica to impart the traditional blessing: “Urbi et Orbi” (“To the city and to the world”). The proportions of Bernini's colonnade are symbolic of the baroque preference for the grandiose, a preference equally apparent in the artist's spectacular setting for the Throne of Saint Peter and in the immense bronze canopy (*baldacchino*) he raised over the high altar of the basilica (Figure 20.15).

Figure 20.14 (below) **GIANLORENZO BERNINI**, Aerial view of colonnade and *piazza* of Saint Peter's, Rome, begun 1656. Travertine, longitudinal axis approx. 800 ft. Copper engraving by Giovanni Piranesi, 1750. Kunstbibliothek, Berlin. The enormous *piazza* in front of the east façade of Saint Peter's can accommodate more than 250,000 people.

Figure 20.15 (opposite) **GIANLORENZO BERNINI**, *Baldacchino* (canopy) ca. 1624–1633. Bronze with gilding, height 93 ft. 6 in. Saint Peter's, Rome. © 1990 Photo Scala, Florence.







Figure 20.16 GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA, interior of Il Gesù, Rome, 1568–1573. Length approx. 240 ft. Foto Marburg.

Figure 20.17 GIACOMO DA VIGNOLA and GIACOMO DELLA PORTA, (right) façade of Il Gesù, Rome, ca. 1575–1584. Height 105 ft., width 115 ft. The Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

Figure 20.18 LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI, (below) façade of Santa Maria Novella, Florence, completed 1470. Width approx. 117 ft. Scala, Florence.



As with Saint Peter's, Italian baroque churches were designed to reflect the mystical and evangelical ideals of the Catholic Reformation. Il Gesù (the Church of Jesus) in Rome was the mother church of the Jesuit order and the model for hundreds of Counter-Reformation churches built throughout Europe and Latin America. Designed by Giacomo da Vignola (1507–1573), Il Gesù bears the typical features of the baroque church interior: a broad Latin cross nave with domed crossing and deeply recessed chapels (Figure 20.16). Lacking side-aisles, the 60-foot-wide nave allowed a large congregation to assemble close enough to the high altar and the pulpit to see the ceremony and hear the sermon. The wide nave also provided ample space for elaborate religious processions. Il Gesù's interior, with its magnificent altarpiece dedicated to Ignatius Loyola, exemplifies the baroque inclination to synthesize various media, such as painted stucco, bronze, and precious stones, in the interest of achieving sumptuous and ornate effects.

The exterior of Il Gesù, completed by Giacomo della Porta, is equally dramatic (Figure 20.17). Its design—especially the elegant buttressing scrolls—looks back to Alberti's two-storied façade of Santa Maria Novella (Figure 20.18). But in contrast to the linear sobriety of his Florentine model, della Porta's façade, with its deeply carved

decorative elements, has a dynamic sculptural presence. For dramatic effect, the architect added structurally functionless engaged columns topped with Corinthian capitals. An ornate **cartouche** (oval tablet) and a double cornice add focus to the central doorway. While the Renaissance façade was conceived in two dimensions, according to an

essentially geometric linear pattern, the baroque church-front is conceived in three. Like a Caravaggio painting, Il Gesù exploits dramatic contrasts of light and dark and of shallow and deep space.

The most daring of the Italian baroque architects was Francesco Borromini (1599–1667). Borromini designed the small monastic church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (Saint Charles at the Four Fountains; Figure 20.19) to fit a narrow site at the intersection of two Roman streets. Rejecting the rules of



Figure 20.19 FRANCESCO BORROMINI, façade of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome, 1667. Length 52 ft., width 34 ft., width of façade 38 ft. © Araldo de Luca, Rome.

Figure 20.20
FRANCESCO
BORROMINI, interior
of dome, San Carlo
alle Quattro Fontane,
Rome, ca. 1638. Width
approx. 52 ft. © 1990
Photo Scala, Florence.



classical design, he combined convex and concave units to produce a sense of fluid, undulating movement. The façade consists of an assortment of deeply cut decorative elements: monumental Corinthian columns, a scrolled gable over the doorway, and life-sized angels that support a cartouche at the roofline. Borromini's aversion to the circle and the square—the “perfect” shapes of Renaissance architecture—extends to the interior of San Carlo, which is oval in plan. The dome, also oval, is lit by hidden windows that allow light to flood the interior. Carved with geometric motifs that diminish in size toward the apex, the shallow cupola appears to recede deep into space (Figure 20.20). Such inventive illusionism, accented by dynamic

spatial contrasts, characterized the Roman baroque style of church architecture at its best.

But the theatricality of this architecture went further still: by painting religious scenes on the walls and ceilings of churches and chapels, baroque artists turned houses of God into theaters for sacred drama. Such is the case with the Church of Sant'Ignazio in Rome. Its barrel-vaulted ceiling bears a breathtaking *trompe l'oeil* vision of Saint Ignatius' apotheosis—his elevation to divine status (Figure 20.21). A master of the techniques of linear perspective

Figure 20.21 (opposite) **ANDREA POZZO**, *Apotheosis of Saint Ignatius*, 1691. Fresco. Nave ceiling, Sant'Ignazio, Rome. Scala, Florence.



and dramatic foreshortening, the Jesuit architect and sculptor Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709) made the walls above Sant'Ignazio's clerestory appear to open up, so that the viewer gazes "through" the roof into the heavens that receive the levitating body of the saint. Pozzo's cosmic rendering—one of the first of numerous illusionistic ceilings found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European churches and palaces—may be taken to reflect a new perception of physical space inspired, in part, by European geographic exploration and discovery. Indeed, Pozzo underlines the global ambitions of Roman Catholic evangelism by adding at the four corners of the ceiling the allegorical figures of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. The vast, illusionistic spatial fields of Italian baroque frescoes also may be seen as a response to the new astronomy of the Scientific Revolution, which presented a view of the universe as spatially infinite and dynamic rather than finite and static (see chapter 23). Whatever its inspiration, the spatial illusionism of baroque painting and architecture gave apocalyptic grandeur to Counter-Reformation ideals.

Baroque Music

In an effort to rid sacred music of secular influence, the Council of Trent condemned the borrowing of the popular tunes that had become common in religious music since the late Middle Ages. It also banned complex polyphony that tended to obscure the sacred text: the message of the words was to be primary. The Italian composer Giovanni di Palestrina (1525–1594) took these recommendations as strict guidelines: his more than one hundred polyphonic masses and 450 motets feature clarity of text, skillful counterpoint, and regular rhythms. The *a cappella* lines of Palestrina's Pope Marcellus Mass flow with the smooth grace of a mannerist painting. Called "the music of mystic serenity," Palestrina's compositions embody the conservative and contemplative side of the Catholic Reformation rather than its inventive, dramatic aspect. In the religious compositions of Palestrina's Spanish contemporary Tomás Luis de Victoria, there is a brooding but fervent mystical intensity. Like El Greco, his colleague at the court of Philip II, Victoria brought passion and drama to religious themes. And, recognizing that the Council of Trent had forbidden Palestrina to compose secular music, Victoria wrote not one note of secular song.

The Genius of Gabrieli

At the turn of the sixteenth century, the opulent city of Venice was the center of European religious musical activity. Giovanni Gabrieli (1555–1612), principal organist at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice and one of the greatest composers of his time, ushered in a new and dramatic style of choral and instrumental music. Gabrieli composed expansive **polychoral** religious pieces featuring up to five choruses. Abandoning the *a cappella* style favored in Rome, he included solo and ensemble groups of instruments—especially the trombones and cornets commonly used in Venice's ritual street processions. Gabrieli was the first composer to indicate a specific instrument for each voice

part in the musical composition, earning him the name "the father of orchestration." Like baroque painters and sculptors, who sought sharp contrasts of light and shadow and dramatic spatial effects, Gabrieli created coloristic contrasts in sound. He was among the first composers to write into his scores the words *piano* (soft) and *forte* (loud) to govern the **dynamics** (the degree of loudness or softness) of the piece.

Gabrieli was also the first musician to make use of a divided choir employed in **concertato**, that is, in opposing or contrasting bodies of sound. At Saint Mark's, an organ was located on each side of the chancel, and four choirs were stationed on balconies high above the nave. The antiphonal play of chorus, instruments, and solo voices produced exhilarating sonorities (evident in the excerpt from Gabrieli's motet, *In Ecclesiis*) that met and mingled in the magical space above the heads of the congregation. In some of Gabrieli's compositions, echo effects produced by alternating voices and the use of unseen (offstage) voices achieve a degree of musical illusionism comparable to the visual illusionism of mannerist and baroque art. Like the extremes of light and dark in the paintings of El Greco and Caravaggio, Gabrieli's alternating bodies of sound (chorus versus chorus, solo voice versus chorus, chorus versus instruments) and contrasting musical dynamics (loud and soft) and pitches (high and low) produce strong harmonic textures and rich, dramatic effects. The *concertato* technique was the essence of early seventeenth-century baroque music and, in Gabrieli's hands, it was nothing less than majestic.

Gabrieli explored a type of musical organization that would come to dominate baroque music: **tonality** based on the melodic and harmonic vocabulary of the major–minor key system. **Tonality** refers to the arrangement of a musical composition around a central note, called the "tonic" or "home tone" (usually designated as the "key" of a given composition). A keynote or tonic can be built on any of the twelve tones of the **chromatic scale** (the seven white and five black keys of the piano keyboard). In baroque music—as in most music written to this day—all of the tones in the composition relate to the home tone. Tonality provided baroque composers with a way of achieving dramatic focus in a piece of music—much in the way that light served baroque painters to achieve dramatic focus in their compositions. By the mid-seventeenth century, the even progress of Renaissance polyphony, like the even lighting of Renaissance painting, had given way to the dynamic use of individual voices and the inventive combination of choral and instrumental textures.

Monteverdi and the Birth of Opera

The first master of baroque music-drama and the greatest Italian composer of the early seventeenth century was Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643). Monteverdi served the court of Mantua until he became chapel master of Saint Mark's in Venice in 1621, a post he held for the rest of his life. During his long career, he wrote various kinds of

 See Music Listening Selections at end of chapter.



Figure 20.22 PIETRO DOMENICO OLIVIERI, *The Teatro Regio, Turin*, painting of the opening night, December 26, 1740. Oil on canvas, 4 ft. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times 3 ft. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Courtesy of the Municipal Museum, Turin, Italy. Five tiers of boxes are fitted into the sides of the proscenium, one even perched over the semicircular pediment. Note the orchestra, without a conductor; the girls distributing refreshments; and the armed guard protecting against disorder.

religious music, as well as ballets, madrigals, and operas. Like Gabrieli, Monteverdi discarded the intimate dimensions of Renaissance chamber music and cultivated an expansive, dramatic style, marked by vivid contrasts of texture and color. His compositions reflect a typically baroque effort to imbue music with a vocal expressiveness that reflected the emotional charge of poetry. “The [written] text,” declared Monteverdi, “should be the master of the music, not the servant.” Monteverdi linked “affections” or specific emotional states with appropriate sounds: anger, for instance, with the high voice register, moderation with the middle voice register, and humility with the low voice register. With Monteverdi, the union of music and speech sought in the word painting techniques of Josquin (see chapter 17) blossomed into full-blown opera: that form of theater that combined all aspects of baroque artistic expression—music, drama, dance, and the visual arts.

Born in Italy, opera emerged out of Renaissance efforts to revive the music-drama of ancient Greek theater. While humanist composers had no idea what Greek music sounded like, they sought to imitate the ancient unity of music and poetry. The earliest performances of Western opera resembled the Renaissance masque, a form of musical entertainment that included dance and poetry, along

with rich costumes and scenery. Baroque operas were more musically complex, however, and more dramatically cohesive than most Renaissance masques. The first opera house was built in Venice in 1637, and by 1700 Italy was home to seventeen more such houses, a measure of the vast popularity of the new genre. By the end of the seventeenth century, Italian courts and public theaters boasted all of the essential features of the modern theater: the picture-frame stage, the horseshoe-shaped auditorium, and tiers of galleries or boxes (Figure 20.22). Interestingly enough, some of these opera houses, resplendent with life-sized sculptures and illusionistic frescoes, are aesthetically indistinguishable from Italian baroque church and chapel interiors (see Figures 20.13 and 20.16).

Orfeo, composed in 1607 for the duke of Mantua, was Monteverdi’s first opera and one of the first full-length operas in music history. The **libretto** (literally, “little book”) or text of the opera was written by Alessandro Striggio and based on a classical theme—the descent of Orpheus, the Greek poet-musician, to Hades. *Orfeo* required an orchestra of more than three dozen instruments, including keyboard

instruments, ten viols, three trombones, and four trumpets. The instrumentalists performed the **overture**, an orchestral introduction to the opera. They also accompanied vocal music that consisted of **arias** (elaborate solo songs or duets) alternating with **recitatives** (passages spoken or recited to sparse chordal accompaniment). The aria tended to develop a character’s feelings or state of mind, while the recitative served to narrate the action of the story or to heighten its dramatic effect.

Monteverdi believed that opera should convey the full range of human passions. To that end, he contrived inventive contrasts between singer and accompaniment, recitative and aria, soloist and chorus. He also employed abrupt changes of key to emphasize shifts in mood and action. And he introduced such novel and expressive instrumental effects as **pizzicato**, the technique of plucking rather than bowing a stringed instrument. Integrating music, drama, and visual display, Italian opera became the ideal expression of the baroque sensibility and the object of imitation throughout Western Europe.

SUMMARY

In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church launched a reform movement that took late sixteenth-century Europe by storm. Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* and the autobiographical writings of Saint Teresa of Avila set the tone for a new, more mystical Catholicism.

See Music Listening Selections at end of chapter.

In the spirit of Saint Teresa's ecstatic visions, such Catholic poets as Richard Crashaw wrote rhapsodic lyrics that fused sensual and spiritual yearnings. The arts of the seventeenth century reflect the religious intensity of the Catholic Reformation, even as they mirror the insecurities of the religiously divided and politically turbulent West.

The baroque style, which came to dominate Western Europe between 1600 and 1750, was born in Italy. The mannerist paintings of Parmigianino, Tintoretto, and El Greco anticipated the baroque style by their figural distortions, irrational space, bizarre colors, and general disregard for the "rules" of Renaissance painting. Italian baroque art, as typified by Caravaggio's paintings and Bernini's sculpture, featured dynamic contrasts of light and dark, an expanded sense of space, and the illusionistic staging of subject matter. Counter-Reformation churches, embellished with visionary paintings and sculptures, were ornate theaters for the performance of Catholic ritual. Bernini's *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* and Pozzo's ceiling for the Church of Saint Ignatius in Rome achieved new heights of illusionistic theatricality. Addressing the passions rather than the intellect, baroque art broadcast the visionary message of Catholic reform to a vast audience that extended from Europe to the Americas.

Rome and Venice were fountainheads for Italian baroque art and music. Palestrina's polyphonic masses and motets emphasized clarity of text and calm sublimity, while Gabrieli's lofty polychoral compositions, performed at Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice, featured dynamic contrasts between and among voices and musical instruments. The daring contrasts, rich color, and sheer volume of Gabrieli's music find their parallel in the canvases of Caravaggio.

The most important development in seventeenth-century European music was the birth of opera. Borrowing themes from classical mythology and history, Claudio Monteverdi integrated text and music to create the new and noble art of music-drama. In its synthesis of all forms of performance—music, literature, and the visual arts—Italian opera became the supreme expression of the theatrical exuberance and spiritual vitality of the baroque style.

MUSIC LISTENING SELECTIONS

CD Two Selection 1 Gabrieli, Motet, "In Ecclesiis," excerpt, 1615.

CD Two Selection 2 Monteverdi, *Orfeo*, Aria: "In questo prato adorno," 1607.

GLOSSARY

aria an elaborate solo song or duet, usually with instrumental accompaniment, performed as part of an opera or other dramatic musical composition

cartouche an oval tablet or medallion, usually containing an inscription or heraldic device

chromatic scale a series of twelve tones represented by the seven white and five black keys of the piano keyboard; see also Glossary, chapter 6, "scale"

concertato (Italian, concerto = "opposing" or "competing")

an early baroque style in which voices or instruments of different rather than similar natures are used in an opposing or contrasting manner

dynamics the degree of loudness or softness in music

foreshortening a perspective device by which figures or objects appear to recede or project into space

libretto (Italian, "little book") the words of an opera or other textual musical composition

overture an instrumental introduction to a longer musical piece, such as an opera

piazza (Italian) a broad, open public space

pizzicato (Italian) the technique of plucking (with the fingers) rather than bowing a stringed instrument

polychoral music written for two or more choruses, performed both in turn and together

recitative a textual passage recited to sparse chordal accompaniment; a rhythmically free vocal style popular in seventeenth-century opera

stucco a light, pliable plaster made of gypsum, sand, water, and ground marble

tonality the use of a central note, called the *tonic*, around which all other tonal material of a composition is organized, and to which the music returns for a sense of rest and finality