

## Protestant Reformation

- The term 'Protestant' comes from the *pro-test* of the Catholic Church. People who wanted reform were labeled protestants.
- The initial protestants had no intention of breaking with the Church — they merely wanted reform (hence, *reformation*). But the Church initially resisted these reforms, and excommunicated the reformers... forcing them to form their own churches.



## Who was Luther?

- Martin Luther was a Catholic monk living in Germany in the 1500s. He became increasingly upset with the sale of indulgences by the German priest Johann Tetzel.
- He felt that if a person could, in essence, purchase salvation, what was the purpose of faith? He also challenged that if a person could *earn* his salvation through good works, then what purpose did faith serve?
- He felt that the Catholic Church had become corrupt, and that God had called him to point out these corruptions.
- On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses (or 95 complaints against the Catholic Church) on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, thus starting the Protestant Reformation.



## 95 Theses

- The 95 Theses were a list of 95 "issues" that Luther had with the Church.
- He pointed out some of the obvious corrupt practices of the Church — the sale of indulgences, for example. But, he also had *doctrinal* (fundamental belief) issues with the Church. These were the more serious, and more dangerous challenges.
- One of the doctrinal issues he had was with the Church's declaration that good 'works' was an integral part of salvation. Luther argued that 'faith alone', not any amount of good deeds or 'works' could save a man.
- Another major issue Luther had was that he argued that man could achieve a 'personal relationship' with God — without the assistance of a priest. This relationship could be achieved through direct prayer and through a reading of the scriptures. Thus, Luther, like Wycliffe before him, also advocated translation of the Bible into the *vernacular* (common language).



## The Diet of Worms

- The Diet of Worms was *not* a new way to lose weight! A Diet, in this case, refers to a congress or assembly, and it met in the German city of Worms.
- The assembly included the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V and a council of Church elders. Luther had to explain his views. He had already been excommunicated from the Church, and now he had to answer to the highest political authority in Europe.
- When asked to retract his views, Luther responded, "I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe... Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me."



