pose. The latter would be the last of the new orders to found establishments in Turin; by the end of the century the wave of religious enthusiasm generated by the Counter-Reformation had largely spent itself, and because it was locked in conflict with the papacy, the government was refusing to permit the establishment of any new religious foundations in the city.

Meanwhile Turin's parish clergy were feeling the influence of the reforms ordered by the Council of Trent, which revitalized the Catholic Church doctrinally and institutionally in the mid-sixteenth century. In accordance with its decrees the archbishop founded a seminary to train priests in 1567, and instituted regular visitations to ensure that services were conducted with due decorum, that congregations were correctly instructed in the tenets of their faith, that church buildings and sacred vessels were properly maintained. The result of better training and supervision was a slow but steady improvement in the moral and educational level of Turin's clergy down to the end of the Old Regime. Guided by this better educated, more committed priesthood, Turin's parishes acted as the mechanism through which the more intense devotional life of the Counter-Reformation was propagated among the citizens. This was a highly disciplined form of Catholicism, demanding closer adherence to theological orthodoxy than had the more loosely defined faith of the middle ages. The parish clergy and the Inquisition were constantly on the watch for signs of deviancy: witchcraft and folk-beliefs, formerly tolerated, were proscribed, along with any hint of Protestant beliefs. The laity were enjoined to pay careful attention to their religious duties, to obey their priests, and to avoid blasphemy, gambling, drunkenness and other sins. In this way the Counter-Reformation gradually inculcated a new mentality among the laity, making them more obedient, and more conscious of the basic teachings of their faith.

A vital element in the religious revival that overtook Turin from the mid-sixteenth century was the formation of religious confraternities, whose members joined together to cultivate a more intense devotional life. One or two of these brotherhoods had existed in the middle ages, but by the sixteenth century they were in decline. From the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century about a score of new confraternities appeared in Turin. Some were organized like a guild by craftsmen to celebrate the patron saint of their trade; some were devoted to specific cults like that of the Virgin, or the Holy Sacrament (very important at Turin following the miracle of 1453), or a particular saint, like St Roch, the guardian against the plague; some were organized for charitable work. Thus the confraternity of the Misericordia assumed the duty