

Within a few weeks Archbishop Carranza, despite his high position, was seized by the inquisition and accused of being affected by Lutheran views, because of certain statements that had been found in his writings against Lutheranism, and particularly because of what he had said at the deathbed of the emperor. Carranza was held in the Spanish dungeons of the inquisition for eight years. Since, on account of his high position, the Spanish officials could not pass final judgment upon him, he was then transported to Rome where he remained in prison for another nine years. Eventually the pope exonerated the archbishop, but declared that many of his statements had been indiscreet and that he must therefore do penance in Rome for an additional five years. Before the end of the first year of this partial freedom Carranza died.

The Reformation made a greater start in Italy than it did in Spain, since that area did not yet have as tightly absolutist a government. Even as early as 1522, 60 church dignitaries and other leaders began to meet at Rome in what they called "the Oratory of Divine Love" to study the Bible and try to develop the spiritual life. Some of the members of the Oratory later became Protestants. Others took their position among the leaders of the persecution. About a dozen years passed before the papacy in Rome came to realize fully the seriousness of the danger of Protestantism. Then Pope Paul III, and particularly Pope Paul IV, introduced extremely repressive measures.

When the Italian inquisition was finally established it set about its work with determination and carried it out as completely as had been the case in Spain. Some of the Italian Protestant leaders, including certain individuals who had been high officials in the church, fled to other countries where they carried on valiant service to Christ in subsequent years. Many of those who remained were martyred. Christopher Hare's book, Men and Women of the Italian Reformation gives an inspiring picture of some of these earnest Christians in this brief period before persecution closed in about them.