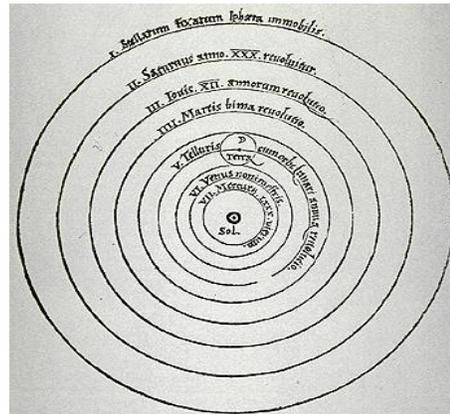


2.9 Documents in the Case of Galileo (1633)

Source: Internet Modern History Sourcebook

https://hti.osu.edu/sites/hti.osu.edu/files/documents_in_the_case_of_galileo_1.pdf

Background: In 1610, Galileo Galilei of Pisa, Italy published *Starry Messenger* (Sidereus Nuncius). He reported observations he had made with his new telescope on the phases of Venus and the moons of Jupiter. Based on these observations, Galileo endorsed the heliocentric, or sun-centered, theory of the solar system proposed by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543. In 1616 the Roman Catholic Church declared heliocentrism heretical and books promoting the theory were banned. Galileo was ordered to stop promoting heliocentric ideas. Galileo did not stop and in 1632 he published a new defense of heliocentrism. In response, in 1633 Galileo was put on trial for heresy by the Roman Catholic Inquisition court in Rome. He was convicted and agreed to renounce his beliefs in exchange for indefinite imprisonment rather than death. He remained under house arrest until he died in 1642.



Copernicus' diagram of the heliocentric solar system from *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (1543)

Instructions: Read the excerpts from the Indictment, Sentence, and Abjuration [Renunciation] and answer questions 1-4.

1. What was Galileo accused of?
2. What was the sentence of the Inquisition court?
3. What was Galileo's response to the sentence?
4. If you were in Galileo's position what would you have done? Explain your reasons for this decision.

Indictment: We pronounce, judge, and declare, that you, the said Galileo . . . have rendered yourself vehemently suspected by this Holy Office of heresy, that is, of having believed and held the doctrine (which is false and contrary to the Holy and Divine Scriptures) that the sun is the center of the world, and that it does not move from east to west, and that the earth does move, and is not the center of the world . . . It is our pleasure that you be absolved, provided that with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, in our presence, you abjure, curse, and detest, the said error and heresies, and every other error and heresy contrary to the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome.

Sentence of the Tribunal We say, pronounce, sentence, and declare, that thou, the said Galileo, by the things deduced during this trial, and by thee confessed as above, hast rendered thyself vehemently suspected of heresy by this Holy Office, that is, of having believed and held a doctrine which is false, and contrary to the Holy Scriptures . . . From the which We are content that thou shouldst be absolved, if, first of all, with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, thou dost before Us abjure, curse, and detest the above-mentioned errors and heresies and any other error and heresy contrary to the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, after the manner that We shall require of thee. And to the end that this thy grave error and transgression remain not entirely unpunished, and that thou mayst be more cautious in the future, and an example to others to abstain from and avoid similar offences, We order that by a public edict the book of *DIALOGUES OF GALILEO GALILEI* be prohibited, and We condemn thee to the prison of this Holy Office during Our will and pleasure.

Abjuration [Renunciation]: I swear that I have always believed, I believe now, and with God's help I will in future believe all which the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church doth hold, preach, and teach . . . I have been judged vehemently suspected of heresy, that is, of having held and believed that the Sun is the centre of the universe and immoveable . . . I curse and detest the said errors and heresies, and generally all and every error and sect contrary to the Holy Catholic Church. And I swear that for the future I will neither say nor assert in speaking or writing such things as may bring upon me similar suspicion; and if I know any heretic, or one suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to this Holy Office.