

The Church in Liverpool

Session 3



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- When Elizabeth I came to the throne she re-established Protestantism as England's official religion.
- People were fined for not attending Protestant church services (recusants).
- But little effort was made to persecute the many Catholics that still lived in England.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- Some Protestants thought that the Anglican Church was still too much like the Catholic church.
- These people became known as Puritans.
- They complained about issues such as:
 - ministers wearing surplices;
 - people kneeling while taking Communion;
 - ornaments, paintings and stained glass windows in churches;
 - the playing of organ music during services and
 - the celebrations of saints' days.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- Puritans were deeply influenced by the writings of John Calvin.
- They disliked the power that the bishops had in the church.
- For example, many Puritans disapproved of bishops appointing church ministers.
- Instead, they suggested that ministers should be elected by the people who attended church services.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- Elizabeth resisted these changes as she saw the Puritans as a threat to the monarchy.
- She feared that Puritans who complained about the wealth and power of bishops would eventually say the same thing about kings and queens.
- In time, the type of Protestant church established by Elizabeth in England became known as the Anglican church.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The Puritans had great hopes when in 1603 James Stuart, the king of Scotland, also became king of England.
- James was a Presbyterian and under his rule many of the reforms that Puritans favoured had been introduced in Scotland.
- However, it soon became clear that James intended to continue with Elizabeth's religious policies.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The Roman Catholics in England were upset that there was going to be another Protestant monarch.
- They also became very angry when James passed a law that imposed heavy fines on people who did not attend Protestant church services.
- This was one of the reasons for the Gunpowder Plot, which increased popular suspicion of Catholics.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- When James died in 1625 he was replaced by his son Charles I.
- The Puritans became very angry when Charles married Henrietta Maria, a Catholic princess.
- They also became worried when Catholic lords began to be given important posts in Charles' court



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- In 1633 Charles appointed William Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Laud soon began to introduce changes.
- For example, he ordered that the wooden communion table should be replaced by a stone altar.
- This area was separated from the congregation by wooden railings.
- He also insisted that ministers should display candles and ornaments.



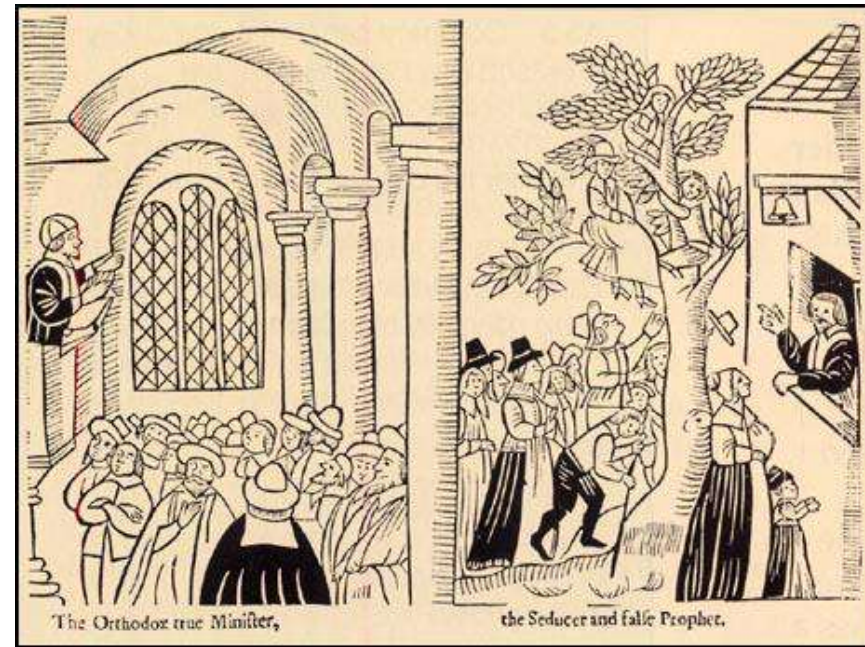
Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The Puritans claimed that Laud was trying to make English churches look like those in Catholic countries.
- When Puritans complained about these reforms. Laud had them arrested.
- In 1637 John Bastwick, Henry Burton and William Prynne had their ears cut off for writing pamphlets attacking Laud's views.



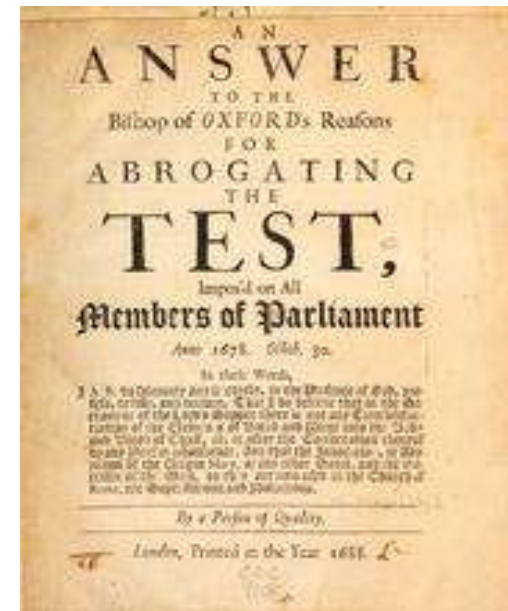
Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- During the Civil War religion was an important factor in deciding which side people supported.
- The king's persecution of Puritans meant that most members of this religious group supported Parliament.
- Most Anglicans and Catholics tended to favour the royalists.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The Puritans lost control of government after the Restoration in 1660.
- However, the vast majority of members of House of Commons remained loyal Protestants.
- When Charles II suspended acts of Parliament that punished Roman Catholics, Parliament passed the Test Acts in 1673.
- This act required all government officials to swear an oath that they were Protestants



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The removal of James II by the protestant William of Orange in 1688 – the Glorious Revolution – made matters worse for Catholics.
- The resumption of war with Catholic France in the 1690s meant that British Catholics became victims of the feelings of hatred and suspicion harboured by their fellow countrymen.



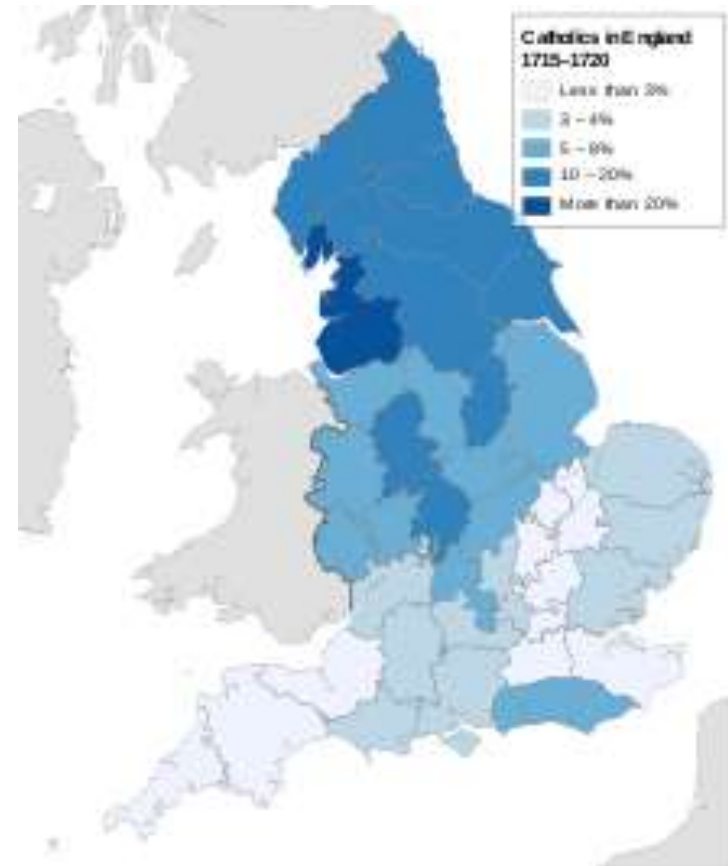
Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- In the Bill of Rights of 1689 Parliament declared that no future monarch could be a Catholic or be married to a Catholic.
- This provision was reaffirmed in the 1701 Act of Settlement and remains in force to this day.



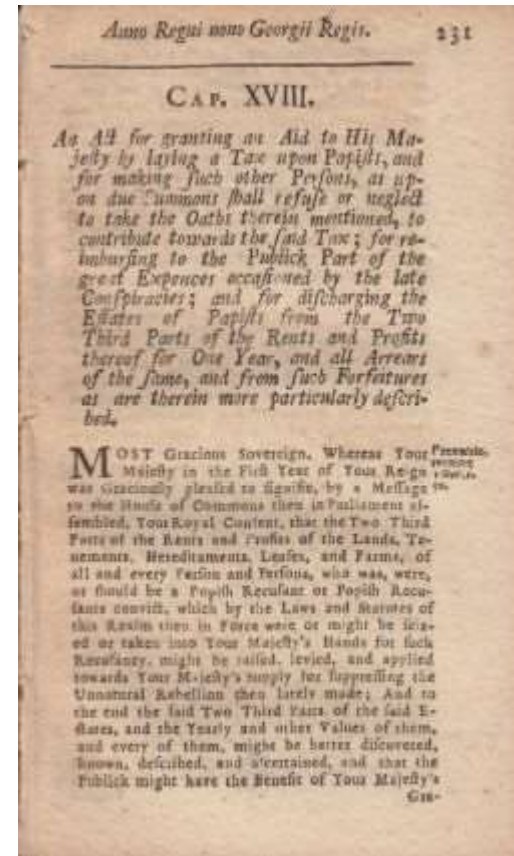
Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- From the mid-1690s the annual Land Tax Acts required Catholics to pay double the tax remitted by everyone else.
- In 1699 Parliament passed new laws with more penalties against those who refused to take the oaths of loyalty to the King and make declarations against Catholicism.



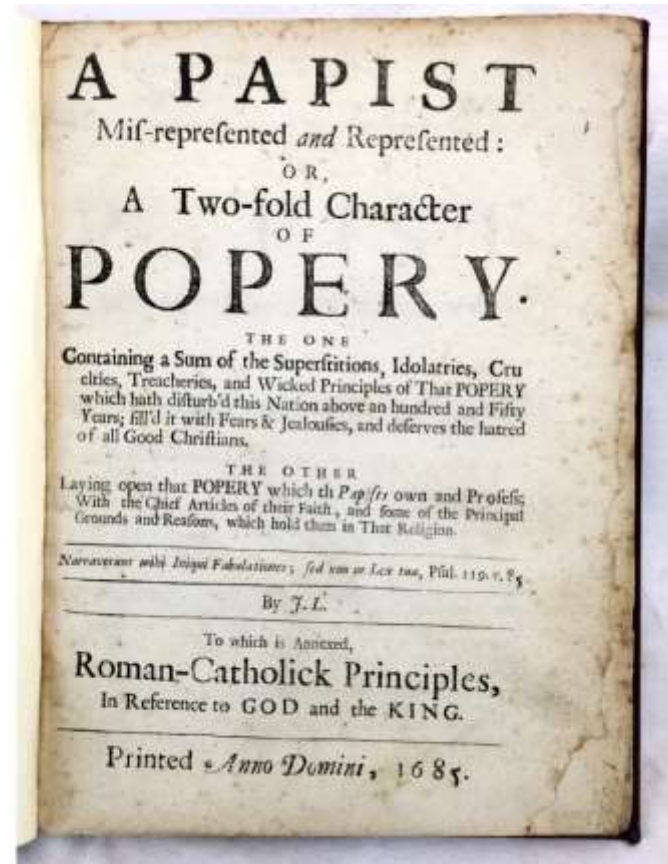
Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The discovery of Catholic involvement in an alleged plot in 1722 to restore the Stuarts to the British throne led to immediate legislation making Catholics pay what was known as a 'papists tax'.
- Parliament also periodically received information about the numbers of Catholics holding public offices and living in certain areas of the country.



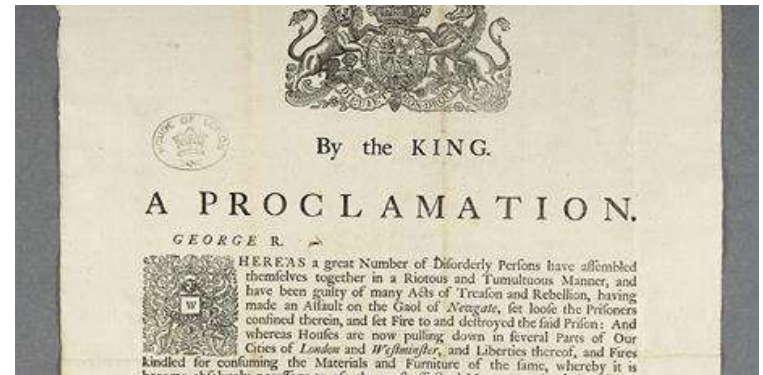
Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- As the decades passed, however, Britain's small but growing Catholic population ceased to be shunned by society.
- Most of the penalties imposed in the 16th and 17th centuries were no longer enforced.
- The position of Catholics greatly improved as the threat of a Stuart restoration diminished after the mid-18th century.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- In 1778 Parliament passed the Catholic Relief Act.
- Although it did not grant freedom of worship, it allowed Catholics to join the army and purchase land if they took an oath of allegiance.
- The Act raised a storm of protest.
- After a huge petition had been presented to the House of Commons, organised by Lord George Gordon, several days and nights of rioting erupted on London's streets.



Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans

- The Catholic Relief Act of 1791 was a much broader measure which gave Catholics freedom to worship.
- It also removed a wide range of other restrictions and allowed Catholics their own schools, to hold junior public offices, and to live in London.





Recusancy in Lancashire

Recusancy in Lancashire

- Following the Reformation in England initiated by King Henry VIII, Parliament passed an Act in 1545 which defined chantries as representing misapplied funds and misappropriated lands.
- The Act provided that all chantries and their properties would thenceforth belong to the King for as long as he should live.
- In conjunction with the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Act helped to finance the war with France.



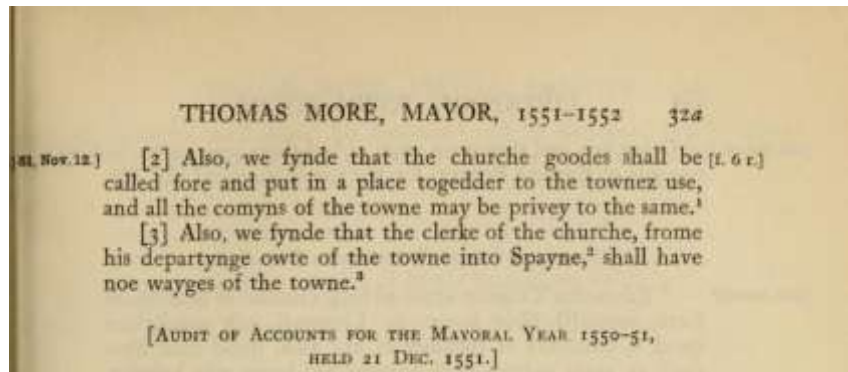
Recusancy in Lancashire

- Because Henry lived for only two years after the Act was passed, few chantries were closed or transferred to him.
- His young son and successor, King Edward VI, signed a new Act in 1547, which ended 2,374 chantries and guild chapels and seized their assets.
- It also instituted inquiries to determine all of their possessions.



Recusancy in Lancashire

- St Mary del Quay in Liverpool was one of the chantries seized and closed at this time.
- St Nicholas became a Protestant Church.
- From this point on (except for the reign of Mary Tudor) those who remained true to the Catholic faith had to worship in private chapels.
- We know that there was resistance in Liverpool and that the clerk of the church fled to Spain in 1551.



Catholicism in Lancashire

- Lancashire remained quite resistant to the Protestant faith
- Apart from Manchester, large numbers of gentry and ordinary people remained Catholics.
- Those who did not conform were known as Recusants – in Elizabeth's time this meant they did not attend the parish church.



TABLE 1: *The distribution of the Catholic and non-Catholic gentry families of Lancashire during the Civil War period¹¹*

<i>Hundred</i>	<i>Catholic families</i>	<i>Non-Catholic families</i>	<i>Total number of families</i>
Salford	9 (4.6%)	187 (95.4%)	196 (100%)
Blackburn	30 (27.3%)	80 (72.7%)	110 (100%)
West Derby	73 (36.9%)	125 (63.1%)	198 (100%)
Leyland	28 (39.5%)	43 (60.5%)	71 (100%)
Amounderness	51 (47.7%)	56 (52.3%)	107 (100%)
Lonsdale	30 (32.6%)	62 (67.4%)	92 (100%)
Total	221 (28.6%)	553 (71.4%)	774 (100%)

Catholicism in Lancashire

- Lancashire's gentry closed ranks and offered stiff resistance to the new religions.
- Many Catholic families simply continued practicing the old faith.
- They went on celebrating the Mass in secret, while nominally embracing Protestantism, as new laws demanded.



Catholicism in Lancashire

- Official response to Catholicism was somewhat laissez-faire, and initially at least, little was done, other than a few fines here and there.
- At the very worst of times only 16 Lancastrians were executed for their beliefs during the reign of Elizabeth I, sometime around 1537.



Blundells and Recusancy

- The Blundell family remained staunchly Catholic
- Richard Blundell died in Lancaster Castle, 19 March, 1591–2, having been convicted of harbouring a seminary priest



Blundells and Recusancy

- Richard's son and heir William, who was sharing the same imprisonment, was afterwards released.
- He was later arrested again and imprisoned in London for two years.



Blundells and Recusancy

- After his return to Crosby the hall was again searched, but he escaped by flight.
- His wife, however, was taken and imprisoned at Chester for some time.



Blundells and Recusancy

- The old Lancaster indictment was revived, and husband and wife lived in hiding until the accession of James I, when a full pardon was obtained.
- Afterwards he incurred a heavy fine on account of a rescue from the sheriff and the Harkirk burial ground.
- He died at Little Crosby, 2 July, 1638



The Harkirk Chapel

- In December 1610, the vicar of St Helen's church, Sefton refused the burial of a local Catholic woman, and her relatives and friends interred her body in a shallow grave close by a lane near to some common land.
- Unfortunately, the body was disturbed and desecrated by hogs which grazed on the common land.



The Harkirk Chapel

- William Blundell (1560-1638), of Crosby hall, heard of this tragedy and in his own words :-

"Were best to make readie in this village of Little Crosbie a place fitt to burie suche Catholiques either if myne owne howse or of thr Neighbourhoode as should depte this lyfe duringe the tyme of these trobles"



The Harkirk Chapel

- The piece of land that he selected was a plot thought, from time immemorial, to have been the site of an ancient chapel.
- It was known in those days, as now, as the Harkirk.



The Harkirk Chapel

- The first burial was of an old man called William Mathewson of Little Crosby.
- It took place on the 7th April 1611: he had been refused burial at Sefton Church.
- In all 131 people were buried at the Harkirk; men, women and children, including 25 priests; and not just locals.



St Benet's Church, Netherton

- St Benet's Chapel was built in 1792-3.
- This was immediately after the second Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1791 came into force.



St Benet's Church, Netherton

- Catholic priests had to be registered, and were forbidden from wearing their vestments or preaching outdoors.
- Catholic places of worship had to be registered, and assemblies behind locked doors were forbidden, as were bells and steeples.



St Benet's Church, Netherton

- Catholicism had maintained strong roots in Netherton as a result of the protection provided by the Roman Catholic Molyneux family.
- The local Catholics worshipped in the Molyneux private chapel.
- This remained legal on the basis that it was not a public place of worship and that those attending mass were guests.



St Benet's Church, Netherton

- However, the local congregation was compelled to find a new place of worship when the 8th Viscount Molyneux renounced his Catholicism and adopted the Established church.
- A Benedictine monk by the name of Father Gregory set about raising funds for a new chapel.



St Benet's Church, Netherton

- By 1792, having raised enough money from the local community and the Benedictine order, Father Gregory obtained permission to build a priest's house and chapel in Netherton.



St Benet's Church, Netherton

- Given its construction so shortly after the Relief Act 1791, it is clear that the Catholic community were still wary of persecution.
- The church is not obviously a place of worship and almost concealed behind the presbytery.

