**Religion**

Everyone has one. We were all brought up to be Christians of one sort or another. If you were born before 1555, or so, your parents were Catholic. Until later in her reign, it's safe to say your grandparents were Catholic.

The official established state religion is the Church of England. It is referred to as the *new religion* or the *established church*, but not yet as "C of E".

*Puritanism* is not a separate religion, but has a Calvinist leaning within the Anglican Church. Puritans do not yet look like Pilgrims

Being a Roman Catholic is not a crime, but there is a fine for not conforming to the established religion; that is, for not going to church on Sunday. And every church is a protestant church.

Paying the fine *does not* allow you to have a priest or practice the Catholic faith. There is no legal way for Catholics to practice their faith. It is illegal to be a Catholic priest in England. It is *very* illegal to be a Jesuit.

A non-conforming Catholic is called a *recusant* (rec-YOU-zant) and is guilty of *recusancy.*

Everyone is required to attend a church service once a month. The service is referred to as the Prayer Service, or the Prayer Book Service, and sometimes as Common Prayer, Holy Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper.

*Mass* is a Catholic service only. It is illegal to hold or attend one at any time in the reign, though punishment varies. People of high rank are less likely to get in trouble.

Older people may still refer to the service as a Mass, but it is politically touchy. Reformers refer to the detestable enormities of the "Mass priests".

The *rosary* is period in several forms, including the modern one, and used only by Catholics. The rosary cross usually does not include a corpus, or figure of Christ.

The Protestants sometimes refer to Roman Catholics as *Romanists.* Catholics do not refer to themselves as Papists.

The term *Puritan* is common in this period, although sometimes the word *precisionist* is used.

The Pope published a writ (1570) absolving English Catholics from allegiance to the Queen, since she is (he says) a heretic. Anyone who kills her is pre-absolved from the sin of murder.

You can apply the term *atheist* to anyone who disagrees with you in religion. In usage, it does not entirely mean you believe that there is no God, but that you don't believe in my God. Any heretic can be called an atheist. So can a Jew.

The Act of Uniformity (1559) provides punishments and fines to be levied for various offenses against the Established Church (the Church of England).

Fine for failing to attend English prayer book services:

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| --- | --- |
|       Before about 1580  | 12d per guilty verdict |
|       After 1580  | £20 per month |

After 1580, it is treason for you to convert to Catholicism or attempt to convert anyone else. Also to reconcile (re-convert) any English subject to Rome. The penalty is the same as for any other high treason: you will be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

At any time, you can be fined and jailed for attending Mass or hiding a priest.

There are not very many (openly) Catholic priests left, anyway, since most of them converted along with the populace, according to the prevailing wind. Said the vicar of Bray, having seen too many people burnt for their beliefs: "I always keep my principle, which is this--to live and die the vicar of Bray."

Anyone may be required to swear to the Oath of Supremacy, which states that you believe that the Pope, being a foreign potentate, has not and ought not to have any spiritual power in England. Nobles and members of Parliament are assumed to agree. Others may have to prove it.

***The text of the Oath of Supremacy, 1559***

I, do utterly testify and declare in my conscience that the Queen's Highness is the only supreme governor of this realm, and of all other her Highness's dominions and countries, a s well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal, and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority ecclesiastical or spiritual within this realm; and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdictions, powers, superiorities and authorities, and do promise that from henceforth I shall bear faith and true allegiance to the Queen's Highness, her heirs and lawful successors, and to my power shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, pre-eminences, privileges and authorities granted or belonging to the Queen's Highness, her heirs or successors, or united or annexed to the imperial crown of this realm. So help me God, and by the contents of this Book. (*this is the Book of Common Prayer)*

People take an oath very seriously, and thus honest people are not inclined to swear to an oath they don't believe in. (See *A Man for All Seasons* for a graphic demonstration.)