

# The Fifth Age of the Church

The English Reformation

# Political Maneuvering

- English Reformation was more purely political than in Europe.
- It was also more complete than in Europe.
- Catholics reduced to less than 1% of population.

# King Henry VIII

- Staunchly Catholic
  - Wrote book against Luther *In Defense of the Seven Sacraments*
  - Named “Defender of the Faith” by Pope Clement VII
- English Catholic Church healthy and popular
- Tudors new to English throne
- Political instability, need for male heir

# Catherine of Aragorn

- Betrothed to Henry's older brother, Arthur, when she was three. Catherine had strong claim to English throne through her mother.
- Niece of Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V.
- Married Arthur at age 15, Arthur died within the year.
- Henry VII unwilling to return dowry to Spain, held Catherine in England and eventually she was married to Henry when she was 23.
- First female ambassador in Europe. Led (as regent) military campaign against Scottish incursion.
- Had multiple miscarriages and early infant deaths, including two boys, only surviving child was Mary.
- Strong Catholic, believed in educating women, skilled in many areas.

# Henry's Quest for Annulment

- Henry felt political situation required a male heir.
- Catherine was past child-bearing age.
- Petitioned pope for annulment on grounds that marriage was illegal under canon law which prohibited marriage to brother's wife.
- Catherine refused to go along. She testified that her marriage to Arthur was never consummated.
- Bad timing: Pope was prisoner of Charles V at the time.
- Henry began affair with Anne Boleyn.
- Henry sought legal justifications and arrested Catherine.
- His lawyers determined that English Church was separate from Rome, Cranmer annulled marriage, Henry married Anne.

# Acts of Submission and Supremacy

- 1532—Act of Submission of the Clergy: all clergy appointed by the king
- Thomas More resigns as chancellor
- 1534—Act of Supremacy: gave king and Parliament more power, nobles and Church less
- Made king head of the Church with power to select and discipline clergy, reform canon law and doctrine, and even correct homilies

# Reflection

- The Church has faced repression throughout its history. Clergy and laity have reacted in different ways. For some public or private martyrdom was their choice, others sought to maintain an underground Church, still others capitulated to the demands of the authorities.
- In your groups, discuss the factors which might influence the choices faithful Catholics make in times of persecution.

# Two Saints

- Saint Thomas More
  - Lawyer
  - Chancellor of England
  - Dedicated husband and father
- Saint John Fisher
  - Academic, Chancellor of University of Cambridge
  - Bishop of Rochester (poorest diocese in England)
  - Cardinal (named cardinal while imprisoned)



# Destruction of the Monasteries

- Monasteries very wealthy in land and treasure. Henry needed money and consolidation of power.
- Under the Act of Supremacy, Thomas Cromwell organized a legal fiction of “visitations” to monasteries.
- 825 religious communities destroyed in five years.
- Lands kept by king or distributed to loyal followers.
- “Pilgrimage of Grace” —violent uprising against dissolution of monasteries. Not supported by bishops. Put down by Duke of Norfolk (Thomas Howard).

# Edward VI

- Ten years old when he became king. He died at age 16 and never ruled.
- “Protector” governed for him.
- Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, instituted iconoclastic reforms further Protestantizing the Church of England.
- Cranmer promulgated *The Book of Common Prayer*.
- Henry VIII’s political changes became doctrinal changes.

# Mary Tudor

- Five-year reign.
- Tried to reinstate Catholicism in England.
- “Festivals, processions, and jollification returned” (Vidmar 232).
- Executed Cranmer for treason, and many others for heresy, hence, “Bloody Mary.”
- Married Phillip II of Spain.

# Elizabeth

- Daughter of Anne Boleyn.
- Restored Protestantism in effort to calm kingdom. Reinstated Act of Supremacy.
- Executed far more people than Mary.
- Excommunicated by Pius V which gave Elizabeth stronger secular control over English nobility and clergy.
- Never married.

# Scottish Reformation

- Scotland separate country, aligned with France.
- Threat to England, but also intertwined with England through proximity, history, and ruling families.
- Queen Elizabeth supported protestants in Scotland for political reasons.
- With death of Elizabeth, King of Scotland became King of England.