



# **The Catholics: The Church and its People in Britain and Ireland, from the Reformation to the Present Day**

*Roy Hattersley*

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*The story of Catholicism in Britain from the Reformation to the present day, from a master of popular history - 'a first-class storyteller' The Times*

Throughout the three hundred years that followed the Act of Supremacy – which, by making Henry VIII head of the Church, confirmed in law the breach with Rome – English Catholics were prosecuted, persecuted and penalised for the public expression of their faith. Even after the passing of the emancipation acts Catholics were still the victims of institutionalised discrimination.

The first book to tell the story of the Catholics in Britain in a single volume, *The Catholics* includes much previously unpublished information. It focuses on the lives, and sometimes deaths, of individual Catholics – martyrs and apostates, priests and laymen, converts and recusants. It tells the story of the men and women who faced the dangers and difficulties of being what their enemies still call ‘Papists’. It describes the laws which circumscribed their lives, the political tensions which influenced their position within an essentially Anglican nation and the changes in dogma and liturgy by which Rome increasingly alienated their Protestant neighbours – and sometime even tested the loyalty of faithful Catholics.

The survival of Catholicism in Britain is the triumph of more than simple faith. It is the victory of moral and spiritual unbending certainty. Catholicism survives because it does not compromise. It is a characteristic that excites admiration in even a hardened atheist.

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