



Religious change

Henry VIII broke from the Catholic Church for several reasons:

- **Personal reasons:** He wanted a male heir and needed an annulment from the Pope to marry Anne Boleyn, believing she would give him a son. His love for Anne made him want to end his first marriage.
- **Political reasons:** He disliked the Pope's power over England and saw the Reformation as a way to gain control over the church and government.
- **Economic reasons:** England was facing financial problems, and the wealth of the monasteries could help solve them.
- **Religious reasons:** Many people criticised the Catholic Church for its corruption, creating a desire for reform.

Church reforms under Henry VIII

1532	Annates Act
1533	Act in Restraint of Appeals
1534	Act of Supremacy
1534	The Treason Act
1535	Valor Ecclesiasticus
1536	The Acts of Union
1536	Dissolution of smaller monasteries
1536	The Ten Articles
1537	Publication of the English Bible
1539	Dissolution of larger monasteries

The social impact of the reformation

Thomas Cromwell and the reasons for the dissolution of the monasteries

Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister and a key architect of the Henrician Reformation, played a central role in the dissolution of the monasteries. The reasons for the dissolution included:

- **Economic reasons:** The wealth of the Church could solve many of the monarchy's financial problems.
- **Political reasons:** Some argue that the idea of monasteries owing allegiance outside England to the Pope and Rome was the reason for the dissolution of the monasteries.
- **Religious reasons:** Cromwell and his supporters objected to the monasteries, viewing them as a misguided form of spiritual life and a waste of human and financial resources.
- **Social reasons:** The Valor Ecclesiasticus alleged sins and abuses in many monasteries.

The impact of the dissolution of the monasteries of Tintern, Neath, Margam and Strata Florida

- **Economic consequences:** The dissolution was very profitable. In 1536, a Court of Augmentations was created to manage the new income from the closures. Over the 10 years leading up to Henry VIII's death, the monasteries provided the Crown with over a million pounds.
- **Social and political change:** As Henry VIII sold off so much monastic land, more estates became available. While many were purchased by landowners who already held estates, some were bought by individuals who previously owned no land.
- **Humanitarian impact:** Around 9,000 monks and nuns were forced to find new ways of living, often relying on government pensions. The poor lost their usual source of charity, and areas near monasteries likely suffered from the loss of support.

Resistance

The conservatism of many Welsh people

A growing sense of national identity in England led to some support for Henry VIII in his attack on the Church. However, this was not the case in Wales as Welsh Roman Catholicism was the faith they had observed during their period of independence. Additionally, some church leaders supported the Welsh people's efforts to gain freedom from English control. The monasteries of Wales were also reasonably popular with the people. The 'New Learning' that undermined the Catholic Church in other countries had not reached Wales, which meant that many Welsh people remained devoted to the Catholic Church. There was no Protestant propaganda in the Welsh language which meant the Welsh could not access it. Given that Wales was remote, with very small towns and a sparse population, there was considerable conservatism among the Welsh people.

The significance of the Welsh language

The Welsh language played a key role in the resistance to the Reformation in Wales. The language acted as a medium for preserving Catholic traditions and as a barrier to the spread of Protestant reforms.

Most of the population in Wales spoke Welsh and relied on Catholic rituals and traditions communicated in the Welsh language. This ensured the survival of Catholic practices, as Protestant reforms were often implemented in English which limited their accessibility.

The lack of Protestant texts in Welsh prevented the spread of reformist ideas. Protestant theology emphasised personal access to Scripture, but most Welsh people were unable to read Latin or English, leaving them dependent on traditional Catholic teachings.

Yn y Llyfr Hwn, 1547. This was the first book to be printed in Welsh. Sir John Price released this book to ensure ordinary people learnt the basic principles of Christianity. Since ordinary people needed to learn to read first, the book contains the alphabet, instructions on how to read and count in Welsh, a calendar, the Lord's Prayer and other Christian texts.



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