The Mass

The Book of Common Prayer contains a schedule of all Protestant Holy Days in their order. During this time of reformation, holiday created disputes among reformers as they each shared opinion about the godliness of their worship. Many accused them as being purely superstitious, not holy. In some areas, law enforcement put in place to maintain observation of these holidays. Others believed punishment for disobedience came from a heavenly manifestation.

One example was in 1589 when an ale wife, making no exception of days, would need brew upon St Mark's day, but lo, the marvellous days, would cause the ale in her house rose quite. Surely a gentle warning to them that violate and profane forbidden days.

Many holidays came from pagan holidays, which was of great concern to the Puritans. When they split from the Church of Rome, The Christian calendar consisted of over 100 Holy Days dedicated to the Saints and religious celebrations. In 1536, King Henry VIII decisively cut down the number of Holy Days to prevent men from becoming slothful and idle. Holy Days, Festivals, Feasts and Fasts were scheduled throughout the year, avoiding the days of labor necessary for the livelihoods of the community. July 1 through September 29 was strictly unmarked by holiday celebration because of the harvest.

The Holiday Calendar

Access to Holy Texts

In the Early Modern Period, few people had access to a bible. Only select men with clerical authority were given access to the Latin text of the Roman Missal. Books were very expensive, restricting its availability; a complete bible could cost over a month of wages for a typical artisan. Education was also expensive, and only offered to the elite, meaning primarily wealthy people could read and write. In the Anglican church, the Bible was seen as the ultimate source of truth, where all Christians could have access to its words. In the Catholic Church, ritual and visual modes of communication were implemented: including preaching, confession, music, images, and rites. Catholic lay members used the bible as a way to retain information that had already been learned through other sources.

People and Worship

For the people of this time, worship was a daily and communal occurrence to represent how devout one was. Everyone in the community was involved in Mass which occurred several times throughout the day. Now often a person attending Mass showed how devout one was. Some community members even went to Mass several times a day. Those that were involved with the Mass and Daily worship were those of wealth, power, influence, and standing. This could be an "individual, family, or large group" such as the gilds. Individuals with these qualities could influence what prayers were said, how many candles were lit, the type and amount of artwork, and who could get buried in the church/parish.

Conclusion

Through a study of the Roman Missal and the Book of Common Prayer, we see the liturgical contrast brought by the Reformation in 16th and 17th century Europe. This time brought change in who had access to these holy books of scripture. The Catholic clergy continued to preach in Latin, while the Anglican clergy worshiped in the vernacular of the lay membership. The Christian calendar had made its way into the daily routines of all participants in the church. The image shows evidence of how this reformation influenced ceremonial worship, singing, prayer, and holidays in the Anglican and Catholic faiths.