

INTERROGATORIES TO CHURCHWARDENS

6 April 1558

Interrogatories, upon which and every part of the same, as well the churchwardens now being as also all other hereafter to be appointed, shall be charged withal, set forth by the King and Queens Majesties Commissioners for search, inquiry, and certificate to be had of all such things as now be, or hereafter shall be amiss in any wise concerning the commission to them given, upon which certificate duly made, reformation and redress shall be had thereof with all convenient speed and diligence.

1. First if there be within their parish a parson, vicar, or curate resident continually upon his benefice and cure, doing his duty there as he is bound to do in all things, especially in preaching, saying Matins, Mass, and Evensong at due time....
2. Whether the said parson, vicar, or curate have been heretofore married or no, and if he continue with his woman or either of them suspiciously do resort to other.
3. Whether within the said parish there be openly or secretly any married priest, or any woman heretofore married to a priest, and whether they be suspected of any evil rule and evil conversation or no....
4. Whether there be within the said parish any that do maintain or uphold the opinion that priests and religious persons may lawfully be married and continue together.
5. Whether there be within your parish any priest that takes upon him to serve the cure, not being before examined and allowed thereto by the ordinary, and whether the said priest has in the time of the late schism here in the realm preached heresy or evil doctrine, and not recanted the same, or does not now preach and set forth the true doctrine of the Catholic Church, and also pray for the three estates of the Catholic Church, and especially for the King and Queen's Majesties, and also whether, praying for the third estate, they do name Purgatory or no.
6. Whether there be within the said parish any that do obstinately persist and stand in any heresy or heretical opinion, or be suspected of erroneous and false doctrine, or a favorer, maintainer, or aider of any erroneous or heretical person or persons, or of any heresies or heretical opinions or naughty doctrine.
7. Whether you know or have heard say of any person or persons within your said parish that have kept, or at this present do keep, any heretical, naughty, or seditious erroneous book or books, especially English testaments or Bibles falsely translated, secretly or otherwise, and whether you have any suspects thereof.
8. Whether you know or have heard of any printers or booksellers within your parish that has sold, or now does sell or keep any the said heretical, naughty, or seditious book or books, letters, or writings, and whether you have any suspects thereof.
9. Whether you know or have heard say of any person or persons within your parish that willingly or obstinately do neglect or refuse to make their confession to the priest, and to receive absolution and penance at his hand for his offences, or obstinately or willingly do refuse to receive the sacrament of the altar, or Extreme Unction, in extreme danger of sickness, or to hear Mass, or to come to his parish church, or refuse to go on procession, or to take holy water, or otherwise does misuse themselves in breaking the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church, specially in fasting on the Ember days and other days by the Church specially appointed, or in praying, or other such like.
10. Whether you know or have heard of any person or persons within your parish that have murmured, grugged, or spoken directly or indirectly against the Masse, or holy bread, holy water, ashes, palms, creeping to the cross, holy oil and chrism, bearing of palms or candles, burying of the dead, or praying for them, specially in saying of dirges and commendations, or in using any other laudable or godly ceremony or usage of the Church.

11. Whether there be within your parish any that does favour, or is suspected to receive any naughty person or persons, especially to read the English service used in the time of King Edward VI, or the Book of Communion, or any book prohibited or forbidden to be read or taught, or to set forth any naughty opinion or doctrine.
12. Whether there be within the said parish any privy lectures or sermons, or other devices, or any unlawful conventicles or assemblies.
13. Whether there be within the said parish any that at the sacring time of the Mass do hang down their heads, or hide themselves behind pillars, or turn away their faces, or depart out of the church, because they would not look upon the blessed sacrament of the altar.
14. Whether you know or have heard say of any person or persons within your parish that have committed Lollardy, as in eating of flesh at days and times forbidden, or otherwise practising or allowing any the opinions of the Lollards.
15. Whether there be within the said parish any person—man, woman, or child—being of sufficient age and discretion, that cannot say their *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, and the creed.
16. Whether there be within your parish any schoolmaster or schoolmistress not being first examined and admitted thereunto by the ordinary or his sufficient deputy, and whether the said schoolmaster and schoolmistress be sound in religion and of honest living and discrete behaviour, causing their scholars to fast, to pray, to come to the church, and to do their duties there, specially in hearing Mass and other divine service, and whether they teach them to help the priest to Mass, and to say their *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, and the creed with *De Profundis* for all Christen souls, and whether the schools, especially being common, be faithfully and diligently kept or no.
17. Whether there be within the said parish any that do absent themselves willingly from the church....
18. Whether you know or have heard of any in your parish that has been, or is, a scold or a slanderous person of his neighbours, or a sower of discord and debate between party and party....
20. Whether you know or have heard say of any concealments, contempts, conspiracies, false rumors, tales, seditions, mis-behaviours, slanderous words, bruited or spread by any person or persons against the King and Queen's Majesties, or either of them, or against the quiet rule and governance of their subjects or realms.
21. Whether the patrons and other having advowsons of benefices have sincerely, truly, and justly presented in due time....
22. Whether you know of any patrons or other having advowsons that have covenanted or agreed to have any sum of money for the same....
23. Whether you know any patrons or other having such advowsons, or any other person that of his own private authority and pleasure has pulled down any church, chapel, or other ecclesiastical building, or have taken away the lead, bells, ornaments, goods, or lands of the said places, or any of them, or spoiled any of the same, or have converted the tithes, profits, commodities, revenues, and possessions of any of the same to his own private and profane use....
26. Whether within the said parish there be any woman that does exercise the office or room of a midwife, not being before examined and admitted thereto by the ordinary or his sufficient deputy....
27. Whether the said midwife has heretofore been, and now is, Catholic, faithful, discrete, sober, and diligent....
28. Whether the said woman does use any witchcraft or does omit or alter the laudable rites and ceremonies accustomed and used of antiquity.

29. Whether the said midwife or other woman denies or lets the newborn child to be brought to the church....
32. Whether within your said parish there be a rood and a rood loft having the images of Mary and John, and lights before the same, and whether in the Lent season there be a covering for the said crucifix decently provided, and whether there be any lights upon the high altar, and whether there be an image of the patron of the church or no.
33. Whether there be any inventory made and kept of the church goods, and a book concerning the registering of those that are baptized, married, or buried.
34. Whether the vestments for the priests and other ministers, and all the ornaments for and about the altar, be kept clean and sufficiently repaired and maintained, and whether there be a comely pixe to keep the blessed sacrament in and upon the high altar, and whether the blessed sacrament be carried decently and devoutly to the sick, the clerk going before the priest in a surplice with light in his hand, and a little sacring bell ringing.
35. Whether the church or chancel of your parish be in ruin or decay....
36. Whether there have been or be any legacies or gifts made for the repairing and maintenance of your church, or of highways, finding of the poor, marrying of poor maidens, or any such like, and the same not paid and answered accordingly....
37. Whether you know of any man that has two wives living, or of any woman that has two husbands living, no lawful divorce being made between them.
39. Whether you know of any usurers....
42. Whether such as cannot read upon the book have every one of them a pair of beads, and do use the same devoutly and accordingly.
43. Whether any minstrels or any other persons do use to sing or say any songs or ditties that be unclean or vile, especially against any of the seven sacraments, or against any the rites and ceremonies of this Church of England, which is a notable member of Christ's Catholic Church.
44. Whether any do deprave or contempen the authority or jurisdiction of the Pope's holiness or the see of Rome....
45. Whether any plays or interludes not being first examined, allowed, and approved by the ordinary, are used at any time, especially in the Lent, or upon Sundays or holy days....
46. Whether there be any that do use to buy and sell upon the Sundays or holy days....
47. Whether you have procured or consented in any wise that during any part of the sermon made at Paul's Cross there should be ringing of bells, playing of children, crying or making loud noise, riding of horses, or other wise, so that the preacher there or his audience was troubled thereby....
48. Whether you do know, or credibly have heard, that within any part of the City of London there has been any set tables kept for such as would thither resort to eat and drink, and whether it be not used at the said tables to have dinner and supper upon the Friday and Embering days, and all other days, as well within the Lent time as without, or whether there be at the said tables any flesh eaten at times prohibited.