

# Did You Know...

✠ News and trivia from our parish and the Catholic Church ✠  
-- contributed by the Christ Child Church Women's Club --

## Christ Child Catholic Church

*Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the Challenges of Loving Service*

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### When Catholicism was Witchcraft

Today, Catholicism is widely regarded around the world as a religion of peace and love of all humanity. But it wasn't always so, even in the U.S.A.

In the extremist Puritan era of 17th-century Massachusetts, Catholics were regarded as guilty of idolatry and were held in contempt, if not outright hated.

It would be difficult to recognize our nation of 360 years ago from today's perspective. The population was dimly ignorant, superstitious, and given to mob acts of violence irrespective of any written laws of the day.



It's indeed rather odd, that a pious, God-fearing people like the Puritans, who decried worship of pagan gods and idols, would nonetheless deeply believe in "witches" and witchcraft. In fact, this mania appeared to be their chosen method for dealing with anything in their lives of a dark and mysterious nature.

And thus unfolded one of the saddest stories of the time, when Ann Glover was summarily accused of witchcraft. And of what was she so heinously guilty? Well, she worked as a washerwoman for the Goodwins, and often prayed to different saints, which the Puritans regarded as "spirits"; and after she left their employ, their four children came down with a mysterious illness which did not respond to the doctoring of the time.



At her trial, Ann was asked to recite the Lord's prayer. Being an Irish immigrant, she stumbled through a recitation in mixed Gaelic and Latin -- proof positive that she was a witch.

Ann Glover was hanged on November 16, 1688, about four years before the peak of witch-hunting in New England. Nineteen more witches would visit the gallows before the insanity finally ended.

These days, it's hard to imagine how anyone, let alone an entire community, could act so irrationally, or how a people could use their religion to justify ending the life of a fellow human, who happened to behave differently than the norm.

But in reality, there are current examples of intolerance to be found in other countries and cultures, right here in our present era. Let's use this sordid tale, from our own soil, to pause for a moment, to reflect on man's innate humanity, and to pray for all to find it and embrace it.

**Still Curious? See these links ---**

<https://aleteia.org/2017/10/24/how-the-last-witch-hanged-in-boston-was-a-catholic/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ann\\_Glover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ann_Glover)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem\\_witch\\_trials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_witch_trials)

--- Karin and Greg Iller

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