

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION



27

Heretics were often burnt at the stake by the Spanish Inquisition



The Inquisition

- ✧ Religious persecution was very common in Europe during the Reformation.
- ✧ Catholics and Protestants had to be careful – they could suffer fines, imprisonment or in some cases death.
- ✧ The Inquisition was a special court set up to deal with heretics.
- ✧ Heresy means any belief which goes against the teachings of the Church.
- ✧ According to the Catholic Church, all Protestants were heretics.
- ✧ The two most important Inquisitions were established in Rome and Spain.



- ❧ **The Inquisition** was at work in Spain even before the Reformation began, stamping out heresy among Jews and Muslims who had been forced to become Christians.
- ❧ It relied on spies and informers whose identity was kept secret, and who were sometimes able to pay off old scores.
- ❧ The Spanish Inquisition became famous for the **violent way** it dealt with heretics. **Torture** was routinely used and heretics were **burnt at the stake**. They could also be fined, flogged or imprisoned.
- ❧ The religious ceremony at which heretics were punished was called an **auto-da-fe** or act of faith.



- ❧ The Spanish Inquisitors were **convinced that they acted for the good of the soul** which they believed was far more important than the body.
- ❧ Pope Paul III was so impressed by the Inquisition that he set up **similar courts for Italy** in 1542. It was at one of these courts that it tried the scientist and astronomer Galileo
- ❧ The Inquisition **destroyed Protestantism in Spain and Italy**. It also caused the Roman Church to be feared and hated.