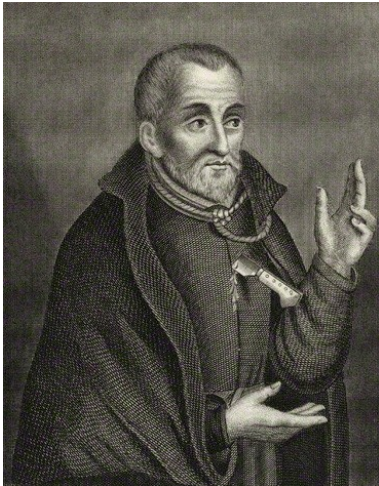


Lives
of
Saints

St Edmund Campion sj

1540 - 1581

Feastday: 1st December



"In condemning us,
you condemn all your
own ancestors, all our
ancient bishops and
kings, all that was
once the glory of
England — the island
of saints, and the most
devoted child of the
See of Peter."

St Edmund Campion

S. J. D. C.
S O C I E T A S
D O C T R I N
C H R I S T I A N Æ

w w w . s d c . m e . u k

I was almost seven when King Henry VIII died in 1547, for I was born in 1540, in London. My father sold books – a new invention for the few who could read! Though we knew about the King's serious quarrel with the Pope and the persecutions, we were a good Catholic family.

When only 15 years, I was sent on a scholarship to Oxford College and graduated two years later. Soon I changed sides and acknowledged Queen Elizabeth as head of the church in England. I must admit that she, like many others, admired my sharp intelligence, and wanted to grant me promotions. I became a deacon of the Anglican Church.

Deep down in my heart I was a Catholic and I had serious doubts about the new Protestant setup. In fact I went to Ireland to try and clear my doubts, and fortunately I returned back to my Catholic roots. High royal officials tried to buy my support, but I escaped to France when Elizabeth herself was condemned by Pope Pius V and tried to arrest me.

At a Catholic Seminary in France I studied to become a priest and I was accepted in the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits. I lectured at Prague's College and it was there that I was ordained a priest in 1578.

Few years later I volunteered with another Jesuit priest to return secretly to England to start a Catholic mission. I knew well how dangerous this decision was, especially for me because the Queen and other officials were still out in full force to kill me. They feared my ability to challenge their new theories for I preached and wrote clearly about Jesus and the truth of the Catholic faith. They nicknamed me in fact "the Seditious Jesuit".

I was soon found out for somebody at Lyford, near Oxford, betrayed me. I was immediately imprisoned in the Tower in 1581. They tried hard to change my mind and bring me to change my religion once more. Queen Elizabeth herself came to see me. But with God's grace I held fast even if they tortured me harshly.

I was eventually taken to Tyburn where on 1 December 1581 I was quartered and hanged as a "traitor". Many years later I was declared a saint by Pope Paul VI in 1970 together with other 39 Martyrs of England and Wales.

My answer to my jurors when our group of Martyrs was condemned remained famous, I think. It's printed on this sheet on the left.