

**Lives
of
Saints**

St John Fisher

1469 - 1535

Feastday: 22nd June



“Had you but tasted one drop of the sweetness which inebriates the souls of those religious from their worship of this Sacrament, you would never have written as you have, nor have apostatized from the faith that you formerly professed.”

St John Fisher

I studied theology at Cambridge University, receiving degrees in 1487 and 1491. I was Parish priest in Northallerton, England from 1491 to 1494. I was Proctor of Cambridge University, a Confessor to Margaret Beaufort, King Henry VII's mother, and the Bishop of Rochester, England. I was considered an excellent speaker and writer, and I worked to raise the standard of preaching in my see. As a preacher my reputation was such that in 1509, when King Henry VII and the Lady Margaret died, I was appointed to preach the funeral oration on both occasions. These sermons are still extant. On various occasions, I denounced various abuses in the Church, urging the need of disciplinary reforms. I was also Chancellor of Cambridge and the tutor of the young King Henry VIII.

When in 1527 I was asked to study the problem of Henry's marriage, I became the target of Henry's wrath by defending the validity of the marriage and rejecting Henry's claim to be head of the Church in England. I declared that, like St. John the Baptist, I was ready to die on behalf of the indissolubility of marriage.

I was imprisoned in 1534 for my opposition, to the King's marriage, and for refusing to take the oath of succession, which would have acknowledged Henry and Anne as legitimate heirs to the throne. I spent 14 months in prison without trial. While in prison, I was made cardinal by Pope Paul III.

I was killed in 1535 on Tower Hill, Tyburn, England, buried in the churchyard of All Hallows, Barking, and canonized in 1935 by Pope Pius XI.

