

The Blood of the Martyrs : the Seed of the Church



Tyburn Convent
Hyde Park Place, London

An Ecumenical Commemoration of

All London martyrs of the Church's Divisions, Catholic and Reformation

Lamenting the sufferings and separation of the past

Purifying the Christian memory in this city and country

**Praying the martyrs' witness will bear fruit in Christian unity
now and in the future**

With

Prebendary Dr Peter Elvy,
Recently Vicar, Chelsea Old Church

The Revd Bill Snelson,
General Secretary, Churches Together in England

Cathy Corcoran,
*Director, the Cardinal Hume Centre and
Trustee, St Ethelburga Centre for Reconciliation and Peace*

11 am, Saturday, 27 May 2006

OPENING WORSHIP

**Alleluia! sing to Jesus! His the sceptre, His the throne.
Alleluia! His the triumph, His the victory alone.
Hark! the songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood.
Jesus out of every nation has redeemed us by His blood.**

**Alleluia! not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;
Alleluia! He is near us, faith believes, nor questions how;
Though the cloud from sight received Him when the forty days were o'er
Shall our hearts forget His promise, "I am with you evermore"?**

W. Chadderton Dix

Introduction and Welcome by the Revd Mark Woodruff

Prayer of Abbé Paul Couturier, known as the apostle of Unity

Lord Jesus,
who prayed, on the night before you died for us,
that all your disciples might be completely one,
as you are in your Father and your Father is in you:
Enable us to feel sorrow for the unfaithfulness of our disunity;
Give us the loyalty to recognize, and the courage to reject,
the mutual indifference, distrust, and even hostility which hide in us;
Grant us all to meet in your praying Heart,
so that from our souls and our lips
it may be your prayer that rises unceasingly -
the unailing prayer that obtains from your Father
the Unity of Christians,
according to your will, according to your means;
That in you, who are perfect charity,
we may find the Way that leads to Unity
in obedience to your Love and your Truth.
Amen.

A reading from the First Letter of Peter (1 Peter 4.12-19)

Beloved, do not be surprised that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as if something strange were happening to you. But rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let no one among you be made to suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as an intriguer.

But whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name. For it is time for the judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, how will it end for those who fail to obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous one is barely saved, where will the godless and the sinner appear? As a result, those who suffer in accord with God's will hand their souls over to a faithful creator as they do good.

ADDRESSES

Address by the Revd Prebendary Dr Peter Elvy, recently vicar, Chelsea Old Church

**Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise;
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways!**

**O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight
and to the rescue came.**

**O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive, and should prevail;**

**and that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine:
God's presence and his very self,
and essence all-divine.**

**O generous love! that he who smote
in man for man the foe,
the double agony in Man
for man should undergo.**

**And in the garden secretly,
and on the cross on high,
should teach his brethren, and inspire
to suffer and to die.**

**Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise;
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways!**

Cardinal John Henry Newman

Prayer from the Rite of Peace, Eucharist of the Roman Catholic Church

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your Apostles:
'I leave you peace; my peace I give you'.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church;
and grant her the peace and unity which is according to your will;
who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Address by the Revd Bill Snelson, General Secretary, Churches Together in England

**Come down, O love divine, seek Thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing.
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.**

**O let it freely burn, 'til earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let Thy glorious light shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.**

**Let holy charity mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart, which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.**

**And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace, till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.**

Bianco da Siena

Prayer by Paul Couturier

Let us not become settled in our divisions.
Preserve us from considering as normal
that which is a scandal to the world
and an offence to your love.
Keep alive in us the knowledge of the sin
that divides what you have made to be one.
By your power, Lord,
gather together your scattered flock
under the one authority of your Son:
that the design of your love may be accomplished
and that the world may know you, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

***Address by Cathy Corcoran OBE, Director, the Cardinal Hume Centre and
Trustee, the St Ethelburga Centre for Reconciliation and Peace***

**Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.**

**Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears:
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.**

**I ask them whence their victory came:
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.**

**They marked the footsteps that He trod,
His zeal inspired their breast;
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest.**

**Our glorious Leader claims our praise
For His own pattern giv'n;
While the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to Heav'n.**

Isaac Watts

COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRS

Martyrdom of William Hunter, from John Foxe's Book of Martyrs

William Hunter represents the many who were interrogated, imprisoned and convicted in London – Catholic, Protestant and Anglican - but who went to their deaths in other parts of the country. Read by Christopher Stephenson, Secretary of Unitas-the Catholic League

Hunter, then nineteen years of age, refusing to receive the communion at Mass, was threatened to be brought before the bishop; to whom this valiant young martyr was conducted by a constable. Bonner caused William to be brought into a chamber, where he began to reason with him, promising him security and pardon if he would recant. Nay, he would have been content if he would have gone only to receive and to confession, but William would not do so for all the world. Upon this the bishop commanded his men to put William in the stocks in his gate house, where he sat two days and nights, with a crust of brown bread and a cup of water only, which he did not touch. At the two days' end, the bishop came to him, and finding him steadfast in the faith, sent him to the convict prison, and commanded the keeper to lay irons upon him as many as he could bear. He continued in prison three quarters of a year.

William was sent down to Brentwood, where he was to be executed. On coming to the stake, he knelt down and read the Fifty-first Psalm, until he came to these words, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Steadfast in refusing the queen's pardon, if he would become an apostate, at length one Richard Ponde, a bailiff, came, and made the chain fast about him. William now cast his psalter into his brother's hand, who said, "William, think on the holy passion of Christ, and be not afraid of death." "Behold," answered William, "I am not afraid." Then he lifted up his hands to heaven, and said, "Lord, Lord, Lord, receive my spirit;" and casting down his head again into the smothering smoke, he yielded up his life for the truth, sealing it with his blood to the praise of God.

Psalm 126 – translation by Bishop Miles Coverdale

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion:

Then were we like unto them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter:

And our tongue with joy.

Then said they among the heathen:

The Lord hath done great things for them.

Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us already:

Whereof we rejoice.

Turn our captivity, O Lord:

As the rivers in the south.

They that sow in tears:

Shall reap in joy.

He that now goeth on his way weeping:
And beareth forth good seed,
**Shall doubtless come again with joy:
And bring his sheaves with him.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.**

*Martyrdom of John Houghton and his companions, from the account of Dom Maurice
Chauncey
read by Mother M. Simeon OSB, prioress of the Tyburn Convent*

This abominable sentence hurled like a bolt by unjust judges was accepted meekly by just men unjustly condemned. Then after five days of facing their oppressors in prison, drenched by a sickening torment of abuse, came the blessed day of their passing, of their glorious passion... they were dragged mercilessly on hurdles, at the horses' heels, across London from the Tower to Tyburn. When the place of punishment was reached, the first to be approached and released from the hurdle was the Venerable Father Houghton.

Then the executioner kneeling before him according to the custom craved pardon for the cruel death he was going to inflict. If only, my reader, you had beheld the merciful man, full of piety and sweetness and charity. How kindly he spoke to his executioner, how generously and lovingly he forgave him, how piously and fervently he prayed for him and all who stood by. John Houghton then declared that he was ready to endure with God's help these and all other torments that they may have the wish and power to inflict, rather than consent to fall away from the right doctrine and the obedience due to God and his holy Church. He prayed Psalm 31 and was hanged. Before he was dead the rope was cut and he fell to the ground and, while still alive, drawn and quartered. His last words were, 'Lord Jesus, lover of thy children, have mercy on me in this hour'.

Psalm 31 – translation of Bishop Miles Coverdale

In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust:
let me never be put to confusion, deliver me in thy righteousness
**Bow down thine ear to me:
Make haste to deliver me.**
And be thou my strong rock and house of defence:
That thou mayest save me.
**For thou art my strong rock and my castle:
Be thou also my guide and lead me for thy Name's sake.**
Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me:
For thou art my strength.
**Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit:
For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.**

*A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 5. 1-10)
Read by the Revd Richard Mortimer, Ecumenical Secretary, the United Reformed Church*

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, ⁹ for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

A Minute's Silence is kept:

- To commemorate all martyrs of the Church's divisions, Catholic and Reformation
- To lament the sufferings and separation of the past
- To pray that the memory in the Churches of this city and country may be purified
- To pray that the martyrs' witness and sufferings will bear fruit in Christian unity

A meditation by Paul Couturier

Grant that all Christians may love one another without reserve.
You alone can bring this to pass.
Grant that we may love you with an unbounded love.
The things which we have in common - your Book, your Baptism,
our faith in you, in your incarnation, in your redemption, and indeed many other beliefs,
all this unites us indissolubly,
making us in you, and through you,
children of your Father.
But the things which separate us
unite us even more closely - though in a different way -
than the things which we have in common.
For the things which separate us are the causes of intense suffering,
the suffering of being separated in our thoughts concerning your Church.
And there is nothing that draws us together
and unites us more closely than suffering.
O Christ, make us suffer so intensely by reason of our separation
that your prayer within us may penetrate us,
may take possession of us,
have free course in us,
and ascend to your Father.

Invocations of Penitence and Hope

For the little importance we have accorded to that word coming from your Heart: 'I have other sheep who are not from this fold: I must also bring them and they shall hear my voice':

We ask you to forgive us, Lord.

For our controversies, narrowness of spirit, or rivalries with regard to our Christian brothers and sisters in other Churches, for our intransigence and our hard judgments:

We ask you to forgive us, Lord.

For all acts of violence, deserving blame, wrought by us in the past and even today against our Christian brothers and sisters:

We ask you to forgive us, Lord.

For all attitudes of pride and self sufficiency that we may have shown across the ages to our Christian brothers and sisters, and for all our failures of understanding toward them:

We ask you to forgive us, Lord.

For our bad examples in conduct, which have retarded, diminished or destroyed the effects of grace in the souls of others:

We ask you to forgive us, Lord.

For forgetting to offer prayer, frequent, fervent, friendly, on their behalf:

We ask you to forgive us, Lord.

Across the frontiers of language, race and nation:

Unite us, Jesus.

Above our ignorance, our prejudices, our suspicion:

Unite us, Jesus.

Above our spiritual and intellectual barriers:

Unite us, Jesus.

O God, for the increase of your glory:

Gather your scattered people.

O God, for the triumph of good and of truth:

Gather your scattered people.

O God, that there may be but one fold and one Shepherd:

Gather your scattered people.

O God, to confound the pride of Satan and his hosts:

Gather your scattered people.

O God, that peace may at last reign in the world:

Gather your scattered people.

O God, to bring fulness of joy to the heart of your Son:

Gather your scattered people.

Our Father.....

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose grace and power your holy martyrs triumphed over suffering and were faithful until death: strengthen us with your grace, that we may endure reproach and faithfully bear witness to the Name of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: **Lord Jesus,
who prayed that we might all be one,
we pray to You for the unity of Christians,
according to Your will, according to Your means.
May Your Spirit enable us
to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin,
and to hope beyond all hope.
Amen.**

Daily Prayer for Unity of the Communauté du Chemin Neuf, based on the writings of Paul Couturier

**For all the saints, who from their labours rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;
thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,
and win, with them the victor's crown of gold.
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave, again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
the saints triumphant rise in bright array;
the King of glory passes on his way.
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

**From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
and singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

Bishop William Walsham How

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Thanks are due to the Benedictine Community of Tyburn Convent which maintains this Shrine in honour of the Catholic martyrs. They immediately responded to the suggestion that this holy place could be a point of reconciliation and meeting between traditions which have all suffered the scars of history and the pains of martyrdom.

Thanks are also due to Sutton's Hospital at Charterhouse, and James Thomson its Master, whose celebration last year in honour of the Catholic Carthusian martyrs, led by the Anglican Bishop of London, inspired this event in turn. Charterhouse is, of course, very close to Smithfield, where so many Protestant Christians laid down their lives for Christ too. We are also grateful to Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch for his helpful advice and encouragement

We thank our distinguished and thoughtful speakers, whose contribution to the purification of memory, 'that they all may be one, so that the world may believe', will not be forgotten. We also thank Unitas-the Catholic League for its generous support in enabling this event to be held.

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The date for this Commemoration of these brave Christians who lost their lives in following Jesus Christ, the Saturday after Ascension Day, has special ecumenical significance. Long before the present age of spiritual ecumenism and ecumenical dialogue, the days between Ascension and Pentecost were designated as Days of Prayer for Christian Unity by the Anglican Lambeth Conference in 1878 and subsequently by Pope Leo XIII in 1897.

