

## **July 2: St. Oliver Plunkett (1629-1681)**

The name of today's saint is especially familiar to the Irish and the English—and with good reason. The English martyred Oliver Plunkett for defending the faith in his native Ireland during a period of severe persecution.

Born in County Meath in 1629, he studied for the priesthood in Rome and was ordained there in 1654. After some years of teaching and service to the poor of Rome he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland.

After arriving back in Ireland, he set about reorganising the ravaged Roman Church and built schools both for the young and for clergy, whom he found 'ignorant in moral theology and controversies'. He tackled drunkenness among the clergy, writing 'Let us remove this defect from an Irish priest, and he will be a saint'. The Penal Laws had been relaxed in line with the Declaration of Breda in 1660 and he was able to establish a Jesuit College in Drogheda in 1670. A year later 150 students attended the college, no fewer than 40 of whom were Protestant, making this college the first integrated school in Ireland. His ministry was a successful one and he is said to have confirmed 48,000 Catholics over a 4 year period.

In 1673 a new wave of anti-Catholic persecution began, forcing Archbishop Plunkett to do his pastoral work in secrecy and disguise and to live in hiding. Meanwhile, many of his priests were sent into exile; schools were closed; Church services had to be held in secret and convents and seminaries were suppressed. As archbishop, he was viewed as ultimately responsible for any rebellion or political activity among his parishioners.

Archbishop Plunkett was arrested and imprisoned in Dublin Castle in 1679, but his trial was moved to London. After deliberating for 15 minutes, a jury found him guilty of fomenting revolt. He was hanged, drawn and quartered in July 1681, the last Roman Catholic martyr to die in England.

Pope Paul VI canonized Oliver Plunkett in 1975.

JULY 2021

## **Prayer from Taizé**

The exchange with God becomes real for us in prayer: by his Holy Spirit, God comes to dwell within us. By his word and by the sacraments, Christ gives himself to us. In return, we can surrender everything to him.

## **Prayers of Intercession for our parish**

- As we move forward as a Parish, let us pray that we are led by the Holy Spirit and guided by God's word so that we may serve him with open hearts and continue to grow in our relationship with him.
- On this feast of Corpus Christi, let us pray especially for our First Holy Communion families, their Catechists and our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, that the gift of the Eucharist will bring them and many others closer to Christ in hope and joy.
- Let us pray that, in this Year of the Eucharist, our parish is truly transformed by the Lord's presence in the Eucharist.

## **Some tweets by Pope Francis**

- We would not have had the courage to believe in a God who loves humanity, if we had not known Jesus. What kind of God is prepared to die for people? What kind of God loves always and patiently, without demanding to be loved in return?
- To be a good father means to offer everything, holding nothing back; to protect without suffocating; to pardon without asking anything in return; to wait patiently and trustingly. It means following the example of the "Good Father" who is in heaven. May God bless all fathers!
- Faith is not an album of past memories; Jesus is not outdated. He is alive here and now. He walks beside you each day, in every situation you are experiencing, in every trial you have to endure, in your deepest hopes and dreams.

### **July 8: St. Gregory Grassi and Companions (d. 1900)**

Christian missionaries have often been caught in the crossfire of wars against their own countries. When the governments of Britain, Germany, Russia and France forced substantial territorial concessions from the Chinese in 1898, anti-foreign sentiment grew very strong among many Chinese people.

Gregory Grassi was born in Italy in 1833, ordained in 1856 and sent to China five years later. In 1876, Gregory was chosen as the Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic for the Apostolic Vicariate of Shanxi. After he assumed authority over the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Shanxi in September 1891, he established a novitiate to provide access to Franciscan life for the Chinese of all four vicariates in Shanxi, and a rest home for overworked missionaries. He also dealt with the suffering of the local population through plague and famine, which led him to enlarge the orphanage in the city and establish several others, in order to cope with the orphans left behind by these catastrophes. With 14 other European missionaries and 14 Chinese religious, he was martyred during the short but bloody Boxer Uprising of 1900.

Twenty-six of these martyrs were arrested on the orders of Yu Hsien, the governor of Shanxi province. They were hacked to death on July 9, 1900. Five of them were Friars Minor; seven were Franciscan Missionaries of Mary — the first martyrs of their congregation. Seven were Chinese seminarians and Secular Franciscans; four martyrs were Chinese laymen and Secular Franciscans. The other three Chinese laymen killed in Shanxi simply worked for the Franciscans and were rounded up with all the others. Three Italian Franciscans were martyred that same week in the province of Hunan. All these martyrs were beatified in 1946 and were among the 120 martyrs canonized in 2000.

Martyrdom is the occupational hazard of missionaries. Throughout China during the Boxer Uprising, five bishops, 50 priests, two brothers, 15 sisters and 40,000 Chinese Christians were killed. The 146,000 Catholics served by the Franciscans in China in 1906 had grown to over 300,000 by 1924 and were served by 282 Franciscans and 174 local priests. Great sacrifices often bring great results.

### **THE TEAPOT – Margaret Leighton**

We are just like a teapot  
With our inmost thoughts inside,  
There our fears, our grief and worries  
And sinfulness abide,  
Too many keep the lid on tight  
So this rubbish lingers there  
And eats into our heart and soul  
So we are cracked with care;  
But Jesus is just waiting  
For us to open up that lid  
To pour His cleansing deep into  
The darkness which we hid,  
His Light will bring refreshment  
To heart and mind and soul,  
The chips and cracks will disappear,  
His healing will make whole;  
We'll be a teapot fit to serve  
And ready to be poured,  
Out will flow His love and truth  
The Gospel of our Lord.

*"...it was for no reason except His own compassion that He saved us, by means of the cleansing waters of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which He has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5,6)*

### **A Prayer for Humility - Rosa George**

Lord,  
Help me to be patient and gentle with others,  
Help me when irritation and anger creep over me.  
In your love and wisdom help me to see  
That as often as not it is I who am being tiresome  
and at fault.  
Teach me to ask pardon for what I do  
And to be humble and courteous in all things.