

Reflection Saturday Week 30 Blessed Martyrs of Douai 2022

The Blessed Martyrs of Douai College (founded 1568). It educated English Catholics, in particular seminarians training for priesthood, to enter England covertly, minister to English Catholics and attempt the re-conversion of England. Being a Catholic priest was high treason in England at this time. The penalty was hanging, drawing and quartering. Almost 160 priests from Douai were executed between 1577 and 1680. Each time an execution occurred the College celebrated a solemn Mass of thanksgiving.

In the office of readings, St Catherine of Siena wrote:

In creating man, God gave him memory to be able to remember the good things God had done for him and enable him to share in the power of the eternal Father.

Moreover, God gave man intellect, so that, seeing the wisdom of his Son, man could recognise and understand God's will; for God is the giver of all graces and God gives them with heartfelt fatherly love.

Moreover, God gave man the desire to love, sharing in the tenderness of the Holy Spirit, so that he might love the things that his intellect had understood and seen.

God did all this solely that man might be able to understand God and enjoy God, rejoicing in the vision of God for all eternity.

The Douai martyrs remind us of the importance of our mission to preach the Good News which Catherine of Siena summarises so beautifully for us. They were a sign to the Catholics of England, at a difficult time in history, showing that they were not forgotten, that God truly cared for them and sought to help them. They became living examples of Jesus who gave his life on the cross to set us free from the power of sin and evil. All the more must we preach the message Catherine teaches us, a message of Good News for everyone.