

Reflection Tuesday Week 11 St Alban 2023

St Alban was the first British martyr, yet little is known about him. Historians estimate his death between 209 and 314 A.D. (more recently mid-3rd century).

Alban was a Roman living in Verulamium who sheltered a fleeing Christian during a persecution. He was converted and was executed. Stories about his death are probably invented. However, his cult was already well established by 429, and on the hill where tradition said he was martyred, a great abbey was built and eventually gave its name to the town. The local people conserved only what they needed to know – that there had been a martyr there. The fact that legends grew up around him is not unusual for the time. There is no doubt, however that he existed.

All we know about Alban is all we need to know: that he was faced unexpectedly with a simple, straightforward decision, and he made the right choice. We do well to remember that it was his entire life and character that were summed up in that single split-second decision. His life (of which we otherwise know nothing) made him the sort of man he was. We may imagine that we would do as he did, given the same chance but, faced with the same reality, we do not know how we would react.

Pope Francis: *The path to holiness is made up of small, daily acts of obedience and love. The way to perfection is found in the small steps of charity and love, often with steps that seem nothing. Faced with many forms of poverty and crises, Christians are right to see charity as the high road of the journey of faith, of the perfection of faith. But it is necessary that works of solidarity, the works of charity that we carry out do not divert us from contact with the Lord Jesus.*

During our priest's sermon, a large plant fell over right behind the pulpit, crashing to the ground. Acknowledging his reputation for long-windedness, he smiled sheepishly and said, "Well, that's the first time I actually put a plant to sleep."