

Reflection for 1st July – Feast of St Oliver Plunkett, martyr

Today is the feast of St Oliver Plunkett – the last martyr of the Reformation. He was Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland before being rounded up, imprisoned, tried at Westminster Hall and killed at Tyburn. He was canonised in 1920 and his major relics are held at St Peter's in Drogheda and Downside Abbey. (Downside of course being so connected to our own parish).

He abandoned a life of prayer and study in Rome to become a shepherd to the people of Ireland at the request of the Pope. He did not distinguish between Catholic and non-Catholic in Ireland. He lived a pretty basic life and through his ministry he was driven by love – love of God's people, his Church, and the Good News. He was humble and led Ireland by example. St Oliver entrusted himself to God and if we can do the same – trusting wholly in God and his plan for us – then we will be doing well: put your trust in God.

One man who did put his trust totally and utterly in God's care is Fr Michael Krychiwskyj – a priest of the Leeds Diocese and a dear friend. He died on this day in 2016 aged only 59. At his requiem Mass and in a packed church in Leeds, the orchestra played Charpentier's Te Deum as his body was taken from the church: a man of God who lived a public life and died a public death. He is in God's care now, with St Oliver and all the saints.

Eternal rest grant unto Fr Michael and may he rest in peace, in the company of angels. Amen.