

Tuesday Reflection 4th May 2021 - Feast of the English Martyrs

Last Tuesday, we considered those prepared to stand up for their principles - even at the expense of their own personal convenience and possibly their freedom.

Today, the Church in England and Wales celebrates its martyrs, those hundreds of men and women, lay and cleric, prepared to suffer and die for a cause they regarded as more important than their own lives. In this they were following the words of Our Lord in St. John's Gospel:

My commandment is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:12-13)

This commandment of love can be contrasted with the cynicism of Caiaphas: "You do not realise that it is better for you that one man die than that the whole nation perish" (John 11:50).

As we commemorate the Catholic martyrs of Britain, let us not forget those who died for their beliefs 'on the other side', like the Bible translator William Tyndale.

Martyrdom is an extreme case of those who chose to sacrifice their lives for a greater cause. They are the victims of intolerance, discrimination and persecution, but as we commemorate them, let us not forget those victims of intolerance, discrimination and persecution like George Floyd who did not have that choice.

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