January

January 1.

The Circumcision or first blood-shedding of the King of Martyrs, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us now praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation.
Ecclesiasticus xliv. 1.

O that it were as it was wont to be,
When Thy old friends, of fire all full of Thee,
Fought against frowns with smiles; gave glorious chase
To persecutions ; and against the face
Of death and fiercest dangers, durst with brave
And sober pace march on to meet a grave!
On their bold breasts about the world they bore Thee,
And to the teeth of hell stood up to teach Thee ;
In centre of their inmost souls they wore Thee,
Where racks and torments strove in vain to reach Thee.
Crashaw.

January 2.

He that shall overcome shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before His Angels.
Apocalypse iii. 5.

Why do I use my paper, ink and pen,
Or call my wits to counsel what to say ?
Such memories were made for mortal men,
I speak of Saints, whose names cannot decay.
An Angel's trump twere meeter far to sound
Their glorious deaths, if such on earth were found.
Ven, Henry Walpole, S.J

January 3.

Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us a kingdom, and priests to God and His Father, to Him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen.
Apocalypse i. 5, 6.

For those who are separate from the visible church neither miracles nor martyrdom can avail as evidences of faith or as grounds of hope. *S. Cyprian,*

January 4.

B. Thomas Plumtree, priest, martyred at Durham, 1570.

He that will save his life shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.
S. Matthew xvi. 25.

On his arriving at the place of execution, his life was offered him, if he would but renounce the Catholic Faith and embrace heresy, to which Blessed Thomas nobly answered, that he had no desire so to continue living in the world as meantime to die to God. Wherefore having fearlessly confessed his Faith, by God's grace he suffered death in this world, that he might merit to receive from Christ eternal life.

Life

January 5.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.
Isaias ii. 5.

For our lov'd land, dear Saints, you bore the cross,
For us ye martyrs died!
Nor hath your love for England suffered loss,
Now you reign glorified.

Gain England back her titles and her power
Within the one true fold ;
The Isle of Saints and blessed Mary's Dower ”
As in the days of old.

Caswall.

January 6.

The Epiphany of Christ our Lord to the Gentiles.

Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee . . . and the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee; thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side.
Isaias lx. 1-4

Many hearts for truth are yearning,
  Drawing nearer to the light :
Mother, speed the feet returning ;
  Mary, guide their steps aright :
Hasten, Mother to their aid
  Speed the day too long delayed.

Then at length the daylight, breaking
On the land shall rise once more ;
Then, shall England's heart awaking
Know and love thee as of yore:
This the hope our heart has cherished—
Who hath trusted thee and perished ?

W. H. Kent.

January 7.

Ven. Edward Waterson, priest, convert, martyred at Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1593.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: and with the robe of justice He hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels.

Isaias lxi, 10.

As for my own good works, I cast them down at Christ His Feet, hoping to be saved wholly by His Passion, and desire our Blessed Lady, and all the blessed saints in heaven to pray for me.

Dying words of Ven. Edward Waterson,

January 8.

Then shalt thou see, and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee

Isaias lx. 5.

God on the Isle of Saints an eye
Of mercy casting from on high,
Over its waste in ruin spread,
A second seed of martyrs shed,
From whence His Church, to earth's amaze,
Might live again in after days.

Caswall.

January 9.

The children of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister to thee: for in m My wrath have I struck thee, and in My reconciliation have I had mercy.

Isaias lx. 10.

Lord, for this Isle, compassionate though just,
Cherish Thy wrath no more !
But build again her temple from the dust,
And our lost joy restore !

January 10.

The children of them that afflict thee, shall come bowing down to thee, and all that slandered thee shall worship the steps of thy feet, and shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Sion of the Holy One of Israel.
Isaias lx. 14.

Who is she that stands triumphant,
  Rock in strength upon the Rock ;
Like some city crowned with turrets,
  Braving storm and earthquake shock?

Who is she with arms extended,
  Hallowing a world restored ;
All the anthems of creation
  Lifting to creation's Lord ?

Hers the kingdom, hers the sceptre !
  Kneel, ye nations, at her feet !
Hers that truth whose fruit is freedom;
  Light her yoke, her burden sweet !

Aubrey de Vere.

January 11.

Ven. William Carter, printer, martyred at Tyburn, 1584.

Wisdom - - kept him safe from his enemies, and she defended him from seducers, and gave him a strong conflict that he might overcome.
Wisdom x. 12

Dear Martyr ! do thine office still,
  Keep still thy craft of old;
Print deep upon our wayward hearts,
  In characters of gold,
The name of Christ, the Crucified,
  Whose love made thee so bold.

S.M.X.

January 12.

Behold, an inhabitant shall come, who was not with Me, he that was a stranger to thee before, shall be joined to thee.

Isaias liv. 15,

Oh, Isle of Saints! Oh, Mary's Dower!
  Now long ere this shall be ?
When wilt thou rise, throw off thy chains,
  And once again be free ?
When wilt thou drive dark error's form
  Back to her native night,
And give to sainted George once more
  His fond, his ancient right ?

Aubrey de Vere.

January 13.

A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel: and shall strike the chiefs of Moab, and shall waste all the children of Seth.

Numbers xxiv, 17,

Then rise, O star of blessed truth!
  And shed thy brightest rays ;
And give this bonny land of ours
  The Faith of ancient days.

Not English hearts shall count the cost
  That waits them in the fight ;
But, breast to breast, rush fearless on,
  And “God defend the right!”

Aubrey de Vere.

January 14.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. *Galatians i. 8.*

Being asked on the scaffold in what state he would die, he declared with a loud voice, "That if an angel should come down from Heaven, and show him any other thing than he had believed all his lifetime past, he would not believe him: and that if his body should be cut joint after joint, or member after member, burnt, hanged, or what pain soever might be done to his body, he would never turn.”

Blessed John Forest, O.F.M.

January 15.

Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. *Ephesians ii. 19.*

Therefore be of good cheer, beloved, clap with your hands, yea, let every member of your bodies exult with joy, in that you have a cause so noble, Christ for your captain, the Holy Spirit for your comforter, and for your advocates and defenders the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, the holy apostles, the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins, the blood of pour fathers so freshly spilt, which cries out loudly to Heaven, and does violence to the Divine Ears, that it may obtain for you consolation, fortitude, and holy perseverance to the end.

Blessed Richard Thirkeld to his fellow-prisoners.

January 16.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy pleasing unto God, your reasonable service. *Romans xii. 1.*

What did their weapons but with wider pores
Enlarge Thy flaming-breasted lovers
More freely to transpire
That impatient fire
The heart that hides Thee hardly covers?
What did their weapons but set wide the doors
For Thee ? fair purple doors of Love's devising :
The ruby windows which enriched the east
Of Thy so oft-repeated rising.

Crashaw.

January 17.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him. *S. James i. 12.*

O blessed they, yea and thrice blessed, who stand firm in the faith of Christ, according to the Apostle's warning : especially in this most deplorable time when God is blasphemed, the priests of Christ are hanged, the Sacraments trampled under foot; for these will be partakers of all graces, yea, and of eternal happiness.

Blessed William Hart.

January 18.

They are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell over them. They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat. *Apocalypse vii. 15, 16.*

Hierusalem ! my happy home !
When shall I come to thee ?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see ?

O happy harbour of the Saints !
O sweet and pleasant soil !
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

Father Laurence Anderton, S.J., in prison for the Faith.

January 19.

And many people shall go, and say: Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. *Isaias ii. 3.*

As to the fruits of Blessed Edmund Campion's death we have the estimate of Father Henry Walpole, that ten thousand persons twere converted through it. That a great number of conversions followed is abundantly proved, among others, those of the daughters of Walsingham and Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower. "Although," says a contemporary writer, "we lost the chief pearl of Christendom, yet it is well, for all men are of opinion that the offences and negligences of our predecessors and forefathers were so great, and our own sins so many, as they must needs be redeemed by the blood of the martyrs." *Life.*

January 20.

Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. *S. John xv. 13.*

England look up! Thy soil is stained with blood,
Thou hast made martyrs many of thine own ;
If thou hadst grace, their deaths would do thee good,
The seed will take which in such blood is sown.
And Campion's learning, fertile so before,
Thus watered too, must needs of force be more.

Ven. Henry Walpole, S.J.

January 21.

Ven. Edward Strancham, priest, convert, martyred at Tyburn, 1586,
with Ven. Nicholas Woodfen, priest.
Ven. Thomas Reynolds, priest, Tyburn, 1642,
with Ven. Alban Roe, O.S.B.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. *Romans viii. 18.*

They declared that they more esteemed it to be drawn up Holborn in a sledge for this cause, than if they were riding in the best coach the King had, and that they were going to a marriage feast. And Father Reynolds said "If I had as many lives as there are bright stars in the firmament, I would most willingly give them all for this cause." *de Marsys.*

January 22.

Ven. William Patenson, priest, martyred at Tyburn, 1592.

This is the priest whom the Lord hath crowned. *Alleluia.*

O Holy priests, that crossed the seas
  Go live in pain and toil,
We thank you for the blessed Faith
  You saved to English soil.
We thank the zeal, we thank the love
  That braved the rope and knife,
That gave the gifts of God to men
  At peril of your life.

S.M.X.

January 23.

God loves nothing more in this world than the liberty of His Church. *S. Anselm.*

Venerable Edward Strancham was wont to say that next to his desire to visit the tombs of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul, he wished to see the place, and examine with his own eyes the rails, whence Theodosius was turned away by Blessed Ambrose. *Acts of the Martyr.*

Ever and evermore
  Proud men do flout the laws
Of Him whom they adore ;
  And by strange jealousy
Do call Christ's blessed cause
  Their enemy.

January 24.

Ven. William Ireland, S.J., priest, martyred Tyburn, 1679,
with Ven. John Grove, layman.

And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying : "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."
And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord. *Acts vii. 59.*

I beg of Almighty God to pour down a thousand and a thousand blessings upon his Majesty and all the Royal Family, and on the whole kingdom. As for the Catholics that are here, we desire their prayers for a happy passage into a better world, and that God would be merciful to all Christian souls. And as for all our enemies, we earnestly desire that God would pardon them again and again; for we pardon them heartily from the bottom of our hearts. *Dying words of Father Ireland.*

January 25.

I say unto you love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. *S. Matthew v, 44.*

We are innocent, we lose our lives wrongfully, we pray God to forgive them that are the cause of it.
Dying words of Ven. John Grove.

O Blessed Lips! that faith would part,
And charity would close,
Whose dying words were prayer to God,
And pardon to your foes.
S.M.X.

January 26.

May He grant us joyfulness of heart and that there be peace in our days in Israel for ever. That Israel may believe that the mercy of God is with us to deliver us in his days. Ecclesiasticus l. 25, 26.

Look upon this land, deep watered with the blood of Martyrs slain,
Surely those who were our kinsmen have not bled for us in vain;
We, like them, are stoutly fighting for the souls of men to-day,
And we claim them for our brothers who have fallen in the fray.
J. W. Reeks.

January 27.

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren, who are in kinsmen according to the flesh. *Romans ix. 1, 2, 3.*

Nothing grieves me so much as this England which I pray God soon to convert.
Ven. Edmund Arrowsmith.

January 28.

But you are come to Mount Sion, and to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels. *Hebrews xii, 22.*

Those sacred saints remain in perfect peace,
Which Christ confessed, and walked in His ways,
They shine in bliss which now shall never cease,
And to His Name do sing eternal praise ;
Before His Throne in white they ever stand
And carry palms of triumph in their hand.

Ven. Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel.

January 29.

He being dead, yet speaketh.

Hebrews xi. 4,

When you see our arms stretched out stiff, and nailed up to the gates of the city, imagine that we are giving you the same blessing that we give you now; and when you look upon our heads fixed up over the bridge, think that they are there to preach to you, and announce to you this very same faith for which we are about to die.

Ven, Alban Roe, O.S.B., preaching to the Catholics in prison the day of his martyrdom.

January 30.

Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation ? or distress ? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? *Romans viii, 35.*

It is told me I must die, a death of dishonour in the vain opinion of the world. O happy news! My Jesus calls me by this sentence to bear His Cross and follow Him. The Judge declares my death necessary for the King and for his people. The people shout and cry ‘Crucify, Crucify' ! He who was perfect innocency hath set before me His example; He opened not His mouth, He justified not Himself, He forgave and prayed for His enemies. O what happiness, to be dignified in so many circumstances of the death of Jesus! V*en. Richard Langhorne.*

January 31.

Ven. John Goodman, priest, convert clergyman; died in Newgate on Good Friday, 1642.

I am even now ready to be sacrificed. *II. Timothy iv. 6.*

To the King's most excellent Majesty,
The humble petition of John Goodman, condemned, humbly sheweth,

That whereas he hath been informed of a great discontent in many of your Majesty's subjects, at the gracious mercy your Majesty was freely pleased to show unto him by suspending the execution of the sentence of death pronounced against him for being a Roman priest ; these are humbly to beseech your Majesty rather to remit him to their mercy than to let him live the subject of so great discontent in your people against your Majesty ; for it hath pleased God to give me the grace to desire with the prophet, that if this storm be raised for my sake, I may be cast into the sea, that others may avoid the tempest.

Ven. John Goodman to Charles I.