A Prayer to our Blessed Lady.

Almighty and al merciable quene,
To whom that al this world fleeth for socour,
To have relees of sinne, sorwe and tene,
Glorious virgine, of alle floures flour,
To thee I flee, confounded in errour!
Help and releve, thou mighty debonaire,
Have mercy on my perilous langour!
Venquisshed m'hath my cruel adversaire.

Bountee so fix hath in thyn herte his tente,
That wel I wot thou wolt my socour be,
Thou canst not warne him that, with good entente,
Axeth thyn help. Thyn herte is ay so free,
Thou art largesse of pleyn felicitee,
Haven of refut, of quiete and of reste,
Lo, how that thèves seven chasen me!
Help, lady bright, er that my ship to-breste!

Ever hath myn hope of refut been in thee,
For heer-biforn ful ofte, in many a wyse,
Hast thou to misericorde receyved me.
But mercy, lady, at the grete assyse,
Whan we shul come bifore the hye justyse!
So litel fruit shal thanne in me be founde,
That, but thou er that day me wel chastyse,
Of verrey right my werk me wol confounde.

From Chaucer's A.B.C.

May 1.

Behold, a fiery chariot, and fiery horses, . . . and Elias went up into Heaven. *IV. Kings ii. 11.* *[2 Samuel 2:11 - ed.]*

If it be true that places as well as men have their guardian angels, what a glorious spirit that must be who keeps watch over the sacred soil of Tyburn! Let us imagine that to-bay we stand beside that great Angel . . . Streets and houses disappear, and we are standing on a little Hill beside some elm trees, looking along a rough stoney road, that stretches through open country to the city gates far away in the distance. Above us is the gaunt gibbet, the triple tree of Tyburn. It was here that they suffered, these gallant knights of God ; they stood below these beams, their feet on the cart that was their chariot of glory, their necks in the rope that would be their heavenly badge.

May 2.

This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it. *Psalms cxvii. 20.*

Tyburn was a place of pilgrimage even in the days of persecution; Blessed Edmund Campion himself inaugurated this pilgrimage. We are told that he would walk between the posts of the gallows with bare head and with a profound bow, in honour both of the Cross which it figured, and of the martyrs whose blood had consecrated it, and also because, as he told Father Robert Persons, he knew that it was one day to be the place of his own conflict.

May 3.

Father Henry Garnet, S.J. ; martyred in S. Paul's Churchyard, 1606.

Blessed is the Wood by which justice cometh. *Wisdom xiv. 7.*

It being the day of the Invention of the Cross, Father Garnet took occasion from thence to speak to the people concerning this cross which he was to take up that day; declaring withal his innocence as to the conspiracy. . . . . Then making the sign of the Cross, he said: "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee ; because by Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world. This sign of the Cross shall be seen in Heaven, when the Lord shall come to judgment. Alleluia."

May 4.

Feast of all Blessed English Martyrs.

BB. John Houghton, Robert Lawrence, and Augustine Webster, Carthusian priors; John Haile, secular priest, and Richard Reynolds, priest, Bridgettine; proto-martprs, Tyburn, 1535.

O you of Israel, that have willingly offered your lives to danger, bless the Lord. *Judges v. 2.*

Martyrum chorus, laudate Dominum de coelis, alleluia.

Lo, dost thou not see, Meg that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths, as bridegrooms to their marriage ?

Blessed Thomas More, looking from his window in the Tower.

I am ready and willing to suffer every kind of torture, rather than deny a doctrine of the Church.

Blessed John Houghton, at Tyburn.

May 5.

Ven. Nicholas Owen, lay-brother, S.J. ; racked to death in the Tower, 1606.

And they chose . . . Nicholas . . . and the word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples was multiplied exceedingly. *Acts vi. 5, 7.*

He twas suspended upon a Topcliff rack, where he was divers times hung up for several hours together, to compel him to betray the hiding-places he had made up and down the land; but not a word could they force from his sealed and faithful lips.

May 6.

Ven. Edward Jones, priest ; martyred in Fleet Street, 1590. Ven. Anthony Middleton, priest; martyred at Clerkenwell, 1590. Ven. Robert Price, layman ; martyred at Lincoln, 1644.

For I have not spared to declare unto you all the counsel of God. *Acts xx. 27.*
Non loquendo, sed moriendo. *Collect for Holy Innocents.*

Mr. Jones was in great repute with the Catholics for his sermons, by which he moved many to a better life, and filled them with courage to profess the faith.

Since it is not lawful to speak, behold the Catholic Roman faith, which by my speech I cannot, by my death I will confirm.

Ven. Anthony Middleton, at the gallows.

May 7.

My son, give Me thy Heart. *Proverbs xxiii. 26.*

When the executioner placed his hand upon the heart of the Blessed John Houghton, ready to tear it from his breast, "Good Jesu," he murmured, "what will ye do with my heart?"

Good Jesu, what wilt Thou do with his heart, with this brave heart which has been true to Thee till death? What wilt Thou do with it? Wilt Thou not enshrine it among Thy choicest treasures very near Thine own? Shall it not be hidden in the Wound of that most Sacred Heart, a heart that has ever beaten for Thee alone, a heart that is sacrificed thus for Thy love? Will it not bring Thee consolation amid the suffering inflicted on Thy Heart by the miserable apostasy of so many who professed to be Thy friends? Here at least is one who in reply to Thine invitation has literally given Thee his heart, one who has been faithful even unto death, one who has died for love of Thee who died for love of him !

May 8.

Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium. *Psalm xxvi, 13.*
Blessed Richard Reynolds' ejaculation on hearing his sentence.

Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Amen I say to you, that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them.
S. Luke xii. 37.

Being the last to suffer, he (Blessed Richard Reynolds) preached to his fellow-martyrs and comforted them, promising them a heavenly banquet and supper for their sharp breakfast, taken patiently for their Master's sake.

May 9.

Ven. Thomas Pickering, lay-brother, O.S.B.; martyred at Tyburn, 1679.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. *Nehemias viii, 10.*
A most dear brother. Philemon 16.

The tyme hath been we hadd one faith,
And strode aright one ancient path ;
The thym is now that each man may
See newe religions coyned each day.
Sweet Jesu, with Thy Mother mylde
Sweet Virgine Mother with thy chylde,
Angells and Saints of each degree
Redress our contree's miserie.

William Blundell, 1560-1638.

May 10.

Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to aliens : our houses to strangers. We are become orphans without a father. , . . We were dragged by the necks, we were weary and no rest was given us. . . . We fetched our Bread at the peril of our lives. *Lamentations v. 1, 2, 3, 5, 9.*

At the gallows he expressed a very great joy that he was so happy as to yield up his life to God, in a case where his conscience assured him his religion was his only guilt. . . Pulling up his cap, and looking towards the people with an innocent smiling countenance, "Is this," said he, "the countenance of a man that dies under so gross a guilt?" And so he ended a pious religious life, with a holy death, and went smiling off the stage.

May 11.

BB. John Rochester and James Walworth, priests, Carthusians ; martyred at York, 1537.

Priests without blemish, whose will was set upon the law of God. *I. Machabees iv. 42.*

It was commonly said that if it were possible that angels could live on earth in human flesh, they were to be found among the monks of the London Charterhouse. Of these men it might be said, as of S. Benedict, that they despised the world as a withered flower, only fit to be thrown away.

May 12.

Blessed John Stone, priest and Austin friar; martyred at Canterbury, 1538.

A living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honourable by God. I. S. Peter ii, 4.

Far from being daunted by long imprisonment, he added voluntary mortification to his enforced sufferings.

Many a blow and biting sculpture
  Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
  By the Heavenly Architect,
Who therewith hath willed for ever
  That His Palace should be decked.

May 13.

BB. Richard Bere, Thomas Green, Thomas Johnson, priests, John Davy, deacon, Carthusians ; William Greenwood, Walter Pierson, Thomas Redyng, Robert Salt, and Thomas Seryven, lay-brothers, Carthusians; Starved to death in Newgate, 1537.

And they shall be gathered together as in the gathering of one bundle into the pit, and they shall be shut up there in prison. *Isaias xxiv. 22.*

Nine of these glorious brethren, priests and lay- brothers alike, were thrown into the horrible and foetid dungeons of Newgate. There they were deliberately left to perish of hunger, chained to the walls and pillars of their dungeon.

May 14.

And the angel of the Lord said to Habacuc : Carry the dinner which thou hast into Babylon to Daniel, who is in the lions' den. *Daniel xiv. 33.*

For a time these holy Carthusians were kept alive by the charity of Margaret Clement, Blessed Thomas More's adopted daughter, who came to the prison disguised as a milk- maid, bringing food in her pail, with which she fed them. When, from the king learning that his victims were still alive, Margaret could no longer enter the prison, she contrived, by taking some tiles off the roof, to let down a basket of food to them.

But they being able to feed themselves very little, and the gaoler fearing that it should be perceived, refusing to let her come any more, the nine languished and died, one after another.

May 15.

In tuo adventu suscipiant te martyres, et perducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem.
Burial Office.

As Margaret Clement lay dying at Mechlin, an exile for the faith, she called her husband and told him that the time of her departure was come, and she might stay no longer, for that there were standing about her bed the blessed martyrs of the London Charterhouse whom she had relieved in prison in England, and they were calling on her to come away with them. Thus she was escorted by that blessed company to the joys of the heavenly banquet.

May 16.

Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. *S, Matthew v. 44.*

Geebe judgement, Lord, twixt them and us,
The ballance yett let pittie houlde :
Let mercie measure their offence,
And grace reduce them to Thy foulde,
That wee, all children of Thy spouse,
May live as brethren in Thy house. *William Blundell 1560-1638*

May 17.

I will allure her, and will lead her into solitude: and I will speak to her heart. *Osee ii. 14.*

I believe, Meg, that they that have put me here ween they have done me a high displeasure; but I assure thee on my faith, mine own good daughter, if it had not been for my wife and ye that be my children, I would not have failed long ere this to have closed myself in as strait a room, and straiter too.

Blessed Thomas More, in the Tower.

O happy prison, O blessed enclosure, O solitude full of Solace, O prison long desired, where hast thou delayed so long? O crosses, where have you lingered up till now? O solitude, why hast thou not suffered me to taste thy sweetness long ago?

Blessed Richard Thirkeld, in Ousebridge, Kidcote, York.

May 18.

Ven. Thomas Ashby, layman; martyred at Tyburn, 1544.

My faithful witness who was slain among you. *Apocalypse ii. 13.*

If martyrs purchase life, if meekness last in praise,
If charity of highest degree do flourish green always,
If mind invincible do ever blaze and bide,
If all the gifts of manly mind, and virtues therein tried:
Then is not Thomas dead, but gone to bliss before
He lives among the sacred saints, and reigns for evermore.

May 19.

Ven. Peter Wright, convert, priest, S.J.; martyred at Tyburn, 1651.

The voice of my Beloved, knocking: Open to Me, My undefiled. *Canticles v. 2.*

Whitsun Monday in the morning, he celebrated Mass with great devotion. And when the time was drawing near when he was to go down in order for execution, hearing the knocking at the iron grate, he took it as a Summons from Heaven, and cried out : "I come, sweet Jesus, I come."

May 20.

The voice of joy and salvation is in the dwellings of the just. *Psalm cxvii. 15.*
Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice. *Philippians iv. 4.*

A man may live for the next world and yet be merry.

Blessed Thomas More.

Be blythe at thy meat, devout at thy Mass.

Blessed Adrian Fortescue.

Nature by grace is not abolished or destroyed, but perfected.

Ven. Robert Southwell, S.J.

May 21.

Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all.
S. James ii. 10.

Christ will have you believe all that He telleth you, and do all that He biddeth you, and forbear all that He forbiddeth you, without any manner exception. Break one of His commandments, and break all. Forsake one point of His faith, and forsake all, as for any thank you get for the remnant.

Blessed Thomas More.

May 22.

Blessed John Forest, priest, O.F.M., Observant; burnt at Smithfield, 1538.

As a victim of a holocaust God hath received him. *Wisdom iii. 6.*
Who shall separate us from the love of Christ. ? *Romans viii. 35.*

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 shew 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, brent, hanged, or what pains soever might be done to his body, he would never turn from his old sect of this Bishop of Rome. Neither fire, nor faggot, nor scaffold, shall separate me from Thee, O Lord.

Words spoken by Blessed John Forest, just before the fire was kindled round him.

May 23.

I rejoice indeed that I have merited to become a victim for Christ ; being accused, I have not denied, being examined, I have confessed Christ, being roasted, I give thanks. I have offered myself a sacrifice to God, in the odour of sweetness. *Office of S. Lawrence.*

My child, I am very sorry for the great grief of your mistress and yourself on account of the pains I suffer . . . as if there were no resurrection to glory. . . . If I were willing to break faith, and through fear of torments or love of riches were to give myself to the devil, beyond doubt I could easily escape ; but pray think of none of these things. . . . Pray for me, that as the torments they think of inflicting on me are but little, they may make them sharper.

Blessed John Forest, in a letter to Queen Katherine's lady-in-waiting.

May 24.

Our Lady, Help of Christians.

Sancta Maria, succurre miseris, juva pusillanimes, refova flefiles . . . sentiant omnes tuum juhamen, quicumque celebrant tuam sanctam commemorationem,

Ave Maria! Mother, hear our cries;
Queen of all beauty, mistress of all woe,
Thy children, sons of Eve, all suppliant—wise
Implore thy pity : may thy Son bestow
Through thy sweet pleading, grace to man below !
Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis.

As thou didst clasp the Christ-Child in thine arms,
O fold us closer to thy tender breast,
That the malignant foe with fierce alarms
May never more our trembling souls molest ;
So in thy peace, sweet Lady, may we rest.
Salus infirmorum, ora pro nobis.

D.B.C.

May 25.

Uphold Thou my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. Psalm xvi, 5.

O Father of mercies who didst create me, O sweetest Son who didst redeem me, O Holy Spirit who didst sanctify me, O blessed Trinity, Three Persons and One God, preserve, defend, and keep me in the Unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, that in her I may deserve to live and die, and at the last to attain to the glory of Thy Divine Majesty.

Blessed Richard Thirkeld.

May 26.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had overcome the beast and his image . . . standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God: and singing the canticle of Moses the servant of God, and the canticle of the Lamb, Apocalypse xv. 2, 3.

We see a vision of the air above Tyburn gallows crowded with the angels of the Agony and Passion, waiting to bear off the struggling souls in their tender experienced hands; of the celestial faces looking down, the scarred and glorious arms stretched out in welcome; of Mary, with her mother's eyes, and her virgins about her—all ring above ring in deepening splendour up to the white blinding light above, where the Everlasting Trinity lies poised in love and glory to receive and crown the stalwart soldiers of God.

May 27.

VV. Edmund Duke, Richard Hill, John Hogg, and Richard Holiday, priests ; martyred at Durham, 1590.

Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, . . - Be not led away with various and strange doctrines. *Hebrews xiii. 7, 9.*

Divers beholders, when these martyrs were offered their pardons if they would go to Church, said boldly they had rather die themselves than any of them should relent ; one saying)he had seven children): "I would to God they might all go the same way in making such a confession of their faith... Others saving : " They have done their parts ; if we be damned, it is long of ourselves. This is a preaching unto us, they die for Him that died for them."

May 28.

Blessed Margaret Pole; beheaded at East Smithfield, 1541. BB. Thomas Ford, John Shert, and Robert Johnson, priests ; martyred at Tyburn, 1582.

She was greatly renowned among all, because she feared the Lord very much, neither was there anyone that spoke an ill word of her. *Judith viii. 8.*

One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism. *Ephesians iv. 5.*

Henry VIII. himself said of Blessed Margaret Pole that the kingdom did not contain a nobler woman.

I am a Catholic; in that faith I was born, in that faith will I die, and here my blood shall seal it.

Blessed John Shert.

I teach but the Catholic religion—that religion of which the Pope is Supreme Pastor.

Blessed Robert Johnson,

May 29.

Blessed Richard Thirkeld, priest ; martyred at Dark, 1583.

The blessing of the Lord maketh rich. *Proverbs x, 22.*

When he was brought up to the bar to receive Sentence, a good old woman who was likewise summoned there for the profession of her faith came up to him, and kneeling down, asked his blessing in open court. Upon seeing this, one of the judges cried out : "He even usurps the office of Christ Himself." The venerable priest answered : "No, indeed, but I, have the power from God, and I only do what belongs to my function."

To another Catholic prisoner he said, "Let your goods go, stick you close to God, and bravely confess His Holy Name."

May 30.

BB. William Filby, Luke Kirby, Lawrence Richardson, and Thomas Cottam, convert, S.J. priests; martyred at Tyburn, 1582. BB. Maurus Scot, O.S.B., and Richard Newport, priests; martyred at Tyburn, 1612.

God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Himself. *Wisdom iii. 5.*

Blessed William Filby, because he appeared after his condemnation more cheerful and firm than usual, was loaded with iron manacles to the day of his death.

To deny the Pope's authority is to deny a point of Faith, which I will not do for securing my life, being sure that this would be to damn my soul.

Blessed Luke Kirby.

The rope being put about his neck and fastened to the post, the sheriff said: “Now Richardson, if thou wilt confess thy faults and renounce the Pope, the Queen will extend her mercy towards thee, and thou shalt be carried back again.” The martyr answered : "I thank her Majesty for her mercy; but I, must not confess an untruth, or renounce my Faith.”

May 31.

VV. Robert Thorpe, priest, and Thomas Watkinson, yeoman ; martyred at York, 1591.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him. *II. Timothy ii. 12.*

So were their bodies martyred amongst their foes on earth, and their souls being accepted of God, crowned with glory amongst their friends in heaven for their good confession.

At the very place of execution Topcliffe offered the Venerable Thomas Watkinson his life and lands if he would become a good subject, and go to the church; but he cheerfully refused, choosing rather to be a king in heaven than to live a miserable subject and bondslave to sin in the world, and so embraced his crown prepared.