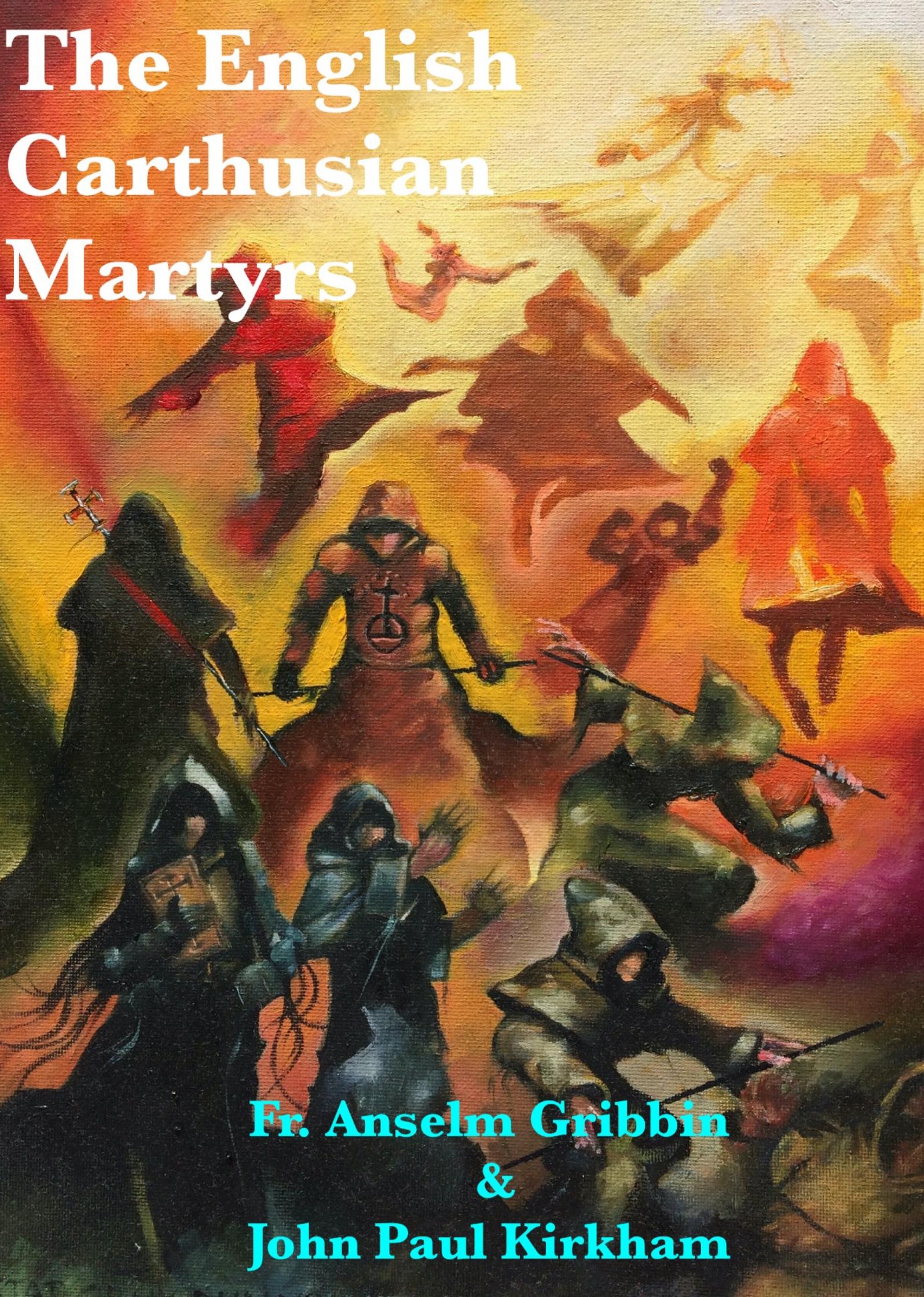


The English Carthusian Martyrs



**Fr. Anselm Gribbin
&
John Paul Kirkham**

The Life and Times of the English Carthusian Martyrs

by

**Rev. Dr. Anselm J. Gribbin
&
John Paul Kirkham**

© Anselm Gribbin & John Paul Kirkham
All rights reserved
First published 2020
1st Edition

Cover image: *Martyrdom of The English Carthusians* by Jan Kalinski

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. St. Bruno – Founder of the Carthusians and Master of the Wilderness**
- 3. The English Carthusian Martyrs and Aftermath**
- 4. The Eighteen English Carthusian Martyrs**
- 5. Carthusian Spirituality and Prayers**
- 6. Carthusian Houses in the UK – Past and Present**
- 7. Recommended Reading, Further Information and Final Reflection**

Introduction

Our life shows that the good from heaven is already to be found on earth; it is a precursor of the resurrection and like an anticipation of a renewed world. (Carthusian Statutes 34.3)

If a survey were to be conducted today in which people were asked about their knowledge of monastic life, they would probably say that the abbeys and monasteries in which nuns and monks live are to be found hidden away in the countryside in quiet places far away from modern cities. Although this is quite true in most cases, there are many religious who strive to live the monastic life in the heart of a city or other urban surroundings. Good examples would include the Tyburn Nuns in Marble Arch, London, the Carmelite Monastery, Allerton in the city of Liverpool or the gargantuan Monastery of The Holy Cross in Chicago. We might be inclined to think that “urban monasticism” is a purely modern invention, but would be wrong in doing so because many monasteries in medieval England were situated in or near cities and towns, both by accident and design. In the Middle Ages the City of London was certainly no stranger to the influence of monasticism. Not far from the Tower of London stood the Fourteenth-century Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady of Grace, known as “Eastminster”, while among the Benedictine houses in London was Westminster Abbey. If the position of a Cistercian abbey in London is extraordinary, it may come as a greater surprise to learn that the much stricter Carthusian Order, founded by St. Bruno in France in the late eleventh century, had established a house in London’s square mile.

A distinguished soldier, Sir Walter Manny, rented land owned by St. Bartholomew’s Hospital near present day Smithfield in order to provide a new cemetery for victims

of the Black Death of 1348. He eventually bought the land and planned to establish a college of priests at the cemetery chapel so that Masses could be offered for the dead. This however did not happen, for Manny was later persuaded by the Bishop Michael Northburgh of London to found a house of Carthusian monks instead. This was done in 1371 and the necessary building work on the new monastery was completed over a period of forty years with the additional help and patronage of London's more wealthy citizens.

The overall reputation that these Carthusians had for holiness and austerity was due to the good leadership and the order's charism for strict observance of silence and solitude. It was to this saintly religious house that one Maurice Chauncy – whose accounts of the Carthusian martyrs we have drawn from - made his way in the early 1530's. As we witness the unfolding of Chauncy's life, against the backdrop of a difficult period in history, we will come to discover a story of courage and devotion to the Catholic Faith and to the enduring monastic way of life, so necessary in our own often turbulent times.

I think today we take for granted that our Faith is in many ways quite safe to practice especially here in the West, and we are familiar with great twentieth-century saints who have inspired us all, such as Saints Teresa of Calcutta and John Paul II. And many will also know the individual sacrifices made by Edith Stein and Maximilian Kolbe in the World War II concentration camps but it is also wise to travel back and refresh ourselves with the many holy people who will not be household names and for centuries have simply remained as martyrs, forgotten in a long lost far away time.

The modern-day authors Fr. Anselm Gribbin and John Paul Kirkham therefore strive to tell the hitherto and almost forgotten story of the Carthusian English Martyrs, not

by hearsay or imagined hagiography, but by piecing together, after a great deal of complex and in-depth research, the genuine story as uniquely witnessed by Dom Maurice Chauncy, their companion and brother-monk in the Tudor times. Interspersed with Carthusian spirituality, much of the information which has been gathered, will shed a new light on to the Carthusians vividly remembering the life and death of an important group of English Martyrs, recalling their motto: “Stat Crux Dum Volvitur Orbis” – *The Cross is Steady While the World is Turning*.

St. Bruno – Founder of the Carthusians and Master of the Wilderness

It is not easy to give sound, beneficial advice all the time. Divine love, being more sound, is more beneficial. What is more sound and more beneficial, more innate, more in accord with human nature than to love the good? And what is as good as God? Still more, is there anything good besides God? So, the holy soul who has any comprehension of this good, of his incomparable brilliance, splendour, and beauty, burns with the flame of heavenly love and cries out: "I thirst for God, the living God. When will I come and see the face of God?" (St. Bruno)

Bruno from the Germanic means *protection* or *armour* or simply the colour brown. The first two meanings are certainly apt and could describe our saint perfectly. Bruno was born in the ancient and former first city of Germany, Cologne, most likely in the year 1030 the best part of one thousand years ago. Like St. Francis of Assisi he appears to have come from a noble family and was fortunate that during this period that Cologne blossomed greatly as a world centre of spirituality being called the "Rome of Germany" and was a place that promoted holiness and monasticism.

As a child he was very gifted in academia and because of his outstanding intellectual talent was sent from Cologne to study at the famous Rheims Cathedral School in France, an establishment that was well known for producing archbishops and popes. The studies would include rhetoric, logic, astronomy, culminating in philosophy and theology in which Bruno excelled in excellence. Bruno as a young man witnessed struggles within the Church as Pope St. Leo IX called a Council which took place in Rheims in 1049. This had a profound effect on Bruno and he began to reflect on what directions to take and very quickly chose to continue with religious studies. On completion of his studies Bruno returned to his home in Cologne where he was ordained a priest c.1055 and became a canon at St. Cunibert's. The following year 1056, Bruno was recalled by the Bishop of Rheims to take up the position of

professor of theology at the Episcopal School a role he would immerse himself in for the next two decades and his students would number themselves as future cardinals, bishops, abbots and Pope Urban II.

In 1075 Bruno became Chancellor of the Rheims Diocese only to witness the local upheavals caused by the appointment of the new Archbishop Manasses de Gournai, who reputedly showed disregard for ecclesiastical regulations and had violent tendencies towards those who opposed him, including Bruno. After many complaints against him he was finally suspended and disposed by Pope St. Gregory VII in 1080.

Bruno was asked to become the new bishop of Rheims but understandably due to the recent intrigues and church infighting chose not to be elected and it was this refusal that would lead him and a handful of companions to seek peace and silence in the wilderness. Renouncing the world he withdrew to place himself under the guidance of St. Robert Molesme who would eventually found the Cistercian Order. Deciding that his vocation was leading him deeper into an eremitic lifestyle, Bruno and six of his companions were installed at the invitation of St. Hugh (Bishop) of Grenoble in a wild, mountainous and remote place in the foothills of the Alps at Chartreuse.

This tiny group of "Hermit Brothers" built an oratory that consisted of small individual cells where they could live an isolated life of poverty concentrating on prayer, manual work and holy study. This became the foundation of the Carthusian Order, *Cartusianus* being Latin for Chartreuse. It was during this time that his former pupil Eudes of Chatillon was elected Pope Urban II and in 1090 Bruno reluctantly left his hermitage after being recalled by the Pope to be one of his close allies and advisors to help reform the clergy and to attend the Council of Benevento in 1091.

The Pope tried to persuade Bruno to accept the newly vacant seat of the Archbishop of Reggio Calabria in the southern most tip of the toe of Italy but he declined the generous offer as he wished to return to his former Genoble and Chartreuese. However the insistence and will of the Pope would keep him in Italy close to the Papal Court. Bruno established with some more of his followers a community in the new “desert” of small wooden cabins and a wooden chapel in a valley surrounded by forests in Calabria to continue his life of solitude and reflection. The two churches that Bruno built in these wildernesses were both dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and it would be Our Lady of Della Torre in Calabria where Bruno would end his days. Bruno died peacefully on October 6th 1101 aged 70 in what is today called Serra San Bruno. As he was preparing to meet God in his final hours he called all his community together to review his life from infancy and then in a very humble and simple discourse he expressed his faith in the Holy Trinity concluding as follows:

"I believe also in the sacraments that the Church believes and holds in reverence, and particularly that the bread and wine which are consecrated on the altar are, after the Consecration, the true Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, his true Flesh and his real Blood, which we receive for the forgiveness of our sins and in the hope of eternal life."

This short but profound concluding act of faith sums up the life of the heavenly saint who after lying in state for three days was buried in the cemetery of Santa Maria only later to be transferred to the altar of the church of the Charterhouse. He loved to contemplate and praise God and *O Bonitas!* – the “goodness” (of God) - was his personal and radiant prayer that directed his heart to the eternal and almighty in simple silence and solitude.

It is the custom of the Carthusians due to their humility never to put forward for canonisation one of their own. Any promotion to the sainthood would have to originate from an external source and in fact Bruno was never officially canonised as such. Pope Leo X did allow veneration by the Carthusians only, by describing *“that he had for a long time been hearing much about the glory and the holiness of the blessed confessor Bruno, judged it just and reasonable that he who had been adorned with such great gifts and such magnificent graces and who had received from the Almighty so docile a heart to carry out his precepts and keep the law of life and holiness, was to be venerated and honoured in a manner worthy of him, now that he rejoices in divine glory for ever.”* However in 1623, Pope Gregory XV extended the veneration of “Saint” Bruno to the entire Church. He is the patron saint of Calabria and one of the patron saints of Germany. His feast Day is held on the 6th October.

The Lord created all mortals in the light, offering the supreme joys of heaven according to their merits. (St Bruno)

The English Carthusian Martyrs and aftermath

For our penance we take part in the redemptive role of Christ. He saved mankind, captive and burdened by sin, especially through his prayer to the Father, and by his death; by forcing ourselves to be associated with this most profound aspect of the redemption, and in spite of our apparent lack of outside activity, we exercise this apostolate in the most immediate way. (Statutes 34.4)

Anyone with a particular interest or perhaps a curiosity about the events of Sixteenth-century England would no doubt be enthralled at the exploits of the many colourful characters that dot the history books of the Tudor age with their heroic moments of glory, great deeds and tribulations. One only has to explore the complex and intriguing figures of Cardinal Wolsey who built the magnificent Hampton Court Palace, Queen Elizabeth I – “Good Queen Bess” – and the adventures of Sir Francis Drake in order to conjure up a picture of a seemingly “romantic” age. However this is only part of the historical picture, albeit an important part.

However, the Carthusian story in Britain begins some four centuries earlier in 1181 when the first Carthusian House or ‘charterhouse’ was founded in Witham, Somerset. The first prior was Hugh of Lincoln who would become a canonised saint in 1220. This original charterhouse first saw the light of day under the patronage of the Plantagenet King Henry II in part due to his penance for the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket at Canterbury in 1170, perhaps foreshadowing what was to happen four hundred years later. Thomas Becket would be elevated to sainthood in 1173 just three years after his assassination.

The sixteenth century saw the turbulent Protestant Reformation, or “Revolt” against the Catholic Faith. It was a period of great change in society, a transition between the medieval age and what historians now call the “early modern age”. Longstanding

religious truths held so dear for many generations were overturned in just a few short decades and monasticism was uprooted from English soil for over two hundred years. During this upheaval lived one Dom Maurice Chauncy (c.1509 – 81), who became an important figure amongst the English Carthusians and historical witness and writer.

Maurice Chauncy was born in 1509 into a comfortably well – off Hertfordshire family, the eldest son of John and Elizabeth Chauncy. He went to study at Oxford and then law at Gray's Inn, London in order to prepare himself for the life of a country gentleman and Justice of the Peace. Chauncy became rather vain at first about his appearance, for on returning home from London with a companion on many occasions was often rebuked by his father because of his worldly attire. It was due to such family humiliations that caused him to have a conversion of heart which made the young Chauncy reflect about life in general, for he very quickly sought admission to the monastery of the strict Carthusian monks in London in 1531.

The Carthusian lifestyle that Chauncy aspired to is somewhat different from the popular conception of monastic life. These monks did not ordinarily chant the office “seven times a day” as in the Benedictine Rule, which they did not observe. The Carthusian Order, which had at the time nine English Houses, sought to live a life of greater solitude according to the example of the Fathers of early monasticism. Carthusian monks remained for most of the day in isolation, in separate cottage-like cells which were connected to a central cloister, where they cultivated a life of hidden prayer. The little hours of the Divine Office were recited in their cell and interspersed with manual work in their individual walled gardens. All meals were delivered through a special serving hatch in the cell wall, which can still be seen today at the London Charterhouse.

The monks only met together in church each day for Matins (the first prayers of the day recited shortly after midnight), Lauds (early morning prayer as the dark of the night edges into dawn), Conventual Mass in the morning and Vespers (prayers at sunset as late afternoon turns to evening), and they also recited their own private Masses. On Sundays and feast days more of the Divine Office of prayers was chanted in the church and a common meal was shared in the refectory. The maintenance and domestic duties of the charterhouse was looked after by the “*conversi*” and ‘*donati*’, who were lay brothers, who spent less time in church and solitude. The superior of the charterhouse was the prior, who was aided by the vicar. The brothers were looked after by the procurator, who was the link and liaison in all things pertaining to the outside world.

Chauncy persevered at the charterhouse and in May 1534 he made his profession. The prior in London at this time, whom Dom Maurice remembered with the greatest affection, was (Saint) John Houghton. It is only due to Chauncy penning his memories in his *Historia* that we know so much about the latter days of the charterhouse under John Houghton. He relates that the saintly prior was particularly strict about the celebration of the liturgy as well as the order’s observances. The long night office was chanted slowly according to the Carthusian custom and lasted longer than two hours because Houghton disliked carelessness and rapidity in its recital. He would admonish his monks for extinguishing their candles during Lauds, because the monks carried out the “office of the angels” in God’s presence and were likened to guardians upon the walls of Jerusalem, praising God night and day. Such strictness ensured a prayerful celebration of the office, which was beginning to attract lay visitors to the church, as the charterhouse, despite the monks’ solitary lives, was adjacent to the square mile of the City of London.

Whilst St. John Houghton was portrayed as a very strict superior he was by no means a tyrant, but a monk that was revered and loved by his brethren community and was just as much profoundly humble and treated all the monks on equal terms and would show them understanding and compassion whenever visiting them in their cells. In the words of St. Benedict's Rule, he was stern as a task master, devoted and tender as only a father can be.

However, Chauncy's prayerful life as a professed monk in London was relatively shortened by events beyond his control. King Henry VIII desired from the Pope an annulment of his marriage to Queen Catharine (of Aragon), and not getting his own way, had the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, grant him a divorce and married Anne Boleyn. Henry later obtained through parliament the first anti-papal Act of Succession (1534) which in effect allowed him to name his own successor, to which he willed all his subjects to swear an oath, recognizing the end of his first marriage and that his future offspring by Anne would succeed to the throne. Consequently the London Carthusians were visited and asked to take the oath. It was only after John Houghton and his procurator, (Blessed) Humphrey Middlemore, were sent to the Tower of London and persuaded to take it – but with the proviso “*so far as it might be lawful*” – and a number of visits by the King's men, that all the monks acquiesced but “*saving their conscience*”. Chauncy held out for as long as possible but became one of the last monks who finally took the oath on 6th June 1534. Nevertheless the prior, who strove to preserve his community's belief in papal authority and the Catholic Faith, knew that things ahead would get far worse.

His fears were realised on 1st February 1535 when the Act of Supremacy was passed which made it treasonable, punishable by death, not to acknowledge King Henry VIII as Head of the Church of England. By the spring of 1535 all of England's

religious houses were being visited in order to gain their acknowledgement and support of the Act. John Houghton sought to prepare Chauncy, by this time a priest, and his fellow monks for resisting the king's immoral designs. He ordered three days of prayer with confession and Mass of the Holy Spirit. Chauncy would remember this Holy Mass for the rest of his life and recorded that when the prior elevated the Sacred Host, a divine sweetness pervaded the church. Both the monks and lay members participated in the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Counsellor. John Houghton was overcome with tears and for some time could not continue the Mass. Day and night the monks prayed before the church's High Altar.

Eventually, Houghton sought a meeting with Thomas Cromwell, the king's chief agent, accompanied by the Carthusian priors of Beauvale, Nottingham, (Saint) Robert Lawrence and of Axholme, Epworth, Lincolnshire, (Saint) Augustine Webster. They tried to save their communities by agreeing to swear to the new Act "*as far as Divine Law allowed*", but Cromwell refused. Because of their constant unwillingness to acknowledge the king as head of the Church of England, they were sent to the Tower of London. The priors, with a learned Bridgettine monk of Syon Abbey, Isleworth, (Saint) Richard Reynolds, were brought to court on 27th April 1535. The jury was placed under extreme pressure by Cromwell to find the prisoners guilty, and this they did, despite the noble defence of the Carthusians and Bridgettine who calmly argued that the Pope's authority was supported by "*the General Councils and all the Fathers and Doctors of the Church for fifteen hundred years*". Seven days later on May 4th these brave men were taken to Tyburn where they were hanged, drawn and quartered, dying courageously for the Catholic Faith. These extremely brutal executions caused a public outcry in London and in continental Europe.

In order to frighten the remaining London Carthusians into submission, the authorities hung one of John Houghton's arms on the gatehouse of the charterhouse. They engaged in threats, physical intimidation and psychological warfare in order to undermine these well-known austere monks, whose submission would be a great victory for the Crown. For this purpose anti-papal literature was deposited at the house. The new vicar of the charterhouse, (Blessed) Humphrey Middlemore, and (Blessed) William Exnew, the procurator, returned the books saying nothing. They were arrested, imprisoned on the 25th May 1535 and after defending the Pope's authority were convicted and executed at Tyburn on the 19th June. Far from undermining Chauncy's resolve to stay loyal to the Faith, he and a number of brethren were still determined to remain firm, despite the ever-increasing pressure to conform. Clerical and lay visitors, including relatives, tried to win them over. Resident lay commissioners were placed in charge of the house. The monks were deprived of food and all of their books. Their Divine Office and daily life were constantly interrupted. The four most obstinate monks, including Chauncy, were dragged off to St. Paul's Cross in London to be forced to listen to a persuasive sermon, but to no avail. Although two other monks slipped away during this period, the Crown's tactics failed.

The King's minions now tried to win their favour by appointing a former monk of the Sheen (Richmond) Charterhouse, one of their supporters, as the new prior. It was thought best to further undermine the Carthusians by removing the four unyielding monks to charterhouses which had conformed. Accordingly (Blessed) John Rochester and James Walworth were removed to Hull, while John Fox and Maurice Chauncy were taken to Beauvale in Nottinghamshire: this was on May 4th 1536, the first anniversary of their saintly prior's death. Rochester and Walworth remained

resolute to the last and on 15th May 1537 they were both hanged in chains from the battlements at York and their bodies left to gradually decay. In the same month twenty members of the community finally gave in and swore the Oath of Supremacy with the prior, perhaps violating their conscience. However, even after two further years of suffering, four monks and six lay members still refused to swear, and were imprisoned without trial at Newgate Gaol, where they were left to die of starvation and neglect. One elderly monk, (Blessed) William Horne, survived the ordeal only to be only later cruelly executed at Tyburn in 1540.

Meanwhile King Henry VIII had appointed two visitors for the English Carthusians, the priors of Sheen and Witham (Somerset). When they visited Beauvale in August 1537, they found that Chauncy and Fox were very “scrupulous” concerning the Pope’s authority. However, the courage of these two young monks, after enduring much hardship had waned as they were now found not to be obstinate in their views. They were allowed to leave Beauvale to consult the Confessor General of the Bridgettines, who had come to support the royal viewpoint and had advised the London Carthusians on such matters. He was asked by two other London monks to be “patient” with Fox and Chauncy, desiring that they return to the capital “*as bright lanterns to show the light of religious conversion*”. This seemed to work because on their return to the charterhouse in 1538 they finally took the oath, hoping that the house would not be dissolved. However, it had already been surrendered to the king the previous June and it was not until 15th November 1538 that the Carthusians left their once beloved home. Written documents at the time record that Maurice Chauncy and the other monks of the house were given the contents of their cells, a vestment, 40 shillings and a temporary pension. The venerable charterhouse was

stripped of all its possessions, the altars used as gaming tables by workmen, and became a storehouse for the king.

What became of Chauncy and his fellow monks after the “Dissolution of the Monasteries”. Some of them, like Dom John Fox, served as parish priests, carrying on pastoral ministry and continuing with a quasi – religious life: the increasing “Protestantisation” of England only came after Henry VIII’s death. This does not mean that the Carthusians decided to abandon their vocation *en masse*. A number of religious had fled to the continent in order to continue religious life, though escaping England was very hazardous, because a strict watch was kept at all major the sea ports. Those Carthusians that eventually fled the country in the late 1540’s ended their lives in charterhouses in Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy and Scotland. Dom Fox himself managed to flee abroad and before February 1546 Chauncy escaped from England’s shores and found refuge in the Charterhouse of Val de Grace at Bruges in Flanders. The oath they reluctantly took to uphold the king’s overall control of the English Church meant nothing to them.

It was shortly after arriving at Val de Grace that Chauncy was asked by his prior, Peter Ruge van Hoorne and community to commit to writing the events concerning the martyrdom of the London Carthusians. This *Historia* largely forgotten today is a trustworthy and factual account, especially when compared to the official state papers of the time and our knowledge of Saint John Houghton and his community would be a lot poorer without it.

The English monks could not stay permanently in Bruges without the permission of the superior of the Carthusians, the prior of La Grande Chartreuse in France and the General Chapter. Chauncy was encouraged to write to them, relating in further detail exactly what had happened in England over the previous decade. After receiving this

work, he allowed the English monks to make a second profession at Val de Grace in 1547. Chauncy's writings were published and helped to spread the devotion to the English Carthusians, as witnessed by later paintings portraying the brutal executions in the Spanish and Italian charterhouses, and elsewhere. Chauncy also included a note of penance for having taken the king's oath against his conscience.

Chauncy continued to live in Bruges for only five years more, for history was to take yet another incredible turn. In 1553 the Catholic Queen Mary succeeded to the English throne and set about the reconciliation of her country with the Holy See. The Carthusian General Chapter asked their exiled English monks to restore Carthusian life to England and so Dom Maurice Chauncy and Dom John Fox arrived back in England on June 29th 1555. This small group needed financial support and the Queen's assistance if the Carthusians were to be re-established as well as finding suitable buildings. They found a kind and gracious benefactor and friend of the Queen, Sir Robert Rochester whose Carthusian and brother was martyred at York, and were ably supported by Cardinal Reginald Pole, who had received his earliest education from the Carthusian monks and enjoyed repaying them in any way he could. Queen Mary was approached, and she offered to return the monks to the former royal Charterhouse of "Jesus of Bethlehem of Sheen" in Richmond alongside the River Thames. This was the original charterhouse where Cardinal Pole had been taught and lived.

Although Sheen became a private mansion and was partly in ruins, it needed much rebuilding, though, overall, the footprint existed for conversion back to monastic purposes. The Carthusians were housed temporarily in Rochester's own lodgings and despite the death of John Fox, Chauncy continued with the project. As time progressed a large group of thirteen former Carthusians re-emerged from the

woodwork and decided to return to monastic life. They included former priors and monks of Mount Grace, East Harley, North Yorkshire and Witham charterhouses, with others arriving from Sheen, Hinton (Somerset), Coventry and Beauvale. On the 17th November 1556, the Feast of St. Hugh, the English Carthusian bishop, the elderly community took full possession of Sheen. Chauncy was appointed prior by Cardinal Pole and their chief benefactor, Robert Rochester financed the re-building of the choir and chapterhouse, repaired the church and constructed a cloister. Prior Chauncy retained a special link with Queen Mary, who was very kind to the monks, for he became her confessor.

Carthusian life in the newly restored Catholic England continued peacefully until, by a strange coincidence, Queen Mary and Cardinal Pole died on the same day, 17th November 1558, the second anniversary of the monks' return to Sheen. A prophecy made by the monks in Bruges that "*quicker than you look for, you will be hurled suddenly from your buildings*" came true. The new Queen Elizabeth re-established Protestantism and once more the queen's commissioners were sent to visit the Carthusians. On July 1st 1559 the monks were expelled, but spared the carnage and suffering that had been inflicted on their earlier communities. They were given safe passage out of England, due to the intervention of the Spanish ambassador and returned to Bruges, where Chauncy became a spiritual figurehead for all the exiled Carthusians. Because of the large group of English monks and the ensuing linguistic difficulties, the General Chapter appointed Chauncy as prior of the Val de Grace Charterhouse in 1561. However financing the new enlarged community became difficult and the friction caused by appointing an Englishman as head of a Belgium charterhouse resulted, in 1568, in the foundation of a separate English community. Prior Chauncy would rule them in their new house, *Sheen Anglorum*.

Although the English community received help from several benefactors, including the surviving family members related to the martyr Blessed Sebastian Newdigate, the new charterhouse suffered economically. The annuity of £100 pounds granted to them by King Phillip II of Spain, former husband of Queen Mary, was not always paid. Chauncy who knew that his community would not be able to return to their homeland tried to raise funds by writing several versions of his earlier works imploring any readers to “*have pity on the monks poverty and calamity*” and asking for prayers.

Despite this it is incredible to think that Chauncy seems to have made a visit to England in 1575 disguised as a Flemish doctor. Why did he journey back to England? It would appear that Chauncy, a few years before his death and into his early seventies, wanted to renew his acquaintance with old friends and familiar places one final time. Although he discovered that his friends had either died or were imprisoned, he accompanied his Catholic nephew around Westminster Abbey and paid a visit to what was left of the charterhouses of Sheen and London. The latter excursions greatly saddened him, for his nephew wrote that he was “*seized with a profound melancholy; clasping his eyes downwards, he spoke not a word for some time. He then hastened from the spot shedding many big tears*”. He then went on to pay his respects by visiting the cemetery where St John Fisher was finally buried.

Chauncy became not only a mainstay of his own order, but a great supporter of the exiled Catholic cause taking an interest in what was happening back in England. It is interesting to observe that in a curious letter he wrote to the English Cardinal William Allen in 1577, he objected to priests of the English Mission wearing secular disguises. He knew full well that Catholic priestly attire could not be worn openly in Protestant England, and that he would have dressed in a secular disguise when he

escaped to Flanders in the 1540's, and also on his last visit. It was clear that he found it difficult to accept that the familiar religious garbs the Englishmen were once accustomed to could simply not be worn, and he found it hard to accept that his beloved homeland had sadly changed.

In 1578 the English Carthusians were on the move as *"the Son of Man has no place to lay his head"*. It was a period of great religious and political turbulence in the Netherlands, which included Belgium and Holland, mainly due to the friction between the Dutch Protestants and the Catholic Spanish overlords. Protestant troops entered Bruges and occupied part of the charterhouse. However an army from Spain and Ghent eventually arrived outside the town walls. At the prospect of their victory the angry pro-Protestant city magistrate turned to the English Carthusians - suspected of Spanish sympathies – and asked them to leave their charterhouse or it would be set on fire and burned to the ground. Chauncy protested, but in vain. The monks left Bruges and obtained refuge at the Louvain Charterhouse. After arriving there, Chauncy made another journey to Spain to seek the help of King Phillip and to relate his monks' recent misfortunes. It was while he was in Spain that he fell ill and was forced to recuperate for a considerable period at the Charterhouse of Blessed Mary of Paular in Castille where he made a deep impression on the Spanish community. Finally he made representation to the king and set off back to Louvain. However on this journey back, he suffered a relapse of what was to become his final illness and died at the Charterhouse of Paris on 12th July 1581, reaching, Deo volente, the heavenly homeland.

Maurice Chauncy survived the great reformation persecutions, and lived into old age. He has become a forgotten "hero" of his time. Without his written words and testimony we would left bereft of so much important information on those Carthusian

brethren who shed their lives for the Catholic Faith. So what manner of man was Maurice? He was most certainly devout, deeply religious and a learned Englishman who firmly believed his Catholic Faith and loved his Carthusian vocation and fellow monks. The two persecuted years in which he resisted the Henrician attack on papal authority showed the strength of character which he continued to exercise throughout his life, despite many setbacks, personal sufferings and disappointments. Chauncy may have paid “lip service” to the Act of Supremacy, but he regretted it for the rest of his life and emulated his beloved martyred brothers of the Faith. He should not be remembered for this flaw or slip due to human frailty, after considerable pressure, and neither his understandable contempt for those who destroyed the Carthusian way of life in England. His charity and goodness were even highly spoken of by non – Catholics – in an age of much intolerance – who said that Chauncy would do a kindness for a Protestant as soon as for a Catholic; and even that *“the name of Maurice Chauncy is worthy of being kept in everlasting remembrance”*. However let the last words about our great “witness to the Faith” come from the Prior of Paular to the monks of Louvain which sum up this revered man. *“This venerable religious greatly edified us. His memory rests in benediction. Although his exterior appeared to have certain gravity, he had an inner joyous humour. Within a weak body he preserved a clarity of spirit and strong sentiments which enabled him to dwell upon the heights of contemplative life”*.

The Eighteen Carthusian Martyrs of England

Separated from all, we are united to all for it is in the name of all that we present ourselves to the living God. (Statutes 34.2)

Those martyred at Tyburn on May 4th 1535:

St. John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse. Born around 1486 in Essex and a graduate of Cambridge University he would become the first (protomartyr) of the English Reformation and the first Carthusian to die for the Faith. Standing on the gallows cart he was offered a pardon if he swore an oath accepting the King but replied to the crowds *“I ask all here present to attest for me on the dreadful day of judgement that being about to die I declare that I have refused to comply with the will of His Majesty the King, not from obstinacy, malice or a rebellious spirit, but solely for fear of offending the Supreme Majesty of God”*. As was the custom he was hung, drawn and quartered and heard to pray out loud as the executioner opened his chest *“Oh Jesus what will you do with my heart”*. His individual Feast day is October 25th but also included on May 4th feast of the English Martyrs as are those companions below.

St. Augustine Webster, prior of the Axholme Charterhouse studied at the University of Cambridge. Pleading *“not guilty”* to treason against the crown, the trial lasted barely a day. The jury wished to find all those charged that day innocent of any crime but pressure was put upon them by the authorities and they were found to be guilty as charged.

St. Robert Lawrence, prior of the Beauvale Charterhouse born in 1485 also trained at Cambridge suffered as those above after being arrested by Thomas Cromwell and placed in the Tower of London with his companions.

Those martyred at Tyburn on June 19th 1535:

Blessed Humphrey Middlemore, monk and priest of the London Charterhouse. His date of birth is uncertain but his father's estate was at **Edgbaston** (historically Warwickshire).

Blessed William Exmew, procurator of the London Charterhouse, another graduate of Cambridge.

Blessed Sebastian Newdigate, monk and priest of the London Charterhouse was born on 7th September 1500 at Harefield Place in Middlesex the seventh of fourteen children. He became a favourite of King Henry VIII and Privy Councillor. He married and had a daughter called Amphyllis. Following his wife's death in 1524 he entered the Carthusian Order.

The above three Blesseds within a few weeks after the martyrdom of their prior, Saint John Houghton, were seized for refusing to take the Oath of the Royal Supremacy and thrown into a dark and filthy dungeon at the notorious Marshalsea Prison in Southwark located in what would become Borough High Street. For thirteen days and nights they were bound in an upright position to columns by iron chains fastened round their necks and legs. As they were examined before the council with great courage each one refused to contradict the truths of the One, Holy, True and Catholic Faith. After being found guilty they went forth to their cruel execution with

glad hearts and faces, rejoicing to be accounted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus. Their last request and desire to receive Holy Communion before they died was denied them. All were beatified by Pope Leo XIII on December 29th 1886.

Those martyred at York on May 11th 1537:

Blessed John Rochester (Born 1498 at Terling in Essex) with **Blessed James Walworth**, monks and priests of the London Charterhouse both suffered dramatic, grim and macabre showcase executions in response to the “Pilgrimage of Grace” that followed the Lincolnshire uprising of 1536. There was a general unrest in Yorkshire following King Henry VIII’s Dissolution of the Monasteries and a widespread Catholic uprising followed against the Crown and King’s men. To this end orders under Cromwell had the Carthusian companions transported to York where they were hung alive in chains from the city walls until they died and their bodies fell apart to send a chilling lesson to all the government dissenters. They were both beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886.

The execution of the above Carthusians did not have the desired effect that King Henry VIII expected and wanted from the crowds. The greater population was shocked by the king’s brutal and public murder of such holy men so instead all but one of the remaining ten were simply left to die of starvation and neglect in confined and squalid prison cells.

Those martyred at Newgate between May – September 1537 were all Beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886:

Blessed Thomas Green, monk and priest of the London Charterhouse with **Blessed Walter Pierson**, lay brother of the London Charterhouse were both starved to death in chains and died on 10th June 1537.

Blessed Richard Bere of Glastonbury, monk and priest of the London Charterhouse. Richard, born in Glastonbury in 1508 went to the Abbey School there from which the abbot sent him to Oxford University. Spurning marriage he went to study further at the Inns of Court, London which he abandoned to become a Carthusian. Imprisoned with his above companions who died from starvation, Cromwell allowed a little food for Richard so that he might be preserved for public execution. After lingering on in such poor conditions he died “prematurely” on 9th August 1537 robbing Cromwell of the pleasure of taking him to the gallows. He is honoured today at the Shrine of Our Lady of Glastonbury in St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Glastonbury featuring on the famous Tapestry in the Lady Chapel.

Blessed Thomas Johnson, monk and priest of the London Charterhouse died on 20th September 1537 after holding out despite starvation for longer than any of his brothers.

Blessed John Davy, monk and deacon of the London Charterhouse. Little is known about his life other than his death was recorded by starvation on June 8th 1537. On the following day June 9th, **Blessed Robert Salt**, lay brother of the London Charterhouse also died of starvation.

Blessed William Greenwood, lay brother of the London Charterhouse obtained degrees from Oxford, Canterbury and became a fellow of St. John's College Cambridge and starved to death on 6th June 1537.

Blessed Thomas Scryven, and **Blessed Thomas Redyng**, lay brothers of the London Charterhouse both died in chains of starvation on June 15th and 16th 1537 respectively.

Martyred at Tyburn on August 4th 1540:

Blessed William Horne, lay brother of the London Charterhouse who shared the incarceration with his fellow Carthusians and survived the longest was spared starvation only to be executed three years later at Tyburn being hanged, disembowelled and quartered.

In *The Life of (Saint) Thomas More* (written circa 1557), remembering that Thomas More witnessed some of the Carthusian monks being "carted off" to execution, from his own cell in the Tower of London, said : "*The Carthusians, I say, men of so singular integrity and virtue, men of so hard and so penitential and of so spiritual and so contemplative life, that they might seem rather like angels appearing in men's bodies than very men*".

Carthusian Spirituality and Prayers

The fruit that silence brings is known to him who has experienced it. In the early stages of our Carthusian life we may find silence a burden; however, if we are faithful, there will gradually be born within us of our silence itself something, that will draw us on to still greater silence. Ultimately our silence becomes Word, the darkness of faith is itself the Light (Statutes, 4.3)

The only goal of the Carthusian way is CONTEMPLATION, by the power of the Spirit, living as unceasingly as possible in the light of the love of God for us, made manifest in Christ. In a monastery contemplation is also described as continuous prayer. The aim of the solitary life is constant prayer, that prayer which is the prayer of the Spirit of Christ as in the Lord's Prayer.

The primary charism of a Carthusian life is the vocation of solitude. *The primary application of our vocation is to give ourselves to the silence and solitude of the cell. It is holy ground, the area where God and his servant hold frequent conversations, as between friends. There, the soul often unites itself to the Word of God, bride to the groom, the earth to the sky, man to the divine (Carthusian Statutes 4.1).* This solitude is lived in three ways: Separation from the world, living in a hermitage cell and finally interior solitude – solitude of the heart. The heart becomes the living altar from which there it constantly ascends before God this is pure prayer.

Separation from the outside world is complete for the entire lifetime of the monk, no visits are allowed, no television or radio so that an internal silence can develop which permits the soul to stay alert to the presence of God. Time is occupied by prayer, reading and work that may include carpentry, laundry, cooking or any needs that the monastery demands. The office of liturgies dictates the pace of each day and the celebration of the most Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice is the centre and summit of

communal life. The church is focused on the altar and the Eucharistic presence of Christ. Here the monks come together, day and night, to pray and worship God. No organs are allowed are allowed but the voices of Gregorian Chant are prominent throughout. *“The longer the monk lives in a cell, the more gladly will he do so, as long as he occupies himself in it usefully and in an orderly manner, reading, writing, reciting psalms, praying, meditating, contemplating and working. Let him make a practice of resorting, from time to time, to a tranquil listening of the heart that allows God to enter through all its doors and passages.”* (Statutes, 4.2)

Prayer to The Carthusian Martyrs

As we remember before God the monks and lay – brothers who for conscience sake endured torment and death

O you servants of the Lord, bless the Lord
O you spirits and souls of the righteous, bless of the Lord
O you holy and humble men of heart, bless the Lord
Praise him, and magnify him forever
(from the commemorative plaque at Charterhouse)

Novena Prayer to the English Martyrs.

The daily prayers can also be used as single prayers for various needs and intentions.

Day 1

Glorious English Martyrs, you endured exile from your country and your families for love of God and the faith. Help all who live in exile today; and help us to value our faith above our securities. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 2

Glorious English Martyrs, you had the courage to witness for Christ before men without counting the cost. Help us to have this same courage in our day. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 3

Glorious English Martyrs, you loved England, your country, enough to suffer exile, persecution, and death to proclaim Jesus Christ here. Intercede for England, and for all who are called to proclaim Christ today. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 4

Glorious English Martyrs, you had a great love of the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, for which you were ready to give up your lives. Help us to have something of this same love, and never to take for granted these great gifts of God.

We pray especially (*add your intention*)

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 5

Glorious English Martyrs, you had a profound love of truth, and would not deny it even though this meant suffering and death. Give us the same love of truth, and zeal for the faith, that you had. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 6

Glorious English Martyrs, at the heart of all you did and endured was the love of God. Help us to know this love, and to pass it to our neighbour. We pray especially for (*add your intention*)

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 7

Glorious English Martyrs, you had such a compassion for sinners that you risked all that they might be converted and live. Help us not to judge others, but to show God's merciful love to all; help us, too, not to despair of our own sins, but to lay them humbly before the Father who loves us, and to ask for forgiveness with a contrite heart. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 8

Glorious English Martyrs, you readily forgave those who persecuted you, and offered your sufferings for their conversion. Intercede for us to have something of the same spirit in the face of injustice or persecution. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Day 9

Glorious English Martyrs, you persevered in your witness to the end, and joyfully accepted the sufferings that opened to you the Kingdom. Intercede for us, and those who are near to death, or undergoing a trial of faith, that we too may have the grace of final perseverance. We pray especially for (*add your intention*).

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be...

Almighty and everlasting God, who kindled the flame of your love in the hearts of your holy martyrs Saint John Houghton, Saint Robert Lawrence, and Saint Augustine Webster: grant to us, your humble servants, a like faith and power of love, that we who rejoice in their triumph may profit by their examples.

English and all Carthusian Martyrs Pray for us.

Carthusian Houses in Britain Past and Present

The grace of the Holy Spirit gathers solitaries together to form a communion in love, in the likeness of the Church; which remains one, though spread throughout the world. (Statutes 21.1)

In all there were eleven Carthusian monasteries in Great Britain, called charterhouses after the anglicised “*Chartreuse*”, from La Grande Chartreuse, motherhouse in France.

The brief history of each and what became of them is recalled here:

Axholme Charterhouse (The House of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary): Close to Epworth in North Lincolnshire established in 1398 by Thomas Mowbray (1st Duke of Norfolk). One of its priors was St. Augustine Webster (martyr). The monastery was suppressed during the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538. The buildings were converted to a house and some local earthworks and parts still survive.

Beauvale Priory, Nottinghamshire: Founded in 1343 in honour of the Blessed Trinity. Martyred Saints John Houghton and Robert Lawrence had been priors of this charterhouse. Dissolution took place in 1535. Today there are remains of the charterhouse, which has listed building status and is open to the public having a tea room and cottages to rent for short breaks. It is also the setting for two of D.H. Lawrence’s stories: “*Country of my Heart*” and “*A Fragment of Stained Glass*”. (for opening times and further information see www.beauvalepriory.co.uk).

Coventry Charterhouse (St. Anne's Priory), London Road, Coventry: Founded in 1385 by King Richard II. It was dissolved in 1539. Today the original charterhouse forms a group of listed buildings and with its vast parklands, has recently been awarded a multi-million pound Heritage Lottery grant to start an ambitious and exciting programme of restoration. It is open to the public for events and details can be found at www.charterhousepriory.org.uk

Hinton Charterhouse, Somerset: Originally established at Hatherop (Gloucestershire) in 1222, then moved to Hinton before 1232, which was more remote. The house was dissolved in 1539 and became a private dwelling. The Chapter House, prior's cell and refectory survive as agricultural buildings and some remains can be found in the surrounding fields and orchard. The surviving buildings are in private ownership there is no public access.

Hull Charterhouse: Founded in 1377 by Michael de la Pole (1st Earl of Suffolk) just outside of the northern walls, and was dedicated to Saint Michael. Unfortunately the structure was all but destroyed during the first siege of Hull during the English Civil War. Rebuilding began in the 1650s and after a century was demolished before being rebuilt for a second time in a classical style that is seen today. The building has a blue plaque commemorating Blessed John Rochester and Blessed James Walworth who were both detained here en-route to their gruesome execution in York. The present day charterhouse is an almshouse with a full and vibrant community and one of the City of Hull's famous structural and architectural landmarks. The chapel is still used for the celebration of Mass with Holy Communion on Sundays and Wednesdays.

London Charterhouse, Charterhouse Square, Smithfield, City of London:

Founded in 1371 and dissolved in 1537, the building has survived a complex and turbulent history. Originally intended as a graveyard for the victims of the plague, a chapel and hermitage built soon led to foundation of the capital's charterhouse. Frequented by St. Thomas More who used to come for private retreats much of the history is recorded within this book focusing on the English Carthusian Martyrs. Following its Dissolution it became a grand Tudor Mansion. Queen Elizabeth I resided there before her coronation. Slipping into and out of several owners it finally found its way into the hands of Thomas Sutton in 1611 whose acquired fortune from coalfields in Newcastle upon Tyne allowed him to bequeath the site and endow the whole area with a chapel, almshouse, hospital and school. Today part of the complex belongs to St. Bartholomew's (Bart's) Hospital and the London School of Medicine. Following restoration after blitz damage in World War II, the Charterhouse continues as an almshouse with forty male pensioners called "Brothers". In January 2017 the London Charterhouse opened its doors to the public and the entrance to the site is free. It is fast becoming a new attraction for the modern visitor who can also enjoy its beautiful tranquil gardens. Full public access is also allowed via the gatekeeper to the programme of daily liturgical services. Situated between Farringdon and Barbican Tube Stations it can be found easily. Details can be found on the website www.thecharterhouse.org.

Mount Grace Priory, Staddle Bridge, Northallerton, North Yorkshire:

Established in 1398 and dedicated as the House of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and St. Nicholas. After its dissolution in 1539, it passed into private hands. Being constructed during the Black Death, it featured a revolutionary medieval waste and sewerage system ensuring good hygiene and sanitation. It became a seventeenth century

manor house and the second larger building became a rare example of the Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1900s. Today it is England's most important, best preserved and most accessible of the ten original medieval Carthusian monasteries. It is owned by the National Trust and operated by English Heritage, and it is possible to holiday there as well. Set against the fabulous North Yorkshire National Park there is much to see and do.

Perth Charterhouse, Scotland: Founded by King James I in 1429 as the "House of the Valley of Virtues", and was placed at various times under the provinces of England, Further Picardy (France) and Geneva (Switzerland). As a house of royal patronage it was the resting place after death of King James I, of Joan Beaufort, Queen of Scots, and Mary Tudor, Queen of Scots. In May 1559 the charterhouse was forcefully attacked and destroyed by a mob, after John Knox, the Protestant reformer, preached an inflammatory sermon. Of this great and beautiful priory nothing survives today and it is now the site of a modern block of flats called Pomarium. A modest monolithic memorial marks the site of the original Charterhouse.

Richmond (also known as Sheen) Priory, Richmond, London: One of the later Carthusian foundations (1414), founded by King Henry V, on the banks of the River Thames, dedicated as The House of Jesus of Bethlehem of Sheen, and comprising of 30 cells arranged around a courtyard cloister. It is claimed that this became the last resting place of King James IV of Scotland who was killed at the Battle of Flodden in 1513. After the Dissolution in 1539 the property passed to the Crown. All that remains are some ruins and the former Priory Gardens are now a public recreational area to enjoy.

Witham Charterhouse, Somerset: The earliest of all the Carthusian houses being built in 1178/79, located in the village of Witham Friary, and founded with monks from La Grande Chartreuse. St. Hugh was prior here from c.1180. In 1539 it surrendered to the Crown. Twentieth-century archaeological excavations have revealed where the buildings lay and there is at ground level exposed earthworks, but not a great deal to see other than remains of the monastic fishponds. However the original Church used by the brothers is completely intact and is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St John and All Saints. It is now the village Parish Church of Witham Friary.

St. Hugh's Charterhouse, Parkminster, Cowfold, Nr Horsham, West Sussex: Established in 1873 and dedicated to St. Hugh of Lincoln, it is the only post – Reformation Carthusian monastery in the United Kingdom. It was completed in 1883, and was designed in the Gothic (Victorian) style. It includes over three acres of orchards. The church has an impressive spire reaching over 200 feet and can be seen for miles around. The Great Cloister stretches beyond a kilometre and is the largest in the world connecting 34 hermitages (individual cells) to the rest of the monastery buildings allowing the monks to live a solitary and silent life communing with God.

And in Conclusion

It is fitting perhaps to end with some meditative words by St. John Paul II from his message in May 2001 to the Carthusian motherhouse at La Grande Chartreuse, on the ninth centenary of St. Bruno's death:

“Our contemporary culture, marked by a strong hedonistic sentiment, by the desire to possess and by an erroneous idea of liberty, does not facilitate the expression of the generosity of young people who want to consecrate their lives to Christ, longing to go forward, in his footsteps, on a journey of oblation, of generous and concrete service Your loving knowledge of God, nourished by prayer and meditation of his Word, invites the People of God to extend their gaze to the horizons of a new humanity in search of the fullness of the meaning of life and integration. Your poverty offered for the glory of God and the salvation of the world is an eloquent protest against the logic of profit and efficiency that often close the hearts of men and nations to the real needs of their brothers. Your life hidden with Christ, like the silent Cross planted in the hearts of redeemed humanity, remains, for the Church and for the world, the eloquent sign and permanent reminder that every human being, today as yesterday, can let himself be captivated by him who is only love”.

Acknowledgements, Further Information and Recommended Reading

We are grateful to Dom Jean Babeau, Prior of Parkminster Charterhouse for permission in allowing access and use of Carthusian archive material. The website of Parkminster and that of La Grande Chartreuse, give a valuable insight into monastery life and spirituality. For those considering a vocation to the Carthusian way as a monk or nun, please contact Parkminster Charterhouse, Partridge Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8EB or see the website *www.parkminster.org.uk* or *www.chartreux.org*

The Tyburn Convent of the Benedictine Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Montmartre in Marble Arch, London can be visited. A sister is available for guided tours of the shrine daily at 10.30am, 3.30pm and 5.30pm and on the first Sunday of each month there is a monastic afternoon open to the public which explains in detail the history of the Tyburn community and both the tours and talk allow access to the martyrs holy relics. See *www.tyburnconvent.org.uk*

The Carthusians under King Henry Eighth published in *Analecta Cartusiana* Volume 109: L.E. Whatmore.

The Religious Orders in England (Vol III): Dom David Knowles OSB

Many of the martyrs attended Cambridge University. The Roman Catholic Parish Church of Cambridge is dedicated to Our Lady and the English Martyrs and is worth seeking out in Hills Road (city centre) to see its stunning interior and windows portraying many of the English martyrs including the laity.

Also worth seeing is the Martyrs Tapestry at the Shrine of Our Lady of Glastonbury in the Catholic Parish Church of St. Mary's, Magdalen Street, Glastonbury, Somerset featuring the Carthusian, Blessed Richard Bere and the Carthusian martyrs' stained glass windows at St Ethelreda's Church, Ely Place, Holborn, London.

And thank you

To my friend and celebrated artist Jan Kalinski based in the south of England who after reading this story was inspired to paint the striking cover picture depicting the ascent to heaven of the English Carthusian Martyrs. Jan was solely guided by respect for a suffering that we cannot possibly imagine. Jan spent many years teaching drawing and painting in Western Canada and works in oils and acrylics.

In 1992 he was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) resulting in permanent numbness of his fingers. He can no longer hold a fine pencil or write his own name but will not let go of a paintbrush and his work today continues to be stunning as ever. Take time to visit his website and gallery at www.jankalinski.art



