

THE PARISH OF SAINT RALPH SHERWIN, DERBY

**Ecumenical Service of Prayer to commemorate
Nicholas Garlick, Robert Ludlam, Richard Simpson & Joan Waste
Chapel of St Mary on the Bridge
Friday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time
Friday 24th July 2026**

First Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7 – ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine.’
Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:7-16 – ‘Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.’

Merciful God,
who, when your Church on earth
was torn apart from the ravages of sin,
raised up men and women in our land
who witnessed to their faith with courage and constancy,
give to your Church that peace which is your will,
and grant that those who have been divided on earth
may be reconciled in heaven
and share together the vision of your glory.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Mr Dean,
Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.

As parish priest of Derby, I am delighted to have been asked by my brother, the Dean of Derby, to preach at this evening's ecumenical service of prayer to commemorate the Nicholas Garlick, Robert Ludlum, Richard Simpson and Joan Waste.

Who are these siblings in faith whom we commemorate tonight?

Joan was born blind in 1534, the year in which the Protestant Reformation began in earnest in England and Wales with the Act of Supremacy, in which Henry VIII usurped the Roman Pontiff and declared himself head of the Church in England and Wales.

The daughter of a barber and ropemaker, William Waste and his wife Joan, and with a twin brother Roger, by the age of twelve she had learned how to knit and well as how to make ropes. She was called before the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry for heresy, including denying the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, a truth to be believed with divine and catholic faith, and for objecting that Mass was once again celebrated in Latin. She was tried in the mediaeval All Saints Church, of which she was a parishioner, the tower of which still stands having been built shortly before her birth, found guilty and condemned to be burnt to death, reportedly holding hands with her twin brother as she walked to her pyre on Windmill Pit, just off the Burton Road, near the site of St Joseph's Church.

Fr Nicholas Garlick and Fr Robert Ludlum were arrested in Padley Hall, which became the residence of one Sir Thomas Fitzherbert in 1534, the year of Joan Waste's birth. The Fitzherbert family were devout Catholics, recusants, who refused to attend Anglican services. The hall was raided on 12th July 1558, and Frs Garlick and Ludlum were discovered hiding within the walls. Two weeks later, they, along with Fr Richard Simpson whom they met in Derby prison, were guilty of high treason for being Catholic priests, and were hanged, drawn and quartered on this date, 24th July, that year, just a few metres away from where we are now, their heads being placed on spikes along the bridge.

So, here this evening, what do these very different people have in common, apart from being baptised Christians and executed because they were 'on the wrong side'? What do their deaths teach us?

St John Paul II gave us an answer to these questions in his homily at the Beatification of the Padley Martyrs, along with other Martyrs of England and Wales, and of Scotland, on 22nd November 1987, a homily in which he spoke about the 'work of renewal in the Church', which 'is carried out in accordance with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and in communion with the universal Church'. Part of this renewal was rediscovering the mystery of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as the People of God and the sacrament of the world's salvation, and what this more inclusive vision had not only for interreligious dialogue, between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religions, but, most importantly for us here this evening, ecumenical dialogue, in word and action, between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, the Anglican Communion, and the ecclesial communities that are rooted in the Reformation.

This is a dialogue that I have been involved in at a national level as a member of EWARC, the English and Welsh Anglican and Catholic dialogue. It is also a relationship

that we celebrate, with its joys and hopes, griefs and sorrows, here in our two parishes, particularly with the Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, our Lent groups, and for me, most importantly, our friendship as fellow priests and fellow Christians here in the heart of our city. All this is an example of the renewal for which St John Paul II called in 1987, saying this:

Central to this renewal, to which the Holy Spirit calls the Church, is work for that *unity among Christians* for which Christ himself prayed. We must all rejoice that the hostilities between Christians, which so shaped the age of these martyrs, are over, replaced by fraternal love and mutual esteem.

Seventeen years ago, forty of the glorious company of martyrs were canonised [as the Forty Martyrs of England & Wales, including St Ralph Sherwin, this parish's patron, martyred at Tyburn on 1st December 1581]. It was the prayer of the Church on that day that the blood of those martyrs would be a source of healing for the divisions between Christians. Today we may fittingly give thanks for the progress made in the intervening years towards fuller communion between *Anglicans and Catholics*. We rejoice in the deeper understanding, broader collaboration and common witness that have taken place through the power of God.

In the days of the martyrs whom we honour today, there were other Christians who died for their beliefs. We can all now appreciate and respect their sacrifice. Let us respond together to the great challenge which confronts those who would preach the Gospel in our age. Let us be bold and united in our profession of our common Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

What the Pope said in 1987 remains true today, and it behoves us all, Christians, to be so united in the fundamentals of our faith so that 'we also believe and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus', raising us up to a new hope as we, along with Blessed Nicholas, Blessed Robert, Blessed Richard and Joan, answer the Lord's call:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you,
I have called you by your name, you are mine.

There is much work still to be done, by the grace of God, as we bear common witness to the common good, sharing a common faith for our common humanity. When Archbishop Sarah was enthroned in Canterbury Cathedral on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, 25th March 2026, our Holy Father Pope Leo wrote to her, recognising that 'the ecumenical journey has not always been smooth':

We have continued to walk together, because differences 'cannot prevent us from recognising one another as brothers and sisters in Christ by reason of our common baptism' For my part, I firmly believe that we need to continue to

dialogue in truth and love, for it is only in truth and love that we come to know together the grace, mercy and peace of God, and thus can offer these precious gifts to the world.

Gathered this evening, we continue to journey together, commemorating those who have passed through water and walked through fire, so that we can have the freedom to worship according to our consciences and our traditions. Within the last twelve months, King Charles III was received in the Apostolic Palace and attended an act of worship in the Sistine Chapel along with Pope Leo XIV and the Archbishop of York – and it was not long ago that it was news that Queen Elizabeth II attended her first Catholic liturgy, Evening Prayer in Westminster Cathedral.

These little hurdles can be seen even in the way in which we say the Lord's Prayer, although it does amuse me that during Evensong you can say, or hear, three different versions thereof! We Catholics, being Bible-based Christians, use the words of the Lord's Prayer that are handed on in the holy Gospel according to Matthew, leaving the doxology until a little later in the Communion Rite. When Benedict XVI came on his Apostolic Visit to Great Britain in 2010, he visited Lambeth Palace, and everyone present said the Lord's Prayer. The Catholics said the doxology so as not to offend the Anglicans, and the Anglicans left it out so as not to upset the Catholics. This little vignette of practical ecumenism expresses what the Holy Father went on to say to Archbishop Sarah:

What is more, the unity which Christians seek is never an end in itself, but is directed towards the proclamation of Christ, in order that, as the Lord Jesus himself prayed, 'the world may believe'. In addressing the Primates of the Anglican Communion in 2024, Pope Francis declared that 'it would be a scandal if, due to our divisions, we did not fulfil our common vocation to make Christ known'. Dear sister, I willingly make these words my own, for it is through the witness of a reconciled, fraternal and united Christian community that the proclamation of the Gospel will resound most clearly.

Joan, Nicholas, Richard and Robert, died for a reconciled, fraternal and united Christian community'. Many of the Martyrs of England and Wales, Anglican and Catholic, saw themselves, in the words of St Thomas More, 'The King's [or Queen's] good servant, but God's first.' Speaking after his election on 8th May 2025, Pope Leo said:

As Bishop of Rome, I consider one of my priorities to be that of seeking the re-establishment of full and visible communion among all those who profess the same faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The opposite of unity is disunity – diversity is an expression of our fundamental unity as together we continue our conversion to Christ. As Archbishop Sarah said in reply to the Holy Father:

We Christians are called to pray and to strive together towards this end, step by step, mindful that it is, above all, the work of the Holy Spirit. I would therefore ask, in all humility, that you continue to pray for the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit in faithfulness, unity, and charity.

Mr Dean,
Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

This evening here in this beautiful place, hallowed by centuries of prayer, by the grace of God we do 'the work of the Holy Spirit', by praying together for a fraternal and reconciled unity as we celebrate our shared inheritance of the witness of the Martyrs whom we commemorate tonight. Let us make the Pope's, and the Archbishop's, priority our own, here in our common home of Derby, journeying together, doing our bit and doing our best, so that, through us and our ministry as Christians, the treasure of reconciliation, fraternity and unity with Christ will be revealed in the earthenware realities of our daily lives, for we are all created for God's glory, who formed and made us all.

May Saint Ralph Sherwin and All Saints pray for us!

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Canon Andrew Cole
24th July 2026