



Saint Margaret Ward

Born : Congleton, Cheshire

Little is written of her early life, except that she was born into a 'good family' and worked as Lady's Companion for the Whittle (Whittal) household in London. When Margaret discovered that Father William Watson (who wrote the '*Quodlibets*'), was imprisoned at Bridewell, she became friendly with the gaoler's wife and was granted permission to visit the priest. After several

uneventful visits, the gaoler ceased his vigilance with Margaret and she was able to smuggle a rope into the prison.

She engaged a boatman to convey the priest down the river once he had freed himself; but the man would not accept the engagement when he realised the nature of the work. In the confusion, Margaret sought the help of John Roche (or Neele), who exchanged clothes with William. Father William escaped, but John was apprehended. The rope, which had been left behind, convinced the gaoler of Margaret Ward's involvement.

Margaret was arrested and kept in irons for eight days. Robert Southwell wrote this account to Father Acquaviva:

She was flogged and hung up by the wrists, the tips of her toes only touching the ground, for so long a time that she was crippled and paralysed, but these sufferings greatly strengthened the glorious martyr for her last struggle.

She was tried at Newgate and admitted her part in Father Watson's escape, but refused to disclose his whereabouts. Margaret was offered a pardon on the condition that she attend the Protestant Church but she declined. Margaret was hanged on 30th August 1588 at Tyburn.