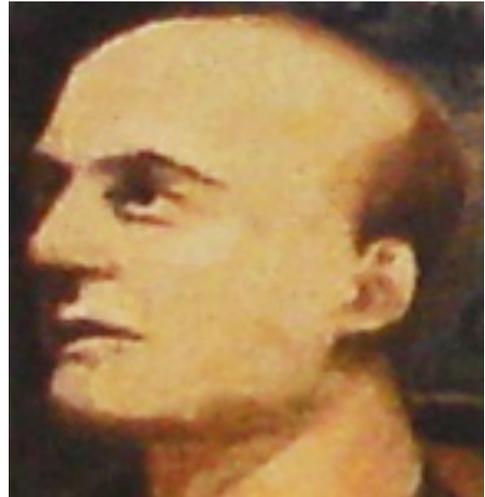


## **Saint John Jones**

**Born 1559: Clynnog Fawr, Caernarvon.**

John Jones, also known as John Buckley, John Griffith or Godfrey Maurice entered the Franciscan convent at Greenwich whilst a young man. He joined the Franciscan Observants at either Pontoise or Rome in 1590; then the Roman province of the *Reformati* in 1591, where he demonstrated the intense discipline of the reform movement.



Pope Clement VIII gave his blessing to John when he left for his mission in England, saying ‘Go, for I believe you are a true religious of St. Francis’. He returned to London toward the end of 1592 and was sheltered for a time in the house of Anne Line, at the recommendation of Father John Gerard.

In 1596, Richard Topcliffe was informed where he might find John Jones (John Buckley). John was arrested and taken to Topcliffe’s house where he was subjected to Topcliffe’s particular form of interrogation. He was then imprisoned in the Clink Prison, on the south-side of the Thames, for nearly two years, until his trial in 1598.

John was tried alongside Robert Barnes and Jane Wiseman, who were accused of receiving and comforting him. An errand-boy named Nicholas Blackwell gave evidence against them, but this did not stand against Barnes’ defence. In part due to this submission, suspicion was cast upon Topcliffe’s methods which eventually lead to him being discredited. Although Wiseman and Barnes were condemned to death, they were later reprieved.

There was no mercy for John Jones, however. He was found guilty of contravening the statute of 1585 which prohibited the return to England of Roman Catholic priests.

‘If this be a crime, I must own myself guilty, for I am a priest and came to England to gain as many souls to Christ as I could’, said Father Jones.

An early hour was chosen for John’s execution and he had to wait an hour while the executioner went to fetch his ropes. John was hanged, drawn and quartered on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1598 at St. Thomas Waterings, Southwark.