



Saint John Rigby

Born circa 1570: Harrack Hall, Wigan, Lancashire

John Rigby was the fifth or sixth son of Mary (*née Breres*) and Nicholas Rigby. His father conformed to the authorised religion and John said that he himself conformed, 'Through ignorance and fear.' From around 1595 John worked as a steward for Sir Edmund Huddleston at Sawston Hall in Cambridge. The Huddlestons were a renowned Catholic family and friends of Father John Gerard, whose influence led to John Rigby's conversion to the Catholic faith in 1597 or 1598.

Sir Edmund's widowed daughter, Mistress Fortescue, was summoned to the Old Bailey in 1600 to testify in regard to her faith. At the time she was too ill to attend the court and John Rigby presented himself on her behalf. Under questioning, John confessed that he was a Catholic and refused to swear the Oath of Allegiance when it was proffered. John was imprisoned in Newgate and tortured.

On February 14th, before Lord Justice Popham, John confessed he had been converted by Father John Jones*, who had been executed the previous year. John was put in irons and taken to the White Lion prison in Southwark, before his trial for treason on March 3rd. The presiding judge, John Gawdy, advised John that no further action would be taken against him if he would attend the Anglican service, which he refused to do. John was found guilty and sentenced to death. John replied, '*Deo Gratias*. All is but one death My Lord.'

On 21st June 1600, John was brought for execution to St. Thomas Waterings, the same spot upon which John Jones* had been put to death. At the scaffold John knelt and prayed, then forgave the executioner and gave him a gold coin. John was hanged but cut-down swiftly, landing on his feet. The executioners threw him to the ground, one of whom placed a foot over his throat whilst the others cut off his limbs. He remained conscious until he was beheaded.