



Saint Luke Kirby

Born circa 1549: Yorkshire. Cambridge MA

Luke Kirby was converted to Catholicism in Louvain (Leuven). He was a Seminarian at the English College of Douai in 1576 and was ordained in September 1577 at Cambrai. Luke took the Oath at the English College in Rome on 23rd April 1579. When he arrived in Dover in June 1580 to begin his ministry he was immediately arrested. Initially imprisoned at the Gatehouse in Westminster, he was transferred to the Tower of London on 4 December 1580.

Tortured by use of the ‘Scavenger’s Daughter’, Luke did not submit.

Condemned on the 17th November 1581, from 2nd April 1582 until his execution, Luke was manacled and chained. He was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn on 30th May 1582.

Polydore Plasden

Born 1563: Fleet Bridge, London.

Oliver Palmer was the son of a London horner, who changed his name to Polydore Plasden. He was educated at the English Colleges in Rheims and Rome, where he was ordained on 7th December, 1586. For a year, he remained in Rome, before returning to Rheims on 8th April 1588. He was sent to the English mission on 2nd September of that year and ministered in London. On the 8th November 1591, he was arrested at Swithun Wells’* house in Gray’s Inn Lane where Edmund Gennings* was celebrating Mass.



Walter Raleigh witnessed Polydore’s execution and heard him defend the Queen, then pray for her and the whole realm. Raleigh questioned Polydore, and not believing the priest was a traitor, he ordered the execution to be postponed until he could consult the Queen. Richard Topcliffe stepped-in and asked Polydore, ‘Then thou thinkest not to defend the Queen against the Pope, if he come to establish thy religion?’ ‘I am a Catholic priest,’ Polydore responded, ‘Therefore I would never fight, nor counsel others to fight, against my religion, for that were to deny my faith’. Walter Raleigh reluctantly let the sentence be carried out, but insisted that Polydore be allowed to hang until death. Polydore’s body was drawn and quartered after he died on 10th December 1591 at Tyburn.