Oliver Plunkett

Born: 1625

Died: 1681

Feast Day:
1 July

Oliver Plunkett, Bishop and Martyr was born in County Meath to wealthy parents. He was educated privately by his cousin Dr Patrick Plunkett.

He was admitted to the Irish College in Rome and was ordained a priest in 1654,

He was asked by the the Irish bishops to act as their representative in Rome.

The conquest of Ireland by Cromwell meant that the practice of Catholicism was banned and Catholic clergy were executed.

As a result, Oliver was unable to return to Ireland for many years. He remained in Rome and, in 1657, became a professor of theology.

In 1669 he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh, and the following year he returned to Ireland

As a result of the relaxation of the Penal Laws, Oliver was able to establish a Jesuit College in Drogheda in 1670.

An non existent 'Popish Plot' gave the authorities an excuse to act against many well known Catholics.

Oliver was arrested and taken to London for trial and he was subsequently executed on 1 July 1681.

He was the final victim of the 'Popish Plot' and the last person to be executed for the faith in England.

His body rests at Downside Abbey, his head in Drogheda. He was canonized in 1975