

MARTYRS' DAY MASS
Annual celebration by Alumni
of
The Venerable English College, Rome



A commemoration of the
44 students of the College
who were martyred in
the 16th and 17th centuries.

Principal Celebrant: Canon Mervyn Tower

Exeter College, Oxford

2 December 2019

Saint Ralph Sherwin 1550 - 1581

Ralph Sherwin was born at Rodsley, Derbyshire to John and Constance Sherwin and christened in Longford church. He was educated at Eton College.

In 1568, he was nominated by Sir William Petre to one of the eight fellowships which he had founded at Exeter College, Oxford, probably influenced by Sherwin's uncle, John Woodward, who from 1556 to 1566 had been rector of Ingatestone, Essex, where Petre lived. A talented classical scholar, Sherwin obtained his Bachelor of Arts in 1571 and Master of Arts on 2 July 1574, and the following year converted to Roman Catholicism.

He soon made for the English College at Douai, where he was ordained a priest by the Bishop of Cambrai on 23 March 1577. On 2 August 1577, he left for Rome, where he stayed at the English College, Rome for nearly three years. On 18 April 1580, Sherwin and thirteen companions left Rome for England as missionaries. He got into England in early August and started his successful ministry in different parts of the country but not for long.

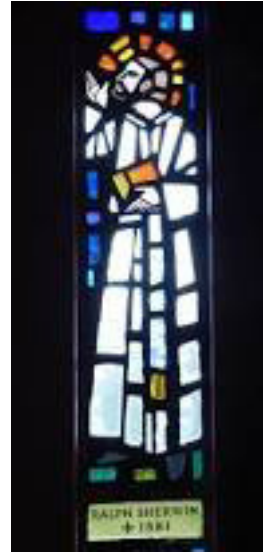
On 9 November 1580, he was arrested while preaching in the house of Nicholas Roscarrock in London and imprisoned in the Marshalsea, where he converted many fellow prisoners, and on 4 December was transferred to the Tower of London, where he was tortured on the rack and then laid out in the snow. Later he was put into isolation cell, without food.

He is said to have been personally offered a bishopric by Elizabeth I if he converted, but refused. After spending a year in prison he was finally brought to trial with Edmund Campion on a charge of treasonable conspiracy. He was convicted in Westminster Hall on 20 November 1581. Eleven days later he was taken to Tyburn on a hurdle along with Alexander Briant and Edmund Campion, where the three martyrs were hanged, drawn and quartered. On the scaffold Ralph Sherwin again "professed his innocence, proclaimed his Catholic faith, and prayed for the Queen". Sherwin's last words were "Iesu, Iesu, Iesu, esto mihi Iesus!"

Sherwin was the first member of the English College in Rome to be martyred. During the years 1581-1681 over forty more students were martyred for their faith.

He was beatified on 29 December 1886 by Pope Leo XIII and he was canonized on 25 October 1970 by Pope Paul VI as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales with a common feast day of 25 October.

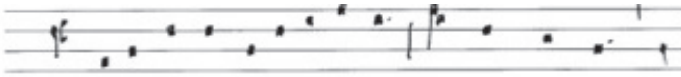
His individual feast day is celebrated on 1 December, the day of his martyrdom.



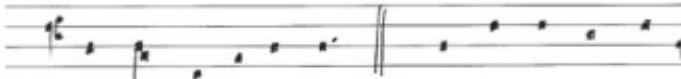
*Stained glass window,
Corpus Christi, St Alphonsus
and St Margaret RC Church,
Oxford*

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The Cantor sings the antiphon which all repeat. Then he sings versus ad repetendum (VR). All repeat the antiphon. Then follow as many verses of psalm 33 as are needed, with the antiphon repeated after each one. When the initial rites are nearly complete, the Cantor sings the doxology, followed by the antiphon and the VR, after which the antiphon is sung for the last time.



Ant. Many are the trials of the just, but from them all



the Lord will rescue them. VR. The Lord will keep guard



over all their bones; not one of their bones shall be broken.

1 I will bless the Lord at all times; • praise of him is always in my mouth.

Repeat ant.

2 In the Lord my soul shall always make its boast; • the humble shall hear and be glad.

Repeat ant.

3 Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Repeat ant. VR. Repeat ant.

Celebrant: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

C. The Lord be with you.

P. And with your spirit.

**I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, (and, striking their breast, they say:)
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

C. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

P. Amen.

C: Kýrie eléison.

P: Kýrie eléison.

C: Christe eléison.

P: Christe eléison.

C: Kýrie eléison.

P: Kýrie eléison.

Glória in excélsis Deo.

Et in terra pax homínibus bonæ voluntátis. Laudámus te. Benedícimus te. Adorámus te. Glorificámus te. Grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam glóriam tuam. Dómine Deus, Rex cæléstis, Deus Pater omnípotens. Dómine Fili unigénite, Iesu Christe. Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius Patris. Qui tollis peccáta mundi, miserére nobis. Qui tollis peccáta mundi, súscipe deprecatiónem nostram. Qui sedes ad déxteram Patris, miserére nobis. Quóniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dóminus. Tu solus Altíssimus, Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

THE COLLECT

C. Let us pray.

Almighty, eternal God, you chose from the people of England and Wales St Ralph Sherwin and his companions to be made like Christ, who died to save the world.

Listen to their prayers: strengthen the Church by the same faith and love that strengthened them, and bless it always with your gift of unity.

Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

P. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

A reading from the Second Book of Maccabees (6:18-31)

Eleazar, one of the foremost teachers of the Law, a man already advanced in years and of most noble appearance, had his mouth forced open, to make him eat a piece of pork. But he, resolving to die with honour rather than to live disgraced, walked of his own accord to the torture of the wheel, having spat the stuff out, as befits those with the courage to reject what is not lawful to taste, rather than live. The people supervising the ritual meal, forbidden by the Law, because of the length of time for which they had known him, took him aside and privately urged him to have meat brought of a kind he could properly use, prepared by himself, and only pretend to eat the portions of sacrificial meat as prescribed by the king; this action would enable him to escape death, by availing himself of an act of kindness prompted by their long friendship. But having taken a noble decision worthy of his years and the dignity of his great age and the well-earned distinction of his grey hairs, worthy too of his impeccable conduct from boyhood, and above all of the holy legislation established by God himself, he answered accordingly, telling them to send him at once to Hades.

‘Pretence’, he said, ‘does not befit our time of life; many young people would suppose that Eleazar at the age of ninety had conformed to the foreigners’ way of life and, because I had played this part for the sake of a paltry brief spell of life, might themselves be led astray on my account; I should only bring defilement and disgrace on my old age.

Even though for the moment I avoid execution by man, I can never, living or dead, elude the grasp of the Almighty. Therefore if I am man enough to quit this life here and now, I shall prove myself worthy of my old age, and I shall have left the young a noble example of how to make a good death, eagerly and generously, for the venerable and holy laws.’ So saying, he walked straight to the wheel, while those who were escorting him, recently so well disposed towards him, turned against him after this declaration, which they regarded as sheer madness. He for his

part, just before he died under the blows, gave a sigh and said, 'The Lord whose knowledge is holy sees clearly that, though I might have escaped death, from awe of him I gladly endure these agonies of body under the lash, and that in my soul I am glad to suffer.'

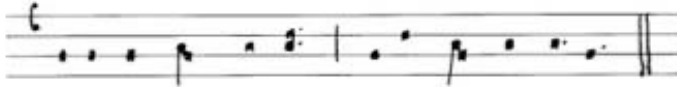
This was how he died, leaving his death as an example of nobility and a record of virtue not only for the young but for the greater part of the nation.

The word of the Lord.

P. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (PS 30)

The cantor sings the whole antiphon, which all repeat. Then he sings the verses of Psalm 30 with the second part of the antiphon only repeated after each verse. At the end, the Cantor sings the whole response, and all repeat it.



Ant. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spi- rit.

Be a rock of refuge for me, a mighty stronghold to save me. All: **I commend my spirit...**

For you are my rock, my stronghold; for your name's sake lead me and guide me.

All: **I commend my spirit...**

Into your hands I commend my spirit. It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

All: **I commend my spirit...**

As for me, I trust in the Lord; let me be glad and rejoice in your love.

All: **I commend my spirit...**

Let your face shine upon your servant, save me in your love. All: **I commend my spirit...**

You hide them in the shelter o your presence, from the plotting of men.

All: **I commend my spirit...**

Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit. All: **Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (8:31-39)

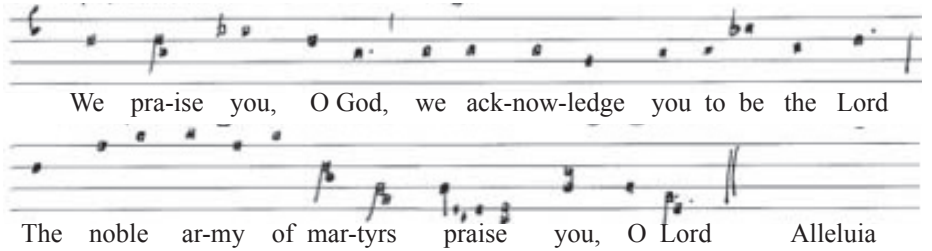
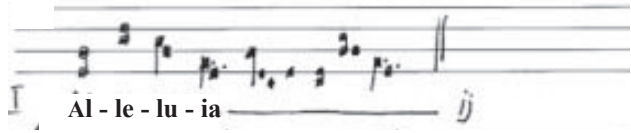
With God on our side, who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain after such a gift that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us - he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing, therefore, can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. As scripture promised: for your sake we are being massacred daily, and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of Him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God, made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

P. Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA
(de Communi Martyrum)
cum Iubilo



THE GOSPEL

C. The Lord be with you.

P. And with your spirit.

C. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (12:49-53)

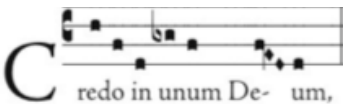
Jesus said to his disciples: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress until it is over! "Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on: a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

The Gospel of the Lord.

P. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE HOMILY

NICENO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED



Patrem omnipotentem, factorem cæli et terræ,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum
Dóminum Iesum Christum, Fílium Dei unigénitum.

Et ex Patre natum ante ómnia sácula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lúmine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Génitum, non factum, consubstantiálem Patri: per quem ómnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos hómines, et propter nostram salútem descendit de cælis.

Et incarnátus est de Spíritu Sancto ex María Vírgine, et homo factus est.

Crucifixus étiam pro nobis: sub Póntio Piláto passus, et sepúltus est. Et resurrexit tértia die, secúndum Scriptúras. Et ascendit in cælum: sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum ventúrus est cum glória iudicáre vivos, et mortúos: cuius regni non erit finis. Et in Spíritum Sanctum, Dóminum et vivificántem: qui ex Patre, Filióque procedit. Qui cum Patre, et Fílio simul adorátur et conglorificátur: qui locútus est per Prophétas. Et unam, sanctam, cathólicam et apostólicam Ecclésiám. Confíteor unum baptísma in remissionem peccatórum. Et expécto resurrectionem mortuórum. Et vitam ventúri sáculi. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Reader: Lord, hear us.

P: Lord graciously hear us.

THE LITURGY OF THE ECHARIST

C. Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life.

P. Blessed be God for ever.

C. Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink.

P. Blessed be God for ever.

C. Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

P. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Lord, accept the gifts we offer in memory of the Martyr, St Ralph Sherwin.

May they be pleasing to you as was the shedding of his blood for the faith.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

P. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

C. The Lord be with you.

P. And with your spirit.

C. Lift up your hearts.

P. We lift them up to the Lord.

C. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P. It is right and just.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For the blood of St Ralph Sherwin, poured out like Christ's to glorify your name, shows forth your marvellous works, by which in our weakness you perfect your power and on the feeble bestow strength to bear you witness, through Christ our Lord.

Therefore, now and for ages unending, with all the host of Angels, we sing to you with all our hearts, crying out as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER 1

To you, therefore, most merciful Father, we make humble prayer and petition through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord: that you accept and bless these gifts, these offerings, these holy and unblemished sacrifices, which we offer you firstly for your holy catholic Church. Be pleased to grant her peace, to guard, unite and govern her throughout the whole world, together with your servant Francis, our Pope, and Bernard, our Bishop, and all those who, holding to the truth, hand on the catholic and apostolic faith.

Remember, Lord, your servant St Ralph Sherwin and all gathered here, whose faith and devotion are known to you. For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise or they offer it for themselves and all

who are dear to them: for the redemption of their souls, in hope of health and well-being, and paying their homage to you, the eternal God, living and true.

In communion with those whose memory we venerate, especially the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ, and blessed Joseph, her Spouse, your blessed Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, (James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude; Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian) and all your Saints;

we ask that through their merits and prayers, in all things we may be defended by your protecting help. Therefore, Lord, we pray: graciously accept this oblation of our service, that of your whole family; order our days in your peace, and command that we be delivered from eternal damnation and counted among the flock of those you have chosen.

Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect; make it spiritual and acceptable, so that it may become for us the Body and Blood of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day before he was to suffer, he took bread in his holy and venerable hands, and with eyes raised to heaven to you, O God, his almighty Father, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

**Take this, all of you, and eat of it,
for this is my Body,
which will be given up for you.**

In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took this precious chalice in his holy and venerable hands, and once more giving you thanks, he said the blessing and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

**Take this, all of you, and drink from it,
for this is the chalice of my Blood,
the Blood of the new and eternal covenant,
which will be poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.**

Do this in memory of me.

C: The mystery of faith.

P: **When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the blessed Passion, the Resurrection from the dead, and the glorious Ascension into heaven of Christ, your Son, our Lord, we, your servants and your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty from the gifts that you have given us, this pure victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation. Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God: command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty, so that all of us, who through this participation at the altar receive the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.

Commemoration of the Dead

Remember also, Lord, your servants St Ralph Sherwin and the English Martyrs who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace. Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in Christ, a place of refreshment, light and peace.

To us, also, your servants, who, though sinners, hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles and Martyrs: with John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, (Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia) and all your Saints; admit us, we beseech you, into their company, not weighing our merits, but granting us your pardon, through Christ our Lord.

Through whom you continue to make all these good things, O Lord; you sanctify them, fill them with life, bless them, and bestow them upon us.

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, for ever and ever.

P: Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

C. At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

**P. Pater noster, qui es in cælis: Sanctificétur nomen tuum:
Advéniat regnum tuum: Fiat vóluntas tua, sicut in cælo, et in terra.
Panem nostrum quotidiánum da nobis hódie:
Et dimítte nobis débita nostra, sicut et nos dimíttimus debitóribus nostris.
Et ne nos indúcas in tentatiónem: Sed libera nos a malo.**

C. Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

P. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

C. Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

P. Amen

C. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

P. And with your spirit.

C. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

P. Amen

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi: miserére nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi: miserére nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccáta mundi: dona nobis pacem.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

C. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins the of the world.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

P. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

THE COMMUNION

C. The Body of Christ.

P. Amen.

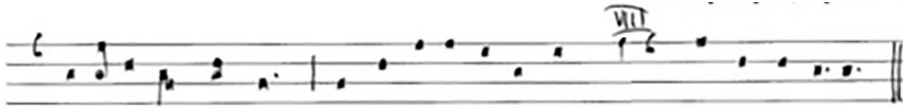
When Communion is ministered under both kinds:

C. The Blood of Christ.

P. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Cantor sings the antiphon, which all repeat. Then he sings as many verses of Psalm 33 as are needed during the distribution of Holy Communion, with the antiphon repeated after each one.



Ant. I say to you my friends; Do not be afraid of those who kill the body.

- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times; • praise of him is always in my mouth. *Ant.*
- 2 In the Lord my soul shall always make its boast: • the humble shall bear and be glad. *Ant.*
- 3 Glorify the Lord with me; • together let us praise his name. *Ant.*
- 4 I sought the Lord and he answered me, • from all my terrors he set me free. *Ant.*
- 5 Look towards him and be radiant: • let your faces not be abashed. *Ant.*
- 6 This lowly one called; the Lord heard. • and rescued him from all his distress. *Ant.*
- 7 The angel of the Lord is encamped around those who fear him, • to rescue them. *Ant.*
- 8 Taste and see that the Lord is good. • Blessed is the man who seeks refuge in him. *Ant.*

C. Let us pray.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Father, may this food from heaven enable us, like St Ralph,
to share our faith joyfully with all whom we meet.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

P. Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

C. The Lord be with you.

P. And with your spirit.

C. May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

P. Amen

C: Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. .

P. Thanks be to God.

DECORA LUX

1. Decora lux aeternitatis auream
Diem beatis irrigavit ignibus,
Apostolorum quae coronat Principes,
Reisque in astra liberam pandit viam.

2. Mundi Magister, atque caeli Janitor,
Romae parentes, arbitrique gentium,
Per ensis ille, hic per crucis victor necem,
Vitae senatum laureate possident.

3. O Roma felix, quae duorum Principum
Es consecrata glorioso sanguine:
Horum cruore purpurata ceteras,
Excellis orbis una pulchritudines.

4. Sit Trinitati sempiterna gloria,
Honor, potestas, atque jubilatio,
In unitate quae gubernat omnia,
Per universa saeculorum saecula. Amen.

1. The beauteous light of God's eternal Majesty
Streams down in golden rays to grace this holy day
Which crowned the princes of the Apostles' glorious choir,
And unto guilty mortals showed the heavenward way.

2. The teacher of the world and keeper of heaven's gate,
Rome's founders twain and rulers too of every land,
Triumphant over death by sword and shameful cross,
With laurel crowned are gathered to the eternal band.

3. O happy Rome! who in thy martyr princes' blood,
A twofold stream, art washed and doubly sanctified.
All earthly beauty thou alone outshinest far,
Empurpled by their outpoured life-blood's glorious tide.

4. All honour, power, and everlasting jubilee
To Him who all things made and governs here below,
To God in essence One, and yet in persons Three,
Both now and ever, while unending ages flow. AMEN





*The Alumni of the
Venerable English College, Rome
thank the Rector and Chaplain of
Exeter College, Oxford
for the use of the College Chapel to celebrate this
Annual Martyrs' Day Mass.*

