



St. Edmund Arrowsmith

Edmund Arrowsmith was born in **Haydock in Lancashire** in 1585 into a strong Catholic family which had **suffered persecution** because its members refused to attend the Church of England. In fact, **two of his relatives**, Fr John Gerard and Miles Gerard, **were executed** because of their faith.

As a child his parents were put in prison and Edmund was looked after by his neighbours.

At the age of 20, Edmund left England to study to be a priest. He was eventually ordained in France when he was 27. He **came back to England** and saying mass and supporting Catholics relatively untroubled for 10 years. However, he was arrested and put in prison by the **Church of England Bishop of Chester** in 1622.

Fortunately, King James I ordered all priests to be released around about this time because he was trying to arrange a marriage for his son to the Infanta - a Spanish Catholic princess. **Edmund was set free**. It was about this time that he joined the Jesuit order of priests.

However, attitudes towards Catholics took a turn for the worse and, in 1628, **Edmund was betrayed** by a man called Holden. Edmund has criticised him for **marrying one of his own close family** and Holden had decided to take revenge!

This time, there was to be no release and on 28th August, 1628, he suffered a brutal death. He was hung until he had nearly suffocated. Then the executioner **cut his body open** so his heart, lungs and intestines could be seen. He was still alive and in great agony. Finally, **he was beheaded** and his limbs cut off.

His head was put on a spear at Lancaster Castle as a **warning to other Catholics!**

4th May Feast of the English Martyrs

A **martyr is someone who dies for their faith** and Edmund Arrowsmith is one of the 40 English martyrs that the Catholic Church regards as saints!

He was a Jesuit priest and his **preserved hand** can still be seen at **St. Oswald's Church in Ashton-in-Makerfield**.

The house flag for Arrowsmith is RED, reminding us of the blood shed by Edmund.

PRAYER

Lord, we give thanks for the bravery and faithfulness of Edmund Arrowsmith.

We pray that we too might be courageous and faithful in times of trouble.

We pray this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.