



Shrine of St Margaret Clitherow

13/12/2015

York

34, The Shambles - York - United Kingdom



The Shrine of St Margaret Clitherow is in a house in the Shambles, York's ancient street of the butchers. St Margaret lived in this house or in one very similar nearby.

St Margaret Clitherow is one of the best known and loved of the English Martyrs. Margaret Middleton was born in York in 1556. In 1571 she married a prosperous butcher, John Clitherow. She became a Catholic in 1574.

At a time when it was held to be an act of treason to be a Catholic priest in England or to shelter a priest, Margaret had Mass celebrated above the family's house and shop in the Shambles. She also ran a small school to teach the Catholic Faith to children.

In 1586 her activities were betrayed to the authorities. When charged, Margaret refused to plead. She did not want to expose her family, friends or the children in her school to the risks involved in giving evidence in a trial: they may have betrayed others; they might have denied their faith in public.

The penalty for refusing to plead was being crushed to death. It was expected that the victim, in the absence of other evidence, might betray herself under the torture. Margaret suffered this fate on 25th March, 1586. It was Good Friday and the Feast of the Annunciation. She prayed aloud but gave nothing away.

Margaret Clitherow had three children. Her son Henry Clitherow went abroad to train as a priest and returned to work on the English Mission.