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Jan. 11, Blessed William Carter, Martyr

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Jan. 11, 2010 NCR Today

Today is the feast of Blessed William Carter, 1548-1584, who was martyred in England for printing Catholic books. He was beatified in 1987 by Pope John Paul II.

To see the kind of books published in 16th-century London by William Carter [1] and his contemporaries and his predecessors (including the famous Wynken de Worde [2]), click here. [3]

Fleet Street [4] ("fletestrete") was already becoming the center of publishing in London, and printers/publishers identified their exact location by the nearest alehouse sign: "three Pidgeons", "signe of the sonne", "black Spread-Eagle at the West-end of Pauls", etc.

By the time of William Carter it had become necessary to provide false information in colophons for safety's sake. Carter calls himself Johannem Bogardi, and claims his edition of a Peter Canisius book was actually printed in "Duaci" (Douay).

But he got caught. He was imprisoned and tortured for eighteen months. His wife died while he was in prison. Finally, he was put on trial. The jury was out for fifteen minutes. Guilty. William made his final confession to a priest on trial with him. Condemned for printing Catholic books. The next day he was hanged, drawn, and quartered, with all that entailed.

Click here [5] to see his entry on page 14 of *Martyrs of England and Wales: 1535-1680.* "Ven. William Carter, layman; b. London; printer. Cond. for printing Catholic books. H.D.Q. + Tyburn, [6] January 11."

Click here [7] for a 2009 article from *The Catholic Herald* about plans for a memorial to the Tyburn Martyrs: "Since the Fifties the site of the gallows has been marked simply by a stone roundel in a traffic island at the intersection of Edgware Road and Bayswater Road, near to Marble Arch, bearing the image of a plain black cross and the words: 'The site of the Tyburn Tree.'"

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Links:
[1] http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15630b.htm
[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wynkyn_de_Worde
[3] http://tiny.cc/g5Czs
[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleet_Street
[5] http://tiny.cc/eDiYY
[6] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyburn
[7] http://tiny.cc/9rXR3