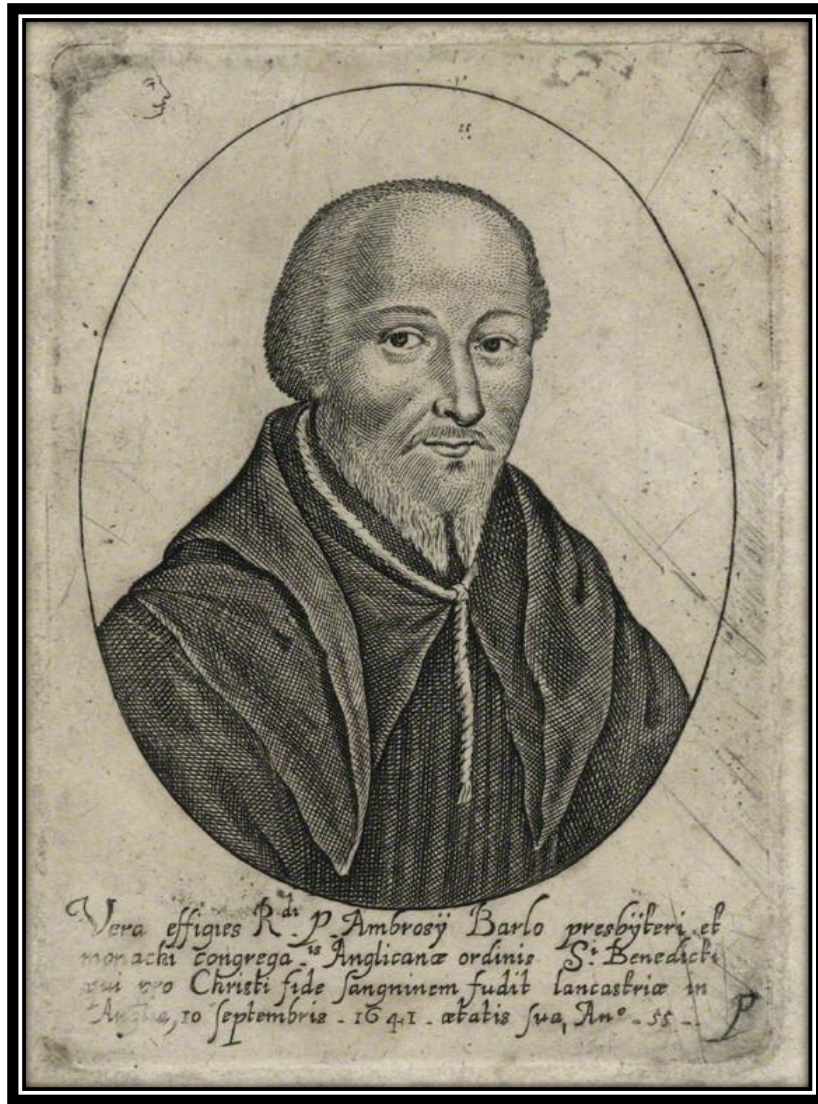


Saint Ambrose Barlow

His life, times and relics.



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and
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On 10th September 1641 Ambrose Barlow, a priest and monk of the Order of Saint Benedict, was executed at Lancaster for high treason. Being born in Lancashire in 1585, in childhood he had managed to cope with being a Catholic in the reign of Elizabeth I and had worked as a priest during the reign of James I. However, he fell victim to the political and religious turmoil in England in the years preceding the outbreak of the Civil War. On the 25th October 1970 he was one of the “Forty Martyrs of England and Wales” canonised by Pope Paul VI. His relics are substantial, widely dispersed and still venerated. In this short work we explore some aspects of his life, death and lasting impact on the Catholic community.

It is difficult for us living in a secular age to appreciate the importance of religious belief and practice to our ancestors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Only by considering these matters can we understand the story of Ambrose. Inability to practise one’s religion in a manner pleasing to God could lead to the abandonment of hopes of heaven and doom a person to an eternity of damnation. Henry VIII’s dispute and final break with Rome after 1533 left the nation as undeniably Christian but with great variations in opinion as to how to live a Christian life. The separation, brought about in order to secure the Tudor dynasty, left large sections of the population with spiritual loyalty to the Pope. Others, also troublesome to those in authority, spurred on by the Reformation in Europe and ideas spread by the printing press, saw little need for bishops and the formal ecclesiastical structure so important to the monarch in maintaining political control. Rather than the various groups displaying Christian piety and benevolence, the spirit of the age was one of persecution and animosity.



Thomas Cranmer, 1545 by Gerlach Flicke

Henry VIII’s dispute and final break with Rome after 1533 had arisen because of his attempts to safeguard the Tudor dynasty by producing a male heir. Although religious practice changed comparatively little during his reign, the King replaced the Pope as Supreme Head of the English church. During the reigns of three of his children the nature of religious observance swung widely; severe measures were taken against those who did not follow the current official line. The reign of Edward VI (1537-53) saw the introduction of increasingly Protestant practices under the guidance of Archbishop Cranmer. The seizure of Church property, begun under Henry VIII, continued. The real presence of God in the sacraments of the bread and the wine was denied and communion in both forms could be taken by the laity rather than just by the priests. After much discussion the Book of Common Prayer was produced in 1552, specifying the liturgy to be used in parish churches. The Act of Uniformity 1551 stated that “....all and every Person and Persons inhabiting within this Realm, or any other of the King's Majesty's Dominions, shall diligently and faithfully, having no lawful or reasonable Excuse to be absent, endeavour themselves to resort to their Parish

Church or Chapel accustomed, or, upon reasonable Let thereof, to some usual Place where Common Prayer and such Service of God shall be used”. Attendance or conducting a service at a place where the liturgy was not followed would lead to imprisonment.

Despite attempts to exclude her from the throne, Edward’s Catholic half-sister, Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, became Queen and, with determination, set about undoing the work of Edward and Cranmer. On her accession in 1553 she issued a proclamation stating that she would not compel her subjects to follow her religion but all the religious legislation of Edward was repealed. Clerical celibacy was restored. Leading reformers such as Hugh Latimer and Thomas Cranmer were imprisoned. In an attempt to ensure the continuation of the Catholic line, Mary married Philip of Spain in 1554. In that year the English church was returned to Roman jurisdiction and the Heresy Acts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were revived.



Fearing the penalties specified by these Acts, many rich Protestants sought exile but those that remained fell victim to the so-called Marian Persecution, giving the Queen the nickname “Bloody Mary”. Bishops Latimer and Ridley were burned at the stake as heretics. Cranmer’s renunciation of Protestantism was not enough to save him and he too was burned. In all, about two hundred and eighty religious dissenters met the same fate. Mary’s failure to produce an heir led to the accession of her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth, in 1558 and then the oppressors became the oppressed.

A crucial issue was the inter-relationship between religious loyalty and political allegiance. Any monarch could not be sure of the support of a subject who did not conform to his or her version of Christianity. Religious freedom could lead to the emergence of powerful groups intent on overthrowing the established order. The interplay of religion and politics may be seen throughout the reign of Elizabeth at both a domestic and international level.

Despite the urging of France to the contrary the Pope, Paul IV (1555-59), did not protest against Elizabeth’s claim to the throne. She lost little time in removing the country from papal control and ending Catholic religious practices. Through the Act of Supremacy in 1558, and her adoption of the title “Supreme Governor of this realm” Elizabeth substituted royal for papal authority in spiritual matters. The Act of Uniformity of the same year replaced the mass and other Roman exercises with a modified version of the Book of Common Prayer dating from the reign of Edward VI. The prayer-book introduced into the English language memorable phrases such as “from ashes to ashes, dust to dust” and “speak now or for ever hold thy peace”. The effect of the Act of Supremacy was that anyone who maintained papal authority would forfeit all goods and chattels in the case of the first offence. Reoffending would lead a person to face the law of Praemunire. This prohibited the assertion of any papal or foreign authority over that of the monarch, which could, after further offences, lead to charges of high treason and the banning of heirs from inheriting honours and offices. The Act of Uniformity was intended to force on the nation the adoption of the Book of Common Prayer. Any cleric who used any other form of service would lose property and be imprisoned. Those who refused to attend an Anglican service faced a fine of twelve pence on each occasion.

Throughout Elizabeth's reign the intensity of measures taken against priests and the Catholic Faithful varied according to the degree of threat which they were deemed to pose. Tightening of the screw sometimes followed external challenges, usually from the Pope. It must not be assumed, however, that leading non-Catholics were of one mind as to how to deal with the Catholic population. Within Parliament the Commons sometimes expressed opinions considered too extreme by both the Lords and the monarch. Many compromises had to be made.

Initial relationships with the Papacy had been relatively friendly. Shortly after his consecration Pius IV (1559-65) had written to Elizabeth encouraging her to return the nation to the Catholic fold. His envoy was not allowed to enter the country and his invitation to English bishops to take part in the Council of Trent (1545-63) was rejected. Rumours circulated that the Pope was not entirely opposed to the Book of Common Prayer, and encouraged by this, to avoid fines, many Catholics reluctantly attended Anglican services, though often hearing mass in secret. Papal opposition to Anglican forms of worship became plain in 1562.

Elizabeth's second parliament met in 1563 after the failure of a plot organised by the nephews of Cardinal Pole to overthrow the government. Ecclesiastical commissioners also reported that the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity were being flouted and the result was the passing of "an Act for the assurance of the queen's royal power." This specified that an oath affirming the supremacy of the Queen had to be taken by all holders of significant positions and by all those who attended mass or who assisted in its celebration. Refusal to take the oath would lead to forfeiture of property and imprisonment. A repeat offence would lead to the offender being hanged, drawn and quartered as a traitor. In practice the Act was not implemented fully but it posed a powerful threat.

At a Convocation of the English Church in 1563, under the leadership of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were accepted which set out the key features of the doctrine of the Church of England. They reflected some traditional Roman practice and avoided some of the more extreme Protestant ideas followed on the continent. The breach with Rome was made abundantly clear, The Pope was declared to have no power in England, the "Sacrifices of the Mass" were said to be fables; transubstantiation had no scriptural foundation; the Roman doctrines of purgatory, indulgences, the invocation of saints and the veneration of images and saints were described as foolish and vain inventions and "contrary to the Word of God."

On the accession of Pope Pius V (1566 – 72) the papal attitude towards the Queen changed as it became obvious that there would be no voluntary return of England to Catholicism. The Pope made a strong condemnation of the Book of Common Prayer and two English priests, Sanders and Harding, were empowered to give absolution to all those guilty of schism, that is promoting division within the Church. This was followed up by a papal bull authorising the absolution of those who had been guilty of heresy by conforming to the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. Those following the old religion were encouraged by William Allen (1532-1594), born in the Fylde area of Lancashire and later to become a cardinal, who in 1568 founded the English College at Douai. His intention was to train young English men for the priesthood with the intention that these "seminary priests" should return to England to promote the Faith.

The Queen's position was far from secure. There was a rival claimant to the throne, the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, and in 1569, in her support, the Northern Rising occurred under the leadership of the Earls of Westmorland and Northumberland. This was put down with difficulty by Elizabeth's forces. The papal response in 1570 was to issue a bull, "Regnans in Excelsis" excommunicating Elizabeth. The Pope's displeasure and his reaction to events in England may be seen in the following extracts from the Bull:-

"Elizabeth, the pretended queen of England...having usurped the place of supreme head of the Church of England.....has reduced this same kingdom to a miserable ruin. She has.....oppressed the followers of the Catholic faith, instituted false preachers and ministers of impiety, abolished the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, fasts, celibacy and Catholic ceremonies.....She has dared to eject bishops, rectors of churches and

other Catholic priests from their churches and benefices.....She has forced the people to come to terms with her wicked laws, to abjure the authority and obedience of the pope of Rome. She has thrown Catholic prelates and parsons into prison where many have miserably ended their lives.....Therefore we declare the aforesaid Elizabeth to be a heretic and her to have incurred the sentence of excommunication and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ."

S. D. N. PII PAPÆ V. *Sententia Declaratoria contra Elizabetham, prætensam Angliæ reginam, et ei adhærentes hæreticos, &c. Feb. 25, 1569.*

[Sanders, De Schism. Angl. 368.]

Pius Episcopus, Servus Servorum Dei, ad futuram rei memoriam.

Regnans in excelsis, cui data est omnis in cœlo et in terrâ potestas, unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam, extra quam nulla est salus, uni soli in terris, videlicet, apostolorum principi Petro, Petrique successori Romano pontifici, in potestatis plenitudine tradidit gubernandam. Hunc unum super omnes gentes et omnia regna principem constituit, qui evellat, destruat, dissipet, disperdat, plantet, et ædificet; ut fidelem populum, mutue charitatis nexu constrictum, in unitate spiritûs contineat, salvumque et incolumem suo exhibeat salvatori. Quo quidem in munere obeundo, nos, ad prædictæ ecclesiæ gubernacula Dei

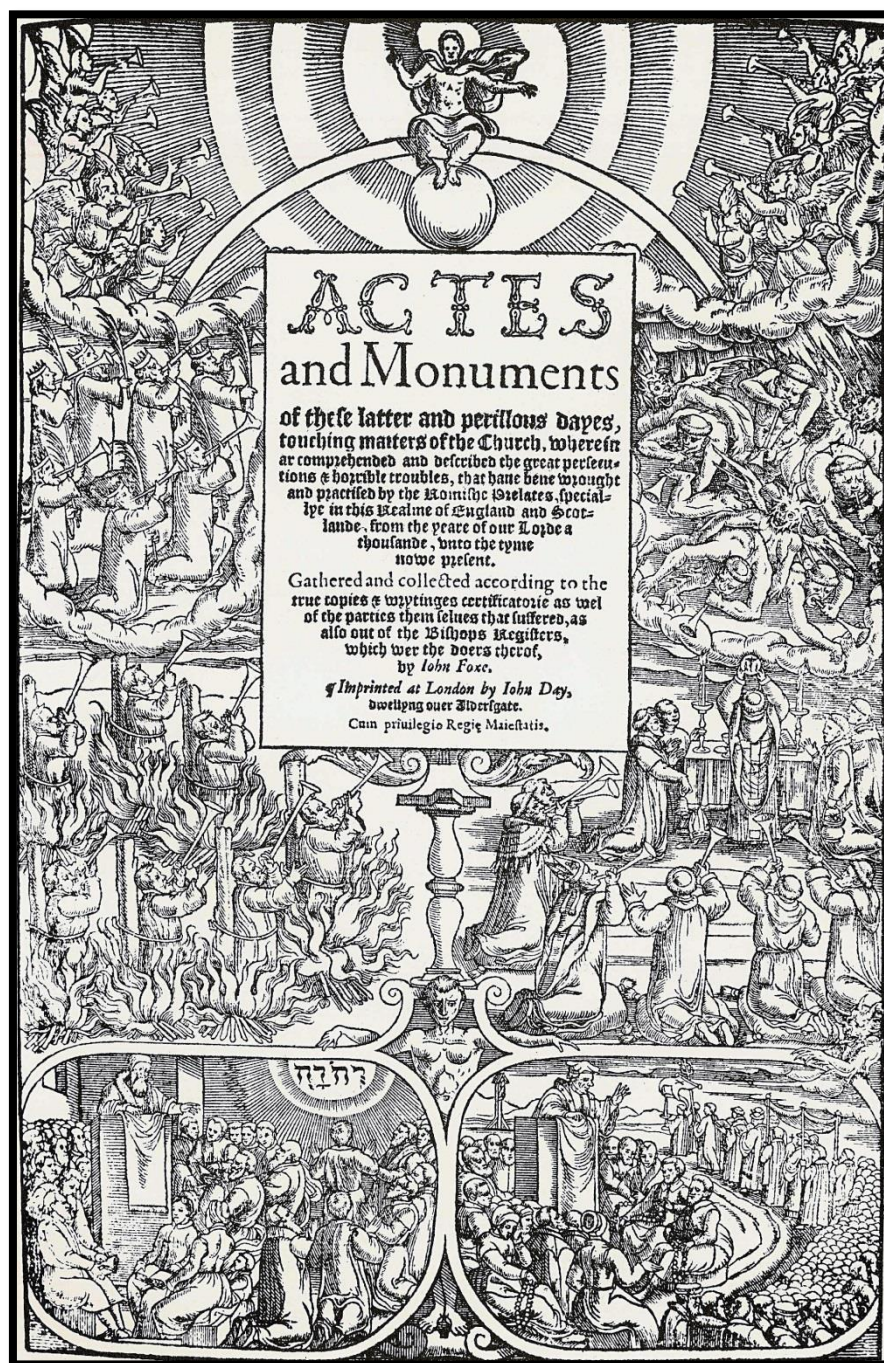
The Bull goes on to deny "the pretended queen" the right to her crown and to absolve all her peoples from any sworn oaths of fealty and obedience. Those that persisted in following her commands should also consider themselves excommunicated. To people who accepted the reality of eternal damnation this was a dreadful penalty. Politically it was practically an instruction to rebel.

Royal reaction was both predictable and necessary. Statues were quickly passed making it high treason to affirm that the queen had no right to the crown or to declare her a heretic. Similarly it was high treason to seek to put into effect or publish any papal bull. To counter the efforts of the seminary priests in trying to win back those who had agreed to attend the Anglican services, there was passed the Statute of Persuasion, (23 Eliz. C1) making it high treason for a priest to reconcile, and for a layman to be reconciled "from the religion now by the Queen's authoritie established within her highness's dominions to the Romish Religion." It was on the basis of this statute that John Rigby, another of the Lancashire martyr saints, was later to be put to death.

Penalties were imposed on those who brought into the country articles blessed by the Pope and on people leaving the country for lengthy periods without royal approval. Fines and imprisonment for non-attendance at Anglican services or hearing the mass were increased. 1585 saw the passing of the "Act against Jesuits, Seminary priests and other such like disobedient persons". This made it high treason for any Jesuit or seminary priest to be in England and a felony for anyone to harbour or relieve them. It was under the terms of this act that most of the English martyrs were executed during and after Elizabeth's reign.

Meanwhile the attitude of the English population towards Catholics and Catholicism was being greatly influenced by a highly significant book, "Actes and Monuments", generally known as "Foxe's Book of Martyrs". The first English edition appeared in 1563, published by John Day, which ran to almost 1,800 pages. John Foxe covered the history of those who had died for their faith from the early Christian martyrs, through the medieval period, ending with graphic illustrated accounts of those who had fallen victim to Marian persecution. By 1596 it had grown in size and it had reached its fifth edition. Far from being an unbiased text, it was a work of anti-Catholic propaganda. Following a Convocation order in 1571, this tome

was chained beside the Great Bible, authorised by Henry VIII, in cathedrals and many churches. Selected readings were made from the pulpit and treated almost as Scripture. Some historians argue that it developed the concept of an English nation threatened by foreign enemies.



Protestant England faced its greatest challenge in the form of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Relations between Catholic Spain and Protestant England were always going to be difficult but problems were exacerbated by the piratical activities of English seamen and English support for Protestant rebels in the Low Countries. Elizabeth's order to execute her Catholic rival, Mary Queen of Scots, outraged Catholic Europe. The executed queen had left her claim to the English throne to Phillip II of Spain. Papal authority had been given to his plans to invade England and oust the Queen. In the event, the destruction of the invasion fleet boosted English national pride, strengthened Elizabeth's support and led to Catholicism being associated with a lack of patriotism.



The above comments clearly are applicable to the country as a whole. For the Crown, problems were especially acute in Lancashire which was the strongest Catholic county in the country. Most of the landed gentry refused to attend the parish church and encouraged their tenants to do likewise, even if that meant paying recusancy fines of £20 a month, a crippling burden. Some Catholic landowning families sent their sons to Douai to be trained as priests and from about 1575 they began to trickle back into the county. Even the magistrates and the law officers of the county could not be relied on to conform to the new laws; some were reported to the Privy Council as being recusants. Attempts to serve writs sometimes failed, one royal official being forced to eat an indictment he was seeking to serve on a Catholic.

An excellent summary of the problems of enforcing the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity in Lancashire is to be found in "The Tablet", 30th October, 1926 in an article on the Lancashire Martyrs written by the Rev. Newdigate. The following section is taken from this source.

"The person on whom principally devolved the duty of enforcing the new Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity in Lancashire at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign was William Downham, Bishop of Chester and President of a body of Ecclesiastical Commissioners for that diocese, which included Lancashire. Downham had not been many years in his see when he received from his Royal mistress the following characteristic reminder that he was not doing his duty. It is dated February 21, 1567/8.

The Queen's Majesty to the Bishop of Chester,—We greet you well. We think it not unknown to you how we of our own mere motion, for the good opinion we conceived of you in your former service to us, admitted you to be the Bishop of that diocese of Chester, expecting in you that diligence and carefulness for the constraining of our subjects in the uniformity of religion and service of God according to the laws of our realm, as now (upon the credible reports of disorders and contempts to the contrary in your diocese, and specially in the county of Lancaster) we find great lack in you, being sorry to have our former expectations in this sort deceived.

She goes on to remind the Bishop that "such disorders are found within your diocese as we hear not of the like in any other parts of our realm," and charges him to make a personal visitation "unto the remote parts and specially unto Lancashire" to remedy them. As a result there was a round-up of the Catholic gentry, and the chief of them had to present themselves for examination before the Commissioners at Latham Hall in

the following July. But apparently the Catholics went on much as before. In October, 1570, the newly appointed Bishop of Carlisle reports on his neighbour's diocese : " [In Lancashire] on all hands the people fall from religion, revolt to popery, refuse to come to church; the wicked popish priests reconcile them to the Church of Rome And cause them to abjure this Christ's religion, and that openly and unchecked," &c., In 1574 the Lords of the Council write to stir up the Earl of Derby, who, as Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire, was the principal lay Commissioner : "Lancashire is the very sink of popery, where more unlawful acts have been committed and more unlawful persons holden secret masses than in any other part of the realm."

Bishop Downham died in 1577, and was succeeded by a strenuous persecutor, William Chaderton.Complaints continue to pour in about the Lancashire Catholics. Many of them are sending their children to be educated overseas. "The state of Lancashire is lamentable to behold. . . The offenders continue in their disobedience. . . Masses are said in several places. . . If her Majesty do not proceed in this Commission our country is utterly overthrown : no lenity will do any good. . ."

The prisons were filling with recusants. The New Fleet in Manchester was set aside as the regular prison for Lancashire recusants, or for such of them as could afford to pay the exorbitant Charges for their keep there; the others went to the common "House of Correction."

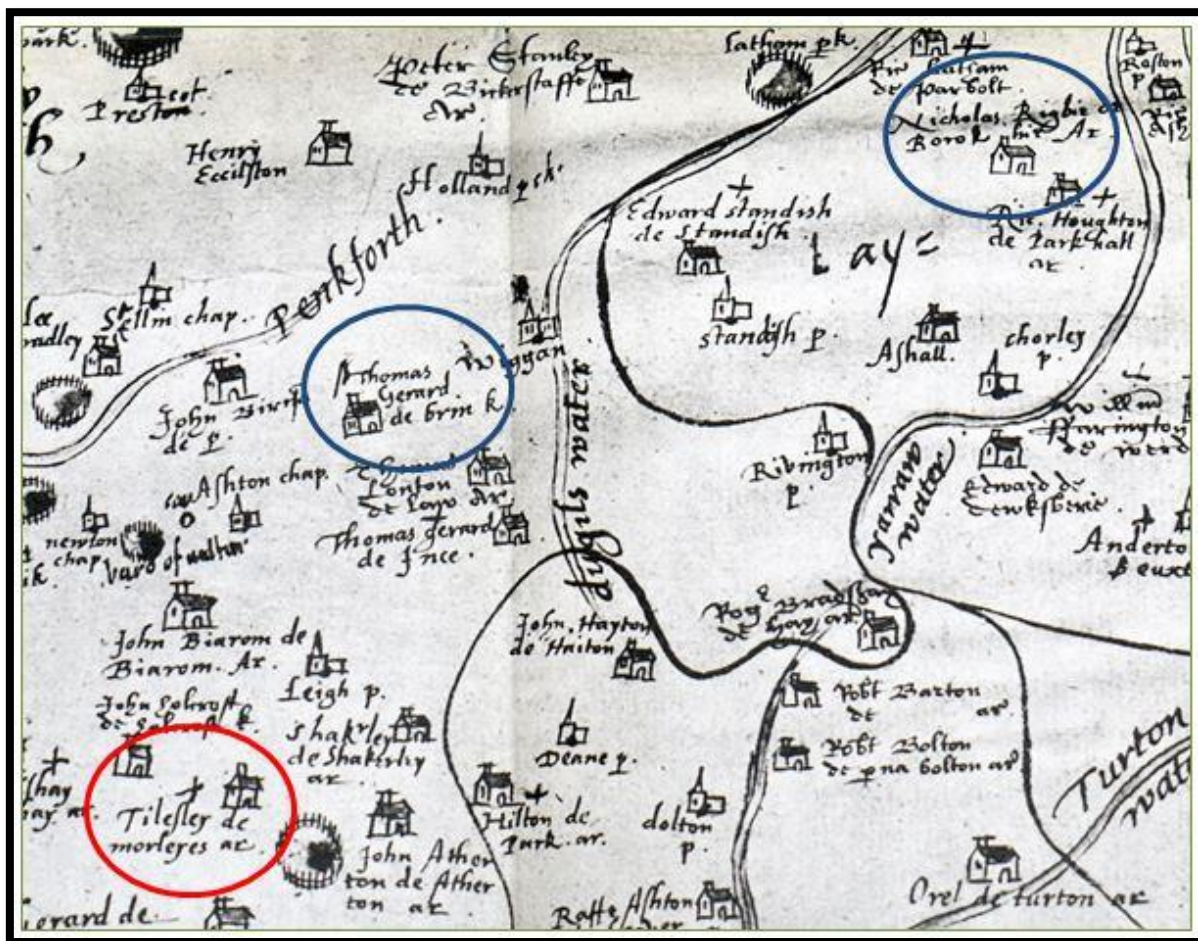
Among the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum (Titus B, iii, f. 58) is "An Information touching the state of Lancashire" in February, 1589. It begins: The County of Lancashire is mightily infected with Popery. The number of Justices of the Peace are but few that take any care in the reformation thereof. The wives, children and servants of some, being also chief officers there, are notable recusants. . . . Few or none receive trial upon indictment. The better sort of recusants there are so linked into kindred and find so great favour at the hands of her Majesty's officers . . . that they are passed over in silence and the poor only drawn to question.

The truth is the greater part of Lancashire and the Lancashire gentry in particular were still thoroughly Catholic at heart all through the Elizabethan persecution. They resented the imposition by force of a mere State religion with a woman—even though that woman were Elizabeth Tudor—for its supreme governor, and the wanton overthrow of all they held most dear. Weak men bowed before the storm, trusting it would soon blow over; there were not a few Catholics at heart who were outwardly occasional conformers. But there were also a vast number of strong men who clung fast to faith and principles and did not grudge the cost."



Lord Burghley's Map of Lancashire 1590. (West at the top)

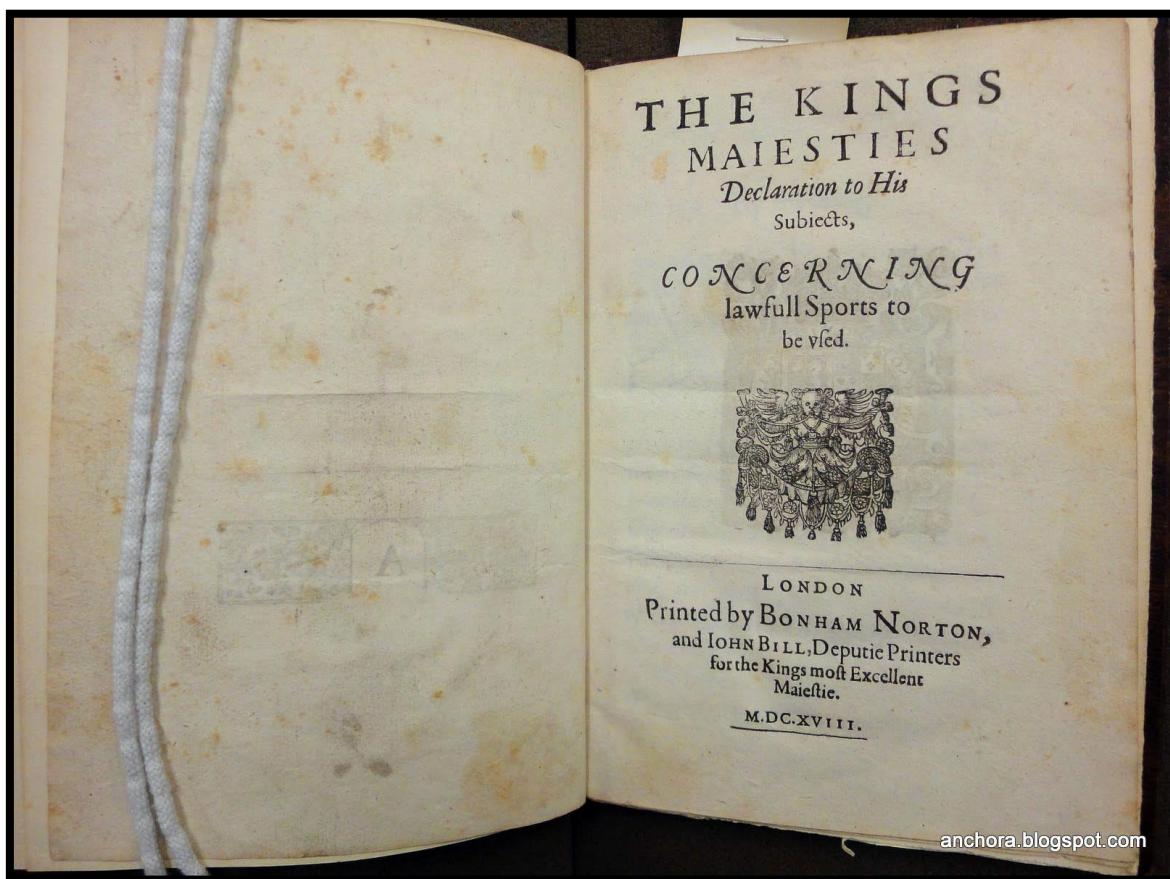
The threat posed by the population of Lancashire was considered to be severe, so much so that it had been feared that the Armada would seek to make a landing there. A remarkable document survives, Lord Burghley's Map of Lancashire, thought to date from 1590. It was drawn up for the Privy Council in the aftermath of the Armada to assist it to tighten its grip on the county. It shows churches, chapels, beacons and the seats of the major landowners.



Lord Burghley, chief advisor to the Queen, marked the houses of well-known Catholic sympathisers with a +. One of those so marked is "Tilley de morleyes". That house and family were to play a major part in the life of Ambrose. Interestingly, marked in a similar way are the homes of Thomas Gerard de brin and Nicholas Rigby. These houses were inhabited by near relatives of two other Lancashire saints, Edmund Arrowsmith and John Rigby respectively.

The challenge to royal power and the established religious order did not just come from the Lancashire Catholics. Manchester and Bolton were hotbeds of Puritanism. The textile trade brought the Puritans of these towns in touch with the London Puritans. By 1590, most of the clergy in these towns did not wear surplices and their congregations were encouraged to take the whole of Sunday as a day of rest. During Elizabeth's reign they formed a radical group within the Anglican Church, producing religious pamphlets to spread their views. After the accession of James I (1603-1625), they tended to break away into non-conformist groups of the Presbyterian persuasion. "The Book of Sports", formally called "The Declaration of Sports", was an order issued by King James I for use in Lancashire to resolve a conflict on the subject of Sunday recreations. This had arisen between the Puritans and the gentry, many of whom were Roman Catholics. Permission was given for dancing, archery, leaping and vaulting, and for "having of May games, Whitsun ales and morris dances, and the setting up of May-poles and other sports therewith used, so as the same may be had in due and convenient time without impediment or neglect of divine service, and that women shall have leave to carry rushes to church for the decorating of it." On the other hand, "bear and bull-baiting, interludes and bowling" were not to be permitted on Sunday. In 1618 the King had ordered this

Declaration to be read by all clergy from the pulpit but the opposition from amongst the Puritans was so great that the command was withdrawn.



W

 Hereas vpon Our retorne the last yeere out
 of Scotland, Wee did publish our pleasure
 touching the recreations of Our people in
 those parts vnder Our hand: For some
 causes Us thereunto mouing, We have thought good to
 command these Our directions then giuen in *Lancashire*
 with a few words thereunto added, and most appliable to
 these parts of our Realmes, to be published to all Our Sub-
 iects.

Whereas We did iustly in Our Progresse through Lanca-
shire, rebuke some Puritanes and precise people, and tooke
order that the like vnlawful cariage should not bee vsed
by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlaw-
full punishing of Our good people for vsing their lawfully
Recreations, and honest exercises vpon Sundayes and
other Holy dayes, after the afternoone Sermon or Service:
Wee now find that two sorts of people wherewith that
Countrey is much infested, (Wee meane Papists and Puri-
tanes)

During the reign of James I (1603-1625) religious divisions became even more pronounced. Extreme Protestants sought religious freedom abroad, as in the case of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 showed the continued threat of assassination and Catholic rebellion. All Elizabeth's measures were confirmed and a new Oath of Allegiance was given to all persons over the age of eighteen. Recusants, those refusing to attend services in the parish church, faced heavy fines and were prohibited from civil and military employment.



Charles I

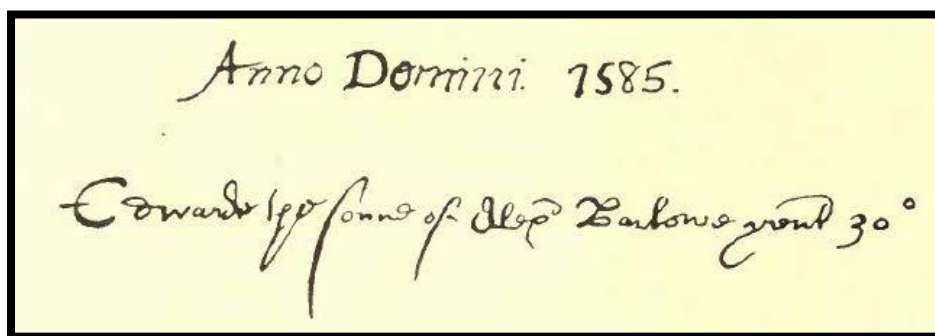
The "Declaration of Sports" was reissued by Charles I on 18th October 1633, as "The King's Majesty's declaration to his subjects concerning lawful sports to be used". This declaration has the same main text as the 1617 and 1618 declarations of King James, with the primary differences an additional introduction and conclusion adding wakes and ales (countryside festivals) to the list of sanctioned recreations. Charles ordered that any minister who refused to read it would be deprived of his position. As the Puritans gained power in Parliament in the lead-up to the English Civil War, hostility to the Book of Sports grew. Attempts to enforce the declaration came to an end with the fall of Archbishop Laud in 1640, and Parliament ordered the book publicly burned in 1643, two years before Laud was executed. By this time, however, Ambrose Barlow had been tried, found guilty of treason and executed.

Biographical information about Ambrose Barlow comes from a limited range of primary and major secondary sources. His story is included in Volume II of the mighty work of Bishop Richard Challoner (1691-1781) known generally as "Memoirs of Missionary Priests". On the frontispiece Challoner stated:-

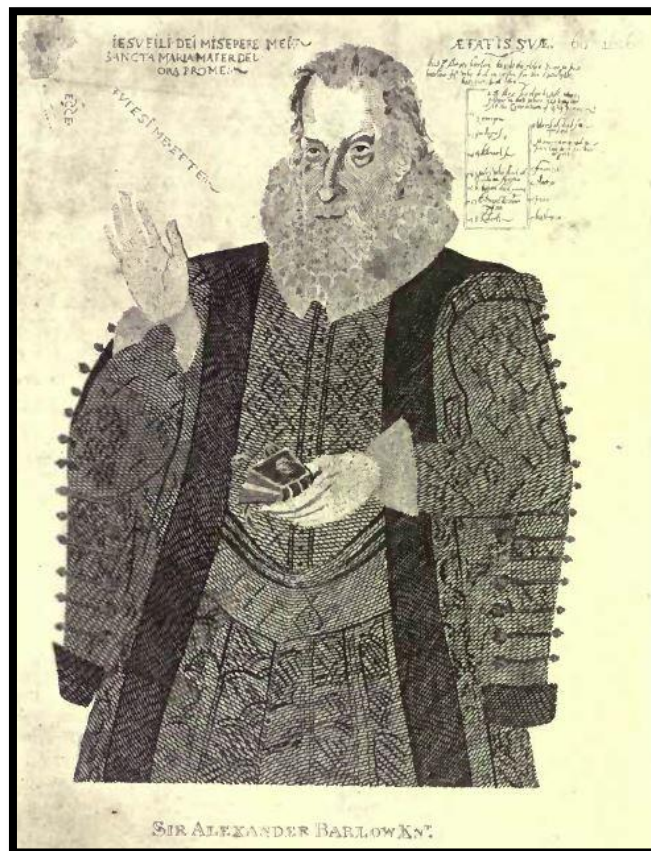
"Carefully collected from the Accounts of Eye Witnesses, contemporary Authors, and Manuscripts in the English Colleges and Convents abroad".

Challoner drew on two documents held by the Benedictines in Douai, one of which was a letter of Ambrose's brother William (Dom Rudesind) to the Abbot and monks of Cello Nuova, dated 1st January 1642. This is turn was based on "The Apostolical Life of Ambrose Barlow", written by a friend and penitent of the saint and sent to Dom Rudesind. The document, held in the John Rylands Library, Manchester was published in 1909 by the Chetham Society with an introduction by W.E. Rhodes. The identity of the author cannot be determined. Dom Bede Camm also drew on the above-mentioned primary sources in his account of Ambrose Barlow in "Forgotten Shrines", 1910. Bede Camm, an eminent scholar, had been ordained as a minister in the Church of England in 1888 but converted to Catholicism in 1890.

Edward Barlow was born at Barlow Hall, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, near Manchester in 1585. He was the fourth son of the Sir Alexander Barlow, who had been knighted on the accession of James I, and his wife Mary, daughter of Sir Uryan Brereton of Handforth Hall Cheshire. Edward was baptised at Didsbury Chapel on 30th November, 1585 but he may have also had a secret Catholic baptism at home.



Edward the sonne of Alex. Barlow gent

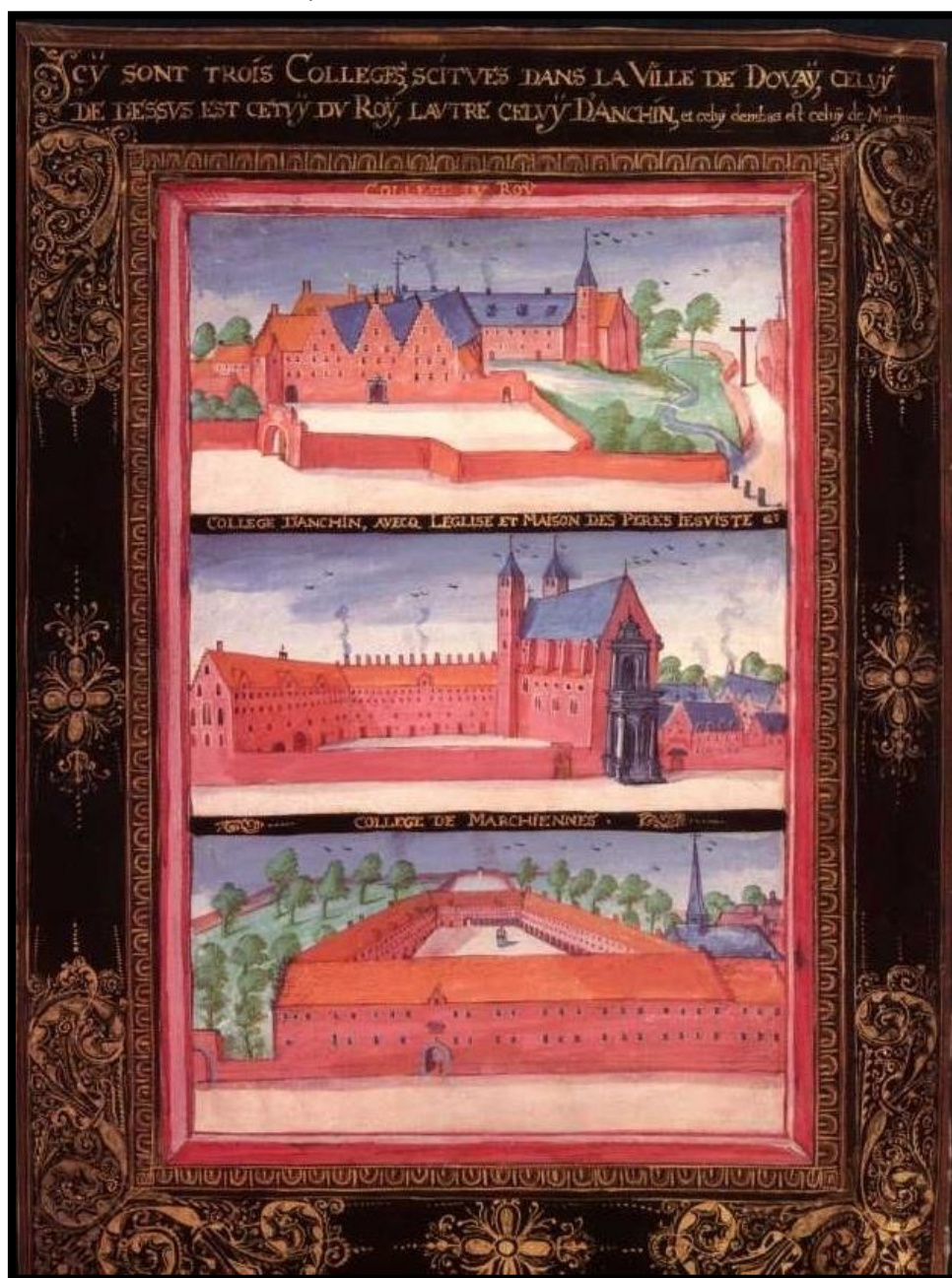


A portrait of Sir Alexander records the names of his eight sons and six daughters. An elder brother, William, was to play a key role in shaping the life of Edward. The Barlow family had conformed to Elizabethan religious requirements after suffering loss of land for their recusancy. However, in his will, Sir Alexander described himself as “A true and perfect Recusant Catholic”. According to Challoner, Alexander ensured that

his son received a liberal and Catholic education. In 1597, at the age of twelve, Edward entered the household of a Protestant relative, Sir Uryan Legh of High Legh, Cheshire, in order to train to be a page. He seems to have followed the Protestant religion until about 1507 when he was brought back to Catholicism by Margaret Davenport, a family friend.

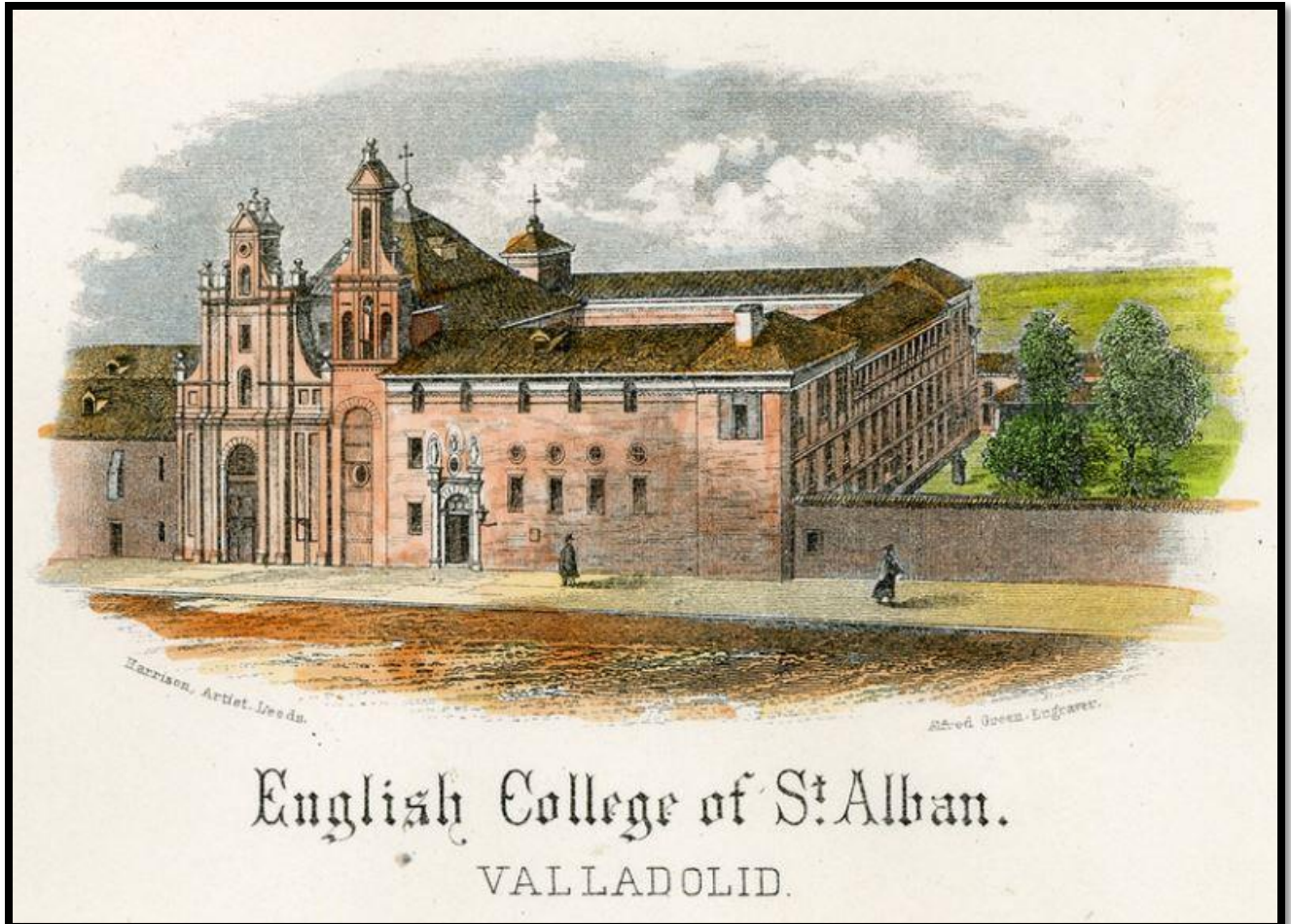
The decision by Ambrose to take religious orders is summarised by Challoner:-

“As he grew up, and considered the emptiness and vanity of the transitory toys of this life, and the greatness of things eternal, he took a resolution to withdraw himself from the world, and to go abroad, in order to procure those helps of virtue and learning, which might qualify him for the priesthood and enable him to be of some assistance to his native country.”



Like the sons of many of the Lancashire Catholic gentry, Edward decided to travel to Douai where, since 1569, an English College created by William Allen had operated. This missionary college or seminary, working with neighbouring monasteries, was intended to provide university-style education to young men prior to them being sent to England to maintain and promote the Catholic faith.

The precise date of Edward's arrival in Douai is unknown. The President of the English College at Edward's time was Dr. Thomas Worthington. According to Challoner, Edward was taught by the Jesuits in the humanity schools at Anchin College. In 1610 he was sent by Dr. Worthington to study philosophy at the Royal College of Saint Alban, Valladolid, Spain where he was admitted with a companion on September 20th, 1610. The College Register states his age as twenty-three but he must have been at most twenty-five.



Well aware of the activities of English spies on the Continent looking for persons likely to return to England as priests, Edward operated under his mother's maiden name, Brereton. He studied in Spain for two years and then returned to Douai, according to the Register "partly on account of ill-health". In Douai he seems to have been based at a newly established Benedictine House dedicated to St. Gregory the Great which served as a monastery, a college and a training school for those who desired to go on the English mission. His brother William (Dom Rudesind) had gone there in 1611 after being ordained a priest and studying for a doctorate at Salamanca. In early 1614, Edward left Douai and went to a monastery of Saint Malo where he became a novice in the Benedictine Order, taking the name of Brother Ambrose. After a stay of nine months he was given permission to return to Douai in 1614 since he requested to be able to complete his theological studies. Undoubtedly an attraction was that his brother had been made Prior of St. Gregory's in 1614. According to Camm "he was clothed with the habit" by his brother on January 4th, 1615 and the Convent of Saint Malo gave up their rights to him as a member of their house on September 20th 1615. The then Dom Ambrose was later made a member of the monastery of Cella Nuova in Galicia where his brother had been professed. He was ordained priest in 1617 and sent to labour on the English mission.

Merely entering the country as a Catholic priest was treasonable and hazardous. Ports were dangerous and officials had descriptions from spies of those attempting to return to these shores. In Elizabeth's "Proclamation against Jesuits", 1591 it was said:-

“And furthermore, because it is known and proved by common experience...that they do come into the same (realm) by secret creeks and landing places, disguised both in names and persons, some in apparel as soldiers, mariners or merchants, pretending that they have heretofore been taken prisoners and put into galleys and delivered. Some come as gentlemen with contrary names in comely apparel as though they had travelled to foreign countries for knowledge: and generally all, for the most part, are clothed like gentlemen in apparel, and many as gallants; yea in all colours, and with feathers and such like, disguising themselves; and many of them in their behaviour as ruffians, far off to be thought or suspected to be friars, priests, Jesuits or popish scholars.”

Brother Ambrose was to minister to the Catholic population in an area between Manchester and Liverpool. Apparently he went to see his parents at Barlow Hall who would not have seen him for about seven years. The letter to Dom Rudesind describes the event:-

“He was such a lover of purity which he professed that upon his coming home, when your deare mother and his went towards him, as if she would have saluted him, he told me that he did runne back till he came to the wall, by which she understood that he had received holy orders and the Sacred Kiss our Our Saviour; no more to be touched by any creature.”

Ambrose had two major bases. Wardley Hall, the seat of the Downe family, was held at this time by Roger Downes, a relation of Sir Alexander Barlow. Morleys Hall was the home of the Tyldesleys. The grandmother of the owner, Sir Thomas Tyldesley, had left a pension of £8 a year to fund a priest who would take charge of the neighbouring Catholics. Ambrose would minister to his flock in private services in these halls but, in addition, he seemed to spend one week a month on a circuit taking in areas inland from Liverpool.

We are fortunate in that the primary sources give us substantial detail about the manner in which Ambrose carried out his work. Challoner used these to write:-

“such was the fervour of his zeal, that he thought the day lost in which he had not done some notable thing for the salvation of souls....Night and day he employed in seeking after the lost sheep and correcting sinners....He found so much pleasure in this inward conversation with God...as much as worldlings would be when going to a feast.

He was always afraid of honours and preferments and had a horror of vain glory, which he used to call the worm or moth of virtues, and which he never failed to correct in, others. He industriously avoided feasts and assemblies, and all meetings for merry making, as liable to dangers of excess, idle talk and detraction.....He chose to live in a private country house, where the poor, to whom he had chiefly devoted his labours, might have, at all times, free access to him. He would never have a servant, till forced to it by sickness; never used a horse, but made his pastoral visits on foot....He allowed himself no manner of play or pastime, and avoided all superfluous talk and conversation; more especially with those of the fair sex. His diet was chiefly whitmeats and garden stuff.... He drank only small beer and that very sparingly; and always abstained from wine. He was never idle, but was always either praying, studying, preaching, administering the sacraments or painting pictures of Christ or his blessed mother....He feared no dangers, when God’s honour and the salvation of souls called him forth...passed, even at noon day through the midst of his enemies, without apprehension....Yet he was very severe in rebuking sin, so that obstinate and impertinent sinners were afraid of coming near him.”

On the eve of principal festivals, Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, Catholics would gather from a wide area. The night was spent in prayer and hearing confessions. On the following day, all were fed, the richer members and Ambrose serving the rest and then they had their meal from the leavings. “Their cheare was boil’d beefe and pottage, minched pies, goose and groates and to every man a gray coate at parting.”

The letter sent to Dom Rudesind after Ambrose’s execution provides more detail about his dress and appearance. He wore

“a long wasted ierkin and doublet, his breeches tied above his knees. The best hatt that euere I say him weare, I would not have giuen two groates for....Instead of pantofles a pair of scuruy old slip-shoes which continually he wore within doors.”

He did not bother to shave. His beard was forked but not long and he had "much haire about his cheeks". Although his diet was meagre, the author wrote "if God should send a venison pastie, he would not refuse to eat of it."

About six months before his arrest in 1641 Ambrose suffered a stroke which affected the use of one side of his body. A Jesuit priest was sent to help him and may have provided some assistance to him while he was in prison.

Ambrose laboured in south Lancashire between 1617 and 1641. It appears that he was arrested and imprisoned on at least four occasions. He ministered to Edmund Arrowsmith in 1628 while the latter was awaiting trial and subsequent execution in Lancaster Prison. He was said to be as well known in the area in which he served as the local Anglican minister. Probably local support enabled him to continue in his role for so long. He had a premonition of what his fate would be since it is reported that Edmund Arrowsmith appeared to him in a dream and said that he too would become a martyr.

In truth, much of Lancashire was not hostile territory for Catholics or their priests. The extent to which anti-Catholic legislation was enforced depended largely on the national picture. Major trouble brewed during the reign of Charles I. He had married a French Catholic, Henrietta Maria, and the policies of his high-church Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, infuriated the Puritan element in England. Scotland rose in revolt between 1638 and 1640 over attempts to impose the English prayer-book. Combined with religious issues were arguments about the divine-right of kings as compared with powers of parliament. The Thirty Years war (1618 – 1648) in Europe brought Protestant and Catholic nations into conflict. Nearer to home, there were on-going problems in Ireland caused by age-old antagonism between Catholics and Protestants which were to lead to widespread slaughter. 1640 was not a good time for Catholics since they were doubly hated for loyalty to the Pope and fidelity to the King. Bede Camm quotes from Charles Butler's "Memorials of English Catholics", Vol II:-

"The political manoeuvres which persuaded the multitude to believe that the sovereign was a favourer of popery, and which left him, as he too readily supposed, no means of repelling the charge, except that of causing the laws against them to be executed with due vigour". John Hampden introduced to the Commons a tailor of Cripplegate who pretended that he was aware of a plot to assassinate a hundred and eighty leading members of parliament at the rate of £10 for every lord and 40s for every commoner so murdered. This "lashed the House into a frenzy".

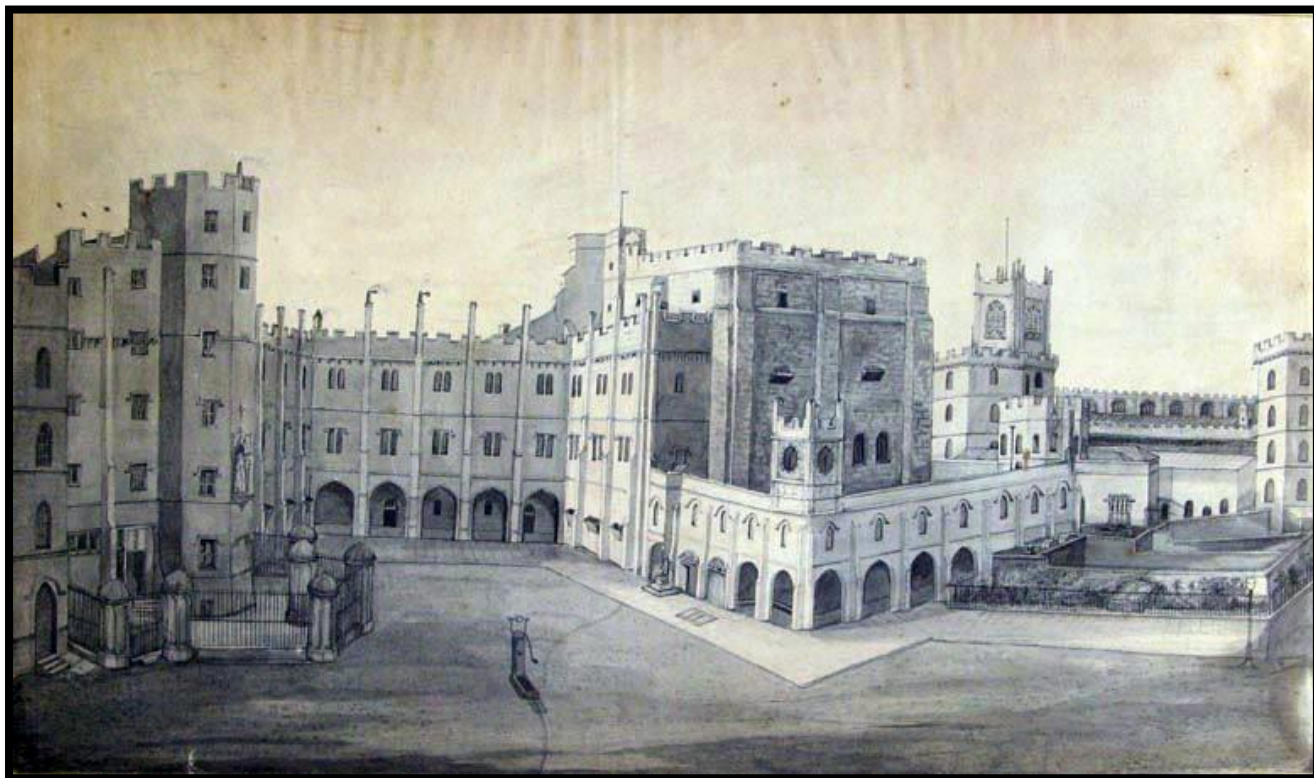
In response, on March 7th a royal decree ordered all priests to leave the kingdom within one calendar month or suffer the penalties of high treason. Ambrose Barlow refused to leave, reportedly saying "Let them fear that have anything to lose which they are unwilling to part with."

Ambrose was apprehended on Easter Sunday, 1641 due to the actions of a "neighbouring minister". Some sources state that this was the Vicar of Eccles, John Jones D.D. but Camm claims that this erroneous and the person concerned was the Rev. James Gatley of Leigh. The parson, wearing his surplice, marched at the head of a mob of four hundred, armed with clubs and swords to Morleys where Ambrose had just finished celebrating mass with a congregation of about a hundred. On sight of the approaching mob, Ambrose was encouraged to conceal himself in one of the priest holes but "he would not leave his sheep to the mercy of these wolves". As the crowd rushed in they were shouting "Where is Barlow? He is the man we want!" They broke open his chest in search of money but none was to be found. The names of the Catholics present were taken and Ambrose was brought before a Justice of the Peace, Mr Risley. He was then sent to Lancaster Castle, guarded by sixty armed men. Although he had recovered somewhat from his stroke he was still weak and had to be supported while he was on horseback.

Information about his capture been passed to the Council and on Friday May 20th 1641 the following resolution was passed by the Lords:-

"Whereas this House was informed that a Romish priest was apprehended on Easter-day last past at the Hall of Morley's in the County of Lancaster, called by the name of Edward Barlowe, who upon his examination

confessed himself a Romish priest, and has received orders at Arras; he being now committed to the common gaol at Lancaster, it is ordered that the said Edward Barlow shall be proceeded against at the next Assizes for the said country according to law."



Lancaster Castle. J. Weetman, 1824

While in prison he recovered strength and health. He did not accept proposals to have him removed to London or be banished since "to die for this cause was to him more desirable than life that he must die some time or other and could not die a better death". After four months in prison on the 7th September he came for trial before Sir Robert Heath at Lancaster. He was a Calvinist and strong opponent of the high-church policies of Archbishop Laud. An important figure, he had played a role in the foundation of both North and South Carolina. He is supposed to have had instructions from Parliament that if any priest was found in Lancashire the full force of the law should be applied so as to act as a deterrent to others.



Sir Robert Heath

Some indication of the events of the trial of Brother Ambrose may be obtained from the works of Challoner and Bede Camm. The latter states that his information came chiefly from the Allanson manuscripts at Ampleforth. Ambrose readily acknowledged himself to be a priest and stated that he had carried out this function for over twenty years. When asked why he had not left the country before 7th April 1641, as commanded in the royal proclamation, he replied that the edict only specified "Jesuits and Seminary priests" whereas he was neither, being a Religious of the Order of Saint Benedict. In

addition, his stroke has made it impossible for him to do so.

The Judge asked him what he thought of the justice of the laws by which priests were put to death.

He replied:- "All laws made against Catholics on account of their religion, were unjust and impious for what law, said he, can be more unjust than this, by which priests are condemned to suffer as traitors, merely because they are Roman; that is, true priests?"

He was then questioned about his opinions of the makers of such laws and those who execute them.

"If, my lord, in consequence of so unjust a law, you should condemn me to die, you would send me to heaven, and yourself to hell."

The Judge told him that his sickness excused him in some measure and that he would set him at liberty provided he promised not to seduce the people any more.

"It will be easy to pledge my word to this since I am no seducer but a reducer of the people to the true and ancient religion. I have laboured all along to disabuse the minds of those who have fallen into error, and I am in the resolution to continue until death to render this good office to these strayed souls."

The Judge said "You speak very boldly to a man who is master of your life, and who can either acquit or condemn you as he shall judge proper."

"It is true that you have power given to you over me through a wicked policy but be aware although I appear before you in quality of a criminal, being, as I am, a minister of Jesus Christ and a priest of the New Law, in spiritual matters, I am judge and I declare to you that if you continue to condemn the innocent, and remain in the darkness of heresy, you will have no part in the happiness of the children of God."

The Judge concluded "I shall have the advantage of you since my sentence will be executed first."

The Judge directed the jury to bring in a verdict of guilty and next day pronounced sentence upon him.

Barlow heard the sentence "with a cheerful and pleasant countenance" and exclaimed "Thanks be to God".

He prayed heartily to his divine Majesty to forgive all that had any ways been accessory to his death. The Judge applauded his charity and granted his request for a chamber to himself in Lancaster Castle where for the short remainder of his life he could ply himself to his devotions and prepare himself for his exit.

Apparently the Judge later stated that he was astonished by the tone of his answers and by his total lack of fear. Later Sir Robert fell from favour. In 1644 he was impeached by Parliament for high treason. He fled abroad, dying in Calais in 1649. Sir Thomas Tyldesley who had harboured Brother Ambrose at Morleys Hall, was killed on 25th August, 1651 when serving as a Major General with Royalist forces at the Battle of Wigan Lane.

On Friday 10th September Ambrose was laid on a hurdle and drawn to the place of execution. He carried with him a cross of wood which he had made while in his cell. When he got off the hurdle he went three times around the gallows, with the cross before his breast reciting the "Miserere". Some ministers tried to dispute with him about religion but he said that it was unfair and that "he had something else to do at present than listen to their fooleries."

As sentenced he was hanged, dismembered, disembowelled, quartered and boiled in tar. He "Passed from short labours and pains to eternal rest and joy, in the 55th year of his age, the 25th of his religious profession and the 24th of his priesthood and mission."

After his execution, his head was impaled on the tower of the collegiate church in Manchester from where it was removed by a relative, Francis Downes of Wardley Hall. When the news reached Douai a Mass of Thanksgiving and a Te Deum were ordered to be sung. Dom Clement Reyner, the President-General of the English Congregation of the Order of Saint Benedict, sent round a circular or "Mortuary Bill" to various monasteries reporting his death.

As early as 1642, the first steps were taken towards canonisation of the English martyrs but the process was suspended, partly because of the opposition likely to be faced in the wider community and partly because of the difficulties in obtaining the necessary evidence. The "Unam Sanctam Catholicam" website sets out the initial problems faced. To be accepted as a "martyr" it has to be established beyond any doubt that a person was directly put to death, and that this death was suffered on account of some point of the Faith.

Meeting the criteria can be surprisingly demanding in situations where no documentary evidence was kept of the martyrdom, or when much time has elapsed. Both problems existed in the cases of many of those who died during the English Reformation. There is, however, the possibility of “equipollent evidence”, that is evidence which is equally strong. This could be proof of a cult going back at least one hundred years prior to the opening of the martyr's Cause. This proof is usually made up of local feasts, records of homilies in praise of martyrs, hymns and sometimes architectural, in the form of shrines and art. Such was the persecution faced by Catholics in England that even such alternative evidence was hard to find.

Various attempts were made in 1866, 1871, 1874, and 1880 to get around this problem but, by 1881, almost a quarter of the English martyrs were still classed as “dilati”, or unrecognised, and even those cases which were not seemed stalled. Then, in 1880, the Promotor Fidei (Devil's Advocate) in the causes of the English martyrs was made aware of some extraordinary evidence of cult (equipollent evidence) by the Rector of the English College, Rome. Mgr. Henry O'Callaghan called attention to the existence in the College of a series of frescoes depicting the sufferings of the English martyrs painted between 1580 and 1582 by the Italian artist Nicholas Cicciniani.



The frescoes depict traditional English martyrs such as St. Dunstan and St. Thomas Becket, but they also include depictions of the Reformation-era martyrs such as More, Fisher and many others. There was an inscription on the frescoes which read, "Martyr saints, who in ancient or more recent times of persecution have suffered in England for Christ and for the defence of the Catholic faith." The titles "saint" and "blessed" appear on many of the depictions. Furthermore, contemporary letters were discovered describing the frescoes as being made at the request of Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585). This was extremely strong evidence of proof of cult, going back almost to the times of the martyrdoms, and showed papal approval. The Promotor Fidei recommended proceeding with the causes and the Sacred Congregation agreed.

On December 9th 1886, Leo XIII signed the commission for the introduction of the cause of two hundred and sixty one martyrs, officially establishing them as venerables. Sixty three of the martyrs were beatified in 1886, the best known being Thomas More and John Fisher. The process of raising awareness of the Lancashire martyrs was underway in in late nineteenth century. The “Manchester Courier” in 1893 reported on a sermon preached by the Rev. Prior Vaughan to Catholic pilgrims gathered near Barlow Hall. He gave an account of Barlow’s life and death and also of the persecution to which he said his ancestors were subjected. The article quotes extracts from the sermon:- “The storms of the 16th century, God be praised, were over.

But in that century all that the arm of the law could do, all that money could do, all that power and statecraft were able to compass, was united in one great effort to swamp out the Catholic Church of this country. But the Church lived for ever, having within it a divine vitality which no human power could destroy or annihilate. We are living in days of calm now. There was no longer an effort to stamp out the priesthood, to destroy the lamps of the sanctuary and to gag the mouths of the noble Catholic gentry. The tone, temper and spirit of the English people had changed and altered.....Why was it that the priests were hunted down?....The ministers of the Protestant Church laid no claims to the powers of the priesthood....The Catholic priest alone was the ambassador of God and the dispenser of the mysteries of Christ."

These messages were not accepted without challenge, provoking a response from one reader commenting "martyr pilgrimages are Cardinal Vaughan's campaign to convert England to Popery" and criticising the alleged notion that "Roman Catholics have a right to disobey the laws of the State."

Only towards the end of the eighteenth century had the position of Catholics in England improved. The Papists Act of 1778 removed many restrictions from Catholics who were prepared to swear an oath of loyalty to the monarch and who were prepared to deny the concept that excommunicated princes could be murdered. This, however, triggered the Gordon Riots in which a mob of 50,000 caused tumult in London until put down by the military.

The French Revolution brought some sympathy to its Catholic victims. In England, Catholic places of worship were tolerated and Catholics were no longer required to swear the Oath of Loyalty. It was only in 1829, however, that most of the remaining penalties on Catholics were removed in the Roman Catholic Relief Act. Anti-Catholic sentiment did increase with the influx of Irish migrants after the Potato Famine of the 1840s. In 1850, Catholic dioceses were re-established in Britain. The 1871 Universities Tests Act opened up the Universities to students of all religions. In 1880, St Joseph's College, Upholland was built to provide priests for the half million Catholics living in the dioceses of Liverpool and Salford. It would seem, therefore that all that Ambrose Barlow and his fellow martyrs had desired had eventually been achieved. The struggle had, however, taken almost three centuries.

Indicative of the restored position of Catholicism in England was the start of work on Westminster Cathedral in 1895. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Herbert Vaughan, sought to emphasise the importance of this new edifice by arranging for the relics of St. Edmund, one-time patron saint of England, to be returned from St. Sermin, Toulouse. The elaborate ceremonial produced an outcry in a hostile press with much criticism of the veneration of relics which scholars argued, in any case, could not be those of the saint. In the event, matters descended into farce when the Cardinal accepted that argument they were not genuine.

By 1910 Dom Bede Camm in "Forgotten Shrines" felt able to write:-

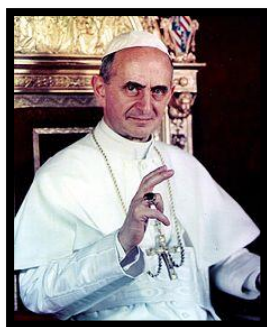
"Englishmen of all creeds have grown more sympathetic of late, as they have come to know something of the true story of that long persecution which made their Catholic fellow countrymen outlaws in their own land, and turned their most treasured religious convictions into crime against the State. We are beginning to understand the extraordinary loyalty of these Recusants, so faithful to the sovereign who persecuted them just because they were so true to the religion of their fathers."

Further investigations into the Cause were begun in 1923 leading to one hundred and thirty six beatifications of victims of religious persecution. Ambrose Barlow, having been venerated by a decree of martyrdom on 8th December 1929, was actually beatified, together with other martyrs, by Pope Pius XI on December 15th 1929. John Fisher and Thomas More were canonised in 1935. The Hierarchy of England and Wales then promoted the canonisation of a limited group of the martyrs. After patient work, the list of forty martyrs was presented to the Holy See on December 1st, 1960. The selection was based on achieving a spread of social status, religious rank, geographical location and the extent of popular devotion. The list included the Blessed Ambrose Barlow. Sufficient data were collected about them to induce the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal William Godfrey, to send a description of twenty four seemingly miraculous cases to the Sacred

Congregation. Two special cases were selected with one in particular standing out. This was the cure of a young mother affected with a malignant tumour in the left scapula; a cure which the Medical Council had judged gradual, perfect, constant and unaccountable on the natural plane. Pope Paul VI confirmed that this cure had been brought about by God at the intercession of the Forty Blessed Martyrs of England and Wales and on the strength of this one miracle he gave permission for the whole group to be recognised as saints.

"L'Osservatore Romano", 29th October 1970, contained an article written by Paolo Molinari S.J.. As Jesuit Postulator General he researched the lives of candidates for beatitude and canonisation. He explained that on May 18th 1970, the Holy Father in the Consistory asked the opinion of Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots about the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. There was a unanimous answer in favour of canonisation.

Pope Paul VI said:-



"We greatly rejoice that unanimously you have asked that these blessed Martyrs of England and Wales be canonised; this is also our desire. It is our intention to enrol them among the saints and to declare them worthy of the honours that the Church attributes to those holy persons who have obtained their heavenly reward. With God's help, we will do this on the twenty-fifth day of October this year in the Vatican Basilica."

Thus, on 25th October, 1970 Ambrose Barlow came to be canonised. Paolo Molinari, S.J., wrote:-

"And this is just what the Church intends to stress with their Canonisation. It was and is her intention to hold up to the admiration not only of Catholics, but of all

men, the example of persons unconditionally loyal to Christ and to their conscience to the extent of being ready to shed their blood for that reason. Owing to their living faith in Christ, their personal attachment to Him, their deep sharing of His life and principles, these persons gave a clear demonstration of their authentically Christian charity for men, also when—on the scaffold—they prayed not only for those who shared their religious convictions, but also for all their fellow-countrymen, and in particular for the Head of the State and even for their executioners."

In November 1969 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey, had expressed his apprehension that this canonisation might rekindle animosity harmful to the ecumenical movement which had become of major concern to the Christian churches, especially after the visit of Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, to Pope John XXIII in 1960, the first such meeting for almost five hundred years. In a Memorandum published in "The Tablet" of 29th November, 1969 Archbishop Ramsey explained:-

"I have been asked a number of times what I think would be the consequences for ecumenical work of the proposed canonisation. I am increasingly convinced that canonisation would be harmful to the ecumenical cause in England.....In England our past history creates inevitable difficulties for the ecumenical progress.....There is not only the prejudice of ultra-Protestant people but there is also the "siege mentality" which is still apt to possess Roman Catholics in England....The "siege mentality" is, I believe, bound up psychologically with a kind of martyrdom complex deeply, and of course intelligibly, rooted in history. My fear is that devotion to the English Martyrs on either side has been and still is a focus for this kind of mentality in its polemical form.I have read the "Manifesto for Martyrs' Sunday 1965" and also the "Biblical Service for the Feast of the Martyrs of England and Wales"....While some ecumenical language is used, the final outcome is that the Martyrs are to be invoked so that, with the aid of their prayers for non-Roman Catholic Christians, England may be brought within the Roman obedience. I cannot therefore help thinking that the proposed canonisation will in the historical circumstances of England encourage on both sides the kind of emotions of which we are anxious to be rid."

This anxiety, although shared by some Anglicans and Catholics, was not widespread. Right from the first announcement of the Re-opening of the Cause of the 40 Martyrs, decreed by Pope John XXIII in 1961, the Hierarchy of England and Wales let it be clearly understood that nothing was further from the intentions of the Bishops than to stir up bad feelings and quarrels of the past. The "Catholic Herald" of 23rd October 1970

reported that Archbishop Beck of Liverpool, in a Pastoral Letter, said the Catholics' pride in the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs did not mean any blame was placed on other Christians and it was not a threat or hindrance to the growth of genuine ecumenism.

The Council of Trent (1563) defended invoking the prayers of the saints, and venerating their relics and burial places:-

"The sacred bodies of the holy martyrs and of the other saints living with Christ, which have been living members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and which are destined to be raised and glorified by Him unto life eternal, should also be venerated by the faithful. Through them, many benefits are granted to men by God."

In 1896, a Decree issued by the Congregation of Indulgences and Sacred Relics stated:-

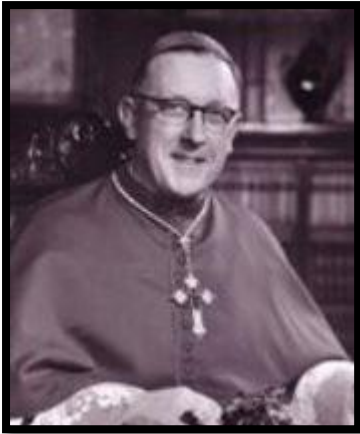
"Ancient relics are to retain the veneration they have always enjoyed except when in individual instances there are clear arguments that they are false and superstitious".

In 1910 Bede Camm wrote:-

"It would seem that a large portion of the holy relics of our martyr came into Catholic hands. His head, as we have seen, was rescued by Francis Downes of Wardley Hall and is still preserved in that historic house.... At Stanbrook Abbey, near Worcester, the Benedictine nuns religiously preserve the martyr's left hand which was formerly kept at the Mission of Knaresborough, in Yorkshire. The appearance of the hand, as regards colour and texture, is much like old parchment. The furrows of the skin are very conspicuous....The points of the fingers are shrunken and contracted. The nuns also have a portion of one of the fingers of the right hand, and a small piece of bone.

At, St. Gregory's Abbey, Downside, there is a piece of rib about four inches long. At the Franciscan Convent, Taunton, is a bone about two inches long. Lastly at our Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr, at Erdington, are preserved two relics. One is a bone about two inches long, one of the metacarpal bones. It bears the inscription in seventeenth century handwriting "Beati Ambrosii Barlow sacerdotis et Martyris ex ordain Sci Benedicti in Anglia". The relic was preserved in St. Mary's Convent, York, for many years but was given to the writer in 1899. The other Erdington relic is a piece of one of our martyr's ribs. This was the possession of the late Miss Blundell of Little Crosby, in Lancashire and was kept with other relics in a silver reliquary.....the relic of Father Barlow, which is about one and a half inches long by three quarters of an inch wide, is at Erdington Abbey. It still has some skin adhering to it. On the paper that enfolded it is written in a contemporary hand "Mr. Barlow's Rib."





An article in the "Catholic Herald" of the 15th September 1961 stated "in the presence of a packed congregation Bishop Beck of Salford sealed the famous Wardley Hall skull in a glass and silver casket and signed a decree by which it was formally acknowledged to be a relic of Blessed Ambrose Barlow."

The ceremony had taken place at the church of St. Ambrose, West Didsbury, the martyr's "home parish". Barlow Hall, Ambrose's family home and birth-place was only a short distance from the church. Before signing the decree, Bishop Beck read a statement in which he traced the history of the skull since its discovery at Wardley Hall. It had taken over two hundred and fifty years for it to be accepted as a relic of the martyr. The fame which the skull had gained was not for religious reasons!

In 1910 Bede Camm explained that the skull first came to light in connection with the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. Wardley Hall was then in the possession of Matthew Moreton, a farmer.



A Jacobite detachment approached the farm and demanded carts and horses. After suffering this loss, the family became impoverished and decided to take up hand-loom weaving. A ruinous part of the building was being demolished to make way for looms when a box fell out of a wall. Moreton broke it open and it was found to contain a skull "furnished with a goodly set of teeth, and having on it a good deal of auburn hair". A maidservant of the Moretons, knowing nothing about the skull, being set to clean the room in which it was kept, mistook it for the head of an animal and threw it into the moat. "It avenged itself by bringing on storms and disturbance of every sort, until the water was drawn off and it was recovered and replaced in the Hall." The Hall then became known as "The Skull House" with the skull being kept in a niche on the staircase. "It is said that if it is moved from its niche strange sounds are heard at night and that the inhabitants have no peace until it is restored to its place. The head, indeed, it is said, defied an attempt to bury it, and, in a terrific storm of thunder and lightning, betook itself to the recess in the staircase wall."

Although Bede Camm had said that the skull was that of Brother Ambrose, for many years it had been believed to be that of Roger Downes. There are various versions of the story of how he was thought to have lost his head. According to www.ghosts.org.uk Downes was a particularly unpleasant man during his lifetime, a debauchee, a boaster and swaggerer, aggressive and quarrelsome, "one of the most licentious courtiers of Charles II". He was known as a "scourer", one of those who swaggered about the streets of London looking for unarmed and defenceless people whom they could attack with their swords, slicing off an ear or slitting a nose for the sheer delight it gave them as sport. "The watch", though armed themselves, avoided them whenever possible, because the use of royal privilege pardoned any crime a 'scourer' might commit. One version of the tale is that in about 1676 on London Bridge, Downes made an attack on one of the watchmen, who seemed to him to be the feeblest, instead of which he was suddenly confronted by a very tough man indeed. The watchman defended himself with his halberd and, severing Downes' head from his body, the head rolled into the gutter. It was said that the head was picked up from the gutter, put into a box and sent back to Wardley Hall as a present for his sister Penelope who kept it near the staircase.

However, Penelope decided her brother's skull should have a Christian burial and be committed to the churchyard. All the arrangements were made for this and the skull in its box was taken down and put into the care of the priest overnight, ready for the burial service the next morning. However Penelope had not consulted the skull, for scarcely had it left Wardley Hall than it asserted itself with great force. That very night a storm of such power broke over the house that those who were living there fled in terror from room to room. They hid under beds and in corners as the storm raged above the Hall as if it had been singled out for destruction. It did not end until dawn broke. Downes' sister, convinced that the skull was the whole cause of the havoc, hastily fetched it back and returned it to the head of the staircase, when immediate silence came and peace was restored. Later, there were other occasions when tenants had moved it out of the house; almost at once havoc would break out again. It was evident that the skull ruled the Hall to such an extent that no one ever dared to move it again. "When not treated with due respect, windows were blown in, cattle pined in the stalls and all things were bewitched."

In an effort to settle the matter, in 1779 an unnamed tenant of the Hall, unable to live any longer in constant fear of the haunting, decided to challenge both the legend and the skull itself, obtaining church permission to have the Downes' vault in Wigan Parish Church opened. Roger's coffin was there and his skeleton was complete with its head. One of the suggestions then made was that it belonged to Ambrose Barlow. The fact that it had been discovered hidden in what was the original chapel suggests that it was of someone religious or revered but there was no proof that it did belong to the Ambrose. Bede Camm writing in "The Tablet" on 11th February 1922 stated "a good deal of doubt has been thrown of late as to the identification of the skull of Wardley Hall with this Martyr." In 1930 the Hall became the official residence of the Bishop of Salford, Dr. Thomas Henshaw. The skull was examined by two professors from Manchester in an attempt to verify it but they found no evidence of its impalement, making it improbable that it was the skull of Ambrose.

The skull became a national sensation in 1930 when it was stolen from Wardley Hall, There was an invasion of photographers and journalists representing almost all the national and local press. All sorts of strange tales were passed on by the locals and received gratefully by the reporters. In 1931 the skull secretly arrived back at Wardley Hall from the frightened thieves who had been haunted by it almost at once and it was once again restored to its recess at the head of the staircase. The "Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle" of 19th February 1931 reported that the "The Moaning Skull" which was stolen from a niche in the wall of Wardley Hall three months ago had been brought back by the man who is believed to have taken it.

In 1960 The Cause of the Forty Martyrs led to more investigations of the origin of the skull. Father Joseph E. Bamber of Dodding Green, Skelsmergh, Westmoreland was authorised to make extensive investigations. His parish, Saints Robert and Alice, "came to be used mainly for elderly Catholic priests of some intellectual reputation, in partial retirement". Father Bamber had carried out extensive research on the subject of

Catholic martyrology in Lancashire. X rays and measurements were compared with depictions of Ambrose in paintings. The skull was taken to the Department of Anatomy at St. Bartholemew's Hospital and examined by Prof A. J. E. Cave. His work showed strong points of comparison with his portrait; that it was of a man of Ambrose's age and stature; that the skull had been violently severed from his body and stuck on a spike. In light of these findings, the skull was duly authenticated by Bishop Beck. The "Catholic Herald" of 15th September 1961 stated that "it came as a happy surprise on the first day of a tridium in honour of the Forty Martyrs. It is now possible to venerate the skull publicly under the provision of Canon 1287 (Section 3). The congregation filed up to kiss the casket containing the skull immediately after the service at which Bishop Beck said Mass and Fr. Francis Ripley C.M.S., preached. The second part of the tridium was held at the English Martyrs' Church, Whalley Range, Manchester. When Dom Maurus Green O.S.B., was the preacher. The third part was held at St. John's Cathedral, Salford when Father James Walsh S.J., Vice-Postulator of the Cause of the Forty Martyrs preached." The "Catholic Herald" of 31st August 2001, recalling earlier events, reported that shortly after the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs, the mortal remains of St Edmund Arrowsmith and his great friend St Ambrose Barlow were reunited. Mgr Allen recalled how the skull of St Ambrose was brought from Wardley Hall for a celebration mass where it was placed alongside the Holy Hand at St. Oswald's Church, Ashton in Makerfield.

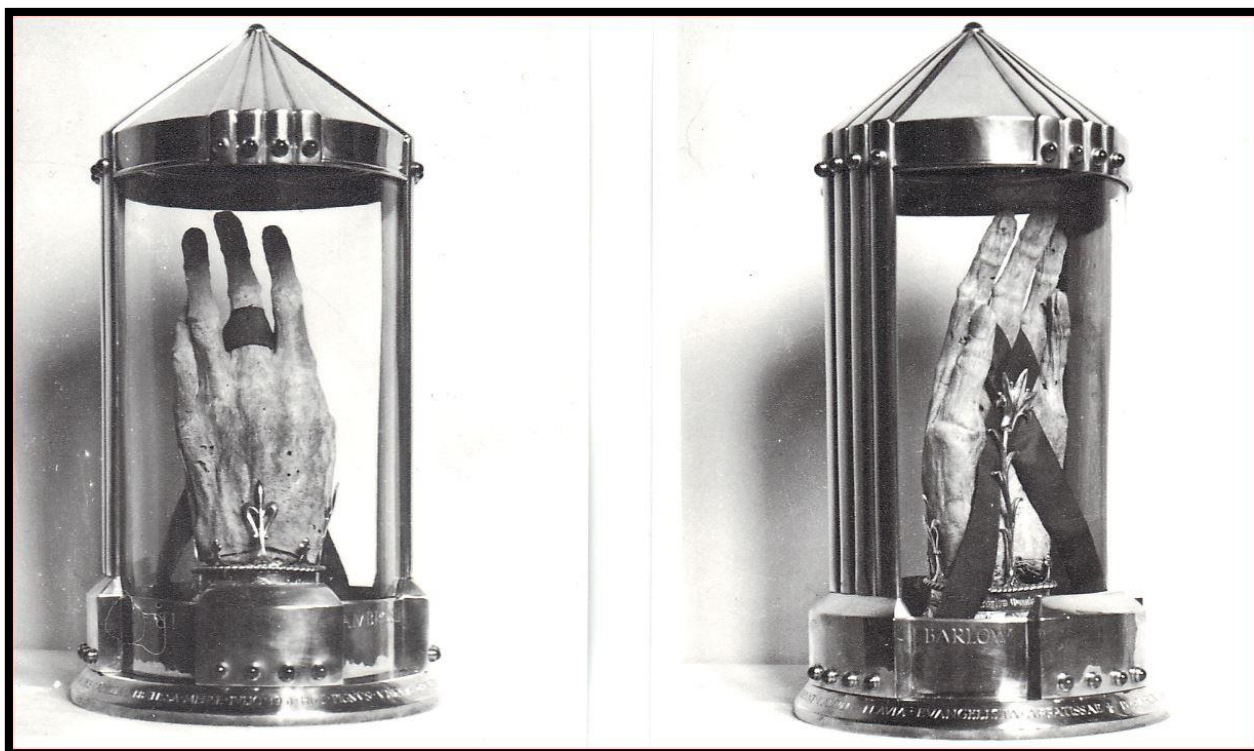
The Bishop promised to give the jaw bone of Saint Ambrose to the parish of St Ambrose, Chorlton, near to Barlow Hall. The parish priest, Father Patrick Earley, appealed to his parishioners for donations of silverware which could be melted down to make a reliquary. The relic was venerated on the last day of a Novena in honour of the Forty Martyrs on 10th September, 1962, the anniversary of the saint's execution.



An article in the "Manchester Evening News" on 12th November, 2009 entitled "Only saint in the south" contains Fr. Earley's views about the saint. "Ambrose Barlow was a local boy done good," said Father Patrick Earley. "He is the only saint as far as we know to come from south Manchester. He has always been known

as the Manchester Martyr because his family, whose name you can see everywhere in this area, were persecuted because of their faith. His jawbone is permanently on display as a reminder of how he was prepared to die to conduct Mass". The relic is moved rarely, one occasion being on 3rd November 2009 when it was venerated in a St. Peter's R.C. High School, Gorton, Manchester.

In January 2014 the present authors sought to gain more information on the relic of the left hand of Ambrose, reported by Bede Camm as being in the custody of the Benedictine nuns of Stanbrook Abbey in Wass, North Yorkshire. Sister Scholastica (Jacob), the Archivist, reported that the relic is of the incorrupt left hand. She hunted through various records and then wrote "There seems to be a silence over the relic's history before about 1820 when it was discovered in the sacristy of St. Mary's, a Benedictine mission (parish) at Knaresborough, Yorkshire. The relic was wrapped in a cloth and stored in a sacristy drawer, at the mercy of moths and worms. It was discovered with parchment documentation of authenticity which has never been questioned". In Father Thomas Austin Rolling's time (1817-1824) it was rescued from the drawer and brought by Dr Barber, Prior of Downside, to Salford Hall, Warwickshire, where the community had a temporary home. Eight years later the nuns and it moved to Stanbrook. The hand was subsequently placed in a reliquary, and is displayed in church on his feast day each year. Probably the hand came from the Plumpton family. The Plumptons, from Plumpton near Knaresborough, were renowned in northern England for their unswerving Roman Catholicism



The words around the base of the hand are:-

Manus R D Ambrosii Barlow + Monachi O.S.B Sacerdotiio qui Martyrium subiit IV Septembris MDCXLI
(The hand of Reverend Dom Ambrose Barlow + monk of the Order of St. Benedict who submitted to martyrdom for the priesthood on 4 September 1641)

And on the base of the reliquary:-

MANUS BEATI AMBROSII BARLOW
(The hand of the Blessed Ambrose Barlow)

Post Rem Monasticum Simul Dispositiuam Auspice Caecilia Abbatissa Mensae Iulio 1931 Hoc Pignus Unionis
Obtulerunt Caecilia Flavia Evangelista Abbatissae

St. Gregory's Abbey Downside is still in possession of its relic of St. Ambrose. This was confirmed in an e-mail from Dom Benet Watt, The Sacristan, which we received in response to our inquiry in February 2014. This stated: "Yes, we have the relic of St. Ambrose Barlow." Further inquiries were made which led to information being provided by Fathers Boniface (Hill) and Michael (Clothier). We learned that amongst the many relics held at the Abbey there are two of Saint Ambrose. One of these is a piece of rib, contained in a reliquary, and there is another piece of bone but the writing surrounding it cannot be deciphered. A Solemn High Mass commemorating the Holy English and Welsh Martyrs was held on 5th May 2012; the celebrant was Father Boniface Hill who also preached the sermon. The reliquaries containing the bones of St. Ambrose Barlow and St. John Roberts were exposed. The reliquary containing the bones of St. Ambrose is on the right hand side of the altar in the picture below. It is about ten inches high.



It has proved to be impossible to determine the fate of the relic identified by Bede Camm as being at the Franciscan Convent at Taunton. In 1950, the Franciscans sold the Convent to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy. In 2005, the main Convent site was converted into flats.

According to Bede Camm the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr, at Erdington, his own abbey, was in possession of two relics. Erdington Abbey, in a suburb of Birmingham, was an offshoot of the Benedictine Congregation of St. Martin of Beuron, Germany. It was founded in 1876 after monks were driven from Germany by anti-Catholic legislation. The Abbey was finished in 1880, then having eleven monks and three lay brothers. Bede Camm was one of the first non-German monks at the Abbey. During the First World War, the Community suffered aggravation and the monks returned to Germany in 1922. It was taken over by Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Congregation Sanctissimi Redemptoris (C. Ss. R.), as a home for priests, brothers and a junior seminary. In the 1980s, it was declared unsafe without expensive modifications and taken over by a private school. In January 2014 the Rector and Parish Priest, the V. Rev Gabriel Maguire C.Ss.R., informed us that he had examined the records and gone through the safe but he could not find any large relic of Saint Ambrose. It was, however, very difficult to decipher the writing on some of the smaller relics.

Having made inquiries as far as possible at all the locations identified by Bede Camm we considered our research into the current state of the relics of St. Ambrose to be complete. Then, however, we noticed a comment made in the Wikipedia entry on the saint which stated:-

“another hand being at Mount Angel Abbey in St. Benedict, Oregon”

This then opened an entirely new field of investigation which took us in a remarkable and totally unexpected direction.



Mount Angel Abbey and Seminary, St. Benedict, Oregon, U.S.A. is a community of Benedictine monks situated on a bluff about five hundred feet high. It was founded in 1882, a daughter house of Kloster Engelberg in Switzerland, as a result of the desire to spread Catholicism into newly settled areas and in response of to the dangers of increased state control in Europe. Its name is a direct translation of that of its mother house. The monastic complex includes a library with a priceless collection of illustrated manuscripts and rare books. Its Retreat House allows men and women from all faiths to spend time in prayer and reflection in a Benedictine monastic community. The Abbey has a hundred and fourteen seminarians from about thirty dioceses and about forty candidates from religious orders for priestly training.

Thinking that “the hand” may have been given to the Abbey by the monks of Kloster Engelberg on its foundation we made initial inquiries in Switzerland. Rolf De Kegel, the Archivist, replied stating that although some relics had been sent from Engelberg to Mount Angel they had not included the hand of Saint Ambrose; therefore:-

“Die Reliquie muss auf anderem Weg nach Mount Angel (Oregon) gelangt sein.”
(The relic must have reached Mount Angel in another way.)

The “other way” was eventually revealed to us owing to the efforts of two monks of Mount Angel, Brother André (Love) and Father Augustine (DeNoble). Brother André is the Museum Curator and Father Augustine was a reference librarian working with the Abbey archives. The latter, despite being aged ninety, had certainly not lost his research skills. The right hand arrived at the Abbey in 1985, a gift from Brother Ambrose Moorman O.S.B.



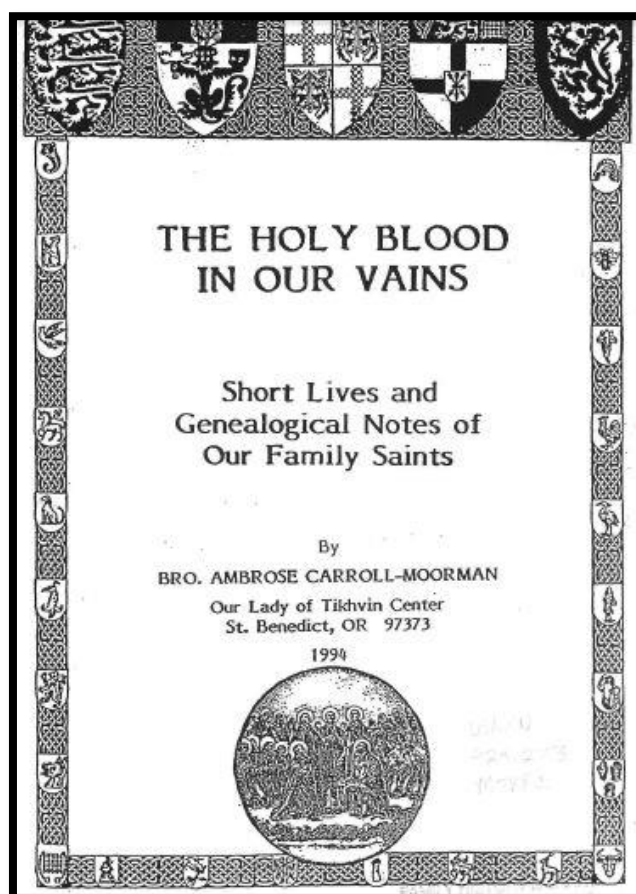
Brother Ambrose was an unusual Benedictine monk. He was born John Carroll on June 18th 1934 in San Francisco. After some time spent in the St. Boniface and Franciscan seminaries he entered Mount Angel Abbey in 1955. He took the name of Ambrose and made his final vows in 1957. He died on 28th April 2012. Although he was a professed Benedictine he received canonical permission to live his monastic life in accord with Russian Old Ritualistic practice.



The Old Believers separated from the Russian Orthodox Church as a protest against the reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon between 1652 and 1666. The reforms altered the Cyrillic spelling of Jesus, the wording of the Creed and how the sign of the cross was to be made, amongst other changes in liturgy. The Old Believers clung to pre-reform practice. After 1685, they endured a period of persecution with torture and execution. Many fled to remote settlements in Siberia. Only in 1905 were the Old Believers released from exile and persecution when Tsar Nicholas II proclaimed the Edict of Toleration. They were thought to make up ten percent of the Russian population in 1910. In 1974, the Russian Orthodox Church asked forgiveness from the Old Believers for the wrongs inflicted on them.

However, many had fled the country after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, large numbers moving to China. With the Communist take-over over of China in the late 1940s, groups moved again to Hong Kong and from there many settled in Brazil. In the 1960s, reports of available farmland in the Willamette Valley, Oregon led to about two thousand moving there. A small colony was established between Gervais and Mount Angel. There are now about ten thousand Old Believers in Oregon. They adhere to traditional customs, wear peasant costumes, follow their traditional Orthodox religious practice and are not allowed to eat from the same dishes as non-believers.

While still a young monk, Brother Ambrose became involved with these Russian communities, assisting them in their contacts with government, social services and the educational system. He learned Old Church Slavonic so that he could assist in serving the Divine Liturgy. He constructed a chapel under the patronage of Our Lady of Tikhvin which, at one time, served as the temple for five separate Old Believer sects and he religiously lived as an Old Ritualist for many decades. He became internationally known in Russian religious circles. He had a private audience with Pope John Paul II during which he related the story of the Old Russians.

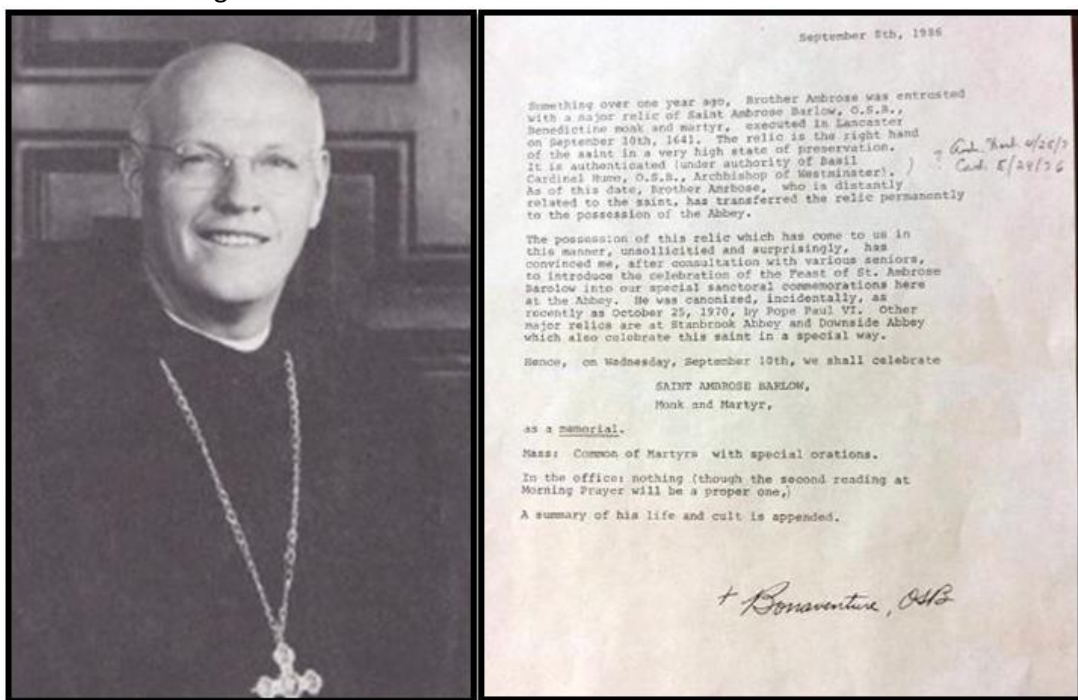


His significance from our viewpoint was that he was a genealogical expert who traced his ancestry to European and Russian royalty and saints. One of his works, written in 1994, was particularly important entitled "The Holy Blood in Our Vains (sic) Short Lives and Genealogical Notes of Our Family Saints". This explains how the right hand of Saint Ambrose came into his possession. It states:-

"St. Ambrose's skull is at Wardley Hall, where he lived for a time. His incorrupt right hand was given in 1720 to Sir William Gerard, who built the church in Ashton-in-Makerfield where the Holy Hand of St. Edmund Arrowsmith is preserved. The saint's incorrupt right hand passed on to a descendant of Sir William, Mrs. Anne Green of Parkstone, Dorset, England and since 1985 has been preserved at Mt. Angel Abbey in Oregon".



Father Augustine carried out more investigations on our behalf, subsequently related to us by Brother André. The donation of the hand to Sir William Gerard was made by Sir Thomas Southwell (an Irish politician) on January 6th 1720. Brother Ambrose Moorman was a distant cousin of Anne Green and she gave the right hand to him in June 1985. Brother André, reported that "the Very Rev. John Chamberlayne, an Apostolic Notary, acting on his own accord and that of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, authenticated the relic of the right hand". The acquisition of this relic took place during the reign of Abbot Bonaventure (Zerr), a Scripture scholar who reigned between 1980 and 1988.



In his notice of September 1986, he comments on the gift and announces to his fellow monks the introduction of the celebration of the Feast of Saint Ambrose Barlow.

The document states....

September 8th, 1986

Something over one year ago, Brother Ambrose was entrusted with a major relic of Saint Ambrose Barlow, O.S.B., Benedictine monk and martyr, executed in Lancaster on September 10th, 1641. The relic is the right hand of the saint. In a very high state of preservation. It is authenticated (under authority of Basil Cardinal Hume, O.S.B., Archbishop of Westminster).

As of this date, Brother Ambrose, who is distantly related to the saint, has transferred the relic permanently to the possession of the Abbey.

The possession of this relic which has come to us in this manner, unsolicited and surprisingly, has convinced me, after consultation with various seniors, to introduce the celebration of the Feast of St. Ambrose Barlow into our special sanctoral commemorations here at the Abbey. He was canonized, incidentally, as recently as October 25, 1970, by Pope Paul VI. Other major relics are at Stanbrook Abbey and Downside Abbey which also celebrate this saint in a special way.

Hence on Wednesday, September 10th, we shall celebrate

SAINT AMBROSE BARLOW
Monk and Martyr

As a memorial.

Mass; Common of Martyrs with special orations.

In the office: nothing (though the second reading at Morning Prayer will be a proper one.)

A summary of his life and cult is appended.

✠ *Bonaventure OSB*

Father Ezekiel (Lotz), of Mount Angel, wrote "Exhibited on occasion to people living in a nearby retirement home or to curious children in the Abbey sacristy this relic of St. Ambrose offers to edify and inform people of the continuing vigour and compassion of the Catholic faith."

A final point made by Father Augustine was that Downside Abbey, Bath, England, has the relics of the ribs of St. Ambrose. On March 29th, 1985, the Abbot of Downside, the Rt. Rev. John Roberts, had given a small portion of rib to Brother Ambrose.

According to Dom Bede Camm, writing about a century ago, there are four things we ourselves can do to venerate the martyrs of this country: "firstly, acquaint ourselves with the stories of their lives; secondly, visit shrines and relics; thirdly follow their example, sacrificing ourselves for the holy sacrifice of the Mass; and fourthly, help to promote knowledge and veneration of the martyrs in the wider world."

Since the beginning of Christianity, believers have seen relics as a way of coming closer to the saints and therefore to God. Saint Jerome wrote in "Ad Riparium", I, P.L.,XXII, 907:-

"We do not worship, we do not adore but we do venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore Him whose martyrs they are".

Father Brian Houghton in the 1960s wrote "Relics are unfashionable". This referred to his attempts to bring three teeth of the saint from St. Sernin in Toulouse to his parish of Bury St. Edmunds. A recent statement of the Church's attitude to relics may be seen in an article in the "Catholic Herald" of June 23rd, 2011, in connection with an exhibition of relics and reliquaries at the British Museum.



The Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, now Cardinal, a contemporary at the Venerable English College in Rome of one of the present authors, was reported as saying:-

“It’s perfectly clear that relics are a very important part of the expression of religious faith as well as of cultural importance in the way that people cling to a souvenir from a person they’ve loved or a place that they have been to. And what that conveys is the connecting of this moment with the treasured moment of the past. And if that connection is made through an object which, maybe, forensically won’t stand up to the test, that is of secondary importance to the spiritual and emotive power that the object can contain, and does contain.

I think that’s where the setting of the relic is as eloquent as the relic itself. If you look at a lot of these reliquaries you do not actually see the relic. The relic is, as it were, the end of an inner journey. So what they’re looking for is the viewer to really enter their own soul to understand how they enter into the value of the treasure of the relic that is before them.

So it’s a spiritual dialogue that takes place between this object and the person themselves. That is why they’re called “Treasures of Heaven”, because it is through the spiritual that our hearts are raised to heaven.”

Ambrose Barlow was put to death as a traitor. His obedience to the Pope and his support for the Catholic population in Lancashire was seen as a potent threat to state power. To the Catholic Church, he was a martyr; dying for the faith of ages rather than accept the “heresy” of the Protestant/Catholic fusion which is Anglicanism. With the movement towards ecumenism since the mid twentieth century it is interesting to see how the Church now views the actions of these men who chose a painful death rather than renounce their faith. In his homily on 25th October 1970 Pope Paul VI greeted all those assembled for the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs, including the representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. Dr. Harry Smythe. He then said:-

“May the blood of these Martyrs be able to heal the great wound inflicted upon God’s Church by reason of the separation of the Anglican Church from the Catholic Church. Is it not one – these Martyrs say to us – the Church founded by Christ? Is not this their witness? Their devotion to their nation gives us the assurance that on the day when – God willing – the unity of the faith and of Christian life is restored, no offence will be inflicted on the honour and sovereignty of a great country such as England. There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and worthy patrimony of piety and usage proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Church – this humble “Servant of the Servants of God” is able to embrace her ever beloved Sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ: a communion of origin and of faith, a communion of priesthood and of rule, a communion of the Saints in the freedom and love of the Spirit of Jesus.

Perhaps We shall have to go on, waiting and watching in prayer, in order to deserve that blessed day. But already We are strengthened in this hope by the heavenly friendship of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales who are canonised today. Amen.”

“Is it not one – these Martyrs say to us – the Church founded by Christ?” Had this question been posed to Ambrose Barlow, how would he have responded? His execution can only be understood in the context of the history, politics and culture of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries which made the Catholic Church different and dangerous. The reduced emphasis on religious divisions today can only be explained within a similar broad context. Some would see the martyrs and their relics as a hindrance to this process of reconciliation, others as a reminder that religious principles are not to be discarded easily.

According to Bede Camm “If it wasn’t for the sacrifice and witness of these men and women the Catholic faith in this country would have been extinguished.” It would be interesting to see how subsequent

generations view the willingness of such a brave man as Ambrose Barlow to face death for his faith. Will his relics merely be considered to be a reminder of historical religious disputes ultimately settled?



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Newspapers and periodicals as stated in the text.

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Portrait of Sir Robert Heath, by permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.
Sketch of Ambrose Barlow by John Payne; a line engraving from the mid seventeenth century. By permission of the National Portrait Gallery.
Father Patrick Earley, P.P., of St. Ambrose, Chorlton, Manchester.
Sister Scholastica (Jacob), the Archivist of Stanbrook Abbey, Wass, North Yorkshire.
Dom Benet (Watt), Fathers Boniface (Hill) and Michael (Clothier), St. Gregory's Abbey, Downside.
The V. Rev. Gabriel Maguire C.Ss.R., Rector and Parish Priest, Erdington Abbey.
Clarice Keating, "Catholic Sentinel", Portland, Oregon, U.S.A.
Brother André (Love) and Father Augustine (DeNoble), Mount Angel Abbey, St. Benedict, Oregon, U.S.A.

Appendix

Sehr geehrter Herr Atherton

Ihre Anfrage ist zu mir ins Stiftsarchiv des Klosters Engelberg gelangt. Ich habe die Reliquienverzeichnisse und Authentica des Klosters Engelberg kontrolliert, aber nichts in Bezug auf den hl. Ambros Barlow finden können. Es wurden zwar tatsächlich Reliquien von Engelberg nach Mount Angel Abbey geschickt, aber leider nicht die von ihnen Gesuchte. Die Reliquie muss auf anderem Weg nach Mount Angel (Oregon) gelangt sein. Vielleicht hat das amerikanische Kloster selber sich um die Reliquie bemüht. Ich würde mich an ihrer Stelle einmal in Mount Angel direkt erkundigen.

Soviel in aller Kürze und mit freundlichen Grüßen

Rolf De Kegel
Stiftsarchiv
Benediktinerkloster
CH-6390 Engelberg

