



Feast Day of St Margaret Clitherow

26th March

Word of the Week John 15: 12-13

Jesus said, 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends'.

In this week's words of Jesus we reflect upon what it means to have deep love, courage and solidarity for others. He is pre-warning his disciples what they will have to do to be true followers of his. In our time and place here in Penwortham we aren't expected to give up our lives for Jesus, but we are expected to stand in solidarity with those who are persecuted for being a Christian. We have to have a voice for those who are vulnerable or face oppression. During the time of the Reformation St Margaret Clitherow exemplified sacrificial love and solidarity through her courageous actions in support of her fellow Catholics during a time of persecution. Her willingness to risk and ultimately give her life for the safety and spiritual well-being of others reflect the heart of Jesus' words.

Saint Margaret Clitherow (1556–1586), known as the "*Pearl of York*," was a wife, mother, and convert to the Catholic faith during a time when practising Catholicism in England was forbidden.

She bravely sheltered priests, hid sacred items in her home, and helped Catholics receive the sacraments in secret. Her courage came from her deep love for Christ and her desire to protect the faith for future generations.

Margaret was martyred for refusing to deny her faith. She was canonised in 1970 as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.

Her life reminds us that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they trust in God.



Margaret Clitherow

A York Resident: Born Margaret Middleton. She lived on The Shambles in York.

Convert and Teacher: Originally Protestant, she converted to Catholicism at age 18 and later ran a small secret school to teach children the faith.

The Protector: During a time when being a Catholic priest was treason, she built 'priest holes' in her home to shelter them.

A Martyr for Others: When arrested in 1586, she refused to plead in court. She did this specifically to prevent her own children and servants from being forced to testify against her, which would put them in danger.

Her Sacrifice: She was executed on Good Friday, 1586, by being crushed to death. Her last words were, "Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! Have mercy on me!".

Prayers for the Week

Saint Margaret Clitherow,

You showed bravery in the face of danger and held firmly to your faith with joy and love. Pray for us, that we may be faithful in small things and big things, kind to everyone we meet, and courageous when we face difficulties.

Help us to bring Christ's light into our school, our families, and our world.

Amen.

Loving God,

We thank You for the life of Saint Margaret Clitherow, a woman of courage, compassion, and unwavering faith. Help us to follow her example by standing up for what is right, loving others generously, and staying close to You in all we do.

Amen

God of all goodness,

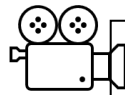
Through the example of Saint Margaret Clitherow, teach us to live with courage, to love with generosity, and to trust in You completely. May her witness inspire us today and always. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

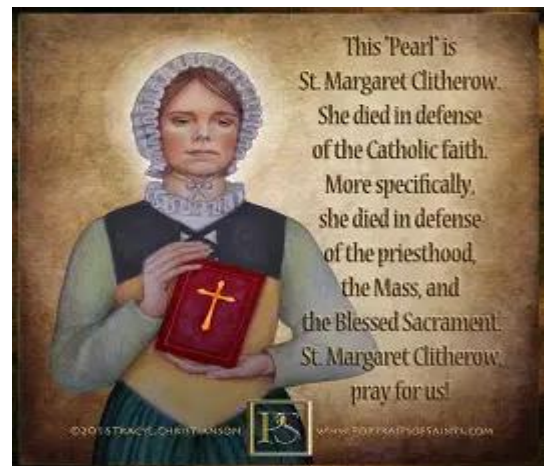
Saint Margaret Clitherow, pray for us...

- That we may be brave when we face challenges.
- That we may stand up for others who need help.
- That we may grow in faith, hope, and love.
- That our school community may be a place of peace and kindness.
- That we may always seek God's will in our lives.

"Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9



[Do you know about the "Pearl of York"? \[St. Margaret Clitherow\]](#)



Reflection

*Margaret lived in a time when her faith was illegal. Have you ever felt pushed to stay silent when you knew something was wrong? How can Margarets example help you speak up?

*Margaret chose a harder path to protect her children from a trial. Who are the people in your life you feel responsible for protecting?

*Margaret turned her home into a sanctuary. How can we make our school or friendship groups a safe space for everyone?

You can go and see where Margaret Clitherow lived. It is on the street called The Shambles in York.



