

## BLESSED EDWARD BAMBER MASS: HOMILY

12 July 2016

(Rev. 21:5-7; John 12:24-26)



We gather in faith this evening to honour the memory of our local martyr, Blessed Edward Bamber, who was prepared to go to the scaffold in Lancaster rather than deny his Catholic faith. We gather also in gratitude and praise to God for Blessed Edward's steadfast courage and powerful witness which helped the faith to survive here in Lancashire during hostile and harsh times. In the words of Ecclesiasticus, "*Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers in their generations.*" (Eccl. 44:1) Blessed Edward Bamber is indeed one of 'our fathers in faith.' Through him and his many martyr companions the faith of the Apostles has come down to us.

Our Blessed Lord in our gospel passage referred to his own approaching death as being like a seed which must first fall into the ground and die, before there can be a harvest. He had to embrace the suffering of the cross and death before the rich harvest of his resurrection could come. Edward Bamber was one of those mysteriously chosen by the Lord to follow him along the path of suffering. '*Where I am, there also will my servant be.*' We here this evening are part of that harvest which Blessed Edward gained through his martyrdom, and when we are invited later in Mass to give thanks to the Lord, we will answer with particular emphasis that it is right and fitting, as we think of our martyr.

We are called to live out our faith in more peaceful times than those experienced by Blessed Edward Bamber, but the following of the Lord in any age is never without its challenges, and often it crosses. Belonging to Christ means first losing our life in order to find it. We have to lay aside our own preferences and learn, as St. Paul expresses it, to put on Christ. Following Christ means seeking the things of Christ, and looking rather to the interests of others rather than our own. Love of God and love of neighbour remains the challenge, day in, day out. Yesterday, the Church celebrated the feast of the great St. Benedict, patron saint of Europe. Benedict urged his monks 'to prefer nothing to Christ', and that exactly is what Edward Bamber did. He preferred nothing this world could offer to being with Christ, in life or in death.

Christ is now in glory, and alongside him in glory is Blessed Edward Bamber. May his prayers before the Lord inspire us to remain faithful to the inheritance of our faith, to which he gave such glorious witness. His intercession with God will ensure that like him we will fight the good fight of faith and come finally to those waters of life, which God has in store for us.

Blessed Edward Bamber – pray for us!

+Michael G Campbell OSA  
Bishop of Lancaster