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Feb. 26, Bl. Robert Drury, Priest, Martyr

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NCR Today

Today is the feast of Bl. Robert Drury, a priest who was martyred at Tyburn in 1607.

Robert Drury was born in Buckinghamshire c.1567. He went to Rheims to study for the priesthood and then to Valladolid. In 1593, he was ordained and returned to England.

He ministered in secret in London for a number of years, often staying at a safe house where St. Anne Line (whose feast day is tomorrow) sheltered priests.

Anne Line was hanged at Tyburn in 1601: "I am sentenced to die for harbouring a Catholic priest, and so far I am from repenting for having so done, that I wish, with all my soul, that where I have entertained one, I could have entertained a thousand."

After the failure of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, in which Robert Catesby, Guy Fawkes, and other Catholics planned to blow up the House of Lords on the 5th of November, the situation in England became even more desperate for priests.

In 1606, King James I imposed a new oath of allegiance which Robert Drury, in conscience, could not take. He was arrested and confined to Newgate prison. He was condemned for priesthood, and on February 26, 1607, he was dragged to Tyburn on a hurdle and hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Robert Drury was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1987.

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