

Blessed Patrick O'Loughran c.1577-1612

On September 27th, 1992, seventeen people from different parts of Ireland were beatified in Rome by Pope John Paul II. All were martyred between 1579 and 1654. One of them was Fr. Patrick O'Loughran.

Patrick O' Loughran was born in the parish of Donaghmore into an Erenagh family. These families were responsible for entertaining visiting bishops, for the education of clergy and for the upkeep of churches in their parishes. Coming from such a background, it was not surprising that Patrick became a priest, and, eventually, chaplain to Hugh O' Neill and his household.

This was a dangerous time to be a priest and an associate of O'Neill, The Earl of Tyrone. In 1605, Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament while the King and his family were present. This resulted in further penal legislation against Catholics and priests were ordered to quit the realm under pain of imprisonment.

*On September 4th 1607 in *The Flight of the Earls*, O'Neill and O'Donnell left Rathmullen and sailed to France. Patrick O'Loughran had previously gone to Flanders to pursue his education but he maintained his connection to O'Neill by meeting him in Douai and travelling with him to Rome.*

In 1611, Patrick O'Loughran returned to Ireland and was arrested. Among the charges made to him were that he had helped O'Neill make his escape, had given sacraments to the exiled noblemen and had assisted Bishop Conor O'Devany, who was also arrested. In their trial Fr. O'Loughran and Bishop O'Devany denied all charges of treason, arguing that they were being persecuted for their faith. They refused to take the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, pledging allegiance only to God. They were both found guilty and sentenced to be executed.

On February 1st, 1612, after watching Bishop O'Devany die, Patrick O'Loughran was hanged, drawn and quartered. His bravery and faith inspired those present who surged forward to acquire relics.

We feel that Fr. O'Loughran has taken a special interest in the welfare of the people of the area and place ourselves under his protection.