

SAINT OLIVER PLUNKETT 400

400th Anniversary of the Birth of Saint Oliver Plunkett



1625 - 2025

PARISH RESOURCE
ARCHDIOCESE OF ARMAGH



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Icon of Oliver Plunkett used with kind permission of the Dominican Community at the Monastery of St. Catherine of Siena, Drogheda. (Image also used on booklet.) cover.



SAINT OLIVER 400

Foreword by Archbishop Eamon Martin
and Canon Eugene Sweeney

Welcome to St. Oliver 400, a special year marking 400 years since the birth of St. Oliver Plunkett and 50 years since his canonisation. As we remember his incredible life and legacy, we must remember that we are not merely looking back at a distant figure from history— but reflecting on a man whose faith, courage, and mission are woven into the very fabric of the Archdiocese of Armagh. St. Oliver Plunkett helped shape the heart and soul of our Archdiocese, and in this commemorative year, we seek to draw fresh inspiration from his witness—guiding how we live our faith today and into the future.

St. Oliver Plunkett was a man who lived through some of the most challenging times imaginable and throughout his life he faced persecution, false accusations, and even death because of his commitment and dedication to the Catholic faith in Ireland. St. Oliver showed courage and hope at a time when it would have been easy to give in. In this sense his story resonates in a special and particular way today. In a world where sharing our faith can sometimes feel daunting and unwelcome, St. Oliver shows us that faith is not about having all the answers or striving to dominate others, but is about living with integrity, humility, and love.

Saint Oliver was a peacemaker during divided times, a man of deep compassion who never wavered from speaking the truth, even when it cost him everything. His life is a powerful reminder that faith must not be kept to ourselves—but lived out, through acts of kindness, standing up for what's right, and building bridges where there is division.

This anniversary year invites each of us to do more than just remember St. Oliver. It challenges us to ask: How can we be witnesses to hope, love, and faith in our own lives? Whether it is in our parishes, communities, families, or workplaces, each of us can make a difference.

Throughout the year, there will be events, reflections, and opportunities for the Archdiocese of Armagh to come together in faith and service. But above all St. Oliver 400 offers an invitation to all of us to let St. Oliver Plunkett's story inspire us to live our lives with courage and compassion, to stand firm in our beliefs, and to be the light of Christ in a troubled world.

May St. Oliver 400 be a year of renewal, hope, and inspiration. May we celebrate his life, learn from his example, and throughout this year may we find new ways to share our faith with the world.

Every blessing on you all,

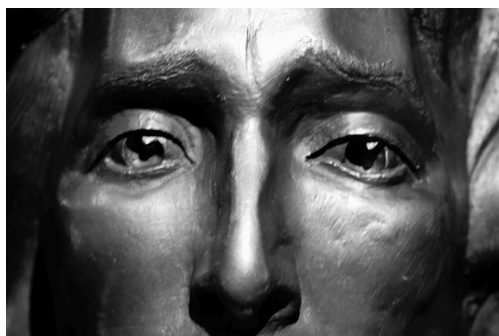
+ Eamon Martin

**+ Eamon Martin
Archbishop of Armagh**

Eugene Sweeney

**Canon Eugene Sweeney VG
Parish Priest of St. Peter's Parish Drogheda**

2. ST. OLIVER 400 AND JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE



As we embark on the Jubilee Year of Hope, called by Pope Francis for 2025, we in the Archdiocese of Armagh also celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of St. Oliver Plunkett. This is a year of renewal, faith, and mission—a time to rekindle hope in our Church and in the many parish communities across the Archdiocese. It is an opportunity for each of us to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another, drawing inspiration from the life and

witness of St. Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop and Martyr. As we mark 400 years since his birth and 50 years since his canonisation, this Jubilee invites us to reflect on his unwavering faith and the enduring legacy of hope he has left us.

A central focus of this year's celebrations will be the National Shrine of St. Oliver Plunkett, which is housed in St. Peter's Church, Drogheda. St. Peter's, Drogheda, designated as one of the Jubilee Churches for the Archdiocese of Armagh. In this sacred space, pilgrims will have the opportunity to journey in faith, receiving the grace of the Jubilee through prayer, reflection, and the sacraments. Just as St. Oliver Plunkett remained steadfast in faith during persecution and trial, this Jubilee invites us to deepen our trust in God's guidance and reflect on how we each can become bearers of hope in our own time.

Parishes across the Archdiocese are encouraged to honour St. Oliver 400 in ways that reflect his legacy—through prayer, pilgrimage, and parish celebrations. As a man who gave his life for the faith, he inspires us to live with courage, integrity and love today. Conscious that there are many Christians persecuted for their faith across the globe, we ask parishes to gather and offer prayers for all Holy martyrs, past, present and future.

Throughout the year, parishes will be invited to celebrate special liturgies, explore St. Oliver's life and legacy, engage in acts of charity, and create spaces for dialogue and reconciliation. Just as St. Oliver sought to build bridges in a fractured society, we, too, are called to be agents of God's love, healing and hope.



The Jubilee Year of Hope and the St. Oliver Plunkett 400 celebrations are an invitation to all—an opportunity to rediscover the joy of the Gospel, to deepen our connection to our faith, and to be inspired by St. Oliver's example. May his courage embolden us, his faith strengthen us, and his hope guide us as we walk together on the path of renewal.

PRAYER TO SAINT OLIVER PLUNKETT

**Glorious Martyr, Saint Oliver, who willingly
gave your life for your faith,
help us also to be strong in faith.**

**May we be loyal like you
to the See of Peter.**

**By your intercession and example
may all hatred and bitterness
be banished from the hearts
of men and women.**

**May the peace of Christ reign
in our hearts,
as it did in your heart,
even at the moment of your death.**

Pray for us, for Ireland and the whole World.

AMEN.



4. EVENTS AND LITURGIES CALENDAR



- 12th Feb 2025** **Wednesday, 11.00 am: Launch of St. Oliver Plunkett 400**
Launch will incorporate the launch of a Commemorative Book and marking designation of St. Peter's Church as a Jubilee Church.
- 22nd Feb 2025** **Saturday, 2.30pm: Jubilee Walk from St. Oliver's Well, Doctor's Quarters, Lislea, Parish of Bessbrook**
- 3rd May 2025** **Saturday, 10am: St. Oliver Historical Context Seminar**
St. Peter's NS, Drogheda
- 26th June 2025** **Thursday, 7pm: Mass at Carrive Mass Rock, Parish of Forkhill**
- 28th June 2025** **Saturday (All Day): Family Day in Oldcastle, Co. Meath (Diocese of Meath)**
- 29th June 2025** **Sunday: Mass in Oldcastle, Co. Meath (Diocese of Meath)**
- Summer 2025** **Exhibition of St. Oliver memorabilia in Louth County Offices, Fair St. Drogheda**
- 1st July 2025** **Tuesday: Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett, Bishop and Martyr**
Parishes in the Archdiocese of Armagh and Diocese of Meath; Memorial elsewhere in Ireland
- 1st July 2025** **Tuesday, 7pm: Mass at St. Oliver 's Mass Rock, Mullaharlin Rd., Parish of Haggardstown and Blackrock**
- 4th July 2025** **Friday: Gathering of the Plunkett Clan, Loughcrew (Diocese of Meath)**
- 5 July 2025** **Saturday: Family Day and Cultural Events with Concert**
A family day with cultural events and a concert will take place in Drogheda
- 6th July 2025** **Sunday: St. Oliver Plunkett Procession and Mass.**
Procession will commence at 3.00pm, Mass 4pm, St Peter's Church, Drogheda. Celebrant and preacher: Archbishop Eamon Martin.
- 13th July 2025** **Mass at St. Oliver's 'Pro Cathedral', Ballybarrack, Dundalk**
Celebration of Mass will commence at 3.00pm, Shrine to Oliver Plunkett, Ballybarrack, Dundalk.
- Date TBC** **Mass at St. Oliver's 'Pro Cathedral', Ardpatrick, Louth**
- 12th Oct 2025** **Sunday: Golden Jubilee of Canonization**
St. Patrick's Cathedral Armagh and St. Peter's Church Drogheda along with parishes in the Archdiocese of Armagh and Diocese of Meath.
- 1st Nov 2025** **Saturday: 400th Anniversary of St. Oliver's Birth**
Loughcrew, Oldcastle and throughout the Archdiocese of Armagh and Diocese of Meath.
- FEB - DEC 2025** **The Captain and the Saint, St Peter's Parochial / Barbican Centre, Drogheda.**
24 prints of watercolour paintings from book of the same name by artist and writer, Fintan Tracey.

5. THE LIFE OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT

By Tommy Burns



St. Oliver Plunkett - Pilgrim of Hope and Peace



Loughcrew Church and Towerhouse

St. Oliver was born in Loughcrew, Oldcastle, Co. Meath on All Saints Day, 1st November 1625. He studied for the priesthood in Rome and returned to Ireland as the Archbishop of Armagh in 1670 after a 23 year exile. He immediately set to work and there was much work to be done as the Church in Ireland had been without proper leadership for almost thirty years.

Facts: about St. Oliver Plunkett

- He built a new school in Drogheda for young boys which incorporated a college for the retraining of priests.
- He brought peace to each diocese that he visited by the settling of countless disputes which had arisen over previous decades.
- He negotiated a peace agreement between the Raparees or Tories and the Government of the day, bringing peace to his province.
- He ordained more than two-hundred priests in less than a decade. He forbade them from frequenting taverns or from drinking spirits and he insisted that each priest should possess good quality vestments and a silver chalice. Educating and training them well, this large group of dedicated priests, fired with the same zeal as he had, was surely one of his most important legacies. These brave men helped Irish Catholics to withstand the strict Penal Laws which were already coming down the tracks.
- Primarily a reforming bishop, he brought order, regularity and peace to the Church, giving both clergy and people hope - certainly another one of his important legacies.
- From Anglo-Irish stock there was some opposition initially among the Gaelic-Irish to his appointment, but these were soon won over, largely by his example as a good pastor, his being an able administrator and by his incredible work rate, irrespective of any hardship.
- Noted for his great loyalty to Rome, he reopened the lines of communication sending numerous letters and reports, and he was always happy to accept advice and to follow instructions from Rome. He signed many of his letters with the pseudo names, William Browne (Captain), Thomas Cox & Edmund Hamon. An indefatigable letter writer, the cost of his voluminous correspondence, added to the cost of the schools, meant that Archbishop Oliver was forever short of money as his income was so small.
- He was a hospitable host and very charitable and caring to those in need, going as far as pawning his valuables so as to be able to provide bread for the poor in a time of famine. He estimated that 500 people had died of hunger in his diocese at that time.

THE LIFE OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT

By Tommy Burns



Facts continued..

- He organised several synods for the Church in Ireland, a national synod in Dublin and provincial synods at Clones and a later one at Ardpark.
- He undertook several visitations of all the parishes in his own diocese and as the only active bishop for a time in the northern half of the country he undertook arduous visits to all of the other dioceses in his province.
- There were barely a handful of church buildings allowed across the region, so most of his confirmation ceremonies were held at moss-coated Mass rocks and he wrote: "There are bearded men of sixty who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation."
- He appointed a new vicar to Raphoe and personally accompanied him to Donegal, guiding him through the passes and introducing him to the diocese. Reflecting on his travels, he wrote to Rome: "What Alps and Apennines I have crossed, the Lord knows."
- St. Oliver was a skilled diplomat who avoided politics while maintaining good relations with influential figures. Lord Charlemont, President of Ulster, allowed him to use his Armagh courtyard for confirmations, while Henry Moore, Earl of Drogheda, granted him a public church with bells, free from royal jurisdiction. When arrested, he was sent to London for trial, as it was widely believed no Protestant jury in Ireland would accept the fabricated treason charges against him.



THE LIFE OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT

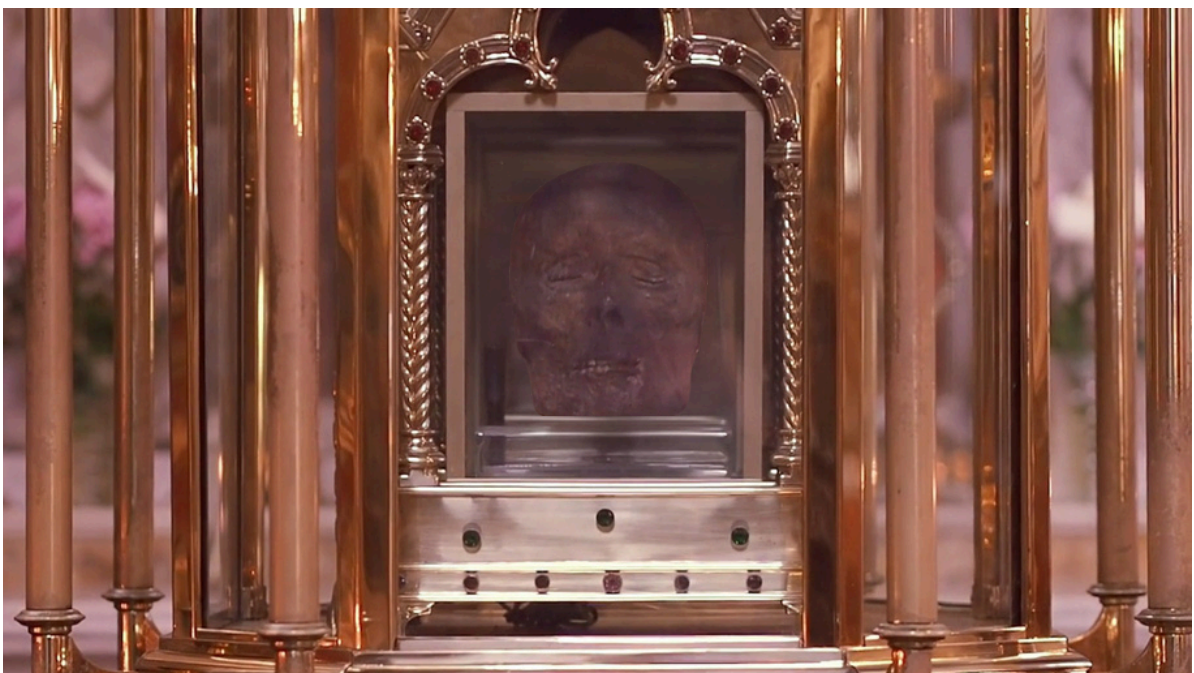
By Tommy Burns



As political tensions in England worsened, a bounty was placed on Archbishop Oliver's capture. Refusing exile, he went into hiding, often without a bed of his own. Falsely accused of plotting rebellion and aiding a French invasion through Carlingford, he was arrested in 1679 and imprisoned in Dublin Castle. After his trial collapsed in Dundalk, he was sent to London, enduring a second brutal winter in solitary confinement, shackled in leg irons. Despite harsh conditions, he fasted three to four days a week and was observed in constant prayer. Denied time to summon his own witnesses, he faced a swift trial in Westminster Hall, where false testimony secured his conviction. On 1st July 1681, he was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, London.

Archbishop Oliver was declared venerable by Pope Leo XIII on 9th December 1886. Following a favourable outcome from each of the three subsequent apostolic tribunals set up to investigate his life, Pope Benedict XV declared Archbishop Oliver a martyr for the faith on St. Patrick's Day 1918 and beatified him as Blessed Oliver Plunkett on Pentecost Sunday, 23rd May 1920.

Following the miraculous cure of an Italian lady in Naples, and the acceptance by the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints that a miracle had indeed taken place through the intercession of Blessed Oliver Plunkett, Pope St. Paul VI who had visited the National Shrine in Drogheda on two occasions, canonised St. Oliver in Rome on 12th October 1975. The relic of his Head is enshrined in the Jubilee Church of St. Peter in Drogheda and pilgrims come from far and near to venerate and pray at his shrine.



Relic of St. Oliver Plunkett, National Shrine, St. Peter's Church, Drogheda

CELEBRATING THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HIS CANONISATION - 12TH OCTOBER 2025

By Tommy Burns



For nearly two centuries after his death, Archbishop Oliver Plunkett was largely forgotten in Ireland due to the harsh penal laws and the struggles of famine. These were difficult times, as Irish Catholics fought for both physical and spiritual survival. However, his memory was faithfully preserved by the Siena Convent in Drogheda, the Irish College in Rome, Lamspringe Abbey in Germany, Downside Abbey in Somerset—where his tomb is located—and several other Benedictine communities.

Figures such as Bishop Richard Challoner in England, Professor George Crolly of Maynooth (nephew of Archbishop William Crolly of Armagh), and Cardinal Patrick Moran, along with other biographers, played a key role in rekindling interest in Archbishop Plunkett's life and work. His final speech, delivered from the gallows at Tyburn, was reprinted multiple times throughout the 19th century, ensuring that his legacy and heroic witness were never entirely forgotten.

Due to extensive scholarship and a renewed interest in Catholics who had given their lives for the faith, Archbishop Oliver Plunkett was declared Venerable by Pope Leo XIII on 9th December 1886. After three apostolic tribunals examined his life and legacy, Pope Benedict XV declared him a martyr for the faith on St. Patrick's Day, 1918, and beatified him as Blessed Oliver Plunkett on Pentecost Sunday, 23rd May 1920.

Following the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, numerous appeals were made to the Holy See to resume his cause, including a 1938 petition signed by 112 members of the U.S. hierarchy. However, the outbreak of World War II delayed further progress. It was not until 1951 that the Sacred Congregation of Rites formally reopened the examination of Blessed Oliver's cause. Since the documentation prepared for his beatification could not be taken for granted, much of the work had to begin anew.

With widespread petitioning, a league of prayer was established in each diocese in Ireland, led by dedicated organisers. In 1958, a miraculous cure was recorded when an Italian woman, Mrs. Giovanna Martiriggiano, was healed through his intercession, marking a significant step in his path to sainthood.

The Medical Missionaries of Mary managed the Clinica Mediterranea, a large hospital in Naples, where in 1958, Signora Giovanna was admitted in critical condition. She had been found alone in her home after spending several hours in a comatose state. Pregnant and at full term, she had suffered a ruptured womb, tragically losing her baby and sustaining severe internal injuries, particularly to her bladder.

Following emergency surgery, her condition was so grave that the surgeon, fearing she would not survive, hastily closed the incision and ordered her to be moved to a side ward, stating he did not want a patient dying on his operating table.

That evening, Sr. Cabrini Quigley, an Irish sister from Bunrana, Co. Donegal, was on duty at the hospital. With little hope for Giovanna's survival, she placed a picture of Blessed Oliver Plunkett on the patient's pillow and arranged for Giovanna's husband, Nicola, and the community of sisters to hold a night vigil, praying for her recovery through Blessed Oliver's intercession.

Throughout the night, doctors were astonished that she remained alive. By morning, against all expectations, Giovanna regained consciousness. In the days that followed, she rapidly recovered, and remarkably, no further medical intervention was ever required—leaving the medical team astounded by her miraculous healing.

CELEBRATING THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HIS CANONISATION - 12TH OCTOBER 2025

By Tommy Burn



After exhaustive theological and medical investigation, the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints formally recognised the case as a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Oliver Plunkett. This paved the way for his canonisation seventeen years later—a moment of significance, especially as the miracle confirming his sainthood took place in Italy, the country where St. Oliver had spent much of his adult life.

Given their pivotal role in the canonisation process, the Medical Missionaries of Mary were well represented at the ceremony. Sister Winifred Newell, matron of the Clinica Mediterranea in Naples, led a group of fourteen sisters on a bus to Rome, declaring, “We wouldn’t miss this day for anything.”

Yet amid the joy of the occasion, there was also a note of sorrow for the community as Sr. Cabrini Quigley, whose faith and prayers had played a crucial part in the miraculous healing, was not there to witness the moment. She had tragically passed away in 1966 while swimming in the Bay of Naples—a swim she had been encouraged to take by friends on that fateful day.

Oliver Plunkett was declared a saint by Pope Saint Paul VI in a canonisation ceremony held in St. Peter’s Square, Rome, on 12th October 1975, during the Holy Year. His canonization not only elevated him to sainthood but also symbolically reversed the court judgment that had condemned him at Westminster Hall centuries earlier.

The ceremony was attended by numerous Irish dignitaries from both Church and State, along with an estimated twelve thousand Irish pilgrims who had traveled from Ireland. Large groups of pilgrims also came from Downside Abbey, the Diocese of Hildesheim, and the United States. A combined choir from Dundalk and Drogheda, joined by one hundred priests, nuns, and clerical students based in Rome, had the privilege of performing at the historic event.

Among the twelve individuals honored to take part in the Offertory procession was Signora Giovanna Martiriggiano, whose miraculous cure had confirmed St. Oliver’s canonization. Reflecting on her healing, she recalled, “I was given up for dead.” Also participating in the procession was Sr. Aloysius Quigley, a Mercy Sister and sibling of the late Sr. Cabrini Quigley, whose faith had played a crucial role in Giovanna’s recovery. Sr. Winifred Newell, M.M.M., also took part, ensuring that the invaluable contribution of the Medical Missionaries of Mary in the canonization process was duly recognized.



6. MAP OF PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH ST. OLIVER



The map includes the places associated with St. Oliver and his relatives. In addition nine locations, where St. Oliver ordained priests, are indicated with the symbol of a cross (+). St Oliver held diocesan meetings at Pierce's Inn, Dunleer and at Blyke's Inn, Dorsey. He was said to have hidden in various parts of the Archdiocese of Armagh in troubled times, two of these were reputed to be in the vicinity of the monastic sites of St Brigid at Faughart and of St Monnine at Killeavy.

He probably visited Monasterboice as it was on or close to the main route from Drogheda to Dundalk. Some of the other places for example, Carlingford, feature in the course of his correspondence as recorded in his letters.

There were many Mass Rocks over the countryside and tradition holds that St Oliver offered Mass at some of these sites, including Mullaharlin that is near Ballybarrack. The Mass rock at Cormeen, Stradone, Co Cavan is included, as a branch of the Plunkett family settled in the area and perhaps St Oliver offered Mass there.

Mullingar (Cathedral of Christ the King) and Maynooth (St. Patrick's College) are included as the Museums at these locations contain items used by St Oliver such as vestments and the seventeenth century thurible found at Ballybarrack in 1920.

Séamus Bellew



7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER AND PILGRIMAGE



As we celebrate 400 years since the birth of St. Oliver Plunkett and 50 years since his canonisation, we are invited to deepen our faith through pilgrimage, prayer, and community gatherings. This Jubilee Year of Hope, called by Pope Francis for 2025, inspires us to reflect on St. Oliver's courage, faith, and enduring hope.

1. Pilgrimage to the National Shrine to St. Oliver Plunkett,

Visit St. Peter's Church, Drogheda, home to the National Shrine of St. Oliver Plunkett and designated as a Jubilee Church for this special year. Here, pilgrims can pray beside the head of St. Oliver Plunkett, reflect on his life, and find inspiration in his faith and witness.

2. Visit Other Sites Connected to St. Oliver

Explore places that shaped St. Oliver's life:

- Loughcrew, Co. Meath – Near his birthplace.
- St. Oliver's Shrine, Ballybarrack, Dundalk – A site of devotion.
- Ardpatrick, Louth - His Church, St. Oliver lived nearby. Also location of St. Oliver Oak tree in which he hid.
- Mural to St. Oliver Plunkett, Dundalk, located near the place he was jailed before transportation to Tyburn.
- Tyburn, London - Site of St. Oliver Plunkett's Martyrdom
- Downside Abbey, Somerset – Where his remains rest.
- St. Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent – Where he was ordained Archbishop in 1669.
- Jubilee Pilgrimage to Rome - Where St. Oliver taught before returning to Ireland.
- Lamspinge, Germany - St. Oliver Festival is held at the end of August each year.

3. Community and School Prayer Initiatives

Parishes and schools are encouraged to:

- Hold prayer services inspired by St. Oliver's life.
- Organise acts of service, reflecting his commitment to peace.
- Learn from his writings, fostering faith and hope in today's world.

5. Embracing Family Prayer

Families are invited to:

- Pray together, asking for St. Oliver's intercession.
- Share his story, reflecting on his courage and faith.
- Practice acts of kindness, inspired by his example.

6. Supporting Parents in Passing on the Faith

Communities are asked to help parents to:

- Introduce children to St. Oliver's life through stories and activities.
- Encourage conversations about faith, courage, and justice.
- Join family-friendly pilgrimages and parish events celebrating his legacy.

7. Engaging Youth and Young Adults

Parishes are asked to help teenagers and young adults to connect with St. Oliver through:

- Pilgrimages and events, like St. Oliver's Camino for families.
- Creative projects, including art, music, murals, and other creative projects..
- Reflection activities that help them explore how his faith speaks to today's challenges.



CHURCHES AND SHRINES DEDICATED TO SAINT OLIVER IN THE ARCHDIOCESE

Shrine Dedicated to St. Oliver Plunkett	Consecrated/Dedicated
St. Oliver Plunkett's National Shrine, St. Peter's Church, Drogheda	1921
St. Oliver Plunkett's Shrine, Ballybarrack, Holy Redeemer Parish, Dundalk	
St. Oliver Plunkett Statue in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh	2019
Church and Parish	
St. Oliver Plunkett, Dorsey, Parish of Cullyhanna	1954
St. Oliver Plunkett, Blackrock, Parish of Haggardstown and Blackrock	1922
St. Oliver Plunkett, Forkhill, Parish of Mullaghbawn	1997
St. Oliver Plunkett, Creggan, Parish of Termonmaguirc	1940
Hospital	
St. Oliver Plunkett Community Hospital, Dundalk, St. Patrick's Parish	1987



SCHOOLS DEDICATED TO SAINT OLIVER IN THE ARCHDIOCESE

- St. Oliver's National School, Drogheda (St. Peter's Parish)
- St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School, Beragh (Beragh Parish)
- St Oliver's National School, Carlingford (Carlingford and Omeath Parish)
- St Oliver's Primary School, Carrickovaddy (Cullyhanna Parish)
- St Oliver Plunkett's National School, Blackrock (Haggardstown and Blackrock Parish)
- St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School, Ballyhegan (Kilmore Parish)
- St Oliver's National School, Stonetown, (Louth Parish)
- St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School, Forkhill (Mullaghbawn Parish)



1 Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett - Celebration of Mass

- 1.1 *Procession of Symbols and Accompanying Reflection*
- 1.2 *Sprinkling Rite*
- 1.2 *Readings for the Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett*
- 1.3 *Intercessions*

2 Evening Prayer

3 Blessings and Prayers for the Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett

4 Novena to St. Oliver Plunkett

5 Hymn to St. Oliver Plunkett

FEAST OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT, 1ST JULY 2025



CELEBRATION OF MASS



PROCESSION OF SYMBOLS: HONOURING ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT

As we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of St. Oliver Plunkett and the 50th anniversary of his canonisation, parishes are encouraged to integrate this Procession of Symbols at the beginning of Mass, particularly on the Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett (1 July) and during key Jubilee events.

Parishes are invited to involve local schools and young people in preparing and carrying these symbols. Schools may even create some of the symbols as part of their St. Oliver 400 celebrations.

1. List of Symbols

Candle: Representing St. Oliver's unwavering faith, shining brightly even in the face of persecution and darkness.

Palm Branch: A symbol of martyrdom and victory over death, reflecting St. Oliver's ultimate sacrifice for his faith.

A Letter or Scroll: Symbolising St. Oliver's pastoral letters and writings, which reveal his deep care for his people and his commitment to peace and reconciliation.

Chains: Representing his imprisonment and suffering, yet also his resilience, hope, and unbreakable spirit.

Bishop's Mitre: Signifying his role as Archbishop of Armagh, his leadership during times of persecution, and his spiritual authority in guiding the Church in Ireland.

2. Reflection on Symbols

Today, as we begin this special year of celebration—marking 400 years since the birth of St. Oliver Plunkett, a man of faith, courage, and hope—we reflect on his remarkable life. St. Oliver lived through some of the darkest times in Irish history, facing persecution, false accusations, and ultimately martyrdom for his unwavering commitment to the Catholic faith. In this Jubilee Year his legacy is a beacon of hope for the Church here in the Archdiocese of Armagh.

Candle:

To begin our procession, a candle will be brought forward to symbolise St. Oliver's steadfast faith—a light that continued to burn even in the darkness of prison cells and during his unjust trial. This flame reminds us that faith, even when tested, can never be extinguished.

Palm Branch:

St. Oliver's life ended with martyrdom, the ultimate witness to his faith. A palm branch, the traditional Christian symbol of martyrdom and victory over death, will now be carried forward, reminding us that his death was not in vain, but a triumph of Faith, Hope and Love.

A Letter or Scroll:

Despite facing danger and persecution, St. Oliver remained a dedicated shepherd to his flock. His letters and writings are filled with wisdom, pastoral care, and a call to reconciliation. A scroll will be brought forward to symbolise his commitment to teaching, peace, and unity, even from prison.

Chains:

St. Oliver spent his final days and months imprisoned, facing harsh conditions with remarkable courage and hope. Chains will be carried forward, not as a sign of defeat, but as a symbol of resilience, faith, and the strength of the human spirit in the face of trial and adversity.

Bishop's Mitre or Crozier:

As Archbishop of Armagh, St. Oliver was a spiritual leader during times of great turmoil. A bishop's mitre (Picture of a Mitre) will be presented to signify his role as a shepherd to his people, guiding them with courage, humility, and an unshakable faith in God.

Involving the Community

Parishes may adapt this procession to their local context, involving young people, schools, and families in the preparation of these symbols. Each symbol tells part of St. Oliver's story, inviting us to reflect on how we can live lives of faith, hope, and courage in today's world.

Through this Procession of Symbols, may we honour St. Oliver's legacy and be inspired to carry his light of faith into our own communities.

SPRINKLING RITE

Celebrant:

Dear brothers and sisters, let us praise the Lord our God for this water he has created, and which will be sprinkled on us as a memorial of our Baptism. May he help us by his grace to remain faithful to the Spirit we have received.

All: Amen.

Celebrant:

Father, God of mercy, through these waters of baptism you have filled us with new life as your very own children. From all who are baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, you have formed one people, united in your Son Jesus Christ. You have set us free and filled our hearts with the Spirit of your love, that we may live in your peace.

Like the courage you gave to blessed St. Oliver, who remained steadfast in faith even in times of trial and persecution, you call all those who have been baptized to bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ with boldness and hope. We pray, by the mystery of this consecrated water, remind us of our new and spiritual birth in baptism. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

(After sprinkling, at the chair):

Celebrant:

May almighty God cleanse us of our sins, and through the Eucharist we celebrate make us worthy to sit at his table in his heavenly kingdom.

All: Amen.

(The Gloria follows, and then the Collect.)

READINGS FOR THE FEAST OF ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT

1ST JULY 2025

First reading

Ezekiel 34:11-16

I will look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view

The Lord God says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I shall bring them out of the countries where they are; I shall gather them together from foreign countries and bring them back to their own land. I shall pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in every inhabited place in the land. I shall feed them in good pasturage; the high mountains of Israel will be their grazing ground. There they will rest in good grazing ground; they will browse in rich pastures on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest – it is the Lord who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Or

First reading

1 Peter 3:8-18

He must never yield to evil but must practise good; he must seek peace and pursue it

You should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing. Never pay back one wrong with another, or an angry word with another one; instead, pay back with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself. Remember: Anyone who wants to have a happy life and to enjoy prosperity must banish malice from his tongue, deceitful conversation from his lips; he must never yield to evil but must practise good; he must seek peace and pursue it. Because the face of the Lord frowns on the evil, but the eyes of the Lord are turned towards the virtuous.

No one can hurt you if you are determined to do only what is right; if you do have to suffer for being good, you will count it a blessing. There is no need to be afraid or to worry about them. Simply reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 30 (31):3-4,6,8,17,21

R. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a mighty stronghold to save me,
for you are my rock, my stronghold.
For your name's sake, lead me and guide me.

R. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Into your hands I commend my spirit.
It is you who will redeem me, Lord.
As for me, I trust in the Lord:
let me be glad and rejoice in your love.

R. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your love.
You hide them in the shelter of your presence
from the human plotting.

R. Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Gospel Acclamation

James 1:12

Alleluia, alleluia!
Happy those who stand firm when trials come.
They have proved themselves,
and will win the crown of life.
Alleluia!

Gospel

John 10:11-16

The good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep

Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd:
the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep.

The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him,
abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks
and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

'I am the good shepherd;
I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me
and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep.
And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well.
They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd.'

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

Prayers of the Faithful for the Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett

Introduction:

Today, as we gather to honour St. Oliver Plunkett, faithful shepherd and courageous martyr, we ask for God's grace through his intercession. Inspired by his unwavering faith, we bring our prayers before the Lord with trust and hope.

Intentions:

1. For Pope Francis, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Bishop Michael and all bishops: that they may lead the Church with wisdom, courage, and a spirit of peace, following the example of St. Oliver's steadfast faith.

Lord, hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

2. For Christians everywhere: that we may live as faithful disciples of Christ, embracing the call to witness with love, integrity, and hope of Christ, even in challenging times.

Lord, hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

3. In this time of renewal and reflection in our Church, may the courage and resilience of St. Oliver inspire us to stand firm in faith, speak the truth with compassion, and work for justice and peace in our communities.

Lord, hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

4. For all who suffer persecution for their faith, and for those facing trials of conscience and conviction: may they find strength and consolation through the intercession of St. Oliver, who remained faithful even unto death.

Lord, hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

5. For our parish community of _____ and for the Archdiocese of Armagh: that we may honour the legacy of St. Oliver by fostering a deep love for the Gospel and a vibrant spirit of hope in our families, parishes, and diocesan life.

Lord, hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

6. For all our departed relatives and friends, and especially those who, like St. Oliver, bore the cross of suffering with faith: may they now share the joy and peace of eternal life in God's presence.

Lord, hear us.

Lord graciously hear us

Concluding Prayer:

Almighty and ever-living God, you strengthened St. Oliver Plunkett to be a fearless witness of faith, hope, and love in the face of adversity. Strengthen our hearts with the same courage, that we may live faithfully and work for the renewal of your Church. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FEAST OF ST OLIVER PLUNKETT, 1ST JULY 2025



EVENING PRAYER



EVENING PRAYER WITH SERVICE OF LIGHT: FEAST OF SAINT OLIVER PLUNKETT

Opening Hymn:

While the opening hymn is sung, a candle is lit as a sign of the light of Christ that never fades.

Invitatory:

The Priest/Presider may briefly introduce evening prayer with the Prayer to Saint Oliver Plunkett and allow a brief silence after this before the service of light.

Lord, open our lips.

R. And we shall praise your name.

Prayer to Saint Oliver Plunkett

Oliver, you were a faithful shepherd in times of persecution.
You stood firm in faith, courageously proclaiming the Gospel.
You endured injustice with patience and forgave those who wronged you.
In this jubilee year, may your witness inspire us to steadfast faith.
May your love of peace strengthen those who suffer for justice.
Oliver, you embraced the cross with unwavering trust.
Strengthen what is weak within us,
that we may walk in courage and truth,
living as faithful witnesses to Christ.

R. Amen.

The candle is blessed by the priest (if present), and if the parish wishes, participants can bring their own candles, which can be lit from the main candle.

Priest: We call upon the Lord, who has made heaven and earth, to come upon us and upon this candle, a blessed candle dedicated to St. Oliver Plunkett. May we, with pure minds, just like St. Oliver, come to You, the Light that does not fail, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

PSALMODY

Psalm 19 (20) – Prayer for Victory

“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21).

The Lord will give victory to his Anointed One.

May the Lord answer in time of trial;
may the name of Jacob’s God protect you.
May he send you help from his shrine
and give you support from Sion.
May he remember all your offerings
and receive your sacrifice with favour.

May he give you your heart’s desire
and fulfil every one of your plans.
May we ring out our joy at your victory
and rejoice in the name of our God.
May the Lord grant all your prayers.

I am sure now that the Lord
will give victory to his anointed,
will reply from his holy heaven
with the mighty victory of his hand.

Some trust in chariots or horses,
but we in the name of the Lord.
They will collapse and fall,
but we shall hold and stand firm.

Give victory to the king, O Lord,
give answer on the day we call.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The Lord will give victory to his Anointed One.

Psalm-Prayer: *Please stand. (Allow a brief pause for personal reflection.)*

Lord, you accepted the perfect sacrifice of your Son upon the cross. Hear us during times of trouble and protect us by the power of his name, that we who share his struggle on earth may merit a share in his victory.

Please be seated. Allow a brief period of silence before the Canticle

Canticle

Apocalypse 4,5 – The Song of the Redeemed

Lord, you made us a kingdom and priests to serve our God.

Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.

Worthy are you, O Lord,
to take the scroll and to open its seals,
for you were slain, †
and by your blood you ransomed men for God
from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

You have made us a kingdom and priests to our God,
and we shall reign on earth.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
to receive power and wealth
and wisdom and might
and honour and glory and blessing.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Lord, you made us a kingdom and priests to serve our God.

WORD OF GOD

Depending on the setting, the reading may be proclaimed from the Ambo, or from the reader's place. Choose a brief reading which may come from the Liturgy of the Hours for the day and hour.

1 Peter 4:13-14

Beloved, if you can have some share in the sufferings of Christ, be glad, because you will enjoy a much greater gladness when his glory is revealed. It is a blessing for you when they insult you for bearing the name of Christ because it means that you have the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God resting on you.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Short Responsory

You have tested us, God, and you have brought us out into freedom again.

– *You have tested us, God, and you have brought us out into freedom again.*

You have refined us like silver.

– *You have tested us, God, and you have brought us out into freedom again.*

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

– *You have tested us, God, and you have brought us out into freedom again.*

PRAISE AND INTERCESSIONS

Canticle of Mary (Magnificat)

Please Stand

All make the sign of the cross as the first line of the Canticle is prayed.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favour on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the king of martyrs, for this is the hour when he offered himself in the last supper and laid down his life on the cross.

R. We praise you, Christ the Lord.

We praise you, Christ our Saviour, example and strength of the martyrs, because you have loved us to the end;

R. We praise you, Christ the Lord.

Because you have promised repentant sinners the reward of eternal life,

R. We praise you, Christ the Lord.

Because you have called the Church to offer the blood of the new and eternal covenant, the blood shed for the remission of sins,

R. We praise you, Christ the Lord.

Because you have brought us to this day with the gift of faith intact,

R. We praise you, Christ the Lord.

Because of the many brothers who today have come to share in your saving death,

R. We praise you, Christ the Lord.

Pause for spontaneous prayers.

Lord's Prayer

Leader: As sons and daughters of a loving God, we pray in the confident words of his Son:

All: Our Father...

CONCLUDING RITE

Concluding Prayer:

Leader: Listen favourably to our evening prayer, Lord, and grant that as we follow your Son's example, we may, by perseverance, yield a harvest of good works. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

A blessing may conclude the liturgy.

Leader:

All: May the Lord bless us, protect us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Closing Hymn

FEAST OF ST OLIVER PLUNKETT, 1ST JULY 2025



BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS



Armagh Diocesan Prayer to St. Oliver Plunkett

Oliver Saint and Hero.
You followed the way of Jesus
and stood up for what you believed in
We honour your memory.

Guide the Church of Armagh
as we engage with the challenges of our time.
Direct our energies in ways that nurture faith.

Walk with us on the pilgrim path
which involves renewal and change.
Help us to trust in Jesus
as leader and teacher.

May we value all that is sacred
And embrace courageously ways of
peace and reconciliation.
St. Oliver Plunkett Prayer for us.



Blessing of St. Oliver's Cross, Picture or Medal

God of truth and justice,
you called your servant Oliver Plunkett to be a faithful shepherd,
guiding your people with courage, wisdom, and love.

We ask you to bless this cross (picture or medal),
a sign of St. Oliver's unwavering faith in the face of trials.

May it remind us of his steadfast hope, his love for peace,
and his trust in your divine providence.

Through St. Oliver's intercession,
may we be protected from harm,
strengthened in our faith,
and inspired to live with integrity and compassion.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(The cross or medal may be sprinkled with holy water)

May the blessing of Almighty God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be upon this cross (picture or medal),
upon those who wear it,
and upon the homes where it is placed.

Amen.

St. Oliver's Blessing for Peace and Courage

May St. Oliver bless the hearts that seek peace,
the minds that search for truth,
and the souls that long for justice.

Bless every home where faith is nurtured,
every voice that speaks with kindness,
and every hand that reaches out in love.

May St. Oliver's example of courage in adversity
inspire us to stand firm in our convictions,
to forgive with generosity,
and to live with hope in times of trial.

St. Oliver, bless us with the peace of Christ,
the courage of the martyrs,
and the joy of the Gospel in our hearts.

Amen.

St. Oliver Plunkett 400 - Prayer for Love and Courage

St. Oliver, faithful shepherd and brave witness,
you remained steadfast in faith amidst persecution and fear.
You spoke the truth with love,
forgave those who wronged you,
and trusted in God's mercy even unto death.

Pray for us, that we may have your courage
to stand for what is right and just.
When we face trials, strengthen us.
When we are afraid, comfort us.
When we are tempted to despair, fill us with hope.

Intercede for peace in our hearts,
in our homes, and in our world.
May we, like you, be faithful disciples of Christ,
living with integrity, love, and joy.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT NOVENA 23RD JUNE - 1ST JULY 2025



NOVENA TO SAINT OLIVER



NOVENA TO SAINT OLIVER PLUNKETT

Day 1: Witness of Faith

Today we pray for the people of the Archdiocese of Armagh, that the example of St. Oliver Plunkett's unwavering faith may inspire us to deepen our trust in God.

Day 2: Hope Amid Persecution

Today we pray for those who face persecution for their faith, that they may find hope and courage in Christ, as St. Oliver did.

Day 3: Unity and Reconciliation

Today we pray for unity in our Church and our communities, that we may be peacemakers like St. Oliver, fostering reconciliation where there is division.

Day 4: Courage to Speak the Truth

Today we pray for all who proclaim the Gospel, that they may do so with courage, compassion, and fidelity to the truth.

Day 5: Compassion for the Poor and Marginalised

Today we pray for the poor, the suffering, and the marginalised, that we may be moved to act with the same compassion St. Oliver showed in his ministry.

Day 6: Renewal of Faith in Families

Today we pray for families, that they may be places of faith, love, and hope, drawing strength from the witness of St. Oliver Plunkett.

Day 7: Strength in Times of Trial

Today we pray for those experiencing hardship or suffering, that they may find strength in God's love, as St. Oliver did in his darkest moments.

Day 8: Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life

Today we pray for vocations, that those called to serve the Church may respond generously, inspired by the example of St. Oliver's dedication.

Day 9: Missionary Discipleship

Today we pray for all baptised Christians, that we may courageously live as missionary disciples, spreading the joy of the Gospel in our world.

Novena Prayer:

O Glorious St. Oliver Plunkett, faithful Archbishop and courageous Martyr, intercede for us as we celebrate 400 years since your birth. Strengthen our faith as we seek to follow Christ with integrity and love. May we stand firm in times of trial, trusting in God's eternal promise.

[Insert personal petition here]

St. Oliver Plunkett, pray for us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...

Concluding Reflection:

St. Oliver Plunkett, you lived with unwavering hope amidst persecution and adversity. As we honour your legacy during this Jubilee Year, may we be inspired by your faith, your courage, and your commitment to peace and reconciliation. Help us to be lights of hope, witnesses of Christ's love, and builders of God's Kingdom.

Amen.

St. Oliver Plunkett, pray for us.

St. Patrick, St. Brigid, St. Malachy, and all the Saints of Armagh, pray for us.

Naomh Mhuire, Máthair Dé, guí orainn.

Amen.

ST. OLIVER PLUNKETT



HYMN TO SAINT OLIVER



Hymn to Saint Oliver Plunkett

Daithi Kearney 2024

Allegro

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score consists of nine staves of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics. Chord symbols are placed above the notes to indicate the harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, and *mp* are used to indicate volume changes. The lyrics are: 'Glor - i - ous Mar - tyr Saint Ol - i - ver who will - ing - ly ga - ve your life for your faith He - lp us al - so to be strong in faith May we be loy - al like you to the See o - f Pet - er By your in - ter - cess - ion a - nd ex - am - ple may all hat - red and bi - tter - ness be ba - nished from the hea - rts of men and wom - en May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts as it did in your heart e - ven at the mom - ent o - f your death Pra - y for us, for Ire - land and the whole world A - - - - - men'. The score ends with a double bar line.

G C Em D C D
Glor - i - ous Mar - tyr Saint Ol - i - ver who will - ing - ly ga - ve your life for your faith

9 *f* G C Am Bm C
He - lp us al - so to be strong in faith May we be

16 *mf* D Em D
loy - al like you to the See o - f Pet - er By

23 G C Am D Em D G
your in - ter - cess - ion a - nd ex - am - ple may all hat - red and bi - tter -

31 *f* D Em C Am C D
ness be ba - nished from the hea - rts of men and wom - en

38 G Em D Bm C D C
mp May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts as it

47 D Em C D
did in your heart e - ven at the mom - ent o - f your death

56 G C Am C
Pra - y for us, for Ire - land and the whole

61 *f* D C D G
world A - - - - - men

Hymn to Saint Oliver Plunkett

Daithi Kearney 2024

Allegro

4

Glor - i - ous Mar - tyr Saint Ol - i - ver who will - ing - ly ga - ve your

11

life for your faith he - lp us al - so to — be strong in faith May we

19

be loy - al like you to — the See o - f Pet - er By

27

your in - ter - cess - ion a - nd ex - am - ple may all hat - red and bi - tter -

35

ness be ba - n-ished from the hea-rts of men and wom en May the

43

peace of Christ reign in our hearts as it

51

did in your heart e - ven at the mom - ent o - f your death

mom-ment of

59

-dea - th Pra - y for us for Ir - e - land and the

64

whole world A - - - men



www.saintoliverplunkett.com

www.sppd.ie

www.armagharchdiocese.org

www.armaghprays.com