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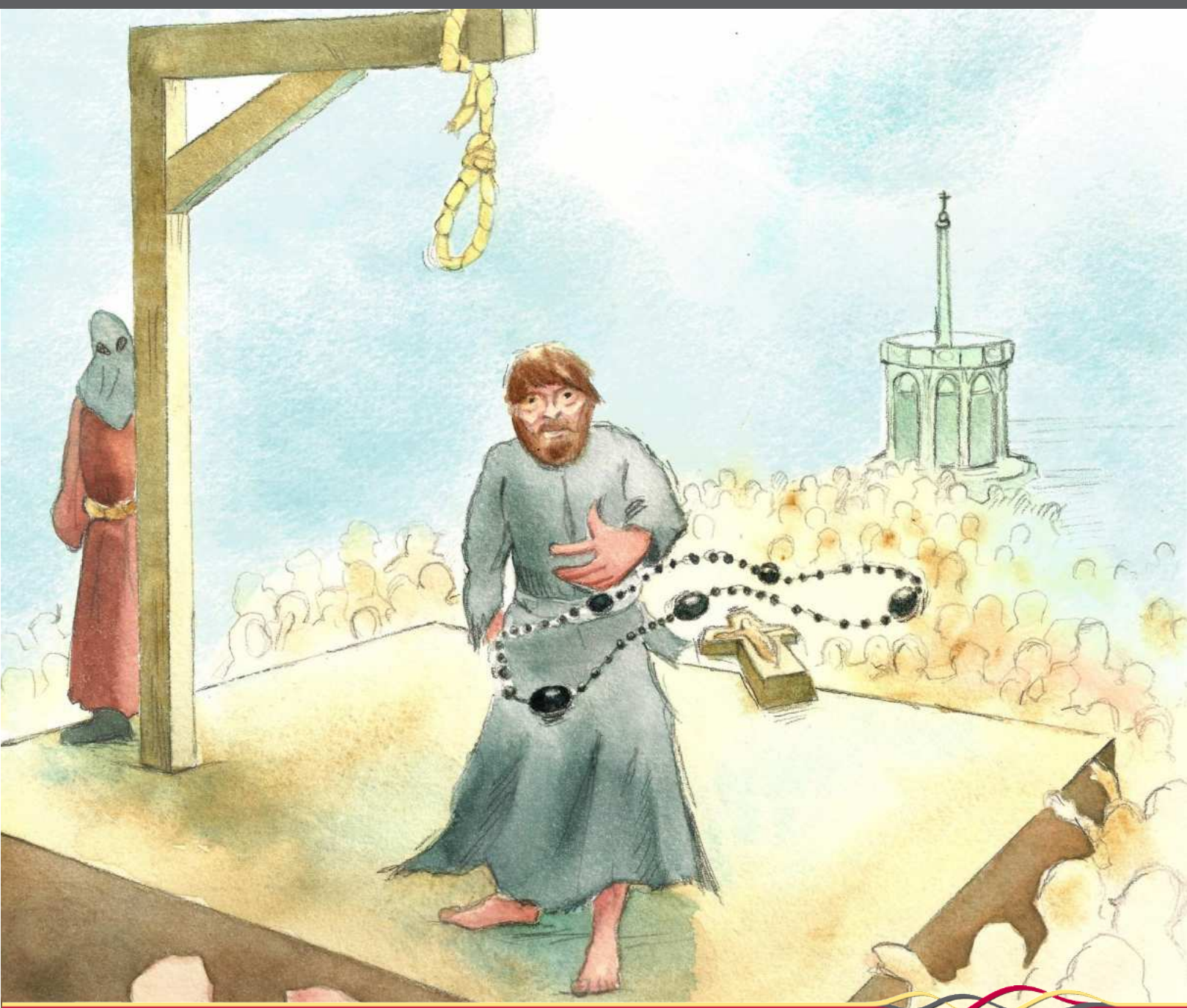

The Quiet Drum

The Story of St John Ogilvie SJ

The Quiet Drum – The Story of St John Ogilvie SJ

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St Aloysius College Junior School, Glasgow
Primary 6 Gonzaga 2014-15

Illustrations by Kathy Jurek.

The prayer *Lord, teach me to be generous* is by Jacques Sevin SJ (1887-1951) and used here with historical and poetic licence.

On the Battlefields of Scotland is by Mother W Long RSCJ with music by Thomas Lakeland SJ.

The eyewitness account of John Eckersdorff is from *The Venerable John Ogilvie SJ – A Sketch of His Life* (1878, 1915) by Daniel Conway.

Teaching resources to accompany this book are available at jesuitinstitute.org

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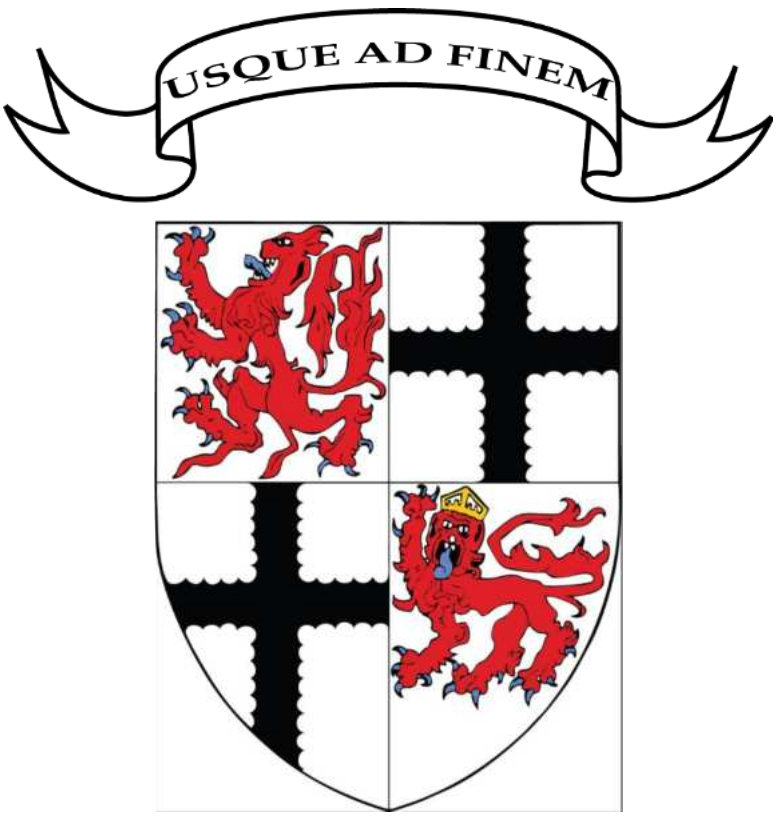
The Quiet Drum

The Story of St John Ogilvie SJ



John Ogilvie was born at Drum, near Keith, on the east coast of Scotland in 1579. John's mother, Agnes Elphinstone, was a Catholic. Two of her brothers were Jesuit priests. Agnes died when John was three years old and he was brought up a Presbyterian by his father and stepmother, Mary Douglas. At the age of 13, John was sent to the continent for his education, enrolling at the famous Lutheran school at Helmstedt in Germany. Moving on to other schools, run by the Benedictines and then the Jesuits, he became familiar with the Catholic faith and changed his religion. He joined the Society of Jesus, a religious order in the Catholic Church, and was ordained priest. Sent to teach and minister at the Jesuit College at Rouen, the political arguments and turmoil of his native Scotland and Great Britain (King James VI of Scotland had become also King James I of England in 1603) were never far from John Ogilvie's thoughts. He returned to Scotland as a missioner priest to provide spiritual care for the Catholics there. Landing at the docks at Leith in 1613, Ogilvie's secret ministry of celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, baptising the newborn, teaching the Catholic faith, and giving spiritual counsel, came to an abrupt end with his betrayal and arrest on 14th October 1614. Imprisoned, tortured and interrogated for five months, Ogilvie was executed at Glasow Cross on 10th March 1615. He was declared a saint in 1976 by Pope Paul VI.

This book was created to mark the 400th anniversary
of the martyrdom of St John Ogilvie SJ.

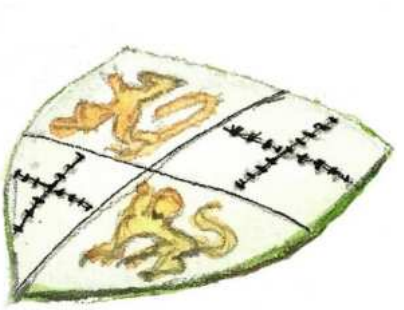

Gilvie - celebrated Jacobite family renowned in word and song

Chapter 1
An Ogilvie

John sat on the low stone wall which bordered the rose garden. His mother said everyone in France had rose gardens. John closed his eyes and let the perfume wash over him. He opened them, his eyes resting on the coat of arms over the main door. He looked at the name carved below it: Ogilvie.

He said the name over and over until it sounded strange, as if he had never heard it before. The letters looked as if they had just been introduced to each other. O – gil – vie. Ogilvie. It didn't sound very Scottish to him. He knew a bit of his family history. Some of his ancestors were quite famous. His father told him there was even a song written about his grandfather because he had been one of the bravest warriors Scotland had ever known.

John looked at the stone symbols carved into the portico. The lions and the crosses. Strange crosses. They looked sharp. Crosses didn't usually look like that. There must be a reason why they looked like that. And those lions. Two different lions. John stared hard at them until he thought one of them moved, turned its head. He looked back quickly but it was just as it had always been.



'Stone lions don't move!' he told himself. On days like this though, when he could smell the sun warming the roses and thyme, and the blue sky of the Strathisla summer promised endless days of adventure, John felt that anything was possible.

For John's eighth birthday, his father had promised to take him fishing. The river Isla ran off the hills above Drum and flowed into the Deveron which ran into the sea at Banff. And legend had it that there was a salmon over six feet long that was often to be found at the bend beyond the holy well up near Lady Hill.

John didn't go up there much. The well was really just a hole in the ground but people of the old religion had been hanging strips of cloth around it for hundreds of years, maybe thousands. No one ever saw someone tie their ribbon onto the tree that hangs over the well but there they were. When a breeze blew through them it looked like the tree was alive, a dress of rags swaying from her gnarly frame. Father said every ribbon was a prayer, so he shouldn't fear going there.

Today looked a perfect day to catch the big salmon, so John ran inside to find his father. His feet echoed as he ran through the great hall, the sunlight glinting off the silver blades of the swords hanging on the wall. John spotted his father at the foot of the stairs talking in a low voice to his mother. John stopped short. Mother was dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief and father had that look on his face which told him there wouldn't be any fishing today.

'What's wrong?' John asked. It looked serious.

'The old Queen, Mary Stuart, is dead, son. Three months since.'

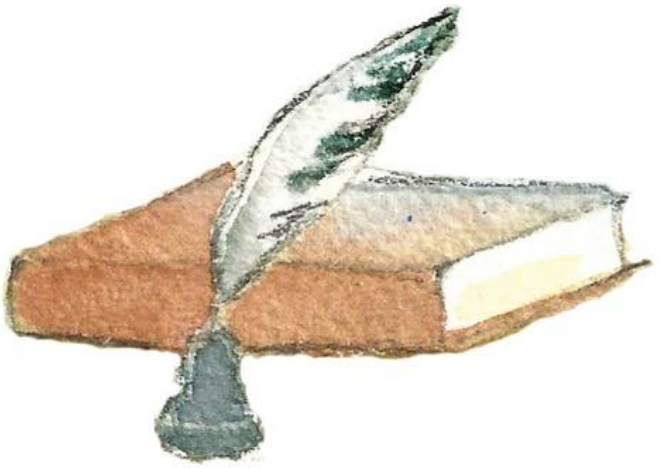
'And by her own cousin's hand!' mother sobbed. 'What kind of times do we live in, Walter?'

'Mary, we don't know the full story so we should reserve our judgements for another day. Elizabeth is Queen of England and a good Protestant woman. And Queen Mary could have been plotting with Spain. You've heard the stories as much as I have. So let us not be rash. But it is a sad day and she deserves our prayers.'


Drumnakeith 1579
SCOTLAND
Leith 1613
IRELAND
ENGLAND
KINGDOM OF DENMARK
SWEDEN
LITHUANIA
EAST PRUSSIA
Helmstedt 1592
BRANDENBURG PRUSSIA
POLAND
United Netherlands
Louvain 1596
HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
Olmütz 1596 1599 1607
Ratisbon 1598
Brno 1599
Rouen 1610
Paris 1610
Vienna 1606
IHS
FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
HUNGARY
Graz 1601
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
SPAIN
KINGDOM OF NAPLES
Drumnakeith 1579
Helmstedt 1592
Louvain 1596
Olmütz 1596
Ratisbon 1598
Olmütz 1599
Brno 1599
Graz 1601
Vienna 1606
Olmütz 1607
Paris 1610
Rouen 1610
Leith 1613

Chapter 2

John's Diary



The years passed and on the Drum above Keith John grew up a studious young man. His mind had often turned to Europe and to the great seats of learning that were to be found there. Aged only thirteen, John found himself standing on the docks, his bags about his feet. His journey was about to begin.

Helmstedt, 14th September 1592

I admit to being afraid when the boat set sail. Such a clamour and rocking! I thought it would never end. I miss my parents so much already but, thank God, at least my uncle is here for company. Germany seems so far from home. Now we are here in Helmstedt, I wonder what my school will be like? Uncle says it is a great school, famous all over Europe. But I wonder if the other boys will be friendly? And if my Latin is good enough?

Louvain, 20th May 1596

I have grown to love Flanders at this time of year. The sun is always smiling down as I walk to school. It is now four years since I left Scotland and I continue to write every week to my parents. I do love it here: the small market stalls lined up in the streets waiting for the rush of people; the quaint houses. My theology Master, Father Cornélius à Lapide, seems worried. Many of my friends have already left here due to a lack of money to pay for food and lodging. I think I will be going soon but I will be sad to leave Louvain. These Jesuit Fathers have been good teachers and kind friends to me. After supper, Cornelius handed me an envelope with a red wax seal on the back. I knew what it was without opening it – another journey, another country, another new school.

Ratisbon, 28th November 1598

My new College is not nearly as comfortable as my last in Louvain. It is in a Benedictine monastery and many of the monks are from Scotland. They have fled the persecution and found peace here in Ratisbon. The word 'peace' (*pax* in Latin) is their motto. It is difficult to think how Scotland can be at peace while people fight for their different religious beliefs.

Brno, 24th June 1600

The College here at Brno is very green. There is ivy climbing up the walls and clinging onto the bricks. The gardens are full of flowers. Today, I am to meet my confessor, a Jesuit priest, Father Campbell. I continue to be impressed by the humanity of these Jesuit priests. I am very much moved by their faith. I have learned much about the spiritual exercises of Father Ignatius and pray daily that my own path may become clearer. I am beginning to think God wants me to join these Jesuits.

Olmütz, 20th February 1605

The sweating sickness is the main news here. Everyone is talking about it. We are not allowed to walk outside the College grounds anymore. It can be lonely. I am very discouraged that I can't do anything to help. A bell sounded in the middle of the night last night and we all knew what it meant. The sickness was here. We may have to leave in the morning. I have already planned to spend some time in Graz. Another school! But safe from the plague.



Chapter 3

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

AMDG
Rouen, 10th March MVCX

Dear Father and Mother,

I hope this letter finds its way to you and reaches you both in good health. I heard rumours from a trader I met in Evreux that it has been a stormy winter in Scotland. When I spoke with him, I wished with all my heart I could be there – to feel a Scottish wind and Scottish rain! You must think I have taken leave of my senses but I do so long to return home.

I have the greatest of news for you. I have been ordained a priest in the Society of Jesus! I can barely contain my joy. My studies, my travels, my prayers are bearing fruit and I am beside myself to think that I am to be allowed to serve our Lord in this way!

And now I have been sent to our Jesuit College at Rouen. It is among our students here that I will take my first steps as a priest, celebrating the Mass for them, hearing their confessions, and, God willing, advising them well. I pray that I may be a good priest.

I also have teaching to do – so many books to read, things to understand, lessons to prepare, before I can teach my students. But I love it all, even the bad students!

As I write to you, I am sitting in a room from which I can see the great rose window of the Cathedral. My senses are alive, more alive than ever, and I can smell fresh bread being baked somewhere below me, and the flowers in the market square are sending the sweetest smells heavenwards. There is a Master of Music at the Cathedral who plays the great organ like no one I have ever heard. A piece I often hear reminds me much of the lullaby you used to sing to me, father, remember? God has blessed him with such a gift – and I can hear it from this very window! His name is Jean Titelouze.



I thank you, beloved parents, for all you have given me and I thank our Lord God in heaven that he has seen fit to pour his blessings on your humble son. May God keep you both in the palm of his hand until we can be reunited.

Your loving son, now and always,
John

LDS


Spanish Armada 1588
Mary Queen of Scots
Executed at Fotheringay
8th February 1587
James VI of Scotland
and I of England
Union of the Crowns
24th March 1603
Gunpowder Plot 1605
France

Chapter 4
Dreams

From across the river, I could hear the bell of Notre Dame strike three o'clock. I opened one eye. It was pitch black and the great city of Paris, which had given me so much, was sleeping. I hadn't slept much. I had been troubled by a conversation I had over dinner with my brother Jesuit, Pierre Legrange. Pierre had recently returned from England. I knew things were difficult for Catholics there but now King James was making things impossible. The Westminster plotters had failed – what was it, five years ago now? The last straw, I suppose.

For shame, the King himself a Scot and my own Scotland no better! So many burnings and imprisonments and hangings. I could not get some of these visions out of my imagination. Dearest Lord, where will it all end? It seems my whole life I have been surrounded by terrible deeds carried out in the name of the God of mercy. It makes no sense to me. I have studied. I have learned. I have prayed. And still it makes no sense to me.

My eyes are heavy and the hour is late. I must sleep as I have Mass early tomorrow. A voice inside my head says, 'Come with me, John. Come with me, John.' I feel the room slowly spinning as I drift into sleep.

I open my eyes and I am standing in a tower. A lady is saying her rosary in the corner. The room has bars on the windows but is well furnished. This is a prison, but not just any prison. And this is not just any prisoner. A young lady enters, making a deep curtsey. I move back, fearful that they might see me, but they cannot. ' Master Gaoler would like to speak with you, your Majesty. May I send him in?' There is a trembling in the young lady's voice.

'Send him in directly, Anne.'

The gaoler enters the room. He bows and remains half-bowed.

'I wish it were different, my Lady, but the date has been set for tomorrow. Eight in the morning.' Without even looking at her, he bows once more, and leaves. Anne, the young lady, starts to sob. Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, slowly blesses herself. Then she sits. Still. Still and unmoved.

I feel the ground beneath my feet rush away from me. Before I can see, I hear the voice again, 'Open your eyes, John, open your eyes.'



I try to open my eyes but can't. I can smell the sea and hear the roar of waves. An explosion brings me to my senses. Huge galleons are facing each other across the water. I watch as cannonballs fly between the ships, one smashing into the hull of a boat as it turns to run. The ship is reduced to sticks. I recognise the papal ensign and the flag of Spain. Of course! This is the mighty Spanish armada sent by King Philip. These majestic ships bring war with them but Elizabeth has the luck of the Tudors on her side. I remember hearing how the wind favoured the English fleet and blew the armada all the way around the British Isles. Some ships made good their escape as far as the west coast of Scotland, and some even as far as Ireland, before meeting their fate, dashed to splinters on the rocks. Even the might of Spain could not save the English Catholics from persecution. The winds of change had blown them to their fate.

I hear the voice one more time, 'Open your eyes, John, open your eyes.' I open my eyes and think about the places the voice has taken me.

My mind is made up. I am going home – to Scotland.


Treatise
Tending
Mitigati
Robert Bellarm
On Tempo
and
Spiritu
Authori
Robert Bell
CONTROVERSIAE
Robert Bellarmine, SJ
Oath
of
Allegiance
Robert
KING JAMES
Bible
The True Law
of Monarchies
Controversie

Chapter 5

Lawful and Rightful King

"Hear ye! Hear ye!

On this twenty second day of June in the year of our Lord, sixteen hundred and six, our sovereign King James, has decreed that all his subjects are to swear an Oath of Allegiance, recognising that the King has all jurisdiction over matters of faith. Our sovereign lord will be recognised eternally as head of the church and defender of the faith. Appointed by God, King James has divine right to rule these Britannic Isles.

And this is the Oath of Allegiance you must swear:

'I do truly and sincerely acknowledge that our sovereign lord, King James, is lawful and rightful King and that the Pope, neither of himself nor by any authority of Church or See of Rome, or by any other means with any other, has any power to depose the king, or to authorize any foreign prince to invade him, or to give licence to any to bear arms, or raise tumults.

Also, I do swear that, notwithstanding any sentence of excommunication or deprivation, I will bear allegiance and true faith to his Majesty.

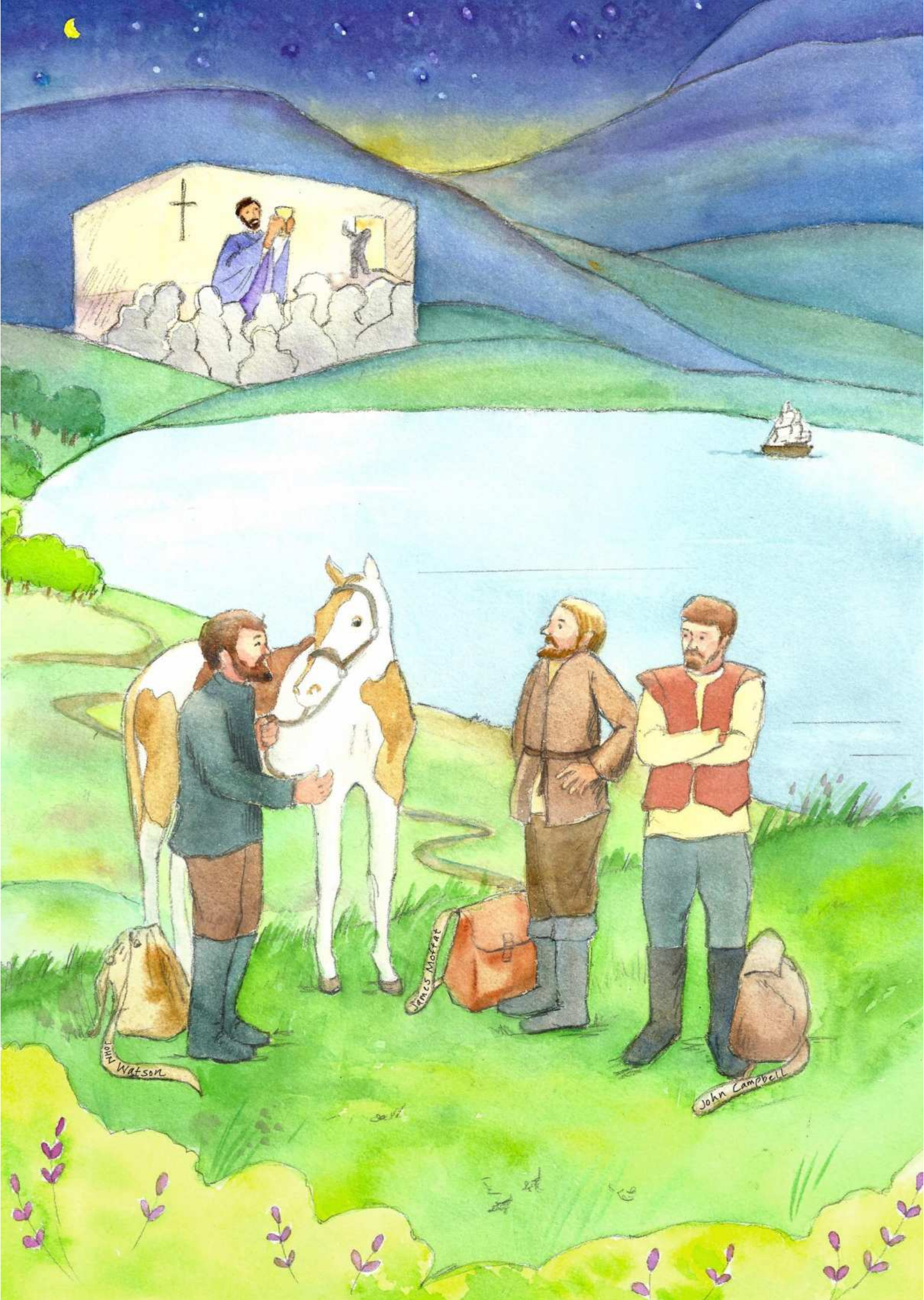
And I do further swear that I do, from my heart, abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical this damnable doctrine and position – that princes which be excommunicated by the Pope may be deposed or murdered by their subjects or by any other whatsoever. And I do believe that the Pope has no power to absolve me from this oath.

I do swear according to the plain and common sense understanding of the same words.'

All are to take this oath. To refuse so to do will be met with a charge of treason!

Hear ye! Hear ye!"




John Watson
James Moffat
John Campbell

Chapter 6

John Watson, Horse Trader

John tethered his horse in the yard. Robert Heygate had invited him to eat and to stay if he wished. Heygate was a Catholic and knew John's real identity as a Jesuit priest. He had often served Mass for Father Ogilvie.

John's clothes were now a soldier's. His name was now John Watson – he had chosen it as he was indeed Walter's son, so there was truth in it. John was, to the world, a soldier who had returned from fighting in Europe's wars and was now earning his living as a horse trader. Though in his mind and in his heart, in truth, he was a Jesuit priest. In his jacket pocket, wrapped tightly in leather, was a relic of Father Ignatius. Cornelius, his first Master in Louvain, had given it him the night before he set sail for Scotland. Whenever John felt weak he held the relic tight in his hand and said the prayer Father Ignatius had taught his companions:

> Lord, teach me to be generous;
> to serve you as you deserve;
> to give and not to count the cost;
> to fight and not to heed the wounds;
> to toil and not to seek for rest;
> to labour and not to ask for any reward,
> save that of knowing I do your will.

Tonight, as the sun sank in the Renfrewshire sky, the horse trader who knocked on Heygate's door held the relic tighter than ever.

'A good evening to you, John. Come in, come in. You look like you could use a good bowl of soup and a safe place to sleep.'

'Both would be more than welcome, Robert. Your hospitality is much appreciated.'

Over dinner, plans were made for John to travel south to Ayrshire to say Mass. Robert had a friend who would meet John and take him to a safe house where the Catholics would gather. It was becoming more difficult to avoid arrest. Spottiswoode, the Archbishop of Glasow, was keen to seek out all those who had not sworn the Oath of Allegiance. A Jesuit priest in chains would be a prize beyond his wildest dreams. But the people needed a priest and John was here to serve.

Robert could see in the man across the table from him that there was most definitely a cost. John had slept in seven different beds in the last seven days and was always on the move, eating when he could, sleeping where he could, always praying for the strength not to count the cost.

'Would you have something I could write on, Robert? I must get a letter off in the morrow.'

'I have John. It's not the best but it should hold some ink.'

John dipped the nib in the ink and started his letter:

'Cornelius, as promised a letter from my beautiful Caledonia! I hope this finds you well, my friend. The harvest here is very great; the labourers are very few. One of them, Father Andrew Crichton, the bearer of this letter, so often in chains for the faith, is leaving the country so as not to fall again into the hands of the enemy, since he is too easily recognised.

I am known to nobody, and am engaged, day and night, in more work than I can cope with in any day. I go about the duties of my vocation, saying Mass, hearing the confessions of faithful Catholics, giving spiritual counsel, baptising the newborn . . . and all in disguise and great secrecy for fear of the King's agents and spies.'

Chapter 7

Talking with my Father

Dramatis Personae

Archie Sinclair (the Gaoler)
John Ogilvie
Walter Ogilvie (John's father)
Mary Ogilvie (John's stepmother)
John Ogilvie as a boy (age 7)
Harry Sinclair (the Gaoler's son, age 10)
John Spottiswoode (the Protestant Archbishop of Glasgow)
King James
Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (the King's Chief Minister)
Crowd

Glasgow. 9th March 1615. A dimly lit cell, leaded windows, candles casting an orange glow. There is a bed, a table and a bench. Inside, two men: Archie Sinclair, turnkey at the Bishop's Castle gaol and the prisoner, John Ogilvie – bearded, shackled hand and foot to a low bar, kneeling in front of a roughly-fashioned cross. He is tired and drawn. He passes his rosary beads through his fingers.

Archie: *(unlocks John's hand shackles)* John, let up your praying and come and eat. His Grace says that even priests get to eat before . . . well, you know . . . before tomorrow.

Ogilvie: *(rises stiffly)* Thank you, Archie. You're a good man, and I thank you for that. My last supper, eh? I hope to God it's not your famous brose? That would do the hangman's job for him! *(laughs)*

Archie: You're some man, John, laughing at a time like this. Are you not afraid of dying?

Ogilvie: No more afraid than you are of going home for your dinner, Archie.

Archie: That's faith, right enough. I can't say I agree with your ways, John, and I wish you had just sworn their oaths and got yourself out of here, but I wish more folk had your faith.

Ogilvie: *(makes the sign of the cross and starts to eat with difficulty)* Will you be here all night, Archie?

Archie: I will and I've brought my Harry with me. He was ten today, John – nearly a man! He's started looking after the Bishop's horses. He's just finishing off their feed, and bedding them. I expect he'll be back just now.

Ogilvie: Aye, I spoke to him earlier when he brought the water in. He seems a fine lad, Archie. A good son is a blessing.

Archie: He is that, John.

Lights fade on cell. Lights up on the Ogilvie home at Drum-na-Keith. The year is 1587. Walter Ogilvie of Drum is reading a letter aloud to Mary, his wife. John is around seven years old and listens in.

Walter: News from England, Mary. And not news you'll want to hear. Mary Stuart is dead. Beheaded it says.

Mary: Dear Lord, Walter, where will it all end? Elizabeth is her cousin, her own flesh and blood. Oh, *(sobs)* this is terrible.

Young John: Who's dead, Father?

Walter: Queen Mary Stuart, John. She may have been of the old faith but she was a Stuart. And we Ogilvies share a long history with that house. Come, John, walk with me a while *(John runs to catch up).* Do you hear that? A curlew.

Gradual fade. Lights up on the cell. Ogilvie is daydreaming. Harry is sitting beside him.

Harry: John! *(shakes his arm)*

Archie: *(off stage)* 'Father John' to you, lad.

Harry: Father John!

Ogilvie: It's yourself Harry. I was miles away.

Harry: I get scolded for daydreaming too. All the time. What were you thinking about?

Ogilvie: My father, Walter Ogilvie, a fine man. And the place I grew up – a long way north of here. It was called Drum. *(lost in thought; he comes to)* In fact, it still is!

Harry: Drum? Like a bang! bang! drum?

Ogilvie: Exactly, Harry. But this Drum was very quiet. I used to sit down by the burn and listen to what my father called the forest choir.

Harry: *(pleased with himself)* He meant the birds, didn't he?

Ogilvie: You're a smart lad, Harry! He did indeed. I've been away a long time. I was only a few years older than you when I left Scotland. Just a boy.

Harry: My father says you've been all over the world – to France and Europe and even to England! He says you've spoken to King James. Is that true, Father John?

Ogilvie: I've been to many countries, Harry. Some with mountains higher than Scotland's and with great cities and rivers that make the Clyde look like a burn. I've seen princes and paupers. And I've heard music you wouldn't believe in great cathedrals. It's been quite a life Harry! Listen – can you hear it?

We hear music – the 'Ave Maris Stella' by Jean Titelouze.

Harry: No, Father John.

Ogilvie: Listen harder, Harry. Listen with your heart, not your ears . . .
(both listen, eyes closed, as music gets louder)

Archie: *(after a few minutes, he puts his head into the cell)*
I must be going soft in the head. I thought I could hear music.
(John and Harry share a look of conspiracy)

Harry: But I don't understand why you're in here, Father John. You don't seem like a criminal. Are you a criminal?

Archie: Harry, leave the man alone. He doesn't need you speiring questions all night.
Ogilvie: It's fine, Archie. The boy's good company. I'm not a criminal, Harry. I'm a Catholic, a Jesuit priest. And I say Mass for the Catholics here in Glasgow.

Harry: But Bishop Spottiswoode says that the Jesuits want to kill the King. He says there aren't any Catholics in Glasgow.

Ogilvie: There aren't many, Harry. And those that are, keep it well hidden. If you believe Bishop Spottiswoode, then a Catholic priest is worse than a criminal. I love our King as much as any man. I don't want him dead.

Harry: Do you say prayers?

Ogilvie: I do, son, every day. I remember once staying in a house near here. The good people had no idea I was a priest as I was in disguise. Before bed, I lit a candle downstairs and was saying my breviary – my prayers – in a quiet voice so no-one would hear. The next morning the lady of the house approached me all excited – 'Mr Watson,' – that's the name I used, Harry – 'is it true you are a wizard?' *(laughs)* The poor dear thought I had been chanting spells. I wish I had got a frog and put it in the chair where her husband sat. *(laughs)* That would have given her a turn! *(they both laugh)*

Harry: What were you disguised as? Was it a bear?
Or *(thinks of something mischievous)* . . . a clown?

Ogilvie: *(laughs)* Fools for Christ, eh? A what? A bear? Aye, Harry – a Jesuit priest parading around Scotland dressed as a bear! There's no way that would ever be noticed! *(laughs)* No, son, nothing as interesting as that. But if Bishop Spottiswoode ever lets me out of here, I might give both of your ideas a go! When I came back from Europe, I travelled with two friends, two brother priests – James and John – not the apostles, mind! – and we travelled disguised as horse-traders. And it worked. Just like you, Harry, I was good with the horses. The three of us split up. I came here to minister to the Catholics in Paisley and across in Edinburgh and here in Glasgow. It's been a life in the shadows, Harry. In the shadows.

Movement and lights fade down.
Music (eg. 'Liberation' by Martyn Bennett).
Groups turning together in military step.
Back-lit gauze showing shadow scenes of Catholics celebrating the Mass secretly with looksouts, being discovered by the King's spies, hiding the priest, the guard arriving and searching, the priest found, arrested and taken away, etc. All done rhythmically.
Harry watches them with John.
A cross is painted on the cloth.
Lights fade up.

Ogilvie: *(cheerier)* My horse, Harry. The Bishop's men took it when I was arrested. She's a chestnut with two white socks on her hind legs. You can't miss her. Her name's Stella – she'll be at the Bishop's stables in Townhead. I want you to have her. She's old, mind, but there's a few miles left in her yet.

Harry: Are you sure, Father John? Th . . . thank you – wait till I tell my Fath . . .

Archie: *(interrupts)* I heard. You're a lucky one, you – just like your mother. If you fell in the Clyde, you'd come out with a salmon in your pocket. *(John laughs)*

Harry: He says my mother actually did! She's with God now but she was from the Highlands.

Ogilvie: Then that makes you Hielan Harry! I learned a song about you when I was young. How did it go now? *(hums the bits of the tune until he gets it)* Right, you bang your foot like this . . .

John sings 'Hielan Harry'. Harry joins in the chorus – a big smile on his face.

It's a beautiful country we have here, Harry. I was away a long time and I missed it every day. And even though the other places are dear to my heart and gave me great gifts – my education, my faith – their hills were not my land's hills, their people not my people. You know, sometimes I used to stand on the north coast of Europe, Harry, and watch the ships sail off towards Scotland. Often I'd dream of boarding one and stepping off here. I would always get a wee bit homesick but then I'd think of Father Ignatius or Father Xavier – God rest them – or my other brother Jesuits and how far they travelled to spread the Good News – some of them to the very edge of the world, Harry. I knew I would go wherever I was sent but, dear Lord, I prayed so hard to be sent home among my own people.

John picks up his cross and goes over over to the small window looking out onto Glasgow. His chains just stretch that far. We hear distant music.

Harry looks sleepy and lies on the bench. As the music ends, Harry has fallen asleep.

His father comes in and lifts him carefully out. As he reaches the door, he turns sadly towards John.

Archie: It's nearly dawn, Father. You should get some sleep. Your journey tomorrow is a long one.

Ogilvie: Tomorrow, Archie, is my wedding day!

Sets the cross on the small window sill and takes out his beads again.

Lights up on Spottiswood, Archbishop of Glasgow. John remains at the window.

Spottiswoode: You were an over insolent fellow to say your Masses in a reformed city.

Ogilvie: You do not act like a Bishop . . . but more like an executioner.

Spottiswoode: *(losing his temper)* By every one of your answers, you have committed most heinous, detestable and unpardonable treason! You deserve the most rigorous pains to be executed upon your body . . . to the terror of others!

Ogilvie: *(defiantly)* I am a Catholic priest. And a Jesuit. I bring the good news of Jesus Christ . . . in peace. I am no traitor.

Lights fade down.

Lights up on King James and his Chief Minister, Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. Cecil is holding a letter.

Cecil: Will your Majesty permit me to read a letter? It is from Bishop Spottiswoode in Glasgow.

King James: Read . . . but only that which is relevant. He does go on!

Cecil: 'Most sacred and gracious sovereign. It has pleased God to cast into my hands a Jesuit that calls himself Ogilvie . . . *(Cecil's voice fades out)*

Light up – John recites the prayer of St Ignatius, quietly but with commitment.

Ogilvie: Lord, teach me to be generous,

to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to seek for rest;
to labour and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing I do your will.

Cecil: *(we hear Cecil's voice fade up . . .)*
. . . for the Jesuit your majesty may be pleased to command him to be examined by such of the Council as your majesty should desire. I beseech Almighty God to preserve your majesty and to disappoint the practices of the wicked.' Signed John Spottiswoode, Archbishop of Glasgow.

Sound of hammers on wood – a gibbet is built in shadow.

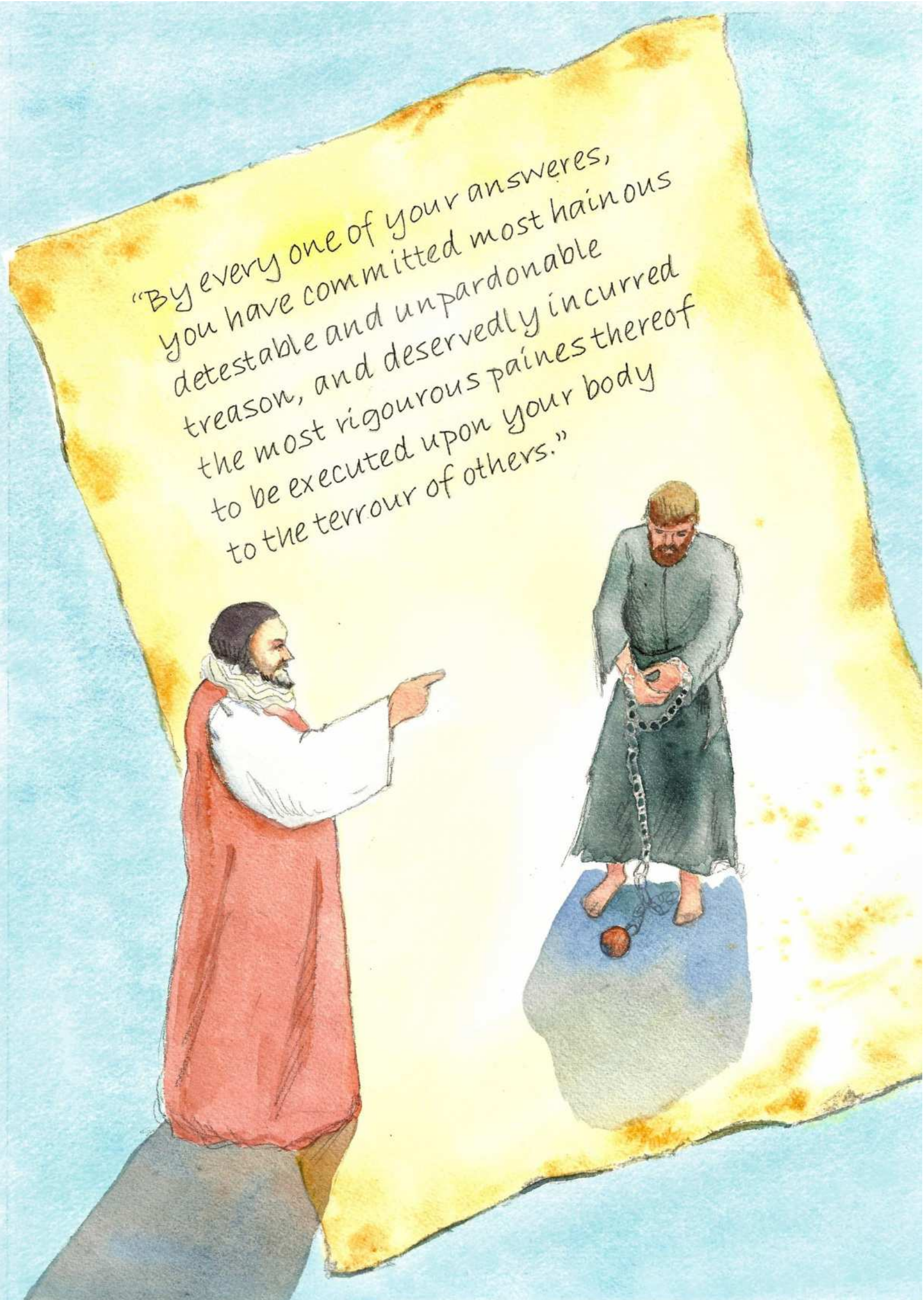
Spottiswoode: Jesuit, do you continue to claim that the Pope's authority extends over the King's dominions?

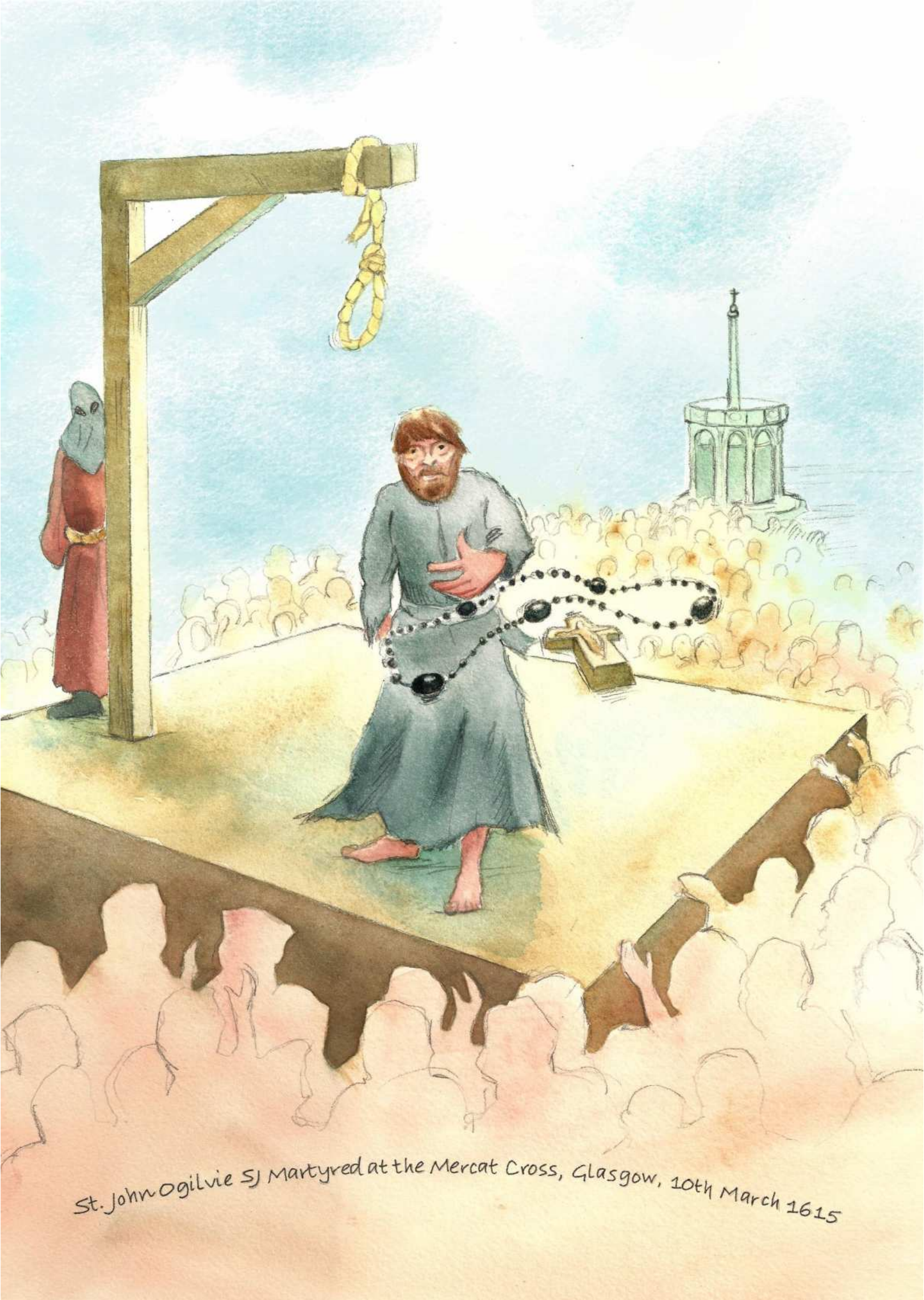
Ogilvie: I do, your Grace. But I do say also that James is King of Scotland.

Spottiswode: Why did you come to Scotland? You ought not to have come to this kingdom!

Ogilvie: This is my country. My home. The King cannot forbid me my own country. He may have forgotten but I have not, that he is the son of Mary Stuart – and yet he owns no superior in his realms! *(angry now)* His mother died with this – a rosary – in her hand. I can hear her heart breaking from here!

Lights fade down.


"By every one of your answeres,
you have committed most hainous
detestable and unpardonable
treason, and deservedly incurred
the most rigourous paines thereof
to be executed upon your body
to the terrour of others."


St. John Ogilvie SJ Martyred at the Mercat Cross, Glasgow, 10th March 1615

The End and the Beginning

1615. Tuesday 10th March. The sun begins to rise through the cell window. A quiet dawn.

John walks from his cell like a ghost, and down the High Street.

A line of people either side say quietly 'God speed you' and the like as he passes. Lights up on the scaffold – backlit, behind gauze.

John arrives in front of the scaffold. In a distinct voice he says:

Ogilvie: Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, defend me from the enemy and receive me at the hour of my death.

The High Street crowd gathers.

John turns and throws his rosary into the crowd.

He mounts the steps, the noose is placed over his head. Sudden blackout. Drumbeat.

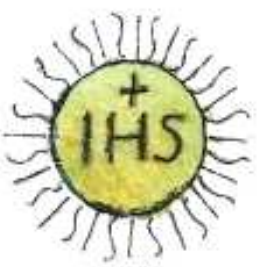
The crowd remains still, facing the gibbet, quietly humming 'On the Battlefields'.

Light up on Harry.

Harry: Father John's body was carried up the High Street and buried in the ground reserved for criminals. I knew that people – pilgrims, I suppose – would look for it. So I paced it out: the north side of the Cathedral *(Harry paces out the steps deliberately)* . . . twenty paces from the great west door . . . close to the cathedral wall *(puts his hand up as if to feel the wall).* There's no stone or marker. But that's where you'll find him.

At least, that's where his body lies.

Blackout.



Chapter 9

So great a cloud of witnesses

On the battlefields of Scotland, in the hour of victory,
there was heard the cry of heroes, 'Ogilvie, an Ogilvie.'
Gallant son of gallant fathers, it was thine as theirs to fight,
but with gates of hell contending, thou didst die for truth and right.
Blessed martyr, thy example will our strength in weakness be,
hear our cry in times of peril: 'Ogilvie, an Ogilvie.'

By the scaffold, all undaunted, strong in grace, we see thee still,
looking up, serene and smiling, with a firm, unconquered will.
It is thy bright hour of triumph, like our Lord on Calvary's cross,
victory is thine in dying, endless gain in seeming loss.
Blessed martyr, thy example will our strength in weakness be,
hear our cry in times of peril: 'Ogilvie, an Ogilvie.'

Blessed martyr, hear thy children, be our guide and show the way;
make us strong and keep us steadfast in the warfare of today.
Looking down from heights of glory, see in us thy kith and kin;
teach us thy strong trust in Jesus, that we too may victory win.
Blessed martyr, thy example will our strength in weakness be,
hear our cry in times of peril: 'Ogilvie, an Ogilvie.'



"We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses . . .
so let us run with perseverance
the race that is set before us,
looking to Jesus,
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,
who, for the sake of the joy that was set before him,
endured the cross,
disregarding its shame,
and has taken his seat
at the right hand of the throne of God."

Hebrews 12:1-2 NRSV

St Thomas More, Renaissance scholar, lawyer, Chancellor of England (Tower of London +1535)
St John Fisher, theologian, Chancellor Cambridge University, Bishop of Rochester (Tower of London +1535)
St Edmund Campion, Oxford scholar, teacher, Jesuit priest (Tyburn +1581)
St Alexander Briant, Oxford scholar, teacher, Jesuit priest, martyred age 25 (Tyburn +1581)
St Margaret Clitherow, wife and mother, recusant, protector of priests (York +1586)
St Mary Ward, executed for helping a Catholic priest escape from Bridewell prison (Tyburn +1588)
St Robert Southwell, scholar, poet, Jesuit priest and missioner (Tyburn +1596)
St Henry Walpole, present at the execution of Campion, convert to Catholicism, Jesuit priest (York +1596)
St Anne Line, wife, recusant, protector of priests, arrested for hiding Fr Fancis Page (Tyburn +1601)
St Nicholas Owen, Jesuit brother, carpenter, creator of 'priest holes' (Tower of London +1606)
St Thomas Garnet, Jesuit priest, first martyr of the English College at St Omer (Tyburn +1608)
St John Ogilvie, convert to Catholicism, Jesuit priest, missioner to Scotland (Glasgow Cross +1615)


St. Thomas More
+1535
St. John Fisher
+1535
St. Edmund
Campion SJ
+1581
St. Alexander
Briant SJ
+1581
St. Margaret Clitherow
+1586
St Mary Ward
+1588
St. Robert Southwell SJ
+1596
St. Henry Walpole SJ
+1596
St. Anne Line +1601
St. Nicholas Owen SJ
+1606
St. Thomas Garnet SJ
+1608
St. John Ogilvie SJ
+1615
Thy example will our strength in weakness be

Chapter 10

The Eyewitness Account of John Eckersdorff

John Eckersdorff was a young Hungarian nobleman travelling in Britain who happened to be in Glasgow on the day of John Ogilvie's martyrdom, 10th March 1615. He wrote this eyewitness account.

"I was on my travels through England and Scotland as it is the custom of our nobility, being a mere stripling, and not having the faith. I happened to be in Glasgow the day Father Ogilvie was led forth to the gallows, and it is impossible for me to describe his lofty bearing in meeting death.

His farewell to the Catholics was his casting into their midst from the scaffold, his rosary beads just before he met his fate. That rosary, thrown haphazard, struck me on the breast in such wise that I could have caught it in the palm of my hand; but there was such a rush and crush of the Catholics to get hold of it, that unless I wished to run the risk of being trodden down, I had to cast it from me.

Religion was the last thing I was then thinking about. It was not in my mind at all, yet from that moment I had no rest. Those rosary beads had left a wound in my soul. Go where I would, I had no peace of mind. Conscience was disturbed, and the thought would haunt me: why did the martyr's rosary strike me, and not another? For years I asked myself this question. It followed me about everywhere.

At last conscience won the day. I became a Catholic. I abandoned Calvinism. And this happy change I attribute to the martyr's beads, and to no other cause; those beads which, if I had them now, gold could not tempt me to part with. And if gold could purchase them, I should not spare it."





The National Shrine of St John Ogilvie SJ
at the Jesuit Church of St Aloysius, Glasgow



ST ALOYSIUS'
COLLEGE