

The Martyrdom of St John Ogilvie The Account of John Eckersdorff

“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.”

from Fr Daniel Conway (edited by Fr Archibald Campbell SJ)
The Venerable John Ogilvie SJ – A Sketch of His Life (1878, 1915)