



George Spencer (Ignatius of St. Paul)

On 20 February 2021, the Holy Father Francis received in Audience his Eminence Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

During the Audience, the Supreme Pontiff authorized the same Congregation to promulgate the Decree concerning the heroic virtues of the Servant of God, Ignatius of St. Paul (born George Spencer), Professed Priest of the Congregation for the Passion of Jesus Christ, born on 21 December 1799 in the Old Admiralty in London and died in Carstairs, Scotland, on 1 October 1864.

A convert to Catholicism, the Servant of God dedicated himself to the challenging and unique work of preaching and evangelization through popular missions and the constant exhortation addressed to his Anglican brothers and sisters, striving for unity in the faith via a path of understanding and conversion.

He was born into a family of strict and faithful Anglican observance, in which he was baptized. In 1822 he was ordained a deacon of the Church of England and later ordained a priest at Peterborough in 1824.

In the autumn of 1829 he met a young convert to Catholicism, Ambrose Phillips De Lisle, and had a long conversation with him that deeply impressed him. It was the Dominican, Charles Benedict Caestryck who admitted the Anglican nobleman into the Roman Apostolic Catholic Church on 30 January 1830. One year after his arrival in the Eternal City, the Servant of God was ordained deacon and on May 26, 1832, a priest.

It was certainly the close relationship and long contact with the Passionist Dominic Bàrberi that matured the vocation to religious life in the Servant of God. On 21 December 1846 he entered the Passionist Novitiate at Aston Hall, where he began the year of probation with the Vestition of the religious Habit, assuming the new religious name of Ignatius of Saint Paul. After making religious Profession of Vows, he began his work of evangelization as a preacher and missionary both at home and abroad, in Ireland, Belgium and Holland.

From 1857 until his death in 1864, he preached 245 small missions in England, Ireland, and Scotland, resulting in numerous conversions. As a true apostle of Christ, he encountered death while he was ministering-- precisely on the occasion of a mission he was supposed to have preach in Leith, at the port of Edinburgh, Scotland.