

Stephen Bloxham would like to share the story of St Alban.

The YouTube link from St Albans Cathedral is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWfyH30Ppdo>

Stephen continues with:

Over the years I've been inspired by the Alban story; the offering of hospitality to someone in need, and his personal conversion to Christianity, something that was not approved of in Roman Britain. Also, a reminder too, of the courage and strength so many Christians both in the past and today show, and perhaps challenge us to think about our own commitment too.

In my previous parish we went to on the Alban Pilgrimage - quite a good day out and joining in the parade through the city. This year, however, it will take place digitally in the 'virtual' space

<https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/the-alban-pilgrimage-reimagined>

The feast of St Alban is celebrated on 22 June.

St Alban was Britain's first Christian martyr who lived in the roman town of Verulamium, now the modern city of St Albans, just outside London in Hertfordshire. Over the weekend closest to the feast day great celebrations are still held in the city, where many pilgrims from around the UK and overseas join a large colourful procession travelling through the city telling the story of St Alban. It is a grand day out and enjoyed by all.

Many pilgrims are inspired by the Alban story; the offering of hospitality to someone in need, and his personal conversion to Christianity, a faith that was not accepted of in Roman Britain. It is also a reminder too of the courage and strength so many Christians both in the past and today show, and perhaps challenge us to think about our own commitment too.

## **The Story of Alban**

Here is a video from St Albans Cathedral showing an animated version of the story

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWfyH30Ppdo>

Alban lived during the third century in the Roman city of Verulamium. He was a worshipper of Roman gods, until one day he gave shelter to a stranger fleeing persecution. The stranger was a Christian priest, and Alban was so moved by his faith and courage that he asked to be taught more about Christianity.

Before long the authorities came to arrest the fugitive priest. But Alban, inspired in his newfound faith, exchanged clothes with him, allowing him to escape. The Roman soldiers were furious at this deception and arrested Alban and brought him before the judge.

Alban refused to renounce his faith, and instead declared: 'I am Alban, and I worship and adore the true and living God, who created all things'.

He was brought out of the town, across the river and up a hill to the site of his execution. Legend tells us that a spring of water miraculously appeared to quench Alban's thirst; and the executioner's eyes fell out after he had beheaded Alban.

Alban is honoured as the first British martyr, and his grave (on which the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban was built) quickly became a place of pilgrimage. For over 1700 years, people have journeyed to this place to remember Alban, to pray for peace and healing, and to seek God. Giant puppets and costumed children retell the story of Alban's martyrdom. It is not only a stunning spectacle; it is a profoundly moving experience, taking us to very beginnings of Christianity in this country.

## **The Alban Prayer**

Among the roses of the martyrs brightly shines Saint Alban.

Almighty God,  
We thank you for this place built to your glory and in memory of Alban, our first martyr.  
Following his example in the fellowship of the saints,  
may we worship and adore the true and living God,  
and be faithful witnesses to the Christ,  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

The Alban Pilgrimage website - <https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/the-alban-pilgrimage-reimagined>

The British Pilgrimage Trust website - <https://britishpilgrimage.org/>