

Reflection Wednesday Week 28 St Edward the Confessor 2021

St Edward the Confessor (1003 - 1066) became King of England in 1042. He was regarded as a saint during his lifetime, renowned for his generosity to the Church and to the poor and for his readiness to listen to his subjects' grievances. He died on 5th January 1066, the last of the old Anglo-Saxon line, and his death precipitated the dynastic quarrels that led to the conquest of England by William of Normandy later the same year. On 13th October 1163 his relics were translated to a new shrine in Westminster Abbey.

The words of the psalmist express Edward's understanding of his role as leader of a nation. *O Lord, my heart is not proud nor haughty my eyes. I have not gone after things too great nor marvels beyond me. Keep my soul in peace before you, O Lord.* (Ps 130) He stands as an example for us.

Although he is not rated highly as a political leader, as a shepherd of a people he certainly modelled his life on the beatitudes and placed his trust in the Holy Spirit. St Paul in his letter to the Romans expresses something of the strength of Edward's life and faith *the Spirit expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words*, (Rm 8). As we prepare for the Synod to be held in Rome in 2023 we will do will to place our trust in the Spirit to help us become a more listening Church so that in our listening we discern the will of God for the Church of the future. Called to encounter others and to listen to their hopes and dreams, demands time an effort but the fruits promised by the Spirit have yet to be discovered.

Belief is always most desired most pressingly needed where there is a lack of will, for the will, as emotion of command, is the distinguishing characteristic of sovereignty and power. That is to say, the less a person knows how to command, the more urgent is his desire for the one who commands, who commands sternly a God, a prince, a caste, a physician, a confessor, a dogma, a party conscience. From whence perhaps it could be inferred that the two world religions, Buddhism and Christianity, might well have had the cause of their rise, and especially of their rapid extension, in an extraordinary malady of the will." Friedrich Nietzsche