

Reflection Thursday Week 28 St Edward the Confessor 2022

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.

Although the current translation of the beatitudes speak of happiness and rightly so, the former word **Blessed** gives a stronger sense of God walking with us and working in us and through us. Aware of this feeling of divine presence will obviously lead to happiness.

St. Edward the Confessor, was a saint of the poor and a model of unity, combating divisiveness in his kingdom and recognizing the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the fundamental unifying principle. Edward forged a unity between the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, but a unity that would take much time to be brought to fruition.

Edward was universally recognized as leading a saintly life, and whose example was one to be emulated. While he did not die a martyr's death, he was a holy man who lived the Word of God and the Gospel calling of Jesus Christ. As such, he was given the title "the Confessor," acknowledging him as one who expressed and lived a profound Christian faith.

St. Edward was regarded as the patron saint of England until 1348, when King Edward III adopted St. George as the nation's patron. However, he remains the patron saint of the English royal family, through numerous changes of royal house and dynasty.

Edward took money for a pilgrimage and spent it on the poor and the building of Westminster Abbey. He was canonized by Pope Alexander III in 1161.

Edward is a saint recognized, revered, and honoured by both Catholics and Anglicans, the reverence that is afforded this great saintly king is certainly common between these Christians. He lived hundreds of years before the English Reformation. In the England of Edward's day, there was but one Christianity, a unified cultus of Jesus Christ. Being a revered saint, perhaps Edward can help us recognize what is held in common between Anglicans and Catholics, and be seen as an example of what the Catholic Church in England can and should look like.