

CHURCH AND KING

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Society of
King Charles the Martyr

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COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRDOM OF KING CHARLES 1994

Please note that, following our usual custom, the commemoration in Whitehall will take place on **Monday 31 January**, not on the day of the martyrdom itself being a Sunday.

At the Banqueting House, Whitehall:
11.40 Devotions and wreath-laying at the site of martyrdom

12.00 Sung Eucharist
Preacher: Sir Leslie Fielding KCMG
Former. Career Diplomat & Vice Chancellor of
Sussex University

Sunday 30 January

St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, City of London
6.00 p.m. Choral Evensong
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Gordon Huelin
St. Aidan's, Skelmanthorpe, near Huddersfield
10.00 am. Sung Mass for the Feast of St. Charles
K.M. (B.C.P.)

Preacher: Fr. Philip Reynolds, Parish Priest
St. Bartiahas. Oxford Apply to
Fr. E. M. Wright for details (0865 - 57530)
County Tyrone, N. Ireland

The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated
10.30 Church of Good Shepherd, Sion Mills
12.00 Noon Urney Parish Church

Monday 31 January

Cirencester Parish Church
7.45 a.m. Holy Communion
(Feast of King Charles)
St. Michael's, Munslow, near Craven Arms
7.30 p.m. Holy Eucharist (1662 rite)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1994. SATURDAY 28 MAY 1994

St. Mary-le-Strand Parish Church

11.30 am. Holy Communion
The Annual General Meeting
will follow the service.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence;
2. Minutes of A.G.M. 1993;
3. Matters arising;
4. Reports On:-

Finance:

Membership:

Church and King;

Observance of the Festival 1994;

5. Election of Officers and Committee;
6. Any other business.

Members are required to signify any matters to be raised under item 6 before the commencement of the meeting, and preferable by Saturday 21 May. It is not in order to propose substantive motions under Any Other Business.

Members are asked to note the date and business of the A.G.M. now as **Church and King** may not come out again before the meeting.

Members attending the meeting may like to lunch together afterwards.

No formal arrangements will be made, but this will be a good opportunity to share fellowship.

Barrie Williams
Chairman.

ADMISSION OF WOMEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD

No one will question that the Church of England made a momentous decision in opening access to the priesthood to women by the vote in November 1993. Other parts of the Anglican Communion have, of course, already taken this step, including, close to home, the Church of Ireland. It is, clearly, a decision which cannot be ignored.

It is clear already that members of our Society have different views on this subject, and it is essential that different views should be fully respected and all members should continue to feel at home in the ethos of the Society. It is not out of place to remind ourselves that our aims and objectives are:

- (1) Prayer for the Churches of the Anglican Communion (and surely this is a duty which lies upon us as never before);
- (2) Reverence for the memory of the Royal Martyr.

If members of the Society have strong views on the subject either way, or simply do not know, and wish the Society to take note of them, they are asked to write in confidence to the Chairman not later than 31 March 1994. This applies only to those in the Provinces of Canterbury and York, as those residing elsewhere are affected by the decisions of different provinces. I should like to add the assurance that the views of the silent majority (if it is a majority) will be fully respected - by remaining silent.

Barrie Williams
Chairman.

SERMON PREACHED BY CANON ARMISON AT THE CHURCH OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR Tunbridge Wells

There is a tiny hamlet in a quiet corner of Huntingdonshire, just off the Great North Road, which joins London and Edinburgh, two capital cities, where in the 17th century Nicholas Ferrar withdrew with his family to recreate in the Church of England the contemplative life largely abandoned after the extremes of the Reformation and the dissolution of the monasteries and convents of the land. The place is Little Gidding. One of the church windows there has in it a text and a coat of arms. The text is: *perdix in montibus*. a partridge in the mountains. The arms are the arms of King Charles I. It is a poignant association.

The text comes from I Samuel (26.20). There, the words refer to another king - King

David, the chosen and anointed servant of the Lord whom Saul, also once chosen and anointed, but now rejected - was hunting. We read how David creeps by stealth into the camp of Saul's army and into the very tent where Saul lies sleeping. He could kill Saul, then and there, with his own spear - but doesn't. For, "Who can put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed," points out David, "and be guiltless?" Instead, he steals the king's spear as evidence of his visit and leaves. Once safely away, he shouts to Saul and shows how he has spared his life. He asks,

Why does my Lord pursue after his servant...like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains ?

The effect on Saul is profound and immediate.

Is that you, my son David? I have done wrong; return, my son, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day; behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

As David's innocence, piety and generosity is revealed to Saul, Saul is shamed into repentance and reconciliation.

Perhaps those who chose to place this text under the arms of Charles I wanted us who pass by to enter into their broken hope that Charles would be spared and reign, as David spared Saul - and Saul David. Perhaps they were signalling their judgement on those who put forth their hand against an anointed King. Perhaps they were saying, sadly, "Would that it had been otherwise. It could have been otherwise. In Old Testament times it was, but not now."

For King Charles, as well all here know, was not spared. He was hounded and hunted and finally executed on 30th January in 1649. Within the church ever since there has been controversy over whether to call him saint or not; but in this place, in this royal town, since 20 years after his death, his memory has been honoured.

For my part, a visitor here, I have reason to remember him too. Before I came to Kent, I was Canon of St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. And it was King Charles who created the diocese of Edinburgh out of the older metropolitan archdiocese of St Andrews. And it was King Charles who gave us our first bishop, the great William Forbes, a scholar of European stature - whose theological work, I noted with pride, was cited among the few footnotes in the recent ARCIC statement, *Salvation and the Church*. But it was, of course, a provocative act, to

found the diocese. And it was, of course, Charles' enthusiasm for episcopacy which was a contributory factor in his downfall. It led him to support those who sought to crush the Calvinism of the time and return to a traditional Catholicism. The appointment of the high - church William Laud to the Archbishopric of Canterbury was another pro- vocation act, not least in Scotland where Laud's opposition to Calvinism was especially repugnant. And when Charles placed the Scottish Church under the jurisdiction of Laud of Canterbury, and insisted that the Scots used the English Prayer Book -this won him few friends there. (There are current parallels). There is no doubt, Charles failed to show that generosity of spirit such as David showed the night he crept into Saul's tent.

Whether you hold Charles' views and acts right or wrong, there are lessons here to be learnt. An obvious one, and a needy one for our own time, is that convictions by themselves are not enough. Indeed, by themselves they can simply reflect prejudice, and provoke intolerance. It was so with Charles.

Unlike King James, who found a way round the obstacles he met in his path, Charles met them straight-on. He was intransigent - or, if you prefer, principled to a degree which did not allow him to concede options which could have maintained, and might have restored the peace.

In Charles' case, all this ended in confrontation and disaster. Riots in Edinburgh and civil War in England - a war which Charles lost, and as a result of which the Church of England was disestablished, episcopacy dismantled, and Presbyterianism established in its place. For Charles, it also ended in his own execution - a violent and probably illegal act, but one which matched the strength of his own convictions and enthusiasm and the temper of the politics of confrontation.

David had feared to put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. It is, after all, a serious thing to kill a king. "Who can be guiltless?" Is it always wrong? The great Aquinas treats of the ethics of just rebellion. There is only one work in the English language - or so the politician Richard Crossman held - which deals with the problems of political obligation to an absolute monarch, and that is Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. "Certainly Shakespeare's play stresses the gravity of the tyrannicide's act." Think of Brutus' long argument with himself. Nearer our own day, a great Christian, now widely regarded as a martyr, found he had to wrestle with the

matter, with the result he became implicated in a plot to murder a despotic ruler. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged for his part in the plot to blow up Hitler in 1944. His last, unfinished work, a great work, was on his desk the day he was arrested. Its title *Ethics*. Its opening sentence the most remarkable opening of any book of Christian theology. A book full of theological learning, but written, too, with the passion of much personal searching and reflection.

Charles lived and died at a time of confrontation - much of his own making. There was little room for compromise. There are ethical and social questions here, too, which retain their relevance today, in a nation unsure about unity, not least in the field of religion. Although we are proud to have a devout Queen who is head of our church on earth, we should look askance, and worse, at a monarch who persecuted Non-conformists, or even those of quite different faiths.

Similarly, each of us today has to discern where conscience takes us, and when; to discern which are the primary issues, when principles must hold, and which secondary, where there can be give and take. He who says, "Here stand I: I can do no other," too quickly or too often, devalues himself and his conscience, as much as he who never knows to say it.

For two hundred years, the restored Church of England venerated Charles and observed his day with a special service. You will find it in the back of old Prayer Books. It was the nearest the Church of England ever got to making saints, until ASB revised the calendar. He became an English example of patient suffering. It is significant that the service was removed from the Prayer Book in 1859. In the confidence of Victorian England, neither patient suffering nor confrontation was the message to be sent out. We may reflect what the church's style should be in our own time, and how it should be expressed. Who is our champion saint in today's complex circumstances, a generation slowly learning to put off imperialism and the glory of strife? Charles was a man with many sins and faults. But sinners can be redeemed, and faults forgiven. By all accounts his end was dignified and prayerful. His death has been justly described as a martyrdom since, at the end, "it was conditioned only by his resolution to defend the church". When a fugitive at the end, hunted like a partridge in the mountains, I like to think things came together for him as he sought a little rest at his much-loved Little Gidding. The popular story is he

came here after his defeat at Naseby. I like to think he may have found rest there - and more.

Three hundred years later, Eliot wrote of the place.

If you came this way....

**If you came at night like a broken king,
If you came by day not knowing what you
came for....**

....what you thought you came for

**Is only a shell, a husk meaning
From which the purpose breaks only when it
is fulfilled
If at all.**

I have been often to Little Gidding and been stretched. There, too. I have found God in peace and unity, and peace and unity in God. I hope it was so too for Charles, *fidei Defensor*.

If Eliot's words applied then as they do now - and why not? - for it was Ferrar's genius and piety which makes them true - if those words applied then, then we can say that it is at least *possible* that this shattered and shattering life, came, *perdis in montibus*, full of husks of meaning, to find its apotheosis in this sanctuary. It is good to think Gidding may have been for Charles a garden, a garden of Gethsemane, where the true purpose did break open for him, in his life's fulfillment; where he found kinship with all as well as kingship over all. He wrote a letter to the Prince of Wales, which he gave to the Bishop of London who attended him at his execution. He wrote,

**The true glory of princes consists in advancing
God's glory....to which centre of true
happiness, God (I trust) hath and will
graciously direct all these black lines of
affliction which he hath been pleased to draw
on me, and by which he hath (I hope) drawn
me nearer to himself.**

**Farewell, till we meet, if not on earth, yet in
heaven.**

ST. PETER'S, FOLKESTONE

The history of St. Peter's begins in 1862, when at the Easter Vestry of the Old Parish Church of Folkestone, it was decided that a Mariners' Chapel should be built on the East Cliff. The estimated cost for building it was £1.300, and gifts were immediately forthcoming. Lord Radnor, the Lord of the Manor, gave the land and £150 and, together with other donations, it was possible for the foundation stone of our church to be laid on 29th April 1862. The chapel was opened for worship on 9th September later that year, but it was not until 30th July 1868 that the chapel was consecrated, and seven days later became an independent parish. Father C. J.

Ridsdale, a curate of the Old Parish Church, was the first Vicar.

These were the early days of the Oxford Movement. In London, there were mob attacks against those churches that were influenced by this movement of renewal, and St. Peter's Folkestone soon became another victim of such violent and riotous opposition. Letters were written to the Press complaining of the ritualism of St. Peter's, which was scornfully described as a "toy cathedral". Eventually Father Ridsdale was prosecuted, and for many years the Folkestone Ritual Case was a "cause celebre" in the Court of Arches and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

The authorities objected to the crucifix on the rood screen, the Stations of the Cross around the church, and the use of vestments and wafer bread, and the eastward position at the altar. Father Ridsdale endured this prosecution - or persecution - with unflinching courage and steadfastness. He was in fact the first Anglican clergyman to be prosecuted under the Public Worship Regulations Act, and therefore holds an important place in the history of the Church of England.

Father Ridsdale was greatly comforted and encouraged by the support of his congregation, and he remained at St. Peter's until 1923.

Father W. H. Pickburn, was inducted in June 1923, and he proved to be strong-minded and loved as was his predecessor. He bravely remained in the parish during the Second World War, when enemy shelling did considerable damage to the church and to houses nearby. After nearly twenty-five years as Parish Priest, he retired in 1946.

Since 1946, the Parish has continued to be faithful to the Catholic inheritance of the Church of England, and in the present troubled state of the English Church, holds fast to the Faith which we have received. Bishop Lancelot Andrews, Archbishop William Laud, George Herbert and the Martyr King are all venerated in the Anglican Calendar and St. Peter's holds the memory dear. That the Church in England plainly a descendant of, and faithful to, the undivided Church of the first Millennium was fervently held by the Caroline Divines. Each 30th January a Prayer Book Mass is celebrated with the intention that, as Blessed Charles the Martyr was faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church of God, so the English Church of today might be similarly faithful.

**Michael Houghton
Vicar.**