




Email Communiqué
Society of King Charles the Martyr, American Region
SERVING MEMBERS IN CANADA AND THE U.S.A.

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This month's article touches on a number of topics, all chosen to give some background and context to the Society's formation, the main cause of which was the 1859 Order discontinuing the State Service first ordered at the Restoration to mark King Charles I's beheading on 30 January 1649. The observances were approved in 1661, the 350th anniversary of which approval we celebrate next year. As with most history, it is not simple, it is not monochromatic; political opinion, religious opinion, and popular sentiment are not categorized facily into simple, arbitrary groups.

The complexity of the subject that began with the King's decapitation a 2 o'clock on 30 January 1649 and has been developing for 3 3/5 centuries since, is considerable. To understand it we need some background information and will begin here. In future issues we will cover the State Service's origin and adoption, how it was used for the annual 30 January commemoration, and the evolution in its use over a period two years short of two centuries until 1859. Why were several Caroline Societies established several decades after that, ours in 1894?

It is hard to segue from that summary of this series of articles to the following, seemingly unrelated point. Suffice it to say that a modern situation may help us to understand figures of the past, like King Charles I, our patron, a figure who has become more iconic over time. Many of the historical facts about such iconic personages have fallen from sight, deliberately swept under the rug—dismissed as silly, unseemly, or false—while others have been incorporated into the accepted image. Some were deliberately included or excluded, and others are probably mythical, like Washington's cherry tree and Lincoln's accidental receipt of a few cents extra change. Others still likely were deliberately fabricated or grossly exaggerated minor events now lost in obscurity.

Of King Charles, such discordant images do exist. As we well know, he has been venerated by some and hated by others. In our Society we venerate his memory because he died for the Church, particularly to preserve her government by bishops, a tradition that has come down through two millennia since its establishment, directly linking us with our Lord's Apostles. How is it that King Charles came to be possessed of such resolve that he faced nearly certain death with equanimity? He had known that something like what happened had been among the likely outcomes for several years. The picture came into focus slowly as endless negotiations among multiple parties proceeded; they were held in various places because the King, under a form of house arrest, was moved about to lower the chance of a liberation attempt. The measures that could be taken against him were momentous. Regicide was a crime that was practically unthinkable. Trying a king in court was not technically possible under the legal system then in place, because of the rights conferred upon the king's person by virtue of his anointing at the Coronation Rite. Our laws still contain vestiges of this. The government is protected from lawsuits in many situations under the doctrine of Sovereign Immunity. Applicable to a Divine Right King, the doctrine is obvious, *i.e.*, that a monarch anointed to be God's viceroy within in his realms can do no wrong.

It should be noted that kings had been murdered or otherwise killed before the regicide of 1649. In the case of King Edward II (see Mr. Windsor's article in the June, 2010, *SKCM News*, pp. 35-39), formal Articles of Deposition were drafted, but he was not tried, rather killed clandestinely. King Richard II, who also lost the trust and confidence a king needed, was imprisoned by act of Parliament. Never tried, he was rumored to have been murdered, but now it is generally agreed that he was starved to death, arguably a worse fate. These deaths were acts of treachery, motivated by greed and pride, and facilitated by secrecy and rumors. Those in a position to reveal the truth did not, hoping to benefit from not doing so and to avoid a sordid death of their own. Only later has painstaking research teased the sordid truth from tangled webs of rumor, deceit, and lack of documentation.

From our present-day perspective, we readily see that Divine Right is easy to abuse. The very prerogatives of absolute power facilitate perpetrators' self-protective capability. Most of those who operated under the theory of Divine Right—which has direct Biblical roots—have chosen to abuse it. They are corrupted by power, that notorious temptation, and use their God-given Right

presumptuously, to empower themselves to do whatever they would. They damned themselves by using the grandiose term 'little gods' to describe what they fancied they had become. They took their Divine Right as a license to do anything, things that are wrong, unjust, and corrupt, and licentious.

King Charles was noteworthy as a strong believer in the Divine Right theory. He had been definitively instructed in it by his father, King James I, who was called by Sir Francis Bacon (when he was not writing Shakespeare's plays) "the best tutor in Europe".

But King Charles was also one of few anointed monarchs who took his Divine Right seriously. He did not flaunt it or use it to rationalize the acceptability of any sin he committed. Charles realized that the Right conferred by the anointing—a Sacramental, and considered an actual Sacrament in parts of the Christian East—conferred not license, but responsibility.

King Charles took Christian living seriously. Found after his death was a rule of life titled "Pious Instructions". It is simple yet difficult, *viz.*, "Thoughts: Heavenly, Timorous (*sic*), Religious. . . . Words: Few, Honest, Unfeigned. . . . Sport: Honest, Short, Seldom." Those are three of the ten concise instructions for Christian living. If one tried to heed their advice, one would require less time each evening for self-assessment, and have less need for confession. Speaking of which, King Charles made his confession regularly, carefully and sometimes publicly, as seen in *Eikon Basilike*.

In 1936, Albert, Duke of York, age 40, the present Queen's father, was suddenly confronted with a huge responsibility. He had only a few days to digest it. His elder brother, King Edward VIII, who had ascended the Throne earlier in the year upon their father George V's death, decided to abdicate. Today the prospect of the King marrying a divorced American woman with a living ex-husband might not be a big deal, but then it was. One may think of it as the greatest love story or the greatest scandal of the century, but no matter here. With a few strokes of the King's pen, Albert, until then a shy, retiring Royal Duke, was "King George VI of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, and Emperor of India". Geopolitically, in an era of massive global change, seething anti-colonial agitation around the world, and frightening European tension, his responsibility was overwhelming. In today's vernacular, 'It was **huge**.' He approached his rule deliberately, conducted business and himself with honor, and became respected for his leadership.

"Bertie", the future George VI, had a painful, lonely childhood, was cruelly fed by his nanny in a "slap-dash" manner, overshadowed by his confident, suave elder brother, unable even to speak with his father, and of below average health. In addition, he had an intractable stammer. He found his official duties as Duke of York to be painful. Isn't it amazing that he proved to be the skilled, respected, and beloved King who with his Queen had the country's complete trust and confidence during the dark days of danger and anxiety during World War II and of austerity in its aftermath?

He was like our venerated and beloved Patron in many ways. Young Charles wasn't able to walk until he was three and then was forced to wear boots reinforced with cast iron. He had a life-long stammer which, it is said, left him only when he spoke so compellingly at his 'trial', where he was not permitted to say much, and on the scaffold, where he was drowned out by hundreds of drums beating, so the crowd wouldn't hear and cheer! Charles was overshadowed by his older brother Henry, Prince of Wales, who was confident, a good athlete, good student, comfortable in social situations, and admired by all, but then struck down in 1612, making Charles, 11, Duke of York, the heir-apparent.
(to be continued in a future issue)

Annual Mass, S. Paul's 'K' St., Washington DC

11 a.m. Saturday 29 Jan. 2011

The Rev'd Dr. Richard C. Martin, SSC, OL

Select Preachers

350th Anniv. of Recognition of the Cultus of KCM

Resurrection, NYC, 11 a.m. Sat. 7 May 2011

The Rev'd Canon Prof. J. Robert Wright, D. Phil.

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