



**REMEMBER!**

## *email Communiqué*

**Society of King Charles the Martyr - American Region  
15 October 2020  
Our Lady of Walsingham**

ISSN 2153-6120

BACK ISSUES OF *SKCM NEWS* AND THE *EMAIL COMMUNIQUÉ* ARE POSTED AT THE AMERICAN REGION'S WEBSITE,  
[WWW.SKCM-USA.ORG](http://WWW.SKCM-USA.ORG)

---

### *In This Issue:*

- *King Charles the Martyr & Our Lady of Walsingham – pp 1-3*
  - *Posted to Our World: Our Annual Dues Statement & Contributions & Goods Opportunities – p4*
  - *Nominations Invited: Order of Laud – p 4*
  - *Upcoming: Nativity of KCM – p 5*
  - *You Are Invited to Join Us: 38th Annual Mass & Luncheon – p 5*
- 

## **King Charles the Martyr & Our Lady of Walsingham**

**W**ithin the Anglican shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk, a statue of King Charles the Martyr stands in a niche above the staircase leading up to the Orthodox Chapel—a fitting location, perhaps, given the affinity of some Caroline Divines for Patristic and Orthodox theology. We do not know what Charles thought about the original Walsingham shrine, destroyed 62 years before his birth, much less what he would have made of its twentieth-century revival. But the invitation to write about Our Lady of Walsingham for the SKCM Communiqué prompted me to ponder the similarities between the two devotions. It took only a little reflection to discern an overwhelming parallel: namely, that the crisis or low point in both stories was an act of state violence against the sacred.

In 1538, agents of King Henry VIII and his Chancellor Thomas Cromwell razed the Holy House of Walsingham and carted the image of Our



Lady off to London to be burned. Some 111 years later, another Cromwell, distantly related to the first, instigated the beheading of Henry's successor Charles Stuart. The destruction of Walsingham was part of the program of dissolution of monasteries and despoliation of shrines during the second half of the 1530s. Ironically, although this policy was aimed at bolstering the monarchy's power, the forces it helped unleash ultimately turned on and briefly consumed that same monarchy just over a century later.

The targets of the violence were in the first instance a sacred object and in the second a sacred person. The goal of countless medieval pilgrimages, the image of Our Lady of Walsingham was renowned for many miracles down through the centuries. Similarly, the King was revered as "the Lord's Anointed" on account of his anointing in the coronation



service. As I show in a forthcoming article in *The SKCM News*, Charles I exercised a vigorous healing ministry in the form of "touching for the King's Evil," with often spectacular results. The deepest meaning of the burning of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham and the beheading of King Charles the Martyr was that they both represented blows struck in modernity's long campaign against the Catholic vision of a sacramental universe. Both aimed at furthering what Max Weber famously called "the disenchantment of the world."

The parallels do not end there. Just as the beheading was the culmination of a protracted struggle between monarchy and parliament, and between Anglicans and Puritans, so the destruction of Walsingham brought to a climax opposition to pilgrimages and holy places that had been brewing in England for more than a century. William Langland had ridiculed pilgrims to Walsingham in his *Piers Plowman* (c. 1370-1390). Fifteenth-century Lollards denounced pilgrimages as occasions of superstition, vice, and commercial exploitation, singling out with particular vitriol "Falsingham" and its "Wych." Erasmus of Rotterdam, who visited Walsingham in 1511, gently satirized in his *Peregrinatio* (1527) what he saw as the shrine's superstitious practices; but along with his humanist colleagues John Colet and Thomas More he advocated enlightened reform, rather than destruction, to preserve and enhance the pilgrimage's edifying aspects.

Both acts of violence followed sham judicial proceedings in which the outcome was a foregone conclusion. In December 1648 the Rump Parliament established a "high court of justice to try King Charles I for high treason in the name of the people of England," which sentenced the king to death on January 27. Similarly, in 1536 the Royal Commissioners conducting the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*—the pre-Dissolution survey of the English monasteries' wealth—drew up Articles of Enquiry for Walsingham's Augustinian canons to answer regarding their alleged superstitions, heresies, and abuses. The next year, following the

suppression of the Pilgrimage of Grace in the northern counties, two members of the Walsingham community were among twelve conspirators arrested and executed on charges of plotting rebellion in Norfolk. The royal order dissolving the Priory came in July 1538. The shrine's destruction quickly followed.

The good news in both stories, however, is that the sacrilegious violence did not have the last word. Within weeks of Charles' beheading, handkerchiefs dipped in his blood were working miraculous healings. The cult of the Royal Martyr grew such that Charles arguably became more powerful in death than in life. The monarchy returned in 1660; and despite parliament's 1859 suppression of the State Service commemorating the royal martyrdom, the Church of England and many other Churches of the Anglican Communion (and of the Anglican Patrimony) now include January 30 in their calendars as the Feast of King Charles the Martyr.

The revival of devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham took longer but was just as successful. In January 1540, the Royal Commissioner Sir Roger Townsend wrote to Cromwell that a poor woman of Wells-next-the-Sea had been spreading stories of miracles wrought by the statue after it had been taken away. He had the woman put in the stocks in Walsingham on Market



Day, with a card reading "Reporter of False Tales" about her neck, and local youths threw snowballs at her. He concluded the letter, "How it can be I cannot perceive, but the said image is not yet out of some of their heads."

Sir Roger's words proved curiously prophetic. For almost four centuries, the memory of Walsingham—the Holy House, the statue, the pilgrimages, the miracles—faded but refused to die. The story of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century recovery would

require another full-length article. Suffice it to say that Fr. Alfred Hope Patten's translation of a fresh image of Our Lady of Walsingham (carved in 1921) from the parish church to the newly-constructed Anglican shrine on October 15, 1931 represented "the return of the repressed." State-sponsored violence never ultimately prevails against what is genuinely holy. God always wins in the end.

*The Rev. John D. Alexander, Ph.D., Ben., OL, is the Superior of the Society of Mary's American Region.*

- ERRATA: There was a misprint in last month's lead article. ABC George Abbot died in 1633, not 1663.

## Posted to Our World: Our Annual Dues Statement and Contributions & Goods Opportunities

In early October we mailed our annual statement so that members and friends may, depending upon their status, pay annual (including future years) dues, support the Annual Mass and/or the General Fund, become a Life Member, and/or purchase Society goods.

Our membership currently totals 467 – 23 higher than one year ago today - and most likely will continue to grow. We have 83 Life Members, including one who joined two days into the new fiscal year.

Last year we made a significant change in **how we recognize and thank our contributors**. We added a \$250 level for Annual Mass contributors ... established General Fund contributor levels using the Annual Mass levels ... and expanded overall Benefactor recognition to include three rather than just one level but with all levels collectively designated as Benefactors. Many of us will spot these changes as being similar to recognition systems used by other organizations, designed to encourage as well as thank those who support the Society. Today, 37% of the Society's budget income comes from contributions, enabling us to keep our dues low and stable and for which we are thankful.

## Nominations Invited: Order of Laud

Society members are invited to submit nominations for Board of Trustees consideration as members of the Order of Blessed William Laud, Abp. & Martyr. Today the rolls of this select group include over 50 members and supporters of the Society, in this life and the next, designated since the creation of this recognition 10 years ago.

In accordance with Board policy, the members of the Order are elected “in recognition of contributions rising to a certain level, or higher, of significance as to impact and benefit to the Society by members and supporters who are not members ... Election to membership in the Order of Laud shall be considered equivalent to the designation of Benefactor status with regard to impact and benefit to the Society.” Just as Benefactors are entitled to use “Ben.” after their names, Order of Laud members may use “OL”.

Such nominations, giving background on the candidate and stating why he or she should be honored, should be sent by 2 November 2019 to The Ven. James G. Monroe, Ph.D., SSC, Awards Chairman, at jimmon39@gmail.com or 4310 Meadow Forest Lane, Kingwood TX 77345-3007 USA, for consideration during the current awards cycle.





## Upcoming: Nativity of KCM

Mark your calendar: 19 November is the day when we commemorate the birth of Charles Stuart at Dunfermline Castle to King James VI of the Scots and his queen, Anne of Denmark, in 1600. Since this is an important Caroline observance, this Society (together with our Mother Society across the Pond) encourages all members and their churches to make proper observance. Thus, **the Eucharistic propers for this feast are attached**, and the November *Communique* will feature a significant article by The Rev'd Martin C. Yost, SSC, a Board of Trustees member, conveying its importance.

## You Are Invited to Join Us



**REMEMBER!**

### **Society of King Charles the Martyr**

#### **XXXVIII ANNUAL SOLEMN MASS OF SAINT CHARLES, K.M.**

11 a.m., Saturday, 30 January 2021

#### **ST TIMOTHY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Winston-Salem NC USA

#### **WATCH FOR STREAMING INFORMATION!**

*Buffet Luncheon reservations: \$25/person by 18 January*

Checks to "St Timothy's" - memo "SKCM"

Send to St Timothy's Church at 2575 Parkway Drive,

Winston-Salem NC 27103 USA

Parish website: [www.sttimothysws.org](http://www.sttimothysws.org)

Contact: [president@skcm-usa.org](mailto:president@skcm-usa.org) or 336-602-0370

### **S.K.C.M. (AMERICAN REGION)**

PRESIDENT (THE REV'D STEVEN C. RICE, OBL.S.B., D.MIN.): [PRESIDENT@SKCM-USA.ORG](mailto:PRESIDENT@SKCM-USA.ORG);

GOODS INQUIRIES: [SKCM@SKCM-USA.ORG](mailto:SKCM@SKCM-USA.ORG);

TO SUBMIT ARTICLES & INQUIRIES TO THE **SKCM NEWS**, PLEASE CONTACT [EDITORS@SKCM-USA.ORG](mailto:EDITORS@SKCM-USA.ORG);

OTHER INQUIRIES: [MEMBERSHIP@SKCM-USA.ORG](mailto:MEMBERSHIP@SKCM-USA.ORG).