



email Communiqué

Society of King Charles the Martyr - American Region
Interment of King Charles I – 9 February 2022

ISSN 2153-6120

BACK ISSUES OF *SKCM NEWS* AND THE *EMAIL COMMUNIQUÉ* ARE POSTED
AT THE AMERICAN REGION'S WEBSITE, www.skcm-usa.org

In This Issue:

- *From a Corruptible to an Incorruptible Crown– pp 1-4*
 - *Report from 4 February Board Meeting– pp 4-5*
 - *An Invitation for Time & Talent – p 5*
-

From a Corruptible to an Incorruptible Crown

The status of kingship within Christendom has always been imbued with a sacral character, quite unlike that of any other head of state, especially in modern times. The rite of coronation of a Christian monarch has even been numbered among the list of the sacraments of the Church which, in ancient times, numbered more than the traditional seven.

When I had the privilege and honour of meeting my Sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Canada, in 1997, what remained with me afterwards was that I had touched someone with



special spiritual Grace and the strong, unmistakable feeling of having come into contact with, first and foremost, a person of exalted SACRAL status.

When kings and emperors took pains to promote evangelisation and defend the interests of the spread of the Body of Christ, the Church, for her part, often bestowed upon him the title of “Saint” if only by way of a commemoration in the Christian Kalendar. Thus, twenty Byzantine Emperors and Empresses are so honoured. For a king to abdicate his throne in order

to receive monastic tonsure practically guaranteed his canonization since the king had given up so very much and with an especial humility to follow after Christ.

For a king to suffer a violent death – of any kind – was so traumatic an event in the life of a people that public penance was always added to national mourning in an effort to appease God for this calamity so that His righteous anger would not be visited upon the country.

Kings who were killed in circumstances that would not be termed “martyrdoms” given that they were not attacked in defence of religion, were often given the title “Martyr” nonetheless and especially when they bore their impending deaths with resignation to the Will of God and in union with the sufferings of Christ. So are Saints Boris and Hlib along with St Edward the Martyr and Blessed King Henry VI revered.



Following the terrible day of the martyrdom of Saint Charles Stuart on January 30th, 1649, all Christian Europe was in such shock that its constituent monarchies cut social, economic and political ties with Britain in retaliation. In effect, Europe took it upon itself to “excommunicate” Britain and place it under a kind of interdict as the pope had done with King Henry II after the martyrdom of St Thomas in Canterbury Cathedral. And it was the Orthodox Tsar of Russia at the time who, in writing his condolences and assurances of his personal support to the widow of the slain monarch, who was among the first to refer to him as “King Charles the Martyr.”

February 9th marks the day on which the Royal Martyr was laid to rest. Royal Saints often had the date of their burial and “translation” of their relics to what would become their shrine likewise entered into the Kalendar. In the case of Saint Charles, such a commemoration of the date of his interment is all the more poignant if we consider how the indignities he suffered did not end nine days earlier on the scaffold...

Let us consider that what we have thus far reflected on with respect to the cultus of martyred Kings would not have escaped the awareness of Oliver Cromwell and his regicides. In all their subsequent actions, there was a profound nervousness in their behaviour which resulted in their continual need to keep the Relics of Saint Charles away from public view as much as possible, even to the extent of keeping the very place of his burial a secret.

The Roundhead soldiers surrounding the scaffold were there to keep a disapproving crowd in check, to be sure. The body of the King was then quickly taken to be embalmed and his just-severed head sewn back on... The Royal Martyr’s coffin was draped in black velvet and taken to St James’ Palace where it lay in state – not to do the King any honour, but only to allow certain members of the public in to view his body to ascertain for themselves that the King was indeed dead!

Four English Lords, the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Hertford and the Earls of Southampton and Lindsey, who had faithfully attended the King in his final moments, were charged with the responsibility to see to his burial. Their petition to parliament to have the King interred within King Henry VII’s Chapel in Westminster Abbey was summarily denied. And of course, it would have been, given parliament’s urgent necessity to quell any public clamour for a recognition of the cultus of their new Royal Saint. The Chapel was also where the relics of Blessed King Henry VI were previously intended to be enshrined before Henry VIII’s break with Rome and the resulting collapse of his Cause for Sainthood.

The Lords' renewed petition for parliamentary permission to have King Charles interred at St George's Chapel, owing to the King having been a member of the Noble Order of the Garter of St George, was, however, granted but with careful instructions to avoid any public show of pomp and circumstance during the translation of the Royal coffin to Windsor Castle.



The Lords with a number of others then took Charles' coffin on the evening of February 7th to Windsor and placed it in what was the King's bedchamber there prior to interment. Cromwell had been using Windsor Castle as a prison for royalists and royalist sympathisers and it was also where King Charles himself was held prisoner at one point. In the eyes of the tyrant, that "prison" was an appropriate place to hide the remains of his Royal enemy for what he thought was forever.

Having arrived at Windsor Castle, the Lords went immediately to the Governor of the Castle, Colonel Whitcote, to present him with their parliamentary authorisation to oversee the burial of King Charles. Bishop Juxon had accompanied the funeral cortege to Windsor as he was intending to perform the rite of the Burial of the Dead over the King's coffin. But the governor would have none of it and refused to grant permission for anything of the sort and no amount of reasoning or pleading with him would change his mind . . .

The time then came for the Lords to find an appropriate place within the Chapel to lay the King to rest. However, they saw that Cromwell's iconoclastic troops had laid waste to the royal markers within the Chapel so that it was next to impossible to determine the identity of the royal graves! Finally, the vault in which lay the coffins of King Henry VIII (whose policies King Charles had sometimes expressed a personal dislike of) and Queen Jane Seymour was opened and it was decided to lay the body of King Charles there.



Only the tears and sighs, as it was recorded, of the Lords attending the interment of the King, constituted the Rite of Burial before the vault was sealed up. The main focus of the tomb would, of course, be Henry VIII rather than Charles I and it was only in 1813, during the course of exhumation of that same vault, that the coffin (or more appropriately, the Holy Ark of Saint Charles the Martyr) was found and confirmed to be precisely that.

Despite the secrecy surrounding the King's funeral arrangements, the British public instinctively sensed they were in the presence of a Royal Martyr. As Saint Charles' blood anointed the scaffold, many pressed forward to dip cloths in it as precious relics and there were ongoing reports of miracles being wrought through them, much like those to be had through the King's Touch. While the Royal Martyr's body lay in state at St James' Palace, many asked for permission, even offered money, for relics of the King's hair. Such permission was again summarily denied and only select groups of the public were allowed for the viewings.

It is, I believe, high time for the relics of Saint Charles, King and Martyr to be raised up from the obscurity in which they have for too long been enshrouded, symbolised by the black velvet pall that covered them for so long, and set in a shrine befitting his great dignity as a Royal Saint and intercessor for the Anglican Communion and Anglican Tradition for which he sacrificed his life as well as for the restoration and deepening of Christian faith and practice in Britain and throughout the Commonwealth!



For our part as members of his Society, we would do well to observe a special three-day period of prayer (Triduum) beginning on January 27th, the day of Saint Charles' willing acceptance of the cross of martyrdom, followed by a nine-day period of prayer (Novena) following his Feast on January 30th and ending on February 9th the Translation of his relics. The martyric witness of Saint Charles, King and Martyr, speaks to us to teach us again the truth of the necessity for each one of us to imitate him in accepting our own personal cross

so that we might then, together with Saint Charles, hope to ascend to Christ where we too, having put aside what is corruptible, will receive our own incorruptible crowns.

- Alexander J. Roman, OBl.S.B., PhD, OL,
Secretary and Member, SKCM-AR Board of Trustees
And Canadian Representative

Report from 4 February Board of Trustees Meeting

Meeting initially as the corporate "members" for election of trustees and then in its usual governance capacity, the SKCM-AR Board of Trustees

- ✓ **Re-elected for the ensuing term the incumbent trustees**, i.e., Bp Keith Ackerman of TX, John Covert of MA, Gunnar Gundersen of CA, Kevin Hanratty of NY, Bp Daniel Martins of IL, Fr Creighton McElveen of GA, Fr Jonathan Ostman of VA, Mrs Phoebe Pettingell of WI, Fr Steven Rice of NS, Dr Alexander Roman of ON CANADA, and Fr Martin Yost of NY;
- ✓ Received the **financial report** which is pointing to the current year ending in balance or a slight deficit on 30 September, a more normal pattern than last year which had a \$10,000 surplus;
- ✓ Noted **continuing growth in Society membership**, with growth from around 300 to 521 over the last decade and now including 115 life members;
- ✓ **Spent considerable time in future planning**, noting such factors as
 - Although the original key objective of placing Royal Martyr Day on the TEC calendar has not yet happened, the Society's emphasis on devotion has been helpful including spreading that devotion both within and beyond its original ecclesial group
 - There remain needs to develop and publish more affirmative material on KCM, including point/counterpoint rebuttal on matters relating to the Royal Martyr

- With the Society originating as a “single proprietor” group, which is usual for many organizations, it has evolved into collective leadership and is continuing to evolve ... an example is that as the Society has grown, over the last decade it has moved from 69% to 51% Episcopalian membership, with most growth being in non-Canterbury Anglicans and Roman Catholics
 - An important development over the last decade has been in the regard of the Society as an integral part of the Anglican Patrimony, what with SKCM leaders now serving in the governance of other devotional societies and vice-versa
 - We need to make clear the role of a cultus and the historic reality that canonization has been a locally initiated process, and our contribution to spiritual growth should be used as a measure, i.e., growth in holiness
- ✓ Continued work on the **focus and editorship of the SKCM NEWS** (NOTE: the edition normally mailed in December is now about to be mailed, delayed by technical issues).

An Invitation for Time & Talent

As we continue to grow, the Society needs to continue to **involve the interests and talents** of more members. Please send an email to membership@skcm-usa.org if you have background and interest in any of the following and want to accept this invitation:

- + Writing, e.g., liturgical and Caroline-related scholars and historians, editors, book reviewers, etc.
- + Leading & growing organizations, e.g., chapters formation, membership administration & development, awards program, etc.
- + Planned giving
- + Advertising
- + Any other way in which you can help the Society



Thank you.

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

*PRESIDENT (THE REV'D STEVEN C. RICE, OBL.S.B., D.MIN.): PRESIDENT@SKCM-USA.ORG;
 TO SUBMIT ARTICLES & INQUIRIES TO THE **SKCM NEWS**, PLEASE CONTACT EDITORS@SKCM-USA.ORG;
 OTHER INQUIRIES: MEMBERSHIP@SKCM-USA.ORG.*

OUR SURFACE MAILING ADDRESS:
 SOCIETY OF KING CHARLES THE MARTYR,
 C/O DAVID LEWIS, TREASURER/ADMINISTRATOR
 1001 WILSON BLVD #609, ARLINGTON VA 22209-2262 USA