

13. October 2025
THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS
Saint Edward, King of England

In a way, the saints embody the Gospel in action and thus bear witness to the authenticity of our faith. They are a great treasure for our Church. We could say that they are like stars in the firmament of the Church.

Starting today, I want to begin a short series talking about the saint of the day and others whom I would like to introduce. I hope that, through their examples, each of these meditations will strengthen us in following Christ. After a brief biography, I will share some reflections on their legacy.

Those who prefer to follow the meditation on the day's reading or Gospel will find the respective link at the end of each text.

Who was that benevolent English king named Edward, also known as Edward the Confessor?

He was born between 1003 and 1005 in Islip, Oxfordshire. He was the seventh son of Ethelred the Unready and the first son of his second wife, Emma of Normandy. England suffered Viking attacks and invasions under the command of Sven Forkbeard and his son, Canute the Great, during his childhood. When Sven conquered England in 1013, Emma fled with Edward and his brother Alfred to Normandy, followed shortly by Ethelred.

Edward spent the next twenty-five years in exile, most likely in Normandy.

In 1014, after the death of King Canute Hardeknut, England's most powerful earl supported Edward, who had returned from exile in the meantime, as heir to the throne. Previously, when Edward came of age, he had been urged to reconquer his kingdom by force. The heir gave a memorable reply, saying that he did not want a reign bought at the price of blood. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle briefly describes his accession to the throne, expressing the affection the people had for him: "Before Hardeknut was buried,

all the people chose Edward as king in London.” On April 3, 1043, Edward was crowned in Winchester Cathedral, the royal seat of the West Saxons.

Why was Edward so beloved?

His refusal to reconquer his kingdom by force speaks volumes. He had a special devotion to St. John the Apostle and aspired to rule justly. He said that the best thing for the kingdom was for the people to practice religion. Therefore, he strove to promote everything related to the Christian faith.

As king, Edward lived very modestly in order to help the poor. The nobles pressured him to marry, and he found a woman—the daughter of the Prince of Wessex—who willingly accepted a life of abstinence. In fact, the couple had no children, so the question of succession remained unresolved until England was conquered by William the Conqueror. Edward's deep piety and exemplary charity decisively influenced the spread of Christianity in England.

Legend has it that on one occasion the holy king cured a man of gout: "Once, the king came across a cripple in the streets of London whose legs were so deformed that he could only move with the help of his hands, like an animal. When the king asked him what he could do for him, the cripple replied: 'Sir, it has occurred to me that I would be cured immediately if the king carried me on his shoulders to church'. Edward lifted the beggar up and carried him to the nearest church. When he set him down in front of the altar, his limbs stretched out, and in an instant, he was once again a well-formed, handsome, tall man."

Edward was considered a benevolent king who always had an open heart toward the poor and shared his riches.

What a blessing to have a king like this, who takes his responsibility before God seriously and truly serves His people in every way! It is said that miracles accompanied him during his lifetime and continued to occur after his death. His tomb in Westminster Abbey in London became a national shrine.

Pope Alexander III canonized Edward in 1161.

What stands out most about him? His deep rootedness in the holy faith, which permeated every aspect of his life, even in his highest responsibility as king in times of war. Edward was aware that he had to set an example for the people and preach the Gospel to them through his witness of life.

As the Holy Scriptures attest about some kings of Israel (cf. 2 Kgs 18:3), he was a king of whom it can truly be said that he *“he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.”* May St. Edward especially intercede for those in positions of responsibility, so they may understand that true religion is best for the people and leads to charity and justice.

St. Edward, pray for us!

Meditation on the Gospel of the Day: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-sign-of-the-lord-and-his-church-3/>