

October 13th
Diocesan Feast of St Edward the Confessor,
married man, king

Son of Ethelred the Unready, Edward spent his early years in exile because of the occupation of the throne of England by the Scandinavian kings Sweyn and Canute. He returned to England at the age of 40 and was proclaimed king in 1042. As a monarch he is judged by some to have been weak and by others to have been both tenacious and cunning maintaining English independence despite the efforts of Danish and Norman powerbrokers to gain power.

He enjoyed a reputation as a religious man and a just ruler, establishing a good relationship between himself as king and the great council of the nation.

While in exile he had made a vow that should his fortunes be restored he would go on pilgrimage to Rome. The likelihood of invasion or civil war if the King were to fulfill that vow caused a national assembly to suggest that he should seek the advice of Pope Leo IX as to how best to proceed. The Pope suggested that the vow be dispensed on condition of the King's giving to the poor the money that would have been spent on the pilgrimage and endowing a monastery in honour of St Peter. Edward rebuilt a monastery at Thorney in London. The Abbey came to be called West Minster to distinguish it from the Cathedral of St Paul's in the east of the city.

Edward died in 1066, a week after the consecration of the new Abbey church. He was buried in the abbey. In 1102 the body was discovered to be incorrupt and was translated to a shrine on 13th October 1163, two years after Edward's canonization. His shrine has remained a place of Catholic devotion from that time to this.

Entrance Antiphon

Lord, your strength gives joy to the just; they greatly delight in your saving help. You have granted them their hearts desire.

Opening Prayer

Lord God,
who set your servant Edward
upon the throne of an earthly realm
and inspired him with zeal
for the Kingdom of heaven;
grant that we may faithfully serve you in this life
and with him inherit your eternal glory.
*We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*

Liturgy of the Word

Lectionary Volume II — National Calendar, p.1361. Romans 8.26-30;
Psalm 130; Matthew 5.1-12.

Preface of Holy Men and Women I or II (Prefaces 69 or 70)

Prayer over the gifts

Lord,
accept the gifts of your people.
May we who celebrate the love of your Son
also follow the example of Saint Edward
and grow in love for you and for one another.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me.

Communion Antiphon

Prayer after Communion

Lord, our hunger is satisfied by your holy gift
as we honour the memory of Saint Edward.
May we who have celebrated this eucharist
experience in our lives the salvation which it brings.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.