

for a boyhood memory is of my mother telling me that when Gregory the Great (Pope 590-604) first clapped eyes in Rome on a group of boys from Britain he exclaimed, “Not Angles, but Angels”. What Gregory actually said was much more significant. So, here is a summary of Bede’s record. We are told that one day some merchants displayed their many wares in the market place. Among the crowd was Gregory who saw, among the merchandise, some boys exposed for sale. He enquired from what country and from what part of the world they came. “From the island of Britain”, he was told. “And what is the name of this race?”. They are called “Angles”, he was told. “That is appropriate, he said, “for they have angelic faces and it is right that they should become joint heirs with the angels in heaven”. Bede also tells us that, as Pope Gregory, he introduced into the Canon of the Mass three petitions filled with the utmost perfection: “Order our days in thy peace, preserve us from eternal damnation and number us in the flock of thine elect, through Christ Our Lord”. These words have now joined the things we no longer do – almost. There are now four Eucharistic Prayers and Gregory’s words – almost – are only used in one. And my concluding boyhood memory is of large congregations on Sundays and queues for confessions on Saturdays.

*(We pay tribute to Martyn Dyer the contributor of this article who passed away peacefully at his residence on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2022. May he Rest in Peace. Amen)*

**Entrance antiphon: How worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and divinity, and wisdom and strength and honour. To him belong glory and power forever and ever.**

**First Reading: 2 Samuel 5: 1-3**

**Psalms 121: Response: I rejoiced when I heard them say: ‘Let us go to God’s house’.**

**Second Reading: Colossians 1: 12-20**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Luke 23:35-43**

**Memorial Acclamation: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**

**Communion Antiphon: The Lord sits as King for ever. The Lord will bless his people with peace.**



## Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

**Cycle C, 2022 Weekly Reflection**

**You must remember this:** One of the characteristics – some might say advantages – of old age is regular trips down memory lane to the ‘Good Old Days’. The Second Vatican Council has bequeathed many avenues to this destination. I am frequently visited by reminders of things Catholics used to do but don’t do any more. For example, in the prayers after Mass our Irish Parish priest used to pray for the King and all the members of the Royal Family, the Conversion of Russia and to Our Lady for “England thy dowry”. These recollections in turn trigger the visual picture of the celebrant emerging from the sacristy flanked by at least four altar boys, servers who would then respond (in Latin) to the celebrant. Another thing that I recall is the Westminster Hymnal. I was 94 when I first encountered the term ‘earworm’ and had it explained to me that it referred to a tune that kept buzzing through your head. I realised that I had one, a popular song of my boyhood: ‘Lazy Bones’. The Westminster Hymnal furnishes me with two ‘hymnworms’: ‘Just for today’ (Lord for tomorrow and its needs) and the memorable lines: “Sight, touch and taste in thee are each deceived, The ear alone most safely is believèd” (O Godhead Hid). It must be at least 20 years since I last heard these hymns, along with many others such as ‘Sweet Sacrament Divine’ and ‘God Bless our Pope’.

There is of course a miscellany of other memories of mine: I think of those who followed the Mass in their missals, others who showed their devotion to its sacred mystery by saying the rosary, Catholic processions in the highways of big cities (like Manchester) Benediction and the tolling of the Angelus bell at midday and 6pm. So, are there any characteristics of old age other than dwelling on abandoned past practices and events? Of course there are, and one of them is the gift of time to read some of the books you should have read, but didn’t. For me one of them is by the father of British history, Bede, “A History of the English Church and People”. Although we are ending with the work of the Venerable Bede, we are not quite out of memory lane,