



Why is Edward the Confessor a saint?



Edward the Confessor was a man of great prayer - rather like a crowned monk. He was hailed throughout his life as a gentle, loyal and devoted king.

A confessor is a saint who suffers for his faith but is one step short of martyrdom. Edward suffered for his faith by resisting the temptations of the world.

Healing the sick

People believed that Edward the Confessor had the power to heal. The tradition continued for nearly 700 years until the reign of Queen Anne.

St Edward was a deeply religious, patient and peaceful ruler who resisted war and revoked unjust taxes.

Miracle of the ring

Many legends sprang up about Edward the Confessor both during his lifetime and after his death. One that has remained strong over many hundreds of years has it that Edward was riding to a ceremony at a chapel dedicated to St John the Evangelist in Essex when a beggar asked for charity. Edward had no money with him so he took off his ring and handed it to the poor man instead.

A few years later two English pilgrims were travelling through the Holy Land and became stranded. They were helped by an old man who told them he was St John the Evangelist.

He was carrying the ring Edward had given to the beggar some years previously. He asked the pilgrims to return it to the king telling him that in six months he would meet St John in heaven.

Edward the Confessor died in January 1066. He was made a saint in 1161 and his body taken to a shrine at Westminster Abbey in 1163.

In the centuries that followed many sick people came to kneel at the shrine and ask to be healed.