

## THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Anglican Church is the third largest Christian body in the world (behind the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches) with over 85 million members, over 40 national and autonomous Provinces, and thousands of parishes throughout the world.

The Anglican Church (from “Angles” or “Engles” for English) comes from the tradition of the Christian Church in England. As the Early Church spread from the Holy Land, missionaries went to the lands of the Britons. By the sixth century, missions from Rome and Ireland were effective in converting the English people. In the sixth century, Pope Gregory I sent St. Augustine of Canterbury to formally establish the Church in England. Christianity eventually flourished in England, and England became home to many saints (St. Alban, St. Columba, St. Wilfrid, St. Bede, St. Patrick, St. David, St. Aiden, St. Augustine, St. Brigid, St. Edward, St. Hilda, St. Cuthbert, St. Alphege, St. Amselm, and many others), beautiful monasteries, and glorious cathedrals.

During the era of the Reformation, the Church in England was separated from the Church of Rome. The Church of England began to worship in English and to use the Book of Common Prayer. As the British Empire expanded around the globe, missionary societies sent Anglican Priests to preach the Gospel wherever there was an English presence. In addition to Ireland and Scotland, this led to the establishment of Anglican Churches in the United States, Australia, the West Indies, throughout Africa, etc. These Churches all look to the Church of England as their spiritual mother and the Archbishop of Canterbury as the first in prominence among the Bishops.

The various Anglican Provinces (national and autonomous Churches) are joined in fellowship through the “Instruments of Communion” – (1) their relationship to the Archbishop of Canterbury, (2) their participation in the Lambeth Conference, (3) the Primates Meeting, and (4) Anglican Consultative Council meeting.

In the year of our Lord 582, Maurice, the fifty-fourth from Augustus, ascended the throne, and reigned twenty-one years. In the tenth year of his reign, Gregory, a man renowned for learning and behavior, was promoted to the apostolical see of Rome, and presided over it thirteen years, six months, and ten days. He, being moved by Divine inspiration, in the fourteenth year of the same emperor, and about the one hundred and fiftieth after the coming of the English into Britain, sent the servant of God, Augustine, and with him several other monks, who feared the Lord, to preach the word of God to the English nation.

– St. Bede the Venerable, d. 735

We must claim, therefore, for our mother the Church of England, as well as for each of her sons, however unworthy, to have whatever is ambiguous in her doctrinal sayings interpreted in the sense most agreeable to primitive Antiquity; Holy Scripture, of course, being paramount over all. And we may feel sure that such interpretation, though not, perhaps, so put forth as to exclude every other, was intended at least to be tolerated within our pale.

– John Keble, d. 1866