

21st April

Memory verses

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth:
and the heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shall perish,
but **thou shalt endure**:
yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.
Psalm 102:25-6

Something to read aloud



Today was the late Queen's birthday. She was born in 1926 and died in 2022 so you can work out how old she was. The Queen had two birthdays. She had her “real” birthday (today) and her “official” birthday which was celebrated on the second Saturday in June. This date was chosen to give the maximum possibility of fine weather for celebrations. I expect you have seen this little sign on the right (perhaps on a post box): do you know what it means?



The E stands for Elizabeth. The R stands for *Regina* which is the Latin word for “Queen”. The II in the middle means “the second” because Queen Elizabeth was the second of our queens to have this name. The Bible tells us to pray for “kings and for all that are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:2). God has given them the responsibility to ensure that we can live “a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” We can pray for our present king today.

Look out for new post boxes. They will have to say CIIR.

Something to sing

If you do not know the National Anthem this would be a good time to learn it.¹ It is not a boastful song but a prayer for our country and our King. You will notice that in the last verse we pray that the King will *defend* our laws – he does not *make* them. This is very important as you will understand when we learn about King William and Queen Mary below. The words “God save the King” come from the Bible. (1 Samuel 10:24) and were first used of Saul, king of Israel. It should be our prayer that God will truly save our king and lead him into his truth.

A Story from History: The Glorious Revolution

On **21st April** 1689 William III & Mary were proclaimed King & Queen of England. William was the grandson of William the Silent about whom we read on 16th April. You may remember that we thought about Christians who are persecuted in various countries in modern times at the end of that lesson. Today's history episode begins at a time when Christians in our own country were persecuted for their faith.

When Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector of England Christians had been free to worship as their conscience dictated. If they could not agree to what took place in the Parish church no one hindered them from worshipping elsewhere. When Cromwell died and Charles II was invited back from

¹ If it is not in your hymn book you can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8KSAtos-dk>.

France to be king he promised to allow “liberty to tender consciences” – that is the same freedom of worship that people had enjoyed under Cromwell. He did not keep his word, however, and once more Christians who worshipped other than in the Parish church were fined, imprisoned and sent as slaves to the West Indies. When Charles died and his younger brother James II became king things got even worse. James was a cruel and vindictive man. He killed and tortured believers in Scotland and persecuted Christians in England until in the West Country, where there were many Christians, they were tempted into a rebellion. The punishment James unleashed on them for that was so cruel that even their enemies felt sorry for them. James did not like having to call parliaments and allow them to make laws. He wanted to turn England into a country like France where he had grown up. In France the parliament was powerless and could only do the king's bidding. The country groaned under James's persecution. Almost everyone looked forward to the day when death would end his reign. They knew that then they would have a good monarch again. James's eldest daughter, Mary, the heir to the throne, was married to William of Orange the Dutch Prince. Mary did not approve of her father's persecuting ways and William's ideas were like his grandfather's. Christians bore persecution bravely praying that it would not be long before Mary and her husband would come over from Holland in place of wicked James.

But then something happened that changed things completely.

Mary's mother, Anne Hyde, had died in 1671 and James II had married again. His new wife Mary of Modena gave birth to a son in June 1688. This meant that Mary was no longer the heir to the throne the new baby was the heir instead because he was a boy.

This was a calamity. James was a persecutor who wanted to make England a Roman Catholic country by force. He would take pains to bring his young son up in his own ways and Queen Mary of Modena would support him. Now there was no end in sight to persecuting rule. Mary and William would not be coming to England when James died – his son would succeed him instead.

A group of leading men in the country decided that there was only one thing to do to preserve the liberty of the country. They sent a letter to William of Orange (Mary's husband) inviting him to safeguard English liberty by coming over at once.

Helped by a favourable wind, William of Orange sailed down the Channel with his fleet and landed at Brixham in Devon. He had a small army with him but he wanted to avoid any appearance of an invasion. He wanted it to be quite clear that he had come only because he had been invited. He proclaimed his objective “A Free Parliament and the Protestant Religion” and hoped that there would be so much support for him in the country that it would not be necessary to fight. In this he was not disappointed.

James responded to William's landing by promising to call a Parliament. People still preferred William; they knew they could not trust James. James next tried to fight William but his army went over to William's side; the soldiers did not want a persecuting king either. His younger daughter, Mary's sister, Anne, also decided to join her brother-in-law's side and deserted her father. James then fled to France where he was welcomed by King Louis XIV. He remained under Louis's care for the rest of his days.

Now there was (for the moment) no king of England but everyone knew that this was the end of any idea that a king of England could be a tyrant like the king of France.

When Parliament met in January 1689 it had to be decided whether the throne should be offered to William. But this would not be a strict succession since William was not in direct line to the throne as Mary his wife was, he was the son of the daughter of Charles I, James II's father. Perhaps, then,

James II should be *called* king but William should rule for him as a Regent. This would be dangerous especially when William died. Others suggested that Mary should be made Queen with William ruling for her with the title King Consort. But then what would happen if Mary died before William? In the end William and Mary decided themselves. Mary refused to rule as Queen with her husband in a subordinate position. When she found out that this was what a strict interpretation of the English law of succession demanded, she said that she had not realised that the law of England and the law of God were so different. Parliament declared that James had abdicated by fleeing the country and that William and Mary were joint sovereigns. William and Mary agreed to limitations on their royal power, contained in a Declaration of Rights, before being accepted as sovereigns. These said that the king could not tax people without parliament's consent and that parliament should be allowed to discuss things freely. Parliament would make the laws. The king could not (as James II had tried to do) make declarations dispensing with laws that parliament had passed. It was made clear that the king *defended* the laws he did not *make* them. No punishments should be inflicted which were cruel or unnatural. The memory of James's tortures made parliament determined to make sure such things did not happen any more. No one wanted another king like James II.

Later in 1689 a Toleration Act was passed which allowed freedom of worship to all Protestants. Catholics, though not included in the act, found themselves able to worship freely provided they did so in private. The king could not prevent the Corporation and Test Acts from remaining on the statute book although he would have liked to see them removed. These were the acts which required all men who held positions in the municipalities or the state to be members of the Church of England. Although Christians who could not agree with the Church of England still could not become M.P.s or go to university, the freedom to worship according to their conscience was now granted. We still enjoy that freedom today and it is a great national blessing. We should thank God for it and pray for our brothers and sisters who live in places where they do not have such freedom.

Something to make

Younger children would enjoy making a crown. Cardboard is good for this especially if you have a stapler to fix it together with. Measure your cardboard round your head to make sure it fits before you start and leave a little over lap to fix it together with when you have finished. A "silver" crown can be made by covering the cardboard with kitchen foil. You can cut patterns into your crown or decorate it with anything sparkling that comes to hand.

If you have some tissue paper you can make a crown rather like the sort that you find inside party crackers. Cut a strip of tissue paper to fit your head, leaving a little to overlap. You can join it with glue if you need to make it long enough. Fold the tissue paper over several times but not so much that it is too thick to cut through. Now you can shape the top of the crown by cutting a pointed shape. If you cut small triangular holes in the folded sides this also makes a pretty pattern.

For extra fun you might like to make yourself an orb and sceptre as well. Find a picture to copy.²

Something to think about

Older children might like to think about how we are governed. Our laws are made by parliament. All adults can vote for their member of parliament. Our monarch upholds the laws and provides a focus for the country especially in times of crisis. The monarch is also head of the armed forces which helps to keep the army and the day to day government distinct. Find out more about our constitution.³

What are the good things about the way we are governed? Are there any disadvantages?

² You can see them here: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/trails/the-crown-jewels>

³ There is information here: https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_United_Kingdom for instance.