

SAINTS OF ENGLAND'S
GOLDEN AGE



Compiled by
Vladimir Moss

CENTER FOR TRADITIONALIST
ORTHODOX STUDIES

SAINTS OF ENGLAND'S GOLDEN AGE

A Collection of the Lives of Holy Men
and Women Who Flourished in
Orthodox Christian Britain

*Including an English Orthodox Calendar
and a Service to All Saints of Britain*

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INTRODUCTION

The year 1997 marks a very important anniversary for English-speaking Orthodox Christians. Fourteen hundred years ago, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, King Ethelbert of Kent and over ten thousand of his subjects were Baptized in the River Swale by Archbishop Augustine of Canterbury, the disciple of Pope Gregory I of Rome—commonly known in the West as “the Great” and in the East as “the Dialogist.” Saint Gregory, overjoyed at the news of the Baptism of Saint Ethelbert, wrote to Saint Augustine: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men; because a grain of wheat, falling into the earth, has died, that it might not reign in Heaven alone; even He by Whose death we live, by Whose weakness we are made strong, by Whose suffering we are rescued from suffering, through Whose love we seek in Britain for brethren whom we knew not, by Whose gift we find those whom without knowing them we sought.”

Today, it is often forgotten what a significant Christian inheritance England has from before the Norman Conquest. Recent excavations in the nave of Canterbury Cathedral have revealed the remains of a tenth-century Cathedral which have astonished archaeologists by their grandeur. This book represents a further excavation into the inheritance of Christian England, being a collection of the lives of the Saints of England’s Golden Age (from a spiritual point of view): the sixth to early eighth centuries.

Some of the Saints in this collection, such as Augustine and Oswald, are relatively well-known to us from the Venerable Bede’s *History of the English Church and People*. Others are less well-known and appear here in a modern English translation for the first time. Not included are those Saints, such as Cuthbert, Wilfrid, Benedict Biscop, Sigfrid, and Ceolfrid, whose complete lives are readily available in good modern translations; those Saints whose main contribution was on the foreign mission field; and the Saints of Cornwall, which during the period covered by this book

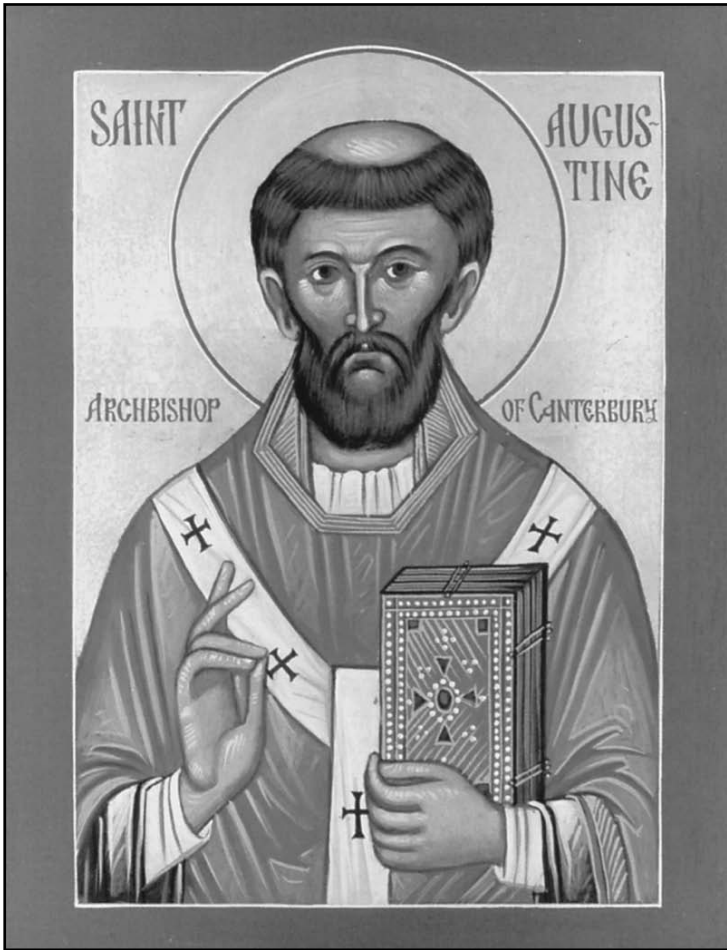
did not enter into any of the English kingdoms. However, the Celtic Saints of Devon who figured on English calendars are included, together with the Saints of Irish, French, and Italian stock who made an impact on the life of the English Church and were venerated in England before the Norman Conquest of 1066.

It is hoped that a closer acquaintance with these Saints will encourage English Christians to return to the sources of the Christian Faith in these islands, to that “sacred deposit” which the Holy Apostles entrusted to our fathers and which, sadly, has been so tarnished and defiled of late. For, as Saint Paul exhorts us, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves” (II Corinthians 13:5). May the prayers of the Saints of Early England help us to fulfill this commandment, to the glory of God and of His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church!

Vladimir Moss

16 June 1997 (Old Style)

Sunday of All Saints of Britain



SAINT AUGUSTINE, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
APOSTLE TO THE ENGLISH (†604)

Consecrated by Saint Virgilius of Arles and commissioned by Saint Gregory of Rome, Saint Augustine led a band of forty monks to preach the Holy Gospel to the English. Having Baptized Saint Ethelbert of Kent, he went on to build a Cathedral at Canterbury, the See of his Archbishopric, and to found the Monastery of Saints Peter and Paul.

