

- 1 1,400 years ago a monk called Gregory saw some boys being sold as slaves in Rome. They looked alike with fair hair and blue eyes, and Gregory asked where they were from. "They are Angles," he was told. "Angles?" Gregory replied; "They look like angels!"
- 2 When Gregory became Pope, he sent a group of 30 monks from Rome to bring the Gospel to the Angles and Saxons in what we now know as England. Leading the group was Augustine. As they travelled through Gaul (France) the group began to lose heart as they heard how rough it would be to cross the English Channel, and particularly how fierce the occupants of the country were reported to be.
- 3 Augustine returned to Rome, but Pope Gregory the Great sent him back with encouraging words for the whole group. In the year 597 they landed on the Kent coast. They discovered that the wife of the King of Kent was already a Christian, and the monks were well-received. Augustine - sometimes called Austin - became the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and many people became Christians.
- 4 The ancient Britons - whose land and country had been taken over by the Angles and Saxons - understandably were hesitant to trust any newcomers, even fellow-Christians. Augustine's attempts to reconcile fellow-Christians about Church matters were not successful, and there were mistakes made on both sides.
- 5 St Augustine of Canterbury is known as the 'Apostle of the English'. Today, 27th May, is his feastday. Two days later in 1982, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury spoke to the Pope during John-Paul's visit to Canterbury Cathedral, saying:
- 6 "Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and I rejoice that the succes-

sors of Pope Gregory and Archbishop Augustine stand here today in the church which is built on their partnership in the Gospel."

- 7 Let us pray:

**God our Father,  
when times are difficult,  
I ask for courage and determination.  
When there is hostility between people,  
lead me to see the best  
in people and in situations,  
and give me the gift of making peace.  
Remove from me  
whatever contradicts your love  
that I may share more fully  
the Good News of your love. Amen.**



-  *Alternative prayers could be those of 18 January, 8 February, 5 May.*
-  *"Not angles but angels," said Gregory, and continued his play on words. "What region are they from?" "From Deira" [Yorkshire]. "Then they must be rescued from 'dei ira' - 'the wrath of God.'" "Who is their ruler?" "Aella." "Then 'Alleluia' must be sung in their land!"*
-  *Different dates for Easter, and a different way of administering the Sacrament of Baptism were two of the differences in custom between the 'British' [Celtic] church - already established in the country - and the 'English church' that Augustine was introducing.*
-  *Augustine is known as "the Apostle of the English" - as distinct from the 'British' - because many of the original inhabitants of the country, as mentioned, were already Christian, and the country's first martyr, St Alban, met his death in Roman Britain about the year 304AD, nearly 300 years before Augustine's arrival [see 20 June for details].*
-  *Just before Augustine started his ministry [landing in the year 597], St Columba from Ireland began missionary work that spread throughout Scotland, founding his monastery on the island of Iona on the west coast in 563. A set of four British philatelic stamps were issued in 1997, commemorating the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columba, and the 1400th anniversary of the arrival of St Augustine.*
-  *Bede's 'A History of the English Church and People' tells of the events mentioned here. See also the CTS booklet "Augustine of Canterbury, 14th Centenary, 597-1997" by Edwin Bannon, FSC, 1-86082-009-3*
-  *Come, come, follow me; Follow me; God's Spirit is in my heart; He who would valiant be*

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in  
*'Praying Each Day of the Year'*,  
a 3-volume book  
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine  
to research this topic further.

This material is part of  
the prayer and education website  
of the De La Salle Brothers  
in Great Britain:

[www.prayingeachday.org](http://www.prayingeachday.org)