QUEEN MARY AND ENGLAND'S RETURN TO CATHOLICISM

Prayer
Scripture Reading: Psalms 71:17-19
Hymn: 460 "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Mary Tudor (1516-58), daughter of Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon, Queen of England from 1553 to 1558, led her country to turn from Protestantism to a brief return to Catholicism. The Pope's ban on England was lifted and England returned to fellowship with Rome. Mary's efforts to restore Catholicism in England earned her the title "Bloody Mary" and aroused in the majority of Englishmen a lasting hatred of Catholicism that insured a return to Protestantism.

THE FALL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

The Duke of Northumberland, leader of the government for the ailing child king, Edward VI, by his greed, his unscrupulous politics, and his brutal tyranny, became for Englishmen the symbol of radical and extreme Protestantism. He earned the hatred of the people and prepared the way for a return to Catholicism. When it became clear that the young king would soon die, Northumberland pressured him to settle the throne on a male heir that might be born to Northumberland's daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, a girl of sixteen. He persuaded the young king to pass over his sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, playing on the fear that Mary would return England to Catholicism, and dwelling on the illegitimacy of both. By emphasizing that the Queen of Scotland, next in line of succession after the two sisters as the granddaughters of Margaret, the eldest sister of Henry VIII, was a threat to England because of French ties, he got the young king to by-pass her also. Lady Jane Grey was the grand-daughter of Mary, the younger sister of Henry VIII. Northumberland changed Edward's will to make Lady Jane herself the heir. England had had enough of Northumberland; his scheming was too apparent.

Northumberland ordered Mary and Elizabeth to London but neither obeyed his summons. Had they obeyed they would have been put to death. Mary fled to Framlingham in a district that hated Northumberland for his ruthless suppression of a rebellion in 1549. Supporters began rallying to her, among them a number of noblemen with a considerable body of retainers.

Northumberland had everything ready for proclaiming Lady Jane queen. He had pressured the Council to accept his plans and had arranged a series of dynastic marriages to guarantee support. He had the army and navy ready. Lady Jane moved to the Tower where she was received as Queen. Northumberland set out with a force to bring Mary to London for the security of the realm. He noted that crowds gathered to see him and his men as they passed, but none wished him "God speed." Mary's supporters proclaimed her the true queen. Protestants and Catholic sympathizers rallied behind her. She was proclaimed queen in London. Word that she was the true queen spread from town to town, and at Cambridge, Northumberland, with tears streaming down his face, had to proclaim her queen and beg for pardon. Many noblemen and gentlemen flocked to Mary confessing disloyalty and asking pardon. To most Mary showed great leniency, but Northumberland, his duchess, Lady Jane Grey and her husband, and a number of their leading supporters were committed to the Tower.

ENGLAND AT THE BEGINNING OF MARY'S REIGN:

When Mary became queen the fortunes of England had sunk very low. The country had lost the prestige it had enjoyed under Henry VIII when he could defy the pope and treat the great nations of Europe as equals. England was in deep financial trouble. A humiliating peace with France
had been concluded under Northumberland. England lacked a statesmanlike
and clear foreign policy; rulers of other countries looked on her as
fickle and untrustworthy. She was considered too weak to be worthy of
serious diplomacy and was a good prospect for annexation either by force
or by marriage alliances.
MARY WHEN SHE BECAME QUEEN:
Mary came to the throne at the age of thirty-seven, an embittered
spinster with deep soul scars. As a girl she had witnessed the humili-
ation of her mother. She had been declared illegitimate and treated as
such. She had been unwanted and ill-treated. Much of her life she was
a kind of prisoner. She had been forced by her father to renounce her
faith and had been made to serve as a maid to Elizabeth, the daughter of
Anne Boleyn. She had been persecuted for clinging to Catholic ways
during the brief reign of Edward. Catholic sympathizers in England and
foreign ambassadors and rulers had expected her to be put to death; they
considered her chances of becoming queen non-existent. Mary had become
queen through her own strong will and wise actions. Her one goal was to
restore Catholicism in England. The Catholic England she dreamed of was
the England she had known as a little girl when her mother was the wife of
Henry VIII. Years of seclusion and isolation had left her with little
understanding of the mind of her people. When her father had broken with
Rome, the average Englishman had little understanding of his Catholicism.
After some twenty years of Protestant reforms, only those over thirty-five
had any memory of the world Mary wanted to restore. Her sufferings had
stirred the people to great sympathy and had given her a warm welcome, but
she was out of touch with the people and had little understanding of their
fear of Rome, of its hierarchy, and of foreigners in general.
THE BEGINNING:
After Mary's unhappy experiences in England, it was only natural for
her to look to her mother's Spain and her cousin, Charles V, king of Spain
and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles had supported her mother,
and his ambassadors had been her trusted friend. He advised Mary to move
cautiously, to be patient, to show herself a good Englishwoman, to be
sensitive to her people and to accommodate her policy to their feelings.
She should punish those who had tried to keep her from the throne, but
she should show clemency to their followers. She should carefully watch
the French, the Italians, and her sister, Elizabeth. Quickly and dil-
gently she should put the finances of her country on sound footing.
Mary released from the Tower the former Catholic bishop, Gardiner,
and made him her trusted minister. His advice was close to that of the
Emperor Charles. She continued in her service most of the officials who
had served her father and her brother in spite of their religious leanings,
but she made it clear that she was Catholic and intended to restore the
authority of the See of Rome. She restored five deposed Catholic bishops.
The Lord Mayor of London had to quiet a riot in London by assuring the
mob that the Queen did not intend to constrain men's consciences but only
by persuasion to bring them to the true faith.
On August 8, 1553, Mary allowed the funeral service for the late king
to be held in Westminster Abbey, conducted by Cranmer according to the
Protestant ritual; she had a requiem mass for her brother in the Tower.
At first Elizabeth stayed at Hatfield, maintaining careful neutrality,
but before the funeral she came to London where she rode beside the queen
and was even seen at mass with her—some said out of fear.
On August 18, 1553, Mary issued her first "Proclamation about
Religion." She advised her subjects to live in quiet Christian charity,
avoiding the devilish terms of papist and heretic. She declared she would
support the religion she had always professed but promised not to compel
her subjects to follow it until such a time as there should be an order for common assent. She prohibited all unlicensed preaching, and some two thousand clergymen had their licenses cancelled—fourth of the clergy of England. She prohibited the printing of any book, ballad, rhyme or treatise without her license; it was clear that she did not intend for any Protestant literature to circulate if she could help it. While she did not make the Roman ritual obligatory, some sixty rebels were arrested as traitors and a number of Protestant bishops were removed.

A number of the leading Protestant reformers fled to the continent. Latimer and John Bradford publicly questioned the right of the queen to be head of the church. Ridley declared both Mary and Elizabeth illegitimate; along with Coverdale and Hooper they were imprisoned. When Archbishop Cranmer denounced the mass as a horrible blasphemy, he was summoned before the Council and imprisoned in the Tower.

The French sent their ambassador to Mary to block Spanish influence; the pope, Julius III, appointed Cardinal Reginald Pole papal legate and then conspired with the Emperor Charles to keep him out of England because of his strong convictions that Mary should immediately destroy Protestantism and restore Catholicism. Pole was assigned to visit Germany, the Netherlands, and France and an attempt was made to intercept all communications between him and Mary.

THE CORONATION OF MARY:

One October 1, 1553, Mary was crowned in Westminster Abbey with all the splendor of medieval times. Her first parliament met on October 5. The Council and Parliament had no desire for a return of papal authority but out of deference to the queen reversed the anti-papal enactments of Henry VIII and Edward VI. The burning question disturbing many Englishmen was whether Mary would press for a return of all the confiscated church lands; the wealth of many had come from these lands. Parliament reversed the legislation of the reign of Edward VI but refused to go back to the reign of Henry where it touched their fortunes. The marriage of Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon was declared legal, making the queen legitimate. All disabilities connected with the Catholic faith were abolished and Parliament renounced the reforms of Cranmer including the Reformed Liturgy, the First and Second Books of Common Prayer, the administration of the sacrament in both kinds, and the recognition of married clergy. Mary was recognized as the head of the church; papal supremacy was tacitly assumed—a contradiction.

When Cardinal Pole got word of the proceedings he was deeply dissatisfied. He saw in Mary's coming to the throne a manifestation of Divine Providence and urged that in gratitude Mary should move at once to seek reconciliation between England and Rome. The Emperor and Gardiner counselled caution and continued to delay Pole's arrival in England.

MARY'S MARRIAGE:

Though she was thirty-seven and in poor health, Mary believed that to accomplish her goal of restoring Catholicism permanently in England she must produce a Catholic heir to the throne. Gardiner and his fellow Englishmen wanted her to marry one of her own nobles. The best prospect among them was Edward Courtenay, son of the Marquis of Exeter; whom Mary freed from eleven years of imprisonment and made Earl of Devonshire; however, Courtenay's lack of self-control and debaucheries became the scandal of the realm. His chances were ended; further, he was discredited by rumors that the French were encouraging him to marry Elizabeth and overthrow Mary.

Catholics tended to favor marriage to a foreign prince. Charles V wanted a marriage between Mary and his son, Philip II who was eleven years younger than the queen. The prospect of a marriage with the heir to the Spanish throne was very unpopular in England. There was strong commercial rivalry and a fear that England would be annexed to Spain.
Parliament prepared an Address to the Crown on November 17, but Mary made her own decision. She had investigated the character of Philip and had decided to accept the Spaniard. The marriage was so unpopular that the Spanish ambassadors were pelted with snow balls by the boys of London.

Gardiner accepted Mary's decision and gave careful attention to the marriage agreement. In the agreement, Philip, though nominally sharing in the government of England, was pledged to respect and observe the English laws and customs. He would settle on Mary 60,000 pounds. Their offspring would be heir to the throne. A male heir would inherit the throne of Spain should Philip's brother, Don Carlos, die without offspring. Should Mary fail to have a child, Philip's connection with England would end with her death. England was not to be drawn into a Spanish war with France. To the English mind, the agreement was to Spain's advantage: it cut England off from trade with the Netherlands, from any share in the New World of America. England was made a vassal of Spain.

Riots and demonstrations arose and spread in England—in Warwickshire, in Wales and in Devonshire. The leaders were rounded up and executed. The most serious threat was a revolt in Kent led by Sir Thomas Wyatt. He led some 7,000 against London but his expected help from France did not come. Mary and her supporters met the threat with courage and determination. Wyatt was made prisoner and exiled to the continent. A careful investigation was made to uncover the leaders of plots against the queen and executions followed. Northumberland renounced his Protestantism, begged for mercy, and declared himself a good Catholic in the most ignominious fashion but he and his wife were executed. Lady Jane Grey and her husband were executed—she died with grace and dignity.

Charles V advised that Elizabeth be executed, but Mary continued to be cordial toward her, and Elizabeth kept herself above criticism.

Pole, the papal legate to England, arrived in France in March and agreed with the French that Mary's proposed marriage to Philip was undesirable. Pole expressed the opinion that it would be better for Mary to remain unmarried. Charles V sent him a sharp rebuke and urged Rome to recall him. Pope Julius would not.

In March also, Mary issued injunctions to the bishops to restore the churches to the conditions before the reign of her brother. Bonner, bishop of London, took the lead in the move to remove all heretics from office and from the schools. All married clergy and all who favored married clergy were removed. Any who had any criticism of Catholic practices were to be removed. The clergy were given until November to get their churches in order. Smouldering discontent rose. In April, a dead cat dressed as a priest with shaven crown and holding a piece of paper resembling a wafer was hanged on gallows. A reward of twenty marks was offered for the discovery of the author of this outrage against the queen's program. The prisons were filled with people found holding reform sentiments.

On April 2, 1554, Mary's second Parliament met. It approved the marriage plans but stipulated that peace with France should be inviolate. Mary turned all her energies to getting ready for the wedding and Philip arrived in England on July 20. He was escorted into Southampton by 150 vessels carrying splendid retinue and vast sums of money. The ceremony was performed by Gardiner in his Cathedral Church in Winchester on July 25, the feast of St. James, the patron saint of Spain. Philip was a joyless bridegroom sacrificing himself for the good of his country.

ENGLAND'S RETURN TO THE PAPAL FOLD:

On November 20, 1554, thirteen months after his appointment, Pole finally arrived at Dover. Ten days earlier Parliament had passed an act cancelling Henry VIII's Bill of Attainder that had exiled Pole and deprived him of all civil rights, including right to trial. This
cleared the way for Pole to return as papal legate. In the months since his appointment, Julius and the French king had persuaded the fiery Pole that it was not necessary that all confiscated church lands be returned to the church. Julius argued that it was lawful to use church property to ransom prisoners, that it was lawful to use church lands to ransom a whole kingdom.

Pole visited Canterbury and on November 24 proceeded to London in triumphal procession to be welcomed by King and Queen. On November 27, he addressed Parliament setting forth the object of his coming—the restoration of England to the Mother Church. The next day both houses of Parliament voted that England should return to obedience to the Apostolic See. On St. Andrew's Day, Pole, on bended knee, presented the Supplication of both houses to the Queen; the King and Queen, on behalf of themselves and Parliament, presented to Pole the national confession of sins and a petition for absolution and readmission into the body of the Holy Catholic Church. Pole pronounced words of absolution in Latin and then in English over the prostrate King and Queen. The "Te Deum" rang out and Catholicism blazed in glory again in England. The next day, 25,000 packed St. Paul's and its precincts to listen to an eloquent sermon by Bishop Gardiner. The crowd fell on their knees to receive absolution and Apostolic Blessing from the papal legate. Pole declared that England had again been received into the unity of the Holy Mother Church.

On January 3, 1555, all legislation enacted against Rome by Henry VIII and Edward VI was annulled. The old acts against heresy, including the haeretic comburendo (the burning of heretics) enacted against the Lollards were revived. On January 28, Pole issued a commission to Bishop Gardiner that prisoners detained for heresy be brought to trial. The fires began to burn.

The proto-martyr was John Rogers, the Bible translator. Tyndale had entrusted him with his translation. He had also compiled the "Matthew's Bible." Crowds cheered him on his way to be burned on Feb. 4, 1555—the French ambassador said they cheered him as if he were going to his wedding. Bishop Hooper was burned in his cathedral town of Gloucester; Saunders at Coventry, Dr. Taylor on Aldham Common in Suffolk. Robert Ferrar, Reformed Bishop of St. David's, was burned in Carmarthen, March 30, 1555. As the number of martyrs grew, popular sentiment against Pole, Rome, the Queen, and Catholicism mounted. In Wales there was talk of revolt against image worship and the crucifix.

Bishops Ridley and Latimer were brought to trial and condemned on October 1, 1555 and on Oct. 16 were burned at Oxford on Broad Street before Balliol College. Cranmer witnessed their deaths from his prison cell in the tower. As the fire was lighted Latimer exhorted Ridley, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as, I trust, shall never be put out."

THE EXECUTION OF CRANMER:

Mary would never forget that Archbishop Cranmer had declared her mother's marriage null and void and had made her illegitimate. Canon law required that Archbishops be tried by the Pope. The sovereigns denounced Cranmer to the Pope and the Pope commissioned Cardinal DuPuy, Prefect of the Inquisition, to act on his behalf. DuPuy delegated the trial to the Dean of St. Paul's, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, and to James Brooks who had succeeded Hooker as Bishop of Gloucester. Cranmer was charged with adultery—as a priest he had been married; as Archbishop, his first wife being dead, he married again. He was charged with perjury—he had sworn obedience to the Pope; he was charged with heresy—he had denied the doctrine of transubstantiation. Cranmer refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the judges, denying the Pope's authority in England. He sent a letter to the Queen denouncing papal claims and abuses and
acknowledging the crown as the head of the church. In a second, bolder letter to the Queen, he charged that the oath she took to uphold the laws, liberties and customs of the realm was inconsistent with her oath to obey the Pope. Cranmer was found guilty of contumacy and condemned to be degraded and punished as a heretic. He composed an appeal to a General Council. He was turned over to Bonner and Thirlby for brutal degradation and then turned over to the secular authorities to be burned. He was presented with a series of recantations which he was ordered by the Queen to sign. Faced with the fire, he signed, but this did not save him. Mary would not forgive him. At the stake he drew from his bosom a copy of the recantation and threw it into the fire, asking pardon from God and the people. He exhorted the people to persist in the true faith. Then he stretched forth his right hand saying, "This which hath sinned, having signed the writing, must be the first to suffer punishment." He held his hand in the fire to burn it off. Cranmer was burned March 21, 1556. To Englishmen his dying hour was his most glorious hour. His death was followed by a long succession of martyrdoms. Pole became Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE FAILURE OF MARY:

For Mary everything hung on the baby that never came. Twice she believed she was pregnant and allowed herself to rejoice that all her dreams would come true. She doted on her husband. Joyous birth announcements were printed. Mary never recovered from the disappointment.

Philip tired of Mary and more and more devoted himself to Spanish affairs. In August 1555 he was summoned to Brussels. His father abdicated and Philip became King of Spain and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. For twenty months he was away from England.

It was a real crisis for Mary. Why would God do this to her? No son and no husband? Could it be she had not killed enough Protestants. The burnings increased. John Fox in his Book of Martyrs tells the story that stirred strong anti-catholic feelings. Actually the number martyred in England was just under three hundred. A larger number died of starvation and disease in the jails. The number was small compared to the number of martyrs on the continent. But Fox's Book of Martyrs for many years ranked with the Bible as the most read book in England. It fanned undying hatred for Rome, for the Pope, for Catholicism.

Mary's health was failing. People began to look to Elizabeth as her successor. Mary favored Elizabeth above Mary Queen of Scots because of Mary's French connections.

Philip returned briefly to England to enlist support in his war against the French. Mary responded to his overtures. The English won an initial victory and then suffered a crushing defeat with the French taking Calais, the last English holding in France. The humiliation of England was complete. Mary declared that at her death "Calais" would be found engraved on her heart.

When Cardinal Caraffa become Pope Paul IV he dismissed Pole as papal legate. It was a cruel reward for restoring England to the papal fold, but Paul had a strong dislike for both Pole and Philip.

Mary died November 17, 1558 and Pole died a few hours later on the same day. Their fanaticism had prepared England for the Protestant Anglicanism of Elizabeth.