

## 2.10 Legacy

No organisation, community or nation is invincible, and there is a natural limit to all human enterprise, when eventually it is thwarted by stronger and more wilful organisations that have their own visionary attainments and loyal communities.

When, a few years later, King Ethelbert accompanies Augustine to Wales to broker a joint effort for converting the pagan Saxons in other Kingdoms in England, and the Welsh bishops succeed in resisting this overture, what follows is that both the Kentish king and his pioneering Archbishop succumb to the consequences.

But there is another, less prosaic dimension to the tale of Augustine's mission and leadership. The secular plot is tempered with the part played by Christian faith itself.

As a spiritual leader, and not only a leader of men, Augustine bound together his mission and his community organisation through faith. As Augustine knew, *faith underlies leadership* – by giving meaning to attainment and values to the community. And for Augustine, effective leadership was the means, but faith was the end.

Regardless of the ups and downs of Christian leadership in the intervening centuries, it is Augustine's faith that has contributed most and helped to shape this nation's history. *It is faith*, more than the mission, that has most endured for fifteen hundred years.

### ***A Reflective Prayer***

For Reflection: spend a few moments with one of these questions:

- In what ways does faith underlie *your* leadership?
- Can the various strands of the Augustinian mission provide a framework for the mission of the Church today?
- The monks went out to local (and mostly rural) people, largely through the twenty Frankish interpreters they brought with them from Tours. What interpretation of the Good News do we need to bring to our own communities?
- The late seventh century a chapel erected in the grounds of Richborough castle was dedicated to Augustine. It soon became a place where people came just to sit and be there, as Augustine had done St Martin's church in Tours. People experienced this as a holy place with a healing presence that somehow reconciled fractured relationships - between spouses, friends, family members, workmates.
- What implications might there be for *your* church as a place of reconciliation and healing?

2.40            Closing prayers

3.00            Our day ends