

Tuesday Reflection 16.06.20

Today we celebrate the Memorial of St Richard of Chichester. Although he has the appendix 'of Chichester', it is perhaps worth noting that he was a Worcestershire man - from a family of yeoman farmers in Droitwich. A further local link is provided by the name of our local hospice - St Richard's.

Unlike many of the local saints we remember, Richard died peacefully in his bed.

In worldly terms he had a very successful career - Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Chancellor of the See of Canterbury, Bishop of Chichester - an appointment opposed by the King, who had earmarked someone else for the job, but was overruled by the Pope after a lengthy stand-off.

As Bishop, he instituted a series of much-needed reforms of the clergy - for example requiring them to reside in their parishes and to provide for the poor - and of the laity - requiring them to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and to be able to recite the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary. He was a man of great compassion; his biographer mentions especially his concern for handicapped children and convicted criminals.

Although frugal in his own life-style, Richard was a very hospitable man; for his guests, only the best was good enough.

Today, Richard is perhaps best remembered for his last prayer, which is one of my favourites:

*Thanks be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ
for all the benefits which you have gained for us,
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us:
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly.
Amen.*

Michael Townson