

Chad
Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary

August 2

Chad was born in Northumbria, the youngest of four brothers, all of whom were priests. He was a pupil of Aidan at Lindisfarne and at a young age came as a monk to his brother Cedd's monastery at Lastingham in Yorkshire. On his brother's death in 664, Chad became abbot of Lastingham and was happy in the peace and quietness he found.

The church in Britain was in considerable confusion in the mid-seventh century. Some order was brought by the Synod of Whitby (664), when the church in the north opted for the developing Roman tradition, and proper organisation was eventually established by Theodore (see 19 September) on his arrival in 669. Immediately after Whitby, Wilfrid, a firm proponent of Roman order, was made bishop of York, but sought valid consecration in France rather than from dubious British bishops. He was away so long that King Oswy appointed Chad as bishop instead. Chad unwisely accepted consecration from the simoniacal Bishop Wini and two other bishops whose valid consecration was in doubt. On his eventual return, Wilfrid did not challenge Chad's position. Theodore, however, on his arrival, pointed out the irregularity of Chad's consecration and asked him to step down in favour of Wilfrid. This Chad graciously did and retired to the abbey at Lastingham.

In 669 King Wulfhere of Mercia asked Theodore to appoint a bishop for the region. Theodore, having rectified Chad's consecration, sent him to be bishop of Mercia, a very large diocese which stretched from the River Severn to the eastern coast of England. In order to have a more central base in the diocese, Chad moved the official residence of the bishop from Repton to Lichfield. He travelled extensively round his diocese, mostly on foot until Archbishop Theodore insisted that he ride a horse. Chad was much loved for his gentleness and humility and for the great holiness of his life, patterned on the example of the ancient fathers. He tirelessly worked at spreading the gospel and is said to have founded the monastery of Barrow.

Chad was bishop of Mercia for only three years and died in 672 of the plague. He was venerated as a saint. A magnificent shrine to house his relics was erected in Lichfield Cathedral in the fourteenth century.

For Liturgical Use

Chad was born in Northumbria and became a pupil of Aidan at Lindisfarne. He became abbot of Lastingham in Yorkshire in 664. Chad is noted for his humility and his great zeal. He was briefly bishop of York and then was appointed bishop of Mercia in 669, with his see at Lichfield. He travelled tirelessly round his vast diocese. He died of the plague in 672.

Sentence

All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
1 Peter 5:5

Collects

Gracious God,
you gave to your servant Chad
the gifts of humility, love and holiness;
grant that we who remember his ministry
may grow in the truths he so faithfully lived

and spread the light of the gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus of Nazareth,
you went from village to village day by day
to proclaim the kingdom;
and so did Chad your humble, saintly follower;
and so may we, wherever we go.

Psalms 37:23-28 131

Readings

Ecclesiasticus 3:17-24	God glorified by the humble
1 Corinthians 9:16-23	I must preach the gospel
Matthew 11:25-30	Learn from me.

Post Communion Sentence

All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.
Luke 14:11