NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Mar. 2, St. Chad, Abbot, Bishop

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Mar. 2, 2010 NCR Today

Today is the feast of St. Chad [1] (Ceadda), Abbot of Lastingham, Bishop of Mercia.

He was an Angle, born in Northumbria, "the youngest of four sons, all of whom became both priests and monks. They entered the monastery on the isle of Lindisfarne and were taught by Saint Aidan."

--*Celebrating the Saints, [2]* by Robert Atwell and Christopher L. Webber, Morehouse, 2001

Much of what we know of St. Chad comes from the Venerable Bede: [3]

"When he became bishop, Chad immediately devoted himself to maintaining the truth and purity of the Church, and set himself to practice humility and continence and to study. After the example of the Apostles, he travelled on foot and not on horseback when he went to preach the Gospel, whether in town or country, in cottages, villages, or strongholds; for he was one of Aidan's disciples and always sought to instruct his people by the same methods as Aidan and his own brother Cedd."

When King Oswy agreed to appoint Chad bishop of the Mercians, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore, "ordered him to ride whenever he undertook a long journey," and "himself insisted on helping him to mount his horse."

Chad established his see at Lichfield. [4] After two and a half years he died of the plague. One of his brethren, Owini, who had been Queen Etheldreda's chief thegn, and who had cast aside "worldly ties" and entered the monastery "carrying in his hand an axe and an adze", "heard joyful singing coming down from heaven to earth".

Chad clapped his hands and told Owini to bring the other monks. He told them that death, "the welcome guest", had summoned him. In private, he told Owini that the singing he heard was that of angels. In seven days, on March 2, 672, Chad died.

Bede recounts other incidents in St. Chad's life which he learned from a monk named Trumbert, who was one of his own "tutors in the Scriptures and had been trained in the monastery under Chad's direction". He would stop what he was doing during a storm to pray. If the storm got worse, he prostrated himself and prayed more. If it got worse still, he would go to the chapel and continue to pray.

St. Chad is venerated in the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Click here [5] for the day's prayer from the Episcopal Lectionary.

Click here [6] for an icon of St. Chad.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/04/2015 - 18:35*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/mar-2-st-chad-abbot-bishop

Links:
[1] http://www.dur.ac.uk/StChads/chad.html
[2] http://www.amazon.com/Celebrating-Saints-Devotional-Readings-Days/dp/0819218839/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1267487351&sr=1-1
[3] http://www.amazon.com/Ecclesiastical-History-English-Penguin-Classics/dp/014044565X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1267485233&sr=1-1#noop
[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichfield_Cathedral
[5] http://satucket.com/lectionary/Chad.htm
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