

Lichfield Diocese Prayer Diary: Issue 134

discipleship
vocation
evangelism

This week we begin nine days of prayer, a Novena, to prepare for & celebrate the reinstatement of the Shrine of St Chad in Lichfield Cathedral. We consider the life of St. Chad, Lichfield's 1st Bishop, and its resonance with Jesus's teaching and pray for renewal: founded on the faith and witness of the Saints who have loved, and lived for, God.

Sunday 30th October: *Day 1 of the Novena - Our joy in the fellowship and communion of saints.*

Give thanks for all Chad's virtues, delighting in God's call to us all to make our home in Him & He in us; that His love & message may be made known in us & through us; that we with all the Saints may show the light of Christ to the world. A reading from Bede's History of the English Church and People: *"In addition to Chad's many virtues of continence, preaching, prayer, voluntary poverty and many others, he [Chad] was filled with the fear of God and mindful of his last end in all that he did."*

Monday 31st: *(Martin Luther, Reformer, 1546) Day 2 of the Novena - Thanksgiving for our baptism*

Today, we renew the vows made at our baptism & offer ourselves anew to God as his holy people, remembering with thanksgiving our baptism and all who have been incorporated into Christ through the sacrament of Baptism. Give thanks for the church St Chad founded in Lichfield, and that through the apostolic work of this Diocese down the centuries many generations have come to understand themselves as God's beloved children, inheritors of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Pray that the Holy Spirit may give us confidence and vision to look on this world and our time with insight and hope: to see possibilities and newness when much seems dark; to have the courage to name what is evil & death-dealing and to work for what is healing and reconciling, fruitful & just.

Tuesday 1st November: *(All Saints' Day) Day 3 of the Novena - Thanksgiving for all the Holy People of God*

We rejoice with the whole communion of the Saints, giving thanks for their faith, knowing we are one with them, if we are one with Christ. The Saints encourage us, by the variety of their lives and calling, pointing to the ways in which we can love and serve God in the particular time and circumstances of our lives. As we honour St Chad, co-patron of our Cathedral, we give thanks that his witness is set in the rich picture of all who have loved and followed God and now rejoice in his company for all eternity. May the infinite and glorious Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, direct our life in good works, and after our journey through this world, grant us eternal rest with the saints. **Amen.**

Wednesday 2nd: *Day 4 of the Novena - Our trust in Jesus Christ the resurrection and the life*

We remember with thanksgiving and love, all who have died in the faith of Christ & those whose faith is known to God alone. A reading from Bede's History of the English Church and People: *"Chad was quickly attacked by a disease which steadily grew worse until the seventh day. Then he prepared for death by receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord, his holy soul was released from the prison-house of the body and, one may rightly believe, was taken by the angels to the joys of heaven. Nor is it strange that he regarded death with joy as the Day of the Lord; for he had always been careful to prepare for his coming".*

Thursday 3rd: *Day 5 of the Novena - Remembering St Chad's Christlikeness - and his Shrine as a place of holiness*

Reflect on the character of Chad & what made him holy- love for God & love for people, praying that the Cathedral community, our Diocese & all who encounter the Shrine may be inspired to love God more deeply & other people with the same kindness & regard. A reading from Bede's History of the English Church and People: *"The most revered Bishop Chad always preferred to undertake his missions on foot rather than on horseback; but Theodore (Archbishop of Canterbury) ordered him to ride whenever he undertook a long journey. He was most reluctant to forgo this pious exercise which he loved, but the Archbishop who recognised his outstanding holiness and considered it more proper for him to ride, himself insisted on helping him to mount his horse. Chad received the Bishopric of the Mercians and the people of Lindsey and administered the diocese in great holiness of life after the example of the early Fathers".*

Friday 4th: *Day 6 of the Novena - Remembering and looking forward to St Chad's Shrine as a place of healing*

We pray that the shrine of St Chad will be a place for the ministry of healing and where Christ's loving mercy may be encountered. A reading from Bede's History of the English Church and People: *"Chad died on 2nd March 672 and was first buried close by St Mary's church; when a church of the most blessed Peter was built later, his body was transferred to it. In both places, frequent miracles of healing attested to his virtues. A madman wandering at large arrived there one evening, and passed the night in church unnoticed and unheeded by watchmen. In the morning, to the amazement and delight of all, he left the place in his right mind, showing clearly what healing he had been granted there by the goodness of God."*

Saturday 5th: *Day 7 of the Novena - Remembering and looking forward to St Chad's Shrine as a place of hospitality and unity*

Give thanks for years of talking, praying & working together that have brought our churches closer together; recalling Chad's witness & actions to heal a divided church. Pray for a share in his spirit, seeking to play our part in overcoming division, and that the welcome we offer will echo Jesus Christ's friendship and hospitality to the stranger & outsider. A reading from Bede's History of the English Church and People: *"Theodore consecrated bishops & with their assistance corrected abuses wherever he found them. When he informed Bishop Chad that his consecration was irregular, the latter replied with the greatest humility: 'If you know my consecration was irregular, I willingly resign the office; for I have never thought myself worthy of it. Although unworthy, I accepted it solely under obedience.' At this humble reply, Theodore assured him there was no need to give up office & himself completed his consecration according to Catholic rites."*