

Festivals and Saints' Days (w/c 11th July)

11th July

Saint Benedict - *religious*

Benedict was born into an aristocratic family of Nursia (in Umbria) around AD480. He was sent to school in Rome; but abandoned his studies at about the age of twenty and, with his former nurse, retreated from the city to find peace. He subsequently spent three years living as a hermit, having met a monk from Subiaco. At some point, an Abbot of Subiaco died and the monks asked Benedict to replace him; this did not work out and ended in acrimony. He left Subiaco and founded twelve monasteries in the area, culminating in the great abbey of Monte Cassino. He died of a fever in AD547. One of his legacies is the Rule of Saint Benedict, which is a manual for monastic life, which is still in use today.



15th July

Saint Swithun - *bishop*



There is hardly any record of Swithun contemporary with his life. He was Bishop of Winchester from AD852 to AD863. He seems to have been remembered as pastorally zealous bishop, though that recollection was overlaid with tales of miracles wrought by him after his death. When S Dunstan and his colleagues were pursuing a programme of Church reform, they placed the newly refurbished Winchester Cathedral under his patronage. Most people, nowadays, if they know of him at all, think of the proverb, "*St Swithun's day if thou dost rain/ For forty days it will remain/ St Swithun's day if thou be fair/ For forty days 'twill rain nae mare.*"