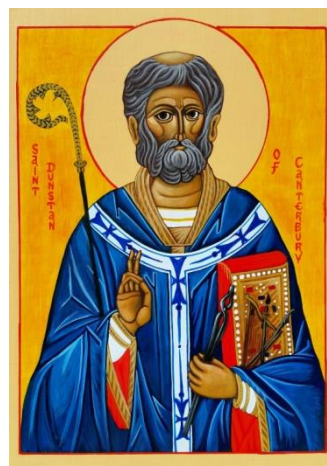


Festivals and Saints' Days (w/c 17th May)

19th May

Saint Dunstan - *bishop*

Dunstan was born to a noble family in Somerset (in the Kingdom of Wessex) in about AD909. He was educated by Irish monks occupying the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey. From an early age he was noted for his intelligence and mastery of learning. He received minor orders and was summoned to the service of His uncle, Athelm, Archbishop of Canterbury; from there he transferred to the court of King Athelstan. His popularity with the King created envy and he was dismissed from the court and entered the service of AElfeah, the Bishop of Winchester.



Although initially reluctant, he was persuaded to become a monk and was ordained in AD943, at which point he returned to live as a Hermit in Glastonbury. Here, he practised his considerable skill as an artist. In due course, further wealthy patronage enabled him to embark upon a restoration of monastic life in England, made easier by his election as Abbot of Glastonbury. Despite further political vicissitudes, he subsequently rose to become Bishop of Worcester, then London and finally, Archbishop of Canterbury in AD960, receiving the pallium from Pope John XII in Rome. He combined his archiepiscopal duties with those of "chief minister" to King Edgar. Following the death of Edgar, there was further political turmoil. When King AElthelred ("the Unready") ascended to the throne (AD978), although Dunstan officiated at his coronation, his political career was at an end and he retired to Canterbury, where he devoted himself to prayer, the promotion of monastic life and the spiritual wellbeing of his people. He died shortly after Ascension Day in AD988. He was revered by the people and was canonised in 1029; until the martyrdom of his successor at Canterbury, Thomas Becket, his cult was one of the most popular in England.

20th May

Saint Alcuin of York - *saint*



Alcuin was born around AD735 in York probably into a noble family, but we do not know for certain. He became a student of Archbishop Ecgbert. He rose to become headmaster of the school at York and was at some point after AD767 he was ordained deacon (he was never ordained priest). He developed into a renowned theologian and was invited to join the court of Charlemagne (who collected leading intellects) where he remained during the 780s and 90s, inter alia assisting with Charlemagne's reform of the Liturgy in his territories. He returned to England for a short while in AD790; but was called back to Charlemagne's court to help counter the *Adoptionist* heresy (that Jesus was not the biological but adopted Son of God). In AD793, Alcuin sought to be released from his courtly duties. Charlemagne put him in charge of S Martin's Abbey Marmoutier. He died on 19th May AD804 and was buried in the abbey church. He left behind him a wealth of literary works.