

Suggested Readings: Acts 13: 46 – 49; Psalm 116 (117); Luke 10: 1 – 9. See 14th February.

Bede tells us that Chad and Cedd were two of four brothers – the others being Caelin and Cynibil – living in the mid-7th century, all of whom were ordained priest, and our two saints consecrated as bishops. They were Anglian boys, educated on Lindisfarne in the monastery founded by S. Aidan. Cedd was called with three other priests to evangelise the kingdom of Mercia, and then to work among the East Saxons. He was later consecrated bishop and founded churches, one of which, at least, at Bradwell-on-Sea, is still in use. About 654 he founded a monastery at Lastingham in Yorkshire, on the site of the church of S. Mary, and remained its abbot until his death from plague in 664, shortly after the Synod of Whitby. The monastery was later destroyed by Danish invaders. When Cedd died, on 26th October 664, his brother Chad succeeded him as abbot, but, soon after, he was appointed by Oswy, king of Northumbria, as Bishop of York in place of Wilfrid who had gone to Gaul for episcopal consecration.

When Wilfrid returned he retired to his monastery of Ripon. But in 669 Archbishop Theodore arrived in England and set about reorganizing the English Church. He deposed Chad, on account of a doubtful consecration, and restored Wilfrid to the see of York. Chad accepted the archbishop's decision with humility and retired to Lastingham. Soon afterwards Theodore gave him episcopal consecration and made him bishop of the Mercians. He served in that office for three years, during which he moved the see from Repton to the site of the present Lichfield Cathedral. He died on March 2nd 672: Bede records that he was at once venerated as a saint. His body was later reburied in the church of S. Peter, in a shrine *'in the shape of a little house, with an opening in the side, through which the devout can take out some of the dust, which they put into water and give to sick cattle or men to drink, by which means their ailment is quickly relieved'*.

It seems likely that, when the church of Lastingham was destroyed in 870, some at least of the relics of Saint Cedd were taken to join those of his brother Chad in Lichfield.

Like most other English shrines, the one at Lichfield was robbed and destroyed by order of King Henry VIII, but one of the prebendaries saved some of the relics, which survived throughout the penal period. They are now enshrined in the Cathedral of Saint Chad in Birmingham.