
ST. RICHARD OF CHICHESTER

Ever wonder where the prayer ... 'May I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day' comes from? Richard of Chichester, a bishop in the 13th century, wrote it. He began life as Richard de Wych of Droitwich, the son of a yeoman farmer. But Richard was a studious boy, and after helping his father on the farm for several years, made his way to Oxford, and later to Paris and Bologna to study canon law. In 1235 he returned to Oxford, and was soon appointed Chancellor, where he supported Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his struggles against King Henry III's misuse of

Church funds. After further study to become a priest, Richard was in due course made a bishop himself. He was greatly loved. He was charitable and accessible, both stern and merciful to sinners, generous to those stricken by famine, and a brilliant legislator of his diocese. He decreed that the sacraments were to be administered without payment, Mass celebrated in dignified conditions, the clergy to be chaste, to practise residence, and to wear clerical dress. The laity was obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days, and to know by heart the Hail Mary as well as the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

Richard was also prominent in preaching the Crusade, which he

saw as a call to reopen the Holy Land to pilgrims, not as a political expedition. He died at Dover on 3 April 1253. In art, Richard of Chichester is represented with a chalice at his feet, in memory of his having once dropped the chalice

prayer, now set to popular music, which runs in full:

“Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for me. O most merciful redeemer, friend



at Mass! One ancient English church is dedicated to him. And, of course, he is author of that famous

and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly, day by day.”