

February 3rd Diocesan Memorial of Ss Laurence, Dunstan and Theodore, bishops, religious

St Laurence accompanied St Augustine on the mission to England in 597 and was Augustine's first successor as Archbishop of Canterbury. Bede records his unsuccessful efforts to effect a unity of practice between the English and Celtic churches particularly with regard to the date on which Easter was kept. He also records Laurence's success in ensuring that the new English Church lived on into its second generation and beyond. Laurence died in 619.

Born to a noble family, St Dunstan was educated in part at Glastonbury Abbey. After a troubled time at court as a young man, he took vows, was ordained and entered Glastonbury as a hermit. At the age of 30 he was made Abbot and was responsible for the revival of monastic life both at Glastonbury and later, as Archbishop of Canterbury, throughout the land. His skills as a statesman led Dunstan back to an involvement in public life. However he met with the enmity of King Eadwig and was banished from court. He went into exile in Flanders for a year. Recalled by King Edgar, Dunstan was first made Bishop of Winchester, then of London and finally, in 960, Archbishop of Canterbury.

St Theodore was born at Tarsus in Cilicia. Educated in Athens he was living as a monk in Rome when asked by Pope Vitallian to go to England and serve as Archbishop of Canterbury. He was ordained at the age of 65. He arrived in England in 669, and embarked on a programme of national visitations, consolidating and establishing dioceses, promoting learning and establishing schools. He called the first National Synod of the English Church, held at Hertford in 673 and largely concerned with the good ordering of the Church, and a second at Hatfield in 680, concerned with establishing orthodoxy in faith. He died in 690.

Entrance Antiphon

I will give you shepherds after my own heart,
and they shall feed you on knowledge and sound teaching.

Opening Prayer

Almighty God,
you raised up
Saints Laurence, Dunstan, and Theodore
as Pastors of the Church.

Grant that through their prayers

we too may be careful for the teaching of the faith,
the building up of the communion of the Church,
and be found trustworthy ministers of the Gospel.

*We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.*

Prayer over the gifts

Lord God,
we have these gifts to offer
in honour of your saints,
Laurence, Dunstan and Theodore.
May these gifts bring us
your help for which we long.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Communion Antiphon

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Prayer after Communion

Lord our God,
you give us the holy body and blood
of your Son.

May the salvation we celebrate
be our undying hope.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.