

Reflection Wednesday Easter Week 3 St Anselm of Canterbury 2021

St Anselm (1033 - 1109) was born in Aosta, north Italy, and became a monk of Bec in Normandy, where he taught theology and devoted himself to the spiritual life. After some years as abbot, he succeeded his master Lanfranc as archbishop of Canterbury. His bitter disputes with the kings of England over the independence of the Church resulted in his twice being exiled. He died at Canterbury on 21 April 1109. He is remembered for his theological learning and writings, and for organising and reforming church life in England.

St Anselm numbers among many of the Archbishops of Canterbury who fearlessly led the Church in this country with conviction and determination. They not only united the Church but helped and inspired the faith of believers. It is only right that we invoke Anselm's help in defeating the virus that caused the pandemic.

Once again, God works in mysterious ways in the Acts. It was because of the persecution by Saul and others that the gospel spread much faster than it would have done otherwise. St Anselm reflected the same courage as Philip and the early preachers of the Gospel. The words of Jesus in the Gospel would have continually resounded in their ears. Like Jesus they went forth, not to do their own will but the will of the Father who sent them out through Jesus. Their confidence is based on knowing that they would be living in the love of the Father and of Jesus here on earth and that link would never be lost even in death. We pray for the same courage and commitment of those early gospel messengers and thank St Anselm for reminding us of their courage and faith.

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things,
with our brothers the animals to whom you gave the earth
as their home in common with us.

We remember with shame that we have exercised
the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty
so that the voice of the earth has been a groan of travail.

May we realize that they live not for us alone
but for themselves and for you,
and that they love the sweetness of life. **St. Basil the Great** (*Earth Day Tomorrow*)