

Reflection Monday 3rd week Easter St George 2023

St George (- c.303) was martyred at Lydda (now in Israel) about 303, during the persecution of Diocletian. Like so many saints of that period, the only fact that we can be certain of is his martyrdom. His cult spread quickly through both the East and the West, and the legend of St George and the Dragon only appeared some time afterwards. During the crusades, George was seen to personify the ideals of Christian chivalry, and he was adopted as the patron saint of several city states and countries, including England and Catalonia. King Richard I of England placed his crusading army under the protection of St George, and in 1222 his feast was proclaimed a holiday.

St George is considered to be the patron saint of knights, soldiers, scouts, fencers and archers, among others; he is also invoked against the plague and leprosy, and against venomous snakes.

Although we know very little about our patron saint, we do know he was executed for defending Christians and refusing to recant his faith. St George therefore calls us to be steadfast in our faith also. The story of St George and the dragon invites us to oppose evil in all its forms, be that greed, injustice, prejudice, lawlessness or whatever else. We should also help and protect the weak and vulnerable in our societies whomsoever and wherever they may be. Courage, honour, courtesy, justice, and a readiness to help the weak are the essence of chivalry and therefore something to which we may all aspire. We would do better to say we are called to love God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds and all our strength, and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

A tramp knocked on the door of the inn known as St. George and the Dragon. The landlady answered the door.

The tramp said, *“Could you give a poor man something to eat?”*

“No,” said the woman, slamming the door in his face.

He knocked again and said, *“Could I have a few words with **George?**”*