

= Oswald of Worcester =

Oswald of Worcester ( died 29 February 992 ) was Archbishop of York from 972 to his death in 992 . He was of Danish ancestry , but brought up by his uncle , Oda , who sent him to France to the abbey of Fleury to become a monk . After a number of years at Fleury , Oswald returned to England at the request of his uncle , who died before Oswald returned . With his uncle 's death , Oswald needed a patron and turned to another kinsman , Oskytel , who had recently become Archbishop of York . His activity for Oskytel attracted the notice of Archbishop Dunstan who had Oswald consecrated as Bishop of Worcester in 961 . In 972 , Oswald was promoted to the see of York , although he continued to hold Worcester also .

As bishop and archbishop , Oswald was a supporter and one of the leading promoters ( together with Æthelwold ) of Dunstan 's reforms of the church , including monastic reforms . Oswald founded a number of monasteries , including Ramsey Abbey , and reformed other seven , including Winchcombe in Gloucestershire and Pershore and Evesham in Worcestershire . Oswald also switched the cathedral chapter of Worcester from secular clergy to monks . While archbishop , he brought the scholar Abbo of Fleury to teach , and he spent two years in England , mostly at Ramsey . Oswald died in 992 , while washing the feet of the poor . A hagiographical life was written shortly after his death , and he was quickly hailed as a saint .

= = Early life = =

Oswald , of Danish parentage , was brought up by his uncle Oda , Archbishop of Canterbury , and was also related to Oskytel , later Archbishop of York . He was also related to the cniht Osulf , who received land while Oswald was bishop of Worcester . Oswald was instructed by a Frankish scholar Frithegod . He held the office of dean of Winchester , but he was sent by his uncle to France and entered the monastery of Fleury about 950 , where he was ordained in 959 . While at Fleury he met Osgar of Abingdon and Germanus of Winchester . The influence of Fleury was to be evident later in Oswald 's life , when it was one of the inspirations for the Regularis Concordia , the English code of monastic conduct agreed to in 970 .

= = Return to England = =

Oswald returned to England in 958 at the behest of his uncle , but Oda died before Oswald returned . Lacking a patron , Oswald turned to Oskytel , recently named Archbishop of York . It is possible that Oswald along with Oskytel travelled to Rome for Oskytel 's pallium , but this story is only contained in a 12th @-@ century Ramsey Abbey chronicle , so it may not be authentic . Even if he did not travel to Rome , Oswald was active in ecclesiastical affairs at York until Dunstan obtained Oswald 's appointment to the see , or bishopric , of Worcester . He was consecrated as Bishop of Worcester in 961 . Soon after his consecration , he persuaded Germanus to come back to England and made him head of a small religious community near Westbury @-@ on @-@ Trym . After the establishment of this group about 962 , Oswald grew worried that because the monastery was located on lands owned by the see of Worcester , his successors in the see might disrupt the community . He was offered the site of Ramsey Abbey in Huntingdonshire by Æthelwine , son of Æthelstan Half @-@ King , and Oswald established a monastery there about 971 that attracted most of the members of the community at Westbury . This foundation at Ramsey went on to become Ramsey Abbey . Ramsey was Oswald 's most famous foundation , with its church dedicated in 974 . Later , Oswald invited Abbo of Fleury to come and teach at Ramsey . Oswald directed the affairs of Ramsey Abbey until his death , when the dean Eadnoth became the first abbot . He gave a magnificent Bible to Ramsey , which was important enough to merit a mention in Oswald 's Life . Alongside the gift of the book , Oswald also contributed wall hangings and other textiles to the abbey .

Oswald supported Dunstan and Æthelwold , Bishop of Winchester , in their efforts to purify the Church from secularism . Aided by King Edgar , he took a prominent part in the revival of monastic

discipline along the precepts of the Rule of Saint Benedict . His methods differed from Æthelwold 's , who often violently ejected secular clergy from churches and replaced them with monks . Oswald also organised the estates of his see into administrative hundreds known as the Oswaldslow , which helped stabilise the ecclesiastical revenues . He constantly visited the monasteries he founded , and was long remembered as father of his people both as bishop and archbishop . It was Oswald who changed the cathedral chapter of Worcester from priests to monks , although the exact method that he employed is unclear . One tradition says that Oswald used a slow approach in building up a new church of monks next to the cathedral , allowing the cathedral 's priests to continue performing services in the cathedral until the monastic foundation was strong enough to take over the cathedral . Another tradition claims that , instead , Oswald expelled any of the clergy in the cathedral that would not give up their wives and replaced them with monks immediately . Oswald also reformed Winchcombe Abbey , along with the monasteries of Westbury Priory , Pershore Abbey , and Evesham Abbey . It is also possible that monasteries were established in Gloucester and Deerhurst , but evidence is lacking for their exact foundation dates .

= = Archbishop of York = =

In 972 Oswald was made Archbishop of York and journeyed to Rome to receive a pallium from Pope John XIII . It is possible that he also traveled on Edgar 's behalf to the court of the Emperor Otto I , and that these two journeys had been combined . He continued to hold the see of Worcester in addition to York . The holding of Worcester in addition to York became traditional for almost the next fifty years . Although it was uncanonical , it had many advantages for York in that it added a much richer diocese to their holdings , and one which was more peaceful as well . When Edgar died in 975 , Ælfhere , Ealdorman of Mercia , broke up many monastic communities , some of which were Oswald 's foundations . Ramsey , however , was not disturbed , probably due to the patronage of Æthelwine , Ealdorman of East Anglia , son of Æthelstan Half @-@ King . Ælfhere was a supporter of Ethelred the Unready , the son of Edgar 's third marriage , while Oswald supported the son of Edgar 's first marriage , Edward the Martyr , in the dispute over who would succeed King Edgar .

In 985 , Oswald invited Abbo of Fleury to come to Ramsey to help found the monastic school there . Abbo was at Ramsey from 985 to 987 , where he taught computus , or the methods for calculating Easter . It was also often used in trying to calculate the date of the Last Judgment . A surviving manuscript gives a list compiled by Oswald , setting forth estates that had been taken from the diocese of York .

= = Death and sainthood = =

Oswald died on 29 February 992 in the act of washing the feet of the poor at Worcester , as was his daily custom during Lent , and was buried in the Church of Saint Mary at Worcester . He promoted the education of the clergy and persuaded scholars to come from Fleury and teach in England . A Life of Oswald was written after his death , probably by Byrhtferth , a monk of Ramsey Abbey . Two manuscripts , a psalter ( Harley MS 2904 in the British Library ) and a pontifical ( MS 100 , part 2 from Sidney Sussex College of Cambridge University ) , probably belonged to Oswald and would have been used in his daily devotions .

Almost immediately after his death miracles were reported at his funeral and at his tomb . His remains were translated to a different burial spot in the cathedral ten years after his death . His feast day is celebrated on 28 February during common years and 29 February during leap years .