

= Cuthbert of Canterbury =

Cuthbert (died 26 October 760) was a medieval Anglo @-@ Saxon Archbishop of Canterbury in England . Prior to his elevation to Canterbury , he was abbot of a monastic house , and perhaps may have been Bishop of Hereford also , but evidence for his holding Hereford mainly dates from after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 . While Archbishop , he held church councils and built a new church in Canterbury . It was during Cuthbert 's archbishopric that the Diocese of York was raised to an archbishopric . Cuthbert died in 760 and was later regarded as a saint .

= = Early life and Hereford = =

Of noble birth , Cuthbert is first recorded as the Abbot of Lyminge , from where he was elevated to the See of Hereford in 736 . The identification of the Cuthbert who was Bishop of Hereford with the Cuthbert who became archbishop , however , comes from Florence of Worcester and other post @-@ Conquest sources . The contemporary record in the Anglo @-@ Saxon Chronicle says that Cuthbert was consecrated archbishop , where if he had been Bishop of Hereford , he would have been translated . No consecration is needed when a bishop is translated from one see to another . Given the nature of the sources , the identification of the bishop of Hereford with the archbishop of Canterbury , while likely , must not be regarded as proven .

If Cuthbert was at Hereford , he served in that capacity for four years before his elevation to the See of Canterbury in 740 . He is credited with the composition of an epitaph for the tomb of his three predecessors at Hereford . The cathedral church of the see may not even have been located at Hereford by Cuthbert 's time .

Whoever Cuthbert was prior to his election to Canterbury , he probably owed his selection as archbishop to the influence of Æthelbald , King of Mercia . A number of Mercians were appointed to Canterbury during the 730s and 740s , which suggests that Mercian authority was expanding into Kent .

= = Canterbury = =

Cuthbert was the recipient of a long letter from Boniface who complained about the lax morals of the clergy in the British Isles , and too much drinking of alcohol by the Anglo @-@ Saxon bishops . Cuthbert also sent letters to Lull who was Archbishop of Mainz and a native of England . During Cuthbert 's time as archbishop he no longer claimed authority over all of Britain , like his predecessor Theodore . Pope Gregory III in 735 had sent a pallium to the bishop of York , raising the see of York to the status of an archbishopric . As a sign of the enhanced status of York , Cuthbert only consecrated bishops south of the Humber and his synods were attended only by bishops from the south of England .

Cuthbert presided over the Council of Clovesho in 747 along with Æthelbald of Mercia . This gathering mandated that all clergy should explain the basic tenets of Christianity to the laity , as well as legislating on clerical dress , control of monasteries , and the behavior of the clergy . It also mandated that each diocese hold a synod to proclaim the decisions of the council . Cuthbert sent his deacon Cynebert to Pope Gregory III after the council with a report on the council and its resolutions . This action may have been taken in response to Boniface 's complaints about Cuthbert and Æthelbald to the papacy . The actions of the council were also gathered into a collection at Cuthbert 's command .

After the council , Cuthbert continued to correspond with Boniface up until Boniface 's martyrdom in 754 , and then sent condolences to Boniface 's successor . Cuthbert held a second synod in 758 , but nothing is known of any enactments it made . He also built the church of St. John the Baptist in Canterbury , which was destroyed by fire in 1067 . He was buried in his new church . The new church was located on the west side of the cathedral , and was used as a baptistery . The church also became a burial site for many of the archbishops , and later was used for trials by ordeal . There is no explicit contemporary reference that states that these uses were intended by Cuthbert ,

but the fact that the church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist argues strongly that Cuthbert at least intended the new building as a baptistery .

The burial practices of the archbishops did change after Cuthbert , but it is not clear whether this was intended by Cuthbert , as a Post-Conquest Canterbury cartulary has it , or due to other reasons , unconnected with Cuthbert . Although Sonia Hawkes argues that the change in burial customs , which extended over most of Britain , resulted from Cuthbert 's mandating burial in church yards , instead of outside the city limits as had been the custom previously . However , the main evidence for this theory is a 16th century tradition at Canterbury and the archaeological evidence of a change in burial patterns . Although a change did occur , the archaeological evidence does not give a reason why this change happened , and given the late date of the Canterbury tradition , the theory cannot be considered proven .

= = Death and legacy = =

Cuthbert died on 26 October 760 , and was later considered a saint with a feast day of 26 October . He was buried in his church of St. John , and was the first Archbishop of Canterbury that was not buried in St Augustine 's Abbey . His letters to the Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the European continent show him to have been highly educated .