

APRIL 3

If you remember the musical, “Godspell”, you likely recall the song “Day by Day”. The lyrics are an extract from a prayer written by the English bishop, Richard of Chichester, during the mid-13th century. We commemorate him on our Anglican calendar today.

Richard is an appropriate person for us to consider today for several reasons. First, he lived in very troubled political times which derailed his work and plans more than once. Second, there were during his life terrible outbreaks of famine and disease for which there was neither relief nor cure. Third, he persisted in his faith and faithfulness, bringing order out of uproar and decayed standards, and leaving the Church better than he found it.

We remember him now most often for two things. The first is the miracle of the unspilt chalice (on a day when he celebrated mass, he knocked over the consecrated cup of wine, but none spilled out—hence he is portrayed with a chalice). The second is the full text of the prayer associated with him, which I think you will find casts his commitment and devotion in terms of that great, undervalued motive for faithful Christian living: simple gratitude to God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and blessed us daily on our way in this troublous life.

Thanks be to thee, our Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits which thou hast given us,
for all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for us.
O, most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,
may we know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly. Amen.