

St. Vedast of Arras

Daily Saints / Saints

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Roman Martyrology: In Arras, in Gaul Belgium, St. Vedast, bishop, who was sent by St. Remigius, bishop of Reims, this devastated city , and there catechized to King Clovis , ruled that church for forty years and carried out an important work of evangelization among the pagans in the region (c . 540) .

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Saint Vedast left his own country very young, (which seems to have been in the west of France,) and led a holy life concealed from the world in the diocese of "Toul, where the bishop, charmed with his virtue, promoted him to the priesthood.

Clovis I., king of France, returning from his victory over the Alemanni, hastening to Rheims to receive baptism, desired at Toul some priest who might instruct and prepare him for that holy sacrament on the road. Vedast was presented to his majesty for this purpose. While he accompanied the king at the passage of the river Aisne, a blind man begging on the bridge besought the servant of God to restore him to his sight: the saint, divinely inspired, prayed, and made the sign of the cross on his eyes, and he immediately recovered it. The miracle confirmed the king in the faith, and moved several of his courtiers to embrace it.

St. Vedast assisted St. Remigius in converting the French, till that prelate consecrated him bishop of Arras, that he might re-establish the faith in that country. As he was entering that city in 499, he restored sight to a blind man, and cured one that was lame. These miracles excited the attention, and disposed the hearts of many infidels to a favorable reception of the gospel, which had been received "here when the Romans were masters of the country: but the ravages of the Vandals and the Alans having either dispersed or destroyed the Christians, Vedast could not discover the least footsteps of Christianity, save only in the memory of some old people, who showed him without the walls a poor ruinous church, where Christians used to hold their religious assemblies. He sighed to see the Lord's field so overgrown with bushes and brambles, and become the haunt of wild beasts; whereupon he made it his most earnest supplication to God, that he would in his mercy vouchsafe to restore his worship in that country. A national faith is so great a blessing, that we seldom find it granted a second time to those, who, by imitating the ingratitude of the Jews, have drawn upon themselves the like terrible chastisement. St. Vedast found the infidels stupid and obstinate; yet persevered, till by his patience, meekness, charity, and prayers, he triumphed over bigoted superstition and lust, and planted throughout that country the faith and holy maxims of Christ. The great diocese of Cambrai, which was extended beyond Brussels, was also committed to the care of this holy pastor, by St "also committed to the care of this holy pastor, by St. Remigius, in 510, and the two sees remained a long time united.

St. Vedast continued his labors almost forty years, and left his church flourishing in sanctity at his decease, on the 6th of February, in 539.

He was buried in the cathedral, which is dedicated to God, under the patronage {369} of the Blessed Virgin; but a hundred and twenty-eight years after, St. Aubertus, the seventh bishop, changed a little chapel which St. Vedast had built in honor of St. Peter, without the walls, into an abbey, and removed the relics of St. Vedast into this new church, leaving a small portion of them in the cathedral.

The great abbey of St. Vedast was finished by St. Vindicianus, successor to St. Aubertus, and most munificently endowed by king Theodoric or Thierry, who lies buried in the church with his wife Doda. Our ancestors had a particular devotion to St. Vedast, whom they called St. Foster, whence descends the family name of Foster, as Camden takes notice in his Remains. Alcuin has left us a standing monument of his extraordinary devotion to St. Vedast, not only by writing his life, but also by compiling an office and mass in his honor, for the use of his monastery at Arras, and by a letter to the monks of that house, in 769, in which he calls this saint his protector."