

place of rest. It is said that on her death, however, the Trentham nuns refused to deliver up her remains, locked them in a coffin in the crypt and placed a guard over them. One night the nuns guarding the body fell into a deep slumber and the locks yielded to the touch of people from Hanbury who arrived under cover of darkness to take Werburgh to her desired resting place in Hanbury. Her relics remained there as a place of pilgrimage until 875 when they were taken to Chester to safeguard them from the Danish invaders. At Chester the existing church was rededicated to Saints Werburgh and Oswald. This church was replaced by a Benedictine Abbey in 1093 and the abbey later became the Cathedral. In 1538, during the dissolution of the monasteries, the monastery was disbanded, the shrine to St Werburgh sacked and her relics scattered and destroyed. Many churches are dedicated to St Werburgh, the most local being in Chorlton-cum-Hardy. Perhaps the most interesting is that in Warburton, near Lymm, dating from the 13th century and one of fewer than 30 timber-framed churches in England. It is on the site of a previous Saxon church. The village of Warburton is recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Warburgtune', i.e. 'settlement or farmstead of Werburgh', whence comes the surname 'Warburton' and explains its prevalence in the North West of England.(1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhWq2ZS3XkE>

-Stephen S

Entrance Antiphon: He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

First Reading: Exodus 24: 3-8

Responsorial Psalm:115: Response: The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name.

Second Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-15

*Sequence*** (shorter form)*

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever. Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26

Memorial Acclamation: When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.



The Body and Blood of Christ, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection: Anglo-Saxon Saints (4) St. Werburgh:

St Werburgh was born in Stone, Staffordshire, in the mid-7th century. Her maternal grandmother was St Sexburga, sister of St

Ethedreda. Her mother, St. Ermenilda, was the daughter of the Christian King of Kent and her father the son of the pagan King of Mercia whom his wife converted into a Christian King. Werburgh, who was much sought in marriage, persuaded her father to allow her to enter the renowned Ely Abbey, founded by her great-aunt, St Ethedreda. Soon afterwards her father died and her mother followed her to Ely where in due course she became Abbess.

The new Mercian King, her uncle Ethelred (not the Unready) requested Werburgh to leave Ely and return to Mercia so as to bring all the convents in his kingdom up to the Ely standard of discipline and spiritual perfection. Werburgh agreed with reluctance since she treasured the solitude at Ely. Benefiting from the heritage of her family of saintly nuns and from having been trained at home by St Chad, she set to the task. She reformed the existing monasteries in Mercia and, with the King's endowment, founded new ones at Trentham and Hanbury (Staffs) and at Weedon (Northants). She became famous for her devotion, her simplicity and her humility. A story about the saint is that she asked a servant to lock in a farmhouse wild geese which were causing havoc in the cornfields. He did this but stole and ate one of them. When Werburgh returned she resurrected the goose. Dr Thomas Pickles of the University of Chester (1) argues that such stories are an important window into medieval society and the moral tensions between the value of the harvest and damage caused by creatures such as geese. In Chester Cathedral is a misericord, a statue and a stained glass window reflecting this story.

Werburgh died in about 700 AD. Apparently aware that her different communities would each try to lay claim to her relics, she chose Hanbury as her