

St Edmund of Abingdon

St Edmund was born in Abingdon around 1175; his father Reginald worked at Abingdon Abbey and presumably did well – he was nicknamed ‘Riche’. Edmund was well educated and taught at the University in Oxford. One day when he was walking in a meadow by the Cherwell, he had a vision of his mother Mabel, a pious woman who disapproved of her son teaching secular subjects. She drew three circles in his palm, telling him to study only the Trinity – God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In 1233 Edmund was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury; in 1240 he died at Pontigny, on pilgrimage to Rome. He was canonised in 1247, and the three circles became St Edmund’s emblem.¹

1. M. Cox, *The Story of Abingdon: Part II. Mediaeval Abingdon 1186 – 1556* (Abingdon: privately published, 1989) 25–29.