

## All Saints and All Souls 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November and Richard Hooker 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Celebrations for the feast days – the day on which they died – of martyrs go back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. After the Church had become established the emphasis gradually came to include all those deemed to display a special closeness to Christ, reflecting holiness in their lives and by the 8<sup>th</sup> c this was a regular part of the Church calendar. The argument that the dates for All Saints and All Souls were chosen because it was the time of a pagan festival in honour of the dead has not been generally accepted. In many countries it has become customary to visit the burial sites of family and friends on these days.

Around 1420 a young Florentine named Guido di Pietro joined the Dominican Order, and became Fra Giovanni. We refer to him now as Fra Angelico – the “Angelic Brother”. Before becoming a monk he was already established as a painter. Soon he was called upon to paint three panels for the chapel at Fiesole where he resided – a large panel for the High Altar and a panel for each side of the monks’ choir. These were sold by the monks in 1619, and the separate sections are now dispersed in different collections. The main section of the altarpiece depicts Mary with the baby Jesus surrounded by angels, with Saints in the large side panels – all standard iconographies. The predella panels – the small rectangular sections below the main sections – are, however, very innovative. In the centre is the triumphant Risen Christ surrounded by angels. The panels on each side represent what is usually referred to as “the Court of Heaven” – row upon row of saints against a gold ground. They include the “forerunners” – patriarchs and prophets from the Old Testament, Mary and the Apostles, martyrs, religious, and local saints – a beautifully painted assembly representing “all Saints”, with small square edge panels of members of the Dominican Order. These are now in the National Gallery in London. Notice how Fra Angelico has given individuality even to the Dominicans in their identical black and white robes.



Christ in Majesty





Forerunners, Martyrs and Virgins



Mary, Apostles and Saints



Dominicans



## Richard Hooker (1554 -1600) 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Richard Hooker was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1579 during a period of heightened controversy over the Book of Common Prayer, with attacks on it by several Puritan groups. Although he served some periods as a parish priest, Hooker's most important work was a large book titled "*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie*" published in sections between 1594 until after his death. Rather than being simply a polemical defence of the "middle way" Hooker's work is a reasoned and comprehensive defense of both the theology and the governance ("Politie") of what came to be called the Anglican Church. It is significant that his writing continues to be discussed in relationship to current issues – including the coronavirus pandemic.



1907 statue of Hooker on Exeter Cathedral Green, by Alfred Drury of Pentelicon marble from Greece.

Hooker's birthplace, Heavitree, is in Exeter. The quote from his writing on the base is

If the world should lose her qualities, if the celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, if nature should intermit her course and leave altogether the observations of her own laws; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, what shall become of man who sees not plainly that obedience unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world?

