

1

00:00:01.630 --> 00:00:05.400

William spent several years in Winchester, seemingly ready to

2

00:00:05.420 --> 00:00:09.300

embrace early retirement. But in 1153, three

3

00:00:09.340 --> 00:00:13.120

of William's most powerful opponents, Bernard of Clairvaux, Henry

4

00:00:13.160 --> 00:00:16.740

Murdac, and Pope Eugenius, died within weeks of each other.

5

00:00:17.280 --> 00:00:19.660

His way back to power was suddenly clear.

6

00:00:20.620 --> 00:00:24.440

William travelled to Rome to plead his case directly to the new pope.

7

00:00:25.220 --> 00:00:28.740

At the same time, England's long civil war came to an end.

8

00:00:30.250 --> 00:00:34.220

A new future was emerging under Henry II, the son of

9

00:00:34.280 --> 00:00:35.160

Empress Matilda.

10

00:00:36.220 --> 00:00:39.680

Finally, William was reinstated as Archbishop of York.

11

00:00:40.720 --> 00:00:44.180

On the 9th of May 1154, he returned to the city.

12

00:00:44.580 --> 00:00:48.470

Crowds lined Ouse Bridge to welcome him, but the celebration turned

13

00:00:48.500 --> 00:00:52.100

to disaster. The wooden bridge collapsed under the weight of

14

00:00:52.140 --> 00:00:54.210

people, throwing many into the river.

15

00:00:54.860 --> 00:00:58.160

William prayed, and miraculously, no one was injured.

16

00:00:58.540 --> 00:01:00.880

This was later regarded as his first miracle.

17

00:01:02.360 --> 00:01:04.380

Yet his triumph would be short-lived.

18

00:01:05.520 --> 00:01:09.100

Just three weeks later, shortly after celebrating mass,

19

00:01:09.640 --> 00:01:13.220

William fell ill and died a few days later.

20

00:01:13.300 --> 00:01:17.200

Almost immediately, there were rumours that William had been killed

21

00:01:17.240 --> 00:01:21.160

by his enemies. One rival, Osbert the Archdeacon, was

22

00:01:21.220 --> 00:01:23.740

even accused of poisoning William's chalice.

23

00:01:24.740 --> 00:01:26.700

But Osbert's case never came to trial.

24

00:01:26.980 --> 00:01:30.940

William's untimely death remains an unsolved medieval mystery.

25

00:01:32.440 --> 00:01:34.380

William was buried in the Minster.

26

00:01:35.320 --> 00:01:39.220

Not long afterwards, miracles began to be reported at his tomb.

27

00:01:40.200 --> 00:01:44.100

Word spread, and soon people from paupers to kings travelled

28

00:01:44.180 --> 00:01:47.520

from across England to see William, searching for hope,

29

00:01:48.100 --> 00:01:52.080

healing, and help. Many of these miracles are depicted

30

00:01:52.120 --> 00:01:55.660

in the incredible St William Window, which is perhaps the largest

31

00:01:55.720 --> 00:01:58.800

retelling of a saint's story in stained glass.

32

00:01:58.840 --> 00:02:02.260

Its panels testify to the many healing narratives that were

33

00:02:02.300 --> 00:02:05.000

reported to have happened at St William's shrines.

34

00:02:06.600 --> 00:02:09.120

William was canonised in 1226.

35

00:02:10.180 --> 00:02:13.820

The following centuries saw a vast outpouring of devotion to him,

36

00:02:14.240 --> 00:02:17.020

echoes of which can still be traced in the modern Minster.

37

00:02:18.080 --> 00:02:21.660

St William's resting place became one of the most significant sites for

38

00:02:21.740 --> 00:02:25.600

pilgrimage in this country. His two shrines, one in the Nave

39

00:02:25.680 --> 00:02:29.360

and one in the Quire, were incredible examples of medieval

40

00:02:29.460 --> 00:02:30.329

stone carving.

41

00:02:31.240 --> 00:02:34.440

At the heart of the nave shrine was St William's sarcophagus.

42

00:02:34.880 --> 00:02:38.609

Today, we can still see where the top has been worn smooth by the

43

00:02:38.640 --> 00:02:40.620

countless hands reaching out in prayer.

44

00:02:40.920 --> 00:02:44.840

The sarcophagus now lies in the Minster's crypt, a site of pilgrimage

45

00:02:44.900 --> 00:02:48.560

still. William's life was one of controversy.

46

00:02:48.840 --> 00:02:52.660

His death is an enduring mystery, but his legacy

47

00:02:52.740 --> 00:02:55.280

transformed York and York Minster forever.