

## **ROBERT GROSSETESTE 1168 – 1253**

**“He was a man of learning and an inspiration to scholars, a wise administrator, whilst a true shepherd of his flock ever concerned to lead them to Christ in whose service he strove to temper justice and mercy”**

- Born in Suffolk to a family of poor means
- Early education in Lincoln Cathedral as evidenced by him being a **WITNESS** in a Charter drawn up around 1186 when HUGH was Bishop of Lincoln
- Education continued at Oxford where by 1214 he is recognized as **MASTER OF SCHOOLS** ( modern day Vice-Chancellor)
- Outstanding Medieval Scholar and prolific writer in **PHILOSOPHY-THEOLOGY-BIBLICAL COMMENTARY-SCIENCE**
- Recognised by eminent historians of the 13<sup>th</sup> century as  
**“ THE GREATEST OXFORD MAN IN THIS AGE PROBABLY THE GREATEST OF ANY AGE”**
- Most learned man of his generation with regard to the new learning arriving from the East with the writings of **ARISTOTLE** and **GREAT ARAB SCHOLARS** such as **AL KINDI**.
- Can be regarded as the **FIRST MODERN SCIENTIST**
- First person to discover how a **RAINBOW is formed**; to understand the concept of **REFRACTION**; to understand how all realities in our Universe can be expressed **MATHEMATICALLY** thus leading to **UNIVERSAL LAWS** and **MODERN SCIENCE**
- 1220 – 1235 he wrote a **SERIES of SCIENTIFIC PAPERS**
  - >**DE SPHERE – An introductory text on Astronomy**
  - >**DE IRIDE – On the Rainbow**
  - >**DE COLORE - On Colour**

> **DE LINEIS, ANGULIS ET FIGURIS – On Mathematical reasoning in the Natural Sciences**

> **DE LUCE – On the “ Metaphysics of Light” ( the original work of Cosmogony in the Latin West )**

- Recognised by **ROGER BACON**, great 13<sup>th</sup> Century English Philosopher, as being the leading scientific scholar of his age.

**“ THE LORD ROBERT ALONE, ON ACCOUNT OF HIS LONG LIFE AND THE WONDERFUL METHODS HE PURSUED, EXCELLED ALL MEN IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENCE”**

- 1235 Robert was appointed Bishop of Lincoln aged 67
- Within first year issued **TWO LETTERS** to the Archdeacons of the diocese pointing out undesirable practices which had developed in many parishes leading to **DRUNKENNESS AND A LACK OF REVERENCE FOR SACRED PLACES**
- 1238 he issued a series of **ORDERS** with regard to his **VISITATIONS (Ofsted Inspections!!)** which were resented by many of the clergy
- 1240 1243 Robert issued a series of **CONSTITUTIONS** which stated , amongst other things, that the clergy had to:
  - > **Teach the 10 Commandments and the 7 Deadly Sins**
  - > **Use simple language to expound the Creed**
  - > **Use English in their teaching rather than Latin**
  - > **Be warned against drunkenness and the sins of the flesh**
  - > **Be reminded of their vow of celibacy**

**OBJECT WAS TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF THE CLERGY IN PREACHING, TEACHING AND MORAL CONDUCT**

- These actions caused some conflict with the clergy – best illustrated in Robert’s relationship with the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral
- 1235 he issued a letter to the Chapter **FORDIDDING** celebration of “Feast of Fools” on 1<sup>st</sup> January each year because it had become an

**IRREVERENT AND LICENTIOUS ORGY – HATEFUL TO GOD – this was NOT POPULAR in Lincoln**

- 1236-1238 Robert encountered **SERIOUS OPPOSITION** from the Dean and Chapter when he proposed to conduct one of his VISITATIONS on them
- 1239 Dean and Chapter **BANNED** Robert from entering Lincoln Cathedral - a Ban which lasted **6 YEARS**
- 1239 Robert **SUSPENDED** the Dean, the Precentor and the Sub Dean
- 1245 at the **COUNCIL OF LYON Pope INNOCENT IV** gave a **JUDGEMENT** in Robert's favour.
- Relations between Robert and the Dean and Chapter became less antagonistic and he was allowed back into the Cathedral, although harmony was not totally restored.
- No matter what the bitterness , there is no doubt that Robert was an excellent administrator and improved the quality of the clergy and the religious experience of his FLOCK and proved a “ **TRUE SHEPHERD TO HIS FLOCK**”
- He had the nickname of **ROBERT “ GREATHEAD “ GROSSESTE** on account of his immense learning and great intellect. He could be hot headed and even a little headstrong at times thus leading to conflict
- After he died, Lincoln Chapter tried three times to have him declared a Saint but **FAILED** each time
- Robert died at the grand old age of 85 which for the 13<sup>th</sup> century was remarkable. Some historians put his long life down to his Scientific knowledge of medicine and nutrition.

**UNDOUBTEDLY DESERVING OF HAVING A UNIVERSITY – A PLACE OF LEARNING- NAMED AFTER HIM.**