

Archbishop of Canterbury blesses remains of King Richard III during reburial ceremony at Leicester Cathedral.

Archbishop of Canterbury leading prayers at Richard III reinterment

(Picture: Matt Short/Leicester Cathedral)

The Archbishop of Canterbury led prayers and the blessing at the reinterment of King Richard III at Leicester Cathedral today.

Archbishop Justin Welby blessed the remains of Richard III during a special ceremony attended by Royal Family members, Bishop of Leicester Tim Stevens, senior ecumenical clergy and civic leaders, among others.

During the sombre service the Archbishop censed Richard III's coffin and blessed it with holy water. He then led the prayers, before sprinkling the coffin with soil from Fotheringhay, Middleham and Bosworth after it was lowered into the ground.

Archbishop of Canterbury leading prayers at Richard III reinterment from above

(Picture: Will Johnston/Leicester Cathedral)

Richard III's mortal remains were received at the Cathedral on Sunday night during a service of Compline, having been carried from the University of Leicester by the team who discovered them.

In the medieval rite of reburial, before reinterment the person's remains were placed in the church while its usual pattern of worship continued.

This same pattern was followed in the Cathedral this week: the remains were in repose until today, when they were reinterred during a special service based on Morning Prayer.

The Archbishop leading a service at Leicester Cathedral

(Picture: Matt Short/Leicester Cathedral)

Richard III, the last Plantagenet king of England, died aged 32 in 1485 during the Battle of Bosworth.

His skeleton was found in 2012, in an old friary beneath a car park, by a team from the University of Leicester in collaboration with the Richard III Society and Leicester City Council.

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