

## Preface

This book complements *Alcuin – His Life and Legacy* and completes my study of Alcuin's contribution to the formation of Catholic Christianity in Western Europe at the end of the eighth century. I am grateful to Dr Rowan Williams who, as an old friend and as Archbishop of Canterbury, has always showed me every kindness and encouragement, and who has generously contributed a foreword to this book. This volume is dedicated, with great gratitude and respect, to Colin Fraser, my close friend and colleague, an outstanding Classics teacher and for a long time a senior master at Marlborough College; and also to my many pupils there, whose company I have always valued and the memory of whom is a very happy one. I have found teaching them to be a real stimulus to my studies and writing: their friendship and questions have been a great inspiration and help to me in my work as a priest and scholar over many fruitful years as Chaplain of Marlborough College.

It is most fortunate that Alcuin's principal theological work *De Fide* has now been published, edited by E. Knibbs and E.A. Matter in a full critical edition and it is good to know that other theological writings by him are in the process of preparation for future publication. I hope that this study, along with these critical editions, will demonstrate Alcuin's seminal importance for early medieval theology, and that in due time he will be formally recognised as a Doctor of the Church alongside his great mentor and inspiration – Bede.

At a time of considerable confusion in the Anglican Communion and challenge for the Roman Catholic Church in much of Western society, the foundation laid by Alcuin and others as disciples of Christ and of Gregory the Great remains to be rediscovered, affirmed and appropriated for the unity, life and effective witness of the Christian Church now and in the years ahead.

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*Feast of St Dunstan & Memorial of Alcuin*  
*19 May 2012 – at Marlborough College.*