

Dear Friend

I could not pass up the opportunity to talk about St David as today is the day we commemorate the Patron Saint of Wales. In addition, my mother was Welsh and so that country is obviously close to me personally!

Evidence concerning David (Dewi) dates from the late eleventh century and refers to his father being a chieftain from Ceredigion and his mother being St Non.

Facts concerning his life are few, but legends abound and it is virtually impossible to disentangle them. One of the few certain facts concerns his presence at the Synod of Brefi in 560, although the account of the eloquent speech he gave is in all probability fiction. David became Patron Saint of Wales in the twelfth century. He was a representative of the Celtic Christian tradition, generally a non-hierarchical movement, with a distinct spirituality, whose bishops had freedom to roam across borders.

He is said to have founded up to ten monasteries which followed Egyptian monastic tradition involving a very rigorous regime. The monasteries were highly influential on both Welsh and Irish monasticism. David devoted himself to mercy and acts of charity, and was recorded as taking cold baths and eating only bread and water.

He became Bishop of Menevia – legend says that he was consecrated in Jerusalem while on pilgrimage – which later was re-named after him as St David's. He died in 601.

The commemoration of David is a reminder of the contribution of the Celtic tradition to the heritage of the Church, a tradition which has often been overshadowed by an historical bias to Rome, and a greater wealth of written material surviving from Canterbury.

Extract from *Saints on Earth: A biographical companion to Common Worship* by John H Darch and Stuart K Burns

This gives me the opportunity to remind you that Morning Prayer on Tuesdays on Zoom is based on the Northumbria service of Morning Prayer which follows the Celtic tradition. Do try it out, especially if you have not listened before.

So, thanking our Lord for the example of the Saints, let us pray:

May the guiding hands of God be on my shoulders,
may the presence of the Holy Spirit be on my head,
may the sign of Christ be on my forehead,
may the voice of the Holy Spirit be in my ears,
may the smell of the Holy Spirit be in my nose,
may the sight of the company of heaven be in my eyes,
may the speech of the company of heaven be in my mouth,
may the work of the church of God be in my hands,
may the serving of God and my neighbour be in my feet,
may God make my heart his home,
and may I belong to God, my Father, completely.

(Source of this version from the original Irish language: *Prayers from the Ancient Celtic Church*, © 2018, Paul C. Stratman)