

Living the Word: 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18

In common with most, if not all of the early Christians, Paul expected the second coming of Christ to happen soon. Here he consoles the Thessalonians who are worried about the fate of their loved ones before the return of the Lord. He tells them they are with the risen Jesus and that the living and the dead will be reunited in the final revelation of the kingdom. The Thessalonians are facing what we all experience, the loss of a loved one. Grief is never straightforward. Paul's message to them and to us is clear. He doesn't tell them and us NOT to grieve. That is alright and normal in such circumstances. What he states unequivocally is 'Do not grieve like those who have no hope. Our confidence rests in Jesus who has conquered death on the Cross and is alive through the Resurrection. There lies our true hope now and for the future. Following Paul's pastoral advice to the Thessalonians: 'We are to comfort one another with these thoughts.'

Saints & Heroes: St Hilda (614-680) 17th November

St Hilda, co-patron of The Society, founded the Abbey at Whitby, and was a remarkable woman of power in the 7th century. A member of the Northumbrian royal family, she was baptized in 627 with King Edwin and the whole Northumbrian court, by Saint Paulinus, the first Bishop of York. Following Edwin's death in 633 she fled Northumbria with Queen Ethelburga. Eventually (Bede says in 647) having decided to become a nun (perhaps having been widowed) she was persuaded by Saint Aidan, the Bishop and Abbot of Lindisfarne, to return to Northumbria and enter the first royal monastery there. In 657 she founded the Abbey of Whitby as its first Abbess. Whitby was a 'double monastery', in which women and men lived separately, under the authority of Hilda as Abbess, but worshipped together. It had a monastic school, five of whose pupils became bishops. It was at Hilda's abbey that the Synod of Whitby was held in 664. Saint Hilda died on 17th November 680. The Oxford Dictionary of Saints comments: "Hilda enjoyed great personal prestige; not only did religious and learned men value her wisdom, but kings, rulers, and common people would ask her advice. She was an excellent example of how in the Anglo-Saxon church an able woman could attain to great influence and authority without, however, there ever being a question of her being ordained."

12th November 2023

Remembrance Sunday

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary
Time



In Jewish weddings in New Testament times, the groom took the bride from her father's house to his own, but only when family negotiations were finished. This explains the delay in this case and why the guests were left waiting in today's Gospel. The foolish bridesmaids went off to find oil, hoping to find a late-night merchant perhaps, so they were too late to welcome the couple. The message here is to be ready because there are always things to do that could never have been predicted. Today's Gospel also reminds us not everything is instantaneous and underlines the importance of waiting. We need to focus on the here and now because it is important to live in the present. That's where we will find God. Whether the groom arrives early or late does not matter if He is always part of our everyday life, through prayer and sacrament.

Today's Gospel: St. Matthew 25:1-13

Prayers to Remember

O GOD the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all; so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Unity from the Book of Common Prayer (1662)