

PRAYING WITH THE CELTIC SAINTS



ST CUTHBERT

Bishop of Lindisfarne

(Celebrated on March 20th)

We light this candle because Christ is the Light no darkness can extinguish



In the name of the Holy Father.
In the name of the Victor Son.
In the name of the Praying Spirit.
In the name of the Three-in-One.

King of heaven, who called Cuthbert from tending sheep to be a shepherd of the people, help us, inspired by his example, to win the godless, to heal the sick, to guard unity and to storm heaven's gates, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Loving God, holy and immortal:
You are with us now in prayer.

God of the hills, God of the outposts:
You are with us now in prayer.

God of the streets, God of the people:
You are with us now in prayer.

**Open our minds to your Truth, our lips to your praise and our hearts to
your love.
Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let you stumble – he who watches over you will not sleep.

The protector of Israel never slumbers or sleeps.

**The Lord will guard you; he is by your side to protect you.
The sun will not hurt you by day, nor the moon by night.
The Lord will protect you from all danger; he will keep you safe.
He will protect you as you come and go, now and forever.**

Luke 9 : 1-6

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

THE LIFE OF ST CUTHBERT



St Cuthbert was born in 634 and died on 20th March 687 in Northumbria. He encountered the Christian faith early and from a young age, he experienced strange encounters with God. Aged 16, while he was a shepherd on the night watch, he saw angels in the sky, ascending and descending. The following day, he discovered that Aidan, the Bishop of Lindisfarne, had died. This was to prove

prophetic, as Cuthbert eventually became the Bishop of Lindisfarne. Before this, he joined the monastery at Melrose and was recognised as someone very devout and close to God.

Like St Hilda, he was very disappointed at the outcome of the Council of Whitby in 664, when the decision was taken to adopt the ways of the Roman Church, rather than the Celtic. Unlike Bishop Colman (the then Bishop of Lindisfarne), who returned to Ireland with his monks, Cuthbert stayed and worked for unity between the 2 churches. He was known for his skill and passion for unity.

He was a great evangelist – his greatest desire being to ‘storm the gates of heaven’ and dethrone all evil powers. He visited every remote village and hamlet, however inaccessible – mostly on foot – to explain the Christian faith and bring people to deep and heartfelt conversion. He also brought healing to many. He was a great teacher and often took a novice monk with him on his travels and taught, as they walked on their mission. He knew all the psalms and St John’s Gospel by heart. He would carry with him his beloved Gospel of St John in a leather satchel. (The beloved saint of the Celtic Church was St John, St Peter being favoured by the Roman Church.) He didn’t take any provisions with him, trusting in God and the hospitality of folk along the way.

The most famous story of St Cuthbert is an appropriate one for this season of Lent : ‘Food in the Wilderness’. Remembering that Jesus told Satan that ‘we do not live by bread (physical food) alone’, Cuthbert set off with his young companion across the bleak moorlands (wilderness) and the boy soon became anxious about their lack of food. Cuthbert reassured him that God would provide. At that moment, a magnificent eagle appeared in the distant sky. Sensing that God wished to encourage the boy directly, Cuthbert pointed out the bird. ‘God is able to provide for us today, even through the ministry of that eagle’, he told the boy.

They continued their journey. Suddenly, they saw the eagle again. It flew towards them with something in its mouth and dropped a large salmon almost at their feet. The boy took up the fish and ran back excitedly to the saint. The eagle watched them from the riverbank. ‘Why have you not given our fisherman his share?’ asked Cuthbert. The boy understood. He quickly cut the fish in two and returned half to the riverbank. Inspired by this provision, Cuthbert and the boy were able to continue to the next village, carrying their precious meal. In a friendly household, they cooked their fish and all shared the wonderful food. After the meal, Cuthbert brought out his Gospel of St John and fed them with the Word of God. He explained that each Gospel had a sign and St John’s was the eagle. So it was that God provided for Cuthbert, the boy and their new friends. All ate and all were satisfied.

REFLECTION

**In a time of distress and hardship, it's easy to forget God's provision for us.
Let's reflect silently for a few minutes, as we give thanks for all God's
blessings, especially our physical and spiritual food.**

OUR PRAYERS

Food in the Wilderness

**When our way is weary
and the going is tough;**

**When life is dreary
and things get rough;**

**When the spirits weaken
and the day turns dark;**

**When sorrows deepen
and pain finds its mark;**

**Strengthen us, keep us true,
save us Lord, as you can do.**

**Lord, when troubles oppress;
feed us in the wilderness. Amen.**



**Dear Lord our God, help us to see Christ in others;
help us to receive Christ from others;
help us to share Christ with others;
help us to bring Christ to others.
Help us to see that in Him, we live and move
and have our being;
that we dwell in Him and He dwells in us.
Amen.**

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

We hold before God our brothers and sisters who live in a perpetual wilderness : those for whom war, poverty, homelessness, disease and death are a daily reality.

We name the places we carry on our hearts.

We pray for those living in fear, in hardship, sickness and deep distress due to this pandemic.

We name those in special need at this time.

We remember all those who are lonely and now ever more isolated and we pray the comfort of your presence in the loving kindness of others.

We give thanks and pray God's protection for those who care for the sick and vulnerable at home, in hospitals, care homes and hospices.

We offer prayers for Christ's Church, here in Mount's Bay, in Cornwall and throughout the world. May we be a beacon of light in these dark times, finding new ways to bring the love and peace of our Lord to those in need.

We pray for all who are suffering, whether bodily, mentally or spiritually. Those known to us, who are in need of healing, we name before God.

We remember those who have died and ask the comfort of God's promises for those who mourn.

Lord, make us a channel of your blessing that we, like St Cuthbert, might play our part in bringing your Word to the world and your healing to those in need. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING

**May God bless us in our sleep with rest,
in our dreams with vision,
in our waking with a calm mind,
and in our soul with the friendship of the Holy Spirit,
this day and every day.**

Amen