

1st March 2021 Feast of St. David (520 - 589), Patron of Wales

“Be joyful and keep the faith. Keep doing those little things you have seen and heard from me.”

These are traditionally accepted as the last words of St. David to his community before he died. St. David was an abbot and bishop at Mynyw, now known as “St. David’s”. (The name of the present Catholic diocese of Menevia is based on the original Welsh place name.) St. David created a strict monastic rule and the monks who were formed by him then evangelised South Wales and travelled to Cornwall, Brittany and Ireland. At St David’s death, St Kentigern, who founded St Asaph’s in North Wales, saw in a vision St. David being joyfully welcomed into the presence of his Lord in Heaven. St. David’s holy relics have been found hidden in St David’s Cathedral, where they are carefully preserved. He was canonized in 1123 by Pope Callistus II. (Information from www.universalis.com)

The Church honours the saints because they are men and women who, by the grace of God, have overcome the challenges we all face in our daily lives and have been able to be the salt of the earth and light to the world. In today’s Gospel Jesus instructs His disciples to be like good salt that has not lost its flavour. The addition of a little salt adds depth to food. In times gone by it also served as a preservative, so salt was a necessity, not a luxury.

The image in the Gospel of lighting a lamp and then hiding it, is on the one hand rather amusing but on the other hand an important message for us. At our Baptism we were filled with the light of Christ. This is symbolised by the lighting of a baptismal candle from the Paschal candle. Each one of us carry that light of Christ wherever we go, and the saints are those that allow that light to be seen by other people. One of the most beautiful things we do at the Easter vigil is to spread the light from the paschal candle around the Church. First of all it is just one flame then two, then four and so on. The light grows but the flames do not diminish. The church that began in darkness is now full of light.

As baptised Christians we are called to spread the light of Christ wherever we go. The world can be a very dark place at the moment. However, if we heed St. David’s final words, we can spread the light of Christ without our own light being diminished. Our hope is in Christ who leads us to His Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Let’s not hide that hope under a bush, but wear it with a smile and a kindly good deed.

St. David, pray for us.