

## St Swithun's Day – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Today is the feast of St Swithun – a 9<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Saxon bishop (Winchester). His example of piety and zeal for the faith make him a good role model to look up to and live by. I also read that he was known for a passion for building new churches and restoring old ones. Churches are important to us – something we've learned through the denial of access to them we've experienced lately – and there are many examples of beautiful places of worship that stir the soul and inspire the mind: soaring spires, intricate stained glass, mosaics and art depicting the life of Christ and the stories of the Old Testament. Collective worship is an important integral part of what it means to live the faith. This collective worship is so well suited to the physical surroundings of a church – a building dedicated to worship and the glory of God.

A church however is *just* a building and it is the living stones that are the people of God who really make the Church. Having stood in an empty church shortly before lockdown was lifted, but for the priest and a server, it is easy to see that churches need people just as people need churches.

So on this St Swithun's Day, make a promise to yourself that you will return to church, even if just for private prayer, and be nourished by the surroundings and know that the Holy Church is there for you.