

## St David

1 3 15

Almighty God,  
who called your servant, David,  
to be a faithful and wise steward of your mysteries  
for the people of Wales:  
in your mercy grant that  
following his purity of life and zeal for the gospel of Christ,  
we may with him receive the crown of eternal life.

Our text may be found in Deuteronomy chapter 31 and verse 20:

**'land flowing with milk and honey'**

Today, March 1<sup>st</sup>, is St David's Day, a candidate for the first day of Spring ! David, Dewi Sant, patron saint of Wales, monk and sixth century Bishop of Menevia (now known as St David's) and who died either in 601 or 589AD. Of David, like many Celtic saints of the period, not a lot for certain is known. He is said to have been an exceptionally powerful preacher. He personally loved and encouraged his monks to live a life of austerity - no meat to eat, no wine or beer to drink - earning him the nickname of 'Aquaticus'. Mostly, he is associated with South Wales but, according to legend, he may even have come here to Brittany. Apparently, two pilgrimages to the cathedral at St David's is spiritually the equivalent of one to Rome !

Today, when we remember one Celtic patron saint, when we look forward to 17<sup>th</sup> March and to another associated with this land, St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, I'd like to pose a question: 'Are you happy in this land?'

Now I'm guessing that your answer is going to be yes. If it isn't, then perhaps a better question would be 'Why stay?' But if your answer is yes, I like it here, then my question is going to be 'Why?' Most of us were not born here but we've chosen to live here. So what is it about this place that is so attractive?

The country here is France, the land here is Breton. If we're confident, we can speak French in the streets or in the shops or on the phone and then we can speak English with our friends as and when. Breton is probably a mystery to most of us.

But there is something very attractive about coming from the outside to a place that is both warm and welcoming. Given the fact that this is a Celtic land and in the west of the British Isles, the Cornish, the Welsh, the Scottish and the Irish all share common roots with the Bretons, then we might well feel some connection here. Given the influence of the Normans both here in France and back in England, then we might well feel comfortable here.

But what truly unites us with this place is a shared culture and a shared set of values. Essentially, this is a Christian land, made Christian by the wave of missionaries, many of them Celtic monks from our islands like St Malo, St Briac, St Méen, and St Suliac, who were Welsh, and St Benoit, who was Cornish. They

spread the gospel here so that those who were their brothers and sisters in blood might also be their brothers and sisters in Christ.

If being here in Brittany is like being in the Promised Land, a **land flowing with milk and honey**, then let me suggest that this is because we are connected here with the God we worship in this place. If we are truly happy in this place, may I say the fundamental reason is that here we feel loved and cherished by God our Father and that we can mirror that love to the people we daily meet here.

Love of God and love of Man informed the Celtic saints like St David and those Celtic missionary saints who brought the Gospel here to Brittany. Then let my prayer for us be that in this place the love of God and the love of Man may in turn inform and connect us.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist*

*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

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G: Sermons 31 : St David

