

Saints & Heroes: St Hilda (614-680)

17th or 19th November

St Hilda, co-patron of The Society, was baptised 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, having decided to become a nun, 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 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. 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."

Heavenly Father, bless the bishops, clergy and people of The Society. Bind us together in love and faith. Renew us in service and witness. And by your Holy Spirit, guide our future and make plain your purposes. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Wilfrid, pray for us.

St Hilda, pray for us.



Sunday 16th Nov. 2025
2nd Sunday before Advent
or 33rd in Ordinary Time
Gospel: Luke 21: 5 – 19



St Luke foretells the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, which was the most permanent structure imaginable: vast in scale, dazzling in appearance, lofty in position. It would have been hard to conceive of a structure more abiding. We are reminded of what alone is permanent, what alone abides unchanging - God. We invest things with permanence: empires, nations, political ideologies, philosophies. But they will all pass away. Even the world itself is transitory. Only God is eternal.

Collect for the day:

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive: have compassion on the souls of thy servants and handmaids, and grant unto them the remission of all their sins; that, being delivered from the bonds of this our mortal nature, they may be found worthy to pass into everlasting life; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.