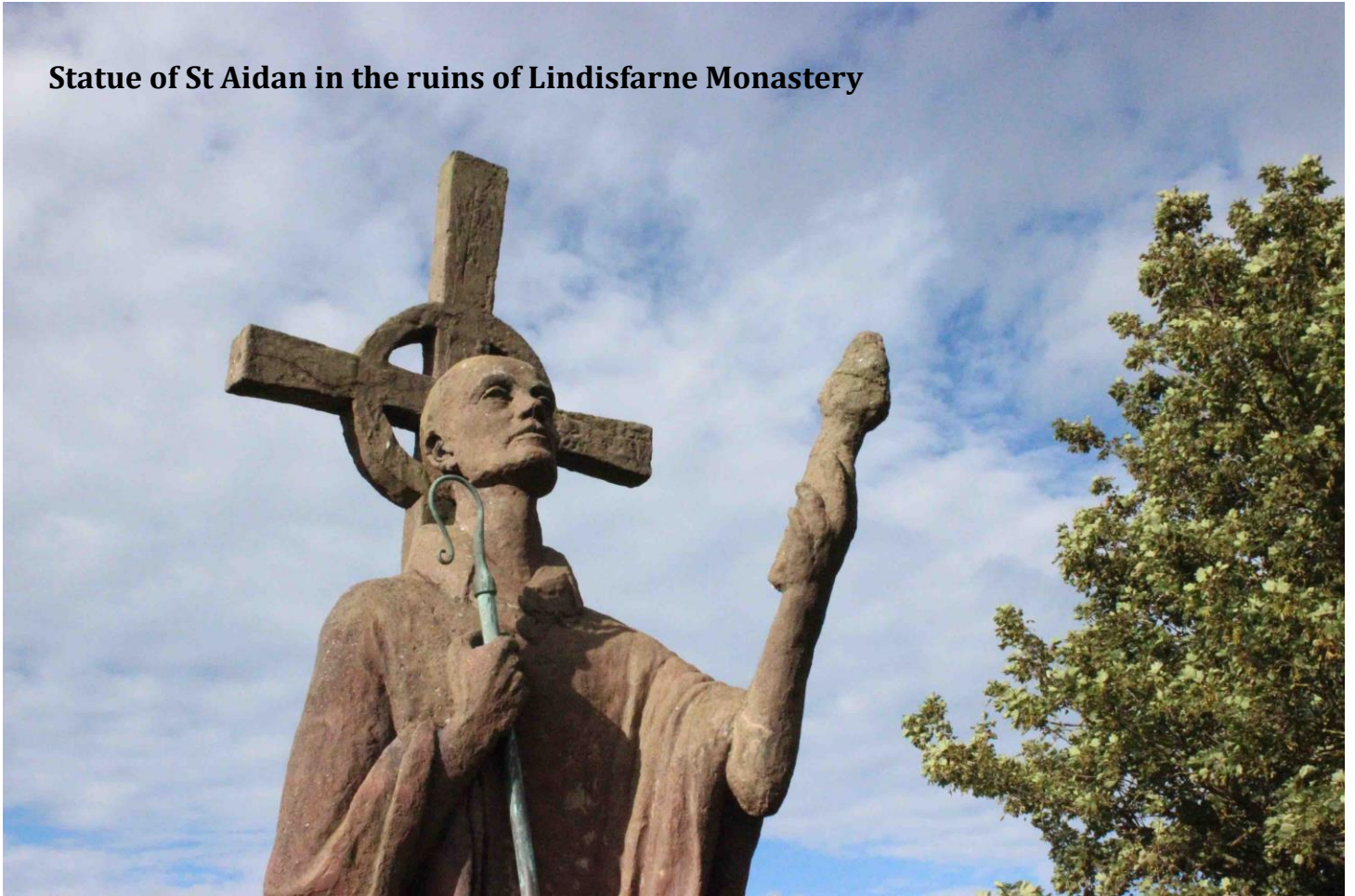


**Thursday 31 August 2023**

# St Aidan of Lindisfarne

**Statue of St Aidan in the ruins of Lindisfarne Monastery**



Aidan was one of St Columba's monks from the monastery of Iona. He was sent as a missionary to Northumbria at the request of King Oswald, who later became his friend and interpreter.

Aidan was consecrated Bishop of Lindisfarne in 635 and worked closely with Oswald and helped train the priests. From the island of Lindisfarne he was able to combine a monastic lifestyle with missionary journeys to the mainland where he won popular support through his concern for the poor and passion for preaching. These efforts greatly strengthened the Church beyond the boundaries of Northumbria.

Aidan died on this day in the year 651.

**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

**Prayers of intercession** © St Aidan

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,  
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say** (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

### The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

### The Preparation

**All Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All** Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen.

## **The Gloria**

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

**All** Glory be to God in Heaven,  
Songs of joy and peace we bring,  
Thankful hearts and voices raising,  
To creation's Lord we sing.  
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,  
Glory be to God our King:  
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,  
Bore the load of this world's sin;  
Only Son of God the Father,  
You have brought us peace within.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,  
Now your glorious reign begin:  
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,  
You we praise with one accord.  
None in heav'n or earth is like you,  
Only you are Christ the Lord.  
With the Father and the Spirit,  
Ever worshipped and adored:  
Ever worshipped and adored.**

### **The Collect for St Aidan**

Everlasting God,  
you sent the gentle bishop Aidan  
to proclaim the gospel in this land:  
grant us to live as he taught  
in simplicity, humility, and love for the poor;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.' Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; all who were incensed against him shall come to him and be ashamed. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory.

*Isaiah 45:22-25*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel. For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them.

*1 Corinthians 9:16-19*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 All creation worships you**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'

*John 13:16-20*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

People often say, often while apologising for not coming to Church, 'I'm not religious.' It usually comes as a shock when I reply, 'well, nor am I.' I say this because *true Christianity is not a religion but a faith*. The distinction is so important it's a matter of (spiritual) life and death.

This quest for moral perfection often starts with The Law. Moses received the Ten Commandments as well as a wider array of regulations, rules about worship, and so on, which became ever more complex. In the centuries between Moses and Jesus, the Law grew to become a vast code that dictated everything including the treatment of illnesses, which foods to eat, moral behaviour ... the list became huge.

As systems of law evolve, soon only a small number of people understand it or can administer it. And it's those who compile, interpret, and regulate a system that become its elite. This overseeing gives them power so the scope for corruption is obvious.

St Paul gave the name 'justification by works' to this approach for reaching moral perfection. He condemns it completely because it was not the right answer to the question of being the disciples that God wants. It was wrong because no one can obey the Law completely: everyone has done something wrong, everyone is guilty, everyone feels dreadful, and therefore everyone is condemned. This system does not work and ends up by growing out of hand and needing replacement.

St Paul got really uptight when he found the system did not work. Read chapter 8 of Romans to see how he felt: 'That which I want to do I do not do, and that which I do not do I find myself doing it. What a wretched man I am!' Oddly, many people in this position *invent* rules for themselves when they find that externally applied rules do not work. For example, John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement and a spiritual giant: as a young man, he resolved to say a collect every quarter hour! He wanted to give God everything but instead only gave Him religion.

Psychologists of religion say this behaviour is quite normal: people who take the demands of the scriptures seriously become wrapped up in wanting to do the right things at the right times. It's a normal phase of religious growth ... so normal, indeed, that there's maybe a problem with those who have never felt this way. Perhaps they have not yet reached this level of seriousness.

When we realise that works alone do not work, we need to put something else in their place. Jesus explained that what God really wants is a relationship with Him rather than a series of rules. God does not want a 'servile robot'. Rather, he wants us to be His intimate disciples. We show ourselves as true Christians when we stop living as though rules are everything (thereby living out a religion) but, instead, start to live in a way that has God at its core. This different system is called

'faith'. The change of mindset is so profound that it feels like a second conversion. Jesus called it being 'born again.' St Paul calls it, 'justification by faith.'

The transition from religion to faith can be difficult to achieve. St Paul found it incredibly hard. By his own account, he trained under the very best of the teachers in Jerusalem (including a man named Gamaliel) and became very zealous. He did everything to become a better Jew. He took his religion so seriously that he sounds both obsessive and neurotic.

In fact, this transition can be dangerous for a soul. At this point, things could go in several different directions: without prayer and spiritual direction, those seeking God through works can become disturbed, and might even need psychiatric help. But more normally, they backslide. They fall away from their beliefs and say it's simply not possible to live such a life. The demands are too great. Religion doesn't work. This happens especially in the branches of Christianity that over-emphasise the rules. Someone walking this route will justify their falling away by saying they couldn't keep it up: 'I'm simply not good enough ... I'm only human.'

If no falling away occurs, the person starts to desire God with an ever-greater intensity. They may feel desperate if they do not find Him. That desperation can hurt. St Paul, for example, took it out on those around him—particularly Christians—perhaps because they seemed to live in a spiritual state he didn't, but wanted badly.

But we can push beyond this rule-bound way of living with the help of God, and with prayer—not just ours but of the Church community around us. Eventually, God becomes visible and apparent to the soul in a new and wholly spiritual way through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It often requires a crisis of faith, perhaps one last cry of desperate longing for God. St Paul saw a vision on the road to Damascus and soon received a different experience of the Holy Spirit. John Wesley had a much gentler encounter with the Holy Spirit. But from that point onwards, religion dies away and true faith takes over. There is no need to live by rules alone, although clearly rules will be obeyed—after all, this soul will not tolerate anything less than holiness. Think now of the mature St Paul, the one who could say, 'Not I but the Lord Jesus lives in me' or 'I am a new creation.'

Many people say they are not religious. Good. Christians are not called to be followers of a religion but to have a relationship with the living Lord Jesus. They are called to be people who have a faith in God and live it. They respond to God as a reaction to a first-hand experience rather than a learnt response to rules. Isaiah is saying much the same in today's first reading when he says, 'Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.' This message should bring us great comfort: we are to serve God and rather than an endless series of rules.

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## Prayers of intercession

Leave me alone with God as much as may be.  
As the tide draws the waters close in upon the shore,  
Make me an island, set apart,  
alone with you, God, holy to you.

Then with the turning of the tide  
prepare me to carry your presence to the busy world beyond,  
the world that rushes in on me  
till the waters come again and fold me back to you.

*Prayers of St Aidan*

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**



## The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 I am a new creation**

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below:

## The Dismissal

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,  
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;  
and the blessing of God the Almighty:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4 In Christ alone**

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,  
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses  
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.  
The glorious company of apostles praise you.  
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.  
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.  
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.  
In communion with angels and archangels,  
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,  
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,  
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with Aidan and all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All**     **Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All**     **Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All**     **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Holy Father,  
who gathered us here around the table of your Son  
to share this meal with the whole household of God:  
in that new world where you reveal  
the fullness of your peace,  
gather people of every race and language  
to share with your servant Aidan and all your saints  
in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.