

March 1: St. David of Wales (d. 589?)

David is the patron saint of Wales and perhaps the most famous of British saints. Ironically, we have little reliable information about him.

It is known that he became a priest, engaged in missionary work and founded many monasteries, including his principal abbey in South-west Wales. Many stories and legends sprang up about David and his Welsh monks. Their austerity was extreme. They worked in silence without the help of animals to till the soil. Their food was limited to bread, vegetables and water.

In about the year 550, David attended a synod where his eloquence impressed his fellow monks to such a degree that he was elected primate of the region. The episcopal see was moved to Mynyw, where he had his monastery (now called St. David's). He ruled his diocese until he had reached a very old age. His last words to his monks and subjects were: "Be joyful, brothers and sisters. Keep your faith, and do the little things that you have seen and heard with me."

St. David is pictured standing on a mound with a dove on his shoulder. The legend is that once while he was preaching a dove descended to his shoulder and the earth rose to lift him high above the people so that he could be heard. Over 50 churches in South Wales were dedicated to him in pre-Reformation days.

Were we restricted to hard manual labour and a diet of bread, vegetables and water, most of us would find little reason to rejoice. Yet joy is what David urged on his brothers as he lay dying. Perhaps he could say that to them—and to us—because he lived in and nurtured a constant awareness of God's nearness. For, as someone once said, "Joy is the infallible sign of God's presence." May his intercession bless us with the same awareness!

MARCH 2021

Prayer from Taizé

The exchange with God becomes real for us in prayer; by his Holy Spirit, God comes to dwell within us. By his word and by the sacraments, Christ gives himself to us. In return, we can surrender everything to him.

Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- Let us pray that we can console all who are afraid and show them God is with us, our refuge and our strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.
- Let us pray that we will reach out to people in need with kindness, patience and persistence so that we may help them experience God's love and grace.
- Let us pray that, as we share the message of hope that God brings through Lent, others will respond to that reminder and join us as we prepare for his ultimate sacrifice.
- Let us pray that, on our Lent journey, our parish family may revitalise its connection with God through prayer and with each other through care and support.

Some tweets by Pope Francis

- To pray is to light a candle in the darkness. Prayer rouses us from the tepidness of a purely horizontal existence, lifts our gaze to higher things, makes us attuned to the Lord, allows God to be close to us; it frees us from our solitude and gives us hope.
- It is striking that the Lord spent most of his time on Earth living an ordinary life, without standing out. It is a beautiful message that reveals the greatness of daily life, the importance in God's eyes of every gesture and moment of life, even the most simple.
- The poor facilitate our access to Heaven. Even now, they are the treasure of the Church. They reveal to us the riches that never grow old, that unite heaven and earth, for which life is truly worth living: the riches of love.

March 27: Blessed Francis Faà di Bruno (1825-1888)

Francis, the last of 12 children, was born in northern Italy into an aristocratic family. He lived at a particularly turbulent time in history, when anti-Catholic and anti-papal sentiments were especially strong.

After being trained as a military officer, Francis was spotted by King Victor Emmanuel II, who was impressed with the young man's character and learning. Invited by the king to tutor his two young sons, Francis agreed and prepared himself with additional studies. But with the role of the Church in education being a sticking point for many, the king was forced to withdraw his offer to the openly Catholic Francis and, instead, find a tutor more suitable to the secular state.

Francis soon left army life behind and pursued doctoral studies in Paris in mathematics and astronomy; he also showed a special interest in religion and asceticism. Despite his commitment to the scholarly life, Francis put much of his energy into charitable activities. He founded the Society of St. Zita for maids and domestic servants, later expanding it to include unmarried mothers, among others. He helped establish hostels for the elderly and poor. He even oversaw the construction of a church in Turin that was dedicated to the memory of Italian soldiers who had lost their lives in the struggle over the unification of Italy.

Wishing to broaden and deepen his commitment to the poor, Francis, then well into adulthood, studied for the priesthood. But first he had to obtain the support of Pope Pius IX to counteract the opposition to his own archbishop's difficulty with late vocations. Francis was ordained at the age of 51.

As a priest, he continued his good works, sharing his inheritance as well as his energy. He established yet another hostel, this time for prostitutes. He died in Turin on March 27, 1888, and was beatified 100 years later.

25 March - Feast of the Annunciation

Why me?

Did Mary ask, *Why me, O God, Why me?*

While Joseph watched her, doubtfully,

And neighbours whispered wicked words

Behind self-righteous hands

Concealing bitter lips.

Did Joseph ask, *Why me, O God, Why me?*

When Jesus wailed his new-born cry

In the dirty stable cave.

Did Jesus ask, *Why me, O God, Why me?*

When hanging in his innocence

On malefactor's cross.

So often, in our pain and loneliness

We ask, *Why me, O God, Why me?*

But then forget in times of happiness,

To ask again, *Why me, O God, O why*

Are you so very good to me?

(Diana Good)

Come Lord,

do not smile and say you are already with us.

Millions do not know you, and to us who do

what is the difference?

What is the point of your presence if our lives do

not alter?

Change our lives, shatter our complacency,

make your word our life's purpose.

Take away the quietness of a clear conscience,

press us uncomfortably, for only thus that other

peace is made.

(Dom Helder Camara)