

In the Morning Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020
Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680

Welcome

Opening prayer

O God of peace, by whose grace the abbess Hilda was endowed with gifts of justice, prudence, and strength to rule as a wise mother over the nuns and monks of her household, and to become a trusted and reconciling friend to leaders of the Church: Give us the grace to recognize and accept the varied gifts you bestow on men and women, that our common life may be enriched and your gracious will be done; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Dwelling in the Word

Ephesians 4:1-6 (NRSV)

I, Paul, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

As you hear the passage being read, what word or phrase is God calling you to notice?
As you hear the passage read a second time, what might God be calling you to try on at this time?

Following your silent meditation after the second reading, please type your word or phrase into the Chat if you would like to share it. The officiant will invite all of us into a quiet time for a few minutes to prayerfully read and reflect on the words offered in the Chat.

The officiant will end this time of silent prayer with The Lord's Prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Zoom call

At end of zoom call

Closing Prayer

Prayer for a Pandemic. 4. May 2020 by Joan Chittister

God of light
and God of mystery,
give us the faith to see you
in the grey dimness
of this time.

Give us the heart to hear,
in the silence of the sick,
the call to care for those
in pain.

Give us the courage
to find you
where you do not now
appear to be.

Give us the trust it takes
to make our way
through this uncertainty,
this fear,
this seemingly irredeemable sense of limitless loss
to the recognition
of the relentless hope
that each seasonal cycle
of life
confirms in us.

You who made all things
for our good and our growth
show us, too, now
the power of darkness
so that we might see newly—
beyond the ephemeral—

to what are really
the gloriously important things
in life.
Amen

Blessing

Hilda of Whitby
From Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018

“Hilda’s career falls into two equal parts,” says the Venerable Bede, “for she spent thirty-three years nobly in secular habit, while she dedicated an equal number of years still more nobly to the Lord, in the monastic life.”

Hilda, born in 614, was the grandniece of King Edwin. She was instructed by Paulinus (one of the companions of Augustine of Canterbury) in the doctrines of Christianity in preparation for her baptism at the age of thirteen. She lived at the King’s court for twenty years and then decided to enter the monastic life. She had hoped to join the convent of Chelles in Gaul, but Bishop Aidan was so impressed by her holiness of life that he recalled her to her home country, in East Anglia, to live in a small monastic settlement.

One year after her return, she was appointed Abbess of Hartlepool. There, Hilda established the rule of life that she had been taught by Paulinus and Aidan. She became renowned for her wisdom, her eagerness for learning, and her devotion to God’s service.

Some years later, she founded the abbey at Whitby, where both nuns and monks lived in strict obedience to Hilda’s rule of justice, devotion, chastity, peace, and charity. Known for her prudence and good sense, Hilda was sought out by kings and other public figures for advice and counsel. Several of her monks became bishops, and at least one pursued further studies in Rome. She encouraged the poet Caedmon, a servant at Whitby, to become a monk and to continue his inspired writing. All who knew her, Bede remarks, called her “mother.”

In 663, Whitby was the site of the famous synod convened to decide divisive questions involved in the differing traditions of Celtic Christians and the followers of Roman order. Hilda favored the Celtic position, but, when the Roman position prevailed, she was obedient to the synod’s decision. Hilda died on November 17th, 680, surrounded by her nuns and monks, whom, in her last hour, she urged to preserve the gospel of peace.