Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne

A statue of Saint Aidan at Lindisfarne in Northumberland

So who was Saint Aidan?

Saint Aidan is the patron saint of the Saint Aidan's Church in Remuera, Auckland. Each year we celebrate St Aidan's day in August as near as possible to the actual date of his death, which is 31 August.

Aidan, our patron saint, was an Irish monk from Iona who went to Northumbria in Northern England in the year 635 in response to the invitation of King Oswald, (who had become a Christian during exile in Iona), and had regained the throne of Northumbria from Mercian invaders. He looked to Iona for help in the work of conversion: first a severe monk was sent, who soon returned complaining that the Saxons were uncivilized and unteachable; he was replaced by Aidan, who enjoyed a reputation for discretion and prudence. Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne, close to the royal palace of Bamburgh. Aidan made his headquarters on the island and was appointed Bishop of Lindisfarne, where he founded the monastery and began his outreach.

The picture below is part of the ruins of the monastery on Lindisfarne (Holy Island) in Northumberland

Aidan founded churches and monasteries, liberated Anglo-Saxon slave-boys and educated them for the Church, and encouraged monastic practices among the laity, such as fasting and meditation on the Scriptures. He himself lived in poverty and detachment, which enabled him to reprove the wealthy and powerful when necessary. Aidan's gentleness, Celtic asceticism, and concern for the poor drew people to Christ. By his own example, he taught the value of prayer, the need to meditate on the scriptures, and the value of education. Aidan's life provides us with a wonderful example of devotion to God and a passion for sharing the good news with others in word and deed.

As we gather each year on Saint Aidan's Day, we celebrate and we give thanks for all those who have gone before us at Saint Aidan's in Remuera and celebrate the community we now enjoy. We take inspiration from our patron saint and would do well to follow the example of his life's work as we look to the future of God's mission and ministry in and from this church.

A Celtic Cross at Lindisfarne

Lindisfarne (Holy Island)

Lindisfarne Priory is on the Lindisfarne Island (now referred to as Holy Island) off the east coast of Northumberland which can only be driven to at low tide. It is claimed to be one of the holiest Anglo-Saxon sites in Britain. The remains of the monastery are still there and several members of our congregation have been there. There is a lovely village there with a museum,

and where one can shop and dine. On the island, there is a Catholic church that bears the name Saint Aidan. On the mainland in Bamburgh, there is an Anglican Saint Aidan church. This church is built on the site of Aidan's original church in Bamburgh. Only a beam survives the original church, and it is in fact, the beam Aidan was leaning against when he died. Aidan was buried at Lindisfarne in the cemetery. Later his bones were translated into the church. Some of these were removed to Ireland by Colman, bishop of Lindisfarne when he retired to Ireland after the Synod of Whitby.

The picture below is Saint Aidan Anglican Church in Bamburgh, Northumberland, built on the site of the original church where Saint Aidan died.