

# Treasures Untold

## A Pilgrimage in Ripon Cathedral

**This is one of a number of guided quiet meditations for use in the Cathedral, each with a different theme.**

**Please feel free to take the leaflet with you when you leave.**

## **About the Cathedral**

The Cathedral website can be found at [www.riponcathedral.org.uk](http://www.riponcathedral.org.uk).

Cathedral Office Telephone No: 01765 603462.

**Find us on Facebook** - Ripon Cathedral's Facebook page is 'liked' by over 2100 people and regularly reaches an audience of more than 10,000 people each week. To find out more, or even join in the conversation about life at Ripon Cathedral, simply search for Ripon Cathedral on Facebook and click 'Like'. You can also join more than 4,500 people who follow @riponcathedral on Twitter – <https://twitter.com/riponcathedral>.



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## The Chancel

Here in the Chancel of this glorious Cathedral of St Peter and St Wilfrid, we are surrounded by wonderful treasures in stone and glass, metal and wood. We sit in a treasure house containing gems of architecture, priceless wood-carving, exquisite sculpture, and the earliest surviving Crypt in England, built by St Wilfrid around AD672.

Beautiful and awe-inspiring as these are, they are but an expression, a symbol, of even greater treasure – the wonder and the mystery of the promises and gifts of God, given to his people.

These overflowing gifts of love, and peace, and wisdom, have been given in the face of enmity, and fear, and turmoil. Above all, he gave the gift of himself, God-with-us, in the gift of his Son, and of his Holy Spirit. His are gifts of Light, a light that has shone in many a time of darkness, for God was present, God was active.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, it was the Venerable Bede who perceived and recorded God's action in the darkness some call the Dark Ages – and told us the stories of these pilgrim light-bearers who reflected God's grace. and truth, faithfully handing on His light down the generations to our own time.

There are many saints depicted here in the Cathedral, and their rich stories are full of grace, 'a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, declaring the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light'.

Holy God,  
like the pilgrims of old,  
we pray that as we make this pilgrimage,  
we may carry our treasures and sorrows from past and  
present,  
as well as our hopes and prayers for the future,  
and lay them before you in this holy place.  
We ask that we may listen for your voice,  
inspiring us through the promises you have given to your  
saints

in every generation,  
that we too may receive the treasures of darkness,  
the hidden riches of secret places,  
and know that you, the Lord, call us by name. **Amen**

*Please now go to the Holy Spirit Chapel to the right of the Chancel.*

## **The Holy Spirit Chapel**

This Chapel of the Holy Spirit is a place set apart, just as the Upper Room became a place set apart, for the disciples after the trauma of the Crucifixion and the bewildering joy of the Resurrection. The vivid metal flames at the Chapel entrance denote the life-changing disturbance of the coming of the Holy Spirit, empowering, enabling and encouraging. Meanwhile, the quiet presence of the Holy Sacrament draws us into this place of prayer, of waiting, and listening for the whispers of God, and the gift of Himself through the coming of the Holy Spirit. In this place, as Jeremy Taylor wrote, 'There should be in the soul, halls of space, avenues of leisure and high porticoes of silence, where God waits'.

O God the holy source, the spring, the fountain of  
goodness,  
for you we wait.  
In the darkness, whatever our darkness,  
and the darkness of our world,  
We believe that you are here, you are with us,  
still creating, still redeeming, still inspiring, just as in the  
beginning.  
O Lord, for you we wait. **Amen**

*Cross the Chancel to enter the Chapel of St Peter.*

## St Peter's Chapel

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'

*John 21:15*

Love draws people. It draws us to a special place. It draws us together. That is especially true of a holy place... a place of love and compassion, solace and strength, a place of peace. This is one of the special qualities – the treasures - of a holy place, that it is peace-giving, not just peaceful and quiet, but a place which actively seeks to make bridges, to build understanding, to offer sanctuary, to develop relationships based on trust and reality, forgiveness and hope, acceptance of the past and faith for the future. Making peace is costly. It comes from generosity of spirit, breadth of mind and imagination.

Where charity and love are, God is there.  
The love of Christ has gathered us into one.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in him,  
let us fear and love the living God, and  
love with a sincere heart. **Amen**

*Return to the Chancel and move westwards through the arch in the screen. Turn right into the North Transept and then to St Wilfrid's Chapel.*

## St Wilfrid's Chapel

The Wilfrid Window

The window in the Wilfrid Chapel, dating from 1977, is a sign of how much the memory of Wilfrid fills this cathedral.

At the centre stands the Bishop and beneath him are scenes from his

life. We see how flames appeared at his birth, testifying to his holiness, how as a young boy he was sent by the queen of Northumbria to study at the monastery of Lindisfarne, and how, when he was a missionary in Sussex, he taught the people to fish in time of famine.

In the lower part of the widow we also see Saints Peter and Andrew. Wilfrid's church in Ripon was dedicated to Peter and the one he built at Hexham was dedicated to Andrew. Stephen of Ripon, who knew Wilfrid well, tells us that these were the two saints whom he specially loved.

On each side of Wilfrid are the symbols of the four evangelists, on whose gospel texts he based his whole life. Not long after Wilfrid's death, his biographer, Stephen of Ripon, wrote, 'We looked on our holy bishop as a great man and a faithful servant of Christ, but our Lord, by the miracles he worked on his behalf, made it known that he was no less than a saint living with Him in glory'.

We thank you for this place, built to your glory. Following the example of Wilfrid and all the saints of those early days, may we worship and adore the true and living God, and be faithful witnesses to Christ, who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

*Move westwards down the North Aisle and turn south to the front of the Nave, in front of the pulpit.*

## **The Pulpit**

Around the pulpit, installed in 1913, we see the bronze figures of two men, St Chad of Lichfield and St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne and two women, St Hild of Whitby and St Etheldreda of Ely. All were very influential leaders in the Anglo-Saxon Church. Each was known to Wilfrid and each had a profound impact on their contemporaries.

St Chad was appointed Bishop of the Northumbrians when Bishop Wilfrid was abroad. When Wilfrid returned, he assisted in Chad's appointment as the first Bishop of Lichfield.

St Cuthbert was one of the monks from Melrose Abbey who first established a monastery in Ripon in the 650s. However, this Celtic community was soon replaced by one led by Wilfrid which followed the traditions of Rome. Cuthbert later became Bishop of Lindisfarne. He is still a much loved figure in the North-East.

St Hild was abbess of Whitby where, in AD 664 a Church Council decided that the Northumbrian church would follow the traditions of Rome rather than of the Celtic churches. Wilfrid was the chief spokesman on the Roman side.

St Etheldreda was a princess of East Anglia. She married the Northumbrian king in AD 660 but later left him to become a nun. In AD 673 she founded the monastery of Ely, where Ely Cathedral now stands. Wilfrid was her spiritual adviser.

In the Anglo Saxon period, saints were important as role models and as people whose closeness to God could help and strengthen others.

Even today, they inspire us as examples of God at work in human lives.

We can draw inspiration from Chad's humility, Cuthbert's steadfast commitment to prayer, Hild's wisdom and Etheldreda's dedication.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

*Galatians 5: 22-3*

Loving God, you are the source of holiness and the giver of all good things.

May we who are strangers and pilgrims here on earth be welcomed with all your saints

to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom.

We make our prayer in the name of Jesus, the Lord. **Amen**

*Cross the Nave and turn left to the entrance to the Crypt.*

## **The Crypt**

This is the Crypt built by Wilfrid in about AD 672. In building the crypt, Wilfrid may have wanted to evoke one of the holiest places of all, the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, marking the place where Christ was believed to have risen from the dead. He may also have wanted to call to mind the stone chambers of the early catacombs and to bring people close to the holy relics of the saints which had been reverently placed within the crypt.

In this ancient and holy place where generations have prayed, we too remember that our life is clothed with Christ, in God.

*Descend the passage to the Crypt with care. If you are unable to visit the Crypt, there is a touch-screen virtual tour.*

*Stand in the Crypt for a moment and imagine the empty tomb of Jesus, the same tomb that Mary Magdalene saw on that first Easter Morning.*

*Now proceed through the passage which will take you into the Quire. When you have arrived in the Quire please sit on one of the chairs towards the High Altar.*

## **Bede's Prayer**

Christ is the morning star who, when the night of this world is past, brings to his saints the promise of the light of life and opens everlasting day. Alleluia. Amen

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory. **Amen**

*Please remain in the Sanctuary for the final location*

## The Sanctuary

Finally we finish in the Sanctuary, the place where many have sought and found rest and peace.

During the pilgrimage through the Cathedral we have been surrounded by saints and generations of believers before us.

In this timeless, holy place may we meet with God and acknowledge that the treasures here in this cathedral are treasures, priceless gifts of God to us his children.

You are the peace of all things calm,  
You are the place to hide from harm,  
You are the light that shines in dark,  
You are the heart's eternal spark,  
You are the door that's open wide,  
You are the guest who waits inside,  
You are the stranger at the door,  
You are the calling of the poor.  
You are my Lord and with me still,  
You are my love, keep me from ill.  
You are the light, the truth, the way  
You are my Saviour this very day.  
Christ, in our coming,  
and in our leaving,  
the Door and the Keeper;  
For us and our dear ones,  
This day and every day,

Our Pilgrimage ends with a blessing:

The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace. Amen

*Numbers 6: 24-27*

Stephen of Ripon, whose *Life of Wilfrid* was completed shortly after Wilfrid's death in 710, tells us that Wilfrid ordered an illuminated copy of the Gospels to be made for the dedication of his new stone basilica. He also tells us that Wilfrid had a case made for the Gospels, 'skilfully made entirely from gold and set with the most precious gems'.

The Ripon Jewel may be part of the decoration of a book box or book cover such as Stephen describes. Although the inset stones or glass are mostly missing, the cross-shape within the circle is clear, with the circle itself being a symbol of eternity.



### The Ripon Jewel

Found in the general area of the Anglo-Saxon monastery in 1976, and datable, by its style, to the late seventh or eighth century.

The Jewel is on display in the Cathedral Library.

