

Reflection Saturday Week 25 Our Lady of Walsingham 2022

The lady of the manor of Walsingham in Norfolk, Richeldis de Faverches, was instructed in a vision of the Virgin Mary to build an exact replica of the house in Nazareth in which the Annunciation had taken place. The vision supposedly occurred in 1061, though the shrine was more likely constructed a hundred years later. This feast celebrates the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Walsingham, a significant pilgrimage centre of medieval times. The original house was destroyed at the Reformation, but the Shrine was re-established at King's Lynn in 1897 and the Slipper Chapel became the National Shrine in 1943. The Shrine was raised to the rank of Minor Basilica by Pope Francis in 2015.

God sent his Spirit into our hearts, says St Paul. We received this Spirit in Baptism when we became *Temples of the Holy Spirit*. Mary became pregnant with Jesus through the Holy Spirit and gave birth to him. In baptism we are given the mission to bring Jesus, the word of God, the greatest expression of God's love and mercy, to all the people and situations in which we find ourselves. Queen Elizabeth was not great because of her royal heritage, if anything that made her life much harder. She chose, because of her faith and her baptism, to let the Holy Spirit work through her. She would never claim to have been perfect but the model of leadership, of service, just like Jesus who was also of royal heritage, has been acclaimed by leaders across the world. We have clear evidence of her dedicated and selfless service. It is also a reflection of the selfless and dedicated service of Mary to God through her Son which she continues down the ages and will continue into the future.

Our Lady of Walsingham, pray for us.