

### **Wednesday Week 28 St Wilfrid 2022**

Wilfrid was born in Northumbria in 634. He was educated in the monastery of Lindisfarne. He travelled to Rome with Benet Biscop. This wider, continental experience had a profound effect on him. He became a keen supporter of the traditions of the Roman Church as opposed to the prevailing 'Celtic' customs introduced by St Aidan. He was appointed Abbot of Ripon and was ordained a priest.

After the death of Aidan, the differing customs of the Romans and the Celts caused a bitter dispute. In 664 a Synod was held in Whitby, in the monastery of St Hilda, to settle the question and Wilfrid successfully argued for the abolition of the Celtic traditions and the imposition of the church discipline of Rome.

Within twelve months he was appointed Bishop of Lindisfarne but chose to be consecrated in Paris, and was absent in France for so long St Chad, one of Aidan's pupils, was consecrated bishop in his place. Wilfrid had to appeal to St Theodore of Canterbury, his metropolitan, before he was able to take possession of his diocese. Establishing himself in York, he encountered much hostility from the secular rulers but also by men of great sanctity like St John of Beverley. A dispute arose in 678 when Theodore attempted to divide the large, unwieldy diocese of Lindisfarne/York in two. Wilfrid objected to the division and appealed to Rome against his archbishop. Not only was he successful, but he became the first Englishman to take a law suit to the Roman courts.

His return to Northumberland was much less successful. He was imprisoned by the King of Northumbria, eventually escaping to Sussex where he carried out an energetic mission to the South Saxons and also briefly among the people of Friesland, thus beginning the great English mission to the Germanic people continued by his pupil, St Willibrord.

Wilfrid returned to Northumbria in 686, but was not allowed to remain. Again he appealed in person to Rome eventually accepting a compromise solution by becoming Bishop of Hexham while retaining his monastery at Ripon. He introduced many additional Roman customs and reorganised the monastery under the rule of St Benedict. He died in 709.