

Reflection Saturday Week 25 St Jerome 2023

St Jerome (340 - 420) was born in Strido, in Dalmatia. He studied in Rome and was baptized there. He was attracted by the ascetic life and travelled to the East, where he was (unwillingly) ordained a priest. He was recalled to Rome to act as secretary to Pope Damasus, but on the Pope's death he returned to the East, to Bethlehem, where (with the aid of St Paula and others) he founded a monastery, a hospice, and a school, and settled down to the most important work of his life, the translation of the Bible into Latin, a translation which, with some revisions, is still in use today. He wrote many works of his own, including letters and commentaries on Holy Scripture. When a time of troubles came upon the world, through barbarian invasions, and to the Church, through internal dissension, he helped the refugees and those in need. He died in Bethlehem.

It is not easy to recognise the importance of Jerome's' translation of the bible into the vernacular of the day. Today there are multiple translations of the bible and, however good they are, they will never capture the wisdom, guidance and inspiration of the original. What translations do is make the bible accessible. However, when we quote from the bible, we must be aware it is a translation of God's word. Which translation is closest to God's word is debatable.

However, if we spend time reflecting on the word and through prayer, we open ourselves to the Spirit of God who can help and guide us towards a positive and helpful understanding. As Pope Francis says: *Let us rediscover with amazement the fact that God speaks to us, particularly through Holy Scripture.*"