

After Etheldreda's death her reputation for saintliness grew and attracted pilgrims to Ely. She became one of the best known and most popular of the English saints throughout the Middle Ages. During the Reformation her monastery was closed and the shrine in her honour destroyed. Many churches are dedicated to her. One which I frequented when I lived in London, is St Etheldreda's, Ely Place. It is one of the very few pre-Reformation Catholic churches in England, having been recovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Church was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by John de Kirkeby, the Bishop of Ely and became the London chapel of the Bishops of Ely, which it remained until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of only two buildings in London which date back to the reign of Edward I. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, one Bishop of Ely and priest at the church, was Mathew Wren, uncle of Christopher Wren the architect of St Paul's. Bishop Wren lost his episcopacy and was imprisoned in the Tower of London between 1642-1660, having been reported to the Puritan Parliament for his "Popish practices". Over time St Etheldreda's name had simplified into "St. Audrey," and an annual fair commemorating her began to be held selling cheap goods, including *St. Audrey's lace*. This eventually became *tawdry lace* and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the word *tawdry* entered the vocabulary with its present meaning. (1). (1) Source: Merriam-Webster online dictionary

-Stephen S

**Entrance Antiphon: Blest be God the Father, and the Only Begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit, for he has shown us his merciful love.**

**First Reading: Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40**

**Responsorial Psalm: 32: Response: Happy the people the Lord has chosen as his own.**

**Second Reading: Romans 8: 14-17**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, the God who is, who was, and who is to come. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: Matthew 28: 16-20**

**Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

**Communion Antiphon: Since you are children of God, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, the Spirit who cries out: Abba Father.**



**The Most Holy Trinity, Cycle B, 2024 Weekly Reflection: Anglo-Saxon Saints (3)) St Etheldreda:** St Etheldreda (c636-679) was one, perhaps the most famous, of four daughters of King Anna of East Anglia, her sisters including St Sexburga of Ely. Etheldreda was probably

born near Newmarket, at Exning. She was subject to two politically arranged marriages, the first in 652 to a local prince of the southern fens who died in 655. Upon his death she retired to the Isle of Ely. She was remarried in 660, aged about 23 years, to Egfrith, the 15-year-old future king of Northumbria. Etheldreda had insisted on remaining chaste during her first marriage and her second husband, at the outset, agreed to respect those same wishes. However, c.670, Etheldreda wanted to become a nun and to be released from her marriage vows, whereupon Egfrith unsuccessfully petitioned (St.) Wilfred, Bishop of York and Etheldreda's spiritual adviser, for permission to exercise his marital rights in preference to his wife's continuing desire to preserve her virginity. Wilfred, however, persuaded Egfrith to allow Etheldreda to enter a convent at Coldingham (now in the Borders) which had been founded by the king's aunt. In about 673, aware that her husband had regretted his decision to let her enter the convent and frightened that she might be forcibly removed, Etheldreda returned to Ely, where she founded a double monastery (i.e. one for both monks and nuns) on land which she owned. The monastery was destroyed after a Danish invasion in 870.

Wilfred visited Etheldreda regularly and obtained special privileges for her monastery from the Pope. She obtained a reputation for her simple life and the spiritual counselling she gave. She wore only woollen clothes, ate sparingly and prayed for long periods. Many men and women followed her example, came to her monastery and placed daughters under her care. St Sexburga, her sister, who had become Queen of Kent, was widowed in 664, then, after bringing up her children, became a nun. Shortly afterwards she returned to East Anglia to enter her sister's monastery. When Etheldreda died on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 697, Sexburga succeeded her as abbess.