

St David's Day.

Daffodils, dragons and leeks, rain and Welsh cakes,
Happy St David's Day, ancient Land of our Fathers.

Memories come flooding back,
Of visits to the tiny city of St Davids,
Beyond the M4, A40, past post-card Solva,
Over hill and vale,
Bright jewel on the index finger of Pembrokeshire.

Grand medieval Bishop's Palace
Now ruined by time and tide of human greed.
Your humble, wonky Cathedral
Still growing up from the ground
In its fertile green valley 'twixt land and sea.
Singing in the nave sloping from earth towards heaven,
Myth and mist and mystery rolling in from the Celtic Sea,
A thin place welcoming pilgrims old and new.

Dewi Sant, son of St Non, not knowing your father,
You became father and bishop to folk regrouping
At the end of Empire, gathering monks and preachers
To praise God and serve the people.
Patron, now smiling across the bridge of time
As your nation's Anthem gathers the faithful.

As Welsh-speakers find it hard to worship God in an unfamiliar tongue,
Renewers and Reformers should remember how language and images
Of the Incarnate need deep time and space to become embodied.

And now, in Exeter, St David's Church,
Its sacred stones scarily shifting towards the sunset,
Seeks a stable foundation for transformation
To re-embrace community with a warm open welcome.

Richard Barnes – Tue 1 Mar 2016

