



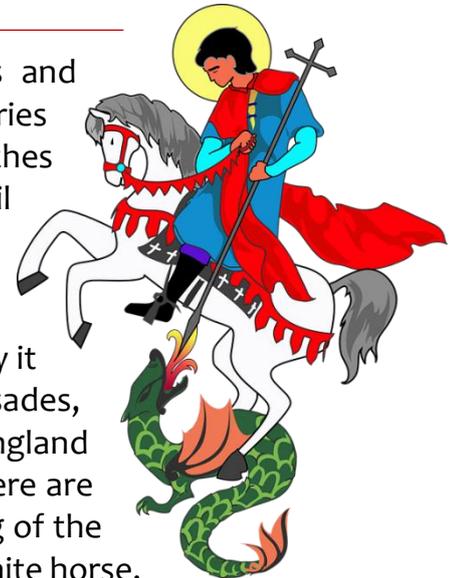
Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

Ephesians 6:10-18 'Strength in the Lord'

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For our¹ struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵ As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ With all of these take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

Patrick, David, and Andrew, the patron saints of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, all seem to be more celebrated in their respective countries than does Saint George of England. Some public buildings and churches will display his flag of a red cross on a white ground on the 23rd April but compared with the celebrations in Ireland, Wales and Scotland on their saint's days, the English appear very subdued.



Did you know that George was not always our patron saint? Originally it was Edward the Confessor. George replaced him in times of the Crusades, in which he fought. King Edward the third made him patron saint of England when he formed the Order of the Garter in the twelfth century. There are many myths and legends surrounding him, most famously his slaying of the dragon. For this he is usually pictured wearing a red cloak, riding a white horse, lance in hand. Intent on defeating the dragon, which represents wickedness and all evil.

Tradition holds that George was a Roman soldier, a devout Christian who was martyred for his faith. The Emperor had declared that all Christians were the enemies of Rome, but George refused to compromise with the truth. Many went into hiding, knowing death was the penalty for professing faith, but we are told that George openly declared his faith and that cost him his life. So he became a symbol of truth honour, courage and integrity. George died rather than deny his faith; may he and his red cross inspire us to follow closely the one who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life'.

Prayer:

Lord of all, we ask such courage
as those who were faithful to you in past generations.
Strengthen our resolve to be always loyal, true and faithful
to you our Saviour, Master, King. Amen.