

The Rectory
28th July 2020

Dear Family,

Thursday the 30th July is the day in the Church of England calendar that we remember William Wilberforce (1759–1833).

He was born in Yorkshire, went up to St John's College Cambridge and became an MP in 1780. In 1784 he converted to the Christian faith. He considered becoming a clergyman, but accepted advice to stay in politics and with other Christians he set about doing what he could to change the society of his day for the better. He became the champion of the anti-slavery cause and made it his life's mission. In this he was greatly influenced by John Newton who had moved from Olney to pastor the Church of St Mary Woolnoth in the City of London. In 1833, just three days before William's death, the British government passed the Bill to abolish slavery. His lifelong battle had at last been won!

The modern day evangelist J. John says of Wilberforce: that he applied his faith to his daily life, he paid a great price for his committed leadership (he was a frail man with poor health), he had determination and persisted in his battle against slavery for decades, he was a man of great wisdom and he was someone who guarded his walk with God. He was definitely someone who knew that only God could be the source of the strength that he needed. To the very end of his life he remained permanently dependent on the "Amazing Grace" of God.

William Wilberforce was already a Member of Parliament when he converted to the Christian faith. He is an encouragement for us to pray for those in government to come to know God personally and to stand up for what is right as they debate and serve in Westminster.

Stay safe and God bless!

Andrew+

A prayer for the week:

Sittings in both the House of Commons and House of Lords begin with prayers. These follow the Christian faith and attendance is voluntary. In the Commons the Speaker's Chaplain usually reads the prayers. The form of the main prayer is as follows:

"Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of Parliament and all in positions of responsibility, the guidance of Your Spirit. May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but laying aside all private interests and prejudices keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all mankind; so may Your kingdom come and Your Name be hallowed.

Amen."