

The role of St Oswald in the Wilson Murray Memorial Window

The figure in the Wilson Murray Memorial Window is St Oswald. Born in 604 AD, Oswald was an Anglo-Saxon king of Northumbria from 634 until his death in 642 in the Battle of Maserfield at the young age of 38. He was responsible for the spread of Christianity throughout Northumbria and much of England. Considered to be a saintly king, Oswald became one of the most powerful rulers in Britain. About 100 years after his death, he was verified a saint for his introduction of Celtic Christian missionaries to his kingdom, spreading over most of England.

There are several reasons behind the choice of St Oswald for the Wilson Murray Memorial Window. Oswald was considered to be an effective leader and educator through his support of Christian missionary work throughout his kingdom while Wilson was raised at Wharanui, the site of St Oswald's Memorial Church. A landmark and site of worship for the people of the Marlborough east coast since 1927, the church was built in memory of Charles Hector Heaton Murray (3411) by his parents, Wilson's great, great, grandparents. Hector, as he was known, died at age 19. In the Chapel window, the Celtic cross behind St Oswald references the Celtic missionaries responsible for the baptism and conversion to Christianity of St Oswald.

The sphere that St Oswald carries represents the world. In Christian symbology, it is seen as God's power over the world. Hence a person holding the orb can be seen as a representative of God's power on Earth. St Oswald's Memorial Church can be seen in the background, referencing Wilson's home and where his remains are to be interred.

St Oswald's name and birth and death dates are found on the right. St Oswald is wrapped in a robe of Murray tartan. Meanwhile, the ocean refers to St Oswald's travels, in particular to the island of Iona in the Inner Hebrides where he took refuge and was converted to Christianity. It is also symbolic of Wilson's love of the ocean, in particular sailing and his own travels.

'Non Sibi' (Not for One's Self), the Jacobs House motto, is inscribed into the saddlebag that St Oswald carries. The coat of arms at the lower left is the Murray Crest and Shield, while the tui head of the Christ's College crest is above the Tudor rose of Jacobs House in the lower right corner.

The Celtic link to St Oswald is strengthened by the entwined endless Celtic knot design around the window border. Celtic knots take several forms but, generally, they feature interlacing patterns with no beginning nor end – representing eternity, an endless cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

Graham Stewart, of Graham Stewart Stained Glass, designed and installed the window.

Most importantly, this window honours God and is in memory of Wilson Antony Charles Murray (14727).