

The Magnus Monument Activity

Discuss

If you had something very important to think about where would you choose to go? Why?



The story of Magnus with questions

A long, long time ago (in the 12th century so 900 years ago), there was a man called Magnus who came to England from Denmark. He was in charge of a band of soldiers and had come to fight. But in the battle in England his men were killed and he was taken prisoner.

What do you think he was thinking about when he was captured?

How do you think the people who captured him treated him?

The English who captured him treated him well. They too had been fighting in the battle and they were Christians and so treated Magnus with kindness and respect.

How do you think Magnus felt when the people who took him captive were kind to him?

Magnus was very impressed by the kindness of his Christian captors and so decided to become a Christian himself. He wanted to spend his life praising God and also thinking about what it meant to be a good Christian.

He needed to be somewhere where he could think and where he could live a good Christian life.

What do you think he did?

Magnus came to live at the church, here at St John sub Castro, but he didn't live in the church. He lived in a small room built onto the side of the church. There was a

small window in the wall through which he was given his food and drink, another window from his room into the church so he could hear the church services and a really small window through which people could talk to him. He lived in this special room for the rest of his life. People who choose to live like this are called anchorites. We don't have anchorites in this country now, but in medieval times there were many famous anchorites.

The Inscription

The inscription on the arch commemorates Magnus. It is written in Latin and says:

“Here is enclosed a knight of the royal family of Denmark whose name, Magnus, indicates his royal lineage. Relinquishing his greatness he assumes the deportment of a lamb and exchanges for a life of ambition that of a lowly anchorite.”

(The vertical gravestone in the middle is not Magnus' and is from a later date.)

Discuss

- Why do you think they say Magnus is like a lamb?
- Do the curved stones remind you of anything?
- Could it be a portal to another world?
- What could be on the other side if you passed through the portal?
- If you were writing the inscription what would you write?
- What do you think we can learn from this story?