Brother David

Lindisfarne Monastery,

Lindisfarne Island,

Northumbria

Brother Abraham

Wenlock Priory,

Much Wenlock,

Salop

Friday 4th May AD794

Dear Brother Abraham,

I am writing to share with you my utter dismay at the situation here at Lindisfarne. In the early hours of the morning, our sacred monastery was brutally set upon by a band of Norse men. Consequently, our beautiful building has been ransacked and valuable goods have been taken; such as; our plates, crosses and even our manuscripts! Have you experienced this tragedy?

As I previously stated, our monastery has been viciously attacked by those from the Norse lands as they search for gold and other precious items. Startled, awoke in the early hours to the sounds of cries in the distance echoing around the chambers. Swiftly, I clambered out of my bed and rushed down the empty corridors towards the bellowing screams.

Frightened, I opened the chapel doors to find those despicable Norse men trashing our holy alter and shattering the ornate carvings of our Lord. By the time I could react, a few of my brethren came to my aid. They began to attempt to stave off the bearded attackers, however they were unsuccessful. The timid attempts of our courageous brothers to protect our sacred objects was in vain, as the Viking raiders showed no remorse or restraint! They plunged their swords through the hearts of our brothers, leaving them for dead when they left. Meanwhile, I was shaking uncontrollably in the corner, petrified that I may suffer the same fate as they did.

I couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw those terrifying bearded warriors rampaging through the corridors with all of our precious (and holy) items in their hands. I’ve heard from others in Britain that these pests have been not just raiding monasteries, but villages too! Will anyone be able to stop their attacks?

So far, we have counted that we have lost five bibles, eighteen goblets, thirteen plates and seven crosses! On top of all that, we have had our beautiful, ornate tapestries torn from the walls and muddied with their footprints, torn with their swords and left desolate. Do you remember the stain glass window which pictures the Last Supper? Well, that has been completely smashed as they threw rocks and stones at it from outside.

I cannot believe what I have just witnessed. Thank goodness that they have gone. But for how long? I have also heard that they have the cheek to trade our beloved items back to us for a cost! I tell you now, I will not be held to ransom by some common thief from across the sea! Other monasteries have traded their goods back for a cost and I feel upset that we may have to do the same just because they have items which we love!

Just remember, dear brother, that they may come to you very soon. If they do, ensure that all of your precious items are locked away safely. I would put them under your bed, in cupboards or even bury them in the ground! Protect yourself too – find somewhere to hide where you cannot be found until the atrocity is over and then come out to pick up what remnants you have left of your monastery. There is no point in fighting with them – they are just too powerful!

I wish you a safe and happy few months. I will write again soon!

Yours sincerely,

Brother David.