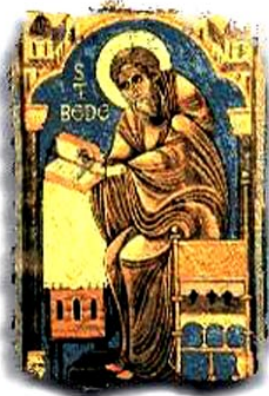


Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain

Bede the Venerable

Feast day: May 27



Monk of Jarrow, biblical scholar (735)

St Bede, or the Venerable Bede, as he is often called, was born in 673 A.D. on the land of the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul in Wearmouth. At the age of 7 he was entrusted to the care of Benedict Biscop, the founder of the monastery, and then to Ceolfrith who in 681 was appointed Abbot of the monastery's new foundation in Jarrow. Bede spent the rest of his life in the monastery. He was ordained deacon at the age of 19 and priest at 30...

In addition to his commitments as a monk and priest, he worked as a scholar and teacher. In his writings he explains that "I have made it my business, for my own benefit and that of my brothers, to make brief extracts from the works of the venerable fathers on the holy scriptures, or to add notes of my own to clarify their sense and interpretation". Bishop Boniface wrote that Bede "shone forth as a beacon of the church by his scriptural commentary"; and his biblical exegeses were widely sought and widely circulated. But St Bede is best known for his 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People', which is to this day our primary source for understanding the beginnings of the English people and the coming of Christianity to England. It is also the first work of history in which the A.D. system of dating is used.

But the range of Bede's astonishing scholarship went far beyond history. He wrote also of nature. He knew that the earth was a sphere. He knew that the moon influenced the cycle of the tides. He wrote on calculating time and his exposition of the Great Cycle of 532 years was of fundamental value to the Church in the task of calculating the date of Easter. He also wrote a textbook for his students on poetic metres.

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Bede died in his cell at the monastery in the year 735 just after he finished dictating the last words of his commentary on the Gospel of John.