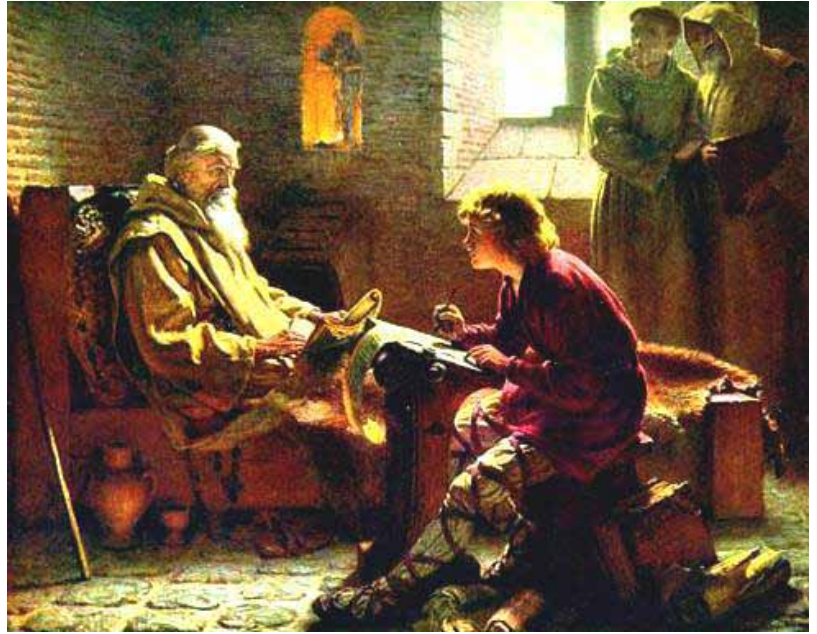


Weekly Musing † May 23, 2011

Saint Bede (early 8th century) is primarily known to us through the writing of his Ecclesiastical History of the English People. Like many of the monastic saints of the first millennia church, he wrote many things because he was interested in and conversant with a large number of subjects. He wrote a famous (at the time) manuscript on arriving at the correct date of Easter. That may not get your juices going, but for those whose lives were defined by the liturgy (in 8th century England, that included pretty much everybody, especially monastics) this was an important determination. He wrote a great deal on various philosophical and scientific subjects, some of which no longer frame our current arguments and some of which we take for granted.

Bede wrote Biblical commentaries including one on John's gospel. The above painting is entitled: "St. Bede Dictating his Commentary on John's Gospel." This coming Sunday's gospel is from John's gospel. Here is the first portion (John 14:15 – 17):



Jesus said to his disciples, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you."

Bede's commentary on it, in which he centers in on "the world," contains this:

Whoever yearns after lowly delight cannot receive the Spirit of truth. The spirit of truth flees from a heart it discerns is subject to vanity and restores by the light of his coming only those it beholds carrying out the commandments of truth out of love."



There is an absolutist spirit about this that I suspect puts off the modern reader. Like most of the learned men of his time, Bede was of course a monk. He lived a disciplined and severe life in which he gave up many of the things we value (family being chief among them) to serve Christ. One does well not to expect a conciliatory tone in the exposition of the Gospel by someone like Bede. His interpretation is probably closer to the mindset of Jesus' own time than it is to ours.

Ours is still a church that values learning and education. In a binary world where well meaning Christians often choose piety over learning, we insist that both are possible. Bede is one of the bright shining lights of a learned church. He wrote over 60 books, most of which are lost.

Bede's tomb, Durham Cathedral.

News from St. Luke's

This coming Sunday is our last Sunday for two services. The week after (June 5) we go to one service on Sunday at 10 am. The Saturday service at 5 pm continues the same. There is no noon Eucharist on Wednesday during the summer.

The youth Group meets this Wednesday for a trip to Geysers Park (the money pit). We start at 6 pm. There will be a Bible Study Tuesday at 6 pm. This is a potluck and we are done by 7:30 pm.

I spent eleven hours last week on four different days meeting with people from Holy Cross parish, their priest, the Rev. Linda McCloud, and a strategic planner. The time was fruitful. We came up with goals for the parish for each of the next five years. One thing we will be doing is asking some of you to help grow Holy Cross. It takes a whole community to raise a new parish. We will have a big Michaelmas celebration on Thursday, September 29th, at Holy Cross (Lillis Chapel, St. John's).

We will be having our annual Day Camp (along with St. Stephen's) this year from July 18 to 22nd. This goes from 8 am to 5 pm all five days. Forms are in the back of the church.

No doubt some of you will be gone this summer. Good. We all need a break from the quotidian lest our lives become burdens.

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