

Weekly Musing † February 28, 2011

The altar at Lastingham Abbey where both Chad and his brother Cedd celebrated the Eucharist.

Our only knowledge of Chad (672) comes from the historian of early English church history, Bede, who died in 735. Bede mentions him always in the context of prayer and study. He lived at a time when the native church of Britain, brought by Roman soldiers and Celtic in character, was being replaced with adherence to Roman regularity and rule. Celtic Christianity emphasized nature and also looked



for grace already existent in one's life. Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury (often called Theodore of Tarsus, referring to his shared home town with St. Paul) had Chad step down as a bishop but was so impressed with his humility that he later had him function as bishop elsewhere. He insisted that Chad ride a horse and the archbishop himself hoisted Chad upon the horse on one occasion. Chad's three brothers, Cedd, Cynibil and Caelin were also monks and priests. It is worth noting that many of England's early monks sought to emulate the desert fathers in austerity but in a land where the climate was much colder and much wetter.



The Wesley brothers, John and Charles, are both honored this week. They were Anglican priests who are known as the founders of Methodism, originally a particular kind of worship within the Church of England. It would be easy to remember each as indefatigable examples of Christian service, Charles having composed 5,000 hymns and John some 40,000 sermons. However, this might give fuel to the common misconception that saintliness is made of the whole cloth of exhaustive heroism (doing what the rest of us do only more of it). This is simply not true.

The Wesleys lived at a time (the 18th century) when the Church of England was a bit moribund. The enlightenment,

with its understanding of natural law and its emphasis on rationality, had plundered the faith of many. It has been said that the Church of England at the time was mostly a branch of government devoid of emotional content. This is no doubt unfair as all generalizations are (there being devout lay and clergy alike in all periods) but it at least illustrates a point. The Wesleys brought a more immediate Christianity to the working classes. Wesley often preached to miners and others as the sun rose before they went to work. Christianity that is only emotional is always a bad thing, on the other hand, a faith that has no emotional content (like a marriage) is suspect.

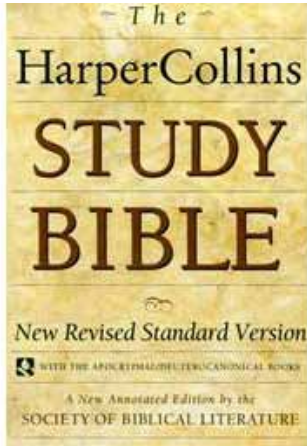
John Wesley had "his heart strangely warmed" after going to a meeting of a religious society. This is the famous Aldersgate event and a watershed event of western Christianity. This was the time of British colonies being established in America and Methodism caught on in the new world. It is often overlooked how Wesley made formal religion available to the working man. He distrusted wealth and felt it was given to some only so that they could show charity by giving it away. Personally, John was not easy to get along with. His brother was warmer but less stable. Their saintliness was not in their personality (though we might wish it so with all of the saints) but in what they did.

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News from St. Luke's continued

The Lenten book ("The Desert, an Anthology for Lent") is still available at the back of the church and in the church office for \$10. Lenten calendars will be available for children and teenagers/college folk. Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, sponsored by the youth, will be from 5 – 7 pm on March 8. The money will go towards sponsoring a Sunday dinner at the Rescue Mission which the youth will do (with \$20 to the Humane Society). Ash Wednesday services will be at noon and 7 pm.

Stations of the Cross will be offered again on Fridays in Lent. Michael Jackson has offered to coordinate that so if you are interested in helping, email him at: mikjaxmt@gmail.com



Soup suppers will start on March 15 at 6 pm, and be over by 7:30 pm. We will be looking at the lectionary readings for the coming Sunday. It would help to have a decent Bible (though copies of the lessons will be passed out). A good Bible is the NRSV version in the Harper Collins study edition with Deuterocanonicals. This will give you useful and up to date footnotes. If you read these, it will give you much insight into the lesson in very little time.

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PROBLEMS

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ONE WHILST IN CHURCH

