

## Weekly Musings ☩ January 10, 2011

Today is the lesser feast of William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury during the middle of the 17th century when the English civil war was raging. The English reformation was in many ways the longest of any in European history. It stretched from the time of Henry VIII, about 1525, to this period (middle 1600s) and really even beyond. An English bishop by the name of Moorman wrote a fictional though accurate account of a poor English priest during the time of Henry and after who had to endure every change imaginable in the liturgy, polity and structure of his church during his ministry while pretending that each innovation was the best thing since, well, sliced bread (no doubt anachronistic).

Laud was a royalist and therefore high church. The obvious reason for that connection (high church and royalist) was that a high churchman was a great believer in the hierarchy of the church and thus amenable to a hierarchy in secular things as well. Not so the low churchmen who at one point had England ruled by a protectorate under Oliver Cromwell. Laud was a man of great learning and encouraged, among other things, Arabic study at Oxford. In our era when the average person no longer immediately associates Christianity with learning, I find this heartening. Laud was the son of a cloth merchant and a short man. He was sensitive to both, especially when the court Jester quipped "Give the devil little laud." Laud was eventually beheaded.

In this painting by Delaroche, Archbishop Laud's hands are seen at the top through the bars as he blesses his ally, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford, as the latter goes to his execution.

It is worth ruminating on the ups and downs of this long and bloody battle. Each time the pendulum swung (usually at the behest of the monarch though not this particular time) good men were imprisoned and executed. One suspects that a result of this was a secret disavowal of religion on the part of many because they saw it as an excuse for human avarice and cruelty (both playing a part in all these machinations as both lands and people were seized). The trick of living together with different ideas may finally be harder than coming up with the right theology.



Aelred in an illuminated manuscript.

Hilary consecrated as bishop. The mitres may well be anachronistic for the period but the first mitres were indeed short affairs.



There is no time for Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, 12th century or Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, 4th century. The former used what we would now call psychology in his spiritual writings and the latter wrote hymns that were the first to use things Christian from other than scripture. Neither, however, is first and foremost remembered for these things.



### News from St. Luke's

We had a lock-in at the church this weekend in which we invited young people and their leaders from St. James in Bozeman. A good time was had by all. Among other things, we went to the Food Bank Saturday morning and put food into boxes for those in need. I always think it a useful thing for people to see the size of the Food Bank warehouse. In addition, they have a freezer and refrigerator each of which is the same size (and height) of our nave. We watched the Movie 'Elephant Man' and went bowling Saturday night. I still ache from same.

Our annual meeting is this coming Sunday after the 10 am service. We will have a light lunch and then conduct business. I am nominating Dr. Laura Rathe as Senior Warden and Holy Brown has agreed to run again as Junior Warden. We need five new vestry persons (four regular and one to replace Laura). So far Dr. Lisa Malody and Leo Gutierrez are running. We also need eight diocesan convention delegates. Convention will be October 7 - 9 in Big Sky. We will also elect members of the Memorial Foundation. Please come, we need at least 35 people by parish by-law.

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