

Readings for Thursday, March 20, 2025

Cuthbert – *Bishop*, 687

Psalm 23

A Psalm of David.

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
- 3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, ‘At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.’ See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Matthew 6:24-34

‘No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Collect:

Merciful God, who called Cuthbert from following the flock to be a shepherd of your people: Mercifully grant that we also may go without fear to dangerous and remote places, to seek the indifferent and the lost; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Cuthbert

Bishop, 687

Cuthbert was the most popular saint of the pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon Church. He was born about 625. Bede, who wrote a life of Cuthbert, tells us that in his youth, while tending sheep one night and praying, “as was his custom,” he saw a stream of light break through the darkness, and in its midst, “a company of the heavenly host descended to the earth, and having received among them a spirit of surpassing brightness, returned without delay to their heavenly home.” Learning the next day that Aidan of Lindisfarne had died at that very time, Cuthbert “determined immediately to enter a monastery.”

Trained in the austere traditions of Celtic monasticism, Cuthbert was Prior of Melrose Abbey from 651 to 664, and then of Lindisfarne for twelve years. Bede says that he was accustomed to make visitations even to remote villages to preach to people who, “neglecting the sacrament of their creed, had recourse to idolatrous remedies; as if by charms or amulets, or any other mysteries of the magical art, they were able to avert a stroke inflicted upon them by the Lord . . .” Bede says that Cuthbert “often remained a week, sometimes two or three, even a whole month, without returning home; but dwelling among the mountains, taught the poor people, both by words of his preaching, and also by his own holy conduct.”

Archbishop Theodore recognized Cuthbert’s greatness of character and made him Bishop of Hexham in 684, but Cuthbert continued to make his see at Lindisfarne. He returned two years later to his hermitage on the neighboring island of Farne, where he died on March 20, 687.

Cuthbert accepted the decisions of the synod of Whitby in 663 that brought the usages of the English Church into line with Roman practice. He was thus a “healer of the breach” that threatened to divide the Church into Celtic and Roman factions.

At the time of the Viking invasions, the monks of Lindisfarne carefully protected his relics during their wanderings, until finally they brought them to Durham, where pilgrims come to visit his shrine to this day.