

up to his last hour. It is said that it is easier to admire him in thought than to do him justice in expression.

Bede also wrote hymns and other verse, the first martyrology with historical notes, letters and homilies, works of grammar, on chronology and astronomy. He was aware that the earth is a sphere, and he is the first historian to date events ANNO DOMINI, and the earliest known writer to state that the solar year is not exactly 365 and a quarter days long, so that the Julian calendar (one leap year every four years) requires some adjusting if the months are not to get out of step with the seasons.

The Saint was employed in translating the Gospel of Saint John from Greek to Old English, even up to the hour of his death, which took place on the eve of the Ascension in the year 735. "He spent that day joyfully," writes one of his scholars. In the middle of the afternoon Bede said: "It is time that I return to the One who gave me being, creating me out of nothing... The moment of my liberty is approaching: I desire to be freed from the bonds of the body and to join Jesus Christ. Yes, my soul longs to see Jesus Christ its king, in the splendor of His glory."



On the evening of his death, a scribe attending Bede said, "Dear master, there is yet one chapter unwritten; would you be disturbed if we asked you additional questions?" Bede answered, "No; take your pen, and write quickly," which the disciple did. Then Bede prayed until his last breath. On his death, one of his disciples, an individual named Cuthbert, said of him, "I can with truth declare that I never saw with my eyes or heard with my ears anyone return thanks so unceasingly to the living God."

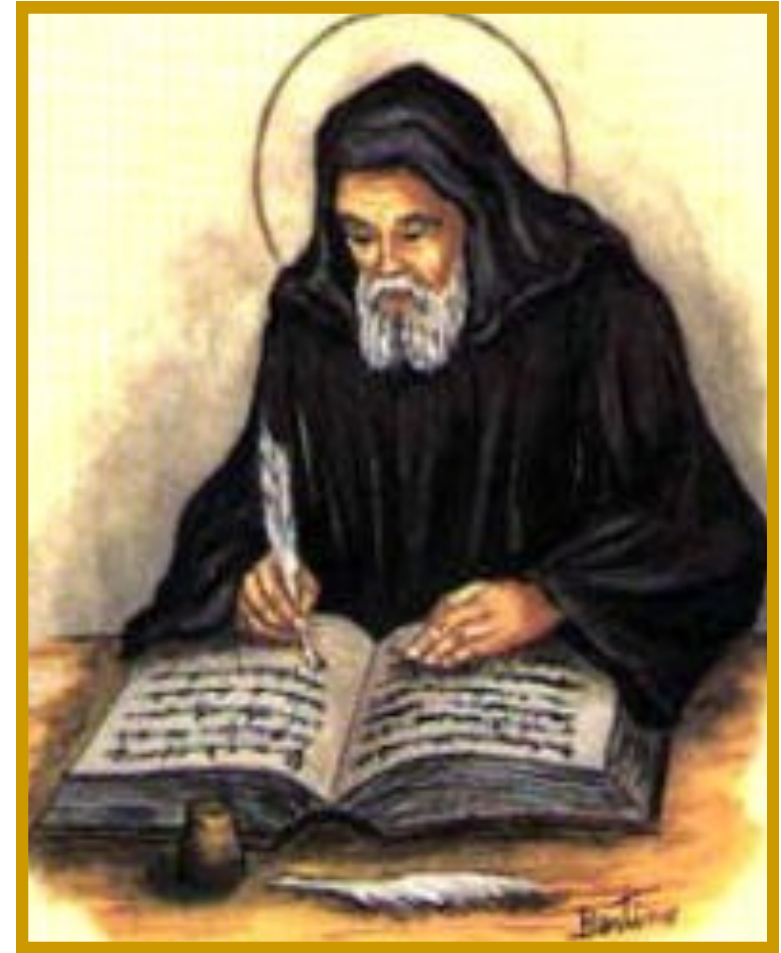
**Traditional prayer to Saint Bede:** Heavenly Father, who didst call thy servant Bede, while still a child, to devote his life to thy service in the disciplines of religion and scholarship: Grant that as he labored in the Spirit to bring the riches of thy truth to his generation, so we, in our various vocations, may strive to make thee known in all the world; Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

\*(excerpted from: [www.magnificat.ca](http://www.magnificat.ca); [www.traditioninaction.org//satucket.com](http://www.traditioninaction.org//satucket.com))

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## Saint Bede The Venerable

Feast Day: May 27



QUOTE:

"We have not, it seems to me, amid all our discoveries, invented as yet anything better than the Christian life which Bede lived, and the Christian death which he died"  
(C. Plummer, editor of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*).

## Saint Bede The Venerable

\*Saint Bede was born in 672 in Wearmouth, England; died on May 25, 735 in the Benedictine abbey of SS. Peter and Paul in Wearmouth and Jarrow, in Northumbria. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1899 by Pope Leo XIII. From the age of seven, he was educated and lived there until his death at the age of 63. He was ordained a deacon at 19 and a priest at 30. He was an avid man of letters, who spent his entire life serving the Lord through learning, teaching and writing. He rivaled Saint Isidore of Seville as one of the wisest and most illustrious men of his time. Because his great sanctity was widely recognized during his lifetime, and, because he could not be called a saint, he was known as Bede the Venerable. The name was conserved after his death and canonization.

The majority of his work was commentary on Holy Scripture, which he endeavored to accomplish in full conformity with the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. He subordinated all his studies to the service of the interpretation of Scripture, which was for him the apex of all learning. He also completed works on mathematics, poetry, astronomy, philosophy, and music. He was a composer of several important works of Gregorian plain chant. He says of himself: "I have devoted my energies to a study of the Scriptures, observing monastic discipline, and singing the daily services in church; study, teaching, and writing have always been my delight."

Besides the toils of teaching and the exact observance of his Rule, Bede added long hours of private prayer, along with the study of every branch of science and literature then known. He was familiar with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In a treatise which he compiled for his scholars, he assembled all that the world had then conserved of arithmetic, history, chronology, physics, music, philosophy, poetry, and medicine.

Bede was the first person to write scholarly works in the English language, although unfortunately only fragments of his English writings have survived. He translated the Gospel of John into Old English,

completing the work on the very day of his death. He also wrote extensively in Latin. He wrote commentaries on the Pentateuch and other portions of Holy Scripture.

Bede's most enduring accomplishment, however, is in the field of history. He is best-known as the "Father of English History," due to his great work, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Virtually nothing is known about pre-eight century England from sources other than from his book. The driving theme of the book is the manner in which violence and savagery have been constantly overrun by the spiritual, doctrinal, and cultural unity of the Church. At the time of Bede's writing, all of England had been finally united under Christianity. This classic, which has frequently been translated, is still available in Penguin Paperbacks.

Fortunately, Bede was very careful to sort fact from hearsay, and to tell us the sources of his information. His writing gives us a history of Britain up to 729, speaking of the Celtic peoples who were converted to Christianity during the first three centuries of the Christian era, and the invasion of the Anglo-Saxon pagans in the fifth and sixth centuries, and their subsequent conversion by Celtic missionaries from the north and west, and Roman missionaries from the south and east. He has also left us in this work, the beautiful lives of Anglo-Saxon Saints and of the holy Fathers, while his commentaries on the Sacred Scriptures are still in use by the Church to this day.

It was the study of the Divine Word that Bede devoted the whole energy of his soul, and at times his compunction was so overpowering that his voice would break with weeping, while the tears of his scholars mingled with his own. Once he was accused of heresy by certain jealous ones, but this scholar who had always made a great effort not to depart from tradition, wrote a letter which vindicated him and stopped the bad reports. He had little aid from others, and during his later years suffered from constant illness; yet he worked and prayed