

**Life**

St. Bede was born in England in 673, and he was sent to the Benedictine Monastery at the age of 7, where he later became a Benedictine monk. When he was 30 he entered priesthood. He was regarded as the most well-learned scholar at his time. His works cover almost all the academic fields of the contemporary period.

Although many illustrious members of English society wanted to win him over, Bede was unmoved. He stayed in the Monastery for almost his entire life, devoted himself to studying the Scripture, teachings and writings about theology, history and scriptural commentaries. When he was still alive, a Church council ordered his work to be publicly read in English Churches, and because of his sanctity and compelling wisdom and knowledge, he was already referred to as the "Venerable Bede". The church officially confirmed this title in 853. His influence to the world is far and wide; for example, the current practice of dating from the birth of Christ using B.C. and A.D. was popularized by him. The motto "Miserando Atque Eligendo" on Pope Francis' Coat of Arm also came from one of Bede's homilies. Saint Bede the Venerable died in 735. In 1899, he was declared A Doctor of the Church and is generally regarded as the patron saint of lectors.

**Reflection**

In St. Bede's most famous work, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, he recounts that "spending all the remaining time of my life in that monastery, I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture; and amidst the observance of the monastic Rule and the daily charge of singing in church, I always took delight in learning, or teaching, or writing". Indeed, he worked and prayed joyfully till the last moment of his life. One of his students Cuthbert described in a letter the touching situation of the saint when he died: "On the Tuesday before the Feast of the Lord's Ascension, Bede's breathing became more labored, and he was suffering, but he remained cheerful and gave daily lessons to us and dictated his books for us to put in writing. He seemed to know his time was near and spent the night giving thanks to God...Dawn came; it was Wednesday. He urged us to finish writing the books on our hands quickly... Everyone was sad and crying, especially because he said that the time to see him in the world were limited; however, they also felt happy because he said, '... it is time for me to set off, because I long to disappear, so that I can be with Christ, because my soul is longing to see Christ, my king, to see His glory'... A boy named Wilbert said to him, 'Dear Master, there is one sentence left unfinished.' Bede said, 'Very well, write it down.' Then the young monk said, 'It is finished now.' Bede replied, 'You have spoken truly. It is well finished.' He sat on the floor of his cell. After chanting 'Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit' to its ending, Bede fell asleep in the Lord Whom he had loved." Saint Bede spent his life in work and prayers to glorify the Lord, and he faced death calmly, safely entering the kingdom of heaven. May we learn from him to try our best to serve God, and at the end of our lives, return happily to our heavenly home.

**Prayer**

During the general audience on February 18, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI said: "Sacred Scripture was the constant source of Bede's theological reflection. After a critical study of the text, he comments on the Bible, interpreting it in a Christological key, that is, combining two things: on the one hand he listens to exactly what the text says, he really seeks to hear and understand the text itself; on the other, he is convinced that the key to understanding Sacred Scripture as the one word of God is Christ, and with Christ, in his light, one understands the Old and New Testaments as 'one' Sacred Scripture." Let us learn from St. Bede how to read the Scripture.

May we learn from Saint Bede to try our utmost to serve God,  
and savour the words of the Scripture under Christ's guiding light.  
We also pray for all lectors. Saint Bede the Venerable, pray for us.