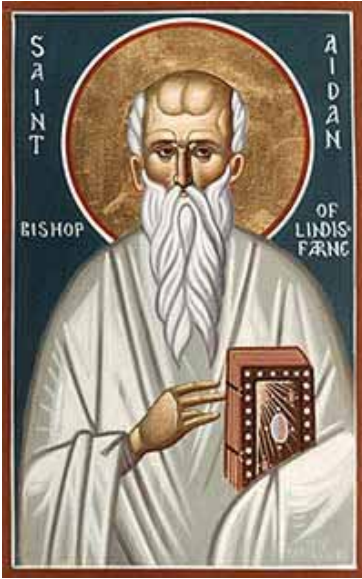


Aidan and Cuthbert

Observed 31 August



In the early seventh century King Oswald of Northumbria send to Iona requesting a bishop be sent to teach Christianity to his people. When Aidan (who had earlier resigned from episcopal office to become a monk of Iona, under the rule of Saint Columba) went to this new and wild place to bring the faith to the Saxons, he first established a remote monastery so that he would have the spiritual resources for this demanding work. Like Iona, this monastery was on an island. Lindisfarne gradually became known as Holy Isle, the home of many saints. Aidan's ministrations were always gentle and humble. He walked everywhere in his diocese, refusing many offers of horses to ease his work. Whatever gifts were given to him he quickly passed along to the poor of his area. His generosity and genuine love for God and for all people won peace and many converts. After a

quarter century of devoted service to the people of Northumbria, he died in 651.

Cuthbert was born not long after Aidan began the monastery on Holy Isle. When he was 15 years old, he had a vision while tending sheep. He saw the soul of Saint Aidan rising into heaven and soon learned that the great man had in fact died at that very hour. Cuthbert wanted to follow in his footsteps as a monk and sought to join the community at nearby Melrose Abbey. However, he was conscripted into the army before he could make good on his intention. Four years later he was able to enter the monastic life and after a turbulent time became abbot of Melrose. Like Aidan, Cuthbert was renowned for holiness and gentleness. Although trained in the Celtic tradition, he conformed to Roman custom after the Synod of Whitby and was chosen to teach this (to them new) way of being church to the community at Lindisfarne. He exercised great patience and finally persuaded the monks of Holy Isle to conform to Roman ways. Cuthbert served as Abbot of Lindisfarne for 12 years. Then after a time of personal seclusion, living as an island hermit, he was recalled to serve as Bishop of Lindisfarne for the last two years of his life, and died beloved and deeply mourned by his people in 687.



Lessons Isaiah 55:6-12; Psalm 104:32-35; Romans 12:6-13; John 10:25b-30

Collect Everliving God, you called your servants Aidan and Cuthbert to proclaim the Gospel in northern England and gave them loving hearts and gentle spirits: Grant us grace to live as they did, in simplicity, humility and love for the poor; through Jesus Christ, who came among us as one who serves, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.