

St. Cuthbert



Cuthbert was thought by some to be Irish and by others, a Scot. Bede, the noted historian, says he was a Briton. Orphaned when a young child, he was a shepherd for a time, possibly fought against the Mercians, and became a monk at Melrose Abbey. In 661, he accompanied St. Eata to Ripon Abbey, which the abbot of Melrose had built, but returned to Melrose the following year when King Alcfrid turned the abbey over to St. Wilfrid, and then became Prior of Melrose. Cuthbert engaged in missionary work and when St. Colman refused to accept the decision of the Council of Whitby in favor of the Roman liturgical practices and immigrated with most of the monks of Lindisfarn to Ireland, St. Eata was appointed bishop in his place and named Cuthbert Prior of Lindisfarn. He resumed his missionary activities and attracted huge crowds until he received his abbot's permission to live as a hermit, at first on a nearby island and then in 676, at one of the Farnes Islands near Bamborough. Against his will, he was elected bishop of Hexham in 685, arranged with St. Eata to swap Sees, and became bishop of Lindisfarn but without the monastery. He spent the last two years of his life administering his See, caring for the sick of the plague that decimated his diocese, working numerous miracles of healing, and gifted with the ability to prophesy. He died at Lindisfarn. Feast day is March 20.