

are the things above the surface of our eucharistic consciousness, while the real foreground facts have sunk to the bottom of professional theological books and official statements of doctrine'.

Gradually we seem to be regaining lost, or perhaps it should be said, overlaid aspects of our worship; the emphasis is gradually shifting from the periphery to the centre of the mystery. But there is still need for books dealing with the whole concept of worship, the eucharist in its primary and fundamental aspect of meal and sacrifice and the sacraments not only as affecting what they signify and working *ex opere operato*, but as acts of Christ in the Church and as essential parts of her worship rather than as individual occasions of grace. Fr Reinhold's book, despite the ephemeral nature of some of it, is useful for its emphasis on these fundamental matters.

St Bartholomew of Farne

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Any man who can endure the rigours of a British summer on the island of Farne deserves to be venerated as the patron of all Britons who year after year, with unquenched optimism, pack up their beach-wear, and children and buckets and spades and sun-tan lotion and dark glasses, to spend a week or two on the coast of their sceptred island, clad in mackintoshes and regretting that they did not decide to take their holiday in November.

But Bartholomew spent no less than forty-two years, winter and summer, on that tiny island off the coast of Northumbria and though there is no evidence that he was ever accorded any liturgical cultus, he left a reputation for holiness and miracles and acquired the title of Saint. And this it seems to me was very well earned for it is one thing to model your life on that of the Fathers of the Desert in the climate of the Thebaid and quite another to try these tactics on a cold slab of rock in the North Sea.

Bartholomew was born at Whitby, probably around the year 1120...

there are differences of opinion about the dates of his death and his birthday can only be conjectured. He seems to have been a sensitive boy and one who could get his own way, two qualities which remained with him to manhood. His fond parents called him Tostig, perhaps because they had their roots in Scandinavia. Roots or no roots, little Tostig was subjected to the usual teasing and jeering that every boy with an unusual name receives until he emerges from his torment with a more suitable title such as 'Beetle' or 'Mugface'. Tostig's parents apparently gave way under the strain of their son's obstinate hatred for his outlandish name and far from insisting that it was a famous name of which he should be proud meekly allowed him to be called William.

He was a restless youth and it was not long before he decided he must have a look at the world outside Whitby. Though he had thrown off his northern name it was the north that drew him, the land of his flax-haired ancestors: Norway of the jagged silver fiords, the midnight sun and the strange streamers and ribbons of the aurora borealis pulsing across the night sky. There are none of the more usual stories of infant piety and youthful predilection for holy pursuits connected with Bartholomew and it comes as a surprise to learn that he stayed in Norway long enough to be ordained priest.

Clad in his new dignity he returned home to England, went to Durham and there became a monk taking the name in religion of Bartholomew. It may be that Bartholomew had no great gift for community life but at any rate when he asked permission to take up the solitary life on Farne on account of a vision of St Cuthbert, no-one tried to dissuade him. And to Farne he went, determined to dedicate the rest of his life to God in the cell which had seen the last hours of the 'Wonderworker of Britain' five centuries earlier.

When he arrived and stepped into his bird-haunted solitude he found another hermit already ensconced in this comfortless abode. Their meeting did not resemble that of the famous Egyptians, Paul and Anthony, who welcomed each other with love and prayer. The first-comer, a certain Brother Ebwin, was disgruntled to say the least to see what he considered a poacher on his holy preserves and lost no time in making this obvious. We are told that he entered on a course of petty persecution. It would be interesting to learn how one hermit can persecute another hermit on an uninhabited island. Did he shout rude epithets in Latin when the other was at his prayers, or did he sneak up and throw seaweed at him? Or did he confine his activities to sudden appearances and hideous grimaces? Whatever his methods Bartholo-

mew was proof against them and in the end Ebwin left the island and Bartholomew was alone with the gannets and the gulls.

Later on, however, he was joined by one Thomas, a former prior of Durham, and once again there was a disagreement. This time it was not the naïf clumsiness of the 'king of the castle' resenting the presence of an intruder that caused the friction, but a charge of hypocrisy on the part of Thomas . . . or at least an inference of it. It was a very natural thing to quarrel over, and I have often thought that the two dear old Desert Fathers who tried to get into an argument and failed would have had more success if they had used as the basis of their attempted dissension something a little more interesting to both of them than a stone.

Thomas and Bartholomew had words, in fact, over the food ration. Thomas could not manage with the meagre allowance on which Bartholomew apparently flourished and so tense did the situation become that he questioned Bartholomew's sincerity, hinting that he was refreshing himself on the quiet. Where Ebwin's tactics had failed, Thomas's won, and Bartholomew in dudgeon left the island on the next fishing boat. It is possible that he in his turn had not been too pleased at the arrival of another hermit and that Thomas's criticism had merely provided him with an excuse to leave. In vain did Thomas apologise and strike his breast and kiss the sea-weed; Bartholomew went back to Durham and stayed there for a year; with Thomas sending periodic cirenical messages which went sternly unheeded until Bartholomew was somewhat peremptorily ordered back to Farne by the bishop.

And there the two hermits were reconciled and lived happy ever after though how they managed it is a miracle in itself. And strange to relate it was not the ex-prior Thomas who was eventually acclaimed as a saint, but Bartholomew, the moody, the restless and the hyper-sensitive, who preferred the cold swish of waves to the sound of the chant, and the company of wild birds to that of his brethren. In the end he overcame even this, for there were monks with him before he died, to whom he foretold the time of his death and who buried him there on his island.