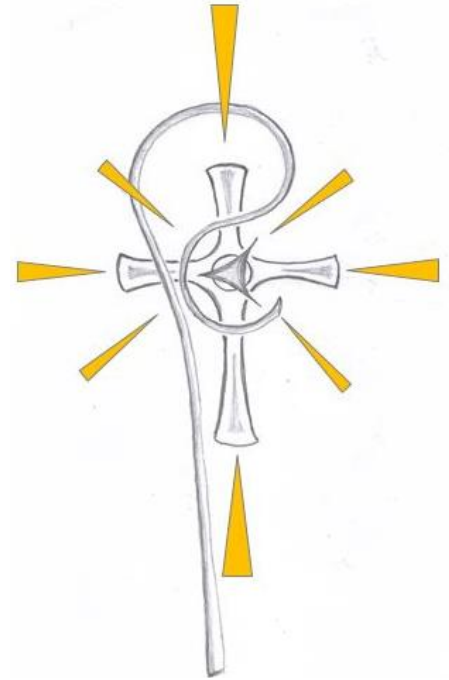


Saints Obscura

The three weeks between Mothering Sunday and Easter, Passion Sunday, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, are richly packed with many scriptural stories and rituals. Meanwhile, barely noticed in the background, are a few characters in our church history, whose examples have inspired us to live the gospel more meaningfully in our own lives.

19th March: St Joseph. This year his memorial date coincides with Mothering Sunday! The husband of Mary helped to safeguard and nurture the child Jesus. What a responsibility! He helps to remind us of the importance of faithful father figures, as well as mother figures, in our lives.



20th March: St Cuthbert. A hill shepherd who saw the aura in the skies when Aidan died and travelled to Holy Island to become a monk and was later made Abbot. This northern saint lived a simple itinerant life – and was well known for his gifts of preaching and healing. He is often depicted with sea otters and eider ducks – affectionately known locally as ‘Cuddy’s Ducks’. He reminds us of our responsibility to befriend wild places and wildlife. Cuthbert was consecrated Bishop in 685 but fell into ill health a year later and died as a hermit on Farne, barely 45 years old. The island features in the current Attenborough series on Wild Isles. Cuthbert inspires us, as Mothers’ Union, to treasure the environment for future families.

21st March: Thomas Cranmer. Author of the Book of Common Prayer in 1549 and 1552, and the original version of the 39 Articles of Faith. He was condemned for treason by Queen Mary and martyred in 1556, aged 67. He is a stark reminder of the cost of discipleship.

24th March: Oscar Romero. A Roman Catholic Archbishop in El Salvador, who stood against violence but spoke up for the poor and for social justice. He was murdered whilst presiding at Mass in his Cathedral on this day in 1980. The world is still in need of people willing to risk their lives for justice and peace; and still in need of prayer.

9th April: Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A German Lutheran pastor and a leader in the ‘Confessing Church’, which spoke up against the Nazi regime in the later 1930’s. He was arrested in 1943 and killed in Flossenburg concentration camp on this day in 1945, just before the end of WW2. His writings were profoundly influential in the founding of Northumbria Community.

Our mini biopic of a few people beloved by Christ ends on Easter Day 2023, when we celebrate the opening of heaven and a new eternal story: **‘He is risen indeed.’**

Thanks be to God... Alleluia!

(Cross design: AEMarr)