

Advent Thought for the Day 2021

Advent 25 by Rev Alan. Stewart

Wednesday 22 December

Caedmon (born 657 AD)



Caedmon was a Northumbrian who tended the animals in the great monastery of Whitby Abbey. We're told that Caedmon loved to listen to music and the stories and songs of others. He himself, however, could not play a note, sing in tune or remember words! Each night when it came to his turn to sing, he would make excuses or run from the great hall. One night he ran to the cattle shed and there fell into a deep and fitful sleep.

He began to dream, and in that dream a man asked him to sing for him. Caedmon protested that he was in the cattle shed precisely because he could not sing. But the man encouraged him, and when Caedmon asked what he should sing about, the man suggested the creation. In that dream, Caedmon sang a song so beautiful it almost made him cry.

When he awoke he had found his voice and a song which he shared with all who would listen. Caedmon's fame grew and he is now widely recognised as the earliest English poet whose name is known.

I believe there is a hymn in every human heart waiting to be discovered. During Advent, perhaps you might want to write your own psalm in your own words, knowing that God will love it, not because of its piety or high literature, but because it came from you.

You might like to start with this prayer from the song of Caedmon:

'I cannot speak unless you loose my tongue: I only stammer and speak uncertainly. But if you touch my mouth my Lord then I will sing the story of your wonders.'