

Nov. 17, St. Hilda of Whitby

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Nov. 17, 2009 NCR Today

The feast of St. Hilda of Whitby is observed by the [Greek Orthodox Church](#), [1] the [Anglican Church](#), [2] and the [Roman Catholic Church](#). [3]

"Christ's servant Abbess Hilda, whom all her acquaintances called Mother because of her wonderful devotion and grace, was not only an example of holy life to members of her own community; for she also brought about the amendment and salvation of many living at a distance, who heard the inspiring story of her industry and goodness."

-- [Venerable Bede](#) [4]

[Hilda](#) [5] hosted the [Synod of Whitby](#). [6] Two of the major issues discussed at the synod were the setting of the date of Easter and the tonsure of monks.

(The Roman tonsure left a circle of hair around a bald spot. The Celtic tonsure left the hair behind a line drawn from ear to ear. Both styles may be seen in the picture.)

Mother Hilda encouraged [Caedmon](#) [7] the cowherd to become a monk and to continue writing poetry in the vernacular.

*Hwæt, ic swefna cyst secgan wylle,
hwæt m? gemætte to midre nihte,
syðþan reordberend reste wunedon.
þ?hte m? þæt ic ges?we syllicre tr?ow
on lyft lædan l?ohte bewunden,
b?ama beorhtost.*

-- [Caedmon](#) [8]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints/2370>

[2] <http://www.wilfrid.com/saints/hilda.htm>

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilda_of_Whitby

[4] http://www.amazon.com/Ecclesiastical-History-English-Penguin-Classics/dp/014044565X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1211137969&sr=8-1#noop

- [5] http://www.wilfrid.com/images/saints/juliet_Mac_michael4.jpg
- [6] http://www.wilfrid.com/Wilfrid_pilgrimage/Whitby_synod.htm
- [7] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%A6dmon>
- [8] http://www.wilfrid.com/images/whitby/caedmon_caedmon_cross.jpg