

ST BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

20th August, 2020

Man of the century! Woman of the century! You see such terms applied to so many today—“golfer of the century,” “composer of the century,” “right tackle of the century”—that the line no longer has any punch. But Western Europe’s “man of the twelfth century,” without doubt or controversy, had to be Bernard of Clairvaux. Adviser of popes, preacher of the Second Crusade, defender of the faith, healer of a schism, reformer of a monastic Order, Scripture scholar, theologian, and eloquent preacher: any one of these titles would distinguish an ordinary man. Yet Bernard was all of these—and he still retained a burning desire to return to the hidden monastic life of his younger days.



In the year 1111, at the age of 20, Bernard left his home to join the monastic community of Citeaux. His five brothers, two uncles, and some 30 young friends followed him into the monastery. Within four years, a dying community had recovered enough vitality to establish a new house in the nearby valley of Wormwoods, with Bernard as abbot. The zealous young man was quite demanding, though more on himself than others. On his feast day today I just thought we could reflect on a collection of some of his sayings:

- “There are those who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge; that is Curiosity. ...
- “There are those who seek knowledge to be known by others that is vanity...”
- “There are those who seek knowledge to serve others, that is love..”
- “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” ...
- “hell is full of good wishes and desires.” ...
- “Many of those who are humiliated are not humble. ...
- “What we love we shall grow to resemble.”
- “The measure of love is love without measure..”

St Bernard, pray for us!!