

## **PAUSE FOR THOUGHT**

*Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor*

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The Venerable Bede was an 8th Century Monk, the first to write an Ecclesiastical History of the English People.

He tells of a group of Anglo-Saxon nobles discussing the new Christian Faith, when one of the noblemen gives this interpretation of life:

“It seems to me that the life of man on earth is like the swift flight of a single sparrow through the banqueting hall where you are sitting at dinner on a winter’s day with your captains and counsellors. In the midst there is a comforting fire to warm the hall. Outside, the storms of winter rain and snow are raging. This sparrow flies swiftly in through one window of the hall and out through another. While he is inside, the bird is safe from the winter storms, but after a few moments of comfort, he vanishes from sight into the wintry world from which he came. So, we appear on earth for a little while – but of what went before this life, or of what follows, we know nothing.”

Well, it is due to Bede that we largely date our history from the Birth of Christ. Before that time, time was dated on the system of the accession dates of the Emperors but Bede thought, no, it should be from the Birth of Christ.

Jesus Christ gave us abundant proof that there is a God who loves us and from whom in a mysterious way we came and to whom, at the end of our life, we return. So when you sing this Christmas, or hear singing, Silent Night, Holy Night, remember that it was into this world that Jesus came, the Son of God, to bring us fresh and good news of the love of God and through that knowledge, to bring us meaning for our lives and hope for eternal life.