

Homily for November 15, 2019

St. Albert the Great was an eminent scientist, philosopher, and theologian and is called “the Great” because of his immense erudition. He was born in Germany, around the year 1200. In 1241, he went to the University of Paris, where he earned his master’s degree and later lectured (1245–48). He then moved to Cologne and there opened his order’s first school. *He was a Dominican). Among his Cologne students was St. Thomas Aquinas.

During his lifetime, he was regarded as a man superior in every branch of learning and was called the wonder and miracle of his age. In addition to his philosophical and theological writings, he wrote treatises on physics, meteors, minerals, sleep, breathing, and botany. In recognition of his theological expertise, he was invited to attend the second Council of Lyon (1274). He died in Cologne on November 15, 1280. Pope Pius XI canonized him in 1931 and declared him a doctor of the Church.

We see in Albert a man who represented this great love for the use of human reason, through his observation of the natural world, with his deep love and understanding of theology. He so clearly represents the Catholic understanding that all truth is God’s truth. Therefore rather than there being a great divide between the sciences, philosophy and theology, the Church, through the lives of men like Albert, celebrate the catholicity of knowledge. They are all part of the whole and bring us to a deepening relationship with God and the world he has given into our care.

Our reading from Wisdom expresses how those who study the visible world can so easily miss the creator behind his creation. Yet, St Albert was a man who grasped the point at the heart of today’s passage:

***For from the greatness and beauty of created things
comes a corresponding perception of their Creator***

And yet for so many they examine God’s works and still fail to find the Lord behind the works. . There has always been a way that people choose to disconnect the creation for the creator. But not with the keen intellect and alive soul of St. Albert. As our opening Collect so aptly states we are to see how human wisdom and divine faith are partners, the two wings of a soaring eagle, as Pope St John Paull II wrote in 1998.

Listen again to our Collect for today:

***O God, who made the Bishop Saint Albert great
by his joining of human wisdom to divine faith,
grant, we pray, that we may so adhere to the truths he taught,
that through progress in learning
we may come to a deeper knowledge and love of you.***

It is this interrelationship so in display in the life of Albert the Great that invites us to, on his feast day rejoice with Psalm 19:

***The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.***