

850th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Bernard



January 18, 2024

It was just 850 years ago, and barely 20 years after his death: on January 18 in the year of grace 1174, Pope Alexander III, from Anagni, addressed the Church of France, Louis VII, King of France, all the abbots of the Order of Cîteaux and, in particular, the monks of the Abbey of Clairvaux, to solemnly announce to all and to everyone that he had decided to respond favorably to the request that had once been presented to him to inscribe Bernard, "during his lifetime abbot of Clairvaux", in the catalog of saints. For, he told the ecclesiastical authorities of France, "he is worthy of living live in our memory first of all, and in that

of all the children of the Church, and to receive forever the expression of our pious respects". This is why, he added "we have ordered that henceforth the feast of his commemoration be celebrated publicly".

As for the monks of Clairvaux, he exhorted them as follows: "Since it is of the utmost importance for you to imitate his life and have his glory respected, take to heart in all things to apply yourselves to following in the footsteps of this holy father and to celebrating the feast of his sanctity, so that, having merited to share his way of life, you may be judged worthy one day to share in his felicity".



Of course, Clairvaux no longer exists! But the community where he received his initial training lives on, as does the Cistercian family in all its diverse expressions. As, a few days later, we celebrate the memory of our holy Founders, may it also be good for us, on this January 18, 2024, to recall "the memory of the life of this blessed confessor and the brilliance with which his faith, religion and doctrine shone, as well as the luminous rays with which he filled the Church of God" (Letter to the monks of Clairvaux)!