



The church nave at Lindisfarne Priory which was made famous by Cuthbert and became one of the most significant centers of early Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England. Also important were the monasteries at Jarrow and Wearmouth where Bede served. One of Bede's major works was to rewrite the *Life of St. Cuthbert*.

## LANGUAGE FACT III

### THE VOLITIVE AND OPTATIVE SUBJUNCTIVE

You just learned that the subjunctive in the main clause may indicate a desirable action.

Such a “desirable” subjunctive may be volitive or optative.

A **volitive** subjunctive is similar to an imperative. The only difference between the volitive subjunctive and the imperative is that the volitive subjunctive indicates a somewhat milder command than the imperative. The volitive subjunctive is translated with an imperative or with the words “you should . . . /you may . . .”

*Rēs parēs!*

“Prepare the things!” or “You should/may prepare the things!”

When this subjunctive is in the first or in the third person, it is often translated with the words “let me/her/him/us/them . . .”

*Ad īnsulam nāvīgēmus!*

“Let us sail to the island!”

The **optative** subjunctive indicates a wish. It is often, but not always, accompanied by the word **utinam**. The optative subjunctive is usually translated with the word “may” and **utinam** means “if only.”

*Utinam dī nōs ament!*

“May the gods love us!” or “If only the gods may love us!”

The optative subjunctive and the volitive subjunctive in the **first** and **third** person is negative when **nē** is added. In the case of the negative optative, we sometimes see **utinam nē**.

*Utinam nē pauper sim!*

“May I not be poor” or “If only I may not be poor!”

*Nē ad īnsulam nāvigent!*

“Let them not sail to the island!”

*Nē malae rēs nōs exspectent!*

“Let bad things not await us!”



### BY THE WAY

The negative of the volitive subjunctive in the **second** person is formed in the same way as the negative imperative: **nōlī, nōlīte** + **infinitive**.

*Nōlīte ad īnsulam nāvīgāre!*

Do not sail to the island!

Beautifully situated overlooking the Wear River, the Cathedral of Durham was begun in 1093 CE and retains most of its Norman craftsmanship and original design. It was built to house the shrine of St. Cuthbert, Bede’s beloved spiritual mentor, and Bede’s own remains were transferred to Durham there. A shrine houses them in the cathedral’s Galilee Chapel.

