

Keeping Colmcille's Memory Alive

Columba/Colmcille (the 'Dove of the Church') died 1,500 years ago this year. Unlike many of the early Irish saints, his memory has been kept alive by oral tradition, writings, church dedications and organised commemorations. Here, **Helen Meehan** describes just some of these . . .

Tradition

The prophecies and maledictions of St Colmcille were kept alive by the rural people of Ireland and the Gaelic speakers in Scotland. The people transferred many of the perceived powers of the pagan gods to the saints, especially power over the elements – wind and water. When Colmcille slipped on the stones as he crossed rivers (in the days before bridges), he cursed the waters saying that no salmon would ever inhabit them and this was believed to be effective in Lough Mourne, the River Finn, the Moyola, etc. His historical prophecies range from the coming of Bishop Montgomery to Derry in 1606, to one for our own days of climate change, when the only difference between summer and winter would be the leaves on the deciduous trees.

Writings

Shortly after his death in 597, Dallan Forgill composed the Amra Colmcille (and elegy) in the saint's memory. Using manuscripts written on Iona, the third abbot, Cummann Fiad, and later Adamnan/ Eunan, the ninth abbot, wrote about his life. Though not a biography in the modern sense, Eunan's Vita Columbae gave much information about the saint and helped to spread his cult. Likewise, the saint's life, written in 1532 by Manus O'Donnell, chief of Tir Conaill, did much to keep the saint's memory alive. The literary output of the Franciscan Friars in Louvain in the seventeenth century continued this trend in works such as John Colgan's Tradis Thaumaturgae and Acta Sanctorum Hibernia, Colmcille featured largely in annals that were written/ translated in those years such as 'The Annals of the Four Masters' (1632 – 1636), 'The Annals of Ulster (1588) and in Geoffrey Keating's early history of Ireland, 'Foras Feasa ar Eirinn'. There was a renewed interest in hagiology from the late eighteenth century. In Ireland, Colmcille featured in works of Canon J O'Hanlon and Rev C P Meehan. In 1856, N O'Kearney published a translation of the prophecies of both Colmcille and St Malachy. In Scotland, Colmcille is frequently mentioned in 'Carmia Gadilica' by Alex Cahmichael and in J Smiths earlier 'The Life of Colmcille the Apostle and Patron of the Ancient Scots'. After visiting Iona in his 'Journey to the Hebrides', Samuel Johnson wrote, 'That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona'.

Buildings

Shortly after the Ulster Plantation, the first Angelican Cathedral in Ulster was built in Derry and dedicated to St Columb. The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were times of unprecedented church building in Ireland. There are more than sixty churches and colleges dedicated to the saint in Ireland, many embellished with statues and stained glass windows, honouring him. The Columban Arch at the junction of the nave and transept in the Cathedral of Ss Eunan and Columba in Letterkenny exhibits a history of Colmcille's life. The ceiling by Amici in St Columba's Chapel (now the baptistery) has many scenes from his life also. Colmcille's churches in Tory (Pollen) Arranmore, Gortahork, Falcarragh and Carrick in Donegal, in St Colmcille's Church in Knockaconey and St Treas Church in Newbridge in the Archdiocese of Armagh, as well as in Churchtown near Cloyne and Douglas in Cork. The Columban window in Gartan depicts his arrival in Iona and his death there.

The Drumcat window by Michael Healy in Letterkenny Cathedral recalls that episode in the saints life. A window in St Columb's College, Derry, shows the saint preaching and distributing Holy Communion, The Long Tower Church in Derry depicts an angel instructing Adamnan/ Eunan to write the saints life. A window in Derry's Guildhall shows the saint in the oakgrove, Doire Colmcille.

There are Columban windows by the celebrated artist Harry Clarke in Ballinrobe Church, in the Honan Chapel in Cork, Roscrae Abbey in Tipperary and Kiltomar Church in Galway where the saint has a quill in his hand. The saint is frequently depicted with doves as in the window in Dunkeld Cathedral in Scotland. Among the many Columban windows in Scotland, those in Iona Abbey and St Margaret's Chapel in Edinburgh Castle are the most famous. Colmcille features in windows also in England and America.

Commemorations

The idea of commemorating the saint's death in Derry was first mooted at the Derry Association dinner in Glasgow in April 1896. Commemorations also took place in Scotland, Donegal and Hollywood in County Down. The foundation stone for St Colmcille's Church there was brought from Gartan. In Scotland, pilgrimages to Iona were organised by both Presbyterian and Catholic Churches. The commemorations in Derry diocese were religious and were mostly held in the Long Tower Church. Bishop P O'Donnell of Raphoe organised a three day celebration in Gartan. Cardinal Logue was appointed Papal Legate. The event received massive publicity even in national papers such as 'The Freemans Journal', 'Irisleabhar na Gaedhlice' devoted its July 1897 issue to it. A 176-page book, 'Cuimhne Colmcille' (Remembering Colmcille) containing the sermons and speeches edited by the diocesan historian, Dr. Maguire, was published afterwards.

The 1,400th anniversary of the saint's death was celebrated as a national event in 1997. Postage stamps were issued by both the Irish and British Governments. A special icon was written by Sr Aloysius McVeagh. The main celebration was an ecumenical service held on the shores of Gartan Lake on 9th June. Cardinal Winnipeg of Glasgow was Papal Envoy. President Mary Robinson attended the celebrations in Donegal, Derry and Iona. Pilgrimages were organised to Iona and to local Columban sites. Masses were celebrated at many outdoor penitential sites for the first time in, perhaps, two hundred years. Most commemorations were held around the saints feast day in June, but in the Archdiocese of Armagh, the celebrations were held at St Colmcille's Church in Carrickmore in August. Let us hope that the 2021 celebrations will continue to keep alive the memory of Ireland's first and greatest missionary.

Parish of Ahamlish and Inishmurray

Grange ♦ Cliffoney ♦ Mullaghmore

Rev. Christy McHugh

Tel: 071 9163100

Web address: www.ahamlish.com Email: ahamlishparish@gmail.com

Postal Address: Parochial House, Grange, Co. Sligo. F91 HR26

Issue 230, Saturday 19th June 2021



Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Courage.

It is I.

Do not be afraid

Visit us on ahamlish.com

&

Ahamlish Parish Sligo Facebook Page.

Join us for every mass online through our FB Page at Grange Church

Masses Cliffoney		
Sat 19 th June	3pm	Baptism – Mullaghmore
Sun 20 th June	10.30m	Father's Day Michael Harrison (40 th Anniversary) Patrick + Anna Kerins
Sun 27 th June	10.30am	James + Catherine Barry + Bernard Barry, Cloonkeen
Sunday Collection:		<i>Collection: 402</i>

Pope's Intention (universal) for June 2021

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

Star of the Sea Retreat Centre - Mullaghmore

Upcoming Events in Star of the Sea, Retreat & Conference Centre, Mullaghmore, are available to view on www.staroftheseacentre.com (New website address). For more information and bookings please contact Louise or Frank at staroftheseacentre@gmail.com or on 071 9176722. Additional events will be added over the coming weeks.

Lough Derg 2021

Lough Derg regrets that it will not be possible in 2021 to reopen Station Island for the Traditional Three Day Pilgrimage or even for the autumn programme of Day Retreats. Lough Derg will again offer the opportunity to "Do Lough Derg from wherever you are" on 3rd – 5th July. The outdoor *Pilgrimage on the Lough Shore Pilgrim Path* will also be available as the summer goes on. Further information from Lough Derg office 071-9861518 or www.loughderg.org

A Daily Offering Prayer

Here I am, Lord; words many have said to you.
Here I am, is what you say to me at the
Beginning of the day.
Thank you for love, grace and protection in life.
In return I offer you the prayer, joys, loves,
Sufferings and hopes of this day.
May all I do and say be for your greater glory.
Amen.

With Jesus in the Night

Thanks
For all that was good in it.
Thanks for help in getting through difficulties.
Keep safe and well in your love all I care for, near and far.
Look after with love all who have no place to rest tonight
Or who go to rest hungry.
May I help them as best I can tomorrow
Amen.

Mary's Meals

www.presentformyteacher.com is where parents and guardians can buy an online gift for their children's teachers in exchange for a donation towards the work of Mary's Meals. Every donation will help to support their mission to provide nutritious daily meals to some of the world's poorest children in their place of education. Donations of **any** amount are gratefully accepted and for just €18.30, a child can receive daily meals while they learn for an entire school year. It is really two gifts in one: your children can safely send a beautiful e-card via email to recognise and thank their teacher, while simultaneously giving a gift of hope to hungry children across the globe.

Masses Grange - All these masses available on Facebook		
Sat 19 th June	8pm	Margaret Nicholson (8 th Anniversary) Donal Connolly's Months Mind Mai Sheerin (1 st Anniversary)
Sun 20 th June	12.00	Annie + Jimmy McSharry John Brennan (5 th Anniversary)
Mon 21 st June	9.30am	Nancy Murphy, Bohernabreena, Dublin
Tue 22 nd June	9.30am	Private Intention
Wed 23 rd June	8pm	Rod Feighney (39 th Anniversary)
Fri 25 th June	8pm	Brid Kelly, Oughterard + parents Delia + Owen McEvilly, sisters Mary + Celia + brother Pat
Sat 26 th June	8pm	Wedding: Nicola + Justin Patsy Foley (1 st Anniversary) Rose Hoey + John Leydon
Sun 27 th June	12.00	Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday Collection:		<i>Grange Collection: €655</i>

Please remember in your prayers:

Philip McElhatton, Bristol, England and formerly of Fintona, Co. Tyrone, died suddenly 7th June at home. Our sympathy to his wife Julie and son Niall, daughter Ellen, daughter-in-law Sophie and sister Mary Gallagher, Edenrevagh, Cliffoney. Funeral will take place in Bristol on July 1st. Mass will be offered in Cliffoney at a later date.

Fr. Sean Cunningham OP Holy Cross Friary, Sligo, died 13th June at Mowlan Nursing Home, formerly Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. Funeral Mass took place at Holy Cross Friary, Sligo on Wednesday with burial in the Dominican Plot, Sligo Cemetery. Our sympathy to his family and to the Prior and Dominican Community, Sligo.

Fr. Seán Gildea OFM died 11th June in his 98th year, Rosstown formerly Riverstown, Co. Sligo, Zimbabwe for 43 years. Our sympathy to the Guardian Fr. Eugene + his Franciscan confreres at Rosstown. Funeral Mass took place at the Friary on Wednesday at 2pm with burial in adjoining cemetery.

40th Anniversary of Novena in Honour of Our Lady Queen of Peace. 16th – 24th June 2021

Hosted by Fr. Ruairi O'Domhnaill, Medjugorje Council of Ireland. Available online from St Conleth's Parish, Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Daily 6pm.

Happy 100th Birthday

Dolly Foran, Lislary, Ballinful 100th Birthday. Our congrats to her and all her fellow residents at St. John's Hospital. Many remember her from her days in hospitality industry + Yeats Country Ryan Hotel. Mass will be offered on June 28th at 9.30am in Grange Church in thanksgiving for Dolly's long and healthy life.

Mass of Christm

Bishop Kevin will celebrate the Mass of Christm on Tuesday 22nd June at 4.00pm in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Sligo. As this is the Mass at which the priests of the diocese renew their commitment to their priestly ministry, the majority of places available under the Covid-19 restrictions will already be taken. We do wish to invite as many people as possible to join us in prayer as we bless the Oils which will be used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders and the Sick over the coming months. You can join the Mass online at www.sligocathedral.ie

A Blessing on Father's Day – June 20th

God is the giver of life, human and divine. May God bless all fathers. Together with their mothers they are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. May they also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.