

Ecumenical Patriarchate

Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain

Edinburgh Orthodox Community of St Andrew

Newsletter

Issue 2

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The second issue of our Parish Bulletin is dedicated to the Saints of the British Isles and, especially, of Scotland. The cloud of holy men and women who lived and died in Christ during the time prior to the tragic division of the Christian world (gradually effected between the 9th and 11th c.) are the most precious fruits of this hospitable land.

Once a British Orthodox priest wrote that the British people who convert to Orthodoxy do not embrace an exotic, imported form of Christianity; they return to the faith of their Fathers. This is a truth anyone can verify by reading the lives of the early British Saints. The many holy monks who lived on these Isles led lives strikingly similar to those who struggled in ascetism in the deserts of Egypt or Asia Minor. The decentralized organization of the Christian communities around an "Elder", the importance of inner prayer and the general liturgical life of the early Christians in this country reveal a surprisingly close connection with the Orthodox East.

In recent times, by God's Grace, there has been an ever-increasing awareness and veneration of the Saints of the British Isles in traditional Orthodox

Countries. In Greece, the newly canonized St Porphyrios of Kausokalyvia, is known to have been very fond of the British Saints. Following his advice books have been written about the them and chapels have been dedicated to their memory.

From the much loved all over the Orthodox world, St Paisios, we have learnt about the amazing prophesy of his God Father, St Arsenios of Cappadocia: 'When the British Saints are honoured in Britain, Orthodoxy will flourish again on that land'.

Let us all then discover the lives of the British Saints and be inspired by their love for Christ. We will be moved by their simplicity of manner and their total commitment to the Gospel. Let us ask for their intercessions. Their prayer avails much! Also, let us try to continue, in some way, their work: to help more people come to Christ and to embrace the True Faith, primarily, by being ourselves faithful Christians.

Fr Raphael and the editorial team

News

Sunday 22nd July was a day of great joy for our Parish. Our Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain served the Divine Liturgy and ordained Christos Kakalis, a lecturer of the School of Architecture in the University of Newcastle, a Deacon naming him Antonios. The new Deacon has been a member of our Parish for many years



though he had to be away for some time because of academic commitments. Fr Antonios will serve in our Parish on weekends while still teaching at the University on weekdays.

Axios!

Also, our Archbishop ordained three Readers: John Michael Mountney, Neofytos Mavridis and Athanasios Gibrixis.

Axioi!

History of Orthodox Britain

By Stephen Griffith

In telling the story of Britain's early Christian history it must be remembered that Britain as we know it today did not exist. When Christianity first emerged most of Britain was part of the Roman Empire. In the year A.D. 410 the Roman legions would abandon Britain. Former-Roman Britain was then divided into several kingdoms inhabited by people known as 'Britons' who spoke Brythonic (an ancient form of Welsh). North-east of Roman-occupied Britain lived a people known as the Picts and to the north-west was the Gaelic-speaking kingdom of Dál Riada inhabited by the Scots.

The British Isles have a long history of Christianity going back to the earliest years of the Church. A number of traditions exist about how Christianity arrived here. The earliest attested tradition is that St. Aristobulus (one of the Seventy Apostles) was the first to preach in Britain. A later tradition states that St. Joseph of Arimathea came to Britain and built the first Christian church here at Glastonbury. In 314 three British bishops are recorded as being present at the Synod of Arles in what is now France. Just prior to this was the death of Britain's first martyr St. Alban who was put to death for his faith in the city that now bears his name.

In 394 a British priest-monk travelled north of the Roman frontier to evangelise the pagan Picts of Galloway in what is now Scotland. This was St. Ninian who established a monastery at Whithorn. Monasticism had been recently brought to Western

Europe by the missionary-bishop St. Martin of Tours. St. Ninian had visited St. Martin's monastery. St. Ninian thus established in Britain the practice developed by St. Martin of using monasteries as centres for both prayer and missionary activity. Whithorn became famous for its school at a time when Roman civilization was collapsing across Britain.

One of the foremost saints to shine among the Britons was St. David of Wales who founded his monastery in the far west of modern south-Wales at the small city known as St. Davids. St. Kentigern (also called St. Mungo) was a missionary-bishop to the northern Britons of the kingdom of Strathclyde. The monastery he established became known as Glasgu meaning 'the happy family' from which derived the name of the city of Glasgow that grew up around the monastery.

In the fifth-century another Briton St. Patrick had travelled to Ireland to evangelise the pagan Irish. Ireland would become a land radiant with saints and a base for later mission to pagan areas of Britain. Irish scholars were renowned across Europe.

In 563 an Irish monk, St. Columba led a mission to the pagan Scots of Dál Riada. He established a monastery on the island of Iona which became a centre of mission to both the Scots and the Picts. Other important Scottish saints of this time include: St. Machar, a disciple of St. Columba who became the first bishop of Aberdeen; St. Moulag, whose miracle-working staff is still treasured on the island of

Lismore; and St. Fillan, whose cave at Pittenweem in Fife is still a place of pilgrimage.

With the withdrawal of the Roman legions Britain became vulnerable to attack from pagan Germanic peoples from north-west Europe - Angle's, Saxon's and Jutes (collectively known as the Anglo-Saxons). These peoples invaded much of Britain establishing their own kingdoms. Free Britons managed to hold-out in what is now Wales and Cornwall where forms of Brythonic are still spoken.

In 597 St. Gregory the Great (the Dialogist), Orthodox pope of Rome sent missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons. The mission led by St. Augustine succeeded in converting King Ethelbert of Kent. St. Augustine was appointed the first Archbishop of Canterbury. From Kent missionaries were sent to other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

A second mission to the Anglo-Saxons from the north was sent from Iona led by St. Aidan. St. Aidan founded a monastery on the island of Lindisfarne (close to the modern Scottish-English border) in what was then the kingdom of Northumbria. This became a centre of mission to other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. St. Chad of Litchfield and St. Cedd apostle of Essex both began monastic life on Lindisfarne. The most famous monk of Lindisfarne was St. Cuthbert. Among the other saints who shone in Northumbria at this time was St. Bede the Venerable of Jarrow. As well as writing commentaries on Holy Scripture and other subjects it is thanks to St. Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People that we know so much of Britain's early Christian heritage

The two Anglo-Saxon missions would eventually clash over some differences in practice. Most notably they observed different dates for the feast of Pascha. Unlike the rest of the Christian world Christians following the Irish tradition celebrated Pascha on the Jewish Passover. A local church council was called by the king of Northumbria to settle the issue. The Synod of Whitby in 664 decided in favour of the Roman practice. This decision would eventually be accepted across the rest of Britain.

It was also around this time (c. 732) that a Greek monk St. Rule (or Regulus) is believed to have arrived in Pictland with relics of the Holy Apostle Andrew taken from Patras. The relics would be enshrined at the place that grew into the city of St. Andrews. One

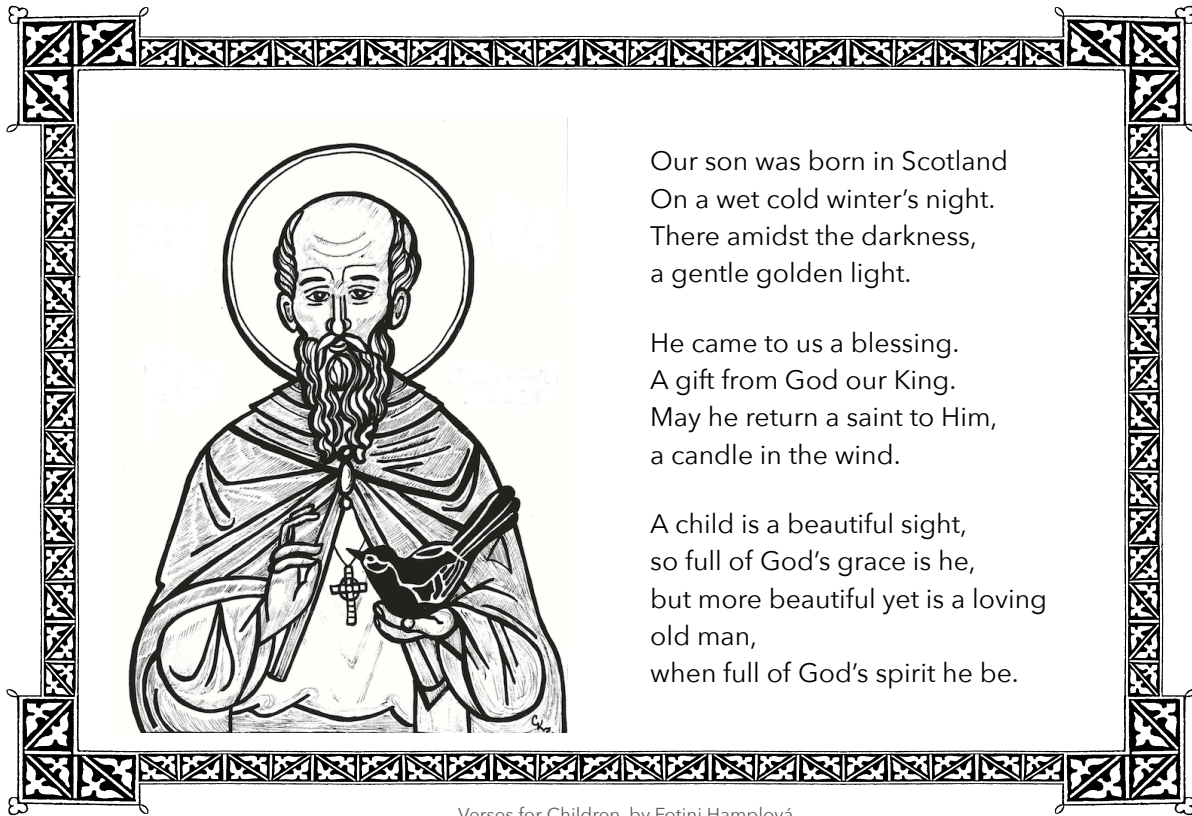
of St. Rule's companions who travelled with him from Greece was St. Triduana who for a time lived at Restalrig (now a suburb of Edinburgh).

June 793 saw the first raid on Britain by the pagan Vikings from Scandinavia. Their first target was the monastery of Lindisfarne. Two years later Iona suffered the same fate. The Vikings would crush the Pictland and take-over many of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Among those who suffered martyrdom at their hands was St. Edmund, king of East Anglia. Eventually in the late ninth-century the remaining free Anglo-Saxon's would successfully fought back under the Righteous King Alfred the Great. After a decisive victory the southern lands would be partitioned between King Alfred and the Danish King Guthrum (who also agreed to accept baptism). Not long after the two kingdoms would be united to create one kingdom of England. King Alfred would do much to establish monasteries and encourage learning - including translating important texts into the Anglo-Saxon language.

Around the same time the king of Dál Riada Kenneth MacAlpin defeated the Vikings and united the kingdoms of Scots and Picts creating in 843 one kingdom of Alba which would grow into modern Scotland.

Through all this history the Christians of Britain understood themselves as members of one Church which included the East as well as the West. Significantly when in the years leading up to the ecclesiastical rupture between Rome and Constantinople of 1054 the British church did not accept many of the religious reforms that would contribute to the eventual schism between Rome and the Orthodox Church. In 1066 England was invaded by the Normans with a papal blessing. The Normans soon set about re-organising the English church according to the practices of the by-now schismatic papacy. Similar reforms would take place in Scotland at the same time under Queen Margaret.

Now with the return of Orthodox faith and life in the British Isles we see the continuation of this great history. May the saints of the Isles ever intercede for and inspire us as we continue our Christian struggle in the lands they sanctified.



Our son was born in Scotland
On a wet cold winter's night.
There amidst the darkness,
a gentle golden light.

He came to us a blessing.
A gift from God our King.
May he return a saint to Him,
a candle in the wind.

A child is a beautiful sight,
so full of God's grace is he,
but more beautiful yet is a loving
old man,
when full of God's spirit he be.

Verses for Children, by Fotini Hamplová

Recipe: Gemista

6	big red peppers	500g	tomato passata	1 tsp	sugar
150g	chopped red onion	1 tbsp	black pepper	2	vegetable stock cubes dissolved in ½ glass warm water
500g	mince meat (beaf or pork)	½ tsp	sweet paprika	3 tbsp	olive oil
200g	rice (rich in starch)	2 tbsp	dried mint		juice of 1 lemon
100g	chopped parsley	1 tbsp	salt		

1. Cut off the top 1cm of the peppers and clean the inside. Keep the top part in order to cover the stuffed pepper at the end.
2. Add the olive oil to the pan
3. When the oil is warm enough, add the minced meat and the chopped onions
4. Stir often and break the minced meat apart into small pieces.
5. When the meat turns white add salt, pepper, mint, paprika, and sugar. Stir well.
6. Cook for another 5 minutes, then move the mix into a large bowl.
7. Add the rice to the bowl with the meat mix.
8. Continue by adding 300g of the pasata, parsley, vegetable stock and lemon juice.
9. Taste and adjust salt if necessary.
10. Take the vegetables and with the help of a spoon start filling the top two thirds (as the rice will grow and you will need the free space). Close them with the top piece and place them in a tall pot.
11. When the pot is full, add the remaining pasata and half a glass of water.
12. Cover the pot with a plate and then cover the pot partially with it's lid.
13. Cook them on medium heat for 25 minutes. Lower the heat and cook until the water around

Life of St Columba

By Gregory Matheson

St Columba lived from 521 to 597. He was born into the royal Ui Neill family in Northern Ireland. He was a descendent of Niall of the Nine Hostages- so named because he kept the sons of local rulers as captives to ensure the loyalty of their families. This gives an insight into the complex politics of Ireland in the 6th century.

Political complexities and rivalries were to provide a formative environment for the younger St Columba. The most notorious of these episodes was his copying a psalter belonging to St Finian of Moville. St Columba determined that he had a right to retain his copy whilst St Finian felt that it should have been his property. This ultimately led to the battle of Cul Dreimhne (somewhere between 555-561) where supporters of the two monastics fought each other. Another political dispute concerned his giving sanctuary to an enemy of King Diarmait which led to battle between Columba's Ui Neill tribe and the High King.

Some have speculated that it was because St Columba repented of his earlier involvement with bloodshed that he then went into exile in Scotland. At this time Scotland was not a unified country, but fractured between the Western Dal Riata kingdom of the Scots (ironically Irish Gaels) and the Picts (a tribe native to Scotland who probably spoke a Celtic language related to modern Welsh).

It was possibly because of this fractured nature of Scotland and the tensions between the tribes that St Columba was invited to Dal Riata by its ruler Conall, as a unifying force for the Dal Riata Gaels. However, whilst Conall invited St Columba to run a monastery in Iona, the Pictish King Brude also claimed sovereignty over the island.

Whilst the Picts and Gaels had tense relationships, Columba's journeys were largely peaceful and fruitful. Due to the deeply forested nature of Scotland and its unknown terrain, he travelled across the Great Glen Fault to reach Eastern Scotland- a journey which involves travelling along a series of lochs- Loch Lhynne, Loch Lochy and Loch Ness. It was in the

course of this journeys that he encountered and used the sign of the cross to banish a water beast in the River Ness which may later have created the legends of the Loch Ness Monster. He met King Brude in Inverness. According to some accounts Brude had bolted the gate to his castle and St Columba made the sign of the cross over it and the bolts of the gate flew open. At any rate, their meeting was successful and St Columba's mission in Iona lasted until his death in 597. He worked tirelessly to bring the Gospel to both the Dal Riata Gaels and the Picts and trained other monastics and missionaries at his monastery.

He died peacefully after predicting his own death and Iona continued to be a centre of monastic Christianity in Scotland until long after his death.



Miracles of St Columba

There are many miracles attributed to St Columba. He was said to have made a stone float to demonstrate his powers to King Brude, he is said to have raised a child from the dead and to have turned water into wine. He was said as well to have been bathed in Holy Light.

A Little British Gerontikon

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

From St. Columba's last words to his monks

'Love one another unfeignedly. Peace. If you keep this course according to the example of the holy fathers, God, Who strengthens the good, will help you, and I dwelling with Him shall intercede for you. He will supply not only enough for the needs of this present life, but also the eternal good things that are prepared as a reward for those who keep the Lord's commandments.'

A saying of St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne - concerning being woken at night

'Nobody vexes me by waking me up. In fact I am pleased, for by driving away drowsiness he had made me turn my mind to doing something useful.'

From St. Bede's 'Life of St. Cuthbert'

'So full was he of sorrow for sin, so much aflame with heavenly yearnings, that he could never finish the Liturgy without shedding tears. He would imitate, as was only fitting, the rite he was performing, by offering himself up to God with a contrite heart. He urged his people to lift up their hearts and give thanks to the Lord God more by the yearnings of his own heart than by the sound of his voice, more by sighs than by chanting.'

From 'The Alphabet of Devotion' (a sixth-century monastic text associated with Iona)

'Love of the living God cleanses the soul. It satisfies the mind. It increases rewards. It drives out vices. It despises the world. It cleanses, it concentrates thoughts [...].'

'The four sayings we should have recourse to, if we shall not have fulfilled them: devotion towards God, calmness towards people, goodwill to every single person, expectation of death every single day.'

From a Commentary on the First Epistle of St. John by St. Bede the Venerable

'He, however who keeps His word, truly in him the love of God has been made perfect [1 John 2:5]. He truly knows God then who proves that he has his charity by keeping his commandments. For this is what it is to know God, to love. For anyone who does not love Him shows clearly that he does not know how lovable He is, that he has not learned to taste and see how gentle and sweet the Lord is, when he does not strive to be pleasing in His sight by continual exertion.'