



Vox Clamantis

Bulletin of the Society of Saint Pius X in Scotland

August 2020

"The will to do, the soul to dare"

Dear Faithful,

I had wanted, in the grand scheme of things, to devote our main article this month to the mysterious figure of St. Blaán (sometimes spelled Blane) whose feast day occurs on 10th August. The constraints, however, of an enormous apostolate, shared between the two priests in residence, hampered by the extremely repressive measures imposed by the Government and, additionally, the National Library being closed, have all meant serious research into this bishop and abbot from the Litany of Scottish saints was simply not possible. Instead I resume what we know in a brief summary here and have instead put in the final part of our series on the Scottish Reformation, looking at the consolidation of the events of 1560 under the minority of James VI as well as his very long reign.



St. Blaán's well, now covered by an iron grille.

Born on Bute sometime in the 6th century, Blaán received his education in Ireland. His uncle, St. Cathan, had founde

a monastery in Bute and, when Blaán returned, oversaw his training as a monk and it was probably he who consecrated him as a bishop. Blaán succeeded his uncle as abbot of the monastery (the remains of whose circular wall may still be seen) and bishop for the surrounding area. The remains of the early 12th century church, built in his honour, are all that is left, since the time of the so-called Reformation, of the edifice erected in his honour, but it was built on the same site, the monastery having been abandoned some time around 790 in the Viking



St. Blaán's church, at Kingarth, Bute.

raids. Just to the West of the church is a well, called St. Blaán's Well which is consonant with the typical life of a Celtic saint of this period.

To find another typical element, the bell, we have to move to Dunblane, where Blaán went as a missionary to the Picts sometime later. Very little remains of his monastery there either but the Cathedral of Dunblane is built on the original site. The bell kept in the Cathedral is said to be Blaán's bell.

Miracles attribute to him include the raising of a chieftain's son from the dead and, most necessary in our own day, the curing of the blind. It is also said that he could kindle a fire just using his fingers.

Though no contemporary life survives, there is no doubt of the enormous devotion to St. Blaán in Scotland for centuries. Various place names attest to this from Strathblane, Auchenblane, St. Blane's Chapels in Fortingall and Balquhiddier to many Kilblanes in Kintyre, Inveraray, Greenock and many others.

I have resumed the Mass timetable on the back of this bulletin but, of course, that is contingent on our continued freedom to worship. For the moment, Masses will continue to be streamed from Edinburgh on Sunday at 11am.

With every good wish and blessing,

Rev. Sebastian Wall (Prior)

THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

Pt. VI – END OF THE BEGINNING



Already back in 1559, on 27th February in Berwick, one of the most notable compacts was to be made between the Lord James Stewart, Lord Ruthven and three other Scottish commissioners, together with the Duke of Norfolk (the Warden of the North of England). This, in fact, was to ensure not only the triumph of the Congregation and therefore the making of Scotland a Protestant country but foresaw this latter, at some later date, becoming a constituent part of a Greater Britain. Of course, the unexpected arrival of the legitimate heir back in Scotland after the death of her French husband threatened to bring all these plans to nought. But Mary was not her mother and, refusing to put herself at the head of a Catholic party meant that many of the nobles, though unsympathetic to the new religion, did nothing. The situation with the considerable property of the Church was similarly evolving. Originally, Maitland of Lethington had divided the revenues from these (back in 1561): one-third to the Crown and the Protestant church, two-thirds to the “auld possessouris” for the term of their lives (after which it would be sequestered by the Crown). This silenced the corrupt clergy and those nobles who held these lands “in commendam”, many of whom, indeed, were Lords of the Congregation. By 1578 all these lands were annexed by the Crown.



A stylised portrait of Queen Mary with her son James. In reality she never saw him from when he was 10 months old.

Mary was still a young queen and presumably her cautiousness was motivated by the thought that she conceivably had plenty of time to wrest back control of the country. In 1565, she married her half cousin, Henry Stewart,

Lord Darnley and the next year gave birth to a son and heir, James. Everyone knows of the subsequent murder of Darnley 8 months later, the Queen’s subsequent marriage to Bothwell and the uprising orchestrated against them, forcing Mary to abdicate in favour of her infant son, whom, after her exile to England later that year, she never saw again.

Since the new King, at 10 months old, was incapable of governing, regents were appointed to oversee his upbringing. The first, the Earl of Moray, was Queen Mary’s half-brother but a virulent Protestant. In 1568 he tried to get England’s approval of his regency but was unsuccessful as Elizabeth, at this time, was unwilling to oppose the legitimacy of Mary’s claim to the throne. In 1570, he was killed. The new regent, Lennox, was Darnley’s father and, therefore, the King’s grandfather. He was at first persuaded to send James overseas to be educated as a Catholic by Father William Crichton, a Jesuit. The Duke signed an agreement but the plan needed money and while Fr. Crichton struggled with the delays of the Roman Curia and the Catholic powers, the anti-Catholic nobles seized the boy, killing Lennox in Stirling, probably at the instigation of Elizabeth, and once more the persecuting laws were put into force. The next regent, the Earl of Mar, was short-lived and was succeeded by the Earl of Morton. He was the last and, in 1578, James officially became King regnant.

As he grew, James learned to gather more and more power into his hands, cleverly using the resources of the Crown and the quarrels of the nobles and ministers for this purpose. He was open to being aided by the successor to Fr. Crichton, Fr. Gordon and watched as one noble after the other converted to the True Faith. This was reported to Elizabeth who, in 1585, helped the two leaders of the English party, the Earls of Angus and Mar, to return to Scotland at the head of a small army. They seized the King and James, willingly or unwillingly made an alliance with Elizabeth, binding him to maintain the Protestant faith in Scotland, or, to put it more crudely, to persecute Catholics.

If the Jesuits thought they might gain the support of the young King, they did not know his character. Maitland, in regard to the promotion of nobles, was later to say, “He considered well that offers would be made by every possessor who would bestow large money to obtain the gift thereof to himself heritably, and the



king was frank in granting lands as he might be persuaded, being facile of his nature; and thereby he thought to make gain of a part of the offers to be made, as it fell out indeed.”

Indeed, when his mother was executed in 1587, James was willing to accept Elizabeth’s explanation on condition that his claim to the succession of England was recognised. His answer to the Catholic petitions for toleration was that it was easier to approve than to grant. When there were riots in Edinburgh because of his lack of persecution of the Catholics he sought help from the Pope. When he was defeated in the field by a Catholic rebellion in 1594, he was reconciliatory but his ultimate motivation is seen in his conditions for peace six months later: the rebels, and indeed everyone, must accept the established Protestant religion. “Deceive not yourself,” the king wrote to Huntly, one of the leaders of the rebellion, “to think that by lingering of time, your wife and your allies shall get you better conditions. I must love myself and my own estate better than all the world, and think not that I will suffer any professing a contrary religion to dwell in this land.” Huntly apostatised, though repented later in life.

James is traditionally called the “wisest fool in Christendom”. Fr. McWhirrie, a contemporary wrote, “The single object of his ambition is the crown of England, which he would gladly take to all appearance from the hand of the devil himself, though Catholic and heretic ministers were all ruined alike, so great is his longing for that regal dignity . . . Fear of Catholic ascendancy, or the hope of obtaining the favourite object of his ambition, might one day make him a hypocrite; but only a great miracle of God’s power and an extraordinary inspiration will ever make him a Catholic in reality.”

It is generally believed today that the persecution of the Highlands and Islands was an English practice, starting after the union of the crowns and particularly after the dispossession of the Stuarts. In reality, this began with James VI. James IV had spoken fluent Gaelic and probably James V too, but under James VI, Parliament sought to abolish it. The people of the Hebrides were portrayed as lawless barbarians rather than the cradle of Scottish Christianity and nationhood. Official documents of the time describe them as “void of the knowledge and feir of God” prone to “all kynd of barbarous and bestile crueltis”. James ordered the ‘civilisation’ of “the most barbarous isle of Lewis” and it was invaded three times over a ten year period starting in 1598. When the Clan chiefs were, at the third attempt, defeated, they were then obliged to provide support for Protestant ministers to Highland parishes; to outlaw bards; to report regularly to Edinburgh to answer for their actions; and to send their heirs to Lowland Scotland, to be educated in English-speaking Protestant schools.

King James, indeed, was the man who destroyed national Catholicism in Scotland. The discipline of the Kirk was sufficiently disliked to leave a small devoted body of Scottish Catholics in each city, ready at every opportunity to claim their heritage of religion. But James succeeded in imposing on municipal Calvinism a form of the royal Protestantism of England and Germany. The power of the presbyteries was largely destroyed and was replaced by that of perpetual moderators who were Crown nominees and who in 1610 received consecration from three Anglican bishops. Because James treated this modified Calvinism as part of the royal tradition, to be accepted because it was the King’s religion, he required his subjects to admit that its overthrow or attempted overthrow was immoral in all circumstances. Scottish nobles had, therefore, to accept him forbidding Mass, persecuting those who openly broke the anti-Catholic laws and in return were allowed, tacitly, to hear Mass privately. They could not, however, bring the sacraments to their fellow countrymen and they could not interfere where the laird was a staunch Calvinist and dragooned his people into conformity with the State religion, neither could they give any Catholic direction to affairs or modify the Protestant laws.

James is the longest reigning Scottish monarch and, during his 58 year reign, many Scottish families disappeared, reduced to beggary either at home or abroad. Those who kept the faith did so precariously and Scottish Catholicism became a family and not a national tradition.

Mass Schedule

	CARLUKE	GLASGOW	EDINBURGH
Saturday 1 st August (<i>First Saturday</i>)		11am	11am
Sunday 2 nd August — 9 th Sunday after Whitsun		10.30am	11am
Monday 3 rd August	11am		
Tuesday 4 th August			6.30pm
Wednesday 5 th August	11am		
Thursday 6 th August — Transfiguration	11am		
Friday 7 th August (<i>First Friday</i>)	12noon		
Saturday 8 th August		11am	11am
Sunday 9 th August — 10 th Sunday after Whitsun		10.30am	11am
Monday 10 th August	11am		
Tuesday 11 th August			6.30pm
Wednesday 12 th August			7am
Thursday 13 th August	11am		
Friday 14 th August	12noon		
Saturday 15 th August — Assumption		11am	11am
Sunday 16 th August — 11 th after Whitsun		10.30am	11am
Monday 17 th August	11am		
Tuesday 18 th August			6.30pm
Wednesday 19 th August	11am		
Thursday 20 th August	11am		
Friday 21 st August	12noon		
Saturday 22 nd August — Immaculate Heart		11am	11am
Sunday 23 rd August — 12 th after Whitsun		10.30am	11am
Monday 24 th August	11am		
Tuesday 25 th August			6.30pm
Wednesday 26 th August			7am
Thursday 27 th August	11am		
Friday 28 th August	12noon		
Saturday 29 th August		11am	11am
Sunday 30 th August — 13 th after Whitsun		10.30am	11am
Monday 31 st August	11am		

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Resident priests:

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Rev. Fr. Anthony Wingerden

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**Saints Margaret and Leonard's
Church**

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EDINBURGH

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If you require any further information concerning one of these places, or need to talk to a priest e.g. in case of emergency for the Sacraments, please ring the phone number mentioned in contact details.