



Vox Clamantis

Bulletin of the Society of Saint Pius X in Scotland

October 2021

"The will to do, the soul to dare"

Dear Faithful,

Last month ended with the belated visit of the bishop, Mgr. de Galerreta, to administer Confirmation to our young faithful in Scotland in our church in Edinburgh. A few faithful



came up from South of the Tweed to take advantage of his coming to receive the sacrament and Fr. Bruc-

ciani, the District Superior, together with Fr. Vandendaele, the Prior of Preston, also made the journey to assure that we could have a Solemn High Mass after the Confirmation ceremony. As there was no sung Mass in Glasgow that week, the Glasgow choir added their voices to the choir in Edinburgh to provide the singing. Sponsors, family and friends of the candidates swelled the congregation and made for a wonderful day for all concerned.

After the ceremonies and group photograph, there was a buffet lunch in the café. It was a marvellous opportunity for the bishop to see how our communities in Scotland have grown in the last few years as well as the various material improvements in St. Margaret's and St. Leonard's. He particularly admired the beautiful garden behind the church and was very interested in the new altar which is now taking shape in the apse. Many thanks to all our faithful who contributed to the success of that day, both in planning and execution.

On occasions like this, it is important to realise that none of it would be possible without the courageous decision of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre to consecrate bishops back in 1988. At the time, over thirty years ago, who could

have foreseen the situation we are in today. The Archbishop was excoriated for not trusting in the promises made by the Roman authorities of providing a bishop for Tradition to assure both Confirmations and the ordination of new priests. But, despite the various communities that have sprung up somehow managing to hang on with the handful of bishops who are (for the moment) still prepared to use the traditional rites of the Church, the present Pope and not a few of the bishops of the world have made it clear that, for them, there is one Roman Rite of Mass, the new one. The same, obviously, goes for the other sacraments. It is not at all clear that, without the consecrations, any bishop in the world would have done what they in fact did. It is also interesting to ponder whether those bishops who are still (grudgingly?) allowing priests to say the Traditional rite of Mass on a Sunday would do so were the Society of St. Pius X not present in their diocese. May God grant the Archbishop the reward for his prescience and courage and some part of that courage to us, his spiritual sons, to continue in our battle for the preservation, not just of the Mass, but of the integral Catholic Faith!

With every good wish and blessing,

Rev. Sebastian Wall (Prior)





St. Kilda - Lost in the Atlantic



Far off to the West of the Outer Hebrides lies what appears to be the furthest reaches of the Kingdom of Scotland. A bleak and windswept archipelago, 40 miles to the West of North Uist, – St.

Kilda: Dùn, Soay, Boreray and the only inhabited (and the largest) island, Hirta. It is not, in fact, the most remote of the British Isles. That distinction belongs to Rona, (sometimes called North Rona to distinguish it from the small island off Skye), 44 miles to the Northeast of Cape Wrath. Both are now uninhabited though both have an extraordinarily rich and long history.

Certainly, the first known inhabitant of Rona was a monk of St. Columba's community in Iona, St. Ronan. Sir Walter Scott, in his only Waverley novel to be set in the 19th century, writes of his well in the Borders town of Innerleithen. It does correspond to the story of St. Ronan beating the devil with a stick in that area and blessing the natural spring there. Although few are familiar with the saint today (outside of the pages of Bede) he was an important figure in the so-called Celtic/Roman Easter controversy. But unlike many of the early Celtic saints, he was in favour of adopting the revised method of calculating the date of Easter (against the Abbot of Lindisfarne, Finan). Since historians simplify the discussion as a Celtic/Roman divide, his contribution is significant.

The monks of Iona were extremely active and, in the mould of many of these early saints, Ronan seems to have been all over Scotland, ending up in Ness on the Isle of Lewis, where, according to local tradition, he was exasperated by his lack of success with the locals



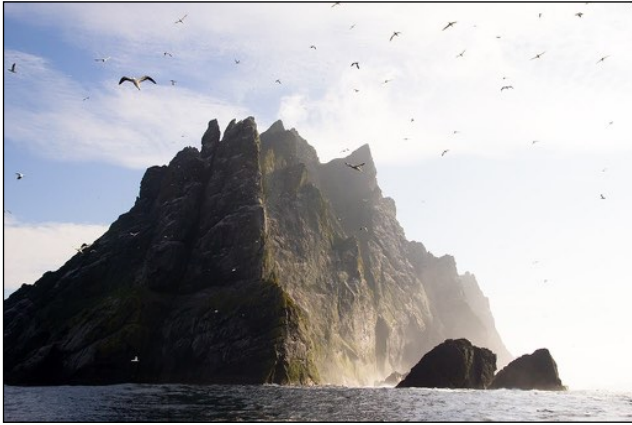
and decided to move on. If St. Conval's means of transport seems unlikely to modern readers, they will be alarmed at how St. Ronan managed to arrive in Rona. He was told to go down to the seashore and there met the fabled *cionarain-cro*. The size of this beast may be guessed by the old rhyme, "*Seachd sgadain, sath bradain; Seachd bradain, sath ròin; Seachd ròin, sath mial-mòr-mara; Seachd mial, sath Cirein-cròin*" [Seven herrings, feast for a salmon; seven salmon, feast for a seal; seven seals, feast for a whale; seven whales, feast for a *cionarain-cro* – the great beast of the ocean]. Ronan climbed on the back of this beast and was taken the forty odd miles to Rona where he built a primitive oratory which still survives today and is the best example of a building of this type in Scotland. Early mediaeval graves inside the building show that it was used by other hermits for some time after its founder. It would seem not unreasonable, then, that that is how the island received its name.

The name Ronan itself, however, comes from the Gaelic word meaning seal (*Ròn*). Bearing in mind that Rona is one of the principal breeding grounds for the grey seal, it is, of course, possible that the name of that animal and the Norse word for island (*øyr*) which occurs in many other island names around the coast, showing the varied history of this area of Scotland where only English is a foreign language, is a more plausible explanation. His links with this island, however, are indisputable. The island, though inhabited for long periods of time has since been abandoned by men and is now partly used for the grazing of sheep.



St. Ronan's church on the Isle of Rona

A similar fate awaited St. Kilda, which has the unique example of both Neolithic and Iron Age breeds of sheep to this day. The main island, called the high country by the locals, (Boreray is the 'north country'), has the highest cliffs in the UK (and some of the highest in Europe). The North side of *Conachair* (the 'beacon', which can be seen from Skye, some 80 miles away) is a sheer drop of over 1,400ft



The cliffs of St. Kilda

at times down to the sea, whereas the approach from Loch Hiort where the only modern settlement used to be, (the last civilian islanders were evacuated in 1930) gives the impression of a peaceful fishing village surrounded by rolling hills. Slightly to the North of the 19th century village is a ‘holy well’ (according to Ordnance Survey) issuing from the rocks in the gentle slopes before the steeper ascent to the *Conachair*. This was the site of the mediaeval village and the spring supplied the water for the inhabitants. It is called *Tobar Childa*. *Tobar* is a common element in Gaelic place names and means, indeed, spring or well. Is ‘Childa’ the saint of these islands?

As we saw above, many of the names in this part of the country are composites of Gaelic words and Norse words. In this case *childa* is indeed a Norse word and means – well. “Well, well”, we might say. In all probability, the first Gaelic settlers had known that the spring was called *childa* by the previous inhabitants and, not understanding the significance of the name, just called it the well of *childa* – *Tobar Childa*.

In his famous *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, Martin Martin, a native of Bealach, near Duntulm on Skye, mentions this well. He had visited St. Kilda in May 1697 and his tour of Lewis in 1699 under the patronage of Hans Sloane, Secretary of the Royal Society in London is, therefore, also well documented. The Scottish antiquary, Sir Robert Sibbald, considered that his command of Gaelic, knowledge of the customs of Gaeldom and connections with Hebridean elites made him well qualified for the task. He was an assiduous collector of natural specimens and minerals during his trips. Both Samuel Johnson and Boswell read his book and took a copy of it along with them on their famous tour in 1773. Johnson felt Martin had failed to record the more interesting aspects of life at the time, and suggested that this was because he was unaware of just how different the social structure of the Western Isles was in comparison to life elsewhere. Some of Martin’s descriptions of

second sight and local superstitions led Johnson to regard him as credulous.

He believed that the name “is taken from one Kilder, who lived here; and from him the large well Toubir-Kilda has also its name”. His knowledge of Gaelic had in fact led him to assume this, but his lack of knowledge of Norse had similarly led him to do so falsely.

The early charts and maps of the area rather confirmed this defective reasoning. The Norse had called the islands *Skildir* or shields, because of their shape when seen from the sea. There was an island much closer to the main Western Isles called *Skildar* (now *Haskeir*) for a similar reason. Maclean suggests that the Dutch mapmakers simply made a cartographical error, and confused Hirta with *Skildar*, which is the name on a map by Nicholas de Nicolay (1583). This, so the hypothesis goes, was transcribed in error by the Dutch cartographer, Lucas Janszoon Waghenaer, in his 1592 charts without the trailing *r* and with a full stop after the *S*, creating *S.Kilda*. This was in turn assumed to stand for a saint by others, creating the form that has been used for several centuries, *St. Kilda*.



So, this month, whereas we may rediscover the great deeds of St. Ronan in both his historical significance and his missionary labours throughout Scotland, there is no new saint to lay before you. There *is* no *Saint* Kilda. Nonetheless, since the islands have become largely uninhabited, archaeological studies performed, on the island of Hirta particularly, show that early Christians certainly lived there for many centuries. Munro records in 1549, “The inhabitants thereof ar simple poor people, but M’Cloyd of Herryay, his steward, or he quhom he deputs in sic office, sailes anes in the year ther at midsummer, with some chaplaine to baptize bairnes ther”. After the ‘Reformation’ the islanders were, due to their remote location, left to their own devices for the most part. Particularly in the 19th century, however, they were subjected to a barbarous form of Protestantism by Ministers sent from Harris. The only church building is indeed one of the Church of Scotland.

Mass Schedule

	CARLUKE	GLASGOW	EDINBURGH
Friday 1 st October (<i>First Friday</i>)		6.30pm	6.30pm
Saturday 2 nd October (<i>First Saturday</i>)		11am	11am
Sunday 3 rd October — 19 th after Whitsun		9am & 11am	9am & 11am
Monday 4 th October	11am		
Tuesday 5 th October			6.30pm
Wednesday 6 th October	7.15am		
Thursday 7 th October	11am		
Friday 8 th October		6.30pm	
Saturday 9 th October		11am	11am
Sunday 10 th October — 20 th after Whitsun		9am & 11am	9am & 11am
Monday 11 th October	11am		
Tuesday 12 th October St. Kenneth		6.30pm	
Wednesday 13 th October St. Comgan	7.15am		
Thursday 14 th October	11am		
Friday 15 th October			6.30pm
Saturday 16 th October		11am	11am
Sunday 17 th October — 21 st after Whitsun		9am & 11am	9am & 11am
Monday 18 th October	11am		
Tuesday 19 th October			6.30pm
Wednesday 20 th October	7.15am		
Thursday 21 st October	11am		
Friday 22 nd October		6.30pm	
Saturday 23 rd October		11am	11am
Sunday 24 th October — 22 nd after Whitsun		9am & 11am	9am & 11am
Monday 25 th October	11am		
Tuesday 26 th October St. Bean			6.30pm
Wednesday 27 th October	7.15am		
Thursday 28 th October	11am		
Friday 29 th October		6.30pm	
Saturday 30 th October		11am	11am
Sunday 31 st October — Christ the King		9am & 11am	9am & 11am

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Resident priests:

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Rev. Fr. Marc Hanappier

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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.