



# Vox Clamantis

Bulletin of the Society of Saint Pius X in Scotland

September 2023

*"The will to do, the soul to dare"*

Dear Faithful,

September is a busy month. St. Giles opens the celebrations, shortly followed by St. Pius X. The 15<sup>th</sup> sees Paisley celebrating St. Mirin then the seven sorrows of our Lady the following day, while the rest of Scotland has our Lady's feast on the 15<sup>th</sup> and then St. Ninian on the Saturday. Local feasts include St. Adamnan and St. Finbarr in the Isles with the High Feast of St. Michael the Archangel closing the month. Unfortunately, this month also sees the annual holiday of Fr. Hennick and so assuring Masses in both chapels is problematic. We, nonetheless, wish him a restful break from his zealous labours and a safe return to us on these shores next month.

This month's saint reminds us of the importance attached to pilgrimages in past ages of the Church. Here in Scotland, we used to have a number of local pilgrimages that didn't leave the country (much) but which, of course, were lost in the wholesale destruction of 1560. These include: St. Cuthbert's Way – Melrose to Lindisfarne (now in England), St. Magnus Way – Orkney, Whithorn Way – Glasgow to Whithorn (St. Ninian), Forth to Farne Way – North Berwick to Lindisfarne (similar to St. Cuthbert's but longer), St. Munn's Way – Cowal Peninsula Argyll, St. Kentigern Way (St. Mungo) – Solway Firth to Glasgow, Northern Pilgrims' Way – Tain to Kirkwall, Three Saints Way – Killin to St. Andrews which may be linked to Iona to Killin for a coast to coast pilgrimage, Deeside Way – Aberdeen to Ballater, St. Conan's Way – Dalmally to Iona, and Dalriada Way – Tarbert to Luig. Perhaps the most historic is the Fife Pilgrim Way – Culross to St. Andrews. This latter is a 64 mile walking route through the kingdom of Fife and it follows one of the ancient routes of pilgrimage across inland Fife that was host to a network of hospices and hostels for pilgrims to stay. The provision of such services was considered an act of piety



itself back in the day. Today's route heads through countryside, skirts the industrial landscape, passes 50 historic mediaeval sites (including a slight diversion to Dunfermline), churches and other historic buildings, and ends at the ruins of St. Andrews Cathedral. This and indeed all these pilgrimages would take a few days to complete, so, although the routes are well-kept and signposted, it would require both robust health and a certain liberty in disposing of one's time. Many of these pilgrimages, however, take in the saints and events covered in the *Vox Clamantis* over the last five years and so would bring to life the cerebral knowledge. Most of these routes are broken up into smaller sections (e.g. Culross to Dunfermline) which would perhaps make for an easier option. Something to think about for next year!

With every good wish and blessing,

Rev. Sebastian Wall (Prior)





## St. Giles, Patron of Edinburgh



This month's saint is St. Giles, the patron of Edinburgh. No-one seems to know why or when he was chosen but it is probably due to the parish church built around 1130 by King David I. In later centuries, the church of St. Giles increased in importance until it was the scene of John Knox's preaching in 1559, subsequently becoming the High Kirk of the Presbyterian sect and, twice, briefly St. Giles Cathedral. Since Presbyterians do not have bishops, it seems odd that that is the title by which the building is known today but its history is as



*The High Kirk in Edinburgh*

varied as its architecture. The original building was burned by Edward II in 1385 when he sacked Edinburgh, restored and enlarged with the stone crown over the tower in place by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By this time St. Giles had become a collegiate church, one served by a college of canons whose role was to service the many chapels and altars in the church and pray for the souls of rich patrons and their families. This was swept away on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1559, when John Knox preached the sermon credited with igniting the Protestant rebellion. The church was also the scene of a riot on the Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1637, after a street-seller called Jenny Geddes threw a stool at the Dean when he tried to use the Book of Common Prayer as newly imposed by King Charles I for use throughout his United Kingdom. This incident led directly to the Bishops' Wars, the Wars of the Covenant and the English Civil War. Because of the nature of Protestantism, interior walls were subsequently constructed within the building to keep the warring sects apart. These were only removed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Originally, the King had given the church to the Lazarists (not the Vincent de Paul ones but the military order started in Jerusalem in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to care for lepers). Because

of the history of St. Giles being associated with contagious diseases (principally the Black Death – he is one of the 14 Holy Helpers) including leprosy, this patronage was chosen. Since the Crusades, many non-indigenous saints were becoming better known in Scotland (St. Leonard, for example) and, given their association with the Crusades, the Lazarists often chose for the patronage of their churches the names of hermits, similarly outcasts (though voluntary) from society. In the UK alone at least 24 hospitals and some 162 ancient churches were dedicated to him, most notably our St. Giles in Edinburgh and St. Giles, Cripplegate, London.

What is actually known about the life of St. Giles? He is reputed to have been born in Athens, the son of Theodore and Pelagia, in about 640. When he was twenty-four his parents died, and Giles, stricken by the double loss, and unconsolated by the pleasures of fashionable life, sold all that he had and gave to the poor in order to follow Christ. Another version of this story claims he in fact left Athens because he was already well-known for his spirituality, giving alms and working miracles of healing. Certainly, it was the search for solitude that prompted him whether disgusted with a worldly life or uncomfortable about fame which is no doubt an obstacle for a virtuous one.

At any rate, he took to sea and landed on the coast of Provence. On the shore he saw human footprints, and following these, he found a cave in which an old hermit had lived for years on roots and herbs, and who was content to share his cave, his food and his prayers with the young man. After three days Giles began to fear his friends might find him, so he hailed a passing ship and sailed on further westwards to Marseilles. The idea that he should follow obvious signs of human habitation when he sought solitude is perhaps fanciful, but certainly this seminal experience of the eremitical life was very providential. This experience was repeated at his next refuge. He crossed the Rhone and travelled towards a rocky promontory above the river Gard and there, in a cave, the entrance of which was hidden by a thicket, he found another solitary, also a Greek. He stayed there but a short time, however, and continued his journey until, finally, in the depth of a forest near Nîmes, he found a hollow of a rock in a green glade by a stream, shaded by four gigantic oaks. There he lived in peace and prayer. His first winter, however, was so severe, he se-



riously contemplated giving up when he encountered a hind, who supplemented his meagre diet with her milk. This detail is considered fanciful by modern writers but it is certainly a fact that in winter even the most timid beast is willing to take food from the hand of him who offers it.

That mediaeval artists depict St. Giles with a doe (and that he is the patron of nursing



mothers) is thus explained, but the addition to his iconography of an arrow needs further explanation. Here modern writers are quick to dismiss the events which ensued, principally for historical reasons. The 10<sup>th</sup> century life of the saint refers to a hunting party of the King of the Visigoths, variously named Wamba or Flavius. The hind found itself the unfortunate quarry of these men and sought refuge with the man she knew would protect her. Hearing the fray, Giles left his cave just as the hind sprang towards him. One of the huntsmen shot an arrow and Giles threw himself in front of it sparing the hind's life but contracting a severe wound. The hind escaped and the huntsmen, bursting into the clearing found the wounded hermit. When Wamba arrived on the scene he was dismayed that they had inadvertently wounded a holy man and besought him to return with him to be healed. The saint steadfastly refused and indeed remained a cripple for the rest of his life (hence his patronage of the same). Finally, he consented at least that the King build him a monastery and accept disciples which later became the Abbey of St. Gilles du Gard, an important stopping place on the Camino to Compostela which

was providential for the spreading of devotion to him, centuries after his death. The problem for the sceptics is that the Franks had expelled the Visigoths from the neighbourhood of Nîmes almost a century and a half earlier. This may have been an innocent mistake, however. A Giles (or Aegidius in the original document) is reported as being sent on a legation to Rome by the bishop of Arles, Caesarius. Perhaps in researching his 'life' the author simply mistook the name of the bishop's legate for the saint and made his benefactor a Visigoth, aiming for authenticity but unwittingly casting doubt on the whole event. What is indisputable, however, is the monastery. Its west portal today is considered one of the finest examples of Provençal Romanesque, though obviously the original building (destroyed during the Albigensian crisis) was a far simpler structure. The later building was constructed above the crypt with his Merovingian-style tomb, this added to the importance of St. Giles' as a pilgrimage site on the Camino.

A similar story from St. Giles' life is also discounted for historical reasons since it involves Charles Martel. Since the same historians cannot agree on his date of birth it seems churlish to argue that St. Giles had no influence on the man who saved Europe from a muslim invasion. The story is certainly a curious one. It is said that Charles committed incest with his sister but was too embarrassed to mention it in confession. Attending St. Giles' Mass he was alarmed to see an angel descending bearing a scroll with the sin written on it. As St. Giles continued to say Mass the writing on the scroll slowly faded away until it completely disappeared. Charles' difficulties with confession similarly disappeared and he was reconciled with God. Part of the difficulty is that this event is placed just before the key battle of Poitiers which would be stretching the timeline somewhat since Giles died on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 720, with the words "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace".



***The Romanesque portico of St. Gilles, Provence. After Jerusalem, Rome and Comostela, this became the fourth greatest site of pilgrimage in the mediaeval world***

# Mass Schedule

	Carlisle	Glasgow	Edinburgh
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> September ( <i>First Friday</i> )			<b>6.30pm</b>
Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September ( <i>First Saturday</i> )			<b>11am</b>
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September — ST. PIUS X		<b>8.30am &amp; 10am</b>	<b>9am &amp; 11am</b>
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>11am</b>		
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> September		<b>6.30pm</b>	
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> September			<b>11am</b>
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> September — 15 <sup>th</sup> after Whitsun		<b>8.30am &amp; 10am</b>	<b>9am &amp; 11am</b>
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>11am</b>		
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> September — Seven Sorrows		<b>6.30pm</b>	
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> September — St. Ninian			<b>11am</b>
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> September — 16 <sup>th</sup> after Whitsun		<b>8.30am &amp; 10am</b>	<b>9am &amp; 11am</b>
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>11am</b>		
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>11am</b>		
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>11am</b>		
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> September	<b>11am</b>		
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September		<b>6.30pm</b>	
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September			<b>11am</b>
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> September — 17 <sup>th</sup> after Whitsun		<b>8.30am &amp; 10am</b>	<b>9am &amp; 11am</b>
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>7.15am</b>		
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> September — St. Michael		<b>6.30pm</b>	
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> September			<b>11am</b>

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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.**