

Prayer Service

Celebrating the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St. Columban

1. Opening Song or Music:

2. Welcome

You are very welcome to our celebration to mark the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St. Columban. We are marking this occasion by reflecting on and celebrating the life of this great Irish monk and missionary. We are here to celebrate 1,400 years of a living faith.

Opening Prayer:

Blessed are you Lord God of all creation

Blessed are you Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life

Blessed are you Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life

Blessed are you, O Holy Trinity

Blessed are you in St. Columban, pilgrim, monk and missionary

Blessed be this gathering as we now come into your Divine Presence to celebrate in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

3. Presenting the life of St. Columbanus

Columbanus, which means “Little Dove” comes from the Latin name Columba, which was a common name in Ireland during the 5th and 6th centuries. Columbanus was 25 years younger than Columcille who founded a monastery in Iona, Scotland. Columbanus also known today, as Columban or Columbán became the founder of the great monasteries of Luxeuil in France and Bobbio in Italy.

According to tradition, he was born at the foot of Mount Leinster on the Carlow, Wexford border around the year 540. As a young man he went first to the monastery at Cleenish on Lough Erne and became a monk under the Abbot St. Sinell. He then went to the monastery in Bangor, Co. Down under the Abbot Comgall. After many years in Bangor, he felt called to a more ascetic life and left Ireland, with a group of twelve disciples, never to return and became what is called a *peregrinus*, a pilgrim for Christ.

He settled first in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains in a place called Annegray, in France, where he established his first monastery. Here he embarked on a spiritual mission. Because of his leadership, ascetic living, knowledge and fascinating personality, many young men from different social backgrounds joined the monastery. Soon Columbanus was obliged to look to the old Roman nearby town of Luxeuil to establish a second monastery and later the hamlet of Fontaine for a third. For over twenty years he lived in the region, where he exercised a tremendous influence on the church and on the politics of the day. He eventually fell foul of members of the Merovingian kingdom of the Franks, especially Queen Brunhild and her grandson King Theuderic II and the local Frankish bishops. This led to his expulsion, together with the Irish monks from the Frankish Kingdom. The King's men escorted him to the estuary of the Loire

River to be sent back to Ireland. However, the captain of the ship refused to let Columban and his monks on board, so he returned back into Central Europe through another route.

When he got to the banks of Lake Constance, in Switzerland he settled there for a while. Having left Gall, his closest companion behind, he set his eyes south towards the Alps. Gall went on to found the modern day city of St. Gallen, in Switzerland. Columban crossed the Alps into the Kingdom of the Lombards. Now, more than 70 years of age, he arrived in Bobbio, south of Milan in Northern Italy and set about establishing a new monastery on land he was given by the Lombard King, Agilulf. It was to become one of the most influential monastic centres of the 7th and 8th centuries. Columban died on 23rd November 615, in Bobbio. According to tradition, he died in the cave, known as Grotto San Michelle, where he came frequently to pray and to spend time in solitude. Today, his tomb in Bobbio is a place of pilgrimage and gathering for the many people who follow in his footsteps.

We might ask ourselves why did Columban make such an impact on the Church and the social landscape of the time. He was first of all a committed believer and was totally and utterly convinced of the urgency to preach the Gospel. He brought an energy, enthusiasm and freshness to living the Gospel message. He was so convincing that others felt called to join him. He defended the right of every person to his or her own good name. Thus, he introduced private confession where the penitent celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation as a personal encounter with Jesus rather than a public confession and lengthy period of penance for his or her sins. He strove vigorously for unity, understanding and dialogue both in the Church and in civil society. It was no wonder that the late Robert Schumann, one of the founders of the European Union said of Columban in 1950 that “*St. Columban is the patron of all those who now seek to build a united Europe.*” Finally, his entire outlook on life was based on the historical fact of the Resurrection of Jesus and that He is the Risen Lord. Hence, the importance that Columban gave to the feast of Easter around which the liturgical year is centred and upon which our entire life of prayer is grounded.

4. Readings from St. Columbanus *(two readers alternating)*

Reader A

“Love yourself rightly, love yourself enough to choose your own happiness in choosing God.” *(Sermon 3)*

Reader B

“If you remove freedom, you take away dignity.” *(Sermon 4)*

Reader A

“Lord, grant me, I pray you, in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, my God, that charity does not fail, so that my lamp may be always lighted, never extinguished, and may burn for me and give light to others.” *(Sermon 12)*

Reader B

“It is not by words, but by faith that God is known ... High is the heaven, broad the earth, deep the sea and long the ages; but higher

and broader and deeper and longer is his knowledge. For he has been adorned by nature, he who created it from nothing.” (*Sermon 1*)

Reader A

“How blessed, how happy are those servants, whom the Lord when He comes shall find watching! Blessed watch, in which they watch for God the Creator of the universe”. (*Sermon 2, 2*)

Reader B

“Seek the supreme wisdom, not by verbal debate, but by the perfection of a good life (*Sermon 1, 5*)

Reader A

“Be submissive to good, unbending to evil, gentle in generosity, untiring in love, just in all things”. (*Letter to a young disciple*)

Reader B

“Allow Christ to paint his image in you” (*Sermon XI*)

5. **Song or Music** (*choose an appropriate song or piece of music*)
6. **What does St. Columban say to us today** (*this can be a shared reflection or given by one of the participants*)

While Columban came from a different era, he stands forth as one of the truly great Christians of his day. His writings and way of life reflect no doubt the culture and monastic tradition of his day. However, he has left us a roadmap to follow. He shows us how to make a clear and irrevocable decision to follow Christ. Nothing stops him or separates him from following Christ. He does not compromise or water down the Gospel message. He is true to the Word of God and he does not shrink from challenging the pope, bishops and kings to be faithful to their calling. His focus is on the Kingdom of God and its fulfilment and he sees our life on earth as a pilgrim journey, so we are not to allow ourselves be paralyzed by the anxieties and problems of daily life but to look beyond them.

Columban shows us that what binds us together is love, expressed in a deep and profound care for one another and for God’s creation. There is no life outside the love of God and the love for another and for the natural world, a love that is outward looking and expressed in care for the other.

7. **Psalm** (*an appropriate psalm is sung or recited*)
8. **Scripture Reading**

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.
At that time Jesus said to his disciples, "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lampstand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven."

The Word of the Lord.

9. Pray together: The deer's Cry

(this poem can be either sung or recited by all)

I arise today through the strength of heaven
Light of sun, radiance of moon
Splendor of fire, speed of lightning
Swiftness of wind, depth of the sea
Stability of earth, firmness of rock

I arise today through God's strength to pilot me
God's eye to look before me
God's wisdom to guide me
God's way to lie before me
God's shield to protect me

From all who shall wish me ill
Afar and a-near
Alone and in a multitude
Against every cruel, merciless power
That may oppose my body and soul

Christ with me,
Christ before me
Christ behind me,
Christ in me
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down
Christ when I arise,
Christ to shield me
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me
I arise today

10. Scripture Reading

Who am I and what am I called to be?

Inspired by the life and writings of St. Columban, we are invited to sit quietly for a short while and stay with the question. We may identify with one of the following callings:

- **Pilgrim.** Allow yourself to be changed as you journey along the road of life. To be open to change and not resist it. To allow God to speak through you, to allow a friend to guide you. To seek out a "soul friend". To see and protect the beauty of nature and life around you. To be always thankful.
- **Missionary.** To embrace the Spirit calling you to look beyond yourself and to think of the other. To be awake to the realities of the world and ready to respond with Gospel values. To step out of one's comfort zone and to be available to others.

- **Contemplative in the countryside, town and city.**
To see the world around you through the eyes of faith. Not to get caught up in the trivial and fleeting things of everyday life. To keep a focus on what matters. To discern the will of God in the events of every day both locally and globally. To be proactive in your faith commitment and to celebrate it with thanksgiving. Never give up on prayer.

11. **Gesture:** You are invited to come forward and light your candle from the Pascal Candle and choose the calling that best describes your commitment to follow Christ at this time. *(each participant places his or her lighted candle together with card that states one of the three callings in the designated place.)*

12. Litany of St. Columban

Lord have mercy. **R/**. Christ have mercy
 St. Columban. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, pilgrim and wanderer for Christ **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, monk and missionary. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, abbot and brother. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, contemplative and prophetic. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, defender of truth and freedom. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, dove of peace. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, friend of nature. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, lover of all creatures. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, protector of the environment. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, healer of the sick. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, courageous and fearless. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, forgiving and rich in mercy. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, voice for justice, peace & integrity. **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, true to the Word of God **R/**. Pray for us
 St. Columban, intercede to God for us. **R/**. Pray for us
 Oh Lord hear our prayer **R/**. And grant us your salvation

For the pilgrim Church in every land
R/. May it be filled, guided and governed by your Holy Spirit.

For our Holy Father Pope Francis
R/. Continue to bestow on him your wisdom to guide him in his service of leading, inspiring, challenging and unifying the Church.

For the religious leaders of the world
R/. Come with your unfailing help and give them your strength in their ministry.

For missionaries throughout the world
R/. Bless their work that all people may know the light of Christ.

For the sick and those who have asked for our prayers
R/. Comfort and strengthen them and keep us attentive to their needs.

For the imprisoned, those deprived of their freedom and those undergoing persecution

R/. Give them strength of mind and body and fill them with your hope.

For those committed to interreligious dialogue, justice and peace **R/**.
Give them courage to be prophetic and authentic witnesses to the Gospel.

For all who are involved in protecting God's creation
R/. May they be successful in their work.

For the intentions of our families and friends throughout the world, and those who watch out and care for us
R/. Keep them in your loving care and bless them with good health.

For lay and religious vocations
R/. Inspire many young men and women to answer the call of the Gospel

For ourselves and those with whom we presently live
R/. May your presence be upon us that we may live in love.

For our deceased family members, and all those who have been close to us during their lives
R/. May they rest in peace and enjoy the company of the angels, saints and martyrs in the Kingdom of heaven.

13. Final Prayer: Prayer of Saint Columban

Lord, kindle our lamps, Saviour most dear to us,
that we may always shine in your presence
and always receive light from you, the Light Perpetual,
so that our own personal darkness may be overcome,
and the world's darkness driven from us.
Amen.

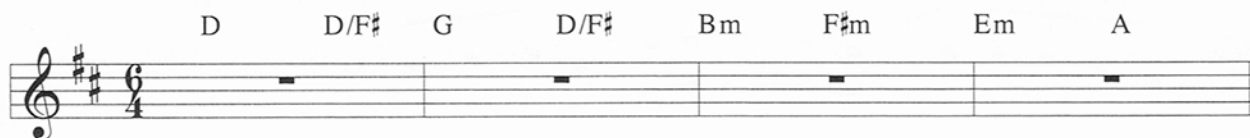
(St. Columban, Sermon XII)

High is the Heaven, Deep is the Sea

Liam Lawton

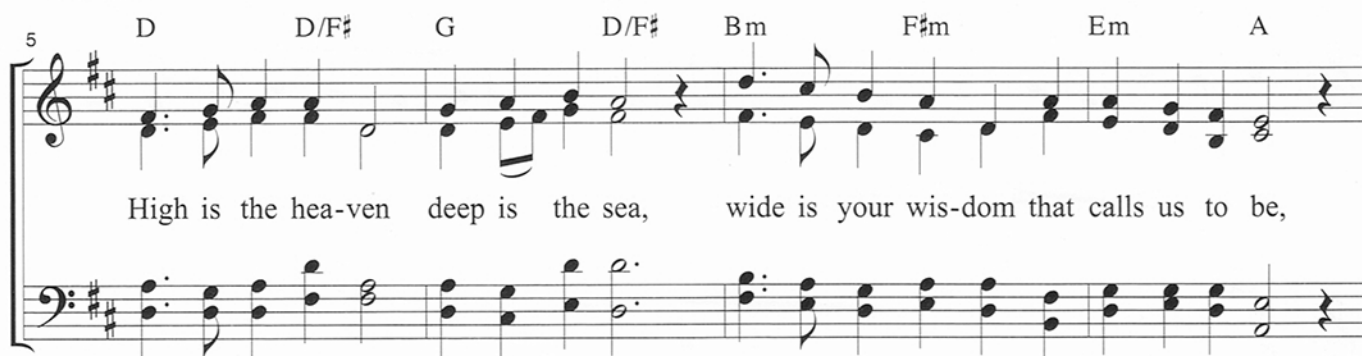
Introduction $\text{♩} = 180$

D D/F# G D/F# Bm F#m Em A



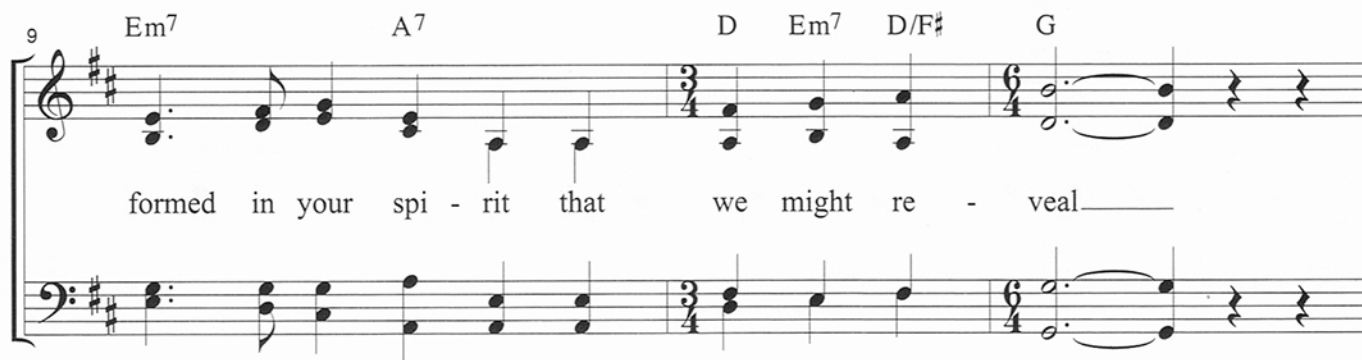
Refrain

5 D D/F# G D/F# Bm F#m Em A



High is the hea-ven deep is the sea, wide is your wis-dom that calls us to be,

9 Em7 A7 D Em7 D/F# G



formed in your spi - rit that we might re - veal

12 Bm F#m G F#m Em



love is your dwell - ing, love is your dwell - ing, O e -

love is your dwell - ing,

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Please remember it is illegal to copy music.
Please ensure that you purchase the correct number of copies you need for your choir/group.

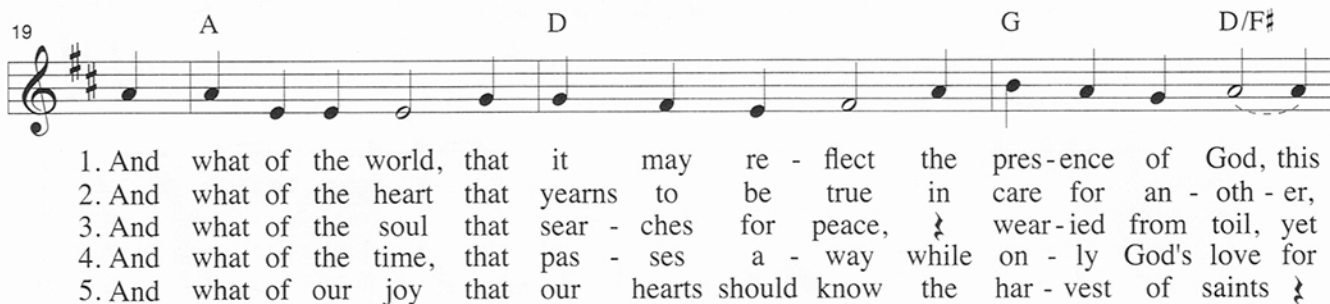
15 G A Dsus4 D



ter - nal mys - te - ry.

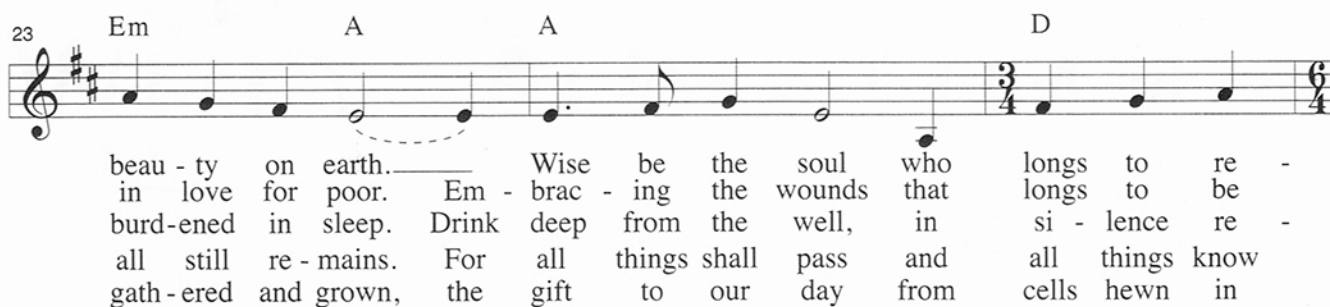
Verses

19 A D G D/F#



1. And what of the world, that it may re - flect the pres - ence of God, this
 2. And what of the heart that yearns to be true in care for an - oth - er,
 3. And what of the soul that sear - ches for peace,
 4. And what of the time, that pas - ses a - way while on - ly God's love for
 5. And what of our joy that our hearts should know the har - vest of saints

23 Em A A D



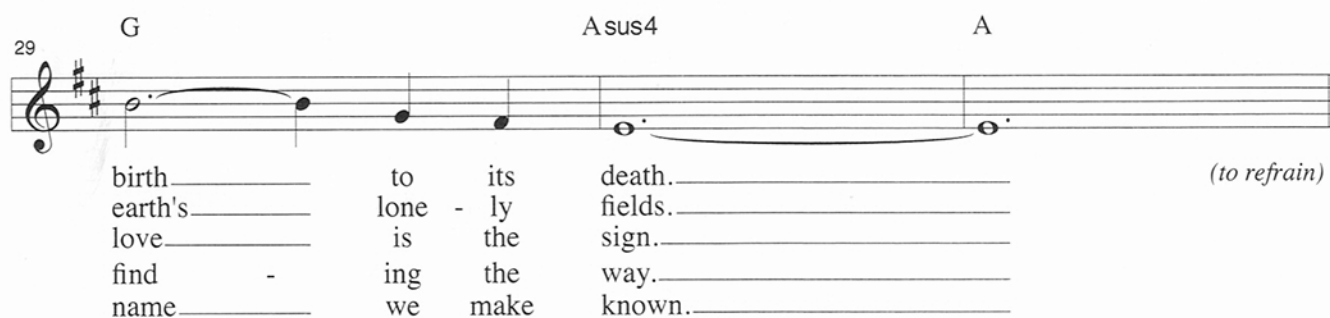
beau - ty on earth. Wise be the soul who longs to re -
 in love for poor. Em - brac - ing the wounds that longs to be
 burd - ened in sleep. Drink deep from the well, in si - lence re -
 all still re - mains. For all things shall pass and all things know
 gath - ered and grown, the gift to our day from cells hewn in

26 G Bm F#m



spect the cre - a - tion of God from it's
 healed in a har - vest of love, in
 fined, where hope is re - vealed and
 change, for we are but pil - grims still
 stone, Co - lum - ban of God, your

29 G Asus4 A



birth to its death.
 earth's lone - ly fields.
 love is the sign.
 find - ing the way.
 name we make known.

(to refrain)

Sunday 21st June 2015 12th Sunday of the Year
Celebrating the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St.
Columban

Introduction to the Eucharist

We gather as the people of God on this weekend to celebrate aspects of our Christian family and heritage that shape our lives.

This weekend, the Churches in Ireland both north and south mark the 1,400th anniversary of the death of Saint Columban, known also as Saint Columbanus, and Naomh Columbán. An Irish saint, monk, and missionary who became a Pilgrim for Christ, and who left these shores to preach the Gospel throughout Europe, never to return to Ireland.

It is the longest day of the year, the summer solstice, an opportunity to acknowledge God's creation and our dependency on the sun, moon and all of the universe for life here on planet earth.

We welcome and pray especially for our own Dads and give thanks for them as we also celebrate Father's Day this weekend.

Penitential Rite

My Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is here with us, as we assemble in prayer. Let us bow our heads and ask for forgiveness.

For the fears that hold us back from trusting in God.
Lord, have mercy

For our failure to accept Christ's Word.
Christ, have mercy

For our failure to live up to our Christian calling.
Lord, have mercy

Readings:

First Reading Job 38:1,8-11

Introduction to reading:

The readings today are focused on the sea, the storms and a small community sailing in a boat. The Word of God addressed to Job assures him that God is in the storm and stills the roaring waves. How could God not be present, even in the worst of storms that we experience in our life?

Note the contrast of the new life bursting forth and the raging waves being stilled. Columban, who we celebrate today, stilled many raging waters.

A reading from the Book of Job

The Lord addressed Job out of the storm and said: Who shut within doors the sea, when it burst forth from the womb; when I made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling bands? When I set limits for it and fastened the bar of its door, and said: Thus far shall you come but no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stilled!

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

As we go through life, God is there with us and calms the storms that come our way. We are ever thankful for His presence with us throughout. Let us praise God for his everlasting love.

Response: Give thanks to the Lord, his love is everlasting.

They who sailed the sea in ships,
trading on the deep waters,
These saw the works of the Lord
and his wonders in the abyss.

His command raised up a storm wind
which tossed its waves on high.
They mounted up to heaven; they sank to the depths;
their hearts melted away in their plight.

They cried to the Lord in their distress;
from their straits he rescued them,
He hushed the storm to a gentle breeze,
and the billows of the sea were stilled.

They rejoiced that they were calmed,
and he brought them to their desired haven.
Let them give thanks to the Lord for his kindness
and his wondrous deeds to the children of men.

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Introduction to reading

St. Paul reminds us that we live for Christ. We are a new creation and this is expressed in our following of Christ. St. Columban takes up this teaching and says that we are of Christ and not of ourselves.

A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

The love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died. He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh; even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer. So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Reading Mark 4:5-41

Introduction to reading

There is drama out on the lake, the disciples are with Jesus in a boat, a storm blows and the disciples are terrified of the danger while Jesus sleeps. We remain disciples even when storms come our way.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark

On that day, as evening drew on, Jesus said to his disciples: "Let us cross to the other side." Leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him. A violent squall came up and waves were breaking over the boat, so that it was already filling up. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Then he asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?"

Homily Notes

There is a small town in northern Italy, 120km south of Milan, called Bobbio. It is well known to motorcyclists who pass through it as they make their way through winding roads from Milan to Genoa. It is in this quaint town known for its wines and wild boar that Columban was laid to rest. Looking across the valley from the old Roman bridge, one can see Columban's Basilica towering over the small cut stone buildings. This is where Columban ended his pilgrim journey in 615 having left the monastery in Bangor, Co. Down on a missionary journey that took him through France, Switzerland, Austria and Italy. He was just over 70 years of age when he crossed the Swiss Alps leaving behind him several monasteries he had founded and over a thousand monks who had followed him into the monastic life.

Columban, has often been confused with Columcille, another early Irish saint. Columcille went to Iona, Scotland. Columban, who was born in the shadow of Mount Leinster on the Carlow Wexford border, went to Europe where he became much better known than here in Ireland. We

in Ireland do not want to let this 1,400th anniversary of his death pass us by without celebrating his memory and legacy, so as to learn from him some insights that may help us to be true pilgrims for Christ at the beginning of this third millennium.

Saint Columban too would have heard many times and meditated on this Gospel passage we have just proclaimed.

Here we have Jesus bringing his small group of disciples out on the lake away from the crowds to teach them. He didn't teach only with words, but rather through his silence. He was asleep at the helm while all the action was taking place and a storm was making it difficult for the boat to keep afloat. Fear overcame the disciples and they felt that Jesus was not aware of what was happening. It is as if Jesus allowed them to deal with their fear and to come to terms with what caused that fear; their lack of faith. The disciples cried out to Jesus. This led to a moment of dialogue that brought about a profound change in the disciples. Jesus got them to recognise their fear and then showed them that in spite of his apparent non-involvement he was very much in control of the situation.

What would St. Columban have learnt from this Gospel passage? When he set sail from Ireland with his twelve companions, he knew the hand of God was guiding them and that they were not alone. He did not know his destiny, but trusted in God to guide him and his group of companions. He was sure that Jesus was with them on their journey as they crossed the Irish Sea. Columban did not set out to achieve anything and yet he had a tremendous impact across continental Europe to the extent that, to quote Cardinal Tomás O'Fiaich "he came to be known as Ireland's first European, poet, scholar, Abbot, preacher, co-founder of western monasticism, associate of kings, and correspondent of popes".

As we celebrate throughout Ireland, the 1,400th anniversary of Columban's death, we might ask ourselves what legacy does he leave us as we try to live out our Christian faith. Firstly, he offers us a firm conviction in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the anchor of our faith. Secondly, St. Columban's legacy, which is portrayed in his own writings, can be expressed today in caring for the Earth, hearing the cry of the poor, welcoming the stranger, and doing justice to all.

Let us celebrate this wonderful occasion to embrace our Irish Christian heritage and in the words of Cardinal Tomás Ó'Fiaich let us be thankful for St. Columban, "this gigantic Irish saint, who made such a profound impression in the history of missionary activity and monasticism, of culture and piety". Robert Schuman, one of the founders of the European Union considered him to be an inspiration for modern Europe and said that "St. Columban is the patron Saint of all those who are seek to build a united Europe".

Through the intercession of St. Columban, we pray today for all who strive to build a more just, inclusive and forgiving Christian society.

Prayers of the Faithful

Introduction

Gathered together to celebrate the Lord's Day, we acknowledge our need for God's help and we humbly offer our prayers of petition

Intercessions:

1. God, our Father, continue to give strength and keep safe our Holy Father, Pope Francis. Lord, hear us. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us
2. God our Creator, give your people an increased love for Nature and an awareness of your presence in all of creation. Lord, hear us. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us
3. Lord Jesus, give us courage to reach out to others, support those in need of help, respond to the cry of the poor, and be open to welcoming in our midst. Lord, hear us. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us
4. Lord Jesus, strengthen in faith, hope and love all our Daddies on this Father's Day. Be at their side to guide and direct them in all they do. Lord, hear us. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us
5. Holy Spirit, giver of life, heal the sick, touch the broken-hearted, restore hope to the depressed and comfort the mournful. Lord, hear us. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us
6. Holy Spirit, our light divine, lead all of us who celebrate the 1,400th anniversary of the death of St. Columban to a greater commitment to living and nurturing the gift of faith handed down to us throughout the centuries by Irish monks, and missionaries. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us
7. Give eternal rest to our faithful departed, those recently deceased and whose anniversaries occur at this time. **R.** Lord, Graciously hear us

Conclusion

God, our Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we offer you these prayers and all in our hearts, you who live forever and ever. Amen.

Communion Reflection

Jesus woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind ceased and there was great calm. Thank you Lord for bringing calm to our lives during moments of great turbulence.

And Jesus asked them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" They were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this whom even wind and sea obey?" We thank you Jesus for being with us, and calming our fears.

We join with the whole Church today to give thanks for Saint Columbanus, who is a model for us to follow. His legacy challenges us today to be pilgrims for Christ, and look beyond ourselves and spread the Gospel.

Final Hymn: High is the Heaven, Deep is the Sea

High is the Heaven, Deep Is The Sea
High is the heaven, deep is the sea
Wide is your wisdom that calls us to be
Formed in your Spirit that we might reveal
Love is your dwelling, love is your dwelling,
O eternal mystery

And what of the world that it may reflect
The presence of God, this beauty on earth
Wise be the soul who longs to respect
The Creation of God from its birth to its death,

And what of the heart that yearns to be true
In care for another, in love for the poor
Embracing the wounds that long to be healed
In a harvest of love, in earth's lonely fields

And what of the soul that searches for peace
Wearied from toil, yet burdened in sleep
Drink deep from the well in silence refined
Where hope is revealed and love is the sign

And what of the time that passes away
While only God's love for all still remains
For all things shall pass and all things know change
For we are but Pilgrims, still finding the way

And what of our Joy that our hearts should know
The harvest of saints, gathered and grown
The gift to our day from cells hewn in stone
Columban of God, your name we make known

Credits: Composed by Liam Lawton, arranged by Mark Cahill
Music on website: www.columban.com