



ECHO

JUNE 2022 BIRTHDAY EDITION



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE
www.ourchurch.fr



A WEEKEND OF CELEBRATIONS

June this year is a time of great celebration.

Firstly, with the arrival of Pentecost, we celebrate the birthday of the Christian Church.

Pentecost occurs 50 days after Jesus' resurrection and we look at this in more detail overleaf on page 2 of ECHO.

Secondly, we celebrate the first birthday of ECO, which transmitted its first service on 6 June 2021.

During the past year we have broadcast over 150 online services, and those services have been watched on Facebook and YouTube by over 3,000 people both in the Occitanie and around the world. In addition we have had over 70,000 'hits' on our website.

Thirdly, we celebrate 25 years since ECO Minister the Reverend Neil Batcock was ordained as a priest. *(See page 7)*

And finally, we officially celebrate the 70th (Platinum) anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's accession to the British Throne.

We hope to celebrate all three of these events on Thursday 2nd June when we will be holding an in-person Communion Service (hopefully in the open air) in the garden of Les Marguerites Restaurant in Alet les Bains starting at 3pm.

Neil will be leading our worship and afterwards there will be a celebratory tea courtesy of Antoinette and Keigh Fairhurst.

To help our planning and to organise social distancing in the garden, we are still asking people to let us know if you intend to come and join us on that Thursday afternoon.

The service will be recorded for broadcast on the morning of Sunday 5th June.

Of course if you live near Versailles, you might like to go on the Sunday to the Grand Jubilee Garden Party being organised by the British Community Committee of France in co-operation with the Standard Athletic Club of Meudon. We have put a link into our online diary in case you live nearby or happening to be visiting.

There is a children's dress code for this Garden Party - Kings and Queens! (Corgis are apparently optional.)



FIRST OF ALL, I'D LIKE TO SAY HOW PLEASED I AM THAT YOU ALL SEEM TO BE ENJOYING ECO'S ONLINE WORSHIP



PENTECOST OR WHITSUN ?

We used to call it Whitsun – 'White Sunday' because long ago children marched to church in white on that day.

No processions nowadays, and we've even changed its name. It's now 'Pentecost', which is more accurate but needs explaining.

Pentecost marks a vital event in Christian history. It is celebrated 50 days after Easter. The year Jesus was crucified (which took place at the Passover), the remnant of His followers, just 120 of them, were together in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were afraid to show their faces in case the authorities arrested them. But on the day of Passover, they had an amazing collective experience.

They described it in terms of wind and fire, a great surge of spiritual energy and confidence. Afraid no longer, they burst out on to the streets where crowds were gathering for the festival, led by Peter they began to tell them about Jesus and His resurrection. As they did so, although many of the people in the crowd were foreigners who spoke other languages, everyone heard them in their own tongue. Peter told them that what they were seeing was the fulfilment of an old prophecy when God would pour out His Spirit on the human race, men and women, young and old.

As a result of His words and the extraordinary spectacle, 3,000 people believed and were baptised in the name of Jesus. They were the nucleus of what in 100 years would be a Church that would turn history upside down. For Christians, Pentecost is in effect the birthday of the Church.

Many people find the whole idea of the Holy Spirit mysterious and elusive. It wasn't helped by the earlier title 'Holy Ghost'. The spirit is not spiritually a 'ghost' but a precious gift.

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" Acts 1:8

We all get tired and battle weary sometimes. The disciples of Jesus had just been through a three-year long roller coaster adventure with Jesus that had culminated in His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The range of emotions would have been hugely taxing in the days leading up to Pentecost, as they remembered Jesus weeping in the garden of Gethsemane, betrayed by Judas, brutally beaten and crucified, and then dead and buried. Then there had been the shock and awe of finding out that He was alive again! But then He had left them again, to return to His Father. By the time the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples would indeed have welcomed some fresh spiritual fire!

For us today, many of us have felt emotionally drained with the uncertainties caused by Covid 19, the worry of prices rising at an alarming rate, and now the pain and uncertainty of what will happen in the war in Ukraine.

So, what better day to pray for fresh spiritual fire for each of us? As we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and birth of the Church, let us thank God that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Pentecost took place on the well-established Jewish festival of First Fruits, which was observed at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was seven weeks after Easter, or 50 days including Easter.

A feast day to celebrate the country's wheat harvest does not sound exactly world-changing, but that year, it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit – the day the Church was born.

Jesus had told His disciples that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for His disciples, but He knew they could not do the work themselves. They would need His help.

And so, they waited in Jerusalem, praying together with His other followers, for many days. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues, to the astonishment of those who heard them. The curse of Babel (Genesis 11: 1- 9) was dramatically reversed that morning.

That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples and followers of Jesus. The Church was born. The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning, proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were baptised.



NEW SPEED CAMERA WARNING SIGNS

These new warning signs are due to start appearing on roads across the Occitanie this summer.

At least 9,000 new speed warning signs are to be installed on roads across France this year in a bid to give clearer messages to drivers and make roads safer.

The plan is in line with an objective set by road safety agency Sécurité routière five years ago. The signs first started to be rolled out in 2017 with the plan set to reach completion this year.

The signs will inform motorists of speed limit areas that are subject to enforcement by cameras.

Two signs, shown here, are set to be installed (where they are not already present).

The first sign (left) shows the same radar, motorbike and car symbol, but underneath shows the length of road that the checks apply to, such as the next 10km, with arrows showing straight ahead to symbolise the next stretch of road. This sign is black and white and does not show the speed limit.

The second (right) shows a speed limit that must be respected, e.g. 50km, above a radar symbol along with icons for a motorbike and car (a now widely-recognised symbol that indicates a speed camera check).

Speed check zones can extend from just five kilometres of road to a full 80 kilometres, Sécurité routière states.

Both signs have a yellow border.

Sécurité Routière stated: "The outer yellow border has been maintained to ensure contrast and visibility, as well as the black pictograms on a white

background symbolising [radar] waves moving towards a motorbike or car."

At least one, if not both, signs will be installed in areas concerned "so that no user can enter this road without being informed that checks are possible", the agency said.

The signs will replace older signs that read "Pour votre sécurité, contrôles automatiques". The new language will be: "Pour votre sécurité, contrôles radars fréquents".

Sécurité Routière said that the new signs will convey the meaning more quickly and easily, as "shown in studies conducted with user groups as part of the development of these signs".

And while the signs will no longer show vans or HGVs on them (but motorbikes and cars only), this change has been done to simplify the signs, and not because larger vehicles are no longer subject to speed checks, the agency reiterated.

However, while the agency claims that the new signs will make speed checks clearer to motorists, the drivers' association 40 Millions D'Automobilistes condemned the plans, saying that the signs will "trick motorists" as they are "less visible and less common than the old 'radars automatiques' signs".

It said the old signs were easier to understand as they indicated that a camera was about to come up, whereas the new ones were vaguer, indicating the possibility of coming across them over tens of kilometres.

Pierre Chasseray, General Delegate of 40 Millions D'Automobilistes said "Speed cameras, again speed cameras, always speed cameras! It's been almost 20 years since they became the be-all and end-all of Sécurité routière's road safety policy, and almost 10 years since they have made any improvement to road users' safety."

SPEEDING PENALTIES - A REMINDER

To allow for inaccuracies on speedometers, the speed measured is discounted by 5kph if the speed limit is 100 kph or less and by 5% over 100 kph. This is the 'Marge Technique'

VITESSE	RETRAIT	AMENDE FORFAITAIRE	SUSPENSION DU PERMIS
< 20	1 Point	68€ / 135€	
< 30	2 Points	135€	
< 40	3 Points	135€	Jusqu'à 3 ANS
< 50	4 Points	135€	Jusqu'à 3 ANS
50+	6 Points	Jusqu'à 1500€	Jusqu'à 3 ANS

SAYING FAREWELL TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

"It is an unsafe place to work"

June 2022 has marked a sad moment of departure from the Church of England for two high profile priests.



The first of these, the Very Reverend Professor Martyn Percy, has formally announced that he is giving up his licence as a minister in the Church of England, after settling a long-running and high-profile dispute with Christ Church College, Oxford in which he was cleared by multiple enquiries of any wrongdoing and receiving a reputed 7-figure amount of compensation to also cover his £500,000 legal fees.

Christ Church has reportedly lost millions of pounds of donations as a result of the adverse publicity over their handling of the case, and is now facing an enquiry into their governance at the insistence of the Charity Commission.

Professor Percy said "In the face of ... partisanship, failure to neutrally manage conflicts of interest, double standards and incompetence in the C of E's safeguarding, I finally took a decision: to leave the church," he said. "Though I have been ordained for more than 30 years, and continue with my faith in God, the Church of England has destroyed any trust I might have had in it. It is an unsafe place to work."

Professor Percy, who moved to Oxford after serving for 10 years as the Principal of Ripon Theological College, Cuddesdon, which he is credited with having turned into the largest provider of training for future Anglican priests in the UK.

Professor Percy bade farewell to his many friends at Christ Church in a special evensong held in the chapel of Exeter College, Oxford (which is an independent place of worship) after Christ Church refused him permission to

hold the service in his home Church, and the Bishop of Oxford refused him permission to preach in any church under his authority within the Diocese of Oxford

The service can be viewed on YouTube at

https://youtu.be/_7TCP-gMMw4



In the meantime, Pop musician turned Vicar, the Reverend Richard Cole has retired from his parish of Finedon in Northamptonshire at the age of 60, announcing that he was retiring because the Church of England was, he said a place "where gay people are not welcome, and that rules me out."

A former member of the 1980's pop group The Communards, as well as more recently appearing as a guest on Strictly Come Dancing, Richard was ordained as a priest in 2005, and was reputed to have been the inspiration for the priest Rev Adam Smallbone in the BBC TV series 'Rev'. He moved to the parish of Finedon near Peterborough in 2011.

Richard's long-term partner, the Reverend David Coles, sadly died in 2019, and Richard has written and spoken at length about struggling to overcome his grief.

In retirement, Richard is now hoping to become a volunteer prison chaplain, and is currently preparing for the publication of his first novel - a murder mystery titled "Murder Before Evensong" in June.

Speaking about leaving the Church, Richard said "A bishop – I won't say which one – once said to me, 'You must remember, Father, all institutions are demonic.' Having worked for both the BBC and the Church of England, I think you can see there's a certain power in that description. I'm 60 – I don't want to be a warrior any more. Because who wants to wear armour all the time?"

A Story of New Life

Janet Varty

The Cedars of Lebanon are a tall and noble tree, they are mentioned throughout the Old Testament and were considered a gift from God. Some say the trees represent healing, purification and spiritual protection. It seems cedar wood does indeed have anti fungal and insect repellent properties and cedar oil is used for its aromatic properties in aromatherapy.

In Ezekiel 31 Assyria is compare to a Cedar of Lebanon. "All the birds of the sky nested in its boughs, all the animals of the wild gave birth under its branches; all the great nations lived in its shade."

Imagine then the sadness when a beautiful Cedar of Lebanon had to be felled in the in the Cathedral Close in Salisbury Wiltshire (UK) in the 1980's. Much of the resulting timber was cut into long strips, each 4ft x 4 ft. These pieces were then given to the stonemasons for use in all the work they do to keep the cathedral in repair. The masons have been using these "chucks" for the past 40 years to support the vast blocks of chilmark stone under the steel cutting saw as they are shaped for carving. So although on the one hand one may weep at the loss of the beautiful tree it has at least a new and positive purpose in helping the work of the cathedral.

The tree's sacrifice was not complete though because the long years of service resulted in the wood having many cuts and gouges left by the saw and when every surface was cut the, the chucks were thrown out. At this point artist Sophie Hacker claimed them and began to make crosses. What an inspiration. These battered pieces of the Cedar of Lebanon would find yet another new life.



I first came across a postcard picture of the first one Sophie made for Sarum College (The Sarum Cross) a few years ago and it lifted my spirit immediately. The vibrant colours of the passion in juxtaposition with the wounds on the wood. It made me think of the contrast between the wounded Christ of Good Friday and the resurrected Christ of Easter Sunday. The rejected was restored. I have used the picture at each of the funerals I have led in the secular Crematoriums here in France where there are no symbols of faith at all.

Sophie has completed 5 in all, the second is in Hospital chapel in Winchester. The Bishop of London commissioned one for her private chapel during the first national Covid lock down in the UK, a small one was made for a parish church and another for a private client. Each cross has a different palette, one on the Kingfisher colours and another the colours of the Pentecost.

Sophie has breathed new life into the rejected wood and her Cedar of Lebanon crosses will inspire, heal and mend many people just as our God would have wanted.

Sophie Hacker can be found at www.sophiehacker.com

she is a contemporary artist whose work includes painting/ sculpture /vestments/ stained glass/ silverware.

Many thanks to Sophie for allowing us to reproduce this image in ECHO.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



WINE TO THE RESCUE IN SAINT-NICOLAS DE BOURGUEIL

Nestling in the Loire Valley close to Saumur, the town of Saint-Nicolas de Bourgueil is famous for its wine production, creating over 8 million bottle of red and rose wine each year from 140 vineyards.

On 19 June 2021, however, disaster struck the region when a tornado with highly destructive hailstorms swept through the region, causing huge damage to vineyards and local houses and, dramatically toppling the steeple of its church



To help fund repairs, one vineyard owner has come up with a novel way of raising money - by selling Tornado Wine.

The Domaine de Jarry has released a new wine with a special label to commemorate the fallen steeple. From the price of each bottle of this wine that is sold, €1 is donated to the town's reconstruction fund.

We have reproduced a poem below about this initiative

We are all preparing for the forthcoming celebration of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. But hang on ! Poet Nigel Beeton thinks we may all have missed something very important....

A (Royal) Dog's Life



We dogs, who live with royal folk
Who feel Her Maj's royal stroke;
We like to hear important talk
Of dinner time, and our next walk.

But lately there's been so much rushing
People bowing, people fussing.
Trumpets blare and soldiers shout
What is all the noise about?

No-one thinks of corgis' needs
Like, where's our bone, and where's our leads?
We're not allowed a doggy romp
'Midst all the pageantry and pomp!

Adding to our canine woes
They all wear their finest clothes,
So we're all stuck behind closed doors
Lest we might smudge them with our paws.

But things will come to settle down.
It's life, when Mistress wears a crown;
Yes, it will pass, you all will see
This business of the Jubilee.

So, we shall wag our doggy tails!
Be happy, like the Prince of Wales!
We think the Boss has done just fine
Being Queen for all this time!



Bells in Pays de Loire

Here is the church
Without any steeple
Stripped by a tornado
We now see the people

Here is the vigneron
Bottling the wine
Raising the money
To make everything fine

Here in France it's a pleasure
To savour the vine
And by aiding the spiritual . .

Truly divine



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS AS A PRIEST Congratulations to Reverend Neil Batcock and an invitation

Petertide - the Sunday which falls closest to the feast day of

St Peter's Day on 29th June, is one of the two major dates in the Church calendar on which the Church of England ordains its priests.

And this year on Petertide, ECO's Reverend Neil Batcock will be celebrating 25 years since he was ordained as priest. Neil, (pictured left with the Right Reverend David Tustin, Bishop of Grimsby) was ordained in 1997, and has invited us to join him in celebrating this anniversary in the grounds of Les Marguerites Restaurant in Alet les Bains on **Thursday 2 June starting at 15:00.**

(please note this date - which differs from the one advertised in our weekly notices recently) when he will preach as we celebrate Pentecost, and will also lead our sharing of Communion.

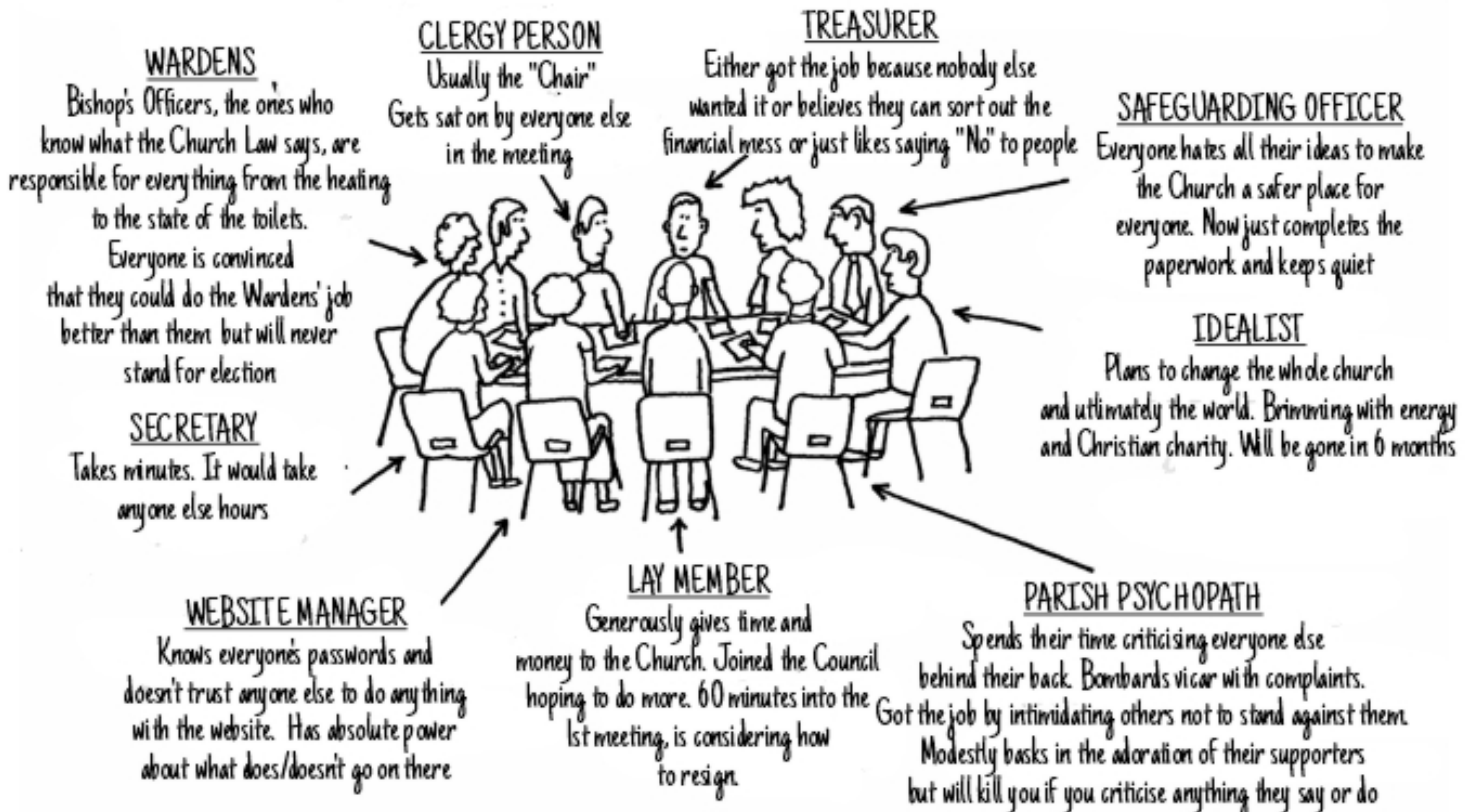
We hope that you might join us and then stay for some of Keith and Antoinette Fairhurst's excellent refreshments.

While we are feeling optimistic about the weather, in case we have to worship inside, please let us know at **contact@ourchurch.fr**

if you would like to come so that we can manage social distancing. Under French Rules a Passe Sanitaire is no longer required, but we do ask you to wear a face mask if we have to go indoors to worship.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE CHURCH COUNCIL

CHURCH COUNCILS MEET EVERY NOW AND THEN TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THE CHURCH.
THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE (SOMETIMES) MEMBERS OF IT

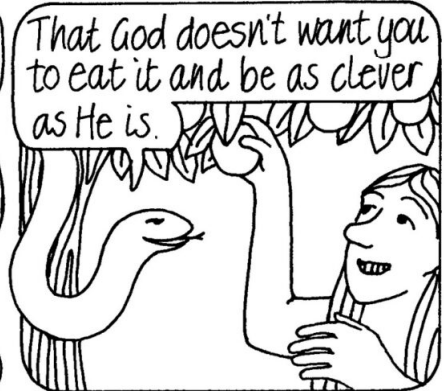
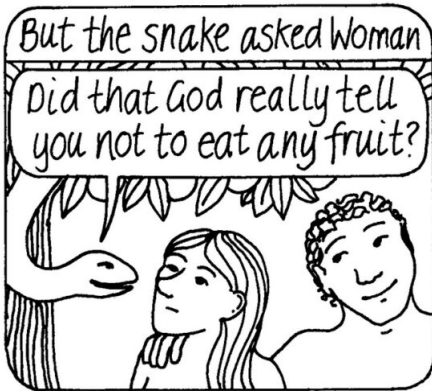
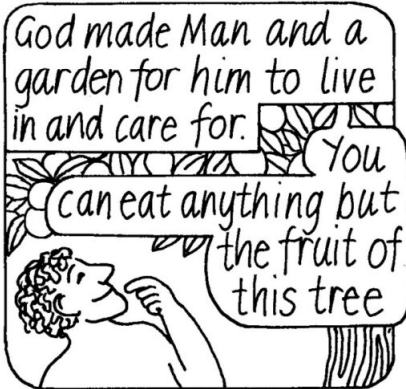


Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Genesis chapter 2:4-9,15-25 and, ch.3

This story is about the wonderful start to the world, and the first mistake...



9 June 2022 is the Feast Day of St Columba of Iona and the Patron Saint of ECO



In 563 AD St Columba sailed from Ireland to Iona – a tiny island off Mull, in the Western Highlands. He brought Christianity with him.

Columba (c. 521 -97) was born in Donegal of the royal Ui Neill clan, and he trained as a monk. He founded the monasteries of Derry (546), Durrow (c.556) and probably Kells.

But in 565 Columba left Ireland with twelve companions for Iona, an island off southwest Scotland. Iona had been given to him for a monastery by the ruler of the Irish Dalriada.

Why would a monk in his mid-40s go into such voluntary exile? Various explanations include: voluntary exile for Christ, an attempt to help overseas compatriots in their struggle for survival, or even as some sort of punishment for his part in a row over a psalter in Ireland. Whatever the reason, Columba went to Iona and spent the rest of his life in Scotland, returning to Ireland only for occasional visits.

Columba's biographer, Adomnan, portrays him as a tall, striking figure of powerful build and impressive presence, who combined the skills of scholar, poet and ruler with a fearless commitment to God's cause. Able, ardent, and sometimes harsh, Columba seems to have mellowed with age.

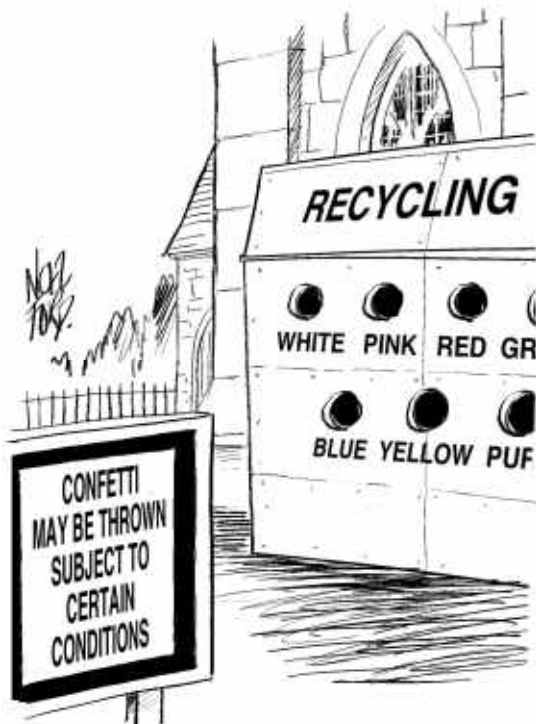
As well as building his monastery on Iona, Columba also converted Brude, king of the Picts. Columba had great skill as a scribe, and an example of this can be seen in the Cathach of Columba, a late 6th century psalter in the Irish Academy, which is the oldest surviving example of Irish majuscule writing. In his later years Columba spent much time transcribing books.

Columba's death was apparently foreseen by his community, and even, it seems, sensed by his favourite horse. He died in the church just before Matins, and it is a tribute to this man that his traditions were upheld by his followers for about a century, not least in the Synod of Whitby and in Irish monasteries on the continent of Europe.

Here is a prayer of St Columba:

Christ With Us

My dearest Lord,
Be Thou a bright flame before me,
Be Thou a guiding star above me,
Be Thou a smooth path beneath me,
Be Thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today and evermore.



A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON LIFE AND FAITH

Anger is just one letter short of danger.

Most people want to serve God, but only in an advisory position.

Nothing else ruins the truth like stretching it.

Never give the devil a ride – he will always want to drive.

People treat the Ten Commandments like a history test – they attempt only three.

Exercise daily – walk with the Lord.

ECO WORSHIP CALENDAR JUNE 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
				15:00 Live Communion Service for Pentecost, Alet les Bains 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10:30 Online Communion Service for Pentecost (Recorded at Alet les Bains)		19:30 Online Service of Compline		19:30 Online Service of Prayer for Healing		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10:30 Online Morning Prayer		19:30 Online Service of Compline		19:30 Online Service of Prayer for Healing		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
10:30 Online Morning Prayer		19:30 Online Service of Compline		19:30 15:00 Live Communion Service, Alet les Bains 19:00 Online Service of Prayer for Healing		
26	27	28	29	30		
10:30 Online Communion Service (Recorded at Alet les Bains)		19:30 Online Service of Compline		Online Service of Prayer for Healing		



STOP PRESS

CELEBRATING THE ASCENSION

ECO's Northern House Group met today to worship and celebrate the Feast of the Ascension.

Our centre piece was the painting of the L' Ascension from the Monastery of Cluny painted in around 1100.

Following an Iona-inspired liturgy we shared carbonated refreshment and fruits. The bubbles being a nod to the Lord rising heavenwards and the fruit a nod to Christ as the first fruits according to Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep..."

God bless Rev Dan Langdon-Griffiths for encouraging us to see the spiritual worth of this Feast.