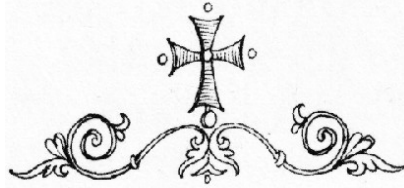


February 2008



The Orthodox Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross, Lancaster

Meeting at the Chaplaincy Centre of Lancaster University

Newsletter



*Ἰσχυρὸς Χριστὸς, Ζωοδότης.
(φ. Κόντογλου, 1962)*

*The parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the United Kingdom and Ireland,
which is part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Western and Central Europe.*

*The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
The Patriarch is His Beatitude Ignatius IV.*

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

TO FIND LOVE

St. Cosmas of Aetolia, who toured occupied Greece around 1750 establishing schools, gives us the price of heaven. Starting with perfect love, he says:

“If you want to find perfect love, go sell all your belongings, give them to the poor, go where you find a master and become a slave. Can you do this and be perfect?”

“You say this is too heavy? Then do something else. Don’t sell yourself as a slave. Just sell your belongings and give them all to the poor. Can you do it? Or do you find this too heavy a task?”

“All right, you cannot give away all your belongings. Then give half, or a third, or a fifth. Is even this too heavy? Then give one tenth. Can you do that? Is it still too heavy?”

“How about this. Don’t sell yourself as slave. Don’t give a penny to the poor. Only do this. Don’t take your poor brother’s coat, don’t take his bread, don’t persecute him, don’t eat him alive. If you don’t want to do him any good, at least do him no harm. Just leave him alone. Is this also too heavy?”

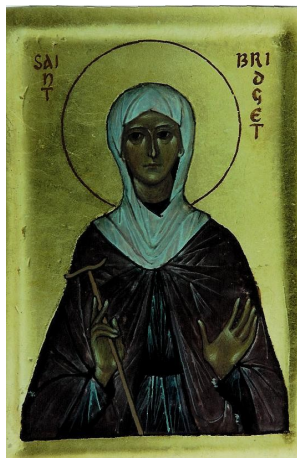
“You say you want to be saved. But how? How can we be saved if everything we are called to do is too heavy? We descend and descend until there is no place further down. God is merciful, yes, but he also has an iron rod.”

St. Cosmas of Aetolia

SAINT BRIDGET OF KILDARE (FEAST DAY 1ST FEBRUARY)

Bridget is probably the best known Saint of Ireland since St. Patrick although the Enlightener of Ireland was British by birth. Bridget was born in County Kildare c.457 and from an early age she was recognised for her generosity to the poor and as a child once gave away her mother’s whole store of butter. However, by the Saint’s prayers the butter was restored.

Bridget took her religious vows before St. Mel, the Abbot and Bishop of Longford. Healing powers, learning and poetic skills became evident in Bridget (her name means “exalted one”) and she established a monastery at Kildare which means “Church of the Oak.” By the time of her repose c. 525 Kildare had become an important centre of learning. The Saint travelled by chariot throughout Ireland continuing St. Patrick’s work of conversion from paganism to Christianity.



She was able by God’s grace to cure lepers, give speech to the dumb

and sight to the blind. Like another Celtic woman St. Melangell of Wales she had a rapport with the animals of God's creation. She negotiated the release of captives and converted a pagan chieftain on his deathbed by plaiting some rushes into a cross. As she did this St. Bridget related to him the life giving salvation of Christ's life, death and resurrection and he was baptised before he fell asleep in the Lord.

In parts of Ireland still today it is still a tradition to plait St. Bridget's Crosses to protect the household in the year ahead.

St. Bridget has been called "Mary of the Gaels" and a common greeting in Gaelic expressed the blessing: *St. Bridget and Holy Mary be with you*. Her influence spread and some of the medieval knights of Chivalry adopted St. Bridget as their patroness and it was they who chose to call their wives "brides" after this holy Saint.

How important it is for us in these islands to recover once more the lives and prayers of our ancient holy men and women.

ST. MELANGELL

Melangell was a female saint of the 7th century. According to tradition she came to Wales from Ireland and lived as a hermit in the valley. One day Brochwel, Prince of Powys, was hunting and pursued a hare which took refuge under Melangell's cloak. The Prince's hounds fled, and he was moved by her courage and sanctity. He gave her the valley as a place of sanctuary, and Melangell became Abbess of a small religious communi-

ty. After her death her memory continued to be honoured, and Pennant Melangell has been a place of pilgrimage for many centuries. Melangell remains the patron saint of hares.



There has been a Christian Church here for over 1200 years. Its setting, in a place of great beauty deep in the Berwyn Mountains, is peaceful and unspoilt. The church stands in a round churchyard, once a Bronze Age site, ringed by ancient yew trees estimated to be two thousand years old. Parts of the building date from the 12th Century though the most recent, a rebuilding of the apse on its original foundations, was completed only in 1990. The impression is still that of a simple Norman church, well loved and beautified over the years.



**ST. COLMAN, BISHOP OF
LINDISFARNE (HOLY ISLAND) 676
(FEAST DAY 18th FEBRUARY)**

At one point in his life St. Colman wishing to follow Christ into the wilderness withdrew into a cave with a Bible. There he was joined by three small companions a cockerel, a mouse and a fly. Each, in their own way contributed to the Saint's sanctification. The mouse used to nibble on Colman's bedclothes and sometimes his ear so that he would awake from sleep and pray in the middle of the night. The cockerel would crow in the morning and keep crowing until the saint got up from his bed.

When Colman read his Bible the fly would walk down the page to mark the line from where the saint was reading. When the saint would stop and reflect on a passage of scripture he was reading the fly would wait until St. Colman began to read again.

The three companions eventually died and St. Colman losing his little friends wrote to his spiritual brother St. Columba about his loss. The Abbot of Iona, Columba wrote: "To you the cockerel, mouse and fly were as precious jewels; so rejoice in the fact that God has taken those jewels for himself."

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES RECIPE

*Delicious low-fat and dairy-free
chocolate truffles recipe*

Makes 24

Prep. time: 30min (+30min chilling
time)

Cooking time: 5 min
53 calories per truffle

Ingredients

- 200g good-quality dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids is good, I prefer Fairtrade Organic varieties)
- 6 tablespoons strong, black coffee (such as espresso)
- 2 tablespoons clear honey, such as acacia or orange blossom (nothing with too strong a flavour)
- Cocoa powder, to dust



How to make:

Melt your chocolate gently in a large bowl over a pan of simmering water before removing it and setting aside. At this stage, it should appear like a liquid pool of chocolate.

Gently pour in the coffee and, using a spatula, give it a slow turn of the bowl until the consistency thickens. The texture of the chocolate will start to seize and thicken almost instantly.

Add the honey, a tablespoon at a time, slowly swirling the chocolate around the bowl until you get a highly glossy mass of chocolate. The whole process will not take more than a couple of minutes.

Chill the bowl in the fridge for 30 minutes or until the truffle mixture has returned to a nearly solid form.

Prepare a clean surface on which to roll out the truffles and sieve three generous tablespoons cocoa powder onto it.

Scrape out a teaspoonful of the mixture into the palm of your hand and roll into a marble-sized ball, then roll this through the cocoa powder until fully coated and pop into an airtight container.

Repeat the process until all the mixture is used up and store the truffles in the fridge.

Tips:

- You could roll your truffles in coconut or chopped toasted nuts, such as hazelnuts.

- You could easily flavour the truffles either with alcohol (rum, orange or coffee liqueur, whisky etc) or with herbs such as lavender, cardamom, saffron, cinnamon stick. Simply make up a tea using 150ml boiling water and a good pinch of the chosen herb (having bashed it up vigorously in a pestle and mortar first to release the flavour). Let the 'tea' infuse for 15 minutes and replace the coffee in this

recipe with six tablespoons of your own strong, home-made herb tea. Alternatively, replace the coffee with the chosen alcohol, taking care that it is at room temperature or you will upset the chocolate.

pieceofcake

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st Feb: **St. Bridget of Kildare**

6th Feb: **St. Photius Patriarch of Constantinople**

10th Feb: **Hieromartyr Charalambus**

18th Feb: **St. Colman**

21st Feb: **St. Eustathius Archbishop of Antioch**

24th Feb: **The first and second finding of the Head of the Forerunner John**

For the lives of Saints please visit the Prologue of Ohrid:

www.westsrbdio.org/prolog/prolog.htm

or the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

www.calendar.goarch.org



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