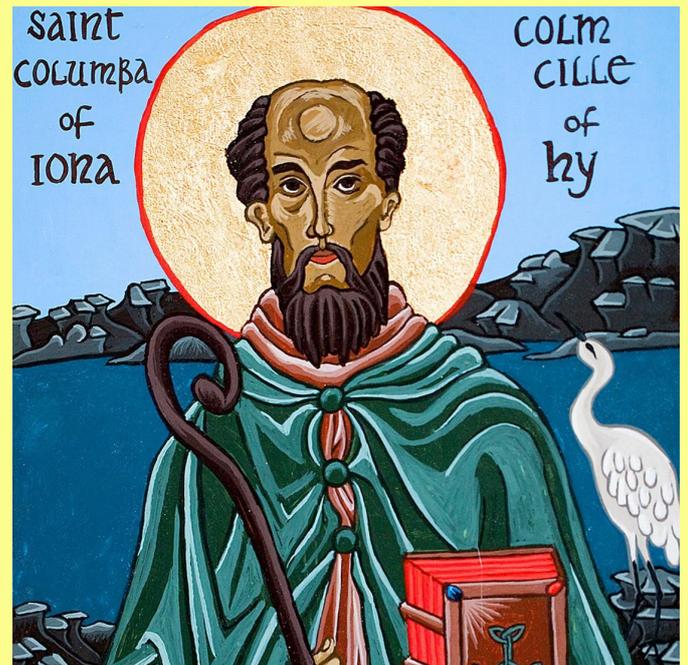


ST COLUMBA'S FAMILIES NEWSLETTER

HELLO FAMILIES OF ST COLUMBA'S

Two weeks ago, we celebrated the birthday of the Church on Pentecost Sunday. This Sunday, it's not exactly a birthday, but it is a special day for churches and congregations that have links to St Columba. The official day for St Columba is June 9th, and each year we remember him on the Sunday nearest the 9th of June. One easy way to remember our connections to St Columba and the island of Iona is to look for the stone of Iona marble on the left hand side of the entrance to the church (by the steps.)



Of all the Dark Age Scottish saints, Columba is the most spectacular star. In 563 AD Columba left Ireland and settled with the Gaels of Dál Riata, where he was granted the Island of Iona to found his monastery.

For the Gaelic warrior kings, Columba was a useful asset. His monastery provided education for their sons, he was a close advisor to the king, and he served as a diplomat to the king's neighbours in Pictland and Ireland. Columba's blessing was treasured by kings - a powerful symbol of their authority, and, in return for Columba's support, the Gaels gave the monastery land and protection.

Columba died in 597, but his monastery's influence continued to grow, leading to the foundation of new monasteries in Ireland and as far away as Lindisfarne in Northumbria. In Pictland, Columban monks began to spread the word of Christianity in the seventh century.

Pilgrimage to Iona increased: kings wished to be buried near to Columba, and a network of Celtic high crosses and processional routes developed around his shrine. At its zenith Iona produced The Book of Kells, a masterpiece of Dark Age European art. Shortly after however, in 794 AD, the Vikings descended on Iona, and, within 50 years, they had extinguished the light which had been Iona. Columba's relics were finally removed in 849 AD and divided between Alba and Ireland. Today Iona is home to the restored Abbey and the ecumenical Iona Community.



In the meantime, I hope you have had a good half term week and feel refreshed for the second half of term. Remember that Sunday School meets on Sunday 27th June and following morning service and Sunday School, there is the Congregational Picnic to follow. Details to be confirmed but save the date. Likely to leave church together at 12.15pm to walk to Hyde Park for a relaxed afternoon of sandwiches, sports, chatter and glorious sunshine (?) For sign up for Sunday School and for the picnic please contact the Office.



No activities this week as it is half term. See you on Sunday,

Angus & the Sunday School Team