June 9

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Columba of Iona

(d. 597)

monk

Shortly after midnight on June 9, 597, Columba of Iona, a monk, man of culture and pilgrim for Christ, died in the church of his monastery.
He was born into a powerful Irish family of Donegal County, but at a young age he understood that he was called to monastic life rather than to a life as chief and leader of his clan.
Educated at the school of several of the best-known Irish monks, he was nicknamed Columcille, "dove of the Church" - in Latin, Columba. Well versed in the riches of his culture and skilled in the Celtic monastic arts, he founded the monasteries of Derry and Durrow, and perhaps Kells. It was in these monasteries that the greatest masterpieces of Irish manuscript illustration were produced. Columba also appreciated the secular arts, and defended the bards and musicians of his time against those monks who wanted to suppress their activity.
At a certain point in his life he decided, following the example of many of his fellow monks, to make himself a pilgrim for Christ and an itinerant preacher. He travelled with several companions, and everywhere he went he left lasting memories. His role as peacemaker in political and ecclesial controversies was appreciated by all.
At the close of his life, his home was the island of Iona off the southwest coast of Scotland, where he had founded a monastery. He dedicated much of his time there to guiding the community, and composed hymns and songs that are poetically and spiritually rich.
Columba is considered the most important saint of the Celtic church, together with Patrick of Armagh and Brigitte of Kildare.

BIBLICAL READINGS

Isa 61:1-3; 1 Thess 2:2-12; Lk 12:32-37

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Columba, abbot of Iona, missionary
Ephrem of Syria (d. 373), deacon, hymn writer, teacher of the faith

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Ephrem, deacon and doctor of the church (Roman and Ambrosian calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (2 ba'unah/sane):
Finding of the relics of John the Baptist (4th cent.; Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Ephrem the Syrian, hymn writer at Edessa

MARONITES:
Alexander and Antonina (4th cent.), martyrs

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Cyril (d. 444), archbishop of Alexandria
John the Russian (d. 1730), confessor (Russian Church)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Abraham mar Kurilose Kattumangat (18th cent.), bishop

OLD CATHOLICS:
Ephrem the Syrian, confessor