



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 73 December 2014



Hastening Home

A Homily by St Columbanus of Leuxuil and Bobbio (615 +)

Now, you see, we must speak of the end of the way; for we have already said that human life is a roadway, and by the likeness of a shadow we have shown how doubtful it is and uncertain, and that it is not what it is; in the same manner, we have said before how incalculable and how blind it is; but concerning the end of our life, by the help of the Holy Spirit, our talk must be continued. It is for travellers to hasten to their homeland, likewise their part is anxiety upon the roadway, and in their homeland peace. Then let us, who are on the way, hasten home; for our whole life is like the journey of a single day.

Our first duty is to love nothing here; but let us place our affections above, our desires above, our wisdom above, and above let us seek our home; for the fatherland is there where our Father is. Thus we have no home on earth, since *our Father is in Heaven* (Matt. 6. 9). And indeed, if He is everywhere in virtue of His power and by the greatness of His Godhead, He is deeper than ocean, firmer than earth, broader than the world, clearer than air, higher than heaven, brighter than the sun; yet He dwells openly in the heavens, where He is *the bread of angels* (cf. Ps. 77. 25) who, as His retinue, inhabit the blessed palace of the highest Heaven, and enjoy the sight of God.

But since our weaker nature could not bear the pure nature of the invisible God, for that reason God in His goodness, *in Whom are all things and beyond Whom is nothing* (Hil. Pictav. de Trin. ii 6), allotted to the supreme virtues the first region of the knowledge of Himself, which He bounded by the first Heaven, and mollified that Heaven by the waters that are above; for unless that nature of the first Heaven were mollified by the aforesaid waters, it would be set on fire by the virtue of the

Most High God, and could by no means be endured by lower natures; and so, while everywhere present to all, God remains invisible. For He is greater than what could be seen entire, and greater than all things, for He created all of nothing; and thus when seen He is imperceptible, since Who He is and how great He is, to Himself alone is known. Yet let us beseech Him, since God the Trinity, though imperceptible and imponderable, is known and present to each one, in proportion to the deserts of our purity.

Let us beseech Him, I say, at least here, that there we may more closely approach, or more clearly understand, and singing on our journey, let us say *Let us run after Thee towards the odour of Thy perfumes* (Cant. 1. 3), and *My soul has clung behind Thee* (Ps. 62. 8), and *Draw me after Thee* (Cant. 1. 3), that with these songs we may speedily pass through the world, and controlled from above may scorn the things of the present, and ever thinking of heavenly things may shun the things of earth; for unless we long unwearingly with heavenly desires, we needs must be entangled in earthly ones.

Then, lest we be concerned with human things, let us concern ourselves with things divine, and as pilgrims ever sigh for and desire our homeland; for the end of the road is ever the object of travellers' hopes and desires, and thus, since we are travellers and pilgrims in the world, let us ever ponder on the end of the road, that is of our life, for the end of our roadway is our home. But there all who journey through this age find various lots according to their merits; and the good travellers have peace in their homeland, but the evil shall perish without; for many lose their true home, because they love rather the road. Let us not love the roadway rather than the homeland, lest we lose our eternal home; for we have such a home that we ought to love it.

Therefore let this principle abide with us, that on the road we so live as travellers, as pilgrims, as guests of the world, entangled by no lusts, longing with no earthly desires, but let us fill our minds with heavenly and spiritual impressions, singing with grace and power, *When shall I come and appear before the face of my God? [For] my soul thirsts for the mighty and living God* (Ps. 41. 2), and *My soul is like a waterless land before Thee* (Ps. 142. 6,) and saying with Paul, *I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ* (Phil. 1. 23), let us know that though we are *strangers from the Lord while we remain in the body* (cf. 2 Cor. 5. 6), yet we are present to the eyes of God.

Hence, spurning all wickedness and laying aside all sloth, let us strive to please Him Who is everywhere present, that with a good conscience we may happily pass over from the roadway of this age to the blessed and eternal homeland of our eternal Father, from present things to things absent, from mournful things to things of joy, from transitory things to things eternal, from earthly things to heavenly, from the sphere of death to that of the living, where we shall see heavenly things face to face, and the Ruler of rulers, ruling His realms with an upright rule, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T201053/>



St Columbanus was one of the most important monastic missionaries in European Church history, whose life and labour revitalised the Church and inspired countless disciples, including our own locally venerated saint, St Wandregesilius, whose shrine once flourished in the village of Bixley near Norwich.

St Columbanus' feast day falls on 6 December (23 November)



Peregrinus Pro Christo: Life of St Columbanus

Born in the year 543 in the south-eastern Irish region of Leinster, Columbanus (from the Celtic *Columbán* meaning 'white dove') was well-educated from his early years. Handsome in appearance, he was tempted by women and was eventually advised by a nun to follow her example and flee from temptation by embracing monasticism. His mother disapproved of this intention, but his will prevailed even when she tried to prevent him from leaving home.

The aspiring monk studied initially with Abbot Sinell of Cluaninis, before moving on to a monastery headed by the abbot later canonized as Saint Comgall. It was under his direction, in the Abbey of Bangor in County Down, that Columbanus formally embraced the monastic calling, as one of a growing number of monks drawn to the Bangor community's ascetic rigor and intellectual vitality.

Though Columbanus was known as a dedicated monk and scholar, around the year 583 he felt called to undertake foreign missionary work. Initially denied permission by the abbot, he was eventually allowed to depart with a band of twelve men, with whom he sailed to Britain before reaching Brittany around 585. There, they found the Church suffering from barbarian invasions and internal corruption.

Received with favour by King Gontram of Burgundy, Columbanus and his companions founded a monastery in an abandoned Roman fortress at Annegray. Despite its remote location in the Vosges Mountains, the community became a popular pilgrimage site, and also attracted so many monastic vocations that two new monasteries had to be formed to

accommodate them at the nearby Gallo-Roman castle called *Luxovium* (Luxeuil-les-Bains) and *Ad-fontanas* at present-day Fontaine-lès-Luxeuil.

These monastic communities remained under Columbanus' authority, and their rules of life reflected the Irish tradition in which he had been formed. Meanwhile, as they expanded, the abbot himself sought greater solitude, spending periods of time in a hermitage and communicating with the monks through an intermediary.

As heirs to the Irish monastic tradition, Columbanus and his monks ran into differences with the bishops in France, partly over the calculation of the date of Easter. He also met with opposition from within the French royal family, because of his insistence that King Thierry should not live with a woman outside of wedlock. He had been urged to do so by his grandmother Queen Brunehild, who thought a royal marriage would threaten her own power.

Columbanus' moral stand for marriage led first to his imprisonment, from which he escaped. But the king and his grandmother had him driven out of France by force, and they separated him from his monks by insisting that only those from Ireland could accompany him into exile. This group travelled and evangelized in present-day Germany, though political circumstances eventually forced them to cross the Alps into northern Italy.

Welcomed by the ruling Lombards, Columbanus nonetheless found the Italian Church troubled by heresy and schism. Having received a grant of land from the Lombard king, Columbanus founded his last monastery in the town of Bobbio during 614. Although St. Columbanus died on 23 November of the following year, the abbey at Bobbio remained a centre of theological orthodoxy and cultural preservation for centuries afterward.

Notes & Jottings

COURTYARD

On Monday 24 November, work started on paving the college courtyard in brick to harmonise with the part that is already paved. This will provide an ideal outdoor reception area for summer social events.

PATRONAL FEAST & FOUNDER'S DAY

After a wet start to November, our Patronal festival on 6 November was greeted with a bright and sunny Autumnal day for the celebration of the Festal Liturgy. Founder's Day was observed on Saturday 15 November, the fourth anniversary of the repose of our Foundress, Mary Bond. It was good to see old and new friends coming from as far afield as Walsingham, Norwich, London and Leicester to pray with us.

THE EMPORIUM

The Emporium, the catalogue of items in stock is [available online](#). The printed version is available on request. It contains details of books, Christmas cards, ikon and prayer cards and church requisites in stock.

BOOKS

SGOIS now has copies of Christopher Birchall's book [Embassy, Emigrants and Englishmen](#) in stock (retail price - £27.95). This is the history of the Russian Orthodox presence in London over the past three hundred years, from the first chapel in the old Russian embassy to the present day.

CALENDARS

The [2015 St Herman Calendars \(£6.50 per copy\) are now in stock](#). Order soon to avoid disappointment.

ST CEDD CARDS

As previously mentioned, our [ikon cards of St Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons](#) have now been printed and are available for just 20 pence each. The college hopes to have a pilgrimage in honour of St Cedd with a specially composed service at some point in 2015.

NAMEDAYS



We send our congratulations to all who are celebrating a nameday at this time and wish :

Many Years!

- 7 December – **Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria** – Catherine Meyer
- 13 December - **Apostle Andrew the First-Called** – Andrei Bosisas
- 17 December – **Great Martyr Barbara** – Matushka Barbara Jones
- 19 December – **St Nicholas of Myra** – Nicholas Meade, Nicholas Morgan
- 28 December – **St Anthea, Mother of St Eleutherius** – Anthea Barry
- 28 December - **St Stephen, Archbishop of Sourozh** - Archpriest Stephen Platt



COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE IKON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW

DECEMBER 2014

DAILY AT 6PM: COMPLINE WITH PRAYERS BEFORE THE IKON

(If you would like the name of a friend or loved one to be included in our intercessions list, please contact us)

Wednesday 3 December

7.30pm ~ Vigil

❖ Thursday 4 December ❖

10.10am ~ Hours & Festal Liturgy (*Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple*)

Saturday 6 December

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 7 December

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (*St Catherine of Alexandria*)

Saturday 13 December

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 14 December

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (*Prophet Nahum*)

Thursday 18 December

7.30pm ~ Akathist to St Nicholas the Wonderworker

Saturday 20 December

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 21 December

10.10am Hours & Divine Liturgy (*St Patapius of Thebes*)

Saturday 27 December

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 28 December

10.10am Hours & Divine Liturgy (*St Eleutherius of Illyria*)

What would happen if we treated our Prayer Rope like we treat our Smartphone?



*What if we carried it around with us?
What if we went through it several times a day?
What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
What if we used it to receive messages more clearly and reliably?
What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
What if we gave it to kids as a gift, and taught them how to use it?
What if we used it when we travelled?
What if we used it in case of emergency?*



And one more thing:

Unlike our Smartphone, we don't have to worry about our Prayer Rope being disconnected – the bill has already been paid.

It makes one wonder: Where are my priorities?

Source: <http://www.pravmir.com/cell-phones-vs-prayer-ropes/#ixzz3KJa1HkDx>

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