

**The Living Tradition
of Saints
in the British Isles**

18 Where do we go from here?

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The Early British Saints

1 The Living Tradition East and West

To understand the early Saints of the British Isles we need to set them in the context of the Universal Church East and West.

There is only one way of holiness in Christ. Christ is one and all the saints live in union with him. This union in Christ has existed from the beginning. It has been passed on in every century and in every country wherever the Church has gone with the Gospel. It consists of all those people who have been effectively sanctified in Christ. They have passed what they have learnt by example and some in writing. Because it is a lived sanctity and not merely an intellectual exercise we call it is the one Living Tradition of holiness in Christ. It is the very heart and foundation of the church and recognisable as such in the East and the West, the North and the South.

This Tradition embraces all aspects of church life: apostolic faith and practice, apostolic ministry and sacraments, apostolic scriptures and ecumenical councils. All these things have, as their fundamental purpose, the living of a holy life in community and in each person.

When we examine this tradition, whatever the place and whatever the time, whatever the language and culture, we should note the evidence and the consistency – without being idealistic .

Let us now look at the Tradition in the British Isles to see how the tradition developed here, who were the saints and where they lived.

2 Encountering the Saints

The Church in the British Isles has always borne the marks of the Living Tradition. The early Church itself grew rapidly within the Roman Empire. But equally, from the beginning, it went beyond the Empire, in the East to Edessa and beyond, in the West beyond Hadrian's wall into Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland. The saint responsible for this, among others is St Ninian. In Ireland, a country wholly beyond the Empire ascetic evangelists lived: St Ciaran of Clear Island, St Declan at Ardmore, St Ailbe at Emly, and St Ibar of Begerin, meaning 'Little Ireland', in Wexford harbour and in cells and river mouths all along the south. From Ireland in turn went the saints who evangelised first the West coast and then the eastern side of Scotland.

The Church in Britain survived the contraction of the Empire and the invasion of the Angles, Jutes and Saxons in the 5C. Out of their reach the church grew in Wales,

Cornwall, Brittany, and Cumbria, then also alongside them Northumbria.

The booklets called the Living Tradition of Saints in the British Isles' from 100 -1000 details this dramatic growth despite many more invasions with photographs and historical comment .

These booklets identify those saints about whom something is known and the places where they lived, prayed and worked. The approach which combines traditions from long ago with holy sites in whatever condition they exist today often provides us with something substantial. On the other hand there are many saints about whom very little is known. At the same time we need to be very careful about the Lives of the Saints inasmuch they were written to entertain pilgrims. The tendency to fancifulness reduces respect for the saints in the modern era and do a disservice to the Living Tradition.

Many British saints however left hardly any teaching. That is why we have to see them in the light of the teaching of the Living Tradition.

The purpose of the one way of holiness is to help all of us, if we will, grow together in union with Christ. This is the purpose both of the Gospel and the Church. It is the same for tradition in all its aspects. We are warned on all

sides about the dangers of intellectualism. The saints say exactly the same.

When I was 20 I met a saint: Fr Sophrony who founded the Monastery of Tolleshunt Knights in the UK. He said to me, "The purpose of the Christian life is to ask Christ to send the Holy Spirit into our heart, for him to cleanse it and make us like Christ'.

There has never been any doubt in my mind that Father spoke from experience and that what he said was true. I was dumbfounded. There was no arguing: here was a direct word of God addressed to me. Here was the whole scripture summed up in one sentence.

This was the turning point in my life. This is how it is with saints. There is only one thing to do - go and do so, in as much as we are able, in co-operation with the Holy Spirit.

The saints are alive in Christ. They are always with us in worship, especially in the liturgy. To know the saints therefore is not to look at the past in a manner that is only romantic. Rather we lift up our hearts to meet them in the Kingdom which is to come, where past is carried forward in the present, and the present is opened toward the future - the very consummation of the Kingdom.

3 The Beginnings

We know little of early British saints outside of Wales, Cornwall and Cumbria¹.

But we do have early martyrs in St Alban, Sts Julius and Aaron at Caerleon in Wales, and earlier still Sts Sanctus and Aigulus, a bishop. The story of Aristobulus, one of the Seventy coming to Britain is perhaps unlikely, as are several other stories all claiming to be the first in Britain,

We do know however that churches were built in Roman times at Colchester, London, Silchester, Lincoln and Exeter; also at Uley in Gloucestershire and Icklingham in Suffolk. We have wonderful frescos at Lullingstone showing a celebration of the liturgy, mosaics at Hinton St Mary and altarware from Water Newton. There are also churches on military sites such as Richborough and elsewhere. One eminent scholar of the period, Charles Thomas², in his study of Roman Britain, suggests that before the Romans left in AD 410 there may have been as many as 25 bishops and 10,000 Christians in Roman Britain.

The period immediately after the Roman left was not the total disaster it was once thought to be. Life went on, and

1 See *Dn Ian Thompson* *The Lost Saints of Britain* Bluestone Books 2005

2 *Charles Thomas* *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*

there is evidence that in some places Anglo Saxons and Britons settled down in some proximity. There is evidence of a continuity of Christian life in Richborough and Canterbury. Beyond Hadrian's Wall, there were essentially British foundations connected with St Ninian made at Whithorn and also in the tip of Galloway in Scotland where grave stones of the bishops Viventius and Mavorius in Kirkmadrine indicate further foundations.

4 Wales

The first monks seem to have come up the Severn Channel. They were using the sea routes that had opened up again after the Romans left. There were plenty of rugged valleys and hills for them to move about and eventually settle. Wales gives us St Dyfrig (5C), St Illtyd, St Teilo (6C) at Llandeilo Fawr (6C), St Barruch on Barry Island, St Cenydd (or Kenneth) at Llangennith and probably, the island of Burry Holms, both 6C. Caldey Island was founded in 540. There are many others.

At Patrishow in the Black mountains is the untouched tomb of 6C hermit St Issui under the altar - a perfect gem of the Living Tradition. There is also the remote church of Kilgwrrwg - an 8C circular enclosure which has a 12C still functioning there.

Another gem is the cave and church of St Govan (6C), and St David's is outstanding. St Justinian (6C) lived on Ramsey Island; St Gwyndaf (6C) at Lllanwanda on

Strumble Head and St Brychan (5-6C) at Nevern; these all have churches, the last two still in use. The whole area forms a spiritual landscape, which according to pilgrims ancient and modern, heaven and earth seem very close.

The gem of the Living Tradition of Mid-Wales is the restored shrine of St Melangel (7C) in the Benwyn Mountains. This has once again become a centre of pilgrimage.

In the north west of Wales is the Lleyn Peninsula where another spiritual landscape has as its focus Bardsey Island off the tip of the peninsula. St Cadfan (6C) is said to have established himself there, though others may have got there before him. On the south side is the wonderful holy well of St Cybi at Llanybi (6C), also Llangian, Llanpedrog, St Tudwal's island where St Tudwal was a hermit, and the church of St Hywen at Aberdaron. On the north side is , among others, St Beuno's church at Pystill which looks much as it was in 12C; and his great church at Clynnog Fawr.

The Isle of Angelsey overflows with ancient churches, with abundant hermits St Tysilio, St Seriol, St Cwyfan, St Gwenfaen, St Dwynwen, St Cybi, and St Eilan - and the list is far from exhaustive.

We get a similar story along the north coast of Wales, with St Trillo, St Celynin, St Dyfnog, and not least St

Winifred at Holywell whither Henry V made a 50 mile pilgrimage on barefoot after the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.

5 Cornwall

North Cornwall was evangelised by Welsh saints; further south others came from Ireland and even Brittany. Cornwall is the epitome of ancient Britain. It reminds us so much of the Desert Fathers. Everywhere we find hermits, men and women living in wild places, in cliffs, in rocks, by the sea or on the moors.

In north Devon is St Urith's grave at Chittlehampton, St Brannoc's well at Braunton, St Nechtan's well at Hartland; in Cornwall, St Gennys' wells at St Gennys, St Piran's well at Boscastle, and St Juliot's on Tintagel. All these give a hint of the dynamic of early British life in Cornwall: hundreds of tiny communities, many of them founded by a hermit or small monastic community.

St Gwinnodock (Enedoc), St Davidstowe, St Clether, Llaneast, Altarnon, Dupath, St Cleer, and Bodmin, all clustered around the edge of Bodmin Moor, still have wells. In the whole of Cornwall there were over 200 holy wells. In East Cornwall is the shrine of St Endellienta at Endellion, the pillow stone of the monk Justus at St Kew, and the reliquary of St Petroc at Bodmin.

The spiritual landscape of Cornwall however is not confined to small communities, abundant holy wells and stone crosses. In many villages there are enormous medieval churches. These were built for the great numbers of pilgrims who from 10C onwards came to honour the saints. The impact of pilgrimages on the Middle Ages should not be minimised: they constitute a significant factor in the continuity of the Living Tradition right up to the Reformation and beyond.

The Life of St Samson is one of the few Lives of British Saints which is early and illuminating. It tells us of an early itinerant bishop evangelist as he moved from Wales through Cornwall to Brittany. His cave at Golant Near Fowey can still be found, though the dripping water will not encourage you to enter.

There is the hugely iconic hermitage built on an outcrop of rock at Roche, which may have been founded by St Gundred, but which was in use, probably spasmodically, for over 1000 years.

The holy well at St Petroc's retreat at Little Petherick on an inlet of the River Camel can still be seen; so can St Constantine's church and holy well on the golf course at Constantine Bay; and St Cubert's holy well in Holywell Bay (not the one on the seashore). At Laherne near Newquay is one of the ancient crosses showing a regnant and victorious Christ which exude the peace of victory. There are several such crosses in Cornwall.

Since the 17C Carmelite nuns have kept an authentic monastic life here for over 200 years and very recently a new Order of Franciscans has found their home here.

6C St Piran's hermitage has been dug out from the sands at Perranporth. At Phillack a Chi-Rho symbol going back as far as Roman Christian times has been found. St Just in Roseland captures all that is beautiful about a little retreat up a Cornish creek. St Michael's Mount in Mount Bay is a typically early monastic island site. And just when we think there cannot be any more there are the holy wells of Madron, Sancred, St Euny and St Levan's plus St Helen's Oratory on Cape Cornwall. These baptistries may be the earliest in Britain and may take us right back into immediate post Roman times. These places are quite amazing. Nowhere will you sense early Christian Britain more than at these places.

6 Ireland

The quantity and calibre of early Christian sites in Ireland is outstanding. Ireland must be seen as a yardstick for interpretation for anything to do with the early churches in the British Isles. The island is unrivalled by virtue of the quantity of evidence in all aspects of church life³.

The story of St Patrick and his companions is well-known. During the first phase of evangelism it became

3 See my Database of Early Christian Church in Ireland
www.earlychristianireland.org

obvious clear that the most eminently adaptable form of the Christian life was the monastic life. It meshed perfectly with tribal culture, so much so that the monasteries spread everywhere with ease. A consequence was that the bishop, who had no city to live in and no stable territory to oversee, often lived in a monastery. This intensely local phenomenon accounts for the huge numbers of local saints throughout the country.

Christian Ireland dazzles us with its development of a thoroughly indigenous church culture which was nevertheless always part of the patriarchate of Rome. It developed stone buildings, high crosses, illuminated manuscripts, carved cross slabs and grave slabs, and round towers in an unrivaled manner.

It is the tomb shrines of early saints which fill us with awe. Co Kerry in particular provides us with bee-hive huts (otherwise known as 'clochans') and boat shaped oratories. Their sheer numbers satisfy the most ardent discoverer of ancient churches.

The monks on Skellig Michael in Co Kerry, and the hermits who occupied the top of the southern peak, demonstrate an ardor of life which matches the best of the Egyptian desert.

In Ireland we do have some monastic literature, namely some Rules ⁴ and the famous *Penitentials*. But to really get the feel of Irish monasticism we need to visit the monasteries built on islands. Here, perhaps in the sunlight or maybe in our windblown and rain sodden faces, we find the context for their spirituality. Several islands are eminently worth visiting; Holy Island and Scattery island in the Shannon, St Seannach's island off the Dingle peninsula, Inishmurray in Sligo Bay, Illaunloughan off Portmagee in Kerry, Church Island in Valentia Harbour, and Church Island in Lough Currane; Inismacsaint in Co Fermanagh and Iniskeel in Donegal. This list does not include the more remote islands in the sea.

7 Scotland

Everyone has heard of Iona. But marvelous though Iona is, it is but one of a continuous chain of islands which lie off the the Western coast of Scotland from the Clyde to the Outer Hebrides. All along mountains and sea sing a magnificent duet, and just when we think there can be no more, we find the presence of the Living Tradition in places like Europie and Eilean Columbkille on Lewis and Kilbarra on Barra; and further still the now uninhabited islands of the Flannans and St Rona.

4 see Unseann O Maidin *The Cletic Monk Rules and Writings of Early irish Monks* Cistercian Publications 1996

The Eastern coast too has its chain of sites from the Firth of Forth up to the Firth of Moray. But nothing can prepare us for the Pictish monasteries, on the mainland at Portahomack perhaps founded by St Columba himself, and on sites on the Orkneys and the Shetlands. Few if any of us will ever get there but it will astonish us to hear of Pictish monastery at Papar Stronsay on Orkney, now in the hands of a Catholic monastery, and nothing will prepare us for the Pictish hermitages on the local sea stacks of Stronsay and the east Mainland . The same stylite phenomenon can be seen at Kame of Isbister and the Berrier of Yell in the Shetlands. These 'papar', the monks, were on Iceland when the Norse arrived in the early 9C.

8 Northumbria and Cumbria

After Iona, the Holy Isle of Lindisfarne in Northumbria ranks next in witness to the Irish Living Tradition. St Aidan and St Cuthbert were revered in the north of Britain without compare. When the mighty Normans stomped their way through Britain, they still knelt before St Cuthbert in the great cathedral they built at Durham to house his body.

The wild mountains of Cumbria ensured that it was a long time before the Anglo-Saxons could claim the north west for England. Previous to this, ever since the 5C, the Irish, British, Northumbrian, Viking and Norse all staked their own claims to different parts of the region. 6C British

monastic sites, 7C Irish monastic sites, early holy wells and late Viking crosses can all be seen by the adventurous pilgrim.

9 Greater Mercia, East Anglia, Kent & Wessex

Time does not permit to trace the paths of the saints throughout the rest of England. We note that the royal families of the Anglo-Saxons were compulsive founders of monasteries, often double ones for men and women, under one abbess. The East Angles and the men of Kent did much the same. The Vikings came and the Danes after them; they too became Christians as a condition of defeat.

The Danes as far as we can tell, destroyed every monastery in the land. But when King Alfred defeated them, he straightway set about restoring monasteries; but to man them he had to fetch Frenchmen from the continent.

10 Continuity

The Living Tradition is therefore much in evidence during the first 1000 years in the British Isles. Before we look at the next 1000 years, let us just remind ourselves of what has survived or been restored

In *Britain* St Alban's has once again become an important place of pilgrimage.

In *Wales*, St Issui of Patrishow was never disturbed.
Caldey Island has been restored to monastic use.
St David's retains its sacred landscape.
Pennant Melangel has now been restored.
The Lleyn peninsula retains its sacred landscape, as does Angelsey;
St Winifred's holy well still operates today as ever it did as a regular place of pilgrimage and taking of the waters.

In Cornwall the landscape is still covered with holy places. the monastic life has been maintained at Laherne has maintained monastic life.

in Ireland Croagh Patrick still functions as a sacred mountain.
Lough Derg still functions as a place of retreat for all Ireland.
The tombs of the saints still cover the land.
Glencolumbkille in Donegal, Glendalough in Wicklow, and the Isles of Aran, all draw thousands

in Scotland, Iona draws its own thousands.
little places like Europie and Cill Barra still hold on; Papar Stronsay has its monastery.
An Orthodox sister lives in the Shetlands

Lindisfarne and Durham draw thousands.

All these places are in the hands of the Anglican or Catholic churches.

But: does it add up to anything?

11 Medieval Britain

We must now look at the next 500 years.

Greeks and Latins had a profound distaste for one another going back till at least 500 CE. As we all know this gave rise to spats.

It was the increasing power struggle around the papacy that made things worse. In spite of this, as historians Henry Chadwick and Andrew Louth have observed that, in this context, the other issues including the *filioque*, look rather like matters lying around ready to be picked up at any one time and used for ammunition. In other words, at that time, if the real issue of authority could have been resolved, then, with a good will, perhaps so could the rest.

But it was not to be; and the other issues were worked up in deliberate hostility, and attitudes hardened.

So where do we go from here?

The first thing is that we can do something about somethings. First and foremost we can determine not to be driven by the old animosities. We need to adopt a different approach. This is not because we are soft, or that we ignore the issues. The reality is that simply chalking up the differences again and again breeds further negativity.

The second thing is that we need to recognise that our lack of love for one another is an unnecessary scandal to the secular world. Our behaviour is often abhorrent and our relationships are seen to suffer from gross lack of magnanimity. This is *not* to adopt the secular view but to measure ourselves once more by the Gospel. We must begin with repentance.

It may be true that as Orthodox, we may not care for many things Latin. But that is not the issue. We have a discourse to undertake where for a long time there has been none.

Our discourse must begin with what unites us. We Orthodox say that we are the true church; but if we say also that there is no church, no sacraments, no salvation and no working of interior grace outside this church, dialogue has already been sabotaged before we begin. Such an attitude not only brings great offense, it is also untrue.

It is also unnecessary. If we close our minds we are heading for stultification. If we open our minds and hearts things can be so very different.

If we affirm that something unites us then dialogue is possible.

It needs to be affirmed that we share a foundation in Christ, an apostolic faith and practice, an apostolic ministry and sacraments, the apostolic scriptures and creeds, the Fathers, the Liturgy and the one Way of Holiness in Christ, *even if we qualify our words in all sorts of ways.*

Here is the rub - words not meaning the same as say they did long ago or in the Living Tradition when it was much more cohesive.

Nevertheless in these words there is something uniting us; some foundations exist. Even if one regards the catholic church as in some ways 'sick', it is not in such a state that Christ no longer works in it.

A new way has to be opened up. There is the old understanding of things but we must not scoff at new ones; with new attitudes we do see things differently.

Let us return to Britain. We hear statements that after such a such a date, in Britain usually 1066, that, to put it bluntly there was no more orthodoxy and no more saints.

Orthodox have been very keen to acknowledge the saints of the British Isles in the first millennium. But to, so to speak, hack off everyone and everything is, dare we say it, absurd. We must go on from there. There is some sort of continuum, even though it is qualified in all sorts of ways, sometimes very unclear and sometimes very feeble. The fact of the matter is Christians continued praying and living holy lives for the next 500 years and beyond.

If we look at people like St Bruno, St Francis and St Clare, St Catherine of Sienna, St Teresa and St John of the Cross and St Therese of Lisieux, we are looking at saints who witness to the Living Tradition.

Some say that these are not real saints because they did speak of 'theosis' and God's 'divinizing energies'. But if we look at substance and not words we can clearly see how the human energies of these men and women were transformed by the divine and that they were remade in the likeness of Christ

Other people say that they did not experience sanctity 'internally' but only appear to have done so 'externally'. We must protest. This begs lots of questions and seems close to playing with words. It ignores the very real impact of their sanctity, and it more more or less reduces them to being cheats and liars.

But if we look at them as Saints of the Living Tradition we have a way forward.

In Britain we make the Normans the bogeymen. They were French, Catholic, 'Roman', 'authoritarian', 'not-Orthodox', even 'not-Celtic'. They did away with itinerant bishops, put down monasteries and 'smashed' the old order. They finished 'orthodoxy'.

But the change in the church in Britain had been underway for years. In reality the Normans were just another lot of Vikings. The Anglo-Saxons had already made marriage alliances with them before this time.

This also overlooks the fact that in the British Isles the old ways had developed huge fault lines. Irish monks fought wars. Anglo-Saxon royals lived a high life in monasteries. The so-called big break of 1066 was nothing of the sort. Besides, the English (and the Irish and the Scots) continued to produce saints.

In Britain the monuments of our past are numerous and all around us. Our spiritual landscape comes in layers: from the men who built Stonehenge, followed by the British, the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons, the Vikings, the Danes, the church effecting the conversion in each successive wave and contributing to the long list of saints in our islands.

The Normans and medieval English have left their mark too on the landscape. We cannot erase them or ignore

them. In short they were the Church of the Middle Ages in this land. The medieval world view, for all its faults, needs a proper appreciation.

12 **The Reformation in Britain**

The Reformers, in reacting against the whole tacky system of indulgences, ruthlessly cast aside saints, relics, and pilgrimages. They also set aside as 'worthless works' the one way of holiness in Christ as it had always been understood. In doing so, they deprived themselves of the riches of the one way of holiness in Christ. They sought the early church - but missed it by miles. For that they are to be pitied.

The Reformation was a nasty business. The wreckage is visible everywhere. The detailed analysis afforded by Eamon Duffy (in his books, 'the Stripping of the altars', and, 'the Voices of Morebath' a remote village in Devon) should make any Christian grieve for the terrible events of the Reformation in England. The country eventually descended into civil war, to be rescued by the Elizabethan Settlement. Every Englishman should be grateful for that settlement. It managed to build a certain centre ground on which, instead of rage and unholy destruction, peace and stability could be built. Even though it had cost the lives of the Catholic martyrs, - and we have to add those of the Reformers also - it left a legacy of cohesion which none of our neighbours have even to this day.

In the beginning the settlement involved exclusion as well as inclusion. Slowly this was unpicked and a more open attitude prevailed: Catholics as well as Methodists were recognised; and now religious freedom is extended to all.

What the Emperor Theodosius thought to be a good idea, namely that Christianity was the religion of state and which was welcomed by Orthodox, has in the long haul proved bad for faith because it has led to coercion. Freedom is the gift to live the Gospel without abusing others. That is the challenge for the church in the world today.

Part of that challenge is the interface between faith and secularism. The Anglican Church is finding it difficult because there seems nowhere to go. The Elizabethan Settlement in its time saved the day; but it cannot rebuild on tradition because its foundation is not big enough.

In another sense its foundation is too big. Having embraced a royal 'head' for protection, it now has a Parliament that makes it bow to the 'tradition' of reason as developed in the West. The result is human rights as defined by the state.

The Oxford Movement tried to reset the church in the Living Tradition. But it wasn't big enough and could not carry the Evangelicals.

Evangelicals now run the coup and their 'tradition' prevents it from drawing on what they dismiss as traditionalism. But the instincts of Pusey, Keble and Newman were right: Anglicanism cries out for re-setting in the Living Tradition.

13 Live the Tradition, Love the brothers.

In this day of freedom, Orthodox need to mingle. It is of no use to stand back and say we have got the true faith, we have got our holy tradition. That attitude in England is taken for snobbery. Love means shaking hands with others, loving others, and, at least metaphorically, getting our hands dirty. We have to emphasise what we can give, not what we demand; and give the love of God freely, from the heart, without agenda.

In Cumbria people have never heard of Orthodox let alone had them in their midst. Our name draws attention to the presence of great saints among us, St Bega, St Mungo and St Herbert, to whom we also add St Cuthbert. We have to say to English people that these are our saints too. We have to say to cradle Orthodox that these too are Orthodox saints and we have been here, in the West, from the beginning. They have to be weaned from equating Orthodoxy with the East; for Orthodox was and is also West.

We have to teach that the Living Tradition of the one way of holiness in Christ, still has the power to deliver the Gospel and make saints.

We make the celebration of the Liturgy and the daily offices our overriding priority. This marks us out as something quite radically apart. We are deeply aware that it is the divine energies that accomplish the work of God's kingdom on a daily basis and not our own. But we accept that the other local churches have something to teach us; and that if we were to separate ourselves from them, it would be at our own peril. This is not an easy path to tread but we have to do it.

Once more pilgrimages have become popular. We do pilgrimages to early Christian Roman sites to early British and Irish sites, Northumbrian, Viking and Norse sites. We do not trash the medieval order, or the Reformation settlement. How else are we going to show our fellow English Christians, of any denomination or none, that we uphold a true faith from the beginning, and a Living Tradition that can make them saints? We pray for unity with our brothers and sisters. This does not mean that we are any the less the true church, or that we have gone soft because we mingle.

Through Chaucer pilgrimages in England got a bad name. Yet pilgrimages did a remarkable thing after the Reformation, out in the countryside, in Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland. They preserved the places and the

memories of the saints. Even when pilgrimages were shut down, much lived on in local memory.

Today pilgrimages have become popular again: and where do we go? To the places of the Living Tradition.

Icons have made their appearance in many of our cathedrals and churches throughout the land. The Tradition, through icons, is sneaking its way back into countless churches and cathedrals. And where their icons are, let us remember, so are the saints themselves.

Many Orthodox, if they have come from Greece, Russia, Antioch or wherever, inevitably come in 'foreign' clothing.

For those in Britain who have become Orthodox, there is a temptation to attach themselves to the first millennium and to regard themselves as its direct heirs. But that won't do. We have to face up to what has happened in the last 1000 years.

The ugly wound of the break with Orthodoxy has gone on for another 1000 years. But the ugliness is mitigated if we can understand that during those 1000 years the Living Tradition was not entirely lost. Here and there the memory lived on, here and there the pull was felt. In the beautiful words of Dermot O'Donoghue, 'the angels keep their ancient places'.

Here we are on the edge of language. But if we visit the holy places, these words take on a more certain meaning. The angels are present and so are the saints. The activity and communion of heaven and earth is rekindled whenever we invite them to come close in the Liturgy. This is something we can all do.

In the meantime we must also live with the scar and turn the pain of it into an intercession of love.