

## **The Marian Pilgrimage: Day Twelve: Monday 18 May 2020**

### **The Shrine of Our Lady of Holyrood, Sacred Heart, Lauriston, Edinburgh**

#### Introduction and Apology

So far so good, everyone has been kind, and it is encouraging that the Presbytery Office estimates that there are about sixty+ people involved in the May Marian Pilgrimage. I have had some appreciative remarks, and some folk [about ten, perhaps] who are without access to computers have asked for, and are getting, print-outs.

By and large the focus has been on Our Lady, as it is her special month, but as we have travelled it has seemed to be appropriate to explore some other areas of interest. Yes, it takes some time putting each day together. First, there is an extensive trawl of on-line resources, much cutting and pasting [not always acknowledging sources, naughty!], and trying to put the material into a similar style, the same font, and perhaps making some passages more felicitous than guide-book originals. The problem is that one is led into such interesting byways. I have discovered areas of study that really demand more time- the recent shrine at Altötting with its associations with the Holy Roman Empire and the Hapsburgs could develop a life-times' research. That will remain an occasional foray into what might have been.

Another slightly more tantalising problem is the question of the historical accuracy of some very personal experiences. Apparitions of Our Lady are interesting in how they reveal a context, and whatever might have happened so often develops into something wholly good- St Bernadette and Lourdes, the Fatima children, the Knock Apparitions. The way people express their personal experiences, and their insights may depend on their own language of religion, with all its myths and symbols.

'When the Church gives approval of a private revelation this means that the revelation itself does not contradict the deposit of Revelation [Scriptures and Creeds, Tradition] in faith or morals. It means that the contents may be published, and the faithful may believe the messages with caution and prudence. If the Church has not officially approved a private revelation, we should be very cautious.

When the Church has given official approval to a private revelation, Catholics are not obliged to believe in that private revelation. A faithful Catholic is called to give the assent of faith to the deposit of faith found in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition' [my paraphrase].

In general, a generous sympathy to the sincerity and integrity of the experiences of others helps us to see that there is sometimes an 'excess of meaning' in the unfolding narrative of the journey of faith.

The experience of the baths at Lourdes, the healing ministries, the awesome humility and faith at Fatima, the absolute sense of protective love at Czestochowa, the sheer dogged faith of Pilgrims to Croagh Patrick, and other centres of pilgrimage incline even the sceptical to seek answers to the issues of faith and understanding.

This Marian Journey is a search for understanding, seeking by pondering in our hearts, what we come to see, read and hear in the stories of others.

Here now is the apology: I have entertained what may be an error in my thinking, namely that there is an explicit devotion to Our Lady of Holyrood. Try as I can I have not been able to substantiate the hint of a rumour in the recesses of memory. So, we can still proceed to Holyrood, and surely with the assistance of Our Lady we will find food for the journey.

We begin at the Abbey of Holyrood, in Edinburgh: before its destruction, and afterwards.



The Abbey church followed the Augustinian norm in consisting of two distinct sections: a monastic east end and a nave which functioned as a Parish Church. The main monastic services took place at the High Altar and the adjacent Choir, but throughout the church there were various subsidiary altars for the celebration of individual masses. These included the altar of the Lady Chapel, [was there here statue, a particular devotion to Our Lady [of Holyrood]].

While access to the choir enclosure was confined usually to the members of the monastic community, the laity would be admitted to the nave and, possibly to a lesser extent, the subsidiary altars of the East end. There is a reference, in 1490, to another altar 'in the nave of the parish church' dedicated to St Sebastian. The number of nave altars increased in the 16th century with the introduction of chantries supported by the Trade Guilds of Canongate. Many of these Edinburgh Trade Guilds continue today.

The Hammermen\* erected an altar dedicated to St Eloi in 1536. The Shoemakers had an altar dedicated to SS Crispian and Crispinian and the Baxters had an altar dedicated to St Hubert. In 1554, the Tailors were granted an 'augmentation of divine service' at an altar in Holyrood Abbey 'hair Saint An their patrone now

stands'. Other altars in this part of the church included one dedicated to All Saints.

\*To comment briefly, the Hammermen was a guild that welcomed all those who worked on metal with a hammer. They included blacksmiths, farriers, saddlers, lorimers, armourers, cutlers, sword-slippers, girdle-makers, locksmiths, tinsmiths, whiteiron-men, brass-founders, coppersmiths and pewterers. Their Patron was St Eloi or Eligius,

The story and history of Eligius.

Eligius of Noyon or Eloy (or in French, Eloi): St. Eligius is the patron of Noyon, of which city he was made bishop. Eligius, or Eloi, as a young man was apprenticed to the master of the mint at Limoges. He became an extremely accomplished metal worker specialising as a goldsmith. His reputation as an honest and accomplished goldsmith attracted the nobles of the land and eventually the French King, Dagobert. He rose in importance at the French court and eventually became the chief counsellor of King Dagobert. He used his position to obtain alms (money or goods) for the poor and obtained money to ransom captives who were being sold as slaves.



## Holyrood: a Poem by Letitia Elizabeth Landon

*The moonlight fell like pity o'er the walls  
And broken arches, which the conqueror, Time  
Had rode unto destruction; the grey moss,  
A silver cloak, hung lightly o'er the ruins;  
And nothing came upon the soul but soft,  
Sad images. And this was once a palace,  
Where the rich viol answered to the lute,  
And maidens flung the flowers from their hair  
Till the halls swam with perfume: here the dance  
Kept time with light harps, and yet lighter feet;  
And here the beautiful Mary kept her court,  
Where sighs and smiles made her regality,  
And dreamed not of the long and many years  
When the heart was to waste itself away  
In hope, whose anxiousness was as a curse:  
Here, royal in her beauty and her power,  
The prison and the scaffold, could they be  
But things whose very name was not for her!  
And this, now fallen sanctuary, how oft  
Have hymns and incense made it holiness;  
How oft, perhaps, at the low midnight hour,  
Its once fair mistress may have stolen to pour  
At its pure altar, thoughts which have no vent,  
But deep and silent prayer; when the heart finds  
  
That it may not suffice unto itself,  
But seeks communion with that other state,  
Whose mystery to it is as a shroud  
In which it may conceal its strife of thought,  
And find repose. But it is utterly changed:*

*No incense rises, save some chance wild-flower  
Breathes grateful to the air; no hymn is heard,  
No sound, but the bat's melancholy wings;  
And all is desolate, and solitude.  
And thus it is with links of destiny:  
Clay fastens on with gold—and none may tell  
What the chain's next unravelling will be  
Alas, the mockeries in which fate delights!  
Alas, for time!—still more, alas, for change!*

These sad lines, written by a lady of fine sensibility whose own life was etched with sadness and who died tragically at a young age.

The poem tells of the 'beautiful Mary. a reference to Mary, Queen of Scots.

Now we see the Palace of Holyrood, the home to the Scottish monarch. Below there is a photograph of two Ladies of Holyrood, each of whom deserves our prayers.







Now, the other Hollyrood, a good hike away in the New Town, is of architectural interest and the occupants thereof are certainly in need of prayers.



It is time now to walk briskly by way of Atholl Crescent [past the 'Dough School?'] and Tollcross up to Lauriston Place – near the old Royal Infirmary.

We have reached the Jesuit Church of The Sacred Heart, Lauriston. Outside it is somewhat undistinguished and inside it has a certain Jesuit Baroque splendour. It is very much an active city centre church and catechetical centre. Jesuits who have served locally in the Highland are, Fr John McCabe, and Fr James O'Neil spent some years at Sacred Heart.



There is a concealed mural of excellent quality awaiting an enlightened Jesuit superior to bring it back from behind the plasterboard.



The artist, Derek Clarke, lived and worked for many years at Edderton, worshipping at St Vincent's, Tain. He had a Catholic schooling [Ampleforth] and, and from the outset of his career as an artist, religious philosophy and Biblical motifs reoccur in his imagery, in various guises. He had painted portraits of several luminaries of the Church, including, Basil Hume when Abbot of



Ampleforth, and some of his works are to be found in St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh and other Scottish churches.

A major commission of the 1960s was to create a 'Resurrection' to be placed in the semi-circular space behind the High Altar in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Lauriston. Derek took inspiration from Domenico Ghirlandaio [2 June 1448 – 11 January 1494), an Italian Renaissance painter born in Florence. Ghirlandaio's particular talent lay in his ability to bring contemporary life, and portraits of his contemporaries to the context of religious narratives, bringing him great popularity and many large commissions.

So also Derek, to populate the scenes he devised, with people of his time, the church organist, the verger, his own wife and children, and Archbishop Gordon Gray. The fate of the painting is a sorry loss in the view of many. Ten years after its dedication, the whole mural was wall-papered over. It is to be hoped that an enlightened future Jesuit community will see it revealed and restored. Derek Clarke died in 2014, aged 101.

He always maintained a positive, constantly questioning outlook and his last painting, which he finished in September 2013, was a religious work called 'The Transfiguration'.

Before Leaving the Church of the Sacred Heart, we should stop at The Pieta:



WE continue in the Old Town to St Patrick's in the Cowgate:



St Patrick's is a popular centre for devotion. The National Shrine of the Venerable Margaret Sinclair is located within the church and draws pilgrims from all over Scotland and beyond. The shrine to Our Lady of Perpetual Help also provides a special focus for prayer and devotion.



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**The Venerable Margaret** the cause for the canonisation of Margaret Sinclair was introduced to the Sacred Congregation of Rites in 1942 by Pope Pius XII. Margaret was born on 29th March 1900 in Middle Arthur Place, Edinburgh, one of a family of nine children. She was baptised at St Patrick's on 11th April. She went to St Anne's school and made her First Holy Communion at St Patrick's on 8th May 1910. She was confirmed on the same day. She left school at the age of fourteen and worked as an apprentice French polisher, and later in McVitie's biscuit factory.

**Sister Mary Francis** In July 1923 Margaret entered the Poor Clare Convent in Notting Hill, London. Her religious name was Sister Mary Francis of the Five Wounds. In February 1925 she made her religious profession. Less than two months later she was admitted to Warley Sanatorium, Essex, suffering from tuberculosis of the throat. She was nursed throughout her long and painful illness by the Sisters of Charity and died on 24th November 1925. She was buried in Kensall Green Cemetery, north London. Very soon after her death a number of cures and favours, attributed to her intercession, led to her becoming

more widely known. In December 1927 Margaret's remains were brought from Kensal Green Cemetery and re-interred at Mount Vernon Cemetery in Edinburgh.

**Cause introduced** In 1942 the cause for her canonisation was introduced by Pope Pius XII. Meanwhile, devotion to Margaret grew and a National Margaret Sinclair Centre was established in Rosewell, Midlothian in 1965. On 6th February Pope Paul VI declared that Margaret practised the Christian virtues to a heroic degree, and she was given the title 'The Venerable Margaret Sinclair'. A strong devotion to Margaret developed throughout the world, but especially in Scotland. Each year an annual pilgrimage to her tomb at Mount Vernon Cemetery takes place followed by Mass at St Patrick's. Margaret's remains were re-interred in St Patrick's Edinburgh and later that month, on October 25th 2003, the new shrine was blessed and dedicated by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Pablo Puento in the presence of Cardinal Keith Patrick O'Brien.

**A saint for today** A special Mass is celebrated on the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. to pray for the Beatification of the Venerable Margaret, and to ask the Lord to grant our requests through her intercession. The life of Margaret Sinclair powerfully captures the imagination of people today. She worked for a living, she was a member of a trade union, she knew what it was to be made redundant, she experienced prejudice in the workplace because of her Catholic faith. Margaret was immersed in the realities of everyday living yet was able to transform the ordinariness of her life into the foundation of a deep spirituality.

The people of St Patrick's recognise Margaret as one of their own who attained great holiness. People from all over Scotland come to her shrine to pray, as well as visitors from all over the world. Her shrine in St Patrick's is a focus for prayer and devotion in the city.

And, so a long road up the A9, with a nod at Aviemore as we pass the Catholic Church of St Aidan [of Ferns].

