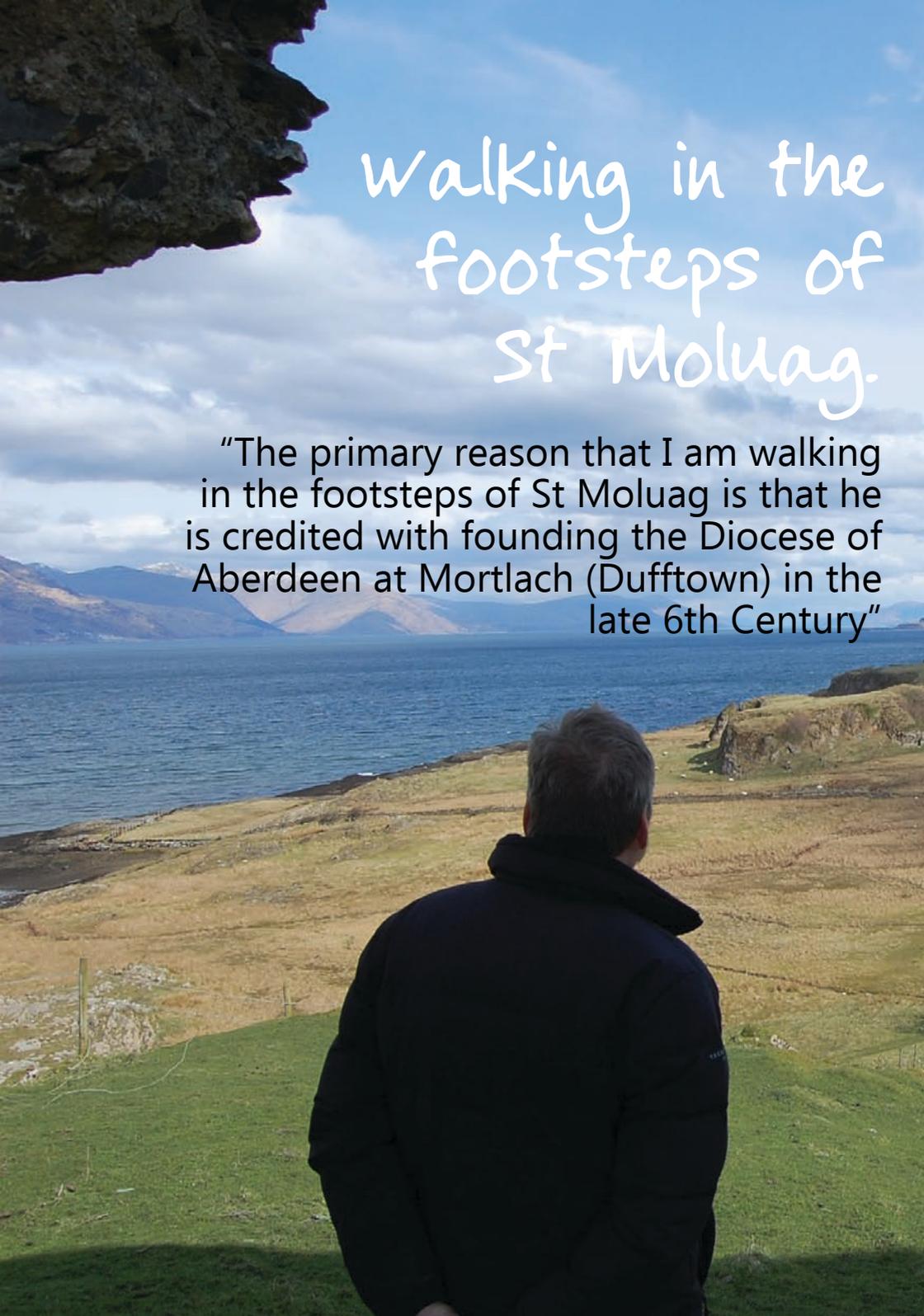




The Dean's walk from
Aberdeen to Lismore in
the footsteps of
St. Moluag



In aid of
The St Andrew's Cathedral
Restoration Project



walking in the footsteps of St Moluag.

“The primary reason that I am walking in the footsteps of St Moluag is that he is credited with founding the Diocese of Aberdeen at Mortlach (Dufftown) in the late 6th Century”

He was the sparring partner of St Columba, but he had the advantage of being both a Gaelic and a Pictish speaker which allowed him the more favourable position of communicating with ease with the whole population of Northern Scotland.

In the North East he is associated with the founding of churches at Clatt, Migvie and Tarland. He is said to have had a muinntir (community) at Clova near Lumsden. There is also on the south side of the Tap O' Noth a stone called St Moluag's Chair. Tradition claimed that he died in 592 AD and was buried at Rosemarkie. It is for these reasons that the walk is following a particular route.

At one point in my early ministry I served as priest at the great church of Ness in Lewis, An Teampuil Mor which was dedicated to St Moluag.

All along the way I am being assisted by Sea Cadets from the Aberdeen, Moray, Inverness, Lochaber and Oban Units. They will ferry me across the appropriate stretches of water. In his journeying Moluag would have used water as a means of transport. Meeting Sea Cadets will give me opportunity of dialoguing with young people. I am the Northern Area Padre for the Sea Cadets and the walk will give me chance to talk with the youngsters in the various units across the North. At one point, in Lochaber I shall be blessing new boats!

I am grateful to my walking companion Steven Boon, who is a member of the Vestry at St Margaret's and also a great source of enthusiasm.

When we arrive in Lismore, where the mission of St Moluag in Scotland began, we shall be met by Niall Livingstone, the coarb of St Moluag, the hereditary keeper of The Bachuil Mor, the crozier of the Saint. Niall will be giving us a lift back to Aberdeen, and the crozier will be at St Margaret's

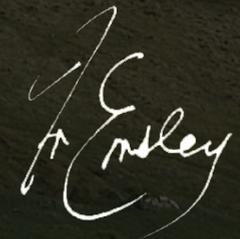
(10.30am) and also St Andrew's Cathedral (6.30pm) on Sunday the 18th of May.

In addition the Rev'd Kate Gibson has painted an icon of St Moluag, which will be carried in procession at the Cathedral by Steven, and Bill Brown has translated a Latin office hymn to St Moluag from the Aberdeen Breviary and set it to music. You will find articles by Niall, Kate and Bill in this news release.

Last, but not least the whole idea is to raise awareness about St Andrew's Cathedral and the need for its restoration. This building is unique and very much conveys the Arts and Crafts Movement of the Early 20th Century. Sir Ninian Comper took the best designs from Old Aberdeen and recreated them in the new redesigned Cathedral in King Street. He created an architectural and liturgical gem full of theological and sacramental symbolism, which must be preserved for future generations. The building very much makes a statement about communicating the faith in our contemporary world.

Comper believed that, as did his friend the Doyen of Féycamp Abbey in Normandy, that 'a church should pray of itself'. The Cathedral possesses that. Others have to experience that. Let the building speak, but above all pray.

Please give generously to this appeal. You too can walk with me in the in the steps of Moluag by assisting me in this project. All donations will be gratefully received.



J. Enslley

"The crozier of a saint is considered his most important symbol and represents his authority. It is passed on, with the authority of the founding saint, to each successive abbot or Coarb.

It is, therefore, similar to a baton, and I am greatly privileged to be the current Coarb of St Moluag and to hold the Bachuil Mor as a symbol of my office and authority. It is a tangible and direct link to St Moluag.

Relic derives from the Latin word reliquiae and can be considered as something left behind. There is another interpretation, more fitting in this case, as an alternative Latin word used for some relics is pignora or pledge. The Bachuil Mor is a pledge of the saint's intercessory power. The Book of James teaches us that the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.

Saints are capable of performing miracles with divine assistance. Their power does not diminish on death; on the contrary it is greatly increased, for they can present petitions and intercede directly on our behalf to God.

Through the centuries the faithful have, therefore, venerated The Bachuil Mor as a conduit to Saint Moluag, praying for his intercession and often the performance of a miracle. As with other relics it has long been the practice to use the Bachuil Mor in the Blessing of Holy Water.

Mall Livingstone,
Coarb of St Moluag



"Of Moluag there
would seem to exist no
biography.

What we have - in some ways better - is a lovely Latin poem in the Aberdeen Breviary of 1509, celebrating the saint's virtues as preacher and teacher and his dedication to a life of discipline issuing in deeds of kindness. It has however, as our Dean pointed out to me, two notable lacks. As it stands, it has no ringing final stanza, and it makes no mention of another great gift which tradition tells us he possessed, the gift of healing. And so, as well as trying to provide a version of this hymn in English, I had the impertinence to add a stanza of my own.

The whole hymn, to a musical setting a little Hebridean in flavour, will be performed on May 18th; and an Aberdeen Cathedral will once more resound to the name and fame of its own very Northern saint.

Bill Brown

Organist/Choirmaster for some twelve years in all at St Margaret's (now still partially so)!

"What is an Icon?"

RELIGIOUS ICONS are sacred images considered to be "prayer made visible." Icons are growing in importance, not only as examples of early Orthodox Christian art but especially as a devotional tool for a pathway into deeper prayer.

It is believed that Icons have been used since the earliest days of Christianity. "The creation of icons is considered a ministry in the Eastern Church." There is an Icon of the Holy Mother and Jesus, in Jerusalem, purported to have been done by Saint Luke. Those who paint or write (either is acceptable as the Russian word means both paint or write) are called Iconographers. Icons are sacred objects that are venerated by the faithful who pray before them. When you look at an icon, it is meant to make you aware that you are in the presence of God. Icons, then, are not just an art work as in a painting with a religious theme; instead they are sacred art because they bring the viewer to the Sacred and the Holy.

Icons have a unique style. The formal figures are often frontal, with large eyes that engage viewers and draw them into the icon and thus, closer to God. Icons are painted in reverse perspective from the viewpoint of God, who is within the painting, rather than from the viewer's perspective.

Coptic icons are looked upon as religious paintings associated with the early Orthodox Christian Church. The most well known Coptic icons

are the funerary and known as the Fayoum Portraits. It is in Fayoum (Egypt) where perfume has been made for centuries and is one of the earliest agricultural areas in the world. When you see these ancient Icons/Portraits, they will take your breath away, as if you are looking into a face that speaks to you through the centuries. These icons originated during the first three centuries of the Christian era and when one gazes at them, they will take you back to that time. (This is said by my own personal experience.)

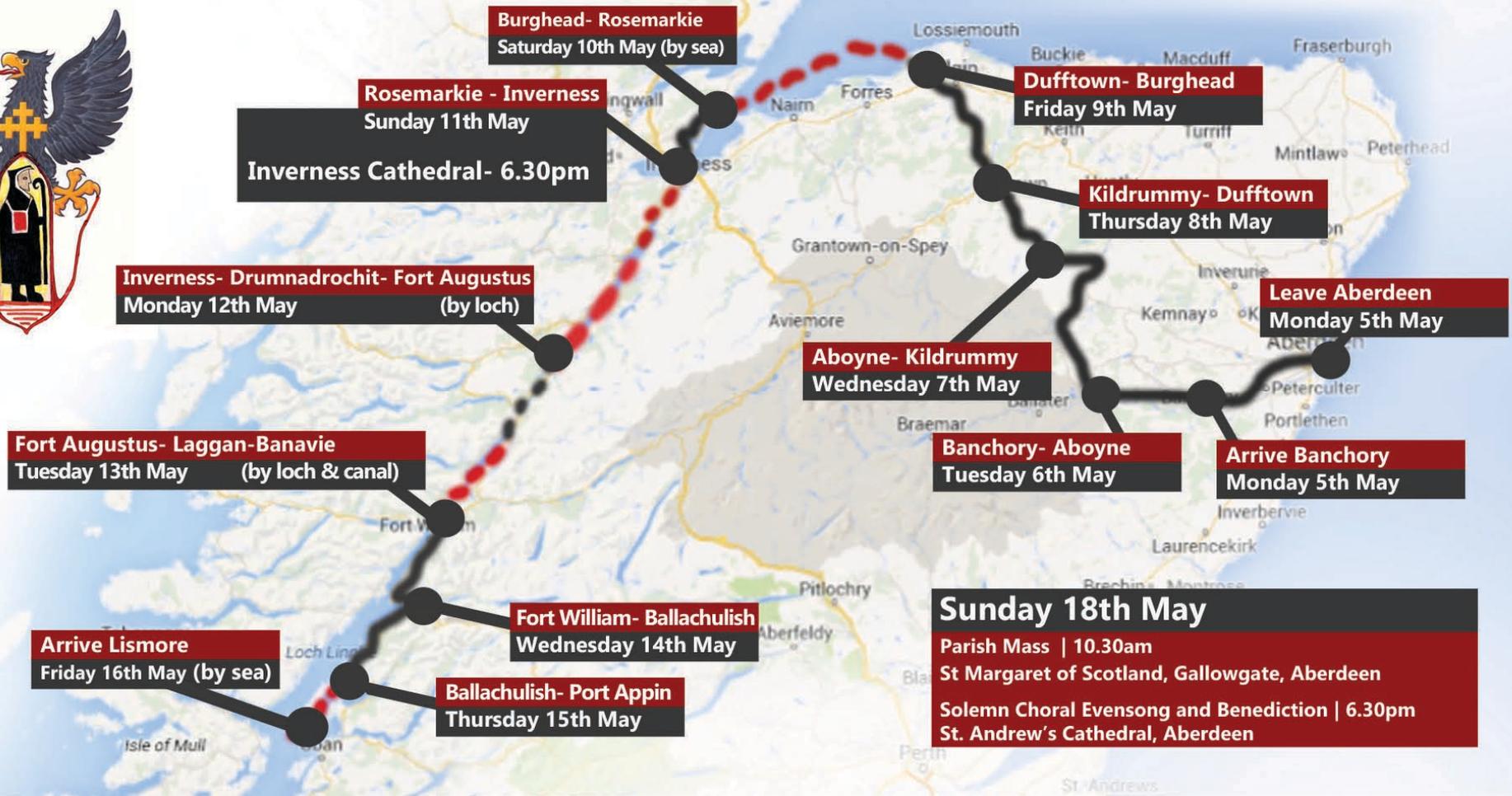
It should not be that surprising that Icons have been called "windows to heaven or doorways to the sacred". When you are standing in front of an icon, it is as if you are looking through a window into the mystery of a heavenly world beyond. But this is a two-way window. As you look through the window, you are also being seen with the eyes of love by those in the icon. It's like you become a part of the mystery that the icon seeks to express. They are a visual form of prayer in line and colour that seek to tell us something true about God and the saints. They follow a long tradition of truths that are communicated visually rather than through words, a theology passed on from one artist to the next. They are meant to help us open ourselves to God's love.

In His peace

The Rev. Catherine S Gibson

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