

## St. Columba's Day of Blessings – June 9, 2011

Each saint has been gifted with a day of celebration and honoring. This tradition reminds us that in the history of faith there have been those who have gone before us in ways that inspire. Their ability to hold Light in the world transcends time and space for they are actively here with us in our hearts. Their stories call us to embrace our sacred humanity along with our divinity by reminding us that it's not so much about what happens in our lives but rather how we choose to experience it. The choices we have before us each day are like the gulls circling outside my window . . . many situations, many options, many voices plaintively calling us in different directions. But if we can remember as the saints did, beneath it all is the call of Spirit that uplifts us on winged possibilities even as it now does the flight of the gulls in the grey sky tinged with sunlight on Iona.

I abide in this moment in an incredible space . . . the Bishop's House on Iona Isle, Scotland. The light is streaming into my tiny, cozy room through a window overlooking the water and the isle of Mull. In the garden below, a bag piper has been playing since just after my arrival. The Meditation Loft is just beyond my room with its stained glass windows of fawn, purple, and green alit with morning sun. It overlooks the St. Columba Chapel that lies at the heart of this beautiful, ancient stone retreat house. Being on spiritual sabbatical first involved lots of rest and walking Glastonbury with its Chalice Well Garden where I stayed in Little St. Michael's Retreat House. I've come to Iona for the second part of this sacred journey of renewal, reflection, and rededication. From here I will go to Chartres Cathedral to unite with a small circle of soul sisters. But I am here this day and blessings abound.

This is the feast day for St. Columba of Iona, my patron saint. Several years ago I was amazed to learn that his saint's day is the day of my ordination into Unity ministry. No one else could have been more perfect for me with my love of Celtic Spirituality, Iona and the Scottish lineage I arose from. And on this day, I am blessed immeasurably to be walking the very earth he walked and preparing to celebrate Eucharist tonight in a retreat house with a chapel dedicated to him. That monk who drifted across the waters from Ireland in his tiny coracle boat having been cast out, who landed here and created a community of faith that continues thousands of years later, and who reminds us all to simply live in conscious harmony with nature, one another and the Presence of the Divine.

My coming to Bishop's House was nothing short of Divine intervention. In coming to Iona I knew there was no room in the hotels for two of the nights, so I'd made arrangements to go to nearby Tobermory. But as I arrived on the ferry, I knew I could not leave. My retreat here called me to remain in the arms of Iona's peace. Over breakfast the next morning, I met a lovely lady who told me about the Bishop's House where she was attending a large retreat with friends from York. They'd overflowed that space, so she had offered to be one who stayed elsewhere. With her encouragement, I later walked down to this stone house by the sea and discovered they only had only one room open for only two nights – exactly on the days I required a sanctuary to stay in. I joined her for tea where we laughed about how perfect it was that our paths had crossed and then shared Eucharist at noon in St. Columba's Chapel. I gave deep and abiding thanks for Joyce and for my place to land my coracle.

A little while ago, I walked up the stairs following Benjamin to my room and was amazed when he opened the door to this sea facing, light filled place. Someone had cancelled and they were able to put me in this lovely single room which was exactly what I needed. Even more special, it is dedicated to St. Droston who was a student of St. Columba, monk of Iona and first Abbot of Deer, and to whom many miracles were attributed. The image on the framed description by the door is of the stained glass window in the Meditation Loft in which I've already prayed. In doing my Wisdom of Avalon cards yesterday, the advice card to move forward with my writing was that of The Deer. It spoke of stepping gently on the path and being gentle with oneself while abiding in deep peace. I am here.

The piper just began playing Amazing Grace and I can hear a woman's voice uniting with the strains of the pipes as he plays. This beautiful song is the one to which more miracles have been attributed than any other. Written by a reformed slave ship owner who had an epiphany in which all humankind was equal and valued, it speaks to most people at a deep level of faith. Those who know few if any Christian hymns are familiar with this one. It is also part of the Lady of Chartres Rosary that I recently was blessed to create . . . each of its verses laid in between the decade beads that call the presence of Divine Mother into the circle. We stand now on some of the oldest rock on Mother Earth as the piper plays on and the sunshine breaks through turning the waters aqua and slate blue. Rich blessings.

For the next two days, I will abide here. Celebrating St. Columba and the anniversary of my ordination today . . . celebrating the anniversary of my marriage to my soul mate Lane tomorrow. I have found sanctuary and Sabbath and sacred space in which I am writing. The flow of my words with both pen to paper and the clicking of modern keyboard has continued all morning. I know my mother will be thrilled. I am as well. So, St. Columba continue to inspire me and guide my words even as you guided your monks in the creation of the illuminated manuscripts all those centuries ago. The truth shines though and peace abides on Iona.

