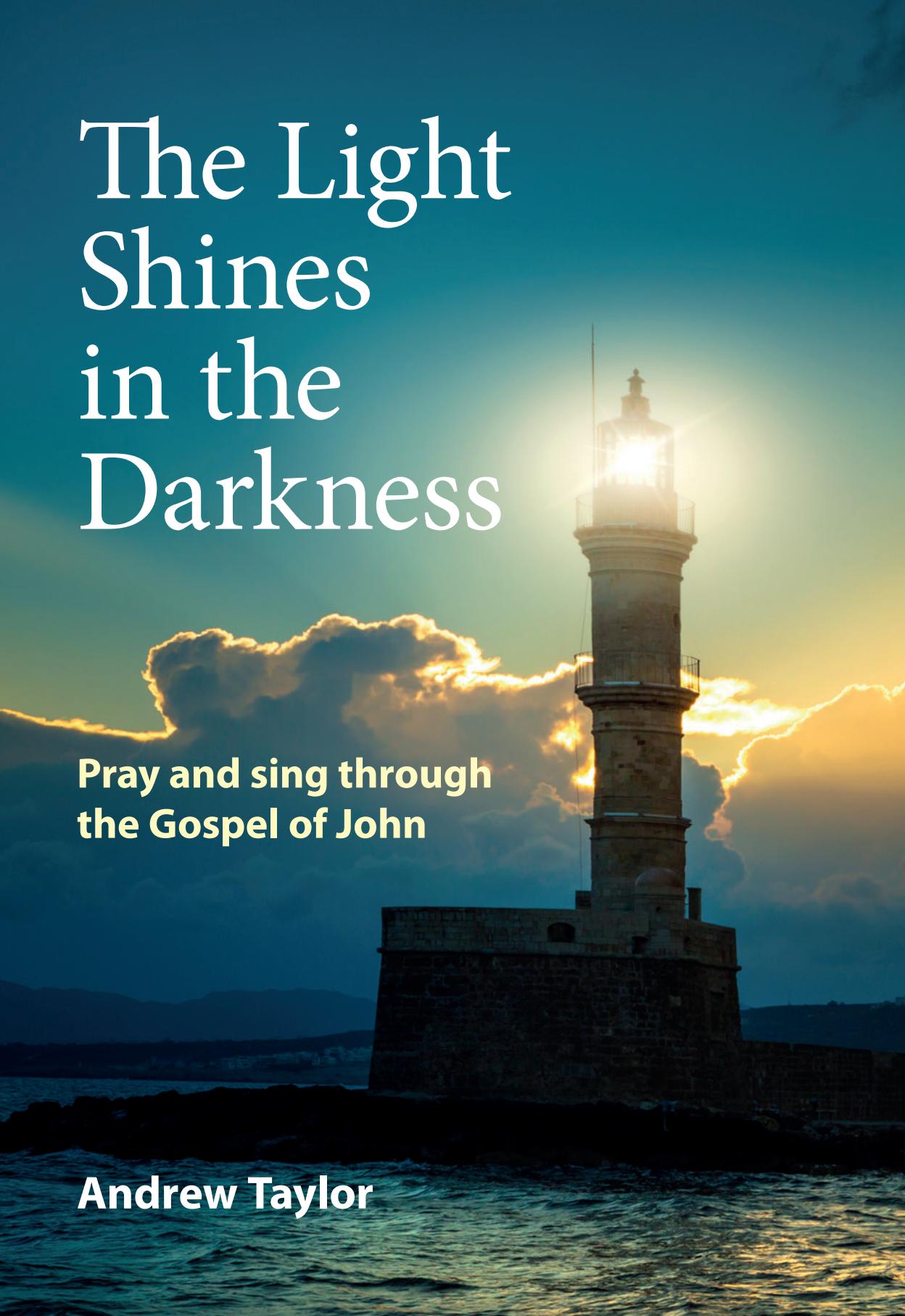


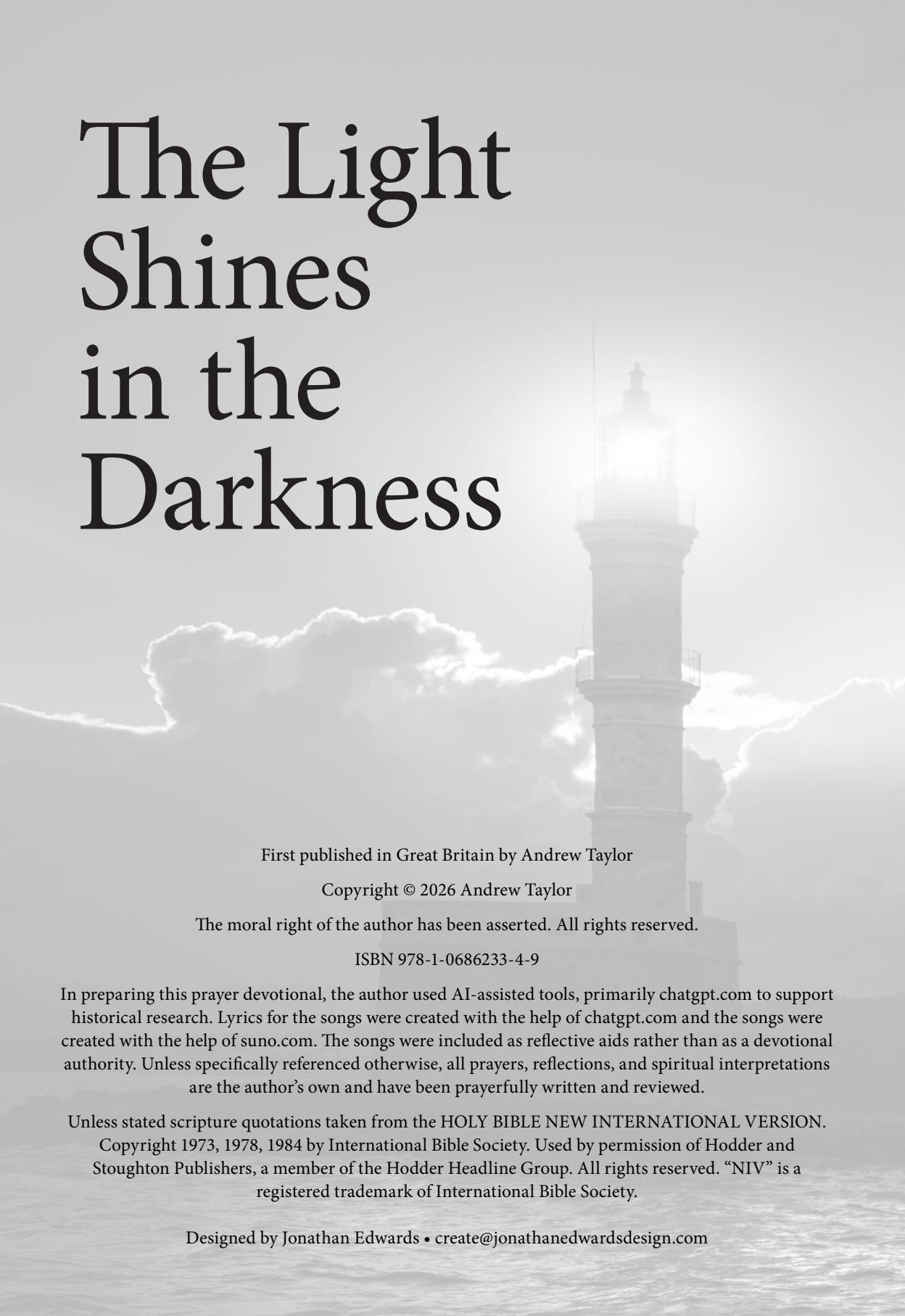
The Light Shines in the Darkness

A photograph of a lighthouse at sunset. The lighthouse is a tall, cylindrical stone structure with a balcony and a lantern room at the top, emitting a bright, white beam of light that cuts through the darkening sky. The sky is a gradient of deep blue at the top, transitioning to orange and yellow near the horizon, with scattered clouds catching the light. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a stone pier or breakwater extends into the water. The water is visible at the bottom of the frame, showing small waves.

**Pray and sing through
the Gospel of John**

Andrew Taylor

The Light Shines in the Darkness

A black and white photograph of a lighthouse standing tall against a backdrop of thick fog. The lighthouse is illuminated from within, casting a bright, circular glow at its top. The surrounding environment is shrouded in mist, with faint outlines of clouds and the ocean visible in the background.

First published in Great Britain by Andrew Taylor

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In preparing this prayer devotional, the author used AI-assisted tools, primarily chatgpt.com to support historical research. Lyrics for the songs were created with the help of chatgpt.com and the songs were created with the help of suno.com. The songs were included as reflective aids rather than as a devotional authority. Unless specifically referenced otherwise, all prayers, reflections, and spiritual interpretations are the author's own and have been prayerfully written and reviewed.

Unless stated scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.

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A light for the nations ... to the ends of the earth

Today we live in an increasingly hostile world, and some even say that Western Christian civilisation is under threat. The Early Church Fathers lived during the collapse of the Roman Empire. They lived a lifestyle of extravagant devotion to the Lord in very challenging times. They had an intimate devotion and longed for Christ to be formed in them, and they prevailed before God and man. Many of them spent time in the deserts of Egypt fasting and praying. However, nowadays, rather than being inspired by their devotion, we tend to find the asceticism of the Early Church Fathers offensive, and the stories we read about them idealised, mystical and fanciful.

The Celtic monks of the British Isles of the 4th–7th centuries AD were inspired by the Early Church Fathers and they too sought the Lord in the wilderness. They saw the wild landscapes of Ireland and Britain (bogs, islands, caves) as places to return to the original simplicity of Adam before the Fall, where the soul, stripped of distractions, could encounter God and so be transfigured into glory. Jesus Christ, who as ‘The Light for the nations’ was universalised theologically by the Early Church Fathers, was embodied devotionally by the Celtic monks.

Irish monks were scholars and missionaries, who took the light of the gospel into Europe. They saw that in Christ, sin is forgiven, ignorance illuminated and death conquered. Bangor, in Northern Ireland, became known as ‘the Light of the World’ and was a major centre of learning, prayer, and missionary training.¹ St Columbanus was a missionary monk who founded influential monasteries in France, Switzerland, and Italy. St Colomba evangelised the Picts and St Cuthbert conducted missionary work in Northumbria and southern Scotland.

We desperately need another missionary monastic movement, inspired by the Celtic saints, who went to the ends of the known world and planted a church in the British Isles ... but are we willing to pray in a similar posture to these heroes

of the faith, and to proclaim the good news?

The Early Church Fathers and Celtic monks sought the Lord in fasting and prayer. By the fourth century, Lent was widely established as a 40-day season of preparation for Easter. This was a time of spiritual testing, fasting, and renewal modelled on Christ’s wilderness experience. For both the Early Church Fathers and the Celtic monks, a key text was *‘John was in the wilderness until the day of his manifestation to Israel’* (Luke 1:80). They were inspired by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, who spent 40 days in the wilderness, for they saw the wilderness as a place of encounter with God.

They saw the wells of salvation in Isaiah 12:3 to be the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.² They saw these wells of revelation of Jesus as truths to proclaim. It is time to unblock these wells ... so that Jesus, the Living Word shines again in the British Isles, and Europe.

Each day this devotional looks at a passage in the Gospel of John through an Old Testament lens, drawing from the insights of theologians like Tom Wright and Richard Hays, and also looking back at the Early Church Fathers and the Celtic saints who both so valued this Gospel.

At the end of each devotional, scan the QR code and listen to a song inspired by the text.

Ephrem the Syrian, John Cassian, John Chrysostom and Isaac the Syrian cried with ‘tears of compunction’. Can we learn from them? Contemporary writers like James Goll, Barbara Yoder and Corey Russell are challenging us to pray for revival with tears, travail and tongues. If Western Christian civilisation is indeed under threat then let’s draw from old treasure and new, and cry out for revival, for a new missionary monastic movement that will be a light for the nations, and that the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea ... **Lord, unblock the well of the Living Word!**

The Celtic Church movement: a chronological summary³

Early foundations (4th–5th century)

The roots of the Celtic Church begin in the 4th century. St Patrick (c385–461), was the ‘Apostle of Ireland’. Originally from Roman Britain, Patrick was enslaved in Ireland as a youth but later returned as a bishop and missionary. He helped convert much of Ireland to Christianity, founding churches and training local clergy.

St Ninian, often regarded as the first Christian missionary to Scotland, was a 5th-century Celtic saint credited with spreading Christianity among the Picts in southern Scotland. Tradition holds that he founded the *Candida Casa* (White House) at Whithorn in 397, which became an important centre of faith and learning. Educated in Rome, St Ninian brought Roman Christian traditions to the Celtic world, helping to link the British Church with wider Christendom. His missionary work laid the foundations for later evangelists such as St Columba.

St Brigid of Kildare (c451–525) was one of Ireland’s patron saints. She founded the influential monastery at Kildare, a double monastery for both men and women, and became a symbol of Christian charity and wisdom. Also around this time was St Ciaran of Clonmacnoise (died c549), who founded the monastic school at Clonmacnoise, a major centre of learning and religion in Ireland.

Expansion and monasticism (6th century)

By the 6th century, the Celtic Church’s monastic character was in full bloom. St Kevin (died c618) established the monastic settlement at Glendalough in County Wicklow, Ireland, which became an important religious centre. St Columba (521–597), after leaving Ireland due to a dispute, established the monastery of Iona in western Scotland in 563. Iona was a hub for Christian mission to the Picts and Anglo-Saxons. Columba’s blend of spirituality, leadership, and scholarship had a lasting impact. St David (c500–589) led a Christian revival in Wales.

Missionary zeal and the spread to Britain and Europe (7th century)

The 7th century saw Celtic Christianity pushing

into Anglo-Saxon England and Continental Europe. St Aidan (died 651) was trained at Iona and sent to Northumbria at the invitation of King Oswald. He founded the monastery at Lindisfarne, often called the Holy Island, and played a crucial role in converting the Northumbrians.

St Cuthbert (c634–687) was a successor in missionary zeal. He was a monk and later bishop of Lindisfarne, and known for his piety, miracles, and connection with nature. His life symbolised the contemplative and ascetic character of the Celtic tradition.

St Columbanus (543–615), a disciple of the Irish monastic school, took Celtic Christianity into mainland Europe, founding monasteries in France, Switzerland, and Italy. His rule emphasised austerity, missionary activity, and scholarly pursuit, helping shape early medieval European monasticism.

St Brendan the Navigator (c484–577) had legendary sea voyages, possibly reaching as far as Iceland or North America.

The Synod of Whitby in 664 was a turning point, with the Northumbrian church aligning with Roman customs under St Wilfrid’s influence, and the dissipation of Celtic Christian life.

The East and West Early Church Fathers,

were instrumental in shaping Christian theology. The Celtic Christians described them as red, green, black, and white martyrs:

Red martyrs literally shed blood for the faith — dying as a martyr.

Green martyrs lived a life of penance, asceticism, and solitude in remote places among nature.

Black martyrs lived strict monastic lives, obeying rigorous discipline and self-denial.

White martyrs left home to preach the gospel or live in exile for Christ.

Eastern Church Fathers

Name	Region/birthplace	Century	Martyr
Ignatius of Antioch	Syria	1st–2nd	Red
Clement of Alexandria	Egypt	2nd–3rd	Black or White
Origen of Alexandria	Egypt	2nd–3rd	White
Anthony of Egypt	Egypt	3rd–4th	Black and Green
Pachomius	Egypt	3rd–4th	White and Green
Gregory of Nyssa	Cappadocia (Asia Minor)	4th	Black
Ephrem the Syrian	Syria (Nisibis/Edessa)	4th	Black
Basil the Great	Cappadocia (Asia Minor)	4th	White and Green
Athanasius of Alexandria	Egypt	4th	White
Gregory of Nazianzus	Cappadocia (Asia Minor)	4th	White
Macarius of Egypt	Egypt	4th	Black/Green
Cyril of Jerusalem	Palestine	4th	Black
Cyril of Alexandria	Egypt	4th–5th	Black
John Chrysostom	Antioch/Constantinople	4th–5th	White
Simon Stylites	Syria	5th	Green
Maximus the Confessor	Constantinople/Palestine	6th–7th	White
Isaac the Syrian	Syria/Mesopotamia	7th	White

Western Church Fathers

Name	Region/birthplace	Century	Martyr
Tertullian	North Africa	2nd–3rd	White
Hippolytus of Rome	Rome, Italy	2nd–3rd	Red
Cyprian of Carthage	North Africa	3rd	Red
Nicholas of Myra	Turkey	3rd–4th	White
Martin of Tours	Pannonia, Gaul (France)	4th	Not martyr
Ambrose of Milan	Italy	4th	Black
Augustine of Hippo	North Africa	4th–5th	Black
Jerome	Dalmatia/Italy	4th–5th	Black
John Cassian	Scythia/Gaul	4th–5th	Black
Leo the Great	Rome, Italy	5th	Black
Benedict of Nursia	Italy	5th–6th	Black
Caesarius of Arles	Gaul (France)	5th–6th	Black
Gregory the Great	Rome, Italy	6th–7th	Black

30-day reading schedule

This 30-day reading schedule is intended for personal devotions. After reading the text for the day and the devotional, it is time to pray and sing!

Line up your phone as if you are take a picture with your camera to the QR code to listen to a song at the end of each devotional.

SCAN ME



Day	John's Gospel	Devotional	Early Church Father
1	1:1–18	His life was the light of all men	Anthony of Egypt
2	1:19–34	The dove descending upon the Lamb	Gregory of Nazianzus
3	1:35–53	Come and see	Pachomius
4	2:1–25	Joy and zeal	Basil the Great
5	3:1–21	A snake lifted up	Augustine of Hippo
6	3:22–36	The bridegroom	Athanasius of Alexandria
7	4:1–42	Living water	Caesarius of Arles
8	4:43–5:47	Nothing by Himself	Benedict of Nursia
9	6:1–24	Breakthrough miracles	Martin of Tours
10	6:25–51	I am the bread of life	Leo the Great
11	6:52–71	Eat My flesh	Ignatius of Antioch
12	7:1–31	Could this be the Messiah?	Jerome
13	7:32–53	Rivers of living water	Clement of Alexandria
14	8:1–30	The light of the world	Cyril of Alexandria
15	8:31–59	Before Abraham was, I am	Origen of Alexandria
16	9:1–41	Blindness	Tertullian
17	10:1–31	The good shepherd	Hippolytus of Rome
18	11:1–44	The raising of Lazarus	Ephrem the Syrian
19	11:45–57, 12:1–8	The jar of perfume	Macarius of Egypt
20	12:9–50	Triumphal entry	Cyril of Jerusalem
21	13:1–38	The last supper	John Cassian
22	14:1–31	The way, the truth and the life	John Chrysostom
23	15:1–27	The vine	Maximus the Confessor
24	16:1–33	He comes to judge the earth	Gregory of Nyssa
25	17:1–26	The high priestly prayer	Cyprian of Carthage
26	18:1–40	Are you the king of the Jews	Gregory the Great
27	19:1–16a	We have no king but Caesar	Nicholas of Myra
28	19:16b–42	This was to fulfil	Simon Stylites
29	20:1–31	Encountering the risen Lord	Isaac the Syrian
30	21:1–25	Feed my lambs	Ambrose of Milan

His life was the light of all men

DAY
1

John 1:1–18

- **Focus verse:** *'In him was life, and his life was the light of all men.'* (John 1:4)
- **Old Testament lens:** *'Let there be light.'* (Genesis 1:3)

The opening of the Gospel of John is like the overture to a great symphony or opera — it introduces key themes that will unfold through the rest of the book. The Gospel of John invites readers to 'Come and see' Jesus,⁴ the true light who gives life. Jesus is the Light of the World. In these first eight verses, John reveals who Jesus truly is: the eternal Word of God, the bringer of life and light into a dark world. From the beginning, we see that Jesus is not just a man — He is the Word who was with God and was God. He was present at creation and was the one through whom all things were made. This echoes the creation account in Genesis, where God speaks and light bursts into existence: *'Let there be light'* (Genesis 1:3). In the same way, Jesus brings the true light into a world shrouded in spiritual darkness.

John 1:4 says, *'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.'* This theme of life is central to John's Gospel. More than any other book in the Bible, John focuses on life — eternal life, abundant life, life through Jesus. The Gospel was written, as John tells us in 20:31, *'so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'* Jesus is also introduced as light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

John invites us to come and see Jesus! John 1:14 says, *'We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'* Amy Ward says: 'As we see His glory and as our lives are giving God glory, as we're looking more like Him every day ... we can't help but be radically obedient to some of the craziest stuff.'⁵ The Early Church Fathers and the Celtic saints were radically obedient to some of the craziest stuff!

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Anthony of Egypt (251–356), Egypt, 'The Father of monasticism'

*'I have seen the snares of the devil spread out over the whole earth, and I said: "Who can escape them?" ... and I heard a voice saying: "Humility."*⁶

Anthony is considered the father of Christian monasticism, particularly Eastern monasticism. He left the world to seek God in solitude and was admired and imitated.

'At the reading of the Gospel, he had heard the words: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." And at once he resolved to give away all he had to the poor, and he departed from his parents' house.' He then followed Jesus and John the Baptist's example and went into the wilderness, which was seen as the place to confront the enemy of our souls. The Early Church saw John the Baptist as a prototype of the monastic life. The ancient world knew that monasticism was not about running away. The reason for his solitary lifestyle was that it facilitated his engagement in spiritual warfare against the enemy. The second main reason for his solitary life was that solitude was recognised to be a 'furnace of transformation'. In other words, it was 'not a private therapeutic place ... (but a) place of conversion where the old self dies and the new self is born'.

'Solitude is not simply a means to an end. Solitude is its own end. It is the place where Christ shines his light on the inner recesses of our souls and remodels us in his own image and frees us from the victimising compulsions of the world.' Anthony's life was marked by radical renunciation of the world, deep humility, and self-denial. He resisted fame even as his reputation

spread, choosing to live in solitude and obscurity. His humility was not passive but deeply spiritual, rooted in self-knowledge and dependence on God.

For both Anthony himself and for Athanasius (his biographer), Jesus' resurrection was as important as the cross. The goal of the ascetic life was union with God, participation in divine life, and restoration of the image of God in man. Later this would call be termed *theosis* (Θέωσις). To be continually transformed into the likeness of Jesus was the goal of both Anthony and Athanasius.

Many Celtic saints —like St Cuthbert, St Kevin, and St Columba — imitated Anthony's life: they lived in remote places (islands, mountains, forests) and practised solitude, intense prayer, and austerity. They fought spiritual battles with demons, similar to Anthony's desert experiences. Celtic monks saw the wild landscapes of Ireland and Britain (bogs, islands, caves) as their own 'deserts'.

In the final days of his life, St Columba, the Celtic saint and Irish monk and missionary, was living at the monastery he had founded on the island of Iona. He had spent decades spreading the Christian faith and building a community deeply rooted in prayer, Scripture, and worship.

As Columba felt his life drawing to a close, he spent increasing time in solitude, prayer, and Scripture reading. According to Adomnán of Iona, Columba's biographer,⁷ Columba had a special devotion to the Gospel of John, particularly the prologue.

The story goes that on the very night before his death, Columba was seen in the scriptorium of the monastery, working by candlelight, copying a portion of the Gospel of John. He was focused on the beginning of the Gospel, writing the words, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'* According to tradition, he never finished copying the verse. Just as he wrote the word *Verbum* (the Word), he laid down his pen, went to pray, and peacefully passed away shortly after. His monks found him in the early hours of the morning, lying before the altar in the chapel; his final act was one of devotion to the Word made flesh.

John 1 was a theological foundation for Columba, but a deeply personal devotion. The idea that Jesus was the divine *Logos*, eternal, present at creation, and made flesh, captured Columba's understanding of Christ's majesty and nearness.

REVIVAL

Jesus is the true light who gives life. Today we cannot ignore the fundamental battle between light and darkness that is raging around us. Whether we like it or not we are in a war. Is the Lord calling you to engage in that war? If so, what does it mean to 'come to Jesus' and to get into right relationship with Him?

Roy Hession, of the East African Revival, says 'if... we are to come into this right relationship with him, the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to his will. To be broken is the beginning of revival. It's painful, it's humiliating but it's the only way. It is being "not I but Christ" and the "C" is the bent "I".'⁸ The Lord Jesus cannot live in us, fully unveiling Himself through us, until the proud self within us is broken.

PRAYER

Shine your light on the inner recesses of my soul, remodel me in Your own image and free me from the victimising compulsions of this world. I will come and see You ... the Glory of the Son, full of grace and truth ... I will come and see. Shine Your light on me.

Come
and see

SCAN ME



The dove descending upon the Lamb

DAY
2

John 1:19–34

- **Focus verse:** ‘Then John gave this testimony, “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.”’ (John 1:32)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘Do not break any of the bones.’ (Exodus 12:46)

John the Baptist came saying, ‘Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ (John 1:29) This statement is rich in meaning and connects deeply with the story of the Passover in the Old Testament. In Exodus 12:46, God gave specific instructions for the Passover lamb: it had to be perfect and none of its bones could be broken.⁹ This lamb was sacrificed so that God’s judgment would ‘pass over’ the households marked with its blood. That lamb was a symbol pointing forward to Jesus.

Fast forward to the crucifixion of Jesus. John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus died on the day of preparation for the Passover (John 19:14), the very day when lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple. When the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified men to speed up their deaths, they found that Jesus was already dead, so they didn’t break His legs (John 19:32–36). John emphasises this detail to show that Jesus perfectly fulfilled the role of the Passover lamb: not a single bone was broken, just as Scripture foretold (Psalm 34:20, Exodus 12:46). God orchestrated every detail to show us that Jesus is the true Passover lamb — the one whose sacrifice brings forgiveness of sins and protection from judgment.

But Jesus is not just the Lamb; He is also the Lamp. In Revelation 21:23, we get a glimpse of the New Jerusalem, the eternal city where God will dwell with His people. ‘The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.’ There is no darkness, no night, and no need for other sources of light because the Lamb Himself shines. Jesus’ physical bones were not broken on the cross but His will was broken.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390), one of the Cappadocian Fathers, Archbishop of Constantinople (capital of the Eastern Roman Empire)

‘Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us.’¹⁰

Gregory came from a deeply Christian family in Cappadocia; his father was Bishop of Nazianzus. He had an excellent classical education (Caesarea, Alexandria, Athens) and was skilled in rhetoric. Though he became a bishop (for a time in Constantinople), he always had a strong ascetic and contemplative lean in his spirituality. His writings — especially his orations — addressed major theological issues such as the Trinity. St Gregory of Nazianzus calls John the Baptist the ‘voice of the Word’, emphasising that John diminished himself completely so that Christ’s glory could be heard: ‘He was the voice, but the Word was God … John was the lamp, but the light was the true Light.’

Gregory uses John the Baptist as a theological and spiritual paradigm: humility, preparation, transformation, pointing to Christ. Gregory uses John as a model for all Christians who wish to ‘decrease’ so Christ may ‘increase’. The Celtic Church’s spirituality (monasticism, asceticism, emphasis on interior transformation, veneration of John the Baptist) shares many of the same motifs.

The Celtic Church continued a strong veneration of John the Baptist (as is common in the East). The respect for the ‘forerunner’

saint meshes with Gregory's teaching: John as the herald of Christ, as one who diminishes for Christ. This metaphor was deeply influential. The lamp imagery inspired many Eastern Fathers to interpret sanctity as the extinction of the self so that divine light might shine through.

In a later tradition, it was said that a dove landed on the shoulder of the Celtic saint, St David¹¹ (c500–589) while he preached at the Synod of Brefi, and the ground rose beneath him so all could hear his voice. This miraculous

event was interpreted as a sign of divine approval and Spirit-anointing, much like the dove resting on Jesus at his baptism. The dove became a symbol often associated with David in Welsh iconography, showing the lasting impression of that image. This connection mattered because the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove confirming David's authority, mirrors the baptismal scene and God's voice and Spirit affirming Jesus. David was being affirmed as a spiritual leader in a similar way.

REVIVAL

Roy Hession says 'in order to break our wills to his, God brings us to the foot of the cross, and there shows us what real brokenness is. We see those wounded hands and feet, that face of love, crowned with thorns, and we see the complete brokenness of Jesus. So, the way to be broken is to look on him, and to realise it was our sin which nailed him there; then, as we see the love and brokenness of the God, who died at our place, our hearts will become strangely melted, and we will want to be broken for him.'¹²

We also read how the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism by John. Hession says, 'What a suggestive picture we have here, the dove descending upon the lamb, and resting upon him! ... The lamb speaks of meekness and submissiveness, and the dove speaks of peace. The main lesson of this incident is that the Holy Spirit as the dove could come upon and remain upon the Lord Jesus, only because he was the lamb ... The dove can abide upon us, only as we are willing to be as the Lamb. How impossible that he should rest upon us, while self is unbroken! The manifestations of the unbroken self are the direct opposite of the gentleness of the dove. Read again the ninefold fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control) in Galatians 5, with which the dove longs to fill us.'¹³ Humility, which is the central monastic virtue, begins in the fear of the Lord, which simply means acknowledging the divine omnipresence and acting accordingly. Columba Stewart says that 'awareness of the presence of God, humility, the central monastic virtue, begins in "the fear of the Lord."¹⁴

Idols are those things we go to for comfort before we go to the Lord. We have the fear of the Lord on us to the degree that we are free from idolatry.

PRAYER

Jesus, Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, show me the areas of self in me that are as yet unbroken. Shine Your light on me. Show me those idols in my life ... those things I go to for comfort before I go to You, Lord. Lord, You are the Lamb who is the lamp forever bright ... guiding us home ... into Your light. Show me those idols in my life.

The lamb is
the lamp

SCAN ME



Come and see

DAY
3

John 1:35–53

- **Focus verse:** “Come and see,” said Philip.’ (John 1:46)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your body, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.’ (2 Samuel 7:12)

Can anything good come from Nazareth?’ Nathanael’s reaction was understandable: Nazareth was a small, obscure town. Philip had met Jesus and found his friend Nathanael, and had excitedly said to him, ‘We’ve found the one Moses and the prophets wrote about—Jesus of Nazareth’ ... but Nathanael was sceptical about Nazareth. Philip didn’t try to convince him with arguments. He simply said, ‘Come and see.’

That phrase ‘Come and see’ is more than just an invitation for Nathanael. It’s an invitation to all of us reading the Gospel of John. It invites us to encounter Jesus personally and discover for ourselves who He truly is. Jesus is looking for us. John wants us to explore how this man from a small village is actually the fulfilment of Israel’s deepest hopes and prophecies. Even in this early part of John’s Gospel, Jesus has already been introduced with incredible titles: the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and the eternal Word (*Logos*) through whom all things were made. Now Philip adds to that list, calling Jesus the one spoken of in the Law and Prophets. But he doesn’t quote Scripture to prove it, he simply points to Jesus.

The idea is clear: *You have to come and see for yourself*. Nathanael does go to see, and his response is striking. After a short interaction with Jesus, he exclaims, ‘*Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!*¹⁵’ (John 1:49). These two titles—Son of God and King of Israel—carry deep meaning. In the Old Testament, especially in Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7, these terms were used for Israel’s kings, particularly the promised Messiah from David’s line. Nathanael probably meant that Jesus is the anointed king Israel was waiting for.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Pachomius (292–348)

‘Shun the praise of men and love the one who, in the fear of the Lord, reprimands you.’¹⁶

St Pachomius was born in Thebes, Egypt, to pagan parents. He converted to Christianity after encountering the faith through acts of charity while serving as a conscripted soldier. After a period as a hermit (under St Palamon), he founded the first organised monastic community around 320 at Tabennisi on the Nile. He established a Rule, a written set of guidelines for communal life: obedience, prayer, manual labour, and communal worship. Pachomius’ monasteries were organised almost like small, self-sufficient villages, with clear hierarchies and rhythms of work and prayer. He’s often contrasted with St Anthony the Great, who embodied eremitic (solitary) monasticism.

Before Pachomius, monasteries in the desert were mostly scattered cells—with monks living on their own. Pachomius created community without interrupting monastic living. He started corporate rules for communities that made room for individual obedience—the cell remained the place where God meets individuals and changes lives.

Cassian eventually wrote this down, and Benedict published it wider in the West. The Celtic Church, especially in Ireland and Britain, was heavily influenced by Gaul (modern-day France) and Mediterranean monastic models through Cassian and others. So, while there’s no evidence that Celtic monks had direct contact with Pachomian communities, his

influence reached them through Cassian's writings and the broader Desert Fathers tradition. Irish and British monasticism in the 5th–7th centuries developed independently in some respects, yet its spirit and structure echo Pachomian ideals: even the Rule of St Columbanus (6th century) and later the Rule of St Benedict (which supplanted it in Western Europe) are spiritual descendants of the Pachomian model. The Celtic monks—like St Columba (Colum Cille), St Brigid, and St Kevin—developed a monastic culture that was more ascetic and missionary than the Pachomian system, and deeply communal, with abbots rather than bishops as central authorities. The underlying structure was a rule-governed community devoted to prayer and labour, which ultimately comes from the Egyptian cenobitic (community) tradition that began with Pachomius.

St Cuthbert is one of the major Celtic-Anglo saints. When his coffin was opened in 698, a small pocket gospel book—the Gospel of St John—was found placed with him.¹⁷ That suggests a deep devotion to this Gospel. Having John's Gospel as

his personal Gospel points to his valuing the kind of revelation ('seeing', in John 1:35–53), recognition of Jesus, and devotional intimacy that the fourth Gospel (including the first chapter) offers and to his following Jesus. The fact the Gospel was placed with him suggests its importance in his spiritual life, possibly as a guide in contemplative discernment and to his faithful following.

Celtic monks would have practised a form of *lectio divina*, when practising Scripture reading, meditation, and prayer was intended to promote communion with God and deeper understanding of the word. They often spent long periods alone with Scripture, and engaged in contemplative prayer and chanting psalms. While they didn't use the term *lectio divina*, and may not have followed the formal four-part method, their approach was essentially the same in spirit—a slow, prayerful, meditative engagement with Scripture. For instance, using the following Scripture, 'Come and see' (John 1:46), a Celtic-style meditative reading (lectio-like practice) may have looked as follows:

REVIVAL

Do you have a deep hope and persistent longing to encounter God? Have you been waiting a long time?

1. Reading (*lectio*)—Slowly and reverently 'Come and see'. A Celtic monk might read this aloud slowly, perhaps in the early dawn, beside the sea or in a stone cell, listening for the voice of God not only in the words, but in the wind, the birds, and the silence.

2. Meditation (*meditatio*)—Reflecting with the heart what it would have been like to walk by the Sea of Galilee. The quiet waves on the shore.

3. Prayer (*oratio*)—Responding to God: 'I've found the promised One!'

4. Contemplation (*contemplatio*)—Silent presence, with no-words contemplating ... 'He saw me under the fig tree.' 'Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me ...' (from *St Patrick's Breastplate*).¹⁸

PRAYER

I come to You, Lord Jesus ... may I see You more clearly, King Jesus. Bring conviction and humbling that I might come into conformity with You, Lord Jesus the Lamb of God, and see victory over self. I come to see You, Jesus ... come and know me, transform me and make me whole.

Come and see, follow me



Joy and zeal

DAY
4

John 2:1–25

- **Focus verse:** ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ (John 2:17)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ (Psalm 69:9)

At first glance, the joyful miracle at the wedding in Cana and the dramatic clearing of the Temple may seem unrelated. But taken together, they introduce us to the heart of who Jesus is and what He came to do. As we reflect on this passage, especially in light of verse 17 (‘Zeal for your house will consume me’) we see how both joy and judgment flow from the same deep love of God. Jesus turning water into wine at a wedding feast ends with abundance, but it began with a major embarrassment: the hosts had run out of wine. Jesus steps in, not with a public spectacle but a quiet miracle that reveals His glory to a few close followers. John 2:11 says, *‘What Jesus did here in Galilee was the first of his signs through which he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.’*

Jesus comforts the disturbed. Jesus cares about the needs of ordinary people in their everyday lives. Then the scene shifts. Jesus arrives at the Temple in Jerusalem and sees the place meant for worship turned into a marketplace. With righteous anger, He drives out the money changers and sellers. Here, Jesus disturbs the comfortable, those who had settled into religious routine but lost sight of God’s holiness. The Court of the Gentiles in the Temple was not supposed to be a place for money changers. It was the only area where non-Jews (Gentiles) were permitted to enter. The intended purpose of the Court of the Gentiles was to allow Gentile ‘God-fearers’ — non-Jews who revered Israel’s God — to come near, to pray, and to honour God in proximity to the Temple. Israel was set apart to be a blessing to the nations, and they were not doing this.

Why are these two events side by side? Because together, they show that Jesus came not only to bring joy but also to call for purity and

truth in our worship. His zeal, His passionate commitment to God’s purposes, is at the centre of both stories. John places this Temple-cleansing scene at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (unlike the other Gospels), perhaps to show us early on who Jesus truly is. Jesus is the new Temple, the Word made flesh, and the Passover Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. David Sliker says, ‘Jesus’ relationship to us and his passion and jealousy relate to our destiny and ... how far he is willing to go to get us to our destiny. He won’t stop until all darkness is out of us ... that hidden sense that I know better than God, that I am wiser than God, that I have a better way ... is dealt with. He is love and included in that love is his anger and jealousy. When you yoke your life and when you fasten your life covenantly to a bridegroom God ... you get him ... the whole of who he is, is fastened to you and you get all of him ... the free gift of righteousness made a way for him to fasten himself to you. You get him ... the God of the Old Testament and New Testament has fastened himself to you.’¹⁹ Here we get a picture of God’s jealous, volcanic love when Jesus drives out the money changers and quotes Psalm 69:9a.²⁰

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Basil the Great (329–379), Cappadocia

*‘Do not be afraid of prayer, for it is the weapon of the soul.’*²¹

St Basil of Caesarea was one of the most important figures in early Christianity. He lived in the 4th century and played a decisive role in shaping Christian theology, monasticism, and church organisation in both the East and West. He came from a deeply Christian and intellectual family — his sister Macrina the Younger, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and his

friend Gregory Nazianzus were all prominent saints and theologians. Together, they're known as the Cappadocian Fathers.

Pachomian monasticism influenced Basil, who adapted communal monastic principles for the Greek-speaking East. Basil's ideas then reached John Cassian, a monk who studied monastic practices in Egypt and later founded monasteries in southern Gaul. Cassian wrote the *Institutes* and *Conferences*,²² which transmitted Egyptian desert spirituality to Western Europe.

Several aspects of St Basil's life and teachings would have resonated with and potentially inspired the Celtic Church, especially in its early monastic expressions. One particularly powerful story that aligns with the Celtic monastic spirit is his radical embrace of asceticism, community life, and service to the poor—especially in the founding of the *Basiliad*,²³ an early model of a Christian community that served both spiritual and practical needs. This was radical. It was monasticism not as escape, but as

engagement—a community of prayer and service, rooted in simplicity, hospitality, and care for the marginalised.

St Brigid of Kildare²⁴ (c451–525) is a Celtic saint who is remembered for being zealous, bold, passionate, and uncompromising in her devotion to God and to community, which was so important to Basil. Like Jesus at Cana, Brigid was known for her miracles of abundance—turning water into beer, multiplying food, and always making room for one more at the table. Her life was a living parable of hospitality, rooted in the Celtic love of extended family, sacred feasting, and communal joy. Brigid reminds us that holiness is not always found in silence and solitude, but often in the clinking of cups, the sharing of bread, and the laughter of loved ones gathered around a table. Like Cana, Brigid's Kildare was a place where the sacred met the ordinary—where God's presence was revealed not just in worship, but in warmth, welcome, and celebration.

REVIVAL

At Cana Jesus 'revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him' (John 2:11). This is a reminder that our primary calling is to love God and look more and more like Him, revealing His glory. As we behold Him, we're transformed and changed by Him. The zeal we see in Jesus in John 2 is a reminder that Jesus has a passion and jealousy regarding the Jewish people and their destiny, and the destiny of Jerusalem and Israel. *'This is what the Lord Almighty says, "I am very jealous for Zion. I am burning with jealousy for her.'"* (Zechariah 8:2)

PRAYER

Thank you for this picture of Jesus' jealous love for His people to fulfil their destiny to be a blessing to the nations. May the eyes of Israel be opened to see Jesus as their Messiah ... the risen Lamb. **Lord, You are the wine that gladdens our soul, You are the fire that makes the Temple whole.**

I am the
wine that
gladdens
your soul

SCAN ME



A snake lifted up

DAY
5

John 3:1–21

- **Focus verse:** *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up* (John 3:14)
- **Old Testament lens:** *My servant ... shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.* (Isaiah 53:12)

Jesus speaks with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, about the need to be ‘born again’. Nicodemus is confused, so Jesus helps him understand by referring to an Old Testament story in Numbers 21, about a snake lifted up. In that story, the Israelites were being punished by God with poisonous snakes because of their rebellion. But God told Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it up on a pole. Anyone who looked at it in faith would be healed and live.

Jesus says that, just like the bronze serpent was lifted up, ‘*the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.*’ Jesus is referring to His coming crucifixion, where He too will be lifted up on a cross. The ‘lifting up’ of the Son of Man is not only about heavenly exaltation but also refers directly to His crucifixion.

John fuses several powerful Old Testament images — the bronze serpent from Numbers, the exalted Son of Man from Daniel, and the suffering servant from Isaiah — to reveal that Jesus’ death on the cross is not merely a moment of shame or defeat. Rather, it is the very moment of His glorification. Isaiah 53:12 says, ‘*My servant ... shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.*’ Jesus’ crucifixion would be the moment where God’s glory is fully revealed.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Augustine of Hippo (354–430), he was a major theological influence in the West

‘*You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.*’²⁵

One key story from the life of St Augustine of Hippo that likely inspired the Celtic Church is

his dramatic conversion story, as told in his autobiographical work *Confessions*. This story highlights themes of inner struggle, divine grace, and the pursuit of holiness.

One day, overwhelmed by inner turmoil in a garden in Milan, Augustine heard a child’s voice saying, ‘*Tolle, lege*’ — Latin for ‘take and read’. Taking this as a divine sign, he picked up a Bible and randomly opened to Romans 13:13–14, which exhorts believers to live honourably and ‘*put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*’ ‘... *Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ ...*’ (Romans 13:13–14) Reading that passage, Augustine felt a sudden, deep conviction and sense of peace. He turned away from his former life and committed himself to Christ. He was baptised by Ambrose of Milan and later became a bishop and one of the greatest theologians in Christian history. His journey from a worldly life to deep faith mirrored the kind of inner transformation the Celtic Christians emphasised in their own spiritual journey

St Patrick’s *Confessio*²⁶ covers Augustinian themes (eg humility, sin, divine grace). Augustine would have been a major influence on St Patrick. While not directly quoting John 3, St Patrick’s *Confessio* speaks of personal spiritual rebirth. He refers to how God turned his captivity (as a slave) into a spiritual awakening, a kind of ‘new birth’.

St Patrick was born into a Romanised Christian family in Britain around the late 4th century. His father was a deacon, and his grandfather a priest, but by Patrick’s own admission: ‘I did not know the true God.’ Despite his Christian upbringing, Patrick had not yet undergone a personal transformation. This aligns with the

condition Jesus describes to Nicodemus: that religious status alone isn't enough — a person must be born from above, by the Spirit (John 3:3–5). At age 16, Patrick was kidnapped by Irish raiders and enslaved for six years in Ireland. This period became the crucible of his spiritual rebirth. During his captivity he began to pray intensely, up to a hundred times a day, and again at night. He developed a deep sense of God's presence, especially in creation, consistent with Celtic spirituality, which sees nature as a reflection of the divine. He writes: 'The Lord opened the understanding of my unbelieving heart, so that I should recall my sins and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God.' This moment mirrors the regeneration described in John 3: a heart opened by God, moved by the Spirit, resulting in repentance and new life. Patrick eventually escaped, returned to Britain, and was reunited with his family, but he was no longer the same

person. He had been reborn in the Spirit.

He later had a vision calling him back to Ireland — the land of his former captivity — this time not as a slave, but as a missionary. His return to Ireland was an act of forgiveness, courage, and divine calling — signs of deep transformation. He wrote: 'I am a sinner, a simple country person ... yet I am greatly indebted to God who gave me so much grace.' His humility, sense of calling, and dependence on grace all point to someone who had been inwardly changed. Jesus says in John 3:8: *'The wind blows where it wishes ... so it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'*

Patrick's life reflects this Spirit-led movement. He went against cultural expectations, choosing to serve the Irish people rather than remain safely in Britain. His mission was to convert, and to form a new kind of Christian community, rooted in love, prayer, and simplicity.

REVIVAL

As we raise the banner of the cross of Jesus over the British Isles, looking at John 3:14 as the Son of Man lifted up, our eyes will be opened up to the victory of Jesus on the cross over the strategy of the enemy to deceive. Roy Hession says, 'There is a proud stiff-necked "I" in each one of us. If we are to come into right relationship with him the first thing we must learn is that our wills must be broken to his will. To be broken is the beginning of revival. It's painful, it's humiliating but it's the only way. It's being "not I, but Christ," and a C is a bent I. Lord, cleanse me from all inward toleration of proud Jezebel. Cleanse me. Every day help me take a stand, and declare the victory of the cross.'²⁷ He says. 'There is a difference between the snake and the worm. When you attempt to strike at them, the snake rears itself up, hisses and tries to strike back — a true picture of self. But a worm offers no resistance, it allows you to do what you like with it, kick it or squash it under your heel — a picture of true brokenness. Jesus was willing to become just that for us — a worm, and no man.'

PRAYER

Spirit of the Living God, breathe on me, let Your mercy wash and set me free, break the I that will not bend ... I bow, I yield, I cannot hide. Shine, oh Lord, Your light on my pride. Let the cross be all I see, no more striving, no more fight, I die to self, be glorified ... and Lord, we pray for the whole British Isles, that many eyes would be opened up to the victory of Christ on the cross. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God breathe on me

SCAN ME



The bridegroom

DAY
6

John 3:22–36

- **Focus verse:** ‘*You yourself can testify that I said, “I am not the Christ but sent ahead of him.” The bride belongs to the bridegroom.*’ (John 3:28)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘*I have installed my king.*’ (Psalm 2:7)

Here we find John the Baptist helping his followers understand who Jesus truly is. Some of John’s disciples were concerned because people were starting to follow Jesus instead of John. But John makes it clear that his role is not to compete with Jesus—he compares himself to the best man at a wedding, and Jesus to the bridegroom. In other words, Jesus is the main event; John is just there to rejoice.

This bridegroom image comes frequently in the Old Testament. God was often described as the bridegroom who would one day be united with His people, Israel. The coming Messiah was seen in this light as well—the one who would bring that spiritual union between God and His people. So when John calls Jesus the bridegroom, he is declaring something profound: Jesus is the promised Messiah, the one Israel has been waiting for. In this passage, Jesus is not only seen as Messiah but also as the Son of God. In the Bible, the title ‘Son of God’ has strong royal and divine connections. For example, Psalm 2:7 speaks of a king whom God calls His Son.²⁸ In 2 Samuel 7, God promises David that his offspring will be like a son to him and will rule over an everlasting kingdom. These Scriptures laid the foundation for Israel’s hope in a future king—one who would not just rule, but have a special relationship with God.

As we approach the final verses of John 3:31–36, we hear a powerful call to decision. What we do with Jesus determines our eternal destiny. As John 3:36 says, ‘*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*’ Belief in Jesus is not just intellectual agreement—it’s trust and obedience. To reject Jesus is to reject the only one who can give us life and rescue us from God’s judgment. The reader

faces these three images of Jesus as bridegroom, king and judge in this passage.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Athanasius of Alexandria (296–373), Egypt
‘Athanasius against the world’²⁹

This phrase was coined to describe how Athanasius stood almost alone against the Arian heresy when most of the Church and even emperors opposed him. St Athanasius wrote the *Life of Antony*, a biography of St Anthony the Great, the father of Christian monasticism. He explicitly compares St Anthony to John the Baptist, describing both as voices crying in the wilderness and both as precursors of Christ’s kingdom through repentance and purity of heart. ‘He [Antony] lived in the desert as Elijah and John lived before him, making himself less than Christ might be all.’ This would have resonated with and possibly inspired the Celtic Church, especially considering its monastic and ascetic tendencies, its love for heroic perseverance in the faith, and its deep engagement with the Desert Fathers.

The radical devotion of John the Baptist baptising disciples had caused a huge stir and drawn much attention, but John was keen to put the focus squarely on Jesus. John was merely a friend of the bridegroom. Origen interpreted the Song of Songs allegorically, as did St Gregory of Nyssa. St Macarius spoke of the soul being ‘espoused to the heavenly Bridegroom’. Jesus was the bridegroom. In his *Life of Antony*, Athanasius certainly presents Anthony as someone betrothed in faithfulness to God. The monastic ideals—particularly the hermit’s life, ascetic devotion, and spiritual combat—passed from the deserts of Egypt to the windswept shores

of Ireland and Scotland. *Life of Antony* was a powerful spiritual text that told the story of a man who gave up everything to live in the desert, battling demons, fasting, praying, and devoting himself wholly to God. Athanasius inspired a unique expression of Christianity that saw the wild places of the earth as deserts for God, and inspired radical devotion by many.

The early Egyptian monastic movement (3rd–4th centuries) consciously saw itself as following in the footsteps of John the Baptist. Their goal was to become less — to annihilate pride, the ego, and the passions — so that Christ might reign.

St Kevin of Glendalough (died c618)³⁰ is one of the most striking examples in the Celtic Christian tradition of someone who embodied radical humility through withdrawal from the world. His life exemplifies a deep commitment to the spiritual principle found in John 3:30 — ‘*He must increase, but I must decrease.*’ Kevin (Irish: *Cóemgen*) was born into a noble Leinster family around the 6th century. He was educated by monks, likely at Kilnamanagh, where he began to take on the monastic discipline that would define his life. Rather than pursuing the privileges of his noble birth, Kevin chose obscurity. He diminished himself, drawing closer to God, and

journeyed to the remote valley of Glendalough, in County Wicklow. At that time, the valley was completely wild — a place of isolation and danger. But Kevin saw it as a place of spiritual purity. There, he lived in a cave-like cell known as St Kevin’s Bed — barely large enough for a man to lie down in. He slept on rocks, ate wild herbs, and drank from the lake out of a desire to empty himself completely before God.

Kevin took this literally: decreasing in comfort, visibility, and self-sufficiency, so that God alone could fill him. Eventually, Kevin’s holiness attracted followers, seekers who found their way to Glendalough, wanting to learn from his way of life. Despite his deep preference for solitude, Kevin reluctantly became a teacher and abbot, founding a monastery that became a vital centre of Christian learning in Ireland. However, even as a leader, Kevin avoided status. He remained detached, often retreating again into silence and prayer. Kevin pursued this hiddenness not as an escape, but as a holy vocation, a way of making space for God. St Kevin’s life was a living interpretation of ‘*He must increase, but I must decrease.*’ In a world that often equates success with visibility and influence, Kevin reminds us of a different path.

REVIVAL

This passage closes with a challenge: where do you stand? The friend of the bridegroom listened to His voice. Are you listening to Jesus’ voice? John the Baptist was the friend of the bridegroom Jesus Christ, and he listened to Jesus’ voice, following His call. The Early Church Fathers responded with radical devotion.

PRAYER

You’re the bridegroom shining bright, You’re my morning after night. You must rise. I must fade, but in Your love I’m remade. Oh my soul, it sings with joy, like a bride meeting her boy. Dress me in the Lamb’s pure white. You’re my bridegroom, You’re my light.

The
bridegroom’s
voice

SCAN ME



Living water

DAY



John 4:1–42

- **Focus verse:** ‘You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.’ (John 4:22)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘Many peoples will come and say, “Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God.”’ (Isaiah 2:3)

Jesus tells the Samaritan woman, ‘*You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.*’ This simple but profound statement connects the story of Israel with the coming of Jesus and God’s plan of salvation for all nations.

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus is shown as the fulfilment of Israel’s history, not the rejection of it. As scholar Richard Hays points out,³¹ John’s Gospel highlights characters like Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah as figures who anticipated Jesus. These Old Testament stories form the foundation on which God’s saving work in Jesus is built. Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman reveals several important truths. First, He acknowledges the unique role of the Jewish people in God’s redemptive plan. The Jews have a special relationship with God and have been entrusted with the truth about Him. This echoes prophecies like Isaiah 2:3 and Zechariah 8:23, which envision the nations coming to Israel to learn God’s ways. In this sense, salvation is indeed ‘from the Jews’ — not because Jews themselves save, but because God has revealed His salvation to the world through them.

At the same time, Jesus also introduces a major shift. When the woman raises the age-old debate about the correct place to worship — Mount Gerizim (Samaritan tradition) or Jerusalem (Jewish tradition) — Jesus responds that ‘a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem’ (John 4:21). He is pointing toward a new way of worship, not tied to a physical place, but based on the Spirit and truth. This is part of a broader transformation in how God’s presence is understood. In the Old Testament, Jerusalem and Mount Zion were seen

as central to God’s dwelling. But now, in John’s Gospel, Jesus Himself becomes the new ‘locus’ of God’s presence. He is the Living Word, the true Temple, and the source of ‘living water’ that gives eternal life (John 4:10–14). Worship no longer depends on geography, but on a relationship with the Messiah.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Caesarius of Arles (470–542), Gaul

*‘The man who is humble, even if he sins, will be quickly forgiven; but the man who is proud, even if he seems to do good, will lose his reward.’*³²

This line captures Caesarius’ main spiritual theme: humility as the foundation of Christian life and salvation. One of the most inspiring and influential stories from Caesarius’ life is his founding of a monastery for women at Arles, which he placed under the leadership of his sister, St Caesaria the Elder. Around 512, Caesarius composed what is widely considered the earliest known monastic rule written specifically for women in the Western Church. This emphasised community life and strict discipline, yet with pastoral gentleness. The abbess held spiritual and administrative authority, but always in a spirit of service. This rule blended Eastern ascetic ideals with practical Western organisation. Caesaria of Arles made space for women. The Celtic Church valued monasticism for both men and women.

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a powerful story of Jesus empathising and engaging in conversation. This characterised the approach of St Patrick, the Celtic saint who evangelised the Irish. Patrick was born in western

Roman Britain in 389. He was ethnically British and a citizen of the Roman Empire and his family was part of the local nobility. At the age of 16, he was captured by a band of Irish raiders and was a slave for six years. He managed to escape and returned home, but a few years later he received a vision of a man named Victoricus, begging him to return. Despite his family strongly encouraging him not to, he returned in 432 with the purpose of taking the gospel to the Irish.

How did Patrick reach the Irish? Hunter describes how Patrick's mission team worked emotionally and artistically to connect with the people: 'Upon arrival at a tribal settlement, Patrick would engage the king and other opinion leaders, hoping for their conversion or at least their clearance to camp near the people and form into a community of faith adjacent to the tribal settlement. The "apostolic" ... team would meet the people, engage them in conversation and ministry ... They would pray for sick people, and for [demon] possessed people ... On at least one

occasion Patrick blessed a river and prayed for the people to catch more fish ... They would engage in some open-air speaking, probably employing parable, story, poetry, song, visual symbols ... Often ... Patrick would receive the people's questions and then speak to those questions collectively.'³³

The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is also a story of Jesus reaching out to an outcast. She went to the well at a time of day when she would be less likely to be seen as she was a social outcast. He reached out with words of knowledge regarding her broken past and the many men in her life, and clearly she felt known and understood by Jesus. She said in John 4:29, '*Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.*' In many ways the Celtic way of evangelism was the way Jesus demonstrated as He reached out to the Samaritan woman, and in doing so '*many of the Samaritans in the town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.*' (John 4:39)

REVIVAL

The Samaritan woman's transformation is striking. After her encounter with Jesus, instead of being questioning, she becomes a witness, telling others about Him. Roy Hession says, 'Victorious and effective soul-winning service are not the product of better selves and hard endeavours, but are simply the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We are not called upon to produce the fruit, just simply to bear it. If you are to witness like Jesus your responsibility is to wake up the unbeliever. His conscience and the Holy Spirit are working with you. His basic problem is that he is selfish and he doesn't care. Our responsibility is to show him that you do care and God cares too. You care enough to bring him to a place of honesty about his selfishness.'³⁴

PRAYER

Lord, You are still waiting where the lost souls dwell, for the stranger, the sinner, the out-of-place. Lord, we pray for a Word and Spirit awakening in our day, where whole towns come to faith and drink from the wells of salvation and thirst no more, through empathetic relational mission and evangelism. Lord, we wait on You for that Word and Spirit awakening.

The well at
Sychar

SCAN ME



Nothing by Himself

DAY

8

John 4:43–5:47

- **Focus verse:** ‘*The Son can do nothing by himself. He can do only what he sees his father doing.*’ (John 5:19)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘*Behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man.*’ (Daniel 7:13)

Jesus performs a healing miracle at the Pool of Bethesda, telling a man who had been paralysed for 38 years to ‘Get up, take up your bed, and walk’ — and he does. But this happens on the Sabbath, and that sparks strong opposition from ‘the Jews’ (likely including Pharisees), who see Jesus as breaking the Sabbath law. But Jesus doesn’t back down. Instead, He explains that His actions are not lawless — they’re part of the Father’s work. He boldly claims that He’s doing what He sees the Father doing and that He’s been given authority by God Himself. This deeply challenges the religious leaders, because Jesus, a man from Galilee with no formal religious education, is claiming to be equal with God. This chapter reveals that the opposition to Jesus wasn’t just about Sabbath laws — it was about who Jesus claimed to be.

Richard Hays, a New Testament scholar, points out that the religious leaders were deeply committed to the Scriptures, but ironically missed the one to whom the Scriptures pointed.³⁵

Jesus calls Himself both the Son of God and the Son of Man in this passage. ‘Son of God’ recalls Old Testament texts like Psalm 2 and 2 Samuel 7, referring to a royal figure — God’s chosen king. But in John’s Gospel, Jesus reveals that He is God’s unique, only begotten Son, with heavenly origin and divine authority. He refers to Himself as the Son of Man, a title rooted in Daniel 7:13–14, where ‘one like a Son of Man’ comes with the clouds and is given authority, glory, and an everlasting kingdom. Here ‘Son of Man’ represents God’s people being vindicated. He shows that He both represents God’s people and is the one through whom God will judge the world. John makes clear that Jesus has been given authority to judge because He is the Son of

Man (John 5:27).

Tom Wright describes Jesus watching His Father work and doing the same, as a son learns a trade from his father.³⁶ And the greatest task the Father is doing, and that the Son now shares in, is raising the dead and giving life. Every time someone believes in Jesus, they are moving from death to life, a spiritual resurrection.

The second half of John 5 (verses 30–47) shifts to the theme of witness. Jesus says He’s not testifying about Himself alone. John the Baptist testified about Him. The works Jesus does testify too. Even the Scriptures, including the Law of Moses, bear witness to Jesus. But His opponents refuse to come to Him for life. Jesus confronts them directly: ‘*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.*’ (John 5:39) He points out that Moses, whom they claim to follow, actually wrote about Him. So if they truly believed Moses, they would believe Jesus. This failure reveals they don’t really understand the Scriptures as they think they do. Finally, He says that they do not seek the glory that comes from God. (John 5:44)

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Benedict of Nursia (480–547), Italy

‘*Listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart.*’³⁷

This expresses the heart of St Benedict’s teaching: a listening, obedient, and loving heart open to God. Intimate prayer where the Son is in tune with the Father, hearing with a listening ear, was important to Benedict. It is also helpful to note

that Benedict was from a different stream. He was a Church Father from the West rather the East.

One particular story from the life of Benedict that would have likely inspired the Celtic Church was the story of the poisoned cup. In the early years of his monastic leadership, some monks became resentful of Benedict's strict way of life. They attempted to poison his wine. Before drinking, Benedict, filled with discernment, blessed the cup, and it shattered, revealing the danger. He remained unharmed. 'He made the sign of the cross over the cup, and it broke as if struck by a stone, spilling the poison.' This episode became one of the signature miracles of St Benedict, symbolising divine protection and discernment.

It is helpful to note that writings about the lives of the saints were often idealised pictures and often present the subject of these biographies in

an extremely positive and often flawless light.

St Brigid of Kildare rendered poison or impurity harmless through blessing. St Columba discerned danger in food or drink and blessed it so that it became safe. St Molua and St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise also have miracle stories involving blessing tainted drink or food. These parallels show a pattern rooted in early Christian stories of the saints, indicating divine protection through a saint's blessing over harmful elements. A key feature of these stories, though, was a desire to seek the glory that comes from God (John 5:44) and to do what the Father was doing. They sought to encounter God and be transfigured into glory, and these stories (though possibly legendary rather than factual) all point to the relationship of the saints to Jesus. Jesus was asking regularly what the Father was doing, and so were the Celtic saints.

REVIVAL

The Scriptures are meant to bring us into a living relationship with Jesus the Messiah, who boldly claimed that He did what He saw the Father doing. The works Jesus does—miracles, healings, signs—were real. They were not idealised pictures painting Jesus in a positive light. They testified to Jesus.

The early Christians were called people of 'The Way'. They lived the Jesus way. What was the Jesus way? The Jesus way was to ask regularly of the Father, 'What are you doing today, Father?'

Is this a prayer you pray when spending time with the Lord at the start of each day? Ask the Father today, 'What are you doing today, Father?' Corey Russell says that the longer he prays for revival, the shorter his prayers have become and the more he prays with tears, sighs and groans, not knowing exactly what he's saying, but knowing that God hears him. The prayer that St Benedict describes in his 'Rule' was passionate as well as contemplative. Three times in his 'Rule', Benedict refers to tears: 'tears of compunction', 'prayer with tears' and 'tears and spiritual concentration'.

PRAYER

The Son does nothing on His own, but copies what the Father has shown. And just as life is in the Lord, the Son gives life by His own word. Lord, teach me how to line up with the prayers on Your heart, on the Father's heart, that Your kingdom might come on earth as it is in heaven. Lord, teach me how to pray, even with tears, sighs and groans.

The Son does nothing on His own

SCAN ME



Breakthrough miracles

DAY
9

John 6:1–24

- **Focus verse:** ‘When the people saw the sign ... they said, “This is indeed the Prophet.”’ (John 6:14)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘The Lord ... will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you.’ (Deuteronomy 18:15)

John’s Gospel³⁸ is like a detective story. There are lots of clues that point to important things where a deeper meaning is found. In this passage, John carefully notes that the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 happens near Passover, which points back to when God rescued Israel from Egypt, led them through the Red Sea, and fed them with manna in the wilderness. John wants us to make that connection. This is the second Passover mentioned in John’s Gospel. The first was when Jesus cleansed the Temple (John 2), and the final Passover will be at His crucifixion and resurrection. All three are key events tied to themes of freedom, provision, and God’s power to save.

Like a skilled storyteller, John includes small but meaningful details. Jesus feeds the crowd in a wilderness-like place, away from towns—just like God fed the Israelites in the wilderness. The people are amazed and declare Jesus to be ‘*the Prophet who is to come into the world*’ (John 6:14), referring to Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses said God would raise up a prophet like him. But they misunderstand what this prophet would do. They hope for a political saviour, someone to lead a revolt against Rome. Jesus had come as a very different saviour.

The second story in this passage, Jesus walking on water, continues the Exodus theme. After feeding the crowd, Jesus goes up a mountain to pray, while the disciples cross the lake by boat. The Sea of Galilee becomes rough, and they are struggling, frightened and in danger. Then they see Jesus walking on the water toward them, and they are terrified. But Jesus says, ‘*It is I; do not be afraid.*’

This scene mirrors Israel’s crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14). In Exodus, the Israelites walked

through parted waters on dry ground with walls of water on both sides. Here, Jesus walks on the water. He doesn’t need a path cleared. He commands the sea itself. This shows that Jesus has authority over the forces of chaos, which the sea often represented in Jewish thought. The sea was not just dangerous: it symbolised evil, fear, and disorder. Only God had power over it.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Martin of Tours (316–397), Gaul

‘*Mercy, not sacrifice, is what the Lord desires.*’³⁹

St Martin of Tours is one of the most famous saints of early Christianity. There are many stories of miracles attributed to him, both during his lifetime and after his death. Much of what we know about these comes from his contemporary and admirer, Sulpicius Severus, who wrote *The Life of St Martin* (*Vita Sancti Martini*) around 397.

Sulpicius records several instances of Martin raising people from the dead. In one case, he prayed over a catechumen who had died before baptism; after Martin prayed fervently, the man came back to life and was baptised. However, Sulpicius wrote in a hagiographic style (that is, a genre meant to inspire faith rather than record history objectively). Martin’s reputation for healing and holiness was widespread even in his own lifetime, which suggests that many contemporaries sincerely believed these miracles occurred.

A number of miracles have been attributed to St Columba, but some are more legendary. He is said to have chased away a monster in Loch Ness by speaking, commanding it, and invoking God. The beast fled at his voice.

However, Adomnán (abbot of Iona) is a serious source. He wrote *Vita Columbae*⁴⁰ between 697 and 704, about 100 years after Columba's death. He was writing from a relatively close generation (though still a century later). The miracles are presented in hagiographic form, with theological

and ecclesiastical motivations. So while they may have been believed by contemporaries and used as signs of sanctity, from a historian's standpoint one treats them with care. But *Vita Columbae* is one of the best sources for early Christian miracle lore.

REVIVAL

The works Jesus does — miracles, healings, signs — were real. They were not idealised pictures painting Jesus in a positive light. They testified to Jesus. John includes this story in John 6 — feeding the 5,000 and walking on water — to help us see Jesus as the fulfilment of the Exodus story, a new and greater Moses. Like Moses, He leads people to freedom, feeds them in the wilderness, and confronts evil powers. The Exodus story is the story of God breaking through.

Barbara Yoder says, 'breakthrough is something we cannot achieve on our own. It requires divine intervention'. The term, 'breaker-through' is foreign to most Christians. However, Barnes' *Notes* says that 'breaker-through' is one of the titles given to Christ in Micah 2:13. He is a 'breaker-through' because 'He is the only one who can overcome certain barriers when something immovable is in the way. God the Breaker crashes a gate to move people into an open space place where they're no longer confined.'⁴¹ If the Lord is going to take ground spiritually in a nation, He needs to establish a beachhead in a person through whom He can get His will done in a nation.

Ezekiel 22:30 says, *'And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.'* Are you a person through whom He can get His will done, as an intercessor? National revival requires that at least one person has broken through in a nation. Are you prepared to be that person for the British Isles? James Goll says, 'it is time for the breakers to come forth for this generation, time to confront the darkness with the light, time for the gatekeepers to open up the way, so that the King of glory will pass before us.'

PRAYER

A prayer of James Goll ... 'I surrender to you my Master and Chief, consume me with your Holy Spirit. Take control of my life. Make me into a prophetic intercessor who helps to make history by coming before your throne. Put your breaker anointing upon my life, for your kingdom's sake. Fill me anew and use me. Empower me for Christ's sake. I choose by God's grace to be a watchman on the walls for my family, my city, my nation and my generation. Like Simeon and Anna, I want to see the purposes of God birthed in my life, take possession of me in Jesus Christ's name. Amen!'⁴²

Bread on the mountain,
storm on the sea

SCAN ME



I am the bread of life

DAY
10

John 6:25–51

- **Focus verse:** ‘*Then Jesus declared “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry.”*’ (John 6:35)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘*and Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.”*’ (Exodus 16:15)

When CS Lewis was asked by a reporter how he made his decision for Christ, the closest he would get to using that language was saying ‘I was decided upon.’⁴³

Jesus is the one upon whom the Father has set His seal. God, like a goldsmith with a hallmark, or like a king with his great seal, has stamped Him with the mark that declares not only where He comes from, but that He carries His authority.

When Jesus says, ‘*I am the bread from heaven*’, the crowd realise that Jesus is pointing out that they can’t just expect bread on demand, that if this really is a heaven-sent renewal movement, there’ll be a new standard to which they must sign up. This means that God is requiring a complete change of heart. Jesus is challenging their motives, saying they are looking for Him not because they saw a true sign of God’s kingdom, but because they want more bread. Then in one of the most important teachings in John’s Gospel, Jesus, as the Bread of Life, tells them not to work for food that perishes, but for food that lasts for eternal life, which He, the Son of Man, will give. He is not offering literal bread anymore; instead, He’s offering Himself. When He says, ‘*I am the bread from heaven*’, He’s pointing to a deeper truth: that He is God’s true provision, sent to nourish souls, not just stomachs.

This is the first of Jesus’ famous ‘I am’ sayings in John. These sayings point to His divine identity and purpose. Here, ‘*I am the bread of life*’ echoes God’s self-revelation in the Old Testament, linking Jesus directly to the divine. The crowd finds this teaching hard. They recall how Moses gave their ancestors manna in the wilderness and expect Jesus to perform another miracle, another sign, as proof of His authority. The crowd has the right passages in mind (Exodus 16 and Psalm 78)

but the wrong interpretation. Jesus corrects them: it wasn’t Moses who gave the manna, but God. The manna was only a shadow of what God truly wanted to give. It filled their stomachs for a day, but those who ate it still died. Jesus here offers bread that brings eternal life.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Leo the Great (died 461), Rome

‘*Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition.*’⁴⁴

This expresses St Leo’s theology of the Incarnation. Whether we are ruled by consumerism (wanting our stomachs filled) or by the fear of authority (political or military), there are thrones that are competing for authority in our lives. Pope Leo faced down a barbarian leader and inspired the Celtic saints to do likewise.

One compelling narrative about St Leo, which might have inspired the Celtic Church, is how he confronted Attila the Hun in 452 during the siege of Rome. According to tradition, as Attila was advancing on the city with a massive force, panic was widespread. Leo went out in full papal regalia to meet Attila personally and persuaded him to turn back, sparing Rome from destruction.

This event highlights several qualities. Leo’s bravery to face a terrifying barbarian leader, relying on faith and moral authority rather than military might. It underscores the power of prayer, humility, and spiritual authority over brute force, and his role as protector of not just the Church but the people of Rome.

The Celtic Church, with its emphasis on holy leaders (who were both spiritual and community

defenders), would likely have seen Leo's example as a model of the bishop or abbot as a powerful mediator between God's authority and worldly powers.

St Columba went to the land of the Picts, a group of tribes who lived in what is now northern and eastern Scotland, and is said to have met King Bridei, who ruled from near Inverness. According to Adomnán's *Life of St Columba* (written about a century later (c697)⁴⁵) Columba went to meet King Bridei at his fortress. The king's gatekeepers refused him entry, but Columba made the sign of the cross, and miraculously the barred doors opened. Impressed, Bridei received him

respectfully, and Columba later helped spread Christianity among the northern Picts.

In Celtic Christianity — particularly Irish, Scottish, and Welsh traditions — there are stories involving miraculous provisions of food, including bread. In one story St Brigid gave away all the monastery's food to the poor during a famine. When more guests arrived shortly afterwards, she prayed, and the stores were miraculously refilled, including loaves of bread. There are other stories of food multiplication with Celtic saints. St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise (c516–544) saw a small gift of food, offered to a guest, multiplied to feed a large group.

REVIVAL

In John 6:26–27 it is clear that the crowd was seeking to have their stomachs filled rather than seeking Jesus. Their god was their stomachs! Are we ruled by consumerism? Are we ruled by the fear of authority, political or military? Are there thrones competing for authority in our lives?

National revival requires the identification of 'thrones', governing powers or seats of authority. Some thrones are personal, others are familial, corporate, territorial or national, but they all oppose the will of the Lord being accomplished. Effective praying for the British Isles will require consecration to the Lord's will and purpose, and personal repentance for sins that may currently stain the conscience. Where there is a coming under other 'thrones', repentance will be necessary.

James Goll woke up from a dream with the words he had heard in his dream: 'when my people will care for, cherish, nurture and love, the bread of my presence like a parent does his newborn child, then revival will come.'⁴⁶

PRAYER

Lord, 'Oh that You would rend the heavens and come down that the mountains might flow down at Your presence.' (Isaiah 64:1)
You heard the prayers of Peggy and Christine Smith in the Isle of Lewis, asking You to pour out Your Spirit on thirsty ground. Jesus, You are the bread from heaven come down from above, given for the world, a sacrifice of love. We long for You to manifest Your presence as You did in the Isle of Lewis in the Hebridean Revival. Bring me to a place of caring for, cherishing, nurturing and loving the bread of Your presence like a parent does a newborn child. I repent of submitting to other thrones and authorities in my life. Lord, come and have Your way in my life, and in my nation's life, I pray. I consecrate myself to Your will and Your purpose.

Bread from heaven

SCAN ME



Eat My flesh

DAY
11

John 6:52–71

- **Focus verse:** ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.’ (John 6:53)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?’ (2 Samuel 23:17)

Jesus makes a shocking statement: ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.’ Many of His followers found this hard to accept and walked away. To understand this better, Tom Wright draws a helpful comparison with a story from the life of King David.⁴⁷ While in battle against the Philistines, David longed for water from his hometown of Bethlehem. Three of his loyal soldiers bravely broke through enemy lines and brought him water from the well. But David refused to drink it. He poured it out, saying it would be like drinking their blood, because they had risked their lives to get it (2 Samuel 23:17; 1 Chronicles 11:19). To him, it would be wrong to benefit from their sacrifice in such a personal way.

This story sheds light on Jesus’ words. In Jewish law, drinking blood was strictly forbidden (see Leviticus 17:10–14). Blood represented life, and it belonged to God. So Jesus saying that we must drink His blood would have sounded outrageous to His listeners. But Jesus wasn’t encouraging disobedience to the Law. He was using strong, symbolic language to make a deeper point, just like David did. David refused to benefit from his soldiers’ sacrifice. But Jesus, as the true King and Messiah, goes even further. He gives Himself to be the sacrifice. He offers His own body and blood, and He wants His followers to benefit from it. ‘Eat my flesh and drink my blood,’ means, ‘take my life into yours. Let my death give you life. Let my sacrifice nourish you completely.’

Jesus wasn’t suggesting physical cannibalism, but revealing a new way God would give life through Jesus’ own death. Just as bread sustains the body, Jesus, the Bread of Life, would give spiritual and eternal life through His broken body and poured-out blood. This teaching connects

deeply to the Lord’s Supper, or Communion. Tom Wright points out that the original Greek word for ‘eat’ in verses 54–58 is a very physical word — something like ‘chew’;⁴⁸ it’s earthy, real, and deliberate. This suggests that Jesus did mean a physical act, not just a spiritual idea. The Early Church understood this as Communion, a meal that mysteriously connects us to Jesus’ body and blood, not just a symbol but an invitation to receive Jesus’ life into our own, by faith. We don’t earn life; we receive it as a gift.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Ignatius of Antioch: a journey to martyrdom as a willing sacrifice

I am God’s wheat, and I shall be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may become the pure bread of Christ.⁴⁹

St Ignatius’ most famous saying comes from his *Letter to the Romans*, where he begs not to be rescued from martyrdom. He was an early martyr quoted by many later fathers. Aspects of his life and martyrdom would have resonated deeply with the Celtic Church, especially given its emphasis on asceticism, martyrdom and spiritual authority grounded in personal holiness. He was arrested during the reign of Emperor Trajan (early 2nd century) and was transported under guard from Syria to Rome to be executed — specifically, to be thrown to wild beasts in the Colosseum. Along the way, he wrote seven powerful letters to various Christian communities, encouraging them to remain united in faith, obey their bishops, and stand firm under persecution.

The most inspiring aspect, especially for the Celtic Church, is Ignatius’ joyful embrace of

martyrdom. He didn't fear death; he longed for it. In his *Letter to the Romans*, he writes: 'Let me be food for the wild beasts, through whom I can reach God. I am God's wheat, and I shall be ground by the teeth of beasts so that I may become the pure bread of Christ.' This vivid metaphor of becoming the bread of Christ by offering himself in death would have had deep eucharistic and spiritual meaning for the Celtic Christians, who valued symbolic language, poetic theology, and spiritual bravery.

For the Early Church Fathers and the Celtic saints, the Eucharist was at the heart of their Christian practice. It was seen as a sacred mystery that connected them deeply with Christ. The heart of the eucharistic meal was that

Jesus' presence comes into the hearts, minds, even the bones of those celebrating, literally permeating their lives with His presence. The Eucharist wasn't just a ritual — it was more than a spiritual encounter with the divine, where those celebrating received the very nature of Christ, of divinity into their fallen humanity, to feast on the Crucified and Resurrected One. Since Celtic Christianity was largely monastic, the Eucharist was celebrated in small communities, often with a strong sense of intimacy and sacred presence, emphasising a mystical, experiential relationship with God. It was part of the rhythm of daily worship. The Celtic Saints viewed the bread and wine as holy and transformative.

REVIVAL

Lou Engel's *Communion America*⁵⁰ in the USA and James Aladiran's 'Battle for Britain' conference in August 2025⁵¹ both argue that we do not wage war against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities. The image of King David pouring out the water that his soldiers had sacrificed their life for, and the image of Jesus saying '*eat my flesh and drink my blood*', powerfully highlight the seriousness of the spiritual battle we are fighting.

As we pray for our nation, it is helpful to engage in identificational repentance. Suzette Hattingh, who used to be the lead intercessor for the Reinhard Bonnke mission in Africa, believed that the spirit of murder was over the British Isles ancient monuments.⁵² Nearly all are in memory of achievements in places where blood has been shed. Ed Silvoso in *That None Should Perish* documents the repentance by pastors in unity, repenting for sins of the past and a huge growth in the Church that followed.⁵³ Brian Mills and Roger Mitchell, in *Sins of the Fathers*, provide helpful identification of sins of the past in Britain to intercede for the nation.⁵⁴ We know that we are redeemed from the futile ways of our forefathers by the precious blood of the Lamb. Taking communion daily and declaration of the 12 statements about the blood of Jesus (see Appendix) is a helpful starting point.

PRAYER

Jeremiah 6:16 says, 'This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'" Lord, teach us how to pray, how to stand in the gap for our nation, to repent and confess the sins of our spiritual forefathers. **L**ord, come and heal our nation we pray.

True drink



Could this be the Messiah?

DAY
12

John 7:1–31

- **Focus verse:** ‘Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach.’ (John 7:14)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘Live in temporary shelters for seven days.’ (Leviticus 23:42–43)

John 7 opens with Jesus in Galilee at the Feast of Tabernacles (also called the Feast of Booths). This was one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar. Jesus had avoided going to Judea because of rising threats against His life. Jesus’ brothers had encouraged Him to go to the feast publicly to show His miracles, but John notes that even His own brothers didn’t yet believe in Him. Jesus responds that His time has not yet come, hinting at His divine mission and the unfolding of God’s perfect timing.

When Jesus does eventually go to Jerusalem for the feast, He goes quietly, not seeking public attention. But around the middle of the festival, He begins teaching openly in the Temple, sparking both amazement and debate. It is at this point that some people begin to ask: could this be the Messiah?

To understand why Jesus’ presence at this particular festival is so significant, we need to grasp the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. Rooted in Leviticus 23:33–43, it commemorates Israel’s journey through the wilderness after the Exodus. During the feast, people lived in temporary shelters (booths) to remember how God provided for them during those years of wandering. It was both a historical remembrance and a celebration of God’s faithfulness. Over time, the feast also took on messianic expectations — it pointed forward to a future time when God would once again dwell with His people and fulfil His promises.

Two key symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles, water and light, play a central role in John’s Gospel. In the chapters following, Jesus speaks of living water (John 7:37–39) and declares, ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12). These aren’t

random metaphors — they’re deeply connected to the rituals of the festival. Each day of the feast involved water ceremonies, reminding people of God providing water from the rock in the wilderness. There were also night-time celebrations with great lamps lit in the Temple, symbolising God’s presence and guidance.

Jesus was fulfilling the festival of the Feast of Tabernacles, which connects to the broader biblical story. Zechariah 14 looks ahead to a future ‘day of the Lord’, when God will reign as King, living water will flow out of Jerusalem, and all nations will gather to worship and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. In that prophetic vision, the festival becomes a symbol of global worship and God’s final victory. So when Jesus steps into the Temple during this festival, He is standing at the crossroads of Israel’s past, present, and future. Jesus uses the Feast of Tabernacles, to reveal that He is the true presence of God dwelling with His people. The festival, with all its symbols, finds its deepest meaning in Him.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Jerome (347–420), Dalmatia, Bethlehem, translator of the Latin Vulgate, key for scriptural study

‘Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.’⁵⁵

This is St Jerome’s most famous saying, quoted throughout Christian history. Jerome’s most famous achievement is the Latin Vulgate, the definitive Latin translation of the Bible for the Western Church. He translated the Old Testament directly from Hebrew (rather than the Greek Septuagint, which was common before him). He revised the Old and New Testaments to

produce a coherent, standard Latin text. The Vulgate became the authorised Bible of the Roman Catholic Church for over a thousand years, shaping Western Christianity, theology, and liturgy. Jerome's biblical scholarship gave the Celtic Church a vital textual foundation (the Vulgate), inspired their monastic scholarship and manuscript culture, and helped connect their unique spiritual practices to the broader Christian world.

Jerome withdrew from city life to pursue a stricter, ascetic form of Christianity and

around 373, he went into the Syrian desert. The hermit lifestyle of Jerome and the Celtic saints was focused ultimately on encountering God and being transfigured into glory. Here in John 7:18 Jesus said, *'Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.'* Jerome, as he withdrew into the desert, was focused not on gaining personal glory but on being a man of truth who was seeking Jesus' glory.

REVIVAL

Zechariah 14:16–19 prophesies that the nations that survive God's judgments are required to come up to Jerusalem every year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This will confirm that the Feast of Tabernacles will become a global observance in the age to come. It symbolises unity, peace, and divine presence under the Messiah's reign. Failure to observe it brings judgment (symbolised by drought)—showing its continued covenant importance.

As we pray for revival, it is time to pray for '*the fountains of the great deep to burst forth*'. This is a phrase used in Genesis 7, regarding a natural flood of water that covered the globe. We are getting closer to the end times that are prophesied in Habakkuk 2:14: *'For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.'* In Isaiah 11:9 there is a very similar verse and also in Numbers 14:21 and Psalm 72:19. As we pray not for a flood of water but for a flood of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, let's declare Psalm 29:10: *'The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever.'*

At the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus reveals that He is the true presence of God dwelling with His people. The two key symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles (water and light) play a key role in John's Gospel, symbols of Word and Spirit. Smith Wigglesworth gave a prophecy in 1947: 'When the Word and Spirit come together, that will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed within these shores, even the Wesley and the Welsh revivals of former years.'

PRAYER

Lord, we remind You of the promise that You will flood the earth as the waters cover the sea. Lord, You sit enthroned over the flood of glory; may Your authoritative word be released. 'Unblock the well of your Word and your Spirit, we pray. **May the fountains of the great deep burst forth and the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.**'

He walked to
the feast in
shadows

SCAN ME



Rivers of living water

DAY
13

John 7:32–53

- **Focus verse:** *'As the Scripture said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'* (John 7:37–39)
- **Old Testament lens:** *'On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem.'* (Zechariah 14:7–8)

In John 7:37–39, Jesus stands up on the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) and cries out, *'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the Scripture has said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."*' This is Richard Hays' translation,⁵⁶ and it differs from most English versions. Many Bibles interpret the rivers of living water as flowing from the believer, but Hays argues that these waters flow from Jesus Himself.

This insight significantly reshapes our understanding of the passage. Rather than suggesting believers become fountains of living water, the focus is squarely on Jesus as the source. According to Hays, Jesus is identifying Himself with the eschatological promises in Ezekiel 47 and Zechariah 14—key Old Testament passages traditionally read during the Feast of Tabernacles.

In Ezekiel 47, the prophet sees water flowing from beneath the restored Temple in Jerusalem, bringing life and healing wherever it goes. Similarly, Zechariah 14 speaks of a future day when living waters will flow out from Jerusalem. Jesus, standing during Sukkot, with its rituals of water and light, claims to be the new Temple, the true source of living water. The water rituals of the festival, which involved pouring water at the altar, to remember God's provision and to hope for future rain, now find their fulfilment in Christ.

Hays emphasises that Jesus is replacing the symbols with His own person. Just as the festival lights symbolised God's presence and glory, Jesus says in John 8:12, 'I am the light of the world.' Just as water symbolised future renewal, Jesus offers living water—His very self and the Holy Spirit (v39). Hays' reading challenges us to see

Jesus as the Temple, the one from whom life flows. This has powerful implications for how we relate to Jesus. We don't just receive from Him; we come to Him. He is the source. Like the Samaritan woman in John 4, we are called to come and drink from Jesus, the well that never runs dry.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Clement of Alexandria (c150–215), part of the Alexandrian school

*'The way of truth is one, but into it, as into a perennial river, streams flow from all sides.'*⁵⁷

This most famous of Clement's sayings is often quoted to express his Christian humanism and integration of reason and faith. The Alexandrian school emphasised allegorical interpretation of Scripture and the pursuit of spiritual knowledge within orthodox Christian bounds. These ideas influenced major figures like Origen and resulted in the transmission of Alexandrian thought into Western monasticism.

Clement of Alexandria read Scripture as: 'inspired and unified revelation from God, multi-layered, with literal, moral, and spiritual meanings, philosophically rich, harmonising revelation and reason, Christ-centred, with the *Logos* as the interpretive key, transformative, aiming at the believer's growth into true knowledge (*gnosis*) and holiness'. Effectively, he read Scripture as a 'river of life'. Partly as a result of Clement of Alexandria, the Celtic Church had a symbolic and poetic approach to theology and Scripture.

For St Patrick, springs and wells played overt roles. He is credited with the miracle of a spring

(fountain) miraculously coming from beneath a rock at Elphin ('the rock of the clear stream'). The spring that Patrick caused mirrors biblical 'water from the rock' (which is also part of the background biblically for the 'living water' imagery).

Wells were used for baptism, healing, meeting daily needs, and spiritual and physical sustenance. This corresponds with the use of thirst, belief, and inner flow in John 7. Celtic Christianity has thousands of holy wells: natural springs, wells and sacred water sources associated with saints. Many churches are built near wells — wells used for

baptism, springs said to burst forth miraculously.

The metaphor of water, thirst, springs, wells, flowing or fountain water is deeply embedded in Celtic saintly tradition. Many saints acted out aspects of that metaphor, they became sources of healing (wells), they lived in austerity, drinking only water or using water in penitential practices, they found springs or promoted them. Spiritually, these stories show a longing for purity, spiritual refreshment, and renewal, roughly analogous to 'thirsting for God' and receiving 'living water' (ie the Spirit) as in John 7.

REVIVAL

Do you have a longing to 'read the Bible with God's heart' and to 'pray with God's heart'? Do you have a longing for a river of life to flow out of you, and for personal and national revival? That river will come as you call out to the Lord with a level of desperation you have not known yet.

Corey Russell says that we need tears, travail and tongues as we intercede for revival. He tells the story of Frank Bartleman in the wake of the death of his daughter Esther, 'praying in' the Azusa Street Pentecostal outpouring on 14 April 1906. Russell, in his book *The Gift of Tears*, reminds us of Father Nash, who travailed in prayer and tears alongside Charles Finney in the Second Great Awakening, and Peggy and Christine Smith, who cried out to the Lord for the youth on the Isle of Lewis before the Hebrides Revival associated with Duncan Campbell. He says, 'I believe that there will be many storylines that bring God's people to a place of desperation for him to move in our generation. The primary purpose of God is bringing you to that point. He is bringing you to the place where you will shed tears — tears of revival. He's bringing you past the place of words to release tongues for revival. He is bringing you to the altar where you will labour with him, where you will travail for revival. It is time to unblock a well of tears of revival.'

We need to read the Bible with God's heart as a river of life like Clement of Alexandria. We also need to pray with God's heart ... and what are the hallmarks of revival? In the book of Acts there are ten hallmarks of revival: 1 'Divine visitation', sovereign, sudden and supernatural; 2 'Anointed preaching', courageous and confrontational preaching; 3 'Radical conviction'; 4 'Passionate intercession'; 5 'Evangelistic worship'; 6 'Miraculous works'; 7 'Kingdom community'; 8 'Social transformation'; 9 'Sacramental reality'; 10 'Constant conversions'.⁵⁸

PRAYER

Lord, You are my God, earnestly I seek You. I thirst for You, my whole being longs for You, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I come to You. You are the Temple, torn and raised, You are the glory, light and flame! You are the water, You are the rain! The Spirit comes in Jesus' name! Come and drink! Come and drink! You are the river, deep and wide, I come to You and drink.

Come and drink

SCAN ME



The light of the world

DAY
14

John 8:1–30

- **Focus verse:** ‘Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me, will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison, those who sit in darkness.’ (Isaiah 42:6)

In John 8:12 Jesus declares, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’ This powerful claim echoes the Old Testament prophets, especially Isaiah, where God’s chosen servant is called to be a ‘light to the nations’ (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). Israel was originally meant to carry that light, to show the world what it meant to know the living God.

This chapter reveals wilful blindness. Jesus accuses His opponents of failing to hear and understand because they no longer know the God they claim to serve. Their actions, thoughts, and ambitions reveal that they have lost touch with the heart of the Father. Jesus even goes as far as to say they are following their ‘father, the devil’ (John 8:44), because their hearts are closed to the truth and full of murderous intent.

The prophets had long foretold that the ‘Servant of the Lord’ would bring justice and light to the world, even at the cost of suffering (Isaiah 53:12). Jesus is that servant. Just like light shining into a dark room exposes everything hidden, Jesus exposes what is in human hearts. He is the true light sent from heaven, God’s Messiah, for Israel and for all nations. Those who accept Him find life and walk in the light. Those who reject Him, whether in hostility or stubborn unbelief, stand exposed and judged by the very light that was meant to save them.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Cyril of Alexandria (376–444), Egypt

‘He calls Himself Light, not as one among many, but as that which is by nature and truly light,

which enlightens every man coming into the world.’⁵⁹

St Cyril of Alexandria was a towering theological figure, especially noted for his role in the Council of Ephesus (AD431). Cyril’s central conviction was that Jesus Christ is the eternal Word (*logos*) of God made flesh. When Jesus says ‘I am the light of the world’ Cyril hears the divine Word proclaiming Himself as the source of all truth, life, and illumination. So, for Cyril, the ‘Light’ is not metaphorical; it’s the uncreated divine light, the radiance of God’s being. Christ reveals the Father’s glory because He is consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father — ‘Light from Light,’ as the Nicene Creed puts it. Thus ‘The Light of the world’ expresses Christ’s divine identity and equality with the Father.

Cyril sees ‘light’ as the symbol of revelation and communion: Christ’s light reveals God’s truth to a world darkened by sin and ignorance. But this light doesn’t just inform, it transforms, allowing the believer to share in divine life. He writes: ‘By partaking of Him we are illuminated, and being delivered from the darkness of error, we are made partakers of the divine light and knowledge.’ So, to be enlightened by Christ is to be brought into fellowship with God, a theme that connects directly with the Early Church father’s understanding of *theosis* (deification).

Cyril’s reading of John 1 — ‘The light shines in the darkness’ — is deeply incarnational. Humanity, for Cyril, is trapped in the ‘darkness’ of corruption and ignorance after the fall. The Word’s incarnation is the divine light entering that darkness, not from outside, but by assuming our nature. In Christ, divine light and human

flesh meet without confusion and without separation.

Also 'The Light of the world' for Cyril is eschatological: it signifies Christ's victory over every form of darkness. Sin is forgiven, ignorance is illuminated, death is conquered. The resurrection foreshadows the eternal illumination of the saints in God's kingdom.

St Columbanus (c543–615)⁶⁰ was the most famous missionary from Bangor, which became known as 'The Light of the world' due to its influential monastic heritage. Bangor Abbey became one of the most important centres of Christian teaching and monasticism in Ireland and Europe. Columbanus left Ireland around 590 with 12 companions and founded monasteries in Gaul (France), Switzerland, and Italy, including Luxeuil Abbey in France and Bobbio Abbey in

northern Italy. Columbanus promoted Celtic Christian practices, scholarship, and strict monasticism. His influence helped shape early medieval European Christianity.

St Gall was another Bangor monk and a companion of Columbanus. He evangelised in what is now Switzerland. He founded the monastery of St Gallen, which became a renowned centre of learning.

Although Bangor Abbey suffered Viking raids in the 9th century and fell into decline, it was later revived in the 12th century under the Augustinians. Bangor was a beacon of early Christian civilisation. Its missionary legacy helped preserve Christian learning during Europe's Dark Ages. The title 'Light of the world' reflects how Bangor's monks illuminated Europe with faith, education, and cultural richness.

REVIVAL

If national revival is to take place, personal sin needs to be brought into the light with open confession. It requires one person to take the first step, but prophetic intercession is necessary too. National revival requires the revelation and identification of 'thrones', governing powers or seats of authority, that oppose the will of the Lord being accomplished.

Currently in Europe, left-wing groups are defending religious extremists, and both are 'thrones' we need to repent of coming under. They seem like polar opposites: on the one hand, woke ideology, gender fluidity, LGBTQ+ affirmation, secularism; and on the other hand, religious extremism, which promotes fixed binaries, compulsory modesty, theocracy. The one thing they have in common is a common enemy, Western civilisation. The West's core values are free speech, freedom of religion, equality under the law, and free market choice, which were birthed out of Western history and biblical Christian worldview. At the same time, extreme right-wing groups are taking positions that are incontrovertibly racist.

National revival requires repentance from agreement with all these powers/seats of authority that oppose a biblical Christian worldview in Europe.

PRAYER

We are still children of the Enlightenment, prioritising reason over revelation. Voltaire and Rousseau were 18th-century Enlightenment thinkers in Europe who presupposed that the Scriptures were a work of man rather than a sacred text.

Lord, expose the ways that the Enlightenment has influenced me, bringing spiritual blindness. Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the world, shine Your light in my heart where there is sin that needs repentance and confession, and shine Your light into every area of darkness in our land today, I pray.

I am
the light of
the world

SCAN ME



Before Abraham was, I am

DAY
15

John 8:31–59

- **Focus verse:** *Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”* (John 8:58)
- **Old Testament lens:** *“Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you ...” So Abram went ...* (Genesis 12:1,4)

In the film *Back to the Future*,⁶¹ Marty McFly travels through time in a DeLorean car, visiting both the past and future. One moment he’s in 1985, the next he’s talking to his parents as teenagers in 1955, or seeing his children in 2015. It’s all fun and fascinating, but clearly fantasy.

Time travel makes for great storytelling, but when Jesus speaks in John 8:58, ‘*Before Abraham was, I am*’, he’s not playing with science fiction. He’s making a far deeper, more shocking claim. He is not from a point in history, He is above it. In this passage, Jesus is speaking to a group of Jews who, like us, see Abraham as the father of their faith. Abraham lived about 2,000 years before Jesus, and now, Jesus is standing there saying that Abraham ‘*rejoiced to see my day*’. Naturally, people are confused and offended. They respond, ‘*You’re not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?*’ (v57). They think Jesus is claiming to have somehow travelled back in time, and they mock him for it. But Jesus isn’t saying He visited Abraham. He’s saying something far greater: He existed before Abraham, not as a time traveller, but as the eternal Son of God. When Jesus says, ‘*Before Abraham was, I am*’, he’s using the very name God revealed to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3, ‘*I AM WHO I AM*.’ This isn’t a cryptic phrase; it’s a bold declaration of divinity. The Jews listening understood the weight of this, which is why they picked up stones to kill Him. They believed He was committing blasphemy.

They claim they don’t need freedom because they’re descendants of Abraham. Their confidence lies in their heritage, not in Jesus. Jesus responds sharply: if you were really Abraham’s children, you would do the works Abraham did. What

were those works? Genesis gives us the answer. In Genesis 12, Abraham obeys God’s call to leave everything and go to an unknown land. In Genesis 15, he believes God’s promise about countless descendants, and it’s counted to him as righteousness. Abraham listened, believed, and obeyed. He welcomed the Word of God, even when it disrupted his life.

In contrast, Jesus says the people before Him are doing something entirely different: they’re trying to kill the one who speaks the truth from God. Instead of faith, they show hostility. Paul has a similar argument in Galatians 3, insisting that true children of Abraham are those who have faith in Jesus, not merely those with Abrahamic blood. The heart of the matter is this: do we receive the Word of God when it comes, even when it challenges our assumptions and comforts? Do we believe like Abraham, or resist like the crowd?

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Origen of Alexandria (c184–c253)

*‘Be a follower of the Scriptures, not of men.’*⁶²

This is a paraphrase of a well-known quote from Origen that urged Christians to seek truth in God’s Word rather than human opinions. He was one of the most influential early Christian theologians, and had a profound impact on Christian theology and biblical interpretation across the wider Christian world, including the Western Church. Origen was a master of allegorical interpretation of Scripture, believing that the Bible should be read on multiple levels — literal, moral, and spiritual. This

method of reading Scripture became central in monastic theological traditions. It has an indirect influence on the Celtic Church, especially its monastic centres like Iona and Lindisfarne, which were steeped in deep and scriptural study. The connection was John Cassian, who preserved and transmitted Origen's ideas to the Latin West, and to Ambrose and Augustine who also used allegory. Origen's methods likely trickled down to Celtic biblical traditions.

Although some Celtic Christian views on the end times were shaped by pre-Christian influences that prefigured later Catholic doctrines of purgatory, there was a fundamental motivation in their approach in reading scripture to have humble, holy and hungry hearts, to hear, recognise and receive 'The Living Word' and to obey.

There was a longing in the Celtic saints to encounter Jesus and to be transfigured to be like Him. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, *'But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the image from glory to glory.'* They believed that going

from glory to glory means we're looking more and more like Him, that we're actually being transformed into the likeness of Christ, reflecting God's glory more and more. This was the focus of the Celtic saints who were influenced by Origen.

John 8:54 says, *'My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.'* The Celtic saints were open to see the Father glorify Jesus as they read the Scriptures. They read the Old Testament seeing those Scriptures figuratively revealing Jesus Christ. They did this while living monastic lives stripped of distractions in the wilderness places of Ireland — the bogs, the islands and the caves — seeking to encounter God, to be transfigured in glory. The goal of this ascetic life was union with God, participation in divine life, and restoration of the image of God in man.

Origen developed the idea that humans are called to become like God through participation in Christ. Origen wrote in his *Commentary on John* (Book 2.2): 'The Son of God became man that man might become God.' This is one of the earliest formulations of what later theology called *theosis*.

REVIVAL

If Jesus did exist before Abraham, do we believe that Jesus could have spoken through the Old Testament? The Church Fathers believed that the Old Testament frequently figuratively revealed Jesus Christ, in ways we often don't today. Origen was a master of allegorical interpretation of Scripture, and believed that the Bible should be read on multiple levels — literal, moral, and spiritual.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus' listeners went away perplexed, and it was often pride in the imagination of their hearts that hindered them from seeing Jesus. They believed He was committing blasphemy. They could not receive Jesus the Living Word of God because He challenged their assumptions and comforts. Do we write off allegorical interpretation because we are proud of our Enlightenment rationalism? Are we willing to read Scripture at multiple levels at times like Origen and the Celtic saints ... or not?

PRAYER

May we be followers of Scripture and not of men. Help us to receive the Word of God when it comes, even when it challenges our assumptions and comforts. Jesus, You are the Word, the Life, the Ancient of Days. Not born of the world, but the Lamb ever near. Lord, give us humble, holy and hungry hearts to hear recognise and receive You, the Living Word, and to obey.

Before
Abraham was
... I AM



Blindness

DAY
16

John 9:1–41

- **Focus verse:** ‘*For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind*’ (John 9:39)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘*Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn and be healed.*’ (Isaiah 6:10)

Imagine watching a slideshow where every image is blurry, until suddenly, one comes into sharp focus. Tom Wright describes John 9 in this way: bringing God’s reality into focus.⁶³

John 9 opens with a question from Jesus’ disciples: ‘*Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*’ (v2) This was a common assumption in that culture: suffering must be a direct result of sin. But Jesus rejects that simplistic view. Instead, He declares, ‘*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world*’ (v5), echoing the very beginning of the Bible: ‘*God said, “Let there be light.”*’ (Genesis 1:3). Jesus is shining light into the darkness, just as God did at the dawn of time. Jesus heals the man in a surprising, even messy way, spitting on the ground, making mud, and rubbing it on his eyes. He then tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. The man obeys, and comes back seeing. For the first time in his life, his world comes into focus.

But not everyone celebrates. The Pharisees begin an investigation. Why? Because Jesus performed the healing on the Sabbath. For them, that violated God’s law. The irony is striking: the blind man now sees, both physically and spiritually, while the religious leaders, who should have been most in tune with God’s work, are blind to what God is doing. Jesus puts it plainly: ‘*For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind*’ (John 9:39).

The Pharisees’ problem wasn’t just ignorance, it was pride. They claimed to see clearly, to know truth, but their hearts were closed. And that kind of blindness is the most dangerous kind. John ties this moment directly to Israel’s history. Isaiah saw God’s glory and spoke of Him, but the people

were resistant, their hearts hard. This is repeated now in the rejection of Jesus, the true Light of the world. This chapter flips everything, beginning with a blind beggar assumed to be a sinner, and ending with religious leaders revealed as truly blind. The real sin isn’t blindness, it’s claiming to see clearly when you’re refusing to see God’s truth.

So, who decides when the picture is in focus? Who has the authority to say what is real and true? Only Jesus does. In the history of the Church, the debate as to whether to emphasise a historical or figurative interpretation or to prioritise reason or revelation has affected the ability to see Jesus as King.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Tertullian (c160–225), North African Latin theologian

‘*The Scriptures are the property of the Church; her rule of faith is the rule of their interpretation.*’⁶⁴

Tertullian was a lawyer by background — analytical, textual, and precise. He saw Scripture as authoritative, sufficient, and divinely inspired, to be interpreted within the rule of faith (*regula fidei*). He was deeply opposed to speculative or uncontrolled allegory, especially of the kind practised by Alexandrian theologians such as Philo or later Origen. Tertullian’s legacy lived on in the Latin theological structure and penitential rigour of the Celtic Church. Even if his name was rarely cited, his spirit (through Augustine and Cyprian) coloured the moral and ecclesial tone of Western Christianity. Tertullian argued for the plain, historical sense of Scripture.

While Tertullian emphasised the literal sense,

he did not reject figurative meaning outright. He frequently used typology and symbolic interpretation, especially in moral or Christological contexts, eg first the typology of Adam and Christ, second the Serpent and the Cross, and third the two Testaments. He read the relationship between the Old and New Testaments figuratively, as shadow and fulfilment, a standard typological approach.

John 9 is a story of Jesus healing a man born physically blind. Several Celtic saints are associated with healing miracles. One prominent example is St Brigid of Kildare (451–525), who was often credited with healings, including the restoring of sight to the blind. The Celtic Church and Celtic monasticism gave much space for spiritual sight or revelation.

Since then Western Christianity has been strongly influenced by the Enlightenment, and the negative effects of this should not be minimised. Ray Simpson⁶⁵ argues that certain forms of Enlightenment-style thinking hinder rather than help spiritual life: he says that an overemphasis on rational knowledge can lead to spirituality

that is abstract, disconnected, or irrelevant to experience. If one believes that understanding doctrines, theology, or spiritual concepts is sufficient, one may neglect practices that engage the heart, the body, the community. There can be a neglect of embodied and relational practices: spiritual disciplines, pilgrimage, 'soul friendships' etc, involve vulnerability, relationality and embodied experience. Enlightenment thinking that privileges detached, objective knowledge may devalue or underplay those, and could be a big stumbling block rooted in pride, hindering Europe from stepping into revival.

Theologian Craig Carter⁶⁶ says the Enlightenment has 'cast a dark shadow over the Scriptures and their Christological meaning, in other words Jesus Christ has been hidden and obscured.' He says, 'if you are trying to read the Bible like any other book, trying to understand what the original author meant to communicate to the original audience in the original situation (rationalist method), then your interpretation is wrong or at the very least highly misleading.'

REVIVAL

Tom Wright says that the fundamental problem at the heart of Christianity today in the West, is that we have forgotten what the four gospels are all about. The truth is that Jesus is King,⁶⁷ a truth that we have forgotten. Could it be that we have forgotten that Jesus is King and Jesus has been obscured, because we have rejected both allegorical (used by Origen) and figurative (used by Tertullian), treating the Bible like any other book rather than as a sacred text? Are you and I guilty of religious blindness like the Pharisees, through over-emphasising reason over revelation, the analytical over the figurative, and individual over community?

PRAYER

Thomas à Kempis said, 'he who follows me, can never walk in darkness says the Lord. By these words, Christ urges us to mould our lives and characters in the image of His, if we wish to be truly enlightened and freed from all blindness of heart. Let us therefore see that we endeavour beyond all else to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ.'⁶⁸ I was blind now I see, his mercy came and rescued me. Lord, may Your light shine into my darkness. Only through You can we truly see.

I was
blind but
now I see



SCAN ME

The good shepherd

DAY
17

John 10:1–31

- **Focus verse:** *'I am the Good Shepherd.'* (John 10:11)
- **Old Testament lens:** *'I myself will be shepherd of my sheep, says the Lord God.'* (Ezekiel 34:23–24)

In the biblical imagination, few images are more powerful or enduring than that of the shepherd with his sheep. This is a metaphor for kingship, not the boardroom strategist or military general, but the tender, watchful shepherd. Ezekiel⁶⁹ had voiced God's promise: *'I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David ... and he shall be their shepherd'* (Ezekiel 34:23–24).⁷⁰ In the same breath, God declares, *'I myself will be shepherd of my sheep'* (v15).

This paradox, God will shepherd and yet David will shepherd, hangs unresolved until Jesus steps into view. In John 10, Jesus speaks into this prophetic frame, offering a layered, controversial, and ultimately breath-taking claim. He begins not with a direct declaration, but with a parable (vv1–5), contrasting the true shepherd with thieves and strangers. These images echo Ezekiel's scathing rebuke of Israel's failed leaders. The 'thieves and brigands' are likely Jesus' own contemporary leaders, some collaborating with Rome, others stirring up violent revolt.

Jesus is asking, in effect: 'How will you recognise God's true king when He comes?' The answer: the true shepherd enters by the proper gate; He is recognised by His sheep. His legitimacy is confirmed not by force, but by intimate knowledge and trust. Jesus says, *'I am the door of the sheep ... whoever enters by me will be saved'* (vv7–9). Then he says in verse 11: *'I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.'* When the crowd presses Jesus, 'If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly!' Jesus' response is cryptic yet weighty. He points to His works—healing, feeding, restoring.

These are the very acts Ezekiel had said God Himself would do as Shepherd: *'I will seek the lost, I will bind up the injured, I will feed them with justice'* (Ezekiel 34:16). Jesus says a most

astonishing line: *'I and the Father are one.'* Jesus is both God come to rescue His sheep and the Davidic king they longed for.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Hippolytus of Rome (c170–235), 'A faithful shepherd'

*'Grant that your servant, whom you have chosen for oversight, should shepherd the flock and should serve before you as high priest without blame, serving night and day, ceaselessly making your face favourable and offering the gifts of your holy Church.'*⁷¹ (Ordination prayer)

Hippolytus was an early Roman theologian and likely a presbyter in the Church of Rome. He was a prolific writer, especially on theology, biblical commentary, Church order, and heresies. He was sometimes considered the first 'antipope', having been elected by a faction opposed to the bishop of Rome (Pope Callixtus I), but later reconciled with the Church. He was martyred around 235 during the persecution under Emperor Maximinus Thrax. He was deeply concerned with moral and doctrinal purity. He opposed the laxity in Church discipline under Pope Callixtus I. He reconciled with the Roman Church before his death, a powerful witness of humility and Church unity.

Hippolytus is linked to the 'Good Shepherd' motif, a common image in early Christian art. The Celtic Church was rich in symbolic and visual spirituality, using nature, animal, and pastoral imagery to express theological truths. The idea of Hippolytus as a faithful shepherd willing to suffer for his flock could have inspired Celtic Christians, who often saw their saints as spiritual shepherds of wild, remote communities.

St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c634–687) is one of the most vivid examples of a shepherd-like leader in the early Celtic Christian tradition. His life beautifully mirrors the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd, not only through literal acts of care but in his spiritual leadership, humility, and self-giving love. Cuthbert's entire ministry was marked by deep pastoral care: as a monk, prior, and later bishop of Lindisfarne, he didn't just administrate—he personally journeyed to remote villages, even during harsh weather, to preach, teach, anoint the sick, and offer comfort. His missionary journeys, especially by foot or boat across rugged Northumbrian landscapes, echo the Good Shepherd's willingness to go out and find the lost sheep. 'He often did what few others would: walk long distances to minister to the poor and isolated. He did not consider status, only souls,' said the Venerable Bede.

Cuthbert's kindness extended beyond people to the natural world, a key feature of Celtic Christian spirituality. A famous story tells of Cuthbert praying all night in the cold North Sea. When he came ashore, two otters came and warmed his feet with their breath and fur. He blessed them in return. He protected nesting birds on the Farne

Islands, forbidding unnecessary harm to wildlife. To this day, those islands are a bird sanctuary.

These stories reflect a shepherd's gentleness and resonate with Celtic ideas of a deep harmony between the spiritual and natural world. In his later life, Cuthbert chose the life of a hermit on Inner Farne Island: he lived in solitude, devoting himself to prayer, fasting, and contemplation, much like the image in John 15 of abiding in the vine (Christ). His time alone was not for escape but for deepening his connection with God, allowing his soul to be 'pruned' and shaped. Even in solitude, people sought him out for wisdom and prayer—his reputation for holiness made him a spiritual beacon.

Like Christ who 'lays down his life' (John 10:11), Cuthbert obeyed reluctantly but faithfully when he was called to become bishop of Lindisfarne: he initially refused the role, preferring his quiet life, but eventually submitted out of love for the Church and his community. His leadership was marked by humility, service, and a desire to lead by example, not command. As he neared death, Cuthbert chose to return to his island hermitage, trusting his fellow monks to continue the work of shepherding the flock.

REVIVAL

Barbara Yoder says that in the Bible 'gates' are places of decision. The Lord Jesus Christ is our gate. Yoder says, 'all of us need a new anointing to slip through narrow places, that constrict and restrict our forward progress. In order to escape pursuers at a "greased pig" County Fair event, competitors try to capture a live pig that has been greased. We need to be like that, smeared with the oil of God's anointing.'⁷² The Lord Jesus Christ is our Shepherd, at this narrow gate that we are passing through at such a time as this in world history.

PRAYER

Lord, grease us up like greased pigs to pass through the gate. Isaiah said, *'Pass through, pass through the gates, prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway, remove the stones and raise a banner for the nations.'* (Isaiah 66:10) Show us the stones that are hindering us. Pass through this time of transition into revival. Lord, at the place of warfare at the threshold, at this gate of transition my nation is passing through, I declare the gates of hell will not prevail. You are the only one who can break through the seemingly impenetrable barriers in my life and my nation's life. I line up with You, Lord Jesus Christ, 'The breaker through'.

I am the
Good
Shepherd

SCAN ME



The raising of Lazarus

DAY
18

John 11:1–44

- **Focus verse:** *'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'* (John 11:32)
- **Old Testament lens:** *'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil'* (Psalm 23:4)

John 11 is one of the most emotionally intense and theologically rich chapters in the Gospel of John. At its surface, it's the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead — a dramatic display of divine power. Underneath, it is a masterclass in how God forms wholehearted love in the hearts of His people.⁷³ It confronts our assumptions about God's love, timing, and methods. In particular, it challenges our desire for a God who evades pain, when in fact, we follow a God who chooses to enter into pain, and brings us with Him.

The chapter begins with an unsettling paradox. John 11:5 says, *'Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.'* Yet the next verse tells us, *'So when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.'* This is not the love we expect. We assume love responds quickly, prevents suffering, and avoids death. But Jesus deliberately waits, knowing that Lazarus will die. Why? Because Jesus is after more than healing. He's after glory, not just His own, but a shared glory that only comes through human partnership in pain. He chooses those He loves for this crucible because He intends to form something eternal in them. This isn't the evasion of suffering, it's the conquest of death, through love forged in the fire of disappointment.

This is especially painful when we consider Mary. When Mary finally comes to Jesus, she falls at His feet — not with accusation, but with honest, broken-hearted love: *'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.'* It's not a theological argument. It's an intimate transaction. She is weeping. And then — Jesus weeps. Her tears move Him. Her groaning pulls on His heart until He groans deeply in His spirit. This is the mystery of partnership. God doesn't just act for us — He

longs to act with us. He waits to be moved by love that says, 'Even in my tears, I trust You.' This is the real glory. The glory is found in Mary's refusal to let go. Her weeping provokes His weeping. Her love draws Him into action. And when those two cries, the human and divine, meet, resurrection happens.

The invitation of John 11 is: let your tears become the currency of love. Don't bypass the process. Don't let your theology excuse you from the wrestle. Enter in. Weep. Worship. Refuse to walk away. God is after not just the fulfilment of the promise — but the formation of a heart that loves Him in the process. John 11 is a story of resurrection and a blueprint for divine partnership.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Ephrem the Syrian (306–373), Turkey, 'The Harp of the Holy Spirit'

*'Grant me tears of compunction and repentance leading to salvation, that I might lift the intelligible eyes of my soul to you.'*⁷⁴

In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, there are several Church Fathers and saints who emphasise 'tears of compunction'.

For St Ephrem, compunction and its tears are not produced by effort alone but are a visitation of divine mercy, a grace that purifies the heart. Tears are thus a divine spring within the soul; they are God's mercy welling up inside a person, cleansing and sanctifying from within. Ephrem prays for tears, aware that they are a grace one cannot fabricate: 'Grant me, O Lord, a fountain of tears that my heart may be purified, that I may wash the defilement of sin

and behold You in purity.' Ephrem sees tears as a second baptism. 'Tears before You, O Lord, are more precious than baptismal water; for baptism cleanses the body once, but tears wash the soul continually.' This theme reflects the Syrian ascetic tradition, where continual weeping is the mark of one who lives in perpetual conversion.⁷⁵

In Ephrem's spirituality, tears are the truest prayer. (He contrasts cold, articulate prayer with the fiery prayer of tears.) 'Tears are the tongue of the soul before God, and when the lips are silent, the heart speaks through tears.' Ephrem's imagery for tears is deeply therapeutic. They are not only cleansing but healing fire and water combined: 'Tears, O Lord, are fire and water together: they burn the evil within me, and they wash my sins away.'

Tears thus transform the soul, restoring it to its original purity, as though returning it to Eden. He portrays the weeping penitent as re-entering Paradise through the gate of tears: 'Through Your mercy, O Lord, the gate of Paradise has been opened for the tears of the repentant.' Ephrem, like many Syriac mystics, expresses a sweetness

in sorrow, a 'joyful mourning' that comes from tasting divine mercy even amid grief for sin: 'Blessed is he who has mixed in his tears the joy of the heart that hopes in mercy; for his mourning becomes a feast, and his tears are pearls before the King.' This paradox, joy within tears, is central to Ephrem's mystical theology: tears are both the fruit of sorrow for sin and the first taste of salvation. Tears are the rain of Eden watering the soul, and they will become rivers of joy in the next world: 'Blessed are the tears that the merciful Lord gathers as pearls for the crown of the repentant.'

There are a number of Celtic saints whose lives include resurrection stories or themes that parallel the resurrection of Lazarus, such as the raising of a king's son from the dead by St Ailbe of Emly (intertwined with legend). This miracle echoes similar resurrection accounts in the lives of other saints, such as St Patrick, and reflects early Irish hagiography's emphasis on divine power overcoming death through the agency of holy men.

REVIVAL

In Mary's tears, Jesus found someone to partner with Him for a resurrection. In Psalm 2, we see Jesus sitting at the right hand of the throne of God, looking for partners to cry out with Him for the nations as His inheritance. In his book *The Gift of Tears*,⁷⁶ Corey Russell says the Lord is bringing his Church to a new place of prayer, he is raising up a generation of revival intercessors, he calls people 'Nasharites'⁷⁷ who are willing to stand in the gap like Father Nash, who prayed and co-laboured with Charles Finney the revivalist to see the Second Great Awakening. The Lord is looking for a man or a woman again as in Ezekiel 22:30 to stand in the gap like Mary and stand in the gap like Father Nash. Will it be you?

PRAYER

Jesus is looking for a shared glory that only comes through human partnership in pain, to see our nation revived, even resurrected. Can you say the following to Jesus? You were not late ... You were drawing me near to see You clearer through every tear. My tears became the door to grace. You met my weeping face-to-face ... even in my tears I trust in You.

Even in
my tears
I trust You

SCAN ME



The jar of perfume

DAY
19

John 11:45–57; 12:1–8

- **Focus verse:** “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied, “it was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial” (John 12:7)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil’ (Psalm 23:4)

The raising of Lazarus triggers a crisis among the religious leaders, leading to an emergency meeting of the chief priests and Pharisees, who are deeply alarmed. They fear that if Jesus continues gaining followers, the Romans will intervene, potentially destroying the Temple, the city, and their fragile religious-political status. This is the only moment in the Gospels where ‘the Romans’ are explicitly mentioned as a threat. The Jewish leaders fear was not irrational. Less than 40 years after Jesus’ death, a Jewish revolt would indeed provoke Rome to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, leaving the nation devastated.

The leaders’ decision to kill Jesus was deeply ironic. Caiaphas, the high priest, declares that it is better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish, a cynical political calculation that John interprets as an unintentional prophecy.⁷⁸ Jesus’ death, though plotted as a political convenience, is portrayed by John as a redemptive, divine act. Jesus is the ‘Lamb of God’ and His death is aligned symbolically and chronologically with the Passover celebration, recalling the Exodus story of Israel’s liberation from Egypt. His crucifixion would occur on the Day of Preparation, the same time the Passover lambs were slaughtered.

It is in this fraught political and spiritual climate that Mary’s gesture in John 12:1–8 takes place. Jesus returns to Bethany, near Jerusalem, knowing a death sentence hangs over Him. The atmosphere is thick with danger. The oppressive presence of Rome, the plots of the religious leaders, and the looming Passover all cast a long shadow over the dinner scene in Lazarus’ home.

Mary’s act, breaking a jar of costly perfume and anointing Jesus’ feet, is not only lavish, but

profoundly intimate and socially provocative. Letting down her hair in public was seen as scandalous, an almost indecent gesture. The act would have shocked the other guests. And yet, it’s this bold, exposed devotion that Jesus receives as preparation for His burial.

Just as Caiaphas spoke more truth than he knew, so Mary’s action carries symbolic weight beyond her intention. She is anointing the Lamb of God for burial. The perfume, worth a year’s wages, is a luxury and a burial spice, used for mourning. This underscores the urgency and reality of Jesus’ impending death. Jesus’ response to Judas’ objection, who masks greed with concern for the poor, is profound. He insists that Mary’s act is timely and necessary. While care for the poor remains important, this moment demands something more. Mary’s prophetic act of devotion, carried out in a time of deep political danger and under the looming threat of Roman violence, anticipates Jesus’ death as the true Passover Lamb, linking the Exodus story with the Gospel’s central message of redemption through sacrificial love.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Macarius of Egypt (c300–391), also known as Macarius the Great

‘A Christian is one who has been changed from darkness into light, from the old nature into the new creation, through the power of the heavenly Spirit.’

In Matthew 26:13 and Mark 14:9, we are reminded that Mary’s devotion would be inspirational, and Jesus says, ‘Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has

done will also be told in memory of her.'

The devotion of Macarius was similarly inspirational. The ideals Macarius embodied became central to Celtic monastic spirituality. His focus on spiritual warfare and the inner life of the soul strongly resonated with Celtic monasticism, which emphasised personal sanctity, penitence, and the battle against sin.

Macarius taught that true Christianity is not merely moral reform or external observance but an inner transformation of the soul by the Holy Spirit. He often compared this to the soul being re-created, as if God's Spirit were forming a new nature within, much as God formed Adam at first. Spiritual transformation, for Macarius, meant the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart, producing divine qualities within the human person. This transformation was not theoretical; he described it as an experiential process where the soul feels the divine presence purifying and illuminating it. Though the Spirit enters the believer's heart, Macarius emphasised that transformation is gradual. The old sinful nature and the new spiritual nature struggle together until the Spirit fully conquers. So spiritual transformation is a journey of cooperation between divine grace and human freedom.

Ultimately, spiritual transformation is deification (*theosis*): the soul becomes united with God, radiant with divine love. 'The soul that

is counted worthy of communion with the Holy Spirit becomes wholly light, wholly spirit, wholly joy, and wholly rest.'

John Wesley, the revivalist and founder of Methodism, found in Macarius a model of ongoing growth, sanctification, and the transformational work of grace. Dr Atef Meshreky is also inspired by Macarius and other Church Fathers, saying the true Christian life involves the 'formation of Christ within' the believer, an inner transformation by which Christ is 'formed' in us, making us Christ-like.⁷⁹ The early Church Fathers taught a similar process of regeneration, transformation, and Christ-likeness.

Mary of Bethany's act of devotion resonated with the spiritual values of Celtic Christianity. St Melangell of Wales⁸⁰ was a Welsh virgin saint associated with hospitality, shelter, and sanctuary. A local Welsh noble, Prince Brochwel, was hunting hares in the valley where Melangell lived, and the hare took refuge under her cloak. Brochwel, struck by her holy presence, asked about her, and she told him of her life of prayer, solitude, and dedication. Deeply moved, he gave her the valley as a place of permanent sanctuary. Her story inspired the idea of the Church as a sanctuary, not only for animals but also for the vulnerable and outcast. Like Mary of Bethany, Melangell is associated with acts of tenderness and reverence.

REVIVAL

Jesus said that the washing of His feet with perfume would be told wherever the gospel was preached. Another story in Luke 7:36–50 is of an unnamed sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet with tears. Both stories speak of devotion through anointing, one with tears and the other with perfume.

PRAYER

I will anoint You with perfume and with tears from my eyes. You are the Lamb who died for the sins of the world. I am totally devoted, devoted to You.

Devoted
to You

SCAN ME



Triumphal entry

DAY
20

John 12:9–50

- **Focus verse:** ‘*Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; blessed is the king of Israel.*’ (John 12:13)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘*See your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly riding on the donkey.*’ (Zechariah 9:9)

When Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey (John 12:12–19), it wasn't just a random moment

of excitement. This event is a key time where everything comes together⁸¹ — Passover, Hanukkah, prophecy, and the question of who Jesus truly is. Passover was a time to remember how God used the blood of a lamb to save His people, leading them through the Red Sea and into freedom. For Jesus to enter Jerusalem during Passover already suggested something significant, especially when we remember that John has already called Jesus ‘the Lamb of God’.

But there’s more going on. The people waving palm branches were actually using symbols from a different Jewish festival, Hanukkah. This feast celebrated when Judas Maccabeus led a revolt against pagan oppressors and reclaimed the temple in 164BC. His victory marked the beginning of a new kingship, and people welcomed him with palm branches as a hero and deliverer. So when Jesus’ followers waved palm branches and shouted, ‘*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, King of Israel!*’ (John 12:13), they were blending the symbols of both Passover and Hanukkah.

John connects this event directly to Old Testament prophecy, especially Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9:9.⁸² Zechariah had foretold that Israel’s king would come riding on a donkey, a peaceful king, not a military conqueror. Jesus is fulfilling this exact vision. Psalm 118, often sung at Passover, blesses ‘*the one who comes in the name of the Lord*’. Jesus is now identified with that very promise. Just after the Pharisees complain that ‘*the whole world has gone after him*’ (John 12:19), foreigners (from Greece) come asking to see Jesus. This shows that Jesus didn’t just come

for Israel, but for the whole world, to draw all people to Himself (John 12:32).

Ultimately, John wants us to see Jesus as the true King who fulfils the Scriptures, reshapes Jewish hopes, and brings salvation to all. His entry into Jerusalem is a signal that God’s promises are being fulfilled in a new and unexpected way. As we watch Jesus ride into Jerusalem, we are invited to see Him as the humble King who brings true freedom, not through force, but through love and sacrifice. As Tom Wright reminds us in his book *How God Became King*⁸³ the fundamental problem deep at the heart of the Christian faith is that we have all forgotten what the Gospels are about.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Cyril of Jerusalem (c313–386), a 4th-century bishop and Church Father

‘*Take heed that thou fall not away from the grace as thou goest thy way; for the road is long, and the end is great.*’⁸⁴

Cyril is best known for his Catechetical Lectures. A strong feature of his teachings is the idea of a sacred journey through life, emphasised in Cyril’s catechesis. This harmonised with the Celtic Church’s metaphor of life as a pilgrimage or *peregrinatio pro Christo* (wandering for Christ). The teachings are set in the context of Jerusalem. While the Celtic Church was far from Jerusalem, it developed a strong idea of ‘spiritual pilgrimage’.

The lives and legacies of the early Celtic and Anglo-Saxon saints — Cuthbert, Kevin, David, Columba, and Ita — together with the historic Synod of Whitby, reveal a transformative period, a pilgrimage or journey of British

Christianity marked by humility, service, and the reconciliation of differing traditions.

St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne epitomised the virtue of humble leadership, *service over status*. Despite being elected bishop, he initially fled to avoid the position, preferring the solitude of prayer and manual labour. When he finally accepted, he remained humble and industrious, engaging in physical work such as digging trenches, repairing buildings, and caring for the sick. His actions showed that leadership in the Church meant service, not privilege.

Similarly, St Kevin of Glendalough embodied *compassion over comfort*. The famous story of Kevin praying motionless with outstretched arms so as not to disturb a nesting bird symbolises profound humility and reverence for creation, an expression of care that transcended self-interest and physical suffering.

St David of Wales⁸⁵ emphasised *faithfulness over fame*. His final counsel to his followers, 'Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have seen me do', encapsulated his belief in holiness through small, consistent acts of devotion rather than grand gestures. His message endures as a national Welsh motto, celebrating humility and constancy.

St Columba's life represents *repentance over pride*. Early in his life, his actions indirectly caused bloodshed, leading him to deep remorse.

In atonement, he left Ireland for exile on Iona, where he devoted his life to prayer, peace, and missionary work, spreading Christianity throughout Scotland.

St Ita of Killeedy, often called 'the foster mother of the saints of Ireland', reflected *simplicity over self-promotion*. Her humility was expressed not through withdrawal from the world, but through faithful presence and nurturing guidance within it.

The Synod of Whitby (AD664) stands as a pivotal moment in uniting the diverse Christian traditions of the British Isles. Convened by King Oswiu of Northumbria at Hilda's monastery, the synod sought to resolve disputes over the calculation of Easter. Bishop Colman, representing the Celtic tradition from Iona, argued for the practice handed down from St John, while Wilfrid defended the Roman custom, emphasising its universality across Christendom. When Oswiu asked whether St Peter had been given the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven', and Colman admitted that he had, the king declared he would follow Peter's authority, 'lest when I come to heaven's gate, there be none to open it for me.' His decision established Roman practice in Northumbria and marked a significant step toward ecclesiastical unity under Roman influence. The Synod of Whitby was the beginning of the end of Celtic Christianity.

REVIVAL

We live in a day when there are signs of life with talk of a 'quiet revival', since the Bible Society's report and evidence of more young men attending church.⁸⁶ At the same time, there is news of a potential split of the Anglican Communion. Are we at another moment of similar importance to the Synod of Whitby? It is time to pray Psalm 24 over the Church in the British Isles and welcome King Jesus into this new season.

PRAYER

Jesus is the coming King, every nation rise and sing, open wide the gates of praise. This is the Lord's appointed day. He is righteous, He is near! Victory and joy are here! Rejoice, O King! Lift your voice! The Cornerstone, we now rejoice! Open up, you ancient gates. The King of Glory will come in!

Jesus is the coming King

SCAN ME



The last supper

DAY
21

John 13:1–38

- **Focus verse:** ‘*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another*’ (John 13:34)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘*You shall love your neighbour as yourself*’ (Leviticus 19:18)

John 13 marks a major turning point. After chapters filled with Jesus’ public ministry, teaching, and miracles, the story now turns inward, towards Jesus’ final night with His disciples. This chapter begins by stating that Jesus knew ‘*his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father*’ (v1). This ‘hour’, often mentioned in John, refers to His death, resurrection, and return to the Father. In Jewish tradition, Passover celebrates God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt. John connects this festival to Jesus’ death, showing that Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, whose sacrifice brings a greater deliverance: freedom from sin and death.

Throughout John’s Gospel, ‘Passover moments’ appear again and again. These moments all point forward to the final Passover in John 13, when Jesus will be arrested, crucified, and glorified. Tom Wright notes that whenever John mentions a Jewish festival, he shows its true meaning is fulfilled in Jesus.⁸⁷

John 13 opens with the powerful scene of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet. This was an ordinary, even lowly, task, usually done by servants. But here, the one who came from God and was returning to God, kneels to wash dirty feet. John emphasises that Jesus does this because He is divine. It’s a profound picture of who God is: humble, serving, loving. Just as Jesus laid aside His garments to wash feet, He laid aside His glory to take on human nature and go to the cross.

This act also foreshadows the crucifixion. Jesus washing His disciples’ feet is an example of love and humility and a sign pointing to His death. The next time Jesus’ clothes are removed will be when He is crucified. Then, He will not just wash feet, but bear the sins of the world. Peter, characteristically outspoken, objects at first, but

Jesus insists: ‘*Unless I wash you, you have no part with me*.’ This is not only about clean feet, it’s about spiritual cleansing. Jesus is saying: you must receive what I’ve come to give you, even if you don’t understand it yet. Then Jesus says something crucial in verse 15: ‘*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you*.’ Christians are called to serve, in small, humble ways, doing the dishes, taking out the rubbish, or staying late to help someone in need. True leadership in the kingdom looks like servanthood.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

John Cassian (c360–435) was a Christian monk and theologian

*No structure of virtue can possibly be raised in our soul unless, first, the foundations of true humility are laid in our heart.*⁸⁸

John Cassian played a crucial role in shaping Western monasticism. According to early Christian monastic tradition, Cassian recorded the teachings and practices he learned from the Desert Fathers, including Pachomius, in his written works. He visited Egyptian monastic communities: he travelled through Egypt around the late 4th century with his companion Germanus. They spent time among the desert monks of Scetis, Nitria, and Tabennisi, where they encountered disciples of Pachomius, the founder of cenobitic (communal) monasticism.

It’s impossible that Cassian met Pachomius himself—Pachomius died around 346, before Cassian’s time. Instead, Cassian learned from Pachomian monks who preserved their founder’s rules and sayings orally and in written

form (in Coptic and Greek). Cassian carefully noted these teachings and observed how the Pachomian monasteries were organised. He later wrote two major works in Latin. First, *De Institutis Coenobiorum (The Institutes of the Coenobia)*, which outlines the external practices and disciplines of monastic life. Second, *Collationes Patrum (Conferences with the Fathers)*, which records the spiritual conversations he and Germanus had with the monks. These texts emphasised prayer, humility, obedience, and the spiritual combat against the eight principal vices (eg gluttony, pride, envy). Celtic monasticism was deeply shaped by these ideals, adopting and adapting Cassian's spiritual disciplines in their own monastic communities. These books were written after Cassian settled in southern Gaul, drawing from the notes and memories of what he had seen and heard in Egypt. Cassian himself states that he wrote as faithfully as possible what he and Germanus heard, sometimes verbatim, sometimes summarised. He portrays the teachings in a dialogue form to preserve both the content and the spirit of the monks' instruction.

The foot-washing episode in John 13:1–38

speaks powerfully to the importance of humility in Cassian's writings. The Celtic Church, emerging as a vibrant monastic culture in the West, incorporated many of these Eastern ascetic principles, especially those related to inner prayer, solitude, and community life. Cassian's works served as a bridge, making the spiritual riches of Eastern monasticism accessible to Western monks, including those in Celtic regions. His writings were practical guides for monks, addressing daily struggles in the monastic life. His emphasis on continuous prayer and vigilance influenced the Celtic ideal of constant communion with God.

John Mark Comer's book *Practicing the Way* reminds us today of the importance of practices, habits and rhythms that the Early Church called a *Rule of Life*.⁸⁹ The Early Church fathers and Celtic saints saw practices like prayer, sabbath, solitude, fasting, community and Scripture as formative disciplines that shape our hearts, minds and bodies, and which help the believer grow in humility. Spiritual formation takes place as we rearrange daily rhythms, slow down, live intentionally, and become formed by Jesus rather than the cultural noise.

REVIVAL

As noted earlier, Roy Hession says that as we 'find ourselves walking in a path of constant conviction and much humbling ... we shall come into real conformity with the Lamb of God'.⁹⁰ Curt Thompson says, 'we think the becoming more like God means becoming more powerful and protected from pain, when in fact it is in a suffering and in a persevering in the face of it in vulnerable community that we actually become more and more like God'.⁹¹

PRAYER

This is the cross, this is the crown! You showed the way: to serve, to kneel, to love the ones who may not feel deserving grace. You showed the way.

Jesus washes
Peter's feet

SCAN ME



The way, the truth and the life

DAY
22

John 14:1–31

- **Focus verse:** *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”* (John 14:6,7)
- **Old Testament lens:** *‘Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them’* (Exodus 25:8)

The true centre of worship is not a place like a temple or church building. Instead, it is found in the person of Jesus Christ.⁹²

Jesus is not only the way to God, but also the very place where God’s presence now dwells. This echoes what John said in the first chapter of his Gospel: *‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us’* (John 1:14). The word ‘dwelt’ actually points back to the tabernacle in the Old Testament, the tent where God’s glory was present among His people during their journey through the wilderness (see Exodus 25:8–9). John is showing us that Jesus is now the new ‘tabernacle’ or temple — the visible, living presence of God on earth.

Richard Hays⁹³ also draws connections⁹⁴ to Ezekiel’s prophecy of God making His dwelling place among His people forever (Ezekiel 37:26–27). In short, Jesus doesn’t just show us the way to God, He is the place where God meets us. Tom Wright focuses on how controversial Jesus’ words in John 14:6 have become in modern times ... that Jesus is the only way to the Father.⁹⁵ People see it as narrow-minded or arrogant. But Wright says that His words about being ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ must be understood through His humility and self-giving love.

Wright also points out that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit — the ‘Helper’ or ‘Comforter’ — to His disciples. After Jesus returns to the Father, the Spirit will live in believers, giving them strength, guidance, and peace, especially when life is hard. The Spirit helps us understand Jesus’ teachings, remember His words, and even continue His works. The Holy Spirit enables the Church to understand that Jesus came to fulfil all of God’s

promises to Israel and to be the very presence of God among His people.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

John Chrysostom (c349–407), Archbishop of Constantinople

*‘Find the door of your heart, and you will discover it is the door of the Kingdom of God.’*⁹⁶

John Chrysostom was a strong advocate of personal holiness, ascetic discipline, emphasising fasting and self-denial, inner purity and humility, simplicity of life, repentance and confession.

How does the Holy Spirit live in believers, as described in John 14? For Chrysostom, he saw tears as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s work in the heart, softening the soul and restoring communion with God. They mark the transition from hardness to tenderness, from sin to reconciliation. Like St Ephrem the Syrian, he frequently compares tears of compunction to a second baptism, available to all after baptism for the cleansing of post-baptismal sins. He said, ‘Do you have sin? Enter the Church and wash your sin away. As often as you fall down in the marketplace, you wash. Likewise, as often as you sin, repent; for repentance is a medicine that destroys sin. It is a baptism without trouble and without cost, since it depends not on time but on disposition, and is perfected not by water but by tears.’

Here Chrysostom calls tears the water of repentance, showing that God provides continual healing for the penitent soul. In Chrysostom’s thought, tears are not just an expression of

sorrow, they are themselves a form of wordless prayer. ‘The tears which come from compunction are a voice stronger than a trumpet, crying aloud and making the heart heard before God.’ He interprets Hannah’s silent prayer (1 Samuel 1) as an image of the soul praying with tears, teaching that God hears such prayers more readily than eloquent speech. Thus tears become the language of love, a mystical communication between the repentant and the merciful Lord.

For St John Chrysostom, the tears of compunction are not a sign of despair but of divine visitation, the heart’s renewal through the Spirit. They express repentance, healing, and love, and they are among the greatest treasures of the Christian life.

There are a number of Celtic saints for whom John 14 would likely have held particular importance, either because of their spiritual journeys, their mystical relationship with the Holy Spirit, or their life of peace and pilgrimage following ‘the Way’ of Christ. For St Columba, founder of Iona (one of the most important spiritual centres in Celtic Christianity), John 14 mattered to him because his whole life was a journey led by the Spirit. He followed Jesus

as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

John 14 mattered to St Brigid of Kildare as well. She led a monastic community of men and women; her leadership reflects the Spirit’s gifts at work. She would have deeply identified with the Spirit as the indwelling presence and teacher (John 14:26).

St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c634–687) was a mystic of the wild and exemplified a life lived in the indwelling Spirit. His connection with creation and the Spirit made the idea of the Spirit dwelling in all things deeply personal and real. Similarly, St Kevin of Glendalough lived in the wilderness of Glendalough, surrounded by birds and beasts. The Spirit as comforter and teacher would have been his only companion in long seasons of solitude. Jesus as ‘the Life’ would have been visible in every part of his natural surroundings.

St Aidan of Lindisfarne, an Irish monk who brought the Gospel to Northumbria, walked from village to village, teaching by example and conversation, rather than preaching from on high. He literally walked ‘the Way’ of Christ, bringing truth and life to a people in darkness.

REVIVAL

The Father’s love revealed through Jesus compels us. In 2 Corinthians 5:14 it says, ‘For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.’ Will that love compel you and me to pray for revival in the British Isles? Are you and I willing to pay the price in fasting prayer and self-denial that the orthodox Fathers paid, to receive the gift of tears, as described by St Ephrem the Syrian and St John Chrysostom, so that we can pray for revival?

PRAYER

One way, Jesus, one way, Jesus, He is the Truth, the Life and the Way. No-one comes to the Father, but through Him every day. One way, Jesus, One way, Jesus, Our hope, our peace, our guide. He is the living presence forever by our side. Your Spirit comes to comfort, teach and guide my soul. Lord, unblock the well of tears, soften my heart, that I might pray with Your heart for the British Isles at such a time as this. We are in desperate need of awakening. Pour out Your Spirit on our land afresh today!

One way,
Jesus

SCAN ME



The vine

DAY
23

John 15:1–27

- **Focus verse:** *'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.'* (John 15:1,2)
- **Old Testament lens:** *'You brought a vine out of Egypt, you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it, it took root and filled the land.'* (Psalm 80:8,9)

Arose, if it's pruned carefully, can grow outwardly toward the light and become its most fruitful.⁹⁷ In the same way, vines must be pruned to thrive. Our loving Father cuts away distractions or false ambitions so that we can bear lasting fruit. The Greek word Jesus uses for 'prune' in John 15:2 is closely related to the word for 'clean'. In the next verse, Jesus says His disciples have already been 'cleaned' or pruned by His word, but should expect more pruning, because pruning is part of growing.

In the Old Testament — in Psalm 80, Isaiah 5, and other passages — Israel is often described as God's vine, brought out of Egypt and planted in the Promised Land. However, that vine failed to produce good fruit. Now Jesus is saying, *'I am the true vine'*. He is the faithful Israel, the one through whom God's purpose is now fulfilled. His followers, by staying connected to Him, become part of God's renewed people.

The picture of the vine reveals the close relationship believers are meant to have with Jesus. It's not optional. A branch that cuts itself off from the vine withers and dies. A branch that stays connected, and accepts the Father's pruning, will live and bear fruit, simply by remaining in personal relationship through prayer, worship, and the Word.

The vine imagery has its roots in Old Testament judgment and hope.⁹⁸ Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea all described Israel as a vine that had become unfaithful and fruitless. God's judgment was that these vines would wither and be burned, like fruitless branches are cast away.

Psalm 80 offers a heartfelt prayer for God to restore His vine, Israel, by raising up a 'Son

of Man' to save and lead the people. In John's Gospel, this hope relates to Jesus Himself, the true vine and the fulfilment of Israel's calling. The disciples' mission is to bear fruit, inner growth, and outward witness to the world, fruit that will last. In John 15:8 Jesus says, *'This is to my Father's glory, that you bear fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.'*

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Maximus the Confessor (580–662)

Several early Eastern Church Fathers strongly emphasised 'abiding' as the inner transformation of the believer and the formation of Christ within (Galatians 4:19), often described in terms of deification (theosis) or Christification. However, Maximus offers perhaps the most developed theology of Christification.

For Maximus, salvation is the process by which the *Logos*, who became human, recapitulates all creation in Himself and enables each believer to become a 'living manifestation' of Christ. Through ascetic struggle and divine grace, Christ comes to dwell in the soul, transforming it so that the believer becomes a microcosm of the Incarnate Word. Maximus says, 'He who loves God in the true and perfect way is he who is made another God by participation, and he manifests in himself the same energy as God through grace, as far as this is possible for human nature.' Maximus means that the believer, through love and divine grace, comes to manifest God's own life, Christ's divine energy, within themselves.

He says, 'The Word of God, who for our sake

became man once in the flesh, is always willing to be born spiritually in those who desire Him. He becomes an infant and forms Himself in them by the virtues.' This is one of the most direct statements of the 'formation of Christ within' in the Greek Fathers. Maximus says the Incarnation is repeated mystically in each believer: Christ is 'born' within us and takes shape through virtuous living and divine grace. 'The Word of God wishes to make all human beings participants in Himself in the same way that He became participant in us, by making our human existence His own.' As the believer grows and bears fruit, as John 17 says, this will be for the Father's glory.

St Cuthbert (c634–687) is a particularly rich example when exploring the theme of abiding in John 15. Cuthbert had an intense personal relationship with Christ, nurtured through prayer, contemplation, and solitude. After being a bishop of Lindisfarne, he retreated to Inner Farne, a remote island off the coast of Northumbria, where he lived in almost total isolation, dedicating himself to prayer, Scripture meditation, and simplicity. This *abiding* was not withdrawal for

its own sake. It was a deliberate act of rooting his entire being in the presence of Christ. Like a branch that draws life from the vine, Cuthbert sought to detach from worldly distractions to stay connected to his spiritual source. Bede records that Cuthbert prayed in the sea at night, standing in icy water up to his neck, singing psalms, a discipline aimed at deeper communion with God.

Despite, or because of, his solitude, Cuthbert's life bore immense spiritual fruit. His holiness, humility, and connection to the divine drew people to Christ even after his death. Pilgrims visited his tomb at Lindisfarne for centuries, seeking healing and spiritual renewal. He had compassion for the poor and sick. Even in isolation, his life overflowed with love, power, and grace. Cuthbert embraced a life of austerity and discipline, living with minimal food, often growing his own vegetables, slept little, rising at night for prayer, practised fasting and physical hardship, and renounced position and comfort, initially resisting being made bishop. The pruning led him to deeper humility and fruitfulness. Cuthbert's hardships refined his soul.

REVIVAL

If Jesus is the faithful Israel we need to pray for Israel to be revived and abide in Jesus, and to become like Jesus. The disciples' mission in John 17 is to bear fruit, inner growth, and outward witness to the world, fruit that will last. The mission that Jesus gives to His disciples is to go into a world that may resist or even hate the message. Today, the world is hating Israel, without cause. Psalm 69 sounds like the anguish of Christ on the cross: 'They hated me without cause.' Michael Cameron writes that Augustine saw Christ using the Psalms to explain Himself, that Christ actually speaks, before His incarnation.⁹⁹ Psalm 69 speaks of the rejection foretold of Christ, and of His disciples, but also of the Jewish people.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, be born in me ... and be born in the Jewish people, that they may enter into their calling, even when rejected and hated by so many nations in the world, and may they bear fruit that will last, and may it be to the Father's glory. Lord, unblock the well of the Living Word.

Abide in
the vine

SCAN ME



He comes to judge the earth

DAY
24

John 16:1–33

- **Focus verse:** ‘When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment’ (John 16:8)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.’ (Psalm 96:13)

In Charles Dickens’ novel, *Bleak House*, there is a legal case, Jarndye and Jarndye, which drags on for years without resolution and the lawyers are not interested in justice at all. God’s justice, however, is the total opposite! It is real, active, and trustworthy. Here in John 16:8–11, as we continue to come and see Jesus in the Gospel of John, He introduces the Holy Spirit as an advocate, a legal helper in a great spiritual courtroom.

In Jewish thinking, judgment wasn’t just about condemnation. It was about vindication, about setting things right. Tom Wright uses this illustration from Dickens¹⁰⁰ and then explains how Jesus says the Holy Spirit exposes that the world is wrong regarding sin, justice and judgment.

- First, the world is wrong about ‘Sin’. The world is guilty of rejecting Jesus. The refusal to believe in Him is evidence that the world chooses its own way over God’s way.
- Second, the world is wrong about ‘Justice’ (or righteousness) — the world thought it was right to condemn Jesus. But Jesus’ resurrection and return to the Father prove that He is truly righteous. God has already declared the verdict in His favour.
- Third, the world is wrong about ‘Judgment’. The ‘ruler of this world’, that is the satanic power behind evil and death, has been defeated. The Holy Spirit, then, doesn’t just comfort us — He defends us and convicts the world.

The Holy Spirit does this through us, as the Spirit-filled people of God, speaking out, standing firm, and living in the light of the truth. There is a powerful image of childbirth in verses 16–22. Jesus tells the disciples they will experience

grief. Pain gives way to new life. Jesus’ death will feel like loss, but His resurrection will bring unshakeable joy. Jesus tells His disciples that there are things they cannot yet bear, but that the Holy Spirit, the ‘Spirit of truth’, will guide them later. Richard Hays explains that this is key: after Jesus’ resurrection, the Spirit will help the disciples remember and understand what Jesus said.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Gregory of Nyssa (c335–c395), one of the Cappadocian Fathers

‘Scripture teaches … that he who desires to behold God sees the object of his longing in always following him. The contemplation of his face is the unending journey accomplished by following directly behind the Word.’¹⁰¹

In John 16 Jesus speaks to the Father about a journey He is going on. Gregory of Nyssa was a major theologian of the soul’s ascent to God. Gregory’s concept of *epektasis* (the soul’s endless journey into God) became foundational in Christian mysticism. The Celtic Church, especially in texts like the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* (The Voyage of St Brendan), expresses a vision of the spiritual life as a journey or pilgrimage into mystery. St Brendan the Navigator stands as a vivid expression of Celtic interpretations of Johannine theology, especially John 16. His legendary voyage is a spiritual parable that explores the Holy Spirit’s role in judgment and guidance.

In the voyage, Brendan and 14 monks set sail in search of the ‘Promised Land of the Saints’. This is a vision of heaven. They encounter islands, monsters, angels, temptations,

and trials, each with spiritual significance. The journey lasts seven years, mirroring the biblical number of completion or spiritual fulfilment. Ultimately, they glimpse the Promised Land but do not remain — returning to share the vision. Focused on cosmic spiritual struggle, each place

or event represents a moral or spiritual reality. They are passionate about divine judgment and the need for purification and discernment before entering heaven. This aligns with John 16, where the Spirit prepares the disciples to face a hostile world with courage, by aligning with truth.

REVIVAL

In praying for revival, John 16:8 — ‘when He comes the Holy Spirit convicts the world’ — is of vital importance. Roy Hession says, ‘If we are really open to conviction as we seek fellowship with God (and willingness for the light is the prime condition of fellowship with God), God will show us the expressions of (the) proud, hard self that causes him pain. Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God.’¹⁰²

Charles Finney said that ‘revival can be expected when wickedness humbles and distresses Christians and when Christians have a spirit of prayer for revival. He says that a revival of religion may be expected when Christians begin to confess their sins to one another and when Christians are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to carry it on.’¹⁰³

The Early Church Fathers and Celtic saints were aware of the struggle and used mystic language to express the spiritual journey of the believer. The journey of travailing intercession and prevailing prayer is a struggle too, as the intercessor prays with God’s heart for promises to be fulfilled. Corey Russell says, ‘travail is one of the hallmarks of true revival’. James Goll says that to pray with God’s heart, travailing prayer is a type of prayer that brings forth promises. The powerful image of childbirth in John 16:16–22 is of a woman in travail. He says, ‘travail is a form of intense intercession, given by the Holy Spirit, whereby an individual, or even a group of people gripped by needing a promise that has been gestating in God’s heart labours with him in prayer, so that the new life he desires can come forth.’

The word ‘travel’ originally came into English as a variant spelling or form of ‘travail’. Because travelling in the Middle Ages was extremely difficult and uncomfortable — slow, dangerous, and full of hardship — the word ‘travel’ gradually came to mean ‘a journey’, but it retained the sense of toil and struggle from its root. The journey of vindicating for judgment was costly for Jesus. As we participate in prayer for revival, praying for the new life the Lord Jesus desires, we can enter into the prayer of travail and partner with Jesus in the place of intercession. Barbara Yoder is currently emphasising the gift of tongues as an important ingredient to partnering with Jesus in prayer.¹⁰⁴

PRAYER

Lord, send your Holy Spirit to convict me of my sin and give me the grace to confess it, according to Your leading ... and as You come to judge the earth in righteousness and in truth give me the grace to carry a spirit of supplication, to partner with You in intercession. Lord, give me that grace I pray.

The Lord,
He comes
to judge the
earth

SCAN ME



The high priestly prayer

DAY
25

John 17:1–26

- **Focus verse:** *'I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me'* (John 17:12)
- **Old Testament lens:** *'I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them and be their shepherd'* (Ezekiel 34:23)

This moment in the Gospel is like a pause in a dramatic play,¹⁰⁵ just as in Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, Hamlet pauses before taking revenge, 'listening in' to his stepfather praying. He was uncertain of what his stepfather was really praying, and he paused, and we should pause here too.

Jesus is praying, and while we can't fully understand the mystery of conversation between the Son and the Father, we are invited to listen in, to reflect, and even to join Him. In this moment, He is revealing the heart of God. His prayer gathers everything the Gospel has shown so far: His unity with the Father, His mission to the world, and His love for His followers.

- **First, Jesus prays for Himself.** He says His work is done — He has completed all the Father asked Him to do. Now, He asks to be glorified, to return to the Father's presence in glory. This isn't selfish. It's the fulfilment of God's plan. Jesus, as the Messiah, is stepping into the role promised in the Old Testament, a King who rules not just Israel but the whole world, as in Psalm 72. His glorification is not about personal praise, but about taking up the throne of God to rule with justice and love.
- **Then Jesus prays for His disciples.** He knows He is about to leave them, and they will face opposition from the world, just as He did. He doesn't ask for them to be taken out of the world, but for them to be protected in it. He prays that they will be set apart, or 'made holy' for God's mission. This idea of holiness is rooted in the image of the Temple and the high priest, who was set apart to enter God's presence and pray for the people. In the same way, Jesus, the true High Priest, is asking the Father to consecrate His disciples so they can

continue his work.

- **Finally, Jesus prays for all future believers, for us.** This is where the prayer becomes deeply personal. Jesus asks that all His followers may be one, united in love and truth. This unity is essential. This unity, fragile though it may seem, is a powerful witness. And in the end, Jesus' desire is for all His people to be with Him and to see His glory, the glory of God's love. Our unity convinces the world that Jesus is truly from God.

In Jesus' prayer we hear His heart for us, for holiness, protection, mission, and unity.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Cyprian of Carthage (died 258), North Africa, cited on ecclesiology and martyrdom
*'He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother.'*¹⁰⁶

In John 17:22, Jesus says, *'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one.'* St Cyprian was known for his writings on Church unity, holiness, and perseverance in faith under persecution. He was bishop of Carthage in North Africa during a time of intense persecution under the Roman Empire. Around 258, Cyprian was arrested during the persecution of Christians and ultimately executed by beheading for refusing to renounce his faith. His pastoral concern for maintaining unity and discipline amid persecution and internal conflict parallels challenges faced by the early Celtic Church.

St Aidan of Lindisfarne (died 651) was one of the most beloved figures in Celtic Christianity and a powerful embodiment of the spirit and themes found in John 17, particularly Jesus'

prayer for unity, sanctification, and divine love. Aidan's life resonates with these themes in deeply practical and spiritual ways:

- First, 'unity'. *'That they may all be one ...'* (John 17:21) Aidan embodied unity not through doctrinal control but through relational fidelity. He built bridges between cultures: Irish, Pictish, and Anglo-Saxon. His mission was not to impose, but to walk alongside.
- A second way was through 'Sanctification in truth' — *'Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.'* (John 17:17). Aidan lived what he taught, walking from village to village, praying, fasting, and serving.
- Third, through Aidan love was made visible, *'So that the love you have for me may be in them'* (John 17:26). For Aidan, glory was the radiance of God's presence in everyday life. The sacred and the ordinary met in his walking, praying, teaching, and healing. His life reflected the humble glory of Christ — self-giving and radiant with quiet holiness.
- Fourth, he had intimacy with God. *'You, Father, are in me, and I in you'* (John 17:21). Like Jesus, Aidan often withdrew to pray alone, sometimes for hours at night. He lived in constant communion with God, which fuelled his ability to give of himself to others, living by abiding presence.

REVIVAL

As we pray for revival and a recovery of faith in the British Isles, we need a fresh breakout of the Holy Spirit; unity will be key. However, a right understanding of Jesus as our great High Priest is of the utmost importance too.

Andrew Murray said, 'Of all the promises connected with the command, abide in me, there is none higher and none that sooner brings the confession, not that I have already attained or am already made perfect, than this. If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Power with God is the highest attainment of the life of full abiding. And of all the traits of a life like Christ, there is none higher and more glorious than conformity to him in the work that now engages him without ceasing in the Father's presence, His all-prevailing intercession. The more we abide in Him and grow unto His likeness, will His priestly life work in us mightily, and our life become what His is, a life that ever pleads and prevails for men.'

Murray also said, 'Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God. Both in the king and the priest the chief thing is power, influence, blessing. In the king it is the power coming downward, in the priest the power rising upward, prevailing with God. In our blessed priest-king, Jesus Christ, the kingly power is founded on the priestly. He is able to save to the uttermost, because ... he ever liveth to make intercession. In us, his priests and kings, it is no otherwise. It is in intercession that the Church is defined and wields its highest power, that each member of the Church is to prove his descent from Israel, who, as a prince, had power with God and with men, and prevailed ...'¹⁰⁷

PRAYER

Help me to see prayer not as the main means of maintaining my own Christian life but as the highest part of the work entrusted to me, the root and strength of all other work. Lord, teach me how to be conformed to the work You, Lord Jesus, are engaged in, Your high priestly role of all-prevailing intercession. Teach me how to prevail before God and man and to see Europe re-evangelised ... and may it all be for Your glory. Lord, teach me how to prevail in prayer.

Father,
glorify
Your Son



SCAN ME

Are you the king of the Jews?

DAY
26

John 18:1–40

- **Focus verse:** ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ (John 18:33)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies, a footstool for your feet’ (Psalm 110:1)

Unlike today’s democratic governments, kings and rulers in Jesus’ time gained power through inheritance or violence.¹⁰⁸ The Jews, like others, knew kings as men who used force. Judas Maccabeus gained power through military victory, and Herod the Great secured kingship through Roman approval after defeating their enemies.

So, when Pilate hears that Jesus might be claiming to be ‘King of the Jews’, he assumes this is a political or military threat, something that could challenge Roman rule. Pilate sees a poor man from Galilee, deserted by his followers. There’s no army, no rebellion. Still, to be safe, Pilate questions him: ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’

What follows is not a straightforward answer. Jesus responds with a question, something typical of him. When Pilate brushes off Jesus’ question as irrelevant Jewish politics, Jesus then clarifies that His kingdom does not come from this world. That distinction is crucial. Jesus does not say His kingdom is not of this world, as if it had nothing to do with the earth at all. Instead, His kingdom’s origin is not earthly, it doesn’t come from human power, violence, or political manoeuvring. If Jesus’ kingdom were like the kingdoms Pilate knows, His followers would have fought to rescue Him. But Jesus’ kingdom is different, it is for this world but not from it. It operates by different values, centred not on force, but on truth. Jesus says He came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and that everyone on the side of truth listens to Him.

Tom Wright draws attention to how radical this claim is. In Pilate’s world, ‘truth’ is power, the kind enforced with swords or, as we’d say today, ‘at the barrel of a gun’. For Rome, truth is established by whoever is strong enough to enforce it. But Jesus says He has come

to reveal the truth, and He is the truth, a truth that does not conquer by killing, but by dying. The truth of God’s kingdom is that Jesus, the innocent King, is dying in place of the guilty. In the end, Pilate sets free Barabbas, a rebel or revolutionary, perhaps someone who really did want to be king by force, while sending Jesus, the true King, to die. This is John’s picture of what kingship and truth really look like in God’s eyes: a King who dies for his people.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Gregory the Great — Gregory I (540–604)

‘The proof of love is in the works. Where love exists, it works great things. But when it ceases to act, it ceases to exist.’¹⁰⁹

This is one of the most enduring sayings of Pope Gregory the Great. In John 18:1–40 it is clear that Pilate’s understanding as a Roman was that truth is established by whoever is strong enough to enforce it.

Pope Gregory brought the truth of God’s kingdom from Rome to England not through force, but through compassion. A significant event took place in Rome before Gregory became pope. According to Bede the Venerable, one day, while walking through the Roman marketplace, Gregory saw some fair-haired slave boys with striking features. Curious, he asked who they were and was told they were *Angles* from Britain. Gregory famously replied: ‘*Non Angli, sed angeli*’ – ‘*They are not Angles, but angels, if they had such faces.*’ He was deeply moved by the fact that such a beautiful people had not yet heard the gospel.

This encounter stirred a strong missionary impulse in him. Gregory resolved to go to Britain himself to evangelise the people but was

prevented by the pope at the time. Years later, after becoming Pope Gregory I, he fulfilled that early impulse by sending Augustine and a group of monks to convert the Anglo-Saxons in 597.

The Irish (Celtic) Church in the 6th and 7th centuries was already deeply missionary in spirit — Irish monks (eg St Columbanus and St Aidan) had been travelling throughout Britain and the continent to spread Christianity. This story would have resonated deeply with them for several reasons. Gregory's compassion for an unreached people reflected the same fervour that drove Irish monks to travel far from home. The idea that even distant or 'barbarian' peoples could be reached by Christ's message matched the Celtic Church's ethos of inclusive evangelisation. Gregory's willingness to act on divine compassion mirrored the Celtic tradition of 'white martyrdom', leaving everything behind to bring Christ to others.

St Patrick took a bold stand before kings and druids, much like Jesus before Pilate. Patrick's most famous confrontation was at Tara, the ceremonial seat of the High King, Loegaire mac Néill, during the pagan festival of Beltaine. As

the king and druids gathered to light the sacred fire, Patrick lit the Paschal fire on nearby Slane Hill, violating royal decree. This was a public spiritual challenge: only the king's fire could be lit first during Beltaine. The act was deliberate and dangerous. Just as Jesus did not avoid confrontation with earthly power in John 18, Patrick openly declared allegiance to Christ over the king's customs.

Loegaire summoned Patrick, intending to intimidate or kill him. Patrick arrived cloaked in prayer and Scripture, invoking the Holy Trinity. The druids tried magical attacks; Patrick countered with prayer. According to tradition, he recited what later became known as 'St Patrick's Breastplate', invoking protection from: '... the snares of devils, temptations of vices, from everyone who shall wish me ill, afar and near ...' This event shifted the spiritual power from druidic control towards the gospel. Patrick respected the kings of Ireland but did not fear them. Like Jesus, he stood with quiet authority. He spoke truthfully, and briefly, and Ireland opened up to him.

REVIVAL

This passage prompts a decision today as we read it. Kingship is not decided by human power, violence, or political manoeuvring. The 'breaking in' of God's kingdom is taking place today. We hear of a 'Quiet revival'. Let's not miss the day of God's visitation. Let's not miss the season of opportunity that we are living in today, here in Europe, to pray for an awakening. We are in a unique window of opportunity when God is about to birth a new youth awakening unto a mission movement. It is time to line up with God's Living Word. It is time to line up with our high priestly intercessor Jesus Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father (Psalm 110:1). Let's line up with His will, with tears, tongues and travail for our continent, calling out to Him for the birthing of an end-times youth awakening.

PRAYER

Lord, unblock the well of Your Living Word ... the word that You are speaking as high priestly intercessor, from the right hand of the Father that comes forth as an iron sceptre that dashes the nations as pottery ... Lord, release Your word that is like a fire ... that is like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces ... that is living and active like a two-edged sword. **May Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.**

Are you the king?



SCAN ME

We have no king but Caesar!

DAY
27

John 19:1–16a

- **Focus verse:** ‘We have no king but Caesar’ (John 19:15)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘The rulers gather against the Lord, against his anointed one’ (Psalm 2:2)

At the end of the film *The Return of the King*, Aragon, the newly-crowned king of Gondor, approaches the hobbits, and they bow in his presence. Aragorn lovingly corrects them and says, ‘My friends, you bow to no one.’¹¹⁰

Here in John 19 the religious leaders say to Pilate, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ The irony is devastating: the religious leaders, who should be waiting for God’s Messiah, pledge allegiance to a pagan emperor instead. In John’s Gospel the kingship of Jesus is not argued through theology or Scripture, but demonstrated in His obedience, His suffering, and His embodiment of truth.

As Roman governor, Pilate has the legal authority to release or execute Jesus. He even has the power to order the Jewish leaders to be silenced by force. So why doesn’t he do it? Pilate knows that if he lets Jesus go, the Jewish leaders could accuse him of letting a ‘rebel king’ slip through his hands. The threat of a bad report to Caesar becomes the trump card, which the chief priests play to manipulate Pilate. Once they say, ‘If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar,’ Pilate caves in. His desire to do the right thing is overridden by fear of political consequences.

But while Pilate appears powerful, Jesus is quietly exposing where true authority lies. He tells Pilate, ‘You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.’ Jesus is not denying Pilate’s authority, but He’s making it clear that even Rome’s power is under God’s control. Jesus doesn’t affirm Pilate’s actions, but He does affirm that God is sovereign, even in unjust situations. Then comes the most tragic moment: the chief priests declare, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ This is shocking! For centuries, Israel’s identity was based on the belief that God alone is King, and one day the Messiah, God’s

chosen King, would reign.

Pilate brings Jesus out and ‘sits on the judgment seat’. John may be subtly suggesting that Jesus, not Pilate, is the true judge in this scene. While Pilate appears to be judging Jesus, it is actually humanity that is being judged by how it responds to Christ. It’s noon on the Day of Preparation, when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered. This is no accident. Jesus is being presented not just as a king, but as the true Passover Lamb, whose blood will bring salvation.

Pilate tries to mock both Jesus and the Jews by calling Jesus ‘your king’, dressed in a crown of thorns and a purple robe. Even Pilate’s mockery ends up declaring the truth. Like Caiaphas earlier in John’s Gospel, Pilate unknowingly speaks prophetic words: Jesus is King, and He must die for the people. The final judgment is not passed by Pilate but by the people who cry, ‘Crucify him!’ and by the chief priests who publicly reject God’s kingship. Pilate fails in his duty to uphold justice, and the Jewish leaders fail in their calling to be witnesses to God. Religious and political power structures are exposed and found wanting, but God’s purpose is being fulfilled.

Colossians 2:15 says, ‘The powers have been disarmed.’ The true King is not the emperor in Rome, nor the priest in the Temple, but the slain Lamb, Jesus.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Nicholas of Myra confronted Arius

‘Thou enemy of God, corrupter of the law, how dost thou dare look on us?’

St Nicholas intervened directly with a civil authority and said this to the Prefect (Eustathius) at Myra.¹¹¹ Nicholas was born and lived in Patara

(Lycia, modern-day Turkey) around 270. He was orphaned young, and raised in a devout Christian family. His early acts of generosity (giving to the poor secretly) became legendary. He became Bishop of Myra, noted for his pastoral care, teaching, and moral courage. In Orthodox tradition, Nicholas is considered a model of holy leadership, combining charity with firm defence of orthodoxy. Nicholas of Myra is remembered as a bishop who feared God more than men, boldly confronting heresy and injustice, while embodying the love and charity of Christ.

The most famous episode connecting Nicholas to confrontation with authority involves Arianism. The issue was that Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria, claimed that Christ was a created being and not fully divine. Nicholas attended the First Council of Nicaea as Bishop of Myra. Tradition (though partly legendary) says Nicholas was so angered by Arius' heresy that he physically struck Arius during the council. The council ultimately condemned Arianism and affirmed the full divinity of Christ, producing the Nicene Creed. Here Nicholas courageously confronted a heretical authority within the Church, standing for Christ's truth. He is perhaps the earliest Orthodox saint whose courage in confronting authority, both spiritual and secular, parallels Christ's moral courage in John 19 before Pilate.

St Aidan confronted King Oswald much like

Jesus confronted Pilate in John 19:1–16. King Oswald was a devout Christian king, educated in Iona and deeply respectful of the monks. He even acted as Aidan's translator, because Aidan spoke only Irish when he first arrived. This respect did not prevent Aidan from boldly correcting Oswald when necessary. On one occasion, King Oswald was giving a lavish gift, possibly gold or silver, to someone of importance. Aidan, observing this, rebuked him gently but firmly: 'The son of a king should not give away what belongs to the poor, but rather what is his own.' Aidan was criticising the misuse of royal wealth, which Jesus might call unjust stewardship, a subtle confrontation of how power is exercised.

Aidan's rebuke was not angry, not dramatic, but quietly truthful, much like Jesus' statements before Pilate. Aidan, like Jesus, lived with no fear of kings, because he served a higher King. Aidan's correction of Oswald was not about humiliation, but transformation, calling the king to align his actions with the gospel, just as Jesus called Pilate to recognise the truth. In Celtic Christianity, spiritual authority was often seen as more powerful than royal or military strength. Aidan lived this, refusing wealth, giving away gifts to the poor, walking instead of riding, and staying close to the people. He lived simply, and corrected others from a place of deep love and humility, echoing Jesus' non-violent, truth-speaking to corrupt power.

REVIVAL

Just as Jewish leaders rejected Jesus, they effectively rejected God's kingship and handed themselves over to the rule of a pagan empire. If we are to see revival in Britain we need to see leaders with courage to stand up.

PRAYER

Lord, give me the courage to stand up and confront as Jesus did, as St Nicholas of Myra did, and as Aidan did. Give me the courage to stand up!

Behold
the man!

SCAN ME



This was to fulfil ...

DAY
28

John 19:16b–42

- **Focus verse:** ‘These things happened so that Scripture would be fulfilled’ (John 19:36)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘They divide my garments among them’ (Psalm 22:18); ‘I am thirsty’ (Psalm 69:21); ‘he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.’ (Psalm 34:20)

John’s portrayal of Jesus’ crucifixion is of a divine fulfilment of the Old Testament. It is rich in scriptural allusion and theological meaning. In John’s narrative, scriptural references are typically introduced with phrases like ‘as it is written’, aligning with Jesus’ public ministry. However, as the Gospel transitions into the passion story, the language shifts dramatically to stress that these events are happening ‘so that Scripture might be fulfilled.’ This, argues Richard Hays, is John’s theological response to Jesus’ suffering, a way of showing that Jesus’ death was not a failure but the climax of divine purpose.¹¹²

John uses quotation formulas frequently, more like Matthew than Mark or Luke, suggesting a deliberate strategy. The prominence of the Psalms in John’s citations is significant. Over 60 per cent of his Old Testament references come from the Psalter. This reflects John’s focus on the suffering of Jesus, as the Psalms often express the voice of a righteous sufferer, which the early Christians saw embodied in Christ. While John engages less with the Pentateuch than other Gospels, this reflects a deeper Christological emphasis. For John, Israel’s story finds its true meaning in Jesus. Israel’s Scriptures become the interpretative framework through which Jesus is understood as their climactic fulfilment. In this way, Israel is not diminished in John’s narrative but absorbed fully into the Christological vision.

Psalm 22, in particular, forms the backdrop for the crucifixion, especially in the soldiers gambling for Jesus’ clothes. This fulfils prophecy and presents Jesus as the righteous sufferer and true king. The phrase ‘*It is finished*’ (Greek: *tetelestai*) signifies not defeat but the completion of Jesus’ mission — a word often used to indicate a debt

paid in full. Jesus’ death thus becomes the moment of cosmic redemption, the full payment for sin. In John 19:31–37, Tom Wright highlights further scriptural fulfilments, including Psalm 34 (‘*Not one of his bones will be broken*’) and Zechariah 12:10 (‘*They will look on the one whom they pierced*’), emphasising Jesus as the Messiah who bears the sorrow and shame of Israel, and of the world.¹¹³

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Simeon Stylites (c390–459), lived atop a pillar (*stylos* in Greek) for 37 years

*Theodore gives a kind of summary of what Simeon taught by example and word: ‘He taught that the kingdom of heaven is gained not by ease, but by labours; not by honours, but by humility; not by indulgence, but by self-restraint.’*¹¹⁴

St Simeon Stylites is one of the most extraordinary and influential ascetics in Christian history, especially within the Eastern Orthodox Church. His radical form of self-denial and unique lifestyle made him a symbol of extreme devotion and inspired many imitators. By living atop a stone pillar in the Syrian desert, he avoided worldly distractions, cultivated unceasing prayer, and became a visible sign of repentance to all. The pillar began at about nine feet, eventually increasing to over 50 feet high. He stood, knelt, and prayed exposed to the elements, rain, sun, snow, for nearly 37 years. Food and water were hauled up to him in baskets by disciples. He would tie himself to the pillar to avoid falling asleep and toppling off. Thousands of people, pilgrims, and even Roman emperors would come

to see him or seek advice.

His voluntary suffering was understood as *kenosis* (self-emptying). His harsh asceticism was viewed as a battle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces. The pillar made him a visible beacon of repentance and a spiritual intercessor for the people. People began to see him as a bridge between heaven and earth, a living icon. Despite being elevated above the people physically, he remained deeply pastoral — preaching, interceding, and counselling from his pillar. Simeon's life was seen as a living crucifixion. His solitude mirrored Christ's loneliness on the Cross. His arms outstretched in prayer recalled Christ on the Cross. His reputation spread across the Roman Empire — even Emperors Theodosius II and Leo I sought his prayers.

Celtic saints were deeply inspired by the suffering of Jesus — his crucifixion, death, and burial. Kevin of Glendalough's ascetic practices were a conscious sharing in Christ's suffering and redemptive love, similar to themes in John 19. Kevin lived alone in a narrow cave called St Kevin's Bed, a cramped rock ledge above a lake — echoing Christ's isolation during His

Passion. Like Jesus who 'carried His own cross' (John 19:17), Kevin voluntarily carried the burden of solitude to draw closer to God. His retreat into the wilderness mirrored Christ's own withdrawal before the Passion.

Stories tell of Kevin standing for hours in cold water, arms outstretched in the shape of a cross, in prayer. This posture strongly echoes Jesus' crucifixion in John 19:18: this was a way to 'crucify the flesh' and join in Christ's redemptive work. Kevin refused comfort, status, and control, even when his monastic fame grew. Like Jesus before Pilate (John 19:10–11), who refused to defend Himself, Kevin rejected worldly power in favour of divine obedience. He left leadership of the monastery at times to return to his cave, modelling Christ's self-emptying humility (*kenosis*). Kevin mirrored the paradox of the Cross — ultimate suffering. Glendalough became a major pilgrimage site and symbol of Celtic Christian monasticism. He was remembered for his kind of 'living crucifixion' through his daily surrender, that is the Celtic ideal of the 'green martyr' — one who dies not by blood but by self-denial and communion with Christ in nature and suffering.

REVIVAL

The death of Jesus Christ was a climactic moment in Israel's history. In British history there have been key moments of opportunity, times of transition and decision, but nothing that compares with this time of fulfilment in Israel's history. Lou Engel says, 'There are moments in history when a door opens. Great revolutions for good or for evil occur in the vacuum created by these openings. It is in these times that key men and women and even entire generations risk everything to become the hinge of history. That pivotal point that determines which way the door will swing.'¹¹⁵

We have an opportunity at this hinge moment in British history, to line up with Jesus Christ who is praying at the right hand of the Father, and to pray with Him that all the blood shed by the martyrs of the faith, and the lives of the missionaries that were sown into the nations, would be turned around, and bear fruit, fruit that remains.

PRAYER

Help me carry Your burden in prayer at this 'hinge moment'.

This was
to fulfil

SCAN ME



Encountering the risen Lord

DAY
29

John 20:1–31

- **Focus verse:** ‘They have taken my Lord away’ (John 20:13)
- **Old Testament lens:** ‘The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away’ (Job 1:21)

Mary is the first to discover the empty tomb, the first to encounter the risen Jesus, and the first to be commissioned to share the news. She becomes the ‘Apostle to the apostles’.

Her story reminds us that the resurrection is deeply personal and communal. Mary mistakes Jesus for a gardener, which, Tom Wright notes, is profoundly appropriate.¹¹⁶ Jesus is the new Adam in a new garden, tasked with bringing life and order from chaos. This isn’t a mistake, it’s a deeper truth. Through the cross and resurrection, Jesus has uprooted the thorns of sin and death and begun a harvest of new life. Wright encourages us to linger with Mary in her grief. Her tears mirror the brokenness of Israel and the world. And yet, through those tears, something incredible happens, Mary hears Jesus speak her name. That moment of recognition changes everything. It reminds us that Jesus meets us personally, calls us by name, and transforms our sorrow into joy. This personal encounter lies at the heart of the Christian faith.

Later that same day, Jesus appears to the disciples, locked away in fear. He greets them with peace and shows them His wounds — proof of His identity and His victory. Then, He breathes on them and says, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ Just as God breathed life into Adam, Jesus now breathes the Spirit into His followers, giving them new life and a new mission: ‘As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.’

The gift of the Spirit is given so that the disciples, and all believers, can carry on Jesus’ mission in the world: announcing forgiveness, bringing peace, and living out the reality of the resurrection. Mary’s tears give way to joy. The disciples’ fear gives way to purpose. We too are sent. We too are called. The risen Lord is alive, and we are part of His unfolding story.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

St Isaac the Syrian (613–700), Qatar

‘Tears mark the moment when the heart has found the key to the heavenly treasure.’¹¹⁷

Mary is in tears throughout this passage in John 20. Tom Wright encourages us to linger with Mary’s grief. She was clearly sad at the loss of Jesus Christ.

St Isaac the Syrian has perhaps the most profound and detailed spiritual theology of tears. For Isaac, tears are not simply a sign of repentance (tears of compunction) — they are a whole mystical path, marking the progress of the soul from conversion, through purification, into contemplation and divine union. For Isaac, tears are the fruit of grace, not human emotion or self-effort. They appear when the Holy Spirit begins to work deeply in the heart. St Isaac outlines a mystical ‘ladder of tears’, a kind of inner ascent that parallels purification, illumination, and union. He distinguishes three kinds (or stages) of tears:

- **Tears of Conversion (Fear and Repentance).** These arise when the soul awakens from sin and recognises its distance from God. ‘At first the soul weeps over its sins, for it has seen the multitude of its offences.’
- **Tears of Purification (Healing and Prayer).** As the soul is purified, tears begin to flow spontaneously — a cleansing spring that softens the heart. ‘Afterwards tears are granted without effort, as a sign that the heart has been cleansed. The mind delights in tears as in a fountain of life.’
- **Tears of love and joy (Contemplation and Union).** Finally, the soul weeps not from sorrow, but from the overwhelming sweetness

of divine love, where tears flow from joy and love and 'the mind is enkindled by the love of God and the heart is made glad beyond measure'.

Isaiah 12:3 says, '*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*' The Orthodox saints had an understanding of the Resurrection as a 'well of salvation'. The wells were considered to be: Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, and the Second Coming. Each well provides a particular aspect to complete our salvation and so complete our glorification. We need every well. Throughout the ages the wells have been blocked, and we mostly drink now from the well of Crucifixion. The Catholics have focused on Incarnation, but the Orthodox Church

has drawn much life from the Resurrection 'well of salvation'.

Many Celtic saints were deeply influenced by the Gospel accounts of the resurrected Christ, including John 20:1–31. Patrick says he was compelled by a divine calling to return to the land of his slavery and preach the gospel, as one sent by Christ. His obedience parallels the disciples being sent out after Christ's resurrection: not in fear, but in Spirit-empowered mission.

Monks in Celtic monasteries copied the Gospels by hand, often with great artistry and reverence. *The Book of Kells* and the *Book of Durrow* are Gospel books, not just artistic treasures: they were tools for evangelism — beauty meant to draw people into the mystery of Christ.

REVIVAL

Mary said, '*They have taken my Lord away.*' She did not realise He was with her in his resurrected body. Jesus is no longer physically present with us. In Luke 5:35–38 we read that '*when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.*' Lou Engel wrote a book, *Nazarite DNA*, calling for a generation of young people to fast and pray for revival. Hannah was barren ... she groaned in the spirit and gave birth to Samuel, who was a Nazarite who was consecrated to the Lord. He gave up legitimate pleasures as he was set apart for God and he prepared the way for the king.

Is it time for you to give up the legitimate pleasures of your life for the extreme pleasures of knowing God ... to prepare the way for the King? Is there a new breed that hears the sound? ... Jesus was born (the Incarnation), He died (the Crucifixion), He was restored to life (the Resurrection), He ascended to the Father (Ascension), He sent the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) and He will come (Second Coming). It is time to unblock these six wells¹¹⁸ of salvation. As these six wells are unblocked, as we see the revelation of Jesus, the Living Word, the fountains of the great deep will burst forth and the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Lord, unblock the well of Jesus, the Living Word.

PRAYER

You are our Bridegroom King. You have been taken away from us and it is time to fast and pray ... Lord, raise up a new breed of young people, not just young people, mothers and fathers, who will produce a generation that can actually shift history like John the Baptist and become the hinge of history. Unblock a well of tears, tongues and travail, may the fountains of the great deep burst forth and may the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Go, tell the world!



'Feed my lambs'

DAY
30

John 21:1–35

- **Focus verse:** 'When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon, "Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."' (John 21:15)
- **Old Testament lens:** 'I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the Earth' (Isaiah 49:6b)

John's Gospel finishes with breakfast with the resurrected Christ.¹¹⁹ The resurrected Jesus is revealed to His disciples. The 'resurrection well' is flowing ... The disciples recognise the resurrected Christ. In John 1:10–11, it is said that Jesus came into the world, which He created, but the world did not recognise or receive Him.

By contrast, in John 21, Peter — who had earlier denied Jesus — now fully recognises Him. Following the breakfast by the sea, where Jesus feeds His disciples with bread and fish (echoing earlier miraculous feedings), Jesus reinstates Peter. In a threefold question parallelling Peter's three denials, Jesus asks, 'Do you love me?' Each affirmation from Peter is met with a charge: 'Feed my lambs', 'Take care of my sheep' and 'Feed my sheep'. This restoration is not just personal; it represents a divine commissioning. Peter is being entrusted with leadership in Christ's Church, and the metaphor of feeding Jesus' sheep points to spiritual nourishment and guidance. However, the message goes deeper, suggesting that Israel as a nation also has a divine calling, to be a 'sheep nation' (as opposed to a 'goat nation' in Matthew 25), and to carry on Israel's call to be a light to the Gentiles. Israel's eyes need to be opened to recognise Jesus as their Messiah.

The New Testament passage in Romans 11, particularly verses 25–26, discusses Israel's partial hardening until the full number of Gentiles come in, and the promise that '*all Israel will be saved*'. The kindness of God, highlighted in Romans 2:4, is emphasised as the path to repentance. May a revelation of God's kindness draw Israel back to Himself.

Old Testament prophecies like Zechariah 12:10 foretell a time when the people of Jerusalem

will look upon the one they pierced and mourn deeply, recognising their Messiah. Similarly, Jeremiah 31 prophesies the regathering of Israel with joy and repentance, with God leading them tenderly like a father. Hosea 3:5 similarly anticipates Israel's return to God and to David their king, trembling before the Lord in the last days. These references underscore the prophetic hope that Israel will return to its spiritual destiny. The Gospel of John thus begins with blindness and ends with eyes being opened, individually and prophetically. The call is now to all believers to pray that Israel will recognise Jesus as Messiah, and embrace its calling.

The Early Church Fathers who inspired the Celtic Church

Ambrose of Milan (340–397)

*'When the Church calls, the emperor must obey.'*¹²⁰

One of Ambrose's most lasting contributions to the Celtic Church came through his influence on Augustine of Hippo, who was deeply shaped by Ambrose's sermons and teaching during his conversion. Augustine's theology, especially his doctrines of grace, original sin, and Church authority, became central in Western Christianity, and his works were widely read in the Celtic world. Augustine held Ambrose in high esteem and saw him as a spiritual father. Because Augustine's writings were transmitted to monastic centres like those in Ireland (eg Clonmacnoise, Clonard) and Iona, Ambrose's ideas entered Celtic theology indirectly.

Ambrose is traditionally credited with introducing antiphonal chant and composing Latin hymns for congregational use.

These Ambrosian hymns were copied and adapted by Western monasteries, some of which made their way into Celtic liturgical practice. While the Celtic Church had unique liturgical elements, it absorbed Latin hymns and practices as Christianity grew increasingly unified under Roman influence. The influence of Ambrosian chant would blend with local traditions in places like Ireland and Wales.

‘Veni Redemptor Gentium’ (‘Come, Redeemer of the Nations’) is one of the most important hymns in early Western Christianity, and a defining example of an Ambrosian hymn or chant – the style associated with St Ambrose of Milan (c340–397). This hymn influenced the Western Church, and much later, in 1524, Martin Luther created a German paraphrase: ‘Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland’ (‘Now come,

Saviour of the Gentiles’).

Jesus Christ *is* the redeemer of the nations. Although Luther’s views towards the Jewish people were very hostile at the end of his lifetime and the Celtic saints didn’t focus on Israel as a geographic entity, interpreting the Old Testament typologically or allegorically, it is my belief that there is a special destiny for the nation of Israel to shine as a light to the Gentile nations too (Isaiah 49:6).

Perhaps it is not inappropriate to produce a couple of contemporary songs on this theme of ‘Come, redeemer of the nations.’ As examples, see ‘A light to the nations’ (the song below) and ‘Come and see, come and go’ (the song on page 66). We can co-labour with Jesus through prayer and song that He would come and be a redeemer of the nations even unto the ends of the earth.

REVIVAL

The path to glory is not around suffering ... it is through it. Those who walk it with Him will find themselves at the centre of His story. Tyler Staton, in *The Familiar Stranger*, talks of redemptive suffering.¹²¹ This was a focus of the Celtic Church.

Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to groan through you, as you share Jesus’ intercessory heart of pain for awakening? The British Isles has a glorious more recent history of revivals and missionaries. Will we stand in the gap for another generation of John Wesleys, Duncan Campbells, Mary Slessors and Rees Howells to be raised up? Will we also pray for a restoring of the hearts of the fathers to the sons?

The Early Church Fathers understood the wells of salvation to be the Incarnation of Jesus, the Crucifixion of Jesus, the Resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension of Jesus, Jesus pouring out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the Second Coming of Jesus. Lord, unblock these wells of salvation, to the Jews today in the nation of Israel, and around the world! Just as Peter came to recognise Jesus at that breakfast, may the eyes of Your chosen people be opened to have a similar revelation.

PRAYER

‘Make me a light to the nations, shining bright through the veil of the night ... from the sea to the hills of Zion.’ John 1:14 says, ‘*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*’ May the eyes of the Jewish community be opened to see You and Your glory today ... and may the knowledge of Your glory cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

A light to the nations



SCAN ME

SCAN ME

Come and see,
come and go



Come and see, go and tell ... to the ends of the earth

One of the most powerful invitations in the Gospel of John is the simple phrase, '*Come and see*' (John 1:39). Spoken first by Jesus and then repeated by His early followers, it encapsulates the essence of discipleship: an invitation to encounter Christ personally and to join Him in His mission. This finds a rich parallel in the Gospel of Luke where the first miraculous catch of fish serves as a vivid symbol of calling and commission. Then the call is renewed through another miraculous catch in John 21. After the second miraculous catch of fish in John 21, Jesus renews that same invitation — a renewal of the commission in light of the resurrection. '*Come and see*' becomes '*go and tell*'.

The pattern of 'come and see' leading to 'go and tell' forms the heartbeat of the biblical mission. From Abraham's call to be a blessing to the nations (Genesis 12:1–3), to Israel's role as a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6), to Jesus' Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20), God's people are continually invited to encounter His presence and then extend His kingdom. The two miraculous catches of fish thus serve as symbolic bookends to the gospel story: first, the call to follow; later, the call to continue the mission in Christ's power. The same Jesus who once said, '*Come and see*' now says '*Go and make disciples*'. In the book of Acts, Jesus says to his disciples, '*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*' (Acts 1:8)

To the uttermost parts

Early Irish monasticism saw missionary work as fulfilling Christ's command to preach 'to the ends of the earth'. St Patrick literally saw Ireland as the ends of the earth ... and of his need to physically go to them. Matthew 28:19–20 figured prominently in his thoughts as he saw the Irish mission as part of the bigger picture of making disciples of all nations. In

the 6th century worldview, 'the ends of the earth' (in Latin, *extremi terrae*) was a biblical phrase — used in texts like Acts 1:8 and Psalm 19:4 — meaning the most remote or far-flung places where the gospel was to be preached. For monks coming from Ireland, the north and west coasts of Scotland truly felt like the far edge of the known world — cold, wild, beyond the boundaries of the Roman world. Other saints of the same era (eg St Columba, St Brendan, St Cormac Ua Liatháin) described their missions or pilgrimages as *voyages ad ultimos terrarum fines* ('to the uttermost parts of the earth'). St Moluag (d592) was an Irish missionary monk, and contemporary of St Columba, who evangelised among the Picts. His main base was Lismore (off the west coast of Scotland). He went as far north as Kilmaluog, Lewis (near Eoropie, in Ness), which he believed was the ends of the earth.

Let's cry out

The Early Church Fathers and the Celtic saints embraced a life of austerity and discipline, practising fasting and physical hardship, seeking to abide in Jesus, to become like Jesus and to bear fruit that would last, inner growth, and outward witness to the world.

As we draw from old treasure and new, crying out for revival in the British Isles and Europe that the glory of the Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, taking the gospel to the ends of the earth, may it mean a new level of devotion, prayer and intercession, even crying out with tears, tongues and travail.

The Early Church Fathers and Celtic saints have gone before us. Let's cry out with Jesus, at the right hand of the Father right now, surrounded by this cloud of witnesses, for a new youth awakening unto a missionary monastic movement, to the ends of the earth.

LET'S 'COME AND SEE ... GO AND TELL ...
UNBLOCK THE WELL OF THE LIVING WORD.'

Appendix

- **The blood of Jesus** has redeemed me from the hand of Satan.
- **The blood of Jesus** has redeemed me from every curse.
- **The blood of Jesus** has sealed an eternal covenant for me.
- **The blood of Jesus** has reconciled me to and granted me peace with God, the Father, all people and all creation.
- **The blood of Jesus** has granted me forgiveness of all my sins.
- **The blood of Jesus**, the Son of God, cleanses me from all sin.
- **The blood of Jesus** justifies me from all condemnation, so all the accusations of the devil against me are nullified; He makes me righteous as though I have never sinned.
- **The blood of Jesus** sanctifies me and consecrates me so I become belonging to my Lord, dedicated to Him and set apart for His ministry.
- **The blood of Jesus** cleanses my conscience from acts that lead to death so that I may serve the Living God.
- **The blood of Jesus** makes me enter the Most Holy Place to serve the Holy God.
- **The blood of Jesus** grants me victory over Satan and all his principalities.
- **The blood of Jesus** is the reason for my everlasting rejoicing.¹²²

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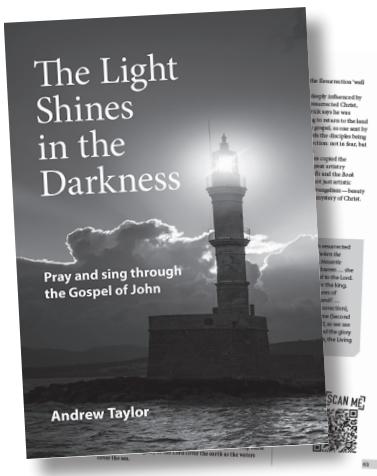
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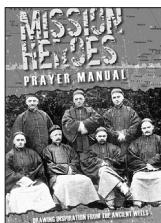


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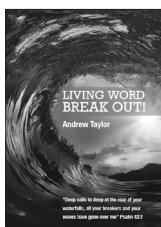
The spiritual fathers of the Christian faith are like wells. As we have failed to draw from their inspiration and example, those wells have become blocked. This guide is designed to remind us of the mission heroes of this nation, and to help us call upon the Lord to open those wells again.



It is Time to Build

This devotional is a call to wake up to the revelation of Jesus as our bridegroom king and to break up the fallow ground of our hearts. It is also a call to line up with Jesus Christ's

burning passion for the nations. He is preparing our hearts to be revival intercessors for the nations. As we partner with Him and line up with His prayers and ask the Father for the nations as His inheritance, the rod of His mouth will strike the earth, and everything that hinders His love will be removed, and His kingdom will be built on the earth. It is time to build.



Living Word Break Out!

This devotional prayer guide — for Lent 2020 — is an aid to pray for God's living word to break out across Europe. It tracks the broad narrative of scripture: God is gathering one family of nations under His rule and in His presence, and His glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Currently, there is a significant opportunity, in Europe, for those unreached and those on fire for Jesus to come together as one. The nations are bringing passion back to the Church in Europe

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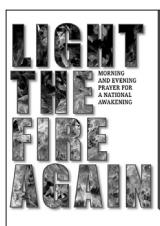
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Launch Out into the Deep!

This discipleship manual is designed to facilitate group prayer and group Bible reading in the context of a local House of Prayer. It is inspired by Benedict's

Rule, which was written just under 1,500 years ago for disciples following Christ in community. It is also inspired by the principles for developing a passionate community of prayer used by the International House of Prayer in Kansas City. As we respond to the Lord Jesus Christ and His call to follow Him into a deeper devotional life with a small group of disciples, He will make us into fishers of men.



Light the Fire Again

This devotional prayer manual is a resource to facilitate group prayer that includes the daily reading and praying of all 150 Psalms over one month. Two hundred and seventy-five years ago, John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman of the 18th century, was used powerfully in a national awakening. This manual consists of inspirational devotionals based on his life, to be read alongside the corporate reading and praying of the Psalms. The theme is 'prayer for a national awakening'. Lord, light the fire again!



Wake Up!

We have a window of opportunity to pray for revival in Europe. Over 1,500 years ago St Benedict called his monks to listen to Christ's voice in Scripture. Over the next few centuries, Christianity spread throughout much of Europe through Benedictine and Celtic missionary monks. They were devoted to singing and praying the Psalms. Many refugees are flooding into our continent. Let's listen to Christ's voice in the Psalms, pray and share the gospel with refugees and the unreached in our cities.



The Light Shines in the Darkness

Come and see ... go and tell ... unblock the well ... of the Living Word. We need a youth awakening unto a missionary movement, inspired by the Celtic saints, who went to the ends of the known world and planted a church in the British Isles. Lord, restore the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and may the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

IT IS TIME TO WAKE UP, PRAY AND SING THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN!



Andrew Taylor and his wife Connie pioneered Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in Cambridge in 2008. Andrew started a House of Prayer in Cambridge in 2011, and together they pioneered a YWAM School of Biblical Studies in 2017. They lived in Coventry for a couple of years and have been exploring opportunities to disciple refugees. They currently live in Cornwall, and have a longing to see a youth awakening in the British Isles.

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