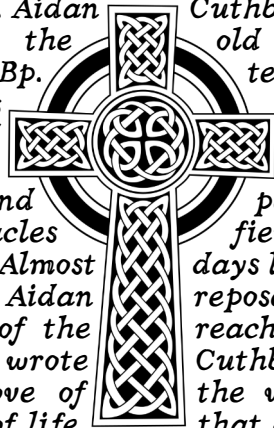




**S**aint Bede the Venerable was born only 22 years after the death of St. Aidan and so the memory of Bp. Aidan's life was still quite fresh and recent when he wrote Bp. Aidan's biography and described the miracles attributed to him. Almost everything we know of Bp. Aidan comes from the writings of the Venerable St. Bede. He wrote warmly of St. Aidan's love of prayer and study, purity of life,

**O**ne of our other great 7th century Celtic saints, Bishop Cuthbert was just a 17-year-old lad while he was out tending his flock of sheep and he had a vision of the angels bearing the soul of some saintly person to heaven in a fiery trail of light. Several days later news of St. Aidan's repose on Aug. 31, 651 reached his region, and St. Cuthbert learned it was at the very hour of his vision that St. Aidan reposed.



his humility, and his care for the sick and the poor. He reports that Bp. Aidan was not attached to the things of the world, nor did he seek earthly treasures. Whenever he received gifts from the king or from rich



### TROPARION TO ST. AIDAN

Tone 5

⊕ holy Bishop Aidan

Apostle of the North and light of the Celtic Church

glorious in humility

noble in poverty

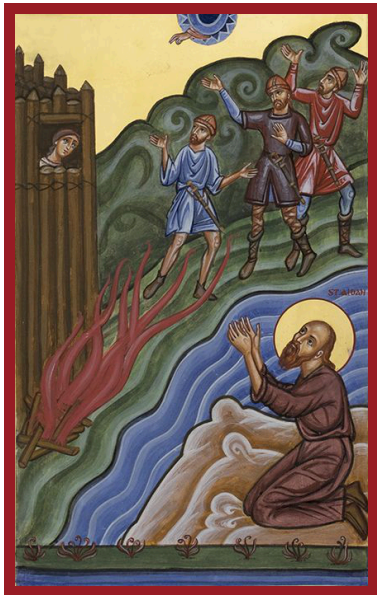
zealous monk and loving missionary

intercede for us sinners

that Christ our God may have mercy on our souls

• Icons by the hand of Aidan Hart •

• Borders: Lindisfarne Gospels •



men, he distributed them to the poor, or used the money to buy and free slaves. On Wednesdays and Fridays, he would fast from all food until the 9th hour (3pm) except during Paschal season.



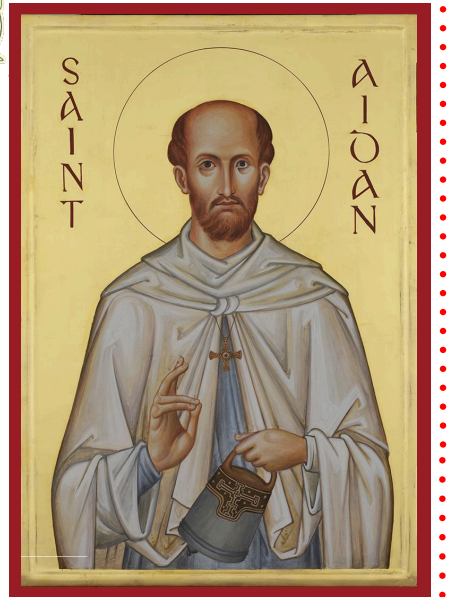
• Compiled by Fr. Andrew •

**S**aint Aidan of Lindisfarne, the Apostle of Northumbria (died 651), was the founder and first bishop of the Lindisfarne island monastery in England. He is credited with restoring Christianity to Northumbria and has even been promoted as the 'patron saint of England.'

**A**idan is the Anglicised form of the original Old Irish Aodhán, (meaning 'little fiery one'). Of Irish decent, Aidan was originally a monk at the Scottish island monastery of Iona (Hii), founded by St Columba. Prince Oswald had converted to Christianity, perhaps at Iona, and was a baptized Christian. In 634 he regained the kingship of Northumbria, and was determined to bring Christianity to his subjects. Owing to his Gaelic past, Oswald requested Irish missionaries from Iona, rather than from the Roman (Latin) mission in southern England.



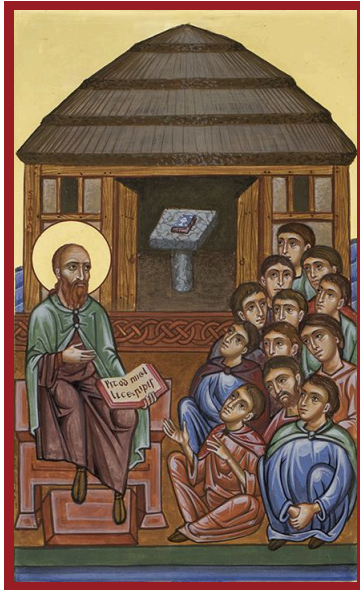
**T**he Venerable St. Bede reports that the first bishop sent, named Cormac, met with no success and soon returned to Iona. He claimed he was unable to achieve anything because the people 'were ungovernable and of an obstinate and barbarous temperament.' Aidan, upon hearing this report replied, 'Brother, it seems to me that you were too severe on your ignorant hearers. You should have followed the practice of the Apostles, and begun by giving them the milk of simpler teaching, and gradually nourished them with the word of God until they were capable of greater perfection and able to follow the loftier precepts of Christ.' This observation by St. Aidan convinced all in attendance that he was the man to attend to the missionary work in Northumbria. Aidan was ordained bishop and was sent as a replacement to spread the gospel in Northumberland in 635.



**K**ing Oswald offered to give Bishop Aidan property to set up a new monastery and headquarters and so he asked for Lindisfarne, an island like Iona (but only an Island when the tide was in), close to the royal fortress of Bamburgh. The monastery he founded grew and helped found churches and other monasteries throughout the area. It also became a centre of learning and a



storehouse of scholarly knowledge. The Lindisfarne Illustrated Gospels dating from the late 7th or early 8th centuries, attributed to Bp. Eadfrith (Bp. Lindisfarne 698-721) in honour of St. Cuthbert, (634 - 687) have survived to this day and are a great treasure. Aidan took in twelve English boys to train at the monastery, that they might spread the Gospel to their own countrymen in their own language and many others followed.



# SAIN T AIDAN

**K**ing Oswald, who had a perfect command of Gaelic, often traveled with and translated for Aidan and his monks, who spoke no English when they first arrived. Once, at Pascha (Easter), when Bp. Aidan was dining at the castle with king Oswald, a servant came and informed the king that a great number of his poor subjects had just arrived and were asking for alms. King Oswald ordered the festive Pascal meal that had been prepared be put on silver platters and served to the new arrivals, and that the silver platters then be broken up and distributed to the poor. Bp. Aidan was deeply moved and blessed the king, taking his right hand and saying, 'May this hand never perish.' Tradition tells us the king's hand remained uncorrupt and was venerated in the church of St. Peter's in Bamburgh for centuries. Unfortunately, it's present location or existence is not known.

**W**hen king Oswald was killed in a battle against the

king Penda in 642, Bp. Aidan was heartbroken, however, the new king, Oswin also became a great friend and support to Aidan. In 651 a pagan army, led by Penda, attacked Bamburgh and attempted to set its walls ablaze. Seeing the smoke from nearby Lindisfarne, Bp. Aidan prayed for the city, and the winds turned and blew the smoke and fire fiercely back toward the enemy, and they fled in terror. This led to St. Aidan being known as the patron saint of firefighters.

**I**n Humility, Bp. Aidan would walk rather than ride a horse on his missionary journeys, wanting to stay on the same level as the people he encountered as he spread the Christian gospel. King Oswin once gifted Bp. Aidan with a beautiful mare from his royal stables which Bp. Aidan promptly gave away to a beggar. St. Bede has left us the following account: "The King asked the bishop as they were going in to dine, 'My Lord Bishop, why did you give away the royal horse which was necessary for your own use? Have we not many less valuable horses or other belongings which would have been good enough for beggars, without giving away a horse that I had specifically selected for

your personal use?' The bishop at once answered, 'What are you saying, Your Majesty? Is this child of a mare more valuable to you than this child of God?'" After that response, the King bowed and humbled himself before his Bishop and said, 'I will not refer to this matter again, nor will I enquire how much of our bounty you give away to God's children.' It was later that evening when St Aidan had a premonition of King Oswin's death saying to his attendant, "I know the king will not live very long; for I have never before seen a humble king. I feel he will soon be taken from us, because this nation is not worthy of such a king." Soon afterward, king Oswin was murdered, and just 11 days later Bp. Aidan himself died, leaning on a beam of St. Peter's church in Bamburgh. The church has been destroyed twice by fires over the centuries, but the beam has survived and is visible in the present rebuilt church.

