

## Reflection Friday Week 9 St Columba 2023

Columba (Gaelic Colm Cille) He was born in Gartan, County Donegal, around 529. He was of royal lineage. He studied under Finnian of Moville and Finnian of Clonard. He founded monasteries at Derry, Durrow, and possibly Kells, before leaving Ireland as a missionary, *“an exile for Christ.”* His greatest foundation was Iona, from where he converted much of western Scotland, and his followers took the Gospel as far as northern England. He died at Iona in 597. He was renowned as a poet and scribe as well as a spiritual guide. In Gaelic literature he appears as Ireland’s most popular saint, noted for his great personal love of all creatures, both human and animal.

We celebrate his feast today because we need his prayers and encouragement to stop destroying the planet at the rate we are doing now.

### **St Columba:**

*“Alone with none but thee, my God,*

*I journey on my way.*

*What need I fear when thou art near,*

*Oh king of night and day?*

*More safe am I within thy hand*

*than if a host did round me stand.”*

*My dearest Lord, be thou a bright flame before me, a guiding star above me, a smooth path beneath me, a kindly shepherd behind me, today and for evermore.*

### **Iona Abbey:**

*Grass stalks dancing, rippling, shot through*

*with red against Mull’s granite backdrop,*

*cascading foam flecks, spattered litanies*

*on the rocks – yes, even the tides are devout*

*to a fault, as they lap this numinous isle*

*christened by pilgrims, dolphin-call, salt –*

*place of the yew, the brown bear’s den,*

*only ever itself: his own Jerusalem. (St Columba)*