**PRAYING THE KEEILLS 2015 – *Saints and their Keeills***

**DAILY REFLECTIONS by Rev Dr DEE DEE HAINES**

**Saturday 23 May: Celtic Saints as Passionate Wanderers**

It is difficult to be certain about the lives and journeys of the Celtic missionaries who once gave themselves, as Jesus did, to the ministry of passionately caring for others. What we do know from the stories that have been gathered is that they were faithful men and women who lived their love for God by loving others, offering practical support and spiritual nourishment. They left their homes in search of unknown places where they could work, pray, teach, preach, and build relationships that established a sphere of spiritual influence, opening the door for transformation.

**Sunday 24 May: A Holy Rhythm**

The Celtic saints felt that their calling was to mirror the life of Jesus. The cyclic repetition of their daily work, practices and rituals, communicated a kind of holy rhythm. In addition to meeting practical needs, they gave themselves to a life of worship and prayer. Their devotion pointed to the very heartbeat of God, the lively Spirit that was flowing in, and through, the whole of the world.

**Monday 25 May: Grounded in Place and Space**

Living quite simply, many early saints established themselves in modest accommodation, seeking only to prevent prolonged exposure to the elements. Although Celtic spirituality would have understood the Spirit to be present in all of Creation, the construction of a keeill provided a constant symbol of God’s presence---a holy space that was set apart--- yet still visible to the wider community as a place where one might be mindful of the Holy One in their midst.

**Tuesday 26 May: Pointing to “The Way”**

Although the saints may have thought themselves ordinary people set apart for a life of ministry, their practices of hospitality, care for the poor and community building meant that their neighbours experienced them as living pathways that pointed to the life of Christ. Tradition bears testimony to the lives of the saints being filled with miracle stories that illustrated extraordinary healing, wholeness and grace.

**Wednesday 27 May: A Ruin of Hospitality**

In a rough and tumble world where some would have been anxious about finding food or a place to rest their heads, the model of radical hospitality offered by those who would come to be known as saints was a counter cultural behavior that set them apart from the norm. They saw themselves as servants of God, teaching by example, sharing what they had and insisting that their communities be a place of welcome to neighbour and stranger, alike.

**Thursday 28 May: In Sync with Creation**

Many of the saints were strong leaders with an intuitive spirit, showing gentle kindness to animals, birds and the environment that surrounded them. Their sense of spirituality was attuned to the elements. Numerous Celtic litanies and prayers give testimony to the understanding that the Spirit of God was living and breathing in the wind, sea, light and other natural elements.

**Friday 29 May: Practice Makes Perfect**

The saints were able to see the brokenness of the world without being consumed by it. They believed that their servant identity was a life-long adventure and relationship with God and devoted themselves to the building up of the Body of Christ. Their religious practices were often characterized by pilgrimage, acts of penitence, and a respect for set apart places like holy wells, monastic sites, mountains, trees and other sacred places.

**Saturday 30 May: Staying True to the Pathway**

The lives of saints were marked by constancy and commitment. When others gave up, they persevered. When faced with challenge and trial, they remained true to their calling and identity. These ancient saints touch the hidden places within our spirits. Through their lives, we are given a glimpse of God---a chance to see and learn what God is like.