

Ecclesiastes 12 12. “But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive study is wearying to the body.”¹

What makes a saint a saint rather than merely a good Christian? Analyse a selection of key characteristics and attributes with references to several Celtic Saints.

The age of the saints in Britain was between the years 450 to 600.² According to the bible all the new Christians were saints as they were all sanctified.³ The traders coming to the shores of Britain, for the past centuries, would have carried the knowledge of the fast spreading, underground, new religion of Christianity. Rome, who were the governing body of most of the known world at this time, had outlawed this new cult, at pain of death. Emperor Constantine issued an Edict in the year 313 in Milan that made Christianity the new state religion. And just one year later in 314 three Bishops from Britain attended the council in Arles.⁴ The venerable Bede tells us, in his Ecclesiastical History, that one of the first martyrs in Britain was a roman soldier by the name of St Alban in 302. A sainthood could be bestowed on any Christian, living or dying, for the Faith. Cecilia Baker explains that when Rome departed from Britain and the Anglo-Saxons took over the lordship, the lands, mainly in the west, were being cut off and developing their own brand of Christianity. We now call this Celtic.⁵ Celtic saints look to the bible first and foremost, because this is the authority of God. This is the rule book. It was God through the bible who was telling our saints what they must do, so they could be good Christians. There were many martyrs in the age of the Saints but many more had fruitful and productive lives and these narratives can be better understood by the converts to Christianity and the emulating of the stories of Jesus in the Gospels. For example, In the book of John 2. 1-11 Jesus turns water into wine, this is the first of Jesus’ mentioned miracles and shows his mastery over water.⁶ Jesus is of noble lineage as explained in Mathew 1. 1-17⁷ the Hagiographers of later years are at pains to show us our saints, like

¹ ‘Ecclesiastes 12 New American Standard Bible’ <https://biblehub.com/nasb_/ecclesiastes/12.htm> [accessed 10 March 2023].

² D. Densil Morgan, ‘Christianity and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Wales’, *Religion, State and Society*, 27.3–4 (1999), 327–42 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/096374999106520>>.

³ ‘The Three Phases of Sanctification’, *Biblical Resources*, 2014 <<https://www.biblicalresources.org/resources/sanctification/>> [accessed 21 March 2023].

⁴ Cecilia Baker, *Walking With The Saints*, 1st edn (Leicestrshire: Troubador, 2018). P42

⁵ Cecilia Baker.

⁶ ‘Bible Gateway Passage: John 2:1-11 - New International Version’, *Bible Gateway* <<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%202%3A1-11&version=NIV>> [accessed 7 March 2023].

⁷ ‘Bible Gateway Passage: Matthew 1 - New International Version’, *Bible Gateway* <<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%201&version=NIV>> [accessed 7 March 2023].

Jesus, are of a noble lineage and therefore worthy and blessed leaders. Romans 13 1-7. Jesus' birth story as described in Mathew 1. 18, and Luke 1.26-39, is miraculous and troubled. From the start Jesus is showing us that following him will not be easy. In Mathew 8. 20. Jesus explains that to be a follower of him is to be a homeless pilgrim. "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."⁸ Jesus was always on a pilgrimage to the people throughout his short life and his followers must be willing to sacrifice everything to follow him.⁹ This is but one of many instances where Jesus makes known that to be a follower of him is to be homeless in this world with the hope of a mansion in the next life. (John 14. 2-18) The stories of the saints show us how they tried to emulate Jesus in this way. We cannot, with accuracy, be certain when looking at the documentation of any of the saints, as to the veracity of the information given. Most of the information would have originated in the oral tradition of folk tales and stories and could have been centuries in the re-telling before they were committed to the written word. The Saints represent an aspirational example of Christian virtue. The exceptional aspects of their lives, communicated through the stories, serve to stand out and inspire ordinary Christians. This legacy still lives in the form of chapels, Holy wells and scattered place names associated with the pilgrimage of the saints.

It has been noted by The Right Rev. John Wyn Evans, who has an accurate, if somewhat cynical, view of the Celtic saints. To be remembered, as some are, saints would have to have been supported by the wealthy patrons.¹⁰ The timescale from the lives of the saints to the written evidence, that we now have access to, is half a millennium. The stories in Wales and probably the rest of the Celtic world would have been kept alive in the royal courts with their bards. A contrary view to the cynical is that the saints and their followers were fully committed to God and had a faith that they were willing to die for. While fully accepting that the information of the lives of the saints could have been manipulated to fit a narrative, we also must consider the evidence of the legacy of some of the saints. The lives of the saints present several recurring themes, for example, miraculous happenings by them and around them. These give an insight into what made them stand out from ordinary Christians. Saints

⁸ 'What Does It Mean That Jesus Had Nowhere to Lay His Head?', *GotQuestions.Org* <<https://www.gotquestions.org/nowhere-to-lay-His-head.html>> [accessed 7 March 2023].

⁹ 'Mark 10 New American Standard Bible' <https://biblehub.com/nasb/_mark/10.htm> [accessed 17 March 2023]. The eye of the needle was a small gate into the city of Jerusalem. To get through the gate the merchant would have to unburden the beast and take the animal and merchandise through separately.

¹⁰ *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. by J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

were inevitably challenged in some way often having to overcome severe hardship. Their redemption could be attributed to their adherence to Christian values and accompanied by miraculous events which validated their virtue. They are venerated after their deaths and their shrines or cult places were often attributed with continuing to give miraculous blessings to devotees. The lives of several saints are examined here to help understand the connection to the world they lived in and their connection to each other.

The sanctification of people is written throughout the bible and is the grace of God to make people worthy of Him. Ephesians 2. 8 -10. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." We can see this in the Old Testament stories with the examples of Abram becoming Abraham when he obeyed Gods calling, Genesis 17. 5 and Moses' birth and escape journey, Exodus 2. This was almost replicated in the story of Jesus own birth in Mathew 2. 14-15. Sanctification is to be set apart. To be made worthy. This is the same as the sainthood that our good Christians from the age of the saint were emulating. 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Our saints were following the teachings that the bible sets out. One of the reasons we know that our saints were of noble, and therefor, privileged, birth was their access too and knowledge of the written word of God. As each chapter of the bible had to be handwritten. Only the very wealthiest would have had access to it. We can show from the building and maintaining of the churches dedicated to our saints that they were promulgating the bible. Sanctification is more than a change of heart. It is our saints utter and complete belief in the bible and the word of God. This is a supernatural belief. In the age of our saints there was still a belief in the old religions. This is the same in today's world with people seeking a meaning for the problems they see around them and looking to the past, and paganism, to provide it. Gods' sanctification is supernatural. It is not limited to our saints own life experiences. Our saints would have been sustained by God and His holy word. It is easy to imagine our saints reading the book about saint Paul and his struggles. Philippians 3. And gathering strength from this. Our saints were told by Paul not to passively accept but to participate. Paul is speaking mainly to the Romanised world.

"1 Corinthians 9.24 -27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the game's exercises self-control in all things. So, they do it to obtain a perishable wreath, but we imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way as not to run aimlessly; I

box in such a way, as to avoid hitting air; but I strictly discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.¹¹

This encouraging scripture would have surely been an inspiration to our saints that they would have aspired to.

Many saints have a noble lineage like Saint Cadfan, late fifth, early sixth century. he was the son of the prince Eneas sometime also spelled Aeneas. Eneas was a Breton who travelled to Wales as a missionary with a party of monks of whom Cadfan was one.¹² Folklore tells us they were fleeing the Frankish invasions of their homeland, but it also says that Brittany was ravaged by a plague.¹³ Whatever the reason it could not have been easy. He was ousted from his home and could not have been sure what had happened to friends and loved ones left behind. Cadfan is credited with the foundation monastery of Bardsey Island. What we know of him is through the Bard Llewelyn Fardd¹⁴ Ann Parry-Owen gives a good description of the type of poem of this and other Bards that can be found in the Hendregadredd manuscript.¹⁵ There is very little early writing about Cadfan, but we know from the book of Llandaff written in the Twelfth century that the Breton missionaries settled in Tywyn, Gwynedd. and surrounding areas. The church in Tywyn and some of the surrounding churches of this time are built in circular enclosures suggesting earlier Celtic places of worship. This has been suggested by several writers on discussion of the druids and is known as Nemeton, the reuse of religious Groves.¹⁶ Cadfan was a Prince. His parentage shows his nobility. He was given the island of Bardsey, that is reputed to be the burial place of 20,000 saints.¹⁷ 'This tale is honoured in a chapel graveyard, where an inscription reads: 'Respect the remains of 20,000

¹¹ 'Bible Gateway Passage: 1 Corinthians 9 - New American Standard Bible', *Bible Gateway* <<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%209&version=NASB>> [accessed 21 March 2023].

¹² Elizabeth Rees, *A Dictionary of Celtic Saints* (Glostershire: The History Press, 2019).

¹³ Andrew Breeze, 'Arthur's Battles and the Volcanic Winter of 536–37', *Northern History*, 53.2 (2016), 161–72 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/0078172X.2016.1195600>>.

¹⁴ David Myrddin Lloyd, 'LLYWELYN FARDD (Fl. c. 1150-1175), Poet | Dictionary of Welsh Biography', 1959 <<https://biography.wales/article/s-LLYW-FAR-1150>> [accessed 6 February 2023].

¹⁵ Ann Parry Owen, 'Canu Beirdd y Tywysogion i'r Saint', *Seintiau Cymru, Sancti Cambrenses: ASTUDIAETHAU AR SEINTIAU CYMRU STUDIES IN THE SAINTS OF WALES*, 2022

<https://www.academia.edu/94517282/Canu_Beirdd_y_Tywysogion_i_r_Saint> [accessed 6 February 2023]. This is a Welsh article that, for a non-Welsh Speaker has to be translated.

¹⁶ 'Nemeton - Religious Groves', *Roman Britain* <<https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/life-in-roman-britain/nemeton-page/>> [accessed 27 March 2023].

¹⁷ Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints: The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and Such Irish Saints as Have Dedications in Britain. Faustus to Gynaid. Part Five* (For the honourable Society of cymmrodorion, by C. J. Clark, 1911).

saints buried near this spot.¹⁸ Saint Cadfan was invited by King Einon, in the sixth century, to build, what is credited as the first monastery in Britain.¹⁹ The island of Bardsey, known in Welsh as Ynys Enlli has had a recent miracle to help maintain its sacred protection.²⁰ Cadfan would have had many followers as attested by the many churches he has named for him like, Llangadfan in Powys. There is a holy well dedicated to Cadfan in Llangadfan that is said to be able to cure rheumatism and skin diseases. Another in Pistyll Gadfan, Gwynedd. And Eisteddfa Gadfa Gwynedd. Cadfan, it would seem, has many of the tropes that testify to his sainthood. He established churches, he had a noble lineage, he performed cures and had followers that were still using his Holy wells into the 19th century.²¹

Cadfan's mother is said to be St. Gwen Teirbron, the triple breasted. we should suppose and mention, that it would have been noted that her connection to the Celtic sacredness of triad would have been supposed and thought of in her time. Along with the connection, however tenuous, to the triple goddess. She is the daughter of king Budic II of Brittany. Gwen was born c499. There are a few saints Gwen's and whites Whita's and Winn's, Glawdys and candida. it is not certain if they are all the same person. It's a probability that some of them are. The information we have of her tell us that she could be the sister of saint Non, Saint Davids mother and therefore David is probably a cousin of Cadfans.²² This is not possible to find and be accurate about because of the number of saints with the same name. but it is evidentiary that Teirbron had four sons who became saints.²³ She also had a daughter with her first husband Fracan, who was a cousin to king Cado of Dumnonia, she had saint Wethnoc, saint Iacob and saint Winwaloe. Cadfan was with her second husband a Breton, Eneas Ledewig. The iconography of saint Teirbron has her suckling her three children on her

¹⁸ Faith Ridler, 'Meet the Welsh Island Where 20,000 Saints Are Believed to Be Buried', *Mail Online*, 2019 <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6495589/Meet-tiny-Welsh-island-20-000-saints-believed-buried.html>> [accessed 25 January 2023].

¹⁹ Laura Geggel published, 'King Arthur May Have Visited England's Oldest Known Monastery', *Livescience.Com*, 2016 <<https://www.livescience.com/57114-earliest-monastery-in-britain.html>> [accessed 25 January 2023].

²⁰ Iain Todd, 'Welsh Island Becomes First Dark Sky Sanctuary in Europe', *BBC Sky at Night Magazine* <<https://www.skyatnightmagazine.com/news/ynys-enlli-bardsey-island-dark-sky/>> [accessed 21 March 2023]. with one of only 17 in the world dark sky sanctuary.

²¹ Laurence Main, 'St Cadfan's Well, Llangadfan, Powys', *Holyandhealingwells*, 2018 <<https://insearchofholywellsandhealingsprings.com/source-first-series-contents/st-cadfans-well-llangadfan-powys/>> [accessed 7 February 2023].

²² Nigel Pennick, *The Celtic Saints* (London: HarperCollins, 1997). Page 26. Celtic genealogies. Other books give different information so it is not easy to be accurate.

²³ QUIMPER-VANNES, 'Why All the Ermine? , The Legend of Saint Gwen of Brittany and Dorset', *What Really Links Place Names in Brittany, Cornwall and Wales (Apart from a Few Hundred Celtic Saints)?* <<https://quimper-vannes.blogspot.com/2016/03/place-name-elements-in-breton-welsh-and.html>> [accessed 21 March 2023]. This is a well informed blog that has the information that can be found in other places.

three breasts. Mothers would give a distaff and some flax to saint Teirbron with the hope of her blessing them with an adequate supply of milk for their baby²⁴. Teirbron has the legend of being twice captured by the Anglo-Saxons. She was living in Brittany and was carried to Britain where she escaped and walked across the channel back to Brittany. Saint Teirbron settled in Dorset in her later years where legend has it that she was slaughtered by the Anglo-Saxons. There is church in the village of Whitchurch Canonorum called the church of St Candida and the Holy Cross. It contains a shrine that survived with its relics untouched during the Reformation. In Breton in the 1870s the priests made a cull of saint Teirbron, and all the iconography and images of her were destroyed.²⁵ Saint Teirbron, like her son, was not stationary. She moved around on a mission to the people. She has a dedicated church and reliquary, was prayed too and has at least one surviving church on the mainland that has a holy well dedicated to her.

Saint Non. Also known as Nonna Nonne and Nonnita. She is the daughter of Cynyr of Caer Gawch who is reported to be the foster father of king Arthur.²⁶ In Brittany she is known as Melaria.²⁷ We get the main of our information about Non from Rhygyfach.²⁸ She is the mother of saint David whose birth was portrayed in the style of the virgin birth of Jesus. Non, it is reported, was raped by prince Sant who was also a priest. This information showed how Saint David was of noble lineage and was deemed to be special from his awful conception. A storm raged while Non was in labour but she, like Mary, was bathed in the holy light.²⁹ There is a holy well that sprung up near saint Non at the moment of Davids birth. This well is purported to heal eye complaints. Like the saints mentioned before, Non was also known in other parts of the Celtic world. Her tomb is said to be in Dirinon, Brittany and she has another holy well in Altarnon in Cornwall. Because it is part of her legend that she was a nun, a holy person, who had been raped to conceive St David. Then she is a saint that can be turned too by others who have been through such traumas. Her son David, who became the patron saint of Wales, was mainly remembered by Rhygyfarch (c 1057-99) who expresses his seeking for

²⁴ Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints: The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and Such Irish Saints as Have Dedications in Britain. Faustus to Gynaid. Part Five* (For the honourable Society of cymmrodorion, by C. J. Clark, 1911).

²⁵ Nigel Pennick.

²⁶ 'EBK: Cynyr Ceinfarfog of Caer Goch' <<http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/bios/cynyrccg.html>> [accessed 14 March 2023].

²⁷ Nigel Pennick.

²⁸ Evans and Wooding. The cults of ss. Nonne and Divi in Brittany

²⁹ 'Who Is St Non? | St Davids Cathedral' <<https://www.stdavids cathedral.org.uk/discover/history/St-Non>> [accessed 14 March 2023].

information on David like a bee going from flower to flower. The industrious bee is used as a symbol by other saints, and it could be Rhygyfarch is using this very flamboyant expression to link David to the other saints. The dove is also used for David. Like John the Baptist being told about Jesus and also St Columba, who was known as Columcille, the dove of the church. The interesting link being Columba was trained by St Finnian of Clonard who, in turn, had been trained by saint David. This information is brought up by E. S. Towill in the Saints of Scotland who claim that David trained in the monastery Candida Casa that was set up by St Ninian in 397 long before Iona.³⁰ We have no proof of this information just as we have no proof that David went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem as Rhygyfarch tells us. There are holy wells and churches set up for David as there are for our other saints mentioned. One of the miracles performed around David is in the druidic style. He was at a meeting to denounce the heretic Pelagius when the ground underneath him was miraculously raised up so the congregation could see and hear him.

The lives of the saints are characterised by recurring tropes and motifs. Of the saints we have looked at we can see that the noble lineage is of importance. Just like Jesus' disciples were keen to show that he was of the line of king David and therefore blessed by God. (Romans 13. 1-6) The stories that were kept alive through the centuries until they were written down have kept the noble lineage as paramount to the stories. The performance of miracles. Signs and wonders out-with the normal everyday occurrences. The importance of this is to show how the saints were blessed by God in the same way that Jesus was. Our saints were mobile. They were seen to be going to the people, proselytising, the churches built for them within their own lifetimes and preserved later on shows the impact that they were having on local communities.

Many saints have wells or springs associated with them that are reported to have healing powers. The wells and springs were in use pre-Christian times. One of the many reasons that beer, which must have the water boiled, and other alcohol drinks were favoured in the past was the fear that the water could be poisonous. Water springing from the ground was, and still is, pure. Finding a pure source was lifesaving and cherished. The source would be protected and generally accredited to a deity. The Romans were fond of bathing and this culture is still in use today with Bath being the obvious link to the past.³¹ Christian Saints, who were after the Roman occupation, would have to bring the pagan association of the wells

³⁰ E S Towill, *The Saints of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrews Press, 1978).

³¹ Blantyre-Simpson. Eve, *Folk Lore in Lowland Scotland* (London: J. M. Dent & Company, 1908).

under the auspice of God. They would use the bible and the fact that it was God who controlled water, probably using the example of Moses striking the rock to bring fresh water to the people. (Numbers, 20. 10-13) and Jesus turning water into wine. For the early saints, it was imperative that the people stopped looking to the old religion and make the claim that the healing powers were God given and were a gift that could only be granted by Gods chosen. Below is an example of the Roman experience.

“Livy, for example (born 59 B.C.), describes how the consul Postumius was lost in Gaul together with his army in a huge forest called Litana, “The Broad One” (early Irish lethan, modern Gaelic leathan). The Gauls ambushed and surrounded Postumius’ two legions and virtually destroyed them. The consul died fighting, spoils were taken from his body and, predictably, his head was severed, and it and the booty were taken by the Boii, the Celtic tribe in question, to their “holiest temple”. “Then, after they removed the flesh from the head (excarnation of skulls and of bodies generally is well attested in archaeological work and must have been widely practised) they adorned the skull with gold according to their custom. They used it as a sacred vessel to give libations on holy days, and their priests and the custodians of their temple used it as a goblet” (Koch & Carey 1994, 31). The libations were presumably sacred water from the springs which served the temples; blood, perhaps, from sacrificial victims; and on occasion the mead or ale which were the favoured drinks of the Celts, although wine-drinking early became popular when supplies became available.” Ann Ross.³²

We can see from this that the Romans were aware of the potential of the holy water and the belief that the gift of the healing well had to be channelled. In the pagan religion there was usually a Naiad or as folklore tells us, a Melusine.³³ In some Scottish folktales you have the notion that for the wells blessings to be real the water must be drawn from the well by a Dewer, a well servant. They would give you a drink from the well in human skull. The water had no potency without the servant this is also true further south as explained by the druids³⁴ The switch to a saintly servant was an easy transition. It could be supposed that it was the same mindset that switched from the pagan triune god to the Holy Trinity. Some of the wells

³² Anne Ross, ‘Severed Heads and Sacred Waters – Anne Ross (Illus. R.W. Feachem) Source Issue 5 Spring 1998’, *Holyandhealingwells*, 1998 <<https://insearchofholywellsandhealingsprings.com/2022/09/19/severed-heads-and-sacred-waters-anne-ross-illus-r-w-feachem-source-issue-5-spring-1998/>> [accessed 17 March 2023].

³³ Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Vol 2: Within a Budding Grove* (Random House, 2010).

³⁴ ‘Sacred Waters - Holy Wells | Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids’, 2020 <<https://druidry.org/resources/sacred-waters-holy-wells>> [accessed 17 March 2023].

are said to have sprung from the ground at a saintly event, like the birth of David, but most would have been appropriated by the saint to show Gods mastery over the old gods. This could not have been an easy task and it is a testimony to the power of the belief in and of the Saints, and their followers, that they were able to bring this change about. It has been thought that the Druids had been in charge and honoured for so long that they didn't know how to sell themselves.

Saints' cults often develop around a holy well or spring and are marked by the building of a church or chapel nearby. they were a mode to uniting the people. The Druids, whom the Romans tried to eliminate, had sacred groves to worship in. we cannot know what information has been lost from the Roman massacre of the druids, but we can assume that the early monasteries, pre-Norman, were on the same landscapes as previous religious sites. There are several old church sites to visit on the island of Anglesey that the Bangor university chaplaincy would take students on to show how they were in circular enclosures. This is the same as the ones mentioned in Gwynedd that saint Cadfan took over. Another druidic image that the saints adopted is the impressions in stone of the prints of important people. Nennius mentions the eighth battle of king Arthur in which he had a vision of the virgin Mary telling him he would be victorious. He was, and in gratitude, had a church built in the village of Stow in Selkirkshire, dedicated to Mary.³⁵ There was, in Stow, a stone slab that had the imprints of the feet of the virgin Mary. The slab was beside a holy well that had many noble patrons.³⁶ St Columba has a pilgrimage rout to follow and on it there is the stone flat on the ground that his mother is said to have given birth to him on.³⁷ This is a reflection of the story of St Non who, when giving birth to St Davis griped the rock so tight that she left the marks of her finger prints in the rock. Other telling's say she broke the rock in half.

The stories of the lives of the saints are often extraordinary and sensational. The reading of their stories can seem like the tabloids or conspiracy theories today. Could the stories be exaggerated? Yes! Would the stories of the miracles all be fake? No! these people were not some ignorant of the world, citizens. The Roman rule had barley ended and the people were

³⁵ 'The Eighth Battle of King Arthur near Gurnion Castle' <<http://www.legendofkingarthur.co.uk/battles/8-gurnion-castle.htm>> [accessed 19 March 2023].

³⁶ 'Our Lady's Well | History & Heritage', *Scotland Starts Here* <<https://scotlandstartshere.com/point-of-interest/our-ladys-well/>> [accessed 19 March 2023]. The stone was crushed up and used for hardcore on the new turnpike road.

³⁷ 'Pilgrimage: The Road To The Scottish Isles' <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2022/14/bbc.com/mediacentre/proginfo/2022/14/pilgrimage-scottish-isles/>> [accessed 19 March 2023].

aware of their surroundings. We do our ancestors a disservice to think they didn't know what was happening and were constantly being duped. Out of the ordinary, 'miraculous' things, can still be attested to today, with many visitors to sacred sites still claiming cures. C S Lewis says that you have to have faith to believe in miracles, and some people are predisposed to not believe.³⁸

The saints we have looked at, all had miracles happen by them and around them, not only in their own lifetime but they and have been worshiped up to the reformation and beyond. We have seen, by the scant evidence we have, that these saints were honoured in their own life, and the cult of them was carried forward by the dedication and prayers that were offered to them by the churches and relics that came after them. Our saints were sanctified by God. The people in their time knew this and followed them so they could also be blessed by God and found worthy of him like the saints were. The saints we have looked at were of noble bloodlines as was Jesus. The lives of our saints are characterised by recurring tropes and motifs. Such as churches being dedicated to them, holy wells with healing powers, miraculous happenings, and many followers. The quote below by The Right Rev. John Wyn Evans is a succinct summing up of the analysis of what makes a saint, a saint in today's world.

"Only the top saints had Lives written about them, but you have to remember they are not history," Bishop Evans says. "They are making points about the status and importance of the churches which actually wrote them."

"The expansion of a saint's cult, which took centuries, had to do with all sorts of factors, like how successful they were in attracting lands. Cults don't depend on the person themselves; they depend on patronage, usually from kings and princes—although the cult could not have happened unless there was a substantial real person. The reason that the cult of David became preeminent is because of the patronage of the House of Deheubarth. Four members of the dynasty are buried in St. Davids Cathedral.³⁹"

This is well put but like the rest of the lives of the saints it is just an opinion after the facts, and we should be left to make up our own informed beliefs.

³⁸ C.S. Lewis, *Miracles*, 1947 <<http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.260876>> [accessed 4 April 2023].

³⁹ Evans and Wooding. *The Bishop of St. Davids, the Right Rev. John Wyn Evans, is an expert on early Welsh saints*.

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