**SERMON AT DIOCESAN SYNOD SERVICE**

**100312**

You won’t be surprised to know that I have an affection for Celtic Saints about whom little is known. They are available to be appropriated in support of all one’s favourite causes. Listen to this:

**Saint Kessog** was an [Irish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_people) [missionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missionary) of the mid-sixth century active in southern [Perthshire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perthshire). Kessog was [Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland)'s [patron saint](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patron_saint) before [Saint Andrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Andrew), and his name was used as a [battle cry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_cry) by the [Scots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_people). Son of the king of [Cashel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cashel,_County_Tipperary) in Ireland, Kessog is said to have worked [miracles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle), even as a child. He left Ireland and became a missionary bishop in Scotland. Using [Monks' Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inchtavannach) in [Loch Lomond](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loch_Lomond) as his headquarters, he evangelized the surrounding area until he was martyred in 520 AD.

In our readings today, we hear of Jonah to whom God says, ‘Get up, go .. and proclaim’ Jesus says to the disciples, ‘Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest’

It won’t surprise you that the story of Kessog resonates with me – as does the story of Columba. I am physically and geographically ‘out of my place.’ I have left behind what I believed to be my life’s work until God decided otherwise. And many of you will have similar feelings – the story of how you came to be where you are and your relationship with that place; the journey of heart and mind which leads you now to believe what you believe and to be the person that you are – bearing the life of Christ within you.

Christian faith is about that. We are where we are. We settle, belong, build, care and serve. But we are also sent – sent to share.

In the Nine Marks of Mission, the one on which we focus this year – and which has been selected by a number of the congregations which have drawn up Mission Action Plans this year - is ‘Share faith by confident and sensitive evangelism’. We know about evangelism which is over-confident and insensitive. We know about evangelism which is under-confident and which, in the best sense, lacks conviction.

The key word I think is confident – in its root it is of course a word of trust and faith. So we aren’t talking about confidence which is bumptious and arrogant. Rather one which is rooted in our own relationship of faith and trust with the God who calls us and sends us.