Glendalough's Monastic Valley in Ireland's Wicklow Mountains | Wikipedia, Olgacaf

REMEMBERING

KELTIC-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

A Rural-Indigenous and Eco-Spiritual Resource
for the Future of Western Christianity
at the End of the Modern World

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PACEM IN TERRIS PRESS

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Washington DC
www.paceminterris.net
2024

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Joe presented earlier versions of this 2024 essay on Keltic-Catholic Christianity at the Spirituality & Sustainability Conferences in Assisi, Italy in 2018 and 2023. This essay and those earlier presentations were developed from a section in Joe's 2017 book POSTMODERN MODERN ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY. That book is also available in its 2023 eBook edition for free downloading from:

https://paceminterris.net/resources

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PREFACE

KELTIC-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY once flourished across Europe's Western Isles including the large island of today's England, Scotland, and Wales and the smaller island of Ireland. It was the Christianity of the Keltic-Catholic Church, composed of rural-indigenous Keltic clans still grounded in the ancient Eco-Spirituality of their Druid ancestors.

Most famous in the history of Keltic-Catholic Christianity was the early-medieval Irish evangelizing mission to the rural-indigenous Germanic tribes long migrating into Central and Western Europe. That Irish mission established rural-indigenous and eco-spiritual communities (Keltic-Catholic monasteries) for faith, agriculture, and education. Many European towns and cities developed out of those Irish foundations, including as far as Vienna.

The great Irish Keltic-Catholic mission to continental Europe, which began in the 6th Century following the fall of the Roman Empire, provided a rural-indigenous and eco-spiritual alternative to the now-weakened Roman-Catholic Church, which had appropriated the Roman Empire's urban-aristocratic and hierarchical-imperial structures. That appropriation developed earlier during the 4th Century out of the Roman Empire's establishment of the Catholic Church as its imperial church, with its bishops becoming aristocratic lords.

But, in the West, attacks by the migrating Germanic tribes eventually led to the collapse of Roman imperial structures. They also weakened the Roman-Catholic Church's Western ecclesial control. Amidst that collapse of old imperial structures for church and society, and as "barbarian" tribal leaders took power across Western Europe, new space emerged for the missionary-oriented Keltic-Catholic Church with its rural-indigenous Eco-Spirituality.

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Indigenous Irish Keltic-Catholic eco-spiritual leaders like Columba (Colmcille in Irish, 521-597) and Columban (Columbanus in Latin, 543-615) led the early-medieval Irish missionary campaigns, with Columba going to today's Scotland and Columban to the European Continent. They and their companions established countless Keltic-Catholic monastic foundations across Scotland, the North of Britain, and continental Europe. Those monastic foundations became Keltic-Catholic centers of regenerative eco-spiritual and eco-social energy evangelizing and educating serving both Keltic and Germanic rural-indigenous peoples.

Centuries later into the 11th and 12th Centuries, followers of Keltic-Catholic Eco-Spirituality included Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), who preached in the Rhineland valley of today's Germany, and Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), who preached in the Umbrian hills and valleys of today's Italy.

However, also in the 12th Century, the British Monarchy (developing its imperial power) and the Roman-Catholic Papacy (developing its ecclesial empire) jointed hands to destroy the rural-indigenous and eco-spiritual Keltic-Catholic Christianity's flourishing center in Ireland.

That destruction began when the English Monarchy (now Anglo-Norman), authorized by a papal mandate from an English pope, militarily invaded Ireland and began to convert its fertile lands and indigenous clans into occupied and exploited victims of its settler colonialism. Also, in the name of "reform," the English Monarchy and Roman-Catholic Papacy began to replace Ireland's rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Church with the Roman-Catholic Church, again with Roman-Catholic bishops as aristocratic lords.

But what if the British Monarchy and the Catholic Papacy had allowed Ireland to remain independent? What if they had encouraged Ireland's rural-indigenous and eco-spiritual Keltic-Catholic Church to reform itself in its own way, to develop even more, and to flourish across Europe's Western Isles and the European Continent?

Might then Modern Industrial Civilization not have produced its now-globalized industrial killing of Earth's beauteous and sacred community of ecological life, which includes our human species?

Also, might contemporary Western Christianity, in both Catholic and Protestant forms and with both in deep crisis, now retrieve and revive the Eco-Spirituality of rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Christianity (along with other rural-indigenous eco-spiritual resources)?

And might that retrieval and revival happen soon enough to help stop the global industrial killing of ecological life, including human life, across Earth's beauteous and sacred Biosphere, with that vast global killing now still expanding before our too-often blinded eyes?

INTRODUCTION

Who Were the Kelts?

T HE KELTS (from the Greek *Keltoi*) – alternately Celts (from the Latin *Celtae*) or Gauls and Gaels (from the Latin *Galli*) – were ancient and rural-indigenous European tribes sharing Keltic languages, technologies, and cultures.

Distribution of Celtic peoples over time, in the traditional view:

☐ Core Hallstatt territory, by the sixth century BC

☐ Greatest Celtic expansion by 275 BC

☐ Lusitanian area of Iberia where Celtic presence is uncertain

☐ Areas in which Celtic languages were spoken throughout the Middle Ages

☐ Areas where Celtic languages remain widely spoken today

The Celts | Wikipedia

During the classical period, the Kelts became <mark>Europe's largest rural-indigenous culture.</mark> Their broadest extension reached from Europe's Western Isles, through much of Western Europe and parts of Eastern Europe, and into Anatolia in today's Turkey. (St. Paul wrote an epistle to Christians in Anatolia's Keltic Galicia.)

<mark>However, in the name of the Roman Empire, Julius Caesar, through his famous "Gallic Wars" (58-50 BC), inflicted plundering military conquest and slaughter upon the Keltic tribes of Western Europe.</mark> He also grew fabulously rich by selling into slavery tens of thousands of Kelts, including women and children.

Fully Conquered Gaul in 50 BC |Gallic Wars | Wikipedia, Christiano64
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4963233

Caesar's brutal conquests reached as far as Europe's Atlantic coast with an incursion into Britain. His conquests ended with the defeat and submission of the Western Keltic tribes and a few Germanic tribes on their northwestern Keltic border. Along with slaughtering or enslaving much of those Keltic and Germanic populations, Caesar also destroyed their ancestral indigenous institutions and imposed on them his Roman "civilization."

In the next century, Agricola (40-93 AD), the Roman Empire's military general and colonial governor for Britain, first conquered the Keltic Britons in the South of today's England. Then, in a famous 83 AD battle at Mons Graupius, he defeated the northern Keltic Picts of Calcedonia (today's Scotland) and the Keltic Britons who joined their battle against the Romans.
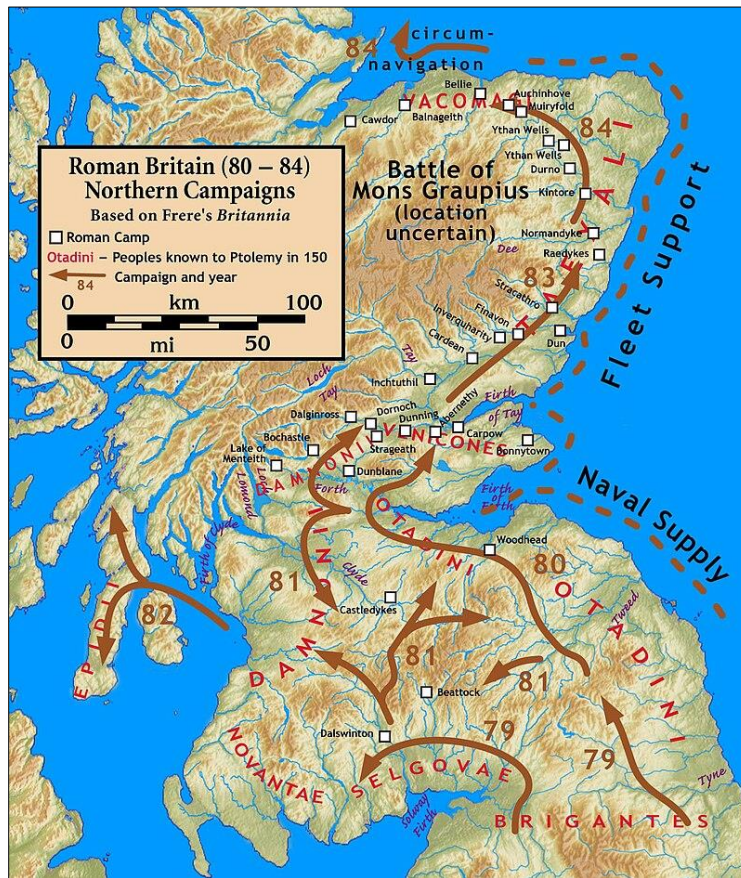
Northern British Campaigns of Agricola 80-84 Wikipedia, Frere's *Britannia*
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Agricola.Campaigns.80.84.jpg

Agricola's son Tacitus, a Roman historian, reported the now-famous speech by the Caledonian (Scottish) leader, Calgacus, to rally his troops. In that speech, he described the Romans in harsh language.

> *Robbers of the world, having by their universal plunder exhausted the land, they rifle the deep. If the enemy be rich, they are rapacious; if he be poor, they lust for dominion; neither the east nor the west has been able to satisfy them. Alone among men, they covet with equal eagerness poverty and riches. To robbery, slaughter, plunder, they give the lying name of empire. They make a wasteland and call it peace.*

In the wake of the Roman conquest of Britain, Christianity also came to Europe's Western Isles, and the new Keltic-Catholic form of Christianity emerged in both Britain (including Wales) and Ireland.

Britain & Ireland in the early–mid 1st millennium AD, before the founding of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

■ Celtic Britons.
■ Picts.
■ Gaels.

Celts in the British Isles
(Celtic Britons, Celtic Picts, & Celtic Gaels)
Wikipedia

The End of the Modern World & Indigenous Eco-Spirituality

During the mid-20th Century, the German philosopher and Catholic theologian Romano Guardini foresaw what he called "The End of the Modern World,"[1] whose foundational character many have described as "bourgeois."[2]

Today, in the early 21st century and across the West, both Catholic and Protestant forms of modern bourgeois Christianity are disintegrating. In response, I propose we understand that *spiritual disintegration* as an integral part of the bourgeois Modern World's wider *social and ecological disintegration*.

The Modern World began approximately half a millennium ago with the European development of mechanical printing and European elites' violent and

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[1] See Romano Guardini, THE END OF THE MODERN WORLD (Sheed & Ward, 1956), originally published in 1950 in the German edition as DAS ENDE DE NEUZEIT.

[2] The word "bourgeois" means *urbanist and urbanizing*. It refers to the dominant modern urban bourgeois class that displaced the once-dominant premodern rural aristocratic class. Premodern aristocratic elites' wealth and power had been based in land. In contrast, modern bourgeois elites gained their wealth and power by control of capital. Also, in the premodern aristocratic period, the exploited underclass was the rural peasantry. In the modern bourgeois period, the exploited underclass became industrial workers (beginning with uprooted peasants). However, the industrial working class is now being marginalized by automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. Because the modern bourgeois project has been urbanist and urbanizing, late-modern bourgeois elites have pressured most of our human family into urban centers, many of which are now gargantuan megacities filled with slums. Many of those cities are also becoming anti-ecological death traps threatened by global warming and coastal flooding.

Unlike premodern landed aristocratic elites, modern urban bourgeois elites (overwhelmingly male) have not philosophically understood Nature's holistically organic and cyclically reproductive character. Instead, they have philosophically misunderstood Nature through the erroneous Cosmology of atomistic-mechanical Materialism retrieved from ancient Epicurean Philosophy (but changing Epicurus' quietist Ethics into one of conquering plunder). They misinterpreted Nature as only a fragmented collection of "natural resources" to be exploited for bourgeois profit. They also misinterpreted human workers as only "human resources" to be similarly exploited for bourgeois profit.

(Note that class analyses like the above are wrongly considered a Marxian invention. Marx himself said he learned about class analysis from Catholic aristocratic intellectuals who criticized the rising bourgeoisie. Also, long before Marx and even long before Catholic Christianity, the political writings of both Plato and Aristotle employed class analysis.)

genocidal conquest of the Americas' lands and indigenous peoples and the horrendous plundering of young Africans as chattel slaves.

During the past several centuries, the Modern World has developed into Modern Industrial Civilization. That new Western form of human civilization grew initially out of the violence of Industrial Colonialism. Later, it industrialized much of the planet. Now, it is disintegrating into Global Finance Capitalism and Communism, which are destroying much of the global Biosphere through its profitable financing of the arms trade (including nuclear weapons) and fossil fuels.

Thus, the late form of Modern Industrial Civilization, in both its capitalist and its communist expressions, is now inflicting anti-ecological industrial killing across our beauteous and sacred planetary Biosphere, which includes our human species.

Further, within this late-modern ecological and social disintegration, much of modern Western bourgeois Christianity, again in both Catholic and Protestant forms, is either collapsing before the triumph of industrial and secularist Materialism or degenerating into the hyper-masculine, racist, and often violent idolatry of 'Christian' Nationalism.

However, the disintegration of Modern Industrial Civilization is not just one more cyclical process in the rise and fall of human civilizations. That is because Modern Industrial Civilization's death throes are technoscientifically killing increasing numbers of biological species within Earth's beauteous and sacred community of ecological life, and it is beginning the sixth great extinction of life on our sacred garden-planet Earth. At the same time, Modern Industrial Civilization is advancing its own demise and threatening the survival of our human species.

In response to this lethal attack on Earth's beauteous and sacred community of ecological life, and on our human species, *one urgent task for Western Christianity, and indeed for all world religions, is to learn from the Eco-Spirituality of our global human family's rich diversity of past and present rural-indigenous traditions.*

Retrieving and reviving indigenous Keltic-Catholic Eco-Spirituality, along with other indigenous eco-spiritual traditions, can help Western Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, to regenerate Western Christianity, Western society, and Earth's beauteous and sacred Biosphere. It would also contribute to the emerging Postmodern Ecological Renaissance's search for a regenerative Postmodern Ecological Civilization.[3]

To assist that Western retrieval and revival, this essay explores Ireland's early-medieval Keltic-Catholic Church.[4] During that period, it flourished as a rural church of indigenous clans grounded in the Christianization of their ancient Druid Eco-Spirituality. Ireland also became the intellectual and eco-spiritual center for missionary evangelization across today's Scotland, the North of Britain, and continental Europe.

Again, I see the early-medieval Keltic-Catholic tradition of Eco-Spirituality as a creative resource for late-modern Western Catholic and Protestant Christians, and perhaps for others as well.

To that end, this essay addresses three themes:

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[3] I use the word "postmodern" *in an ecological sense* different from what some have called "Deconstructive Postmodernism," which I see as only late-modern and nihilist.

[4] I define the Keltic-Catholic Church as having been a *sui juris* (self-governing) Catholic Church.

Today, there are 24 *sui juris* Catholic Churches in communion with the Catholic Bishop of Rome (pope). The 23 non-Roman Catholic Churches are found in Africa, Eastern Europe, Western Asia, the Middle East, and India, with some dating back to the time of the Apostles.

Thus, I view Keltic-Catholic Christianity as having been a Western-European but non-Roman *sui juris* Catholic Church in communion with the Roman-Catholic Bishop of Rome.

However, within the current global communion of 24 Catholic Churches, the Roman Catholic Church is by far the largest. Its vast size is due to its millennia-old alliance with Roman and Western imperialism from Constantine to Leopold of Belgium. That imperial alliance enabled the Roman-Catholic Church to continually expand its global territories.

Perhaps now is the time to break up the Roman-Catholic Church's vast territorial monopoly of ecclesiastical power and to form more regional Catholic churches in communion with the Catholic Bishop of Rome. A revival of the Keltic-Catholic Church could become one example.

1. **The Eco-Spiritual Flourishing of Irish Keltic-Catholic Christianity.** After the Roman conquest of Britain in the 1st Century, the Keltic-Catholic form of Christianity began developing in the South of Britain and Ireland. However, following the Roman withdrawal from Britain in the early 5th Century, "Anglo-Saxons" (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) soon invaded Britain and allied with the Roman-Catholic Church to replace the Keltic-Catholic Church in the Briton's South (though it still survived in Wales and Cornwall). Then, during the 6th to 10th Centuries, Irish missionaries spread the Keltic-Catholic Church into today's Scotland, the North of Britain, and Continental Europe. Much later, during the 12th and 13th Centuries, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) and Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) continued to preach Keltic-Catholic Eco-Spirituality.

2. **The English Destruction of Irish Keltic-Catholic Christianity.** The English destruction came in two historic waves.

   - *The Anglo-Norman English Invasion.* First, in the 12th Century, the Anglo-Norman and Roman-Catholic English Monarchy, authorized by an English pope, partially invaded Ireland. Soon after, the Roman-Catholic Papacy, working in alliance with the English Monarchy and continental religious orders (especially the Cistercians), began to displace Ireland's Keltic-Catholic Church. That happened as continental religious orders took over Keltic-Catholic monastic lands and properties and by Romanizing bishops took power and weakened the Irish Keltic-Catholic monastic system.

   - *The Tudor-Protestant English Invasion.* Second, during the 16th and 17th Centuries, the Tudor-Protestant English Monarchy completed the English conquest of Ireland. It also completed the destruction of Ireland's Keltic clan system and ancient and extensive monastic centers of scholarly study and teaching. That meant Irish Keltic-Catholic elites, including clerical candidates, had to leave Ireland to study at continental Roman-Catholic universities, where they were no longer formed in the Keltic-Catholic eco-spiritual tradition. At the same time, the Protestant English Monarchy violently attempted to replace Ireland's now-Romanized Catholic Church with its

new Anglican Church of Ireland, which then confiscated Catholic church lands and properties.

3. <mark>*The Retrieval of Keltic-Catholic Christianity*</mark>. Today, I argue that Western Catholic and Protestant Christians need to retrieve and revive the ancient rural-indigenous tradition of Keltic-Catholic Eco-Spirituality. By doing so, they could help to regenerate Western Christianity at the end of the Modern World, amidst the global devastation of integral-ecological life by its Modern Industrial Civilization in the form of Global Finance Capitalism and Communism. They could also contribute to the emerging Postmodern Ecological Renaissance, which is summoning us to begin the long and difficult journey toward a global and regenerative Postmodern Ecological Civilization.

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THE ECO-SPIRITUAL FLOURISHING
OF IRISH KELTIC-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

BACK IN ROMAN TIMES, THE ROMAN EMPIRE'S BRUTAL ARMY never invaded Ireland. For that reason, Ireland flourished as the remaining center for rural-indigenous and eco-spiritual Keltic-Catholic Christianity within Europe's Western Isles. It also served as the main base for the great Keltic-Catholic Church's missionary revival of Christianity across Western Europe after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and for its evangelization of the vast Germanic tribes migrating into Western Europe.

In this Part I, I explore Irish Keltic-Catholic Christianity by criticizing the historical ignorance about its reality as seen in a now-famous address by the late and distinguished scholar Lynn White, Jr. (1907-1987), who was a professor of medieval history at Princeton and Stanford.

Lynn White's Ignorance
about Keltic-Catholic Christianity

In 1966, Lynn White, Jr. addressed the 133rd annual meeting of the American Society for the Advancement of Science. His address was later published in a 1967 issue of SCIENCE.

Calling his address "The Historic Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," White identified Christianity as the most significant historic root of the contemporary ecological

crisis. He wrote: "*Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen*."

Lynn White, Jr.
American Historical Society
1973

However, White's purpose was not to reject Christianity but to reform it ecologically. He was the son of a Calvinist-Protestant professor of Ethics, a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, and a committed Christian. For his goal of reforming Christianity, he held up the Nature-loving figure of Saint Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), and he proposed that Francis be seen as "*a patron saint for ecology*."

White's published address provoked a torrent of scholarly responses, with many criticizing his sometimes-erroneous understanding of Christianity and the Bible. Nonetheless, White's address helped to stimulate a vast literature about the relationship between Christianity and ecology.

Lynn White, Jr.'s highlighting of Saint Francis of Assisi resonated with several later actions of the Roman-Catholic Papacy.

- *Patron Saint of Ecology.* In 1979, John Paul II issued a papal decree naming Saint Francis the Catholic Church's patron saint of ecology.

- *Pope Francis.* In 2013, Jorge Bergoglio, the Argentine cardinal newly elected pope, chose "Francis" for his papal name, in part after Saint Francis of Assisi.

- *Laudato Si'.* In 2015, Pope Francis issued his now-famous encyclical letter on ecology, LAUDATO SI'. The letter begins with Saint Francis of Assisi's famous prayer the "*Canticle of Creation*."

In addition, White's highlighting of Saint Francis resonates with the contemporary series of international and interfaith Conferences on Spirituality and Sustainability held in Assisi, Italy, and organized by Dr. Elisabetta Ferrero and Dr. Rick

Clugston. So far, there have been ten of these Assisi Conferences – seven during the 1990s, two more in 2017 and 2018, and one more in 2023.

While I judge that Lynn White was wrong to identify Christianity as the "historic root of our ecological crisis," I agree that the *dominant forms* of Western Christianity played a culturally foundational role in setting an uprooted and privatized spiritual stage for the current global ecological crisis. (However, I will not go into that here. Anyone interested in my critique of the dominant forms of Western Christianity topic may consult my book 2017 POSTMODERN ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY.)

Lynn White, Jr.'s underlying error was that he did not distinguish between the *dominant forms* of Western Christianity and its *alternative form* of Keltic-Catholic Christianity, which was rural-indigenous and eco-spiritual. Despite being a distinguished medieval historian trained in Western Christian history, White shared the pervasive Roman-Catholic and Protestant historical ignorance about Keltic-Catholic Christianity and its Druid-rooted Eco-Spirituality.

I will explore the alternative Keltic-Catholic form of Christianity by using it to correct three erroneous claims that Lynn White, Jr. made in his now-famous address.

1. *Sacred Groves.* First, White claimed "*the whole concept of a sacred grove is alien to Christianity … For nearly two millennia,"* he wrote, "*Christian missionaries have been chopping down sacred groves, which are idolatrous because they assume spirit in nature*."

2. *Animal Stories.* Second, White stated that "*legends of saints, especially Irish saints, told of their dealings with animals, but always, I believe, to show their human dominance over creatures*."

3. *Saint Francis of Assisi.* Third, although White appealed to Saint Francis of Assisi's Nature-loving interpretation of Christianity, he portrayed Francis as an exceptional figure with no precedent in the Christian tradition.

These three claims by Lynn White, Jr. are all wrong.

SACRED GROVES
Keltic-Catholic Monk-Scholars forming
Eco-Spiritual Christian Communities

Again, White's first error was to claim that "*sacred groves were foreign to Christianity*" and that "*for two millennia Christian missionaries had been chopping down sacred groves*" as "*idolatrous.*"

However, during the early-medieval periods, Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars across Europe's Western Isles searched deep in the forests for "*sacred groves.*" Contra White, their motive was not to cut them down. Rather, their loving spiritual kinship with Nature led them to form, deep within the forests, what I call eco-spiritual Christian villages for rural-indigenous Keltic clans.

Celtic Cross at Dawn in Knock, Ireland
Sebd, 2005 | Wikipedia

These eco-spiritual Christian villages were Keltic-Catholic "monasteries" with chapels, farms, and schools. Their function was to evangelize and educate the surrounding tribal peoples and gather them in Christian eco-spiritual communion with Nature's myriad creatures.

Peter Maurin (1877-1949), co-founder with Dorothy Day (1887-1980) of the Catholic Worker Movement, described these villages as "farming colonies" that were "agronomic universities" with "centers of thought" and "houses of hospitality." Peter wrote that they combined "Cult" (liturgy), "Culture" (literature), and "Cultivation" (agriculture).

In the early days of Ireland's Christian evangelization, the Druids overall had not violently opposed Christianity. For that reason, there were no Christian martyrs in Ireland. In addition, many female and male children of Druids reportedly became eco-spiritual Keltic-Catholic leaders. Women and men, these Keltic-Catholic leaders Christianized the Druid tradition's rural-indigenous Eco-Spirituality.

Then, for several centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars from Ireland, along with some Welsh and British monk-scholars, undertook bold Christian missionary campaigns to evangelize today's Scotland, to renew Christianity in Western Europe, and to evangelize the migrating Germanic tribes. In so doing, they laid an eco-spiritual, eco-intellectual, and eco-social foundation for European Civilization.

Many of those missionary monk-scholars came from leading families of the Keltic clans. Because of their family roots in tribal-clan leadership, they were able to successfully evangelize leading families of the migrating rural-indigenous German tribes and, through them, their rural-indigenous tribal peoples.

As was their custom, the Irish Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars began their re-evangelization of Western Europe and their new evangelization of the Germanic tribes by forming, again deep within the forests, Nature-centered eco-spiritual communities with chapels, farms, and schools. Those eco-spiritual communities eventually grew into villages of rural-indigenous Christians. (I sometimes call them early-medieval ecovillages.) Later, many grew into towns and cities of contemporary Europe.

In contrast, missionary evangelization was not initially part of the Roman-Catholic monastic movement founded in the early 6th Century by Saint Benedict of Nursia (480-547) and his sister Saint Scholastica (480-543), both young Roman-Catholic spiritual leaders from a wealthy Roman family in Umbria of today's Italy.

The Benedictine Rule, written after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, was inner-directed to the human psyche's interior life. It did not mention missionary

evangelization. It required Benedictine monks to stay in one place ("stability"), which excluded becoming missionary pilgrims.

Thus, unlike the outer-directed Irish monasticism that began in the same 6th Century, inner-directed Benedictine monasticism had no early evangelizing mission to the Germanic tribes. Instead, it promoted what has been called the *fuga mundi* (Latin for flight from the world).

Perhaps Benedictine monasticism did not initially seek to evangelize the migrating Germanic tribes because the early Latin Benedictines were so culturally different from them. Benedict and Scholastica were children of an aristocratic Roman lord, and Benedict later lamented the 'barbarian' destruction of Rome.

Perhaps too, some early Roman-Catholic Benedictine monks, still carrying the culture of Roman Civilization, may have looked down on the "savage" Germanic tribes. But "savage," from its Latin root *silva* ("forest"), simply means people who live within Nature in rural woodlands, rather than in artificially constructed stone cities like Rome, which were designed to rise above Nature. Further, stone cities like Rome were fortified enclaves for aristocratic elites' military conquest of rural-indigenous peoples living within Nature's woodlands.

Where Roman 'civilized' culture was urban and imperial, the Keltic and Germanic tribes were 'uncivilized' woodland peoples. (The word "civilized," from the Latin *civitas*, simply refers to those who live in a city.) The Keltic and Germanic cultures were not urban or imperial but rather rural and indigenous.

Thus, the rural-indigenous Keltic and Germanic tribes shared "savage" woodland cultures that were immersed in Nature, while the Roman Benedictine monks presumably cherished memories of the stone cities constructed for Rome's "civilized" urban-imperial culture.

Perhaps that was why Roman Catholic Benedictines, during the high medieval period, built great stone abbeys and monastic empires like Cluny. In contrast, the

==Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars identified their monasteries with Nature – again, deep within forests, close to lakes, or on the edge of the wild sea.==

Even so, a Benedictine monk named ==Boniface== (c. 675-754) from the Saxon territory of England's Wessex was sent on a mission to "Germania." But Boniface was charged with "reorganizing" Germania's Keltic-Catholic Church, already established there by Irish missionaries, into the (imperial) Roman-Catholic model.

Boniface became famous from the legend of his chopping down an oak tree to symbolically root out paganism. Perhaps, he was Lynn White, Jr.'s model for his erroneous statement that Christian missionaries "*always chopped down sacred groves.*"

Benedictine Monk Boniface (675-754)
chopping down an oak tree to combat paganism
(Wikipedia | Bernard Rode, 1781)

In contrast to the English-Saxon and Roman-Catholic Benedictine monk Boniface, Irish Keltic-Catholic monastic missionaries did not chop down oak trees to destroy "paganism." (From its Latin root, "pagan" simply means "rural," and rural indigenous peoples were thus identified as "pagan" by urban-imperial Roman elites.) On the contrary, ==like their Druid ancestors, Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars embraced rural sacred groves deep within the forests. They established those Keltic-Catholic forest centers for their Christian communities to pray, work, and study together in spiritual kinship with the Divine Presence, which they saw immanently revealed within Nature.==

Again, Irish Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars' evangelizing centers within the forest centers were not inner-directed like Benedictine monasteries pursuing the *fuga mundi*. Instead, they were outer-directed for rural-indigenous evangelization. Irish monk-scholars formed their lay Christian communities – again, chapels, farms,

and schools – to live within Nature and to celebrate Nature as a sacred creation immanently revealing the Divine Presence

Also, the Irish Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars, who journeyed as missionaries to continental Europe, considered themselves evangelizing pilgrims *(*from the Latin *peregrini* meaning travelers*)*. In contrast to Benedict's vow of stability," the Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars journeying as missionary pilgrims across Europe saw themselves imitating the pilgrim Jesus journeying across Galilee and Judea.

Thus, the early-medieval Irish Keltic-Catholic missionaries spread not simply a different model of Catholic monasticism but, more significantly, a different model of Catholic Christianity. The contrast was not simply between Irish Keltic-Catholic monasticism and Benedictine Roman-Catholic monasticism. The more profound contrast was between Roman-Catholic Christianity, which was *urban, aristocratic, and imperial,* and Keltic-Catholic Christianity, which was *rural, indigenous, and anti-imperial*.

Before concluding this correction of Lynn White, Jr.'s first error, allow me to share a personal story. Many decades ago, an Irish friend, John Sweeney, took me to visit the site of the ancient Irish Keltic-Catholic monastery at Glendalough within Ireland's gentle Wicklow Mountains. Saint Kevin (Coemgen in Irish, meaning "Fair-begotten") founded the ancient Glendalough monastery in the 6th Century. In pre-Christian times, the site had reportedly been a Druid center. The site's Irish name, *Geann Dá Loch*, means "valley of two lakes." Saint Kevin slept there in a mountain cave known as "Kevin's bed."

 My Irish friend John told me that, during the Middle Ages, thousands of young scholars from the European Continent journeyed to that monastic valley every summer to study with its monk-scholars. I also remember, from my boyhood years, my Irish grandfather, born not far from Glendalough, telling me stories about Saint Kevin and "Kevin's bed."

When John showed me Glendalough's mystical valley and lakes, I scanned its magnificent landscape and naively asked: But where is the abbey? He responded: Oh no, Joe. There is no abbey. This green valley with its shining lakes, this is the monastery.


Glendalough's Monastic Valley in Ireland's Wicklow Mountains
Wikipedia, Olgacaf

So Lynn White, Jr. was in error when he claimed the concept of "*a sacred grove*" was alien to Christianity, and that Christian missionaries had "*always chopped down oak trees as idolatrous*." Let us now turn to the second theme of Nature's sacred creatures, on which Lynn White, Jr. based his second erroneous claim.

ANIMAL STORIES

Irish Keltic-Catholic Saints' Spiritual Kinship with Animals

Lynn White's second error claimed that, in their stories about animals, the "*Irish saints*" wanted "*to show their human dominance over creatures*." But that was the opposite of the Irish Keltic-Catholic saints' eco-spiritual intention.
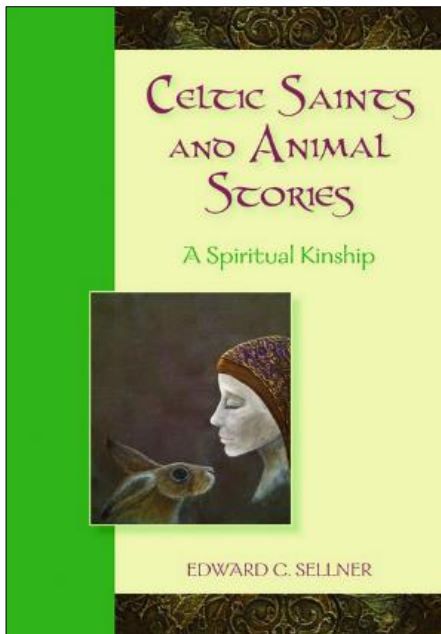
Edward Sellner, Professor Emeritus in Theology and Spirituality at St. Catherine's University and a fellow at the Oxford University Center for Animal Ethics, made clear that truth in his charming 2020 book CELTIC SAINTS AND ANIMAL STORIES: A SPIRITUAL KINSHIP. Through abundant stories, he showed how the Irish Keltic-Catholic saints developed warm relationships with animals, not to dominate them but in spiritual kinship with them.

CELTIC SAINTS AND ANIMAL STORIES offers endless examples showing how, for the Irish Keltic-Catholic saints, "*a sense of kinship with animals and, really, of all creation, became a major characteristic of their Celtic Christian spirituality.*"

For example, Edward Sellner wrote:

> *Celtic Christians found it natural … to experience communion with God in their natural surroundings. In the stories of the saints, they are often found establishing their monasteries and oratories in places where the druids and druidesses had once taught and worshipped in the midst of oak groves or near sacred springs, on the shores of secluded lakes, or on misty islands far out at sea.*

Again, he wrote:

> *The lives of these Celtic saints constitute the largest body of hagiographies of any group in Christian history to have so many animal stories included in them … This sense of kinship not only was an intrinsic aspect of Christian living in Celtic lands, but also significantly influenced later saints who were raised in geographical areas on the Continent, ministered to by Irish missionaries …*

As we will see in these stories, the Celtic saints had a special affinity with animals that were reciprocated. Kevin shelters in his hand a blackbird that probably sang for him. Ciaran meets a wild boar who helps him clear land for his monastery. Columcille's white horse sheds great tears at his master's approaching death … Like many shamans throughout history, ancient Celtic druids and druidesses knew from firsthand experience of the mystical connection between humans and animals.

Edward Sellner also pointed to *John Scotus Eriugena* (c. 810-877), the 9ᵗʰ-Century Irish Keltic-Catholic philosopher-theologian who became head of the Carolingian Palace School at Aachen and the intellectual-spiritual leader of the Carolingian Renaissance.[5] He cited Eriugena's famous mystical quote: "*Every visible and invisible creature can be called a theophany, that is, an appearance of the Divine.*"

*Deer on the slopes of the Wicklow Mountains*
Joe King, 2010 | Wikipedia

Because many Western Roman-Catholic theologians had been theologically blind to the immanent Divine Presence within Nature's sacred creatures, they condemned Eriugena as a *pantheist* (someone who claims all is God). Instead, he was a *panentheist* (someone who claims God is in all yet transcends all).

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[5] In John Scotus Eriugena's name, "*Eriugena*" means in Latin " Ireland-born," and "*Scotus*" means someone from "*Scotia,*" which was the Latin name for Ireland.

Again, Lynn White, Jr.'s second error claimed that "*Irish Saints told of their dealings with animals … to show their dominance over creatures*." But they were not showing their dominance over animals. They were living their spiritual kinship with them.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Continuing Keltic-Catholic Christianity's Eco-Spirituality

Saint Francis of Assisi, 13th Century Fresco
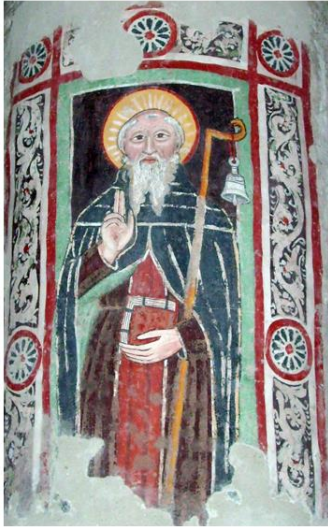*(Wikipedia)*
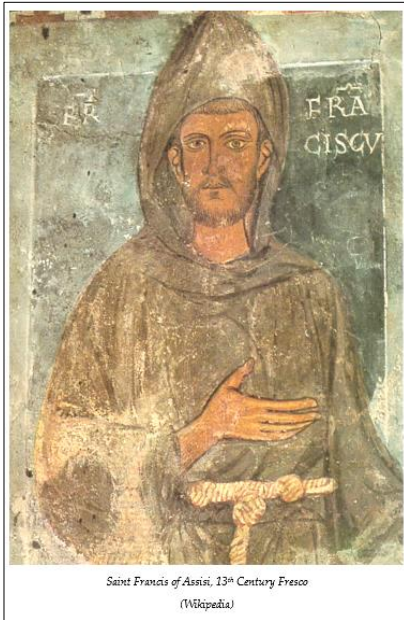
Lynn White, Jr.'s third error concerns Saint Francis of Assisi (Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, c. 1181-1182). White implicitly portrayed Francis as an exceptional figure with no precedent in the Christian tradition. But that also was not true.

Again, my resource is Edward Sellner's CELTIC SAINTS AND ANIMAL STORIES. In this book, he places Saint Francis of Assisi within the legacy of the rural-indigenous Eco-Spirituality brought to today's Italy by Irish missionaries bearing Keltic-Catholic Christianity. He specifically mentions the great leader of the Irish evangelizing mission to continental Europe, Columban.

> *Francis of Assisi … lived in part of Italy where Christianity had been brought by the great Irish missionary Saint Columban, and as a pilgrim [Francis] visited his tomb in Bobbio … [and] the numerous animal stories associated with Francis and his attitude of compassion toward animals and birds as "sisters" and "brothers" reflect the spirituality of the Celtic saints.*

The founder of the Bobbio Monastery in today's Italy, where the young Francis journeyed on pilgrimage presumably for prayer and study, was the Irish Keltic missionary Columban. He founded many monasteries, most famously Luxeuil in today's France, St. Gall in Switzerland, and Bobbio in today's Italy.

Fresco of Saint Columbanus (543-615), leading figure in the Irish Keltic-Catholic Mission to the German Tribes, from the Brugato Cathedral in Northern Italy. (Wikipedia, Davide Papalini)

In 568, the Germanic Lombard tribe invaded Northern Italy. Columban, together with the Christian Lombard Queen Theodelinda, worked to convert the Lombards to Christianity. In 613, thanks to the Lombard King Agilulf's gift of a secluded rural territory, Columban began his Keltic monastery at Bobbio. Though later was converted into a Benedictine abbey, it is still known today in Italy as the *Abbazia di San Colombano* (abbey of Saint Columban). Columban's library at Bobbio, which probably began with manuscripts from Ireland, eventually grew into one of the largest libraries in the Middle Ages. Also, in his many letters to the Roman-Catholic pope, Columban (like many other Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars) repeatedly declared his loyalty to the Roman-Catholic Bishop of Rome.

Also in CELTIC SAINTS AND ANIMAL STORIES, Edward Sellner tells us about *Saint Hildegard of Bingen* (1098-1179). From Germany's Rhineland Valley, she was a great medieval feminine mystic and eco-intellectual-spiritual leader. He shows us how, in her "*theology of greenness*," Hildegard wrote about the divine presence revealed in creation. He also notes that "*in the hagiography she wrote on St. Disibod, the Irish missionary and founder of her first monastery, she specifically shows her appreciation of the Irish contribution to her life*."

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) with her Nuns, 13th Century Image (Wikipedia)

Long before Hildegard, Keltic-Catholic Christianity had always celebrated strong women. Edward Sellner tells us about one legendary figure, the abbess and saint, *Bridget of Kildare* (c. 451 - c. 525). According to legend, she was the step-daughter

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of a Druid. She is also the Mother Saint of Ireland, protector of animals, and has been declared by some to have been ordained a Keltic-Catholic bishop.
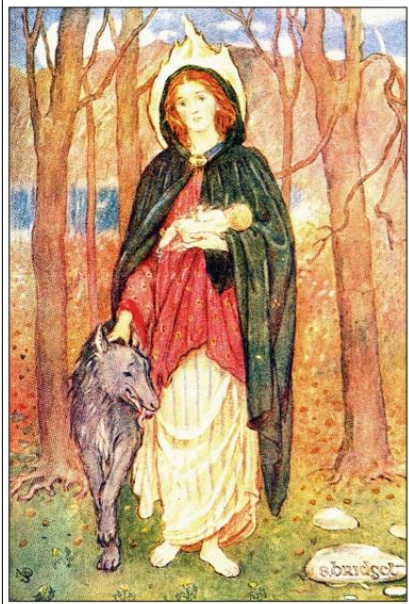
St Bridget of the Mantle
by Minnie Didbin Spooner, c. 1917

==Bridget was the abbess of a Keltic-Catholic dual monastery that included both women and men.== Once found throughout Europe's Western Isles, women often led those ==dual monasteries== – for example, the famous dual British Keltic-Catholic monastery at Whitby, led first by Abbess Hilda and later by her daughter.

==The female and male leaders of Keltic-Catholic monasteries, based on clan communities, were often married, with their leadership often passing from mother to daughter or father to son.== Similarly, Keltic-Catholic bishops and presbyters were generally married, as had been the Roman-Catholic case prior to the 11th Century.[6]

Thus, contrary to Lynn White, Jr.'s claim, Francis of Assisi was not a singular exception without precedent in Christian history. Like Columba, Columban, Bridget, and Hildegard, Francis continued the centuries-old legacy of rural-indigenous and

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[6] In contrast to the Keltic-Catholic tradition of strong women leaders, the Roman Catholic tradition adopted the Roman Empire's hierarchical patriarchy – a tradition still continuing today.

Also, beginning in the 11th Century, the Catholic Papacy, in alliance with heirs of Benedictine monasticism, forcibly imposed clerical celibacy on long-married Roman-Catholic bishops and presbyters. In turn, their wives were often driven into poverty and prostitution, while other wives and their children were condemned to slavery, including in the papal Lateran palace. (See my 2017 book, THE CRUEL IMPOSITION OF WESTERN CLERICAL CELIBACY.)

How different the practices of Eastern Orthodox Churches and Eastern Catholic Churches, which still carry many long and unbroken genealogical lines of married priests, like Judaism's long and unbroken genealogical lines of sacerdotal and rabbinical families, with their heirs of those families each time further enriched over countless generations by their long intellectual traditions. So too, the modern examples of married Protestant ministerial leaders and their families.

Keltic-Catholic Christian Eco-Spirituality. <mark>Again, it was also the legacy in which strong women like Bridget and Hildegard had played leading roles.</mark>

Such was the Keltic-Catholic model of Christianity that missionary monk-scholars from Irish clans, along with some British, Welsh, and Scottish missionary monk-scholars, carried to the European Continent to share with the migrating German tribes.

<mark>Central to their Keltic-Catholic proclamation of Jesus' Good News was the biblical message that God is love and that God loves all creation, as well as their ancient indigenous proclamation that all creatures participate in and immanently reveal the Divine Presence</mark>. Unfortunately, however, Ireland's Keltic-Catholic Christian Eco-Spirituality soon came under attack and was eventually destroyed, as I will now review.

II

THE DESTRUCTION OF
IRISH KELTIC-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY

A S NOTED EARLIER, THE ENGLISH ATTACKS ON IRELAND and its Irish Keltic-Catholic Christianity came in two separate English invasions of Ireland, one in the 12th Century (a partial conquest), and the second in the 16th to 17th Centuries (the complete conquest).

The first English invasion only partially undermined the Ireland's rural and indigenous Keltic Catholic Church, and it began to replace it with the aristocratic and imperial Roman-Catholic Church, The second English invasion destroyed the remaining legacy of Ireland's rural-indigenous Keltic tradition, and it unsuccessfully attempted to replace the now-Romanized Catholic Church of Ireland with its new Anglican Church of Ireland. I will shortly review both of those invasions.

Overall, the English military conquest and occupation of Ireland spread over eight centuries, despite unending Irish resistance. It finally ended with the early 20th-Century Irish victory in Ireland's War of Independence (1917-1921). But that war came far too late to save Ireland's rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Church.

(The high-medieval and early-modern English conquests of Ireland served as a violent testing ground for the wider global violence of the British Empire. The next step, coinciding with the second English invasion of Ireland, was the genocidal attack by English Mercantile-Capitalist Colonialism on indigenous Native Americans and the simultaneous kidnapping and enslavement of millions of young Africans. The subsequent step, during the high-modern period and now fully global, was the British Empire's Industrial-Capitalist Colonialism.

Finally, during the mid-19th Century, in the name of "Laissez-Faire" Industrial Capitalism, the British Empire genocidally inflicted enforced starvations on the rural poor of Ireland and India. (Caroline Elkins, Professor of History at Harvard University, has documented the brutality of the British Empire in her 2022 book, LEGACY OF VIOLENCE: A HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE. The Irish historian Christine Kinealy has documented English laissez-faire policies for the Irish Famine in her 1995 book, THIS GREAT CALAMITY: THE IRISH FAMINE 1845-52.)

The Earlier Roman-Catholic Papal Campaign to Replace Keltic-Catholic Christianity in Britain

As we have seen, the early Roman-Catholic replacement of Keltic-Catholic Christianity had begun earlier in the South of England, when Pope Gregory I (590-604), great-grandson of an earlier pope and founder of a Roman monastery on his wealthy Roman family's estate, sent his "Gregorian Mission" to evangelize England's Anglo-Saxon invaders (again, Saxons, Angles, and Jutes).

Map of England about the time of the Gregorian Roman Catholic Mission to evangelize the Saxons in England.
The Historical Atlas, by William R. Shepherd, 1926 | Wikipedia

The leader of Gregory's mission was the Roman-Catholic monk Augustine (died c. 604). He had been abbot of Pope Gregory's personal Roman-Catholic monastery on his family estate. Gregory made Augustine the first Roman-Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury (597-604).
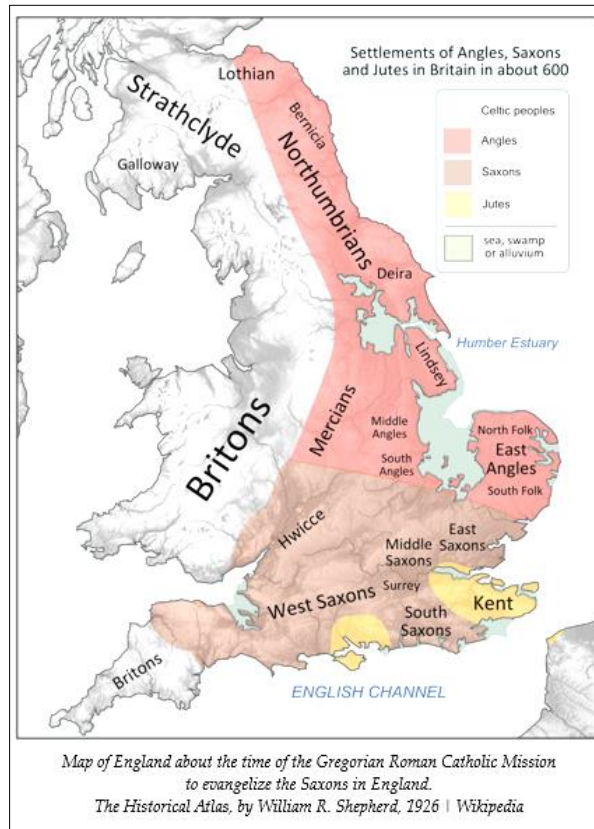
Augustine of Canterbury is often called the "Apostle to the English" and "founder of the English Church." But there was already a Catholic Church in Britain. It was the rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Church of Keltic Britons. However, the Keltic-Catholic Britons in England's South refused to evangelize their conquering Anglo-Saxon invaders, and so Pope Gregory sent Augustine.

In addition, the Columban Keltic-Catholic Church, centered in Iona of Scotland and founded by the Irish missionary Saint Columba (Colmcille), was already flourishing in the Northeast of Ireland, and it was taking root in much of today's Scotland and Britain's Northumbria.

Augustine's papal mission understandably focused on evangelizing Saxons in the South of England. But Pope Gregory also directed Augustine to eliminate all "*deviations*" from the Roman-Catholic model. That meant replacing Britain's rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic form of Christianity with urban-imperial Roman-Catholic form of Christianity.

A later major event attempting to extend that replacement beyond Saxon territory was the Northumbrian Synod of Whitby in 664, in which a papal legate tried to impose the Roman-Catholic model in Northumbria and displace its rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Columban Church. However, the Synod of Whitby was only marginally successful.

But centuries later in 1066, Normans soldiers from France, led by William the Conqueror, invaded and conquered England. William then reigned as King of England until his death in 1087. The French Normans were Roman Catholics, and they forcibly imposed their Roman-Catholic model on England. Also, to expand their triumph, the Norman conquerors of England soon planned to conquer Ireland.

Thus, the long papal goal of making the Roman-Catholic model universal in Europe's Western Isles was gaining greater strength.

The 12th-Century Anglo-Norman & Roman-Catholic
English Invasion of Ireland

In 1155, Pope Adrian IV (1154-1159), the only Englishman ever to become the Roman-Catholic Bishop of Rome, 'granted' Ireland to the Norman King of England by his decree *Laudabiliter* (1155).[7] That act was an ominous development for the Catholic papacy.

Its meaning would become clearer when a later pope, Innocent III (1198-1216), proclaimed the new high-medieval *theocratic model of the papacy*, which claimed punitive papal temporal power over the entire Earth. Innocent declared:

Henry II

Contemporary depiction of Henry from the Gospels of Henry the Lion, c. 1175–1188

King of England

Wikipedia, Henry II of England

> *The pope has jurisdiction over all men and power over them in law … If a gentile, who has no law except the law of nature, does something contrary to the law of nature, the pope can lawfully punish him.*

In 1171, sixteen years after *Laudabiliter*, the Norman English King Henry II (1133-1189), a French-speaking Roman Catholic who knew no English, invaded Ireland. Then, in 1172, Pope Alexander III (c.1159-1181) confirmed Henry as "Overlord of Ireland." However, Henry later transferred that title to his son John as "*Dominus Hiberniae*" (Lord of Ireland). But, when John became King of England (1199-1216), the title returned to the English crown and remained there for centuries to come.

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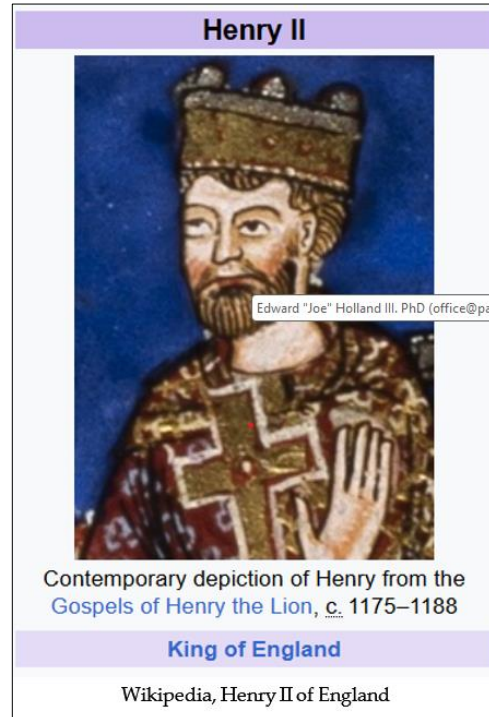
[7] There is debate about whether that decree might have been a forgery. However, the late Irish medieval scholar Donnchadh Ó Corráin, in his magisterial 1982 book THE IRISH CHURCH, ITS REFORM, AND THE ENGLISH INVASION, judged it was not a forgery.
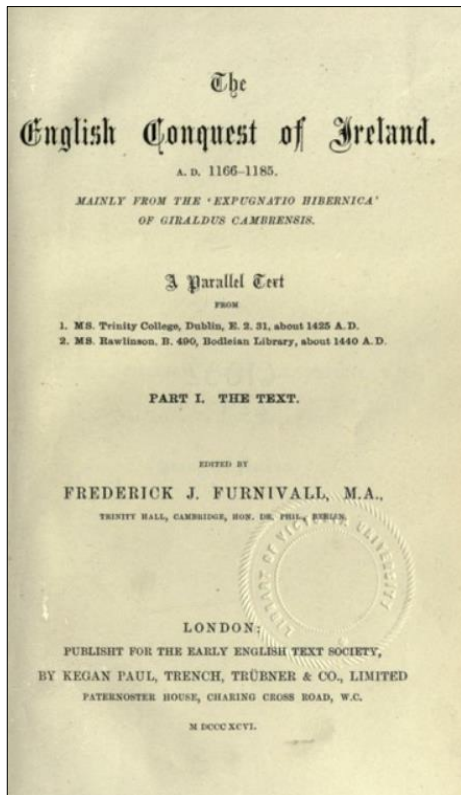
This initial papal action of claiming to give conquering and occupying authority to a foreign colonialist power rose to a greater scale with the later papal "Doctrine of Discovery." That doctrine grew from a series of papal decrees in which the Roman Catholic papacy 'granted' title for the lands of the Americas to the European colonial powers of Spain and Portugal. Thus the Roman-Catholic Papacy, developing its anti-evangelical claim of "temporal power," became a crucial partner in the conquest, often enslavement, and sometimes genocide of the Americas' indigenous peoples.

Thus, Pope Adrian's 1155 *Laudabiliter* was a medieval precursor to early-modern papal decrees called the "Doctrine of Discovery." That "Doctrine" arose from Pope Nicolas V's 1452 *Dum diversas* and 1455 *Romanus Pontifex*, Pope Alexander VI's 1493 *Inter caetera*, and Pope Julius II's 1506 *Ea quae pro bono pacis*. However, its original foundation was established in the high-medieval period to support England's violent invasion of Ireland and its indigenous Keltic clans.[8]

The early-modern papal decrees granted European Christian rulers the right to invade and conquer "pagan" lands. However, the indigenous Irish were not "pagans" but rather Keltic-Catholic Christians. Therefore, Henry needed a different justification for his invasion of Ireland."

His pretext, and that of the English Pope Adrian IV, became their claim that the Irish were "*ignorant and degenerate*" Christians who had to be saved from "*ignorance and vice*." Therefore, Henry's military invasion, again justified by papal decree, set out to "*reform*" the Irish Church by eliminating its Keltic form of Catholic Christianity and replacing it with the Roman form of Catholic Christianity.

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[8] On the wider historical framework and cultural implications of the Doctrine of Discovery, see the powerful 2021 book by the indigenous legal scholar Robert A. Williams, SAVAGE ANXIETIES: THE INVENTION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION. See also the equally powerful 2008 book by indigenous legal scholar, Steven T. Newcomb, PAGANS AND THE PROMISED LAND: DECODING THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY.

The English Conquest of Ireland.

A. D. 1166–1185.

MAINLY FROM THE 'EXPUGNATIO HIBERNICA'
OF GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS.

A Parallel Text

FROM

1. MS. Trinity College, Dublin, E. 2. 31, about 1425 A.D.
2. MS. Rawlinson. B. 490, Bodleian Library, about 1440 A.D.

PART I. THE TEXT.

EDITED BY

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TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, HON. DR. PHIL., BERLIN.

LONDON:

PUBLISHT FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY,
BY KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LIMITED
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.

M DCCC XCVI.

Chronicling Henry's invasion of Ireland was Gerald of Wales (Gerald de Barri, c. 1146 to c. 1223), a Roman-Catholic priest from a Norman-Welsh family in Wales, adviser to Henry II's son John, and chaplain to Henry II. Born in his family's castle and educated by Benedictines, Gerald is today famous (or infamous) for his 1189 book THE ENGLISH CONQUEST OF IRELAND (*Expugnatio Hibernica*, in the original Latin).

However, Gerald wrote two books on Ireland, with THE English CONQUEST OF IRELAND being his second one. His first 1187 book was titled TOPOGRAPHY OF IRELAND (*Topographia Hibernica*).

That first book was an exploration of the Irish terrain and culture, perhaps in preparation for the English invasion. In that first book, Gerald launched the prejudiced justification for the English Roman-Catholic invasion of Ireland's indigenous people:

> [The Irish] remain to this day so ignorant of the rudiments of Christianity. It is indeed a most filthy race, a race sunk in vice, a race more ignorant than all other nations of the first principles of the faith … This race is inconstant, changeable, wily, and cunning. It is an unstable race, stable only in its instability, faithful only to its faithfulness … [Further,] the Irish people attach no importance to castles; they make the woods their stronghold.[9]

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[9] From THE TOPOGRAPHY OF IRELAND, Chapter XIX, *How the Irish are very Ignorant of the Rudiments of the Faith*, in Thomas Wright, THE HISTORICAL WORKS OF GERALDUS CAMBRENSIS (George Bell & Sons, 1905), pp. 134-134.

Yet rural-indigenous Irish Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars had for centuries been the intellectual and eco-spiritual saviors of the West's classical tradition and its Christianity. They evangelized and educated rural-indigenous tribal peoples within Ireland and

Manobier Castle in Wales, Birthplace of Gerald of Wales | Wikipedia, Paul Allison, 1994

across today's Scotland, the North of Britain, and the European Continent.[10]

Those Irish monk-scholars were fluent in Latin, knew Greek as well, and their libraries were full of books from the classical Greek and Roman traditions. Their later ranks included the already mentioned John Scotus Eriugena, intellectual leader of the Carolingian Court and the most brilliant scholar in the Europe's 9th Century.

After the Western Roman Empire's collapse, Irish Keltic-Catholic missionaries, beginning in the 6th Century, had established monastic foundations, farms, and schools for eco-spiritual, intellectual, and economic renewal across much of Western Europe. Meanwhile, back in Ireland, Keltic-Catholic monastic schools for monks, for episcopal and presbyteral leaders, and for laity, were everywhere.

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[10] Thomas Cahil offered a popularized account of this story in his widely read 1996 book, HOW THE IRISH SAVED CIVILIZATION: THE UNTOLD STORY OF IRELAND'S HEROIC ROLE FROM THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE RISE OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE.

Benedict Fitzpatrick's much larger book, IRELAND AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF EUROPE (Funk & Wagnalls, 1927), is an earlier and far more detailed version of the same story. Of noteworthy value in the book is a large map titled "Hibernicized Medieval Europe," which indicates areas of Irish cultural activities, monastic foundations, and political settlements. However, the book is sometimes colored, although perhaps understandably, by the spirit of Irish nationalism that followed the then-recent and victorious Irish War of Independence.

(The Irish Keltic-Catholic monastic centers and schools were later converted into Roman-Catholic Benedictine centers or centers of other continental European Roman-Catholic religious orders. Further, Benedictine scholars often minimized or forgot the historical memory of Irish Keltic-Catholic monastic contributions. They solely credited Benedictines for the intellectual, spiritual, and social foundations laid by Irish Keltic-Catholic monk-scholars in Europe's Western Isles and on the European Continent.)

To counter the truth of Ireland, Henry II, the Norman King of England, along with the English Pope Adrian IV, developed a false propaganda campaign. Themselves living in fortified stone structures, they condemned rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Christians, for living in "*uncivilized*" woodland settings. (They thus implicitly condemned all indigenous peoples who still prefer to live within Nature.) Their condemnation also charged Irish Keltic-Catholic Christians with being "*ignorant barbarians*" in need of taming and educating by English Roman-Catholic "*civilization,*" meaning fortified castles as platforms for oppressive military conquest of their surrounding indigenous peoples.

King Henry and Pope Adrian especially accused Irish Keltic-Catholic Christians of sexual immorality. Yet the English Monarchy and its court were infamous for sexual immorality, and the medieval papacy with its court was equally infamous for its sexual immorality.

While traditional Keltic-Catholic leaders prioritized love for the poor and the sacredness of all creatures, the high-medieval Roman-Catholic 'reformers' of the "Gregorian Reform" were obsessed with sex.[11]

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[11] In the Roman Catholic Church, the 11th and 12th Centuries have been known as the period of the "Gregorian Reform," named after Pope Gregory VII (1073–85). Seeking to create a politically powerful clerical theocracy, the Gregorian Reform forcibly imposed celibacy on traditionally married Roman Catholic bishops and presbyters and thereby condemned many bishops' and priests' wives into slavery, prostitution, and suicide. Some priest wives were even enslaved in the papal Lateran Palace. Their children were also often condemned into slavery. See my earlier book, THE CRUEL IMPOSITION OF WESTERN CLERICAL CELIBACY (Pacem in Terris Press, 2017).

Also, some leaders of Roman-Catholic religious orders on the European Continent enthusiastically supported those false charges, as seen in the ==famous Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). (Cistercians are "reformed" Benedictines.)==

Bernard was the most powerful European Roman-Catholic leader in Europe and a leader of the false propaganda campaign against the rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic Church in Ireland. He was the dominant abbot of the Cistercians, a founder of the Knights Templar, a promoter of the Crusades. Further, according to some historians, he was also the male lover of ==Ireland's new pro-Roman-Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Malachy (Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair, 1094-1148).==

==In their close alliance, Malachy and Bernard worked jointly to send continental Roman-Catholic monastic orders to Ireland, including the Cistercians, to take over the island's rural-indigenous Keltic-Catholic monastic properties.==

==The late Irish historian Donnchadh Ó Corráin== (1942-2017), once a distinguished professor at both University College Cork and Cambridge University, wrote in his definitive 2017 study, ==THE IRISH CHURCH, ITS REFORM, AND THE ENGLISH INVASION==, about the destructive vision for Ireland carried by 12th-Century Roman-Catholic "reformers."

> *What they sought was nothing less than the overthrow, from within, of the traditional Irish church, an institution whose unbroken history stretched back over nearly 700 years to the early centuries of Christianity in Ireland, to a unique age of the saints, and that had created (and continued to create) a remarkable literary and artistic Christian culture. This inherited ecclesiastical order, however venerable, however celebrated its missions and its schools, was to be replaced by a conventional contemporary [Roman-Catholic] hierarchy.*

Yes, despite their attempt to destroy Irish Keltic-Catholic Christianity, the "Gregorian Reform" ==only partially succeeded.== Traditional Irish Keltic-Catholic Christian culture continued, though only in rural areas outside the invaders' stone castles

and fortified urban centers. Thus, although Irish Keltic Catholic Christianity no longer flourished as it once had, it nonetheless survived for hundreds more years until the next wave of English invasions in the 16th and 17th Centuries, this time in Protestant and Tudor English form and with terminal consequences.

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The 16th and 17th Century Tudor-Protestant English Invasion of Ireland

To be developed …

TOWARD A WESTERN REBIRTH OF KELTIC-CATHOLIC ECO-SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY

To be developed …

CONCLUSION

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