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St. Cybi of Wales

Vita Sancti Kebii

The Life of St. Cybi

Version One

Here begins the life of saint Cybi, bishop.

§1. Saint Cybi was one of the good servants of the heavenly Father, whose festival is held on the eighth day of November, that is, the sixth before the Ides of November. He was sprung from the region of the Cornish between the two rivers, the Tamar and the Limar. His father was Salomon, son of Erbin, son of Gereint, son of Lud. His father too was captain of the guard. He himself was brought up at school.

§2. The blessed Cybi was seven years old, when he began to read. Afterwards he was in his own region for twenty years.

§3. Then he went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem to adore the sepulchre of the Lord. Afterwards he was with the most blessed Hilary, bishop of Poitiers. There he was for fifty years, where he gave sight to the blind and cleansed the leprous, and cured the paralytic and dumb, the insane and the possessed with devils.

§4. Afterwards he received the episcopal degree from bishop Hilary. Then he was admonished by an angel of the Lord to return to his own country. He was there a small space.

§5. And then he was asked to come to be king of the Cornish-folk, and he declined to take the power of this present world. Afterwards he went forth into his own country with his ten disciples. These disciples are Maelog, Llibio, Peulan, Cyngar, and the rest.

§6. Afterwards Cybi arrived in the region of Edelygion, and king Edelig was alive at that time. Saint Cybi descended into the midst of his meadow, and pitched his tent there. And Edelig sent a certain man to see who were the persons who are descending into his meadow. That man returning to Edelig and said he 'They are monks.'

§7. And straightway Ethelic arose with all his household to eject the monks from his land. And forthwith Ethelic fell from his horse on the way, and immediately his horse died. And Ethelic was straightway blind, and all his household. Then Ethelic prostrated himself on his face, and gave his body and soul to God and saint Cybi. And immediately by the prayer of saint Cybi the men of Ethelic were made whole and himself and his horse.

§8. Then Ethelic gave for ever to saint Cybi two churches, of which one is called Llangybi, and the other Llanddyfrwyr, and there Cybi left his small mottled finger-bell. Then saint Cybi, blessing king Ethelic, went forth from thence to Mynyw the city of saint David, and there sojourned three days and three nights.

§9. From thence he sailed across to Ireland to the island of Aruin, in which he remained for four years, and built a church there in honour of Almighty God. His kinsman Cyngar was an old man, for whom saint Cybi bought a cow with its calf, because other food he was not able to eat by reason of his old age. And there his disciples bravely tilled the land.

§10. One day it happened that one of the disciples of saint Cybi, Maclog by name, went to dig the ground at the door of the lodging of Crubthir Fintam. And Crubthir Fintam, seeing him, being angry, came to stop him, and said, 'Dig not the ground at the door of my lodging.' Then saint Cybi and Fintam went out together to the abbot of the island of Aruin, who was called Enna, and he pacified them. But it chanced one day that the calf of Cyngar's cow went into the corn of Crubthir Fintam, and the disciples of Crubthir Fintam came, and took the calf, and bound it to a great tree.

§11. And saint Cybi sent one of his disciples to Crubthir Fintam that he might loose the calf; and he loosed it not, but Crubthir Fintam continued still in his anger. But the holy saint Cybi prayed the Lord that the calf might come to its mother, because the old man, Cyngar was almost dead by reason of lack of milk, for without her calf that cow gave no milk.

§12. God heard the prayer of saint Cybi, and in wondrous fashion sent the calf to its mother together with that tree, to which it was tied, and together with its roots. Then Crubthir Fintam prayed the Lord that he might put to flight and delete saint Cybi from the island of Aruin, because God loved him. And an angel of the Lord came in a dream to saint Cybi, and said to him 'Go from this island towards the east.' To whom saint Cybi replied, saying, 'May God delete Crubthir Fintam from this island. And the angel said 'So will it be.'

§13. Then saint Cybi came to the south side of the region of Meath, and there he remained forty days and forty nights. And he built there a church, which to this day is called the great church of Mochop. Crubthir Fintam, hearing that saint Cybi dwelt there, came and said to him, 'Go to another place. Mine is this land as well. Then saint Cybi fasted three days that God might show him what then he should do. And the same angel said to saint Cybi, 'Go eastwards.' And saint Cybi did so, and came to the plain of Bregh. And there he remained seven days. And again on hearing it Crubthir Fintam, his adversary, came to him and said to saint Cybi, 'Go to another place.' Then saint Cybi said 'I pray Almighty God that he may show me what I am to do.' To whom the angel said, 'Go to the south.' And he did so.

§14. And he came to the region of Vobyun, and there sojourned twelve days. Still Crubthir Fintam followed him, and said to him, 'Cybi, go across the sea.' Then saint Cybi, angered, said to him, May all thy churches be so much deserted that there may never be found three churches [and men] singing at thine altar in the island of Ireland.'

§15. Then saint Cybi sent his disciples to a wood to cut timber for a boat. And immediately they cut, and built it. And the boat being done, Crubthir Fintam came, and said to them 'Enter into the boat without hide, if ye be servants of God.' To whom saint Cybi replied speaking in prophetic response, 'God is wonderful in his saints. The God of Israel himself will give

strength and endurance to His people. Blessed be God.' And saint Cybi said to his disciples, 'Place the boat on the sea.' And they placed it. And saint Cybi entered the boat, lacking hide, with his disciples. And immediately a strong wind came on the sea, and his disciples feared greatly, and saint Cybi prayed powerfully to God, by whose prayer God divided a rock into two parts, and the boat leapt up between the two rocks, and at last they landed on the island of Anglesey. Then saint Cybi struck there a crag with his bachall, and straightway water flowed.

§ 16. Then saint Cybi came to the place, which is called Cundab, and there sojourned awhile. And he said to one of his disciples, to wit, Caffo, 'Go, bring us fire.' And Caffo went to the house of a certain smith, Magurn by name. And Magurn asked the disciple 'Whence comest thou?' The disciple replied 'From my master Cybi have I come.' And Magurn asked him what he would have. To which the disciple answered 'I would have fire.' And Magurn said, 'I will not give thee fire, unless thou carry it in thy bosom.' And Caffo said, 'Put the fire in my bosom.' And Magurn placed it. And straightway Caffo returned to his master, Cybi, carrying the fire put in his bosom, and not even the hem of his cloak was burnt.

§ 17. At that time king Maelgwn was reigning over the provinces of Gwynedd. One day it happened that he went out to the mountainous regions to hunt. Seeing a she-goat, he incited his molossian (i.e. dog) to seize her. Then the she-goat ran quickly for protection to saint Cybi's cottage. And saint Cybi said to his disciple Caffo, 'Withdraw from me; we cannot be together.' And he came to the town, which is called to-day Merthyr Caffo, and there the herdsmen of Rhosyr kill Caffo. And so the blessed Cybi cursed the herdsmen of Rhosyr with their mistress. And the she-goat found protection.

§ 18. And king Maelgwn pursued her as far as Cybi's cottage. And the king said to him 'Let go the she-goat.' And Cybi said, 'I will not let her go, unless thou grant her protection of life.' And the king, angry, said, 'If thou dost not let her go, I will eject

thee altogether from this land'. And the blessed Cybi said, It is not in thy power to eject me from this land, but it is in the power of God. But still I will let go this she-goat for thee, if thou wilt sacrifice to Almighty God and to me the whole land, which she may go about in front of thy molossian (i.e. dog).' And the king said 'Freely will I sacrifice it.' And saint Cybi let go the she-goat, and the molossian followed her through the whole ridge, and she returned again to the cottage of saint Cybi.

§ 19. And afterwards a conflict arose between king Maelgwn and saint Cybi, but he was not able to withstand the servant of God. And so he conveyed his fortress to Almighty God and the holy Cybi as a perpetual offering of alms.

§ 20. And there he slept in Christ with great honour on the sixth day before the Ides of November. And a multitude of angels came, and took his most holy soul to heaven in the company of the patriarchs and prophets, in the unity of the apostles and evangelists, in the unity of the martyrs and confessors, in the unity of virgins and all the righteous saints, in the unity of the heavenly church, where is day without night, tranquillity without fear, joy without end. Where are the seven eternal things, life without death, youth without old age, joy without sadness, peace without discord, light without darkness, health without pain, a kingdom without change. Blessed are they who dwell with Abel and Enoch and Noah, with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, with Moses and Aaron and Joshua the son of Nun, and with the twelve prophets and with the twelve apostles, and with all the saints from the beginning of the world to the end, with the twenty orders of angels, with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, in peace and gladness and in purity and in youthfulness, without hunger and without nakedness, with abundance for the whole body, without any ill, about a young, bountiful, beautiful, eternal King. We pray Almighty God that we may deserve to possess that blessedness through the intercession of the blessed Cybi for ever and ever, Amen.



Vita Sancti Kebii

The Life of St. Cybi

Version Two

Here begins the life of saint Cybi, bishop, November 8.

§1. Now the blessed Cybi was one of the good servants of the heavenly Father, born in the region of the Cornishmen of illustrious lineage, whose ground of nativity was between the two rivers, which are called Tamar and Limar. Whose father is called Salomon son of Erbin son of Gereontus son of Lud, formerly captain of the guard. However in the first years of his childhood he was educated in schools of letters.

§2. The blessed Cybi was seven years old, when he began to be instructed in letters. Thereafter he continued for twenty years in the region of his nativity.

§3. Then he went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship the Lord's sepulchre. Afterwards he went to saint Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, where he abode for nearly fifty years. Also there he gave sight to the blind, he cleansed the leprous, he healed the paralytic, he loosened the tongues of the dumb, he healed the insane, he cast out evil spirits by virtue of the Holy Ghost from the possessed.

§4. Afterwards, he is joyfully promoted to the grade of bishop by the most blessed Hilary bishop of Poitiers, and admonished by an angel of the Lord to return to his native land, which also he did. And there he stayed a little time.

§ 5. At which time being much requested that he should rule even over the race of the Cornishfolk, but he absolutely declined to accept power over this present life. So at length returning to his native land, he was then joined by disciples, whose names are subjoined, to wit, Meliauc, Libiau, Paulin, Kengar, with the rest.

§6. Then saint Cybi arrived in the region of Edelygion, Edelig being still king at that time. Then saint Cybi went down in

the middle of the meadow of the aforesaid king, and there he stretched his tent. Wherefore he directed a man to investigate who the people were, who without his consent presumed to descend into his meadow. He returning said to the same king 'Monks they be.'

§7. And straightway king Ethelic arose with all his household that they might eject the monks from his fee. But at once he fell on the way from his prancer, and soon the horse expired, whilst the king none the less with all his house was immediately blinded. Wherefore also, the king being prostrate on his face, he the more earnestly begged pardon of the blessed Cybi for himself and his followers. Also to God and the same person he commended his body and soul. On the spot through the prayer of the same saint the said Ethelich with all his satellites together with his horse was restored to health.

§8. Besides the king likewise gave two churches to saint Cybi in perpetuity, of which one is called Llanybi and the other Llanddyfrwyr, wherein he left his small and parti-coloured bell. Then the holy Cybi, blessing king Ethelic, went to Menevia the monastery of saint David, and there sojourned three days and as many nights.

§9. Then he sailed across to Ireland to the island of Aruin, wherein he resided continuously for four years, and built a church in honour of the Almighty. His kinsman by name Cyngar was an old man, for whom the aforesaid man of God bought a cow and calf, since he had been able to eat no solid food by reason of old age. Therefore the disciples of holy Cybi bravely cultivated the soil in that place.

§10. On a day it happened that a certain disciple of the afore-noted holy man whose name was Melauc, went out to dig the soil in the front of the door of the cubicle of a certain little man, by name Crubthir Fintam. The same man perceiving it, exceedingly angry, as quickly stopped him saying, 'Do not dig the soil in front of the door of my habitation.' Wherefore holy Cybi and the

aforesaid Crubthir Finta went together to the abbot of the island of Aruin, called Enna, to make peace, which too happened. For they returned mutually pacified. Then on a day it happened that the calf of Cyngar fed off the crops of the aforesaid Crubthir Finta, on seeing which the followers of the same took the calf, also tied it to a big tree.

§ 11. So saint Cybi sent one of his disciples to Crubthir Finta to loosen the calf, but he refusing continued in his anger. But holy Cybi prayed the Lord, that the same calf should return to its mother, as indeed the old man Cyngar was distressed by lack of milk. For that cow yielded no milk whilst the calf was absent.

§ 12. Therefore God heard his prayer, and wonderfully directed the same calf to its mother with the tree, to which it was bound, torn from the roots. Then Crubthir Finta prayed to the Lord that He should drive away or destroy the holy Cybi from the island of Aruin, because God had been his lover. Wherefore the angel of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Depart hence to the east side.' To whom saint Cybi answering said, May God destroy Crubthir Finta from this island.' And the angel said to him, 'So it will be.'

§ 13. After that he started for the south part of the region of Meath, and there he tarried forty days and so many nights. He built also in that place a church, which is called to this day the great church of Macop. But yet the often mentioned Crubthir Finta perceiving that the man of God remained there, came to him, saying, 'Go elsewhere, for this land as well is mine by right.' Then the blessed Cybi, continuing for three fast days, earnestly beseeching the Almighty that he would show what might be done. The angel of the Lord attending him said 'Go to the east.' And he obeyed the commands, proceeding to a plain, which is called Breggh, and he sojourned there seven days. The aforesaid adversary of the same saint, hearing that holy Cybi dwelt there, came to him saying, 'Proceed to another place'. Then the blessed man let loose words of this sort, 'I beg of God Almighty that he manifests to me what I might do.' To whom the angel of the Lord 'Crossover hence to the southern province.' And he did so.

§14. And he started out for the region of Uobiun, and in that place he sojourned twelve days. Not yet did Crubthir Finta desist from pursuing him, but following him up said `Go away from here and pass over the sea.' Then the holy man, very irate, said to him, May all thy churches be so deserted that never may three be found in the island of Ireland.'

§15. Then saint Cybi directed his disciples to a wood, that they might cut timber to build a boat. Which being cut, they straightway built a boat. The aforementioned Crubthir Finta, coming up hastily, said to them, `Enter the boat without a hide, and put out to sea, if indeed ye be servants of God.' Whom saint Cybi answered with prophetic response saying, `God is wonderful in his saints. The God of Israel, he will give power and courage to his people, blessed be God.' But holy Cybi to his disciples said, `Put the boat in the sea.' And they straightway put it. Then the holy man with his disciples entered the boat, with no hide. At once a strong tempest arose. It terrified his disciples exceedingly disturbing them. But the Lord, hearing the aforesaid saint praying earnestly, severed a huge rock into two parts, and in wondrous manner the boat by the divine will leaping upwards stuck between the two rocks, and at last landed on the island of Anglesey. So the holy Cybi struck a certain crag with his bachall, and at once a spring gushed forth.

§16. Then he came to a place which is called Cunab, and there for some time he remained. On a day he bade Caffo, a disciple of his, to bring him fire. And he obeying his preceptor proceeds to the house of a certain smith, by name Magurnus. Asked by him whence he had come he replies, `From my master Cybi.' And he, inquiring what he wanted, `Fire' (said he) `I would have.' To whom Magurnus `Fire I will not give thee unless thou shalt carry it in thy lap.' And Caffo answered, `Place the fire in my lap.' And he placed it. And straightway Caffo returned to Cybi, his teacher, and draws out for him the fire placed in his lap, nor was there a border of his cloak the least burnt, which kind of garment one obtains in Ireland.

§17. At that time king Maelgwn was ruling all the provinces of Gwynedd, which in English is called Snowdonia. On a day it happened, that he went to hunt to the mountains or ridges, and seeing a goat, instigated his Umbrian (dog) or Molossian to seize her. But she, taking counsel for her life, fled directly for refuge to the cot of the blessed Cybi.

§18. Wherefore straightway king Maelgwn, pursuing the goat, went for the dwelling-place of holy Cybi, and demanded her of him with threatening words, saying, 'Let go the goat.' But he answered 'By no means will I let her go, unless thou givest her protection of life.' The king in reply 'If thou wilt not let her go, I will drive thee away from this place.' And the man of God answers, 'It is not in thy power to expel me from this land, but it is of divine power to do concerning me whatever it shall determine for itself. However, on this condition will I let this goat go for thee, that thou givest to God Almighty and to me all the land, which she will go round, whilst your dog is being incited after her.' To this the king, 'Freely' (said he) 'will I deliver it.' So the blessed Cybi dismissed the goat, which flying continuously throughout the whole headland, whilst the aforesaid dog pursued her, at length returned to the cot of the aforesaid man of God, not the smallest interval of soil being gone over anew.

§19. Then again there arose conflicting dispute between king Maelgwn and holy Cybi, but by no means could he resist the servant of God. Therefore the king conveyed his castle to God Almighty and to his faithful servant Cybi as perpetual alms for the salvation of his soul, where now an old man he awaited the end of this mortal and transitory life.

§20. And in the same place having consumed happily the course of his days, he fell asleep in the Lord on November 8th, through whom he destroyed death and found everlasting life, where he rejoices continually in the celestial kingdom with the God of gods and the King of all kings, and exults, enjoying eternal glory, which God prepared from the foundation of the world for himself and those who love him, where is day without

night, tranquillity without dread, joy without sorrow, life without death, youth without old age, peace without dissension, light without darkness, health without pain, kingdom without change, where God will be all in all, food, clothing, and other things which a pious mind can desire. Who lives and reigns through all ages, Amen.

