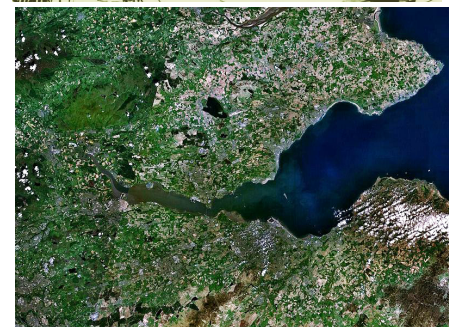


*St. Kentigern, Kentigernus (L),  
or Cyndern Garthwys (W), a.k.a.  
St. Mungo, d. 614.*

St. Kentigern, who lived between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, was the apostle of the Brythonic Kingdom of Strathclyde in Scotland, and patron saint and founder of the city of Glasgow. His mother was an unmarried girl (Thaney, Thaneu or Tenoï). Thomas Walsingham writing in 1602 adds the royal touch early hagiographers believed to be essential for a saint: *“At this time was Mungo, the holy bishop of Glasqnew, quhilk was gotten on St Thanew, the daughter of Loth, king of Pichtis, opprest contrar hir will, be Eugenius, last king of Scottis.”* The outcome was that the young woman was condemned to death by being thrown from a “pinnacle”. Remarkably she survived without a bruise and then placed in a coracle and put out into the Firth of Forth and was carried to Cullam/Culross near the monastery of St. Servannus/Serf. After the birth of Kentigern the monks found her and brought her food and firewood. Later St. Kentigern became a child of the monastery and St. Serf gave him the pet name of Mungo (darling).

St. Serf (c.500-c.583) was first bishop and apostle of the isles of Orkney, and disciple of St. Palladius. There is some question about the chronology. Many churches and a number of schools in Fife, Edinburgh and Central Scotland are dedicated to St. Serf.



The adult Kentigern preferred solitude so when the time came to go out on his own he went to Glasghue/Glasgow where he lived an eremitic life. He soon became known for his austerities, and stories of his miracles attracted many people to him. The people demanded that he be made their bishop and a bishop from Ireland consecrated him. Political unrest led the saint to go to Wales, where legend says he stayed awhile with St. David at Menevia. Cadevallon, a Denbigshire chieftain gave him land to build a monastery, Llanelwy in North Wales, the place now known as St. Asaph's. One of his disciples was St. Asaph, who was to become his successor. The highly successful monastery housed over 900 monks. However, the Welsh insist that St. Kentigern's stay in Wales is pure fiction.

*Roman Days* St. Kentigern is supposed to have made seven trips to Rome from his highly successful monastery at Llanelwy. He went for two reasons. The first was an attack of scruples relating to his confirmation as bishop. He knew it was valid, but he was disturbed that the Roman ritual was not used. This problem seems to have been resolved. He also wanted advice on how to stem the growing paganism in his country. We do not know how long he was away from home, where he might have been of use, but his self-imposed exile, if that is what it was soon ended: *“Wherefore, King Rederech, seeing that the Christian religion was almost entirely destroyed in his kingdom, set himself zealously to restore it. . . he discovered no more healthful plan by which he could bring it to a successful result than to send messengers to St. Kentigern, to recall him to his first see.”* (Jocelyn)



St. Columba

It was after his return to Glasgow that the saint had his memorable meeting with St. Columba, the apostle to the Picts. St. Columba was impressed with the bishop and is supposed to have praised him thus: *“I see a fiery pillar in fashion as of a golden crown represented on his head, appeareth to me with the sign of sanctity.”* (Jocelyn) Needless to say they got on quite well.

“St. Columba banging on the gate of Bridei, son of Maelchon, King of Fortriu.”  
Artist: John R. Skelton  
From *Scotland’s Story* by Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall, 1906

During his Glasgow years, both before and after his flight to Rome, St. Kentigern was responsible for many conversions and for the return to the faith of many who had fallen away.



Left: Saint Kentigern’s image appears on the crest of the coat-of-arms of the city of Glasgow. A ring, a bell and a fish also shown refer to miracle-legends. Right: Tomb of St. Kentigern in the crypt of Edinburgh Cathedral. His elaborate shrine was destroyed during the Reformation.



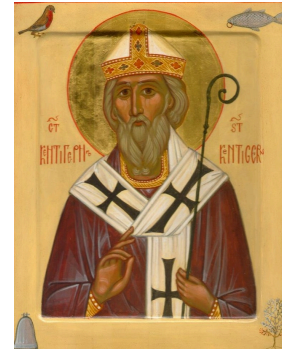
The 'Life of Saint Mungo' was written by the monastic hagiographer, Jocelyn of Furness, in about 1185.<sup>[5]</sup> Jocelyn states that he rewrote the 'life' from an earlier Glasgow legend and an Old Irish document. There are certainly two other medieval lives: the earlier partial life in the Cottonian manuscript now in the British Library, and the later 'life', based on Jocelyn, by John of Tynemouth. See: *Historians of Scotland Vol V Lives of S. Ninian and S. Kentigern* : compiled in the twelfth century by Forbes, A. P. (Alexander Penrose), 1817-1875, ed; Aelred, of Rievaulx, Saint, 1110-1167; Jocelyn, fl. 1200

## *Beyond Scotland*

St. Kentigern is honored by Roman Catholics and Anglicans, and is also on the Eastern Orthodox calendar of Early Western Saints:

*Troparion in the 6th tone to St Kentigern (Mungo), bishop of Glasgow*

*Son of an exiled princess, you received  
An excellent education from St Servan.  
As an adult, you lived as a hermit near Glasgow.  
Driven away into Wales, to Llanelwy,  
You built a monastery, and then returned to Scotland.  
St Kentigern, pray to Christ to save our souls!*



Russian icon of St. Kentigern/Mungo.



St. Kentigern baptizing the aged wizard Merlin at Stobo Kirk  
(Photo: Roger Griffith)

*The Saint and the Wizard.* There is an intriguing legend that St. Kentigern converted King Arthur's Wizard Merlin. After the deaths of Arthur and Gwenddoleu ap Ceidio (a Brythonic king of lands near Hadrian's Wall), who fell at the Battle of Arfderydd (573), Merlin fled to the forest. The ill and aged Merlin (Myrddin Wyllt/Merlin Sylvestris) was no longer powerful. He had witnessed the spread of Christianity and knew his days were over. St. Kentigern found him in the forest, cared for him, and converted him to Christianity. Tradition has it that the altar stone at Stobo Kirk is the same stone on which Merlin was converted. According to legend Merlin was baptized in the first Stobo Kirk.

*Below left:* Stobo Kirk, Peeblesheer (Walter Baxter). Tradition says that St. Kentigern founded the church. There appears to have been a church on this site since the sixth century. The present building shows restoration work of 1863 and 1929.  
*Below right:* "The altar stone on which Merlin was converted" can be seen at Stobo Kirk.



### *St. Mungo's Hospital*

According to legend, Healer Mungo Bonham founded St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies in London in the 1600's. It is described as a large hospital staffed by healers in many specialties and has a tearoom and shop for visitors. The hospital is entered through the window of what appears to be an abandoned store. The first the muggle (non-magical) world heard of it was in *The Chamber of Secrets*, Book Two of the Harry Potter Series, by J.K. Rowling.