



Today, 3rd June, is the feast of Saint Kevin known as the founder and first abbot of [Glendalough](#) in County Wicklow, Ireland.

Although his life is not well-documented, it is reported Kevin (like St. Columba) was of noble birth and was born in 498 AD

Kevin was ordained by Bishop Lugidus and, following his ordination, he moved on to Glendalough in order to avoid the company of his followers.

Glendalough, or the Glen of two Lakes, is one of the most important sites of monastic ruins in Ireland. It is also one of the beautiful parts of Ireland.

Kevin lived the life of a hermit there with an extraordinary closeness to nature. His companions were the animals and birds all around him. He lived as a hermit for seven years wearing only animal skins, sleeping on stones and eating very sparingly.

He went barefoot and spent his time in prayer. Disciples were soon attracted to Kevin and a further settlement enclosed by a wall, called Kevin's Cell, was established nearer the lakeshore. By 540 Saint Kevin's fame as a teacher and holy man had spread far and wide. Many people came to seek his help and guidance. In time Glendalough grew into a renowned seminary of saints and scholars and the parent of several other monasteries.

Until his death around 618, Kevin presided over his monastery in Glendalough, living his life by fasting, praying and teaching. St Kevin is one of the patron saints of the diocese of Dublin.

One of the most widely known poems of the Nobel prizewinner [Seamus Heaney](#) , 'St Kevin and the Blackbird', relates the story of Kevin holding out his hand with trance-like stillness while a blackbird builds a nest in it, lays eggs, the eggs hatch and the chicks fledge.

A series of paintings by the Welsh artist

[Clive Hicks-Jenkins](#)

around 2009 depicted the story of Kevin and the blackbird, by way of Heaney's poem.

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Click below to hear Seamus Heaney reading 'St. Kevin and the Blackbird'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYoyd8pZz0c>