

The Miracles: Winefride is restored



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The *Golden Legend* goes on to say that St Beuno found Winefride decapitated and cursed Caradoc so that he immediately died. He was popularly supposed to have melted and been swallowed up by the ground. After this, Beuno asked all the horrified people who have gathered around to join him in prayer:

And after, took up the head in his hands, and set it to the place where it was cut off, and desired all the people that were there present to kneel down and pray devoutly to Almighty God that it might please him to raise her again unto life, and not only for the comfort of father and mother, but for to accomplish the vow of religion. And when they arose from prayer, this holy virgin arose with them also; made by a miracle alive again by the power of Almighty God. Wherefore all the people gave laud and praising unto his holy name for this great miracle. And ever, as long as she lived after, there

appeared about her neck a redness round about, like to a red thread of silk, in sign and token of her martyrdom.

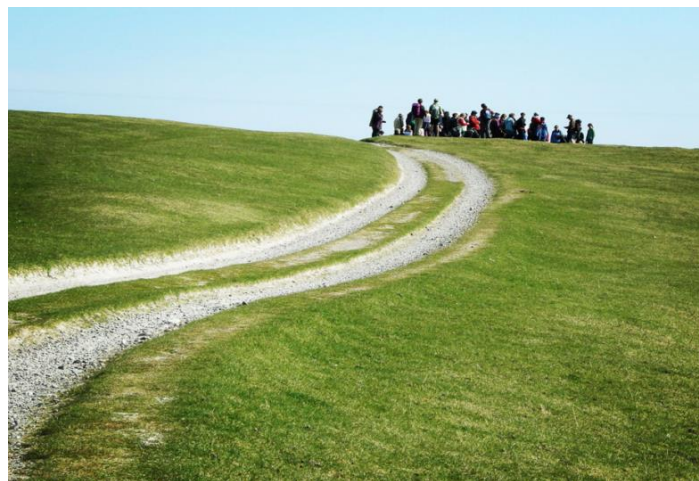
So Winefride is miraculously restored to her parents and to her religious vow, by the power of prayer. She lives out her life consecrated to that vow and bears her promise to God and her story forward into the future as an example to all.

What this story tells us goes far beyond the 'miracle' itself, not least because we are all too sadly aware from atrocities reported in the news, that beheaded people do not come back to life. Rather we learn from an extraordinary picture of utter destruction that nothing is impossible for God and that no life, no matter how long or short, is devoid of meaning or purpose. On one level the story is about a powerless young woman, subject to extreme, devastating violence; on another level, the evil that is done to her is destroyed and borne away and her contribution to the richness and fullness of God's world is restored, such that her story percolates as a source of inspiration through the ages and is still with us today.

Many of us bear the scars of pain and violence and the picture of this young woman walking about with the thin red line on her neck sends an important message about not being ashamed of the scars we bear, whether those are of physical violence, or impaired mental or physical health. The mark like a thread of silk externalises the suffering of oppressed women, of those trafficked for sex, victims of domestic abuse, who are often made to feel worthless and less than human. The transformation of corpse into a person of dignity, symbolises for us the transformation we should seek for all oppressed human beings, so that we can rejoice with them and learn from them. Their stories, like that of Winefride, should change us all.

Some things to think or talk about:

- How can we work to restore dignity and worth to those who have been abused or to the memory of those killed?
- How important, do you think, is the picture of a crowd of people praying together for a miracle?
- How do we help people not to be ashamed of their scars and the bad things that have happened to them in life?



Stew Dean/flickr praying at Iona