



Saint Deiniol of Wales

St. Deiniol (the Welsh form of Daniel) lived in the sixth century. He was a descendant of one Celtic ruler in Northern Britain. As a young man Deiniol probably studied at the monastery of the saintly Abbot Cadoc in Llancarfan, Wales. He also may have lived as hermit in Pembrokeshire for some while. But our saint of God, above all, is famous for establishing two monasteries in Wales with the name "Bangor": the first was called "Bangor Fawr" (now the city of Bangor in Gwynedd), while the second was called "Bangor Iscoed" (now the village of Bangor-on-Dee on the River Dee in Wrexham). The name "Bangor" means "a settlement within a wattle fence".

According to tradition, St. Deiniol received land for establishing Bangor Fawr (Great Bangor) Monastery from the local King of Gwynedd named Maelgwn, who became the monastery's patron. Deiniol built his (originally small and humble) monastery in a low-lying area to prevent raids from pagan pirates. Around the cells which were like huts St. Deiniol arranged an enclosure made of upright poles with branches woven between them. The man of God gathered many disciples around him who went out to evangelize the surrounding region. Thus, with time, many converts to Christianity joined the monastery: some of them became monks, while others came to live together with their families within the monastery's territory (such was a popular custom of Celtic monasteries). Thus the monastery grew.

Many miracles were associated with the holy Abbot and Bishop Deiniol. One such account relates that robbers stole an ox from a ploughman. Then, at the command of Deiniol, stags started faithfully working in the fields instead of the lost oxen. Another time a seriously ill woman who lived not far from Pembrokeshire and whom no doctors could help came to the holy well founded by Deiniol. She drank some water from it and was instantly healed.

After his death in about 584 AD he was buried on the island of Bardsey, formerly one of the most prominent monastic strongholds of the Welsh land, where, according to tradition, "20,000 saints of God rest in peace."