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2021, the year when we learn to forgive: Resolution from Hieromonk Serafim, Scotland



Hieromonk Serafim Aldea from the Monastery of All Celtic Saints in Kilninian, on Mull Island, published on Thursday a video urging the faithful to adopt the wisest New Year resolution: learning to forgive. “A blessed future cannot be built on a poisoned foundation,” affirms the only Orthodox monk in the Hebrides Archipelago.

“A new beginning, this is what I want more than anything else out of the new year for you, for me, for the monastery, for the world at large,” says the Romanian monk.

But, he warns, “one cannot build a blessed life, a blessed being on the foundation of resentment and hatred and poison; it doesn’t matter even if that poison is fully justified.”

“If we do not manage to let go of the poison the world injects in us we are going to be shaped by that poison, we are going to become poisonous beings ourselves,” he adds.

“Let us make together a new year’s resolution; let us decide together that in 2021 we are not going to allow the hatred of the world, the poison of the world to define us in any way; let us decide between you and us at the monastery that this year is going to be the year when we learn how to forgive.”

“Let this be the year when we slowly are being shaped by the love of Christ and by everything this God of ours, God who is Love, has taught us,” says the monk.

He also spoke of beauty hidden inside each of us, including in our enemies.

“My dear ones, there is so much beauty in the world (...) and so much beauty in us, in all of us with no exception at all, even the people whom we think are completely fallen, completely covered in their sin, the people who hurt us or hate us for some reason: they are also beautiful beings and they hide in themselves the same treasure that we hide as well: the image of Christ is imprinted on them.”

Hieromonk Serafim concludes his message with a blessing for all those watching and their dear ones – alive or departed, reminding us “we are all alive and we are all one in Christ”.

The story of the monastery on Mull Island

The Monastery of All Celtic Saints is the first Orthodox Monastery in the Isles of Scotland in over a thousand years. It was re-established on the foundations of an Orthodox monastery from the first millenium. The Church was initially dedicated to St Ninian and St Cuthbert (7th-8th centuries).

“In the first millenium, when Christianity was united and there was no schism between the Orthodox and the Catholics, there were hundreds of monasteries on

these islands, with hundreds and thousands of monks and nuns,” said the Romanian monk on another occasion.

The first Orthodox liturgy on Mull Island after more than a millenium was officiated in 2011. The monastery previously belonged to a Benedictine monastic community.

The Benedictine monks were moving to England and Father Marcel Oprișan, former priest of the Romanian community in Glasgow, convinced them in 2010 to donate their property to the Orthodox Romanians.

This is how St Colomba’s prophecy was fulfilled. He was a venerable who had come from Ireland to Scotland and founded a monastery on the neighbouring Island Iona in the 6th century.

He predicted that in the last days people of a different nation would bring back Orthodox chants on the island instead of the sound of Scottish cowbells.

Hieromonk Serafim Aldea was tonsured in monasticism in 2005 at Râșca Monastery in northeastern Romania. He is a Theology Doctor of the University of Durham and has a Master’s degree in English and Compared Literature from the University of Warwick.

He was praying at Father Sofrony Sakharov at the Essex Monastery in England when Father Marcel Oprișan called him and told him of the Kilninian Monastery on Mull Island.

“I was in the crypt where Father Sofrony reposes and was praying for direction in my life. And God sent me this abandoned church with a ruined roof, which needed lots of work and lots of money,” recalled Father Serafim.

Mull Island is the second largest of the Hebrides Archipelago and has between 1,000 and 2,000 inhabitants. Its residential center is Tobermory (‘Mary’s Fountain’, dedicated to the feast of the Annunciation). Tobermory is a village of approximately 700 inhabitants.

One can reach the island by flying to Edinburgh, then driving for three to four hours to a port where there is a ferry to the Hebrides. After an hour’s sailing, the monastery is found by crossing the island to its opposite shore, the one facing the ocean.

For donations

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The online shop of the monastery [can be found here](#).

Website: [Mullmonastery.com](https://mullmonastery.com)

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