

THE STORY OF ST MAUGHOLD

A pageant for Heritage Year by Dhoon School [1986]

SCENE ONE

Principal Actors – St Patrick, St Maughold, a band of robbers, two monks, cook, *St Bridget [optional]

[Introductory music. Narrators take their places]

Narrator 1: This is the story of St Maughold who has given his name to our parish. He came to the Isle of Man in the fifth century and spread the Christian faith, but he was not always a good man. This story tells of his miraculous conversion, and it begins in the lonely mountains of Ireland.

Narrator 2: At this time, Maughold was the leader of a band of robbers who hid out in the hills, waylaying travelers who passed by and stealing their goods from them. Maughold himself was sometimes nicknamed 'Cyclops' because he had lost the sight of one eye in a fight. He was the wickedest of them all.

[Enter robbers, quarrelling noisily amongst themselves and brandishing their swords]

Narrator 1: St Patrick was travelling around the country in those days, preaching the message of Christ and performing many miracles. He was converting people to the new faith and his fame had spread far and wide.

Maughold: Look boys, here comes that goody-goody Patrick [enter Patrick and his disciples] going about telling everyone how wonderful his God is. Let us go and play a trick on him and then we will see how clever his miracles are. I have a plan. You [to one of his men] lie down on the ground and we'll pretend you are ill and we will ask Patrick to make you well again.

[Robber lies down and they cover him with a cloak and kneel down around him, chanting what sounds like a spell. Patrick and the monks approach].

Maughold: O Patrick, one of us has fallen ill. I beg you to heal with him with your miraculous powers.

St Patrick: I'm not surprised he was sick.

Maughold: What do you mean? [pulls back the cover and sees the man is dead]

Patrick [to Maughold]: Why did you try to trick me?

Maughold: I confess that I meant to capture and kill you, but I am truly sorry for what I have done. Whatever you ask me to do, I will do. You must judge how I am to be punished.

Patrick: I am not able to judge you, but God will. [He touches the 'dead' man and he sits up again].

Patrick: As a penance for your wickedness you must go to sea in this boat with nothing but the clothes of a follower of Christ [puts robe over him]. Your feet will be bound together with an iron chain and you must throw the key away into the sea. God will decide what is to become of you. [Maughold steps into the boat and throws away the key].

Strains of "Sea Invocation", getting louder, to symbolize the journey

Narrator 2: The boat was washed up on a beach on the Isle of Man, at a place we now call Maughold Head. Monks from a nearby monastery came down to see who was in the boat.

[Monks lift Maughold out of the boat, embrace him and carry him off]

Narrator 2: Maughold told them his story and they took him to their monastery. St Patrick himself had visited the Island some years before and had converted many people to Christianity. The monks of Maughold were among his followers.

Narrator 1: Conindrus and Romilius brought Maughold to the monastery where he spent his days in prayer and study. Because of his chains he could not go far, but he liked to watch the country people going about their daily chores, and he saw that many of their ways were like those of the Irish people. They still retained their old customs, and important times of the year were celebrated with singing and dancing. One of the oldest of these was the "Flitter Dance" which dated from pre-Christian times but which everyone performed on Good Friday when they went down to the seashore to gather limpets.

[Dancers wend their way onto the stage in the "Flitter Dance"]

Narrator 2: One evening when Maughold had been with the monks for some time, they sat down to dinner as usual...

[cook walks in with large plate bearing a fish]

Cook: [starts to open up the fish with a knife] Masters, look what I have found (holds up large key). This fish was caught in the sea today and look what it has inside it. What can it be? Is it a sign?

Conindrus: If I'm not mistaken, I know very well what this means. Maughold, you have studied well and devoted your life to God. God has sent this key to set you free. [He unlocks the chains. Maughold goes down on his knees to pray].

Maughold: The Lord has seen fit to forgive my sins. For my part I shall go to a lonely cave and make my home there. Each day I will spend in prayer until I have cleansed my soul and made myself worthy of God.

[As he walks away, choir sings "Ushag Veg Ruy" – Little Red Bird]

Narrator 1: Maughold was as good as his word. He retired to a lonely cave above the sea and lived the life of a hermit, some say for seven years. His reputation as a holy man spread and according to legend he was visited there by another Irish Saint, Bridget, who at the age of 14 came to receive the veil from him.

**[Enter Bridget while choir sings "Invocation to St Bridget"]*

Narrator 2: Maughold was consecrated 11 years after his arrival in Mann, and he became so eminent for his holiness that he was elected Bishop by the Manx people in AD 498. He is said to have presided over the Manx church for 58 years and it was he who divided the Island into parishes. Legend says he lived to the age of 110.

Narrator 1: A church was built on the headland where he was cast ashore, and a community grew up around it. He was buried in the churchyard where his shrine was kept for many centuries. His principal feast day is July 31st and up until recent times a fair was held on this day and people would make the pilgrimage to St Maughold's Well on the headland overlooking the Irish Sea which first brought St Maughold to our shores.

[Ends with crowd scene, everyone laughing and talking with dancing in the middle].

Musical items: Girls of Balladoole; Siobhan ni Dhuibhir; St. Patrick's Breastplate; Sea Invocation [Geay Jeh'n Aer]; Little Red Bird [Ushag Veg Ruy]; Invocation to St Bridget; Manx Fishermen's Evening Hymn.

Dances: Flitter Dance; The Mhelliah; Hop-tu-naa; Return the Blow [Chyndaa yn Bwoialley]; Manx Girls' Jig.