

ST DWYNWEN AND SAINT DWYNWEN'S DAY, 25 JANUARY

Dwynwen is the Welsh patron saint of friendship and love. A 5th Century saint, she was reputedly one of the prettiest of Brychan Brycheiniog's 24 daughters!

She fell in love with a young man named Maelon Dafodrill, but her father had arranged for her to marry another. Maelon was so distressed that he attacked Dwynwen. She fled to the woods where she begged God to make her forget Maelon.

After falling asleep she was visited by an angel carrying a sweet potion of forgetfulness, and one that would turn Maelon to ice. When she woke, she saw all that had happened. God then appeared, and granted Dwynwen three wishes. She wished to thaw Maelon, she wished that God met the hopes and dreams of lovers and that she should never marry.

All three were met, and Dwynwen devoted the rest of her life to serve God. The remains of her Church can be seen at Llanddwyn in South West Anglesey. Near the church, overlooking the sea is a small well, known as St Dwynwen's well. It has been a place of pilgrimage for lovers for many centuries.

Today in Wales, we celebrate Gwyl Santes Dwynwen in much the same way as St Valentine's day is celebrated, with sweethearts exchanging gifts and enjoying romantic dinners for two.