

Praying the Legacy of St. Patrick, Missionary for Christ

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. At the start of this March day in the service of our Catholic schools, let us begin with God's word and consider how it speaks to us in light of St. Patrick's mission to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to Ireland's people.

Let us begin our prayer with the sign of the Trinity:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPENING SONG

Please join in our opening song, _____.

Opening Prayer: St Patrick Prayer

(Together)

As I arise today, may the strength of God pilot me,
the power of God uphold me, the wisdom of God guide me.
May the eye of God look before me, the ear of God hear me,
the word of God speak for me.

May the hand of God protect me, the way of God lie before me,
the shield of God defend me, the host of God save me.

May Christ shield me today.

Amen.

And now, let us listen to God's word.

READING

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph 1, 3-6)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as His children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

St. Patrick was born during the fifth century into a Roman Christian household in what is now northern Britain. His father was a deacon and grandfather had been a priest. He was captured as a teenager by pirates and taken to Ireland, where he was sold as a slave to tend the sheep of a local Druid chief. His years of solitude among the hills under an open sky nurtured the seeds of faith planted in his heart at Baptism, and he became a young man of prayer. After six years, he fled over three hundred kilometres on foot, and escaped in the boat of seafaring merchants and was reunited with his family. He studied for the priesthood, was ordained bishop, and returned to Ireland to evangelize its peoples.

Just as St. Paul wrote to the early Christians of the riches and blessings of their new life in Christ, so too, Patrick awakened the Irish people to the blessings God was ready to pour out on them in Christ. The Triune God was their Origin, who called them to share in the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christ was their light, their shield, their defender against all evils. The spells and conjurings of Druid priests were no match for the signs and wonders Patrick worked in the name of Christ, and the power of God's word that he preached to hearts thirsting for Christ's gifts of hope, freedom and joy.

St. Patrick's legacy reminds us as leaders in Catholic education of our important share in the Church's mission to proclaim the Good News of God's love for humanity in Christ. Fortified as one body with every blessing in the spiritual places, we are empowered to bring the Gospel's freedom, hope and joy to thirsting hearts who long for something better than slavery to Godless ideologies and their hopelessness that hang like an oppressive cloud over our times. We too, like St. Patrick are called to rise up in the Trinity's name and lead others by our words and example to share in the blessings God eagerly awaits to pour out on His children in Christ.

OUR FATHER

Let us pause for a moment, and bring to mind the needs of our school communities, our workplaces, our families, parishes and friends.

(Pause)

All of these needs and prayers we place confidently in the hands of Jesus, who constantly intercedes for us with the Father. Let us join in His unceasing prayer on our behalf with the words he gave us:

Our Father....

CLOSING PRAYER: St Patrick Prayer

(Together)

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit, Christ when I stand,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
Amen.

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG:

Please join in our closing song, _____