



St. Patrick's
TESTIMONY



A foundational inspiration of the Irish Celtic Church

This Testimony of St. Patrick gives his account of how the Lord changed his life and used him in a powerful way in Ireland. It was written in Latin and there are 8 Latin manuscripts in existence today. Patrick was the first Apostle to the Irish and he is understood to have founded some 300 Christian Communities throughout Ireland. His Testimony, written near the end of his life, is Christ-centered and Scripturally based. The Irish Celtic Church he founded focused on these six aspects:

- Worship and Prayer
- Lifestyle of learning, training and equipping others
 - Study of Scripture
- Establishing communities as centres of hospitality
 - Adventurous missionary endeavour
 - Had an openness to the Charisms

May you be blessed and inspired as you read the following key extracts from St. Patrick's remarkable testimony.

The inspiring Testimony of St. Patrick

PATRICK, A SINNER:

I am Patrick, a sinner, most unlearned, the least of all the faithful, and utterly despised by many. My father was Calpornius, a deacon, son of Potitus, a priest, of the village Bannavem Taburniae (probably in Britain); he had a country seat nearby, and there I was taken captive.

DID NOT KNOW GOD:

I was then about sixteen years of age. At that time, I did not know the true God. I was taken into captivity in Ireland, along with thousands of others. We deserved this, because we had gone away from God, and did not keep his commandments. (S1) We would not listen to our priests, who advised us about how we could be saved. The Lord brought his strong anger upon us, and scattered us among many nations even to the ends of the earth (S2)...

HIS CONVERSION:

It was there that the Lord opened up my awareness of my lack of faith. Even though it came about late, I recognised my failings. So I turned with all my heart to the Lord my God, (S3) and he looked down on my lowliness (S4) and had mercy on my youthful ignorance. He protected me and consoled me as a father does for his son. That is why I cannot be silent about such great blessings and such a gift that the Lord so kindly bestowed in the land of my captivity.

HIS CONCEPT OF GOD:

Because there is no other God, nor ever was, nor will be, than God the Father unbegotten, without beginning, the Lord of the universe (S5) and His son Jesus Christ, whom we declare to have always been with the Father by Him are made all things visible and invisible. (S6) He was made man and, having defeated death, was welcomed into heaven by the Father. He has given Him all power in heaven, on earth, and under the earth and every tongue shall confess to Him that Jesus Christ is Lord and God. (S7) He is judge of the living and of the dead; (S8) he rewards every person according to their deeds. (S9) He has poured forth upon us abundantly the Holy Spirit, (S10) the gift and guarantee of eternal life, who makes those, who believe and obey, sons of God and joint heirs with Christ (S11) and Him do we confess and adore, one God, in the Trinity of the Holy Name.

IMPERFECT—YET SPEAKS THE TRUTH:

For He Himself has said through the Prophet: 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you and you shall glorify me.' (S12) Although I am imperfect in many things, I nevertheless wish that my brothers and relations should know what sort of person I am, so that they may understand my heart's desire. I know well the testimony of my Lord, who in the Psalm declares: 'You will destroy those who speak lies.' (S13) The same Lord says in the Gospel: 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgment.' (S14)

WHY EVANGELISE:

We are, so Scripture says, a letter of Christ for salvation even to the ends of the earth, and, though not an eloquent one, yet this letter is genuinely and strongly written in your hearts, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. (S15) So I am first of all a simple country person, a refugee. I was like a stone lying in the deep mire; and He, that is mighty, came and in His mercy lifted me up... and placed me on the very top of the wall. (S16) So be amazed, all you people great and small who fear God! (S17). You well-educated people in authority, listen and examine this carefully. Who was it who called one as foolish as I am? (S18) Regardless of danger I must make known the gift of God without fear and I must spread everywhere the name of God so that, after my decease, I may leave a bequest to those, whom I have baptised in the Lord - so many thousands of people.

THE POWER OF PRAYER:

After I came to Ireland, every day I had to tend sheep and many times a day I prayed. The love of God and His fear came to me more and more, and my faith was strengthened. My spirit was moved so that in a single day I would say as many as 100 prayers, and almost as many in the night. Even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountains, I used to get up for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, because the spirit within me was then fervent.

LEARNING TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE:

One night I heard in my sleep a voice saying to me: 'It is well that you fast, soon you will go to your own country.' Again, after a short while, I heard a voice saying to me: 'See, your ship is ready.' It was not near, but at a distance of perhaps two hundred miles and I had never been there. Then I took to flight, and I left the man with whom I had stayed for six years. I went in the strength of God (S19) who directed my way and I feared nothing until I came to that ship. (S20)

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER – TRANSPORT:

The day I arrived, the ship was about to leave the place. I said that I was able to pay for my passage with them. But the captain was not pleased and with indignation he answered harshly: 'It is of no use for you to ask us to go along with us.' I left them in order to return to the hut where I was staying. As I went, I began to pray; and before I had ended my prayer, I heard one of them shouting behind me, 'Come, hurry, we shall take you on in good faith.'

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER – FOOD:

After 3 days we reached land and for 28 days we travelled through deserted country. They lacked food, and hunger overcame them; and the next day the captain said: 'Tell me, Christian: you say that your God is great and all-powerful; why, then, do you not pray for us? As you can see, we are suffering from hunger; it is unlikely indeed that we shall ever see a human being again.' I said to them full of confidence: 'Be truly converted with all your heart to the Lord my God, (S21) because nothing is impossible for Him, (S22) that this day He may send you food for He has abundance everywhere.' With the help of God, so it came to pass: suddenly a herd of pigs appeared on the road before our eyes and they killed many of them and fully recovered their strength. From that day they had plenty of food.

ASSAILED BY SATAN:

That same night, when I was asleep, Satan assailed me violently. I believe that I was sustained by Christ my Lord and that His Spirit was even then crying out on my behalf as is written in the Gospel: 'On that day, the Lord declares, it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.' (S23)

PROPHETIC VISION:

A few years later I was with my parents in Britain. They welcomed me as their son. There I saw in the night the vision of a man, (S24) whose name was Victoricus, coming as it were from Ireland, with countless letters. He gave me one of them, and I read the opening words, which were, 'The voice of the Irish': 'We ask thee, boy, come and walk among us once more.' Thanks be to God; after many years the Lord gave to them according to their cry.

HEARING GOD'S VOICE:

Another night - whether within me or beside me, I know not, God knows - I heard authoritative words that I could not understand, except that at the end of the prayer He spoke thus: 'He that has laid down His life for you, it is He that speaks in you'; and so I awoke full of joy. (S25)

HOLY SPIRIT PRAYS IN HIM:

Another time I saw Him praying in me, and I was as it were within my body, and I heard Him above me, that is, over the inward man. (S26) There He prayed mightily with groanings. At the end of the prayer He spoke, saying that He was the Spirit; and so I woke up, and remembered the Apostle saying: 'For we know not what we should pray for; but the Spirit Himself asks for us with unspeakable groanings, which cannot be expressed in words'; (S27) and again: 'The Lord is our advocate and pleads for us.' (S28)

BETRAYED BY HIS DEAREST FRIEND:

I was attacked by a number of my seniors who brought up my sins against my hard work as a bishop. This hit me very hard but the Lord in his kindness strongly supported me when I was so badly treated. I pray that God will not hold this sin against them. (S29) As cause for proceeding against me they found---after thirty years---a confession I had made before I was a deacon. In the anxiety of my troubled mind I confided to my dearest friend what I had done one day when I was young. I was then fifteen years old: and I did not believe in the living God. On that day I heard God's voice saying to me: 'He who touches you touches as it were the apple of my eye.' (S30) Therefore I give Him thanks who has strengthened me in everything. (S31) So I say boldly, my conscience does not blame me now or in the future. (S32) But I grieve more for my dearest friend that we had to hear what he said. To him I had confided my very soul!

LEARNED TO ALWAYS GIVE THANKS:

So I'll never stop giving thanks to my God, who kept me faithful in the day of my temptation, so that today I can confidently offer Him my soul as a living sacrifice - to Christ my Lord. (S33) He is the one who defended me in all my difficulties. Thus I can say: 'Who am I, Lord, or what is my calling, that you have worked with me with such divine presence?' (S34). This is how I come to praise and magnify your name among the nations all the time. Whatever comes about for me, good or bad, I ought to accept them equally and give thanks to God, who taught me to trust in Him always without hesitation. (S35) He must have heard my prayer so that I dared to undertake such a holy and wonderful work to preach His Gospel for a testimony to all nations before the end of the world. (S36)

NUMEROUS PLOTS AND DANGERS:

Now, it would be tedious to give a detailed account of all my labours. Let me tell you briefly how the merciful God often freed me from slavery and from twelve dangers in which my life was at stake---not to mention numerous plots, which I cannot express in words.

MANY PEOPLE BORN AGAIN:

From where did this wisdom come to me, a wisdom which was not in me? (S37) I didn't even know the number of my days, much less did I know God. (S38) I am prepared to give even my life without hesitation and most gladly for His name, and it is there (in Ireland) that I wish to spend it until I die. I am greatly in debt to God. He gave me such great grace, that through me, many people should be born again in God and brought to full life. (S39) This is just what he promised in the past through his prophets: The nations will come to you from the ends of the earth, and they will say: How false are the idols our fathers got for themselves.' (S40) And again: "I have put you as a light to the nations, that you may be their salvation to the end of the earth.' (S41) It is there that I await his promise: 'They will come from the east and from the west, and they will lie down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' (S42)

FISH WELL AND DILIGENTLY:

For that reason, therefore, we ought to fish well and diligently, as the Lord teaches, saying: 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' (S43) Again he says through the prophets: 'Behold, I send many fishers and hunters.' (S44) Therefore it is very right that we should cast our nets, so that a great multitude will be taken for God. There should be clerics to baptise and encourage a people in need. This is what the Lord says in the gospel: 'Go therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the age.' (S45) Again he says: 'Go out therefore to the whole world and announce the gospel... Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.' (S46) In the same way, the Lord foretold this through the prophet as he said: 'It will come about in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy; your young people will see visions and your older people will dream dreams. (S47)

I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH:

I hope to do what I should. I know I cannot trust myself as long as I am in this body subject to death. (S48). There is one who is strong, who tries every day to undermine my faith (S49) I have chosen to the end of my life for Christ my Lord. The flesh can be an enemy dragging towards death. (S50) I know how I have not led a perfect life but I acknowledge this to my Lord, and I do not blush in his sight. From the time in my youth that I came to know him, the love and reverence for God grew in me, (S51) and so far, with the Lord's help, I have kept the faith. (S52)

AWARE OF WEAKNESSES YET PERSEVERED:

So I want to give thanks to God without ceasing. (S53) He frequently forgave my lack of wisdom and my negligence, and more than once did not become very angry with me. I was not quick to accept what he showed me, and so the Spirit prompted me, There were many who forbade this mission. They even told stories among themselves behind my back. It was not that they were malicious – they just did not understand.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO IRISH CHRISTIANS:

Now, therefore, I have informed my fellow-servants who believed me and I warn them now, in order to strengthen and confirm your faith. Oh that you would imitate greater things, and do more powerful things. (S54) This will be my glory, since a wise son is the glory of his father. (S55)

FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE:

Perhaps, however, when I baptised so many thousands of people, did I hope to receive even the smallest payment? If so, tell me and I will return it to you. (S56) The Lord is powerful, and he can grant me still to spend my very self for the sake of your souls. (S57) See now: I call on God as witness in my soul that I tell no lie. (S58) Nor would I write to you looking for your praise, nor out of greed. I know for certain that poverty and calamity are more my style than riches and enjoyment. But Christ the Lord became poor for us. (S59) Daily I expect murder, fraud, or captivity, or whatever it may be; but I fear none of these things because of the promises of heaven. (S60) I have cast myself into the hands of God Almighty as the prophet says: 'Cast your concerns on God, and he will sustain you.' (S61)

FAITHFUL WITNESS TO THE END:

Now I commend my soul to my most faithful God. (S62) For him I perform the work of an ambassador, (S63) despite my less than noble condition. So I shall make a return to him for all that he has given to me. (S64) But what can I say, or what can I promise to my Lord? There is nothing I have that is not his gift to me. But he knows the depths of my heart, my very gut feelings! He knows that it is enough that I desire very much, that he would grant me to drink of his chalice, just as he was pleased to do for others who loved him. (S65) I pray that God give me perseverance, and that he grant me to bear faithful witness to him right up to my passing from this life, for the sake of my God.

TOTAL COMMITMENT:

If ever I have done any good for my God whom I love, I beg Him to grant me that I may shed my blood with those exiles and captives for His name because on that day, without doubt, we shall rise in the brightness of the sun, (S66) that is in the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, as sons of the living God and joint heirs with Christ, (S67) to be fashioned in His image; for of Him, and by Him, and in Him we shall reign. (S68)

REWARDS OF FAITH:

We believe in and adore the Christ, who will never perish. Nor will they perish who do his will but they will abide forever just as Christ will abide forever, (S69) who reigns with God the Father Almighty and the Holy Spirit before time, and now, and in all eternity. Amen.

PURE MOTIVES FOR PREACHING:

Again and again I briefly put before you the words of my testimony. I testify in truth and in great joy of heart before God and his holy angels that I never had any other reason for returning to that nation from which I had earlier escaped, except the gospel and God's promises.

MY CONFESSION: A GIFT OF GOD:

I pray for those who believe and fear God. Some of them may happen to come upon this writing which Patrick, a sinner without learning, wrote in Ireland. May none of them ever say that whatever little I did or made known to please God was done through ignorance. Instead, you can judge and believe in all truth that it was a gift of God. (S70) This is my testimony before I die.

Note:

1. S indicates a direct Scripture reference:

S1	Daniel 9:5,6	S36	Mat 24:14
S2	Lev 26:33	S37	Mat 13:54
S3	1 Kings 8:48	S38	Job 14:5
S4	Luke 1:48	S39	1 Peter 1:23
S5	Acts 17:24	S40	Jer 16:19
S6	Col 1:16	S41	Isa 49:6
S7	Phil 2:9-11	S42	Mat 8:11
S8	Acts 10:42	S43	Mat 4:19
S9	Romans 2:6	S44	Jer 16:16
S10	Titus 3:5,6	S45	Mat 28:19,20
S11	Romans 8:16,17	S46	Mark 16:15,16
S12	Psalms 50:15	S47	Joel 2:28,29
S13	Psalms 5:6	S48	Rom 7:24
S14	Matthew 12:36	S49	1 Peter 5:8
S15	2 Corinthians 3:2	S50	Rom 7:5
S16	Psalms 69:14	S51	Ps 71:5
S17	Rev 19:5	S52	2 Tim 4:7
S18	1 Cor 1:27	S53	Eph 5:20
S19	1 Sam 30:6	S54	John 14:12
S20	Ps 23:4	S55	Prov 10:1
S21	Joel 2:12	S56	1 Sam 12:3
S22	Luke 1:37	S57	2 Cor 12:15
S23	Mat 10:19,20	S58	Gal 1:20
S24	Acts 16:9	S59	2 Cor 8:9
S25	1 Thess 1:6	S60	2 Cor 11:27,28
S26	Eph 3:16	S61	Psalms 55:22
S27	Rom 8:26	S62	1 Peter 4:19
S28	1 John 2:1	S63	2 Cor 5:20
S29	Acts 7:60	S64	Psalms 116:12
S30	Zech 2:8	S65	Mat 20:22
S31	1 Tim 1:12	S66	Daniel 12:2,3
S32	1 John 3:21	S67	Rom 8:16,17
S33	Rom 12:1	S68	Rev 5:10
S34	2 Sam 7:18	S69	1 John 2:17
S35	Rom 8:28	S70	Eph 3:7

2. There are eight hand-written manuscripts of St. Patrick's Confession (Testimony) in existence today, which were written in Latin. The oldest (807AD) is in the Book of Armagh in Trinity College, Dublin

3. This translation in English was compiled by Ludwig Bieler in 1952.

4. With thanks to Matthew Rudolph, Messianic Jewish leader of Gateways Beyond International, a great inspiration on Irish Celtic Christianity.

*May this inspiring Testimony
of the founder
of the Irish Celtic Church
be an inspiration to you.
May you encounter the living Jesus
as Patrick and the early
Celtic Christians did.*

OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST AS PATRICK DID

We have an amazing Christian heritage in Ireland. Irish monks re-evangelised most of Europe when it had lost its way. It is right to honour our heritage and to call young people to again be inspired by it. Our young people need to encounter our Lord Jesus Christ and to heed the call to intentional discipleship modelled in the early Celtic Church. There are many places in Ireland where the Irish Celtic Christian church made its mark.

If you would like to encounter Jesus and begin to develop your personal relationship with God, as Patrick did on that mountain in Slemish, Co. Antrim, here is a very simple prayer which you may like to use in taking that step:

*“Lord Jesus Christ,
I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life.*

(Pause to ask His forgiveness for anything that is on your conscience).

Please forgive me.

I now turn from everything which I know is wrong.

*Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and
set free.*

Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Spirit.

I now receive that gift.

*Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever
as Saviour and Lord of my life.*

Thank you, Lord Jesus.

Amen.”

St. Patrick's BREASTPLATE

*Attributed to St. Patrick
Paraphrased by Cecil Frances Alexander*

I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same, the Three in One, the One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever by power of faith
Christ's incarnation,
His baptism in the Jordan river,
His death on the cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb,
His riding up the heavenly way,
His coming at the day of doom I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch,
His might to stay,
His ear to harken to my need,
the wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide,
His shield to ward,
the Word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me,
Christ within me,
Christ behind me,
Christ before me,
Christ beside me,
Christ to win me;
Christ to comfort and restore me;
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ in quiet,
Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger

I bind unto myself the name, the strong name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same, the Three in One, and One in Three,
of whom all nature hath creation, eternal Father, Spirit, Word;
praise to the God of my salvation,
salvation is of
Christ the Lord!



Extracts from St. Patrick's Confession
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