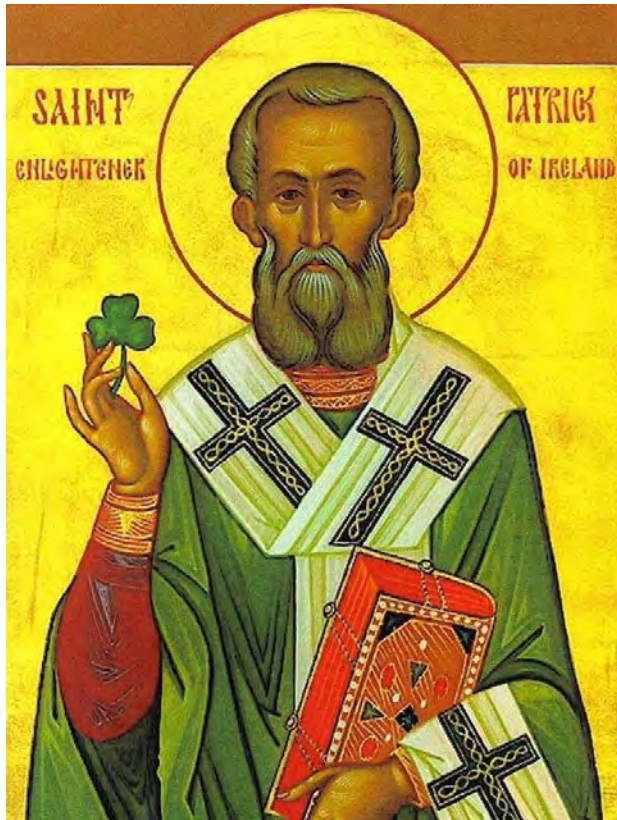


My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 83

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The Only Begotten Daughter, Part XII

"I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's hosts to save me
Afar and anear,
Alone or in a multitude.
Christ shield me today
Against wounding
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 down,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in the eye that sees me,
Christ in the ear that hears me.
I arise today
Through the mighty strength
Of the Lord of creation."

--Excerpted from a prayer attributed to Saint Patrick (5th Century Catholic Bishop and Missionary).

I sat down to write this essay, as the Feast of Saint Patrick was being celebrated throughout the world. In the same manner that Christmas has acquired popularity as a day of secular celebration, so too has the Patron Saint of Ireland become the excuse for commercial and gustatory excess across the globe. Of course, the real story of Patrick stands as an ironic counterpoint to all that the day has become.

Celtic raiders from Ireland captured the 16 year old Patrick from the "Provincia Britannia" or Roman Britain in the early 5th Century. During six years of enslavement, he labored as a herdsman and deepened his Christian faith through physical deprivation, suffering, and prayer. Then Patrick had a dream in which he saw a vessel appear on the coast of Ireland to bring him back to Britain. Inspired, he escaped his slavers and made his way to the destination revealed in his dream. After his return, Patrick studied for the

Catholic priesthood and was ordained. After several years, he volunteered as a missionary to Ireland to evangelize the Celts, his former captors, in what would prove to be an extraordinarily dangerous venture. Although Christianity had been introduced to Ireland before Patrick, prior efforts had met with little success. However, Patrick's labors bore fruit and firmly established the faith throughout the island.

What was at the root of Patrick's success? As Unificationists, we can immediately note that Patrick chose to love the very tribes that enslaved him, bringing his Celtic enemies the gospel at the risk of his life. And that risk was not imaginary: Patrick was under constant threat of martyrdom. His proselytizing represented a foreign and destabilizing force to local tribal power structures, a force that had become associated with the imperial power of Rome. The message of faith he carried from Provincia Britannia, undercut the cultural and social legitimacy of Celtic hierarchies buttressed by centuries of pagan belief and rituals. Thus, each evangelical encounter carried mortal risk. We can see in Patrick's prayer, as he walked the sacrificial path of Jesus, each day required his complete surrender to God. Patrick's legendary fidelity to his mission arose from his willingness to die for the sake of heaven. Eventually, Catholicism took root in Ireland and by the 8th Century, the Irish were sending monks and missionaries to evangelize the Germanic tribes. Thus, Patrick's exemplary faith significantly contributed to the conversion of Europe to Christianity.



During Morning Devotion, when a brother expressed gratitude for the early Korean, Japanese, and European missionaries to America, I could not help but think about how fitting that acknowledgement was on the Feast of St. Patrick. These brothers and sisters tirelessly gave (and continue to give) themselves to this country on the foundation achieved by True Parents in Korea and Japan. We cannot calculate the depth of heart, the tears and sweat, the longing and the sacrifice of these youthful missionaries as they invested themselves without remuneration or acknowledgement from the foreign nation--and for many, the former enemy--they unselfishly served. Together with our True Parents, they traveled from city to city and state to state, bringing a message of New Hope and Christian revival to a parched and weary land. Through the sacrifice of our members, these spiritual descendents of Saint Patrick, America's foundation became substantial, and in 1975, American missionaries were likewise sent out to the world.

And of course, even now many brothers and sisters, like Dr. Yong, have left their families and their own countries to evangelize a precipitously declining, post-Christian America in this second seven year course inaugurated by our True Mother, the Only Begotten Daughter of God. In particular, Dr. Yong's impassioned, thorough, and carefully researched teaching of True Parents' Word has revealed step by step, insight by insight, God's longing, pained, and sorrowful heart. Together with Dr. Yong, we can bathe our hearts with tears as we greet the dawn of each day with fervent prayer. Together, ingesting our daily nourishment, we can awaken our hearts and resurrect our spirits.

It is my absolute faith that these morning devotions are the beginning of America's Third Great Awakening, as our understanding deepens and our hearts catch fire. Spiritually and substantially, the Holy Spirit, God's Only Begotten Daughter, has come to this land. There is not a moment that I cannot feel True Mother's presence in my heart, if only I turn my attention to her. Moreover, on his feast day, it is my conviction that St. Patrick was not haunting the cold altars of empty churches. Rather, he gathered with us at morning devotion, and shed tears of sorrow and repentance; he sighed with longing in prayer; he rejoiced to listen to God's Word, to understand what had heretofore been obscure and hidden; and together with us, determined in his heart of hearts to attend our True Mother as we labor to revive our dying land.