

Dear everyone, greetings once again.

In our last Worldview, we discussed some aspects of the life and ministry of St. Patrick. In this Worldview, I want to discuss aspects of the spiritual life that Saint Patrick developed among the new Celtic believers.

St. Patrick was working among a predominantly illiterate community. Before the arrival of St. Patrick, the Druids had maintained a strong hold over the religious life of the Celtic Irish. The Celtic Irish were often excluded from the rituals and the rights of Druid is him which were controlled by the Druids themselves. In stark contrast, Saint Patrick developed a life of prayer among the new believers in Ireland, and these prayers were open to any new believer to pray. The prayers were memorized, they were taught, they were passed from community to community, and they became the treasured common property across the new community of believers. The prayers developed in the Celtic Irish community were not reserved for specifically religious events. No, the prayers were designed to help new believers to have a living connection with God above throughout the course of the day's activities.

Here are some examples of Celtic prayers.

*I will rekindle my fire this morning
in presence of the holy angels of heaven,
God, Tyndale thou in my heart within
a flame of love to my neighbor, to my fellow, to my friend, to my kindred all,
to the brave, to the knave, and to the thrall.*

*I am bending my knee
in the eye of the Father who created me,
in the eye of the Son who purchased me
in the eye of the Spirit to cleanse me
in friendship and affection.*

*I lie down this night with God,
and God will lie down with me;
I lie down this night with Christ,
and Christ will lie down with me;
I lie down this night with the Spirit,
and the spirit will lie down with me;
God and Christ and the Spirit
be lying down with me.*

*Oh Father who sought me
oh Son who brought me
O Holy Spirit who taught me.*

As can be seen above, the prayers of the Celtic believers expressed a profound theology within the context of everyday life. Prayers were developed relating to every aspect of daily life, and were designed

in this way deliberately to foster a life of continual prayer and dependence upon God among the new believers. The prayers were highly visual, theologically profound, and directly relevant to the daily challenges that people faced in daily life.

Perhaps the most famous Celtic prayer of all is called "St. Patrick's Breastplate" and the words are as follows:

*I rise today
In powers strength, invoking the Trinity,
believing in threeness,
confessing the oneness,
of creations Creator.*

*I rise today
in the power of Christ's birth and baptism,
in the power of his crucifixion and burial,
in the power of his rising and ascending,
in the power of his descending and judging.*

*I rise today
in the power of the love of cherubim,
in the obedience of angels,
and service of archangels,
in hope of rising to receive the reward,
in the prayers of patriarchs,
in the predictions of prophets,
and the preaching of apostles,
in the faith of confessors,
in the innocence of holy virgins,
in the deeds of the righteous.*

*I rise today
in heaven's might,
in sun's brightness,
in moon's radiance,
in fire's glory,
in lightning's quickness,
in wind's swiftness,
in sea's depth,
in earth's stability,
in rocks fixity.*

*I rise today
with the power of God to pilot me,
God's strength to sustain me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look ahead for me,*

*God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to protect me,
God's way before me,
God's shield to defend me,
God's house to deliver me:
from snares of devils,
from evil temptations,
from nature's failings,
from all who wish to harm,
Babylonia, alone and in a crowd.*

*Around me I gather today all these powers
against every cruel and merciless force
to attack my body and soul,
against the charms of false prophets,
the black laws of paganism,
the false laws of heretics
the deceptions of idolatry,
against spells cast by women, estimates and Druids,
and all lawful knowledge
that harms the body and soul.*

*May Christ protect me today
against poison and burning,
against drowning and wounding,
so that I may have abundant reward;
Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me;
Christ within me, Christ beneath me, asked about me,
Christ to write of me, Christ to left of me;
Christ in my lying, Christ in my sitting,
Christ in my rising;
Christ in the hearts of all who think of me.
Christ on the tongue of all who speak to me,
Christ in the eye of all who see me,
Christ in the ear of all who hear me.*

*I rise today
in power's strength, invoking the Trinity,
believing in threeness,
confessing the oneness,
of creation's Creator.*

*For to the Lord belongs to salvation,
And to the Lord belongs salvation,
and to Christ belongs salvation
May your salvation, Lord, be with us always.*

As can be seen, the Celtic approach to the spiritual life involved the conscious development within the community of a range of prayers that could be taught and memorized by all community members, prayers which directly dealt with all aspects of daily life. In this way Saint Patrick and his coworkers enabled the new believers to develop faith and understanding on a daily basis as they went about their daily activities. In essence the prayers performed the role of teacher of truth for the new believers, many of whom were illiterate, and due to the poetic quality of the prayers, the prayers were well received within the Irish Celtic community, which had a rich tradition of music and poetry. In this way, faith was contextualized by Saint Patrick and his coworkers in a profoundly beautiful way.

And what of us today? Do we view prayer as merely a few words of invocation at the beginning and end of an otherwise secular business meeting? Do we view prayer, intentional prayer, memorized prayer, planned prayer, spiritually rich prayer, as a means of maintaining a living connection with our Heavenly Father throughout all of the activities we engage in on a daily basis? What a wonderful thing it would be if we

ourselves could develop prayers for use throughout our daily activities, and then to be able to teach such prayers, pregnant with truths of our, to those whom we love and serve for them to carry throughout the day. As we develop such prayers, we are enabling new believers to be able to "pray without ceasing" throughout each and every day.

May God bless us as we soon enter the Sabbath hours, and may our prayers always sends to our heavenly father, who provides grace and help in our hour of need.

God bless for now,

Conrad.