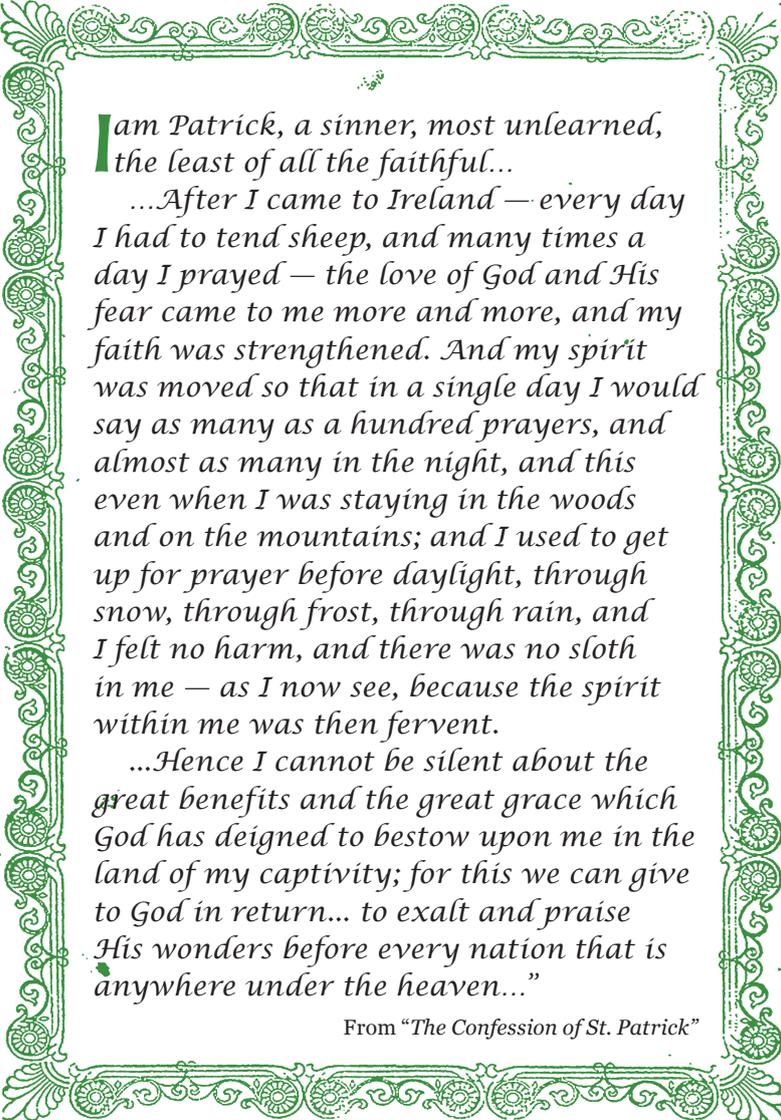


*“...Although I am imperfect in many things, I nevertheless wish that my brethren and kinsmen should know what sort of person I am, so that they may understand my heart’s desire.”*

*Saint Patrick — Written 5th Century A.D.*





**I** am Patrick, a sinner, most unlearned,  
the least of all the faithful...

...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. And my spirit was moved so that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and almost as many in the night, and this even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountains; and I used to get up for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, and I felt no harm, and there was no sloth in me — as I now see, because the spirit within me was then fervent.

...Hence I cannot be silent about the great benefits and the great grace which God has deigned to bestow upon me in the land of my captivity; for this we can give to God in return... to exalt and praise His wonders before every nation that is anywhere under the heaven..."

From "The Confession of St. Patrick"



**T**his confession is from the "heart of St. Patrick" as expressed in the year 490 A.D. in one of the only remaining documents authenticated to have been written by his own hand.

Patrick had endured much suffering in this life. As a teenager in England, he was taken captive by the Irish to be a slave. In the midst of those difficult circumstances, he turned his heart toward the God he sensed all around him as he sat under the open skies tending sheep on the Irish hillside.

Once Patrick escaped from his captors, he was not a man filled with bitterness for how he had been treated by his Irish master. To the contrary, the love of God caused him to make a valiant attempt to bring hope and light to the same hostile people who once had captured him. Though born English, he became more "Irish" than one who was native born.

In his day, the established church had not yet taken form, and many of Patrick's ways would now be considered very "unorthodox." His simple, down-to-earth religion is what drew the Irish to his faith. His own experience with God as a youth on the Irish hillside caused a deep respect in Patrick for nature. Thus, the Celtic Church which he founded, has a much closer link to the wonders of creation than is seen in the later established church. This affinity for nature has been attributed to their hero, Patrick.



## Shamrock

Thus, Patrick often used nature as a tool to teach men about an awesome God who is not so difficult to understand when you look at the beauty of His Creation... for His divine attributes can be clearly seen in all that He has made (as it says in the New Testament):

*“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” Romans 1:20*

It was for this reason that Patrick used a **shamrock** as he attempted to bring the lofty concept of “the trinity” of God down onto a level that the common shepherd or fisherman could easily understand. In the same way the Son of God Himself brought clarity to his message with the use of parables, so Patrick’s story of the “shamrock” struck the heart of the Irish people. He used the shamrock to represent how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers later adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.



But there is actually no such thing as a “Shamrock Plant.” The word *shamrock* comes from the Irish word **seamrog**, meaning “little clover.” The clovers occupied an important position in the cultural life of many early peoples. White clover (*T. repens* L.) in particular was held in high esteem by the early Celts. Some said the clover was a charm against evil spirits. Evidently Patrick was able to build upon the charm of the little clover, as he explained the grandeur of the Almighty to them in a way they could easily understand. It has since become the much-loved symbol of the Irish people.

## No Irish Need Apply

Like for Patrick, the road for the Irish people after him has not been an easy one. They have had to endure oppression and famine.

When the Great Potato Famine hit Ireland in 1845, nearly a million poor, uneducated, Irish began to pour into America to escape starvation. Despised by the American Protestant majority for their religious beliefs and funny accents, they were met with rejection. The immigrants had trouble finding even menial jobs.

But the Irish were far from beaten down. The philosophy of endurance and fortitude inspired by Patrick held them. Their fiery tempers and national pride caused them to stand even taller when they read the roughly drawn signs

**NO IRISH  
NEED APPLY.**

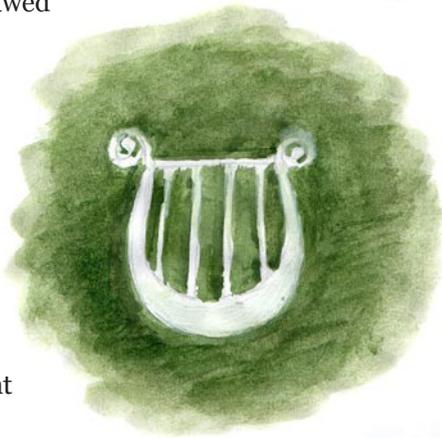
in the shop windows of those seeking workers, “No Irish Need Apply.” Irish immigrants were undaunted when they saw these statements of exclusion, so-called *NINAs*. But it was not until nearly a hundred years later that the Irish were able to rise above all this.

## Music

Through all their hard times, their music has been a source of strength for Irish culture in general. From the ancient days of Patrick, they had an “oral tradition,” where religion, legend, and history were passed from one generation to the next by way of stories and songs.

After being conquered by the English, the Irish were forbidden to speak their own language. Responding to their suffering like Patrick of old, they did not become bitter, but rather turned to music to help them remember important events and hold on to their heritage and history. Because it often stirred emotion and helped to unite the people, music was outlawed by the English.

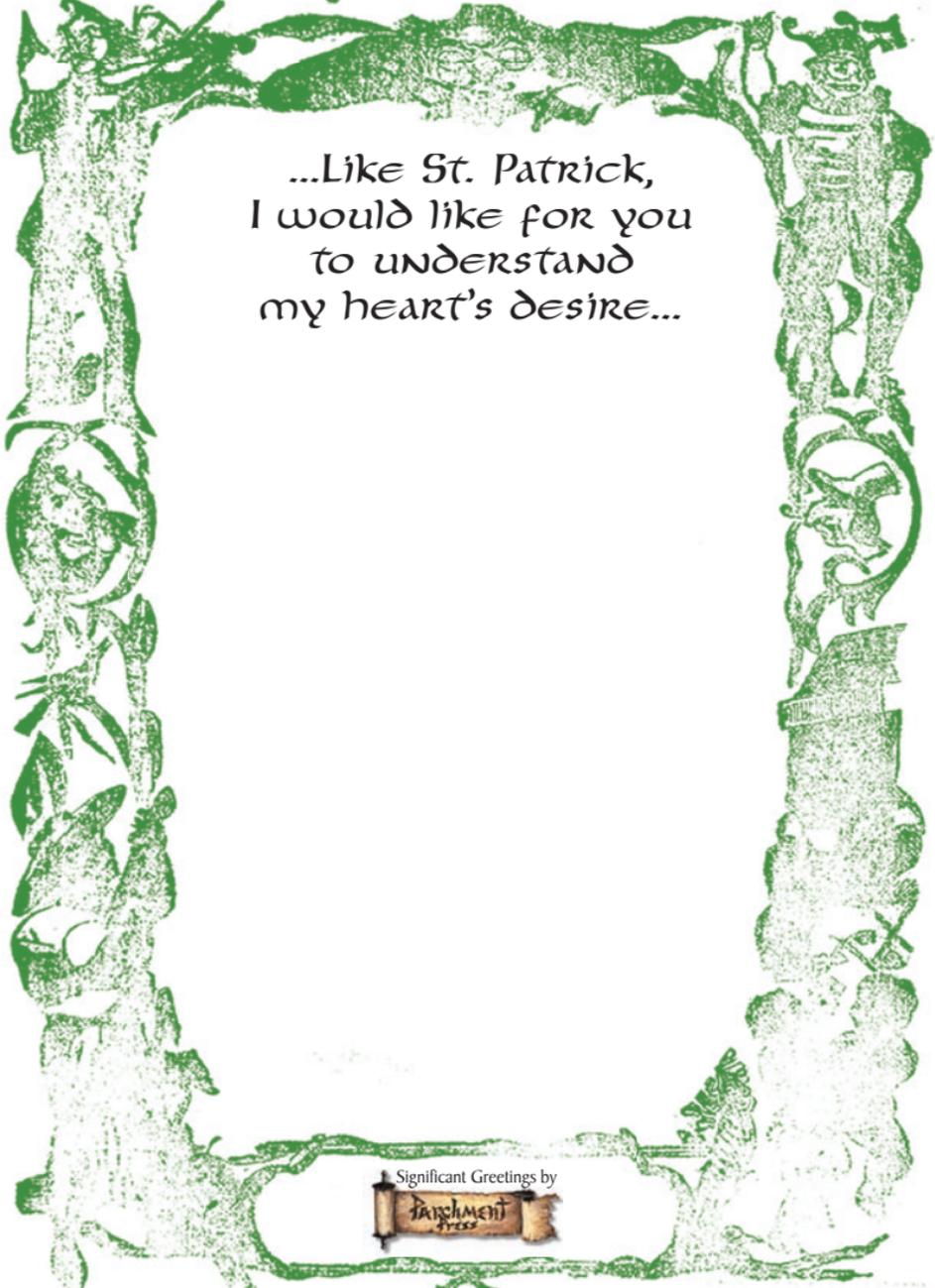
England enacted the Statute of Kilkenny in 1366, making the possession and playing of the pipes and harps a penal offense, including having pipers entertain in the home. The English government



was very concerned that Irish pipers acted as “...agents or spies on the English whereby great evils often resulted.” The consequences for an infraction of the Kilkenny statute was death. The English thought that by silencing the pipes in Ireland, the Gaelic Clans would no longer be moved to rebel against them. This edict was again supported by Queen Elizabeth I and again by Cromwell, instituting a punishment of banishment to Barbados or other West Indies islands if someone were caught playing music.

From the Irish, and their folk hero, Patrick, we can all learn a great lesson..... Though few really understand the *man*, Patrick, he was not who he is often made out to be... Let us truly understand his heart! ♣





...Like St. Patrick,  
I would like for you  
to UNDERSTAND  
my heart's desire...

Significant Greetings by

SAVING  
MOMENTS  
PRESS