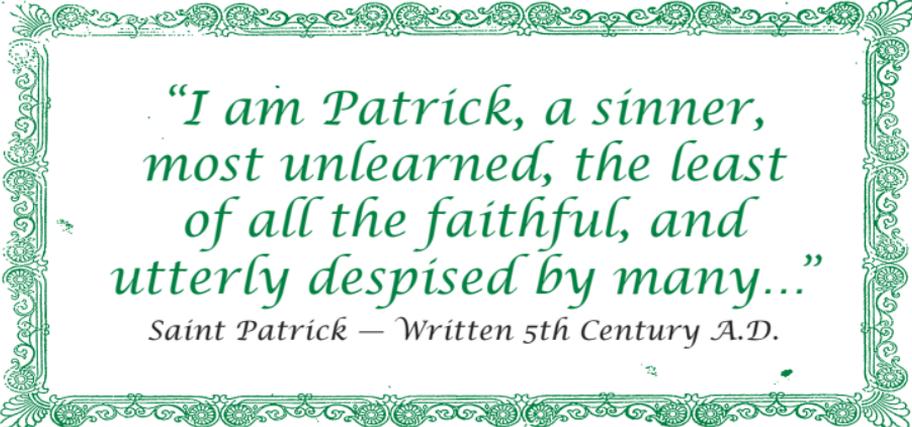


"I am Patrick, a sinner,
most unlearned, the least of
all the faithful, and utterly
despised by many..."

— Saint Patrick





*“I am Patrick, a sinner,
most unlearned, the least
of all the faithful, and
utterly despised by many...”*

Saint Patrick — Written 5th Century A.D.

So begins the famous work written by the hand of the famous St. Patrick called, “Confessions of St. Patrick.”

This certainly sounds entirely different from the St. Patrick we all love and celebrate today... St. Patrick’s Day is one of the most festive holidays of the calendar year. Yet, most of us know *little* of this man for whom we all must wear “a touch of green” on March 17.

Though named after a *saint*, few of us think of St. Patrick’s Day as a “religious holiday.” Yet, if Patrick had his way about this holiday named after him, surely things would be different.

In fact, in one of the only remaining documents that was actually written by his own hand in the fifth century, Patrick wrote:

Although I am imperfect in many things, I nevertheless wish that people should know what sort of

person I am, so that they may understand my heart's desire.

For this reason I had in mind to write, but I have not studied like the others... My writing, betrays how little instruction and training I have had in the art of words...

Patrick went on to say repeatedly how ashamed he was that he had not been educated, and was of very humble speech.

He went on further to say:

Wherefore, then, be astonished, ye great and little that fear God, and you men of letters on your estates, listen and pore over this. Who was it that roused me, the fool that I am, from the midst of those who in the eyes of men are wise, and expert in law, and powerful in word and in everything? It was He that inspired me - me, the outcast of this world...

This “outcast of the world” (as he called himself), Patrick has now become the greatly admired symbol of the heart of Ireland. Though there are many traditions attached to his name, the man Patrick has firsthand information on himself that he makes known to posterity here in the last days of his life. He wanted people to remember him for the man he really was. Very humbly Patrick makes clearly known that though

he had a life full of adventure, he wanted to go down in history this way:

The Life Story of St. Patrick *written by his own hand near the end of his life...*

...at about sixteen years of age, I did not know the true God. I was taken into captivity to Ireland with many thousands of people in Britain and deservedly so, because we turned away from God, and did not keep His commandments.... And the Lord brought over us the wrath of His anger and scattered us among many nations, even unto the utmost part of the earth, where now my littleness is placed among strangers.

There the Lord opened the sense of my unbelief that I might at last remember my sins and be converted with all my heart to God, who had regard for my abjection, and had mercy on my youth and ignorance. He watched over me before I knew Him, and before I was able to distinguish between good and evil, and guarded me, and comforted me as would a father his son.

Hence I cannot be silent about the great benefits and the great grace which was bestowed upon me; for this we can give to God in return after having been chastened by Him, to exalt and praise His wonders before every nation that is anywhere under the heaven. For He Himself has said through the Prophet: Call upon

me in the day of thy trouble, and I will deliver thee, and you will glorify me...

Although I am imperfect in many things, I nevertheless wish that people should know what sort of person I am, so that they may understand my heart's desire.

The Shepherd Boy

But 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.

And there one night I heard in my sleep a voice saying to me: 'Soon you will go to your own country.' And again, after a short while, I heard a voice saying to me: 'See, your ship is ready.' And it was not near, but at a distance of perhaps two hundred miles, and I had never been there, nor did I know a living soul there; and then I took to flight, and I left the man with whom I had stayed for six years. And I went in the strength of God who directed my way to my good, and I feared nothing until I came to that ship.



But after Patrick's safe return to his homeland of Britain and his family, he was not happy. He felt as if he did not fit in to that culture. But then one night something amazing happened to him:

...I saw in the night a vision of a man, whose name was Victoricus, coming as it were from Ireland, with

countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the opening words of the letter, which were, 'The voice of the Irish'; I read the beginning of the letter: 'We ask thee, boy, come and walk among us once more.' And I was quite broken in heart, and so I woke up. Thanks be to God, after many years He answered their cry.

Let me tell you briefly how the merciful God freed me from slavery and from dangers in which my life was at stake, for I am very much God's debtor. For He opened the way for my return to Ireland.

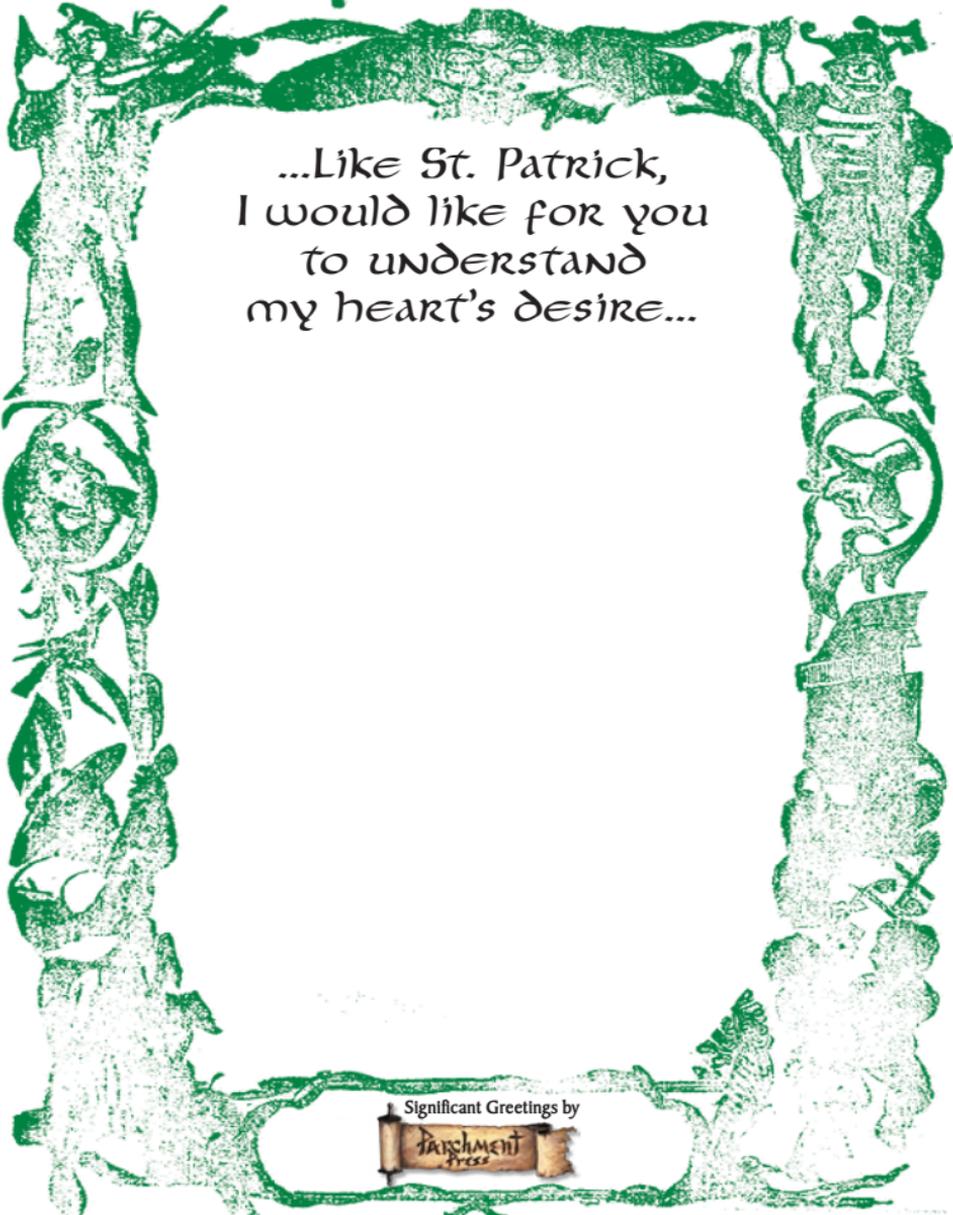
...and I know that in part I did not lead as perfect a life as did the other faithful; but I acknowledge it, and do not blush before Him, because I lie not: from the time I came to know Him in my youth, the love of God and the fear of Him have grown in me, and up to now, thanks to the grace of God, I have kept the faith.

...This is my confession before I die.

Patrick of Ireland

For Patrick his faith meant everything to him. This is the true inspiration of St. Patrick's Day... For he truly was a man to be admired.

May we all find the heart of St. Patrick! 



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

Significant Greetings by

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