

Prayer Warriors, Let's Cry Out to God for This St. Patrick's Day Miracle

St. Patrick's Day, March 17, is recognized as an Irish celebration, but in fact the whole Christian world owes a large debt to St Patrick.

Brought to pagan Ireland as a slave, Patrick escaped and returned to his home in Roman Christian Britain. However, he was unable to forget the lost souls of Ireland and returned to evangelize the island. The pagan wizards and priests were no match for the man of God, and the whole island was Christianized as the result of his efforts. For this he is rightly honored as the evangelist of the Irish.

But his legacy of a Christian Ireland blessed far more people than just the Irish. Even before his death in A.D. 461, the Roman Christian Britain of his boyhood was being overrun by the pagan Angles and Saxons. Soon the British and Irish switched roles: The newly Christian Irish sent missionaries to the newly pagan Britain. And in about a century the Anglo-Saxons were Christianized. So the British saved the Irish so the Irish could save the British.

An even more remarkable turnabout occurred as the European continent fell into chaos during the time known as the Dark Ages. The formerly barbarian, unlettered Irish were able to save countless manuscripts from destruction and became the custodians of the civilized Western worlds' knowledge. They also expanded their evangelistic efforts into Europe, bringing about a revival of Christianity in France and Italy. Thus, Patrick's Irish followers became a beacon of learning and hope in the Dark Ages, helping preserve the centers of European Christianity as well as its British and Irish outposts.

Alas, the Irish were not immune to the instability of their times, as they were first invaded by the Vikings and then colonized by the ungrateful English. After the Reformation, they were persecuted for their Catholic faith and allowed to starve in the horrible famine of the 1840's. The Island remains divided between the Catholic republic in the south and the Protestant north.

It is ironic that these two peoples, still divided over religion, owe their Christian faith to the other: The Irish to the British Patrick, and the British to the Irish missionaries. Yet, there is progress being made to reconcile these peoples. Several years back we at Corporate Prayer Resources made a prayer journey to Ireland and saw our and many other prayers answered as a peace process began in Northern Ireland. There are also continuing reconciliation efforts underway between the Catholics and the Protestants to heal this terrible division.

As we look forward to this St Patrick's day, the best way to honor St. Patrick would be to pray that there would be reconciliation, forgiveness and peace between his British homeland and his beloved Ireland, and between Catholic and Protestant.

And may it be so. {eo}

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