

March 2005
Mi Na Marta

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A Happy St. Patrick's Day to All Emeralds!

St. Patrick's Day falls on March 17 each year.

Our celebration of this saint's day takes place on the Saturday prior, March 12, 2005. Come join in the food, festivities, and fun!

The St. Patrick's Day Committee has been working feverishly under the leadership of John Doherty to bring you a festival celebration that will outshine last year's memorable sunny day on Ponce Circle. Yes, there will be Miss Colleen pageant. There will be home made Irish soda bread, Irish whiskey cake, lashings of corned beef and cabbage, shepherd's pie, and a lots of beer, wine, soft drinks, and more potent libations to do proper honor to the patron saint of Ireland. Festival Day is on Saturday, March 12 and we kick off our celebration at 12:00 noon in Fred Hartnett Park on Ponce Circle in Coral Gables, on Ponce de Leon Blvd., just south of Miracle Mile. The fun, food, and drink will be there until sunset.

Election Ballots

Ballots for the election of officers and board members have been distributed. We want to have the results by March 12. If you have not returned yours bring it to the festival.

The Installation of Officers will be at Parrot Jungle on Wednesday, May 25, 2002. Look for more details next month.

Irish Cultural Series Meets in John Martin's

Join us at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 10, 2005, upstairs at John Martin's Irish Pub and Restaurant, 253 Miracle Mile in Coral Gables. The program will be an entertaining discussion of the joys and sorrows of golfing in Ireland by Emerald sportsmen Martin Lynch, Frank O'Dowd, and Michael F. O'Connor. Dan Fitzgerald will serve as moderator and we will have maps and brochures from the Irish Tourist Board to provide additional current details on playing the outstanding greens of Ireland.

Welcome New Members

We welcome seven new members this month:

Paul Riley John Barrie McHugh
Helen Lennon Michael O'Hara
Jimmy McMillion Timothy C. O'Sullivan, Jr.
 Kathleen Foley Schmach.

Look out for them at the festival and welcome them warmly.

Hollywood Parade

For those of you living in Broward or North Miami-Dade there is a St. Patrick's Day parade at Young Circle in Hollywood on Sunday, March 13, 2005.

No Social in March

We'll all be so tired and worn out from the St. Patrick's Day festivities that we have decided to forego a social in March. In April the popular socials organized by Bill O'Brien will resume.

"A Better Way to a Better Ireland"

That's the theme of a talk by Mark Durcan, the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in Northern Ireland. He will talk about the state of the peace process in Northern Ireland, which has been shaken by the recent events in Belfast. The Irish Peace Institute Foundation (Kathleen Foley Schmach), Nova Southeastern University, and the Celtic American Law Society are sponsoring the talk and an intimate reception at the Carl DeSantis Building's Knight auditorium, Room 1124 on the Davie campus at 6:00 p.m. on March 15. The event is open to the public.

Following the lecture there will be a pre-St. Patrick's Day dinner with Irish musical entertainment in honor of Mr. Durcan at Signature Grand, 6900 State Road 84, near NSU at 8:00 p.m. Cost is \$85 per person. Call Kathleen at 305-532-8363, or email kschmacht@hotmail.com.

Poetry Corner

Each month the Shamrock News presents a poem by an Irish poet. This month, in honor of the saint, we bring you an English translation by Whitley Stokes of an old poem in Gaelic from the eighth century, which is known as "St. Patrick's Breastplate." The poet or poets are unknown. It is partly a Druidic poem and really may have nothing to do with St. Patrick, but the fifth verse is often quoted and has been incorporated into a hymn to St. Patrick.

St. Patrick's Breastplate

I bind unto myself today
The strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One, and One in Three.

I bind this day to me for ever,
By power of faith, Christ's Incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan River;
His death on cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb;
His riding up the heavenly way;
His coming at the day of doom;
I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today
The virtues of the starlit heaven,
The glorious sun's life-giving ray,
The whiteness of the moon at even,
The flashing of the lightning free,
The whirling winds tempestuous shocks,
The stable earth, the deep salt sea
Around the old eternal rocks.

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need,
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward,
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ be within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the Name,
The strong name of the Trinity;
The invocation of the same,
The Three in One, and One in Three,
Of whom all nature hath creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word,
Praise to the Lord of my salvation:
Salvation is of Christ the Lord.

Anonymous, translated by Whitley Stokes

Board Members

The Board will meet on Thursday, April 7, at the Miami Yacht Club to put the new Board members and officers to work for the new year.

Any member is welcome to attend. Attendance of all Board members is expected. Dinner and drinks, as usual, will be available. Stick around after the meeting and enjoy good company by the water's edge under the stars.

The Real St. Patrick

Oliver Kerr, your editor, wrote the following piece for inclusion in the St. Patrick's Day souvenir book that will be distributed at the Festival on Saturday. It is reproduced here for those who cannot attend the festival.

I was born and raised in Armagh City, Ireland's ecclesiastical capital, within sight of two magnificent hilltop cathedrals, both dedicated to St. Patrick. On the older building, a square-towered sandstone building on the central hill, there is sign reading, "St. Patrick's Cathedral, Church of Ireland, Anglican, Episcopal, founded by the saint 445." On the other, twin-spired, newer building is an inscription in Latin that

reads, "To the One God, Omnipotent, Three in Person, under the invocation of St. Patrick, Apostle of the Irish, A.D. 1866." And there they have stood for the past 150 years, Christian monuments of strong faith and devotion to St. Patrick and ironic symbols of the religious, cultural, and political forces that have divided the country for centuries. In the Catholic tradition, the division of the country is recognized in the titles used by the prelates. The archbishop of Dublin, Ireland's capital city, is the primate of Ireland. The archbishop of Armagh is the primate of All-Ireland.

Growing up in the north of Ireland in the 1940s and 1950s we all knew the Gospel according to St. Patrick: that he came to Ireland in 432, that he brought Christianity to Ireland, that he drove out the snakes, that he used the shamrock as a symbol of the Holy Trinity, that he picked Armagh as the site of his church, and that he died on March 17. We also knew why St. Patrick picked Armagh. Only a mile to the west of the city lies the earthen-work remains of the ancient capital of Ulster, Emain Macha, where archeologists have found evidence of human activity going back 5,000 years. It was the seat of ancient kings and the legendary war-goddess, Queen Macha, whose name is part of Armagh, that is Ard Macha, the Height of Macha. In this world of legend, Armagh the capital and its Knights of the Red Branch were just like Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table. Where else would St. Patrick establish his church?

Our information about St. Patrick, both the facts and the legends, comes mostly from the Book of Armagh, an illustrated ninth century manuscript that is currently housed in the library of Trinity College in Dublin. This book is a collection of writings including the New Testament, several lives of St. Patrick, and an abridged version of the St. Patrick's own work, his "Confession," written late in his life. In his "Confession" he tells us that he came from Britain, where his father was a deacon and a local government official, a tax collector for the Romans, and his grandfather a priest. The clergy may have been exempt from taxes. He was a Roman citizen and

a Celt and probably lived on the west coast where raiders could easily land and capture people to work as slaves in Ireland. He tells us that he was captured at the age of 16 and spent six years in Ireland. He escaped, returned to Britain, and in a dream heard the Irish calling him to return. He did eventually return as a missionary but we do not know when or what further education he acquired in the intervening years.

Scholars agree that St. Patrick did establish his church in Armagh but he did not die there and was not buried there. They also believe that he was born late in the fourth century, kidnapped around 406 and returned to Ireland between 425 and 435. He died about 460. The March 17 date of his death comes from the Book of Armagh.

According to Alf McCreary, the author of *Saint Patrick's City, the Story of Armagh* (Belfast: The Blackfriar Press, 2001),

The picture of Patrick which emerges from his writings is that of a strong, resolute, determined, and deeply spiritual man with attractive qualities of kindness and humility. He is every inch a good Bishop, tending to his flock, evangelizing, baptizing, educating and looking after his

people in every way possible. He is not class conscious, though he seems unduly flattered that the sons and daughters of the Irish aristocracy are among his converts. He is acutely conscious of the social evils of his day and he is one of the first senior figures in the Christian Church to rail publicly against slavery . . . (p. 11).

When I think of St. Patrick, once a slave and later in voluntary exile, I think of the thousands of Irish exiles across the centuries who left their native land with little but a firm faith in God. They went to the four corners of the world, lived by their Christian beliefs, reached out to their new neighbors, made new friends, and helped build new communities and nations.

And here in South Florida I think also of the hundreds of thousands of South Floridians who were born in other countries and who are here, whether by choice or not. St. Patrick's message to all of us exiles spans the centuries and should be heard today in all our languages. *Live your lives in tolerance and in patience. Stay away from violence. Look out for the poor. Help those who are trapped or enslaved in any way.*

And I hope and pray that the Irish today in Ireland will hear this message too and move forward in peace.

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