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Saint Patrick's Day and America's Founding



The "luck of the Irish". Shamrocks. Green elfs. Parades. St. Patty's Day. All of these and more fill the air when March 17 rolls around each year. Yet, few Americans really know who Saint Patrick was. More importantly, what significance does he have with America unique form of government based on the Ten Commandments? St. Patrick's Day has become an American tradition, but do we know its full significance?

If we could uncover the roots of Saint Patrick, we might replace the phrases with some of the following. Miracles of God. Three-leaf clovers to symbolize the Trinity. Converted sinners. The gospel on parade. A day to remember the *Liber ex Lege Moisi*, the book that made the Ten Commandments the base of our English and American common law tradition. Yet some of these mean little or nothing to most believers as well as Americans in general. We must uncover our history!

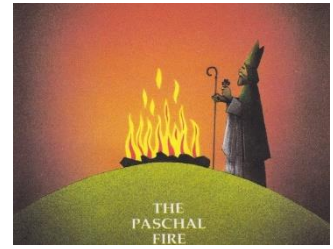


Maewyn Succat (Patrick's original name) was born in England around 389 AD. His father was a deacon in the church and the son of a priest in the Celtic tradition. His mother and father raised him in the Christian faith, but Patrick, before he turned 16, considered himself a pagan because his heart was dark with sin and it was such a contrast to the way his head had been trained.

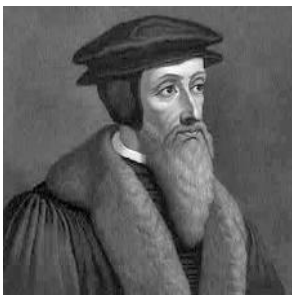
When he turned 16, he was captured by Druid pirates and sold as a slave. His father was killed and his sister disappeared. Due to the fact of how he was trained, however, he determined to obey his slave master. He tended flocks of sheep, and cried out to God for a relationship with Him. He wrote of his conversion in his Confessions. "...*The Lord opened the sense of my unbelief that I might at last remember my sins and be converted with all my heart to the Lord my God...*" After six years, he escaped when his owner was converted.

After years of study and preparation in theology, he wrote "*one night I heard in my sleep a voice saying to me, 'it is well that you fast, 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.'*" After miraculously returning to his homeland, his ministry began in earnest. He planted over 300 churches, baptizing more than 120,000 new converts! His ministry was accompanied by miraculous signs of healing and the power of the Spirit so that at times whole villages were converted!

For instance, in 432 AD, when Easter and the Druid festival were to coincide, the tradition was that no fire was to be lit until the pagan fire of the occult (devil worship) was lit first. Patrick lit the Easter fire first anyway, and when the King attempted to lure Patrick into an ambush and kill him, a dark cloud covered him so they could not see Patrick walking down the road!



Bold, fearless and ministering in confidence, green became the symbol of spiritual growth and maturity. Patrick used the three-leaf clover to teach the Trinity. He taught how the three leaves came from one stem like the three persons of the Godhead. By the time he died, much of Ireland were Trinitarian believers! He died on March 8 or 9, no one knows for sure. That is why Saint Patrick's Day is March 17 - for they simply added the two numbers together!



What does this have to do with America, you might ask? First, his thirty year ministry in Ireland preceded and prepared for the work of Saint Augustine, whose theology was revived by John Calvin during the Reformation. Calvin was called the theological father of American liberty. Author Jean-Henri Merle D-Aubigne put it this way: *“Calvin was the founder of the greatest of republics. The Pilgrims who left their country in the reight of James I, and landing on the barren soil of New England, founded populous and mighty colonies, were his sons.”*

Furthermore, Patrick didn't stop with converting sinners to believers. He disciplined them from an ancient law book written when the Celtic people were first converted by the Galatian believers in the first century. That book, called the *Liber ex Lege Moisi*, or "liberty from the law or book of Moses", began with the Ten Commandments and essentially laid the foundations for a civilization built on God's law.



All over Ireland, and later Scotland and England, the decentralized institutions of home, church and state became a model the Saxons copied and eventually embraced. King Alfred revised the *Liber* as the foundation for his famous code in 890 AD. This, in turn, is the origin of England's common law. Marriage, family life, limited civil government, maximum liberty, private property rights, and private education under the authority of parents flourished.



This, my friends, is the inheritance that came over the Atlantic with Captain John Smith in 1607 and even more fully with the Pilgrims in 1620. The Founders desired to restore the rights framed under King Alfred through the restoration of Magna Charta in 1215. That is why the image of a the colonial militia had a sword and a copy of the Great Charter. In short, St. Patrick brought the law and the gospel to Ireland. The legacy of self-government and civil liberty were codified by King Alfred and framed in the Magna Charta whose truths were brought by the Pilgrims and Puritans, and defended by the Patriots! Let's never celebrate Saint Patrick's Day the same again!