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SAINT PATRICK

By Rt. Rev. Sylvester H. Rosecrans, S.T.D.

(Editor's note. The following sermon on St. Patrick is included in a collection of manuscripts by Bishop Rosecrans, now in the possession of the Catholic Record Society.)

If one were gifted with the spiritual power to follow the track of thought and affection and fancy through space, how many lines he would see running across continents and rivers and oceans from all quarters of the civilized world to centre in the green Isle of the west; and how many again going out from fireside and chapel and green lawn and crossroad, then back to the land afar; and if one could hear the voice of the heart how often and how tenderly would his ear be filled with "God bless the darlings far away," answered by, "the blessing of Jesus be with those at home," from every land beneath the sky. And here as you cluster around the Altar the thoughts and memories of home are busy to your hearts. As you call down the blessing of the Incarnate God on each dear head, the sunshine of home flashes upon you, the soft spring air fans you, and you picture the cottage where the forms of those you bless are gliding to and fro, or happily bent in prayer for you - or the chapel where you made your First Communion, and where now the Unbloody Sacrifice is being offered as of yore on this sacred day. Let the stream of these holy thoughts and swarming memories flow on; and while your hearts are bathing in it with subdued delight, let me call to your mind the true glory of the land you love, St. Patrick, and the Religion of the Irish People.

I need not repeat to you the history of St. Patrick's life. You know all that is known of his birth, his kidnapping, his bondage, his journey to Rome to get his commission from the successor of St. Peter; his return to Ireland, his preaching, his miracles, his wonderful zeal and piety. One great fact alone tells the whole story of his claim to our veneration. He found Ireland Pagan when he landed the second time on her shores to begin his preaching; he left Ireland Christian when he left her shores for his home in Eternity after a mission of sixty years. In a single lifetime he wrought what it took three centuries or ten generations to effect in Rome. God seemed to lavish his grace on the hearts of St. Patrick's hearers, and, what never happened in any other nation, the whole change of ideas and worship, the shattering of the idols, the planting of the cross, the subversion of the pagan priesthood and ceremonies, and the introduction of the rites of the Catholic Religion, took place without a single persecution, without the shedding of one drop of Christian blood! Even before he died the land was dotted over with communities of religious men and women; and he consecrated Bishops, and saw Cathedrals built, and priests multiply, and churches thicken until in his Apostolic journeys through the country there was scarcely a spot so lonely, but that, standing in it, he might not discern in one direction or another the Cross pointing upward to the sky from the summit of chapel or abbey or Cathedral. And every one of those

religious houses and Cathedrals and churches is a panegyric of St. Patrick. They point to him their founder and say in the language of the Church, "Behold the great priest, who in his day pleased God and was found just."

Ages have since testified to the thoroughness of that national conversion. Nearly thirteen centuries have elapsed since the death of the Apostle of Ireland, and ever since that time, in weal and in woe, the Irish people have been Catholic. Irish nationality and Irish Catholicity have been one and the same thing.

The historic glory that glows over the path through the ages when the Northmen were desolating Southern Europe, like the light which appeared to Constantine before the great battle that made him Emperor without a rival - wears ever the shape of the Holy Cross; and the clouds which the treachery of her children, more than the prowess of her enemies, have caused to gather about her subsequent career, cast, at the same time, their shadow on the heart of all Christendom. Who does not know that from the fifth to the eleventh centuries while continental art, science and piety found a shelter in the Isle of the West, there up to the time when England began to invade the country, the monasteries and schools and churches were at peace, and consequently learning flourished, but always under the protection of Religion, always in the monastery or near the sanctuary of God. The chieftains had their feuds, and collisions, it is true; but, as a general thing, Religion was held in honor, justice was respected, the poor were neither oppressed nor starved; slavery was forbidden by statute of the land; and all, prince and subject, owned the gentle sway of the Catholic Religion, gloried in bearing the sweet yoke of Christ.

From the beginning of the English invasions to the Reformation the nation had to struggle, but was not conquered. And anyone reading the history of the times can easily note that not Religion but the betrayal of Religion by some of her faithless sons, was the cause of the sorrow of Ireland. Had her people been as united in counsels and in arms as they were one in Religion, the tide of invasion would have rolled in vain against her rock bound coast; and at this day the descendants of the Irish kings might be holding their court in the halls of Tara; and the Irish people, instead of assembling in little groups in America, Australia, and in other stranger climes, first to hear Mass and then to talk over the memories of home, might be kneeling in mighty multitudes around the altars that heresy has shattered, in churches that are now moss-grown ruins; or joining the merry song and jocund laugh and manly game on their own native green.

But during the period of her struggle against invasion it was not her clergy that betrayed the people of Ireland, but her nobility. They (clergy) as a body were true to their country because they were true to Religion.

After the Reformation had deformed the face of England, persecution began in Ireland to be bloody and relentless. The heart sickens at the tale of the past three hundred years: robbery and sacrilege legalized and called the Irish Established Church; Catholic priests shot and hanged; schools closed and teachers banished; the lands seized upon and the fruits of labor taken away by aliens and enemies; manufacturers forbidden and commerce obstructed; injustice and oppression in these and countless other forms, make a picture so hideous that the heart grows faint in beholding it.

Why is it that so many of the sons and daughters of Ireland are far from home? Why is it that their blood is shed in every battlefield, and their wit and muscle strained in every great enterprise of physical and mental labor the world over? Do they love to wander up and down the earth? Has the home of their childhood, the graves of their parents, the voices of their loved ones, the sunshine of their native sky, the sight of their native hills, bright lakes and green fields, no charm for them? They do not turn their back upon home until power has made home a desolation; and they linger fondly even round the ruin, and as they go away, they leave the razed cottage and cold hearth stone with moist eyes and aching hearts, only to fly from starvation and dishonor. Yet throughout this long enduring and fierce storm of persecution the Irish people and the Catholic faith have been identified, as in the days of peace before it began.

In England a multitude of the clergy apostatized with the king, and held, therefore, a place among the aristocracy. In Ireland the few faithful nobles were soon exterminated and crushed out. The remainder betrayed their country and their kindred, joining hands with the oppressor. So when the separation was made, when the aristocracy severed their interests from those of the laborers, when they started one way and the people another, the Irish clergy went with the people, and have been with them ever since. They were preeminently the object of persecution. Their enemies sought to smite the shepherds that they might scatter the sheep. When a price was set on their heads, if found on the Island, they took shelter in the cottages of the poor. They hid in caves, and the peasants brought them their food by night. They said Mass in caverns to distribute the Bread of Life to the poor. They taught the catechism among the crags of the mountains, or in the shelter of thickets and hedges and bogs; hunted and worried as they were, from hiding place to hiding place, they still had a welcome at the firesides of the poor, all over the realm. They were the only advisers and leaders the people had from the establishment of King William's rule and the setting aside of the treaty of Limerick, - except the short period in the last century which culminated in the disastrous rebellion of '98 - until the time Daniel O'Connell. The nobles were either exterminated or betrayed their faith. The young and aspiring sought an opening in foreign lands and in military service, so that the priests and the people were left to bear the storms of persecution together. No wonder then that they loved one another. Besides the priest was bone of the people's bone and flesh of their flesh. They as it were chose him in his childhood for the sacred ministry. The brightest, most modest, most pious of some farmer's sons, who first learned to answer Mass and wait on the priest at the Altar. And far and wide the neighbors understood the choice and looked upon the boy as specially gifted, and entitled to more than common favor. They helped him to pick up scraps of learning here and there, now from the priest, now from the hedge schoolmaster, and when he grew old enough, his character of poor scholar was a passport from house to house, and a means of crossing the seas to Rome or Salamanca or Douay or Paris to finish his studies and receive Holy Orders. When ordained he returned as he had gone away, to live among the people. His home was wherever there was a "station", infants to baptize, children to instruct, confessions to hear, or the sick to be visited. Whatever house he entered he brought sunshine with him. The good mother welcomed him with blessing; the honest man called in his neighbors for the evening; the children screamed with joy as they clambered on his knee.

In their woes and sorrow, in their joys and festivities, in their views and aims, the Irish people and the Irish priest were one and indivisible, their interest, their honor, their hopes, their fears linked inseparably together. In other words, the Catholic Religion was the mainspring of Irish life, and denied as they were the liberty of exterior worship, their devotion, like suppressed but not smothered fire, burned all the brighter and purer in their secret heart. This fact of three hundred years' duration of a people remaining faithful to God under so sharp a pressure of persecution - is the grand eulogy of St. Patrick, the historic glory of Ireland.

Those who see but the surface of things cry out "poor downtrodden Ireland," with something of contempt and pity. I, too, say "poor downtrodden Ireland" just as I could weep over a martyr's torments while worshipping his constancy. Downtrodden but unconquerable Ireland! Your stately Cathedrals and majestic abbeys are now moss grown ruins; your land is turned to waste and cattle pasture; your children are scattered abroad over the earth. But faith is yet warm in their hearts, and the spirit is living yet, which when God shall smite the persecutor and shatter his power, will build up again the abbey and the Cathedral, turn the wastes into fields of smiling grain, and bid the children of toil rejoice in peace and plenty and freedom.

But even should that time never come, and a new era never dawn upon her, still no child of St. Patrick need ever blush for the record his native land has made, or bow his head with grief over the graves of his ancestors. True in external fortunes that land has not been the queen but the Niobe of nations; but stripped of her glory by the rude hand of oppression without, she has preserved the glory of an unconquerable spirit within. Shorn of commercial prosperity and political prestige, she yet retains in defiance of oppression, bribes, threats and flattery, her stainless honor and her priceless faith. After three centuries of fiery persecution Ireland is Irish and Catholic still.

No one of you need think sorrowfully of the graves of his ancestors at home. While they were living they needed sympathy. But the poorest of them fills a prouder grave than the haughtiest of their persecutors. No marble monument or wordy epitaph points out the resting place of their dust; but the angel of God knows the flowers that spangle the turf above them; and in the records of the All-seeing it stands written that they clung to their faith and their integrity through poverty and toil and reproach, and died in honor with God. If it were right to be proud, I would rather draw my being from such an ancestry than from a line of kings.

Thus has Ireland's glory been the work of St. Patrick; thus has the Catholic Religion been the main feature of Irish nationality. The intercession of St. Patrick and his spiritual children in heaven have thus shielded the land from apostasy, and twined together with indissoluble tie the shamrock and the Cross.

To the unbelieving this constancy of fidelity to faith has seemed a piece of folly - as to the Gentiles the Cross was always foolishness. "Let your faith go," they say, "and win at all hazards political importance and commercial prosperity." But if the Irish people had wanted to let their faith go, they should have bartered it for political importance three hundred years ago. It is too late now to make the bargain with any profit even if they were ready for the dishonor. On the contrary now is the time to cling to your faith, to be united in devotion to justice, and trust in God who sends the sunshine after the storm, for the time will come

"When Erin will stand 'mid the Isles of the Sea
Unfettered, unshackled, great, glorious and free."

Now is the time to do with earnestness and fidelity the duties that lie before you in this land of your adoption, both because they are duties, and as a school of preparation for new duties which Providence may throw in your way. He who is false to little obligations will never be true to great ones. The proud, the boasting, the petulant, the drunkards and blasphemous will not become virtuous by crossing the sea. The regenerators of a nation must be men of faith and prayer as St. Patrick was. Today it is your duty to seek the Kingdom of Heaven by prayer, by regular attendance at Mass and reception of the sacraments; by honesty and charity toward your neighbors; by sobriety and chastity and industry. Do these things now; and, if afterwards God should make you out a path through the fires of revolution and the gore of battle for the sake of your fellowmen, fidelity now will make you faithful then. But wait on God's own time, and do meanwhile what He sets before you and what He will call you to account for, trusting that He who alone can make the occasion, will also make your hearts and your arms strong enough for the work He assigns you. Knowing this you will be ready should He ever call you to aid in any design he has to benefit the land where the bones of your fathers are.

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AN IRISH "FIRST FAMILY"
OF ST. JOSEPH'S, SOMERSET
By Donald M. Schlegel

At the time of the dedication of the log church at St. Joseph's in Perry County in 1818, there were from six to ten Catholic families in the area (1). It is probably correct to assume that most of these first families were of German descent, but Rev. L. W. Mulhane has left evidence that at least one Irish Catholic family lived in the area and was present at the dedication ceremony. Father Mulhane wrote an article (2) entitled, "The Second Church in Ohio, St. Luke's, Danville, Knox County, Columbus Diocese," which begins with the story of the foundation of St. Joseph's. He quotes the title page of the old baptismal register (3) concerning the date of the dedication and then continues, "The last survivor of that memorable day, who was then a little girl - 9 years of age - died March 14, 1895, at the age of 86, at Mt. Vernon, Ohio - Mrs. Mary Bonar, a relative of the Hon. Lewis Greene, the well-known editor of Logan, Ohio. Her memory was very clear as to the events of the day, and among other things, she often boasted that she placed the dishes on the table that day for Father Fenwick's dinner and helped afterwards to 'rid things up'."

Father Mulhane probably heard this story from Mrs. Boner's own lips, for he was pastor at St. Vincent de Paul parish in Mt. Vernon and, according to her obituary (4) in the Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner, he officiated at her funeral services. Quoting from this obituary, "Mrs. Mary Boner, an aged pioneer lady, died at the home of her son Patrick Boner, a short distance south of town, Thursday evening, the result of an attack of the grippe. . . During her residence near Somerset in Perry County, she was an intimate friend of the mother of General Philip Sheridan and. . . assisted at the first Catholic service held within a church of that denomination in Ohio. She was possessed of a rugged mind and delighted to talk of the early pioneer days. . . She is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Lyman Durbin."

Though known as Mrs. Boner, she had in fact been married and widowed a second time before 1880 (5), so that her death was recorded at the Knox County court house under the name of Mary Lindell. This record (6) states that she was 84 years, 9 months and 2 days old at the time of her death, and that she was born in Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Boner's daughter Mary A. Boner married John Lyman Durbin at St. Vincent de Paul church in Mt. Vernon before Rev. T. J. Lane, on November 3, 1881 (7). Mary Boner Durbin died November 29, 1932, in Mt. Vernon, and her husband died five months later, on April 24, 1933. It has been necessary to follow her family this far because it is Mrs. Durbin's official death record (8) which proves the identity of the Irish family present at the dedication of St. Joseph's: Mrs. Durbin's daughter Eleanora reported Mrs. Durbin's parents' names to have been John B. Boner and Mary McFadden.

The only McFadden family in Reading township at the time of the 1820 census was that of Edward McFadden, who was born in Ireland in the 1760's (9). The 1820 census lists himself, a wife, three daughters and two sons, some of whom can be identified as follows:

The eldest daughter was Sarah McFadden, born in Pennsylvania around 1796 (10). On February 5, 1837 (11) she married Joshua Green of near Somerset, whose wife, Elizabeth Hughes (12), had died some time before. Her mother, Margaret McFadden, and her niece, Elizabeth McGarrigle, were living with the Green family in 1850 (10). Sarah's only child was Lewis H. Green, to whom an entire biographical sketch could be devoted. It will suffice here to state that he attended St. Joseph's college (Somerset) and became a successful farmer, newspaper proprietor, and state representative from Perry County.

The second McFadden daughter was Ann, born in the late 1790's, who on February 6, 1824 (11) married William McGargle or McGarrigle. The baptisms of four of their children can be found in Vol. I, records of baptisms at St. Joseph's, Somerset, Ohio (13). Another child was Elizabeth who was living with the Green family in 1850. William apparently was a son of James "M'Garigle" with whom he and Ann and their children were living in 1830 (14). James "M'Garrigal" and his son were living alone together just two houses from St. Joseph's in 1820 (15). Only one other possible reference to this family has been found: On October 22, 1803, in southwestern Pennsylvania was baptized Anna, daughter of James and Anna "Mecherrikell", born April 22, 1803. The baptism was recorded at Greensburg (16).

The third daughter was Mrs. Boner, Mary McFadden, who married the widower John Boner and lived in Mary Ann Township, Licking County (17). John was born in Ireland and died in Licking County around 1854. Their three children (18) were Patrick J., Hugh P., and Mary A. Boner. Patrick apparently never married. Hugh P. Boner married the widow Mrs. Margaret Blubaugh and lived in Brown township, Knox County (19). Mary A. Boner married John L. Durbin, as mentioned above. Her children were Joseph S. Durbin and Anna Eleanore Durbin of Mt. Vernon and Sister Adelaide of Owensboro, Kentucky (20).

One of the sons of Edward McFadden was Charles, who married Margaret Murray. Three of their daughters' baptismal records appear in the first volume of the register of baptisms at St. Joseph's, Somerset (21). Other McFaddens lived in Reading township (though not as early as 1820) but no firm evidence of a relationship with Edward has been found.

Thanks to Father Mulhane's interest in history and in his parishioners, we now have an expanded and more personal view of St. Joseph's dedication day along with proof that Irish Catholics, though perhaps not in Ohio as early as the Germans, were definitely present at least from this day of formal dedication onwards.

- (1) The Rt. Rev. Edward D. Fenwick, O.P. , by Very Rev. V. F. O'Daniel, O.P.; The Dominicana, Washington, D.C. 1920, pp. 219 and 222.
- Cradle of the Faith in Ohio, by Rev. R. E. Brennan, O.P., p. 12.
- Diocese of Columbus, The History of Fifty Years, 1868-1918, p. 480.
- 2 American Catholic Historical Researches, Vol. XIII (1896), pp 126-134.
- (3) Bulletin, Catholic Record Society, Diocese of Columbus, Vol. I, p. 1.
- (4) The Mt. Vernon Democratic Banner, March 21, 1895, p. 3.
- (5) Federal Census of 1880, Clinton Twp., Knox County, p. 91, House 153.
- (6) Knox County death record, Vol. II, p. 102.
- (7) Knox County marriage record.
- (8) Knox County Health Dept., death record.
- (9) Federal Census of 1830, Reading Twp., Perry County, p. 447; for his birthplace, see note 5.
- (10) Federal Census of 1850, Reading Twp., Perry County, house and family # 461.
- (11) Perry County marriage record.
- (12) For the baptism of Joshua's and Elizabeth's child, Sarah, see the Bulletin, Catholic Record Society, Diocese of Columbus, Vol II, No. 4, p. 120.
- (13) See also Ibid., Vol. I, No. 8, p. 57 and No. 10, p. 73; Vol. II, No. 4, p. 121, and No. 5, p. 129.
- (14) Federal Census of 1830, Reading Twp., Perry County, p. 436.
- (15) Federal Census of 1820, Reading Twp., Perry County, P. 11A reverse.
- (16) Records of the American Catholic Historical Society, Vol. XXVII, pp 70-71
- (17) Licking County, Ohio Probate Records, 1828-1904; Licking County Genealogical Society, 1975, pp. 60 and 109-110 (Guardian Bonds).
- (18) Federal Census of 1850, Mary Ann Twp., Licking County, p. 778.
- (19) Federal Census of 1880, Brown Twp., Knox County, p. 198, house #206.
- (20) Knox County, Probate Court, Box 725, Files 5955 and 5956.
- (21) See also Bulletin, Catholic Record Society, Diocese of Columbus, Vol. I, No. 10, p. 74 and No. 12, p. 88; Vol II, No. 4, p. 122.

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CHAPEL HILL, ST. FRANCIS CHURCH

Baptism Records (Continued)

1841

- Jan. -- James, son of Thomas and Mary Car. Sponsors: Patrick Morn and Mary Bruffy.
- Jan. -- (Ceremonies supplied) Margaret, daughter of Thomas and Catherine Bane. Sponsors: Patrick Kendrik and Anna Kennan.
- Feb. 1. Francis John, son of James and Silvia Aloysia (prot.) Mcnamarra. Sponsors: Joseph O'Meany and M. Denman.
- Feb. 1. Elizabeth Mary, daughter of William David (prot.) and Catherine Cant. Sponsors: John Duffy and Margaret Kensley.
- Feb. 23. Mary Ann, daughter of Matthew and ----- McGovern. Sponsors: Thomas Walpol and Anna Smith.
- Mar. 2. Anastasius, son of Sylvester and Margaret Ayarm(?). Sponsors: Joseph Nelson and Anna Denman.

- Mar. 3. (Ceremonies supplied) Julius, son of Stephan and Alereid Feagan. Spon
Sponsors: John and Mary Ryan.
- Mar. 3. Mary, daughter of Stephan and Alice Feagan. Sponsors: Hewgh Harrington
and Catherine Dunning.
- Mar. 5. Mary, daughter of Peib(?) and Sara Harkins. Sponsors: John Shorlin and
Catherine Soosfton(?).
- Mar. 5. John, son of Joseph and Margaret Heartman, Sponsors: Michael Mcdaniel
and Alex McCulla.
- Mar. 5. Mary, daughter of Aondy and Mary Gallagher. Sponsors: Patrick McCoal
and Catherine Mcoughlin.
- Mar. 5. Mary, six years old, daughter of John and Helen Mccluscky. Sponsors:
Charles Greaslin and Mary Gallagher.
- Mar. 5. (Ceremonies supplied) Thomas Fitzpatrick, 29 years old. Sponsor:
Aegidius Olivetti.
- Mar. 5. (Sub conditione) Elizabeth Logan, 48 years old. Sponsor: Aegidius
Olivetti.
- Mar. 5. (Sub conditione) Sara Logan, 25 years old. Sponsor: Aegidius OLivetti.
- Mar. 19. Elizabeth, daughter of Michael and Catherine Welch. Sponsors: Michael
Cragan and Brigitt Kensky.
- Mar. 19. James, son of James and Elenora Rain. Sponsors: Thomas Sweeney and
Brigitt Sweeney.
- James, son of Michael and Judith Doyle. ----- Cornelius Clemmen and
Mary Schean.
- Rose, daughter of John abd Brigitt Cunn----- . Sponsors: Matthew
Walpol and Mary Smith.
- Angela, daughter of Hewgh Donley and Heln don----- . Sponsors: Andrew
Masterson and Mary Donley.
- Apr. 24. Michael, son of Richard and Margaret geordan. Sponsors: Thomas McGloklin
and Catherine Mcgravy.
- Apr. 24. Helen, daughter of James and Brigitt berry. Sponsors: Mary enland and
Hewgh fitspatrick.
- Apr. 25. Helen, daughter of Michael and Mary Heg. Sponsors: Michael Molan and
Helen Mourtough.
- May 2. Philip, son of John and Temperance Gaigher. Sponsors: Patrick Canada
and Mary Ann begin.
- May 4. Jesse, son of James and Ann Haket. Sponsors: Jesse and Mary Carpenter.
- May 6. Mary Ann, daughter of Edward and Mary Kensley. Sponsors: Thomas
Gallagher and Joanna Lee.
- May 6. Joanna, daughter of Michael and Helen megra. Sponsors: Laurence footman
and Catherine Searlok(?).
- May 10. Ann Mary, daughter of Philip and Ann Longstreth. Sponsors: Aeg. OLivetti
and Abigail Longstreth.
- May 15. Samuel, son of Own (?) and Helen grennen. Sponsors: patrick tool and
Anna tool.
- May 15. Christina, daughter of Eusebius and Catherine Wise. Sponsors: Hilary
Wise and Joanna Mester.
- May 22. (Sub conditione) James, 6 months old, son of Joseph (prot.) and Susanna
georg. Sponsors: Aeg. OLivetti and Catherine Thompson.
- May 23. James, son of Michael and Brigitt Molan. Sponsors: Peter Corn and
Mary McScheanan.
- May 25. James, 11 months old, son of Patrick and Ann burns. Sponsors: Aeg.
Olivetti and Helen Cunningham.

(To be continued)