

SPEECH OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT THE  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDLY SONS OF ST. PATRICK OF WEST  
WARWICK ON SUNDAY EVENING MARCH 15, 1959

In celebrating the feast day of Ireland's national apostle, it is not strange that the thoughts of Irishmen and those of Irish blood wherever they may be should turn to the spiritual values and cultural heritage for which the name of Patrick stands and <sup>s</sup> have stood through the centuries for the Gaelic people.

No civilization will be long remembered that has not a tradition -- for tradition is the handing down of ideals, of a culture, of a heritage. And it is essentially this tradition that has made Ireland, and those in whose veins flow Irish blood, a living symbol of a heritage that was begun in the past, is being carried on in the present, and must now be handed down to the future by the young Irish who have taken up the task.



It is this tradition that makes each one of us here tonight, Irish born or descendants of Irish forbears inwardly proud. Each of us boasts that he is directly or indirectly, from the "land of saints and scholars." But I wonder how many of us know what a wonderful privilege it is to be Irish. To be Irish is a noble gift, but to know what being Irish is means more. For being Irish is a part of a history as old as the world itself, and part of a history still to be fulfilled.

On this day we celebrate, it is fitting therefore that we should recall the great heritage which is ours. For St. Patrick's Day is a day for remembrance. It is a day on which we recall again the great names of Ireland, the names of the countries and the towns and the villages, of the hills and the valleys, of the Lakes and rivers and bays of Ireland. A day on which we recall again the names



of her saints and her scholars, to recite and list again  
the names of her great patriots and leaders, of her singers  
and of her poets. Even though many of us have never seen the  
places, just as we have not seen or known the saints of Ireland,  
both the persons and the places come alive again in our minds  
and in our hearts. We recall the names of Donegal and Tyrone  
and Armagh in the North, of Kildare and Meath, Wicklow and  
Dublin in the east, of Waterford and Cork and Kerry in the South,  
of Limerick, Clare, Galway and Sligo in the west. The names  
of Niall, Cormack, Brian, ~~Murray~~, O'Connor, Parnell, O'Connell,  
*MITCHELL, WOLFE TONE*  
Phunkett, Emmet~~s~~ and Hyde; the names of Patrick, Bridgid and  
Columkille, and Brendan and Malachy and all the rest of the  
saints, and the great leaders and the scholars, and the bards  
and genealogists and the poets of Ireland,

~~It is difficult for those who are not Irish to under-~~  
stand the character of the Irish. The Irish character has not



All the world has felt and benefited from the love and the loyalty of Ireland for the things of the mind and the spirit. Here in America we can say with all modesty that many of the things we most cherish in the American spirit have a touch of the Shamrock in them. One of the marks of the Irishman everywhere is his idealism, and at the heart of that idealism there lies his inherent love of the good God Who made each man in His own image. Of all of his gifts to American life, of all the ways in which the Irishman in this great country has showed his gratitude for the gifts she has given him, none is more outstanding than the gift of himself and the goodness of his heart. It is not too much to say that much of the warmth and friendliness of spirit which foreigners admire in Americans was drawn from Irish hearts and hands.

The Irish role in the development of the American spirit has been an exceptional and exalted one. Out of the ~~xxx~~ sweat of their brow successive Irish generations have studded our country with works that breathe their love of God and of their fellowmen; with churches and schools; with hospitals and homes and houses of fraternal service; they have come in due time to participate in the leadership of our country, in its national life, its administration, in the professions. They have fought and bled and died to make secure their ideals of American society and its precious values.



of institutions, important and valuable as all these things may be in given circumstances. It is fundamentally and primarily in the Christian quality of the individual lives of its members. There is no other basis for Christian strength than in the excellence of our individual daily life, making holy the routine of our duties and of our obligations to ourselves, our families and our neighbors. It is doing this that gives to life its Christian perspective and unique value.

America today is engaged not only in a struggle to overcome the economic drive of Communist imperialism and its aggressive purposes in the political field. We are also involved in an even deeper battle: the struggle for the minds and hearts of millions of men and women in new nations that are just emerging from the colonial stage. At home, too, the warfare of ideas goes on and the pressures of materialism mount around us.

In that conflict the faith and devotion of America's citizens of Irish origin provide an abiding source of interior strength. Grounded upon fixed principles of morality, humbled by a true sense of the limitations of man's nature, enlightened by the truths of religion, the Irish mind seeks to put



all things in their true and proper order under God. Out of that proper order, that habit of putting first things first, comes real spiritual strength, the kind of strength that is so vital to our endurance in the modern war of nerves, the daily battle for the souls and the hearts of men.

In the last decade one of the major means of United States foreign policy to combat the spread of communism has been to give economic and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries. We spend great sums of money each year in this way, but very few people stop to consider the magnitude of Ireland's contribution to the betterment of these very areas or to reflect that it has been going on for a much longer time.

Side by side with our own United States, Ireland annually makes her unique and glorious contribution to the struggle to win the fight against Communism's insidious program to enslave the mind of all humanity. I refer, of course, to the vast missionary endeavor that is one of little Ireland's biggest contributions to mankind.



Last year almost one thousand Irish missionaries, priests nuns and brothers went to the mission fields of Africa and Asia. They are teachers, doctors and nurses to staff schools, hospitals, training centers of many kinds in these primitive areas, in which at present 15,000 other Irish missionaries are working. Try to imagine the total value of the work involved in all this. It goes on every minute of the day, year in, year out, and -- please note this -- is always expanding. It cannot be measured in terms of money because only dedicated men and women can possibly perform it. We could estimate, however, that the cost of maintaining the same number of lay men and women in the same areas would run, I am sure, to not less than 10 million dollars a year. Yet these Irish missions are maintained by a country of 3 million people with a per capita income one fifth that of the United States. I mention this single example of Irish international activity because so few of us think about it, and because it is so characteristic of the great-heartedness of the Irish people. The peoples of Nigeria, of Ghana, of Korea and China, of India and Ceylon know of the benign Irish presence in their midst with affection and gratitude.



It seems to me that in our preoccupation with our own problems here we may have permitted our relations with Ireland, that great motherland of the Christian millions, to have become remote and nebulous. If that is the case, it is a calamity that it should continue for we can only impoverish ourselves thereby. Few of us can define what it is that determines the appeal of Ireland for us, many of whom are now three and four generations away from it. We do know that even the mention of the name Ireland causes an excitement in our hearts and though we do not *always* succeed in giving expression to the emotion, we are in some way conscious of a mystic bond uniting us by reason of a common origin and joining us to a common destiny with that island of our forebears.

It's no wonder then that Irishmen are proud -

they have so much to be proud of.



and we can also do everything in our power to aid Ireland by encouraging travel there and the purchase of distinctly Irish products.

In our own hearts and minds we must keep every alive that deep Irish sense of the primacy of things spiritual, which is our most precious distinction, and while we do so, we may look to Ireland with hope for her role in the future of mankind. Once Ireland led a great cultural and spiritual revival as the early Middle Ages emerged from the darkness of the barbarian invasions. Still in the world of today she is a burning and a shining light. Her cause is not only vital to the realization of international justice and the principles of the United Nations, but out of a united and strong Ireland of the future, another great spiritual dawn may be looked for in the world.



It's no wonder Ireland has a permanent place in history -  
she has written so many pages of history herself.

It's no wonder Ireland is blessed - for on either side  
of her at the throne of Heaven stand a <sup>BRIGID</sup>~~Bridget~~ and a Patrick.

Is it any wonder then that every Irishman worthy of  
the name can on the Eve of St. Patrick's Day feel his eyes  
sparkle, his pulse quicken, his blood tingle, when he says to  
himself, "I'm part of a great tradition -- treasurer of a greater  
heritage -- and recipient of the greatest gift of all.  
I'm IRISH."

