

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, REPRESENTATIVE,
SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND, AT THE
ANNUAL DINNER OF THE FRIENDLY SONS OF SAINT PATRICK OF
EAST GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND ON MARCH 11, 1962

It is indeed an honor to join with you -
the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick of East
Greenwich - in commemorating Ireland's great
Saint and famous civilizer, Saint Patrick, on
the eve of his approaching feast day.

It is quite appropriate that we take
such an occasion at this time each year to recall
the memory of Saint Patrick and to assess the
true value of the Christian heritage which he
gave to Ireland. The traditional homage which
is paid to Saint Patrick is probably one of
the oldest of its kind, not only in the tiny
nation of Ireland, but also in our own country.
It is interesting to note that while this feast
day has been celebrated consistently over the
centuries in the Emerald Isle, it has also
been commemorated in this country, in a public
and formal manner, at least since the year 1771
when the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick of the

City of Philadelphia was founded. The universal appeal of the virtues to be derived from the life of Saint Patrick and the principles for which he labored is indicated by the fact that the Philadelphia organization of the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick was established by thirty-one Irish gentlemen, twenty-eight of whom were Protestants and only three of whom were Catholics. Its first chosen President was Stephen Moylan - whose brother was the Bishop of Cork - and who later became a famous Revolutionary War General. In 1781 George Washington graciously accepted honorary membership in that Society. In keeping with the true teachings of the Christian faith which Saint Patrick implanted in Ireland, there was at that time no bigotry dividing Americans devoted to the memory of Saint Patrick and there is none today. In a true sense, therefore, we are carrying on a good American custom, of an Irish character, that antedates the formation of our own government and let us hope that it is a

custom that will continue as long as our government exists.

I truly believe that to men of good will everywhere, the story of Saint Patrick's victory over the forces of paganism and the lessons to be derived from that peaceful conquest is particularly worth the while of telling and re-telling in this day and age when the forces of materialism threaten to engulf the world. The challenge of paganism that confronted Saint Patrick in Ireland in his day can be compared with the great challenge of our own age - that of atheistic communism. This false philosophy of life constitutes the very root of all our international tensions today. It chiefly accounts for the continuous need of expending much of our resources on defensive armament which otherwise could be devoted to improving the lives of mankind in many areas which literally cry out for improvement. After being imposed upon some of the ancient

civilized nations of Europe with brutal force it now constitutes a principal menace to the newly emerging nations of Africa and Asia and has even gained a foothold in our own hemisphere and is constantly seeking to infiltrate countries of Central and South America.

Slavery, fear, oppression, hatred, were the products of the bitter tree of paganism in saint Patrick's time. These are the same fruits of communism in our own time. Saint Patrick, with the gentle weapons of Christian faith and using only the forces of the mind and spirit accomplished a sweeping victory over the false ideology of paganism. He did it with a zeal born of love of neighbor. Where there was darkness, he brought light; where there was hatred, he brought charity.

In addition to the defensive weapons which we need to successfully resist the further inroads of world communism, we need the weapons

of Saint Patrick - the peaceful force of idealism and the will to implement that idealism in order to win the minds and hearts of our fellow men in other lands to the true cause of freedom and liberty.

Some may say that it is idle to believe that the sword of Christian faith alone can win any victory over the diabolical forces of communism. To them, however, I would say that there is a great example in the life of Saint Patrick which can be applied to our own times for, in the case of Ireland, a tiny nation of less than 3 million people today, the idealism of Saint Patrick was so firmly implanted that it produced a great harvest of saints and scholars who, over the centuries, have put out from the shores of Ireland for foreign lands and have there won everlasting victory in the cause of peaceful Christian living.

The legions of Irish priests, nuns and brothers who have gone to the mission fields of Africa and Asia, to North and South America, to various parts of Europe and the Near East can never be fully cataloged. This contribution of the sons and daughters of Saint Patrick to the spreading of the gospel of peace continues to this very day. Last year, for example, almost 1000 Irish missionaries, both men and women went to the mission fields of Africa and Asia alone where they served their fellowmen as teachers, as doctors and nurses, pooling their talents and limited resources with some 15,000 other Irish missionaries who are working in that area of the world. They assisted in the establishment of hospitals and in the creation of training centers for young and old in very remote and primitive areas. How can one measure this contribution to the welfare and to the stability of a strife-torn world? The

work of these missionaries is carried on without fanfare and without much emphasis in the public press, but it cannot be minimized simply because of its completely spiritual character. The common people of Nigeria, of Ghana, of Korea and China, of India and Ceylon have long known and appreciated the benign influence of this army of Irish missionaries.

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 the Irish role in the development of the American spirit has been an exceptional one. Out of the sweat of their brow successive Irish generations have studded our country with works that breathe their love of God and of their fellowman; 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.

Here at home in our own hearts and minds we must keep ever alive that deep Irish sense of the primacy of things spiritual which is our own most precious inheritance from Saint Patrick. We must avoid the temptation of downgrading spiritual values or subscribing to the view that, in order to make progress in economic or social fields, we must divorce the things of the spirit from the things of the world. The simple fact of history is that no civilization can endure that does not have a spiritual tradition - for tradition is the handing down of ideals, of a culture, of a heritage. It is essentially this sense of spiritual values that

has made Ireland the remarkable nation that it is, that sustained it through centuries of oppression and which maintains it now as a living symbol of that heritage.

It is a remarkable fact of world history that Ireland, as a nation, has never sought to invade the borders of another nation for war-like purposes; it has never sought conquest in the name of colonialism; it has never sought to impose its will on any of its neighbors. Even today it has pledged part of its tiny army, through the United Nations, to perform a rather unpleasant, but necessary, police duty in the maintenance of good order in the strife-torn Congo.

So, it is easy to understand why we of Irish origin or descent are proud of our heritage. Let us also affirm our continuing interest in the successful growth of the Irish Government which was permitted to have its freedom only forty-one years ago. I know that

there are few of us who can define just what it is that determines the great appeal of Ireland for us. Some of us are now three or four generations removed from it. We do know, however, 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.

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 at her side at the throne of Heaven stands Saint Patrick.

Is it any wonder then that every Irishman worthy of the name can, on the eve of Saint

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."