

St Patrick's Day

Christ be with me, Christ 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.

Hello and welcome to this message recorded for Wednesday 17 March. Happy St Patrick's Day!

Perhaps you recognised those verses as coming from the prayer we know as St Patrick's Breastplate, a breastplate being the piece of armour that protects the heart.

I wonder what you are like first thing in the morning? I wake to the radio and like to lie under the covers for half an hour or so, usually hearing a short round up of the news before more or less reluctantly rolling out and facing the day.

Patrick's life's mission, given to him in a vision, was to bring the Good News to 5th century Ireland. I think we can tell from his prayer that this was no easy task. It's a morning prayer, it begins, 'I bind unto myself today' and in it ... it's quite long Patrick calls on the protection of God, the strong name of the Trinity. He recites through everything he knows that makes God God: everything about the fantasticness of creation, the heavenly powers, the incredible life-saving story of Jesus, the omnipresence and omnipotence of the character of God and the proof of the faithful who have gone before, to give him the strength to stand against the perils and dangers that will beset him.

I can hear these words recited some mornings in desperation, Patrick gradually building up his confidence in his ability to meet the task ahead, and sometimes in wonder, fully aware of the Glory of God.

I'm going to put a copy of the prayer by my bed. I hope it will be a reminder of how the day should start, with a prayer that the day will be lived knowingly in the presence of God.

Thank you for listening