

PRAYER / REFLECTION for MARCH 2020

"It is appropriate that we celebrate as our National Day the Day of St. Patrick, whose own life story was one of hardship and migration. St. Patrick, we are told, was trafficked into Ireland as a slave, managed to escape, but chose to leave his native land again and return to Ireland. In the centuries that followed, migration has remained a constant feature of the Irish experience, defining us as a people, and shaping our outlook on the world."



(President Michael D. Higgins in his remarks for St Patrick's Day 2019)

We know of all this through Patrick's own extraordinary autobiographical account, the Confessio:

"My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers. I am looked down upon by many. My father was Calpornius. He was a deacon; his father was Potitus, a priest, who lived at Bannavem Taburniae. His home was near there, and that is where I was taken prisoner. I was about sixteen at the time. ...I was taken into captivity in Ireland, along with thousands of others. ...The Lord brought his strong anger upon us and scattered us among many nations even to the ends of the earth."

(President Michael D. Higgins in his remarks for St Patrick's Day 2019)

The 21st century is seeing new waves of people displaced by war, famine and climate change. So far we are not handling it with great success in Ireland or the EU. Barriers are going up everywhere and people are even being denied their legal right to seek refuge. Racism and xenophobia are stronger now than at any time since the 1930s.

Mighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger, homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

