

Celtic Christian Spirituality
March 24, 2021
Chapters 7 and 8

Opening Prayer

Journey Prayer – pg 135

God, bless to me this day,
 God, bless to me this night;
Bless, O bless, Thou God of grace,
 Each day and hour of my life;
Bless, O bless, Thou God of grace,
 Each day and hour of my life.

God, bless the pathway on which I go,
 God, bless the earth that is beneath my sole;
 Bless, O God, and give to me Thy love,
O God of gods, bless my rest and my repose;
 Bless, O God, and give to me Thy love,
And bless, O God of gods, my repose.
 The Carmina Gadelica, III, 179

Chapter 8 – Social Justice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuAxn894neE>

The emphatic embrace of the Incarnation leads Celtic saints, poets, theologians, and missionaries to strongly voice the social import of the gospel. In these excerpts from writings by Saint Patrick, Pelagius, and the Welsh poet David James Jones (Gwennalt), the sacred nature of the human person is confirmed and the social and communal responsibilities of the Christian community become clear and irreducible. Christians are given the task and the responsibility to be agents of transformation in society, so that goods are distributed equitably, any kind of slavery is eradicated, and all people are treated with equal respect. Christian communities are to emulate the particular attention that Jesus gives to the outcast, the poor, the hungry, the sick, and the prisoners and captives. There is no separation of holy versus unholy. This is a perspective on our life together shaped by profoundly knowing that “in Christ all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17b). That vision has a distinctive moral rigor about it, and leads all members of the Christian community to reflect upon their own actions in the world, their own investments. Each person who follows in this Way, in the company of soul friends, is called to a critique of the society in which we live and to ongoing humility, conversion, and transformation for the life of the world. *Pg 117*

A society in which people only avoided certain actions, but never did anything good, would be utterly dead; it would be like the valley of dry bones which the prophet describes. A society can only live if people love and serve one another. So when you are aware of hatred in your heart, do not simply suppress it, but transform it into love. When you desire to commit a malicious act, do not simply stop yourself; transform that act into a generous one.

Pelagius, Letter to Celantia pg 119

How can you call yourself a Christian since you do not act like one? “Christian” is the name of justice, goodness, integrity, patience, chastity, prudence, humility, humanity, innocence, and true religion. How can you claim this for yourself when you possess only a few of so many virtues? That person is a Christian who is so not only in name but also in deed; who imitates and follows Christ in all things; who is holy, innocent, and pure; who is uncorrupted; in whose heart there is no place for evil; in whose heart there is only true religion and goodness; who is incapable of hurting or wounding anyone, but can only come to the aid of everyone. That person is a Christian who, with Christ as an example, cannot even hate their enemies but does good to those who oppose them, praying for their persecutors and enemies.

Pelagius, On the Christian Life pg 123

Gaelic Rune of Hospitality – pg 129

I saw a stranger yestreen,
I put food in the eating place,
Drink in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place,
And in the sacred name of the Triune,
He blessed myself and my house,
My cattle and my dear ones,
And the lark said in her song
Often, often, often
Goes the Christ in the stranger’s guise.

Traditional Gaelic (Oral tradition, quoted by Ronald Ferguson, Chasing the Wild Goose: The Story of the Iona Community [Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1998], page 25)

Chapter 8 – Blessing as a Way of Life

Blessing...has to do with bending the knee. *Pg 15*

...we find notes that men would “bend the knee” to the rising sun, and women would “bend the knee” to the new moon. *Pg 15*

Following in the way of Celtic Christian spirituality opens us to the wonder of life and to the humility to look beyond particular events and moments in the natural world to God who is revealed in those events and moments. *Pg 15-16*

The blessing we receive is an eternal reality. It is not a matter of quantifiable possessions or material wealth. This is the blessing of our very being, our true identity. *Pg 133*

What is it to walk in blessing? The Celtic pilgrims show us that when we walk in blessing, we are living in a growing awareness of God's presence and mercy, extended to us with infinite wisdom and grace, because of who God is. We bless God by becoming aware of God's mercies and goodness to us, receiving that mercy and goodness, and allowing our lives to be transformed into active blessing of others. *Pg 133*

To Come Home to Yourself – pg 137

May all that is unforgiven in you
Be released
May your fears yield
Their deepest tranquilities.
May all that is unlived in you
Blossom into a future
Graced with love.

John O'Donohue

Closing Prayer – An Irish Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.
May God be with you and bless you:
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings.
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.
May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.
May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you

