

Above all, Patrick is a man with a tangible connection to the Holy Spirit. As a teenage slave-labourer in Ireland, he says that 'the Spirit was burning in me'. When Patrick is discerning whether to return as a missionary, the Holy Spirit physically enters his body, praying 'strongly, with sighs'. His union with the Spirit is practical as well as mystical; the Spirit is 'living and working in me to this very day' and when Patrick is not quick to accept what God is showing him, 'the Spirit prompted me'.

'Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you', God says to Jeremiah in today's Liturgy of the Word. It foreshadows the prayer we associate with Patrick, 'Christ be on my right hand, Christ be on my left hand...', and in turn, Patrick sets the template for all who follow in his footsteps, to the present day.