

Pembroke Bible Chapel

... from darkness to light ...



Welcome to our Saint Patrick's Day Newsletter March 2007

We have designed this newsletter to bring you information on a variety of topics related to Saint Patrick's Day. When we think of Saint Patrick's day we naturally think of leprechauns and luck, and we may even consider what would make Saint Patrick a saint. Our feature article considers what is the Biblical definition of a Saint, and the question, is there such a thing as luck? You will find a devotional on spiritual balance in the Christian life, an article on how we see God in the wonders of nature, an article on the revival of Christianity in the Middle East - titled The Incipient Implosion of Islam, a teen article on dating rules set by parents for their teens, a missionary article, an interesting recipe for Emerald Irish Stew, and a book review.



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FEATURED ARTICLE

Saint Patrick's Day by Mark

Traditionally, our culture celebrates Saint Patrick's Day by paying tribute to the Irish in various ways, including wearing green and indulging in Irish food and drink. When we think of Ireland we think of the rolling hills covered with greenery.

Saint Patrick

Saint Patrick, born in 386 AD, was living in Wales as a boy of 16 when he was captured by raiders and sold into slavery to an Irish chieftain. He became a Christian on the Irish hills herding sheep. After several years he escaped and returned to Britain. He became a Bishop and returned in 432 AD to Ireland to bring the Christian faith to the Pagan Irish who believed in the Druids.

The Shamrock

One of the more interesting stories of Saint Patrick was that he used the shamrock (three-leaf clover) as an object lesson to teach others about God's three-in-one nature. Today, the shamrock is the most recognized symbol of the Irish, especially on St. Patrick's Day, when all over the world, everyone is "Irish for a day".

"The Luck of the Irish"

It is not entirely clear where the idea of the luck of the Irish came from. Several credible possibilities exist. One possibility is related to their bravery. The Irish were descendants of great fighters and invaders: the Celts and Vikings. They seemed to be "lucky" because they were good at what they did and fewer got killed because of their natural fighting skills.

Another idea is that the expression may come from the legend of the 'Little People' of the land, or the leprechauns. Finding or catching a leprechaun (who would then give you gold) was a lucky event that could only take place in Ireland.

The legend that finding a four leaf clover brings luck is interesting. Some thought that the leaves on the clover stood for faith, hope, and love, with the fourth leaf being luck or God's grace.

Is there such a thing as luck or chance or good fortune? Certainly in material things evidenced by the many lotteries and game shows, many look for a lucky win. But while material good fortune is not a certainty, spiritual good fortune from God for the born again believer is a certainty. Some of these certainties are listed in Ephesians chapter 1: the blessing of God; redemption and forgiveness; insight into truth; the riches of God's kindness; a future inheritance; being indwelt by God Himself; and a guarantee of living forever in Heaven. This certainty is freely available to anyone who places their faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Who is a Saint?

Our culture has many misconceptions about sainthood. Biblically, the word comes from the Greek word 'hagios' and is directly related to the word 'holy'. Contrary to popular thought, the designation of saint is not applied solely to persons of exceptional holiness, or, after death, to those who were characterized by exceptional service to God and mankind. The Bible designates all who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as saints. In 2 Thessalonians 1:10, the word is used synonymously with "all those who believe". No doubt, good works are associated with saints, but they do not qualify a person as one.

The Scriptures teach us that we are made holy (sanctified) by the work of Jesus Christ at Calvary's cross. Through faith in Him, we are set apart from sin unto God. This is a positional truth. It is where God sees us in Christ. Any practical acts of holiness on our part proceed from where God has positioned us in Christ. In unbelief, we were once separated from God, mired in the kingdom of darkness - dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). In Christ, we have died to sin and are raised up in Him in newness of life (Romans 6:2-4). We have been repositioned in Christ, where we have union with God (Colossians 3:3).

Any "saintly" acts of service proceed from the fact that, by faith, we have been made anew in Christ and are now empowered by His indwelling Spirit to do the things He has purposed us to do. In God's judgment, there is only one person born of Adam's race that qualifies by his own works as righteous and holy - Jesus Christ. Those who are called saints by God have received this title (better still, this position) as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:12 declares that it is "the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light". No one has truly attained unto sainthood by their own works. This is, as they say, putting the cart before the horse. Anything that we do of value to God can only proceed from the position of sainthood that we have, by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ.

HIGHLIGHTED DEVOTIONAL



A daily devotional like this one can be found on our website at www.pembrokebiblechapel.com

Spiritual Balance by Miles Stanford, None But The Hungry Heart

"Not I, but Christ" (Galatians 2:20)

"Any abiding spiritual progress must be based upon our taking sides with God against the old life. Why? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

"Enmity" knows no reconciliation; crucifixion is the only alternative!

"The life of Christ is the holiness of Christ. The reason we so often fail in the pursuit of holiness is that the old life, the flesh, in its own strength seeks for holiness as a beautiful garment to wear and enter heaven with. It is the daily death to self out of which the life of Christ rises up." A.W. Tozer

"In receiving Christ we receive the divine-human life; a life that is death to the life of fallen nature, which finds its fruit in sin and self. The tragic mistake of thousands of believers is in trying to live in two worlds at the same time; in nature and in God, in self and in Christ, in the flesh and in the Spirit, by faith and in independence, by abiding and by effort. To have life is not enough: the life of the Lord Jesus demands the death of the flesh, if that life is to be fully developed and become fruitful in us. Here is the crux of the whole matter."

"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death." (Philippians 3:10)

SCIENCE & CREATION

The Polar Bear - Master of the Arctic by Chris

The early part of the winter of 2007 was rather mild, because of the effects of a particularly strong El Niño. Many fear that a global warming could cause the disappearance of great animals such as the Polar Bear. The Polar Bear's life depends on a fragile equilibrium in its environment, and could vanish fairly easily from our Planet Earth. What makes the greatest and toughest predator living in the North so special?

First, it is the kind of extreme environment it lives in. Temperatures plummet below -40°C/°F regularly during the winter. Blizzards occur frequently during the winter for several days at a time, and feeding is almost impossible during those severe storms. Bears have to fast until it quiets down, and when it does, a meal is not guaranteed. Males are active during the winter, except for about 2 months while they lie dormant until the sun shows up again. During the winter, the female Polar Bear is usually hiding in a hole dug in hard snow on a steep slope, to be protected from aggressive males, while she gives birth and nurses one or 2 cubs, weighing initially about 1 kg (2 pounds) each. While remaining in that hole for a few months, she does not feed at all, surviving on fat reserves. She is the only one to raise the cubs, and has to protect them from males.



Polar Bears hunt for seal in what looks like a frozen and bitterly cold desert. They have very good vision, and their sense of smell is extremely sensitive, making humans handicapped in comparison. They can smell a seal under one meter (one yard) of snow, or about a kilometer (1/2 mile) away. When the bear has smelled its snow-hidden prey, it pounds through the crusted snow, breaking the cover of the hole where a baby or female seal is hiding. They can smell carrion a few kilometers upwind despite temperatures that would freeze our nose in less than a minute. They often wait patiently for hours for a seal to appear at a breathing hole. As the seal comes up to breathe, the bear pounces on it, often missing, but swimming underwater after it, for up to 2 minutes. The bear often catches the exhausted seal, desperate to breathe.

A dense and thick fur protects the bear from the cold with a layer of fat. They are excellent swimmers in frigid waters: some have been seen about 100 km (60 miles) from the nearest coast, swimming for a few days as they slowly migrate south with the sea currents, sometimes taking a rest on floating ice, while searching for seal. Their paws are non-skid and their claws are very sharp, to be secure on ice. As the bear pulls itself out of the freezing water, it shakes the water off, and rolls in the snow to dry. This does not lead to hypothermia, unless it is malnourished. They migrate back to the North by land, at the end of the summer into the autumn, eating vegetation, lemmings, and whatever looks comestible.

What a fascinating animal, perfectly designed for the northern extremes. No wonder it needs to rest for a couple of months!

COMMENTARY

The Incipient Implosion of Islam by Jim Rutz, Posted January 23, 2007

Last February, Joel Rosenberg gave us another astonishing glimpse into the real Muslim world:

Last week I took my wife and kids to see the Egyptian premiere of "Narnia" in Cairo. The film was as wonderful as we had hoped. But I must confess that far more interesting to me than watching digital lions and beavers come to life was being in a theater jam-packed with Muslims mesmerized by a thinly-veiled parable of Jesus Christ, penned by one of the 20th century's greatest Christian writers. Every seat was taken, and when we left, the theater's lobby could not contain all those hoping to get into the 10 o'clock show.

The same was true in the spring of 2003 when ... Muslims packed movie theaters throughout the Middle East to see Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." They were watching Jesus teach. They were watching Him suffer and die and rise again. They were crying – sobbing, in many cases – as they continued to flood the theaters night after night.

Doesn't sound much like the Muslim jihadists you see in the liberal media, does it? Those media know what sells papers and draws viewers: Conflict. Scandals. Outrage. Violence. Hatred. Head-on collisions between groups and nations. Anything else may get short

shrift.

For instance, did the liberal media tell you about the Reconciliation Walk? From 1996-1999, teams of Christians trekked along the same route that the Crusaders did 900 years before – from Cologne, Germany, to Jerusalem. About 2,000 marchers, cycling in and out, visited Muslim and Jewish villages and cities. And as they went, they wore T-shirts proclaiming in Arabic or Hebrew, "I apologize" and called out, "We're sorry." Astonished Muslims poured out of their homes and into the streets, many of them applauding and cheering wildly, some of them weeping. The marchers were hugged warmly and invited in for dinner. City mayors welcomed them with heartfelt, emotional speeches. That beats bullets six ways to Sunday.

But now it's all gone and forgotten, buried under millions of conflict-promoting words.

Well, I do believe in staying the course in this messy war against Islamism – because many militant Muslim leaders understand nothing but force. But now Mr. Rosenberg has just brought us fresh data, reminding us of how the Holy Spirit is outpacing any progress we could make with guns:

More Muslims converted to faith in Jesus Christ over the past decade than at any other time in human history. A spiritual revolution is under way throughout North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia:

Iraq: More than 5,000 new Muslim converts to Christianity have been identified since the end of major combat operations. Also, more than 1 million Bibles were shipped into the country since 2003, and pastors report Iraqis are snatching them up so fast they constantly need more Bibles.

Afghanistan: only 17 Muslim converts to Christianity before 9/11/01, but now more than 10,000.

Kazakhstan: only three known Christians in 1990, but now more than 15,000.

Uzbekistan: no known Christians in 1990, but now more than 30,000.

Iran: In 1979, there were only 500 known Muslim converts to Christianity, but today Iranian pastors and evangelical leaders tell me there are more than 1 million Iranian believers in Jesus Christ, most of whom meet in underground house churches.

Sudan: More than 1 million Sudanese have converted to Christianity just since 2000, and some 5 million have become Christians since the early 1990s, despite a radical Islamic regime and an ongoing genocide. ... Why such a dramatic spiritual awakening? "People have seen real Islam, and they want Jesus instead," one Sudanese evangelical leader told me.

But perhaps the most startling picture that Rosenberg gives us is from Egypt:

Egypt: Some reports say 1 million Egyptians have trusted Christ over the past decade or so. The Egyptian Bible Society told me they used to sell about 3,000 copies of the JESUS film a year in the early 1990s. But last year they sold 600,000 copies, plus 750,000 copies of the Bible on tape.

The shocker is that 600,000 figure. Each circulating copy of JESUS in the Mideast will, on average, draw about 4.1 Muslims into a saving relationship with Christ. Do the math!

I think our troops are winning, but I know Jesus is winning.

Life as a Missionary

No Fixed Address (Continued) by Chloe, an MK from Guinea, West Africa

In the last paragraph of my first article, I wrote, "the strike is over and life is back to normal". Well, a lot has happened since then! The people of Guinea went on strike again after that and there was more serious unrest, so for the last three weeks my family and I have been staying at the mission center. We've been waiting for things to calm down and now that the president has named a good prime minister and the strike is over, we hope to go back to our home in the village soon. I'll be glad to get home and hopefully back to a "normal" schedule.



The last month and a half has been very thought provoking, and it is exciting to see all the ways that God has showed himself faithful to his people. The first No Fixed Address point that I mentioned last time is comforting. It makes me realize that even if I don't have a fixed address on earth I do have one in heaven. Another way that NFA applies to me is this: I don't have a fixed address because I'm free to go wherever God calls me on earth. This is challenging, but I personally want to be willing to live without a fixed address for the sake of the gospel. As an ambassador of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, I want to be willing to go anywhere on earth for my King and for his glory. So I ask myself if I really am willing to leave comfort to be my King's ambassador. I want to step out in faith and trust God with his plans for me.

In Genesis we read about Abraham's step of faith. God told him, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." So Abraham trusted God and obeyed. Later on in the book of Hebrews it says "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."

TEEN SECTION

Dating Rules for Christian Teens by Kelli Mahoney

Many parents set rules for their Christian teens about dating. While setting rules is a good idea, it is important for parents to think through the rules that they do set. Parents need to know why they are setting the rules, and they also need to discuss the rules openly with their children. Here are some of the most common dating rules and how they can be used most effectively to guide teens through the world of dating:

1. No dating until you are ____ years old.

Pros: You can set an age where most teens have a good maturity level and are able to think independently.

Cons: Not all teens mature at the same rate, so even though your teen comes to that age, he or she may still not be able to handle it.

The Solution: Try using that age as a "review" age. Tell your teen that you will talk about dating when he or she is ____ years old. Then you can sit down and have a conversation to see if your teen is ready.

2. You must date a fellow Christian.

Pros: The Bible says Christians should be yoked to fellow believers. If a teen is dating another Christian, there is a greater likelihood that they will remain abstinent and supportive of one another.

Cons: Some people say they are Christians, but they are not necessarily Godly in their actions. Setting this rule alone can breed lying and inappropriate activities.

The Solution: You can set the rule, but also leave it open for your approval. Make sure you meet the dating partner. Don't grill him or her about their faith, but get to know him or her to evaluate whether or not you think this teen shares your child's values.

3. Dates must be in public places.

Pros: Dating that occurs in public places prevents temptation from getting the better of teenagers. They are always being watched by other people.

Cons: Just saying that the dating has to occur in public places does not necessarily ensure that the people around your Christian teen will hold him or her accountable. Also, teens sometimes don't stay in one place for an entire date.

The Solution: There are several solutions to this issue. You can try driving your teen to and from the place where the date will happen. You can also require that your teen go on dates where other Christians will be present.

4. Double dates are mandatory.

Pros: Going on a date with another couple helps hold your teen responsible and resist temptation. Christian teens face a lot of the same temptations as other young people, so having friends there can be helpful.

Cons: The other couple may not share the same values as your Christian teen. They may encourage inappropriate activity or leave early.

The Solution: Encourage your teen to call you if the other couple leaves or does anything that compromises your teen's situation. Also, try to meet the other couples so that you can feel more comfortable about your teen associating with him or her.

5. No sex until you are married.

Pros: Letting your teen know that you expect purity is important. Your direct statement will be in the back of their head, even if they seem to scoff at your statement.

Cons: Demanding that your child wait until marriage to have sex without explaining why may backfire.

The Solution: Spend some time discussing sex with your teen so that he or she understands why God wants teens to wait until marriage. Having a clear understanding of why they should wait can help teens make better decisions.

6. Avoid situations that increase temptation.

Pros: Telling your teen to be careful when holding hands, kissing, or touching can help him or her avoid situations that can end up going too far. It also helps teens identify early when a situation is becoming dangerous.

Cons: Just making the blanket demand can make it easy for teens to rebel or go too far without understanding. Teens may also not understand what to do when they end up in a tempting situation.

The Solution: Discuss temptation openly with your teen. You don't have to divulge all of your temptations, but explain how temptation is normal and everybody faces it. Also go over ways to avoid temptation, but also ways to cope when faced with it. Be sure to include what "too far" means and how to be safe from things like date rape when in tempting situations. While all of these rules are appropriate, it will be easier for your teen to follow your rules if they understand where the rules come from. Explain how Scripture applies. If you feel uncomfortable doing it on your own, bring in another parent, youth worker, or youth pastor to help.

RECIPE of the MONTH

Emerald Irish Stew by Enid

Enjoy a traditional Irish Stew to get you into the Saint Patrick's day spirit. Traditional Irish stew is a filling, flavorful dish made with the most readily-available ingredients. The Irish raised primarily sheep and root crops for subsistence. The sheep provided wool for warm clothing, milk for drinking and making cheese, and eventually food. Potatoes were the main food crop, prior to the potato famine.

3-4 lbs. Lamb leg, cut into 1 ½ inch cubes
 2 tablespoons butter
 1 tablespoon oil (I use Olive)
 2½ cups water
 ½ cup chicken broth
 2 teaspoons salt
 ¼ teaspoon thyme, crushed
 ¼ teaspoon pepper
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 3-4 medium red potatoes, scrubbed and cut in half
 6-8 small white onions
 1 24 oz package frozen peas
 ¼ lb fresh mushrooms, sliced
 1 cup milk
 1/3 cup flour



Brown lamb cubes with butter and oil in large Dutch oven.

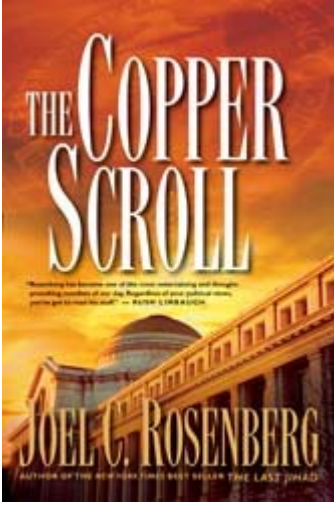
Add water, broth and seasonings, cover and simmer one hour.

Remove any surface fat. Add potatoes and onion. Simmer, covered, until all vegetables are done.

Combine milk and flour, stirring until smooth.

Add to the boiling stew and boil for one minute. Correct seasoning.

BOOK REVIEW



The Copper Scroll by Joel Rosenberg, Tyndale House Publishers, 2006

On June 1, 1956, the New York Times broke a story that captured the imagination of the world. Another Dead Sea Scroll had been found, engraved on copper and written in a strange language. In the years that followed, some scholars came to believe the Copper Scroll could be history's greatest treasure map, one that could lead to the discovery of the Second Temple treasures and the building of the Third Jewish Temple. Fifty years later, the world is about to be shocked again. New York Times best-selling author Joel Rosenberg takes you on his most exciting and heart-pounding ride yet--as a new democratic Iraq rises, so, too, a new evil, and White House advisors Jon Bennett and Erin McCoy find themselves facing a terrifying threat triggered by an ancient mystery. The story unfolds over an action packed 14 day period in the Middle East with Bennett and McCoy searching for the treasure.

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