

Recognizing The Feminine On St. Patrick's Day

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The month of March is a time of observance of two significant things: St. Patrick's Day and Women's History. I've come to experience March 17th as a day of sadness, for me and many others who are awakening to the feminine aspect of God. This is especially true this year after having visited Ireland last fall. Now St. Patrick's Day seems to celebrate a holocaust of sorts, the submerging of an indigenous religion and the stolen souls of its people.

According to Greg Dues, author of Catholic Customs & Traditions, St. Patrick was born in the British Isles around 385 C.E. (Common Era). He was a Roman citizen, son of wealthy parents. A teenaged Patrick was reportedly kidnapped by pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. Patrick soon escaped to France, where he was eventually ordained a deacon. Pope Celestine I ordained Patrick, a bishop in 432 C.E. and allowed him to return to Ireland. Patrick's ministry established Christianity in Ireland. His "calling" initiated the destruction of the ancient Celtic religions, depriving the indigenous people of their ancestral myths and legends. Patriarchy began to dominate the Emerald Isle, and with it came the death of the Goddess.

Mythology says that St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland, enticing them into the sea where they drowned. Modern-day archeologists and cultural anthropologists have discovered new meanings of this old myth. For starters, there were no snakes in Ireland - not then, and not now. What St. Patrick drove out of Ireland was the Goddess, the Divine Feminine. The snake or serpent is an ancient symbol of the goddess.

"The coiling path of the serpent, like the great rivers of the earth winding from mountain to sea, traces the spiraling of the life energy as it travels from one dimension to another. The serpent, with its quick and fluid shape and movement, came to symbolize the dynamic power of waters beyond, beneath and around the earth, and appears in many different mythologies as the

creative source or generator of the universe," explains authors Anne Baring and Jules Cashford.

When we celebrate St. Patrick's act of driving the snakes out of Ireland, we are in truth celebrat-

mother was the vessel that delivered life. That is what the ancient Irish people worshipped - the mystery of she who can give life; a soft, rounded form that could bleed and not die; a human whose bodily functions are in harmony with the moon; a life/death/ life way of being in accordance with the seasons.

The shamrock is another popular symbol proudly displayed on St. Patrick's Day. It is said St. Patrick used the three-leaf

Brigits" or "Three Morgans", the "mother - hearts" of Celtic tribes. The shamrock was often used in fertility rites. The leaves were burned in a ritual and the ashes sprinkled over fields as a prayer for good crops.

Like the snake myth, I used to get angry when I saw the shamrock displayed so callously every March. I wonder if that's how devout Christians feel when they see the Ichthyous "fish symbol" on car bumpers with Darwinian feet.

After my trip to Ireland, I see the shamrock differently. I see an image of the Goddess in every three-leaf clover. This time of year shamrocks decorate living rooms and classrooms, businesses and advertisements. It tells me that the goddess is alive and magick is afoot - as another popular bumper sticker declares. As more and more spiritual truths emerge from indigenous people all over the world, the closer we will get to unity and peace.

Maybe a holiday like St. Patrick's Day can be celebrated with dignity and love. With or without green beer, we can remember the ancient roots. Rather than reminding us of a sad time in world history, perhaps March 17th can remind us of an earlier time - a time when the feminine was deemed holy and sacred.



ing patriarchy's domination of the Divine Feminine. It represents the suppression of women and girls everywhere throughout modern history. Pre-Christian people understood that a blend of masculine and feminine powers miraculously created life. The feminine was worshipped because the divine

clover to demonstrate to the Irish pagans the Christian trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Long before St. Patrick, the Irish Celts already had a religious meaning for the shamrock. It was a symbol of the Triple Goddess - Maiden, Mother and Crone. The Shamrock represents "The Three

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