Celtic Spirituality: Sacred Tradition of Healing and Hope
Celtic Influences- Keltoi- “The hidden people”

There is no doubt "that the Celts were one of the great founding civilizations of Europe. They were the first European people north of the Alps to emerge into recorded history". (Dictionary of Celtic Mythology, p. 58)
**Popularity of Celtic Spirituality**

**Issue of immigration:**
78 million people around the world claim Irish ancestry. Almost 50 million Americans trace their roots to Ireland.

1845-8.25 million  1923-3.2 million  2016-4.6 million

**Revival of Celtic culture:**
Diaspora, the ancients.

**Model of Church:**
Small, indigenous, charismatic in nature.

**Attitude to moral issues**
Positive, simple lifestyle, deep and rich spirituality.

Anam Cara: John O Donoghue
The Migration of Celts – India, Turkey, Greece, Austria, France, Spain, Briton (Great= England) (Little=Wales)
Two waves of migration

From the South the aboriginal Irish came from the North of Spain – Milesians (also called Tuath de Danna- people of the Goddess Dana- they were known as the Dubhghall (Dark Foreigners- with Dark Hair)

From the East came the Celts- they had their system of Gods- these people were known as the Fionnghall (Fair foreigners – Red Hair)
Celtic Myth and Legend

Celtic Territory from the 5th Century B.C. Until the Roman Conquest

Celtic Territory 500 BC to 50 BC

Celtic Territory today
The megalitic tombs in Newgrange are older than the Great Pyramids of Egypt.
• The Triskelion is a key design in Celtic art and life.

• It features time and time again in Ireland and is deeply rooted in other areas of the world. Isle of Man, Sciliy.
The trinity and the shamrock were symbols that had great significance to the Celts. The myth of St. Patrick using the shamrock to preach the gospel of Christianity by comparing its three leaves with the Father, the Son and the holy spirit, was probably derived from the Celtic metaphor of the shamrock representing a:

- "trust in your soul,"
- "belief in your heart"
- "faith in your mind."

This trinity forms the basis of Celtic spiritual beliefs.
The Life of St. Patrick

- It is known that St. Patrick was born in Banna Venta Berniae to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century. He is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D. His father Calpurnius was a deacon and his Grandfather Potitus was a priest.

- At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family's estate. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity under the slave-master Milcu. Escaping and hearing the voice of the Irish he returned to minister to them.
St. Patrick’s Ministry

- Familiar with the Irish language and culture, Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. For instance, he used bonfires to celebrate Easter since the Irish were used to honoring their gods with fire.

- He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish.
He spent sixty years in Ireland. During that time he consecrated 350 Bishops to follow his ways. He died on the 17th of March 493 in Sabhall in County Down. His grave is in Downpatrick, also in County Down.
I am Patrick, a sinner, most uncultivated and least of all the faithful and despised in the eyes of many.
Ballintubber

This has been a place of prayer since its people were baptised by St Patrick (441 A.D.). Their graves, facing the east and the rising sun are symbols of their faith. The Abbey (1216 A.D.) “that refused to die” is a symbol of their enduring hope. The ruined cloisters, the informers tree, the Tóchar Phádraig are symbols of their faithful love. These hallowed grounds invite us to share in that faith, that hope, that love. This is a place of prayer and peace.
Croagh Patrick
Theo-centric nature of life

- Dia Dhuit
- Dia is Mhuire Duit
- Bail O Dhia ar an obair
- Slan agus Beannacht
Enter this door as if the floor within were gold, and every wall of jewels all, of wealth untold; as if a choir in robes of fire were singing here. Nor shout, nor rush, but hush! For God is here.
Holy Wells

About 60 years ago, a survey claimed there were as many as 3,000 holy wells in Ireland - more than in any other country in the world. Where once a pagan sacrifice may have taken place, today a bride might look into the waters for good luck - or an ill person might bathe in them, hoping for a cure.
St. Mogue’s Well, Clonmore Co. Carlow
Hospitality was another hallmark of Celtic Spirituality. It naturally flowed from the belief that God resided in every human being. There was always room for one more person at the table. To turn somebody away was considered seriously sinful worthy of receiving the same lack of welcome from Christ himself. A poet prayed as follows:

- **O King of stars!**
  - Whether my house be dark or be bright
  - It will not be closed against anybody;
  - May Christ not close his house against me.
St. Brigid of Ireland: Model of Hospitality
St. Brigid’s Community

- Brigid's small oratory at Cill-Dara (Kildare) became a centre of religion and learning, and developed into a cathedral city. She founded two monastic institutions, one for men, and the other for women, and appointed Saint Conleth as spiritual pastor of them. She established institutions for art, metal working, and illumination.
Experiencing a personal relationship with God is the one essential element of any authentic Celtic spirituality.

Therefore, daily prayer and quiet are a "must" for people who follow this life.

Celtic spirituality seeks the hidden meaning of things, a meaning beyond the mere external event of the here and now.
Tie a yellow ribbon
Prayer of St. Brigid

I would like to have the men of Heaven in my own house:
With vats of good cheer laid out for them.
I would like to have the three Marys, their fame is so great.
I would like people from every corner of Heaven.
I would like them to be cheerful in their drinking,
I would like to have Jesus too here amongst them.
I would like a great lake of beer for the King of Kings,
I would like to be watching Heaven's family, drinking it through all eternity.
The Priest Hunter of the West

His name was John Malowney.

And here is the legend....
The Mass Rock in the Glen

In a lonely mountain valley
In the hills of Donegal
Lies one of Ireland's hallowed spots
Deserted and unknown
But few who write historic tales
Or wield the poet's pen
Can say with pride - they knelt beside
The Mass Rock in the glen
The Mass Rock In the Glen

Our priests like wolves were hunted down
O God 'twas surely hard
That from the right to worship Thee
Thy children were debarred
But still they proudly bore
Thy cross Those simple mountain men
Were proud to share Thy Calvary
By the Mass Rock in the glen