

The Lorica, or, St. Patrick's Breastplate

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Lorica (or Breastplate, the Irish name is the Deer's Cry) has many versions. It is said to be Patrick's prayer before Patrick and his party confront the Druids at Tara. The version below is from Cecil Frances Alexander. Cecil's husband was Armagh's Archbishop and the direct successor of Patrick.

¶1

I bind unto myself today
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.

¶2 I bind this day to me forever,
by power of faith, Christ's Incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan River;
His death on cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb;
His riding up the heavenly way;
His coming at the day of doom:
I bind unto myself today.

¶3
I bind unto myself the power
of the great love of cherubim;
the sweet "Well done" in judgment hour;
the service of the seraphim;
confessors' faith, apostles' word,
the patriarchs' prayers, the prophets'
scrolls;
all good deeds done unto the Lord,
and purity of virgin souls.

¶4
I bind unto myself today
the virtues of the starlit heaven,
the glorious sun's life-giving ray,
the whiteness of the moon at even,
the flashing of the lightning free,
the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
the stable earth, the deep salt sea,
around the old eternal rocks.

¶5 I bind unto myself today
the power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need;
the wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward;
the word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

¶6
[Against the demon snares of sin,
the vice that gives temptation force,
the natural lusts that war within,
the hostile men that mar my course;
of few or many, far or nigh,
in every place, and in all hours
against their fierce hostility,
I bind to me these holy powers.

¶7
Against all Satan's spells and wiles,
against false words of heresy,
against the knowledge that defiles
against the heart's idolatry,
against the wizard's evil craft,
against the death-wound and the burning
the choking wave and poisoned shaft,
protect me, Christ, till thy returning.]

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¶8

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

¶9

I bind unto myself the Name,
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.
Of whom all nature hath creation,
eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
praise to the Lord of my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the Lord.

— Vocabulary

Verbally, define the following terms in 1-2 words. Try to comprehend the vocabulary term by seeing how Patrick used it in a sentence.

bind, Trinity, invocation, Incarnation, cherubim, seraphim, confessors, apostles, patriarchs, tempestuous, hearken, ward, host, vice, temptation, heresy, defiles, idolatry

— Geography

- 1) Locate the Jordan River on a map, in an atlas, and on a globe.
- 2) Compare and contrast the weather from Jordan River with your own weather for one week.

— Comprehension Questions

Verbally discuss the following questions.

- 1) Questions for ¶1-¶5

What does it mean to bind one's self (¶1)?

What is the Trinity?

What is Patrick connecting himself to in ¶2? Why?

What is Patrick binding himself to in ¶3?

All good deeds are done for _____.

What natural wonders is Patrick referring to in ¶4?

What does Patrick look to God to do?

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2) Questions for ¶6-¶9

What is Patrick resisting in ¶6?

Why do you think this would be important for a missionary like Patrick?

Why would this be important for all Christians?

What is Patrick praying against in ¶7?

Why would this be important?

Why do you think Patrick prays the way he does in ¶8?

Have you ever considered praying in this fashion?

What does Patrick bind himself to in ¶9?

3) General Questions

What can you learn about Patrick's character traits by this prayerful poem?

Do you think Christians should be praying as earnestly about these concerns today? Why?