

THE STORY OF THE HYMN

The original poem was believed to be the work of the sixth-century St Dallán Forgaill. A native of County Cavan, he was given the name of Dallán, which means little blind one, when he lost his sight. He was author of a poem on the life of St Columba of Iona. This poem is representative of a type that was common in Celtic monasticism and it is known by the Latin name *Ionica* or 'breastplate'. It was a prayer to God for protection from various kinds of enemies and from natural evils. The best-known *Ionica* poem is the long 'Breastplate of St Patrick', which has also been set to music by several composers.

The version of 'Be Thou My Vision' which we sing is the work of two women. It was translated from the Old Irish by Mary Byrne in 1905 and given its final verse form in 1912 by Eleanor Hull. They were both born in the same year (1860) and both were scholars of Old Irish. Mary Byrne was educated by the Dominican nuns and studied at UCD. Eleanor Hull was born in England into an Irish family. She returned to Dublin for her education at Alexandra College. From there she went on to study Old Irish and wrote many scholarly studies of Old Irish texts. She died in 1935.

THE MEANING OF THE HYMN

Our poem has six verses. It uses the phrase 'Be thou' 14 times, which expresses the poet's hopes in what God can do for him.

Remembering that St Dallán, the composer of our hymn, was blind gives particular poignancy to the poem's opening prayer:

"Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art;
be Thou my best thought in the day and the night,

both waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light."
Waking and sleeping are the two ends of the day. The poet does not want anything other than that God should be the light that guides him.

Like the first verse, all four lines of the second verse begin with "Be Thou..." spelling out what he hopes God will be for him:

"Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
be Thou ever with me, and I with Thee, Lord;
be Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son;
be Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one."

He hopes for companionship with God, and even more, to dwell with him and to enjoy the indwelling of God. This verse looks towards the promise of Jesus at the Last Supper (Jn 14:23).

The next verse takes up the idea of the *Ionica* or spiritual armour from which this type of prayer takes its name and also from St Paul (Eph 6:12-17):

"Be Thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be Thou my whole armor, be Thou my true might.
Be Thou my soul's Shelter, be Thou my strong tower,
raise Thou me heavenward, great power of my power."

The final two verses recognise that the genuine disciple has few earthly desires except the reward of eternal life which the High King of Heaven (notice how this ancient Irish title is applied to God) will bestow on him:

"Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
be Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
be Thou and Thou only the first in my heart,
high King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.
High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
grant me its joys, after victory is won;
great heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be Thou my vision, O ruler of all."

The poem ends as it began with a request for true sight. ■

17 January 2021 – 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

Psalter Week 2

Stou()space

SERIES: SING ONCE. PRAY TWICE.

Season colour: GREEN

Hymns are an important part of Catholic worship. We will look at some of our familiar hymns. Musical versions are available on YouTube.

BE THOU MY VISION



This is an ancient Irish prayer which is known from a manuscript written in the 11th century, but it is probably older than that, dating perhaps to the sixth or eighth century. In its English translation, it has proved to be one of the most popular hymns in Britain and Ireland.



Today's readings

1 Sam 3: 1-10

1 Cor 6:13-15, 15, 17-20

Jn 1:35-42

GOD'S WORD TODAY

John's account of the gathering of the first disciples is different from what we find in the other gospels where Jesus takes the lead and calls them to follow him. John emphasises that they exercise free choice in going after Jesus. The first two disciples follow Jesus of their own free will and leave John the Baptist after he points Jesus out to them as "the Lamb of God". A lamb was regarded as a sacred animal in Israel. A lamb was offered every morning and every evening

in the Jerusalem Temple as sacrifice. At Passover, every family sacrificed a lamb and ate its flesh. Jesus will die just as the Passover Lamb is being sacrificed in the Temple. His crucified body will bear some of the characteristics of the lamb – his bones will not be broken but he will shed his blood, just as the lamb's blood marked the homes of the Israelites to protect them. One disciple is nameless: the other is Andrew, who then recruits his brother Simon whose name Jesus immediately changes to Peter.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 17th January 2021

Anniversary Masses

Leitrim

Sat 16th Patsy Bannon (MM); Mary Bannon
Patrick McAnulty; Colette McMullan

Sat 23rd Henry and Rita O'Hare

Dromara

Sun 24th Kathleen, John and Sarah Gordon

St Michael's PS, Finnis

Application forms are available online from
7th until the 31st Jan.

Any child who turns four on or before the
1st July 2021 is eligible for Primary One class in
September.

Any child who turns four on or after 2nd July
2021 until June 2022 is eligible for Reception
Class the Monday after their 4th birthday.

You can view our virtual open night on
Facebook. The school app can be downloaded
via play store or the app store.

Parents feel free to contact:

Mr Donal McCaul (Principal), and/or

Mrs Malone (Primary One/Reception teacher)

on 02897532404 or email

dmccaul694@c2kni.net

kmalone397@c2kni.net

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Pádraic
McAleavey

Drumgooland SVP

Our helpline number is 07586447427. Please contact
us, in strict confidence, if you would need help or
support at any time, we are here to alleviate the
struggle and worry of meeting household bills or
worries.

Many thanks for all the support we received
throughout 2020. Our usual red box collections
outside church has not been available, but our work
is ongoing.

Anyone wishing to make a one off or regular donation
can do so to our bank account:

First Trust Bank Newcastle
Account Name: Drumgooland SVP
Sort Code: 938351
Account Number: 07440031

Your support is very much appreciated and will go
some way to helping others in our locality in these
challenging times.

Thanks and God bless.



Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot
change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to
know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying
one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway
to peace...*

Masses: Sat 6:00pm Sun 9:00am
Mon 9:00am Tues 9:00am
Wed 7:30pm Fri 7:30am

All masses will be streamed from the
Parochial House. They are available on
YouTube, there is no need to subscribe to
YouTube in order to watch and pray. There
is a button to click on the parish website.
The decision to suspend public gatherings
for mass came late last Thursday evening,
after the bulletin was printed. Thank you
for your understanding and cooperation,
especially for the short notice for the two
masses last Friday evening. There will be no
congregational celebrations until Feb 6th at
the earliest, and it is highly likely that the
masses may not resume at that time. These
decisions and recommendations are due to
be reviewed at the end of Jan. It is clear that
people are being responsible. I have noticed
how quiet the roads have become. It is a
challenging time for many people, there are
financial concerns; I am aware that internet
services can be poor at times; the challenges
faced by the school staff to teach in a manner
that is far from ideal; the parents who are
trying to balance their workload at home as
well as help with learning. The present
situation can leave people very drained.
Please be gentle and kind to yourself. We all
need care and support. Thank you to all
who are praying for me, you are in my
prayers. Please continue to pray for each
other. A reach out to another person is a
living prayer.