

Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

Saint Patrick pray, pray for all of us, pray for me

By Iván Portela *

Translated by Claire Healy

*Who is it that enlightens the assembly
upon the mountain, if not I?
-Aimbirgin*

You, who banishes the snakes,
Casting them out to sea,
Denying them refuge in the flesh
Of the man who repents in good faith.
You loved him fervently,
And even converted Macaldus
On a boat of chains and disasters,
After suffering so much weeping.

You, who started with a shamrock,
Who brought hope to the green fields,
Who, from afar, bequeathed to the mountains
A touch of magnificent learning.

You, who carries the sun inside your soul,
You, who holds the chalice in your hand
And comes with the sceptre,
Walking in the wind or in the calm...

You, Saint Patrick,
Who has the strength of a thousand soldiers,
The faith of four Celtic provinces,
The charity of the sea that surrounds you,
That shall not unleash its raging tides
Against your brave Christian people.

You, Saint Patrick,
Who in centuries and universes of distance
Bears a holy name in my confines...
The name you bear embroidered in your cloak
Is the most holy name of Erin

Saint Patrick,
Return your gaze
To a World convulsed, preparing
For a future that could never
Convert the planet of Christ!
Saint Patrick pray, pray for all of us, pray for me!



* Iván Portela (b. 1943), known as the bard of the Mexican-Irish, writes poetry in Spanish about the Irish and Ireland. He has taught at the Universidad Iberoamericana since 1981, and presents a daily selection of 6-7 mythological tales, entitled 'The Myth and You' on Mexican ABC Radio. His favourite selections have always been from Celtic mythology. He has been interviewed by Irish, North American and Mexican publications, and among his many published books are *La otra cara de Irlanda* (Mexico City, 1986), and *Cantos de Tír na nÓg* (Mexico City, 2006), from which this poem has been taken.