Psalm 77:11-14 - 11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. 12 I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. 13 Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? 14 You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.

**The Situation in Europe at Patrick's Death**
- While the violence and chaos of Ireland were rushing to peace and civility… the famed peace of Rome was falling to chaos
- Rome Overwhelmed by Barbarians
  - Rome was finally overrun by illiterate pagan Barbarian tribes: o    Vandals, Sueves, Alans, Goths, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Burgundians, Franks, Huns, Angles, Saxons, etc.
  - Military invasions
  - Mass immigration
- Roman Empire (in the West) Collapsed
  - Barbarians invaded, attacked, destroyed, pillaged, looted, and overran the Empire everywhere they went
  - By mid-6th c… Trier (center of Roman military gov't) was destroyed 4 times, Cologne was "overflowing with the enemy," Mainz a rubble (according to Roman writer Salvian)
  - Destruction, Chaos, and Anarchy
    - Roman law and order disappeared
    - Roman civil structure collapsed
    - Famine, starvation, and disease were rampant
    - Libraries (public and private) were destroyed and abandoned
    - Schools, learning, writing, philosophy disappeared
      - Quote: Gregory of Tours – "In these times when the practice of letters declines, no, rather perishes… there has been found no scholar trained in ordered composition to present in prose or verse a picture of the things which have befallen."
  - Quote: One Contemporary – "Not only are the Roman provinces gone, the whole subtle substructure of Roman political organization and Roman communication has vanished."
- The Effect on the Church in the Roman Empire
  - 1. Some priests and bishops cloistered amongst themselves, serving the elite Romans, fearful of the incoming Germanic tribes
  - 2. Some bishops did their best to preserve Roman society by working with Barbarian kings as the only official Roman government officials left behind
    - These did preserve some order, but they became very corrupt
  - 3. Some monks, priests, and simple Believers fled to safety in newly civilized Ireland
    - These were the ones who made the real impact in Europe.

**So What Happened After St. Patrick?**
- Rome collapsed, but God was lifting up Ireland. And then things went full-circle – God used a restored and revived Ireland to rescue Europe from the brink of destruction
- Irish Christianity Was on Fire
  - The Christianity of Patrick and the Irish was different from that of the Roman Empire
    - Passionate for the Word of God
    - Zealous to spread the Gospel
    - Believed in signs and wonders and the supernatural
    - More democratic and less authoritarian
    - Less focus on buildings, uniforms, or titles
    - Taught that only Jesus can forgive your sins, not the Priest

- Did not teach Mary worship
- Did not accept the authority of the Pope as some sort of King
- <u>Saint Patrick's Ministry Launched a Movement within Ireland</u>
  - Green Martyrdom – Believers left civilization to suffer for Jesus in the wilderness
  - Monasteries – the Green Martyrs naturally joined together… which became Irish monasteries
  - University Cities – Ireland had no cities or population centers, so as these monasteries emerged, they became the major urban centers of Ireland
    - "hubs of unprecedented prosperity, learning, and art" (Thomas Cahill)
      - Historians call them "university cities"
    - Centers of Learning
      - Monks learned Greek, Latin, and Hebrew
      - Monks studied the Bible and works by the Church Fathers
      - Monks were devoted to gathering and copying manuscripts - the Bible, Christian writings, Greek and Roman literature… anything!
      - Monks created an Irish grammar
      - Monks copied down Irish oral literature
      - Monks designed intricate calligraphy, using 2 types of script, one of which became the main one scribes all over Europe used
      - Quote: Thomas Cahill – "In a land where literacy had previously been unknown, in a world where the old literate civilizations were sinking fast beneath successive waves of barbarism, the… Gospel, shining in all the little oratories of Ireland, acted as a pledge: the lonely darkness had been turned into light, and the lonely virtue of courage, sustained through all the centuries, had been transformed into hope."
    - People came from all over Europe to study at university cities
    - Anyone (rich or poor, common or nobility) was welcome to come and learn
      - Free instruction, free meals, free books, free housing
    - Instruction began with the Gospels, then the rest of the Bible, then stories of martyrs and ascetic monks, then sermons and commentaries by early church fathers, then anything else from Greek and Latin literature (philosophers, poets, historians), then their own Irish myths and poems passed down through the years
- <u>Who Were These Monks?</u>
  - Brigid of Kildaire (5<sup>th</sup> c.) – tried to sell all her father's possessions
  - Kevin of Glendalough (6th c.) – lived in a cave seeking God
  - King Sweeny – spent whole days in the treetops praying
- <u>Columcille (Saint Columba)</u>
  - Born into Irish royalty Dec. 7, 521 AD (about 60 years after Patrick's death)
  - He slept with a rock for a pillow, talked to animals, healed the sick, cast out demons, and legend says he scared the Loch Ness Monster into the lake simply by raising his arm
  - One of his followers was murdered by King Diarmait, so he raised up an army and killed 3001 soldiers in vengeance
    - As punishment, he was exiled from Ireland and sentenced to save 3001 souls
  - 564 AD: Columcille and 12 companions set out for the island of Iona, off the coast of Scotland
    - White Martyrdom – Columcille pioneered the Irish concept of White Martyrdom, monks dressed in white who would sail into the "white sky of morning" into the unknown to preach the Gospel
    - Columcille and his 12 companions founded the first Irish monastery outside of Ireland, on the island of Iona
    - People from all over Scotland came
    - When there were 150 people, they sent out 13 to start a new monastery

- o Columcille founded monasteries and university cities all over Scotland – 41 monasteries by the time he was 41 years old, 60 by his death
- After Columcille – White Martyrs Went Everywhere
  - o Columcille became the pattern to follow
  - o Quote: Thomas Cahill in How the Irish Saved Civilization – "Monks began to set off in every direction, bent on glorious and heroic exile for the sake of Christ. They were warrior-monks, of course, and certainly not afraid of whatever monsters they might meet. Some went north, like Columcille. Others went northwest, like Brendan the Navigator, visiting Iceland, Greenland, and North America, and supping on the back of a whale in mid-ocean. Some set out in boats without oars, putting their destination completely in the hands of God. Many of the exiles found their way to continental Europe, where they were more than a match for the Barbarians they met. [For these were ones] whom the Romans had never conquered…"
- Columbanus
  - o Born in 540 AD (80 years after Patrick's death)
  - o 590: He and 12 companions left for Gaul (France), where he founded 3 monasteries among the Barbarian Sueves
  - o 603: Conflicts with Roman bishops and Brunhilda, princess of Burgundy, led to their being kicked out of Gaul
    - ▪ As they left to return to Ireland, Deicola, an older monk traveling with Columbanus, stayed behind and founded a monastery in Lure
    - ▪ The group was shipwrecked
    - ▪ Then they traveled to Italy to reach the Lombards
      - • On the way, Gall (his German language expert) got sick and stayed behind in Arbon
      - • 612: Columbanus and 3 disciples built the first Irish monastery in Italy (city of Bobbio)
  - o 615: Columbanus died, having spent 25 years planting monasteries on the continent, in modern-day France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy
    - ▪ He had helped found at least 60 monasteries, maybe over 100
- Gall
  - o Columbanus's Germanic language expert who was left behind in Arbon
  - o Quote: Cahill – "Finding himself, after Columbanus's huffy departure, alone among wolves, bears, and illiterate Alemans, Gall, a more patient man than Colmbanus, went about visiting his neighbors, instructing them in faith and letters."
  - o He became a central figure in the founding of the Swiss church
  - o 645: By the time Gall died, all the Alemans had received Jesus
- Aidan: Irish monk who brought Christianity and learning to the Barbarians of N England
- Saint Fursa the Visionary: went to East Anglia, Lagny (east of Paris), Peronne
- Caidoc and Fricor: went to Picardy
- Virgil the Geometer: archbishop of Salzburg
- Donatus: became bishop of Fiesole for 50 years
- Saint Cathal: elected bishop of Taranto (Italy)
- St. Brendan the Navigator (8th c.)
  - o He and 40 other monks left Ireland by boat, seeking solace wherever the winds drove them
  - o Legend has it he ate on the back of a whale sunning itself at sea
  - o Eventually, they came to America before anyone else from Europe had
- Countless unnamed Irish women who planted monasteries and churches in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Belgium
- Irish White Martyrs went as far as Czech Republic and Kiev, Ukraine
- Quote: Heiric of Auxerre (French theologian) [Complained in 870] – "Almost all of Ireland… is migrating to our shores with a herd of philosophers!"

**Beyond the Irish – English White Martyrs**
- Anglo-Saxon Invasion of England (5th-6th c.)
    - The Anglo-Saxons, a pagan Germanic tribe which became the English people, invaded ~~Romania~~ Britania from the East, pushing the Romanized and Christianized Britons to the West
    - Seeing their Briton brothers in danger, Irish monks came to their aid – not to fight the foreigners but to go to them as missionaries
        - The Irish and Britons worked together, establishing monasteries among the Britons that served as bases that sent monks to the Anglo-Saxon invaders
        - The English people became Christian because of these Irish missionary monks
- English Missionary Monks
    - The new English Christians were just as zealous for missions as the Irish were
    - By mid-600s… English missionary monks were going to the Germanic tribes in Europe just as the Irish had been doing
        - Wilfrid went to Frisia (Netherlands)
        - Willibrord founded monasteries and churches in Luxembourg and throughout modern Germany (Utrecht, Wurzburg, Erfurt, Eichstadt, Passau)
        - Winfrid (known as Boniface) – founded an abbey at Fulda, monasteries at Disbodenburg, Amoenaburg, Fritzlar, Buraburg, Heidenheim, Mainz
    - By mid-700s… most of Frisia, Saxony, Thuringia, Bavaria, and Denmark had received the Gospel through these English missionaries

**What Was the Effect of Patrick and the Irish Missionary Monks?**
- Quote: James Westfall Thompson – "The weight of the Irish influence on the Continent is incalculable."
    - Countless hundreds of thousands of Irish and other Barbarians were added to the kingdom of God
    - Europe was rescued from the brink of collapse
- Without the Irish monks… all early Latin literature would have disappeared (Christian and otherwise)
- Without the Irish monks… literacy, education, and deeper thought would have died out in the West
- Without the Irish monks… many of Europe's great cities may not even exist, since many came into being from the university cities that grew out of Irish monasteries
- Without the Irish monks… European politics would have devolved into tribal feuds and barbarian wars, since the Irish (as some of the only truly educated people in Europe at the time) became advisors to kings and queens
- Without the Irish monks… Europe would probably be Muslim
    - As Islam arose in the 700s, it encountered little resistance among the loose tribes of the Middle East and North Africa.
    - When it came to Europe, it met a unified, revived, strengthened European Christian culture.
    - If it weren't for the Irish monks, Islam would have easily overwhelmed the loose Barbarian tribes of Northern Europe who had overthrown the Roman Empire.

**So what can we learn from Patrick and the White Martyrs?**
- God knows what He's doing in history, so trust Him
- The darkness is never too dark for the Light of the World
- The Gospel is always the answer
- Be bold for Jesus

Hebrews 12:1 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us…