

# A Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus

## *Part I*

1

I am Patrick, yes a sinner and indeed untaught; yet I am established here in Ireland where I profess myself bishop. I am certain in my heart that "all that I am," I have received from God. So I live among barbarous tribes, a stranger and exile for the love of God. He himself testifies that this is so. I never would have wanted these harsh words to spill from my mouth; I am not in the habit of speaking so sharply. Yet now I am driven by the zeal of God, Christ's truth has aroused me. I speak out too for love of my neighbors who are my only sons; for them I gave up my home country, my parents and even pushing my own life to the brink of death. If I have any worth, it is to live my life for God so as to teach these peoples; even though some of them still look down on me. *I Cor. 15:10 Phil. 2:30*

2

I myself have composed and written these words with my own hand, so that they can be given and handed over, then sent swiftly to the soldiers of Coroticus. I am not addressing my own people, nor my fellow citizens of the holy Romans, but those who are now become citizens of demons by reason of their evil works. They have chosen, by their hostile deeds, to live in death; comrades of the Scotti and Picts and of all who behave like apostates, bloody men who have steeped themselves in the blood of innocent Christians. The very same people I have begotten for God; their number beyond count, I myself confirmed them in Christ.

3

The very next day after my new converts, dressed all in white, were anointed with chrism, even as it was still gleaming upon their foreheads, they were cruelly cut down and killed by the swords of these same devilish men. At once I sent a good priest with a letter. I could trust him, for I had taught him from his boyhood. He went, accompanied by other priests, to see if we might claw something back from all the looting, most important, the baptized captives whom they had seized. Yet all they did was to laugh in our faces at the mere mention of their prisoners.

4

Because of all this, I am at a loss to know whether to weep more for those they killed or those that are captured: or indeed for these men themselves whom the devil has taken fast for his slaves. In truth, they will bind themselves alongside him in the pains of the everlasting pit: for "he who sins is a slave already" and is to be called "son of the devil." *Jn. 8:34, 44 (O.L.)*

5

Because of this, let every God-fearing man mark well that to me they are outcasts: cast out also by Christ my God, whose ambassador I am. Patricides, they are, yes and fratricides, no better than ravaging wolves devouring God's own people like a loaf of bread. Exactly as it says: "the wicked have scattered your law, O Lord," which in these latter days he had planted in Ireland with so much hope and goodness; here it had been taught and nurtured in God's sight. *Eph. 6.-20 Acts 20.-29 Ps. 14:4 Ps. 119.126*

## **Part II**

6

I do not overreach myself, for I too have my part to play with "those whom he has called to himself and predestined" to teach the gospel in the midst of considerable persecutions "as far as the ends of the earth, even if the enemy reveals h's true envy through the tyranny of Coroticus, who fears neither God nor the priests whom he has chosen and to whom he has given the highest divine power, namely that "those whom they bind on earth are bound in heaven." *Rom. 8:30 Matt. 16:19*

7

Accordingly, I beseech especially you "holy and humble in heart," that it is unlawful to flatter men like these, nor should you eat or drink in their company, neither should anyone feel any obligation to receive alms from such men; not until the time comes when they do penances so harsh that their tears pour out to God, and that they agree to free those servants of God and the baptized handmaids of Christ. For these did he die, for them was he crucified. *Dan. 3:87*

8

"The Almighty turns away from the gifts of wicked men." "He who offers sacrifice from the goods of the poor, is like a man who sacrifices a son in the sight of his own father." "Those riches," it is written, "which he has gathered in unjustly will be vomited out of his belly." "And now the angel of death comes to drag him away. He will be mauled by angry dragons, killed by the serpent's tongue. Moreover, everlasting fire is consuming him." So, "Woe to those who feast themselves on things that are not their own." Or, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his own soul?" *Ecclus. 34:19-20 Job 20:15-16, 26 Hab. 2:6 Matt. 16.-26*

9

It would take too long to discuss or argue every single case, or to sift through the whole of the Law for precise witness against such greed. Sufficient to say, greed is a deadly deed. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. You shall not murder. A homicide may not stand beside Christ. Even "He who bates his brother is to be labeled murderer." Or, "He who does not love his brother dwells in death." therefore how much more guilty is he, who has stained his own hands in the blood of the sons of God, those very children whom only just now he has won for himself in this distant land by means of our feeble encouragement. *Rom. 13:9 Exod. 20:13, 17 I Jn. 3:15, 14*

### Part III

10

Could I have come to Ireland without thought of God, merely in my own interest? Who was it made me come? For here "I am a prisoner of the Spirit" so that I may not see any of my family. Can it be out of the kindness of my heart that I carry out such a labor of mercy on a people who once captured me when they wrecked my father's house and carried off his servants? For by descent I was a freeman, born of a decurion father; yet I have sold this nobility of mine, I am not ashamed, nor do I regret that it might have meant some advantage to others. In short, I am a slave in Christ to this faraway people for the indescribable glory of "everlasting life which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." *Acts 20.22 Rom. 6.-23*

11

And if my own do not want to know me, well and good, "a prophet is not honored in his own country." Indeed, perhaps we are not "from the same sheepfold," or possibly we do not have "one and the same Father for our God." As he says, "He who is not with me, is against me" and he who "does not gather with me, scatters." We are at cross purposes: "One destroys; another builds." "I do not seek things that are mine." Not by my grace, but it is God "who has given such care in my heart," so that I should be among "the hunters or fishers" whom God foretold "in those final days." *Jn. 4:44 Jn. 10:16 Eph. 4:6 Matt. 12:30 Ecclus. 34:23 I Cor. 13:5 II Cor. 8:16*

12

They are jealous of me. What am I to do, Lord? How bitterly they despise me! just see how your sheep are torn apart and despoiled, and by those gangsters I have named, bound to the last man by the inimical mind of Coroticus. Far away from the love of God is the man who betrays my Christians into the hands of the Scotti and Picts. "Ravenous wolves" have gulped down the Lord's own flock, which was flourishing in Ireland and tended with utmost care. Now I have lost count how many sons and daughters of the kings of the Scotti have become monks and virgins of Christ. For which reason, "may these injuries done to the just not find favor in your sight," even "to the lowest depths of hell may you not be pleased."

13

Which of the saints would not refuse to feast and decline the company of such men? See how they have filled

their houses with the spoils of dead Christians? Why, they devote their lives to plunder! Miserable men, they have no idea how they feed poison, food that surely kills, to their friends and even to their own children; just as Eve never realized that she was handing out certain death to her own man, her husband. It is always the same with those who do evil: they labor long only to yield death as their everlasting punishment.

14

Roman Christians in Gaul behave quite differently: it is their custom to send holy, capable men to the Franks and other nations with several thousand soldiers so as to redeem Christian prisoners, yet YOU would rather kill or sell them on to a far-off tribe who know nothing of the true God. You might as well consign Christ's own members to a whorehouse. What kind of hope can you have left in God? Can you still trust someone who says he agrees with you? Do you listen still to all those flatterers who surround you? God alone will judge. For it is written, "Not only those who do evil, but also all those who agree with them, are to be

15

For myself, I do not know "what I shall say," or how "I may speak anymore" of those who are dead of these children of God-whom the sword has struck down so harshly, beyond all belief. For it is written, "Weep with those that weep, and again "If one member grieves, then all members should grieve together." Because of this, the whole Church "cries out and for its sons and daughters" who so far have not been killed by the sword. For they have been taken far away and abandoned in a land where sin abounds, openly, wickedly, impudently; there freeborn men are sold, Christians are reduced to slavery, and worst of all among the most worthless and vilest apostates, the Picts. *Jn. 12:49 Rom. 12:15 I Cor. 12:26 Matt. 2:18,- Jer. 31:15*

16

Because of all this, my voice is raised in sorrow and mourning. Oh, my most beautiful, my lovely brethren and my sons "whom I begot in Christ," I have lost count of your number, what can I do to help you now? I am not worthy to come to the help of God or men. "We have been overwhelmed by the wickedness of unjust men," it is as if "we had been made outsiders." They find it unacceptable that we are Irish. But it says "Is it not true that you all have but one God? Why then have you, each one of you, abandoned your own neighbor?" *I Cor. 4:15 Ps. 65:3 Ps. 69:8 Eph. 4:5, 6 MaL 2:10*

#### Part IV

17

And therefore I grieve for you, how I mourn for you, who are so very dear to me, but again I can rejoice within my heart, not for nothing "have I labored," neither has my exile been "in vain."

And if this wicked deed, so horrible, so unutterable, had to happen, thanks be to God, as men, believing and baptized, you have left this world behind for paradise. I can see you all clearly: you have set out for where "there will be no more night," "no more lament, neither death."

"There your hearts will leap, like calves let free from the tether, and you will trample down the wicked underfoot, and they will be like dust under your feet." *Phil. 2:16 Apoc. 22:5, 21:4 MaL 4:Z 3*

18

Therefore will you reign with the apostles and the prophets and all the martyrs. You will attain the eternal kingdoms. just as he testifies, exactly as he declares: "They will come from East and the West, and they will rest with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." "While outside howl the dogs, the poisoners, the homicides," and "Their fate, with liars and perjurers, is the lake of everlasting fire." Where, says the Apostle, not without reason, "The 'Just man will scarcely be saved, yet the sinner and the flagrant lawbreaker, where shall he stand?"

*Matt. 8:11 Apoc. 22:15 Apoc. 21:8 I Pet. 4:18*

And so, now you, Coroticus-and your gangsters, rebels all against Christ, now where do you see yourselves? You gave away girls like prizes: not yet women, but baptized. All for some petty temporal gain that will pass in the very next instant. "Like a cloud passes, or smoke blown in the wind," so will "sinners, who cheat, slip away from the face of the Lord. But the just will feast for sure" with Christ. "They will judge the nations" and unjust kings "they will lord over" for world after world. Amen. *Wisd. 5:14 Ps. 68:2, 3; 3:8*

I bear witness before God and his angels that this will come about, just as he has revealed my lack of learning. To repeat: these are not my words, but God's own words-and the apostle's and the prophets', which I have merely chiseled out in Latin: and they have never lied. "He who is found to have believed will be saved; but he who did not believe will be condemned, God has spoken." *Mk. 16:15, 16*

My chief request is that anyone who is a servant of God be ready and willing, to carry this letter forward; may it never be hidden or stolen by anyone, but rather, may it be read aloud before the whole people-Yes, even when Coroticus himself is present.

May God inspire these men sometime to come to their senses in regard to God again, so that they may repent, however latter day, of their grave crimes, namely homicide against the brothers of the Lord, and that they free these baptized women whom they have taken, so that then they may deserve to live to God and be made whole once more, here, now and for eternity.

Peace to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. *AMEN.*