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The Legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory

Washington (NC) -- While St. Patrick's Day, March 17, is often a day of celebration even during Lent, legend surrounding the Irish saint also speaks of repentance.

Robert Meyer, professor emeritus of Celtic studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, said that most people don't know the Irish legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory.

According to the legend, St. Patrick took his followers to an island in Loch Derg, a lake in County Donegal, where they would enter a cave and see visions of purgatory.

Patrick wanted to warn his followers of the evils and dangers of sin, Meyer said. The people would see the pain and suffering of those sentenced to purgatory.

Patrick's Purgatory sounds depressing, Meyer said, but the Irish saint really cared about his people.

"Patrick was not like the great metaphysical theologians, but was a very practical, down-to-earth man. He came to Ireland, a country obsessed by pagan superstitions and rites, and converted the people to Christianity," said Meyer.

Loch Derg, in Northern Ireland, has been a place of potential pilgrimage at least since the 12th century.

"There, on three-day retreats, people fast, go barefoot and sleep on the ground after spending the first night in prayer. Then they go to confession," Meyer said.

Meyer has his doubts as to whether St. Patrick ever went

to the island. He might have, Meyer said, but probably the legend is based more on literary imagination.

Still, those who are feeling penitent the morning after a St. Patrick's Day celebration might consider reflecting on the ancient pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, Meyer added.

St. Patrick lived in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. In his early teens he was sold as a slave in Ireland and after six years he found a ship to bring him home.

Some biographers believe he studied for the priesthood in Europe before returning to Ireland preaching conversion.

She Wants Police Accountable to Public

By Terrance J. Brennan

"Public accountability of public servants is coming," said Eileen Luna, chief investigator of the Berkeley (Calif.) Police Review Commission (PRC), in Rochester last week to speak to a March 8 luncheon meeting of the Judicial Process Commission.

"All we ask is that the police be accountable to the people they serve," she said.

Ms. Luna's visit was timely, considering the recent controversial police shooting death of Alicia McCuller, daughter of long-time area civil rights activist James McCuller.

While here, she met with the Rochester City Council, Mayor Thomas P. Ryan, Rochester Police Chief Delmar Leach, and representatives from the McCuller committee, among others.

Ms. Luna also appeared on WOKR-TV Channel 13's "Morning Break" show.

"The problems (in Rochester) are so similar as those in other cities," the 38-year-old attorney noted. Ms. Luna explained that Berkeley has quite a large population (103,000+) over a relatively small geographic area (five square miles).

Ms. Luna said that there are nine members of the Berkeley PRC, all civilians. Each is appointed by a representative member of city council, to two-year terms. In addition to the nine on the commission, the PRC has an investigative staff of attorneys, which she heads, that handles the research of all complaints against the Berkeley Police Department.

Ms. Luna joined the PRC, which was formed in 1973, three years ago as an associate investigator.

She said the PRC has "total jurisdiction over police activity" -- this includes all discourttesy, improper tactics and excessive force complaints.

In supporting her premise that other cities should initiate a like program, Ms. Luna points out that excessive force complaints in Berkeley dropped 67 percent from 1974 to 1977 and have never risen since.

"We have not replaced internal affairs," Ms. Luna stressed. "They still investigate the complaint."



EILEEN LUNA

The major difference is that the PRC investigation is open to the public, the internal affairs is not.

"This is why people know they can come to us," she said. "Therefore, they tend not to be confrontational with the police on the street."

Following an investigation, the PRC reports its findings to a board of inquiry that includes three of the nine members of the city council. An acquittal is rendered or discipline is recommended within 120 days of the investigation's completion.

Ms. Luna said that when a decision is made to discipline an officer, the commission is not consulted for recommen-

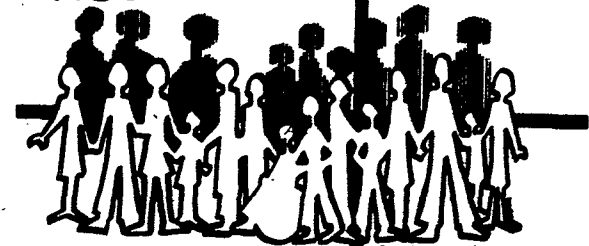
dation. "We are not part of the disciplinary process," she said. "We are not their employers."

The commission survived the early, shaky times of doubt, she said, and now both the citizens and the Berkeley police support the PRC.

There are only four civilian review boards in the country besides Berkeley -- Washington, Oakland, San Francisco, and Portland, Ore. There is also a similar program in Toronto.

"We are not headhunters," Ms. Luna said. "We're not out to harass police officers. We basically want good policing."

CROSSROADS II



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RENEWED CHURCH

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Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Overflow

To accommodate an overflow of catechumens, candidates and sponsors at the Rite of Election Sunday at the Cathedral, part of the 285 involved for 43 parishes in the diocese moved forward in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults program in ceremonies before Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey at St. Thomas More Church. Other Rite of Elections are scheduled tonight at St. Mary's in Corning and Friday at St. Patrick's in Seneca Falls.

Senate Confirms Wilson As Vatican Ambassador

Washington (NC) -- The Senate March 7 confirmed the nomination of William Wilson to be the first U.S. ambassador to the Holy See by a vote of 81-13. Wilson had served as President Reagan's personal envoy to the Vatican.

The confirmation followed widespread opposition by some Protestant and Catholic groups, including ongoing efforts to deny a State Department request for a transfer of funds to finance an extended U.S. diplomatic presence at the Vatican.

Senators voted after a sparsely attended floor debate in which backers of confirming Wilson, led by Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind.,

said the move would enhance U.S. interests. Opponents said the ties would harm the Vatican's status as a religious entity and raise serious church-state questions.

"We believe this nomination will be good for U.S. diplomacy and U.S. security," said Lugar.

Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., another supporter of the nomination, said that the United States is recognizing the Vatican "not in its capacity as a religious entity but as a political entity."

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., argued that diplomatic ties with the Holy See could turn the Vatican into a political body to the denigration of its religious status.

Hatfield, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which has been considering the proposed additional funding for the U.S. embassy at the Vatican, described the Holy See as a "church" and the current pope as "one of the greatest spiritual leaders of this generation."

Hatfield, in voting against the Wilson nomination, said when Pope John Paul speaks out on issues, "he's affirming and acting out his religious commitment. He's not a politician."

The Oregon senator also said he was acting out of his "very firm belief in the separation of church and state."