

Our Lady of Ireland

March 17, 1697



Ireland was invaded by Protestant England in 1649. Led by Oliver Cromwell, the English brutally Catholic Ireland. The loss of life among Irish Catholic was significant; estimates being between 15 to 50% of the population. Those Catholics who survived had their property confiscated and transferred to British settlers. Catholics who could not flee were forced to live separately from Protestants who took ownership of businesses and government.

Among those forced to leave was the Catholic Bishop of Confert, Dr. Lynch. The only treasure he brought with him was the painting of Our Lady of Ireland. The image depicts the Blessed Mother as queen, looking down at the sleeping Infant Jesus, crowned King.

Bishop Lynch traveled around Europe and eventually settled in Hungary in 1654. There, he met Bishop John Pusky of Gyer. Dr. Lynch became his auxiliary bishop. He was affectionately called the "Irish Bishop."

Ten years later, Auxiliary Bishop Lynch fell ill. On his deathbed, he gave the painting of Our Lady of Ireland to Bishop Pusky. Bishop Pusky hung the painting on the wall of the Cathedral of Gyer, Hungary in memory of the Irish Bishop. It has been kept there for many years.



On the Feast Day of St. Patrick, March 17, 1697, a miracle took place. On that day, many faithful were gathered for Mass at the Cathedral of Gyer. They witnessed tears of blood flow from the eyes of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the painting of Our Lady of Ireland. For three hours, her bloody tears fell on the Infant Jesus in the painting. Linen towels were used to soak up the blood. A piece of the blood stained cloth is preserved at the shrine. Also preserved at the Cathedral of Gyer, is a parchment from 1697 that documents this miracle. It is signed by over 100 witnesses including clergy and laity who were present at the Mass as well as, councilmen, the mayor, the governor, Protestant preachers and a rabbi.

In the 1900's, a chemist examined a piece of the blood stained cloth. His analysis found that the stain was made from human blood and tears.

"Mary was a martyr, not by the sword of the executioner, but by bitter sorrow of heart." ~ St. Bernard.

This year, we focus on Mary, the **Mediatrice of All Graces**, the model disciple, who shows us how to receive and bear the Word to the world. For more on Year 2 preparation, visit: www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubiliecelebration/

-From the Office of Religious Education