



Living in Relational Wholeness

Coalesce Podcast

Episode 028 – Native and Celtic Spirituality

Note, terms, scripture, practice



Book of Kells (includes the four Gospels) ~800 AD

“The Deer’s Cry” or “St. Patrick’s Breastplate” 8th century

Celtic Christianity: A Sacred Tradition, a Vision of Hope (Timothy Joyce)

[Romans 1:20](#) - Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

Pelagius (c. 354-418) British monk and theologian: “You will realize that doctrines are inventions of the human mind, as it tried to penetrate the mystery of God. You will realize that Scripture itself is the work of human minds, recording the example and teaching of Jesus. Thus it is not what you believe that matters; it is how you respond with your heart and your actions. It is not believing in Christ that matters; it is becoming like him.”

[Acts 2:44–45](#)

[Genesis 1:10-31](#)

[Colossians 1:15f](#)

[Genesis 1:26](#)

We are prone to getting stuck unless we have

- 1) some kind of initiatory experience,
- 2) some healing rites of passage, and
- 3) almost always the aid of some guides or elders.

[Revelation 2:17](#)

Practice: Intimacy with Creation

“In every religion we find the need to consecrate our participation in the natural world. This is especially evident in the tribal religions of native peoples. Their songs and prayers express a great courtesy toward the natural world. For example, the refrain ‘We return thanks’ in the thanksgiving ritual of the Iroquois Indians—first to our mother, the Earth which sustains us, then to the rivers and streams, to the bushes and trees, to the elements, and finally to the Great Spirit who directs all things—reveals the intimacy of their relation with the entire Earth community.” (Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, ed., *Earth Prayers: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations from Around the World*, p. xxi)

A Navajo chant expresses the depth of this intimacy with, and participation in, nature:

The mountains,
I become part of it . . .
The herbs, the fir tree,
I become part of it.
The morning mists, the clouds, the gathering waters,
I become part of it.
The wilderness, the dew drops, the pollen . . .
I become part of it. (Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, ed., *Earth Prayers: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations from Around the World*, p. 5)

We also are able to “become part of it” when we are aware that we share the Spirit of God with all creation, as the following passage by Celtic theologian Pelagius affirms:

Look at the animals roaming the forest: God’s spirit dwells within them. Look at the birds flying across the sky: God’s spirit dwells within them. Look at the tiny insects crawling in the grass: God’s spirit dwells within them. Look at the fish in the river and sea: God’s spirit dwells within them. There is no creature on earth in whom God is absent. . . . When God pronounced that his creation was good, it was not only that his hand had fashioned every creature; it was that his breath had brought every creature to life. Look too at the great trees of the forest; look even at your crops. God’s spirit is present within all plants as well. The presence of God’s spirit in all living things is what makes them beautiful; and if we look with God’s eyes, nothing on the earth is ugly. (*The Letters of Pelagius* as quoted by J. Philip Newell, *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality*)

Go out into the natural world and look with God’s eyes; listen with God’s ears; know your place within God’s good creation.

