



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Saint Patrick's Day message from President of Ireland, Mary McAleese

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig ar chlann mhór dhomhanda na nGael, sa bhaile agus ar fud na cruinne, ar ár lá náisiúnta ceiliúrtha féin.

Warmest greetings to everyone who is celebrating Saint Patrick's Day 2010, wherever you are in the world. On this day we set aside our problems and remember the joy in life that comes from good company and the celebration of a great culture. Saint Patrick's Day is a time for fun and laughter, for showcasing the best of the Irish and for demonstrating our pride in homeland and heritage. Saint Patrick's own life story is worth remembering during these tough times for he himself faced and overcame great personal hardship that tested him to the limits. The family of the Gael gathers in his name in Ireland and in many diverse parts of the world. We are lucky to have such a large global family. It has proved itself to be a very precious and important resource in every generation. In recent years it has been an indispensable enabler of the Peace Process which is consolidating and strengthening little by little. Northern Ireland is enjoying the longest continuous period of devolved power-sharing since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. The recent Hillsborough Agreement was another significant step in the completion of devolution and represents an important milestone on the path to long-term stability and normalisation. It took considerable generosity of spirit on all sides to secure this historic peace and we can look forward to the many benefits of a rapidly growing culture of good neighbourliness instead of wasteful division.

The commitment of our global Irish family is now being harnessed as never before with initiatives like the Farmleigh Conference and the new Global Irish Network, all intent on putting their talents and ideas at the service of Ireland's economic recovery. Thanks to our global family the link with Ireland has been kept alive over generations and our culture introduced to countless millions throughout the world. Saint Patrick's Day is marked and relished in a myriad of places in a celebration that is both local and global and that is quintessentially Irish yet warmly welcoming of friends from other cultures and traditions. So whether you are parading down the street of a small rural Irish village or one of the largest cities in the world, Saint Patrick's Day parade is a shared celebration with the same deep pride and love of life and of community at its heart.

To every Irish person and to every friend of Ireland, I wish you a happy and enjoyable Saint Patrick's Day 2010.

MARY McALEESE
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND