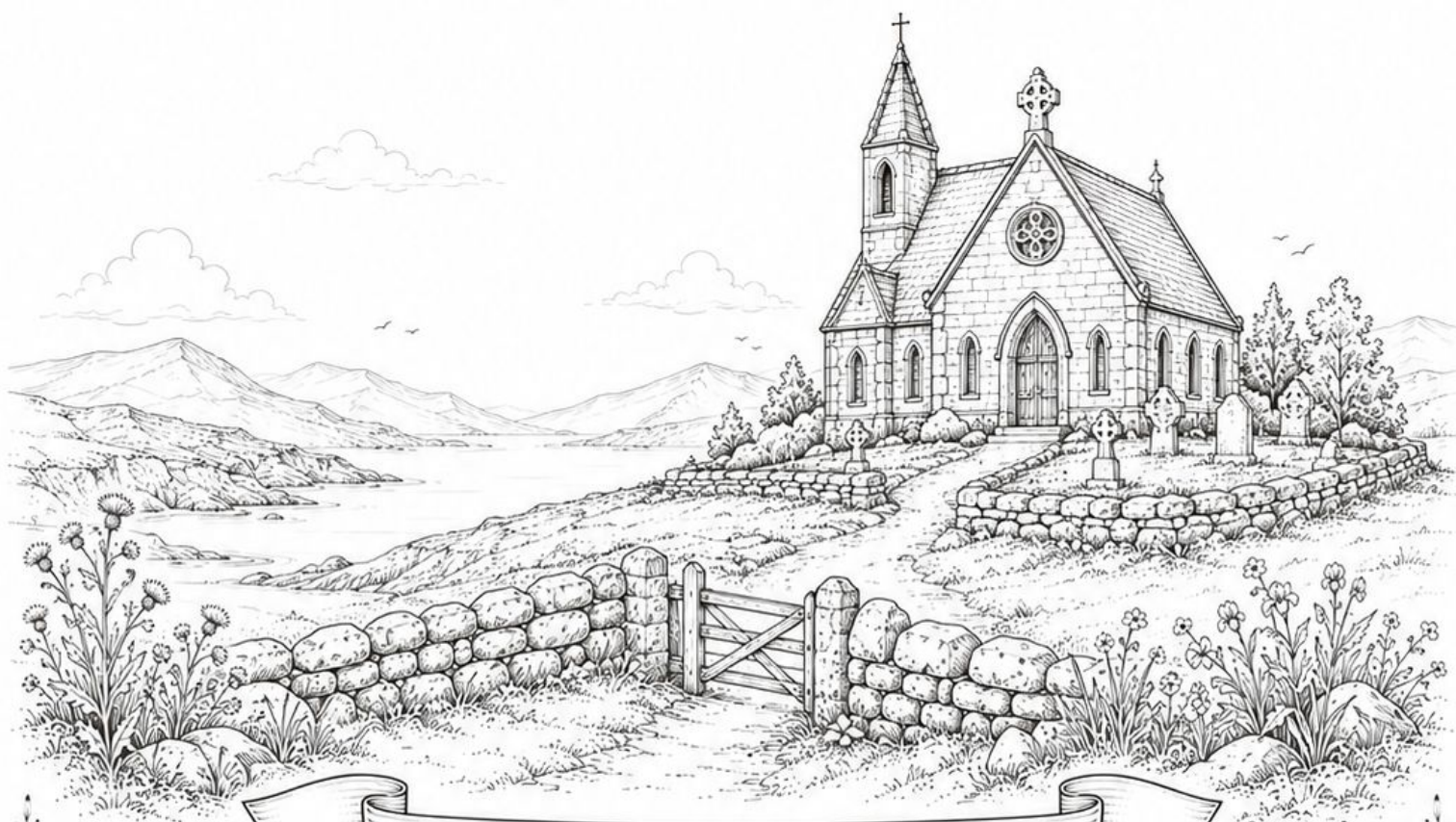


August

Be Thou My Vision

*High King of Heaven,
My Treasure Thou Art*

TUNE: SLANE



...there is nothing on earth that I
desire besides You. - Psalm 73:25



INTRODUCTION



Christ is our greatest treasure.

Throughout life, many things compete for our attention—success, possessions, comfort, popularity, and even good things like family or education. *Be Thou My Vision* teaches us to ask God to become our greatest delight. It is not merely a prayer asking God to help us; it is a prayer asking Him to become the center of everything we think, love, and pursue.

Written over a thousand years ago as an Irish prayer and later translated into English, this hymn reminds believers that true wisdom is found in Christ alone.

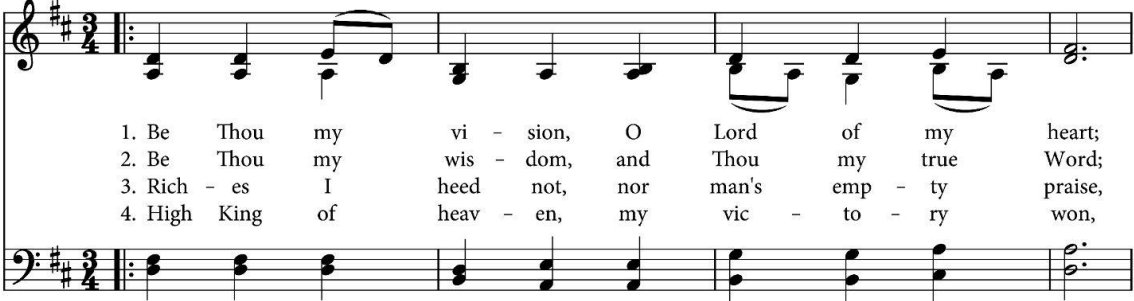
As your class sings this hymn throughout the month, encourage students to notice the many titles given to God:

Vision
Wisdom
Word
Father
King of Heaven
Treasure
High King
Heart of my own heart

Each title helps us understand another beautiful truth about who God is.

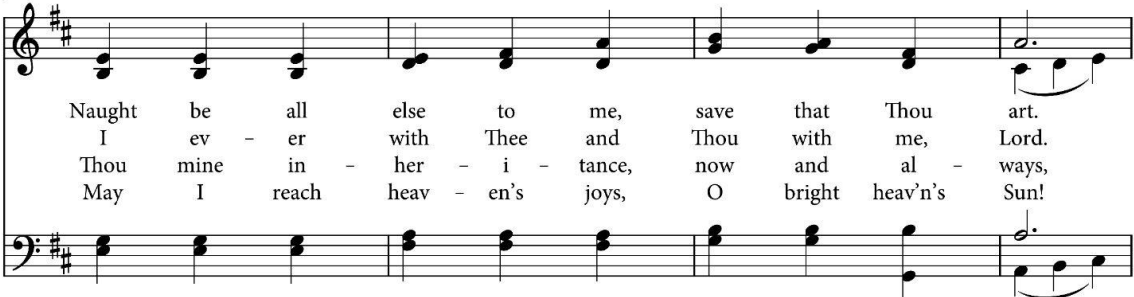


BE THOU MY VISION



1. Be Thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2. Be Thou my wis - dom, and Thou my true Word;
 3. Rich - es I heed not, nor man's emp - ty praise,
 4. High King of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

5



Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.
 I ev - er with Thee and Thou with me, Lord.
 Thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways,
 May I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!

9



Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 Thou my great Fa - ther, I Thy true son,
 Thou and Thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

13



Wak - ing or sleep - ing, Thy pres - ence my light.
 Thou in me dwell - ing, and I with Thee one.
 High King of heav - en, my trea - sure Thou art.
 Still be my Vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Ancient Irish Poem
 tr. Mary E. Byrne
 Set to music by Eleanor Hull

SLANE



BE THOU MY VISION



Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.





LIVING QUESTIONS



- Which words or phrases are unfamiliar? What do you think they mean from the context?
 - Which title for God in this hymn stands out to you most? Why?
 - The hymn says, "Riches I heed not." What kinds of "riches" might compete for your heart today?
 - Have you ever wanted something so much that it became the main thing you thought about? How does this hymn help us think differently?
 - Which line in the hymn would make a wonderful prayer to pray every morning?
 - If someone who had never heard of Jesus read this hymn, what would they learn about Him?
 - Which image in the hymn would you like to illustrate?
 - Why do you think the writer asks God to be his Wisdom instead of simply asking God to give him wisdom?
- 
- 



VOCABULARY



Old English terms:

Thou = you Thee = you Thy = your Art = are Save =
except

Vision — Seeing with your mind and heart what is true. In this hymn, it means asking God to guide the way you think and live

Heart — The center of a person's thoughts, desires, and love—not just the organ inside your body

Naught — Nothing

Presence — Being with someone; God's presence is always with His people

Wisdom — Knowing what is true and choosing what is right

Dwelling — Living in or making a home in a place

Heed — To pay attention to or care about

Inheritance — Something valuable that is passed down from a family member; In this hymn, God Himself is our greatest inheritance

High King — The greatest ruler; the king over all other kings

Treasure — Something you value more than anything else

Befall — To happen





SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS



Christ our Wisdom

1 Corinthians 1:30

"...Christ Jesus...became to us
wisdom from God..."

Treasure

Matthew 6:19-21

"For where your treasure is, there
your heart will be also."

The Lord our Portion

Psalms 73:25-26

"Whom have I in heaven but you?"

Psalms 16:5-6

"The LORD is my chosen portion
and my cup..."

Christ our King

Revelation 19:16

"King of kings and Lord of lords."

Looking to Christ

Hebrews 12:1-2

"... let us run with endurance the
race that is set before us, looking
to Jesus, the founder and perfecter
of our faith..."

The Word

John 1:1-5

"In the beginning was the Word..."

God Guides His People

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all your
heart, and do not lean on your
own understanding. In all your
ways acknowledge him, and he
will make straight your paths."

Heart of My Own Heart

Ezekiel 36:26

"I will give you a new heart..."





THE STORY



The story behind this hymn is one of the most unique stories of all the hymns that we sing. The story begins with St. Patrick, kidnapped at age 16 and sold into slavery in Ireland. While in slavery he became a Christian. He later escaped his captors and returned to his family in England, only to inform them that he was going back to Ireland as a missionary.

Upon his return, in 433 AD, the local Irish King issued a decree during a pagan festival forbidding any fires to be lit before his own royal ceremonial fire. Patrick, refusing to honor anyone but Christ, defied the king. The next morning was Easter morning. On that cold Irish Sunday morning, Patrick climbed to the top of the Hill of Slane and started a large fire. As the people awoke, they could see Patrick's defiance as the light of his fire shone brightly from the hill - proclaiming to all that Christ, alone, is King. Years later, an unknown author wrote a tune in honor of Patrick's defiance called "Slane" named for the hill on which Patrick had started the fire.

Although the story of the tune is very noted in history, the story behind the lyrics is much more obscure. About 400 years after St. Patrick's fire, someone wrote a beautiful prayer in Gaelic (a language spoken in Ireland). It wasn't originally meant to be sung. It was simply a heartfelt prayer asking God to be everything. The prayer began, "Be Thou my vision..." The writer wasn't asking God to help him see better with his eyes. He was asking God to become his focus in all of life.

When he woke in the morning...

When he worked...

When he studied...

When he faced danger...

When he became discouraged...

He wanted God to guide every thought.

For centuries, this prayer was copied by monks and preserved in old Irish manuscripts.

But the story gets even more interesting - you see the poem and the tune were lost until 1905 when a young lady, Mary Byrne, a 25 year old university student, discovered the 14th century copy of the original Gaelic poem and for the very first time translated it into English. Then, seven years later, in 1912, an Irish woman, Eleanor Hull set the words to music. The tune she chose? Slane, the tune originally written in honor of St. Patrick's stand against the king. Be Thou My Vision was born and published for the very first time in 1919. We now have been singing this hymn for over 100 years. But it's story spans 1,600 years and counting!



THE AUTHOR

Unlike many hymns, no one knows exactly who first wrote *Be Thou My Vision*. The original poem was written in Old Irish sometime around A.D. 800 (possibly earlier), and the author's name has been entirely lost to history.

Rather than being remembered for a famous author's name, this hymn reminds us that God often uses ordinary believers whose names are known only to Him.



A.D. 433
(traditional event)

St. Patrick lights the Easter fire on the Hill of Slane—later giving its name to the tune SLANE.



8TH CENTURY
(or earlier)

Ancient Irish poem written.



1905

Mary Elizabeth Byrne translates the poem into English.



1912

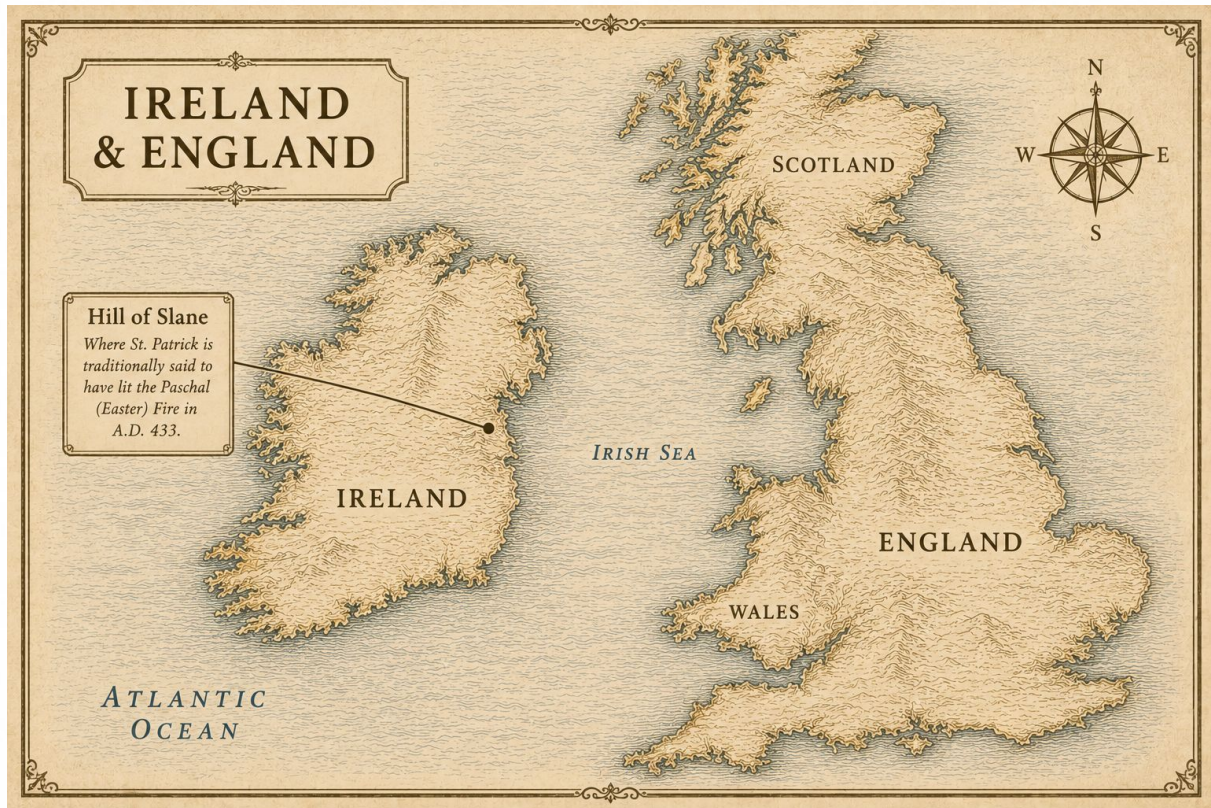
Eleanor Hull adapts it into the hymn we know today.



TODAY

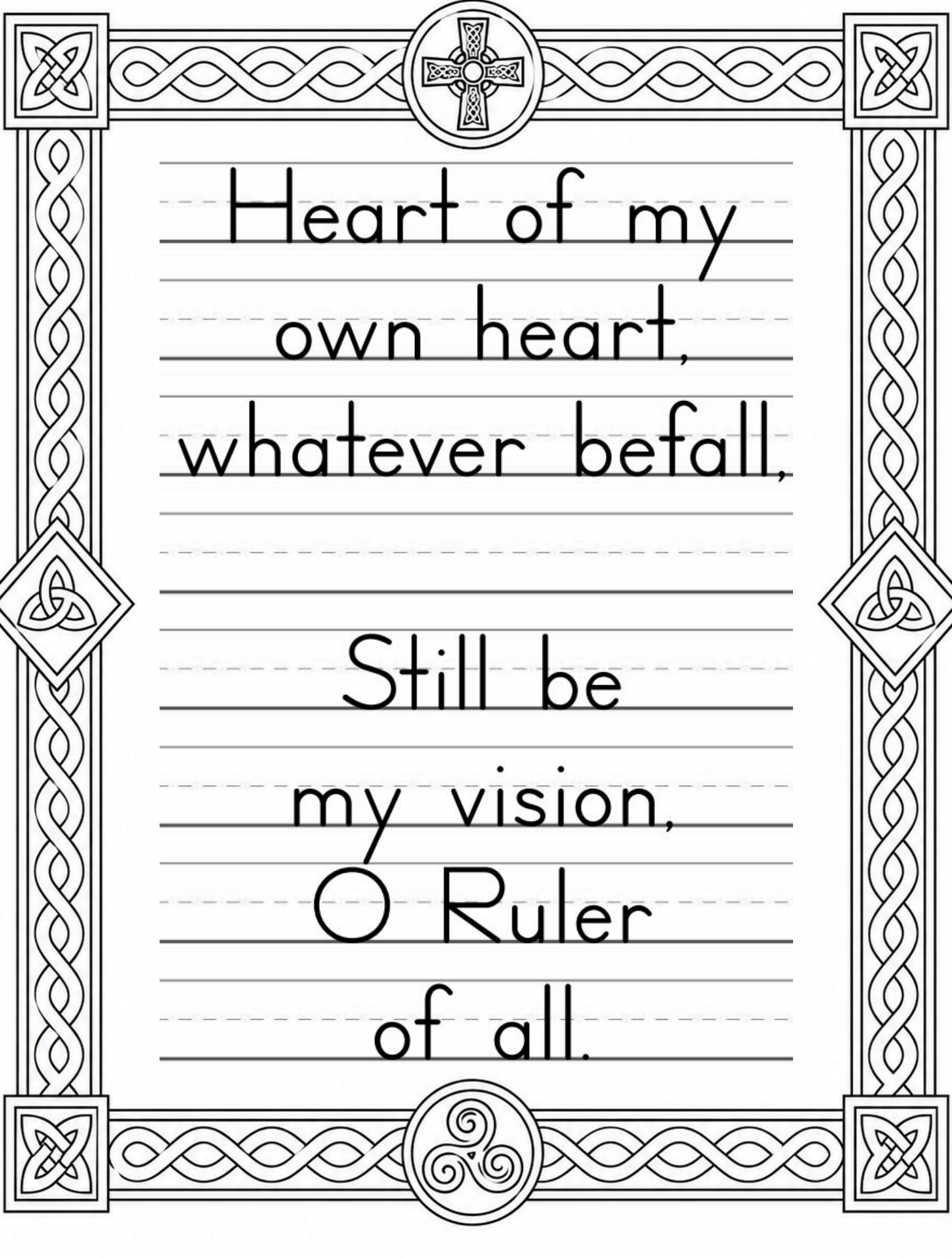
Christians around the world sing *Be Thou My Vision*.

GEOGRAPHY



Historical Setting

- Early Middle Ages
- Irish monasteries copied Scripture by hand - produced the Book of Kells, one of the world's most famous and ornate handwritten copies of the Gospels, created by Irish monks around A.D. 800 - the same time this poem may have been written
- Missionaries carried the gospel across Europe.
- Books were rare.
- Most learning happened orally - by listening and memorizing.



Heart of my
own heart,
whatever befall,

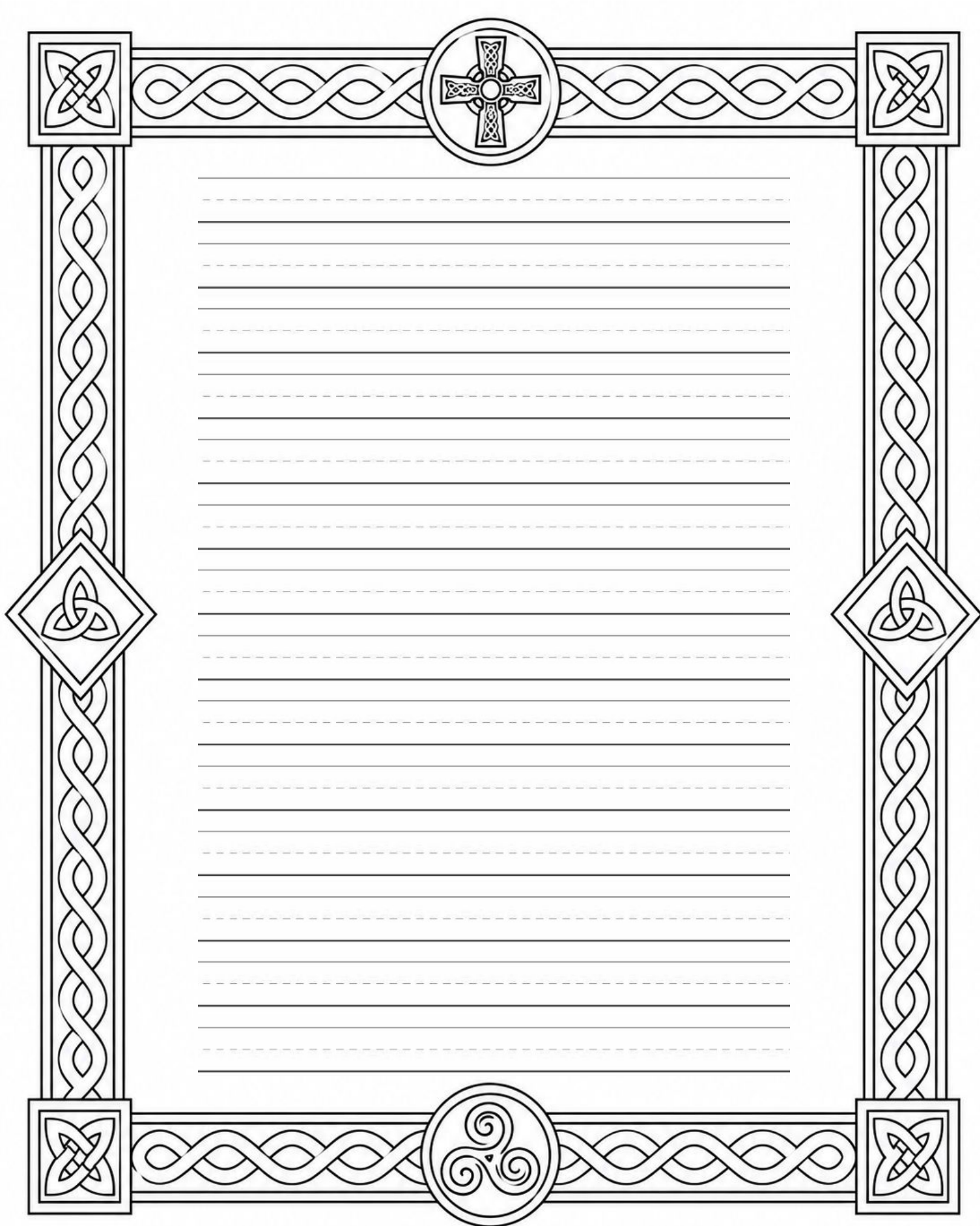
Still be
my vision,
O Ruler
of all.





Riches

I heed not,
nor man's
empty praise,
Thou mine
inheritance,
now and always;
Thou and Thou
only, first in
my heart,
High King
of Heaven,
my Treasure
Thou art.





Be
Thou
my
vision,
O Lord
of my
heart...

