

Wednesday March 17th, 2021, Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent, Feast of St. Patrick

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the guidance we receive to overcome these strange times, and continuing to pray for all our needs at this time.

Don't forget that as 10am Mass on Easter Sunday is now booked up there will a second Mass at **11:30am**. Please book in in the usual manner. If it is deemed necessary I will add an extra mass on Palm Sunday. Please keep mailing in!

Isaiah 49:8-15 takes us back to Monday's lovely theme, the closeness and presence of God towards his people; *'Does a woman forget her baby at the breast, or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you.'*

'My Father goes on working and so do I' says Jesus to the Jews in John 5:17-30. The Father has given the Son complete authority and influence and power - he can give life to anyone he chooses. Whoever refuses to honour the Son refuses to honour the Father. *'My aim is to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.'* Let us seek to discover God's will for ourselves, and the grace to carry it out.

Father, this life is akin to a journey.

All-day we meander through deep valleys and high hills.

We are constantly seeking Your face and trying to deduce Your will.

In Your great wisdom, You have provided us with Your will in Your holy word.

Lord, teach us to seek Your voice in the pages of scripture.

Keep us from being blown around by every posture and position of the world.

Instead, keep us steadfast on the right path,

where Your will is manifest in our life. Amen.

And today is the Feast of one of the world's most popular Saints, Ireland's own Patrick. He was born in Roman Britain and when he was fourteen or so, he was captured by Irish pirates during a raiding party and taken to Ireland as a slave to herd and tend sheep. At the time, Ireland was a land of Druids and pagans but Patrick turned to God and wrote his memoir, 'The Confession' in which he wrote *'The love of God and his fear grew in me more and more, as did the faith, and my soul was roused, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers and in the night, nearly the same. I prayed in the woods and on the mountain, even before dawn. I felt no hurt from the snow or ice or rain.'* Patrick's captivity lasted until he was twenty, when he escaped after having a dream from God

in which he was told to leave Ireland by going to the coast. There he found some sailors who took him back to Britain and was reunited with his family.

A few years after returning home, Patrick saw a vision he described in his memoir: *'I saw a man coming, as it were from Ireland. His name was Victoricus, and he carried many letters, and he gave me one of them. I read the heading: "The Voice of the Irish." As I began the letter, I imagined in that moment that I heard the voice of those very people who were near the wood of Foclut, which is beside the western sea-and they cried out, as with one voice: "We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us."'* The vision prompted his studies for the priesthood. He was ordained by St. Germanus, the Bishop of Auxerre, whom he had studied under for years, and was later ordained a bishop and sent to take the Gospel to Ireland.

Patrick arrived in Slane, Ireland on March 25, 433. There are several legends about what happened next, with the most prominent claiming he met the chieftan of one of the druid tribes, who tried to kill him. After an intervention from God, Patrick was able to convert the chieftain and preach the Gospel throughout Ireland. There, he converted many people - eventually thousands - and he began building churches across the country. Patrick preached and converted all of Ireland for 40 years. He worked many miracles and wrote of his love for God in his 'Confessions'. After years of living in poverty, traveling, and enduring much suffering he died March 17, 461 at Saul, where he had built the first Irish church. He is believed to be buried in Down Cathedral, Downpatrick. His grave was marked in 1990 with a granite stone. Here is one of his prayers:

May the Strength of God pilot us.
May the Power of God preserve us.
May the Wisdom of God instruct us.
May the Hand of God protect us.
May the Way of God direct us.
May the Shield of God defend us.
May the Host of God guard us
Against the snares of the evil ones,
Against temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us!
May Christ be before us!
May Christ be in us,
Christ be over all!
May Thy Salvation, Lord,
Always be ours,
This day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen.

And how about a few choruses of ‘Hail Glorious St. Patrick, Dear Saint Of Our Isle’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJbbkai2rak>

So Happy Feast Day to anyone with Irish blood in their veins. And here’s me in Cork a few years ago, with the first - and last - glass of Guinness I have ever drunk!

Top of the morning to you all! Have a great Feast Day!

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don’t reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). Any suggestions for ways to keep our faith and spirits up at this time are most welcome!

And remember, St. Bernadette’s is not closed. We’re just doing things differently for a while, until we are allowed to gather together once more, more stronger, more faithful, more loving, more creative, and more grateful for the amazing community that is St. Bernadette’s.

With love and faith in Jesus.

Fr. P.