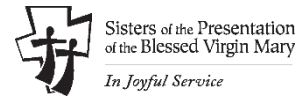


2021 Lenten Reflections



March 17, 2021 ~ St. Patrick's Day

A model for us in living out our lives for social justice and equality

Today we celebrate St. Patrick's Day. The Church celebrates St. Patrick as it does most saints, by reflecting on their lives and how they may be imitated by us.

St. Patrick has been given some bad press over the years. Some of it by those of us who delight in being ourselves Irish! Reflecting on the life of St. Patrick let us know he has little to do with the small leprechauns peeking out behind mushrooms, or the little old men in white beards hoisting steins of green beer. Nothing at all to do with the green river in Chicago, and truly probably very little to do with the large three leaf clovers plastered on every door and sold at every item shop. (Where the four leaf clover comes into play ... who knows?) The shamrock is a legend told of St. Patrick using **three leaves** on one stem to teach the Triune God, to whom he was deeply devoted.

Even St. Patrick himself, has been remade to suit our more festive suitability of the day. We freely quote the Irish Blessing as coming from his smiling mouth down from our grandparents. The Breast Plate of St. Patrick, which I often quote ... a scholarly and spiritual piece, was written many years after his death by an Irish Church who dearly loved their holy St. Patrick.

St. Patrick factually wrote two scholarly and spiritual documents, which gave us a glimpse into the saintliness, the simplicity, the humility, and the depth of this great saint's spirituality ... his "Letter to Coroticus" and his "Confessions." In these two writings, we learn of a humble man, not above loving each common person, even those who may have enslaved him, and of a scholarly and deeply spiritual man who had come to listen to his God, and to act upon that insight since his youth. He was not above admitting where his failures had brought him. He was not too proud to know where his place was with God and in the Church.

Today, we are impressed if we can give way to the "probabilities, the maybes, and could bes" that surround the stories and legends that have grown up around Patrick. In the two documents he left us, he gives us the vision of the intimate presence of God in Creation and in the Church, in Scripture and in people. He is a model for us in living out our lives for social justice and equality in our day. And, he is fine with us celebrating in joyful anticipation of all that is to come!

Blessed and All Holy Three in One God, we confess today our belief in your intimate and all involving presence in our lives, knowing you have made all through your love; all the earth, all the universe, every human being and experience we have lived, have been guided by your love. Help us, with Patrick, as a guide, to believe more strongly in your presence, and to live our lives in more open awareness of the gifted world around us and of the needs of all, in your Holy Name. Amen.

Sister Patrick Leonard Murphy
Volunteer Chaplain, Avera Prince of Peace