



FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Fourth Sunday of Lent – 14 March 2021

It is rather fitting that we are halfway through Lent and can celebrate 'Laetare Sunday'. It was that time when people took a break from the fasting of the season and had a celebration. In our culture, it is also known as 'Mothering Sunday' when Christians went on pilgrimage to the place of their baptism—their 'mother' community. In Medieval times, it was a chance for parishioners to gather at their diocesan Cathedral, their 'mother' church, as a symbol of unity.

Today, the emphasis is rightly on our own mothers—those who brought us into the world and gave us life. I hope you can spend time with your own mothers, even if it must be over Zoom—you can tell them how much you love them. If like me, you have lost your mum, then pray with her on this day; safely light a candle and recall all your happy memories. If your parish is wealthy enough you might notice that your priest and deacon are dressed in pink vestments today, symbolic of the Church joining in the celebration—I am assured that the vestments are ROSE coloured and not pink! So, today is a unique day in the year to give thanks for mothering itself, perhaps for 'Mother Church', and for our own mothers.

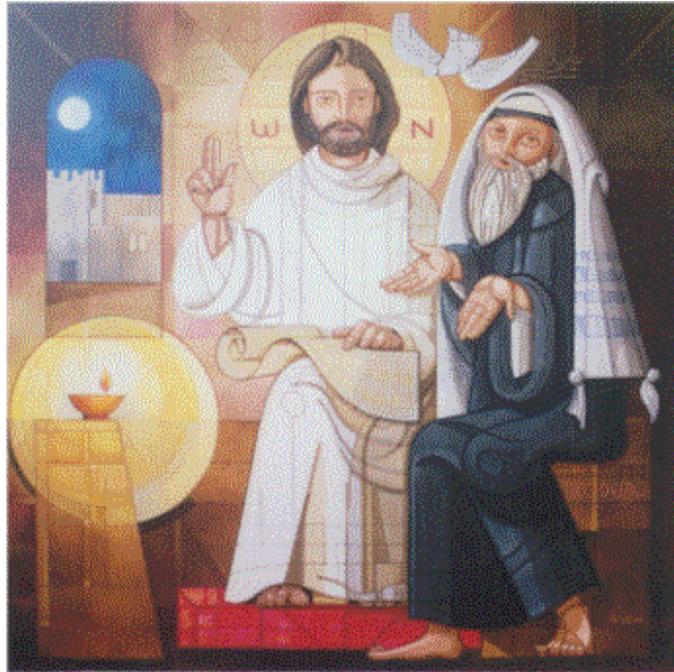


Photo by Eye for Ebony on Unsplash

We must acknowledge this is a day on which some people find coming to church at all difficult in the best of times, never mind during the worries of a pandemic. For some women – and men too – this day underlines their silent, personal griefs and sorrows. Quiet tears will be shed by many on this day: tears for children who have died, tears for children who have rejected their parents, tears for the relationships that never happened, tears for the children that never were. There will also be tears for mothers who have loved and been loved and are now sorely missed, but there will also be tears for some mothers who have may have loved too much and for some who have not loved at all. All in all, a day of mixed emotions. Mothering Sunday is a day to honour and celebrate all those who have provided mothering – in its widest sense – in our lives. Even those people who may have had difficult relationships with their own mothers will nonetheless know those people – both women and men – who have been their companions, who have influenced, supported, nourished, and guided them in their lives. Today is that day to give thanks for those friends who have

very much become our family, who have stood by us, like Mary the mother of Jesus, in the most difficult and trying of circumstances. Their care and love will always be appreciated.

Our gospel today introduces us to the character of Nicodemus, who appears three times in



Jesus and Nicodemus by Fray Gabriel Chávez de la Mora

the Gospel of John. He is a Jewish leader looking for enlightenment; he represents those wonderful people who are never too old to learn or to search for the truth. Even though he comes to Jesus under cover of darkness, he is given light. Together they can explore the reality of God in their lives: **'God loved the world so much that he gave his only son.'**

Nicodemus realises that God has sent that only Son into the world to be **'lifted up'** so that we can share in glory—a glory seen in both the Cross and the Resurrection. Jesus shows himself not to be the cartoon type 'prophet' wandering around once-busy city centres with a sign proclaiming how doomed we are. Have you noticed how some Christians can belittle you and make you feel small, because they feel they have the right to tell you what a sinner you are? Jesus has no time for these types of 'pharisees', as he affirms that God sends the Son, **'not to condemn the world but so that through him the world might be saved'**.

On this day of celebration, there is no need to take to the streets with a sandwich-board preaching a message of condemnation and violence; rather, Jesus invites Nicodemus to be honest and true to his vocation. Today is call to each of us to be authentic and not live a lie, for **'the one who lives by the truth comes out into the light...and what they do is done in God'**.

We are invited to make a clear choice today: are we going to align ourselves with liars, those who offer 'alternative facts' and peddle all kinds of wild conspiracy theories? The problem is, as we have seen in US politics now, the truth can be manipulated to be convenient and a viewpoint that can be far from what is right and proper in a civilised society. We are called to stand for TRUTH, however uncomfortable it might make us feel; we are called to live in

LIGHT, even though the darkness might be more appealing. Standing for truth and light might never make us popular, but it will make us authentic, as we share the love and light of God. Michael Winstanley SDB reflects:

It is the love which through Jesus has drawn us into the life of God, so that we are always in the heart of God, wherever we are and whatever we are doing ...even in our Church we can get caught up in side-issues, lose genuine perspective, miss the essential. Lent can be an exciting time of discovery, a discovery that can transform our lives.

Lenten Sundays, p.101, Michael T Winstanley SDB, Don Bosco Publications

Today: make your Lent exciting: what will you discover about yourself today?

We can pray: Heavenly Father, thank You for this wonderful witness of a man with a teachable spirit, and thank You that You loved the world so much that You came to die for all people, who simply trust in You for Salvation. I pray that like Nicodemus I may have a teachable spirit and be prepared to come to You with all my needs and questions and not trust in my own understanding - knowing that You not only have the answer but that You ARE the answer... this I pray in Jesus name, AMEN.

Monday 15 March 2021

Today we remember Blessed John Amais, a Yorkshireman who became a priest after his wife's death, during Reformation Times. Although he was trained in Rheims and ordained there, he desired to return to England on the dangerous mission of ministering to Catholics in penal times. After seven years as a secret missionary, he was arrested in Melling and executed in York with a fellow priest, Robert Dalby. It was people like Blessed John who kept the faith alive during the darkest times in England.



Healing the Official's Son: Joseph -Marie Vien, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In the gospel today, we see Jesus back in Cana, the place of his first miracle (John 4: 43-54). No doubt, he was well remembered there, given what he had done. In John's gospel that first miracle is not one of curing serious illness or calming great storms; the first miracle

recorded in John is a miracle of fun, laughter and total generosity: ordinary water is transformed into gallons of the best wine. The people have real cause to remember him, perhaps hoping that he might repeat it! Although he was rejected up in Nazareth, **'the Galileans received him well, having seen all that he done in Jerusalem'**. One might say that his fame preceded him.

In desperation, a court official wants his son to be made better, no doubt hearing that Jesus did more than just do magic with water. In the simple exchange, Jesus shows that he wants the absolute best for the sick son as he proclaims, **'your son will live'**—Jesus wants him to share the totality of life. He does not even have to visit the home, as the servants come rushing to tell the father that the boy is cured and is well again. The official comes to believe in Jesus, 'and he and all his household believed'. This is the impact of coming to fully know Jesus, to appreciate him as more than just a bringer of **'signs and portents.'** Jesus is the one who brings us to the fullness of life, and this time of Lent helps to open us up to the treasures that Jesus is offering. A good bottle of vintage Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a lovely gift, but Jesus is offering far more, if our hearts are open to receive.

Today open your hearts to the gifts that God is offering you: recognise God's life and love in every moment of your day.

We can pray: To our brothers and sisters who have contracted and are suffering due to the Coronavirus disease: we pray that God's healing hand may rest upon you. To medical doctors, nurses and the supporting staff who are in the frontline of the fight against COVID-19: may the Good Lord sustain you and inspire you to render your life-saving services with due care, love and compassion. To all those who have lost their loved ones due to the Coronavirus outbreak: we convey our deepest sympathies. We pray that their souls, through God's mercy, may rest in eternal peace. We pray that God may grant all bereaved families his consolation and strengthen their faith and hope in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Prayer adapted from the 2020 Easter Message of the Catholic Bishops of Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

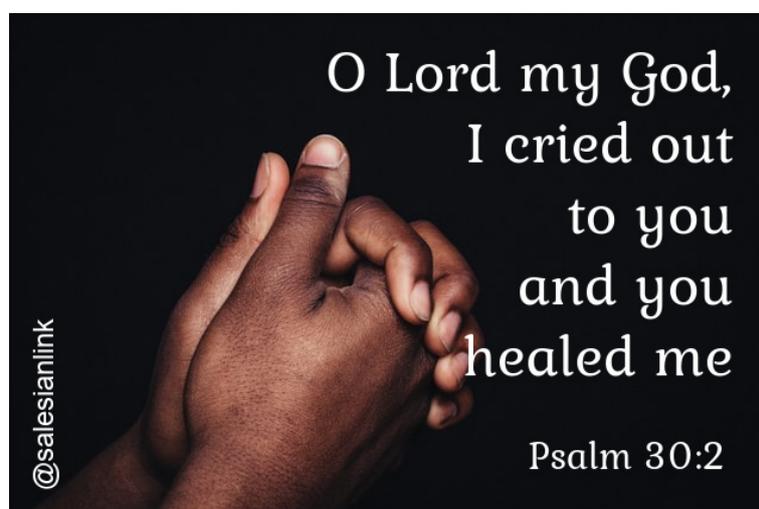
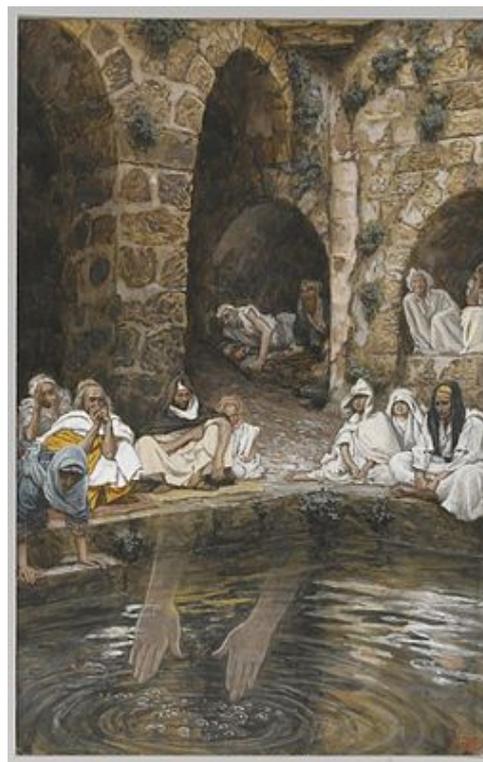


Photo by Nsey Benajah on Unsplash

Tuesday 16 March 2021

Today we find Jesus back in Jerusalem again at the Sheep Pool, a place associated with healing. On the sabbath day he meets a man who **'had an illness that had lasted thirty-eight years'**; Jesus asks the obvious question, **'do you want to be well again?'** and gets an unusual response. The man needs to be put in the water while the water is disturbed, but he has no family or friends to support him and get him to the water—he is not only sick, but he is alone. One of the greatest curses our modern society, with all its wonderful methods of social communication, is that so many people are alone. In this time of pandemic, that feeling of loneliness can be amplified and made even worse—it is essential that we regularly check in on family members and friends who live on their own in these days. Jesus does not carry him to the pool, instead he offers complete healing: **'get up, pick up your sleeping-mat and walk.'**



*James Tissot, Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons*

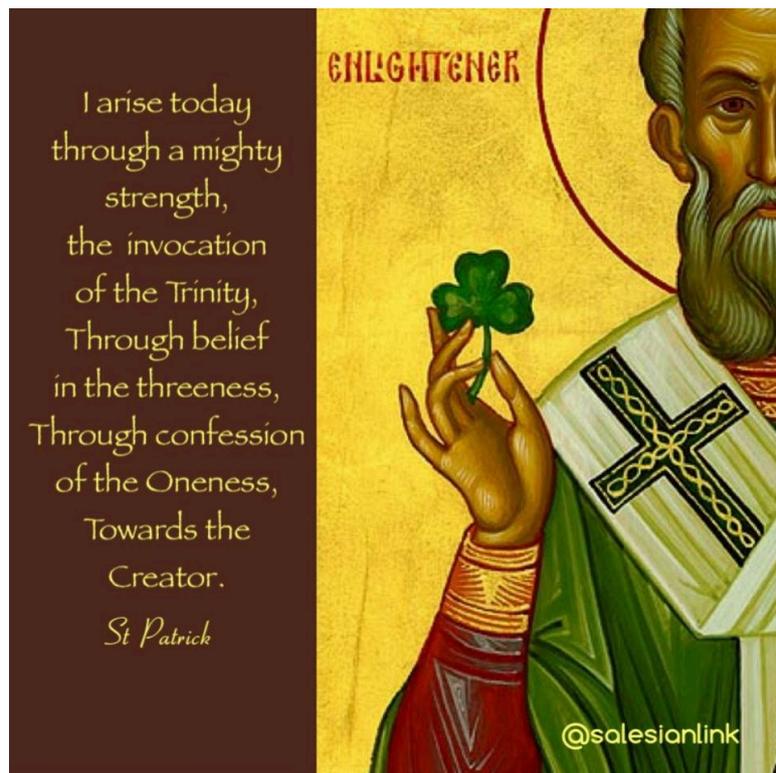
As this act of healing took place on the sabbath day: the religious thought-police are in straight away with their condemnation, as they see the man walking away, carrying his sleeping mat. They are more concerned at his breaking some obscure sabbath law, than they are about the miracle and the huge difference it will make in the life of this man: thirty-eight years of pain, humiliation and grief is over in a moment—yet these people want to keep him imprisoned in his guilt. We are all adept at using the 'guilt card' when we want to get our own way; today's gospel is an encouragement to go to the Lord with our own problems and sickness—problems and illnesses that are not always obvious to the eye. When you feel that you are being hounded for trying to do the best you can, often in confusing circumstances, remember that you are in good company. It was because of this outreach of help that John says that the people **'began to persecute Jesus'**.

Today: check in with someone who is really alone; affirm them of your support. You might not have to carry them to the sheep pool, but you can offer your time.

We can pray: Father God, many of us need healing. I need healing for past hurts, random physical pains that I allow to waylay my days and Spiritual healing for various reasons. I reach up to You to receive this healing so that I may be whole and that I may be able to then serve others in a way that brings You fullness of glory. Show others Your healing power so that they may also be healed and walk in wholeness. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen!
(Dawn Mast)

Watch: Jesus heals a lame man on the Sabbath <https://youtu.be/QhirAYf29VE>

Wednesday 17th March 2021—Feast of St Patrick



Today we remember the people of Ireland as they celebrate their national day, the feast of St Patrick, a fifth century saint. Various sites in Britain claim to be the birthplace of Patrick: from Patterdale in the Lake District to various Welsh locations—even to an island in the River Thames, near Battersea. Tradition has it that Irish pirates kidnapped him while he was still a teenager and took him back to pagan Ireland. He escaped his captivity as a young man, vowing to bring the light of Christianity to this land. He was ordained to priesthood and given the mission to SUPPORT the infant Christian community in Ireland—implying that Patrick was not the first to bring the Christian faith to the island.

What he did very well was to incorporate the existing religious symbols and celebrations into his preaching; from his time as a slave, he was familiar with the Irish language and culture. Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity, instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. For instance, he used bonfires to celebrate Easter, since the Irish were used to honouring their gods with fire. He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish. He used the world of nature, still so dear to the people of Ireland, to preach the gospel.

My native culture in Ireland does not boast high mountain ranges, though you cannot fail to be impressed by the ranges you can visit in Donegal and Kerry. However, I would like to reflect on my home region. The Atlantic drive from Westport into Connemara never fails to impress me; I look out from my family cottage and see Mount Nephin in the distance, rising up out of a flat plain. If I look west, I can just see the top of our 'holy mountain', Croagh Patrick or, as it is known locally, 'The Reek'.



Croagh Patrick. Photo: Chmee2 or Mates, [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

'St Patrick's Mountain' is a mere pimple when you compare it to Mount Everest towering over the whole world at 20, 030 feet. However, for the good folk of Mayo, it is 'our' mountain, and we are immensely proud of the part that it has played in our national and spiritual history. Situated outside the beautiful, planned town of Westport, Crough Patrick stands beside Clew Bay. It was the last sight of Ireland for the countless emigrants who left Mayo, especially during the Famine, to seek a new and better life, often in Canada or the United States. The mountain rises up like a triangle, its peak firmly pointing beyond itself, up to the glory of the sky. It stands almost like a great pyramid, lording over everything beneath it. In pre-Christian Ireland, it was known as Cruachán Aigle, the Mount of Eagles; . According to Celtic legend, the ancient fertility gods, Cruach and Cora, covered the land with gold and set dragons to guard the sacred treasures—the mountain was used as a place of sacrifice and offering. Like the Hebrews, the ancient Celts saw the mountaintop as a place for getting closer to God, and evidence shows that worship has taken place here for over 3000 years.

Christians see this spot as especially sacred in the history of the faith in Ireland. Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish, was keen to get people on-side for his challenging message. Like Paul in his address to the Areopagus (Acts 17: 22-34), Patrick saw the wisdom of helping others come to faith through things they were familiar with. Tradition has it that he stayed on this 'Mount of Eagles' to fast during the holy season of Lent. As the sun rose on Easter Sunday morning, so Patrick would celebrate the Eucharist and 'break the fast' in great style. The story of this holy mountain is the story of the battle between the forces of the old and the new. Patrick, the apostle of the newly arrived faith, is seeking to win the allegiance of the people, to draw them away from their long-established deities and win them over to the new, one and true God. From a traditional Christian perspective, it can be read as the 'battle for the soul of Ireland', as it recounts the story of the victory over 'the lesser gods' and their fall.

While these ancient gods might be redundant, the legacy and traditions that they left behind are still very much part and parcel of a modern Ireland. While the festival of Lughnasa might now be seen as a harvest festival, as we bring the crops and fruits of the land for an autumnal blessing in Church, its origins go back to pre-Christian times when the farmers climbed their local hills or mountains to give an offering of the first cut of corn to the gods. In the amazing and thought-provoking Brian Friel play, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, we meet the Mundy family, living a life of poverty and repression in rural Donegal in 1936. The play describes a bitter harvest for the Mundy sisters, a time of reaping what has been sown. We see the underlying tension of living in this new Irish nation that has been divided by a border; we witness a harsh Catholicism, greatly influenced by Jansenism and an extremely strict interpretation of the faith, as both Church and state fought to shake off the shackles of imperialism, sadly replacing it with another form of control. However, the spirit of Lughnasa is alive under the surface, as the sisters burst into spontaneous dancing and celebration. In this dark Irish cottage, we get a glimpse of what true celebration and faith could be.

Please watch this short clip from the film: <https://youtu.be/anzEZz-6vds>

This battle between a strict Church interpretation of the Gospel and wanting to have a sense of fun and play was also seen in the nineteenth century by the writer William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863), in *The Irish Sketch Book*. It was clear to him that, in the popular imagination, the battle with the pagan gods did not end with Patrick, and they still had a grip on the mountain. He noted that at the start of the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage on a Sunday morning, the local diocesan priests went up the mountain to forbid any kind of levity, music, and dancing, while exhorting the pilgrims to strict adherence to the performance 'of what are called religious duties.'

In 2020, the impossible happened: a virus known as Covid-19 forced a temporary end to pilgrims climbing that mountain. The last Sunday in July is known in Ireland as 'Reek Sunday', when from dawn to dusk, thousands climb the mountain in solidarity with those who have gone before us. It is a time of prayer, blessing and community with many asking for forgiveness and praying for a reign of peace—a peace that the land has been blessed with since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. On top of the mountain, mass is celebrated in the tiny chapel—on this arid summit, where the winds blow hard, where no root takes hold, where distance seems infinite and heaven close, the spirit is tested and replenished, for the pilgrim had reached a 'thin place', where you have the chance to meet God without distraction. The deserts of Egypt drew the early fathers to their dry expanses: the summit of the mountain is a hard desert where only the spirit can flourish; where the ground is covered with sharp rocks; where the backdrops to ordinary life are removed. It is here that the human spirit passes from the familiar, comfortable world into a spiritual world. That is why it is a significant place.

My memory of climbing the Reek on a wet and dismal July Sunday was one of tiredness and a relief that the climb was over. I felt glad that I had done it and that I got to the top, encouraged by friends and family. I hope that this Camino is giving you an opportunity to reflect and relax a little into the Lord. Go easy on yourself and enjoy the peace and beauty

that God wants for you, especially as we get closer to the feast of Easter. As you climb the mountain of God, at least in your mind, remember those words of Isaiah:

In the days to come, the mountain of the Temple of Yahweh will TOWER over the mountains and shall be lifted higher than the hills. All nations shall stream to it.

Isaiah 2: 2

As I made the equally difficult descent, I realised that this little hill on the extreme edge of Europe was being 'lifted higher' than even mighty Everest for that short time. As I went down, the pilgrims were streaming up from many parts of the world; then the really spiritual moment happened: the clouds parted, and the sun shone brightly—and beneath us lay Clew Bay with its hundreds of tiny islands sparkling like bright diamonds in the Atlantic Ocean. It was blessing that I will never forget.

In the gift of Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (see Mk 9:2-8) the chosen apostles saw Jesus in all his glory, but they had to come down from the mountain even though they wanted to stay. Jesus tells us we need to get on with life, just as the angel told the women in the Garden of Gethsemane: 'In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "**Why do you look for the living among the dead?**" (Lk 24:5)



*Clew Bay from the top of Croagh Patrick.
Photo: Duncan Hornby, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons*

The gift of Lent, especially in these strange times, is a chance to connect with the beauty that life brings us; it is a gift to share, with our sisters and brothers, the fullness of our lives. What a fantastic gift to bring to your loved ones on this day of Patrick. Think of the mountains you have climbed in these past few months. This crisis has been hard, but it has brought the best in you; you have discovered resources and inner strength that you did not know existed. Use that strength as you face the challenges that 2021 has brought you. In

your hard times, go up to that mountain of the Lord in your mind; concentrate on your 'happy place' and all will be well, as Julian of Norwich reminds us:

All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.

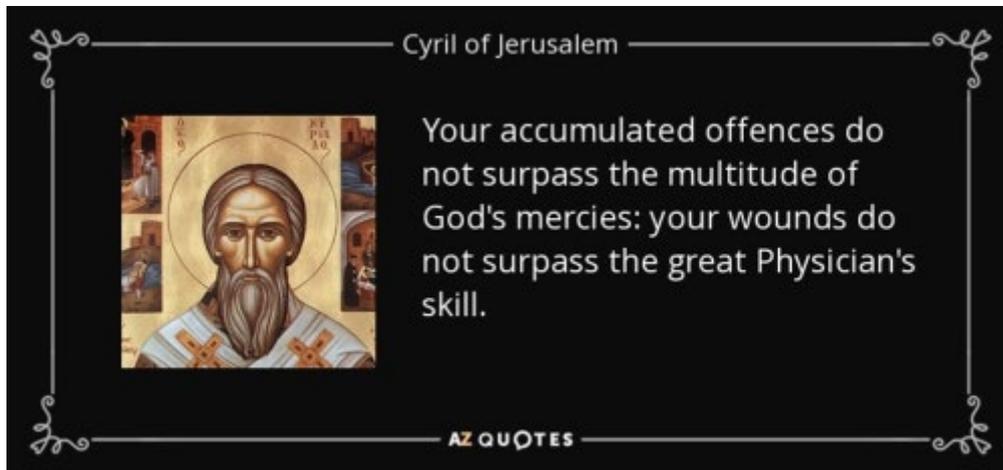
Today: as we pray for the people of Ireland, take a moment to recognise God is the beauty of nature.

We can pray: May love and laughter light your days and warm your heart and home. May good and faithful friends be yours, wherever you may roam. May peace and plenty bless your world with joy that long endures. May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours! AMEN

Happy St Patrick's Day!

Thursday 18 March 2021

Today we remember St Cyril of Jerusalem, a fourth century saint who became the Bishop of the church family in Jerusalem. A great scholar, he especially reflected his writings on the divine nature of Jesus, as the Son of God eternally.



Our gospel today is taken from John's deep reflection on light and truth; Jesus reflects on the ministry of John the Baptist, embraced by so many as they went out into the desert to find peace and forgiveness, yet rejected by the leadership even though, '**John was lamp alight and shining**'.

Jesus speaks a truth that is even greater than John's; he has been sent by the Father, and Jesus becomes the voice of God. In this passage we see the reality of incarnation once again because '**you have never seen his shape.**' Those who refuse to believe in the mission and teaching of Jesus cannot see that he is the fulfilment of scripture— '**you do not believe in**

the one he has sent.' We are lucky as we have read the end of the story in a way that these contemporaries of Jesus were unable to. However, do we always act in a way that shows that we are true daughters and sons of the light? Will my actions and words today, show that I am a Christian?

Today: be there for another in need.

We can pray: Strengthen, O God, your Church in the sacraments of your grace, that we, in union with the teaching and prayers of your servant Cyril of Jerusalem, may enter more fully into your Paschal mystery, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, now and forever. Amen.

Friday 19 March 2021—The Feast of St Joseph



Artist unknown

I love this gentle and natural painting of 'Joseph holding Jesus while Mary sleeps'. The biblical accounts give us little information about how the parents of Jesus reared him. Most pictures of the Holy Family have Jesus in the arms of his mother, while Joseph holds them both in his care. Part of that care must have involved Joseph taking his turn with the care of the infant. His care must have involved being the parent that many of us want to be--he was available and showed unconditional love for his wife and their child. They were a family of love that had to face crisis and problems, as all of us do from time to time. The journey to Bethlehem was no picnic, especially finding no accommodation at the end of their trail. They were forced out of their new-found home when Herod unleashed his violence and hatred on the town of Bethlehem. As a good father, Joseph has to look at the options open to this family, threatened by the most extreme form of bullying. Thus, they became refugees in Egypt, sharing the lot of millions down through history and in the world today. Joseph is the saint of caring leadership; as a father, he wanted the best for his child. May we know that same care today.

In the gospel today, Luke presents Joseph as 'a man of honour'; he discovers, to his horror, that his beloved, Mary is pregnant, and he is not the father. He knows the shame that this could bring to her: he could publicly denounce her and let her face the crowds who would

be all too eager to stone her. This 'man of honour' does not go down that selfish way; although he is not the father, he will divorce her quietly. As so often happens in scripture, the messenger or angel from God appears to him in a dream and explains the situation, so that he must not be afraid to take Mary home, as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit.' God takes a potentially damaging situation and transforms it. Joseph does not take the easy way out; as a true follower of Christ he sees it through. On 8th December 2020, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis released *Patris corde*, his Apostolic Letter on St. Joseph. Pope Francis gives a reminder in this letter, that Christians cannot take the easy option:

Nor should we ever think that believing means finding facile and comforting solutions. The faith Christ taught us is what we see in Saint Joseph. He did not look for shortcuts, but confronted reality with open eyes and accepted personal responsibility for it.

Each of the characters in the story of the first Christmas will be remembered in a different way, from the Virgin Mary to the Magi from the east. Although Joseph is always present in Nativity scenes, we rarely read reflections on his life during that key moment and beyond. For those who admire Joseph's life and have considered it closely, Pope Francis's letter could be seen as an early Christmas gift. It was published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Joseph as patron of the Universal Church, with the Pope announcing that 2021 will be the **Year of St. Joseph**.

As we celebrate his feast day in this special year, we can take time to reflect on the gift of being a father: without a doubt some do it better than others. However, we need to be thankful for the gift of fathers, or those who fulfil that role in our lives. Joseph was a father to Jesus in Bethlehem, in Egypt and in Nazareth; no doubt he taught him skills that would help him in ministry. We know that he was a righteous man who followed the law: He observed religious law – we know he went to Jerusalem for the Jewish festivals. He also followed civil law: he went to Bethlehem for the census. We know that Joseph had dreams. God spoke to him in his dreams and he followed his dreams. It is interesting to note that nowhere in the gospels do we ever hear anything Joseph says. He never says anything that is recorded in scripture; but he is a man of action: he does what the angel tells him; he takes Mary as his wife; he goes to Bethlehem; he finds a place to stay; he takes his family to Egypt and helps them to return to Nazareth when it is safe. He is a man of action – not a man of words.

Today: pray for you dad wherever he might be.

We can pray:

It was from Joseph first I learned of love. Like me he was dismayed.

How easily he could have turned me from his house; but, unafraid, he put me not away from him

O God-sent angel, pray for him.

Thus through his love was Love obeyed.

The Child's first cry came like a bell: God's Word aloud, God's Word in deed.

The angel spoke: so it befell, and Joseph with me in my need.

**O Child whose father came from heaven, to you another gift was given,
your earthly father chosen well.**

With Joseph I was always warmed and cherished. Even in the stable

I knew that I would not be harmed.

And, though above the angels swarmed,

man's love it was that made me able to bear God's love, wild, formidable,

to bear God's will, through me performed.

O Sapientia by Madeleine L'Engle—she writes this poem as if she were Mary reflecting on the love of her husband.



By Julian Garcia Mejia via Qumran2.net

Saturday 20 March 202

In our gospel today, John gives the reactions of those who listen to Jesus; they range from, **'surely he must be the prophet'** to **'he is the Christ'** with others wondering, not without a hint of condescension, **'would the Christ be from Galilee?'** The temple authorities are annoyed that even their police service, tasked with arresting Jesus from Galilee, seem to be taken in by his words: **'there has never been anybody else who has spoken like him.'** Again, we meet the wise Nicodemus who reminds them of the need for due process, as the **'the Law does not allow us to pass judgement on a person without giving them a HEARING.'** Nicodemus gets to the heart of the matter: the crowds and even the temple police, have LISTENED to what Jesus has to say; his words speaks to their hearts and they understand that those words are put into action.

So many times, we hear of people ending up in prison, or even on death row, because they have not been fully listened to. In the same way, we have often ignored our children and vulnerable members of society as they have tried to articulate their problems and concerns. Are you content to judge somebody on the basis of hearsay and tittle-tattle? This happens far too often, and many innocent people can be stuck with the repercussions of such lazy thinking. Often, it is because we refuse to face up to our own mistakes and inadequacy, and choose another to pin our problems on. It is a form of bullying—and that can never be accepted in any society that calls itself 'Christian'. Last year, I was deeply impressed by a letter from a former pupil of mine: he wanted to get in touch with another student whom he had bullied. As an adult and a father himself, he realised that such behaviour was unacceptable. I was impressed that, years later, he wanted to do something positive and make a real difference in his life. With the other former pupil's permission, I was able to help them contact each other and begin a healing process that is still going on. We need to resolve to face up to issues that are of our own making, and not conveniently pass the buck to another.

Today: honestly face your life, and apologise if you have bullied another.

We can pray: Holy Father, Your Word says that we are to treat people in the way that we want to be treated. We confess that we will practice this command and be kind and fair. We will be good friends and tell an adult when someone is being mean to another person. We will not push, shove, or fight. We declare that You, Lord will be the light and salvation for those who are being bullied and mistreated, so they will not have to be afraid. We ask that Your angels will protect those people who are being bullied wherever they go. We declare that You will rescue those who love You, and protect those who trust in Your Name.

A children's prayer for those who are being bullied



For children

There are no snakes in Ireland. St Patrick told them all to go away and they obeyed him.



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