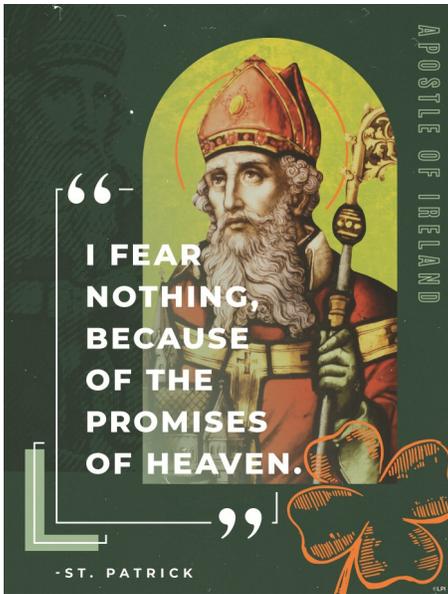


## FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we journey together toward the Paschal Mystery of Our Lord, the current date reminds us that we are already deep in the desert of conversion, and yet the Lord continues to call us forward. On March 17, we celebrate the Memorial of St. Patrick, Bishop and Missionary to Ireland, a feast that shines brightly even amid the purple of Lent, inviting us to contemplate the power of the kerygma, the announcement of the Good News that transforms lives and nations.

St. Patrick was not born a saint. He was born into a Christian family in Britain, yet captured at sixteen by Irish raiders and enslaved for six long years among a pagan people. In that harsh exile, amid suffering and isolation, the Lord drew near to him. As he himself confesses in his own words: “I was like a stone lying in deep mire, and He that is mighty came and in His mercy raised me up and lifted me high up and placed me on top of the wall.” God awakened in him a profound sense of sin, of his own unworthiness, and of the gratuitous love that rescues the lost. This was no abstract faith, it was a living encounter with Christ

crucified and risen, the same encounter we desire for people in our parish today.

Patrick returned to his homeland, but the voice of the Irish called him back: “Come again and walk among us.” He obeyed, not out of personal ambition, but compelled by the Spirit, as he writes: “I am bound by the Spirit... to preach the Gospel to the poor.” He went to the very land of his former captivity, proclaiming the kerygma—the foolish announcement of the cross that saves those who believe. Thousands were baptized; communities of faith sprang up where druidic idols had once dominated. He used the humble shamrock to speak of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity: one God in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this simple image, he echoed the profound truth that our faith is not a set of ideas but a living relationship with the Triune God who reveals Himself in history and in our lives.

We can recognize in St. Patrick a true model of the post-baptismal catechumenate. His life was an itinerary of conversion: from slavery to freedom, from ignorance to the light of faith, from isolation to building communities rooted in the Word of God, the Liturgy, and fraternal communion. Just as Patrick rediscovered the riches of his own baptism through trial, so we are invited to rediscover the immense gift of our Baptism. Let the announcement of the kerygma find a home in us: that God so loved the world that He sent His Son to die for our sins and rise for our justification. This announcement calls us to conversion, to recognize ourselves as sinners loved gratuitously by God, to welcome forgiveness in the sacrament of Penance, and to walk together, letting faith mature through the celebration of the Word and the Eucharist.

St. Patrick’s Confession reveals his humility: “I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers.” Yet God used him mightily. He endured persecutions, insults, and dangers, always trusting that “nothing is impossible for Him.” In our own time of secularization and indifference, the Lord raises up the same call. We too are sent to proclaim this Good News, not with power or eloquence of our own, but with the weakness that allows Christ to shine. We can go out to announce that Christ is risen and that in Him we become children of God, if we have experienced it first ourselves.

As we approach March 17, let us not be content with superficial celebrations of green or folklore. Instead, let us enter more deeply into the spirit of St. Patrick. Let us imitate his zeal: announce Christ to our families, our neighbors, our colleagues, especially to those who feel enslaved by sin, doubt, or despair. The Lord who called Patrick out of the mire calls each of us today: “Whom shall I send?”

Peace,