

Dear Friends,

I wish you a blessed 2nd Sunday in Lent and a blessed St. Patrick's Day!

Many Americans enjoy Irish heritage, and on this day, the whole country enjoys this heritage. Holding on to what is unique and what set them apart, the Irish found something that brings us all together. Although he wasn't Irish himself by birth, St. Patrick is by far the most famous Irishman in history. His life, like those of all the saints, shows us the glory of our call as Christians to be one in Faith although we come from many and different cultures and backgrounds. It is our Faith that joins us in the Body of Christ. It is our Faith that compels us to serve, to forgive, to love. Our Faith looks beyond that which is visible, that which makes us different, to what unites us in the Love of Christ.

The life of St. Patrick is a great example of how God works in the most unlikely of circumstances to help us to realize the greatness of our call as His children. A slave, stolen from his family and homeland, St. Patrick began to pray. He had not paid much attention to the faith of his family until he experienced this trauma that left him isolated as a shepherd calling out to God. In the wilderness, he learned how to pray. In his *Confession*, he relates that he would pray continually through the day, often reciting the Our Father over 100 times. "Thy will be done." It was this life of prayer that helped him to hear God's voice, which would lead him to freedom and eventually back to the people who had enslaved him to set them free from their slavery to sin.

St. Patrick's attentiveness to God's voice, God's inspirations, led him to shine the light of Christ in a unique and specific way. Different than anyone before or after him. This is the life that each of us are called to. To be saints is our calling. To be holy is to be different, set apart. To unite our lives to Christ shows the brilliant light that is unique and special about each individual person. To conform our lives to the world, falling into the current of trends and worldly affairs, shows how humdrum our lives are without the One who gives light and life to us if we listen to His Son.

From the cloud a voice was heard, "***This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.***" May our hearts and minds be more attuned to the voice of Jesus in these days of Lent so that with St. Patrick and through his intercession, we might enjoy his glorious heritage.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,



Fr. Jack D. Shrum
Pastor

