

March 2024 - Calendar / Feast Days

1 March:	St. David
3 March:	3rd Sunday of Lent
5 March:	St. Kieran
8 March:	St. John of God St. Senan
9 March:	St. Frances of Rome
10 March:	4th Sunday of Lent
11 March	St. Aengus
17 March:	St. Patrick
17 March:	5th Sunday of Lent
19 March:	St. Joseph
24th March	Palm Sunday
25 March:	The Annunciation of the Lord
27th March	Spy Wednesday
28th March	Holy Thursday
29th March	Good Friday
30th March	Holy Saturday
31st March	Easter Sunday

1 March: St. David

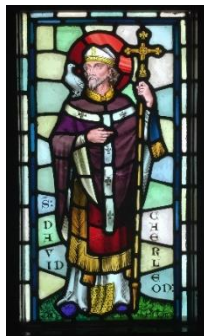
St. David is the patron saint of Wales, and is perhaps the most famous of British saints. It is known that he became a priest, engaged in missionary work, and founded many monasteries, including his principal abbey in south-western Wales. He died around 601. Several Irish saints were his pupils and he influenced monastic development in Ireland. To mark the day, Welsh people around the world wear one or both of Wales's national emblems - a daffodil and a

leek. Special concerts and parades are also held in St David's honour. He reached a very old age. His last words to his monks and subjects were

“Be joyful, brothers and sisters. Keep your faith, and do the little things that you have seen and heard with me.”

Joy is what David urged on his brothers as he lay dying. Perhaps he could say that to them—and to us—because he lived in and nurtured a constant awareness of God’s nearness.

Let us pray:
Through the intercession of St. David, may we be blessed
with a great sense of God’s presence and nearness,



5 March: St. Kieran

St. Kieran of Saigir was born on Cape Clear Island. His father’s name was Laighne, and his mother was Liadain. At that time, the Irish were non-Christians. Many legends exist concerning the events of Kieran’s life.

When Kieran was a child, he was kind and gentle. He loved animals, and they trusted him. Several of the stories about St. Kieran tell of his ability to tame wild animals, and he is often shown with a badger, a doe and a fox.

Kieran wanted to learn more about God, so when he was thirty years old he went to Rome. He spent several years studying there. Kieran was baptized a Christian and later ordained a priest. Many stories say that St. Patrick met with Kieran in Rome and commissioned him to return to Ireland and build a monastery. He is known as one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland. One legend tells of St. Patrick giving Kieran a bell that rang for the first time when he reached the sight of a holy well in Saigir, and there he built his church. This became renowned as a sacred place, and many of the ancient Kings of Ossory were buried there.

Legend tells that Kieran had hoped to live a life of solitude, and upon his return to Ossary he dwelt in a cave where he spent much of his time in prayer. As the story goes, he befriended the animals who came to him when they were sick or hurt. People began to hear of his powers of healing. He ministered to the people and soon had a following. Kieran built a monastery in Ossory, and the town of Saighir grew up around it. Kieran served

the people as Bishop of Ossory until his death. Kieran is the first person born in Ireland to be canonised a saint.

8 March: St. John of God

St. John of God devoted his life to the care of the poor and the sick. He is the patron saint of nurses, the sick, heart patients, printers and booksellers.



8 March: St. Senan

St. Senan was born near Kilrush, Co. Clare. His family were prosperous farmers. His vocation seems to have resulted from an experience of danger from the sea. His early studies were mainly made at the monastery of Kilnabeg. His principal monastic foundation was on Scattery Island, near Kilrush, in the Shannon Estuary. St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise and St. Brendan both chose him as their spiritual director. He died in 544. He lived a life of great holiness and many miracles were attributed to him. He died about the year 544 A.D. and he was buried on Scattery Island.

11 March: St. Aengus

St. Aengus was a monk Clonenagh, Co. Laois, who came to the monastery at Tallaght at the end of the eighth century when Maelruain was abbot, to spend a period under his direction. He was renowned for his devotion to both foreign and native saints.

19 March: St. Joseph

We know Joseph was a man of faith, obedient to whatever God asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him the truth about the child Mary was carrying, Joseph immediately and without question or concern for gossip, took Mary as his wife. When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back.

Saint Joseph was a worker. He was a simple craftsman, a carpenter, who served his neighbours through his handiwork. He taught his foster son Jesus the value of hard work. It is likely that the

humility Joseph exhibited in recorded Scripture spilled over into the simple approach he took to his work and providing for the Holy Family.

Let us ask St. Joseph to intercede for our families and us.

*St. Joseph, a family man and protector of all families,
a man who models for us the family's call to holiness:
We ask St. Joseph to intercede for all our homes and families.*

*St. Joseph, a worker and the patron of all crafts people and workers:
We ask St. Joseph to intercede for all workers
and especially craftspeople.*

*St. Joseph, the dreamer, an example for everyone and especially our young
That they never to lose the ability to dream,
to take risks and to take on difficult tasks.
We ask St. Joseph to intercede for all who will go the extra mile for others.*

*We remember all who are making career choices and
who dream that they will make a difference.
We ask St. Joseph to intercede for
all young people and for their parents.*

Saint Joseph as a person of faith.

We pray for all families in our schools and parishes: that they will feel nurtured especially when it comes to passing on the faith from one generation to the next. In order for faith to continue through the generations of a family, there must be a passing down of that faith. The role of parents is to pass down the faith to their children who will in turn pass it down to their children and so faith can thrive from generation to generation.

Let us pray Pope Francis' Prayer to Saint Joseph:

***Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
In you Mary placed her trust;
With you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.***



17 March: St. Patrick



St. Patrick's Breastplate

Christ be with me
Christ be beside me,
Christ be before me,
Christ be behind me,
Christ be at my right hand,
Christ be at my left hand,
Christ be with me wherever I go.
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the heart of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

St. Patrick - A Reflection by Martin Coffey CP

St. Patrick is known and admired all over the world as the young slave who became an unlikely hero, the shy boy transformed into a courageous missionary. Patrick came to an alien land that soon became his adopted home, and a foreign people became his friends. He was no brilliant scholar but a man of deep faith tried and tested in the fires of slavery and exile. At first a reluctant preacher until filled with the strength of the Trinity he overcame his fears and limitations to establish one of the strongest Churches in the Christian world.

- Man of God Patrick was a towering figure.
- He had a strong biblical faith centred on the Trinity.
- He was deeply familiar with the Word of God and pondered it day and night.
- He lived in intimate union with Christ who was always before, behind, above, within him.
- Every step he took was in the company of Jesus, every word he spoke was inspired by Jesus, every breath was full of the spirit of Jesus.

The legacy he left is most clear in the distinctive Gaelic spirituality that combined Celtic love of nature and monastic closeness to God. The pre-Christian Celts looked for signs of God in the beauty and power of nature. Echoes of this early Celtic sensitivity to nature are found in Patrick's prayers.

*I arise today
Through the strength of heaven:
Light of sun
Radiance of moon
Splendour of fire
Speed of lightening
Swiftness of wind
Depth of sea
Stability of earth
Firmness of rock.*

Monastic Life

From the very beginning the Irish found the simple beauty of the monastic life very attractive and in a few short years many monasteries were founded. The monastic life resounds with the sense of God's presence and the constant singing of his praises. The monks learned to pray at all times and to find God in all things. These are the characteristics that shaped the distinctive Christian faith of the Irish. Later in darker and harder times, when priests were few and parish structures did not exist, the distinctive faith of the Irish continued to flourish. For centuries, the faith of the people was a kind of home-spun, knit together out of the bits and pieces of their simple lives. It was lived and celebrated around the kitchen hearth and in the fields, along the roads and in the meeting of neighbours. From morning to night, their days were filled with the sense of God.

An Té a thug saor ón oíche sinn
go dtuga sé saor sábhailte ón lá sinn,
le toil Íosa Críost agus na Maighdaine Muire.

Every simple activity in the home began with prayer and concluded with prayer. The first greeting to any person along the road was to invoke God's blessing. Go mbeannaí Dia dhuit, Dia is Muire dhuit. When there were no church buildings the whole of creation became a huge cathedral. The songs of the birds were hymns of praise, the sweet scents of nature were incense, the changing of the seasons the signs of God's presence close to the people and providing generously for them at all times. The God of glory shone down on this people giving soil and rain and the little sun they needed to plant the seed and grow their crops. Everything spoke to them of the greatness and goodness of God.

God was not confined to the Church building.
The whole of creation was his dwelling place.
He was always close at hand.
Is gaire cabhair Dé ná an doras.

Hospitality to the stranger was strong among these people who knew what it was to be shut out in the dark and cold of night. Travellers, people on the run, the poor of the road were welcomed in the name of Christ who was refused lodgings, locked out and had nowhere to lay his head. Christ still comes in the form of a stranger.

The ancient language of our forefathers is one continuous prayer. It is hardly possible to utter a sentence in Irish without mentioning Dia, Iosa or Muire. Our version of English still holds some of those touches as we say Thanks be to God, and God bless you again and again every day. In the writings of the poets and singers, we find echoes of the rich spirituality. Patrick Kavanagh, spoke of finding God in ordinary every-day things. Nature spoke to him of God and nothing seemed beyond the touch and the smile of a good and merciful God. In the midst of hardship, God is never far away. God is in the bits and pieces of everyday. The faith of Patrick worked its way into every fibre of life. The true Irish faith of which we can be so proud made our ancestors a people of saints and mystics, of poets and scholars.

**Saint Patrick was a great saint.
May he be our guide and inspiration.**

25 March: The Annunciation of the Lord

The Annunciation of the Lord refers to the time when the angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of Jesus, our Saviour.

The Annunciation marks a decisive moment in the life of Mary and the entire human history. Mary's fiat or Mary's yes was an immediate acceptance of and consent to God's will for her life: "May it be done to me." Her yes was total and complete; she held nothing of herself back from God.

God gave Mary the wisdom to know the consequences of her decision, and he gave her the grace not to be overwhelmed by that knowledge. When we respond to God's prompting and make the best and right decisions, God's grace will give us the strength to cope with what God is asking of us. We just have to keep trusting

Because of Mary's complete faith and unequivocal surrender to God, the Word became flesh within her.

Mary didn't understand God's plan when she acquiesced to it. But she did it anyway. That is the very definition of faith. In short, her faith in God is unshakeable and that gave her the courage to submit to His will.

Listening to God and obeying Him can require sacrifice. Sometimes, it involves making hard choices. This is what Mary taught us with her fiat – obeying God's will is not easy but it will be worth it.

Let us pray:

May we say yes, to what God asks of us, just as Mary did.

Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

