

St Patrick

Apostle of the Irish People, d. 461
17th March

The Gathering of God's People

THE GREETING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

SENTENCE

Brothers and sisters, be joyful, and keep your faith and belief, and do the little things which you have heard and seen with me.

St David

INTRODUCTION

A Romano-Briton born of Christian parents in the latter years of the Roman Empire in Britain, the exact place of his birth, named by him in his *Confession* as *Banaven Taberniae*, has never been identified – claims from places in West Briton as far apart as Dumbarton and Somerset have been made. Present-day opinion favours the neighbourhood of Carlisle in Cumbria. During his teenage years as a captured slave boy in the West of Ireland, Patrick's latent Christian faith came alive. Escaping and returning to Britain, Patrick trained for the ministry of the church perhaps in Gaul. Some time later he heard a call to return to Ireland and bring the good news of Christ. Apparently he came as an envoy of the church in Britain and began his ministry in East Ulster. Saul, near Downpatrick, has long been accepted as the starting point for his mission. How extensive his travels for Christ were is difficult to determine, as churches and communities all over the island in later years desired to claim Patrick as their founder. Whatever the details, one thing is clear: Patrick's mission had the most significant impact in the Christianisation of Ireland. Armagh and Down are the two most important centres associated with the mission of Patrick and on this day commemorations in those places draw Christians from all over the island. Tradition says Patrick returned to Saul before his death and that after it he was buried at the nearby hill of Down – already holy place, and one more easily defended than Saul itself. One important aspect of the life of Patrick is that he left two pieces of writing which are accepted as genuine, his *Confession* and a letter to *Coroticus*. These are of immense value as they reveal Patrick the man, humble and aware of all that he achieved was by the grace of Christ. Irish Christians today, of all traditions, can equally identify with this holy man and draw inspiration from his life and writings. George Simms wrote in

the Real Story of St. Patrick: cathedrals and churches are to be found the world over with dedications and memorials in honour of St. Patrick. A courageous missionary himself, his example continues to inspire the sons and daughters of Ireland to go into the world with the good news of the gospel of Christ. St. Patrick himself should have the last word. His life was rough and rugged. He had to face jealousy and much cruel abuse. Yet he was brave to the end. A rare serenity shines through the inimitable style of his words, 'Let anyone laugh and revile me who wants to, I will not keep silence nor will I can see the signs and wonders which have been shown me by the Lord.'

OPENING PRAYER

O God, your name is blessed
from the rising of the sun to its setting;
fill our hearts that from East to West
all may sing your glory,
with one voice and accord,
in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

PENITENCE

Lord Jesus,
you call by name those who are yours:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
you lead us in the right paths for your name's sake:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy

Lord Jesus,
you are the door of the sheepfold;
those who enter by you will be saved:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God,
 you have knit together your elect
 in one communion and fellowship
 in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
 Grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
 in all virtuous and godly living
 that we may come to those inexpressible joys
 that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

THE FIRST READING

Ezekiel 34: 11-16

For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

**Their delight is in the law of the Lord
 and they meditate on his law day and night.**

Blessed are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
 nor lingered in the way of sinners,
 nor sat in the assembly of the scornful. **R**

Like a tree planted by streams of water
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither,
whatever they do, it shall prosper. **R**

As for the wicked, it is not so with them;
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked shall not be able to stand in the judgment,
nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but
the way of the wicked shall perish. **R**

THE SECOND READING

1 Peter 5: 1-4

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE GRADUAL

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**

I am the good shepherd:

I know my own and my own know me. **Alleluia!**

THE GOSPEL READING

John 10: 11-16

Hear the Gospel of our Saviour Christ,
according to St. John, chapter 10, beginning at verse 11.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

ADDITIONAL READING

From the Confession of St Patrick

Now, after I came to Ireland, tending flocks was my daily occupation; and constantly I used to pray in the daytime. Love of God and the fear of him increased more and more, and faith grew, and the spirit was moved, so that in one day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and at night nearly as many, so that I used to stay even in the woods and on the mountain to this end. And before daybreak I used to be roused to prayer, in snow, in frost, in rain; and I felt no hurt; nor was there any sluggishness in me – as I now see, because then the spirit was fervent within me.

The Prayers of the People

Almighty God,
in your providence you chose your servant Patrick
to be the apostle of the Irish people,
to baptize those who were wandering in darkness and error
and to bring them to the true light and knowledge of your Word:
keep us in that light and bring us to everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hear us, most merciful God,
for that part of the church which you planted in our land:
that it may hold fast the faith entrusted to the saints
and in the end bear much fruit to eternal life:
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEACE

Peace be to you, and peace to your house,
and peace to all who are yours. *1 Samuel 25: 6*

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Celebrating at the Lord's Table

PRAYERS AT THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Wise and gracious God,
you spread a table before us;
nourish your people with the word of life,
and the bread of heaven. **Amen.**

THE TAKING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

The priest takes the bread and cup

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us
therefore let us celebrate the feast.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Eucharistic Prayer 1 With Extended Preface

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise

It is indeed right and good,
our duty and salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today we honour St Patrick
who in your loving providence
enabled your Church to grow in spirit as the body of Christ.

To your children he faithfully proclaimed
the good news of salvation
and nourished them by ministering your sacraments.

Through a pastor's love
he led your people to share your grace
and witness to the world
in the communion of one true faith
and in the work of selfless charity.

On this his feast, we join with him to praise you
and in the company of angels
and all the host of heaven
we sing for ever of your glory:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed are you, Father,
the creator and sustainer of all things;
you made us in your own image,
male and female you created us;
even when we turned away from you,
you never ceased to care for us,
but in your love and mercy
you freed us from the slavery of sin,
giving your only begotten Son to become man
and suffer death on the cross to redeem us;
he made there the one complete and all-sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world:
he instituted,
and in his holy Gospel commanded us to continue,
a perpetual memory of his precious death
until he comes again.

On the night that he was betrayed he took bread;
and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it,
and gave it to his Disciples, saying,
Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup;
and when he had given thanks to you,
he gave it to them, saying, Drink this, all of you,
for this is my blood of the new covenant
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

Therefore, Father, with this bread and this cup
we do as Christ your Son commanded:

**we remember his passion and death,
we celebrate his resurrection and ascension
and we look for the coming of his kingdom.**

Accept through him, our great high priest,
this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving;
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts,
grant by the power of the life-giving Spirit
that we may be made one in your holy Church
and partakers of the body and blood of your Son,
that he may dwell in us and we in him;

Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
**all honour and glory are yours, Almighty Father,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

or

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say

Our Father, who art in heaven

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

They recognized the Lord, Alleluia;

in the breaking of the loaf, Alleluia;

For the loaf that we break is the body

of our Lord Jesus Christ, Alleluia;

The cup which we bless is the blood

of our Lord Jesus Christ, Alleluia

for the remission of our sins. Alleluia;

O Lord, let your mercy come upon us, Alleluia;

in you O Lord have I put my trust. Alleluia.

They recognized the Lord, Alleluia;

in the breaking of the loaf, Alleluia.

Lk 24:35 1 Cor 10:16-17; Mt 26:28 Ps 31:1 Stowe (9th c)

AGNUS DEI

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

or

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God,
who has taken away the sins of the world.
Happy are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

THE COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**
The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

THE GREAT SILENCE

Going out as God's People

PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

God, shepherd of your people,
whose servant Patrick revealed the loving service of Christ
in his ministry as a pastor of your people;
by this eucharist in which we share
awaken within us the love of Christ
and keep us faithful to our Christian calling:
through him who laid down his life for us,
but is alive and reigns with you, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

DISMISSAL
The Blessing

Christ the good shepherd,
who laid down his life for the sheep,
draw you and all who hear his voice,
to be one flock within one fold;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.