

CELEBRATING ST. PATRICK

Ireland's Pilgrim Apostle



Much of what is known about the life of St. Patrick has been interwoven with folklore and legend. Historians generally believe that St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, was born in Britain (not Ireland) in the late 4th century. At age 16, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders and sold into slavery to a Celtic priest in the area now known as Northern Ireland. After working six years as a shepherd, he escaped to Britain. He eventually returned to Ireland as a Christian missionary. St. Patrick lived as a pilgrim throughout Ireland.

Hundreds of years later, people make pilgrimages to Ireland and to places associated with St. Patrick.

SONG: Pilgrims of Hope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43rlcvvlfEE>

Pilgrim - a person who travels, especially a long distance, to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion; a person who makes a journey, often long and difficult, to a special place for religious reasons.

Words of Pope Francis

The Jubilee motto, “Pilgrims of Hope”, evokes the long journey of the people of Israel towards the Promised Land, as narrated in the Book of Exodus. This arduous journey from slavery to freedom was willed and guided by the Lord, who loves his people and is ever faithful to them. It is difficult to think of the biblical exodus without thinking also of those of our brothers and sisters who in our day are fleeing situations of misery and violence in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Thus, a first call to conversion arises from the realization that we are all pilgrims in this life; each of us is invited to stop and ask ourselves how our lives reflect this fact: Am I really on the way, or am I standing still, not moving, immobilized by fear and hopelessness or reluctant to leave my comfort zone? Am I looking for ways to leave behind the occasions of sin and situations that degrade my dignity? It would be a good Lenten exercise to compare our daily life with that of a migrant or a foreigner, to learn to sympathize with their experiences and thus discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our way to the Father's house. This would be a good “examination of conscience” for all of us travelers.

Pope Francis, Lenten Message 2025

Word of God

Thus says the Lord: "Stand by the wayside, and see, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls."
Jeremiah 6:16

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the promised land, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
Hebrews 11:8-10

Reflection

- ❖ *How do I walk by faith?*
- ❖ *What gives me "hope" along the way?*



A Blessing for Presence

May you awaken to the mystery of being here
And enter into the quiet vastness of your own presence.

May you have joy and peace in the temple of your senses.
May you receive great encouragement when new frontiers call you.

May you answer the call of your gift
And find the courage to follow its path.

May the flame of anger free you from falsehood.
May the warmth of your heart keep your presence aflame
And may anxiety never take hold of you.

May your outer dignity reflect the inner dignity of your soul.
May you take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that require no attention.

May you take comfort in the secret symmetry of your soul.
May you live each day as a sacred gift, woven around the heart of wonder.

John O'Donohue, (1998). Eternal Echoes. Exploring our hunger for belonging