



St David – Patron of Wales Feastday 1st March



St David illustration, by Jonathan Edwards

He was born in a storm in the year 500. According to legend his mother St Non gave birth to him on a Pembrokeshire cliff top during a fierce storm. A nearby holy well is said to have healing powers.

He was a fine preacher

St David became a renowned preacher, founding monastic settlements and churches in Wales, Brittany and southwest England.

He was a teetotal vegetarian

St David and his monks followed a simple, austere life, and refrained from eating meat or drinking beer. St David himself was reputed to have consumed only leeks and water – which is perhaps why the leek became a national symbol of Wales.



He performed miracles

The most famous miracle associated with St David took place when he was preaching to a large crowd in Llanddewi Brefi. When people at the back complained that they could not hear him, the ground on which he stood rose up to form a hill. A white dove, sent by God, settled on his shoulder.

His legacy lives on

St David died on 1 March – St David’s Day - in 589. He was buried at the site of **St Davids Cathedral**, where his shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. His last words to his followers came from a sermon he gave on the previous Sunday:

‘Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do.’

‘**Do the little things in life**’ - is still a well-known maxim in Wales.

From **ALIVE** by **R. S. Thomas** (Welsh Poet)



It is alive. It is you,
God. Looking out I can see
no death. The earth moves, the
sea moves, the wind goes
on its exuberant
journeys. Many creatures
reflect you, the flowers
your colour, the tides the precision
of your calculations. There
is nothing too ample
for you to overflow, nothing
so small that your workmanship
is not revealed.....



To the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary

To us Pierre was Edie, my father Liam's sister.

Thankfully our children came to know and love Edie and share in her wonderful life. When our young daughter Emer was born on 3 August 2000 Edie happened to be staying with my parents, and the sheer joy of her visiting the maternity hospital that day to hold her new born grand-niece, was a site to see.

She had an enduring love of children and an appetite to genuinely engage with them and explore their dreams and achievements.



From her early days in Rathmore, to school principal in Lisburn, to duty in Africa, France and Barrow in Furness she lived a full life of service, care and compassion. She seemed truly happy as a Sister of the Sacred Heart of Mary, happy with the mission she chose and saw through. Happy with her sister companions on their shared journey. In recent years she spoke fondly of her trips to the Order house in Wales.

While she flew far from her home nest in the heart of Dublin, she absolutely delighted in trips home, down old side-streets and rekindling memories. It was as if she had instant recall of the places, characters and events of her childhood. She retained a fondness and affection for her home country, its language, customs and traditions while embracing the richness and culture of the peoples she would over decades come to share time with.

It is with great sadness that we cannot be with you for the funeral mass and burial. She would have loved the gathering of family from near and far, to celebrate with smiles and happy tears, the life she lived. She returned home in 1989/90 to care for her sister Rita and for that we are very grateful to the Order. She missed Nuala, Sr André so much.

Unfortunately tomorrow at 2.00pm Ellen, my wife, is on duty - nursing in one of our Intensive Care Units, and I am on my feet in a long running trial. Wherever we are, are thoughts and prayers of thanks for Edie and for the life lived with her fellow sisters in Christ, will be with you all. Hopefully later this year we will be able to visit her grave.

Beannacht Dé ar a anam dílis.

Cormac Ó Dúlacháin

for Cormac, Ellen, Cathal & Emer

JPIC NEWS



This letter is from Claudia, the JPIC animator in Mozambique, where they are very concerned about the violence in the north and the number of displaced persons, caused by destruction of property, including churches. the number of deaths and hunger. Here Claudia talks about the floods and Covid, which has affected many of them.

Letter to the JPIC team.

I hope you are well at this time of Lent in the hope of journeying together towards a happy Easter.

I'm fine and so are the other sisters (who are also recovering from Covid 19), except Sister Isabel who is still in recovery.

I share this news of what is happening in the country, mainly in Beira, which is the province always visited by cyclones coming from Madagascar, also the provinces of Manica, Zambézia, Inhambane and Maputo, which are still flooded by the waters of heavy rains that fell in these regions as a result of cyclones. There are many houses that are flooded, where the residents had to leave. A lot of produce has been lost and that is already causing hunger in families that had great hope for a good harvest.

Another problem is COVID-19, it is evolving every day in the country, many infected and many daily deaths showing many public figures are dying from this disease. The hospitals reserved to receive COVID patients have run out of space and are providing other spaces for hospitalization. And that is why we are in a state of calamity where schools and churches are closed once again. The country is experiencing difficult times.

We only trust God to help us in these calamities and pandemics, and we continue to pray every day.

Best wishes for a blessed Lent.

Cláudia Lina

A Laughing Chorus – Anonymous

Oh, such a commotion under the ground
When March called, "Ho, there! ho!"
Such spreading of rootlets far and wide,
Such whispering to and fro;
And, "Are you ready?" the Snowdrop asked,
"Tis time to start, you know."
"Almost, my dear," the Scilla replied;
"I'll follow as soon as you go."
Then, "Ha! ha! ha!" a chorus came
Of laughter soft and low,
From the millions of flowers under the ground,
Yes – millions – beginning to grow.



Feast of Saint Patrick 17 March



May the Wisdom of God instruct us.
May the Hand of God protect us.
May the Way of God direct us.
May the Shield of God defend us.



(St Patrick's Blessing)

5 Lessons we can learn for today from the ministry of Saint Patrick

(from an article by Kelsey McKain)

- 1. Extraordinary Forgiveness:** Patrick didn't just forgive his captors, or just pray for them. He chose to love them and when he escaped he chose to return to the people who hurt him and share the Gospel with them because he saw that they needed to hear about Jesus.
- 2. Hopeful Perseverance:** As a young slave in Ireland he had to constantly hold on to the hope and promise of Christ. He had to stand strong in the face of oppression and cruelty. He refused to back down and focussed on the promises of Christ. In doing so he became one of the greatest disciple makers of all time.
- 3. God Qualifies the Call, Not the Other Way Around:** Patrick says in his Confession that he was uneducated but he didn't wait until he was 'ready'. He says, 'I am unable to explain my mind to learned people' yet he was prepared to trust God and despite his insecurities he undertook his ministry of evangelisation.
- 4. Team Work Makes the Dream Work:** Patrick sent new believers and missionaries out in teams. A team of about 12 would travel from tribe to tribe. After a few months some would remain to continue discipling the new believers. Some of the new believers would travel on with the team, learning and teaching, and so the work continued. Having a team on the field and a team at home praying for you will make all the difference in your ministry!
- 5. Disciple Making is Key:** For Patrick commitment to discipleship was important. His team lived with the new tribe showing them how to be Christian, not just preaching at them. They invested time in people. Patrick saw the importance of training people to continue his work when he moved on.

Praying *by Mary Oliver*



It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
small stones; just
pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

Feast of the Annunciation 25th March

Mary's entire life was spent under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
in intimate union with her God,
known only by God, and ignored by others.
United to God and filled with the Holy Spirit, as Mary was,
live only to bring forth Jesus in the hearts of others.
The more your life is hidden, in union with God,
the more able you will be to accomplish great works,
and to cooperate, as Mary did,
in the great work of redemption. *Gailhac 25/X/1881*



Knock, Co Mayo - 'An International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine'

Madeleine Fitzpatrick



Pope Francis delivering the homily by zoom on 19 March 2021

Recently, through the darkness of the Pandemic a second light shone. On Feast of St. Joseph, almost unexpectedly, Pope Francis bestowed an honour on Knock as he named it canonically: 'An International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine'. This is a wonderful moment for the Shrine, the local community and our island of Ireland, both on a faith and economic level. Almost a hundred and forty two years ago on a wet Thursday

evening 21 August 1879 in the west of Ireland an apparition appeared on the gable

wall of the parish church... the Eucharistic Lamb of God standing on an Altar, St. John the Evangelist holding out the Word of God, Mary with her arms outstretched and St. Joseph turned towards the group. Is there not something mysterious about this grouping? No words were spoken, no message given ...only Silence, a great silence, just Images and venteen local people witnessing this marvel, this mystery. At that time the people of Knock and the West of Ireland scarcely eked out a livelihood in the wake of the famine.

Knock is a place of welcome for all. It is a lowly place of prayer, mystery and expectation, a sacred space, a sanctuary, a place of presence, surrounded by a deep silence in expansive natural surroundings. It is a place of pilgrimage due to, not only the apparition but also the pilgrim foot prints for the past 142 years. The hopes, fears, pain, stories, gratitude and dreams of these pilgrims are etched in its trees and hollows, fields and sanctuaries. Counselling, Spiritual Direction, Prayer Guidance, Reconciliation, a Jesuit Week/Retreat are available especially during the Pilgrimage Season.



And yes, certainly a light has shone:

For more visit the website www.knockshrine.ie

Listen to Trees

Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach the ancient law of life.

.....

When we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: Be still! Be still! Look at me! Life is not easy, life is not difficult. These are childish thoughts.... Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you, or home is nowhere at all.



If one listens to a tree silently for a long time, it reveals its kernel, its meaning. It is not so much a matter of escaping from one's suffering, though it may seem to be so. It is a longing for home...., for new metaphors for life. It leads home. Every path leads homeward, every step is birth, every step is death...

When we have learned how to listen to trees, then the brevity and the quickness and the childlike hastiness of our thoughts achieve an incomparable joy. Whoever has learned to listen to trees no longer wants to be a tree. He wants to be nothing except what he is.

That is home. That is happiness.

Hermann Hesse
Trees: Reflections and Poems

HOLY WEEK

This poem might evoke memories for many of us from our school days:

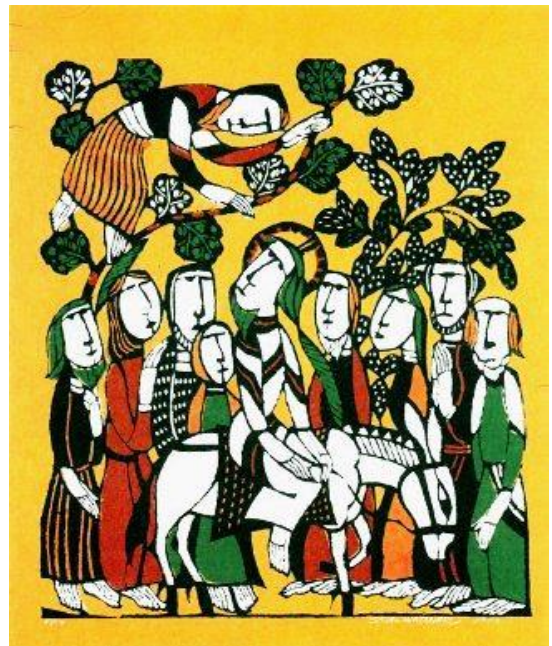
G.K Chesterton captures Palm Sunday from the perspective of the donkey that Jesus rode.

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.



Sadao Watanabe's "The Triumphal Entry", 1974

The Last Supper - Leonardo Da Vinci



of Christ.

Years passed and The Last Supper was not completed. Leonardo had now painted all the disciples of Christ except one – Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Master. So Leonardo now began the task of searching for a man who could act as a model for his portrait of Judas. He needed to find someone whose face was hardened and distorted by evil and at last, he found a beggar on the streets of Rome. This man's face was so full of evil, so inhuman and distorted with diabolical malice, that merely gazing at him made Leonardo shudder.

This was what Leonardo had been looking for. So the great artist approached the beggar, hired him, and had him sit in his studio as a model. Leonardo painted his portrait of Judas Iscariot, thus completing The Last Supper.

When he had finished, Leonardo paid the beggar, and was about to send him away, when he remembered something and stopped. “By the way,” the artist said, “I never did learn your name. Who are you?” The beggar looked at Leonardo with his evil face and eyes and replied: “Don't you recognise me? I am the man who sat for your portrait of Christ. My name is Pietro Bandinelli.”

When Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece The Last Supper, we are told he spent a long time looking for a model for his Christ. At last he located a chorister in one of the churches of Rome who was lovely in life and features. He also had a pure and blameless character and life. His name was Pietro Bandinelli. So the great artist hired him, and Pietro Bandinelli became Leonardo's model for his portrait

The PASSION and the PANDEMIC

Adapted from an article by Colleen Gibson, A Sister of St. Joseph of Philadelphia,

(Illustrations by Sieger Koder)

In the midst of this pandemic, we, as a people of faith, have made our annual pilgrimage to the cross. Death is more palpable; despair more available; isolation more regular. In these circumstances, the Passion takes on new meaning. Just as I now cringe as I notice the distance (or lack thereof) between people in everyday life and on television I immerse myself in the way of the cross in a new way. The isolation and abandonment Christ experienced takes on new shades in a world where people admitted to hospitals are prohibited from having visitors and those living in nursing homes and on their own are confined by mandatory lockdowns, let alone the many who are dutifully obeying stay at home orders. In these situations, the isolation of the cross becomes more real. The stress and trauma of



this moment in our history is difficult... In this climate, we come to see that our daily living, the reality of our current situation is a cross.

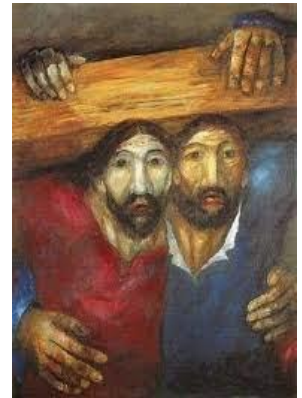


As we weather this extraordinary season of life, the crosses that present themselves call forth in us resilience in the face of adversity. These crosses cannot simply be endured as burdens but invite us to encounter them as experiences to be in union with God, especially with Christ and his cross. Like Jesus, we walk this way stripped of control. Our only choice, it would seem at this moment, is how we will experience it all. The unexpected nature of our current reality is the cross we bear. Like Jesus, we walk this

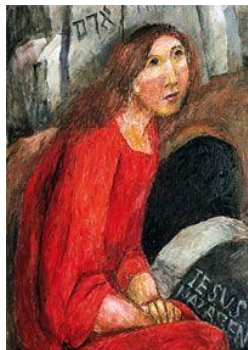
way stripped of control. Our only choice, it would seem at this moment, is how we will experience it all. The unexpected nature of our current reality is the cross we bear.

As we encounter the many emotions of these days — from loneliness and isolation to gratitude and awe — we must ask ourselves: Can we offer these to God? Not so they might be taken away but so that we might share these emotions (and moments of light and darkness they bring) with God, trusting that Christ is here with us.

This question is one of connection in the cross, connection in and through Christ crucified, resurrected, and alive among us, even now. ... Together, we will weather this pandemic and the many tides of emotions and realizations it brings. As we experience the absence of traditions this Holy Week and scarcity of formal sacraments for weeks to come, we can hope to be in union with people the world over for whom this absence is not a new reality. Without minimizing our own struggle we can embrace and be with others, strengthened in walking together, and lighter for having held each other's crosses.



The hard news of the virus drew us in from our isolation into communion with one another. Together we joined in prayer and were reminded that together we bear the cross of our current reality with grace and mercy. On this Good Friday of our lives, in a space that feels much more like Holy Saturday than Easter Sunday, the lesson is simple: We are not alone.



Now more than ever, we may be separated and feeling the effects of isolation but we are not alone. Jesus has walked this way and we walk with him now. We are united by our faith in a God who can hold it all and are urged to remember that the glory of the cross is in our union with the One who is with us in such suffering. With Jesus we are united, never alone. He walks with us no matter the circumstances. Together we embrace the cross today and always, knowing that through it we are led to new life and the Easter joy that, in time, surely awaits us.

