



Coloma Catholic Life.

Saint Patrick's Prayer

Christ shield me today Against wounding. Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in the eye that sees me, Christ in the ear that hears me. (St. Patrick)

Laetare Sunday

Laetare Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, takes its name from the Latin word which begins the entrance antiphon (introit) for that day, "Rejoice, Jerusalem ... Be joyful, all who were in mourning!" – taken from Isaiah chapter 66.

Laetare means *rejoice*, and this Sunday is marked by a relaxation of the penitential character of the Lenten season. In church, flowers may be used to adorn the altar on this day, and the organ may be played more fully. On this Sunday, we look with expectation to the great Solemnity of Easter for which we have been preparing ourselves as a Church during the Lenten season. By its anticipation of the joy of Easter, Laetare Sunday is meant to give us hope and encouragement as we slowly progress towards the Paschal Feast.

On both Laetare Sunday and Gaudete Sunday (the Third Sunday of Advent), a priest may wear rose vestments. The colour rose is used as a sign of the joy which characterises these two Sundays. The use of rose vestments probably stems from an ancient papal tradition of blessing golden roses which would be sent to Catholic heads of state in Europe on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Mothering Sunday (Simmel Sunday)

Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Traditionally, it was a day when children, mainly daughters, who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit



Pope Francis

Prayer Intention for march:

Sacrament of Reconciliation.

'Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.'

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEBGF-CsKbU&list=PLTroqZcBkue16MMgz9LKRp-W1biit5sp&t=4s>

Tweet: 'In Jesus, God went in search of us where we were lost. In Jesus, he came to raise us up when we fell. In Jesus, he wept with us and healed our wounds. In Jesus, he blessed our life forever.'

Liturgical Year

Week: 4th Sunday in Lent.

Colour: Purple

their mother and family. Today it is a day when children give presents, flowers, and home-made cards to their mothers.

Most Sundays in the year churchgoers in England worship at their nearest parish or 'daughter church'. Centuries ago, it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother' church once a year. So, each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their 'mother' church - the main church or cathedral of the area. Inevitably the return to the 'mother' church became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home. It was quite common in those days for children to leave home for work once they were ten years old.

Most historians think that it was the return to the 'Mother' church which led to the tradition of children, particularly those working as domestic servants, or as apprentices, being given the day off to visit their mother and family. As they walked along the country lanes, children would pick wild flowers or violets to take to church or give to their mother as a small gift.

Mothering Sunday was also known as Refreshment Sunday because the fasting rules for Lent were relaxed that day. Originally, both Old and New Testament lessons on mid-lent Sunday made a point of food.



Simnel cake

The food item specially associated with Mothering Sunday is the Simnel cake. A Simnel cake is a fruit cake with two layers of almond paste, one on top and one in the middle. The cake is made with 11 balls of marzipan icing on top representing the 11 disciples. (Judas is not included.) Traditionally, sugar violets would also be added.

Why Simnel?

The name Simnel probably comes from the Latin word *simila* which means a fine wheat flour usually used for baking a cake. There's a legend that a man called Simon and his wife Nell argued over whether the cake for Mothering Sunday should be baked or boiled. In the end they did both, so the cake was named after both of them: SIM-NELL.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a sacrament which can be celebrated repeatedly throughout one's life. Catholics are encouraged to receive this sacrament frequently. The Church suggests regularly confessing our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, *at least once a year* during the Easter Season. It helps us to return to Jesus and strengthen our relationship with him.



The Blessings in Frequent Confession

There are many blessings in frequent confession (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church 1425-1498). Among such blessings are the following:

- It *restores divine life* to those who have lost it through mortal sin;
- It increases *grace* and one's capacity for grace and helps one to grow in Christian maturity;

- It brings order and peace into one's life by causing one to pause at regular intervals and ask oneself the all-important question: Where am I in my relationship with God?
- It improves *personal relations* with others by making one aware of attitudes and actions that cause pain to others;
- It motivates one to practice the basic *Christian virtues*: faith, hope, charity, humility, self-denial, repentance, detachment from the pagan ways of modern life.

How to go to confession – video links below as a reminder of the steps in going to confession.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb8pzvnnL20&t=3s>

Celebrating this sacrament during the pandemic remains difficult. Many parishes operate an appointment only system, whilst others have times advertised in their parish newsletters, but may be doing things differently whilst observing Covid guidelines. Pope Francis addressed the difficulties posed by the restrictions by saying to do what the Catechism says: "Speak to God, he's your Father, tell him the truth, tell him I did this or this or this. Ask his forgiveness with all your heart, with an act of contrition and promise him afterward I will go to confession but forgive me now." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4f2xYNOQ3c>

Whilst this is no substitute for personal confession, it provides reassurance for those who are still unable to get to see a priest to receive forgiveness and reconciliation in person.

Religious Festivals

Spring/Vernal Equinox, Paganism - 18th March



Spring Equinox celebrates the renewed life of the Earth that comes with the Spring. It is a solar festival, celebrated when the length of the day and the night are equal (this happens twice a year, at Spring and Autumn Equinox).

This turn in the seasons has been celebrated by cultures throughout history who held festivals for their gods and goddesses at this time of year. Aphrodite from Cyprus, Hathor from Egypt and Ostara of

Scandinavia. The Celts continued the tradition with festivities at this time of year.

Today, Pagans continue to celebrate the coming of Spring. They attribute the changes that are going on in the world to an increase in the powers of their God and Goddess (the personifications of the great force that is at work in the world). At the time of Spring Equinox the God and the Goddess are often portrayed as The Green Man and Mother Earth. The Green Man is said to be born of Mother Earth in the depths of winter and to live through the rest of the year until he dies at Samhain.

To celebrate Spring Equinox some Pagans carry out particular rituals. For instance a woman and a man are chosen to act out the roles of Spring God and Goddess, playing out courtship and symbolically planting seeds. Egg races, egg hunts, egg eating and egg painting are also traditional activities at this time of year.

Saints of the Week

St Patrick, Bishop and Missionary – 17th March



Patrick was born in Roman Britain and at the age of fourteen he was captured by Irish pirates and taken to Ireland as a slave where he became a shepherd. At the time Ireland was a land of paganism ruled by Druids. Patrick turned to God and in his 'Confessions' he wrote: 'The love of God and his fear grew in me more and more, as did the faith, and my soul was rosed, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers and in the night, nearly the same. I prayed in the woods and on the mountain, even before dawn. I felt no hurt from the snow or ice or rain.'" At the age of 20 he escaped to the coast where he boarded a ship and returned to his family in England.

He was prompted by a vision to study for the priesthood and was ordained by St Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre. After being ordained a bishop he travelled to Ireland arriving in Slane on March 25th 433. Patrick preached the Gospel throughout Ireland and many were converted to the Christian faith. He built many churches across the country and would use the shamrock to explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Bishop Patrick continued to evangelise in Ireland for the next 40 years and died at Saul, where he had built the first Church in Ireland, in 461. St Patrick's most well-known prayer is known as St Patrick's Breastplate: Christ be within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ inquired, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

Ireland is not the only country where St Patrick is a patron saint. In 1961, the same year Ireland opened an embassy in Lagos, Irish bishops named St Patrick the patron saint of Nigeria. The Irish have a long history in the country. In the 1890s, Roger Casement, who was executed in Dublin 1916 for his role in the Easter Rising, served as a British consular officer in Calabar, in south eastern Nigeria. In the 1920s, Irish priests of the Order of the Holy Ghost set up a mission in the country. St. Patrick's Society for Foreign Missions, dedicated on March 17, 1932, became one of several Catholic groups in Nigeria providing both religious and secular education.

Today, there are around 20 million Catholics in the country, and Nigerian priests have even recently been assigned to churches in England and Ireland, where the clergy is in decline.

St Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor – 18th March



Saint Cyril of Jerusalem was raised in Jerusalem and well-educated, especially in the Scriptures. He was ordained a priest by the bishop of Jerusalem and given the task during Lent of catechizing those preparing for Baptism and catechizing the newly baptized during the Easter season.

His *Catecheses* remain valuable as examples of the ritual and theology of the Church in the mid-fourth century. At the time the Church was embroiled in the controversy caused by Arianism, the teaching that denied the Divinity of Christ and saw Jesus as created by the Father and was therefore neither co-eternal nor consubstantial with the Father. After being ordained a Bishop Cyril faced challenges from the Arians and was driven from Jerusalem on two

occasions, eventually spending half of his episcopate away from his diocese. It was at the Council of Constantinople that the amended form of the Nicene Creed was promulgated in 381, to state that Jesus was 'consubstantial with the Faith' meaning that Christ is of the same substance or nature as the Father. Cyril was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Leo XIII in 1883.

St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary – 19th March

Little is known about the life of St Joseph outside of what we know from the Gospels. In the Gospels we meet a man, a devout Jew, who is faced with a massive challenge when he learns that his young wife, Mary, is expecting a child that is not his own. In Jewish society this would be regarded as adultery and the guilty person would be condemned to be stoned to death. Joseph loves Mary and does not want this to be her fate, so he resolves to send her away quietly. It is then that a vision shows Joseph the way forward: "But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins". When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. *Mt 1:16 – 24*. Joseph says, 'Yes' to the will of God, and he trusts totally that God will guide and be with him though out his life as husband of Mary and as the earthly father of Jesus, the Son of God.



Joseph is also patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers (pregnant women), travellers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general.



YEAR OF
Saint Joseph

December 8, 2020 - December 8, 2021

PRAYER FOR

The Year of Saint Joseph

Holy Saint Joseph, guardian of Jesus Christ, husband of the Blessed Mother and patron of the Catholic Church, we pray to you for guidance this "Year of Saint Joseph" proclaimed by Pope Francis.

You have showed us by your loving ways, the value of work and the joys of fatherhood. By teaching God's Son to do the will of His Father you have given us the path to do the same. By your example, you have encouraged us to accept others as they are, without exception.

To you Saint Joseph, our Heavenly Father entrusted his only Son, Jesus Christ to your tender care and upbringing. In you, our Blessed Mother Mary placed her love and trust. Through your mentoring, Jesus Christ became man.

We praise you and ask of you to defend us and our loved ones from every evil and guide us with your grace and mercy.

*A*MEN.

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