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St. Patrick's Messenger

Our official newsletter

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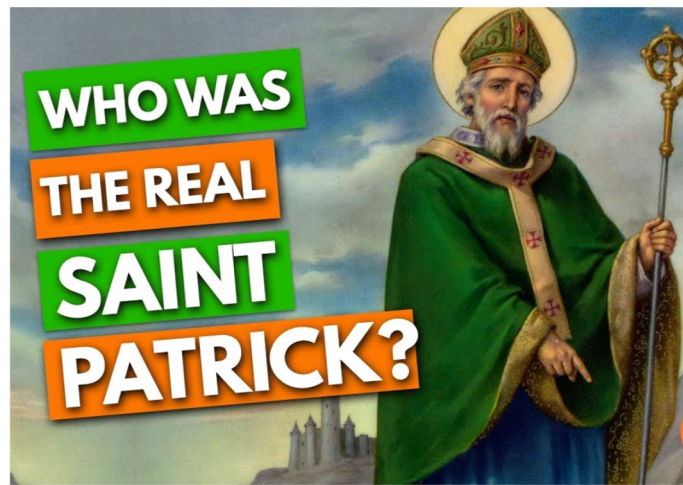
St. Patrick,
pray for us

March 17 St. Patrick's Day. All you need to know about our Patron Saint

Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and is identified with all things Irish. Judging by the number of St. Patrick churches in SW Iowa alone, you'd think everyone who immigrated here came from the emerald isle! March 17 marks the traditional death date of St. Patrick (c.385-c.461) and is truly a cultural and religious celebration. Witness all the public parades and festivals, wearing of green clothing, shamrocks and special drinks and meals. And not just here; St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in

more countries than any other national festival. St. Patrick was born into a Romanized British family where his father was a deacon and perhaps an army officer. At age 16 he was captured, along with many others, by Irish pirate and sold into slavery to spend 6 years as a herdsman of sheep and pigs. Although he hadn't been particularly religious, during this time he turned with fervor to his faith. After a vision led him to stow away on a boat bound for Britain, Patrick escaped back to his family. He had another dream that the Irish were calling him back

to Ireland to tell them about God which inspired him to become a priest. To prepare himself for life as a missionary, he spent 12 years



in France at a monastery learning the faith before he returned to Ireland as a bishop sent with the Pope's blessing.

His life as a slave prepared him well due to familiarity with the language, culture, religion and the power structure of the Druid and clan leaders. For 20 years he traveled the length and breadth of the island, preaching the faith, baptizing people, establishing monasteries, schools and churches as he went. As a bishop, he ordained many priests so that, when he died, he left behind an organized

church and an island of Christians. Many legends have evolved in the retelling of his life. The most well known involves the shamrock that grows everywhere in Ireland and has become the symbol of Irish heritage. He used the 3 leaved clover to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity as separate elements making up one entity. An equally famous legend has it that St. Patrick drove all the snakes of Ireland into the sea where they drowned. Since there never have

been any snakes in Ireland, this is taken as an allegory. Snakes were sacred to the Druids. Their banishment reflects St. Patrick's success at removing pagan influence from the island. The association of green and St. Patrick's Day is equally non exciting: It probably dates to the 18th century when supporters of Irish independence used the color to represent their cause.

Whatever the tangle of myth, legend and fact, on March 17, everyone is enthusiastically Irish. St. Patrick pray for us!

Rosary for the Nation prayer group

Every Tuesday at 11 am.

Since 2013 6-8 people have quietly gathered every Tuesday at 11 AM to pray the Rosary for the salvation of our nation. Inspired by the events of September 11, 2011 and patterned after the devotions at Medjugorje, they use a booklet entitled "Patriotic Rosary. For the consecration of our Nation". Each separate decade begins with a prayer for one of our leaders: the President, The Supreme Court, the Senate and House, the Governors and the County and Municipal offices. Each Hail Mary is preceded by "We plead the Blood of Jesus



over (name of State) and every soul in that State" thus covering all 50 States. Each decade

ends with a prayer for the conversion of our Country. They fervently pray "Mary, we call You as You have called us. Please, intercede before God to forgive us, to heal us, to heal our families, and to heal our nation...Holy God, grant Mary Her requests that we may again be your people, not a nation above God but one nation humbled and under God. Amen." By doing this spiritual work of mercy for all of us, these people live out the long history of intercessory prayer that marks the Catholic Church. They fulfill the command of our Blessed Mother to "Pray the Rosary". **Please consider adding your voice to theirs any Tuesday morning.**

DID YOU KNOW

Have your eyes ever strayed to the columns and windows at the entrance to the sanctuary? Notice the unusual carvings that make you think of fish scales and twisted ropes? See the filagree stone work high above the priest's chair? What you are looking at is Manueline architecture from Portugal.

This style of architecture developed during the reign of Manuel 1 (1495-1521) from which it takes its name. It incorporates maritime elements and representations of the discoveries brought back by the famous explor-

ers of that time like Vasco de Gama. Interestingly, it is influenced by the temples of east India which they must have visited. Characteristic of the style are elements of the sea such as shells, pearls, spheres, anchors, anchor ropes and cables. It also includes botanical motifs like laurel branches, oak leaves, acorns, poppy capsules, corn-cobs and thistles. Columns are often carved like twisted strands of rope and windows are outlined with Islamic

style filagree. Complete with its Mediterranean style tile roof, our church really stands out. It is a credit to Fr. Maurice Powers (pastor here from 1926-1956) under whose direction it and the adjoining rectory were completed in 1931 at a cost of \$59,834.28. How this architectural gem came to be in the midst of a settlement of Irish and Germans is a mystery to ponder.



»»» A melodious life »»»

Theresa Cruise shares her life experiences

Theresa Cruise's father Earl Curry was a farmer south of Corning. She was born at the hospital in Creston but, unfortunately, her mother died giving birth to her and she was adopted by her paternal uncle Leo and his wife Loretta living in the very home where she now resides at 600 Grove Ave. The Curry's were a strongly Catholic family, usually daily communicants, who taught her the Faith in the absence of formal Sunday School or religious education programs. They also made sure she had piano lessons even though they were held in Creston. Although she attended Corning public schools, she enrolled at Marycrest, a Catholic college in Davenport, Iowa, but didn't find it a good fit, so she transferred to Rosary College (now known as Dominican University), an all girls school on the west side of Chicago. There she flourished under the guidance of the Dominican sisters and graduated with a Bachelors of Music Education. A highlight of her college experience was a 6-8 week Holy Year (1950) tour visiting, among other cities, Lourdes, Nice, Assisi, Florence, and Rome. She stood



in the courtyard of the Vatican with thousands of other students from around the world to hear a greeting from the Pope. After her graduation, she taught vocal music in Hamburg, IA and Papillion, NE and even did a stint as the music librarian for an Omaha radio station where she pulled all the music used in the day's shows. After marrying, she taught music in K-12 for 13 years at either Corning, Creston or Massena in addition to giving private piano lessons in her home. She was also the organist/pianist and choir director at St. Patrick Church for over 70 years, giving it up only when her eyesight became an issue!

She and her husband Jack Cruise had 4 boys and 1 girl, so there was a lot of involvement in sports and the Boy Scouts. In addition, she was a Lector and EM at the Church. Despite the death of her son Patrick as a young adult, she never wavered in her faith nor went through a "mad at God" phase. Similarly, she never had the drama of a "born again" moment. As a steady faithful Catholic, she says the number one thing in her life has always been to live out the answers to the famous Baltimore Catechism question "Why did God make me?". Number two, no surprise, is music. **Thank you, Theresa, for your steadfast witness to our Catholic faith.**

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What is with the small bank of candles in front of the statue of the infant Jesus at the left front of the church?

Candles are a part of almost every Catholic celebration and ritual. They are lighted for the Mass, for liturgical or funeral processions and for most prayer services as a symbol of the light of Christ. In addition, every Catholic church has a perpetual candle in front of the tabernacle to show God's presence in the Blessed Sacrament stored there. That tradition was probably handed down from the ancient Jews who kept a perpetual light burning in the temple. One was prescribed in the Talmud to be at the Ark where the Torah was kept. Historically, candles or oil lamps were burned in the tombs of the saints by the 200's AD and before sacred images and relics by the 300's.

We have these same traditions today. The candle light signifies our prayer to God or for the saint's intercession for us with God. It represents our desire to remain present to the Lord in prayer even though we may depart to go about our daily business. The little slot at the bottom of the rack is solely for donations to defray the cost of the candles themselves.



Mirror of humility

Saint Joseph is one of the quiet kind of saints, one easy to overlook and forget about. On March 19 we celebrate his feast. Like ours, his life isn't headline material. He's not connected with martyrdom, withstanding gruesome tortures for his faith, inspiring speeches nor heroic death. Instead, he comes off as simply a Dad taking care of his family day to day.

The Bible calls him a "just" man, meaning that he was totally open to what God wanted to do for him. And it says that God talked to him through dreams and that Joseph obeyed, even when it meant jumping up in the middle of the night, loading up his family and fleeing for a foreign coun-



try to avoid their destruction by the ruling authorities bent on wiping out the threat of a Jewish King Jesus. Joseph is a saint precisely because he was

fully cooperative with God's will for him. Every time he is mentioned in Scripture, it is in the context of following what God wanted. And in that is revealed how he is the perfect role model for the rest of us ordinary people. Devotion to family, devotion to spouse and fully following God's will for us in our ordinary forgettable lives is enough to make us saints, too. The bones of St. Joseph have never been found. His burial place remains unknown. In a way, how fitting that is since it mirrors his humility of never having the spotlight shown on him.

St. Joseph, pray for us and help us to live our ordinary lives full of great love.