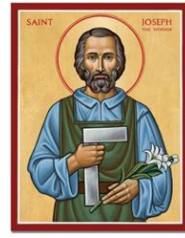
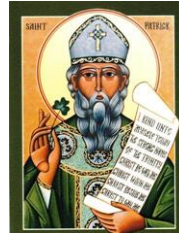


Fr. Martin's Reflection – March 12, 2023



Mo Chairde – Miei Amici (my friends),

Welcome to the week of the two Saints– St. Patrick and St. Joseph. (I know St. Patrick's Day is Thursday and St. Joseph's Day is Sunday, but they both go so well together) Both men had an amazon effect on humanity. St. Patrick, we all know, is the patron saint of Ireland and St. Joseph is husband of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and is very dearly loved and venerated by all with an Italian heart. Like all saints they belong to all the people of God and like all saints they have a lesson for all of us. Both men had to endure great difficulties and challenges in their lives.

St. Patrick – was kidnapped, sold into slavery and left to eat what the pigs were eating.

St. Joseph – betrothed to Mary, was left feeling humiliated and ashamed by Mary because of her pregnancy.

The one thing that strikes me about both Patrick and Joseph was how their faith in God got them through what it was they were experiencing. For Patrick it was the devastation of been ripped from his family and sold into slavery, possibly believing that he would never see his family again.

For Joseph it was in having to deal with that great sense of betrayal and humiliation, and having his friends quote the law to him about what should happen to Mary. His family also feeling publicly humiliated and wanting him to divorce Mary and be done with her.

During their great times of trial and desperation both Patrick and Joseph turned to God for help and guidance. For Joseph the decision came quite quickly because God spoke to him directly in a dream to accept and take Mary into his home.

For Patrick it was many hard, desperate years of abuse, mistreatment and starvation. To have found his way out of slavery, onto a boat and make his way home to his family should've been the end as he walked off into the sunlight. But as we know that wasn't the case. His years of slavery allowed him to grow close to God and allowed God to grow close to him so that when he made it home, he knew that God wanted him to be a priest. After several years back in his homeland, Patrick felt the push of God and the call of the Irish people to come back to Ireland – this is where I believe faith and courage combine. To go back to the people that held you in slavery and to bring the message of Jesus with you, "Love your enemies and pray for those to persecute you," takes an amazon level of faith and courage. My dear friends, look at what both Patrick and Joseph did by allowing God to work through them – all it took was faith in the power of God.

"If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Heb 3:15

PS – Sunday, March 19, at Holy Assumption Church, Roebing, at the 10.30 am mass we will celebrate the great feast of St Patrick. I hope you can come and join us crazy Irish people for the celebration of the mass and for "refreshments" afterwards in McGrath Hall. Bring yourself, bring a friend, bring the family.

Fr. Martin