



Meditation for Wednesday March 17, 2021

The Feast of St. Patrick of Ireland

c. 390 -461

So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. [Thessalonians 2:9]

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

[Matthew 28:20]

Today we pause in our reading of the Propers for Lent to observe the feast of St. Patrick. The joy and celebration we generally associate with this day will be more muted this year, with virtual parades and smaller gatherings for traditional meals of corned beef and cabbage. As a result, we might hear more clearly the lessons that Patrick offers us. For woven into all the stories about his courageous leadership the wonders he performed is the repeated theme that he listened to “his inner voice” before making any decision.

The son of a Christian official in the Roman court in Britain, Patrick was kidnapped by Irish pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland when he was about sixteen. After about seven years he escaped and returned to Britain, was educated as a Christian, and eventually ordained a presbyter and bishop. About twenty years later, he responded to his “inner voice” and returned to Ireland. There he became known for his missionary journeys as he converted kings and their followers throughout Ireland. Always, even when confronting the threat of violence, Patrick was calm, self-assured, and compassionate, ever trusting in the presence of God.

Steven Charleton’s meditation on the importance of listening to our elders is a helpful reminder of how important it is for each of us to welcome silence in our lives so that we can listen to our own “inner voice.”

Steven Charleton, *Ladder to the Light*:

The ancestors stand silent. Before the clamoring crowd, the shouting politicians, the angry preachers, the dealers in empty dreams, they all stand silent. In their silence, they strip bare every word that holds truth hostage to the hunger for more, the endless appetite that fuels the machine we are told is our home. Let the ancestors’ silence be heard in every heart, for it is the first sound of freedom. We have the dignity of our truth. We have the integrity of our faith. Even if all we can do is stand silent, let us do so with pride. For our witness is not more words piled on more words, but a vision as true then as it is now. [p. 116-117]