

Wearing of the Green.... This week, on Thursday March 17th, we celebrate a great day for the Irish and for everybody else for that matter. On this day of course, we celebrate St. Patrick's Day! Maybe this week a little Irish humor would be appropriate. So here it is. A 98 year old Mother Superior from Ireland was dying. All the nuns gathered around her bed trying to make her last journey comfortable. They tried giving her some warm milk but she refused it. One of the nuns took the glass back to the kitchen and remembering a bottle of Irish Whiskey received as a gift the previous Christmas, she opened it and poured a generous amount into the warm milk. Back at Mother Superior's bed, she held the glass to her lips. Mother drank a little, then a little more and before they knew it, she had drunk the whole glass down to the last drop. "Mother," the nuns asked earnestly, "Please give us some wisdom before you die!" She raised herself up in bed and said, "Whatever you do, don't sell that cow!" During Lent, a little bit of Irish can help us get through! Who really was the man that will be honored with that great parade up Fifth Ave. in Manhattan this week? Well, St. Patrick was born in Roman Britain probably around the year 389. When he was about fourteen years old, pirates captured him and many others and he became a slave in Ireland. It was there in Ireland, probably in Mayo, that Patrick tended sheep in the most extreme and difficult conditions. In his confession St. Patrick tells us that it was the Lord who got him through this very difficult time in his life. "Constantly," He said, "I used to pray in the day...Love of God increased and my spirit was stirred up, so that in a single day I said as many as a hundred prayers and at night nearly as many." Eventually Patrick escaped from slavery and bound a ship to Europe probably to France where he was ordained a priest. In a vision, he heard a voice telling him to return to Ireland: "We beseech thee holy youth, to come and walk among us once more..." Although the details of his life are sketchy, we know that Germanus ordained Patrick as a Bishop to succeed Palladius, the Bishop in Ireland who had died. On his return to Ireland, Patrick began the massive job of evangelization and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Druids, who were Pagans, were Patrick's most bitter opponents-yet through prayer, sacrifice and incredible labors, Patrick converted them all. Patrick summed up his ministry in these words: "Wherefore then in Ireland they who had never had the knowledge of God, but until now only worshipped Idols and Abominations-now there has been lately prepared a people of the Lord and they are called Children of God." What a wonderful testament to the grace of God and the work that one man can do for the faith. That is the reason why we celebrate St. Patrick's Day! While we should enjoy the parades, the corned beef and cabbage and "The wearing of the green", this day should mean something to us as Catholics. On March 17th, we honor a holy man-Patrick; a Catholic Saint who took seriously the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel "Go and teach all nations" and applied them. May we do likewise... Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Jerome