



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
IRISH • CATHOLIC • AMERICAN

Ohio State Board

Newsletter

March 2025

Volume 7 Issue 3

President's Message



Happy Irish American Heritage Month!(See Page 14 for more information) I want to wish all a happy and blessed St. Patrick's Day.

As we gather to march in our parades and have celebrations, please remember that all eyes will be upon on us. IAHM is a good time for recruiting and showing members of our communities what it means to be a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. If your Division or community is having an IAHM parade or party, please share the information with Webmaster Marc Wolnitzek. I would like to have a permanent list of all St. Patrick Day parades and events available on our state website.

State Board Meeting

A State Board meeting will be held in Akron on March 29, 2025. This meeting will be in conjunction with a walk through of the State Convention site. The Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls is located at 1989 Front St., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221. The meeting will commence at 11am. The Convention will take place June 24-26, 2025. Information will soon be released on room bookings and packages. I hope to see all of you there. \

Lost Gaels Book Tour

Ohio is lucky to be one of the stops on the 11 city AOH/LAOH sponsored book tour by author Peadar Thompson. Mr. Thompson's new book "Lost Gaels: Remembering the Members of the GAA Killed During the Conflict in Ireland" is the first comprehensive account of how the Troubles impacted the GAA Community. The Ohio stop will take place on Sunday, March 2, 2025 at the

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Chaplain's Comments



Repent and believe in the Gospel.

These are the words that will be imparted to us on Ash Wednesday as we began this year's Lenten journey. We are called to repentance, and this involves reconciling our relationship with God that we have damaged through sin. To do this we must examine our conscience, look into our hearts, and see how we have damaged our relationship with God. How can we do this? Well, we have been given an exemplary model to follow: Jesus Christ.

Brothers, we have the Paschal Mystery; the suffering, death and resurrection of our lord, Jesus Christ to help us in our time of need. Do you not think Jesus contemplated our sins as he made that long walk to Golgotha? Do you not think that with each step closer to death, Jesus calls us to repent? Do you not think that in his resurrection he calls us all to believe in the Gospel? Salvation! This is the Gospel message, and it has been won for all of mankind through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our Lenten journey therefore needs to be an evaluation of our relationship with Christ. We need to experience the Paschal Mystery. We can share in Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. We can share in his suffering by walking in his footsteps. The devotion of the Way of the Cross, or the Stations of the Cross, is one way to walk in His steps and share in His experience. The devotion developed in medieval Europe as wars prevented pilgrims from traveling to the Holy Land. As we

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President's Message, cont.

West Side Irish American Club in Olmsted Township, Ohio outside of Cleveland. Members of the AOH and LAOH are encouraged to attend. The address to the West Side Irish American Club is:

8559 Jennings Rd.
Olmsted Township, OH 44138.

Doors open at 6pm with program starting at 7pm.

Brothers, I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming weeks.

*In Motto,
Denny*

Chaplain's Comments, cont.

are the pilgrim Church on Earth, it is fitting that we partake in this devotion. The Stations of the Cross provide us with an audible and visual representation of what effect our sins have on our relationship with God. As Christ carried the cross which he was to be crucified upon to the place of his death, I am sure he contemplated our sins, the will of God, and his role in the salvation of the world. This should be the direction of our contemplation as well. Other things that can help us focus our thoughts are the rosary, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, personal prayer, and the sacrament of reconciliation. Each provides focus for our thoughts and prayers as we direct them toward the relationship we share with God. We devote time to our families because the relationship we share with them is special. How special is the relationship we share with our creator? We need to devote time in our busy lives for God. The season of Lent allows us to focus on how much time we devote to God. It allows us to reflect on the relationship we have with Him and how we have damaged that relationship.

I had a conversation with a fellow parishioner recently, and although our conversation was jovial; the content was intense. He mentioned to me that sometimes he feels close to God, and sometimes he feels quite removed. This is something that is not uncommon. Our relationship with God is not that different than the relationship we share with our spouse, our siblings or our friends. Our relationship is not going to be filled with peaches and cream 24/7.

We will have good, and we will have bad times. That is how human beings are made. St. Theresa of Calcutta experienced the same thing. She lived many years feeling as though she had lost contact with God. These were the years when she performed her greatest acts of mercy. The point is we all experience these dark times. As the light fades in our hearts; God's increases so that we can see the brightness and move out of the darkness into the light. In the times when we feel furthest away from God, he provides a light for us to return.

Thankfully, God has provided for our every need. We have been given the gift of faith. We have been given the gift of Salvation through the Paschal Mystery. We have been given the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We have been given the gift of the Holy Eucharist. We have been given the chance to share in the gift of eternal life.

During this season of Lent, enter into a conversation with God. Reflect on the Paschal mystery and what it means in your life. Devote time to God in adoration of the Holy Eucharist, time to pray the rosary and walk in Christ's footsteps in the Stations of the Cross, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation to repair damage done through sin and offer ourselves in sacrifice as the living body of Christ, and allow ourselves to repent and believe in the Gospel.

God Bless,
Deacon Bruce

2023 - 2025 Officers

| | |
|--|---|
| Chaplain | Deacon Bruce Dobbins brunomusarra@yahoo.com |
| President | Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com |
| Vice President | Bruce McPherson hilliardmcperson@gmail.com |
| Secretary | Pete Chrystal pvchrystal59@gmail.com |
| Treasurer | Greg Brown Gbrownshamrock@yahoo.com |
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| Director | Chris Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com |
| Past President | Bob Harper harper.bg@pg.com |
| National President | Sean Pender paddyspeed@yahoo.com |
| National Oversight Committee Chairman | Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com |

OHIO DIVISIONS

County/Division Presidents

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Clermont | Douglas Gerrard dpgerrard@aol.com |
| Cuyahoga Board | Tom Ginley tgbigbass@gmail.com |
| Cuyahoga #2 | Jim Kilbane jjk5755@hotmail.com |
| Cuyahoga #3 | Robert Mullin bobbymulls@yahoo.co |
| Franklin #1 | Jerry Tracy Gbtracyjr@sbcglobal.net |
| Hamilton #1 | Tim Oliver toliver33@live.com |
| Lucas | Robert McMahon aohjohnpkellydivision@gmail.com |
| Mahoning #6 | Joe McCormick macman23.jm@gmail.com |
| Medina | Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com |
| Montgomery | Art Gannon artgannon@aol.com |
| Stark #1 | Tom Wolf tomwolfcpa@msn.com |
| Summit Board | Jim Meszaros meszi01@neo.rr.com |
| Summit #2 | Ed Morrison edwardcmorrison@outlook.com |
| Summit #3 | Michael Namsick mpnamsick@gmail.com |
| Trumbull | Marty McQuaide emcqu@aol.com |
| Washington | Patrick Kelly pkelly03@sprynet.com |

Appointed Officers

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Catholic Action | Patrick Lally lally8404@hotmail.com |
| Pro Life | Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com |
| FFAI | Patrick Williams karimcwilly@gmail.com |
| PEC | Mike Cosgrove irish.mick213@gmail.com |
| Project St. Patrick | Chris Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com |
| Missions & Charities | Chris Konik chriskonik@mindspring.com |
| Organizer | Joe Casey qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com |
| Historian | Mike Finn FCoolavin@aol.com |
| Veterans Affairs | Doug Gerrard dpgerrard@aol.com |
| Hibernian Hunger | Dave McLaughlin dmclaug106@sbcglobal.net |
| Immigration | John Myers johnmyers216@gmail.com |

Jim Casey's New Email Address

jjcasey973@icloud.com

Newsletter News

Just a reminder. If you have information for our monthly newsletter, please send it as an attachment to an e-mail to Editor, Jim Casey at

jjcasey973@icloud.com

The **deadline** for articles is the **24th of the month**.

Ohio AOH Spring State Board Meeting and Convention site walk through

Earlier in January, I sent you a save the date for a Spring State Board meeting and State Convention site walk through for April 12th, 2025. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the date needed to be changed. The new date of the Spring State Board meeting and State Convention site walk through is **Saturday, March 29, 2025**. The walk through is scheduled to start at 11am and the State Board meeting will start at the hotel immediately following the walk through. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. We usually have our Spring meeting in mid to late April but, Easter is April 20th and Divisions are having events the following weekends. Please have your reports into State Secretary by March 22, 2025.

When: Saturday, March 29, 2025 at 11am.

Where: Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls, 1989 Front St. Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221
Denny Parks

State Organizer's Report

As I mentioned last month, the National Organizer broadcast his quarterly Organizer Zoom call on February 3rd. We **MUST** have all of our currently open applications closed by March 1st, per our National President, Sean Pender. Division presidents, if you have closed or are having problems closing the applications, please send me an email, stating the names of those applicants. In the near future all applications will be sent directly to the division president affected. He will have 10 days to react on it and let either Denny Parks or myself know the status. If nothing is done within those 10 days, it gets bumped up to the State and then to the National 10 days after that. It is also imperative that your list of officers is up to date on the National roster so the applications can be sent to the correct people.

We are into the Green Season, a great time to increase membership and possibly bring back some members who have fallen away. Get with some of your members to see if they have any relatives or friends who would like to join. Invite some members who don't attend meetings or have fallen off your rolls to come to your St. Patrick's events.

If you have any questions, please contact me. My email is qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com.

Thank you for your cooperation and have a blessed St. Patrick's Day.

Joe Casey

Mark Your Calendars**2025 State Convention****Sheraton Suites in Cuyahoga Falls, June 26 - 29****2025 Ohio AOH Spring State Board meeting and Convention site walk through****Saturday, March 29, 2025****Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls
1989 Front St. Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221****2026 National Convention, Omaha NE**

Fr. John Keehner



Congratulations to Bishop Elect John Keehner, past State of Ohio and National AOH Chaplain. **The Diocese of Youngstown Reverend John Keehner has been named the Bishop of the Diocese Sioux City, Iowa.** See following news release.

YOUNGSTOWN, OH – Pope Francis has named Reverend John Keehner, a priest of the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio the 8th Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa. This appointment was made public today, February 12, 2025, by Cardinal Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Bishop-elect Keehner was born on November 19, 1965, in Youngstown, Ohio the son of the late John and Betty Lou Keehner. He has two brothers and a twin sister. He completed his seminary studies at the Athenaeum of Ohio, Mount Saint Mary Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio and was ordained on June 12, 1993, by the Most Reverend James W. Malone. Following ordination, he was appointed parochial vicar at St. Charles Parish, Boardman, Ohio. In 1997 he began graduate studies in Canon Law at the Angelicum, Rome and returned to the diocese in 1999 as a Judge for the Diocesan Tribunal. He has served as Newman Center Chaplain for Youngstown State University, Rector of St. Columba Cathedral and as pastor of St. Christine Parish, Youngstown, St. Luke Parish, Boardman, St. Paul Parish, North Canton, Holy Spirit Parish Uniontown and most recently as pastor of Our Lady of Peace Parish, Ashtabula, Assumption Parish Geneva, Corpus Christi Parish Conneaut and St. Andrew Bobola, Sheffield.

Bishop-elect Keehner stated that he is truly humbled by and grateful for the Holy Father's decision to name him Bishop of Sioux City. He has chosen for his episcopal motto the words of his patron saint, John the Baptist, which he speaks in reference to Jesus; He must increase, I must decrease. Bishop-elect Keehner explained that he chose these words fully conscious that if he is to serve effectively, he must choose every single day to let go of himself, to let go his ego and to allow Christ to manifest himself and to reveal His will to him.

Bishop David Bonnar is overjoyed to welcome Bishop-elect Keehner as a brother bishop. He expressed, "it is obvious that Pope Francis desires men with a shepherd's heart to be his episcopal shepherds. Bishop – elect Keehner checks all the boxes in this regard. The Diocese of Sioux City will come to know very quickly his many gifts along with his pastoral, kind and humble zeal."

Bishop-elect Keehner will be ordained and installed as the 8th Bishop of Sioux City on May 1, 2025 at the Cathedral of the Epiphany, Sioux City, Iowa at 2 p.m. CT., 3 p.m. EST.

Pro Life Report

I would like to thank all of you that attended the national march for life and any other event promoting the sanctity of human life. I attended the Summit county March for Life along with FFAI chair Patrick Williams. As we have just made it past the 52nd anniversary of the overturned Roe v Wade, we remember all of the lives that had been taken from us and the negative impact it has had on women and society. We will continue to march until abortion becomes unthinkable and every life is respected from conception to natural death. We must continue to care for all mothers and provide any assistance they need.

God Bless,
Jacob Durda jacob.durda@gmail.com

A Letter from Ireland

a Chara,

It always amazes me how the new becomes the normal. This week marked one year since the institutions of the Good Friday Agreement were re-established, and Sinn Féin Vice President Michelle O'Neill became First Minister.

I remember watching the Assembly session on TV that day. I knew what was due to happen, but nonetheless found it incredibly emotional as Michelle spoke about being the First Minister for All.

Here was a Sinn Féin leader taking on the role of leading a parliament at Stormont. Up until that day, the position had been held by a Pro-British Unionist. The position had been held by one community to exclusively represent that one community. We now had a dedicated Irish Republican vowing to represent all the people.

Michelle embodied the Irish Republican ideals of anti-sectarianism and equality. I remember talking with a group of unionists and one of them candidly said that he feared that Irish Republicans in power would do to unionists what unionists in power had done to Irish Republicans. I assured him that we had no interest in retribution, exclusion, or repeating the mistakes of the past.

Since then Michelle has turned the rhetoric of that day into action. She has acted to respect and honor many identities that make up society. An Irish Republican being the First Minister is no longer a news story, and the past abuse of power remains in the past.

What is consistent is that the British Government continues to hold the purse strings in the North. On the week marking the anniversary of the re-establishment of the institutions, Hilary Benn, the British Secretary of State, thought it would be a good time to remind the locals that they have to live within their designated budget and be prepared to make "the hard decisions".

I always bristle when a Government Minister talks about making hard decisions as the cost of those decisions is normally felt by the poorest in society. Ministers remain with health salaries, perks, and pensions. No Minister has ever made a hard decision that left them hungry.

The North is dealing with years of underfunding and the economic impact of partition. At the time of partition, the North was a net contributor to the British economy. Within ten years it would require a subsidy, and so it has remained since. Partition never did and never will make economic sense.

The truth is that post-Brexit, the British economy is failing. The people in the North voted against Brexit. Neither Hilary Benn nor anyone in his government in Westminster has a single vote in the North of Ireland. Yet this government claims to speak on behalf of the people and control the budget.

This week the British again demonstrated the economic and democratic deficit of partition. Hilary Benn represents the failings of the past and the costs of partition and union with Britain.

Michelle O'Neill, by her actions, demonstrates that a united Ireland will be a home for all. A new and united Ireland is the hands of the people.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

State Historian's Report

The Mysterious St. Patrick

By: J. Michael Finn, State Historian



More has been written about St. Patrick than almost any other saint. March 17 is celebrated around the world by more people than any other feast day. His image graces postage stamps, stained glass windows, greeting cards and statues. His name is attached to churches and cathedrals around the world. Yet, what we actually know about the real Patrick is shrouded in mystery.

Let's start with his beginnings. In his Confession, which is one of two writings that are attributed to Patrick, he says he was born in Bannavem Taburniae in Roman Britain. The problem is no one has been able to locate that place on any map or in any Roman records. Some speculate the village was in Wales or in Cornwall. It was likely located near the coast on the western side of the island of Britain.

His father, Culpernius was a decurio, a Roman provincial official, and his grandfather Pontius was a presbyter, or elder in the Christian church. At sixteen Patrick had fallen away from the church and his belief in God. He and his companions were no longer obedient to God. Patrick also speaks of a serious unnamed sin he committed as a youth.

Irish pirates raided Patrick's village and he was taken captive. He was taken to Ireland and sold as a slave. Patrick ended up tending a flock on a bleak hillside. Alone with the animals, he had time to contemplate his life. Mostly he prayed. After several years of hardship, he was advised in a dream that it was time to escape. Thus began a long journey that eventually brought him home where he was reunited with his parents. He became a deacon, studied for the priesthood, and was ordained. Some theorize that this study occurred at a monastery in Europe; possibly in Gaul since legend suggests that Patrick may have been a relative of St. Martin of Tours.

Some early church records indicate that Patrick may have been a companion of St. Germain assisting in his fight against the Palagian heresy in Britain. But Patrick continued to hear the call to return to Ireland and convert the Irish to Christianity. He was eventually made a bishop and returned to Ireland to fulfill his mission of conversion.

We know that Patrick was not the first bishop sent to Ireland. The first bishop was a man named Paladius. There was a small Christian community in Ireland before Patrick's arrival, possibly in the south. Paladius had been sent to tend to the spiritual needs of that community. Patrick's mission was to convert. He was also expected to establish monasteries, ordain priests and found orders of religious women.

The Patrick of his Confession was a very humble man. He called himself a sinner, unlearned, a country bumpkin who was totally unworthy to take on his mission.

After arriving in Ireland he began the conversion process. As he wrote, "So it behooved us to spread our nets, that a vast multitude and throng might be caught for God, and so there might be clergy everywhere who baptized and exhorted a needy and desirous people."

There is nothing in his small amount of writings about driving snakes out of Ireland, teaching the Trinity by using the shamrock or any of the many extraordinary miracles attributed to him in story and song. Most of these events

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State Historian's Report, cont.

were written about nearly two hundred years after his death, so there is no written proof that they actually occurred. There is, however, sufficient historical evidence from his writings that we can make several definite statements about the historical significance of the man known as Patrick.

Patrick began the Irish literary and historical tradition. If the writings that we have attributed to Patrick are authentic, and most agree that they are, they are the earliest writings in Ireland. Patrick is the literary godfather of all Irish writers who would follow after him. The writings are also noteworthy in that they were written in a vernacular form of Latin. That is, they were written in a rough Latin that was spoken by the common people of the time, not in the classical Latin of scholars.

Irish historians can also claim a direct legacy from Patrick. Tomás, Cardinal O’Fiaich has written, “Irish history properly speaking must begin with St. Patrick, the author of the earliest documents known to have been written in Ireland.” Patrick’s writings give us significant historical details about early Ireland that we would not have known otherwise.

Patrick was one of the first missionaries. In Patrick’s time missionary work in the early church was difficult. Many of the existing pagan tribes in Europe were not willing to be converted, so the Church viewed evangelization as a dangerous undertaking. Patrick proved that it could be done by one man with great faith and that it could be done without bloodshed. To our knowledge there were no Christian martyrs in the conversion of early Ireland, although Patrick writes that he lived in daily expectation of “murder, fraud or captivity.”

Patrick was one of the first in the Church to speak out against slavery. Having been kidnapped and held as a slave, Patrick had a no tolerance for those who profited from the taking of slaves. Patrick is credited with writing a letter to the Irish pirate, Coroticus, who also was a Christian. Coroticus had attacked and killed some newly baptized Christians and kidnapped the survivors. He was holding them as slaves before selling them to the Picts (a pagan tribe in Scotland).

In his letter, Patrick explains that he had sent an emissary to Coroticus to plead for the release of the captives. The emissary was ridiculed and sent back. Enraged, Patrick sent the pirate a letter in an attempt to convince Coroticus to release the hostages. In the letter, Patrick reveals that he could be quite different than the humble churchman presented in his Confession. He wrote, “Hence I do not know what to lament more: those who have been slain, or those whom they have taken captive, or those whom the devil has mightily ensnared. Together with him they will be slaves in Hell in an eternal punishment; for who commits sin is a slave and will be called a son of the devil.” He advised Coroticus, “Far from the love of God is a man who hands over Christians to the Picts and Scots.”

The letter was meant to notify Coroticus that failure to comply with Patrick’s request would result in his excommunication. The letter remains a strong condemnation of those who profit from human slavery.

Yet another St. Patrick’s Day is upon us, it is time to celebrate our Irish heritage. Patrick knew what it meant to be separated from his country of origin. So, we can use Patrick’s own words when he wrote, “Hence, I cannot be silent about the great benefits and the great grace which the Lord has deigned to bestow upon me in the land of my captivity...”

Although few of our Irish ancestors came to this country in captivity, many did come as exiles. So, let’s not be silent about our heritage on St. Patrick’s Day as we celebrate the “benefits and great grace” our ancestors found in this new land. Remember what the day is about – the real St. Patrick. Have a great day!

Michael Finn

Catholic Action

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5. The liturgical color for Lent is violet, except that rose may be worn on the Fourth Sunday, *Laetare* Sunday (March 30). Ash Wednesday is a day of fast and abstinence; all the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.

MAJOR SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS OF MARCH

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs | March 7 | |
| Patrick, Bishop | March 17 | |
| Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Doctor | March 18 | |
| Joseph, Spouse of Mary | March 19 | Solemnity |
| The Annunciation | March 25 | Solemnity |

IRISH SAINTS OF THE MONTH

Kieran of Saighir, Bishop (d.c. 530) March 5

This saint is also known as Kieran (or Ciaran) the Elder and is one of several sainted Kierans. Details of his life are sketchy and disputed, and many fanciful stories revolve around him. He lived for a time as a hermit, attracted a number of followers, and built a monastery which developed into the town of Saighir. He is considered the first bishop of Ossory; he may have been one of the twelve bishops consecrated by St. Patrick. St. Piran (or Perran), a Welsh hermit whose feast is celebrated the same day, is sometimes confused with him.

Fridolin, Abbot (6th century?) March 6

Reportedly an Irish priest who preached throughout Ireland and then wandered through Gaul preaching, Fridolin settled near Poitiers. He is credited with the recovery, guided by a vision, of the remains of the founder of St. Hilary's monastery there. He rebuilt the monastery, which had been destroyed during the barbarian invasions, and was elected abbot. He later settled on Sackingham, an island in the Rhine, and built a monastery, a convent, and boys' school there, serving as abbot of the monastery. He was known as the Wanderer, or the Traveller.

Senan, Bishop (d. 560) March 8

At least one authority on the subject lists twenty-two St. Senans and separating the details of their lives is not easy. This man is known as Senan of Scatterry Island. He was of Munster origin and lived the life of a warrior before hearing a call to religious life. After tutelage under an abbot named Cassidus, Senan was sent to St. Natalis, abbot of Kilmanagh in Ossory. Like many Irish saints, Senan made a pilgrimage to Rome, and on his journey home, made the acquaintance of St. David of Wales, whose staff Senan bore back to Ireland. After spending some time in a community at Inishcarra, Senan was directed by divine signs to found a community on Scatterry Island (Inish Cathaigh) in the estuary of the Shannon. He was supposedly consecrated a bishop at some point, but no one knows over what see or when.

Kessog, Bishop and Martyr (6th century) March 10

Kessog, or Mackessog, came of Munster royalty. He went to Scotland to preach the Gospel and was consecrated a bishop there. He is said to have suffered martyrdom, but exactly how or where is uncertain. The Scots formerly invoked him in battle, before St. Andrew replaced him in this regard, and he is depicted in iconography as an archer. Several place names in Scotland testify to his veneration there in Catholic times.

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Catholic Action, cont.**Oengus, Abbot and Bishop (d.c. 824)**

March 11

Oengus, or Aengus, entered the monastery of Clonenagh at Leix, then well-known for its size, learning, and sanctity. A few years later, he took up the life of a hermit a few miles away. Still later, he moved along to the abbey of Tallaght, near Dublin, where for years he concealed his identity from the abbot. This was probably in order to be able to lead a more retiring life, since over the years his reputation for sanctity had spread and brought him unwelcome attention. Toward the end of his years, Oengus returned to Clonenagh, where he was reportedly made abbot and bishop. In his final years, Oengus completed his metrical hymn in honor of the saints, the *Felire*, over which he had labored for many years. Oengus died at his nearby hermitage. He is known as the Hagiographer, because of his hymn, and the Culdee (God's Vassal), due to his strict asceticism.

Gerald of Mayo, Abbot (d. 732)

March 13

Gerald was an Englishman, a Northumbrian monk of Lindisfarne. After the Synod of Whitby imposed the Roman Easter observance over the Celtic one, a decision which Colman could not abide, a group of English novices accompanied St. Colman and his Irish followers back to Ireland. A community was established on Inishboffin. Though the Irish and English monks of the foundation agreed on liturgical usage, they evidently disagreed on enough other matters to cause Colman to erect a separate house on the adjacent Mayo coast for the English monks. It is not known whether Gerald was an original English member of Colman's group or came later; many English monks did come later, as the place had a reputation as a "school for the Saxons." Colman was at first abbot of both house, but was succeeded by Gerald as abbot of the English one. Gerald is sometimes said to have been a bishop, but it is likely that this results from confusion over the likelihood that Gerald enjoyed some sort of privileges as a protector and patron of his countrymen in Ireland. Gerald probably lived to see the imposition of the Roman Easter usage upon his abbey.

Patrick, Archbishop (c. 389-c. 461)

March 17

Most of us know at least the outline of the story of the Apostle of Ireland, and at least some of the legends about him. The son of Calpornius, a Romano-British official, born somewhere in the Roman province of Britain, he was carried off into slavery by Irish raiders when he was about 16. After serving as a shepherd for 6 years, probably in Mayo or Antrim, he escaped, and made his way to Gaul. He seems to have studied at the monastery of Lerins, 412-15, and was probably ordained c. 417. Patrick harbored the desire, encouraged by a vision which he experienced, to return and evangelize the pagan Irish. In about 432, consecrated bishop by St. Germanus, he was sent back to Ireland to carry on the work of St. Palladius, who had died the previous year. Most of the remainder of his life was spent in this task, as he travelled throughout the island, encountering the potentially deadly opposition of many pagan chieftains and the Druidic priests. In 442 and 444, he visited Rome. He made Armagh his episcopal see, cementing its role in the history of the Irish Church. Besides his many conversions, Patrick brought the Irish Church into closer union with Rome, encouraged the study of Latin, and raised the standards of scholarship in general. Among surviving writings, we have his *Confession*, an answer to some of his detractors, which contains many details of his life, his *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, denouncing murders committed by Welsh Christian marauders against their fellow Christians in Ireland, and his prayer, *The Lorica*. Patrick's tomb is believed to be at Downpatrick, with Saints Brigid and Columba.

Continued on Page 11

Catholic Action, cont.

Frigidian, Bishop (d.c. 588)

March 18

Frigidian was an Irish priest, who during a pilgrimage to Italy, resolved to become a hermit on Monte Pisano near Lucca. Eventually he unwillingly accepted the bishopric of Lucca under pressure from the pope. He fled the Lombard invasion of Lucca, returning later to rebuild the cathedral destroyed by the barbarians. He was noted for his solicitude for the suffering and sick, even those among the conquerors, many of whom he converted. Frigidian retired to his hermitage from time to time. He also founded and presided over a community of clergy, later organized as canons regular, who even five centuries later were seen as models for reform. He is better known in Italy as Frediano, and is still the patron of the cathedral of Lucca.

Christian, Abbot (d. 1186)

March 18

Christian was a disciple of St. Malachy and would appear to be one of the four men who remained behind at Clairvaux, taking the Cistercian habit, when Malachy passed through there returning from his pilgrimage to Rome. Malachy, desirous of bringing the Cistercians to Ireland, applied to his friend St. Bernard, who sent Christian and several French monks. Christian became the first abbot of the first Cistercian house in Ireland. It is possible that Blessed Christian was bishop of Lismore and papal legate in Ireland.

Enda, Abbot (c. 450-c. 530)

March 21

Enda was a warrior, possibly of Oriel in Ulster, whose sister, St. Fanchea, was a consecrated virgin. Fanchea persuaded him to give up raiding and violence and adopt Christianity, and later to embrace the monastic life and the priesthood. Enda may have studied abroad, in Scotland or Britain, and may have been to Rome. He established perhaps the first Irish monastery in the Aran Islands, at Killeany on Inismor, and became its abbot. The monastery became a pilgrimage site as well as a center from which evangelization spread back to the mainland of Ireland. Enda founded several other monasteries and shares with St. Finnian of Clonard the title Father of Irish Monasticism.

NEWS AND ISSUES

In the company of our National Pro-Life Chairman, Larry Squires, I attended the National March for Life January 24 and marched with the AOH contingent. Kristin Hawkins, head of Students for Life, was one of those who spoke at the AOH breakfast at the Irish Channel.

In remarks at the breakfast, President Sean Pender let it be known that AOH support for women's centers and pregnancy help centers is a priority of his term, down to local division level.

This is a special Jubilee Year in the Church, beginning with the Pope's opening of a special Jubilee door at St. Peter's at the beginning of the year. We have inherited this notion of a Jubilee Year from the ancient Hebrews (see *Leviticus* 25). Look for ways that your parish or diocese may be marking the year.

Another thing to watch for this year is commemoration of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicea (325). This was the first ecumenical council of the Church, and its authority is recognized by Catholics, the Orthodox, as well as many of our Protestant brethren. Nicea settled a number of elements of Christology and Trinitarian theology in Church doctrine. Also, the Creed which we recite at Mass originated at this Council (augmented by elements added by the Council of Constantinople in 381).

Your Catholic Action Chairmen would love to hear from you about what you are doing.

A Happy St. Patrick's Day to All.

Do you have local news? Please send for inclusion in this report.

Fraternally, Patrick J. Lally lally8404@hotmail.com 330-792-7135

Division News

Irish Brigade Div. #1, Medina Co.

The Irish Brigade Division #1 of Medina County presented a \$250 check, a sack of diapers and children's clothing on February 3rd to BirthCare of Medina County. The Hibernian brothers collected money and goods at their Christmas party in December, specifically to assist this Catholic Charities agency. BirthCare's mission is to provide emergency assistance and sympathetic support to families with young children to help assure their safety, warmth and health. For more information on this agency, access their website at birthcaremedina.org.



L to R: Pete Chrystal, BirthCare volunteer Tracy Bayer, Division President Jacob Durda, Tony Manley and Joe Casey]

Mark Heffernan Div. #2, Summit County

Hibernian Hall, 2000 Brown St., Akron, OH

Irish American Heritage Month March 1 Songs from Ireland

5:00-9:00 Chuck Keiper
Special Performances by the
MacConmara Academy of Irish Dance

March 2 All Irish Day
2:00 MacConmara Academy
3:00 Chuck Keiper
3:30 Custy & McNamara
4:00 MacConmara Academy

March 8 AOH Parade Day
7:00-11:00 Breakfast w/ The Hurler's
12:00 Parade, Main St. (Downtown Akron)
1:30 MacConmara Academy
2:00-4:00 Celtic Rush Band
4:00 MacConmara Academy
5:30-7:30 Gordon Shaffer Session Band
8:00 Callahan, O'Conner, & Butke

March 17 St. Patrick's Day Party
10:00 MASS- AOH Hall
11:30-1:30 Gordon Shaffer Session Band
2:00-4:00 Chuck Keiper
4:00 MacConmara Academy
5:00-7:00 TBD
7:00 MacConmara Academy
8:00 Callahan, O'Conner, & Butke

Food available every day by Kate's Kitchen, The Hurler's, LAOH

Friday, March 7, 24, 21, 28 Fish Fry

March 15 Join us for Karaoke



The Ancient Order of Hibernians in American St. Patrick Centre Ambassador Program

Saint Patrick Centre Young Ambassador

Leadership Program 2025

Members age 19 - 25 should apply today!!

Up to 10 young Hibernians will have the opportunity to travel to Downpatrick for the first two weeks in June 2025. You must be 1 year out of High School up to age 25. *All Expenses except food and beverage will be covered by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America!*

The aim of the Young Ambassador Program is to establish a network of informed and influential individuals throughout North America who can actively represent the northern part of Ireland throughout their lives. Northern Ireland provides an incredibly diverse platform to learn about many social and cultural aspects of contemporary and historical life in Ireland as well as a developing model for community reconciliation which is relevant to many cities in North America. Young Ambassadors will develop a meaningful and on-going relationship with Chapters of the Friends of Saint Patrick, the AOH, the Saint Patrick Centre and organizations linked to the Program.

[Apply Now](#)

Contact Danny O'Connell for more information

Dannyoaoh@gmail.com 330-518-4450

Lost Gaels

On Sunday March 2, 2025, at 7pm the Ohio AOH and LAOH are sponsoring a book launch at the West Side Irish American Club in Cleveland. Author Peadar Thompson from Belfast will be discussing his new book, *Lost Gaels*. The book details the members of the GAA who were lost during the Troubles. Cleveland will be the 9th stop in a 10 city US tour.



Irish American Heritage Month



Brothers,

March 1 marks the beginning of Irish American Heritage Month—*our month*. If we don't take the lead in recognizing and celebrating it, who will?

Once again, we will be sharing a video campaign and profiles of notable Irish Americans on the National AOH Facebook page and other social media. Make it a daily habit to like, share, and spread the word. One post from you can help educate and inspire others. Don't just share it on your Division's page—put it on your personal page too. The more shares we get, the more social media promotes our message, and the more people discover the real meaning of Irish heritage!

Take a quick look at your Division's website and social media—if the Christmas party or last summer's BBQ are still the lead story, it's time for an update. People are looking for real Irish history and heritage this month—let's make sure they find it with the AOH. It may even bring in members!

A Few Reminders:

Use "**Irish American Heritage Month**" instead of "Green Season"—the phrase matters; we celebrate the contributions and sacrifices of countless Irish men and women, not just a color we put on and take off.

Avoid "St. Patty's" or "St. Paddy's Day"—these are the equivalent of saying "Merry Xmas." Let's show our patron Saint and the man who brought Christianity to Ireland and the Irish to the attention of the world the respect he deserves.

When you march in a parade, reflect the pride in your heritage—let's push back against the commercial interests that reduce our heritage to facepaint, cosplay, and green beer. As Hibernians, we honor a history of resilience, faith, and pride—let's make sure that's what people see.

Take the time to pass on your family's stories to the young people in your life. Heritage is a gift you give, not receive.

[Visit the AOH Irish American Heritage Month Program page](#) for materials you can use to help tell our story.

Brothers, we are the stewards of Irish American heritage. Let's be proud. Let's celebrate because we know all that the Irish have done for our nation and the world. Most importantly, let's make sure others know it too. Lead by example—not just in March, but every day of the year.

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh! 🍀

In Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity,

Neil F. Cosgrove

Irish American Heritage Month

Justice Delayed is Justice Denied: The Public Inquiry Into Sean Brown's Murder Must Move Forward

Judge Michael C. Mentel*

On May 12, 1997, an impromptu match was played at the Bellaghy Wolfe Tones GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) Club grounds in South Derry, just outside of Bellaghy. The match was played at the time when the weekly GAA Club meeting normally took place. As a result of the match, the meeting was pushed back to that evening ending at 11:15 p.m. .

Following the meeting, Club Chairman Sean Brown waited until the last meeting attendees left the grounds. He then drove his vehicle to the main gates of the Club immediately off of Ballscullion Road to lock the gates for the night. At approximately 11:32 p.m. members of the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) pulled several cars into the gate area, exited their cars, and attacked Mr. Brown brutally beating him.

Mr. Brown was thrown into the trunk of his own car, which was then driven by the LVF to a secluded area ten miles outside of Bellaghy. Once there, he was dragged from the trunk, thrown down next to his car, and shot six times in the head. The LVF then set fire to the car. The heat from the flames was so extreme that it burned a portion of his body.

Twenty-eight years on, no one has been charged or prosecuted for his murder.

Chairman of the GAA

Sean Brown was 61 years old when he was murdered. He is survived by his 87 year old widow, Bridie Brown. Sean Brown was father to six children, now grown adults. Regrettably, one of his adult children passed away four years ago.

Mr. Brown was not engaged in politics nor was he involved in any paramilitary activity or organizations. He was held in high esteem in his community and across Ireland. His dedication and support of the GAA was unquestionable. His murder

has been described as “an arrow through Ireland’s heart.”. In 2024, the Coroners Court for Northern Ireland wrote in its inquiry opinion regarding his murder that, “[Sean Brown] was a man who was at the heart of his family and his community. He was a man of whom his family are justifiably proud. He was the kind of person our society needs, and his loss is truly felt in that wider sense.”

In 2024, a public inquiry was ordered by the High Court in Belfast into Mr. Brown’s murder however, the British government appealed that ruling to stop the inquiry from moving forward.

British Appeal Brown Public Inquiry Ruling

The legal path to the public inquiry into Sean Brown’s murder has taken many turns. Public inquiries are prescribed under The Public Inquiries Act of 2005 (the “Act”). The Act provides that a British government Minister may cause an inquiry to be held if it appears that “particular events have caused...public concern, or...there is a public concern that particular events may have occurred.”

On February 27, 2024, the Legacy Inquest Unit released a Gist of the Sean Brown Inquest. A “Gist” under northern Ireland law identifies the essential grounds or object of a legal action without which no cause for action would exist.

The Gist issued by the Legacy Inquest Unit stated that “[t]he material [provided in the case] indicates that in excess of 25 individuals were linked, through intelligence, to the murder of Sean Brown. The intelligence material [further] indicates that those individuals are said to have been involved, at the material time, with loyalist paramilitaries”. It further stated that “... intelligence material [from the British government] indicates that at the time of the death of Sean Brown, a number of individuals linked through intelligence to the murder were agents of the [British government].”

Continued on Page 16

Justice Delayed is Justice Denied: The Public Inquiry Into Sean Brown's Murder Must Move Forward, cont.

In March, 2024, the Coroner Court Justice, Mr. Justice Kinney, determined that “[he was] satisfied that [his] duty to carry out a full, fair and fearless investigation into Mr. Brown’s death is seriously compromised as issues of central importance to the death cannot be dealt with by the inquest process.” He determined that “[he could not] investigate or make a proper analysis of material which is the subject of the PII [public interest immunity] certificates.” In other words, the British government was blocking the coroner from investigating the murder by claiming PII.

In December 2024, the Belfast High Court of Justice handed down a ruling advancing the public inquiry into the murder. The Court adopted several key findings from the Gist. It subsequently issued “...an order of mandamus compelling the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to cause a public inquiry to be held, under the Inquiries Act 2005, into the death of Sean Brown on 12 May 1997”. An appeal of the court’s order by the British government soon followed.

British government Appeals High Court Decision

The British government asserts two issues in its appeal. The first contention asserts that it is exempt from disclosing information under public interest immunity, PII, allowing it to bar the release of otherwise disclosable information. The second contention asserts that the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (the “ICRIR”) exists to conduct the inquiry in lieu of a public inquiry under the inquiry Act.

The ICRIR is a body established under the Legacy Act of 2023 and is intended to provide families with answers to the tragedies suffered during the Troubles while giving immunity to government perpetrators. The Court of Appeals Belfast has ruled part of the Legacy Act to be unlawful while allowing the ICRIR

to continue. The Government is allegedly in the process of repealing and replacing the Legacy Act, however it intends to contest the Court of Appeals ruling relating to the Secretary of State’s unilateral authority to withhold sensitive information.

The fundamental problem to advancing a public inquiry is the British Secretary of State’s unilateral authority to determine what sensitive information will and will not be disclosed. In this case, the Secretary of State asserts that he, not the courts, has sole authority to determine what information is held back on the Government’s involvement in the Brown murder.

On January 16th of this year, the British government argued its appeal before the Court of Appeals Belfast. It contended that it holds unilateral authority to determine if a public inquiry should move forward. Des Fahy KC, representing the Brown family, argued that the “illegality at the centre [sic] of this challenge [is the] refusal by the Secretary of State to convene a public inquiry...In refusing to do so, he is presiding over a state of illegality.”

Barrister Fahy argued that “Sean Brown’s widow appears in court today for the 57th time to ask a court to ensure that the state adheres to its minimum obligation to ensure an effective investigation of how her husband died and in what circumstances.” Fahy noted to the Court that “[t]he killers have in all likelihood escaped accountability for their actions, but the reasons why that was, and is, still can, and must, be examined.”

A maxim of law posits that justice delayed is justice denied. Twenty-eight years and fifty-seven court appearances later, justice has clearly been delayed. It now rests with the Court of Appeals Belfast to ensure that justice is not denied to the Brown family.

**Judge Michael C. Mentel is a Judge on the Ohio Court of Appeals Tenth District. He is a member of the Shamrock Club of Columbus, and the Patrick Pearse Division I, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Columbus, Ohio*