

## Father Michael's Musings

March 2025

March is a busy and important month for St. Patrick's this year. Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> is the Celebration of Shrove Tuesday, and next day, March 5<sup>th</sup>, is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of our Lenten season. On Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate our Patronal feast with a St. Patrick's Day traditional Irish corned beef and cabbage meal. Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> will also include Confirmations for several members of the Church and a visit from our Bishop, the Right Reverend William Bower.

Shrove Tuesday is more commonly known as Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). That day, we feast in anticipation of the Fasting we will exercise during the season of Lent. For St. Patrick's, that means our traditional pancake dinner, including blueberry pancakes, strawberry pancakes and even crepes. The dinner will also include fresh fruit, bacon, sausage and other home cooked sides. The pancakes are cooked by Father Michael and Father Chet, two seasoned flippers who know their way around the griddle. Please come and join us for dinner.

Please also join us the following day for Ashes and the beginning of Lent. We will have services at 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM. For those of you unfamiliar with the Ash Wednesday practice, ashes are made placed by the priest on the forehead of the worshippers in the Sign of the Cross. These ashes serve to remind us that a life dedicated to our selfish and material desires is pointless. It reminds us also that the sacrifice made by Jesus during his Passion and Crucifixion redeems us from our sinful and self-centered life. We set aside these 40 days of Lent to prayer and dedication of our lives to a Godly and Holy purpose, with deep appreciation for our Redemption and reconciliation with God, and for a destiny of eternal Life and Love.

We do take dispensation from our Lenten Fast to celebrate the life of our patron, St. Patrick, at 6 o'clock on Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. It will be a time of fellowship, music and traditional Irish food. Many of us think about St. Patrick as we hold a 3 leaf clover, which he used to teach about the Trinity. A few of us know the story of St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland, which is an allegory for his overcoming the Druid religion, symbolized by a snake. Some even know that the church established in Ireland was the source of missionaries to Scotland, Britain and even France.

But only a small number know that St. Patrick was originally an English boy captured by pirates near his hometown and taken to Ireland where he was sold into slavery. After a decade, he escaped and made his way to freedom back in England, where he became a

priest. God called him to respond to the trauma and suffering of his youth by calling him to return to Ireland and found a church that would convert his captors and change the destiny of Ireland and much of the world. That willingness to forgive those who did him terrible wrong, and to dedicate his life to establishing a new church, and serving the same people who had enslaved him is the greatest of his accomplishments, and the reason we are proud to be members of a church that honor his sacrifice, and strive to imitate his holiness and kindness.

God bless you.

Father Michael