

SAINT PATRICK: FAITH HE FOUGHT TO KEEP

St. Patrick is credited for converting our Irish pagan ancestors into Christians, by enlightening their pagan minds with the Paschal Flame of Faith. He physically lit this flame on the Hill of Slane (433AD) to make the people aware of the Presence of Christ in their hearts. He is depicted by the image of driving snakes out of Ireland. This image symbolised the Evil presence of Satan in Ireland. Satan is represented in the Garden of Eden as a snake. The devil never went too far away. Most Irish Christians have sadly returned to their pagan roots, not believing in God. Many have sadly replaced God with the Golden Calf of worldly possessions and philosophies.

DO NOT FALL FOR FALSE TRUTHS

St. Paul (2Tim 4:1-8), warns us not to be dependent on ourselves, but to learn how to protect ourselves by listening and obeying the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel. To *fight the good fight* is nothing to do with beating life's misfortunes on our own terms, it refers to us fighting against sin and the enemy, who is Satan. We can only fight evil with faith. Always trust in Jesus and not in what St. Paul calls, *the latest novelty.... according to our own tastes*. St. Paul asks us to *be brave in times of trials* and not to lose faith and hope in Jesus, who is God made visible in the Person of Jesus Christ.

THE HIDDEN TRUTH ABOUT SATAN

Like a snake, Satan continues to hide, like a weed infecting a healthy harvest in a field, which symbolises us in this world. In today's Gospel (Mt 13:24-32), Jesus explains how evilness is like a parasite, latching onto goodness. We must never forget that on our Judgement Day, Jesus will separate evil from good. It is God who sows the good seed of love. The darnel is a weed, symbolising sin, which is harmful to the harvest, which is us. If we oppose Church teachings and solely live according to our own freewill, then we have willingly allowed Satan plant the seed of sin in our hearts. Our lifestyle should conform to God's Will. Jesus in His infinite patience is giving us a sacred time, in this earthly pilgrimage, to change from our sinful ways, before the Day of Judgement, when we will be made accountable for our conduct on earth.

HARVEST OF LOVE AND MERCY AND CHARITY

By never practicing love, mercy or repenting for our sins in confession, risk the very real possibility of us ending up in hell. If Jesus finds us still tied to sin, after we have died, then He says that we will be bound up into *bundles to be burned*. This refers to the fires of hell. People who imitated Christ in life, will be led into the glorious barn of heaven. Jesus also compares the Kingdom of heaven to a tiny mustard seed. We must allow this seed, which is the presence of Jesus, planted in the field of our hearts, in baptism, to grow, so that our souls magnify and project Jesus, in the way we live and treat others. The Kingdom of God is established in all of us in baptism. Protect it from the enemy by practicing our faith. God bless and a Blessed St. Patrick's Day! Fr. Brendan.