

6. Prayers

Mentioning people and situations we want to pray for.

7. Closing Prayer

An Irish Blessing

May the blessing of light be upon us,
light on the outside and light on the inside,
with God's sunlight shining on us.
May our hearts glow with warmth
to welcome friends and strangers alike.

May the blessing of God's soft rain be on us,
falling gently on our heads,
refreshing our souls with the
sweetness of little flowers newly blooming.

May the blessing of God's earth be on us
as we walk on our way; may we always
have a kind word for those we meet.

May we understand the strength and
power of God in a thunderstorm in
winter, the quiet beauty of creation, the
calm of a summer sunset and the tender
love that surrounds us.

In this Easter season we may rejoice
in all the signs of life springing around us
and in the assurance of God's faithful,
unending love.

Irish Blessing (adapted)

Myrtle

Myrtle is a shrub with evergreen leaves and small white flowers indigenous throughout Palestine. The fruit is a small black berry used in biblical times for rituals and celebrations. (Isaiah 41:19 and 55:13)



The myrtle tree with its dark green leaves and star-shaped flowers it is a symbol of peace, hope, innocence, abundance and balance. Its perfume is reputed to be more exquisite than roses.

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Partners in Faith

c/o Sophia Housing Association,
25 Cork Street, Dublin 8.
Tel: 087 2077458
Email: info@partnersinfaith.ie
Website: www.partnersinfaith.ie

Gospel-sharing for Small Groups

Fifth Sunday
of Lent and
Feast of St. Patrick
2024

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Prayer of St. Patrick

May the strength of God pilot us
May the wisdom of God instruct us
May the hand of God protect us
May the word of God direct us
May your saving grace, O Lord,
be always ours, this day and for
evermore.

Christ behind us, Christ before us,
Christ beside us, Christ to win us
Christ to comfort us and restore us
Christ beneath us, Christ above us;
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger.
Christ in hearts of all that love us
Christ in the mouth of friends
or stranger.
Christ wherever we go, wherever we
stay.

2. Gospel text: John 12:20-33

Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew, Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

Jesus replied: "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am

my servant will be also. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say?" 'Father, save me from this hour?' No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 'Father, glorify your name.'"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

3. Quiet time...

People can read over the text for themselves and pick out words or short phrases that strike them and say them out loud. When everyone has had a chance to say their word/phrase, they can then reflect silently for a moment or two and then briefly say why such a word/phrase struck them in relation to themselves, or their community or the world.



4. Background Notes for John 12:20-33

Jerusalem is full of pilgrims arriving for the festival, among them many Greek-speaking Jews from all around the Roman Empire. The text carries a sense of Jesus' life on earth reaching its end. The interlude of the Greeks seeking to meet him is not developed. Jesus answers by giving insight into his own feelings of hesitation and dread. He is overcome by the dawning awareness: his life is coming to an end. The grain must fall down, die and break open.

He shrinks away from what it will mean: his one life taken away in terrible, cruel suffering and death. The 'seed' dying.

But he chooses to be faithful; to trust in God, despite what awaits him.

After his death and resurrection, the elements of God's dream flourish.

The community of followers are not alone but have a new, powerful unity with Jesus and the Father through the Spirit. Living and acting with faith and courage, the followers, then and today, can help life blossom transforming the wastelands. No love ever being lost upon the face of the earth.

5. Reflection Question for John 12:20-33

This St. Patrick's day, what does Ireland need most?