



Immaculate Conception
Church

Homily for the 4th Sunday of Lent

Year B 2015

Paddy suffered a serious heart attack and had open heart surgery. He awakened from the surgery to find himself in the care of nuns at a catholic Hospital.

As he was recovering, a nun asked him questions regarding how he was going to pay for this surgery. She asked if he had health insurance.

He replied... "No health insurance."

The nun asked if he had money in the bank.

He replied... "No money in the bank."

The nun asked, "Do you have a relative who could help you?" He said, "I only have a spinster sister, who is a nun."

The nun became agitated and announced loudly, "Nuns are not spinsters! Nuns are married to God!"

"In that case," replied Paddy, "send the bill to my brother-in- law."

And so in a few days we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day. It will

be, as it always is, a day filled with the rich gift of Irish mirth and the joyous celebration of the Apostle of Ireland...not to mention an abundance of Irish Bread.

Fast on the heels of St. Patrick's Day comes the feast of St. Joseph. To speak of St. Joseph's feast is to speak of Zeppoles. Zeppoles are a special sweet created especially for this feast of St. Joseph. Legend says that this tradition began in Sicily during the Middle Ages during a severe drought, in which people prayed to St. Joseph to bring rain.

The drought ended and along the streets, the Sicilians offered gifts, as a sign of gratitude to St. Joseph...including a special food for the poor. Zeppoles were prepared in huge quantities and given to the poor and those who were hungry.

This great feast celebrates the man chosen by God to be the guardian of his beloved Son, Husband of Mary, patron of the Church and center of devotion for those of Italian heritage.

And then there is today...the 4th Sunday of Lent. Considered to be the mid-point of Lent it is also called Laetare Sunday...a joyful Sunday. And on this Sunday the Church offers us the connective thread that weaves this Season of Lent and the great feasts of Joseph and Patrick together. For the gospel proclaims "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." St. John is quick to tell us that the Son of God did not come to condemn but to save the world.

Jesus taught Nicodemus that the power of God's love would be raised high above the people. This image would not be that of the serpent that Moses lifted up. Rather, it would be God's love made real in the flesh and blood of the Son of God.

It is this love of God that empowered Joseph and Patrick to pour their lives out in service of God.

And in a world shattered by hatred, prejudice and violence, it is this same love of God the empowers each of us to pour out our own lives for others so that all of us might find life in the great mystery of God's unending love.