



St. Patrick  
Statue: Notre Dame Parish,  
Chippewa Falls, WI

### Sacred Scripture:

Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I call you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

*John 15:12-15*

“A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he who finds one finds a treasure. There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend, no sum can balance his worth.

A faithful friend is a life-saving remedy, and those who fear the Lord will find him.

Whoever fears the Lord behaves accordingly, and his friend will be like himself.”

*Sirach 6: 14-17*

# VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

## Friendship

### Catechism of the Catholic Church:

Friendship with persons: “Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion” (CCC 2347). “The principle of friendship or social charity is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood” (CCC 1939). The depth of our friendship with others is dependent upon and related to our friendship with God.

Friendship with God: “God created man in His own image, male and female He created them; God established him in His friendship” (CCC 355). Even when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and lost His friendship, He did not abandon them to the power of death (CCC 55). “God shows forth His almighty power by converting us from our sins and restoring us to His friendship by grace” (CCC 277).

### What is the virtue of friendship?

The relationship between acquaintances may blossom into friendship when there is a common interest in work or leisure, help is given or received, joys and sorrows are shared, and the good of each is advanced by the other. Friends enjoy the other’s company. Friendship will always involve commitment at some level. The basis of friendship is some kind of communication and it is mutual, selfless, grounded in virtue, with an ongoing development of truthfulness, trust, faithfulness, loyalty, generosity, understanding, modesty, and respect.

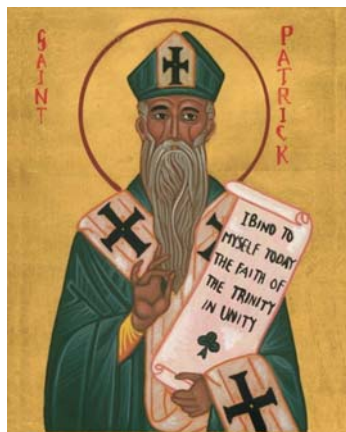
- As a friendship develops, the individuals learn to adjust to each other’s temperament, idiosyncrasies, moods and tastes.
- Friendships are not to be developed with ulterior motives in mind, such as gaining popularity or based upon a fascination of a quality (such as exterior beauty, a successful talent) and not based on false and empty “goods exchanged” (purely material objects, unhealthy items such as illegal drugs).
- Strong and meaningful friendships can only develop with human persons to the extent that we are growing in a deep and strong relationship with God through regular communication, which is daily prayer. The degree of love we have for a friend is indicative of our love for God. (See 1John 4:20-21)

### Why do we need the virtue of friendship?

- We are created to be in relationship with others. We are drawn to share our life with others who have similar interests.
- Through regular communication that is noble and good and in sharing in virtuous things, chosen friendships develop and help the individuals to mature in Christian character.
- A true friend wants his friends to be happy. Our friends can only be happy if they live as children of God. Therefore, an authentic friend can never accept or encourage a friend to do anything immoral or illegal. Rather, a real friend helps his friends to perform good deeds and grow in holiness, becoming the best person he can possibly be – the person God created him to be.
- In offering a friend advice or direction, we must accept the fact that this counsel may be rejected. A friend cannot be controlled or forced as freedom is part of true friendship.
- In marriage there is communication of life, work, goods, affection, and indissoluble fidelity. And so, married friendship is a true, holy friendship.

*St. Patrick's  
Breast-Plate Prayer*

*I bind to myself today  
God's Power  
to guide me,  
God's Might  
to uphold me,  
God's Wisdom  
to teach me,  
God's Eye  
to watch over me,  
God's Ear  
to hear me,  
God's Word  
to give me speech,  
God's Hand  
to guide me,  
God's Way  
to lie before me,  
God's Shield  
to shelter me,  
God's Host  
to secure me,  
Against the snares  
of demons,  
Against the seductions  
of vices,  
Against the lusts of nature,  
Against everyone who  
meditates injury to me,  
Whether far or near,  
Whether few or with many.*



**St. Patrick  
385-461**

Icon credit: Institute of St. Joseph

# Friendship St. Patrick



**FAST FACTS**  
*Also Known As:*

Patron of Ireland  
Patron of Engineers  
Patron of Paralegals

Feast Day:  
March 17

### *His Life*

- Patrick was born around the year 385 in a British village in Scotland. His family was financially comfortable and his father was a deacon
- Patrick was kidnapped when he was 16 and taken to Ireland and made to tend sheep. During the great suffering of his enslavement, he turned to prayer, coming to know the love of God. His character was formed by fervent prayer, his growing love for God, and the acceptance of his situation. (See *Romans 5:5*)
- After 6 years as a captive, God told him in a dream that a ship that would return him to his home was “ready”. He fled to a port 200 miles from his captors. The ship by which Patrick escaped from Ireland landed in France, in an area that had recently been devastated. The ship’s crew nearly starved to death for a month until the pagan captain challenged Patrick to pray to his “all powerful” God for food. Patrick prayed with confidence and a herd of pigs suddenly appeared, which was enough to feed them.
- Patrick returned to his home in Scotland several years later. Although there is little information on the early life of Patrick, after years of study he was ordained a priest. Patrick heard a call from the Irish in a dream to “come and walk among us once more.” He waited patiently to return to his friends, and even those who had enslaved him in Ireland, to enlighten them about God.
- Years later, Patrick was consecrated a bishop and assigned to evangelize Ireland. For twenty-nine years, Patrick worked as a missionary and amid unbelievable difficulties, eventually obtained the protection of the local kings, and made numerous converts.
- Patrick used the shamrock to teach about the Trinity. Patrick strengthened the people in their faith and virtues, comforted them in their difficulties, and ordained priests and consecrated Bishops to continue God’s work.
- Patrick authored “Confession”, the story of his life which showed his humility and sanctity. Patrick died in Ireland on May 17, 461.

### *How is Saint Patrick a model of friendship?*

- Patrick was a true friend of the people of Ireland. No matter what the cost to himself, he wanted what was best for them, the salvation of their souls.
- During Patrick’s twenty-nine years as a missionary in Ireland, the people of Ireland converted to the faith. This success gave him “joy of heart”; he never failed to see this as a gift from God.
- Patrick persevered through trials and suffering as he worked diligently to convert the pagans. He was peaceful in his efforts to befriend and evangelize the Irish people. He literally took them into his heart, always seeking to secure their best spiritual interests.

## Activities to foster the growth of the virtue of friendship

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- Pray this prayer written by St. Patrick, asking for the grace to grow in the virtue of friendship.  
Peace between family members,  
Peace between relatives,  
Peace between friends,  
In love of the King of Life.

Peace between person and person,  
Peace between wife and husband,  
Peace between mother and children,  
The peace of Christ above all peace.

Bless, O Christ, my face,  
Let my face bless every thing;  
Bless, O Christ, my eyes,  
Let my eyes bless all it sees.

- Make a list of the words from page one that describes the virtue of friendship.
- Many of our friends live in the same neighborhood. We attend school and participate in various activities with them. However, when you personally choose to develop a friendship with someone, what qualities would you want in a friend?
- Discuss the process of developing a friendship?
- Where there is virtue, friendships develop naturally What virtues are necessary to develop an authentic friendship? Give examples to explain the necessity of each virtue.
  - Loyalty—we stand by a friend through difficulties except if it will lead us to immoral behavior.
  - Generosity—we are to offer time, talent, and treasure to a friend when it is useful for his improvement.
  - Modesty—in male - female friendships, we guard the extent to which we surrender aspects of our intimacy.
  - Understanding—we need to listen and recognize the various factors which affect a friend's situation.
  - Trust—we believe in a friend and know we can depend and rely upon him in all circumstances.
  - Respect—we see the good of a friend and accept personality traits that are different than ours.
  - Spirit of Sacrifice—to be more than an acquaintance we are selfless rather than selfish.
  - Commitment—a friend is there when one is in need.
- Why do we want to select friends wisely? What are the effects of living the virtue of friendship?
- Reflect on a way you have failed to be a good friend. What could you have done differently?
- How does the Sacrament of Reconciliation assist you to live out the virtue of friendship?
- Why do friendships end? Is there ever a time that it is good to end a friendship?

God is the basis of all love,  
and is therefore the source of all friendship.

cf. St. Thomas Aquinas as cited in *We Die Standing Up*,  
Dom Hubert Van Zeller, NY Sheed and Ward, p. 129

- Using the “Praying with Scripture” prayer worksheet, take ten minutes to pray with a Scripture passage.
 

1 <i>Samuel</i> 18:1-5	David and Jonathan were friends.
<i>John</i> 11:1-44	Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were friends of Jesus.
<i>John</i> 19:23-27	John, the beloved disciple stayed at the foot of the Cross with Jesus.
<i>John</i> 20:19-29	Jesus appears to His friends, the Apostles, after His Resurrection.
2 <i>Timothy</i> 1-14	St. Paul sends a letter to Timothy with guidance and encouragement.
- Each week, memorize a Scripture passage that relates to friendship. Examples:
 

<i>Proverbs</i> 13:20	“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”
<i>John</i> 15:12-15	Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I call you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.”
1 <i>Cor</i> 15:33	“Bad company ruins good morals.”
<i>Sirach</i> 6: 14-17	“A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter; he who finds one finds a treasure. There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend, no sum can balance his worth. A faithful friend is a life-saving remedy, and those who fear the Lord will find him. Whoever fears the Lord behaves accordingly, and his friend will be like himself.
<i>Sirach</i> 6:5	“A pleasant voice multiplies friends, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies.”
- Read a book about a saint and report to the class how this saint lived out the virtue of friendship. Examples: St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure; St. Bernard and St. Hildegard; St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal; St. Benedict and St. Scholastica (brother and sister); St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare; St. Philip Neri and St. Catherine dei Ricci; St. Catherine of Siena and Friar Bartholomew de Dominicis of Siena; Venerable Louis of Granada and St. Charles of Borromeo; St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzan.
- What does it mean to want to possess a friend exclusively?
- Discuss these very practical tips observed in good friendships. Give an example for each.
  - **Express interest** in your friend’s life
  - **Pay attention**, recognize what your friend needs in the current moment: a listening ear, compassion, praise
  - Exhort your friends to **strive for the best** moral answer, the truth, and all things holy
  - Always try to **think the best** until proven otherwise
  - Be willing to **accept praise** from a friend
  - Be willing to **give praise** often but appropriately
  - **Apologize earnestly** when appropriate
  - **Show hospitality** whenever possible
  - **Be of service** as you are able
  - **Be a considerate guest**
  - **Respect even a subtle “No”**
  - **Think twice before asking for favors**
  - **Accept constructive criticism**
  - **Give constructive criticism**
  - **Practice truthfulness** in all circumstances

“There can be no genuine friendship between Christians unless Christ comes in to make a third.”

St. Aelred

## Additional Information on the Virtue of Friendship

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- “Every friendship that lasts is built of certain durable materials. The first of these is truthfulness. Trust is the first requisite for making a friend, faithfulness is the first requisite for keeping him, and trust and faithfulness cannot endure without truthfulness” (*The Business of Being a Friend*, Bertha Conde, NY: Houghton, Mifflin Co.).
- “You should not pick your friends based on who are the easiest friends to make or the most influential. You should choose your companion based on these two questions: Where do I want to end up as a person? and Who is going in that direction?” (*5 Needs Your Child Must Have Met at Home*, Ron Hutchcraft, Grand Rapids: Zondervon, pp. 96-97).  
“True friendship arises out of virtue and it grows as virtue grows. This growth, in turn, makes the person more loveable and more capable of loving” (*The Education of Friendship*, Dr. David Isaacs, p. 1). A friendship will probably revert to acquaintanceship if one person is growing in virtue while the other is growing in vice.
- The best way to develop a friendship with someone is to spend time with the person, listening and expressing an interest in his/her life. Further, “friendships take work to cultivate, and work to maintain. It takes a spirit of sacrifice and a spirit of service to nurture friendships.” (*Raise Happy Children...Teach Them Joy!*, Mary Ann Budnick, R.B. Media, p. 278-279)
- The assistance God provides in the Sacrament of Confession is something that has to be experienced more than understood intellectually. Challenge the students to reflect on a way in which they have specifically failed to live out this virtue. Following this reflection, encourage them to acknowledge that awareness of sin to a priest in Sacramental Confession and notice the strengthening that has taken place in their heart following their reception of forgiveness of sin, after expressing sorrow for their sin and their willingness to change their behavior.
- “According to different kinds of communication friendships also differ, and communications differ according to the goods exchanged (such as books, e-mails, gifts). If the goods are false and empty, the friendship is false and empty. If they are true goods, the friendship is true” (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, St. Francis de Sales, p. 170).
- “True friendship is rare indeed, as most of us learn with sorrow, and yet it is very common among saints. Saints know how to love with understanding and forgiving love... and, realizing its worth, make the sacrifices necessary to be worthy of possessing it.” “The bond of charity, of true Christian friendship which exists between us, is what St. Paul calls the ‘bond of perfection.’ And indeed it is that, for it is indissoluble; the longer it endures, the stronger it becomes; death itself has no power over it.” “The love of saints is constant and enduring, for it is unselfish love. It leads to the heights of spiritual sweetness, for it is pure love that desires to give rather than to take. It reaches its hands through the gates of death, for it is established in God.” (*The Joyful Ways of the Saints, And What They Teach About Kindness, Humility, Courage, and Love*, Sister Mary Eleanore, C.S.C., Sophia Institute Press, p. 57, 60, 68).
- “If we are greedy for the other’s affection, demanding a monopoly and constant attention, then of course we shall try and run our friend. The manager-companion is an abomination... Possessiveness can spoil everything – not only the quality of the relationship but also the plan of God” (*Raise Happy Children...Teach Them Joy!*, Mary Ann Budnick, R.B. Media, p. 281, 292).  
It is usual for a person to have a few real friends or soul mates. Having a friend is a privilege and is worth the effort.

# Additional Resources on the Virtue of Friendship

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## Pre-School through Third Grade

- *Saint Joseph First Book of Saints, Their Life-Story and Example*, Lovasik, Father Lawrence, S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp, 1986.
- *Book of Saints for Catholic Children*, Lord, Father Daniel, William J. Hirten Co., 2009
- *Picture Book of Saints*, Lovasik, Rev. Lawrence G., S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1979.
- *Saints Tell Their Stories*, Mitchell, Patricia and Lo Cascio, Maria Cristina; The Word Among Us Press, 2009. [www.wordamongus.org](http://www.wordamongus.org).
- *Little Book of Saints: #2*, Muldoon, Kathleen M., Pauline Books & Media, 2005
- *Book of Saints, #1*, Lovasik, Rev. Lawrence G., S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 1981
- *Patrick, Brave Shepherd of the Emerald Isle*, DVD animated, CCC, Ignatius Press.

## Fourth Grade through Eighth Grade

- *Saints for Young Readers for Every Day, Volume 1*, Wallace, Susan Helen, Pauline Books and Media, 1999 (2 pages)
- *Saint of the Day, Lives, Lessons, Feasts*, Foley, Leonard, O.F.M., McCloskey, Pat, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2009.
- *Best-Loved Saints*, Lovasik, Fr. Lawrence G. S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2007.
- *Patrick, Brave Shepherd of the Emerald Isle*, DVD animated, CCC, Ignatius Press.
- *St Patrick: The Irish Legend*. VHS, Saban Entertainment, Inc., Ignatius Press.

## Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade

- *Best-Loved Saints*, Lovasik, Fr. Lawrence G. S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2007.
- *Saint of the Day, Lives, Lessons, Feasts*, Foley, Leonard, O.F.M., McCloskey, Pat, O.F.M., St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2009..
- *St Patrick: The Irish Legend*. VHS, Saban Entertainment, Inc., Ignatius Press.
- *Speaking to the Heart, a Father's Guide to Growth in Virtue*, Stephen Gabriel, Our Sunday Visitor.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Friend, Friendship)
  - Christ, friend of man, 1972
  - God, friend of man, 142, 2063, 2576
  - Laying down one's life for one's friend, 609
  - Friendship between Christ and man, 1395,2665
  - Friendship between God and man, 55,277, 355, 374, 384, 396, 1023, 1030, 1468, 1863, 2709
  - Charity, harmony and friendship 1829, 1939
  - Chastity developed and expressed in friendship, 2347
  - Friendship is no excuse for insults against the truth, 2480

“You consider yourself a friend because you say nothing bad. That is true but I see in you no sign of giving good example or service. This kind makes the worst friends.”

*Furrows, St. Josemaria Escriva, #740*