

# Lent with the Saints, Part 1: Praying with St. Patrick

While most of the young people will recognize the name of St. Patrick, few will know the details of his life. I will begin by telling his story, highlighting that he learned how to depend on God during his time in captivity. His total trust and dependence in God gave him the strength to spread the good news of Jesus Christ throughout Ireland.

I will then hand out copies of the prayer known as “St. Patrick’s Breastplate”:

*Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in the eye that sees me,  
Christ in the ear that hears me.*

To help them take this prayer to heart, I will tell the young people that they can pray the words, “Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,” every time they do one of the following:

- do a kind deed for someone.
- become the recipient of a kind deed.
- take a moment to rest.
- think of someone they love.
- think of someone they dislike.
- hear someone compliment another.
- see someone in need of help.

This practice will remind the young people to see Christ in the people they encounter, which will help them grow in **friendship with the Lord**.

Lent is a time of spiritual renewal for all of us. I hope that by taking St. Patrick’s Breastplate to heart, young people will draw closer to God and one another.

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/lenten-meditation-1-friendship-with-god/>

<https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2017/03/lent-with-the-saints-part-1-praying-with-st-patrick/>

# Lenten Meditation 1: Friendship with God

By **Becky Eldredge**

*I maintain that God—out of the abundance of divine relational life, not any need for us—desires humans into existence for the sake of friendship. This thesis may sound strange, because it runs counter to much teaching about God. To be honest, I questioned it myself when I first began to think it through. But over the years, as my own relationship with God has deepened and I have listened to people talk about how God relates to them, I have become convinced that the best analogy for the relationship God wants with us is friendship.*

*As I begin my Lenten journey, I pray to understand what it means for my life that God wants to be friends with me.*

—William A. Barry, SJ, in ***Lenten Meditations: Growing in Friendship with God***

The idea that God wants to be friends with me seems absurd! Why in the world would God, the Creator of the universe, the Giver of all things, want to be in relationship with me? What can I possibly offer God in the realm of friendship?

There are many types of friendships in my life:

- the friends who can sit with me and hold everything going on in my life
- the friends who can sit in silence with me as we savor our time together
- the ones who laugh loudly with me and celebrate the abundance of life
- the ones who are present during the tough times
- the ones that are part of my day-to-day life and support me in motherhood

All of these friends offer a piece of themselves to me, and by their doing so I experience what it's like to be loved by another. I, too, offer various types of friendships to men and women in my life. In being there as a friend, I am helping them experience what it's like to be loved by another.

God offers a relationship that encompasses all of these different types of friendships. In a sense, God is the totality of all of my human friends in one.

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God sits with me in silence, rejoices with me, laughs with me, celebrates with me, supports me in tough times, and walks with me in my day-to-day life. All of these ways that God is present deepen my understanding of God's love for me.

What can I offer to God, though? I offer my presence to God. I offer my response to the totality of God's love. I offer my love to God as I laugh, celebrate, cry, and share the depths of my heart with God. I offer my gifts and talents to God. In this mutual giving to each other and receiving from each other, we develop a deep friendship with each other.