

St. Patrick's Day Celebration
March 17, 1993
Most Reverend Thomas J. Murphy
Archbishop of Seattle
Homily

Once again we gather to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. We join together in prayer and song as a community of people who recognize that today's celebration is more than the observance of a significant person in the heritage of one particular ethnic group.

Rather, we celebrate this day to see how one person heard God's Word and made a difference. The prophet Jeremiah challenges all of us to be willing to speak God's Word, whether we are young or old, whether we can speak well or speak poorly. Paul challenged the early Christian community to be "the light of the world." And Jesus would instruct His disciples to bring the gift of peace to all the households they would visit.

St. Patrick heard the Word of God and made it come alive in his life. Today, we must do the same. If God's Word is to be spoken and heard today, then it is you and I that must do it. There is a desperate need for light to be present in the darkness of our world, the darkness which expresses itself in poverty and homelessness, unemployment and hatred, discrimination and prejudice. But most of all, each one of us must bring the gift of peace to our own lives, the life of our families and community, and especially to the world in which we live.

The world has changed dramatically during the past few years. Yet, violence, hatred, and war continue. We gather this morning to seek ways to be more aware of the violence which continues to exist in Northern Ireland. We pray that ways may be found to end this violence, to root out the hatred which divides people, to bring people together to recognize that we all share the gift of human dignity, value and worth because each one of us is created in the image of God.

It is good to come together again with you to celebrate this Liturgy for Peace in Northern Ireland. May we continue to pray that peace will become a reality.

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St. Patrick's Day has captured the imagination and the hearts of countless people with different racial, ethnic and social backgrounds. What seems to attract us to this celebration is that behind it all, there is a sense of hope and joy, the belief that things need not be as they are.

It's good there's a soft mist in the air this morning. It's good that there will be a parade and celebrations in our city today and tonight. It's good that people are wearing a touch of green. For this one day, we pause and laugh, and pray, and celebrate. But, my friends, the challenge remains. May we have the courage to hear God's Word. May we dare to bring light into the darkness. And may we especially be people who work for peace. Happy St. Patrick's Day to you.