



DIOCESE OF BAKER

Office of the Bishop
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March 2, 2026

Dear Fathers,

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ!

In honor of the upcoming Memorial of Saint Patrick, and recognizing the profound impact that those of Irish heritage have had on our diocese since its founding in 1903, including five bishops (O'Reilly, McGrath, Fahey, Connolly, and, most recently, Cary), I hereby grant a dispensation from the obligation to abstain from meat on Friday, March 13, within the Diocese.

This dispensation is given so that the faithful may fully participate in the celebrations honoring Saint Patrick, patron of Ireland and beloved missionary bishop.

Generations of Catholics have benefitted from those who came as missionaries from the "Emerald Isle." Now, sadly, Ireland is mission territory in many ways. As you enjoy your corned beef and cabbage (a distinctly *American* Irish dish, by the way) or raise a pint in jubilation, please remember those who followed in the missionary spirit of Saint Patrick to spread the faith in this country, and please pray for the Church in Ireland today.

I also strongly encourage all who make use of this dispensation to substitute another appropriate act of penance, charity, or prayer, in keeping with the penitential spirit of the Lenten season.

May this celebration deepen our faith, strengthen our community, and inspire us to imitate Saint Patrick's zeal in proclaiming the Gospel.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Thomas J. Hennen
(Dutch and German) Bishop of Baker