

The Shepherd and The Holy Oils

I am taking a course on the History of the Celts and of course Saint Patrick has a prominent role. Like Amos in today's first reading, he was a shepherd while he was a captive in Ireland.

Every bishop carries a shepherd's staff called a crosier. And every real shepherd does not drive the sheep with whips or curses. Rather he is out ahead of the flock guiding them with gentle persuasion.

This morning I delivered an essay about bishops as shepherds and gentle persuasion to *Today's American Catholic*, and it will be published on line in a coming edition. I will let you know when it appears.

Oils

In today's Gospel, the apostles go out on mission and we are told heal the sick through the anointing with oil.

Sunday I gave the anointing to Frank Leavey a great Irish patriarch who fell and required 8 stitches, and to Jim at Osborn Hospital and prayed:

"Through this Holy Anointing,

may the Lord in his love and mercy,

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Written by Fr. Fitz
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help you with the grace of te Holy Spirt,

and may the Lord who frees you from sin,

save you,

and raise you up!"

Anointing should always be seen as a consolation, rather than as a last resort.