



## *Spiritual Care Notes: March 2019*

My great-great-great grandfather on my dad's side was a man named William Charlton. He and his wife, Sarah Donald Charlton, were from County Antrim in what is now known as Northern Ireland. William was born in 1800, Sarah in 1796.

According to Canadian census records at the Provincial Archives housed at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, they immigrated to Saint John, New Brunswick in 1828. The records list them both as Methodists, although information from the Archives indicates that they could have been members of the Anglican church when they lived in Ireland. Either way, they were clearly "orange" Irish. Yet, at the time they lived on the Emerald Isle, it was one, united Ireland. And because it was one, united Ireland when my ancestors lived there, I proudly embrace my Irish heritage – and the wearin' of the green!

Legend holds that Saint Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland. Snakes, of course, is a metaphor representing the devil, or Satan. According to legend, Saint Patrick converted to Christianity the pagan Druids of Ireland at Tara, hence driving the devil out of the native population.

It's been said that everyone is Irish on Saint Patrick's Day. I used to think that beyond the world-famous Irish hospitality, it was basically a one-day free license to prefix your last name with an O' and wear something green. I know now it's more than that – a lot more. It's really an invitation to join with those Irish ancients who embraced Saint Patrick's teaching at Tara – to turn away from sin, to listen to the words of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the Gospels, and to place our hope in Him who died on the Cross on Good Friday and rose from the dead on Easter. His death and resurrection defeated Satan and gave each of us the opportunity to share in eternal life with Him too.

Be they harmless little garters, or deadly big rattlers, may the spirit of Saint Patrick drive the snakes out of your world and lead you to everlasting life...Amen!

*David Hutchings*

Spiritual Care Associate/Chapel Minister  
Maristhill