March 17th: Memorial of Saint Patrick, bishop (Patron Saint of Ireland)

Gospel text (*Lk* 10:1-12.17-20): At that time the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest..."

Saint Patrick, bishop (Principal Patron of Ireland) (V century)

Fr. Gavan JENNINGS
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Today, we celebrate the great fifth century "Apostle of Ireland", St Patrick —a saint who is revered not only in the country to which he brought the Catholic Faith, but also in those many countries throughout the world which were in turn, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, evangelized in large part by Irish emigrants and missionaries.

He, single-handedly converted a whole nation from paganism to the Catholic Faith. He first came to Ireland as a captive teenage slave from Roman Britain, and he came very much alone; some years later, following priestly and episcopal ordination, he returned to the people that had enslaved him, deeply desiring to capture them for Christ, and once again he came completely alone.

—Perhaps by the “fewness” of the labourers Jesus may also be referring to a personal lack of sanctity: Christ doesn't require multitudes to convert the world, he requires saints. Even one saint can convert a whole nation as we witness today.