
Celtic Saints

PATRICK

A
CELEBRATION





PATRICK

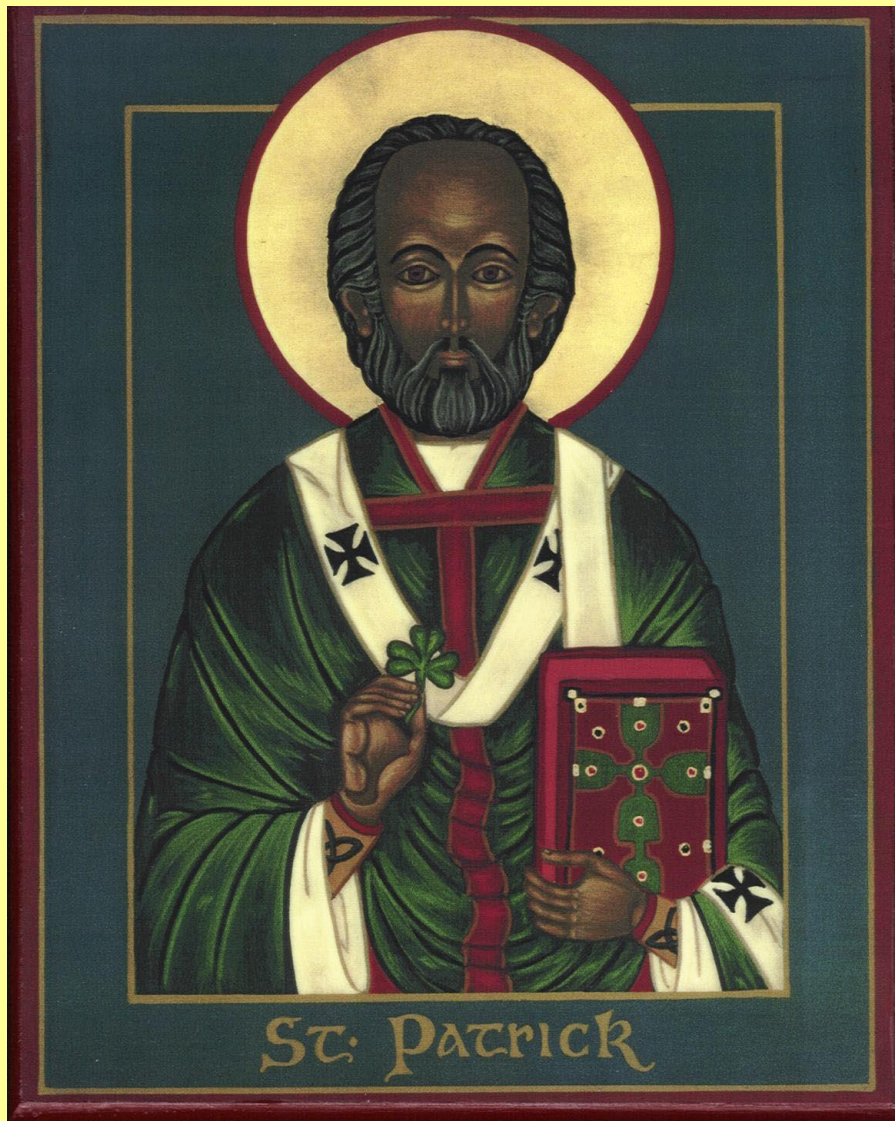
Also known as
Apostle of
Ireland;
Maewyn
Succat;
Patricius;
Patrizio



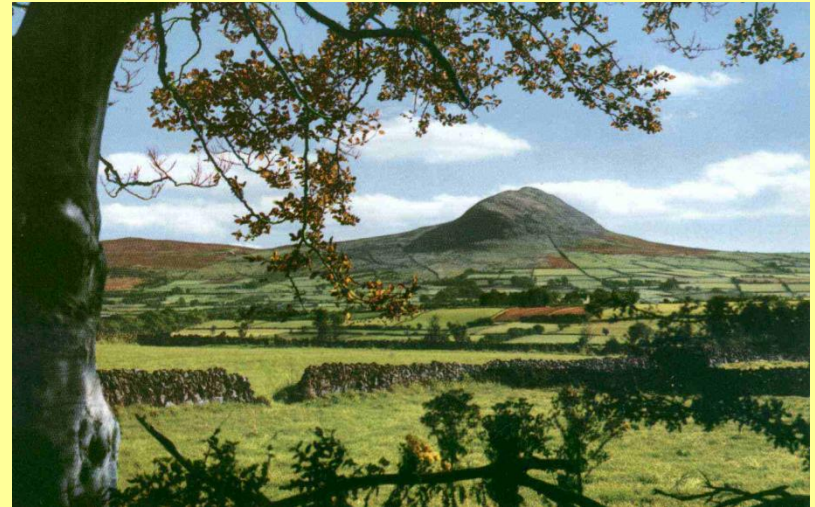
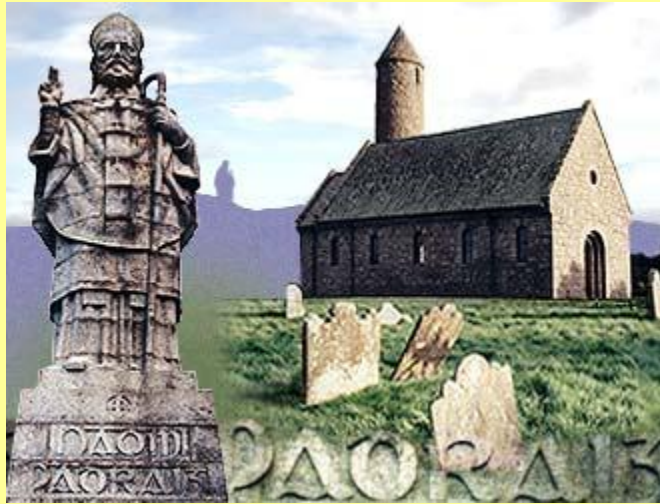


St Patrick, (c. 389-c. 461), called the Apostle of Ireland, Christian prelate. His birthplace is uncertain, but it was probably in south-western Britain; born in Wales or in Scotland.

about AD 385. His given name was Maewyn Succat . ARCHAEOLOGISTS believe they have found the birthplace of St Patrick. A dig in Urswick has uncovered a Roman fort which may be the Banna Vernta Berniae, thought by many scholars to be where Ireland's patron saint was born. At 16 years of age he was carried off by Irish marauders and passed his captivity as a herdsman near the mountain Slemish in County Antrim (as tradition has it) or in County Connacht (Connaught). The young herdsman saw visions in which he was urged to escape, and after six years of slavery he did so, to the northern coast of Gaul (now France).



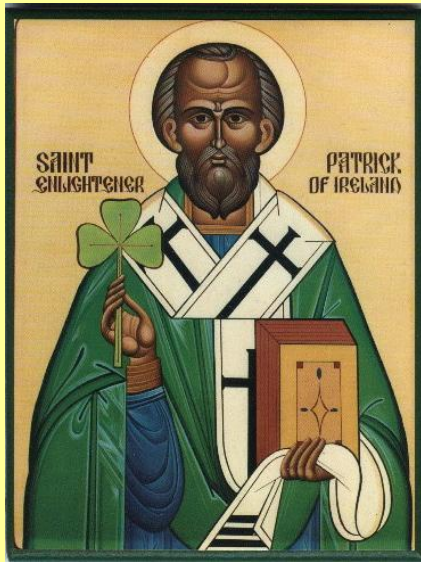
During his captivity, he turned to God in prayer. He wrote "The love of God and his fear grew in me more and more, as did the faith, and my soul was raised, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers and in the night, nearly the same." "I prayed in the woods and on the mountain, even before dawn. I felt no hurt from the snow or ice or rain."



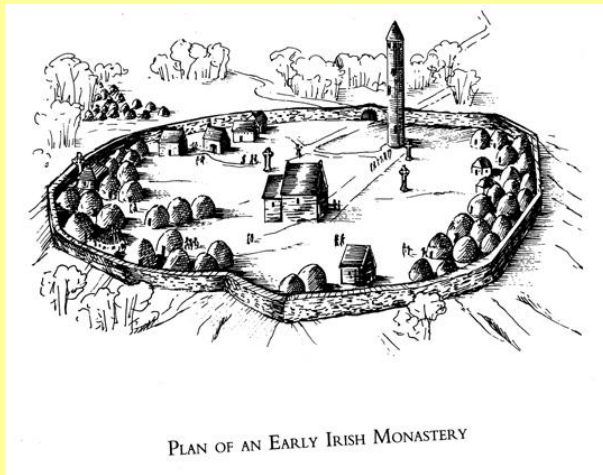
He was set to herd sheep and survive on bleak Sliabh Mis (Slemish), a mountain in Antrim, and it was during this hard and lonely exile that his maturing of thoughts turned to God and His Holy Mother for courage and consolation. It was on the wind swept slopes of Slemish that he became a man of prayer. He learned the Irish language , grew to love the young people whom he came in contact, winning from them in return a love that perhaps helped him to escape from captivity at the end of six sad years.



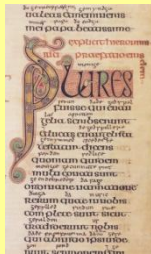
He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in the monastery under St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre for a period of twelve years. During his training he became aware that his calling was to convert the pagans to Christianity. Ordained a priest, possibly by St Germanus, at Auxerre, His wishes were to return to Ireland, to convert the native pagans to Christianity. But his superiors instead appointed St. Palladius. But two years later, Palladius transferred to Scotland. Patrick, having adopted that Christian name earlier, was then appointed as second bishop to Ireland. he returned to Ireland. St Patrick was appointed, sometime after 431, successor to St Palladius.



Patrick concentrated on the west and north of Ireland. It is possible that he visited Rome and returned with relics. His reported use of the shamrock as an illustration of the Holy Trinity led to its being regarded as the Irish national symbol. A strange chant of his, called the Loric, is preserved in the Liber Hymnorum (Book of Hymns), and what purports to have been a handbell he used during Mass is shown in the National Museum, Dublin.



Patrick was quite successful at winning converts. And this fact upset the Celtic Druids. Patrick was arrested several times, but escaped each time. He travelled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the country.



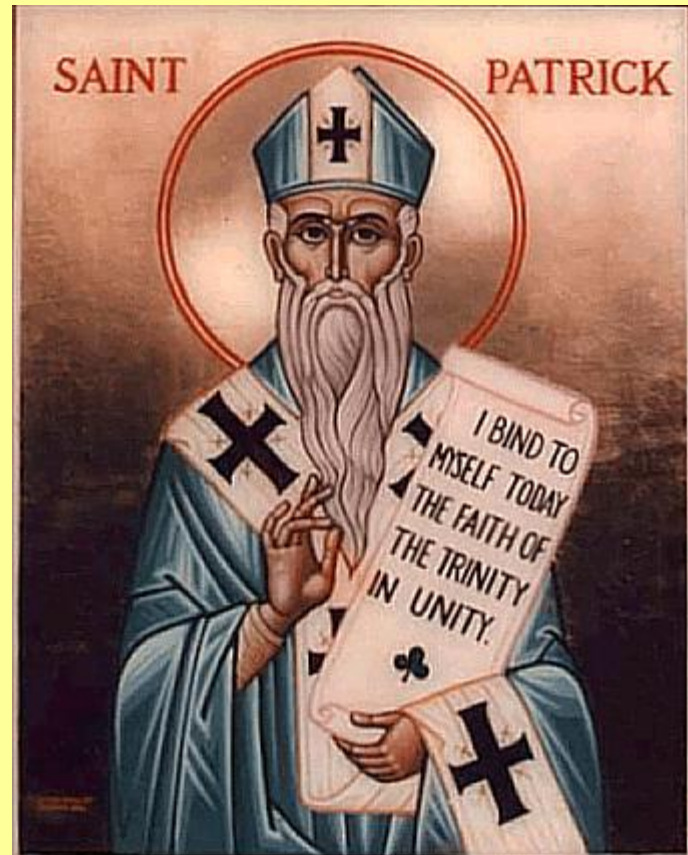
He also set up schools and churches which would aid him in his conversion of the Irish country to Christianity.



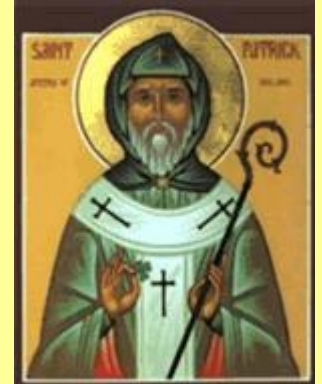


Armagh is very much the ecclesiastical capital of the island of Ireland. It has been the seat of the Catholic primacy of all Ireland since the days of St Patrick, who built his first church there. It is also the seat of the Church of Ireland archbishopric of Armagh. St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, pictured here with its twin spires, stands on one of the numerous hills upon which Armagh is built.

One traditional icon of the day is the shamrock. And this stems from a more bona fide Irish tale that tells how Patrick used the three-leaved shamrock to explain the Trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.



Legend says, that the druids, worried that the king would accept Patrick's religion, asked Patrick if he could make it snow. Patrick sensing a trap replied, that it was God who can determine the weather. At that moment it began to snow in the middle of a sunny spring day. St. Patrick made the sign of a cross and miraculously the snow disappeared and sunshine resumed.



It is said that, King Laoghaire, wanted to know more about the religion which St. Patrick intended to spread throughout Ireland. Patrick stated that unlike the Gaels, Christians only worshiped one God. When St. Patrick desperately tried to explain the Trinity, the druids started to laugh at his attempt. Patrick, in his desperation, took a shamrock and told the audience: "there is one stem but there are three leaves on it. So it is with the Blessed Trinity. there is one God, but three persons stemming from the same divinity."



King Laoghaire allowed St. Patrick to spread the Gospel throughout Ireland, but he said, he would refuse to accept Christianity for himself, as it would betray his ancestors, who entrusted him with the land and his tradition.



He also is said to have given a sermon from a hilltop that drove all the snakes from Ireland. Of course, no snakes were ever native to Ireland, and some people think this is a metaphor for the conversion of the pagans.





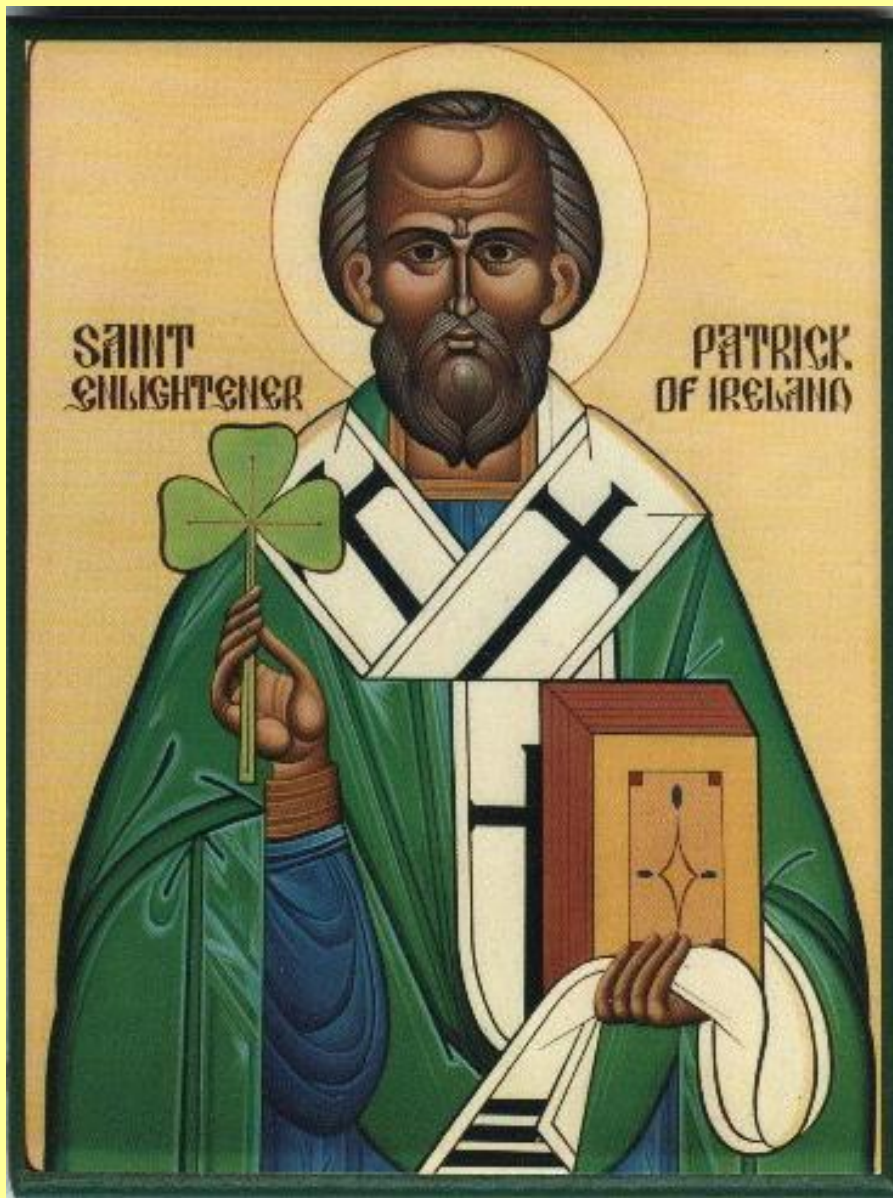
I came to the Irish people to preach the Gospel and endure the taunts of unbelievers, putting up with reproaches about my earthly pilgrimage, suffering many persecutions, even bondage, and losing my birthright of freedom for the benefit of others.

If I am worthy, I am ready also to give up my life, without hesitation and most willingly, for Christ's name. I want to spend myself for that country, even in death, if the Lord should grant me this favour.



It is among that people that I want to wait for the promise made by him, who assuredly never tells a lie. He makes this promise in the Gospel: "They shall come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." This is our faith: believers are to come from the whole world.

from the Confession of Saint Patrick



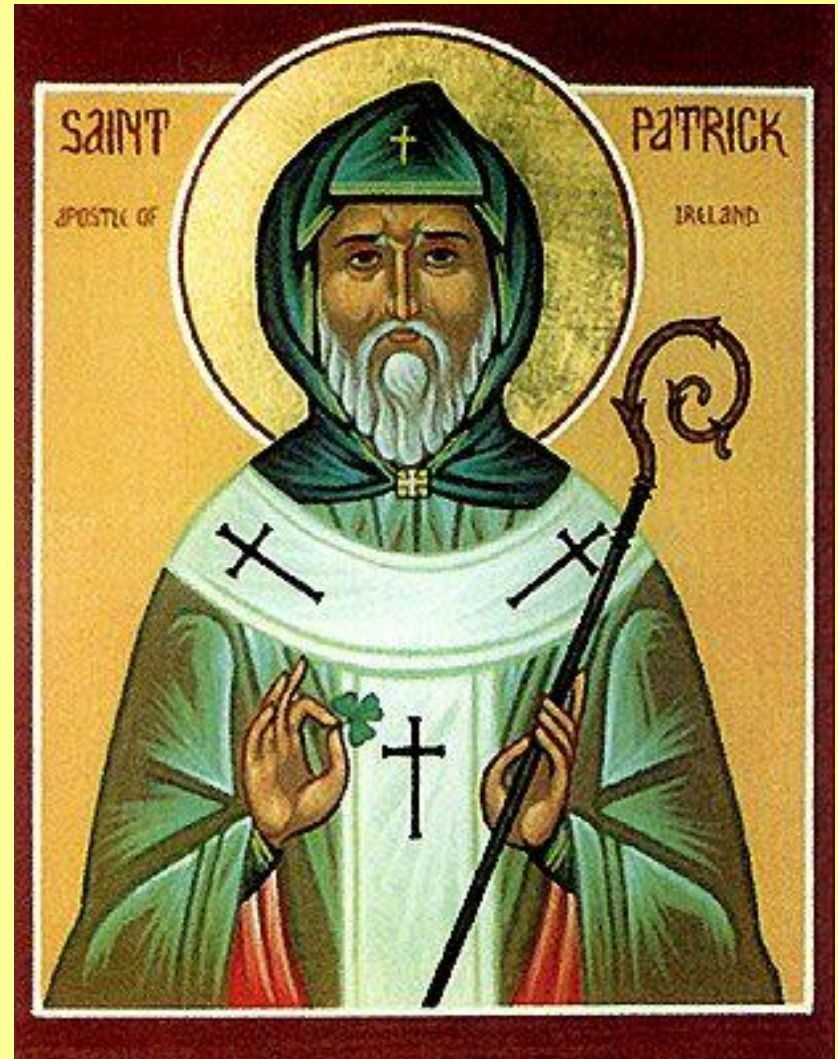
Christ shield me this day:
Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every
person who thinks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in the ear that hears me



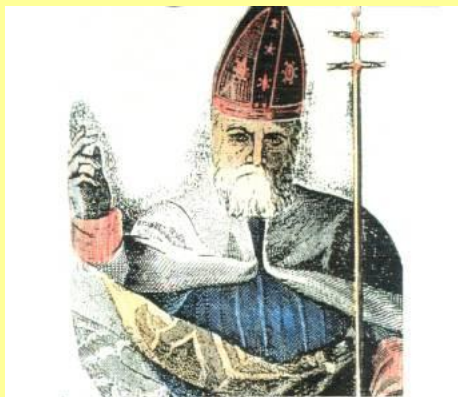
Besides that which came upon him daily, the care of all the Churches of Ireland, he never suffered his spirit to weary in constant prayer. They say that it was his custom to repeat every day the whole Book of Psalms, together with Songs and Hymns, and two hundred Prayers ; that he bent his knees to God in worship three hundred times every day, and that he made on himself the sign of the Cross an hundred times at each of the Seven Hours of the Church Service. He divided the night into three portions ; during the first he repeated the first hundred Psalms, and bent his knees two hundred times ; during the second he remained plunged in cold water, with heart, eyes, and hands lifted up to heaven, and in that state repeated the remaining fifty Psalms ; during the third he took his short rest, lying upon a bare stone. He was a great practiser of lowliness, and, after the pattern of the Apostle, he always continued to work with his own hands. At last he fell asleep in the Lord in extreme old age, refreshed with the Divine Mysteries, worn out with unceasing care for the Churches, and glorious both in word and work. His body is buried in Down in Ulster. He passed away in the fifth century after the giving of salvation by Christ.

His mission in Ireland lasted for thirty years. After that time, Patrick retired to County Down. He died on March 17 in AD 461. That day has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since.

Feast Day - 17 March



Patrick's Grave at Downpatrick Co Down.





Hail, glorious St. Patrick, dear saint of our isle,
On us thy poor children bestow a sweet smile;
And now thou art high in the mansions above,
On Erin's green valleys look down in thy love.
(optional repeat) On Erin's green valleys, on
Erin's green valleys, On Erin's green valleys look
down in thy love. Hail, glorious St. Patrick, thy
words were once strong Against Satan's wiles
and a heretic throng; Not less is thy might where
in Heaven thou art; Oh, come to our aid, in our
battle take part! In a war against sin, in the fight
for the faith, Dear Saint, may thy children resist
to the death; May their strength be in meekness,
in penance, and prayer, Their banner the Cross,
which they glory to bear. Thy people, now exiles
on many a shore, Shall love and revere thee till
time be no more; And the fire thou hast kindled
shall ever burn bright, Its warmth undiminished,
undying its light. Ever bless and defend the
sweet land of our birth, Where the shamrock
still blooms as when thou wert on earth, And our
hearts shall yet burn, wherever we roam, For
God and St. Patrick, and our native home.

