

# St Patrick in his own words

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*It is a joy to hear Patrick's own voice speaking to us from some excerpts of his Confession, unencumbered by pious hagiography or later legend. We can rejoice in the gift of a saint from Romano-Britain, trained in Gaul, who spent his ministry in Ireland. May he intercede for us all!*

My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers. I am looked

down upon by many. My father was Calpornius. He was a deacon; his father was Potitus, a priest, who lived at Bannavem Taburniae.

His home was near there, and that is where I was taken prisoner. I was about sixteen at the time. At that time, I did not know the true God. I was taken into captivity in Ireland, along with thousands of others. We deserved this, because we had gone away from God, and did not keep his commandments. We would not listen to our priests, who advised us about how we could be saved. The Lord brought his strong anger upon us, and scattered us among many nations even to the ends of the earth. It was among foreigners that it was seen how little I was.

*Awakenings of faith as a slave in Ireland.*

It was there that the Lord opened up my awareness of my lack of faith. Even though it came about late, I recognised my failings. So I turned with all my heart to the Lord my God and he looked down on my littleness, and had mercy on my youthful ignorance. Before I knew him, he kept guard over me and before I came to wisdom and could distinguish between good and evil, He protected me and consoled me as a father does for his son.

*Back home Patrick is called to serve the people of Ireland.*

A few years later I was again with my parents in Britain. They welcomed me as a son, and they pleaded with me

that, after all the many tribulations I had undergone, I should never leave them again. It was while I was there that I saw, in a vision in the night, a man whose name was Victoricus, coming as it were from Ireland, with so many letters they could not be counted. He gave me one of these, and I read the beginning of the letter, the voice of the Irish people. While I was reading out the beginning of the letter, I thought I heard at that moment the voice of those who were beside the wood of Voclut, near the western sea. They called out as it were with one voice: "We beg you, holy boy, to come and walk again among us." This touched my heart deeply, and I could not read any further; I woke up then. Thanks be to God, after many years the Lord granted them what they were calling for.

*In later life Patrick resolves to spend his life for the Irish People.*

I could wish to leave them to go to Britain. I would willingly do this, and am prepared for this, as if to visit my home country and my parents. Not only that, but I would like to go to Gaul to visit the brothers and to see the faces of the saints of my Lord. God knows what I would dearly like to do. But I am bound in the Spirit, who assures me that if I were to do this, I would be held guilty. And I fear, also, to lose the work which I began - not so much I, as Christ the Lord, who told me to come here to be with these people for the rest of my life. May the Lord will it, and protect me from every wrong path, so that I do not sin before him.

Christ our true Sun!

The sun which we see rising for us each day at his command, that sun will never reign nor will its splendour continue forever; and all those who adore that sun will come to a bad, miserable penalty. We, however, believe in and adore the true sun, that is, Christ, who will never perish. Nor will they perish who do his will but they will abide forever just as Christ will abide forever. He lives with God the Father almighty and with the Holy Spirit before the ages began, and now, and for all the ages of ages. Amen.

*Patrick testifies that his reason for being with the Irish people is to preach the Gospel and share the salvation of God.*

Again and again I briefly put before you the words of my confession. I testify in truth and in great joy of heart before God and his holy angels that I never had any other reason for returning to that nation from which I had earlier escaped, except the gospel and God's promises.