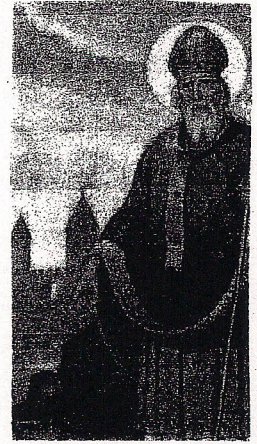




Holy Heroes

St. Patrick---March 17



Patrick was born in Scotland in 385 near Kilpatrick at a time when Ireland was a land of pagan kings and warriors. His parents were Romans living in Britain in charge of the colonies.

When Patrick was sixteen years old, Irish warriors raided Scotland and carried captives back to Ireland to be slaves. Patrick was among them. His head was shaved and he was put to work as a shepherd for an Irish Druidic high priest named Milchu.

For the next six years, Patrick learned the language and customs of the Irish people. This knowledge helped him later when he returned to Ireland as a missionary. Patrick also grew in love and devotion to God, often praying one hundred prayers a day and more at night.

One night, in a dream, God told St. Patrick to escape his master and go to the coast, two hundred miles away. Patrick did as he was told and made the journey safely. He found a ship about to sail for Britain, but the sailors refused to take him with them. After a silent prayer to God, they agreed.

In another dream, Patrick heard the people of Ireland crying out to him.: "We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more." Patrick was willing but not ready for such a big job, so he began to study to be a priest and eventually was ordained. Pope Saint Clestine sent Saint Patrick to bring the Gospel to Ireland. Patrick willingly accepted the job. He was ordained a bishop (so that he could ordain priests while he was there).

Patrick arrived back in Ireland on March 25, 433 and began preaching the Gospel throughout Ireland, converting many. Patrick used the shamrock's three leaves on one stem to explain the Trinity, and it has been associated with him and the Irish since that time. He and his disciples converted thousands and began building churches all over the country. Kings, their families, and their entire kingdoms converted to Christianity when hearing Patrick's message.

God performed many miracles and healings through Saint Patrick, so that everyone could see the power and mercy of God. Patrick preached and converted all of Ireland for 40 years, although it was not easy. Saint Patrick and his followers were imprisoned and sentenced to death several times, people conspired against him to the Kings, an entire county was plundered by enemies of Patrick and many people were killed. After years of living in poverty, traveling, and enduring much suffering, he died March 17, 461. Patrick died in Saul, Ireland, where he had built his first church.