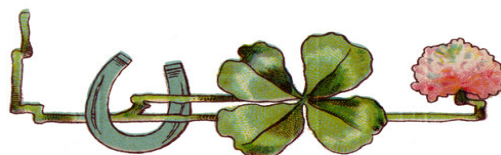


St Aiden's Homeschool



St Patrick

The Legend and the Legends





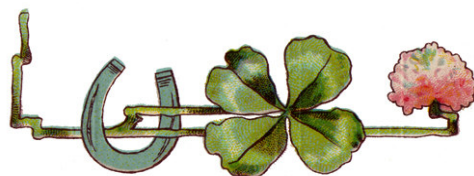
St Patrick - there's no doubt in anyone's mind that he existed and has become the legend that he is today. There are varying accounts of this amazing man's life, all pointing to the fact that he was one extraordinary person. Here we account tales & legends of his life.

St. Patrick's Day

**Leprechauns peeking,
Around a willow tree,
Pussy willows waking,
Longing to be free.
Colleens and shamrocks
And castles old and gray,
Put them all together
To make St. Patrick's Day**

Ever wonder where the term Luck 'o the Irish, or Irish Luck, came from?

If so, then read on for a little history/legend about Saint Patrick's Day and Irish Luck.





Saint Patrick:

The whole thing started with Saint Patrick. Actually, Saint Patrick was not Irish. He was born around 373 A.D. in either Scotland (near the town of Dumbarton) or in Roman Britain (the Romans left Britain in 410 A.D.). His real name is believed to be Maewyn Succat (he took on Patrick, or Patricus, after he became a priest). He was kidnapped at the age of 16 and sold into slavery in Ireland. During his 6-year captivity (he worked as a shepherd), he began to have religious visions.

He finally escaped (after voices in one of his visions told him where he could find a getaway ship) and went to France, where he became a priest (and later a bishop). When he was about 60 years old, Saint Patrick returned to Ireland to spread the Christian word. It's said that Patrick had an unusually winning personality, and that helped him win converts.



Shamrocks:

Shamrock (Irish Seamrog or Seamroy for "little clover") is the common name for any of several trifoliate (3 leaf) clovers native to Ireland. The shamrock was originally chosen as the national emblem of Ireland because of the legend that Saint Patrick used the trefoil plant to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Most shamrocks, particularly the small-leaved white clover, have been considered by the Irish as good-luck symbols since earliest times. Before the Christian era it was a sacred plant among the Druids of Ireland because its leaves formed a triad.

Throughout history, the number three is one of the numbers considered special or magical. This superstition has persisted in modern times among people of many nationalities. In the modern Western World, the rare finding of a four leaf clover is said to double one's good luck. The trefoil in Arabia is called Shamrakh and was sacred in Iran as an emblem of the Persian triads. As the number three was sacred in the Celtic and other religions, it is thought that Saint Patrick must have considered this in choosing the three leafed plant to demonstrate the three-in-one nature of the Christian Trinity of the Father, the Son and The Holy Spirit.

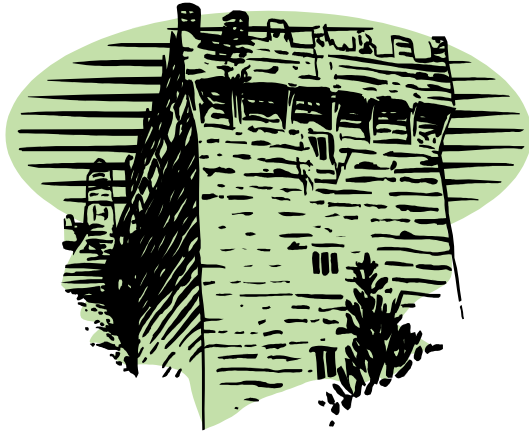
A group of his followers came to him and admitted it was difficult for them to believe in the Holy Trinity. Saint Patrick thought for a moment. He stooped down and plucked a leaf from the Shamrock growing at his feet. He held it before them and said, "Behold the living example of the Three-in-One." From that day forward, the Shamrock has been revered throughout Ireland!

The mystique of the Shamrock (white clover plant) continues today since there is not a clover plant that produces four leaflets. A fourth leaflet is a rare occurrence! One leaf is for HOPE, the second for FAITH, the third for LOVE, and the fourth for LUCK! Having had a bad time with Great Britain over the years, the Luck 'o the Irish, obviously is a misnomer. It seems that Irish luck is strictly related to four leaf clovers.





Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17th, to honour and celebrate the death anniversary of St. Patrick the patron saint of Ireland. St. Patrick's day is celebrated with parades and marching bands. People eat corned beef, cabbage and Irish soda bread. Some people sing and dance the Irish jig. The shamrock leaf is a symbol of St. Patrick and Ireland. St. Patrick used a three leaved clover to explain the concept of the Trinity (father, son and holy spirit). Many people wear green on this day. Green symbolises the colour of spring, Ireland and the shamrock. Ireland is called the "Emerald Isle" as it has lots of green pastures.



The Blarney stone

The Blarney stone is in the Irish village of Blarney in the wall of the Blarney castle. Legend has it that kissing the stone gives person the ability to speak sweetly and convincingly.

Snakes:

Legend has it that Saint Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland -- that they all went into the sea and drowned. Poor snakes. I don't know why he would want to do this, except that the snake was a revered pagan symbol, and perhaps this was a figurative tale alluding to the fact that he drove paganism out of Ireland. He was said to have done this by beating a drum. He also made the soil fatal to all serpents who touched it. One day, there was a stubborn snake that refused to leave. Saint Patrick constructed a box and tried to lure the snake into it. The snake refused, stating that the box was too small. Saint Patrick told the snake that it was big enough and to just give it a try. The snake agreed, just to prove that the box was too small, and he entered the box. Saint Patrick immediately closed the lid on the snake and threw the box, snake and all, into the ocean.



Leprechauns:

Leprechauns are also associated with Saint Patrick's Day, although I'm not sure why. Leprechauns of legend are actually mean little creatures, with the exception of the Lucky Charms guy. They were probably added later on to give card makers something cute to put on their cards. A Leprechaun looks like a small, old man (about 2 feet tall), often dressed like a shoemaker, with a cocked hat and a leather apron. According to legend, Leprechauns are aloof and unfriendly, live alone, and pass the time making shoes. They also possess a hidden pot of gold. Treasure hunters can often track down a leprechaun by the sound of his shoemaker's hammer. If caught, he can be forced (with the threat of bodily violence) to reveal the whereabouts of his treasure, but the captor must keep their eyes on him every second. If the captor's eyes leave the Leprechaun (and he often tricks them into looking away), he vanishes, and all hopes of finding the treasure are lost.

Pinching:

School children have started a little tradition of their own -- they pinch classmates who don't wear green on Saint Patrick's Day.





Saint Patrick's Day (Irish: *Lá 'le Pádraig* or *Lá Fhéile Pádraig*), also known as St. Paddy's Day or Paddy's Day, is an annual feast day which celebrates Saint Patrick (circa 385–461 AD), one of the patron saints of Ireland, and is generally celebrated on March 17.

The day is the national holiday of Ireland. It is a bank holiday in Northern Ireland and a public holiday in the Republic of Ireland and Montserrat. In Canada, Great Britain, Australia, USA and New Zealand, it is widely celebrated but is not an official holiday.

It became a feast day in the Roman Catholic Church due to the influence of the Waterford-born Franciscan scholar Luke Wadding in the early part of the 17th century, and is a holy day of obligation for Roman Catholics in Ireland. The feast day usually falls during Lent; if it falls on a Friday of Lent (unless it is Good Friday), the obligation to abstain from eating meat (usually corned beef) can be lifted by the local bishop. The date of the feast is occasionally, yet controversially, moved by church authorities when March 17 falls during Holy Week; this happened in 1940 when Saint Patrick's Day was observed on April 3 in order to avoid it coinciding with Palm Sunday, and happened again in 2008, having been observed on 15 March. March 17 will not fall during Holy Week again until 2160

ABOUT THE CELEBRATION

Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated worldwide by Irish people and increasingly by non-Irish people (usually in Australia and North America). Celebrations are generally themed around all things Irish and the colour green. Both Christians and non-Christians celebrate the secular version of the holiday by wearing green or orange, eating Irish food and/or green foods, drinking Irish drink (such as Guinness or Baileys Irish Cream) and attending parades.

The St. Patrick's Day parade was first held in Boston in 1761, organised by the Charitable Irish Society. The first recorded parade was New York City's celebration which began on 18 March 1762 when Irish soldiers in the English military marched through the city with their music. The New York parade is the largest parade and can draw two million spectators and 150,000 marchers. The predominantly French-speaking Canadian city of Montreal, in the province of Québec has the longest continually running Saint Patrick's day parade in North America, since 1824; The city's flag has the Irish emblem, the shamrock, in one of its corners. Ireland's cities all hold their own parades and festivals, including Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Derry, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, and Waterford. Parades also take place in other Irish towns and villages. The St. Patrick's Day parade in Dublin, Ireland is part of a five-day festival.

As well as being a celebration of Irish culture, Saint Patrick's Day is a Christian festival celebrated in the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, and some other denominations. The day almost always falls in the season of Lent. Some bishops will grant an indult, or release, from the Friday no-meat observance when St. Patrick's



Day falls on a Friday; this is sometimes known as a "corned-beef indult". When 17 March falls on a Sunday, church calendars (though rarely secular ones) move Saint Patrick's Day to the following Monday—and when the 17th falls during Holy Week (very rarely), the observance will be moved to the next available date or, exceptionally, before holy week. The public holiday in Ireland does not move and always remains at 17 March, being fixed on the State calendar.

In many parts of North America, Britain, and Australia, expatriate Irish and ever-growing crowds of people with no Irish connections but who may proclaim themselves "Irish for a day" also celebrate St. Patrick's Day, usually with the consumption of traditionally Irish alcoholic beverages (beer and stout, such as Murphy's, Beamish, Smithwicks, Harp, or Guinness; Irish whiskey; Irish coffee; or Baileys Irish Cream) and by wearing green-coloured clothing.

WEARING OF GREEN

According to legend, St. Patrick used the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, to explain the Holy Trinity to the pre-Christian Irish.

St. Patrick's Blue, not green, was the colour long-associated with St. Patrick. Green, the colour most widely associated with Ireland, with Irish people, and with St. Patrick's Day in modern times, may have gained its prominence through the phrase "the wearing of the green" meaning to wear a shamrock on one's clothing. At many times in Irish history, to do so was seen as a sign of Irish nationalism or loyalty to the Roman Catholic faith. St. Patrick used the shamrock, a three-leaved plant, to explain the Holy Trinity to the pre-Christian Irish. The wearing of and display of shamrocks and shamrock-inspired designs have become a ubiquitous feature of the saint's holiday. The change to Ireland's association with green rather than blue probably began around the 1750s.





Saint Patrick (Latin: *Patricius*, Irish: *Naomh Pádraig*), said to have been born **Maewyn Succat** (Latin: *Magonus Succetus*), was a Roman Britain-born Christian missionary and is the patron saint of Ireland along with Brigid of Kildare and Columba. When he was about sixteen he was captured by Irish raiders and taken as a slave to Ireland, where he lived for six years before escaping and returning to his family. After entering the church, he later returned to Ireland as a missionary in the north and west of the island, but little is known about the places where he worked and no link can be made between Patrick and any church. By the eighth century he had become the patron saint of Ireland. The Irish monastery system evolved after the time of Patrick and the Irish church did not develop the diocesan model that Patrick and the other early missionaries had tried to establish.

The available body of evidence does not allow the dates of Patrick's life to be fixed with certainty, but it appears that he was active as a missionary in Ireland during the second half of the fifth century. Two letters from him survive, along with later hagiographies from the seventh century onwards. Many of these works cannot be taken as authentic traditions. Uncritical acceptance of the *Annals of Ulster* would imply that he lived from 340 to 460, and ministered in what is modern day northern Ireland from 428 onwards.

Patrick in his own words



Slemish, County Antrim, where Patrick is said to have worked as a herdsman while a slave.

Two Latin letters survive which are generally accepted to have been written by Patrick. These are the *Declaration* (Latin: *Confessio*) and the *Letter to the soldiers of Coroticus* (Latin: *Epistola*). The *Declaration* is the more important of the two. In it Patrick gives a short account of his life and his mission.

Patrick was born at Banna Venta Berniae. Calpornius, his father was a deacon, his grandfather Potitus a priest. When he was about sixteen, he was captured and carried off as a slave to Ireland. Patrick worked as a herdsman, remaining a captive for six years. He writes that his faith grew in captivity, and that he prayed daily. After



six years he heard a voice telling him that he would soon go home, and then that his ship was ready. Fleeing his master, he travelled to a port, two hundred miles away he says, where he found a ship and, after various adventures, returned home to his family, now in his early twenties.

Patrick recounts that he had a vision a few years after returning home:

I saw a man coming, as it were from Ireland. His name was Victoricus, and he carried many letters, and he gave me one of them. I read the heading: "The Voice of the Irish". As I began the letter, I imagined in that moment that I heard the voice of those very people who were near the wood of Foclut, which is beside the western sea—and they cried out, as with one voice: "We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us.

Much of the *Declaration* concerns charges made against Patrick by his fellow Christians at a trial. What these charges were, he does not say explicitly, but he writes that he returned the gifts which wealthy women gave him, did not accept payment for baptisms, nor for ordaining priests, and indeed paid for many gifts to kings and judges, and paid for the sons of chiefs to accompany him. It is concluded, therefore, that he was accused of some sort of financial impropriety, and perhaps of having obtained his bishopric in Ireland with personal gain in mind.

From this same evidence, something can be seen of Patrick's mission. He writes that he "baptised thousands of people". He ordained priests to lead the new Christian communities. He converted wealthy women, some of whom became nuns in the face of family opposition. He also dealt with the sons of kings, converting them too.

Patrick's position as a foreigner in Ireland was not an easy one. His refusal to accept gifts from kings placed him outside the normal ties of kinship, fosterage and affinity. Legally he was without protection, and he says that he was on one occasion beaten, robbed of all he had, and put in chains, perhaps awaiting execution.

Murchiú's life of Saint Patrick contains a supposed prophecy by the druids which gives an impression of how Patrick and other Christian missionaries were seen by those hostile to them:

Across the sea will come Adze-head, crazed in the head,
his cloak with hole for the head, his stick bent in the head.
He will chant impieties from a table in the front of his house;
all his people will answer: "so be it, so be it."

The second piece of evidence which comes from Patrick's life is the *Letter to Coroticus* or *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*. In this, Patrick writes an open letter announcing that he has excommunicated certain Brythonic warriors of Coroticus who have raided in Ireland, along with Picts and Irishmen, taking some of Patrick's converts into slavery. Coroticus, based largely on an 8th century gloss, is taken to be King Ceretic of Alt Clut. It has been suggested that it was the sending of this letter which provoked the trial which Patrick mentions in the *Confession*.



According to the latest reconstruction of the old Irish annals, Patrick died in AD 461, a date accepted by some modern historians. Prior to the 1940s it was believed without doubt that he died in 420 and thus had lived in the first half of the 5th century. A lecture entitled "*The Two Patricks*", published in 1942 by T. F. O'Rahilly, caused enormous controversy by proposing that there had been two "Patricks", Palladius and Patrick, and that what we now know of St. Patrick was in fact in part a conscious effort to meld the two into one hagiographic personality. Decades of contention eventually ended with most historians now asserting that Patrick was indeed most likely to have been active in the mid-to-late 5th century.

While Patrick's own writings contain no dates, they do contain information which can be used to date them. Patrick's quotations from the Acts of the Apostles follow the Vulgate, strongly suggesting that his ecclesiastical conversion did not take place before the early fifth century. Patrick also refers to the Franks as being pagan. Their conversion is dated to the period 496–508.

The compiler of the Annals of Ulster stated that in the year 553:

I have found this in the Book of Cuanu: The relics of Patrick were placed sixty years after his death in a shrine by Colum Cille. Three splendid halidoms were found in the burial-place: his goblet, the Angel's Gospel, and the Bell of the Testament. This is how the angel distributed the halidoms: the goblet to Dún, the Bell of the Testament to Ard Macha, and the Angel's Gospel to Colum Cille himself. The reason it is called the Angel's Gospel is that Colum Cille received it from the hand of the angel.



The reputed burial place of St. Patrick in Downpatrick

The placing of this event in the year 553 would certainly seem to place Patrick's death in 493, or at least in the early years of that decade, and indeed the Annals of Ulster report in 493:

Patrick, arch-apostle, or archbishop and apostle of the Irish, rested on the 16th of the Kalends of April in the 120th year of his age, in the 60th year after he had come to Ireland to baptize the Irish.

There is also the additional evidence of his disciple, Mochta, who died in 535.

St. Patrick is said to be buried at Down Cathedral in Downpatrick, County Down, alongside St. Brigid and St. Columba, although this has never been proven. The Battle for the Body of St. Patrick demonstrates the importance of both him as a spiritual leader, and of his body as an object of veneration, in early Christian Ireland. Saint Patrick Visitor Centre is a modern exhibition complex located in Downjohn and is a permanent interpretative exhibition centre featuring interactive displays on the



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Patrick%27s_Day

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Patrick

http://annals_of_ulster.totallyexplained.com/

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St Aiden's Homeschool, South Africa & The Child Development Spot

P O Box 13720

Cascades

3202

KwaZulu-Natal

Republic of South Africa

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