

St. Patrick's Day

Saint Patrick was a patron of Ireland and a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. He is said to have been born at Bannavem which may have been in England near the Seven estuary, or in Scotland near the modern city of Dumbarton.

Patrick's British name is said to have been Sucat. Patrick is English for his Latin name Patricius.

Saint Patrick led a romantic life, full of adventures. At the age of sixteen he was captured by pirates from Ireland. They carried him back to Ireland and set him to tending the flocks of a chieftain in Ulster. He became a devoted Christian during his six years of slavery.

Patrick became a monk after escaping to France. A vision in 432 led him to return to Ireland as a missionary bishop. The rest of his life he worked zealously in various parts of the island. He became known as one who "found Ireland all heathen and left it all Christian" because of the great success of his labors. Because of Patrick, over 300 churches were founded, and more than 120,000 people were baptized.

Many legends grew up about this popular saint. The best known of these is that he charmed the snakes of Ireland down to the seashore so that they were driven into the water and drowned. Patrick left a semblance of autobiography in his CONFES- SION, written in crude Latin.

Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated throughout the world, wherever there are Irish people. In the United States this day is March 17.

