

## St. Patrick

St. Patrick was a real person who was born in Britain sometime in the last half of the 4th century AD. Britain was at that time part of the Roman Empire. Christianity was then the official religion of the empire, and the young Patrick was a Christian.

One day when he was about sixteen years old a band of pirates raided the land and kidnapped Patrick along with others. They sold Patrick into slavery in Ireland, where he was forced to guard sheep on a lonely mountainside. Alone and afraid, Patrick turned to God for solace and grew deep in his faith.

After six years of slavery he heard a voice. First it told him that he would soon go home. Then it told him that his ship was ready. Patrick decided to follow the voice. He walked down the mountain and kept walking for two hundred miles until he reached the coast. Though he had no money, he talked his way onto a ship and returned home to Britain and freedom.

A few years later he had vision where he heard a different voice. In the vision he saw a man coming from Ireland. The man gave Patrick a letter with the heading, "The Voice of the Irish." As he read the letter he heard the Irish people cry out, "We appeal to you, holy servant boy, to come and walk among us."

Patrick heeded the vision. He studied to be a priest and then returned to the land of his enslavement to preach the gospel. It was not an easy task. On one occasion he was beaten, robbed of all he had, and put in chains, perhaps awaiting execution. But Patrick persevered and was very ultimately very successful in converting the people. According to legend used the shamrock, which has three leaves on one stem, to explain the concept of the Trinity.