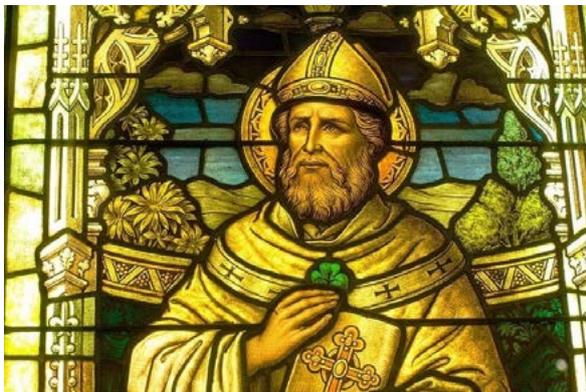# Saint Patrick

Facts

Feast day: 17 March
Patron of: Ireland
Birth: 387
Death: 461

Saint Patrick was born in Roman Britain. When he was 14 years old, he was captured by Irish pirates and taken to Ireland as a slave to look after sheep. At the time, Ireland was a land of pagans, but Patrick turned to God.

Patrick's captivity lasted until he was 20 when he escaped after having a dream in which God told him to leave Ireland by going to the coast. He went to the coast and there he found some sailors who took him back to Britain and he was reunited with his family.

A few years after returning home, Patrick saw a vision and was prompted to study for the priesthood. He was ordained by St Germanus, the Bishop of Auxerre, with whom he had studied under for years, and was later ordained a bishop and sent to take the gospel to Ireland.

Patrick arrived in Slane, Ireland, on 25 March 433. He converted many people to Christianity – eventually thousands – and he began building churches across the country. So complete was his trust in God and of the importance of his mission, he feared nothing – not even death.

He often used shamrocks to explain the Holy Trinity and entire kingdoms were eventually converted to Christianity after hearing Patrick's message.

Patrick preached in Ireland for 40 years. He worked many miracles and wrote of his love for God. After years of living in poverty, traveling and enduring much suffering, he died on 17 March 461.

He died at Saul, where he had built the first Irish church. He is believed to be buried in Down Cathedral, Downpatrick.

Saint Patrick's Day is observed on 17 March, the date of his death. It is celebrated inside and outside Ireland as a religious and cultural holiday.

Source: The information above has been adapted from the article about St Patrick available on Catholic Online.

St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne

Saint Patrick's legacy was palpable in the early days of the Catholic Church in Melbourne. St Patrick's Cathedral was built and named after this great missionary saint – a testament to the rich Irish culture present at the time.

Fr Patrick Geoghegan OFM arrived in 1839 to be the first priest in the Port Phillip settlement that was Melbourne at the time. In 1847, he created the new parish of St Patrick at the eastern end of town where the government had granted land for a church and school. This was a modest church and, after gold was discovered in 1851, it was clear that a larger church was both needed and could be afforded.

Bishop James Goold, who was the first bishop of Melbourne, commissioned William Wardell to commence building St Patrick's Cathedral in 1858 and it was finally completed in 1939.

At that time, the Catholic community in Melbourne was predominantly Irish, hence the cathedral was dedicated to St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. As an archdiocese, we continue to celebrate St Patrick as our patron saint.

Source: The information above has been adapted from RESource.

The Breastplate – Patrick's poem of faith and trust in God

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Source: Our Catholic Prayers, *St Patrick's Breastplate*, accessed 15 December 2021, https://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/st-patricks-breastplate.html.