

About St Patrick's Day

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One will find many stories associated to "St Patrick". As the patron saint of Ireland, he is one of the Christianity most widely known figures, but his life remains a mystery. The holiday is respected in relation to the day of his death.

Stories about him banishing all the snakes from Ireland have no fundament and it appears that over the years, people have given more importance to this fact. It is false. The legend states that he drove all the snakes out of Ireland and chased them to the sea after they attacked him during his 40-days-fast. Not too many know that in fact, St Patrick was not Irish. Story telling over the years, have built around this personage a "carapace" that we will try to destroy today. He was born in Britain to wealthy parents at the end of the fourth century and is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D.,

His father was a Deacon of the Christian Church who may have taken that opportunity to benefit from his tax incentives, but there is no proof that his family was particularly religious. He was taken prisoner when he was 16, by a group of Irish raiders who attacked his family's estate and remained in captivity for six years in Ireland at Mount Slemish, in the county of Antrim or perhaps in the county of Mayo near Killala.

During a six-year of captivity, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. He become a devout Christian and wanted to convert Irish people to Christianity. He finally escaped and he wrote that a VOICE that he interpreted like the voice of God, addressed him during a serial of dream asking him to leave Ireland. He then, walked more than 200 miles from County Mayo to the Irish coast. In another dream, this was an angel instructing him to return to Ireland as a missionary. This is the way Patrick decided to self-enroll in religious training for 15 years.

He became a priest and was sent to Ireland to minister Christians and to convert the Irish. He tried to incorporate the Irish culture in his Christian discussions because, he was very familiar with their language and their culture. He chooses to incorporate traditional rituals while teaching Christianity to change the native Irish beliefs. He incorporated powerful some symbols like the Sun and the Fire into the cross as they used to honors their gods, calling it the Celtic Cross to facilitate the veneration. In doing it that way, it appeared more natural for the Irish to venerate the Cross.

The Irish culture centered around a rich tradition of oral legend and myth and upon Patrick's arrival on the island, a small number of Christians were present. It looks like the stories of St Patrick became exaggerated over the years with exciting tales. Unfortunately, they called him "St Patrick" but he was never canonized as a Saint by the Catholic Church. There was no formal canonization process during the first millennium. He was then proclaimed "Saint" by popular acclaim.

In using this little page, I wanted to extend upon while a friend of mine (LS) from medical school announced me that he was going to an Irish club because he likes well the atmosphere of the "Saint Patrick Day". He mentioned that he was eager to eat



the traditional Irish food and mentioned: Corned Beef and cabbage...potato and carrots... He was also ready to eat Irish sausage and beacon with a Guinness Strout (beer). I learned from him as well that a high percentage of priests and cardinals originated from Ireland although the percentage of Catholics in the population was not that high. Historically, so many Irish, perhaps more than a million, have deserted their island in the mid-1800's following the Great Potato Famine to emigrate into the United States where they were also subject of percussion because of their catholic religion preference.

This also bought to me the souvenirs of so many happy years passed in Connecticut and the way my Irish friends were excited about this day of celebration. The "17 of March" brings a certain pride and Joy to the Irish community during the festivities for the commemoration of Saint Patrick death, more than 1000 years ago during the 5th century. Should you wear "Green" or participate to their activities or being pinched for not wearing green? Let us try to go back to the origins and remind the facts that he was born Roman Britain and was kidnapped and enslaved at the age of 16. He was bought to the Emerald Isle (Ireland) until he escaped. He became a priest with the mission to bring Christianity to Ireland around 432 AD.

To celebrate Saint-Patrick's life, Ireland began commemorating him around the 9th or 10th century with religious services and feasts. The 17 of March falls during Lent (Christian season prohibiting the consummation of meat). Many would attend church services or may be encouraged to eat Irish bacon and drink beer. The first Saint Patrick's parade was thrown in 1601 in St Augustine FL, until Irish people took over the tradition and performed their own in Boston in 1737. Since, many parades are held across the United States to commemorate the day of his death.

Things got better for them when the Irish community recognized their own political power after organizing parades and celebrating their heritage. They were able to capture the Irish American Spirit, all as in a big family, contributed to the major celebrations held actually in many big cities like Boston, New-York, Chicago, Savannah. The Ireland community is also well represented in Canada and in Australia. In 1990, Ireland has amended its constitution and claimed the 17 March as a national holiday, in order to drive tourism. Dublin was the center of attraction.

The color "Green" is associated to this holiday because Ireland is called the Emerald Isle which is the country's lush greenery. There is also the shamrock which is the symbol of St Patrick, almost always in green as well as the flag of the country. This is a symbol representing the Irish Catholic rebelling against the Protestants of England. The color "Green" has replaced the color "Blue" which was used before the 17th century. An Irish descent may make you believe that you will become invisible if you wear Green...



Happy St Patrick's day.

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