

Saint Patrick

Born in Roman Britain in the early 5th Century, Patrick was taken captive at 16 years of age . . .

. . . and brought by pirates as a slave to the ancient kingdom of Dalriada in the Braid Valley in the glens of Antrim.

Patrick worked as a shepherd for a chieftain named Milchu around Sliabh Mis (Mt Slemish), near the present-day town of Ballymena.

His captivity brought him to his senses, in terms of his spiritual life, according to his own account, known as *The Confessio:*

". . . I was at that time about sixteen years of age. I did not, indeed, know the true God; and I was taken into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of people, according to our deserts, for quite drawn away from God, we did not keep his precepts, nor were we obedient to our priests who used to remind us of our salvation. And the Lord brought down on us the fury of his being and scattered us among many nations, even to the ends of the earth, where I, in my smallness, am now to be found among foreigners.

And there the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who had regard for my insignificance and pitied my youth and ignorance. And he watched over me before I knew him, and before I learned sense or even distinguished between good and evil, and he protected me, and consoled me as a father would his son. . ."

After six years he escaped back to Britain, but he heard God's call to return to convert the Irish.

After studies for the priesthood in France, he returned as Bishop c. 432 and commenced the remarkable conversion of the Irish. He died in 491.



This large stone marks Patrick's grave in Downpatrick, Co. Down

' Christ In Me' HERE

Patrick's Breastplate
Finding God while herding sheep
Who was Patrick's God ?
The Confessio
A Prayer to Saint Patrick for today