

March 17

St. Patrick

It is believed that St. Patrick was born in fifth-century Britain to Roman parents. When he was sixteen, he was captured by pirates and taken to Ireland. There he was sold as a slave. His owner sent him to tend his flocks on the mountains. Patrick had little food and clothing. Yet he took good care of the animals in rain, snow and ice. Patrick was so lonely on the hillside that he turned often in prayer to Jesus and his Mother Mary. His life was hard and unfair. However, Patrick's trust in God grew stronger all the time.

Later when he escaped from Ireland, he studied to become a priest. But Patrick always felt that he had to go back to Ireland to bring that pagan land to Christ. At last his wish came true. He became a priest and then a bishop. It was while St. Celestine I was pope that Patrick went back to Ireland. How happy he was to bring the Good News of the true God to the people who once had held him a slave.

Right from the start, Patrick suffered much. His relatives and friends wanted him to quit before the pagan Irish killed him. Yet the saint kept on preaching about Jesus. He traveled from one village to another. He seldom rested, and he performed great penances for those people whom he so loved. Before he died, the whole nation was Christian.

Despite such great success, Patrick never grew proud. He called himself a poor sinner and gave all the praises to God. Patrick died in 461.

Many missionaries are laboring today to bring the Good News to our world just as Patrick did. We can pray and make sacrifices that their hard work will lead many people to belief in and love for Jesus.

Quitting Time

Have you ever set out to do something that you thought was really important, and people wanted you to quit? What was it like? What would have happened if you quit? Did you or didn't you quit? What would have happened if Patrick had quit?

Shamrocks

St. Patrick is said to have explained the Most Holy Trinity to the Irish by using a shamrock. The three leaves represent the three distinct persons of the Trinity. The one plant represents the one God. So the shamrock is a symbol of the three persons in one God. Using green

construction paper, cut out shamrocks and decorate your bedroom or home with them.

Prayer

Re-read the story of St. Patrick and write a prayer to ask his help. Notice his childhood and how he must understand what it means to be lonely, left out, grounded, frustrated, eager to follow his life's dreams.... Do you have a special problem you need help with?

