

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE  
[www.ourchurch.fr](http://www.ourchurch.fr)

## Happy St. Patrick's Day

Around the world today, people with a claim to Irish heritage will be raising glasses of Guinness and Irish Whiskey to toast the memory of St Patrick, the foremost saint of Ireland.

Patrick lived from about 385 to 451 and was a Romano-British missionary sent to Ireland. Born in Britain to a wealthy Roman family, his father was a deacon and his grandfather was a Christian priest.

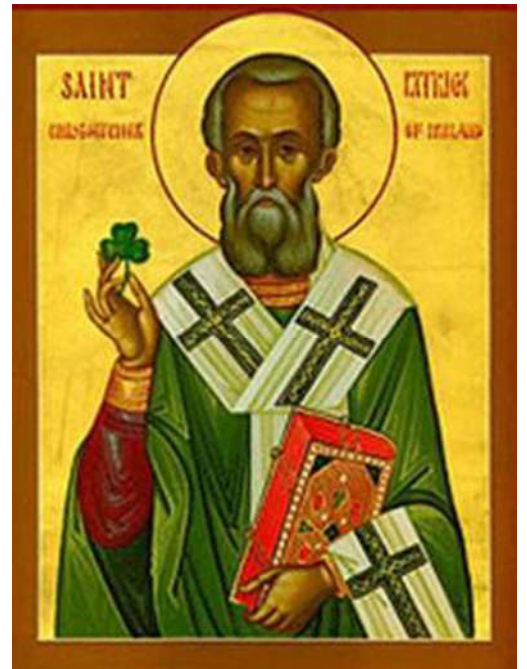
At 16 years old, however, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders and taken as a slave to Ireland. He worked there as a shepherd for 6 years and found God. In the *Declaration*, an account of his life said to have been written by Patrick himself, God appeared to Patrick and told him to flee to the Irish coast where he would find a ship which would take him back to Britain.

Patrick was then ordained a priest and returned to Ireland as a missionary, spending many years in the North. Allegorically he was said to have driven all the snakes out of Ireland, but this is actually a reference to his driving out paganism.

Patrick was said to have died on March 17, and he was buried in Downpatrick.

St Patrick's Day is a public holiday in Ireland, the Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador and also in Montserrat. There will be a huge parade today in New York (the day has been celebrated in America since 1601). It was even celebrated on the International Space Station when in 2011 astronaut Catherine Coleman played her antique Irish flute in orbit, and again in 2013 when Colonel Chris Hadfield took photographs of himself dressed in green singing "Danny Boy".

The shortest St Patrick's Day parade used to take place in Dripsey, County Cork, where it travelled just 23.4 metres between the two village pubs !



MOSES' COCKTAIL PARTIES SOMETIMES TOOK NEWCOMERS BY SURPRISE....



VERY NICE TO MEET YOU - WOULD YOU CARE FOR A LOCUST ?

## St Patrick's Breastplate



One of the most famous associations with St Patrick is the St Patrick's Breastplate prayer and hymn, which have been recorded hundreds of times. It will be read in our Service of Prayer for Healing this evening (Thursday) by Heidi Worswick.

According to tradition, Patrick wrote the prayer in 433AD to pray for divine protection before successfully converting the pagan king Leoghaire and his subjects from paganism to Christianity.

Related to St Paul's Chapter 6 verse 11 of St Paul's letter to the Ephesians in which he refers to putting on the Armour of God.

St Patrick's Breastplate is written in the style of a traditional incantation of the Druids to be protected on a journey. The original poem, in Gaelic, was called "St.Patrick's Lorica", after a mystical ancient garment which was supposed to protect the wearer from danger or illness, and guarantee entry into Heaven.

The hymn version—"I Bind Unto Myself Today" - was written in the 19th Century by Cecil Frances Alexander, the wife of an Anglican priest. She was a prolific hymn writer and also wrote "Once In Royal David's City" and "All Things Bright And Beautiful".

## GIVING BLOOD—JUST NOT FOR TRANSFUSIONS

Because of the presence of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (Mad Cow Disease) in the UK during 1980 - 1996, people who spent more than 12 months in total during that time in the UK cannot give blood for transfusion purposes in France.]

However, blood can be donated for use in medical research (*un don à usage non thérapeutique*) and also to help to train health professionals. A blood donation made in this way can release other blood donations for use in transfusions.

You can find where there are current blood donation sessions on the website:

<https://dondesang.efs.sante.fr/trouver-une-collecte>

## Our Service of Prayer for the Ukraine

Thank you for joining us in our special service of prayer for the Ukraine this week. Thank you also for your very kind messages of support that we have received.

We will continue to include prayers in all our services as we hope for a swift and just resolution to this crisis.

If you would like to offer support to Ukrainian refugees, please visit the French Government website:

**Je m'engage pour l'Ukraine**

<https://parrainage.refugies.info>

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

