

March 17 - Happy St. Patrick's Day!

March 17 marks the traditional date of St. Patrick's death. Patrick was born around the year 385 in England. His father was a church deacon and his grandfather a priest. Patrick was described as being a bit on the wild side.

At age 16 he was kidnapped by Irish raiders and taken to Ireland for six (6) years until he escaped. At age 48, Patrick had a dream that he was to return to Ireland and share the Gospel. Patrick knew the language from his six (6) years as a slave. Patrick did not go alone but took about a dozen people with him.

Legend suggests that Patrick used a three (3) leaf clover to explain the Trinity to the Irish. Another legend says Patrick chased the snakes out of Ireland. Since Ireland doesn't have snakes, the reference may have meant that Patrick chased the unbelievers out of Ireland.

Patrick's team of missionaries would ask an Irish tribe's leadership and seek permission to set up camp and preach the Gospel. Once one or two people were converted, two team members would stay behind with the converters and build a church.

Patrick based his ministry on Jesus spending time with tax collectors and sinners.

Patrick was called from a fairly comfortable life at age 48 to go back to his land of captivity. His Celtic Christians evangelized much of Europe after his death.

On March 17, many people claim to be Irish. I think it's better to claim the God that empowered St. Patrick and let the Good News change people! In closing here are the words of St. Patrick's Breastplate:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger

*Your Interim in Christ,
Pastor Newell Embley*