

St Patricks day

- The text of the Mass for St Patricks Day in English is available here: http://www.liturgy-ireland.ie/march_17.htm
- The text of the Mass for St Patricks Day in Irish is available here: <http://www.liturgy-ireland.ie/padraigsgaeilge.htm>
- Irish Council of Churches have an ecumenical service with hymns and prayers free here: www.irishchurches.org/resources



Questions people ask!

Is St Patrick a Patron Saint in other countries?

Yes. In fact, Saint Patrick is a very popular patron saint. He is the patron saint of various dioceses and archdioceses, including Adelaide (Australia), Armagh (Ireland), Auckland (New Zealand), Ballarat (Australia), Boston (USA), Burlington (Vermont, USA), Cape Town (South Africa), Dromore (Ireland), Erie (Pennsylvania, USA), Fort Worth (Texas, USA), Harrisburg (Pennsylvania, USA), Kilmore (Ireland), Melbourne (Australia), Mymensingh (Bangladesh), New York (USA), Poona (India), and Sacramento (California, USA). He is also the patron of the countries of Ireland and Nigeria. He is the patron of engineers, excluded persons, and ophidiophobics (those who fear snakes). He is the patron saint against snakes, fear of snakes, and snake bites.

Why is St Patrick associated with Snakes

Legends suggest that Saint Patrick drove out snakes from Ireland, although scientific evidence suggests that snakes did not exist in post-glacial Ireland. Some scholars believe that the "snakes" that Saint Patrick drove out are a metaphor for the serpent symbolism of Druids who inhabited Ireland during Patrick's time, or even heretical beliefs, e.g. Pelagianism. Saint Patrick probably did have a role in driving out Druid and Pelagian influence in Ireland.

Was St Patrick the first Irish Bishop?

No, Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine around 431 to Ireland, 'to the Irish believers in Christ'. He is considered a saint by both the Anglican and Catholic church. Patrick worked more in the west and north of the country, principally with those who weren't already Christian, and Patrick's legacy is the one which endured. Patrick is well known because of the writings he left – they help us to feel connected with him and his faith.

What is St Patricks Purgatory?

Since the 12th century, Saint Patrick's Purgatory has been a place of pilgrimage on Station Island, Lough Derg, Co. Donegal, in Ireland. This is where Christ is said to have revealed to Saint Patrick the entrance to purgatory and the earthly paradise. The earliest recorded visit to Saint Patrick's Purgatory is by an Irish knight named Owein around AD 1146. Saint Patrick's Purgatory became a popular pilgrimage site for knightly pilgrims from different countries in the 14th and 15th centuries. Pilgrims still visit the Island, which now has a modern basilica.

As part of our Celtic heritage and renowned throughout Europe since the Middle Ages, Lough Derg is a unique place of peace. In today's modern world - where everything is fast and instant - Lough Derg still manages to maintain a pace where people have to move more slowly, where the mind can be stilled. This small island offers no distractions, no artificialities, but instead a warm welcome, for there are no strangers here. If you are seeking an opportunity for calm, for renewal or growth, then this ancient Sanctuary of St. Patrick might well be the place. Everyone is welcome to become part of what has been an Irish tradition since the sixth century. Given that it has survived for over a thousand years, that it continues to attract pilgrims and give them hope, there is nothing to suggest that it will not be here in another thousand years.

For more information about visiting Saint Patrick's Purgatory, visit the Lough Derg website at <http://www.loughderg.org/>