The History of St. Patrick

St Patrick is known as the patron saint of Ireland. He was not a born Irish.
But he has become an integral part of the Irish heritage, mostly through
his service across Ireland of the 5th century.

Patrick was born in the later half of the 4th century A.D. His birth place is said to be in
either Scotland or Roman England. His real name was probably Maewyn Succat.
Though Patricius was his Romanicized name, he was later to become familiar as Patrick.

Patrick was the son of Calpurnius, a Roman-British army officer. One day
a band of pirates landed in south Wales and kidnapped him along with many others. The
pirates sold him into slavery in Ireland. He was there for 6 years, mostly imprisoned. One
night he dreamed of having seen God and in that dream God told him to escape.

Finally, he did escape and went to Britain and then on to France. There he joined a
monastery and studied under St. Germain, the bishop of Auxerre. He spent around 12
years in training. Later he was made a bishop. He dreamed that the Irish were calling him
back to Ireland to tell them about God.

He set out for Ireland with the Pope's blessings. There he converted the Gaelic Irish, who
were then mostly Pagans, to Christianity. He was confident in the Lord, he journeyed far
and wide, baptizing and confirming with untiring zeal.

Indeed, Patrick was quite successful at winning converts. Through active preaching, he
made important converts even among the royal families. And this fact upset the Celtic
Druids. Patrick was arrested several times, but escaped each time.

For 20 years he had traveled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the
country. He also set up schools and churches which would aid him in his conversion.
He developed a native clergy, fostered the growth of monasticism, established dioceses,
and held church councils.

By the end of the 7th century Patrick had become a legendary figure, and the legends
have continued to grow since then. There are many legends associated with St Patrick.
It is said that he used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the concept of the Trinity;
which refers to the combination of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Patrick's mission in Ireland lasted for over 20 years. He died on March 17, AD 461.That
day has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since.