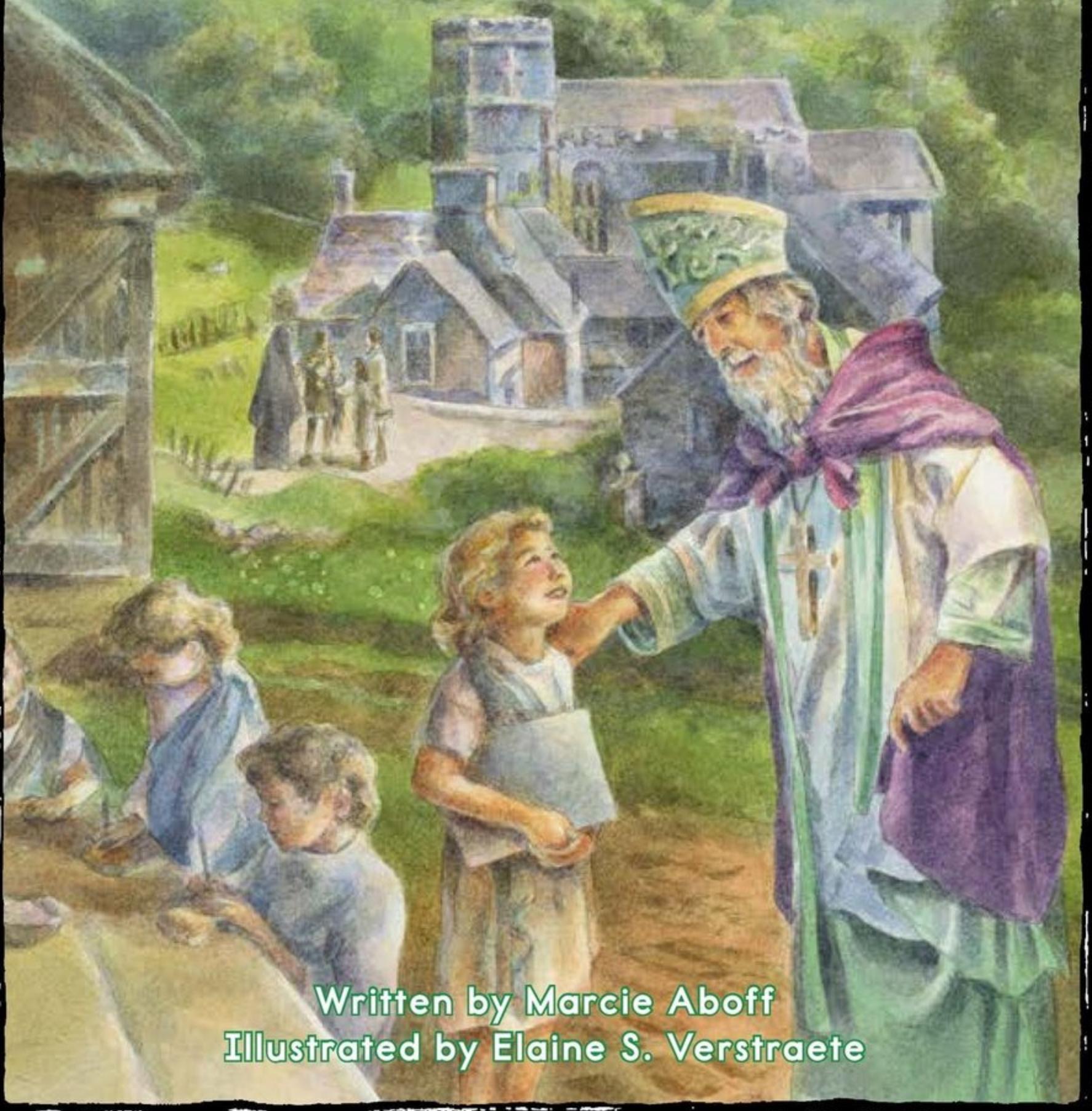


LEVELED BOOK • L

# Saint Patrick's Day



Written by Marcie Aboff  
Illustrated by Elaine S. Verstraete

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People take part in traditional Irish dances in Bucharest, Romania.

## Introduction

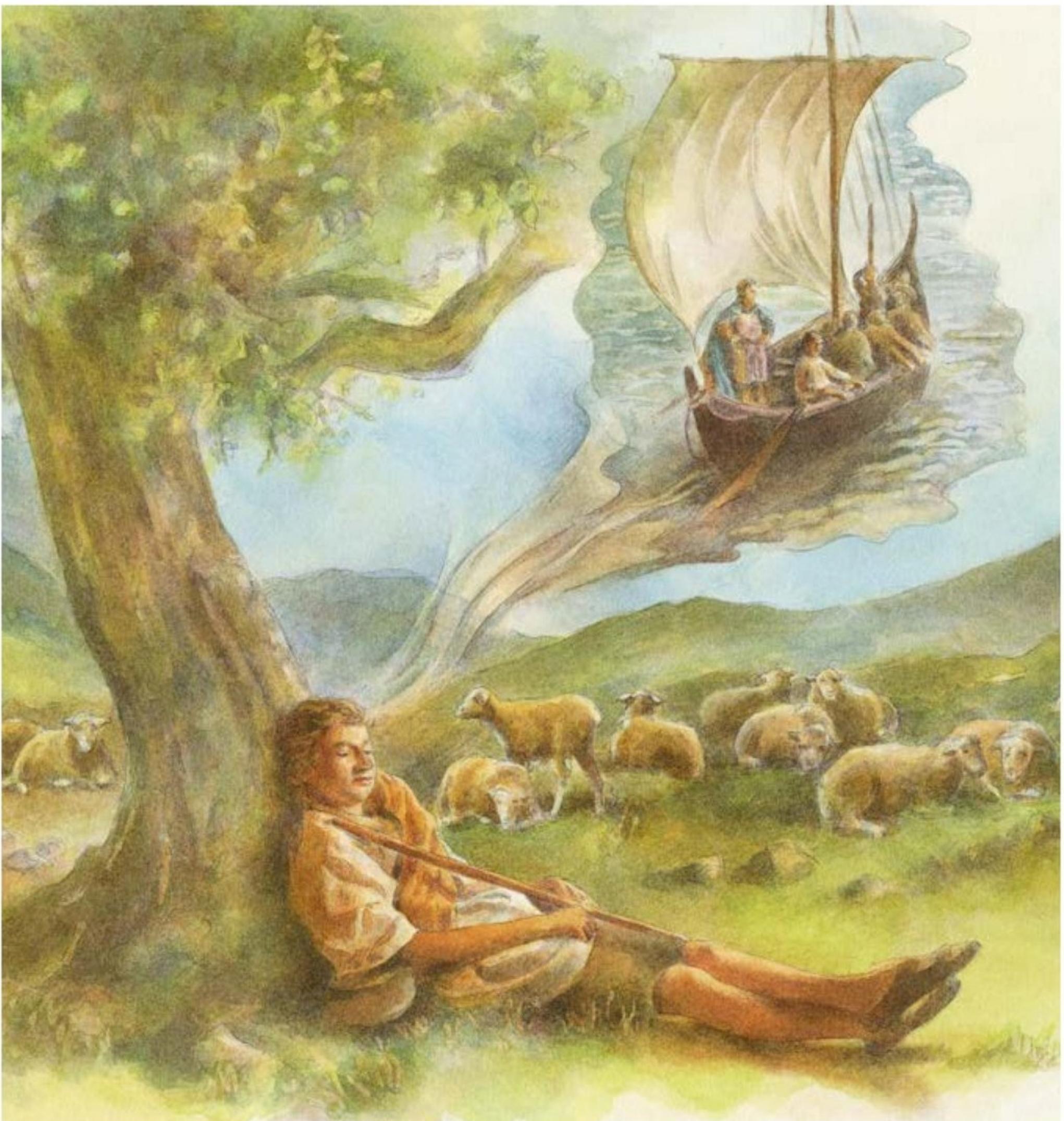
On March 17, people around the world come together for Saint Patrick's Day. This holiday celebrates the people and **culture of Ireland**. Towns and cities have parades with music and dancing. Many people wear green and eat Irish foods.

The day started, however, as a day to celebrate Saint Patrick, the **patron saint of Ireland**.

# Who Was Saint Patrick?

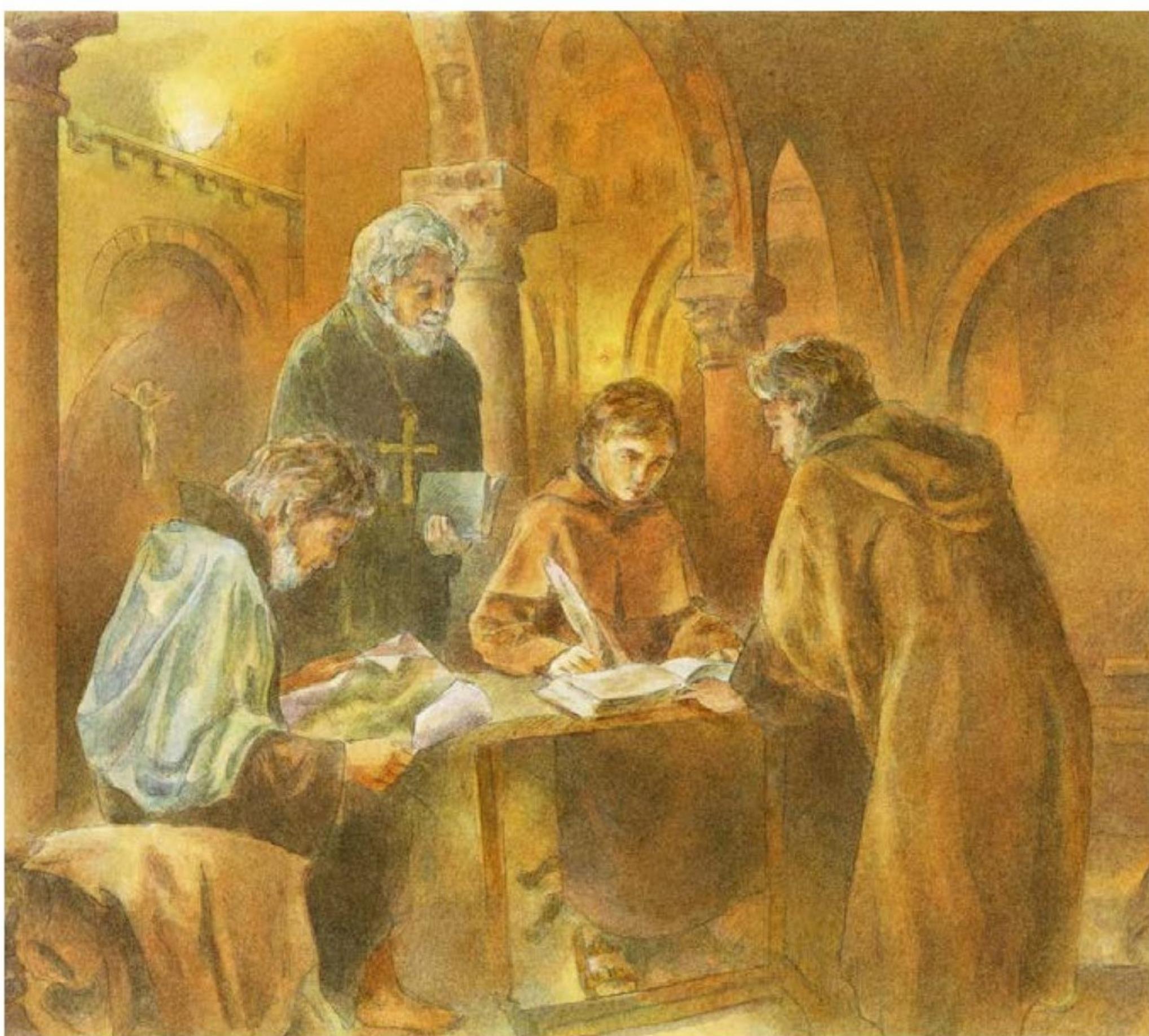
Saint Patrick wasn't always a saint, nor was he "Patrick." He wasn't even Irish! His name was Maewyn Succat. He was born into a **Catholic** family in Britain around AD 385 or 390. When he was sixteen, Irish invaders captured him and took him to Ireland.

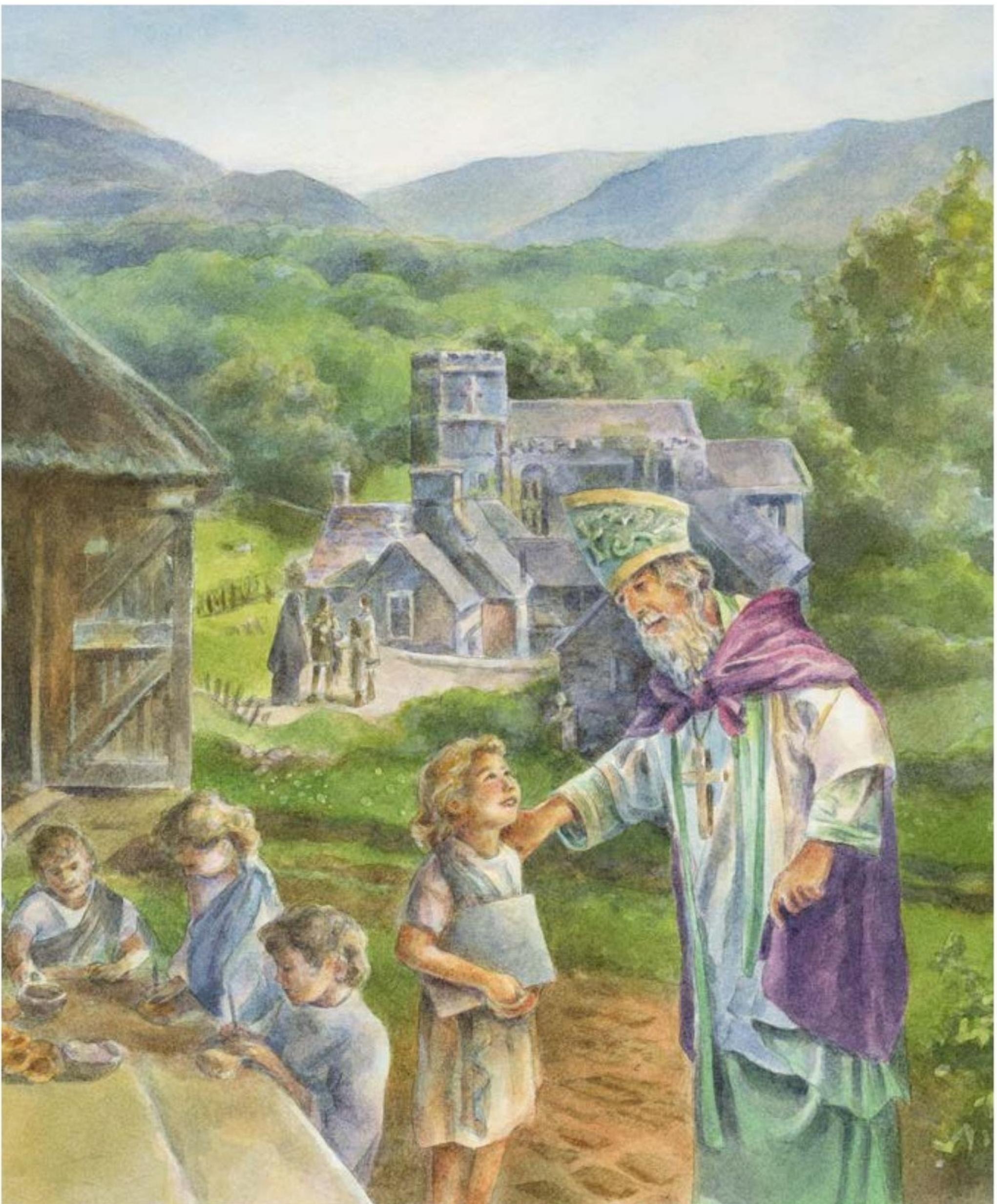




Maewyn was forced to take care of sheep in Ireland for six years. During this difficult time, he found comfort in his religion. He later wrote that a dream told him to escape on a ship. When he did, he returned to his family in Britain.

His writings say he had another dream in Britain. The dream told him to return to Ireland to help the Irish people. Maewyn later began many years of training and became a priest and then a **bishop**. He was given the Latin name **Patricius**, or Patrick.





Patrick finally returned to Ireland. He set up schools and churches. He helped people in need and became well known. Many people in Ireland became Catholic because of Patrick.

## Tales of Saint Patrick

Many tales come from Patrick's time in Ireland. One says that he chased all the snakes from the island. This tale could not be true. Ireland had no snakes during that time.





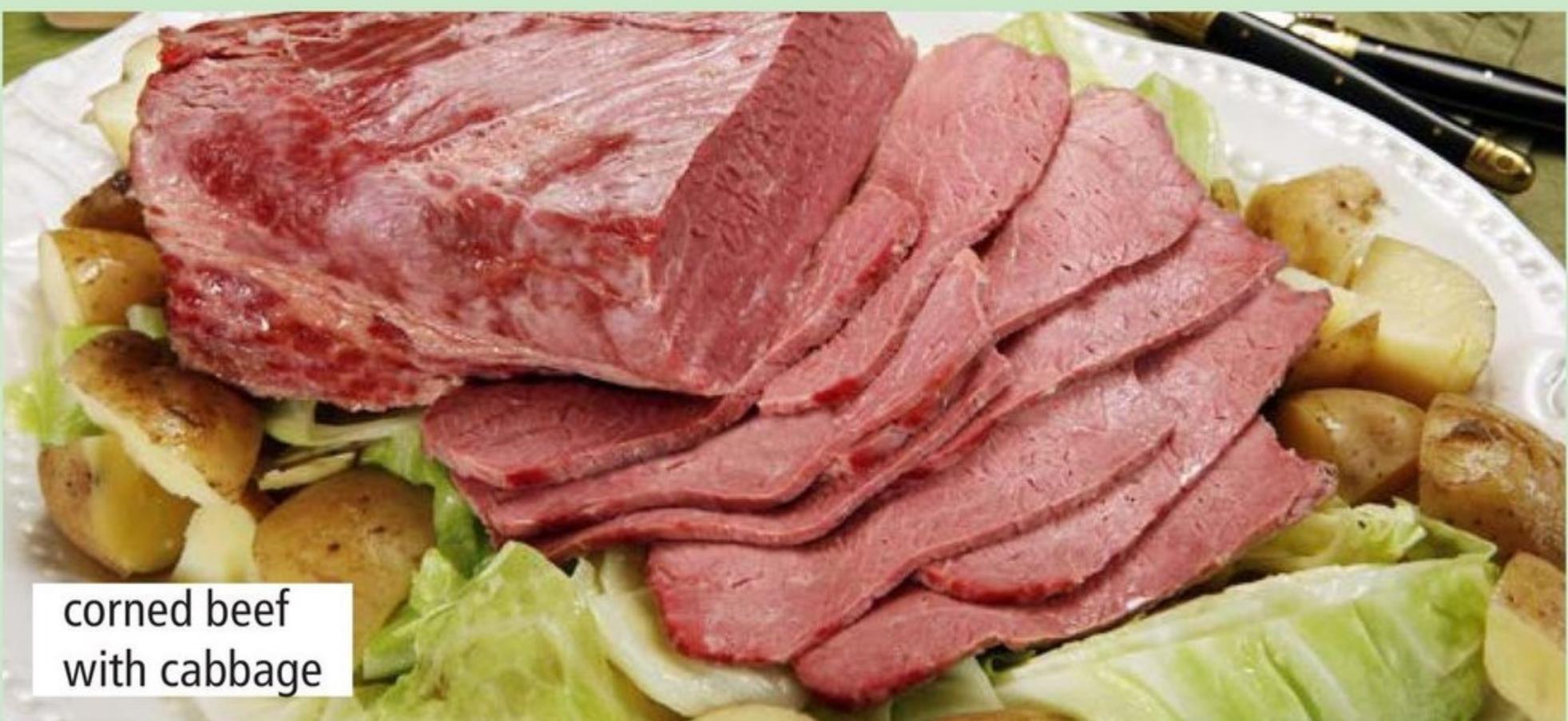
## Saint Patrick Remembered

Patrick died on March 17, around the year 460. Many years later, the Catholic Church made him the patron saint of Ireland.

The day Saint Patrick died started out as a feast day in Ireland. Over hundreds of years, many Irish people moved to other countries. They brought their **customs**, including Saint Patrick's Day, with them.

## Irish Festival Foods

Corned beef with cabbage, soda bread, and Irish stew are traditional Irish foods eaten on St. Patrick's Day.





In Toronto, Canada, some people celebrate Saint Patrick's Day by dancing.

## Celebrating Saint Patrick's Day

Towns and cities all over the world have Saint Patrick's Day celebrations. Along with parades and Irish food, many people wear green.

Green is on Ireland's flag. Some people believe wearing green brings good luck.



In England, some people dress in the colors of the Irish flag to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day.

## Green Lights for Ireland

The Empire State Building in New York City glows green on Saint Patrick's Day. So does the Sydney Opera House in Australia.



Sydney Opera House

The shamrock is a symbol of Ireland. Many people believe it is a kind of clover. Some believe it may be a different plant. The shamrock is a common decoration on Saint Patrick's Day.



Japanese students march in a Saint Patrick's Day parade in Tokyo, Japan.

## Conclusion

Saint Patrick was a real person who is important to Ireland's history. The holiday that bears his name has changed over the years. It has become a celebration for people around the world. On Saint Patrick's Day, everyone can be a little Irish.

# Glossary

<b>bishop</b> <i>(n.)</i>	a high-ranking official in some Christian churches who is responsible for a specific area or group of churches (p. 7)
<b>Catholic</b> <i>(adj.)</i>	of or having to do with the Roman Catholic Church, a branch of Christianity (p. 5)
<b>culture</b> <i>(n.)</i>	the ideas and customs of a certain group of people (p. 4)
<b>customs</b> <i>(n.)</i>	traditional ways of doing something in a culture (p. 11)
<b>Ireland</b> <i>(n.)</i>	an island in northwestern Europe that contains the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (p. 4)
<b>patron saint</b> <i>(n.)</i>	a holy person recognized as the special protector of a person or group (p. 4)

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Title page: Some people like to dress in the colors of the Irish flag on Saint Patrick's Day.

Page 3: To celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, the people of the city of Chicago, Illinois, dye the Chicago River green.

Back cover: Some clover leaves are shaped like hearts.

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