



Irish Missionary Saints

By Else Tennesen

I often forget that Orthodox Saints don't just come from Eastern lands. I've been armchair traveling to Ireland and Britain lately, and have discovered some wonderful Church Fathers from there.

St. Cuthbert of Lindesfarne. St Cuthbert was born in 634 in northeast England. One night, as he shepherded sheep, he saw a vision of St Aidan of Lindesfarne being carried to heaven by angels. After a brief life as a soldier, he entered the monastery and became a monk. He was known for his exemplary ascetic life, charm, and service to the poor. He later adopted the solitary life, first living in a cave and then on Lindesfarne Island. He was made Bishop of Lindesfarne after a bit and had to leave the caves to witness to others, and after many more ascetic years, died in 687. Cuthbert's relics were later found to be incorruptible and many miracles have been attributed to him. His feast day is March 20. The Life of St Cuthbert by the Venerable Bede is a wonderful, ancient book about Cuthbert that will thrill and encourage your soul. Read it online at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/bede-cuthbert.html>.

St. Brendan of Clonfert (the Navigator). Born in 484, St Brendan is known as one of the twelve apostle of Ireland. He is best known for his seven years' voyage to the Isle of the Blessed. With a group of unbelievers, he set out in a coracle boat to seek the Garden of Eden. On his way, he encounters "wonders and horrors of the world, such as Judas frozen on one side and burning on the other, people with pigs' heads, and an enormous fish or sea monster that at one point encircles his boat. He founded many churches in Ireland and Wales. He died in 577 and is buried in Clonfert Cathedral. His feast day is May 16. You can read about his marvelous voyage at <http://www.lamp.ac.uk/celtic/elibrary/translations/nsb.htm>

St. Patrick of Ireland. St Patrick was born in 387 AD in Britain. At the age of 14, he was kidnapped and brought as a slave to Ireland, where he became a Christian. One night after he had returned to England as an adult, he heard the people of Ireland crying to him to come back and bring the Gospel. Tradition states that he baptized thousands, ordained priests, and founded Christian communities. Legends tell of how he banished snakes from Ireland and how his staff rooted into the earth when it took a

long time for hearers in a certain town to accept the truth of Christ. He used the shamrock to explain the Trinity. He died in 493. Patrick is considered the patron saint of Ireland and his feast day is March 17. Read his wonderful Lorica prayer at http://orthodoxwiki.org/Patrick_of_Ireland#Lorica_of_Saint_Patrick and his famous confession at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/patrick/confession.ii.html>

St. Columba or Collum Cille (the dove of the church). Columba was born in 521. He was a Irish monk who brought the Gospel to the Picts (Scotland). He was one of the twelve apostles of Ireland. He was considered a holy man and miracles occurred during his work among the Picts. He promoted literacy and diplomacy among the Pictish tribes, and on the island of Iona, established a monastery and a school for missionaries. He is considered to be pivotal in revitalizing monasticism in the Celtic church. Tradition states that he chased off the Loch Ness monster with the sign of the cross. He died in 597 and was initially buried on Iona. His relics were later moved to Downpatrick, Ireland where he is buried with St Patrick. Read his life story in another ancient manuscript by Eunan of Iona at <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T201040/index.html>.

Source: <http://www.stlukeorthodox.com/html/evangelist/2010/irish.cfm>