

Saint Patrick Writes

by

**Most Rev. Joseph Duffy, D.D.
Bishop of Clogher**

Tentmaker Publications



Tentmaker Publications,
121 Hartshill Road,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffordshire, ST4 7LU
www.tentmaker.org.uk

© 2007

ISBN 1 901670-51-1

Cover: Text from the beginning of the *Confession* from a page in the Book of Armagh; by kind permission of the Board of Trinity College, Dublin.

Photo: Achill by Phil Roberts

Acknowledgements

The translation of the Confession, with a few minor emendations, has been published already by Veritas Publications in *Patrick in his own words*. The Biblical quotations are from *The Jerusalem Bible*, as far as Patrick's Latin allows, and are used by permission of Darton, Longman and Todd, London.

The translation of both documents has been made from the Latin text of Ludwig Bieler as published in *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Episcopi* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin 1952).

SAINT PATRICK WRITES

Saint Patrick is known all over the world as the patron saint of Ireland. Although he lived as long ago as the fifth century, the story of his life has never been forgotten. He was brought to Ireland at the age of sixteen to work as a slave tending herds on the side of a mountain. Later he returned as a bishop in charge of a mission to preach the Gospel. Every year on 17th March, the Irish celebrate his feast and give thanks to God for the faith which he brought them.

We warm easily to Patrick because he is a flesh-and-blood saint with a rich and interesting personality. He tells us about himself in two documents which he wrote at different times of crisis in his life. The first of these was a vigorous letter of protest to the soldiers of a British prince Coroticus who had killed some of Patrick's converts and sold others into slavery. Near the end of his life he wrote his *Confession*, a much longer statement which was a reply to general allegations made against him by his fellow-clergy that he had not conducted his mission in a proper manner.

In Patrick's own writings, even in translation, we get very close to a man who did his utmost to live by the beliefs he preached to others. For him, to be a Christian was to allow Christ to give direction to his whole life.

CONTENTS

THE LETTER TO THE SOLDIERS OF COROTICUS	page 7
THE CONFESSION	page 13
God's Gift must be told	page 13
Escape from captivity	page 17
How Patrick was called	page 19
Mission to the Irish.....	page 22
Conclusion	page 28
NOTES	page 29
RECOMMENDED READING	page 30