

What was saintly about St. Patrick?

A multitude of legends exist around the man we know as Saint Patrick. Tradition says that he did many wonderful things and chased the snakes out of the Emerald Isle. The legend is not the man. The man was a missionary who went to Ireland, published the message about Jesus Christ, and as a result revolutionized the life of that fair country.

What is a saint? According to tradition, saints are people who lived exceptional lives, performed miracles, and if all tradition could be believed, exist on a level beyond the life of ordinary sinful mortals.

Since the Scriptures are the original source of the idea of sainthood, what is it all about? The word literally means "those who are set apart for special use." Set aside for, or from, what? Set aside from evil, to God, for service to God and those around them. Are there only a few special people who fall into this category? No. In the Scriptures anyone who has given themselves over to obey Jesus Christ as their king is a saint - that is what the Bible calls them. (Since the word 'saint' is biblical, that is the definition we must use to understand what saints are.) They are people who have committed themselves totally to Jesus Christ and purpose by God's help to turn from evil, serve God, and live lives of service to others.

This means that anyone can become a saint according to the scriptural definition of sainthood. All you need to do is turn from rebellion against God. Give yourself to live in obedience to Christ, and serve others.

Some may have some trouble with the fact that such saints are not yet perfect. Saints do not become perfect until they get to heaven. Any real saint, of this kind, will be making visible, recognizable progress toward that goal.

Do you know any saints? Christ came to call everyone to be saints. You should respond in obedience and join Saint Patrick as a genuine follower of Jesus Christ.