



Did St. Patrick really drive snakes out of Ireland?

There are no snakes in Ireland – did St. Patrick actually drive them out?

It is true that there are no snakes in Ireland. Legend tells us that St. Patrick drove them away during his missionary journey around the fifth century. For this reason, many images depict St. Patrick crushing a snake with his foot.

But did St. Patrick *really* drive the snakes out of Ireland? While we know about his impact on the spread of Catholicism in Ireland, we don't know many of the details of his life. St. Patrick is also a major symbol of Irish culture, so there are a lot of legends about his life.

St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland is almost certainly one of those legends. Yes, Ireland is snake-free, but most experts believe they never made it to Ireland in the first place. But St. Patrick *did* drive the metaphorical snakes of evil and paganism out of Ireland, converting an entire people to Catholicism. That is why the legend persists and why, while probably not literally accurate, it is spiritually true.

Before St. Patrick, pagan practices were rampant in Ireland. St. Patrick helped incorporate the Christian message into Irish culture to help the Irish people understand the Christian God and abandon their pagan practices.

So while St. Patrick likely did not physically drive snakes out of Ireland, we can say with certainty that he did have a major role in driving the Devil out of Ireland by converting the Irish to Christianity.

This Saint Patrick's Day, in the midst of all the festivities, we should honor St. Patrick's legacy by helping spread the Word of God to those who are unreached.