

Feast of St. Brendan

16th May



Saint Brendan was born around 488AD in Annagh, near Tralee, Co. Kerry. He is best remembered as the monk who sailed all around northwest Europe, spreading the Christian faith and founding monasteries. His many sea voyages brought him to Wales, Scotland, France, parts of mainland Europe and Newfoundland. He founded a very large monastery in Clonfert, Co. Galway. He was buried in Clonfert in 577AD. Saint Brendan is the patron saint of boatmen, sailors, travellers and whales. He is, also, the patron Saint of the diocese of Kerry.

Brendan's most famous voyage was to the west. According to tradition, he was about 70 years old when he and 17 other monks set out on a voyage in a currach, a wooden-framed boat covered in sewn ox-hides. They were seeking the 'Promised Land of the Saints', which was said to lie far to the west of Ireland. Saint Brendan decided to set sail to see if he could find this land. He and his crew loaded enough supplies to last for 40 days and, after many farewells, they set sail on their great adventure. The voyage lasted much longer than they thought, however: They were away from home for seven years!

St. Brendan and his monks sailed for weeks and weeks without seeing any land. Sometimes, when they reached land, friendly locals gave them food for the journey. They reported seeing some strange sights while at sea: There were mountains which blew out smoke and fire and white pillars floating in the sea! The monks had never seen anything like it before!

One strange tale tells us that the monks landed on a very small island where nothing grew. They tied the boat up and stepped onto a stony beach where they collected a small pile of driftwood and began to cook lunch. As the fire burned hotter, however, the earth began to move! The monks shook with fear. The land began to shake and sink into the water. The monks had scarcely got back to their boat when their 'island' headed off into the ocean! In fact, it wasn't an island that they landed on at all! Can you guess what it was? The back of a whale!

Read about: *Brendan's Voyage in Alive O 5, Term 3, Lesson 8*

Website: http://www.iisresource.org/resources_ph.aspx to find a link for an illustrated story-poem about St. Brendan's Voyage.

TRUE OR FALSE

- 1 Bishop Murphy is the bishop of Kerry?
- 2 St. Brendan was born in Galway?
- 3 St. Brendan is the patron saint of sailors?
- 4 The type of boat he sailed was a currach?
- 5 He set sail on a voyage with 27 monks in the currach?
- 6 They brought enough food for 40 days?
- 7 St. Brendan and the other monks saw dinosaurs on their journey?
- 8 Their voyage took them 7 months?
- 9 St. Brendan is buried in Clonfert, Co. Galway?
- 10 St. Brendan died in 577AD?
- 11 St. Brendan founded hospitals?
- 12 St. Brendan sailed west in search of the Promised Land of the Saints?
- 13 A currach is made of a wooden frame covered in sewn ox-hides?
- 14 His largest monastery was in Clonfert?
- 15 St. Brendan is the patron St. of the diocese Kerry?
- 16 St. Brendan was born near Tralee?
- 17 Mount Brandon is named after St. Brendan?
- 18 St. Brendan's feast-day is celebrated on the 16th May?



Read about Brendan's Voyage in Alive 0 5, Term 3, Lesson 8