

Patrick, a Christian boy who was carried off from Scotland by Irish pirates and sold into slavery as a swineherd, was so moved with pity at the sight of the ignorance of the Irish, that when he had escaped after six years' captivity, his one desire was to go back to preach the true faith to the people amongst whom he had toiled as a slave. He returned to Ireland (A.D. 405) with a little band of followers. His previous knowledge of the country and of the language, joined to his dauntless courage and burning zeal, enabled him not only to convert many to Christianity, but to lay with wise forethought the foundations of the Church in Ireland. The Irish have ever honoured him as their patron saint.

The great missionary amongst the Germans, Winfrith, afterwards called Boniface (A.D. 680–755), was an Englishman born in Devon. The stories he heard in his youth of the English and Irish missionaries who laboured amongst the pagan German tribes, inspired him to follow their example. His work was marked by devotion and wisdom. He founded monasteries, notably the famous monastery of Fulda, as centres of learning, with schools