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After his dream, which prompted him to escape a life of slavery in Ireland, St. Patrick tells us (in his *Confession*) that he found a ship to take him back home. Initially, the crew did not want him aboard but, later, they relented.

After he escaped his life as a slave-shepherd, Patrick went back to the country of his birth. He didn't take a direct route, however. Let's read his words (translated from Latin) as he describes the journey.

[o]n the same day that I arrived, the ship was setting out from the place, and I said that I had the wherewithal to sail with them; and the steersman was displeased and replied in anger, sharply: 'By no means attempt to go with us.' (See *The Confession of St. Patrick*, [point 17.](#))

Patrick was puzzled. Could it be that he wasn't supposed to escape after all? He began to pray:

Hearing this I left them to go to the hut where I was staying, and on the way I began to pray, and before the prayer was finished I heard one of them shouting loudly after me: 'Come quickly because the men are calling you.' And immediately I went back to them and they started to say to me: 'Come, because we are admitting you out of good faith; make friendship with us in any way you wish.' ... I continued with them, and forthwith we put to sea. (*Confession*, [point 18.](#))

Scholars believe the ship sailed to France (then called Gaul) but, once again, we cannot be sure. Patrick, himself, did not tell us where he landed. He did say the rest of the trip was extremely difficult:

And after three days we reached land, and for twenty-eight days journeyed through uninhabited country, and the food ran out and hunger overtook them; and one day the steersman began saying: 'Why is it, Christian? You say your God is great and all-powerful; then why can you not pray for us? For we may perish of hunger; it is unlikely indeed that we shall ever see another human being.' (*Confession*, [point 19.](#))

Patrick suggested that the men pray for themselves:

In fact, I said to them, confidently: 'Be converted by faith with all your heart to my Lord God, because nothing is impossible for him, so that today he will send food for you on your road, until you be sated, because everywhere he abounds.' (*Confession*, [point 19.](#))

Taking the young man's advice, his traveling companions did as Patrick suggested:

And with God's help this came to pass; and behold, a herd of swine appeared on the road before our eyes, and they slew many of them, and remained there for two nights, and they were full of their meat and well restored, for many of them had fainted and would otherwise have been left half dead by the wayside. And after this they gave the utmost thanks to God, and I was esteemed in their eyes, and from that day they had food abundantly. (*Confession*, [point 19.](#))

Patrick had safely escaped Ireland, but he was not yet home. That would take a few more years.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ESCAPE-St.-Patrick-of-St.-Patrick-s-Day>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/ESCAPE-St.-Patrick-of-St.-Patrick-s-Day>



Gaul (France) - 4th Century

Map from "The Public Schools Historical Atlas" by Charles Colbeck. Longmans, Green; New York; London; Bombay. 1905.

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