

## November 27 - Advent

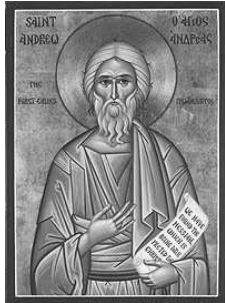
With Advent, the Church's year begins anew as we wait for the birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

As we begin Advent, here are some apt words from a Celtic prayer from Poems of the Western Highlanders

Jesu MacMary, at dawn-tide, the flowing,  
 Jesu MacMary, at ebb-tide, the going:  
 When our first breath awakes,  
 Life's day when darkness takes,  
 Merciful God of all, mercy bestowing,  
 With us and for us be,  
 Merciful Deity,  
 Amen, eternally.



## November 30 - St Andrew's Day (d. c.60)



Andrew is a good patron saint for those of you holding a Christmas party this year - and who hope you have rightly estimated the amount of food you'll need. Andrew was the disciple who, when faced with 5,000 people to feed, brought a boy to Jesus who had two small fish and five barley loaves. When Andrew wasn't being wildly optimistic with the catering arrangements, he was out fishing with brother Peter and friends James and John. This New Testament apostle and martyr was brother of Simon Peter and a fisherman by trade, his home was at Capernaum. He was a disciple of John the Baptist before becoming an apostle of Christ.

In all the Gospel lists of apostles his name is among the first four; he is specially mentioned for his share in the feeding of the 5,000 and in the episode of the Greeks who wished to meet Jesus. (John12:20-2)

It is not certain where Andrew preached the Gospel, where he died, or (even in Chrysostom's time) where he was buried. The most ancient written tradition links him with Greece; Scythia and Epirus both claimed him as their disciple. Patras in Achaia claimed to be the place where he was crucified and preached to the people for two days before he died.

His feast was universal from the 6th century; churches were dedicated to him from early times in Italy and France, as well as Anglo-Saxon England, where Rochester was the earliest of 637 medieval dedications.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1204, the Crusaders took his body to Amalfi. The despot Thomas Palaeologus gave his head to the pope in 1461. It was one of the most treasured possessions of St Peter's until it was returned to Constantinople by Paul VI.

In art Andrew is depicted with a normal Latin cross. The saltire cross (X), commonly called St Andrew's Cross, which represents Scotland on the Union Jack, was associated with him from the 10th century at Autun. His other attribute is a fishing net.