

St. Declan of Ardmore

God our Father,

we give thanks for the life of **St. Declan**
who sowed the seeds of faith
among the people of the Déise.

We praise his name.

We visit the places made holy
by his presence.

We walk in his footsteps,
on the path taken
by generations of pilgrims
as we journey to the Father's House.

We pray that we may step
in faith, hope and love, walking with Jesus,
guided by the Holy Spirit
on our journey home.

We make this prayer,
through Christ your Son, our Lord, Amen.



24th July

Feast of St. Declan of Ardmore

The cult and veneration of St. Declan as the leading and most important follower of Christ in the Déise region is very strong. The annual celebration of Declan in Ardmore is the oldest Christian Celebration of all in the Déise county. It has attracted travellers and visitors for many centuries.



Place of Birth

From his life, we learn that he was born in Drumroe, a townland not far from Lismore and beside the Bóthar na Naomh, the Road of the Saints, which connects Lismore and Ardmore.



His Baptism

We are told that his baptism was administered by Colmán, perhaps the patron of Kilcolman near Ardmore or Colmán of Lismore. The name Colmán is to be found in so many lists of saints in the Deise region, that one cannot be sure.



Rome

Declan journeyed to Rome where he was ordained Bishop by the Pope himself and sent back to Ireland



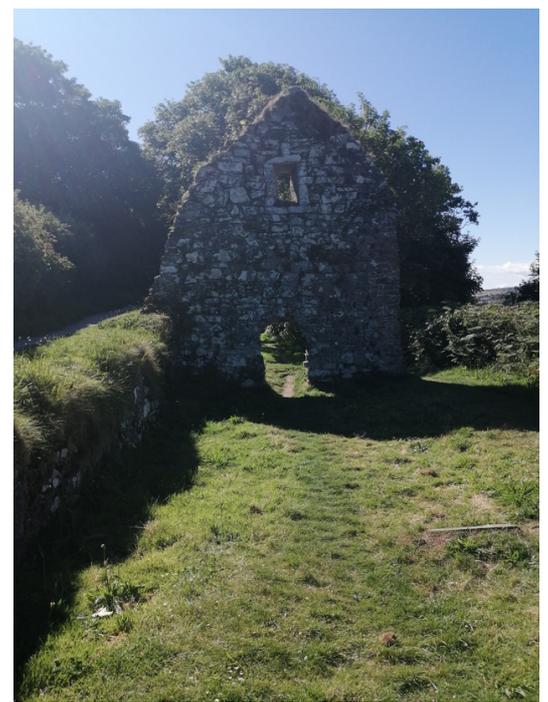
Ardmore

Declan established himself in Ardmore, but travelled around Munster. When Declan died, his body was brought back to the Monastery of Ardmore and buried in the little Church called the Beanachán near what later became the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Ardmore.

St. Declan's Last Journey - 'The Short Mile' from Heritage to Tomb

"When Declan realised that his last days were at hand, his disciples brought him to his own city (the Monastery), for it was not there he dwelt at the time but in a small venerable cell which he had ordered to be build for him between the hill called Ardmore Decláin and ocean - in a narrow place at the brink of the sea by which there flows down from the hill above a small shining stream about which are trees and bushes all around, and it is called in Irish **Diseart Decláin** (Declan's Hermitage).

Then to the city, a short mile and the reason why Declan used go there was to avoid turmoil and noise so that he might be able to read, pray and fast there. When Declan fell ill, he returned to his own city. He received the body and blood of Christ and he blessed his people, his dependents and his poor and he kissed them in a token of love and peace.



He was buried with honour in the tomb which he had himself indicated which moreover has wrought wonders and holy signs from that time to now".

St. Declan's Miracles

There are many miracles association with St. Declan. This list has been passed down through the generations.

- The rock carrying his bells floats into Ardmore.
- Declan connects Ard Inis na gCaorach to the mainland.
- Healing and comforting the sick.
- St. Patrick's follower, Ballin, drowned at Ath na gCorra Mhíol, was restored to life.
- An imminent sea attack and danger to Ardmore was halted when Declan asked Ultan to intervene. Ultan raised his left hand against the attackers and the sea swallowed them up. Declan and Ultan disputed the originator of the miracle, but the saying "The left hand of Ultan against you' is still recalled in Ardmore. (It is said that Ultan was carrying a child on his right arm).
- The raising from the dead of seven noble hostages who died of the plague.



*Jubilee Year Memorial Stone
(St Declan) at Ardmore.
Sculptor: Turlough Cowman
Mason: James Hurley*

These miracles are of the supernatural and awe inspiring. In many cases, these stories were told in an oral tradition to attach importance and significance to the work of the Saint. In Declan's miracles, there are underlying messages of praising God, of helping the neighbour, consoling the bereaved, good over evil, undoing of wrongs etc - integral elements of Christian Faith.