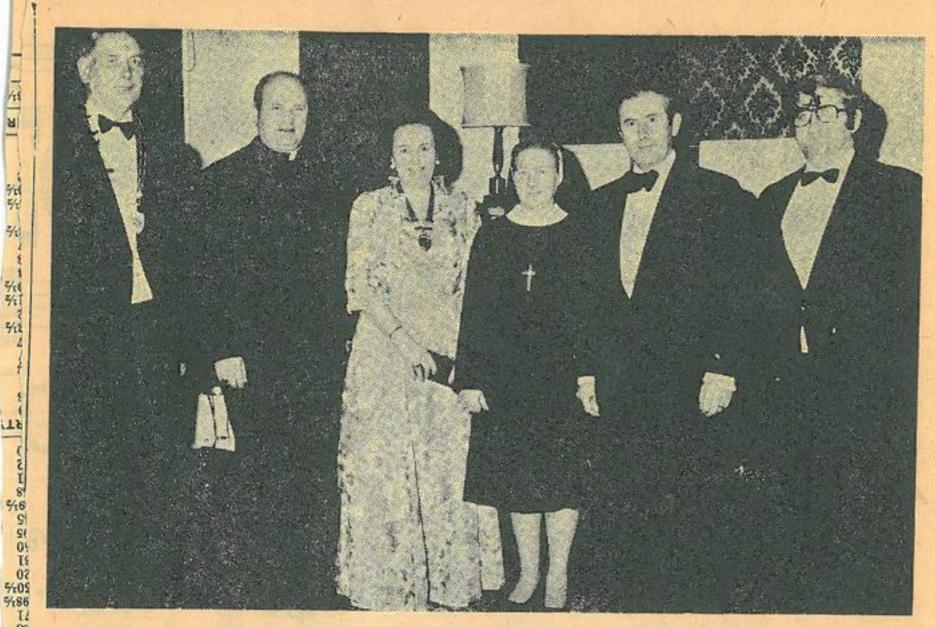
Saints (Ste-Itz)



Among those who attended the annual dinner dance of the Presentation Convent, Killarney Past Pupils Union, held in the Great Southern Hotel, Killarney, were (from left): Senator M. Moynihan, Most Rev. Dr. Casey, Bishop of Kerry; Miss Maura Brosnan, president of P.P.U.; Sr. Gonzaga, Superior, Presentation Convent, Killarney; Mr. Richard Burke, Minister for Education, and Mr. Michael Begley, T.D.

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SAINT ITE OF KILEEDY AND KILMEEDY

By PADRAIG O MAIDIN

On the 15th of each recurring January, states the author of the Munster at the time would suglife of Saint Ite. the faithful of remote parish become this rejoiced and gladdened at the solemnity of grandeur and ceremonies prepared for them. although they, like the Corcu sent his messengers to her who The parish is that of Killeedy about five miles to the south of Erainn settlers. The Ui Fidgeinte for a convent. Ite replied: "The Newcastle West in Co. Limerick. had placed the maintenance of Upper Fionn Abha valley. She was also venerated at Kilmeedy, also in Ui Conaill Gabhra, and at Kilmeedy in Dunhallow and at several places in Cornwall.

to life so vividly as Ite She was born, not in Co. Limerick, but i somewhere in the present Co. Waterford and belonged to the Desi people who had been driven from central Ireland in the olden times before the dawn of history, and had settled, part in the present Waterford district, and part across the channel in Pembrokeshire.

... The original of her life appears to have been very ancient. As we would expect, some fabulous stories were added to it. As we would expect also in the life of any wealthy and attractive girl who wished to take the veil of a nun, there is the episode of the father losing patience with her when she refuses to marry the noble young man. Here however is a new note, the voice of a girl but already made mature by her understanding of people: "Bear with my father for a while", she pleads "because although he now forbids me to consecrate myself to Christ, yet hereafter no at am abournan lledo ad

gest that Ite was the patron of their swine and their herds as a tax on the Corcu Oche and it was because of this imposition that the battle of Cuilne was fought. A small dif-Few of the early saints come ficulty arises however. Although the annals generally give the victory to the Corcu Oche, the Annals of Ulster state that they were slain: A.D. 551 The battle of Cuilne in which the Corcu Oche were slaughtered through the prayers of Its of Cluain." All we can say is that Ite, being the patron of the Corcu Oche, would not have prayed for their defeat.

When we come to traditions of St. Ite in Duhallow we find her again involved in war. In her efforts to christianise the Millstreet area she discovered that the pagan Muscrai were firmly established there with their centre of worship at Crobh Dearg under the Paps. Their military headquarters was at Drisean. Ite encouraged her followers to capture this fort and when they had taken it and had settled down in the area they expected her to site her convent there.

Ite had other ideas. She had decided that her new foundation poor.

A study of the history of was to be in the smiling fertile valley of the Upper Fionn Abha (Finnowe). The chieftain did not the Corcu Oche people who were like this as it was too far away being persecuted by the Ui Fid-geint, allies of the Eogannachta, easy to protect. Therefore he

They praised the rich pastures of Drisean. Ite was adamant: "The Upper Fionn Abha valley." Drisean was sheltered. "The Upper Fionn Abha valley" she insisted. So near the fortress "The Upper Fionn Abha valley." It was no use in talking further but the chieftain took pre-cautions. Even today we find the remains of eleven forts in the single townland of Clochbhuaille mor, nine of them with double rampart. So Ite established her convent at Cill Mo Ide (Kilmeedy in the Upper Fionn Abha valley. She had untroubled confidence in her menfolk.

Fourteen hundred years ago, on January 15, Ite died in extreme old age and was buried in the place of her habitation, the little church at Killeedy. Our ancestors, says O'Hanlon, held her in great veneration, not alone on account of her own sanctity but because of the virtues implanted in those persons who were under her direction and training. She was the refuge and the solace of sinners, ever compassionate towards the erring and ever charitably disposed towards the