

30th November 2021

Patrons

**“There will never be great architects or great architecture
without great patrons.”**

Edwin Lutyens, In 'Country Life' (1915)

Edwin Lutyens is right. When great things are created, there is invariably a great patron around, who puts their wherewithal behind a visionary purpose. In architecture, music, education, and much more, the role of the patron can be crucial. That patron may be an individual, or an organisation, or even the State. But we need great patrons all the time.

Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece and Russia and was Christ's first disciple. Today is St Andrew's Day in Scotland. And there is much in this saint's life that makes him a great "patron" for us.

The details of his life are scant but simple. He was born between 5 and 10AD in Bethsaida, the principal fishing port of Palestine. His parents were Jona and Joanna. Andrew, and his brother Simon, were fishermen, like their father before them. He would have gone to the synagogue school at the age of five to study scripture, then astronomy and arithmetic. And it was Andrew, the first disciple, who brought the boy with the loaves and fishes to Jesus before the feeding of the five thousand.

According to the apocryphal book, "The Acts of Andrew", he's said to have travelled to Asia Minor, the Black Sea, as far as Hungary and Russia, and to the banks of the river Oder in Poland. Like many others, he was hunted and persecuted for his faith. In Patras in Greece, he was given the choice of being offered as a sacrifice to the gods or being scourged and crucified. By his own request he was crucified on a diagonal cross. Like his brother Simon Peter, he felt himself unworthy to be crucified on the upright cross of Christ. Legend has it that he hung for three days on his cross, tied by ropes, and even in his last agony, he continued to preach.

A patron behind an enterprise? A patron saint for a nation? With his zeal and commitment, steadfastness and faith, Andrew will do fine as a patron for me. And if Russia and Greece want to have a patron saint such as this, I'm happy with the Andrew's worth and value being shared around.

A prayer for today

*Lord, thank you for Andrew's life and example.
Might I become a patron of good things too? Amen*