

# St Swithin's Day

On July 15<sup>th</sup> the people of Britain remember St. Swithin, not for his life but for this rhyme about the weather:

*St Swithin's Day if it does rain  
Full forty days it will remain  
St Swithin's Day if it be fair  
For forty days 'twill rain no more*

Complete the story of St. Swithin by using one of the following words in each space.

for	of	on	in	by	from	over	to
-----	----	----	----	----	------	------	----

**S**t. Swithin was an early Saxon Bishop of Winchester and legend says that as he lay 1) \_\_\_\_ his deathbed, he asked to be buried 2) \_\_\_\_ the common graveyard, "where the rain would fall 3) \_\_\_\_ him and the feet of ordinary men could pass 4) \_\_\_\_ him." For a number 5) \_\_\_\_ years his wishes were followed but then the monks of Winchester (the capital city of Saxon England) attempted 6) \_\_\_\_ move his remains to a splendid shrine.

The work began 7) \_\_\_\_ July 15<sup>th</sup>, but torrential rains prevented it 8) \_\_\_\_ being completed quickly. The rains continued non-stop 9) \_\_\_\_ the next forty days and forty nights. It was believed that St. Swithin, who had detested any show of ostentation, was weeping 10) \_\_\_\_ protest.

The countryside was flooded and the monks prayed 11) \_\_\_\_ the saint to help them. It is said that he appeared to one of the monks and told him that God was displeased to see them wasting their time and money 12) \_\_\_\_ extravagances rather than helping the poor and needy.

13) \_\_\_\_ the time the shrine was finally built, the legend of St. Swithin as rain-saint had become firmly established. While many dismiss the superstition as nothing but an old wives' tale, the people of Longford 14) \_\_\_\_ the Republic of Ireland are more cautious these days. 15) \_\_\_\_ August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1942, the *Longford Leader* newspaper reported that, following a wet July 15<sup>th</sup>, they had endured forty days 16) \_\_\_\_ uninterrupted rain. The article declared "When it rained 17) \_\_\_\_ St. Swithin's Day the incredulous smiled 18) \_\_\_\_ sympathy with believers 19) \_\_\_\_ the tradition. Today if they smile it is 20) \_\_\_\_ anticipation 21) \_\_\_\_ the end of a dreary forty days which is expected to follow."

Nevertheless, according 22) \_\_\_\_ the Met Office this old wives' tale is nothing more than a myth. It has been put to the test 23) \_\_\_\_ 55 occasions when it has been wet 24) \_\_\_\_ the United Kingdom on St. Swithin's Day and forty days 25) \_\_\_\_ rain did not follow. Wherever you are this St. Swithin's Day, may you have the weather you deserve.