

St. Patrick: The Saint Patrick Window was donated “in gratitude for God’s blessings by Keith and Sheila Henson and family.” Much of Patrick’s life comes to us by way of tradition and legend. He was born around 389 in Roman Britain, perhaps in Cumbria, though some say he was born in Scotland. Captured by pirates when he was about sixteen, Patrick was sent to Ireland as a slave. After working as a shepherd for six years, he escaped, most likely to Gaul (France). He returned to Britain, studied at a monastery, was ordained a priest, and later consecrated a bishop. He became a missionary to Ireland preaching the gospel to unfriendly tribal chieftains and Druids, most of whom Patrick eventually converted to Christianity. He wrote about his life in the *Confessio*, and in the *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus* he denounced the killing of Irish Christians by a group of Welsh Christians. Patrick died c. 461.

Our Patrick is dressed as a bishop, with green vestments, a crozier in his left hand, and a miter on his head. In his right hand he carries shamrocks. The shamrock, a three-leafed clover that grows in Ireland, has become one of the most familiar Irish symbols. Tradition tells us that Saint Patrick used the shamrock to educate the Irish about the mystery of the Trinity, three divine persons in one divine nature. The shamrocks Saint Patrick holds are highly symbolic of the Trinity: we see one sprig with three shoots, and on each shoot are three shamrocks. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, of the Irish, and of all who would like to be Irish on his feast day, March 17.

