

# **Ennis Cathedral:**

## **The Building & Its People.**

**Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>. August 2009**



*Presented by the*  
**Clare Roots Society**

## Clare Roots Society

The Clare Roots Society, brainchild of Ennisman Larry Brennan, was formed in April 2006 as an amateur family history group. The Society meets once a month in Ennis, and has approx. 50 members. Anyone with an interest in tracing their family tree is welcome to join. Some members are experienced genealogists while others are novices in the field. In addition to local members, we have some 'virtual' members who live overseas, but who follow our activities via email, and dream that they are in Clare. Activities are advertised in local press and in the Ennis Cathedral church bulletin.

Under the Chairmanship of Declan Barron and his committee of Fiona de Buitleur, Eric Shaw, Larry Brennan & Paddy Waldron, guest speakers were arranged at past meetings including Paul O'Donnell of the South Galway genealogy group, Peter Beirne of 'The Manse' Local Studies library in Ennis, Jim Herlihy on the RIC, Liam Curran on Irish Soldiers in the British Army, Jonny Dillon of the Folklore Dept., UCD, and Dr. Pat Nugent of the University of Liverpool amongst others. From our own members, speakers have included Dr. Paddy Waldron, Gerry Kennedy, Ger Madden, Declan Barron, Eric Shaw, Robert Cullen, and Larry Brennan. In addition, we have run a number of hands-on computer workshops on genealogical research and the recording of data.

The society works in partnership with Clare County Library in order to add to the wonderful fund of genealogy information already available on their website [www.clarelibrary.ie](http://www.clarelibrary.ie) Our biggest project to date, completed in 2008 with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Council of Ireland, involved transcription of the gravestones in the old Drumcliffe Cemetery. Drumcliffe is the major burial ground for Ennis and environs. A group of ten Clare Roots members and a group of school children from the local Ennis National School photographed and transcribed all the graves by hand. The photos and the gravestone information are now available on the Clare Library website. Other projects completed in 2008 – 2009 include transcription of Killoo, Killone, Clareabbey and Clarehill graveyards. Other materials transcribed and donated by members to Clare County Library include the contents of the old Ennis National School rollbooks 1898-1952, the Ennis NS contributions to the Schools' Folklore Project 1937/38, the old Burial Rolls for Drumcliffe, and Slater's Directory for Ennis and Clare, 1870. The group is affiliated to CIGO where Paddy Waldron attends its meeting on a monthly basis.

Our Heritage week event in August, 2008, was a guided "Talk-Walk" around the old Drumcliffe graveyard, Ennis with Clare Roots members pointing out graves of interest and telling the stories behind them. This year's (2009) event "Ennis Cathedral and Its People – A Guided tour" aims to look beyond architectural heritage and chronological events, and bring the human history of Ennis cathedral to life.

## **Heritage Day at Ennis Cathedral** **by Br. Martin Brown**

The building in which we're gathered today is both the parish church of Ennis and the Cathedral Church of the Diocese of Killaloe. What's a Cathedral, you might ask... The word 'Cathedral' comes from the Latin word *cathedra* meaning seat. And so, the Cathedral is the church where the bishop has his seat. It is the first church of the diocese, a focus of unity for the diocese, where many major diocesan occasions as well as parish occasions are celebrated.

It might be expected that the Cathedral of Killaloe diocese would be in Killaloe itself, rather than in another town. And indeed, up until the Reformation, there was a single Cathedral, dedicated in memory of Saint Flannan, in Killaloe itself. Since that troubled time, Killaloe Cathedral has continued as the seat of the Church of Ireland bishop. For most of that period, the continuing Catholic community had no permanent Cathedral of its own at all.

In the 1730s – with the penal laws still in force – the Catholics of Ennis built a chapel, in what we still call Chapel Lane. As many of you know, it later became the CYMS hall, and community centre. It was because of the penal laws, which restricted Catholic participation in public life, that this small church was built in such a tucked-away place. It's a fine stone building, but it is very plain and unprepossessing, without tower or bell, or any other signs of prominence or distinction.

By 1821 though, the Catholic population had become more confident, and resolved that a new church would be necessary for their growing numbers. This would be a bigger and more prominent church, a sign of their re-emerging from the shadows. It wasn't until 1828 - the year Daniel O'Connell was elected to parliament - that any real progress was made though. O'Connell's election was followed a year later by the Catholic Emancipation Act, which abolished the remaining penal laws.

The site for the new Catholic church was actually donated by a Protestant, Francis Gore, and three Protestants were on the committee of thirty appointed to steer the project. The bishop of the time was living in Newmarket-on-Fergus, but already, the Parish Priest of Ennis – Dean O'Shaughnessy, about whom we'll hear more later – had it in mind that this new parish church would one day be the Cathedral for the diocese.

The church was designed by Dominick O'Madden, who also designed the Cathedrals of Ballina and Tuam. Building progress was slow, happening in fits and starts for the first few years. Work stopped altogether after the foundations had been dug and didn't recommence until 1831. Apart the prevailing poverty, there was competition in the market! The Franciscans opened their new church in 1830, and attracted some of the donations which Dean O'Shaughnessy might otherwise have received. His attempts to prevent them building a public church went all the way to Rome, which found in favour of the friars. (He later had a very public row with the Christian Brothers as well, and didn't seem to like religious at all, and so I can only surmise that he would be aghast at the thought of a monk standing here today talking about the building!)

In 1837, four people who had been attempting to fix a stone on one of the walls were toppled to the ground, with the stone, from a height of 38 feet. Two of these workers lost their lives in this tragic accident. The first Mass was celebrated in the new church, by Dean O'Shaughnessy, on 4 September 1842, and the building was solemnly dedicated by Bishop Patrick Kennedy on 26 February 1843. The well-known 'Apostle of Temperance,' the Capuchin Fr Theobald Matthew, preached at this dedication Mass.

I noticed an interesting little detail from the account of the dedication in the *Clare Journal*.... The sprinkler for holy water used in church ceremonies is known formally as an *aspergillum*. However, the *Clare Journal* says that the Bishop sprinkled water from an *asparagus*, which is a very different thing altogether!

So, the parishioners of Ennis would no longer worship in a small chapel up a back lane, but in a fine and prominent church. However, it is important to realise that what was built in that initial phase in the 1830s was substantially different to what we have today. For one thing, the tower wasn't part of the original building. You can imagine what a strange and squat building it must have been before the addition of the soaring tower and spire which make the Cathedral such a landmark for miles around. Neither did it have galleries... or an organ... The fine Presbytery which adjoins the building now was also a later addition. (Curates lived over the sacristy!) Newspaper accounts of the period say that the building could fit between 5,000 and 6,000 people. That might sound a bit improbable to us now, but when you take into account that there was hardly any seating at all provided for the congregation, the figure begins to sound more realistic.

But it wasn't just the fabric of the building that looked different. The internal decoration of the church was far from complete. It was during the 1850s that much of the decoration of the building as we know it today took place. The architect was JJ McCarthy. His additions to the building were significant: the pillars and arches which divide the church into aisles, and which give it its sense of verticality, reaching upwards and joining earth and heaven; the panelled ceiling; three altars, a high altar and altars of the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin Mary.



*Altar of the Sacred Heart*



*Altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

If you look, you can see that the remains of those side altars are still present in the church. On your left, the altar of the Sacred Heart, and on your right, the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, before which the tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament now stands.



*St Senan*



*St Flannan*



*St Paul*



*St Peter*

The four life-size paintings on the back wall also come from this time: Outside left, Saint Senan, and outside right, Saint Flannan. Inside left with his sword and book, Saint Paul and insight right, with the keys of the kingdom and the pallium, Saint Peter. The selection is not accidental – Ss Peter and Paul are the patrons of the church and Saints Flannan and Senan are the patrons of the diocese.

If you look above these paintings and above the sacristy doors, you will see six busts in little alcoves. These represent Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint Brigid, Our Lady, Our Lord, Saint Joseph and Saint Celestine. Pope Saint Celestine might seem an odd choice, but do remember, it was he who sent Saint Patrick to Ireland, and so despite the fact that there wouldn't have been much devotion to him in Ireland, he is not as strange a choice for depiction in an Irish church as might first appear to be the case.



*Saint Mary Magdalene*



*Saint Brigid*



*Our Lady*



*Our Lord*



*St Joseph*



*Saint Celestine*

You might also ask why Brigid and Celestine are represented, but not Patrick... Well, in JJ McCarthy's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century scheme he was. McCarthy had a bust of Saint Patrick over one of the sacristy doors and a bust of Saint John, the Beloved Disciple over the other. As you will see, these busts are no longer there, and instead we now have paintings of Saint Joseph on the left, and of Saint Michael the Archangel on the right.

Monsignor Ignatius Murphy, in his article on the Cathedral for Joe Power's 'Ennis Miscellany' says that he was unable to discover when these two busts were replaced. I am happy to say that I have been able to discover when... In October 1938, Bishop Michael Fogarty commissioned the firm of Earley and Co., from Dublin, to do some major redecoration of the Cathedral. It was at this time that those two busts were replaced. The Bishop obviously wanted to honour his own patron, Saint Michael. (The current organ, also installed under Bishop Fogarty, is also dedicated to Saint Michael.)

But let's not skip too far ahead. Let's return to JJ McCarthy's work. The first organ was also installed during his decoration work.

In 1871, the parish began plans to build the tower and spire. There is some confusion about the architect, but it seems likely that the project was a slight adaptation of the plans drawn up by Dominick O'Madden fifty years earlier. The contract for the work was awarded to the local firm of William Carroll, whose great-grandson is with us today. Again, progress was slow, but the last stone was put in place on 23 October 1874. Immediately this was done, Carroll hoisted the papal flag on top of the tower – it having been made by the Sisters of Mercy for the occasion – and there was a band and a parade through the town. The bell, which remained the sole bell until very recently, was installed in 1875.

The parish church became the cathedral church in 1889, when Bishop Thomas McRedmond took up residence in Ennis. Technically it was a pro-Cathedral, since the bishop would have held that the Cathedral in Killaloe was *the* Cathedral. The style 'pro-Cathedral' continued in use right up until 1990, when Bishop Harty solemnly dedicated the Cathedral after a series of renovations.





*The Ascension*

The largest pieces of art in the building were installed in 1894. The firm of Joshua Clarke, father of the famous stained-glass artist, Harry Clarke, was engaged to re-decorate the interior. This work included the installation of three large paintings over the three altars – the Ascension over the high altar; the appearance of the Sacred Heart to St Margaret Mary Alacoque over the Sacred Heart altar, and the Assumption over the Lady altar. It must have been quite a sight...

I mentioned Bishop Fogarty's removal of St John and St Patrick in 1938. Well, the two large paintings of the vision of St Margaret Mary Alacoque and the Assumption were removed then too. The Bishop judged that they were 'in a bad state' and ordered that 'in place of these a richly designed architectural panel with Gothic tracery to be represented in colours and gold' be put in place. I can only surmise that the two smaller paintings of Jesus restoring the sight of a blind man and the Annunciation were installed at this point too.

The fabulous stencilled ceiling tiles were put in at this time too. The local firm of Meehans doing much of the work. Also in the 1930s, the current organ was installed, the work of Evans and Barr in Belfast. The sacristy was altered and the Chapter Room added, with the work done by the local firm of Joseph Daly.



*Stencilled Ceiling Tiles*

The final major change occurred when Bishop Harty re-ordered the building after the renewal of the liturgy following the Second Vatican Council. A new altar, ambo, font and pillar for the tabernacle replaced the existing high altar and reredos. The architect was Andrew Devane, and local firm Ryan Brothers were the contractors. One part of the renovation which was perhaps less successful than others was the hanging of a canopy with spotlights over the altar. A fire in 1995 put paid to that, and the view of the huge painting of the Ascension is now once again obscured.

There is much else to say, but other people have things to say too, so I shall close. I'll just point out one last feature – the tabernacle. If you look closely at that pattern on the doors, you will see that it's not at all abstract or random, but is an elegant arrangement of loaves and fish. A suitable Eucharistic motif for the tabernacle. It is the work of the late Brother Benedict Tutty, a monk of my monastery of Glenstal, and which I am happy connects this church of my baptism and confirmation with the place where I seek to serve God now.



*The Tabernacle*

# The Builders

by Eric Shaw

In October 1821 it was decided to build a new chapel to serve the people of Ennis. For a number of reasons, the project was delayed until 1828. In that year, a site was donated by Francis Gore at a nominal rent. Shortly after that, Dean O'Shaughnessy issued guidelines for the architects. "The Chapel is to be 120 feet in length, and 50 feet wide with two wings, the T to be 100 feet by 60. The elevation of the building to be in proportion".

The plan that was chosen was that of Dominick O'Madden. O'Madden had designed two other cathedrals, at Ballina and Tuam. O'Madden himself later left Ireland to become a chief engineer in South America.

By June 1828, the digging out of the foundations had begun but was to stop within a few weeks. This was the time that saw Daniel O'Connell elected to the House of Commons and there was great political excitement in Clare. In April 1831, work again started and on 10 August 1831, the foundation stone was laid by Bishop Patrick MacMahon. The Clare Journal of 19 December 1831 reports of progress to bring the Church to a satisfactory stage of completion. In its description of the building in that report, the paper refers to the intended steeple, "which is to be of the best cut stone, the underwork of the elevation being of the same description". This is an important point as there is some debate about who designed the spire and I will refer to that point again later.

Various disputes between Dean O'Shaughnessy and the Franciscans and the Christian Brothers delayed the raising of funds for the work and by 1836, the project was again at a standstill. Fund-raising got underway in the town and work recommenced. On 12 September 1837 there was a serious accident on the building as reported in the Clare Journal:

*"Three men and a boy were engaged in fixing a large stone , supposed to weigh about five hundred, when it fell on the scaffolding, broke it down, and precipitated these unfortunate beings to the ground, from a height of about 38 feet. They were instantly conveyed to the County Infirmary, where everything that medical skill could devise was adopted to alleviate their suffering, but which proved ineffectual in the case of two of them, a man named McMahan, a stone-cutter.....and Michael O'Connor, a mason.....The other two, one of them a man named Chas. Ginnane, a labourer and the other, the boy, son of O'Connor, who was killed, are still in a dangerous state. It is the duty of the clergy to give the collection at the parish chapel and Friary on Sunday, for the relief of the families of these wretched men.....their united numbers amount to about 15"*

Progress continued at a slow pace and it was January 1841 when the walls were ready for roofing and slating. In the previous month, another serious accident had been narrowly avoided. *“Some infamous wretch nearly cut through one of the ropes holding a windlass, erected for raising stones to the wall of the new chapel. Had it not been discovered, five or six lives would have ...been sacrificed”*

*In Lewis’s Directory of 1837 he states:*

*A chaste and elegant cruciform structure, from a design by Mr. Madden, was commenced in 1831, on a more eligible site, under the superintendence of the Very Rev. Dean O’Shaughnessy, P. P., which is intended for the cathedral of the R. C. diocese of Killaloe : the tower will be surmounted by a spire rising to the height of 140 feet. The estimated expense is £5000, towards which Sir Edward O’Brien, Bart., of Dromoland, contributed £100 : the site was presented by Francis Gore, Esq.*

Finally in September 1842, Dean Terence O’Shaughnessy said the first Mass, though the building was far from complete. It was a great moment for the then eighty - two year old parish priest. It was also a great moment for his parishioners, who although living in extreme poverty, made very significant donations to its construction cost.

On 26th February 1843, the new church was blessed and placed under the patronage of Saints Peter and Paul. After the blessing of the chapel, there was still much to do including the building of the tower and the spire which formed part of O’Madden’s plans but all work ceased with the beginning of the famine. In 1848, Dean O’Shaughnessy died and was buried in the Church that he had built. A small brass plaque on the floor immediately in front of the sanctuary carries the inscription:

***In Memoriam***

***Very Rev. Dean O’Shaughnessy***

***Died 4<sup>th</sup> Octr. 1848***

***R.I.P.***

**In July 1850, the Limerick and Clare Examiner stated:**

*The extensive edifice is capable of accommodating five to six thousand persons but is still in a very unfinished state and owes a debt of £800.*

The capacity of the Church was based on the fact that very little seating was provided and of course there was minimal regard for safety in those days. In the 1850s, J.J.McCarthy, the leading Irish Church architect of the period, was engaged to draw up plans for the interior of the Church. The beautifully paneled wooden ceiling, pillars and arches dividing the area into nave, aisle and transepts, the organ gallery were all of McCarthy’s design and were done at a cost of £3,000. The three altars and reredos behind the main altar were also included in that sum. The stonework was done by Hardman & Co., of Dublin. A very fine description of the Church was captured by

Thomas Lacy of Wexford when he visited Clare in October 1859. He mentions that entry to the building was through a door on the west side of the tower which rose at that time “no higher than the first storey”. He goes on to give a detailed account of the internal features of the Church including the fact that there was a deep gallery of the Gospel off the transept, with no gallery off the opposite side. An extract from that article which is well worth reading can be found in the CLASP publication, “The Strangers Gaze” edited by Brian Ó Dálaigh.

The next development in the cathedral did not begin to take place until June 1871 when it was decided to go ahead with the completion of the tower and construction of the spire, cutstone frontage, gateways, railings and approaches. Maurice Fitzgerald, architect, estimated that these works would cost about £2,000 and tenders were sought. William Carroll of Ballybeg tendered for the tower and spire at a cost of £1,473 and this was accepted. The design for the other works had not been completed. It seems as if Fitzgerald was implementing O’Madden’s plans. In September 1871, a bell weighing 31 cwt was purchased and was temporarily mounted on a timber belfry in the yard. The spire was to be 170 feet in height. Because of funding difficulties, the last stone on the spire, at the apex, was not laid until 23 October 1874. William Carroll had a staff raised above it from which floated a flag bearing the Papal Arms which had been made by the Nuns in the Convent of Mercy. In my family, there is the story that Carroll insisted on putting that flag in place himself.

In the *Other Clare*, Vol.10, Martin Browne recounts the tale of a steeplejack falling to his death while fitting the massive iron cross on top of the spire. Ciarán Ó Murchada tells me that his father heard a similar story as a young man from old tradesmen in the town who had worked on the spire.

In June 1875 the bell was erected in the tower and in 1877 a new internal entrance porch at the front of the building was completed. Entrance to the Church was by two doorways, still in existence to the right and left. The present internal central doorway from the porch to the nave was constructed in 1894. In that year also, major internal renovations were carried out in the Cathedral. These included the erection of three large paintings by the firm of Nagle & Potts over the altars. The contractor for the works was Joshua Clarke of Dublin. He was the father of Harry Clarke who became an outstanding artist in stained glass.

To commemorate the Holy Year in 1950, Bishop Fogarty erected a clock on the tower. In 1973, a major renovation of the sanctuary was carried out to make it suitable for the changed liturgical requirements after the Second Vatican Council.



## **The Rev. Dean James Barrett**

(1722-1808)

On the south wall is a memorial to the Very Reverend Dean James Barrett. It has fluted Doric columns supporting a broken pediment with a Grecian urn and resembles the eighteenth century monuments in Ennis Friary. It reads as follows:

**Sacred to the Very Reverend Dean James Barrett DD  
46 years Pastor of the Parish of Drumcliff  
who died the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1808  
Aged 86 years  
The Inhabitants of Ennis of all religious persuasions  
Have erected this monument to perpetuate the memory  
of so good a man.  
R.I.P.**

This memorial was erected by subscription in the old chapel at Chapel Lane and was later re-erected in the Cathedral.

“The Clare Journal of 18<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1808 contains a lengthy obituary of Dean James Barrett, though without much biographical detail. It says that Barrett had served in Ennis for 46 years and was in his 86<sup>th</sup> year when he died after a short illness at his house in Chapel Lane.”

We are also told that in 1795 the Bishop at the time, Michael Peter MacMahon, was looking for a coadjutor and made overtures to Dean James Barrett parish priest of Ennis. His choice was considered an extraordinary one because Barrett was 73 years old at the time.

Barrett declined the dignity but recommended Rev. Mr. Shaughnessy. Shaughnessy was consecrated in Ennis on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1799.

So who was this Dean James Barrett who could have been Bishop of Killaloe in 1799? He was licentiate in theology of Paris University, promoter of diocese of Killaloe. The Clare Journal of the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1814 mentions that he was author of a work named Harmony. No copies are known to survive but which almost certainly advocated good relations between Catholics & Protestants.

His tenure in Ennis was characterised by good relations with the Protestant community.



In 1791 Barrett erected a Charity School in Ennis. It catered for 50 boys. The Roman Catholic inhabitants of Ennis contributed very little towards its support. The chief aid came from Barrett's own pocket, assisted by the liberality of the Marquis of Headfort, Lord Conyngham, Colonel Burton and a few other gentlemen. Barrett also supported chiefly from his own income a school of ten girls.

Barrett had the title of 'dean' for some years before his death which took place in his house in Chapel Lane. Chapel Lane derives its name from a Catholic church erected there in 1735 during penal times. This building now forms part of the Ennis Community Centre. In 1775 Fr. James Barrett extended the church. The Chapel Lane church remained in use until 1842. It was best described as a small Barn-church built of rubble limestone. Eighteenth-century houses can be found on both side of the lane.

The people of Ennis erected a tomb in Drumcliff cemetery where he is buried. The tomb states: He died on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1808, aged 85 years. Erected by his parishioners 1811. *Grave ref.1030.*

It is important to remember that James Barrett had no contact with our current Cathedral as the celebration of the first Mass did not take place until 1842 and was dedicated the following year even though it was not finished. So during the construction of the cathedral James Barrett was still remembered by the people of Ennis 24 years after his death.

Three days after his death a most numerous and highly respected cavalcade left Ennis for Newmarket-on-Fergus to meet Bishop O' Shaughnessy. On their way they stopped at Dromoland where Sir Edward O' Brien, a Protestant, agreed to accompany the delegation. When they met Bishop O' Shaughnessy they asked that Patrick MacDonagh, who had been curate in Ennis for twenty-six years, be appointed parish priest. The bishop would not agree to appoint MacDonagh. Soon afterwards Patrick Davin, parish priest of Sixmilebridge, was transferred to Ennis and appointed dean.

Although more information exists about priests in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century than in the 18<sup>th</sup>, in some cases before 1836 a newspaper obituary or other brief reference is our only clue to the very existence of a particular priest.

We are fortunate that the Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser dated Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> 1808, Number 2359, contained the following article:

The Rev. Dean Barrett at an early hour yesterday morning, departed this life, at his home in Chapel-Lane, the Rev. Doctor James Barrett, Titular Dean of Killaloe, &c.-a character as near perfection as the lot of humanity admits of. For upward of half a century he continued to show to the world what a Clergyman ought to be, and how much small good a hearty lover of mankind may do in that station. If domestic disquietude annoyed any of his flock, the demon was subdued by the precepts he installed, and the unreality which he inculcated. The writhing of disaster were mitigated by the calm of his advise counsels, and perversity never applied to him in vain.-indeed principal part of his life was sedulously employed to discover the hovel of wretchedness, or the mission of misery, there to administer that comfort and relief

which gathered to be that leading features of his charity to dispense. Under his protecting influence, youth found an asylum from vice and wretchedness, most were trained up in the paths of virtue and of truth. The shivering mendicant was prepared to meet the severity of approaching winter thro his bounty and his influence: and now, the tears of the sons and daughters of sanctification, bowed down with a double weight of anguish, embalm his sacred memory.

Doctor Barrett was in the 86<sup>th</sup> year of his age, for 46 years of which he was the faithful Pastor of this parish. Though deeply conversant in the best stores of literature, inmate modesty veiled the wide range of his acquisitions-for, humble and unassuming he obtruded not his opinions with that all of authority to which their merit entitled them, but adorned just as of sentiment by decoct of application.

Some people imagined that the Dean was possessed of money; but those who thought so did not follow but steps into the mansions of misery, and distress; Whether had, their coffers would be like his - destitute of a single guinea and - Divine reflection I - their reward, like his, would be in Heaven.

Details of Dean Barrett's Funeral are recorded also in the Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser dated Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup> 1808, number 2560, as follows:

Between one and two o' clock on Wednesday last, the mortal remains of Doctor Barrett were placed on a hearse, drawn by six horses, which began to move from the Chapel, through Market street, Jail Street and Church street, continuing his course over Lifford-Lysaght bridge to the burial ground of Drumcliff. The hearse was preceded by Titular Bishop, and Parish Clergyman of the Established Church, with scarf and bands , followed by other Protestant Clergymen, and those of the Roman Catholic persuasion, alternately intermixed and arrayed in like manner, furnishing, and cordially of disposition which can best insure the tranquilly of the public and the security of the Crown. The mournful concourse was immense yet among this multitude scarce of dry eye could be discovered the loss seemed general, for all descriptions so amply participated therein, as to justify us in asserting, that we never witnessed the lot of human nature so universally deplored. Nor was the sympathy confined to age or sex; the old wept for the loss they sustained by the demise of their spiritual councilor and friend-youth at being deprived of the kind and persuasive mildness with which they were instructed and improved -while- informally and want seemed unable to bear the accumulation of wretchedness brought on in being bereaved of their daily comfort and support - and as the mournful hearse moved along, children blubbered out, because their parents cried; Thus, "from the cradle to the church," have we seen all convulsed at the loss of this you, good, and truly benevolent man.

At the presentation in the Cathedral Councilor Tom McNamara and other member of the McNamara family identified themselves as being related to Dean Barrett.

We attach under separate notes details on the life of Harriet Smithson Berlioz (1800-1854) below which show the influence of Dean Barrett on her life.

## Dean Terence O'Shaughnessy (1771 – 1848)



The obituary in the Clare Journal of 5 October 1848 states that Dean Terence O'Shaughnessy was born in 1771 and says that he was lineally descended from an ancient Gort family. Fr. Ignatius Murphy gives his date of birth as 1761 and his possible place of birth as Broadford, Co. Clare.

He left Clare at an early age to seek an education in France, something denied him in Ireland under the Penal Laws. He entered the university of Louis le Grand in Paris in 1786 and he was ordained a priest. In 1793 Terence O'Shaughnessy, wearing the uniform of a National Guardsman for disguise, was present at the execution of Louis XVI. He described this event as “the king’s foul murder” and it had a deep effect on him.

Fr. O'Shaughnessy returned to Clare in 1793 and served for many years as Parish Priest of Broadford. In 1806, he became Parish Priest of Kilrush and in 1820, he became Dean of the diocese and Parish Priest of Ennis. He was to spend the next 28 years in that role. His work to ease the cholera victims in Ennis during the outbreak in the summer of 1832 is remembered.

The Clare Elections of 1828 had its difficulties for the Dean. Vesey Fitzgerald was a friend of the Deans and was very generous to the Catholics in the parish and it seems that the Dean absented himself from Clare during the elections. O'Connell and the Dean later patched up their differences and the Dean had little involvement in politics afterwards.

The main event that Dean O'Shaughnessy is remembered for the building of a new parish church in Ennis which he hoped would become the Cathedral of the Diocese. The planning for the new Church began in 1821 but it was 1828 before the work started. Shortage of finance and other problems delayed the work on the Church and the Dean said the first Mass in the Church of Ss. Peter & Paul in 1842. Even then, the building was little more than four walls and a roof. The Church was dedicated by Bishop Patrick Kennedy on 26 February 1843 and Father Matthew preached on that occasion.

The effect of the Famine years left little finance available for to continue the work on the Church. The tower at the front of the Church went only as far as the first storey and the internal fitting-out of the Church had to wait for some more years. At the time of the Dean's death in 4 October 1848, the building was still at this stage and he was not to see the completed building that he had laboured so hard to bring to fruition. As his obituary states in the Clare Journal, Dean O'Shaughnessy descended to his grave in front of the High Altar of his beloved Church "full of years and full of honours and he has finished his course the good and faithful servant".

## **The Rev. John Meagher C.C.** **(1827-1866)**

On the north wall is a memorial to Reverend John Meagher. The white painted bust is set in an elaborate gothic niche and reads as follows:

**Sacred to the memory of the Rev. John Meagher who was three years curate of this parish. The Inhabitants of Ennis have erected this monument as a memorial of his virtues and a token of their love. Died March 17<sup>th</sup> AD 1866 in the 39 year of his age and the 14<sup>th</sup> of his sacred ministry. May he rest in peace. Amen.**

Ignatius Murphy in his Book 'The Diocese of Killaloe 1850-1904' tells us:

Maher / Meagher. It is very difficult to sort out the Maher / Meagher priests who served as curates in the diocese in 1850s and 1860s. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1866 John D Maher, C.C. Ennis died of typhus fever. Most likely he is John who studied in Paris and was ordained in Oct. 1851 in Nenagh. He worked in Newmarket on-Fergus, Roscrea, Nenagh, Cloughjordan, Clondegad and Kilmurry McMahan before coming to Ennis. (KDA;LR & TV, 20 Mar. 1866;MN, 24 Mar.1866).

The Clare Journal of the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1866 gives us details of his death:

### **DEATH OF THE REV. JOHN MEAHER. C.C.**

It is with most sincere regret that we have to record the demise of the above reverend and greatly lamented Roman Catholic clergyman, which melancholy event occurred at his residence in the town, shortly after twelve o' clock on Saturday last. It is not long since he was seen in his sacred health discharging, zealously and faithfully, his duties as a clergyman, and it was while in the discharge of those duties that he contracted the very dangerous disease which about three weeks ago placed him on a bed of sickness from which, in the diversities of Providence, he was never to rise, and by which his parishioners were deprived of the ministrations of a clergyman, who was indefatigable in his exertions to promote their spiritual welfare. Throughout the three years of his ministrations in this town he had gained the love, respect, and esteem of all classes and all sects, for the unobtrusive piety, his kindness of disposition, and anxious desire to perform his sacred duties. When many were gaining popularity and notoriety in the public discharge of their duties as clergymen and leader of their flock, his more constant aim was to attend to the wants of the poorer parishioners, bestowing upon them all the care and attention which devoteness to his calling suggested. With what truth can it be said that he was "Prompt at every call." No matter the time, no matter the hour, the poor always found in him a ready and willing comforter.

“Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt, and pains by turns dismayed,  
The reverend champion stood”

He was esteemed by his parishioners, no less for his many private Christian virtues as for his acquirements in the pulpit. He was an eloquent and impressive preacher, and he died at the comparatively young age of 41 years, thirteen of which he spent in the ministry. While his death was announced on Saturday a cloud seemed to settle on the town, which was further heightened by the shutters being left up on every establishment, and the blinds on every window closely drawn. His remains were interred at twelve o'clock this day in the interior of the New Catholic Chapel and were conveyed to their last resting place by an enormous concourse of people, all of whom invoked the most heartfelt grief.

The procession, which was formed after High Mass had been concelebrated in the Chapel, was one of the largest and most imposing that had been ever witnessed in the town before. It was headed by the different trades who carried their banners draped in black and wore crapes on their right arms. Next were the children of the Christian Brothers School and the collegians of St. Flannans College, the former carrying the banners of the Young Men's Catholic Association, and all wearing craps on their hats and arms. The Town Commissioners walked next, after which the procession was composed of a large number of Roman Catholic priests dressed in white surplis and preceded by representatives of the Catholic chapel in black. They chavgol the news for such an occasion, which added to the solemnity of the entire proceedings. The hearse with its white plumes the mournful procession after which followed a large amount of people, among whom were more of all creeds who testified by their presence the deep affection they held for the deceased is his lifelong. The cortege having moved from Jail Street proceeded at a slow solemn pace through the town after which they returned to the Chapel where the remains of the good priest, the body of the learned scholar, were lowered into the grave amongst the tears and regrets of the large congregation who crowded the sacred edifice in every point.

The Clare Journal of the 26<sup>th</sup>. March 1866 contained a letter of thanks from Rev. James Maher C.C. brother of the late Rev. John Meagher C.C.

He states “ A remarkable feature in their demonstration of respect particularly impressed me; not only were the shutters up and the windows closed , but the doors were shut and all business entirely suspended- a holiday, yet no relaxation, but silent sorrow and a gloom overhanging Ennis like a funeral pall.”

Meanwhile in The Clare Freeman and Ennis Gazette 24<sup>th</sup>. March 1866 a Spectator wrote:

It is indeed a rare thing to witness such a large public procession of Roman Catholic priests in their vestments chanting prayers in Latin whilst parading the town.

## **The Rev. John Kenny P.P.** (1848-1876)

From *Ennis in the 19th Century* - Tim Kelly

"Fr. John Kenny, P.P. 1848-76. He was the only son of Michael Kenny, Kilmurry-Ibrickane, Co. Clare and Catherine Howley of Co. Tipperary. He was born at Mungret, where his parents had a business premises, in 1792. John's early education was received at Leamy's School, Limerick, but his parents then returned to the Ennis area. In Sept 1808 he entered Maynooth College where he was a classmate of John McHale, the future archbishop of Tuam. Ordained in 1814, he was appointed curate of Kilmihil and Kilmacduane. In 1817 he was made parish priest of Ogonoloe and was mainly responsible for ending illicit distilling there. In August 1818 he became parish priest of Tulla and was transferred to Kilrush in 1827. There he quietly supported the O'Connell movement. Appointed to Ennis in 1848 his simplicity and zeal made him a universal favourite. He assisted the Christian Brothers and Sisters of Mercy. He was closely connected with Springfield College and continued the decoration of the Cathedral. In politics he usually supported the popular, non violent movements such as the Three Fs. A great public dinner was given in his honour to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. On Sunday 17 Feb 1867 he was installed as Dean of the Diocese of Killaloe. At the end of 1875 he became totally blind and resigned as parish priest. He died at his house in Jail Street (O'Connell St.) on 12 Jan 1879."

The obituary in the paper ads: Remains of the good Dean were lowered into the vault prepared for it in the aisle.

## **Rev. Patrick M. O' Kelly.** (1852-1894)

Father O' Kelly was only in his forty-second year, and had spent nineteen years in the ministry. He was a native of Kilrush, and passed most of his earlier year in the Western capital living with his uncle, Mr. Michael Kelly, a leading merchant of the town. He was educated first at the Diocessan College in this town, and subsequently, he passed into St. Patrick's College at Maynooth, whence he was ordained. He went through a most successful collegiate course, and was the recipient of several first class prizes during these his, student days. His ordination took place in Nenagh, where in the month of September, 1875 he was received into the priesthood by the late Most. Rev. Dr. Ryan, Bishop of Killaloe. He was then in his 23<sup>rd</sup>. year, and was remarkable for his handsome presence and very fine physique. His first curacy was Ruan and Dysart, where he is still affectionately remembered. After spending some time in Ruan he was appointed to Kilmurry Ibrickane, and afterwards was transferred to Cooraclare; whence he was appointed to Castleconnell, where he remained for about ten years, a general favourite. In the November of 1888 he was removed to Ennis, and after nearly five years curacy here he was, on promotion of Father M. Carey to the parish of

Doora, made Administrator in his stead. The appointment was a very popular one, both among his brother priests and parishioners, with whom he was intensely popular.

Prior to his death over the past few years, Father O' Kelly had one or two sharp attacks of illness which must have undermined his splendid physic, and his friends were aware for some months that his health was not the most robust, but the immediate cause of death was a very acute attack of pneumonia, developed from a sharp cold contracted at Queenstown, during the ceremonies attending the consecration of the Most Rev. Dr. Browne Bishop of Cloyne a bare week ago. Towards morning at four o' clock, "God's finger touched him, and he slept."

The remains were removed on Monday evening from the Parochial House to the cathedral, where they were placed on a catafalque draped with black cloth in the centre of the aisle. The interior of the church was draped completely in mourning cloth. A black background, relieved with small crosses, extended across the entire breadth behind the High Altar, and the massive pillars were also enveloped with crepe to a considerable height, while the stations of the cross were also covered with black cloth.

At the mass Most Rev. Dr. Redmond Bishop of Killaloe, presided. After the Mass, which terminated about two o' clock, the funeral procession left the cathedral. The route was by the Store Road, Mill Street, O' Connell Square, Bank Place, Bindon Street, Harmony Row, Church Street and through Jail Street again to the Cathedral, where the coffin was laid to rest in a brick lined grave at the south side of the aisle, closing of the most solemn and impressive ceremonials ever witnessed in Ennis. To give a list of all who assisted in the funeral would be to give the names of almost every inhabitant in the town and surrounding district.

The chief mourners were-Mr. Michael Kelly uncle, Kilrush, Miss Carmody, step-sister, Kilrush, MJ Kenny, MP, cousin, Freagh Castle, Rev. Laurence J. Brown P.P. cousin, Doonbeg, Mr. T J MacMahon Ennis; Mr. Jas McMahan, Miltown Malbay; Mr. John Grogan, cousin Kilrush, Mr. Stephen Grogan cousin do; Mr. Patrick Browne cousin, Ennis, Mr. James Mc Carthy; Mr. Michael Carmody; Doonaha; Mr. P. Carmody Carrigaholt; Mr. J. Roche do; Mr. P J Kelly do. Mr. J Culligan. J P, Kilrush, Mr. Thomas Kelly; Clonina; Mr. James O' Connor, Kilrush.



## **Rev. Patrick Barry.**

(1857-1900)



Patrick Barry, administrator, Ennis, died on 24 March 1900 while in Dublin for treatment, in his 43<sup>rd</sup>. Year. A native of Bridgetown, he was educated at the Diocesan College, Ennis, before going to Maynooth, where he was ordained in 1882. Before coming to Ennis, where he repaired the Pro-cathedral and built the Boys National School, he served in Ruan, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Castleconnell and Roscrea.

Rev. Patrick Barry was a native of the parish Killaloe, having being born at Bridgetown, East Clare. He first studies were at the old Diocesan College, where he passed into Maynooth, where as at Ennis he distinguished himself by a brilliant course of study. Ordained in the year 1882 he was sent to his first curacy in his native county, at Ruan, where he spent about three years. He was then sent on promotion to Newmarket-on-Fergus, and was next transferred to Castleconnell, where he ministered for close on five years. His next field of labour was Roscrea, where he spent a year, and from Roscrea he was promoted to a curacy in Ennis five years ago.

On the death of Fr. Pat O' Kelly, Father Barry was chosen as Administrator, and his selection was justified by his wise, capable and energetic management of parochial affairs. He carried to a successful close, a large scheme, for the renovation and improvement of the Cathedral towards which little had been done for years with the exception of the "slender shaft of shapely stone" which towers above it. When Father Barry had achieved his object in this direction he turned his attention to extending the opportunities for education in the town, and as a result of his labours, there was raised a fine schoolhouse now standing at the Kilrush Cross. No local movement with a genuinely deserving object appealed to Father Barry in vain, either for procuring support or the aid of his influence.

The Rev. Father P. Barry had been ailing for some time, but it was only within the last couple of weeks that his condition gave his friends cause for anxiety. Acting on advice he proceeded to St. Vincents Hospital Dublin for the best medical treatment. At first there was an improvement, but the insidious foe had wrought two serious inroads on the infebled constitution, which was unable to withstand the strain upon it. Barry was only in his 43<sup>rd</sup>. year. His remains left Dublin by the 9.15 a.m. train from the Kingsbridge station and reached Ennis by the 6.00 p.m. being met at the station by an enormous concourse of the residents of the town, and brother clergymen. The body was in a heavy oaked casket, massively mounted and bearing ring at the head. On

Tuesday at 11 O' Clock there was a solemn Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The Most Rev. Dr. MacRedmond the Lord Bishop of Killaloe presided at the Throne. On completion of the mass the funeral then the Cathedral by the New Line, through Mill St., Bindon St., Harmony Row, Church st., and Jail st., to the Cathedral, where the service for the dead was completed, and the remains laid in their last resting place in the brick lined grave which had been prepared at the left side of the Cathedral closet to the grave of the Rev. Dean Kenny.

The chief mourners were Rev. Robert Barry, Mount St. Joseph's Monastery, Roscrea, Mathew & John Barry, Bridgetown, Brothers, Mrs. MacGrath, O'Gonnelloe, Mrs. Ryan Nenagh, Mrs. Ryan Ballyvaughan, sisters, Miss MacGrath, Niece, William nahinch, brother in law, Rev. Peter Burke Shannon, brother in law, Rev. Peter Burke President Diocesan College, Rev. William Burke, Tubber, Rev. J. Scanlon, P.P. Clonlara, Rev. Father Scanlan C.C. Lorrha, Martin Molony, Clonlara, Mrs. Duggan of Nenagh, Jeremiah Garvey, of Killaloe, Pat Hayes, Mr. J. and Mrs Buckley; Annaghoulty, Mrs. MacDermott, Whitegate, Michael Holland Whitegate, Jas Quin, O'Gonnelloe; Mrs. Ryan Ballinahinch; Mr Waltham, Ballinahinch, John Coffey, Limerick cousins.

## **Rev. John Considine:** (1873-1929)

(Buried in the priest burial plot at Drumcliff are Rev. John Considine & Rev. Sean Saunders. The following is a brief background on Fr. Considine.)

Born in Ballydineen, Kilmihil of a family which gave another priest Rev. Michael Considine (1871-1941) to the Church. He got his early education in St. Flannan's College, from which he entered Maynooth. There he was ordained in 1899. His first mission was in the Diocese of Salford where he served for 6 years. He was then sent to the curacy of Monsea in his native Diocese of Killaloe. He was later to serve n Borrisokane, Sixmilebridge, Mullagh, and then at Ennis. He spent 9 years of his life in Ennis. He later transferred to Kilmurry-McMahon the year before he died as Administrator to relieve his ailing brother Rev. Michael Considine.

Father Considine who in his young days a splendid athlete, took a keen interest in various forms of athletic pastimes. He was a curate in Mullagh when the French boat, Leon XIII., was wrecked off the coast of Quilty and it was mainly due to his exertions that a new church was erected in recognition of the bravery of the local fishermen, who rescued the crew of the ill fated vessel. While in Ballywilliam, he re-organised the local creamery.

For a considerable time past, Father Considine suffered from a grave illness, from which he died in his 56 year. Death occurred in a Private Nursing Home in Dublin, and his own express wish, his funeral was arranged for Drumcliff.

The chief mourners were; Rev. M. Considine P.P. Labasheeda (brother), Mrs. Kathleen Daly, Derryleigh, Kildysart, (sister); Mr. M. Kenny, Ennis (brother-in-law); Mrs. P. Considine Knockalough and Mrs. M. Considine, Ballydineen (sister-in-law) Miss M. Kenny Cloncullen; Mrs. T. Garry, Clonreddan; Miss K.Carey, Derry Leigh (nieces); Mr. L Eyres, Ballydineen (nephew) ; Mrs. E. Murphy, Danganelly; Rev.

Brother Madigan, St. Joseph Orphanage, Galway; Mr. T. Crowe, Co.Co, Ballylean (cousins).

The Clare Champion of the 20<sup>th</sup>. July 1929 details the record of his funeral.

Gravestone nr. 301 at Drumcliff reads as follows: In loving memory of Rev. John Considine, C.C. of Cathedral Church, Ennis for nine years.

Died 14<sup>th</sup> July 1929. Requiscat in pace.

## **Rev. Sean Saunders:**

(1921-1982)

(Buried in the priests' burial plot at Drumcliff is Rev. Sean Saunders & Rev. John Considine).

Sean Saunders was born at Finuremore in 1921. He received his primary school education at Mullagh school and his secondary education at St. Flannan's College, Ennis. From St. Flannan's he proceeded to Maynooth College where he was ordained in 20<sup>th</sup>. June 1948. Died 12<sup>th</sup>. January 1982.

The following is a brief background on Fr. Saunders taken from the Clare Champion dated 15<sup>th</sup>. January 1982)

Fr. Sean Saunders, Administrator at St. Joseph's Lifford Ennis, since 1976 died unexpectedly on Tuesday morning. He was taken suddenly ill while in the Parochial House and was dead on admission to the County Hospital.

A native of Mullagh where his mother Mrs. Margaret Saunders who now resides in Quin and his late father were national school teachers, Fr. Saunders was educated in the local national school and later St. Flannan's College. He studied for the priesthood in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, where he was ordained in June 1948.

After his ordination he served for two years in the diocese of Cardiff in Wales and returned to Killaloe diocese in 1950, ministering in Portroe, Co. Tipperary until 1959 when he was appointed curate in Quin. In 1969 he was transferred to the Cathedral in Ennis and was appointed Administrator in St. Joseph's Church in July 1976.

A man of wide and varied interests and commitments, Fr. Saunders was especially devoted to parish work and commanded the respect and love of all. His weekly sermons at Mass in St. Joseph's were never less than thought provoking and he regularly hit out at society ills which he felt needed remedying.

He had a life long interest in music and was chairman of the Clare CCE County Board for a number of years. His interest in music was also felt in the life of the Ennis Musical Society where his backstage work in looking after amplification was of immense value. He was chairperson of the Board of Management at the Holy Family Convent and regularly visited the school communicating with the children in a way

that made that made him a great favourite with them. He was also chaplain to the local branch of the St. Joseph's Young Priests Society and was involved with the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association as Spiritual Director. He was chaplain to the Community Centre also.

The suddenness of his passing cast a gloom over the area and the sympathy of all in tendered to his mother, his brother Frank (Kilmihil), his sister Mrs. Eva Rahilly (Quin), Sr. Marie Therese and Sr. Mary Assumpta, both of the Mercy Convent, Callan, Co. Kilkenny and Sr. Mona, Sisters of Mercy, Spokane, Washington.

His remains were received at St. Joseph's Church on Wednesday evening and on Thursday at noon Solemn Concelebrated Mass was offered for the repose of his Soul in the Cathedral, followed by burial in Drumcliff cemetery.

Gravestone nr. 299 at Drumcliff reads as follows: Administrator St. Joseph's Ennis, Died 12<sup>th</sup>. January 1982. I measc na Naomh go raibh sé.

## **Bishop Michael Flannery** (1818-1891)



Michael Flannery was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1818 in Scariff to David Flannery and Anne Corbett. He studied for the priesthood in Carlow and Maynooth and was ordained in 1843. He served as curate in Cloughjorhan before being appointed professor of Moral Theology at All Hallows College, Dublin in 1845.

In 1858 Flannery was appointed coadjutor to the ailing Bishop Vaughan. The circumstances of his appointment were unusual since he was not among the three names suggested by the parish priests. However he did have the support of Archbishop Leahy of Cashel, who had been his contemporary on the staff of the Catholic University, and of Archbishop Cullen, who felt that Killaloe needed a Bishop who could bring about necessary change. Cullen told Propaganda that, while Flannery was a priest of the diocese, he had the advantage of having led a regular life in an academic setting for many years and could bring order and discipline to the diocese. The candidates favoured by the parish priests had, in Cullen's view, grown used to a system where discipline was lax. Flannery was given the titular see of Tiberiopolis and he was consecrated in Nenagh on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1858. His predecessor Bishop Vaughan died on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1859, and Flannery assumed full control of the diocese.

The choice of Flannery proved to be an unfortunate one, for he suffered ill health- acute depression- for most of the remainder of his life. In 1863, he went to live in Paris, hoping to find a more suitable climate for his illness. Flannery lived abroad for

the remainder of his life and, though he continued as Bishop, the diocese was in effect ruled by a succession of coadjutor Bishops. In total Flannery had three coadjutors, two of whom he out-lived.

During 1884 his health seems to have deteriorated further, as he granted full power to Bishop Ryan to govern the diocese without reference to him. He continued as Bishop until his death on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1891.

Dr. McRedmond, his coadjutor at the time, travelled to Paris and, in accordance with Bishop Flannery's wishes, brought his remains home to be buried in the Pro-Cathedral, Ennis.

The Clare Journal of 29<sup>th</sup>. June records the Funeral Arrangements:

On last Friday at four o' clock p.m. the Most Rev. Dr. Flannery, late RC Bishop of Killaloe, died at his residence in Paris, at the advanced age of 75 years.

The remains of the Most Rev. Dr. Michael Flannery were on Friday brought to Ennis by train accompanied by the Rev. Dr. McRedmond. The station was crowded with priests and the leading residents of the town.

The case in which the shell was enclosed was reverently carried into the waiting room, and being removed, disclosed the unmounted plain oak coffin, with black clasps, its brass plate bearing the inscription:

Most Revd Michael Flannery,  
Bishop of Killaloe,  
Born May 17, 1818  
Died June 19, 1891  
R.I.P.

The ceremonies in connection with the burial took place on Saturday at eleven-o'clock. The very proficient choir attached to the Pro-Cathedral, under the leadership of the organist, Monsieur Nono.

The proceedings lasted until 1.30, when, inhabitants of the parish carried the coffin to the brick lined vault on the Epistle side of the aisle.

## **Bishop Thomas McRedmond** (1835-1904)

Thomas McRedmond was born in 1835 in Birr, Co. Offaly. In 1852 he began his studies for the priesthood at the Irish College in Paris and two years later transferred to Maynooth. He distinguished himself academically and took a postgraduate course at the Dunboyne Establishment in Maynooth. He was ordained in 1860 and served briefly as curate in Bournea and Toomevara, before being appointed curate in Nenagh and secretary to Bishop Flannery in 1861.

In 1866 McRedmond was appointed President of the fledging Diocesan College in Ennis, which he helped establish on a firm footing. On the death of Bishop Power in 1871, the parish priests named McRedmond as their first choice to replace him. Due primarily to his relative youth he was not appointed on that occasion. In 1874 he left the College to become vicar-general of the Diocese and parish priest of Killaloe. On the next occasion when the parish priests met to nominate a coadjutor Bishop in 1889, they again selected McRedmond as their first choice. On this occasion their choice was ratified by Rome and he was given the titular see of Sinope. On the death of Bishop Flannery in 1891, McRedmond automatically succeeded him as Bishop of Killaloe.

On his appointment as coadjutor Bishop, Thomas McRedmond, came to live in Ashline in Ennis. He maintained Ennis as his mensal parish and made its church his Cathedral. During his time as bishop he put considerable effort into the building and renovation of churches, schools and convents- a fact noted in his obituary (CJ, 7 April 1904). While he did not play as active a role in politics as some of his predecessors, he did attend Land League and other such meetings. Some of his priests, notably Robert Little, were very active in the land agitation of the period. Shortly before his death in 1904 Bishop McRedmond restored the diocesan chapter which had lapsed over 300 years previously. He died at the hydropathic establishment at St. Anne's Hill in Blarney, Co. Cork on 5 April 1904 and is buried in the Cathedral, Ennis. (Obituary Clare Journal, 7 April 1904 can be checked for further information).

## **Bishop Michael Fogarty** (1859-1955)



**Compiled by John Bradley**

Michael Fogarty was born on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 1859 in Kilcolman near Nenagh in County Tipperary. He was educated at the local national school, St., Flannans College Ennis and St. Patricks College, Maynooth... His studies were wide and varied. And he was an outstanding student, who won distinctions. In Elocution, French, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Metaphysics.

He was ordained to the priesthood on the 13<sup>th</sup>.of Sept 1885.His first appointment was for one year as Curate in Toomevara. Co. Tipperary. Before he was appointed to St., Patricks College Carlow as professor of Philosophy and Canon Law. (1886-1890.) He then returned to Maynooth as professor of Dogmatic and Moral Theology from (1890 to 1904). As a Professor he was noted for his clarity of expression and depth of knowledge. It was said of him that no subject was too abstruse for his penetrating brain.

On October 13<sup>th</sup> 1903, Dr. Fogarty was chosen by the Irish Bishops as Vice-President of Maynooth.This was followed less than a year later by a greater honour. On Sunday September the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1904 he was consecrated Bishop of Killaloe in the Pro Cathedral in Ennis

His reign was 51 years long – It was so eventful, so full of reforms and improvements that I can only refer to a few of them here .New churches and presbyteries were built and most of the existing ones were renovated. A new sacristy and Chapter Room were added to the Pro Cathedral. An organ was built in the Pro Cathedral in the 1930s and Bishop Fogarty gave £1000 towards the cost .He also purchased Westbourn House as the Bishops residence for himself and his successors;

He raised the standard of religious Knowledge and emphasized the importance of Gregorian Chant in our churches and schools. In his efforts to implement the instructions of Pope Pius X to simplify Choir music Bishop Fogarty engaged the services of Ernest de Regge. A Belgian, born in Flanders in 1901.he was a composer, an organist and a specialist in Gregorian chant. He was appointed Professor of Music at St Flannans College and Organist and Choirmaster at the Pro Cathedral. De Regge and 7 others were killed in 1958 at Carmody's Hotel when the floor collapsed during a furniture auction.

The National daily life of his people always held an absorbing interest for Bishop Fogarty. He stood by them in their struggle against landlordism and encouraged every advance in their agricultural way of life. He was himself a practical farmer and won many prizes at the Ennis and Limerick Agricultural Shows.

Early in his episcopate he intervned in labour disputes and tried to resolve them.

Sept. 25 1910 at the Ennis Cathedral he very strongly denounced the outrages which had recently taken place in connection with labour conflict on the West Clare Railway. Bishop Fogarty deplored the outrages which have happened and said that such crimes brought shame, humiliation and sorrow to the neighbourhood and showed disregard for the sanctity of human life, for divine authority and for divine law. It was

dreadful to think that there should be among his flock any one that would endanger human life.

He was widely recognised for his Nationalist sympathies. He gave his wholehearted support to the struggle for National Freedom and Independence. He became a tower of strength to the people. The leaders of the struggle turned to him for light and guidance and they did not turn in vain. He frequently championed their cause both in speeches and in writing.

During the East Clare Bye- election of 1917 he came out publicly in favour of Sinn Fein and supported Eamon De Valera.

He was one of the eighteen Catholic and three Protestant Bishops who signed the manifesto of May 7' 1917 protesting against the pending partition of Ireland.

In 1917 after the death of Thomas Ashe from enforced feeding while on hunger strike in Dublin, Bishop Fogarty wrote to the Freemans Journal as follows;

“It is horrible that the country has to stand by silently listening to the moans of the decent young Irish Boys who are being slowly done to death behind the walls of Mountjoy Prison. They may die as poor Thomas Ashe has died, but with other results than Dublin Castle has dreamed of. Their deaths will sanctify them in the memory of Ireland and surround their heartless torturers with extinguishable hatred and ignominy. This is the sort of cruelty we were accustomed to hear of as possible in the ancient Bastille, or the dungeons of Naples or the Black Prisons of Russia, but as altogether impossible under English rule. We have no need to wait for the future to inform us- the world sees already in these hideous atrocities what the triumph of English culture means for small nationalities.

In an open letter in the Irish National Daily newspapers of April 14' 1918 Bishop Fogarty expressed his views on Conscription as follows;

“I have no hesitation in saying what I feel bound to say in the interest of my own people that neither the English Government nor any other Government has the moral right to conscript Ireland against its will. The Irish people are not slaves.”

His support for Dail Eireann and the Irish Republic led to attempts by the Auxiliaries to murder him.

There are in depth details surrounding the attempt by the Black and Tans to murder Bishop Fogarty in December 1920.

Bishop Fogarty's providential escape from murder by the Black and Tans on the night of Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 1920 was mentioned at the time in a book written by General Crozier who resigned his position as second in command of the Black and Tans in Ireland because the Government declined to punish their members who were guilty of robbery and violence.



General Crozier reported that on November 23, 1920 he returned to Dublin via Killaloe. At Killaloe he inspected a company, and learned there that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Killaloe Dr Michael Fogarty was to be “done in” and his Body was to be dumped in the Shannon. In order not to have another “Griffin Case,” which horrified him very much

Crozier sent a message to the Bishop to warn him as a result, Crozier believed the Bishop went to Armagh where he obtained shelter with Cardinal Archbishop Logue. The “Griffin case” referred to was the Murder of Fr. Griffin of Galway by the Black and Tans.

Bishop Fogarty took exception to some of the statements contained in the book published in 1923. In an interview with a Clare Champion reporter he said there were some serious inaccuracies. It was quite possible; he said that General Crozier was good enough to direct someone to give him warning of the intentions of the Black and Tans towards him

But he did not receive any such warning and his escape from being “done in” and his body being dumped in the Shannon was due to entirely different reasons, and “I never went on the run to Armagh or anywhere else” he added.

. Requested to state the facts regarding his escape Bishop Fogarty said that it was quite true that the Black and Tans - four of them armed with revolvers and blackened faces visited his residence on the night of December 3, 1920 and were subsequently heard to express regret that they missed him. He had left before they arrived. The reason for his departure was not the receipt of a warning from General Crozier but the following:

Late on the evening of December 2, 1920 he had received a telegram from Dr. Mannix who was then in London, to the effect that Archbishop Clune was crossing to Dublin that night by the Mail Boat and desired to meet him (Dr. Fogarty) at the Gresham Hotel. Dr. Fogarty had just returned to Ennis after a long journey and did not feel physically fit for another. Consequently he sent a prepaid telegram to be delivered to Archbishop Clune at the Gresham Hotel in the following words. “IMPOSSIBLE TO COME UP CAN YOU COME DOWN” Dr Fogarty awaited a reply to that message all day on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> and its non receipt caused him great anxiety as he was aware that Archbishop Clune’s mission was for the arrangement of peace terms if at all possible. Eventually he became very alarmed and the crisis was of such magnitude that he decided to set out for Dublin. There were no trains running from Ennis and most of the private cars had been commandeered. However through the kindness of Dr. John B. McClancy, he succeeded in getting a car and as all the main roads had been blocked, they set out for Limerick by the back- roads after an adventurous journey they got to Limerick and the Bishop stopped the night in St. Johns Hospital. Early the following morning they set out for Limerick Junction where Dr. Fogarty got a train for Dublin.

On his arrival in Dublin he stayed in All Hallows College where he met Archbishop Clune. In conclusion Dr Fogarty said he was quite willing to accept General Crozier’s statement, warning him of the Black and Tans threat but that warning never actually arrived. The then County Inspector was later reported to have received instructions to guard Westbourn House against attack, and

Lloyd George was credited with having personally interested himself in the protection of the Bishop of Killaloe.

The escape of the Bishop from the Black and Tans who raided Westbourne House on the night of Dec. 3, 1920 was even narrower than is reported above. It transpired after the outrage that Archbishop Clune, having received Bishop Fogarty's telegram had drafted a reply for despatch to Ennis this was to the effect that Dr. Fogarty need not travel to Dublin. Through some inadvertence the wire was not sent, had it been sent the Bishop would have been found in Westbourne House by the prospective assassins. So without doubt, the Bishop owed his life to a providential accident.

His Lenten Pastoral letter of 1921 sums up Bishop Fogarty's own aspirations for a united Ireland." Peace will come and come I believe sooner than most people imagine. Meanwhile what Ireland needs in her deep distress are the two divine virtues of fortitude and wisdom"

"Tyranny is neither omnipotent nor everlasting. Justice and truth were never yet buried beyond the hope of resurrection for there is a God in Heaven who watches over all. As long as our aims are just and our methods right we can look with confidence to the future. We have only to remain steadfast to win."

"The calamitous days we live in have made Ireland a veritable Purgatory for all of us. Anyone who knows the psychology of the Irish people is well aware that brute force will never appease them nor intimidate them into surrender of their national rights."

Bishop Fogarty and the priests of Killaloe Diocese passed a resolution protesting against harassment that they themselves experienced while on their Annual priests Retreat in 1921. They deplored the entrance on the grounds and premises of St. Flannans College by British military forces, and the arrest of Very Rev William Kennedy while Mass was being celebrated, as an uncalled for and shameful outrage on religious decency and good order.

In 1921 Bishop Fogarty seemed to welcome the Treaty a treaty that led to the partition of Ireland and to the resulting evil that the people of the partitioned Six Counties have suffered since. Undoubtedly, he did not foresee the consequences, and saw it possibly as the lesser of two evils and as a first step towards ultimate unification of the whole of the Island of Ireland. Bishop Fogarty spoke as follows:

"This Treaty is worth the bitter price paid for it. Ireland is now free to live her own life without interference from outsiders. I have confidence that the Irish Free State will soon have cordial allegiance of every Irishman; Belfast will find Dublin not an enemy but a warm-hearted friend. This peace is Gods gift."

Many have disagreed with the Bishop's position, and the subsequent Civil War was to prove him wrong and mistaken.

He favoured the Treaty saying "Refusal to ratify the Treaty would be an act of national madness".

In his Lenten Pastoral Letter of 1922 he was still Pro-Treaty although one can detect certain reservations.

“The terror is gone and, with it, the foreign power that held our country in a destructive grip for several hundred years. It is gone and let us hope gone forever. Even though we have not achieved all that we should wish to reach, we have established this supreme thing at all events. Ireland is now the sovereign mistress of her own life. The rusty chains of bondage are scrapped forever. True the Northern difficulty is still unsettled. Time will cure that difficulty also. The desire for union north and south of the Boyne is growing too fast to be long delayed.”

Many people considering the life of Bishop Fogarty are perplexed when they contrast his evident love for Ireland, his nationalist stance and his many controversial statements, with his now commonly acknowledged support for many Irish politicians who supported the Treaty.

Bishop Fogarty’s attitude is also remarkable in that his diocese of Killaloe is considered by some as the cradle of the Fianna Fail party founded by Eamon de Valera.

There is the obvious direct link and parallel in his own Cathedral Town of Ennis between Daniel O’Connell and Eamon de Valera. Ennis has since become the bastion of all that was nationalist and Catholic. The struggle has been epitomised in Clare being designated the Banner County.

On July the 8th 1954, His Holiness Pope Pius XI, in recognition of Dr. Fogarty’s long and distinguished reign as Bishop, honoured him with the “privileges and honours of Bishops Assisting at the Pontifical Throne” and bestowed on him the title of Archbishop.

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1954, DR. Fogarty who was then in his 95<sup>th</sup> year, celebrated an almost unique event in the history of the church- the Golden Jubilee of his Episcopate. It was the most magnificent religious spectacle ever seen in Ennis. His Eminence Cardinal D’Alton Primate of All Ireland, four Archbishops, fourteen Bishops, two hundred priests from all over Ireland and outside of it, Mr Sean T. O’Kelly President of Ireland, Government ministers, T.D.’s and thousands of people joined for two days in honouring Dr. Fogarty.

The people of Ennis honoured the occasion in a very special way. They erected a statue of our lady in the grounds of the Cathedral which will be a lasting memorial to one of the greatest leaders the Diocese of Killaloe has ever seen.

He had the longest episcopate in the history of the Irish Hierarchy in modern times. In his 51 years as Bishop of Killaloe he had seen and influenced the most profound changes in the political and social world. It was only towards the end of his life that he needed the assistance of a Coadjutor Bishop.

Bishop Michael Fogarty died on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 1955.

Whatever about the controversy he may have caused by his political views and opinions even his critics cannot deny that he was a great prelate who served God, the Church and his flock with distinction and dedication?

Richly endowed with the characteristics that are inseparable from great and noble minds, his kindness, generosity and hospitality were outstanding. He served God and loved his country with a passion that surmounted all obstacles, and no personal sacrifice was too great for him in the fulfilment of his duties. To the learned and the unlearned, the poor and the wealthy, the most exalted and the most humble, he was equally approachable and was truly loved and revered by all of them.

### **Addendum.**

It was later acknowledged by most people in Ireland including members of De Valera's own party, Fianna Fail agreed that it was a mistake to oppose the Treaty and that it was the best deal on offer for the Irish. Britain In 1922 was never going to grant Ireland an Independent Republic.

De Valera was once asked in a private conversation what had been his biggest mistake. His answer was blunt; "not accepting the Treaty"

Bertie Ahern also conceded that the Date that marks the real achievement of independence is 1922, when the Irish Free state created by the Anglo-Irish Treaty came into being.

## **Bishop Joseph Rodgers:** (1903-1966)



He was born at Liss, Killanena on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1903. He became a pupil of St. Flannan's College in 1915. In September 1920, he entered Maynooth. On the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1927 Father Joseph Rodgers was ordained priest at Maynooth. He was consecrated bishop on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 1948.

Relatives of the newly consecrated Bishop present were: Mr. Michael Rodgers, Liss, Cahir, Feakle; Serg. John Rodgers, G.S., Cappamore, Co. Limerick; Mr Andrew Rodgers, Lisduff, Tulla (brothers); Mrs. Kathleen Hayes, Lisduff, Tulla (sister); Mrs. M. Rodgers and Mrs. J. Rodgers (sister in law); Miss teresa Rodgers (niece); Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Rodgers, Scariff; Mr. E. Rodgers, do.; Miss D. Brody, Duglawn, Feakle;

Miss Egan, do; Mrs. O' Shea, Magherabawn; Mrs. Rodgers, Gort; Mr. & Mrs. J. Moloney, Beha; Mr. and Mrs. T.McMahon; Knockanena; Mr. and Mrs. M. Rodgers, Maghera; Lucy Lambert, Ballyturin, Gort.

On the Sunday morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> May 1966, Bishop Rodgers was found dead on the grounds of Westbourne.. The Bishop's Funeral Mass was celebrated in the Pro-Cathedral where burial took place in the church grounds.

## **Bishop Michael A. Harty.** **(1922 - 1994)**



He was born on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1922 into a family of seven. His parents were Patrick & Eileen Harty of Lismore House, Toomevara, Co. Tipperary. After attending Ballinree National School he entered St. Flannan's College, Ennis in 1934. He won scholarships on the results of his Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations. He entered Maynooth College in 1939 where in September 1942 he achieved a B.A. in English, Languages and Literature. Studies in Theology resulted in a B.A. degree in 1945. On June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1946, he was ordained to the priesthood in the College Chapel, Maynooth.

At Maynooth he did post graduate studies in Canon Law and was awarded the L.C.L. degree in June 1948. He also held the H.Dip in Education from U.C.G.

In September 1948 it was back to his old school, St. Flannan's where he filled the vacancy in staff left by the appointment of Dr. Rodgers as Coadjutor Bishop of Killaloe in January 1948. At St. Flannan's he taught English & History. He was appointed junior dean of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth in October 1949 and lectured in Liturgy. In September 1953 he was granted a year's leave of absence to work as an assistant in the parish of Los Angeles. This was to get pastoral experience and while there he travelled widely to study systems in U.S. seminaries.

From 1955 to 1959 he served as Secretary to the President of Maynooth College. In October 1957 he was appointed Dean of St. Joseph's Division in Maynooth College and at the same time took over the editorship of the Ordo and the Irish Catholic Directory.

He was a foundation subscriber to the Furrow Magazine (est. 1949). He contributed reviews and features to this magazine as well as to Doctrine and Life, the I.E.R. and Christus Rex. Subsequently he edited a number of books-The Peoples Book for Holy Week and Easter; The New Irish Supplement for the Missal and Breviary and The Lectionary for Week-days.

October 1960 saw him appointed Senior Dean at Maynooth College and between 1960 and 1963 was Supervisor of University Exams (N.U.I.) in Maynooth. He returned to the U.S.A. in the Summer of 1964 to take up holiday relief work in a parish in Los Angeles and to attend the American Liturgical Conference in St. Louis. In February 1965 he was appointed Secretary of the National Committee of Liturgical Consultors set up by the Irish Hierarchy.

Over the years he was a member of several committees which included the organising Committee of the Glenstal Liturgical Congress, to which he lectured on a number of occasions, The Gorta Projects Sub-Committee and many others too numerous to mention.

He had travelled extensively in Europe, U.S.A., and Africa. He had done pastoral work in Los Angeles, London, Glasgow, Blackpool and in Germany. During the summer vacation of 1966 he visited Kenya, Tanzania, Rhodesia, South Africa and Nigeria.

The Consecration Ceremony of Bishop Harty took place at the Pro-Cathedral, Ennis on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 1967. It began with the procession of three hundred priests to the church at 11.30 a.m. Cardinal Conway was the consecrating Prelate. After the ceremony five hundred of those present proceeded to St. Flannan's College for a special dinner.

Bishop Harty died at the home of his sister in Dublin on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August 1994. The previous day he was in Croke Park for the All-Ireland semi-finals in hurling as he had a lifelong interest in Gaelic games. He was bishop of Killaloe for twenty seven years during what was a period of great changes in the world.

(The above is taken from Kilmaley Parish Magazine 1992).

## **Bishop William Walsh** (1935- )

Bishop William Walsh was born in Roscrea on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1935, the youngest son of William and Ellen Walsh. Eddie his brother ran the family farm at Glenbeha, Roscrea. Another brother Joe who lived in Roscrea died in 1983. His sister Maura married Dr. John Kirby and ran a pharmacy in Tipperary Town. Another sister Kitty who was also a pharmacist, worked in St. Patrick's Hospital, Dublin.

He was educated at Cornville National School, Roscrea National School and St. Flannan's College, Ennis. He studied for the priesthood at St. Patrick's College Maynooth where he achieved an honours B.Sc. He then transferred to the Irish College in Rome for his theological studies at the Lateran University. Following his ordination in Rome he remained there for three years to complete a doctorate in Canon Law at the Lateran University. On returning to he taught for a year at Colaiste Einde at U.C.G. This was followed by a twenty five year teaching career at St. Flannan's College, where he taught mathematics, science and religion.

As well as his usual teaching and priestly duties in Ennis, he has been involved with Marriage Tribunals at diocesan, regional and national levels. He played a major part in establishing the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in the diocese.

He has a life long passion for and interest in Gaelic games and has been a selector for the Clare senior hurling team which contested two Munster finals. Eire Og hurling club also benefitted from his expertise as did Harty Cup and All Ireland winning teams in St. Flannan's College.

After his appointment as Coadjutor Bishop in June 1994, he took over the administration of the diocese following the unexpected death of Bishop Harty in August.

## **Parish Priests of Ennis**

V. Rev. James Barrett	1762-1808
V. Rev. Patrick Davine	1808-1814
V. Rev. Charles Healy	1814-1820
V. Rev. Terence O' Shaughnessy	1820-1848
V. Rev. John Kenny	1848-1876

### Administrators:

V. Rev. John Fogarty	1876-1878
V. Rev. Daniel Fogarty	1878-1888
V. Rev. Michael Carey	1888-1894
V. Rev. Patrick M. O' Kelly	1884-
V. Rev. Patrick Barry	1894-1900
V. Rev. Charles Stuart	1900-1906
V. Rev. John Hannon	1906-1911
V. Rev. Denis O' Dea	1911-1916
V. Rev. Patrick Hogan	1916-1920
V. Rev. William Grace	1920-1922
V. Rev. John Meade	1922-1932
V. Rev. John Roche	1932-1935
V. Rev. Michael Madden	1935-1940
V. Rev. Michael Hamilton	1940-1942
V. Rev. Patrick Cahill	1942-1945

V. Rev. Michael Hogan	1945-1950
V. Rev. Thomas Brady	1950-1951
V. Rev. Michael Quealy	1951- 1960
V. Rev. James O' Neill	1960-1962
V. Rev. Henry Kenny	1962-1966
V. Rev. Patrick Meehan	1966-1969
V. Rev. John Carroll	1969-1973
V. Rev. Peter Ryan	1973-1976
V. Rev. John F. Hogan	1976-1984
V. Rev. Brendan O'Donoghue	1984-1988
V. Rev. Patrick Taaffe	1988-1990
V. Rev. William Walsh	1990-1994
V. Rev. Joe Hourigan	1994-1998
V. Rev. Tom Hogan	1998-

**Other Administrators in Ennis:**

V. Rev. Sean Saunders	1973-1982
V. Rev. Seamus Mullins	1982-1989
V. Rev. Rory McInerney	1989-1993
V. Rev. Hugh O'Dowd	1993-1997
V. Rev. John Bane	1997-1999
V. Rev. Paul Ryan	1999-2005
V. Rev. Gerry Carey	1999-

**Parish Clerks**

James Morrissey 62 Gaol Street, Ennis. 1894- 1910  
(In the Clare Journal of the 30<sup>th</sup>. August 1894 we are informed that Mr. James Morrissey sent a wreath to the funeral of Rev. P.M. O' Kelly as follows: A tribute of respect and grateful remembrance to a kind and thoughtful master from the clerk of the Pro-Cathedral.)

James Morrissey, who lived at 62 Gaol Street, Ennis, from: 1901 to 1910  
Michael Hastings, a carpenter who lived in the Turnpike, Ennis, from: 1910 to 1917  
Owen O' Neill, who lived in Lifford, Ennis, from: 1917 to 1945  
Paddy Brennan, who lived at 62 O'Connell St, Ennis, from: 1945 to 1991  
Christy Scales, Ennis, from 1991 to 1998  
Noel Bolger, who lived at New Rd, Ennis, from: 1998 to 2009  
Ann Kelly, who lives in Dalcassion Ave. 2009 to

James Morrissey:	Prior to 1894 - 1910
Michael Hastings:	1910- 1917
Owen O' Neill	1917 – 1945
Paddy Brennan 62 O' Connell St.,	1945 – 1991
Christy Scales	1991 - 1998
Noel Bolger	1998 - 2009



**The Duties of the Parish Clerk were listed by Paddy in 1987 as follows:**

1. Open Church and ring bell at 7.30 a.m. each morning.
2. Preparation for 8 and 10 masses.
3. Looking after heating and lighting of church when required.
4. Assist at Baptisms, marriages and funerals and make the necessary preparations for same and any other ceremony that may take place with the Church.
5. Having ready alter breads, wine, candles, vestments and alter linen.
6. Recording of Baptisms, Confirmations, marriages and deaths. The entering of notification of marriages, confirmations and baptisms of parishioners outside the parish. Duplication of baptisms and marriages on Bishop's diocesan records.
7. The recording of marriage notifications of parishioners married outside the parish. The recording of infants baptised outside the parish. Issuing of certificates when required. Tracing certificates for people in foreign countries which often entails long and detailed study of the parish registers.
8. Looking after candles shrines-seeing to supply of candles for same. Provision of leaflets for perpetual novena shrine. Collecting and checking of cash in all shrines and recording same in accounts book.
9. Lodging of all money thus collected when counted and entered in accounts book.
10. Bells to be rung before all Masses during the week-morning and evening-together with two Angelus bells each day. Tolling of funeral bells on arrival at and departure from Church.
11. Collection of "planned giving fund" and loose plate after last Mass at Cathedral every Sunday and presenting same to Adm. for deposit with planned giving staff at Convent.
12. Locking of Church doors at 9.30 p.m. except when prescribed by Adm.

## **Choir Conductors**

Charles Louis "Mons" Nono.

1859- 1895

Charles Louis Nono, from Roeselare, Belgium, and his wife Ellen O'Byrne arrived in Ennis in September 1859. He was appointed music teacher in St. Flannan's College and resident organist at the Cathedral.

After his death in 1895 his son Donat took over the job as organist in the Cathedral and teacher at St. Flannan's.

( A full account of Mons was written by Ghislaine De Regge).

## **Organists:**

Mrs. D. Cangley (nee Mlle Nono)

1894-

## **List of Organists & Choirmasters since 1930:**

**Organists:**

John Jones, Pat Flynn, Ita O'Shea, Nell Hanley, Harry Hitching, Cormac McGuinness, Nigel Bridge, Ita O'Shea, Nell Hanley, Cormac McGuinness, Sr. Elizabeth O'Malley, Mary Curley, Michael Hennessy & Leon Walsh.

**Choirmaster and Organist:**

Ernest de Regge, Fr. Patrick O'Brien, Fr. Kieran O'Gorman, Sr. Elizabeth O'Malley, Carmel Griffin, Mary Curley, Michael Hennessy & Leon Walsh.

**Its History:**

The organ comprises three manual departments and a pedal organ playable from a three-manual electric action console situated about ten feet from the front of the organ case. It contains 2,152 pipes spread over 35 stops or 38 ranks. The three manuals, each full size C to c''' (five octaves), are Great, Swell and Choir. The pedal board is full-size C to g' (two and a half octaves). The organ contains 28 flue stops and 7 reeds. There are many console accessories as well as two tremulants. The organ has a large Swell department.

## PAINTING OVER THE ALTAR: THE ASCENSION



*The Ascension*

A note in the early account book for the Parish of Ennis states:

“Picture over High altar set up by Clarke & Co. Dublin & Painted by: Joseph Elwood Potts, Dublin Artist. Wm. Nagle helped.

The building was re-decorated in a renovation begun in 1894 under the direction of Joshua Clarke, father of Harry Clarke. The fresco of the Assumption, which stood behind and above JJ McCarthy's (demolished) high altar, is by Nagle and Potts.

In 1887 Joshua Clark (1858-1921), had moved from Leeds to Dublin. He was an 18-year-old Protestant, ambitious and hardworking. He converted to Catholicism, married Bridget MacGonigal and added an 'e' to his surname.

On St Patrick's Day, 1889, a son Henry Patrick (Harry) was born to Joshua and Bridget Clarke in 33, North Fredrick St, Dublin. This was exactly a year to the day since Walter; their first son was born. By a happy coincidence, Harry and Walter both married sisters, Margaret and Minnie Crilly. By another coincidence, this time a tragic one, Harry and Walter both died within a year of each other.

Mrs. Clarke was consumptive, and Harry and Walter, both inherited a tendency to a weakness in the chest. The fact that Harry was a chain smoker and worked with acids in his stained-glass work compounded this weakness. The girls, Kathleen (the eldest of the four children) and Dolly (Florence) were stronger.

Joshua Clarke had little formal education and no particular interest in art. In 1886, the boom in church building was at its highest, so he set up his own company of Joshua Clarke & Sons. As an entrepreneur he could see that the production of stained glass would ideally complement his church-decorating firm.

In 1892, he opened a glass studio in rooms at the family home in North Fredrick St. in Dublin – just around the corner from Belvedere College.

Joshua Clarke died in 1921.

## The Fourth Station of the Cross:



*The fourth Station of the Cross*

Presented by Mary Hartigan in memory of her beloved husband John Hartigan who Died on the 1<sup>st</sup>. April 1896. R.I.P.

On further research we find from the death certificate that John Hartigan died from accidental drowning at Ballybeg Lake on the 1<sup>st</sup>. April 1896 aged about 57 years. His occupation was listed as a licensed publican. F.F.Cullinan Coroner for Ennis District signed the certificate.

From the Clare Journal of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. April 1896 we are informed of the following:

One of the most lamentable occurrences which it has been our melancholy duty to chronicle for many years took place near Ennis yesterday afternoon, involving the loss of three lives, while a fourth member of the ill-fated party had a narrow escape from the doom which befell his companions. And saddest of all, the lives which were such appalling sadness snatched away were those of married men.

Ballybeg Lake, a lonely and secluded lough, separated by a neck of land from New Hall-Lake and lying between New Hall wood and Kildysart road, was the scene of the

accident. The lake, which is not a very large one, is a well known fishing ground, especially for pike, which are found there frequently to run to a great weight, and amongst those who are particularly partial to the piscatorial art upon it are some of the permanent staff of the Clare Militia Artillery, who have a boat on it always. Yesterday a party was made up for an afternoon's fishing on the lake, numbering Company Sergt Major F Sparling, Mr.J. Hartigan, the Turnpike, Mr.J.R.Roy, Ordnance Survey, Ennis and Sergeant Roche, of a Company, Clare Militia Artillery. They seem to have left the town between two and three o' clock, or as Sergeant Roche, the survivor, times it, after dinner hour, for the lake, where they had an hour's enjoyable fishing.

From Roch's story, one fish appears to have been taken, and Sergeant Sparling was in the act of landing a second one, when the unfortunate accident which launched three of the party into eternity occurred. Mr. Roy, for some purpose, rose in the boat, which gave a lurch falling on Roche at the moment, and Sparling evidently fearing he was going overboard, made a snatch at him to hold him. Before the occupants of the boat had time to realise what had happened all were struggling in the water, and the rest of the sad story is soon told. Roche, more fortunately circumstance than his comrades, inasmuch as he was not encumbered with his heavy tunic, as he was at the oars at the time, struck out for the shore, facing towards the New Hall side, which he succeeded in reaching in a thoroughly exhausted condition.

When he looked around on reaching the land there was no sign of his late companions, and dreading the worst, and still unable to realise the extent of the calamity he ran around the fringe of the lake towards the opposite side. After calling for them and getting no answer he ran towards the Clare Road, where he met a couple of Constables, whom he questioned in the hope that they had seen the others of the party. Being answered in the negative he made towards the barracks to report the occurrence. In a short time several of the staff at the Militia Barracks and Ordnance Department were at the lake, with a number of civilians, and the police from Clare Castle. A boat which was on New Hall Lake was got, and the place was dragged, until darkness setting in prevented the searchers from continuing their efforts. The boat was found at the side of the lake, and near it was a cap, which was at once identified as that of Sergt. Major Sparling. It was arranged to continue the search at 6 0' clock this morning.

Mr. Sparling, who was Sergeant Major of 3 Company of the Clare Artillery, was a man of about 45 years, of very good physique, tall and portly. He belonged to a Killaloe family, we believe, and leaves a widow, but no children. He had always been in the Royal Artillery, and was most popular in the regiment, and among all civilians with whom he had been brought in contact. He had the reputation of being an expert and powerful swimmer, and those who were most intimately acquainted with him expressed their surprise he failed cover the comparatively small stretch of water, not more than 150 yards, from where the boat it said to have been upset, ago the shore.

Mr. Hartigan was the senior of the party. He also was married, but had no family, and until about some twelve months ago, was on the staff at the Militia Barracks. He was about 65. He was retired on pension, and entered into public business taking licensed premises in the Turnpike. He was looked upon as one of the best-conducted men in the regiment during his stay in it. He had formerly served in the 59<sup>th</sup>. Regiment.

Mr. J.R. Roy was a native of Inverness, and had been several years in Ennis on the Ordnance Survey staff. He was a man of about 45 or 50 years of age, or thereabouts, and was married and leaves we believe two sons.

### **Finding of the bodies:**

A large iron drags system of searching which was used the previous day was dispensed with. A number of large hooks attached to a line, which was dropped between two boats, which were kept at some distance, the line and hooks raking the bottom along the intervening space. The three bodies were picked up using this method. Hartigan's watch was found to have stopped at 3.35 o'clock.

### **Evidence at the Inquest by Sergeant Denis Roche:**

On the day the fishing party went to Ballybeg Lake about two o'clock. They were fishing for pike. Roche who was rowing the boat had his tunic off at the bow of the boat with the others having their backs turned to him, in the stern. While in that position Sergeant Sparling caught a fish, which he got into the boat, and Sergeant Sparling stooped to take the hook out of its mouth, when Roy said to excuse him, and stood up in the boat. He then staggered backwards and hit the witness and knocked him out of the boat, which went over on its side, and upset, and threw them all out. Roche made his way with great difficulty to the reeds and got ashore.

He was quite exhausted, and water was coming out of his mouth. After a time he got up and went to look for the others but got no trace of them. He then went for help.

Roche was asked were all the parties in the boat sober. Hartigan had nothing that day with us but a half glass of soda water, and I had not drunk anything for over two years. Sergeant Major Sparling had two glasses of stout. Roy was half "boozed" he was half drunk. We had no drink in the boat – not a drop. Roy had pressed his company upon them, and they did not like to insult him.

In the search Hartigan's who was first found was dressed in all his clothes, and he had a fishing basket strapped across his back, and over his shoulder and under his arm. Sparling was found after. He had all his clothes on except his cap. He was in uniform. His fishing line was tangled around him and the rod was attached to the line. Roy was the last found and he had all his clothes on except his hat. He held his pipe in his hand. Hartigan was about 30 yards from the shore, Sparling was about 70 yards out, and Roy was about 150 yards.

A verdict of accidental drowning was then returned, and the proceedings terminated.

### **The Funeral:**

It was decided to hold the funerals simultaneously the following day. Mr Hartigan remains were removed at a late hour to the Cathedral. On Saturday a little before three o'clock the remains of Mr. Sparling and Mr. Roy were born from the Barracks to the Parish Church, and the Presbyterian Church, respectively. The coffins were placed in separate hearses, and the cortege as it slowly passed through the streets to the

solemnly slow strains of the regimental band, was one of the most impressive and mournfully striking that the town has perhaps ever beheld. First marched the firing party of twenty of the Clare Artillery, with their rifles reversed, preceding the band. Then came the first hearse, bearing the remains of Sergeant Major Sparling, at either side of which marched five of the brother staff sergeant. Then came a detachment of the Clare Artillery. Some mourning coaches with relatives of Mr. Sparling, preceded the second hearse which bore the remains of Mr. Roy at the sides of which marched a number of the Ordnance Survey Department Staff who had been in the office with the deceased. The remainder of the Clare Artillery were in the rear.

At Bindon Street Sparling's coffin was accompanied into the Church. Roy's remains were borne on to the Presbyterian Church. When the procession was resumed the hearse bearing Mr. Hartigan's remains united with it at the New Bridge forming one continuous "cortege".

At the grave sides the last services were almost simultaneously read, and upon many the thought must have been irresistibly forced that the scene then presented was one which might not be witnessed in a life-time – the laying to rest in their last common earthly home the poor remains of one of the most tragic occurrences Ennis has ever witnessed, the last prayers over the graves read by clergymen of three different denominations, Rev. Father Barry Adm, conducted the services at Hartigan's and Rev. Dr. Griffith that at Sparling's, while Rev. Mr. Scott delivered an affecting little address at Roy's grave. After the services the firing party discharged three volleys over the grave of Sparling and Hartigan and then reforming on the road and military marching back to town.

The grave of Sparling can be found by taking your bearings from the layout signage in the old section of Drumcliff Graveyard and looking towards the first tree in eyesight and two graves behind this. ( Grave Number 52). The inscription reads as follows:

Erected by the Officers, non Commissioned Officers Officers Officers Officers and the men of Clare Artillery in memory of Robert Fredrick Sparling Sargent major Regional Artillery who was accidentally drowned in Ballybeg Lake Ennis by the upsetting of a boat on 1<sup>st</sup>. April 1896. Aged 35 years.

Further over about half was and the fourth row down from the path is set between two trees we find the Hartigan grave, which reads as follows (Grave Number 123):

To the memory of my husband John Hartigan late of Mp Sergt Clare Artillery who was accidentally drowned by the upsetting of a boat on Ballybeg Lake, Ennis, 1<sup>st</sup>. April 1896. Aged 57 years. This monument was erected by his sorrowing widow , officers NCO, & the men of the Clare Artillery. May he rest in Peace, Amen.

Mary Hartigan was identified as a shopkeeper / publican in the Turnpike in the 1901 Census returns. She gave her age as 37 years a widow originally from Kings County (Offaly) and living in the premises at the time with here was Anne Honan a domestic Servant.





*Plaque over the fourth Station of the Cross*

### **Harriet Smithson Berlioz (1800-1854)**

Harriet Constance Smithson was born in Ennis on the 18<sup>th</sup>. March 1800. Her father William Joseph Smithson managed a theatre / playhouse accommodating two hundred or so spectators in Cook's Lane formally Bridewell Lane off the present-day O'Connell St. and her mother performed minor acting roles. Harriet was a child of travelling players. The common experience of strolling actor's children was to pass their infant years trailing tediously from one playhouse and town to another and then find them at an early age eking out the company's resources on stage. Harriet was spared this phase. The Smithson's returned to Ennis in October 1801 to mount another short season. Either then or shortly after, it was agreed to leave Harriet in the care of the elderly Reverend Dean James Barrett, who became her guardian and brought her up as though she were his own daughter. The Smithson's came to see her from time to time, certainly in 1803 and 1805, but Ennis was Harriet's childhood home. Harriet's was fortunate to be in his care, and to grow up in the calm of his house in Chapel Lane. Dr. Barrett instructed Harriet in the precepts of religion. The local newspaper announcement for 15<sup>th</sup>. February 1808 for Theatre Ennis headed 'By desire, and under the patronage of the Rev. Dean Barrett, for the benefit of Miss A Smithson – a remarkable tolerant gesture on the Dean's part for that age. However that well intentioned involvement with the theatre was Dr. Barrett's last public action. Early the next morning he died, 'a character as near perfection as a lot of humanity admits of'.

Harriet had not lost a parent; but she lost the person who for the greater part of her eight years had provided her with affection, a home and education.

Harriet took up acting as a result of her father's ill health and made her first appearance on stage at the Cron Street Theatre in Dublin. In 1817 she went to England and although lacking in experience she attracted attention and by 1818 she was appearing in Drury Lane. She later went to Paris as a leading lady in Shakespeare's "Romeo & Juliet". She stirred packed audiences, which included the rising young composer, Hector Berlioz who was not only enchanted by the play, but was later to fall in love with the leading lady. Having failed to win her over he composed his *Symphonie Fantastique*. He later married Harriet in 1833. The couple had one child Louis Berlioz (1834-1867) born on the 14<sup>th</sup>. August 1834. The couple were separated in 1840. Harriet began to suffer from a paralysis, which left her unable to talk or move. She died on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Marh 1854. The inscription on the vault at Montmartre reads as follows: Henriette Constance Berlioz Smithson, nee a Ennis en Irlande, mort a Montmartre le 3 mars 1854.

Two books have been written about Harriet:

Fair Ophelia Harriet Smithson Berlioz: A Life of Harriet Smithson Berlioz:

By Peter Raby. This book presents a complete account of the remarkable life and career of Harriet Smithson Berlioz.

Ophelia's Fan a novel by Christine Balint from Melbourne, Australia. The research process took the writer from the Bishop's Palace in Ennis, to the Freemason's records in Dublin, to the Bibliotheque Nationale de France. She visited Drumcliff cemetery where Father Barrett, Harriet's childhood guardian is buried. The writer recreates the life of Harriet in the third person that has been immortalised by music yet overlooked by history.

### **The presentations on the day were made by:**

Declan Barron

John Bradley

Larry Brennan

Nicky Brennan

Br. Martin Brown

Martin Mc Mahon (Scanthorp, England).

Olive Paradis

Eric Shaw

**Special thanks to:**

Fr. Tom Hogan & Ennis Parish Council.

The staff of Ennis Parish Office.

The Staff of Bishop's House.

The Staff at Ennis Library.

Fiona de Buitléir, Secretary of Clare Roots Society.

Music prior to the presentation was performed by Méabh de Buitléir.