

Foundation Stone of the tower had been laid – 1926; Centenary 1930

In spite of a great gale which swept Scotland from Wednesday to Friday, 19 - 21st January, 1927, and did considerable damage to the scaffolding around the tower, the work of transforming the church and its surroundings went ahead as planned.

The Foundation Stone of the tower had been laid on 27th June 1926, by Archbishop Mackintosh.

The new marble side altars, the pulpit the altar rails, the organ, the mortuary chapel, the tower and its carillon of 23 bells had all been completed by the end of 1927 and with the erection of the Pieta on the marble altar in the basement of the tower the two years' work was brought to a successful termination.

The first Dumbarton parish pilgrimage to Lourdes took place in 1912 and there were annual pilgrimages thereafter for some time apart from the war years.

In 1929 the signing of the Lateran Treaty between the Vatican and the Italian Government was marked by the celebration of the High Mass in St. Patrick's and in the following year 1930, a major landmark was reached when the parish celebrated its centenary.

Monsignor Kelly had hoped that this centenary year would witness the consecration of the church but this was not to be and he must have been deeply disappointed.

At the St. Patrick's Night concert of that year he told the packed Burgh Hall: "One of our old curates the Rev. Father Taylor of Carfin fame has communicated to me that he wishes to do something to help hurry on the consecration of St. Patrick's and that on the Tuesday before Passion Sunday he would be delighted to bring to Dumbarton his famous players to give them a representation of the Passion Play.

Father Taylor was as good as his word and although he was unable to be present, the Burgh Hall was fully booked for the Passion Play on Tuesday and Wednesday and the Consecration Fund was greatly enhanced as a result.

The Centenary Mass was celebrated at Midnight on Christmas Eve. The church was completely filled and a selection of carols was played on the bells in the memorial tower, and inside the church carols were sung, followed by the blessing of The Crib.

A special Centenary Ode was written and issued to the parishioners to commemorate the hundred years of parish history from the opening of the church in 1830 and also the traditions associated with the Catholic community in Dumbarton from early times.

In 1932 they would be celebrating the fifteenth centenary of St. Patrick going to Ireland - "While a fitting monument to that great saint in the place of his birth should be a welcome burden on the whole Irish race, it was left to a few poor Irishmen to erect, what they recognised at any rate, as a monument not unworthy of St. Patrick".

The Monsignor celebrated his Golden Jubilee in 1939 and travelled to Rome to celebrate his thanksgiving Mass in the Oratory of St. Marcellus where he had been ordained by Monsignor Lenti.

The war years were to affect the parish of St. Patrick's in common with the rest of the country, but on the whole the town was most fortunate to be spared the devastation of its near neighbour at Clydebank.

In May of 1941 an unexploded bomb fell in the church grounds and the clergy for a time were very hospitably invited to stay at Clerkhill by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

In the Blitz which had occurred some months earlier the school beside the Old Church was a casualty, but the Church itself soldiered on after the war although it was rapidly disintegrating and was eventually destroyed by vandals in 1976.

It had served its purpose wonderfully well - first as the church of 1830 then after 1903 as the parish hall until 1920 when it became part (and a very large part) of St. Patrick's Secondary School.)

During the war Father O'Callaghan acted as liaison officer between the parishioners at home and those serving in the forces.

His monthly letters were a godsend to those fortunate enough to receive them giving them news from home and keeping up their spirits until the day they returned to the fold.

Another piece of news intimated that James Hart at one time a geography teacher in St. Patrick's High, had been ordained to the priesthood in Roscrea Monastery, Eire, and that John O'Donnell, McLean Place (later Monsignor O'Donnell) expected to be ordained the end of June, while the Rev. Dom McLaughlin, O.S.B. had been elected Prior of Fort Augustus Abbey.

The year following the end of the Second World War saw the parish of St. Patrick's being split into sections.

The growth of the Catholic population was such that a new parish was essential and "The Bridge" was a natural line of division.

The new parish of St. Michael's was established and Father Hugh Bogan was appointed as its first Parish Priest.

On 27th April, 1950 His Grace the Archbishop of Glasgow, Most Rev. Donald A. Campbell, consecrated the church.

The Right Rev. Monsignor James Ward, V.G. accompanied His Grace in his capacity as Vicar General; Father Henry Hart and Father William Hart were Deacon and Sub-Deacon; Father Gerard Hart and Father McCann were M.C.'s; Father Thomas McLaughlin, O.S.B. Prior of Fort Augustus Abbey, Father Andrew Hart, O.C., Father Andrew Murphy, W.F., Rector of Newton St. Boswell's Seminary and Father John O'Donnell were bearers of the relics of the Martyrs which were entombed in the consecrated altar and Father Gerald McCallion was Deacon *Gustus Ecclesiae*.

At the ceremony were the Cathedral Chapter, representatives of the Religious Orders in the Archdiocese, a number of priests who had served as curates in the parish and also all the members of St. Patrick's Deanery.

In May, 1950, Monsignor Kelly was succeeded as parish priest of St. Patrick's by the Rev. Hugh Bogan who had become the parish priest of the new parish of St. Michael's in 1946.

Father Bogan's legacy was in truth a daunting one. How does one take over from a personality who was indeed a legend?

During the 25 years of his tenure of office Father Bogan had at various times as his assistants: Fathers John McCready; Richard O'Callaghan; John Gowans; Desmond Gunning; David McLachlan; Francis Meagher; Michael Henretty; Carlo Centra and James Ryan.

The Golden Jubilee of the "new church" was celebrated on Sunday, 26th April, 1953 with Solemn High Mass in the presence of His Grace Archbishop Campbell of Glasgow.

In his sermon Monsignor J. Conroy D.D., Kilmahew College, and a former curate of St. Patrick's, said, that then as now there was a sense of achievement and feeling of satisfaction.

There was also a sense of adventure, a dedication to the work of paying off the debt and of beautifying the church worthily.

A parish church was the place where God was especially at home" to his people.

The Jubilee Mass was said by Monsignor Ward, Vicar General of the Archdiocese, Father Peter Harrison S.J. was the Deacon and Father Andrew Murphy (W.F.) was the sub-Deacon.

Monsignor Treanor, Rector of Kilmahew College, was the assistant priest to the Archbishop who spoke to the congregation at the end of the Mass.

Many parishioners will remember with gratitude Father Harrison and Father Murphy, both natives of the town and former pupils of St. Patrick's High School. Father Harrison for a number of years assisted at the Holy Week services when he paid his holiday visit to the town. A feature of this Jubilee Mass was that the over-sixties received a special gold-letter card of admission entitling them to a reserved seat in the church.

With the opening of the new Church of St. Michael in 1954 with the late Father O'Leary as parish priest, there was naturally a decline in the Catholic population of St. Patrick's, and the Catholic Directory of 1954 estimated 3570 in St. Michael's and 4500 in St. Patrick's.

The 21st September 1955, was a special day of rejoicing for Dumbarton Catholics. On that date in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Dundee, Father William Andrew Hart was made Bishop of Dunkeld.

In May, 1929, Father William Andrew Hart was ordained priest in Valladolid and said his first Mass in St. Patrick's, Dumbarton, in June.

He celebrated his Golden Jubilee in May, 1979 and in September 1980 celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his being raised to the Episcopate.

Another former parishioner of St. Patrick's and a life-long friend of the Bishop of Dunkeld soon joined him in his new office. Exactly five years after Father William Hart had been consecrated Bishop, Monsignor James Ward, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop to His Grace Archbishop Campbell of Glasgow, with the title Bishop of Sita.

Father Bogan had become a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter in 1959, and he was presented with the Robes at a function in the Burgh Hall organised by a parish committee.

There was a very large attendance. Many people came from St. Michael's, where Father Bogan had been Parish Priest from 1946- 1950.

Mr. Tom McCann made the presentation and Miss Elizabeth Craig read the address of congratulation to Canon Bogan.

In 1966 the Catholic population in the mother parish had increased to 6000 but with the establishment of St. Peter's Parish in that year with Father Charles Vallely as Parish Priest, the number of Catholics in St. Patrick's fell to 2700.

Canon Bogan celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood with a concelebrated Mass on 28th May, 1973.

With him on this great occasion were the Archbishop of Glasgow, the Most Rev. James Donald Scanlon; the Rt. Rev. James Ward V.G., Bishop of Sita and Auxiliary Bishop of Glasgow; the Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Winning, Auxiliary Bishop of Glasgow; the Rt. Rev. William A. Hart, Bishop of Dunkeld, and the Canons of the Cathedral Chapter.

Bishop Ward later paid a glowing tribute to Canon Bogan at a reception for relatives, friends and visiting clergy in the Dumbuck Hotel.

In the course of the tribute, Bishop Ward said that he and the Canon had been curates together and that everyone admired the Canon's tremendous qualities.

The retiral of Canon Bogan in 1975 was followed by the arrival of Father Thomas Murray.

One of his first tasks was to provide a suitable parish hall which had been sadly lacking since the time when the Old Church Hall could no longer be of service.

Happily the removal of St. Patrick's Primary School to its new premises in Crosslet Road, in February, 1973, allowed the old school hall at McLean Place to provide a base for this project.

The old hall was extended, reconstructed and modernised, and today it fulfils its role perfectly, being much in demand for wedding receptions, dances and other functions.

Additional research by the late Thomas O'Donnell of this parish.