

## **New church - 1901**

Unfortunately Fr Dougan had to retire temporarily because of ill-health after the foundation stone of the new church had been laid in 1901.

On recovering his health he was appointed chaplain to the Convent at Dalbeth and died in 1919. He is buried in the Catholic cemetery at Liberton.

While in Dumbarton he had Fathers William McAvoy, Aphonsus Ooghe, Michael O'Connor, Charles Cunningham, James Macdonald and Thomas N. Taylor' (later Canon Taylor of Carfin) as assistants priests.

The premature retirement of Father Linster brought to St. Patrick's, Dumbarton a priest who was to remain in charge for nearly 50 years and was to effect changes which affected the life and conduct of a very large section of the townspeople, including many who were not Catholics.

He was the Rev. Hugh Kelly, who arrived in Dumbarton via St. Mary's Paisley, and St. Patrick's, Shotts.

One of the early priests, the Rev. John McIlvane was a native of the town. He was ordained in 1904 and served as assistant priest in his home parish in 1905.

The obituary notice of his death makes tragic reading: "Lost at sea when H.M. Hospital Ship 'Glenart Castle' was destroyed by enemy action on 26th February, 1918, in the 41st year of his age and the 14th year of his priesthood. Among the early volunteers for war service he ministered for a time in France with the happiest results to his soldier flock. Being rather badly affected by gas he returned to Glasgow to recuperate but on his recovery he at once resumed duty and was lost at sea".

On 22nd March, 1903, the new church was formally opened on a very wet day. At the opening ceremony, the Mass was celebrated by the Rev Michael McNairney who had served as assistant priest in St. Patrick's under Father Hughes. Archbishop Charles Eyre assisted at the throne.

In addition to the Pastor of the Mission the Rev. Hugh Kelly, members of the chapter and a number of the Diocesan priests were in attendance.

The Archbishop preached on St Patrick, the Patron of the church, whose feast had occurred in the preceding week and whose birthplace according to a number of historians lay in the neighbourhood of Dumbarton.

In the early days of the new church seats were let to various families, and people who occupied the nave paid 3d while those in the side aisles paid 2d.

The choir, which in the old church had been mixed, now became a male monopoly.

The old church itself was used for social purposes after 1904 and the school building adjacent continued to be used for a number of years as an institute for recreational activities.

One of the assistant teachers, Miss Kate Kelly who spend her life teaching in St. Patrick's and on her retirement presented the statue of the Child of Prague to the church.

During the years of the 1914 - 18 war the Old Church Hall was used for war work. In 1915 Father Kelly was very ill indeed and was removed to a nursing home in Glasgow where he underwent an operation. Never very robust he seemed very weak indeed and appeared to be dying. The prayers for the dying were recited but he made

an almost miraculous recovery and assured those at his bedside that he was not going to die - yet.

Apart from Father McIlvane whose death during the war is already recorded, the year 1917 saw the tragic death of another locally born priest in the person of Father Michael Gordon D.D.

The parents of Fathers Michael and Frank Gordon were property owners in College Street and Father Michael was killed at Koksijde (anglicised to Coxyde) on 27th August 1917.

The statue of St. Michael the Archangel, sword in hand preparing to strike the serpent coiled around his feet, is the work of Eric Gill and this is one of two memorials to Father Michael.

The year 1920 was another milestone in Father Kelly's educational programme. It complemented the Girls' School founded in 1912.

An interesting event in the spring of 1921 was the visit of Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne to Dumbarton.

A controversial figure in the "Irish Question at that critical time (before the Treaty which saw the birth of the Irish Free State), the Archbishop was refused permission to speak in Glasgow but was invited to speak in Dumbarton and later addressed a large crowd in the grounds of St. Patrick's Church when Father Kelly acted as chairman.

The Centenary Ode pays its compliment to the man who inspired his people at this time to strive for better things, not for selfish vain glory but for the honour and glory of God.

'And led by him around the Eucharistic Lord  
The people came, as children, wondering  
And gave their help, some great, and some small, to build  
A Temple in God's Holy Name  
A Shrine that would be home for them".  
"Within the centre of the town, there stands a church so fair  
Tower, Rood and Bell; all that might honour give unto a King  
Is gathered there."

At the end of this year 1926 St. Patrick's Choral Society more than justified its existence with the production of "Maritana."

The Choral Society was only one of number of "ploys" handled by the editor of St. Patrick's Magazine, Father John Daniel.