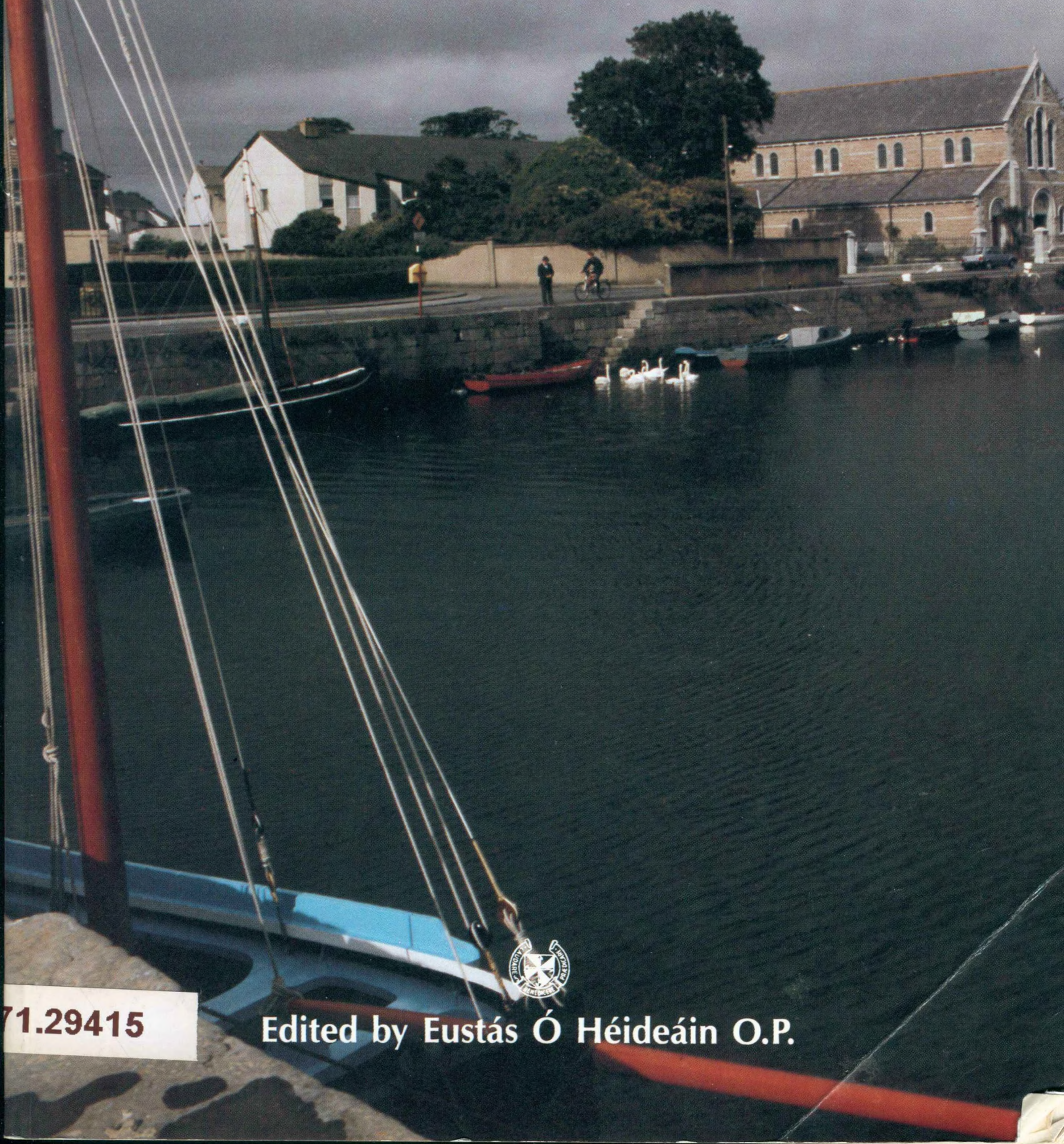


The DOMINICANS in GALWAY 1241-1991



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Edited by Eustás Ó Héideáin O.P.

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Dominican Priory
The Claddagh
Galway

Dominican Order - Irish Province
The Dominicans in Galway 1241-1991.
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THE DOMINICANS IN GALWAY



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Fr. Damian Byrne O.P., Master of the Dominican Order, with Pope John Paul II.
(Photograph: *L'Osservatore Romano*)



THE DOMINICANS IN GALWAY
1241 – 1991



Galway Dominicans: A Chronology 1241 – 1991

The Dominican Order was formally approved by Pope Honorius III in 1216. St. Dominic died in 1221. Only three years later (1224), the Dominicans came to Ireland and made their first foundations in Dublin and Drogheda (1224), Kilkenny (1225), Waterford (1226), Limerick (1227), and Cork (1229).

- 1241 First foundation in Connacht, in Athenry. It was from Athenry that the Dominicans came to Galway in 1488.
- 1426 Foundation in Portumna. O'Heyne-Coleman in *Irish Dominicans* notes: 'In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the members of the Portumna community, not daring to settle in the town, took up their residence in the townland of Boula, a boggy tract of land near the Shannon, where they hoped to be free from observation. However, their retreat was discovered and mentioned in a report sent in March 1715, by the grand jury of the county Galway to the lords justices'. Small groups of Dominicans survived in Boula until 1890 when the priory was handed over to the bishop.
- 1427 Foundation in Tombeola, Connemara, about ten miles east of Clifden in the barony of Ballynahinch. The priory was founded and erected by the chieftain O'Flaherty who ruled this barony until the time of Cromwell. O'Heyne-Coleman notes (*op cit*): 'In this abbey, called Tombeola, there were generally eight religious; but from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth it was not inhabited and the Protestants removed all the walls and the church itself to build a castle in the neighbourhood'. However, there were three Dominican priests there in 1767.
- 1488 'At the request of the citizens' of Galway, the Athenry Dominicans take possession of the Church of St. Mary on the Hill, an abandoned chapel outside the city walls, previously served by the Premonstratensian Canons of Tuam. Later the priory came to be known as the 'West Convent' or 'St. Mary's outside the gates'.

- 1493 Mayor James Lynch, at his own expense, builds a new choir for the Fathers in the Church of St. Mary on the Hill.
- 1570 By royal mandate, under Elizabeth I, the Dominicans are deprived of their property, declared illegal, and dispersed. However, they continue to celebrate Mass and exercise a pastoral ministry in Galway.
- 1622 Galway has the largest Dominican community in the country. The Dominicans have been back in the Claddagh since about 1617 at the latest.
- 1625 Formal agreement with the Mayor of Galway giving the Dominicans an exclusive right to open a free school for the young people of the town. Hugh Fenning notes (in *The Dominicans of Galway: 1488-1988*): 'Perhaps this was intended to succeed the more famous free-school of Alexander Lynch near the Spanish Arch, closed in 1615 . . . In 1630, with a larger community of about thirteen, of whom some were novices and five "professed clerics", the Dominicans of Galway even planned to conduct a seminary for students of both the diocesan and regular clergy, supported by the property of the suppressed canons regular of Cong and Annaghdown. Nothing came of these schemes, except the education of their own "professed clerics", but they show great vision and were (in an Irish Dominican context) unique'.
- 1642 Lord Forbes lands in Galway Bay with an expeditionary force. He erects his batteries on the Dominican church in an effort to capture the city.
- 1644 A monastery of Dominican Nuns is established in Galway.
- 1651 Galway City is threatened by Cromwellians under Sir Charles Coote. The citizens are afraid that the church will again be used as a base to attack the city, as it was in 1642. An unusual document is drawn up promising, if the Dominicans agree to their church being razed, to rebuild it exactly as it then stood, when peace is restored. The Dominicans agree. Church and Priory are demolished. Prior, Fr. Pierce Butler.
- 1669 A new church is built. Roderic O'Flaherty in *West or H-lar*

Connaught (1683), edited by James Hardiman (1846) notes (pp 39, 40): 'Fr. Daniel Nolan, Pryor of this convent, Anno 1670, deceased; Anno 1669, built there a large chapell, and covered it with brick'. In a letter (10 March 1673), referring to a visit he made to Galway, St. Oliver Plunkett said of this church: 'it is the most ornate church in the whole country'.

1683 John Kirwan, Mayor of Galway, and his wife Mary present the Dominican Fathers with a crown for the statue of Our Lady of Galway in their chapel

1698 The Community (numbering about 20 in 1685) is dispersed and exiled under a general exile of religious orders. Valuables – including altar stones, chalices, monstrances and Our Lady's silver crown – are left for safe keeping in the care of Valentine Browne, a Galway merchant. Also among the valuables given into care is 'a big brass ringeing bell belonging to the chapple'. The Prior is Fr. Gregory ffrench.

1702 Three Dominicans are in Galway: Fr. Daniel MacDonnell, Fr. Gregory ffrench and Fr. Nicholas Blake.

Fr. Daniel MacDonnell, a member of the Urlar community who happened to be passing through Galway, was arrested and sentenced (10 May) for 'coming into the kingdom contrary to the late act of Parliament, the same being a Dominican Fryer – under judgment to remain in jail a twelvemonth and to be transported by order of the Government'.

Fr. Gregory ffrench is arrested (1702) as 'a regular Papish clergyman'. By 1706 he was living with his brother.

Fr. Nicholas Blake is now alone. An unsigned article in the *House Chronicle* 1921-1962 (p.213) describes him as 'a monk without a monastery, a priest without a church, a friar without brethren, an Irishman without a country, a citizen without civic rights, a forlorn but faithful outcast, hunted like a wolf, with a price on his head'. He writes a poem in classical Latin describing his desolation. (O'Heyne/Coleman, *The Irish Dominicans*, Appendix by Coleman p.74, has the Latin text and an English translation).

1714 The Mayor of Galway writes to the Secretary of State that Fr. James ffrench, O.P., 'has lain in jail a long time, committed for high treason for returning from beyond the seas, after having been transported, but could not be tried for want of a Protestant jury of freeholders'.

(W. P. Burke in *Irish Priests in the Penal Times* notes further orders for the transportation of James to 1718).

- 1725 Gradually pressure is eased, due largely to the refusal of the Mayor and Sheriffs to implement the anti-Catholic mandate of the English government. Priests are again in the Claddagh, but tolerated by officials.
- 1730 An entry in the House Accounts (November) records an interesting expenditure: 'For claret to treat the Sheriffs in their search the 11th . . . 2s 2d' (see below, 1731 and 1746).
- 1731 The Sheriffs report on a search in the West Convent:
'They also searched the friary in the west suburbs, called the Dominican friary, wherein is a large chapel, with a gallery, some forms, and an altar piece, defaced; in which said reputed friary, there are ten chambers and eight beds, wherein, they believe, the friars belonging to the said friary usually lay, but could find none of them. That it is a very old friary, but some repairs lately made in it'. (Quoted in O'Heyne-Coleman, *The Irish Dominicans*, Appendix by Coleman, p.75).
- 1746 Stratford Eyre, governor of Galway, lectures the Corporation:
'Now gentlemen, that you are here in your corporate capacity, I must recommend to you to disperse those wrestless popish ecclesiastics. Let me not meet them in every corner of the streets where I walk as I have done. No sham searches, Mr. Sheriffs, as to my knowledge you have lately made. Your birds were flown, but they left you cake and wine to entertain yourselves withall'.
- 1753 Gift of a thurible to the Church. The inscription reads: 'the Frs of West Galway are desired to pray for ye givers, Patk French, Cloagh, Ballimore and his wife Cathrne alias Kirwan 1753'.
- 1792 Fr. James French builds a new priory.
- 1800/15 A new church is built, also by Fr. James French. It is a slated building, replacing the old thatched chapel but on the same site. According to Fr.



Fr. James French, O.P.
(1749-1834)
(Drawing: Fiona McCarthy)

Luke Taheny, O.P. (in letters to Fr. Norbert Murray, O.P., Sligo) the basic work on the priory and chapel was done during the priorship of Fr. Bernard Mullany (1796-1800), but there was a long delay (to 1815) in finishing it. James French presented the tabernacle in 1813, and the first high Mass was sung in the new chapel on 4 August 1815.

1809 The Dominican Galway Deposit Book (1815-1833) refers to:

The bell set up on 30 March 1809, Fr. Magr. James ffrench, Prior. This may have been the first Catholic church bell to be rung in Ireland at the end of the penal days. It pre-dates by three months Limerick's first bell (Newgate friary chapel, June 1809), and it was six years before the erection of the first bell in Dublin (SS Michael and John's Church, 1815).

The Prior who built and endowed both church and priory, James Thomas ffrench (1749-1834) was born in Galway, son of John ffrench and Mary Smith. After entering the Dominican Order he studied in Rome, Genoa, Cremona, and Lisbon where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1772. He went from Lisbon to London (1773) as chaplain at the Sardinian embassy, but returned to Galway by 1775 and resided there for the rest of his life. On his death at Galway (15 November 1834) he was said to have been prior for 33 years. There is a fine portrait of him in the West Convent, in which he bears a silver-headed cane. The provincial archives contain a large collection of his personal documents. (From *Collectanea Hibernica: A List of Dominicans in Ireland, 1832*, p.123).

1812 A West Convent Dominican, Fr. Edmund French, is elected Warden of Galway, the senior ecclesiastic in the city. He was the last to hold this ancient office, established 1484-5. It was he who built the new Catholic Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas and brought the Presentation nuns to Galway. Fr. French was later consecrated Bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora. He died in July 1852 and is buried in Kilmacduagh.

1846 Fr. Rushe, prior, builds the Piscatory School, as a centre for training local young people to make nets and lace. Later it became an

ordinary National School. It was given into the care of the Diocese in 1892 and returned to the Dominicans in 1934, the year a new National School was opened on the hill behind the priory. The Piscatory School, a tall impressive building, is located beside the church.

- 1889 Foundation stone of the new church is blessed by Bishop Mac Cormick (18 August). (This stone can be seen in the wall of the church, behind the choir stalls in the oratory near the sacristy).
- 1891 Present church is opened (25 October). Much of the money for building the church was collected by Bro. Alphonsus O'Donoghue, a native of Galway and a member of the Claddagh community, who spent seventeen months in the United States and returned with £1,500. Mr. John Connolly of Liverpool, formerly of Fairhill, and Mrs. Monica McDonagh, High Street, were the principal benefactors. (See article on *The Dominicans of Galway: 1488-1988*, by Hugh Fenning, O.P.). A diary kept by Bro. Alphonsus, and some letters, have survived.

Fr. Joachim O'Sullivan, in an entry in the House Chronicle, 1 February 1941 (p.223), writes: 'The pedestal of the Lady statue near the archives safe immediately outside the House Library is nothing else than the tabernacle of the old Church (i.e. pre-1889). So Fr. Jones informed me'. This tabernacle is now in the corino behind the high altar.

1907



Fr. Stephen Glendon, O.P.,

(Drawing: Fiona McCarthy)

Fr. Stephen Glendon begins the building of the Claddagh Hall on a site, near Nimmo's Pier, given to him for a nominal sum by the Urban Council. In a letter from Tralee to Fr. Henry Gaffney, dated 13 April 1943, Fr. Glendon writes: 'When I went to Galway in 1905 I was greatly pained at the state of the Cladach and I resolved to make an effort to improve it. I conceived the idea of building a Hall. . . .' (House Chronicle 1922-1962, p.233). Architect W. A. Scott, an old friend of Fr. Glendon, designed the hall free of charge.

- 1922 Prior William Stephens finds the old statue of Our Lady of Galway in the priory and places it in the church.
- 1924 Unveiling of the mosaic of Our Lady on the Hill, on the wall behind the statue of Our Lady of Galway.
- 1930 Unveiling of mosaics at back of High Altar and St. Dominic's altar (made by Messrs. W. J. Pearce Ltd. at the cost of £510).
- 1935 Stained glass window, showing Our Lady giving the Rosary to St. Dominic (artist, Michael Healy) is erected (April) beside Our Lady's altar.
- 1939 Stained glass window, showing St. Dominic leading a group of Nuns to San Sisto, Rome (artist, Mr. McGoldrick, under the direction of Michael Healy) is erected beside St. Dominic's altar.
- 1947 Lourdes Grotto, built by Fr. L. H. McGauran, is blessed by Bishop Browne (1 June).
- 1948 Statue of Fr. Tom Burke on Fr. Griffin Road (sculptor, Seán Kavanagh, Cork) is unveiled (November).
- 1957 Tertiary Chapel is opened at the rear of church (12 June), with windows designed by Fr. John Heuston.
- 1971 The Claddagh and the surrounding area becomes a parish under Dominican care.
- 1978 A new priory is built in front of the old priory which was then demolished. The *Dominican Hall* was built on the site of the old priory. In the 1880's it had been planned to build a priory and a bell-tower, in addition to the church, and a drawing (1889) showing all three has been preserved in the *House Chronicle: 1921-1962* (p.118). The high bell-tower, topped by a pinnacle and cross, was to have been located between the church and the priory. Circumstances, including insufficient space, made possible only the building of what was most important, the church. Plans for priory and bell-tower were shelved.

In 1934, additional space was acquired through the return to the

Dominicans of the Piscatory School and some ground around it, and Fr. Stephen Glendon, prior and chronicler, wondered whether it might now be possible to build a priory 'in accordance with this (1889) design, or perhaps a new and better design'. In fact a new priory was not built until 1978; and in place of a bell-tower, a neat frame was placed over the Tertiary Hall (1991) for the Crossboyne bell.

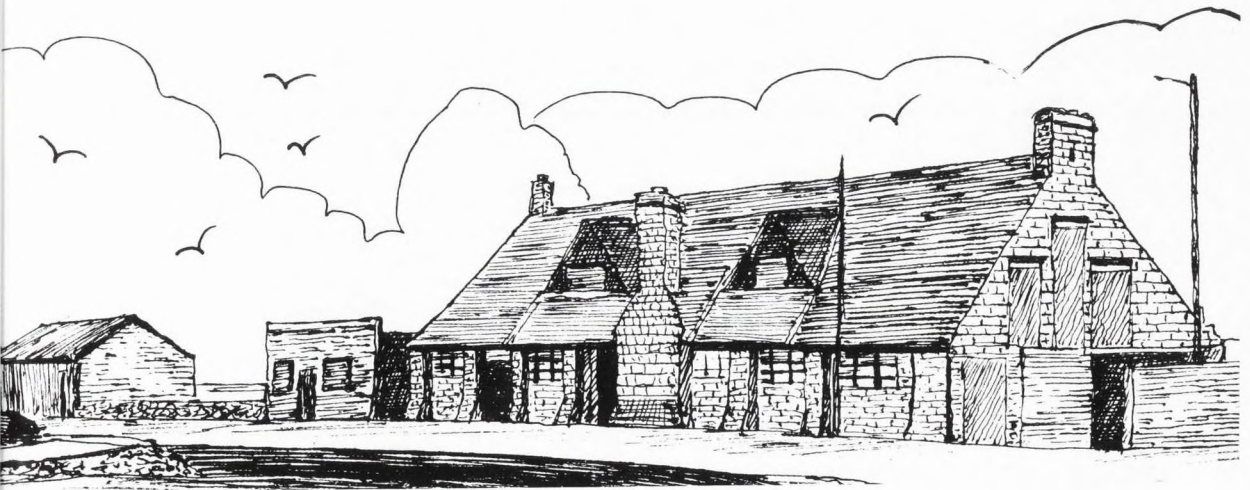
- 1983 Galway-born Fr. Damian Louis Byrne is elected (2 September) Master of the Dominican Order, and 83rd successor to St. Dominic, the second Irishman to hold this office.
- 1987 Dominican Penny Bank is opened (December) in the Claddagh Priory.
- 1988 Fifth centenary of the coming of the Dominicans to Galway. A new porch is built on to the church, mainly to provide easier access for invalids and elderly. (Builder, John Cullen; Architect, Derek Tynan; Engineer, Chris O'Byrne. Prior, Fr. Jim Harris).



Frs. Cyprian Candon O.P., Fr. Jim Harris O.P., Prior, with Bishop Eamon Casey; 1988.

(Photograph: Cathy Moore)

- 1989 Statue of St. Martin de Porres, sculptured by James McKenna, is placed in the church grounds. An organ is installed in the church.
- 1990 The Church of St. Mary on the Hill receives the gift of a bell from Dean James Grant of Tuam. The bell was formerly in the Church of Ireland chapel on the estate of Lord Oranmore and Browne in Crossboyne, Co. Mayo. It had this inscription, *Mears et Steinbank Londini fecerunt*.
- Easter: a baptismal font, also a gift from Dean Grant, is placed in the sanctuary and used for the first time on Holy Saturday night.
- 1991 First centenary of the opening of the present church (October 1891). Erection of a bell, Dean Grant's gift, to take the place of the missing bells of previous centuries.



The Claddagh Hall.

(Drawing, Michael Tyndal)

The Dominicans of Galway: 1488 – 1988

HUGH FENNING, O.P.

The first Dominicans to reach Ireland came in 1224 and since they spread fairly rapidly throughout the country, it is rather surprising that they took so long to settle in Galway. The friars tended to make foundations in Norman centres, even in Connacht where among the five houses established between 1241 and 1274 all but one had Norman patrons. The exception was Roscommon, founded by Felim O'Connor, King of Connacht. Galway, too was Norman, being under the control of the de Burgo or Burke family, yet even that incentive did not suffice. During the fourteenth century, probably because of the Black Death, there was only one new foundation made in the entire country, patronised by MacDermottroe at Clonshanville, Co. Roscommon, in 1385. The fifteenth century saw quite a spate of new Dominican houses, no less than seven in Connacht alone before the Dominicans came to Galway. Almost all had native Irish founders and many were the product of a 'reform' or 'observant' movement within the Order, which perhaps explains why

THE
IRISH DOMINICANS
OF THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
BY
FATHER JOHN O'HEYNE, O.P.
FIRST PUBLISHED AT LOUVAIN IN 1706

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BY
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Title-page of O'Heyne's History of the
Irish Dominicans

they were small houses in particularly remote places such as Tombeola in the parish of Moyrus on the western edge of Connemara. The Dominican convent of Galway, founded in 1488, was almost the last foundation in the whole of Ireland before Henry VIII suppressed the monasteries.

We shall never know the reasons for this delay, but can suggest at least three possible ones. The mendicant friars, because they had to beg for their bread, tried to keep out of each others' way, so the very presence of the Franciscans at Galway from 1296 may have been a deterrent, especially since the town had yet to become either large or wealthy. There was also the question of a patron, some wealthy noble who would defray the initial heavy costs of building a church and priory, and without such backing, no medieval foundation was possible. The Order may have looked for such a benefactor in Galway without success. One must also remember that the largest Dominican house in Connacht was at Athenry about twenty miles away and that each Dominican house in the country had well-defined 'limits' within which its members might preach and beg. Thus, the establishment of another house at Galway would necessarily have halved the western 'limits' of Athenry and therefore reduced its income.

One of the wealthy citizens of Galway, Edmund Lynch, was accustomed in the 1450s to entertain the friars of Athenry in his town house, but the stage was set for a Dominican house in the city by two events which happened in 1484. One was the creation of the Wardenship whereby the clergy of the town became independent of the archbishop of Tuam. The other was the appointment for the first time of an Irish Dominican provincial with full jurisdiction over all the convents of Ireland, hitherto ruled by the provincial of England or his vicar. This first provincial was Fr. Maurice O'Mochain Morall, member of an ancient Connacht family and a 'son' of the convent of Athenry. Galway got its first mayor, Pierse Lynch, in 1485, and its first Dominican priory 'at the request of the citizens' in 1488.

The Dominicans got possession of the old abandoned chapel of 'the Blessed Virgin outside the walls', otherwise called 'St. Mary on the Hill', occupied by the Premonstratensian Canons of Tuam from 1235, but by 1451 merely a chapel whose rector was removed in that year by the archbishop of Tuam. These Premonstratensians were men and not (as many have written) nuns. They were 'canons regular', as St. Dominic himself had been, and devoted themselves to parish work. The papal document of 1488 confirming this grant to the Dominicans expressly mentions 'the provincial of Ireland', namely Fr. Morall, who surely had a hand in the business. The Order thus obtained not only the site of their present premises but also the title of their church, St. Mary's, from the Premonstratensians. In later times it came to be called 'the West Convent' or 'St. Mary's outside the gates'. On the whole,

Dominicans in Ireland preferred to live outside the gates of walled towns. They could find a cheaper site, more space, freedom from tolls, and come and go as they wished.

The patronage of the wealthy Lynch family, extended thirty years earlier to the visiting friars of Athenry, was maintained in the new foundation. James Lynch Fitzstephen, the mayor who is said in romantic legend to have hanged his own son, built the choir of the new church at his own expense in 1493, and left six pounds in his will (1508) for the building expenses 'of the chapel of the Blessed Mary on the Hill in the west part of our town'.

SUPPRESSION AND RECOVERY: 1540 – 1640

Most Irish Dominican houses, particularly in Leinster and Munster, were effectively suppressed under Henry VIII about 1540 and did not really recover until the 1620s. Ulster and Connacht, being largely beyond English control, were not affected by the campaign of suppression until the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). The corporation of Galway acquired a lease of the Dominican 'friar-house' in 1570, but there is no reason to believe that St. Mary's church was put to other uses or demolished. From the terms of the lease we learn that the friars had a 'garden', probably a vegetable-garden, of eleven acres; a further eleven acres elsewhere, and the right to take a salmon 'near the bridge of Galway' every Friday. By a further lease of 1578, all three houses of friars (O.P., O.F.M., O.S.A.) passed to the corporation.

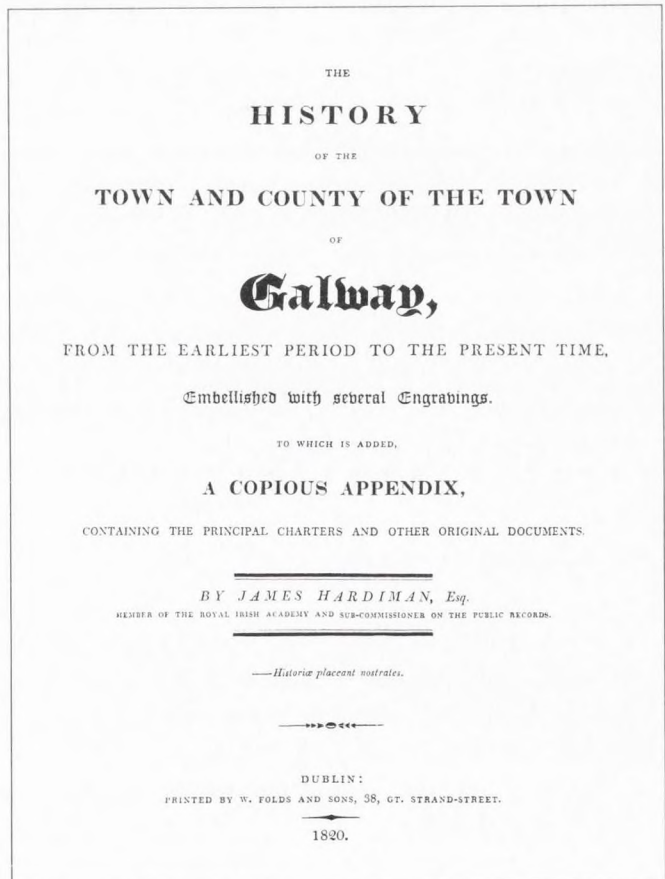
It does not follow from these leases that the Dominicans simply went away. The corporation may have been obliging them with a sort of legal umbrella. Certain it is that the Franciscans held a big meeting at Galway in 1572, during which the few Protestant citizens were afraid to go outdoors. Even after the meeting, though in the same year, there was a complaint that 'the friars are so open in Galway as sometimes they go ten, fourteen, sixteen, yea twenty in a company'. The same writer mentioned the arrival at Galway of two outstanding Dominicans: Tadgh O'Farrell, later bishop of Clonfert, and the provincial Cormac O'Fergus. Whether the Dominicans remained at the Claddagh, moved into the city, or simply dispersed, their ancient and much venerated statue (*imago* in Latin) of Our Lady was still the object of devotion in 1587. This was not the present statue of Our Lady of Galway, but its predecessor. The citizens of Galway, with the help of a priest at Rome, Richard Burke of Annaghdown, prevailed on the Pope in that year to grant a plenary indulgence to the faithful who would venerate this statue on the four feasts of Our Lady: the Visitation, Annunciation, Purification and Nativity. In 1588, the executed soldiers of the Spanish Armada were prepared for death

at Galway by Augustinian friars, so it is likely enough that there were Dominicans in the city still.

Between 1590 and 1610, because of increasing persecution under Elizabeth and James I, Dominican activity in Galway was eclipsed, if it did not completely die. The number of Dominicans in Ireland had dropped to about forty men, practically all of whom were in Connacht or west Ulster. What saved the situation was a new policy, adopted about 1610, of sending young recruits to receive the habit and pursue their ecclesiastical studies in convents on the continent. In the course of time, and against considerable opposition, the Irish Dominicans eventually obtained three foreign colleges of their own: Louvain (1623ca), Lisbon (1635ca), and Rome (1677). Whenever possible, these recruits made their novitiate in Ireland first and were ordained after solemn profession. By this stratagem, they might say Mass and support themselves on stipends wherever they might go. While not the general rule, it applied to many. At some date before 1617, one of the vicar provincials of the time, Daniel O'Crean, is said to have saved the Dominican province from extinction

by placing some novices at Galway in the house of one of the tribal families, that of Martin Font.

From the same year (1617) the picture is one of gradual consolidation and recovery, despite occasional proclamations and even persecution. An early example of persecution, from 1617, comes from Galway itself where two Munster Dominicans were arrested as soon as they landed. One was Richard Carron, Vicar of the Irish Dominicans, and the other a young cleric named Aeneas O'Callanan. Both were sent to Dublin Castle, imprisoned there for eighteen months, and then sent through England into exile in France. However, by 1622, Galway had the largest



Title-page, Hardiman's History of Galway.

Dominican community in the country, with ten friars under Daniel O'Crean. They also seem to have recovered their church, which very few other communities managed to do.

These Galway Dominicans probably had a Rosary confraternity, as was usual elsewhere at this date. One of them, Nicholas Lynch, who was to become provincial (1628-31), is said to have 'restored devotion to the Rosary in Galway'. They were also interested in education although one cannot say what success they had. In 1625 they entered into a solemn convention with the mayor whereby the Dominicans would have the exclusive right to open a free-school for the young people of the town. Perhaps this was intended to succeed the more famous free-school of Alexander Lynch near the Spanish Arch, closed in 1615. Three of the Dominicans who made this agreement were also named Lynch, one of them being the Thomas Anthony Lynch (d.1627) whose tombstone is the oldest in the Claddagh cemetery. In 1630, with a larger community of about thirteen, of whom some were novices and five 'professed clerics', the Dominicans of Galway even planned to conduct a seminary for students of both the diocesan and regular clergy supported by the property of the suppressed canons regular of Cong and Annaghdown. Nothing came of these schemes, except the education of their own 'professed clerics', but they show great vision and were (in an Irish Dominican context) unique.

No other Dominican house in the country has so many old chalices. Those of the West Convent date from 1634 when a certain Joan French presented one for the use of her son, a Dominican named Gregory French. There is a particularly interesting one of 1639 presented by Patrick Bodkin and Mary French who dedicated the chalice 'to the Blessed Virgin', intending probably its use in a Lady Chapel before the present statue of Our Lady of Galway or its predecessor. Other chalices bear the local names of Halloran, Skerrett, Lynch, Blake, Butler and Burke.

FROM WAR TO EXILE: 1641 – 1698

This confused but fascinating period began with a decade of war (the Catholic Confederacy) followed by a decade of persecution under Cromwell and the Commonwealth. Intermittent persecution (from the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 to 1685) was followed by a decade of relative peace under James II before all the bishops and religious of Ireland were ordered into exile in 1698.

Lord Forbes, leader of the parliamentary fleet, arrived at Galway in 1642 to reduce the city, but failed. He turned the Dominican friary on Fairhill into

a battery for his guns. Before sailing away again he defaced the church, dug up the graves and even burned the bones and coffins of the dead. On a happier note, the first monastery of Dominican nuns in Ireland was established in Galway in 1644 and their foundation confirmed by the papal nuncio Rinuccini in 1647. All present-day houses of Irish Dominican sisters, at home and abroad, trace their descent directly back to this monastery at Galway.

No matter how fierce persecution might be in Ireland, the clergy were always ready to squabble among themselves, so it is no surprise to find the Dominicans and Franciscans of Galway quarrelling about precedence – which group should go first in a procession – in the middle of this war. The nuncio, not in the least amused, put the Dominican church under interdict in 1648. Unfortunately, he had himself to leave Ireland in February 1649 because the corporation would neither support his stand against the royalist Ormonde nor his plan to hold a national synod at Galway. The Dominicans and Franciscans remained, though not for long.

After the fall of Limerick in 1651, Galway became the last outpost of the Confederate army under the leadership of Thomas Preston. As the inevitable siege drew closer, the corporation remembered Lord Forbes and decided to level the Dominican church lest it should be used again as a battery against the western walls of the town. A formal agreement with the Dominican community was drawn up and signed by all parties, on the understanding that the corporation would rebuild the church in better times. The original document is now in the Irish Dominican archives at Tallaght. In 1652 the city capitulated to the Cromwellian army under Sir Charles Coote. The nuns all left Galway for Spain while most of their Dominican brethren made their way to the continent as best they could.

Most Dominican communities in Ireland can claim to have had martyrs for the faith in the time of Cromwell, but it does not appear that Galway can claim even one. Bernard O'Kelly hanged at Galway in 1653, was a laybrother of Roscommon. Gerald Davock, the vicar provincial captured after saying Mass, a prisoner in Galway from 1655 to 1657 and afterwards for some years on Inishboffin, belonged to the convent of Athenry. If some of the Galway community went immediately into exile, the others must have had powerful protectors. There is a very interesting list of the seventy-six Dominicans actually in Ireland in 1657, and among them one can spot at least one who had close ties with Galway: Nicholas O'Halloran. Among the Galway exiles of this period one can mention three who made their mark in different ways. On the intellectual front, Dominic Lynch was a theologian, professor and writer at Seville. John O'Connor was more the practical man

of affairs, procurator for the Irish province at Madrid, whose greatest achievement was to acquire the twin-convents of San Clemente and San Sisto at Rome in 1677. Then there was the missionary, Peter French, who worked in Mexico and learned one of the native languages well enough to write a catechism in it. Fr. French returned to Galway after long years abroad and died in 1693.

Although the corporation of Galway lacked sufficient funds to rebuild the Dominican church as it had agreed to do in 1651, the citizens dug deep into their pockets to make good the loss. Most of the work was done in the 1660s by Fr. Daniel O'Houlihan who was to die in 1677 while travelling to Dublin to buy an organ for the new St. Mary's. Fr. John Browne (later provincial from 1684 to 1688) also gave much attention to the building. St. Oliver Plunkett described the new church in 1674 as 'the best and most ornamented church in the Kingdom'. This is the church to which the statue of Our Lady of Galway most probably belonged, with its silver crown presented by John Kirwan and Mary his wife in 1683. John Kirwan was the first Catholic to be mayor of Galway for about thirty years. This wooden statue in the baroque style is considered to be of Italian manufacture and to represent the Madonna of the Rosary. The Child on her arm looks far too alert and well-grown to be carried around.

With the accession of James II, a Catholic, in 1685, there was no further need of concealment until his defeat at the Boyne and Limerick in 1691. The Dominican nuns returned from Spain in 1686 and have been in Galway ever since. The male Dominican community in 1685 numbered twelve priests, five novices and two laybrothers. The provincial of the time, John Browne of Galway, kept excellent records, still extant, of every priory in the country. Unfortunately, this proved but a short period of peace, because in 1698 every bishop and religious in the country was ordered into exile by a parliamentary act of banishment. Even at this juncture, Galway proved unusual among the Dominican houses of Ireland. The community entrusted its goods and valuables to a merchant named Valentine Browne and managed to preserve a detailed inventory of the transaction. Only the Dominicans of Sligo succeeded in doing as much. The Dominican author John O'Heyne, whose history of the province was printed in 1706, describes how he attended to the nuns of Galway and advised them to stay at home before he took ship for the continent with 126 other religious of all orders. The nuns' cloister had at that time been broken open and they were forced to wear lay clothing, but by a curious omission nuns were not mentioned at all in the act of banishment. And so they stayed.

A
CHOROGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION
OF
WEST OR H-IAR CONNAUGHT,

WRITTEN A. D. 1684,

BY RODERIC O'FLAHERTY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF THE "OGYGIA."

EDITED, FROM A MS. IN THE LIBRARY OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY JAMES HARDIMAN, M.R.I.A.



DUBLIN:
FOR THE IRISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

MDCCCLVI.

FROM PERSECUTION TO TOLERATION: 1700 – 1794

Once the friars left St. Mary's in 1698, the task of burying the dead in the adjoining cemetery fell to the parish clergy, and for that task they received funeral dues which they would have liked to keep even after the Dominicans returned. As early as 1720, when the provincial came on visitation, he found two priests and a brother in Galway. The two priests were Gregory French and Nicholas Blake, both of whom had returned after a year or two at Nantes. Fr. French was actually in prison, which gives point to the famous lament composed by Fr. Blake on finding himself alone, 'like a lonely sparrow on a roof-top'. The brother was Peter Kinnily. In the same year, Daniel MacDonnell of Urlar was arrested in Galway where he died, still a prisoner, in 1707. Another Dominican, Thomas MacDermott, disembarked at Galway in 1714 only to be arrested and sent back to the continent after a short spell in prison. Nonetheless, there was a Dominican community of seven at Galway in 1720 when the dispute over funeral dues, already strong in 1713, surfaced again. The detailed 'Report on the State of Popery', compiled in 1731, gives much the same figure while explaining that three were novices. Among the priests was Colman O'Shaughnessy, formerly provincial and soon to become bishop of Ossory. From the statement that 'the west Chapel was built and made use of time out of mind', it is clear that the chapel built in the 1660s was still to the good. Unless replaced by another after 1731, it must have remained in use until 1800.

Another list of 1735 names fourteen Dominicans of Galway, of whom only four were resident (probably with some novices) at Galway itself. The other ten were at various places on the continent, except for one who had found his way to the Indies. Two of the four priests at Galway were remarkable in different ways. Peter Killikelly, another provincial, was to become bishop of Kilmacduagh, while Nicholas Banks found his way to Newfoundland where he suffered greatly before returning, half-demented, to Bordeaux. This dispersal of the community illustrates two contemporary problems: the reluctance of many to leave the comforts of the continent for the 'rigours of the mission', and the financial problems which would have arisen at the Claddagh had all its fourteen 'sons', sat down at the one table in Galway. So far as persecution was concerned, the last countrywide outburst was in 1744, and it caused the brethren in 'the friary at the West', no more trouble than to get out of the house, leaving some cakes and wine for the sheriffs, until the token search was over.

By this time, the nuns were left in peace, having already passed through a sea of troubles. Their numbers increased from thirteen in 1702 to thirty-nine in 1714. Even that number increased to forty-four in 1724, so that many

of them had to live with friends. It is curious that the nuns admitted no novice whatsoever for forty years after 1730, but the policy soon produced results. There were only twenty-four in 1735 but (and here is the mystery) thirty-one in 1756. So far as the record goes, they increased in number while admitting no one to the habit.

Earlier in the century there were great fears for the survival of the monastery, and various plans devised to get them out of the country. The first, in 1712, was an abortive attempt by Edmund Fitzgerald, the Irish procurator at Madrid, to find a new home for both friars and nuns at Jativa in Valencia. The Galway monastery was commandeered as a barracks in 1714, and while the sisters found accommodation elsewhere, they were dispersed three times within two months. They went to prison to visit Fr. Thomas MacDermott in that year: he reported that the nuns were 'in despair and it would make the stones weep to witness their sufferings'. Another plan, to settle them at Marchena in Seville, foundered in 1717 although six nuns from Galway were already at Madrid en route to the proposed foundation. Also in 1717, in an attempt to relieve the situation, the provincial arranged that eight of the Galway nuns should settle in Dublin. Among them was Sr. Julia Browne, daughter of a wealthy family, strong-willed and full of initiative. When even the Dublin monastery was under pressure in 1736, she attempted to establish a refuge for the nuns at Brussels. In fact she succeeded in getting one, but her religious sisters in Dublin preferred to live under the penal laws rather than under Sister Julia Browne. Her altarplate – candlesticks, thuribles, cruets – all of Irish make, has been preserved and must be one of the finest collections of the kind in the country. Another sister of Galway, Margaret Browne, went to Waterford in 1736 as a founding-member of a new monastery which unfortunately died out after twenty years because some influential clergy were opposed to it. There was also a financial difficulty in all these actual or proposed foundations in Ireland and abroad: the reluctance of the Galway monastery to part with the dowries of sisters who wished or were told to settle elsewhere.

Thomas Burke's *Hibernia Dominicana* supplied excellent statistics for the year 1756. There were then 179 Dominicans in Ireland of whom 43% were in Connacht. There were nine priests in Galway at the time, as there were also in Dublin, but these were the largest communities after Roscommon which had sixteen. Ironically, while the number of friars of all orders increased under the penal laws up to 1744, they dropped gradually thereafter, largely because of the decree of Propaganda Fide (1750) forbidding the future reception of novices in Ireland. One could say that this gradual decline continued until about 1850. The country convents, for example most of those

in Connacht, eventually ceased to exist. Those, like Galway, in towns or cities were better able to survive.

There were six priests at the Claddagh in 1767, but no laybrother, for laybrothers too were among the casualties of the time. One of the priests, Dominic Fitzpatrick, had an unfortunate experience in 1771. Having sailed to Guadeloupe in the West Indies to collect the money of a deceased brother he took sick with fever and found not a fortune but a grave. A list of the community in 1777, all beneficiaries in a will, includes the name of the prior, James French, who was to build a new chapel and convent twenty years later, and that of Patrick Kirwan, a former prior of San Clemente, Rome, who had been ordered out of the Papal States for receiving Bonnie Prince Charlie with royal honours on the death of his father, James III.

In the early days of the movement towards Catholic Emancipation, while negotiations were in progress between some bishops and members of parliament, it seemed likely that the first Emancipation Act (1782) would banish the regular clergy outright, force them to become secular priests, or at the very least forbid the return to Ireland of regulars actually on the continent. It was widely said that the regular clergy were a thorn in the side of the hierarchy and a burden to the people. To offset this kind of talk, the regular clergy of Galway held a meeting in 1779 which decided to employ the famous Capuchin, Arthur O'Leary, to lobby members of parliament and to approach all the bishops of Connacht for a statement in their favour. The same was done in other provinces, but the only real support the regular clergy got was from the bishops of Connacht who paid high tribute to their character and usefulness. It is one of the puzzles of history why the regular clergy got such warm support from the bishops of Connacht, where they were so numerous, and such cool treatment from the bishops in other provinces where the regulars were so few.

The old dispute about funeral offerings surfaced again at Galway in 1788 and we are fortunate to have an extremely long letter on the subject by Patrick Kirwan, the prior. There was no difficulty about the burial of the rich, who would hold to ancient custom and ignore the Warden's vicars. So far as the poor were concerned, it was the custom: 'to hold Remembrance Mass the First Sunday after the interment of their friend in the chapel annexed to the place of burial where, after Mass, the representative lays a shilling on the altar and the friends they assemble on the occasion their pence and ha'pence.' The vicars, however, induced the poor to have this Remembrance Mass in the parish chapel, offering as an encouragement 'to forego their funeral dues, a crown or half a guinea'. Prior Kirwan was not amused, foreseeing that the six Dominicans then at the Claddagh would have to reduce their numbers or be content to live 'on potatoes and milk'. Nor had they

anything to be ashamed of. 'We live as a community, we preach, teach and catechise. In all the great solemnities of the year we have High Mass and Benediction . . . we answer all calls by day and night.' If the Dominicans had to attend the dying in the early hours of the morning – normally the duty of the parish clergy – it was to impart the traditional 'Friar's Blessing' by which the people of the Claddagh laid great store. In the event, an amicable agreement was reached in 1790, and when the subject came up again in the 1820s it was finally settled.

One of the features of Dominican life between 1786 and 1800 was that at least six of the brethren went to work in Newfoundland and the United States. At New York, the site of the first Catholic church was purchased by a young Galway merchant named Dominic Lynch in 1785, and Lynch wrote home to the Warden appealing for priests to staff it. Among these Dominican missionaries was Francis Bodkin of Galway who started his priestly career as a pastor in Castile. Later he worked in London, Maryland, the West Indies, Kentucky, New Orleans and Havana before becoming a military chaplain to an Irish regiment at Seville. In 1808 he returned to Galway, but set off again to Lisbon as bursar of the Irish college (1813-1815) before coming home to the Claddagh for good. Some of the books he left after his death in 1822 are still on the shelves of the library.

FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT DAY: 1789 – 1988

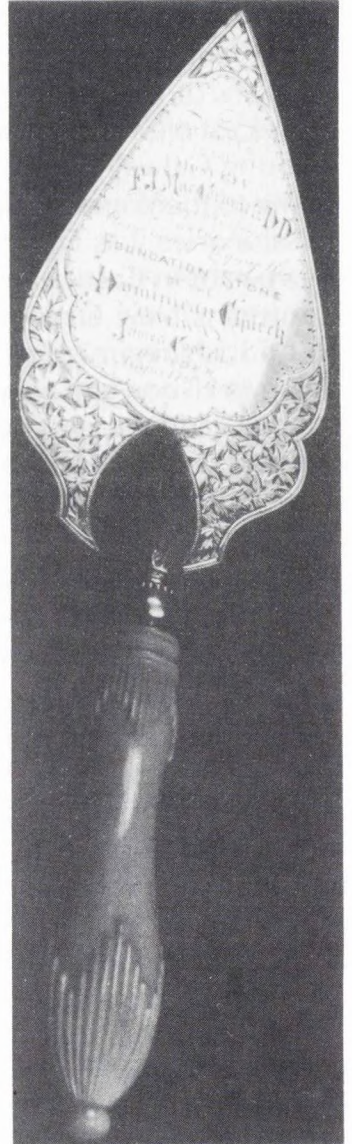
One of the effects of the French Revolution was the loss to Ireland of innumerable seminaries on the continent, particularly in France where these colleges were most numerous and the largest of all was at Paris itself. The Irish Dominicans lost their largest college at Louvain in 1794, while those at Rome and Lisbon practically ceased to receive students until Napoleon met his Waterloo in 1815. This was a serious set-back for recruitment and training. The diocesan clergy managed better, thanks to the foundation of Maynooth (1795) and the existence of slightly earlier colleges at Kilkenny and Carlow. Nonetheless, even the bishops found it hard to staff parishes for a period of twenty years and turned to the religious orders for pastors and curates. This was a further blow to isolated country priories whose few surviving members were drawn into parishes while their 'convents', such as they were, disappeared for ever. That is why, in Connacht, only the houses of Sligo and Galway survive today.

James Thomas French, already prior at the Claddagh in 1777, built a new friary in 1792 and a new church in 1800 to replace the 'thatched chapel' which may have been the one St. Oliver Plunkett so much admired in 1674. Fr.

French's chapel measured 100 x 28 feet, with a spacious gallery, side-altars and even an organ. The priory still possesses a fine portrait of Fr. French, holding a silver-topped walking-stick; he died in 1834 at the age of eighty-four. Since his chapel was not replaced until 1891, some photographs of it may still be seen.

The last Warden of Galway was another Dominican of the same name, Edmund French, elected in 1812. He is best remembered for bringing the Presentation Sisters to Galway and for building the pro-cathedral in Middle Street in 1816. When the diocese of Galway was created in 1831, Dr. French went to live at Kinvara as bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora. Edmund and his brother Charles, also a Dominican, were the sons of a parson who had been both mayor and Protestant Warden of Galway. Charles, who spent his life as a missionary in Canada, describes in his brief autobiography how he had once, as a boy, attended midnight Mass one Christmas in the chapel of the Dominican nuns of Cross Street. When the Protestant boy saw candles, the rich vestments, the smoke of the incense, and the elevation of the Host, 'it seemed the heavens were opened' before his eyes. And that was about ten years before his conversion.

In the early decades of the 19th century, the new active congregations of religious sisters spread everywhere in Ireland, while contemplative nuns such as the Dominicans of Galway could scarcely find recruits. By 1826 there were only eight or nine in the community. Their old house in Cross Street, which in any case was falling down, offered neither fresh air nor any means of exercise. However, they resumed the wearing of the habit in 1841 and moved in 1845 to more healthy quarters in Taylor's Hill. The bishop of the time, feeling himself slighted by the move, put the nuns under interdict for nine months. However, nuns being stronger than



Trowel used by Bishop McCormack to lay foundation-stone, 1889.

(Photo: Victor Davis)

bishops, they soldiered on, helped to feed poor children during the Famine, and in 1858 opened their famous boarding-school with the help of some nuns from Sienna Convent, Drogheda.

Even the Dominicans of the Claddagh were reduced in 1827 to a community of only three, whereas, as they wrote at the time, 'we were formerly eight'. Like the nuns, they held fast to their traditions and could boast that theirs was the only Dominican house in Ireland where the habit was still worn. Other Galway Dominicans of the time made their name as missionaries. George Corcoran, a native of Loughrea, sailed to South Africa in 1837 with his confrère, bishop Raymund Griffith, and spent the following twenty years at Capetown and Port Elizabeth. Anthony Fahy, also a native of Loughrea, lived at Buenos Aires from 1843 to 1871 as the unofficial chaplain and father-figure of thousands of Irish immigrants. Thanks to his advice, they kept away from the capital, and settled in the pampas and became highly successful ranchers. The statue of Fr. Fahy stands in Buenos Aires today. John Urquhart, born of Protestant parents in Galway, became a Dominican after his conversion, went to New York about 1840 and died twenty years later as a parish priest in Kingston, Ontario. Apart from these missionaries, the Galway community had two other interesting characters. One was Thomas Agnew who fell out with his brethren in 1842 and went into business making ropes in Galway. He was reconciled on his deathbed in 1871 by Fr. Thomas Taylor O.P. who is still revered and prayed to at Kilkenny. Bernard MacDermott was born in Killimor, Co. Galway, but was admitted to the Order at the Claddagh about 1794. Apart from a spell as rector of the college in Lisbon (1822-1829) he spent most of his time as a curate in Dublin and wrote a few books which would be better remembered had he put his name to them: *Captain Rock in Rome*, *Letters between John Bull, Jonathan and Eregenus*, and *Letters on the Reformation*.

In 1846, during the Famine, Fr. Thomas Rush built the 'Claddagh National Piscatory School' where six hundred children learned the arts of making nets and lace. This later became an ordinary National School which was entrusted to the diocesan clergy in 1892.

By the time of the Famine, the total number of Dominicans in Ireland had dropped to about fifty, but this was soon to change with the building of a novitiate-house at Tallaght, Co. Dublin, in 1856. It was the first proper novitiate and house of studies which the Irish Dominicans ever had on home soil, and the first master of novices was Fr. Tom Burke who had first seen the light of day in Kirwan's Lane off Cross Street in 1830. This pupil of the Patrician Brothers was to become the most famous preacher Ireland produced in the nineteenth century, unless one allows a claim on behalf of Fr. Theobald Mathew, the Capuchin apostle of temperance. Thanks to

the efforts of Fr. Stephen Glendon, whose 'memorial committee' began work in 1939, Fr. Tom Burke's statue now stands in his native city. It was erected in November 1948.

The present church was opened in 1891. The principal benefactors to pay for the constructions were a Mr. John Connolly of Liverpool (formerly of Fairhill) and Mrs. Monica MacDonagh of High Street. However, much of the money required was raised by a laybrother, Alphonsus O'Donoghoe, who spent seventeen months in the United States and came back with £1,500. Brother Alphonsus kept a diary during his travels and that diary is still preserved.

When Fr. William Stephans, later provincial, was prior of Galway he found the statue of Our Lady of Galway safe in the priory but rather neglected. The venerable statue was publicly restored to Our Lady's chapel in 1922 and the present mosaic background provided in 1924. During the 1930s, Fathers Stephen Glendon and Henry Gaffney made a new entrance to the priory from the west, laying down a path through the ancient graveyard to which the people of the Claddagh had been bringing their dead before ever the Dominicans came to Galway. About 1956, Fr. Terence O'Donoghue built the present two-storey tertiary chapel and sacristy to the specifications of Fr. John Heuston who is portrayed, with his sister Mother Bernard O.P. and Bishop Michael Browne, in its stained-glass window. The same bishop in 1971, turned the Claddagh into a parish under Dominican care, remarking that the Claddagh was 'the natural hinterland' of the priory. The first parish priest was Fr. Albert O'Beirne. Fr. Paudge Duggan knocked down the old priory of 1792, replaced it by the present building set closer to the harbour, and built the Dominican Hall on the site of the old house, between 1975 and 1980.

These notes may fittingly end with an even more recent and remarkable event: the election in 1983 of Fr. Louis Damian Byrne as master of the entire Dominican order. Like Tom Burke, Father Byrne is a Galwayman and a pupil of the Patrician Brothers.

Dominicans of Athenry: A Chronology 1241-1991

The first Dominican foundation in Connacht was in Athenry (1241) and it was from here a group of Dominicans came to Galway in 1488 to take over

the Church of St. Mary on the Hill in the west suburbs. Some years earlier they had made a foundation in Portumna (1426) and in Tombeola (1427) near Ballinahinch in Conemara. In the early seventeen hundreds they moved to a cabin some miles from Athenry, in Esker, where in 1723 they had to sell seven old silver chalices in order to survive. Later they built a church and priory in Esker and lived there until 1895 when the buildings were given to the Diocese. In



Athenry-born Fr. Brian Reynolds O.P. at Centenary Mass, 1991.
(Photograph: Frank Kennedy)

1901 they were taken over by the Redemptorists. Following is a chronology of the Athenry Dominican community, compiled by Professor Etienne Rynne, MRIA.

- 1241 Meiler de Bermingham, 2nd Baron of Athenry and founder of the town, invites the Dominicans to Athenry. The building of the priory begins with the co-operative sponsorship of both native Irish and colonizing Anglo-Normans.
- 1242 A provincial chapter of the Dominicans is held in Athenry.

- 1252 Meiler de Bermingham is killed in a battle near Cashel, Co. Tipperary, and is buried near the high altar in Athenry. Many of Meiler's descendents are also buried in the priory.
- 1261 The Church of Sts. Peter and Paul is completed, a simple rectangular building with cloisters on the south side.
- 1324 Extensions are made to the church. It is lengthened eastwards by twenty feet, the front is rebuilt with fine traceried window; and an aisle and transept, with entrance through its east wall, are added to the north.
- 1400 Pope Boniface IX grants an Indulgence to all who visit the church on certain feast-days, and contribute to its upkeep.
- 1423 The priory is accidentally burnt down. Pope Martin V grants an Indulgence to those who contribute to its repair. This Indulgence was renewed by Pope Eugenius in 1445.

Alterations made during this lengthy period of rebuilding include: a reduction in size of the east window (replacing its ornamental cusped tracery by the more severe switch-line variety), insertion of an altar alcove into the north wall of the choir, blocking of east doorway; raising of cloistral ambulatory, and the construction of a large central tower which necessitated strengthening of the aisle's columns and reducing its arches; under the tower was erected a roodscreen, of which there are only three other examples in Ireland.

- 1574 Having escaped suppression during the Dissolution of Henry VIII because it was 'situated amongst the Irishry ... (and) our saide sovereign lord shoulde have lyttle or no profit', Queen Elizabeth I granted the priory buildings and lands to the provost and burgesses of Athenry.
- 1627 Charles I grants the priory to four Galway merchants, to hold it for the king.
- 1638 The Dominicans re-establish themselves in Athenry. Some restoration work is started, including the addition of a sacristy and, perhaps, the hagiocope in the south wall.

- 1644 Because of favourable conditions resulting from the Confederation of Kilkenny (1642), the priory is erected into a University for the Dominican Order by decree of the General Chapter held in Rome.
- 1652 Cromwellian soldiers wreck the priory buildings.
- c. 1750 Cloistral buildings are demolished and a barracks is built there for a regiment of English soldiers, who are recorded as having broken or defaced nearly all the tombs and carved stones in the priory.
- 1850 The central tower falls.
- c. 1850 The soldiers are moved to a new barracks in Cross Street.
- c. 1890 The old barracks is demolished and replaced by the houses of Abbey Row. Shortly afterwards the handball alley was built against the west front of the priory.
- 1892 The priory is taken (November 19th) into State care as a national monument.
- 1991 A 750th anniversary Mass is concelebrated in the church (18 August) and a commemorative plaque is unveiled by Baron Jean de Bermingham. The plaque bears the dates 1241-1991, flanked by the arms of the Dominicans and the de Berminghams. It is inscribed as follows:
- IN COMMERMORATION OF THE
FOUNDATION OF THE DOMINI-
CAN PRIORY OF SAINTS PETER
AND PAUL THE HOLY SACRIFICE
OF THE MASS WAS AGAIN CELE-
BRATED WITH THE COMMUNITY
OF ATHENRY HERE, ON SUNDAY
18th AUGUST 1991. LAUDARE *
BENEDICERE * PRAEDICARE.



Baron Jean de Bermingham unveils the commemorative plaque.

(Photograph: G. Atkinson)

Bishop Barrett and King Richard III

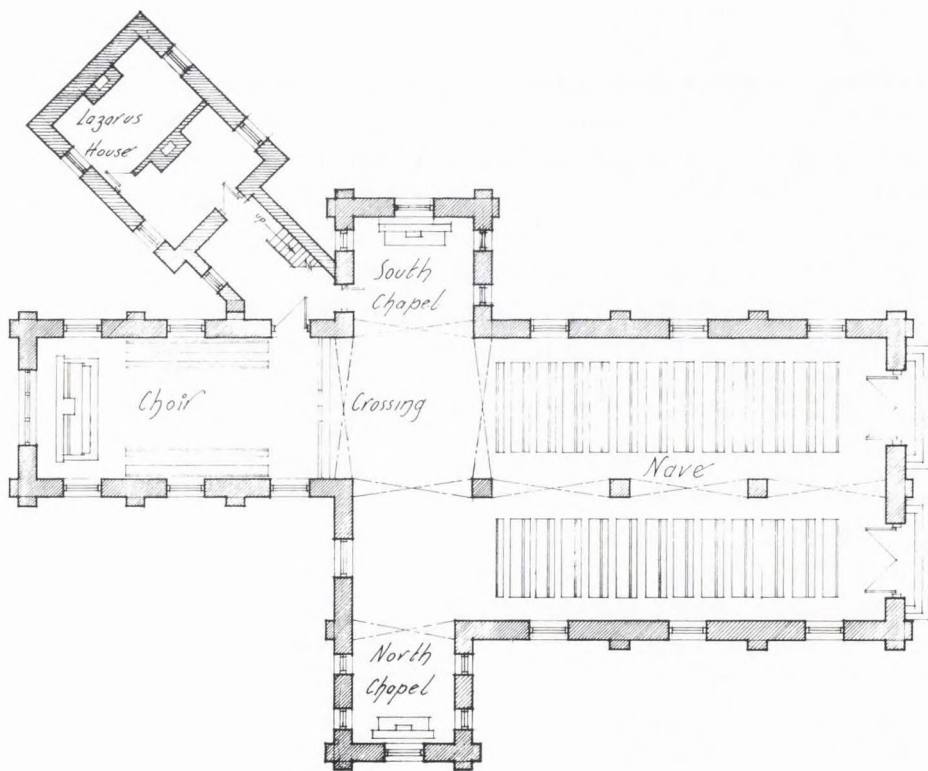
THOMAS P. O'NEILL

Shortly before the Dominicans came into possession of the former Premonstratensian Abbey in the Claddagh, Galway, great changes in both the civil and ecclesiastical administration of the city had taken place. In his short reign, King Richard III tried to establish contacts with branches of Norman families which had been alienated from or lost touch with the central administration. He obviously wished to be independent of the most powerful Irish lord, the Earl of Kildare, and to bring the Irish colony back to allegiance to the crown. The Wars of the Roses had weakened the monarchy and disrupted the Irish colony. Richard III decided to re-establish the royal authority in Ireland.

The King had near to hand in England an Irish adviser, a bishop of an Irish diocese, a descendant of a Norman family long settled in north Connacht, Thomas Barrett, Bishop of Annaghdown. Barrett, a native of Killala diocese in Mayo, had been appointed to Annaghdown diocese, which lay on both the east and west shores of Lough Corrib and included Galway city, in 1458 but failed to get possession of the see because Donatus O'Murphy, Archbishop of Tuam, claimed that Annaghdown had been subsumed in his archdiocese. When Barrett tried, in his early years, to appoint Odo O'Tierney as parish priest of St. Nicholas's parish in Galway his nominee was excommunicated by O'Murphy. A few years later, in 1464, Bishop Barrett had a dispute with Bernard O'Hogan, dean of Annaghdown, whom he sought to deprive of jurisdiction in the neighbouring parish of Ragoon. Archbishop O'Murphy had proved too powerful and Barrett gave up the struggle and went to England. There he acted as suffragan or assistant to bishops who from time to time were unable to devote time to their dioceses. About 1468, while acting in Exeter for Bishop George Nevill, Lord Chancellor of England, Barrett was sent by King Edward IV on a mission to Ireland. In Richard III's reign he was acting as suffragan for Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells. He is the man most likely to have brought Barrett to the attention of King Richard.

By September 1484 Thomas Barrett was in Ireland making contact with many of the surviving Irish families of Norman origin. Indeed he may have been there earlier and was possibly involved in the grant of Leixlip and Wicklow castles of Kildare as an opening ploy in his mission. If so its purpose must have been to indicate a softening of Richard's anger as shown eight months before. The King on 22 September issued a patent ordering all

mayors, sheriffs and other subjects in Ireland to give Barrett safe passage. He described the bishop as "our full wellbeloved counsellor". The bishop certainly was in Ireland by that date because letters of a couple of days previously mention his good reports on some Irish noblemen. There is evidence too that he was in contact with his old rival, the elderly and ill Archbishop of Tuam with whom he had crossed croziers a quarter of a century before. Perhaps the letters from the King were used to frighten the Archbishop on his deathbed, though admittedly getting the official documents from England to Galway in a matter of six days would have been well nigh impossible in those times. Certainly on 28 September Archbishop O'Murphy granted a unique right to Galway city. Not alone did he make the parish church of St. Nicholas a collegiate church independent of Tuam archdiocese but he granted the right of appointment of the warden and other priests to the city officers and council. His letter establishing this unprecedented ecclesiastical jurisdiction shows that he was aware of other royal plans for the city. He mentions the possibility of the senior officer being a mayor though the King did not issue a charter to that effect until 15



Plan of 1488 Church: reconstruction by Michael Conneely.

December following. This he must have learned from Barrett. The bishop had evened the score with the archbishop but it was not simply a personal victory. It was an achievement within the guidelines of a policy which the bishop was pursuing on behalf of the King in that it raised up an old Norman enclave.

The bishop was given letters from King Richard to deliver to Norman Irish lords in Munster, Leinster and Connacht. These were addressed to Lord Barry, John and Piers Power, Lord Barrett, Lord Roche and the Earl of Desmond in Munster; to Sir Alexander Plunkett, Sir Rowland Eustace, Sir Oliver Plunkett, the Baron of Delvin, Viscount Gormanston and the Earl of Kildare in Leinster; and to the lords Staunton, Nangle, Exeter, Bermingham and Barrett, the bishop's kinsman, in Connacht. No specific letter was addressed to any surviving family of the early colony in Ulster but that province was not omitted from the royal plans for Bishop Barrett had special instruction in its regard.

The Earl of Kildare was to be told that the King's interest in writing to him at that time lay in trying to get back possession of his inheritance as heir to the Earls of Ulster. This earldom had belonged to the de Burgo earl in 1333, through the female line to Edward III who married a de Burgo descendant. Richard III's claim to the earldom of Ulster arose from his descent from Edward II through the Mortimer family. It was an interesting and important claim which was later revived by the Tudors and by Charles I. Under it, ownership of most of Connacht and of Ulster would have been vested in the monarchs of England. Since Ulster was in 1484 in the hands of Irish chieftains, Richard requested that Kildare use his good offices with 'the great O'Neill', Conn Mór O'Neill, who was married to the earl's sister, to induce him to accept the King's rights as owner of the great part of Ulster which O'Neill held. Kildare's kinship by marriage with O'Neill made him, in the eyes of Richard, an ideal intermediary to treat with that chieftain.

The other Ulster chieftain to be approached was Hugh Roe O'Donnell of the western part of the province. Since he was at war with O'Neill the King felt that the approach to him should be made not by Kildare but by Bishop Barrett. If, however, Barrett succeeded in enticing O'Donnell to accept the King's authority Kildare was ordered to receive him and to cast aside 'all manner of partiality' which he might have for his brother-in-law Conn O'Neill, in treating with him. Indeed he was instructed to follow the advice of the bishop and to give support to those whose surrender would soonest give the King possession of the property of the earldom of Ulster. Barrett had no instructions to approach any native Irish lord other than O'Donnell but apparently he had explicit directions from the King on how to obtain that

chieftain's allegiance. What these were is not known. Even Kildare was to be informed of them only by word of mouth.

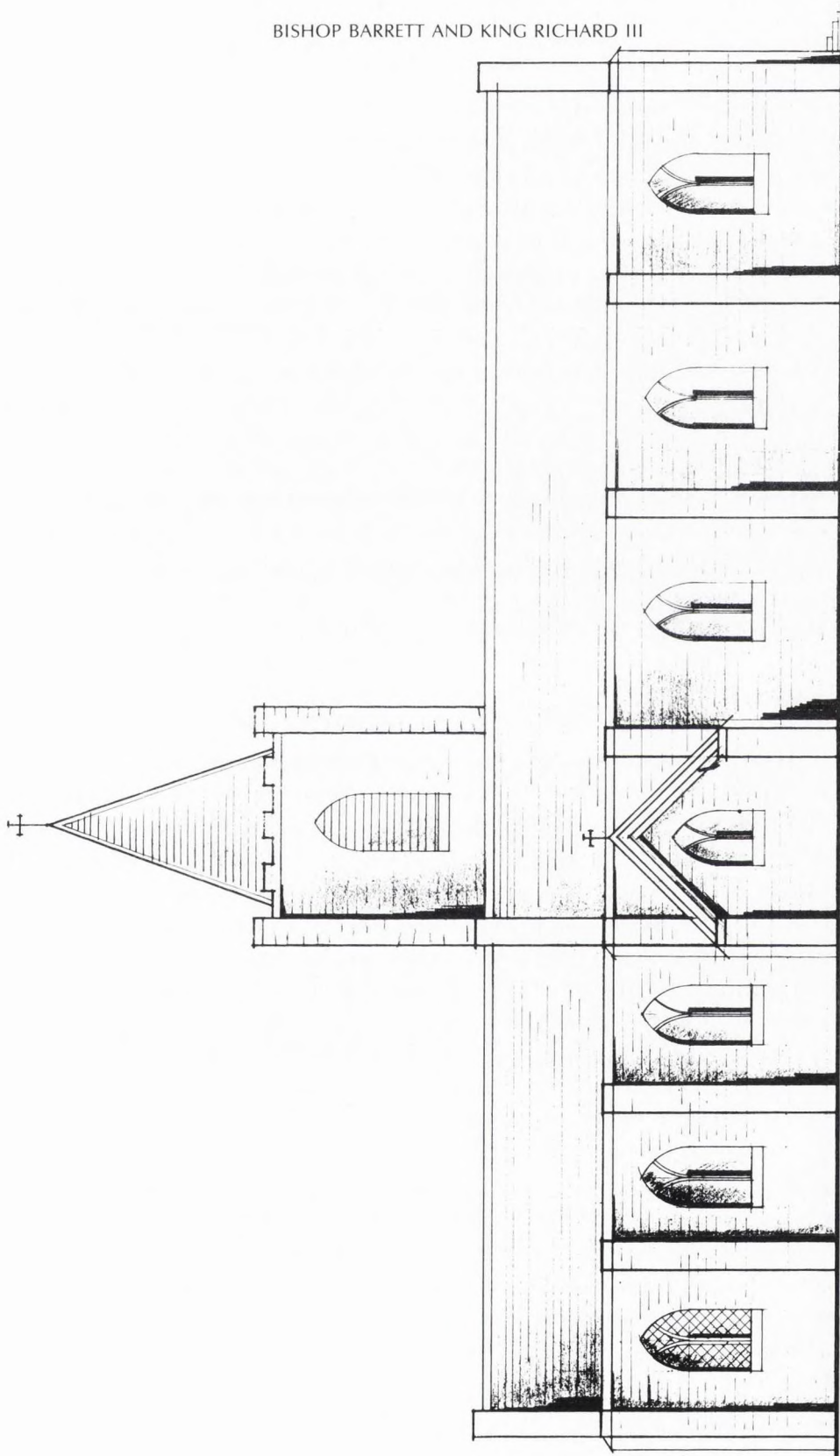
Besides the above letters Barrett was armed with others. A copy of that addressed to each of the Norman lords in Connacht and to Lords Barrett and Roche in Munster was not addressed to any particular individual. It could be used, it would seem, in dealing with persons who might be worth approaching who 'inhabited the extreme parts', were 'enemies of the wild Irish' and 'daily keep war with them'. The second letter which was not directed to a specific recipient is recorded as being intended for 'others'. In fact three copies of this letter were given to Barrett. It appears to have been intended for the various de Burgo families in Connacht. It states, 'ye be descended of the ancient blood and lineage of our ancestors in Ulster', which must refer to the two major de Burgo families or to some of their offshoots who adopted surnames such as Jennings, MacDavie and MacUgo. It certainly did not refer to the O'Neills or O'Donnells. The King was apparently trying to win the loyalty of the junior de Burgo families while retaining his own rights as the successor to the senior branch, the Earls of Ulster. Indeed the charter which he was to issue to Galway was an assertion of these rights against other de Burgos who were not to enter the city without permission of the mayor.

A most interesting aspect of Barrett's mission is that it was directed almost entirely to the Norman-Irish settlers, the exception being O'Donnell and, through Kildare, O'Neill. It was aimed deliberately at bringing back to their allegiance families which had for years, even for generations, been cut off from the centre of Norman administration in Dublin. Also intriguing is the fact that Richard III was looking beyond the Pale and viewing the possibility of bringing the whole island of Ireland under his control. It was years since any English King had thought in such terms. Reconquest was what was envisaged, a reconquest based on the remnants of the earlier Norman colony.

In each of the letters from the King given to Bishop Barrett to deliver, apart from that directed to the Earl of Kildare, emphasis was laid on the fact that the bishop had reported of the true faith, fealty and good demeanor and so on of the recipients. They were complimented and thanked for their allegiance which in general the King requested them to continue to give. In return Richard would be to them and to their kinsmen a good and gracious sovereign in all their problems. There was a more than implicit suggestion that the aid of the King was available to them if they listened to the more detailed statement which the bishop would make to them with royal authority. All of this was to ensure a good hearing for Barrett so that he could deliver himself of the King's 'further mind and pleasure' and indeed show it to them in writing.

To two people in particular Richard held out more specific promises. He had learned through Barrett that Barry in Munster had felt a grievance over the loss of property in Wales to which he felt entitled by inheritance. He was assured by the King: 'if you . . . shall lust to make diligence for your recovery thereof' under the laws, the King would open the records to help in the case. To the Earl of Desmond he went further still. The winning of the loyalty of that nobleman was perhaps Richard's greatest aim in his Irish plans. The power of the FitzGerald of Desmond was second only to that of their kinsmen of Kildare. Before the complete hegemony of the Earls of Kildare began in 1470 the Desmonds had been equally powerful and had acted as King's deputy for many years. This had ended with the execution of the seventh earl in Drogheda in 1458, the circumstances of which had shocked both Irish and Norman-Irish at the time. As a result the son of the executed earl cut his links with the English colony, cast off English ways and adopted Irish manners of living. In his letter to Desmond, Richard III paid tribute to the earl's highly revered father whose loyalty to his own father, Richard, Duke of York, and to Edward IV were reasons why he wished to accept James, the present earl, into singular favour and grace. The King sent with the letter a collar of gold and English apparel, gowns of cloth of gold and of velvet lined with satin or damask, doublets and hose in scarlet, violet and black and headgear to match. If these did not ensure that James should cast aside Irish fashions at once, at least he would be fittingly dressed for the visit to the royal court which the King suggested was in the offing. Indeed he would be well rigged out for the marriage which the King was planning for him.

Bishop Barrett was instructed to reinforce the King's line of approach to Desmond. He was to go beyond expressing sorrow at the way the earl's father had been 'extorciously slain and murdered by colour of the laws' and to say that the King understood how Desmond felt for his own brother, the Duke of Clarence; and other near kinsmen and great friends had been similarly slain. An oath of allegiance was to be administered to Desmond by the bishop in which the earl would be committed to Richard's cause in life and even to death against all his enemies. The wife which the King would choose for him would be "of such noble blood as shall redound to his weal and honour'. The clothing which the bishop was to present was to be a token of rejecting Irish array and accepting English fashion. Indeed he was to be encouraged to follow any change that English styles might in future dictate. The collar of gold devised for the earl was to be presented by the bishop on the King's behalf with some pomp and ceremony, as the instructions put it 'in most convenient place and honourable presence'. The earl was to be assured that in no way would the church be wronged by Richard and



Reconstruction, by Michael Conneely, of Church of St. Mary on the Hill, based on 1651 surveyors' report.

that the King's subjects would be protected. The earl had a part to play in this by keeping the highways safe so that his reputation would be an honoured one even in the realm of England.

The mixture of flattery, gifts, assurance, compassion, sympathy and promises was attractive. However we do not know exactly how it was received by the earl. Even if he did not accept a wife of the King's choosing it appears that he responded favourably. This may be inferred from the fact that early in 1485 Richard III issued a new charter for the town of Youghal in which the earl's father, shortly before his death in 1468, had established a collegiate church. Indeed it is interesting that, in dealing with Desmond, the King added a charter to a pre-existing ecclesiastical jurisdiction while in Galway the ecclesiastical and civil arrangements were made almost at the same time and were more closely interrelated. In the longer term the allegiance of the Desmonds to the House of York appears to have been assured as may be seen in 1487 and 1491 when they supported Lambert Semnel and Perkin Warbeck, the supposed Yorkist pretenders, against Henry VII.

Restoring the Desmond FitzGerald to favour with the King could in the long term have posed a threat to the hegemony of the house of Kildare. With the Earls of Ormond in exile and the Desmonds in disgrace there was no senior feudal family to challenge Kildare. We do not know how the Great Earl reacted to the overtures being made by Bishop Barrett. The rehabilitation of the Desmonds would give Richard III an alternative to Kildare in his choice of Irish deputy, but there was no immediate danger and Kildare's fears were assuaged by the fact that the bishop brought for him a new warrant of appointment as deputy. The King's lieutenant of Ireland was to be the nephew of King Richard, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln. Since Lincoln, as recently appointed President of a Council of the North of England, would be fully occupied there Kildare need fear no more interference from him than from the child Prince of Wales. While Kildare may have been disappointed at not being given the deputyship for a specific term, at least his position had not been immediately worsened in any way. This would have been especially reassuring to the deputy in view of the acid tone of the King's letter to Kildare and of the instructions given to Bishop Barrett on what Richard desired of him in September 1484, while not tart was remarkably formal and cold when compared with the letters to Desmond and the other lords which the bishop carried. Indeed Kildare was neither flattered nor cajoled. He was given orders especially in regard to the King's claim to the inheritance of the earldom of Ulster. One can sense that the King had not forgotten the episode of the chancellorship but was willing to overlook it.

In this mission to Barrett and in the letters and instructions which were

issued for him in the last ten days of September 1484 one sees a King with a general perspective of Ireland much closer to that of his Tudor successors than of his immediate predecessors. The diplomatic skill of his approach was based on knowledge gleaned not from the lord deputy but from the enquiries of the bishop. One is, in fact, tempted to see the hand of Barrett not only in the provision of that information but even in the overall vision of the policy adopted. The King presents an image of himself throughout as a monarch caring of his subjects. The timing of the initiative would appear to have been almost fortuitous but it nevertheless was appropriate. It occurred just as Richard had made a three-year peace agreement with James III of Scotland and a marriage arrangement between his niece and the son of the Scottish King. Sanitization of Ireland against taint of sympathy with Richard's greatest rival, Henry Tudor, together with the Scottish treaty would strengthen the King's uneasy seat on the English throne.

One aspect of Barrett's activity in Ireland was the manner in which he linked ecclesiastical and civil affairs. In Galway he accomplished this through the royal charter establishing the mayoralty and the creation of the wardenship in which the patronage rested with the mayor and burgesses. It was a unique arrangement. In Athenry he appears to have used his power to get a collegiate church erected under the patronage of the local potentate, Lord Bermingham, to whom he carried a letter from the King. Youghal already had a collegiate church under the patronage of the Earls of Desmond. On 17 May 1484 Richard III issued a charter for that town, something almost certainly done as a result of Barrett's mission for it would have pleased the Earl of Desmond whose family were interred there.

Ecclesiastical promotions in the reign of Richard III in Ireland show some signs, too, of efforts to strengthen, where possible, the power of members of the families of colonists. The appointments of Thomas Purcell to Waterford and Lismore, Thomas FitzRichard to Killala, John de Courcy to Kilmore and Walter Fitzsimons to the archbishopric of Dublin could have been the result of deliberate policy. However a number of bishops from Irish families were in dioceses where the King's writ did not run. Indeed the Kilmore appointment ran into difficulties as Niall Mac Seamus Mac Mathghamhna was appointed to that see by Rome on the same day as it nominated de Courcy. The latter never got possession of the diocese. The most clearcut case of an appointment which fitted in with Barrett's mission and interests in Ireland was that of William Joyce as archbishop of Tuam. His antecedents went back to the thirteenth century Norman settlement in Connacht. He spent at least part of his priestly life in England as vicar of Chichester. It is probably not without significance that in 1477, he was resident there. The document of presentation of Joyce to Tuam was issued in Rome on the same

day, 16 May 1485, as that of Langton's successor in St. David's and a letter was dispatched to Richard III informing him of both appointments.

As Archbishop, Joyce was to strengthen the recently established wardenship of Galway by adding to it the parishes of Oranmore and Maree, a step which was important in helping it to survive. More significant, however, was the fact that his appointment reversed the control which the more truly Irish O'Murphy had exercised for three decades. It appears to fit in with an overall policy on the part of the King to broaden the base of his support. Just as he was casting around desperately for support in England he was doing somewhat the same in Ireland. The appointment of Joyce in Tuam coincided with the issuing of a royal charter enhancing the status of the city of Dublin.

In August 1485 the results of Richard III's diplomacy in Ireland and in England were tested on Bosworth field. As far as Ireland was concerned the King could, had he had the time on that gory field, have congratulated himself on the fact that Bishop Barrett's mission had at least ensured that no Irish lord was ranged against him in the army of Henry Tudor. On the other hand neither was any contingent from Ireland ranged on his side. Since he lost the throne and his life in that battle it is difficult to assess the effect of his policies. A reign of just over two years was too short to have changed Irish history but he and Bishop Barrett had made substantial changes in Galway.

The wardenship of the city was already expanding within three years of Richard III's death and the power of the old Norman families in the city was growing. So too was their wealth. The Lynch family was by that stage the pre-eminent one in the town. Dominicans were granted the old abbey in the Claddagh by a brief of Pope Innocent VIII dated 4 December 1488. According to this document it was issued at the request of the citizens of Galway. Noticably the site was outside the city walls as was the site granted to the Franciscans a century before. So too was to be the place where the Augustinians were established in 1508. One wonders was this because the wardenship wished to have an exclusive grip on the main centre while the mendicant friars served those outside the walls who had been described in 1484 as 'the mountainous and wild people'. The Dominicans made their home then in the Claddagh and five hundred years later they are still there and still serving their people.

Letter of Pope Innocent VIII

4 December 1488

‘To the Dean of the Church of Annaghdown and William Omullarchlyn and William Machay, canons of the same, mandate in favour of the inhabitants of the town of Galwye, d(iocese) Annaghdown.

‘The Pope has learned that the chapel of St. Mary *de colle* – which is without cure – outside and near the said town, of an annual value not exceeding one mark sterling, is vacant and has been for so long that there is no certain knowledge of the manner of its voidance, and as the recent petition of the said inhabitants stated, they hoped that if professed members of the Order of Friars Preachers, for whom they have a special affection, had a house in the said town or outside and near it, as a suitable dwelling for a prior and a number of brothers of the said order, the said inhabitants, by the exemplary life of the prior and brothers for the time being in the said house, by the constant and devout celebration of divine rites, by the hearing of confessions, by the preaching of the word of God and by exhortation to a good life, would more easily win salvation.

‘The said petition further stated that even if the said chapel, as some allege, is in the collation or presentation or otherwise in the disposition of the abbot and convent of the monastery of Holy Trinity, OPrem, d(iocese) Tuam, it has for quite a long time been detained by various secular clerics.

‘At the supplication therefore of the said inhabitants the Pope orders the above three, or two or one of them, to summon the said abbot and convent and others concerned, and if they find the facts to be as stated, to grant the chapel to the said order and to the prior provincial and brothers of the Irish province on its behalf, and to give them a licence to have a house built there, with a bell tower, bell, cemetery, dormitory, refectory, cloister, orchard, gardens and other necessary offices, to receive it for their use and dwelling forever and to live there, saving otherwise the right of the parish church, of the said monastery and any other, inducting the prior and brothers etc., having removed any unlawful detainer. Notwithstanding Boniface VIII’s prohibition on friars of the said or other mendicant orders receiving new dwelling places without a special licence of the apostolic see, making special and express mention of the said prohibition. With indult that in the event of the chapel’s being granted and the licence’s being given, the said house, prior and brothers for the time being dwelling there may enjoy for the future all privileges, graces, favours, grants and indults granted to other houses of the said order’.

The Claddagh Village

Older residents of the Claddagh still refer to it as 'The Village', a throw-back to the years when it was a separate, fishing village outside Galway city. It was to this village that the Dominicans came, at the invitation of the citizens of Galway, in 1488.

There is a good description of the Claddagh in Hardiman's *History of Galway* (1820), and in *Cladach na Gaillimhe*, by Domhnall O Caoimh (*Galvia*, 1959, pp.4-14). The following paragraphs are based mainly on these sources.

The name Claddagh is derived from the Irish word 'Cladach', meaning 'shore' or 'sea-shore'. Hardiman notes (p.293) that it is a 'very ancient village, and, according to tradition, was the first residence of the settlers in this quarter; a circumstance not very unlikely, from its contiguity to the bay, and consequent convenience for the purpose of fishing, which appears to have been their original occupation'.

The village was very much a self-governing community. The head, called a mayor, ruled according to accepted customs, arbitrated on fishing disputes, and his decisions were, as Hardiman said (p.293) 'so decisive, and so much respected, that the parties are seldom known to carry their differences before a legal tribunal, or to trouble the civil magistrates'.

The mayor was elected each year on the feast of the Nativity of St. John, June 24th (O Caoimh, p.4). His boat was different from the others in that it carried white sail, and colours on the mast, so that it could be seen easily at sea.

It was the mayor who led the fleet out from the Claddagh harbour. Before they sailed at the beginning of the herring season, the boats were blessed by a Dominican on the pier. Most probably this was the origin of the annual Blessing of the Bay, a tradition that has survived to the present day. Hardiman (p.294) writes of 500 'large and small' boats sailing into the bay. Figures given in the *Report of the Commission into the state of Irish Fisheries* (1836) are more modest: 105 hookers and 80 rowing boats in the Claddagh fleet. Whichever figure is more accurate, we can easily accept Hardiman's description of the sailing out together of the Claddagh boats led by their mayor: 'The beauty of this sight is inconceivable, and when viewed from one of the heights of the town is perhaps one of the most gratifying that can be imagined'.

On the arrival at the fishing grounds, the mayor gives the signal for nets to be lowered, and each boat is then left to fish as best it can. For nourishment during what might be an absence of several days, the fishermen had potatoes, oatmeal cakes, water and the making of a fire. Fishing usually took place



The Claddagh

Pictorial Isometric Projection

Ancient Fishing Village (Chronological Composite)

Actual Layout circa 1838 - 1934

Drawn and hand painted (mixed media) by: *M. A. Conneely*

Published by: M. A. Conneely, 20 Frenchville, Grattan Rd., Galway, Ireland. Copyright © 1987.

For list of inhabitants refer to

'Vanishing Galway' by Paul O'Dowd



in Galway bay, out to Aran Island, but occasionally the boats sailed along the west coast, north as far as Sligo and south to the Shannon. The crew normally consisted of six.

Before going to sea considerable time had been spent in preparation, repairing nets and sails, and getting bait for the lines. Not surprisingly, as Hardiman has noted, the return of the fishermen 'especially if heavily laden, is joyfully hailed by their wives and children, who meet them on the shore'. Hardiman adds: 'The fish instantly becomes the property of the women, (the men after landing never troubling themselves further about it), and they dispose of it to a poorer class of fish-women, who retail it at market' (p.293). The women, he said, 'possess unlimited control over their husbands, the produce of whose labours they exclusively manage, allowing them little more money than suffices to keep their boats in repair: but they have the policy, at the same time, to keep them plentifully supplied with their usual luxuries, whiskey, brandy and tobacco, of which they themselves also liberally partake' (p.294). According to O Caoimh, however, the men retained possession of the herrings, leaving the women to dispose of the other fish.

On shore the fish was divided in equal shares among the fishermen, with the owner of the boat getting an extra share. According to evidence given to the Commission of Inquiry into the State of Irish Fisheries (1836), and quoted by O Caoimh, each boat on average would catch 10,000 herrings in a night, and on one occasion John King of the Claddagh caught 40,000.

The Claddagh fishermen controlled fishing in Galway bay. This seems to have been generally accepted in Connemara. Birds flying overhead indicated the arrival of the shoals of fish and two or three boats from the Claddagh would be sent out to protect them from any marauder until the arrival of the Claddagh fleet under their mayor. The patrol had power, if others were fishing, to break their nets or confiscate their boats.

Outside the fishing season, the Claddagh men used their boats to gather sea-weed for sale to farmers, or to bring turf from Connemara into the city.

Boats, sails, nets and fishing lines were all made in the Village, and women had a big share in this work. Before the eighteen hundreds, sails were made on the floor of the Dominican church, the only large space available. This use of the church is a symbol of the friendship that has existed for over five centuries between the Claddagh 'villagers' and the Dominicans in the Church of St. Mary on the Hill.

Four Claddagh Churches: 1488, 1669, 1800/1815, 1891

The present Church of St. Mary on the Hill, built in 1891, is the third replacement of the original church given to the Dominicans in 1488.

The first church was demolished in 1651, by agreement between the Mayor of Galway and the Prior of the Dominicans. There is a view of this church in the great map of Galway made in 1651, but more detail has survived in a document drawn up in 1651 when the Mayor and Prior Pierce Butler agreed to the demolition of the church, with a promise from the city to rebuild it when peace would be restored. (This document is quoted in *West or H-lar Connaught* (1684) by Roderic O'Flaherty, edited by Hardiman (1846), p.275).

The church was about seventy feet long, made of hewed stone and with a steeple. It contained a chapel and choir. The body of the church had 'three windows of three lights and two gables of three lights'. There were windows also in the chapel, 'three windows of three lights and one gable of three lights', and in the choir, 'one gable of five lights in the pinicle of the queere, one gable of two lights in the side of the queere, six windows of one light in the north side of the queere, and one window of two lights in the south side'.

There was also a 'lazorous house' – a quarantine for infectious diseases – twenty seven feet long, twenty feet broad and eighteen feet high, with two chimneys and six windows.

The document ends on a human note, a fear that stones of the demolished church might be removed from the site: 'If any of the said battlement or hued stones be brought home for the use of St. Nicholas' Church, payment or satisfaction is to be made to the said religious order'.

Roderic O'Flaherty (*West or H-lar Connaught*, pp.39,40) has recorded the date of the erection of the second Church of Our Lady on the Hill (1669) and the name of the Prior, Fr. Daniel Nolan, who built it. O'Flaherty described it as 'a large chappel' and covered with brick. In March 1673, St. Oliver Plunkett said 'it is the most ornate church in the whole country'.

Less than thirty years later (1698) the Claddagh Dominican community was sent into exile. They returned quietly early in the seventeen-hundreds and from expenditures recorded in the Bursar's Account Book (1727-1738) we get glimpses of the church. In 1727, for example, lime was bought for the 'chappell' and the wall of 'the small garden'. Three panes of glass were obtained for the chapel window and there were several purchases of thatch, presumably for the church roof.

There was also a steeple on the church, and a cross, needing repair in October 1729, on the 'chapple pennicle'.

A few more details are provided in a report by the sheriffs who searched the priory in 1730. They found 'a large chapel with a gallery, some forms and an altar piece, defaced'. The priory had 'ten chambers and eight beds, wherein, they believe, the friars belonging to the said friary usually lay'. The priory was 'very old', but some repairs had lately been made.

The third Church of St. Mary on the Hill was built between 1800 and 1815. A new priory had been built in 1792, by Fr. James French who also built the new church. It was a slated building, replacing the old thatched chapel but on the same site. According to Fr. Luke Taheny, O.P. (in letters to Fr. Norbert Murray, O.P., Sligo) the basic work on the priory and chapel was done during the priorship of Fr. Bernard Mullany (1796-1800), but there was a long delay (to 1815) in finishing it. Fr. French presented the tabernacle in 1813, and the first high Mass was sung in the new chapel on 4 August 1815.

Peadar O'Dowd, in *Old and New Galway* (p.93), describes it as being '100 feet long, 28 feet broad, with a precious gallery and a well-toned organ', and he says the church was erected 'a little further down the hill'.

Finally, in 1891, the fourth Church of St. Mary on the Hill, the present church, was opened close to the waterfront.

Subsequent changes in the 1891 church have been noted in *Galway Dominicans: A Chronology 1241-1991*. However, one aspect of the church has not changed since 1488; it is still very much the 'Church of St. Mary on the Hill'. The centuries-old statue of Our Lady of Galway is on a side altar in the church. The background is a mosaic of a chapel on a hill, overlooking a boat tossed in the waves of Galway bay, with a young Claddagh man and woman watching in prayer.

Four churches of Our Lady on the Hill, but one theme. To quote St. Bernard of Clairvaux: 'Among the storms and tempests of life . . . in danger, in difficulty, in doubt, think of Mary, call upon Mary'.

Galway City : 1600-1650

'It may be necessary to observe here, that during the first half of the seventeenth century, that town (Galway) was the most distinguished place in Ireland, next to Dublin; which, in some respects, it surpassed, particularly in its commercial relations. Some have even gone so far as to assert, that if in the beginning Galway had become the capital of Ireland, instead of Dublin, the country in general would at the present day be far more advanced than it is, in prosperity and improvement. In the ancient school and college of St. Nicholas, many learned men were educated. Here Mac Firbis, O'Flaherty, Lynch, Francis Browne, Patrick Darcy, the celebrated lawyer, Sir Richard Blake, Dr. Kirwan, R.C. bishop of Killala, Edmund de Burgo, Peter French, John O'Heyne, and other persons of distinction frequently assembled. And here were planned and partly executed, some of those learned works which have ever since ranked among the most valuable on Irish history'.



City walls and St. Mary's Church.

(Photograph: Farrells)

Roderic O'Flaherty, *West or Hlar Connaught* (1684), edited by James Hardiman (1846), p.421.

Pictures, Engravings, Sacred Vessels St. Mary on the Hill Priory

Listed in House Chronicle July 1st 1924

PICTURES, ENGRAVINGS

1. Life size painting of *Michael Ophovius*, O.P., by Reubens. He was confessor of Reubens, Provincial of the Netherlands and afterwards bishop. The original, painted by Reubens, is at the Hague picture gallery. This replica, painted after he was bishop, was probably either painted by Reubens himself or under his immediate supervision. It was presented to the House by Captain Lambert.

The House Chronicle (5 Dec 1953) has the following entry:
'Last evening an old Claddagh lady, Mrs. Lydon (died 19.1.54), gave the Prior (Fr. T. O'Donoghue) the following interesting information re the valuable oil painting (entitled) "Most Rev. Dr. Ophovius, Provincial and Bishop in the Netherlands. He was confessor to Reubens, by whom or by one of whose pupils, the portrait was painted". The "Notes on the Pictures" in the refectory say *This picture was presented by Captain Lambert* and give the impression that the Capt. was a friend of the community'.

Mrs. Lydon explained that her father-in-law, 'a very good, simple, but uneducated Catholic', worked for Captain Lambert at Taylor's Hill. He was constantly teasing the old man about the Catholic Church and its teaching. The old man asked his confessor, a Dominican at the Claddagh, for advice. The account in the House Chronicle continues:

'The Father told him to do nothing. But when the Capt. again attacked him, to ask quietly if, in the past, any of the Captain's family were Catholics. The old man did so adding "where did that painting of the Dominican Father in the drawing room come from?" (The Dominican Father Confessor knew of this painting from the old man). Lambert was so annoyed by the question that he told the old man to take the picture and bring it to the Claddagh. Hence its presence here. Having told Fr. Prior the story,

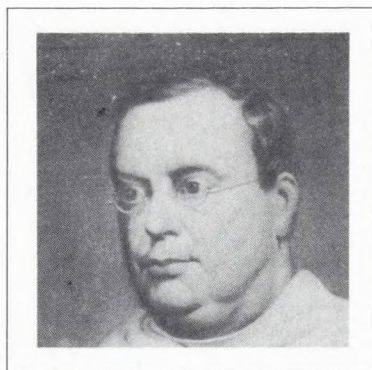
Mrs. Lydon asked if by any chance we still had the picture. Fr. Prior brought her to the refectory. She at once recognised the picture she had seen when a young girl'.

2. Small oil painting on an oak plaque of the *Madonna and Child*. Identified by the Director of the National Gallery, Dublin, as a painting by the lesser masters of the school of Bruges, a school which flourished at the end of the 14th and the beginning of 15th century.
3. Very fine painting of *Our Lady giving the Rosary to St. Dominic*, surrounded by several saints.
4. Very fine portrait in oils of the Most Rev. Dr. French, O.P., who built our present house, was the last warden of Galway, built the present pro-Cathedral, and was afterwards Bishop of Kilmacduagh.

The house Chronicle (p.259a) has a letter (dated 27 Feb. 1946) from Fr. C. J. Kearns to the Prior (L. H. McGauran) which disagrees with this. Fr. Kearns writes: 'The report that we had it (Warden French's baptismal certificate) in Tallaght archives is due to a confusion, which Fr. Coleman seems to have originated, between Dr. French the Warden, and Fr. James French, Prior of the West Convent for about 30 years on and off at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th. There was a bundle of documents in the archives here labelled, in Fr. Coleman's handwriting, "Documents relating to Dr. French, Warden of Galway". Among them was a baptismal certificate. But on examination all the documents without exception prove to refer *not* to Dr. French but to Fr. James French. For your information I append a copy of the baptismal certificate. Fr. James deserves well of the West Convent and his name should be kept alive. Personally, for reasons which seem to me fairly sound, it is my belief that the portrait in the parlour in the West is Fr. James's, not the Warden's. We have a portrait here in Tallaght which Fr. Reg. Walsh claimed to be the Warden's'.

5. Beautiful copy of the picture of *Our Lady of Perseverance*. The original is in Rome. This copy was bought by Fr. Folan from Captain Lambert for £40.
6. The *Nativity*, very small Italian painting in oak.
7. *Our Lord and Judas*.

8. *Head of our Blessed Lady* with hands joined. A picture brought from Rome by Fr. Tom Burke.
9. Copy of the *Salvator Mundi* by Carlo Dolci. The original is in San Clemente.
10. Copy of Raphael's *Madonna della Sedilia*.
- 11-17. By Mr. O'Malley, a Galway artist:
 Father Tom Burke, O.P.
 Father Rushe, O.P.
 Father Folan, O.P.
 Fr. Folan and Claddagh boy
 Père Jandel, Master General O.P.
 Luke Wadding, O.F.M. (This was presented in 1934 to the Franciscan Fathers for their new College of St. Anthony in Galway.)
 St. Mary Magdalene (copied from painting in the old Church and now lost).
18. Steel engraving *The Transfiguration*.
19. Steel engraving *Madonna and Child*.
20. Four engravings: Royal Irish Art Union.



Fr. Rushe, builder of Piscatory School, 1846.

(Painting by O'Malley)

SACRED VESSELS

Chalices

Date	Inscription
1634	Joan French for the use of her son Fr. Gregory French O.P.
1639	Fr. Anthony Kennedy for the Convent of Lorrha
1639	Patrick Bodkin and Mary French
1640	Donagh Halorain and his wife Mary for the Convent of Blessed Mary of Galway
1671	Mary Lynch for the soul of her son Thomas Browne
1707	Steepe (?) Skeritt and Maria Blake for Our Lady of ye West of Galway
1722	Richard Butler and his wife Cecily Lynch
1725	Friar John of St. Thomas & (?) Athenry Convent

1739	Friar Manuel of Valladolid (gift of the Grandmother of the Misses Redington). The pearls and diamonds and heavy gilding are the gift of John Connolly of the Claddagh. The decoration cost him £150.
?	Walter Burke, his wife etc(?)
No date	Thomas Skeritt and Mary Lynch
No date	F.C.B.
1904	Fr. Houlihan, O.P., from Rosary Confraternity, Cork

Monstrances one small silver one (no date)

one large gilt one

Pyxes a small one for Benediction, not suited to any of our monstrances

five sick call pyxes, one dated 1846

Silver cruets a pair of very small ones mentioned in the 1698 document

Thuribles one silver thurible 'The Frs of West Galway are desired to pray for ye givers Patrk French of Cloagh, Ballimore, and his wife Catherine alias Kirwan 1753'

one silver Thurible of somewhat similar design, no date.

Ciboria one silver ciborium, "The gift of Fr James F French, O.P. 1828"
one silver gilt ciborium, gift of Patrick Darsye

A later chronicler inserted the following note: In December 1933 the Rosary Confraternity presented a large silver ciborium which cost £20 and a Benediction Throne for the Sacrament which cost £8 15 0.

Crowns silver crown for Our Lady dated 1683, and the new crown, silver gilt, procured recently.

Crucifix mention should be made of a large oak Crucifix which hangs in the Refectory.

Galway Dominican Nuns: A Chronology 1644 – 1988

A century and a half after their arrival in the West Convent, the Dominican Fathers were joined in Galway (1644) by Dominican Nuns. Following is a chronology of the Dominican Nuns, compiled by Sr. Rose O'Neill, O.P., Taylor's Hill Convent.

- 1644 A monastery of Dominican Nuns is established in Galway. The first members were all Galwegians and they were trained by the Fathers of the West Convent.

- 1647 Papal Nuncio, John Baptist Rinuccini, approves the foundation of the monastery and gives it the title of Jesus and Mary.

- 1651 The fourteen Dominican Nuns are driven into exile. Fr. Gregory French goes with them to Spain and he finds refuge for them in Spanish monasteries.

- 1686 Two Sisters, Julian Nolan and Mary Lynch, return from Bilbao and John Kirwan gives them his house in Kirwan's Lane, Cross Street. They are joined by novices and so their monastery in Galway is re-established.

- 1698 Again the Nuns are expelled from the city but they decide to remain in Galway. They scatter and find temporary shelter with relatives.

- 1717 Because of intense persecution in the west of Ireland, the Dominican Provincial encourages eight Nuns to make a foundation in Dublin. Sr. Catherine Plunkett goes to Belgium and returns in 1722 to found Siena Convent, Drogheda.

- 1845 The Nuns move from Kirwan's Lane, to their present home on Taylor's Hill.

- 1858 With the help of Nuns from Drogheda, a day school is opened on Taylor's Hill, and a boarding school in 1859.

- 1944 The Nuns celebrate the third centenary of their foundation. They

receive an illuminated address from the Mayor and Corporation at a formal meeting of Galway Corporation held in the Convent library.

- 1968 Three Galway Nuns, Srs. Catherine de Ricci O'Connor, Evangelist Dundon, and Margaret Kirby, leave Ireland for Argentina and take over the Keating Institute in the centre of Buenos Aires. (Prioress, Sr. Joseph O'Dea). The Keating had been founded in the nineteenth century for the education of the daughters of Irish immigrants. The Irish Dominican Sisters continued in the Keating Institute until January 1982.
- 1971 The Taylor's Hill community joins the Irish Congregation of Dominican Sisters, Cabra. The Cabra community traces its foundation to Galway Nuns who went to Dublin in 1717. This amalgamation was in the nature of a home-coming.
- 1968-88 The Argentine mission founded by the Galway Dominican Sisters is extended, to Parana (1975) in the parish in the care of the Irish Dominican Fathers, to Moreno (1982), where a novitiate was opened in 1987, to Solari (1982), and to José C. Paz (1987). A second house was opened in Moreno in 1989.



Sr. Evangelist O.P. with Cathy Griffin and Gráinne Riddell: Old Convent, Kirwan's Lane.



Kirwan's Lane, Galway, location of Dominican Nuns' Convent 1686-1845.
(Photograph, Liam Lyons)

Following is the text of a letter written by the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop John Baptist Rinuccini, approving the Galway Dominican foundation, and placing the nuns within the jurisdiction of the Irish Dominican Province:

‘John Baptist Rinuccini, Archbishop by the Grace of God and the appointment of the Holy See and Apostolic Nuncio in the Kingdom of Ireland, to our dear nuns of the Order of St. Dominic in the town of Galway, and to their future sisters, health and apostolic benediction.

‘It is our desire to extend the Apostolic Protection to those entering the religious state lest by rash attempts of the malevolent they should be drawn away from their holy purpose or the strength of holy Religion be weakened. We therefore willingly yield to the petitions addressed to Us by you, living together as you have been for the last three years, under the sweet yoke of religion and in the observance of the Rule of the Sisters of St. Dominic and confirmed, moreover, by the General Chapter and the Irish Provincial Chapter of the same Order. Having duly consulted certain learned men as to the means at your disposal for your decent support and that of others up to the number to be named below that shall be admitted amongst you, We confirm by Our Apostolic Authority your foundation.

‘We erect the house you now inhabit (and whatever house you may in the course of time inhabit) into a monastery under the title Jesus Mariae, with cloister according to the manner and form which shall be approved by your local spiritual superiors . . . And as on Our arrival in Galway we found you placed in the care of Father Gregory French, of whose piety and zealous interest in your welfare we and all others have firm confidence, We confirm him in this office as your lawful superior and perpetual vicar and as far as may be needful, We appoint him to the work, so that he cannot be transferred to any other against his own will. But henceforth the ordinary appointment of a Vicar is to be made by the majority of the Fathers of the Provincial Chapter and in no other manner.

‘Finally We decree that your convent as now established and confirmed by Us be acknowledged as such by all the faithful. We also by Apostolic Authority, extend to it all the favours, privileges and exemptions, goods and possessions, enjoyed by the communities of your Order throughout the world, as granted by canon Law or established by recognised custom.

‘In faith of these Patents given under Our Hand and countersigned by Our Chancellor, We have ordered to be authenticated by Our Seal. Given at the Palace of Our Residence, Galway, 10th September, 1647’.

JO. B. ARCHBISHOP OF FERMO, *Nuncio Apostolic.*
Albertus Pauletus, *Chancellor.*

Demolition of the Church of St. Mary on the Hill: 1651

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MAYOR OF GALWAY AND PRIOR PIERCE BUTLER

'A.D. 1651.

'This Indenture witnesseth, that whereas *Saint Dominick's abbey* near Galway in the Weast Franchises of the same, commonly called *Our Lady's church*, in theise combustious and warlicke tymes, is found noisome and of dangerous consequence to the safety and preservation of this Toune of Gallway, if possessed by the enemies, as late experience declared when the same was possessed by The Lord Forbous, and the Parleiment partie under his conduct.

'Whereupon, the Mayor, sherifs, free Burgesses and Commonaltye of the said towne of Gallway, and the Countie of the said Towne of Gallway, conceived it necessary to pull down and demolish the said Abbey for the preservation and safty of the said Toune. Whereunto they craved the consent of father Pierce Buthler now prior of the religious Order of the Dominicans in Gallway, and the rest of the said convent, who for the good and securitie of the said Toune and Corporacion, their freinds and benefactors, have thereunto consented; the said Toune and Corporacion promissing, assumeing, and undertaking, in tyme of peace to re-edifie soe much thereof, as appears in the scedule hereunto annexed to have beene by them broken downe, and leave the said abbey in as good case as they have found it when they pulled it doune, or as much woorke as the same may come into in true vallue, within their franchises, as to the prior and convent of the said abbey, for the tyme beeing, shalbe tought meete and required: in consideration and pursuance whereof, wee Oliver French Knight, mayor of his Ma^{ties} towne of Gallway, James French Fitz Edd, and Peeter Lynch Fitz Anthony sheriffes and free burgesses, and coumonality of the said Toune of Gallway, doe by theise presents promisse, covenant, undertake and assume to and with the prior and convent of the said Abbey of St. Dominick's Order and their successors, that the Corporation of Gallway shall after theise warrs in hand, and peace established in this Kingdome, build, erect and re-edifie the said Monasterie, and leave the same in as good condition, plight, manner and forme as the same was at the tyme of pulling doune and demolishing of the same, and alsoe to performe all such covenants, provisos and under-

takeings, as the said Corporation of Gallway have formerly engaged themselves, under their common seale, for or concerning the re-edifieing of the said Monasterie; and that wee the said Corporacion shall build and erect as much woorke as the same will come unto, there or any where else without this Towne, or in the liberties thereof, on their owne ground, for the said prior for the tyme being, in dischardge of our consciences, the honnor of our B. Lady and advanceing of Holly Church, and y' before any other woorke shall be donn for any other religious work, within the corporacion or franchises of the same. In wittness whereof, wee the Maior, Sheriffes, free Burgesses and Coumonalitye have heereunto putt our coumon seall; Given at our Toulsell of Gallway, the twentie day of September, in the yeare of our Lord God one tousand, six hundred, fiftie and one.'-*Orig.*

The following document, relating to the same foundation, may be considered curious, as describing the particular divisons and dimensions of the old church alluded to.

'A true relation and returne of the undernamed persons, qualified by the Mayor and Prior of the said Convent, to try the particulars that were demolished and pulled doune of S^t. Dominickes abbey, otherwise called our Ladie's Church, in the West Franchises of Gallwy, upon pressing occations, in order to the preservation of this Toune against the Parlement forces under the comaund of S^r. Charles Cotte, now incamped aboute this Towne, 10^o Augusti 1651.

'Ittim first, there are sixtie seaven feete longe in the side of the church, next the doore.—In the side oppositt to the same, from the pincle of the stiple, sixtie fower foot longe.—From the stiple to the pincle of the queere, seaventie fower foote longe. Fortie fower foote in breath, betweene both the wall, with fower arches in the midle, in the bodie of the church.—Twenty two foote broade in the queere betweene both the wales.— In the chapel, towards the north, nyneteene foote longe, sixteene foote broade, and twelve foote in hight in the wall. In the wale of the bodie of the church and queere, twenty three foote in hight to the battlement, and the wale in tickness two foote and nyne enciis.—Lasorous house is twentie seaven foote longe, twenty foote broade, eighteen foote high, with two chimneys, six windowes, one of which is two lights and the rest one light.—In the bodie of the church three windowes of three lights, and two gables of three lights.—In the chaple three windowes of three lights, and one gable of three lights.— One gable of five lights in the pinicle of the queere, one gable of two lights in the side of the queere, six windowes of one light in the north side of the queere, and one window of two lights in the north (*south*) side.— All this, besids the battlement and breast wall of the same, together with a small stiple, the

most of all being made of hued stone, weare demolished and pulled downe as aforesaid.—If any of the said battlement or hued stones be brought home for the use of St. Nicholas' Church, payment or satisfaction is to be made to the said religious order.

'WALTER BROWNE FITZ-MAROUS. CHRISTO: BODKIN. ALEXANDER LINCHE. MARTIN FRENCH, CHAMBERLYNE'

For a view of 'Our Lady's Church,' taken before it was so domolished, see the great map of Galway, made A.D. 1651, and preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. On the above compact, John O'Heyne (for whom see Harris's Ware, vol. ii. p.295), writes as follows: '*Ecclesia erat vetustissima, sed a Fundamentis destructa est ex Concilio Catholicorum Civium, ne Inimicus Cromuellus, obsessurus eundem Locum, Fortalitium sibi faceret in illa Ecclesia. Ex communi tamen Consensu totus Magistratus spopondit, quod, advertante Pace, totus Conventus reoedificaretur in Forma priori, Expensis Civium, et si sperata Tranquillitas affulsisset in Patria, id facerent proculdubio, erant enim valde pii, et potentissimi Divitiis multis accedentibus ex igenti Commercio maritimo, quo hic Locus exuberat specialiter prae reliquis Regni Partibus.*'—*Epilog.* p.22.

oneere one gable of two lights in the ...
 two lights in the North side
 the same together with a small Bible the most
 brought home for the use of St. Nicholas
 Martin French Chamberlyne
 James Bodkin

Signatures from 1651 document.

Extract from Roderic O'Flaherty, *West or Hlar Connaught* (1684), edited by J. Hardiman (1846), pp.274-5.

Statue of Our Lady of Galway

Most probably the first home of the statue of Our Lady of Galway was in the church built in 1669, described by St. Oliver Plunkett as 'the best and most ornamented church in the Kingdom'. It is a wooden statue, of baroque style, and said to be of Italian origin. In 1683 John Kirwan, the first Catholic mayor of Galway for about thirty years, and his wife Mary, presented a silver crown for the statue.

We cannot follow in detail the history of the statue through the turbulent years that followed the expulsion of the West Convent community in 1698. The silver crown was left for safe keeping with merchant Valentine Brown, and it is now back in the West Convent. A local tradition says that the statue itself was buried. It is possible that it was restored to the church built by Fr. James French in 1800/15. A local resident, Martin Rainey, whose father was seven years of age when the 1891 church was opened, recalls a tradition in his family that the statue of Our Lady of Galway was in a corner of the old church.

Some time after the building of the 1891 church, Prior William Stephens found the statue, rather neglected, in the priory. In 1922 it was placed in the church in front of Our Lady's altar, and during May that year it was brought in procession through the Claddagh, an occasion still remembered in local tradition. An entry in the house chronicle dated 22 May notes:

'The pearl Rosary beads which adorn Our Lady's statue were brought from Jerusalem by a sea-faring man named John Clancy who still lives in the Claddagh. He gave them to his mother and she in turn presented them to the Dominican Fathers for Our Lady's statue. The original cross was a reliquary, but through time was badly damaged. Michael Connell, carpenter, Claddagh, made and presented the stand to which the statue was bolted for the procession.'

Miss Eleanor Caulfield, Dominic Street, has a photograph of the statue taken during this May procession.

Some years later (1924) the present beautiful mosaic was unveiled on the back wall of the altar. It shows the Church of Our Lady on the Hill, overlooking Galway Bay where a boat is struggling through stormy waters. In the bottom corners a young Claddagh man and woman are in prayer, a symbol of the thousands who through the centuries have put themselves in the care of Our Lady of Galway.

The Dominican House Chronicle (1921-1962) contains a document describing the 1891 church 'on the verge of the Atlantic, in glistening Galway granite' and adds 'from a niche in the facade (of the church) a gracefully

carven statue of the holy Mother of God looks out over the blue reaches of Galway Bay'.

The church is still very much, as it has been since 1488, the Church of St. Mary on the Hill. In addition to Our Lady's altar with its background mosaic of the 'chapel on the hill', the sparkling mosaic behind the high altar is the artist's impression of the assumption of Mary watched by St. John the Baptist, St. Dominic and some Dominican saints, while overhead angels hold scrolls spelling out the words of the *Ave Maria*. The stained glass window over the main door of the church shows Mary being crowned queen of heaven. Beside St. Dominic's altar is a stained glass window, by Michael Healy, showing Our Lady giving the rosary to St. Dominic.

In its own way, the Church of St. Mary on the Hill is Galway's shrine to Our Lady.



Mrs. Molly Brown of the Claddagh.

(Photograph: *Connacht Tribune*)



Statue and chapel of Our Lady of Galway, Claddagh Dominican Church.

(Photograph: The Connacht Tribune)

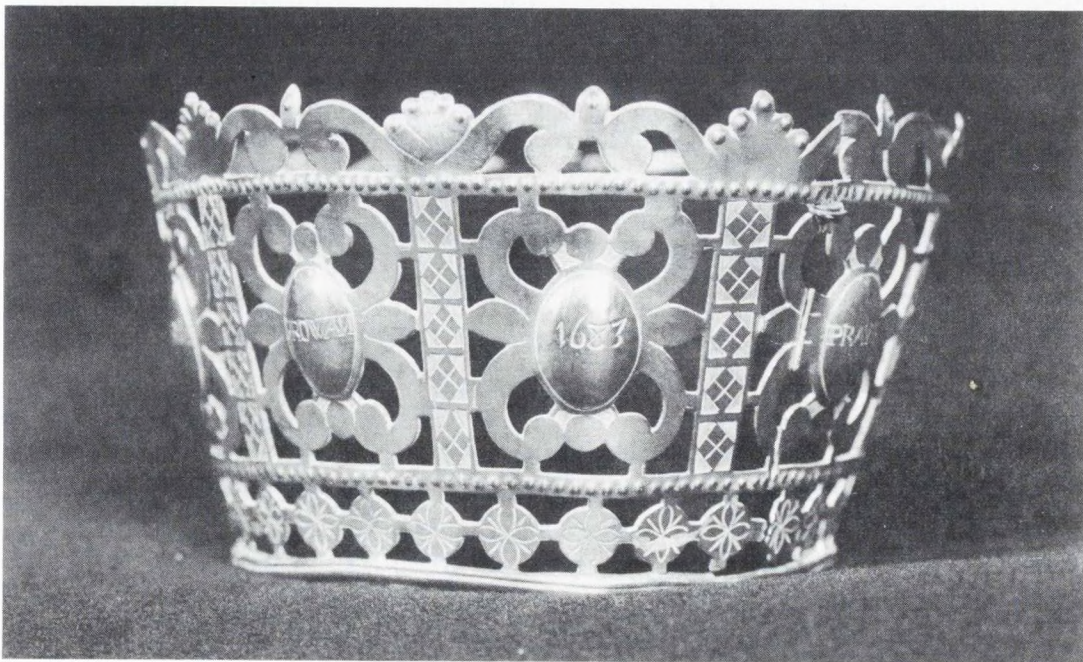
Church Valuables put in Safe Keeping before Exile

RECEIPT FROM VALLENTINE BROWNE: 1698

Just before the Claddagh Dominicans went into exile in 1698, they left the valuables of the church in the care of a local merchant, Mr Vallentine Browne, who gave them the following receipt:

'Jesus, Maria.

'To all Christian people to whom these presents shall come, I, Vallentine Browne, of Gallwey, Merchant, sendeth greeteing. Know you that I the s^d Vallentine hath received into my custody and keeping, to be kept as safe as my owne orary of my owne goods or property, the severall goods following: videlicet, elleven casulas, one canopy, two red dalmaticas, two cappas whereof one white and the other redd, two smale frontales, ten ould silk scarfes, six bursas, five pallas, five vellums, sevrall smale coatts for ye Image of Jesus, two silke coatts for to make antependiums of sadd coloure, thirteen towells, four albs, two peir of beads, two singing books, four antependiums, five corporalls, one alter stone, one girdle, ten amicts, one



Silver crown presented by Mayor Kirwan, 1683.



Chalices (1707 and 1722) from the Claddagh collection.

smale chest wherein are the silver plate of the convent, videlicet, ten silver chalices, whereof four are gilt w^h gould, one silver ciborium, one silver remonstrance, a silver crown for the Image of our blessed Lady, two smale silver ampullas, and one smale silver crowne, one smale box containeing bills and bonds and other papers belonging to the convent, a big brass ringeing bell belonging to the chaple and a brandiron, from and by the hands and delivery of Gregory ffrench FitzRedmond, by the consent, assent and approbation of the Society or Community of the Dominicans fryers of our blessed Lady's Chappell in the West of Gallway, whereof the s^d Fr. Gregory ffrench is prior att present . . . as witness my hand this fifth day of Aprill, 1698. Memorandum it is the reall intent and meaning of the above nam'd Vallentine Browne, and so declares at the possession heerof, that he will keepe all the above goods for the use of the above Frs. pryors and community the best of his power skill and caring and deliver them also at any tyme demanded.

Vallentine Browme.

Present { James Browne.
Augustin Browne.

'Endorsement—M. Vallentine Browme his note for all ye goods received frome the convent of Gallwey of St. Dominick's order.'

It is satisfactory to know that most of the plate came back to the community and is still in their possession.—See *General Exile of 1693*, by the present writer Coleman, *Irish Eccl. Record*, Jan, 1899.



Church of St. Mary on the Hill, The Claddagh, Galway.

(Photograph: Liam Lyons)

The Church of St. Mary on the Hill

1673

‘The city of Galway, although small, is very beautiful. Two thirds of the population are Catholic, but very poor through having lost all their income: O what a devout and hospitable people! They maintain three convents, one of the Dominicans, one of the Augustinians and the third belongs to the Franciscans. The Dominicans have the best church – it is the most ornate church in the whole country. All three convents are accustomed to live in an exemplary and decorous fashion. The city is strongly fortified, being a seaport, and it was the last in the country to be attacked by Cromwell and resisted for a long time. The superior, or as they call him, the warden, of the secular clergy in Galway and nine or ten parishes annexed to it claims exemption from the jurisdiction of the archbishop, and often there are disputes about this. . . . Please excuse the large ink blot on the paper: my servant while making the bed overturned the ink bottle, and with the post setting out within two hours I have not had time to re-write the letter’.

Letter of St. Oliver Plunkett to Baldeschi, 10 March 1673. From *The Letters of St. Oliver Plunkett 1625-1681*. Edited and translated by Monsignor John Hanley (1979), Letter 137.

'Here Lone I Live' (poem): 1702

In 1698 the Dominican Community was driven from the Claddagh West Convent and sent into exile. Four years later, in 1702, three Dominicans were in Galway: Prior Gregory ffrench, Fr. Nicholas Blake (both from the West Convent community) and Fr. Daniel MacDonnell (from Urlar, passing through Galway). Frs. ffrench and MacDonnell were quickly arrested and imprisoned. Fr. Blake was left alone. He expressed his loneliness in a poem in classical Latin. Following is a translation.

Here lone I live. The lonely days pass slow;
And here at night my sighs to cold stars go.
As lone as any dove of mate bereft,
I chant my poor lament, lone and aloof.
Great Angel, keep me steadfast while I live!
Amid thine hymns supernal, comfort give.

Ah! coward soul, lift up thine eyes, and cease
To weep! Look up! The white stars whisper peace!
Look up! And in the white star's peace learn thou
Their wise and awful joy: do God's will now!

Yea! Lord! If I so do and not repine,
The stars but hint the joys that must be mine.
From pain, joy leaps to me . . . The winds are drear,
And waves rage fiercest when the port is near.

Solus ego vivo, solus mea tempora sumo;
Solus ego timeo, solus ad astra gemo.
Passer ego solus sub tecto, solaque hirundo,
Et lugubris meditor, maesta columbae sono;
Turtur ego solus, gemebundo pectore deflens,
Dilecto orbatus complice, solus ego.
Angelus e superis Custos praecordia pulsat,

Ingeminans; sortem suspice charae clinentae.
Suspice promissi placidissima sidera coeli,
Infundent animo gaudia vera tua.
Hic ego, si patiar rerum dispendia, dices,
In coelis amplum gloriae foenus erit.
Sit tibi vita Chaos; urget fortuna procellas,
Quas modo, si vincas, sidera portus erunt.

Leabhar Cuntais Teampaill Mhuire

Cois Chladaigh: 1727 – 1738

EUSTÁS Ó HÉIDEÁIN, O.P.

Ar na láimhscríbhinní a bhaineann le stair na nDoiminiceánach i nGaillimh tá Leabhar Cuntais a théann siar to dtí tosach na hochtú aoise déag. Leabhar cuíosach mór isea é, clúdach leathair air, stíl na hochtú aoise déag ar an litriú agus ar an scríbhneoireacht; ach tá sé beagnach chomh so-léite anois is a bhí sé níos mó ná dhá chéad bliain ó shoin nuair bhreacadh an Sparánaí, ó lá go lá, costaisí tí agus teampaill.

Tháinig na Dominiceánaigh go dtí an Cladach i nGaillimh sa bhliain 1488. Cheana féin, bhíodar níos mó ná dhá chéad bliain i gContae na Gaillimhe, i mBaile Átha na Ríogh (1241). Sa bhliain 1426, bhunaíodar eaglais agus clochar i bPort Omna agus bliain ina dhiaidh sin d'imíodar siar to Tuaimbeola i gConamara.

Le fada roimhe sin, bhí mainistir cois Chladaigh i nGaillimh ag Canónaigh Ord Permonstra, agus sa bhliain 1488 thairg an Pápa Innocentius VIII an mhainistir sin dona Doiminiceánaigh ó Bhaile Átha na Ríogh. Ghlacadar le tairiscint an Phápa agus tháingadar isteach go Gaillimh. Ó shoin i leith, taobh amuigh de thréimhsí beaga anois is arís nuair scaip géirleanúint éigin iad, tá na Bráithre Dubha cois an Chladaigh.

Nuair cuireadh an ruaig ar na manaigh is ar na bráithre in Éirinn sa bhliain 1698, b'éigin do Dhoiminiceánaigh na Gaillimhe, chomh maith le bráithre na nOrd eile, imeacht ó bhaile is dul ar a dteicheadh. Is eol dúinn, áfach, gur éalaíodar tharnais go dtí an Cladach arís go lua san ochtú aois déag.¹ Sé atá insan Leabhar Cuntais seo ná an chéad leabhar cuntais a bhí ag na Dominiceánaigh cois Chladaigh taréis dóibh filleadh ó Scaipeadh Mór na bliana 1698.

Is fuirist mí-chinnteacht na mblianta tosaigh sin a fheiscint insan Leabhar Cuntais. I mí Márta 1727, mar shompla, níl tagairt ach do shuim airgid amháin:

Recd. for herrings in different times

18s.

agus tá ana chuid dena míonna (Bealtaine, Meitheamh, Iúl, Meán Fómhair, Samhain agus Nollaig) sa bhliain 1727 fágtha ar lár ar fad insan gcuid sin den leabhar a bhaineann le cúrsaí ioncaim.

Diaidh ar ndiaidh, áfach, feicimid biseach éigin ag teacht ar an saol Doiminiceánach cois Chladaigh. Tá tagairtí ann do litreacha a fuarathas ón

gCúigíoch ("Pd for a letter from the Provincial . . . 8d") agus ag deireadh na bliana 1729, do réir deallraimh, d'éirigh leis an gCúigíoch (An tAthair Ó Maoilsheachlainn) cuairt a thabhairt ar an gCladach:

3 Dec. 1729. Pd to Cornelius for going for Mr. Saghnessies horse	1-1
32 Dec. 1729. Paid to Charly when he went for Dublin to meet the Prov.al	4-0
Pd for the Prov.al's horse	7-3
Pd for shoeing the Prov.al's horses	3-9½
Pd for a pair of bootes for Charly	5-5

Sa bhliain 1732, d'éirigh leis na Doiminiceánaigh in Éirinn cruinniú de Chaibidil na Cúige a chomhthionól i mBaile Átha Cliath agus bhí an Páior ón gCladach i láthair ann:

21 May 1732. Fr. Prior's expenses to Dublin to the Chapter not in tot of this month	£2-6-0
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Deisiú is Maisiú

Leis an tagairt sin áfach, don bhliain 1732, tá an seanchas ag rith ar aghaidh ró-thapaidh linn. Fillimís ar an bhliain 1727 is ar leathanaigh tosaigh an Leabhair Chuntais.

Nuair tháinig na Doiminiceánaigh tharnais go dtí an Cladach taréis scaipeadh na bliana 1698, ní híonadh go raibh cuid mhaith deisiú is maisiú le déanamh acu laistigh is taobh amuigh den tséipéal bán ceantú

Paid for washing the ornaments of the altar	10d.
Pd for wax for the altar	1-8
Pd for duties of the wax that came from Lisbon	8
Pd for tremings for a vestiment belonging to the altar	2-8½
Pd towards the payment of the rent of the west Chappell	£1-0-0.

An 10ú lá Bealtaine 1727, deineadh réiteach faoi leith le fear oibre:

This day I have agreed wt Mr ffrank Anger to keepe the chapell in order the yeare for three Mill crowns, of wh sum I have paid him to buy lime 5-5d.

Pd ditto to buy sand	1-7½
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Is iomaí tagairt a deintear sa Leabhar Cuntais don Frank Anger céanna. Nuair fheicimid na rudaí éagsúla a ceannaíodh dó ó mhí go mí, is beag ná gur féidir linn an maisiú agus an deisiú a fheiscint lenár súile féin:

20 May	Pd for a locke for the chapell and quire	2-5
30 May	Pd to Roger and the man worker for digginge the garden, gathering of leaves	2-0
	Paid to ffrank Anger to buy sand	2-0
	Pd to ditto to buy tiles	3-0
21 June	Pd for lime to dash the wall of the small garden	3-4
18 July	Pd for lime to the chappell	2-0
	Pd to the workman tht assisted ffrank Anger	5
5 Oct.	Pd to ffrank Anger for mending the chappell	7-0½
9 Oct.	Pd for three pains for the window of the chappell	8
18 Oct.	Pd for tach	2-7
	Pd to the tacher and to his man	2-4

I míonna tosaigh na bliana 1728 cluintear níos soiléire fuaim na gcasúr:

20 Feb.	Pd for twelve deal for making the doores of the chappell and sacriest	14-0
2 Mar.	To Bryne Jhonny the joyner	8-1½
6 Mar.	For carringe deal boards to the west	5
9 Mar.	Pd to the paver	2-0
	Pd for tach and carryadge of sd tach	4-5
	Pd to a mason	1-8
	Pd for sand	9
27 Mar.	Pd to the smith Ned Burke	3-3
28 Mar.	Pd for _____ and red leade	3
31 Aug.	Pd to the glacer for mending the windows for the altar and for doores	£4-10-0
	Pd to Bryne Jhonny for a keefe and 12 of chairs	£4-10-0

I mí Eanáir, an bhliain ina dhiaidh sin, deineadh réiteach nua le Frank:

Memorandum: I promised ffrank Anger 16s. 3d. for to keepe the chappell in repaire for the yeare 1729 and the same day I have paid him in part payment 2s. 8½d.

6 Mar. 1729.	Paid for nails for to repaire the steepell	1-10
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Is dócha gurbh é Frank a dhein stuaic an tséipéil a dheisiú i mí Márta: agus i mí Meán Fómhair bhí sé gnóthach fós, an babhta seo le tíleanna. Dhá mhí ar a laighead a chaith sé leis an obair sin agus sé is dóichí ná gur deineadh ceann tíle a chur ar an séipéal in ionad an chinn tuí.

Do réir deallraimh, bhí crois agus stuaic ar shean-shéipéal an Chladaigh, mar tá tagairt dóibh san Leabhar Cuntais i mí Deireadh Fómhair 1730:

16 Oct.	To iron for repairing the Cross of the Chapple Pennicle	5-8
20 Oct.	To the smith for making the Cross upon the Pennicle of the chapple	2-2

I Leabhar Cuntais eile i bhfad níos déannaí (Galway Deposit Book 1815-1833) gheibhimid an chéad tagairt do chlog an tséipéil:

The Bell set up on Holy Thursday the 30th of March 1809, Fr. Magr.
James French, Prior.

N'fhéadar arbh é clog an Chladaigh an chéad chlog a buaileadh go puiblí in Éirinn taréis maolú na bpéindlithe. Is mian le muintir Chathair Luimnigh agus le muintir Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath an chraobh san a bhronnadh ar a gcathair féin; ach tá an tagairt sin thuas do chlog an Chladaigh trí míonna níos tuisce ná an chéad tagairt don chlog a buaileadh i Newgate Friary i Luimneach, mí Meithimh 1809,² agus sé bhliain níos tuisce ná buaileadh an chloig in Eaglais Mhíchíl is Eoin Naofa i mBaile Átha Cliath sa bhliain 1815.³

Cuairt óna Sirriaim

Bhí na péindlithe i bhfeidhm fós an fhaid is a bhí an deisiú agus an maisiú san thuas ar siúl agus ní foláir go raibh fhios ag gach éinne i nGaillimh go raibh na Doiminiceánaigh tharnais cois Chladaigh arís. Ní hionadh gur cuireadh na sirriaim siar go dtí an Cladach chun a fháil amach céard a bhí ar siúl ann. Tá tuarascáil an chuardaithe againn fós:

'They also searched the friary in the west suburbs, called the Dominican friary, wherein is a large chapel with a gallery, some forms and an altar piece, defaced; in which said reputed friary, there are ten chambers and eight beds, wherein, they believe, the friars belonging to the said friary usually lay, but could find none of them. That it is a very old friary, but some repairs lately made in it''⁴

Tá abairtín amháin sa Leabhar Cuntais, áfach, a léiríonn taobh eile den scéal:

Nov. 1730 For claret to threat the Sherifs in their search the 11th 2s 2d.

Ba nós é freisin, bronntanas beag a thabhairt dona sirriaim um Nollaig, mar is léir ó ana-chuid tagairtí insan Leabhar Cuntais:

29 Dec.	1728	Pd to the Mayors Sergeants	1-1
29 Dec.	1729	Pd to the sergeants, constables and millers	1-4
24 Dec.	1731	By cash to the constable	6½
24 Dec.	1732	By cash given the constables	6½
		To cash given the Mayrs Sergants	1-6

3 Jan.	1735	Pd the Mayor Sergants for the Xtmas box	1-1
30 Dec.	1735	Pd the Mayor Sergants for their Xtmass box	1-1

Níor chuir na geáitsí sin an dalla umlóg ar údaráis na tíre, mar is soiléir ó léacht a thug Stratford Eyre uaidh do Bhárdas na cathrach:

‘Now, gentlemen, that you are here in your corporate capacity, I must recommend to you to disperse those wrestless popish ecclesiastics. Let me not meet them in every corner of the street where I walk as I have done. No sham searches, Mr. Sheriffs, as to my knowledge you have lately made. Your Birds have flown, but they have left you cake and wine to entertain yourselves withall’.⁵

Cé nach raibh cead ar bith ag na Doiminiceánaigh bheit tharnais arís cois Chladaigh, bhí cáineacha á n-íoc acu leis an mBárdas:

26 Jan.	1732	To cash for town taxes	2-6
27 Sept.	1734	Pd for publick taxes	6d
28 Jan.	1736	Pd for town taxes	4d

Ba shuimiúil an saol a bhí á chaitheamh acu cois Chladaigh dhá chéad bliain ó shoin!

Praghasanna

Maraon leis an léargas san a bheireann an Leabhar Cuntais dúinn ar chúrsaí creidimh is polaitíochta, léiríonn sé cuid bheag de ghnáth-shaol na ndaoine. Feicimid ann, mar shompla, na praghasanna a bhí ar earraí áirithe i dtosach an ochtú chéid.

			s.	d.
23 May	1730	For two pound of butter	6	
26 May	1730	For a halfe a pound of tobacco	4	
Aug.	1731	By cash for a puter chalice	3-6	
27 Dec.	1735	Pd for a rope for the well	2	
24 Apr.	1736	Pd the barber	2	
13 May	1736	Pd for two bottles of clarett for benefactors	2-2	
30 Apr.	1736	For a hen to make broth for the sick	0-4	
26 Dec.	1736	To cash paid the broagman for a pear of pumps for the little girl	1-0	
28 Dec.	1736	To cash paid for a pear of shoes for Penny being due to her since last year	2-8½	
2 Mar.	1736	Pd for a hundred of herrings sent to Eskir	5-0	
27 Mar.	1736	Pd for a boule and bazen for shaveing	1-4	
8 Jun.	1737	To cash paid for soape for the Provl.	2	

28 Jun.	1737	Pd for sweeping the chimney	2
4 Aug.	1737	Pd for a goose	1-1½
16 Oct.	1737	For starch and blew for the altar cloaths	2
6 Jan.	1738	Pd for soaleing Daniel's shoes	1-0
15 Feb.	1738	Pd for a cod	4
31 May	1738	Pd for 4 loades of turf	8

Thaithneodh na praghasanna thuas go rí-mhaith le bean an tí inniu ach na laethe úd fadó ní fhaghadh Penny Flanagan, an cailín aimsire, ach timpeall 30s sa bhliain maraon le bia agus cothú (agus bróga, freisin, do réir deallraimh) agus ní bheadh ag fear ceirde ach deich bpingin sa ló:

20 May	1730	Pd the Mason Teig Daly for 2 days labour	1-8
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Bhí £10 sa bhliain de chíos ar an séipéal agus ba mhinic a bhí d'fhiachaibh ar na sagairt an t-airgead san a fháil ar iasacht ó charaid éigin:

17 Apr.	1730	Recd from Mr. Aug. Burn to pay the chaple rent 50s and borrowed from Sister Brid. amt.	£2 -5-7½
		in all	£4-15-7½

Do réir deallraimh bhí 4s 4½ ag an Sparánaí féin, i dtreo is go raibh sé ar a chumas cíos leath-bhliana (£5) a thabhairt don tiarna talún, Mr. Morris.

An tSiúr Bríd, O.P., sin a thug an t-airgead ar iasacht dona sagairt, bhí sí ana-lách ar fad leo mar is léir ó ceann dena tagairtí eile a deintear di sa Leabhar Cuntais:

11 April	1738	Pd Sist. Bridgett Kirwan wht she lent Fr. And. in the year '30	8-11
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Tinneas agus Tórramh

I mí Bealtaine 1730 fuair duine dena sagairt bás i mBaile Átha Cliath, an tAthair Liam Mac Cionnaith, agus léiríonn an Leabhar Cuntais dúinn cuid dena nósanna a bhaineadh le tinneas is tórramh fadó:

To Jaspar Hynes for bleeding Fr. Kenny 3 times	3-3
To James Roe the servant that waited on him in Dublin	3-11
For the coffin	10-10
For candles	3-3
For two pds of tobacco and six dozen of pipes	2-9
For twelve quarts of strong waters at 7d	7-0
For carrying the false (?) coffin back to town	2

Do réir deallraimh bhí tórramh ana-mhaith ar an duine marbh! Níl ach cúpla

Expenses for 1730

Payed to Thady Daly Carpenter 4^h 700 0

From the begining of June 1730 We
find the totts of the months past
to this day of what has been rec.
& Expended for the use of this house
this 14th of Jan^r 1730/31 viz^t the
Receipts amounts^t thirty four pounds
one shilling & four pence, & the Expence
to forty six pounds nine shillings & one
penny halfpenny so yt we find the
Expence exceeds the Receipts by twelve
pounds seven shillings & nine pence
halfpenny the said Ballance is due
to Father Master Coleman Shagnessy
as witnesses our hands this 14th of
Jan^r 1730/31

Fr^s John Gasman Prior
Fr^s Patzeker. Donnell
Fr^s Coleman Shagnessy

Received from Fr^s John Gasman Prior
Donnell of sum of five pounds & six pence for
above sum I have received this 14th of June 1731
Fr^s Coleman Shagnessy

tagairt eile don 'strong water' sa Leabhar Cuntais ach léiríonn siad dúinn chomh coitianta is a bhí an deoch san fadó:

11 April	1730	Pd for a quart of aquavit to Mr. Angers and the workman	7d
26 April	1730	Memorandum: that not knowing whether the mill-crown I received from Madam ffrench of Duras was intuitu communitatis or not, I have disbursed it in 10 quarts of strong water for the fishermen.	

N'fheadar an raibh éad ar na fir a bhí ag obair cois Chladaigh nuair chonaic siad a oiread san dí á thabhairt dona hiascairí, mar b'éigin deoch a thabhairt dóibh-san freisin an lá céanna:

26 April	1730	Pd for two quarts of strong waters for the limbrick people	1-1
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Cuireann an tagairt san thuas don 'millcrown' a fuarathas ó Madam French i gcuimhne dúinn sean-phíosaí eile airgid go bhuil tagairt dóibh sa Leabhar Cuntais. Lá amháin, thángthas ar shuim mhaith airgid a bhí i bhfolach in áit éigin agus ar ábharaí an domhain dhein an Sparánaí liosta iomlán dena píosaí airgid a bhí sa chiste sin:

	£	s.	d.
12 pieces at 5s. 6d. a piece	3	6	0
4 pieces at 4s. 4d.		17	4
16 mayders at 29s. 10d.	23	18	0
14 ditto at 29s. 8d.	20	15	4
5 ditto at 29s. 6d.	7	7	6
8 ditto at 30s	12	0	0
20 guineas att	23	0	0
1 pistole weight att		18	6
2 pistoles and a halfe, att 18s. 4d.	2	5	9
4 pistoles att	3	13	8
2 ditto	1	16	8
17 ditto att 18s. 2d.	15	18	10
2 and a halfe ditto att	2	4	7
2 ditto att 18s	1	16	0
4 ditto	3	13	0
4 ditto att	3	13	4
2 ditto att	1	16	4
1 ditto att		17	8

1 quarter mayden att	7	0
1 quarter mayden att	7	4
2 Carolus att	2	8 0
2 pistoles att	1	16 0

Comhartha isea é sin go raibh na píosaí airgid sin coitianta go leor fós i dtosach an ochtú chéid déag. Taobh amuigh den liosta thuas, deintear tagairt anso is ansúd do shean-phíosaí airgid eile, mar shompla:

29 May 1728 Paid Bryne Jhonny a Spanish pistol 1-8½

Cúrsaí Ioncaim

Is beag tagairt atá déanta againn fós don chuid sin den Leabhar Cuntais ina bhfuil eolas cruinn le fáil againn ar an ioncam a bhí ag na Doiminiceánaigh cois Chladaigh taréis dóibh fillleadh ón Scaipeadh Mór. Is eol dúinn go n-imíodh na sagairt anois is arís mór-thimpeall an chontae ar lorg déirceanna agus deintear tagairt go minic san Leabhar Cuntais don 'quest' sin. Uaireanta, tugtar 'the limitts' nó 'limitation' air, de bhrí go raibh teoranna faoi leith leis an limistéar ina ndeineadh gach sagart an bailiú airgid sin.

4 August 1727	Recd from the quest	£1 0 4
17 Oct. 1731	To cash recd as charity in the limitts abroad	5-11½
26 Aug. 1737	Recd by fr. Dom. k from Ireconnaght limitation	5- 5

Uaireanta d'fhaghadh siad cuid de thoradh na feirme in ionad airgid óna fermeoirí nó iasc óna hiascairí:

24 April 1730	Received for oats sold at Cregg	13- 0
23 May 1730	Recd for a lamb which came from Mr. Andrew Blake	2- 4
10 Oct. 1731	To cash received for a sheepskin	5
24 March 1736	Recd for a hundred and quarter of herrings	5- 4
20 April 1739	Recd for a bushell of salt	10

Deinter an 'quest' sin fós anso is ansúd in Éirinn. In áiteanna, freisin, deintear airgead a bhailiú taréis Aifrinn na Marbh fé mar a deintí i nGaillimh, do réir deallraimh, fadó:

10 Feb. 1729	Recd for the commemoration of Julian Blake	10-6
13 Mar. 1730	Recd for the commemoration of Pat Lynch	9-1
29 Feb. 1732	To Cash received at Mrs. Mullenox remembrance	5-0

Uaireanta bheadh bailiú speisialta ann:

27 Aprill	1731	Recd from Mr. Blake being collection made for the chapple rent	£3 16 9
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agus tá tagairtí ann do dhaoine a thug bronntanas don chlochar ó am go ham, cosúil leis an liosta seo ar lá fhéile San Doiminic 1737: Mark Halloran, Julian ffrench, John ffrench Andrew, John Kirwan, Mr. Keany, Mary ffrench, Peter ffrench fenix, Capt. Tully, agus Peter Boland. Thugadar san agus daoine eile nach iad ana-chabhair do Theampall Mhuire cois Chladaigh nuair ba mhó an gá leis an gcabhair sin. Bheadh ar fáil, freisin, ag na sagairt na suimeanna beaga a bheadh 'on the plate' gach Domhnach agus an oifrál a déanfaí chun Aifreann a léamh:

10 June	1730	Received on the plate at the chapple	1-0½
6 May	1736	Recd for to say Mass	1-1

Tosnú Ré Nua

Is fuirist a fheiscint ón Leabhar Cuntais go raibh ord agus eagar de shaghas éigin ag teacht ar shaol na nDoiminiceánch cois Chladaigh ó deireadh na bliana 1732 amach. Nós isea é fós ag na Doiminiceánaigh cruinniú de Chomhairle an Chlochair bheith ann gach mí; maraon le gnótha eile, deintear an Leabhar Cuntais a scrúdú agus a shíniú ag an gcruinniú sin. Sa tsean-Leabhar Cuntais seo, deineadh an scrúdú agus an síniú san don chéad uair i mí Lúnasa 1732 agus ag deireadh na bliana san deineadh scrúdú ar ioncam agus costaisí na bliana go léir:

We the undersigned haveing viewed the accounts of this booke from the begining of January 1731 to the present date hereof doe find the receipts to amount to one hundred and ten pounds four shillings and twopence halfpenny and the expenses to amount to one hundred and twelve pounds eleven shillings and eleven pence soe that the expenses exceed the receipts in two pounds seven shillings and ninepence, which summ we finde to be due to the Prior, given under our hands this 12th day of January 1732/33.

fr John Gusman, Prior
fr Laurence Mulloy, Sub.
fr Patrick McConnell
fr Tho. de Burgo, praed. gen. et Mag. Nov.

Dhá mhí ina dhiaidh sin, i mí Márta 1733, thug an Cúigíoch cuairt ar an Chladach agus dhein sé an leabhair Cuntais a scrúdú, díreach mar a dhéanfaidh an Cúigíoch ar chuairt oifigiúil inniu:

Haveing examined the accs. I found them to be just (errors excepted)
as wittness my hand this 26th of March 1733.

fr Colman O Shaughnessy, O.P.

V. Pr. valis.

Ní raibh ré na bpéindlithe in aonghaor do bheith thart fós. Leis an síniú
sin, áfach, feicimid ré nua ag tosnú i saol na nDoiminiceánach i nGaillimh.

NÓTAÍ

1. Tá an t-eolas san againn ó cháipéisí éagsúla atá le fáil i gCairtlinn Phropaganda na Róimhe; mar shompla, *Acta de anno 1719 folio 9 verso, Ad Congregationem diei 9 Jan. 1719, numero 23*: 'I religiosi degli Ordini Mendicanti di Galloway in Ibernica luogo nella diocesi Tuamense, altre volte rappresentarono all'Eminenze Vostre che nell'occasione del loro esilio succeduto per ordine del parlamento l'anno 1696 e durato sino al 1712, i parrochi e clero di quella città si appropriarono gli emolumenti dei funerali ed anniversarii de defunti che fin ab immemorabili quei religiosi erano in possesso di ricevere e celebrare. E ritornati i detti padri ai lori conventi, i parrochi suddetti pretendarono di continuare ad usarpari i medesimi emolumenti col motivoto che fossero provente parrocchiali e che perciò a loro appartenessero o al meno che si dovesse loro la quarta parte. La onde i Padri suddetti supplicarono l'EE.VV. di ordinare a Monsig. archivescovo Tuamense che informasse la Sacra Congreg. e che intanto si degnassero di prefiggere al clero secolare e parrochi di Gallway un termine a dedurre le lorro ragioni in S. Congreg. per prender poi sopra tal controversia quella risoluzione che sarebbe stata di giustizia . . .'
2. Féach Lenihan: *History of Limerick*, lch. p.420: 'For the first time for a long series of years a bell now (1809) tolled in the cupola attached to the north gable end of the house inhabited by the Friars of the Order of St. Francis in Newgate-lane . . . O'Connell now formed the acquaintance of an energetic and stirring Franciscan, Fr. Dan Hogan who is yet (1866) remembered by some of old citizens . . . Consulting as to how the Penal Laws could best and most safely be evaded as to bells in chapels and steeples in Catholic places of worship, O'Connell hit on an expedient, informing Fr. Hogan that there was no penal statute against erecting a cupola and putting a bell there if he chose. The good friar took the hint; masons and carpenters set to work; the cupola was made; the bell was placed in its position; its sounds were heard and the citizens awoke in amazement and joy, not unmixed with apprehension of the consequences, when on the 1st June 1809, they heard the iron tongue sound for the first time within memory of the existing generation to call them to Mass. It was a most remarkable day in the annals of Limerick.'
3. Féach Myles V. Ronan: *An Apostle of Catholic Dublin*, (Baile Átha Cliath, 1944), p.132: 'SS. Michael and John's was opened in 1815 with its double granite fronts in Smock-alley and Lr. Exchange St. . . . In defiance of the penal code, Dr. Blake the parish priest set up a bell to call the people to Mass and to toll the Angelus – the first bell set up in any Catholic place of worship in Ireland for nearly 300 years.'
4. Apud *Archivium Hibernicum*, lml. III (1914), lch. 153.
5. Apud W. P. Burke: *Irish Priests in the Penal Times, 1660-1760* (Portlárige, 1914), lch. 419.

Warden Edmund Ffrench, O.P.

BISHOP OF KILMACDUAGH AND KILFENORA 1775-1852

Edmund Ffrench was born into a Protestant family in Galway in 1775. His father, also Edmund, was both mayor of the town and Protestant warden. The father was the mayor who signed in 1761 'the manifesto of intolerance' called the 'Black Petition'. Edmund and his brother Charles became Catholics while still young, thanks to a Catholic girl who worked in their father's house.

In 1794 Edmund was accepted as a Dominican postulant in the Claddagh priory. He took the habit in Esker monastery, Athenry, and was given the name 'Martin' in religion, a name he never used. He continued his studies in Lisbon and was ordained there, it seems, in 1804. From 1806 to 1810 he served in St. Michan's Dublin. Although a member of a religious order and therefore ineligible, he was chosen as a vicar of the Catholic wardenship by the Tribal 'corporation', despite the loud protests of the secular clergy.

But Rome gave a dispensation with the result that in 1812 Ffrench was elected warden of Galway while his brother Charles became a missionary in America.

Dr. Ffrench was a quiet diplomatic leader of his community doing his best to head off disagreements with his priests and lay-people. Unfortunately owing to the weakness of his position as warden, he could not deal with internal problems in a decisive manner. He failed to put an end to the disputes between the religious orders and the secular clergy. One of his very notable contributions to education was the bringing of the Presentation nuns to Galway. Dr Ffrench built St. Nicholas's 'parish chapel' later the Pro-Cathedral which served the people of Galway well until the opening of the new Cathedral in 1965. The old church, costing over £4,000, which was completed in 1821 was an indicator of better times to come, as at the laying of the foundation stone, the Protestant mayor of Galway presided, and many Protestants attended.

With a view to ending the wardenship eventually and uniting it with the dioceses of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora Dr. Ffrench was appointed bishop of the two vacant dioceses while retaining the wardenship. Rome, always cautious, hesitated about uniting immediately the three areas into one diocese. The wardenship election of 1828, in fact the last wardenship election, caused much excitement as the position of Dr. Ffrench was challenged by one of his parish priests, Fr. Peter Daly. After a very noisy campaign Ffrench won but the Irish bishops and eventually Rome saw that the wardenship should be ended. To bring about a pacific settlement, Ffrench resigned his wardenship position to make room for the new diocese of Galway. He retired



Claddagh Piscatory School.

(Drawing: Michael Tyndall)

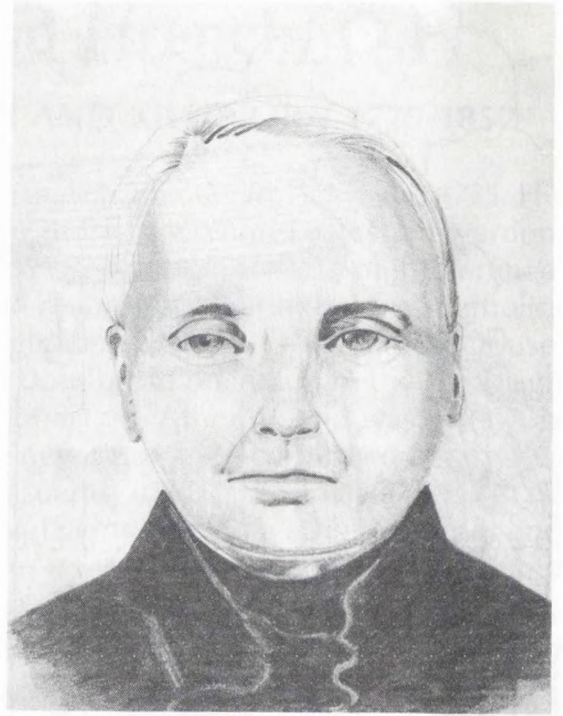
to his two dioceses and took up residence in Thornville, Kinvara, a pleasing small Georgian house until recently occupied by the Nally family.

Dr. Ffrench supervised the building of nine churches and he co-operated with the new national education system in providing schools. He worked to relieve the distress caused by the great hunger, even though his own health was poor. Towards the end of his life he resided at Rose Park Lodge south of Gort, near his sister Mrs. Blake-Forster. He died on 14 July 1852 in the residence of the parish priest of Kilmacduagh in Gort and he was buried in what was traditionally regarded as the grave of St. Colman in Kilmacduagh cemetery. Archbishop John McHale of Tuam preached a moving sermon in Irish at the graveside. A fine granite cross marks the grave.

Fr. Anthony Dominic Fahy

1805-1871

Just inside the entrance to the Recoleta cemetery in Buenos Aires, on the central avenue, there are monuments to two Connachtmen who considerably influenced the history of Argentina in the last century. One was Foxford-born Admiral William Browne, founder of the Argentine navy. The other was a Galway Dominican, Fr. Anthony Dominic Fahy.



Fr. Anthony Fahy.

(Drawing: Fiona McCarthy)

Anthony Fahy was born in Loughrea in 1805, a son of Patrick and Belinda Fahy. In 1828 he entered the Dominican Order in Esker, and received the habit on August 4th. A year later he went to the Irish Dominican College in Rome, San Clemente, to study for the priesthood. He was ordained priest on 19 March 1831, and he remained in Rome until 1834 when he finished his studies.

A year previously, on 30 July 1833, he had written to the Irish Dominican Provincial, Fr. Peter D Smyth, saying 'I should like very much to lead an active life'. His wish was to be fulfilled. At San Clemente he had become familiar with the work of the new Dominican foundation in Kentucky made by Fr. Edward Fenwick, later first bishop of Cincinnati. One of Fr. Fahy's choices was missionary work in Ohio.

Apparently the Provincial agreed. On 31 March 1834, less than two weeks after his ordination, he left Rome for Livorno and sailed six weeks later (19 May) for Somerset, Ohio. After a stay of about two years in this under-developed territory, an experience that prepared him in some way for his work later in Argentina, failing health forced him to return to Ireland. He spent some time in Loughrea, where he was of considerable help to Bishop Coen, and in 1839 went to Kilkenny as Prior of the Black Abbey.

The invitation to go to Argentina came in a roundabout way. In the

beginning of the nineteenth century, Irish emigrants discovered Argentina. It was estimated that they and their families numbered about 1,500 in 1832, and they had no proper pastoral care.

In 1843, James Kiernan, president of the Irish Catholic Society in Buenos Aires, with the permission of the Bishop wrote to Archbishop Murray of Dublin asking for help. The Irish immigrants desperately needed an Irish priest to care for them. Archbishop Murray passed the request to Bishop William Kinsella of Ossory, who immediately thought of his friend Fr. Anthony Fahy. Fr. Fahy said he would go, and he arrived on the river Plate outside Buenos Aires on January 11th 1844.

Irish immigrants and their families then numbered about 3,500. Five years later this number had risen to 4,500. The problem was that they were scattered over an area which, to quote Fr. Fahy, 'is larger than the whole of England'.

Such a scattered congregation could not possibly come to their pastor; he would have to go to them. His plan was to give notice that for five to ten days he would visit a particular district frequently covering several parishes. There he would administer the sacraments to the Irish, preach, visit their homes, gather information about them, and meet the children. Then he would return to Buenos Aires for a short rest before setting out on another journey.

He travelled through the country on horse-back. His philosophy was simple: if an Irish sheep-farmer could ride a hundred or a hundred and fifty kilometres on business, he would do the same to visit the people. William Bulfin wrote of Fr. Fahy: 'From forty to sixty miles a day he often galloped over the camp, changing horses here and there as opportunity offered. Many a night he slept on his *recao* (riding gear) rolled in his *poncho*, with the thatched roof of a hut over his head and at times nothing but the starry skies of the Pampa. Many a meal he ate where every guest was supposed to hold the meat in his fingers and use his own long camp knife to the best advantage' (quoted in James Ussher, *Father Fahy*, pp.45,46).

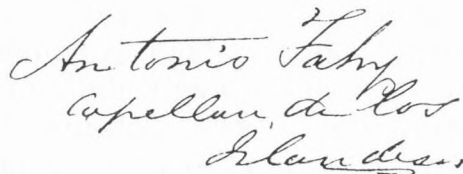
Each year he would spend a total of about six months on these journeys. He quickly realised the importance of agriculture in the development of Argentina and he encouraged Irish Immigrants not to stay in the cities but to move into the country. There they found employment, first as ordinary workers on the ranches, then as supervisors and managers, and eventually they became land owners and a significant influence in the life of Argentina. In a letter to the President of All Hallows College, Dublin, in July 1855, he wrote: 'would to God that Irish emigrants would come to this country, instead of the United States . . . There is not a finer country in the world for a poor man to come to, especially with a family. Vast plains lying idle for the want

of hands to cultivate them, and where the government offers every protection and encouragement to the foreigner' (quoted by Ussher, *Father Fahy*, p.57).

In Buenos Aires he saw the need for schools, including boarding schools, for the children of Irish immigrants, and the need for a hospital. In 1856, the Sisters of Mercy from Baggott Street, Dublin, came to his help when five sisters, one novice and two postulants left Ireland for Buenos Aires where they took charge of the Irish Immigrant Infirmary and opened a boarding school for girls. His efforts to establish a boarding school for boys met with difficulty. It was not opened until after his death and it is now known, in his honour, as the Fahy Institute.

Fr. Fahy's pastoral care of Irish immigrants in South America was not confined to Argentina. In 1856, the year the Mercy Sisters arrived in Buenos Aires, he was asked whether he could do anything to help a few hundred Catholics, mostly Irish, who lived on the Malvinas. This group of islands, called the Falklands by the British, is situated on the southern tip of the South American continent, about two thousand kilometres from Buenos Aires. Fr. Fahy decided to visit the islands, a visit that lasted about six months. He was there on Patrick's day 1857 when a committee was formed to collect money for the building of a chapel. This chapel was later opened, dedicated to St. Mary *Stella Maris*, and it became a centre for Catholics on the island.

Fr. Fahy died on February 21st 1871, a victim of the yellow fever epidemic. He was alone as chaplain to the Irish when he arrived in 1843. By 1870, there were ten chaplaincies and twelve resident Irish priests. His care of Irish immigrants in Argentina seems to have been universal. He once described himself as 'consul, postmaster, judge, pastor, interpreter and provider of situations for all those folks'. He might have added that he was also, for many, their banker, and for all a very good friend.



Antonio Fahy
Capellán de los
Irlandeses.

Signature, Antonio Fahy, Chaplain of the Irish.

Post-Penal Church Bells

The first bell to be rung in Ireland at the end of the penal days may have been in the Claddagh. The Dominican *Galway Deposit Book* 1815-1833 refers to 'the Bell set up on the 30th March 1809, Fr. Magr. James ffrench Prior'. This was ten years before the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829, three months before Limerick's first bell, and six years before the erection of Dublin's first post-penal bell in 1815.

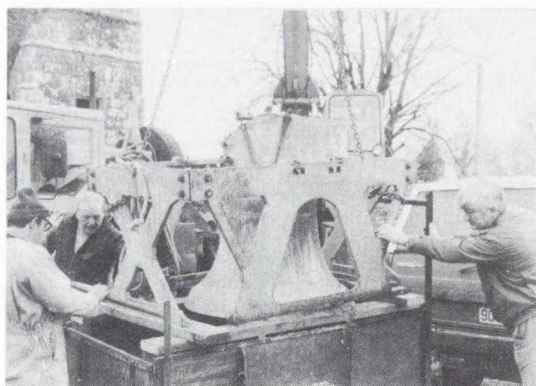
There is no reference to a bell in the earlier *Claddagh Dominican Account Book* 1727-1738. There are, however, several references to what may have been a belfry. For example:

16 October 1729 To iron for repairing the Cross on the Chapple
Pennicle 5s 5d

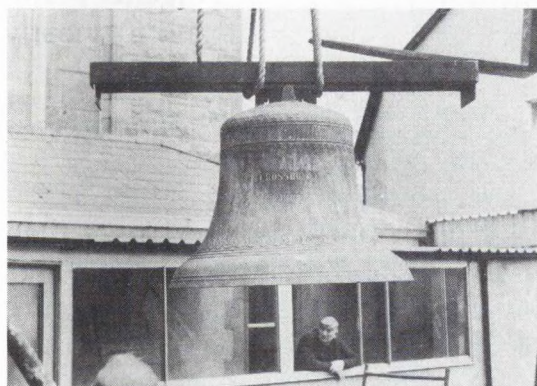
20 October 1729 To the smith for making the Cross upon the Penicle
of the chapple 2s 2d

We do not know what happened to the early bells of the Church of St. Mary on the Hill. According to a local tradition, a bell was buried for safety somewhere in the grounds and still lies hidden there.

Lenihan, in his *History of Limerick*



Removal from Crossboyne Chapel, 1990.



Lifting the bell on to Church roof, 1991.

(c.1866), refers to the excitement among Limerick Catholics when the first bell was erected. Fr. Dan Hogan of the Newgate Friary chapel was told that there was no penal law against erecting a cupola at the gable of his house and putting a bell there if he chose. And so:

'The good friar took the hint; masons and carpenters set to work; the cupola was made; the bell was placed in its position; its sounds were heard and the citizens awoke in amazement and joy, not unmixed with a nervous apprehension of the consequences, when on the 1st of June 1809 they heard the iron tongue sound for the first time within memory of the existing generation to call them to Mass. It was a most remarkable day in the annals of Limerick' (Lenihan p.420).

And Lenihan describes how Fr. Hogan, doubtless with tongue in cheek, explained to the constabulary that his housekeeper was a bit deaf and he needed the bell to wake her in the morning:

'Fr. Denis Hogan, the friend of O'Connell, a bold and courageous man, who not only put up the bell to his convent, but laughed at the garrison when they in consequence turned out, and showed the entire *posse comitatus* that he was able for them, setting their fears aside by stating that he had an old woman very deaf in his service and was obliged to put up the bell to awake her' (Lenihan, p.658)

We do not know whether Prior James ffrench of Galway made a similar excuse if the constables came to him in 1809 to ask him to explain the Claddagh bell. Or perhaps, with traditional Claddagh hospitality, he treated them with claret.

Myles V. Ronan in *An Apostle of Dublin, Fr. Henry Young* refers to Dublin's first post-penal bell (which he claims was the first in Ireland), and the first penny-a-week collection:

'St. Michael and John's was opened in 1815 with its double granite fronts in Smock-alley and Lr. Exchange St. It is the first church on record in Dublin in which the penny-a-week contribution of the poor was mainly responsible for the building. . . . In defiance of the penal code, Dr. Blake set up a bell to call the people to Mass and to toll the Angelus – the first bell set up in any Catholic place of worship in Ireland for nearly 300 years' (p.132).

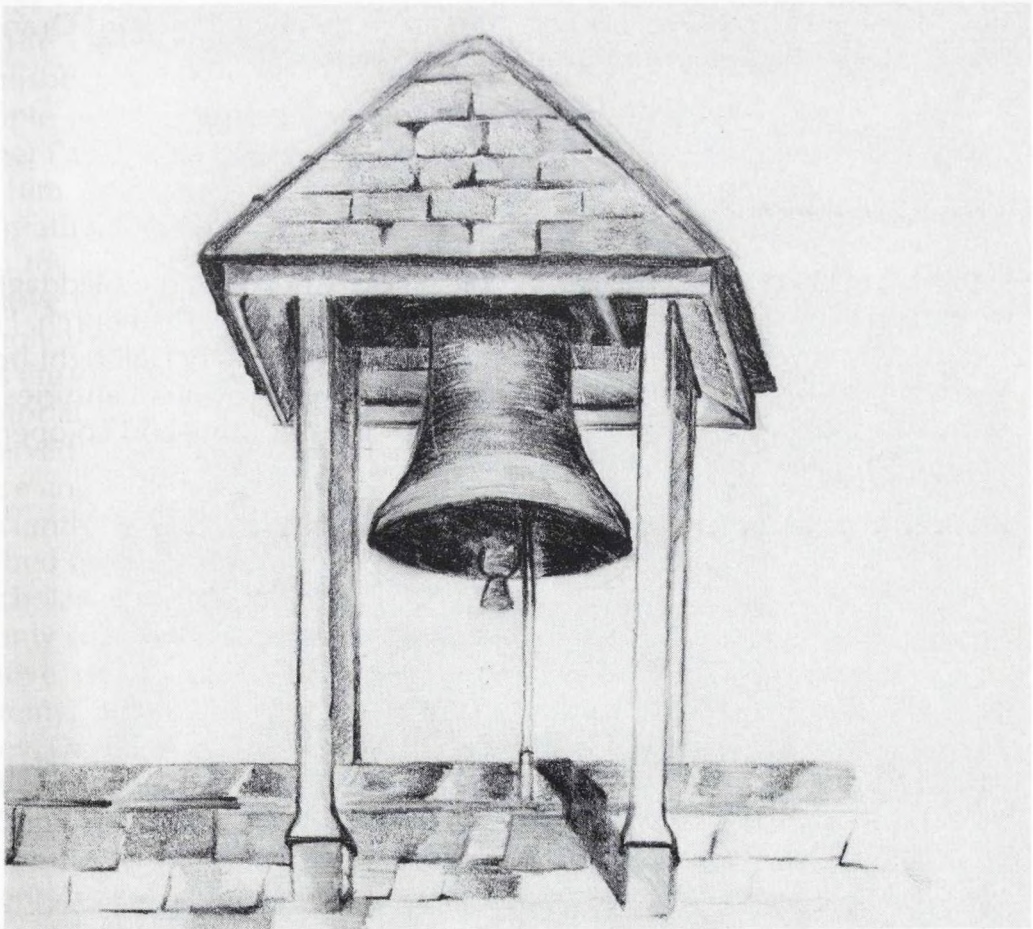
And he continues with a quotation from Bishop Donnelly's *Dublin Parishes* (11 197), referring to Orange fury about the bell:

'This audacious proceeding aroused the fury of the Orange bigots, then all-powerful in Dublin, and Alderman Carleton instituted proceedings against the offending parish priest. The latter was fortunate to secure the advocacy of Daniel O'Connell and when the alderman learned this fact he quietly climbed down and no more was heard of the matter. It was the last kick of the penal days'.

CLADDAGH BELLS FROM LATER YEARS

An entry in the House Chronicle dated July 27th 1957 (chronicler, Fr. Bernardine Kavanagh) notes:

'The wooden structure that held the Priory bell, used before the recent installation of the "electric bell", now stands at the back of the Church, with the frame of a guillotine. The bell left by rail this morning on the first stage of a journey that will bring it to Delaford Church in the Island of Tobago B.W.I. Delaford Church, now under the care of Fr. Gerard O'Keefe, O.P., a nephew of Fr. Terence O'Donoghue (prior) has no bell . . . The bell was a small one, about three feet in diameter at the base, and carries the inscription *J Murphy, Founder, Dublin 1886*. The bell has the impress of a small harp and shamrock. The present Claddagh



Centenary bell.

(Drawing: Fiona McCarthy)

Church was opened on 25 October 1891, so the bell may have been purchased about that time.

'Tradition has it that an older bell is buried someplace in the Priory graveyard, put there apparently on one of the many occasions that the Dominicans had to leave the Claddagh since their first arrival in 1488.'

Electronic Bell

In the 1950's an electronic bell was installed in the Claddagh Church, to take the place of a small bell then suspended on a simple rectangle structure in the graveyard. This was the bell sent (July 1957) to Delaford in Tobago.

Centenary Bell 1991

In 1990 Dean James Grant of Tuam gave the present of a bell to the Church of St. Mary on the Hill. It had previously been in the Church of Ireland Chapel in Crossboyne, Co Mayo, on an estate formerly owned by Lord Oranmore and Browne. The inscription on the bell reads:

*Mears et Stainbank Londini fecerunt
Laus Deo
Crossboyne
1909*

In March 1990 the bell was brought from Crossboyne to the Claddagh and placed on view on the ground outside the new porch of the church. Finally in May 1991 it was erected on the end roof of the Tertiary Hall right behind the Church. It is a reminder of the lost bells of previous centuries and, because of its origin, a symbolic prayer for greater unity and co-operation among Christians.

Father Tom Burke, O.P., 1830-1883

LUKE J. TAHENY, O.P.

In that great muster-roll of pupils whose early life was moulded and fashioned by the Patrician Brothers few can claim to have achieved such fame and greatness as that won by Father Tom Burke. Priest, patriot, orator, his name was a household word from the Thames to the Mississippi. He won the plaudits of the world and may fitly be placed among the greatest ecclesiastics of his century, yet, in the words of Father Lilly, O.P., 'he coveted no earthly distinctions, being one of the humblest and most childlike of men.' It is no empty boast to say that the seeds of his future greatness were sown by that intrepid pioneer and founder member of the Patricians in Galway, Brother Paul O'Connor.

In the divine plan of things, the Brothers were but some ten years established in Galway when Father Tom came as a pupil to their school. The example of humility, of glowing charity and the devout Christian life of Brother Paul made a profound impression on the young boy. It was to remain with him throughout all his life and was to evoke tender feelings of love and gratitude. 'When my young mind turned towards the priesthood, when my first thoughts were directed towards the sanctuary', he tells us, 'the love that grew in my heart for the sacred ministry was enkindled by the holy teachings of Brother Paul.' The second great formative influence in his life was Father Raymund Rushe, O.P., who had founded the Claddagh Piscatorial School in 1846. Among the early belongings of Father Tom is preserved a manual presented to him by Father Rushe and autographed 'My novice and child in Christ,' while Father Tom writes that he 'can never be sufficiently grateful to Father Rushe' and addresses him as 'your most attached and grateful child.'

Nicholas Antony Burke was born in Kirwan's Lane, Cross Street, in 1830, the only son of Walter Burke, master baker, and of Margaret McDonagh, a native of Moycullen. He received his early education in McGrath's Academy, in the Lombard Street School, at the establishment conducted by Rev. Dr. O'Toole, the second Vice-President of Queen's College, Galway, and finally at Michael Winter's Academy. At the age of seventeen he entered the Dominican Order and was assigned to Perugia. It is of interest to recall how on the journey through Italy he wondered if the priest in charge of students would measure up to the high standard set by Bro. Paul. 'I wonder,' he mused, 'if I can ever love him as I loved the gentle monk in Galway.' After four years in Italy he was transferred to Woodchester, Gloucestershire,

to take charge of the newly appointed novitiate, although at that time he was only in Minor Orders. In 1855 he was appointed to superintend the new Tallaght novitiate, as well as the spiritual direction of the Order's students. Here he remained for nine years until his transfer to Rome as Prior of San Clemente (1864-1867). It is of interest to add that he attended the Vatican Council of 1870 as theologian to Dr. J. P. Leahy, Bishop of Dromore.

His first return to the city of his birth was on 22 December 1853, nine months after his ordination. Although we know from his Manuscript Diaries (1851-1855) that he 'preached frequently' in England, he reserved his first sermon on Irish soil for Brother Paul's well-known charity, the Poor Children's Breakfast Fund. This sermon was preached most probably in the Pro-Cathedral. It is good to think that the complete sermon is extant, especially when we realise that there are only three complete manuscript sermons still existing (January, 1854 for Brother Paul; 1856 or 1857 for the Piscatorial School; and one for an unnamed charity). He never used a manuscript, for in the words of Father Lilly, 'his method of preparing a sermon was singular. He seldom spent more than a few minutes in considering how he would treat his subject. He mapped out briefly the ground over which he proposed to travel. I could never imagine him sitting down at a table and patiently setting down his fiery thoughts on paper.' He had returned frequently from Rome and spent his time giving missions, preaching special sermons and conducting retreats for the clergy. In 1871 during the celebrations in honour of the tricentennial anniversary of the Battle of Lepanto he preached on three successive days in the Claddagh. His parents and members of his family were present and he sent a 'special invitation to his old preceptor, Brother Paul, and his pupils of St. Joseph's Seminary.'

On the 12 October 1871 he sailed from Liverpool on the *City of London* en route for New York, where he was sent to visitate the American Dominican houses. He sought out the Irish among the impoverished steerage passengers and as Mass was forbidden on board he gathered them together for prayers and discourses. The dreadful conditions of Irish Catholics in the U.S.A. deeply moved him. Steeped in money-making and business, they had no time for religion beyond Sunday Mass and yearly Confession. 'Many Irish emigrants,' he writes, 'have got on remarkably well and made large fortunes. In proportion as they become rich (I mean very many of them) they begin to feel ashamed of Ireland, and their children still more so, and in proportion as they become unIrish they also become unCatholic.' And now began that great apostolate of preaching that won Father Tom the title of Prince of Preachers. No Irish priest with the possible exception of Father Matthew came face to face with such teeming multitudes, hungry for spiritual food,



Fr. Tom Burke O.P.: sculpture by Seán Kavanagh.

(Photograph: Liam Lyons)

and eager for a man that would champion their cause. On the advice of some friends his sermon took on a decidedly national tone, so that Irish Catholics in the States would no longer consider themselves pariahs to be both Irish and Catholic. The famous historian, James Antony Froude, was then visiting America and in his lectures cast slurs on the Irish race, belittling their faith and holding them up to ridicule. Father Tom was beseeched with requests to answer him. Totally unprepared, one might even say professionally unqualified to challenge a historian, Father Tom studied for one week in a private library, came forth to meet his adversary and, in the words of Father Lilly, 'Froude got no further than Philadelphia'. The refutation was absolute. It is of interest to recall that Father Tom dedicated his discourses to Archbishop MacHale, 'the defender of the weak and the glory of the Irish people at home and abroad.'

There are extant some eighteen letters of American Bishops praising the wonderful work of Father Burke. Dr. Alemany, O.P., of San Francisco, writing to Rome, states that 'Father Burke causes extraordinary honour to be given to the Church by his solid lectures and sermons addressed to large audiences day after day with an eloquence and power that seems supernatural. In all my life of sixty years I have never known another person that could endure so much fatigue.' Father Lilly describes his preaching thus: 'He electrified his congregation by a spontaneous outburst of eloquence. He was a born orator. He had a grand sonorous baritone voice, a fluent delivery and a splendid action. He possessed a large fund of information, a store of wonderful resources and an intimate tenderness in applying them. His dramatic power was marvellous and as a word painter I have never seen his equal.'

For almost one year and a half he preached all over the States, spending himself daily and never counting the cost, for his health was never robust. His sermons realised fifty thousand dollars, half of which he gave to his American brethren to pay long-standing debts on the churches, and the other half to defray the cost of St. Saviour's, Dublin and the Tallaght Priory. While popular accounts credit him with making double that amount, these statements cannot be substantiated, although the amount he gathered in appeals for orphanages and Catholic charities in the States is now unknown. Space prevents me from enumerating all the titles of the sermons which he preached, but a glance at some will suffice to show his wide range of subjects. They vary from sermons on 'The History or Ireland As Told In Her Ruins' to 'The National Music of Ireland,' and from 'The Immaculate Conception' to 'The Catholic Church, The Mother of Liberty.'

Like every exile, his thoughts often winged their way homewards to the city he knew and loved so well. His father died on 29 November 1872, while

Father Tom was refuting the sophistries of Froude. 'I loved,' he wrote to his sister, 'my poor father dearly, innocent mirth, sweet song,' while to Father Folan, O.P., the Prior who erected the tomb over his father, he wrote: 'I have to thank you from my heart for your loving kindness in putting a tomb around the poor old man in the West graveyard. I feel it all the more as the gift of my Alma Mater, the dear old West, where I suppose and hope that I may end my days.' His mother lived for another seven years after the death of her husband, and she is mentioned in all his letters to Bedelia, his sister who then resided at 2 Dominick Street. 'Give my love to Mama and tell her that I will come home to her as soon as ever I can.' He fulfilled that promise for he was in constant attendance at her bedside for the three months prior to her death.

When he returned to Ireland after his American mission, he was greeted with an address of welcome by Brother Paul and members of the Aloysian Society in the Lombard Street School. 'We are convinced,' so ran the address, 'that one of the brightest rays that shall illumine the pages of her history will be the record that the old Citie of the Tribes was the birthplace of him whom we have the honour of addressing to-day, who united in his character all that we admire and love in the orator, the patriot and the priest.' In his reply, Father Tom stressed the debt which he owed his aged teacher. 'Nothing,' he said, 'that I ever heard could be compared in value to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of Brother Paul.' He recalled that he was presented with an address of welcome from a Society in America which proudly bore the title of the Paul O'Connor Club and that he had met many men who always treasured the memory of the wonderful man. It must have been a proud moment for the aged Brother when he heard the priest whose name was known all over the English-speaking world declare that after God he attributed whatever fame he had achieved to the teaching of Brother Paul. 'Treasure him,' he said, 'as men treasure some unique gem, something of rare value; guard him with your prayers; surround him with your love; for, believe me, when Brother Paul goes it will be long until Galway sees his like again.' And when God called him to his final reward Father Tom could declare that his life was 'the exemplification of the life of Jesus Christ. To me the sight of Brother Paul was always an impressive sermon.'

After his return to Ireland Father Tom was assigned to Tallaght Priory where he spent the last ten years of his life (1873-1883). He frequently went to Rome where it was hoped that the warm climate would improve his rapidly deteriorating health, but nevertheless these years were one incessant round of preaching. He tells us in one letter that he spent fifteen hours in the Confessional Box in one day alone during a parish mission in England. So it was but natural that 'his powers were recklessly drawn upon every day

and his strength poured out like wine for the nourishment of the needy and the poor.' After the sermon which he preached on May 24, 1883 at the opening of the London Dominican Priory, the English Provincial stated that 'the shadow of death was upon him as he came and though suffering acutely he preached to us no less than five times, rising from his bed of sickness to do so.' Despite the signals of approaching death, when the clarion call came forth to help, Father Tom was there once again to answer. Five thousand children in Donegal were starving and he was implored to help with a charity sermon. 'Three times I took up my pen,' he writes, 'to say that I could not come and each time it fell from my hand as I heard the cries of the famishing ones asking for bread. I weighed their lives in the balance with my own; theirs were five thousand and mine was only one.' Is there not here an echo of St. Patrick hearing the voices of the Gael begging the young Apostle to come and walk once more amongst them? Is there not also an echo of the moral courage of that devout son of St. Patrick who came to our city in its dark days and answered the cries of the children who also were starved for a Catholic education?

This memorable and touching sermon preached on 22 June 1883 was surely his own panegyric, for within ten days he was dead. 'As soon as he opened his lips,' wrote a reporter from the *Freeman's Journal*, 'a sympathetic thrill passed through all present. The fascination of an eloquent tongue which may be said to have moved the entire world was again felt and the congregation appeared literally spellbound. He said he had at first been anxious owing to his increasing infirmities that some other voice should advocate their cause; he only regretted that he could not speak at more length and with greater energy, but a cause like this required neither length of time nor efforts of eloquence. He left their cause before the altar of God.' One hundred and twelve pounds were collected in the sacristy for the children.

He returned to Tallaght, the house of which he was a founding member, to die. His condition was full of pain, amounting at times to intense agony. Frequently he called upon Mary, Queen of Christians, to come to his aid as the Fathers recited the prayers for the dying and solemnly chanted the *Salve Regina*. Now in truth could he sing his *Nunc Dimittis* for the servant was ready to meet his Lord. And then death came. The voice of the Prince of Preachers was silenced forever; the golden-tongued orator who had thrilled thousands with the beauty of his thoughts and the eloquence of his language was to speak no more. He was laid to rest in the Church since dedicated to his memory, far away from the West where rest his parents and sisters and his own beloved teacher, Brother Paul.

Claddagh Cemetery Book

1843-1881

A cemetery book may be nothing more than a list of names and the date of burials. The Claddagh Cemetery Book 1843-1881, the only one to survive in Galway's West Convent archives, is different. In its own small way it reflects aspects of life in the Claddagh Village during the period, including the hardship caused by famine and cholera.

In 1846, for example, there were 58 burials in the Claddagh cemetery. In the following year, 'black '47', the number increased by almost five hundred per cent, to 258. February, March, April and May were the most severe months, and the reaction of the record keeper is seen for example in an entry he made after the names of a married couple on March 25th: 'Both died on the same day from want'.

In 1848 the number of burials dropped to 73, although still above the average of the pre-famine years. Then in 1849 cholera struck the Claddagh and the burials again increased. There is a clear difference, however, between the two tragic years. It seems that children got what little food was available during the famine and they are not high on the list of deaths. Cholera made no distinction between young and old. So many children died in 1849 that it was impossible, apparently, to record all their names. The cemetery book notes simply the number of children buried on a particular day, with more detail about the adults – probably a parent or members of their family – buried with them.

In recording burials during the cholera epidemic, whoever made the entries wrote 'cholera' in large letters across the pages of the book. This single word reflects his feelings even more sharply than any comment he wrote during the famine year.

From 21 September 1871 the cemetery book notes the age of the person who is being buried, and the cause of death. Between that date and the end of December 1872, sixty-three burials took place, but it is not easy to classify accurately the illnesses from which people died. 'Fever', for example, is given as the cause of three deaths, without any indication of the nature of the fever, and it is possible that it should be bracketed with other illnesses listed.

The highest single cause of death in that fourteen-month period was consumption from which eleven people were said to have died, most of them young. Next highest (nine deaths) is 'old age'. Six people died from heart disease, five children from 'convulsions', three people from 'paralysis' and

three from 'poverty'. Two died from asthma, 'diarrhea', jaundice, and 'worm fever'. Two died from drowning, and two women in childbirth. Included in the causes of death in individual cases were 'gravel', scarlatina, 'purging', chest disease, pleurisy, rheumatism, 'swelling', bronchitis, cancer and 'ague'.

Not surprisingly in a record of deaths in the Claddagh Village, there were several references to drowning. Some of them were fishermen in Galway Bay. On 2 February, for example, the book notes that 'these three fishermen were drowned in a squall of wind off Barna, herring fishing'. They were Michael Reny, Michael Connor and Charles Henry (Heary?).

The last entry in the cemetery book was on 9 November 1881. Only a short period is covered, from 1843 to 1881, but it is a mirror of life, and death, in contemporary Galway.

547 Martin Hourke	Claddagh	14	"
548 Ellen Keane	Bushypark	15	"
549 W. Mollay	Down	16	"
550 Bridget Kelly	Claddagh	16	"
551 Dennis Maher	Renmore	16	"
552 Patt Devine	Claddagh	17	"
553 Mary O'Neill	do	21	"
554 Peggy Connolly	do	21	"
555 Nighl M'Donnough	do	21	"
556 Niki Fahy +	do	21	"
557 Ellen Fahy	do	22	"
558 Michael Moran +	Shillalah	23	"
559 Bridget Sullivan	Claddagh	23	"
560 Mary Connolly	Wood Quay	24	"
561 Margaret Corley	Kelly's Lane	24	"
562 W. A.	W. A.		

Cholera April -

From the Claddagh Cemetery Book. Note the cause of death, cholera, written-in on right hand side.

Dominican Tertiary Hall 1957

The Dominican family consists of priests, brothers, nuns, sisters, and the Dominican laity. The four groups are united, with mutual support, in their efforts to exercise the apostolate outlined by St. Dominic and St. Catherine and interpreted by the Dominican saints.

The 'Tertiary Hall' at the back of the Claddagh church was built by Prior Terence O'Donoghue, and opened in June 1957, principally as a meeting place for the Dominican laity. The hall contains six remarkable windows. The first four represent the preparation of the laity to share in the pastoral ministry of the Dominican Order. The remaining two reflect some aspects of the apostolate of the full Dominican family.

Entrance to the hall, situated on the second floor of the building behind the church, is through the door near the sacristy.

There are five single-light windows on the south side of the hall, and one three-light window on the north side. Rather more colour has been used in this sixth window, not only to suit the subject but also because of the greater extent of glass. The windows were designed by Fr. John Heuston, O.P.

First Window

St. Dominic gives a processional cross to a kneeling lay Dominican brother. The lily cross, each piece of which terminates in a fleur-de-lys, is the emblem of the Dominican laity. It seems to have been adopted because of the very close connection of the Order in the thirteenth century with St. Louis, King of France. In the head of the window is the star of St. Dominic which appears as the crest in the arms of the Order. It is an eight-pointed star, symbolising the eight beatitudes at the heart of Christian living.

Second Window

St. Catherine of Siena gives a breviary to a seated lay Dominican sister. St. Catherine often recited her office with Jesus, walking in the cloisters of the church. The office is composed mainly from the psalms of David and so the head of the window contains a Jewish psalter.

Third Window

St. Dominic puts his own rosary into the hands of a lay Dominican brother.

Fourth Window

St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, who spent most of his life preaching the

rosary and devotion to Mary, binds the hands of a lay Dominican with the chains of his 'slavery of Mary'. The crescent moon is over his head.

Fifth Window

Two lay Dominicans set out on their Dominican work. The brother sows the seed as he walks along: 'Now the seed is the word of God' (Mt. 13). The sister carries a lantern: 'Lamps burning in your hands. Let your light shine before men'. They work under the arms of the lay Dominicans.

Sixth Window

This three-light window is based on the medieval legend which tells of St. Dominic having a vision of heaven but failing to see any of his followers there. Mary spreads open her mantle and shows them safely under it. The window, however, is not meant to represent the legend. The figures are the Dominican family to-day engaged in their ordinary Dominican activity: a priest who has been studying, a nun in contemplative prayer, a lay brother engaged in manual work, a 'tertiary' priest reading his breviary, a brother saying his office, and a sister saying the rosary. Without them being aware of it, Mary spreads her protecting mantle over them.

The faces are drawn from real life: prior Terence O'Donoghue (priest with book), Mother Bernard Heuston, prioress Taylor's Hill convent (nun in contemplative prayer), Fr. John Heuston, O.P. (lay brother with sweeping brush), Bishop Michael Browne ('Third Order' priest reading his breviary), and architect Simon Kelly (a lay Dominican brother saying his office). The lay Dominican sister saying the rosary has not been identified.

The Statue of St. Martin de Porres O.P., at the Claddagh

DESMOND EGAN

James Mc Kenna sculpted his *Naomh Máirtín de Porres* from a slab of Dublin 'grey' granite which came from Walsh's quarry at Ballyedmunduff. The finished work stands six feet high from its own base, is something less than three feet wide and weighs in the region of one and a half tons. Mc Kenna received the commission from Fr. Jim Harris O.P., Prior of the Claddagh Dominicans, in June 1988 and worked on the piece fairly constantly between then and the following April when the completed sculpture was erected. Sculptors generally do not sign their work (a convention which I find irritating) and to the best of my knowledge this is the only piece by Mc Kenna to bear his signature.

THE SCULPTOR

Born in Wicklow, James Mc Kenna lived mostly in Dublin but has lately moved to Co. Kildare, outside Droichead Nua. He is a highly respected artist and has exhibited fairly regularly, though sparingly – most recently in the international exhibition, *Espace*, where his work excited much admiration and was considered by some the highlight of the show. Mc Kenna sculpture on public view may be seen in Dublin (at Thomas St., Sandyford Mint and Dublin Airport); Limerick (University of Limerick, Thomond College); Sligo (Hazelwood); Monasterevin (the Gerard M. Hopkins monument); Kells; Kildare; Athlone (Cornamagh); Milltownmalbay (the Willie Clancy plaque); Laois ('The Four Masters' on a bridge on the river Droghais); Peterswell . . . A Catalogue commemorating the many facets of his genius was published by The Goldsmith Press in 1985. He has been described by the Art critic of *The Irish Times* as 'the finest stone sculptor' we have – but his work in other media, and especially in wood, is equally outstanding.

Mc Kenna has also, of course, made his reputation as a dramatist: since its initial success at Dublin Theatre Festival, *The Scatterin'* has been regularly performed, while other plays (all of them passionately concerned with the values of modern Ireland) have won awards and been staged and broadcast. Mc Kenna even ran his own theatre company in the seventies, during which



Naomh Máirtín de Porres O.P.: sculpture by James Mc Kenna.

(Photograph: Liam Lyons)

time his *Poems* were published. There is no more gifted, vital or important artist working in Ireland today.

ST. MARTIN DE PORRES

An 'illegitimate' child, Martin was born in Lima, Peru, in 1579; the son of Juan de Porres, a Spanish nobleman (who later became Governor of Panama) and Anna, a negro slave. Juan and Anna also had a daughter, Juana. Juan soon abandoned the children and their mother to a life of grinding poverty in Lima – but re-emerged six years later, brought the children back with him to Ecuador, and had them taught to read and write. When de Porres became Governor, Martin went back to Lima as apprentice to a barber-surgeon. At fifteen he joined the Dominican Third Order as a tertiary or *donatus*, with a status lower than that of Brother. Soon he became noted for the austerity of his life and for his compassion towards the poor. After a long (for those times) and holy life, he died in Lima in 1639, in his sixtieth year. Gradually his reputation for holiness spread beyond Peru; it received final recognition when in 1962 Pope John XXIII declared him a saint.

Even before his canonisation, 'Blessed Martin' was very popular in Ireland. Why? His sanctity, of course, and the Dominican connection (insofar as there is any distinction between the two!) – but I think Irish people also responded to his picaresque background and to the fact that he was an outsider, the sort of heroic under-dog we have always admired. In many ways he seems one of ourselves.

THE SCULPTURE

Mc Kenna depicts Martin in the act of pouring soup into the bowl of a hungry child while laying a comforting hand on the youngster's head.

The Saint's face arrests our attention: absorbed, gentle, compassionate. Though possessing a transcendent quality, the face is particularised too: it has that individuality through which alone a universal insight may be glimpsed. So Mc Kenna subtly suggests Martin's mulatto appearance without dwelling too much upon it or making it a distraction since this statue is more concerned with the inner than with the outer man. Again, Martin had a certain quietness in his ways, adverted-to by those who knew him; one can catch it here. The Dominican habit is in evidence, and the labourer's *mein* – but Mc Kenna invests the whole figure with such spirituality (I know no other word for it) that the externals of Martin's life are subsumed into it.

The striking dignity of the figure, perhaps the first quality which communicates itself to the viewer, clearly flows from this. Martin comes across not only as an individual but as a moving embodiment of compassion and indeed of the human spirit itself which, touched by that of Christ, moves beyond the tragic particularities of living to a vision which can face and even surmount them. The child is part of the mystery, part of Martin himself, and the Saint recognises this.

Look at Martin's left hand: notice how it lies on the child's head with such massive authority that it fuses the two figures, giver and taker, introducing them together into the same mysterious process of human suffering and longing. At the same time, the Saint's huge right hand becomes an organ of giving. He pours more than soup into the bowl of a starving child: he spills his whole life into the service of vulnerable humanity. Again compare the face of the child with that of Martin. They look in two different directions; they belong to two levels of understanding: the child trapped by his immediate, terrifying need (and there is terror in that face), while Martin totally sympathises with and at the same time somehow transcends it. Even as he offers food, he seems to embody the truth, 'Not on bread alone doth man live.'

His expression has that calmness in it and that profound strength. An astonishing face; the face of a holy person. We have here no conventional statue but a work which both challenges and uplifts: a work of art.

This magnificent sculpture is a long way from repository art (something sentimental and of the surface of things, inferior journalism). It seems quite clear that Mc Kenna was genuinely touched by St. Martin's religious piety and by his marvellous humanity (if there is any difference).

Hard to avoid that misunderstood term, inspiration, without which one is left with mere technical skill (the world is full of it) or fake as opposed to genuine emotion – the kind which radiates from this work. Consequently, it has so much energy and inventiveness that one can and indeed should view the piece from every angle, admiring the originality of its concept, the constant surging of interesting shapes (here Mc Kenna has nothing to learn from the abstractionists), its lyrical simplicity – so in keeping with the character of Martin – and of course the authority of it all. One can confidently say, without fully understanding the rich poetry of *Naomh Máirtín* (if one did, it would be a failure, without life) that it could not be changed in any way, could not be other than it is.

The sculpture also has another kind of importance. It asserts the figurative, the human dimension, at a time when sculpture in general and Irish sculpture too has begun to make the *material* the whole point, as though formal considerations alone had significance, with little or no thought for



content: the decadence, the despair of so much purely abstract art. I agree with the French philosopher Simone Weil that the great disaster of modern times has been the gradual erosion of the idea of *value*. Mc Kenna could not be accused of such a betrayal of the responsibility of the artist. Interestingly, his work – both here and elsewhere – seems in some ways to advert to the earlier Irish representational genius which developed out of the Celtic; and to re-establish continuity.

I would like to congratulate the Dominicans of Galway for having brought such a stunning piece of work to the Claddagh. In doing so they too have helped renew another kind of continuity, one, alas, almost broken in our time: that of the link between the Church and the finest art of the age.

New Pipe Organ: 1989 Church of St. Mary on the Hill

The following comment on the pipe organ has been contributed by Ernie Crone and Colin Davidson, Irish Organ Company, Antrim:

Because the organ in church proclaims the glory of the creator, it has been called the second pulpit. Properly played it can inspire a vision of spiritual grandeur, of the indescribable, a vision beyond the compass of mere words. Not for any trivial reason has it been called the King of Instruments.

A well designed organ satisfies visual sensibilities and laws of acoustics. The visible front pipes in the organ case at St. Mary's are a mixture of speaking pipes, actual notes, and dummies just for display.

In designing the new organ, the organ-builders have trodden the well trodden and clearly defined path laid out by masters of prior ages. In voicing



Claddagh Church Choir, 1991.

(Photograph: *The Connacht Tribune*)

the pipes, that great tonal artist Mr. Arthur Watson, who has devoted a long life to enriching the world with beautiful sound, was also following worthily in the steps of great masters before him. The other expert craftsmen, Ernie Crone, Colin Davidson and William Davidson, head of the Irish Organ Company, were doing likewise, each in his own field of skill.

The finality is but one facet of the much beautified and enriched church for the worship of God.

St. Mary's new organ contains five basic ranks, or sets, of pipes, 16ft Bourdon, 8ft Geigen Principal, 8ft Salicional, and an 8ft Trumpet. These are distributed by the unit extension system to yield twenty-six sounding stops playable on two manual keyboards and one pedal board, all of full compass.

The extension system is a technical subterfuge that, tastefully designed and used, greatly expands the musical possibilities of a mere handful of well voiced pipes. The effect is, very roughly, that of an instrument having four times as many pipes. The organ in St. Mary's has 420 pipes.

The organ, built by the Irish Organ Company of Antrim, contains the following stops and accessories:

Manual Compass CC-C.	61 Notes.
Pedal Compass CCC-F.	30 Notes.

Great Organ	Open Diapson.	8ft.
	Stopped Diapson.	8ft.
	Salicional.	8ft.
	Principal.	4ft.
	Nason Flute.	4ft.
	Twelfth.	2 $\frac{2}{3}$ ft.
	Fifteenth.	2ft.
	Trumpet.	8ft.
	Clarion.	4ft.
Swell Organ	Contra Salicional.	16ft. T.C.
	Geigen Principal.	8ft.
	Leiblich Gedact.	8ft.
	Salicional.	8ft.
	Leiblich Flute.	4ft.
	Gemshorn.	4ft.
	Nazard.	2 $\frac{2}{3}$ ft.
	Piccolo.	2ft.
	Fifteenth.	2ft.
	Trumpet.	8ft.

Pedal Organ	Bourdon.	16ft.
	Bass Flute.	8ft.
	Octave.	8ft.
	Salicional.	8ft.
	Flute.	4ft.
	Principal.	4ft.
	Trumpet.	8ft.
Couplers	Swell to Great.	
	Great to pedal.	
	Swell to Pedal.	
Accessories	4 Thumb pistons to Swell Organ	
	4 Thumb pistons to Great Organ.	
	General Cancel piston.	
	Tremulant.	
	Detached Stopkey Console.	
	Electro-Pneumatic Action.	
	Discus Blower. Transformer Rectifier Unit.	
	Radiating & Concave Pedals.	
	Balanced Swell Pedal.	
	420 Pipes.	
Basic Ranks	Pitch: C-523.2 Hz.	
	Tuning: Equal Temperament.	
	Wind Pressure: 3.75" wg.	
	Bourdon 16ft. wood & metal (enclosed right side.)	
	Open Diapson 8ft. spotted metal (open left side.)	
	Geigen Principal 8ft. metal (enclosed right side.)	
	Salicional 8ft. zinc & metal (enclosed right side.)	
	Trumpet 8ft. metal (enclosed right side.)	

Blessing of Galway Bay

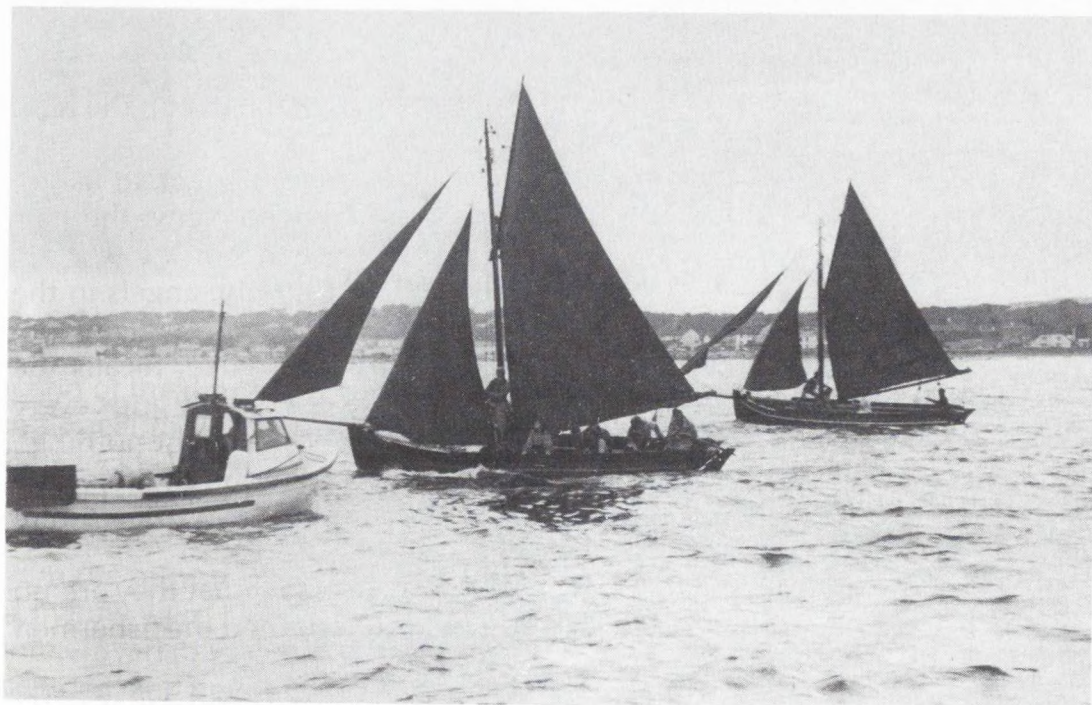
On a Sunday in mid-August near the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, crowds come to the Claddagh for the age-old blessing of Galway Bay.

About this date the herring season opens, and most probably the ceremonial blessing of the bay originated in the wish of Claddagh fishing folk to get God's blessing on their work, and his help in bringing their light hookers and currachs safely home after each voyage.

Only a few boats now remain of the once famous Claddagh fishing fleet. In mid-August, they are joined by the motor trawlers that have replaced them, and with an escort of yachts and smaller pleasure craft they sail out into Galway Bay.

There the ringing of a bell is the signal to form a wide circle around the boat that carries the altar boys and choir from the Claddagh Church, St. Mary on the Hill, and a Dominican priest whose Order has been associated with the Claddagh fishing village for over 500 years.

The beauty of the ceremony that follows is its stark simplicity. A passage from the Gospel of St. John recalls the scene on the Sea of Galilee when



Galway hookers join in the blessing of the Bay. (Photograph: *The Connacht Tribune*)



Prior James Harris O.P. at the blessing of the Bay. (Photograph: Private Collection)

Jesus went fishing with the apostles and told them: 'cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find'.

They did as they were told and Peter drew in the net 'full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty three. And although there were so many, the nets were not broken'.

Then the *Benedicite* canticle calls on all creation, from the angels in the height of heaven down to the fish in the depths of the sea, to give glory to God. And another Gospel extract, this time from St. Luke, recalls the weariness and frustration that gripped St. Peter as it occasionally grips every fisherman: 'Master, we have laboured all night and have caught nothing'.

But at the Master's request, he let down the nets once more, and this time they were so filled with fish that he had to call another boat to help him and 'the two boats were filled with fish'.

For a moment, those who follow the ceremony may feel that they are no longer in Galway Bay but on the Sea of Galilee with Jesus and the fishermen who were his friends.

Meanwhile, as he stands at the mast of the boat in the centre of that circle of ships, the Dominican priest has prayed: Increase, we beseech you, O

Lord God, your mercy towards us and even as you multiplied five loaves and two fish to satisfy the hunger of five thousand, so now please multiply for our use the fish that are generated in these waters, so that we, experiencing your goodness, may give you thanks and praise your holy name'.

At the end, almost unexpectedly, he calls on Mary, Queen of the Sea, to plead for her children. Those familiar with the writings of St. Bernard will remember his words: 'When you are tossed about among the storms and tempests of life, look to the star, call upon Mary'.

The *Magnificat* is sung and the sea is sprinkled with holy water. The last



Fr. Declan Geraghty O.P. with some First Communicants.

action of the dramatic ceremony is a sign of the Cross over the fishing fields, an appeal to God to bless them and the men who fish them, their boats, their tackle and all their labours.

The blessing over, the boats usually make a short trip around the bay before turning for home.

On the outward journey, the sound of the Rosary in Irish and the singing of hymns were heard over the water. Now popular songs sound a lighter note. Invariably, *Galway Bay* and *Here's a Toast to you, Claddagh* are included, and perhaps, if Molly Browne is on board, *The Laughing Policeman*. The motor-driven boats make their way back to the docks, with the white-sailed yachts following gently in their wake. But the few remaining brown-sailed gleotogs and puchans – and with luck, a hooker – move home to

the Claddagh, gracefully and proudly like dark swans on the water. The trawlers have replaced them on the fishing fields but these old Claddagh boats are still an integral part in the pageantry of the blessing of the bay.

In its own way the changed pattern of the ships that take part in the blessing of the bay reflects the change that has taken place in Galway's fishing industry.

Once there were over 200 boats in Galway's fishing fleet, and when the Claddagh boats were home in harbour they were so tightly packed that it was possible to walk from one arm of the harbour to another by stepping from deck to deck. In those days it must have been an impressive sight to watch the whole fleet leave for the blessing of the bay.

In August 1941, an entry in the house chronicle of St. Mary on the Hill recalls that only 18 hookers sailed out that year. Yet a new era in fishing had already begun, for the chronicle adds: 'for the second time in history motor driven trawlers participated in the ceremony'.

After the war, Scottish trawlers that came into harbour in Galway joined enthusiastically in the blessing of the bay. Now the green trawlers based in Galway docks are the hope of a new vitality in an age-old fishing tradition.

One may feel a touch of nostalgia as one stands outside the Church of St. Mary on the Hill and looks across at the few remaining Claddagh boats in the 'basin'. They are a link with great days that have passed.

However, although the external pattern of the blessing of the bay may change, even though brown-sailed hookers have been replaced by motor-driven trawlers, Galway fishermen still feel the need to ask God's blessing on themselves and on their work.

The Dominicans

Cardinal Villot once described St. Dominic as 'stupifyingly free'. For Dominic, freedom of spirit was not an accident but deliberate choice, an apostolic tool. His itinerant lifestyle, an openness to new ideas, study in the service of preaching, a democratic system of government, the law of dispensation, and his insistence on mobility, are all aspects of his conviction of the need for apostolic freedom – the freedom to preach and the ability to read the signs of the time and adapt to them. As Henri Lacordaire said, 'it is the grace of understanding the present century', of pondering the mind of Christ for the world of today.



Fr. Aidan McGovern O.P. with Patrick Oliver.

(Photograph: *Connacht Tribune*)

For the first four hundred years, the Master of the Dominican Order was an itinerant, consistently on the move, visiting the members of the Order throughout the world. Government was not to be wielded from the centre; rather it was to be exercised at the level of the local community. Creativity is not initiated from the top but in the roots. And so the Master did not issue decrees but as an itinerant lived among the members of the Order. A truly strange system! At the time of the Reformation this tradition was lost for an extended period. Yet, itinerancy is an essential ingredient of the role of

the Master in the Order of Preachers. While the Dominican Constitutions endow the Master with extensive power he does not wield his authority as power but more as an animator and brother. In a unique way he calls Dominicans to their vocation and encourages them . . . towards greater commitment to the four priorities set before members of the Order. Rooted in the Dominican tradition, these are:

1. A catechesis directed to a de-Christianized culture and environment, a secularized Christianity.
2. The philosophical and theological investigation of cultures, intellectual systems, and non-Christian religious traditions.
3. Justice in the world – a critical analysis of the origins, forms and structures of injustice in contemporary society, and evangelical activities for the integral liberation of humankind.
4. The integration of the means of social communication in the preaching of the word of God.



Directors of the Dominican Penny Bank. Front (left to right): Paddy Doherty, Teresa McNamara, Brod Long, Michael O'Farrell; back: Brian Carpenter, Tom Cox.

(Photograph: *The Connacht Tribune*)

Extract from the Introduction (by Simon Roche, O.P.) to *A Pilgrimage of Faith* (1991) by Fr. Damian Byrne O.P.

Fr. Damian Louis Byrne, O.P.

MASTER OF THE DOMINICAN ORDER

Fr. Damian was elected Master of the Order and 83rd successor of St. Dominic in September 1983. Only one other Irishman, Fr. Michael Browne, later Cardinal, held this high Dominican office.

Louis Byrne was born at 2, Prospect Hill, Galway, son of Louis and Mary Byrne. Later the family moved briefly to Abbeygate Street, and then to Beattystown where his mother still lives.

Louis received his secondary education in two local colleges, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. After leaving school he spent two years in Galway as a clerk with Coras Iompair Éireann.

In 1949 he entered the Dominican Order, in the novitiate in Cork. He was ordained priest in July 1955.

After completing his studies he spent some years in Newbridge College and in Tallaght. In 1963 he returned to his native city as Prior of the West Convent. In 1965, before the end of his term of office, he was one of a small group who went to Argentina to open a Dominican house in Recreo, Catamarca. In preparation for this work they spent some time studying Spanish and South American culture in a school for missionaries in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

This was the beginning of many years at work on the missions. From Argentina he went to Trinidad, where he was Vicar-Provincial, and then, an unusual appointment for an Irishman, to the Mexican province as Provincial. From Mexico he returned to Ireland where he was elected Provincial.

Those who knew Fr. Damian, his personal qualities, his background of wide experience, and the effective leadership he had given often in difficult circumstances, were not surprised when he was elected Master of the Order in September 1983. Since then he has visited more than eighty countries, most recently Eastern Europe and Russia, areas from which his predecessors had been barred for many decades.

It is a happy coincidence that this year, the first centenary of the opening of the present Claddagh Dominican Church, the third replacement of the original chapel of St. Mary on the Hill, Fr. Damian has published his *Pilgrimage of Faith*. It is mainly a collection of letters written to the Dominican Order since his election as Master. They deal with the Dominican tradition, and with the priorities set before members of the Order, and they reflect

the experience of years he spent in Argentina, the West Indies, Mexico and Ireland, before he was elected Master of the Order.

In the five centuries since the Dominicans from Athenry took possession of the Church of St. Mary on the Hill, many Galway Dominicans were well known nationally and internationally. We think, for example, of Warden Edmund French who became Bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, Fr. Tom Burke, the 'prince of preachers', who worked on the continent and preached throughout the United States, and Fr. Dominic Fahy, apostle of Irish emigrants in Argentina. No Galway Dominican, however, has exercised a wider apostolate than Fr. Damian Byrne.



Fr. Damian Byrne O.P. and Pope John Paul II.

(Photograph: *L'Osservatore Romano*)

A Century of Claddagh Priors

1891 – 1991

1886-1892	Fr. Dominic McCarthy
1892-1893	Fr. Pius V. Kenny
1893-1896	Fr. Augustine Coveney
1896	Fr. Pius Boylan
1896-1902	Fr. Ceslaus J. Lyons
1902-1908	Fr. J. Dominic Barry
1908-1914	Fr. G. Raymond O'Sullivan
1914-1921	Fr. Thomas Alphonsus Tighe
1921-1924	Fr. William Stephens
1924-1930	Fr. J. Alphonsus O'Reilly
1930-1933	Fr. M. Stephen Conlon
1933-1939	Fr. Stephen Glendon
1939-1942	Fr. Joachim O'Sullivan
1942-1948	Fr. Louis H. McGauran
1948-1952	Fr. Dominic Matthew Fahy
1952-1958	Fr. Terence O'Donoghue
1958-1963	Fr. Joseph Moran
1963-1965	Fr. Damian Byrne
1965-1975	Fr. Albert C. O'Beirne
1975-1980	Fr. Kieran P. Duggan
1980-1986	Fr. Raymond Watters
1986	Fr. James C. Harris

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CLADDAGH DOMINICAN COMMUNITY, 1991

Front row: Walter O'Brien, Enda Hourigan, James Harris (Prior), Declan Geraghty, Nicholas Folan.
Back row: Eustas O Héideáin, John O'Reilly, Mark MacGreevy, Vincent Brennan, Aidan McGovern.

(Photo: The Connacht Tribune)



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The Editor, Eustás Ó Héideáin, O.P., is Emeritus Professor of Education, University College Galway. For many years he has been interested in the history of the Dominicans in Galway, introduced to it by that great historian, the late Fr. Luke Taheny, O.P.

The Editor often wished he had one book which brought together information about Galway Dominicans that was scattered through many books, lectures, house chronicles and archives. Eventually he decided to try writing that book himself. And here it is. It does not claim to be complete and comprehensive; nor does it work its way relentlessly from 1241 to 1991. It is an unusual kind of book that one can begin reading at almost any chapter, even the last.