

Roman Catholic Clergy of St. Mary's Parish (Part 2)

Succession of Curates in St. Mary's Parish until 1900

by John Carroll

1704 – John Connellan was registered as P.P. of the parish of St. Nicholas in the North Liberties of Limerick in 1704. He was ordained by Dr. James Whelan at Kilkenny. In 1709 he took the Oath of Abjuration (loyalty to the Crown), became P.P. of St. Munchin's parish and acted as curate to Fr. William Ryan, P.P. of St. Mary's parish. Fr. Connellan had the reputation of being an excellent pastor. A native of County Clare, he died in 1722 and is buried in St. Mary's Cathedral on the south side of the graveyard.

1727 – Martin Geron of the diocese of Killaloe was probably Fr. Matthew Geron who was indicted in the Grand Jury Book in July 1725 for celebrating Mass. At this time he is described as being a working priest in the city.¹ He was chosen as coadjutor pastor of St. Mary's parish in 1727 as Fr. Ryan P.P. was failing in health. Fr. Geron became a great favourite with his new parishioners and retained the parish until 1730 when serious accusations were brought against him by Messrs. John Flynn and Darby Flannedy. Lawsuits ensued on both sides and in 1732 he was suspended from duty by Dr. O'Keeffe, Bishop of Limerick.²

1738 – James White began his preliminary studies under Rev. Thomas Gorman, S.J. who opened a school at Limerick in 1728. He then proceeded to the College of Salamanca (Spain) where he completed his studies with remarkable success and returned a sub-deacon aged twenty-one. Though he had not reached the age of priesthood he had to leave the college, as no student was retained after six years, according to the rules of the house. He was ordained on Christmas Day, 1738 by Dr. Robert Lacy, the newly-appointed Bishop of Limerick. Fr. White received permission to hear confessions and answer sick calls in St. Mary's parish where he spent his life as a good and faithful pastor.³ His death took place on 7 February 1768 in the thirtieth year

of his priesthood aged fifty-three years. He employed his leisure moments in literary pursuits and having acquired a considerable amount of information on the diocese, he documented it in annalistic form which fortunately has been preserved and helps to illuminate a very dark period of our history.⁴ The papers, known as the 'White Papers', help preserve his name for posterity.⁵

1741 – Michael McMahon was P.P. of the parish of St. Nicholas up to 1741 when he also became Vicar of St. Mary's parish.⁶ St. Nicholas's parish seems to have been incorporated into St. Mary's parish around 1749. A Franciscan pastor, he was much esteemed by the priests of the city and respected by the people until his death which occurred in August 1750. He was buried in St. John's (old) graveyard.⁷

1750 – John Casey is mentioned in the parochial records of 1750 as having performed a number of baptisms and marriages at the parish church and continues to be frequently recorded until the latter part of 1755. He probably ministered as an assistant priest in the parish and may also have served simultaneously, in the same role, in St. Munchin's parish. He was a Franciscan and in 1766 is recorded as residing at the Castle Friary, where the Limerick Franciscans were based at that time. Another Franciscan, Fr. Cornelius Ryan, was also residing at Castle Friary in 1766 and may too have ministered in the parish.⁸ At this time due to persecution and scarcity of secular priests, assistance from pastors attached to religious orders was often required in order for parishes to function. The Franciscans later moved to Newgate Lane, where they resided until 1822.

1755 – Laurence O'Connell was a young priest of great zeal. In 1756 he was removed from St. Mary's parish to St.

John's parish, where he died in 1758 aged thirty-two years.⁹

1756 – Thomas Walsh, an Augustinian priest was appointed to succeed Fr. O'Connell.¹⁰ Born in 1721, he studied at Valladolid (Spain), was ordained there in 1748 and subsequently returned to Limerick to serve with the Augustinians at Creagh Lane. He ministered there until 1756 when he was appointed C.C. of St. Mary's parish at the request of Bishop Lacy. He was still administering in the parish in 1780. He died in August 1793 and was a zealous missionary.¹¹

1768 – Denis Conway, D.D. was a native of the Newcastle West area. He studied at Louvain, was ordained in 1753 and returned to Limerick in 1758 when he was appointed C.C. of Glin. After a short time in Glin he was transferred to St. John's parish and in the early 1760's took up pastoral duty at St. Patrick's parish until his appointment to St. Mary's parish as senior curate in 1768, succeeding Fr. White. In 1771 he was appointed P.P. of Rathkeale and also became Vicar General. In January 1779 he was appointed Bishop of Limerick.¹² A report in 1783 states that the city of Limerick contained:

....about 30,000 inhabitants, 3,000 of whom were Protestant and the rest Catholic. There were five other good towns in the diocese, and together with the country parishes, contained about 40,000 or 50,000, about 4,000 at most were Protestant. The diocese was divided into four decanates presided over by four Vicars-Forane, whose duty it was to summon the priests of their respective districts to conference once a month and preside over them in the absence of the bishop....Of the forty parishes in the diocese there was none without a chapel....The chapels in the five city parishes were larger and more ornate....There are also in the city chapels lately built,

which are a great consolation to the citizens, which are served by three Franciscans, three Dominicans, and as many Augustinians. They live in great harmony with the secular clergy and are specially cherished as they are most useful....There is no public oratory, no convent of nuns, no clerical seminary, no confraternities in the parishes.¹³

During his episcopate which lasted until 1796, he ordered the parochial priests to keep a special record to record the number of converts and those who fell away from the faith. The result showed that 1,000 were converted and 100 Catholics had fallen away. Most Catholic conversions were women who married Protestants and the men did so to preserve or increase their fortune.¹⁴ Dr. Conway, who resided at Mungret Street, suffered ill-health in his later years and is interred at St. John's Protestant graveyard. A horizontal slab was placed over his grave inscribed thus:

In this sepulchre are deposited the remains of the Right Revd Denis Conway, Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick, and parish priest of St. John's parish in said city, who departed this life on the 19th day of June, 1796 in the 74th year of his age.¹⁵

His predecessor as Bishop, Dr. Daniel Kearney is also interred in the same grave.

1771 – Laurence Nihill, D.D. was born in Limerick circa 1726 and had a reputation for being a gentleman of great ability and was highly esteemed for his many endearing qualities. He was connected with several leading families in Limerick and Clare and was an author of some repute. He became P.P. of Rathkeale in 1762 and remained there until he exchanged with Dr. Conway in 1771. In December 1783 he was appointed Bishop of Kilfenora. Ill health prevented him from becoming Archbishop of Cashel in 1792. He died in 1795 and is buried in the old Cathedral church of Kilfenora, where a slab with a Latin epitaph was placed over his grave.¹⁶

1775 – James Carmody is mentioned as ministering in St. Mary's parish up until 1782, when he was forty-two years of age. He was ordained at Limerick in October 1764¹⁷ and may have belonged to a religious order as he appears to have

served as an assistant priest in the parish. References to Fr. Carmody end in the parochial records in March 1783.

1783 – Thomas Bourke succeeded Fr. Carmody and was ordained in Mechelen (Belgium) in 1769. He is recorded as being 34 years of age in 1782. He remained in the parish until April 1787 and subsequently may have been C.C. of St. John's parish, as he is recorded, in the *Limerick Chronicle* 28 March 1792, as having preached a charity sermon in St. John's chapel on the previous Sunday. Charity sermons were a popular means of collecting funds to assist charity schools, orphanages, asylums and poorhouses at this time and were preached by both Catholic and Established Church pastors in their respective places of worship. Fr. Bourke is also recorded as preaching charity sermons in St. John's chapel in April and May 1793, with the latter taking place on Sunday 26 May in aid of the House of Industry.

1784 – Sylvester (Silvester) Goonan, who became P.P. in 1792, was a renowned preacher and had some of his sermons published.¹⁸

1787 - Charles Tuohy D.D. was born in Nicholas Street in 1754. He studied at the Irish College, Bordeaux and subsequently at Toulouse and Paris, where he was ordained in 1780. He continued his studies after ordination and received a Doctorate of Divinity in 1784. He returned to Limerick later that year and in May 1787 appears to have taken up a curacy in St. Mary's parish, where he remained until 28 April 1788 when he became C.C. of St. John's parish, a position he held until 1796 when he was appointed P.P. of Newcastle West. In 1806 Dr. Young appointed him P.P. of Rathkeale and in 1812 he became Dean. The following year he succeeded Dr. Young as Bishop of Limerick. While in Limerick he lived at Newtown Villa in Sexton Street and was a tireless worker on the political and ecclesiastical scene. In 1816 he welcomed the Irish Christian Brothers to Limerick. He died on St. Patrick's Day 1828 and is interred in the same tomb as Bishop Young in St. Patrick's graveyard.

1788 - Fr. Hogan succeeded Fr. Tuohy in May 1788. He may be Fr. Denis Hogan, a

Franciscan pastor based at Newgate Lane at this time and who in later years became a great friend of Daniel O'Connell.

1791 - Gerard Herbert succeeded Fr. Hogan in May 1791 and became P.P. of St. Mary's Parish in 1807.

1795 – Fr. Egan (Regan) is mentioned in the parish registers from February 1795 until April 1809 and in a local newspaper on 1 July 1797 as preaching at a charity sermon at St. Mary's chapel on Sunday, 9 July in aid of the charity orphan school in the parish, which had been founded sometime in the 1780's. He may be **Fr. Darby Egan** who became P.P. of Coolcappa-Kilcolman in 1817. If so, he built Kilcolman church in 1824. The present church in Kilcolman dates from 1913 and is built on the site of the 1824 church. He died on 12 September 1838 and was buried in Coolcappa church, where his remains lay until June 1985, when they were reinterred in the grounds of the present church there. He had a reputation for being hospitable.¹⁹

1796 – Timothy (Thady) O'Flynn was appointed P.P. of St. Mary's parish. He was assisted by curates Fr. McGrath and Fr. Creaton.²⁰

1797 - Thomas O'Neil ministered in the parish for a short time. After he pursued his studies in Europe he was ordained in 1797. He was a member of the first group of students to be ordained from the new St. Munchin's College at Palmerstown, which was opened on 29 September 1796. Later in 1797 he became C.C. of Abbeyfeale and was promoted to P.P. there in 1800. He died in 1813 and was buried in Abbeyfeale churchyard without a tombstone.²¹

1798 - Fr. Hurley was C.C. of the parish until May 1805.

1798 - John Farrell ministered in the parish for a short time. Like Fr. O'Neil, he was ordained in 1797 and pursued his studies on the continent prior to 1796.

1805 - Maurice Hogan was C.C. of the parish from May 1805 until early 1806 when he was appointed P.P. of Croagh-Kilfinny, a position he held until his death at Amigan Castle, which is recorded in the *Limerick Chronicle* dated 19 July 1848 as follows:

On Sunday last, at Amigan, in this County, the Rev. Maurice Hogan, P.P. of Croagh, of which he was the zealous and exemplary pastor, for 42 years. This esteemed and much respected Clergyman was 47 years on the mission, and was beloved by his parishioners.

1805 - Michael Copps served as C.C. of the parish from Christmas 1805 until February 1807 when he was appointed P.P. of Kildimo-Pallaskenry, a position he held until his death on Monday 3 March 1817. He is interred in Killurach graveyard, where a flat stone marks his grave. He lived in 'The Cottage' which is now the site of the agricultural college in Pallaskenry.²²

1808 - Fr. Kennelly may be the pastor who in 1809 commenced ministry for a brief period at St. Michael's parish. He may have been attached to a religious order.

1810 - Richard Mackey was a native of College Hill, Templemore, Co. Tipperary. He is buried in the local cemetery and the following inscription appears on a horizontal flagstone:

Sacred to the memory of the Revd Richard Mackey curate of St. Mary's Limerick where he died March the 10 1810 aged 33 years. His unaffected piety and ardent zeal in the discharge of his sacred duties endeared him to every class of person's and the sincere and universal regret manifested at his death bore testimony to the high opinion they entertained of him in his exalted character as a priest. May he rest in Peace. Amen.



Map showing location of Amigan Castle

1810 - Fr. Cronin appears sporadically in the parish registers from 1810 until mid-1814 when he is more frequently recorded. The *Limerick Chronicle* 25 June 1814 states: 'The Rev. Mr. Cronin, of Creagh-lane Chapel, has given 11s. to Alderman Watson, for the House of Industry, which he got from a Gentleman'. He may be William Cronin who was appointed P.P. of Askeaton-Ballysteen later in this year. If this is so, he died in 1818 at Anne Street, Limerick, after a lingering illness.²³

1813 - Maurice Fitzgibbon was C.C. of the parish in 1813 and ministered here until late 1819. From 1814 he is named in the parish registers of St. Michael's parish and possibly could have worked the two parishes simultaneously. He opened the first convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Order in Newgate Lane during his tenure at St. Michael's parish. He may have become full C.C. of St. Mary's parish in mid-1816 as at that stage he is no longer recorded in the St. Michael's registers, but may have returned to the parish in 1823 for a short

time. In a clerical report of 1824 he is not recorded, but reappears in the St. Michael's parish registers the following year and continues to be recorded until mid-1832. In 1834, he was appointed P.P. of Adare. The following year he took up parochial duty at Parteen-Meelick and remained there until 1848 when he became P.P. of Kilfinane-Ardpatrick in an exchange of parishes with Fr. James Moore (who served as P.P. of St. Munchin's parish from 1850 until 1863). Fr. Fitzgibbon remained at Kilfinane until his death in 1858. Ardpatrick was part of Kilfinane parish until 1862..

1813 - James Walsh took up curacy in St. Mary's parish in 1813 and held this position until early September 1816 when he was appointed Administrator of Knockaderry-Clouncagh. In 1819 he became P.P. of Bulgaden-Martinstown and remained in this role until his death on 24 December 1858 aged 77. He is interred in Bulgaden church.

1814 - Fr. Condon succeeded Fr. Cronin and remained as C.C. of the parish until July 1815 when his name no longer appears in clerical listings.

1815 - Michael Shanahan was appointed C.C. of St. Mary's parish in 1815 and remained until November 1817 when he took up curacy at St. Michael's parish. He was there until 1824 when he was appointed P.P. of Dromcollogher-Broadford, a position he held until his death in 1833. He is interred at Ballylanders graveyard and was uncle of Denis Shanahan, P.P. of St. Mary's parish from 1898 until 1917, and of Timothy Shanahan who was C.C. of the parish from 1859 until 1863 and who is dealt with later in this study.



SALESIAN MISSIONARY AND AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, PALLASKENRY, CO. LIMERICK.

1816 – Thomas Coll is believed to have hailed from the Newcastle West area and is first mentioned in February 1816 when he was C.C. of St. Mary's parish. Early the following year he became C.C. of St. Michael's parish where he remained until 1826. While there he gained a reputation as a preacher of great eloquence and persuasive powers. In 1826 he became Administrator of Cappagh and Stonehall (then a combined parish) and while there earned promotion to P.P. of Newcastle West, a position he took up on 14 January 1827. He soon began building a parish church which was ready for use in late 1828. He was appointed Dean of the diocese in 1840 and remained in pastoral charge at Newcastle West until his death on 18 October 1857. He is interred in Newcastle West church and was particularly generous to the poor there during the Great Famine. He also established the Convent of Mercy in Newcastle West at a cost to himself of over £1,000. Dean Coll was also a prominent campaigner for Repeal of the Act of Union and a supporter of William Smith O'Brien.

1816 – William Downes, a native of Limerick city, studied at St. Munchin's College and is listed in the parish registers of St. Mary's parish from September 1816, when he probably commenced his ministry. He appears to have left that parish at the end of 1818 because in 1819 his name appears in the parochial registers of St. Munchin's parish. He returned to St. Mary's parish in the early 1820's, remaining there until late 1823, and in a clerical report of 1824 he is listed as C.C. of St. Michael's parish. He became P.P. of Patrickswell-Ballybrown in 1828 – having been C.C. of Shanagolden for a short time prior to this – and held this position until his premature death, aged 50, on 14 December 1840, following a fall from his horse near Robertstown, Adare. He was interred in Ballybrown church and was reputed to be a celebrated preacher. He was one of three brothers in the priesthood. Denis died of fever in Rome in 1839.²⁴ Thomas was P.P. of Kilmallock from 1841 until his death in 1890, while their nephew, William was P.P. of Ballingarry-Granagh from 1894 until his death in 1901.²⁵

1818 – Thomas Enraght is also listed as C.C. of St. Mary's parish in the 1824 report. He appears to have commenced

his ministry at St. Mary's parish in mid-1818 and after 1824 served as senior curate in the parish prior to being appointed P.P. of Mahoonagh and Feenagh (then a combined parish) in early January 1836. The following was written on his departure from St. Mary's: 'The numerous poor of St. Mary's unaffectedly lament the removal of Mr. Enraght; but the idle and disorderly in that extensive district have cause to rejoice at the change'.²⁶ He died in 1839 and was buried in the grounds of the old Castlemahon church where the present national school is situated.

1821 – Michael Malone was C.C. of the parish from the middle of 1821 until early 1822 when he was appointed C.C. of St. Patrick's parish. He became P.P. of Cratloe in 1832 and remained there until he took up parochial duty at Mahoonagh in 1844. His death is recorded in the *Limerick Chronicle* dated 4 September 1847 as follows: 'At Castlemahon, in this County, the Rev. Michael Malone, P.P. of Mahoonagh and Fehonagh – a gentleman much and deservedly regretted. His remains were interred this day at Trough Church yard'.

1822 – John Brahan became P.P. of St. Mary's parish in 1840.

1833 – Henry Fitzgibbon was C.C. of the parish in 1833 and resided at George's Quay with his fellow curates. He may have been C.C. of St. Patrick's parish prior to his St. Mary's appointment as in 1819 his name appears in the parish registers of that parish. He is not mentioned in the 1824 report. He became C.C. of Parteen-Meelick in 1828 and held this position until 1830. He was appointed P.P. of Kilmallock in March 1840 and remained there until October 1841 when he took

up pastoral duty at Killeedy. His death is recorded in the *Limerick Chronicle* dated Saturday 1 March 1851 as follows: 'On Thursday, near Mungret, the Rev. Henry Fitzgibbon, late P.P. Killeedy, and formerly Curate of St. Mary's parish, in this City'.

1836 – John Nolan became C.C. of the parish in December 1836. He was appointed to Bruff in March 1844 where he remained until 1849.

1837 – John Nash was ministering at Bruff in 1836. He was transferred to St. Mary's parish in October 1837, succeeding Fr. Brahan, where he remained until April 1840. After his departure St. Mary's became a two-curate parish.

1840 – Michael Egan succeeded Fr. Henry Fitzgibbon and is first mentioned in 1836 when he was C.C. of Parteen. The following year he was transferred to Effin and in 1838 took up curacy at Kilmallock where he remained until his St. Mary's appointment. His death is recorded in the *Limerick Chronicle* dated 26 January 1848 as follows: 'Last night, at the residence of the Rev. John Brahan, P.P. St. Mary's, the Rev. Michael Egan, R.C.C. The death of this amicable pastor, from abscess of the liver, brought on by incessant fatigue in the discharge of his clerical duties, is sincerely lamented by the large flock to whose necessities he administered.'

1844 – Richard Mackey is first mentioned in 1841 when he was appointed to Bruff. In March 1844 he was transferred to St. Mary's parish to succeed Fr. Nolan, who replaced him at Bruff. Fr. Mackey remained there until his death, which is recorded in the *Limerick Chronicle* dated Wednesday 14 January 1846 as follows:



Ballybrown Roman Catholic church

Friday, at Wilson's Quay, the residence of the Rev. John Brahan, P.P. of fever, a second time contracted in the active and fearless discharge of his ministerial duties, the Rev. Richard Mackey, Curate of St. Mary's, and late of Bruff, a native of Templemore. He was beloved and lamented by all the parishioners of St. Mary's, where his pious zeal and fervent charity had endeared him in a great degree to every class of persons, more especially the sick and labouring poor.

Fr. Mackey may well have been related to his aforementioned namesake, as both men were from Templemore.

1846 – Joseph Darrack hailed from 7 Patrick Street and is first mentioned in February 1846 when he succeeded Fr. Mackey. In July 1847 he was transferred to Cratloe and the following year took up curacy in St. Michael's parish, where he remained until 1859 when he may have taken up ministry in the archdiocese of Melbourne (Australia) as a pastor of the same name appears in clerical listings there after 1859. His date of death is unknown. His brother, James, was a medical doctor with the British Army and died in Kingston, Jamaica, on 20 February 1857, of fever he contracted upon his arrival there and was buried with full military honours.

1847 – Michael O'Brien succeeded Fr. Darrack and remained C.C. in St. Mary's parish until the following April, when his name is no longer in clerical listings.

1847 – Richard Baptist O'Brien, a native of Carrick-on-Suir, was born in early 1809. He is reputed to have been blind at birth but recovered his sight after a visit to Tobarobanastia holy well at Cooliska in the parish of Mahoonagh. In honour of this, his mother named him Richard Baptist O'Brien. At a young age he moved to St. Mary's parish and worked as a grocer's apprentice prior to pursuing his vocation. He was ordained on 21 December 1838 at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, having received his education there and at Carlow College. His first appointment was to a university position at Nova Scotia in the archdiocese of Halifax where he remained until 1845 when he became a professor at All Hallows College. In 1847 he returned to the Limerick diocese when he was

appointed C.C. of St. Mary's parish. In 1852 he went to Rome to pursue further studies, obtaining a Doctorate in Divinity, and resumed his position as C.C. of St. Mary's the following year but after a very short time returned to his position at All Hallows College. While at St. Mary's parish he also founded a branch of the Catholic Young Men's Society. In 1858 he was appointed P.P. of Kilfinane and Ardpatrick – succeeding Fr. Maurice Fitzgibbon there - and in 1861 took up parochial duty in Newcastle West, succeeding Fr. Brahan there. In 1864, he was appointed Archdeacon and Vicar General and on 27 July 1865 was made Dean of the diocese. He died on 10 February 1885, aged 76, having been in failing health for some years prior to this. He also wrote several literary works, amongst these being *Ailey Moore*, *Jack Hazlitt A.M.* and *The D'Altons of Crag*. In his younger days he was very actively involved in politics and was a strong supporter of Daniel O'Connell and later the Home Rule movement.

1848 – Patrick Kenyon was born on 11 May 1821. His father was a successful stone mason in Thomondgate and proprietor of a public house and grocery business there. Patrick studied at Maynooth and was ordained in 1847. He was appointed to St. Mary's parish in April 1848, succeeding Fr. Michael O'Brien, where he remained until June 1850, when he became C.C. of Donaghmore-Knockea. In 1852 he was transferred to Kilcornan and the following year went to Australia where he spent the rest of his ministry. Patrick's final appointment was as P.P. in the parish of Newcastle, New South Wales, from June 1869 until January 1870. In his brief time in this parish Patrick (who is characterised as quite a conservative priest) apparently became embroiled in the 1869 elections for the Legislative Assembly by denouncing one of the candidates (Sir James Martin) regarding his views on Catholic education, and this may have led to his departure from Australia. While travelling to Ireland by sea, he became ill and died on 15 July 1870. He was buried at sea. Patrick's brother, John, was ordained for the diocese of Killaloe and came to national prominence through his support for the Young Ireland movement and his denunciations of Daniel O'Connell. Fr. John was P.P. of Templederry, County Tipperary at the time of his death on 21



Richard Baptist O'Brien

March 1869 aged 57. Their three sisters became nuns. Two of them, Matilda and Monica, served at the Presentation Convent, Sexton Street, Limerick and the eldest sister, Alice, joined the Sisters of Mercy in Killarney and later served on mission in Australia.²⁷

1850 – Marcus Clery (O'Cle(a)ry was a native of Bulgaden parish and was ordained in December 1840. After ordination he was appointed to Bruff and in 1842 was transferred to Bulgaden. In 1844 he was appointed to Shanagolden, remaining there until 1847 when he was transferred to Newcastle West. In July 1850 he succeeded Fr. Kenyon as C.C. of the parish. He was transferred to Killeedy in 1854 and served as C.C. of Askeaton-Ballysteen from 1857 to 1860 and as C.C. of Adare from 1860 to 1862. He returned to Bulgaden in 1862, this time as P.P. and remained there until his death on 8 December 1886, aged 74. He is interred in Bulgaden church, where a large stained-glass window behind the altar commemorates his memory.

1853 – Michael Ryan served as C.C. of St. John's parish from 1841 to 1843 and of St. Michael's parish from 1843 until 1847 when he returned to St. John's parish, where he remained until his appointment to St. Munchin's parish in 1852. He served as C.C. of St. Mary's parish from 1853 until 1859 when he took up curacy at Kilfinane. In 1861 he took up similar duties at Granagh-Ballingarry until 1863

when he was transferred to Dromin-Athlacca. In 1865 he was appointed P.P. of Colmanswell, a position he held until 1871 when he took up parochial duty at Ardpatrick. Colmanswell, which is now joined with Ballyagran, was at this time a separate parish. Fr. Ryan remained at Ardpatrick until his death in 1873 and is interred in the parish church.

1853 – Michael Fitzgerald became P.P. of the parish in 1870.

1859 – Timothy Shanahan was ordained on 19 September 1856 having studied at Maynooth. His first assignment was to St. Munchin's parish as C.C., a position he held until 1858 when he took up similar duties at Donoughmore. In 1859, he was transferred to St. Mary's parish – succeeding Fr. Ryan - where in 1861 he was appointed Administrator. He remained in this role until 1863, when he was transferred to St. Michael's parish. On 22 July 1874 he was appointed P.P. of Ballingarry and while there completed the present church, built in Gothic style which was opened in 1879. He remained at Ballingarry until 25 May 1894 when he returned to St. Munchin's parish, this time as P.P. From 1894 to 1904 he also served as chaplain to Limerick City Workhouse. He was appointed Vicar Forane in 1894 and Dean of the Diocese and Vicar General on 20 November 1905. He resigned St. Munchin's parish on 26 October 1910 due to ill-health and he died on 14 May 1915 aged 86. He was a brother of Denis Shanahan, P.P. of St. Mary's parish from 1898 until 1917. Another brother, Gerard, served as P.P. in the parish of Thornbay-on-Tees in the diocese of Middlesbrough (England), while a third brother, Patrick, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia in June 1868. The Shanahans were natives of Ballinanima in the parish of Kilfinane and were nephews of the aforementioned Michael Shanahan, C.C. of the parish from 1815 until 1817.

1861 – Daniel Fitzgerald, a brother of the aforementioned Michael, became P.P. of the parish in 1878.

1861 – Maurice Leahy was ordained on 23 September 1859 and was C.C. of St. Patrick's parish from the following 25 October until 13 November 1861 when he was appointed to St. Mary's parish.

On 30 March 1870 he was transferred to Bruff. He left Bruff in 1877 and is not recorded again until 20 October 1880 when he was assigned to Newcastle West. On 21 January 1884 he was appointed to Ardagh and was C.C. of Athea from 1885 until 14 September 1887 when he was assigned to Mungret-Crecora. In October 1888 he was transferred to Cratloe where he remained until his death on 13 January 1905 aged 60. He was a relative of Timothy Curtin who was P.P. of Croom, when he died in 1936.

1863 – Cornelius Conway succeeded Fr. Shanahan. He was educated at St. Sulpice, Paris and was ordained in August 1861. After ordination he was appointed C.C. of Newcastle West and the following year was transferred to Croom. On 19 July 1863 he became C.C. of St. Mary's parish and in 1865 took up similar duties at St. John's parish. In 1871 he became C.C. of St. Michael's parish and on 21 June 1878 became Administrator there. On 3 November 1886 he received his excommunication from the Limerick diocese. He left for the Archdiocese of Sydney on 14 May 1887 and served as Administrator of St. Francis's parish, Haymarket, until early May 1896 when he became P.P. of Concord parish at Burwood. He returned to Limerick on 16 September 1898 when he was appointed P.P. of St. Patrick's parish. On 30 January 1908 he resigned as P.P. owing to ill-health and died on 30 November 1918 aged 80. He was a nephew of Daniel Synan who was P.P. of St. Munchin's parish from 1847 until 1850.

1870 – Laurence O'Keeffe was baptised on 1 March 1842. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained on 28 July 1867. In 1869 he became C.C. of St. Patrick's parish. The following year he became C.C. of St. Mary's parish and held this position until his death on 12 November 1881 aged 39. He was interred in St. Mary's church grounds and an altar to St. Joseph in the present parish church commemorates his memory. One of his brothers was a priest in the Jesuit Order and another brother ministered in Athy, in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

1870 – Thomas Nolan, a native of Shanagolden, studied at the Irish College, Rome and was ordained on St. Patrick's Day 1861. The following 11 August he was appointed C.C. of Donoughmore

and held this position until 1863 when he was transferred to Monagea. From 1864 he ministered in the parishes of Croom, Ardagh and Rathkeale respectively until he was appointed C.C. of St. Mary's parish in 1870. On 3 October 1879 he retired temporarily from ministry due to ill-health related to alcohol, and was subsequently reinstated on condition that he kept 'total abstinence'. On 22 November 1879 he was appointed C.C. of Banogue. The following March he broke his pledge and faculties were withdrawn. He subsequently sought his excommunication from the Limerick diocese and joined the Redemptorists, where he ministered for a time at Cork and Kilkee. He died in London on 15 October 1882.

1879 – Jeremiah O'Grady succeeded Fr. Nolan. A native of Kilmallock who was baptised on 10 January 1853, he studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St. John's Cathedral on 1 July 1877. After ordination he returned to Maynooth to take a teaching post there and in August 1878 became Professor at St. Munchin's College. In September 1879 he stood for the Chair of Rhetoric in Maynooth but due to eyesight problems was unsuccessful and on 29 October of the same year was appointed C.C. of St. Mary's parish. In early 1881 he returned to St. Munchin's College, but later that year returned to ministry at St. Mary's parish and remained there until 14 May 1887, when he was appointed chaplain to Mount St. Vincent Orphanage. He also became attached to St. Michael's parish at this time. On 18 February 1890 he became full C.C. of St. Michael's parish and held this position until 23 February 1895, when he was appointed P.P. of Stonehall (now Kilcornan). He resigned from Stonehall on 27 October 1896 and the following year became chaplain once again to Mount St. Vincent Orphanage, a position he held until his death on 5 June 1902 aged 49 in St. John's Hospital.

1881 – John Martell, a native of Bulgaden, was born on 31 May 1847. He studied at Rome and was ordained there in April 1873. The following July he was appointed President of St. Munchin's College and held this position and the chaplaincy of Mount St. Vincent Orphanage until he succeeded Fr. O'Keeffe at St. Mary's parish on New Year's Day 1881. He died on 26 February

1891 aged 43. The *Limerick Chronicle* dated Saturday 28 February published the following obituary:

Much regret has been evoked throughout the city at the demise of the Rev John Martell, C.C. St. Mary's, who died rather suddenly at the Parochial House on Thursday evening about seven o'clock, when an attack of paralysis prostrated him. Everything that could be done for the rev. gentleman was done, but without avail as he passed away almost immediately. Father Martell had undergone a long and trying illness but for the past couple of months seemed to have improved considerably and his very sudden end has come as a great shock on his numerous friends in Limerick. He was a zealous and most popular clergyman, and in St. Mary's parish, where he had officiated for several years he was an especial favourite with rich and poor. Amongst the humbler classes in the parish he laboured unceasingly and did what in him lay to promote their comfort and improve their lot as much as possible. By them he will long be missed but by all his parishioners his demise is deeply lamented. The remains were conveyed to the Mortuary Chapel, New Cemetery where the interment took place.

The 'New Cemetery' referred to in the obituary is Mount St. Lawrence Cemetery.

1887 – James Cregan studied at the Irish College, Paris and was ordained at Mount St. Vincent Orphanage on 6 June 1881. After ordination he became C.C. of Monagea. In 1886 he was transferred to Abbeyfeale and the following May was appointed to St. Mary's parish, a position he held until October 1890 when he took up curacy at St. John's parish, where he also served as chaplain to the Sisters of Mercy Convent. On 13 June 1892 he was appointed curate to St. Michael's parish and remained there until 8 December 1906, serving the final five years of his tenure as Administrator. He was then appointed P.P. of Athea and remained there until May 1918 when he returned to Abbeyfeale, this time as P.P. On 24 March 1924, Canon Cregan – who had been created Canon in 1912 and Vicar Forane in 1918 – was transferred to St. Munchin's parish and remained there until his death on 12 August 1926 aged

69. While there, he also served as chaplain to Croom and Limerick workhouses. He was a nephew of Dean Denis Cregan who was P.P. of Bruff from 1866 until his death in 1892, and an uncle of James Cregan who ministered in Staffordshire in the archdiocese of Birmingham, England.

1889 – Edmond Russell was a native of Rockhill parish. Born on 9 September 1848, he studied at Rome and was ordained there on April 1873. He was appointed C.C. of Manister on 28 June 1873 and remained there until 18 September 1876 when he took up curacy at Glenroe-Ballyorgan. The following 26 January he was transferred to Dromcollogher-Broadford and ministered there until October 1886 when he became C.C. of Dromin-Athlacca. In 1889 he was appointed to St. Mary's parish and remained there until 29 September 1890 when he returned to Manister as C.C. The following 12 January he was transferred to Ballingarry where he remained until his death following a long illness on 11 January 1893 aged 44. A very popular clergyman, he was interred in Mount St. Lawrence Cemetery.

1890 – George Clarson, a native of Kilmallock, was baptised on 28 August 1853. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at the Convent of Mercy, Limerick on 28 December 1879. From then until his appointment to Bruff on 21 July 1882 he taught at St. Munchin's College and also served as chaplain to Mount St. Vincent female orphanage. On 7 August 1889 he was transferred to Kilmallock and the following year took up curacy at St. Mary's parish, succeeding Fr. Cregan. In 1891 he received his excommunication from the diocese and became a Jesuit priest. He subsequently went on mission to Canada and was still alive on 10 August 1922.

1891 – William Mulcahy was baptised on 10 November 1848. After receiving his education at Maynooth, he was ordained at St. John's Cathedral on 3 August 1873. Due to no pastoral vacancies existing in the Limerick diocese at the time of his ordination, his first clerical assignment was at Clones (Clogher diocese) until 26 August 1875 when he returned to the Limerick diocese, taking up curacy at Killeedy. On 3 October 1877 he was transferred to Abbeyfeale until 5

March 1879, when he was appointed to Ardagh. The following October he was transferred to Ballingarry-Granagh until 7 July 1881, when he was appointed to St. Munchin's parish. In 1884 he became C.C. of Mungret until 14 September 1887, when he was assigned similar duties at Dromin-Athlacca. On 20 July 1889 he was transferred to Shanagolden until 11 March 1891 when he was assigned to St. Mary's parish. On 4 October 1892 he was appointed P.P. of Croagh-Kilfinny, a position he held until his death on 7 December 1927, aged 79. He is buried in Croagh church grounds, having been in poor health for some time prior to his death. He was a gifted preacher and writer, a great temperance advocate and author of several brochures dealing with the Irish temperance movement.

1891 – Michael Murphy studied at Paris and was ordained on 25 February 1888. A native of Dromcollogher, his first appointment was to Cratloe as C.C. in March 1888. The following September he took up a teaching post in St. Munchin's College and held that position until May 1889 when he became C.C. of St. Patrick's parish. The following November he was transferred to St. John's parish and remained there until 30 September 1890 when he took up curacy at Monagea. In May 1891 he became C.C. of St. Mary's parish until January 1892 when he returned to St. John's parish. On 15 November 1910 he was appointed Administrator of St. John's and remained so until 2 July 1914, when he returned to St. Patrick's parish, as P.P. and remained there until his death in St. John's hospital on 2 August 1924. Two of his brothers, Jeremiah and Timothy, also served as parish priests in the Limerick diocese. Jeremiah was P.P. of the parishes of Killeedy, Coolcappa and Abbeyfeale respectively prior to his death in 1936, while Timothy was P.P. of Croagh-Kilfinny from 1927 until his death in December 1961 aged 90.

1892 – John Lee was born on 5 February 1858. A native of Glenroe parish, he pursued his studies at Rome and was ordained there on 8 April 1882. After ordination he served in the archdiocese of St. Andrew's in Edinburgh (Scotland), until 1887 when he was recalled to the Limerick diocese as C.C. of Kildimo-Pallaskenry. On 22 February 1892 he was

appointed to St. Mary's parish until 20 November 1894 when he was transferred to St. Michael's parish. On 8 December 1906 he was appointed Administrator there and on 2 December 1908 was appointed P.P. of Askeaton-Ballysteen. In 1909 he built the parochial house in Askeaton. He was transferred to Kilfinane on 13 May 1915, was created Canon in June 1924, and Vicar Forane on 18 March 1926, when he was also appointed to Bruff. Although of frail disposition, he accomplished many improvements while in Bruff. He died on 22 April 1932, aged 74, and is buried in Bruff church grounds.

1892 – John O'Connor hailed from Coolcappa and pursued his education at Rome prior to his ordination at St. John's Cathedral on 26 July 1884. After ordination he ministered in the archdiocese of Westminster until 1888, when he was appointed C.C. of Glenroe. On 14 June 1892 he was transferred to St. Munchin's parish and succeeded Fr. Mulcahy the following 4 October at St. Mary's parish, where he remained until 1896. In 1898 he became C.C. of Effin. On 27 March 1904 he was transferred to Ardagh, but after a short time there his priestly faculties were withdrawn and he went to reside at Belmont Park, Waterford. He died on 2 January 1923 aged 60.

1893 – Robert Fitzgerald was a native of Knockderk, Knockainey, which is in the Cashel and Emly archdiocese, and was ordained for the diocese of Limerick in June 1888, having received his education at Maynooth. After ordination he served on temporary mission in Liverpool until 1891, when he was appointed C.C. of Ballyagran. The following year he was transferred to St. Munchin's parish and took up curacy at St. Mary's parish in 1893. On 5 May 1895 he was transferred to St. John's parish, becoming Administrator there in 1914. In 1917 he was appointed P.P. of Effin and in 1926 was created Canon. He died in the Bon Secours Home in Cork on 26 May 1930 aged 67 and is buried in Effin church grounds. His brother Thomas was also ordained for ministry and spent his entire priestly life in Kansas, U.S.A. until his death on 9 November 1945.

1895 – Gerald O'Connor, a native of west Limerick, studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St. John's Cathedral on New Year's Eve 1885. From then until June 1888 he served in the parishes of St. Mary and St. Joseph in the diocese of Bradford (England). He was C.C. of St. Patrick's parish from 1888 until 1889 and of Coolcappa-Kilcolman from 1889 until 1890. He is not recorded in clergy listings again until 1894 when he was appointed C.C. of Mahoonagh. On 5 May 1895 he was transferred to St. Mary's parish, where he was deeply involved with St. Mary's Temperance Society. In 1900, he was assigned to Bruff and in 1907 he was appointed Administrator of Rockhill-Bruree and on 2 September 1908 he was appointed P.P. there. He had been in failing health for some time prior to his death on 10 August 1921, aged 62 and he is buried in Rockhill church grounds.

1897 – John Fitzgerald succeeded Fr. John O'Connor. A native of Ballysimon, he studied at Rome and was ordained in 1889. His first appointment was to the archdiocese of Westminster (London) until 1893 when he returned to Limerick to take up curacy at Patrickswell. Four years later he was transferred to St. Mary's parish and while there served as chaplain to the Mercy Convent. He remained there until 3 July 1900 when he became C.C. of Adare. On 23 January 1917 he was appointed P.P. of Manister and held this position until 3 April 1924 when he took up similar duties at Coolcappa. In 1938 he was appointed Chancellor and the following year was created Canon. He died on 7 November 1942 aged 78, having been in poor health for some time prior to this. He was a brother of William Fitzgerald who served as P.P. of the parishes of Mungret and Shanagolden respectively prior to his death in 1935.

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It is possible that some of the pastors, on whom there is little information, may have been on temporary missions from other dioceses.

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2. *ibid* (p.190).
3. *ibid* (p.207).
4. *ibid* (p.226).
5. The 'White manuscript', annals of the diocese collated by Rev. James White (d.1768), comprising a folio of some 200 pages, is held in Limerick Diocesan Archives.
6. Begley, op. cit. (p.210).
7. *ibid* (p.302).
8. The Castle Friary, near Athlunkard Street, was a Franciscan penal friary between the 1730s and the 1780s.
9. Begley, op. cit. (p.218).
10. *ibid*.
11. *ibid* (p.306-307).
12. *ibid* (p.242).
13. *ibid* (p.245).
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16. *ibid* (p.250).
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18. Reverend Silvester Goonan, of the City of Limerick, *Sermons on various religious subjects, for different Sundays and festivals of the year*. (Dublin, 1798). See also: Michael Tynan, Silvester Goonan's sermons (note), in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal XXVI* (1984) p.p. 100-102.
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