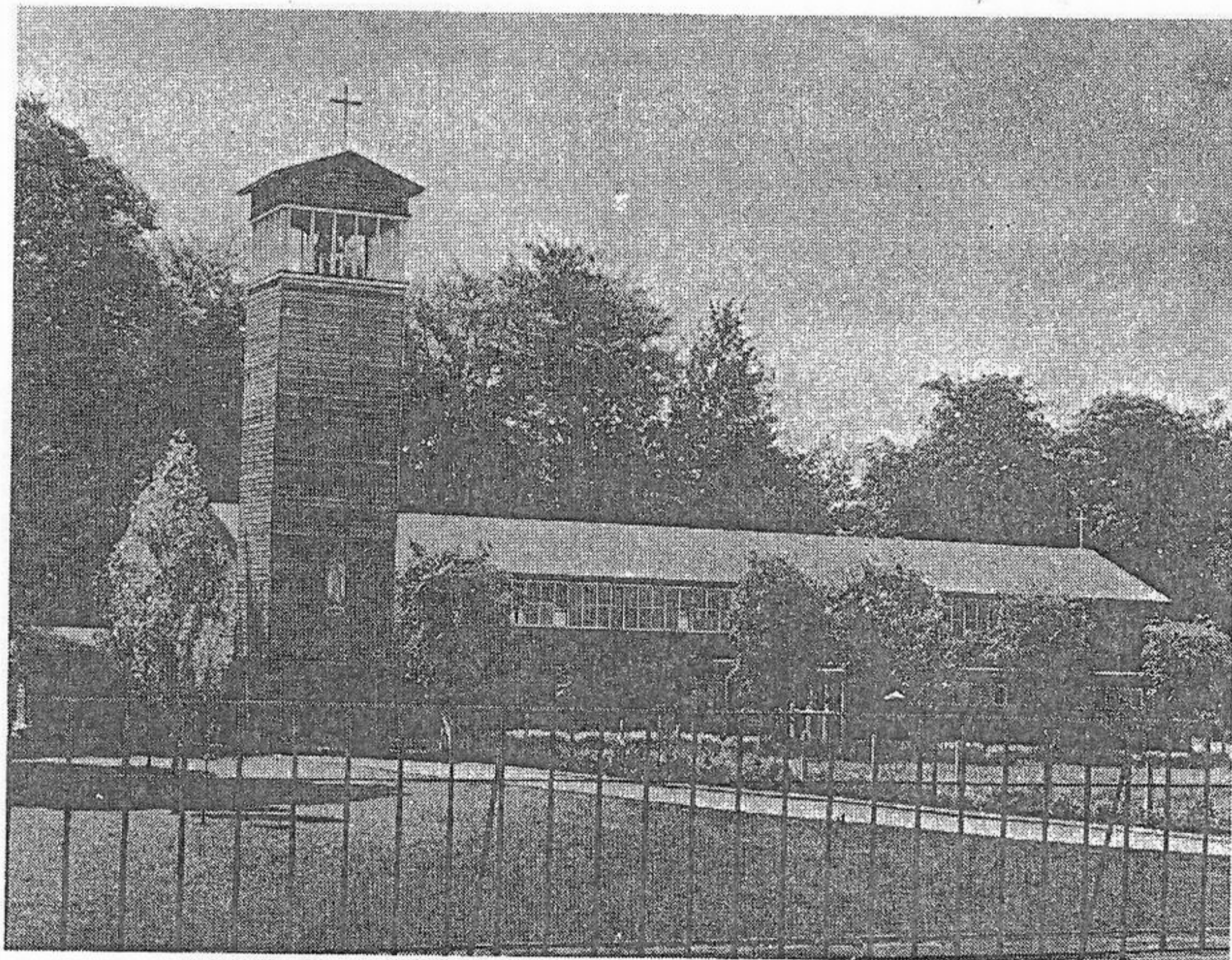


Our Lady of the Rosary Church Ennis Road, Limerick.



CONTENTS



CHURCH SERVICES	3
MONSIGNOR TYNAN'S HOMILY AT THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE EXTENDED CHURCH.....	5
OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHURCH AND PARISH	8

The "Our Lady of the Rosary" Booklet is published by Carlton Publishing Co. Ltd., Poolbeg House, 1/2 Poolbeg Street, Dublin 2, Telephone 719229/719885. The publishers wish to sincerely thank all those who contributed articles and photographs to the booklet.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CHURCH
ENNIS ROAD,

LIMERICK

HOME OF IRISH CHURCH ART

Church Services

Sunday Masses:

Summertime: 8.00, 9.00, 10.00, 11.00 a.m.,
12.15 and 7.30 p.m.

Wintertime: 8.00, 10.00, 11.00 a.m., 12.15, 5.30 and 7.30 p.m.

Holydays:

As on Sundays.

Weekday Masses:

8.00, 10.00 a.m., and 5.45 p.m. except Saturdays, when the evening Mass is at 7.45 p.m.

Holy Souls Masses:

November Novenas: 2nd to 10th inclusive, 10 a.m. and 7.30 p.m.

The 8 a.m. every Monday and the 5.45 p.m. Mass each First Friday, except November.

Confessions:

Saturday, 2.15 to 3.00 p.m. and 7.30 to 9 p.m.

Eves of Holydays and First Fridays: 7.30 to 9 p.m.

Priest available for Confessions on occasion of reception of remains, etc.

Baptisms:

Sundays at 1.00 p.m. and by arrangement with the parish clergy and the clerk.

Marriages:

By diocesan statute, three months notice is normally required.

Devotions:

Saturdays, in honour of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, with Benediction at 7.30 p.m.
Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament each First Friday from the 10 a.m. Mass to the 5.45 p.m.; from after the 12.15 p.m. Mass on Corpus Christi and the Feast of Christ the King. Benediction for the pupils of the JFK Memorial N.S., First Fridays at 3.00 p.m. Occasional Devotions as announced.

The Holy Rosary:

Recited each weekday after the 10 a.m. and before the 5.45 p.m. Masses.

St. Munchin's Regional Maternity Hospital:

Mass for staff and patients, Sundays and Holydays, 9.00 a.m. Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Our Lady's Oratory, Corpus Christi and Christ the King feasts.

contd. from p.7

concerned, the committee, our devoted church workers, the new choirs, now happily housed and endowed with the physical space to enable them make their contribution to the renewed liturgy.

I thank the Bishop for his interest throughout the reconstruction and for his coming here today to bless it and say the holy Mass.

I need hardly say I thank those generous parishioners who are paying for all this, on top of everything else they pay

for good works at home and abroad. I am grateful also to our visitors, notably from the U.S.A., who do not forget us.

These, my dear people, are confused, distraught and violent times. They bear heavily on a youth, however bold and dashing it may appear to be. To those young souls, born into the faith, so rich in promise, so vulnerable in experience, may we offer this holy place in all its slender beauty to their love and their protection in Christ Jesus our Lord.



The late Monsignor Moloney examining the Jammet statue of Our Lady.



Oremus :

Oa nobis, Domine, ut animam famuli tui Patritii Episcopi, quam de hujus saeculi eduxisti laborioso certamine, Sanctorum tuorum tribuas esse consortem.

Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.

In memoria aeterna erit justus : ab auditione mala non timebit.

The late Bishop Patrick O'Neill, who was bishop of Limerick when the church was built.



Canon William O'Grady

Born in Rathkeale 1900
Ordained Priest at Irish College
Paris 1925.
Parish Priest - Kilfinane 1954 - 1964.
Parish Priest - Our Lady of the
Rosary Parish, Limerick 1964-1974.
DIED 24th JUNE 1974.
Requiescat in Pace, Amen.

The late Canon O'Grady, first parish priest of Our Lady of the Rosary parish.

—✠—
Trócaire Ríog nime d'anmain

pádraig uí néill

Saol-easbog Luimnig

Fuar bás diadanta an séanao lá
prídeao de mí Márta, 1958, i mbliadain a
aoise a h-oét agus trí fich.

Ós bliadain uéag nó fá séan a's pá
sonas i gceannas an dióisis. Ádúar éag-
caine i dtír na hÉireann uile a linge san
uair go faontas. I dtéar na Tríonóide nó-
naonta go mairbh sé buan.



The Lord said : I am the light of the
world;
he who follows me will not walk
in darkness,
but will possess the light of life.

Stay with us, Lord Jesus, as evening
falls :
be our companion on our way.
In your mercy inflame our hearts
and raise our hope,
so that in union with our brethren
we may recognise you in the
scriptures,
and in the breaking of Bread.
Who live and reign with the Father
and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever
and ever.
Saviour of the World, save us. Amen.

Monsignor Tynan's Homily at the Formal Opening of the Extended Church

The Entrance Antiphon of the Mass today provides an apt text for the occasion:

Let all the earth cry out to God with
joy;
praise the glory of his name;
proclaim his glorious praise,
alleluia.

It is now some thirty years since first we entered this beloved place with hearts of praise. Many of us who were here then are here still. Indeed, as I look about me, on the surface at least, little seems to have changed. The church has grown up and the congregations with it; we are full to the brim, bursting at the seams. The altar babes seem no different to me from the ones I trained for the opening in 1950. The parents are still sending them, and the babes themselves, despite their liberation from Tridentine discipline, are not opting out. On the contrary they dig in. They have a sense of belonging. Not always there when you want them, perhaps, but they keep hanging about the temple of the Lord like so many little Samuels.

These must be good auguries for the future. Yet, there have been profound changes in the past decade, as you know

very well. Changes of heart and disposition, changes in basic attitudes to the life situation that tend to wean our youth from the practice of the faith. A new age, suddenly unfolding, full of excitement and wild promise. It has brought a lot of tension into our homes and much sorrow.

To compound our dilemma, the Church, in trying to cope with this upheaval, has been seen as changing herself, changing, some would think, not only in form but even in substance. Our faith tells us this cannot be. Christ is always with his Church, securing her in the truth, guiding her by his Spirit. Yet the form is so bound to the substance, like the froth to the pint, if I may make such a comparison, that when one is blown away the other seems in peril.

Certainly, Vatican II has generated tensions. Those who welcome change feel things are not moving fast enough; they have become impatient and even impulsive. Others, and they are not few, have had great difficulty in coming to terms with the new order. There are those who are still longing for the silent Mass — *Introibo ad altare Dei* — how the memory of it lingers on! The climate of personal devotion, the awareness of Christ's coming sacrifice, the solemn

moments, the tinkle of the little bell, the bowed heads, the suppressed cough, the faint rustle when 'twas over, a kind of sigh of relief that the awesome thing was done.

We have not lost this experience, but changes in the liturgy of the Mass that seem to lessen its awareness were bound to be upsetting. By and large, I think, we in the Irish Church have been guided wisely and we have been slipping into the new rites with a minimum of jolts.

We have, I believe, been particularly fortunate in this place. The parish priest who built this church thirty years ago was a man of vision. He sensed the need for change and chose an architect not averse to experiment. The result was to anticipate the architecture of the new era, but with this singular difference. The church is warm and cosy. It came early enough to avoid those functional lines, aloof and severe, that appeal to the intelligence and to the imagination but can leave the heart cold.

It came early enough also to allow of being filled with sacred artifacts, statues and holy pictures. All of these are original, by artists of quality, most of them Irish, some from Limerick. It was Monsignor Moloney's pioneer work in this respect that has gained the church some modest claim to eminence. But what I am thinking of this happy day is that we ought to be grateful in these times to have a church with sacred images, however we may differ about their appeal.

I know that we did differ. Perhaps we differ still, so many survivors of the old tradition are still around. The statue of Our Lord holding his Sacred Heart in his hands was a striking innovation and would seem to have been, in this concept alone, an advance on the repository statues that could be so garish and even grotesque. But many did not react in that

way. Perhaps the truth is people did see the new statue from the pressure of its originality, whereas they did not see with any kind of precision the plaster Sacred Hearts, taking them merely as a symbol of their devotion, a reminder of their Lord "burning with love for men". It was the person "whom the images represent", to quote the catechisms of the period, that dominated the people's thought and feeling.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

The figure of Our Lady, too, now restored to its former place in the sanctuary, may not have fitted in with the memories of our childhood. Some of us are getting old and we must remember a new generation has come of age since the statue first appeared. It may have its special appeal to troubled and uncertain souls: the lines of that face, the gesture of the hands, all maternal suffering and concern. And the plaster statuary on the east wall that used to be called "the Thing"! No doubt there must always be a question of taste; but the work shapes up very literally indeed to the vivid description of the suffering Christ in the prophesy of Isaiah: "I am a worm and no man".

Although we have preserved all the artifacts in the reconstructed building, we have not thus far added a single new one. The work we dedicate today is all architecture. There seems to be no hesitation in respect of *it*. One hears nothing but praise; like the antiphon, all the earth is crying out with joy.

This, I believe, is just. For all that we have to thank and praise the past, there is a sense in which the present architect and those associated with him have made a church of it.

With all my heart I thank everyone
contd. p. 14.

Our Lady of the Rosary Church and Parish

Until 1965, the modern parish of St. Munchin or *Mainchin*, named after the patron saint of the diocese of Limerick; embraced the city area lying on the Clare side of the Shannon and a considerable rural hinterland. The Catholic population, some 98% of the whole, was 11,652 in 1956. There was the one parish church of St. Munchin, opposite the Treaty Stone at the head of the river where Thomondgate meets Clancy's Strand. Now the population is rapidly approaching 25,000, and where we had one parish and one church we have four parishes and five churches.

The first of these break-away parishes was Our Lady of the Rosary.

It came into being, to be canonically exact, at midnight on December 31st, 1964. Within five years, Our Lady of the Rosary had begotten its own daughter parish, Christ the King, embracing Caherdavin and the surrounding areas lying outside the county borough boundary. Our parish today consists of the territory of the old St. Munchin's to the south of the Ennis Road, the Ennis Road itself together with the adjoining Elm and Lansdowne Parks, Shelbourne Park, Shel-

bourne Road and Avenue, part of Mayorstone, and Shannonville, Greystones and Clareview estates.

We have some 1,800 family and other units and about 8,000 souls. The parish serves St. Munchin's Regional Maternity Hospital. It has three primary schools, two on the Salesian Convent campus at Fernbank, for small children of both sexes and primary grade girls, and the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Memorial National School for boys adjoining Our Lady of the Rosary Church. There are two second level establishments of grammar school class, one for girls at Fernbank and the one for boys, the Christian Brothers' Ard Scoil Rís, on the middle road, down from the church. The Redemptorist Fathers' Retreat House is located in the parish, on the North Circular Road.

THE CHURCH

The church of Our Lady of the Rosary predates the founding of the parish, having been built as a chapel of ease for the old St. Munchin's. The area to be served by the church had begun to develop after

the 1914-18 war. The Elm Park and Lansdowne Park estates were completed by the mid '30s, and in this period between the two wars the development of the Ennis Road beyond the Union Cross had begun as well as the ribbon building at Westfields and Revington Park. The 1939-'45 war over, and with the advent of Shannon Airport, building on the southern side of what was to be the new parish got a great boost. Soon there were some 500 households and the question of a church became inevitable. In January, 1947, the parish priest, Canon Michael Moloney, called a meeting of the parishioners and the decision was made.

THREE YEARS

Three years passed, however, before the church appeared. In discussion between the parish priest and Frank Corr, building adviser at the time to Limerick Corporation, the idea emerged of a temporary structure in steel and wood that might be dismantled and re-erected elsewhere. In early 1949, Mr. Corr entered into partnership with Liam McCormick of Derry, who in time was to become a notable church architect. This firm drew up the plans for the proposed new church. Tenders were received by October, 1949, Messrs. P. Molloy and Sons of Limerick securing the contract. Foundations were laid in the winter and on March 2nd., 1950, the side supports in place, the steel roof element which had been assembled on the ground was hoisted into position. The operation in those days was quite a novelty and a number of parishioners assembled to watch. In due course the outer walls of creosoted weatherboard were added, hardboard panelling within and a roof of mineral grit. The work was completed with a side porch, mortuary and sacristies in the north range under a lean-to roof, a main porch including the baptistry at the porch at the east end, and a

campanile also in creosoted weatherboard connected with the main porch by a covered way.

Thus was executed the original design of Our Lady of the Rosary Church, with the nave and sanctuary in unbroken line, 115 feet by 34. The cost, exclusive of the furnishings, equipment and artifacts, came to no more than £13,500. This was very satisfactory. The parish could not be rated as poor but the parish priest had already expended a considerable sum on the renovation of St. Munchin's Church and he had a sizeable school-building programme on hands. The new church was blessed by the Bishop, Dr. Patrick O'Neill, on December 11th, 1950, and formally opened with holy Mass on Sunday, December 17th in the presence of the Mayor and Corporation and a large congregation. Monsignor Arthur Ryan of Belfast, a notable occasional preacher of the period, delivered the homily.

When the church was being planned the question of size was a debatable point. Accommodation for some 500 was ultimately thought to be adequate, but it proved to be so for only a few years. During the autumn and winter of 1955, Molloy's built the south aisle to Liam McCormick's design. Somewhat later the sacristy area to the north was widened and fitted with a flat roof. And then from the early 'sixties came the enormous expansion of our economy and with it the growth of Limerick from a large market town to a considerable city. There was serious overcrowding in the church on Sundays. There was some relief when the church of Christ the King was built in Caherdavin, but not enough.

THE EXTENSION

After the death of Monsignor Moloney in 1964 the church became a trifle tatty, and not so much from neglect as from a certain hesitation about its future. Although it had quickly faded

from Monsignor Moloney's mind, the concept of "temporary" was still in currency and there was some talk about the "permanent" church. It seemed clear, however, that the parishioners generally had acquired a deep affection for their wooden church and there was the fact of its considerable reputation. The idea of expansion was emerging as the proper course and Tom McMahon of McMahon, McMahon and Hickey, the Limerick architects, prepared several plans.

In the event, the new parish priest, Canon William O'Grady, hoping no doubt that the Caherdavin church would absorb the over-flow, elected for a renovation of the building as it stood. The architects insulated the roof with serroklith and finished it off with rubberoid felt. The walls were insulated with fibreglass, the insulation proving very successful as the church could be quite cold in winter despite the good thermal storage heating system. Painted and decorated inside and out, the church was back in style by the time the present parish priest took over in 1974.

But the problem of overcrowding had not been solved, and there was a nagging worry too about the possibility of panic developing in the event of alarm on account of the inadequate passages and limited exits. Then in March of 1976, in the small hours of a Sunday morning, the sacristy caught fire from a defect in the electrical system and was partially destroyed. The result of this experience was the decision to expand.

Mr. Mahon came up with a new plan. There was some argument in favour of introducing a matching brick in the proposed extension and a limited amount of brick was in fact introduced. But fortunately the idea prevailed of facing the concrete block structure in the new building proper with the creosoted weatherboard. Langan Brothers of

Limerick secured the building contract. Work began in the spring of 1978 and the church as it now stands was blessed by the Bishop, Dr. Jeremiah Newman, before the 12.15 p.m. Mass on the third Sunday of Easter, 29th of April, 1979.

The renewal in the main consists of the north aisle with the wall of stained glass, the Blessed Sacrament chapel, the chapel of the Stations of the Cross where the choirs assemble for services, the confessional rooms, a general purposes room, the porch leading to the south aisle and the sacristy block with entrance opening off the north aisle. An oil-fired central heating system was installed throughout. Attractive patios to the north and south of the building have added considerably to the very delightful landscaping.

When Monsignor Moloney was planning some thirty years before, he saw in what he had in mind a contribution towards solving the problem of providing churches at reasonable cost in our developing growth areas. What he could not quite have foreseen was the rapidity with which these areas were about to develop, nor could he have foreseen at all the phenomenon of inflation. Costs are not really comparable in respect of the church he built and the one we have now because they belong to entirely different economies. It is enough to say that the reconstruction expense sheet was somewhat longer than that of the original!

MODEST REPUTATION

Neither does one compare the original structure with the present. The church as conceived by Messrs Corr and McCormick did not envisage expansion and one feels that Mr McCormick added the south aisle with much reluctance. The single aisle made the building lopsided, upset the lines of the original design and took from its simplicity. The church is built

by the founding architects certainly gained a modest reputation at home and abroad. The architects contributed a feature on the building to *The Furrow* of April, 1951, naturally not uncomplimentary. But appreciative notices followed in reputable architectural journals and elsewhere: the prestigious *Architects' Journal*, March, 1952; *Foreign Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs*, July, 1952; *Architect and Building News*, January, 1953; *The Builder*, December, 1953; *Hibernia* (of Fribourg), 1954; *Irish Architect*, August, 1956.

The *Shell Guide to Ireland*, London, Ebury Press, 1967, rates "the temporary wooden church" as "one of the more significant of recent contributions to Irish ecclesiastical architecture and art". The church is mentioned in the latest *Fodor Guides to Ireland*. In *The Churches and Abbeys of Ireland*, Brian de Breffny and George Mott, London, Thames and Hudson, 1976, amid the architectural finery of the ages a slender beam lights up the Rosary Church. And in *Ireland*, by Joe McCarthy, Time Incorporated, 1964, the church is chosen to illustrate the devotion of our people to the faith of their fathers, two photos, one of the interior, where a mother and her children kneel in prayer — the scene easily identifiable from the highly original pews of laminated plywood that furnished the original building — the other of a Sunday Mass congregation spilling on to the grounds.

One must allow a final word to the architect, Liam McCormick, from his *Building Churches: 1947-1975: A personal Recollection* —

From my point of view, the significant thing in meeting Monsignor Moloney was not just his introduction to Evie Hone and through her a host of young

Irish artists; from him I learnt that churches are not just places in which services are held, but that they should inspire and uplift, that they should have about them a quality of peace and quiet where one can escape from the bustle of life and meditate.

THE ARTIFACTS

Monsignor Moloney was a man of distinction not only as an ecclesiastic but in historical, archaeological and artistic circles. An outline of his life and works will be found in *North Munster Studies: Essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney*, edited by Etienne Rynne, Limerick, The Thomond archaeological Society, 1967. He was one of the very few Irish parish priests of the time who felt the Church should be encouraging native artists and craftsmen. His encouragement was richly rewarded: the reputation of Our Lady of the Rosary Church is due as much to the artifacts in painting and sculpture commissioned by him as to the building itself and its lovely sylvan setting.

There are two distinctive works without the building, the teak statue of Our Lady of Fatima on the facade of the campanile, by Oisín Kelly, and the Annunciation tableau, affixed to the north-east wall of the sacristy block, designed and executed by Ian and Imogen Stuart.

Entering the church from the main porch, a somewhat startling Deposition from the cross is perched on a ledge above. It has an interesting history. The work, in bronze, of the Irish-American artist, Andrew O'Connor, is in the Tate Gallery in London where it is labelled "Ghosts". Monsignor acquired the plaster cast from the O'Connor family, and there it is preoccupying our east wall.

To the left, on the south wall of the nave, the work of a Limerick-born artist,

Eamon Costello, is the elongated figure of St. Anne with Mary, her child.

In the south aisle are the five large oil paintings on canvas executed by the Dublin artist-priest, Jack Hanlon. Depicting St. Patrick, Pope St. Pius X, St. Brigid, the Holy Family, and St. Oliver Plunkett, Father Hanlon designed them to enliven the church when it had no stained glass. In the same transept is the baptistery window, a tryptich of stained glass, the central panel, the Baptism of Christ, the work of Evie Hone, the side panels, the Nativity and Resurrection of Christ, by John and Roisin Murphy, these latter commissioned by Canon O'Grady. The Evie Hone panel, designed shortly after her notable East Window in Eton College Chapel, was originally in the main porch which then contained the baptistery. The font is the work of Thomas Quinn of Limerick.

The statues in the sanctuary of Christ with his Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Rosary, executed by Mme. Jammet of Dublin, had been removed with some excess of Second Vatican zeal but were restored at the reconstruction with the blessing of Bishop Newman. The woven backcloth in maroon and honey is of Irish workmanship and so is the simple sanctuary lamp, designed in Glenstal Abbey,

now used as a receptacle for plants since the Blessed Sacrament was enthroned at the head of the new north aisle.

The Stations of the Cross in the chapel opening off the north aisle, were executed by Oberammergau carvers who performed in the famous Passion Play during the Holy Year of 1950. The wall of stained glass in the north aisle was designed and executed by the Abbey Stained Glass Company of Dublin. The Madonna and Child at the bottom of the aisle is the work of a Limerick artist, James Clancy.

The church has some good plate of Irish workmanship, a notable antique Monstrance, and an ivory crucifix, late 16th century Spanish, mounted on a 17th century Italian cross, the gift of a close friend of Monsignor Moloney's, the late John Hunt.

Our Lady of the Rosary is always enriched with beautiful flower displays, fruit of the skill and devotion of Our Lady's Floral Society.

And since beauty must have its sheen, the care of the church, its furnishings and artifacts, is a major charge assumed by Our Lady's Altar Society, a group of ladies in the parish whose work earns the admiration of parishioner and visitor alike.

M.T.