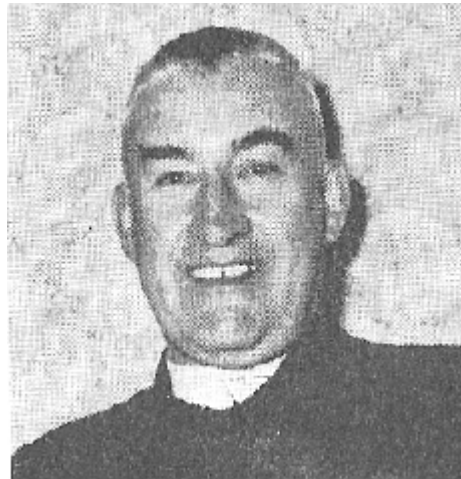
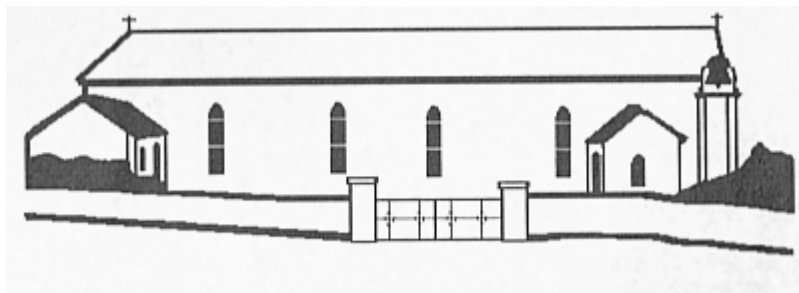


Attymass Church Reconstructed July 57 – 58

Transcribed from the Attymass Parish Inventory

Dated: 5/4/1959



Fr. Hannon PP during the restorations

Attymass Church Reconstructed July 57 – 58

The humble Church described in the opening page of this Inventory Book and built in 1835 was truly a monument to the faith of the people of the Parish.

It was built in an area where lived the very poor and it is said of them that in their eagerness to prepare a building for Devine Worship they did what was most unusual. They carried the stones for the future building on their shoulders where they gathered for Sunday Mass.

At the turn of the century the structure began to show signs of progressive deterioration. The roof was a source of headache to successive pastors. By the turn of the second half of the century it seemed certain that this roof was in danger of collapse and therefore to avoid a calamity the fabric would have to be attended to without further delay.

A representative gathering of parishioners with the Parish Priest decided that the first thing to be done was to establish a fund for the purpose and that a preliminary contribution of £12 should be handed in by each family. This continued for two years.

In the meantime the people handed to the Parish Priest the names and addresses of their friends in America & England. Over £2000 had been collected at home while the replies had in the interval infrenshed upwards of £1000. It was realized however that no further delay could be tolerated owing to the dangerous condition of the roof timbers.

By kind permission of the Bishop it was decided to invite an architect to examine the building and to draw up plans for its repair and reconstruction and invite tenders for the work.

As already stated the Church was in existence since 1835 i.e., just 120 years, yet the perfect condition of the original walls revealed in the preparatory stages of the repair work bears testimony to the fine craft of the early builders. It was because they built so well and with such precision that the parish was spared the enormous extra cost of building an entirely new Church.

The Architect Mr. Simon Leonard of Wm. Byrne & Sons Dublin after a careful and thorough examination of the original structure expressed his admiration for the enduring nature of the masonry and saw that the building would lend itself to fine work of reconstruction.

From a number of tenders that of £6939.11 submitted by Mr. J.P. Flanagan of Ballina was accepted. This was however later increased by some hundreds of pounds due to the fact that certain parts of the work in the opinion of the Architect should be further improved upon, over and above the original specification.

He decided that nothing could be retained except the bare walls. And within the building itself the gallery erected of pitch and pine in 1900 and the leafs of similar wood in 1910.

The new roof rests on ten steel tresses made and erected by Smith & Pearson of Dublin. These tresses give the vaulted outline to the ceiling.

The walls are studded so that there is no danger of any spots of dampness showing at any future time. The walls, it is true, were found perfectly dry but in those early days there was no

damp course laid on them at floor level and it was to safeguard against any terrible dampness seeping upwards from the foundation that he decided to treat the internal surface in this way.

The old windows were taken to Dublin by State Glass Co, and given a perfect repair with new bronze ventilators and when fitted again were set in concrete reveals and storm glazed.

The stain glass window originally in the Sanctuary was transferred to the gable wall and its place taken by two new stained glass windows our Lady of the Rosary & St. Joseph. They were made by the same company at a hundred pounds each and donated by Muintir Na Tire, Attymass Branch and Children of Mary. The same Company installed four leaded lights in the Sacristy at a cost of £50. The whole of this work including new windows cost £438.10.0.

The damp course covering the Sanctuary the body of the Church & Sacristy was laid by South of Ireland Asphalt Co. The block flooring is the work of McMahon of Limerick and the rubber ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick) in the Sanctuary Passages and Sacristy & Gallery Stairs was laid by Mr. Burke of Galway.

A Mortuary Chapel was railed in by a grille under Gallery where also the Baptistry with similar grille is located.

The new font is by Earley of Dublin which Company also erected new Marble Altar, Rails & Pulpit & Stations of Cross. The whole cost of Marble Work came to £2020, Altar £820 Rails £500 Pulpit £350 Font £350 Stations of Cross £250.

Installation of Lighting & Storage Heating with cables encased in conduits by International Stores Ballina £250. Lampshades Brackets & Holders supplied by Maguire & Gatchill Dublin for 16 Lights cost £82.10.

Of the two boundary walls outside the old Church two were repaired and two replaced by newly built concrete walls, all coped with the gate pillars to match. A concrete apron from gate with concrete path 4ft. wide surrounding the whole Church was laid as well and this work which was not in the contract cost £458.4.2.

A Lighting Conductor was erected and because of this danger from squally winds in the area it was deemed advisable to have all the slates pointed on this vertical line.

The work of felling all the trees was completed before the opening of 1958 and the parishioners assisted in levelling the surface.

Seeds and shrubs were sewn by the end of March. These were supplied by Powers of Waterford. Among them were about forty Rose Bushes planted immediately inside the main gate.

The work commenced on 15th July 1957 and all was complete for the most important event i.e. The Dedication Ceremony which took place on 15th July 1958 and was performed by Most Revd Dr. Fergus during which the Church was given The Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph as titulars.

His Lordship the Bishop of Killala graced the occasion by his presence and there were also present Dean Blaine the Archdeacon Mons Roughneen and twenty three priests.

After the Dedication Ceremony Solemn Votive Mass of The Immaculate Conception was celebrated by the Parish Priest with Fr. O'Grady C.C. Bonniclon Deacon and Fr. Cunney a native of this Parish Subdeacon and Fr. Cawley colleague Master of Ceremonies. Dr. O'Boyle was in the Sanctuary as also The Dean & Archdeacon.

The music and Gregorian chant were beautifully rendered by a choir conducted by Rev. Joseph Higgins Adm. Tourlestrane and composed of the school children of the Parish members of the talented Cunney and Flannelly families and some members of Diocesan Schola Cantorin.

His Lordship preached after the Gospel and after paying a deserved tribute to the people of the Parish for their splendid and generous support of this worthy project, to the Architect for his successful direction of the work and to the contractor for work well done, he gave to a full congregation a simple clear and beautiful exposition of the exalted purpose which the Church served.

July 15th was therefore a memorable day in the annals of the parish and will be long remembered by those who were privileged to be present on the great occasion.

J.F. 5/4/59

NOTES:

The Inventory book referred to at the start of the document contains a hand written history of Attymass parish composed by Patrick Flannelly in the 1930's. Transcripts of the document can be found at http://www.attymass.ie/historic_documents

The "J.F." signature at the foot of the document is believed to be that of the Bishop of Achonry, James Fergus.

A scanned image of a document regarding the blessing of the Stations of the Cross in 1958 can be found at http://www.attymass.ie/historic_documents

There is uncertainty regarding the authorship of this section of the inventory though it seems likely to be either Patrick Flannelly or the then PP Fr Hannon.