



**ARDMORE PARISH**  
ST MARY'S CHURCH

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*History.*

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Ardmore Parish lies south of the Parish of Waterside (Glendermott) and on the northern side of the Claudy Parish. It is on the Eastern side of Dunamanagh Parish and on the western side of Faughanvale Parish.

At the Waterside Parish end, its parish boundaries ends at today's Crescent link, across its main arterial road is the Waterside. The Rosstown Rd divides it from the Strathfoyle Parish . The Belt Rd divide is also the boundary between the Waterside Parish and Ardmore. The Belt Road going west becomes the Trench Rd and about a mile before that road meets with the New Buildings to Dunamanagh at the townland of Desertowen brings you into the Waterside Parish area. From there, the Parish boundary then runs south in the Direction of the Curryfree Rd toward Slieve Kirk mountain which borders the Parish from Dunamanagh Parish and also Claudy Parish. The Ardmore Parish on the Eastern side of Slieve Kirk mountain range borders the Claudy Parish and has its limit at Goshaden, where Ardground Rd brings you into the Claudy Parish. Across the Eastern side of the Faughan River, the Ardmore Parish extends beyond the main Glenshane Rd for approximately a half mile from the Burntollet bridge area till Drumahoe beyond the Fincairn cottages where thereafter the Faughan river is the boundary till the Rosstown Rd at Ardlough Rd.

Our townlands include Carn, Lisneal, Ardlough, Ardnabrocky, Altnagelvin, parts of the following three townlands of Lisaghmore, Cromkill and Clondermot. The townlands of Drumahoe, Tullyally, Gortgranagh, Currynieran, Ballyshaskey, Ardmore, Glenkeen.

Lisglass, Carnafarn, Creevedonnell, Curryfree, Lisdillon, Ardkill, Knockbrack, Goshaden, Tamnymore, Strathall, Crossballycormick, Fawney, Lismacrol, Gortica, Manach and Fincarn,

The earliest reference in literature to the Faughan Valley where Ardmore Parish is concerned occurs in the work of *Tirechan*, an Irish Scholar who worked between 664 and 700AD.

He tells how Patrick travelled from Inishowen to 'the plain of Dul Ochenai' (The Faughan) and 'built seven Churches there', namely the foundations some of which are in the Ardmore Parish and others lie in neighbouring Parishes. In Ardmore, Domhnach, Dari and Domhnach Dola foundations have associations with Ardkill and Crumkill areas respectively, though there is no absolute certainty of exact locations.

**Below is text from Olly McGilloway Book of 1986 'Along the Faughan Side'.**

**Following texts in book written by Fr John R Walsh PP Buncrana.**

**'Ecclesiastical Settlements' P74ff.**

'The earliest reference in literature to the Faughan Valley occurs in the work of *Tirechan*, an Irish Scholar who worked between 664 and 700AD.

He tells how Patrick travelled from Inishowen to 'the plain of Dul Ochenai' (The Faughan) and 'built seven Churches there'. Three centuries later the author of the Tripartite Life recorded the names of the seven Patrician foundations 'at the river Fochaine'. *Domnach Dola, Domnach Senliss, Domnach Dari, Domnach Senshue, Domnach Min –Cluane, Domnach Cati and Both Domnach*. The word 'Domnach' derives from the latin 'dominicus' ('pertaining to the Lord') and seems to refer specifically to churches established by Patrick. There is, then, a long tradition, going back indeed to the seventh

century, that Patrick founded seven churches in the Faughan Valley. It must be stressed, however, that since Badoney (Cranagh in the Glenelly Valley) is obviously one of these establishments, earlier writers did not confine themselves as rigidly as we have done to within a few miles of the actual river. Apart from Badoney and Clooney (Domnach Min – Cluane) it is impossible to be certain about the identity of the other five Patrican foundations. Is Domnach Dari what is now called Ardmore where there once was an oakwood? Is Domnach Dola what is now the parish of Clondermott as south Derry historian *Seamus O Ceallaigh* suggests or is it Templemoyle as has been recently speculated? Could Domnach Senliss now be known as Lettershandoney? Is Domnach Cati the modern Kilcattan and does that townland bear the name of Catus, one of Patrick's retinue, or is it Donaghedy in and around Donemana as suggested by Rev Ciaran Devlin? Though Seamus O Ceallaigh suggests the Dunamanagh site as site of one of St Columbanus's of Bangor's disciples, with the name Caoidhe. In regards the area once known as Domnach Senchue? We can ask the questions but regrettably cannot provide the answers.

Above taken from;

**'People of the Faughan Valley' as below by Fr Kieran Devlin is another Chapter in Oilly McGilloway's Book, 'Along the Faughan Side 1986.**

'No satisfactory identification of all seven churches has been made. Some are clear like Both Domhnach (Badoney in Glenelly) and Domhnach Caati (Donaghedy at Donemana). Domhnach Dari has been placed at Ardmore where there was an oak wood, and Domhnach Senliss at Lettershandoney. Domhnach Dula is probably near lough foyle, possibly at Templemoyle at Brian Lacey suggests.

The Annals of the four masters picture St Patrick travelling with his household of twenty four, made up of his bishop, priest, judge, psalmist, chamberlain, bell ringer, waiters, charioteer, cowherd, smiths, embroidresses, etc. The names of three of this household are associated with churches in this area. Aithgen (his cook) was the patron saint of Badoney. Bescna – described as 'Cruimhthear' (the form Presbyter took in Irish), who was a priest – was his chaplain and was patron of Domhnach Dula. Another cruimhthear, Mescan, was his friend and brewer and became patron of a church near the the Faughan called Domhnach Mescain. This Church has never been identified but possibly the Meskan Stone in the townland of Gortnaran (near Claudy) casts some light on the matter'.

**(Fr Mc Keefrys Annals as follows )**

### **Early Years.**

Ardmore was originally, part of the larger Glendermott Parish that in a bygone era included Claudy, Faughanvale, Strathfoyle, and Waterside.

Concentrating on the present parish of Ardmore – Tradition has it that the earliest mention of Christianity in this area was when, **St Patrick** along with his disciple **St Breacan** preached along the banks of the Faughan river that flows through the parish on his way to founding a Monastery at Clooney (Remains in St Columb's Pk, Waterside)

A few centuries later there came into being a monastic settlement at **Ardkill** meaning 'High Church' in the townland of Glenkeen, near Goshaden. It was built in 987. Nearby is a narrow stretch of road leading to it known as 'The Togher' (Pilgrims Way). '

*A Monastery, Church and Graveyard was here. There was a hospital here,(Going by a rough drawing made by Fr McKeefrey a burial ground was in an old circular fort area that was probably a site of an old round tower,(as written by Fr McKeefrey) its position being on the East side of sharp bend near the bottom of the Ardkill rd approx 20ft – 40ft from corner. Behind circular fort on upward side of bend was a church,*

*( small) 30ft approx behind and above the circular fort and again 30ft above and behind it was a monastery, which he drew as rectangular, perpendicular to the road on upward side of bend (as seen from FrMcKeefrey's drawing NF). Patients were brought from Derry to be nursed at the Monastery. Was this Monastery an annex of St John ' the Cross', Or is it a Church established by St Patrick? Fr McKeefrey asks.*

**In the Cross district at Fawney** a Father Kearney taught school latin in an old Thatched school near the present Mr Quigley's House. When Kearney's time was up, David Quigley bought the house from Bob Smith. Catholic's used the street of Donaghy's field for Mass and also near Brackfield in Mr Brolly's place.

**The Cross** stood beside the present shop of Mr Smith (Inn at the Cross). The monks wearing 'Cloaks and Hood's' had devotions twice a day in a long white washed cottage right behind this present house. Bella Canning who died 30 years ago (1878) aged 84 told my (Fr McKeefrey) informant Mr Quigley.

There is a Tradition here not very prevalent however that 400 monks were put to death between Brackfield Br(Burntollet Br) and the Bridge at the Cross. A book is in possession of Terence O Neill a Carrickmore teacher said the **Church of St John** was in the Blackditchfield about the 3rd tree about 12 perches from the road. It ran near the old main road for about 22ft and along the ditch 38ft and then 22ft at base and 38ft again to the old main road. My informant's mother's grandmother used to tell that there were 2 houses here It was on the old road on the Claudy side of the present (Inn at the Cross) (Going by sketch 150 –200+yds on Claudy side of Inn on same side of old road). and the monks used to have prayer on Sundays in the open air. 2 Candlesticks and gold were found in an orchard on the other side of the road by a Catholic servant named Ferry.

(End of Fr McKeefry article).

(Written below is found in the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland written July 28th 1902 and in P284 is the following in brackets –'The 'Donach-Dara was at the present 'Oaks' in the Ardmore District of the same parish; and here also was a monastery and a church, the ruins of which were still visible in the last century. This church was dedicated to St John, according to the testimony of very old men who, when young, heard their grandfathers talk of St John's Church. It is probable that this Church of St John, of which there is no mention in any of the Irish Annal or local Histories, may have been occupied by the Knights Hospitallers of St John, who followed the rule of St Augustine. Local tradition speaks of the slaughter of a large number of monks here, whether by the Danes or the English is not definitely known.

*The office houses attached to Mr Quigley's residence were built on the convent school. The graveyard lies principally to the left of the public road (in 1902) going to Claudy. The ancient name of the townland was Cross-Bally-Cormac, now it is called 'The Cross'. In the First Glendermott Presbyterian Church there have been preserved from time immemorial, some old tankards and cups. One of these tankards which I obtained through the courtesy of Mr Adair, has been photographed by Mr Coghlan of Derry. It stands 7 and half inches width at top is four and half inches and width at bottom five and three quarter inches. It has on it the inscription I.H.S. surmounted by small maltese cross and beneath three small pennants – the usual device of the Knights of Malta. These tankards have always been regarded as belonging to a monastery in the parish. (The tankard exhibited at a meeting on the 28th July 1902 is of pewter. There are no town marks, or maker stamps upon the cover side or bottom of the tankard, which would have afforded of a sure test of the precise date at which it was made. The theory of a wide loop for the mailed hand can hardly be sustained.*

*Tankards were common at the time of Charles 1st and 2nd down to the reign of George 3rd. And were used as flagons in Communion plate.*

*Mr Robert Day P.S.A. to whom I sent a copy of the photo, informs me that in the absence of marks he would fix the date at circa 1690 – 1710. He mentions that at present in the Cork Exhibition about ten such flagons all dating from the end of the 17th C. to 1750.*

*These Tankards were in the possession of Rev Mr Will the First Presbyterian Clergyman in the parish who was ordained in 1654. The handle is very large and obviously out of proportion. This is explained by the tankard being intended for use in the refectory of the monastery and so shaped to be easily raised by the mailed hand. These tankards belonged in all probability to the monastery of St John, at the 'Cross' and not to 'Enagh' as some writers assert. Enagh was a Franciscan House. (End of Royal Society Antiquarian).*

(Written below is written in Fr McKeefrey's Annals).

*Another Monastery was in the site of Mr Stevenson's House, at 'Drumnahae' (spelling as in Fr McKeefrey's annals of old place names that had almost disappeared in 1903.) Mr Stevenson was a county Councillor (Fort .....at Milltown, now lodges young people in care. 'Knockefort' lies to the south side of 'Drumnahae' Road from Derry to Claudy past the Old Glendermott Church (C.o.I) on to Oleahaus Castle. House to Monastery and Church at Drumnahae. Four old Hawthorne Trees here were probably the sole remnants of the graveyard and south side of the Monastery is a forth called 'Knockauroe' An O Kane's (O Cahin) Castle stood on one of the Henderson farms.*

*'Killeninch' Name of field that lies to the east of the Monastery between public road and the river. (Latter details from Hy McCullagh Yr 1903, so writes Fr McKeefrey). (Jean McCourt in 2007 told me that Mr McCullagh lived in Ardkill Hse in 1903. The above italics from Fr Fr Keffrey's*

### **Written Below is credited as taken from source which follows**

'St Columbkille had a foundation in the Parish, probably on the site of the old parish Church at Clondermott, as the glebe belonging to it gives its name to the townland Crumkill, a corruption of Columbkille. At the time of the Plantation there was an old church here which was taken over and rebuilt by the Goldsmiths Company and used for worship until 1770. The Ardmore territory was in the care of the monks at Clondermott. Possibly too there was another church at Disertowen, though this assumption rests on nothing more than the derivation of the place name. Bishop Eoghan or Eugene, the patron saint of the diocese, concerned himself mainly with the territory ruled by the Ui Fiachrach

of Ardstraw, and he is the patron of Langfield at Drumquin and also of Ceapach, but there is not much evidence to show that he worked in other parts of the Derry Diocese. It is significant, however, that in pre Plantation days, he was recognised as the patron of Cumber church and as there were many other saints who had worked there, Eugene would hardly have been singled out unless for some specific reason, probably because he had a monastery there. If that were so, it would lend weight to the theory that Disertown in Glendermott parish was the disert or hermitage associated with the monastery of Eugene in the neighbouring district. From so many doubts and suppositions one truth emerges clearly and admits of no hesitations, namely that Christianity was firmly established in the parish by the end of the sixth century.

Yet the Gospel of Christ with its message of peace did not for many long centuries quell the terrible tribal conflicts that took place around Derry, From Inishowen where the Cineal Eoghain had originally settled themselves there spread out many branches of the family seeking lands to establish themselves in. One of the strongest of these was the Clann Chonchobhair, who after hard fighting won for themselves Magh Iotha, that fertile plain south of Derry, known today as the Lagan. After a time the old problem arose once more, too many people, too little land, and the tribe were pushing out again. Thus it came about that the Ui Caireallain the family of Caireallan, grand son of Diarmuid, son of Chonchobhar, found themselves in what today is our parish, and thus it was that the name Glendermott, or more accurately, Clandermott, Clann Diarmuda, was given to the district. The O Caireallains and their numerous cousins, the O Dubhgaills or Doyles, the O Duibhreachains, the Murrays, the Denneedys. The Duddys and the McGettigans shared the newly conquered lands between them, and they appear to have been firmly established here by the end of the ninth century. When later towards the close of the twelfth century the O Cahans had established themselves as undisputed rulers in the district, there was no real change because they too, were of the family of the Chonchobhar, descended from Drughan, another of his sons.

About the parish priests at the end of the middle ages and in early modern times we know little more than their names and of the actual curates appointed to run the parish no record at all survives.

The Diocese was fortunate to have as Bishop the Great Redmund O Gallagher who took possession of the See in 1569 and was killed in 1602.

One consequence of the English occupation of the city of Derry which was complete in the year 1600, was that the bishop, Redmund O Gallagher transferred his residence to Glendermott and Cuellar the Spanish sailor who came to Ireland in the Spanish Armada fleet and wrote extensive notes on his travels describes how in 1588 he went into O Kane's country in search of a bishop, who was seven leagues off in a castle where the English kept him in Banishment and retirement. 'The Bishop was a very good Christian and went about in the garb of a savage for concealment. 'An honourable and just man'. For many years Redmund O Gallagher was safe here, in the castle at Enagh. In this time he rebuilt the chapel at Clooney. He took an active part in spurring the Ulster chieftains to defend their land against the English. Now Redmund, it seem was the tower of strength of the Ulstermen and their bond of union and to him was due the long continuance of their independence. At any rate the heretics believed him to be the person who kept alive the war, and kept up the spirit of the forces, for they singled him out as the one person for whose destruction all their efforts were to be combined. And eventually they were successful.

Tradition is that he now left Enagh and disguised as a herdsman he dwelt on the slopes of the Warbleshinney or Corrody hills. The English forces made frequent raids into O Kane territory and it is probably on one such that Dr O Gallagher was slain in 1601. There is a full account on the 'De Praesulibus'. 'The following year the Lough Foyle garrison got on his track and at last seized him in Cumalia, and out of the way hamlet, about a mile from Derry, on the way which leads to Strabane, where there was a parochial church.'

There survives in a Salamanca manuscript which narrates that the bishop was not killed in the house, but carried on horseback to the fort at Dunalong. On the way the soldiers saw that the old man was dying so they cut off his head and threw the body in a ditch. His faithful people took his body and buried it reverently in the graveyard at Clondermott. Cumalia. Where the bishop was killed has never been certainly identified, but it probably was the townland of Crumkill, or certainly that location. Other historians record his place of death being at Cumber Old Church location, Claudy. The date was 8th March 1601.

In 1608 the English Crown decided that only by confiscation and thorough Plantation could Ulster be secured. The district opposite Derry fell to two Companies, the Grocers and the Goldsmiths.

The Goldsmiths proportion had at its southern boundaries the townlands of Tully, Drumagore, Craigtown and Tirkeeveny, the limits of the Glendermott Parish today. Part of this large tract included Lisglass, Lisdillon, Gortgranagh, Ardmore, Currynieran, Tullyally, Ballyshasky and Glenkeen. The dean of Derry made good his claim to Clondermott.

Thomas Skipton came from London, was a family of middle class landowner he purchased for a mere £1000. The townlands of Tamneymore, Ballyshaskey, Currynieran, Ardmore, Glenkeen. He prospered and built a mansion at Ballyshaskey.

King James issued the proclamation:

'The King declares, publishes, and proclaims that it is his will and commandment that all Jesuits, seminary priests, or other priests whatsoever, made and ordained by any authority derived or pretended to be derived from the See of Rome, shall before the tenth day of December next (1611) depart out of the Kingdom of Ireland.

The fear that Derry could not support a bishop in any way consonant with the Episcopal dignity seems to have influenced Rome in its reluctance to appoint one, and yet this very want of a bishop for one hundred and fifty years might have been decisive. A. Certainly, no other single factor could have had such pernicious results. In a hierarchical society so sensitive and complex as the Church the lack of a bishop affects every aspect of its life, organization and discipline deteriorate. Confirmation and Orders, cannot be administered, and perhaps most important of all for there is something sacramental about Episcopal rule, the spirit goes out of a diocese. Glendermott parish was typical; it survived, but for long years it did not appear to have any chance of doing so.

Such was the pattern that developed during the first half of the Eighteenth century, and so cleverly was the Penal code, framed, so vigorously was it enforced, that one wonders today how the Faith survived.

In 1694 a detailed report was demanded from each parish and yet a single grim sentence sufficed for Glendermott and Faughanvale. 'We have no popish clergy residing in either of these parishes but ye people have Mass sometimes read by some straggling priests, but they are not constantly attended.'

Many traditions of the parish that survive today were written down in 1905 by Fr McKeefry, a painstaking chronicler, and some stories told to him came down in a single family, whose great grandfather had been an eye witness of the event in the mid eighteenth century. When the channel is as direct and as brief as this, one should be able to use the information safely.

From Derry, William Wotton, the mayor, wrote on the 12th June 1714. 'We do not find any of the Popish clergy exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction or officiating as Popish priests except one whom we are informed hath lately officiated within the Liberties and we hope to have him in custody in a few days'. An occasional visit from, a handful at Mass, uneducated peasants deprived of the Sacraments, biting poverty, that, without doubt, was the parish of Glendermott for the first half of the Eighteenth Century. Perhaps their very misery saved these Catholics. They had so little that they had nothing to gain by apostatizing, and they were so poor and of such negligible consequence, that they were hardly worth persecuting. The courage of the priests, their ready acceptance of hardship and great risk seems at last to have fired the imagination of the ordinary people, and to have aroused in them a spirit of religion that nothing could subdue. By 1750. The battle had been definitely won. There were still hardships, still legal restrictions, but the Faith had survived, the Irish had begun again to feel their strength, and never again could anyone unleash persecution as in the past.

The change must have been quite noticeable in Fr McElvar's time. He dwelt at the Cross, properly, Cross Baile Cormaic, and said Mass at the Sand Hole. Here on Good Fridays the people of the parish were accustomed to assemble, and the main feature of the service seems to have been a sermon on the Sacred Passion. That a huge crowd could meet without fear and without molestation is sufficiently indicative of the new state of affairs. Fr McElvar was probably a native of the parish, and friends of his lived in Lisdillon. He had charge, too of Faughanvale and his days were very full, because according to the Religious Census of 1766 there were 386 Catholic families in Glendermott, well over one thousand souls, and 884 parishioners in Faughanvale.

**(All the above was taken from Fr James Coulter's Book. 'Glendermott 1958.)**

### **Old Places in Ardmore Parish now almost forgotten. Writes Fr McKeefry in his Annals of 1903**

'Curraghalee' – In upper Lisdillon where the McGrellis lived.

'Belbau' or 'Bulban' above Cartons where Gallagher lives.

'Edderill' Is in the upper Lisdillon: There is a grave holm here and it is stated that a battle was fought here.

'Dougen Glen' runs for two miles.



Perth Brig (Bridge) is near the public road at Ardmore between Knocbrack and Goshaden.

'Ardnasallagh' is in Mt McKeevers farm Lisdillon – waterfalls here.

'Stranigaini' lies to the north of Lisdillon. A priest lodged there in a village about 100 years ago (1803).

'Knockbarrel' where Cunningham lives (at the Hollows according to Jean McCourt near Lusby's farm)

'Tullyglass' in Goshaden on Downey's farm.

(Cathal Dallat of Ballycastle has the following meaning to local place names.

Ardough – 'The high lough, although all trace of the lough has disappeared.

Ardmore: means the great height or hill. St Patrick is thought to have founded a church here which was known as Domnach Daire, the church of the Oak Trees.

Ardnabrocky: means the height or the hill of the badgers and badgers feature in many of our place names.

Ballyshasky: Baile Seascaigh – the townland of the sedge grass or reeds.)

#### **Penal Mass Rocks (Ordinance Survey as below)**

The **Mass Rock** at 'Birchwood'. *'Among the most attractive features of the demesne is a deep precipitous ravine, the bed of a rapid stream. Near the point where this stream enters the river Faughan, and in a picturesque situation within the deep wood, stands the Ardmore Altar which consists of a wall about 8ft long, with a projection table of loose stones and 2 flags forming steps; its immediate site is a green platform about 20ft long, and it is overhung by a birch tree – The Ardmore Altar, (still surviving in 1837) which is adjacent to Mr Smyth's house, stands in the depths of a thick wood, on a green platform about 20ft in length and on the brink of a fearful precipice overhanging the Faughan. Ordinance Survey Memoirs of Ireland Parishes of Londonderry (x111) 1831-1838 vol 34)* The Mass rock dates back to 1720 and known locally as the 'Old Altar' is also in the townland of Glenkeen.

**During the Penal Years of the C17th. Mass was celebrated here. In the ordinance survey map of 1837 mention is made of an altar in the 'Birchwood'. The priests associated with the Mass Rock were Fr O Brolchan, (Bradley) also known as Cathal na mBo Mor or Charles of the big cow. Fr O Kane and Fr Doherty. (Within brackets from Fr James Coulter Book, Glendermott – A story is told of a certain John McGinnis, son of a gardener on the Knox estate at Prehen who used to attend Mass in the Birch Wood. On one occasion, the celebrant Fr McKinney found himself with 12 of a congregation and took the opportunity of questioning them in the catechism, while he waited on others to come along. It is said that only one of those present, a man named Logue, was able to answer. Religion this tradition declares, had fallen so low in the district, that people were not only afraid but ashamed to be known as Catholic).**

**There is also tradition that a local Presbyterian known as Watson's family provided a place of safety for the priests. This old house used to belong to the Watson family which was knocked down in recent years by. In that old house, the Watson family hid the priest in the hole of the chimney brace.**

**This in time came to be known as the 'Priest's hole' A member of the same family carried the priest across the Faughan river on his back and saved his life.**

The Wood is supposed to have its martyr too. There is the tradition that in the Penal times a priest was killed in the Birchwood. A man whose clothes were covered with blood on coming from the wood was asked what was wrong replied. *'That he was after doing away with one of the black game'*. A Fr Doherty was said to have said Mass in the 'Birchwood'. Fr McKay C.C. Waterside said his Grandfather came from Glenmornan (Clochcor) to hear Mass there.

**The Cross at the Birchwood Mass Rock as is commonly known site to the people of Ardmore was erected after Mass was celebrated there in March 1928. It was made by William Patrick Treacy and paid for by Teddy Kearney. The Mass in 1928 due to bad weather had to be delayed for several more days and then was celebrated by Fr. T. Nicholson at 6.30am for the Downside Wanderers Cricket Team. Many people also walked from the Waterside to be present. The early hour for the Mass was to allow people to get to work. The cross was pulled down and thrown into the Faughan in the 1950s. It was saved by the workers in the Bleach Green and was then secured in concrete. The Mass has been more regularly celebrated there in recent years. The local postwoman Mary O Connell (nee Kearney) now deceased, spent much time decorating the place and keeping it tidy. Another Mass rock is located in the Fincairn Glen, its location at present is unknown as is the position of the Mass rock not far from the present Birchwood Mass rock.**

The next Mass was celebrated there by Fr Johnny Harkin C.C. in 1974 during a 'Columban Week'. In 1997 to celebrate the 1500yrs since St Columba's death, Fr McNicholl PP and Fr McQuillan C.C. celebrated Mass at the Mass Rock. Fr Neil Farren celebrated Mass there in 2008, to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the placing of the Cross at the Mass rock site. Many Ardmore Parishioners gathered and the 11am Church choir sang at the Mass. Other Masses were celebrated there on the Feast of The Irish Martyrs in 2010 and 2011. Unfortunately with river erosion the location was too dangerous to celebrate Mass at the site thereafter due to health and safety fears caused by the soil erosion in same location.

The **Fincairn Altar, situated in Fincairn Glen** is an accidental stone, selected by the priest as a convenient substitute for a regular altar.

(Fr Coulter Book, Glendermott as follows. Fincairn Glen was another recognised place for public mass. The Ordnance Survey reports. 'the altar' was an accidental stone selected by the priest, as well adapted for his purpose'. A happy tradition survives that Ash of Ashbrook was informed that a priest was to say Mass there, and as he was a magistrate, he was forced to take some action. Very humanely, he sent warning beforehand, so that when he arrived at the place, the priest had gone and the congregation dispersed).

**Ardmore Old Church.**

The old church, which is in the district of Currynierin, (in grounds of old Ardmore Cemetery opposite the present St Mary's Church). It was erected in 1791 and dedicated to St Columba. It can accommodate 560 persons, (had a gallery and a pew at the back of the church with special padding on seat for the Nicholson family who came to worship there – source May Hargan of Gosheden cottages, who attended the church there as a child). But is at present in bad state of repair (insert marginal query; still in bad repair?). IT HAD NEITHER BELL NOR STEEPLE Fr James McFeely Parish Priest, born 1742 (died 1794) at McFeely's Height in the townland of Glenkeen same townland as the 'Birchwood Mass Rock' built the old Church at Ardmore between 1784 and its opening in 1791 at a cost of £400. (This Church is no longer visible and was situated in the Old Ardmore Graveyard). The old church was the parish church of Glendermott Parish. The old chapel, erected in 1791 was situated in the present old Ardmore Graveyard was dedicated to St Columba. It accommodated 560 persons. Built in the townland of Currynieran on a rood of ground leased from the Ash family. It was an unpretentious structure, because in 1858 it was valued at twelve pounds and fifteen shillings, less than a quarter of the valuation of the church that by that time had been built in the Waterside. But the chapel at Ardmore poor as it was, had significance far beyond its size, for it marked the end of an epoch, and the beginning of a new age for Catholicism in the district)

The last Mass celebrated in the old church was by Fr James McFeely in the morning of All Saints Day. 1st November 1930. The gates leading into the old church grounds, today old Ardmore graveyard was made by William Elliott, grandfather of the present Ardmore Elliott family (2011)

According to Charlie Hargan of the Berryburn (aged 89 in 2011) he said: 'The old ardmore church was still in use, after it was closed as a church. William and Vera Sharkey made 'Paris Buns' and tea in the old school next door to the old church after Mass in the new church, on the first Sunday of each month for the parishioners to have after Mass and they would all go into the old chapel to eat the buns and drink the tea.

According to Fr McNicholl's (P.P. in 1980s) paper booklet 'Memories of Ardmore' is recorded 'The Old Church (St Columba's) housed evacuees from the Waterside during the early second world war years and was demolished in 1946.

### **Present St Mary's Church.**

The **present St Mary's Church** at Ardmore stands on the opposite side of the road from the old church. Situated then on a wooded site on the hill's crest. The lands for the site had been provided by the Nicholson Family of Beech Hill.

This new St Mary's Church, Ardmore was dedicated to 'Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians' was built when Rev William Boyle McFeely PP.VF. (buried, 1937 in the middle graveyard, Ardmore) was Parish Priest of Glendermott . He was the uncle of the late Bishop McFeely of Raphoe. Fr McFeely had a great devotion to St Don Bosco who was canonised in 1930. Don Bosco was the Founder of the Salesians, and had 'Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians as their patroness'. Hence the reason for Rev W.B. McFeely's title of Dedication for the new Ardmore Church.

St Mary's Church was Solemnly dedicated at 10.30am on the All Souls Day 2nd Nov 1930 by Bishop O Kane. He was assisted by Rev. J. L. McGettigan, Adm St Eugene's Cathedral; Rev W. Elliott C.C. Buncrana; Rev W. Hegarty, C.C. Urney; Rev J. McCauley, St Columb's College; Rev B. Smith C.C Waterside.

Subsequently his Lordship presided at High Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. J.J. McGlade, P.P. Limavady; the sub deacon, Fr W. Hegarty and the Master of Ceremonies Rev Dr Neil Farren, President, St Columb's College.

The large congregation included many from the city. The music was from the Messe de Copus Christi (Palestrina) rendered by the choir. One of the Sisters of Mercy trained the choir and played the organ. The soloists were Miss Alfric McGinley, Messrs M. O Doherty, S. Burke and L. Hasson.

At the conclusion of the Mass an inspiring sermon was delivered by V. Rev Fr Nicholson, C.S.S.R.

Father McFeely expressed thanks at the end of the High Mass.

At the conclusion, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given by Bishop O Kane.

The design of the Church is Lombard Romanesque, and is oblong in plan, with a Lady Chapel on the South side, and the Sacristy on the North side. The church is divided into ten bays, and in addition the main entrance and the entrance to gallery on either side. The lady chapel is divided from the church by Portland stone columns having moulded bases and carved caps. There is an entrance through the Lady Chapel the Church. The Baptistry is off the main entrance and outside the main wall of the church. The sacristy building contain priest's sacristy, clerks room with committee room and store rooms over. The heating chamber is under the sacristy.

The outside walls are built in Laganvale red pressed brick, and are relieved with bands, coping and barges, etc of Portland stone and concrete. The main facade has the principal entrance door in the centre, which is surrounded in Portland stone; on either side is a moulded pedestal with columns having moulded bases and carved caps. The entrance is circular headed with pediment over.

The tympanum has a carved panel of the Nativity, and on the top of the pediment is a statue of Our Lady in Portland stone. The gable at top is finished off in arcading, carried out in concrete with columns under the barges. Over the main entrance is the tower and belfry, having copper roof and surmounted by a cross.

On the south side is the baptistry and Lady Chapel, and in the gable of the latter is a carved panel of the Madonna carried out in stone.

The floors of the entrance and baptistry are done in encaustic tiling. The church has a solid floor finished in a wood, and the inside walls are finished off in grey colour, and the jambs of windows, etc, being finished in white.

The choir and gallery fronts are done in pitch pine, divided into panels by columns. The ceiling is flat and carried out in plaster, with a pitch pine moulded and detailed cornice round same.

The Sanctuary is divided from the church by an oak altar rail,(no longer in existence 2014. Part of that oak altar rail is now placed as credence table at interior sanctuary wall). And on the side walls are octagon columns with full size carved angels under the roof truss. The rail is circular-headed open panelling, relieved with columns, and has flat top. The floor of the Sanctuary is laid in maple (no longer in existence 2014) and the altar steps and predella in oak (no longer in existence 2014). The altar is carried out entirely in oak, having carved panels relieved with gilding, the Tabernacle and the canopy over it is entirely gilded with beautiful brass doors chastely engraved. Over the altar is a Baldachinno with columns i oak and relieved with gilding on each corner is the figure of an angel. On the wall behind the Baldachinno is a richly coloured and brocaded velvet which forms a beautiful background (no longer 2014).

The dado of Sanctuary is done mosaic in delicate tints, relieved with gold running ornament. On the Gospel side of the Sanctuary wall is a mosaic panel of St Patrick and on the Epistle side, St Brigid.

The Church is heated with with McClary Pipeless Central Heating system. The seats are in Columbian pine, having movable kneeling boards (fixed in place Nov 2013). The frame fronts being panelled and moulded.

The site is enclosed by iron standards with wrought iron bars and chain to match the entrance gates (no entrance gates 2014).

The building contract was carried out by Messers, Sutherland and Co. Great Patrick St. Belfast. The Altar and Baldachinno were supplied by Mr Maurice Vanpouille of London. The mosaic work was carried out by Messrs, Ludwig Oppenheimer, Ltd of Manchester. The bell, etc was supplied and erected by Messrs, Gillett and Johnston of Croydon. The heating was by Messrs Chase and Co, Ltd of London (This Heating system was changed in the mid 1980s). The seating was supplied by Messrs, Sweeney, Ltd Derry.

The work was carried out from plans and under the superintendence of Mr J.P. Mc Grath, M.R.I.A.I. architect, Derry.

Above notes on Ardmore Chapel taken from Derry Journal 3rd Nov 1930.

#### **Parish Priests of Glendermott Parish by Fr James Coulter 'Glendermott'.**

1294. Peter. Appointed P.P. Glendermott.

1319. Thomas Appointed P.P.

1401. Donat appointed P.P.

1432 – 1456. McCloskey was P.P.

1458 - 1471. Another McCloskey was appointed P.P.

1501. Maurice O Querolan appointed P.P.

1519. Thomas O Querolan was appointed P.P.

Up to this time the Dean of Derry was also rector or P.P. Glendermott.

1630. Fr Edmun Buy McEnally. P.P.

1631. Fr James Boy McAnnally. P.P.

1766. Fr James McElvar

1743 birth. Died 1794. Fr James McFeely born at McFeely's Height in Glenkeen. And as was usual in those days, ordained before he had completed his education. Ordained 1770 After a few years ministry in Inishowen he went to France to resume his studies, and when he had finished his course, he returned to work in his native district. Appointed P.P. Glendermott 1785-1794. His was the privilage of building the first church in Glendermott and by 1791 he had the chapel at Ardmore completed. Built in the townland of Currynieran on a rood of ground leased from the Ash family. It was an unpretentious structure, because in 1858 it was valued at twelve pounds and fifteen shillings, less than a quarter of the valuation of the church that by that time had been built in the Waterside. But the chapel at Ardmore poor as it was, had significance far beyond its size, for it marked the end of an epoch, and the beginning of a new age for Catholicism in the district.

Father McFeely was transferred to Cumber in 1794 until 1824.. He was responsible for the building of Church in Claudy holding 500 people and Craigbane holding 200 people. Buried in Claudy Cemetery.

1794 - 1815. Fr Dan Phillips: This priest had served as Bishop MacDavitts curate in Urney, 1784-85 and then had gone to Salamanca to study. On appointment to Glendermott parish he took up residence in Glenkeen and laboured for 21 fairly uneventful years.

buried in the old Ardmore Cemetery.

1815- Jan1826. Fr Patrick Mullan a native of Derrynoid, Ballinascreen, came here from Badoney Upper in 1816. Was in ill health for some time.

Buried in the old Ardmore Cemetery.

1826-1830. Fr Edward O Doherty(In Fr Coulter Book Glendermott, this PP. Was widely known as Spectacle Doherty to distinguish him from a latter namesake, he promised to have a most brilliant pastorate but unfortunately, these hopes were dashed since he had to retire due to breakdown. Died aged 42. His grave under the shadow of the church tower in Clonmany).

1830 – 1853. Fr Alexander J. McCarron (known as Archdeacon, educated at Foyle College 1815-1819.

1853 – 1864. Fr Hugh Nugent (Fr Coulter Book Glendermott, he was born at Deerpark, Omagh, completed his studies at the old Seminary at Ferguson's lane. And then went to Maynooth. He was one of the first you could say had a prolonged and systematic education before ordination. Ordained 1835. First Curacy, Urney, then Strabane, then 1841 Derry city.

1864 – 1872. Fr Edward Doherty (Fr Coulter Book, Glendermott. He came from Bunrana. Born 1814, ordained 1839. Was in Moville prior to Glendermott. He built the Parochial House, Ceremony in St Columbs church to mark completion given by Dean O Kane of Maynooth on 17th Sept 1865. Died aged 58).

1872 – 1881. Fr Philip Devlin (Fr Coulter Book, Glendermott, Ordained Maynooth 1841. Had two years in Coleraine and then Desertegney as curate to Dr Maginn. Then to Rome for Theological studies for three years. Then Donagh and in 1856 Limavady, then 1863 Strabane. When came to Glendermott he procured a bell for St Columbs. On 5th Feb 1873 the people of Derry heard the sound of a Catholic Bell for the first time in two hundred years)

1881 – 18th July 1915 death Fr Charles McFaul (Fr Coulter Book, Glendermott, Born Clonmany 1831. Ed Maynooth. Ordained in Long Tower on 23 Feb 1862. Curate Urney, Ardstraw west, Moville, Clonmany. Long Tower in 1871. He was one of four priests who had to look after Derry City with Pop of 16.000 Catholics. He enlarged the Waterside Church. Adding a chancel and transepts. Installed a new communion rail of polished pitched pine. Separated the grounds of the church from the school with a large wall and wrought iron gates at entry. All costing £3000. Collection to celebrate at opening commemoration, total £700. Ardmore contributed £150. In his time St Patrick's Hall was built). He is most likely the priest in the old photo in jaunting car that is presently available. Maureen Donnelly (80yrs) of Knockbrack says that her mother said the priests circa 1900 in the parish always wore flat hats and believes this photo is of priest on the left with the taxi driver (bolar hat – possible Bradleys firm on the go in Derry at that time) being taken out for the Sunday Mass to St Columba's old Church, Ardmore (Presently Old Ardmore Graveyard left of gate. School right of present graveyard gate. Man standing at old school wall is Master James Mullan of Forge Rd.

1915 – 1937. Fr William Boyle McFeely (Fr Coulter Book, Glendermott, Born 1863. He was one of the first pupils at St Columbs College, then Rome, Ordained 1888. Went to Coleraine, then Bunrana, and then Omagh, then St Eugenes Cathed. Appointed by Bishop Mc Hugh as P.P. Glendermott in 1915. Had a deep veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Built new St Mary's Church, Ardmore. September 1919, Good Shepherd Sisters arrived in Glendermott Parish. At beginning only Mother Ita and two companions,

1937 – 1946. Fr John Logue McGettigan (founder of the Derry Feis). Fr McFeely did not allow the main door of the church to be opened on Sundays, only the side door was open. He did not want people congregating there as this might give offence to the faith with people of other religious denominations, When Fr McGettigan became P.P. he said. 'Go down there and open those doors. Thank God we don't live in the Catacombs'. He died 23 Dec 1946.

In 1946 - 1974 Mgr Joe O Doherty became P.P. A native of Carndonagh, St Columbs attended from 1906. Maynooth. Ordained 1919. He did extensive renovations and had electricity installed in the 1950s, replacing the tilly lamps which the sacristan John Sharkey use to have to pump and light before the Masses. Bishop Neil Farren came to conduct a ceremony to mark this. occasion. Mrs Nicholson of Beechill (mother of Judge Nicholson) presented the present statue of Our Lady of Fatima in the Church to Mgr Joe Doherty PP. on the occasion of the death of her husband Cyril, killed in a car accident coming out of the present Jennifer Johnson house, Culmore Rd.

1974 – 1977 Fr John McGaughey. Bought the Trench Rd field in 1976 of Protestant through Eddie Given of Corrody Hill, who knew the man and who in turn sold it to the Parish. The present Trench Rd Primary School and Immaculate Conception Church now occupies the site purchased.

1977 – 1984. Mgr Austin Duffy. Was P.P. when the Trench Rd Primary School opened and was blessed on 2nd April 1979. He also was P.P. when the new Church of Immaculate Conception was built. He was also P.P. when St Brecans boys and St Brecans Girls were amalgamated to be St Brecans High in 1980.

1984 - Fr James Clerkin. Did extensive renovations to St Columb's Church, new roof and interior renovations in 1986. He also was P.P. when the Mennesin Chapel was removed and replaced with more solid structure for the St Mary's Church New Buildings, Consecrated in September 1999.

Fr Kevin McKenna

2009 Fr Aidan Mullan. He did renovations to the Parochial House, moving the office from the ground floor to the basement of the Parochial Hse. He also added a glass partition to the Transept of St Columbs Church in 2007. He created extra space for car parking at the Church by building over the former school playground area. He created the walk way over to the first Floor of the old school building and renovated the old school to be more usable church hall. He also got the exterior walls of the two sides walls of the Church pointed in 2008/09.

Fr Paddy Doherty P.P. 2009-2011. In his time the exterior front of St Columb's Church was pointed in 2010.

Fr Michael Canny P.P. 2011 – In his time, Parochial House front steps 2011, side entrance of church new pavement and rails 2013 and the exterior of the Parochial House was re painted with new plaster put in place 2013/14

### **Priests of Ardmore (By Fr McKeefrey in his 1903 Annals)**

(He wrote, 'This enunciation is imperfect and not conservative)

Fr Nugent. He had to say Mass in Ardmore at a table placed in front of rails.

Fr O Donnell CC. Afterwards joined the Redemptorists – went from this parish after Mullan + (did this cross written mean after Mullan died (NF))

Fr Brown C.C. under Fr Doherty (Spectacles) when Mullabuoy Chapel was being built. It was built in 1826. Previously Fr Mullan used to say Mass in the old wallsteads erected by Fr Philipps PP. in upper side of road beyond the present chapel.

Fr Mullan said Mass frequently in McLaughlin's house.

Fr O Loughlin CC said to be a nephew of Dean O Loughlin officiated here a short time.

Fr McCarron came as PP when only 5 years on the Missions (did he mean since ordination) in October 1827. He erected the Waterside Church. Before the chapel was built the catholic's used to hear Mass in Dr Whites Coach House directly behind Mt McDevitts new shop (Duke St) 26 years here.

Fr Hughes was C.C. in 1827 lodged in a farmhouse went to Faughanvale.

Fr McAleer CC. Here during the 'Derry Discussion'. Was 4 years among Evangelicals and taught school for a time. Transferred to Burt (Burt added to Fahan after his death)

Fr McKeag CC. Here for 9 years. Went to Donagheady. Was here under Fr McCarron.

Father Geoghegan CC. On 22nd Oct 1853 died in 1865.



Fr McCollum. Here a short time. Went to Draperstown.

Fr Michael Kelly CC. Desertmartin, Here a short time in 1846. After a length of time complained he got no change of dress, since he came over the hills and that if every penitent he had would give a penny. They raised £14 for him. Fr McCarron complained that the Mass boy in three places would scarcely buy a milk cow. Kelly went to America Fmass in Mullabuoy = s12/6d.

Fr Roger O Doherty CC. Here short time as Kelly: Said on altar 'He would be no man's slave'. As McCarron was out collecting for Church he was here in 1842.

Fr McNamee CC. Was uncle to late Mgr McNamee Omagh and was for a time stationed in Faughanvale.

Fr Pat Kelly (Draperstown) CC. Here in 1836. Lodged with Mickey Deehan.

**Curates of Glendermott from 1841 - (Booklet St Columbs Church Wateside 1841 – 1991 Anniversary booklet by Rev J.R. Walsh.**

1841. Carr

1841. P. Kelly

1847. J. McNulty

1859 – 1865. J. McGeoghan.

1864-1872. P. Campbell

1865-1885. James McKay.

1689-1871. J.F.McConalogue

1871-1874. William Bradley

1873-1874. B. Mulholland

1874- 1880. Hugh McMenamin.

1880 -1881. James Hasson

1880-1881. John Gribbon

1886-1886. P. McKeefry.

1886-1890. J.O Kane

1890-1905. Joseph McKeefry.

1895-1905. Laurence Hegarty

1897-1899. Michael Floyd

1898-1915. Denis Quigley

1900 – 1901. Mark O Neill.

1901-1915. John Connolly.

1907- 1927. Patrick Devlin  
1914 – 1915. Patrick McCauley  
1915-1930. Patrick Kelly.  
1916-1926. P. Mahon  
1926-1931. C.E.McFaul.  
1927- 1946. Bernard A Smith  
1930-1941. James McGlynn  
1931- 1941. James Kelly.  
1938 – 1939. Peadar MacLoingsigh.  
1939 – 1941. James Lagan  
1941 – 1942. John McGarvey.  
1941 – 1949. Felix O Hagan  
1941- 1944. Owen McMenamin.  
1942 – 1953. Thomas Hegarty  
1946 – 1964. Bernard Kielt  
1946 – 1974. John Harkin  
1949 – 1953. Henry J O Kane  
1953- 1970. Patrick McGoldrick  
1953 – 1958. James Brennan  
1958 – 1963. Michael Mullan  
1963 – 1967. John T Quinn  
1964 – 1969. Desmond Mullan  
1967 – 1976. James Doherty  
1969 – 1980. Stephen Kearney  
1970 – 1977. Liam Donnelly  
1972 – 1984. Brian Brady  
1974 – 1974 James McCrory  
1974 – 1979 Denis McConologue  
1974 – 1978 Michael Collins  
1976 – 1978 Aidan Mullan  
1976 – 1982 Eamon McDevitt

1977 – 1978 Martin Treanor  
1978 – 1984 Colum Clerkin  
1978 – 1986 Kevin Hegarty  
1979 – 1988 Neil Farren  
1980 – 1985 Eugene Boland  
1982 – 1987 Patrick Crilly  
1984 – 1987 Michael Leonard  
1985 Joseph Coulter  
1985 David O Kane  
1987 – 1990 Fintan Diggin  
1987- 1988 Andrew McCloskey  
1988 - Noel McDermott  
1988 – 1989. Patrick Dunne  
1989 Stephen McLaughlin  
Peter Devlin  
Paul Porter  
Adrian Porter  
Seamus O Kane  
1990 Michael Canny.  
Eugene Hasson  
Michael McCaughey  
Colm O Doherty  
John McDevitt  
Peter O Kane.  
Kevin Duddy  
2007 - Christopher Ferguson  
2009 - 2010 Gerard Sweeney  
2010 - Roland Colhoun  
2010-2011 Paul Farren (Priest in Residence)  
2012 - Joseph Varghese.

In the early days Glendermott Parish included Claudy and Faughanvale, and as late as the start of the 20th C was known as Glendermott and Lower Cumber.

### **Ardmore becomes a Parish in its own rite: History.**

Ardmore became a parish in its own right on the 8th Sept 1974 at a time when parishes in the Diocese were being re-organised by Bishop Edward Daly, Ardmore then was a small parish, population wise, but the parishioners ensured that the parish was financially viable.

Fr Michael Conway was its first P.P. On his arrival to the Parish in September 1974, Fr Conway lived in the Sacristy area of the Church for a few months before moving into a temporary residence in a black coated wooden house placed approx where the present Pastoral Centre is before building the present parochial house. He bought the land opposite the church for car park and later on 1st October 1977 the land where the present wood is adjacent to car park from the aunt of Denis Mullan for £5.500. From Mrs Mullan of Forge Rd Fr Conway also bought land where exists the present forest which he created and initially was bought as land for parish hall, He sold the temporary house (house in the praire) where Pastoral Centre now is for £4000 and in the Spring of 1997 moved into the present red brick parochial hse costing £24.956.47p.

The Parochial House Architects. F. M. Corr Associates.

Builder. Patrick O Kane, Ballybogie, also son Kevin O Kane 1 Ballybogie Rd. Tony McCoolle from the Creggan. Danny Parkes Bricklayer and Tommy Magee of Lisdillon.

Fr Michael Conway's First Sick call in Parish was to Joseph Elliott, who was the first casualty of the Troubles in Ardmore at the foot of the Hall Lane.

In 1980, The Church had a bomb placed at its front door. The door was blown up as far as the altar. Some of the stain glass windows were damaged and needed repairing. A storm window was then placed in front of these stain glass windows. The statue of Our Lady above the front door was not damaged.

Hugh Scullion of Maghera made the new front door of St Mary's Church and was later in 2014 involved in renovations at the Church to the Church seating and new oak fittings for Sanctuary steps.

Fr Dan McNicholl became P.P 1986 - 1999. Fr Dan got central heating into the church, Placed a new interior porch to the side chapel and access for the disabled. He got the present statue of the holy family painted by Nigel Carrigan of Moville, a nephew of Sr Aloysious (Icon Painter).

In 1986 he had the interior of the Church repainted and the interior carpeted.

Fr Oliver Crilly became P.P 1999 - 2007. He instigated the building of the Present Pastoral Centre next to the Chapel at Ardmore, the architect being Sean McLaughlin of Ardmore. It was opened on the 1st October 2006.

Fr Neil Farren P.P. 2007 – present, was inducted Parish Priest on the 21st August 2007.

The entire church seating, balcony front, balcony stairs was varnished in January 2009. Stations of the Cross were veneered and new kneeling pads replaced in the kneelers of the pews. New tiles were placed in the Transept of the Church in February 2009, replacing the transept floor that had wet rot

due to the rain coming through the side door over many years prior to the inside porch being put in place in Fr Dan McNicholls era as was the entrance for the handicapped.

New steps at the entrance to the Church of Donegal Granite purchased in Mountcharles, Donegal were put in place over a week beginning 8th March 2010.

The Church celebrated its 80th anniversary on the 2nd Nov 2010, marking it with the placing of the Sacred Heart statue (donated to church at the time of the church opening by James and Catherine McIvor of Lisdillon as was the Holy Family Statues. Since the mid 1970s the Sacred Heart statue and that of St Anthony was banished to the back porch of the church or next to the side porch as still is St Anthony's statue. Prior to this both statues were in the Sanctuary area near the position where the present Ambo is, the other statues non existent today were on the far side of the altar in sanctuary near the Sacristy door. The people of that saved Sacred Heart and St Anthony Statue from banishment from the church altogether. The Sacred Heart statue was re painted in October 2010 by Brother Joseph Connolly a Christian Brother from Derry attached to Omagh.

The Statue of Our Lady of Grace was erected and dedicated on 31 May 2013. Surrounds built by Tommy Devine, Eugene (Badger) O Kane and Seamus O Kane.

The work completed at St Mary's Church 2013/14 was carried out by the Architect, and by the builders O Kane Builders, Ardmore. The slates of the Church Transept was replaced and rotten timbers removed in October 2013 as was later the lean slates of the toilet section. The Church floor was replaced through October – December and replaced by 14th December 2013 as well as the interior of the church walls painted or with satin finish and gold leaf paint as with the Baldicino. Alterations were made in church floor space, pew also taken from exit aisle to side door and was used for two altar server seatings. . The Gutterings and the Drainpipes of the Church were restored by March 2014. The Belfry metal frame corrosion treated and light installed within belfry in November 2013. In week beginning 24th March 2014 the new carpet was laid in the Church sanctuary area, The old altar rails were renewed and is presently the credence table.

Mgr. Ignatius McQuillan C.C. 1991 – 2006. Presently on this 5th of May 2015, he is actively retired.

Sr Teresa Russell of the Good Shepherd Convent was parish sister from 1984 – 2007. She retired on the 21st August 2007. Her Requiem Mass was celebrated in St Mary's Ardmore on 21st February 2011.

5th May 2015, Sacristan/Groundsman - John McCarron

Parish Secretary, - Julie Anne Campbell.

Housekeeper - Teresa Ward.

There is good lay involvement in this parish at present, with good attendances at Mass throughout the week and on Sundays. The parish has dedicated people who are very supportive of Church activities.

There are still challenges such as keeping abreast with the large influx of new parishioners to the parish. The parish has grown considerably in population in recent years (3.500 approx) especially with

the overflow of houses from the waterside area around the Belt road and the Altnagelvin side of the Crescent link road as far as the Ballyoan cemetery at Rosstown Rd.

The first baptism of the newly created Ardmore Parish was Edward Martin Molloy, son of John Molloy and Bernadette nee Taylor of 12 Lisdillon. Baptised 5th October 1974. By Fr Michael Conway.

The First wedding in the new church was that of John Joseph Murray son of William F Murray and Celine nee McCloskey who married Gemma Harkin daughter of William Harkin and Kathleen nee Brennan. Married by Fr Michael Conway on 4th October 1974.

### **Glendermott Parish Schools. (Fr Coulter's Book Glendermott)**

Luckily enough in Glendermott Parish in the 'twenties' (1820s) there were five Catholic masters who ran small private schools.

In Desertone Thomas Donnell taught thirty pupils in a rented cabin, twenty of these were boys and ten girls, but strangely enough only two were Catholics.

Michael McCloskey had an establishment at Gortican, and on his roll of 57 there were 21 Catholics. His salary amounted to £12 a year, paid by the pupils.

John Curry taught in a thatched cabin at Clooney, where only ten of the forty two children attending were of his faith.

At Ardmore where Denis McCloskey was master, there were 25 Catholics and 17 Protestants.

Hugh McCook taught 21 Protestants and 10 Catholics in a small thatched cabin in Lisdillon. *'The Roman Catholic Sunday School formerly held in Lisdillon schoolhouse has fallen into a decline; the revival of it again is uncertain.*

*(Ordinance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, Parishes of Londonderry 1831-1838. Vol. 34).*

At the 15 Protestant schools in the Parish there were 127 Catholic children. Which means all in all at the time there were 197 Catholic children being educated out of a total of 749 children overall of various faiths.

Archdeacon McCarron began a Sunday School in the Glendermott Chapel in 1829. With 22 boys and 28 girls. Then in 1836 he established a day school with 80 girls and 47 boys. The mistress was Miss Walsh who had eight assistants.

At Rosnagalliagh Sunday School under John Ward 24 in attendance.

At Lisdillon established in 1835 with 39 pupils. Did not survive. and this eased the problems for Catholic Parents.

The National Board of Education took control of schools. The school at Ballyshaskey while theoretically, undenominational, the teacher John Gill was Catholic, as were 81 of the 93 children.

Fr Dan McNicholl former PP Ardmore in his paper pamphlet 'Memories of Ardmore' written in his tenure stated that 'at the beginning of the 1900s were Mr James Mullan. Miss Margaret McIvor and

Miss Winnifred Doherty who became a nun. The present site of the present Ardmore school dates from 1912 . And by that time Mr Heany had replaced Miss Doherty. Denis Mullan of Forge Rd (2012) stated that in the old Glendermott National School, Ardmore, the principal before Mr James Mullan was Mr Thomas Mullan and then further back in time was Mr Gill who was Principal in the 1880s. Local people have vivid memories of the phase of their lives and loose nothing in the telling and there are few who don't remember the milk bottles heating in front of the fire, bringing in the coal for the open fire and working in the school garden. Despite the fact that the school had little or no facilities a very broad curriculum was taught from nature study, sewing, knitting, geography, algebra as well as the three 'R's. Discipline was strict and the cane was never spared but most people remember those days with affection.'

The Parish in 2012 has one Primary school which is overseen by the Principal Mrs Christina Doherty whose first day at Glendermott Primary School was on the 15th February 2010. The present Glendermott Primary school was built in 1912 with extensive renovation carried out in intervening years.

Principals of the school prior to Shirley McKenna's arrival were Christina Doherty's, Mr Billy Doherty, Noeleen Donaghy: Sean Friel: Bill Carrigan Paddy Doak: John Armstrong. James Mullan (who moved from the Old Glendermott National School into the present school) Before him was Mr Thomas Mullan and in the 1880s Mr Gill. (Glendermott P.E.S).

The old school which was built in 1820 used to be beside the old Church of St Columba, today's Lr Cemetery on the Beechill side of the Church. Its principal teacher was Master Mullan,

Fr Dan McNicholl former PP Ardmore in his paper pamphlet '*Memories of Ardmore*' written in his tenure in the 1990s, stated that '*at the beginning of the 1900s the Principal teacher was Mr James Mullan assisted by Miss Margaret McIvor and Miss Winnifred Doherty who became a nun. Mr Heany replaced Miss Doherty.*

*Local people have vivid memories of the phase of their lives and loose nothing in the telling and there are few who don't remember the milk bottles heating in front of the fire, bringing in the coal for the open fire and working in the school garden. Despite the fact that the school had little or no facilities a very broad curriculum was taught from nature study, sewing, knitting, geography, algebra as well as the three 'R's. Discipline was strict and the cane was never spared but most people remember those days with affection.'*

The present Glendermott Primary school in its existing site celebrated its Centenary (1912 - 2012). The Glendermott Elementary School existed before the Glendermott Primary school was built in 1912 dating back to 1820 and situated in a different site next to the old Ardmore Cemetery grounds at the Old St Columba's Church (Ardmore Rd). Mr James Mullan was the last Principal of that old Glendermott Elementary School before him was Thomas Mullan and in the 1880s John Gill.

The Principal teachers that followed James Mullan were John Armstrong, Paddy Doak, Bill Carrigan, Sean Friel, Noeleen Donaghy, Billy Doherty Christina Doherty and presently Shirley McKenna (2014-)

**The Ardmore Pastoral Centre. Opened Spring 2007.**

Prayer placed in foundations of the Pastoral Centre is as follows:

*'God our Father, under these foundations we have placed soil from Bethlehem, water from the river Jordan and olive oil blessed at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Grant that all we do in building this parish centre and in working at the development of our parish, may be firmly based on our faith in the child of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ your Son, Our Lord. Amen'.* (Placed under Hall floor area approaching store door within Pastoral Centre).

The Pastoral Centre was built in 2006 when Fr Oliver Crilly was Parish Priest and agreed by the Ardmore Pastoral Council.

Architect: Sean McLaughlin Ardmore.

Builder: Conway Builders.

The Centre is used for many purposes. In 2015 it has been used for: morning teas after 10am weekday Mass and after Sunday Mass once a month: Derry Diocesan ACCORD Pre-Marriage Courses, Indoor Bowls, Pastoral Council Meetings, Being and Building Parish Faith Community Meetings, Marriage and Family Life Meetings, Derry Diocesan Pioneer Meetings, Pre Parish Sacramental Meetings for First Communion and Confirmation sacraments. Prayer Guidance Courses, St Joseph's Young Priests Society Meetings, Derry Diocesan Safeguarding Meetings, Supper Dances, Parish Volunteer Night, Ceili Dancing, Set Dancing, Family gatherings, Kerala Evenings, Extra Ordinary Ministers of the Eucharist Talks and Reflections Evenings, Lay Readers Talks and Reflections Evenings, Derry Diocesan Marian Movement Meetings. G.A.A. Meetings. It is also used for other functions and meetings in previous years too.

Bridie Wilson from the Bleach Green created the signature embroidery for the Pastoral Centre with blessed signature of St John Paul engraved 27/7/03 as well as laterly Parishioners and friends names embroidered on it. The £5 donation from each went to the Building Fund.