

# Cloghroe Church Past and Present

*by Patrick O'Callaghan*

Early references to Christian practice in Inniscarra Parish centre around the old Inniscarra Graveyard adjacent to the confluence of the Lee and Bride rivers. This ancient site, referred to in a Taxation Roll of Pope Nicholas IV in AD 1291 and in the Pipe Roll of Cloyne (begun in AD 1364 in the time of Bishop John Swaffham mentions Parish Patron St Senan.

Briefly, it is believed that Senan was born near Kilrush in AD 488 and studied at Iarros in County Clare. He founded a church at Enniscorthy, afterwards visiting Rome and Tours. Returning from Rome via Cornwall and Wales he discovered Inniscarra in C520AD, where he built a monastery and subsequently built another at nearby Innisleena. He was visited by 50 Roman disciples, ten of whom he accepted to support him at Inniscarra, ten were sent to Saint Brendan and the remainder to other monastic schools.

Senan finally established a great monastery at Inis Cathaigh (Scattery Island, in the mouth of the Shannon) in about AD534. He reportedly died there on 8th March 544 - his feast/patron day.

He also records that this Abbey ruin, another foundation of St Senan, was knocked down in 1716 and stones were used for construction in Cronodymore. He mentions a Holy Well, St

Senan's Well, which was north of the Abbey, which was also submerged.

During the Penal Code/Laws, mass was said out



of doors, on the land of the late Edmond O'Keeffe in Bridgetstown. The local landlord, observing their plight, made a site available for a chapel at Currabeha in the early 1800s. This building, still extant about a quarter mile west of the present Church, served as a church until 1858 and subsequently as a National/Primary School.

To the left of the original church was the priest's



house in what was a quarry-like area. This went into disrepair after the priest moved to the new residence. When demolished, the stone was recycled and moved by horse and cart with local voluntary labour to the O'Dwyer farm.

The site was back-filled by its present owner and is now a yard and a commercial centre. The middle section was added later when the old school was sold, and became a furniture factory.

In 1858 Inniscarra/Cloghroe Parish Priest Father John Cahill entered into a 999 year lease with local landlord Thomas Judkin, Capel Fitzgerald for the erection of the present edifice, on behalf of his parishioners, personally financing the venture. This five-acre site subsequently accommodated a new school and Chaplain's house. Bishop William Keane DD was also party to the lease agreement. Rent was set at £2 per year (two



completed in Bishop Keane's Parish visitation of 1859. The inner layout has been altered many times since its completion.



half-yearly payments on 20th March and 20th September). The Church was completed on 20th October 1862. Father Cahill died, aged 85, on 8th February 1863.

The above-named landlord Thomas Fitzgerald then occupied the site and estates associated with Cloghroe Gynes Castle with its historic links with Gynes, Barretts, Lombard, McCarthy and Fitzgerald families.

The Church was mentioned as being almost

Our newly renovated church also reflects changing trends and styles. It has married the traditional original building with a bright functional modern extension.

It reflects the change, history and welcome that defines an open and joyful centre of Christian practice. We welcome all to pray with us at our Parish Church here in Cloghroe.



### Stations of the Cross

There are fourteen Stations of the Cross, painted by L Chovet and L Reau of Paris. Chovet was a renowned artist who specialised in this type of painting, and examples his work can be found all over the world. Only one of the stations is signed. The Stations were delivered to the Church in 1870 by Edmund O’Keeffe of Currabeha in several trips by horse and cart from Blarney station. The Stations were donated to the Church by John O’Dwyer in memory of his parents, whose descendants included Dan Burns, late husband of Marie Burns, who still resides there.



### The Angelus Bell

The bell was foundered in 1868 by John Murphy, who established his Foundry in Dublin in 1843, and manufactured bells for export to places all around the world. The insignia (inset) stamped on the side of the bell shows a crown over the Irish Harp.

### Bullán

In the mid 1950s, Doctor Daniel J O’Sullivan, a medical doctor who lived in “the Laurels” Cloghroe, was a renowned antiquarian and, with the help of Master John Twohig, Sean Twohig and Jerry Looney, salvaged a Bullán from the Innisleena monastic site (then adjacent to the Fitzgibbon residence and graveyard) prior to its submergence in Inniscarra Lake created by the local hydro-electric dam in 1957. He itemises same as follows:

**Bullán:** “The Christening Stone” (found in the graveyard). Baptismal Font or Holy Water Stoup of the early Christian Church. Removed to Cloghroe in June 1956 before the flooding of the Valley by the ESB.

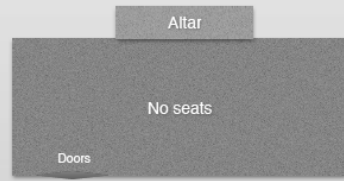
The inscription reads

***"Bullán Sheanain Naofa  
St Senan's Baptismal Font"***

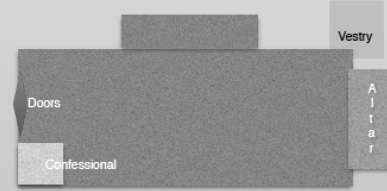
# Changes through the years

## How the layout and usage of the Church was affected by the changes in our culture

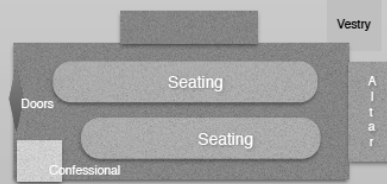
1858  
Original construction with no seating so that the congregation gathered around the altar.



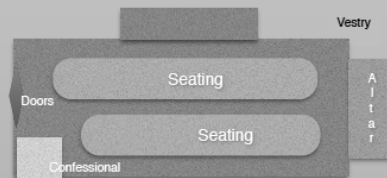
C. 1890  
Colonel Colthurst returned from the Crimea War and refurbished the church, moving the altar and installing a confessional and a vestry.



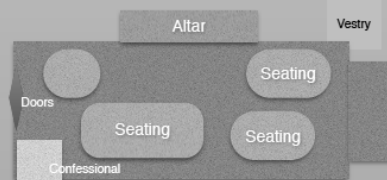
1954  
Walls were plastered and new floors installed. Trees were removed from the grounds. Seating was installed, men on the right, women and children on the left.



1962 - 1965  
The altar and been realigned to comply with the requirements of Vatican II so that the priest faced the congregation.

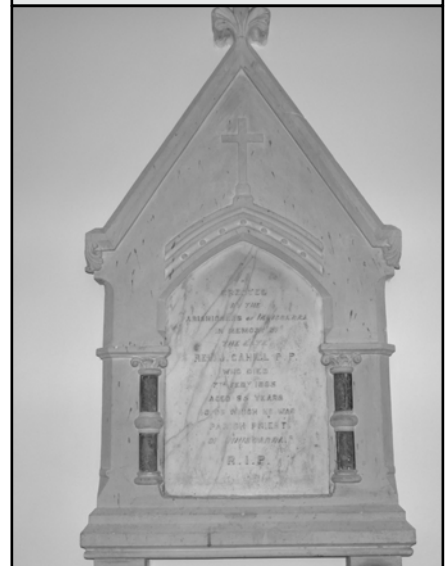


1987  
The altar had been moved to its original position and a completely new seating arrangement was installed and a porch added.



### The Crucifix

Donated by Paddy and Mamie Cotter of Old Cloghroe Village, in memory of their 9-year-old son, Patrick Joseph, who tragically lost his life on the road on 4 December 1953. The Cross was hung on the North wall.



New Ground Floor Layout 2015

This advertisement appeared in the Cork Examiner on 25th June 1860

### NOTICE TO BUILDERS.

THE Rev. Mr. CAHILL, P.P., Inniscarra, will, on SUNDAY, the 24th Instant and following Week, receive Tenders for the Construction, according to Specification, of a DWELLING-HOUSE in the Plantation annexed to the Cloghroe new Chapel. The distance from Cork is about Six Miles. [1915]