

**CHURCH OF ST. BRIGID
KILBIRNIE**



Centenary

1862 ————— 1962

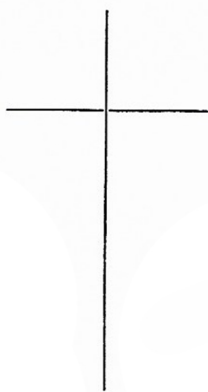
**SUNDAY, THIRTEENTH OF MAY
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO**



Souvenir Brochure

CHURCH OF ST. BRIGID
KILBIRNIE

Centenary



Sunday, 13th May, 1962



HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN XXIII

Foreword

DEAR CANON O'REILLY,

I have read the St. Brigid's centenary brochure with great interest. It is a valuable record of the growth of the parish and indeed of the Church in Ayrshire during more than a hundred years.

It is matter for satisfaction that we now have a permanent account of the origin of the parish, of its development and a record of the priests who laboured to build it. It would ill become us to forget those who in spite of great difficulties and the lack of material resources, built church, school, hall, and ministered to the needs of the Catholic people in the district. That their efforts bore fruit can be seen from the present flourishing state of the parish of St. Brigid, from the number of priests, nuns, teachers it has produced and from the strong, practical faith of its people and their devotion to their religion.

It is becoming, too, that the debt that St. Brigid's owes to what is now the neighbouring diocese of Paisley should be recorded. It is an ungrateful child that fails to remember its mother. If, as the brochure states, "it was Paisley that organised our district for Catholic life and made St. Brigid's possible," this is as near a title of motherhood as is possible in a matter of this kind. I am glad that the centenary provides St. Brigid's—and indeed the diocese of Galloway—with the opportunity of acknowledging this debt.

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Ps. 126, 1). The history of any parish is largely the record of the human effort that has gone into the building of it. It cannot take account of that inner, spiritual reality that makes of the faithful "living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2, 5). It is this inner life, flowing from Our Divine Lord, through the Church in the preaching of the word, the Mass and the sacraments that binds the people of God into one in the Mystical Body of Christ and makes human effort fruitful unto God.

This centenary is before all else an occasion for thanking God for the outpouring of His grace and love upon the people of the parish during all these years. I look forward to offering Mass of thanksgiving as the central act of the celebrations.

With a blessing to you and to your people.

Yours devotedly in Dno.,

✠ JOSEPH MCGEE.

CANDIDA CASA,
AYR.

Feast of St. Joseph, 1962.



RIGHT REVEREND JOSEPH MCGEE. BISHOP OF GALLOWAY.

St. Brigid's, Kilbirnie

TO start a Catholic church you need a Catholic congregation. Two hundred years ago there was not one Catholic person in Kilbirnie and not one Catholic priest in the whole of the shire, but one hundred years later things had changed, Kilbirnie had found a Catholic population, and because of it St. Brigid's came into existence on May 11th, 1862. Where had these Catholics come from . . . what had happened to bring the Catholic faith back from its banishment?

There were many changes in Scotland between the years 1760 and 1860, and if you go back to the start of this period you will not find any signs of the Kilbirnie you know to-day. There was indeed a place called Kilbirnie, but it was an isolated parish of farmers and farm-workers, cut off from the outside world by lack of good roads. Good roads there were nearby, but they didn't pass through Kilbirnie: one branched off at the Kerse and swung east to Beith; another, coming from Largs, turned at the Hourat and went to Dalry. So Kilbirnie was cut off and was seldom visited by strangers; more than that, it had a bad reputation as a place of rough manners and uncouth speech.

There was no little town as we know it to-day. The parish was split into two, the centre of affairs being the Barony Kirk while, about half-a-mile farther north, there was a tiny hamlet of three houses beside the bridge at the place we now call Bridgend.

A rough path connecting the kirk and the Bridgend kept uphill away from the flooding Garnock holms, holding close to the side of a long, sow-backed ridge of earth, the Old Walls, now called Avilshill. It was at the end of this useless bank of earth that the Catholic church was to rise later, but two hundred years ago there was not one building on the route.

The changes began when a road was built into Kilbirnie in 1766. It came down from the mill district of Johnstone, through Lochwinnoch, and into our town at the Bridgend. Immediately it was possible for mill-owners in Glasgow and Paisley to make use of the waters of the Garnock Valley for purposes of power and cleansing. So Kilbirnie became a small centre of mills: the Garnock



VERY REVEREND DERMOT CANON O'REILLY.

Mill was owned by Wilson and Jamieson; David Watson had a cotton mill; William and James Knox were established at Water-side Mills as threadmakers and bleachers.

Kilbirnie began to grow rapidly. The mills provided for incomers, and the owners housed the new workers in specially built houses in the Dennyholm or in new streets such as Cochrane Street, Glasgow Street and Montgomerieston. By 1820 this end of the town was a pleasant little village of grey stone-built houses roofed with blue slates.

Away at the other end of the parish something quite different was developing. Ore had been found here many years previous to 1840, and two iron-masters, Merry and Allison, had obtained the lease of all the ironstone bands in the district. But they had remained afraid that the local coal might prove useless for smelting ore, and if this was true there was no way of bringing in large quantities of fuel from elsewhere. A new railway from Glasgow to Ayr gave them confidence. Its track ran along the side of Kilbirnie Loch; if the local coal did prove of no use it was now possible to bring in supplies along this new railroad.

A new partnership of Merry and Cunningham decided to build a set of blast furnaces which would use the local iron ore, the local splint coal and the plentiful supply of water in the loch. So, on a piece of ground on Lochend Farm, eight blast furnaces were set up in 1843, a major event in the history of Kilbirnie.

The erection of these blast furnaces caused the rise of a new village where there had been no houses at all. We call the place Glengarnock, but in its early days it was known as Kilbirnie Iron-works. In the new tenements and housing rows it had a population of 1,000 people, many of them Catholic.

The only other village in the parish was one that had grown up near Kilbirnie Station (now Glengarnock). It housed workers in the nearby wool mills and, later, employees of the Glengarnock Chemical Works, which was an offshoot of the blast furnaces. This village too had its quota of Catholic families.

So, by 1845, a new Kilbirnie had grown up and in it were sufficient Catholic families to merit a church and a resident priest. But supplying such needs was not a simple matter. This new way of things in Kilbirnie was only part of a large change that was taking place over the whole of western Scotland. Different localities were setting up mills, or factories or furnaces; a network of rail-

ways was providing transport from the multitude of small new pits; canals were competing in a similar service; new roads were putting an end to travel difficulties; on the coastline, new harbours and reorganised old ones were booming with new trade.

Since the work on all these vast new projects had to be done by pick-and-shovel men, thousands of workmen came pouring into the shire. When they had settled down into permanent employment Ayrshire showed a huge increase in population. In our own area Kilbirnie grew from a hamlet of three houses to a little town with over a thousand inhabitants; Beith, with only five houses in 1688, had 4,000 people staying in it by 1840; Dalry had a similar rise to a village of 1,265 souls.

It was Ireland that supplied most of the newcomers. They left a poverty-stricken land to take a 3d. ticket on the *Rob Roy* that sailed twice a week between Belfast and Glasgow. In Scotland they could be sure of work and a house, so at the rate of over 8,000 a year they poured into Scotland, going all over Ayrshire, filling the new rows and tenements so that there was hardly a corner without its quota of Irish workers. In places like Girvan and Hurlford the Irish formed more than half the population. For the first time in modern Scotland there was a Catholic population clamouring for churches and priests.

There was a problem for the Church in the very way these new workers had scattered themselves through the countryside. Pit villages like Rankinston, Patna and Annbank needed priests; furnace centres like Glengarnock, Dalry, Kilwinning, Lugar, Muirkirk, Hurlford and Waterside needed priests; mill towns, like Beith, Kilbirnie and Dalry, prospering through connections with Paisley and Glasgow, needed priests; ports like Ayr, Ardrossan and Irvine, needed priests.

And there was not one priest in the shire.

The spread of Catholicism in the western lowlands of Scotland was something for which the Church was ill-prepared. Even in Glasgow before 1800 there had been only a handful of Catholics, and the bishop came across from Edinburgh at intervals to say Mass and give Holy Communion to a congregation of less than twenty people. Suddenly there came a change, and the year 1829 saw the baptism of more than 1,100 children. But the Church had no ready means of supplying priests or churches to the growing flocks, so that even in 1840 the nearest chapel to Kilbirnie was at Paisley nearly twenty miles away.

The need for priests and churches was urgent, but all sorts of difficulties were in the way. The new congregations were far too poor to help themselves and priests had to undertake journeys into England or across to Ireland in search of funds, while bishops had to address pitiful begging letters to "benevolent Catholics in England, Ireland, and the more prosperous parts of our own country." In 1844, Father Wallace had to tour England to seek aid to pay off the debt on St. Joseph's in Kilmarnock; when the new church was built at Barrhead in 1842 and was soon to serve Kilbirnie, all these collections came to a total of £638, while the cost of the church was £2,186. And . . . what could have been expected from a congregation whose wages averaged twelve shillings a week? When the St. Andrew Society was started in 1857 to get money for new churches, Bishop Murdoch in a letter stated that the Western District had 100,000 Catholics and of these 60,000 were unable to make any contribution. He wanted one shilling per person per year, and he couldn't get it.

Poverty was one stumbling-block; anti-Catholicism was another. Until 1793 it was against the law to be a practising Catholic, to be present at a Mass or to hold land as a Catholic. Later, when it did become legal to hold land and be able to build a church on it, there was no one willing to sell. The Barrhead priest stated this bluntly when he wrote: "No proprietor in the neighbourhood can be induced to give for love or money a site for a Catholic erection." In our area we find proof of this when trying to purchase ground for St. Bridget's school and an old church for the Catholics of Beith.

But the main difficulty was obtaining a priest; even had Kilbirnie had a church in 1800 there would have been no priest to serve it, for there was no Catholic clergyman anywhere in the shire. Production of additional priests was a slow process. Blairs College did not open until 1829, and home-trained students were a long time in coming. At first the new congregations were dependent upon Highland priests, like Fathers Bremner, Thomson, Rattray, Forbes and McDonald. Ireland, regarding Scotland as a foreign mission—which it was—began to supply priests from their missionary colleges, especially All Hallows, and from there came priests like Fathers Burke, Hallinan, Fitzgerald, and our own Father Lee. Help also came from Europe: the second priest in Saltcoats was a German, Father Bergemann; the second priest in Kilbirnie was an Italian, Father Angelo Celetti.

Epidemics played havoc with the supply of priests. In these days of sound medical practice we are apt to forget the dangers a priest

ran in taking the Last Sacraments into a fever-stricken household. Priest after priest died from typhus fever: between 1840 and 1860 there were at least fifteen priests who lost their lives in such martyrdom, and each succeeding year took its toll due to that "awful and ever-present enemy, typhus-fever." In 1846 it was not unusual for a priest to administer the Last Sacraments thirty times a day and be on sick calls without sleep for weeks on end. In one parish in Glasgow all the five resident priests were down with black-typhus, and it was left to the bishop to be the sole minister to the sick.

The Church had to battle its way past all such obstacles before it could set about supplying Ayrshire with priests and places of worship.

Bishops were not concerned with shires or even dioceses when allocating priests: Scotland was a mission country divided into districts, and a priest went where the need was greatest.

Paisley was the great Catholic centre south of Glasgow, and here in 1808 a chapel was built to serve not only Renfrewshire but any Catholic population which it could reach. At times clergymen from St. Mirin's managed the length of Ayr to say Mass and encourage the incomers to hold on to their native faith. About 1815 Father Forbes spent a month in Ayr before transferring to Perthshire; till the summer of 1822 Father Caven had charge of the congregation of Ayr where he officiated at fixed periods. Paisley, officially built for its own town and surrounding villages, was actually for fifteen years the guardian and inspiration of every Catholic in the shire. And it was Paisley that organised our district for Catholic life and made St. Brigid's possible.

In 1822 came the first step towards an Ayrshire church. A Highland priest, William Thomson, who had transferred to Paisley, was sent to reside in Ayr. Despite tremendous difficulties in raising funds, his efforts bore fruit, and in 1826 he built St. Margaret's, the first new Catholic church in our shire. From this church next the county town, Father Thomson viewed the whole of Ayrshire as his parish, and his baptism register shows him working as a priest in places as far apart as Girvan and Saltcoats. That he did not come to Kilbirnie was due to the fact that the expanding Church was working to a plan in which Kilbirnie was served from Paisley not Ayr.

It is now possible to analyse the plan the Church was using to supply chapels and priests. Ayr had been chosen as the site of a

church, but at various centres of population such as Kilmarnock, Irvine and Girvan, the priest had "stations" for saying Mass. Father Thomson had a Sunday Mass in Girvan every sixth or eighth week, and one in Kilmarnock and Irvine every fourth Sunday alternately. Stations like the above were expected to grow into separate parishes as soon as they could afford a priest and a church, and as soon as a priest could be had. Kilmarnock did this in 1847 and began a process that has continued into our times. In such a process Kilbirnie was planned from Paisley.

In our area the first church to develop under Paisley was that at Barrhead in 1842, and to it soon was to come a priest, Father John Sheedy. Around this time a spare clergyman, John McDermott, had been assisting in Airdrie, and by 1844 was stationed at Campbeltown to serve the Catholic populations in Lochgilphead, Inveraray and Rothesay. These two priests, Fathers Sheedy and McDermott, aided by a Father John Tuohy from Glasgow, are the pioneers of Catholicism in Kilbirnie.

Dalry had been served from Paisley, and in 1845 it was its turn to develop into a separate parish. Father McDermott was sent from Campbeltown to be resident priest in this new mission, and the reason was given, "The increase of Catholics over the country in the centre of which the village of Dalry is situated has of late been so great and rapid that it has been found necessary to station a clergyman in the midst of them. He resides there and officiates at Saltcoats and Kilbirnie. As yet there is no chapel in this new, extensive and promising mission."

By a stroke of good fortune we still possess the little notebook in which Father McDermott listed his marriages and baptisms, and beyond any doubt it contains the earliest account of individual Catholics in our district. On the outside cover of the little volume is hand-written, "Baptismal Register for the Several Districts." A glance at the inside pages shows that the several districts were Dalry, Irvine, Kilbirnie, Saltcoats and Kilwinning, in fact the whole of north Ayrshire.

The first section contains the marriage register for Dalry, commencing on the first day of November, 1845, and ending in September, 1846. The first marriage by Father McDermott is that of John Quinn and Margaret McMahan, both of Kilbirnie, and this could be the first Catholic wedding in the area since the Reformation. It is a short register of only fifteen marriages: Father McDermott has three marriages in 1845 and nine before April, 1846. Father John Tuohy has two in August of 1846, and



FR. THOMAS P. LEE

Father John Sheedy concludes the list with one on September 14th, 1846.

The baptism section concerning Dalry begins in November, 1845, and ends in June of 1846. The same three priests are shown, and the total number of baptisms recorded is fifty-three.

Baptisms in Kilbirnie start on January 25th, 1846, with the baptism of John, son of John Donnelly and Mary Coleman, and this is quite definitely the first recorded baptism in new Kilbirnie. The trio of priests continue to baptise until September, 1846, and then comes the name of Father Thomas Fogarty, long thought to be the first resident priest in this region. The register ends in May of 1848 and shows 185 baptisms in these two years.

Twenty-six baptisms are listed for Saltcoats, and there are some crossed-out entries concerning early Irvine and Kilwinning.

Small as it is, this little book is a valuable guide to the early history of our parish. It proves that by the end of 1845 priests from Paisley and Barrhead were resident in Dalry, that Dalry had been chosen as the mission centre, and that Saltcoats and Kilbirnie were the main "stations" to be served from that parish.

At first there was no church in Dalry and Mass was said in a rented hall. In 1847 Father McDermott has disappeared from all records and Father Fogarty is in command. In 1848 Father William Burke succeeded Father Fogarty and in 1851 he built St. Palladius', the first new Catholic church in north Ayrshire and the mother-church of all churches in the district.*

St. Palladius' opened on the 7th of December, 1851. It was a neat, commodious building in the Gothic style, with accommodation for 500, and it had—what all priests of those days dreamt of possessing—a presbyterium, what we would call a chapel-house.

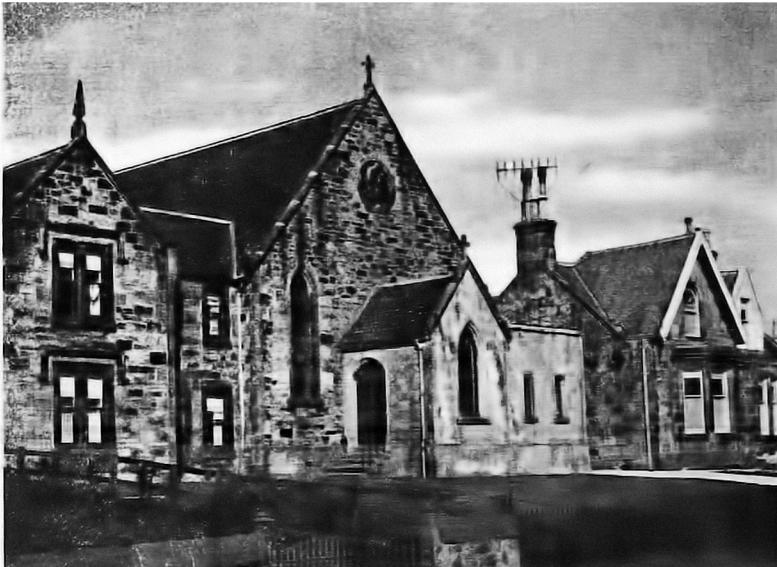
In 1852, Father Burke was given an assistant, Father William Hallinan, who was to stay in the presbyterium but take charge of Saltcoats and Kilbirnie. The new arrangement didn't last long; in 1853 Father Hallinan went to Saltcoats to open an independent mission, and from then on Father Burke had Dalry and Kilbirnie as his principal charges.

Kilbirnie as a "station" of Dalry, had its Mass-centre in a local hall in Main Street. It was called Tam Kennedy's Hall, and was located where No. 34 Main Street now is. A close between two

* See Appendix on p. 24.



THE OLD ST. BRIGID'S (Exterior).



THE NEW ST. BRIGID'S (Exterior).

shops let you into a small stairway, which led to an upper floor where there was a hall and two small rooms. Many alterations have taken place since then, but the downstairs building is still in existence as premises for the Scottish Gas Board, and the old hall upstairs has been converted into a dwelling-house for the mechanic.

To this hall every Sunday came Father Burke to say Mass at ten o'clock, hold a Sunday School immediately after and then, on foot or on horseback, hurry to Dalry for Mass at twelve noon.

In 1859 it was the turn of Kilbirnie to break off as an independent parish. A young Irish priest, Father Thomas P. Lee, who had come as a missionary to the Western District of Scotland, was sent from Johnstone to be resident priest in Kilbirnie, and with his coming begins the official life of our parish. His register opens with the baptism of Arthur, son of Arthur Morgan and Elizabeth Cunningham, on 6th March, 1859, and for the first time in 300 years Kilbirnie has its own priest. The churchless priest had a wide parish, which included Lochwinnoch and Beith. The main body of his parishioners lived in the local village around the mills. The next largest section was at Kilbirnie Ironworks (now Glengarnock), where in rows and tenements lived blast-furnace employees, nearly all of Irish descent but later to be mixed with incoming Polish families, who settled particularly in the Long Row. A separate village called Kilbirnie Station (now Glengarnock) had about a dozen Catholic families, while the Loadingbank and the Den had also small groups.

Beith was subdivided into Beith village, with some thirty Catholic households, Barrmill with about twenty, Gateside and the Lambert with a handful in each.

Lochwinnoch had only about a dozen families interesting Father Lee.†

We have no information as to how Father Lee raised the money for his church, of how he obtained the necessary ground, or of why he chose St. Brigit to be the patron saint of the parish.

The site chosen for the new church was much nearer Bridgend than Glengarnock. It was at the end of the ridge called Avilshill and there was no other building in the vicinity until an industrial school (now the Y.P.I) was built in 1865. A lawyer's letter of 1932 describes the site as a piece of ground, extending to one rood and fifteen poles, inside the following boundaries: "On the east, the proposed new line of turnpike road between Kilbirnie

† See Appendix on p. 25 for list of families.

and Dalry; on the south, the site of the Kilbirnie Female Industrial School; on the west and north, other lands belonging to the Earl of Glasgow." It is to be remembered that the new church would stand alone in an unbuilt area, so that the local papers could truthfully say that it was visible for miles around.

Details of the purchase of the ground are not known. It was bought on a 99-year lease from the Earl of Glasgow, and bore a feu-duty of £3 8s. 9d.

The church itself was a modest Gothic structure with a plain exterior. It was built as a simple rectangle, could seat about 500 people, and had a gallery, a porch, a vestry and a confessional. Adjoining it was "a neat presbytery in perfect good taste and in keeping with the church." As has already been said, the building stood on a ridge of ground "from which it could be seen for a considerable distance, its pointed roof and crosses being visible for miles around." Nothing at all is known of the architect or building firms.

On Sunday, May 11th, 1862, exactly 100 years ago, came the opening service. The church was crowded out long before the official ceremony began. Shortly after eleven o'clock a pontifical High Mass was sung by Bishop Murdoch, who had the assistance of Father Peter Forbes of Glasgow St. Mary's, and a splendid male voice choir from Saltcoats. Father Burke of Dalry was deacon, Father Lee was sub-deacon and Father Chisholm acted as Master of Ceremonies. It was a great day for Kilbirnie and for the whole Catholic neighbourhood. As the papers said, "It was a heart-cheering spectacle to see every public road leading to Kilbirnie covered with people hastening to the opening of the new church." From this day on there would be no more going to Mass at Dalry, hail, rain or shine; no more crowded ceremonies in Tam Kennedy's Hall. Kilbirnie now had its own church, its own priest and Sunday Masses at nine and eleven-thirty. There was still the problem of Lochwinnoch and Beith, but half a century was going to be needed to solve this.

Poor Father Lee did not live long to enjoy his new church. He died in Kilbirnie on the 24th of June, 1864, at the age of thirty-three, having been only eight years an ordained priest.

The work of the church continued under Father Angelo Celetti, who saw education as the next great need of his parish and who at once set up Sunday schools and day-schools and night-schools as was the practice of his times. But, despite episcopal appeals for

help to build urgently needed schools in Dalry and Kilbirnie, six more priests were to hold office in Kilbirnie before a real day-school came into existence.‡ It was left to Father Thomas Hopwell to complete St. Bridget's School in May, 1894, exactly thirty-two years after the opening of the church.

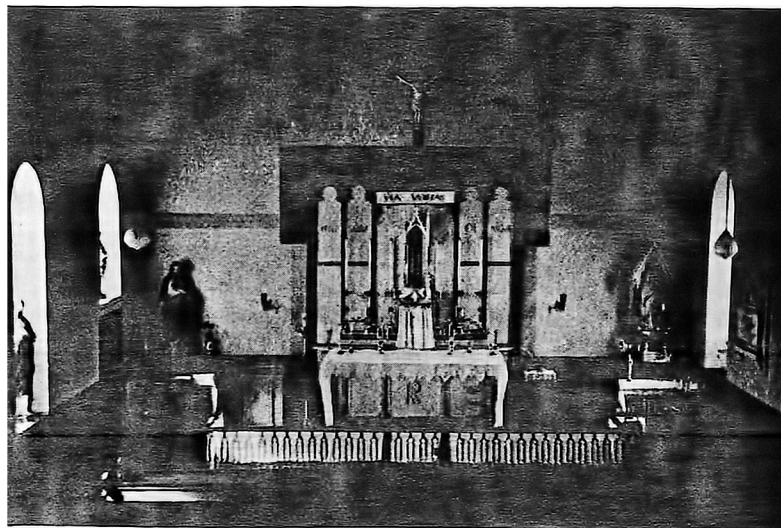
The completion of a church and a school marked the realisation of the Catholic aim of every parish. But parochial life is hampered by lack of a parish hall, necessary as a social centre and as a meeting-place for societies such as the St. Vincent de Paul that came to Kilbirnie in February of 1899. A parish hall did not come till after the First World War. In 1920 Bishop Toner obtained a ten-year lease of a piece of waste ground, and on it the men of the parish erected an army hut. The hall had the normal equipment of a Catholic hall of its period—billiard-tables, carpet bowls, dishes for 200 guests and dramatic scenery insured for £40. It served the people well, and many of the older members of the congregation will have happy memories of the various entertainments it offered.

Meanwhile the outlying parts of the parish were giving concern. Beith and Lochwinnoch were being served by priests from Kilbirnie, but it was felt that the time had come for these places to have churches of their own.

It was proving difficult to find a site in Beith. In 1921 a Protestant church, called Mitchell Street U.F., was put up for sale. It came into our possession and was opened as the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour on May 28th, 1922. It was served by the Kilbirnie clergy until 1947 when Beith became an independent parish with Father T. A. Kelly as its first resident priest.

Lochwinnoch was also developing away from its parent church in Kilbirnie. The fact that it was in a different shire was to have much to do with its later history. For a long time Mass was said on Sundays in the public school, which was hired for the purpose, and this continued until the lucky day of September 8th in 1936 when the Mill Hill Fathers opened a college in a mansion house near the village. As soon as the college was in full operation, Father Plunkett obtained permission for the Catholics of Lochwinnoch to fulfil their Sunday obligation by hearing Mass in the college chapel. With the setting up of the new diocese of Paisley in 1947 it was decided that church boundaries should coincide with county ones, and as Lochwinnoch was in Renfrewshire, it was now broken off from Kilbirnie and served from Howwood.

‡ See page 27 for List of Priests.



THE OLD ST. BRIGID'S (Interior).



THE NEW ST. BRIGID'S (Interior).

While these changes were taking place in Lochwinnoch and Beith, the parish priests of Kilbirnie were beginning to be forced to consider a new problem. The population was centralising into a compact, prosperous parish, based mainly on new housing schemes such as the Milton. There was now the growing problem of accommodation for a multiplying flock and of modernisation of an old church.

There were obvious alternatives: build a complete new church on a new site, or enlarge and renovate the old.

It would seem that Father Plunkett preferred the idea of a new church and acted accordingly. The hall had been built in 1920, and there was waste ground all round it. It looked a probable site for a new St. Brigid's, and Father Plunkett planned with this end in view. In 1933 a large house at the top of the "Hut Brae," in Parkhouse Drive but overlooking the intended site, became desirable as a presbytery for this future church. John Riddett, the owner, was willing to sell Caernock, so it was purchased for the diocese in the hope that some day it would house the priests of an adjacent new church.

With the same idea in mind, Father Scannell now proceeded to purchase the houses that stood where the desired ground bordered the main road. There was a shop and a dwelling-house, "The Avils," occupied by a Hugh Paterson, and it was bought for the archdiocese in 1938. Behind "The Avils" was another dwelling-house, "Erin Villa," occupied by Mrs. Theresa Gologly, and it was similarly purchased in 1939.

Thus a new site and a new presbytery had been acquired before the Second World War put a stop to all forms of building.

When the changed conditions of the post-war period had made building costs prohibitive, the alternative idea of remodelling the old church became very attractive and gradually ousted the intention of erecting a totally new building. So in the days of Canon O'Reilly it was decided to renovate and enlarge the old church. In May of 1955 all the necessary permits were obtained from the controlling authorities, and it was now in order to proceed with the alterations.

The plans provided for an extension to the west of the existing church, and when the work was completed there would be a new sanctuary and sacristy with accommodation for the altar boys. At the other end a spacious new baptistery and a one-entranced porch were skilfully grafted on to the old structure. The main alteration in the interior was the attractively plain altar set against a most

unusual background of blue. Two new confessionals, new side-doors and an altar recessed into the south wall added to the efficiency and modernity of the new St. Brigid's. To unite the old and the new in perfect harmony was the task of the local architect, Mr. James Houston, and one visit to the interior will prove how masterly was his reconstruction. St. Brigid's is now one of the loveliest, peace-giving little churches in the shire: it has a quiet modesty all of its own, and always there is the feeling that here one may say one's prayers, undistracted and in peace.

The restored church was opened by Bishop McGee on Sunday, June 2nd, 1957.

The only thing now lacking was a presbytery near at hand, and this was acquired in 1959 by the purchase of the schoolmaster's house, which was next-door neighbour to the church. This was the final step in the modernisation of St. Brigid's, and happily the whole process was completed in time for the celebration of the centenary, which will take place on Sunday, May 13th, 1962.

In this pamphlet we have tried to outline the progress made during the hundred years that St. Brigid's has been in existence. We conclude it with the sincere hope that this progress will be continued and that the church will overcome its difficulties in the future as successfully as it has done in the past.

**The extent of Dalry Parish in the years 1848 to 1851, with the
number of Baptisms recorded for these years.**

Annick Lodge - - - 2	Hagthorne - - - 7
ARDROSSAN - - - 7	Ironworks - - - 33
Baidland Mill - - - 1	IRVINE - - - 4
Bairds Row - - - 3	KILBIRNIE - - - 124
Bankhead - - - 2	KILWINNING - - - 41
Barrmill - - - 3	Kersland - - - 7
BEITH - - - 8	Lambert - - - 3
Boston - - - 113	Loadingbank - - - 18
Brownhill - - - 3	LOCHWINNOCH - - - 21
Burn Row - - - 4	Peesweep - - - 3
DALRY - - - 61	SALTCOATS - - - 43
Den - - - 4	STEVENSTON - - - 25
Drakemire - - - 4	Station - - - 2
Fergushill - - - 4	Swinlees - - - 43
Gateside - - - 2	WEST KILBRIDE - - - 14

Ten of to-day's parishes are in this district. The priest's duties took him to tiny hamlets like Brownhill, where there was only an occasional baptism, to crowded mining rows like the Boston, with at least a baptism a fortnight, or to similar rows like the Den, Swinlees and the Hagthorne, all of them now derelict and abandoned.

**Location of families at the time the Church was opened
in 1862.**

KILBIRNIE VILLAGE

Barbour.	Fitzpatrick.	Kelly.	McMillan.
Bennet.	Gaffney.	Kennedy.	McMullen.
Brennan.	Gorman.	Kerrigan.	McTaggart.
Cain.	Grames.	Killan.	McVarry.
Callaghan.	Graham.	Kirkwood.	McWilliamson.
Campbell.	Gollogly.	Martin.	O'Donnell.
Connelly.	Grimes.	Milne.	Philips.
Connor.	Hand.	Muldoon.	Pyers.
Cronin.	Hanlon.	Murphy.	Quin.
Courtney.	Healey.	Murray.	Rafferty.
Crawley.	Heaney.	McCabe.	Redmond.
Cosgrove.	Grant.	McCann.	Richards.
Currie.	Greer.	McCafferty.	Ross.
Digney.	Haggerty.	McDonald.	Short.
Donnelly.	Higgins.	McIlkeny.	Toner.
Dorrian.	Hughes.	McKinlay.	Ward.
Duffin.	Johnstone.	McKay.	Waterson.
Duffy.	Kane.	McLooney.	Wilkie.
Ferguson.			

IRONWORKS

Agnew.	Downey.	Limerick.	McLaughlin.
Blair.	Fallon.	Martin.	McWilliamson.
Blaney.	Flood.	Muldoon.	McVeil.
Bonnar.	Friel.	McCabe.	Richards.
Byrne.	Fulton.	McCann.	Roe.
Cairns.	Grimley.	McCourtney.	Traynor.
Diamond.	Hammill.	McDonald.	Williamson.
Dillon.	Harkin.	McGuinness.	
Donnelly.	Hillon.	McIver.	

LOADINGBANK

Brady.	Duffy.	Harrigan.	McGarrity.
Crabb.	Donnelly.	Haughney.	McGeechan.
Connor.	Fox.	Hughes.	McGoldrick.
Dillon.	Gaffney.	Meikle.	McGuigan.
Doherty.	Gribbin.	McCann.	McLaughlin.

DEN

Barr.	Daly.	Kiernan.	McLookey.
Bannatyne.	Edwards.	Mullen.	McMahon.
Boyd.	Gallagher.	McCarry.	McMenemy.
Bradley.	Hair.	McGinn.	McTaggart.
Casey.	Lemon.	McGuire.	McReynolds.
Collins.	Lennon.	McKee.	Reid.
Connor.	Lundy.	McLaughlin.	White.
Cushlihan.			

STATION

Flannigan.	Hannah.	Morgan.	O'Hara.
Harley.	Hennigan.		

BEITH

Crawford.	Graham.	Moffett.	McKeon.
Crow.	Hamilton.	Morgan.	McLookey.
Devlin.	Hart.	McAllister.	McMahon.
Doherty.	Heffernan.	McCafferty.	Quigley.
Dorman.	Henry.	McDonald.	Sreenan.
Edwards.	Hynes.	McDowall.	Stewart.
Feeny.	Kerrigan.	McDougall.	Williams.
Friel.	Martin.		

BARRMILL

Barclay.	Donnelly.	Jamieson.	Mulligan.
Cadlow.	Donoghue.	Kennedy.	Murray.
Connelloe.	Gaffney.	Layden.	Rafferty.
Carolan.	Hannah.	Madden.	Walker.
Dearie.			

LOCHWINNOCH

Bowman.	Ferguson.	Moore.	McLuskey.
Cooper.	Hunter.	Muldoon.	Nolan.
Doyle.	Maguire.	McGurk.	Sweeney.
Donnelly.			

LONGBAR

Kelly.

LAMBERT

Finnegan.	McBride.	McVittie.	Sreenan.
Keenan.	McGuinness.	Smith.	

GATESIDE

Byrne.	Jamieson.	McAllister.	Rafferty.
Hughes.			