The background of the cover is a purple-toned stained glass window. It features a large, stylized profile of a woman's face, likely the Virgin Mary, looking downwards. The face is composed of various colored panes, though the overall color scheme is monochromatic purple. The lines of the stained glass are dark and prominent.

CLONARD WEXFORD

THE CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

1974-2007

EITHNE SCALLAN

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Introduction

This little booklet doesn't set out to be a comprehensive or exhaustive account of the Church and Parish of Clonard but all who read it and enjoy it will agree that it is a wonderful record of so much that has happened in Clonard since the commencement of the Parish in 1973.

We are delighted that Eithne Scallan has given us this little gem which sparkles with pictures and words reminiscent of our joyful vibrant community.

She has painstakingly interviewed everybody involved here. She has collected photographs which speak 'more than a thousand words'. She has recorded details of the artifacts which enhance our house of God and has given testimony of the thousands of good people who work so harmoniously to make us what we are.

It is a wonderful tribute to all who have gone before us – an encouragement to all who are presently involved – and an inspiration for the future.

Enjoy it!

Very Rev. Denis Lennon, PP, VF

The Background

Clonard - An Chluain Árd or 'The High Meadow' - is a townland in County Wexford.

'The meadowlands a mile west of the town' is how writer Padraic Fallon describes Clonard when he was a child in the 1950s. In his book *A Hymn of the Dawn*, he recalls growing up at Prospect; 'The house faced down a slope of farmland towards the town, a slope steep enough to conceal the town itself, but not the steeples of its twin churches'. He describes some of their farm as being rather wet land, although they grew wheat and vegetables and had grazing and hay for their cattle. He describes 'The Well Field, from where the household's water was carried in buckets until electricity arrived'.

Former school pupils from St. Peter's College remember the school Sunday walks up Summerhill and out into the country towards Clonard Cross. They recall surrounding fields and just occasional houses, set so far back from the road that they did not even think about them. (The schoolchildren would have been unaware of the famous names of past residents - names such as historian Thomas Lacy, Hatton, Kellett, Richards and even Suttons of the 14th century Clonard Castle). Billy Colfer, writing in the Parish News in 1977, referred to the townlands still retaining their Irish names: Clonard, Ballymorris, Coolree, Killeens, Ballynagee, as well as two of English origin, Whitemill and Whiterock. He mentions too, a map of 1804, which shows seventeen windmills in the area at that time. In the 1940s during the years of World War II, some change in the landscape came with the storage of enormous turf dumps 'as high as a house' as emergency fuel supplies for the town of Wexford. Children growing up around the Whiterock View region had this whole area of countryside as their playground.

By the 1960s it was still an area of fields - some swampy - but building development, both residential and industrial, was spreading. With the installation of German-owned factories, as well as local enterprises, the Wexford Industrial Estate was established at Whitemill in the Parish of Clonard. County Development Officer of the day, Billy Ringwood, described it: 'The overall result has been the creation of a vibrant base of industrial expertise and technology, the development of worker skills and crafts and the creation of much needed employment.' In an article on one of these industries, James Meyler referred to it as the success of German/Irish team work.



Aerial View of Clonard

It was around this time that the clergy of Wexford town, studying the changing demographics, made the first move to acquire land in Clonard for a future church building which was initially a Relief Church for the parish of the Church of the Assumption, Bride Street, Wexford. The Land Registry Map and the Local Authority Planning grant show the outline of the site at Townparks, as at October 1998, bordering on the GAA Park, Clonard Road, Clonard Avenue and Liam Mellows Park

The land selected at first was the site on which Kennedy Park School was built later, but it was agreed that this was not sufficiently central to the population area. Up the hill by the GAA park was land owned by the Mercy Convent, on which the owners grazed their cows, to supply milk for the orphanage run by the nuns. The nuns having sold the site to Wexford Corporation, it was subsequently bought by the Church authority so that the church could be built on its present site. Thus the parish became owners of the land where the Clonard church and community hall was built. It was an appropriate continuation of the link with the Mercy Order, since, as Donal Thompson has written, the former Mercy School at Summerhill served the district for more than a hundred years.



Former Convent of Mercy, Clonard

The First Church

According to the Parish News in 1977: 'This area of Wexford town parish was rapidly expanding and the time came when something had to be done to provide a church and other facilities. A decision was made to build - but to build something that was to be the first of its kind - a church, plus a Community Centre at the same time.'

It may be of interest to note that the complex was established in the aftermath of the thrust of Vatican II with the emphasis on the people of God and consequent greater involvement by the laity in the running of the parish.

Planning and fund-raising got under way with the enthusiasm of the townspeople and so many successful schemes that the debt of 'over £100,000' in 1976, was reduced to £30,000 just three years later.

Michael Kelly, writing in the Parish News of 1977 when he was Chairman of the Committee at the Centre, described Clonard Church and Community Centre as 'one of the most exciting and, without

doubt, one of the most challenging ventures undertaken in Wexford for some years'. It is significant that a local resident recalls that as a school student she was required to write a project on a new building in Wexford, and discovered that the complex at Clonard was the only one!



Blessing of Foundation Stone (Ferguson Collection)

A design was prepared by Albert Lennon and Ceall Ó Dúnlain, and in December 1973 the foundation stone was laid for the Church of the Annunciation with its associated Community Centre. The foundation

stone, still in the back wall of the Day Chapel, is inscribed *This foundation stone was solemnly blessed and laid by his Lordship Most Reverend Donal J. Herlihy D.D. Bishop of Ferns on December 23rd 1973.* The novel concept was that sliding doors would link the church with the hall. The other innovative



Painting by Billy Colfer hanging in the Parish Office

feature was that the spire or fleche was of fibreglass on steel latticed trusses. It was designed in similar proportions to the spires of the 'Twin Churches' of Wexford town. Sadly, while it looked striking, there were subsequent structural problems due to its new design. The builders were John Ferguson & Sons.

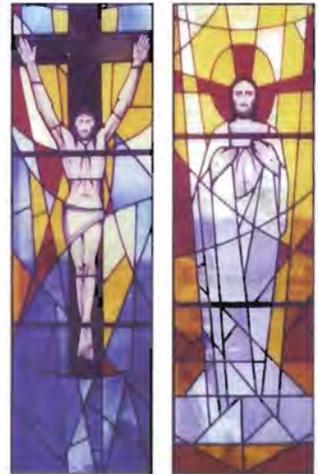
The architects wrote an account of their ideas which was published in the booklet produced for the dedication of the church by Bishop of Ferns Dr. Donal J. Herlihy, on December 8, 1974. They described the church as small and intimate for daily use, with seating for approximately 220. With the hall included this would be extended to 770.



Interior of Old Church

Keeping in mind the traditionalism of the Wexford people, the design used for the church furniture was evocative of Celtic design. What was described as 'the richly decorated interior' included the limestone fronted altar (no longer there) on which the motif represented the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and was derived from the North Cross at Castledermot. The tabernacle door is based on early Irish open bronze work and depicts the Crucifixion. The cross inscribed on the ambo was repeated on the church door panels (now gone).

Two small windows on the north wall by the main access door represented the Crucifixion and the Resurrection and were designed by Stanley and Alan Tomlin at Irish Stained Glass Ltd. These artists and manufacturers were also involved with designer William Early in production of



Alan Tomlin Collection

the large and beautifully glowing stained glass window on the east wall, representing The Annunciation. While the two smaller windows and an adjacent row of six small windows were removed and stored, in the later changes, the Annunciation window has remained in the original church. Over the years it has had minor repairs and restoration by Wexford Glass Company Limited and stained glass artist Vera Whelan.



Irish Stained Glass Ltd. Archive (Photo: Lee Robinson)

Change

The parishioners of Wexford had been prompt and generous in subscribing funds for the new Relief Church, and by the time the initial fund-raising committee handed over to the finance committee of the new parish, the amount raised was only £2000 short of the target for the building of the first church. At the consecration ceremony held four years later on 25th March 1979, the Bishop led prayers that the church might remain a gateway of peace, that it might never be without God's blessing and that all those approaching might receive comfort.



Des Robinson Collection

However changes began to develop. While the whole Community Centre and church were immediately utilised to the full, a difficulty emerged with the linking of church and hall, in that the associated sounds from the hall were often inappropriate in the case of funerals or special prayers in the adjoining church, and it was frequently necessary to adjust the timing of various events. Notes of local committee meetings of the 1975 period reflect the changing times and

the gradual development of the area and the complex. The County Council were being asked for 'Street Lighting'. Money values were very different; complaints were made of the high price at functions in the hall of checking in a coat, at five pence (7c), so it was reduced to two pence. Tennis balls were on sale at twenty-three pence (29c) each. Activities in the community hall developed fast, though discos were reported to have discontinued due to 'disturbance'. In an example of community spirit, members of the Garda living locally, offered their services to help with security.

As the population continued to grow rapidly and parish activities expanded, it became evident that the church itself was not big enough. Even in 1979 Austin O'Sullivan had written a plea in the Parish Journal for the planting of more trees to enhance the appearance of the new estates in this rapidly expanding area.

An Independent Parish

In 1976 Clonard became a separate parish, with Very Reverend Patrick Cummins as its first Parish Priest. From the outset, the people of the area formed an outstandingly enthusiastic, generous and dedicated community. The spirit of Clonard's parishioners is a remarkable feature. By the early nineteen eighties it was becoming evident that the existing church and facilities were no longer adequate and the parishioners were anxious to have a new large church which would be separate from the community centre at the complex. Before this step was taken, an unusual event was a ceremony for members of the Lutheran church held on April 12, 1980. For the confirmation of Christine Sassmannshausen and her sister Mareike (already members of the Clonard folk group) Bishop Herlihy welcomed Pastor Kuir Pruessmann of the Lutheran Church in Ireland to the Church of the Annunciation. Catholic clergy and laity joined in the church ceremony and the happy celebration in the Community Hall.



Photo: Padraig Grant

A New Church

It was not until 1992 that Father Lory Kehoe, then Parish Priest, invited a number of parishioners to a meeting to discuss the building of a new Parish Church. At the first meeting an ad hoc committee was set up to progress the project. Following this meeting a Building Committee was established to develop plans for presentation to the Executive Committee. The Chairman, Des Robinson, led a team of experts: Father M. Byrne CC, Clem Daly, Willie Cleary, Father J. Gunning CC, Father Lory Kehoe PP, Pat Kennedy, Seán McDermot, and Dave Ormonde. In 1993, on his appointment as Parish Priest, Father Denis Lennon together with newly appointed curate Father Colm Murphy, joined the Building Committee, representing the clergy.



Architect's Plan

The parishioners were consulted at public meetings, and extensive research was undertaken. Due to the care taken at this planning stage, as well as the contemporary fundraising drives by other churches in the area, it was some four years before satisfactory decisions were made regarding design and location. The Committee and clergy travelled extensively to view other church buildings and the parishioners

of Clonard were regularly consulted regarding their wishes. The architects investigated a wide variety of options and took account of a list of 30 major considerations put by the Building Committee. The Church was to be fan-shaped, would seat 650 people and would face the direction of Clonard Road rather than towards the GAA sports park. Maurice Fitzgerald was the architect for the company that was then Fitzgerald, Reddy and Associates of Dublin. Messrs Richard Browne and Sons Ltd. of Wexford were appointed main contractors. By now Clonard was Wexford's biggest parish and the dream was to have a Parish Church with Pastoral and Community Centre of which everyone could be proud.



The Blessing of the foundation stone

It was 21 December 1996 when the foundation stone was laid by Bishop Brendan Comiskey. The commemorative plaque reads *The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ Our Lord*. Names of the architects and builders are included.



Photo: Pdraig Grant

Great detail was provided in the Project Appraisal from the architects. Under the heading of General Design Considerations, Maurice Fitzgerald wrote 'Broadly, the project is visualised as two distinct elements comprising a new 600 seat church and the renovation of the existing centre for various social activities'. He pointed out that while the church and the social centre would be interlinked, they must be capable of operating independently. The church was to seat 650 persons in a fan-shaped seating arrangement, allowing the congregation to be as close as possible to the celebrant. The project was to cost more than £2.5 million.

The plan was that 'internally the atmosphere is to be intimate and prayerful, externally the building is to convey an image of refuge and peace'. The original church would now become a Day Chapel with seating for 60 to 80 persons. A significant feature of the design for the new church is the fact that the furthest pew is only ten rows from the sanctuary area and approximately 15m from the altar. As the architect put it 'This arrangement reinforces the intimacy of the relationship between the congregation and the celebrant. All have clear uninterrupted sight of the sanctuary area'. The foresight of the community representatives resulted in a Government grant towards the project. This was intended 'To encourage and promote cultural and arts projects in the new church and extended hall'.

The New Church Opens

The church was blessed and officially opened on October 11th 1998. Journalist Hilary Murphy wrote in the Wexford People that 'It was a time for savouring the satisfaction of a job well done and for expressing admiration and gratitude for the trojan input by so many and by certain individuals in particular'. The opening service involved many of those people.



Photo: Des Robinson Collection

The architect selected American white oak as material for the Altar and the seating. These were manufactured by Irish Contract Seating, Dromod, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Many artists and craftspeople have contributed to the beauty of the church.

The Stations of the Cross/Windows

In an unusual arrangement, the Stations of the Cross around the curved outer wall of the church are represented by the fourteen windows designed by Gillian Deeny, living in Wicklow. She has pointed out that there is considerable emphasis on the role of women in the passion story as depicted in her windows. These were made in conjunction with the craftsmen at Abbey Glass where she worked with the cutout shapes of coloured glass, the pigment being a mixture of lead oxide, ground glass and colour. The craftsmen fitted the finished glass work, and the artist in this case has signed each window.



Windows by Gillian Deeny
(Photos: Padraig Grant)



Stonework

The stonework setting for the tabernacle is a cantilevered piece of County Dublin granite, and the baptismal font is of carved Carlow limestone with hone finish. The design concept of the three bowls is intended to emphasise the significance at baptism of the Three Divine Persons. The work is by sculptor Paddy Roe, who moved from Dublin to County Wexford. It was he also who carved the small holy water fonts in the porches.

At the Candle Shrine in the Baptistry area is a relief work on the wall representing Our Lady and the Children of the World.



Photo: Padraig Grant



Photo: Padraig Grant

Two unusual decorative facsimile crosses – paint on wood – hang in the church.

One is a copy of the Reliquary Cross of Pascal 1st, depicting the infancy cycle with baptism. The original dates from the IXth century and is in the Vatican Museum. The other is a Pascal Cross inspired by Armenian and Georgian medieval patterns. The original is the work of Nelda Vettorazzo from the XXth century.

The Tabernacle

The tabernacle door was made by metalwork artist Jane Murtagh of Cratloe, Co. Clare. She has described her inspiration; 'At the time much of my work was round the structure of plants, and so I started with the Bible, looking for references to plants. Brother Brian Murphy in Glenstal, who was making a Bible garden, very kindly gave me images of such plants.



Tabernacle Door
(Photo: Padraig Grant)

A blacksmith who as a young man during the 2nd World War drove around the Sinai desert with a chaplain, saw the tamarisk bushes and the substance that falls from these bushes at night and is collected and sold in the markets. This sticky blob was the "manna from heaven" hence the design of the tamarisk for the tabernacle'. She added 'The substance found beneath the tamarisk tree in late May, June and July is called manna by the natives. In 1927 two professors from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem discovered that it was produced not by the tamarisk tree itself, but by two species of cochineal insect which fed on its leaves. The viscous substance falls at night and appears in the morning as balls the size of a hazel nut. It has to be collected early before the ants get to it. The manna was eaten raw or cooked, sometimes mixed with meal'. Her tabernacle door thus representing the bread from heaven, was set into the granite surround which suggests the circular shape of the host.



Altar, Ceramics & Tabernacle (Photo: Lee Robinson)

Ceramics

Wexford potter Paul Maloney made and donated the ceramic altar vessels; chalice, cruet set, ciborium and finger bowl.

The Hangings

The hangings designed by Terry Dunne are at the altar and the ambo, both woven by himself. His other designs in the west and the east porches are worked as tufted hangings carried out by Vsoke in 1999. As shown in the plaques beneath each one, they represent – in the east porch: *Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb* (Illustration on dedication page) and in the west porch: *And the Angels said to the little birds flying in mid-air come and gather for the supper of our great God.*



Photo: O'Hara Collection

The brief to the weaver from the Parish Priest and the Architect in 1998 was to keep The Annunciation in mind, and design a tapestry for the Altar on the theme of *The Word was Made Flesh and Dwelt amongst us* and for the ambo on the theme of receptivity to God's word as in *Be it done unto me according to Thy word*. The colour scheme was to be based on blue and orange (or terra cotta) to tone with the church décor.



Photo: Padraig Grant

Terry spent two months thinking about a design, and then in his mind's eye saw a "host of people". He went on to design his hanging with a visual link between the white Host and the people gathering around the Eucharist. The colours incorporated were the blue and orange as suggested.

For the front of the ambo he wove an impression of the blue haze depicting Our Lady on the top right, and the orange shading on the bottom left suggesting the Angel Gabriel, as the Madonna Lily representing the Word, is passed from the angel to the Madonna.



Photo: Padraig Grant

The Bell

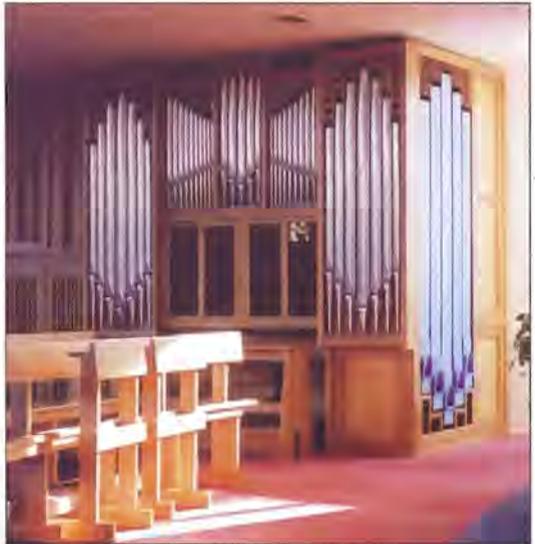
With reconstruction and change, it had been necessary to remove the original spire. It was decided to have a real bell in the modern belfry or bell tower. An old bell was procured from the firm of Hayward Mills in England. It came from St. John's Church of England Church at Great Marsden in Lancashire. The church had been closed and replaced and their bell was no longer required.



Photo: Fitzgerald Architects

The Pipe Organ

It was also agreed that such a church should have a pipe organ, and the commission was given to Wexford organ builder Paul Neiland. Some years before, at the time the Mercy Convent closed at nearby Summerhill, the organ from the chapel was given to the community at Clonard. The organ dated from 1870 and only some of the instrument was suitable for reuse, but it was found possible to incorporate a set of pipes – the Oboe – into the new organ together with some other pipes which are now part of the pedal division. The new organ was constructed at the Neiland workshops, now located at Newtown, Killinick. It proved possible to use a considerable quantity of stock pipework and the fine finished instrument has a total of 1,093 pipes ranking in size from ½ inch to 16 feet long. The organ was duly installed in the church and the plaque states *Jubilee Year 2000*. An inaugural recital was held on June 8th, 2000. On that occasion the quality and range of the instrument were demonstrated through the playing of gifted young organists Charles O'Connor, Trevor Clark, William Murphy and Eanna McKenna. Another Wexford organist Ruth Miller accompanied the Young Wexford Singers and Wexford musician Patrick Clancy played works on trumpet and cornet. Paul Neiland spoke about the organ and organ building and Eithne Scallan introduced the music.



Organ (Photo: Pdraig Grant)

Unusually, by 2006 the church could boast a second pipe organ, this one a small single-manual organ dating from 1843 and built by W. Telford. It came from the Presentation Convent in Enniscorthy, and facilitates practices and services in the Day Chapel.

Music in the Church

Music to accompany the liturgy was by 2007 being provided in different forms; through the church choir, directed by the organist Eanna McKenna – Director of Music (Ferns), Director of Young Wexford Singers and organist and choir director in a number of churches and schools; a Folk Group, established in 1979 by Therma Shine with others, flourished from the start. It was taken over in 1996 by Ruairi Byrne. Unlike many of the folk groups popular in the 1970s, the members did not drift away. Over more than twenty-five years the group progressed from small numbers, singing in two parts with two guitars. It proved popular with the congregation and gradually developed into The Clonard Folk Choir. The full complement rose to twenty-two with instrumental accompaniment of flute, violins, viola, piano, guitars and percussion. Maria Hayes emerged from this group into the development of the Children's Choir which encouraged the children of the parish, not only to sing but to bring their instruments with them as they take part in this Liturgy Group. Willing helpers raised money to keep the group going. Participation in the Liturgy for children was influenced by the German nuns of the order of Our Lady of Schoenstatt who moved for a few years into Clonard. Leaders like Angela McCormack came forward, and an enthusiasm for the study of the Pastoral Ministry developed. Opportunity was made possible for creativity in the planning of the children's liturgy, with volunteers directing evening groups, and children began to come to Clonard from other areas. In time Francis Furlong took over keyboard accompaniment for the children's mass. A successful imaginative feature was the introduction of projection of the words of hymns onto the church wall. The proximity of the Pastoral Centre allows for separate appropriate instruction for the children while the liturgy of the word takes place in the church.

The first major classical concert was a prestigious event held at the combined church and hall as early as November 1st, 1975 when Wexford Singers (later Wexford Festival Singers), with the national Symphony Orchestra and conductor Albert Rosen performed Mozart's Coronation Mass as part of Wexford Festival. While this was an impressive occasion, there were problems then – as later – during rehearsal with the noise from the adjoining hall where Irish Dancing was in progress... Equally, it was a serious disruption for the organisers of the Irish Dancing Feis being held there at the time.

As regards this first music event at the new church, the Irish Times music critic Charles Acton wrote "As far as I could hear from my seat, the church is an admirable place for such a concert..."

At time of building for the second time, bearing in mind the stated aims of the development when receiving State grant aid, the new church was designed in such a way as to make it suitable for use for appropriate concerts and lectures. One of those consulted was the chairman of Wexford Sinfonia, Richard Miller, who willingly joined in planning to make the church workable as a venue for orchestral concerts. This involved putting the altar furniture on wheels for easy movement. The orchestra have found the church in Clonard a very satisfactory venue. The fact that the acoustic is quite dry is perhaps better than situations where there is too much reverberation.



Photo: Alan Mahon

The ancillary facilities are excellent also. The church has been the venue for other concerts as well as lectures, although the executive committee and community are mindful of the clause in the Constitution which states 'Religious ceremonies shall have priority over all other activities in the Centre'. A millenium service was held there for a Millenium International Reunion for past pupils of St. Peter's College. It has been the setting for baptisms, marriages and ordinations. By 2007 a Lithuanian mass was being held once a month.

An unusual wall hanging was commissioned for the Day Chapel. The designer Anne M. Heffernan followed up on the views of stained glass artist Gillian Deeny in commemorating especially the work of

women. Accordingly it celebrates Brigid – Muire na nGael (or Mary of the Gael) – and the abundance and beauty of the earth and the sea. The delicate work was carried out by a local sewing team of eleven gifted needleworkers who were volunteers. It was unveiled by Gillian Deeny on February 2, 2001. A special celebration was held with singer Nóirín Ní Riain and music by *Rig the Jig*, and *Frankly My Dear*.



Photo: Padraig Grant

By 2007 the Clonard area of Wexford could boast of a church distinguished by its architecture and art work as part of a complex which included, apart from religious services, a Pastoral Centre and a remarkable range of social activities. Among these were facilities for Youth Club, Playschool, Active Retirement, Girl guides, Scouts, Keep Fit, Parent & Toddler, Bingo, Lotto, Crèche, as well as support groups like Cura, Grow, Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Family Life Services and Clinics for Child Psychology run by professional personnel. The Community Hall continued to be a centre for indoor sports, dancing, drama and social gatherings. The population in Clonard parish had risen to 10,000 and welcomed immigrants from many countries. Among the most successful fundraising schemes was the weekly Lotto which – although paying out 70% of the income – raised one million euro for the parish over seven years.

Father Martin Doyle, appointed curate in the year 1999, found that the outstanding voluntary commitment exemplified the value of the layout of the complex; the proximity of Church, Day Chapel, Hall and Pastoral Centre. It was also clear that the existence of a debt on

the complex and the need for constant fund-raising established a bond and a particular dedication within the community. He found that the shape of the church tended to lead to an awareness of the congregation all around, with ease of liturgy and opportunity for creativity. The strength of lay involvement in the work of the church developed further with a course in pastoral theology for some of the volunteers. Establishment of a Lectio Divina group meant valuable input from parishioners into preparation of homilies, readings, interpretation and reflection on the word of God, thus making it more comprehensible.

After thirty-three years the community – like society in general – had become a very different place from 1974. Father Jimmy Moynihan mentioned that twenty different nationalities were represented in Scoil Mhuire with resulting adaptation to different cultures. He felt that the 'image of God had changed' in the years since the first church was built here. He also found, from the time of his arrival, that the extensive involvement and willingness of the laity to volunteer for many tasks associated with the church and pastoral centre, left the priests more free to attend to their own special field of work, a welcome development.

After ten years of experience, John Taylor the Sacristan was of the opinion that to be involved at Clonard was to work in a place that is unique. In discussing the physical layout of the complex, he felt that everything was central to the Day Chapel, but that no matter what had to be done, there was a great team of people and no matter what might be the problem, there was always someone to solve it.

The Millenium stone outside the church stands as a reminder of the passing of time. Obviously not everyone in the area would or could be affected by the activities at this unusual complex, but Clonard, by the twenty-first century, had become an example of how a church in a modern age can still be a centre of all that is worthwhile in a community.



Millenium Stone (Photo: Lee Robinson)

Childhood Memories

Peter Kirwan recalled 'When I think back to the time I was a child living in Moongate opposite the field in the 50s and 60s, I am struck by the staggering changes that have taken place in what seems to me to be a relatively short space of time. I think I am right in saying that my generation, who were teenagers in the 60s have seen more change and more dramatic change than any generation ever.

As young children I well remember on winter days skating on a frozen pond in this field. Climate change surely. I also clearly remember the Convent's cows being herded up Clonard Road into this field, and then being herded back to the Convent on summer's evenings to be milked, driven by the convent's workman Larry Kehoe, who lived in Ferrycarrig. My family were very close to the Sisters and every spring Larry was sent over to Moongate to plough with a horsedrawn plough. My parents were very enthusiastic gardeners (flowers and vegetables) and they had a sizeable property there. In the days before television, nothing was more exciting than when Larry came to plough. I can see him now cutting shavings off a plug of tobacco with a penknife and rubbing it in his hands to put in his pipe and covering the bowl with a little silver cap so that the tobacco didn't burn too quickly in the open air. I remember him as the kindest, gentlest and oldest man I had ever seen (although he was probably only about 50 at the time!). He used to have lunch in the kitchen in Moongate and he would have *two* boiled eggs, a feat which I then thought the most amazing thing, and which I haven't seen equalled before or since. When he was finished ploughing for the evening he would unhitch the horse, put me up on the horse's back, tell me to look through his ears, and walk the horse back to the convent at Summerhill. The sisters also had a field further up Clonard Road opposite what was Mike Finnucane's house (which is now Medentech) and I remember going up on the horse-drawn cart with Larry gathering loads of turnips to bring back to the Convent and being given turnips to give my mother.

As children, I well remember sitting on the wall of Moongate in the late 50s, early 60s watching the occasional motorcar drive by and as a competitive game writing down the registration numbers of the cars as they passed. At that time there were almost as many pony-and-traps coming down Clonard Road to go into town to do the shopping.

I also remember that the Presentation Sisters owned the field beside Moongate on which Beechlawn (named after the beeches in Moongate) now stands. They also had a herd of cows and half of that field was grazed by the cows and the other half was tilled. I can clearly remember and clearly see now, corn being cut by a horse-drawn mowing machine and being bound in sheaves by a horse-drawn binder, with Benny in charge of the operation. Up to the time that property was sold, we frequently heard corncrakes in that field'.



Photo: Des Robinson

Acknowledgements

Compilation of this booklet was made possible through the help and co-operation of parish priest Father Lennon and of Des Robinson. In addition, useful data was loaned by Michael Kelly and Pat O'Connell and patient help was provided by Laura Nolan and Anita O'Hara at the Parish Office. The author's thanks extend to Des Robinson, Fr. Denis Lennon, Noreen and Frank Butler, Richard Browne & Sons, Ruairi Byrne, Dr. Billy Colfer, the late Fr. Pat Cummins, Fr. Jim Curtis, Gillian Deeny, Fr. Martin Doyle, Terry Dunne, Padraic Fallon, Jim Ferguson, Maurice Fitzgerald, Frances Furlong, Helen Gaynor, Maria Hayes, Sister Ita, Sister Josephine, Fr. Lory Kehoe, Michael Kelly, Angela McCormack, Éanna McKenna, Sister Martina, Fr. Jimmy Moynihan, Jane Murtagh, Laura Nolan, Pat O'Connell, Cathal O'Gara, Anita O'Hara, Dave Ormonde, Paddy Roe, Lally Scallan, Philomena Sinnott, John Taylor, Alan Tomlin, Wexford Library staff.

Special gratitude goes to Lee Robinson and personnel at The Print Shop Ltd, Whitemill Industrial Estate, Clonard, Wexford.

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The Author

Eithne Scallan is a local historian who has lived for forty-five years in Wexford. She is an experienced writer, broadcaster and lecturer. Her books include *The Celtic Story*, *The Boat Club*, *Houses of Wexford* (co-authored with David Rowe), and *You Can't Be Serious* (on the lighter side of Wexford Festival).

