

Message from Archbishop Dermot Martin



I am very happy to share with you the joy of celebrating the centenary of your Church.

To have built a Church such as St. Agatha's was a great achievement in a time of poverty and want. Since the blessing of St. Agatha's Church on Sunday 25th October 1908, by my predecessor Archbishop Walsh, this Church has been a sign of generosity and commitment to the faith.

As we look forward to the future we do so with great optimism knowing that your faith is based on the firm foundation of past generations, that faith of the people of North William Street, which has always been a source of inspiration to us all.

The Church of St. Agatha is without doubt a beautiful building, but our challenge is to build a Church made from living stones, to that end I thank God for the good example of parents, priests, teachers and all the people of St. Agatha's parish who over the past one hundred years have witnessed to their faith in Christ.

From the beginning the people of North William Street Parish have faced difficulties and hardships with courage and fortitude, the bombing of the North Strand in 1941 and the floods of 1954 and again in 1992 are examples of your community spirit which shows your determination to overcome any obstacle and to succeed.

In this time of relative prosperity Ireland has experienced many positive benefits amongst which has been the arrival of immigrants in search of a better life. Such diversity has enriched our culture and faith. It reminds us of our need to be receptive to new ideas, to new commitment, to the emergence of new faces in our communities which are different expressions of the Christian life.

In this fragile world in which we live, may your parish be a beacon of hope and love dispelling the darkness of social neglect, poverty, addiction and alienation.

May God continue to bless you as he has blessed your parish during those past 100 years.

Yours very sincerely

+ Diarmuid Martin

+ Diarmuid Martin

Archbishop of Dublin

St. Agatha's Church 1908 – 2008

On Sunday 25 October 1908 the Archbishop of Dublin blessed the church of St. Agatha at 11.30 on what was described as charming seasonable weather. This opening was the culmination of a plan first mooted some 43 years earlier and during the intervening period there had been tragedy, arguments over the site, debt, litigation, references in Ulysses, until finally the church was built and completed in 1908.

A quick look back over this colourful history must start with the establishment of the Parish of St. Agatha. This parish area was originally part of the parish of St. Mary, Marlborough Street (now the Pro-Cathedral) and, when that area became too big to administer, the Parish of what is now St. Agatha was established at the eastern end of the district. FR. FRANCIS DORAN was appointed as the first PP and he was in office from 1865 until his untimely death in 1877. It was his idea to raise a church to replace the small and dark chapel that had been supplying the pastoral needs of the district up to then. Prior to his appointment as Parish Priest he had been an assistant to the Chaplain to the Convent which had already been established in North William Street. He wanted to dedicate this new church to St. Agatha, the Sicilian Virgin and Martyr to whom he had a great devotion.

His determination to see the church built was never realised as, on 2 July 1877, he was involved in a boating accident approaching the South Wall Lighthouse and died as a result.

He was succeeded by FR. MATTHEW COLLIER, who was in office from 1878 to 1892. He wished to pursue the intentions of his predecessor and also



to change the name of the church slightly to that of St. Agatha and the Holy Souls. He selected a site a few yards distant from the chapel in North William Street and, having decided to erect a classical Roman church, he chose Meade as the contractor. The trowel that was used for the laying of the foundation stone was originally presented by Fr. Collier to the Archbishop of Dublin, Edward McCabe on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone. It was only in the early 1980's that Archbishop Ryan returned the trowel to the then parish priest, Fr. John Whelan. The foundation stone was laid on Sunday, 25 April 1880.



Whilst Fr. Collier had an apparently well-earned reputation for piety, simplicity, and devotion to duty, he had unfortunate limitations in fund-raising abilities and the edifice of the church only slowly began to rise. Money ran out when the walls had reached the string course and at that stage the contractor was owed £1,400. Building came to an end and old age, infirmity and perhaps stress brought Fr. Collier's life to an end on 28 October 1892.

He was succeeded by FR. JOHN O'MALLEY who was to remain as parish priest until 1904 and become probably the most controversial parish priest of this parish.

He had previously been a curate in St. Audoen's



and then administrator in St. Andrew's church and he came with high expectations, as he had reputation of being both a pious and a hard working priest. In 1893 he received permission from the then Archbishop, Dr. Walsh to borrow £1,400 from the bank in order to pay the contractor the sums that were owed. He then set about the building of the church itself. He was not satisfied with the site that had already been selected and on which building had already commenced. He regarded it as a back street and began searching for alternative sites. Around this time, a lady in the parish, Miss Walsh, left the parish £8,000, a serious sum of money in those days. This was specifically for the new church.

This gave Fr. O'Malley the impetus to proceed with the church and he selected a site at 10 Richmond Place which would be on a more main thoroughfare. The Archbishop, however, refused his consent saying the money had been left for the building of a church in North William Street and nowhere else. Fr. O'Malley then tampered with the legacy without the consent of his co-trustee, the Archbishop and much wrangling followed, culminating in the Parish Priest taking the Archbishop to court.

The Archbishop won this case, but unfortunately it diminished the amount of money in the legacy, which was now reduced from its original figure to a sum of just below £6,000. Years had gone by during this period and ill-feeling must have been considerable, as the Archbishop forbade Fr. O'Malley the exercise of all parochial jurisdiction and named FR. NICHOLAS DUDLEY, who had been appointed Senior Curate in 1900, as Administrator Pro-Tem of the parish. Fr. O'Malley unexpectedly died on 16 March 1904.

CANON MICHAEL WALSH PP was appointed to succeed Fr. O'Malley and he would serve a total of 31 years as parish priest, the longest serving parish priest in the whole history of St. Agatha's. His appointment brought to an end the problems that had ensued over the previous decade. Fr. Dudley would continue to serve as curate in the parish until 1912. Fr. Dudley himself merited mention in Ulysses. Normally it would have been curious at the time for Joyce to have made reference to a curate, when he could have made reference to a parish priest; and Dudley's reputation must have been greatly enhanced by

the events of the previous few years and these would have been familiar to James Joyce and indeed, probably to the people of Dublin. Not every day is a curate put in as an administrator to a parish, nor does a parish priest sue an archbishop.

Canon Walsh came to the parish with an enormous reputation. He hailed from Callan, Co. Kilkenny and was for many years Professor of Humanities in Clonliffe College, eventually becoming its fourth President from 1893 to 1904.

His appointment to the parish of St. Agatha's at once restored the prestige and importance of the parish and he promptly decided to go back to the original plan and site for the church and complete the work that had already been commenced during Fr. Collier's term of office. He had to hand the balance of the legacy of just below £6,000 and the building work re-commenced in July 1906. By October 1907 the expenditure had reached £14,000 and the Archbishop contributed £1,000 at a public meeting towards this debt. Other sums were raised at public meetings and at other weekly collections, and gradually the church of St. Agatha's rose to its full grandeur and beauty.

The Church

The Church of St. Agatha's in North William Street was designed by the architects, William H. Byrne and Son and is one of the best examples of their use of the Roman Renaissance style. The building contractor was James Kernan, whilst John Ryan executed all the elaborate fibrous plasterwork with which the entire interior is finished. The contractors for the lighting were Cummins & Sons.

Where St. Agatha's church now stands would have originally been the sea and the old coast road would have run from Parnell Street along Summerhill down Ballybough Road through Fairview and on to Clontarf island. It was only in the 1750's that Summerhill was built and from that point other streets and avenues projected eastwards.

Although on a quiet street, the church is a very imposing building and often comes as a surprise to those who suddenly come across a particularly large structure in what are very narrow streets. There can be few parish churches that have been as well looked after as St. Agatha's has been.

During the lifetime of most people in this parish, there have been two major redecoration schemes. The first of these was for the 75th anniversary of the church in 1983, but the most recent one in preparation for the centenary started some ten years ago with major work on the roof and on the façade of the church including re-pointing, cleaning, etc. This was then followed by major work on the electrical wiring which had not been replaced since the early 1940's, culminating then in the complete redecoration of the church which has only been completed in the past two years.

The full splendour of the church has now been restored and it must resemble closely how it would have looked 100 years ago. The parish is lucky to have a band of dedicated women in the parish who look after the upkeep and cleaning of the interior, to make it among the finest kept churches in the diocese.

The work on the parish church over the past five years has been a great credit to the parishioners, who have contributed generously to the restoration and who retain a great affection for the church as a place of prayer. There has also been enormous support from Share, the Dublin Diocesan Development Fund. Without all of this generosity, the restoration work would not have been possible, and it is a testament to the esteem in which the parish church is held by so many.

The Parish

From Fr. Francis Doran in 1865 to Fr. Brian Lawless, who was appointed in 2007, the parish has had 14 parish priests and a great number of curates. All the names are listed further on in this booklet. In more recent years the parish ministry has been extended, and here in St. Agatha's the Daughters of Charity have been actively and directly involved in various aspects of the parish work. Up to 2007 St Bridget O'Connor and Sr. Eileen Brown worked as part of the parish team, and since Sr. Eileen's departure Sr. Bridget has continued that work with the three priests of the parish, Fr. Brian Lawless, Fr. Tony Scully, and the parish chaplain, Fr. Paddy Devitt. All of these are part of the parish team and they work in the parish. Apart from the work that is inextricably linked directly to the church services, this includes home and hospital visitation, parish pastoral council work, parish liturgy groups, bereavement care through the Bethany

Bereavement Support Team, training and care of the Ministers of the Eucharist, Ministers of the Word, and Baptism team, home/school/parish link between the schools, especially in relation to sacraments, the children's liturgy group, and choir.

The parish itself has changed over the years. The original parish has been reduced by the creation of Gardiner Street parish, which was originally in the parish of St. Agatha's. There are approximately 2,200 units in the parish, combining the houses that were always in the parish, apartments, and flats. In recent years the parish has welcomed a changing community with many of those immigrating to Ireland living in the parish and attending its services.

Over the past five years the administration of the parish has itself changed with the establishment of the first Parish Pastoral Council under the Chairmanship of Mary Irwin and the first Finance Committee under the Chairmanship of Ken Langan, the Liturgy Group, and the continued development of the choir under the enthusiastic hands of Peter O'Driscoll. The parish is a vibrant community with a great number of dedicated, selfless participants, a fitting legacy to those who conceived the building of St. Agatha's church over 100 years ago and an inspiration to those who will follow in the next hundred years.

Perhaps our best known parishioner is the Archbishop, Diarmuid Martin.



St. Agatha – Patron of our Parish

St. Agatha is the Patron Saint of the parish in North William Street. She is also the patron of nurses and of diseases of the breast. Because she was born in Sicily, Italy she is also prayed to for protection against earthquakes. The name Agatha means 'goodness'.



Agatha was a woman of noble birth who lived in the 3rd century in Sicily. Like many of her contemporaries, Agatha had consecrated her virginity to God. Having triumphed over many assaults on her chastity, she would not have bargained for the lustful designs of Quintianus, the Roman Governor in Catania, Sicily. She was a Christian and at that time, the Roman Governor, Quintianus was persecuting Christians. Having worked his way up from lowly origins, Quintianus hoped to marry Agatha both for her beauty and her wealth – she was of a rich and illustrious family. To shake off his intentions Agatha left Catania and went to Palermo. Quintianus tried unsuccessfully to seduce her. He was enraged with her refusals and had her repeatedly tortured. This included imprisonment, beating, burning, cutting off her breasts and starvation. Her courage and commitment to her faith kept her strong.

While she was praying in prison she is reputed to have had a vision of the apostle St. Peter who comforted her, healed all her wounds and filled her prison cell with a heavenly light. The story of St. Agatha is one of courage, tremendous spiritual strength, immaculate integrity and utter dependence on Christ.

She was martyred on 5th February 251.

Prayer to St. Agatha

St. Agatha, glorious Virgin and Martyr, in the moment of torture, you refused to betray the faith you had in Jesus Christ. Help us that we may not fail in our good resolutions through self interest and human respect. You kept yourself holy and pure in the most dangerous and violent temptations. Obtain for us from Our Divine Lord the grace to resist with courage the temptations of the devil. Help us to be real followers of the crucified Christ. Help us to fulfill the purpose for which God created us, so that we may receive the blessed crown of eternal life.

Amen.



Hymn to Saint Agatha

Vincent Kennedy

Honour the courageous martyr
who shines forth with light divine.
Let us sing her glorious triumph
as we come before her shrine.
Exultant in the midst of torment.
Victorious in her prison cell.
We now come to laud her virtue
and again her courage tell.
Humble now we kneel in worship.
Singing hymns of love and praise.
Confident we kneel in worship.
Singing hymns of love and praise.

May her fame sound through out the ages.

Ever glorious, holy one.

May her dying prayer inspire us.

Lead us close to God's own son.

Humble now we kneel in worship.

Singing hymns of love and praise.

Steadfast now we kneel in worship.

Singing hymns of love and praise.

You who dwell now with the Lord.

Shining jewel among the just.

Agatha our patron saint.

Be our refuge, plead for us!

Humble bow we kneel in worship

Singing hymns of love and praise.

Confident we kneel in worship.

Singing hymns of love and praise.

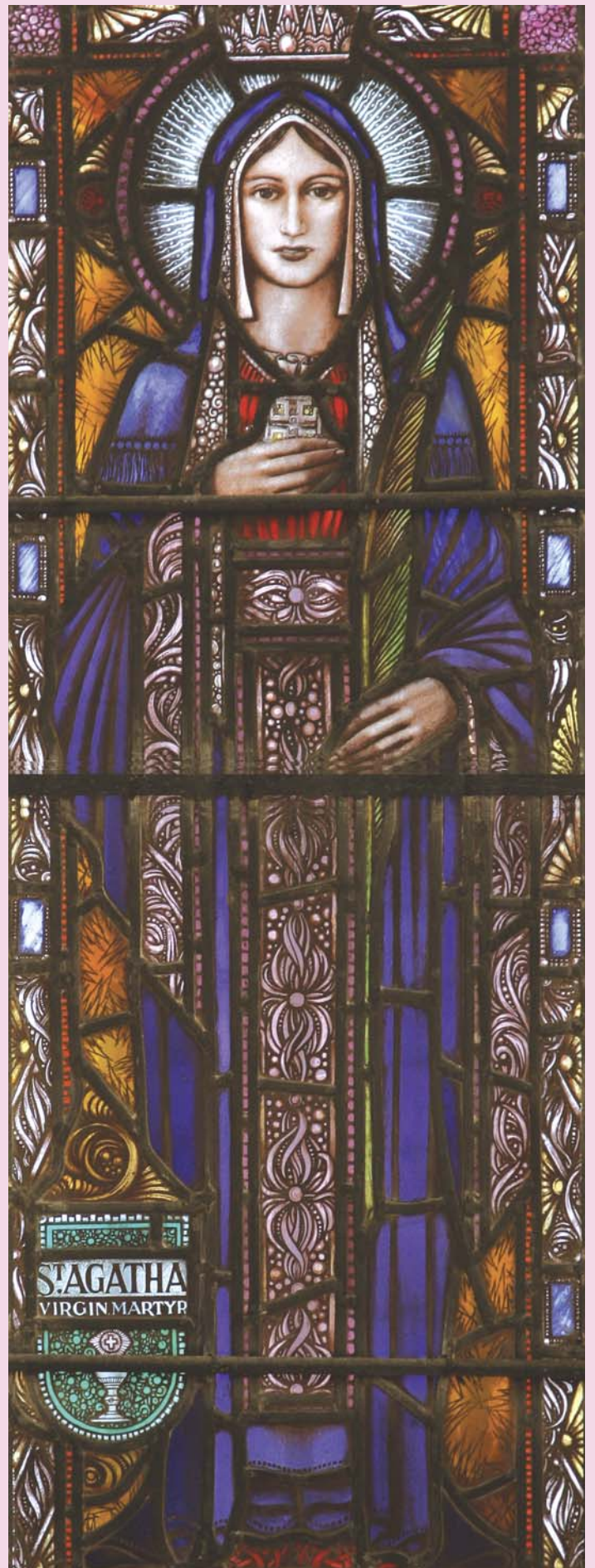
Humble now we kneel in worship.

Singing hymns of love and praise.

Steadfast now we kneel in worship.

Singing hymns of love and praise.

Commissioned by the Parish of Saint Agatha on
the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the
consecration of the church.



Daughters of Charity

First days in North William Street

On the 14th of May 1857 Sr. Josephine de Virieu with five Daughters of Charity, Sisters Crawford, Behan, Merve, Boice and Morris arrived in North William Street to found St. Vincent's Community. This was the beginning of 150 years of service in North William Street parish in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac.

Sr. de Virieu came at the invitation of the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Paul Cullen. In November 1855 the Daughters of Charity had founded their first house in Ireland in Drogheda, having come there from Rue du Bac in Paris. The foundation in North William Street was their second in Ireland, the first in the Dublin Diocese. Sr. Josephine de Virieu was born in 1818 in Crecy-sur-Fille, near Dijon in France. In 1850 she entered the Daughters of Charity and was placed in Arras in 1851. When she arrived in North William Street she was 39 years of age. She was to continue to live and serve there for the next 33 years until her death on 12th December 1890 aged 72.

The sisters were asked to take over a small orphanage which had been in existence for over 50 years. This had been founded by the Trinitarian Confraternity and managed successfully by the Religious Sisters of Charity, the Poor Clares and the Carmelite Sisters.

To meet the challenge of the large number of homeless children the Daughters of Charity reopened the orphanage on 28th December 1858, renaming it after their founder St. Vincent de Paul.

To respond to the need for education of the children in the area the Sisters built two schools – one for infant boys and one for girls. At a time when there was no state funding for the orphanage, for the schools or for the relief of the poor the Daughters were dependent on charitable donations.

They were then particularly supported by the Vincentian Fathers in Phibsborough – a close relationship which was to continue down through the years.

Not long after the Great Famine this was a time of great poverty and destitution in Dublin. The sisters became familiar sights in the local area. They lost no time getting to work. Soon the white cornettes were to be seen moving through the streets, visiting the sick and the poor in their homes.

The convent chapel was erected for the community of the Irish Sisters of Charity who under the leadership of Mother Mary Aikenhead established their first convent in Dublin in North William Street in 1815. The chapel was open to the public and served as a Chapel of Ease to St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street which at that time served a vast area. The parish of St. Agatha was founded in 1865 and the convent chapel served the pastoral needs of the parish until St. Agatha's was opened in 1908. Many parishioners were baptised, confirmed, married and buried from this chapel (all these records are at present in the Church of St. Agatha.



Daughters of Charity – Centenary Celebrations 1957

On 14th May 1957 the Daughters of Charity celebrated the centenary of their coming to Dublin with a Solemn High Mass in the Church of St. Agatha, North William Street at which Bishop Dunne presided.

The streets were en fete for the joyous occasion a riot of colour made by streamers and bunting spanning the streets, and flags flying from buildings went far to lift the gloom of overcast skies that memorable Tuesday. Many homes in the area had little shrines installed in windows. Senior girls, numbering over 300, in navy and white uniforms lined both sides of North William Street as a guard of honour.



*Sr. Louise – Daughter of Charity
in North William Street, 1932 - 2003*



Daughters of Charity – Celebrating 150 Years 2007

On the 27th May 2007, Pentecost Sunday, the Daughters of Charity celebrated 150 years of service in North William Street parish with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. During this Mass Sr. Nora O'Sullivan presented a candle representative of each of the services with a candle lit from the 150th Commemorative Candle, missioning them to continue their service of God in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac.

The services were –

- St. Louise's Nursery – this provides support to parents and a safe and happy environment where children can interact with each other. Ms. Louise Gillick is the Manager of the Nursery.
- St. Vincent's Girls' School – was established by the Daughters of Charity in 1857. It has served the community between the North Strand and Ballybough since its establishment. Catholic values are an important part of the school culture. Mrs Rita Tighe is the Principal of the school since 2002 and the Daughters of Charity remain the Trustees.
- St. Vincent's Infant Boys' School – was established as a Catholic School in 1904. Mr Pat Courtney is the Principal of the school and the Daughters of Charity remain the Trustees.
- Parish of St. Agatha, North William Street – Parish Sister Sr. Bridget O'Connor.
- Parish of St. Joseph, East Wall – Parish Sister, Sr. Helen MacEvilly.
- St. Agatha's Food Centre – located on Portland Row, this food centre is run by Crosscare. Sr. Magdalen McHugh and her staff and volunteers, Monday to Friday provide meals to over 50 people with meals and also bring meals on wheels to the housebound.
- Vincentian Housing Partnership (Rendu Apartments) was officially opened in October 1995 to provide transitional housing for people who are homeless and vulnerable aged between 20 and 50, male or female, single or couples, with or without children. This is a collaborative ministry of the



Daughters of Charity, the Vincentian Fathers, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The Director of the Vincentian Housing Partnership since August 2008 ? is Ms. Clare Williams.

Since 1857 many Daughters of Charity have worked and ministered in St. Vincent's North William Street. The longest serving Sister was Sr. Louise who served for over 70 years! She is remembered today with great affection by many of the people in the Parish of St. Agatha.

On 6th December 1932 Sr. Louise Hallahan and Sr. Catherine Barrett arrived in North William Street from Clonakilty, Co. Cork. As Sr. Louise herself said, she was "a raw recruit". She joined the Daughters of Charity community there – and stayed for over 70 years until her death there on 27th January 2003.

Prayer, Mass and devotion to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal were the main sources of energy for Sr. Louise. She led many pilgrimages to most of the Marian Shrines in particular to Lourdes. She loved the Church of St. Agatha – a love which she expressed in the hours and hours she spent in the church cleaning, arranging flowers and looking after St. Anthony!

Sr. Louise dedicated her life to serving God by serving His people, especially helping those in need. For over 70 years she worked with and for the people of the parish of St. Agatha. Over the years Sr. Louise organised activities for the young and not so young. In the earlier years she established clubs for teenage girls and young mothers. In co-operation with Comhairle le Leas Oige many young women benefited from tuition and training which built their self confidence. One of the Clubs founded by Sr. Louise in the 1940's still exists today – The **Mothers' Club**! This club held a special place in her heart where she had many moments of fun and laughter.

Working tirelessly for the elderly in co-operation with the Eastern Health Board, Sr. Louise organised meals-on-wheels for those who were housebound. Daily meals were also served in St.



Back: Srs. Bride Lyng, Nora O'Sullivan (Now in Blackrock), Helen MacEvilly, Angela Burke (Now studying in USA),
Front: Srs. Magdalen McHugh, Eileen Browne (now in Cork) and Bridget O'Connor.

Anthony's Centre. This service would not have been possible without the strong support of dedicated volunteers.

Sr. Louise was often seen walking the streets on her way to visiting families and elderly people in the parish both at home and in hospital. She had a special love for the sick and the dying who were always very close to her heart.

Sr. Louise set up a Youth Club in the late 1960's which catered for girls from 9 - 18 years old. It began with classes in cookery and dressmaking with teachers from Comhairle le Leasoige. Then through affiliation with CYC, the club were very successful in 'Make and Model' competitions, Group Singing and Young Entertainers competitions. Other activities included Table Tennis, Arts and Crafts, Hostelling weekends and an annual holiday.



The Mothers' Club above at their old club room in St. Anthony's Day Care Centre and below on one of their many trips out.



Clonliffe College and The Mater Dei Institute of Education

Holy Cross College Clonliffe was the Dublin Diocesan Seminary for well over a hundred years. It occupies a prime location between Clonliffe Road and the Tolka river, and is within sight of the great GAA stadium, at Croke Park.

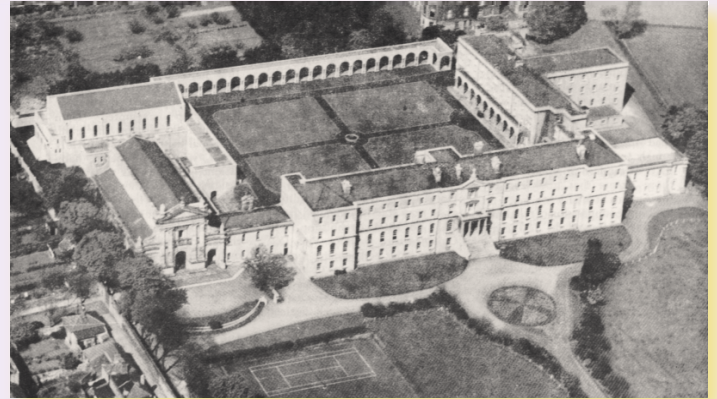
Originally, the seminary consisted of what is now called The Red House (the first students entered in 1859). Here the Diocesan CROSSCARE enterprise is located.

The three later constructions (built in the eighteen sixties, the nineteen fifties and the nineteen sixties) to house the growing number of seminarians, were all in full use up until the nineteen eighties, when student numbers began to fall. Gradually the numbers were such that the Seminary effectively ceased.

The Mater Dei Institute of Education, established by Archbishop McQuaid in 1966, was first located on the ground floor of the Old Wing of the Seminary Building. As the Institute expanded, it first moved into temporary pre-fabs, but eventually a purpose-built block was set up in the grounds of the Archbishop's House.

It now has approximately five hundred students registered on its various courses. It specialises in the academic and professional formation of teachers, especially in the area of Religious Education, for post-primary schools in Ireland. It also offers a BA degree course in Irish Studies and Religious Studies. It offers numerous post-graduate courses, including Adult Religious Education, Chaplaincy Studies; and, most recently, a course designed for potential Parish Pastoral Workers.

Numbers of students in Mater Dei have grown all the while, such that there is no longer adequate space for them in the building. At present, Mater Dei rents about half of the Clonliffe Building for use



as classrooms. It is planned to upgrade this plant and add a parallel extra building in the quadrangle behind, whenever Clonliffe is officially no longer a seminary and the funding is available.

Mater Dei was for years linked to St Patrick's College, Maynooth. Since the late nineties, Mater Dei (along with St Patrick's, Drumcondra, and All Hallows) has been a College of Dublin City University. What used to be the seminarians' assembly hall cum theatre (with a superb stage), has recently been converted into a beautiful library to service the Mater Dei student population.

The church of the Holy Cross, dating from 1874, used to be available to many of the parishioners of St Agatha's, especially those living nearby. The church no longer functions as a kind of chapel-of-ease. It is, however, still used by Mater Dei for occasional masses, concerts, plays, examinations and graduation ceremonies.

In recent years, the GAA has been assisted by Mater Dei/Clonliffe, through the provision of superb off-street parking for the people going to matches or concerts in Croke Park. Mater Dei also offers dressing room and canteen facilities to the children who play at half-time in the All-Ireland finals.



The Irish Christian Brothers

Founded by Edmund Rice in 1802, the Brothers have been teaching in the area, now constituting the parish of St Agatha, since 1828. Their Primary and Secondary schools, named after Daniel O'Connell, and



Edmund Rice

among the first to offer free education for poor Dublin Catholics, still operate today; though many of the present pupils come from abroad, and upwards of forty different nationalities now enrich the schools. Some of the second-level pupils have been able to spend time with the Brothers' mission in Zambia – their **Zambian Immersion Project** was a powerful educational experience for everybody.

Beside the schools, in North Richmond Street, is Edmund Rice House; here the memory of the founder is kept alive. Blessed Edmund, founder of the Christian Brothers, lived there from 1831 - 1838. Over the years, the Brothers had always invited their



Edmund Rice House

pupils to pray for the Beatification of Edmund Rice, and their prayers were eventually answered in 1996. Many Brothers, along with hundreds of their ex-pupils, were privileged to travel to Rome for the Beatification ceremony. The year 2002 was the bicentenary year of the Brothers' foundation.

From September 2004 Edmund Rice House became the Centre from which many Edmund Rice projects operate. Under the directorship of Mr Donal O'Callaghan, the centre promotes and develops the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice through its networks and various projects:

- **Edmund Rice Office** which moved back from Marino;



Immersion Project

- Co-ordination of the **Edmund Rice Awards**, which are open to school groups all over the country;
- **Edmund Rice Summer Camps** which train young people to run Summer Camps;
- **Edmund Rice Immersion Programme** which organises groups of Students and Teachers to spend time working on the Missions.

Others who live there are the **Vocation Director** and the **Postulator of the Cause of Blessed Edmund**. The Edmund Rice Centre was officially opened by An Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern in early 2006.

Under the promptings of Brother Christy O'Carroll, the memory of Matt Talbot was also kept alive. Matt had once been enrolled in O'Connell School, but did not attend very often. Opposite his name, in the Register, is the word 'mitcher'. During the nineteen nineties, a few pilgrimages on the Matt Talbot trail began in O'Connell's yard and followed Matt's other locations in the North Inner City, taking in Gardiner Street, Granby Lane and Sean Mac Dermott Street church, where his shrine is now kept.

One of the pupils of O'Connell Schools to make the news recently is Dom Éamon Fitzgerald, the Abbot of Mount Melleray in Co. Waterford, who has just been elected head of the Cistercian Order.

North Strand Bombings - 1941

Saturday 31 May 1941 is a date that will forever be remembered in the parish of St Agatha.

At 1.30am on that morning German bombs were dropped in the area. The first bombs dropped on North Richmond Street and Rutland Place. Just over half an hour later at 2.05am a German 'Land Mine' landed on the North Strand Road between the 'Five Lamps' and Newcomen Bridge.

The first bomb demolished Mrs Grice's shop at 582 North Circular Road. The bomb that fell at 2.05 a.m. on the tramlines at the junction of North William Street and North Strand opened a huge crater in the road. A third bomb fell at Summerhill Parade, demolishing two houses, nos. 43 and 44.

As the stunned Emergency services set about their onerous task of searching for survivors, LDF and LSF forces cordoned off the area. Mobile Units of St. Johns Ambulance hurried to the scene and provided significant help. First aid was administered and the more seriously injured transferred to local hospitals such as the Mater. Civil Defence services were also heavily involved including the Auxiliary Fire Service, Rescue service and Casualty Service. Thousands of ARP workers, men and women, and large contingents of LDF and LSF cared for woman and children who were rendered homeless and were suffering from shock. All the rescue workers were loud in their praise of the local residents in the immediate vicinity, whose houses, though injured, were still standing. The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul worked unceasingly with the Red Cross in caring for homeless people.

In the aftermath of the incident the death toll stood at 29, with 90 injured and 300 houses destroyed or

damaged. Almost 400 people were left permanently or temporarily homeless.

The first fifteen burials took place on June 4th with the interment of the tragic Browne family in their native Edenderry and the burial of eight more in Glasnevin and Dean's Grange cemeteries. Twelve of those killed were buried by Dublin Corporation at a Public Funeral on 5 June, at which Government members including Eamonn DeValera, attended. The service took place in the Church of St. Laurence O'Toole, Seville Place and was presided over by Archbishop McQuaid.

St. Agatha's Church was also damaged that night. The fine stained glass windows over the sanctuary area of St. Agatha's Church were blown out and unfortunately never replaced. The Mortuary Chapel was built onto the church with the money given to the parish as compensation for the damage. It contains the shrine of St. Agatha-the only such shrine in Ireland.

Each year the parish holds a Ceremony of Remembrance at which survivors and their families are represented.



Organ Restoration

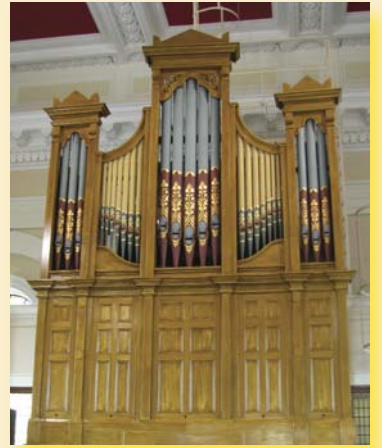
The organ was installed by the world-famous Dublin firm of J & H White, shortly after the completion of the building of the church in 1908. The organ in St. Agatha's church is truly a masterpiece. The organ which has 1,200 pipes, is housed in a handsome classical style organ case, which along with many of the pipes were adapted from an earlier organ in the 1860s by the elder John White who founded the firm in the 1840s.

In May 2000 an Open Meeting of Parishioners decided to look at the possibility of restoring the pipe organ. At an Open Meeting of Parishioners on 9th October 2000 it was decided to restore and preserve the church organ which prior to this had not been used in liturgical celebrations for over twelve years. Following this meeting an Organ Restoration Committee was established to raise the funds to begin this process. The members of this committee were Fr Liam Rigney (Chairperson), Carmel Pobjoy (Secretary/Treasurer) Peter O'Driscoll (Director of Music), Barry Eyre and Dermot Ring. St. Agatha's Organ Restoration Fund was officially launched by An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, T.D. in Cusack's North Strand Road on Monday 2nd April 2001.

Trevor Crowe, a Kildare based organ expert, was commissioned to carry out the restoration of the organ, with Professor Gerard Gillen, Titular Organist at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral as an adviser to the project work. Work on the organ began in September 2001. The motto for the project was "One pipe does not make an organ – together we can make it happen."

The Organ Restoration Committee organised various events to raise the necessary funds to restore the organ. Events included Fun Race Nights, Table Team Quiz, Golf Classic and by sponsoring pipes.

The sponsoring of the pipes proved very popular. Pipes were named in memory of a loved one or friend, living or dead. **Over X pipes were sponsored. The first pipe X was sponsored by Sr. Louise O' Halloran - middle C (need to check the name of this pipe). When the organ is played today the memory of all who sponsored pipes is kept alive and will be for generations to come.**



The Beautifully restored Church Organ.

Donations were also received from businesses both inside and outside the parish including the International Financial Services Centre Inner City Trust who contributed. In May 2002, the Dublin Docklands Development Authority gave a grant of €44,400 to the Organ Restoration Fund under their Community Development Project Initiative 2002. This was a matched-funding grant which was given because €95,230 was raised by the parish. This grant made it possible to complete the restoration project and increase the size of the organ from 1,000 pipes to 1,450. As a result of the DDDA Grant the Organ Restoration Fund totalled €140,828 and the fund was then closed.

On Thursday 15th May 2003 the church organ was blessed by Cardinal Desmond Connell followed by an inaugural recital by Professor Gerard Gillen in the presence of An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern T.D. St. Agatha's choir also sang under the guidance of musical director, Mr Peter O'Driscoll.



Mr Peter O'Driscoll was appointed as Director of Music for St. Agatha's in September 1999. Peter conducts the Adult choir and plays the organ.



Church Choir

Priests of the Parish 1830 - 2008

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Richard Henry | | 1830 – 1854 | William Nix | Curate | 1950 – 1972 |
| Francis Doran | Curate | 1849 – 1865 | William Rogan | Curate | 1951 – 1967 |
| Francis Doran | Parish Priest | 1865 – 1877 | Miceal Hastings | Assistant Priest | 1960 – 1960 |
| James Quinn | Curate | 1867 – 1870 | Brendan Heffernan | Curate | 1961 – 1963 |
| John O'Hanlon | Curate | 1868 – 1872 | Thomas M. Barrett | Curate | 1963 – 1969 |
| James Maguire | Curate | 1870 – 1871 | Donal H. McDowell | Curate | 1965 – 1970 |
| Michael Murphy | Curate | 1871 – 1874 | John J. Kennedy | Curate | 1967 – 1973 |
| John O'Reilly | Curate | 1872 – 1885 | Patrick Murray | Parish Priest | 1968 – 1972 |
| Robert Eaton | Curate | 1873 – 1874 | Michael Fitzgerald | Curate | 1969 – 1978 |
| E. Quaide | Curate | 1874 – 1895 | Donal O'Doherty | Parish Chaplain | 1970 – 1974 |
| Robert Carrick | Curate | 1874 – 1877 | Sean Byrne | Parish Priest | 1972 – 1977 |
| Alfred Byrne | Curate | 1877 – 1882 | Tadhg McCarthy | Curate | 1972 – 1980 |
| Matthew Collier | Parish Priest | 1878 – 1892 | Patrick J. Hughes | Curate | 1973 – 1977 |
| Patrick Kavanagh | Curate | 1882 – 1884 | Sean Byrne | Pastor Emeritus | 1977 – 1978 |
| John Cooney | Curate | 1885 – 1886 | Sean O'Lehane | Parish Priest | 1977 – 1980 |
| Walter F. Hurley | Curate | 1884 – 1887 | Martin O'Farrell | Curate | 1978 – 1984 |
| P.A. Yorke | Curate | 1886 – 1888 | Noel Neenan | Parish Chaplain | 1978 – 1979 |
| James Magrath | Curate | 1887 – 1892 | Fergus O'Higgins | Parish Chaplain | 1979 – 1988 |
| Denis O'Brien | Curate | 1888 – 1900 | John Whelan | Parish Priest | 1980 - 1983 |
| John O'Malley | Parish Priest | 1892 – 1904 | Michael V. Smythe | Curate | 1980 – 1990 |
| Stephen Egan | Curate | 1894 – 1896 | Stephen Greene | Parish Priest | 1983 – 1988 |
| Patrick Butterly | Curate | 1896 – 1907 | Joseph Bailey | Curate | 1984 – 1986 |
| Henry Dudley | Curate | 1900 – 1912 | Manus Lyons | Curate | 1986 – 1989 |
| Michael Walsh | Parish Priest | 1904 – 1935 | Daniel F. Brady | Parish Priest | 1988 – 2002 |
| Daniel Hickey | Curate | 1904 – 1907 | Daniel F. Brady | Pastor Emeritus | 2002 – 2007 |
| Andrew Moriarty | Curate | 1907 – 1933 | Piaras McLochlainn | Curate | 1989 – 1994 |
| Myles O'Rourke | Curate | 1912 – 1926 | Anthony Maher | Curate | 1990 – 1993 |
| Joseph B. McGrath | Curate | 1904 – 1913 | Colm Matthews | Curate | 1993 – 1995 |
| John M. Neary | Curate | 1913 – 1935 | David Creed | Parish Chaplain | 1994 – 1995 |
| John Materson | Curate | 1927 – 1950 | Liam Rigney | Curate | 1995 – 2002 |
| Daniel Gallagher | Curate | 1929 – 1936 | Patrick Kelly, C.S.S.R. | Curate | 1995 – 2002 |
| Edward Gallen | Curate | 1933 – 1934 | Liam Rigney | Parish Administrator | 2002 – 2007 |
| Daniel J. Lucey | Curate | 1934 – 1943 | John Galvin | Curate | 2002 – 2002 |
| John McGuirk | Parish Priest | 1935 – 1941 | Patrick Devitt | Parish Chaplain | 1988 – to date |
| Thomas J. McGrath | Curate | 1935 – 1944 | Anthony Scully | Curate | 2002 – to date |
| Liam Thackaberry | Curate | 1936 – 1939 | Brian Lawless | Parish Administrator | 2007 – to date |
| Denis Daly | Curate | 1939 – 1944 | | | |
| Thomas O'Reilly | Parish Priest | 1941 – 1968 | | | |
| John Foley | Curate | 1943 – 1950 | | | |
| Joseph Newth | Curate | 1944 – 1965 | | | |
| Michael C. Burke | Curate | 1944 – 1961 | | | |



Parish Pastoral Council

In 2004 Archbishop Diarmuid Martin asked that a Parish Pastoral Council be established in every parish in Dublin by Lent 2005. This structure in the church enables the people and priests to share responsibility and work together for the ongoing development of the parish that is characterized by faith, prayer, service and mission.

A Working Group - made up of the Priests of the Parish, Parish Sisters and some lay people - was formed in November 2004. Their work was to establish the first Parish Pastoral Council for St. Agatha's.

The members of the first Parish Pastoral Council in St. Agatha's Parish were either selected by the Working Group or elected at an Open Meeting of Parishioners which took place on 14th April 2005. The members of the first Parish Pastoral Council were Jackie Byrne, Helen Dowling, Mary Irwin, Mary Keane, Dan Moore, Vivienne Parkes, Michael Pobjoy and Nial Ring. The ex officio members were Fr. Liam Rigney (Administrator), Fr. Tony Scully (Curate), Fr. Paddy Devitt (Parish Chaplain), Sr. Eileen Brown, (Parish Sister), Sr. Bridget O'Connor (Parish Sister), and Mary Conway (representative of the Parish Finance Committee).

The members of the Parish Pastoral Council were commissioned at the 11.00 a.m. Mass on Pentecost Sunday, 15th May 2005. The first meeting of the

Parish Pastoral Council took place on Tuesday 17th May 2005 at which Mary Irwin was elected as Chairperson and Dan Moore elected as Secretary.

The first task of the Parish Pastoral Council was to write the Parish Mission Statement which is as follows; "The Parish of St. Agatha seeks to reach out to gather the people of the parish into a community that is welcoming, caring and centred on the person of Christ."

The Parish Pastoral Council set up various sub-committees including; Liturgy Committee, Fundraising Committee, Centenary Committee, Committee on Child Protection and various committee to organise special events within the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council facilitated the co-ordination of parish services regarding liturgy, pastoral care and administration.

In June 2007 with the change of Administrator the Parish Pastoral Council were asked to remain in place for another year to give Fr. Brian Lawless, Administrator, time to settle into the parish and also to afford continuity following the departure of Fr. Liam Rigney and Sr. Eileen Browne. The next Parish Pastoral Council for St. Agatha's will be elected at an Open Meeting of Parishioners on 25th November 2008.



Parish Pastoral Council – October 2008: Jackie Byrne, Mary Conway, Fr. Paddy Devitt, Helen Dowling, Mary Irwin (Chairperson), Mary Keane, Fr. Brian Lawless (President), Sr. Bridget O'Connor, Vivienne Parkes (Secretary), Michael Pobjoy, Niall Ring and Fr. Tony Scully.

