

# ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY OF BRUFF PARISH

By John Carroll

**D**uring the eighteenth century, the people of Bruff Parish were fortunate to have an unbroken line of priests to minister to their spiritual needs. The custom of saying Mass in the homes of the people continued even though the Mass-houses of the 1730s were being replaced by more solid structures. There are no less than thirteen graveyards in Bruff parish, including that in Grange, with many of these graveyards situated in townlands which were once parishes in their own right, e.g. Tullybrackey, Uregare, and Glenogra.

Prior to the eighteenth century, one finds record of churches at Ballygrennan, Ballingirlough, Camass, Glenogra, Tullybracky and Uregare. TJ Westropp stated that Bruff Church was dedicated to St Peter of Alexandria on 26th November 1410. It subsequently fell into a bad state of repair and was demolished and re-built in 1776 by Lady Lucy Hartstonge. The present Church of Ireland Church was built on the site and is dedicated to St Peter of Alexandria. Between 1776 and 1829, a Catholic Church is believed to have stood somewhere between Crawford Street and Chapel Street. However, no record of this church apparently exists.

According to Archdeacon Begley, Tullybrackey Parish was for many years a prebend, meaning that the parish tithes were assigned by the cathedral to a canon of the cathedral chapter. In 1302, Tullybracky church was valued at £7-14-4, a high value at that time. The church was dedicated to St Molan on 5th May 1410. In 1440, and again in 1447, inquisitions were held in the bishop's court there. With the advent of the Penal Laws, however, Tullybrackey ceased to be a parish.

For ecclesiastical purposes, Grange has been associated with Bruff for centuries and as will be seen from what follows, Grange, Bruff and other parishes had the same parish priest, as far back as 1704 and probably earlier.

## *Succession of Parish Priests in Bruff Parish*

**1686** –**John Hayes** is the first PP of whom there is a record to hand. He died in 1686 and is buried in Tullybrackey Graveyard in the right-hand corner of the epistle side of the church ruin. An inscription on a small flagstone reads: *Receive the soul of John Heas who departed this life 24 day of January 1686*. His memory was preserved in Bruff as late as 1785.

**1704 –Darby Mulquiny** was ordained in Limerick in 1675 by Dr John Moloney, Bishop of Killaloe. He was registered in 1704 as PP of Bruff, Grange, Tullybracky, Glenogra and part of Manister. He could have been in Bruff Parish for some time prior to this, possibly succeeding Fr Hayes in 1686. He lived at Bohergeela and in 1709 took the Oath of Abjuration. He died in 1722 aged 69.

**1722 –Canon Robert Hayes** was appointed PP of Bruff on the death of Fr Mulquiny and was created Canon in 1735. He suffered ill-health during his later years as PP and during this time gave the townlands of Mortgage and Drominicar to Fedamore Parish as he was afraid of crossing the Camogue River in wintertime to answer sick calls. He was replaced as PP in 1758 by Thomas O’Driscoll. In 1760, Fr O’Driscoll was appointed to Dromin to succeed the PP, who had died there, Fr William Marshall, and Fr Geoffrey Keating of the Cashel Diocese was appointed PP of Bruff. When Fr Hayes died on 11 December 1762, Fr O’Driscoll was re-appointed PP of Bruff, with Fr Keating being transferred to Dromin. Fr Keating was appointed PP of Croom in 1766, where he remained until his death in 1770.

**1762 –Thomas O’Driscoll** had been PP of Effin from 1749 up to the time of his first appointment as PP of Bruff in 1758. In Bruff, he lived in a house situated on the site of the present courthouse and he owned a large farm. In 1766, there was also a curate called Ryan ministering in Bruff. Fr O’Driscoll suffered from gangrene and died around 1770.

**1770 –John Shinnors** was ordained in 1765 and served as CC of St John’s Parish in Limerick City until he was appointed to Bruff on the death of Fr O’Driscoll. Owing to ill-health, he stepped down as PP in 1781. He died in January 1782 and is buried in Grange Churchyard.

**1781 –John Young DD** was born in 1745 and was a native of St John’s Parish. He studied at Louvain and obtained an MA and a DD prior to his ordination in 1770. After ordination, he served as CC of his native parish, possibly succeeding Fr Shinnors. He was appointed Administrator of Bruff Parish in 1781, and Dr Conway made him PP of Bruff on 5 January 1782. Dr Young lived at Glenogra, probably in the castle, and was assisted by a curate. In 1783, the townlands of Mortgage and Drominicar were reunited with Bruff Parish. In 1791, Dr Young was appointed PP of St Mary’s Parish in Limerick City and in 1793 was appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Limerick, becoming Bishop of Limerick in 1796. He died on 22 September 1813, aged 68, and is buried in the (old) graveyard in St Patrick’s Parish.

**1791 –Darby Buckley** was born in 1740 and was a native of Bulgaden. He was ordained at Limerick in 1763 and then went to Louvain to complete his studies. In 1769, he was appointed PP of Bulgaden-Martinstown until his appointment to Bruff in 1791. During his time in Bruff, he struck up a close friendship with the Protestant Parson serving in Bruff at this time, Reverend Guy Luther, who was said to be a descendant of Martin Luther. Rev Luther had a thatched cottage erected for Fr Buckley in close

proximity to the Glebe, which was situated at Ardykeohane, and for many years was the residence of the various Protestant Ministers appointed to Bruff. While in Bruff, Fr Buckley was also appointed Vicar General by Dr John Young. An 1806 report states that there were 1,000 houses in Bruff Parish and 250 baptisms in that particular year. Fr Buckley died in 1807 and is buried in Bruff Church of Ireland graveyard alongside his great friend Rev Luther. The inscription on Fr Buckley's headstone reads: *Here lieth the mortal part of the Rev Darby Buckley, Catholic Pastor of Bruff and V.G. of the diocese. In life he was loved and respected, and in death most sincerely lamented. He departed life December 14th in the year 1807, aged 67. Pray for him.* Rev Luther had predeceased him on 13 March 1799, but no stone marks his grave.

**1807 – Andrew Ryan** studied at Louvain and returned to Ireland in 1794. The following year he was appointed PP of Patrickswell-Ballybrown where he remained until his appointment to Bruff in 1807. He built the present Roman Catholic Church in Bruff, which was opened on 1 November 1829 and is dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. Fr Ryan was quite zealous and kept the parochial records impressively. He died on 19 December 1830 and is interred in Bruff Church.

**1831 – Dean Patrick McNamara** was a native of Bruff, hailing from Crawford Street. Prior to 1822, he was CC of St John's Parish. He was PP of Mungret from 1822 until 1824 and PP of Shanagolden from 1824 until 1830. In 1829, he built the present church in Ballyhahill, which is dedicated to Our Lady of the Visitation. At that time, Ballyhahill formed part of Shanagolden Parish. In 1831, he was appointed PP of Bruff and was made Dean and Vicar-General of the diocese. While in Bruff he completed Bruff Church and in 1837 he commenced building Grange Church, but he died suddenly on 21 August 1838, aged 48 while visiting Bishop Ryan in Limerick. He is buried in Bruff Church and was reputed to be a celebrated preacher.

**1838 – Dean Robert Cussen**, a native of Limerick City, studied at the Sulpician College, Paris, and was ordained there in 1825. After ordination he became a professor in a French Diocesan College but, as a result of ill-health, he returned to Limerick and was appointed CC of St Michael's Parish on 17 December 1831. He also became a Dean in Maynooth College around this time. Upon his appointment as PP of Bruff in 1838, he immediately set about completing Grange Church, which was completed the following year and is dedicated to Saints Patrick and Brigid. On 20 July 1845, Dr Cussen asked Lord Guillamore, who had given a site free of charge, to lay the foundation stone of a new Catholic Church in Meanus, which is dedicated to St Mary. Dr Cussen also introduced the nuns of the FCJ Order to Bruff, where they began their presence in Crawford Street and remained there until he built the present convent for them in 1856. He then built the parochial house on the Convent Road, which remained the parochial house in Bruff up until 1991, when it passed into private ownership, and finally in 1860 Dr Cussen built the Christian Brothers' School – known as the Monastery –

which remained a school until 1972, and which from 1977 to the early 1990s was used as a community centre. It was finally demolished in August 2004, and a new school hall now stands on its site. Dr Cussen was created Dean in 1862. In his later years as PP, he became unwell and went to London to consult a doctor, but became so ill while in London that he died there in 1865. His remains were brought to Bruff and interred in the church where a life-size monument was erected to his memory. This monument was transferred to the grounds of the new national school in the early 1970s, and it remains there to this day. Dean Cussen's memory was commemorated further in 2000 when the new amalgamated national school was named Scoil Dean Cussen.

**1866 –Dean Denis Cregan** was a native of Shanagolden. The first record to hand of him is in 1841 when he was appointed CC of Newcastlewest. He remained there until 1850 when he was transferred to Adare. In 1860, he was appointed PP of Rockhill-Bruree until 1866 when he was transferred to Bruff Parish. Upon his departure from Rockhill he left there a gold chalice which had been presented to him as a testimonial from the people of Adare. While at Bruff he was created an Archdeacon; in 1887 he was appointed Dean, and before the conclusion of his life he also became a Vicar General. He was a very hardworking priest and, although delicate, lived to a good age. He died on 10 February 1892 and is buried in Bruff Church grounds. In his testament, he left a burse of £15 for the foreign missions at All Hallows College, Dublin.

**1892 –Dean Charles McNamara**, a native of St Mary's Parish, is first mentioned in the Catholic Directory in 1865 when he was CC of Rockhill. In 1868, he was transferred to St John's Parish where he remained until 1883 when he was appointed PP of Kilcornan. He was transferred to Effin Parish in 1889 and on the death of Dean Cregan was appointed to Bruff. He was made Canon in 1912 and Dean in 1915 and, despite being invalided for some years before his death, lived to a good age. He died on 18 February 1926, aged 87, and is buried in Bruff Church.

**1926 –Canon John Lee** was born on 5 February 1858. A native of Glenroe Parish, he pursued his studies at the Irish College, Rome and was ordained there on 8 April 1882. After ordination, he served in the archdiocese of St Andrew's in Edinburgh (Scotland), until 1887 when he was recalled to the Limerick Diocese as CC of Pallaskenry. On 22 February 1892, he was appointed to St Mary's Parish until 20 November 1894 when he was transferred to St Michael's Parish. On 8 December 1906, he was appointed Administrator there and on 2 December 1908 was appointed PP of Askeaton-Ballysteen. In 1909, he built the present parochial house in Askeaton. He was transferred to Kilfinane on 13 May 1915, was created Canon in June 1924, and Vicar Forane on 18 March 1926 when he was also appointed to Bruff. Although of frail disposition, he accomplished many improvements while in Bruff Parish. He died on 22 April 1932, aged 74, and is buried at Bruff Church grounds.

**1932 –Archdeacon John Begley**, a native of Monagea, was baptised on 1 August 1861

and was the author of his three-volume *History of the Diocese of Limerick*. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained there on 24 June 1888. After ordination, he served at St Andrew's Parish in Argyll (Scotland) until he was appointed CC of Coolcappa in 1890. He was CC of Tournafulla from 1893 until 1898 when he was appointed to St Munchin's Parish, and remained there until May 1915 when he was appointed PP of Cappagh and was also created Canon. He was transferred to Dromcollogher on 29 June 1917 and remained there until 28 March 1927, when he was appointed to Kilmallock, also becoming Vicar Forane. He was transferred to Bruff on 18 May 1932 when he was also created Archdeacon. On 18 June 1937, he was made Vicar General. He died on 10 June 1941, aged 79, and was interred at Bruff Cemetery, which had been opened in 1937.

**1941 –Patrick O'Neill DD** was a native of Fedamore Parish, born on 8 February 1891. After his education at St Munchin's College and St Patrick's College, Maynooth, he was ordained on 20 June 1915. After ordination, he returned to Maynooth to prepare for a Doctorate in Divinity and on 8 October 1918 took up the position of Professor of Moral Theology and Lecturer in Canon Law there. The following year he went to Rome to take a Doctorate in Canon Law and in 1920 returned to his teaching post at Maynooth. On 13 October 1936, he became vice-president of Maynooth College until July 1941, when he was appointed PP of Bruff. Fr O'Neill marked his period in Bruff with the accomplishment of many improvements in the grounds of the old Presbytery. In 1945, he was transferred to St Munchin's Parish and after a short time there was appointed Bishop of Limerick on 24 February 1946. He remained Bishop until his death on 26 March 1958.

**1945 –Canon David O'Riordan** was ordained at Limerick on 26 June 1904. A native of Effin, he received his education at the Irish College in Paris. After ordination, he ministered at the diocese of Port Elizabeth in South Africa until early 1908, when he was appointed CC of Ardagh. The following June, he became CC of Cratloe and three years later was transferred to Templeglantine. On 26 February 1912, he took up curacy duties at Abbeyfeale. He was appointed CC of Athea in July 1917 and was transferred to Kilfinane in September 1924. In his initial years in Kilfinane, the PP there was Canon John Lee, who, as already indicated, went on to become PP of Bruff. Fr O'Riordan was transferred to Shanagolden on 25 October 1929 and remained there until May 1934, when he was appointed PP of Manister, a position he held until 17 February 1941, when he took up parochial duties at Feenagh-Kilmeeedy. While there, he built the present church at Kilmeeedy, which was opened on 11 October 1942 and is dedicated to St Ita. On 6 March 1945, he was appointed PP of Bruff, a position he held until his death at the Regional Hospital, Limerick, on 16 December 1957, aged 77. He is remembered as a great priest who had an extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

**1958 –Canon Edmond Condon**, a native of Glenroe, was ordained on 21 June 1922. He was appointed CC of Ardpatrik after ordination, and in 1924 was transferred to Parteen. In 1928, he was appointed to Bulgaden-Martinstown and two years later was transferred to Kilmallock until 1946, when he was appointed PP of Banogue. He was transferred to Bruff in early 1958, and while in Bruff achieved considerable improvements in Bruff Church and its grounds. He was instrumental in erecting the priests' houses in the Fairgreen. He died on 23 September 1973 and is buried adjacent to the entrance to Bruff Church.

**1974 –Canon James Culhane** was born in Dromcollogher on 30 December 1907. He entered St Munchin's College in 1921 and in 1925 went to Maynooth to study for the priesthood. He was ordained at Maynooth on 5 June 1932. After ordination, he was appointed CC of Parteen and remained there until 1933 when he was transferred to St Patrick's Parish. In 1935, he was appointed to Adare and while there was quite prominent in GAA circles, serving as vice-chairman and later as chairman of the West Limerick GAA Board. In 1946, he took up curacy duties at Kilmallock and while there was particularly associated with the development of its sports field. He remained in Kilmallock until 1963, when he was appointed PP of Our Lady of Lourdes, a newly-formed parish at Ballinacurra in Limerick City, and while there, was instrumental in clearing the debt on a newly-built church and national school. In 1970, he was transferred to St Paul's, another newly-created parish at Dooradoyle in Limerick City, and marked his tenure there by erecting a new church. He was appointed to Bruff in 1974 and was created Canon in 1986. He retired as PP in late 1987 but remained in the parochial house until his death on 6 April 1991. He is interred in Bruff Church grounds. Canon Culhane was also keenly interested in history and archaeology and was a founder member of the Thomond Historical Society.

**1987 –Canon David Houlihan**, a native of Athlacca, was ordained in Maynooth on 19 June 1943. After ordination, he was appointed temporary CC of St John's Parish and also served as chaplain to the Good Shepherd Convent and in St Patrick's Parish until October 1945 when he was appointed to Ardpatrik. He remained there until 18 June 1954 when he was appointed to St Mary's Parish. On 22 February 1956, he was transferred to Newcastlewest and remained there until April 1970 when he was appointed PP of Templeglantine. On 9 February 1976, he took up parochial duties in the parish of Christ the King (Caherdavin) and while there built the present parish church which was opened on 27 September 1985. The church cost approximately £250,000 to build. In December 1987, he was transferred to Bruff upon the retirement of Canon Culhane and also became Vicar Forane. In November 1988, he was appointed Canon Penitentiary. While in Bruff he lived at Ardykeohane. He retired as PP in May 1991 and went to reside at Milford House where he died on 2 May 1993. He is interred in Bruff Church grounds. Canon Houlihan was a devout pastor and most conscientious

about his priestly duties. He is fondly remembered as a man of deep faith and with great concern for the pastoral care of his people. A brother of his, Edmond, served as CC of Bruff from 1949 to 1963.

**1991 –Seán Condon**, a native of Glenroe, attended St Munchin's College and was ordained in Maynooth on Sunday 23 June 1957. In 1961 he was appointed CC of Askeaton and the following year was appointed chaplain to Sarsfield Barracks, a position he held until 1967, when he took up ministry at St Augustine's Diocese in Florida, USA He returned to Limerick in 1971 when appointed CC of St Mary's Parish, and became PP there in 1980. In September 1985, he went to Nigeria where he ministered in the diocese of Minnae and remained there until 1990 when he was appointed PP of Kilfinane. The following year, he was appointed PP of Bruff upon the retirement of Canon Houlihan. While in Bruff he spearheaded a major renovation of the three churches in Bruff Parish. In 1995, he took sabbatical leave for twelve months, and in August 1997 returned once again to the USA to the diocese of Orange on a pastoral assignment, where he has remained to the present time. He is a nephew of the aforementioned Canon Edmond Condon.

**1997 –Canon James Costello**, a native of Tipperary Town, was ordained in Thurles in 1961 and served in the diocese of Wandsworth (England) until 1967 when he was appointed CC of Glin. In 1968, he took up curacy duties in Loughill-Ballyhahill and remained there until 1979 when he was transferred to Athea. In 1985, he was appointed PP of Manister, a position he held until 1993, and while there built the present church dedicated to St Michael and which was opened by Bishop Newman on 13 January 1991. From Manister, he was transferred to Shanagolden where he remained until his appointment to Bruff in 1997. He was created Canon in 1999 and remained PP of Bruff until December 2013 when he retired as PP but remained in Bruff as Associate Pastor. He is actively involved with a number of parish organisations and is a keen historian.

**2013 –John Daly** is the present incumbent. A native of Athlacca, he studied at Maynooth and was ordained at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Ballinacurra on 8 June 1975. The following 20 August he was appointed CC of St Joseph's on a pro-tem basis until 26 March 1976 when he took up curacy duties in Our Lady of the Rosary Parish. On 14 March 1998, he was appointed PP of St Nicholas's Parish (Corbally) and, while there, introduced a community of Salesian Sisters to that parish. He remained PP of St Nicholas's until December 2013 when he took up duty at Bruff. In July 2015, he was appointed Canon.

#### *Succession of Curates in Bruff Parish*

Information on curates is sketchy until 1836 when the Irish Catholic Directory commenced publication. As a result of this, only the curates pre-1836 in respect of whom there are records, are mentioned.

**1738? –Peter Daniel.** The only record there is of Fr Daniel is in April 1738, when he was indicted at the Assizes of marrying John Grafton, a Protestant, to Margaret Tobin, a Catholic, in Bruff. At this time, any priest who dared to marry a Catholic and a Protestant was guilty of a crime punishable by death. He may have served as an assistant priest in the Limerick Diocese as he was never assigned to a parish. He died at Sixmilebridge, Co. Clare in 1759.

**Pre-1764 –John O’Mahony.** According to Begley, Fr O’Mahony was CC of Bruff prior to 1764, when he was appointed PP of Kilmallock. He remained in Kilmallock until 1778, when he was transferred to Dromin. He left Dromin in 1782. In the Bruff parochial records, a Fr John O’Mahony appears in 1782 and is recorded frequently until 1786. Whether he is the aforementioned pastor is open to conjecture. No further information on him exists after 1786.

**1782 –William McKnight** is mentioned in 1782 as CC of Bruff. He became CC of St John’s Parish later in 1782, and may have remained there until 1791 when he was appointed PP of Bulgaden – succeeding Fr Darby Buckley, who became PP of Bruff. A silver chalice in Bulgaden Church bears the inscription “*Parochiani de Bulgaden ne fieri fecerunt Pastore Revd. W. McKnight, 1791*”. He remained in Bulgaden until 1798, when he was appointed to St Patrick’s Parish, where he remained until his death in September 1804.

**1790 –David McIneiry** was a Dominican friar and is mentioned in the Bruff parochial records between 1790 and 1791. He may have been temporarily PP of Bruff between the departure of Dr Young in 1789 and the appointment of Fr Buckley in 1791. He is not recorded after 1791.

**1809 –Denis McIneiry** is first mentioned in parochial records in 1809 and continues to be frequently mentioned until 1824. No other information relating to him is available. He is recorded as “*Dionysius McIneiry*”, which is the Latin form of his name. All records in the Bruff parochial register during and prior to this time are recorded in Latin.

**Pre-1824 –Darby Buckley** was CC of Bruff prior to 1824, when he was appointed PP of Glenroe and remained in Glenroe until 1844 when he resigned, retaining the title of PP. After his resignation, he continued to play an active role in ecclesiastical matters and remained in Glenroe until his death in 1865.

**1824? –Robert (William) Bourke.** In a clerical report of 1824, Robert Bourke was CC of Bruff. As the Irish Catholic Directories do not commence until 1836, it is impossible to say how long he was ministering prior to 1824. He remained in Bruff until 1835, when he was appointed Administrator of Cappagh. In 1837, he was appointed PP of Donoughmore-Knockea and remained there until he died of fever in 1849. Fr Bourke was a native of Limerick City and is interred in the grounds of St Mary’s Cathedral. The Irish Catholic Directories record him as Robert Bourke while Archdeacon Begley gives his name as William.

**1824? –Patrick O’Brien** is also recorded as CC of Bruff in the aforementioned clerical

report of 1824. He may have been CC of Croagh-Kilfinny in 1836. No record is available relating to his subsequent appointments if any.

**1825? –Jeremiah Halpin.** This pastor has the distinction of celebrating the first Mass in Bruff Church on the occasion of its opening on 1 November 1829. He was ordained in Carlow on 11 December 1824 and was appointed to Bruff after ordination. In 1837, he was transferred to Cappagh where he became Administrator. He built Cappagh Church in 1839. In 1841, he was appointed PP of Mahoonagh until his transfer to Mungret in 1844. He built Raheen Church – which is dedicated to St Nessan – in 1845, but did not live to see its completion as he died on 3 October 1845. He is interred in Raheen Church. One of his successors at Mungret, Fr Michael Casey, completed Raheen Church, but due to the Famine the church was not completed until November 1856. To mark its completion, Fr Casey had a memorial plaque to Fr Halpin erected in the church.

**1831? –Patrick Cherry** appears in the Bruff Parochial Records throughout 1831 and for much of 1832 as having performed a number of baptisms and marriages in the parish. After 1832, he possibly could have taken up curacy at Patrickswell, where he is listed as ministering in 1836. In 1838, he was transferred to Shanagolden and the following year became CC of Kildimo. In 1841, he returned to curacy at Shanagolden and remained there until 1846 when he was appointed CC of Kilmallock, where he remained until his sudden death in February 1852. He was interred at Donoughmore, where he possibly could have been a native of.

**1834 –James Houlihan (Holohan)** became CC of St Patrick's Parish in late 1836 and in 1837 took up curacy duties at St John's Parish. A young and delicate priest, remarkable for his charitable works during his tenure at St John's, he succeeded in bringing the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Convent from Newgate Lane to the present site of their convent in Clare Street. He was appointed PP of Killeedy in 1838. In 1839, the roof of Ashford Church was blown off during "the big wind". Fr Houlihan repaired the roof through collecting money in his native Limerick City. He died in 1840 after a short illness and is buried in Raheenagh Church.

**1836 –John Nash** was serving in Bruff in 1836 when the Catholic Directories commenced. As in the case of Fr Bourke, it is impossible to say how long Fr Nash was serving prior to 1836. He was transferred from Bruff to St Mary's Parish in 1838, where he remained until 1840. Unfortunately, no further information pertaining to him is available.

**1837 –Charles McDonnell** is listed in the Catholic Directories as CC of Kilcornan in 1836. At this time, Kilcornan was known as Stonehall Parish. As in the case of Fr Nash, it is unknown as to how long he was serving as CC in the Limerick Diocese prior to 1836. He succeeded Fr Halpin as CC of Bruff in 1837 until 1841, when he took up the position of PP of Cappagh – again succeeding Fr Halpin. At this time, the parish of Cappagh was known as Nantenan Parish. Fr McDonnell remained in

Cappagh until 1847, when he was transferred to Ardagh, where he remained until his death in September 1852.

**1838 – Thomas Blake.** In the first edition of the Irish Catholic Directory in 1836, he is recorded as CC of Shanagolden. He was transferred to Bruff in 1838, but after a year was transferred back to Shanagolden until 1841 when he was appointed to Effin. He returned to Bruff in 1844 until 1854, when he was transferred to Fedamore. In 1858, he was appointed PP of Fedamore and was the first PP of the parish of Fedamore as we know it today. Fedamore had been united with Manister prior to 1858. He died on 14 October 1874, aged 68, and is buried in Fedamore Church.

**1839 – Thomas Downes.** No mention of him exists prior to 1839 when he succeeded Fr Blake as CC of Bruff. He became a DD in 1841, and in the same year was appointed PP of Kilmallock, a position he was to hold for almost half-a-century, making him one of the longest-serving parish priests in the diocese on record. The present Catholic Church in Kilmallock – dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul – was built by him and was opened in 1889. Fr Downes died on 6 March 1890 and is buried in front of the high altar in the church. He is believed to have been a native of Limerick City. A brother of his, William, was PP of Patrickswell from 1828 until his premature death, aged 50, on 14 December 1840, following an altercation with the Whiteboys at Castleroberts, near Adare. Their nephew, William was PP of Ballingarry-Granagh from 1894 until his death in 1901.

**1841 – Marcus Cleary** was a native of Bulgaden Parish. He is not mentioned in clergy listings before 1841 so one can assume that he was appointed CC of Bruff after ordination. In 1842, he was transferred to his native parish of Bulgaden until 1844, when he was appointed to Shanagolden and was CC of Newcastlewest from 1847 until 1850, of St Mary's Parish until 1854, of Killeedy until 1857, of Askeaton until 1860, and of Adare until 1862. He returned to Bulgaden in 1862, this time as PP, and remained there until his death on 8 December 1886, aged 74. He is interred in Bulgaden Church where a large stained-glass window behind the altar commemorates his memory.

**1841 – Richard Mackey** is first mentioned in 1841 when he was appointed to Bruff. In 1844, he was transferred to St Mary's Parish until 1846. No further information exists pertaining to him.

**1842 – Richard Nunan** was a native of Limerick City. He is first mentioned in 1839, when he was appointed CC of Bulgaden-Martinstown. He was transferred to Adare the following year, and in 1842 he succeeded Fr Cleary as CC of Bruff. He was CC of Rathkeale from 1843 until 1850 when he returned to Bruff. In 1859, he returned to Bulgaden, this time as PP, and remained there until his death, aged 46, on 17 May 1862. He is interred in Martinstown Church. Upon his departure from Bruff in 1859 he was the recipient of a testimonial.

**1843 – Timothy Shanahan** was CC of Fedamore from 1838 until 1840 and of St

Munchin's Parish until 1843, when he succeeded Fr Nunan as CC of Bruff. No further information exists regarding his subsequent appointments after his departure from Bruff in 1844.

**1844 –John Nolan** is mentioned in 1836 as CC of St Mary's Parish. As in the case of several other aforementioned priests, he may have ministered prior to 1836. He was appointed to Bruff in 1844 and remained in Bruff until 1849. No further information is recorded about him after 1849.

**1844 –Thomas Blake.** (Aforementioned)

**1849 –Patrick Meehan DD**, a native of St John's Parish, was born on 28 February 1821. He was ordained in Rome on 12 July 1847, having received his education there. After ordination, he became CC of St Patrick's Parish. In 1849, he was appointed CC of Bruff and was CC of St John's Parish from 1850 until 1853 and of Glenroe-Ballyagran from then until 1865. In 1865, he was appointed PP of St Patrick's Parish until 1890, when he succeeded Fr Downes – also a former CC of Bruff – as PP of Kilmallock. Dr Meehan carried out extensive improvements to Kilmallock Church and also sponsored a stained-glass window in that church. He died on 20 April 1904, aged 84, and is buried in Kilmallock Church grounds.

**1850 –Richard Nunan.** (Aforementioned)

**1854 –Thomas Browne** is first mentioned in the Catholic Directories in 1854 when he succeeded Fr Blake as CC of Bruff. In 1859, he was transferred to Donoughmore, the following year was appointed to St Michael's Parish, and in 1863 was made Administrator there. In 1871, he was appointed PP of Mungret-Crecora, where he remained until his death in 1900.

**1859 –James Moran** is first recorded in 1855 when he was appointed CC of Rathkeale. He was transferred to Kilmallock the following year and was CC of Croagh-Kilfinny from 1857 until 1859 when he was appointed to Bruff. He returned to Rathkeale in 1863 and was CC of Mahoonagh from 1864 until 1868, of Granagh until 1873 and of Rathkeale, again, until 1875, when he returned to Mahoonagh, this time as PP. He remained at Mahoonagh until his death in 1879 and was interred in the old church grounds in Castlemahon – now the site of the present national school.

**1859 –Mortimer Fitzgerald** was CC of Kilfinane from 1857 until 1859 when he was transferred to Bruff. He returned to Kilfinane in 1861 and remained there until 1865 when he took up curacy duties at Askeaton. In 1872, he became CC of Kilmallock and remained so until 1877 when he was appointed PP of Ballyagran. Ballyagran, which is now joined with Colmanswell, was then a separate parish. His tenure in Ballyagran was regrettably short as he died in 1878.

**1861 –Patrick Lee** is first mentioned as CC of Killeedy in 1847. He was CC of Kildimo from 1848 until 1851 and of Kilfinane until 1861, when he was transferred to Bruff, succeeding Fr Fitzgerald. He was appointed to Feenagh-Kilmeedy in 1866, and after

a year was made PP there. Amongst his achievements while in Feenagh was the renovation of its church in 1876. He was transferred to Kilfinane on 24 January 1877, and by a quirk of fate, his curate there was his nephew, also called Patrick Lee! While in Kilfinane the former Fr Lee built the present parish church. He died on 23 July 1892, and a number of plaques and stained-glass windows in Kilfinane Church commemorate the memory of the PP, who built it.

**1863 – Luke Gleeson** was ordained on 21 May 1853 and after ordination was appointed CC of Glin. In 1855, he was transferred to Croom and in 1857 was appointed CC of Rathkeale. He remained in Rathkeale until his transfer to Bruff, where he succeeded Fr Moran. On 26 April 1866, he returned to Glin as CC and remained there until 27 November 1873, when he was appointed PP of Stonehall (now Kilcornan). On 21 March 1878, he took up parochial duties at Parteen and remained there until his death on 22 June 1902, aged 75. He is interred in Parteen Church grounds. In December 1876, he had been appointed PP of Glenroe-Ballyorgan but asked Dr George Butler, Bishop of Limerick at this time, to remain at Stonehall. This request was granted.

**1866 – David Quin** studied at Maynooth and was ordained on 24 September 1854. The following year he became CC of Glin and remained there until his appointment to Bruff on 26 April 1866, succeeding Fr Gleeson. On 5 October 1867, he was transferred to Rockhill until 8 February 1876, when he was appointed PP of Fedamore. He was transferred to Coolcappa on 1 July 1882 and remained there until his death on 19 August 1887.

**1866 – Joseph Bourke** was a native of St Mary's Parish. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained in December 1864. After ordination, he was appointed CC of Bruff. In 1867, he was transferred to Rathkeale, and after a short time there was appointed President of St Munchin's College, a position he held until 1886 when he returned to curacy duties at Askeaton. During his tenure at St Munchin's College, he served as chaplain to the Presentation and Laurel Hill Convents. He also served as Administrator of Cratloe from 1882 until his Askeaton appointment. In 1887, he was appointed PP of Askeaton until 1890, when he was transferred to St Patrick's Parish and remained here until his death on 15 May 1892, aged 52.

**1867 – Stephen Nicholl** commenced his curacy duties in St Munchin's Parish in 1866. The following year he took up similar duties in St John's Parish and after a short time was appointed to Bruff. He left Bruff in 1870, but nothing is recorded of him after his departure.

**1867 – Patrick O'Riordan.** The only record to his name is the period he spent in Bruff, as he died on 1 December 1876, aged 35 and is interred in Bruff Church. A plaque to his memory is on a wall in the mortuary chapel.

**1867 – Timothy Kelly** was baptised on 27 June 1840 and was ordained on 28 July 1867. A native of Killeedy, he was appointed to Bruff after ordination. On 2 August 1873, he was transferred to Mahoonagh and the following 23 May he was appointed CC of Croagh-Kilfinny. He returned to Mahoonagh on 19 February 1876 and was CC of Effin from 27

September 1877 until 1881 when he was transferred to Dromin-Athlacca. On 22 June 1883, he took up curacy at Shanagolden until 30 July 1887, when he became Administrator of Killeedy. He held this position until his death on 30 January 1895, aged 54.

**1868 –Edward O’Dwyer** was born in Cullen, Co. Tipperary on 30 January 1842. He was educated at Limerick CBS and Maynooth, where he was ordained on 10 February 1867. After ordination, he served briefly in the parishes of St Patrick’s, Rathkeale and Cappagh respectively before being appointed CC of Bruff on 6 March 1868. The following November he returned to curacy at St Patrick’s parish and in 1870 was transferred to Adare where he remained until 1872 when he took up curacy at Newcastlewest. In 1873, he was transferred to Shanagolden and on 3 August 1874 was appointed to St Michael’s parish. On 29 June 1886 he became Bishop of Limerick and held this position until his death on 19 August 1917 aged 75. A famous and controversial Irish bishop of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, he ended his life with approval from his people for his stand against General Maxwell in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. He was a relative of Eugene Sheehy who was PP of Bruree from 1903 until his death in 1908 and who was prominent during the years of the Land War of the 1880’s.

**1870 –Maurice Leahy** was ordained on 23 September 1859 and was CC of St Patrick’s Parish from the following 25 October until 13 November 1861 when he was appointed to St Mary’s Parish. On 30 March 1870 he was transferred to Bruff. He left Bruff in 1877 and is not recorded again until 20 October 1880 when he was assigned to Newcastlewest. On 21 January 1884, he was appointed to Ardagh and was CC of Athea from 1885 until 14 September 1887, when he was assigned to Mungret. In October 1888, he was transferred to Cratloe where he remained until his death on 13 January 1905, aged 60. He was a relative of Timothy Curtin, who was PP of Croom at the time of his death in 1936.

**1873 –Stephen Hayes** was CC of Donoughmore from 1863 until 1865, of Loughill until 1866, of Knockaderry until 1868 and of Mahoonagh until 1873, when he was appointed to Bruff, succeeding Fr Kelly. His tenure in Bruff was regrettably short as he died on 30 March 1875.

**1875 –Joseph Keating** was baptised on 24 March 1842 and was ordained on 17 June 1866, having studied in Maynooth. He was CC of Cappagh from 1866 until 1867, of Rathkeale until 1868 and of Cappagh again until 1869, when he took up a teaching position at St Munchin’s College. On 4 March 1872, he was appointed to St Patrick’s Parish until 10 February 1875, when he was transferred to Bruff. On 17 August of the same year, he returned to St Patrick’s Parish where he remained until 11 July 1879 when he left the Limerick Diocese and went on mission to Australia. No subsequent information exists regarding him.

**1875 –John Fitzgerald** was ordained on 10 June 1862, having studied at Maynooth. A

native of Ardpatrik, he was appointed CC of Monagea after his ordination and the following year was transferred to Feenagh. In 1865, he became CC of Effin and remained there until 20 January 1872 when he was transferred to Coolcappa. On 28 August 1875, he was appointed to Bruff, succeeding Fr Hayes. On 23 April 1879, he was appointed PP of Stonehall, and on 27 April 1883 took up parochial duty at Killeedy, where he remained until his death on 25 October 1885, aged 48.

**1876 – Thomas Graham** was a native of Lisnagry. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained on 12 August 1867. He served as CC of Manister after ordination and the following year was appointed to Kilmallock. On 20 January 1872, he took up curacy duties at Monagea, and on 17 December 1873 was appointed to Parteen until 23 August 1875 when he was transferred to St Munchin's Parish. The following year, he was appointed to Bruff. On 2 October 1886, he became Administrator of Cratloe and two years later was appointed PP there until 29 August 1900, when he was transferred to Ardpatrik. On 13 March 1919, he took up parochial duties at Donoughmore. He died on 12 August 1926 at St John's Hospital, aged 90 and is buried in the old ruin opposite Donoughmore Church. He was a nephew of Dean Thomas Hammond, who was PP of Newcastlewest from 1885 until his death in 1898.

**1879 – John Sheehan** was ordained on 5 November 1871, having studied at Maynooth. After ordination, he became Professor of Humanity at St Munchin's College, a position he held until 18 May 1872 when he was appointed CC of Cratloe. The following 20 January he was transferred to Ardagh and remained there until 7 May 1874 when he took up curacy at Croom. On 14 October 1879, he was appointed to Bruff, succeeding Fr Fitzgerald. On 17 August 1891, he was appointed PP of Árdpatrik until 25 August 1900, when he returned to Ardagh, this time as PP. His successor as PP of Ardpatrik was the aforementioned Thomas Graham, and interestingly, between 1879 and 1886, the two future PPs of Ardpatrik were both serving as curates in Bruff. Fr Sheehan remained at Ardagh until his death on 28 November 1902, aged 69 and is interred in Ardagh Church grounds.

**1880 – James Gleeson** was ordained in Rome on 2 April 1865, having received his education there. A native of St Michael's Parish, he is first recorded in 1867 when he was CC of Dromin-Athlaccá. In 1868 he was transferred to Ardagh until 21 January 1873, when he took up curacy at Kilfinane, a position he held until 1874, when he became chaplain to Sexton Street CBS and Mount St Laurence Cemetery. On 24 June 1878, he was appointed to Newcastlewest, where he remained until his transfer to Bruff in 1880, succeeding Fr Leahy. He returned to Newcastlewest on 16 June 1881 until 1886, when he was transferred to Athea, where he remained until his appointment as PP of Coolcappa on 15 December 1888. The following September, he joined the Trappist Community at Roscrea but returned to Coolcappa as PP on 29 September 1890. He retired as PP on 5 February 1912 and died in Dublin on 29 July 1914, aged 75.

**1881 –Cornelius Kenny** was born on 24 November 1831. He was ordained on 23 September 1860 and is first recorded as CC of Tournafulla in 1861. The following year, he was transferred to Feenagh-Kilmeedy and was CC of Ballingarry-Granagh from 20 August 1863 until 1870, of Kilfinane until 21 January 1873, of Shanagolden until 17 March 1874, of Newcastlewest until March 1875, of Monagea until 1876, of Shanagolden, again, until 28 September 1877 and of Knockaderry until 27 January 1881, when he succeeded Fr Gleeson in Bruff. On 10 July 1882, he was appointed PP of Fedamore where he succeeded Fr Quin, also a former CC of Bruff. Fr Kenny remained in Fedamore until his death on 20 August 1893, aged 61. He is interred in Fedamore Church grounds.

**1882 –George Clarson**, a native of Kilmallock Parish, was baptised on 28 August 1853. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at the Convent of Mercy, Limerick, on 28 December 1879. From then until his appointment to Bruff on 21 July 1882, he taught at St Munchin's College and also served as chaplain to Mount St Vincent female orphanage. On 7 August 1889, he was transferred to Kilmallock and the following year took up curacy duties at St Mary's, succeeding Fr Cregan. In 1891, he received his excommunication from the diocese and became a Jesuit Priest. He subsequently went on mission to Canada, and no further information exists regarding him, except that he was recorded as being alive on 10 August 1922.

**1886 –Edward Russell** was baptised on 12 February 1843. He was ordained on 7 August 1870 and after ordination was appointed CC of Ballyagran. On 25 July 1871, he was transferred to Dromcollogher and remained there until 19 October 1875, when he took up curacy at Rathkeale. On 22 October 1879, he was transferred (at his own request) to Askeaton until 1886, with his final two years at Askeaton as Administrator. He was appointed to Bruff upon the departure of Fr Graham. On 16 November 1887, he was transferred to Effin until 14 June 1892, when he was appointed PP of Kilcornan. On 12 February 1895, he took up parochial duties in Killeedy until 7 July 1902, when he was transferred to Parteen. He was created Canon in December 1920 and resigned as PP due to ill-health on 12 April 1926. He died on 29 February 1928 at St John's Hospital, Limerick, aged 85.

**1887 –John Curtin** was baptised on 18 September 1858. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on 29 June 1881. After ordination, he served at Halifax (England) until he commenced his ministry in the Limerick Diocese as CC of Monagea in 1886. The following year, he succeeded Fr Russell as CC of Bruff and remained at Bruff until 1 October 1889, when he was appointed to Loughill-Ballyhahill. In 1891, curacy facilities there were withdrawn, and he left the Limerick Diocese to join the Passionist Fathers, although there is no record stating that he joined the Passionist Community in Ireland. There is speculation that he died in 1936, but no confirmation of this is available.

**1888 –Michael O'Donnell** was born on 25 October 1854 and was a native of Croom. He studied at the Irish College, Rome, and was ordained at St John's Cathedral, Limerick, on 13 June 1880, but owing to ill-health he received no appointment until 10 May 1881, when he was made CC of Ardpatrik. In 1882, he was appointed chaplain to Laurel Hill Convent until 1884 when he returned to Ardpatrik. In March 1887, he was appointed to Fedamore, and the following year succeeded Fr Curtin as CC of Bruff. On 22 February 1892, he was transferred to St Michael's Parish and in 1895 was made Administrator there. In 1901, he was appointed PP of Rathkeale and also made Vicar Forane. In 1912, he was created Canon, in 1918 was made Vicar General, and in July 1920 was made Monsignor. He was appointed Vicar Capitular in 1923 and Dean of the diocese in 1927. He died in Rathkeale on 17 May 1937, aged 82.

**1889 –John Reeves** was baptised on 10 February 1856 and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on 29 June 1881, having received his education at Maynooth. He served as CC of Monaghan town in the diocese of Clogher from July 1881 until 1886 when he was appointed CC of Ballingarry. On 1 October 1889, he succeeded Fr Clarson as CC of Bruff until 7 October 1901, when he was appointed PP of Tournafulla. On 27 November 1918, he was transferred to Ballyagran and on 30 March 1927 was assigned to Dromcollogher, where he remained until his death on 5 February 1936, aged 80. He is interred in Dromcollogher Church grounds. He was a cousin of John Reeves, who was PP of Loughill from 1876 until his death in September 1892, and of another John Reeves, who was PP of Ardagh from 1916 until 1929. The three aforementioned pastors were all relatives of Dr James Corbett, who was Bishop of Sale in Victoria, Australia, from 1887 until his death on 29 May 1912, aged 77.

**1890 –Stephen Culhane** was born on 4 February 1858. He studied at Rome and was ordained on 8 June 1884. After ordination, he ministered as temporary CC in the parishes of St John's and St Patrick's until the following September, when he went on mission to St Andrew's Archdiocese at Edinburgh (Scotland). On 23 November 1889, he returned to the Limerick Diocese when he was appointed CC of Fedamore, and the following 19 February was transferred to Bruff. He became CC of Ballingarry the following year and remained there until 2 February 1908 when he was appointed to Bulgaden. On 7 November 1918, he was transferred to Kilcornan where he remained until his death on 4 April 1920, aged 62.

**1891 –Martin Carroll** studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on 16 November 1890. After ordination, he taught at St Munchin's College until 17 August 1891, when he was assigned curacy duties at Bruff. He became CC of Mahoonagh on St Patrick's Day 1892 until 1894 when he was appointed to St Munchin's Parish. He was briefly CC of Croagh-Kilfinny in 1898 before being transferred to Croom. In 1900, he fell ill and remained on sick leave until 1902 when he took up a temporary teaching position at St Munchin's College. He fell ill again in 1903 and did not return to ministry

until 1918 when he was appointed CC of Knockaderry. He left Knockaderry in 1920 and again took sick leave until 17 January 1925 when he was appointed CC of Monagea. He retired from the priesthood in June 1927 and died at St John's Hospital on 7 October 1934, aged 68. He was interred at Mount St Laurence Cemetery. His brother John ministered in the diocese of Plymouth (England) and another brother, Cornelius, who was PP of East Hartree Parish at Bristol (England) died suddenly at Kilkee in August 1934 while on holiday there. The family were natives of Croom.

**1892 –David O'Driscoll** was born on 6 December 1858 and was a native of Mount Fox, Kilmallock. He was educated at St Munchin's College and Maynooth and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on 1 January 1882. He served in the diocese of Clogher until June 1884, when he was appointed CC of Glin, and in September of that year was transferred to Askeaton. In June 1888, he was assigned to St John's Parish and the following November was transferred to Bruff until 1 July 1889, when he took sick leave. In May 1890, he was appointed to Mungret until 9 March 1892, when he returned to Bruff. While at Bruff, he was in charge of a classical school. On 5 September 1898, he was appointed vice-president of St Munchin's College until 31 January 1908, when he was appointed PP of St Patrick's Parish. On 29 June 1914, he was transferred to St Munchin's Parish and while there, built the present St Munchin's Church in 1921. He had been appointed Vicar Forane in 1916 and Canon in 1918. He died on 8 December 1923, aged 65, and is interred in St Munchin's Church grounds.

**1898 –Robert Ambrose**, a native of Ardagh, was baptised on 16 August 1850. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on 22 August 1880. He was CC of Manister from September 1880 until June 1881, and of Ballyagran until January 1883 when he was transferred to St Patrick's Parish. He moved to St John's Parish the following June and while there also served as chaplain to the Good Shepherd Convent. He was CC of Ardagh from October 1886 until May 1891, of Knockaderry until February 1896, of Killeedy until October 1896, and of Athea until 5 September 1898, when he became CC of Bruff. In 1900, he was transferred to Abbeyfeale until August 1904 when he was appointed to Glenroe-Ballyorgan, and in 1906 was appointed PP there. He remained at Glenroe until his death – following a motoring accident – on 8 April 1926. He is interred in Glenroe Church grounds. A first cousin of his, Myles Ambrose, was a member of the Jesuit Order at Glasgow, Scotland. Another relative, Fr Patrick Kenrick, served as curate in several Limerick parishes prior to his premature death in May 1901, aged 50.

**1900 –Gerald O'Connor** studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on New Year's Eve, 1885. From then until June 1888, he served at the parishes of St Mary and St Joseph in the diocese of Bradford (England). He was CC of St Patrick's Parish from 1888 until 1889 and of Coolcappa from 1889 until 1890. He is not mentioned in clergy listings again until 1894 when he was appointed CC of

Mahoonagh. On 5 May 1895, he was transferred to St Mary's Parish and remained there until he was assigned to Bruff in 1900. In 1907, he was appointed Administrator of Rockhill-Bruree and was made PP there on 2 September 1908. He remained there until his death on 10 August 1921, aged 62 and is buried at Rockhill Church grounds.

**1901 –James Carroll**, a native of Effin, was baptised on 8 August 1871. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at Dunboyne College on 20 June 1897. He studied there until 1898, when he took up a teaching position at St Munchin's College, and in 1899 was appointed CC of Fedamore until his transfer to Bruff on 7 October 1901. In December 1906, he took up curacy duties at St Michael's Parish and in December 1924 became Administrator there. On 18 March 1926 he was appointed PP of Kilfinane. He died on 14 April 1934, aged 62, following an illness and is buried at Kilfinane Church grounds.

**1904 –Patrick O'Riordan**, a native of Effin, was baptised on 9 December 1869 and was ordained at the Convent Chapel of the Reparatrice, Limerick, on 28 January 1894, having received his education at Maynooth. He was Professor at St Munchin's College from 1894 until 1896 and held a similar position at All Hallows College from 1899 until 1901. He then returned to St Munchin's College to take up a teaching position until 1903, when he was appointed Administrator of St John's Parish. On 10 April 1904, he was transferred to Bruff until 4 October 1905, when he was appointed to Athea. On 2 February 1908, he was transferred to Rathkeale, and after a short period there left the Limerick Diocese and went on mission to America, where it is believed he spent the remainder of his priestly life. The only other record of him is in 1922 when he got his excommunication from the Limerick Diocese. He subsequently died in the United States.

**1905 –John Conway** was baptised on 10 December 1872. A native of Tournafulla, he studied at Maynooth and was ordained there on 20 June 1897. After ordination, he went to Dunboyne College for further studies until 1899, when he was appointed CC of his native parish. In 1903, he was transferred to Glin and remained there until his Bruff appointment on 4 October 1905. On 28 May 1926, Fr Conway was appointed PP Glenroe-Ballyorgan – succeeding Fr Robert Ambrose – and remained there until his death on 30 August 1931, aged 58. He is buried in Glenroe Church grounds.

**1907 –William O'Shea**, a native of Pallaskenry, was ordained on 5 June 1886. After ordination, he served at Sunderland (England) until 1889, when he was appointed temporary CC of Glin. On 24 March 1890, he was appointed to St John's Parish and in May 1895 was transferred to Mahoonagh, owing to ill-health. In October 1901, he was appointed to Newcastlewest; in October 1902, he was transferred to Dromin-Athlacca and in 1904 he was assigned to Rockhill until September 1908 when he became CC of Bruff. In 1911, he was transferred to Shanagolden until May 1918 when he was appointed PP of Athea by the Holy See, as no successor to Dr O'Dwyer had been appointed. He remained at Athea until his sudden death on 12 January 1924 and is in-

terred in Athea Church grounds. He was a brother of James O'Shea, who was PP of Kilmallock from 1904 until 1927, and a nephew of James O'Shea, who was PP of Rathkeale at the time of his death in 1877. Two other brothers, Daniel and Peter, were also ordained for sacred ministry and served in Australia, in Victoria and Sydney respectively.

**1911 –David Barry**, a native of Effin, was baptised on 18 May 1879. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St John's Cathedral on 28 June 1903. After ordination, he studied in Dunboyne College until 1905, when he was appointed CC of Parteen. On 2 February 1908, he was transferred to St Munchin's Parish and the following 23 June was assigned to Templeglantine until 13 November 1911, when he was appointed CC of Bruff. He was transferred to Patrickswell on 13 February 1931, and in May 1933 was appointed PP of Cappagh, succeeding Fr Patrick Woulfe. He remained in Cappagh until his death on 10 January 1937, aged 58, in the Mater Hospital, Dublin, and is buried in Cappagh Church grounds. He was a distinguished writer on moral issues.

**1921 –Robert Dunworth** was born at Garryfine, Bruree on 1 August 1886. He attended St Munchin's College, Maynooth and Rome where he was ordained on 6 April 1912. After ordination, he served in the diocese of St Augustine, Florida, (USA). On 7 June 1919, he was recalled to the Limerick Diocese when he became CC of Effin, and the following 12 January, he was appointed as CC of Bruff to assist Dean McNamara – at this time Bruff Parish had three curates. He returned to Effin in November 1924, became CC of Knockaderry in June 1926, and on 11 April 1930, was transferred to Dromcollogher. On 5 July 1937, he was appointed PP of Cappagh, succeeding Fr Barry. He was transferred to Feenagh in March 1945 and in August 1948 took up parochial duty at Adare, also becoming Canon. He died on 23 February 1963 at the Private Hospital of the Sisters of St John of God, Cahercalla, Ennis. He had been ill since autumn 1961. He is interred in Adare Church and was known as a kindly, gentle priest who followed the way of sanctity very quietly. Incidentally, his curate in Adare was Fr John Casey, a native of Grange.

**1924 –Charles Moriarty** was born at Croom in 1897. He attended St Munchin's College and Maynooth, where he was ordained in June 1922. He commenced his ministry at Bulgaden after ordination and became CC of Bruff two years later. He was CC of St Michael's Parish from 1926 until 1940 – succeeding Fr Carroll – and of Kilmallock from 1940 until 1946, when he was appointed PP of Tournafulla. While at St Michael's, he gave spiritual and material assistance readily and generously to the poor of the city's slums. He established the first praesidium of the Legion of Mary in Limerick and was also involved with the St Vincent de Paul. In Tournafulla, he improved the church and parochial property, and in Athea he extensively reconstructed and redecorated its church. He provided a new residence for his curate, renovated the presbytery, modernised three parish schools and provided a site for another. In 1949, he took up parochial duties at Athea. He is remembered for kindly humour,

a readiness to help and forgive and a determination to overcome failing health which he had for some months before his death on 12 January 1965.

**1926 –David Fitzgerald** was born at Kilmacow in the parish of Ballyagran on 22 November 1884. He attended St Munchin's College and in 1903 went to Maynooth, where he was ordained on 19 June 1910. After ordination, he spent four years at St Sylvester's Parish in the diocese of Liverpool (England) and returned to Ireland on 8 October 1914, as CC of Askeaton. He was CC of Abbeyfeale from July 1918 until 16 October 1922, of Croom until 2 May 1924 and of Knockaderry until June 1926, when he was transferred to Bruff. On 14 March 1936, he was appointed PP of Kilcornan and while there, acquired a site for a national school. On 26 November 1942, he took up parochial duties at Coolcappa and in August 1953 was transferred to Kildimo-Pallaskenry, where he remained until his death on 7 December 1963. A memorial plaque in Kildimo Churchyard commemorates his memory.

**1931 –Cornelius O'Sullivan** was a native of Athea, who was baptised on 12 January 1890. He studied at St Munchin's College and went to Maynooth in 1908, where he was ordained on 20 June 1915. He was CC of Banogue from 1916 until 1918 when he was appointed to the staff of St Munchin's College. In September 1920, he was appointed CC of Monagea and was CC of Askeaton from March 1924 until 8 October 1926 and of Patrickswell until he was appointed to Bruff on 13 February 1931 upon the departure of Fr Barry, who incidentally replaced him as CC of Patrickswell. On 11 July 1938, Fr O'Sullivan was appointed PP of Cratloe until 3 July 1944, when he was transferred to Killeedy. On 6 August 1953, he took up parochial duties at Askeaton and remained there until his death on 21 November 1963, aged 72. Fr Con, as he was known, had a deep interest in the Irish language revival and the Gaelic way of life. His rendering of Irish airs, vocal and instrumental, was welcomed at many a social function. He was remembered for a very kindly and gentle manner.

**1936 –John Carroll**, a native of Coolrus, Granagh, attended St Munchin's College and in 1918 was nominated to attend Maynooth College as a student of the diocese, graduating in 1921, and successfully completing a theological course in 1925. After ordination on 21 June 1925, he spent a short time in the diocese of Southwark (England), in a parish which contained Arundel Castle – the town residence of the Duke of Norfolk – within its boundary. He returned to Limerick in 1926, when he was appointed CC of Loughill. He was CC of Ardagh from 1928 until 1936 when he succeeded Fr Fitzgerald as CC of Bruff. In 1949, he was appointed PP of Glenroe by Dr Patrick O'Neill – who had been his PP while in Bruff – and remained there until 1963 when he was transferred to Askeaton. In Glenroe, he is remembered as a diligent custodian of its churches and schools, a steadfast friend and a devoted worker for his parishioners. While in Askeaton, he extensively renovated Ballysteen Church in 1964, and the schools in that parish also benefited from his

attention. He was created Canon a short time before his sudden death on 10 September 1969, and he is interred in Askeaton Church grounds.

**1938 –Thomas O’Sullivan** was CC of Tournafulla from 1924 until 1926, of Feenagh until 1927 and of Croom until 1938, when he was appointed CC of Bruff. He remained at Bruff until 1948, when he was appointed PP of Loughill-Ballyhahill, a position he held until his death on 28 May 1958. While at Loughill, he built a national school which was opened on 24 September 1958. He is buried in the grounds of Ballyhahill Church.

**1948 –John McCarthy** was born in 1904 and was a native of Effin. He attended St Munchin’s College and Maynooth, where he was ordained on 22 June 1930. After ordination, he served as temporary CC at Ballingarry before being appointed to Athea in 1931. He was CC of Glin from 1936 until 1948 when he was appointed to Bruff. He left Bruff in 1949 but is not listed again until 1954, when he was on temporary mission at the archdiocese of Cardiff (Wales). In September 1959, he returned to Limerick when he was appointed CC of St Michael’s Parish and remained there until 1963, when he was appointed PP of Tournafulla. He remained at Tournafulla until his death on 4 October 1979. While there, he renovated both churches in the parish, built the present national school and also served as President of its GAA Club and encouraged the purchase of a club playing field. He erected the grotto at Tournafulla Church grounds, near which he is interred.

**1949 –John Browne**, a native of Abbeyfeale, pursued his studies at Maynooth and was ordained there on 19 June 1943. In July of that year, he was appointed assistant priest at Dromcollogher. He served as CC of Tournafulla from September 1946 until March 1947 and as CC of Athea until April 1949 when he was appointed to Bruff. He was transferred to St Munchin’s Parish in September 1959 and in 1964 became CC of the newly-created Our Lady of the Rosary Parish on the Ennis Road until 19 February 1970, when he was appointed PP of the newly-created Christ the King Parish at Caherdavin. He was transferred to Adare on 3 February 1976 and remained there until his death at the Regional Hospital, Limerick, on 9 December 1990. While in Adare he refurbished the church there. He possessed a magnificent singing ability and was a fine preacher.

**1949 –Edmond Houlihan** was a native of Athlacca who attended Maynooth and was ordained on 17 June 1945. He is first mentioned in 1946, when he was CC of Parteen and remained there until 1949 when he was transferred to Bruff. While in Bruff he was actively involved with several parish organisations, amongst these being Muintir na Tire, the PTAA and the Bruff Sportsfield committee. In 1963, he was transferred to Kilmallock where he remained until 1972 when he was appointed PP of Ardpatrick. In 1979, he was transferred to Effin where he remained until his retirement in 1996, having been created Canon in 1988. He then resided at Milford House until his death on 23 August 2006.

**1959 –Maurice Crowley** was born in 1914. A native of Bulgaden, he was ordained on 18 June 1939. He was CC of Fedamore from 1939 until 1943, of Feenagh-Kilmeedy

until 1953 and of Kildimo until 1959, when he was appointed to Bruff, succeeding Fr Browne. In 1966, he was appointed PP of Glenroe-Ballyorgan, a position he held until some months before his death, on the night of 2 November 1976, aged 62.

**1963 –James Neville**, a native of Rathkeale, was ordained on 22 June 1952. After ordination, he served in the diocese of Seattle (USA) until 1958, when he was appointed CC of Ballyhahill. He was CC of Dromin-Athlacca from 1959 until 1963 when he was appointed to Bruff, where he succeeded Fr Houlihan. In 1973, he was transferred to Shanagolden where he remained until 1979 when he was appointed PP of St Paul's. In 1988, he took up parochial duties at Abbeyfeale and in 1989 was created Canon. He retired as PP in 2002 and still resides at Abbeyfeale. He was a brother of Ronald Neville, who was PP of Harolds Cross (Dublin) at the time of his death in August 2006. Another brother, Ernan, who died on 9 October 2004, also served in the Dublin archdiocese, being a former PP of Kilnarnagh and of University Church, St Stephen's Green.

**1966 –John Burke** was a native of Granagh, who was ordained on 19 June 1944. He was appointed CC of Templeglantine after his ordination. He became Diocesan Religious Inspector of Schools in 1945 until 1959 when he was appointed to Coolcappa. In 1962, he was transferred to Patrickswell until his appointment to Bruff. In 1973, he was appointed PP of Monagea until 1983 when he took up parochial duties at Ballyagran. He remained there until his death on 2 March 1989. He is interred at Ballyagran Church grounds.

**1973 –John Ryan**, born on 27 March 1937, was a native of Killonan, Castletroy. He was ordained at Maynooth in June 1962 and was appointed to St John's Parish the following September. He was CC of Ballyagran from December 1964 until 4 July 1973 when he was appointed to Bruff. In September 1979, he was transferred to St Joseph's Parish and on 23 September 1983, he was appointed Administrator there. He was PP of Bulgaden from 19 June 1987 until 25 February 1992 and of Christ the King Parish from then until his untimely death on 7 December 1997. A statue of Our Lady of Tenderness, Mother of the Church, in the porch of Christ the King Church, is dedicated to his memory.

**1973 –Albert Nix**, a native of Meelick, was appointed to Bruff after ordination until the autumn of 1974 when he was assigned to St Joseph's Parish. On 22 August 1976, he was appointed CC of Parteen until 1977, when he went on mission to Nigeria, ministering in the diocese of Jos. On 2 September 1981, he took up curacy duties at St John's Parish. In July 1985, he went to Carlow to pursue further studies. He was CC of Christ the King Parish from July 1986 until September 1990 and of Newcastlewest from then until September 1993, when he went on mission to Paterson Diocese in New Jersey (USA), where he ministered in the parish of Stirling. In 1998, he obtained an exeat from the diocese and has remained at Paterson.

**1974 –Maurice Costello**, a native of Foynes, was ordained at Carlow College in 1970 and served as CC of the Holy Family Parish until 1972 and of St Michael's Parish until the autumn of 1974, when he became CC of Bruff. He was appointed CC of the Marie

Reparatrice Convent in September 1982 and the following 6 February took up curacy duties at Rathkeale, where he remained until his retirement in 1992. Since then he has served as Associate Pastor there.

**1979 –Patrick Howard** is a native of Ballyshane, Glenroe. He studied at St Munchin's College and was ordained at Maynooth on 19 June 1955. He was CC of Kilfinane from 1955 until 1958, of Askeaton until 1961, of Bulgaden until 1969 and of Coolcappa until 1979, when he became CC of Bruff as successor to Fr Ryan. In July 1983, he was appointed PP at Monagea until 1997 when he was transferred to Dromin-Athlacca. He retired in September 2004 and resides at Dromin.

**1982 –Patrick J O'Donnell**, a native of Rathkeale, was ordained at Maynooth in June 1961 and served in Peru until he was appointed to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in late 1966. He remained there until September 1982 when he took up curacy duties at Bruff. While at Bruff he was actively involved on the Tidy Towns committee and the PTAA In October 1985, he was appointed PP of Corpus Christi (Moyross) until November 1992 when he was transferred to St Patrick's Parish. He was appointed to Cappagh on 5 September 1998 and the following year returned to Peru, where he remained until 2000 when he became attached to the Limerick Diocesan Office. He is very accomplished at the piano and organ and his brother, Thomas, also served as a priest in the diocese.

**1983 –Thomas Coughlan** is a native of Ardpatrick. He studied at Maynooth and was ordained at St Munchin's College, Limerick on 20 June 1965. He was CC of Tournafulla from 1965 until 1970, of Kilfinane until 1975 and of Glenroe until 1976, when he was transferred back to Kilfinane, where he remained until he was appointed to Bruff upon the departure of Fr Howard. In 1986, he was appointed PP of Parteen-Meelick and in 1997 took up parochial duty at Effin, where he is at present.

**1985 –Francis O'Dea**, a native of Gormanstown in Bulgaden Parish, studied at St Patrick's College, Thurles. He was ordained there on 8 June 1985 and after ordination served as CC of Croom (pro-tem) until October 1985, when he was appointed CC of Bruff. While in Bruff he was actively involved in the Tidy Towns committee and with a number of other groups, including the PTAA and the youth club. He was CC of St John's Parish from June 1990 until 7 September 1996, and of Newcastlewest until September 2002, when he was appointed PP of Corpus Christi Parish. In 2011, he took up parochial duty at Dromcollogher where he remains to the present.

**1986 –Desmond McAuliffe**, a native of St Mary's Parish, was ordained in 1974 having studied at St Patrick's College, Maynooth and was appointed CC of Christ the King after ordination. On 4 February 1978, he was appointed CC of St Michael's Parish and during this time also served as Spiritual Director at St Munchin's College. In 1979, he became CC of Mungret until July 1986 when he was transferred to Bruff. He served as Administrator of Bruff from September 1995 until September 1996. On 5 April 1997, he returned to St Michael's Parish, this time as PP until September 2004, when

he was appointed PP of Christ the King Parish. On 24 September 2005 he became PP of Rockhill-Bruree where he is at present.

**1990 – Frederick Walters** is a native of St Munchin’s Parish. He was ordained at St Munchin’s Church in Limerick on 14 June 1987 and was appointed CC of Corpus Christi Parish after ordination until his transfer to Bruff in September 1990 when he succeeded Fr O’Dea. While in Bruff, he was involved in many parish organisations, in particular, the youth club. In October 1992, he was appointed to Mungret and after his departure, Bruff reverted to being a two-priest parish. He remained in Mungret until September 1997, when he went to the diocese of Paterson, New Jersey, USA on a temporary assignment. He subsequently took his exeat from the Limerick Diocese and is currently ministering in Paterson, where he has to date served in the parishes of McAfee and Hewitt.

**1995 – Gerry Roche**, a native of Athea, served for a year as CC of Bruff when Fr Condon was on sabbatical leave. Fr Roche was a member of the Kiltegan Fathers and spent his priestly life on missionary work in north-west Kenya, where he remained until he was murdered there on 9 December 2009. He is remembered in Bruff as an honest and forthright pastor.

**1997 – Joseph Foley**, a native of Effin, was ordained in 1995 and was appointed to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish after ordination until he succeeded Fr McAuliffe as CC of Bruff in 1997. He was actively involved with many parish organisations and was responsible for many improvements in Bruff Cemetery. In September 2002, Fr Foley was appointed chaplain of the John Paul II Oratory in Dooradoyle, and he divided his time between Bruff and Dooradoyle. On 9 December 2013, he took up curacy duties in Abbeyfeale, where he remains to the present.

*References and Notes:*

- (1) Archdeacon John Begley – “History of the Diocese of Limerick – Volume III”.
- (2) 1977, 1988 and 2000 editions of “The Dawn”.
- (3) Bruff Parish Records.
- (4) Archives of the “Limerick Chronicle”.
- (5) “Diocese of Limerick Heritage Project”  
(available on CDROM and on diocesan website –  
[www.limerickdioceseheritage.org](http://www.limerickdioceseheritage.org))
- (6) “Our Catholic Life”
- (7) Limerick Diocesan Clergy Directories.

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