

Restoring a Cathedral: *to God alone be the glory*

Visitors to Italian cities and towns will be familiar with the words *Il duomo*. It is the Italian for cathedral, a cathedral currently in use or an historic one that survived from former days. People who drive cars in Italy will be accustomed to looking out for signposts which point to *Il duomo*. Cathedrals are usually to be found in the Town Centre, often the oldest and most interesting part of cities. This is explained by the fact that towns often grew up around Cathedrals. So the Cathedrals remain an important element in the history and heritage of many cities and towns in European countries.



BISHOP COLM O'REILLY

I would exaggerate if I were to say that all of this is true of St. Mel's Cathedral. It is not at all as old as many cathedrals in the heartland of Christian faith in mainland Europe. However, as Catholic Cathedrals go in Ireland, it is up there among the most significant. It takes its place among the early ones which emerged in post-Emancipation Ireland and is also, among cathedrals, a link between pre-famine and post-famine days in our country. Its story illustrates how devastating the Great Famine was but also the resilience of those who resumed building work on the Cathedral once the worst was past. It remains an inspiring testament to what an intrepid people can achieve, something that should not be forgotten in our times.

St. Mel's Cathedral duly celebrated many great commemorations, its centenary in 1940 and its sesquicentenary in 1990 to mark 150 years of its existence. Other important occasions, such as marking the Great Jubilee Year 2000, were well celebrated in the splendid setting that St. Mel's always was on great occasions. Similar celebrations would have marked the lifespan of other old cathedrals in the same way. Up

to the year 2009 we could say that our Cathedral had pretty much the same life-story as most others. All that changed with the catastrophic fire of Christmas 2009. St. Mel's Cathedral which looked its very best just hours before its interior was totally destroyed has taken us along an unprecedented restoration journey. A tragic accident and a major restoration have made St. Mel's the most talked of Cathedral in the land. The devastation and shock of Christmas 2009 resonated across national and indeed faith boundaries too.

One of the effects of what has taken place will be that the telling of the story of St. Mel's Cathedral can henceforth be presented in a different way. The story can even have a new starting point, which will immediately arrest the attention of reader and listener. However the teller of the story chooses to begin, the story itself will have a new axial centre. One man with all the skills of the story-teller touched into the emotional impact of the fire on Longford people in a prose poem beginning with the words "Once upon a snowy Christmas night". These words were written while the embers were still burning. In the future story-tellers will be able to choose to make this a starting point and oscillate between the days of its birth pangs in 1840 and its rebirth as a Cathedral in a five-year period in our own time.

The history of St. Mel's Cathedral has now acquired something like epic proportions. The epic is not completed, of course. It is much too soon for a trumpeter to proclaim a victory for courage over calamity. However, it is not too soon for this writer to acclaim the quality of the work of the Design Team in planning the restoration. It is not too soon to acknowledge the investment of precious time by unpaid and dedicated people in steering the project. And it is not too soon to refer to the pride evident in the dedication of the workforce currently in the Cathedral, working diligently and wholeheartedly in their task.

When I see the work that is being done on site and off site I cannot but think of a story told about the famous architect, Sir Christopher Wren, who designed St. Paul's Cathedral in London. It is said that he arrived one day incognito on site and talked to three workers, each in turn, asking them what they were doing. The first two gave a precise

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description of the particular task assigned to them. The third pleased Sir Christopher Wren enormously when he said simply: "I am building a Cathedral". Here I suspect that, in a variety of ways, the planners, the managers of the project and the workers on the ground would all pass the Sir Christopher Wren test.

In a novel called *"The Pillars of the Earth"* by Ken Follett there is a description of the coming to Britain of Gothic architecture. Some critics of this new and flamboyant style predicted that it would fail. Looking at designs for very large windows and slender arches, some said "this can't be done". The restoration of St. Mel's Cathedral has not been without its "can't be done" moments. However, the end result will show that the first such judgement should never also be the last word.

The destruction of St. Mel's Cathedral has brought notoriety to Longford. Its restoration will do so too, in a very different way. However, of far greater concern will be our hope that it will become once again a welcome place for quiet prayer for visitors. If its beauty attracts people to come and worship together, all our efforts to restore it will be amply rewarded. The great composer of classical music, J.S. Bach, wrote at the end of each of his compositions: *Soli Deo Gloria*, to God alone be the glory. That should be our prayer too.

+Colm O'Reilly
24th July 2013



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PDF Editor



TRIBUTE TO THE LATE

Dr. Richard Hurley RIP

BY BISHOP COLM O'REILLY, BISHOP OF ARDAGH AND CLONMACNOIS

Many people are deeply shocked by the sudden death on Tuesday, 6th December of Dr Richard Hurley. Among those very deeply and immediately affected are ourselves, especially those in very regular contact with him in planning for the restoration of St. Mel's Cathedral on which he has been engaged since he was employed here in 2010. His death has deprived us of the services which he was still to give us. Our loss is great. Of course, the feeling of loss and sadness that we are experiencing are of a different kind from those of his wife, Bernardine, and their sons whose distress must be intense. We deeply sympathise with them.



DR. RICHARD HURLEY

Richard Hurley was involved with us here many years ago when the sanctuary of St. Mel's was reordered to accommodate the new style of celebration of the liturgy. While he was no longer involved when that work on the Cathedral was completed, his original plan was clearly reflected in the end product. It had stood the test of time very well until it was destroyed by the fire of Christmas Day 2009. Richard entered the scene again last year when he was an enthusiastic applicant for the role of architect for the current restoration. When awarded the key role of Design Architect, he expressed his delight in being back again. At that time he promised me with the utmost confidence that he would achieve the best possible outcome. As soon as agreement was reached with the other partner architectural firm involved, Fitzgerald Kavanagh and Partners, he threw all his energies into the Association's mammoth task of agreeing a programme for the restoration. Since then he has continued untiringly to press on and meet targets. He was a man in a hurry and the speed with which he delivered his plans would have done credit to a man of half his age.

He delivered his last presentation to the Diocesan Art and Architecture Committees on the 16th of November. When he said it was his last, he meant that this would be the one which would be the final part of his outline of his vision for the restoration. He had no idea that it would also be his last in a more final sense still. As so often happens in life when we see someone for the last time, as he concluded the presentation he just checked the time that he would need to get to the train and said 'good-bye', neither he nor we having any idea that we would not meet again on earth.

We have now lost our Design Architect but not the plans he had so carefully prepared for us. He had, I would like to think, a sense of great satisfaction in reaching the end of the planning phase. I would like to think that achieving this stage in this particular project has somehow rounded off the long and fruitful career of Ireland's best and known and greatly respected Church architect. I would like to think that this last of the 150 or so major projects of his life meant more to him than most. He had given it his full concentration and brought to it the experience of a lifetime as architect and the insight of many liturgists, of whom the late Father Sean Swayne, Director of the Centre for Pastoral Liturgy in Carlow, was the foremost. I am very touched by the fact the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois has just benefited in the double from the mature and experienced Richard Hurley, doyen of Church architects in Ireland. He was Design Architect for the splendidly restored St Mary's Church in Carrick-on-Shannon which was completed last year and has left us with the plans for St. Mel's Cathedral.

Many people in Longford met him when we had our Open Day on the 18th September last. He was at the Cathedral Centre in the morning and afternoon and spoke with anyone who sought to speak to him about the model and the draft plans for the cathedral on display. He was easily recognisable with his imposing presence, tall in stature and impressive in appearance. His gracious manner and willingness to listen to everyone must still be remembered, I believe. He stayed for a long time greeting and talking to people, a tiring exercise in itself but something to which he attached great importance.

I have known Richard Hurley for a very long time. In recent times it was good to have reason to meet with him very often. He was a truly an inspirational man, a man of deep faith and integrity. He was a man who has left a great legacy of fine work in the design of churches and other buildings of note. Among his writings is the beautifully illustrated Irish Church Architecture. We have good reason to be grateful that part of his legacy will enrich us. It is my confident hope that when St. Mel's Cathedral has been restored his contribution will be seen as his final gift not just to us but to the nation as well.

+Colm O'Reilly
Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois



Important Events in the history of St. Mel's Cathedral

1838 (6 May):	Bishop William O'Higgins made the first appeal for funds. (<i>1838 subscription list</i>)
1840 (19 May):	The foundation stone was laid at a ceremony attended by as many as 40,000 people. (<i>The Longford Journal</i> article, 30 May 1840)
1846:	The side-walls and pillars were completed, but work stopped because of the onset of the Great Famine.
1853:	Bishop John Kilduff began fund-raising again. (<i>Mohill subscription list 1853; Note authorising payment to Mullins 1854; Mullins receipt 1854; Terence Farrell receipt 1856</i>)
1856 (24 Sept.):	The main part of St. Mel's was consecrated. (Admissions on opening day 1856; <i>The Longford Journal</i> , 27 September 1856)
1857:	The first organ was installed. (<i>Organ specification 1857; Organ ticket 1857</i>)
1860:	Bishop Kilduff launched a further appeal for funds to build the bell-tower and entrance vestibules. (<i>Specification of works 1860; Works estimate 1860</i>)
1863:	The bell-tower and entrance vestibules were completed.
1867-'70:	The high altar made of Carrara marble was planned and erected. (<i>High altar subscriptions</i>)
1889-'93:	The portico (pillars at the front) was erected. (<i>1889 bazaar ticket; 1889 prize winners; Bazaar receipt 1889</i>)
1893 (19 May):	St. Mel's was consecrated, after being fully completed.
1913:	A new organ was purchased. (<i>Carnegie letter 1913</i>)
1932-'33:	Stained-glass windows were installed, including two from the Harry Clarke Studio, Dublin. (<i>Clarke studio letter 1932</i>)
1940:	Centenary celebrations. (<i>1940 subscriptions for altar; centenary photograph</i>)
1977:	Re-dedication after the remodelling of the sanctuary.
1983:	New gallery and pipe-organ installed.
1990:	Celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone.
2009 (25 Dec.):	Destruction by fire.

Historical Overview

The Building of St. Mel's, 1840-56

The village of Ardagh was the location of the original St. Mel's Cathedral until the Protestant Reformation of the mid-1500s. A report on the diocese of Ardagh in 1517 described the cathedral as being in ruins, the cathedral city reduced to three or four wooden houses, mainly because of the warlike life of the late bishop, William O'Farrell (1480-1516). For the next three centuries the Catholic diocese was without a cathedral. From 1788 the church in Ballymahon served as a Pro-Cathedral and the bishop resided in the town from then until 1853. With the granting of Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the same year as William O'Higgins became bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, it was possible to envisage a cathedral for the diocese.

Where should such a building be located? Longford was an obvious place, as the largest town in the centre of the diocese, the county town of Longford, close to the ancient cathedral site of Ardagh. Its population in 1841, the year after the foundation stone was laid, was 4966 people and increasing. The town had two military barracks and was prospering, following the arrival of the Royal Canal in 1830. By coincidence the parish was in great need of a new church. A public meeting held in the chapel there on 27 January 1833 passed the following resolution, *"The present chapel being totally inadequate to meet the needs of so large a congregation and being from its tottering condition liable to endanger the lives of many that a new chapel is now wanting and that subscription be entered into this day to prepare for its commencement and that a period of five years from this date be given to complete the subscription by annual instalments."* By 1838 almost two thousand pounds had been subscribed by Longford parishioners and on 6 May of that year, at a public meeting in the chapel, by then *"in a wretched state of repair,"* according to the *Freeman's Journal*, Bishop O'Higgins announced that Longford would be the location of a diocesan cathedral and the residence of the bishop. On 27 October 1841, when the project was already underway,



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the bishop used the following words, *"Our cathedral will belong to no one particular parish or district; but being diocesan, claims the co-operation of all."*

The design Bishop O'Higgins conceived, based partly on the Madeleine Church in Paris, the Pantheon and the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome, was indeed grand, as he said in 1841, *"When finished, it will be the chastest, most extensive, and most elegant church of modern times, in any part of the United Kingdom."* The architect who was employed in the first phase was John Benjamin Keane and the contractor was John Mullins. The building of St. Mel's commenced on 19 May 1840 with the laying of the foundation stone at a ceremony attended by as many as 40,000 people, the preacher being Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam. A massive fundraising campaign commenced immediately in all the parishes of the diocese, in churches throughout Ireland and in some parts of the United Kingdom and, from November 1842, in cities of the United States and Canada. One interesting fundraising event occurred on 30 August 1842 in the partly built cathedral when a Charity sermon was delivered to a large crowd by the Catholic convert and Passionist priest the Hon. Rev. Charles Spencer (1799-1864), an ancestor of Princess Diana and a relative of Winston Churchill! Two weeks later John O'Connell M.P., son of The Liberator, visited the site and described the reaction of a local woman who was not familiar with Mr. Keane's design: *"A poor old countrywoman who went to see the building much about the time of my visit, was highly delighted with the vestibule, and passed the following comment upon it, and upon the vast space beyond, then enclosed by the yet roofless wall of the intended Church raised about twenty feet from the ground, "Oh, what a darling little chapel, and what a beautiful ber-rin' place (burying-place) that is, just back of it!"*

The side-walls and pillars were complete by 1846, but with the onset of the Great Famine the work stopped. By 1850, the situation had improved, but the bishop was in declining health and died in 1853. It was left to his successor, Dr John Kilduff (1853-1867), to complete the construction work, with John Bourke as the

architect. A *Freeman's Journal* article of 29 June 1868 gives us an idea of the scale of the challenge which faced the new bishop and architect fifteen years earlier, *"The rains of heaven trickled down its unroofed walls. The wild nettle and luxuriant weed twined round the half raised columns, or covered the prostrate pillars lying scattered all around. The weather-beaten walls, prostrate columns, and roofless waste all overrun with weeds, spoke rather of a ruin than of a work progressing to completion. It was, indeed, a task to discourage the stoutest heart and deter the noblest zeal; yet a very few years sufficed to carry the work almost to completion, and it stands today a noble and glorious monument of his labours and his zeal."*

Bishop Kilduff commenced fund-raising almost immediately on his appointment, and the cathedral was roofed and ready to open for worship within three years. However, much remained to be done, as Fr. John O'Reilly, a curate in Longford, wrote in July 1855, *"A great deal is still undone. As yet there are no altars. The marble altars which in the first instance we hoped to be able to erect, must be supplied by temporary wooden ones. We must leave numerous beautiful niches without statues. The erection of the Portico and tower, I fear, must be left to future generations. The work is great: great sacrifices have been made. We must trust to Providence for the rest."* An exquisite feature completed at this time was the series of 30 angels above the arches sculpted by the eminent Longford born sculptor Terence Farrell. St. Mel's was consecrated on 24 September 1856, with the principal celebrant on that occasion being Archbishop Dixon of Armagh, in the presence of approximately 18,000. Many of these travelled to Longford by train, the Midland Great Western line having reached the town the previous year. The effects of the Famine and the great emigration that succeeded it were in evidence. In the ten years from 1841 to 1851 the population of Co. Longford had fallen from 115,491 in 1841 to 82,348 in 1851, a fall of 29%, one of the largest decreases of any county in Ireland during the period.

The Completion of St. Mel's, 1856-93

Over the next thirty seven years the full vision of Dr. O'Higgins was realised. Bishop Kilduff made another appeal in 1860 and it raised the

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funds for the completion of the vestibules and the bell-tower or campanile and the installation of two bells from the James Sheridan's Eagle Foundry, Dublin, all of which were done by 1863. John Bourke modified and altered considerably the original Keane design for the campanile. Under Bishop Bartholomew Woodlock (1879-95), the building of the portico, with its entablature, commenced in 1889, according to the design of George Coppinger Ashlin, R.H.A., with builders Joseph Meade and Company, Dublin. This necessitated a major fundraising campaign over Ireland and the English speaking world. The scene depicted in the entablature, in Portland stone, is the enthronement of St. Mel as bishop of Ardagh and is the work of the eminent Dublin sculptor George Smyth, who also executed the huge statue of the Sacred Heart over the Pediment. This statue was paid for by the subscriptions of the children of the diocese, whose names were enclosed in a capsule inside the statue, found during renovation work in 2011. St. Mel's was finally consecrated on 19 May 1893, with Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh presiding.

Meanwhile, there had been improvements to the interior of the building. Bishop Kilduff had the first organ installed in 1857, bought from Bevington and Sons, London. The Stations of the Cross were purchased in Paris in 1858, the same year the boundary wall and railings were erected. The high altar in Carrara marble, designed by John Bourke and dedicated to Bishop Kilduff, was erected in 1869, during the episcopate of Bishop Neal McCabe (1867-70). The sculptor was Mr. Callaghan of Dublin and the altarpiece, depicting 'Christ Falling under the Cross' was by Thomas Farrell, R.H.A., son of Terence. Between 1881 and 1884 sixteen statues, purchased from Froc-Robert of Paris, were placed in the niches. Leading up to the consecration in 1893, Bishop Woodlock planned many significant changes and improvements to the interior. An 18th century altar, originally in a Dominican convent in Rome, was placed in the cathedral, below a picture of the Holy Family which was one of the few items to survive the fire. There was also a new altar of Holy Souls with a beautiful sculpture of the Pieta in Carrara marble by George Smyth. A new sanctuary, designed by George Ashlin, included a new Bishop's chair and oak choir stalls made by Cornelius Bull of Dublin, altar rails by

Sharpe of Dublin and a mosaic floor in the sanctuary by Oppenheimer of Manchester. It had taken fifty-three years to achieve the dream of Bishop O'Higgins, but the finished product was impressive: St. Mel's was one of the largest public buildings in Ireland at the time of completion.

Developments 1893-1970

During the episcopate of Bishop Joseph Hoare (1895-27) further developments took place. The inhabitants of Longford town and beyond first heard the peal of the cathedral's twelve new bells, cast in Byrne's Bell Foundry in Dublin, on 12 June 1910. In 1913 the firm of Stahlhuth of Aachen, Germany, built a new organ for the cathedral and in the same year a new Baptistry was constructed. In the years prior to the 1940 centenary Bishop James J. MacNamee (1927-66) initiated further improvements. Two stained glass windows from the Harry Clarke studio were installed in the transepts in 1933, depicting the Resurrection of Christ and St. Anne while a new marble pulpit in memory of Bishop O'Higgins was erected in 1940, a donation from the priests of the diocese. Cardinal MacRory, Archbishop of Armagh, presided at Mass for the centenary on 19 May 1940 in the presence of an enormous congregation. Over one thousand children from the diocese sang Plain Chant for the Mass.

1970-2009

The Diocesan Museum, containing priceless treasures like the 10th century Crozier of St. Mel and the Shrine of the Book of Fenagh (1536), was opened at the rear of the cathedral in 1974. Major alterations to the sanctuary were completed in 1977, under the direction of Bishop Cahal B. Daly (1967-82), to reflect the liturgical changes of Vatican II. The main features were a new altar, ambo, bishop's chair and baptismal font. A tapestry depicting the 'Second Coming', behind the bishop's chair, and a painting, 'The Supper at Emmaus', over the Blessed Sacrament altar, were the work of artist Ray Carroll. In 1983 a new pipe organ built by Kenneth Jones and a choir gallery were installed during the episcopate of Bishop Colm O'Reilly (1983-2013). The following year the building was re-roofed. Bishop Cahal B. Daly, Bishop of Down and Connor (later Cardinal-

Archbishop of Armagh) preached at the Mass in May 1990 to celebrate the one-hundred-and-fiftieth-anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone. The news of the devastating fire on Christmas morning 2009 shocked the people of Longford and further afield. However, at morning Mass in the Temperance Hall on Christmas morning, while the fire was still raging, Bishop Colm O'Reilly promised, "Together we will rebuild our beloved St. Mel's Cathedral." "Courageous words in a cataclysmic situation," remarked architect Dr. Richard Hurley a year later. It is now late 2013 and the time of re-opening draws nearer, when, to quote the late Dr. Hurley, "St. Mel's will rise again and live again as the centre of Catholic life in the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois."

— The Sanctuary —



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The Fire

At the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass on the 24th December 2009 St. Mel's Cathedral looked especially resplendent. Bishop Colm O'Reilly commented on how well the Cathedral looked and the warm spirit of Christmas was palpable, belying the bitterly cold and snowy weather outside. Due to the cold, the heating ran at a high setting continuously for 17 hours to cater for the many visitors coming to say a prayer, light a candle or attend confession during the day and the for the large attendance at Mass that night. After Mass the heating was turned off and the now empty and still Cathedral was locked up for the night. The temperature outside plummeted to -8°C accompanied by light flurries of snow. Sometime after 5am, Larry Nolan Jnr, a resident of Chapel Street, immediately adjoining the Cathedral to the north, heard cracking noises. On looking out his window he saw, to his horror, smoke and flames pouring from the third floor of the rear of the Cathedral. At 5.11am he raised the alarm.

Longford Town Fire Brigade was promptly on the scene. It was obvious then that the fire was already a raging inferno. They called in the units from Granard, Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon and Lanesborough. Major difficulties arose with water freezing in hoses and on the ground. Despite valiant efforts by the Fire Service, as Christmas morning dawned it was clear the interior of St. Mel's Cathedral was lost. By the end of the day, all that was standing was the exterior walls, portico and campanile. The roof had burned through and collapsed right down to the crypt. The building was sealed pending an investigation into the cause of the fire by the Gardaí and forensic experts appointed by the insurance company. The only silver lining that could be detected from the tragedy was that there were no remains awaiting funeral rites and nobody was injured during, or in the immediate aftermath of the fire. The people of Longford were shocked and bereft.

All potential causes were probed and explored. These included malicious acts, burning candles or residual burning incense, smoking materials, electrical or appliance malfunction and the heating system.



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It was the heating system that eventually provided the explanation of the cause of the Christmas Day 2009 fire in St. Mel's Cathedral.

The heating system consisted of an oil fired burner located in the crypt, with a flue connected to an original brick lined chimney. The burner and boiler were known to have been in good working order as they had been regularly serviced. However it is likely that combustible material may have accumulated in the chimney. Due to the prolonged running of the heating system already alluded to, it is likely that this material became superheated. As long as the burner was operating, this material was deprived of oxygen. When the burner was switched off, the natural draught allowed the ingress of oxygen causing the combustible material to ignite in what was, in effect, a chimney fire. Unfortunately, this chimney was fitted with inspection hatches. It is reckoned that burning embers from the chimney fire escaped via an inspection hatch door in the sacristy. There it ignited some further combustible material which then spread to destroy the entire interior of the Cathedral.

The first priority after the fire was extinguished, was to make the building safe. The insurers, Allianz appointed Hegarty Demolition to provide a safe working environment for the forensic inspection and salvage operation. The Longford Local Authorities worked closely in this delicate stage with all concerned. Debris was sifted by operatives from the National Museum to salvage all fragments and damaged artefacts from the Diocesan Museum. The remains of the two Harry Clarke Studio stained glass windows were removed for restoration. Interestingly there were some remarkable survival pieces, including the three statues at the rear of the sanctuary, including one of St. Mel himself. A Bible and Hosts survived in the Tabernacle.

Further exploratory works would find that the 28 limestone columns, that distinguished St. Mel's Cathedral as a Basilica, had been damaged beyond repair. Following the commitment given by Bishop Colm O'Reilly on that fateful Christmas Day, that the Cathedral would be restored; a daunting task now lay ahead for those who would be charged with that restoration.



The First Springtime

It is well known that a certain generation of people can recall exactly where they were when JF Kennedy was shot. I think it is true to say that for many people with Longford connections the moment they awoke on Christmas morning 2009 to hear that St. Mel's Cathedral was on fire is a moment that will stay forever in their minds.

After a wonderful celebration of Midnight Mass few could believe that we would so soon stand in the freezing cold and watch that iconic building in its landmark site at the heart of our county town succumb to the power of fire. In little over 5 or 6 hours the beautiful interior of St. Mel's Cathedral, which for 170 years had been the focal point of the local Catholic community, was almost completely destroyed, with just the shell of the structure surviving.

It was a time of utter chaos and shock and panic. The following days, weeks and months were full of frantic activity as the local community rallied to cope with the tragic fire and its fallout. The early days were spent liaising with Gardaí, Fire Brigade, National Museum, Insurance Company and Media. My memories are of amazing goodwill, endless messages of support from near and far and offers of help from many including the other Christian denominations in Longford.

Four days after the fire a meeting was called to which the Parish Pastoral Council, Temperance Hall Committee, Parish Finance Committee and Parish Staff were invited. At that meeting it was evident that the temporary accommodation afforded us at the Temperance Hall would not be a long-term solution. It was decided with the approval of the Principal of St. Mel's College to use the facilities at the College as a more long-term solution to our need for a place to worship.

The College Chapel was identified as somewhere which could cater for our daily Masses but was in need of refurbishment. One group set about the task of renovating it from head to toe. Another group set

themselves the task of adapting the College Gym as a place for Sunday worship. The Gym was renamed 'The Cathedral Centre' for our purposes and the transformation brought about there in a matter of weeks was truly breath-taking.

The task of designing a space appropriate for worship was conceived largely by Noel Strange, Eddie Kiernan, Fr. Sean Casey and others. To this day the Cathedral Centre continues to come in for very positive comment. It is a very tasteful, inspiring adaptation of the space with its many echoes of the Cathedral and it has served us very well in the time ever since.

Those early weeks were filled with various parishioners and committee members beavering around looking after sound, light, heat, altar furniture, chairs, curtains, fire regulations, etc. Out of chaos, wonderful community spirit was harnessed and we remain very grateful to the many people who volunteered their services in different ways.

We became more familiar with Newtownforbes Parish and are thankful for the welcome the community there has afforded us since that time for so many of our Parish Funerals and Weddings.

In those early days we established good working relationships with our Insurers and Loss Adjustors who played a leading role in the task of arranging the emergency works to safeguard the Cathedral. Moylan Engineers were brought on board and in turn Hegarty Demolition undertook the emergency measures to include installation of temporary roof (subcontracted to Kiernan Steel of Killoe), clearing out, propping, hoarding, installation of structural steel supports, etc.

Some weeks on St. Mel's Project Committee was formed with Seamus Butler taking on the role of Chairperson. The task ahead was enormous, unknown and daunting — a multimillion euro restoration project had begun.

In time Project Managers were appointed, the Design Team selected and the various building blocks of design, tendering, planning



applications, financial matters, organ and art procurement, developing a future vision, etc. were put together to the point where we can now anticipate a reopening next Christmas time. It has been a mammoth task and we will remain forever grateful to the many people who have given of their time and talent to ensure that St. Mel's Cathedral will live again and in the not too distant future once more open its doors in welcome to the people of the Parish and Diocese inviting them to spend time in the presence of their God.

"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD"

Fr. Tom Healy
Administrator
St. Mel's Cathedral
Sept 2013

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The Project Begins

The challenge of restoring St. Mel's is enormous. Assembling a team that would be cognisant of the weight of this challenge was in itself a major undertaking. Once the Cathedral Restoration Committee was in place, they with the loss adjustors had emergency works to be carried out. Moylan Engineers, Hegarty Demolition and Kiernan Structural Steel were engaged to make the site safe. The Committee then set about appointing the design team. Interactive Project Managers were duly appointed.

Niall Meagher, of Interactive Project Managers, led the management and outline programme for the restoration of the cathedral reporting directly to the St. Mel's Cathedral project Committee appointed by Bishop Colm O'Reilly in February 2010.

The key personnel were chosen after a very careful search among those with the necessary expertise, in Architecture, Conservation and Liturgical Design. They, in turn, led the process of identification of the entire design team.

Architects

Dr Richard Hurley and Fitzgerald, Kavanagh & Partners were among a number of interested parties who made submissions in 2010 for the restoration of the cathedral. Initially Dr Hurley was appointed as the lead Design Architect. He was to work along with Colm Redmond, an architect from the prominent firm Fitzgerald, Kavanagh & Partners. The two men were entrusted to deliver a restored Cathedral that would not just be faithful to its original architectural splendour, but also to function as a place of worship that would be inspirational for a new era in the life of the Church in Ireland.

Dr Richard Hurley's appointment was based on his wide experience of church architecture. He had overseen a portfolio of over 150 church projects in Ireland, Britain, Africa and Australia, including St Patrick's College, Maynooth; St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane, Australia, and

Honan Chapel, University College Cork. Colm Redmond's architectural qualifications were augmented by a diploma in theology and experience in liturgical work.

Fitzgerald, Kavanagh & Partners were viewed as a larger, up and coming architectural firm with excellent systems to handle large complex projects.

The Architectural firm is a Conservation practice "Grade One" as accredited by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland. Ms. Ann Cuffe Fitzgerald has a Masters in Conservation and leads the firms Conservation Team, which also includes Colm Redmond, Margaret Gulphker and James Glancy. The combination of talents of Dr. Hurley and Ann Cuffe Fitzgerald was seen as providing a great synergy to the project. This was a confluence of skills, experience and talent and they worked well together until December 2011. On the 6th December of that year, following a meeting on the Cathedral, Dr Hurley passed away.

The loss of Dr Hurley was a major blow to the project. A period of reflection took place over Christmas 2011 in the wake of the respected architect's passing. One of the significant factors that assisted the progress of the re-ordering work was that Dr Hurley had outlined the vision for the Cathedral. The lead architect had committed his vision for the sanctuary area and how he intended to present a cathedral for the 21st Century.

Dr Hurley's strategy was not just to restore the Cathedral to the way it had been, but to reach out to the next generation of worshippers in Longford. This reaching out in the pastoral sense is at the heart of what the design team aim to achieve in the finished design.TM

Subsequently Colm Redmond of Fitzgerald Kavanagh & Partners Architects was appointed as Lead Architect. It was fortunate that Mr Redmond had been at every committee meeting and had also attended with Dr Hurley as he engaged with a variety of interest groups and the wider community of Longford.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS

Although Dr Hurley's passing presented many difficulties the experience of Mr Redmond and his close association with the project was invaluable. Mr Redmond said: "We were all left with a huge gap on 6th December, when Richard passed away. We thought very hard about how to bring that forward in terms of design and detail into the next stage."

Through design and construction the firm endeavoured to keep the same team in place while appraising the clients and interested parties of how the process was progressing.

With twenty-eight years experience behind them Fitzgerald Kavanagh have been involved in many impressive projects. They have a long history of working on Churches, and have also worked with many Religious Orders NGOs, including the Peter McVerry Trust, the National Council for The Blind and the Pallotine Fathers. They have worked on an extensive number of liturgical projects including churches in Ferns and the Archdiocese of Dublin as well as the centre for Theological Studies in Nairobi, East Africa.

Consultants

Others involved in the project included Peter Cox, a conservation consultant with conservation experts Carrig Consulting Ltd who was appointed as a special Consultant to the Structural Engineers and Architects. The team was complete with the appointments of Gerard Neville and Kevin Clancy of Punch Consulting Engineers. Susan Cormican of Arup Consulting Engineers and Fintan Bennett of Brendan Merry & Partners Chartered Quantity Surveyors & Project Managers.



ST. MEL PEDIMENT

The work on the Cathedral is in no small part thanks to the conservation survey carried out by building conservation consultancy Carrig. They are specialist in delivering a wide range of professional services to the built heritage and the construction industry.

Carrig gave reliable expert advice to the design team thanks to the ongoing research, promotion of best practice and guidance. The Carrig team provided an effective assessment of the Cathedral that allowed for the informed decisions to be made on the direction that the restoration project would take.

PUNCH Consulting Engineering was founded in Limerick in 1973 and work throughout the Island of Ireland on Structural Engineering contracts of varying size and complexity. PUNCH has been doing the work of conservation engineering since the practice was founded, before the description "conservation engineer" was ever in use. The PUNCH Conservation team comprises Kevin Clancy, Kevin Mullery, Ger Neville and Ger Madigan, providing a specialist service involving the refurbishment of protected structures or buildings in conservation areas, which require a sympathetic approach to changes in structure. PUNCH Conservation takes its responsibility towards health and safety seriously, particularly in the context of working in existing buildings and establishing the capacity of the existing structure to new loading conditions, as well as their assessment of temporary loading conditions during any structural alterations. In any project, it is design choices that inform what risks must be endured by the contractor and the end users. So they possess this crucial ability to influence safety early on in the design process.

Engineering company Arup were also an integral part of the team. Arup in Ireland was founded in 1946 when Ove Arup teamed up with a local architect for the design of the Irish national bus company headquarters in Dublin. Today they have over 300 staff based in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. They cover all disciplines and works with global colleagues on projects in Ireland and around the world.

Arup provide engineering design services such as structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, fire safety, health and safety. Susan Cormican

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leads the Mechanical and Electrical team from Arup. Colin Quinn is the primary mechanical engineer and Mark Reilly is the primary electrical engineer.

They play a major role in bringing a 19th Century building into the 21st Century, and as such is a mammoth undertaking. Susan Cormican says that the challenge is part of what makes the job so attractive: "It is certainly a change from a new office block in a city centre but that's what makes our job with Arup so interesting, variety in building types as well as the constant changes in technology. Fr Tom Healy and the St. Mel's Committee have impressed upon the whole team the importance of the project to the town and the people of Longford and the diocese."

There are new obligations on the design of the restoration due to the changes in the building techniques over the last 150 years. Fire safety in design has obviously changed significantly and means of escape and protection from the spread of smoke and flame mean that Arup have had to incorporate sufficient escape routes and some partitioning in the roof space. Architect Colm Redmond has been very sympathetic in incorporating this into the design.

Health and safety in design has also improved in recent times and as designers Arup specify equipment and systems where they can safely be installed and accessed later for maintenance.

The lighting, in particular, has been considered carefully in terms of location and liturgical ambiance.

ST. PATRICK PEDIMENT

The changes brought about by energy conservation legislation also have an effect on restoration of older buildings. The cathedral, as a



protected structure, is exempt from the Building Regulations but the engineers have incorporated as much thermal improvement to the fabric as possible without compromising the original building materials.

Ms Cormican says that the biggest changes will be in the lighting systems that will be energy efficient but will also capture the atmosphere essential to the Cathedral. The level of control and scene setting will allow the users to pre-set specific lighting scenes for specific liturgical occasions.

The project is about marrying what was lost with what remains and putting in place something for the future. This presents difficulties, but Ms Cormican says that in conjunction with the architectural team it has been a worthwhile challenge: "A lot of what we do as mechanical and electrical engineers is design systems that are not seen by people. The heating, ventilation and water services are there to function without being obtrusive so that the original aspects of the building are not changed. Lighting is one area where we have a wonderful opportunity to use modern technology to enhance the cathedral and Mark and the Architectural team have created an amazing design for internal and external lighting which will add to the atmosphere of every occasion in the Cathedral and the visual effect of such an important building to Longford."

From an engineering standpoint ensuring that there is adequate ventilation to the Cathedral was more challenging than expected. While the engineers need to provide sufficient ventilation for the full occupancy of the building they still had to make sure that the space is comfortable for a smaller occupancy, for example at a morning mass in winter. Typical techniques for modern buildings were not applicable in the case of St. Mel's and the team had "to take out the pen and paper and go back to basics to arrive at a solution".

The general view from outside the barriers was that work takes place at a painstaking pace. Engaging in such a significant task requires an inordinate amount of attention to detail. Arup are engaged in much

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more detail than usual. The project managers for St. Mel's, Niall Meagher and his team at Interactive Project Managers, have ensured that the designers were all well aware that this was not to be treated as a typical project and needed special attention to detail.

Brendan Merry & Partners are providing full Quantity Surveying services for the St. Mel's Cathedral project and were appointed by the St. Mel's Project Committee. Brendan Merry & Partners were established in 1968 and have worked with leading private companies and public bodies on a wide range of projects covering all sectors of the construction industry.

The conservation and restoration of St. Mel's Cathedral is one of the most unique projects in which Brendan Merry & Partners have ever been involved. The Surveyors concerned in the project have been captivated by the sheer scale and scope of the project. Overcoming the challenges the project has presented has provided immense satisfaction for all involved. We are now beginning to see the splendour restored to what was a truly magnificent place of worship for the people of Longford.



ORDINATION OF ST. MEL PEDIMENT

Ken Cribbin and Michael Mulryan were the Project Directors who worked on the initial stages of the project. Their service included preparing a Detailed Cost Plan for the project, allocating and setting out the Budget for the project which was also agreed with the Insurance Loss Adjusters. An Enabling Works Contract was procured which comprised stabilising

the existing structure with temporary steel, providing a temporary roof structure and removing statues and features.

Brendan Merry & Partners are currently involved with cost management of the project and carefully monitor the budgets to ensure the project can be delivered within the agreed budget. They also work closely with the Design Team, Client and Contractor making sure all expenditure is rigorously checked. Fintan Bennett is the Project Director currently responsible for the day to day management of the Project. The project requires continuous financial monitoring to keep pace with the programme and challenges for a project of this nature.

Contractors

Longford based company Gem Construction are half of the joint venture responsible for overseeing the biggest restoration project in Europe. Gem are leaders in their field for over thirty years. Their company comprises of Gem Construction, Gem Joinery and Gem Development and are established as one of Ireland's leading companies in the area of general building contracting, specialist bespoke joinery and development.

The other half of the team is Purcell construction. Established in 1988, Purcell Construction has grown to become a leading contractor with a proven track record in Conservation and in providing quality projects on time and in budget. Mr. Ronan Moore originally part of Purcell Construction is the Site Contracts Manager and has considerable experience on Conservation works.

At the outset Gem recognised the complexities involved with the project and logistical challenges it would present. The project is a mixture of new building works and extensive restoration works. To ensure these challenges were met, Gem Construction formed a joint venture with Purcell Construction of Galway. The collective knowledge of the two companies encompasses both large scale building and restoration projects and as such the team were confident in their skill levels to undertake and complete the prestigious project.

Gem Purcell Ltd made it a priority to employ local people when engaging the workforce required to undertake the restoration of St. Mel's. Large elements of the restoration works are very specialised and as such there are only a few companies in Ireland capable of carrying out these works using the techniques and methodologies that are required. Because of this specialised sub-contractors from outside the locality were necessary.

Gem Purcell Ltd is also engaging with local suppliers and hire companies for elements of plant and materials used on the project. As Gem is a Longford based company they were mindful of the local economy and the role that the restoration played in it.

Kevin Fay of Gem Purcell says: "The first time I saw the devastation to the interior of St. Mel's was the day after St. Stephen's Day. With a member from our local An Garda Síochána I stood at the West Transept external doors and peered into what used to be our Cathedral. I have to say it was an extremely emotional experience. Like so many other local parishioners who attended the Cathedral on a regular basis I was saddened

by what I witnessed that day. The weather was extremely cold with frost and snow on the ground; however the Cathedral was still warm from smouldering timbers that lay in heaps everywhere. The beautiful painted and gilded ceiling had collapsed and this void was filled by the grey sky outside yielding snow into the Cathedral. As the snow hit the hot fire damaged stone columns that stood proud for over 150 years, they began to pop and crack."



SACRED HEART PEDIMENT

He says that he is pleased that Gem Purcell can play a part in the restoration and that he look forward to the conclusion of the largest liturgical restoration project currently underway in Western Europe.

Future Proofing

Vatican II introduced a number of changes such as the place of the altar table and the facing of the priest to towards the congregation. The re-ordering for places of religious worship in a protected Structure is covered under the Planning and Development Act 2001. The planning authorities must take cognisance of the use of the building as a place of public worship.

As the Cathedral is a historic building of national importance there are constraints as to what the design team can do. The Cathedral is also a place of religious worship and so the Planning Act facilitates the re-ordering of the main sanctuary space in line with liturgical requirements.

The restoration of the Cathedral is a very complex project and involves multiple planning applications. There are many skilled trades people at any one time working on the site. A Conservation Strategy was set out for the Restoration which was based firmly on the "Charter of Venice" principles of conservation, retention of historic fabric, like for like replacement and minimum Intervention. Where new work is required the original techniques are to be employed. The fabric of the cathedral (for example the columns, the roof, the plaster work) is being restored to the original state and the cathedral will be recognised as the historic building that it had been before the fire.

There are opportunities presented in the re-ordering. The design team have taken into consideration that technology has moved on considerably since the original construction in the 1840s. An example of this is the under floor heating system. When the Cathedral opens in December 2014 it will have a heating system that will maintain a constant ambient heat that will help maintain the building's fabric.

There are other areas that benefit from modern advances, such as light and sound. The advent of new technology allowed the design

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team to address many issues that would have been inherent in the original design of the cathedral. For example, a difficulty with the drainage of the roof over the last 50 years became apparent when archive documents were reviewed. Although this will not be immediately apparent to the casual observer it is part of the works that secure the Cathedral into the future.

However, these changes will not alter the main view of the building. When people walk into the Cathedral on December 24th 2014 they will see the cathedral the way it was. One exception to this will be the Sanctuary area. One of the concerns of the previous reordering had been the position of the tabernacle. There is a general belief that the tabernacle should be placed in its original position at the centre of the apse. The original tabernacle was destroyed in the fire and the re-ordering will see a new tabernacle, designed by an eminent Irish artist, placed in the centre of the sanctuary.

Colm Redmond says that flexibility is part of the challenge of the restoration: "When we work on this project we consider the fact that it has a long and rich history. From its commencement in 1840, how it



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was stopped during the famine years, its recommencement in 1856, and the introduction of the portico in the 1890s. All the time it is responding to external factors.”

Over the years the records show that pulpits were erected then taken down, altars were changed, brass railings and gates introduced then removed. The Cathedral has an organic aspect that is always changing. Every generation has brought its own understanding of faith and community to the Cathedral. At the time of the fire St. Mel’s was a repository of that tradition in Longford. The structure is a receptacle for the memory of over a century and a half of meaning to the people of Longford. That is something that cannot be replicated, but can be augmented.

Mr Redmond said the theory that the design team are working to is that they should leave space for the next generation. Rather than introducing replicas of the art of previous generations they hope to leave room for future worshippers to express themselves. The statues in the alcoves along the side of the aisles were repository art and were not created exclusively for St. Mel’s. However, future commissions may allow the creation of Art unique to Longford.

The design team stress it is important that when mass goes walk into the cathedral that they are presented with good quality art that provides not just decoration but of meaning along with a unique finish to the cathedral.

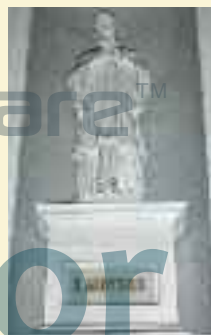
Works to Date

The work on the cathedral has progressed in phases. The nature of the work means that it progresses at a measured and ordered pace. The first phase after the clearing out and stripping down was a new roof structure, followed by the replacement Blue Bangor roof slates. The phasing is a logical sequence of events that allowed the design team to start work on some items that did not require planning permission. The slates and the columns, for example, did not require planning permission because they were like for like replacements.

Unusually a planning application was needed for the roofs alternative trusses. At the time that the cathedral was made a protected structure the roof was copper coated. However the original roof was slate and the design team opted to return to its original presentation.

Going through the archive documents, research found reference to the Blue Bangor slates from Wales. The design team were fortunate that that quarry was still operational. They have recently have recommended the production of large slates as a special order. The slates are 600mm by 900mm. Had the project been five or six years earlier they would not have been able to procure the slates, as the parent company only recently opened up a new section of the quarry allowing them to produce the larger slates.

The works conducted to date by Gem Purcell Ltd are primarily structural. The team have removed and replaced the existing limestone columns with Cregg Stone Ltd. They have removed and replaced



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the damaged stone pilasters to the wall elevations. It was very much an All Ireland project using new Irish limestone quarried in Carlow by Stone Development Co. and hand carved in Kilkenny and Clare. They also installed the new concrete ground floor slabs.

George O'Malley plastering have applied the internal lime plastering to the walls and the internal decorative plaster works to some cornices and arches. The lime plastering on the walls takes 12 months to carbonate.

On the exterior of the building they restored the existing fire damaged stonework to the North facade. They were responsible for the installation of a new perimeter water main to the Cathedral and the provision of a new lightning protection system.

At the peak of construction over 125 people were employed directly on the project with many more employed indirectly through the supply chain of materials and specialist goods. The trades involved are varied, but very specialised for certain areas of work including demolitions, stone masons, concrete workers, steel fixers, lime plastering and decorative cornice works, roofers, steeplejacks, lightning protection and archaeologists.

The work on the Cathedral continues. Fr Tom Healy said "The task of assembling our Design Team was obviously a key step on the journey of restoring St. Mel's. For the Design Team to choreograph the many elements of this mammoth restoration has been very complex and intricate. Thankfully the fruits of their efforts are now coming good as we watch the restoration unfold and look forward in anticipation to a wonderful completion."

Planning Considerations:

Colm Redmond – Fitzgerald Kavanagh + Partners

The 2009 fire caused extensive damage to the roof, walls, plasterwork, columns, marble decoration and statues in the Cathedral. Much of the timber objects, such as the roof structure and seats as well as the organ were destroyed. The exterior of the building experienced minimal damage however the fire caused the roof of the cathedral to completely collapse further damaging the interior due to falling debris and hot liquefied roof material.

Extensive investigations were carried out to record and assess the historic fabric of St. Mel's Cathedral in order to promote a suitable strategy for repair. The project restoration context has been to restore the cathedral to its former glory.

The restoration of the Cathedral has proceeded in a number of phases and a corresponding series of Statutory Consents sought by way of Planning Applications or Declarations under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002.

The design team identified a number of elements which required immediate attention. These elements formed the subject of a Section 57 application...

The urgency of the works was informed by two aspects:

- Ongoing endangerments of elements of the structure which particularly contribute to its architectural, artistic, social and historical importance.
- Public safety concerns due to the presence of high level elements in unsatisfactory structural condition.

The conservation and restoration works were carried out on a basis of a like for like replacement and repair, respecting the conservation principles of Minimum Intervention and respect of Historic Fabric.

However there are some instances where it has been considered appropriate to propose alterations or to revert to an original design or use of materials which was in place prior to the date the Cathedral was made a protected Structure.

Following meetings with the Local Authority Planning and Conservation officers it was agreed that as the building is a Protected Structure work to the interior, which would not normally require planning permission, and is not considered to be like for like replacement, requires an application for Planning Permission.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000, refers to instances where a Declaration may be sought for the carrying out of works to a protected structure, which is applicable in this instance. This is known as a Section 57 Declaration.

- **Section 57** – refers to declarations to be issued by the planning authority with regard to works which do not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific social or technical interest.
- **Section 58** – refers to the duty of owners and occupiers of protected structures to ensure that the structure, or any element of it which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, is not endangered.

Section 57 (exempted development):

The first phase of the reconstruction work to the Cathedral consisted of the like for like replacement of building elements, respecting the conservation principles of Minimum Intervention and Respect of Historic Fabric. These elements related to the replacement or repair of existing stone columns and pilasters cornice, window surrounds and cills and the replacement of original lime plaster work to interior walls. A "Declaration of Exempted Development under Section 57" of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2002, was sought from Longford

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Town Council on the 22nd December 2011 and granted on the 22nd March 2012. This allowed these works to advance at an early stage.

Planning Application No. 1:

The Second phase of the work consisted of the provision of the new roof and new floor to the nave and side aisles. These proposals formed the basis of the first Planning Application which was lodged with Longford Town Council on the 1st of February 2012. A decision to grant permission was issued on the 27th March 2012, with a Final Grant of Permission with Conditions issued by An Bórd Pleanála on the 13th of September 2012. The Final Grant of Permission from An Bórd Pleanála differed from the application in that the Roof Structure was to be carried out reconstructing the historic Queen Post Roof to the nave whilst allowing the bottom boob of the truss to be a “glu laminated” timber beam.

Planning Application No. 2:

The Third Phase of the reconstruction work is on-going at present and relates mainly to the interior of the Cathedral and includes the fitting of windows and the cleaning of the external stonework and associated works. These proposals formed the basis of the second Planning Application which was lodged with Longford Town Council on the 3rd August 2012. A decision to grant permission was issued on the 27th November 2012, with a Final Grant of Permission with Conditions issued by An Bord Pleanála on the 24th of April 2013.

Planning Application No 3:

The Fourth Phase application forms the Third Planning Application and was lodged on the 28th of August 2013. It relates to the exterior of the Cathedral which includes external hard and soft landscaping, car parking, vehicular entrances, work to site boundaries.

The Section 57 Declaration Application

As part of the assessment of the structure at St. Mel's Cathedral, which it became evident that significant parts of the structure were in need of conservation and restoration, having been damaged by the fire of December 2009. The application for a Section 57 Declaration,

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related to like for like replacement of a section of the works involved in the restoration of the Cathedral. This facilitated important and necessary sections of work to be undertaken. This was the first stage and it was envisaged that there would be other applications for the remaining section of works. The application referred to the following elements:

- Replacement or repair of existing stone Columns and Pilasters
- Replacement or repair of existing stone Cornice or high level coping at eaves of roof to nave.
- Replacement or repair to stone work at window surrounds and window cills.
- Removal or "de-frassing" of loose stone to interior of random rubble walls.
- Replacement of original lime based plaster work to interior walls, window surround, arch surrounds, string courses and cornice.

Planning Application No. 1:

The main items in this planning application related to the following:

Reinstatement of roof structure and roof finish:

The original pitched roof structure dating from 1854-1856 was constructed in timber, with queen post trusses spanning the nave and king post trusses spanning the 2 no. transepts. A mono-pitch roof spanned the side aisles, with its high point at the external masonry walls, sloping down towards the nave walls to allow for clerestory windows. The roof structures to the front and back annexes consisted of simple A-frame pitched roofs. All roofs were originally covered with slates and had lead gutters and cast iron downpipes. Some of these were later changed to copper gutters and PVC downpipes. During works in 1996, due to timber decay caused by water ingress, the roof structure (and plaster ceiling) to the side aisles was largely replaced in keeping with the original design. At this time the roofs of the side aisles, transepts, front and back



annexes, which are concealed from view by a tall parapet wall, were covered with a single ply roofing membrane. The roof above the nave which is visible was covered with copper sheet.

All roof structures except that above the portico were completely destroyed in the fire (total loss) and a temporary roof was put in place to protect the building fabric.

As little was left of the original roof structure (except the portico roof) and as the structure itself is not visible from the inside or outside it was initially proposed to rebuild the primary support structure with steel trusses in the location of the original timber trusses. The new roof structure was to keep the profile of the original roof.

The design team preferred steel for the following reasons:

- Full historic replication is not usually appropriate in situations of almost total loss
- Steel will have shorter construction time than timber hence less exposure to elements for remaining structure.
- Procurement of timbers in appropriate sections and lengths on a like for like basis would be problematic in terms of time and quality particularly with the correct moisture content.
- Suitable timber for trusses is a scarce resource and sustainability criteria require that it should be used for timber replacement or repair in existing timber structures only.
- Steel due to its material strength allows for a slightly different configuration of the structural members which in turn enables the installation of proper walkways through the roof space. This would improve maintenance access and aid compliance with current Health & Safety standards
- It was proposed that the substructure for both roof covering and plaster ceilings will be made of timber.

The roofs were originally covered with natural slates. Receipts exist for Penrhyn Welsh Queen ton slates in the original construction. These were replaced in 1996 by copper sheeting (nave) and single ply roofing membrane (all others). These roof coverings were completely

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destroyed by the fire. It was proposed to revert back to the original roof covering, slate, which is a historic roofing material in Ireland and appropriate for this type of building. Large format slates (900x600mm) were proposed on the exposed high level nave roof and a smaller format (600x300mm) on the other roofs which are hidden behind the parapet wall.

It was proposed to keep the original slope of the high level nave roof to 22.5° and the original roof configuration as shown on the surviving 1984 survey drawings by W. Cantwell. Some changes were incorporated to the lower roofs in order to deal with water ingress problems that had become apparent over the history of the building. These were mainly due to the fact that the mono-pitch roof over the side aisles sloped inwards towards the high level clerestory windows of the nave. This configuration necessitated a valley gutter running all along the facade of the nave wall, discharging the rainwater from both the side aisle roof and the nave roof via 8 no. internal open lead channel gutters passing through the roof space of the side aisles. Any problems such as blockage of these gutters lead to water damage to the decorative plaster ceilings beneath which is evident on pre-fire photos. It was proposed to eliminate these internal gutters. This required cutting through the roof of the side aisles in 4 no. locations – each side – to form paired gables to new wide channel copper gutters. As these roof sections are hidden behind the parapet wall, the proposed changes will not be visible externally from the site or from viewpoints. The proposed works will future-proof the Cathedral for the increased rainwater falls and storm events that are expected in the future. The original downpipe and hopper locations will be re-used. It is also proposed to install snowguards on both the nave roof as well as the roofs of the side aisles to prevent blockage of gutters by snow. Valley gutters will be in copper, external gutters and downpipes in cast-iron.

Before the destructive fire of December 2009 different types of floor construction from various dates were to be found in the Cathedral. The original configuration pre-fire was as follows:

- A concrete slab dating back to circa 1890 formed the floor for the sanctuary, the central aisle and the rear aisle (along the



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Southern wall at the main entrance to the nave and side aisles). The slab in the sanctuary area was resting on brick vaults whereas the slabs of the central aisle and the rear aisle were supported by steel beams, partly built into the concrete, and suspended on rubble stone piers.

- The floors of the three entrance porches accessed from the main portico were made of 4 inch open mix concrete (No change proposed to these areas).
- A concrete slab dating back to 1930 existed in the 2 no. transepts and underneath the side altars in the side aisles (No change proposed to these areas).
- In 1977 a further concrete slab was added in the sanctuary area on top of the existing concrete slab and floor finish as part of reordering works.
- The floors in all remaining areas were constructed in timber. In the nave and the side aisles the long spans were supported by timber beams on rubble stone piers.

All timber floors were completely destroyed by the fire and needed to be replaced. The steel beams supporting the suspended concrete slabs of the central aisle and the rear aisle warped badly in the excessive heat of the fire and were propped as they had lost their structural strength. The supporting rubble stone piers were also badly damaged in the fire, particularly at the top where the stone has cracked, and are in poor repair.

The concrete itself was of poor quality and relied on the damaged steel beams for tensile strength. As a result the structure of these suspended concrete slabs was compromised. The Design Team came to the conclusion that the damaged central aisle and rear aisle could not be repaired and had to be completely replace. The remainingTM concrete floors in sanctuary, porches and transepts are structurally sound.

It was proposed to remove the damaged central and rear aisle including their supporting steel beams, rubble stone piers/concrete plinths and mosaic floor finish. Prior to any removal the surviving

mosaic finishes were recorded, carefully removed and boxed and stored for possible future re-use.

A new 300mm deep reinforced concrete flat slab has been constructed in the nave and the side aisles, supported on 350mm diameter reinforced concrete columns spaced at 7m intervals on new reinforced concrete pad foundations. The structure is independent of the masonry walls in line with conservation principles. The floor sub slab is finished 150mm below the existing floor finish level to allow for a new floor build-up, including insulation, and floor finishes which was the subject of the second Planning Application.

The colonnades of limestone columns forming the nave was one of the architectural glories of the Cathedral. They were also a bravura display of Irish craftsmanship. There are a total of 28 no. Ionic columns in the main body of the church, 26 no. of which support the roof structure: 22 no. the roof of the nave and 4 no. part of the roof of the transepts. These columns were erected during the first building phase (1840-1846) and are constructed entirely in limestone, including the capitals.

There are a further 2 no. Ionic columns to a very similar design at the central entrance into the nave which were erected at a later stage, during the second building phase (1854-1863) to support the high level choir gallery. Probably due to a shortage of funds or the unavailability of stone these 2 no. columns were only partly constructed in limestone, namely the bottom drum. The upper sections are constructed in brick and plastered to imitate limestone. Due to their location, the capitals were of a different design, with a two axis symmetry rather than one.

All 28 no. columns were badly damaged in the fire to the point that they could not be repaired and had to be fully replaced. This work was the subject of a Section 57 application. It was proposed as part of planning application no1 to remove the remains of the 2 no. composite columns at the central entrance into the nave and to replace these entirely in limestone to match the other columns.

The inner face of the walls to the main worship space was articulated into bays by pilasters which were aligned with the colonnade. These were – like the Ionic columns – constructed entirely in limestone. The replication of these pilasters, which were heavily damaged in the fire, was also the subject of the Section 57 application. The 2 no. pilasters that were located at the central entrance into the nave, behind the 2 no. composite columns to the choir gallery were not limestone. These pilasters were constructed in timber, faced in plaster and lath and were completely destroyed in the fire. It was proposed to reinstate these 2 no. pilasters in limestone to match the other pilasters throughout.

Works to the Cathedral Interior areas also included a redesign of the Sanctuary to the design proposed by the late Richard Hurley to create a Cathedral for the 21st Century. The interior work includes the provision of a new organ. The new 32 stop pipe organ, will consist of metal and timber pipes in a hardwood enclosure, suspended from the transept arches and Tiered choir stall. It will be one of the largest Organs in the country and has been designed and manufactured by leading organ manufactures Rufatti of Padua, Italy.

The floor finishes to the Sanctuary area and circulation spaces will be polished limestone, in a light cream colour to contrast with the blue grey limestone of the columns and pilasters. The finish below congregation seating is to be solid hardwood flooring above the under-floor heating.

New decorative stained glass to artist's design to fourteen arched windows and twenty four semi-circular windows are to be fitted to the side aisles and nave clerestory level, four of the original stained glass windows, two of which are by the Harry Clarke Studio have been conserved and will be reinstated in their original location.

A major part of the interior work is the replacement of the decorative vaulted ceiling to the Apse, nave, and coffered ceilings to aisles and transepts. This is to consist of lime plaster on riven laths; the details



Longford Cathedral Times Past

*Remembering
the former
glory of the
Cathedral*



A SNAPSHOT OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS

are being replicated from historic photographs, drawings and surviving remnants. The surviving architectural drawings from W H Byrne of 1962 indicate the ceilings in this section of the building.

Internal doors and joinery at original locations will be in hardwood and treated softwood, replicated from historic photographs, drawings and surviving remnants. The exterior doors will be new panelled hardwood doors to a design based on the classical design of the Cathedral. The salvaged stained glass fanlights will be re-instated to portico and transept doors.

Archive drawings indicate that there had been timber lobbies against the doors to the transepts, as part of the heating strategy for the Cathedral it is proposed to provide lobbies in these areas. However to minimise the visual impact these are to be constructed in Structural glass at East and West transepts:

A Lift is being provided in the North East corner of the Sacristy to provide disabled access to the upper floors of this section of the Cathedral. The original timber stairs to the sacristy area are to be replicated from historic evidence, with central mild steel support to Engineer's detail. Finish to stair treads and handrail to be hardwood, finish to stringer, rails and posts in painted softwood, all to historic detail. A New stairs from ground floor to crypt level is to be provided in East Sacristy area, connecting for the first time the sacristy area to the crypt. The space at crypt level below the main nave had been used as storage space. This provided considerable combustion load when the 2009 fire occurred. For fire safety purposes second means of escape is to be provided from the crypt. With minimal structural intervention, the stairs between the East and Central vestibules has been extended to the crypt level and an opening formed to connect to the crypt below the main nave.

A major part of the vision for the restoration of the Cathedral is the aim to increase the use of the ancillary spaces of the Cathedral as a resource for Diocesan and Parish activities. In order to facilitate access to the upper floors of this section of the Cathedral, for wheel chair

users, parents with buggies, older people and universal access a lift is required. The lift is to be located in the east entrance vestibule and will provide access from ground floor to the first floor level above the east vestibule and the higher first floor level above the central vestibule. Investigation work and trial pits have been carried out at the perimeter walls and foundations. The location of the lift has taken in to account the steps in the walls at various levels.

The lift is to be a glass lift car with a glazed shaft and structural steel supports. The design intent is that the lift is transparent and light in appearance. It is proposed that this modern intervention will encourage the use of the upper rooms. The history of the Cathedral is one of a series of interventions and renewals. This intervention will be designed to be reversible and constructed to minimize the effect on the historic fabric.



A SNAPSHOT OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS

The works will also include the installation of a fully addressable Fire Detection and Alarm System. This has been designed to provide the most appropriate level of detection and alarm for the Cathedral. The system will extend to all parts of the building including all habitable areas, storage rooms and service ducts. The Fire Alarm and Detection System, together with a high level of compartmentation to roof voids and ancillary spaces, an extended mains water system and fire hydrants and the development of a site specific Fire Safety Plan with the Cathedral guardians and the local fire department, form the basis of the fire strategy for the Cathedral.

Planning Application no. 3 relates to the exterior of the Cathedral the main aspects of this proposal include the following;

- The creation of an urban space or “Gathering Space” to the front of the Cathedral, comprising a contemporary architectural setting for the building and forming pedestrian connections to the town whilst also acting as “as a transitional space” to the front of the Cathedral.
 - New boundary conditions are to be created through the provision of a 14 metre sliding gate across the urban space of “Gathering Space” with the relocation and setting back of the Presbytery railings and piers and the ramp access and gateway along St. Mel’s Road. These gates and railings are to be detailed in a manner to respect the character of the existing boundary treatment.

The proposal includes the enhancement of pedestrian routes from Chapel Lane to the front of the Cathedral and from St. Mel’s Road at the Family Centre to the Cathedral.

A limited number of car parking spaces, including bicycle space, are to be provided to the rear of the site. This takes in to account the limited size of the site, the provision of access to the rear of the presbytery and the desire to retain some element of soft landscaping on the site.





Sacred Art and Architecture

Where does art begin? In the case of Saint Mel's Cathedral it all began in the immediate aftermath of the fire on Christmas day 2009, when the people of Longford, and anyone from across the globe who had an association with the Cathedral, began to research their memories and began to recall their personal images of that beautiful building. Some reached out for books and written histories, others went to the computer and the internet. All sought a link; all sought either a personal image in the mind or an old photograph.

Out of this search came stories that were recorded by the media. Some wrote their ideas down recording a mixture of memories and emotions relating to the loss of their great Cathedral. Children and adults were inspired to write poetry and to create other works of art recording their feelings of loss and their feelings of hope for the future. It is therefore, hoped that the spirit that inspired both young and old to write; to paint and perhaps even to weave their thoughts into a fabric, will also inspire the individual artists commissioned to create works of sacred art for the Cathedral.



The sculptor Ken Thompson is deftly carving with chisel and mallet the images of the Passion of Christ into fourteen blocks of stone. He works by hand, carefully guiding the images of Christ and Pontius Pilate into being from the mute stone. His studio is perched in fields of barley above the cliffs of the Atlantic coast.

The ceramic artist Laura O'Hagan is working on beautiful tiles of cobalt, turquoise and aquamarine. These she will shape into the waters of life mosaic floor that will surround the Baptismal font. Her studio is a part of a modern factory unit on an industrial estate in county Wicklow.

Meanwhile in the wide open spaces of the midlands Tom Glendon is engaged in the sacred task of carving the Altar of the Eucharist from a single block of white marble. Tom is also working on the beautiful octagonal white marble baptismal font in which future generations of Longford people will be baptised. The font is designed to facilitate both infant and adult baptism and will be placed in a central location at the entrance to the Nave of the Cathedral.

The Dominican priest father Kim En Joong is working in his studio outside Paris on the design and the selection of glass for the art glass windows on the east side of the Cathedral. Father Kim's windows are a feature of many ancient and modern churches, cathedrals, abbeys and convents across Europe. When he came to visit Longford he was very moved by Clonmacnoise. He loved the wide, ever-changing sky above the Shannon and the wide open reaches of the bog landscape. His windows will work with the dawn and early morning light, scattering a rainbow of pure colour into the Cathedral interior.

Angela Godfrey is currently working on a design in carved oak for the Bishop's Cathedra. Angela has a great understanding of wood carving and of liturgical art.

Her design for the Cathedra will express the apostolic inheritance, which each new Bishop receives at his Ordination, of teacher of the Faith, servant and leader of God's people.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS

James Scanlon, with lead and deeply coloured glass, is working on the windows to the west. The golden glow of the evening light coming through these windows will cast shards of rich colour into the Nave. James is one of the foremost stained glass artists working in Europe today. He works using traditional techniques of lead and glass that Harry Clarke would have known. However like Clarke he is always experimenting and his concepts and use of colour are of our own time. His work was first given international recognition by the master glazier and stained glass artist Patrick Reyntiens. Patrick had worked with the artist John Piper on the great Baptistry window in Coventry Cathedral.

Imogen Stuart has her studio in an old carriage house near the James Joyce Tower in Sandycove. Here she has worked for many years producing beautiful sculptures in timber and stone. Here she is surrounded by maquettes of famous past commissions while she creates new forms. She is currently working on the design for the Sanctuary Cross, the Ambo and the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle will occupy a focal position in the restored Cathedral.

Imogen has developed the design for the Tabernacle in collaboration with Vicki Donovan the silversmith. Vicki works in an old mill on the banks of the River Nore. There, in the peace of that fertile valley of trees and lush water meadows, close to Jerpoint Abbey, she creates her beautiful burnished works of art. Vicki and her father Peter Donovan have recently completed a major commission for a Tabernacle in the Church of Saint Geneviève in New Orleans.

The late Dr Richard Hurley F.R.I.A.I. had an architect's vision for the liturgical reordering of the interior. He saw the restored interior of the historic Cathedral and he sensed the play of coloured light from Kim en Joong and James Scanlon's windows on the curved surface of the columns, above the pristine form of the simple white Altar cube. Richard knew each of the artists he recommended personally and he knew that, given the opportunity, each one would bring something special to the sacred life of the Cathedral. He saw the great organ suspended in the east, heard the choir. He had the permanent design

for his proposed liturgical reordering approved by the Cathedral authorities in September 2011 two months before his unexpected death on the 6th December 2011.

The architect Colm Redmond of Fitzgerald Kavanagh will be working closely with the artists in the final stages of the Cathedral programme. He will be there as each of their individual works is permanently installed in the Cathedral. He will oversee the return of the restored Harry Clarke windows into their original openings. He will also be responsible for the installation of the great organ which will be suspended on the colonnade between the east side aisle and the east transept. The great organ of Saint Mels is the work of the Italian master international organ builders Fratelli Ruffatti.

All will be revealed on the day of the consecration when the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois celebrates a joyful and dignified liturgy amid the plumes of incense that will rise around the newly anointed Altar, and the choir raise their voices in unison with the great organ, and perhaps the clouds will part for a moment to release beams of glorious sunlight through Kim en Joong's windows. Then will the gathered people of God see the full beauty of the restored Cathedral. Then will they witness the vision of Bishop Colm O'Reilly and all who have worked together with him, as volunteers and professionals, to achieve a beautiful place of worship worthy of God.

Alexander M. White F.R.I.A.I.

September 2013



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The Future

On the morning of Christmas Day 2009 St. Mel's Cathedral was gutted by fire. Today this is just another milestone in the continuing story of this remarkable structure.

Bishop Colm O'Reilly said: "A Cathedral is a lot more than an elegant and beautiful building. Always remember that any church, large or small, is first and foremost a place for prayer and for worship of God." The bishop also acknowledged that St. Mel's will be a Cathedral for the future as well as for the present.



Even when it was stripped back from its decorative beauty the 19th Century building had an imposing majesty. The 28 columns, originally quarried in Newtowncashel before being brought to Rathcline where the stonemasons gave them their distinctive finish, have been replaced with limestone from Carlow. This, however, will not diminish

what this building means to the people of Longford.

It may have been denuded of the sculptures and decorative metalwork, but even at its lowest point the bare building had a magnificence that confounds the blackened fire damaged stone. Although much of the marble in the building was destroyed, the traces that remained alluded to its former splendour.

The relationship of architecture to liturgical practice is at the heart of planning for the Cathedral's



future. Liturgy is the public expression of people's communion with God and the most important activity a Christian can pursue it that of worship. It is the focus of our creative endeavours, whichever form they take.

The Christmas Day fire at St. Mel's Cathedral was an unprecedented catastrophe for the parish community. A huge amount of energy has been invested since then by the Project Committee, Diocesan Committees and Design Team to ensure that St. Mel's will be restored worthily and sympathetically, in keeping with the heritage aspect of the building, as a place of welcome and worship for present and future generations.



However, the restoration project has ironically afforded an opportunity to take a comprehensive overview of the building and to enhance many of its features for the future. Among the modern interventions is the installation of lifts at the front and rear. This gives improved access to the ancillary rooms to make them more usable for parish purposes.

The St. Mel's of the future will meet all modern standards in fire protection and health and safety regulations. There will be many improvements in the areas of toilet facilities, wheelchair access, insulation, ventilation, CCTV, webcam, sound, heat and light.

The thought and planning that has gone into the future layout is informed by guidelines from Rome and the post Vatican Two liturgy of today. Diocesan Committees in consultation with the Architects have developed a new vision that includes the relocation of the Baptismal Font, Tabernacle, Altar and Choir Gallery.

The Baptismal Font will be centrally located inside the front door. It will be a prominent and constant reminder to all about the baptismal calling, membership of the family of the Church and the challenge to live the Gospel each day. A newly crafted Tabernacle will be located in a very central and prominent position to honour the reserved Eucharist.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE RESTORATION PROCESS

Many modern Churches are built 'in the round'. This serves the liturgy of today as celebrant and congregation can closely interact. The experience at the Cathedral Centre at St. Mel's College has achieved this ideal and in the renewed St. Mel's the altar will be brought forward to try to achieve this closer interaction.

The Choir gallery of the 1980s was a modern intervention and after much consideration, it was thought that the heritage aspect of the building is best retained without this gallery. It is now also considered preferential to have the choir in the midst of the congregation. The new location for the choir will be in the east aisle near the altar while the new Grand Organ will be a particular feature of the renewed St. Mel's.

Stained glass windows are synonymous with Church architecture and are a wonderful way of harnessing natural light to beautify a building's interior. Two renowned stained glass artists have been commissioned to craft windows for the future. The Stations of the Cross will be another beautiful feature of the Cathedral and are currently being crafted by artist Ken Thompson at his Cork studio.



The external environment of the Cathedral will also be greatly enhanced with improved lighting, landscaping and quality surfaces more worthy of the space. Plans are in place to link the forecourt to Dublin Street, thereby enhancing the relationship between town and church.

All associated with the restoration of St. Mel's Cathedral are mindful that it is much more than an historic building. It is a living Church to which countless thousands have come in the past and will come in the future to encounter their God. Despite the ravages of fire on that fateful Christmas morning, the restored St. Mel's Cathedral will continue to offer a place of quiet and stillness and prayer for hundreds of years to come.

When the design team complete the restoration and the congregation assemble in the 25th of December 2014 it will be in a fully functioning cathedral. Architect Colm Redmond's work will be completed, but his connection with the work will remain.

"Although our work is finished there will still be much to be completed in the cathedral. There will be art work that needs to be developed, the plans for the side altar and the crypt are to be finalised. There is room for the expressions of the future generations," Mr Redmond said.

The future Cathedral will again be an oasis of tranquillity, a wonderful spiritual place where it is possible to escape the chaos and madness of everyday life. More than bricks and mortar it will be a place imbued with over a century and a half of community memories.

Bishop Colm O'Reilly has said that the history of the great building has seen moments of night and dawn. Recalling the illustrious history of the building the Bishop pointed out that when the sod was turned on the site in 1840 there were 40,000 people in attendance. We now look forward to a future when the magnificent structure is in a position to host visitors who wish to view this remarkable symbol of rebirth.

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ARTISTS

Imogen Stuart



The artist Imogen Stuart is seen here with the silversmith Vicki Donovan. They are relaxing following a Tabernacle design meeting with the chairperson of the St. Mel's Art Procurement Committee Alexander M. White.

Imogen Stuart



This is a detail of Imogen Stuart's carved timber sculpture of the Madonna and the human child in St. Mary's Oratory, Maynooth.

Laura O'Hagan



This is a detail of ceramic artist Laura O'Hagan's baptistery wall panel of the self-sacrificing pelican in the Parish Church in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Her waters of life mosaic floor panel will be a foil to Tom Glendon's beautiful white marble octagonal baptismal font.

Er Kim en Joong



This is a detail of an abstract art glass panel by the artist Father Kim en Joong produced in the stained glass studios of master glazier Wilhelm Derix. The panel is a fine example of the art work produced in the Derix studios and was photographed in an exhibition of Kim en Joong's art work in the International Centre for Stained Glass in Chartres.

involved in the restoration process

Angela Godfrey



The sculptor Angela Godfrey is seen here in her studio. Angela has worked on many very important liturgical commissions here and in England with the architect the late Dr Richard Hurley.

James Scanlon



This is a detail of a James Scanlon stained glass window in the Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Anne Cork. It was here that James worked for the first time with the architect the late Dr Richard Hurley, who was responsible for the liturgical reordering of the Cathedral.

Fr Kim en Joong



The artist James Scanlon and Father Tom Healy the Cathedral Administrator discuss the practical matters of river navigation on the Shannon at Clonmacnoise Marina. This photograph was taken in June 2012 during a visit by the artists Kim en Joong and James Scanlon to Clonmacnoise and Longford Cathedral.

Fr Kim en Joong



This is the ever changing sky over Clonmacnoise that the artist Father Kim en Joong found so inspirational during his visit. James Scanlon a Kerry farmer's son was alive with a barrage of questions for Father Healy regarding local farming techniques as we cruised by boat the *Shannon Callows* up from Shannon Bridge to Clonmacnoise.

The People ...

St. Mel's Cathedral Project Committee

Bishop Colm O'Reilly
Seamus Butler
Fr. Tom Healy
John Nugent
Fr. Sean Casey
Carol Farrell

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