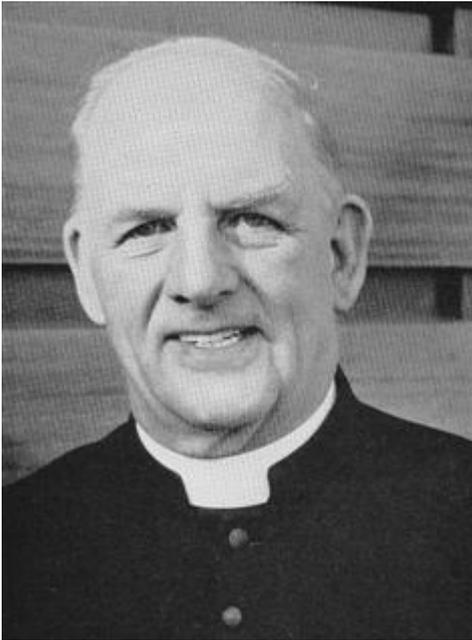


Canon Thomas McGarvey



In February 1956, Canon McGarvey was appointed to serve as the Parish priest of Kilsyth who, like his predecessor, had been parish priest in the neighbouring parish of Bonnybridge.

Very Rev. Thomas Canon McGarvey was born in Uddingston on 1st December 1896. He received his early education in Broxburn and his secondary education at Blairs in Aberdeen.

During the First World War he served with the Armed Forces as a gunner in the Royal Artillery. He studied for the priesthood in the Scots College, Rome from 1920 to 1926, and was ordained there during his final year in 1925.



His first posting as assistant Priest was to St Patrick's Edinburgh where he served from 1926 to 1930. From there he was transferred to St Anthony's Polmont near Falkirk from 1930 to 1936.

His first appointment as Parish Priest was to St Kenneth's Lochore where he served the whole of the War Years and more from 1936 to 1949. As he did not have a Chalice of his own the people of Lochore paid for him to have a second hand one for his presentation which his family then had gilded with gold from melted down family jewellery.

From 1949 to 1956 Canon McGarvey was the Parish Priest of St Joseph's Bonnybridge. His last posting was here to the Parish of St Patrick's Kilsyth where he was Parish Priest from 1956 until his retirement in 1972.

Canon McGarvey was the first native born priest to serve as parish priest in Kilsyth. During the early years of his charge here, Canon McGarvey, in his own unobtrusive way, sought to know his parish and its needs, both spiritual and temporal. He turned his attention to the youth of the parish and saw the need for some established organisation to cater for the development of young people, both boys and girls, in the early teenage years. With this in mind he founded the first Catholic Boy Scout Troop in Kilsyth, and with it the attendant Cubs for the very young boys. At the same time, he promoted the Guides and Brownies for girls, and so originated what is still to-day a very worthwhile and rewarding part of Kilsyth social life for the young.

The young men's club, under the expert leadership of his curates, was given a renewed lease of life in the Boys' Club. This club filled a much-needed want for this age group, and the activities carried on under its aegis reflected great credit on all who took part.

Since very little had been done to the church since the fire in 1954, it was now looking very dilapidated and the need for a new church was now very evident. Nevertheless, a beginning on the new church could not be made until a substantial sum of money could be provided, and so Canon McGarvey set about raising funds for the building. He organised socials on a regional basis so that each district in the parish would play its part in this effort. These were very successful and engendered a spirit of unanimity which has been maintained ever since in all the activities promoted for the raising of funds for the new church.

When Canon McGarvey retired in 1972 a council house was found for him in Johnston Avenue Kilsyth, close by two sisters, Eileen and Lucinda Robinson. Eileen had been sacristan in St Patrick's for many years for Canon McGarvey and knew him very well. The two spinster sisters looked after Canon McGarvey in his retirement and nursed him through his eventual ill health right through to his death on 6th Oct 1987. Shortly before his death and by this time confined to a wheelchair Canon McGarvey was able to celebrate the diamond jubilee of his ordination.

The overarching legacy of Canon McGarvey is that during his time he was able to fund and build the current St Patrick's Church to the design of Gillespie Kidd and Coia which is now a part of Scotland's architectural heritage and which remains a modern looking building 50 years after its construction, providing a magnificent space in which to celebrate Mass.

Some Memories of Canon Thomas McGarvey



Canon McGarvey's cohort at Blairs Seminary College in Aberdeen 1913/14



Canon McGarvey at Blairs Seminary College Aberdeen 1913-14.
Canon McGarvey is 3rd from left in the second row.



Canon McGarvey at a wedding in St Patrick's Halls



Canon McGarvey at St Patrick's sports field with Stevie Chalmers, Lisbon Lion, of Celtic Football Club and the Glasgow Cup c1965.



Canon McGarvey receives a donation from the Kearney Celtic Supporters Club who were on a visit from New Jersey.



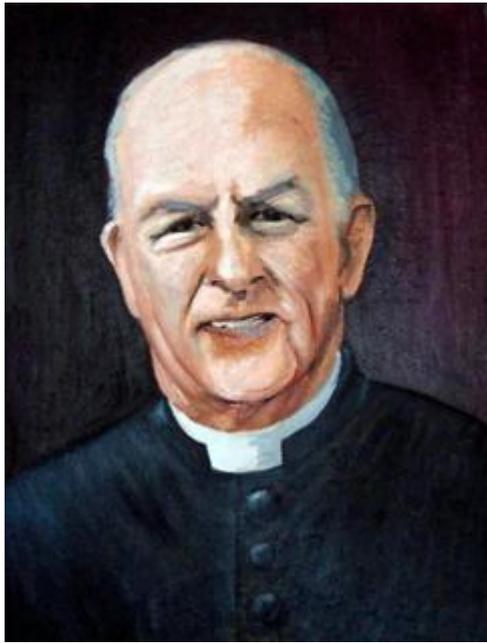
Canon McGarvey with members of Kearny New Jersey Celtic Supporters



With Miss Alice Kelly being presented with a Papal Blessing to mark the occasion of her retiral as parish organist after 40 years of service to St Patrick's Parish



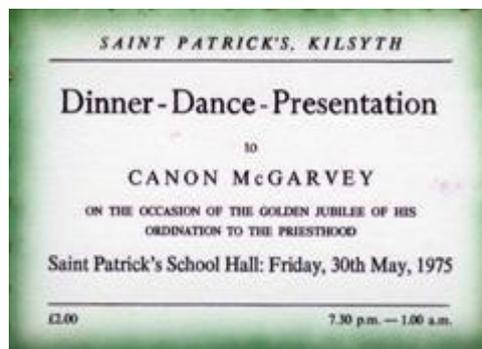
Canon McGarvey and Fr. David Brown on a trip to Lourdes



A portrait of Canon McGarvey by Sr Clement



On a pilgrimage to Lourdes



Invite to The Canon's Golden Jubilee Dinner Dance



Canon McGarvey – a gunnery officer during WWI



Canon McGarvey with (we think) his brother.



Canon McGarvey a student for the priesthood at Scot's College Rome after the 1st WW



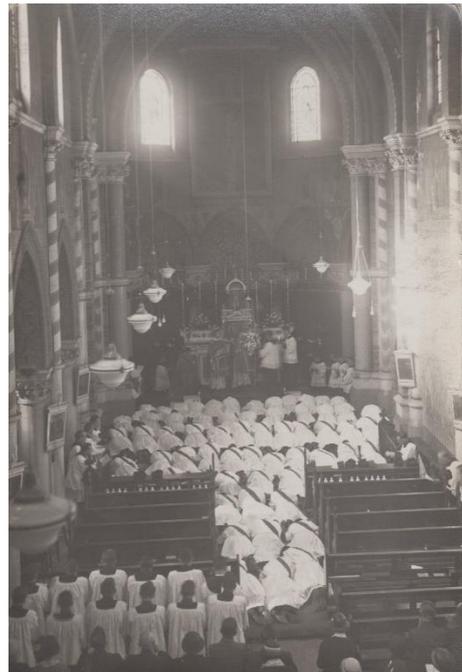
Canon McGarvey a student for the priesthood at Scot's College Rome after the 1st WW



Canon McGarvey a student for the priesthood at Scot's College Rome after the 1st WW



Canon McGarvey a student for the priesthood at Scot's College Rome after the 1st WW



Canon McGarvey's Ordination to the Holy Priesthood 10th May 1925



Canon McGarvey was a frequent visitor to Lourdes and can be seen concelebrating Mass in the grotto (centre beneath the statue).



Canon McGarvey with Mr George Beattie local businessman and with John Fallon Lisbon Lion 12th man & 2nd Celtic Goalkeeper with the Scottish Junior Cup in Kilsyth Rangers colours and the Scottish League Cup in Celtic colours in 1967 or 68.



St Patrick's Kilsyth Trip to Lourdes in 1956 with Canon McGarvey



Above Canon McGarvey with local dignitaries. It is 1965 and the picture is of the “Kirkin’ O the Council” of the Burgh of Kilsyth. To the right of Canon McGarvey is ex Provost Robert Callaghan, a Parishioner of St Patrick’s. To the left of Canon McGarvey is Provost Patrick McCann OBE JP another Parishioner. Behind Robert Callaghan is Bobby Meechan the father of Father Alan Meechan and another parishioner of St Patrick’s – Bobby went on later to become Provost himself in the early 1970’s. In the back row in glasses is Alistair D Mathie, Clerk of the Council and founder of Mathie Lennox legal practice which still operates in Kilsyth.



Isobel Hudson and her new husband James Montage with Canon McGarvey after their Wedding in the spring of 1967. Shortly afterwards the Montage's left Kilsyth for a new life in Cana da. This was one of the first weddings in the new St Patrick's Church building.



Archbishop O'Brien visits Canon McGarvey in Johnstone Avenue in Kilsyth in 1986 to concelebrate Mass with Fr O'Connell.

Canon McGarvey although he was retired was, above and before anything else, a priest first and foremost. Throughout his retirement years he was always willing to step in to say Mass in St Patrick's or take devotions or benediction if one of the other priests in the Parish had another commitment. Later after he was less mobile, he still said Mass every day in his own home until he was no longer able and was always diligent in reading his Daily Office. Sometimes he would say Daily Office twice - *'just to make up for some other priest somewhere else who was perhaps*

too busy to do it'. In the end when he could no longer see properly he would ask Eileen or Lucinda to read the Daily Office for him. The photograph above shows a visit from the then Archbishop O'Brien who came to Kilsyth as assistant priest in 1972 - just as the Canon was going into retirement. There was a great bond of respect for the Canon from all the younger priests who met him and saw his example of faith and devotion as well as his deep love for the people of Kilsyth.

The 3 priests, the retired Canon, the Parish Priest and the Archbishop said Mass together for the Canon who was clearly failing and for whom this was probably his last concelebrated Mass.

Canon Thomas McGarvey died on the 6th October 1987 after spending more than 62 years of his life as a priest and a faithful servant of God. May he rest in peace!



Bishop Rénatus Butibubati of Nwanza Tanzania and Canon Thomas McGarvey – these were great friends and had known each other since they were both young priests.



Canon Thomas McGarvey with his regiment during World War 1 – kneeling on the rhs



Canon McGarvey to the left of the Presiders Chair - fulfilling his duty as a member of the Cathedral Chapter of Canons during the visit of an Archbishop from another country to St Mary's Cathedral Edinburgh 1960's

**Sermon at the Months Mind Mass for the late Very Rev. Thomas Canon McGarvey
6th October 1987.**

Canon Thomas McGarvey, retired Parish Priest of St Patrick's, Kilsyth died in Kilsyth on the 6th October 1987, in the 92nd year of his age and in in the 63rd year of his priesthood. At a Month's Mind Mass in St Patrick's on 6th November, the following homily was delivered by the Most Reverend Keith Patrick's O'Brien, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh.

As you know I was abroad over the last few weeks – in El Salvador and the United States of America.

It was with deep sorrow that I heard of the death of Canon Thomas McGarvey. My sorrow was not at the death of a great and good priest and a dear and valued friend – but at the realisation that as Archbishop, I would not be in Kilsyth in person for the Funeral Mass. I rejoiced on my return to Scotland, however, to learn from Canon O'Connell and Father Paul of the funeral ceremonies for the Canon – and of how they had been carried out in such a solemn, dignified and yet loving way in the presence of Bishop Monaghan, Bishop Mone, Monsignor Grady and so many civic and church representatives from Kilsyth and further afield as well as with the assistance of so many of you, the good people of St Patrick's Kilsyth.

What you were doing one month ago was two-fold:

a) You were looking back over the long and priestly life of Canon McGarvey and thanking God for it. Yes, indeed a long and priestly life, the details of which were recorded for you by Monsignor Grady. It was indeed a life of service - initially in the army during the 1914-1918 War; service at seminary in Rome until his ordination in 1925; service as an assistant in St Patrick's Edinburgh, before service as a Parish Priest in Polmont, Lochore, Bonnybridge and last of all here, in St Patrick's Kilsyth from 1956 until 1972. It was a life of service, but it was also a life of great joy as it soon became known that the Canon was never happier than with the sick in his parishes or on his many pilgrimages to Lourdes.

b) The other thing you were doing one month ago was praying for the happy repose of the soul of the Canon. In a long, varied and pastoral ministry, I am sure the Canon would be only too well aware that at times he may have made mistakes and hurt or offended some people, despite all his efforts to the contrary. I am sure he would ask nothing more of me this evening than that I would ask of you to pray for him at this time.

Yes tonight we are doing much the same as happened one month ago, looking back over the Canon's life and praying for his soul.

But perhaps we could all do something else; Perhaps we should all be asking God for a share in the graces and blessing which the Canon enjoyed; perhaps we should be trying to recapture in our lives something of the joy and the goodness of the Canon which he showed in the practice of his faith; in the exercise of his priestly ministry. Canon McGarvey was an uncomplicated man; there was no identity crisis about him – he knew he was a priest and he knew why he was a priest. He had been ordained a priest on 10th May 1925, to pray, to offer the Holy sacrifice of the Mass and to serve others - which he did to the best of his ability – right up to the moment of his death.

One thing which the Canon did which I am sure not many will do – he spent fifteen years in retirement. I think I can honestly say that those fifteen years were blissfully happy years, thanks to you the people of Kilsyth who did not want to lose him from your midst; thanks to the Priests and Sisters of this Parish who always made him feel welcome and at home; and thanks especially to Eileen and Lucinda, who loved and cared for the Canon devotedly as they had indeed their own father before – they looked for no reward save that of knowing what they were doing for Canon McGarvey was as if it was being done to Jesus Christ himself, the Great High Priest.

Do you know that during the Canon's fifteen years in retirement, I myself was in two different Parishes; two seminaries and already spent two years as Archbishop – having served three years in Kilsyth, three years in Bathgate, two years in Drygrange and five years in Blairs and now over two years as your Archbishop? I know that many of my brother priests here present, during those fifteen years have had as equally busy and varied ministries. But I would hazard a guess that perhaps the Canon used those fifteen years to greater advantage than any of us – during those fifteen years he did not serve on any committees or commissions, he had no meetings to go to, he was not involved in running around his Parish or Diocese, he did not see the need for any great further study of philosophical or theological text books – but what he did see the need for was the need to grow holy, to become more and more closely united to Jesus Christ and to Our Blessed Lady during his life here on earth. He was an example of prayer to anyone who came to his home, his breviary on one side, his Rosary on the other. Each day of his retirement, right up to the day of his death, he faithfully celebrated the Holy sacrifice of the Mass for which he was ordained. He remembered those in his prayers those who came to him and those who had gone before him; he prayed for the needs of the Parish and for the needs of the Diocese; he prayed for the missions, remembering especially his many friends in the White Fathers and the African Bishop he had befriended, when he was Parish Priest in Lochore, Bishop Budububage.

We are told in Sacred scripture that:

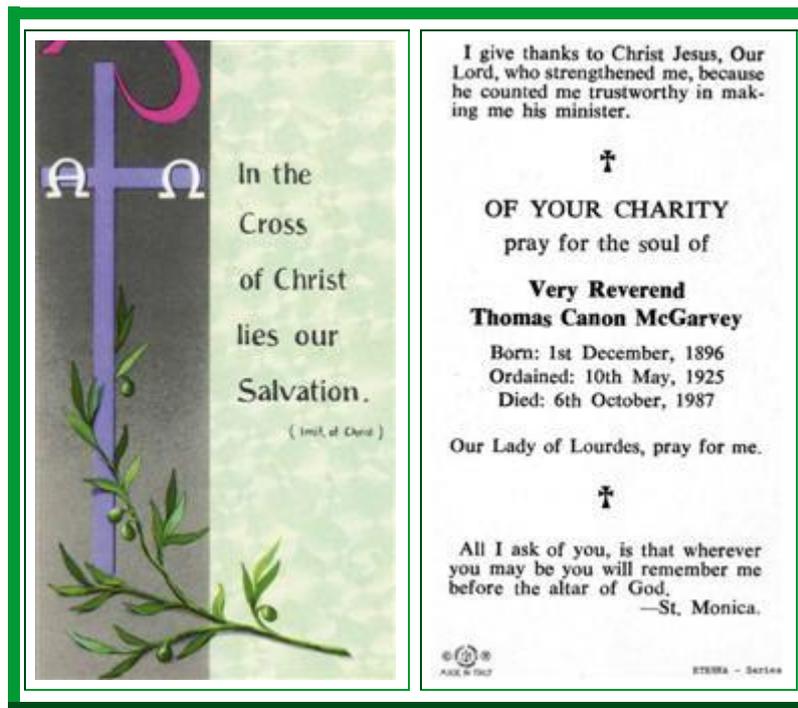
“The life and death of each of us has an influence on others”.

I think the life and death of Canon McGarvey has had an influence on me - and I am sure an influence on all those who knew him and loved him. Perhaps the greatest lesson he taught us is that of the simplicity and joy of the life of a Christian, and the lesson that a priestly life well lived must be rooted and founded in prayer, especially the prayer of the Mass, linked with a love and devotion to our Blessed Lady.

May God grant him eternal rest, and may perpetual light shine upon him; may he rest in peace. Amen.

By kind permission of The Scottish Catholic Directory, 1988 edition, pages 418 - 420.

Canon McGarvey's Prayer Card



Canon McGarvey's Headstone in Kilsyth Cemetery

IN APPRECIATION OF THE LATE CANON MCGARVEY

"A note to say how sorry I was to hear of the death of Canon McGarvey and I send the sympathy of our Church to you and your people. He was well liked and esteemed in the community.

I am unable to attend the funeral and I have asked the Rev. Robert Bone to take my place and represent our Church."

Rev. James Ross, M.A., B.D., Kilsyth Anderson Parish Church.

"It was with regret that we heard of the death of the Very Revd. Canon McGarvey.

He will be remembered as one who served his Church, Parishioners, and the Community with distinction, and worked tirelessly until his retirement in 1972. Though retired he still took a most active interest in its wellbeing.

I should like at this time to convey to you, the Clergy & Parishioners of St. Patrick's the sincere sympathy of our Moderator (Rev. Alastair McLachlan), the members of the Kirk Session & Congregation in the sad loss sustained to your Church. We will be remembering all our friends of St. Patrick's in our prayers at this time."

Mr. Robert Andrew, Session Clerk, Kilsyth Burns & Old Parish

"His Priesthood was the 'joy of his youth' - and of his old age. A gentle, kindly soul, and much loved priest who is assured of a continuing remembrance in the prayers of parishioners...his name will live on with Canon McNamara & Canon Michael Downey as household names in this parish."

Canon O'Connell, St. Patrick's.

"On behalf of the McGarvey family I would like to thank you all and all involved in the arrangements for my uncle's funeral. We were all very touched & comforted by the large attendance on Thursday evening and yesterday at his Requiem.

The people of Kilsyth did him proud, and we are happy that he chose there as his final resting place."

Anne McGarvey. (Canon's niece. Edinburgh).

The Parish of St Patrick's Kilsyth is in possession of many more photographs from the life of the late Canon Thomas McGarvey. They are kept in the Chapel House of St Patrick's Kilsyth and a digital copy of them has been sent to the Scottish Catholic Archive at Columba House in Edinburgh for safe keeping. Amongst these photos are many family photos of Canon McGarvey with his relatives whilst visiting in the United States of America and with family members here in Scotland. Please contact us if you are a relative of Canon McGarvey and we can share these photos with you.



Most Holy Father

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of his Ordination to the Holy Priesthood, 10th May 1925 - 10th May 1950

Rev. Thomas McGarvey

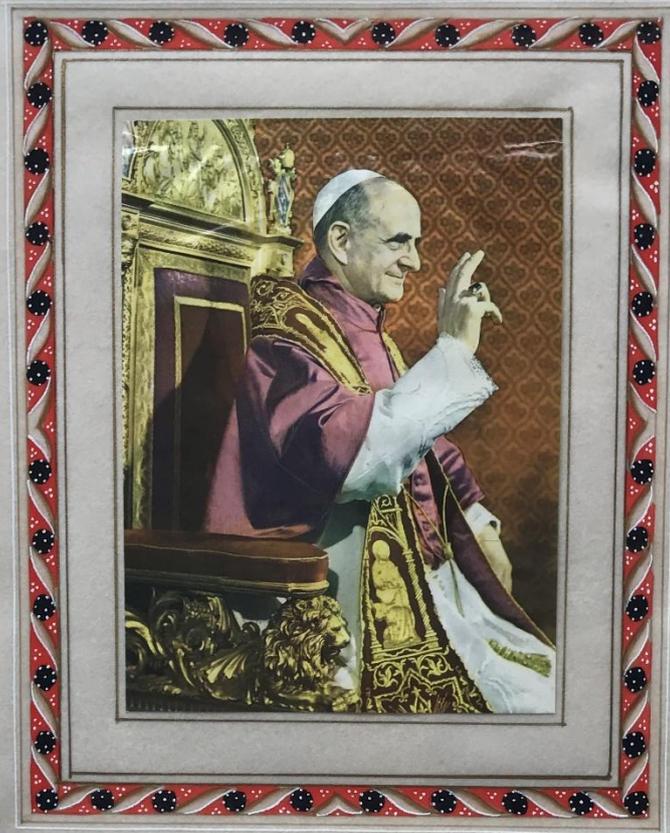
humbly prostrate at the feet of your Holiness begs the Apostolic Benediction and a Plenary Indulgence to be gained at the hour of death on condition that being truly sorry for his sins even though unable to confess them and to receive the holy Viaticum, he shall at least invoke with his lips or heart the holy Name of

Jesus.

*Appl. Domini benigne annuit. Pius XII
Ex Aedibus Vaticanis die 25 Aprilis 1950*

*+ Joseph Nigone
Archiepiscopus Neomedien*

An Apostolic Blessing for Canon McGarvey on his Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee from Pope Pius XII



ost h o l y F a t h e r

The Rev. Thomas McGarvey

humbly begs of Your holiness a special

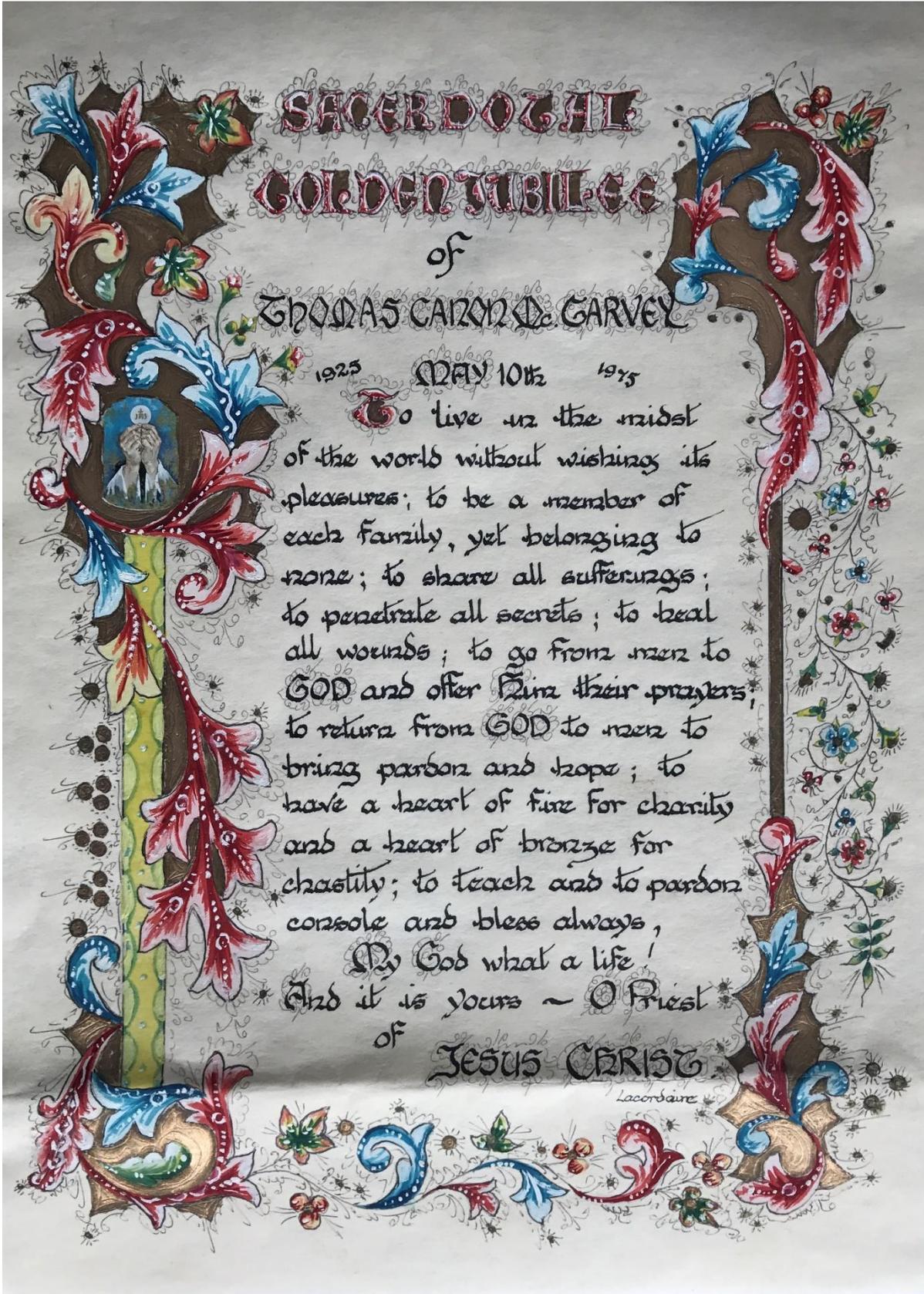
Apostolic Blessing

on the occasion of the Golden Anniversary
of his Ordination to the Priesthood,
May 10, 1975

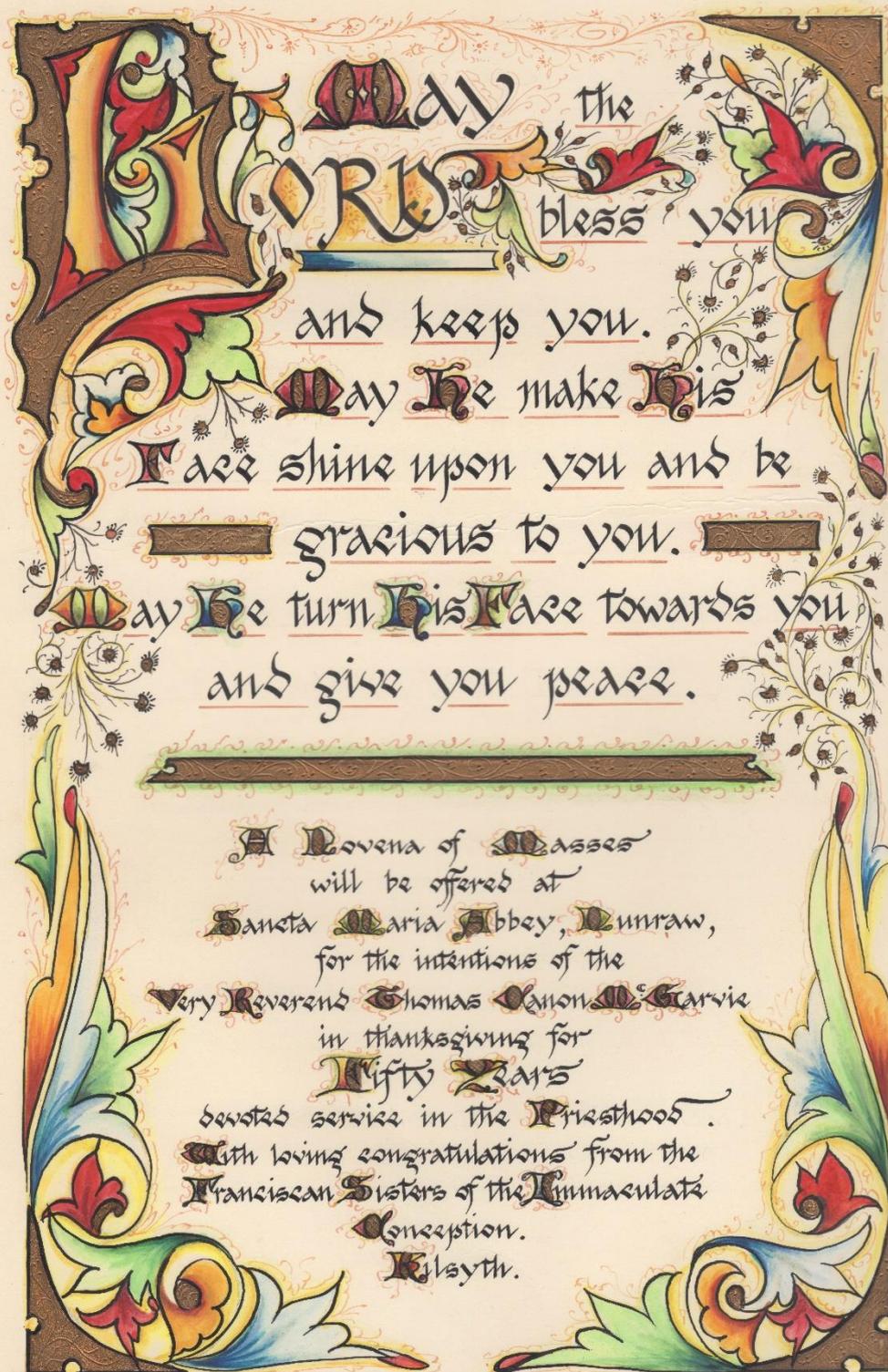
*P. vni^s Dominus Benedictionem Apostolicam conuertit
Ex Aedibus Vaticanis die 16 maii 1975*

*+ Antonius de Brinis
A. Secy. Greg. vni^s S. P.*

An Apostolic Blessing for Canon McGarvey on his Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee from Pope Paul VI



A Blessing for Canon McGarvey on his Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee from the Parishioners of St Patrick's Kilsyth



A Novena of Masses for Canon McGarvey on his Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee from the Convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Kilsyth