



The Parish of St. Patrick's

Chapel House: 30 Low Craigends, Kilsyth, Glasgow G65 0PF

Website: www.saintpatrickskilsyth.org.uk

Email: pp.stpatricks@gmail.com

Tel: 01236 822136 / Hall Bookings Tel: 07538260848



Fr. John J. Galvin

John Joseph Galvin was born on the 23rd December 1838 in Townland of Lisfuncheon in the Parish of Ballyporeen, County Tipperary, Ireland.

He was the son of James Galvin and Catherine Galvin, m.s. Mahoney. He was baptised in Ballyporeen at the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption which has been opened only 10 years previously in 1828 around the time of Catholic emancipation in Ireland.

He was educated at Mount Melleray Seminary, Cappaquinn, County Waterford and All Hallows College Dublin. He was ordained a Priest on the 24th June 1861 in Dublin specifically for missionary work in the Eastern District of Scotland as it was known before the restoration of the Hierarchy in Britain and the re-establishment of the ancient See of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh.



After he was ordained, Fr Galvin was then posted to Scotland and his first parish was St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh where he was an assistant Priest for some months in 1861 before being moved to St Andrew's Cathedral in Dundee for another few months later than same

year. Subsequently, he was posted to St Andrew's Cathedral in Dumfries for a year between late 1861 and 1862. He then spent almost 3 years at the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in Bathgate, West Lothian from 1862 to 1865 again as an assistant Priest.

His first posting as Parish Priest was here in St Patrick's Kilsyth. The Catholic people of Kilsyth had been petitioning the Bishop in Edinburgh since the 1840's for a resident Parish Priest. The Parish of St Machan's Lennoxton had been established and Fr Gillon and Fr MacLachlan had serviced Kilsyth not as a Parish but as a 'Station' of St Machan's. Indeed, Fr MacLachlan's territory covered virtually the whole of Stirlingshire, so visitations to Kilsyth were very infrequent. Finally, in an attempt to attract the attention of the Bishop to the rapidly growing number of Catholics in the Kilsyth area, a committee was established on Sunday the 19th January 1862 and a missive was sent to The Right Rev Dr Gillis, Bishop of Limyra and Vicar Apostolic of the Eastern District of Scotland, pleading for a resident Priest. It was not until 3 years later that this missive was answered with the presence of Fr John Galvin who arrived on the 5th January 1865 and was tasked with the founding of St Patrick's Parish Kilsyth and building a church suitable for worship to accommodate the growing numbers of Catholics in the town. It is great credit to this young priest who, still only 27 years old, managed to organise a Parish, obtain the land for a Church and Parish House, organise better the Sunday Schools and days Schools which were already present and build the first St Patrick's Church in Kilsyth which stood for almost 100 years - all within the space of 15 months from his arrival. Fr Galvin was to stay in Kilsyth, consolidating the new St Patrick's Parish in until 1873.

Many people at this time were economic migrants and left Scotland and the whole of the rest of Europe for the United States of America. The Church had to respond by establishing a greater presence in the

American Mission where the diocese were rapidly growing and new Parishes being established. Fr Galvin was posted to the USA to minister to the growing numbers of Catholics who were arriving from all over the world into the United States at this point in history. Fr Galvin was posted to The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the town of Lewiston in the Diocese of Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania from 1873 to 1876. The records in Scotland no longer follow Fr Galvin after this point.

With help from the Diocese of Harrisburgh we have traced Fr Galvin from Harrisburgh to the Archdiocese of St Louis Missouri where he is listed as being attached to St Roch's Parish and to St Joseph's Cathedral from 1877 to 1878. Then during the period 1879 to 1882, Fr Galvin is listed as a Priest of the Archdiocese of Missouri but is not assigned to any Parish. Being listed as a Priest of the Archdiocese but not assigned to a Parish was common when a Priest was ill, in hospital or unable to undertake the hard burden of Parish commitments. In 1883, when he would have been aged 56, he is no longer listed in the Catholic Directory for Missouri, but neither is his death. Outbreaks of Cholera are known to have been widespread in the Missouri Parishes at this point in history. The most likely explanation is that either he died in the USA or he returned to Ireland at this point and our investigations continue into whether Fr Galvin was able to continue his mission or not and where his final resting place is located.

If you have any further information regarding Fr Galvin, please contact us.

Our thanks to Noelle Dowling, Diocesan Archivist of the Dublin Archdiocese, Ireland; Greg Harkin, Archivist of All Hallows College Dublin, Ireland; Annemarie Swineford, Parish Secretary at the Parish of The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lewistown, PA, USA;

Fr. Michael Coleman, Archivist of the Diocese of Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, USA; The archives of the University of Notre Dame; George Dailley and Jack McGovern of St Patrick's Kilsyth; Also the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh for their help in finding all these details regarding Fr Galvin. Sources: '*The Missionary College of All Hallows, 1842 - 1891*', Matricula, page 306 by Fr Kevin Condon; '*Irish born Secular Priests in Scotland*' by Bernard Canning, p116.