

Fr George Paul

George Paul was born in Dalavich, Argyle in 1958. He was educated at St Mary's School Bathgate and after leaving school worked for a while for the civil service. He was trained for the priesthood at St Andrew's College, Drygrange and Gillies College in Edinburgh. He was ordained in Bathgate in 1987 at the age of 29.

Immediately after his ordination he was transferred to St Andrew's Bathgate for a short period before coming here to St Patrick's Kilsyth to act as assistant Priest to Karl Canon Krugger who had arrived in St Patrick's on the same day as Fr. George Paul in 1987.

Fr Paul left Kilsyth in 1988 and there are no further entries for him in the Catholic directory St Andrews and Edinburgh.



With the departure of Canon Denis O'Connell for Fife last week, St. Patrick's Church in Kilsyth now has a completely new team, for the first time in 15 years, as Father Mullen, the curate, has also moved on. The Chronicle takes this opportunity to profile the two men who have taken over. Father Karl Kruger, MA, PhL., (right) took up his duties last week as the new parish priest, while his curate, Father George Paul, has been here since September. Here we take a look at the two men's careers to date.

THE new curate at St. Patrick's, Fr. George Paul, also has a brother in the priesthood. "His name is John, but that doesn't make me a relation of the Pope," he jokes (the present Pope of course, being John Paul II).

Fr. Paul (29), is a native of Dalavich in Argyll, but was brought up in Bathgate. He worked for the Department of Employment in Edinburgh before deciding that his vocation was for the priesthood.

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He trained at St. Andrew's College, Dryrange, now closed, and Gillis College, Edinburgh. He served as a Deacon at St. Andrew's, Livingston, and was ordained a priest earlier this year at Bathgate. His brother John, older by two years, is at St. Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh.

"Like Fr. Kruger, I'm just getting to know the parish although I did work for some time with Canon O'Connell. We have between three and four thousand people so we have split the parish in two and we will work with the Sisters of St. Andrew's Convent as a parish team," he said. "It is a big job, but the Kilsyth people are friendly and I'm sure we'll cope."

He finds Kilsyth a complete change from what he is used to. "My last parish was at Livingston and you couldn't get much different than that," he said. "Even Bathgate

is a lot bigger than Kilsyth, but there is a mining connection there. Like the Kilsyth area, the coal industry there is now-existent now. We don't have so many hills, but some people joke about the shale bings round Broxburn."

Music is Fr. Paul's hobby.

"I played the organ in my own church in Bathgate before joining the priesthood," he said. "I did that for nine years. I also play the piano. I like a wide range of music from classical to pop, since I used to run a disco. That could be useful to me here since I can identify with the younger element through pop music, but I don't see my priority as exclusively the young. We must serve the whole parish."

Photography is also a great interest. He enjoys taking pictures in the West Highlands, though he does not do his own developing.

What has impressed him most about Kilsyth, apart from the friendliness of the people, is the excellent relations between all the churches. He hopes this will continue to develop.

"I feel that working as I did with the department of employment was invaluable training," he said. "I went initially for six months, as I had decided even then I wanted to be a priest. I ended up staying for five years, during which time I became a trade union representative with the CPSA. I worked in the unemployment benefits office in Edinburgh. You really get to see how some people live and the problems they have to cope with. We used to get people coming in from the Grassmarket area. I got used to taking a lot of abuse, and worse.

"I think that every potential priest should spend some time in an ordinary job. It gives you more insight into the everyday lives of people," he said.