



Restoring the Church of St Cornan

BROTHERS OF CHARITY
CENTENARY PROJECT

1883-1983

by Brother Alfred Hassett f.c.



Restoring the Church of St Cornan: Brothers of Charity Centenary Project 1883-1983

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Alfred Hassett was born in Ballytarsna near Horse & Jockey in Co. Tipperary in 1944. He joined the Brothers of Charity in 1962 and made Final Profession in the Congregation in 1967.

Having completed his BA and HDip at University College Cork in the late 1960s he went on to study Catechetics at the Mater Dei Institute in Dublin.

In 1974 he became Director of Services, Brothers of Charity Services, Woodlands, Renmore, Co. Galway and went on to be Provincial Leader of the Congregation in Ireland and Britain in 1988. He is currently Chair of Brothers of Charity Services Ireland and Chair of Trustees of Brothers of Charity Services UK.

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The Front Cover

The Church of St Cornan is in the foreground, the Bungalows to the right, the Swimming Pool to the left, Kilcornan House is in the rear with the 1820 Walled Garden and the Yew-tree-lined avenue leading towards the woods.



Restoring the Church of St Cornan: Brothers of Charity Centenary Project 1883-1983

Foreword

The Church of St Cornan is located on the grounds of the Kilcornan Estate approximately one and a half kilometres from the village of Clarinbridge in Co Galway. The Estate was acquired by the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity in 1950 with a view to establishing the first residential service for adults with intellectual disability in the west of Ireland.

The mission of the Brothers of Charity in Ireland began with the setting up of the first Religious Community in Waterford in 1883. Through its mission within the Catholic Church the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity is dedicated to spreading the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ by joyfully engaging with all people of goodwill in building a better world for every human being and most especially, for people who are in danger of being downtrodden.



*Fr Peter Joseph Triest
(1760-1836), Founder
of The Brothers of
Charity*

In fidelity to the motto “*Deus Caritas Est*” (God is Love), given to the Congregation by the Founder, the Servant of God, Peter Joseph Triest, the mission of the Brothers of Charity is to be characterised by the love and respect that is shown in every action, but most especially in actions that relate to people who are vulnerable.

To carry forward its mission in Ireland the Congregation set up “Brothers of Charity Services Ireland” in January 2007, an incorporated body with charitable status. As we approach the end of 2020 “Brothers of Charity Services Ireland” provides a range of supports to over 8,000 families in the south-east, the south and the west of the country. Additionally, trustees acting on behalf of the Congregation provide the trusteeship of a number of schools for pupils with special needs in Co Cork and in Co Galway. The Congregation deeply appreciates the vital part that is played in their mission by everyone associated with



Brothers of Charity Services Ireland, and by all those associated with their schools for pupils with special needs. They also greatly appreciate the vital part played by local communities in ensuring a better quality of life for all those individuals and families supported by the Services and by the schools. The Trustees are very conscious of the need to express their appreciation to local communities in a variety of ways, including making their grounds and other facilities around the country as accessible to the public as is feasible at any given time. In that particular context the Brothers are very happy to note the extent to which the grounds and facilities on the Kilcornan Estate are being made accessible to local communities with the voluntary assistance of the members of the Kilcornan Foundation. They support ongoing plans to provide for such greater accessibility in the future as is feasible.

The restoration of the Church of St Cornan, to mark the centenary of the arrival of the Brothers of Charity in Ireland, was a very fitting manner in which to celebrate that important event and the Congregation is grateful to everyone who played a part in that restoration. It emphasises the continuity of faith and the practice of good works between the monastic tradition that was so strong in the area in the Middle Ages and the work of the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity and of Brothers of Charity Services as we enter the third decade of the Second Millennium.

Brother John O'Shea f.c.

The Church of Saint Cornan, Clarinbridge

Leaving the village of Clarinbridge in County Galway on the main road south, the N67, the driveway to Kilcornan House is on the left about 300 metres past the Parish Church. Approaching the House along this driveway, the Church of St Cornan stands about 1.5km from the main road to the left of the driveway - or as described in the Tuam Herald on 11th February 1899, “...about a stone’s throw from Kilcornan Mansion.” The account in the Tuam Herald, opposite, is a moving description of the funeral of the much loved Christopher Talbot Redington (1843-1899) whose wish to be buried in the Church was then being fulfilled.

Little is known about St Cornan or about the origin of the Church, although it is described by Redington (1912), Hayward (1952) and others as a 13th century edifice, probably early 13th century. There’s a Saint Cornan’s Holy Well in Glenina on the south coast of Galway Bay. There are two parishes named for Saint Cornan, one in County Limerick and the other in County Tipperary. Seven townlands in different parts of the country derive their names from the Saint including Kilcornan which translates as the Church of Cornan.

In 1651 the Cromwellian army, under its second in command Lieutenant-General Edmund Ludlow (c1617-1692), was said to have pillaged and murdered and generally ravaged much of South County Galway in advance of the vicious destruction carried out in Galway city in 1651/2. Ludlow’s own description of the nearby Burren in Co Clare in 1651 tells us little about the Burren, but it tells us quite a bit about Ludlow, “*The Burren affordeth not a piece of timber sufficient to hang a man, water in any one place to drown a man, or earth enough to bury him*” (Ludlow, 1698/9). There was a credible, local tradition that the troops destroyed the churches at Killeely, Stradbally and Kilcornan in 1651 (Murphy, 2017). It is clear that the roofless Kilcornan Church had deteriorated over the next 230 years



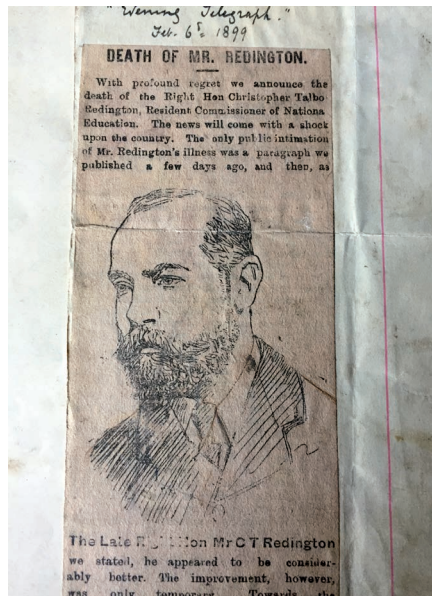
Lt-General Edmund Ludlow (c. 1617-1692)



until it was rescued to some degree by Christopher Talbot Redington as one of his great number of “*improvements and beautifications*” of the Kilcornan Estate - thus the description in 1899 by the Tuam Herald of the Kilcornan Estate and demesne as, “*one of finest timbered and best enclosed and most picturesque in Ireland.*” In the 1890’s Christopher Redington removed the weighty and destructive ivy which covered and threatened to tear down the West gable of the Church and he had the tops of its four walls re-pointed. He commissioned the sculpting of a Celtic High Cross to be erected outside the Church and prepared the inscription, “*Pray for those who worshipped here, and whose bones are scattered about this place.*” Sadly, Christopher died in 1899 just as the cross was completed and his sisters decided that the Celtic Cross he had commissioned for others would be a fitting headstone for his own grave.

At the entrance to the park the children of the Convent Schools, wearing white linen veils, lined the approach to the gate, and when the coffin had been borne through the gate they took their place immediately behind it. The procession followed the main avenue of the park for about a mile, till it reached a ruined chapel, which stands on a rising ground about a stone's throw from Kilcornan mansion. The ruin has been recently restored, and, as it now stands, presents a pretty picture of thirteenth century architecture, wanting only a roof to make it suitable for divine worship. The building, which was dismantled in the Cromwellian period, is supposed to have once been the centre of a burial ground. When it was restored a space round it was enclosed, within which human remains found in the immediate neighbourhood were re-interred. Mr Redington had planned the erection of a cross within the chapel walls, for which he had prepared this inscription: “*Pray for those who worshipped here, and whose bones are scattered about this place.*” Within the ruin his own grave had been dug. The coffin was laid beside it; the grave was blessed, and the funeral prayers read by the Most Rev Dr McCormack. Then the Benedictus, chanted solemnly and sweetly by a choir of priests, echoed again, after a silence of three hundred years, through the old church walls. When it ended the coffin was lowered into its resting place, and the last prayers said by the Bishop. As soon as the religious service had concluded the clergy retired from the chapel and the people streamed in to look once more, before the grave was closed, upon the coffin, in which slept the friend and benefactor who had bound himself to them by so many ties.

Christopher Redington's
Burial (Tuam Herald)



Sketch of Christopher T Redington,
Obituary 1899 (Evening Telegraph)



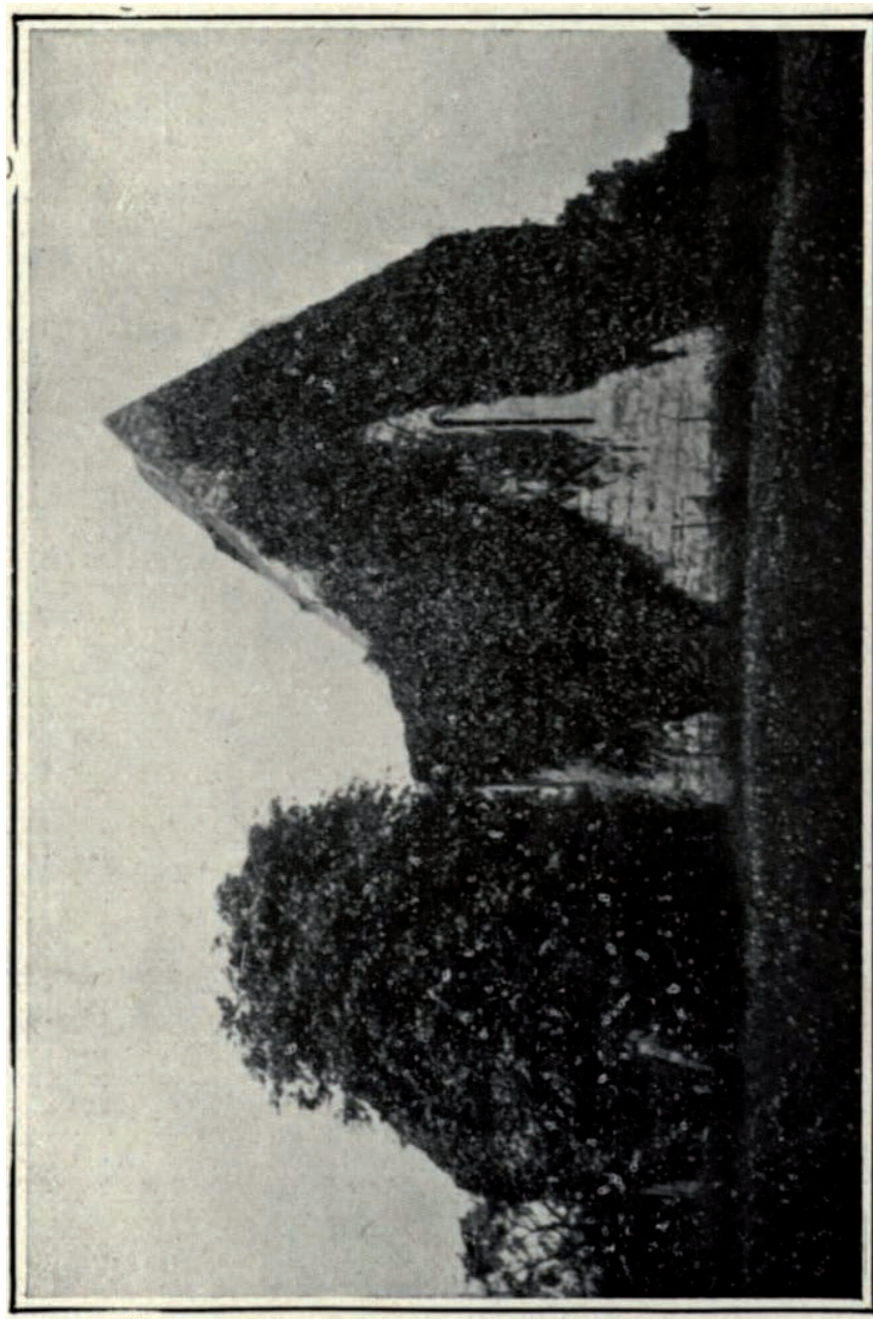
Matilda Redington's Description of the Church in 1912

Matilda Redington (1851-1923), Christopher's sister, was an especially active individual in the County Galway community in the late 1800's and early 1900's and she had a particular interest in local history and archaeology. A founding member, she is credited with being a key influencer in founding the "*Galway Archaeological & Historical Society*".

Matilda's article in the Journal of that Society in 1912 gives a brief and professional description of St Cornan's Church as it was then, 43ft by 20ft, grouted walls 2ft 9in thick, *"All the coigns are well cut and fitted, and are of sandstone, shewing the track of the saw with which they were cut. In the E. gable is a lancet window with pointed head, 7in. wide outside and deeply splayed inside, the edges of jambs being 4ft. 9in. apart. A smaller lancet, 4ft. 4in. across inner edge of jambs, is in the S. wall, 5ft. 6in. from E. gable. The splays of these windows are faced with thin flags which follow the lines of the deeply recessed arches, but a few of the upper ones are missing from the S. window. The finely cut stonework around the exterior of these opes is rebated, and chamfered also in the E. window. The doorway has a sharply pointed 13th century arch of six stones and a key stone, the jambs having chamfers on inner and outer edges, which end in inverted stop-chamfers where they meet the sharp arris of the arch stones. It is deeply recessed on the inside under a segmental pointed arch, the inner jambs of the recess being 4ft. 6in. apart. The usual bolt holes exist in E. and W. walls, and there is a smaller square hole 1ft. higher on E. side. One of the eastern and three of the western jamb stones, have been repaired with limestone, as also a stone in each of the window splays. There was a priest's croft at the W. end, where are two square windows, a small one high up in gable and a larger one below it"* (Redington, 1912).



Ms Matilda Redington
(1851-1923)



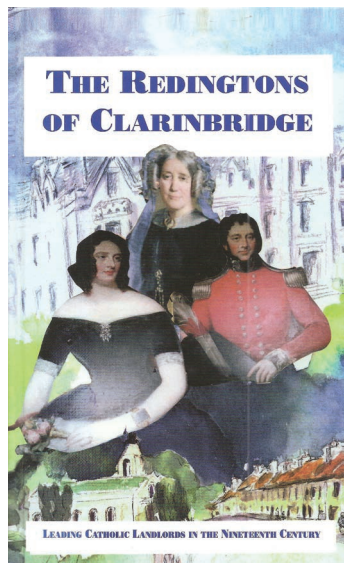
The Church of St Cornan in 1880

The Redington Family of Kilcornan

Joseph Murphy's book, *The Redingtons of Clarinbridge: Leading Catholic Landlords in the 19th Century* (1999; 3rd ed. 2017) describes the life and times of the Redington family in a manner that is both accessible and authoritative. His book is carefully researched, beautifully illustrated and it is really a great read.

Thomas Redington (1697-1780) of Creganna Castle, County Galway married Margaret Lynch of Lydican, Co Galway in 1729. He bought Kilcornan from Christopher Burke in 1763 the same year that his son, Thomas Redington known as Tommy (1742-1827) married Christopher's daughter, Sarah Burke. Tommy and Sarah had three daughters and three sons. As none of Tommy's sons survived him, his grandson Thomas Nicholas Redington (1815-1862), son of Christopher Redington (1780-1825) became the heir to the Kilcornan Estates. Thomas Nicholas was an exceptional person by any standard, an MP for Dundalk by the age of 22, Under-Secretary of State for Ireland by the age of 31 and ennobled by Queen Victoria with a KCB in 1849 at 38 - he was now Sir Thomas Redington. He married Anna Eliza Talbot coheir of John Hyacinth Talbot MP (1793-1868). Not alone was there a meticulously negotiated and invaluable dowry but his wedding was held at *Alton Abbey* (now Alton Towers) near Stafford, the then recently completed magnificent residence of Anne Eliza's first cousin Maria Theresa Talbot (d. 1856) who had married her namesake John Talbot, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury (1791-1852).

Thomas Nicholas Redington died from tuberculosis in 1862, a young man of 47 years. Thomas's son and heir was Christopher Redington PC DL JP (1843-1899) who, in addition to his responsibilities for Kilcornan with its farm and tenants, also became a public servant when he was appointed Commissioner for Education for





Ireland. He spent many years and significant money on the Kilcornan House and grounds, and had created one of the most beautiful estates in Ireland by the time of his early death in 1899. Christopher's work in Education was of such prominence that he had extensive obituaries in no less than 30 newspapers throughout Ireland and Britain. He had worked tirelessly to enhance the National School system in Ireland and he had promoted the importance of making third level education and graduation available to women.

In 1899 Kilcornan was left to his sisters, Anne (1845-1929), Frances (1846-1933) whose husband the Hon John Wilson-Lynch LLB JP DL died in 1911, Mary Theresa (b. 1850) and Matilda (1851-1923).

In about 1933, shortly after the death of Frances Redington Wilson-Lynch the House and the demesne including St Cornan's Church passed to the Land Commission. It was purchased by the Brothers of Charity in 1950.



Fr Mathew stayed at Kilcornan House in 1840, administering the pledge to 800 people from the locality



Cardinal Wiseman's visit to Kilcornan in 1858 (Leinster Express)

Father Joseph Deasy Barrett SMA (1910-1998): “Celebrate our Centenary”

Having served on missionary work in Nigeria and Egypt, and noted for his innovations in training teachers in Africa, Father Barrett was appointed chaplain to the Brothers of Charity at Kilcornan in 1968. He was a devout and scholarly man with a special interest in history, particularly in local history. In his study of the area around Clarinbridge and Kilcornan he determined that the area had a

special significance in early Christian Ireland. According to Fr Barrett, many of the saints of the early church, including Saint Colmcille, embarked from the nearby inlet of Killeen Aran for the Aran Islands, “*Aran of the saints.*” Saint Sourney’s Church in Drumacoo, St Colga’s Church in Kilcolgan, and St Foila’s church in Killeely are all witness to a strong early monastic tradition in the area. Close to Kilcornan is the Angels’ Well, *Tobar na nAingeal*, which was an early Christian holy well and one of the few shrines in Ireland dedicated to the angels.

The fact that so many people in the area surrounding Kilcornan remained faithful to their traditional religious beliefs and practices despite extended periods of persecution is reflected in the presence of a Mass Rock in woodlands close to Kilcornan. Mass rocks are to be found in secret locations where people assembled for the celebration of mass during the period of persecution that followed the enactment of the penal laws in Ireland in the latter part of the 18th century. In more recent times the devotion of people in the area to the Mother of God is manifested by the nearby shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes which was erected through voluntary subscription, mainly by the staff of Brothers of Charity Services, in the Marian year, 1987/88.

Fr Barrett’s interest in local history and archaeology gave rise to his particular interest in St Cornan’s Church and to an ardent wish to see it preserved, a wish which came to be shared by the members of the Religious Community at Kilcornan. While there was initial concern that there might be opposition from the Office of Public Works (OPW) to the Restoration project, the Brothers were delighted to learn from



Mr Jim Dunne

the OPW that there would be no objection to it. As far as the OPW was concerned the Brothers of Charity had permission to carry out whatever restoration they considered appropriate. In response, the Congregation decided to embark on the complete restoration of the Church to mark the Centenary of the establishment of the first Brothers of Charity Community in Ireland in 1883.

As a first step, before embarking on the project, Mr Jim Dunne, Head of the Maintenance Department at Kilcornan, contacted a friend, Mr. Pat Concannon, now deceased, who was employed with the Board of Works Heritage Department in Athenry. Following consultation with Mr. Pat Hegarty, Clerk of Works at the Heritage Centre, Athenry and Mr. Paul McMahon of the National Monuments Branch of the OPW in Dublin, Mr Dunne and Mr Concannon visited sites in Kilmacduagh and Ballintubber Abbey where similar works had been carried out.



Ballintubber Abbey, Co Mayo



The Challenging Work of the Restoration

Following upon the visits to Kilmacduagh and Ballintubber Abbey the Co-ordinators of the Restoration Project (Mr Jim Dunne, Mr Pat Concannon and Br Alfred Hassett) decided that the framework for the roof should be constructed with unseasoned Irish oak using building methods that were commonly used in other restorations of this kind. Additionally, it was agreed that a Choir Gallery, reached by way of a wooden staircase, would be installed where the priest's croft had been located in the original Church.

Jim Dunne sourced the timber for the project from sawmills at Mountbellew. Being unseasoned Irish Oak, it was extremely hard to work with, as it was both damp and very heavy. The first task was to level the front and back walls of the Church and set bolts in concrete to take the wall plates. Three trusses (weighing approximately a half a ton each) were constructed to support the roof structure while 16 purlins were cut and set in place and morticed to the trusses. Seventy-two rafters were required to cover the roof area. All the dowels that were used were handmade from Irish Oak offcuts. The roof was then sheeted with one-inch thick, unseasoned Irish Oak. The next task was the search for old Blue Bangor slates and suitable ridge tiles and these were located by Jim Dunne at different sites throughout Connacht. With the slates and ridge tiles fitted, granite capping on the gables and lead flashing in place, the gutters and downpipes were fitted, completing the external work.

Before the work inside of the Church could get under way permission had to be sought to remove the Celtic High Cross which marked the burial place of Christopher Talbot Redington (1843-1899) from within the body of the Church to a suitable location outside. This permission was provided by his grand-niece, the daughter of Frances Redington Wilson-Lynch, Mrs Maureen Smyth (1906-2000) who lived locally. As a next step, unseasoned Irish Oak beams were inserted to carry the loft, the floor area of which was made from unseasoned Irish Oak. Pat Concannon and Jim Dunne then made an arched door of seasoned Irish Oak to match the original arched entrance - followed by frames for the windows which were also of seasoned Irish Oak.



Walsh's Crane does some heavy lifting.



Jim is happy with the progress.



Roof coming along nicely.



Church of St Cornan in 2021



The Kilcornan Bungalows in 2021



Jim Dunne and Brother Alfred study the plans.



A granite arch was erected over the main window in the east gable wall of the Church - heavy work which required great care and skill. The main floor area was levelled and a raised step was created to mark the Sanctuary area. Liscannor Quarries cut and delivered Liscannor stone slabs to cover the floor area and they made the Altar from slate, to match the flooring. An engraved granite slab was laid on the floor to mark the burial place of Christopher Talbot Redington. As a further step central heating and electric lighting were installed before the first Mass was celebrated.



Marking the grave of Christopher T Redington



The Celtic High Cross at the Church of St Cornan



Sketch (c. 1948) of Icon of Our Lady by Piper



Community Support for the Restoration Project

The County Roscommon Association for People with Intellectual Disability, in appreciation of the work done by the Brothers of Charity in setting up the Services in County Roscommon, donated the Altar and the Sanctuary Fittings in Liscannor Flagstone. As the work progressed and when the Brothers finally considered that the Church might be used from time to time for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, generous donors provided other church furnishings including the Church benches. The figure of the Crucifix in the Sanctuary was donated by the Parish Priest of Clarinbridge, Archdeacon Canon Dermot Higgins. The Stations of the Cross were commissioned by the Brothers' Community at Kilcornan from Mr Jim Gannon, Drumsna, County Leitrim. The benches and Lectern were made by the staff and trainees of the Brothers of Charity Services, Bawnmore, Limerick.

The first Mass in the restored Church was offered by Father Joseph Barrett SMA, Chaplain, on December 23, 1983 in the presence of a congregation composed mainly of staff and Brothers from Kilcornan Centre. The occasion was made forever memorable by the raging storm that arose during the Eucharistic Celebration fully testing the workmanship in the slated roof.

The Church was formally re-consecrated early in 1984 by Archdeacon Canon Dermot Higgins and for decades it was used for both the Vigil Mass on the Saturday evenings and for the morning Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. Many members of the local community joined in these liturgies with residents and staff from the Kilcornan Centre residential village. For some years Fr Martin Keane, Chaplain, offered an additional "Healing Mass" on Thursday afternoons and these masses drew people from every County in Ireland. Fr Martin retired when he was more than 90 years of age. By that stage the project, undertaken by the Brothers of Charity Services some years earlier, to assist all residents of Kilcornan Centre to relocate to their local communities had been successfully completed and there was no longer a need for a resident chaplaincy. As a consequence, sadly, regular masses were necessarily discontinued. In recent years the *St George Syrian Orthodox Church*

petitioned to be allowed to use the Church for their special celebrations of their Orthodox rites and, in the spirit of Ecumenism, the Brothers of Charity have acceded to this request.

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Church the Brothers of Charity arranged for a number of further works to be carried out. The most important of these was the improvement to the lighting and sound systems which was completed in January 2009 with technical advice from Heavey Kenny Associates.

The Brothers of Charity are indebted in a very special way to two of the men in the Restoration team, Mr Jim Dunne and Mr Pat Concannon. Jim Dunne was the Head of the Maintenance Department at Kilcormac Centre at the time and he dedicated most of his evening free time over many months to the work including much of the heavy direct labour involved in working with unseasoned Irish oak. Pat Concannon of the OPW who lived locally in Kilcolgan, was very generous in advising the restoration team and in his practical support for every aspect of the work. The general support and back-up of the members of the maintenance team at Kilcormac Centre was also very much appreciated.



Interior of Church of St Cornan, pews and altar



The Brothers of Charity in Ireland and in Kilcormac Centre

The Congregation of the Brothers of Charity was founded in Ghent, Belgium, in 1807 by Canon Peter Joseph Triest. The Brothers in Belgium established a considerable reputation for their work with people who had a disability or were liable to be marginalised. While the original name given to the Congregation by the Founder was “Brothers of St Vincent” the people of Ghent were so appreciative of the manner in which the Brothers carried out their mission that they renamed them “*Broeders van Liefde*” (Brothers of Charity). Very shortly after their foundation the Brothers expanded their works to the Netherlands and Canada. They founded their first Religious Community in Ireland in Waterford in 1883 and thereafter established religious communities and Services in Cork, Galway, and Limerick. With growing support from the Department of Health and the Regional Health Boards, the Brothers founded additional services in Counties Kerry, Clare, Roscommon, Kilkenny and South Tipperary.

Since the 1980’s a number of governance structures have been introduced by the Brothers of Charity culminating in the establishment of a national company with charitable status, “Brothers of Charity Services Ireland”, with a voluntary National Board of Directors of nine lay men and women and three members of the Congregation. The National Board has responsibility for the overall Governance of the Brothers of Charity Services in Ireland. A total of over 8,400 men women and children received services from the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland in 2020, with over 4,300 employees (about 3,500 wte) making it the largest provider of support services for people with intellectual disability in Ireland.

The Mission Statement of the Brothers of Charity

Belonging to an internationally active movement and rooted in the values of the Christian Gospels, the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland provide quality services to support people who are in danger of being marginalised and strives to create opportunities and choices that develop and maintain connected lives where all are cherished as valued and equal citizens in our communities.



The Brothers of Charity purchased Kilcornan Estate in 1950 providing the only specialist Service for adults with Intellectual Disability in the West of Ireland at that time. Somewhat basic by today's standards, with over 100 men living in dormitory style accommodation, it was nevertheless an answer of its time to a very stark, high level of need, and it had both educational and practical vocational training programmes, which, in the early 1950's was a marked improvement on much of the alternative residential provision available at the time.

Following years of striving to obtain funding for modernisation, in the early 1970's thirteen modern bungalows were built on site, together with kitchen and dining facilities, a gymnasium, a swimming pool and a hairdressing salon. Shortly thereafter Kilcornan became a service for adult men and women; it broadened its range of support, training and day activity programmes; it employed a significant number of lay staff including professionals from every relevant discipline; and it quickly sought and began to find opportunities for residents to move off campus as group homes were established to provide community accommodation usually for five or six residents. In the 1980's and 1990's, with the Department of Health anxious to modernise the psychiatric hospitals, and as EU financing became available, it was possible to set up small local more person-centred Community Programmes for Adults in six provincial towns - this proved a turning point in Service Provision. On Millennium Day, 1st January 2000, the Brothers of Charity Services Director in Galway wrote to the Western Health Board stating a clear objective and seeking support and funding to end the provision of services in congregated settings. Following nearly a decade of negotiations with all of the stakeholders and given the support of a highly motivated staff, service provision ended at Kilcornan and the women and men supported there are now supported in their local communities and are encouraged and supported to participate in their communities to the greatest possible degree. The vacated bungalows have been made available to meet a variety of local community requirements including an Educate Together school, a pre-school, a Sanctuary operated by SCCUL and a base for the work of the Alzheimer's Society.

The Carved Icon of Our Blessed Lady



In the late 1850's a stone-carved icon of Our Blessed Lady had been dug up close to Lavally House about 5km from Kilcornan. Leading up to the 21st birthday celebration for Christopher Talbot Redington (1843-1899) his tenants told him that they wished to make a presentation to him to mark his coming of age. He replied that the only thing he would like to have for his 21st birthday was this stone-carved Icon of Our Lady - he considered it in danger of being damaged or possibly even being lost. This icon was presented to Christopher at a celebratory birthday ball

in Kilcornan in 1864 and he placed it in St Cornan's church for safe keeping. Matilda Redington described the Icon as follows.

In the Church... is a tablet brought from the house of Lavalley in the parish of Killeely. On it is a carved figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary crowned with stars and standing on the crescent moon, and it is therefore referable to a period not earlier than the 17th century, although the archaic character of the figure might appear to assign it to an earlier date (Redington, 1912).

Richard Hayward who visited St Cornan's Church in the late 1940s described the Icon as follows.

Within it (St Cornan's Church) lies what is reputed to be the only representation of the Assumption in Irish iconography. Carved with great charm on a worked stone, Our Lady sits with Her Feet on the crescent moon, a ring of stars round her head, and there is a tender quality about the rendering of this figure that is impossible to convey in print. Originally, it was most likely decorated in polychrome, but as it stands it is a moving and most attractive piece of religious sculpture (Hayward, 1952).

Hayward was accompanied on his visit to Kilcornan by the artist Raymond Piper. Piper's sketch of the Icon, page 17, is included in Hayward's 1952 book.



Fr Barrett described the Icon's recent history.

The Sacred Icon remained within the walls of the old ruined church until it was removed after the estate came into the hands of the Land Commission. It was initially thought to have been removed to the local convent but in or about 1968 it was uncovered lying on the floor of the mortuary in the parish church in Clarinbridge. In 1973 it was framed and erected at the back of the church. The nose of the figure and some other features had been chipped from neglect over the course of time (Barrett, 1990).

The Stone Chrismarium or Chrismatory

A second artefact found within St Cornan's Church was considered by Fr Barrett to be a Chrismarium or Chrismatory which he believed came from Lavalley at the same time as the Icon of Our Blessed Lady.

Matilda Reddington described it at the beginning of the last century as, "...finely cut out of a single block stone 2'3" by 1'2" with the remains of a raised border showing traces of an inscription in Gothic letters".

This artefact is being further researched at present and it is preserved in Kilcornan House.



Font / Chrismatory preserved at Kilcornan



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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Jim Dunne for his work at every stage of the Restoration project, from planning and design, through to his skilled craft work and his unfailing determination to complete the project to the highest possible standard.

Joseph Murphy's, *The Redingtons of Clarinbridge: Leading Catholic Landlords in the 19th Century*, is the primary source of the information on the Redington Family which sets out its background and historical context. The newspapers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially the Tuam Herald and the Connaught Tribune have been another invaluable source.

I wish to thank Patrick McGinley for his assistance in drawing together the documentary sources on which the text is based, for arranging the photographs and the design of the booklet.

I am grateful to Joseph Murphy, the Tuam Herald and the Connaught Tribune for their permission to use their information freely but I accept responsibility for any errors that may have arisen in compiling this text.
Brother Alfred Hassett

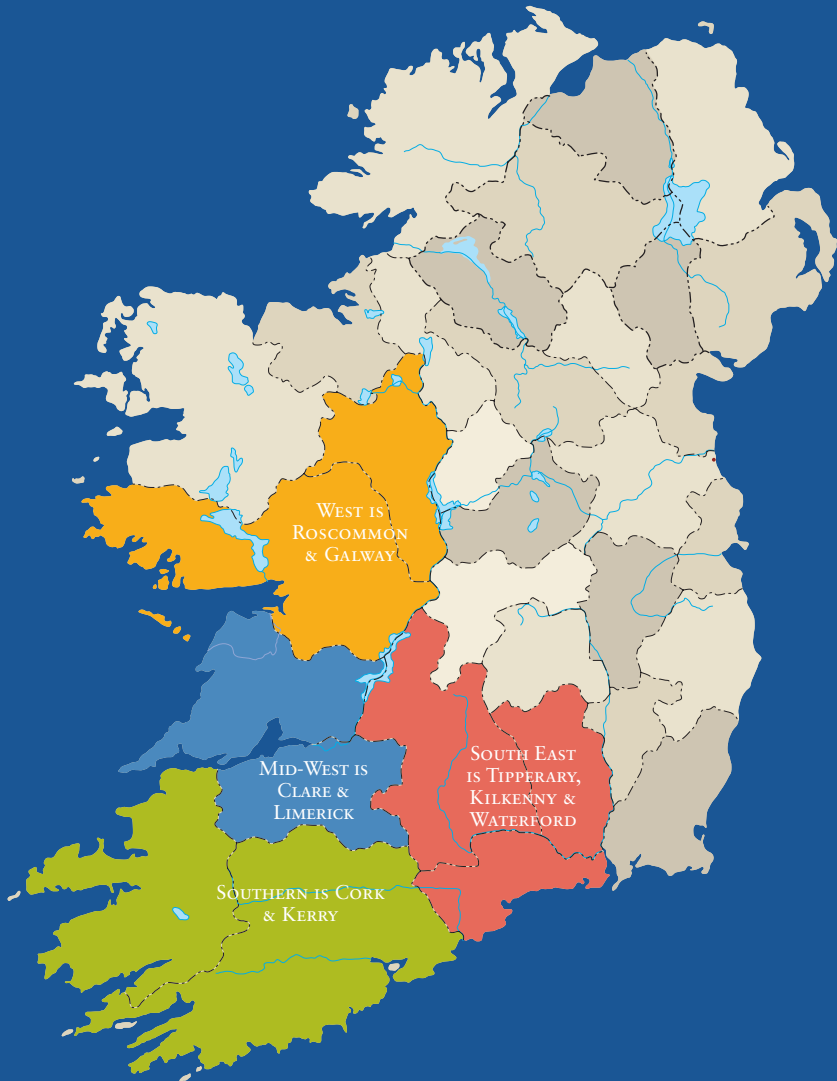


The above artistic representation of the logo of the Brothers of Charity is based on the motto, “*Deus Caritas Est*” given to the Congregation by its Founder, The Servant of God, Peter Joseph Triest, in 1807. It best illustrates the true meaning of the word “Charity” in the title “Brothers of Charity” given to the congregation not by the Founder, but by popular acclaim of the people of Ghent in recognition of their wonderfully supporting response to those being downtrodden.

In adopting this motto declaring that “God is Love” the founder stressed for the members of the Congregation the vital importance of the quality of the relationships in all of our lives as members of the great human family and as brothers and sisters with Jesus Christ in the family of God our Father.

He went on to point out that love provides the greatest of all motivations to contribute to the building of a better world, “...to create a new heaven and a new earth”. To enter into a relationship of true integrity is to recognise the total equality of each and every human being at this most fundamental human level. By entering into relationships of such integrity we declare to all, but especially to those who are in danger of being downtrodden, that their equality is recognised and will be defended before God and the whole human race.

This message remains as truly relevant and important today as it was in the time of the Founder.



Over 8,400 men, women and children received support from the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland in 2020, with over 4,300 employees (about 3,500 wte) making it the largest provider of support services for people with intellectual disability in Ireland.