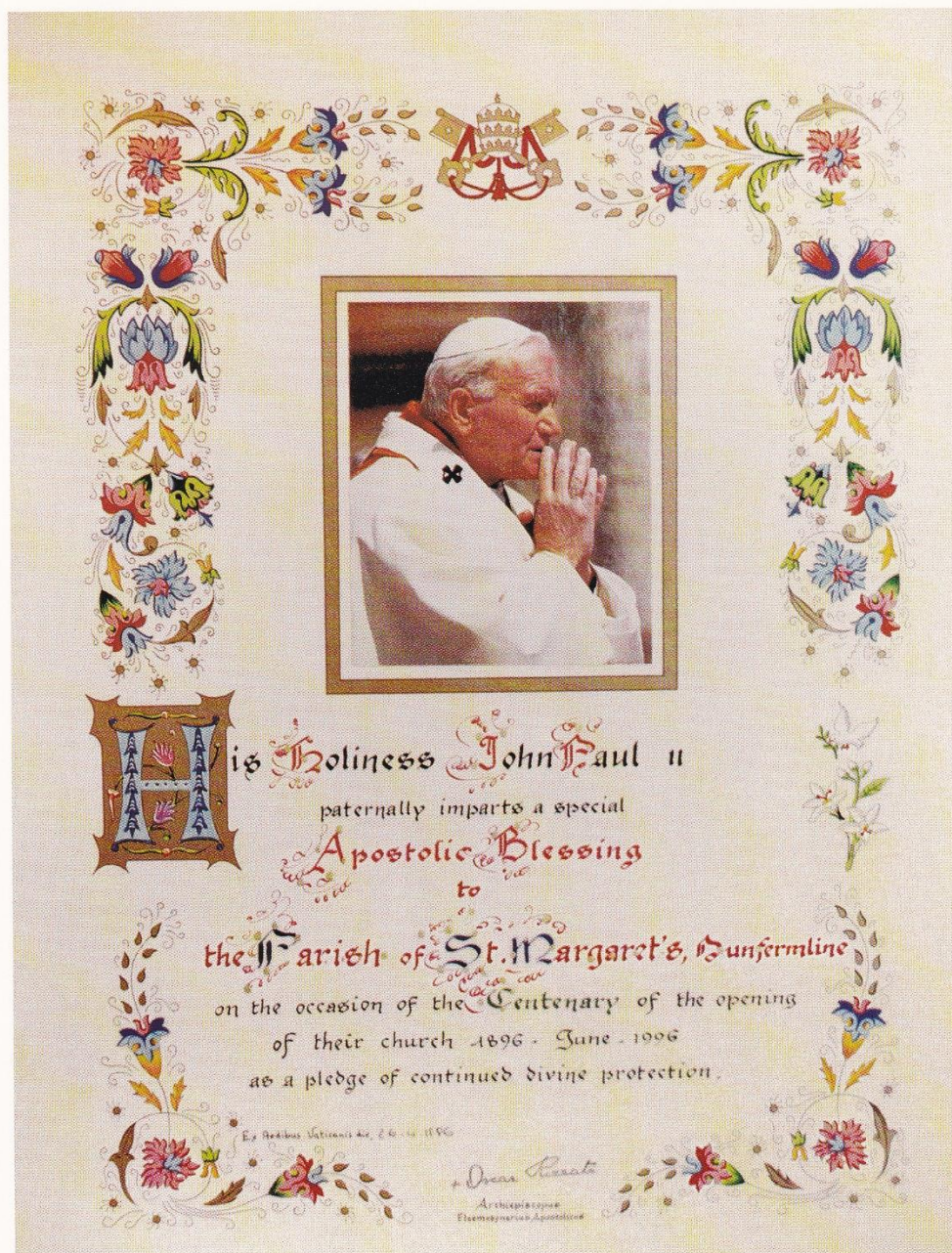




ST. MARGARET'S R.C. PARISH,
DUNFERMLINE

PARISH 1846 – 1996
CHURCH 1896 – 1996

A SHORT HISTORY



Prologue

Over 150 years of community can be celebrated by the members of St. Margaret's Roman Catholic Church in Dunfermline. But who are these Christians? To find the answer to this question we have only to look at the REREDOS (carved stone altarpiece) behind the present high altar of the Church. The reredos depicts four figures who represent symbolically the identity of Scottish Catholic Christians (looking from left to right):



- The first is an Irish missionary monk: St. Columba of Iona. The Celtic missionary monks who struggled against extreme odds in the Dark Ages to establish the early Church in Scotland are represented by St. Columba.
- The next is the Apostle, St. Andrew. The Jewish roots of our Christianity are represented by St. Andrew. Apostle and martyr, patron saint of Scotland, his relics were brought to St. Andrews by early missionaries from Rome and became a focus for pilgrimage.
- The next is a Hungarian princess who became Queen of Scotland when she married King Malcolm Canmore in the 11th century. She is St. Margaret, patroness of Dunfermline and Queen of Scotland.
- The last is the Scottish missionary, St. Mungo. The heroic Scottish priests who led the people to God by their example are represented by St. Mungo, a native of Fife, educated at Culross Abbey, he was guided by St Serf and is said to have had a hermit's cave at Dysart. He became Bishop of Glasgow in the 6th Century.

A Pilgrim People led towards God by the example of apostolic missionaries, monastic teachers, heroic priests and visionary saints - this was the Scottish Catholic Church's identity in the early Renaissance world. The great schism of the Reformation saw a gap in this long tradition - St. Margaret's Abbey Church was sacked and partially destroyed, the monks and priests were deported, the relics of the saint were scattered and the pilgrimages stopped.

The New Mission (1846 – 1889)

By 1823 Catholic Christians had returned to Dunfermline to find the shrine of St. Margaret dishonoured - relegated to a place outside the walls of the reconstructed neo-Gothic Abbey Church used by the Reformers. Her relics had been scattered. The head of the Saint, kept at Douai Seminary in France, had been hidden and never recovered during the godless period of the French Revolution. But some of the remains, which had been taken to Spain and kept in the Escorial by Philip II, were returned to Scotland by Bishop Gillis during the 1860s and kept at the Ursuline Convent of St. Margaret in Edinburgh where they remained until 2008. Between 1823 and 1899 several important developments took place which precipitated a renaissance of Scottish Catholicism in Dunfermline:

- the influx of Irish Catholics to Fife to work on the construction of the Victorian railways;
- generous patronage of both churches and schools by wealthy Catholic families in the tradition of St. Margaret;
- the re-establishment of the Scottish Hierarchy of Bishops and Archbishops by Pope Leo XII in 1878;
- the emergence of native Scottish priests of great missionary zeal;
- the coming of monastic orders of sisters, the Carmelites to Oakley and the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul to Dunfermline;
- the re-establishment of pilgrimages in honour of St. Margaret.

Chalmers' History of Dunfermline notes:

"Roman Catholic congregation founded 1823. Having no resident priest, they meet in the houses of two of their number who conduct the usual services but, of course, do not perform mass."

By 1831 a visiting priest from Edinburgh said Mass every six weeks and by 1835 a priest from Stirling came every four weeks. At last, when the congregation had grown in number to 397 souls, a resident priest was appointed. He was Rev. Aeneas Dawson and the year was 1846. He was allowed the use of a small room in the Town House where, by permission of the Magistrates, he celebrated Mass for his flock on Sundays. In 1847 he obtained the lease of a larger hall which was fitted up exclusively for use as a Chapel and opened on Pentecost Sunday. The lease of this hall expired in 1850 and it was taken by the railway company. It seemed the growing congregation would have no place to meet. The hall had become too small to accommodate them in any case, since the railway work had attracted a constant influx of workers, many of whom were Irish Catholics - "poor in chattels but rich in Faith" - the inheritors of Columba's Celtic tradition.

The Annals of Dunfermline (Henderson), under the date 1851 contain the following entry: *"Roman Catholic Chapel - The hall in Queen Anne Place was taken on lease by this body of worshippers and by them fitted up for their place of worship."* This was the Masons' Hall, afterwards the Church Hall of Queen Anne Presbyterian Church, Pilmuir Street. Fr. Aeneas Dawson, reputed an excellent preacher, a poet and translator of French literary works, left Dunfermline in 1852 to become a parish priest in Ottawa and died in Canada in 1855.

He was succeeded by Fr. Michael O'Bierne, an Irish priest who was recalled to Ireland in 1855. The congregation by 1853 had reached 800, and the Masons' Hall, in its turn, had become too small. In 1854 Father O'Bierne and other members of the Catholic community signed an agreement with a Mr. Clark, proprietor of the Music Hall in Guildhall Street. The Hall was to be used on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation for Mass. Signatories to the agreement included James Mullan, father of Monsignor George Mullan who was to become one of Dunfermline's most distinguished Parish Priests.

Fr. John Stuart came to Dunfermline in 1855. For a time he fixed his headquarters at Lochgelly which had become a very large centre of population by 1859. He returned to Dunfermline however, when in 1860 Mr. Smith-Sligo, Laird of Inzievar, made an allowance of £60 to the Dunfermline priest. The Laird also generously provided money for a school and paid the salary of the teacher. The spirit of St Margaret was still alive in Dunfermline. She must have smiled on this wealthy man's concern for the intellectual and spiritual nourishment of the people. Mr Smith-Sligo also presented two acres of land as a site for a chapel and priest's house. This is the site on which the present Church is built in Holyrood Place. The ground had once belonged to the Abbey and had been known as the "Holy Blood Acres", a link with St Margaret. It was to be thirteen years before the congregation could build on the site, such was the poverty of most members at that time.

It was Fr. Francis McKerrell, Parish Priest from 1867 till 1879, who undertook the building of a chapel-school on the Holyrood Place site. He was a native of Paisley and studied at Blairs College and later in Rome. He became Provost of the Chapter of St Andrews and Edinburgh and later Monsignor. He was held in great affection by his flock and chose to be buried in Dunfermline. The opening of the chapel-school took place on Sunday 23rd March 1873. A contemporary report states: *"It is certainly much to be regretted that nothing more worthy of the great name of St Margaret could be erected in Dunfermline, at least for the present, than the above humble substitute for a church "*.

To make matters worse a heavy debt had been incurred. Yet to the children of the school and to their teachers the new building must have seemed palatial in comparison with the old school in Pilmuir Street. Year by year the school grew in numbers and in reputation. One notable headmistress of the period was Miss Catherine Mullan, sister of Monsignor George Mullan, who later entered the Community of the Sisters of Charity, several of whom were to serve the school in later years.

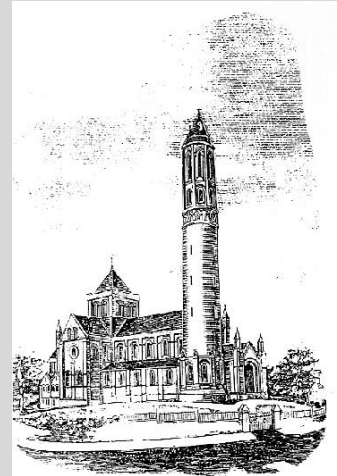
In 1878 the restoration of the Hierarchy of Bishops and Archbishops in Scotland marked an important step forward in Dunfermline's fortunes, for Archbishop Smith of the Diocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh was brother to Mr. Smith-Sligo of Inzievar, local benefactor of Dunfermline parish who must surely have been given added enthusiasm for the cause of Catholicism in Scotland by the influence accorded his brother. Fr. J. B. Hare succeeded Monsignor McKerrell in 1879. He was an educationalist much interested in the welfare of the children. St Margaret still smiled on her people.

Early Days (1889 – 1896)



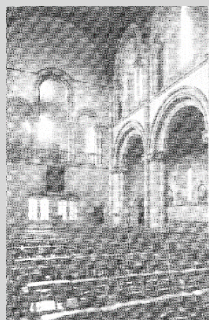
Fr. George Mullan, apostolic missionary priest served Dunfermline between 1889 and 1903. Fr. Mullan was a native of Dunfermline and came from a well-respected family of business people, "staunch and generous" Catholics. An examination of the correspondence between this determined and pious priest and his Archbishop, first Archbishop Smith and, after his death, Archbishop MacDonald, reveals a man of sensitivity and drive, a practical resourceful man whose single-mindedness was to prove greatly to the advantage of his growing congregation.

First he wiped out the debt occasioned by his predecessors' building of the modest chapel-school in 1873 on the site gifted by Archbishop Smith's brother, the local laird of Inzievar, Mr Smith-Sligo. Next Fr. Mullan set about his visionary project: the building of a NATIONAL MEMORIAL CHURCH OF ST. MARGARET to replace the chapel-school which, by all accounts, was considered 'disappointing' and unworthy of Dunfermline's Catholics and of their great St. Margaret. Fr. Mullan approached, through the Archbishop, the nobility of Scotland for help with his project. The Marquess of Bute generously funded the drawing up of plans by the architect, Dr Rowan Anderson. These began so lavishly that they had to be revised three times before a project of manageable proportions could be agreed. Nevertheless a huge baptistery incorporating a bell-tower was included, "one of the Marquess's pet ideas from the beginning", Fr. Mullan noted wryly in one of his frequent letters to Archbishop MacDonald in December 1893.



The original idea had been to build the Church in time for the eighth centenary of St. Margaret's death in 1893. The death of Archbishop Smith and the difficulties Fr. Mullan encountered raising the £30,000 required (despite a nationwide appeal endorsed by all the Scottish bishops) delayed the opening until 1896. Even then only the porch, music loft, nave and aisles were completed.

Despite generous donations from Fr. Mullan himself and his family, the people of Dunfermline and of the nation, the clergy and the nobility, money could not be found for the building of the transepts and the apse. A temporary brick wall had to be built to enclose and support the structure of the nave and an elaborate wooden altarpiece was placed against it. The Marquess' baptistery was never built and a debt of £3,000 was left outstanding.



The church is built in 12th century Transitional style (Norman with Gothic elements). Its interior elevation resembles the 12th century Abbey Church built for St Margaret by her son, David (for which French stonemasons were brought from Durham to create a striking Norman church similar to Durham Cathedral). The nave and the clerestory of Fr. Mullan's Church have rounded Norman arches and the nave has a barrel vault. The overall effect, however, tends more towards the Gothic tastes of the Victorians in that it has a more perpendicular feel. This is achieved by the narrower pillars with piers running up to the clerestory creating Gothic height rather

than Norman solidity. Because the transepts were never built the cruciform shape of the Church, as originally planned, is lost. The intention had been to decorate the dome (where the transept would have crossed the nave) with mosaics and to cap the whole with a square tower. Had it been completed it would have been a noble structure worthy of St Margaret and her pilgrims.

Fr. Mullan was far from dismayed, however. He wrote to Archbishop MacDonald in September 1894 of his optimism: " we are likely to have our Memorial Church more complete even in the first stage than we anticipated... ". He mentions "a handsome offer" from Lord Bute of £1,649 to help the work and in the same month he wrote of: *"a strange feeling of confidence in God. ... a feeling that a supernatural agency was at work on our behalf."*

The laying of the marble foundation stone (paid for by Lord Bute) took place on St Margaret's Day, 16th November 1894. The stone was laid by Lady Margaret, wife of the Marquess of Bute. Two years later on 17th June 1896, the octave day of St Margaret's Feast, St Margaret's Memorial Church was solemnly opened for worship by His Grace Archbishop MacDonald of St Andrews and Edinburgh. Pontifical High Mass was sung by the Right Rev Dr. Smith of Dunkeld. His Lordship Bishop McGuire of Glasgow was present together with priests from all over Scotland. Behind the scenes, before the ceremony frantic building activity, encouraged by the zeal of Fr. Mullan and by his unshakeable faith, had ensured that all was ready on the day. His concern, frustration and excitement are eloquently attested by his letters to the Archbishop during 1895 and 1896:

- 8th June 1895: *"We have reached a crisis in the work. On Monday morning it will be necessary to begin the brickwork across the north end for the support of the nave and aisles It means of course that the foundation stone will be outside the Church and this seems a reductio ad absurdum. It seems ominous that the beginning of this mortification should happen on the very feast of our Saint ... I will ask the people to pray. ... if we do not move the heart of the Lord, we will have the opportunity of practising resignation. "*
- 7th May 1896: *"In watching the work in progress I can hardly see how we can get entry by the octave of St Margaret's. The floor is not yet layed (sic), but it appears this is the work of ten days or so. The clerk of works is hopeful, and the architect is positive we can do it.....The Inzievar folks are off on a well-earned holiday to London but will be back for the opening."*
- 12th May 1896: *"I really think now that we will be sufficiently presentable for the opening on 17th June. I got by dint of hard pushing, all the scaffolding cleared away by Saturday, and the flooring of the Church was begun yesterday. The weather of course is to be all sunshine, we will pray for this; otherwise our plans will be all moonshine. I am daily on the spot urging the men to hard work."*

The opening ceremony was a triumph which must have gladdened the good cleric's generous heart. The "Dunfermline Saturday Press" gave a glowing account of the elaborate ceremonial of the High Mass:

"With the first low bars of the Stately Mass, the impressive ceremony began Father Mullan was Master of Ceremonies ... The Chapter of St. Andrews and Edinburgh was represented by most of the Canons, and a large body of clergy were (sic) present. The proceedings throughout were of the most elaborate description. The stirring music, the continual passing to and fro of gorgeously robed priests, the swaying of the incense and the glimmering lights of the waxen tapered candles on the altar combined to form a scene both radiant and fascinating;. from beginning to end the Ceremony was entirely successful. Beautiful flowers and plants decorated the spaces around the Pulpit and the Altar, and

against the dark background the white and scarlet, purple and gold embroidered robes stood out in bold relief. The Church was crowded in every part by a congregation whose interest was sustained for nearly three hours by one of the most striking and impressive religious functions ever witnessed in Dunfermline."

The sermon was preached by Fr. James McGuinness of St. Patrick's Edinburgh. He sketched the history of the Dunfermline mission and commended "the scheme of raising a fitting Church in honour of St Margaret". He expressed his regret that "These hopes have not been fully realised," but his certainty that "the project has not been abandoned. " He drew a comparison between the new Church and the old Abbey. *"The Church founded by St Margaret in Dunfermline was begun before 1080, and was finished only in 1115. The congregation is accordingly reconciled to the use of an unfinished church in the hope that one day it will grow into a truly noble structure complete in all its parts."* He went on to extol the virtues of St Margaret: her piety, her devotion to learning and to education, her charitable works among the poor. On an ecumenical note he drew attention to the rapprochement taking place between Protestant and Catholic historians of the day praising the "honest researches of Protestant historians" in recognising the Catholic tradition.

Pilgrim People (1896 – 1946)



The monastic tradition of education and charitable works was re-established in Dunfermline in 1898 when the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul came to the town. They set up residence in St Mary's, Abbey Gardens, a house which is set at the eastern gate of the old Abbey and overlooks the shrine of St Margaret. The nuns' habit, which included an elaborate French starched linen coif (headdress) caused something of a stir among the "more ignorant and bigoted

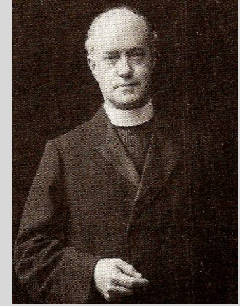
section of the townsfolk" but their good works soon won them the respect and love of all. Two of the sisters were appointed to the school and a "marked increase in the average attendance" was recorded. The first Superior of the Sisters was the saintly and much-loved Sister Magdalene who later became Headmistress. Like St Margaret she was an educated woman of aristocratic stock (Lady Fielding, daughter of the eighth earl of Denbigh) who devoted herself to the poor.

Fr. Mullan now had an assistant priest to help him serve the Carmelite Convent in Oakley and the Community of Sisters of Charity in Dunfermline. He doubled the school accommodation by adding a second storey to the chapel-school building and at the same time added to the presbytery to provide better accommodation for the clergy. The time was now ripe for the graces showered upon Dunfermline's Catholics through the intercession of St Margaret to bring forth the sweetest fruit.

On 10th June 1899 the first Annual Pilgrimage to Dunfermline in honour of St Margaret took place. Even the newly-built railways were pressed into the service of the Saint. The Victorian pilgrims left Edinburgh by steam train at 9.10am. Rosary and Litany of Our Lady were recited during the journey. Pilgrims heard mass at 10am in the beautiful new Church of St Margaret. After mass the Veni Creator was sung and there was an address by Monsignor McKerrell. Next there was a solemn procession to St Margaret's cave where the Litany of the Saints was recited and a hymn to St Margaret sung. Another solemn procession took pilgrims to St Margaret's Tomb where they again recited the Rosary and sang a hymn. Benediction took place in the Chapel of the Sisters of Charity nearby before pilgrims boarded the train once more at the Lower Station. Another Rosary and Litany were recited on the train. It was truly a pilgrimage in the spirit of those medieval ones but it had taken four long centuries to reinstate it.

Fr. Mullan's flock continued to increase with the development of the coalfield near Crossgates. In 1902 Fr. Mullan purchased a hall where Mass could be offered as often as possible. This further increased the workload of the Dunfermline Priests. In 1903 Fr. Mullan was moved to Edinburgh.

He was succeeded in Dunfermline by Fr. David Robertson (right). Despite his heavy workload Fr. Robertson had no curate for a long period. Nevertheless his extraordinary devotion to the sick was long remembered by those who had the privilege to know him. It is said of him that he knew how to be "all things to all men". A non-Catholic, well-known in the town, said of him: "He was awfu' weel respeckit." He made alterations to the priests' house and incorporated the old presbytery within the school to accommodate the increasing numbers of pupils, 225 by 1910. His successor was Rev William Mellon (later Bishop of Galloway). He was appointed to Dunfermline in 1916. Two years of the Great War saw the military housed in the school.



The children had to be taught in the Church. It was a trying time for both pupils and teachers. Fr. Mellon, however, was a "true friend and comforter to old and young alike". He was determined to cancel the Parish debt which, with accumulated interest, was now a heavy burden on the people, their circumstances straitened by the deprivations of war. Happily the Fife Education Committee in 1921 became responsible for Catholic Education, and the school buildings were sold to this authority. The substantial sum realised enabled Fr. Mellon to leave the Mission practically debt free when he was moved to Edinburgh in 1924.

The period 1924 till 1933 saw a rapid succession of priests in charge of St Margaret's: Fr. Samuel France till 1926; Fr. Allan Gray till 1929; and Fr. Smith-Steinmetz till 1933. In 1920 Saline and Steelend were attached to Dunfermline and because of this another curate was appointed. St Margaret's pilgrims had been becoming increasingly international since the turn of the Century with the coming of the first Italian families *en route* for America via the great Victorian port of Glasgow. Many of these families settled in Scotland. Most of these families established businesses which made them household names. Swiss emigrés too who came to work in Dunfermline's thriving silk mills swelled the ranks of St Margaret's devotees.

1930 saw the revival of the Pilgrimages on a grand scale. With the encouragement and support of the Archbishops and Bishops of Scotland and the organisation of the Catholic Truth Society the Pilgrimages became a National event attracting between eight and ten thousand people when held in November but an astonishing twenty thousand when they were held in June. The National Memorial Church could no longer accommodate the pilgrims for Mass and so began the co-operation with Dunfermline Athletic Football Club. Each year, after a colourful procession from the station, High Mass was celebrated in the football ground. Many distinguished preachers addressed the huge congregations, in particular Monsignor John Barry, secretary of the CTS.

Rev Fr. Maguire (later Bishop Maguire of Ilium and coadjutor Bishop of Dunkeld) succeeded Fr. Smith-Steinmetz in 1933. Fr. Maguire became well-known to Catholics and Non-Catholics alike as a member of the staffing Committee of the Education Authority for many years. Church and community were growing ever closer just as they had been in St. Margaret's time. Fr. Maguire had a long association with Fife having served as a curate in Dunfermline and built the church and school at Kelty. In 1934 he determined to extend St Margaret's Church and had plans drawn up by the architect Sir Reginald Fairlie. The extension was ready for use after Easter 1936 and an extension to the school too was carried out to accommodate increasing numbers of secondary pupils travelling in to Dunfermline from Rosyth, Inverkeithing, Oakley, Steelend and Valleyfield. In September 1936 Fr. Maguire was moved to Edinburgh.

Fr. Richard Delaney (later Canon then Monsignor) was formally inducted by His Grace Archbishop MacDonald on St Margaret's Day 1936. Fr. Delaney (pictured right) was the first Parish Priest formally inducted in Dunfermline, indeed in Scotland, since the Reformation. He set about completing the Church sanctuary by the addition of a marble altar, marble altar rails, flooring and walls. The extension built by his predecessor was, in style and quality, a rather disappointing approximation to the style of the original building. It is to Father Delaney that the sanctuary owes its most distinctive feature. This is the beautiful carved stone Reredos mentioned on page 1 of this history.



The reredos resembles the architecture of a medieval fortified building, perhaps Malcolm Canmore's Tower, and is surmounted by a wooden canopy reminiscent of a portcullis. On it in low relief and two friezes, one of Norman chevrons (like those of Dunfermline Abbey's west door and pillars) and the other of stylised flowers. Between these are two colonnades, one of interlaced arches and one of pilasters between which appear four columnar figures in frontal hieratic poses. The design was by Huw Lorimer, one of the most distinguished Scottish sculptors of the 20th century who dies in 1993.

What more fitting focal point could the Church of St Margaret have? Patrons who made possible the extension and its refurbishment were Mr John Goodall, a local businessman who bequeathed £1,500 and Miss Honora McGuigan who donated £1,000. By 1946 the anonymous author of "The Faith in Dunfermline", a short history of the Parish written to celebrate the centenary of the Parish and the golden jubilee of the building of the Church, wrote with satisfaction: *"We are very happy to put on record that now the church and parish have been completely cleared of debt, and for this congratulations are due to the good and generous Catholics of Dunfermline who have almost solely borne the heavy burden since the National appeal in 1890."*

Recent History (1946 – 1996)

As a consequence of the Second World War, there was an influx of displaced persons into the British Isles from the European Continent, many of whom were Roman Catholics. The largest of these exiled groups were from Poland, and who formed a Polish Government in Exile supported by an army, navy and airforce. Just as St Margaret had come from Eastern Europe for political reasons in the 11th Century so these Eastern European exiles came to Scotland. At least two thousand members of the Polish armed forces were billeted in Dunfermline District between 1939 and 1945. Fr. Bohanski, the spiritual leader of the Polish Community, regularly conducted Mass in St Margaret's Church.

Many Polish servicemen decided to settle in Scotland after the war rather than return to a country now ruled by a communist government hostile to religious belief. These men now worked in local industries and in various professions, took local brides and brought up families in Dunfermline. This new community was fervently religious with a strange mother tongue, new religious feasts and customs, mournful and stirring hymns and particularly beautiful Christmas carols. Devotion was also paid to quite different saints through exotic-looking icons; all in sharp contrast to the predominantly Irish influence within the parish.

A good friend to the Poles during the war and in later years was the parish priest, Fr. Delaney. Whatever the request from the Polish community Fr. Delaney was always helpful and responsive. When he was later honoured as Monsignor Delaney in St Margaret's Church the Polish community was well represented. In 1962 Monsignor Delaney celebrated his Golden Jubilee in the priesthood. He had served St Margaret's Catholics for nearly thirty years. He died in Dunfermline in July 1965.

In that same year Fr. Patrick Lynch was appointed Parish Priest. During his period of office there took place the most radical change in the Catholic Church's history since the Reformation, four hundred years before. This was the Ecumenical movement. It began in earnest with the Second Vatican Council called by Pope John XXIII in 1963. Councils were the way in which the church had developed its identity from earliest times. So, in the 20th Century, after four hundred years of counter-Reformation apologetics, a new era of dialogue and healing had begun.

In December 1967 Sunday Mass was broadcast from St Margaret's Dunfermline by BBC television. A new age in the apostolic mission of the Church had dawned. This broadcast was followed by an evening transmission of "Songs of Praise", a programme which for many years after reached a wide ecumenical audience. Fr. Lynch pronounced the final blessing.

In 1976 Father Lynch carried out major alterations to the sanctuary to facilitate the new liturgy. The altar was repositioned so that Mass could be said facing the people. The altar rails were removed and a marble lectern acquired to emphasise the importance of scriptural readings. Microphones were introduced so that the services could be followed by the congregation. Further extensions to the Church followed in the form of a Lady Chapel and additional sacristy.

The year 1982 saw internationalism and ecumenism in the Church in Scotland receive enormous encouragement and confirmation by the historic visit of the first Polish Pope, John Paul II to Scotland. Groups from every parish in Scotland attended huge gatherings in Glasgow and Edinburgh and St Margaret's was no exception. Her pilgrims were invigorated and prepared for the increased responsibilities which were to be heaped upon Lay Church members in the years to come.

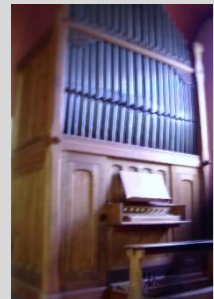
Fr. Lynch now Canon Lynch, a humble, pious man who took a lively interest in the town's affairs and was held in great affection by many people was honoured in 1984 by having a street named after him: Canon Lynch Court. He became ill and died in November 1984. It fell to his successor, Fr. John Urquhart, to consolidate and develop the post-Vatican II ethos embraced by Canon Lynch.



Fr. Urquhart commissioned a beautiful carved wooden altarpiece for the Lady Chapel from Steven Foster, a young London artist. Central to the work is an image of the Virgin and child. In the foreground is a scene of St Margaret washing the feet of a poor woman. In the background are Malcolm Canmore's Tower and the Abbey. The work, though contemporary, deliberately uses cramped, unrealistic perspective and the figure of the Virgin is deeply reverential recalling works by the late medieval Italian painter, Duccio.

In 1987 he organised the long overdue Dedication of the church to the service of God. The Dedication was carried out by Archbishop Keith Patrick O'Brien on the 16th September, the anniversary of St Margaret's canonisation in 1249. Civic dignitaries were invited to join other guests who had links with the Parish. The Kirkin' of the Council was held in St Margaret's for the first time in that same year and church and council exchanged gifts. The council's gift hangs in the Church Porch. It is a print of Sir Noel Paton's painting of St Margaret instructing Malcolm Canmore.

Fr. Urquhart established a Liturgy Committee to ensure that parishioners not only participated in but came to understand the full implications of liturgical rites. His great gift was his love of music and it was in this aspect of the liturgy that he contributed most memorably to the life of the Parish. An organ fit at long last to grace the beautiful organ gallery of the Memorial Church was loaned on a long-term basis at this time. The instrument was built in 1872 by one of the best of the 19th century organ builders, G M Holdich. Restored to its original specification by Renshaw, the organ was installed in St. Margaret's in 1988.



Father Urquhart encouraged congregational singing. Hymns containing both old and new hymns were acquired. The congregation was led by a choir. An instrumental group with a vocalist was also established. Fr. Urquhart composed music for use in the Services. On the occasion of the Dedication the first performance by the choir of a specially composed anthem, "Worthy is the Blessed Earth" took place. Saint Margaret's owes the exuberance of its music liturgy to a remarkably quiet priest.



In 1989, Fr. Urquhart was succeeded as Parish Priest by Fr. David Barr. Deeply spiritual and capable of the most stirring homilies, he was also a man of the people, a pragmatic, practical, energetic leader whom parishioners quickly took to their hearts. He poured his energies into ensuring that the large 19th Century building did not deter modern worshippers. The environs of the Church, now used as a car park were paved. Flood-lighting was introduced to enhance the architecture and identify the nobility of the building as a landmark in the town. The vexed issue of heating the huge building was tackled with some success despite much initial cynicism inspired by the failure of earlier attempts. Fr. Barr was particularly successful in continuing the adaptation of the Church interior to the demands of post-Vatican II liturgical practice. He had the Church repainted in warmer tones; introduced new halogen lighting and extensive carpeting; brought the sanctuary to the people by extending it and moving the altar and font in closer proximity to the congregation. He acquired marble from the beautiful chapel of St Mary's Balnakeil, Galashiels, when it closed down. This he had refashioned to form an ambo (lectern), baptismal font, altar and tabernacle plinth. All these practical and aesthetic measures have created a more intimate ambience.

Daily Mass incorporating prayers from the Sacred Office takes place in the re-orientated Lady Chapel. Holy Communion under the species of both bread and wine is administered at both Sunday and daily Masses. A children's liturgy is a regular part of the 9.00am Mass on Sundays, and Baptisms form part of the 11.00am Sunday Mass on a monthly basis, all of which confirms the faithful in their dedication to God.

There is a strong emphasis on community in St Margaret's. The Parish Pastoral Council is a thriving body which assists the Parish Priest to deal with every aspect of Church life. Spiritual life is nourished by groups such as the RCIA, the Prayer Group, and the One World Group. Lay Readers and Ministers of the Eucharist are the norm in St Margaret's as are both male and female acolytes. Lay people share the burdens of their parish with the clergy: taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound is one of these.

The high point of Fr. Barr's ministry was the 'Margaret 900 Celebrations' which took place over an entire year in 1993 to mark the 900th anniversary of Saint Margaret's death. His influence ensured that Dunfermline's place in St Margaret's life was central to the celebrations. The Countess of Elgin, Lady Bruce, whose husband is a descendant of Robert the Bruce, agreed to be Patroness. She was tireless in her support of the efforts of the 900 Committee. She permitted her home to be used for fundraising. A figure of £30,000 was realised which enabled an ambitious programme of events to be planned.



Fr. Barr observed afterwards: *"As it turned out all our plans proved to be far too humble and low key. Little did we know that Margaret who influenced the country of her day would wield the same influence on us ... in our Procession of Pilgrims we would include people from high and low estate; HRH Princess Margaret (see above); The Lord High Commissioner; The Moderator of the Church of Scotland; the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church; the late Cardinal Gray; the President of the Scottish Catholic Bishops; Abbots, Bishops as well as many parishes and organisations. Over 15,000 pilgrims came to*

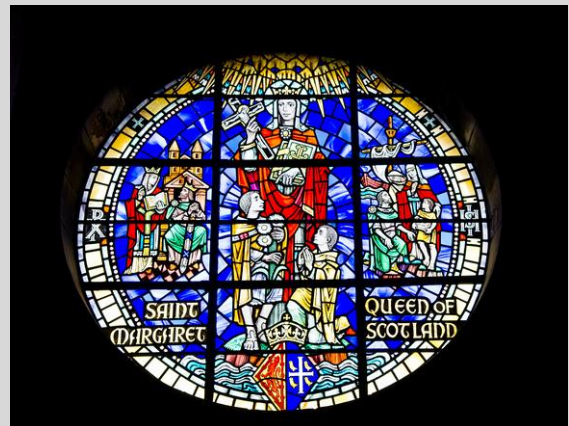
visit St Margaret's Cave, Dunfermline Abbey and St Margaret's Shrine and to our National Memorial Church where they venerated the Relic of St Margaret."

Events included three televised services from St Margaret's Memorial Church, each on a theme connected with St Margaret's Life: her tending of the sick; her love of children and her care of the poor. An Ecumenical service was held in Dunfermline Abbey. Officiating were clergy from both the reformed Churches and the Catholic Church. St Margaret must have rejoiced to see her people honour her and worship God in harmony once more in the very Church she herself had built 900 years before. *"On reflection,"* Fr. Barr concluded, *"as well as attracting Pilgrims to Dunfermline from all over the country, we had in fact gone all over the country and taken St Margaret to her people."*



Historical illustrations by Jurek Putter (see left) of Dunfermline's royal and monastic past were commissioned for the 900 celebrations by the District Council. Copies of these are disposed around St Margaret's Church.

The beautiful Memorial Church of St Margaret now has a historic rose window to commemorate the 900th anniversary of her death. Fr. Barr commissioned the stained glass window from the Fife artist, John Blythe. Funds were raised by parishioners. The window depicts Margaret in the centre as Queen and Saint holding her Book of the Gospels and the Holy Rood. On the right she is seen arriving at St Margaret's Hope and on the left reading to King Malcolm in front of the Church built for their marriage in 1070. The style has a strong medieval quality using traditional colour and composition and emphasising the lessons to be learned from St Margaret's exemplary life. It is certainly, as Fr. Barr intended, "something of lasting artistic value that future generations will come and see".



The wheel has come full circle. St Margaret has never ceased to watch over the people of Dunfermline. She has reunited them through their devotion to her. In 1996, St Margaret's Memorial Church celebrated one hundred and fifty years of community and a hundred years of stone raised to the glory of God. In doing so it also celebrated the living stones that make up God's spiritual house: the people of St Margaret.

A Short History of St. Margaret's Memorial Church, Dunfermline

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