

St Patrick's Church, Dumbarton



Visitors Guide

St Patrick's Parish

The parish of St Patrick's was founded in 1830 when Fr John Gordon built a church and presbytery on a site in Church Street opposite the site of the pre Reformation Collegiate Church of St Mary founded in 1450 now occupied by the red sandstone Municipal Buildings erected in 1902.

As the congregation grew, a site in Strathleven Place was acquired in 1883 for a larger church. On 4th May 1901, Bishop John Maguire performed the formal ceremony of blessing and laying the foundation stone of the new church.

In a cavity beneath the foundation stone was placed a copy of the Glasgow Herald and Lennox Herald together with specimens of silver and copper coins of the realm. This foundation stone is situated on the left jamb of the left main front door and has the following inscriptions:

'This stone was laid by Bishop Maguire DD May 4 1901''.

Beneath the inscription is carved a Latin Cross and on the side is carved a Consecration Cross with date 1901. The architects were Messrs Dunn and Hansom of Newcastle on Tyne and the builder was Mr William Barlas of Dumbarton.

The official opening ceremony was performed by Bishop Maguire – who was now Archbishop of Glasgow – on Sunday, 22nd March, 1903, in the presence of a large congregation of clergy and laity. Indeed a special train was run from Glasgow to Dumbarton for this occasion.

The new red sandstone church was described as being of Early English Gothic style carried out in a simple manner. The outside is entirely of stone with very little tracery or carving. With the exception of the windows and doorways, the stone is entirely rough. The main entrance is at the west end of the church and consists of two doorways leading into an inner porch. The other entrances are provided on the south side.

The total length of the church is 140 feet; breadth 60 feet; length of nave 98 feet; length of sanctuary 28 feet; length of aisles 98 feet. Seating accommodation was provided for 970 people. Heating was by hot water radiators and gas lighting which was replaced by electric lighting in

1908. The estimated original cost was £8,340 but final cost was £13,000.

Interior of the Church

Porch area at front doors:

Improvements have been made to the porch area in recent years by moving the front wooden partition further into the church and constructing inner door which have assisted in reducing draughts of cold air and have provided a circulating area for church purposes.

There is no internal indication of the Foundation Stone of the church but on the wall on the right hand side there is a white marble tablet to commemorate this occasion. The plaque also commemorates the formal opening of the church and the consecration of the High Altar by Monsignor Hugh Kelly in 1936. It reads:

The First Stone of the Church

Was Laid and Dedicated

By Most Reverend Lord John A. Maguire

On 4th May 1901

The work of building this Church being happily completed

On 22nd March 1903

It was dedicated to Divine Worship

By Most Reverend Lord John A. Maguire,

Archbishop of Glasgow

The High Altar by Special Indult

Was solemnly Consecrated

By Right Reverend Monsignor Hugh Kelly

Including the Relics of the Holy Martyrs

Faustinus and Pia

24th October 1936

On the opposite wall is another marble tablet which commemorates the consecration of the church in April 1950. It reads:

To the Great and Almighty God

Assisted by the Cathedral Chapter and also

A numerous crowd of clergy

This Church to the honour of Saint Patrick

Was solemnly consecrated

By the Most Reverend Lord Donald A Campbell

Archbishop of Glasgow

Inserted in the Altar of the Sacred Heart

The Relics of the Holy Martyrs

Faustinus and Pia

The customary indulgence, namely

One Year on the Day of Consecration and

100 days on the day of the Anniversary

Is hereby proclaimed

Praise God Always

To the left of this table is a painting of the old church of St Patrick's which stood in Church Street near the present Dumbarton Central Station. The painting is by a local artist Mr. W A Donnelly of Milton and shows a congregation gathering at the church for Midnight Mass.

Statue of St Michael

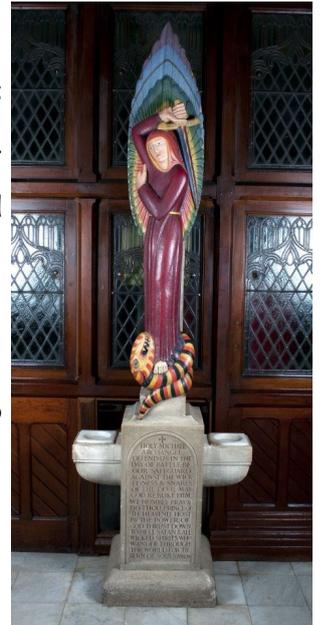
At the bottom of the wooden screen leading into the church at its centre, can be seen a panel which permits the reading of the inscription on the back of the statue of St Michael within the church which states:

*Pray for the soul of
Reverend Michael Gordon DD
Native of this parish
Who while acting as a Military
Chaplain in the Great War
Was killed at Coxyde, Belgium
On 27th August 1917 RIP*

This statue of St Michael was the work of the sculptor, Eric Gill and was commissioned by the family of Fr Michael Gordon. Fr Michael was a professor at St Peter's College in Bearsden. The statue was unveiled and blessed by Fr Octavius Claeys at an evening service on Sunday 6th September 1920.

The statue depicts St Michael the Archangel, sword in hand preparing to strike the serpent coiled around his feet. On the sword are the words:

'Quis Ut Deus' 'Who as God'



ie., Who is like to God. The serpent is painted in black, yellow and red. The pedestal at the foot has engraved on the front the prayer to St Michael, with the commemoration to Fr Gordon on the back. On either side are holy water fonts.

Choir Loft

Above the porch is the choir loft with wood engraved panels with the ornate wooden porch screen with engraved glass panelling. The present organ was installed in 1927 and was built by Messrs. Andrew Watt & Son of Glasgow. It is encased in solid oak to the design of Messrs. Pugin and Pugin of London.

It was formally blessed on 11th August, 1927 by Monsignor Hugh Kelly prior to a special recital by Mr. P O'Neill, the burgh organist of Coatbridge. This organ has two manuals and pedals and it is so divided as not to obscure the lighting in the loft. The swell organ is on the right, facing the al-

tar, and the great pedal organs are on the left. The keyboard is in the centre and the organist faces the altar.

The Nave

Looking down the nave from the back of the church, the interior is partly of stone notably the nave arcade and the chancel arch. The ceiling is octagonal and is carried out in pitch pine divided into small panels by moulds. The ceiling of the sanctuary is curved and is also of pitch pine and divided up by rib moulds. The ceiling of the extended sanctuary is also of pitch pine paneling. Originally there were clerestory windows above the nave arcade of stone with plaster jambs and arched heads. These were removed in 1935 when the original sanctuary was extended and rear wall demolished.

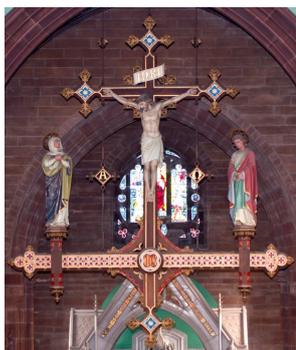


On the right aisle are ten outside windows and porch door and on the left aisle six outside windows and four confessionals with two doors each. There is dressed stone around the windows and doors with pitch pine dado around the walls, the remainder above being plastered. On either side there are six dressed stone round columns supporting the roof creating seven arches with fourteen windows above.

There were three periods of improvements to the church undertaken by the parish priest Monsignor Hugh Kelly.

1906-1908

Saw the erection of the large Calvary and new Stations of the Cross and the installation of electric lighting.



The large Calvary has the central figure of the crucified Christ on the Cross, with the figure of His Mother on the left side and the beloved disciple, St. John, on the right side. At the top of the cross is a scroll with the letter INRI – *Jesus, The Nazarene, King of the Jews*, At the foot of the cross are

Inscribed the letter IHS, which is the first letter of the name of Jesus with the H being an E in Greek and was a common medieval symbol. On the supporting rails are the letters A and O the first and last letter of the Greek alphabet, the symbol used for God as the Beginning and the End. Altogether a very impressive arrangement.

The fourteen Stations of the Cross, seven on either wall of the aisles replaced those brought from the old church. These Stations were brought from Belgium and are painted on copper plate.

The original electric lighting was replaced and updated in recent years but still blends with the character of the church. A public-address system has also been introduced.

The original seating in the church was for 970 persons and despite a slight alteration to accommodate the repositioning of the baptismal font at the front of the church, the general arrangement has remained almost unaltered over the years.

1926 – 1929

This was the period of major improvement when the Centenary Tower was built with the Memorial Chapel at its base. The wooden Sacred Heart and Lady altars and pulpit were replaced with marble ones from Italy together with marble altar rails – now removed, sanctuary steps and nave and aisle flooring.

1935 – 1936

In the third period was when the sanctuary was extended and a new High Altar – now the Blessed Sacrament Altar – with baldachin built

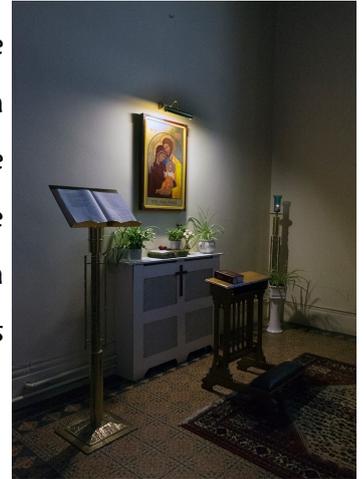
St Anthony of Padua and St Joan of Arc Statues

On the left of the family chapel is the large statue of St Anthony of Padua he is venerated all over the world as the Patron Saint for lost articles, and is credited with many miracles involving lost people, lost things and even lost spiritual goods. On the right side is the statue of St Joan of Arc,

which was made by the La Statue Religieuse of Paris. This statue is said to be one of two statues in Scotland and was donated to the church after the First World War by Belgian refugees who had come to this country.

Family Chapel/Baptistry

At the rear of the left aisle is the Family Chapel. This was previously the Baptistry until the liturgical changes resulting from the Second Vatican Council were introduced and the font was moved to the front of the church. In previous years, it was the practice in Catholic churches to site the baptismal font at the rear of the church as the Sacrament of Baptism symbolized the entry of the person into the Church. The stained glass window in the Baptistry depicts the Baptism of Christ with the words:



Ecce Agnus Dei- Behold the Lamb of God.

This window was donated to the church and the words at the bottom read:

*To the Glory of God
In thanksgiving for the grace of Holy Baptism
and in Memory of the Parents of the Donor.*

Below this window is a marble plaque which reads:

*Pray for the Soul of
The Rev. John Dougan
Senior Priest of the Mission
Who died on 2nd August 1893.
This Tablet and Font have been
Erected by the Congregation in
Grateful Remembrance of Him. RIP*

Father John Dougan became parish priest of St Patrick's in 1893 but within a few months of taking up his appointment he visited a typhoid fever patient and contracted this disease himself and died on 2nd August, 1893. This commemorative plaque and baptismal font were originally installed in the old church and were removed to the new church in 1903.

As the space was not being used as a Baptistry the decision was made to convert the space into a Family Chapel.

The Chapel was blessed during a special Mass which remembered the many children of the parish stillborn or lost in miscarriage. The focal point of the Chapel is the icon of the Holy Family and it is a quiet place where parishioners can go to remember their family members and record their prayers or requests for prayers for those family members who have passed away.

On the wall next to the statue of St Joan is a painting of Our Lord meeting the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. This picture was painted by Mr. George N Duffie of Dumbarton in 1924.

On the stone pillar near the statue of St Anthony and on the walls of both aisles, can be seen the Consecration crosses. On 27th April, 1950, His Grace Archbishop Donald A. Campbell of Glasgow solemnly blessed the whole church and anointed with Chrism the twelve crosses engraved on the walls of the church with their attached candle holder. These crosses are symbolic of the Apostles and are also a visible indication to posterity that the church has been consecrated.

Sacred Heart Altar

Devotion to the Sacred Heart - also known as the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus - is one of the most widely practiced and well-known devotions, taking Jesus Christ's physical heart as the representation of his divine love for humanity.

The origin of this devotion in its modern form is derived from a Roman Catholic nun in France, Marguerite Marie Alacoque, who said she learned the devotion from Jesus during some apparitions which occurred between 1673 and 1675.

The stained-glass window on the left wall of the altar depicts the apparition with the words be-

neath:

*I have come to cast fire on the earth and
what I will but that it be kindled.*

The marble altar was sculpted in Leghorn in Italy and brought to Dumbar-
ton in 1927. The central figure is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The church
magazine of the period describes the statue as being conventional in de-
sign, but it adds to the common impression, the idea of Our Lord stepping
down from heaven to earth. The angels in the adjoining niches are de-
scribed as exquisitely carved down to such small detail as the faint wrinkles
just above the finger joints, and they at once suggest reverence and adoration to the worshippers.
Between the two angel statues are two panels. The one on the left depicts the Angel of the Ago-
ny comforting Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane with the words beneath

*“Amor coegit te tuus” – Thy love it was that
drove thee - to suffer and die.*

The other on the right depicts the meeting of the Risen Lord with the two disciples at Emmaus,
with the lettering:

*“Mane nobiscum Domine” – Stay with us Lord,
as narrated by St. Luke.*

Both panels are sculpted in high relief with intricate detail. Below the stat-
ue of the Sacred Heart is a gold fronted tabernacle. On the marble floor
are inscribed the letters IHS.



The Sanctuary

The main work of extending the sanctuary began in 1935 and involved the demolition of the gable wall with clerestory windows and building a new one twenty feet to the rear with a lower wooden ceiling. A massive new white marble altar with a white baldachin or canopy resting on six black marble pillars on either side was then erected. The interior is ornamented with carved wood panelling.



Behind the altar is a reredos of carved marble with coloured mosaics representing two biblical scenes: The Sacrifice of Abraham and the Feeding of the Five Thousand in the desert.

Surmounting the front group of three pillars on which the canopy rests, are figures of Melchizedek on the left and Aaron on the right. Along the façade, above these figures is a Latin quotation from the Prophet Malachi:

*“From the rising of the sun to the going down
thereof, there is offered in thy name
In every place a clean oblation.”*

Central to the whole altar is the large gilt tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament. On either side there is carved in Latin the words which translate as:

*“As often as you do these things,
you shall do them in remembrance of me,”*

words used in the Consecration of the Tridentine Mass. There is a marble niche above the tabernacle. This niche or throne has a door at the rear which is reached by steps behind the altar. This was to enable the priest to place the monstrance containing the Sacred Host where it can be seen and venerated by the whole congregation during a service called Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament or Benediction.

Above the baldachin is a large stained-glass window on the rear wall. In the centre is the figure of Christ the King; the left section shows Pope Urban with above a small image of St. John Vianney; the right section shows Pope Pius X with an image of a bishop confirming small children.

On either side of the sanctuary are six Gothic style choir stalls with a wooden canopy above. On the marble floor are depicted the symbols of the four evangelists with an outline of a cross in the centre.



In 1998 the sanctuary was re-ordered in accordance with recommendations following from Vatican II. A permanent free-standing altar was constructed, incorporating the carved marble and mosaics, - showing the Lamb of God with angels on either side, from the front of the previous High Altar, which has now become the Blessed Sacrament Altar. The

pulpit, which originally was outside the sanctuary, has been rebuilt, almost in its entirety, into the sanctuary steps to form the ambo which is used for the readings at Mass and from which the priest delivers the homily or sermon. Around the ambo there are five carved figures, the principal being the figure of Our Lord preaching with the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John on either side.

The altar rails which divided the sanctuary from the rest of the church have been removed and the marble used for the lower panels of the Blessed Sacrament Altar and to form the credence table on the right of the choir stall. The reconstruction was carried out by Mr Tom MacMillan, a marble specialist.

The chandeliers containing the sanctuary lamps, which previously had been beside the two statues at the entrance to the sanctuary, are now fixed to the walls inside the sanctuary.

At either side of the sanctuary are two marble statues. The one on the left is of St. Joseph with the

Child Jesus in his arms. On the right is St. Patrick holding a bunch of shamrocks in his right hand and a bishop's crozier in his left, with snakes coiled at the bottom of his crozier. Both these statues were erected in 1935 replacing earlier wooden ones.

On either side of the main altar are two side altars, the one on the left is the Sacred Heart Altar, the one on the right is the Lady Altar.

The Lady Altar

The marble Lady altar was erected in 1927, after the Sacred Heart altar was completed. In the centre is a statue of Our Lady with a panel on the left side depicting the Annunciation by the Angel Gabriel with the greeting "Ave Maria Gratia Plena" – Hail Mary full of Grace – carved beneath the panel. The panel on the other side depicts the Coronation of Our Lady in Heaven with the inscription below:



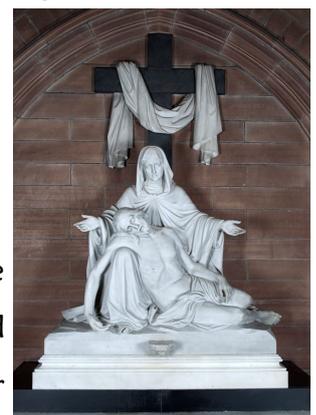
"Sublimis inter sidera" – Exalted above the stars.

In the statue of the Madonna on this altar we have what must be described as the masterpiece of the whole scheme. If one goes near and stands below, one will be surprised at the expression in the face. Looking up from the foot of the altar, the features are transformed and seem almost alive. The secret is in the eyes, which though cast down as it were in modesty and devotion are not entirely closed.

To the right of the Lady Altar is a marble statue of the Infant of Prague, which shows Christ as a small child with a crown on his head and an orb in his hand. The statue was a gift from Miss Kate Kelly on her retiral from teaching in St. Patrick's Primary School.

Memorial Chapel

The chapel at the base of the tower was erected to commemorate especially those natives of the parish who lost their lives in the First World War. The central figure is the large white marble Pieta, the figure of Our



Lady receiving the dead Christ from the cross in the background. This figure was sculpted by Messrs. Vickers & Company of Glasgow. The walls of the chapel are lined with stone with a dark wood dado and the roof is lined with dark oak panels. The white marble floor is inscribed with the symbols of the crucifixion – crown of thorns and nails, lance and hyssop stick, hammer and pliers.

There are two stained glass windows. The one facing Strathleven place depicts the Raising by Christ of Lazarus from the Dead, with the words below:

“I am the Resurrection and the Life.

He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.”

Above is a small window depicting the Risen Christ. The window facing Church Street depicts Christ the King with Our Lady of Mount Carmel with the words below:

*“If I have found favour in Thy sight, O King,
and if it pleases thee, give me my people.”*



The small window above depicts the Crucified Christ. Between both windows is the doorway leading to the belfry above. In the adjacent corner is the bell rope.

The memorial Chapel was used as a Mortuary Chapel until recent years when church liturgy changed. It was the practice previously to bring the coffin of a deceased person to the church on the evening prior to the day of burial. Overnight the coffin rested in the Mortuary Chapel until the Requiem Mass next day when it was placed in front of the High Altar. Present practice is to leave the coffin overnight in front of the sanctuary.

With this change in use the chapel was unused until recently when the then parish priest Monsignor Desmond Maguire opened it daily during the month of November for private prayer. It is now

open daily and has a Book of Remembrance and lighted candle on the altar. Parishioners are encouraged to record the names of their deceased family and friends and to pray for the repose of their souls.

Leaving the Memorial chapel and turning right the passage leads to the Sacristy. On the right wall there is a charming stained-glass window with apocryphal scenes depicting events in the lives of St. Joachim and St. Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The left panel from the top to bottom depicts St. Anne praying in the garden and St. Joachim praying on the mountain.



The Angel Gabriel appears to each in turn and tells them to meet at the Golden Gate of the Temple in Jerusalem. The bottom depicts the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The right panel from the top shows St. Joachim reading to St. Anne and Our Lady from the Book of Isaiah

“Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”

Below, St Joachim and St. Anne divide their income into three parts: one third for the temple, one third for the poor and the remainder for their own support.

The next panel shows Mary being presented by her parents to the Priest in the temple and below that a picture of St. Joachim on his death bed with an angel revealing to him that his daughter is to become the Mother of God. The final panel shows the Annunciation to Mary in her parents’ house.



Returning towards the rear of the church, on the first window sill past the entrance to the Memorial chapel is a picture of an ancient icon of the Blessed Trinity given to St. Patrick’s to mark the 500th anniversary of the foundation of the Archdiocese of Glasgow. At the top of the aisle is a door leading to the choir loft and to a side external door. The Holy Water Font at this door was donated by the women’s branch of the Sodality of the League of the Cross.

Next is a shrine to St. Therese of Lisieux, which was donated by Miss Mary Conway, a number of years ago. The central figure is a statue of the saint as a Carmelite nun holding a crucifix and a garland of roses. To the left there is a painting of the Pope blessing the saint and on the right the saint adoring the child Jesus seated on his mother's lap. Our Lady is depicted as Queen of Heaven. At the base of the shrine is the coat of arms of the Carmelite Order with their motto, taken from the Book of Kings:

"With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of Hosts."

Exterior of the Church

Viewed from the front of the church there are two main doors with a small rose window above each door. On the left jamb of the left doorway can be seen the Consecration Cross with the date 1901, which was carved on the side of the Foundation Stone. Above the Foundation Stone can be seen the carved Consecration Cross of 1950 with a smaller one on the right jamb of the right doorway.

In the centre above the main doors is a niche with a stone statue of St. Patrick with at its base, tracery of shamrocks and at the apex above the niche a stone cross.

On either side of the doorways are double arched windows; those on the left being of stained glass facing into the Family Chapel/Baptistry; those on the right are of clear glass and face into the south side doorway and the stairway to the choir loft.

There are three slender pointed lancet windows above the main doors and above them a circular rose window with a stone cross at the apex of the roof.

On the south side of the church are two doorways. The one nearest the front of the church leads to the choir loft and has a small niche on either side of the door. The second side door is used to access the church outside Mass times and is open each day from morning until evening. The original access has now been altered with the provision of a ramp for disabled access.

While the building of the church as originally designed was completed in 1903, the parish of St. Patrick's began in 1830 and, to mark the centenary of the parish, work was begun on the Centenary Tower in 1926. The tower was designed by Pugin & Pugin, architects of London. At the base of the Centenary Tower can be seen the Foundation Stone which was formally blessed and laid by Archbishop Donald Mackintosh of Glasgow on 27 June 1926. The inscription in Latin translates to:

To the Great and Almighty God.

In honour of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland,

when the approximate completion of the

Centenary of the Mission of Dumbarton,

amid the plaudits of the Clergy and Faithful,

*the Most Reverend Donald Mackintosh Archbishop of Glasgow blessed and placed the foundation
stone*

of this noble tower on 27th day of the month of June

in the year of Our Lord 1926.

In a cavity below the foundation stone was placed a leaden jar containing parchment detailing the proceedings of the day, some coins of the realm and a list of special donors of stones used in the building of the tower.



The square tower of red sandstone is in decorated Gothic design with a battlement parapet with four corner pediments 25 feet high. It is 79 feet high to the parapet and 100 feet to the top of the pinnacles. At the base is the memorial chapel which has double painted stained glass windows on two sides. Above the chapel are the windows of the belfry and carillon and near the top the louvered windows of the belfry. Below the parapet on three sides are carved in large letters the word Sanctus.

On three sides of the tower above the chapel are three niches with life sized stone statues which are the work of Messrs Boulton of Cheltenham. They fill the niches so completely as to give the impression that they have been cut out of solid stone.

The statue of St. Patrick has the position of honour facing Strathleven Place. It is conventional in style, portraying the saint with mitre and crozier in the act of expelling the snakes in Ireland. On the opposite side facing the presbytery is the statue of St. Andrew, Patron of Scotland, with the traditional cross of St. Andrew carved as a background and facing Church Street is the statue of St. Peter with a venerable expression and kingly pose. The statues were blessed on 27 August 1927 by Monsignor Hugh Kelly, parish priest.

The belfry contains a large tenor bell and a carillon of 23 bells, one of only 4 carillons in the whole of Scotland. The tenor bell was cast by Messrs Gillet & Johnston of Croydon, weighs just under a ton and measures almost 4 feet in diameter at the base. It is inscribed in Latin translated as:

To the Great and Almighty God

In honour of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland,

Titular Saint of this church,

who first saw the light in this district,

Pope Pius XI happily reigning,

under the administration of the

Right Reverend Hugh Canon Kelly,

*the Most Reverend Donald Mackintosh, Archbishop of Glasgow, blessed and consecrated this bell
on 17th March 1927.*

And the Word was made flesh.

On the side of the bell:

I praise the true God,

I call the people,

I assemble the clergy,

I bewail the dead,

I disperse storm clouds,

I do honour to feasts.

The bells are dedicated to Our Lady and various saints. Later a clock was installed in the belfry. The tenor bell is a swinging bell operated by a rope from the first floor of the tower, while the others are stationary and rung by hammers operated from a clavier of the carillon. The clavier is on the principle of a piano keyboard with the hammers of the bells connected by light rods to the small hand or foot levers of the clavier and the bells are rung by depressing the levers.

At ground level can be seen the exterior of the extended sacristies completed when the tower was built and wood corridor connecting the church to the presbytery. After the church was built the original house, called Croftbank, was demolished and the present attractive red sandstone presbytery built on the site.

In October 1936 the Lennox Herald commented:

*'Thanks to the Catholic Community,
Dumbarton can now claim
to possess what is probably the best equipped
and most beautiful of
modern ecclesiastical buildings of its kind.'*

But St Patrick's Church today is a rehabilitation of all the Collegiate Church ever was – nay more, it is the Parish Church of bygone days in all its completeness and glory and splendour.

St. Patrick's Church, Dumbarton
 Built 1903 • Extended Sanctuary 1935 • Tower 1926-1928
 Consecrated 1950

