All Saints, Drimoleague, and Catholic visual culture under Bishop Cornelius Lucey in Cork, 1952-9

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Abstract

All Saints, Drimoleague, designed by Cork architect Frank Murphy and built in 1954-6, was the first church built in a modernist architectural style in the Cork and Ross diocese since Christ the King, Turner's Cross, in the 1920s. It contains a very unusual mural on the sanctuary wall and a distinguished series of stained glass windows by Harry Clarke Studios. This article sets out a framework for the study of the ten new churches that Bishop Cornelius Lucey oversaw during his first years in charge of the diocese of Cork and Ross. It argues that one of them, All Saints, Drimoleague, is a building of national importance and it places its artwork within the broader context of Catholic politics and social teaching in the diocese in the years before Vatican II.

Pl. 1. All Saints, Drimoleague, exterior photograph from the west (R. Butler).

This article has three main aims: firstly, to set out a framework for the study of Bishop Dr Cornelius Lucey's new churches in the Cork and Ross diocese in the years before Vatican II; secondly, to argue that All Saints, Drimoleague (Pl. 1), is a building of national importance on account of both its architecture and its decorative arts; and thirdly, to place this artwork within the broader context of Catholic politics and social teaching of the time. The intensity of church building in Cork under Lucey in the period 1954-64 is rivalled only by the years surrounding Catholic Emancipation, in the 1820s, and the 'Devotional Revolution', of the 1860s and 1870s. Cork's post-war churches have however received little if any scholarly attention.[1] Partly this is a dictate of chronology, but there are also wider

[1] Hayes, Tom (ed.), *Cork and Ross Church Directory 2008* (Cork, 2008); Kennedy, Thomas, 'Church Building', in Corish, P.J. (ed.), *A History of Irish Catholicism: Vol. 5, The Church Since Emancipation* (6 vols., Dublin, 1967-71, 1970), pp. 1-36; Coombes, James, 'Catholic Churches of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 81, part 1 (1975), pp. 1-7; Godson, Lisa, 'Catholicism and Material Culture in Ireland, 1840-1880', *Circa: Contemporary Visual Culture in Ireland* 103 (Spring 2003), pp. 38-44; Wilson, Ann, 'The building of St. Colman's Cathedral, Cobh', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies* 7 (2004), pp. 233-65; Grimes, Brendan, 'Funding a Roman Catholic Church in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *Architectural History* 52 (2009), pp. 147-68; Delay,

historiographical issues. For many observers these buildings are unloved and unlovely, aesthetically disappointing, and embodying in their dominant presence, conservative planning, and pious ornamentation, symbols of many of the scandals that now dominate memory of the period in popular culture. As the *Irish Times* art critic Brian Fallon so unequivocally claimed, 'the clergy were mostly philistines, as was immediately obvious from the ugliness of many or most of the parish churches'.[2] Yet the role of the historian should be different, and an 'ugly' church is not necessarily an historically unimportant or uninteresting one. There are wider questions to consider, not least how the building of these churches was funded, who controlled their planning, and what was the relationship between their design and the political and cultural world of Catholic Ireland that built them.

To date much of the published research on twentieth-century pre-Vatican II Catholic architecture has focused on Dublin under Archbishop John Charles McQuaid and certain well-publicised controversies that reveal key dynamics of the period, such as the unbuilt modernist design for Clonskeagh in 1954-5.[3] There has also been sustained interest in modernist architects who are perceived to buck the established trends of the time, such as Liam McCormick (1916-96) and Michael Scott (1905-89).[4] In Cork, scholars have been

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Cara, '"The Gates Were Shut": Catholics, Chapels, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *New Hibernia Review* 14, no. 1 (March 2010), pp. 14-35. McGee, Caroline, 'Holy Cross Catholic Church, Charleville, County Cork', NIAH Building of the Month, March 2012. www.buildingsofireland.ie [accessed 11/11/2014].

[2] Fallon, Brian, *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930-1960* (New York, 1998), p. 190.

[3] Fuller, Louise, *Irish Catholicism since 1950: The Undoing of a Culture* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 22, 91-2; Rowley, Ellen, 'Transitional Modernism: Post-war Dublin Churches and the Example of the Clonskeagh Church Competition, 1954' in Keown, Edwina, and Taffe, Carol (eds.), *Irish Modernism: Origins, Contexts, Publics* (London, 2009), pp. 195-216; Rowley, Ellen, 'From Dublin to Chicago and Back Again: An Exploration of the Influence of Americanised Modernism on the Culture of Dublin's Architecture, 1945-1975', in King, Linda, and Sisson, Elaine, (eds.), *Ireland, Design and Visual Culture: Negotiating Modernity 1922-1992* (Cork, 2011), pp. 210-31.

[4] O'Regan, John (ed.), *Scott Tallon Walker, Architects: 100 Buildings and Projects, 1960-2005* (Kinsale, 2006); Larmour, Paul, *North by Northwest - The Life and Work of Liam McCormick* (Kinsale, 2008); Turpin, John, 'Visual Culture and Catholicism in the Irish Free State, 1922-1949', *Journal of*

particularly interested in Barry Byrne's Christ the King, Turner's Cross, built 1927-31. Yet his Art Deco design was so daring for its time that it had few followers; one critic describes it as 'isolated and exceptional'.[5] Beyond these examples there has been very little academic research into this subject.[6] The vast cathedral at Galway, for example, designed by J.J. Robinson and built in 1957-66, has yet to be tackled by historians, and so too the many new parish churches and grottos in that diocese.[7] They all await their place in an as-yet unwritten history of post-war Catholic visual culture. Historians have referred to the 1950s as a 'lost' decade in an economic and political sense; perhaps the same could be said of our appreciation for the visual culture that it has left us.[8]

Lord Killanin and Michael Duignan in their valuable *Shell Guide to Ireland*, first published in 1962, commented that All Saints, Drimoleague, was 'one of the few recent churches of interest in Ireland'.[9] By this they meant simply that its design was influenced by fashionable international modernism, but there are other reasons why it is a remarkable building. Of the ten new churches built by Lucey at this time, it is easily the most daring and explicit in its use of modernist architecture. It forms a dramatic contrast with the most conservative of these new churches, Mary Immaculate, in nearby Dromore, where the architectural language is derived instead from Hiberno-Romanesque sources, most

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Ecclesiastical History 57, no. 1 (January 2006), pp. 55-77; and Gibbons, Luke, 'Visual Modernisms', in Cleary, Joe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 128-46.

[5] Rowley, 'Transitional Modernism', p. 210. Michael, Vincent, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana, 2013).

[6] With the exception of a brief and incomplete account in Hurley, Richard, and Cantwell, Wilfrid, *Contemporary Irish Church Architecture* (Dublin, 1985), pp. 9-45. Drimoleague is absent from this book. For Catholic post-war architecture in Britain, see Proctor, Robert, *Roman Catholic Church Architecture in Britain, 1955 to 1975* (Ashgate, 2014).

[7] For a list of these churches, see *Connacht Tribune,* 29 February 1980; and Donnelly Jr., James S., 'Bishop Michael Browne of Galway (1937-76) and the Regulation of Public Morality', *New Hibernia Review* 17, no. 1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 16-39.

[8] Keogh, Dermot, O'Shea, Finbarr, and Quinlan, Carmel, (eds.), *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade* (Cork, 2004); and Murphy, J.A., 'Lost Decades?', *The Irish Review* 33 (Spring 2005), pp. 134-6.

[9] Killanin, Lord, and Duignan, Michael, *The Shell Guide to Ireland* (London, 1962), p. 196. In the 1989 revision by Peter Harbison it is said that All Saints 'is one of the first churches to have been built in a modern idiom in Ireland after the Second World War.' (p. 133).

expressly seen in its slender concrete Round Tower. Drimoleague also stands out for its stained glass and mural, the former containing a rare programmatic expression of Catholic social teaching under Lucey's early years as bishop, the latter peculiarly depicting parishioners and even the parish priest playing their part in a dramatic portrayal of Christ's suffering and resurrection. In tracing the history of this church, I will rely mostly on newspaper articles and the extensive use of Lucey's diocesan magazine *The Fold,* as there are no surviving archives in the parish. If Lucey's papers are someday made available to historians it is possible that some of the conclusions reached in this article may be open to revision. My analysis will also include oral history gathered from people associated with the building of the church, and the study of early drawings and a model prepared by the architect.

I

The history of All Saints, Drimoleague, is intimately connected with Lucey's Diocesan Church Building Fund, established in 1953, but it would be a mistake to assume that all ten new churches share a common genesis. Instead they break down into three distinct geographical categories: the five 'Rosary' churches in the city (Gurranabraher, Ballyphehane, Farranree, Dennehy's Cross, and Mayfield) each dedicated to a Glorious Mystery. Then there are the two in the satellite towns (Carrigaline and Blackrock), and finally there are the three clustered together in west Cork (Dromore, Drimoleague, and Caheragh).[10] Lucey thought the Rosary churches the most important of all. Appointed coadjutor bishop in November 1950, he succeeded Daniel Cohalan in August 1952. During Cohalan's reign of almost 40 years many new churches were built, including five in the city (Western Road, Turner's Cross, Ballinlough Road, Blackpool, and Military Hill), and one

[10] 'The Great Ten Years in Caheragh', *The Fold*, June 1963, pp. 27-30.

more in a nearby town (Ringaskiddy). He also oversaw three new churches in rural areas (Glandore, Gaggin, and Drinagh).[11] Under Lucey, the pace of building dramatically increased, and what had taken Cohalan 40 years would take Lucey less than ten. In 1953 he began his work: the five new Rosary churches were announced at a meeting in the City Hall in May, and a fund was set up.[12] He sought to raise around £450,000 from local businesses and wealthy individuals, 'Corkman now domiciled elsewhere in Ireland, in Britain and in America', and from weekly parish collections.[13] Lucey controlled and managed the fund, and donations could be sent to him personally. In this way he made himself synonymous with its aims and workings.

In July 1953 the first issue of Lucey's new diocesan magazine, *The Fold,* was released, and in it we find regular updates on the fund and his plans for the new city churches.[14] The key motivator was the enormous increase in social housing in the near suburbs of the city. A 'huge project', the *Southern Star* noted, 'has been conceived by…Lucey [and] is designed to meet…urgent requirements'. He argued there was a 'pressing need for new churches' not only to 'bring the Presence of God' but also to cater for the 'old and the infirm'. His plan moved forward swiftly and in September he formally launched his appeal and blessed the site of the first church at Gurranebraher. 'Thousands of people thronged the hilltop site…to witness the ceremony', the *Star* commented. Characteristic of Marianist rhetoric of the time, Lucey proclaimed 'To-day has seen the start made on the Rosary of churches wherewith we hope to girdle this fair city and bind it

[11] Biographical detail from Cork and Ross diocesan records (available online). www.corkandross.org [accessed 11/11/2014]. Hayes, *Cork and Ross Church Directory 2008*. This list excludes churches built by various orders, such as the Franciscans, whose church on Liberty Street was built in 1949-53. Military Hill was the acquisition of an existing Methodist church. See *Irish Press,* 3 August 1949; and *Irish Independent,* 15 July 1953.
[12] *Southern Star*, 5 September 1953.
[13] 'Diocesan Notes', *The Fold*, July 1953, pp. 9-10. *Southern Star*, 5 September 1953.
[14] Founded, Lucey claimed, because the 'secular press and periodicals are hostile or indifferent to the Church' – see *The Fold,* July 1953, pp. 8-10.

fast to Our Lady.'[15] In the next year he laid the foundation stones of a further three churches, a record not exceeded in the diocese since the 1860s if not before.[16]

The new churches were built for three different reasons. First there were the five Rosary churches, and the church at Carrigaline; these served communities in the rapidly expanding city area. Second there was Blackrock, built anew after a fire. Third there was the cluster in west Cork, replacements for dilapidated 1820s buildings in poor rural parishes that at this time were suffering significant population decline.[17] Crucially, only Drimoleague was planned and already in motion before Lucey launched his fund. This is a salient detail and allows us to distance it from the other churches over which Lucey held much stronger financial and political control. Fr Patrick Murphy (*c.* 1887-1955), the parish priest (hereafter 'PP') at Drimoleague had called for a new church to be built as early as November 1952, six months before Lucey's fund was announced, and within a few days the first fund-raising event – a dance organised by the local Pioneer Association – was advertised in the newspapers.[18] Murphy was born in Togher in west Cork and was educated at Christian Brothers College, Cork, St Finbarr's, Farranferris, and Maynooth. Unusually he gained some international experience after his ordination in 1915 by working in the Plymouth diocese during the First World War.[19] Later he was appointed curate in the Cork city parish of Douglas where he remained for almost sixteen years. In June 1950 he was given his first PP role in Drimoleague by Bishop Cohalan on the death of the incumbent, Fr James O'Mahony. Though Murphy had spent much of his early career in rural parts of the diocese (Kealkill, Ballydehob, Caheragh, and Kilmichael), he came to Drimoleague fresh

[15] *Southern Star,* 5 September 1953.
[16] Dromore (3 May 1954), Ballyphehane (2 July 1954), and Drimoleague (2 November 1954). 'Cork's Silent Church Builders', *The Fold,* September 1955, pp. 14-5. *Southern Star,* 1 May 1954 and 6 November 1954.
[17] 'The Great Ten Years in Caheragh', *The Fold*, June 1963, pp. 27-30.
[18] 'Golden Jubilee: All Saints Church, Drimoleague, 1956-2006' booklet (n.d.). Murphy, Frank, 'Drimoleague Parish Church', *The Fold*, October 1953, p. 17. *Southern Star,* 6 December 1952.
[19] *Southern Star*, 2 July 1955.

from the city, unlike the two previous PPs in Drimoleague whose pastoral experience was confined almost exclusively to rural areas.[20] This is not to suggest that Murphy's urban background led him to bring a radical modernist architect to work in rural Drimoleague – that would be too simple an explanation – but it does explain his connection with the architect, Frank Murphy (1916-93) (incidentally of no relation), whose parents were friendly with Fr Murphy and who knew him from going to mass in the city. According to the architect's son,

> As a young boy [Frank Murphy] and his family on a Sunday used to attend church and the priest there who was friendly with [them] would ask [Frank Murphy] what would he like to be when he left school, a builder maybe? No an Architect! To this the priest said if he had it in his power someday to be allowed to oversee the building of a church he would give the job to him.

Peter Murphy adds that Lucey was unhappy with the proposal because,

> Almost all of the large Catholic churches in the Munster area went to another architect, Rupert Boyd Barrett, [and] the relationship between the bishop [and Frank Murphy] was strained as the bishop did not feel that a modern design was appropriate. As a consequence no funding was made available from the dioceses and the finance for the project was raised locally and abroad by the parish priest and community at the time.[21]

[20] Fr Jeremiah O'Sullivan (1944-6) and Fr James O'Mahony (1946-50).
[21] Memorandum of life and work of Frank Murphy, architect, prepared by Peter Murphy, September 2012 (copy in possession of the author).

While this testimony cannot be verified without a detailed examination of Lucey's papers, there are many corroborating facts that suggest the outline is true. First, by pre-empting Lucey's fund by several months, Murphy clearly believed it would be possible to build the new church without the bishop's direct assistance. Murphy had brought in an engineer to assess the condition of the old building in 1952 who had concluded the cost of repair would be prohibitive.[22] But there were many similarly down-trodden churches in other parts of the diocese, such as at Caheragh, not replaced for another ten years. In nearby Dromore, Fr Patrick Henchy committed himself to build anew in 1953 but more on account of his own personal enthusiasm than for the imminent collapse of the extant building.[23] Indeed many rural churches in the area date from the 1820s and yet only a small number were demolished and rebuilt in these years; the others survive to this day.[24] Why is this? There was rarely an unequivocal *need* to rebuild, bar in cases of fire; instead the deciding factor was the ambition of an individual PP, his financial wherewithal, and his standing within the diocese. In Dromore a strong tail-wind pushed Henchy to success with financial assistance and flowing rhetoric from the bishop and the dean.[25] In Drimoleague these crutches were less apparent if they existed at all. What then can be said of the relationship between Lucey and the architect? Drimoleague was the only church that Murphy built during his long career; by contrast, J.R. Boyd Barrett (*c.* 1904-76), whose conservative designs (and right-wing social views) were more favoured by the bishop, supervised the building of Turner's Cross, rebuilt two church interiors in the 1940s, and under Lucey's tenure built seven new churches in the diocese and extended the cathedral.[26]

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[22] 'Golden Jubilee: All Saints Church, Drimoleague, 1956-2006' booklet (n.d.). Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.
[23] Henchy, Patrick, 'Our New Church at Dromore', *The Fold,* April 1954, pp. 25-6.
[24] O'Sullivan, D.J., *The History of Caheragh Parish* (Skibbereen, 2010), pp. 83-7.
[25] *Southern Star*, 12 December 1953 and 7 May 1955.
[26] Conservative architectural views were given strong support by several contributors to *The Furrow* at this time – see Robinson, J.J., 'Talking of Churches', *The Furrow* 1, no. 1 (February 1950), pp. 14-7; Stokes, J.F., 'Building with Vision', *The Furrow* 1, no. 3 (April 1950), pp. 122-7; and Robinson, J.J., 'The Case for Tradition', *The Furrow* 6, no. 6 (June 1955), pp. 350-3.

This was undeniably a stamp of approval, and three times more commissioners than any other architect received during Lucey's long reign.[27] Whatever were the bishop's privately-held views on church design, there was little ambiguity in his architectural patronage.

Faced with these unfavourable odds, Fr Murphy redoubled his fund-raising in Drimoleague. In *The Fold* it was claimed that a new church is 'a very expensive thing. Even the simplest will cost nearly £100,000'.[28] This was with reference specifically to a Rosary church that was designed to seat roughly 1,400 worshippers.[29] In Drimoleague there would only be a need to seat around 900, and Fr Murphy was confident that the church could be built for just £40,000.[30] This was still a formidable sum to raise and especially so when Henchy was at the same time seeking £17,000 for his new church in nearly Dromore.[31] Over the next three years, at least 26 events were organised in the parish: a carnival,[32] a 'monster carnival',[33] a three-act comedy concert,[34] a raffle,[35] and a play on the 'Life of Blessed Martin de Porres'.[36] 'A popular priest', Chris Eipper has written, 'could mobilize the bulk of the community …. As a professional "doer" [he] was looked upon as a man

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[27] Boyd Barrett was made Knight Commander of the Order of St Sylvester by Pope John XXIII in 1963 – see *Irish Press,* 4 April 1963. His Cork and Ross churches are: Gurranebraher (1953-5), Ballyphehane (1953-6), Dennehy's Cross (1957-60), Mayfield (1959-62), Caheragh (1960-3), Blackrock (1962-4), and Togher (1971-2). He rebuilt the interior at Bantry in 1944-5 after the collapse of the ceiling – see *Southern Star,* 21 October 1944 and 10 February 1945; *Irish Independent,* 18 December 1944. He also rebuilt the roof at Inchigeelagh – see *Irish Builder* 86, 22 April 1944, p. 171. The cathedral was extended in 1964-7 – see 'The Planned Reconstruction', *The Fold*, May 1963, pp. 23-6. Of the 18 new diocesan churches consecrated during Lucey's reign, Boyd Barrett built seven, Harry Fitzgerald-Smith built two (Dromore and Farranree), Kerry, Barry and Associates built two (Riverstick and Lowertown (Goleen)), and the following each built one: Frank Murphy (Drimoleague), E.P. O'Flynn (Carrigaline), Patrick Whelan (The Glen), Aidan McElhinny (Curraheen Road), and Patrick McSweeney (Frankfield). I have been unable to find the architect's names for Knocknaheeny or the Orthopaedic Hospital chapel at Gurranebraher.

[28] 'New Church of the Holy Ghost', *The Fold*, October 1954, pp. 23-5.

[29] *Irish Independent,* 20 May 1955.

[30] *Irish Independent,* 13 June 1956; Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.

[31] *Southern Star,* 7 May 1955.

[32] *Southern Star,* 3 January 1953.

[33] *Southern Star,* 7 March 1953.

[34] *Southern Star,* 13 February 1954 and 24 April 1954.

[35] *Southern Star,* 25 December 1954.

[36] *Southern Star,* 16 April 1955.

who could "get things done"'.[37] While Murphy may have wished to receive some assistance from Lucey, it is clear from the scale of his fund-raising plans, which far outweighed even the enthusiastic parishioners in neighbouring Dromore, that he was ready to 'go it alone' if Lucey did not cooperate.

There is no evidence to suggest that a competition was held to select the design for Drimoleague, nor indeed for any of Cork's new churches. Lucey controlled the Rosary churches directly, and in this regard it made sense for prospective architects to offer donations to his fund if they hoped to gain employment.[38] Unsurprisingly Boyd Barrett was one of the largest subscribers, donating £1,000, more than some of Cork's largest merchant firms. By way of comparison, E.P. O'Flynn (architect of Carrigaline) and Frank Murphy each contributed £150.[39] The professional architecture world in Cork at this time was insular and claustrophobic, and it is likely agreements were reached in an informal and often verbal manner; three out of the four architects, for example, who designed Lucey's new churches all had offices on the same street.[40] It must be stressed however that Drimoleague operated at some distance from this close-knit world. Before the Rosary churches got off the ground, Murphy had not only launched his rebuilding plans but had even gone so far as to pick his architect. The proof for this is an article in *The Fold* from October 1953 that shows a model of the new church with a description by the architect.[41] There is also a series of early drawings for Drimoleague now in the Cork and Ross

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[37] Eipper, Chris, *The Ruling Trinity: A Community Study of Church, State and Business in Ireland* (Aldershot, 1986), p. 104.
[38] As was the case in Dublin under McQuaid, see Rowley, 'Transitional Modernism', p. 201.
[39] 'Cork Churches Appeal', *The Fold*, July 1953, p. 7.
[40] O'Flynn was at no. 60 South Mall, Murphy occupied nos. 46 & 51, and Fitzgerald-Smith was at no. 73. Boyd Barrett was at no. 5 Camden Place, Cork. 'Cork Churches Appeal', *The Fold*, July 1953, p. 7. *Irish Builder and Engineer* 96, no. 8 (10 April 1954), p. 364.
[41] Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.

diocesan archives that are dated December 1953 and January 1954.[42] Tellingly, these drawings do not include Lucey's name anywhere and are instead inscribed 'for Rev. Fr. Patrick Murphy, P.P.' Boyd Barrett, by comparison, tended not to mention individual priest's names in his drawings, viewing himself more as a servant of the diocese, and the bishop, than of any one priest.[43]

The individual nature of Drimoleague is highlighted by contrasting it with nearby Dromore, where Lucey had endorsed the priest's call for a new church and had, at the very outset, promised 'to provide a very considerable portion of the money required' from his church building fund.[44] In Drimoleague the priest pushed ahead independently and hoped for assistance later. Whatever the differences between priest and architect on one side, and bishop on the other, Lucey did not let any cracks show in his public statements. In May 1954 he administered confirmation in Drimoleague and remarked that:

> I was in Boston recently [and] they were generous to me…beyond measure…. [Your] children's children would see the fruit of the [new church] and thank God for those who, in the days of landlords and rack rents, built the present church which was a magnificent edifice for its time and which had cost more in money and effort than would a modern church in a modern parish.[45]

For Lucey there was still some use to be made from Catholic nationalist rhetoric. According to one parishioner who contributed to the fund-raising at the time, Fr Murphy

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[42] Cork and Ross diocesan archive, 'Proposed Parish Church at Drimoleague, Co. Cork', three elevations views and a plan on three sheets, dated December 1953 and January 1954 and signed Frank F. Murphy.
[43] See for example, Cork and Ross diocesan archive, 'Church of Mary Immaculate Dromore. Proposed New Porch', elevations, sections and plans on one sheet, dated December 1964 and signed J.R. Boyd Barrett.
[44] *Southern Star*, 12 December 1953.
[45] *Southern Star,* 29 May 1954.

raising the sum required 'simply by raising the dues by ten times'.[46] When Lucey returned to Drimoleague in November 1954 to lay the foundation stone, his comments suggest these recollections are probably true. For the first time he also addressed the architectural style of the new church, in words that are perhaps more striking for their ambivalence than for their ringing endorsement:

> It will be a spacious church…It is modern in design, but not daringly so. Altogether, it promises to be a fine church, a fitting House for God…. No doubt it is costing a great deal of money, but won't it be worth it? … In actual fact there will be nothing extravagant about the church, either in equipment or adornment. No more is being spent than is necessary in order to have a good and lasting structure…. You have been asked for much already for the Building Fund, and you have given willingly and promptly what has been asked of you…. If your Parish Priest has not spared you at the beginning of the work it is for your own good; you will have so much less to pay at the end…. Neither has he spared himself or his friends. From far and wide he has collected for this church…. He deserves your gratitude [and] your co-operation [.]

Lucey felt the need to publicly state that,

> As for myself, I need only say that he had from the beginning and that he still has my unqualified confidence and support…you may rest assured that you will get a big share of the Fund I have got for the churches.[47]

[46] Interview with Mr James Collins, Drimoleague, March 2012.
[47] *Southern Star,* 6 November 1954.

It is unclear whether Drimoleague received any more from the fund than what was contributed as part of regular collections in the parish. As Lucey had made clear, all parishes were expected to organise collections, not just those that were proposing to build new churches.[48] In Drimoleague the local community was therefore paying not just for their new building, but for their part of the larger diocesan project. If the architect's son is correct in his account of events, Lucey offered no financial assistance; it may also be true that there was no *net* contribution above the funds contributed by the parish.[49] This sequence of events should not be surprising: Lucey rightly focused on his city churches, not only larger, more expensive and more ornate buildings, but where there were bigger demographic challenges and opportunities. His feeble description of Drimoleague as just 'modern' (though not 'daringly so') and simply 'a fine church' (though not 'extravagant' in any way), and where he appears not to mention the architect's name, contrasts with his comments the year after at the consecration of his first Rosary church at Gurranebraher:

> We have crowned the hill…with this massive, majestic Church of the Ascension. We have completed one decade of the Rosary of the five Glorious Mysteries churches that will dedicate this growing city to God and Mary.

Lucey then

> thanked the architect, Mr J.R. Boyd-Barrett, who, he said, was second to none in his profession in the country, and that [the new] church was second to none of the many he had designed.[50]

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[48] 'Diocesan Notes', *The Fold*, July 1953, pp. 9-10.
[49] Memorandum of life and work of Frank Murphy, architect, prepared by Peter Murphy, September 2012 (copy in possession of the author).
[50] *Irish Independent,* 20 May 1955.

Meanwhile building work in Drimoleague continued unabated. By November 1954 the old church had been demolished and the walls of the new building were taking shape.[51] Work continued through the winter, delayed only by occasional harsh weather, and was described as 'now well advanced' in March 1955.[52] Tragedy struck that summer with Fr Murphy's untimely death aged just 68. Lucey presided at his requiem mass and Murphy was laid to rest at the base of the half-finished walls of his new church.[53] He left £1,000 in his will to Lucey's building fund.[54] Fr Richard Dalton filled the vacancy in Drimoleague.[55] Whatever Lucey or Dalton's views were on the architecture of the church, it was obviously too late for either of them to make any changes. Dalton faithfully continued the building programme and photographs in the *Cork Evening Echo* in January 1956 show the roof trusses being assembled and the tower almost complete.[56] Lucey returned to Drimoleague that June to confirm the children of the parish and consecrate the completed church, accompanied by the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr William Philbin (1907-91). A photograph taken from the gallery during that mass shows the bishops and their assistants at the altar surrounded by a row of arm-bearing military officers from the Skibbereen Battalion F.C.A.[57] Though the *Southern Star* carried a lengthy and detailed description of the new church, they unfortunately did not record what Lucey said.[58]

II

Drimoleague's architecture stands out from any other new church built in the diocese in these years. The *Irish Independent* led with 'New Style in Church Design' and opined that the

[51] *Southern Star,* 11 September 1954 and 16 October 1954.
[52] *Southern Star,* 27 November 1954 and 12 March 1955.
[53] *Southern Star,* 2 July 1955.
[54] 'Cork Churches Appeal', *The Fold*, November 1957, p. 9.
[55] *Cork Examiner,* 8 April 1959.
[56] *Cork Evening Echo*, 4 January 1956.
[57] 'Golden Jubilee: All Saints Church, Drimoleague, 1956-2006' booklet (n.d.).
[58] *Southern Star*, 16 June 1956. 'The Church of All Saints, Drimoleague', *The Fold*, July 1956, p. 24.

church 'represents a complete break from the traditional forms of ecclesiastical architecture'.[59] The *Irish Builder and Engineer* thought that it 'dominates the countryside [and is] notable for the simplicity of its architecture and absence of internal obstruction ensuring a complete view of the high altar.'[60] The *Southern Star* noted the 'extensive use of modern materials which require little or no maintenance', 'the absence of curves', and that 'it has no arches, and no pillars…. During the ceremonies, the sun broke through…on a few occasions and the lighting effect on the altar was delightful.'[61] The new church was featured in Luan Cuffe's modernist record, *Architectural Survey*, in 1957*,* one of only two new churches from the diocese to be given that honour (and one that was not extended to any of Boyd Barrett's churches).[62] Fr Diarmuid Linehan, the curate at Drimoleague in 1959, thought it 'new and of daringly modern design'.[63] An exhibition on 'Modern Church Architecture and Liturgical Art' was organised by the Christus Rex Society and held in Youghal in April 1961; one reviewer noted that among the photographic exhibits were, 'of course, the by now well-known churches at Ennistymon and Drimoleague.'[64] In light of all these comments it is surprising that the church has been omitted from all subsequent scholarship.

But was the design really all that revolutionary? Boyd Barrett used giant bold arches – pointed at Gurranebraher and circular at Dennehy's Cross – to span the entire width of two of his Rosary churches, thus obviating the need for pillars or aisles.[65] Fitzgerald-Smith, at Farranree, used exposed brick throughout the interior in a manner that the *Southern Star*

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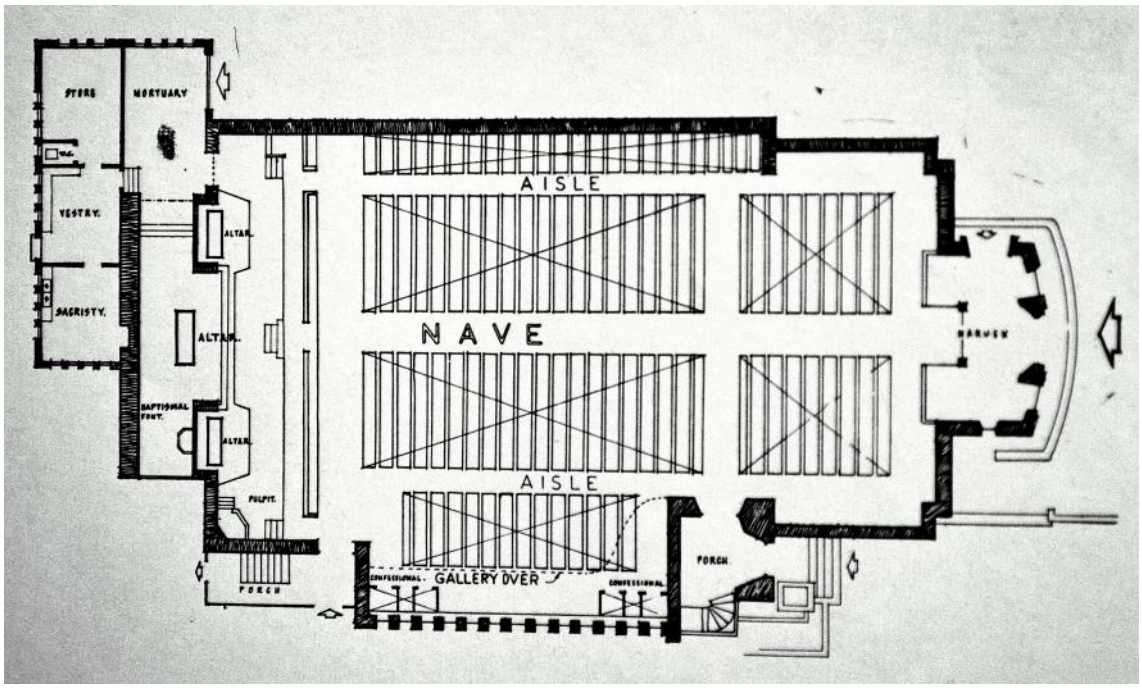
[59] *Irish Independent,* 13 June 1956.
[60] *Irish Builder and Engineer* 98, no. 12 (16 June 1956), p. 555.
[61] *Southern Star*, 16 June 1956.
[62] Cuffe, Luan, *Architectural Survey* (Dublin, 1957), pp. 8-11. The only other new church in the diocese to feature was Farranree – see Delany, Patrick, *Architectural Survey* (Dublin*,* 1959), p. 8.
[63] Lenihan, Diarmuid, 'Good Friday and Holy Saturday', *The Furrow* 10, no. 5 (May 1959), pp. 327-31, at p. 327.
[64] McConville, Laurence, 'An Irish Exhibition', *The Furrow* 12, no. 6 (June 1961), pp. 22-25, at p. 24.
[65] A feature he first used at Glanworth, county Cork, in 1941-4, and later at Bantry (1944-5), and Inchigeelagh (1944).

presumably would also have praised. And of course in the generation before, Barry Byrne had introduced a hexagonal plan that was a true revolution on the standard cruciform design of so many of Cork's churches, a plan that allowed not only for uninterrupted view of the altar and the dramatic entry of light through a vast array of lancet windows and funnelled sky-lights, but also the audacious use of reinforced concrete to achieve these effects. To understand why Drimoleague was indeed such an important departure from what was typical under Lucey's early stewardship, I would like to focus on three aspects of the design: plan, elevation, and detailing.



Pl. 2. All Saints, Drimoleague, plan (from Luan Cuffe, *Architectural Survey* (Dublin, 1957), p. 10, reproduced with the kind permission of the Cuffe family).

While the typical Cork church plan was simply a nave (sometimes known as a 'barn' church) with or without arcaded aisles and perhaps a transept, Drimoleague's plan is derived from combining five cuboid spaces that would appear as one large if slightly distorted rectangle, into which Murphy brought movement and variety by cutting and splicing the extremities of its shape in an irregular manner (Pl. 2). The choir gallery

protrudes from this rectangular outline, and a series of attenuations to the east signify the lesser importance of this part of the church. The bold asymmetrical tower to the south fits into a corner formed by the meeting of two of these rectangles, leaving the impression from inside that it is completely independent of the main body of the church, but from outside that it is intricately tied to the other blocks, an arrangement that is more striking in elevation. Not only are there no aisles or piers to obstruct the central focus on the altar but the walls are left plain and flat with only minor exceptions. A priest in Drimoleague later praised the 'spacious' design saying 'movement is easy and rarely is there any need for standing or blocking of side-aisles.'[66] Two thick brick walls on either side of the altar (Pl. 3), like huge sliding doors, separate the main body of the church from the torrent of light that enters through the full-height windows that are cleverly hid behind them. In this way a very clear and yet subtle spatial and hierarchical division is worked into what appears to be such a simple space. A priest could enter either directly behind the altar (a door that has since disappeared) or by appearing dramatically from the bright space behind these large walls. Parishioners enter through a large porch at the east end, though there is a second entry that passes through the base of the tower and emerges onto the crossing point of the pews (as originally built there was also a public entrance to the south of the altar (Pl. 2), however this must have been an awkward route during services and has since been blocked up).[67]

[66] Lenihan, 'Good Friday and Holy Saturday', p. 328.
[67] It is visible in Cuffe, *Architectural Survey,* p. 11, and in Cork and Ross diocesan archive, Drimoleague drawings, plan, January 1954.

Pl. 3. All Saints, Drimoleague, interior photograph looking west (R. Butler).

In only one Rosary church – Mayfield – did Boyd Barrett digress from the standard nave-cruciform arrangement, and that was not until 1959. What is likely to have inspired Frank Murphy to make the break some years earlier? He was a keen follower of the international modernist movement, like many of young architects of his time, and was particularly inspired by the work of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Eliel and Eero Saarinen, and Alvar Alto. Graduating from UCD in 1939 from an architecture programme still heavily routed in traditional classical architecture, Murphy rebelled against this inherited tradition and learned more from a series of visits he made to Europe, and Germany in particular, in the 1930s. Later in 1947 he went to Scandinavia on his honeymoon – an unusual choice perhaps were it not for the wealth of modernist architecture he could see there. The son of a large Cork building contractor, he established practise in the city in 1940 and built some private residences in Blackrock and worked at St

Patrick's Institution, Belmont Park, in Waterford.[68] Drimoleague was however his first major commission. By the time he was preparing his plans in 1952-3, he would have been able to draw on a large range of modernist churches, both Irish and foreign, to provide inspiration. Liam McCormick and Frank Corr's church at Ennistymon, county Clare (built 1947-54), illustrated in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* in 1948, provided an example of a large and simple rectilinear interior space with an asymmetrical lofty tower that is so similar to Drimoleague.[69] Many churches on the continent from the inter-war years had followed the same plan, as had Eliel Saarinen's widely-admired Christ Church Lutheran (built 1948-9) in the Minneapolis suburbs, where a large cuboid space is combined with a tower in a manner strikingly similar to Drimoleague, and a full-length south-facing window allows light to pour in to the sanctuary in precisely the same way as Murphy proposed.[70] In Germany he could borrow from the spatial planning and composition of established church architects such as Dominikus Böhm;[71] in England we find many of Robert Potter's churches, such as those in Plymouth, or A.D. Crooke's church in Stowmarket, follow a similar plan and bell-tower elevation. Though *The Furrow* would make its biggest mark in introducing modernist architecture to the Irish Catholic world only after the Clonskeagh controversy in 1954, from its earliest volumes in 1950 we find articles on contemporary German church building as well as on McCormick and Corr's modernist Holy Rosary Church in Limerick (built 1951).[72]

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[68] Memorandum of life and work of Frank Murphy, architect, prepared by Peter Murphy, September 2012 (copy in possession of the author). Murphy later built Presentation Convent, Ballyphehane (1955), Irish Distilleries, Popes Quay (1964), Thompsons Bakery, McCurtain St (1967) and 1 South Mall (1967), all in Cork city.
[69] *Irish Builder and Engineer* 90, no. 18 (4 September 1948), pp. 708-10.
[70] Christ Church Lutheran was featured in *Life* magazine (3 March 1951).
[71] There was an exhibition held in Dublin in 1953 on new German architecture – see 'Churches in Germany', *The Furrow* 4, no. 7 (July 1953), pp. 1-3.
[72] Klauser, Theodor, 'Directives for Building a Church', *The Furrow* 1, no. 7 (August 1950), pp. 353-62; Corr, F.M., and McCormick, W.H.D., 'Our Lady of Fatmina, Limerick', *The Furrow* 2, no. 3 (March 1951), pp. 168-75; Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950,* pp. 91-92.

Whatever the subtleties of the plan, in elevation the building was undoubtedly a major shock. We only need contrast it with its peers to make this point, whether in the brick Italianate arcades and campanile deployed by O'Fynn at Carrigaline or Boyd Barrett at Ballyphehane, or the Round Tower at Dromore. Murphy rejected these precedents and instead allowed the irregular arrangement of rectangles that formed the plan to speak for themselves in the elevation. 'From the outset', he said, 'all traditional forms were set aside.'[73] Thus we see a collection of large cuboid spaces dramatically varied in size, composition and use of material that gives the church its distinctive sharp skyline. Though there are subtle changes between Murphy's late-1953 drawings and the church as built, it is clear that the overall shape of the building had been decided upon by this time. Instead of envisioning the nave and bell-tower to be related but essentially independently-designed features, in the manner of so many Irish precedents, the bell-tower at Drimoleague is simply one of the many irregular cuboid shapes that make up the church – thinner and significantly taller than any other but still snugly fitting into the adjoining masses. Where possible the roofs are flat, and at an early stage in the project Murphy hoped this could be universally the case, but the engineering and financial obstacles presented by spanning the nave necessitated triangular steel trusses.[74] To mitigate their roof profile the supporting walls were raised in the manner of a parapet (though perhaps not entirely successfully) to stress the cuboid composition. Only on the east façade is the gabled roof fully visible with no attempt to hide it; instead the protruding cornice and upward bow profile on the main window give it an extra prominence, as McCormick and Corr had done in Ennistymon, but without letting the triangular shape overpower the focus on rectilinear geometry.

[73] Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.
[74] Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.

The focus on flat surfaces, perpendicular joins and a rectilinear aesthetic is most apparent from the south and west (Pl. 1), where the different cuboids vary in size and weight like a slate rock that has been sheared and fractured into clean shapes, an allusion that is strengthened by the widespread use of thin slabs of slate stone from a local quarry.[75] The design is most successful in its massing of these large blocks, identifying and varying them by alternating between slate and aggregate blocks. Rivalling the tower in height and importance is the west cuboid, where full-length windows on two sides contrast with the impenetrable austerity of the giant slate wall, only varied by occasional and seemingly irregular protruding flagstones. In an earlier scheme Murphy had proposed fixing a crucifix scene high on this exterior wall; whether financial or aesthetic concerns saw this dropped we cannot be sure but its absence is no loss to the building.[76] Likewise there was to be a giant statue of a saint perched half-way up the concrete buttress to the south of the bell-tower but this would again only have distracted from the simple beauty played out by contrasting building materials. Instead all the focus is put on the truly enormous metal cross that is bolted to the tower and rests its bulbous, thermometer-like base on a large buttress (Pl. 4). In this striking feature as in the overall shape, height and position of the tower Murphy was influenced by McCormick, Corr, Saarinen, and many others who sought to give a distinctly twentieth-century revision to the typology of a church bell-tower. In allowing the irregular cuboid floor plan to express itself so freely in elevation Murphy also distinguished himself from many if not all of Lucey's new churches at this time.

[75] *Droim dhá liag*, the 'ridge of the two flagstones'.
[76] Cork and Ross diocesan archive, Drimoleague drawings, west elevation, January 1954.

Pl. 4. All Saints, Drimoleague, exterior photograph of bell tower (R. Butler).

In the detailing we see more important advances. Foremost is the use and manipulation of light, where exciting possibilities were ignored by every other new church in Cork at this time, even those that by good fortune happened to be aligned in the correct east-west fashion. Murphy took full advantage of it. Firstly, to the east he filled the nine lancet windows, and the large adjacent clerestory on both sides with yellow-orange glass that fills the church with glorious sunrise warmth in the morning. Secondly, he gave

prominence to the large choir gallery window to the south that would be illuminated all day and he maximised its surface area by arranging the panes in a saw-tooth pattern. Thirdly, the full-length sanctuary window allowed a stream of light to flow in, particularly in the middle of the day during a mass when it would gleam off the chalices and plates on the altar (as the *Southern Star* had noted). Saarinen had pioneered this 'hidden' light source in Minneapolis, so similar to Drimoleague as to suggest that Murphy was aware of this building through the architectural press. An extensive article devoted to the Minneapolis church in the July 1950 issue of *Architectural Forum* had remarked that 'natural light is used with dramatic simplicity to make the main altar [a] focal point of the entire interior…. Light streams into the sanctuary through a window extending the full height of the south wall'. Murphy explicitly stated at Drimoleague he strove to 'concentrate all light and attention on the altar'.[77]

Beyond simply letting light in, Murphy also sought to conceal it in a multitude of different ways, again the only of Cork's new churches from this time to attempt this. Light wells, in the Corbusier tradition, are inserted into walls at the rear of the church. Only from the exterior is it clear that this light, which flows vertically down into the body of the church, comes from a subtle variation in the plan of the east cuboid. The same idea is carried over to the two large brick walls that frame the altar, where a series of symmetrical perforations let spots of white and blue light through. In the niches on both sides there are two more light wells, invisible to the congregation, that direct light from the great south window into the otherwise dark recesses of these shrouding walls. G.E. Kidder Smith, in his 1963 celebration of modernist church architecture described the potential for using 'dramatic spotlights of sun from roof monitors' to create a contrast between areas 'flooded

[77] Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.

with light' and those 'where a mysterious atmosphere prevails.'[78] Murphy's intelligent use of light was also carried through to the exterior, where the irregular protruding blocks of concrete and slate stones catch the sunlight at different points of the day. Saarinen had famously placed four huge sculpted blocks on the front of his Minneapolis church, fulfilling his wish to add some three-dimensional texture to an otherwise very plain wall; in Drimoleague this same idea reappears in a series of aggregate blocks on the north elevation.

To architects of a more traditionalist outlook, this sculptural use of raw aggregate blocks, and perhaps much else of Murphy's design, may have been seen as machine-like, cold, or simply ugly. J.J. Robinson made these arguments in *The Furrow*. By breaking away from the established canon of architecture that had been so dominant in the Cork diocese, Murphy, like Barry Byrne in the 1920s, had strove to set a new direction for ecclesiastical architecture. That this was his only church speaks volumes for how it was received and the extent to which it depended upon an independently-minded priest who could operate at some distance from the bishop's main church-building programme. Though the design was praised by many critics at the time, I have not seen any other post-war church in Ireland that is either directly or indirectly inspired by it.[79] At the *Church Architecture Today* symposium held in Dublin 1955, McCormick claimed that 'there is no need to fear the new idiom'.[80] Whatever about fear, there was little enthusiasm for Murphy's design in the Cork diocese, and with perhaps the exception of the floor plan that Boyd Barrett used at

[78] Kidder Smith, G.E., *The New Churches of Europe* (New York, 1963), pp. 12-3.
[79] With the exception of the concealed full-light sanctuary windows at Belmullet (1960), throughout the nave at Kilkee (early 1960s), and oddly facing north at Millford, county Donegal (by McCormick, 1961). Many post-Vatican II churches have concealed light sources, and Drimoleague cannot claim to have played any role in popularising this feature. It can be seen in all the major cities and at Dún Laoghaire, Kildare, Knock, the Carmelite Abbey grotto in Loughrea, Newmarket-on-Fergus, and perhaps most strikingly at Burt, Cresslough, and Glenties, county Donegal (all three by McCormick).
[80] *Irish Builder and Engineer* 97, no. 10 (7 May 1955), pp. 461-2 and *The Furrow* 6, no. 6 (June 1955).

Mayfield (the best of his Rosary churches), modernist architecture only returned in a sustained manner after Vatican II.[81]

III

Pl. 5. All Saints, Drimoleague, mural on sanctuary wall, 1956-57 (R. Butler).

[81] Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950,* pp. 111-6.

No history of Drimoleague church is complete without discussing its decoration, and in particular its mural and stained glass. Neither has received any scholarly attention to date. At the consecration in 1956 the church was only barely complete and no artwork had yet been installed. With Murphy's death the year before there was an opportunity for his replacement, Dalton, and perhaps the bishop as well, to choose their preferred artists and subjects. Let us consider the mural first (Pl. 5). The large sanctuary wall called for a major artwork, and ideally one that would take advantage of the strong indirect lighting. What do we know about the mural? It is signed 'Hans Schroener 1954-56', but there has been significant (and regrettably amateurish) repainting in places in recent years, and in this case the pencil under-lettering suggests a different spelling. It may be Schrocher, Schroeder, or Schroehir. Peter Harbison in 1989 thought it Schröder, perhaps as in Hans Schröder (1931-2010) the German artist from Saarbrücken.[82] People who recall the mural being painted remember that the artist came from Germany or Austria.[83] There is indeed a striking similarly between the way in which facial features such as eyes, mouths and chins are painted in the mural and how they appear in Schröder's drawings such as *Zwei Zeichnungen* (1969) and *Irmgard Schmeer* (undated). This attribution raises the obvious question of why either priest or bishop in 1950s Cork would hire a young German artist who went on to make his name designing erotic sculptures of sportsmen and young lovers. However, in the mid-1950s Schröder was struggling to become known as an artist, was working as a decorator, and were it not for his good fortune in being discovered by a gallery director in 1957 was considering abandoning his artistic career.[84] In such a position his professional fees can only have been very modest; something that would have suited the parish's

[82] Killan, Lord, and Duignan, Michael, (revised by Harbison, Peter), *The Shell Guide to Ireland* (Dublin, 1989), p. 133. Obituary in *Saarbrücker Zeitung,* 9 April 2010.
[83] Interview with Mr James Collins, Drimoleague, March 2012. Memorandum of life and work of Frank Murphy, architect, prepared by John Murphy with the assistance of Ted Uniacke (who joined Frank Murphy and Partners in 1954), September 2012 (copy in possession of the author).
[84] Von Klaus, Ertz, and von Emily, Dillman (eds.), *Hans Schröder: Plastiken, Zeichnungen, Fotocollagen und Gemälde aus den Jahren 1950-1988* (Freren, 1989), pp. 10-11.

stretched accounts. The attribution remains an intriguing mystery. The signed date, too, of 1954-6 is perplexing, as it is clear from photographs in the *Cork Evening Echo* in January 1956 that the roof above the east wall was only being sealed at this time, and so it is impossible that the mural was begun before this date. Also, the aforementioned consecration photograph from June 1956 shows a door immediately behind the altar, as originally built but later sealed up. The outlines of this door, visible in the mural today, overlap with key parts of the lower scene where Christ is shown being taken down from the cross. Thus the mural cannot have been painted until this door was sealed, which had occurred by the time a series of photographs were taken in 1957.[85] The mural therefore was painted between June 1956 and early 1957.

Why are these details important? Firstly, because it proves the signed date is incorrect (as perhaps is the current iteration of the artist's name); and secondly, that it removes any possibility that Fr Murphy had overseen the creation of the mural in the final year of his life. According to an engineer who worked in Frank Murphy's office from 1954 onwards, two artists were invited to submit schemes to Lucey, who then personally chose Schröder.[86] In 1953 Frank Murphy thought the wall would be covered with a mosaic and not painted; in the end this did not happen.[87]

The mural is made up of two episodes from the Crucifixion separated by a large gilded Gothic arch. In the lower scene there is the bringing down of Christ from the cross, and in the upper scene he is shown at the Resurrection as he ascends into the sky. The lower scene is not particularly remarkable; Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are shown

[85] Cuffe, *Architectural Survey,* p. 11
[86] Memorandum of life and work of Frank Murphy, architect, prepared by John Murphy with the assistance of Ted Uniacke (who joined Frank Murphy and Partners in 1954), September 2012 (copy in possession of the author).
[87] Murphy, 'Drimoleague', p. 17.

gently lowering Christ from the cross, which is partly visible in the background, and passing his body to his mother and Mary Magdalene. Far more important is the Resurrection scene where Jesus is shown surrounded by no fewer than 28 figures, praying, writing and witnessing his ascent. The tone is less celebratory than reverential. The tiers of clouds form a stage on which the witnesses stand and sit; in the centre Jesus is shown with his sacred heart and his arms raised, flanked by two angels, the sun and planets, the eye of providence, a dove, and a rainbow that crowns the whole scene. Intriguingly, not all the witnesses are saints, as we might expect in a church dedicated to them. Instead there is a division, signified by the use of the halo, between saintly and lay people. As a general rule, but with a key exception, the lay witnesses are clustered together in the bottom right of the mural. Many of the saints are identifiable, not least the Apostles who are shown writing their testimonies, Mary with her blue dress and crown, and St Peter holding the Keys of Heaven. In the lower left we see St Sebastian tied to a tree and pierced with arrows, St Catharine holding a sword and a wheel, and above her the curious choice of St Barbara with the prison tower that she is reputed to have escaped from, through a crack in its walls. At the top left is likely St Brigid who is shown clutching a chapel with its distinctive Round Tower and on the other side St Patrick genuflects. If Schröder was indeed the artist, he was evidently willing to include Irish saints in his work. He was also willing to include ordinary people, in a most extraordinary fashion. A total of seven lay figures appear in the work. The most striking is the priest in the lower left, who is obscured by the brick wall but is shown holding a model of All Saints. This is Fr Murphy (Pl. 6), kneeling and offering his new church to God (curiously it was judged locally that his facial features were not accurately represented by the artist, Fr Murphy having died by the time it was drawn, and a replacement head was later glued on top of the original).[88] To the right are six figures from two different families; below are husband, wife, little child and perhaps grand-mother,

[88] Interview with Mr James Collins, Drimoleague, March 2012.

pausing in their farm work to witness the Resurrection. They are wearing 1950s dress. Above them is a family of perhaps husband, wife and adult child, in nineteenth-century costume; the man uses his axe as a stick, as the man below uses a spade. A parishioner who remembers the church being built was able to name the family shown in the bottom right, they were local people from Drimoleague who were integrated into the scene.[89]

Pl. 6. All Saints, Drimoleague, detail from mural, 1956-57, showing Fr Patrick Murphy and All Saints Church (R. Butler).

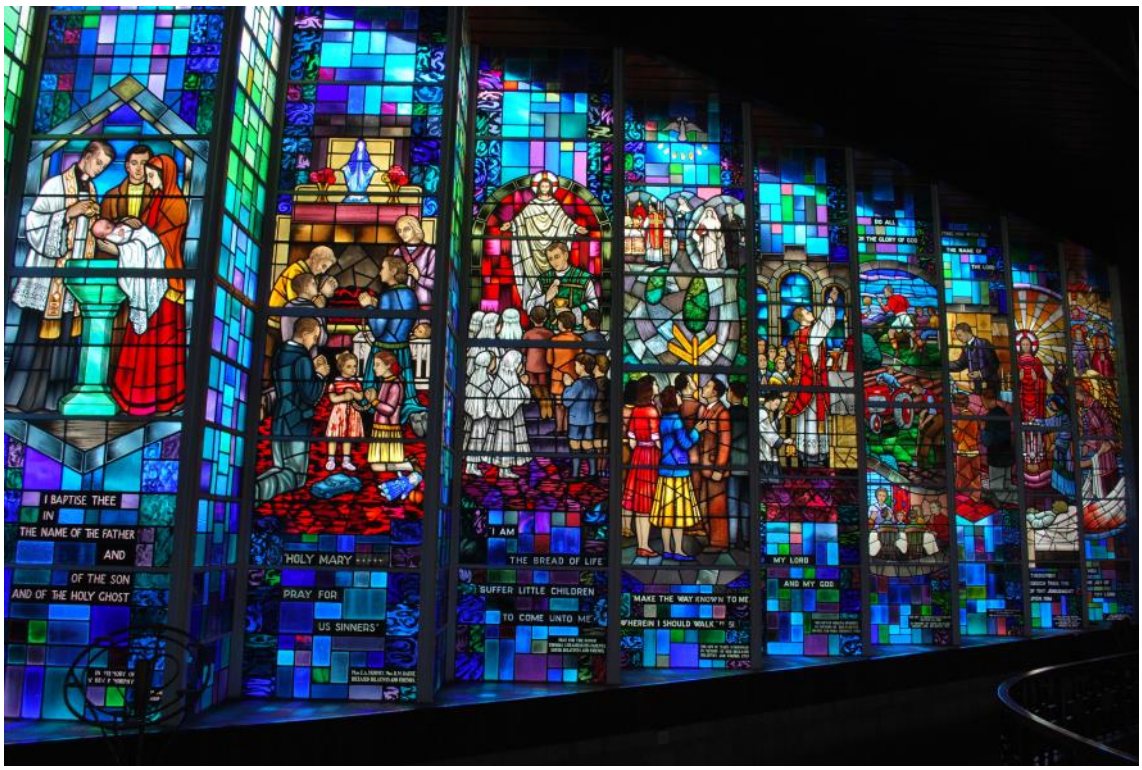
[89] Interview with Mr James Collins, Drimoleague, March 2012.

The lay witnesses are by no means relegated to secondary importance in the overall arrangement; they share the same hierarchical position as saints Catharine and Sebastian. Instead of being separated from the Resurrection they are intimately part of it, integrated so fluidly that only the absence of halos gives them away. The mural in All Saints was to represent a 'people's church' in that it incorporated local people into its decorative artwork. It is very rare in Irish church decoration to see such a 'democratic' (if we may use the term) expression of the church and its position within society in this era; such depictions are normally reserved for post-Vatican II artwork and can be seen for example in Athenry, county Galway. A stained glass Crucifixion scene in St Clement's Church of England, Hastings also shows identifiable parishioners putting down their tools and witnessing Christ (by Philip Cole, 1949), but such arrangements are very unusual and it is unexpected to say the least to find such a scene in rural Cork in the late 1950s. It is not replicated anywhere else in the diocese.

The stained glass in the south window is no less important. The brief had been set by the architect when he designed the windows in a saw-tooth pattern. Instead of one flat window there are some eighteen panels arranged perpendicularly, nine that face the altar and nine the congregation. At the time of the consecration the window was covered with plain glass but the *Southern Star* noted 'it is proposed to change those ordinarily visible from the body of the church to stained glass'.[90] As with the mural, the commission for this glass and its programme was now a matter for Dalton and the bishop, and not Fr Murphy. The stained glass was inserted in 1959, and is by Harry Clarke Studios, Dublin.[91] Each window was paid for by individual families or groups such as Muintir na Tíre; Bishop Lucey paid

[90] *Southern Star,* 16 June 1956.
[91] Date on the sixth window; signed on the second window.

for the east-most window in memory of Fr Murphy.[92] As originally planned, simple green and blue glass windows faces towards the altar and all the figurative glass faces the congregation. The subject of the nine windows is, in short, an expression of ideal Catholic life from birth to death with all its inherent restrictions and rewards (Pl. 7). It is unique in Irish Catholic visual culture. From left to right we see ordinary people in contemporary dress as they pass from baptism, family prayers, and first communion to courtship, mass, family meals, sport and agricultural work, and to the last rites, death, and ascension into heaven. Inscriptions from the Bible explain each stage of life and give directions as the sequence passes from window to window.



Pl. 7. All Saints, Drimoleague, stained glass window, Harry Clarke Studios, 1959 (R. Butler).

The east-most panels represent the earliest triad of life – childhood – and begins with a priest pouring holy water over an infant child, being held by his mother as his father.

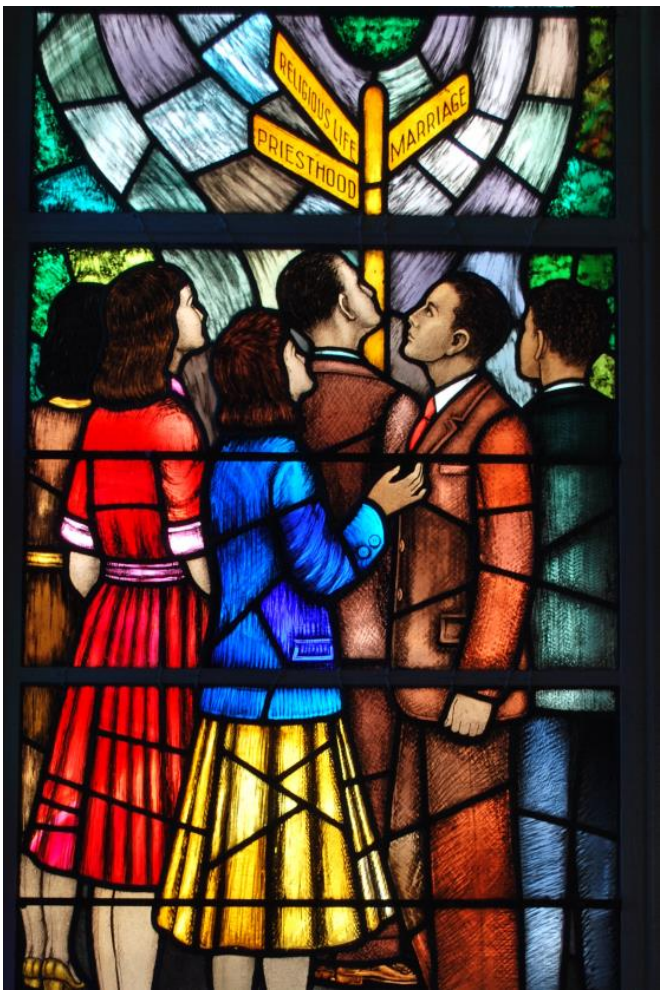
[92] *Southern Star,* 24 January 1959.

A family are then shown saying the Rosary by the fireside, an image so characteristic of Marian devotion in the 1950s. We see children of all ages, their parents and a grand-mother. In the foreground there are a modest number of toys – a car, a ball, and a doll – for the children to play with. In the third scene the priest from the baptism window is shown dispensing first Holy Communion to a group of children in their finest white dresses and suits; below is written 'I am the Bread of Life. Suffer little children to come unto me.'

The second triad – adult life – is perhaps the most distinguished. Above the quote from Psalms, 'Make the way known to me wherein I should walk', we see six young adults clustered together (Pl. 8), three conservatively-dressed girls in long colourful dresses, and three respectable young men in suits. They gaze upwards at an orange road sign that sets out their options for a good Catholic life. There are only three directions marked: Priesthood, Religious Life, and Marriage. Swirling patterns lead from these markers to three speech-bubble-like vignettes that in turn show a priest performing mass, a nun, and wedding photograph. With their choices firmly made, the fifth window concentrates on the importance of mass. The same priest from windows one and three reappears, stressing his integral role in the life of the parish. The church is represented by three Romanesque arches – certainly not All Saints then – and these frame the priest as he raises the Eucharist. The inscription below is simply 'My Lord and my God'. The sixth scene shows the virtues of ordinary life in three images and is titled 'Do all for the glory of God'. On top we see two men in red jerseys playing Gaelic football as two women sit on a bench and share news. Below them is a work scene in a field as one man uses a tractor to plough a field while another, similar to the man shown in the bottom-right of the mural, is shown using a spade (appropriately for the window donated by Muintir na Tíre). After sport and work we

see a family eating together, the children gathered around the table with their parents engaged in conversation.

The three west-most windows show old age. First we see a priest administering the last rites to an old man as he clutches a cross; his children kneel at his bedside praying for him. In the next window the man has died and is shown in his bed holding a cross and Rosary beads. Above him is Christ in glory as two saints judge the man's life with scales. The tension is relieved in the final window as the inscription from Matthew, 'Enter though into the joy of thy Lord', confirms the man's ascension into heaven; a host of angels welcome him with outstretched arms as God is shown observing from on high.



Pl. 8. All Saints, Drimoleague, detail from stained glass, 1959,
fourth window, 'Make the way known to me wherein I should walk' (R. Butler).

It is exceedingly rare to find ordinary people depicted in Irish religious stained glass. Harry Clarke Studios are one of the only firms from the years before Vatican II to do this but nowhere else is their programme so explicit and dominant. In Athlone and Cavan they produced windows to commemorate the 1932 Eucharistic Congress that feature lay people but only in very small side panels. One of their windows at Blackpool in Cork city shows a family saying the Rosary at night and this is without doubt a reworking of the second window at Drimoleague. But there are no other examples from the pre-Vatican II period that I am aware of that rival the intensity and thoroughness of Drimoleague in showing ordinary Catholic life in the 1950s.[93]

It cannot escape the historian to notice that this window shows a programmatic working through of the core political and social values that Lucey espoused at this time. He was recognised as the leading clerical sociologist in Ireland and has left us a rich written documentation of his social teachings, mostly preached at confirmation ceremonies and in his diocesan magazine *The Fold.*[94] In Drimoleague in May 1952 he stressed the importance of a 'healthy agricultural economy', saying 'farming is an essential and worthy occupation; land should be owned privately, and ownership of it diffused as widely as possible.' 'In the eyes of the Catholic sociologist', he opined, 'the ideal farm is the family-size farm…Farm life ministers in an exceptional way to wholesome family life'. Catholics could seek 'sanctification of their lives through their daily work and the nightly family Rosary'. He later deplored the rural depopulation that was threatening the bucolic stable agricultural life that is so clearly extolled in this glass.[95] Later in 1954 he found himself defending the idea that

[93] In England there are examples by Philip Cole at St Clement's, Hastings (1949) and by M.E. Rope at St Peter, Molesworth, Cambridgeshire (1929) and All Saints, Hereford (1944). On the island of Ireland the only rivals to Drimoleague that I have seen are at Athenry (early 1970s), and at Comber Church of Ireland, county Down (2009, by David Esler).
[94] Sheehy, Michael, *Is Ireland Dying? Culture and the Church in Modern Ireland* (London, 1968), p. 184.
[95] *Southern Star,* 10 May 1952.

the children of farmers, if they did not take ownership of the farm or marry into one, would be forced to emigrate. He claimed that the 'old argument that the country was over-populated' was not true. It should be possible for all to marry and live locally, and the fourth option missing from Drimoleague's fourth window – the glaringly obvious omission of emigration – should not be necessary.[96] Acutely aware of 'the decay of rural life', he called on government to intervene and even suggested that rural teachers should be paid more because they cannot take advantages of the city's attractions and freedoms.[97] In April 1955 *The Fold* dedicated its issue to focusing on the importance of family life and in particular the woman's role within the house. There are countless such examples that could be quoted to build up a picture of Lucey's Catholic social teaching, whether concerning sexual morality or the dangers of alcohol, discord and the 'sins of the tongue' within the family home, the centrality of the church to everyday life, or the perils of hell. These are all topics referred to in Drimoleague's extraordinary stained glass.[98]

What about the mural? Its depiction of ordinary people from the village as well as their ancestors stresses the permanent, unchanging, and triumphant church within rural society. The promise of the Resurrection was made available to all who worked hard on their farms and who led good lives; the new church would literally be held up in honour of all the saints who joined the laity in witnessing Christ's ascension.

It remains for others to find the exact place for All Saints within the canon of Irish modernist architecture; I would suggest that not enough churches have been analysed for this to be attempted here. It is also open to others to debate the extent of domestic versus

[96] O'Brien, John A., *The Vanishing Irish: The Enigma of the Modern World* (London, 1954).
[97] *Southern Star,* 28 May 1954.
[98] Sheehy, *Is Ireland Dying?*, pp. 25, 184-95, 232-3; Blanshard, Paul, *The Irish and Catholic Power: An American Interpretation* (London, 1954), pp. 41, 139-67; Whyte, J.H., *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1979* (Dublin, 1980), pp. 241, 271-2, 310-13, 331-4; Inglis, Tom, *Moral Monopoly: The Catholic Church in Modern Irish Society* (Dublin, 1987), pp. 214-7; Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950,* pp. 3-96.

international influences on architects and artists of this time. What is clear is that Lucey's enthusiasm for Boyd Barrett's conservative and traditionalist new churches appears to have been rooted in, essentially, his own view of what a new Catholic church should look like; by and large that this was to be a traditional nave or cruciform plan with a distinct bell-tower or domed roof, inspired by Roman, Italianate or Hiberno-Romanesque architecture. Murphy's All Saints clearly did not fit into this picture; it was the church that owed its existence to the leadership of an individual priest and a fortuitous timing of events; like St Barbara it emerged through a crack in the tower. It is an isolated and exceptional building, like Turner's Cross, but in which we find artwork that is explicitly representative of Lucey's teachings at this time, and so of wider historical importance. Perhaps as a reaction to the modernist architecture that frames them, they are some of the most powerful artworks of 1950s Catholic visual culture, and some of the least known.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following for their help in writing this article: the Bishop of Cork and Ross, the Rev. John Buckley, Fr Liam Crowley, Ita Gimblette, James Collins, Peter Murphy, John Murphy, Dr Frank Salmon, Peter Murray, Joan Clancy, Ciarán Cuffe, Tamela Maciel, Otto Saumarez-Smith, the Rev. Kristine Carlson, Robert J. Davis, and Peter Truax.