

An Tur Gloine Stained Glass Windows  
and Mosaic Stations of the Cross  
in St. Brendan's Cathedral,  
Loughrea, Co. Galway



The National College of Art and Design

An Tur Gloine Stained Glass Windows and Mosaic  
Stations of the Cross in St. Brendan's Cathedral,  
Loughrea, Co. Galway.

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Finally, I would like to thank my tutor, Nicola Gordon Bowe, for her constant and invaluable assistance, advice, information and encouragement.

D.C.



# ABBREVIATIONS.

N. G. I. National Gallery of Ireland.

N. L. I. National Library of Ireland.

R. H. A. Royal Hibernian Academy.



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Quotations concerning St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea.

'The building itself is not noteworthy, but the works of these artists have made it almost a museum of early Irish art and artistry.'

Brian de Breffny and George Mott (The Churches and Abbeys of Ireland)

'... few modern churches can compare with it in the fine taste of its interior ornament and furniture'

Denis Gwynn (Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival)

'... I would need to enumerate the whole noble series of windows at Loughrea, for they are of major importance in the history of Irish art.'

Thomas MacGreevy (St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea)

'The glass at Loughrea amounts to a gallery of specimens from An Tur Gloine.'

Jeanne Sheehy (The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past - the Celtic Revival)





1. Exterior, Loughrea Cathedral.
2. Interior, Loughrea Cathedral.



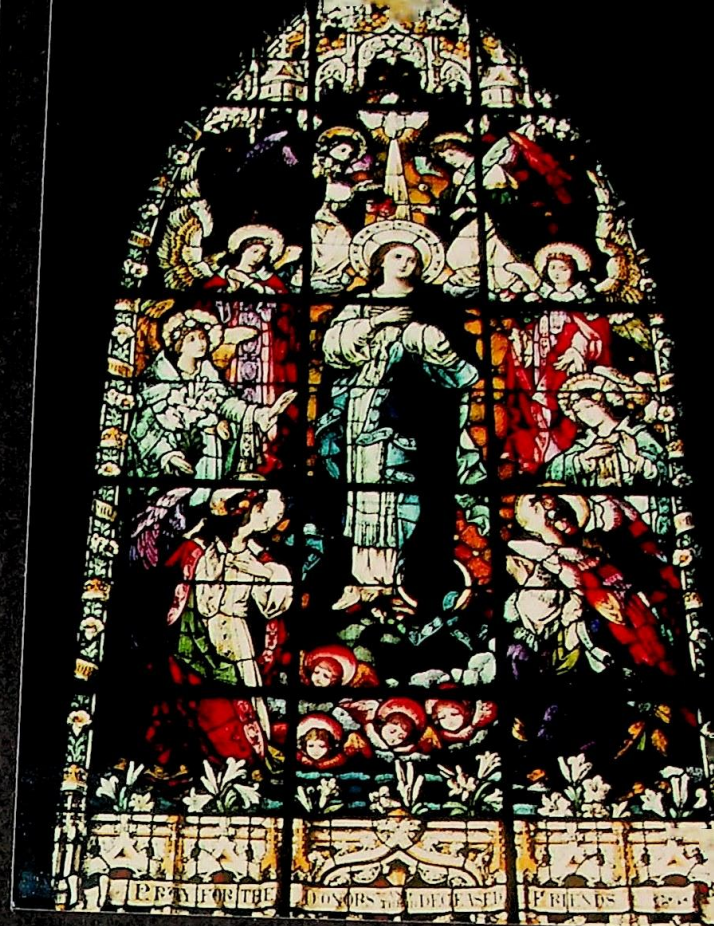
## P R E F A C E.

When I first chose St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea, County Galway, as the subject of my thesis I had hoped to write on all aspects of the interior decoration. It was not long before I realised the enormity of this ambition and so instead chose the most important aspect - the An Tur Gloine contribution. Therefore I shall not be discussing the work of artists and craftsmen such as Michael Shortall, William A. Scott, John Hughes, Francis O'Donohoe or the Dun Emer Guild.

Many authors have praised the high standard of ecclesiastical art, particularly the stained glass windows, in Loughrea Cathedral and I have selected a short list of relevant quotations which can be found on the page preceeding this preface. However, very early on in my research I discovered that virtually no authors or scholars had ever tackled the subject of St. Brendan's in any degree of detail. The most in-depth study of Loughrea Cathedral is Thomas MacGreevy's article for The Capuchin Annual which was published thirty-five years ago. This article was written before the last two windows were commissioned but even so it contains several inaccuracies and omissions. I hope that my thesis might be of some value to those interested in the study of Loughrea Cathedral and of An Tur Gloine in general.

My thesis is written in two parts, (the second part being an appendix), and I have explained the reason for this further on. A third section includes short biographies on the artists, priests and patrons who were involved in the interior decorative scheme of Loughrea Cathedral.





3. Mayer of Munich Baptism of Christ no date. Catholic Church, Carrick-on-Shannon.
4. Mayer of Munich Immaculate Conception no date. Catholic Church, Drumsna.
5. Mayer of Munich Caritas no date, St. Naithi's C.of I., Church, Dundrum, Dublin.



In 1895, Mr. William Hunt, R.B.A., was invited to write a report on the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland's first exhibition held in that year. Included in the exhibition were stained glass cartoons. He summed them up in one sentence: "The cartoons for stained glass are disappointing; pictorial effect has in every case been aimed at, and the effect sacrificed to detail".<sup>1</sup>

Stained glass windows being produced in Ireland were indeed of a low standard. Most of the clergy chose to place their commissions in the hands of foreign stained glass companies. This would appear to be a reasonable decision were it not for the fact that the foreign windows were of an equally low if not lower standard than those produced at home. One of the few enlightened clergy, Fr. Jeremiah O'Donovan<sup>2</sup> gave his views to the Maynooth College Union. "It may seem a rather sweeping statement to make, but it is a statement upheld by every expert authority on art, that generally, indeed in almost all cases, this glass, from an art standpoint, is beneath contempt."<sup>3</sup>

These foreign windows which resembled "crudely painted window blinds"<sup>4</sup> more often than not had their origin in Munich or one of the other large foreign firms. (Plates Nos. 3, 4, 5) The colours used were muddy and murky: mauves, greens and browns predominating. The figures depicted were stiff and wooden, their gestures awkward and stereo-typed; facial expressions were blank and vacant - supposedly suggestive of piety



and devotion. The saints depicted were invariably incased in gothic revival architectural niches complete with over-elaborate pinnacled canopies. All these windows were mass-produced. No single 'artist' would begin and complete a window on his own; he was merely a cog in the production process. Furthermore no consideration of the future sight of the window was taken into account.

The man who initially took it upon himself to halt this flow of foreign windows into Ireland was Edward Martyn.<sup>5</sup> According to Denis Gwynn,<sup>6</sup> it all began when Martyn decided to erect some windows in memory of his family at his parish church of Ardrahan.<sup>7</sup> Unable to find any Irish windows of a suitable standard he was forced to look abroad. He went to an Englishman, Christopher Whall,<sup>8</sup> the leading stained glass artist of the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>9</sup> It is still uncertain as to whether Whall did execute any windows for Ardrahan.<sup>10</sup> At any rate Martyn approached Whall not only about windows for Ardrahan but also for advice and help to revitalise the Irish stained glass industry.

At about the same time an administrative appointment took place in Dublin which was to prove important for both Martyn and Whall. The Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, had for many years been under the jurisdiction of the South Kensington School of Art. It was hardly an ideal arrangement. Then in April 1900, the Department of Agriculture



and Technical Instruction came into existence. The Department took control of the School of Art and T. P. Gill was appointed its secretary. Gill was an old friend of Martyn's and was sympathetic to his artistic ideals. He set about reorganising the School of Art's curriculum with particular emphasis on the introduction of craft classes including stained glass. Gill's problem was finding a suitable instructor for the stained glass class.

Meanwhile in Edward Martyn's native Galway, a new Catholic cathedral at Loughrea had been underway since 1897. By April 1901 the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. Healy<sup>11</sup> encouraged by one of his priests, Fr. Jeremiah O'Donovan, was beginning to think in terms of furnishing it with stained glass.<sup>12</sup> There was no question of using inferior Munich stained glass. Bishop Healy wanted the windows to be made in Ireland. Like Edward Martyn, he realised that there were no Irish stained glass artists sufficiently competent to satisfy his demands. No doubt at Edward Martyn's suggestion, and with Fr. O'Donovan's encouragement, he decided to offer the commission to a non-Irish artist with the important proviso that the commission was to be executed in Ireland with Irishmen as assistants.<sup>13</sup>

Edward Martyn had more than likely decided that the stained glass artist to obtain the teaching post at the School of Art would be the same man that would get the Loughrea commissions. The only problem now was where would he execute the Loughrea commissions. Obviously a



studio would have to be set up. He approached Sarah Purser.<sup>14</sup> "At first she was inclined to jib; but being a woman of great business capacity as well as an artist, who, of course, would understand the situation she took the hint ..."<sup>15</sup>

By April 1901, Martyn, Gill, Purser and the Loughrea priests were working together with a common aim as can be seen in a letter written to Sarah Purser by the Loughrea priest, Fr. O'Donovan.

"I saw Edward Martyn yesterday: - of course it is our intention to pay a salary to the stained glass man. How much I cannot say yet, but am writing to T. P. Gill to-night about it. Enough to get a really good man ..."<sup>16</sup>

By July 1901, it had been decided who the "really good man" should be.<sup>17</sup> He was Alfred Ernest Child,<sup>18</sup> Christopher Whall's "chief helper"<sup>19</sup> and "favourite pupil".<sup>20</sup> Twenty-eight years later, A. E. Child recalled his first impressions: "When I was appointed instructor of this class in September 1901, I found that there existed (as there still exists) a tremendous amount of local talent among the young Irish artists, only requiring to be applied to this important craft, talent which seems especially applicable to church art in general."<sup>21</sup>

Although A. E. Child's stained glass classes began in the Autumn of 1901, Sarah Purser's stained glass workshop was still in the planning stages. During 1902, a site for the workshop was found. Its address was



no. 24 Upper Pembroke Street though the workshop was built in a back-  
garden of one of the Georgian houses. (Plate no. 6 ) Access was by a  
lane off Lower Leeson Street. The workshop was christened "An Tur Gloine"  
or "The Tower of Glass", the choice of name had its origin in a Gaelic  
legend. Sarah Purser was very much the driving force behind the  
enterprise although Child was the manager and during the early years it  
was invariably referred to as 'Miss Purser's Stained Glass Works' rather  
than by its correct title. The official opening took place on January  
1st 1903. In a speech twenty-five years later, Sarah Purser recalled the  
opening:

"On that 1st January, twenty-five years ago, we had our first  
tea party. Some friends, Mr. Hughes, the sculptor, was one of them, came  
as it were to see us off. The shop was quite new, and oh so cold! We  
gathered around the Kiln and drank champagne out of tea cups - it didn't  
taste very well, and we betook ourselves to the teapot..."<sup>22</sup>

In the same speech, Sarah Purser indicated their debt to  
Christopher Whall:

"I cannot end without acknowledging how much we owed at the  
starting to Mr. Whall ... He treated us with the most noble generosity,  
gave us his tradition, and his excellent methods, and was to the last,  
kind and sympathetic even when he didn't quite approve some of our  
developments".



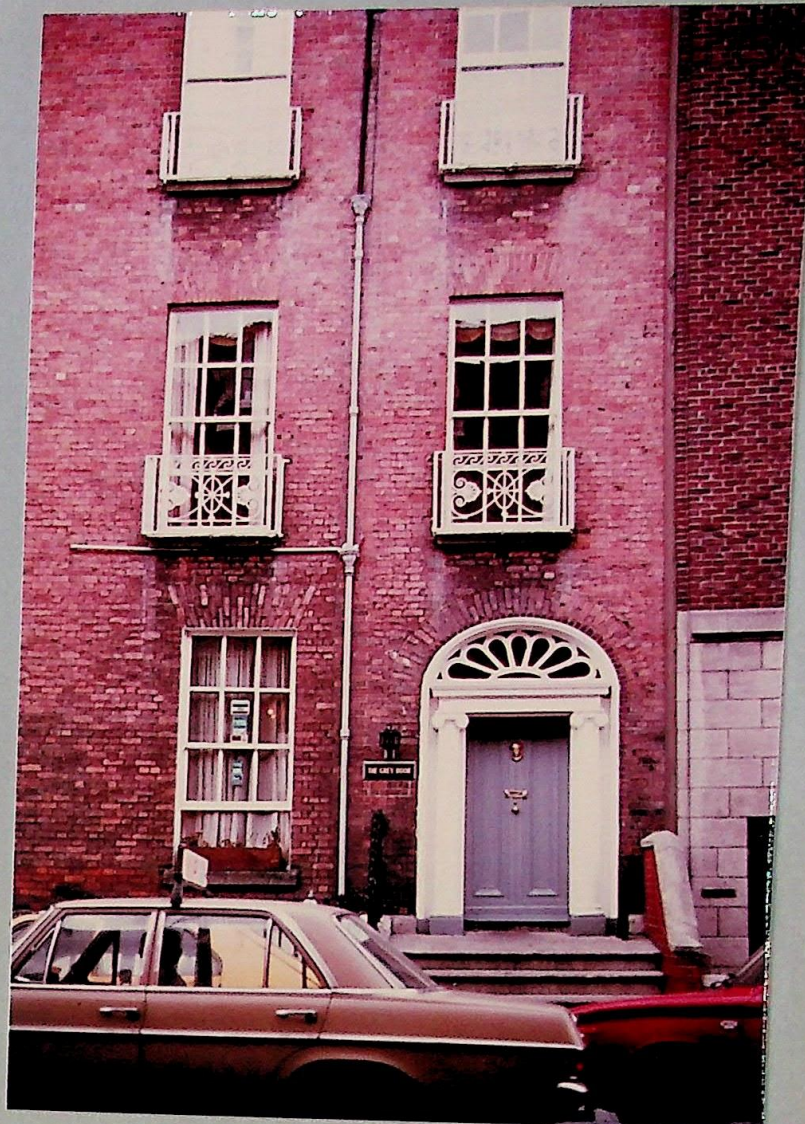
no. 24 Upper Pembroke Street though the workshop was built in a back-garden of one of the Georgian houses. (Plate no. 6) Access was by a lane off Lower Leeson Street. The workshop was christened "An Tur Gloine" or "The Tower of Glass", the choice of name had its origin in a Gaelic legend. Sarah Purser was very much the driving force behind the enterprise although Child was the manager and during the early years it was invariably referred to as 'Miss Purser's Stained Glass Works' rather than by its correct title. The official opening took place on January 1st 1903. In a speech twenty-five years later, Sarah Purser recalled the opening:

"On that 1st January, twenty-five years ago, we had our first tea party. Some friends, Mr. Hughes, the sculptor, was one of them, came as it were to see us off. The shop was quite new, and oh so cold! We gathered around the Kiln and drank champagne out of tea cups - it didn't taste very well, and we betook ourselves to the teapot..."<sup>22</sup>

In the same speech, Sarah Purser indicated their debt to Christopher Whall:

"I cannot end without acknowledging how much we owed at the starting to Mr. Whall ... He treated us with the most noble generosity, gave us his tradition, and his excellent methods, and was to the last, kind and sympathetic even when he didn't quite approve some of our developments".





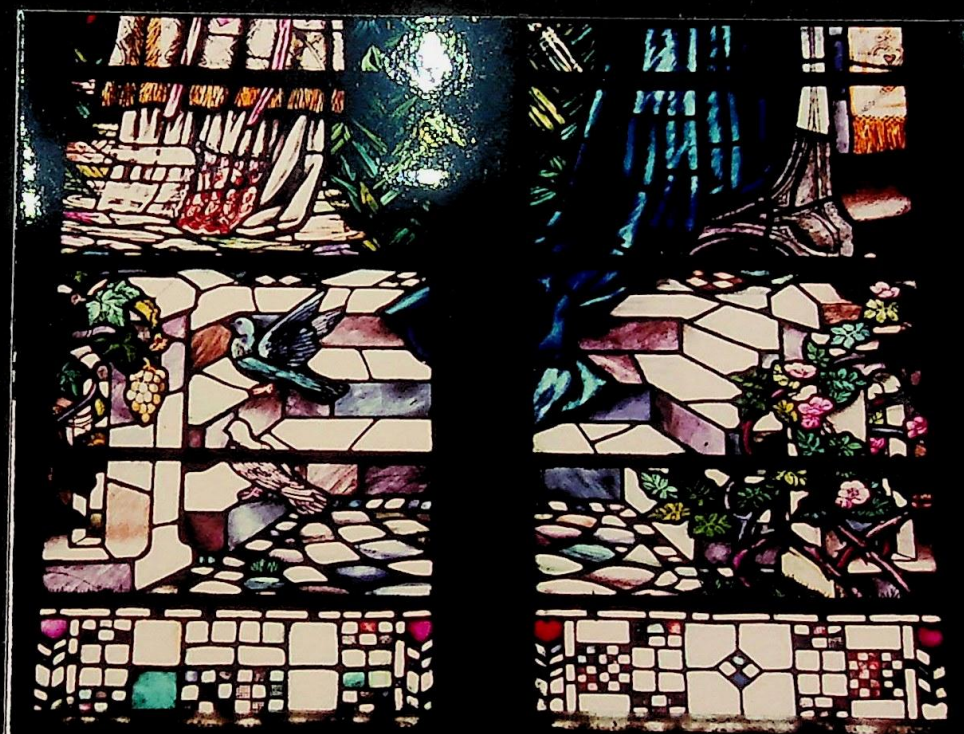
6. 24 Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin. photographed in 1981.



The very first window recorded in the An Tur Gloine work journals<sup>23</sup> is The Annunciation (plates nos. 7, 8, 9) for St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea. It is one of three large two-light windows made by An Tur Gloine for the apse of the cathedral. It was executed in the first half of 1903 by A. E. Child who was assisted by Michael<sup>24</sup> Healy and possibly other students also. (Healy is recorded as having painted an angel for this window).<sup>25</sup> Although the window is attributed to Child<sup>26</sup> the design has clearly come from Christopher Whall's hand. By comparing the Loughrea Annunciation with a window of the same subject by Whall in the north nave of All Saints Church, Dogmersfield, Hampshire (plate no. 10) it is possible to see an undeniable similarity. Christopher Whall's window was executed in 1898. Why then should A. E. Child choose to reproduce almost identically a window by Whall? This is curious especially when one considers that both Whall and An Tur Gloine stressed the necessity that "each window should be in all its artistic parts the work of one individual artist, the glass chosen and painted by the same mind and hand that made the design and drew the cartoon ..."<sup>27</sup>

It is not recorded in the work journals who exactly commissioned this and the other two apse windows. It must have been either Bishop Healy or Edward Martyn, or perhaps they both contributed to its cost. Edward Martyn might have seen a cartoon or sketch for the Dogmersfield





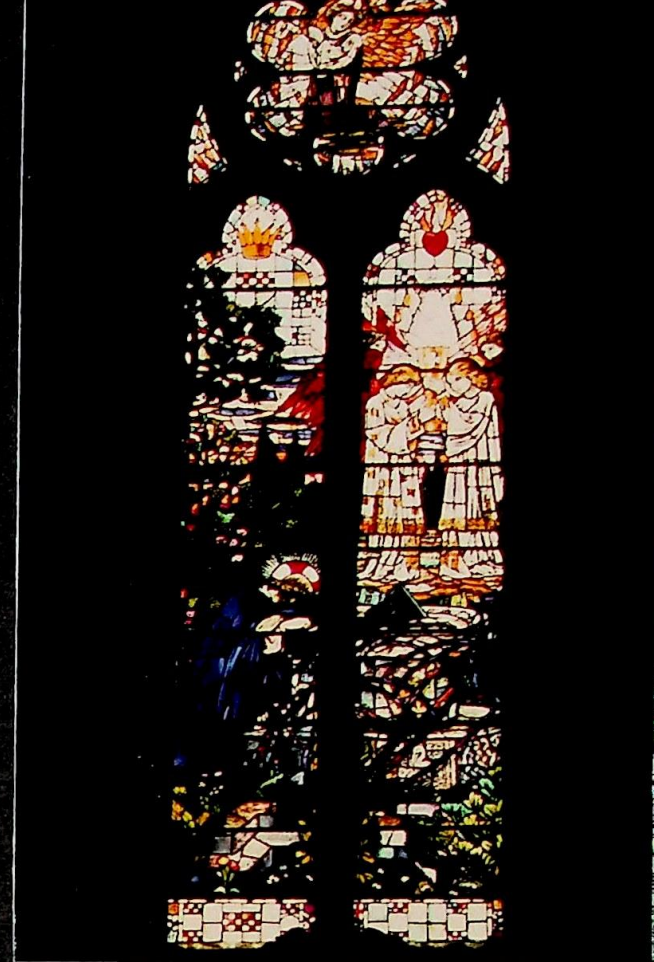
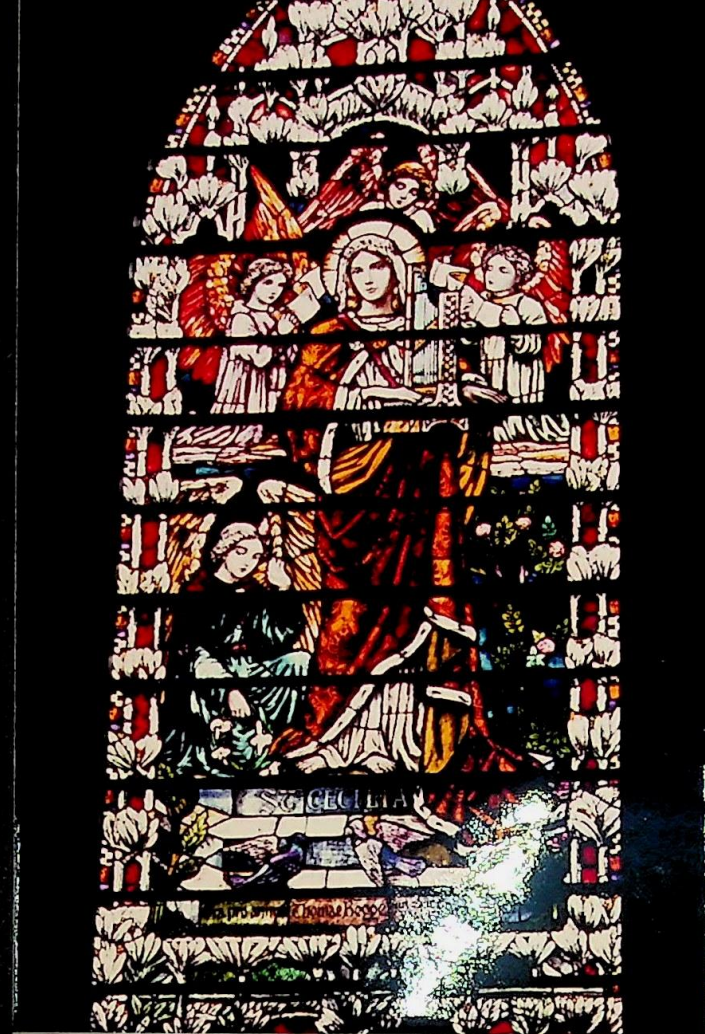
7. A. E. Child The Annunciation, 1903 Loughrea Cathedral.
8. A. E. Child The Annunciation 1903 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
9. A. E. Child The Annunciation 1903 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.





10. Christopher Whall The Annunciation 1898, Dogmersfield, Hampshire, England. photograph: Peter D. Cormack.





11. A. E. Child St. Cecilia 1904 Catholic Church,  
Haddington Road, Dublin.
- 12 A. E. Child The Agony in the Garden 1903 Loughrea  
Cathedral.
13. A. E. Child The Agony in the Garden 1903 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.



Annunciation when visiting Whall in London and liked it so much that he requested a version of it for Loughrea. What is perhaps more probable is that Child himself decided to adapt one of Whall's designs. Child was not a very original artist and this is not the only occasion in which one of his windows is closely derived from his master's hand.

The window, which depicts the announcement of Christ's birth to Mary by the Angel Gabriel, is described in St. Luke's Gospel (1:26-38). The Loughrea window is narrower than the Dogmersfield Annunciation window and consequently Child had to alter Whall's original composition. He does this primarily by placing three recessed steps below the figures. The doves on the steps are an attractive feature which he repeats when depicting St. Cecilia (plate no. 11) for Haddington Road Church, Dublin, in the following year. The small rose window completing the Loughrea window is likewise not to be found in the Dogmersfield window. It depicts an angel carrying the Lamb of God surrounded by what appears to be a crown of thorns. As in the Dogmersfield window, lilies with their traditional symbolism of purity and virginity fill the background area between Mary and the Angel Gabriel.

The other two windows in the nave at Loughrea were also executed in 1903 by A. E. Child, assisted by his pupils. The central window depicts The Agony in the Garden (plates nos. 12, 13); Then Jesus came to a small estate called Gethsemane; .... And going on a little



further he fell on his face and prayed. 'My Father', he said, 'if it is possible let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless let it be as you, not I, would have it. (Matt. 26:36-39)

A. E. Child's version of The Agony in the Garden is clearly an adaptation of part of the south transept window by Whall in Canterbury Cathedral (plate no. 14) (1902). His depiction of Christ is so similar to the cartoon for the Canterbury window that one wonders if he were lent it by Whall<sup>28.</sup>

The sun dial over which the figure of Christ is stooped has obvious connotations and the thorny briars clearly anticipate Christ's crown of thorns. The two angels holding the chalice aloft in the right-hand light probably have their origin in Whall's studio also.

However, Child has added one or two details of his own conception. On the side of the sundial there is a pelican shown in relief. Child chose it because of the legend that is associated with it: - the pelican loved its young so dearly it nourished them with its own blood, pecking at its breast to this end. On the other side of the sundial there is a relief panel of celtic strapwork ornamentation. This curious detail is so small that it is virtually impossible to see without the aid of binoculars. Ironically, of all An Tur Gloine artists, it was A. E. Child, the Englishman who most attempted to integrate, if only superficially, celtic ornamentation into his stained





14. Christopher Whall Cartoon for both lights of The Agony in the Garden in the south transept window of Canterbury Cathedral 1902. William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London. photography courtesy of the Gallery.

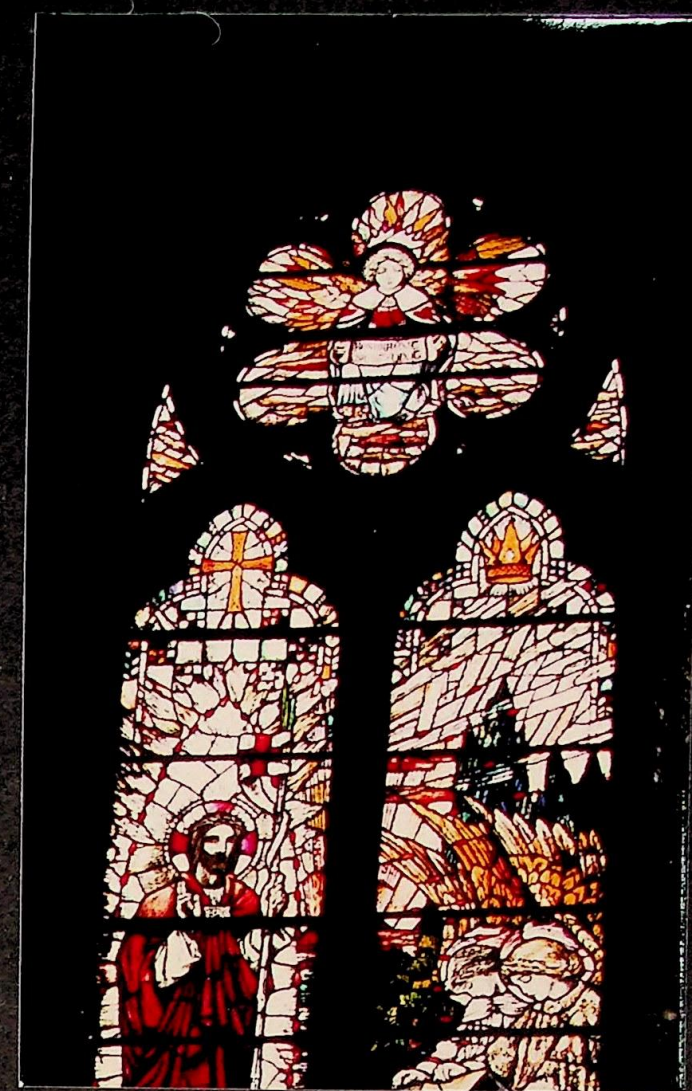
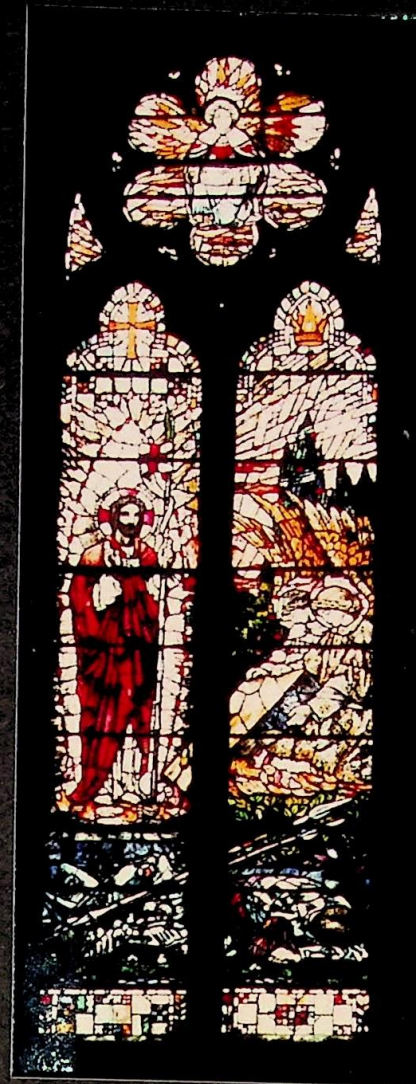


glass designs. This panel on the sundial must be the first evidence of his interest in early Irish art. More examples of this interest will be seen in a window executed for Loughrea by Child many years later.

The third and final window in the apse depicts The Resurrection (plates nos. 15, 16, 17) and so adds a continuity to the choice of subjects. Not surprisingly, this window is also based upon designs by Whall for a window of the same subject. There is a strong similarity between A. E. Child's Resurrection and the version by Whall in Canterbury Cathedral (plates nos. 18, 19) and a two-light window in St. Ethelberts Church at Herringswell, Suffolk, (plate no. 20) also by Whall is virtually identical to the Loughrea window. The Herringswell window was executed in 1902. The resemblance is so strong that it seems quite likely that Child borrowed the cartoons for it from Whall. The main difference between the two versions is that Child has two angels guarding the tomb, in other words he depicts St. John's account of the Resurrection rather than St. Matthew's who only mentions one 'angel of Lord'. The other basic difference between the windows is that in Child's version an angel is shown holding a scroll in the rose window above the two-lights; there is no angel in Whall's version.

A. E. Child executed other similar versions of The Resurrection for churches in Ireland. There is one to be found in the small Church of





15. A. E. Child The Resurrection 1903 Loughrea Cathedral.
16. A. E. Child The Resurrection 1903 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
17. A. E. Child The Resurrection 1903 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.





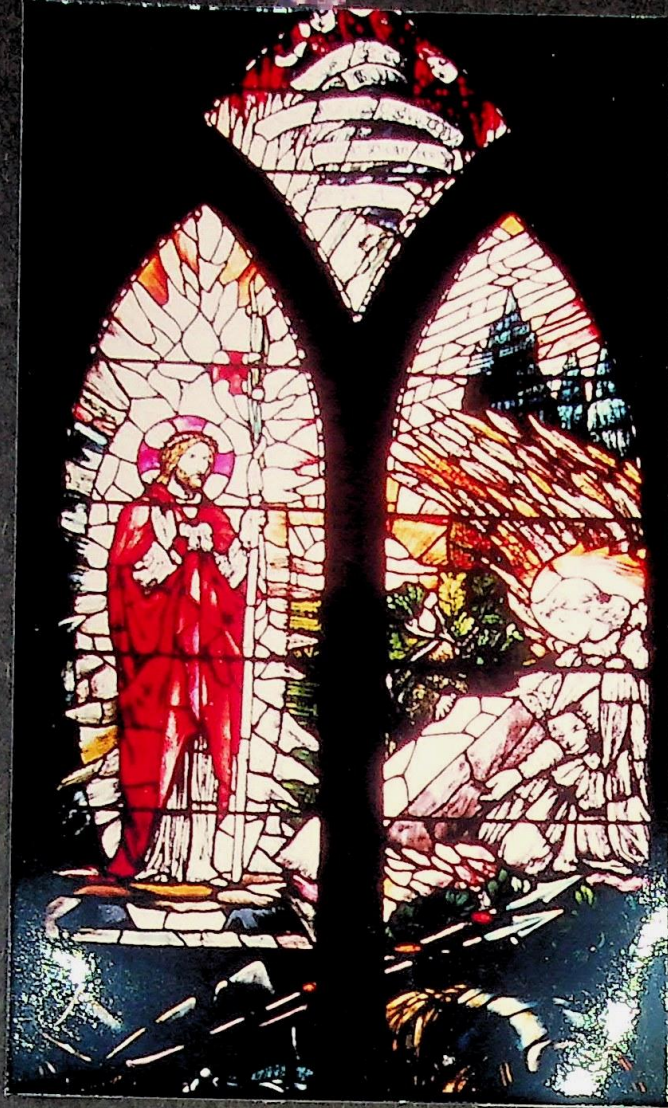
18. Christopher Whall Cartoon for left-hand light of The Resurrection in the south transept of Canterbury Cathedral, 1902. William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London. photograph: William Morris Gallery.





19. Christopher Whall Cartoon for right-hand light of The Resurrection in the south transept of Canterbury Cathedral, 1902. William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, London. photograph: William Morris Gallery.





20. Christopher Whall The Resurrection 1902 St. Ethelbert's Church, Herringswell, Suffolk, England. photograph: Peter D. Cormack.
21. A. E. Child The Resurrection 1911 Ardcarne C. of I. Church, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.



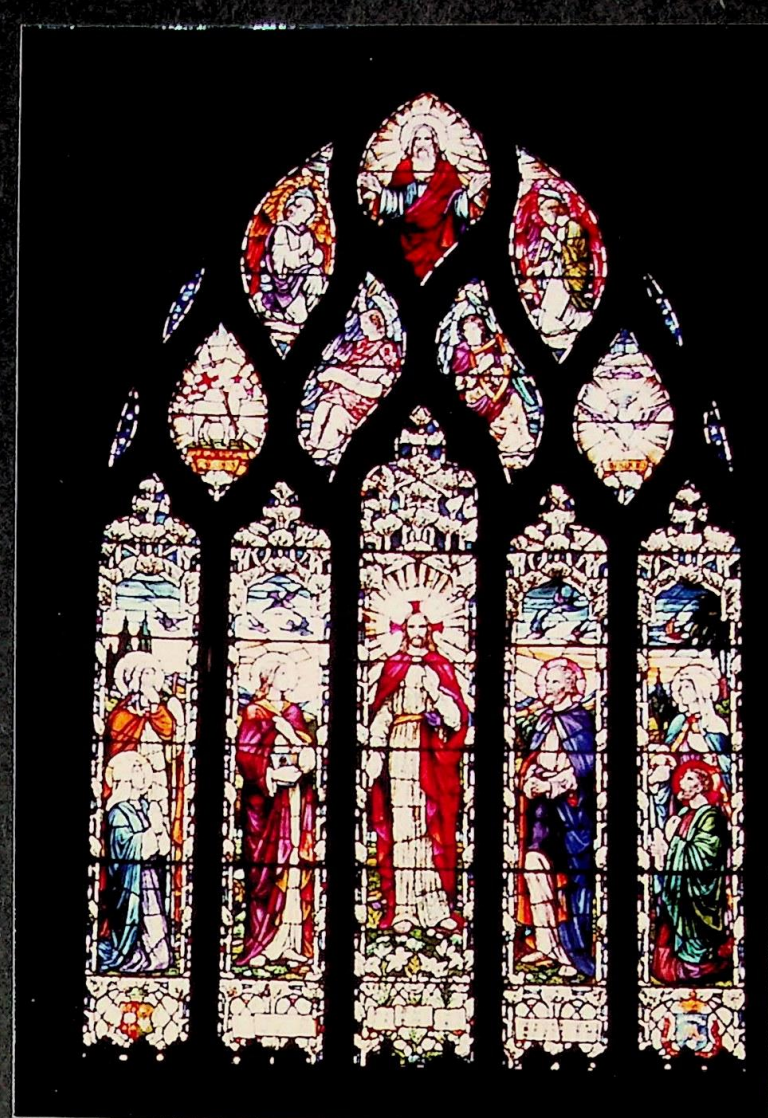
Ireland Church at Ardcarne (plate no. 21), near Boyle, County Roscommon. The main difference in this version is the posture of the soldiers guarding the tomb. It was made in 1911. A single-light window of 1913 for the Church of Ireland Church, Straffan, Co. Kildare (plate no. 22) also has its origin in Whall's design but the composition has been adapted and made more compact so that the similarity is not as striking.

The fact that these three windows for the apse at Loughrea are not entirely original works as such, but are based on designs by Christopher Whall, does not lessen their importance in the history of Irish stained glass. The vast difference between the artistic quality of these windows and those that were being made in Ireland or imported from Munich can be more easily appreciated by quoting a contemporary source. The art critic, Robert Elliot, after visiting An Tur Gloine and seeing the first of the apse windows in progress wrote:

"I saw a design full of interest; and I saw some glass that would make the heart beat with delight in response to the chromatic impulse transmitted. And I saw an intelligent, appreciative artist and worker, who knew how to make the most of their leads. And there is very little doubt that the window at Loughrea will be the richest bit of refulgent, harmonious colour in modern Ireland. I shall certainly make a point of seeing it when finished and fixed in its place."<sup>29</sup>

Two points worth noting in Elliot's article are his mention of





22. A. E. Child The Resurrection 1913 (detail) Straffan  
C. of I. Church, Co. Kildare.
23. A. E. Child Christ, St. Joseph and Our Lady, St. John  
St. Peter, Mary Magdalen with God the Father in Glory,  
Meekness and Wisdom 1924 Convent of Divine Providence,  
Foxford, Co. Mayo.



the superior quality of glass used at An Tur Gloine, and the artists' (Childs) knowledge of his craft. There is no record of the exact type of glass used by An Tur Gloine but there is a contemporary description of it: "It is made in tiny slabs graduated from two inches to a mere fragment at the edge; to this gradation and the employment of acid to eat away colour that is first laid on heavily is due to the exquisite translucent effect. The entire process of 'leading' and 'firing' is carried out in the little workshop and by the help of a tiny Kiln."

30

Elliot's remark on Child's knowledge of how to use lead to its best effect echoes<sup>e</sup> what Whall wrote on the subject: "You must not disguise your lead lines ... Respect your bars and leadlines, and let them be strong and many."

31

A. E. Child's knowledge of the stained glass craft and his aptitude as an instructor in this craft cannot be over-estimated. Apart from lecturing on stained glass and its history, he taught all the students at An Tur Gloine as well as pupils at the Dublin School of Art, among them Harry Clarke,<sup>32</sup> Evie Hone,<sup>33</sup> was the only major stained glass artist who did not come under his supervision though it could be said that she did learn her craft indirectly from him through Michael Healy. Child's stature as a father-figure to twentieth century Irish stained glass cannot be disputed but his position as one of the foremost artists



of the school he helped to create is less secure. The apse windows at Loughrea are indicative of his inability to create a truly original composition of his own. One point to be made in his favour is that he could manage large compositions, unoriginal as they might be. The windows in the apse at Loughrea are tall - nearly twelve feet high not including tracery. He could also manage windows with several lights such as the five-light windows for the Unitarian Church, Dublin and the Convent of Divine Providence, (plate no.23) Foxford, Co. Mayo. His pupils with the exception of Michael Healy seemed to have shied away from these large commissions.

During 1903, the authorities at Loughrea also commissioned from An Tur Gloine plain glazing for the windows and door panels. Fr. O'Donovan, who since 1902 had been elevated to the position of Administrator commissioned a fan-light for his house.<sup>34</sup> It is worth noting these points because much of the work done at An Tur Gloine, particularly during the early years, was of this nature. Furthermore, it should be remembered that artistic patronage at Loughrea was not restricted to An Tur Gloine. For instance, the carving of the capitals by Michael Shortall was underway in 1903 and a set of twenty-four embroidered banners was executed by the Dun Emer Guild in 1902-03.

In 1904, the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. O'Dea,<sup>35</sup> who had succeeded Bishop Healy the previous year, outlined his ambitions for the future of



Loughrea:

"It is hoped that the Cathedral, when finished will be a concrete embodiment of the new movement for the revival of Irish art. It will be an Irish cathedral in the fullest sense - the architect engaged in its completion is a prominent representative of the new school of Irish art. Irish marbles and Irish materials generally will be used in its furniture and decoration. The painting, sculpture, woodcarving, and other branches of art which the Church so loves to press into the service of her Master will be entrusted to Irish artists, in sympathy with Irish ideals, and desirous of reviving and developing the artistic excellence of 'Cormac's Chapel', the 'Cross of Cong', the 'Chalice of Ardagh' and the 'Book of Kells'.

36

The above is an extract from a letter written by Dr. O'Dea to two priests of the Diocese prior to their departure on a mission to the United States to collect funds for the Cathedral. A further two priests were appointed to collect funds in both the North and the South of Ireland.

Not only did Irish priests from Loughrea go to the United States in 1904, but so also did three windows commissioned for Loughrea.

37

The Irish Daily Independent reported the occasion.

"Miss Purser H.R.H.A., whose studio is situated at "An Tur Gloine", Upper Pembroke Street, is represented at the St. Louis exhibition by work that would cast credit on the first studios of the



world. It has attracted immense numbers of admirers. The exhibition consists of three stained glass windows, of which we give illustrations. They are designed for the baptistry of the new cathedral at Loughrea, and represent Saints Ita and Simeon, the former being designed by Miss Purser and the latter by Mr. Michael Healy, a Dublin artist. The third, which is the largest, is that of the Baptism of Our Lord, and was drawn by Mr. Child, manager of the works. Although these works are not long started, so highly appreciated are they already that Miss Purser has secured many orders in Ireland. It is worthy of note that after viewing the exhibit, his Grace Dr. Glendon, Archbishop of the Diocese, publically intimated his intention of using Irish stained glass in the windows of the new cathedral in St. Louis."

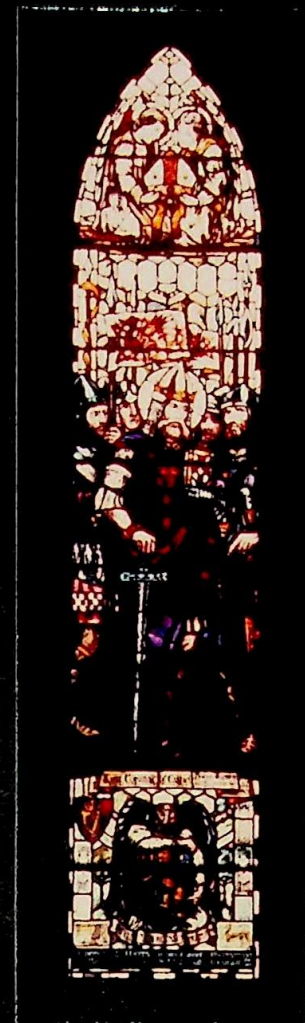
These three windows which aroused such interest in the United States, were executed in 1904 and installed in the baptistry of Loughrea Cathedral in March 1906. St. Ita (plate no. 24) and St. Simeon (plate no. 25) are both single-light windows and were made so as to form a pair. St. Ita,<sup>38</sup> though designed by Sarah Purser, was executed by Catherine O'Brien. No cartoon or sketch for St. Ita exists in any Irish public collection. Without such evidence it is difficult to know who was most responsible for the image of St. Ita that is in Loughrea Cathedral. By comparing Sarah Purser's sketch in the N.G.I. for the Cormac (1906) window (plate no. 26) in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, with the actual window (plate no. 27) which was executed by A. E. Child, it is evident that the final conception





24. S. Purser and C. O'Brien St. Ita 1904 Loughrea Cathedral.
25. M. Healy St. Simeon 1904 Loughrea Cathedral.





26. S. Purser sketch for Cormac King of Cashel, 1906, N.G.I. photograph by N.G.I.
27. S. Purser and A. E. Child Cormac, King of Cashel, 1906 St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.
28. S. Purser and C. O'Brien St. Ita 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



is more the work of Child rather than Purser. However, in Catherine O'Brien's case it would probably have been somewhat different. She was very much a novice at stained glass (indeed so was Sarah Purser herself), whereas Child was an experienced and competent exponent of that craft. Sarah Purser may well have supplied Catherine O'Brien with a detailed cartoon as well as a watercolour sketch. Many years later, Miss Purser admitted that this arrangement was never found to be satisfactory.<sup>39</sup>

The choice of St. Ita as a subject for a window in Loughrea Cathedral is hardly surprising since she was the foster-mother of St. Brendan to whom the Cathedral is dedicated. What is a little surprising in this window, and in also the one by Michael Healy which forms its companion, is the inclusion of a gothic canopy at the top (plate no. 28). These canopies are found in virtually all Munich windows and one would have thought that An Tur Gloine artists would have made a point of not including this ugly and antiquated feature in one of their first commissions. Who was exactly responsible for it is difficult to say. Evidence might suggest Sarah Purser. Michael Healy's sketch in the N.G.I. (plate no. 29) for the St. Simeon window shows that he had a much simpler conception of what the upper portion of his window would look like. One can only guess that Miss Purser's sketch incorporated the pinnacled canopy and because the windows were to be a pair he had to alter his design to correspond with hers.





29. M. Healy sketch for St. Simeon 1904 , N.G.I.  
photograph by N.G.I.

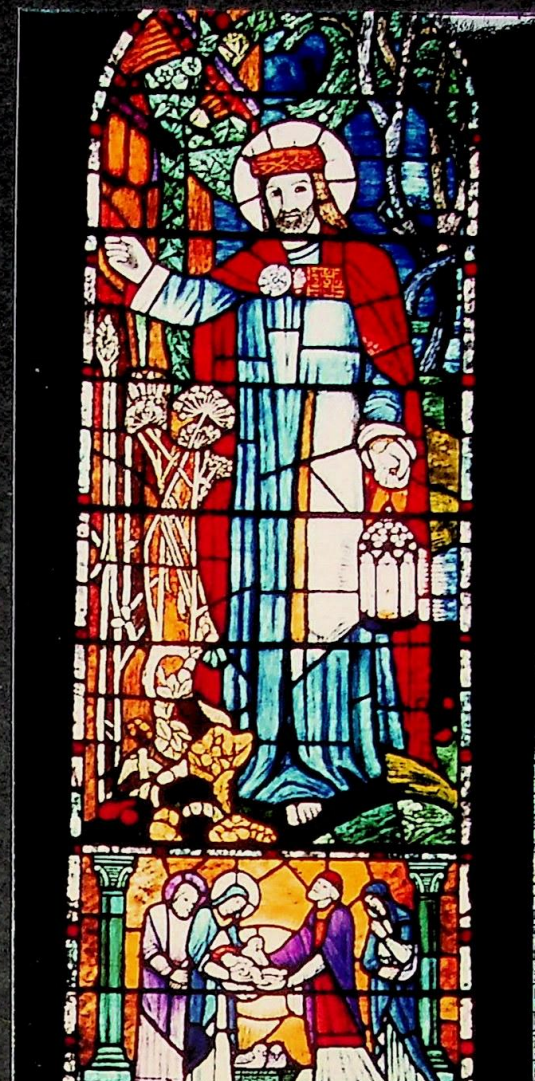


St. Ita is depicted in a pale white robe and rich blue cloak which contrasts effectively with the plush deep red backdrop. The bunch of Keys and purse attached to her waist do not appear to have any particular symbolism but are perhaps a reference to St. Ita's responsible position as a foundress of the nunnery Hy Connail, in County Limerick. The two gold brooches which clasp her cloak seem to have a vaguely celtic design.

Thomas MacGreevy admired the 'sensitive hands' of the saint which he felt sure must have been the work of a woman artist <sup>40</sup> (at the time he wrote the article the window was attributed to Child). The hands and faces are indeed sensitive and are proof that Catherine O'Brien could be a good draughtsman. Her rendering of an angel's features (plate no. <sup>30</sup>) (1910) in the Church of Ireland Cathedral, Gorey, is further proof of Catherine O'Brien's drawing capabilities (she had been a pupil of William Orpen's), however, much of her later work is spoiled by garish colour scheme and awkward compositions such as the two windows by her in St. Luke's Church of Ireland Church, Cork (1950) (plate no. <sup>31</sup>).

Probably the most pleasing portion of the St. Ita window at Loughrea, is the bottom section. It depicts the young St. Brendan being handed a small boat by an angel (plate no. <sup>32</sup>). St. Ita is said to have nursed St. Brendan with the help of angels. The boat has special significance; it refers to St. Brendan's legendary voyage across the





30. C. O'Brien An Angel 1910 (detail) Gorey Church of Ireland Cathedral, Co. Wexford.
31. C. O'Brien Light of the World 1950 St. Luke's C. of I. Church, Cork.
32. S. Purser and C. O'Brien St. Ita 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.

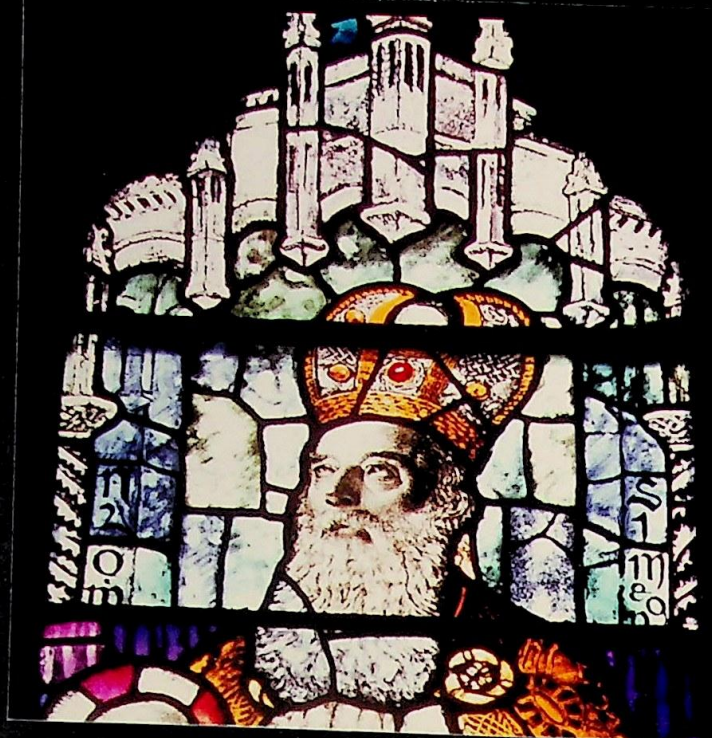


Atlantic. On the sails of the boat was blazoned the crossed croziers - the arms of Clonfert in which Diocese Loughrea is. The young St. Brendan has a rather appealing chubby face; the angel has more delicate features. She has a garland of white flowers in her hair and is wearing a white dress with a golden butterfly motif on it. Both are sitting crouched on steps beneath the tall majestic figure of St. Ita.

St. Simeon (plate no. 33) is even more majestic and impressive looking than St. Ita. He was the "just and devout man who awaited the consolation of Israel," (Luke 11,25), who took the Infant Saviour in his arms when he was brought to the Temple and who on that occasion sang the 'Nunc Dimittis'. In the window St. Simeon is shown holding the baby Jesus aloft in his arms (plate no. 34). At the base of the window, almost corresponding with St. Brendan in the companion window, is the figure of the young St. John the Baptist (plate no. 35). Both St. John the Baptist and Christ were born at about the same time though St. John looks years older than the infant Christ. To the right of St. John there is a nicely rendered wicker-basket complete with straw and two doves which Mary and Joseph are said to have brought along with them to the Temple. The doves, however, look more like pears than live birds.

Of the three windows in the baptistry at Loughrea, this one is the best known because it is the first window known to be completely designed and executed by Michael Healy. From examining the treatment of





- |     |          |                   |                                   |
|-----|----------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 33. | M. Healy | <u>St. Simeon</u> | 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |
| 34. | M. Healy | <u>St. Simeon</u> | 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |
| 35. | M. Healy | <u>St. Simeon</u> | 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |



St. John in this window one can see how much Healy was influenced by Italian Renaissance painting. His debt to artists like Leonardo (plate no. 36 ) and Raphael (plate no. 37 ) is clear and he must surely have seen original major works by them during his eighteen month stay in Italy.

The grey-bearded patriarchal figure of St. Simeon dressed in his vibrant yellow robes anticipates later works such as the depiction of St. Patrick in the important 1914 window in the Catholic Church, Donnybrook, Dublin (plate no. 38 ). No doubt Healy's name-sake, the then Bishop of Clonfert was delighted to see in the St. Simeon window the employment of celtic motifs of which he wrote in his letter to the American bound priests. All over St. Simeon's yellow cloak and on his mitre there are Celtic strapwork and interlacing patterns. Many of Healy's windows show an interest in cloth texture and designs. In a 1908 window for the Catholic Church, Fairymount, Co. Roscommon, there is in St. Anna's cloak the identical shade of yellow with a beautiful bird pattern on it. (plate no. 39 ).

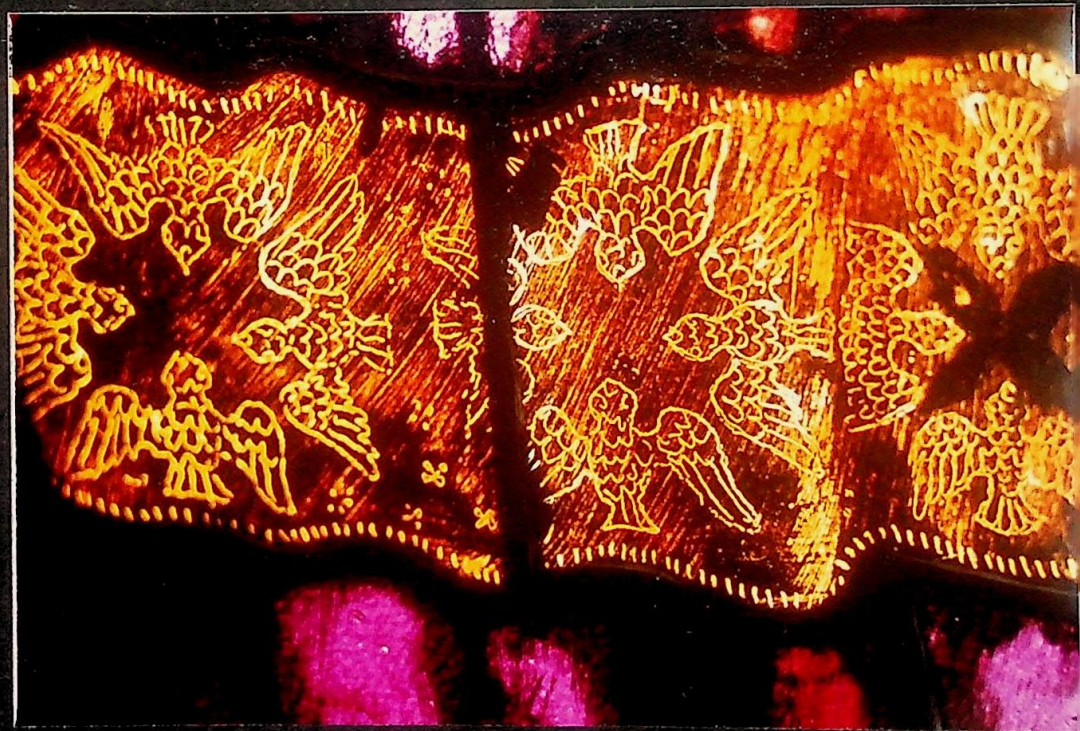
In the initial sketch Michael Healy made for this window he seems to have intended that there would be four quarries decorated with Celtic designs to the left and right of St. Simeon's head. As in the St. Ita window, the names of the saints are written in Irish and the lettering used is generally celtic in origin. This is not at all surprising since





36. Leonardo da Vinci The Virgin of the Rocks, c.1480  
Paris, Musee National du Louvre.
37. Raphael La Belle Jardiniere <sup>(DETAIL)</sup> c.1507 Paris, Musee  
National du Louvre.





38. M. Healy St. Patrick with Saints Eithne and Fedelma  
1914 (detail) Catholic Church, Donnybrook. Dublin.
39. M. Healy St. Peter and St. Anna, with Lamb 1908 (detail)  
Catholic Church, Fairymount, Co. Roscommon.



the interest is arts and crafts was closely associated with the Celtic Revival. Edward Martyn among others, taught himself Irish. All the inscriptions on the Dun Emer banners and on Scott's ironwork at Loughrea are also in Irish.

Michael Healy's St. Simeon window is clearly successful for a first complete venture in stained glass. It does, however, suffer somewhat from overworking and an attempt at excess realism. In his stained glass handbook, Christopher Whall warned that "there should be no full realism of any kind." Healy, probably because of his strict academic training, has aimed at rendering the figures in a highly realistic manner. The Christ Child in particular has suffered with the result that it looks cold and lifeless. Simeon's head also might have been hewn out of a block of ice.

The third and final window in the baptistry is A. E. Child's Baptism of Christ (plates nos. 40, 41, 42). As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from the heaven 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on Him.' (Matt. 3; 16, 17)

A. E. Child has achieved a successful compositional solution to this popular subject by the introduction of two attendant angels (plate no. 41). Without the angels in one of the lights, the figures of Our Lord and St. John





40. A. E. Child Baptism of Christ 1904 Loughrea Cathedral.
41. A. E. Child Baptism of Christ 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
42. A. E. Child Baptism of Christ 1904 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



would have had to be considerably larger and the scene would have been awkwardly divided in two by the central pillar. The dove is placed comfortably in the tracery above.

The most admirable feature of this window is not the composition, however, but the quality and the treatment of the glass itself. This really <sup>be</sup> comes apparent when the vibrancy of this window is compared with a window of the same subject by Mayer of Munich (plate no. 3). Mayer's version is really a dull oil-painting on glass; Child's window glistens and glimmers as the light outside changes. The stylised treatment of the background area in this and the apse windows can be almost blinding when direct sunlight passes through it. Even on an overcast day the water appears to sparkle and take on a life of its own.

Much of the impact of this and other windows by A. E. Child is lost due to the conventional gestures and the lack of facial expression. The Pre-Raphaelite angels in particular are totally lifeless.

An interesting feature of this Loughrea window, is the canopy, if one can call it that, constructed from branches and leaves. Christopher Whall was a strong advocate of drawing from nature. He includes a section on this subject in his stained glass handbook. One of the plates in this book includes a montage of some drawings of plants and leaves by three of his pupils including A. E. Child. However, this idea of constructing a rigid architectural-type framework devised from a botanical source is not one originated by Child but by Whall. It can be seen in Whall's windows

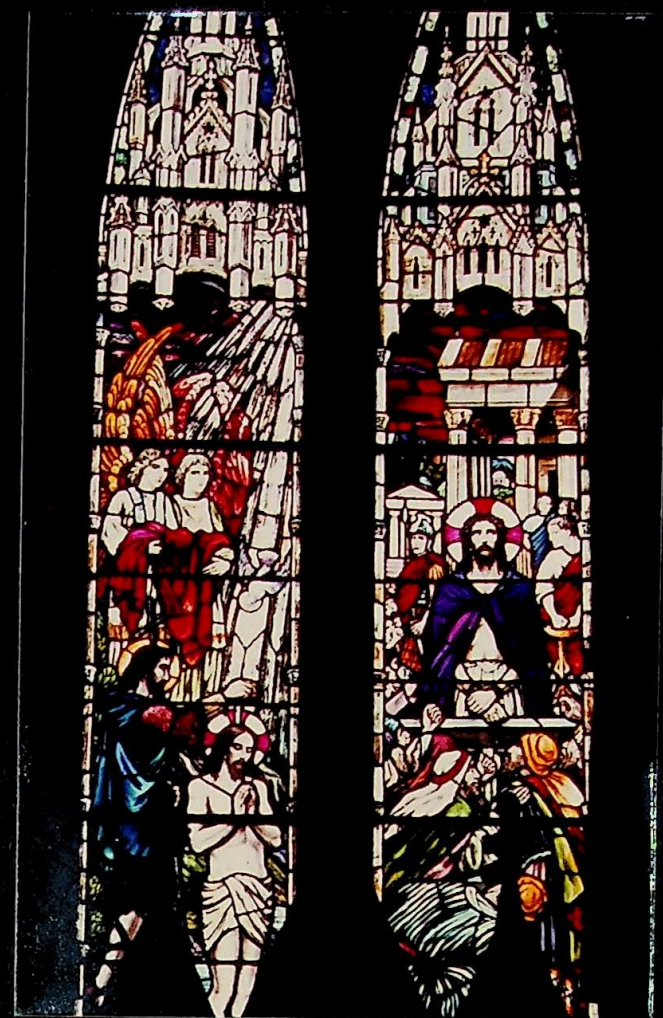


at Gloucester Cathedral (plate no. 43 ) where Child, among others, assisted the master before his departure for Dublin. Another more impressive example of Child's leaf-and-branch structures can be seen in a later window at Loughrea. The diaper patterns on the costumes of the attendant angels also have their inspiration in nature and likewise have been adapted to form a recurring pattern.

A less successful variant on Child's Loughrea version of The Baptism is to be found in a large four-light window at Tulsk, Co. Roscommon (plate no. 44). Here, Child has changed the two-light Loughrea window so that the scene is compressed into one of the four-lights in the Tulsk window. The result is that the scene looks squashed and cluttered. In this window he has also incorporated the awful architectural canopy. This is very unusual for Child. Normally the only occasion these canopies were included by any An Túr Gloine artists was when the window had been commissioned as a companion to an older, usually foreign, window. Examples of this are Beatrice Elvery's window of 1907 for Ballaghderreen Cathedral, Co. Roscommon (plate no. 45) and Michael Healy's window of 1916 for Clongowes Wood College, Co. Kildare.

There is one window at Loughrea which stands apart from all the others. It is the smallest window in the Cathedral and is not located in the main body of the building: it is Sarah Purser's St. Brendan (plate no. 46 ) and it is to be found in the right hand porch. St. Brendan has long been





43. Christopher Whall St. Agatha 1900, Lady Chapel, Gloucester Cathedral (photographed by Whall before installation in the Cathedral)
44. A. E. Child Baptism of Christ 1913 (detail) Catholic Church, Tulsk, Co. Roscommon.
45. B. Elvery St. John and St. Anna 1907 Catholic Church, Ballaghadereen. Co. Roscommon.



associated with the West of Ireland. He was a great founder of monasteries, the chief of which was Clonfert. It was hardly surprising then, that when the Cathedral at Clonfert came to be named, it was St. Brendan's name that was chosen.

Sarah Purser's 'St. Brendan' is unique because it is the only window, not in a private collection, which she both designed and executed herself. Miss Purser described it as "my only output ... something in the nature of a curiosity."<sup>41</sup> There are a small number of other panels by her which are in private collections; one of these depicts St. Columcille, another The Crucifixion.

None of these panels, including 'St. Brendan', are entered in the An Tur Gloine work journals and their exact dates are unknown. There is, however, a clear reference to St. Brendan in a February 1904 edition of a periodical called 'The Irish Packet'<sup>42</sup> which means that this little panel must have been made by then.

The window is inscribed at the base in Irish - 'Brandan Naompta ar an Muir' - 'St. Brendan on the High Seas'. A somewhat awkwardly poised St. Brendan, the patron saint of sailors, is perched on the bow of his boat. Behind his head and shoulders there is a mast made up of the colours of the setting sun. Two monks, one praying, one gazing out to sea, stand behind him, but lower down so as not to detract from the subject of the window. An attractive, though rather crudely painted feature is the





46. S. Purser St. Brendan c.1903 Loughrea Cathedral.
47. Michael Shortall St. Brendan on his voyage to America c.1902-1906. capital in Loughrea Cathedral.
- 48.. Healy Holy Family surrounded by six Angels 1907 Loughrea Cathedral.



carved figure on the bow complete with Irish harp.

Sarah Purser's St. Brendan is a charming little window even though it is not executed in the true spirit of stained glass. She has not made correct use of her lead lines and it has much of the painterly qualities of an oil painting. This is hardly surprising because by the time this was executed Sarah Purser, aged about fifty-five, was a mature and highly accomplished portraitist in oils. In her speech celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of An Tur Gloine, Sarah Purser admitted readily that she herself was really not suited to the medium of stained glass.

At the same time as St. Brendan was executed by Miss Purser, Michael Shortall<sup>43</sup> was involved in the lengthy task of carving four scenes on each of the capitals surmounting the large pillars in the nave of the Cathedral. These trace the life of St. Brendan from birth to death. The same scene as the one Sarah Purser depicts, that of St. Brendan on his legendary voyage to America, is to be found on the first pillar on the right. (plate no. 47).

Only a few short years after its founding, An Tur Gloine had established itself as the foremost producer of quality stained glass in Ireland. It had many supporters but it also had an occasional critic.

The Irish Builder and Engineer of December 29th 1906 reported:

"Mr. George Moore in his evidence before the recent Royal Commission on



Art in Ireland, said that all modern stained glass is so utterly bad, and so beastly ugly, that it is simply throwing away money trying to improve it - in fact the sooner it dies out the better." According to Beatrice Elvery, Moore was a regular visitor to An Tur Gloine whenever they had a finished window on view.<sup>44</sup> He had a love-hate relationship with both Sarah Purser and Edward Martyn so perhaps these strong works were said in a moment of anger and directed at the people behind An Tur Gloine rather than at the quality of Irish stained glass. The Irish Builder and Engineer, under the editorship of R. M. Butler was a bi-monthly publication which was enthusiastically supportive of Irish stained glass and this quotation from George Moore is just about the only criticism they ever printed on the subject. Butler was a personal friend of Miss Purser's (in one of his articles he described her "as easily the wittiest woman in Ireland")<sup>45</sup> and he gave An Tur Gloine several commissions.<sup>46</sup>

The next stained glass commission to be executed for Loughrea Cathedral was in 1907. It was for two small rose windows to be placed above the side altars in the transepts. The Commission was offered by the Bishop of Clonfert and was executed by Michael Healy at a cost of £70 for the pair. These windows are easily passed by because of their relatively small size and non-central position.

The left hand window is positioned above a painting by Francis O'Donohoe<sup>47</sup> of the Sacred Heart. Michael Healy was friendly with both



O'Donohoe and Michael Shortall during their student days at the Metropolitan School of Art.<sup>48</sup> Healy's window depicts the Holy Family in the central light surrounded by six angels in the smaller periphery lights (plate no. 48). Rose windows generally provide awkward design problems: the elliptical shape of the surround lights and their integration with the central scene. Although still a relative novice at stained glass (he had only about four years experience), Michael Healy has succeeded in posing the six angels so that they are in perfect harmony with the central scene. All six angels gaze inwards at the Holy Family and still remain individual and natural in their gestures and expressions.

<sup>49</sup>  
A much larger rose window (by the Clarke Studios executed in the 1930's) for St. Joseph's, Terenure, Dublin, is considerably less successful. In this window seven of the angels face towards the central scene while the three angels at the bottom look away from the centre. The result is compositionally not as satisfactory as Healy's Loughrea window.

The central scene of Michael Healy's Loughrea window depicts Our Lady sewing a piece of cloth while being watched intently by the Christ Child and St. Joseph. Thomas MacGreevy suggests that there is more to the subject than simply being "a charming, almost humorous, study in pious domesticity." His theory is that Michael Healy had in mind some tenderly loving reference to the seamless robe which in Christian lore is frequently regarded as symbolical of the Hypostatic



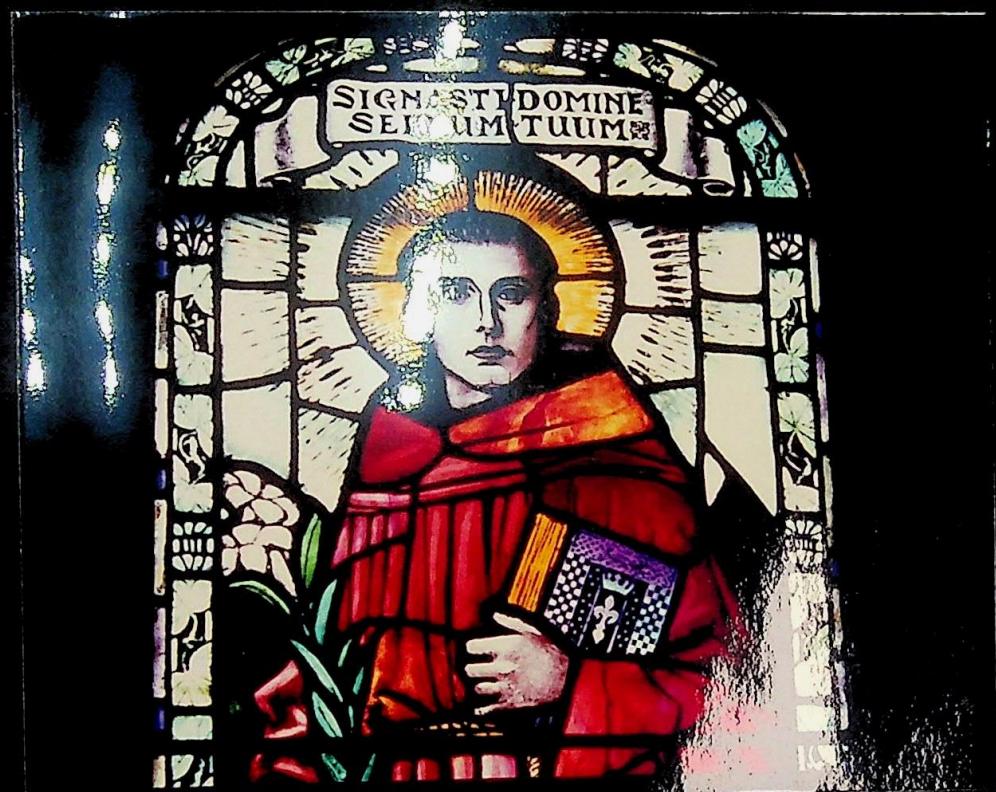
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Union.

The pair to this window (plate no. 49), on the other side of the high altar, depicts Our Lady in a less tender and domestic role. This window is above the side altar dedicated to Our Lady, the central feature of which is the superb statue of the Madonna and Child by John Hughes. Unfortunately, the side altar which rises above the statue, masks the lower portions of Healy's window. According to Alan Denson, "the scanty evidence would seem to imply that the two works by Hughes at Loughrea (the Madonna and Child statue and a bronze relief) were set in position some date between 1905-1909."<sup>51</sup> Since Healy's window is dated 1907 it is impossible to know if he was aware of the problem that Hughes statue, and consequently the side altar which houses it, would cause. Probably he was not.

The Window depicts the Madonna and Child in the centre light surrounded by Saints Patrick, Brendan, Colman, Jarlath, Columba and Brigid in the periphery lights. From even the best position on the floor it is impossible to see Saints Colman, Jarlath and Columba. Trying to get a closer look at the window only masks a greater portion of the lower half. If Healy knew this problem would occur it seems likely that he would have chosen a different subject - one in which the periphery lights, or at least the bottom three, would have a less important role.

The depiction of the Madonna and Child demonstrates the influence of Italian painting on Healy once more. She is not, however, a gentle





49. M. Healy The Madonna and Child with Saints Patrick, Brendan, Colman, Jarlath, Columcille and Brigid 1907 Loughrea Cathedral.
50. M. Healy St. Anthony 1907/08 Loughrea Cathedral
51. M. Healy St. Anthony 1907/08 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



natural Madonna of Leonardo, but a more serious, poised Madonna found in pre-Renaissance art. She holds the infant Christ in her lap and stares solemnly at those who gaze up at her. The two angels, who flank her, and the Irish saints who surround her also have solemn knowing expressions. Perhaps Healy is trying to suggest that the Madonna and the Saints are aware of the suffering and pain that lies ahead for the Christ Child in adult life.

In the same year as these small rose windows or perhaps a year later, (the work journals are not clear), Healy executed a window depicting St. Anthony (plates nos. 50, 51). The Scribbled entry in the An Tur Gloine work journal (volume 1) shows that it was ordered, or paid for, or both, by Rev. Bishop O'Dea and Edward Martyn. The cost was £42. The window was erected to the memory of Anthony Smyth of Masonbrook, Loughrea, who had died in 1887. Denis Gwynn refers to the Smyths in his book - Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival:<sup>52</sup> "John Martyn, the father of the subject of this memoir, married a Miss Smyth of Masonbrook in the same county, whose father belonged to much more humble stock than the Martyns, but had amassed a large fortune by buying up properties that came on the market through the Encumbered Estates Act, and was able to provide his daughter with a dowry of ten thousand pounds."

St. Anthony is one of the most 'popular' saints of the Church with a great reputation for retrieving<sup>e</sup> lost belongings of careless people. Mrs. Arthur Bell<sup>53</sup> states in her book on the saint that "... he can be

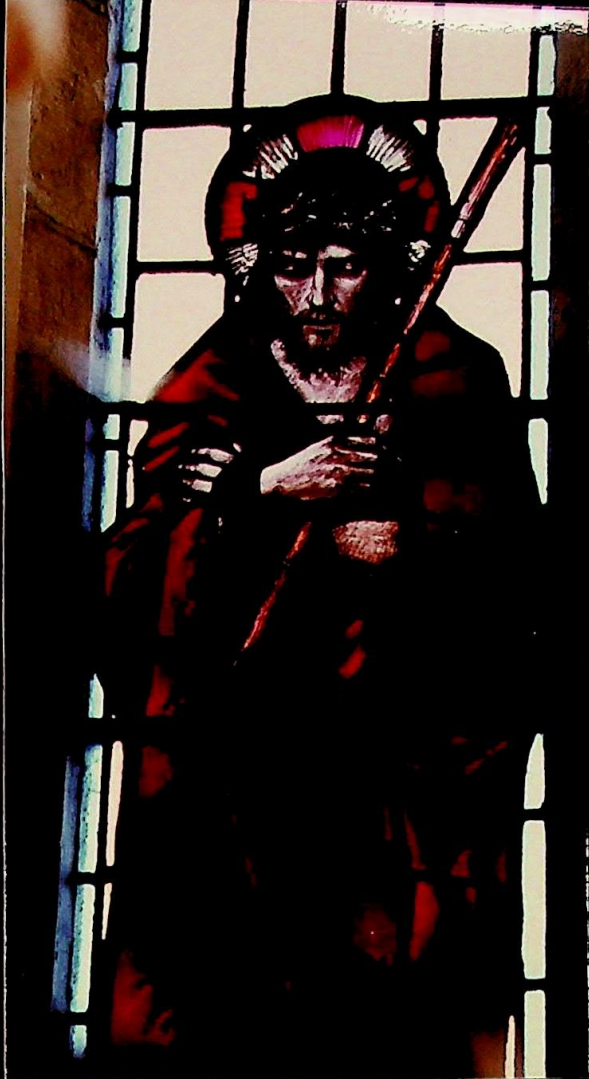


easily recognised, not only by the aid of his usual emblems, the book and the lily, but by his short figure and refined intellectual face." Michael Healy's depiction corresponds with Mrs. Bell's description. Healy has not only represented St. Anthony in the traditional manner but has also executed the window in a very conventional and academic way. These are probably the reasons for making it less attractive than his other Loughrea windows.

A pale border of stylised foliage surrounds the subject which is not a typical Healy characteristic. In the apex of the window there are the "crossed arms with stigmatised hands" which is the symbol of the Franciscan order; St. Anthony, was of course, a follower of St. Francis. The figure of St. Anthony is clad in a brownish-red robe. The background, which is very subordinate to the figure is made up of leaves and rocks. The saint's face is sensitively rendered and in many ways is typical of what Healy was producing at the time. The window is indeed conventional but it has a quality that elevates it above work of a similar date by other young artists at An Tur Gloine. This special quality can also be detected in the straightforward but pleasing six figures to be found in the apse of the Catholic Church, Fairymount, Co. Roscommon. (plates nos. 52, 53).

The bottom panel (plate no. 54) depicts a well-known episode from St. Anthony's life. It is a rather complicated incident; the result of it was that St. Anthony went to Verona in order to plead for the release of a supporter of the Pope and his men who were being tortured. The saint





52.. Healy St. Peter and St. Anna, with Lamb 1908 (detail)  
Catholic Church, Fairymount, Co. Roscommon.

53. M. Healy Ecce Homo and Mater Dolorosa, with Dove and Host 1908 (detail) Catholic Church, Fairymount,  
Co. Roscommon.

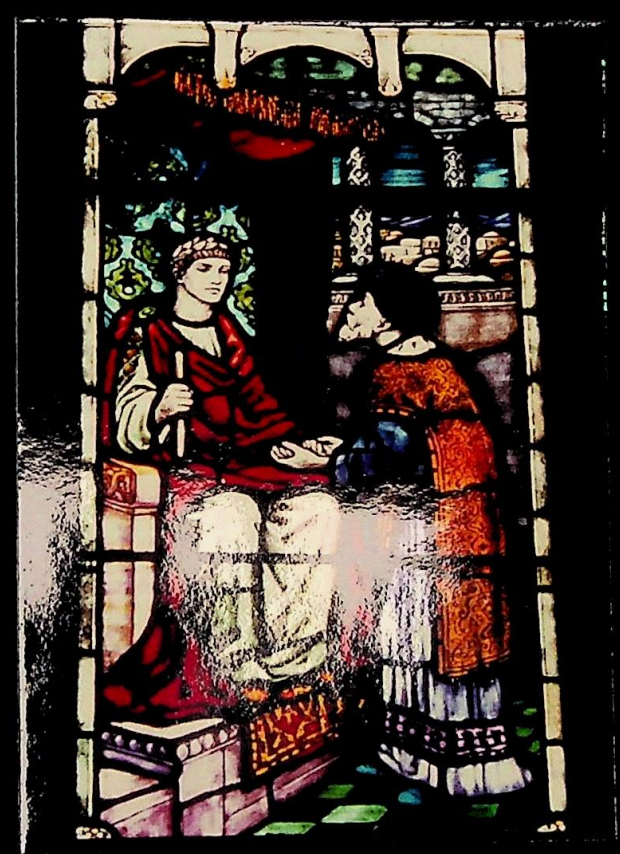
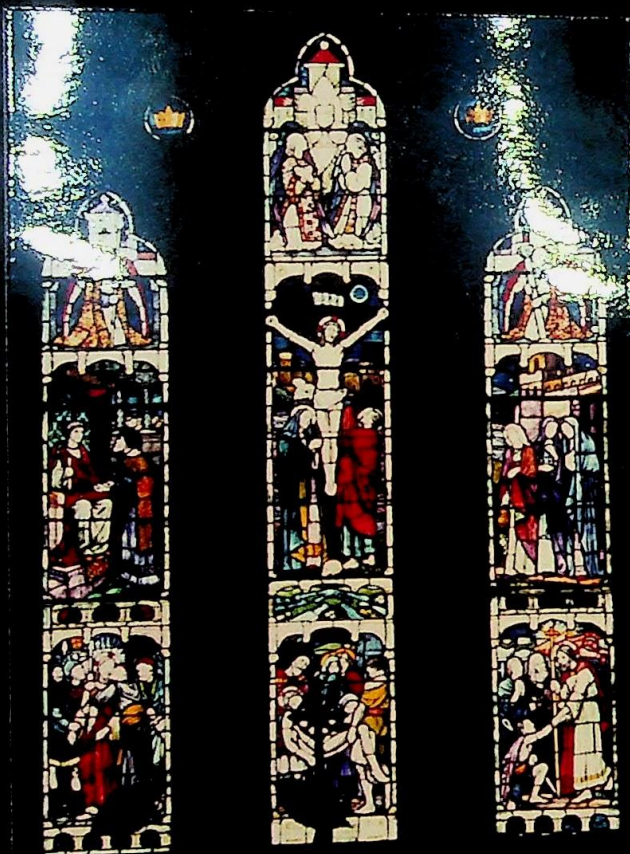
54. M. Healy St. Anthony 1907/08 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



did not, however, succeed in securing the release of the prisoners. It is only in later stories that there exists a happy ending where the tyrant, Ezzelino da Romano falls at St. Anthony's feet, smitten to the heart, begging forgiveness for his dastardly deeds. Worth noting in this panel is the rendering of the knight's armour. Healy must surely have learnt this skill from A. E. Child who was an expert at depicting shiny, metallic surfaces. Child really exploited this skill in later years during the war-memorial boom when knights in armour were all the rage.

The exact dates of the next two windows at Loughrea are not a hundred per cent certain. The windows, both large three-lights, depict The Nativity (plates nos. 55, 55A) and The Passion (plates nos. 56, 57) and are positioned in the north transept of the cathedral. The 'Passion' has been dated 1912<sup>54</sup> and 1908-1912<sup>55</sup>. An article in The Freeman's Journal which was reprinted in The Irish Builder of March 7th 1908 would seem positive proof that the window was definitely finished by that date. The newspaper report gave a detailed description of the large window: "One of the finest of many fine windows that the crafts people at An Tur Gloine have produced has just been on exhibition in their works. It is a three-light window for the Cathedral Church of Clonfert, where the Most Rev, Dr. O'Dea, Mr. Edward Martyn, and others have already shown Irish people some of the resources of Irish art. Very noticable to the critical eye, because original and successful, are some features in this





55. S. Purser and A. E. Child The Nativity 1912 Loughrea Cathedral.
- 55.A S. Purser and A. E. Child The Nativity 1912 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
56. S. Purser and B. Elvery The Passion 1908 Loughrea Cathedral.
57. S. Purser and B. Elvery The Passion 1908 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



new window, features which are the result of thoughtful painstaking art. One of the most noticeable features in their new window is the way in which the lancet heads of the long lights are filled with kneeling angels, very decorative, in blue and red wings, and patterned robes, against a background of what may be termed acceptable architecture - that is imaginative edifices that yet are distinctly ecclesiastical, and which we do not question for a moment. These terminate the upper portion. In the main part of the large window, the middle panel, and the most important of the six - the "Crucifixion" - there are several original and beautiful notes of attraction, the very attitude of the dignified figure of Christ, with erect head, open-eyed, appealing to the universe, strikes us as separating much else done in this subject. The darkened sun and moon are there, as in early Italian art, and the traditional lonely mourners, Our Lady and St. John the Beloved. Beneath the cross is a most beautiful harmony in blue and green representing symbolic rivers flowing from the foot of the sacred tree - an exceedingly beautiful idea, intellectually carried out.

Other panels are the "betrayal", with an irreproachable Judas, from the standpoint of art. There is also the visit of Christ to Limbo to liberate the souls of the just, with Abel being raised up and Eve, with Adam standing by. The serpent, suggesting the hiss of him, the subtle one, foiled by conquering love, is also shown. To right and left of the central



"Crucifixion" are panels of a seated Pilate, with Joseph of Arimathea begging the body of Our Lord; of the holy woman starting for the sepulchre; and beneath the "Crucifixion" in a most fitting place, is a solemn entombment, sealing as it were, the general solemnity of the whole window.

The solemnity of the treatment is immediately apparent. We note the details, of course, later. The general colour of the glass chosen prepares us at a distance for what we discover on close inspection. The peculiar glow of deep rubies and of low-toned greens and other colours will, we think, no matter how strong the light destined for it, always, keep this window in the true key with the motif. Miss Beatrice Elvery's "painting" of it is also a wonderful factor in its undeniable success as a window. It is altogether a window which we are sure will rank high as ecclesiastical art."

This is very high praise for a window which now would be considered one of the duller and more conventional at Loughrea. The newspaper article, though perhaps over-congratulatory and over-enthusiastic, does serve to stress the superiority and even the originality of this window when compared with the normal windows being commissioned in Ireland at the time.

Of particular interest in this article is the fact that Beatrice Elvery<sup>56</sup> is praised for her painting of the window. While the

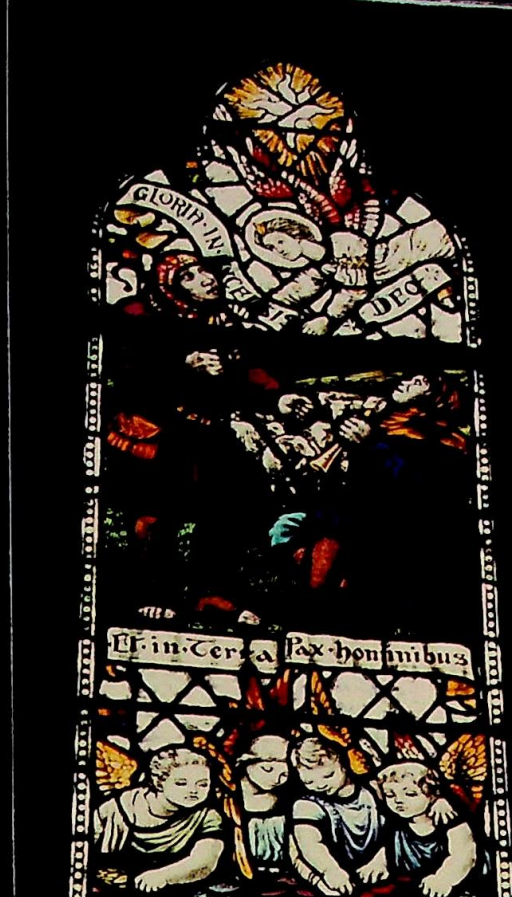


window is known to have been designed by Sarah Purser, it is A. E. Child<sup>57</sup> who is traditionally attributed with its painting. The An Tur Gloine work journals do not record the painter and it seems that Child may have been attributed simply because in the early years he is known to have painted some of Miss Purser's windows. The newspaper report is so detailed and accurate that it must have been written after consultation with a member of An Tur Gloine and for this reason it would seem that Elvery and not Child is a more plausible candidate. This means that all the main members of An Tur Gloine with the exception of Wilhelmina Geddes<sup>58</sup> were involved in the Loughrea project at one stage or another. There is no other example of so many An Tur Gloine artists working for the same church.

There are two rather curious iconographic details in this Passion window. Firstly, there is the inclusion of the panel (bottom right) of Christ visiting Limbo to liberate the souls of the just (plate no.58). The theme of the window is clearly the Passion of Christ (though it is usually referred to simply as The Crucifixion), and while all the other panels are central to the story, this one is not. Were it not for the newspaper article it might have been difficult to identify this scene. It could easily be mistaken for Christ showing his wound to Doubting Thomas were it not for the snake in the background.

Secondly, the arrangement of the nine panels among the three-





58. S. Purser and B. Elvery The Passion 1908 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.
59. S. Purser and A. E. Child The Nativity 1912 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.



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lights of the window does not appear to follow a logical pattern. They do not read from left to right or from top to bottom (see illustration).

This window was erected to John Smyth, another of the Smyth's of Masonbrook, at a cost of £175. The companion to this window also cost £175 and was erected in 1912 by Mrs. Smyth in memory of Marion Chichester and Edgar Smyth. This window was also designed by Sarah Purser and its painting has been attributed to A. E. Child.<sup>59</sup> As in 'The Passion'

window, the three-lights contain nine panels which do not follow any logical sequence (see illustration). It is however, a more pleasing window than its predecessor partly due to the exclusion of what the "Freeman's Journal" reporter referred to as "acceptable architecture ... imaginative edifices that are yet distinctly ecclesiastical ... " The individual scenes represented are more readily identifiable than those of The Passion. Just so that there can be no confusion each scene has an appropriate quotation in Latin from the Gospels. Unfortunately, these inscriptions are difficult to read, even for those well-versed in Latin, partly because the lettering is small and over-ornate, and partly due to the confessional which obscures areas of the lower panels.

If the lettering is a little small, Sarah Purser has certainly made the figures as large as possible without obviously changing the scale that was used throughout The Passion window. The number of figures in each panel has also been reduced and their gestures and poses have



been made more explicit. If Sarah Purser was influenced by stained glass windows when designing The Nativity, this inspiration must surely have come from 16th century windows rather than the more famous 12th and 13th century windows of Chartres, Bourges etc. She must have seen original examples of this era of stained glass during her student days in Paris. Throughout her life she remained a regular visitor to the continent.

The fact that the panels which make up The Nativity window are fundamentally illustrative, that the inscriptions are written on 'paper' scrolls and that the figures themselves are dressed in costumes of that era, all point to an interest in this type of stained glass.

It is the costumes, particularly those of the shepherds, which are so readily eye-catching and appealing. Possibly the best panel is the top one of the central light (plate no. 59). The scene is compact yet there is plenty of movement as the angel swoops low over the shepherds' heads to announce "Glory to God in the highest and peace to all men."

The main reason why these three-lights form such a pleasing entity is due to the extensive use of diamond-shaped quarries as background glass. This use of quarries limits background detail and so places the emphasis on the figures themselves. Unfortunately the window suffers because of the lifelessness of the figures and their dull, expressionless faces. Despite this criticism, it is definitely a more pleasing window than The Passion of four years earlier. Clearly Miss Purser learned from her mistakes.



Dr. O'Dea, who had been such a benevolent patron of the arts during his six years at Loughrea was replaced in 1909 by the Rt. Rev. T. P. Gilmartin. The new Bishop of Clonfert's interests obviously lay elsewhere. No stained glass windows were commissioned by the Diocese during his term of office. In September 1919, the Most Rev. Thomas O'Doherty succeeded him as Bishop of Clonfert. Again no windows at all were commissioned. By now it might have looked like the decorating of Loughrea had ceased for good had not the Most Rev. John Dignan<sup>61</sup> become Bishop of Clonfert in June 1924. Shortly afterwards the scheme of decoration began to take an upward turn.

Despite this good fortune there is still a lamentable gap of thirteen years in which no windows were commissioned at Loughrea. During this period all the An Tur Gloine artists and particularly Michael Healy were developing into mature stained glass artists. Some of their better works were produced during these years and this makes it all the more unfortunate that Loughrea has no examples from this period.

The first window which marks the beginning of the second phase of stained glass windows at Loughrea Cathedral was not actually commissioned or paid for by the Diocesan authorities. The new Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. Dignan, was however, involved in its erection because he must have granted permission to the donors to install this memorial window in his Cathedral. This window was no ordinary memorial window and a certain



degree of controversy surrounded it during the mid 1920's when it was commissioned.

The window was erected to the memory of Padraig Mac Aoda, or Patrick Coy by which name he is generally remembered. Captain Coy was a member of the Free State Army and was killed after being challenged by members of the "Irregulars" near Abbeyfield, Co. Kerry on January 27th 1923. He was a native of Derryhoyle in Clostown parish which is about four miles from Loughrea on the Loughrea - Gort road. His comrades, family and friends held a collection for funds to commemorate the dead man. A very ordinary celtic cross type monument was erected over his grave in Kilchreest cemetery. There was some money left over and it was decided that a side altar or stained glass window should be installed in Clostown church. The ageing parish priest would not allow this. According to the dead man's nephew, Brother Pat Coy, this is how the window came to be erected in Loughrea Cathedral. The cost of the window was £164.

It is not known when exactly the window was commissioned. Probably not until the second half of 1924. It was finished by September 1925 and went on view in the 7th, and last, Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland Exhibition. It was seen in Dublin and then travelled to Belfast. The window was due to travel with the rest of the exhibition to Cork for the month of January in 1926 but the An Tur Gloine records show that it was installed in Loughrea Cathedral on 10th December 1925. Presumably the



donors were anxious to see it in place before the new year. The window is recorded in the catalogue of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition: "no.390. Two-light window for Loughrea Cathedral, 'The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary.'" In fact the Blessed Margaret Mary had since 1920 been elevated to Saint Margaret Mary. The seventeenth century French nun was probably mentioned regularly in newspapers prior to, and following her canonization. This would have generated renewed interest in the saint and probably explains why she was chosen as a subject for this window.

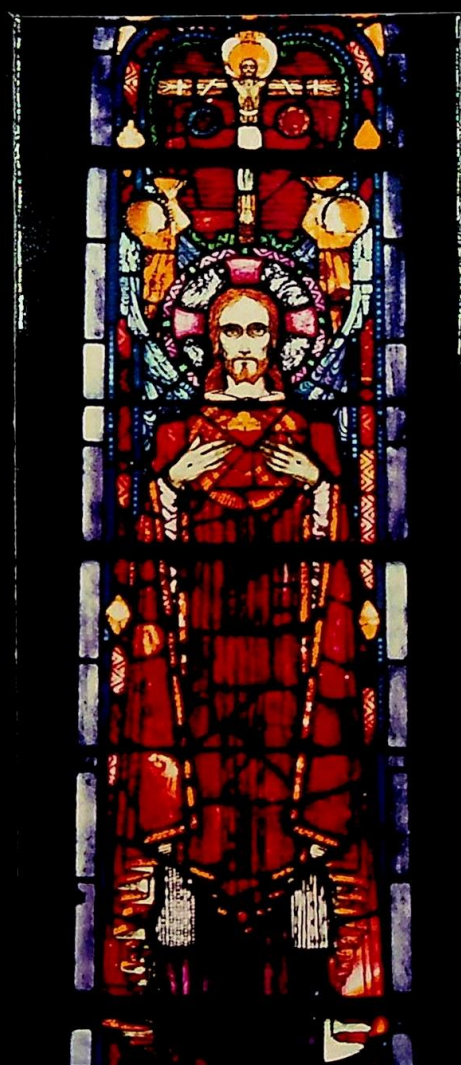
Hubert McGoldrick's <sup>62</sup> stained glass window (plate no. 60) is situated in the left-hand side altar of the Cathedral and is positioned at right angles to Francis O'Donohue's oil painting of the Sacred Heart, <sup>63</sup> The window is just over eightfeet high and approximately four and a half feet wide. Though quite large, the window is not high off the ground and so it is easy to appreciate and enjoy fully all the minute details that combine to make this window one of McGoldrick's most successful works.

As the title of the window suggests, the scene depicts the moment when the Sacred Heart appears to St. Margaret Mary Alocoque:

"He asked me for my heart which I prayed him to take; which he did, and placed it in his own adorable heart wherein he showed it to me like a tiny atom being consumed in that blazing furnace; and he drew it forth again like a burning flame in the form of a heart, and set it once more in the place whence he had taken it ..."

<sup>64</sup> This very vivid and dramatic account





60. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 Loughrea Cathedral.
61. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
62. H. Clarke The Sacred Heart, St. John and St. Margaret Mary 1919 (detail) St. Peter's Church, Phibsboro', Dublin.



calls to mind a similar miraculous event recounted by St. Teresa and immortalised in Bernini's sculpture of that subject - the Ecstasy of St. Teresa.

The recurring colours in McGoldrick's window are deep blue and sonorous red. This basic but extremely effective combination of colours is reminiscent of the great medieval windows of Chartres and other cathedrals of that era. Some of the almost malevolent looking creatures which are to be found in McGoldrick's window also seem to have a medieval quality.

It has been remarked that this window combines what is best of Harry Clarke and An Tur Gloine. Certainly the inspiration of Clarke is clear; the slightly gaunt, wide-eyed Christ (plate no. 61), the stylised figures and, of course, the treatment of infinitesimal detail. While there is no specific window by Harry Clarke which is an obvious prototype for Hubert McGoldrick's window, some areas of Clarke's 'The Sacred Heart, St. John and St. Margaret Mary (plate no. 62) (1919) in St. Peter's Church, Phibsboro', a window McGoldrick most likely did see, may have been a source of inspiration.

65  
Thomas MacGreevyn in his valuable article on Loughrea Cathedral, does not appear to prize this window as highly as others by McGoldrick such as The Resurrection (plate no. 63) in the Mortuary Chapel, Aughrim Street, Dublin. The Resurrection is indeed a fine window, (though no one





63. H. McGoldrick The Resurrection 1939 The Mortuary Chapel, Catholic Church, Aughrim Street, Dublin.
64. H. McGoldrick St. Luke 1937 St. Ann's C. of I. Shandon, Cork.



sees it any longer because the mortuary chapel is now unfortunately used as a store room) but it has none of the engaging detail of the Loughrea window which is a real feast for the eye. What is very obvious in The Resurrection, and to a lesser extent in the Loughrea window, is Hubert McGoldricks understanding of design and his ability to use the leading to its best advantage. No other An Tur Gloine artist manages to use the strong linear quality of the leading with such great success. This ability to design harmonious compositions with such apparent ease made McGoldrick appear to be one of the most 'modern' of the An Tur Gloine artists during the twenties and early thirties. Examples of his ability in this area can be seen in two of his Cork windows - those at St. Patrick's Catholic Church and St. Ann's Church of Ireland Church, Shandon. (plate no. 64).

Hubert McGoldrick appears to have happily interchanged between a highly intricate, detailed style such as to be found at Loughrea and a dramatically simplified style most often apparent in his later windows but in evidence as early as 1922.<sup>66</sup> Unlike Michael Healy, for instance, an artist with whom McGoldrick is sometimes likened, he produced not only windows of the highest quality but also some which can only be described as pot-boilers. This is lamentable for he was greatly talented and it is Loughrea Cathedral's loss that he is only represented there by one window.

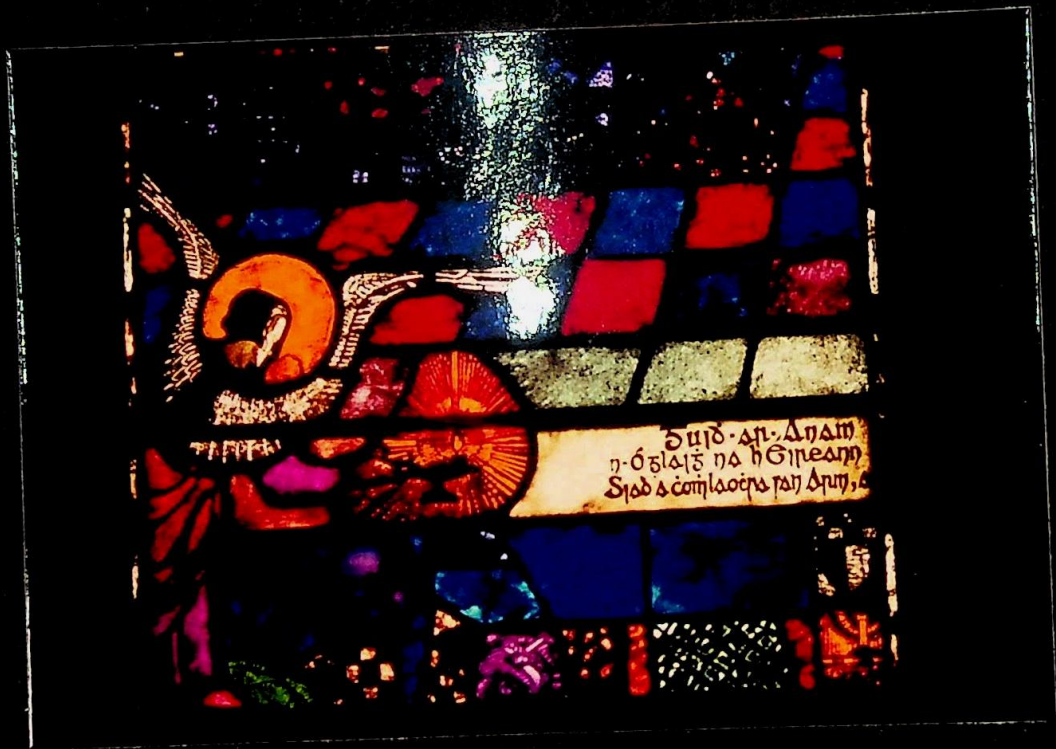


Noticeable among the details of The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary is the use of celtic motif. It appears in the upper portion of the two-lights and seems to be an extension of the altar in the background. Also included in the details are four small crests. These seem to be purely decorative and not the emblems of either the name Coy or the Free State Army. (plate no. 65).

In keeping with the Celtic ornament, the lettering is also of Celtic origin and the inscription is written in Irish. A particularly nice feature is the winged angel with its back to the viewer, holding a lamp in order that the inscription may be read. (plate no. 66). In a corner of the left hand light, Hubert McGoldricks signature is clearly discernable. It is scratched on a lozenge of yellow glass. Above his name, on the same small square of glass, there is a tower - the symbol of An Tur Gloine - behind which the sun is setting. (plate no. 67). Both Ethel Rhind and Catherine O'Brien regularly signed their windows and included the tower symbol but these are always like trade marks rather than the minute glowing scene that McGoldrick has painted.

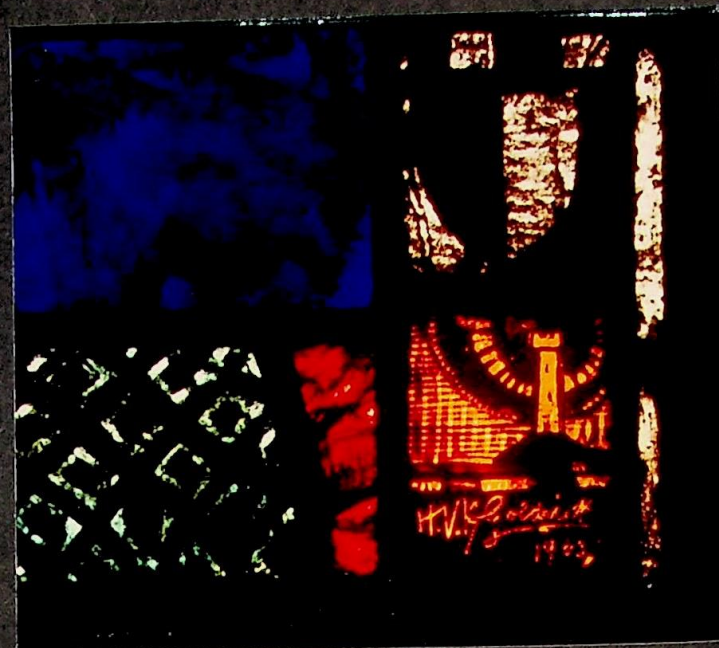
Above St. Margaret Mary's head, on the altar behind her, there is a small shrine of a Madonna and Child lit by a slender candle (plate no. 68). Here the use of such basic colours as red, yellow, blue and green couldn't be more effective. It is a delightful detail and yet it is a detail that has not been over-stated or over-worked; it does not detract from the





65. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
66. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.





67. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.

68. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



saint's head below. Kneeling on top of the shrine is a slightly wicked, elf-like angel who carries a glowing lantern. (plate no. 70 ). The angel's robe is simply a plain white piece of glass but the use of strong black lines, painted on without hesitation, gives it body and volume.

There is a watercolour sketch for 'The Apparition of the Sacred Heart of St. Margaret Mary' (3809, TG 79) in the National Gallery of Ireland. For such a small sketch (approx.  $16\frac{1}{2}$ " x 9") it is surprisingly detailed and finished. The figures of Christ and the Saint in the sketch correspond exactly with the figures in the actual window. Other alterations have taken place though - the most noticeable of these being in the lower section where the inscription has been moved and the winged angel added. The colours of this watercolour sketch are rather weak but they may have faded somewhat over the years. (plate no. 69)

If there is one criticism that can be made of this window it is the weakness of some of the drawing. McGoldricks forte was not as a draughtsman and usually his best windows are those in which the figures are highly stylised. In this window, the gestures particularly those of the saints, are academic and strained. Her hands are noticeably lacking in form and this detracts from the overall success of the window. (plate no. 65).

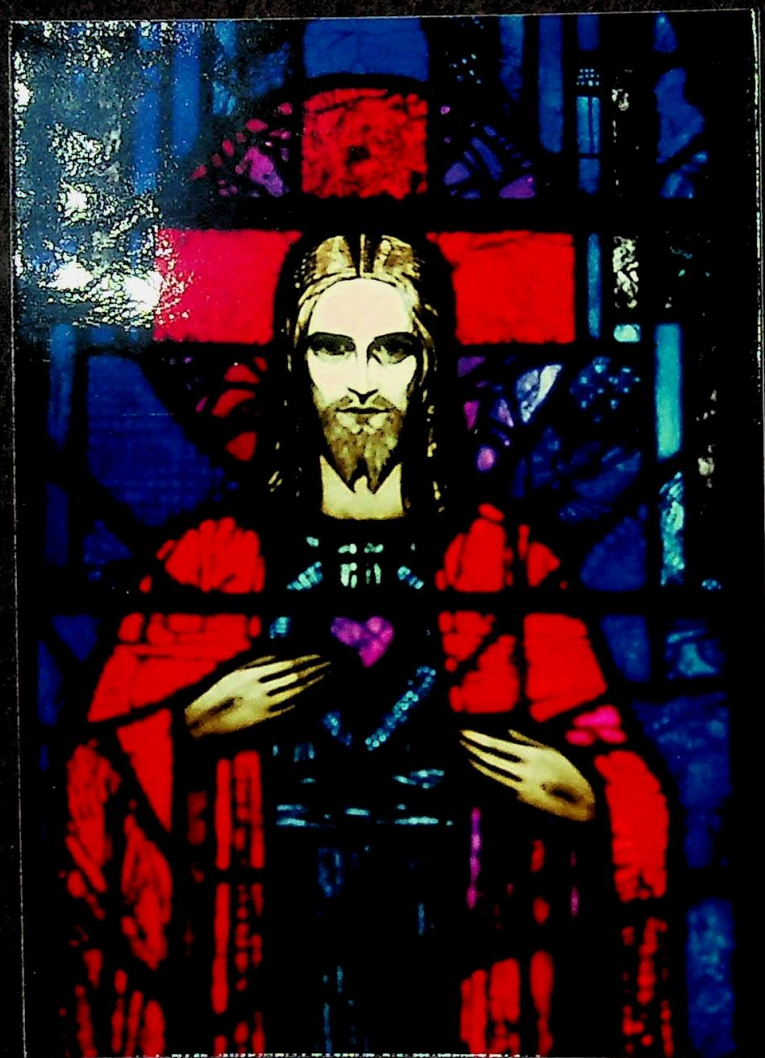
In 1937, Hubert McGoldrick executed another window depicting the Sacred Heart, this time without St. Margaret Mary. It is to be found in





69. H. McGoldrick watercolour sketch for The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925.  
 N.G.I. photograph by N.G.I.





70. H. McGoldrick The Apparition of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary 1925 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
71. H. McGoldrick The Sacred Heart 1937 (detail) Blackrock College Chapel, Dublin.



Blackrock College Chapel, Dublin, (plate no. 71 ) which has also several fine windows by Healy and Hone. This version of the Sacred Heart is much smaller but has definite similarities with the Loughrea window. The face of Christ is similar - rather Clarkesque; and the use of pulsating blues and reds predominate.

In 1925 Mrs. Smyth of Masonbrook, Loughrea, wrote to Sarah Purser on the subject of a new stained glass window for the cathedral;<sup>67</sup> it was to depict St. John the Evangelist and was to commemorate John Smyth who had died the previous July. He is possibly the John Smyth who donated the high altar for the cathedral. There are three windows in all erected to the memory of different John Smyths in Loughrea Cathedral. Unfortunately Mrs. Smyth's letter does not have appeared to have survived but at any rate the commission was accepted by Michael Healy and the new stained glass window was installed in the Cathedral in 1927 at a cost of £90.

It is regrettable that although the cathedral has ten stained glass windows by Michael Healy there is almost a twenty year gap between the Saint Anthony and Saint John windows. Dr. C. P. Curran in his valuable article on Michael Healy states that Loughrea Cathedral "holds his work of every period".<sup>68</sup> This is hardly accurate though it is true to say that the Cathedral does hold the best single representative collection of Healy's windows anywhere.



Michael Healy's splendid window depicting Saints Patrick, Bithne and Fedelma (plate no. 72) in the Catholic Church, Donnybrook, is a suitable choice as a link between St. Anthony and St. John. The work was executed in 1914 and it is probably the first mature work by the artist. The figures demonstrate his continued allegiance to academic representation but the extensive use of the 'acid' process, particularly in St. Patrick's robes, is indicative of work that was yet to come.

The St. John the Evangelist (plate no. 73) window at Loughrea is superficially at least, not all that dissimilar to the St. Anthony which stands beside it; there is a small top panel, the main figure of the saint in the middle, and a rectangular panel at the base of the window.

The top panel depicts the Crucifixion (plate no. 74) because just before His death on the Cross, Christ asked John "the disciple he loved", to look after His Mother, Mary (John 19 : 26,27). Beneath the Crucifixion scene are the words "In principio Erat Verum" - "In the Beginning was the Word". This is the opening line of St. John's Gospel. The main figure of St. John is represented with his traditional attributes; the serpent emerging from the chalice he holds, and the book, his Gospel, which he clasps in his other hand. On his left side there is the eagle, the traditional evangelical symbol of John. In the bottom panel, Christ is shown appearing before an old grey-haired St. John.





72. M. Healy St. Patrick with Saints Eithne and Fedelm  
1914 Catholic Church, Donnybrook. Dublin.
73. L. Healy St. John the Evangelist 1927 Loughrea Cathedral
74. M. Healy St. John the Evangelist 1927 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.

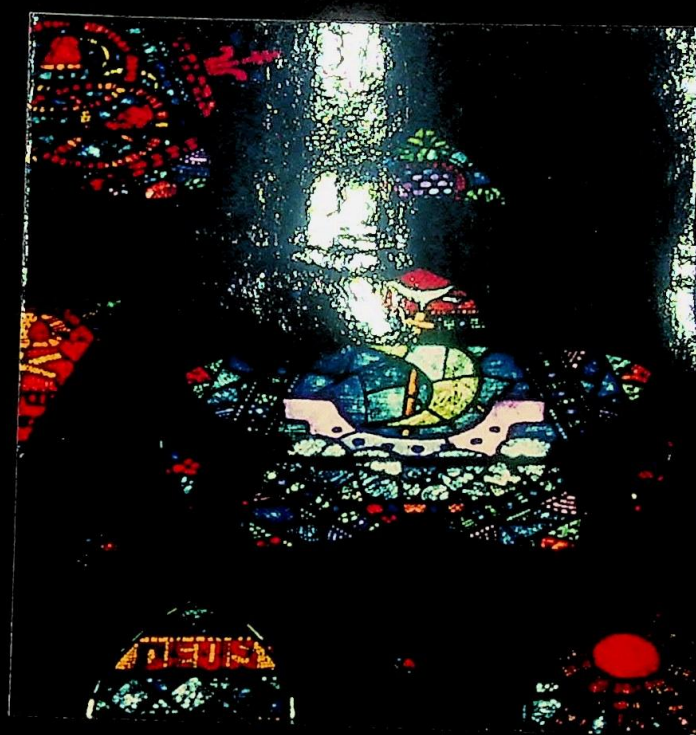
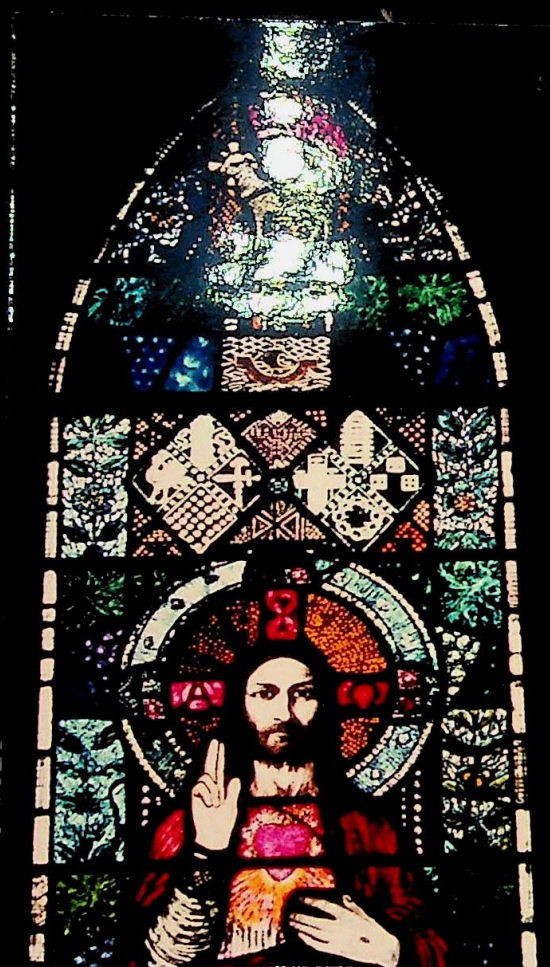
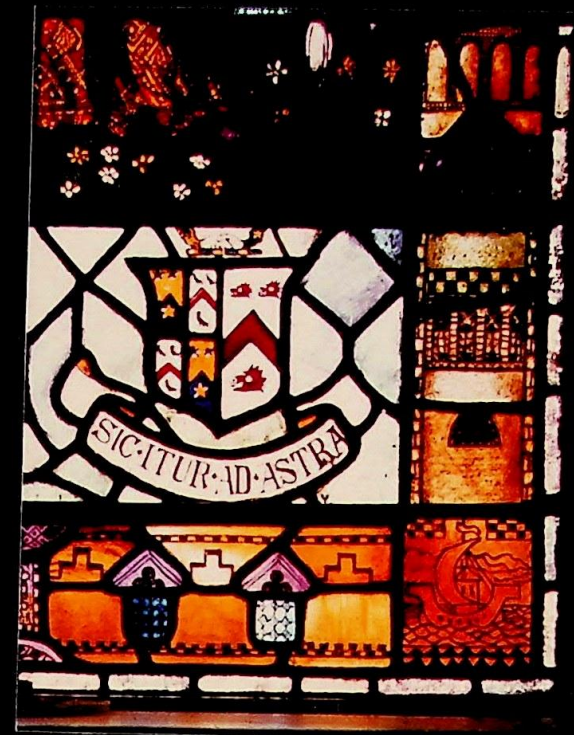
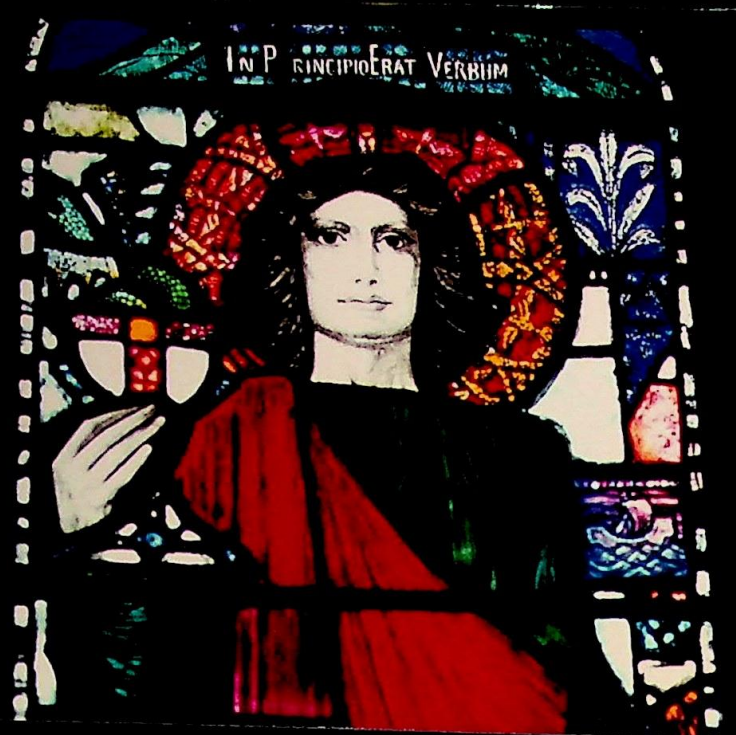


It is a modern theological development which has decided that St. John the disciple and St. John the Evangelist were in fact the same man. The main figure of St. John is depicted without a beard which is how John, the youngest of the disciples is normally represented. The figure in the panel below is the bearded St. John; the Gospel writer, who following the resurrection spent most of his time at Ephesus and lived to a great age.

The most striking feature of this stained glass window is, not surprisingly, the main figure of St. John. Clad in a resonant crimson robe he stares straight ahead (plate no. 75). MacGreevy notes "the apocalyptic note beginning to strike in the expression of the evangelist ...". The red and gold halo that surrounds his head has an almost abstract bird motif - probably representing flying eagles, their wings outspread. The large powerful eagle at St. John's side is also rendered in firey red and burnished gold; its feathers so metallic and stylised that they have the quality of swords.

Michael Healy's love of religious symbolism is evident, not only in the obvious form of the eagle but also in the inclusion of a small boat, behind the saint's left shoulder. The boat is an emblem of the Church (the Ark of Salvation). It is one of Healy's favourite symbols and different versions of it can be seen in several of his windows such as Hope (1915) (plate no. 78) in the Church of Ireland





75. M. Healy St. John the Evangelist 1927 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
78. M. Healy Hope 1915 (detail) C. of I. Church, Donore Avenue, Dublin.
79. M. Healy The Sacred Heart 1922 (detail) Catholic Church, Timahoe, Co. Laois.
80. M. Healy St. Augustine 1934 (detail) The Augustinian Church, Thomas Street, Dublin.

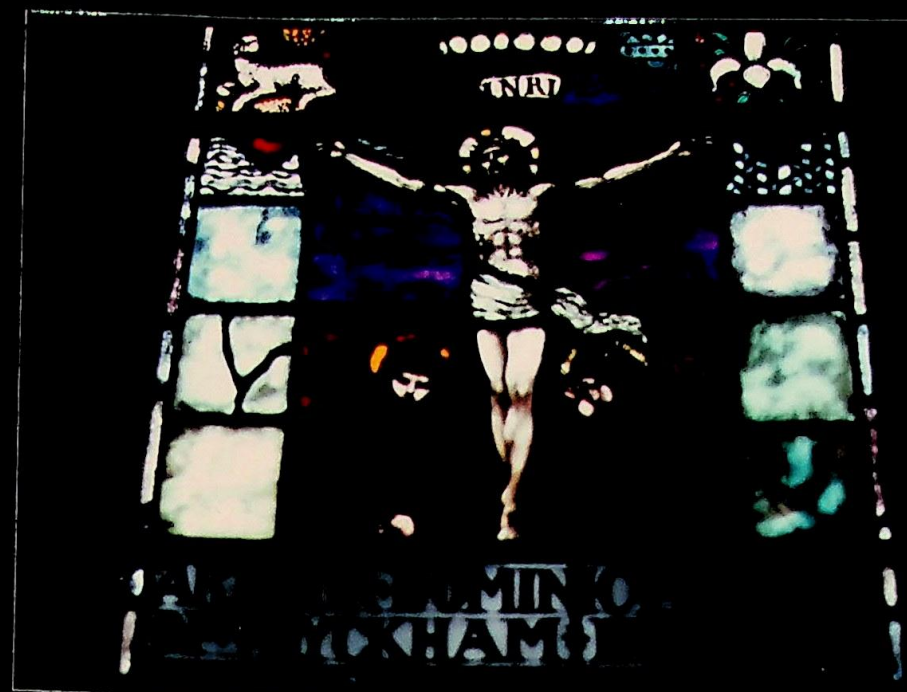


Church, Donore Avenue, Dublin; The Sacred Heart (1922) (plate no. 79 )  
Timahoe, Co. Laois: and in the better-known St. Augustine window (1934)  
(plate no. 80) in the Augustinian Church, Thomas St., Dublin.

The small crucifixion scene in the apex of the window is remarkable primarily for its sky. The depth and vibrance of the colour seems to imbue the sky with an emotional value which is necessary because the expressions on the faces, lowered in sorrow, can not be seen clearly. This small little scene is reminiscent of a similarly successful treatment of the same subject in a panel of the 'Madonna and Child with Saints Catherine and Dominic' window of 1919 for the Catholic Church, Dundrum, Co. Dublin. (plate no. 81 )

The bottom panel of the Loughrea window depicting St. John has captured a spontaneity and instantaneous movement that is almost never seen in stained glass. (plate no. 82) The aged St. John, seated at his desk appears to have looked up just at this moment. Such a quality is a remarkable achievement in this medium. The distinctive outline of St. John's bearded face is reminiscent of Gustave Courbet's self-portraits in which he proudly put emphasis on what he called his 'Assyrian profile'. (plate no. 83). A charming depiction of St. Columcille (1924-25), one of five excellent windows by Healy in the Convent, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo, also represents the saint's head in a similar manner to that of St. John's . (plate no. 84).





81. M. Healy Madonna and Child with Saints Catherine and Dominic 1919 (detail) ,Catholic Church Dundrum. Dublin.
82. M. Healy St. John the Evangelist 1927 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.





83. Gustave Courbet Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet Musée Fabre, Montpellier.
84. M. Healy St. Columcille 1924-25 (detail) Convent of Mercy Chapel, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.



In this bottom panel of the St. John the Evangelist window, skillfully applied to a pale quarry is the symbol of the monogram of the name of Christ. It is easy to read but not so dominant that it would interfere with the little scene. On either side of this scene there are also the Alpha and Omega symbols to represent Christ's words "I am the Alpha and the Omega - the first and the last" (Revelations 1;8).

The next window destined for Loughrea Cathedral was also commissioned by the benevolent Smyths of Masonbrook. According to the work journals, sketches were sent to Mr. Smyth for approval and he returned them in July 1926. However, the window was not installed in Loughrea Cathedral until 1929. Clearly A. E. Child, the artist who received the commission, was busy and was unable to give the window his undivided attention.

The window was erected to the memory of Maria Clare Smyth and Charlotte Frances Smyth. The cost was £195. The window comprises of two lights and is almost ten feet high (plate no. 85). We know that A.E. Child began work on this commission almost immediately because in the 1927 edition of The Irish Catholic Directory there is an advertisement (advertisements had to be sent in by November of the previous year) for An Tur Gloine. Accompanying this advertisement is a black and white reproduction of the St. Clare half of this window, minus the panel at the base.





85. A. E. Child St. Clare and St. Frances 1927-29  
Loughrea Cathedral.
86. A. E. Child St. Agnes with St. Anne and the Virgin Mary 1924, Convent of Divine Providence, Foxford,  
Co. Mayo.
87. A. E. Child St. Clare and St. Frances 1927-29  
(detail) Loughrea Cathedral.

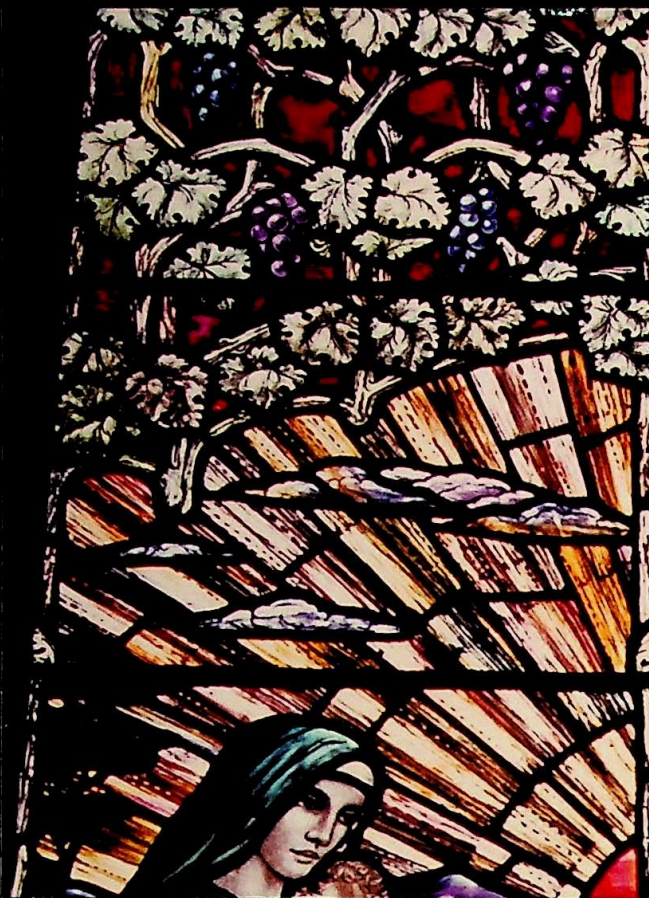


This window by Alfred E. Child has several features in common with an earlier window by him; that of St. Agnes with St. Anne and the Virgin Mary (1924) in the Convent of Divine Providence, Foxford, Co. Mayo (plate no. 86). These two windows are basically of the same proportions; there is extensive use of quarries and both incorporate the distinctive leaf-and-branch ornamentation, similar to that already found in Child's Loughrea 'Baptism' (1904).

This two-light Loughrea window features oak leaves and acorns, probably Child's favourite botanical motif (plate no. 87), though structures of vine leaves with bunches of grapes (1932) (plate no. 88), and orange branches bearing fruit (1914) (plate no. 89) can be seen in two windows commissioned for the Church of Ireland, Zion Road, Dublin. None of his pupils, with the exception of Catherine O'Brien, seem to have imitated their teacher in this respect. She even continued to adorn her windows with these leafy structures as late as 1947 (St. Naithis, Church of Ireland, Dundrum), many years after Child had died. (plate no. 90).

Partly due to the oak leaves, acorns, inscription bearing scrolls and the costumes of the saints, this window seems to evoke the era of Arthurian legend. A great many of Child's windows from c.1918 onwards capture something of this quality. A considerable amount of his windows of this period were war memorial commissions and so depict knights in the allegorical roles of Victory, Sacrifice, Faith, Valour, Peace etc. etc.





88. A. E. Child Of Such is the Kingdom of God 1932  
(detail) C. of I. Church, Zion Road, Dublin.
89. A. E. Child St. Luke 1914 (detail) C. of I. Church  
Zion Road, Dublin.
90. C. O'Brien Like a Tree planted by a Riverside 1947  
St. Naithi's C. of I. Church, Dundrum, Dublin.



They indicate a development from the clearly Pre-Raphaelite inspired windows like those executed for the apse of Loughrea Cathedral.

The two saints depicted in this window at Loughrea are Saint Clare and Saint Frances of Rome. Both Italian saints, they died in 1253 and 1308 respectively. St. Clare is represented in the traditional manner; holding a monstrance in memory of her having miraculously saved her convent from assault (plate no. 91). St. Frances' life is perhaps less well known than St. Clare's. During forty years of marriage her life was a model of fidelity and devotedness to her domestic duties; she patiently bore many severe trials, among them being the death of her children, her husband's banishment and the confiscation of their estates.

A. E. Child, as usual, has represented the saints with their traditional attributes in a very straightforward and conventional manner. The strength of this window lies not in the draughtmanship but in the richness of colour; the deep blue robes, the crimson background drapes and the glowing orange disc of St. Clare's halo. The regular use of pale, mellow quarries makes the dominant colours seem even more vibrant than they are. (plate no. 92).

By 1928, An Tur Gloine had been producing stained glass for twenty-five years. In January a reception was held at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, to celebrate its jubilee. It was a great success and





91. A. E. Child St. Clare and St. Frances 1927-29  
(detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
92. A. E. Child St. Clare and St. Frances 1927-29  
(detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



gave valuable publicity to An Tur Gloine. A Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration pamphlet was later produced and it records speeches made by T. P. Gill and Sarah Purser. (Extracts from Miss Purser's speech have been quoted on pages 5 and 22). A further pamphlet was also published which lists the principle stained glass windows executed by An Tur Gloine between 1903 and 1928. About 200 windows are listed. These two pamphlets, the studio's work journals, their minute book and Sarah Purser's received correspondence are the main contemporary sources of information.

In 1929 a set of Stations of the Cross were commissioned from An Tur Gloine by the Diocesan authorities for Loughrea Cathedral. They were to be executed not in stained glass, but in opus-sectile mosaic, a medium that some of the studio's artists had been working in for some years. Despite some superficial similarities with stained glass, opus-sectile mosaic is quite different and therefore the fourteen Stations of the Cross will be discussed separately in the appendix to this thesis.

During the early nineteen thirties, a pair of stained glass windows by Michael Healy were erected in Loughrea Cathedral - Christ the King, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven. They occupy the same positions as Healy's St. Anthony and St. John windows but are located on the opposite wall of the nave. Even if the choice of subject matter did not readily identify them as a pair, the treatment and iconographic approach make them obvious companions.



Christ the King (plate no. <sup>93</sup>) was commissioned in 1929 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Dignan's entry into the priesthood. It was installed in April 1930; the companion window was not erected until three years later. Both cost £90 each. Michael Healy depicted Christ the King, or Tu Rex Gloria Christe to give it its correct title, twice before the Loughrea version; in 1917 for the tiny Church of Ireland Church, Kilsallaghan, Co. Dublin (plate no. <sup>94</sup>), and in 1928 for a church at Warrenpoint, Co. Down. I have only seen the former which is a fine window, though if one did not know its date it could easily be mistaken for having been executed at an earlier date than 1917. The most dominant colour is a rich crimson, similar to the shade of Christ's robes in the Loughrea version.

During 1930, Michael Healy executed three other windows besides the Loughrea Christ the King. One is in Wellington, New Zealand, another is a very straightforward heraldic window in the Four Courts, Dublin, and the third is an amazing, though little mentioned window depicting St. Victor in Donore Avenue Church of Ireland Church (plate no. <sup>95</sup>). This last window with its enthralling details of wild animals is surely one of his best, if not the greatest, of his single-light windows.

Christ the King is the first window by Michael Healy in Loughrea Cathedral that indicates to any great extent his use of acid-gilding. There is restricted use of this process in 'St. John the Evangelist',





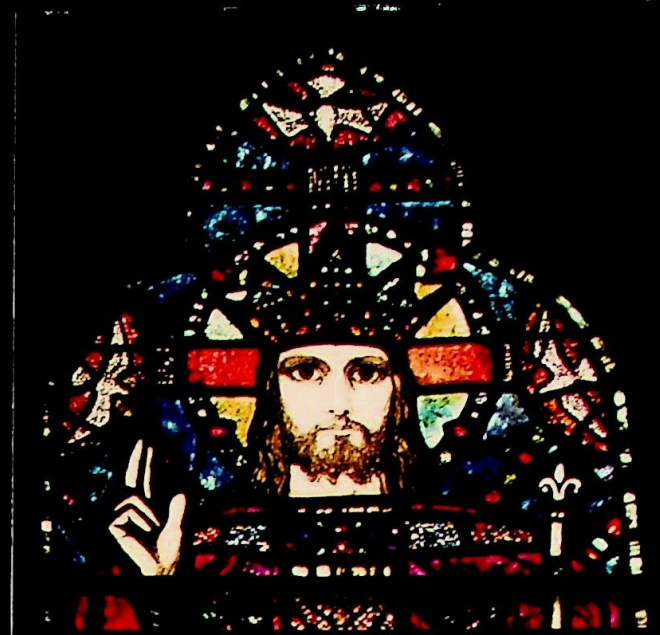
93. M. Healy Christ the King 1930 Loughrea Cathedral.
94. M. Healy Christ the King 1917 C. of I. Church,  
Kilsallaghan, Co. Dublin.
95. M. Healy St. Victor 1930 C. of I. Church, Donore  
Avenue, Dublin.



though Healy had been using it extensively as far back as his 1914 Donnybrook window. 'Aciding' (which is derived from the Abraiding technique) is the process particularly favoured by Michael Healy and Harry Clarke, where by a layer of colour can be removed from 'flushed glass' with hydrofluoric acid. Healy shows that skilful use can create a highly jewelled effect by letting tiny pin points of light pierce through the coloured glass. Aciding is in evidence throughout Christ the King but particularly in the area below Christ's feet (plate no. 96 ). As the light outside changes, the glass appears to sparkle.

This window does not have any of the narrative qualities of his earlier windows at Loughrea; there is no little scene in the apex or at the base of the window - the figure of Christ occupies the window alone. This difference is indicative of Healy's development from an artist who emphasised the human aspects of his subjects to one who is interested in depicting a more detached, austere and regal representation. It suggests that Michael Healy's artistic inspiration shifted from the Italian fifteenth century painters to earlier Byzantine art. Indeed many of his later works, partly because of the aciding technique, appear to take on some of the characteristics of Byzantine mosaics. The technical treatment of some areas of Christ the King is not quite as skilful as might be expected from an artist who normally has complete control over his craft. The head of Christ, in particular, does not





96. M. Healy Christ the King 1930 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
97. M. Healy Christ the King 1930 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
98. M. Healy Our Lady, Queen of Heaven 1933 Loughrea Cathedral.



fully demonstrate Healy's ability as a draughtsman. An attractive feature which surrounds Christ's head are the three white sparkling doves. It is unusual because normally the dove, which is the emblem of the Holy Ghost, is depicted singly (plate no. 97).

As in the St. John the Evangelist window, Michael Healy incorporates Christ's monogram and the alpha and omega symbols. Also at the base is an orb, one of the traditional symbols of monarchy. Michael Healy is really the only Irish stained glass artist who incorporated coloured glass in his lettering. This is of course as it should be for an inscription is an integral part of each window and should not appear as if it were an after-thought. In this window 'Tu Rex Gloria Christe' had been acided out of yellow glass which was 'flashed' with red. The result is stunning.

The companion to this window, Our Lady, Queen of Heaven (plate no. 98) was executed by Healy in 1933 and its technical treatment definitely surpasses 'Christ the King'. This window was erected by Bishop F. J. Tief of Concord, U.S.A. in memory of his mother. Regina Coeli the window's Latin title, are the first works of the antiphon said in honour of Our Lady at the close of Divine Office during the Pascal season.

This is surely one of Michael Healy's most sumptuous works - the whole window is a symphony of blue and pink. Throughout Our Lady's



robe the acidifying process is brought to its limit (plate no. 99). Were it not for the saint's hands, the mid-section of this window would appear to be an abstract design (plate no. 100). It calls to mind similar virtuoso treatments of cloth such as the red and gold robes of St. Patrick in his stunning window (1916) in the Catholic Church, Ballyporeen, Co. Tipperary (plate no. 101).

In this Loughrea window the saint's robes are so eye-catching that they dominate the window. Our Lady's face would almost be of secondary interest, had Healy not endowed her with such graceful Mo digliani - type features. Like Christ the King, Our Lady is depicted as an icon; a two-dimensional image that can be meditated upon.

The year after Regina Coeli, 1934, another window was commissioned from A. E. Child. Between them, Child and Healy received all ten of the Loughrea stained glass commissions from 1926 to 1940. This window by Child was commissioned by Dr. Dignan and the Diocesan authorities<sup>71</sup> though it is erected to the memory of John J. Smyth of Masonbrook who had died the previous year. The cost was £90. The An Tur Gloine work journals note that the subject of the window was to be Faith, though it is normally referred to as The Centurion because he is the main feature of the window<sup>72</sup> (plate no. 102).

Three centurions have been made famous by the New Testament but the one represented in Child's window is the Centurion of Capernaum





99. M. Healy Our Lady, Queen of Heaven 1933 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.
100. M. Healy Our Lady, Queen of Heaven 1933 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.
101. M. Healy St. Patrick 1916 (detail) Catholic Church  
Ballyporeen, Co. Tipperary.



described in St. Luke's and St. Matthew's Gospels.

"When Jesus went to Capernaum, a centurion came up and pleaded with him. 'Sir' he said, 'my servant is lying at home paralysed, and in great pain'. 'I will come myself and cure him' said Jesus. The centurion replied 'Sir, I am not worthy to have you under my roof; just give the word and my servant will be cured. For I am under authority myself, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man: Do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those following him, 'I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this" (Matt. 8:5-10). These words spoken by Christ are inscribed in Latin on a scroll in the apex of the window.

The panel at the base of the window also has a Latin inscription: "Credo Domine: adjura incredulitatem meam". This is a quotation from the Gospel of St. Mark (9:25). The scene depicted is the miracle of the epileptic demoniac. The grey-bearded man brings his afflicted son to Jesus to be cured but remains sceptical of Christ's powers. Jesus tells him "Everything is possible for anyone who has faith" and the old man replies "Lord I believe, help my unbelief". Jesus then cures the man's son.

A. E. Child has not represented the miracle in as dramatic terms as St. Mark's description would suggest. St. Mark describes the boy as being possessed by an unclean spirit which throws him into convulsions causing him to fall on the ground writhing and foaming at the mouth. In





- |      |             |              |      |                              |
|------|-------------|--------------|------|------------------------------|
| 102. | A. E. Child | <u>Faith</u> | 1934 | Loughrea Cathedral.          |
| 103. | A. E. Child | <u>Faith</u> | 1934 | (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |
| 104. | A. E. Child | <u>Faith</u> | 1934 | (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |



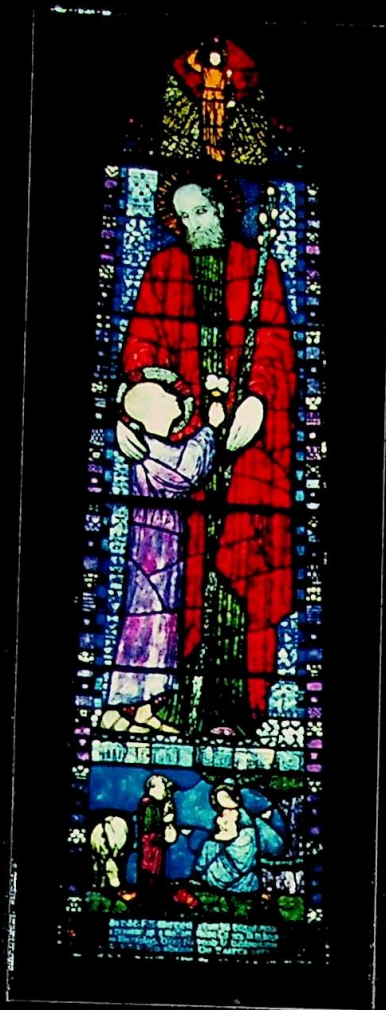
Child's window the boy merely looks overtired as he rests against a piece of masonry (plate no. 103).

Despite this minor iconographic criticism Faith is probably Child's most successful window in the nave of Loughrea Cathedral. Its strong points are the drawing and the rich use of colour. The centurions arms and legs are admirably executed, so much so that they could almost be mistaken for the work of Michael Healy. The warm, firey hues of the centurions' cloak contrast effectively with the cold metallic armour and the lush green foliage in the distance (plate no. 104). The dominant colours found in the centurion are also evident in the bottom panel. A noticeable absence from this window is the use of white glass and pale quarries which are almost always a feature of A. E. Child's windows.

The architectural structure in which the centurion is firmly placed is sufficiently original to be quite acceptable. The stone capital above the Latin inscription has a celtic interlacing carving on it and the curved arch behind has a zig-zag pattern which suggests the influence of Hiberno-Romanesque architecture (plate no. 104).

In 1935 another window was commissioned from Michael Healy (plate no. 105). This window differs in both approach and treatment from the pair he had previously executed for the east wall of the nave. In spirit it is more akin to the windows Healy executed in the 1920's. The





105. M. Healy St. Joseph 1935 Loughrea Cathedral.
106. M. Healy St. Joseph 1935 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
107. M. Healy St. Joseph 1935 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



central panel depicts St. Joseph with the Christ Child; the bottom panel illustrates the Flight into Egypt; and the apex of the window depicts an angel (plate no. 106). When designing this window, Michael Healy clearly decided to connect the top and bottom panels. The angel is not just a decorative device filling the gap above St. Joseph's head but is in fact the "angel of the Lord who appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and escape into Egypt and stay there until I tell you ...'" (Matt. 7:13).

The angel, though small in proportion to the window, is an important feature. Clad in a golden robe with scarlet wings, it gazes downwards and, with one hand raised in command, directs Joseph to alter his plans. A tongue of flame is seen above the angel's head and golden rays of light emanate from the background.

In the central scene a weary and troubled looking St. Joseph (plate no. 107) puts his arms around Jesus who is shown, not as an infant, but as a growing boy. "This is the Joseph who knows the tragedy of the world and who has some special understanding of the destiny in the world of the Child whom he carries in his arms ..." <sup>50</sup> This sorrowful overtone echoes the theme of Healy's earlier window at Loughrea - the 1907 rose window depicting the 'Madonna and Child, with Irish Saints'.

As in the earlier window Jesus is depicted as the essence of



innocence - completely unknowledgeable of what lies ahead. Here he holds up a delicate yellow flower on to which a butterfly is just about to alight (plate no. 108). The butterfly is, among the ancients, an emblem of the soul and of unconscious attraction towards light. Perhaps Michael Healy included it for this reason as well as for its more obvious decorative qualities.

The colour scheme, in keeping with the theme of the window, is somewhat sombre and subdued. It is certainly not dull, but it does not have the glitter and sparkle of Christ the King and Our Lady Queen of Heaven. Mauves and blues predominate but there is also the crimson and green of St. Joseph's robes.

This window is a good example of Michael Healy's ability to create mood and atmosphere. Like Evie Hone, but without her wilful crudeness, he can evoke a joyous or tragic quality in a window. Only very occasionally do other Irish stained glass artists, (with the exception of Wilhelmina Geddes), manage to achieve an emotive effect in a stained glass window.

The bottom panel of the St. Joseph window (plate no. 109) is straightforward enough - it is basically illustrative in concept and harks back to the predella panels of much earlier windows. In subject matter, colour scheme and technique it is not unlike the little right







panel of the nativity in his 1919 window for the Catholic Church, Dundrum, Dublin (plate no. 110). As usual with Michael Healy, the St. Joseph window has many details, tiny details, often not noticed until after a close inspection. Two minute white doves flutter around the seated Madonna and Child who are resting during their flight into Egypt. St. Joseph affectionately looks on holding a crook in one hand, a lantern in the other. A small fire keeps the Holy Family warm while a donkey, oblivious of the exalted company he is keeping, nibbles on some grass.

Above this domestic scene 'St. Joseph' is written in Irish. (plate no. 109). Likewise the donor's inscription is also in Irish. As is expected from Michael Healy, the lettering is unique, specially designed for this window. It has a celtic quality about it, not because it is a pastiche from the Book of Kells or some other early Irish manuscript but because of the dedicated attention to detail.

In Clongowes Wood College, Co. Kildare, there is a three-light window (1916) depicting St. Joseph by Michael Healy. The same saint is also featured in Healy's first three Dolours (1936-41) likewise executed for Clongowes. In the Dolour series, the figures depicted, though graceful, have an unreal, artificial air and are lacking the human quality that is found in the Loughrea St. Joseph.



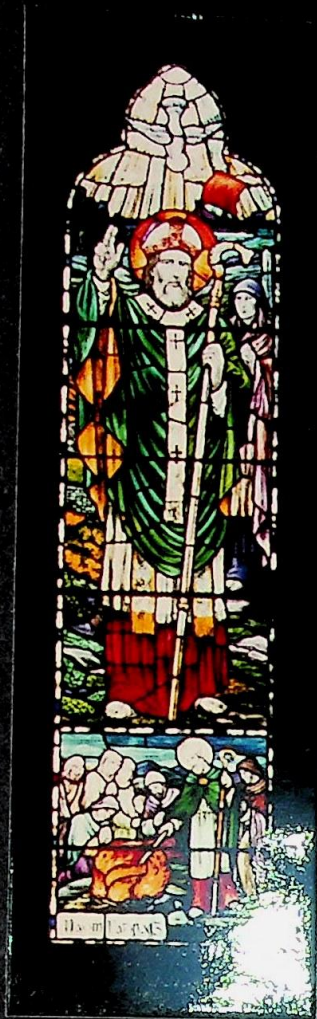
Healy had barely completed St. Joseph when he began work on a large three-light window for the Cathedral. The date for this window is normally given as 1936<sup>74</sup> but it must have been under consideration the previous year because it is referred to in the minutes of an An Tur Gloine committee meeting held in September 1935. At this stage the Cathedral's stained glass scheme was nearing completion; all that remained were a rose window, a pair of single-lights for the nave and two three-lights for the west transept. It was decided that the three-light window nearest the altar would represent the Ascension; the companion three-light which was executed between 1937 and 1940 depicts the Last Judgement. Both are by Michael Healy.

Breaking the chronological sequence, it seems more sensible to discuss A. E. Child's 1937 window first before moving on to what are often seen as the crowning achievements of Michael Healy's career and the most impressive windows in the Cathedral.

In 1937 when Alfred E. Child executed St. Patrick (plates nos. III, II2) he was sixty-two years old. His general health was not excellent and his eye sight in particular had begun to deteriorate considerably. His stained glass output appears to have been in gradual decline since the war-memorial boom ceased and St. Patrick is in fact one of the last stained glass windows he made.

St. Patrick is almost certainly the most frequently represented saint in Irish Catholic churches. It is all the more surprising that a





111. A. E. Child St. Patrick 1937 Loughrea Cathedral.
112. A. E. Child St. Patrick 1937 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
113. A. E. Child St. Patrick 1937 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



window was not erected to him earlier on in Loughrea Cathedral because Dr. O'Dea, the first Bishop of Clonfert, had a particular interest in St. Patrick and wrote a large volume on the saint's life.

The dominant colour of this window is green; this might not seem unusual since St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and green is the colour traditionally associated with him, were it not for the fact that large areas of green in stained glass windows are, as a rule, avoided. Looking at A. E. Child's window, the reason is clear enough: green stained glass, or at least the green glass available to 'An Tur Gloine' has none of the vibrancy or sonorous qualities that say, their red, yellow or blue glass has. For this reason Michael Healy normally depicted St. Patrick in golden robes accompanied no doubt, with protests from the local parish priest. (plate no. 72). The most interesting feature of Child's window is his adaptation of celtic ornament. As has been stated already, A. E. Child was fonder of incorporating early Irish art motifs in his windows than any of the Irish artists themselves.

75  
According to his daughter, A. E. Child had special access to the Book of Kells in Trinity College. This access was arranged by the influential Miss Purser probably through her brother, Louis Claude who was vice-provost of the university. Both St. Patrick's mitre and his stole have celtic decoration embroidered on them. The saint's robes call to mind the exquisite sets of vestments which were commissioned from the Dun Emer Guild for Loughrea Cathedral.



The crozier which St. Patrick carries in his left hand appears to be broadly based on the twelfth century crozier of Clonmacnoise. The background behind the saint also has identifiable Irish characteristics; the distant mountains, vivid green fields, stone walls and gorse bushes. There is even a round tower, possible a reference to St. Patrick's visit to Cashel but also a symbol associated with Ireland and of course, the emblem of An Tur Gloine. The distant boat could represent St. Patrick's travels; his journey from Britain to Ireland, then to the European mainland and back to Ireland again.

The dove of course, has obvious significance; it depicts the third person of the Holy Trinity. St. Patrick is well known for using a shamrock in order to explain the mystery of the three persons of the Holy Trinity.

In the bottom panel, A. E. Child has chosen to illustrate one of the most famous incidents associated with St. Patrick; the lighting of the Pascal fire on the Hill of Slane (plate no. 113). The legend recounts how the fire, when seen by the King and his company who were staying at nearby Tara, filled them with anger and consternation because they were in the course of holding a druid festival. The end result of the incident was that the King became converted to Christianity. An attractive feature of the bottom panel is the Pascal fire itself; a ball of writhing orange flames.



'St. Patrick', as might be expected is written as 'Naom Padraig' in lettering derivative of Celtic manuscripts, Alfred E. Child's

daughter<sup>76</sup> remembers her father and mother going to attend Irish classes given by Willie Pearse,<sup>77</sup> so that when the occasion arose, and it regularly did, he would be able to write Gaelic inscriptions accurately.

The St. Patrick window is the last of the seven windows A. E. Child made for Loughrea not including the Purser window he is said to have painted. They span virtually his whole career in Ireland; thirty-four years between the Apse windows and St. Patrick. It has already been mentioned his importance as an instructor; perhaps if Child had devoted more time to his own work there might have been a greater artistic development between The Annunciation and St. Patrick. They might easily have been executed within a few years of each other. Michael Healy, on the other hand, developed enormously during the same period. It is fitting that Healy's first window at Loughrea, indeed the first window he ever executed himself, should depict the infant Christ in the arms of Simeon while his final window, finished a year before he died, should depict The Last Judgement.

MacGreevy states that The Ascension and The Last Judgement along with Healy's slightly earlier St. Augustine window "are probably<sup>78</sup> the crowning masterpieces of the Irish stained glass revival". Both these impressive Loughrea windows were commissioned by the Bishop of

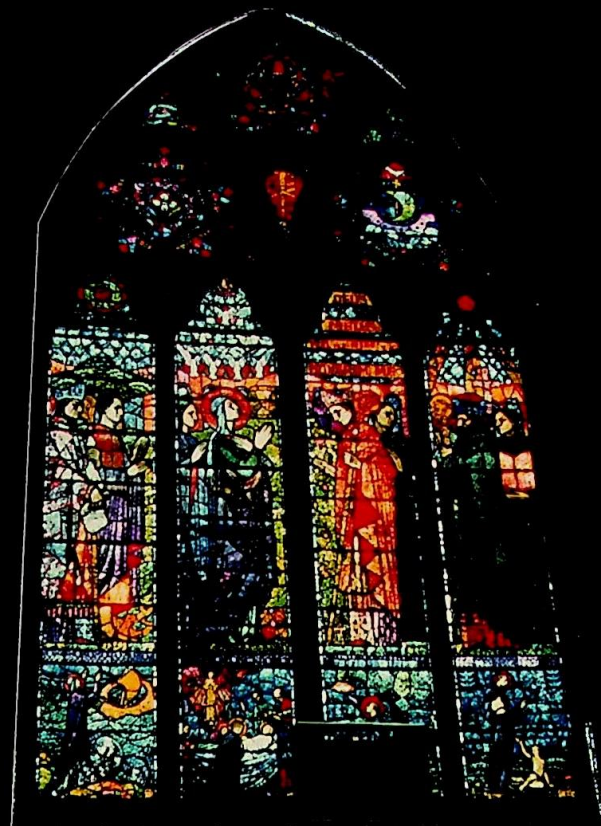


Clonfert at a cost of £300 each. They are of the same proportions as the two windows designed by Sarah Purser which they face; the side lights are nearly eleven feet high, the central light over thirteen feet high, each light two feet wide; in all each window contains about seventy-five square feet of glass. Their monumental proportions correspond with the monumental subject matter.

It is worth noting that all the windows executed by Michael Healy during the last seven years of his life with the exception of the Loughrea St. Joseph (I can not speak of his Ecce Homo (1935) at Bushmills, Co. Antrim, for it is the only one of this period which I have not seen), are large, some very large, and all high, at least twelve feet off the ground. In other words, a major consideration of the artists was that the windows would be viewed from below and from a distance. Consequently gestures have been exaggerated and facial expressions simplified. This sometimes imbues the figures with a theatrical, artificial and detached quality. From a technique point of view virtually all intermediate tones in the faces and hands have been abolished resulting in the features bearing a likeness to woodcuts - broad areas of solid black contrasting with pale flesh coloured glass.

The first window in which these features are clearly in evidence is in Healy's four-light St. Augustine window (1934) for the Augustinian Church, Thomas St., Dublin, which is arguably a finer window





- 114. M. Healy St. Augustine 1934 Augustinian Church,  
Thomas Street, Dublin.
- 115. M. Healy St. Augustine 1934 (detail) Augustinian  
Church, Thomas Street, Dublin.



than either of the two large Loughrea windows. It combines the technical virtuosity and sublime beauty of the later Loughrea windows with the more humanistic vision and narrative qualities found in his windows of the 1920's. (plates nos. 114, 115).

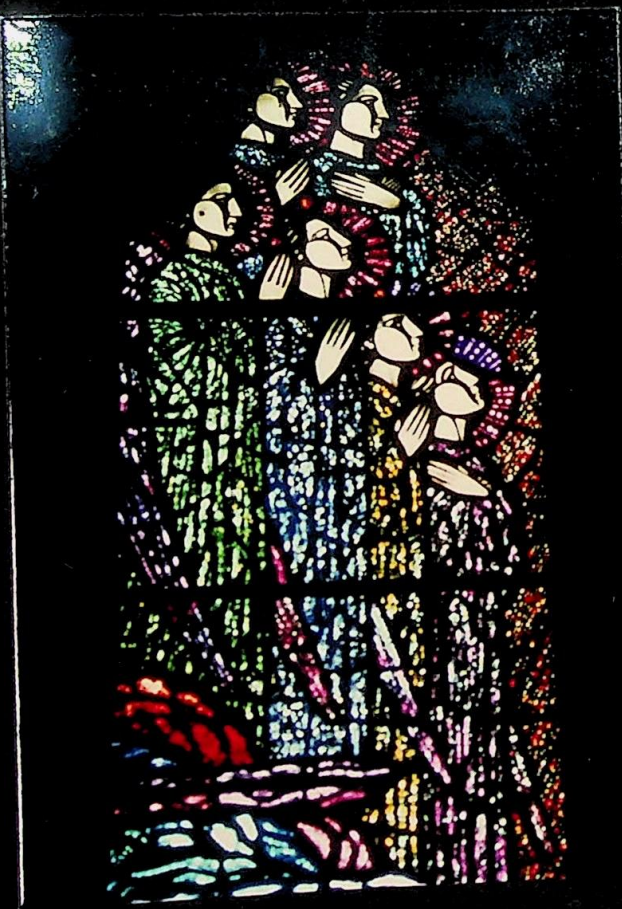
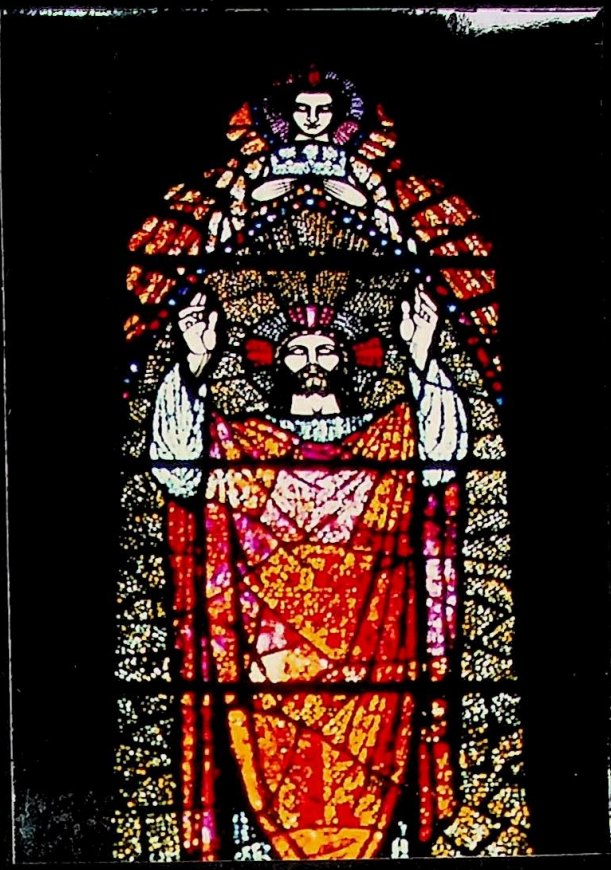
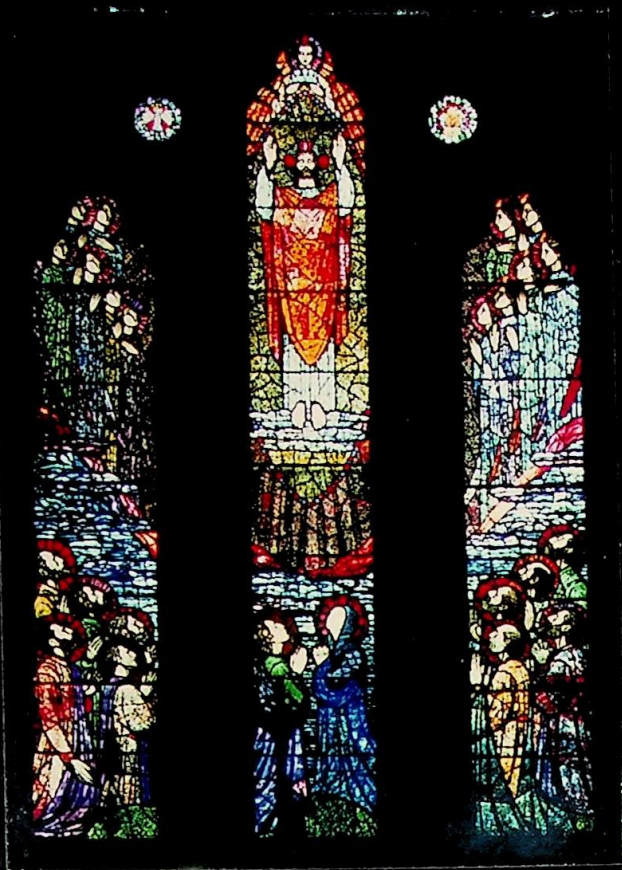
In the Loughrea Ascension and Last Judgement the acidifying technique has been stretched to its limits; perhaps even over-used. With the exception of the hands and faces, the process has been employed on all the glass. Some critics might feel that this is to the detriment of the overall effect of the window. In both these Loughrea windows the leading is not a dominant feature and Healy could even be accused of what Whall considered a cardinal sin; disguising the lead lines. <sup>79</sup>

The first of the Loughrea pair, The Ascension (plate no. 116) depicts a subject that Healy had not attempted in stained glass before. The episode is recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke:

"Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. Now as he blessed them he withdrew from them and was carried up to Heaven. They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy" (Luke 24:50-52).

Michael Healy depicts Christ in mid air, his hands raised up preparing to receive a crown that an angel above holds for him (plate no. 117). To either side angels hover (plates nos. 118, 119). Depicted in the central light, kneeling on the ground below are St. Mary and St. John, 'the disciple





- |      |          |                      |      |                              |
|------|----------|----------------------|------|------------------------------|
| 116. | M. Healy | <u>The Ascension</u> | 1936 | Loughrea Cathedral.          |
| 117. | M. Healy | <u>The Ascension</u> | 1936 | (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |
| 118. | M. Healy | <u>The Ascension</u> | 1936 | (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |
| 119. | M. Healy | <u>The Ascension</u> | 1936 | (detail) Loughrea Cathedral. |



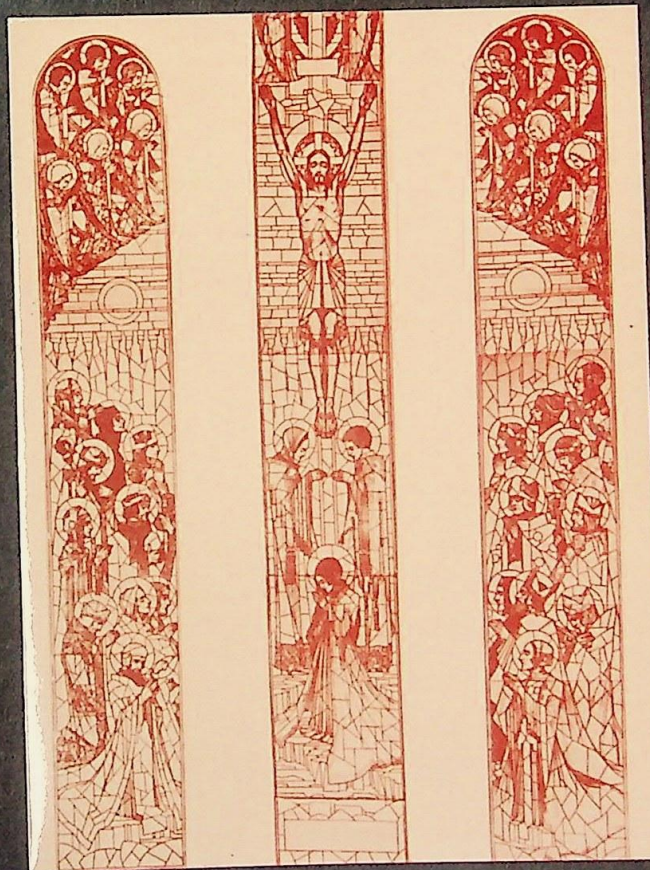
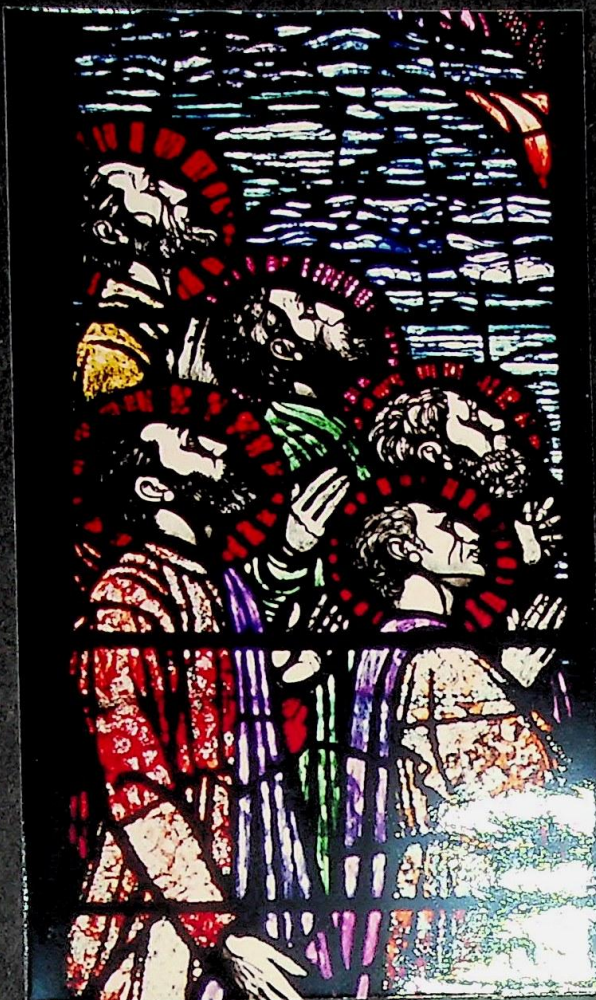
Jesus loved'. Five apostles kneel in each of the side lights (plates nos 120, 121) (Judas had hung himself after betraying Christ). In the two small circular lights the dove and pentecostal fire are represented; both being symbols of the Holy Ghost.

It must be stated that Michael Healy's composition for the Ascension is not startlingly original. It bears resemblance to Harry Clarke's Adoration of the Cross (1920) (plate No. 122) at St. Joseph's, Terenure, Dublin. The similarity is not as obvious as it might have been because Healy's technique is quite different. Clarke also used the acidifying process but never to this effect.

The companion window, The Last Judgement (plate no. 123) is if anything more sublime in its apocalyptic theme than The Ascension. It is St. Matthew who foretells the Last Judgement in his Gospel - "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men from one another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats ... Next he will say to those on his left hand 'Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' ... And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life." (Matt. 25:31-46)

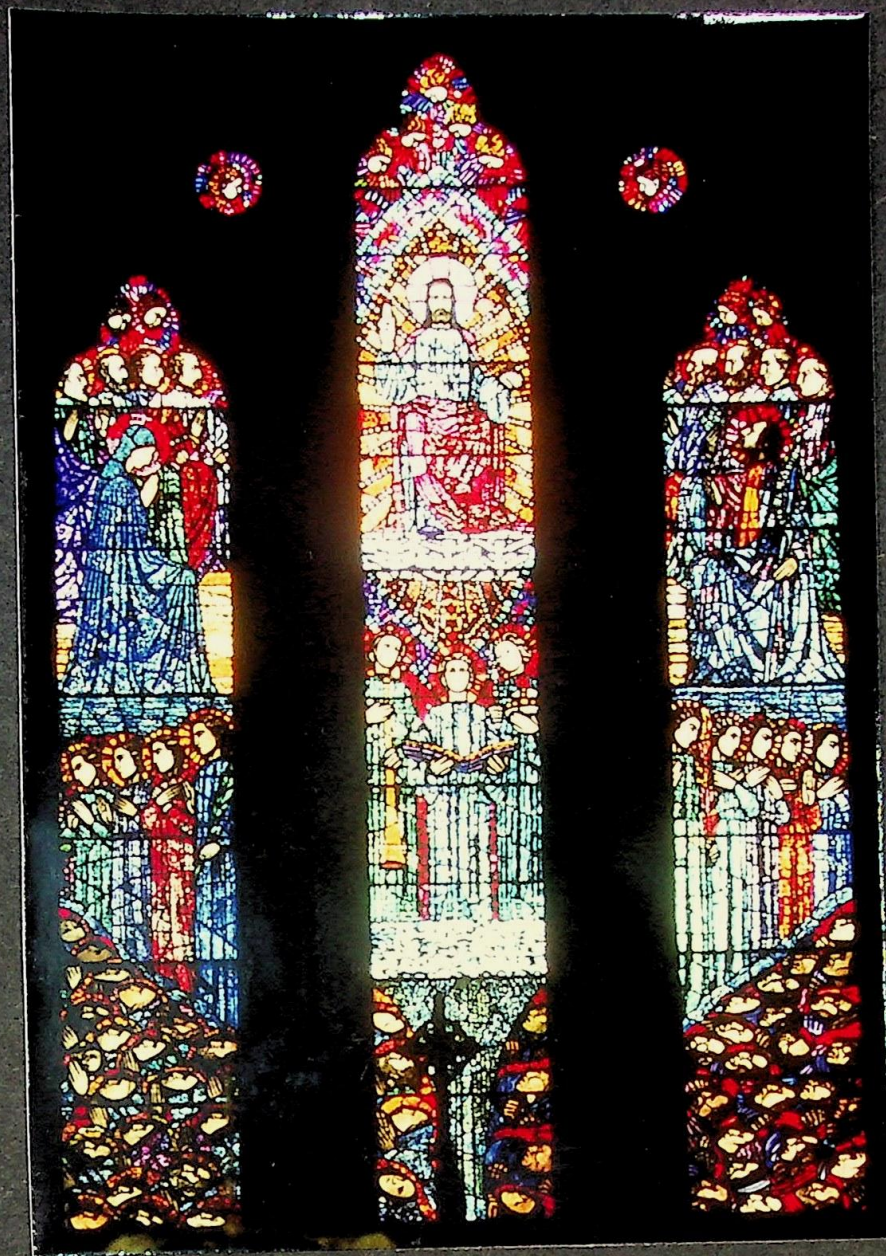
The composition of The Last Judgement is more original and





120. M. Healy The Ascension 1936 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
121. M. Healy The Ascension 1936 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
122. H. Clarke <sup>CARTOON FOR</sup> Adoration of the Cross 1920 St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Terenure, Dublin.





123. M. Healy The Last Judgement 1936-41 Loughrea  
Cathedral.



the facial expressions more animated than those of The Ascension. The Byzantine influence that was evident in Tu Rex Gloriam Christe, and Regina Coeli, is perhaps most noticeable in the upper portion of this window. The imposing seated figure of Christ, depicted in a mandorla, might have been copied directly from a Byzantine mosaic (plates nos. 124, 125).

While there was a subtle upwards movement in The Ascension, this window is completely static and two-dimensional; it is basically a sea of faces - over eighty of them - some regally impassive, some the epitome of the expressions they depict.

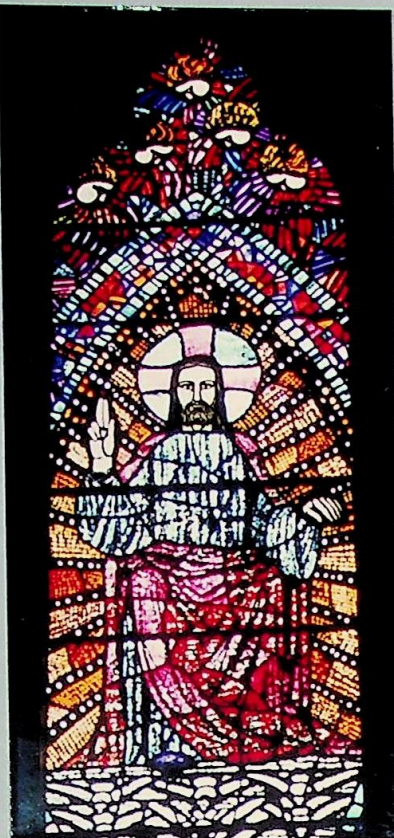
It is a curious co-incidence that virtually the last window executed by both Harry Clarke and Michael Healy should be large three-light windows representing The Last Judgement. Clarke's window, made for the Catholic Church, Newport, Co. Mayo (plate no. 126), was executed in 1930, ten years before Healy completed his version. Both are sublime and awe-inspiring in the extreme.

Harry Clarke's window, as might be expected, is highly imaginative particularly in the depiction of the 'damned'; Michael Healy's window has stronger emotive qualities. Clarke's 'damned' look like weird, ugly, monsters from outer space (plate no. 127); Healy's 'damned' have real faces - distorted only through fear and pain (plate no. 128).

80

The design for Clarke's Last Judgement (plate no. 126), though





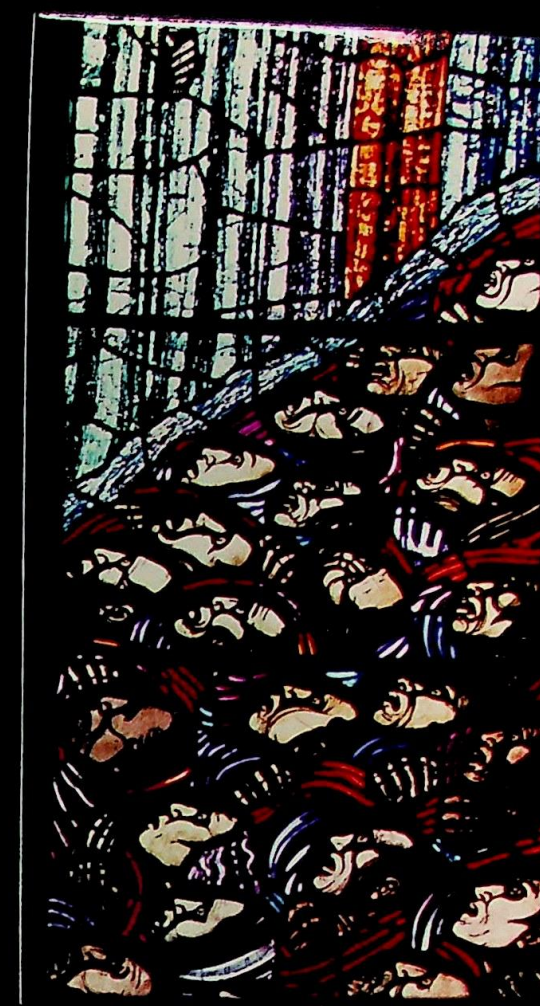
124. M. Healy The Last Judgement 1936-41 (detail)  
Loughrea Cathedral.
125. The Zoe Panel 1028-42. Sancta Sophia, Constantinople.





126. H. Clarke The Last Judgement 1930 Catholic Church,  
Newport, Co. Mayo. photograph Eason & Son.





127. H. Clarke The Last Judgement 1930 (detail) Catholic Church, Newport, Co. Mayo.
128. M. Healy The Last Judgement 1936-41 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
129. M. Healy The Last Judgement 1936-41 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.

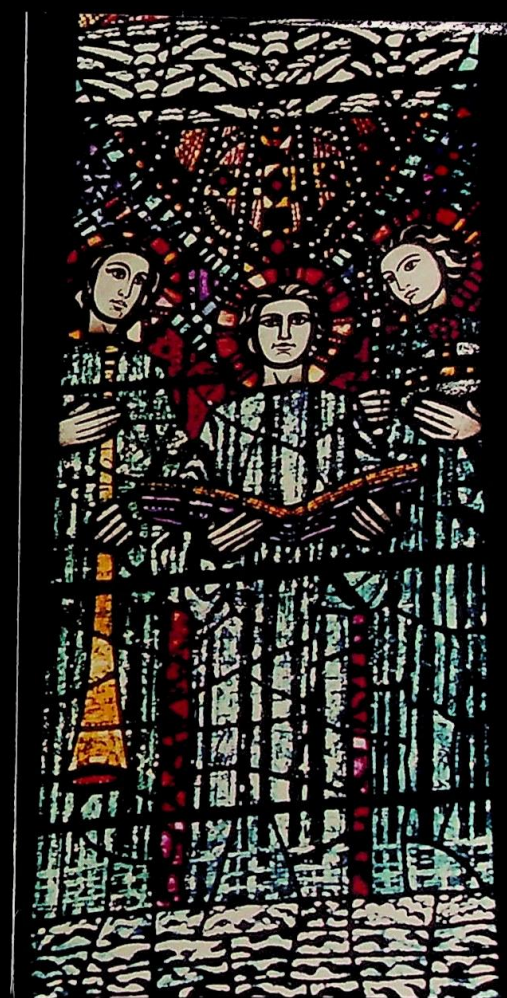


superficially more imaginative than Healy's window lacks the inventiveness of Healy's compositional solution. Clarke's obsession with detail and pre-occupation with rendering the figures' costumes as exotically as possible does, I think, detract from its over all success as a window. Healy to a lesser extent fell into the same trap when designing The Ascension. We are distracted by the highly-jewelled and plush costumes (plate no. 130) that the disciples are wearing and consequently their faces are almost of secondary interest. In Michael Healy's Last Judgement, over-elaborate costumes have been generally avoided; often the figures are so compressed that it is only the facial expressions that command attention. In effect a pruning process has occurred, eliminating some of the glitter and sparkle but thereby emphasising the essential. (plates nos. 131, 132).

Admirers of both Healy's and Clarke's work would probably agree that often their very best works are not necessarily their large three-light windows but the smaller single-light windows which have been commissioned by a sympathetic donor willing to allow the stained glass artist work without interference.

It would be very interesting to know what were the primary sources that influenced Michael Healy when he was designing the Last Judgement. Unfortunately there are no drawings, sketches or cartoons relating to this window in any Irish public art collection. Without





130. M. Healy The Ascension 1936 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
131. M. Healy The Last Judgement 1936-41 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
132. M. Healy The Last Judgement 1936-41 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



such evidence available one can only guess. A Byzantine influence is fairly evident in the upper half, but the lower portion, particularly the sea of faces, is treated quite differently. A possible source of inspiration here could be an enamel tabernacle made by Oswald Reeves for the Honan Hostel Chapel, which Healy would most likely have seen. (plate no. 133). Several of his An Tur Gloine colleagues worked on this project. This superb tabernacle depicts the Lamb of God. On the tabernacle door, looking downwards, rather than upwards, are three horizontal rows of eighteen angels. Their features like those in Healy's window have been greatly simplified to create a strong two-dimensional image.

While this is a possible influence on Healy's arrangement of the heads in compact rows, it does not explain the woodcut or linocut appearance of the faces themselves. Michael Healy, apart from being an outstanding stained glass artist, was also a talented illustrator and graphic artist. It is not recorded if Healy did do any work in the linocut or woodcut mediums but he must surely have been familiar with them because the An Tur Gloine artist, Wilhelmina Geddes, worked in these graphic techniques. The faces of the 'damned', in particular, not only resemble wood or lino-cut prints because of the strong 'black and white' contrast but also because the agonised features of the 'damned' actually give the appearance of having been gouged out (plate No. 131).





133. Oswald Reeves Enamel Tabernacle depicting The Lamb of God. c.1916 Honan Hostel Chapel, University College Cork.
134. M. Healy St. Dominic Reveiving the Rosary 1933 (detail) Dominican Church, Galway.
135. M. Healy St. Augustine 1934 (detail), Augustinian Church, Thomas Street, Dublin.



This quality emphasises the emotive aspect of the faces and calls to mind work done in woodcut by German Expressionist artists.

There are two areas of The Last Judgement which recall details found in slightly earlier Healy windows: the three angels in the centre light positioned below Christ (plate no. 132) are reminiscent of the angels bearing the instruments of the Passion which are found in a 1933 window: St. Dominic receiving the Rosary in the Dominican Church, Galway (plate no. 134). The flock of white doves, directly below Christ's feet which seem to be supporting him in mid-air are not altogether unlike those depicted in the 1934 St. Augustine window already referred to (plate no. 135). If sometimes features in one window bear a similarity to elements of another window, Healy always manages to integrate them effectively.

The An Tur Gloine work journals record the subject, artist, size, cost etc. of both The Ascension and Last Judgement - they also record that for both windows the cost was "to include for brass tablet with inscription which M. Healy omitted from window".<sup>81</sup> After studying the designs for these windows it seems probable that he did not include the inscriptions on purpose; they would have been detrimental to the compositions of the windows. However, no brass tablets can now be found beneath or adjacent to the two windows.

In 1942, there were only two windows out of the twenty-three

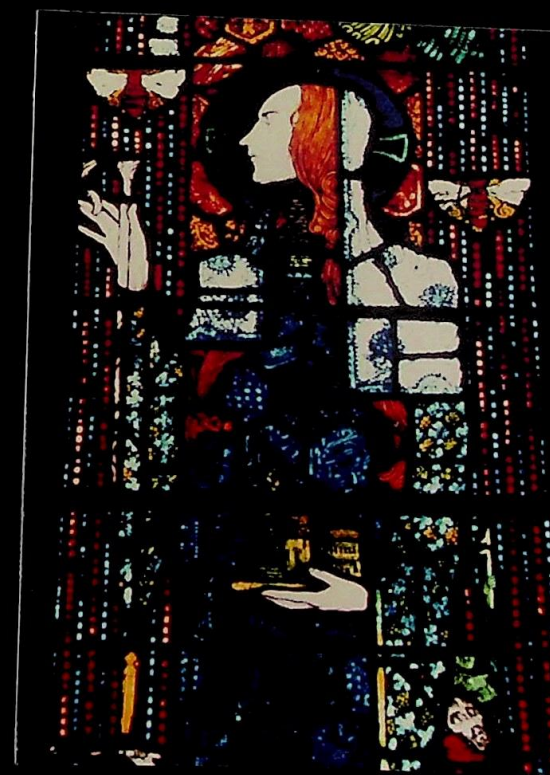
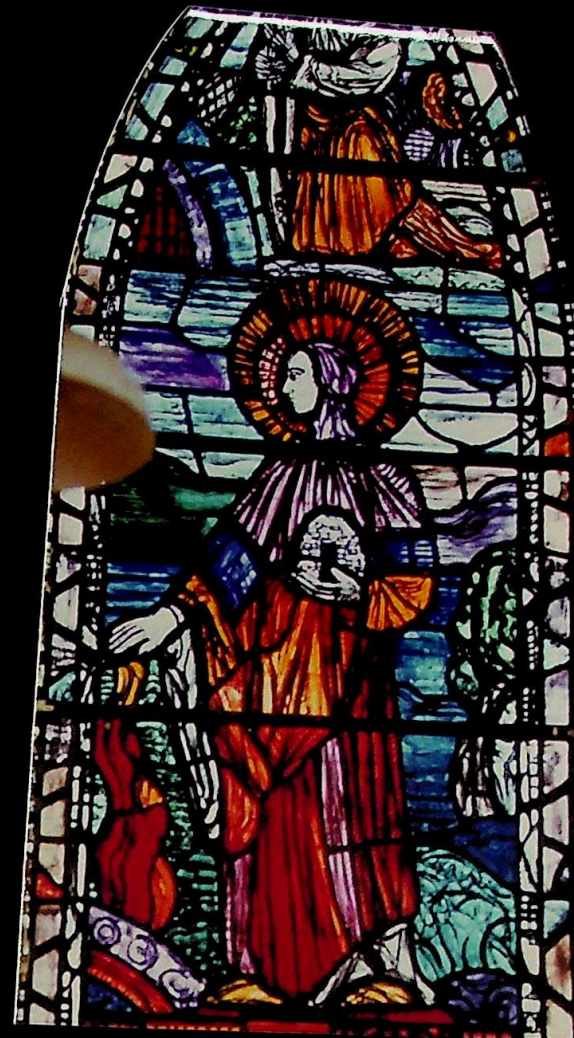


windows in the main body of the Cathedral without stained glass. Were either Alfred E. Child or Michael Healy still alive in 1942, it seems likely that the Bishop of Clonfert would have offered them the commission. Dr. Dignan clearly appreciated their work as he had given them, as has already been noted, all the commissions since 1926. In 1942, there were only three artists still working at An Tur Gloine - Catherine O'Brien, Hubert McGoldrick and Evie Hone.

The new commission for a window depicting St. Brigid went to Evie Hone (plate no. 136), perhaps partly because the other two artists were already represented in the Cathedral but probably the main reason was that she was a greater artist than the other two. Evie Hone is usually, though not quite always, acknowledged as the leading light of twentieth century Irish stained glass. Certainly hers is a name that the general public associates with stained glass more readily than Clarke, Healy or Geddes.

Evie Hone was the last artist to join An Tur Gloine. She commenced work with the assistance of Michael Healy in 1933 and became a full member of the co-operative in 1935. The saint featured in her first Loughrea stained glass window is St. Brigid whom she depicted on three other occasions: - Sts. Patrick, Brigid and Berac (1934-35) for the Church of Ireland church, Ardcarne, Boyle, Co. Roscommon; St. Brigid (1948) for the Church of Ireland church, Malone Road, Belfast; and





136. E. Hone St. Brigid 1942 Loughrea Cathedral.
- 136.A E. Hone Saints Patrick, Brigid and Berac (detail) 1934-35  
Ardcarne C. of I. Church, Boyle, Co. Roscommon.
137. H. Clarke St. Gobnait 1915-17 (detail) The Honan  
Hostel Chapel, University College, Cork.



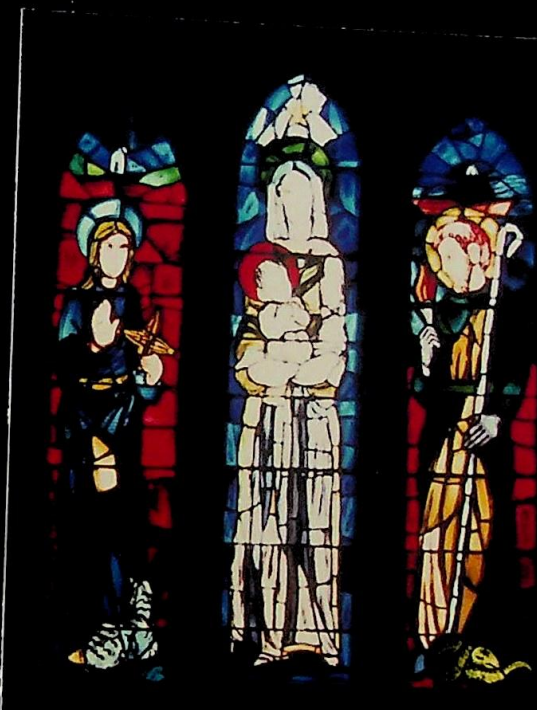
Madonna and Child with Sts. Patrick and Brigid (1954-55) for the Catholic Church, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. (I have not seen the Belfast 'St. Brigid').

The Ardcarne window (plate no. 136A) was in fact Evie Hone's first real stained glass commission, (the better known Annunciation, though made a year earlier was not a commission). The window depicts the three saints and is divided into nine scenes. It is mainly narrative in content. St. Brigid is represented in the traditional manner - that is holding a small church in the palm of her hand. Though executed in Evie Hone's inimitable style, St. Brigid bears a curious resemblance to Clarke's superb St. Gobnait (1916) for <sup>the</sup> Monan Hostel (plate no. 137), both saints are depicted in dramatic profile holding models of the churches they respectively founded in their left hands. The same glowing reds and oranges contrasting with cool blues and ultramarines predominate in both windows.

The Loughrea representation of St. Brigid, executed seven years later, is quite different. It is the work of the mature stained glass artist. Though it still contains a strong narrative element, it is quite typical of its date in relation to Hone's artistic development.

St. Brigid is depicted giving bread to a starving peasant girl, kneeling at the saint's feet (plate no. 138). The background of the scene is the town of Kildare where the saint founded a convent. In





138. E. Hone St. Brigid 1942 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.
139. E. Hone Madonna and Child, St. Patrick and St. Brigid  
1954-5. Catholic Church, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.



the distant hills, barely visible to the naked eye are some animals grazing; they look like sheep but are possibly meant to be cows because St. Brigid is reputed to be the protectoress of those engaged in dairy work. A play upon the name of Kildare (Church of the Oak) is suggested by the oak leaf beside the saint's left foot.

Evie Hone's final representation of St. Brigid in Blackrock Church (plate no. 139) was her second last commission and she completed it in the year of her death. It shows her debt to twelfth and thirteenth century stained glass, particularly through the predominant use of red and blue. The figures, like those in the Eton College Chapel window (1949-52) are very large in proportion to the window size (plate no. 140). This version of St. Brigid does not 'tell a story' like the Ardcarne and Loughrea windows. St. Brigid is identified by her distinctive reed cross which she holds. A small simple, almost abstract church is represented in the apex and there is a lamb at her feet. Mainly due to its harsh colour and 'primitive' style it is probably the least aesthetically pleasing of Evie Hone's three versions of St. Brigid.

A sentiment voiced by the art historian Martin Harrison when referring to the work of Evie Hone and Wilhelmina Geddes seems particularly appropriate in connection with the Loughrea St. Brigid: "... while their sincerity cannot be questioned, the desire to introduce expressive power into their work often resulted in the merely crude".





140. E. Hone Crucifixion and Last Supper. Sketch design  
for window at Eton College Chapel, England (1949)  
N.G.I. photograph N.G.I.



The Loughrea St. Brigid appears to have been executed very quickly, almost in a rush; and while a certain spontaneity can enhance work done in most mediums, stained glass does not readily lend itself for this purpose. Consequently a window that too little time was taken over usually suggests that the artist is lacking the skill and care that is essential for this craft.

However, this window does, like so much of Michael Healy's work, have an emotive quality. While Healy, in perhaps a more subtle manner could evoke emotion through facial expression or underplayed gesture, Evie Hone does the same through the large hands of the peasant girl, raised upwards in an obvious begging gesture. Evie Hone often relied on hands for an expressive purpose because whether through choice or otherwise, the faces she depicts are sometimes almost featureless and convey only black expressions. Her 1950 window for Peterswell, Co. Galway depicts a praying girl at Our Lady's feet (plate No. 141 ). Her pose is similar to the begging peasant girl in the St. Brigid window and the fact that she is praying is made obvious by her firmly clasped hands.

The mauve colour of the peasant girl's dress is not a colour that is normally chosen by stained glass artists but seems to have been a favourite of Evie Hone's during this period. It can also be found in Mary Magdalen's dress who is similarly depicted with contrasting yellow





141. E. Hone Our Lady of the Rosary 1950 (detail)  
Catholic Church, Peterswell, Co. Galway.
142. E. Hone Deposition (detail) 1941 Clongowes College  
Chapel, Co. Kildare.
143. E. Hone St. Brigid 1942 (detail) Loughrea Cathedral.



hair, in Hone's Deposition (plate no. 142) window for Clongowes Wood College, Co. Kildare, executed a year before the Loughrea St. Brigid.

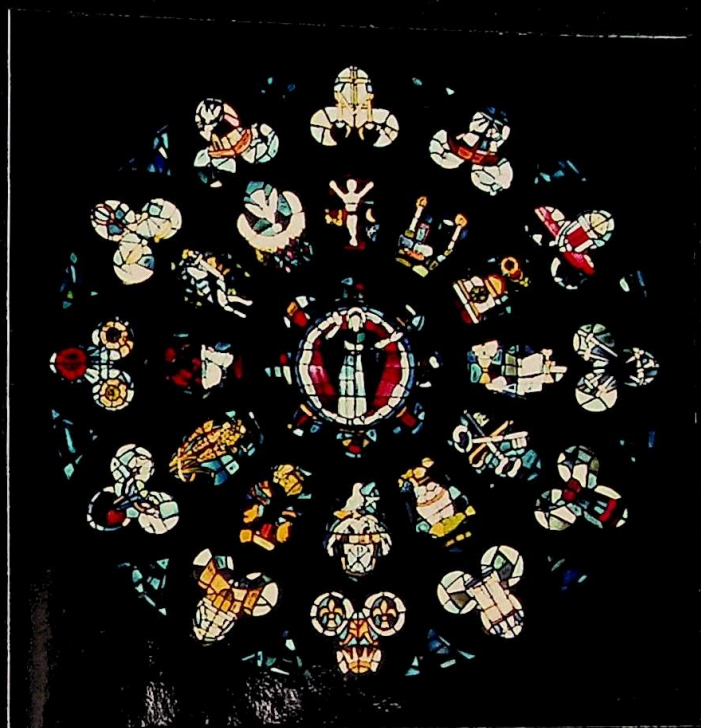
Perhaps the most attractive feature of Evie Hone's 'St. Brigid' is the depiction of the town of Kildare. It forms a colourful backdrop of brick and tile which contrasts effectively with St. Brigid's plain blue habit. (plate no 143 ).

Despite any criticism levelled at Evie Hone, it cannot be denied that she injected much needed vitality back into the craft at a time when the steady upward trend which had been a feature of the twenties and thirties appeared to have ceased.

In 1950, the final stained glass window for the main body of Loughrea Cathedral was commissioned (plate no. 144 ). It was the rose window above the organ gallery - a window of similar proportions to Michael Healy's two 1907 rose windows for the side altars, but this new window was situated at a great height and had to be viewed from the centre of the nave to avoid obstruction from the organ. Consequently the iconographic solution had to be as simple and as bold as possible in order that the subject of the window could be understood and appreciated fully from such a distance.

Evie Hone received the commission and it would be interesting to learn how she went about solving the problem. Unfortunately it is not known if any initial sketches etc. survive. <sup>83</sup> Evie Hone's cousin,





- 144. E. Hone The Creation 1950 Loughrea Cathedral.
- 145. E. Hone The Assumption 1953 All Hallow's College,  
Dublin.



Oliver Hone, has suggested that any preliminary sketches or cartoons for both this window and the St. Brigid window may have been in the collection of the late Miss Anne Stafford King-Harman and could have been destroyed in the fire at her family house, Rockingham, Co. Roscommon in the late fifties.

The theme of the Loughrea rose window is the Creation. It is a fitting subject matter when viewed in the context of the overall scheme of the Cathedral. Almost every major aspect of Christ's life from His birth to His death had so far been represented; from The Annunciation to The Last Judgement. Several Irish saints, a popular choice in most churches, were also represented. However, before The Creation was depicted there was no window with an Old Testament theme.

The Creation is described in the opening chapters of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters ... " The description of the Creation continues for some length and because of its imaginative and apocalyptic subject matter has for centuries been a popular choice for artists with an imaginative streak.

It would not have been at all surprising if an artist such as Evie Hone, and particularly when faced with such problems of distance



might not have chosen to represent The Creation in abstract terms. With the benefit of hindsight it is easy to say that this would have been a more successful solution since most of the elements of this window cannot be clearly identified with the naked eye.

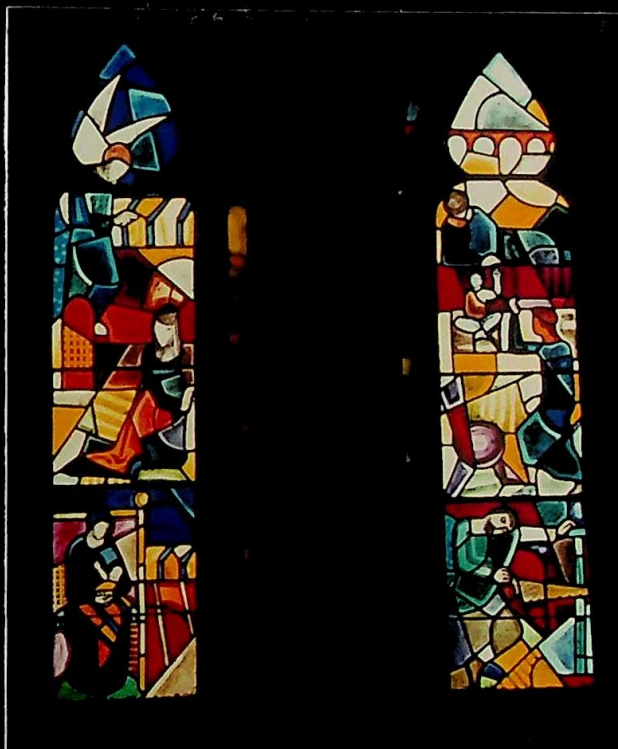
The theme of the main circular panel is The Trinity: there is God the Father's hand, the Holy Ghost in the guise of a dove and various symbols associated with Christ - his monogram and the alpha and omega symbols. In the periphery lights, the lion symbolizes the earth; the eagle symbolizes the air; the pelican symbolizes the water and the serpent symbolizes fire. The top panel represents Adam and Eve and the bottom panel depicts the Tree of Life.

84

This comparatively small window was executed during the same period as the famous Eton window. It is not surprising to find a similarly strong, almost harsh colour scheme basically composed of the three primary colours; red, blue and yellow. A dramatic colour scheme was necessary for this rose window for it to assert its position in the Cathedral. Had Evie Hone used a colour range similar to that of her watery Assumption (1953) (plate no. 145) rose window for All Hallows College, Dublin, The Creation could easily go unnoticed by visitors to Loughrea Cathedral.

It should be mentioned that The Creation was not in fact executed at An Túr Gloine. Following Sarah Purser's death in 1943, the future of the co-operative stained glass works was in doubt. The following





146. P. Pye St. Brigid 1957 Loughrea Cathedral.
147. P. Pye Scenes from the Life of the Holy Family  
Catholic Church, Creagh, near Ballinasloe,  
Co. Galway.



year Catherine O'Brien became the sole owner of the studio. Evie Hone had decided, for several reasons, that she would prefer to work from her own home, Marlay Grange, Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin. She had a studio arranged and there she executed most of her windows until her death in 1955.

In some ways Evie Hone's death ended an era of Irish stained glass making. Yet her influence was so great that it is still evident in the work of some contemporary Irish stained glass artists twenty-five years later. One such artist is Patrick Pye and there is a window, in fact his first stained glass commission, in Loughrea Cathedral. It is the only non-An Tur Gloine window at Loughrea and although it does not come directly under the subject of this thesis it would be wrong to exclude some brief details relating to it.

Patrick Pye executed St. Brigid for the left hand porch at Loughrea Cathedral in 1957, (plate no. <sup>85</sup>146). In a letter Mr. Pye states that he thinks this window was made in Patrick Pollen's studio at Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin. Mr. Pollen and Miss O'Brien worked at the old An Tur Gloine studio after the co-operative had dissolved.

Mr. Pye is probably the best known figure in contemporary Irish stained glass. It is worthy of note that when the Bishop of Clonfert, Dr. Philbin offered the last stained glass commission at Loughrea, he gave it to a relatively inexperienced artist who has



subsequently become the foremost exponent of his craft in Ireland.

Patrick Pye is represented in the Catholic Church, Creagh, Co. Galway (plate no. 147); the Jesuit House, Emo, Co. Laois; the Abbey Church, Glenstall, Co. Limerick; the Catholic Church, Milford, Co. Donegal; the Catholic Church, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin and elsewhere.



NOTES.

1. William Hunt R.B.A., Report on the 1895 Arts and Crafts Society Of Ireland Exhibition Dublin 1895
2. Jeremiah O'Donovan (1871-1942), priest and author. see biography section p. 112
3. A remarkable pronouncement on arts and crafts in Ireland by an Irish priest, The Irish Builder and Engineer, July 18, 1901 (p. 809). This article was originally in the form of a speech addressed to the Maynooth College Union.
4. Denis Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival London, 1930.
5. Edward Martyn (1859-1923) patron and author. see biography section p. 108
6. Denis Gwynn, Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival op.cit.
7. Generally called Ardrahan, the Martyn's family church is in fact situated at Laban, about half a mile from Ardrahan.
8. Christopher Whall (1849-1924), Arts and Crafts stained glass worker. see biography section p. 115



9. Peter D. Cormack Christopher Whall 1849-1924: Arts and Crafts Stained Glass Worker London 1979
10. Stephen Gwynn (Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival op.cit) writes that Martyn did employ Whall and also a Mr. Virtue. I have been unable to trace any stained glass worker of the name Virtue. Furthermore I have visited Ardrahan Church and Tulira Castle (the Martyn family home at Ardrahan) and have been unable to identify any windows that could have been executed by Christopher Whall. There are however, in Ardrahan Church, two windows, (depicting St. Anna and St. Robert), by Selwyn Image (1849-1930), a friend of Whall's. Perhaps Whall had sufficient commissions to occupy himself and suggested Image's name to Martyn. Also in Ardrahan Church are Three An Tur Gloine windows, one of which (depicting St. Elizabeth), is possibly based on a Whall cartoon and this might explain Stephen Gwynn's remark. Detailed research is required before the confusion concerning the windows at Ardrahan Church can be solved satisfactorily.
11. The Most Rev. Dr. John Healy (1841-1918), first Bishop of Clonfert. see piography section p. 105
12. Letter dated 25-4-01 written by J. O'Donovan to Sarah Purser, N.L.I.
13. C. P. Curran Michael Healy : Stained Glass Worker 1873-1941 article printed in Studies vol. 31 Dublin March 1942.



14. Sarah Henrietta Purser (1848-1943) artist, patron, doyen of the arts and founder of enterprises associated with the arts. see biography section p. 113
15. Denis Gwynn Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival op.cit.
16. Letter dated 25-4-01 written by J. O'Donovan to S. Purser. N.L.I.
17. The Irish Builder and Engineer op.cit. p. 809
18. Alfred Ernest Child (1875-1939) English born stained glass worker resident in Ireland from 1901 onwards. see biography section p. 100
19. The Irish Builder and Engineer op.cit.
20. Elizabeth Coxhead Daughters of Erin - five women of the Irish Renaissance London 1965.
21. The Irish Builder and Engineer, Stained Glass in Ireland by A. E. Child. June 8th 1929 (p. 528-530)
22. An Tur Gloine Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration a pamphlet commemorating that event but published a year later. It includes speeches by Miss Purser and T. P. Gill.



23. There are three An Tur Gloine work journals N.G.I.
24. Michael Healy (1873-1941) first important Irish stained glass artist of this century. see biography section. p. 106
25. C. P. Curran Michael Healy : Stained Glass Worker 1873-1941 op.cit.
26. James White and Michael Wynne Irish Stained Glass Dublin, 1963.
27. An Tur Gloine Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration Miss Purser's speech. op.cit.
28. This cartoon was later joined to another and then framed. After 1914 it became the property of the L.C.C. Central School of Arts and Crafts. It is now thought to be lost.
29. Robert Elliot Art and Ireland 1906 republished Kennikat Press N.Y./London 1970.
30. L. M. Little A new Art in Ireland - beautiful work by Irish hands,  
The Irish Packet Feb. 27, 1904 vol. I. no. 22.
31. Christopher Whall Stained Glass Work in the Artistic Crafts Series of Technical Handbooks edited by Lethaby, London 1905.



32. Harry Clarke (1889-1931) Irish stained glass worker, illustrator and graphic designer. see biography section p. 101
33. Evie Hone (1894-1955) best known Irish stained glass worker. see biography section p. 107
34. ref: An Tur Gloine Work Journal No. I. N.G.I.
35. The Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas O'Dea (1858-1923), author and second Bishop of Clonfert. see biography section p. 111
36. Catholic and Church Building : letter from the Bishop of Clonfert.  
Connaught Champion on 17 Sept. 1904.
37. Irish Daily Independent 18 Oct. 1904.
38. Catherine O'Brien (1881-1963) the longest member of An Tur Gloine. see biography section p. 110
39. An Tur Gloine Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration Miss Purser's speech op.cit.
40. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea article printed in The Capuchin Annual Dublin 1947.



41. An Tur Gloine Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration Miss Purser's speech op.cit.
42. This reference is cited by John O'Grady. The Life and Work of Sarah Henrietta Purser 1848-1943 unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Library, University College, Dublin.
43. Michael Shortall (d.1951) Dublin sculptor.
44. Beatrice Glenavy (nee Elvery) To-day we will only Gossip London 1964.
45. The Irish Builder and Engineer 14 Sept. 1929 (p. 205)
46. refs: in An Tur Gloine work journals, N.G.I.
47. Francis O'Donohoe (1878-1911) Dublin painter. For full biography see: Walter G. Strickland A Dictionary of Irish Artists 2 vols. Dublin 1913.
48. C. P. Curran Michael Healy : Stained Glass Worker 1873-1941 op.cit.
49. The Harry Clarke Studios Limited were founded in 1930 (a year before Harry Clarke's death) and produced work in his distinctive style for many decades.



50. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea op.cit.
51. Alan Denson John Hughes : Sculptor Kendal, 1969.
52. Denis Gwynn Edward Martyn and the Irish Revival op.cit.
53. Mrs. Arthure Bell St. Anthony of Padua London 1901.
54. James White and Michael Wynne Irish Stained Glass Dublin 1963  
also: Michael Wynne Stained Glass in Ireland, principally ...  
1760-1963 unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Library, Trinity College,  
University of Dublin, 1976.
55. John O'Grady The Life and Work of Sarah Henrietta Purser  
1848-1943 op.cit.
56. Beatrice Elvery (1883-1970) Dublin born painter, sculptor,  
illustrator and stained glass artist. see biography section p. 103
57. James White and Michael Wynne Irish Stained Glass op.cit.  
also: Michael Wynne Stained Glass in Ireland, principally ...  
1760-1963 op. cit.
58. Wilhelmina Geddes (1888-1955) An Tur Gloine stained glass artist  
who formed a studio in London in 1925. see biography section p. 104



59. James White and Michael Wynne Irish Stained Glass op.cit.  
also: Michael Wynne Stained Glass in Ireland, principally ...  
1760-1963 op.cit.
60. The Freeman's Journal and reprinted in The Irish Builder and Engineer 7 March, 1908.
61. The Most Rev. Dr. John Dignan (d.1954) fifth Bishop of Clonfert.
62. Hubert Vincent McGoldrick (1897-1967). see biography section p.109
63. A framed sketch in oil for this picture is in the Administrator's residence, next door to St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea.
64. Henri Gheon The Secret of St. Margaret Mary London, 1937
65. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea op.cit.
66. St. Brigid (1922) by H. McGoldrick in the Catholic Church, Fairymount, Co. Roscommon.
67. ref. to letter in An Tur Gloine Work Journal no. 2 p.45. N.G.I.
68. C. P. Curran Michael Healy : Stained Glass Worker 1873-1941. op. cit.



69. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea op.cit.
70. The Journals, minute book and copies of the pamphlets are now in The National Gallery of Ireland archives. Miss Purser's received correspondence is preserved in The National Library of Ireland.
71. ref: An Tur Gloine Work Journal no. 3. p.28. N.G.I.
72. James White and Michael Wynne Irish Stained Glass op.cit.  
also: Michael Wynne Stained Glass in Ireland, principally ... 1760-1963 op.cit.
73. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea op.cit.
74. James White and Michael Wynne Irish Stained Glass op.cit.  
also: Michael Wynne Stained Glass in Ireland, principally ... 1760-1963 op.cit.
75. interview by David Caron with Mrs. Nora Dungan, Terenure, Dublin, September 1981.
76. interview by David Caron with Mrs. Nora Dungan. op.cit.
77. William Pearse (1881-1916) Irish patriot.



78. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea op.cit.
79. Christopher W. Whall Stained Glass Work op.cit.
80. Harry Clarke never actually saw this window before it was finished.
81. An Túr Gloine Work Journal no.3. pages 42 60 N.G.I.
82. Martin Harrison Architectural Stained Glass (p.73) edited by Brian Clarke. London 1979.
83. There is a small gouache painting (approx. 8" diameter) in the possession of Fr. Martin Lydon, The Carmelite Missions Antique Shop, Clarendon Street, Dublin. There are no iconographic or compositional differences between this painting and the finished window, and so gives no insight into how Evie Hone initially conceived this window.
84. The iconographic symbolism of this window is inscribed on the reverse of the gouache painting which is in the possession of Fr. Martin Lydon. op.cit.
85. Letter to the writer 6 Oct. 1981.



# A P P E N D I X.

## List of Illustrations.

1. E. Rhind Jesus is condemned to Death 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
2. E. Rhind Jesus is laden with the Cross 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
3. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the First Time 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
4. E. Rhind Jesus Meets His Mother 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
5. E. Rhind Simon Aids Jesus 1929-33 opus-sectile  
Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
6. E. Rhind Jesus is Presented with a Towel 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
7. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the Second Time 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
8. E. Rhind Jesus Consolates the Women 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
9. E. Rhind Jesus falls the Third Time 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
10. E. Rhind Jesus is Stripped of His Garments 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
11. E. Rhind Jesus is Nailed to the Cross 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
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opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
13. E. Rhind Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross 1929-33  
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15. Unidentified Jesus Falls the First Time c.1915-17  
The Honan Hostel Chapel, University College Cork.



16. Unidentified Jesus Falls the Third Time c.1915-17  
The Honan Hostel Chapel, University College Cork. Cork.
17. E. Rhind Jesus is Condemned to Death 1912-28  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Catholic Church,  
Spiddal, Co. Galway.
18. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the Third Time 1918-28 opus-sectile  
Station of the Cross, Catholic Church, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
19. E. Rhind Jesus is Stripped of His Garments 1918-28  
opus-sectile Stations of the Cross. Catholic Church  
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20. E. Rhind Jesus is Nailed to the Cross 1918-28  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Catholic Church,  
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21. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the First Time 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.
22. E. Rhind Jesus is Stripped of His Garments 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.
23. E. Rhind Jesus is Nailed to the Cross 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.
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opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
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25. H. McGoldrick Veronica presents Jesus with A Towel  
1929-31 opus-sectile Station of the Cross Catholic  
Church, Westport, Co. Mayo.
26. H. McGoldrick Jesus consoles the Women 1929-31  
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27. C. O'Brien The Last Supper 1936 (detail) The Friary,  
Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
28. E. Rhind Dorcas Seated 1933 Methodist Church,  
Sandymount, Dublin.



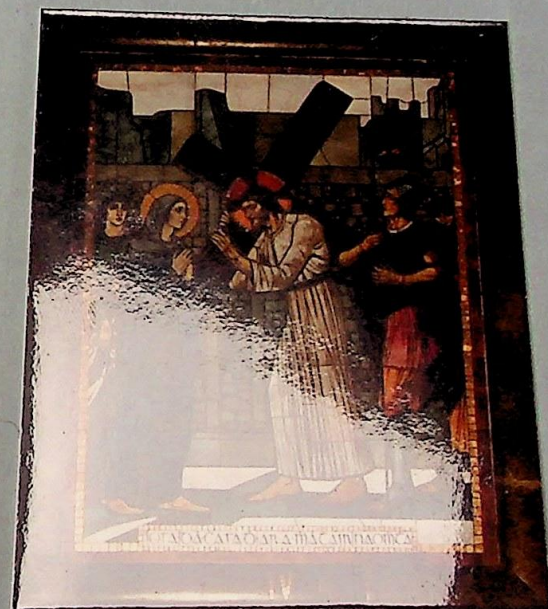
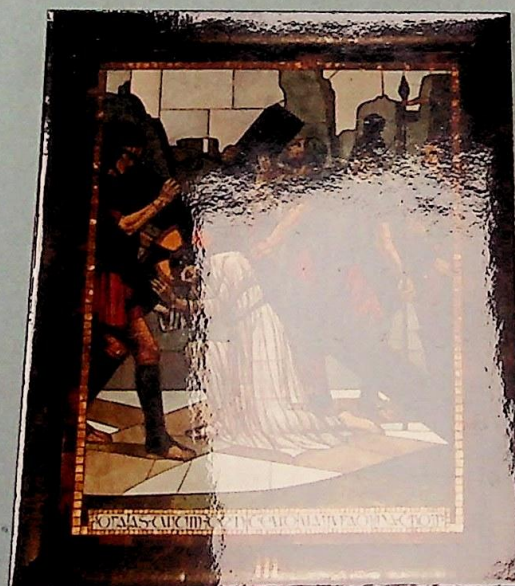
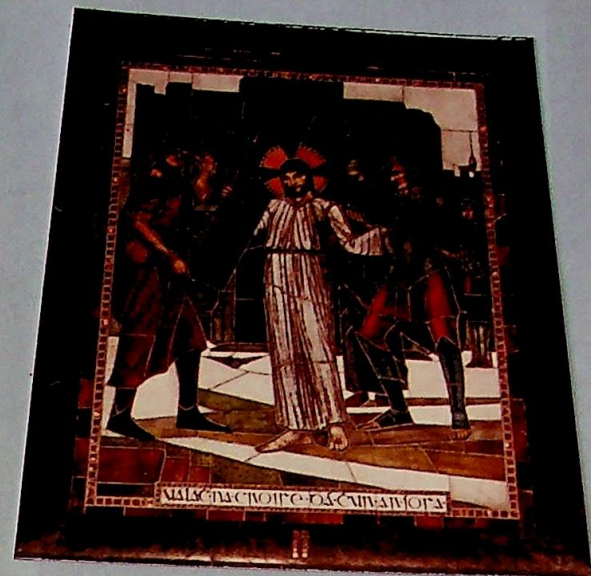
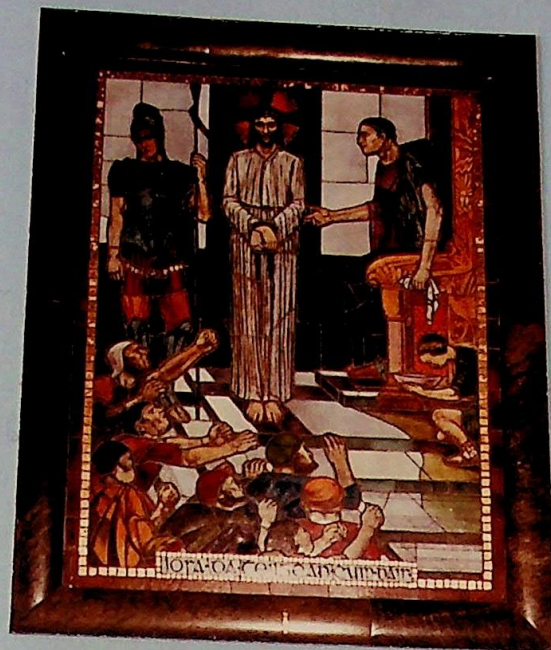
## APPENDIX.

The Bishop of Clonfert commissioned not only stained glass windows from An Tur Gloine but also a set of opus sectile Stations of the Cross. (plates nos. 1-14). Opus sectile mosaics were probably first made in Ireland by Joshua Clarke and Sons of North Frederick Street, Dublin. The Irish Builder of 12th February 1903 announced its arrival to Clarke's and reported its special attributes: "It is a modification of mosaic, and can be used for all classes of church and mural decoration at less cost than glass mosaic. Another feature is that the material is absolutely damp proof, thus overcoming one of the longstanding difficulties in artistic wall decorations. Any scheme of colouring can be worked out, and the material so prepared that surface glitter is altogether avoided."

Since 1902 mosaic classes had been held at the Metropolitan School of Art. It is not recorded if it were opus sectile mosaic or just ordinary mosaic which was taught, nor is it known who the instructor was; it does not seem to have been A. E. Child because he is not recorded as ever having designed or executed any opus-sectile panels while at An Tur Gloine. Among the very first mosaic pupils was Ethel M. Rhind and in 1904 she won the School of Arts mosaic scholarship.<sup>1</sup> By 1906 An Tur Gloine was producing opus-sectile work.<sup>2</sup>

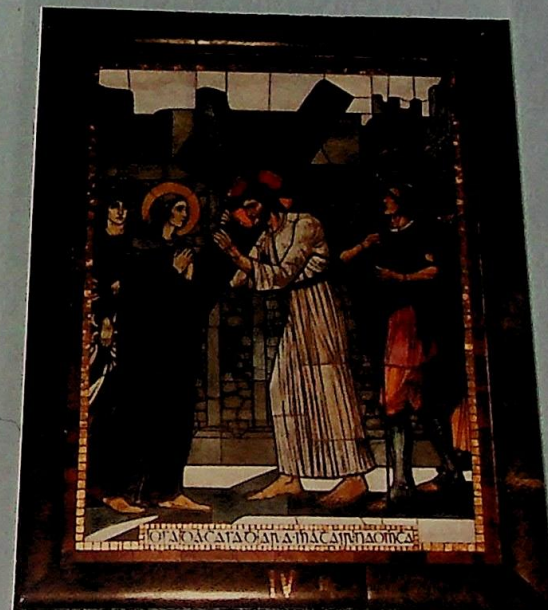
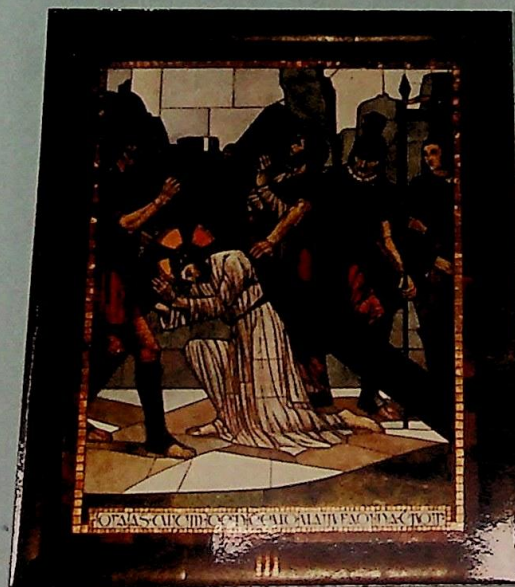
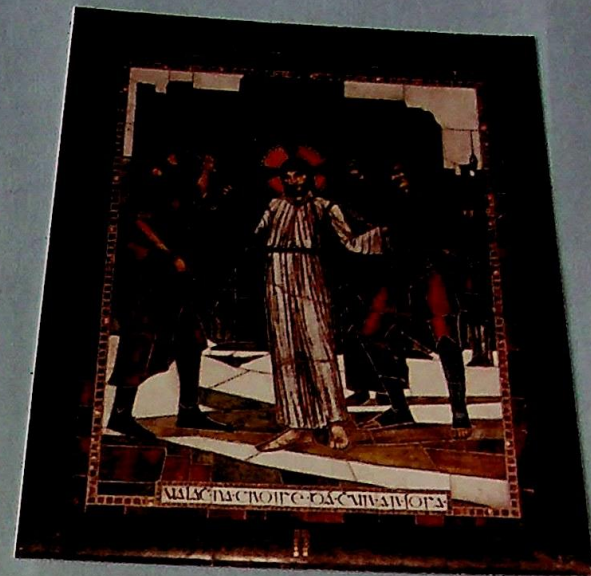
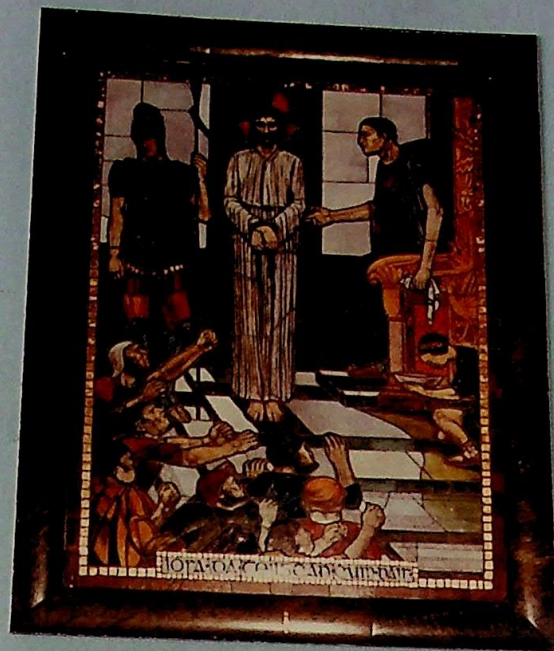
Ethel Rhind, who was also a stained glass artist, produced several sets of opus sectile Stations of the Cross for Irish churches. Michael Wynne catalogues four<sup>3</sup>; those at Honan Hostel Chapel, (plates nos. 15, 16) U.C.C., Cork;





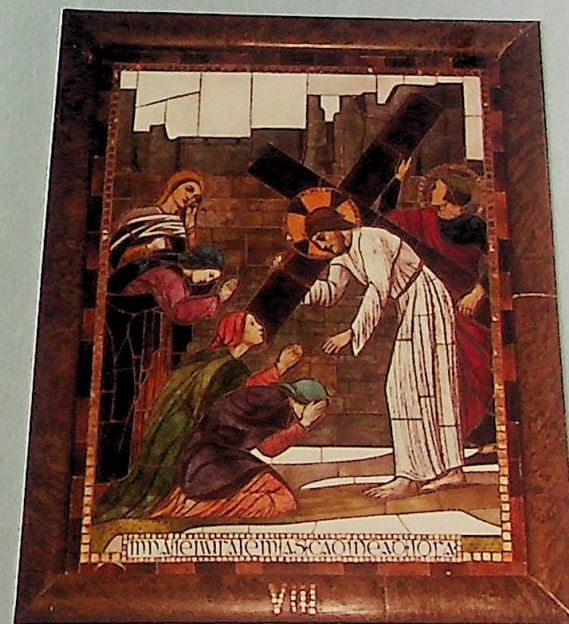
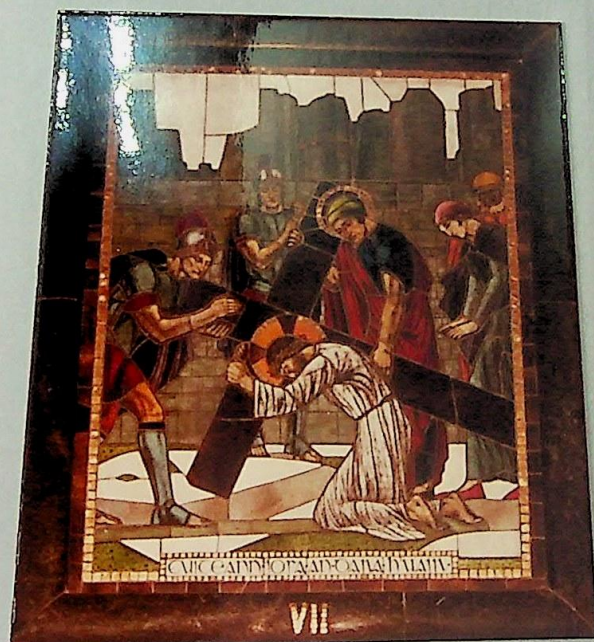
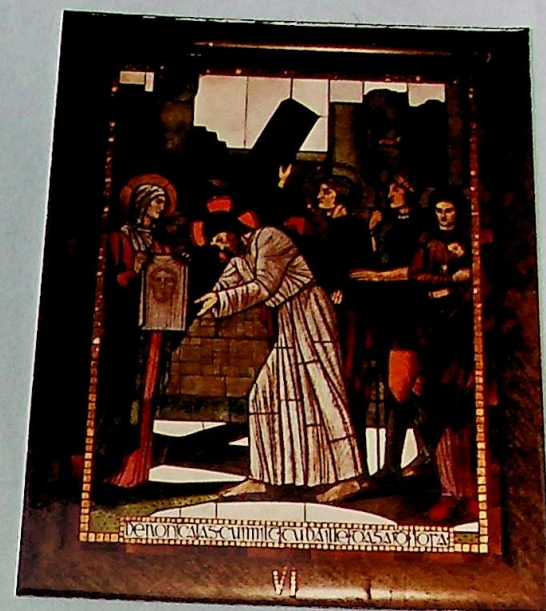
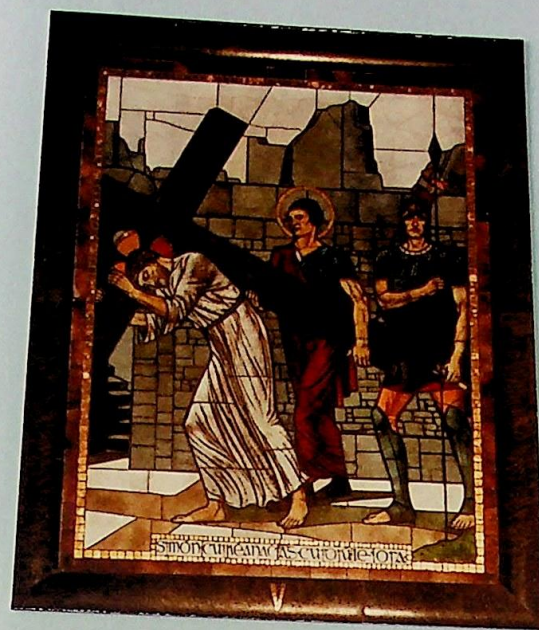
1. E. Rhind Jesus is condemned to Death 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
2. E. Rhind Jesus is laden with the Cross 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
3. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the First Time 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
4. E. Rhind Jesus Meets His Mother 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.





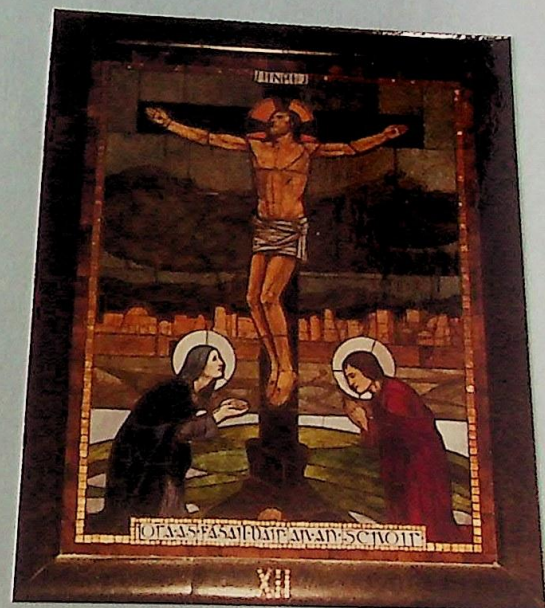
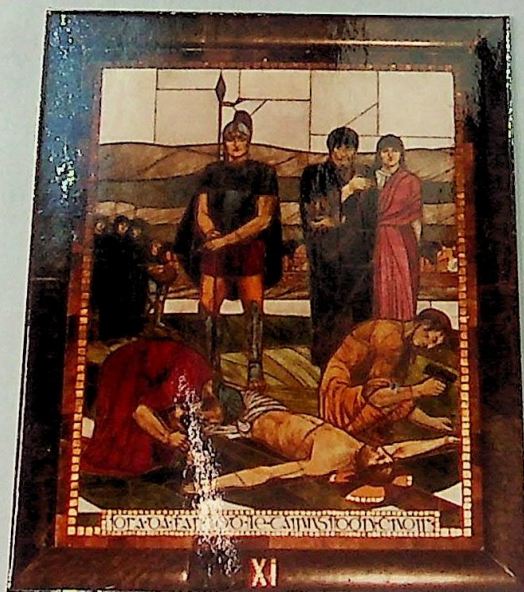
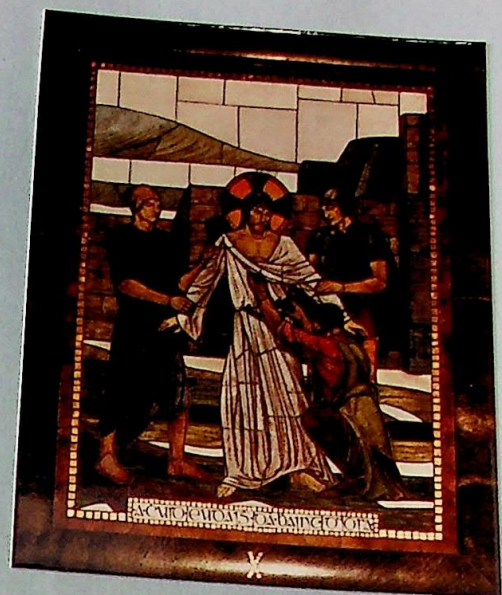
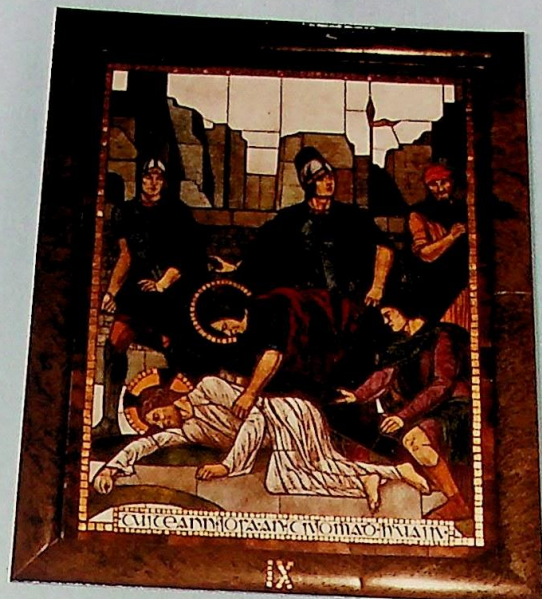
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opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
4. E. Rhind Jesus Meets His Mother 1929-33  
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5. E. Rhind Simon Aids Jesus 1929-33 opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
6. E. Rhind Jesus is Presented with a Towel 1929-33 opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
7. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the Second Time 1929-33 opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
8. E. Rhind Jesus Consoles the Women 1929-33 opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.





9. E. Rhind Jesus falls the Third Time 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
10. E. Rhind Jesus is Stripped of His Garments 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
11. E. Rhind Jesus is Nailed to the Cross 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
12. E. Rhind Jesus Dies Upon the Cross 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.





13. E. Rhind Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
14. E. Rhind Jesus is Laid in the Tomb 1929-33  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Loughrea Cathedral.
15. Unidentified Jesus Falls the First Time c.1915-17  
The Honan Hostel Chapel, University College Cork.
16. Unidentified Jesus Falls the Third Time c.1915-17  
The Honan Hostel Chapel, University College Cork. Cork.

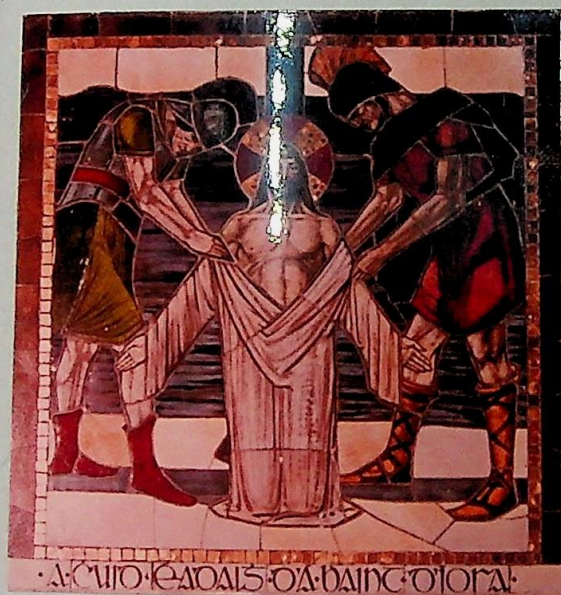
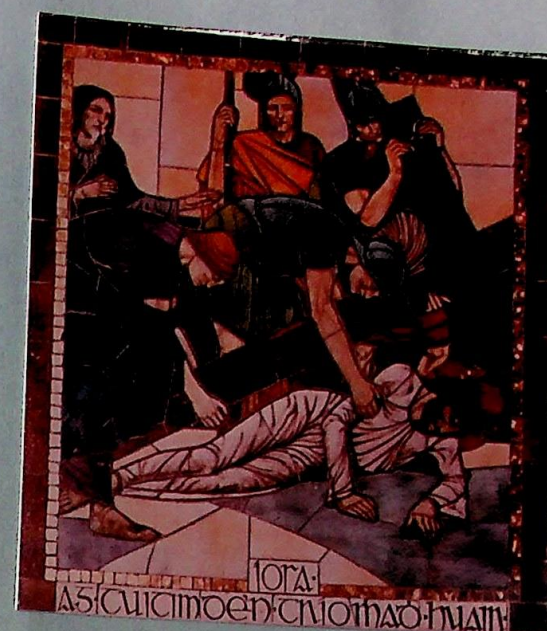


Spiddal Catholic Church, Co. Galway (plates nos. 17-20); the Friary, Athlone (plates nos. 21-24) and of course, those at Loughrea Cathedral. All but the Honan Hostel Stations are recorded in the An Tur Gloine work journals. I have been unable to find any documentary evidence that confirms Dr. Wynne's Honan Hostel attribution.

There are three major sources of information on the Honan Hostel Chapel. These articles are by Sir John O'Connell,<sup>4</sup> Rev. Prof. P. Power<sup>5</sup> and M. J. O'Kelly<sup>6</sup> and there is also a continuing reference in The Irish Builder and Engineer. Though all three authors praise the opus sectile Stations, none of them state who was responsible for their execution. The most noteworthy of these articles is the one by Sir John O'Connell - it is a contemporary publication and he was personally responsible for commissioning the various elements that comprise the chapel. In the foreward of his booklet he offers his thanks to among others;

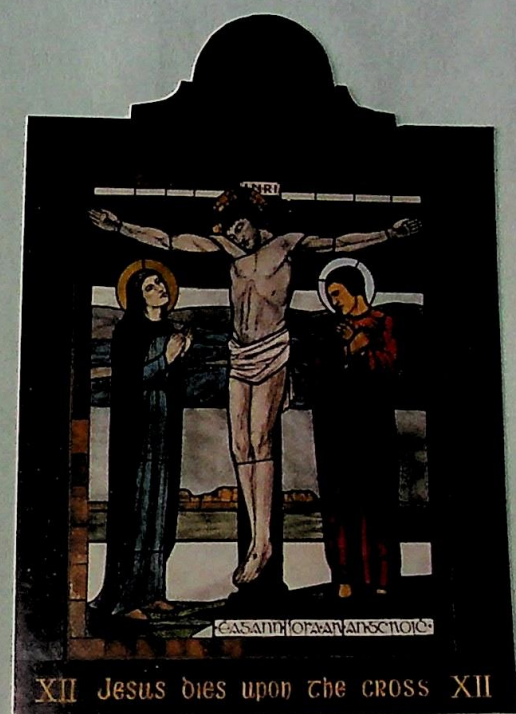
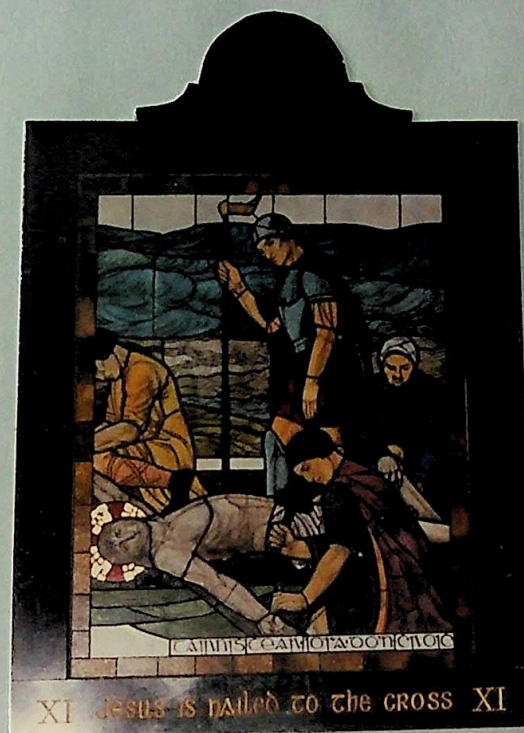
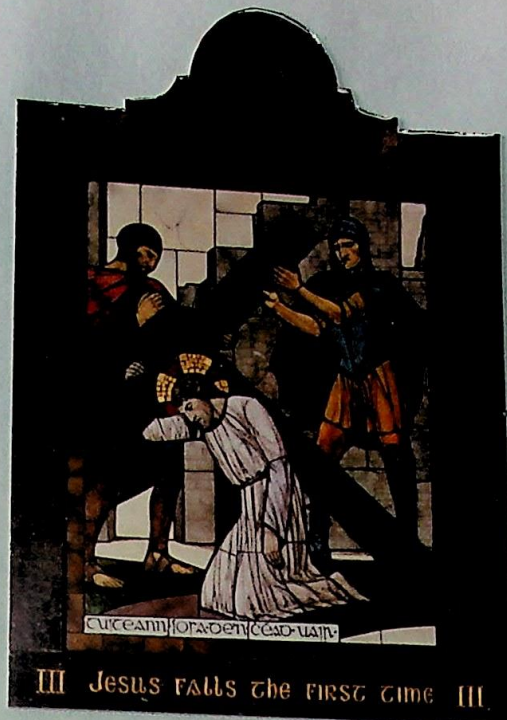
"Miss Sarah Purser R.H.A., and her assistants in designing and making the window in the East wall and the windows of St. John the Evangelist, St. Ailbe, St. Colman, St. Fechnain, St. Flannan, and St. Munchin." He does not allude to the Stations of the Cross in this forward; the only companies and individuals he acknowledges are those which are Irish. Sir John gave lectures on the subject of the Honan Hostel Chapel and one of these lectures may have prompted the Editor of The Irish Builder, R.M. Butler, to include the following remark published in connection with an article by Sir John - "The arcading is indeed very satisfactorily made use of as a





17. E. Rhind Jesus is Condemned to Death 1912-28  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Catholic Church,  
Spiddal, Co. Galway.
18. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the Third Time 1918-28 opus-sectile  
Station of the Cross, Catholic Church, Spiddal, Co. Galway.
19. E. Rhind Jesus is Stripped of His Garments 1918-28  
opus-sectile Stations of the Cross. Catholic Church  
Spiddal, Co. Galway.
20. E. Rhind Jesus is Nailed to the Cross 1918-28  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Catholic Church,  
Spiddal, Co. Galway.





21. E. Rhind Jesus Falls the First Time 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.
22. E. Rhind Jesus is Stripped of His Garments 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.
23. E. Rhind Jesus is Nailed to the Cross 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.
24. E. Rhind Jesus Dies Upon the Cross 1934-36  
opus-sectile Station of the Cross, The Friary, Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.



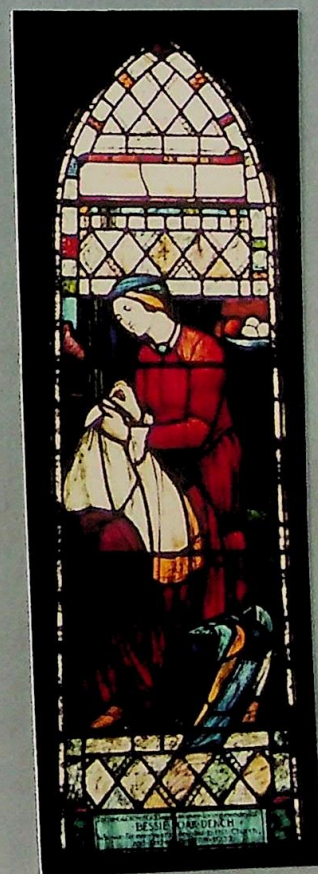
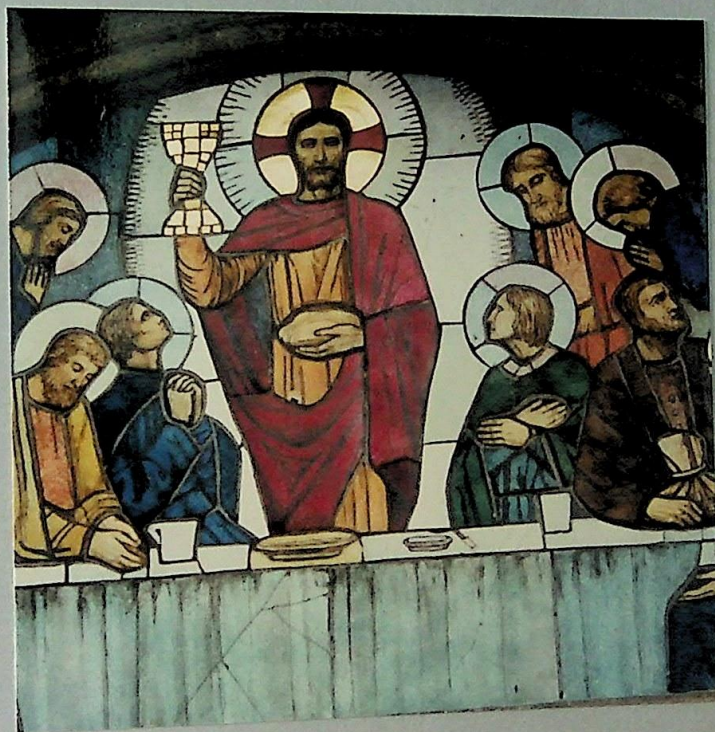
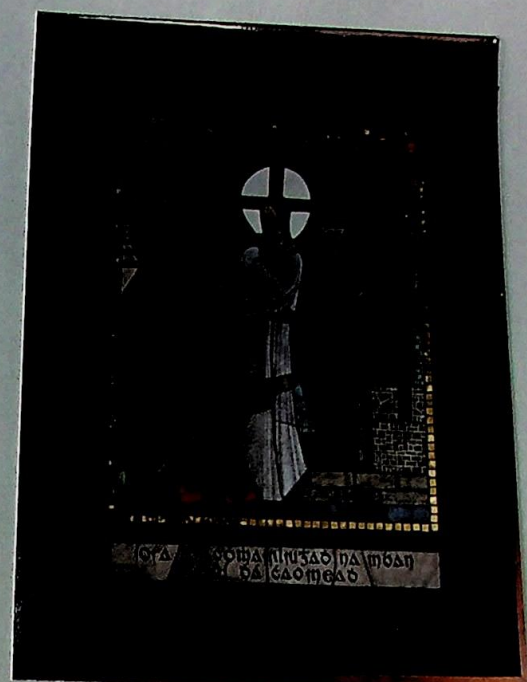
frame for the Stations of the Cross, executed in opus sectile, though we fancy the author (Sir John O'Connell) is mistaken that opus sectile work could not be made in Ireland."<sup>7</sup>

This evidence and the fact that the Honan Hostel Stations do not stylistically resemble Ethel Rhind's other three sets of Stations, would seem to indicate that they are not by her hand and are most likely the work of a non-Irish company. My own suggestion is that a Leeds firm, Kayll and Reed may have been responsible for the Cork Stations. They advertised regularly in The Irish Catholic Directory during the years when the Honan Hostel commissions would have been under consideration. A black and white photograph of one of their Stations which was reproduced in the 1913 edition of the Directory appears to closely resemble the Honan Hostel Stations.

Hubert McGoldrick is the only other An Tur Gloine artist who executed a series of Stations. His rather stylised set (1929-31) is to be found in Westport Church, Co. Mayo. (plates nos. 25, 26). Besides McGoldrick, Catherine O'Brien also occasionally worked in opus sectile mosaic (plate no. 27). Ethel Rhind's Spiddal Stations date from c. 1916-1928; the Loughrea Stations 1929-1933; and the Athlone Stations 1934-1936.

Before An Tur Gloine, most sets of Stations, like much of the stained glass were imported. "So Stations of the Cross, fourteen 'images' of Our Lord, among other things, have to be erected. They are almost necessities for the parish at large, and the conscientious priest hastens to erect them. He falls prey to the ubiquitous





25. H. McGoldrick Veronica presents Jesus with A Towel 1929-31 opus-sectile Station of the Cross Catholic Church, Westport, Co. Mayo.
26. H. McGoldrick Jesus consoles the Women 1929-31 opus-sectile Station of the Cross, Catholic Church, Westport, Co. Mayo.
27. C. O'Brien The Last Supper 1936 (detail) The Friary, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
28. E. Rhind Dorcas Seated 1933 Methodist Church, Sandymount, Dublin.



commercial traveller from other lands where art has fallen also temporarily low."<sup>8</sup> Opus sectile Stations of the Cross are awkward, time consuming and expensive commissions which is probably the main reason why An Tur Gloine only produced four sets, (a set each for the Dominican Convnet, Eccles St., Dublin and for Oughterard, Co. Galway are mentioned in the An Tur Gloine minute book. Both sets were to be executed by Hubert McGoldrick but it seems that these sets were never begun in one case, and never completed in the other case.)

While the Loughrea Stations were underway, Sarah Purser wrote an article for The Irish Builder entitled "Stations of the Cross: the architectual and artistic point of view".<sup>9</sup> Much of Miss Purser's article examines the problems of maintaining continuity in size, scale etc. throughout a series of Stations. Probably these difficulties were ones which she saw Miss Rhind faced when she was executing her Loughrea Stations of the Cross. The first Loughrea Station was installed in 1929; four more were completed by December 1930; another four were completed by June 1932; and the final five, after being exhibited at the stained glass works in Pembroke Street, Dublin, in March 1933,<sup>10</sup> were sent off to Loughrea Cathedral to be installed.

Five years is a long time to execute fourteen Stations of the Cross. We know that Ethel Rhind did make a few stained glass windows during this period but even so, the process involved in opus sectile mosaic work seems to have been laborious and time-consuming. It was a process that some of the An Tur Gloine artists found to interfere with their concentration. The minutes for a committee meeting in



October 1929 records that:

"It having been found that the grinding of the mosaic glass caused great annoyance to Miss O'Brien and the question of how this may be avoided was discussed. Miss Purser's proposal was adopted: that the Loughrea Stations at present in progress shall be completed with the arrangement that Connolly only carries on the grinding from 8.30 to 10.30 a.m., from 1 to 2.15 p.m. or at any other time that is convenient when the artists are not present ..."

The mosaic glass actually came in tile form. In 1924 Harry Clarke sold Ethel Rhind a large consignment of tiles which some time previously had been bought from Powell's of London.<sup>11</sup>

Ethel Rhind's Spiddal, Loughrea and Athlone Stations are in many ways similar despite the fact that they span twenty years. Some of the compositions hardly differ at all and the general colour schemes remain the same. Of these three sets I personally prefer the first series: the Spiddal Stations. The proportion of each Station at Spiddal varies in accordance with the subject. The church, designed by W. A. Scott, who was also involved in designing elements of Loughrea's interior decoration, is small and consequently the Stations are at eye level. These Stations do not have any frames as such, and so appear to grow out of the walls. The figures, particularly those of Christ were probably influenced by Wilhelmina Geddes and are more forceful and expressive than the figures of either the Loughrea or Athlone sets.

Not surprisingly, the Loughrea Stations share many features with both the earlier Spiddal Stations and the later Athlone Stations, though they definitely have more in common



with the Athlone set. The Stations of the Cross commissioned for The Friary, Athlone, are darker in tone and the number of figures have in general been reduced and the compositions made more compact. The comparatively elaborate frame with its curved top does not add greatly to this series of Stations of the Cross whose effectiveness derives from their simplicity.

All three of Ethel Rhind's sets of Stations have the title of each scene inscribed in Irish - the Athlone series is in both Irish and English. In the Loughrea Stations of the Cross the roman numeral of each Station is made of 'gold' mosaic inset in the Connemara marble frame.

Generally, the Loughrea series are more naturalistic in treatment than either the Spiddal or Athlone Stations. The scenes have greater depth and the compositions less symmetrical. It would be too tedious to describe individually each of the fourteen Stations of the Cross at Loughrea Cathedral. The subject matter should be well known and Miss Rhind has not chosen to represent the individual scenes in a highly original manner.

In none of her series of Stations does Ethel Rhind stylise the figures more than the medium necessitates. The success of the Loughrea Stations of the Cross lies in the straightforward but sensitive depiction of familiar scenes coupled with a suitably low-key colour range. The mosaic which is set in portland cement surrounded by a convex border of smooth Connemara marble contrasts effectively with the plain white interior walls of the Cathedral. The choice of this marble is, of course, particularly appropriate for a County Galway Cathedral. In fact Miss Rhind's all over colour scheme



could even be said to have its inspiration in the West of Ireland landscape; atmospheric blues, greys, mauves and greens predominate. Stations such as X and XI which have broadly indicated mountain backgrounds seem to echo Paul Henry's western landscapes.

It is worth mentioning that although Ethel Rhind executed many stained glass windows, they do not bear any stylistic resemblance to her work done in opus sectile mosaic. One of her better windows, a small one-light depicting Dorcas Seated (plate no. 28) was made for the Methodist Church, Sandymount, Co. Dublin, in 1933 - the same year as she completed her Loughrea series of Stations of the Cross. This window is evidence that Miss Rhind could work with equal facility in both the stained glass and opus sectile mediums, but it is probably as an exponent of opus sectile that she will be best remembered.

We are to be thankful that Edward Martyn, who did so much work to elevate the standard of ecclesiastical art throughout Ireland and who benefit-ed St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea in particular, both financially and otherwise, did not have his way in one respect. Edward Martyn was adamant that Loughrea Cathedral should have no Stations of the Cross as such - only plain wooden crosses.<sup>12</sup>



1. Metropolitan School of Art Register 1904-05. Library, N.C.A.D.
2. Evening Mail 2-8-1906. This reference is cited by John O'Grady. The Life and Work of Sarah Henrietta Purser 1848-1943 op.cit.
3. Michael Wynne Stained Glass in Ireland, Principally ... 1760-1963 op.cit.
4. John O'Connell The Collegiate Chapel, Cork - some notes on the building of it and the ideals which inspired it Cork 1916
5. Rev. Prof. Patrick Power The Chapel of St. Finnbar, University College, Cork Its History, Architecture and Symbolism Cork n.d.
6. Michael J. O'Kelly The Honan Chapel article printed in The Furrow Vol. 1 Dublin, July 1950.
7. The Irish Builder and Engineer 31 March 1917 p150
8. Robert Elliott Art and Ireland op.cit.
9. The Irish Builder and Engineer 27 February 1932 p.186
10. The Irish Builder and Engineer 25 March 1933 p.221
11. quoted from Nicola Gordon Bowe, The Life and Work of Harry Clarke 1889-1931 unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Library, Trinity College, Dublin 1981
12. Thomas MacGreevy St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea op.cit.



This section includes short biographies of the following:

Child,	Alfred Ernest.
Clarke,	Harry.
Dignan,	The Most Rt. Rev. Dr. John.
Elvery (later Glenavy)	Beatrice.
Geddes,	Wilhelmina M.
Healy,	The Most Rev. Dr. John.
Healy,	Michael.
Hone,	Evie.
Martyn,	Edward.
McGoldrick,	Hubert V.
O'Brien,	Catherine A.
O'Dea,	The Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas.
O'Donovan,	Jeremiah (later Gerald).
Purser,	Sarah H.
Rhind,	Ethel M.
Whall,	Christopher W.



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Alfred Ernest Child was born in London in 1875 and at an early age was apprenticed to an accountant. This job only lasted six months. c.1891, Child entered a scholarship for a London Art School and won it. After completing his formal artistic education he entered Christopher Whall's stained glass studio probably as a paid assistant. A. E. Child exhibited a design for lead glazing at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1899 (no. 87). In February 1901 he married Annie Haines in London. In September of the same year he began teaching at the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin and two months later the Childs' first son was born. There were three subsequent children, a boy and two girls. When An Tur Gloine opened in January 1903, A. E. Child was appointed its manager though he continued to teach stained glass at the School of Art for many years. Child was a founder member of the Guild of Irish Craft-Workers. Throughout his life, except for the last couple of years, he executed a large number of windows for churches in Ireland and occasionally abroad. In his latter years his eye sight began to fail and his general health deteriorated. He died from a massive stroke in 1939.



Harry Clarke was born in Dublin in 1889, the second son of Joshua Clarke, the owner of a stained glass business. Like his contemporaries, Harry Clarke studied stained glass under A. E. Child at the Metropolitan School of Art, Kildare Street, Dublin. As early as 1910 he exhibited with the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland. From 1915 to 1917 he executed his first stained glass commission - eleven windows for Honan Hostel Chapel, Cork. These are generally regarded as being among his best work. Apart from stained glass commissions, Clarke also designed decorative schemes, textile designs and was a highly talented illustrator, particularly in black and white. He is the only major Irish stained glass artist of this period who did not work at An Tur Gloine. Harry Clarke founded The Harry Clarke Studios Limited in 1930 which continued to produce work in his distinctive style for many decades after his early death in 1931.



The Most Rev. Dr. John Dignan was the fifth Bishop of Clonfert. Prior to his appointment he had been president of St. Joseph's College, Ballinasloe. When he was made Bishop in 1924 he brought with him Fr. Patrick Jennings who was given the position of Administrator. Together they were responsible for organising most of the commissions post 1924. Dr. Dignan died in 1954 and was succeeded by the Most Rev. Dr. William Philbin who held the position of Bishop of Clonfert until 1963.



Beatrice Glenavy (nee Elvery) was born in Dublin in 1883. She studied modelling under John Hughes at the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin from 1896. She continued to attend most years until 1908. Beatrice Elvery joined An Tur Gloine in 1904 and left in 1912 on her marriage to Charles Campbell (later 2nd Baron Glenavy). She returned in 1918 to execute a war memorial window for her childhood church at Carrickmines, Co. Dublin. As well as executing stained glass commissions, Beatrice Elvery also did illustrations and sculpture. She exhibited with the Irish Arts and Crafts Society, the Royal Hibernian Academy and the Royal Academy, London. Her later works, mostly paintings, show an interest in surrealism. Beatrice Glenavy's autobiography "To-day we will only Gossip" was published in 1964. She died in 1970.



Wilhelmina Margaret Geddes was born in Leitrim in 1888. She attended the Methodist College Belfast and the Belfast Technical School. Later she attended the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art and worked under Sir William Orpen. She joined An Tur Gloine in c.1915 but consistently bad health regularly interrupted her work. She corresponded closely with Miss Purser during the next couple of decades. In 1925 Miss Geddes moved to London where she formed a studio. Much of her work can be seen in Ulster and Britain. Probably her most important commission was 'Te Deum' - a war memorial (1938) which was presented to the Belgian Government by Great Britain. It is in St. Martin's Cathedral, Ypres.



The Most Rev. Dr. John Healy was born in 1841. He was the first Bishop of Clonfert and in 1903 was made Arch Bishop of Tuam. Although apparently interested in Irish ecclesiastical art he does not appear to have written on the subject. His large volume 'The Life and Writings of St. Patrick' was published by Gill & Son, Dublin, in 1905. Dr. Healy's collected "Papers and Addresses" was published by the Catholic Truth Society, Dublin, 1909. Dr. Healy died in 1918.



Michael Healy was born at Bishop Street, Dublin in 1873. His father died when he was a child and by fourteen he was earning his own livelihood. In 1897 he began to attend the Metropolitan School of Art. A year later The Irish Rosary advertised for an illustrator, Healy applied and was given the job. In 1899, Michael Healy went to Florence where he remained for some eighteen months. On his return he took up a teaching post from which he later resigned. Some years earlier he had attempted to become a lay-brother in the Dominican Order but found the life unsuitable.

It was John Hughes, the sculptor, who recommended Healy to Sarah Purser. He joined An Tur Gloine in 1903 and remained there until his death in 1941. Examples of his stained glass can be seen in most counties of Ireland as well as in Britain, the United States and New Zealand. Apart from being a stained glass artist, Michael Healy is also known for his watercolour sketches and ink drawings of Dubliners.



Evie Hone was born in 1894. In London she studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art and then at the Westminster School of Art. In 1920, she went to Paris with her life-long friend the Irish painter, Marie Jellet. There she studied under Andre l'Hote and Albert Gleizes. In 1924 she held a joint exhibition with Marie Jellet in the Dawson Painters Gallery. Evie Hone began to work at An Tur Gloine in 1933, which by then was called the Co-operative Stained Glass Works. She became a member of the Co-operative in 1935. Evie Hone continued to work at the Co-operative until it was dissolved in 1944. Thereafter she executed her stained glass commissions at her home, Marlay Grange, Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin. She began the famous Eton window in 1949 and it was placed in position in early 1952. Evie Hone was a Catholic convert. She died while attending Mass at her parish church in 1955.



Edward Martyn was born in 1859 and was educated at Belvedere College Dublin, Beaumont and Oxford. A man of large independent means he lived in his family home, Tulira Castle, Ardrahan, Co. Galway. He did not, however, conform to the typical picture of an Irish landlord. Apart from being a member of the Gaelic League, he wrote two novels and championed many causes. He founded the Palestrina Choir in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, keenly supported the Irish Literary Theatre and the revival of Irish music. He was also a dedicated art collector and left many fine pictures to the National Gallery of Ireland. Edward Martyn helped to found An Túr Gloine and was closely associated with the interior decoration of St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea until his death in 1923.



Hubert McGoldrick was born in Rathgar, Dublin in 1897. He first attended the Metropolitan School of Art aged 14. In 1913 he joined the stained glass firm of Earley's, Camden Street, Dublin. His name appears on the School of Art Register for most years until 1922. In 1920 he joined An Tur Gloine where he remained until 1945. He worked in both opus-rectile mosaic and stained glass. He exhibited at the Art and Crafts Society Exhibition of 1925 and several R.H.A. exhibitions. He returned to An Tur Gloine in 1953 to execute a large single-light window for the Dominican Convent, Muckross Park, Dublin. Hubert McGoldrick died in 1967.



Catherine O'Brien was born in Ennis, Co. Clare in 1881. In 1901 she began to attend the Metropolitan School of Art and was a pupil of Sir William Orpen. Her name continues to appear on the Register of the Metropolitan School of Art until 1918 when she was 35, though she had joined An Tur Gloine in 1906. She had a large output of stained glass and occasionally she also worked in opus-rectile mosaic. When An Tur Gloine was dissolved as a co-operative in 1944, Miss O'Brien personally took over the ownership and continued to work there until her death in 1963. She was a regular contributor to exhibitions and was a member of the Guild of Irish Art Workers.



Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas O'Dea was born in 1858. He was Dr. Healy's successor and occupied the position of Bishop of Clonfert from 1903-09. Like Dr. Healy, Dr. O'Dea was literary minded and wrote 'Maynooth and the University Question' and an unpublished 'Treatise on Justice'. He died in April 1923 and was succeeded by The Rt. Rev. T. P. Gilmartin.



Jeremiah (later Gerald) O'Donovan was born in 1871. He was ordained a priest for Clonfert in 1895 and the following year went to Loughrea as curate. During the next few years O'Donovan showed himself to be an enthusiastic supporter of Irish Art, as well as having interests in social reform, agriculture, the Irish Language, etc. In 1901, he became the Administrator in Loughrea. Judging from his letters to Sarah Purser, (in N.L.I.), Fr. O'Donovan seems to have been instrumental in organising the first stained glass commissions for Loughrea Cathedral. He was a friend of both Edward Martyn's and Sarah Purser's.

In 1904, O'Donovan left Loughrea and resigned from the priesthood at the same time. It is unclear as to what exactly caused this action. After staying with relations of Edward Martyn's in Dublin for two years, O'Donovan left for London where he married a Protestant colonel's daughter in 1910. They had two girls and a boy. In 1913 O'Donovan's first book Father Ralph - a satire on the clergy at Loughrea, was published. He wrote, and had published, five subsequent books, and established a respectable literary reputation. Gerald O'Donovan died of cancer in 1942.



Sarah Henrietta Purser was born in Dungarvan in 1848 of a well-to-do family. Following her education in Switzerland she attended the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, and afterwards the Academie Julien in Paris. On her return to Dublin she established herself as a successful portrait painter. Her stature as a major figure in Irish artistic circles grew out of her activity as a patron, hostess and founder of enterprises rather than out of her own painting ability. Among the enterprises she was instrumental in founding were The Friends of the National Collections, the Municipal Gallery, Dublin, and An Tur Gloine. Sarah Purser died at her home Mespil House in 1943.



Ethel Mary Rhind was born in Bengal, India in c.1878. She was educated at Derry High School and began to attend the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin in 1902. There she was awarded a scholarship for mosaic work. In the third (1904) Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland Exhibition, she exhibited a Head of June (no. 125) in mosaic. She also contributed three stained glass windows to the 1907 Irish International Exhibition. Her name continued to appear on the Register of the Metropolitan School of Art until 1916. However she most likely ceased to be a day student in 1908 when she joined An Tur Gloine. Her only work in a public collection is neither executed in mosaic or stained glass; it is a tapestry she designed but did not execute herself, entitled 'Smuainteach' which is in the National Museum (Inv. no. 117. 1926) She retired from An Tur Gloine in 1939 and died in 1952.



Christopher W. Whall was born in 1849 in Northants. He was a student at the R.A. Schools in London and later exhibited at the Royal Academy. Between 1876 and 1879 Whall travelled around Central and Northern Italy studying architecture and painting. While in Italy he experienced a religious vocation to devote himself to 'Catholic Art'. During the 1880's and 1890's he established himself as the leading stained glass artist of the Arts and Crafts movement. He trained many pupils, among them Karl Parsons, Henry Payne and Alfred Child. In 1907 Christopher Whall's book 'Stained Glass Work' was published. In 1913 he exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Ghent, Belgium and in 1916 he exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition at the R.A. Christopher Whall died, aged 75, in 1924.



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