

Father MacLachlan

This day (*Ed - Aug. 24th, 1882*) the grave in Dunblane churchyard will close over the mortal remains of the Very Rev. Mgr. MacLachlan, D.D., Vicar-General of the Diocese of Dunkeld, who peacefully breathed his last about one a.m. on Tuesday last. Father MacLachlan was in his 79th year, and had been a priest for the period of 53 years. The deceased was born in Bellaknockan Farm, Braes of Glenlivet, in the Highlands of Banffshire, in 1804. He was first educated at the school of his native district. This locality has been remarkable for its persistent adherence to the Faith since the Reformation, and has proved itself so fruitful nursery of devoted missionaries.

In his youth he was noted for his piety and precocious talents, in consequence of which his ecclesiastical superiors requested him to enter the seminary of Scaln, in Banffshire, where he received his preliminary training for the holy orders of priesthood. His literary studies being completed here, he went abroad to pursue his theological studies in France chiefly in Paris and in the Valley of the Medoc. To his latest day he had affectionate reminiscences of the happy early years he spent here, and many of the treasures of his extensive library were collected during his sojourn in France, and subsequent visits to Spain.

He was ordained priest in 1831, and then returned to Scotland, being attached to the diocese of Edinburgh. His first charge of importance was the cure of souls in Campsie, Kilsyth, Stirling, Falkirk, Alloa, and Linlithgow. Through this extensive district he trudged and drove at regular intervals, and so successful were his labours, that in 1838 a chapel was built in Irvine-place, Stirling. Here he then transferred his headquarters from Campsie, and the congregation being joined by a number of men in business, all of whom are now dead, but we believe one - Mr. James Kane, Broad-street, he gathered in the scattered of the faithful. His visitations over the district were continued for many years, and about 1850 (*ed - actually 1865*) a priest was stationed at Kilsyth, relieving Father MacLachlan.

At Linlithgow too, a chapel was much needed, and Fr MacLachlan was transferred to Falkirk, to be nearer the advancement of his desire. While there he built two chapels--one at Linlithgow and one at Falkirk—and returned to Stirling, where the church he had left so shortly ago soon required enlargement. A school followed, and since their erection the chapel and school have been enlarged thrice and twice respectively.

The arrival of a large number of Catholics at Doune turned his attention to the western district of Perthshire, and he added that to the district he now supervised. When St. John's Episcopal Church in Alloa was closed and the congregation had flitted to the magnificent church built by the late Earl of Mar and Kellie, he at once entered into treaty for their old church. In 1869, St. Mungo's Chapel in Alloa was opened under the charge of Father Murphy, a zealous worker among the extensive Catholic population of the mining villages of Clackmannanshire.

During only one period of his lifetime up to this date, did Father MacLachlan enter into any polemical disputes. He was about the year 1846 attacked by the late Rev. Dr. Gilfillan, and Sunday after Sunday the one preached the other down. Then a newspaper war commenced, until the columns of the organ of the Free Church party refused to admit his letters, and he took to pamphleteering, followed by his able antagonist. Here the dispute ended.

In Stirling he was all along known as the gentle, courteous gentleman. He devoted his life and great talents to the sacred purpose to which they had been consecrated, and in the service of

the Church he lost no opportunities of doing good to her children. Many and warm friends - did he make in his long journey in Stirling. Pleasant moments have been spent of an evening in his study, and his conversation was ample and brilliant, for he kept himself fully informed of what was going on in the world. This he could only do by wasting none of the moments he could snatch from the important duty of his holy office, and these he assiduously utilised.

The congregation at Doune and Deanston grew apace, and on the 7th of October 1875, a pretty chapel dedicated to St. Fillan and St. Alphonsus was solemnly opened at Doune by the Right Rev. Bishop Strain, of Edinburgh. Shortly after this he took up his residence in Doune, and then Dunblane came more immediately beneath his eye. About a year ago he bought a mansion at Dunblane, and converted part of the building into a nice little chapel, which would have been opened during the bygone week were it not for his sudden illness. He preached his last sermon on the 5th Aug (*Ed - 1882*) and took to his bed on the 8th.

In 1878, the Pope (*Ed - Leo XIII*) conferred on him the honour of Doctor of Divinity, and recently the dignity of Domestic Prelate. The Bishop of Dunkeld appointed him Vicar General several years ago. Monsignor MacLachlan, it will thus be seen, was a most successful missionary power as well as a bright ornament to the Catholic body in Presbyterian Scotland. When seized with his last illness, he was engaged with arrangements to take charge of the new mission station at Dunblane. His remains were interred at Dunblane, within the Cathedral grounds, yesterday. High Mass of Requiem was said in St. Fillan's Church at Doune, previous to the funeral procession leaving for Dunblane. The solemn service beginning at eleven o'clock a.m. The body was then carried from the church and conveyed to Dunblane Cathedral churchyard for burial.

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