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Foreword

THE REVISED HISTORY of St Bartholomew’s Church, Clyde Road combines the work of two authors and therefore the perspective of two different styles. St Bartholomew’s is among an unique cluster of church buildings in Ireland that puts liturgy at the heart of parochial life. For this reason, it is important that those who worship in such churches be able to read the architecture and the decoration as more than incidental or formulaic but as intrinsic to the movement of faith and the public articulation of the work of God. Important in this regard is Alistair Rowan’s simple expression that the Scriptural quotations in the nave from Revelation surround the worshipping congregation with Scripture itself while at the same time being kind to our mortality in realizing that we can only take in a small amount at any given time; and the same holds for other quotations from psalm 92 in the choir; and, as Rowan points out, on a dark day nothing can be read at all.

This volume seeks to offer such a guide to reading St Bartholomew’s with careful attention to personalities and to structures. It does not shirk the controversies internal to the parish around the forward march of a church the on-going building of which was dependent on and derivative of successive clergy who worked out an original plan of considerable sophistication and intricacy during their time of office. Like all such buildings, it came from time to time under the strain of insufficient funds and more than sufficient needs. The story, nonetheless, is one of evolution and celebration sustained by constant witness to Almighty God upheld throughout politically and socially turbulent times until it has established today’s much more settled identity in the diocese of Dublin and in the Church of Ireland.

St Bartholomew’s dates from the turbulent days leading up to Disestablishment and its on-going work straddles that great division and piece of unfinished business in the self-understanding of the Church of Ireland. It would be possible, for example, to overlook the fact that, in itself, the seating marked a social revolution, as was stated at its consecration on 23rd December 1867: ‘all the seats in it being free

and unappropriated.' This is of a piece with the conviction of one of its renowned rectors who was clear that the work of the laity did not end with attending church services. He went further to require of parishioners participation with the priesthood in the spiritual ministry of the church. Most of us would now view such perspectives as regular and unexceptional but, in their day, they were refreshingly ground breaking.

St Bartholomew's combines magnificence with modesty. The magnificence lies in the exuberance of its beauty, drawing everyone urgently ever closer to God. The modesty lies in its description in this volume as 'a parish church in the countryside rather than a building of metropolitan assertions.' Our gratitude must go not only to those who have served and cared for the church in all its many facets over the years and for their courage and commitment to break new ground regularly. Our gratitude must go also to those who through what *The Book of Common Prayer* calls 'patient continuance in well doing,' particularly around the continuum of worship, have prayed with and for all the generations. St Bartholomew's deserves our admiration and respect for testing the waters around aspects of an international Anglicanism which, in their day, were alien to the Church of Ireland and with which many to this very day remain uneasy. This volume shows that these things were not done with intentional confrontation but within the combined work of Word, Sacrament and Mission.

My thanks go to both authors, Dr Kenneth Milne and Professor Alistair Rowan, for a volume that gives personality and colour to our picture of St Bartholomew's in the year when we commemorate one hundred and fifty years of the disestablishment of a Church of Ireland into which St Bartholomew's, in its painstaking restoration and in its daily witness, still speaks scintillatingly.

THE MOST REVEREND DR MICHAEL JACKSON
Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough

Preface

WHAT FOLLOWS is not a facsimile of the 1963 edition of *S. Bartholomew's: a History of the Dublin Parish*. While the treatment of some episodes in the life of the parish remains unchanged, accounts of its origins and early life have been expanded in the light of sources, both primary and secondary, that have become available in the intervening period. However it was thought that readers might find of interest the original Foreword, Preface and John Betjeman's Introductory Note.

Whereas the first edition followed a biographical pattern it was felt that a thematic approach would be more appropriate for the years from the sixties onwards. Therefore developments in ecumenism, liturgy and music, for instance, are treated as topics running through the past half century rather than being addressed vicar by vicar.

This new edition is considerably embellished by the addition of Professor Alistair Rowan's invaluable study of the architecture of what he describes as 'the most striking example of Anglican High Church design in Ireland'. His detailed and erudite study of the building will not only be of particular interest to members of the architectural profession but will also enhance the general reader's understanding of how eloquently the work of the architect, the builder, and of those who have had care of St Bartholomew's over the generations, speak of its theological and liturgical witness.

KENNETH MILNE
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