




St Macartan's Cathedral Monaghan

Sacred Spaces

St Macartan's Cathedral is the physical beacon that welcomes everyone to Monaghan town. As one approaches the town from every angle, its steeple gives those from near and far a focus and a sense of belonging. It stands on a hill overlooking the town and surrounding countryside; its tower and spire no longer a sign of authority or dominance but, rather, a sign that here is a sacred space, house of prayer where all are welcome.

The foundation stone was laid in 1861 by architect James Joseph McCarthy and the cathedral was dedicated on 21 August 1892 to the service of God and the patronage of St Macartan, the diocese's patron saint. As the Cathedral Church of the entire Diocese of Clogher and the Parish Church of the Parish of Monaghan & Rackwallace, it is the seat of the Bishop of Clogher, the ecclesial centre and principal place of worship and prayer of the Diocese of Clogher.

Today, our Cathedral needs structural renewal, conservation and restoration. Those who have gone before us enabled the building and decoration of St Macartan's Cathedral in times of great stress. Through the ongoing restoration works our generation of faithful now have an opportunity to preserve this vital piece of our local and regional heritage, this place of faith, hope and inspiration for us in our time and for the coming generations.

Restoration Project

The restoration work at St Macartan's Cathedral in Monaghan has been a significant undertaking. In practicing our faith – coming together as a community for Mass, dropping by for a quiet prayer, celebrating the Sacraments – we want to provide the safest place to worship. Following an extensive inspection of our Cathedral in July 2019, Mullarkey Pederson Architect provided Diocesan leadership with an extensive conservation report. It was apparent from this investigation that the fabric of St McCartan's has sustained significant damage since through rainfall, carbon and climate. Action was needed to ensure the safety of the building and its worshippers.

On consultation with specialists and conservationists, the extensive work would happen across seven phases, two of which have been completed, and phase three to be completed in August 2024. This strategic approach to the restoration is being guided by a committee of laypeople and clergy. We hope to initiate phase four in early 2025, however, we are contingent upon by the financial support of our generous community.

Fundraising Plan

St Macartan's Cathedral is one of the great buildings of the Irish Gothic Revival period. It is estimated 'Phase four' will cost around €3m+. We hope all parishioners, local businesses, friends across the diocese and the Monaghan diaspora will consider their support. Given the magnitude of the project and the fundraising expertise needed, we have retained Community Counselling Service (CCS), to provide practical help and guidance.

Gathering Opinions

To prepare adequately, we are first garnering insight from a wide audience. In meeting with representatives from CCS, we invite your feedback on:

* Monaghan Parish * The restoration elements * Personal involvement
* Central features of the fundraising eg strategies, leaders, goal, challenges

This is an exciting time for our parish. Your direction is important at this early juncture. Thank you.

Scope of Work – completed, ongoing and upcoming

Phase I: South Transept roof (Complete)

Phase II: North Transept roof including statues (Complete)

Phase III: Tower, Spire and South Gable elevation of the South Transept (Due to be completed August 2024)

Problem

- *stonework at high level is crumbling*
- *significant stability issues at the granite columns*
- *all surfaces are in urgent need of repointing*
- *windows at the South Transept are experiencing significant deterioration*
- *water ingress to the internal walls and spaces below*

Impact

- *creates issues of water ingress and damage to the stone*
- *creates a health & safety issue in regard to the stone that is falling away*

Mitigation measures

- ***Stonework –*** *rich mortar removed, and stonework repointed using sand and lime*
- ***Tower and spire –*** *through re-pointing using a sand and lime mortar we are improving the weathering properties of the masonry but would also reduce the risk of damage and exaggerated weathering of the more valuable ancient carved stone.*
- ***Windows, including Rose window -*** *specialist glass repair is required to be undertaken to repair and reset the leaded lights and missing glazed units. Any new glass pieces shall be sourced to match the existing in texture and colour as close as possible.*
- ***Copings and flashings -*** *the lead flashings and soakers will require to be replaced and mortar jointing is in poor condition*

Phase IV: Western side of Cathedral, including entrance and turrets (Upcoming - pending fundraising campaign)

Similar to the work on the southern side of the Cathedral we will need to restore many of the features on at the main entrance. The restored entrance will enhance the Cathedral's visual appeal and historical integrity and it symbolizes the town's commitment to preserving its architectural heritage. The entrance restoration involves several key elements:

Repointing of Turrets - *Repairing and reinforcing the stonework joints in the turrets*

Replacing Stonework Mortar - *Shifting from rich mortar to a more traditional mix of sand and lime for durability*

Segmented Approach: *The work will be sequenced into three segments: 4a, 4b, and 4c*