



# St Gregory's Church, Glasgow

## Visitors' Guide

1971 - Architects: Borthwick & Watson (later incorporated into Thomas Cordiner, Cunningham & Partners)

Sculptor, Mural Designer: Charles Anderson

Stained Glass Artist: George Walsh

# Introduction

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**St. Gregory's is a Roman Catholic Church, built and opened in 1971, within the Archdiocese of Glasgow. The Parish of St Gregory's covers areas in the North and West of the City of Glasgow. The origins of the Parish can be traced back to the building of some 1,800 houses in the Wyndford Estate (on the former grounds of Maryhill Barracks, home of the Highland Light Infantry) which required the formation of a new Parish between the two old-established Parishes, Immaculate Conception, Maryhill, and St. Charles', N Kelvinside. The patron Saint Gregory Barbarigo (Feast day 18th Jun), who was canonised in 1960 by Pope John XXIII, was chosen by Archbishop Scanlan who had resolved that he would name a parish after the saint.**



## Parish History

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Fr (later Mgr) Brendan Murphy was appointed to open this Parish on 19th Feb 1965, and took up temporary residence in the Immaculate Conception Presbytery. A classroom in St. Mary's Annexe on Maryhill Road (on the present Maryhill Police Station site) was rented, to gather the new parishioners together for Holy Mass, and the "Oratory" was born!

The altar, vestments and other equipment came from the private Oratory of the late Archbishop Campbell, and the first Mass was on St. Patrick's Day, 17th Mar 1965, in a tiny building designed to seat 50, with a congregation far in excess of 100. Permission was then granted to use the Assembly Hall in Shakespeare Street Public School on Sundays and on 28th Mar the first public Masses were offered.

St. Gregory's acquired the old parish house of Our Lady of the Assumption on Bilsland Dr which served as a temporary Presbytery for 6 years. A film was made in 1966 by the Scottish Catholic Film Institute, "Springboard to the World" which gives the story of the early days of the parish. On 26th June 1966 it was announced that the parish was purchasing the entire annexe of St Mary's School for reconstruction as a temporary church.

Eventually in 1968 the parish obtained part of the site of the disused Dawsholm Engine/ Loco Shed (closed in 1964). Plans were made for a new church, hall and parish house on Kelvindale Rd. Despite the setback of the builders going into liquidation and the work being held up for six months, the clergy took up residence in the new presbytery, early in Jan 1971, and were then on site for the final stages of the Church building.

On 11th Feb 1971, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Archbishop Scanlan performed the ceremony of the 'Laying the Foundation Stone'; the building work was duly completed and the Opening Mass / Ceremony in the new Church was held at 12 noon on Sunday 13th Jun 1971. St Gregory's has had 5 parish priests to date Fr (later Mgr) Brendan Murphy, Fr Daniel Gallagher, Fr Carlo Centra, Fr Joseph Mackle and Fr Allan Cameron.

*More information about our church is available on our parish website [www.stgregorybarbarigo.co.uk/about](http://www.stgregorybarbarigo.co.uk/about)*

## Architectural and Artistic Features

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One of several bold designs that the Archdiocese of Glasgow commissioned, and fitting with Second Vatican Council themes. Magnificent stained glass tower and panels and an exquisite use of sunlight to animate the interior. Charles Anderson epoxy resin treated mural and sculptures in concrete and metal. A late modernist style with flat roof, plain exterior and dramatically sunlit interior.

The Lady Chapel is greatly enriched by its long stained glass windows and by the epoxy-resin treated mural of Our Lady, which is designed to counterbalance the baptismal font. The altar and font are Charles Anderson's bold textured concrete sculptures. The tower incorporates a hardwood window with a distinctive wooden cross, finished in black, and the remainder is infilled with magnificent stained glass, allowing the southern sunlight to drench the area below with a wonderful wealth of light and subtle colour. The style of the crucifix, the Risen Christ by Charles Anderson, above the main altar fits in with the architects' intention to use modern materials; it is made of metal, fibre glass and glass. The 14 stained glass Stations of the Cross by George Walsh depict the passion and death of Jesus. Light, dark and colour is used extensively. The spiritual aspect of the church is enhanced by the use of Hartley Wood manufactured glass, which accounts for the light reflection.

The seating pattern on three sides of the sanctuary is a good example of the re-ordering of church interiors, due to changes and radical reforms introduced with the Second Vatican Council in the Roman Catholic Church, which was ongoing at the time.

The foundation stone for the church was laid on 11th Feb 1971, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, by Archbishop Scanlan; a casket was placed under the stone containing a piece of rock from Massabielle Hill, Lourdes on which Our Lady stood and a set of the then new decimal coins.

The church buildings manage to achieve by the simplicity of their design, materials, their unity and general landscaping a considerable degree of dignity, charm and harmony, and provide an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. The use of a deep white concrete cope carried around all of the buildings and the walkways at a uniform level, unifies the group, but also helps to create the effect that the roofs of the Church and Hall appear to rise and float above the general mass of the buildings from which they are separated by the introduction of clerestory windows carried around on all sides. The Kelvin walkway which runs along the west side of the church, and tree setting, enhances the complex of buildings and covered walkways in the grounds.

## About Our Architects

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**Peter Borthwick FRIBA** A partner in the renowned Thomas Cordiner & Partners firm (who along with the Gillespie, Kidd and Coia firm carried out many commissions for the Archdiocese of Glasgow): When Thomas Smith Cordiner died in 1965 Borthwick formed a partnership with Watson and they were both incorporated into Thomas Cordiner, Cunningham & Partners by 1970 according to the Dictionary of Scottish Architects.. Borthwick studied at Glasgow School of Architecture in 1943 at the same time as undertaking an articulated apprenticeship to Thomas S Cordiner. He graduated and was also admitted ARIBA in 1949. He worked in the offices of Thomas S Cordiner except from 1951-54 he worked in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and from 1957- 60 worked in Canada and set up his own independent practice in Ontario. He moved back to Glasgow and entered into partnership with Cordiner in 1964, the practice being known as Thomas Cordiner Cunningham & Partners by 1970. He was elected FRIBA on 5th Apr 1967. In the RIBA Directory of 1979 he would appear to have taken a post with the City Engineer's Department in Durban.

**James Watson LRIBA** was an Associate of the Glasgow Institute of Architects by 1939-40. He was admitted LRIBA in 1954. He was a partner in the practice Thomas Cordiner, Cunningham & Partners by 1970. He died on 20th Feb 1978.

*Ref Dictionary of Scottish Architects*

## About Our Artists

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**Charles Anderson DA RSW Hon. FRIAS** One of Scotland's most successful Mural Designers and Sculptors. Following a short period of as an Art Teacher, after his graduation from Glasgow School of Art in 1959, he embarked on a career as a professional mural painter and sculptor for the next 30 years. This was mainly major Art and Design projects throughout the UK, carrying out commissions for a wide variety of clients. He was elected R.S.W. (Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours) in Nov 2004. In 2006 he was elected President of the Glasgow Art Club, and served in this position until Feb 2009: He is now a Trustee of the Glasgow Art Club Property Company and chairs the committee dealing with the Charles Rennie Mackintosh frieze to the Gallery in the Art Club. He was recently made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland for his work in the public domain.

*Ref [www.charlesandersonart.co.uk](http://www.charlesandersonart.co.uk)*

**George Walsh** Born in Dublin and studied painting and stained glass at the School of Art in Belfast and Dublin. From 1953-60 he was stained glass apprentice to his Father George S. Walsh and worked at Clokley's Studios Belfast. From 1960-62 he worked in stained glass at the Conrad Pickel Studio USA. He was a designer in the Abbey Stained Glass Studios. He has carried out a number of international commissions and is a regular exhibitor, including at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin. His work in both glass and paint can be found in numerous collections.



## St Gregory's Church

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