

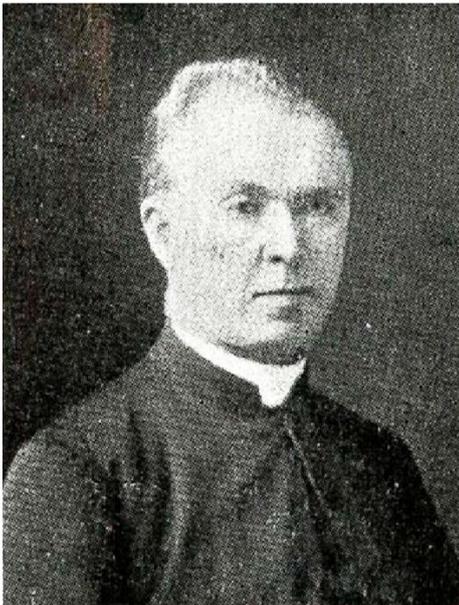
# Parish Priests

1868 - 2018

150 years of Holy Family Mossend

Edition 2

## Rev. Dr Michael Fox 1881 - 1892



### Early Life

The Rev. Dr. Michael Fox was born in Killeshill, Co. Tyrone on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1837. He arrived in Scotland with his parents at the age of 4 years and spent his boyhood days in the uplands of Renfrewshire. This is quoted as being the reason for his intense love of the scenery of the west coast of Scotland.

### Formation

Fr. Fox was admitted to Blairs College on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 1853 and remained there for 3 years.

### Appointments

On returning to Scotland on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1863, he was first appointed at St. Mary's Greenock as curate under Dean Gordon. His time in Greenock was very trying due to an epidemic of fever however he persevered and continued his duties.

In 1867 Rev. Fox was moved to take charge of the Mission of St. Mark's Alexandria and later transferred to St. Mirin's Paisley where he was made Dean of the Chapter and member of the school board.

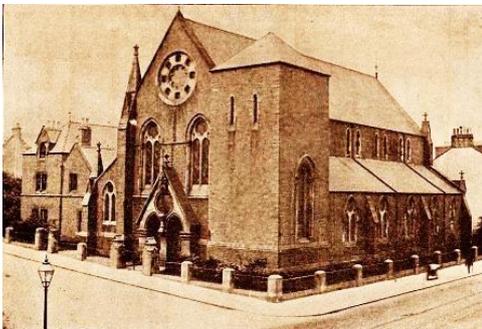
He served at Longriggend and here at our own parish in Mossend from 1881 to 1892.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1856 he was transferred to the College of Propaganda in Rome. He received the tonsure and minor orders in March 1860.

### Ordination

Rev. Dr. Fox was ordained as Subdeacon on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1863 and ordained deacon the following day.

He was then ordained to the Priesthood by Cardinal Patrizi on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1863 in St. John Lateran's Church Rome.



### A period of growth

Rev. Fox had gained a great reputation across the Archdiocese of Glasgow as a builder of churches and schools.

After a short time serving in Mossend, Rev. Fox erected a large addition to the Chapel school that had been built in 1868. This large 2 story addition provided space for up to 460 pupils.

This building continued to be used for some years even after the erection of the much larger current Primary school which was built in 1907. The school built by Rev. Fox remains standing to this day as part of our Parish Centre.

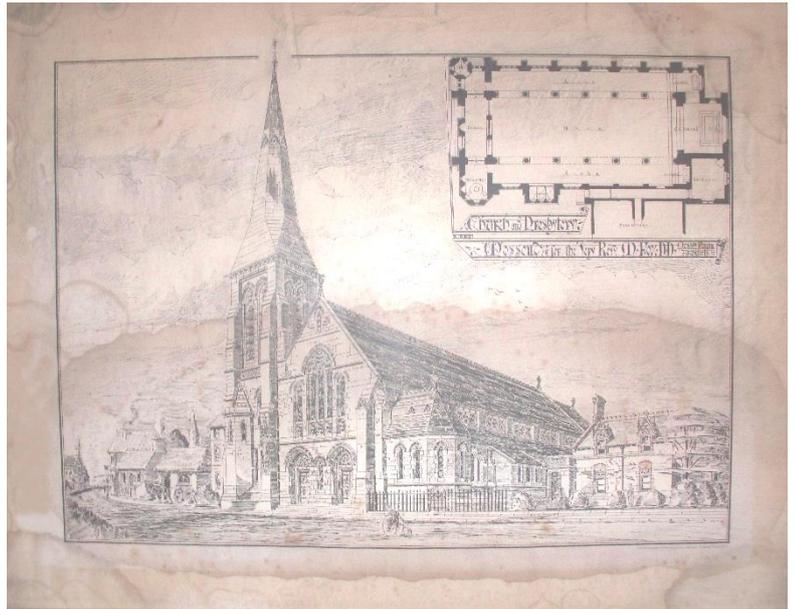


Holy Family Church built 1868 (left) School built by Rev. Fox

## A new church in Mossend

In 1883 Rev. Fox began the process of building a much larger and grander Church in Mossend to suit a growing population. The new church was designed by Peter Paul Pugin and was originally planned to have a 124 feet high spire, however construction was not completed.

Listed buildings give the reason as “not due to financial reasons, but because objections raised by the Church of Scotland led to plans for the spire being refused. Later churches by Peter Paul Pugin were usually designed without spires to keep costs down.”



*Original plans from Peter Paul Pugin.*

## The opening of our present church building



*Holy Family Mossend*

The newly built church was formally opened in November 1884. At the time it was described in the Scottish Catholic Directory as “...One of the neatest, most chaste and elegant in this part of the country...”

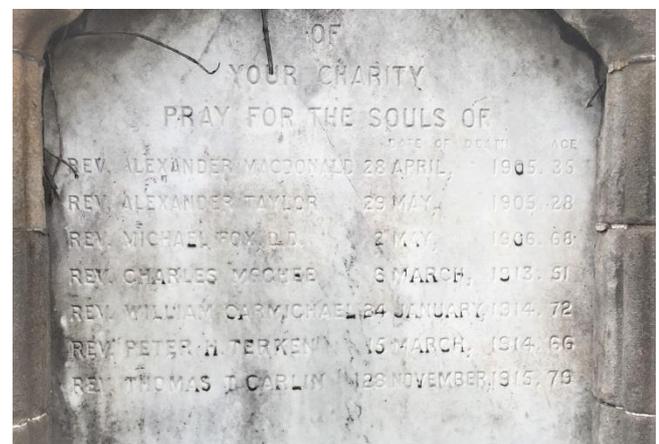
At the opening service there was a large attendance. Archbishop Eyre preached at High Mass, which was celebrated by Rev. Fox.

In a few short years at Mossend, Rev. Fox had successfully built a new church and school with limited means at his disposal.

## Later years

After his time in Mossend, Rev. Fox succeeded Rev. Murphy at Greenock, returning again to the town where he had once served as a curate almost 30 years previous. Once again Rev. Fox set about building a new church for the people of Greenock. The High altar in this beautiful gothic style church was reported to be one of the finest in the West of Scotland.

After a prolonged illness of almost a year, Rev. Dr. Fox died in April 1906 and was buried in a crypt in the church he had raised. Among the mourners at his funeral were four priests who would later take charge at Mossend; Fr. Cronin, Fr. Brown, Fr. McMenemy and Fr. Flanagan.



*Memorial Stone in Dalbeth Cemetery*

*Next time we will look at Rev. Michael Hughes who was parish Priest from 1892- 1904*