



And then there was Margaret Sinclair, one of six children born to a dustman and his wife who were parishioners of St Patrick's. Margaret was baptised at the church on 11 April 1900. She left school at fourteen and became an apprentice French polisher; but in her early twenties she became a Poor Clare Colettine nun, before contracting TB and dying at the age of twenty-five. In the years after her death her fame spread: she had been an ordinary young woman, a factory worker and a trade unionist, whose struggles in life seemed relatable to many. She was someone who never gave up: she had a grit and a strength that belied her age and her situation. As a teenager, whenever her mother was tired out or worried about not having enough money for the family, Margaret always had the same advice for her: "Dinnae give up." No wonder Pope St John Paul II, when he visited Scotland in 1982, described her as someone who "through her very simplicity was touched by God with the strength of real holiness in her life". Four years earlier, in 1978, she had been declared Venerable by Pope St Paul VI; today St Patrick's has a chapel dedicated to her and the cause for her canonisation continues.

## RESTORATION AND UNITY

Meanwhile the parishioners have launched a fund to pay for the restoration costs of the Runciman mural and hope the church will raise its profile further when the Edinburgh Festival is revived after the pandemic. As a church it's a strong symbol of Christian unity, exemplified in the different congregations that have worshipped there across the centuries, as well as a centre for the sort of dramas and stories that fuel the world's biggest arts festival.

## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let my prayer come into your presence.  
Incline your ear to my cry for help, O Lord.

### FIRST READING 1 Kings 17:10-16

### PSALM Psalm 145

RESPONSE My soul, give praise to the Lord.

Or Alleluia!

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **R.**
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down. It is the Lord who loves the just, the Lord, who protects the stranger. **R.**
3. The Lord upholds the widow and orphan but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. **R.**

### SECOND READING Hebrews 9:24-28

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!  
How happy are the poor in spirit;  
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Alleluia!

### GOSPEL Mark 12:38-44

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The disciples recognised the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread.

### Next Sunday's Readings:

Daniel 12:1-3  
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18  
Mark 13:24-32

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## THE SISTINE CHAPEL OF SCOTLAND — ST PATRICK'S, COWGATE, EDINBURGH

It's the site of a hidden artistic masterpiece; it nurtured a parishioner who is now en route to canonisation; one of its parish priests is said to have given his name to an Oscar Wilde novel – and for good measure, its football team went on to be a world-famous club. No wonder they call St Patrick's in central Edinburgh the Sistine Chapel of Scotland: standing just off the city's Royal Mile, it oozes atmosphere and history.

When the church first opened, in 1774, it wasn't Catholic but Episcopalian – and its name was St Paul's. Soon after its consecration, the artist Alexander Runciman was commissioned to create a series of murals for the ceiling, the most important of which was a depiction of the ascension. A few years later, though, the church was sold to a Presbyterian congregation and they decided to paint over the piece – despite the fact that it's widely regarded as Runciman's finest work.

In 1856 the church changed hands again, this time transferring to Catholic ownership, and it was given a new name – St Patrick's. At the time the city's Catholic population was expanding rapidly and the large, spacious church became the hub of Edinburgh Catholicism – at one point, there were around six hundred baptisms there a year.

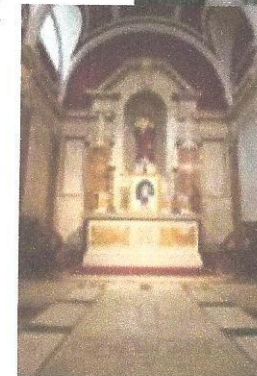
The size of the parish was no doubt how it came to have such a successful football team, founded in 1869 by one of its priests, Canon Edward Hannan. The club was Hibernian, its name derived from an ancient word for Ireland. Today the "Hibs", as they're known, are one of the top clubs in the country.

Thirty or so years after the founding of the Hibs, a new priest who was also a poet arrived at St Patrick's – Father John Gray. He had been a friend of the playwright and author Oscar Wilde and was rumoured (though this he denied) to have helped inspire the title character in Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published before Gray became a priest.

## Houses of God



Joanna Moorhead looks at an Edinburgh church and some of the characters who have been involved in its history.



7 NOVEMBER 2021

32ND SUNDAY  
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DIVINE OFFICE WEEK IV