

# Sacred light: Mayo stained glass illuminated

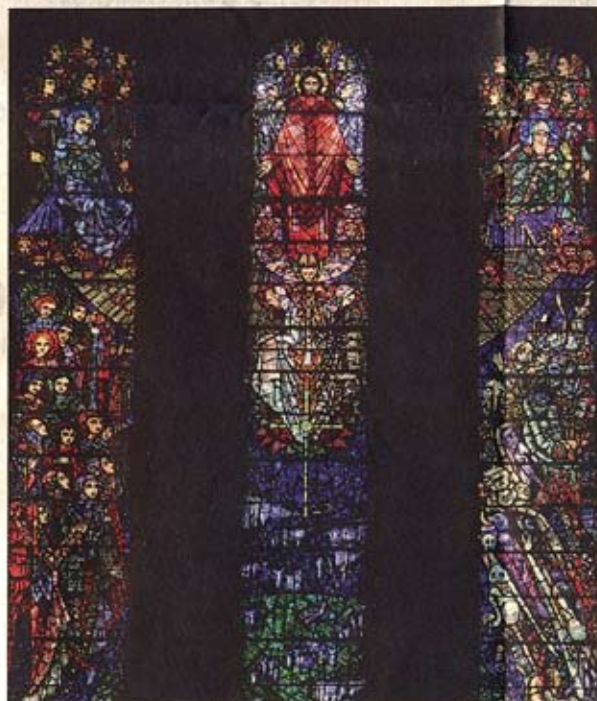
BY CRÓNA ESLER

**T**HE beauty and intricacy of the stained glass windows in a number of churches across Co Mayo is featured in a new book.

Entitled *Strangest Genius: The Stained Glass of Harry Clarke*, the book is part of a trilogy of projects based on the life and work of Harry Clarke.

The trilogy also includes [www.harryclarke.net](http://www.harryclarke.net) – a website that features the entire collection of the artist's windows. This will be launched on RTÉ's *Nationwide* programme in October. During his short life (1889 to 1931), Harry Clarke created over 160 windows for churches and private establishments in Ireland, England, the United States and Australia.

Clarke's work in the West was predominantly focused on South Mayo. The book features his exquisite windows in St Mary's Catholic Church, Ballinrobe; Roundfort Catholic Church; St Patrick's Church, Kilmaine; and St Patrick's Church, Newport. The Mayo windows are also



The window depicting the Last Judgement in Newport Church.

included in a new film documentary, *A Revel In Blue*, which will be available later this year.

In 1924, Monsignor d'Al-

ton commissioned Harry Clarke to create the eight two-light windows in St Mary's Church in Ballinrobe. These magnifi-

cent windows depict scenes from the life of Jesus and Mary, as well as eight Irish saints.

A few miles down the road in Roundfort, Clarke's seven-light window was installed in 1926. Entitled *The Ascension*, it depicts Christ ascending into heaven, surrounded by Mary and his disciples.

*The Nativity* window at St Patrick's Church in Kilmaine was created in 1926 and depicts the Holy Family, adored by the three wise men and shepherds.

*The Last Judgement* window in St Patrick's in Newport was the last window that Clarke ever designed. It was installed in 1931.

The first light depicts Our Lady with saints, angels and souls that have been saved. The central light shows Christ on judgement day – resplendent in crimson robes and a golden halo – surrounded by saints and angels dressed in sumptuous robes.


The right light depicts the damned being thrust down to hell. The green figure positioned upside down as being cast down to hell is a self-portrait of Clarke.




Ecce homo and Mafdalene in the Garden, from Ballinrobe Church.



A detail from *The Ascension*, which can be seen in Roundfort Church.



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