

The stone cross at this site marks the location of the Dunavenny Mass Rock used during the Penal times (c1650 - 1750).

Mass rocks represent important field antiquities dating from the Penal days, when by the law of the land, the people were not permitted to attend Mass. This necessitated the Catholic population having to resort to secluded places away from the beaten track to worship. Natural flat-topped rocks were used by the priest as his altar or, where such was not available, flat slabs were erected. In some cases these were

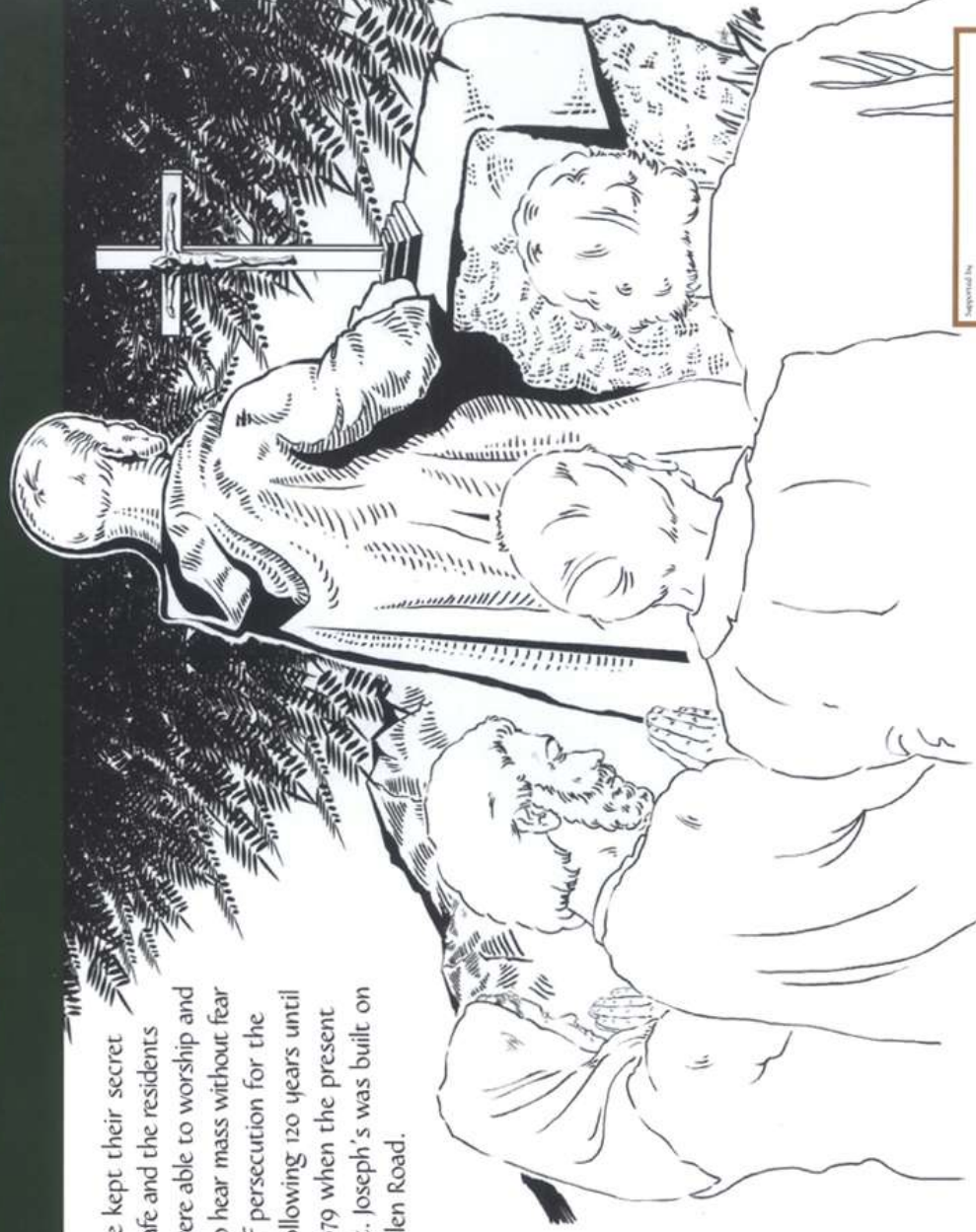
incised with a cross, and later

had commemorative plaques erected. In many localities tradition will indicate the local Mass Rock or occasionally the O.S. maps will record an example by the term "altar".

After 1749 the penal laws were relaxed and humble church buildings began to appear throughout the countryside.

In the case of Glenullin, in the early 1750s, the Reverend George Sampson, a Church of Ireland minister, sold a plot of land in the townland of Brocklough for a mill. The mill, a thatched building known to locals as 'the old chapel', was a clever disguise for a chapel and although Reverend Sampson clearly knew the hidden intentions of the local people

he kept their secret safe and the residents were able to worship and to hear mass without fear of persecution for the following 120 years until 1879 when the present St. Joseph's was built on Glen Road.



The mass rock from this site, known as the Dunavenny Mass Rock and weighing approximately 1.5 tonnes, was removed in the Spring of 1972. It is now in the Reconciliation Chapel of the Cistercian Monastery in Portlengone.

