

An 11-Day Pilgrimage to Ireland, Scotland & Northern England

11 days / 9 nights

Day 1: Monday, September 16, 2019: Departure from the USA

*How many loved your moments of glad grace/And... one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changling face (William Butler Yeats).*

Our journey begins with an overnight flight, with full meal/beverage service and in-flight entertainment, to Dublin, Ireland.

Day 2: Tuesday, September 17: Dublin

May you live all the days of your life. (Jonathan Swift)

Welcome to vibrant, soulful Dublin! Upon arrival in “Dublin's Fair City” we meet our Faith Journeys Tour Manager and transfer by motorcoach for a panoramic Dublin City Tour. Our first stop will be Christ Church Cathedral, site of Dublin’s first wooden church, built by King Sitric Silkenbeard (first Christian Viking King of Dublin in 1038). The present Cathedral, dates from 1172. Next, we visit St. Patrick's Cathedral. Built in 1192 in honor of Ireland's patron saint. It stands adjacent to the famous well, where tradition has it, St. Patrick baptized converts on his visit to Dublin. This grand, Gothic cathedral owes part of its renown for being the burial site of its former Dean, Jonathan Swift, author of Gulliver's Travels. Next, we continue on to our hotel and enjoy a group meal before getting some sleep.

Day 3: Wednesday, September 18: Wicklow & Glendalough

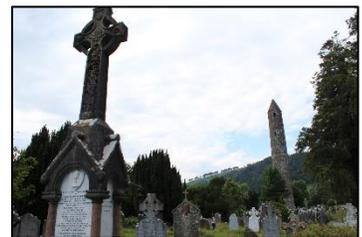
Lord, in your abbot Kevin you give an example of the gospel lived to perfection. Help us to follow him by keeping before us the things of heaven amid all the changes of this world. (Collect for St. Kevin's Day)

Today's first stop is the sprawling campus of Trinity College and its famous library. The building is home to the 8th century Book of Kells, a splendidly illuminated version of the Christian Gospels. We also get the chance to visit the Long Room. Once the principal library of the University, it now contains over two hundred thousand books and manuscripts. Next, we board our motorcoach for the short drive into the Wicklow Mountains and Glendalough, located south of Dublin. Known as “the Garden of Ireland”, it is the site of a 6th century monastic site founded by St. Kevin. Set in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the monastic remains include a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses. The Visitor Center has an interesting exhibition on Glendalough detailing the history, archaeology and wildlife of this part of Wicklow and includes an audio-visual presentation. Later, we return to Dublin to enjoy the balance of the day at leisure, before returning to our hotel for dinner and overnight accommodations.

Day 4: Thursday, September 19: Newgrange & Down

Legend credits St. Patrick with teaching the Irish about the concept of the Trinity by displaying the shamrock or 3-leaved clover to highlight the belief of 'three divine persons in the one God'.

This morning we take a morning drive out of the city and into the Boyne Valley—the most historical region of the whole island—to find the most important Irish monuments: Newgrange, Knowth and Loughcrew Cairns which are megalithic tombs, dating from 2500 B.C, and located along the valley of the river Boyne. The river is also known for the famous Battle of the Boyne in 1690 between the Catholic King James of England and the Protestant King William. The Brú Na Bóinne Visitor Center, the starting point for all visits to the monuments, is designed to present the archaeological heritage of the Boyne Valley, and features an extensive exhibition. Next it's off to the St. Patrick Centre in Downpatrick,



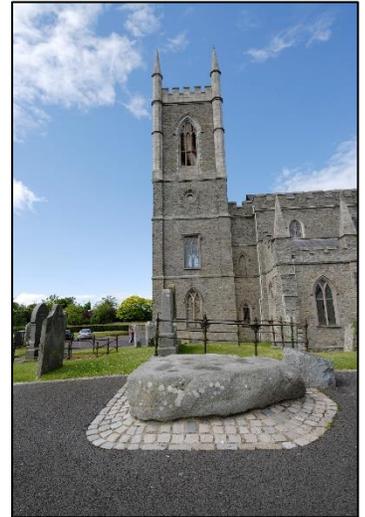
which houses a permanent exhibition telling the story St. Patrick. The exhibition, entitled 'Ego Patricius,' presents Patrick's story in his own words in the context of the period and uses state-of-the-art interpretations that gives visitors a real understanding of the history of Christianity in Ireland. We'll continue on to Down to visit the Down Cathedral, best known as the burial site of St. Patrick, Ireland's patron saint, who is thought to have died about 461. The Cathedral is the property of the Church of Ireland and has been a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for many centuries. We'll enjoy a group dinner and an overnight stay in Armagh.



Day 5: Friday, September 20: Armagh – Belfast – Irish Sea - Scotland

Pro tanto quid retribuamus (the motto of the city of Belfast taken from Psalm 116:12 ("What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?")); the Latin translates literally: "For (Pro) so much (tanto) given (quid) we shall repay (retribuamus).

Today we start our spiritual journey in Armagh, an ancient site of worship for both Celtic paganism and Christianity, and the island's "ecclesiastical capital" as St. Patrick established his principal church here. Known as "the city of saints and scholars", we will visit St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral at the summit of Armagh's principal hill, Druim Saiseach (Sallow Ridge) where St. Patrick founded his church in 445 AD. Next, we continue to Belfast to enjoy a panoramic tour of the city. The tour will take in the leaning Albert Memorial Clock tower (Ireland's answer to the Tower of Pisa!) and one of Belfast's great landmarks, the Opera House. We will pass by the City Hall, the Crown Bar (dates from 1885), Queens University and the Botanic Gardens. A visit to the Shankill and Falls Road will be of interest too, as it will give us an indication of how life was in Belfast during the troubles. Just past noon, we'll board a ferry and cross the Irish Sea to Stranraer from where we travel along the Ayrshire coast. Shortly after setting foot on Scottish soil, we reach the village of Alloway in Ayrshire, which is the birthplace of Robert Burns, Scotland's world-renowned national bard. The ruined Kirk Alloway was featured in Burns' best-know poem "Tam o' Shanter". We also pass Culzean Castle, formerly the home of the Kennedy family. Tonight we'll dine and overnight in the Ayrshire region.



Day 6: Saturday, September 21: Isles of Mull and Iona

[T]o our souerane and supream governor Christ Jesus... that such is so is not a matter of Parliamentary approval or of any temporal instrument- but of God's word (Confession of Faith, attributed to John Knox).

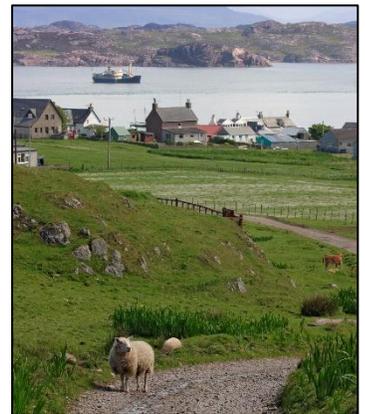
Today's excursion to the Isles of Mull and Iona begins with a ferry ride to Craignure on the Isle of Mull, island home to over 250 different bird species. Minke whales, porpoises and dolphins are among the sea life visible from boat tours off the coast of Mull. There will be free time set aside for exploring the island and its surroundings. Later in the day, another ferry (from Fiannphort) will take us to the Isle of Iona, center of Irish monasticism for centuries and presently known for its tranquility and natural beauty. We will visit Iona Abbey, of particular historical and religious interest to pilgrims and visitors alike because it is the best-preserved ecclesiastical building surviving from the Middle Ages in the Western Isles of Scotland. In front of the Abbey stands the 9th century St Martin's Cross, one of the best-preserved Celtic crosses in the British Isles. We'll enjoy dinner and stay overnight on the island.



Day 7: Sunday, September 22: Isle of Iona

Therefore glorify the LORD in the east, the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, In the coastlands of the sea. (Isaiah 24:15)

After a good night's sleep, we attend morning Eucharist at Iona Abbey before enjoying some time for exploration or personal reflection while soaking up the peaceful spirituality of the Island. According to tradition, the monastery was founded in 563 by the monk Columba and his twelve companions who went into exile on Iona and founded a monastery. Known as a great center of learning with a hugely successful scriptorium, the religious settlement of Iona played a crucial role in Scotland's conversion to Christianity. The Iona Cathedral and the religious settlement are now under the administration of the National Trust for Scotland. The abbey graveyard contains the graves of many early Scottish Kings (including Macbeth), as well as kings from Ireland, Norway and France. We'll enjoy another dinner and stay overnight on the island.



Day 8: Monday, September 23: Stirling Castle & Edinburgh

Be a bright flame before me, O God, a guiding star above me. Be a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me today, tonight, and forever. Alone with none but you, my God I journey on my way; what need I fear when you are near, O Lord of night and day? More secure am I within your hand than if a multitude did round me stand. Amen. (Prayer of St. Columba)

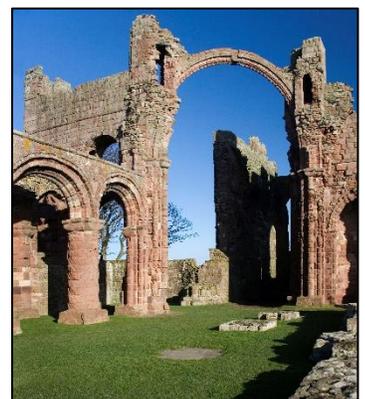
This morning, we travel from the West to the East coast of Scotland (a less than 2 hour drive) with a stopover at Stirling Castle; One of the largest and most important castles in Scotland. Stirling Castle sits atop Castle Hill and is surrounded on three sides by steep cliffs. The panoramic view of Stirling from this impregnable medieval fortress is truly magnificent. It is also where several Scottish Kings and Queens have been crowned, including Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1543. The castle is the strategic dividing line between the Scottish Highlands and Lowlands. When one looks North and then South, one can see why. Time permitting, we can walk down the hill and visit the Church of the Holy Rude. Although most groups don't think to stop here, this church is very important to both church and world history. The church was the site of the crowning of King James VI of Scotland (later to be named James I of England – the person responsible for the King James Version of the bible, which we still use in Rite I today). The preacher at that coronation was none other than John Knox! We continue on to Edinburgh to check into our hotel and enjoy a group dinner.



Day 9: Tuesday, September 24: Lindisfarne

"For with the flow and ebb, its style, Varies from continent to isle; Dry shod o'er sands, twice every day, [But] the pilgrims to the shrine find way." (Sir Walter Scott)

This morning we'll travel to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, known as the very fountain head of England's Christian heritage. It was on Holy Island that the early Christian message was honed and distributed to a largely pagan Northumberland. Lindisfarne Priory was the home of St. Cuthbert and the birthplace of a true national treasure - the Lindisfarne Gospels, a unique illuminated Latin manuscript of the gospels of Mark, Luke and John. The Lindisfarne Heritage Center contains an electronic copy of the book—the real version is kept in London's British Library—and also presents a complete history of the island that brings the story of St. Cuthbert to life. Standing on a rocky outcrop overlooking the island is Lindisfarne Castle - a small fortress first built in 1550 and today looked after by the National Trust. After enjoying the unforgettable richness of the day, return to Edinburgh for dinner and overnight stay at our hotel.



Day 10: Wednesday, September 25: Edinburgh

St. Andrew now in bliss above, thy fervent prayers renew that Scotland yet again may love the faith, entire and true; that I the cross allotted me may bear with patient love! Twill lift me, as it lifted thee, to reign with Christ above. (E.M. Barrett)

After breakfast, our day begins with what may be the most recognizable symbol of Scotland: Edinburgh Castle which sits atop the volcanic Castle Rock and not only dominates the skyline but also provides a great view of the city. The castle, dating back as far as the 9th century B.C., was a royal residence from the 12th century until the Union of the Crowns in 1603. The castle became a military base with a large garrison in the 17th century; many of the buildings we'll explore today are from its use as a military garrison. We'll also see the Honours of Scotland, known as the Scottish regalia and the Scottish Crown Jewels which date from the 15th and 16th centuries and are the oldest set of crown jewels in the British Isles. After our tour, we exit through the castle gate unto the Royal Mile, where we stop at St. Giles, the High Kirk of Scotland. This historic church, once part of the Church of England, is the burial site of the great Scottish reformer, John Knox (who's grave is, strangely enough, located under parking spot #23, found outside the church). We also want to spend some time visiting the ornately carved Thistle Chapel, home of the Knights of the Order of the Thistle, Scotland's highest order of chivalry. The remainder of the day is free for personal sightseeing, reflection and shopping. In the late evening, we will come back together at a local restaurant for a Farewell Dinner to celebrate our pilgrimage experience in Ireland and Scotland.

Day 11: Thursday, September 26: Depart for Home

We must laugh and we must sing, We are blest by everything, Everything we look upon is blest (William Butler Yeats).

After breakfast at the hotel, we transfer to either Edinburgh or Glasgow International Airport for our return flight home.

***This is a very flexible itinerary.** Except for confirmed appointments, the places of interest and the sequence of sightseeing might be changed if necessary or desirable*

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