

## The Irish Pilgrim Abroad

Each year thousands of Irish Catholic pilgrims flock to holy or significant places throughout Europe. The main sites are:

**Lourdes**, the site of a Marian apparition in 1858. It is the most visited pilgrimage shrine in the Christian world.

<http://armaghparish.net/parish-life/pilgrimages>

**Fatima** situated in the middle of Portugal is where three children, Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia experienced the manifestations of the mother of God and the Angel in 1916 and 1917.

<http://www.santuariofatima.pt/portal/index.php?id=1126>

The Holy lands allows you to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and the Disciples.

<http://www.maynoothcollege.ie/news/PilgrimageStudyTouroftheHolyLand.shtml>

The list in unending with some more of the more popular places of pilgrimage being: San Giovanni for St Pio, Lisieux for St Thérèse, Ephesus for Mary's house, Assisi for St Francis, Turin for the Shroud, Santiago de Compostela for St James, and Medjugorje for the apparition of Mary.

Whether in Italy, Spain or Israel, on our knees, at Church or at work, when we separate ourselves from the everyday concerns of the world and spend time in the presence of God we are on Pilgrimage!

The Prayer and Spirituality Commission of the Archdiocese of Armagh invite you most warmly to visit our website at

[www.spayerandspirituality.com](http://www.spayerandspirituality.com)

The Prayer and Spirituality Commission organise prayer experiences and times of reflection for parish ministry groups as well as resourcing parishes with prayer and spirituality ideas and happenings. We organise Christian meditation groups and spiritual retreats. If you follow the link above you will find a more detailed description of our work and tasks to date.



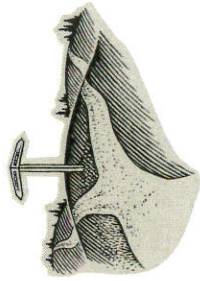
Armagh Diocese  
Prayer and Spirituality  
Commission

## The Irish Pilgrim

A Pilgrim is a traveller on a journey, often on foot, to a place of special significance – a Holy Place. In the spiritual literature of Christianity, the concept of pilgrim and pilgrimage may also refer to the experience of life in the world; *we are all pilgrims in search of moral and spiritual significance.*

*Why do people go on Pilgrimage?*

Question life's purpose  
Inspiration  
New perspective  
A change of mind  
Meditation  
Prayer  
Penance  
Change routine  
Find peace  
Spiritual adventure





## Walking with the Saints



Ireland has a long history of Pilgrims and Pilgrimage. This spiritual tradition has roots stemming from the ancient Celtic belief that all creation follows a path. From conception to birth, through life to death and then to rebirth. The Irish call this the

Oran Mor, the great song of creative life-giving energy. This mythology built into the DNA of the Celtic people was a fertile ground for a Christian seed planted by the early Saints. To the Christian Celts pilgrimage and Oran Mor were one. For the Irish, pilgrimage is part of life; intrinsically linked to nature and to God, The Irish Catholic sings the song in the pilgrimages undertaken in daily lives, whether saying the Rosary or journeying to a holy well or sacred space, pilgrimage reminds them of journeys once travelled; of the song sung before.

Turn any corner in Ireland and you are likely to find a pilgrim path or holy place. All these sites are linked to the beautiful stories and the deep Christian faith our ancestors left us.

The following is a small list of pilgrim ways in Ireland.

**Knock Shrine in Co. Mayo** is an international place of prayer and pilgrimage where over one and a half million people make their way every year. The story of Knock dates back to the 21st of August 1879 when fifteen people from the village witnessed an Apparition of Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. John the Evangelist, at an altar, with a cross and Lamb.

Information can be found at <http://www.knockshrine.ie/>

**Croagh Patrick** which overlooks Clew Bay in County Mayo, is considered the holiest mountain in Ireland. Its religious significance dates back to the time of the pagans, when people are thought to have gathered here to celebrate the beginning of harvest season. The mountain now takes the name of Ireland's patron saint, who, according to Christian tradition, fasted at the peak of the mountain for 40 days in 441. Each year, about 1 million pilgrims, climb to the summit in honour of St Patrick. At the top, there is a modern chapel where mass is celebrated and confessions are heard.

Information can be found at <http://www.croaghpatrick.com/>

**Lough Derg** is a unique island of peace. Pilgrims have been travelling to this sacred site for centuries seeking something deeper, getting closer to their real selves, continuing a tradition of their ancestors. Lough Derg allows you to escape the daily grind. Both the scenery and surroundings allow you to reflect and meditate on your life's journey. A pilgrimage to Lough Derg connects you to an Irish tradition that has spanned centuries, and offers the opportunity to unwind and explore your spirituality.

Information can be found at <http://www.loughderg.org/>

**St Brigid's Shrine and Well** in Faughart Co. Louth is where St Brigid, one of our national Patronesses, spent her early years. The ancient penitential 'stations' linked with St Brigid's Stream have been performed here from ancient times. Today pilgrims visit Fochard Bríde daily. Public pilgrimages are held during the year, a candlelight

procession takes place on the Saint's feast day (1 February), a Mass for the Sick is celebrated in early June and there is a national pilgrimage on the first weekend in July.

Information can be found at <http://irelandsholywells.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/saint-brigids-shrine-and-well-faughart.html>

**Slemish Mountain**, is the first known Irish home of Saint Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland. It is located in Co. Antrim near the town of Broughshane. The mountain which is actually a volcanic plug, saw Patrick work as a shepherd for about six years, from ages 16 through 22, for a man named Milchu. The beauty and silence of the mountain was where Patrick turned to frequent prayer. Slemish Mountain is open year-round, and on Saint Patrick's Day (17th March) large crowds hike to the top of the mountain as a pilgrimage.

Information can be found at <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/Slemish-Mountain-Ballymena-P172/>

**Saint Kevin's Way** follows in his footsteps through the Wicklow hills to the beautiful setting of Glendalough, where he spent several years as a hermit and later found a monastery. This pilgrim walk has been followed from medieval times and has the power to still your mind, inspire your heart and fill your soul. It comes as no surprise to the visitor why St Kevin is reputed to have lived for 120 years. The present remains in Glendalough tell only a small part of its story. The monastery in its heyday included workshops, areas for manuscript writing and copying, guest houses, an infirmary, farm buildings and dwellings for both the monks and a large lay population.

Information can be found at <http://www.irishtrails.ie/Trail/St-Kevins-Way--Pilgrim-Path-/371/>