

Irish Trust Talk



The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Galway
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Charity Registration Number 20009953

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust



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The Irish Pilgrimage Trust

Established in 1972, the Trust provides special pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes for children and young people with special needs. The Trust continues to grow and on Easter Sunday 2018 1,140 pilgrim carers and Guests of the Trust travelled to Lourdes for the annual week long Easter pilgrimage.



The Trust is a Registered Charity, Charity Registered Number 20009953

DONATE

Our Volunteers fundraise to cover the costs of our young GUESTS

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is NOT State Funded!

We rely on the generosity of our donors and the fundraising by our Volunteers to finance the work and activities of the Trust

To DONATE Contact 091-796622 or email:
info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust

Safeguarding Officers



Designated Liaison Person

Bernadette Connolly



Deputy Designated Liaison Person

Catherine Foley

Persons Designated with responsibility for the safety, welfare and protection of our guests

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A Word from the Chair

Helen Kirwan

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Autumn Trust Talk! For many of us the Summer months have been a time of rest and relaxation and I certainly hope that you made the very best of the wonderful sunshine that we enjoyed this Summer. I hope that the 46 groups who travelled at Easter have enjoyed a well earned rest and are now thinking about the new Trust year. 2018 has been a very successful year for the Trust. The smiles and positive feedback from Easter are still in our minds and hearts and we continue to treasure the memories created at Easter. As Our Lady pondered all these things in her heart we too ponder on the many miracles that occur in our lives as part of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

Approximately 100 people travelled with these groups this year. This pilgrimage offers an opportunity for adults who would not be able to travel alone to be accompanied and to be enriched by the Lourdes experience. The week in Hosanna House is a different experience to the Easter week but a hugely rewarding and enjoyable week for everyone concerned.

Hosanna House also welcomes our wonderful youth groups from Mayo. Each of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust groups were accompanied by youth groups, students from secondary schools and their teachers who gave up a week of their summer

length of time that suits them. Many more people help out with meals, entertainment and lots of other aspects of the week. This is truly a week of friendship and a real team effort. I would love to see more friendship weeks in our houses. My hopes for the future would be that this aspect of our organisation along with our commitment to Lourdes can grow and flourish in the coming years. Please think about volunteering for a friendship week or applying to join one of our friendship weeks as a guest.

As we begin our preparation for the 2019 Easter pilgrimage we focus once again



on the tasks of beginning fundraising, organising our carers and most importantly encouraging young people to apply to join us on our very special journey. Let us get out there this autumn and find new centres, new schools, new families to apply to travel with us! If we do not have applications we will not have a pilgrimage!



holidays and also many other weeks of preparation to assist the groups. The youth groups have also joined with some of the HCPT summer groups and the HCPT groups have been hugely enriched by the care, enthusiasm and willingness to help shown by these young people.

Friendship weeks are at this stage an integral part of the Trust Summer. There were two friendship weeks in Cois Cuain and four in Kilcuan. The friendship weeks are an extension of the Lourdes experience encompassing a holiday for the young person, respite for the families and an opportunity for carers young and older to give freely of themselves. Many carers who cannot commit to a week in Lourdes come to help on friendship week for whatever

The Trust family continues to grow and Summer is a busy time for the groups travelling to Hosanna House and the many people who help out with friendship weeks in both Cois Cuain and Kilcuan.

Three groups travelled to Lourdes during the Summer staying in Hosanna House. These groups are made up of adults with additional needs and volunteer carers and were set up to serve the young people who travelled to Lourdes at Easter but who had outgrown the Easter pilgrimage.

This new Trust year is a different year for me personally as I take on the task of Chairperson of the Trust. I am truly privileged to have been elected as Chairperson and honoured as a woman to take on the role. However this role is just one role in the Trust and we are all part of a massive team of wonderful people who make our pilgrimages happen. Every person who is part of the Trust, whether guest, fundraiser, carer, group leader, trustee or the myriad of other roles plays an indispensable role in this organisation. Each member of the Trust has a valuable part to play and we are all grateful to each other for the co-operation, friendship, encouragement and hard work taken on by so many.

Finally, if you know someone who would benefit from any of our pilgrimages please give them an application form and remember the most powerful way to promote the work of the Trust is by sharing your experience with others. Remember too that the closing date for guest applications is October 31st! May Our Lady of Lourdes and St Bernadette bless our work in this new year.

Helen

Walk the Camino Frances from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust

The Way of St. James

22nd - 29th June 2019



El Camino de Santiago was one of the most important Christian pilgrimages during medieval times. According to legend St. James's remains were carried by boat from Jerusalem to northern Spain where they were buried on the site of what is now the city of Santiago de Compostela.

Participation Fee

Total Cost is €500. This covers the cost of your Camino passport, accommodation, bus transfer from Santiago de Compostela to Sarria, breakfast and dinner, luggage transfer and travel insurance. A deposit of €100 euro must be paid to The Irish Pilgrimage Trust by 26th October, 2018.

We will be asking all participants to fundraise €1000 euro. All funds raised should be payable to The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. This will go directly to support the work of The Trust.

If you would like to join us for our 2019 Camino to Santiago de Compostela and traverse the hilly landscape of Galicia for The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, please contact the head office in Kilcuan at 091 796622 or email to info@irishpilgrimagestrust.com for an application form.

Closing date for receipt of application forms and booking fee is 26th October, 2018.

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is planning its 7th Camino along the ancient pilgrim path, also known as Camino Frances from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela from 22nd – 29th June, 2019. The route was proclaimed the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987 and was also named one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites in 1993. This route marks the final section of the Camino Frances, where we will walk through the beautiful Galician countryside of farmlands, forests and rustic villages to Santiago de Compostela which enables you to qualify for your Compostela / Pilgrim Certificate.

By joining The Irish Pilgrimage Trust's fundraising Camino you will be supporting the work of the Trust and specifically Cois Cuain our holiday home in Kilrane, Co. Wexford.

The Way of St. James is the pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where legend has it that the remains of the apostle, Saint James the Great, are buried.

Orla Tighe, 175 writes about her experience as a New Group Leader, Easter 2018

27/04/2018

Dear Ber, Zoe, Maureen, James, Pat, Denis, all Trustees and all in Kilcuan/the IPT family,

I hope this letter finds you all well and that you have all recovered from our fantastic week away.

Words won't really be able to describe what a wonderful week I had in Lourdes as Group Leader in 175 this year. However I felt it was really important to at least attempt to express my gratitude and thanks to you all for your support and guidance. From the bottom of my heart I want to thank you for helping me to have such a fantastic week/experience. Naturally enough I was a combination of nerves and excitement in the months/weeks and days leading up to Lourdes as I took on the role of Group leader for the first time. At every stage I felt supported and was overwhelmed by the positive vibes and good wishes

that were constantly being sent my way. I have appreciated every phone call, email, letter and message as well as the waves, chats & reassurance while in Lourdes.



L to R Dr Marie Hanlon and Orla Tighe, Group Leader 175

I was frequently stopped by members of the Trust / other group leaders especially those within the Eastern region to see how things were going. Perhaps that I struggled to sit down for the first few days instead preferring to stand watching over 'my flock' made my newness obvious. Every interaction gave me a boost and the advice / support was always welcomed. At times I felt like a new parent taking charge of my new family adjusting to the

challenge and experience with nerves and excitement but with the reassurance I had the extended family as backup!! The phrase "it takes a village to rear a child" comes to mind when I think of the week in Lourdes.

Our aim is always to provide a special week away for our guests and it has been a privilege to be part of that in an extra way this year. I have really enjoyed creating the special link with our guests and their families and it has been an honour to be group leader. Although I have only been a part of the Trust for four years now in a really good way it feels like a lifetime. With each year my appreciation for all that you do to create such an amazing experience for our guests / carers grows.

I am grateful for the opportunity that has been afforded to me and the skills/experience I have picked up along the way. No doubt the Easter week is life changing for our guests but the same definitely applies for us carers/volunteers. Thank you all so much for your support and please God, Easter 2019 will be a similar week of blessings and positive experiences.

Best wishes
Orla Tighe,
Group 175

Lourdes After Thoughts By Michaela Gormley, Group 751

Michaela Gormley a 5th year student from Mount St. Michael's Claremorris, reflects on the Easter 2018 pilgrimage experience with student Group 751. This is an all female group of students from Mount St. Michael's Secondary School, Claremorris and St. Joseph's Secondary School, Castlebar.

Looking back on my week in Lourdes I can say with certainty that I'm so proud of everything Group 751 has learned. Everyone from the priests, guests and helpers all create the fun, love and serendipity that Lourdes is renowned for. Our flight from Shannon to Lourdes was full of music and singing. At one stage the girls from our group even attempted 'Rock the Boat' in the middle of the aisle! This enthusiasm and playfulness set the tone for our entire week.



Michaela (left) with her sister Muireann (right) and Lisa Quinn (centre) enjoying the Irish Mass.

However, everyone's first day in Lourdes was difficult. We all wanted to be the best helpers we could be for our groups. Fr. Mike, the priest in our group, was quick to remind us that there

was a reason we had all been chosen to go to Lourdes. All we had to remember was to be true to ourselves. He also granted us with our first mantra of the week, 'feel the fear'. This means that in life there are things that challenge us but we do not need to shy away. Yes, it can be scary to make new friends or sing in front of the crowds but that doesn't mean you cannot achieve it.

I was also beyond delighted with Group 125, which I got to help for the week. I had the time of my life getting to know everyone. The days were spent with laughter as we played simple games of cards or exchanged badges with other groups. One of my fondest memories is of the International Mass. There were thousands of people gathered. Energy and excitement was palpable in the air. It was unlike any other mass I'd ever attended. By the end of the mass everyone was standing on the pews singing and dancing along with the choir.

Despite the hustle and bustle of the week we made time to sit and pray for our own intentions at the grotto. We had a chance to think about the impact we

were making in Lourdes. One of the best parts for me was also our late nights in the local café New Orleans. Here we had our music sessions and feasted on pizza and ice-cream. Fr. Mike liked to request Kodalíne's 'All I Want', and now when I hear that song I can't help but smile and think of our music-filled nights in Lourdes.



Some members of Group 751 at the Irish Mass.

On our final day we visited the City of the Poor. We had mass together and everyone got a chance to talk about their week, and no one was able to hold back the tears. No one was ready to go home. Alongside the gallons of holy water Group 751 brought home we also brought home a little piece of Lourdes in our hearts. Nothing can stop us from keeping the spirit of Lourdes alive at home. Personally this means that I try not to assume what anyone is dealing with. It is always best to be kinder than necessary. Without doubt I have a deeper understanding of what it means to be present, and how there is always a way to celebrate everyone's abilities.

Bernadette Connolly National Coordinator sets the scene for the year ahead



Bernadette Connolly
National Coordinator

It is hard to believe that the Summer is over and a new school year is beginning. How quickly times marches on! Preparations have already begun for our Easter 2019 pilgrimage with charter flights already booked, application forms for our special guests being circulated and filled in by families and volunteers booking their time off for the week after Easter. In addition, we are meeting with group leaders of our groups who

travel to Hosanna House over the summer to plan for their weeks in 2019 and with leaders of our Friendship Week groups who bring young people with additional needs to our houses in Clarinbridge, in Galway and in

Kilrane in Wexford. We are now working year round to fulfill our mission of caring for young people with special needs.

As you know, The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is a volunteer led organisation – our Trustees who run the Trust and all carers, nurses, group leaders, chaplains, youth carers give their time for free, pay their own travel costs and support the Trust by working, fundraising, caring and giving generously of their time. In the past year September 2017 to August 2018, over 1000 people benefitted in various ways from the Trust and contributed generously to the work of the Trust. To those of you who volunteered, fundraised, helped in Church gate collections, trusted us with your precious children – we say thank you very much. We are really excited as we head into another year and look forward to talking to you during the course of the year. Maureen, Zoe, James and I are working in the office and we will be happy to help you at any time!

A Parent's THANK YOU Letter to Group 162

Dear Elaine,

Many thanks to you and all the volunteers for facilitating Brian's trip to Lourdes. He had a wonderful time and it was so good for him. He has come back a more confident and independent young adult. Of course he misses Olive and he was very down on

Monday and Tuesday but we showed him the facebook page and photos and he looks at them at night and reads his diary which is a fantastic memento to have.

We cannot thank you enough for the time and the effort you make to make this happen, be in no doubt, it makes a difference and we appreciate it so much. Please pass on our sincere thanks to all.

Kind regards, Michele



FRIENDSHIP WEEKS - FW6, 2018, Cois Cuain, Kilrane, Co. Wexford by Aoife Doyle Our Special Summer Holiday Camps

Friendship Week 6 took place in Cois Cuain from the 14th to 21st of July. I have been involved with the Trust for the last four years. I was in transition year when I first was introduced to the concept of Friendship Week. Having travelled to Lourdes twice now and after volunteering at friendship week for the past four years, I find it almost impossible to compare the two experiences. However, Friendship Week is always a key date marked in my calendar well in advance. It is something I look forward all year around and make sure not to miss.

Therefore, when I was asked if I would I like to go to back to Cois Cuain this summer, the obvious answer was yes. Many of the carers arrived Saturday evening followed by the guests who arrived one by one. From the outset it was clear that everyone, carers and guests included, would be joining us for various periods some for a day, overnight and some for a week. I felt at home the moment I stepped through the doors of the

house in Kilrane, and this was reinforced the moment I was reacquainted with old friends and introduced to new ones.

By Sunday morning, I found both carers



and guests in such a short time became a family and this was embodied throughout the week. We took a walk after breakfast on the nearby beach of St. Helens where we had a great time playing games followed by a picnic. Once we returned we were lucky enough to receive a visit from Fr. Tom Dalton who celebrated mass with us and we were all delighted to get the opportunity to sing rise and shine.

By Monday everyone was fully settled in and we had our first outing to Kennedy Park. This was fantastic and catered to

everyone's interests whether that was the history buffs, those who enjoy a stroll in nature and simply those who are partial to a tasty picnic in the sun.

The week was action filled with countless activities such as obstacle courses, arts and crafts, quizzes, sing songs, dancing lessons and of course a few films too. We were lucky to go on more trips such as our one to Our Lady's island on Wednesday where one very special guest treated us to a rendition of Panis Angelicus, and with such great weather we couldn't resist getting ice-cream too!

Thursday was a picnic in Kilmore Quay followed by some outdoor dancing and our annual barbecue that evening. On Friday we had a trip to Leisure Max for bowling and lunch where we received a warm welcome from all the staff. It was home on Saturday morning after a great week of sun, fun and friendship.

If I had to describe the week in one word it would have to be "magical". I could not recommend it highly enough for new guests or carers. The experience, the memories, and the people you meet along the way are truly remarkable. Roll on Summer of 2019.



World Meeting of Families 2018

A reflection on the event and the Pope's visit by Trust President

Bishop Donal McKeown

People remember big football matches or concerts or family events for different reasons. But the 2018 World Meeting of Families and the visit of Pope Francis will remain one of those big national occasions – even for those who had no particular interest in the proceedings. I hope that it was an opportunity for two things.



L to R Annette McDermott, Bishop Donal, Teresa Lee

Firstly, the Pope held up a mirror for the Irish Church to look at itself, blotches and all. I don't just mean the struggle to cope with the pain of the past and accepting a truer story about our history. I also include the energy and enthusiasm of so many, including young people, who are struggling to find a credible message in today's consumerist society.

Secondly, Pope Francis also held up a mirror to Irish society in general. His call to cherish family 'as the glue of society' spoke to the reality of family life for many people. He also used straight words in Dublin Castle.

Can we say that the goal of creating economic or financial prosperity leads of itself to a more just and equitable social order? Or could it be that the growth of a materialistic "throwaway culture" has in fact made us increasingly indifferent to the poor and to the most defenceless members of our human family, including the unborn, deprived of the very right to life?



The Irish Pilgrimage Trust has had the mission of both cherishing those who have special needs in our society – and enabling families to feel supported as they love their special family members. The Easter pilgrimage to Lourdes provides a superb model of a 'temporary family' where both the guests and the wonderful helpers can bond and learn what it means to belong. That is not just helpful for both the guests and their family at home. It can be an invaluable formative experience for generous young people. The lessons of service, patience, dedication and gentleness can last a lifetime.



The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is working in an Irish context where there will be a new

pressure to judge children with special needs as not being worthy of life. Our Easter pilgrimage, therefore, also has a prophetic role. In a holy place, it testifies to the dignity of the individual and to human capacity for heroic love.

Lourdes is not just a religious theme park, a holy Disneyworld where you can go for a bit of religious candyfloss – whose sugary taste is quickly forgotten.

In his document *Amoris Laetitia* (219), Pope Francis wrote that 'young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope'. Our pilgrimage and pilgrimage family do plenty of dancing in Lourdes! But the Trust also wants to dance together in the face of the very real challenge that we all face – and to show that, together in love, we can dance together into the future, no matter how difficult our situations may be.

At the Annunciation Mary was asked to take on an impossible task. When she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, she did not complain. On the contrary she said, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour". Bernadette faced opposition, poverty and bad health with equanimity.

I hope that the WMOF in Dublin will help us all in The Irish Pilgrimage Trust to

1. Cherish every family, however it may be structured. It is where people best live and grow;
2. Support and campaign for families that are threatened by homelessness or economic pressures;
3. Witness to the power of generous love, especially towards those who most need to feel included and cherished.

And then, behind all the razzamatazz and the organisation, the WMOF will prove to have been a time of great blessing



LOURDES 2019 APPLICATIONS

DO YOU KNOW SOME YOUNG PERSON WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM A FREE TRIP TO LOURDES NEXT EASTER?

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is seeking applications from or on behalf of young people, children and young adults for consideration to receive an invitation to join the Trust on it's annual Lourdes Easter Pilgrimage/Holiday 2019. We have over 400 Guest places available.

ALL OUR YOUNG GUESTS TRAVEL FREE

Application Forms may be downloaded from our website www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com or contact our office directly on 091-796622 for an Application Form

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE 31st OCTOBER 2018

FRIENDSHIP WEEKS, SUMMER 2019

APPLICATIONS are invited from young people with special needs who wish to be considered for our KILCUAN and COIS CUAIN Summer 2019 Friendship Weeks. Forms must be submitted before 31st May 2019

HOSANNA HOUSE SUMMER 2019

APPLICATIONS are invited from adults with special needs who wish to be considered for our Hosanna House Summer Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Forms must be submitted before 31st May 2019

EASTER PILGRIMAGE 2019

To be considered for our 2019 Pilgrimage / Holiday to Lourdes application forms must be received at our head office in Kilcuan on or before 31st OCTOBER 2018.

We welcome applications from young people with a:

Physical disability or illness or a learning disability (aged 11 - 30 years);

Serious illness up to age 11 years old accompanied by a parent or guardian (FAMILY GROUPS)

Applicants will not be excluded or discriminated against on the grounds of social or financial status, religion, nationality, racial or ethnic origin.

KILCUAN, Clarinbridge, Galway.



AVAILABILITY

KILCUAN is available on a self catering basis to organisations and groups serving people with special needs to provide respite holiday breaks.

For information on availability and costs contact James McHugh on 091-796622 or email: jmchugh@irishpilgrimagetrust.com

COIS CUAIN, Kilrane, Co. Wexford



AVAILABILITY

COIS CUAIN is available on a self catering basis to families/organisations/groups serving people with special needs to provide respite breaks.

For information on availability and costs please contact our office on 091-796622 or email: info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com