

2011 CELTIC PILGRIMAGE ITINERARY

Our group flight will depart on Sunday, June 19. Since some members will be flying from other cities, the group will gather for the first time as we board our coach at the Manchester airport on Monday morning, June 20

DAY 1: Monday, June 20 - Our first stop is Chester, an ancient English walled city. The well-preserved Roman ruins remind us that it was most probably Roman soldiers who first introduced Christianity to the island. We cross the border into Wales and make our way to Maen Achwynfan, one of the tallest remaining high crosses in all of Britain. Gathered around this symbol of the first Celtic Christians, we share in our welcoming service, the first of our daily times of worship. Our drive along the mountains of Snowdonia ends at Llandudno.. B, D

DAY 2: Tuesday, June 21 - Today we cross to the island of Anglesey. After visiting the ruins of Penmon Priory, a coastal monastery founded by Seiriol in the 6th century and our first holy well in Wales, we have lunch in Beaumaris with its views of the mainland mountains. We return to Llandudno to enjoy another free evening in this popular seaside resort. B

DAY 3: Wednesday, June 22 - Our early morning fast ferry from Holyhead soon arrives in Dun Loaghaire, the seaport of Dublin, Ireland. Our Irish coach takes us into the city where we visit Trinity College to view the magnificent exhibition of the famous illuminated Book of Kells. There is time to have lunch and explore a part of the city that is filled with museums and other points of interest. Later this afternoon we are driven into the Wicklow mountains south of Dublin to Glendalough in the valley of the two lakes, site of the sixth century monastic settlement of St. Kevin. We check into the Glendalough Hotel, adjacent to the monastic site and our home for the next three nights. B, D

DAY 4: Thursday, June 23 - This morning we enjoy a program at the Glendalough Visitor Centre that introduces us to this 6th century monastic site. The remainder of the morning and afternoon is free to walk the trails and visit the round tower, lakes, stone churches and numerous high crosses of this inspiring reminder of the Celtic monastic tradition. B, D

DAY 5: Friday, June 24 - Today we drive to Kildare, home of St. Brigid, where local guides lead our visit to the cathedral and Brigid's well. We return to Glendalough this afternoon and the evening is free to continue our personal enjoyment of the area. B, D

DAY 6: Saturday, June 25 - As we begin our journey north, our first stop is the ancient passage tomb complex at Bru' na Boinne in County Meath. This afternoon we visit the high crosses of Monasterboice Abbey and the ruins of Mellifont Abbey, one of the first Cistercian foundations that slowly replaced the native Celtic abbeys. We continue our drive into Northern Ireland and our hotel in Belfast. B, D

DAY 7: Sunday, June 26 - This morning another of the world's largest fast ferries takes us to Troon, Scotland. Met by our UK coach, we enjoy the breathtaking beauty of mountains and lunch at the idyllic village of Luss on the shore of Loch Lomond on our way to the coastal town of Oban. The evening is free to enjoy the wonderful seafood of this "Gateway to the Isles." B

DAY 8: Monday, June 27 - Today we travel by ferry to the Island of Mull. We drive across Mull to catch the passenger ferry to the crown jewel of our pilgrimage, the Isle of Iona. Following an orientation session and dinner at the hotel, worship is in the Abbey church. B, D

DAY 9: Tuesday, June 28 - Today we have the opportunity to join other visitors in the weekly pilgrimage around the island. Led by a member of the resident community, the story of Iona is retold as the group stops at significant sites along the way. Worship is in the Abbey church every evening, often followed by a traditional community gathering for story telling, singing and dancing. B, D

DAY 10: Wednesday, June 29 - Today is a free day. This island has been a place of pilgrimage for over a thousand years. There is time to explore on your own and there are boat trips to the nearby islands. B, D

DAY 11: Thursday, June 30 - This morning we leave Iona. Traveling again across Mull and through the beautiful Highlands of Scotland, we cross into England and on to Lindisfarne (Holy Island). Our guide is a member of the Durham faculty who will introduce us to the rich Christian heritage of this corner of England. In 634 a monastic

community, established here by a group of monks from Iona led by Aidan, evangelized the whole of Northumbria (northeastern England). The illuminated Lindisfarne Gospels were created here. After a tour of the abbey ruins and time for exploration of the island, we drive to our hotel in Bamburgh, whose castle overlooks Lindisfarne. B

DAY 12: Friday, July 1 - After visiting the Bede's World exhibit and the monastic ruins at Jarrow, we arrive at the historic cathedral city of Durham. Durham Cathedral was begun in 1093 and this "finest example of Norman architecture in England" was completed in 1133. The tombs of both Cuthbert and Bede are located here. Adjacent to the cathedral is Durham Castle. Founded in 1072, it was the palace of the Prince Bishops of Durham until 1832 when it became the foundation college of the University. Afternoon tours will end in time for attendance at Evensong in the cathedral. B

DAY 13: Saturday, July 2 - Today we visit Hadrian's Roman Wall, stopping to view some of its restored fortifications and ongoing archeological digs. The afternoon is free to explore Durham and the cathedral. Following dinner, our group will worship in the 12th century Norman Chapel in the castle. B, D

DAY 14: Sunday, July 3 - Today we travel to Whitby, site of the famous 664 synod which marked the beginning of the end of a distinctive native Celtic Christianity in the British Isles. Then it is on to York, the historic ecclesiastical capital of northern England. It was in 685 in York Minster that Cuthbert of Lindisfarne was consecrated bishop and given the task of uniting the English Church. We are free to walk the city wall, visit the cathedral and explore the medieval streets until our coach departs for the hotel at Manchester Airport. B

DAY 15: Monday, July 4 - This morning we board our return flight to the USA, arriving this afternoon.