

Irish Trust Talk



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The Irish Pilgrimage Trust, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Galway
091-796622 www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com
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A Word- from the Chair

Denis McCarthy

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Irish Trust Talk!

2017 has been both a busy and successful year for the Irish Pilgrimage Trust, with over 1,100 pilgrims joining us on our Easter Pilgrimage this year. We were blessed with an exceptionally enjoyable pilgrimage this Easter, with wonderful weather and a somewhat under worked medical team: no doubt those two phenomena are related. Lourdes was a riot of colour and song for Easter week as over 40 groups from The Irish Pilgrimage Trust joined numerous others from our sister Trusts from all over the world.

Once again, we were ably lead by Bishop Donal McKeown, our Trust president, who did a wonderful job both in leading our main liturgies and providing pastoral support to various groups within the Trust over the course of his time with us.

My thanks to everybody who helped to make Pilgrimage 2017 such an enjoyable and meaningful journey for us all.

No sooner does one pilgrimage cycle ends than another one begins. We are now beginning our preparations for Pilgrimage 2018, with the first task being to ensure we have plenty of applications from deserving young people to participate in our pilgrimage next year. To travel on the pilgrimage with the Trust has been a great privilege and benefit for many young people, and I would ask all of those associated with the Trust to assist us in ensuring that deserving young people do not miss out for want of knowing about the pilgrimage.

If you know a young person who would benefit from travelling with us please feel free to download an application form (just google **www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com/forms** and follow the link to download the form) and have the applicant's family fill the form out. It's very simple and you could make an enormous difference in a young per-

son's life by simply doing this.

We are also of course already well into the fundraising drive for 2018. Volunteers with the Trust have always been justifiably proud of the fact that we fundraise not to cover our personal pilgrimage costs but to allow young people to travel with us free of charge. This allows young people who otherwise could not afford to come to Lourdes the opportunity to do so, and it is a vital part of what we do. Fundraising is never easy, and the Trust does not have significant reserves, meaning that it is a constant struggle to ensure we can fund the Pilgrimage each year.

I would ask all friends of the Trust to consider donating to the charity (there's a big purple 'Donate' button on our website!), or indeed to consider including The Irish Pilgrimage Trust in your will. Bequests are one of the biggest sources of fundraising for our brethren in the English Trust and there is no reason why it should not be the same for us here in Ireland. We would gratefully appreciate if you could include the Trust in your will as you plan for the ultimate inevitability.

In closing, thank you all for your prayers and support for our wonderful organisation, and here's to another great year in 2018.

Denis

The Trust VOLUNTEERS - Who Are They

They are the women and men from all walks of life who are driven by their desire to help those with special needs, who may need of additional assistance or support and who may benefit from our care. The Irish Pilgrimage Trust is a Volunteer led organisation run by a Board of VOLUNTEER Trustees drawn from our groups and regions around the country. Each year more than 850 like minded people volunteer with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

Our Volunteers include Doctors, Nurses, Chaplains, Teachers, other professionals and skilled people. The Trust's youth and student volunteer program has been a particular blessing. A number of transition year students join our Lourdes and Friendship Weeks as student helpers and bring their caring gifts, new life, energy, fun and support to their groups. We are also fortunate to have Students Nurses join us and their volunteering is also recognised by their course. ALL Volunteers with the Trust are vetted and are also bound by the Trust's Code of Practice and Safeguarding policies and attend training.

What do our Volunteers do?

Volunteers organise and take part in the annual Easter Pilgrimage and summer Hosanna House pilgrimages to Lourdes as well as the Cois Cuain and Kilcuan Summer Friendship Weeks for young people with special needs.

The Trust Volunteers give up their free time and holidays to provide care, support and companionship to the Guests of the Trust and do so at their own cost.

All of this is only possible due to their fundraising efforts as the Trust is totally reliant on fund raising and private donations. The funds raised cover the full cost of Guests while all volunteers pay their own fares. This is just one of the exceptional sacrifices and commitments made by every volunteer.

Many Volunteers return year on year to participate. Many former students return as adult volunteers and a number have also become group leaders. The Trust is a community for all ages, all abilities bound by a shared commitment to care and support those who require additional help or have additional needs. This is acted out in practical ways by sharing time and experiences together that change lives very often in positive ways.

Being a volunteer is not always easy but is always rewarding in the most unexpected ways. Each volunteer brings their own individual gifts to their group without which the group is incomplete.

Our Special Volunteer Supporters

The Trust is very fortunate and grateful to receive the kindness and generosity of the very many volunteer supporters who give freely of their time helping out at Church gate collections, assisting with organising fundraising events, cyclists and others throughout the regions. Many of our supporters have not travelled with the Trust but understand the vital nature of our work. Volunteering of this nature underlines the value of the Trust's work and is an acknowledgement of the wonderful work of our groups.

**If you would like to become a Volunteer with
The Irish Pilgrimage Trust contact our
Head Office Tel. 091-796622 or email
info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com**

Quote: **We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.** - Mother Teresa



VOLUNTEERS

A very special journey for Guests of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust

Application Forms are now available for our Easter 2018 Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Completed forms for children and young people with special needs must be sent to Kilcuan on or before 31st October 2017.

Forms are available from Head Office in Kilcuan or can be downloaded online from www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com/forms

Marian Lynch
My son travelled to Lourdes Easter 2014. It was his first time away from home without the family and his first aeroplane journey. He had a ball and we were happy to allow him travel with this excellent organisation



Sharon Lennon
My daughter Melissa can't wait for her turn to go again. She loves that trip so much



GUESTS

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust provide special pilgrimage holidays to children and young people who have additional needs. In 2017 over 1,100 volunteers and guests participated in our Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Each year the Trust cares for over almost 1,000 guests through its annual Easter and Summer trips to Lourdes, in southern France and also here at home in our purpose built homes in Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co Galway and in Cois Cuain, Rosslare Harbour in Co Wexford.

A completed application form must first be submitted to our Head Office in Kilcuan for a family member, relative or friend with special needs who wishes to be considered for our Easter Pilgrimage, our Hosanna House summer pilgrimages or Friendship Weeks here in Ireland.

DID YOU KNOW that guests who travelled with the Trust in 2013 or earlier are now eligible to apply for a place once again in 2018!

Following detailed consideration invitations are issued to those whom the Trust believe it can best care and provide for during the Easter and other pilgrimages. Invitations are issued before Christmas to those selected to join the Trust as Guests on our Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes. ALL Guests for the Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes travel free of charge, including flights, accommodation, meals and activities.

The criteria is as follows:

- Children aged 11 years old to 30 years old with a physical disability or illness or a learning disability
- Infants up to the age of 11 years old with serious illness or life threatening conditions will be considered for one of our Family Groups; The selected child and a parent will be invited as Guests

GUESTS

EASTER PILGRIMAGE 2017 -

More Memories from The Sunny Pilgrimage

The feeling that you get when you put a smile on the guests faces or they put a smile on yours is priceless and I would pay any money to do it all over again. - Hannah Cleary Second Level Student and Youth Carer Group 751



My week in Lourdes was the best week of my entire life where I met amazing inspirational people and learned a lot about myself. I learned that it's the simple things in life such as a smile that can make someone's day - Rachel Barrett, Second Level Student and Youth Carer Group 751

From group leader to carers to guests I couldn't have asked for a better crew to spend the week with. We traveled with a jet set group which may have added further to my own experience because the fact that they were that bit older meant they had more opinions and outlooks to share with the rest of us. Some of the people I met I will have a friendship with for life -- the guests, to a head, had some of the most wonderful hearts I've come across and were just lovely people who were full of craic and enthusiasm. Group 306 made my first Lourdes trip worth it -- unforgettable in the best possible way - Ronan McGurrian, New Carer

FUNDING

Trust Chairman Denis McCarthy reminds us that *“Fundraising is never easy, and the Trust does not have significant reserves, meaning that it is a constant struggle to ensure we can fund the Pilgrimage each year.”*

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust does NOT receive public funding or annual subventions. The Trust therefore relies totally on fundraising and voluntary donations to fund its activities. We are always heartened by the ongoing support we receive and we are grateful for the generosity of our donors and benefactors and all those who contribute financially to the Trust.

Denis further states that *“Volunteers with the Trust have always been justifiably proud of the fact that we fundraise not to cover our personal pilgrimage costs but to allow young people to travel with us free of charge. This allows young people who otherwise could not afford to come to Lourdes the opportunity to do so, and it is a vital part of what we do.”*



Many challenges in recent times impacted directly on fundraising. There are many worthy causes and competing needs.

However, there are few greater needs than those faced by children and young people with physical or learning disabilities or illness.

The volunteers of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust actively and positively engage with families, friends and the young people concerned to bring new experiences and respite to those in need through our programs of pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes and to our special homes in Galway and Wexford. The funds raised by the Trust ensure that our Guests can enjoy these pilgrimage experiences FREE OF CHARGE.

Donate

WE WANT TO ASK YOU TO SUPPORT OUR WORK AND DONATE to the Trust. This can be done in a number of ways, for example simply go online to - www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com and press the DONATE button and follow the instructions.

You and your family and friends can also ensure that the work of the Trust continues by including The Irish Pilgrimage Trust in your will. Many people are now choosing this method of bequests.

You can also make regular donations by setting up a Direct Debit and make monthly donations to this worthy charity.

Thank you.

**To find out more about how you can include The Irish Pilgrimage Trust in your will please contact
Bernadette Connolly
on 091 796622 - or - email info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com**

FUNDING



COIS CUAIN **The Trust's very special** **Holiday Home in the** **Sunny South-East.**

Our purpose built home in the South-East was opened in 2010.

COIS CUAIN may be rented by Families with members who have special needs or by organisations and groups who specifically cater to persons with special needs.

It is rented on a Self-Catering basis for short holiday respite breaks. The

house accommodates 17 persons - this includes 11 beds on the ground floor and 6 beds upstairs.

COIS CUAIN is located close to St. Helen's Golf Resort and the local beach is an added attraction. The house is also ideally situated for day trips to many local attractions that include Hook Head, Kilmore Quay, Wexford town and of course the many fine restaurants and children's entertainment centres.

For Booking enquiries call 091-796622 or email info@irishpilgrimagetrust.com



CYCLE 2018 is up and 'running' following its very successful launch in Lourdes last Easter. We are thrilled with the response to date, and also with the fact that we have so

many new 'first-time' cyclists this year. This is very much welcomed by the Trust as well as being hugely encouraging for this unique biennial event. In 2018 our cycle route to Lourdes will be almost 1,000 km over 7 days. Its importance as a fund raiser for The Irish Pilgrimage Trust cannot be overstated.

The Cycling begins in earnest on 25th and 26th November 2017 when the first meeting and practice cycle takes place in Kilcuan. It will be the first opportunity for cyclists, back-up crew and organisers to get together as a group. This is a very important weekend in our preparation for France. We begin implement-

ing our plans and fine tuning the roles and responsibilities for everybody involved. On Sunday morning 26th our cyclists will set off from Kilcuan on a 100km cycle through county Galway supported by the back-up team.

WE wish everyone involved every success with reaching their fundraising targets and that the cyclists will get the good weather they deserve to suit their training during the coming months.

REGISTRATION for CYCLE 2018 remains open until early November. Application Forms and Further information are available from Kilcuan. Contact James McHugh at 091-796622 or on mobile 087-2508074.

James can also be contacted on email at jmchugh@irishpilgrimagetrust.com



Please SUPPORT our Volunteers and Cyclists who are raising funds for children and young people with special needs. The Funds raised enable the Trust to provide these young people with special Pilgrimage Holidays to Lourdes free of charge every Easter and respite to families. THANK YOU