

Irish Trust Talk

Spring 2009 No. 80



Bernadette Our Friend

Bernadette Our Friend



Our Theme this year is “Bernadette Our Friend”.

As Easter approaches, we ask you to remember us in your prayers so that our time in Lourdes may be blessed and that we may come to see St. Bernadette as our friend not just in Lourdes but throughout the year as well. Perhaps you could pray the Trust Prayer below with your families in preparation for our Pilgrimage.

Dear Loving God,

In Lourdes, where Mary came and spoke with Bernadette, she showed your love for us in a wonderful way. Thank you for touching us with your love. Help us to bring your love to all those we are able to help, especially our families, our friends, and all those we meet in the Trust always and forever. Amen.

Our Lady of Lourdes,

Pray for us

St. Bernadette,

Pray for us.

Prayer for the Journey

May the God who called our father Abraham to journey into the unknown, and guarded him and blessed him, protect us too and bless our journey. May His confidence support us as we set out. May His Spirit be with us on the way, and may He lead us back to our home in peace. Those we love, we commend to His care. He is with them, we shall not fear. As for ourselves, may His presence be our companion, so that blessing may come to us and to everyone we meet. Blessed are you, Lord, whose presence travels with His people. Amen.

A Time to Remember

During the month of November, evenings of Remembrance were held in different regions throughout the country. November has been given a special significance in the life of the Church for remembering our beloved dead, and in Ireland, we have a great tradition of doing just this! It was therefore fitting, that we as an organisation, remembered those who have played such a vital role in the life of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. The Trust exists not only because of the people who are connected with the organisation now, but we owe a great debt of gratitude to the many people who have gone before us who contributed to making The Trust the organisation that it is today.

To them we say thank you for their generosity, their inspiration, their legacy, their life!

The evenings of remembrance were opportunities for The Trust Family to gather together, to remember in a very special way, all those who were so much part of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust’s experience. As well as remembering guests and carers, the evening was a time to remember and give thanks for all our fundraisers, benefactors, families and all who have supported the work of The Trust in any way.

The evening consisted of prayer and music, reflections and quiet time. Afterwards, people gathered for light refreshments and this gave people a chance to share their own experiences of loss.

We hope this will become an annual event in each of the regions. A time to remember! A time to recall! A time to pray! A time to give thanks! Loss has been a part of all our journeys but it also shows us what is most precious in life as is the love we shared, for which we can only be grateful.



I Have Called You by Name

The international conference on the theme “I Have Called You by Your Name” took place from the 14 – 16th November in Lourdes. The keynote speakers, the Larondina dancers and the seminar facilitators inspired all present and enlightened our vision and understanding of disability in the mission of the Church.

The crisp Autumnal weather, clear blue skies, good food and great company enhanced what can only be described as a thought provoking, refreshing and uplifting weekend.

The enthusiasm and energy of each speaker was brought alive as they shared their own experiences with us, as well as some anecdotes.

For me, the most poignant message from the conference was the importance of slowing down. Jean Vanier in his heart-rending story of Eric portrayed the importance of slowing down and being at peace with ourselves. Society and the demands of everyday life propel us to move too fast and we miss the real meaning of life. We may fail to realise and address

the fragility of being human and the hidden disabilities that lie within all of us. In the words of Jean Vanier “*we all have these hidden disabilities, which is a difficulty to relate, a difficulty to forgive, not to be controlled by fear, by prejudice, to think we are part of an elite or whatever it is. No. We’re all people who are disabled. With some, it’s more visible, it’s obvious. Eric is very visible.*”

Sometimes our busy lifestyles mean we don’t take time to talk to others and take notice. The conference provided the opportunity to talk to strangers, an element of pilgrimage as alluded to by Fr. Michael Drumm, another key note speaker. Upon return from pilgrimage, we should draw upon our experience there to enhance our relationships at “home”.

Each evening culminated with performances from the Larondina dancers. The ethos and spirituality of this conference for me was depicted through their gentle, graceful and elegant movement which touched all present.

Sinead McCallan



You can listen to recordings of the Keynote Speakers at the conference on our website www.irishpilgrimagestrust.com

Pilgrimage 2009



Preparations are ongoing for our next Pilgrimage. Young people have been selected and invited to travel to Lourdes with us on Easter Sunday 12th April until Saturday 18th April. Each young person has been assigned to a group and group leaders are contacting families to organise visits to the young people who have been selected for their groups. The office is very busy at this time finalising numbers for flights, ensuring that all necessary paperwork is completed and returned to us and getting passports for all young people who will be travelling with us.



**The Irish
Pilgrimage Trust**

PRESIDENT

Bishop Dermot O'Mahony
Kilcuan, Clarenbridge
Co Galway

CHAIRPERSON

Mr Gerry Martin
Nunsland, Eadestown
Co Kildare

TREASURERS

Mr James White
Ballindinas, Barntown
Wexford

Northern Ireland
Damian McNicholl
6 Cedarhurst Court
Cedarhurst Road
Belfast BT8 7AA

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Bernadette O'Connell
Kilcuan

Clarenbridge, Co Galway
Tel: 091-796622
Fax: 091-796916
Email:

boconnell@irishpilgrimagetrust.com
www.irishpilgrimagetrust.com

KILCUAN MANAGER

Pat Jordan
Kilcuan

Clarenbridge
Co Galway
Phone: (091) 796900
Fax: (091) 796916
Email:

pjordan@irishpilgrimagetrust.com

BOARD MEMBERS

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Charity Number 5992

A Note from the Chairperson

Welcome to the latest edition of the Trust Newsletter and, on behalf of the Board, can I take the opportunity to wish the entire family of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust every best wish for 2009.

The early months of the year in the life of the Trust are, of course, filled with renewed hope, excitement and anticipation as we look forward to our annual Easter and Hosanna House Pilgrimages to Lourdes and to our Friendship Weeks in Kilcuan. It is also the time of year when all our groups begin to come together in earnest to begin their planning, visits and fundraising events. In particular, spare a thought for all our Group Leaders at this time who so generously and unselfishly take on the responsibility of the leadership of the groups with all the attendant workload. We wish them all well with their preparations.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank all the Trustees for all their work and contribution, much of it behind the scenes, throughout the entire year. The Trust is fortunate to have their talent and expertise at its disposal.

Most importantly, this is the time of year in the Trust when over 450 families all over Ireland, many becoming aware of our work for the first time, are looking forward to a member of their family joining us on our Pilgrimage journey over the coming months. What a mix of emotions it must be for parents, in particular, to contemplate allowing their child to join us on this journey and what an incredible privilege for all of us to accept that responsibility. It is this privilege and responsibility which encourages and drives us all to ensure that our planning and preparations for this year's Pilgrimage are managed with absolute professionalism and attention to detail. We owe all our families and the Trust nothing less. In this regard, be assured that Bernadette and all our team in Kilcuan are available at all times to support you and your group in your preparations.

This edition of the newsletter has been compiled and edited by a new team. We wish them well and thank them for their work. It is appropriate, therefore, at this stage to extend our sincere thanks to both Richard Scriven and Des Keane who have laboured on this Newsletter over many, many years. I want to thank them both sincerely on behalf of the Board for their enormous contribution to the Trust over all these years. I have no doubt that the standard of this publication would not have been achieved without their incredible efforts and talents.

Building Project Update

You will be aware that we have been working for some time now on the provision of a new residential facility in the South East having secured a grant from the Dormant Accounts Fund. Our vision for this project is to provide a facility, designed and equipped for special needs usage, which will offer the flexibility for use by individual families as well as groups. After a number of false starts and planning disappointments we identified an existing property in Kilrane, Rosslare which can be modified to suit our needs. We have received planning permission for this project, completed the tender process and, I am delighted to be able to tell you that, we are now in the final stages of completing the purchase. With a fair wind, we expect to begin this exciting development in the work of the Trust within the next month and I look forward to updating you with a progress report at our National Meeting in March and in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Finally, I want to thank you all for your ongoing support for the life and work of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust. This important work could not continue without the efforts and contribution of so many people, in particular, our Leaders, Carers, Regional Officers, Benefactors, Staff and Trustees. We also remember at this time the sacrifice of all our members' families, our young people and their families, past and present, and all those who keep us and the Trust in their prayers. *What a difference you make and how lucky we are.*

I hope you enjoy this edition of Trust Talk and look forward to seeing you in 2009.

With every best wish,

Gerry Martin

Im Memoriam

Eileen Boyle	173
Imelda McIlvar	103
Michael Fitzgerald	113
Billy Rea	126
Edward Kearney	174
Catherine Kelly	303
Stella Corey	63
Michael Devlin	63
Anne Marie McNamara	63
Thomas McKemey	113
Rebecca Reynolds	163
Mchael Hanley	Cyclist

May they Rest in Peace

St. Bernadette



During the Jubilee Year of 2008 in Lourdes we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the apparitions. We were invited to walk the jubilee way: visiting the Parish Church where Bernadette was baptised, the Hospital chapel where she received her First Holy Communion, the Cachot where she lived and finally the grotto where Mary greeted Bernadette. During this year the Lourdes authorities have invited all pilgrims to follow the Way of Bernadette. It is not so much to follow the life story of Bernadette but rather to explore four components of her Christian life and nourish our own life with God through her experience. So again this year we will walk the 'jubilee way' and be invited to deepen our love of Jesus and his Mother through the story of Bernadette.

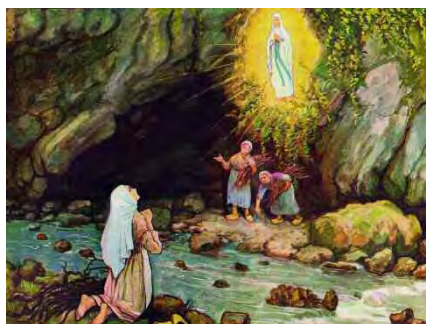


Bernadette was born on January 7th 1844 and lived her life in Lourdes and Never. Daughter of François Soubirous (1807–1871), and his wife Louise (née Castérot) (1825–1866), Bernadette was the eldest of five children who survived infancy. Bernadette was baptized at the local parish church, St. Pierre's, on January 9, which was her parents' wedding

anniversary. Bernadette's godmother was Bernarde Casterot, her mother's sister. Hard times had fallen on France and the family lived in extreme poverty.

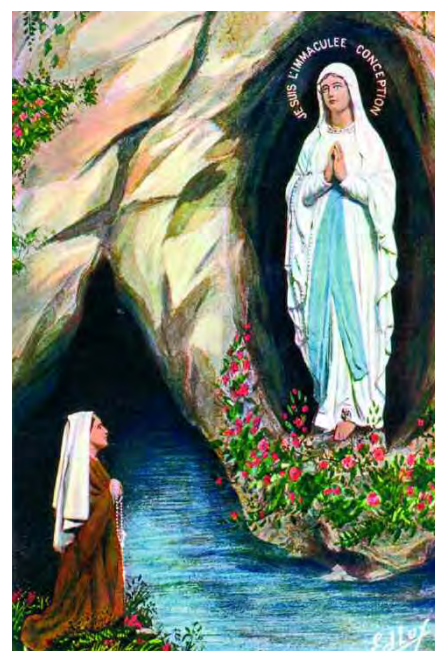


On February 11, 1858, Bernadette, then aged 14, was out gathering firewood with her sister and a friend at the grotto of Massabielle. On this day Bernadette had the first of 18 visions. In this vision, Bernadette observed "a small young lady" (*uo petito damizelo*) standing in a niche in the rock. Her sister and her friend stated that they had seen nothing. On her next visit, she said that the "beautiful lady" asked her to return to the grotto every day for fifteen days. At first her mother had forbidden her from going, but Bernadette persuaded her mother to allow her to go. The apparition did not identify herself until the seventeenth vision, although the townspeople who believed she was telling the truth assumed she saw the Virgin Mary. Bernadette never claimed it was Mary but described the lady as wearing a white veil, a blue girdle, and had a yellow rose on each foot; she held a rosary of pearls.



The other contents of Bernadette's reported visions were simple, and focused on the need for prayer and penance. However, at the thirteenth of the alleged apparition on March 2, Bernadette told her family that the lady had said "Please go to the priests and tell them that a chapel is to be built here. Let processions come hither."

Accompanied by two of her aunts, Bernadette duly went to parish priest Father Dominique Peyramale with the request. A brilliant, but often roughspoken man with little belief in claims of visions and miracles, Peyramale told Bernadette that the lady must identify herself. Bernadette said that on her next visitation she repeated the priest's words to the lady, but that the lady bowed a little, smiled and said nothing. Then Father Peyramale told Bernadette to prove that the lady was real (that is, objectively) by asking her to perform a miracle. He requested that she make the rose bush beneath the niche where she appeared to Bernadette bud and flower in the middle of February.

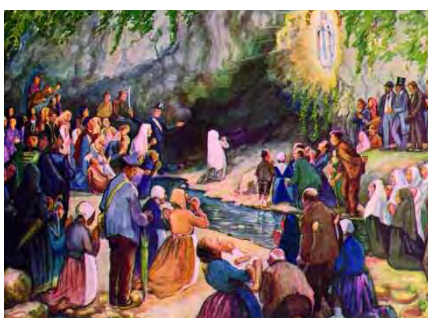


As Bernadette later reported to her family and to church and civil investigators, at the ninth visitation the lady told Bernadette to drink from the spring that flowed under the rock, and eat the plants that grew freely there. Although there was no known spring, and the ground was muddy, Bernadette saw the lady pointing with her finger to the spot, and said later she assumed the lady meant that the spring was underground. She did as she was told by first digging a muddy patch with her bare hands and then attempting to drink the brackish drops.^[1] She tried three times, failing each time. On the fourth try, the droplets were clearer and she drank them. She then ate some of the plants. When finally she turned to the crowd, her face was smeared with mud and no spring had been revealed. Understandably, this caused much

skepticism among onlookers who shouted, “She’s a fraud!” or “She’s insane!” while embarrassed relatives wiped the adolescent’s face clean with a handkerchief. In the next few days, however, a spring began to flow from the muddy patch first dug by Bernadette. Some devout people followed her example by drinking and washing in the water, which was soon reported too.



Her 16th vision, which she stated went on for over an hour, was on March 25. During this vision, the second of two “miracles of the candle” is reported to have occurred. Bernadette was holding a lighted candle; during the vision it burned down, and the flame was said to be in direct contact with her skin for over fifteen minutes, but she apparently showed no sign of experiencing any pain or injury. This was said to be witnessed by many people present, including the town physician, Dr. Pierre Romaine Dozous, who timed and later documented it. According to his report, there was no sign that her skin was in any way affected, so he monitored Bernadette closely but did not intervene. After her “vision” ended, the doctor said that he examined her hand but found no evidence of any burning, and that she was completely unaware of what had been happening. The doctor then said that he briefly applied a lighted candle to her hand, and she reacted immediately. It is unclear if observers other than Dozous were sufficiently close to witness if the candle was continuously in contact with Bernadette’s skin.



According to Bernadette’s account, during that same visitation she again asked the lady her name but the lady just smiled back. She repeated the question three more times and finally heard the lady say “I am the Immaculate Conception”. Four years earlier, Pope Pius IX had promulgated the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.



Bernadette was a sickly child; she had cholera in infancy and suffered most of her life from asthma, and some of the people who interviewed her following her revelation of the visions thought her simple-minded. However, despite being rigorously interviewed by officials of both the Catholic Church and the French government, she stuck consistently to her story. Her behavior during this period is said to set the example by which all who claim visions and mystical experiences are now judged by Church authorities.



Her request to the local priest to build a chapel at the site of her visions eventually gave rise to a number of chapels and churches at Lourdes. The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes is now one of the major Catholic pilgrimage sites in the world. One of the churches built at the site, the Basilica of St. Pius X can itself accommodate 25,000 people and was dedicated by the future Pope John XXIII when he was the Papal Nuncio to France.



Disliking the attention she was attracting, Bernadette went to the hospice school run by the Sisters of Charity and Christian Instruction, where she finally learned to read and write. She then joined the Sisters of Charity of Nevers convent moving into their motherhouse at Nevers at the age of 22. She spent the rest of her brief life there, working as an assistant in the infirmary and later as a sacristan, creating beautiful embroidery for altar cloths and vestments. She later contracted tuberculosis of the bone in the right knee. She had followed the development of Lourdes as a pilgrimage shrine while she still lived at Lourdes, but was not present for the consecration of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception there in 1876. She eventually died of her long-term illness at the age of 35 on April 16, 1879.



She was canonized on December 8, 1933 as the Catholic patron saint of sick persons, of the family, and of poverty.



El Caminito de la Esperanza

Two and a half years ago, one of our experienced volunteers and previous group leader and trustee, Angela Keane travelled to Peru on what was to become a life-changing experience. Angela tells us about her experience below. This is one of the outreach projects which The Trust has helped to support in recent years.



By Angela Keane

Last August '08 saw the end of my two year placement as an overseas missionary (with the Columban Sisters) in Ayacucho Peru. Here we set up a day service for children with an intellectual disability.



On my return visit in December '08 I was thrilled to see the service continuing with 95 children registered, while over 50 children attend the clinic each week for therapy.

I had a meeting with the Minister for Education in Ayacucho who has assured me he will sponsor a teacher who will commence this January. While the Minister for Health in Ayacucho will make a visit to our clinic in two weeks time so let's hope he too will make a commitment to his own special people.



I feel very privileged to have shared two wonderful years with the people of Ayacucho. They were so open in accepting me into their culture and giving me the freedom to work with their special children. While the people have so little and experience such poverty on a daily basis, they express such gratefulness & happiness through their smiling faces.



On a personal note my two years in Ayacucho was a life changing experience which continues to live with me on a daily basis here in Cahirciveen.



I want to thank you the family of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust for being so supportive to me these past two years in your letter writing, emails, your donations, not forgetting the odd bar of chocolate and continuous prayers, all of which were much appreciated, without you realising you were all working on home mission..... go raibh maith agaibh agus muchas gracias.



Hosanna House Pilgrimage 2009

This year our trip to Lourdes is from the 12th to the 19th of June. Everyone pays their own fare and this year it is €750.00 per person. The pilgrimage is

open to anyone who wants to apply – for example last year we had a husband with his sick wife, parents with sick children and young adults who would find it difficult to go on holidays alone.



We have lots of carers who willingly give up a week to make someone special have a great week. If you are interested please get a form from our HQ in Kilcuan and we can assure you of a wonderful experience for you and your loved ones. The entire Irish group is made up of 86 people divided into two separate groups, Group 513 and Group 514.

Mailing List

The work of maintaining the Mailing List for the newsletter is done at our office in Kilcuan. If you no longer wish to receive the Irish Trust Talk, please write to us by post or telephone or email quoting your name and the address on the Address Label and we will ensure that your details are removed from the mailing list. Also if you are receiving more than one copy, please contact the office.

Kilcuan, Clarenbridge, Co. Galway

+353 (0) 91 796622
bregan@irishpilgrimagetrust.com

Articles and Photos

The next edition of the newsletter will be out in early September. If you wish to send in an article or photograph for the newsletter, it must be received by Friday 24th July 2009. Articles and photographs may be sent to bregan@irishpilgrimagetrust.com

The Irish Pilgrimage Trust Walk to Santiago de Compostela

27th June – 4th July 2009



The Trust are again organising a walk to Santiago de Compostela this summer, from Saturday 27th June 2009 to Saturday 4th July 2009.

Santiago de Compostela is located in the northwest of Spain and legend holds that the remains of St James the Apostle 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.

There are a number of places left on Walk 2 from Ponferrada to Sarria and Walk 1 from Sarria into Santiago de Compostela. [Walk 2 is for those who walked in 2007].

The cost of the trip is €500 (exclusive of flights) which is covered by the volunteer and it is proposed that each walker raise €1000. This funding will go towards the work of the trust and in particular for the development of the South East project (A holiday home in Kilrane, Co. Wexford).



Walk 2

Arrive into Santiago Airport, meet guide and bus transfer to Portomarín (3 hour Transfer)

Sunday:	Ponferrada - Villafranca del Bierzo	23k
Monday:	Villafranca del Bierzo - O Cebreiro	30k
Tuesday:	O Cebreiro – Triacastela	21k
Wednesday:	Triacastela – Sarria	22k
Thursday:	Sarria – Portomarín	22k
(Collected at Portomarín at 5.00pm and transferred to Lavacolla to join the other Irish Pilgrimage Trust group)		
Friday:	Lavacolla – Santiago	12k

Walk 1

Arrive into Santiago Airport, meet guide and bus transfer to Sarria (1.5 hour Transfer)

Sunday	Sarria – Portomarín	22k
Monday	Portomarín - Palas de Rei	25k
Tuesday	Palas de Rei – Melide	15k
Wednesday	Melide – Arzúa	14k
Thursday	Arzúa – Lavacolla	29k
Friday	Lavacolla – Santiago	12k

Please do not hesitate to contact HQ or Dan Collins at dgcollins07@gmail.com if you require any further information or details regarding the walk.

The Walk to the Field of Stars



The first time that I heard about the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was on the Channel 4 programme “Time Team”. Whilst excavating a medieval monastery in England the archaeologists uncovered scallop shells in the graves – a sign that those monks had completed the pilgrimage. Saint James of the Field of Stars – who could resist? A seed was planted!

When the Trust advertised a walk for the summer of 2007 I put my name forward – and persuaded (bullied!) my sister to join me. We were so well looked after – communication and advice on training and preparation before, accommodation and support during, and recovery after!

We flew from Dublin with the other pilgrims. Valuable friendships were started on the flight and continued. On arrival at our hotel on the first night we were given our Pilgrim Passports – stamped at every halt to prove that the journey was completed, and our scallop shells – emblem of the pilgrim. The next morning we started walking!!

The best thing to remember on the route is that this is not a race – there is no prize for 1st place! I often said that I had only one speed, and it wasn't fast. Indeed to rush would mean missing so much – the

gorgeous scenery, the wonderful people also walking the Way, and the sense of being on a journey.

We walked every step and received our certificates of completion before attending the Pilgrim Mass in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. People from all over the world were there, having also completed their journey. I really felt that I was part of something wonderful, and part of something ancient, and part of something that will go on.

Edish Mc Quade (Group 62)



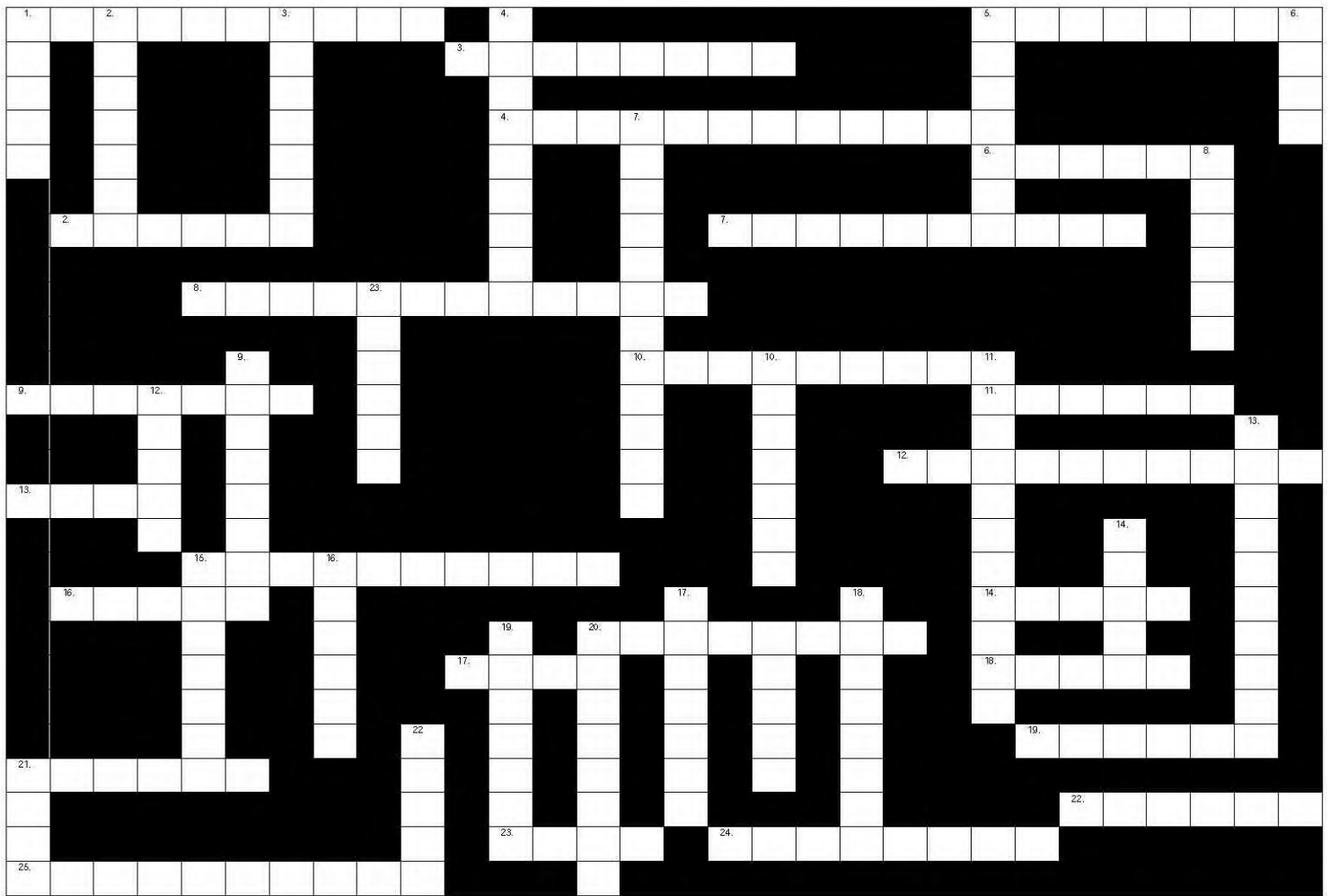
Prayer for World Day of the Sick

11th February 2009

Dear Lord, I want to ask you:
Why am I so sick? Why me? Why now?
What shall I make of this? Am I being punished?
People tell me "You don't question God."
I don't understand that.
You are my Father in Heaven.
Had I not asked my earthly father questions, I would have remained fairly ignorant.
So, I have my questions.
I think you will bring people to me, who have some answers.
They are instruments of your goodness and mercy: Doctors, Nurses, Ministers, Chaplains, even Friends.
Now, I have my own answer for "Why me?"
Why not me?
Dear Lord, I will wait upon your answers, with faith that you will not turn away my questions,
but use the instruments of your love to show me Your way to peace and to wholeness.
In the name of Your precious Son, I pray,
Amen.
Kathleen DuVal Joynt, Richmond, New Jersey

Activity Corner





Across

1. The _____ Conception (10)
2. Resting Place of St. Bernadette (2)
3. What age was Bernadette when Mary first appeared to her? (8)
4. Who is the President of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust? (6,6)
5. First Residence of Soubirous Family (4,4)
6. Name of one of the basilicas in Lourdes (6)
7. Our Lady asked people to come to Lourdes in _____ (10)
8. A famous song with the Trust.(4,3,5)
9. The Headquarters of The Trust in Ireland (7)
10. Bernadette was not promised this in her lifetime. (9)
11. Opposite of proud (6)
12. A religious vision (10)

13. A hollow or natural passage under or into the earth (4)
14. An imagined series of events experienced in the mind (5)
15. A journey to a sacred place or shrine. (10)
16. To be of the same opinion (5)
17. The River which runs through Lourdes. (4)
18. An exceptionally good person (5)
19. Bernadette and her family lived here for a time (6)
20. Bernadette, her sister and friend went to collect some. (8)
21. Our Lady asked Bernadette for one to be built. (6)
22. Name of Airport near Lourdes. (6)
23. Another name for Our Lady (4)
24. Name of Bernadette's Aunt (8)
25. Mary's Song of Praise (10)

Down

1. The _____ Pilgrimage Trust (5)
2. An amazing or wonderful occurrence (7)
3. A Marian Shrine (7)
4. St. Bernadette's Surname (9)
5. The place Bernadette tended sheep. (7)
6. God's greatest gift. (4)
7. Every June, The Trust takes two groups here (7, 5)
8. The colour of the rose on Our Lady of Lourdes' feet (6)
9. A popular excursion while in Lourdes. (8)
10. The state of lacking adequate food or money (7)
11. Name given to a female tending sheep (11)

12. A person who cares (5)
13. A procession in Lourdes (10)
14. You can travel round the town of Lourdes in one (5)
15. One of the sacraments (7)
16. A small cave (6)
17. Another word for petitions (7)
18. A calling (8)
19. A sacrament (7)
20. Month of the first apparition (8)
21. Another word for peace or tranquility (4)
22. Someone who has been invited (5)
23. Respiratory disorder characterized by wheezing. (6)

Spot the Difference

There are 6 obvious differences in the two photos. See if you can find all six of them.



Picture of Eilish McQuade, Neal Clenaghan & Siobhan McQuade, Group 62 from left to right.



Crossword Answers

Across

1. Immaculate 2. Nevers 3. Fourteen 4. Bishop Dermot 5. Boly Mill 6. Rosary 7. Procession 8. Rise and Shine 9. Kilcuan 10. Happiness 11. Humble 12. Apparition 13. Cave 14. Dream 15. Pilgrimage 16. Agree 17. Gave 18. Saint 19. Cachot 20. Firewood 21. Chapel 22. Tarbes 23. Mary 24. Bernarde 25. Magnificat

Down

1. Irish 2. Miracle 3. Lourdes 4. Soubirous 5. Bartres 6. Love 7. Hosanna House 8. Yellow 9. Gavarnie 10. Poverty 11. Shepherdess 12. Corner 13. Torchlight 14. Train 15. Penance 16. Grotto 17. Prayers 18. Vocation 19. Baptism 20. February 21. Calm 22. Guest 23. Asthma

L	L	I	M	Y	L	O	B	A	C	D	T	U	C
S	H	G	C	O	N	V	E	N	T	O	Q	D	W
O	S	L	P	T	F	N	R	A	H	O	F	C	N
U	P	R	G	T	E	P	N	C	F	W	A	G	O
R	E	W	E	R	G	N	A	E	S	E	F	N	I
L	N	L	B	V	O	C	D	S	U	R	M	I	T
A	A	X	M	U	E	T	E	Q	P	I	I	R	I
D	N	I	T	J	K	N	T	R	G	F	R	P	R
Y	C	S	X	Z	I	G	T	O	X	H	A	S	A
E	E	Q	H	P	N	L	E	M	W	G	C	A	P
P	R	F	P	T	S	E	D	R	U	O	L	D	P
S	M	A	S	S	A	B	I	E	L	L	E	V	A
U	H	L	V	C	X	B	A	R	T	R	E	S	L
G	N	O	I	S	S	E	C	O	R	P	X	V	D

Grotto	Happiness	Convent	Bernadette	Our Lady	Lourdes
Firewood	Baths	Nevers	Bartres	Penance	Cachot
Massabielle	Procession	Spring	Boly Mill	Apparition	Miracle

Spot the Difference Answers

1. Eilish is smiling in the first photo and laughing in the second one
2. Neal is smiling in the first photo and laughing in the second one
3. Siobhan is smiling in the first photo and laughing in the second one
4. You can not see Eilish's hand in the first photo but you can see it on the second photo and she is holding a camera and umbrella.
5. Neal is holding two candles in the first photo and no candles in the second photo.
6. Siobhan is holding the candle differently in the both photos.

The Young are the Builders of Tomorrow



Pope John Paul II said:

“The young have shown themselves to be.....for the Church a special gift of the Spirit of God.” Each Easter we realise how true his statement was when we witness the many young people who voluntarily give of themselves to help in whatever way they can on our Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Each year, The Trust invites young people from many different schools throughout the country to come and share in the wonderful experience which is Lourdes with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

One of the schools that will have students travelling this year is St. Joseph's in Castlebar. The students give us an insight into their preparation work for the pilgrimage below.

In September 2008, Fr Michael Murphy and Aiden Grealis from the Irish Pilgrimage Trust came to our school, St Josephs, Castlebar, to talk to us about their intentions to set up a youth group to go Lourdes in 2009 as helpers. They showed us a DVD about The Irish Pilgrimage Trust and the work they do while in Lourdes with their groups. We were invited to fill in application forms to be in this youth group. Seventeen students have committed to travelling this year.

Since September, we meet every month and discuss various topics about helping people with special needs and fundraising. This also helps us to bond with each other as a group. We enjoy these meetings because we sit around and discuss openly what we are planning for our youth group in the coming months. Everybody in the group is allowed to say what they think and we all listen to each other. We have some great laughs and most of all its good fun being in our youth group, and that's what we want to bring to Lourdes at Easter for the young people with special needs. We had some people from the Irish pilgrimage Trust who came to our meetings and spoke to us about

their experiences while they were in Lourdes over the years. We first had Mary McKeon and Walter Donoghue from Group 109. Fr Fergal Cunnane who is involved with Faith and Light talked to us about his experiences of living with young people with special needs in the L'arche community in France. John O'Reilly and Bridgeen Regan also travelled to come and speak with us. John who is a Trustee spoke to us about the history of The Irish Pilgrimage Trust and he also went into great detail about the Trust code of practice. Bridgeen then talked to us about the spiritual side of Lourdes and also her experiences while in Lourdes with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

So far, to raise money for The Trust, we have had a bag-packing day and a movie day in our School. Then we came up with the idea of travelling around Mayo on St Stephens's day, singing, dancing and playing music as the 'Wren Girls'. We also have plans to take part in a sponsored climb of Croagh Patrick in February and also organize some lunchtime concerts in our school.



We are all looking forward to travelling to Lourdes at Easter and working with the different groups from the North Western and Western regions. We know it will be a very worthwhile and positive experience, especially with the help of our group leaders, Fr Michael Murphy, Aiden Grealis, Marese O'Hora and Lisa Walsh. We are also looking forward to helping the young people with special needs in the groups that we will be involved with. We would like to thank the Irish Pilgrimage Trust for allowing our Youth Group to travel to Lourdes this year and for giving us an opportunity we will hopefully treasure always. Roll on Easter 2009!

Good luck to all this year's youth groups and we hope you have a memorable, rewarding week in Lourdes, full of friendship, joy and inspiration.

Past Youth Group Experiences



Last Easter, a group of young people associated with the St. Vincent DePaul Society travelled with The Trust to Lourdes from Belfast. The young people came from various schools mainly located in North Belfast and all had a great experience with The Trust. Below are just some of their thoughts on the week in Lourdes.

During my time in Lourdes I have had the most amazing experiences possible. I have had the pleasure of meeting various types of people from all over Ireland and have made life long friends. I have learnt a lot about myself and other people. Although I always had a strong faith during my time in Lourdes, I have never been more privileged to be part of the Christian community, The Irish Pilgrimage Trust and SVP.

Rachael

Going to Lourdes has made my faith stronger and has made me be thankful for what I have. Just seeing young people with a range of disabilities look so happy and join in with the songs in the Masses was terrific to witness. I will never forget this experience, thank you.

Danny

I had preconceptions before I came on the pilgrimage, challenges of faith and fear of the unexpected. I was afraid the young people would have needs which I would be at a total loss to comprehend. But in reality each young person was as individual and kind spirited as the next. They had such a capacity for love and such trust, that being there for them was one of the easiest things in the world to do. I was humbled by the strength of the young people and I now no longer see the disability but the person. I feel that as a result of this trip I am more open to faith and I want to take every opportunity to "love thy neighbour" to allow me to live in a truly Christian way.

Claire

My experience of the week in Lourdes was quite emotional and has made me appreciate what I have and not to complain about what I don't have. My group welcomed me warmly and throughout the week that feeling remained. I have a deeper perspective on my faith going home than what I did when I arrived. Also it has shown me that there is more to faith than just prayer, that it's also about us individually as people and what we can do for each other. I hope to return to the same group next year.

Ashlene

I came to Lourdes not knowing what to expect I was nervous at the start but when I met my group, I didn't feel nervous any more. There were young people with many different disabilities. These young people had been through more in their short lives than most people ever go through, but this didn't stop them from constantly smiling, laughing and giggling. You get a small sample on this trip of what these young people go through day each day and you hope to make a difference but wonder how much of an impact you really make. This experience has made me want to do more – I just hope I was able to make a small difference.

Decky

My time in Lourdes has been the single greatest experience of my life. It has given me an insight into the sufferings of young people and how, although they struggle, still manage to have a smile on their face. I thank Mary Our Blessed Mother for the time I have spent during my week in Lourdes. Thanks to all in The Irish Pilgrimage Trust and SVP for allowing me to join in this "awesome" experience.

Chris



My Lourdes Story

Growing up religion was always very important to my parents and they instilled this in myself and my brothers. Going to Mass was a must, the rosary would be recited as a family, and our parents would say prayers with us at night before going to bed. I found faith a great comfort and I had a picture of Our Lady in my room which I would talk away to just like I would any friend. At 12 I became ill and was

diagnosed with Syringomyelia, cysts in my spinal cord, which made my balance bad and walking very difficult. I underwent operations to fit shunts in my spine to try and drain the cysts to keep them from damaging my nerves and causing my health to fail anymore, but gradually, over the next few years, I went from using crutches, to using a wheelchair most of the time, to not being able to walk at all.

During this time my faith became even more important to me. To feel that there was someone watching over me, looking after me and making sure what was best for me would happen was a great comfort. It enabled to see that I was blessed when my health was good and not to take it for granted as there were many people who had a lot worse to deal with.

The year after I was diagnosed Patrick McNicholl RIP asked if I would like to apply to go to Lourdes with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. I hadn't heard of The Trust before and was a bit scared at the thought of going away without my family when I didn't know many of the other people going, but I applied for it and was accepted to go with Group 68. The group were really friendly and devoted to helping all of us with a disability and I made friends with the other young people straight away. I had never been to Lourdes before and didn't know what to expect but when I first saw the grotto at night I was amazed. I couldn't believe how much faith everyone seemed to have and how many young people would be on their knees praying in front of the grotto. I loved the Masses as everyone would be singing and doing actions to the hymns which we wouldn't really see at Mass here.

Before I went to Lourdes I imagined that it was a place of prayerfulness and reflection, but I found that as well as this very important side of it, the group would have activities like picnics in Gavarnie and parties in the hotel. One vivid memory is the late Patrick giving us boiled eggs and breaking off pieces of crusty bread for each of us at picnic tables in Gavarnie before we got the chance to take it in turns to travel on a donkey or horse up the hills. The time went by so quickly and it was the best experience I ever had.

Some people go to Lourdes hoping for a physical cure. I wasn't healed physically but my cure was the gift of acceptance of my illness which to me has been invaluable. I left, feeling Lourdes was a very special place, and kept telling my parents they should go so two years later I went back with my mum, younger brother and great-aunt and uncle when I had the privilege of seeing St. Bernadette's body in Nevers.

The year after my second trip to Lourdes my health became worse and I was bed bound for five and a half years. Once again my faith helped me to cope, and gave me the hope that I would get better and be able to get out again. Thankfully I got through the illness, and although, not able to walk anymore, I was at least able to lead a more normal life being out of bed.



The Trust started up a new group, 306, which was going to take 18 – 25 year olds to Lourdes and I was asked me if I would be interested in applying to go. I was delighted to get the chance to travel to Lourdes with The Trust again as I had loved going at Easter time, and from my experience of group 68, I knew what an enjoyable pilgrimage it would be, and the friendships you form with the others.

Once again it more than lived up to my expectations. I met more wonderful friends, each of whom added to making the pilgrimage such a great experience. One of my favourite times to visit the grotto was at night with the peace and stillness and the glow of the candles. It is like a piece of heaven on earth and that makes you sad to leave Lourdes. I am extremely grateful to The Trust for introducing me to the beauty of Lourdes. It is a place that makes you think that everyone should have the fortune of seeing at some stage in their lives and somewhere that gives you so many graces spiritually and the ability to cope with whatever difficulties may arise in life.

Leanne McGilligan



Dr. Pat Casey Retires

It was with a mix of sadness and gratitude that we in the Southern Region greeted the news that Dr Pat Casey has decided to finally hang up his stethoscope and retire from his position as medical officer for the region. For 25 years, Pat has lent his skills to the Trust with his characteristic good humor and affable nature. A Millstreet man, Pat began his involvement as part of group 162, and has been a key member of Jet Set 4 now for many years. Over the years many great and interesting characters have passed through the Trust: some involved for only a few years; others for decades. While all these people are missed by those who remain, a special place in the affections of volunteers from the Southern Region (and I am sure, in the affections of various volunteers throughout the country) will be held for Pat.

Pat is and always has been a gentleman. Generous with his time, easygoing, and never precious over his position or status, Pat in many ways epitomises the sort of Christian spirit that the Trust seeks to promote through the annual pilgrimage that we organise. I'm sure Dr. Pat has seen and treated more ailments during his stint with the trust than he'd care to remember. On behalf of the Southern Region and the Trust in general, may I thank Pat for his work over the years. Naturally, we would all be only too delighted for Pat to 'do a Lazarus' and re-emerge from retirement. However, failing that, we all hope that Dr Pat enjoys many healthy years of retirement.

Group 175 Reunion

Group 175 Reunion took place on Sunday 14th September at Airfield House & Farm, Dundrum. Despite the very wet weather, an enjoyable afternoon was had by all and it was great to meet up with everyone again after our trip to Lourdes together. We even managed a full performance of "Rise & Shine" so the weather certainly didn't dampen our spirits!



My week in Lourdes

I have travelled to Lourdes twice and I love it. It's been the best holiday I have went on and I have been to Florida, New York and Italy. You meet many new people in Lourdes and you keep your friendships because I have and you will to. I'm 18 and if I go again I would like to go to help. I hope you can go to Lourdes because it really touches your heart. It touched my heart so, so much and if you're down, it really makes you happy.
Love Georgina xxxxx

Missionary Work



Fr. PJ Hughes Group Chaplain of 164 went to South America on 5th Jan, 2009 for 5 years. He was also the Regional Chaplain for North West. We wish him all the very best!



Retirement of Trustee

The retirement of John Henry as Trustee of 10 years was marked by a presentation by the Region in Welcome Inn, Castlebar in October.

In a tribute to John's contribution, Mary McKeon - Regional Chairperson said "I am delighted to see so many people present especially from Group 95. It is a fitting tribute and a true acknowledgement of John's hard work as trustee over the past 10 years. I wish to thank you John for your loyalty, support and unfailing courtesy to everyone. May I wish you well and sincerely hope that you will continue your association with The Irish Pilgrimage Trust and the North-West region" In reply, John thanked Mary for her kind comments and said that The Irish Pilgrimage Trust had

been good to him and hoped to continue in his role as leader and carer. Lourda McGowan, Trustee reiterated Mary's comments and wished John well for the future.



Fan into Flame

To mark the 150th Anniversary of the Apparitions at Lourdes, a short book was published on the vision and spirituality of the Trust. The book is intended to help people focus on our reason for being and to also help people reflect on their experiences within The Trust Family. The Book is entitled 'Fan Into Flame', and it is the hope of all involved, that we, as an organisation, will indeed fan into flame and continue to inspire and embrace all we come into contact with. The book has many pictures, reflections and inspiring quotations and is available on request from HQ in Galway. (+353 (0) 91 796622)

Carer's Retreat

There will be a retreat for all carers in preparation for this year's pilgrimages on 20th – 22nd February, 2009 in Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway. The retreat is entitled, 'Come Apart and Rest A While'. There are a number of places available on the retreat and you can contact Bridgeen Regan, bregan@irishpilgrimagetrust.com for further information.

What does the Trust do?

What does the Trust do?

The Trust does:

Friendship and diversity, completely voluntarily

It has vision, spirit and accumulating history.

What does the Trust do?

The Trust does:

Renewal, Faith and spirituality
No boundaries, ability not disability.

What does the Trust do?

The Trust does:

Family, God, togetherness
To give love without inference
Where 'different' makes no difference.

An Invitation To You

THE IRISH PILGRIMAGE TRUST

SUPPORTERS CLUB

Please fill in all the details below to help us keep our records accurate and return the form to:

National Coordinator, Irish Pilgrimage Trust, Kilcuan, Clarinbridge, Co. Galway.

January, 2009

Dear Friend of The Trust,

I am taking this opportunity to write to you on behalf of the Trust.

The Trust thankfully is strong and vibrant and continuing to grow and prosper. We have more people than ever wishing to travel to Lourdes with us at Easter time and Hosanna House in June, both carers and guests. Our house at Kilcuan is a great facility for both The Trust and other caring organisations providing a great holiday spot for our guests and respite for their families and carers. We are now about to embark on a new holiday home located at Kilrane in Wexford, near Rosslare Harbour. This house will be available to groups of up to 18 people or families for holidays. All these developments can be reviewed on our website. www.irishpilgrimagestrust.com

One of our greatest challenges each year is the dreaded fundraising and in the current times, we believe that this will get more difficult. Also our costs of getting to Lourdes are increasing faster due to increases in fuel prices. Traditionally, most of the fundraising as you know has been done by the groups and this is now more difficult than ever. In an effort to share this responsibility, we are asking the wider Trust Family to get involved. This can be done either passively or actively. We attach a standing order form for anyone who might wish to make a donation monthly or annually. Any annual payment of over €250 is eligible for a tax refund to The Irish Pilgrimage Trust. Alternatively, if anyone wishes to get involved, you can contact HQ, any regional officer or group leader in your area. Names and contact details can be got from us in Kilcuan.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Bernadette O'Connell,
National Co-ordinator

Name: Group Number:
(If applicable)

Home address:

Telephone: (Home/Work)

Please include me/us on the mailing list to receive a copy of the IHCPT newsletter.
Yes/No

I/we would like to make the following contribution to the **IRISH PILGRIMAGE TRUST** fund raising

By pledging to pay €..... monthly/annually. Please circle as appropriate

I/we have enclosed an annual cheque for the draw: €.....

I/we have completed the attached Banker's Order

Monthly Contributions	Annual Contribution	
€5.00	€60	Eligible for Tax Refund to The Trust.
€10.00	€120	<i>Any annual payment in excess of €250, see covering letter. Please complete the top of this form and return to Kilcuan.</i>
€25.00	€300	
Other: €	Other: €	

The section below should be completed and given to your Bank.

BANKERS ORDER

To: The Manager,

Bank: Branch:

I/we authorise you to debit my/our account number:

With the sum of EUR.....

For the credit of Irish Pilgrimage Trust **ACCOUNT NO: 46961-183**
Allied Irish Banks, Tralee, Co Kerry. Sort Code: 93-63-91

Please charge these payments to my/our account monthly/annually commencing with a payment on the 1st..... 200... Please do not charge my/our account any fees as the IHCPT is a Revenue approved "Eligible Charity" number CHY5992.

Account Name:

Authorised Signature(s)

Date:

This cancels all previous standing orders in favour of IHCPT – The Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

Share in the Light of The Trust

