

LOUGH  
DERG

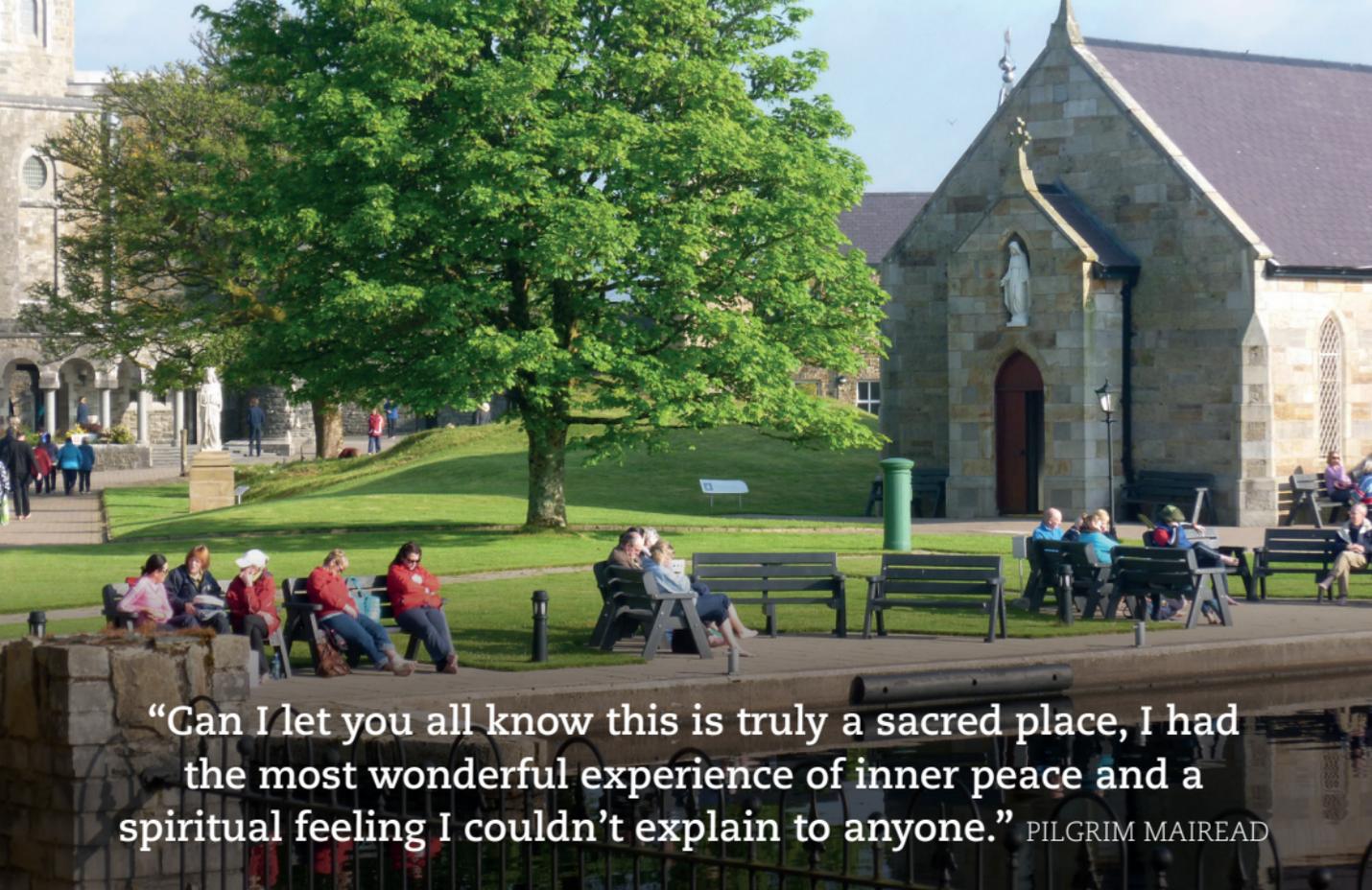


2020  
SEASON



“A place you come away to, in order to come home”

PILGRIM ANN, 2019



“Can I let you all know this is truly a sacred place, I had the most wonderful experience of inner peace and a spiritual feeling I couldn’t explain to anyone.” PILGRIM MAIREAD

# Welcome

Dear reader, as you take a first glance here at what Lough Derg is offering in 2020, I invite you to notice what may be going on within you as you read. You may be a frequent Three Day or One Day pilgrim; you may be remembering a previous visit to Lough Derg, perhaps not so recently; you may be recalling tales or images of Lough Derg others have shared with you; or you may be a kind of blank canvas where no impression of Lough Derg has yet made its mark.

As you page through our Season Guide 2020, here is a question you might ask: Is there something here that draws my interest? It could be the warm glow of sunset over

the Island in the picture on the cover. It might be a line from a pilgrim comment. It may be the invitation to consider finding some time apart, perhaps with a companion, perhaps alone. It might be the “still, small voice” that invites you to attend to the God who awaits within.

There was a time when people came to Lough Derg in order to be hungry. Now, more and more, people come to us because they are hungry: hungry for something more. Hungry, perhaps, for God.

In any case, who knows where the journey to Lough Derg might lead you? It might even lead you home.



Fr La Flynn



# One Day Retreats

Our popular One Day Retreats, when shoes remain on and a light lunch is served, continue to facilitate a wide range of people who want to come on pilgrimage to Lough Derg.

This island – so long associated with St Patrick and consecrated by pilgrim prayer and penance over countless generations – is happy to welcome you to be part of its living tradition.



These days are for busy people who would really appreciate a break away from what may feel like a relentless routine, as well as for those who already value time in life for the deeper things. Our One Day Retreats offer encouragement and support for the journey. You will return home refreshed.

## RETREAT DATES

**MAY:** Sat 2nd, Sun 3rd, Mon 4th, Sat 9th, Tues 12th, Sun 17th, Tues 19th, Sat 23rd, Sun 24th, Mon 25th.

**AUGUST:** Mon 17th, Tues 18th, Sat 22nd, Sun 23rd, Mon 24th, Tues 25th, Sat 29th, Sun 30th.

**SEPTEMBER:** Tues 1st, Sat 5th, Sun 6th, Mon 7th, Tues 8th, Sat 12th, Sat 19th, Sun 20th, Wed 23rd, Sun 27th.



## RETREAT PROGRAMME

**One Day Retreats** offer a flexible programme of prayer and reflection, designed for adults and unsuitable for children. (*Fasting or walking barefoot is not required*).

The day concludes with the celebration of Mass in St Patrick's Basilica.

**The Retreat programme runs 10.30am-4.30pm**  
(Pilgrims arrive from 9.15am)

**Boat times:** Available to pilgrims from 9.15am and return to lakeshore at 4.30pm. Crossing approx. 10 mins.

## A SHORT GUIDE TO YOUR ONE DAY RETREAT

Our One Day Retreats offer time and space in this special sanctuary of Lough Derg, and include Prayers of Intercession, reflection on life with scripture, the option of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the celebration of Eucharist in St Patrick's Basilica.

The afternoon also offers a particular opportunity for quiet time and for Eucharist Adoration.

Hospitality on the day includes tea/ coffee and scones on arrival and a light lunch.

It is advisable to wear/bring warm and waterproof clothing (pilgrims keep footwear on).

# Three Day Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage, in the words of Pope Francis, is  
“the most eloquent expression of the  
faith of God’s people.”

**PILGRIMAGE DATES** Friday 29th May - Saturday 15th August

(the last day to come on pilgrimage is Thursday 13th August)



From the story of St Patrick, most people will know that in his mid-teens he was captured and sold into Ireland by slave traders. Years later, having eventually made his escape, he returned to share with the people of Ireland his faith in Christ, the faith

that had seen him through his darkest days. The Three Day Pilgrimage offers a setting in which the modern pilgrim can re-live something of Patrick’s experience: time apart to be found by God; space to clarify what it is that truly matters in life; new purpose that will make all the difference for self – and perhaps for others....



**Here I can have my peace, my solitude!**

“I am delighted to have escaped the household chores this weekend, this is my sanctuary.

I am thankful to have such a supportive family and my husband is looking after the two kids because this weekend it is so important for me to come here and to have my three days where I can have my peace, my solitude. This place is a great leveller for me.”

For anyone thinking about doing the Three Day Pilgrimage: *Don’t be afraid. Try not to focus on the things you can’t have – it is about what you can have when you are here: you have peace, solitude, help, advice and you have time for closeness with God. It is such a special place to be for three days – think of all the good things that can happen for you here and just what a great experience it will be!*

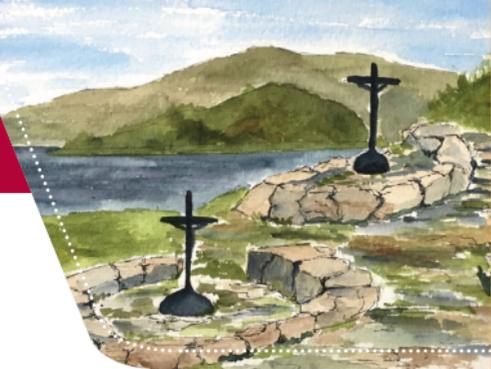
*Pilgrim Erin*



# Three Day Pilgrimage

## A SHORT GUIDE TO YOUR THREE DAY PILGRIMAGE

- ▶ The Three Day Pilgrimage follows a centuries-old pattern prayer.
- ▶ The pilgrimage programme includes prayer and quiet reflection, bare feet, keeping Vigil (24 hrs) and fasting (one simple Lough Derg meal each day). Pilgrims must be over 15 years old, physically able to walk and kneel unaided and to maintain the fast.
- ▶ Pilgrims arrive from 11.00am on the first day having fasted from midnight and depart on the third day at 10.00am. Pre-booking is not required.
- ▶ Boat times: Daily between 11.00am and 3pm. Crossing takes approx. 10 mins.
- ▶ Admission €75; student discount 15%; concessions for seniors and groups.



Three Day Pilgrimage begins on Friday 29th May and ends Saturday 15th August  
(13th August is last day for pilgrims to begin the Three Day Pilgrimage)

## THREE DAY PILGRIMAGE DONE!

Father and daughter, Padraig and Donna, 2019

*“It was well worth it, glad to have done it and with Dad.”*

“At home growing up we always said we would come with Dad to Lough Derg and this year after finishing my exams I decided that I’d come with him.”

*Pilgrim Donna*

*“I’d miss it if I didn’t do it!”*

“I can remember back to 1990 and it was then that I made a firm promise that I would go to Lough Derg every year if I was fit and that’s 29 years ago. Often I say I’ll not get this year and as the time goes by I get the feeling there is something missed and I find my way here. It’s the first time I’ve had one of the children with me, my wife used to do it many years ago. It’s nice to have your own with you so they can experience it for themselves.”

*Pilgrim Padraig*



# National Youth Pilgrimage

Led by Bishop Donal McKeown.

19th-21st June 2020

Youth Admission €64/£55

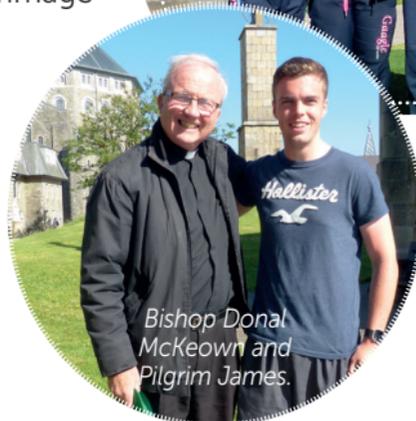
Young people from across the island of Ireland are invited to come together for the ironman of pilgrimages, the Three Day Pilgrimage, on 19th June – arrive mid-day on 19th, stay two nights and depart after a night's sleep by 10.00am on third morning, 21st June.



On completing the pilgrimage with a group of young people in 2019 Bishop Donal said "Young people who come here want to do something big and they like to take on a challenge and to do it with other young people.

That's why a weekend is dedicated to young people on Lough Derg.

It offers not only an experience but an opportunity to go into your own story, to be at peace with silence and not to be afraid of pushing the barriers out in terms of hunger and sleeplessness and bare feet; it simply invites you into a different space to have an



Bishop Donal McKeown and Pilgrim James.



Three Day Pilgrims from St Louis School Ballymena.

**"I always heard my mum and granny talking about Lough Derg and I thought 'one day I am going there'. Then I saw a post on Facebook from the Derry Diocese that a bus was organised so I signed up... there have been a few difficult moments but if you think of them as challenges you can work through them. I'm glad to have done it – really rewarding."**

PILGRIM JAMES

encounter with yourself and with God. You never leave Lough Derg and go home the same person."

**"It was so good to put the phone away and escape all that and to have real time for myself and God"**

PILGRIMS MARIA & FRANKIE,  
NATIONAL YOUTH PILGRIMAGE 2019.



# Special Days

## A DAY OF FRIENDSHIP & PRAYER

Wed 20th May | €25

We are delighted that, after an original initiative for Jubilee Year 2000, Lough Derg each year invites believers from across the Christian denominations and beyond to share the hospitality of the Island on a special Day of Friendship and Prayer, now on the third Wednesday in May. The day celebrates how much we share beneath all that may divide us. This year our speaker will be Dr Johnston McMaster, who spoke so memorably back in 2000 on the timeless values that inspired the life of the Celtic monasteries - long before the religious divisions of later centuries.

## QUIET DAYS

Mon 11th May & Fri 4th Sept | €35

The two Quiet Days that we offer each year appeal to people who prefer to follow a programme of their own making as they spend some time on Lough Derg. We provide a welcome, refreshments and the freedom of the Island with its own special atmosphere with a heritage of prayer that spans the generations and the centuries. If you think that this might be for you we look forward to welcoming you. Spiritual direction available.

## PARISH MINISTRY DAY

Sat 16th May | €45

We introduced this event last year and the response encouraged us to keep it in the season calendar. The programme for the day offers spiritual refreshment for those who give service to others in their parishes: readers, safeguarding personnel, parish pastoral and finance people, baptism and liturgy teams and so many others. Our speaker Jim Deeds has served in the Living Church leadership in Down and Connor Diocese and is a regular pilgrim on Lough Derg.

## LIVING WITH SUICIDE DAY

Sat 26th September | €45

Our key speaker on this special retreat day will again be Conor McCafferty, director of ZestNI, psychotherapist and widely respected for his leading work in the area of suicide prevention and bereavement.

This retreat offers support to people who struggle with suicide ideation or who are affected by suicide through personal loss and to those who minister to the suicide bereaved or work in support services.

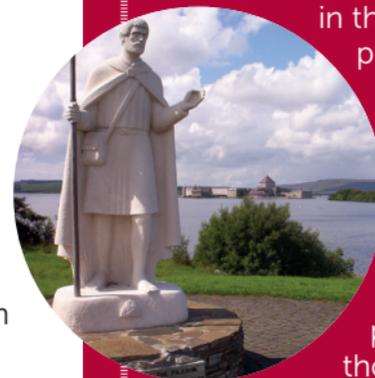


Photo by Gareth Wray Photography

# Mary's musings...

## ...why come to Lough Derg?

From the moment it comes into view at the lake shore, the island is shrouded in mystery. No wonder then, so many people who have never been ask me Why?: Why

would I do the three day pilgrimage, hungry, cold and sleep-deprived?

Why would I put myself through that?

We might ask the same question of someone undertaking a marathon or an iron man: Why put yourself through **that**? A great sense of

achievement would probably be the answer.

That wonderful sense of achievement is felt after Lough Derg too, but there's more.... The sacred mystery unfolds as the pilgrim struggles through the vigil and the pilgrimage exercises. Stripped back to basics, the soul, mind and body are open to a deep encounter with God and self, allowing the pilgrim to leave the island with a feeling of inner peace, better prepared to deal with the challenges of life. Those of us who know and love Lough Derg can testify, the physical challenges are but a gateway into the new spiritual energy that the pilgrimage offers. That sense of peace and joy can be



experienced by those who participate in a day retreat or a school retreat; the holy ground on which they walk exudes a deep spirituality which can be felt even today by walking in the footsteps of thousands of pilgrims who have prayed barefoot here over the centuries.

Why not come and see for yourself? Why not bring someone who has never been before so that they too can experience the peace, spiritual nourishment and new direction that this ancient place of pilgrimage can offer in today's ever-changing and fast-paced world?

**LOUGH DERG**  
Pettigo Co. Donegal

Join an organised group going to Lough Derg from your area.  
[www.loughderg.org/group-organised-travel-by-coach/](http://www.loughderg.org/group-organised-travel-by-coach/)

Lough Derg hosts School Retreats and Youth Retreats during May, September and October.

# 2020 Season Highlights

## ONE DAY RETREATS

One Day Retreats begin on **Saturday 2nd May 2020**  
*Dates detailed on page 4.*

## THREE DAY PILGRIMAGE

Commences on **Friday 29th May 2020** and continues until Thursday 13th August.  
*Details on page 6.*

## NATIONAL YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

**19th-21st June 2020**  
*Details on page 10.*

## SPECIAL DAYS

*More information on page 12.*

### ► QUIET DAYS *Mon 11th May & Fri 4th Sept*

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### ► DAY OF FRIENDSHIP & PRAYER *Wed 20th May*

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