

Abbey of the Holy Cross

The Holy Cross Abbey, now a ruin, is located beside a car park in Cahersiveen, near Marian Place. An interesting fact about the Abbey is that the church does not have any steeple. This is not a church of traditional design, as there is no steeple present, due to the laws prevailing in the Penal Times. The old Penal church is located directly south of the Abbey. Between 1695 and 1829 the Penal Laws were in force in Ireland which aimed at bolstering the position of the Protestant ruling class and restricting the religious practices of Roman Catholic. One of these laws prohibited any Catholic Church to have a steeple or bell. The old Penal church is located directly south of the Abbey. The parents of the famous Irish Politician Daniel O'Connell are buried in the graveyard which surrounds this church



The Holy Well Cahersiveen

Water was and still is a vital necessity for all human beings. In many parts of the world, the veneration of water was an ancient tradition. It was widely believed in Ireland, from early Medieval times down to our times, that there was a sacred element as well as curative powers within the water of some wells. The water from these wells was believed to be able to cure many ailments including blindness and rheumatism. Many wells are dedicated to local saints such as St. Fursey and St. Derarca but the tradition may have originated in pre-Christian rituals. The word 'pattern' is derived from the word 'patron'. The pattern involved making some religious devotions or 'rounds' while offering some token, drinking the water and making the sign of the cross. Most of the wells are natural springs but some are just rock-cut hollows collecting water. There are thirty-five holy wells in Iveragh. Patterns no longer take place at most holy wells but individual pilgrims still visit for devotional purposes.

The Well of the Holy Cross (Tobar na Croiche Naofa) is a natural spring located between two houses in the south side of Main Street, Cahersiveen. It is covered by a relatively modern structure which is surmounted by an iron cross. A modern pump stands in front of the front of the well. The OSNB (Ordnance Survey Name Book) recorded that a pattern was formally held here on the 14th of September and that rounds were also performed at the well on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Cnoc na dTobair



Cnoc na dTobair has a strong resonance, physically and personally for the people of Cahersiveen. Canon Timothy Brosnan was the one who sensed its possibility as place of pilgrimage. We continue to honour the traditional pilgrim walk to St.Fursey's Well and Cnoc na dTobair. These places of pilgrimage might seem to many to belong to the past however, so many who come to visit desire to understand the personal and spiritual influences that shaped their forebears.

The Crosses along the pilgrim's route up the hill, were built and placed there under the direction of Canon Brosnan.

Once a year there is a special Pilgrimage. It consists of praying the 14 Stations of the Cross as you climb finishing with Mass at the summit. Although the Pilgrimage is usually on a Sunday in the middle of May, the date every year is subject to change because of the weather. It will be rescheduled to the following Sunday if it is known that it will be windy or very rainy.

The schedule is:

12:00 Assemble at the foot of the mountain.

15:00 Mass at the summit

17:30 Estimated time to return to the foot of the mountain.

Guidelines for following the annual Pilgrim's Path on Cnoc na dTobar.

- Wear suitable clothing – it will be quite cold at the summit
- Bring a strong stick and wear strong boots
- Bring some food and drinks in a rucksack. Keep your hands free for supporting yourself on the climb
- Stay with your group and do not wander from the route
- Do not litter the mountainside. Take your rubbish home with you. Respect nature at all times.
- Value your safety. Be especially careful on your descent
- You climb at your own risk but there are stewards to help on the special Day of Pilgrimage
- Enjoy the day

Click on more websites for more information below:

www.pilgrimpath.ie/pilgrim-paths-day/cnoc-na-dtobar-kerry/

<http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/travel/go-walk-cnoc-na-dtobar-knocknadar-co-kerry-1.1970014>

<http://www.kerrygems.com/kerry-gems-app/the-best-walks-in-kerry/cnoc-na-dtobar/>

<http://mountainviews.ie/summit/123/?PHPSESSID=88mphvul0q7prlha78484gpev7>

Order of Pilgrimage to St.Fursey

Prayer of the Pilgrim (in the Church)

Bless this path before us Lord. We come as pilgrims to walk in your ways. Help us to see the world as you do. Help us to be quiet, to become still : let the rhythm of our walking helps us to tune our hearts to the deeper rhythm of your love. Help us walk gently o the earth, to give thanks....for land, for water, for all the wonders of your creation. We carry little for this journey but we carry many burdens in our lives. Help us with these, lighten our load. We are going to a holy place. Following the footsteps of holy men and women who went before us. Help us to learn from them and also to find in our holy places, a spring of life-giving water for our own lives, a place to come ever closer to you, a place to help us know the true goal of all our journeys.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen

STATION ONE

John 4:5-7

On the way, he came to the Samaritan town called Sychar. Jacob's Well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink".

Do I feel tired, troubled, thirsting for meaning, searching for peace? How do I treat the stranger?

Prayer

Circle me, O God, keep hope within and despair without. Circle me O God, keep peace within and turmoil without. Circle me O God, keep calm within and storms without. Circle me O God, keep strength within and weakness without. Circle me O God, keep wisdom within and foolishness without. ALL respond : Your peaceful presence, giving strength, is everywhere.

As we journey on, may we be open to new ENCOUNTERS.

Proceed along Main Street, turning right to site of Penal Church and ruins of Holy Cross Church

STATION TWO

John 4: 7-10

Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink". His disciples had gone into town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "What? You, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink? Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans." Jesus replied, "If only you knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would be the one to ask, and he would have given you living water."

Do I exclude people of different background, culture or religion?

Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. The courage to change the things that I can. And the wisdom to know the difference.

ALL respond: Your peaceful presence, giving strength, is everywhere.

As we journey on, we may be challenged to rid ourselves of prejudice.

STATION THREE (at ruins of the Holy Cross)

John 4: 13-14

Jesus replied, "Whoever drinks this water, will get thirsty again, but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give, will never be thirsty again. The water I shall give, will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life."

Am I aware of God's generosity? Am I generous with my time, my gifts?

Prayer

Lord, help me to be generous, to give and not to count the cost. Let my giving be an expression of kindness and compassion. May I recognise the thirst in those who are needy in spirit, in companionship or support. May I always be refreshed, restored and renewed by your presence to me in nature, people and prayer.

Proceed to Kilnavarnogue, via Marian Place, Quay Street and Bridge.

STATION FOUR (at Kilnavarnogue)

John 4: 15

“Sir” said the woman, “Give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water.”

What is live-giving for me right now?

Prayer

Lord, enfold me, in the depths of your love and there, hold me. Renew my being. Refine, refresh, restore me, until my whole being is aglow with your glory and goodness, gracious and generous God. Amen

ALL respond: Your peaceful presence, giving strength, is everywhere. May we journey in FAITH.

Proceed to St. Fursey’s Well.

STATION FIVE (at the Well)

John 4: 28-30

The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people. Come and see the man who has told me everything I ever did. I wonder if he is the Christ? This brought people out of the town and they started walking towards him. She left the jar behind.

What do I need to leave behind me? Do I witness as the woman did, within my family, my community?

Prayer

God be in my head and in my understanding. God be in my eyes and in my looking. God be in my mouth and in my speaking. God be in my heart and in my thinking. God be in my end and at my departing.

ALL respond: Your peaceful presence, giving strength, is everywhere. May we journey on giving WITNESS to our faith.

Prayer of St. Fursey

*The arms of God around my shoulders,
The touch of the Holy Spirit upon my head,
The sign of Christ’s cross upon my forehead,
The sound of the Holy Spirit in my ears,
The fragrance of the Holy Spirit in my nostrils,
The vision of heaven’s company in my eyes,
The conversation of heaven’s company on my lips,
The work of God’s Church in my hands,
The service of God and neighbour in my feet,
A home for God in my heart,
And to God, the Father of all, my entire being,
Amen*

A Blessing to be said at the Well.....

Lord, bless this water, source of life and nourishment. It gives fullness to all living things and refreshes us. Protect us from all danger, ill health and broken dreams. May we always thirst for you, knowing that you alone can satisfy our quest for freedom and wholeness. Give us your protection, strength and life-giving presence today and always. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen

Lord, bless each pilgrim here today. Bless their families and friends. May their search for you, for meaning and peace, for health and happiness, find fulfilment in you. Grant these and all our requests through Christ Our Lord. Amen

Church Island, Ballycarbery West



The Iveragh Peninsula has fifty-four Early Medieval ecclesiastical sites. The most important of these sites is the spectacular Skellig Michael which became the most impressive eremitical site in Christendom. **Church Island at Ballycarbery West**, in Valentia Harbour, was a centre of local importance which never developed into a major monastic centre. During vernal equinoctial tide, Church Island can be reached by foot from Beginish Island along a sandbar. The site was excavated under the direction of M.J. O'Kelly in 1955-56. Visible features included an oratory and cloghaun, an ogham inscribed cross-slab and traces of an enclosing wall. Evidence of occupation from the early to late Medieval period was discovered as well as a circular wooden hut and a rectangular wooden structure. Later stone structures replaced these wooden buildings. The site was further examined in August/September 2004 and proved to be an elaborate terraced shrine mound. Nine stone terraces were also uncovered but not excavated. Valentia Slate was used as part of the paving. Traces of burials, probably of the founding fathers of the monastery, were also found. The results of excavations indicate that the oratory was founded by at least the eighth century but may actually have been established as early as the sixth century. It is unclear when individual religious sites such as Church Island went out of use but it may have been when parochial divisions were established in the twelfth century. These ancient monastic sites are an essential part of the religious and cultural history of our parish and indeed, our country.

Saint Michael's Rock (Skellig Michael)



George Bernard Shaw described St. Michael's Rock in *The Beauty of Ireland* as:
'an incredible, impossible mad place. I tell you the thing does not belong to any world you and I have lived or worked in ; it is part of our dream world.'

There is no doubt but that St. Michael's Rock is utterly unique, totally isolated, a huddle of domes crouching half way to heaven. For over 1,500 years it has been an essential part of our Christian heritage and thus part of the story of our parish. This isolated 44 acre rock, just eight miles out in the Atlantic, rising majestically 714 ft out of the sea, is Europe's best preserved and least accessible early Christian Monastic site. The rock also has a pre-Christian history and folklore has it that the Milesians were shipwrecked there a millennium prior to Saint Patrick. The Druids used the site to observe the sun, the flight of birds, the movement of the tides, stars and clouds as part of their doctrine of divination.

History of Skellig Michael

The earliest reference in history to the Skellig Islands dates back to 600AD. During the time of the Penal Laws, Skellig Michael and Little Skellig became a haven for many Catholics whose beliefs and rights were being suppressed. The largest of the Skelligs is Skellig Michael (Sceilg Mhichil) and was home to one of the earliest monastic settlements in Ireland.

The monks of St. Fionan's monastery led simple lives and lived in stone, beehive shaped huts. They would descend the 670 steps early every morning and fish for the morning's breakfast and would spend the rest of the day praying in the church, tending to their gardens and studying. The huts, which are round on the outside and rectangular on the inside, were carefully built so that no drop of rain ever entered between the stones.

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Skellig Michael was built in 588 AD on a steep rocky island about 12 kilometers off the coast in County Kerry, Ireland. It survived a Viking raid in 823 and was significantly expanded with a new chapel around the start of the second millennium. The site was abandoned around 1100. Starting in the 1500s, Skellig Michael became a popular destination for annual pilgrimages, but attracted no permanent residents.

The extreme remoteness of Skellig Michael has until recently discouraged most visitors, leaving the site exceptionally well preserved. The very spartan conditions inside the monastery illustrates the ascetic lifestyle practiced by early Irish christians. The monks lived in stone "beehive" huts (clochans), perched above nearly vertical cliff walls. In 1826 a lighthouse was built on the island and in 1986 some restoration work was done and an official tourist bureau associated with the island was established.

Click on the links below for more information

http://www.wildatlanticway.com/directory/signature/skellig-michael/346/?gclid=Cj0KEQIA56_FBRDYp_qGa2p_e1MgBEiQAVEZ6-5qzi05WEadQMvtfjXwUcG37D_YTCKyR0TQB1YRnoeEaAvBX8P8HAQ

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skellig_Michael

<http://www.skelligexperience.com/skellig-michael/>

<http://www.worldheritageireland.ie/skellig-michael/>

<http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/south-west/skelligmichael/>