

# Sacred Ireland 2019

Pilgrimage Into the Mysteries of the Celtic Sacred Feminine  
with **Cath Connelly and Alison Powell**

**11 - 27 September 2019**



Image ~ Inishbofin Island

## **Day 1 ~ Wednesday 11 September ~ gathering in Dublin**

Whether you have already been in Ireland a few days or are just flying in today, the group will gather at 18:00 in a private room at the Castle Hotel in central Dublin to come together in circle followed by dinner together at 19:30. We have chosen The Castle Hotel for it's fine Georgian Architecture and because it is in the heart of Dublin with many attractions within walking distance. Please arrive at the hotel and be settled in by 16:00, to allow time to rest before the opening circle, earliest check in 14:30.

Group members will make their own way from the airport to the Castle Hotel, on arrival. Due to security measures it is not possible to pre-order taxis or hotel chauffeurs however there are plenty of government licensed taxis and the drive is 20-30 minutes depending on time of arrival. The taxi will cost approximately Euro30 (\$AUD50). It is recommended you come into Dublin a day or so early to settle before the pilgrimage commences, and some people will stay on an extra night at the end. We can book the additional nights for you at the hotel.

Overnight: Dublin; The Castle Hotel      Included meals: (D) dinner

## **Day 2 ~ Thursday 12 September ~ Dublin to Navan**

Following breakfast the day will start with a circle and body prayer. We will then check out of the hotel and at 9:30 make our way on foot for a guided tour of Trinity College located

in the heart of Dublin City. In the magnificent Old Library building resides the Book of Kells, a 9th century gospel manuscript famous throughout the world. After some free time and lunch we will return to the hotel and board our coach to Navan, our home for the next three nights. The evening will include a ritual and group sharing circle.

Overnight: Navan; New Grange Hotel    Included meals: (B) breakfast, (D) dinner

### **Day 3 ~ Friday 13 September ~ Loughcrew and the Hill of Uisneach**

Following breakfast and our daily body prayer we board our coach for visits to the Loughcrew Estate Gardens, Cairn T and the Hill of Uisneach. The focus for the morning will be meditation at Cairn T, followed by lunch at the Lime Tree Cafe (at individual expense). In the afternoon Marty Mulligan will guide the group through the Hill of Uisneach followed by a meditation at the Catstone. Before returning to the Newgrange Hotel in Navan for a relaxing evening.



Overnight: Navan; New Grange Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)

Image: Catstone at the Hill of Uisneach

### **Day 4 ~ Saturday 14 September FULL MOON ~ Faughart**

Following the regular morning ritual we drive to Brigid's shrine and holy well in Faughart where we meet Dolores Whelan, expert on Celtic Spirituality and author of "Ever Ancient Ever New" (recommended reading for the pilgrimage). Dolores is also co-discoverer of Brigid's Way, an ancient path connected to Brigid goddess and saint. Dolores will lead a blessing ritual at the holy well and provide a talk about the well and its connection to Brigid. Dolores will accompany the group to the nearby holy well of St. Monnine of Killeavy. Lunch (at individual expense) will be taken at a nearby cafe.

In the afternoon we return to Navan with a ritual to mark the full moon and dinner.

Overnight: Navan; New Grange Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)

Image: Holy Well of St Brigid



## **Day 5 ~ Sunday 15 September ~ Navan to Inishbofin via Clifden**

Following the full moon day, we have a beautiful full day journey to the enchanted island of Inishbofin in the far West of Ireland, place of our retreat and the heart of the pilgrimage. We will have an earlier start today, following breakfast and daily group body prayer we board our coach at 08:00, heading first to the coastal port of Clifden, where we will take lunch (at individual expense) before driving on to Cleggan where we will take the Ferry, a sea crossing of just 30 minutes, to Inishbofin. Inishbofin is a tranquil natural place ideal for contemplation, is set in the wild splendour of Connemara, amid the magical beauty of sea, lake and mountain, located off the beautiful Galway and Mayo coastline. On arriving at Inishbofin we will transfer the short distance to the Dunmore Hotel, our home for the next 3 nights.

Overnight: Inishbofin; Doonmore Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)



Image: Inishbofin Ferry

## **Days 6 & 7 ~ Monday 16 & Tuesday 17 September ~ Inishbofin Celtic Wisdom Retreat**

Day 6 will be a guided retreat day lead by Cath and Alison on Celtic Spirituality and the Sacred feminine in the land and within.

Day 7 will be a rest day at your leisure to and explore the natural beauty of the island and/or relax in whatever way suits you.

Overnight: Inishbofin; Doonmore Hotel

Included meals both days: (B) (D)

## **Day 8 ~ Wednesday 18 September ~ Inishbofin to Inishmore via Brigit's Garden**

An earlier start this morning to catch the 09:00 ferry back to Cleggan where we will meet our coach and driver. We drive on to Brigit's Garden for a one-hour Brigit workshop,

exploring the symbols and practices of the Brigit tradition. After some relaxed time and lunch we re-board the coach and travel to Rossaveal ferry port to travel over sea once more this time to Inishmore and the Aran Islands Hotel, our home for the next three nights. Following dinner at the hotel there will be a circle and intention setting for our time together on Inishmore.

Overnight: Inishmore; Aran Islands Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)



Image: Cliffs of Ireland's West Coast

### **Day 9 ~ Thursday 19 September ~ Inishmore**

Following the morning rituals we tour the island visiting Inishmore's many sacred places; Ciaren's Chapel, the ancient Monks school, Dun Aengus, Teampull Bheanain, the Seven Churches Monastic Settlement and St Edna's Monastery. There will be time for meditation and practice at the some of the sites.

Evening meal and sharing circle.

Overnight: Inishmore; Aran Islands Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)

### **Day 10 ~ Friday 20 September ~ Inishmore rest day**

Leisure day, near the midpoint of the pilgrimage we will take a day for rest and relaxation on this beautiful island; between the morning and evening sacred gatherings the day will be at your leisure.

Overnight: Inishmore; Aran Islands Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)



Image: Poulnabrone Dolman

**Day 11 ~ Saturday 21 September ~ Inishmore to Ennistymon via Fanore, Burren Perfumery and Poulnabrone Dolman**

After the daily body prayer and breakfast we will drive the short distance for the 90 minute ferry crossing to Doolin, departing at 11:30. We will take lunch on arrival (at individual expense) before driving on to Creggagh to visit John O'Donohue's grave. Then continuing on to Carran and The Burren Perfumery, where natural herbs are transformed into cosmetics and medicine.

The final visit for the day will be the Poulnabrone Dolman for our group Autumnal equinox.

It will be just another 45 minute drive to Ennistymon and the Falls Hotel and Spa.

Overnight: Ennistymon; Falls Hotel and Spa

Included meals days: (B) (D)



Image: Grange Stone Circle, Lough Gur

**Day 12 ~ Sunday 22 September ~ Ennistymon to Adare via Killinaboy**

En-route to Adare we will first visit the ruins of Killinaboy Church and Sheela-na-gig, where a brief ritual will be held. Followed by a visit to the Holy Wells on Burren. On arrival at the Dunraven Arms Hotel in Adare afternoon tea will be served.

We will gather at 18:00 for a sharing circle followed by dinner at 19:30.

Overnight: Adare; Dunraven Arms Hotel

Included meals: (B) (L) (D)

### **Day 13 ~ Monday 23 September ~ Adare to Birr via Lough Gur**

Today we travel to Lough Gur stopping at Grange Stone Circle for a group meditation and then on to Lough Gur Heritage Centre. After exploring the Heritage Centre we will eat our packed lunch before driving on to the County Arms Hotel in Birr.

Tonight a special guest will join the group sharing circle and it will last for 90 minutes, longer than normal.

Overnight: Birr; County Arms Hotel      Included meals: (B) (L ~ packed lunch) (D)



Image: Statue of St Brigid; Circle alter with Brigidine crosses and Brigid doll

### **Day 14 ~ Tuesday 24 September ~ Birr to Glendalough via Kildare**

This is a very special day in our pilgrimage, today we visit St Brigid's most sacred site, the goal the pilgrimage has been building up to; St Brigid's Cathedral in Kildare.

Kildare is about a one hour thirty minute drive from Birr. On arrival in Kildare we first visit St Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower where a local guide will take the group around the Cathedral and grounds. We will then board the coach to the nearby Solas Bhride Centre. Where the Brigidine Sisters will lead the group in a retreat day about Brigid to include being led to St. Brigid's Well for meditation.

From Kildare there will be another drive of about one hour and thirty minutes on to Glendalough.

Overnight: Glendalough; Glendalough Hotel      Included meals: (B) (D)

## **Day 15 ~ Wednesday 25 September ~ Glendalough**

In the morning we will meet a member of the Tearmann Spirituality Centre who will teach on the Celtic heritage of this place. In the afternoon Cath will lead a walk Glendalough Labyrinth. The remainder of the afternoon will be for leisure and integration prior to the evening sharing circle.

Overnight: Glendalough; Glendalough Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)

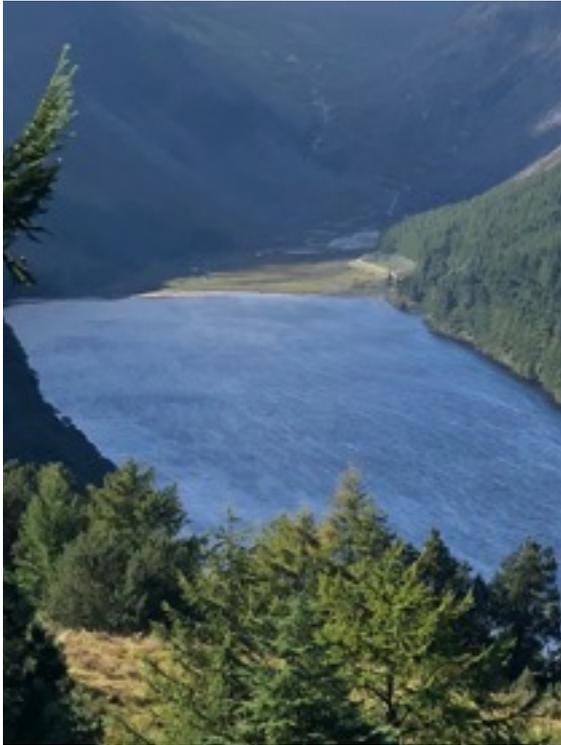


Image: Upper Lake Glendalough; St Kevin's Church, Glendalough

## **Day 16 ~ Thursday 26 September ~ Glendalough**

Today will be all on foot with no coach rides necessary, after breakfast we will walk to the nearby Monastic City and the ruins of St Mary's Church where ritual will be held. The focus for the day will be integration, Cath and Alison will hold a longer sharing circles in the afternoon with time for rest in the beautiful natural surroundings.

Overnight: Glendalough; Glendalough Hotel

Included meals: (B) (D)

## **Day 17 ~ Friday 27 September ~ onward journey**

Following breakfast and a closing circle, we head onward and to the return journey to integrate the blessings we have received into our families and communities.

First stop for the coach will be Dublin International airport at approximately 12:00, please don't book flights 15:00 or later if you plan to fly out today. Due to high security at the

airport you must arrival a minimum of 3 hours before flight departure. The coach will go on to the Castle Hotel in central Dublin, where the journey began. Several members of the group will stay on in Dublin for a day or so, if you would like us to book a room for you at the Castle Hotel for this night please let us know.

Included meals: (B)

## Meet Your Guides

### Cath Connolly

One of Australia's leading Celtic harpists, plays concerts and ceremonially around the world and has produced 6 albums. Cath holds a Master of Arts in Spirituality through the Melbourne College of Divinity and has completed a four year Spiritual Direction course with the Living Well Centre in Melbourne. Cath has had a deep spiritual and ancestral connection with Ireland and Celtic spirituality and has led several pilgrimages to her spiritual heartland over the years.

Cath feels most fulfilled when leading pilgrimage through the sacred places of Ireland. Cath's travel harp (pictured right) will accompany her on this journey and regularly played during ritual and meditation.



### Alison Powell

Also from Melbourne and with Irish ancestry, Alison's heart pulled her to Ireland and the ancient Celtic Shamanic path. Having studied deeply with Ireland's most respected teachers of Celtic spirituality, Alison runs a monthly women's circle in Melbourne and teaches workshops on Celtic Spirituality throughout the year. Her deep love of Brigit and the sacred feminine, embodied in the Celtic tradition make Alison a potent ritual leader.

Alison and Cath are dear friends of many years and create a safe and loving space for deep transformation.

