

LIMERICK KILLALOE CAMINO





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You are invited on a pilgrimage...

Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. — Psalm 25:4

The idea of going on a pilgrimage exists in many lands, many cultures, many religious traditions. In Judaism, for example, the focal point of pilgrimage was, and still is, the Holy City of Jerusalem. Christians have gone to places in the Holy Land associated with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, as well as to magnificent churches and to places associated with miracles. In Islam, every Muslim who is able to do so is supposed to undertake the Hajj, a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, at least once in their lifetime.

A few common themes exist in all pilgrimages. In a pilgrimage, a person leaves home, travels to an unknown place, and returns home again, changed. It is even possible to journey to a place that is familiar, but to go there with the intention of seeing it afresh, anew, so that again, one returns home, but changed, with a new perspective.

A person's intention matters. Every pilgrim, it would seem, undertakes not one but two journeys: a physical journey, containing challenge, adventure, and some degree of discomfort, and at the same time an inner journey or quest for meaning and understanding, a desire to seek the presence and guidance of God.

You are invited on a pilgrimage between Limerick and Killaloe, along a portion of a path called the Lough Derg Way. The route is called the Limerick–Killaloe Camino. The word 'camino' is the Spanish word for *road*. A pilgrimage that is a walk often is called a 'camino', after one of the most famous pilgrimage routes: the Camino de Santiago, or the Way of Saint James, in northwest Spain. It consists of a network of routes that lead to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela,

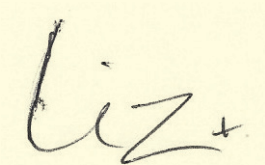
where there is a shrine of Saint James the Great, one of the twelve original apostles of Jesus.

Each of the stops on the Camino has a description in this booklet, along with a Bible passage and a prayer or a song to accompany it. At the rear of the booklet is a chart so that you can record when you complete each leg of the journey. This book has been purposely designed to assist readers with perceptual disorders such as Irlen Syndrome and Dyslexia.

This booklet is a project of the joint Cathedral Chapter of the two Cathedrals at either end of the Camino: Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, and Saint Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe. It is dedicated to the memory of Archdeacon Wayne Carney of the Diocese of Killaloe, Church of Ireland, a former member of the Chapter before his untimely death in the summer of 2020.

The Limerick–Killaloe Camino meanders through seemingly 'ordinary' surroundings, but you are invited to venture along this path as a pilgrimage: to find here connections to the eternal truths in the midst of which we all live.

May God be with you on your travels!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Liz', followed by a small cross symbol. The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

The Rev. Canon Liz Beasley,
Chancellor of the Cathedral Chapter

Overview of the Camino

The Limerick–Killaloe Camino is roughly 25 kilometres in length, approximately a 5-hour walk. It is along a portion of the Lough Derg Way, which follows a mix of riverbank, canal bank, forest track, old roadway, and minor road.

A map of the Camino is provided here, divided into three sections. These maps give the approximate length for each portion of the trail. The maps are produced for Sport Ireland by EastWest Mapping.

The Lough Derg Way is best accessed at one of five key trailheads, three of which are located along the length between Limerick and Killaloe. These trailheads provide information map boards and car parking. The trailheads are located reasonably close to other services and facilities, such as shops, accommodation, restaurants, and public transport. The trailheads are located as follows:

Trailhead 1 – Limerick City

Limerick City is located approximately 25km from Shannon Airport and 37km from Ennis. This trailhead is located at Arthur's Quay Park in Limerick city centre.

Trailhead 2 – Clonlara

Clonlara is located on the R463, approximately 10km from Limerick City. This trailhead is located in the centre of the village.

Trailhead 3 – Killaloe/Ballina

Killaloe/Ballina is located on the R463 and is 28km from Limerick City. This trailhead is located at the Riverside Car Park on the Killaloe side of the River Shannon and is situated close to the Tourist Information Office.

A Disclaimer!

Pilgrims may discover that portions of the Lough Derg Way are overgrown or otherwise not recently maintained. Please wear good walking shoes, bring clothing suitable for rain (which can strike at any time in Ireland!), and have water with you.

Illustration of a Pilgrimage



Journey of the Magi, by Stefano di Giovanni, the leading painter of fifteenth-century Siena, Italy, shows the three magi (the Wise Men or Three Kings) journeying to Bethlehem to worship Christ. It is a fragment from a small altarpiece showing the Adoration of the Magi. Originally, the star was shown above the tiled roof of the stable. The fur-lined hat worn by the magus in pink was inspired by the visit to Siena in 1432 of King Sigismund of Hungary. The picture may date from about 1433–35. For more information about this painting and the other panel from the altarpiece, visit metmuseum.org.

Lough Derg Way, Map 1: Limerick City to Clonlara



Distance: about 10 km.

(Map produced for Sport Ireland by EastWest Mapping.)

Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

*I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord'.
—Psalm 122:1*

You are very welcome, whether you are visiting for the first time or for the 1,000th time! We share in worship which has been offered here for over 850 years. The Cathedral continues to be a place of prayer and pilgrimage for all who enter its doors and a symbol of faith, hope, and love to the city of Limerick.

According to tradition, Saint Mary's Cathedral is built on the site of the Viking thingmote, later the palace of the O'Brien kings of Thomond, and was given to the church by King Donal Mór O'Brien in 1168. We believe that the great West Door is the only surviving part of King Donal's palace. The doorway itself is an iconic image within the city. Symbolically, it sums up our entire purpose in Saint Mary's—welcoming in and reaching out.

Whether you are beginning or ending this Cathedral Camino we hope that along the way you will experience, or have experienced, the love of God welcoming each of us in and reaching out to us everywhere.

*Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
Open our hearts to the riches of his grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The Canal

*O brothers, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on sisters, let's go down
Down to the river to pray*

From Saint Mary's Cathedral, the shared walkway and cycleway gently meanders for 3.25km to the University of Limerick Boathouse. This part of the walk goes from the Cathedral along by Barrington's Hospital to the Guinness Bridge near the Absolute Hotel, at which point it is possible to access the walkway beside the canal.

This waterway was originally developed as a commercial highway, and the first boat travelled along here in 1799. This phase of its existence ended on 1 January 1960, and it lay unused until it was regenerated in recent years and found new life as a place of recreation. Once a place of toil and commerce, it has been transformed into a place where the walker can find calm and rest. Walking by water is a wonderfully renewing experience. It is good for the body, the mind, and the spirit. It can be refreshing, relaxing, and reinvigorating.

It is appropriate that a pilgrim should begin one's journey by water, as we begin our lives in the waters of our mother's womb. Our journey in faith begins as we emerge from the water at our baptism. Just as items and places from the past can be transformed and repurposed, so too can lives be renewed, new purposes discovered, and different directions taken.

*Lord, we thank you for this restful place,
for the minds that conceived it, for the hands that created it.
We pray that all who walk this way
will experience renewal and refreshment. Amen.*

University of Limerick

*For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young— Let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill...
—Proverbs 1:2-5*

The University of Limerick, *Ollscoil Luimnigh*, was founded in 1972 as the National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick, and became a university in 1989. It was the first university established since Irish independence in 1922 (followed by the establishment of Dublin City University later the same day).

The desire to educate is a thread that runs throughout Holy Scripture, in order to teach wisdom and to pass on tradition. The imperative for education in the Christian Era was driven by the need for copies of Scripture and for knowledge and understanding of the great theological debates. In Ireland, centres of educational excellence were to be found in major monastic centres.

As you pass by this local centre of learning excellence, consider your own journey of learning. Have you focused on facts or skills, or have you also sought understanding and wisdom? The passage from the Book of Proverbs invites both young and old to seek learning. It is never too late. Do you continue to learn, whether in daily life or through training or further education?

*Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom:
Enlighten by your Holy Spirit those who teach and those who learn,
that rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship you
and serve you from generation to generation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Holy Well

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar.... Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water.... Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' —John 4:5-7, 13-14

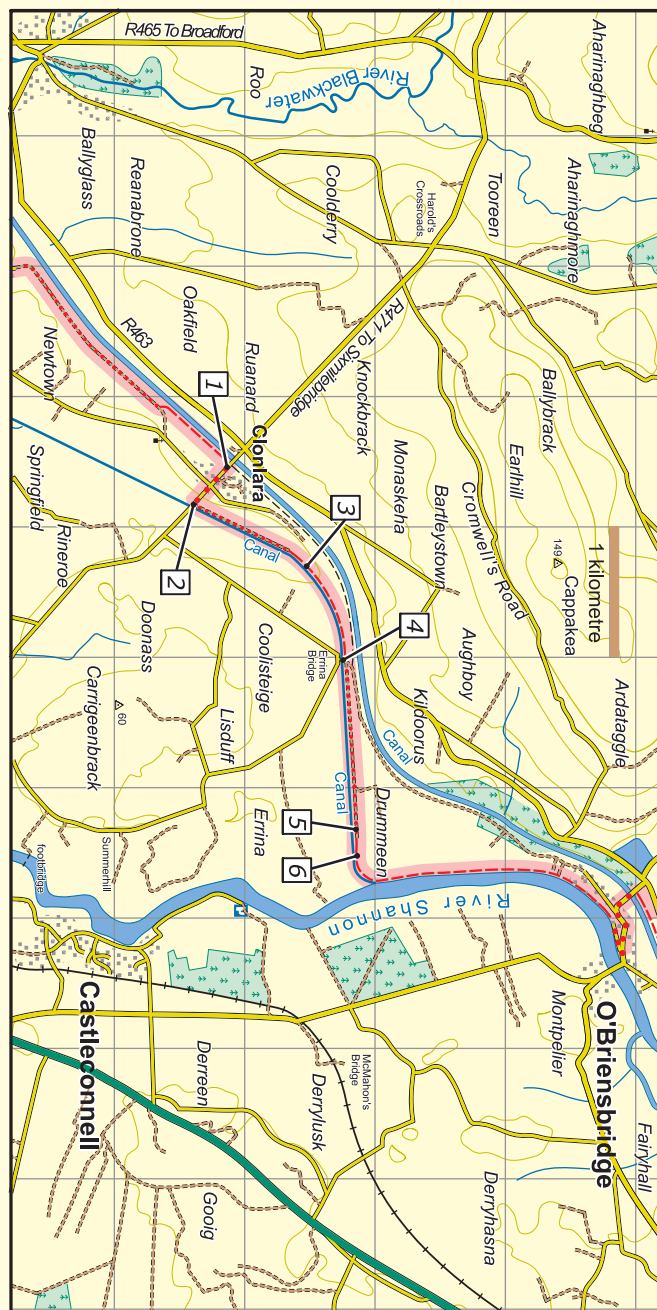
A Holy Well, one of countless examples around Ireland, is located just the other side of the Blackwater River and Canal—as you walk beyond Gilloge Bridge—near a location called Tobermochulla. Beyond there to the east, on the other side of a small ring fort or enclosure, is the old ruin of a church called Templemochulla.

The association of Churches with Holy Wells is ancient. The Sacred Scriptures of the Christian faith often dwell on the natural and supernatural significance of water. In the founding myths of ancient Ireland, water, acting as a portal, denotes the boundary between the land of mortals and the 'land of the immortals'.

In many places, water welling up from the earth has healing properties. The early Christian monks of Ireland picked up on the old Celtic myths and meanings and give them new significance through Christian theology. In Christian baptism, we are baptised into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Water becomes the means of rebirth, of renewal, of healing, of life, and of resurrection.

*We thank you, almighty God,
for the gift of water to sustain, refresh, and cleanse all life.*

Lough Derg Way, Map 2: Clonlara to O'Briensbridge



Distance: about 6 km.

(Map produced for Sport Ireland by EastWest Mapping.)

Clonlara

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. —Psalm 23:1-3

Clonlara is in the east of County Clare in the civil parish of Kiltonanlea or Doonass, barony of Tulla Lower. It lies between the River Shannon to the east and the Clare hills to the west and north. In 1841 there were 219 people in 31 houses. The village lies beside the head-race canal that delivers water to power the Ardnacrusha power plant a few kilometres to the southwest.

In 2014 Clonlara Church of Ireland (Kiltenanlea) was closed: vandalized, damaged, and unloved. Community leaders called a meeting, inviting everyone in the community to explain that the building was on the way to becoming just one of many other church ruins around Ireland. But the community decided otherwise. They came together, work parties were organised, and the church was transformed, making Clonlara a remarkable witness to what can be done when people are willing to work together.

*Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together,
O bind us together with love.
— Bob Gillman*

The Forest

I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me, you can do nothing.

—John 15:5

Standing up with arms outstretched, clothed in beauty, reaching for the heavens, rooted in the earth. Together the trees of the forest stimulate our spirits.

They sing of loving God their creator and their neighbours ... be those neighbours smaller younger trees, birds, insects, fungi, or bacteria. In fact, they know the secret of all our lives before God: We are created to need one another. The trees of the forest link people with nature, naturally, comprising the only completely live part of the landscape.

Ireland was once known as 'The Land of Forests'. The Welsh knew us as 'The Forest People'. When we were an oral people before the written word, the trees of the forest were known and differentiated, supplying meaning to early written language. The ancients knew trees to be a gateway between heaven and earth. In reality, they are a bridge between the world before history and the world today. While there are very few native forests left, there are many mixed groups of trees, and they have earned the accolade of being 'the nation's soul'. No other element in nature so 'roots' us, invites our deepest selves, even unaware, into a blossoming consciousness before God in Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

*'God is love: let heaven adore him;
God is love: let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him,
and exalt him with one voice...'*

O'Briensbridge

*For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven.*

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

At O'Briensbridge, the road crosses the River Shannon by way of an attractive stone bridge. The pace is slower, which should encourage the walker to stop and take in the beauty of creation in the countryside—water, land, and sky.

When the electricity generating station was built at Ardnacrusha, it included the construction of a canal running north from Parteen, just outside Limerick City to the Parteen Weir, south of Killaloe and the gateway to Lough Derg. This created an island between the canal and the River Shannon which in turn meant that the village of O'Briensbridge was now surrounded by water.

It has been said that change is the one constant in life. Our physical surroundings are constantly changing: not only from one season to the next, but also the nature and makeup of our cities, towns, and villages. So, too, do we change as we go through life, as we adjust and learn and adapt to the circumstances we encounter.

The underlying meaning of a pilgrimage is to change: to leave home, to undertake a journey, and to return home, changed.

*Be present, O merciful God,
and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we,
who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world,
may rest in your eternal changelessness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Lough Derg Way, Map 3: O'Briensbridge to Killaloe



Distance: about 9.5 km.

(Map produced for Sport Ireland by EastWest Mapping.)

Inishlosky

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

—Psalm 46:1

Inishlosky Island, which is east of O'Briensbridge, can be accessed only by boat. The ruins of the old church are on this island. The church is surrounded by a low bank and the land is very wet, boggy, and marshy. Occasionally horses graze on it. Because of neglect and the passage of time, distinguishing unmarked burial stones from church rubble and collapsed stonework is difficult to do.

The original site was established by French monks who arrived from Montpellier in the south of France. (There is a small village called Montpelier on the other side of the Shannon from O'Briensbridge.) They founded a church with a graveyard on the island but later had to move off it because of the threat of rising water and flooding from the Shannon. The graveyard at Lisheen, Montpelier, overlooking the island was in turn established. The oldest gravestone is from 1723 while the newest is 1816.

While it might seem that this site is not very inviting, visitors might see the experience of arriving on the island as a snapshot of their life. In Japanese culture, special gardens are laid out in a certain way so that visitors have to keep their eyes on the ground as they negotiate the terrain. When they arrive at their destination they discover there's a beautiful view—the effort they made to get there was worth it!

*Grant, O God, that amidst all the discouragements,
difficulties and dangers, distress and darkness of this mortal life,
I may depend upon thy mercy, and on this build my hopes,
as on a sure foundation.*

— Thomas Wilson

Ardcloony Burial Ground

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
—Matthew 5:4*

Life is the greatest pilgrimage of all. We encounter good times and bad, we wander through all sorts of terrains, spiritually speaking, from wildernesses to lush valleys, as we journey from birth to death.

Our Camino began with Saint Mary's Cathedral, and then a canal, symbolizing the waters of birth and of baptism. We end with a burial ground, followed by Saint Flannan's Cathedral in Killaloe. We have gone from birth to death, bracketed by two buildings constructed as places of worship to God our Creator, where one might gather with others to ponder the mysteries in the midst of which we all live.

Death is the greatest mystery. It brings sorrow to those who mourn the death of a loved one. Death also has the power to bring people together, as they gather to comfort one another in grief.

In the Christian tradition, death is seen as, yes, a time of mourning among those who remain, but also as a time of joy because the faithful departed have passed through a gateway into an eternal life with God, in the company of those who have gone before.

*O Lord, support us all the day long until the shades lengthen,
and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over, and our work is done.
Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Saint Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe

'How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts.' —Psalm 84

Welcome to Saint Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe! Killaloe, which means the Church of Lua, is mentioned by name in the Annals of Innisfallen under the year 991. Lua (or Molua) was a sixth-century saint and contemporary of St. Columba, St. Brendan and St. Comgall of Bangor. Lua accompanied Comgall back to Bangor, and was ordained there, returning to Munster where he founded a monastery at Clonfert-Mulloe near Roscrea.

There is no evidence that St. Lua personally founded any church in Killaloe; however, the earliest surviving church is indeed known as St. Lua's Church. This is a little stone church built on Friar's Island nearby in the River Shannon.

The building of the present Cathedral was carried out between 1194 and 1225. It fell on dark times between the 13th and 16th centuries, once more emerging into the light again in 1615. The Cathedral contains many treasures, including the Ogham stone, the High Cross, the Medieval Font, the Romanesque doorway, and the oak screen. Perhaps the most impressive feature is the East window, depicting the Good Shepherd and the Apostles.

The life and witness of this cathedral continues today as we continue to kindle the light of the Gospel, reflected in the witness stretching back to St. Flannan and St. Molua.

The Collect for the Feast of St. Flannan, celebrated on 18 December:
Kindle in our hearts, O God, the flame of love that never ceases, that
it may burn in us, giving light to others. May we shine for ever in
your temple, set on fire with your eternal light;
even your Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer.

Poems & Prayers for a Pilgrimage

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 at my end, and at my departing.
— *The Sarum Primer (13th century)*

How might it feel to be part of the vine?
Not just to see the vineyard from far
Or even pluck the clusters, press the wine,
But to be grafted in, to feel the stir
Of inward sap that rises from the root,
Himself deep-planted in the ground of Love,
To feel a leaf unfold a tender shoot,
As tendrils curled unfold, as branches give
A little swelling of the grape,
In gradual perfection, round and full,
To bear within oneself the joy and hope
Of God's good vintage, till it's ripe and whole.
What might it mean to bide and to abide
In such rich love as makes the poor heart glad?
—*Malcolm Guite, reprinted by permission*

Lord God, above and beneath and in every cloud which surrounds us on our journey of life, make us aware of your holy presence. Touch us, and transform the shadows of doubt into the radiance of faith; the shadow of indifference into personal trust; the shadow of pain into deep peace; the shadow of loneliness into companionship of love; the shadow of mortality into the brightness of eternal day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Camino Progress Chart

Because a pilgrim along the Limerick–Killaloe Camino might not complete the entire path on one journey, this chart is offered as a way to keep track of your progress. Simply fill in the date that you finish each leg of the journey. A stamp is available at each of the Cathedrals, at the beginning and the end.

Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick _____

The Canal _____

University of Limerick _____

Holy Well _____

Clonlara _____

The Forest _____

O'Briensbridge _____

Inishlosky _____

Ardcloony Burial Ground _____

Saint Flannan's Cathedral, Killaloe _____





LIMERICK KILLALOE
CAMINO

