

# Catholic Pilgrimage Choir Tour to Ireland

Standard Tour #2 (8 nights / 10 days)

## Day 1

Departure from USA via scheduled airline service to Shannon, Ireland. Enjoy full meal/beverage service and in-flight entertainment during this trans-Atlantic flight.

## Day 2 Shannon / Galway

Arrive at Dublin Airport. Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to the awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to Galway via the Burren Region, which is an extraordinary and unique place. 'Boireann' is Irish for 'rocky country' and when you see the miles of polished limestone stretching in every direction, you'll understand why it is named so! We will make a stop at the Cliffs of Moher, one of Ireland's most spectacular sights. On a clear day, the views are tremendous. Continue to Galway for Welcome Dinner and overnight.

*Galway is picturesquely situated at the northeast end of Galway Bay, at the point where the short tidal River Corrib, coming from Lough Corrib, pours its abundant flow of water into the Atlantic. Galway is the see of the diocese of Galway county, and has a university (part of the National University of Ireland), in which much of the teaching is in Irish. With its narrow streets, old stone and wooden shopfronts, good restaurants and bustling pubs, it is one of Europe's fastest growing cities and ranks fourth in size in Ireland, after Dublin, Cork and Limerick.*

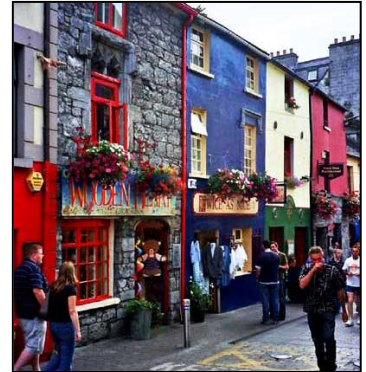
## Day 3 Galway

Excursion along the Coast of Connemara and the Lakes. Visit Kylemore Abbey. Kylemore Abbey is a lakeside castle that is a romantic, battlemented Gothic Revival fantasy. It became an abbey when Benedictine nuns, fleeing from Ypres in Belgium in World War I, sought refuge here. The nuns now run the abbey as a select girls' boarding school. In the grounds, rhododendrons and fuchsias enhance lakeside walks. **Participate/sing in a Mass in Kylemore Abbey.** Return to Galway for dinner and overnight.

## Day 4 Galway / Killarney

**Participate/sing in a Mass in Galway Cathedral.** Following the Mass see Galway from a different view on a Corrib River Cruise in Galway Bay. Continue to Craggaunowen for a visit. Then it is on to Bunratty Castle and Folk Park in County Clare for a visit. The castle was begun by the Vikings, who built a fortified settlement on a former island surrounded by a moat. Then came the Normans, who built the first stone structure in the 1270's. The present castle is the fourth or fifth to occupy the location beside the River Ratty and was built in the early 1400's. Evening dinner and overnight in Killarney.

*Renowned for its beauty, famed for the splendor of its scenery, Killarney is one of the world's best-loved tourist spots. Killarney (Cill Airne - The Church of Sloes) became a magnificent town around 1750 when the local magnate, Lord Kenmare, developed the tourist business and four major roads were built to the outside world*



### Day 5 Killarney

Full-day sightseeing tour of the Dingle Peninsula. There is no other landscape in Western Europe with the density and variety of archaeological monuments as the Dingle Peninsula. This mountainous finger of beautiful land which juts into the Atlantic Ocean has supported various tribes and populations for almost 6,000 years. Because of the peninsula's remote location, and lack of specialized agriculture, there is a remarkable preservation of over 2,000 monuments. Enjoy the mountains, beaches, and history as you travel from Inch to Rossbeigh Beach. Return to Killarney for dinner and overnight.



### Day 6 Killarney

Morning visit to Killarney Lakes and Killarney National Park. Famous for its splendid scenery, the Lakes of Killarney is one of Ireland's most popular attractions. Although the landscape is dotted with ruined castles and abbeys, the lakes are the focus of attention: the moody watery scenery is subject to subtle shifts of light and color. Visit the Muckross House. This imposing Victorian mansion was built in 1843 in Elizabethan style. The landscaped gardens are especially beautiful. **Participate/sing in a Mass in St. Mary's Cathedral in Killarney.** Evening dinner and overnight in Killarney.



### Day 7 Killarney / Waterford / Kilkenny

Transfer to Cork where we will visit the Blarney Castle and Stone. The castle dates from 1446 and is built on solid limestone in beautiful grounds. The sacred stone is found at the top of the castle and when you catch a glimpse of it, you may well feel compelled to bend over backwards and kiss it! Continue to Waterford for time to shop at the Waterford Glass Factory, famous for its hand cut crystal. Here crystal is blown and polished by hand. Finally reach Kilkenny for dinner and overnight.



*Kilkenny is considered by many to be second only to Dublin in its attraction for visitors. Its narrow winding streets lend it an atmosphere of old world charm; its terraces of handsome Georgian houses give it elegance; and with all this it is a busy modern town and market center for a fertile agricultural area.*



### Day 8 Kilkenny / Dublin

Enjoy a tour of Kilkenny Castle. Finely situated on the high river bank and surrounded by gardens, the castle is now open to the public. Some of the rooms have been restored; particularly charming is the Victorian Great Hall. Continue to Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains. The steep wooded slopes of Glendalough the "valley of the two lakes" harbor one of Ireland's most atmospheric monastic sites — established in the 6th century. Here we visit the Round Tower, Cathedral, St. Kevin's Cross and Kitchen, and Gatehouse and other monastic ruins. Continue to Dublin for dinner and overnight.



*Dublin - originally a Viking settlement, Dublin sits on the banks of the River Liffey, which divides the city north and south. The liveliest round-the-clock spots, including Temple Bar and Grafton Street, are on the south side, although a variety of construction projects on the north side are helping to reinvigorate these areas. Dublin, Europe's most intimate capital, has become a colossally entertaining, engaging city, astonishing considering its general size, and all of the city's main attractions are within a short walking distance of each other.*



### Day 9 Dublin

This morning's touring includes visits to Dublin Castle and Trinity College. Trinity College, which is Ireland's oldest university, was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592 on grounds confiscated from a monastery. The highlight of the tour will be a view of the Book of Kells, which dates from AD 800, making it one of the oldest books in the world. Also visit St. Patrick's Cathedral, with its spectacular choir displaying banners and stalls decorated with the insignia of the Knights of St. Patrick. The cathedral also holds Ireland's largest and most beautiful organ. ***Participate/sing in a Mass or an evening concert.*** Farewell Dinner and overnight.



### Day 10 Depart for home

Transfer to Dublin's International Airport for return flight to USA. Arrive home in the evening of the same day.



Lakes of Killarney