

AOH OUR LADY OF KNOCK – DIVISION 7
February 15 – 23, 2013
Itinerary

Fri, Feb. 15 UNITED STATES TO DUBLIN

Depart your hometown and take an overnight flight across the Atlantic. Enjoy in-flight entertainment and meal service as you travel to start your vacation.

Sat, Feb. 16 DUBLIN ARRIVAL & SIGHTSEEING

After landing at Dublin Airport, complete customs and immigration formalities. Then your CIE Tours driver/guide will welcome you to Ireland and escort you and your luggage to the coach. Take an orientation drive around Dublin city center. Dublin is one of the liveliest capitals in Europe but there are plenty of historical places also. See the main thoroughfares of O'Connell Street and Nassau Street, the shopping streets and some lovely public parks. Stop to visit the Guinness Storehouse to see exhibits on how this world famous stout was first created and why it is so popular today. Finish your visit in the roof-top bar, Gravity, overlooking the city center where you can sample a draft Guinness and enjoy the view of the city. Then drive to your hotel and check in. After you settle into your room you may like to rest or explore some of the city on your own before dinner.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: BURLINGTON HOTEL, DUBLIN

Sun, Feb. 17 DUBLIN HIGHLIGHTS & MERRY PLOUGHBOY EVENING

After celebrating Mass with your group this morning, set off with a local guide who will show you around the prominent historic buildings and monuments of Dublin. Dublin is an ancient settlement, founded by the Vikings in the 9th century. The city has been molded through the centuries with many architectural styles, reflecting the economic, political and artistic influences. Stop to tour Dublin Castle to see the State Apartments where many state functions are held in the richly decorated chambers. In Trinity College view the 8th century Book of Kells, an illuminated manuscript of the gospels. The afternoon is free for independent activities, sightseeing, shopping and much more.

This evening drive to the town of Rathfarnham to The Merry Ploughboy Pub for dinner followed by a lively show of traditional Irish songs, dancing and music.

OVERNIGHT: BURLINGTON HOTEL, DUBLIN

Mon, Feb. 18 LOCKE'S DISTILLERY, CROAGH PATRICK & WESTPORT

Depart Dublin and journey across the rolling pastures of Ireland's heartland and stop outside Kilbeggan for a tour of Locke's Distillery. It was established in 1757 and today it is no longer used but preserved to show visitors how whiskey was distilled here. At the end of the tour, sample some whiskey. Then continue your journey northwest through the scenic countryside to visit the conical mountain of Croagh Patrick, which is a popular place of pilgrimage where people climb the stony path to the summit. Tradition maintains that St. Patrick fasted here for 40 days. A short drive will bring you into Westport where your hotel is located. After checking in, enjoy some free time to settle in before dinner.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: HOTEL WESTPORT, WESTPORT

Tue, Feb. 19 EXCURSION TO KNOCK

Today travel to the pilgrimage town of Knock and attend a ceremony at Knock Shrine followed by a pipe band performance. Return to Westport where the remainder of the day is free before dinner in the hotel restaurant.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: HOTEL WESTPORT, WESTPORT

Wed, Feb. 20 'QUIET MAN' TOUR & ENNIS

Depart Westport and travel via Ballinrobe to the attractive village of Cong where the movie "The Quiet Man" was filmed with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara in 1952. Take a short walking tour through the village to discover places that appeared in the production. Finish your walk at the Quiet Man Heritage Cottage, filled with memorabilia of the movie. Continue your drive south via the outskirts of Galway to reach Ennis. Check into your hotel and spend the balance of the day free before dinner.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: TEMPLE GATE HOTEL, ENNIS

Thu, Feb. 21 CLIFFS OF MOHER, BUNRATTY FOLK PARK & MEDIEVAL BANQUET

Travel to the coast of Clare to view the Cliffs of Moher, an impressive wall of rock which rises to a height of 700 feet above the wild Atlantic waves and stretches for a distance of about five miles along the coast. In the afternoon drive inland to the village of Bunratty for a visit to the Bunratty Folk Park, which comprises a collection of farmhouses from different regions of Ireland and a 19th century village street with a pub, school, general store and many other buildings where traditional lifestyles and crafts are demonstrated. Also visit Durty Nelly's pub which stands in the shadow of Bunratty Castle and has been in business for about two centuries. It is a warren of small rooms and intimate bars with cozy fireplace seats.

This evening join in the fun and feasting at Bunratty Castle. Your medieval-style banquet is served in the Great Hall of the 15th century castle during which the lords and ladies of the castle transport you in spirit to the Middle Ages with their songs and stories. Return to Ennis for your overnight stay.

OVERNIGHT: TEMPLE GATE HOTEL, ENNIS

Fri, Feb. 22 CLONMACNOISE & DUNBOYNE CASTLE

Travel from Ennis to the center of Ireland to visit Clonmacnoise. This monastic settlement was founded in 545 AD by St. Ciaran and is delightfully set on the banks of the River Shannon. Learn about the history of the site through an audiovisual presentation and take a walk around to see the ancient monuments and the entire area. Continue your drive through farming country and marketing towns to the village of Dunboyne, just to the north west of Dublin, where your delightful hotel is located. Arrive in time to enjoy some of the facilities and relax in elegant surroundings. In the evening join your fellow travelers for a farewell dinner in the hotel restaurant.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: DUNBOYNE CASTLE HOTEL, DUNBOYNE

Sat, Feb. 23 RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

All too soon, your vacation in Ireland has come to the end. Transfer from Dunboyne to Dublin Airport in plenty of time to check in for your flight, clear security and claim your VAT refund. You may do some last minute shopping at the duty free stores. Then clear U.S. Immigration before boarding your aircraft and fly west across the Atlantic Ocean back to the United States.