

## Journeys to the Heart and Soul of Ireland

The Irish language has different words to describe different types of travel. The word for pilgrimage or sacred journey is Imram. To make an Imram requires that we first make the journey from the head to the heart because as Patrick Kavanagh says "God can't catch us unless we rest in the unconscious room of our hearts" Ireland is a place where beneath its modern facade lies a deeply rooted connectedness with the cycles of the natural world and with the spiritual world. Lakes, mountains, trees, stone circles, dolmens, court cairns and other megalithic structures, each with their own unique energies mark the places of soul, the "amini loci", throughout the countryside. When these sacred places are acknowledged and honoured by us their essence shines through more vividly, they become more alive.

Through the act of pilgrimage we are offered the potential for deep healing and transformation as we walk in these ancient sacred places. We are challenged to take off the shoes of forgetfulness, reconnect with our true nature and remember that we are always standing on holy ground. As we journey to these places with reverence and openness, it is possible to experience the archetypal energies and qualities of the eternal otherworld and contact the ancient and perennial spiritual wisdom present

within the landscape.. Through the act of pilgrimage walking a resting and praying in these ancient places offers the potential for deep healing and transformation for ourselves and the land

Our Journey, both internal and external will be of the heart allowing serendipity to happen It will be an opportunity to step out of our normal life and stop and in the words of Patrick Kavanagh "stare through the gap into ancient Ireland in all its un-baptised beauty"

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