

WISE WOMAN EMERGING

Pilgrimage and Croning Ceremony
September 18-26, 2024

Sacred Sites of Ireland
Fall Equinox 2024
County Sligo, Ireland



Introduction

Wherever you find yourself on the physiological journey of the age/stage of menopause, this pilgrimage will give you an opportunity to gather the gold of your experience and claim the wisdom of your years. In this transformational pilgrimage, you will be guided to embody your own expression of the Wise Woman and participate in a Croning Ceremony to celebrate your emergence.

Ireland is a magical and mysterious land full of ancient and sacred sites and thin places that offer transformational energies in support of women's journeys into their inner wisdom. Join Mary Francis on a guided tour of seven of these sacred sites and encounter the Divine Feminine in Her many forms. Immerse yourself in this transformative process of the Wise Woman Emerging in the verdant Irish countryside and along the Wild Atlantic Way during the thin time of the Autumnal Equinox.

In addition to these sacred sites, there will be time to explore the lovely town of Sligo along the Garavoge River for local food, music and shopping. Accommodations for the week will be at The Sea Barn, located by the sea in Ballymulderry, Co. Sligo on the Wild Atlantic Way. (sligoseabarn.ie)

Mary Francis Drake

Rt. Rev. Mary Francis Drake, MA, MSW, D-Min Candidate

madevi.org



Photo credit: [Maundy Mitchell Photography](#)

Rt. Rev. Mary Francis Drake, MA, MSW is Senior Adjunct Faculty in the Psychology Department at the University of Massachusetts--Lowell Campus and Online. She has been teaching for UMASS Lowell for 35 years. Her teaching, private practice counseling and spiritual direction offerings have focused on women and raising the energy of the Feminine to restore our beings and our planet to balance.

With 25 years as a Psycho-Spiritual Counselor, 17 years as a Priest, and now Bishop (3 years) in the Mystical Christian Tradition, Mary Francis continues to broaden her scope in the area of Conscious Evolution by ordaining independent Priests and offering spiritual direction to seekers.

She is also a poet and author of 3 books related to her ecclesiastic training and its transforming power: *This Much I Know Is True*, 2016 (essay collection); *beauty, grit & grace*, 2018 (poetry collection); and *Dancing in the Doorway: A Life's Journey Between Worlds*, 2022, (purposeful memoir). Mary Francis is currently a doctoral student in Ubiquity University's Doctor of Ministry Program. She is also the mother of 3 young adult children. She has recently moved to Vermont to start a Queen Mothers Home for elderwomen to age in place with dignity and community, harvesting the gold of the elder years for the sake of future generations.

Audrey Drake

Singer, songwriter, sound healer and Reiki Master

audreydrake.com



Photo credit: [Maundy Mitchell Photography](#).

Audrey Drake grabs the attention of her listeners with music that tugs at their hearts and an unassumingly cultivated voice. Her music crosses many styles and offers a great balance of songs both familiar and unknown, curated for the people in front of her. Listeners love her angelic tone and are sometimes surprised by the powerhouse of soulful sound within her. Haunting melodies and soulful lyrics transport you to a place where there is only you, the music, and life's journey.

Audrey's music is also influenced by her spiritual journey and path. Whether singing on festival stages, in yoga spaces or Kirtan events her unique voice and contemplative lyrics touch the hearts of those present to offer healing. On this journey, she will be offering sound healing in support of the transformative process, offering morning sacred practice.

Day 1 - Divine Orientation

On our way out of Dublin, we will visit the Black Madonna of Ireland, housed at Whitefriar Street Carmelite Monastery. Our journey begins with adoration and supplication of the Divine Mother's blessing on this pilgrimage and inner journey.



This will be followed by a visit to The Hill of Tara and the Stone of Destiny, powerful Celtic and Druid sacred places which we will also tune into for support, as well as our first Holy Well visit.

We will lunch and shop at Maguire's at the Hill of Tara café and have a chance to shop in the Art Gallery of Courtney Davis, Celtic Spiritual Artist.

Day 2 - Holy Places



Day 2 will begin with the practice of silence as we visit the Holy Well at Tobernault, former Celtic/Druid holy well and sacramental altar for Catholics in hiding during Ireland's penal times. The deep quiet of this holy place will further support the unfolding process of each participants' spiritual journey.

While in Sligo Town, we will visit the Hazelwood Forest and Lough Gill, the stomping ground of William Butler Yeats, Irish Poet and Esotericist. We will also visit his gravesite and ancient Celtic Cross and tower in Drumcliffe at St. Columba's Church.



Day 3 - Emerging Process



Day 3 will begin slowly with meditation, journaling and artistic expression of the emerging process, followed by a beautiful walk by the seaside at Ballymulderry.

The afternoon and evening will be spent in Sligo Town, enjoying local food, music, shopping and hopefully, the treat of a visit to local storyteller and woodcarver, Michael Quirke.



Day 4 - Queen Maeve

Our fourth day of Pilgrimage will include two stops related to Queen Maeve, The Cave of Cats – birthplace of Queen Maeve and Knocknarea – Queen Maeve’s burial cairn. Both of these excursions require some physical agility/strength as well as hiking cloths/shoes. The first is a ‘womb’ experience requiring some sliding/climbing into the mouth of a cave with waterproof boots and a headlamp. The second will require a moderate 45 minute climb to the burial cairn of Queen Maeve where the energy will shift toward the Wise Woman mission.

Alternate activities will be provided for those who feel uncomfortable with these physical activities.



Day 5 - Integration

On Day 5, we create space for integration and reflection. Immerse yourself in the tranquility of Sligo, with its many activities to support relaxation and reflection. Enjoy nature walks, optional holistic therapies, or town offerings to allow the unfoldment of your spiritual process.



Day 6 - Autumnal Equinox

Day 6 is the Autumnal Equinox. We will spend the day by the sea integrating all that has come to pass in the pilgrimage and making Croning Crowns. At dusk, we will go to the Faerie Glen to offer an equinox ritual for the turning of the seasons and a Croning Ceremony. Fall is the time of the Crone, the Wise Woman. This evening will be spent communing with the Elementals and connecting to the Mother Earth in Her turning.



Day 7 - Mother Mary

Day 7 will be a full day's journey to The Marian Apparition Site at Knock, Ireland. This World Pilgrimage Site and Basilica represents the visitation of Mother Mary to the poor town just after the famine times. Her appearance brought blessings and hope to the local citizens as well as the peace of Her Presence among them.



Day 8 - Integration

Day 8 will be a relaxing day of integration with options for spa treatments (self-paid, shopping, dining out and/or local music depending on the events happening in Sligo Town.

Day 9 - Departure

On Thursday, September 26, our coach will collect us at the Sligo Sea Barn at 9am and deliver us to the Dublin Airport at noon.

Recommended Reading

*The Art of Pilgrimage

Phil Cousineau

*Dancing in the Doorway

Mary Francis Drake

*Hagitude

Sharon Blackie

Queen Maeve and the Tain Stories

Pauline McDermott

The Celtic Spirit: Daily Meditations for the Turning Year

Caitlin Matthews

If Women Rose Rooted

Sharon Blackie

Crones don't Whine

Jean Shinoda Bolen

Come of Age

Stephen Jenkinson

*Required reading for those taking the course for credit at U.U.

Logistics

- Pilgrimage limited to 12 participants
- Participants are responsible for flights to Dublin Airport where ground transportation will collect us at 9 am on Wednesday, September 18. Return flights should be scheduled for afternoon/evening of Thursday September 26 at the earliest. Participants will be delivered to the Dublin Airport by noon on Thursday the 26th by private bus.
- Participants will be provided with snacks and water, as well as breakfast included in overnight stays. Participants will be responsible for lunch and dinner meals, drinks and tips.
- Cost for retreat includes retreat content, ground transportation from Dublin airport to all sites and return to Dublin airport on the morning of 9/26, and 7 nights accommodations w/breakfast . \$3000 pp (not counting credits for UU students, flights not included). Some dinner options catered at a fee. Non-refundable deposit of \$1000 due by June 1, balance by August 1.
- Accommodations will be double occupancy.

What to Bring

- It's Ireland...so bring a raincoat and/or umbrella
- Waterproof wellies (rubber boots) & headlamp if you plan to climb into the Cave of Cats
- Hiking boots if you plan to climb Knocknarea (45 minute uphill hike, moderate)
- Journal, pens, religious/spiritual items for shrine
- Prayer beads or Rosary
- A satchel or back pack to carry the above
- Spending money for shopping and meals



May you gather the gold of your
experience and claim the wisdom
of your years to embody your own
expression of the Wise Woman.

To inquire further, please contact
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