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Routes of Faith is the newsletter of the Faith Travel Association that blends articles aiming to inspire as well as share the many destinations offered by FTA members. *Routes of Faith* also provides insights that educate readers on new and innovative ways to travel, including eco-friendly and sustainable trends.

FAITH TRAVEL ASSOCIATION



Creating an effective faith travel experience

Remember for a moment your most moving travel experience. If you have ever visited a place or imagined a destination that, for you, stimulated questions of your purpose on this beautiful orb and the meaning of this life, you already have a sense of the power of faith travel.

Theologians recognize questions of who we are and why we occupy space on this planet temporarily as ontological questions. Rather than exploring abstract theological concepts, Purposeful Journeys' Mike Malone provides clarity in the definition of faith travel while also offering pragmatic advice on how to begin planning an effective faith travel experience. Read his article on [NTAcourier.com](https://ntacourier.com).

[NTACOURIER.COM](https://ntacourier.com)



[A new perspective on faith travel](#)

Standing at the top of Nerudova Street, peering down at the rain-soaked cobblestones and pastel storefronts as the street lights danced like a watercolor painting come to life, Big Story Living's Amy Colón never felt more certain that travel and faith were the most perfect of companions. It was March of 2017, and she was experiencing one of the most difficult times of her life. She'd finally succeeded in adopting her fourth daughter from Vietnam, but the years of stress and struggle had taken their toll. Emotionally and spiritually, she was in a bad place, and she needed to care for herself and re-center. This is how she ended up in Prague on her first solo adventure to Europe. Read the full story on [NTAcourier.com](https://ntacourier.com).

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FTA MEMBER FEATURE

Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC



Experts of the Emerald Isle: Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC
By Todd Probus

In his book "Outliers: The Story of Success," best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell says that in order to achieve expertise in any aspect of life, one must spend 10,000 hours honing that particular skill or area of knowledge. That number equates to 416 days, a little more than 13 months.

But what about 525,600 hours? That's how long, give or take a thousand or two hours, that Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC has been in business. For nearly 60 years, Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC, Ireland's oldest family-run destination management company, has been serving customers who visit the Emerald Isle. However, according to Stephen Enright, the company's general manager, "customer" isn't the correct term. "As a company," says Enright, "we always say that we don't have customers, or clients ... we have partners."

That's because the people at Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC see themselves as an extension of each operator who brings groups to Ireland. "When we work together, we become a branch office of your company on the island of Ireland," Enright explains. "The level of personal service is appreciated by our partners. They love how we work and that's why they stay. If there's a problem, they know we're on hand to take care of it." Enright adds that over the course of its 60-year history, the company has never lost a client.

Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC is a new member of NTA and Faith Travel Association, and Enright is particularly excited about introducing the company's faith-based itineraries to operators and faith travel groups.

"Ireland has long been regarded as a premier destination for faith-based travel," Enright notes. "The country has a deep-rooted Christian heritage that spans over a millennium. It's home to numerous ancient monastic sites, abbeys, holy wells, and sacred sites." Enright adds that Ireland's natural beauty only enhances the visitor experience, saying that the country "offers various pilgrimage routes that allow travelers to embark on a spiritual journey while also experiencing its breathtaking landscapes."

Ireland also holds events that may be of interest to faith travelers, hosting religious festivals throughout the year that celebrate its faith and cultural heritage. St. Patrick's Day is obviously the best-known, but the Feast of St. Brigid, observed on Feb. 1, is a popular event as well. Also known as Imbolc, the festival celebrates the early signs of spring.



Of course, the nation as a whole features a long list of sites that travelers of faith will want to visit. The list includes Saint Patrick's Cathedral, the famous monastic site at Glendalough, Clonmacnoise, Croagh Patrick, Skellig Michael, Knock Shrine, St. Brigid's Cathedral, Lough Derg, Rock of Cashel, and The Book of Kells. Enright notes that this list "represents a diverse range of sites and experiences, offering a glimpse into Ireland's spiritual heritage, monastic traditions, and remarkable landscapes."

With so many sites to see, Ireland easily lends itself to repeat visits, especially for reasons pertaining to its natural beauty. "Our landscapes are ever-changing, depending on the season," says Enright. "Returning to Ireland at different times of the year allows you to witness its natural beauty in various stages: lush greenery in the spring, vibrant colors in the autumn, or even the rough winter landscapes."

Enright adds that repeat visits allow travelers to go a bit off the beaten path. "On subsequent visits, you can venture beyond the well-known sites and explore lesser-known gems," he explains. "Ireland is full of hidden treasures, such as small churches, remote holy wells, and local pilgrimage routes that may not be widely recognized but offer profound spiritual experiences and insights into Ireland's faith traditions. With each visit, you can delve deeper into the country's religious sites, learn more about saints and legends, and gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual traditions that have shaped its identity."

With 60 years of experience in showing guests all that Ireland has to offer, Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC clearly has cemented its place as a trusted partner for tour operators and faith group leaders alike.

"We're a reputable DMC with extensive knowledge of the country's religious heritage, historical sites, and sacred destinations," says Enright. "We offer customized itineraries tailor-made for the specific needs and interests of any group. We're a well-connected company that can help facilitate access to certain sacred sites that require special arrangements for that access to be made. We can also help organize rituals, prayer sessions, and other spiritual activities to enhance the pilgrimage experience."

Of course, Enright makes sure to mention another important aspect of any Ireland experience—its people. "We're in a very unique and privileged position to have wonderful connections within each and every diocese on the island of Ireland," he explains. "This affords us direct access to people who can confirm directly the service we request, thus guaranteeing a warm and friendly welcome for our guests. This is coupled with the excellent faith-based guides who have worked with us for years. They have an excellent knowledge not only of the religious aspect of tours, but also of the culture and tradition of the island. These relationships ensure that your guests have a wonderful and memorable time in Ireland."

Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC's decades of serving travelers equates to some 525,600 hours worth of expertise, and because of that, you and your group can get to know Ireland's faith heritage in a much shorter time.



For more information about Joe O'Reilly Ireland DMC, visit www.jorireland.com or email Bernard O'Reilly at bernard@jorireland.com.



FTA's "The Short Story" - Episode 2

Unlisted

Don't miss "The Short Story"

Earlier this year, Faith Travel Association members recorded brief presentations about their destination or company in two video conferences called "The Short Story." If you missed them, now is your chance to see what these FTA members have to offer. To find the recordings, click below to the NTA Online Education page, click on Seminars and Webinars, and scroll down to Previous Webinars & Conversations.

[NTA ONLINE](#)



PHOTO: NORMAND HUBERDEAU

[Meet with faith travel partners at Travel Exchange '23](#)

At NTA's annual convention this fall, members of the Faith Travel Association will gather for fellowship during meals, meetings, and evening events, and they'll hear from faith leaders and other industry experts focused on faith-based group travel. They'll network with NTA members interested in adding a faith travel element to their itineraries or learning about new destinations, attractions, and travel trends. And those seeking information about becoming a member of FTA can chat with NTA staff and join on-site. Click below for more information on Travel Exchange.

[TRAVEL EXCHANGE](#)



The [Faith Travel Association](#) is a worldwide community of tour operators, travel agents, destinations, and travel suppliers serving the faith-based travel market. *Routes of Faith* is the official newsletter of FTA. For more information on joining FTA, contact [Todd Probus](#).

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