

# CHURCHES, CHURCH RUINS, IN IRELAND.

Rundtrip Irland and England Year 2004



When traveling through Ireland, it is striking how many church and monastery ruins there are everywhere. And if there is any old church that is not destroyed and functioning today, it is not Catholic but Anglican even though the Anglicans in Ireland are a small minority. The Catholic churches are all relatively newly built.

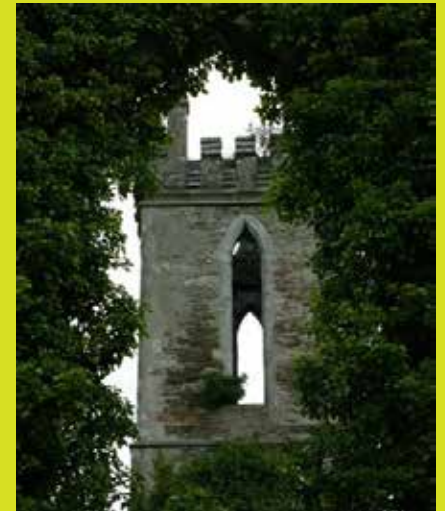
Remarkable, I also think, is that

the Anglican Church informs about how the English reformers destroyed the Catholic churches of Ireland. This can be read on many of the signs found in churches and church ruins here.

The first ruin I come across is in the town of Howth on the isthmus outside Dublin.



The next ruin I see is on the road from Dublin down towards the coast on the south-east side in County Wicklow.



Behind the church, which is partially overgrown with climbing plants, there are a number of graves that barely stand out from the vegetation. Someone has made a path to some of the graves which have been freed of creepers and given ornamental plants in front of them (not in the pictures).



This church is down in the bay below the Holy Mountain, Crough Patrick.

## CLAREGALWAY FRANCISCAN FRIARY



This Franciscan monastery in Claregalway on the road between Galway and Knock in the first half of the 13th century. It was dissolved by Henry VIII and given in 1570 to Sir Richard Bourke. On the sign inside the monastery it says: "The Franciscan friars remained in the neighborhood for 200 years. At times during this

time they used their old buildings". Surely they used the ruins when they came to celebrate Catholic mass for the people. This happened in most parts of Ireland during the British occupation. Mass was celebrated outdoors in a field or in church ruins without a roof. This is what an Irish Passionist priest Fr. Luke told me. I see it confirmed on the information board for this monastery and also on other monastery ruins I visited in Ireland.



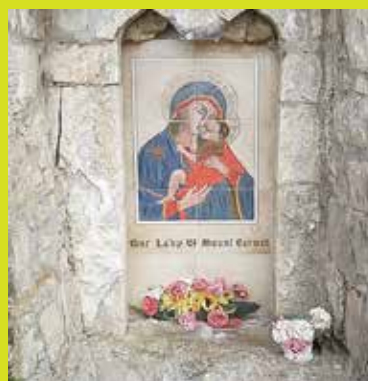


# ST. MARY'S ABBEY BALLINSMALE

This monastic ruin is a few kilometers on the road south of Knock. On the information board it says:



"Founded in 1288 A.D. for "The Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel" by the Prendergast family of Clanmorris the Carmelite Friary consisted of a church, cloister, domestic quarters, a "Lady" Chapel and a More Chapel. Although surprised by Elizabeth 1st c. 1585 and partially destroyed by Parliamentary forces in 1649 the Carmelites remained almost continuously at St. Mary's for 600 years until c. 1870."



More information:

<https://arborealis.ca/local-history/ireland/kilcolman/carmelite-abbey/>

# EX-CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH IN IRELAND AND ENGLAND.

Something else that strikes me is that many churches are no longer used as churches but house a profane activity. It can be restaurants or even gambling halls, something I saw in a small town in the west of England south of the Scottish border, but didn't have time to take a picture of.

In Cashel there is a church which now serves as a restaurant "Chez Hans". I go in and am told by one of the waiters that it used to be a Methodist church.



Restaurant "The Vestry" used to be an Anglican church, I learn from the cobbler in the workshop opposite. I stop there on my way from the Kerry peninsula to Cork on the south coast of Ireland. The place is called Templenoe.





A few hundred meters away is a fairly newly built Catholic church. I go in and get into a conversation with the organist who is sitting there practicing. He says people here don't sing. They just come to the fair and want to get it done as quickly as possible. He himself is from England and in his congregation in London they had a large choir. Now he has at least managed to get a group together that sings.



In the town you drive through before you get to Crough Patrick, there is a church that is now a pizzeria: "Pizza Place" is what it says on the sign outside.

Prior's Kitchen Restaurant is now called the old monastery church. Inside the restaurant, the students of the cathedral school seem to be holding on today. Outside the church restaurant you see several students or perhaps rather "graduates".





In this little town which I pass through from the Passionists of Saint Helen's near Liverpool, England, on my way to their house at Minsteracers in Northumberland, Freemasonry seems once to have been very lively. Now, however, it seems to be on the decline. On the main street that runs through the town there are two different churches that are now used for profane activities.

One was apparently the original Methodist Church here in town and is now a hostel.



The other one you can't see what it has been but is now a business where they even has liquor rights.





A Catholic layman, Noel O, I visited in his home told me a clever question that one is surprised to hear the answer to: What city in the world has three cathedrals, two of which belong to one Church and the third to another? Yes, it's Dublin. And one would expect the two cathedrals to be Catholic and the third Anglican in a pro-Catholic country like Ireland. But it is the exact opposite; the two largest and oldest cathedrals of the Anglican Church, the Church of Ireland, with the Catholic one being a relatively new and smaller church.



Down in the crypt in the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, there is an exhibition with e.g. a stand dealing with Henry VIII. There is written the following text, which must also be the official Anglican version:

"At the Reformation in the 16th century King Henry VIII claimed that he and not the Pope was head of the Church in Ireland. He closed most monasteries and priories. The Augustinian priory at Christ Church was closed in 1541, but the cathedral continued. The prior and the other canons became the dean and chapter of the reformed cathedral. Other changes came more slowly, but gradually the Latin services were replaced by the Book of Common Prayer. The sacred relics were destroyed changes came a century later when Oliver Cromwell conquered Ireland. The government leaders and officials from Dublin castle continued to worship here, but it ceased to be a cathedral and the Book of Common Prayer was outlawed."

