

ADVENTURES IN IRELAND AND ENGLAND:

Learning Spiritual Growth from Monastic Best Practices

Theological Travelogue One

Ireland....full of wonders and natural beauty – a people who had close connection with creation....















A Land of Creativity, Art, Poetry, Story and Song....



Arrival through Dublin





WILD ATLANTIC WAY



ACTIVEME.IE

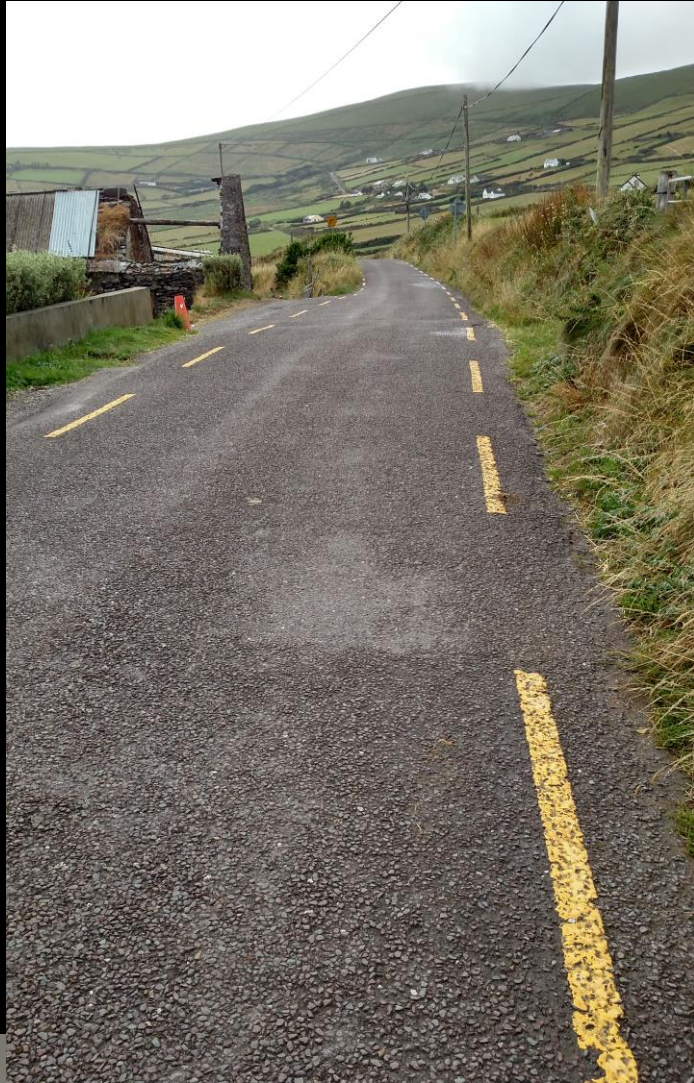


- Wild Atlantic Way
- Ferry Route to Island
- Flight Route to Island
- Signature Discovery Point
- Discovery Point
- Road (Motorways / National Road)
- City / Town
- Causeway Coastal Route

Note: Not all of the route is fully accessible by coach traffic.
For a suggested coach route, please see www.fairerireland.ie/wildatlanticway



And the Hazards of the Road!



**St. Columbanus
writing to the Pope in the 6th century
described the Irish people as**

*"Living on the edge of the world....[with]
none of the imperial infrastructure, as found
elsewhere in Europe on which to build the
church."*

St. Patrick in the 5th Century Brings the Gospel

"I speak the truth, that 'I saw a vision of the night': a man named Victoricus – 'like one' from Ireland– coming with innumerable letters. He gave me one of them and I began to read what was in it: 'the Voice of the Irish.' And at that very moment as I was reading out the letter's opening, I thought I heard the voice of those around the wood of Foclut, which is close to the western sea. It was as if they were shouting with one voice: O holy boy, we beg you to come again and walk among us. And I was 'broken hearted' and could not read anyore."

Patrick

- And the Irish traditions.... He came alongside and Christ fulfilled the old traditions, and the old traditions were continued in among the converted Christians.
- *"Such indeed is the case in Ireland where they never had knowledge of God – and until now they celebrated only idols and unclean things. Yet recently, what a change: they have become a 'prepared people' of the Lord and they are now called 'Sons of God'."*
- Druids: this is the greater light that has been prophesied would come

Patrick

"So now without any affection, I have told my bretheren and fellow-servants. They believed me because 'I warned and I warn' in order to make your faith more sure and robust. Would indeed that you would imitate greater things and do more powerful things. This would be my glory...."

The Irish Saw God Present in the Natural
Wonders of the World but not equal with it



The Irish Christians Enjoyed Feasts and Celebrations...Such as with Brigid....



But Also saw the dangers/Temptations of living for self rather than God

Which led to ascetic practices...that were designed to train the self not to live for pleasure but to live for God....

Die to self by mortifying the passions of the body....

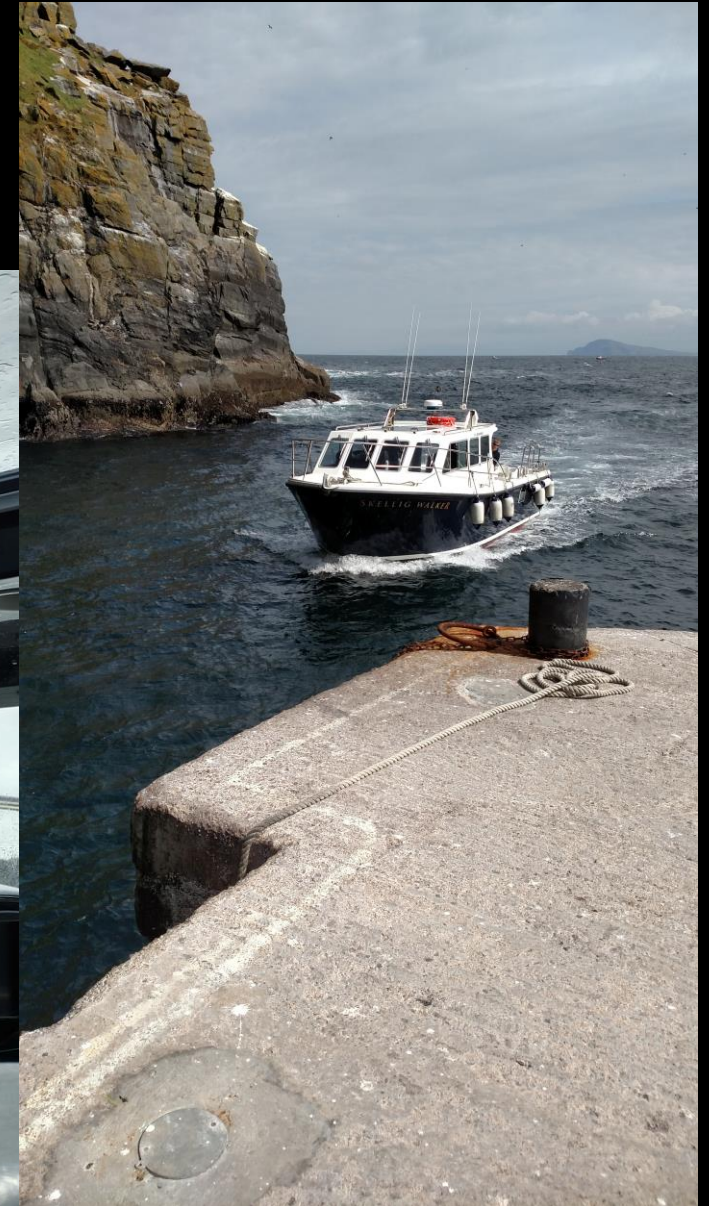
Asceticism: "Practicing strict self-denial as a measure of personal and especially spiritual discipline" -- Miriam Webster

And so this and extreme devotion
lead to Skellig Michael!





The Approach....

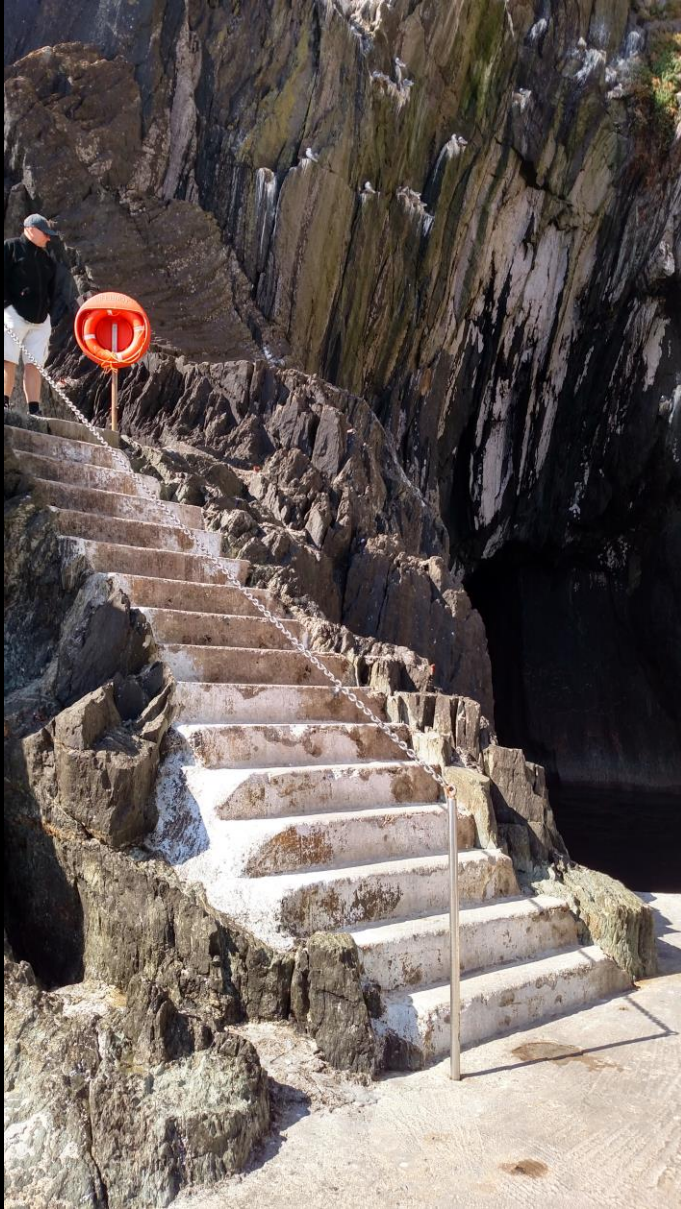


George Bernard Shaw

Yesterday I left the Kerry coast in an open boat, 33 feet long, propelled by ten men on five oars. These men started on 49 strokes a minute, a rate which I did not believe they could keep up for five minutes. They kept it without slackening half a second for two hours, at the end of which they landed me on the most fantastic and impossible rock in the world: Skellig Michael, or the Great Skellig, where in south west gales the spray knocks stones out of the lighthouse keeper's house, 160 feet above calm sea level.



Walking Along the Base...



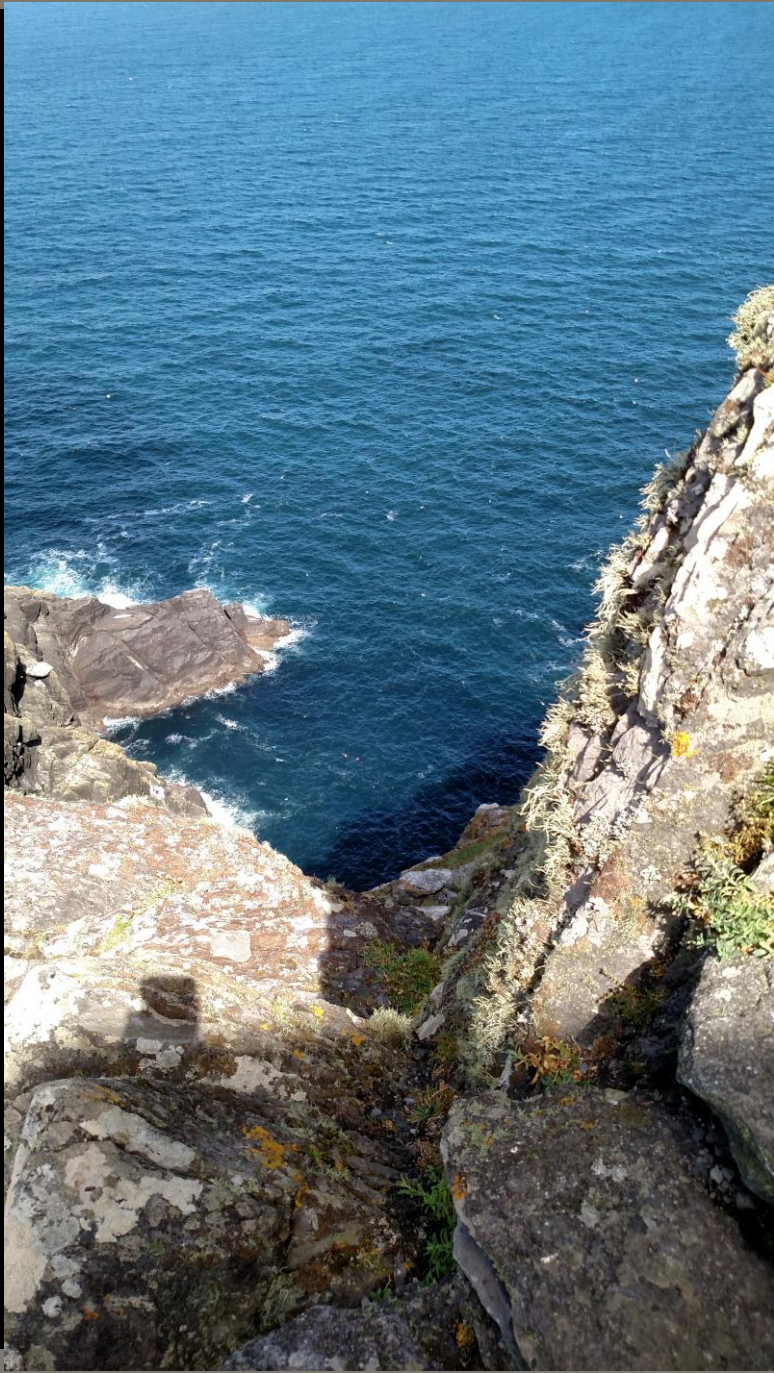




Beginning the Ascent...







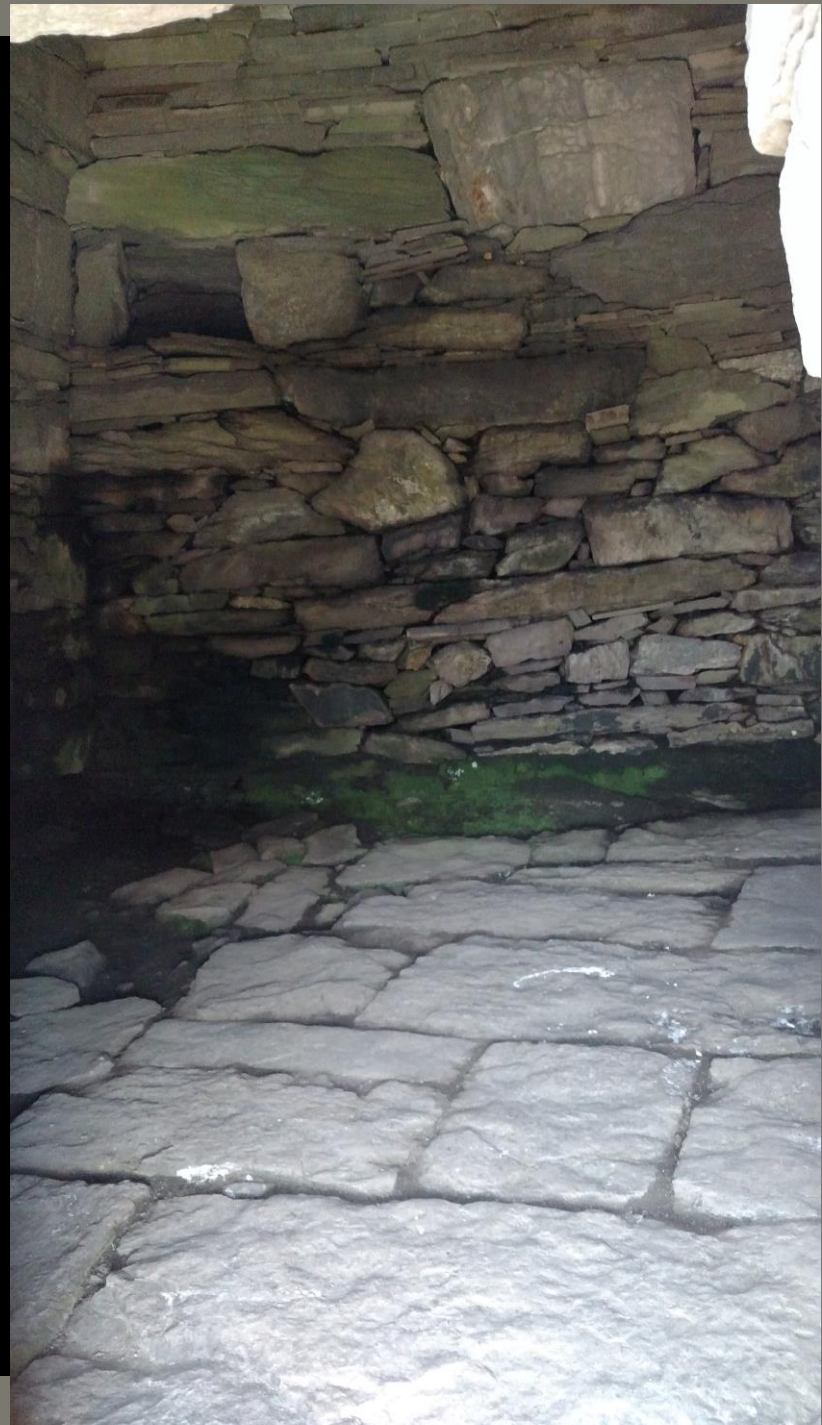
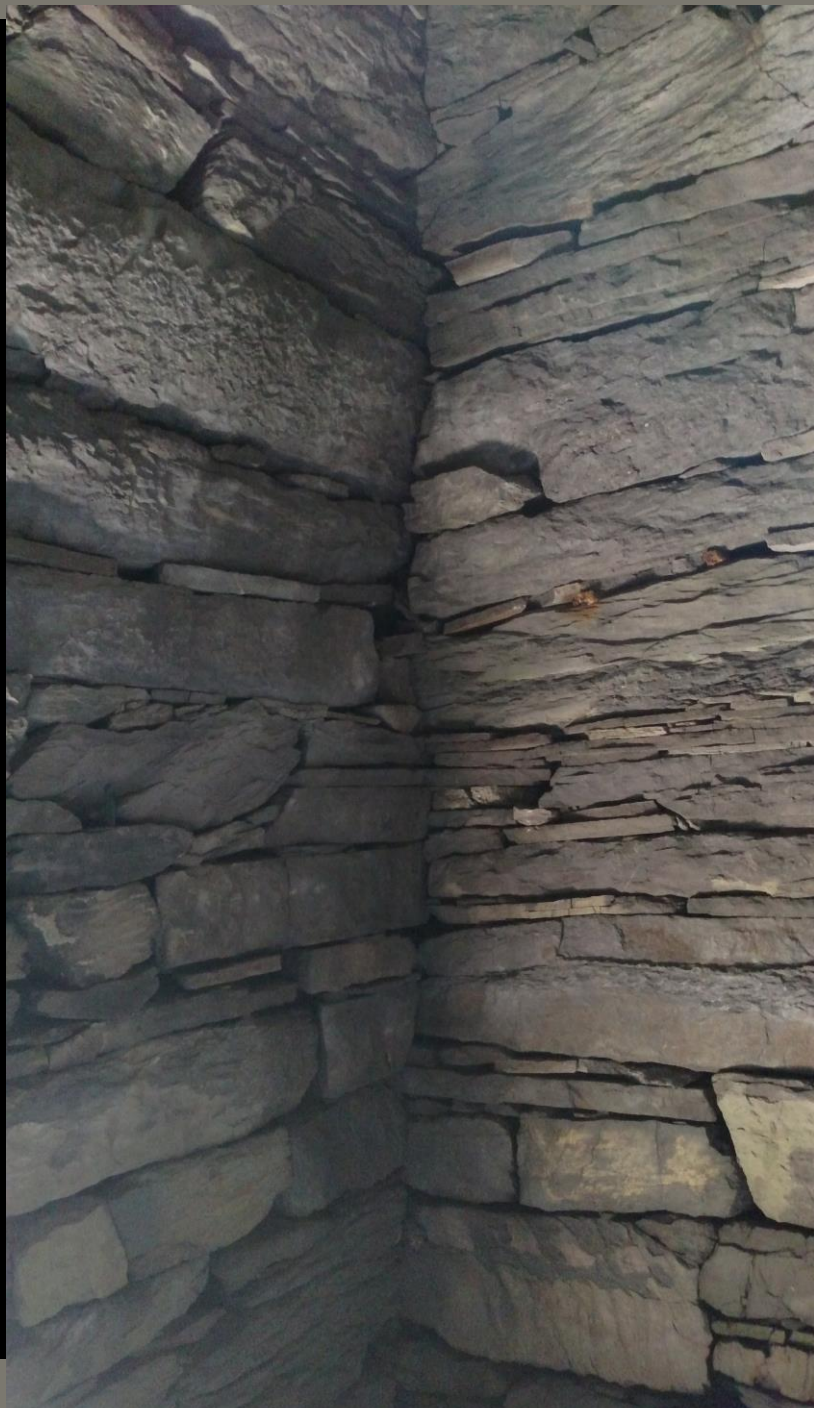
The Skellig Experience....video

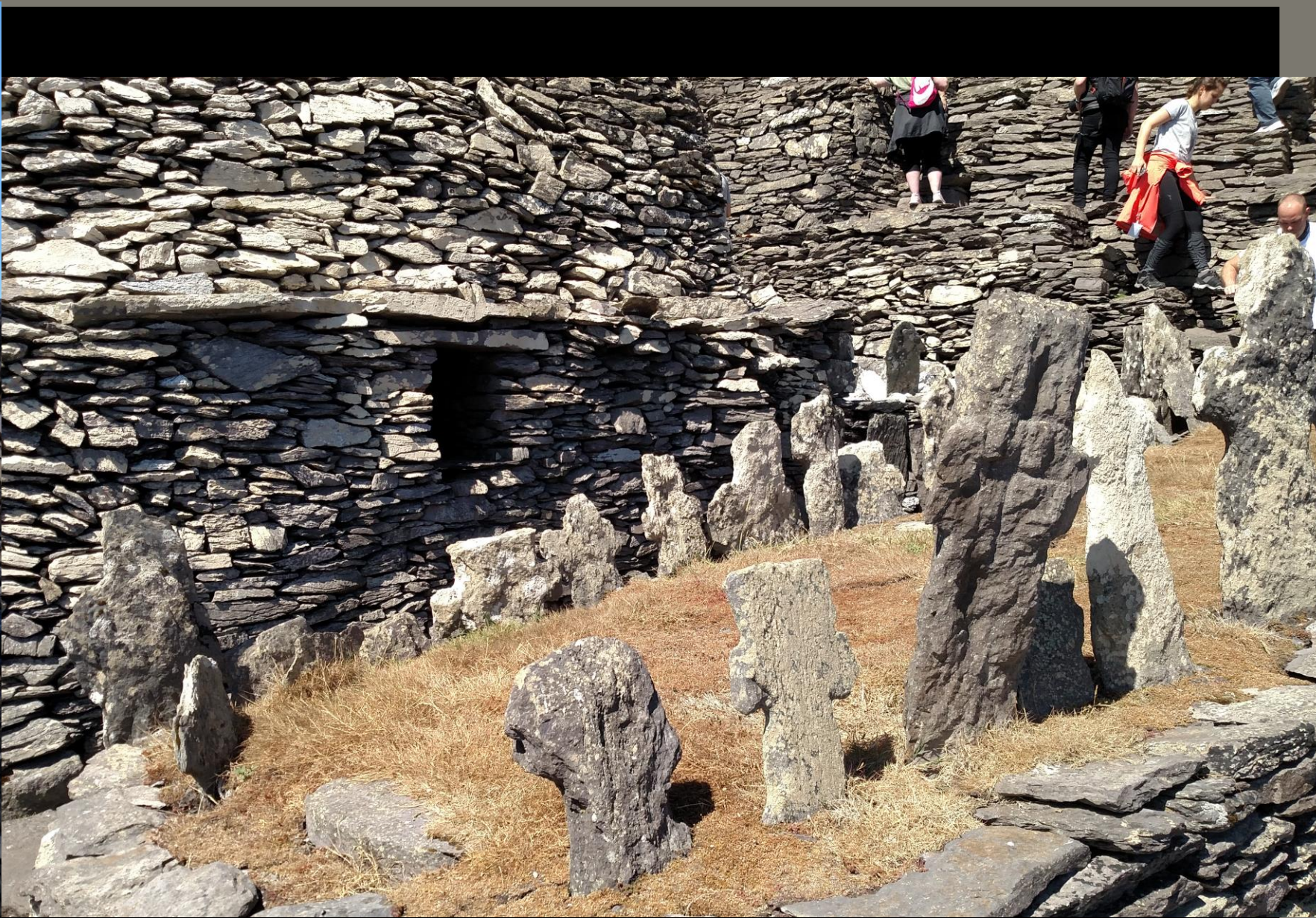
The Monastery...



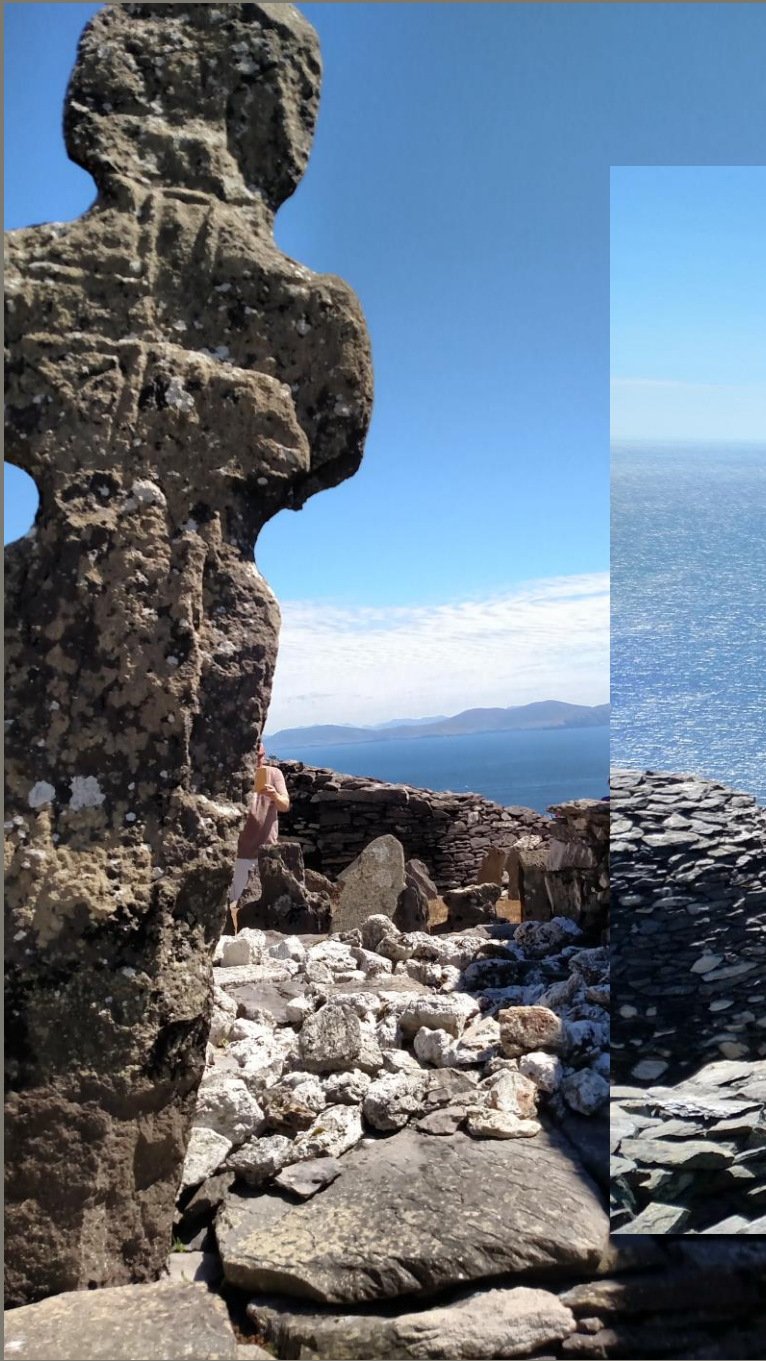






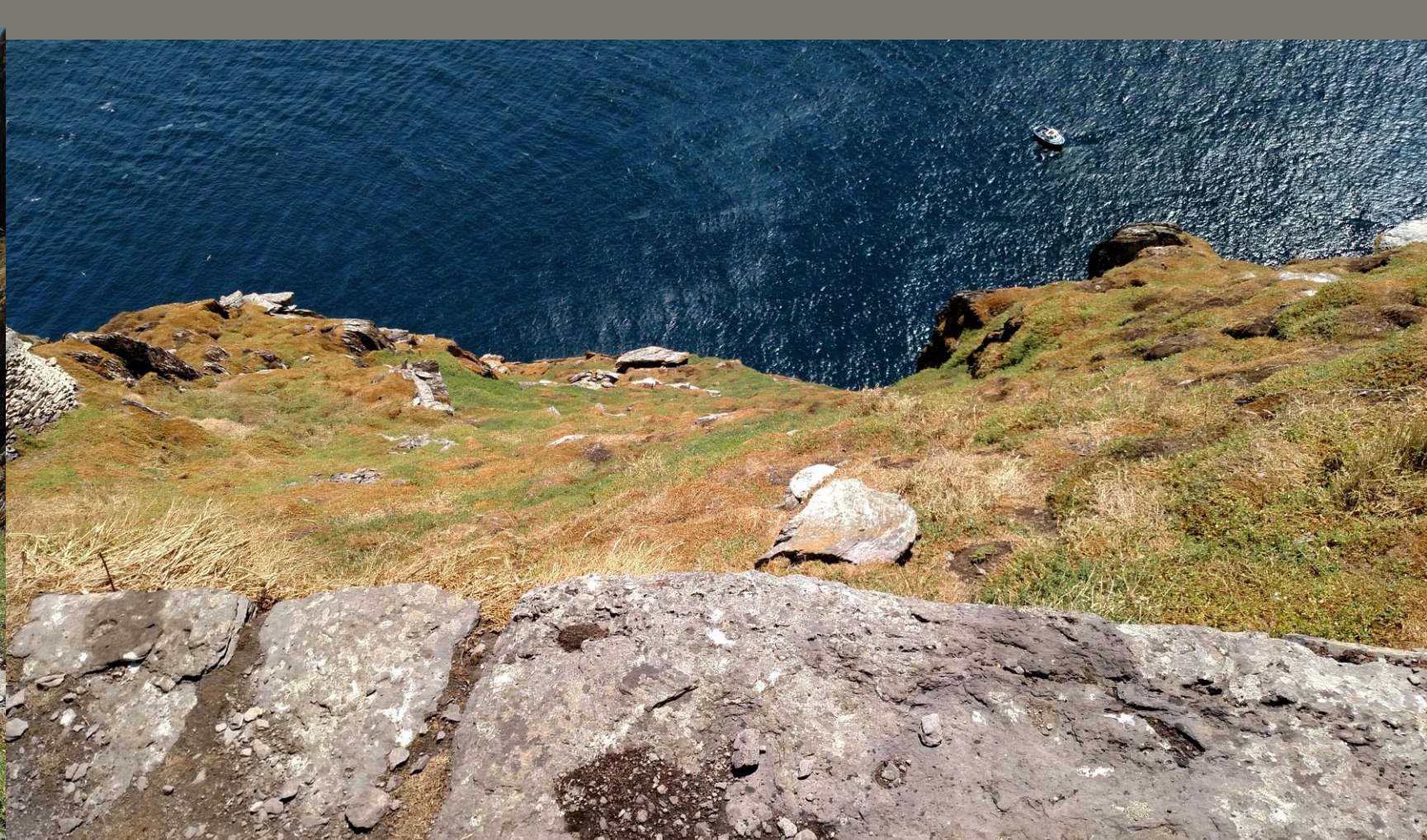


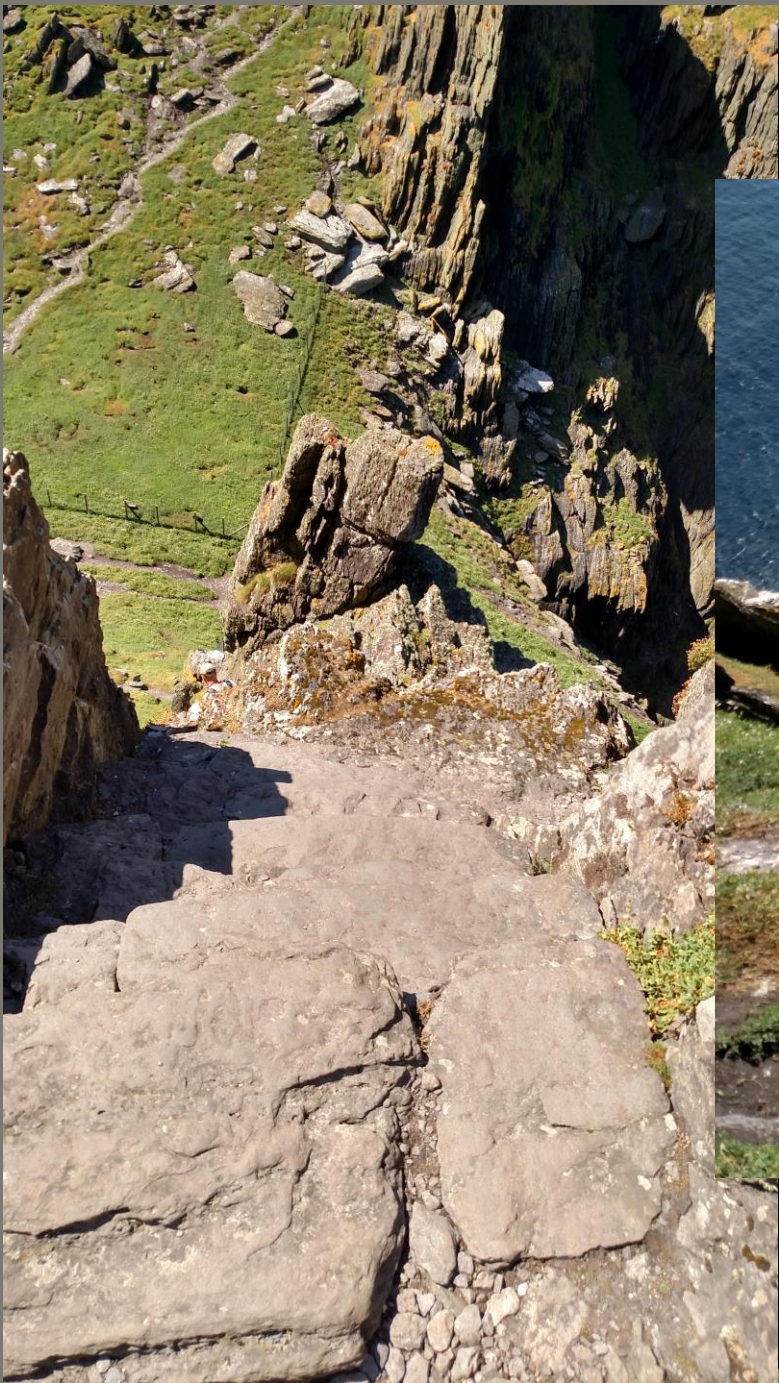




The Way Back Down...



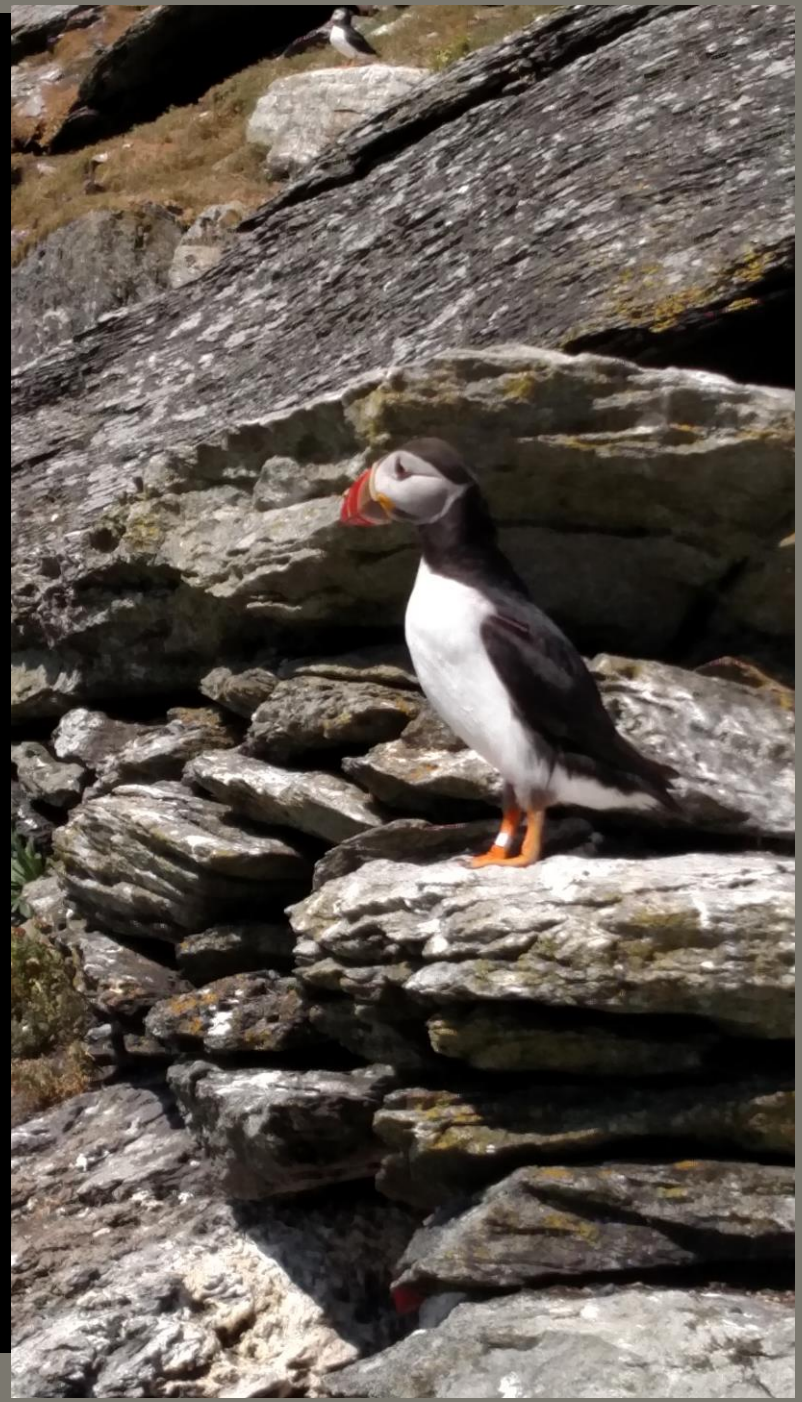




Wildlife...the Puffins



















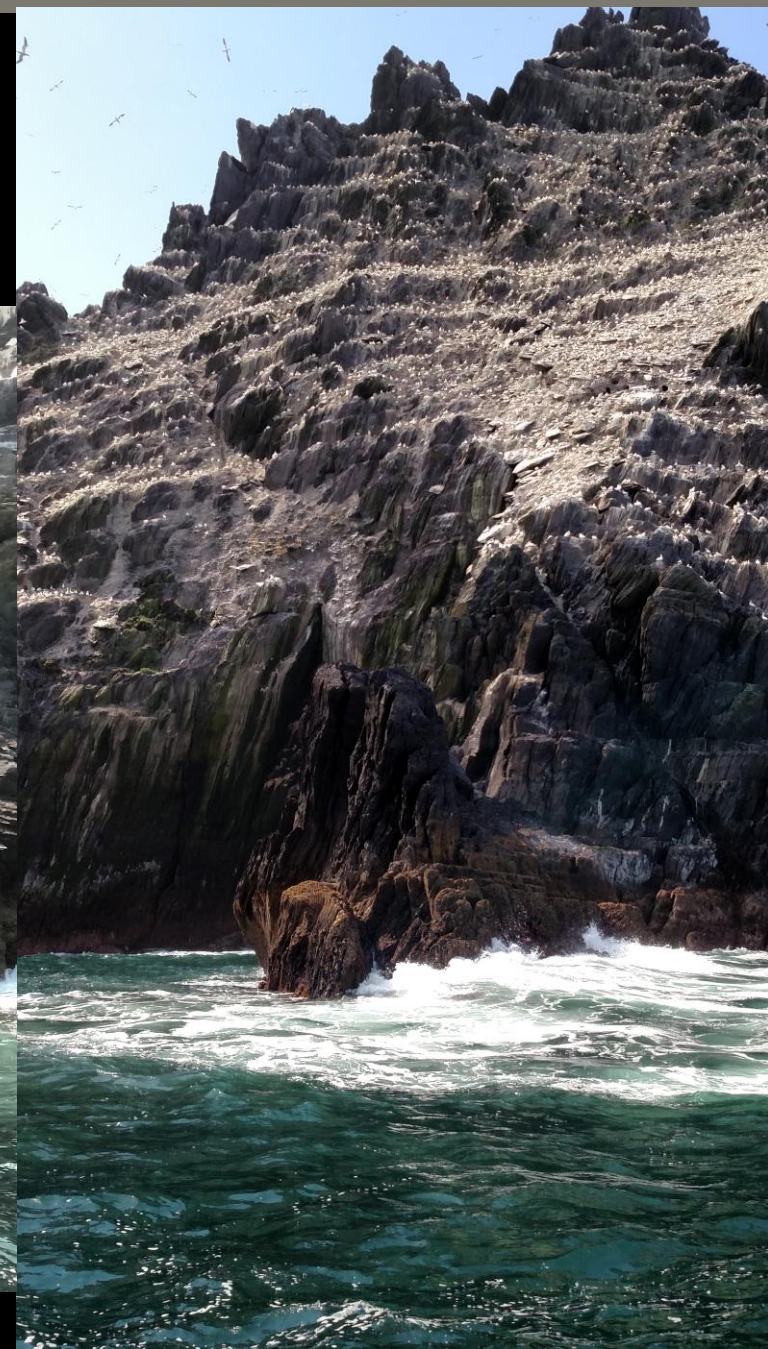
The Hermitage



From Celtic Light by, Ester De Waal

“Skellig Michael was the most westerly of Christ’s fortresses in the western world...these solitary places were to become their place of resurrection.”

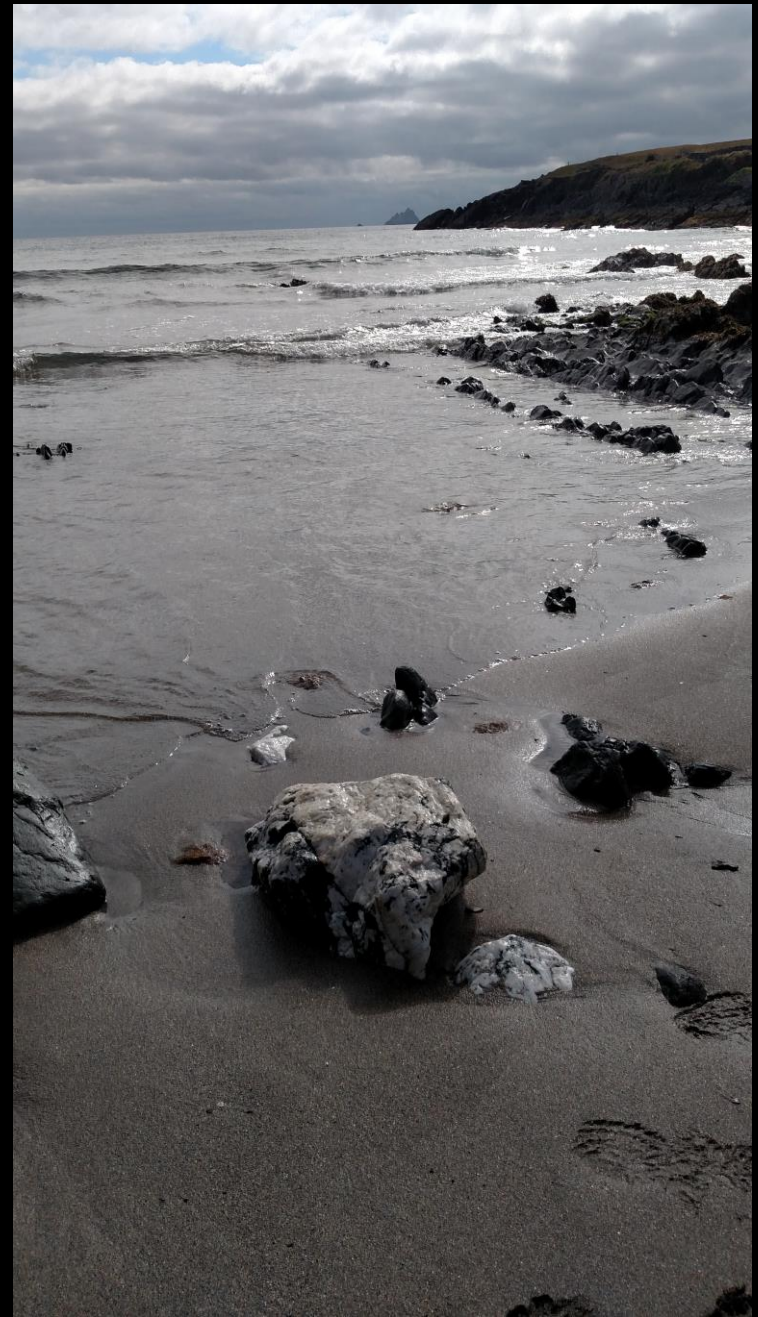
Gannettes





St. Finians Bay









Pilgrimage

- Zeal for God!
- Effort
- Danger
- Not too attached to this world
- But seeking God present in this world (NOT Pantheism)

St Columbanus: On Pilgrims in this World

"Christians are guests of the world....like pilgrims always sigh for our homeland, long for our homeland. It is the end of the road that travelers look for and desire...Don't let us love the road rather than the Lord to which it leads, lest we lose our homeland altogether."

United
Kingdom



Google



King Oswald and Bamburgh Castle -- England

Kingdom of Northumbria

Sent to Iona for a Monk

Austereire

Aiden

Inner Farne and praying against fiery attack





Inner Farne





Holy Island

Aiden's Prayer:

Lord this bare island, make it a place of peace.

Here be the peace of those who do Thy will.

Here be the peace of brother serving man.

Here be the peace of holy monks obeying.

Here be the peace of praise by dark and day.

Be this island, Thy Holy Island.

I, Lord, Thy servant, Aidan,

Make this prayer.

Be it Thy Care. Amen.



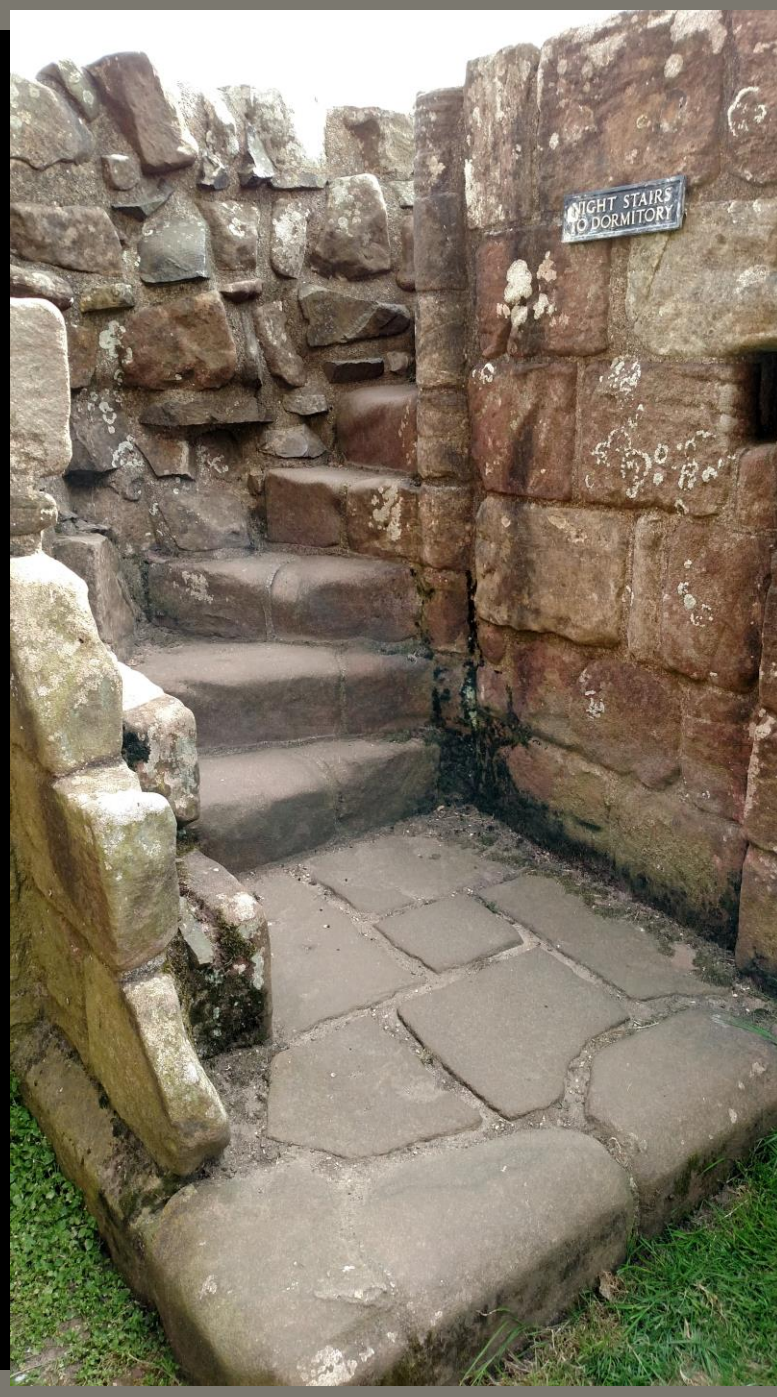




The Celtic Monastic Approach

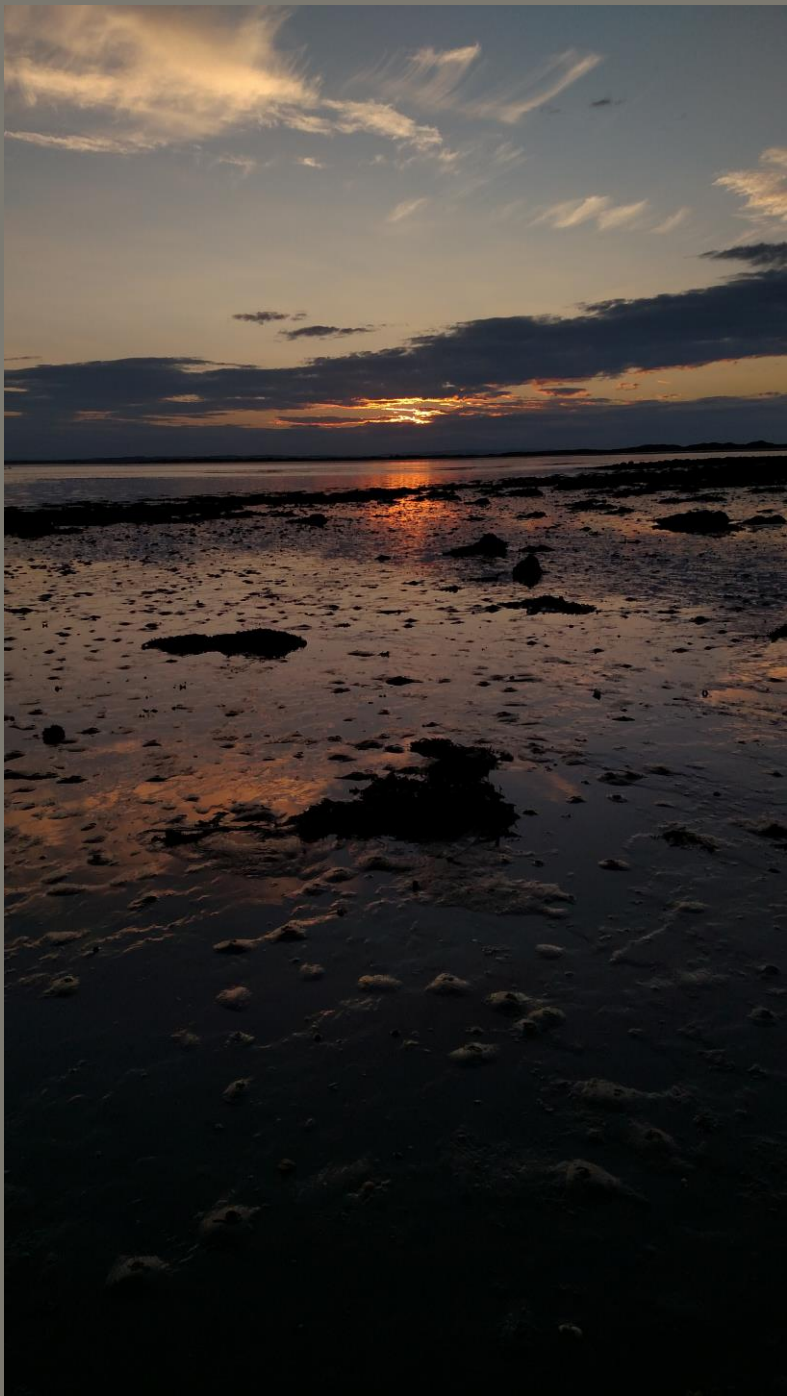
- Balanced solitary times with interconnectedness with others and times of active service.
- The Monastery was a place of learning, education, art, and provided for those in need.
- Work, common prayer, dedication to copying the Scriptures and mission were balanced.
- Renunciation of materialism with a focus on detachment from the things of this world to be freed to love and serve.



















Prayers from Ireland, Scotland and Northumbria

- Start the day:

with splashing water on the face three times...."A cup full for the Father, a full for the Son and a cup full for the Holy Spirit."

- A prayer for meals:

"The Lord shared the blessing of the 5 loaves and 2 fish with the 5000. May the blessing of Him who gave us this meal be upon us and upon our sharing of this food."

Prayers and blessings

- Whatever the distance they would never set out on a journey without first asking for a blessing, however simple:

“In Thy path, O God/Thou God in my steps,
Bless to me, O God, the earth beneath my feet.
Bless to me, O God, the path wherein I go.”

A journey becomes a time to walk with God and for God to walk with us.

Prayers and Blessings

- Work:

Work is seen as a partnership with God, something through which He may be better known.

At Night:

"I lay me down with Thee, O Jesus/And mayest Thou be about my bed,

The oil of Christ upon my soul, the Apostles Creed above my head.

O Father who wrought me, O Son who bought me, O Spirit who sought me,

Let me be Thine.

Prayers and Blessings

“I do now as my mother was doing when I was a child. Before going to bed I place the bar upon the leaf of the door, and I make the cross of Christ on the bar and on the door, and I supplicate the great God of life, the Father of all living, to protect and comfort me this night. After that I put out my light and then I go to bed, and when I lie down on my pillow I make the cross of Christ upon my breast, over the tablet of my hard heart, and I beseech the living God of the universe:

May the Light of lights come to my dark heart from Thy place;

May the Spirit's wisdom come to my heart's tablet from my Saviour.”

From *Carmina Gadelica*, collected by Alexander Carmichael, found in *Celtic Daily Prayer*, I, p. 748.

A Modified Ancient Prayer....A Prayer to Start the Day

I will kindle my fire this morning, the flame of my soul

In the presence of the holy angels of heaven.

God, kindle Thou in my heart within, a flame of love to my neighbor,

To my foe, to my friend, to my kindred all,

To the brave, to the knave, to the thrall...

From the lowest thing that liveth, to the Name that is highest of all,

For when I have done it to one of the least of these,

I have done it to You.

Without malice, without jealousy, without envy,
Without fear, without terror of anyone under the sun,
For you are the Son of God whose flame burns with Light that
Shines brightly all around me – even when I don't see it
Still it shines into the dark places of my soul and this world.
Though I am not worthy of Your love,
You delight in me and I adore You.
Kindle the flame of my fire this morning to burn with passionate
love for You.
Grow my love of You this day, O God.

Even as you lit the water-soaked wood on the altar on Mt. Carmel for Elijah,
So ignite my heart this day, O God.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

Spirituality for Life: Lessons Learned from the Irish, Celtic, Monks and their Heritage

1. Like the Monks of Skellig Michael – for what do you have such single-minded zeal and passion? Are you likewise “all in” for God?
2. What aspects of living in the 21st century threaten to pull you away from God? How might detachment from these help you grow spiritually?
3. What can we learn from these practices, prayers, and readings to help create greater openness to God within our hearts while closing us off from the “sinful desires that draw us from the love of God.”

New Monasticism? The Founding of the Northumbria Community...A New Monastic Community at St. Luke's?

- A Rule of Life – common practices with each other
- Dispersed – esp. when not able to come to church....staying connected.
- A way of life that acknowledges the nearness of God throughout the various parts of the day, morning, at meals, at work, on the journeys, at night
- A common set of readings and prayers
- Use of Technology for sharing experiences
- Periodic Meetings together for fellowship, sharing and support.
- What might God do to grow our awareness of Him and our rootedness in Christ, if we lived this way?
- Interested? Let me know...you can have input into what develops!

