Tuesday, June 9: We’ll leave the Des Moines International Airport and have one, possibly two layovers en route overnight to Ireland. Dinner and then breakfast will be provided on the airline.

Wednesday, June 10: We’ll arrive in Dublin. Our day will consist of a walking tour of the city, plus a visit to St. Patrick’s Catholic Church for Mass. We’ll turn in early to give everyone time to rest and relax for the exciting journey ahead!

Thursday June 11: Before departing Dublin we’ll stop at the world famous Guinness Brewery! We’ll discover a very important site in the history of Catholicism in Ireland: Glendalough. This was an abbey established by St. Kevin. We’ll explore the ruined sites of the monastery that he founded. After our tour, we will make our way to Limerick for our overnight stay.

Friday, June 12: We’ll depart Limerick and make our way to the Knock Marian Shrine. Our Lady
of Knock is different from other famous Marian Shrines in that Our Lady did not speak during the vision. She was also said to have appeared with St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist. It has been reported that a number of miraculous healing have also taken place here. We will spend our evening in this village and have Mass at the Shrine.

Saturday, June 13: We’ll make our way back to Dublin to board our plane to London. After arriving in London, we will board a motor coach and make our way to Canterbury, the spiritual center of the Anglican world. However, before King Henry VIII established the Anglican church, England was an extremely Catholic country. Canterbury was a famous site of pilgrimage for the martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket. Unfortunately, his shrine was destroyed as England transformed itself into a Protestant country. We will have Mass at the local Catholic church named for the saint. We will spend the reminder of our day and overnight in this wonderful town.

Sunday, June 14: We’ll see the cliffs of Dover - a spectacular site! We’ll see sites associated with the defense of England from the Middle Ages until World War II. We will return to the town to give our pilgrims a chance to relax and explore this quintessential English town. Our Mass will be at St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Church during their regular Sunday liturgy.

Monday, June 15: Today we depart Canterbury and head to Birmingham, home to many sites associated with Blessed (St. as of October 13) John Cardinal Henry Newman after his conversion. We’ll visit the Oratory established by him. This Oratory would also have a great impression on a young Tolkien. We will celebrate Mass in the Oratory, and take some time venerate his relics. We will overnight here as well.

Tuesday, June 16: We’ll head to Oxford to see sites associated with John Cardinal Henry Newman. We will see Oxford University, where he was a leading figure in the Oxford Movement within the Anglican Church; and then move onto Littlemore where he lived and prayed up to and after his conversion. We’ll have Mass in the chapel where he converted. We will also make time to visit the Eagle and Child pub, where famous authors such as Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterson dined.

Wednesday, June 17: We’ll have free time in the morning to explore the city of Oxford before boarding our motor coach for the return to London. We’ll stop at Windsor Castle, and have a tour of the official residence of the British Monarch. We will celebrate Mass at the Oxford Oratory. Rest up because tomorrow will be a full day!

Thursday, June 18: We’ll start our day with Mass at the Cathedral of Westminster, the mother Church for England and Wales. We’ll have a tour of this Neo-Byzantine Cathedral. Next stop - the famous Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. We’ll also visit the Churchill War Rooms and see where the great statesman helped lead the UK defense during World War II. We’ll also explore central London, including Westminster Palace (home to the UK Parliament) and the famous clock tower known as Big Ben. We’ll see Westminster Abbey, where all the monarchs of England and the UK have been coroneted since 1066. Our day ends with our meal together.

Friday, June 19: Today we see the Tower of London, where St. Thomas More was imprisoned before his execution. He was beheaded for treason because, as the Lord Chancellor, he would not recognize Henry VIII’s authority over the church instead of the Bishop of Rome. His remains, along with almost all other prisoners here, were buried in the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula on the grounds of the tower. Commemorating St. Thomas More and all those that died for the Catholic faith during this time is the nearby Church of the English Martyrs. We’ll have our daily Mass here before moving on to St. Paul’s Cathedral, the Anglican Cathedral of London. The remainder of our final day in Europe is yours to explore the city, rest, or to ponder all that we have seen. We will gather for our final meal together.

On Saturday, we will make our way to London’s Heathrow airport for our journey back home. We leave England and Ireland behind, but our memories and our deeper appreciation for those that suffered for the faith.

Saturday, June 20: We’ll make our way to London’s Heathrow airport for our journey back home. We leave England and Ireland behind, but our new friendships, memories and deeper appreciation for those that suffered for the faith will remain.