Rooted in AMU. Shaped by Ireland. Mount Melleray Abbey

Campus Update

April 27, 2026

Ave Maria University is rooted in a new and exciting chapter of its mission. The University's partnership with Mount Melleray Abbey, a historic 200-year-old Cistercian monastery nestled in County Waterford, Ireland, was recently spotlighted on EWTN Nightly News. In the interview, Daniel Schreck, Chief Strategy Officer for Ave Maria University, explained how this ancient monastic home became the ideal setting for AMU's international campus. The semester-long Ireland Study Abroad Program offers students a fully integrated Ave Maria University experience that combines rigorous academics, intentional spiritual formation, and immersive cultural experiences—all while keeping them on track toward graduation.

What makes Mount Melleray truly special is the intentional simplicity and profound community it offers. Students live, learn, and pray within the monastery grounds, where dorms, classrooms, the chapel, dining hall, and library create a close-knit residential environment. Days unfold with a steady rhythm of prayer, coursework, shared meals, and time outdoors, providing the structure needed to flourish while allowing space to breathe. This integration of spiritual, academic, and communal life creates a formation experience that goes beyond the classroom—one that echoes the very mission Ave Maria was founded to pursue.

Beyond the abbey walls, Ireland becomes a living classroom. The academic schedule deliberately includes three-day weekends, inviting students to explore everything from the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark to St. Declan's Way, from charming Irish towns to historic pilgrimage routes. Whether hiking coastal trails, visiting medieval castles, or simply experiencing authentic Irish culture, students discover how their Catholic faith has shaped an entire nation and people. With access to Cork and Dublin airports, the possibilities extend across Europe as well.

"This is why we venture to Ireland," reflected Chief Strategy Officer Schreck. By broadening the imagination of our students in a place shaped for centuries by monks and faithful Catholics, Ave Maria deepens its commitment to forming the intellect, directing the will, and inspiring a joyful discovery of God's abundant calling. For alumni seeking to support the next generation of leaders grounded in truth and faith, this partnership represents an extraordinary opportunity for formation that honors both our Catholic heritage and our forward-looking mission.

Read online for photos and videos:

https://alumni.avemaria.edu/news/rooted-in-amu-shaped-by-ireland-mount-melleray-abbey-1776549852805