

Diocesan Day of Prayer and Pilgrimage – Steps on the Way



Any journey can be a pilgrimage

Whether you are travelling by train, car or on foot to Canterbury, making a pilgrimage around your benefice, your town or your church or making a spiritual journey of the heart from a room where you live - you can make a pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage is a way of travelling prayerfully, with an intentional purpose of connecting more deeply with God. It might be to go somewhere to worship, seek healing, find guidance or simply because you know you just need to do it. It can be on your own, it can be in company. You can choose it to be for one purpose and find out, on the way, God has another purpose in mind!

Pilgrimage is **an opportunity to 'renew our relationship with God ... an opportunity to reconnect more deeply with God's holy presence at the centre of our lives'**.

Pilgrimage can **help us make changes in our lives** – from tiny tweaks to significant decisions. Each of these changes help us to grow, to be confident in our relationship with God and those we love and serve.

A Pilgrimage journey **begins from the moment you respond** to the invitation to journey differently for a while. **Our Diocesan Day of Prayer and Pilgrimage is an opportunity to explore our calling as individuals and as a diocesan family to God's direction for renewal and mission ...** and journey differently for a while.

So... whether you're walking on a path to Canterbury, cycling around your benefice, making a pilgrimage around your church or tracing the path of a finger labyrinth at home..... The following prompts might help when planning your pilgrim journey...

[1] Making your journey a pilgrimage...

Before you set out... take a moment to think about

- Why you are going?
- Who or what is 'nudging' you to go?
- Why have you said 'Yes'?

What does
the LORD require of
you? to act justly and
to love mercy and
to walk humbly
with GOD. Micah
6:8

[2] Preparing to travel...

Pilgrims travel light ... only take what is needed for the journey...

The form of transport you take will influence how you travel and arrive. How environmentally friendly can you be?

- Will you go fast or slow, in one go or to take stops for reflection and prayer?
- What frame of heart and mind do you want to be in when you arrive?
- Can you build in some spaces for praying on the way for those you are with and those you meet, so that these 'meetings' are part of your prayer for renewal?

[3] Taking the first steps...

As you prepare to step onto the path/road/station that will take you onwards:

- Prayerfully place all those you love and all that keeps you busy in God's hand.
- Notice the rhythm of your breathing ... notice any thoughts and feelings...
- Carry your intentions for the day close to your heart.
- Be attentive for words or signs that might be offering a message of faith, hope and love along the way.

[4] Pausing on the way...

Stop on the way anytime you want to (be attentive to safety):

- Recall your destination and intention and pray for those waiting to receive you, others who are travelling and who have been praying through the past day.
- Pray for those travellers who are also on your path, who don't know where you are going or why. Would they understand why you are praying for the renewal of church and society? What would you tell them if they asked?

[5] Arriving at your destination ...

Stop and pause before you go into your arrival point.

- Give thanks for the journey
- Give thanks for this time of prayer and what it holds for you and God's church
- Open your heart afresh to the spirit of the living God who desires to cleanse and refresh the people of God for mission

[6] Resting and recognising moments of grace and blessing...

Take time to stop, to smile, to pray, to relax.

- Is there a special place that you need to touch / be close to at your destination?
- Swap stories with fellow pilgrims – what has God been saying on the journey?

[7] Returning back...

Collect your things and yourself in readiness for the journey home.

- What 'things' will you take back home or leave behind?
- Notice any changes in how you feel... any new thoughts...new resolutions...new relationships.
- How might your changed life influence change in others' lives?
- Where might you stop along the way and pray a prayer of blessing upon people or places?

[8] Reflecting on your Pilgrimage...

You might like to find a way of remembering this pilgrimage:

- Writing in a journal or painting or drawing or creating something symbolic of your journey, identifying something of how your intentions for prayer transpired.
- Fixing within your pattern of prayer the changes that will give life and renewal to you, your church and society.
- How have you- *recognised and welcomed the holy presence of God at the centre of your life?*
- Offering thanks to God for his grace and our diocesan community of prayer.