

NEWSLETTER

Dear Pilgrims,

It has been another eventful year as in addition to our summer pilgrimage we organised the 2-day Mercy Pilgrimage in July to join the Diocesan Year of Mercy celebrations at the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in West Grinstead. We had a beautiful mass with a send-off from the Bishop at Arundel Cathedral on Saturday, fabulous weather and two good days walking arriving (just) in time for the 3pm celebration mass at the Shrine on Sunday. We were pleased to be able to stay overnight at Storrington Priory which was made possible for us by the Chemin Neuf community.

And now the Canterbury Pilgrimage is imminent! We have chosen the famous Winchester to Canterbury journey and have the opportunity to visit these old pilgrim cities and to make the journey our own. We have found a route that starts and ends on the old Pilgrims Way but takes a more southerly path than the journey this group first made in 1976. We cross some beautiful countryside in Surrey, Sussex and Kent tracking the watershed of rivers that flow north to the Thames and south to the coast as we make our way to Canterbury cathedral.

After our induction service we will again this year begin walking on our first day. We make our way north-east from Winchester to Alton via Alresford visiting some historic pilgrim churches before breaking away from the traditional pilgrim route to head eastward toward the panoramic Gibbett Hill at Hindhead. Days 2-4 are the longer ones of the pilgrimage with distances of around 16 miles but they are well worth the effort. After 5 day's walking we will be ready for our rest day in Horsham where we will be centrally located with easy access to all amenities.

In the middle section of the pilgrimage we cross from Sussex into Kent. We have some forest walking on our way to Worth Abbey where once again we are fortunate to be able stay and to join the monastic community. We continue through the High Weald with manageable walking days of an average of 12 miles into Tunbridge Wells for our second rest day. The historic Georgian spa town is a pleasant place for the resting pilgrim to browse, shop, eat, drink and stroll.

The last stretch of the pilgrimage heads eastward on the scenic, upland High Weald Landscape Trail before rejoining the Pilgrims Way at Dunn Street. We spend our last night on the road at Challock before following the Pilgrims Way into Canterbury. We will have walked 168 miles in 12 walking days when we arrive for evensong at Canterbury Cathedral.

Our 2016 pilgrimage is offered as a prayer of solidarity and support for those people suffering the effects of conflict or fleeing persecution, praying that the world may become a fairer, safer, and more peaceful place. We have a country focus for prayers throughout the pilgrimage, as below.

MON	15-Aug	: Syria	SUN	21-Aug	: Palestinian Territories
TUE	16-Aug	: Iraq & Afghanistan	MON	22-Aug	
WED	17-Aug	: Nigeria & Democratic Republic of Congo	TUE	23-Aug	: Turkey & Serbia
THU	18-Aug		WED	24-Aug	: Italy & Greece
FRI	19-Aug	: Eritrea & Sudan	THU	25-Aug	: France
SAT	20-Aug	: Somalia & Myanmar	FRI	26-Aug	: UK

Please can I ask pilgrims to volunteer in advance to research the situations and stories of a particular country in order to lead a prayer stop? You can book your slot by emailing Bill Ward on

billchris.ward@btopenworld.com !

I hope you are looking forward to our pilgrimage together. Thank you to new, returning and web pilgrims who are joining this summer's pilgrimage. I want to welcome you on what promises to be a fulfilling and prayerful fortnight.

Now to practical matters - In the "mailing" of which this letter is a part, you will also find:

- The route cards: full information on each day's walking route and other events, which pilgrims will carry with them as they walk
- Come and Join us for a Day': a short summary of the route cards to give to potential 'day pilgrims' who may walk with us for a day or part day
- The Pilgrim Code: guidance for pilgrimage community life
- The Equipment List: guidance on what you need to bring.
- On your arrival you will be given printed copies of the following:
- The route cards: laser printed so that they won't run in the rain (meaning that you can leave your own copy with a relative or friend that wants to follow your progress)
- 'Come and Join us for a Day': a short summary of the route cards to give to potential 'day pilgrims' who may walk with us for a day or part day
- The Pilgrim Code
- The Alternative Transport Guide: a document listing possible alternative transport (buses or trains) for each day
- (on request) a 'Who we are' leaflet to give to interested passers-by

Finally, it would not be a coordinator's letter without reminding you that there is still time to squeeze in one last practice walk to get fitter before departure, to check your equipment and to re-proof any outdoor gear. You have been reminded!

I look forward to seeing you very soon.

God Bless, Ceri

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