

NEWSLETTER

Dear Pilgrims,

The years seem to come around (and go around) faster and faster. It seems only yesterday that we were celebrating in Lindisfarne, and we have now completed and celebrated another pilgrimage journey this time in St. David's which may well mean that some of you might now have a credit point upstairs if you have been there before. The year has also sadly seen the end of their earthly journey of some past pilgrims as reported in previous newsletters which, with 35 years of pilgrimages, is not too surprising.

At the end of the walk this year and again at the AGM, I thanked Aidan not only for his leadership in the past year to St. David's, but for his dedication over the 2 years that he has been our co-ordinator. These have possibly been 2 of the most successful, enjoyable, and rewarding pilgrimages of the 35 year history and much of this is down to Aidan's energy and enthusiasm, and I can only hope that he has been able to enjoy these 2 walks as much as the rest of us have. Not all of you who will read this newsletter were of course able to be in St. David's or at the AGM, but I am sure that all of you share these sentiments – THANK YOU AIDAN.

This of course means a change in co-ordinator, and it is a great honour to have been elected to this post, for which I thank you – I can only hope and pray that we will not have cause to regret this decision. We have been blessed with many talented co-ordinators through the years, not least my own father, and I now have to walk in their footsteps (pun intended) which will not be easy. I am also conscious that this is the first time that a son or daughter has followed in a parent's footsteps as co-ordinator, and I ask for your prayers over the next 2 years that I may be a worthy successor.

I am sure that many of you not able to join the pilgrimage this year will have followed its progress through the website. There were a few wet days (we were in Wales after all!), but there were also many sunny days and I think that everyone who walked the first leg from Cardigan to Aberystwyth was awestruck by the sheer beauty of the Ceredigion coast. The hills were generally on the small side which proved challenging at times, and this gave rise to new ground being broken through the use of 3 tents for 3 of the nights, with 20 of us sleeping in the tents. The longest day (at 21 miles) came just after the second rest day, and with that behind us, the final run in to St. David's seemed very easy indeed (the glory of the Pembrokeshire coast may have helped in this respect). It never ceases to amaze me that a building the size of St. David's Cathedral can stay hidden until you are right on top of it so coming to the journey's end in such a sudden way was quite an emotional and rather a special moment at the end of 190 glorious, if somewhat hilly, miles.

Aidan thanked many individuals at the celebration meal who had helped make the St. David's Pilgrimage a most successful and enjoyable experience for all who took part. I would echo those thanks and indeed thank all who came along as, without pilgrims, there would be no pilgrimage.

So much for history. At the AGM it was agreed that in light of the Beatification of John Henry (Cardinal) Newman by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, our 2011 pilgrimage should be in the Cardinal's honour given that he was an Anglican who converted to Catholicism. Our route will start in West London and end up in Birmingham, taking in places such as Oxford, with which Cardinal Newman was associated.

Planning for this is already well underway and as always, the outline route will be available for inspection at the forthcoming reunion (details with this newsletter). The anticipated route is not just put up to be inspected, however. The principal reason is to permit those who would like to try their hand at planning the route for a day to select a day of their liking, and volunteer their services.

For those thinking of assisting the pilgrimage in this way, the chief route planner (Jonny) will advise you early in the New Year of the grid references of the hills at either end of your day, and provide you with a guideline distance to aim for so that we can (hopefully) avoid too many long days back to back (or indeed too many short ones). He may also provide some other suggestions of places that you might like to build into the day. You are then left to identify a route that will keep us off busy roads, allow us to visit 3 or 4 churches along the way, and find a suitable pub or alternative lunch venue (ideally large enough that we can all get inside if the weather is wet).

You will be expected to write route notes that are detailed enough that someone else could use them to lead the day, in the event that you are unable to join the pilgrimage on your day, for whatever reason. You will also need to take note of the contact details at the churches. These actions need to be done by Easter, and you may need to make several trips to your route to achieve this, so you should bear this in mind before volunteering. You might also like to team-up with another pilgrim to assist you, or volunteer to help someone else with their day as a means of learning this valuable skill. Jonny will be available to assist if you should encounter problems with the planning.

Although there are still a good number of younger pilgrims in our ranks, whose enthusiasm and willingness to muck in are very humbling to witness, it has been recognised that the age profile of the average pilgrim has been rising. Rather than debar, hobble, or in any other way prevent our revered older pilgrims from coming along, as a means to lower the age profile, it is planned to hold a weekend “mini pilgrimage” in December in hopes of attracting some others of that age group. Please pray for the success of this weekend in achieving its goal.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the reunion.

May God bless you all.

Nick

Prayers and Hymns by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)

A Daily Prayer

May He support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in His mercy may He give us a safe lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last.

Prayer for a Happy Death

Oh, my Lord and Saviour, support me in that hour in the strong arms of Your Sacraments, and by the fresh fragrance of Your consolations. Let the absolving words be said over me, and the holy oil sign and seal me, and Your own Body be my food, and Your Blood my sprinkling; and let my sweet Mother, Mary, breathe on me, and my Angel whisper peace to me, and my glorious Saints smile upon me; that in them all, and through them all, I may receive the gift of perseverance, and die, as I desire to live, in Your faith, in Your Church, in Your service, and in Your love. Amen.

Lead Kindly Light

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead me Thou on! The night is dark, and I am far from home, Lead Thou me on! Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step is enough for me. I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou shouldst lead me on; I loved to choose and see my path, but now lead Thou me on! I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears, pride ruled my will: remember not past years. So long Your power hath blest me, sure it still will lead me on, o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone; and with the morn those angel faces smile which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

Praise to the Holiest in the Height

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise;
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! That flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against their foe,
Should strive and should prevail.

And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and His very Self,
And Essence all-divine.

O generous love! that He who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo;

And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.

Prayer for the Light of Truth

O my God, I confess that Thou canst enlighten my darkness. I confess that Thou alone canst. I wish my darkness to be enlightened. I do not know whether Thou wilt: but that Thou canst and that I wish, are sufficient reasons for me to ask, what Thou at least hast not forbidden my asking. I hereby promise that by Your grace which I am asking, I will embrace whatever I at length feel certain is the truth, if ever I come to be certain. And by Your grace I will guard against all self-deceit which may lead me to take what nature would have, rather than what reason approves.

O My Lord Jesus

O my Lord Jesus, low as I am in Your all-holy sight, I am strong in You, strong through Your Mother, through Your saints and thus I can do much for the Church, for the world, for all I love.

The Mission of My Life

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.

Pilgrims Social Networking

Find us on Facebook at <http://www.new.facebook.com/home.php#/group.php?gid=13203916228>

And on Xt3 ("Catholic Facebook") at <http://www.xt3.com/group/view.php?id=1430>

Remember you don't have to be young to use social networking - just young at heart!