

NEWSLETTER

Dear Pilgrims,
A very Happy New Year to ALL.

2008 means EVESHAM to SALISBURY

Slightly later than in recent years. Saturday August 16th - Sunday 31st August.

As we were later coming to a decision on the destination, route and date it has inevitably delayed the search for Halls. Keith and Pat, ably assisted by Danny have started work, but weather, distance and lack of large Halls, with the ongoing issue of School kitchens are all causing difficulties. As John Chenery receives news of Halls being booked he is sending out instructions to the Route Planners, of whom we have an abundance this year - Patrick and the Chenerys waiting in the wings in case of an emergency!! I had hoped to start reconnoitring Stow to Northleach in early January, but an attack of Back Spasm (Over Christmas - Is there no Justice in this world?) has put it on the back burner (groan).

Whilst planning on the ground has been a little slow, the spiritual preparation has advanced apace. Starting from a Shrine to Our Lady dating from the Medieval Evesham Abbey and heading to the magnificent Salisbury Cathedral, celebrating the 750th Anniversary of Consecration, dedicated to the Annunciation, meant a Marian Theme was ideal. What could be more appropriate than the Magnificat? Congratulations to Danny and his team for the work that has already been completed.

Without any undue influence exerted, by remarkable coincidence the second year of my coordination will see the Pilgrimage visiting another area of the country with which I am very familiar - 13 years living in Winchcombe in the North Cotswolds, just a few miles from our route. If one can't walk along the coast, the Cotswolds and Wiltshire Downs must figure as amongst the most beautiful and spectacular countryside anywhere! It would probably be wise to avoid too many references to expected sunshine after last year; just pray all the harder.

At the Reunion in October it was decided to make a stab at encouraging rather more young pilgrims for 2008. After Bridget's brilliant put down " If you want to persuade more young people to join the Pilgrimage, Peter, they won't want to listen to you !!", it obviously required a youthful approach. So for the weekend 12th/13th January Aidan produced a fantastic slide presentation on the computer and Bridget

with a little assistance from myself tried our best to win over the Mass(ed) crowds of Redhill Parish courtesy of Father Lawrence. Further efforts will be made in April and June, with possible venues - Guildford, Woking or Epsom. Local pilgrims will be needed to help lobby as all those potential pilgrims desperately try to escape! Success will be measured in Evesham this August.

As Pauline Kirk is unable to act as chauffer and assistant cook to Frances (Many thanks for a wonderful contribution in 2007 Pauline!) it is with great pleasure that I am able to announce that a volunteer has stepped into the role with almost no pressure being applied (honest!) Margaret Pollard very kindly offered hospitality to four weary pilgrims at Totland last summer, taking them home for a shower and was so impressed by their tales that she jumped at the chance of joining us in 2008. Just be warned what a small act of kindness can lead to. Not to be left out, Margaret's husband Doug will walking the whole way - Monica please note.

With Church Talks, the Website and the recent burst of new pilgrims in 2006 - 17 and 2007 - 14, I am sure that we will have no difficulty attracting a record haul (horde? - what is the collective noun for multiple pilgrims?) so do respond early to ensure your place as there don't appear to be a wealth of massive halls along our route.

SITUATIONS VACANT.

VAN DRIVER. No John Russell. Absolute horror! John has been brilliant and much appreciated, BUT he cannot drive for us in 2008. As no one fancies carrying the luggage on their backs - kitchen gear and all, we desperately need a driver. Please, please use all your powers of persuasion to convince friend, relative, fellow parishioner - someone (almost anyone!) that this would be their ideal two week break in August 2008. As a small enticement (bribe?), do mention that no charge is involved - just two weeks free work. What could be fairer!

SANDWICH MAKING ORGANISER. Joan Gale is convinced that the Good Lord will ensure that she is fit to walk this year, so reluctantly she has asked to be relieved of sandwich duties, though doubtless ever willing to offer a helping hand. So any offers? Please don't be bashful.

PETER (DORAN - just too many Peters)
Pilgrimage Coordinator

Are you getting the news?

Keeping people informed about pilgrimage activities is a balance between cost and coverage, so the mailing list is split into 4 parts:

- "Active pilgrims" (been on a pilgrimage in the last few years or booked for the current year) and "life members", who get all 3 mailings each year;
- "Less active pilgrims" (been on a pilgrimage some time back), who get just the February mailing;
- "Inactive pilgrims" (moved without a forwarding address or asked not to be mailed) who receive no mailings;
- "E-pilgrims" who receive all 3 mailings by e-mail only.

If you want to receive mailings but are not an active pilgrim please let us know; a contribution towards costs (about £1 per pilgrim per year) is appreciated. If you'd be happy to receive mailings by e-mail please e-mail database@thepilgrims.org.uk - it saves postage and printing costs.

This issue we've included a summary of news from the last 2 issues, for those who only get the annual mailing.

The Pilgrimage Theme 2008 – The Magnificat

On a cold November Sunday afternoon, Fr. David Russell, Keith Donachie, Sue Adilz and I met in my house to begin forming the theme for this year's Pilgrimage from Evesham to Salisbury.

With Evesham being a shrine to Our Lady and Salisbury Cathedral also dedicated to her as the Blessed Virgin Mary, we focused on Mary's great prayer, the Magnificat. We took phrases from the prayer and looked at their meaning and relevance for us today.

About the Magnificat

The Magnificat [Latin: magnifies], also called the Canticle or Song of Mary, is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55). It is the Virgin Mary's joyous prayer in response to her cousin Elizabeth's (John the Baptist's mother) greeting (Luke 1: 41-45). This great hymn forms part of the Church's prayer in the Divine Office (Evening Prayer or Evensong). When it is recited as part of the Office, it is followed by the Gloria Patri ("Glory be"). The traditional sung Magnificat is in Latin plainchant. One of the hymn's most glorious musical renditions is the version of the Magnificat by J.S. Bach.

The Magnificat appears below in one of its many English translations.

*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness; henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy his name! His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him.
He puts forth his arm in strength and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones, and raises the lowly.
He fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant. Remembering his mercy, the mercy promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his sons forever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen*

Each walking day has a "sub-theme" on to which we can reflect, and hook our thoughts to during the Prayer Stops and other Services.

Day 2 Introduction to Magnificat – the prayer and practice; discernment.



Day 3 Mary and the role of Women in the Church – then and now. Let Mary's "Yes" be my "Yes".

Day 4 *My soul magnifies the Lord.* The prayer of listening and reflecting – what is God calling me to do?

Day 5 *His mercy is on those who fear him.* Confronting Fear – What am I getting into? Facing challenges to come.

Day 7 *The Almighty works marvels for me.* Learning to Trust – I am safe in God's hands.

Day 8 *Holy his name!* The power of the Spirit to work within me to do God's work.

Day 9 *He scatters the proud-hearted.* Dealing with pride - God cannot use me if I block the action of the Holy Spirit.

Day 10 *He has filled the hungry with good things.* Living

simply – meeting my needs and the needs of others.

- Day 12 *He protects Israel, his servant. Remembering his mercy. God's mercy – I may fail, but I can always start again.*
- Day 13 *My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. Commitment – my "Yes" to what God is calling me to do. I am God's hands and feet in this World.*
- Day 14 As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Prayer Stops or "God Stops", as we affectionately call them, are not only opportunities to rest our weary legs but times also to enrich our weary spirits. For those pilgrims speaking a time for sharing and catharsis; for those hearing, oases of enlightenment and self-growth.

As we walk we can magnify the spirit of pilgrimage to those we meet and spread the Good News. Let's make this "Magnificat Pilgrimage" a glorifying, and magnificent experience!

Danny Thomas

Magnificat in Dorking

As part of the Leith Hill Music Festival, on the evening of Friday 11th April at the Dorking Halls, a combined choir formed from the Beare Green & Newdigate, Buckland, Mickleham and Shalford Choral Societies will be singing Rutter's Magnificat - conducted by the composer himself. Come and see if you can spot Louise Chenery amongst the singers. Full details at www.lhmf.co.uk

The news of 2007

- The July edition carried messages from past pilgrims Liam Breathnach and Matthew Huntbach, each glad to be kept in touch with current activities.
- The November edition reported on the wedding of Edit Vigh from Hungary (now Mrs Philip Rees) who walked with us to Chester.
- The November edition also carried news of the death of Pat Olivier whilst walking with us at Niton on the Isle of Wight. Pat was involved in the earliest of our pilgrimages, was chaplain in 1984/5, and over recent years had followed us online and often dropped in with his wife Nicola. Pat, Nicola and their family were in our prayers through the pilgrimage and the following months, and will continue to be so.
- Despite (or perhaps because of) Pat's death and some of the least favourable weather pilgrims could remember, the 2007 pilgrimage from Wells to Arundel "produced a truly memorable Pilgrimage, with an atmosphere of cooperation, enjoyment and pilgrim spirit at its eternal best." We had a vibrant mix of old hands and new blood, and there was a feeling of homecoming as we reached Arundel.
- The 2007 reunion was held earlier than usual in Dorking, before the November newsletter. A carefully planned walk was enough to be a challenge but we were still home before dark, ready for a 21st century slideshow of the Wells-Arundel pilgrimage.