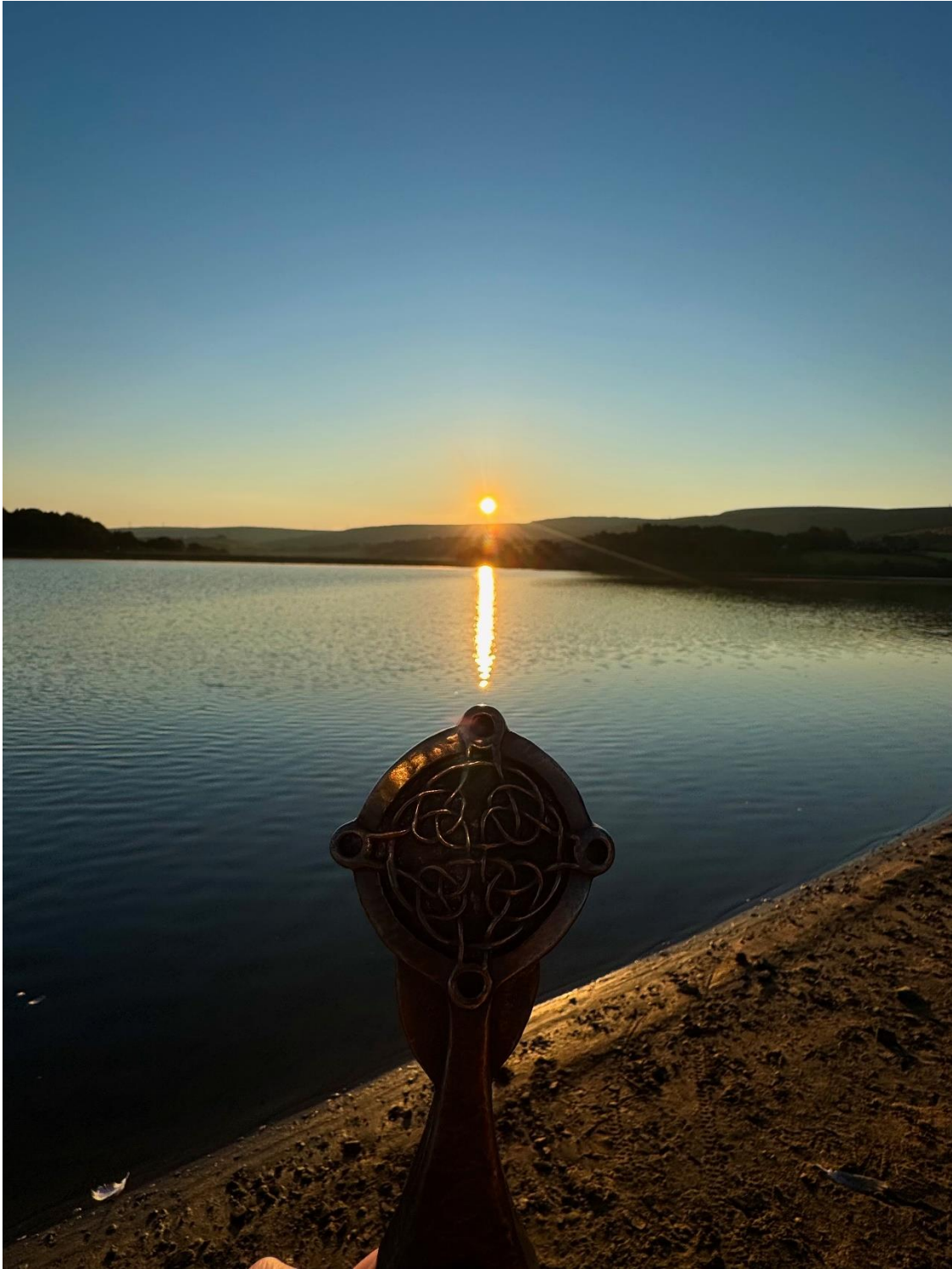


walk with the northern saints - a pilgrimage to lín dísfarne



tríntý sundag to st aídán's day
31st may-31st august 2026
week 6

week 5

It has been really encouraging when people tell me they look forward to seeing the posts about the Pilgrimage and that they are enjoying following the journey. Thank you.

Last week I walked around Royton and Chadderton and around Piethorne Reservoir and to Manchester Cathedral. Spiritually we visited St Hilda's Priory, Whitby, St Mary the Virgin, Whitby, Whitby Abbey, St Hilda's Whiby and St Mary's Sandsend. We crossed the country and arrived on the East Coast and we had covered just over half of the distance to Lindisfarne – two significant milestones!

At the end of Week 5 I had walked 31.4 miles, bringing the total to 163.1 miles and arrived spiritually at St Hilda's Priory, St Mary the Virgin Whitby, Whiby Abbey, St Hilda's Whitby and St Mary's Sandsend

week 6

This week I have been walking around Royton and Chadderton, to and around Hollingworth Lake from High Crompton

We have continued along the Way of St Hild It feels like we have reached a significant milestone in our pilgrimage as we have traversed across the country and have now reached the East Coast and in the words of Yazz "The only way is up!" We set off up the coast firstly by walking the St Hild's Way, an official pilgrimage route launched in 2020, from Whiby to Hartlepool – the site of the two monasteries that Hilda was the Abbess of.

sponsored walk

As well as being a virtual pilgrimage, where we pray each day and 'visit' holy and spiritual sites along the way to Lindisfarne, there is also the opportunity to sponsor Revd Liz for the physical challenge of walking 325 miles between Trinity Sunday and St Aidan's Day (31 May-31 August). Each Church, St Matthew and St Luke Chadderton and St Anne, Longsight Royton will be raising money for their own Church funds but they will also be raising money for Dr Kershaw's Hospice.

To sponsor Revd Liz and donate to **St Matthew and St Luke Chadderton and Dr Kershaw's Hospice** via our secure portal please click [here](#).

To sponsor Revd Liz and donate to **St Anne, Longsight, Royton and Dr Kershaw's Hospice** via our secure portal please click [here](#).

Please do share this newsletter with family and friends, tell them about the pilgrimage and maybe ask if they would follow along and be willing to sponsor Revd Liz.

Please do continue to pray for me as I pray for you.

With love and prayers Revd Liz

northern saints pilgrimage

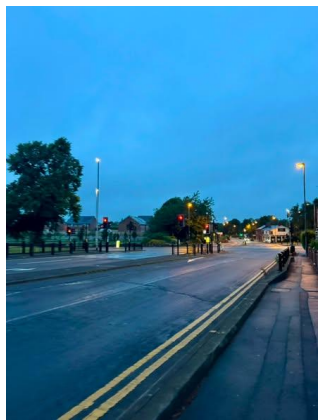
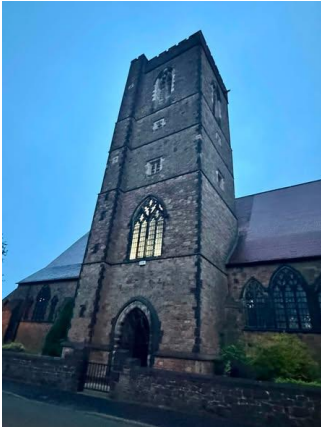
Depart	Arrive	Miles	Total
St Matthew's Chadderton	St Anne's Royton	1.5	1.5
St Anne's Royton	St Mark's Heyside	1.5	3
St Mark's Heyside	St Thomas' Moorside	1.5	4.5
St Thomas' Moorside	Christchurch Denshaw	2.6	7.1
Christchurch Denshaw	St Bartholomew Marsden	7.2	14.3
St Bartholomew Marsden	Huddersfield Parish Church	7.4	21.7
Huddersfield Parish Church	CR Mirfield	4.5	26.2
CR Mirfield	Wakefield Cathedral	10.1	36.3
Wakefield Cathedral	All Saints Pontefract	9.5	45.8
All Saints Pontefract	Selby Abbey	13.3	59.1
Selby Abbey	Bishopthorpe	11	70.1
Bishopthorpe	York Minster	3.4	73.5
York Minster	Stanbrook Abbey	22.3	95.8
Stanbrook Abbey	Ampleforth Abbey	4.6	100.4
Ampleforth Abbey	St Mary's Lastingham	15.5	115.9
St Mary's Lastingham	All Saints Helmsley	10.8	126.7
All Saints Helmsley	St Hilda's Priory	27.8	154.5
St Hilda's Priory	Whitby Abbey & St Mary's Whitby	1.7	156.2
ST HILD'S WAY from Whitby	To Hartlepool		
Whitby Abbey & St Mary's Whitby	St Hilda's Whitby	0.7	156.9
St Hilda's Whitby	Sandsend	2.4	159.3
Sandsend	Runswick Bay	4.6	163.9
Runswick Bay	Staithes	4	167.9
Staithes	Skinningrove	5	172.9
Skinningrove	Huntcliffe Roman Station	3.3	176.2
Huntcliffe Roman Station	Saltburn	0.2	176.4
Saltburn	Transporter Bridge	13	189.4
Transporter Bridge	Greatham Creek	4.2	193.6
Greatham Creek	Seaton Carew	6.7	200.3
Seaton Carew	St Hilda's Hartlepool	4.7	205
St Hilda's Hartlepool	St Aidan's Hartlepool	3.5	208.5
St Aidan's Hartlepool	Durham Cathedral	18	226.5
Durham Cathedral	St Peter's Monkwearmouth	14	240.5
St Peter's Monkwearmouth	St Paul's Jarrow	7.5	248
Paul's Jarrow	Newcastle Cathedral	6.8	254.8
Newcastle Cathedral	St Cuthbert's Bedlington	13	267.8
St Cuthbert's Bedlington	Alnmouth Friary	23	290.8
Alnmouth Friary	Holy Trinity Embleton	9	299.8
Holy Trinity Embleton	St Aidan's Bamburgh	9.2	309
St Aidan's Bamburgh	Lindisfarne	16	325

day thirty six

5th July

trinity 5 3 miles

I was out in time to watch the sunrise this morning and even planned a route to enable me to see it at its best. The fine mist of rain and low clouds meant that the sun rose without any fanfare- only discernible with the increased light. Praying and giving thanks for The Revd Canon Richard Hawkins who is celebrating with us at St Matthew's today the 30th Anniversary of his ordination to the sacred priesthood. Thankful for Richard's faithful ministry, his wisdom and his friendship.



I was walking through Royton as the Town Hall clock struck 5. Some seagulls far away from their natural habitat! Praying for those in my congregations on holiday at the moment, and those going away today. Praying for safe travels and rest and refreshment.

Praying for Paul and Eileen, and their family, as they are laid to rest in the Garden of Remembrance at St Anne's later today. I walked along Broadway up to Holden Fold Lane, remembering that in that area, over 100 years ago there was a small mission church, St Cuthbert's, Holden Fold, a little iron church built in 1908 and closed in 1927, just after the opening of Broadway

I have walked 3 miles this morning and on our spiritual pilgrimage we have reached Runswick Bay and are on our way to Staithes.



We are walking spiritually along the St Hilda's Way and we have reached Runswick Bay, a place I visited physically a couple of weeks ago on a sunnier day!



Today was a special day. A beautiful celebration of The Revd Canon Richard Hawkins 30th Anniversary of his Priesting. Giving thanks for his 30 years of faithful ministry as a priest in the Church of God and thankful for his love and friendship to us here at St Matthew's. Prayers for Richard on this special occasion.

Thanks to Fr Alan Murray-Simpson for preaching today. Thanks to all those who came to celebrate Richard's Anniversary with us from different areas of Richard's life.

Thanks to Maggs and Helen and the team for organising a wonderful celebration and preparing the food, drink and cake! Congratulations Richard with love and prayers from your St Matthew's family!



Day thirty seven 6th July

11.4 miles

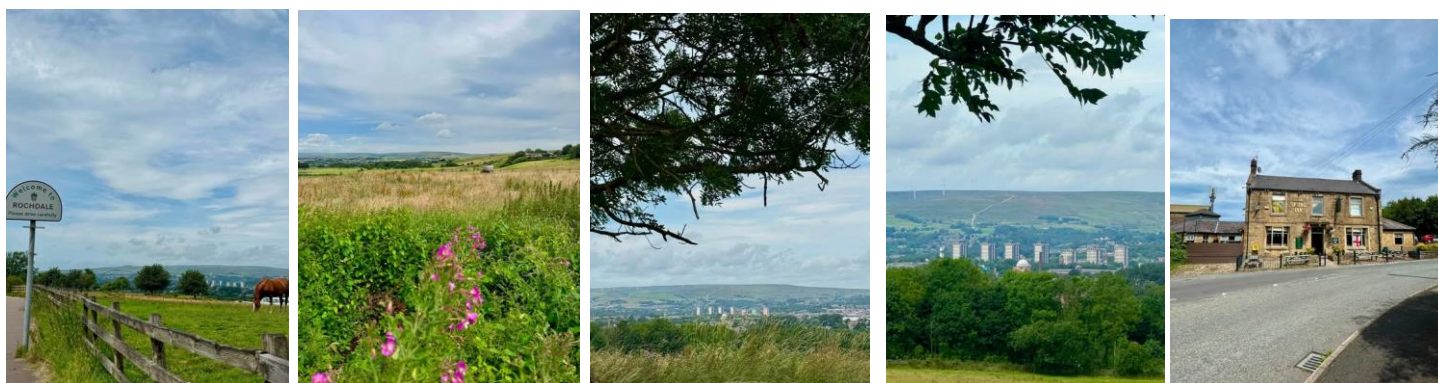
I dropped Winnie off at her Grandma and Grandad's and walked from Rushcroft Road High Crompton, past my home church, St Mary's. Holding The Revd Helen Tyler in prayer as she prepares to take on the role of Vicar here and at St James Thornham.

Giving thanks for all whose vocation to priesthood has been nurtured there.

Walking past High Crompton Park and up towards the Fair View. Thankful for these beautiful views on both sides of the road. Surrounded by beauty.



Reached the border of Rochdale, looking over to the 7 sisters tower blocks. Praying for Revd Anne Gilbert, Area Dean of Rochdale and one of the priests whose vocation was nurtured at St Mary's. Walking towards Lower Lane to walk over to Milnrow.



The sun began to shine more as I walked down Lower Lane in between houses then industrial units. I noticed when I walked on Sunday in the drizzle that weather makes a huge difference to how I look at what is around me. On Sunday my head was down and hood up and I had to make a conscious effort to be aware of what was around me. Today my head was up and it was the most natural thing to look all around and take everything in.

Lord help me to always be aware of your presence in creation, in human creativity and in other people I meet along the way. Amen.



Reached Milnrow and walking down Buckley Lane. A tree stump has been made into a little house! The old, cobbled road shows through at various points along this road- this is obviously a path that has been well trodden for many years.

Going across the bridge which goes over the tram tracks and underneath the road to get to where I turn up to Hollingworth Lake. After a peaceful walk in between the industrial estate, now everywhere seems busy and rushed. Praying for those with sensory issues, for whom everyday tasks and situations can prove difficult to cope with.



Thankful for a breeze as I walked up the hill to Wildhouse Lane. I had walked past the Fair View earlier and now I walked passed the Bella Vista! The start of a stretch of road with very beautiful views across glorious countryside. The Seven Sister towers, visible again from a different perspective. Praying for residents who have been asked to move out in the next few months after safety concerns and those who are fighting to "Save the Seven Sisters" and for refurbishment.



A long stretch of road with such beauty on one side of me as I walk and the busy road with cars speeding by on the other. Whilst I have been on this pilgrimage it has been good to have times when I've been walking where I have had to slow down, but it is not always possible to take that time. I hope that after this pilgrimage is done I will make some times each week to walk and pray as it is has been good for my physical, mental and spiritual health. What do you think you need to make time for on your spiritual journey and your daily life?



I arrived at Hollingworth Lake and stopped at a cafe for pot of tea. What I was sat there The Proclaimers began to sing "🎵 I will walk 500 miles" 🎵 I'm "only" doing 325 miles! I decided I would walk around Hollingworth Lake and then head back.

There were a lot of people out walking, enjoying the lovely weather, but I think there were more ducks and geese than people! I love being by the sea or by a large body of water. I find prayer comes more easily in those places. After the break in my walking for a much needed cuppa I needed some time to simply enjoy my surroundings and settle back into the rhythm of walking and prayer. Is there a place you find it easier to recognise or feel God's presence, or where you find prayer comes more easily?



A perfect reflection of the swan. Such grace and serenity. The memorial leaves face the lake. A beautiful peaceful place to remember those we have loved, but for a little while see no longer.



Beautiful wild flowers and apples beginning to grow by the side of the lake. The gate opening onto farmer's fields. "I am the gate for the sheep" John 10:7
The closed gates helps to protect and keep the sheep safe.

The open gate is the one through which we are called by name to go out to abundant and life-giving pastures to life in all its fullness, and become more and more who God made us to be. May our security come not from the closed gate of the guarded sheepfold but from the freedom of being able to go out and come in through the open gate, that is Jesus, to live life in all its fullness.



The sweet smelling honeysuckle and the butterfly bush are both havens for insects. The birds were putting on a display of thermal soaring, as they gliding through the air, being lifted on columns of warm air. The chorus of on Eagles Wings came to mind
And He will raise you up on eagles' wings
Bear you on the breath of dawn
Make you to shine like the sun
And hold you in the palm of His hand
Praying for those who need lifting up at this time, may they know they are held in the palm of God's hand.



I am retracing my steps now, as I continue back to High Crompton through Milnrow. I spotted a tiny door in tree stump! "Who lives in a house like this?!" Giving thanks for the power of our imagination. Children use their imaginations to great effect- my 4 year old granddaughter uses her imagination wonderfully, making up games and stories. As adults we can be embarrassed or have just got out of the habit of using our imaginations. We can use our imaginations in prayer, imagining ourselves in a gospel story, for example and allowing God to speak to us through that experience.



Walking down Lower Lane to Old Broad Lane and saw the new houses being built there for the first time. I was surprised to hear my name being called and then realised it was Alicia, who was a young

girl at St Anne's when I was a curate there and she is now wonderful mummy to Oakley having just moved into a new house with her young family. Prayers for them as they settle into their new home together.

A minute later I bumped into Hazel (pictured) from St Mary's, who was part of the Re-Stat group which for a time morphed into my support group when I was in training. Lovely to see her. Giving thanks for everyone in that group and for all that we shared.

Winnie's dog sitters, my mum and dad were going out tonight, so My Dad came to pick me up by the motorway bridge to save a bit of time. Winnie's pleased to see me!

I walked 11.4 miles today, meaning spiritually we have arrived at Staithes, Skinningrove, Huntcliffe Roman Signal Station and Saltburn on Sea.



Day thirty eight 7th July

2.1 miles

At St Matthew's this morning to meet with two funeral directors about funeral services and burials of ashes taking place this week. Praying for all the funeral directors my churches work with and giving thanks for their ministry. Praying for the families who are laying their loved ones to rest this week at St Matthew's and for all who are mourning the loss of some one they loved. Good to see the families and children at toddlers today. Praying for Alma and her wonderful team and the families and children who attend each week. They enjoyed a wonderful feast this morning as always!



Walking past St Matthew's school. Praying for the Head, Simon Buxton-Moore and his family. Praying for all the staff and pupils in these last couple of weeks of term. Praying especially for Year 6 as they prepare to leave St Matthew's and begin a new learning adventure at their Secondary Schools. A peaceful walk through the park, meeting a few dogs and their owners.



Walking back through the park to church and saw little doors in trees again like I saw in Milnrow yesterday! Walking by the water has a calming restorative effect.

"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.

They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.

It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8

Praying for staff and pupils at North Chadderton School in their final couple of weeks of the school year. 2.1 miles walked this morning. 9.8 miles until we reach the Transporter Bridge.



Day thirty nine 8th July

I woke up too late for the sunrise but was out at half past five when the early morning sun was giving a "glow up" to everything around. I began as always with the pilgrimage prayer.

Be by my side Creator God, every step I take Be before me Saviour God, every step I take

Be behind me Merciful God, every step I take

Be within me Strengthening God, every step I take. Amen.



Spiritually we are heading to the Transporter Bridge. Physically I am walking towards Shaw down Shaw Road, up by the Lion Mill, through the Estate onto Blackshaw Lane.

Praying for staff and pupils at Blackshaw Lane Primary School and Royton and Crompton School in their last few days of term.

Praying for my former Church, St Mark's Heyside and for St Thomas Moorside visible for miles around on the hill, for Revd Cait and the congregations of the two churches. Praying for the continued renovation of the Chapel of the Living Christ and for the Let our Bell Ring Again Appeal.



Walking along Oldham Road, Heyside and praying for Newbank House Pre School and nursery and Heyside Pre-school held in Heyside Parish Hall. Praying for those who will leaving pre-school in the next few weeks to start "big" school. Crossing into Shaw at Shaw Edge. Praying for Fr Gavin at St Joseph's Shaw and the congregation there and for the staff and pupils at St Joseph's Primary school.



There is a public footpath by St Joseph's which led me to Shawside Orchard, growing apples, quince and plums, which I didn't know existed!! love finding pockets of beauty and quiet in unexpected places. I wasn't sure where I would end up once I walked through the orchard. Thankful for this pilgrimage and the opportunities it is giving me to discover new and hidden places I wouldn't otherwise have done.



Walking through the orchard brought me out on Manchester Road by the welcome to Shaw and Crompton, Cowlshaw sign. Looking back I can see St Anne's clearly- it's an amazing view from the Big Lamp roundabout. Walking past Holy Trinity Church, praying for Fr Paul Pritchard, Fr Dean Stott and Fr Matt Sanderson and the congregation there. It looks beautiful against the brilliant blue sky and lit up by the sun.



Walking past my old school again.

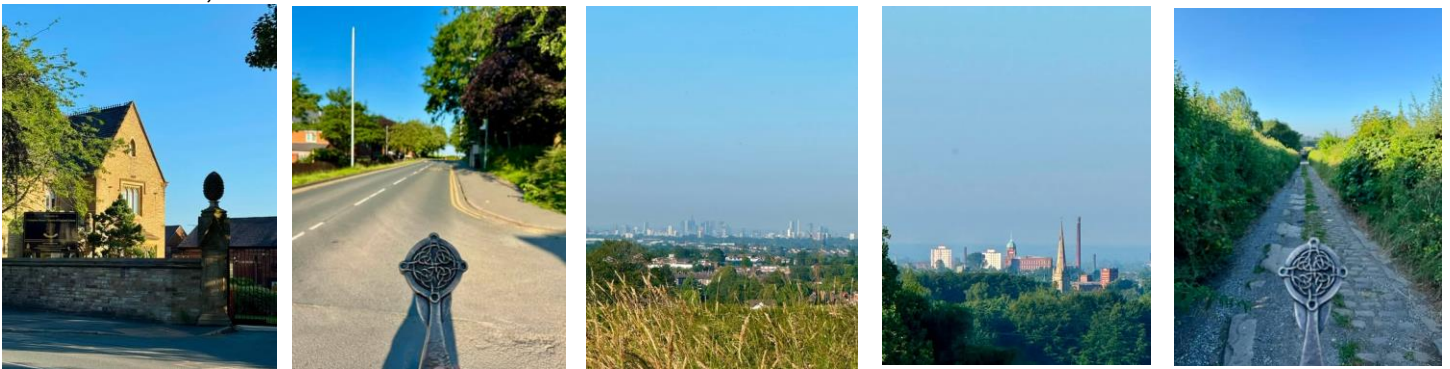
On Sunday at St Anne's we were remembering teachers who inspired us- mine at New Barn, as it was, were Mrs Wrigley, Mrs Patterson and Miss Murphy- they were strong women who encouraged me and nurtured me.

Giving thanks for them and for my time at that school. Praying for staff and pupils at Crompton Primary.

Who inspired you as a child? Give thanks for them. Walking back up to my childhood home, so many memories as I walk up these streets. So much to be thankful for.



Praying for all staff and pupils at Crompton House in these final days of the school year. On Founder's Day this year, on 29th September 2026 the school will celebrate its centenary! My Grandma attended in the 1930's my mum in the 1960's and my children in the noughties and 2010's. I worked there from 2003-2010 too. The school has played a big part in my families lives. Giving thanks for its 100 years of service to the community. I walk down Thornham Road then turn down Low Crompton where today there is a fantastic view of the Manchester skyline. Praying for our Diocese and for Bishop David, in his last year as our Bishop of Manchester, before retirement



Memories of walking this path with my second cousins, Rachel and Sarah during our long summer holidays from school.

Walking past Millers Floral Design, praying for the family as they prepare to say goodbye to Norma, their much loved mum, grandma and great grandma at her funeral tomorrow.

Praying too for Joan, whose funeral I have the privilege of conducting today, and prayers for her family and friends.

One of the signs tells me Cowlshaw is only half a mile away on the Crompton Circuit- I think I've walked a couple of miles from Cowlshaw to here! I've never walked the Crompton Circuit before- perhaps I should. I think I would need a guide though!



I wasn't sure where I was going to walk to this morning when I set off. I didn't always take direct routes, I explored new paths and revisited ones I had walked in the past. It meant I saw places I didn't

know existed, had new experiences and also relived some old memories as I walked and prayed- all before breakfast!

Prayers for St Anne's school in these final weeks of the school year and as it prepares for its Awards Service in church tomorrow.

I have walked 5.62 miles this morning along the St Hild Way and am just over 4 miles from Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge, our new way point on the pilgrimage.

I have felt the presence of the God with me as I have been walking this pilgrimage and known the companionship of the Northern Saints. This prayer, by David Adam seems a good one to use on this pilgrimage.

I have seen the Lord...

Where the mist rises from the sea,
Where the waves creep upon the shore,
Where the wreck lives upon the sand,
I have seen the Lord.

Where the sun awakens the day,
Where the road winds on its way,
Where the fields are sweet with hay,
I have seen the Lord.

Where the stars shine in the sky,
Where the streets so peaceful lie,
Where the darkness is so nigh,
I have seen the Lord.

The Lord is here,
The Lord is there,
The Lord is everywhere.

The Lord is high,
The Lord is low,
The Lord is on the paths I go.

.Prayer by David Adam -

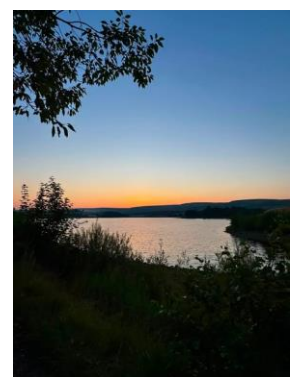
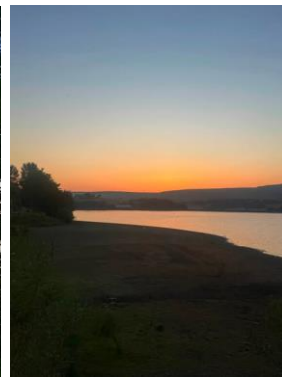
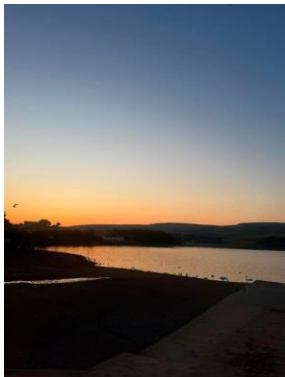
'Times and Seasons: modern prayers in the Celtic tradition.' SPCK 1989

Day forty 9th July

Winnie joined me as we set off spiritually towards Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge and physically on a dawn walk around Hollingworth Lake.

We arrived just before sunrise knowing it would take a while before it rose over the hill!

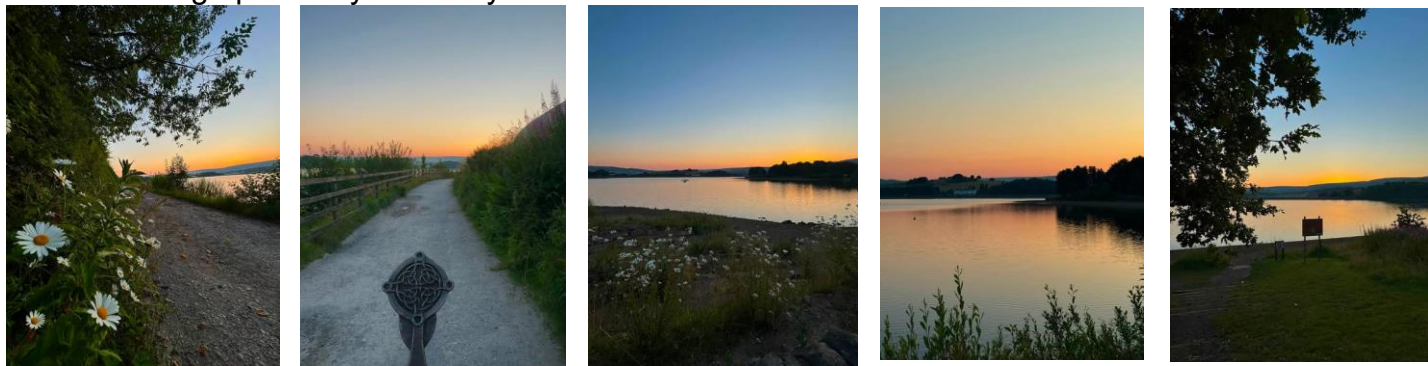
Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul." Psalm 143:8



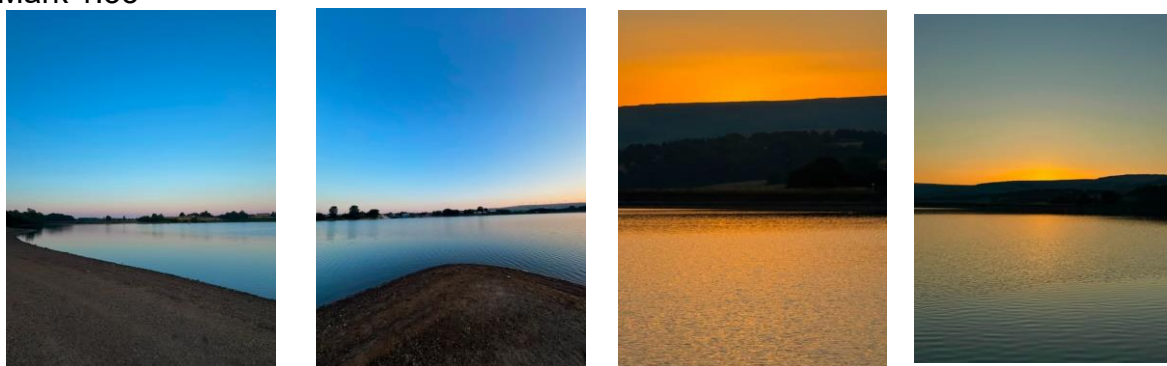
I love to watch the ever changing light at this time of day.

I struck up a conversation with another early morning walker who has been doing virtual pilgrimages using an app- she has walked the Great Wall of China! She often walks by the lake and people ask

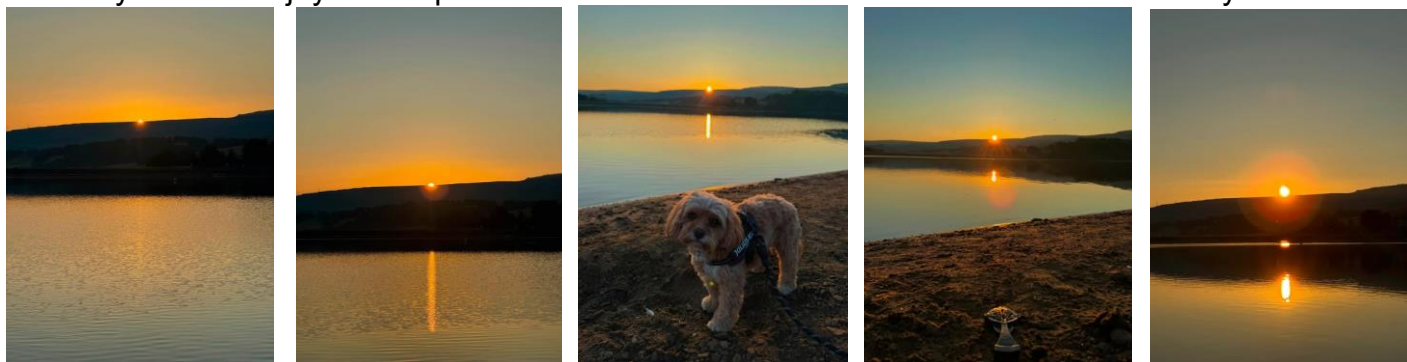
her where she has been on holiday, because, like me, she takes lots of pictures of the beautiful lake!
 So fortunate to have places of such beauty nearby. O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
 in the morning I plead my case to you and watch. Psalm 119:147



I reached the spot where I wait for the sun to rise above the hill and say Morning Prayer there.
 "In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed." Mark 1:35

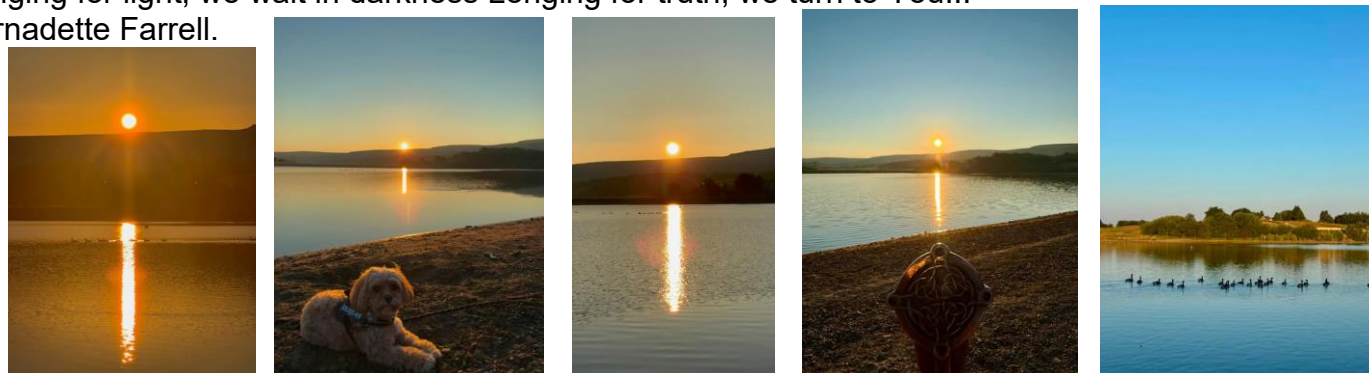


From the rising of the sun to its setting let the name of the Lord be praised!
 It fills my heart with joy and hope when I watch the sunrise. A wonderful start to the day.



It was amazing to watch the geese suddenly appear from every direction and swim towards the light, swimming into the stream of gold light on the lake. It seems that all of God's creation, including us and geese long for the light.

Longing for light, we wait in darkness Longing for truth, we turn to You...
 Bernadette Farrell.

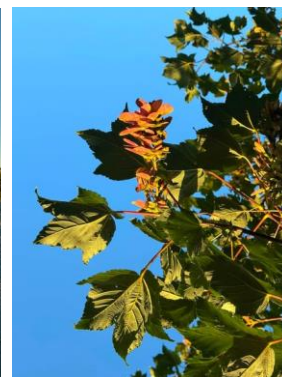
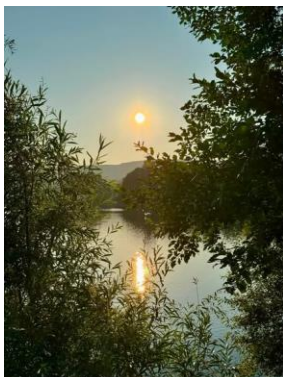


Walking back the way I've already walked so I can still watch sun rising over the lake if I look back. Praying for St Anne's school and for the Awards Service taking place this morning in St Anne's church. So much to give thanks for over this last year.



Praying for Keith, whose funeral I have the privilege of officiating at today and for all his family and friends who mourn him.

"I am the resurrection and the life. Says the Lord. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." John 11:25-26

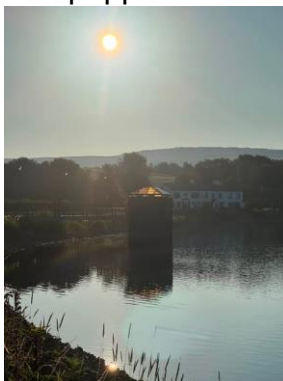


I got back to where I started and walked around the lake again the other direction, but went the whole way round this time.

The light was constantly changing and the lake was so still- it was like a mirror in places.

Praying for the family who I am meeting with after the funeral today, to plan their Mothers's funeral.

The poppies in the sunshine- for remembrance.



It was an early start this morning, but the walking, and all I have seen in the glorious changing light has energised me and filled me with hope. There were beautiful starbursts on some of the photos.

I am reminded of this prayer of St Bede, one of our great Northern Saints.

O Christ, our Morning Star, Splendour of Light Eternal, shining with the glory of the rainbow, come and waken us from the greyness of our apathy, and renew in us your gift of hope. Amen.

I walked 5 miles this morning and we have reached Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge on our pilgrimage of the heart to Lindisfarne.

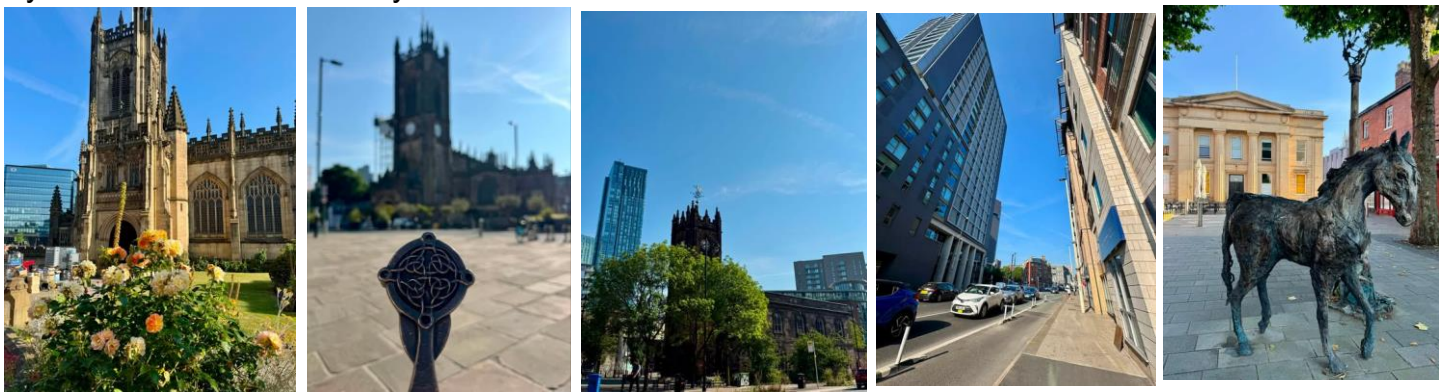


Yesterday we arrived at Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge. The Transporter straddles the River Tees at a point that 1400 years ago may have been where the old river, proper, entered into the vast estuary of mudflats and water channels before discharging into the North Sea.



Day forty one 10th July

Today, spiritually we are heading for Greatham Creek on the Way of St Hild, physically I am setting off at Manchester Cathedral and heading over to the newly refurbished and recently re-opened, Salford Cathedral. Walking past Sacred Trinity Salford, and praying for Revd Canon Andy Salmon, who will be at General Synod in York as one of Manchester Diocese clergy reps. Praying for all attending Synod over the next few days.



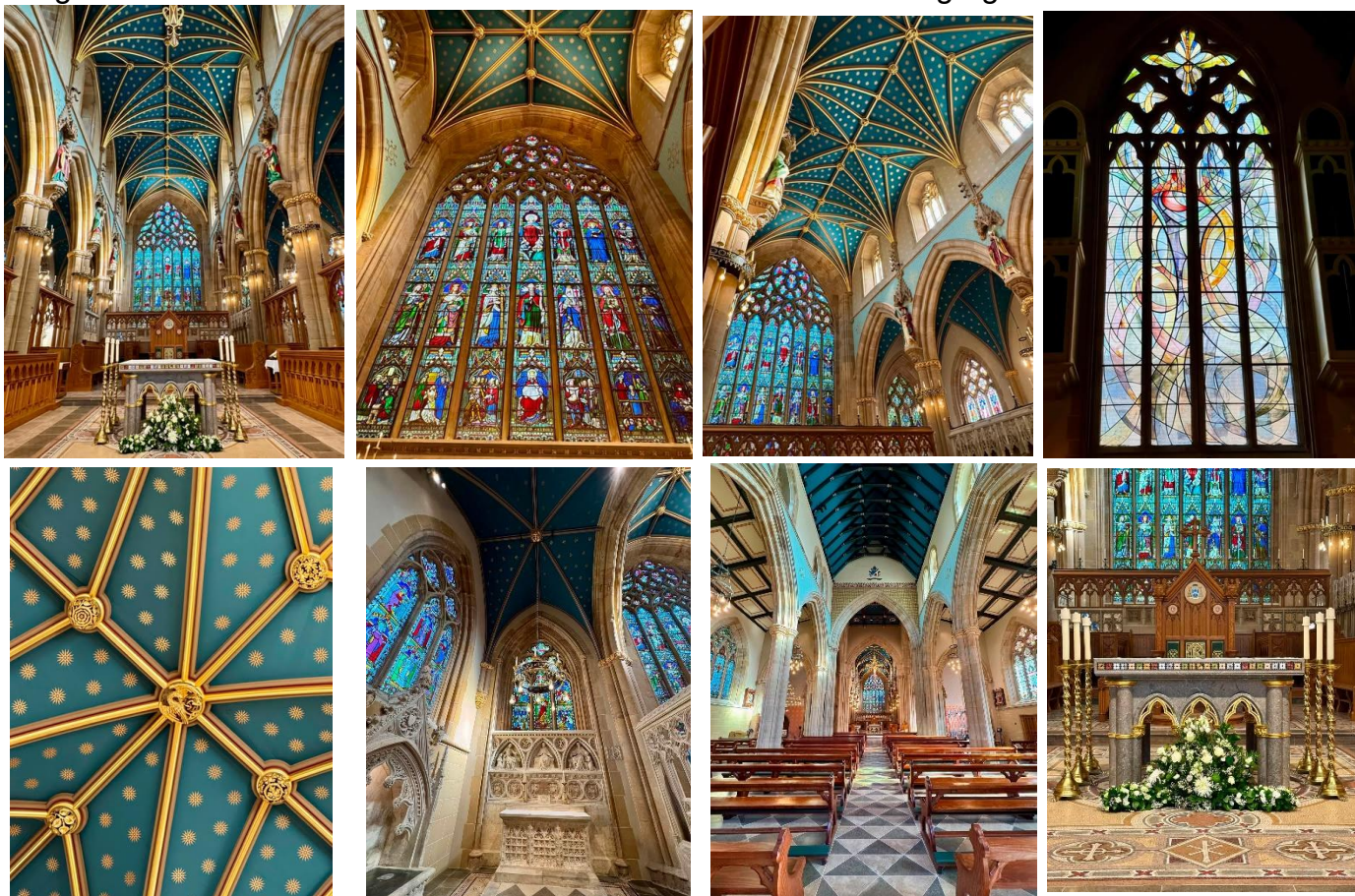
I arrived at Salford Cathedral, and was awestruck at the transformation.

In 2022, due to water ingress and various building issues Bishop John initiated the Restore the Glory of the Cathedral project. The project was led by the Cathedral Dean, Rev Canon Michael Jones, alongside the Cathedral architect and Dr Tom Bridgen from Purcell Architects and a team from Simpson of York contractors.

In the Cathedral "Brief Guide" it says the ecclesiastical ambience has been restored, "as a place of sacred encounter that lifts our minds and souls to contemplate God's love and beauty through Christ." Giving thanks for all who have worked so hard and so skilfully to bring about this restoration of the Cathedral to God's glory.



Praying for the Salford Cathedral clergy, Rev Canon Michael Jones, Rev Nathan Horne, Rev Frankie Mulgrew and the Parish Sister Brenda Matherson D.C. and the congregation at Salford Cathedral.



Praying for all at St Philip's Salford, as they prepare to enter a period of interregnum. Walking along Chapel Street towards Salford University. Praying for the staff and students and those hoping to start there in the Autumn.



I walked down the side of the University buildings towards Peel Park and walked a little way along the River Irwell. Beautiful reflections of the birds flying overhead.

Praying for all gathering in York for the General Synod this weekend, thinking about Hope for All Creation, Persecuted Christians, National Unity amongst other debates.



Walking through the beautiful Peel Park, which is celebrating 180 years later this year. Giving thanks for the people who bought this park for the people and giving g thanks for those who care for and maintain it now. A place of peace in the midst of the city.

Parks and gardens are places which are full of life and places we can find peace. Why not explore your garden, or a park you are visiting using your camera. When you open your eyes in this way you will see there is much to appreciate and notice the life in the garden.

Let that life give you peace as you take it all in. Let it fill you with contentment and rest. Notice its beauty, both subtle and bold. Notice how each plant, from little seedlings to mature plants, has something special about it. Think about how you can capture it with your camera in a way that will make for a wonderful photograph that shows the goodness of God.



Walking back into Manchester, and stopping off along the way for refreshment. The old buildings, including our cathedral sit alongside the new and the skyline is every changing. Giving thanks for the vibrant life of this city. Praying for the Mayoral elections on 30th July.

I have walked 4.52 miles this morning meaning we have reached Greatham Creek on our pilgrimage of the heart to Lindisfarne.



We have arrived at Greatham Creek!

It is a tidal saltmarsh and tributary of the River Tees in North East England. Located near Hartlepool and the industrial landscape of Teesside, it is renowned as a prime spot for viewing local wildlife, particularly harbour and grey seals that haul out on the mudflats. Today as you look at the creek and surrounding tidal wetlands, up stream of the bridge, you get a glimpse of what it was like 1400 years ago. Greatham Creek, or Greatham Fleet as it was once named, was part of a great system of ditches, channels, streams and creeks, draining the vast mudflats exposed at low tide. 5.56 miles until we reach Seaton Carew.



Day forty two

11 July St Benedict miles



Today the church celebrates St Benedict – known as the Father of Western Monasticism. Benedict was born in Nursia, central Italy, around the year 480. As a young man he was sent to study in Rome, but was soon appalled by the corruption in society and withdrew to live as a hermit at Subiaco. He quickly attracted disciples and began to establish small monasteries in the neighbourhood. Around the year 525, a disaffected faction tried to poison him so Benedict moved to Monte Cassino with a band of loyal monks. Later in life Benedict wrote his Rule for Monks, based on his own experience of fallible people striving to live out the gospel. He never intended to found an 'order' but his Rule was so good that it was disseminated and widely followed, becoming the model for all western monasticism. Benedict died at Monte Cassino in about the year 550.

On this pilgrimage we have visited The Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, The Sisters at Stanbrook Abbey, Warrington, the monks at Ampleforth Abbey and the Order of the Holy Paraclete at Whitby – all of these communities follow the Benedictine Rule. (see Week 5 for more on The Rule) and today will be a day of celebration for them.

We are spiritually on our way to Seaton Carew on the Way of St Hild, and physically I am setting off in the evening sun towards Elk Mill.

Praying for Marlene who was laid to rest today at St Matthew's, and for her family and friends. Giving thanks for the wonderful Strawberry Tea at St Anne's for fellowship, friendship and fun.



I walked up by the side of Elk Mill and walked back down Broadway, which I think has been the most prayed on Road of this pilgrimage!
Praying for all those who attended Oldham Pride today and praying for all at Oldham Parish Church who offered hospitality and a safe sanctuary space for visitors to Pride- Giving thanks for their ministry. I have walked 2.03 miles today, and 196.77 miles in 42 days. We are making good progress.



Seeing with the Eyes of the Heart

I know that many people have enjoyed seeing some of the pictures that I have taken on this pilgrimage. Many may also have wondered “how can she be praying if she is taking photos all the time?!” The photographs are part of the prayer, and they are a way for me of taking notice of what is around me, a way of focusing, a way of framing what I see, a way of reflecting on what is going on for me as I notice what I have included in a photo and what I have left out, a way of entering into a prayer of contemplation and a way of journaling my prayer – as you have seen these last few weeks. I have read a book by Christine Valters Paintner called “Eyes of the Heart – photography as a Christian Contemplative Practice.” She begins with a sentence of scripture “May the eyes of your heart be enlightened.” Ephesians 1:18

Christine describes how for her photography has been a way to see more deeply but that when she embraced monastic spirituality as a Benedictine oblate (someone who though not a nun or monk have individually affiliated themselves with a monastic community and lives by the rule of that monastic order in their lives.) she began to see photography as a way to slow down and gaze deeply, noticing things she missed in her rushed life. For her the camera provided “an encounter with an eternal moment – that place in which I was able to suddenly become so present to what I was gazing upon that I lost track of time, allowed eternity to break in. It became a tool for deeper vision, supporting and enlivening contemplative seeing.” (pg 2, Eyes of the Heart Christine Valters Painter; Sorin Books). This is my experience too. Some abridged extracts from the book are below

Learning the Art of Visio Divina

In Week 4 of the Pilgrimage we thought about the Benedictine way of prayer, Lectio Divina and in Week 5 we learnt how we might go on an awareness walk. We could combine the two and go for a contemplative awareness walk around where we live or on our favourite walk with a camera or phone.

- Begin your walk with a prayer – perhaps the pilgrimage prayer. Contemplative walking doesn’t necessarily mean walking slowly but slow down enough to see what is around you, notice the detail of things – the many shades of the flowers, the texture of bark on the trees, architectural details on houses and even patterns on manhole covers. You aren’t looking for something beautiful and you mustn’t worry about how good a photographer you
- are – you are trying to be present to the moment, to life as it is and respond to the call of the world to your heart, and in the process you will discover beauty.

- Each contemplative photographic journey will be like a mini-pilgrimage. We don't have to travel far away to have a transformative experience, monastic wisdom tells us that the sacred is right here, right now, and if we can't see it before us, travelling around the world won't change things. Ignatian spirituality encourages us to find God in all things.
- If you go on a contemplative walk and take some pictures, a few days later choose one of your pictures to pray with using a process of Visio Divina – Sacred Seeing. This way of prayer uses an adaptation of the four movements of Lectio Divina to a prayer of "gazing".
- Just as in Lectio Divina where we would first of all listen for a word or phrase that calls to us in that moment, the first movement *lectio*, we notice which of our images is stirring a response in us, or calling for more time for us to dwell with it. You can print out the picture or view it on your tablet or computer. This will be like the sacred text for your time of prayer.
- As you would with any time of prayer, spend some time in preparation, light a candle, perhaps spend some time noticing your breathing, don't alter it just become aware of your breathing. Each time you breathe in, breathe in the love of God, as you breathe out, breathe out all that is getting in the way of you and God. Feel yourself being filled with the love of God. As you slowly descend from your head to your heart open your eyes and cast a gentle gaze upon your photo with the eyes of your heart. Take a few moments to allow your eyes to wander over the whole landscape of the image, exploring the shapes, colours, contours, details and symbols. Allow yourself to become present to the details of the image.
- Gradually notice if there is a place on the photo where your eye is being invited to rest. Don't think this through too much. Notice where you are being drawn to and where you are avoiding.
- What is it that is calling to you on the image? Is it a colour, a symbol a person or an expression. Take a few moments to simply be present to this in a gentle way.
- Begin to allow this place on the photo to unfold in your imagination. You might want to
- Close your eyes again and notice what memories, images, and feelings are stirred within you. Allow space within yourself for these to emerge, simply noticing your experience and being present to what is stirring. Rest here for a few moments without judgement.
- Slowly begin to notice if an invitation begins to emerge from these memories, feelings, and images moving in you. In these concrete circumstances of your life right now, what awareness or action is God calling you to? What is my invitation in this moment of my life? How am I being called to respond? Take a few more moments resting with this invitation.
- Connect to your breath once more. Breathe in gratitude for whatever has been revealed. Breathe out and release the images moving within you and rest for a few moments in gratitude, simply relishing the experience of stillness and being in the presence of God.
- In these final moments of prayer, allow your breath to slowly and gently bring your awareness back to the room. As you open your eyes, take another moment to gaze upon your photo and

take it in as a whole. See if there is anything else you notice right now, and then bring your meditation to a close. Now take a few moments to write any brief reflections in your journal.

- If you practice this you will find that over time when you go on your contemplative walks you will take the spirit of the Visio Divina with you as you walk and photograph and not just in reflecting afterwards. As you receive your images, pay attention to moments that seem to shimmer and make space within your heart to be with whatever feelings or memories these stir, trusting that God is at work in the process. Let your camera be a window on to a new way of seeing.



I have 128.23 miles still to walk before we arrive on our pilgrimage map at Lindisfarne. It can be helpful sometimes when we are on a long journey, or doing something that is a challenge, to have a picture in mind of where we are heading. Below are 3 pictures I took when on retreat on Lindisfarne in November last year. Thank you for following along. With love and prayers, Revd Liz

