

## **Parish Community Letter - April 2026**

We welcome members of the parish to contribute and write our Parish Community Letter. **Thank you to Steven Knowles for taking the time to write for this month's edition.**

### **Walk for your Body – Pilgrim for your Soul**

When preaching or leading reflections I often refer to the journey, are we all not on a journey? We journey through life, hopefully feeling that we are directing that journey and not just being blown from shore to shore by the vagaries of life and its effect on us emotionally. What does it take to feel in control?

A question best left unanswered in this article, but one we each have to face through our lives. A feeling of control for me came when I felt less trapped by a life of need and expectation. That freedom comes when there is an income and the space to choose what you commit to. For a decade now I feel my journey has been more for the soul.

I joined the Arundel and Brighton Catholic diocese ecumenical pilgrims and walked a number of routes with them. A unique experience as a group of forty or more walk a pilgrim trail across this country and visit a number of churches on the route. We would share prayer, reflections and services every day, then settling down on church, or village hall floors every evening. They were quite intense periods of growth for me.

More personal journeys I have made to Rome, the Spanish, Semana Santa Holy Week processions, Jerusalem and the Holy Land have resulted in intense feelings of awe and wonderment at the statements of faith made by the countless saints who have have gone before us and those who choose to make the statement of pilgrimage in the modern era.

If you are a person of faith, we might say that any journey to a notable religious site is a pilgrimage. There are many ways of pilgrimage, some people make journeys to visit all the cathedrals in the country. Other people take pilgrim routes to places of particular holy significance and complete them using bed and breakfast or a series of day trips. My first pilgrimage was Winchester to Canterbury and I will never forget the sense of achievement and spiritual rejoicing as we entered Canterbury

cathedral after walking for two weeks.

This year I completed a gentler more local pilgrimage when in January I joined St Mary's church from Churt at the Ladywell Convent in Godalming. We shared a week of guided reflection and worship following the events of Holy Week and referring to the many photographs provided by those of us who have visited The Holy Land. During the week, I was able to enter a holy place, some might say a thin place, that place between the physical world and the spiritual where the boundaries are not so black and white as usual, where we can experience moments of deep profound reflection.

If you can walk a pilgrimage so much the better for the holistic experience, but if not, you can still experience the holiness of pilgrimage by choice of place to visit. The title for this piece is, Walk for your Body – Pilgrim for your Soul. That is the statement on the opening page of the British Pilgrimage Trust web page. I try to treat my journey through life as a pilgrimage, rejoicing in the moments of spirituality when in special places and acknowledging the journey as one of learning and growth with a specific end in mind.

You will see notes elsewhere of a walk I am leading for St Peter's fundraising on 16th May. Starting at St Peter's and ending at the cathedral on Stag Hill, I invite you to join us and experience your own sense of pilgrimage. What might you get from pilgrimage? The journey is personal but for those who join one I would wish, reconciliation to life, peace and joy as you celebrate faith and God's creation.

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