

A Priest's Guide to
Pilgrimage

at

The Shrine of Our Lady
of Walsingham



Introduction

Pilgrimage is one of God's richer gifts to his people. From the time of Abraham sacred 'journeying' has given opportunity for divine conversation and spiritual encounter. Pilgrimage can have a remarkable, transformative effect on the lives not just of individuals but also of whole church communities. Walsingham has been a place of pilgrimage for nearly a thousand years, and as Mary's domain, it has been for many a place of healing, forgiveness and profound encounter with God. Countless pilgrims to this holy ground have found renewal and even the gift of faith itself.

Yet for a priest, organising a pilgrimage and pastoring a pilgrimage group can be a stressful and challenging experience. Walsingham in particular seems to have a peculiar ability to engender nervousness. Where should I go when? What should I wear? Will I get it right? Even the most experienced and confident clergy can end up feeling like new boys on their first day at school.

Yet everyone should feel at home at Walsingham. Our aim is to welcome all people as if they were Christ, and so this guide is intended to support and advise clergy who are planning a pilgrimage. It is intended especially for those coming for their first time, but I hope it will be of use even to priests who visit Walsingham regularly. As well as the practicalities of organising a pilgrimage, it will consider the nature of pilgrimage and what its benefits can be. It will also seek to help with the task of preparing pilgrims spiritually for their journey and what to anticipate on their arrival at the Shrine.

Why Pilgrimage to Walsingham?

God calls Christians on pilgrimage in order for them to enjoy a richer experience of his love. We need to remember that the journey is an integral part of pilgrimage and celebrates the eschatological journey of salvation upon which we embark at our Baptism. That journey comprises a series of moments of conversion, times when we commit our lives afresh to Christ, and this is a challenge that is laid before every pilgrim. On pilgrimage we also glimpse the destination of our journey, which is the life of heaven, and which is expressed through worship and fellowship with the community of pilgrims which forms each week. On pilgrimage, the barriers of race, class, culture and education which can divide people are broken down and we realise that all that matters is our citizenship of heaven. And so one of the most important parts of a pilgrimage is the return home, because pilgrims are challenged to take the God they have encountered in a holy place back into their daily lives. Pilgrimage therefore has an crucial evangelistic dimension as it helps to equip the People of God for mission and ministry in the daily routine of their lives.

Pilgrimage to Walsingham dates back to 1061 when the Lady Richeldis of Faverche experienced a vision in which she saw in extraordinary detail the house in Nazareth where Mary received the Angel's message at the Annunciation and gave her life in obedience to God. Richeldis built a replica of that house on a spot marked by the appearance of a well, and by the fifteenth century Walsingham was the most significant place of pilgrimage in England.

The original Shrine was destroyed in 1538 during the Reformation. In 1921, Fr Hope Patten became Vicar of Walsingham, and he very soon restored the Devotion by placing an image of Our Lady of Walsingham in the parish church. In 1931 the image was translated to the newly built Holy House around which the Shrine Church was constructed. The heart of the pilgrimage is therefore once again the Holy House which contains the image of Mary and which is situated next to a well where pilgrims receive sprinkling from the cool, fresh water.

Walsingham is a Shrine celebrating the Incarnation of Our Lord, a reminder of how God breaks into the most ordinary lives in the most extraordinary ways and raises up lowly people to glory. It challenges us to say 'yes' to God as Mary did. It reminds us of the homeliness of holiness; that the God who reigns in supreme majesty works in the everyday lives of his people. At a time when people mistrust institutions and are bombarded with words, Walsingham offers simple yet mysterious and profound encounter with the Divine.

Before you Leave

Preparing your People for Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage needs careful promoting, especially in those parishes where it is not part of the tradition, and much of this work will inevitably fall to the priest. The challenge is to encourage as many people as possible, from the youngest to the most elderly, to share in the experience. In encouraging people to make a pilgrimage, it is crucial to be clear about expectations and intentions. A pilgrimage is not a holiday, though it should be fun. A pilgrimage is not a retreat because the social dimension is a key part of the experience, but nonetheless there are times of deep prayer and silence.

The Shrine can offer resources to local churches to help them to promote pilgrimage. The most ambitious of these is 'Why Walsingham?' a day event which helps people to experience the Shrine through worship and teaching. (Please contact the Administrator for more information). However in the end the best promotional tool is word of mouth invitation, and the best advertisement is people's natural curiosity. Don't try to over-explain!

Parish priests should give careful thought to how pilgrims will be prepared spiritually and practically for the experience. Some parishes will organise a meeting before departure for pilgrims, others will celebrate the Mass or provide an opportunity for confessions. Pilgrims should certainly be encouraged to think of a particular intention for prayer for their pilgrimage, and those unable to come should know that their needs and thanksgivings will be offered in prayer.

Planning a Programme

The first area to consider is when to come on pilgrimage. The full season runs from Easter until the end of October, and a slightly modified pilgrimage programme is offered from February until Easter and throughout November. During Lent, there is a special Lenten programme which focuses on the cross and on penitence. The majority of groups come for a weekend, however increasing numbers are opting for a midweek pilgrimage and find that this can offer a little more space and tranquillity. The full programme is offered on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Before departure, pilgrimage organisers will want to construct a programme for their group. There are two areas of input for this programme, the first of which is the timetable of worship that the Shrine offers for all pilgrims. This comprises the following:

Weekend Programme from Easter to the end of October:

Saturday	6.00pm	Pilgrimage Mass
	8.15pm	Sermon, Procession and Healing Ministry (with sprinkling, laying-on of hands & anointing, confession and exposition)
Sunday	11.00am	Parish Mass in St Mary's Parish Church
	2.30pm	Sprinkling
	3.45pm	Procession of the Host, Benediction & Last Visit

A slightly attenuated programme will run before Easter and in November. There is a Special Lenten Programme for the weekends before Easter.

Midweek Programme from Easter to the end of October

Tuesday 8.15pm Healing Ministry (with sprinkling, laying-on of hands & anointing, confession and exposition)

Wednesday 11.00am Pilgrimage Mass
8.15pm Sermon, Procession and Benediction

Again an attenuated programme will run for midweek groups who come outside the main season.

Day Pilgrimage Programme (On Saturdays and when booked in advance)

12 noon Pilgrimage Mass
2.30pm Sprinkling
4.15pm Benediction & Last Visit

Pilgrimage groups will want to take part in one of the above programmes. **In order to do so, it is essential that every pilgrim has a Pilgrim Manual (except those on day pilgrimages). These can be bought in the Shrine Shop or at the Shrine Reception for £3.**

As well as the programmes, there is a regular pattern of worship that takes place in the Shrine each day. This is as follows.

Worship each day

7.30am Mass
2.30pm Sprinkling
5.00pm Mass (Except Saturdays and Sundays)
5.30pm Evening Prayer* (except Saturday)
Confessions are heard after Evening Prayer.
6.00pm Shrine Prayers
(5.00pm on Saturdays)

*Many clergy join in with Evening Prayer which is said publicly in the nave. The Divine Office is used, and copies are available. Clergy may sit in the nave or in the Guardians' Stalls, and the priest leading the office will give clear instructions.

The second area of input into the programme is the worship that a group will organise for itself. This may include:

- **Stations of the Cross.** These can be made in the outdoor Stations around the Shrine Grounds or at the Beatitude Stations beneath the cloister which leads to the new refectory. There is an Order for the Stations in the Pilgrim Manual, though many groups like to bring their own.
- **Intercessions in the Holy House.** Again there is a rite that can be used for Intercessions in the Pilgrim Manual. Usually they are offered in five categories: Thanksgiving; the Sick; Those in Need; the Departed; Parish and Community. It is a good idea to ask pilgrims to write down their intercessions on labelled slips of paper and collect them in as soon as you arrive at Walsingham. They can then be edited and organised before being offered.
- **A Visit to the Roman Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady** to pray for the unity of Christians. This should be booked in advance with the Roman Catholic Shrine. Again there are prayers for the Visit printed in the Pilgrim Manual.

- **Mass.** While it is hoped that pilgrims will join in the Concelebrated Pilgrimage Mass, in addition many priests like to celebrate Mass for their groups at another time. If you intend to celebrate Mass in the Shrine, all you will need to bring is an alb. Vestments and vessels will be laid out for you in the sacristy, and the Shrine has a wide selection of liturgical books (you can even say Mass in Gaelic!)

Times for Mass, Intercessions and Stations need to be booked in advance with the Shrine Sacristans. This can either be done by sending a draft copy of your programme to the Shrine Sacristans two weeks in advance or by attending the Sacristy Meeting. Obviously if you send in your programme in advance you are more likely to be able to reserve the times and places you want.

While women priests and their groups are very warmly welcomed on pilgrimage, the Shrine maintains the discipline of restricting priestly ministry to men. Also it should be noted that Eucharistic celebration in the Shrine Church or at other altars in the grounds is restricted to those who are in communion with an Anglican Bishop.

There is a Sacristy Meeting each day for clergy. (This can also be attended by the organisers of groups who have come without a priest). The meeting takes place at 5.00pm on Saturday and at 5.45pm on other days of the week and is an absolute must. At this meeting arrangements for the next day are made, and not only is it important for the shrine clergy as their opportunity to recruit servers and calculate numbers of concelebrants, but it is also when we work out plans for the following day. Sometimes it is necessary to rearrange Mass times at short notice so that everyone's needs can be accommodated, **so please make every effort to attend.**

Groups are encouraged to be as imaginative as possible with their programming. For example instead of making the Stations of the Cross in the shrine grounds, consider using the Slipper Chapel or the Holy Mile. You can celebrate the Mass in one of the other churches in the Benefice associated with the pilgrimage such as Houghton St Giles or East Barsham. The Shrine Clergy can help you to organise this.

At Walsingham we encourage you to pray hard and play hard. There may be time to fit in an excursion as part of your programme and there is certainly no shortage of places to enjoy: there are beautiful beaches and resorts, wonderful country estates such as Sandringham or Blickling, attractions such as the Thursford Collection and stunning churches, castles and abbeys all within easy reach. There are also guided tours of Walsingham and other local places. The Tourist Information Office can provide details of these (their 'phone number is at the back of this guide).

The Practicalities

All arrangements such as room and meal bookings, payments and provision for those with special needs should be made with the Hospitality Department. They produce an Organisers' Guide for named group organisers, and if this is a layperson in your case you should make sure to liaise closely with them.

Running the Pilgrimage

Reclaiming the Journey

In the Middle Ages, the journey *was* the pilgrimage; arduous, long and dangerous. These days we just hop in the coach or car, spin on the Abba CD and we're there before we know it. However if the journey is itself a symbol of the spiritual journey to heaven, then we need to make it clear that our progress to Walsingham is an integral part of the whole experience. It

is therefore vital to begin the journey in prayer, and the Pilgrim Manual contains an Itinerary to be used before departing. It may be worth stopping off at points on the journey to pray, as pilgrims in the past would have done. Many pilgrimage routes go in the vicinity of holy places or former shrines.

Closer to Walsingham there are countless churches which have been associated with the pilgrimage for centuries and these make excellent stopping points. East Barsham, the Slipper Chapel in the Roman Catholic Shrine and Houghton St Giles are ideal for this. Many pilgrims choose to walk the last mile into Walsingham, though sadly few have the courage to emulate their forebears by doing so barefoot!

The final few miles of the journey are a good time to lead prayers in the coach or car, and pilgrims should be encouraged to spend the last minutes of their journey in silence as they call to mind their intentions. Ideally the First Visit to the Holy House should be made immediately upon arrival, though this may not always be possible because of other worship taking place in the Shrine Church. (Before starting the First Visit, be sure to send in a scout to make sure that no-one else is in the Holy House and that Evening Prayer or Shrine Prayers are not being recited in the nave).

The Programme Unpacked

We hope that all Pilgrim Clergy will want to join in fully with the programme of worship. Since this is a source of anxiety for so many, this section will comprise a fairly thorough guide from a priest's perspective. Please be assured that clear verbal instructions are given to clergy before each act of worship. While at times this may seem irksome, it is done in order that visiting clergy may feel relaxed, comfortable and confident.

The Weekend Programme

Many weekend pilgrims look forward to attending Shrine Prayers at 5pm on Saturday. Focused on the mysteries of the Rosary, this intercessory prayer has been offered every day since the Shrine was restored. For others though, the programme begins with the Pilgrimage Mass at 6pm. Clergy who are Priests Associate of the Holy House are invited to concelebrate. (If you are not yet a Priest Associate but would like to concelebrate then speak to one of the Shrine Clergy, ideally before arriving at Walsingham). If you are concelebrating you should be vested in the sacristy at least ten minutes before Mass begins. You will need an alb, but other vestments are provided. Before Mass, one of the Shrine Clergy will give clear instructions regarding the ceremonial which is straightforward and normative. The Rite we use is Common Worship, and the concelebrants' cards with the Eucharistic Prayer give instructions on Concelebration.

The Evening Liturgy at 8.15pm on Saturday includes a sermon, the Procession of Our Lady and Healing Ministry. (On Saturday evenings before Easter and in November the procession is replaced with either a Penitential Liturgy or a Meditation). Clergy robe in cassock and cotta or alb (no stoles are worn) and since there is no entrance procession they go straight to a seat in the Guardians' Stalls. During the Procession of Our Lady, the clergy walk at the back as indicated by the MC and return to the stalls for the remaining part of the service. One of the Pilgrim Priests is asked to preside over the Procession, and a clear briefing is given to this priest. During the Healing Ministry, the Blessed Sacrament is left on the altar until 10pm for silent devotion and Priests are available to hear confessions. We rely on Pilgrim Priests to conduct this ministry, and it is a privilege to those priests who are themselves regular penitents.

You are warmly encouraged to attend the 11.00am Mass at the Parish Church, St Mary's, on Sunday morning as part of your pilgrimage. Otherwise arrangements can be made for groups who opt to celebrate the Mass in the Shrine. All that you will need at St Mary's is an

alb. Again vestments are provided and the Parish Priest will give instructions on the ceremonial which is similar in style to that at the Shrine. After the Mass Pilgrim Clergy are invited back to the Administrator's Cottage in the College for drinks before lunch.

Sprinkling takes place at 2.30pm in the Shrine Church, and a number of priests are needed to assist with this. Volunteers are sought during the Saturday evening Sacristy Meeting. You will need to wear an alb or cassock and cotta. Stoles are provided and again clear instructions will be given at 2.15pm in the Sacristy. Again we rely on visiting clergy for this simple but very moving service, and a clear briefing will be given at 2.15pm. (On Sundays before Easter and in November, sprinkling is followed by Benediction and the Last Visit).

The closing act of worship in the weekend programme is the Procession of the Host and Benediction. Clergy robe in alb or cassock and cotta and white stole. Stoles are provided or you may wish to wear your own. As on Saturday evening, there is no entrance procession and so clergy proceed immediately to their seats in the Guardians' stalls. One of the Pilgrim Priests will be asked to preside and again he will be briefed separately. In the Procession the clergy walk at the front, behind the Crucifer and before the Blessed Sacrament, and this will be indicated by the MC. After the Procession they return to their seats for Benediction. If there are people in your group who are chronically sick or disabled they may like to receive an individual blessing with the host prior to general Benediction. If this is so, please tell one of the Shrine Clergy at the Sacristy Meeting. After Benediction, pilgrims are invited to turn towards the Holy House for the final devotion which is the 'Last Visit'.

The Midweek Programme

All the worship that takes place at the weekend is offered in the midweek programme but in a slightly different order. The Tuesday Evening Liturgy is a Healing Service, comprising Sprinkling, Laying-on of Hands, Anointing and Confession. We rely on Pilgrim Clergy very heavily for this, and a briefing will be given at 8.00pm. You should wear cassock and cotta or an alb. Stoles are provided. The Mass at 11am is similar to the Saturday 6pm Mass (see above) and Priests Associate are invited to concelebrate. The Liturgy on Wednesday evening comprises an Address, Procession of Our Lady and Benediction. If there are fewer than 40 pilgrims, an indoor Devotional service will take place.

The Day Pilgrimage

A booking should be made in advance if you wish to bring a group on the Saturday Day Pilgrimage. This begins with the Pilgrimage Mass at 12 noon at which Priests Associate are invited to concelebrate. We often need a thurifer for this Mass, and if you are able to help with this please tell one of the Shrine Clergy in advance or upon arrival. Sprinkling takes place at 2.30pm and it is very useful if Pilgrim Priests offer their assistance for this. Stoles will be provided and there will be a short briefing at 2.20pm. The day pilgrimage concludes with Benediction at 4.15pm. One of the visiting clergy is invited to preside, and the others are invited to vest in alb or cassock and cotta with white stole and sit in the Guardians' stalls. Stoles can be provided.

What Else can Walsingham Offer your Parish?

Special Events

While the regular pilgrim programme runs throughout the season we also organise a number of special events that cater for particular groups. Each Spring the Children's Pilgrimage welcomes children aged between 7 and 11 (upper primary school age). The children take over the whole shrine and a special programme is provided to cater for their particular needs. For young people of secondary school age, the Youth Pilgrimage is held

each August. The young people camp out in the fields near the Slipper Chapel, and a wide and varied programme is organised which includes worship, live music, workshops and social events.

The Walsingham Family Pilgrimage takes place in November. While following the structure of the pilgrimage, there are events and activities for people of all ages: a crèche, workshops for young people, a social night for adults. There are large discounts for school-age children. We also hold a pilgrimage for clergy families during the October half-term, and many families apply for subsidy for this from their Dioceses. Information on all these events can be obtained from Brigid Harrison in the Schools' Office.

The largest event in the Shrine's calendar is the National Pilgrimage which takes place in the Abbey grounds on the Bank Holiday Monday at the end of May. This is a big jamboree which is attended by many thousands of people. The Pilgrimage for Healing and Renewal takes place on the August Bank Holiday Monday and celebrates the healing dimension of England's Nazareth. This is a gentle, moving event which is very special to many people, especially those who live with pain, sickness or disability. Throughout the year the Shrine also organises various retreats and conferences and also a special weekend for pilgrimage organisers. Full details of each year's programme are sent out in the Easter Mailing which is received by all members of the Society and by Priests Associate.

The Schools' Office

Each year the Shrine is visited by around 6000 schoolchildren whose needs are catered for by our thriving and creative Schools' Office. Courses are planned to dovetail with Keystages 1 to 4 of the National Curriculum, and cover topics in RE, English and History. The Department will also design days to meet specific requirements, and it caters very effectively to special needs groups. While many groups visit for the day, there are also opportunities for residential visits. The Schools' Office is also able to provide a service to those involved in parish-based work with children and young people. Full details of this work can be obtained from the Schools' Office Administrator, Brigid Harrison.

Staying in Touch with Walsingham

The Society of Our Lady of Walsingham exists to enable pilgrims to stay in contact with the Shrine through prayer and the sharing of information. Members of the Society undertake to pray for our work each day, and in return for a small subscription fee they receive three mailings a year, two of which contain the Walsingham Review. Most pilgrim priests choose to become Priests Associate of the Holy House which carries the same privileges. A group of Society members in the same parish or area may choose to form a Cell. This provides an opportunity for people to join together to pray for the Shrine and to promote the practice of pilgrimage in their own community.

Members of the Society are also able to join the Living Rosary which is a way of sharing in the Shrine's continuous ministry of intercessory prayer. Each member is allocated a mystery of the Rosary and is asked to pray that mystery on the day that it is being offered in Shrine Prayers.

The Walsingham Partners are a significant group of pilgrims who undertake to make monthly donations to the Shrine (currently a monthly minimum of £10) in order to facilitate repair, expansion and development.

Our Ladies Lamps and Candles - intercessory lights burn in the Shrine Church and around the Shrine grounds. The majority of these lights are sponsored by pilgrims.

Information on all the above can be obtained from the Shrine's Membership Secretary, Karl Jackson.

Contact details on page 9

Whom to Contact

Administrator, Bishop Lindsay Urwin OGS

Tel: 01328 824204; E.mail: pr.adm@olw-shrine.org.uk

The Shrine Sacristans (for all inquiries regarding Shrine Church services, use of the Barn Chapel, the Guild of All Souls Chapel etc.)

Tel: 01328 824202; Email: sacristans@olw-shrine.org.uk

Hospitality Department (for enquiries concerning accommodation and catering)

Tel: 01328 820239; E.mail: accom@olw-shrine.org.uk

Membership Office, Mr Karl Jackson

Tel: 01328 820582; E.mail: membs@olw-shrine.org.uk

The Shrine Priest & Youth Missioner, Fr Stephen Gallagher (for enquiries regarding youth events and youth, children's and family pilgrimages)

Tel: 01328 824203; Email: shr.pr@olw-shrine.org.uk

The Schools' Office, Mrs Brigid Harrison

Tel: 01328 824200 (until 15th August, 2010) From 16th August, 2010 - Tel: 01328 824205; E.mail: schools@olw-shrine.org.uk

RC National Shrine

Tel: 01328 820217; E.mail: rcnationalshrine@walsingham.org.uk

Tourist Information Office

Tel: 01328 820510; E.mail: walsingham.museum@farmline.com

The Vicar of Walsingham, Fr Norman Banks

Tel: 01328 821316; E.mail: nabwalsingham@lineone.net