

The Celtic Way

No 6 – Pilgrimages and Retreats

Introduction: Christianity has a strong tradition of pilgrimages to sites connected with the ministry of Jesus. In the bible, pilgrimage has been associated with the call of Abraham (Genesis 12: 1-2), with the Jewish festivals in Jerusalem, with the magi's journey to Bethlehem (Matthew 2: 1-12) and the first pilgrimages were made to sites connected with the ministry of Jesus.

Early Pilgrimages

- The Itinerarium Burdigalense ("Bordeaux Itinerary"), An anonymous pilgrim from Bordeaux visited the Holy Land in 333 AD.
- The Holy Land fell to Muslim conquests in the 7th Century
- Pilgrimages in the West, Santiago de Compostela in the 9th Century
<https://the-camino-de-santiago-a-pilgrimage-of-spiritual-enlightenment>.

(E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Late Roman Empire AD 312-460* 1982)

The history of Pilgrimages in the UK

- 7th century. Saint Augustine, a missionary sent by Pope Gregory the Great
- Saint Alban, the first British Christian martyr, who was executed around 304 AD
- St Michael's Way St Uny (Yoo- Nee) Church in Lelant to St Michael's Mount.
- Glastonbury Abbey is the burial place of Saint Joseph of Arimathea
[Celtic Christian Pilgrimages](#)

<https://www.pilgrimways.org.uk/history-of-pilgrimage-in-england-and-wales>

Who went on Pilgrimage and why?

- Royalty, clergy, common people (Canterbury Tales – Geoffery Chaucer)
- Spiritual Devotion:
- Seeking Miracles:
- Penance:
- Vows and Gratitude:
- Adventure and Exploration:

"For Pilgrimage to be real it has to be a moving experience in more than simply a physical sense [it is] the discovery that we are walking on holy ground".

The Awesome Journey: Life's Pilgrimage by Adam, David

Popular UK Pilgrimage routes <https://www.britishpilgrimage.org/routes>

- **The Pilgrims' Way:** Winchester to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury. 138 mile route (146 miles if detour to Rochester Cathedral). Original trackway dated to 600–450 B. Route taken by Henry II on his pilgrimage of atonement for the death of Bishop Thomas?
- **St Cuthbert's Way:** 62 miles between Melrose and Lindisfarne. Cuthbert was saint 11 years after his death. Cuthbert's final resting place the Norman cathedral at Durham
- **St Oswalds Way** – 97 miles- traditionally walked from the Holy Island, past Bamburgh Castle to the site of the Battle of Heavenfield
- **The St. Columba's Way.** Month long route, Iona abbey to St. Andrews. Many kings of Scotland, Ireland, and even Vikings buried there.

Portchester to Southwick: Route taken by Augustinian monks 1140

<https://www.pilgrimways.org.uk/portsmouth>

Retreats

- A dedicated time set aside for spiritual renewal, prayer, rest, and connecting with God
- involve worship, prayer, study, meditation, recreation, and fellowship
- Held in Christian conference centres, monasteries, or other serene locations
- Encourage a deeper connection with the Lord through His Word and Spirit.
- <https://www.christianwebsite.com/what-is-retreat-in-christianity/>

Where Did the Tradition Originate From?

- Jesus and His disciples would retreat to secluded places to rest, reflect, and pray together (Mark 6:31)
- 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the desert wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).
- St. Ignatius of Loyola: "Spiritual Exercises" a month of prayer, fasting, meditation, and study

St Mary's Portchester

- Quiet days for Lent and Advent
- Contemplative Prayer Group