

## Station 9 - The Road Home

There is only one road back to Y Cefn. 1000s of pilgrims have walked it. Rev'd Andrew Jones in his book, *Pilgrimage*, shares his own discovery:

*'I learnt on that remarkable Enlli Pilgrimage that the real worth of any pilgrimage, any journey, is in its return to everyday reality at the end.'*

He also tells us that R S Thomas *'describes return as a process of moving away from the boundaries of one's self and into the centre of the heart. There at the centre in the presence of God, it is possible to find the strength and the spiritual compass we need to go forward with faith and in trust.'*

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*



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Mary Chitty: *The Monks on Enlli*

A Allchin: *Bardsey: A Place of Pilgrimage 3/e*

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## Bardsey Island Pilgrimage



*'Seeking the place of resurrection'*

## Pererindod Ynys Enlli

by Susan Blagden

Welcome to Ynys Enlli - the Isle of the Currents which has also been known for many centuries as a place of resurrection. This Pilgrimage will take a couple of hours to walk at a leisurely pace. It begins to one side of the landing stage.

Pause for a moment to connect with the fact that you have landed. Check that head, mind and heart are all together in this place. Feel the ground beneath your feet. Take some deep breaths and remind yourself that this is a place where many have indeed had a life-changing encounter with the risen Christ.

At each of the Stations on the Pilgrimage the following prayer will be used:

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

*O God of our journey, its beginning and its end,  
source of our longing and heart of our hope,  
be beside us here where you have been before,  
go ahead of us now and lead us  
by the hand deep into your heart.*

## Station 8 - The Mountain Top

If the weather is good, climb the rest of the mountain. Enjoy the views of the Atlantic Ocean and Cardigan Bay, the mountains of Snowdonia, the whole of the Llŷn, and, on a clear day, the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland.

As Jesus faced his own death, he went up the mountain, taking three of his disciples with him. He was then transfigured before them. (Luke 9 v28-36)

*... through beholding, we are transfigured in every sense: nothing is wasted, nothing is left behind; through our wounds we are healed; our perspective – the way we ‘figure things out’ – is changed. In the resurrection, the wounds of Christ do not disappear; they are glorified...in our core silence, through our beholding, we realise our shared nature with God; we participate in the divine outpouring upon the world: incarnation, transfiguration and resurrection become conflated into a single movement of love.*

*Maggie Ross: Writing the Icon of the Heart: In silence beholding (BRF)*

The Pilgrimage draws to an end by considering that final threshold between death and life. We are people of the Resurrection!

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

## Station 7 - The Cave of St Elgar

Follow the wide track that rises up the mountainside, halfway along to our right, and if you choose the right path, you will find behind a rock you the low cave where tradition says St Elgar lived for a while. More recently, Brother Ramon, a Franciscan monk who spent some time here praying in the 1970s, found this cave to be a very powerful place of prayer. Elgar was the hermit who identified Dyfrig's remains in the 12th century for Bishop Urban so that they could be translated to Llandaff Cathedral.

There has been a strong tradition of hermits on the Llŷn and here on Bardsey. If you visit Y Betws / The Oratory on the way back, you will be visiting what was for many years, Sr Helen Mary's hermitage, a Franciscan hermit with a love of orthodox saints. You will find in there a beautiful icon of John of Dalyatha, painted by one of the hermits of Pen Llŷn. The text invites you to rest and lay your weary head on the knee of the beloved. Copies are available to purchase on the Enlli website, in the craft shop by the Caffi on the island, and also in St Hywyn's church bookshop in Aberdaron on the mainland.

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

We pray for all who have dedicated themselves to God in prayer: for religious and for hermits. Pray for those who work as spiritual directors helping people recognise the call of God in their day to day lives.

## Station 1 - Y Cafn (The Quay) and the Boathouse



Take a moment to look back and notice where you have come from - today, or maybe the start of this pilgrimage/ start of your Christian journey ... In the silence maybe reconnect with a deeper reason for your journey here today. Why are you really here?

As you look out, be aware of what, or who, you have left behind, or perhaps what needs facing. This is the place where repairs are made to boats and fishing equipment. What repair work might be needed in your own life/ relationships at this point in time?

William Bodwrda and Griffith Roberts - referred to Enlli as the 'gateway to paradise'. I wonder what image that creates for you? A gateway is a threshold place. We see here the thresholds maybe between sea/land, risk/security, death/resurrection.

Ynys Enlli is a place of promise, of hope, a mere step away from life lived in the fullness of God's love. Consider for a moment the thresholds you face in your own life just now.

You might want to ask:

- What needs to die so that there can be resurrection?
- What security needs to be let go of so that the risk of love and adventure with God can go deeper?

Take time to name those thresholds in your own heart, along with the feelings that they hold, and then ask God to help you embrace the possibilities of new life, of resurrection.

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

As you move on, pray for all pilgrims on their journey - that there would be an integration of the inner journey with the outer journey.

Walk attentively around the bay towards the lighthouse, pausing near the gate. As you walk, seek to be aware of creation. There are many creatures on this shoreline - large and small, noisy and quiet!

Take a moment to be aware of what you are thirsting for. Also name those who maybe need God's healing touch.

Pray for those who are literally thirsty and hungry and those who hunger and thirst for justice.

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

You may choose to end your Pilgrimage here, especially as a day visitor, so that you have time to explore other parts of the Island. However, if you would like to continue the Pilgrimage then please move to Station 7.

## Station 6 - The Well

Walk to the left of Tŷ Capel - house adjacent to the 19th century Methodist Chapel - (given by Lord Newborough).



Follow a little pathway through a gate on the right, partway up the mountainside to one of the island's wells. See if you can see the mysterious little human face carved in the rock above the well.

Wells provide refreshment but also remind us of our baptismal vows to turn to Christ. Over the years they have also acquired the reputation of healing particular illnesses. We remember the vision in Revelation of the new heaven and new earth where John saw the River of the Water of the Life bringing healing not only to individuals but to nations.

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman whom he met at the well, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.'

## Station 2 - The Lighthouse



The monks who lived here were described as *culdee* (derived from Irish/celtic word) meaning servants/friends of God. There were many hermits in this tradition and some of the poetry that emerged at this time reflects a 'wonderful sense of the transfiguration of the world of nature in the grace of God'. *Allchin, p14*

Light is essential to that process of transfiguration. Jesus came as the Light of the World. There are many thresholds of light/dark in our world, in our lives.

What does it mean for you today to walk in the light of Christ?

How is that resurrection light falling on your journey today?

What is it illuminating?

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*



Walk to station 3, away from the lighthouse, continuing along the shoreline, and remember in prayer the fishermen, those who work on the seas, and those who need the lighthouse to keep them safe.

### Station 3 - Maen Du

Maen Du is a large black rock beyond the lighthouse that is cut off at high tide. As you continue to walk along the coastal edge, with the lighthouse behind, you will notice lots more black rocks. This stretch is long enough to settle into a real rhythm of walking. Notice what this feels like and how it compares to the way you usually live your life.



Sometimes we can be like people who *'felt that they had been travelling so fast that they had left their souls behind. In order to allow their souls to catch up, they needed to pause and rest a while.'*

Pilgrimage, p189

Pause here to look out across the seemingly endless expanse of the Atlantic ocean. Allow your soul to catch up with your body!

The ruins of this Abbey, which was dedicated to Mary, date back to 13th century. It was an Augustinian Abbey and linked with Aberdaron Priory on the mainland. Before the Priory was built there were many celtic establishments on Ynys Enlli. You can see a couple of celtic crosses in the graveyard with their circle reminding us that the whole world and all our lives are lived within the love of God.

There is a plethora of Welsh saints to which churches are dedicated on the Llŷn. However, we do know that Mary was a favourite with the Augustinians! In the church of St Mary near Mynydd Mawr on the mainland, where the ruined outline can still be seen today, pilgrims watched and prayed before their voyage to Enlli. There was a sense for them in which Mary continued her life's work of watching and waiting, as the pilgrims traversed the treacherous Bardsey Sound. Mary had an open heart that was always focussed on Jesus Christ. She left him free to be his God-self. She did not manipulate or force an encounter. She was willing to be servant, to pour herself out, to love and to take risks, and to let herself be changed by that love.

As you contemplate the ruins here, consider how your own prayer journey has changed.

What invitation might there be for you today to a deeper exploration of the path and place of prayer?

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

Pray for those who live on the island today, those who care for it and for its future.

## Station 5 - Abbey Ruins



May I, the poet Meilyr, pilgrim to Peter,  
Gatekeeper who judges the sum of virtue  
When the time comes for us to arise  
Who are in the grave, make me ready.  
May I be at home awaiting the summons  
In a fold with the moving sea near it,  
A desert it is of unfading honour  
With a bosom of brine about its graves  
Fair Mary's isle, pure island of the pure,  
The heir of resurrection, it is good to be in it.  
Christ of the foretold cross knows me, will keep me  
From the pains of hell, that place of exile.  
The Creator who created me will meet me  
In the fair parish of Enlli's faithful.

*(12th century poet)*

'The Message' (a modern telling of the gospel stories) paraphrases Matthew 11: 28-29 - as an invitation to 'learn the unforced rhythms of grace'.

How do you respond to this invitation?

What might those 'unforced rhythms of grace' look and feel like in your life?

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

As you journey on, pray for all those who feel they are 'hurrying on to a receding future' quoting R S Thomas.

## Station 4: Birdwatchers' Hide

At the northern end of the island as the path bends round to the right, you will see slightly down and to your left the Birdwatchers' hide. Depending on the weather you might want to sit in it/on the grass/rocks outside.



Pray for those who watch and wait for others, those who have no one to watch for them, and for the lonely, the isolated and the sad.

Bardsey Sound is also said to be the seventh most dangerous stretch of water in the world. Some days sitting here you really can hear the 'Sound'. R S Thomas, poet and one-time priest in Aberdaron, compared these vast grey waters to prayer.

Birdwatchers, like pray-ers, can spend many hours watching and waiting, being hyper-attentive to their context. This island is home to many migrant birds, such as the Manx shearwaters. The youngsters are fed on the fatty fish from the waters around the

island and further afield. The parents head off, and leave the young to find their own way. Their maiden voyage is unaccompanied.

Take a few minutes to reflect on those who have nurtured, guided and influenced you in your life and on your faith journey.

Pray for the Bardsey Bird and Field Observatory - its wardens and volunteers, as well as the Scientific committee.

*Loving God, loving and strong, loving and gentle, pour mercy upon us.*

From here follow the signposted path, diagonally across the fields, up towards the Abbey Ruins.