

What is a pilgrim?



Sign marking the way to Santiago de Compostela

Pilgrim?

Definition: A pilgrim is a traveller, one who has travelled a long way who is on a journey to a holy place.

When some sets off on a journey to a holy place they are called a pilgrim and the journey they are on is called a pilgrimage. Many people of different religious beliefs undertake pilgrimages to special, holy places. These might be where a holy person lived in the past, died or is buried or are perhaps where something wonderful happened, called a miracle. The journey to the holy place is a type of prayer because the pilgrims are making a lot of effort to visit the shrine (another name for a holy place).

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Why is a pilgrimage a holy journey?

2

What is a shrine?
Why might people pray there?

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What has Pope Francis asked people to do in the Year of Mercy?



This carving of a medieval pilgrim is at Lincoln Cathedral.

In medieval times, people walked long



distances to visit the places where famous saints were buried. Pilgrims to the place of burial of St. James in



Spain often wore a shell in their hat, like a badge, to show they were on a pilgrimage.

Pilgrimages in the Year of Mercy.

Pope Francis has asked that as many people as possible go on a pilgrimage in this holy year.

In medieval times, Christians used to walk for months, even years, to travel to shrines of saints, such as the Shrine of Saint James in Spain, Santiago de Compostela. Pope Francis has made things a little easier in the Year of Mercy! Every Diocese has its own special door into a Church or shrine (holy place), a Holy Door. All Catholics are called to make a journey to the Holy Door as part of a special prayer for God's mercy. Pope Francis wants people to ask for God's mercy by travelling to the Holy Door and receive a special blessing when they walk through, then, most importantly, people should return from their pilgrimage and treat the people in their lives with greater kindness.

In the Lancaster Diocese there is a Holy Door at St. Peter's Cathedral in Lancaster. This is where people can go on pilgrimage as a sign of their special prayer and to receive a special blessing. Travelling to the Holy Door is part of the prayer, which is why it is good to walk, so that it is a challenge. Pilgrims will sing and say some prayers as they walk, they might even make a cockle shell badge.



“The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life.”

There are many places of pilgrimage throughout the world. Christians often go to places where Our Lord Jesus lived in the Holy Land or places linked with famous saints. Rome is an important place of pilgrimage because it is where St. Peter, the first Pope was killed. It is where the Pope lives now. In France, Lourdes is a place where people go to wash in holy water that was revealed to St. Bernadette by Our Lady. Followers of Islam travel to places associated with their Prophet, such as Mecca. Hindus may travel to their sacred river, the Ganges, or one of the many temples or shrines in India.

WHAT IS THE YEAR OF MERCY?

The motto of the Year of Mercy is ‘merciful like the Father’ (St. Luke 6:36). In this year, people are invited to forgive, to give love and forgiveness, to show mercy as God shows mercy to everyone. We learn about God's love through Jesus, the Good Shepherd. There are many stories about God's mercy in the Gospels, especially in the Gospel of Luke.

Pope Francis has declared that the Universal Catholic Church will observe a Jubilee Year of Mercy from December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016 .



Lancaster's Catholic Martyrs.

Martyr comes from a Greek word meaning witness.

If you have ever studied anything about the Tudor times, you will know that there was a great deal of disagreement about religion, this period in history is called 'The Reformation'. The English Queen, Elizabeth I believed that she was 'Supreme Governor' of the Church in England, not the Pope. The Pope, St. Pius V, believed Elizabeth was wrong and he excommunicated her, telling English Catholics that she was not a true queen. Elizabeth then made it against the law to be Catholic in England and Wales. Anyone who went to Mass was breaking the law and the priest who was saying the Mass would be executed for the crime of treason.

What happened in Lancaster?

During the period 1584-1646 fifteen Catholics were executed in Lancaster Castle for their faith.

It was against the law to be a Catholic, to go to Mass or to shelter a priest. Even though it was very dangerous, many people in the north of England believed in the Catholic faith. Even though it was dangerous, many young men went to Europe to train to be priests. When

they returned to England these priests would have spent most of their time moving from house to house. Sometimes staying with their



Elizabeth I was queen from 1588-1603. She was a Protestant and believed she was Supreme Governor of the Church in

Pope Pius V was made a saint. He believed he was chosen by God to be leader of the Church in the whole world and was following in the footsteps of St. Peter.



own family or people they knew. They lived their lives in secret. If the Queen's men came looking for them they had to hide in tiny spaces built for the purpose and known as Priest Holes. These priests, and the people who helped them, fully understood that they would be killed if they were captured. The law was very hard on Catholics, especially priests as it was though Catholics were plotting to get rid of the Queen. Lancaster Castle is a place where fifteen Catholics were tried and executed because of their faith. They were given very horrible deaths. Priests were hanged, drawn and quartered, while laymen were executed by hanging. They became known as the Lancaster Martyrs.

Many of the Lancaster Martyrs are now saints or blessed. Can you find out more about their lives?
What things do you care most about in your life?

Mary, Mother of Mercy.



**Hail, holy Queen, Mother of
Mercy,
Hail, our life, our sweetness
and our hope.**

Merciful, like the Father.

The Logo and Motto for the Year of Mercy.

The motto for the Year of Mercy comes from the Gospel of St. Luke and the picture represents how Jesus carries those who are lost towards the mercy of the Father.

Some things to notice.

How is Jesus carrying the person? Would that be easy or challenging? How is Jesus showing kindness? Does this remind you of other pictures of Jesus where he is carrying the lost sheep? The background colours change from dark blue to a lighter blue, why?

On the pilgrimage we will sing these Greek words from the earliest times of the Church, "*Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison*" they mean "*Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*". This prayer is said when we are sorry for the times we have been unkind in our thoughts, in what we have done or what we have not done. We ask Jesus Christ to help us be more merciful, as God, our Lord and Father shows mercy and kindness towards everyone.



The Year of Mercy logo is shaped as an oval or a *mandorla*, which means almond shaped.

This is a shape used often in Christian art and it shows in Jesus two parts are combined, he is fully human and fully God.



In the logo, the colours change from dark to light as they show how Jesus leads us from darkness towards light through showing us the mercy of God the Father.

"Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison"

When you are on the pilgrimage, you will be asked to bring your own special prayer, asking for God's mercy and asking Him to help you treat others with more kindness. These prayers are called petitions.

Start to plan your petition here, thinking about the Year of Mercy logo and motto. How can you be more merciful?

What is a 'holy door'?

Holy Years have been part of the Church's history since 1300!

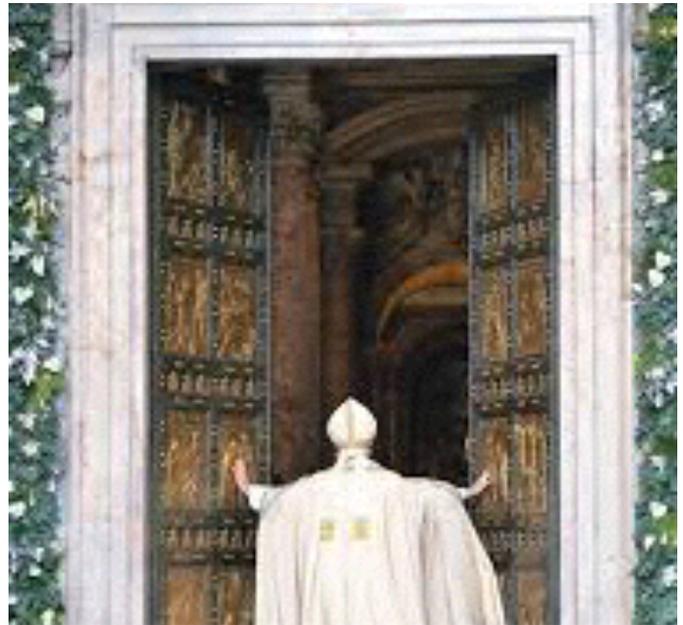
The Church has celebrated special 'holy years' about every twenty five years. In this Holy Year, Pope Francis has also opened a Holy Door in at St. Peter's Church in Rome. Walking through this door is like saying a special prayer.

Because everyone cannot go to St. Peter's Church in Rome, there are Holy Doors in every Diocese. In Lancaster Diocese, there is a Holy Door at St. Peter's Cathedral in Lancaster. But what is special about a door?

Images of doors are used throughout the Bible to explain ways in which we can find God. In the Book of Genesis, Jacob has a dream where he sees a ladder going from earth to Heaven, when he wakes up, he says, 'Truly, Yahweh is in this place and I did not know!' He was afraid



and said, 'How awe-inspiring this place is! This is nothing less than the abode of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' (Genesis 28:16,17).



Jesus uses the same image when he explains, he is the way to God. Like a good shepherd, Jesus watches the gate. 'So Jesus spoke to them again: In all truth I tell you, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All who have come before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: such a one will go in and out and will find pasture.' (John 10:7-9).

People come and go through doors but the Year of Mercy asks people to open the 'door' of their heart to God's love.

THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PETER.

St. Peter was one of the apostles. There are many stories about him in the Gospels. He was a fisherman. Peter was called Simon but when he recognised Jesus was the Christ, Jesus gave Simon a new name, Peter, a special title.

"You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church...I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (St. Matthew 16:18-19)

Peter was the first Pope, Pope Francis is the 266th Pope.

