



Journey through Lent with the Six Welsh Cathedrals

from Pancakes to Palm Crosses



Lent Course 2026
Lent Two

Journey through Lent with the Six Welsh Cathedrals from Pancakes to Palm Crosses

Bangor – Preparation and Pancakes

St Davids – Persistence

Brecon – Penitence

Llandaff – Praise

Newport – Passion

St Asaph – Palm Sunday

Epilogue – Easter Day

Bible Reading

Matthew 16. 24-26

Jesus told his disciples,

‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?’

*New Revised Standard Version
Anglicized Edition*

Reflection

For centuries, pilgrims have been coming to this site on the western coast of Pembrokeshire in their thousands. Here, Dewi Sant, St David, founded a house of prayer for his community of monks, and this holy place continues to inspire and renew those who come today. David's final words have become a popular phrase in Wales: "Be joyful, keep the faith and do the little things you have seen in me."

They are words to live by as we consider: what gives us joy? What makes our hearts sing? What's the roots of the faith that guides and shapes our lives, however we express this? What are the things we do to make a difference to those around us – those we meet and more widely? All of this can be wrapped up in thanksgiving as we make each day a moment to praise and reinforce the joy in our hearts.

Some people seem to have a capacity to travel light, some of us need to take the kitchen sink with us when we go on a journey. As we stand or kneel before the site of the shrine of David, there is a connection with those who have gone this way before us, needing far less than we might weigh ourselves down with, and finding here a treasure beyond possessions.

At first sight, being asked to take up our cross and follow Jesus does not look like travelling light, it sounds rather heavy. It is an image that recognises we have a cross to bear, be that an injury of mind or body, worries or concerns, a trial or struggle ahead, something we might find difficult or very costly. Life brings cost. The invitation is to pick these up and follow Jesus, to give our whole selves over to God in faith and trust. Such self-giving and self-returning delights in knowing that our lives belong to God, from whom they come and to whom they return. Our ultimate fate lies with God.

It can be easy to give up or despair, especially if the going is tough. There are no gadgets or special kit to make the journey of life easier. The persistence required to keep going comes from a heart that desires all that God has to give and seeks it out. As is so often the case, though, seeking God is really a process of being found by God, who is always waiting for us to show up, as we are with our cross in tow. Persistence in the pilgrim's way is a journey of the heart into knowing and being known by God who comes among us in Jesus Christ, and calls us to follow him with joy, faith, and the little things. Our lives belong to God, so the cross is not really so heavy after all.

Interview

The Reverend Dr Cass Meurig Thomas

The Reverend Canon Sheridan Angharad James

Cass



Cass: Hello, Angharad.

Angharad: Nice to see you.

Cass: So, what is your role in the cathedral?

Angharad: I'm a Canon Pastor, and my work is in the parish as an ordinary parish priest, and I also work with the pilgrims that come to St Davids every year. So, half of my work is with them.

Angharad



Cass: So how does your work relate to pilgrimage as well?

Angharad: Well, we do a lot of different things across the year. In the summer, we do a pilgrimage every Friday morning so that people can come on just a very small pilgrimage, and we do that every Friday morning. We do quiet days during the week – during Lent, for example. And then we do a lot of work with groups who come from all over the world. So, we meet them, we talk about pilgrimage, and we help them understand – what does it mean to have just accomplished this? And they also share with us, so it's mutual – we hear what their stories are, and we can talk to them about the importance of pilgrimage in St Davids. And, through them coming into the cathedral, I almost don't need to do anything, they come in and they can feel the sanctity of the place, the nobility of the building, the beauty of the building. And when they've come in, they can feel the power of prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit here in the cathedral, and I don't need to explain, they can feel it in their own lives. I come here every day, I work here every day, and every day I can feel the Holy Spirit here. And also, there's something of the spirituality of St David, helping to grow faith into fullness, joy, and I like the stuff about doing the little things, that's so important to take forward in life. But also, when we're on a pilgrimage, doing the little things is really important, because we're walking with friends, or perhaps people we don't know, but when we're walking, we're tired. Maybe we're feeling ill, maybe we feel like giving up, but doing the little things can help someone and encourage them to persevere – it's so important. Just a word to help push them forward to go further, giving them a drink, showing them the beautiful views, sharing the things that God has made. Just little things like that which help people to keep going, to take the next step. Those are the very important things to know about pilgrimage.

Cass: An element of perseverance is to just keep going, keep going.

Angharad: Yes, yes, and that transformation takes place in the carrying on. Sometimes we want God to change us like that [snaps fingers], but going on a pilgrimage is something that's so ordinary, just walking, walking, walking – but, through the walking, something changes within us, which is the work of God. Pilgrimage is a metaphor for life – our spiritual life as well – and we need to keep going every day. Not every day is prosperous, fantastic, but we need to keep

going in faith and on our journey. There's something really holy about keeping going, and, when we carry on, we can feel that Jesus is walking with us. That's a very lovely thing to experience.

Questions

- † How do the final words of David inspire you today?
- † Take each of them in turn: what gives you joy, what is the faith you keep, and what 'little things' do you do to make a difference?
- † What crosses do you carry? Do they feel heavy? How easy or difficult is it to hand them over to God?
- † What gets in the way of seeking to grow in faith and hope? What helps?

Notes