



## Bishop's Letter Summer 2024

My dear sisters and brothers,

It is now six months since my consecration and enthronement as Bishop of St Davids, so much has happened in a short period of time, and I am very mindful of the tasks and responsibilities ahead. I, and my family have been very grateful and touched at the kind messages of warmth and welcome we have received; we feel very privileged that we belong to the family of the Diocese of St Davids and commit ourselves to serving the church as we go forward together.

A strong image of our Christian life and witness in this diocese is reflected in Pilgrimage. Our Mother Church, (the Cathedral) has been a focus of pilgrimage for centuries and has taught us that the journeys we take can bring us closer to God as we share the Gospel. Pope Francis recently said, "*Always remember this: life is a journey. It is a path, a journey to meet Jesus.*" That is the journey of the Christian.

Sometimes on a pilgrimage we are taken out of our comfort zone, out of the usual and familiar surroundings of our life; perhaps some of us are feeling this way now, especially as we adopt new ways of trying to be church and assess where we are on our journey together. This is not always easy, and always challenging, however, it is here that we often encounter the living God. Perhaps we need to look closely at what our Diocesan pilgrimage is all about, it is about hardship and joy, making sacrifices and receiving blessings. As a family of God, I think it's important that we do not only focus on the pilgrimage but our destination.

I recently came across an old photograph of myself with a group of young people on pilgrimage to the Isle of Iona, it was led by Bishop Wyn Evans, it brought back many happy memories. On reflection on that, and other pilgrimages I realised that what I learnt about myself, and the church was not accomplished alone. As a family of God on our pilgrimage we are journeying as one. This is the true reflection of what Christian life is all about, we are one body (1 Cor 12.12). As Christians we do not have a private relationship with Christ, but a personal relationship with Christ, and this personal relationship is found alongside others. In our sharing, we find Jesus.

Throughout the New Testament the image of the church is not individualistic, it is of a community (1 Peter 1. 15-16.), we journey together, we work together, we worship, pray and love together. Yes, a pilgrimage is a personal quest, but not one that we can make alone or apart from each other. That is why we as a Diocese, people and clergy need to cooperate, serve one another, care, love and support each other.

Our pilgrimage is held together by Christ, he enables us to go forward. When we fall, he raises us up, when we tire, he gives us strength, and through his Holy Spirit, he revitalises us and encourages us to move forward towards our goal. Our diocese has come to a junction on our journey, a time to pause and consider our choices and way forward, we need to trust and fix our eyes on Jesus. For us “The future starts today, not tomorrow”, the chance has come for us to pave the way for a better future and a safer journey. With our pilgrimage starting anew we can live each day with a renewed faith, a realised hope, with a motivation to make the life of our diocese the best it can be for you, and the people around you.

In the love of Christ,

+Dorrien Tyddewi