

## **WHERE DO PILGRIMS GO WHEN THEY VISIT WALSINGHAM?**

### **1. The Holy House.**

About half a million pilgrims now visit Walsingham every year. Most of them go to the Holy House to spend time absorbing the atmosphere and contemplating the Motherhood of Mary, who is known as Our Lady of Walsingham. They feel the peace that has always been associated with the Holy House and relax in the silence. They focus on the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham and use it to centre their thoughts for worship.

### **2. The Pilgrimage Church.**

There are always a lot of candles burning in the Pilgrimage Church. They are lit either by the pilgrims or as a result of requests that come in by telephone and letter. Each is a symbol of a prayer that has been requested for someone or some situation.

At six o'clock every evening, prayers are said for those in need or in trouble. This ceremony is called 'Shrine prayers'.

### **3. The Stations of the Cross.**

There are fifteen stations of the cross found in the grounds of the shrine, which pilgrims use to meditate on the sufferings of Jesus.

### **4. The Holy well.**

There is usually a visit to the Holy Well to receive the Holy Water. They are blessed with the water and it is sprinkled on them. Sometimes they drink it too.

### **5. The Slipper Chapel.**

In 1934 the Roman Catholics restored the ancient Slipper Chapel, placing a statue there. This is about one mile outside the village and it is where mediaeval pilgrims left their shoes to walk the last mile barefoot. Recently a Chapel of Reconciliation has been built nearby.

(Eastern orthodox and Russian orthodox churches also have centres in Walsingham.)

## **WHAT DO PILGRIMS DO WHEN THEY VISIT WALSINGHAM?**

### **A typical Shrine Visit.**

The main pilgrimage season runs from Easter to November. Many people come from all over the world. Some come for the day, others stay several days.

Whilst they are there, pilgrims:

1. Visit the shrine and attend 'shrine prayers'. Most people who visit the shrine are committing themselves to living more as God would wish.

2. Take part in two processions:

One at night when the statue is carried round the gardens, while pilgrims accompany it singing the pilgrim hymn which tell the shrine's story.

The second is usually held on the afternoon before they leave, when the Blessed Sacrament takes place.

In this, they thank God for the Bread and Wine that Jesus gave to Christians as a sign that He was always with them,

3. There is usually a visit to the Holy Well to receive the Holy Water. They are blessed with the water and it is sprinkled on them. Sometimes they drink it too.

4. Some pilgrims stay in the Hospice, where they eat in the Refectory and relax in the gardens.

**Special events at Walsingham.**

**Spring Bank Holiday - The National Pilgrimage** - The biggest event - many pilgrims arrive from all over the country and circle the whole village

**Easter - the Student Cross.** Students from Universities all over the country walk to Walsingham carrying big wooden crosses.

**May - Pilgrimage of the Houses of Parliament** - Members of the House of Lords and of the Commons visit Walsingham with their families to pray for God's blessing on the way they run the country.

**Night vigils** - Groups who stay at the Shrine praying all night.