

**SACRED HEART PARISH, FLITWICK
PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO IONA & DURHAM
9 – 13th July 2012**



We journey through the world as either tourists or pilgrims. For tourists, travelling is all about getting to the next attraction, the next photo opportunity or the next landmark.

For pilgrims, though, the joy is in the journey itself. It's difficult to be attentive to the stirrings of the Spirit if we're focused on reaching a new destination.....to go on pilgrimage is to set out on a journey that may take us to unexpected places, away from home and without our usual defences we become more open and receptive to God. Whether we go on a physical journey or see our whole life as a pilgrimage, the theme of a pilgrimage will enrich our walk with God, encourage us when the going gets tough, and renew our vision for everyday living as God's people.

After early morning Mass at Sacred Heart we set off for an overnight stop at Kendal. We celebrated Tuesday morning Mass at The Holy Trinity & St. George Parish with Fr. Anthony before journeying on to Oban to catch the ferry to Mull where we would be based for the next two nights.

We spent all day on Iona starting with a celebration of Word and Communion in the Catholic House of Prayer with Deacon Philip and afterwards time for reflection and prayers before exploring the island. The pilgrims were tasked with picking up something from our visit, a pebble, a piece of driftwood, a flower, leaf or feather and to bring this back to place before our Pilgrimage candle which each day had a new 'colour' material added to the display to represent the sky, the land, the sea etc.

Our last night was in Durham, Fr. Tony of St. Cuthberts Parish made us feel so welcome by inviting the group for tea/coffee after morning Mass. We had a wonderful tour of Durham Cathedral & lunch in Bishops Priory before our journey home to Flitwick.



We had beautiful singing from Beth Hutton (Shefford Parish) & David Cheshire (Dunstable) during the long coach journey with historical information on the towns & cities we went through. Music quizzes and stories and jokes broke up the journey. Most of the Pilgrims had a part to play in the daily services and we returned strengthened & renewed in our faith, we found 'peace' on Iona, we supported each other with love and prayers, forming new friendships that will last well beyond this pilgrimage.