

From the Rector

Welcome to Dorchester and the Abbey! I hope you enjoy your visit and leave refreshed.

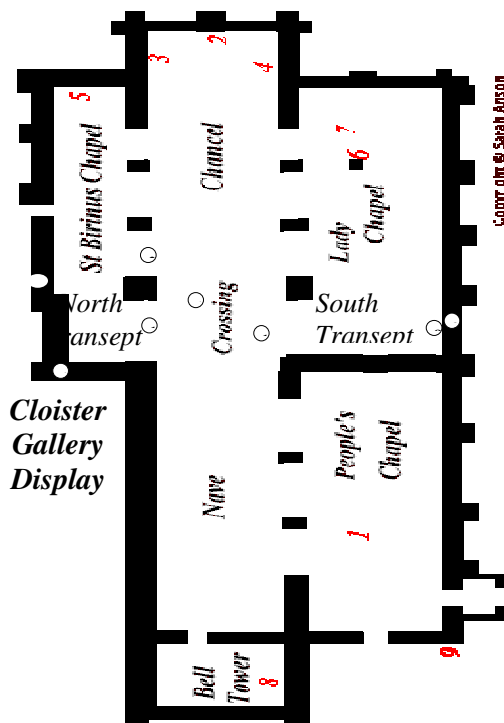
A pilgrimage is a special journey towards God and towards an understanding of our inner selves. For centuries, people have found that a physical journey helps that inner journey. The Abbey has been part of that for millions of pilgrims.

Today we invite you to make a mini pilgrimage with us: an outward journey around the building that we hope will inspire your inner journey and give you an opportunity to pray for yourself and for the world.

The numbers in the leaflet match those in the Green leaflet short 'self guided tour'.

This prayer based on words of St Basil imagines our life journey as the voyage of a ship

Steer the ship of my life good Lord,
To your quiet harbour,
Where I can be safe from the storms of
sin and conflict.
Show me the course I should take.
Renew in me the gift of discernment,
So that I can always see
the right direction to take.
And give me the strength and the courage
To choose the right course,
Even when the sea is rough
And the waves are high,
Knowing that through
enduring hardship and danger
in your name
I shall find comfort and peace.



1. Beginnings - Begin by the Font.

The Font is near the door because it is the place of Baptism - the outward sign of our inward journey with God. Even if you don't remember your own baptism, you may recall attending a Baptism service.

This is a good place to pray for new beginnings: for yourself, a friend or a world situation that concerns you.

Loving God I offer you all that concerns me. Let my worries, my sorrows and my joys rest in your peace.

For godparents or grandparents it's a good place to remember your godchildren and grandchildren.

I lift up (name) to you. You have promised to guide him/her throughout his/her life's journey. Be with (name) in joy and in sorrow. Bless and watch over him/her and give us grace to shine as lights in the world to your praise and glory.

2. Journeying.

Walk from the font to the open space at the back of the Nave behind the pews. You are standing roughly where the first Christians met to pray - this is as close as you can be to the beginning of the Abbey's journey.

Looking straight ahead, you can see the great East window and the High Altar - this has always been the focus of the building.

When you walk this way you are taking the same steps as a bride towards her marriage and as a coffin at the end of a life. On these journeys, the pews are filled with those who have loved the person up to this point in their life.

*Who would be sitting there for you?
Give thanks for the friends and relatives who have been inspirational and supportive in your life.*

Eternal God, you create us by your power and redeem us by your love. Guide and strengthen us by your spirit that we may give ourselves in love and service to one another and to you.

As in life's journey you can take different turnings as you move along the main aisle.

Artists and Craftsmen and women

3. The cloister gallery with its mix of ancient and modern calls us to give thanks for all who have built this place, for the community of brothers that once lived here; and the community that worships here today.

4, 5 and 6 At the East End we see the work of craftsmen from the 14th to 21st centuries.

Eternal God you have given us gifts of inspiration and skills of creation to increase the richness of life. We offer our praise in humility and gladness for our own gifts and the talents of those whose work makes this a place of wonder and worship. And we give thanks for all human works that reveal the truth of your creation.

The World

7. In the Birinus chapel you may light a candle and pause to pray for yourself or for a person or cause you care about.

You may leave a card with your prayer for us to offer during the week and you may send a card to someone for whom you have prayed.

8 and 9 The Shrine Chapel with its memorials to crusaders and to the politician Sir John Stonor and the chapel of remembrance remind us to pray for our politicians and armed forces.

God of truth and justice, we pray for those whose memory we cherish, and those whose names we shall never know. Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world and to pray for all who serve its governments. Give us faith in your future – for you are the source of life and hope.

Hidden on the floor at the head of the Stonor memorial is the Beauforest brass. At the dissolution Richard Beauforest purchased the Abbey from the king – but rather than turn it into a great Tudor House he gave it to the village and so the Abbey remains a parish church to this day.

Give thanks for the centuries of worship and service that his generosity has enabled; for all people today who live generous lives and for the grace to live generously.

A Lifetime Journeying

Also in the Shrine chapel is the remnant of a large wall painting of St Christopher – the patron saint of pilgrims and all who make journeys. Often you will find a Labyrinth chalked on the floor of this chapel. You might like to walk the Labyrinth, praying for your own journey, or pause and pray the prayer of St Basil.

Leave the Shrine Chapel through the small door opposite. You will find yourself almost back to where you started in the People's Chapel. The wall painting shows the end of Jesus's life – surrounded by his friends and his mother.

Sarah Fletcher ended her own life as a result of soul destroying family upheaval – her memorial is just beside the wooden screen on your right.

Loving God hear our prayer for all those whose lives are drawing to an end today. I pray especially for families divided and torn apart, for those who feel alone and unloved and those who feel their lives are not worth living.

The wall painting on the east wall of the People's Chapel is of Jesus on the cross. Jesus's companions did not know the end of his story but after his death they discovered that in some way his life continued – they met him and talked with him.

That life continues today, and when people are baptised it is a symbol of dying with Jesus and coming to a new life ... and a new beginning.

*What we call the beginning is often the end.
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. ... We shall
not cease from exploration, and the end of all
our exploring will be to arrive where we
started and know the place for the first time.
(T.S. Eliot)*

Dorchester Abbey



The Prayer Pilgrimage

**A journey around the Abbey
with pauses for prayer and reflection**

**DORCHESTER ABBEY is part of the
Oxford Diocese Pilgrim Project**

