

YOUTH PILGRIMAGE TO MALTA JULY 26th - 31st 2020

Following in the footsteps of St. Paul

WHY PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage could be described as a meaningful journey to a sacred place. It provides the opportunity to step out of the non-stop busyness of our lives, to seek a time of quiet and reflection. It is a time of simply 'being' rather than always 'doing'. For Christians, the reasons for going on pilgrimage include setting aside time for God; to help discern his plan; to be strengthened in our faith; and to feel inspired by the communion of saints who have gone before us.

Pilgrimage can also be a highly sociable activity, allowing us to enjoy the company of others we meet. It gives us the chance re-energise mentally, physically and spiritually.

WHY A PILGRIMAGE TO MALTA

In between international World Youth Days, the Diocesan Youth Service runs a pilgrimage. In recent years, we have taken groups to York, Iona, and Santiago de Compostela. In this 'Year of the Word' we will be going to Malta to follow in the footsteps of one of the great writers of the epistles in the New Testament – St. Paul.

It was in 60 AD, that St. Paul was on the way to Rome, to be tried when he was shipwrecked just off the coast of Malta during a storm. The people of Malta looked after the crew and St. Paul until they could continue with their journey. During this time, St. Paul preached the Gospel to the locals, who at the time were under Roman rule. Many converted to Christianity including the Governor of the island, Publius, who became Malta's first Bishop.



ITINERARY (to be confirmed)

Our pilgrimage will be led by Fr. Luke Goymour, chaplain to the Diocesan Youth Service. Fr. Luke also has family in Malta and has visited numerous times. Mass will be celebrated each day and we will also have other regular times of group prayer and reflection on our theme 'In the footsteps of St Paul'.

Sunday 26th July Evening transport provided from pickup points in East Anglia* to Gatwick.

Monday 27th July 0635 Flight from Gatwick Airport to Malta, arriving 1035. After settling into accommodation, we will become acquainted with the local area of where we are staying including visiting the National Shrine of Our Lady in Mellieha. This has been one of the most important Marian shrines in Malta for centuries. It is also famous for a painting of the Madonna on the rock face which is attributed to St Luke the Evangelist, who was also shipwrecked in Malta together with St. Paul.

Tuesday 28th July We travel to St Paul's Bay and stop outside the Church of the Bonfire. According to tradition, this is where St Paul first reached land and made a bonfire. Here you can also see St. Paul's Islands from the coastline and this was the place the locals believed the shipwreck took place.

We will then continue our journey heading to Valletta, Malta's Capital to visit St. Paul's Shipwreck Church, 'the hidden gem'. This is one of the most popular churches in the Maltese Islands. It was the Bishop's church in Valletta and was closely connected with the Order of St John. Besides having a glorious history, two very important relics of St Paul are held in this church: a wrist bone and a piece of the column above which he was beheaded.

After lunch, there will be the opportunity to explore Valetta and visit St John's Pro-Cathedral and Museum. This houses many treasures and fine works of art including Caravaggio's beheading of St John the Baptist.

Wednesday 29th July We visit St. Paul's Catacombs which was his actual resting place during the short period the St. Paul stayed on the island. We then visit the Roman Domus. This property dating back to the Roman era was typical of the period when St. Paul was in Malta. It is an upper-class Roman Town House discovered in 1881. This is considered to be the richest archaeological find of the Roman period in Malta. Its elegant architecture and polychrome mosaics date its original construction to the early 1st century B.C.

After lunch, we will visit the ancient city of Mdina, built on a plateau in the centre of the island. The city's old Baroque buildings, cathedral and magnificent bastion walls dominate the rural skyline. We will do a tour of the city including the beautiful Mdina Cathedral of St Paul. The Cathedral is said to have been built on the site where the Roman governor Publius had his residence. In addition, there will be the option of visiting the Cathedral Museum, considered as one of the best ecclesiastical museums in Europe.

Thursday 30th July We take the ferry to the island of Gozo, where we will visit the shrine of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu. This Basilica is one of the most spectacular of all the churches in Gozo. It is located on the edge of a sheer seaside cliff, providing breath taking views and an extremely calming atmosphere. Its precise origins are unknown but records of it date back to at least 1534. We will try to arrange Mass at the shrine which has been visited in recent years by both Pope St John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. Following Mass there will then be an opportunity to explore the island including the beautiful sandy beach at Ramla Bay.

Friday 31st July Free day / optional visit to the shrine of St Georg Preca / Mosta Dome. 21:35 flight from Luqa International Airport, Malta to London Stansted arriving at 23:55. Transport back to drop off points in East Anglia.

*Transport will go down the middle of the diocese stopping at Norwich, Cambridge and Thetford. However, if there are sufficient numbers from other areas of the diocese, we will arrange additional transport.

ACCOMODATION

We will be staying at La Salle Retreat Centre situated in the beautiful valley of Santa Marija, within walking distance from the beaches of Melieha Bay (shown in picture). Accommodation is in shared bedrooms of three or four people. For more details see <http://www.mellieha.delasallemalta.org/>



COST

We have decided not to include flights in the price as the cost of these is likely increase depending on when people book. Currently (10th February 2020) flights come to £162. Also we have decided not to include travel insurance as past experience tells us people want different levels of cover, and many people already have travel insurance included with their bank account etc. However, it is essential you have at least a basic level of travel insurance. You will also need some money for breakfast on the plane on the outward flight (allow 5 euros) and money for lunch on Monday to Friday (allow 5 Euros a day – 25 Euros).

All other meals, accommodation, transport to and from East Anglia to airports, transport around Malta, admission to places of interest are included in the price of £425.

We realise this is still quite expensive but we have made it as cheap as we possibly can. You may find your parish is willing to help you, as generally parishes are keen to help young people's faith development.

PAYMENTS

Once you have booked, we will send details of how to make payments. We ask for an initial £25 deposit within a week of making the booking, a further £200 by the end of May and the remaining £200 by the end of June.

BREXIT

As we will still be in the transition period, there shouldn't be any complications travelling to Malta as a result of Brexit.

HOW TO BOOK We have limited accommodation spaces, so please book as soon as possible. In any case, bookings will close on April 13th (Easter Monday).

You need to be age 16 by 26th July, have a valid EHIC (health insurance card – free to apply for) and a valid passport.

Complete the online booking form at www.rcdea.org.uk/youth and as soon as you have heard back that we have accepted your booking, to travel with the group, book your flights as follows:

Outward Flight: At www.easyjet.com, book the 0625 flight on Monday July 27th from London Gatwick to Luqa International Airport, Malta. Flight Number: EZY8823

Return Flight: At www.ryanair.com, book the 21:35 flight on Friday July 31st from Luqa International Airport, Malta to London Stansted. Flight Number: FR8852

We advise you to book without any extras and only take cabin luggage, to keep it as cheap as possible, but if you want to pay for extras and / or additional luggage, you can.

Once you have booked your flights, please forward confirmation emails to dys@rcdea.org.uk

CONTACT INFORMATION

For any queries, don't hesitate to contact Hamish MacQueen, Director of Diocesan Youth Service. Tel. 0781 2004934. Email dys@rcdea.org.uk