

# Aidan's Way Day 5:

# Call of the Wild

Thank you for joining me in prayer on this the fifth day of my three-week pilgrimage from the Scottish island of Iona to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, travelling 300 miles in the footsteps of the seventh century Celtic saint, Aidan, and praying the Bible each day in our usual way. Today I'm at Craig Lodge, a Catholic House of Prayer and pilgrimage tucked away in the Highland hills of Glen Orchy.<sup>1</sup>

(Want to know more about this unique series on pilgrimage? Check out the special introductory day, "An Introduction to Pilgrimage").

## Pause

*As I enter prayer now, I pause to be still; to breathe slowly, to re-centre my scattered senses upon the presence of God.*

Pause and pray

## Prayer of Approach

*High King of Heaven, would You walk with me and talk with me as I seek to follow in the footsteps of Your servant Aidan today? I have set my heart on pilgrimage, so challenge me and change me, cleanse and rearrange me, until the fire that burned in Aidan's heart, burns brightly in mine.*

# Rejoice and Reflect

I woke up this morning in the Craig Lodge House of Prayer, founded more than thirty years ago by a ninety-year-old former shepherd and deer-stalker after he had an encounter with God on pilgrimage. And so I rejoice today in the words of a 'Pilgrim Psalm',<sup>2</sup> joining with God's people as they ascend Mount Zion on one of the three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

## **A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem**

I look up to the mountains—  
does my help come from there?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth!  
The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go,  
both now and forever.

**Psalm 121:1-2,8 (NLT)**

## **Pause and pray**

Today I am reflecting on one of the most surprising things Jesus says about us who are born again...

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**John 3:5-8 (ESVUK)**

It's easy to associate spiritual maturity with words like solid, steady and predictable. But Jesus says here that the distinguishing mark of those 'born of the Spirit' is mobility, unpredictability, and even a certain wildness like the wind. We see this in the life of Abraham who 'went out, not knowing where he was going... having acknowledged [with his wife Sarah] that they were strangers and exiles on the earth' (Heb. 11:8,13). We see it in the first apostles who travelled thousands of miles. And we see it in the ancient Celts whose favoured metaphor for the Holy Spirit was not a domesticated dove but a wild goose. As for pilgrimage, they adopted the Latin word '*peregrinatio*' which means wandering, adventuring, with and for the love of God. Its meaning is beautifully conveyed by a lovely ninth century story of three Irishmen who landed in Cornwall having drifted across the sea in a boat without oars. They were brought before King Alfred and explained, 'we stole away because we wanted for the love of God to be on pilgrimage and we cared not where.'<sup>3</sup>

# Ask

When I pray for the Holy Spirit, I am normally asking Him to bring comfort and peace. But today I pray differently, inviting Him to bring holy disruption to my day:

Breathing in slowly, I pray, *'Come, breath of God'*.  
Breathing out slowly, I pray, *'Send me anywhere'*.

**Pause and pray**

As well as being a House of Prayer and pilgrimage, Craig Lodge is the birthplace of an extraordinary humanitarian programme called Mary's Meals. Here in a tiny red-roofed shed an organisation began twenty years ago which today feeds 2.4 million children in 18 countries every single day.<sup>4</sup> And so I pray today for those who are feeding the hungry in Jesus' name, through Mary's Meals, Food Banks, and other vital ministries.

**Pause and pray**

# Yield

***As I return to the passage, I open my ears to hear Your whisper, and my heart to yield to the wildness of the Spirit -***

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**John 3:5-8 (ESVUK)**

The wild unpredictability of the Holy Spirit has drawn me away from my ordinary responsibilities into the wilds of Scotland on this pilgrimage. He used another pilgrimage to turn this remote hunting lodge into a house of prayer. And now He has used this house of prayer to feed millions of children. The early Celtic Christians were similarly blown by the Spirit all over the world. They 'seem forever to have been on the move, criss-crossing the Irish Sea, the Minch, the Bristol Channel, and even the English Channel, and the North Sea, penetrating deep into Wales, the Scottish mainland, the inner, and outer Hebrides and many parts of England, as well as journeying further afield into Continental Europe, where they evangelised and set up monasteries in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy. Irish monks reached as far as the Faroes by 700 and by the end of the eighth century they had reached Iceland.<sup>5</sup>

**Pause and pray**

## Yielding Prayer

*Holy Spirit, I yield to your pace and your purpose for my life today. I hoist my sails and surrender: blow me wherever you will. I open my schedule and surrender: interrupt my carefully laid plans. I yield my heart and surrender: surprise me today I pray.*

## Yielding Promise

And now, as I prepare to take this time of prayer into the coming day, the Lord who loves me says in Joshua 1:9:

“Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9 (NLT)

## Closing Prayer

*Father, help me to live this day to the full,  
being true to You, in every way.*

*Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,  
being kind to everyone I meet.*

*Spirit, help me to love the lost,  
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.*

*Amen.*

---

<sup>1</sup>You can follow Pete’s pilgrimage and hear the occasional song inspired by the journey on ‘The Pilgrim Podcast’ available at [www.PeteGreig.info](http://www.PeteGreig.info).

<sup>2</sup>During this season of pilgrimage, many of our ‘Rejoice’ Scriptures will be drawn from the so-called ‘Pilgrim Psalms’ (84, 120–134), prayed by God’s people approaching Mount Zion on the three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup>Esther de Waal, *The Celtic Way of Prayer: The Recovery of the Religious Imagination* (London: Canterbury Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup>[www.marysmeals.org](http://www.marysmeals.org)

<sup>5</sup>Ian Bradley, *Following the Celtic Way: A new assessment of Celtic Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2018).