

A Journey with Our Lady of Paisley

In preparation for our Diocesan Synod 2016



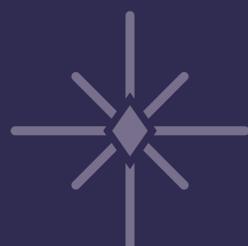
Our Lady of Paisley; pray for us

Day 1 Annunciation



Mary, when the Angel Gabriel came to ask you to be the Mother of Jesus, despite your fear, you said, 'Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' This was the start of your journey and you could not have known the cost, but said 'Yes' with grace and courage. This 'Yes' would lead you through many joys, trials and sufferings, which you would bear for the Lord's sake.

Throughout my life, may the Lord guide me and give me the courage to respond in a positive way to the challenges I face, always mindful of the Spirit's power to transform me in faith. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



Day 2 Visitation



Mary, after the angel left you, you did not hug the hidden God within you to yourself but set out to see your cousin, Elizabeth. Filled with compassion for her, you hurried along the dusty road to share your joy of God's gift of new life growing within you both. Your song of Magnificat rejoiced in what God had done for you but also celebrated how justice and mercy can reign in our world.

I ask God for the grace to know where I need to be, who I need to be with and what I need to do to show God's compassion to the people I meet. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



Day 3 Journey to Bethlehem

Mary, in your advanced state of pregnancy, you travelled with Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem to register for the census. You had no wealth and no secure accommodation at the time of Jesus' birth but had to depend on the mercy of strangers. That small kindness provided meagre comfort in which to welcome the Son of God. It was also significant that your first visitors, the shepherds, were the poorest of the poor.

May God grant me the grace to see beyond first impressions so as to find Jesus in everyone I meet. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



Day 4 Flight into Egypt



Mary, disturbed and frightened by Joseph's dream, you bundled up your tiny Son and your family's few possessions in the middle of the night to escape from Herod's threat as the angel told you. As strangers in Egypt and without the support of family and friends, you had to find shelter and a way to support yourselves.



I ask God for strength to be welcoming and generous towards strangers, particularly refugees and all who find themselves alone in a strange land. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



Day 5 The Ministry of Jesus



Mary, when Jesus was twelve years old and you found him in the Temple, impressing the teachers with His understanding, he said, 'Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' You treasured all this in your heart. When Jesus called His disciples together you knew He was travelling the countryside preaching, healing and performing miracles. You were at His side at the Marriage Feast at Cana in Galilee when the wine ran out and you said to the servants, 'Do whatever He tells you' with faith and trust in your Son's compassion.

I ask God to grant me the wisdom to be the right support to my family and friends, whether in times of trial or times of joy. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



Day 6 Journey to the Cross



With the disciples and followers, Mary, you accompanied Jesus through the jeering crowd during His last days on earth.

You walked every painful step with Him as Simeon's prophecy became real, 'a sword will pierce your soul too.' Consumed with sorrow you stood with Jesus' closest friends at the foot of the Cross until He died.

I ask God for the grace to be with Mary in her grief and to reach out in love to all grieving parents today who feel powerless, watching their children die in war zones, refugee camps, hospital wards. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



Day 7 Resurrection *

From the beginning of the Church's tradition, Mary, we have acknowledged that Jesus appeared to you, his beloved Mother, after His death. Who can imagine the depth of your joy and consolation as you experienced Jesus newly alive for you and in you for all time?

I ask God for the grace to celebrate the new life of Jesus' Resurrection every day of my life and to recognise it in the lives of everyone I meet. Our Lady of Paisley; be with us on our life's journey.



How the icon of Our Lady of Paisley came to be...

A chance encounter at a family gathering between a Deacon of Paisley Diocese, Denis Murphy, and the Lanarkshire based artist, Bernadette Reilly, started a conversation between them, which led eventually via Nunraw Abbey to Paisley. Bernadette had trained in iconography in the London studio of Dr Stephane Rene, the world renowned neo-coptic iconographer and was full of enthusiasm to put her training prayerfully into practice:

'I was full of love and enthusiasm for this style of work which I find to be a wonderful blend of the ancient and modern. Denis revealed to me that he had had a dream, a desire, for many years, to see the devotion to Our Lady of Paisley revived once more.'

Bernadette had been encouraged in her painting of icons for many years by Father John Keenan and, within months of her beginning work on the icon of Our Lady of Paisley, Father John was appointed to be Bishop of Paisley and agreed to give the icon project his support and blessing. Denis's research

had found that in medieval times there was a wall surrounding Paisley Abbey with statues in niches at intervals. Statues including those of the Virgin Mary and St James faced the road to Glasgow with the Latin inscription nearby, translated as

'Go not this way unless you have said Ave Maria. Let him always be a wanderer who will not say Ave to thee.'

The icon includes the first line of this inscription with Mary holding the child, Jesus; she wears a skirt showing the scallop pattern of pilgrimage. Illustrating the continuity of faith in Paisley, Mary stands firmly rooted on a simple piece of Paisley patterned carpet in between images of Paisley Abbey and St Mirin's Cathedral.

The journey of the icon around the parishes of the diocese as part of preparation for our Synod in April 2016

As the icon of Our Lady of Paisley journeys around the parishes of our diocese, we are invited to spend time with the icon in prayer, reflecting on Mary's own journey of life from the challenging moment when God's messenger asked her to become the mother of God's son until the wonder of his resurrection. We are invited to enter prayerfully into Mary's life asking for the grace to be guided by her generosity, strength and compassion in our own life's journey.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen

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'I deeply loved writing this icon and felt that Our Lady worked with me all the way, and it was wonderful to see it coming to life. It was a privilege, an honour, a wonderful blessing and a gift from Our Lady to me. I will always treasure my connection to Our Lady of Paisley and her beautiful child.'

(Bernadette Reilly April 2015)

Bernadette gifted this beautiful icon to the people of Paisley Diocese.

