

MIGRANTS, MISSIONARIES OF HOPE

A SHORT PILGRIMAGE GUIDE FOR THE
WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2025



IMAGE MAZUR/CBCEWORG.UK

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FOREWORD



Each year, The World Day of Migrants and Refugees invites us to express our Christian concern, care and solidarity with migrants and refugees. It offers us a moment to reflect on the journeys and hardships that many are forced to undertake to escape war, poverty and hunger.

This year, we mark the 111th celebration of WDMR with the theme: “Migrants: Missionaries of Hope.” It is a powerful reminder that those who flee their homes do not leave their dignity behind. They carry with them inspiring stories of resilience and courage; stories that remind us to act with compassion towards those who are strangers to us, to find hope even in difficult times, and to recognize that God is always with us.

In the first six months of this year alone, more than 21,000 people crossed the English Channel in small boats. We often see the headlines and the images of crowded dinghies, the life jackets, the coastguards. But how often do we stop to ask: What have they endured? What are their names? What are they hoping for? Behind every migrant is a story of loss and sorrow, but also of hope and resilience.

Pilgrimage is a sacred act of encounter. When we walk in solidarity with those who have been forced to leave their homes, we allow their stories to speak to our hearts. It is in these shared steps that we draw closer not only to one another, but also to Christ Himself.

I hope that this guide encourages you to set out on pilgrimage, however small, and walk with our migrant brothers and sisters. May your journey be one of listening, of reflection and of deepening love for the stranger. As we walk together, may we become, like those we accompany, missionaries of hope.

Bp Paul McAleenan

Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Westminster

Lead Bishop for Migrants and Refugees

This Guide



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INTRODUCTION

In this Jubilee year, the **World Day of Migrants & Refugees** will be marked on 04 & 05 October alongside the **Jubilee of Migrants**.

In his 2024 World Day of Migrants & Refugees (WDMR) message, Pope Francis invited us to walk alongside migrants and refugees, noting that ‘it is possible to see in the migrants of our time, as in those of every age, a living image of God’s people on their way to the eternal homeland’[1]. Pope Francis referenced the journeys of hope taken by refugees and migrants, with ‘God as their travelling companion, guide and anchor of salvation’[2].

This year, we celebrate migrants as **‘missionaries of hope’**.

Migrants and refugees embark on journeys often fraught with challenges and uncertainty, hopeful of a better future for themselves and their families and placing their trust in God to lead them to safety. For millions of refugees and migrants, their trust in God and hope are the driving force that carries them through danger, loss and uncertainty. Their journeys represent the importance of perseverance.

As modern-day pilgrims of hope, migrants and refugees embody the theme for Jubilee 2025. The Jubilee is a time of pilgrimage, forgiveness, and justice, with a particular focus on those who suffer exclusion or oppression. As Catholics across the world embark on pilgrimage, we hope you can use this resource to embark on a walk (a short pilgrimage) to reflect on the journeys taken by refugees and migrants, to consider what they are forced to leave behind and what hopes they carry with them.

In this resource you will find some example walks organised by our members, how to prepare for your walk and some questions for you to reflect on, whether alone or with others.



PRAYER FOR 11TH WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

GOD OF MERCY, COMPASSION AND HOPE,
FROM A WORLD OF WAR, VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE,
WE TURN TO YOU IN FERVENT PRAYER,
FOR THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE BLIGHTED.
HELP US ALL TO BE PILGRIMS OF HOPE AND PEACE.
HELP US TO SEE AND REACH OUT IN CHARITY TO
MIGRANTS,
REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS, PRIVILEGED
WITNESSES OF HOPE.
HELP US TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO THE STRANGER AND
THE UNLOVED,
FELLOW HUMANS BUT IN NEED.
HELP US TO RECOGNISE AND ACCEPT THE DIGNITY OF
ALL AS YOUR CHILDREN,
AS OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
MAY WE ALL BE LIVING WITNESS TO THAT HOPE,
THE PROMISE OF A PRESENT AND A FUTURE IN YOUR
KINGDOM.
WE MAKE OUR PRAYER THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD.
AMEN.



ROUTES

London

Birmingham

Dover

Pilgrimage of Hope



IMAGE: MAZUR/CBCEV.ORG.UK

LONDON (A)

About the route:

This route was used for the 2024 WDMR celebrations, 'God Walks with His People,' during which Bishop Paul walked alongside refugees, migrants, and laypeople.

As the route traces the edge of the Thames, it invites reflection on the many perilous journeys made by those forced to flee their homes, especially the countless individuals who have crossed seas and rivers in search of safety.

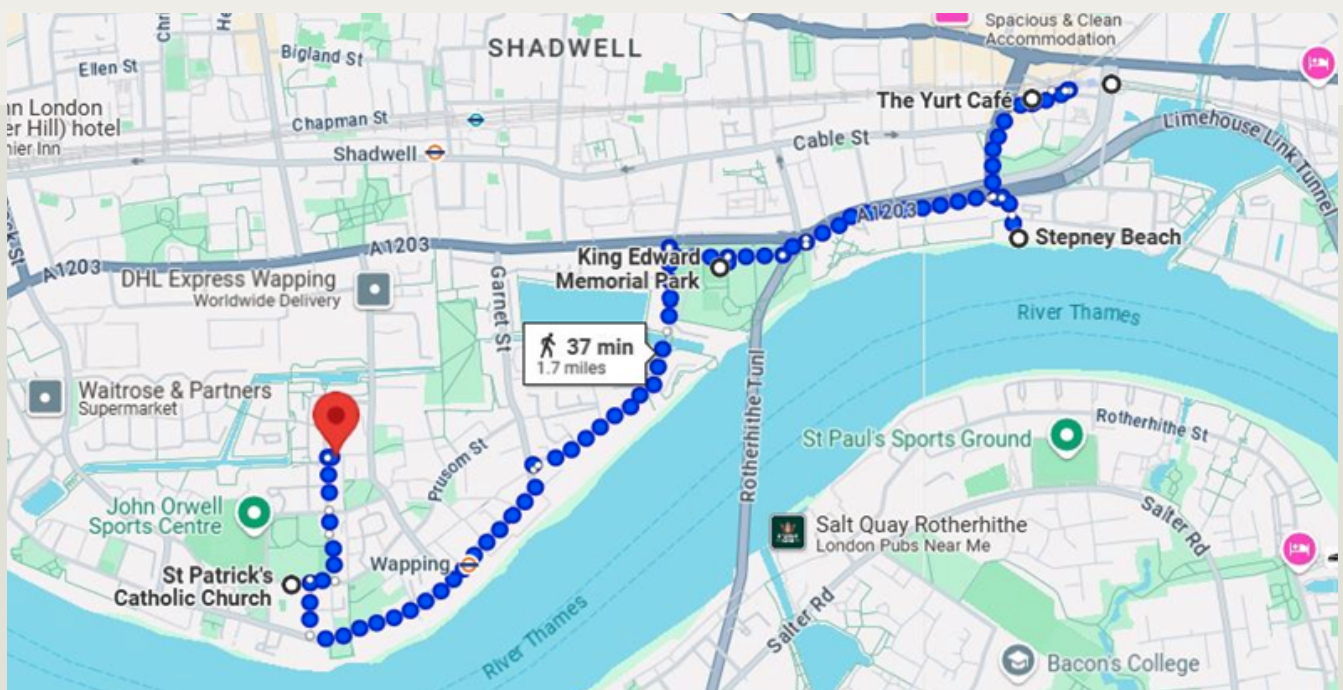
Historically, the area was home to sailors and dockworkers who either passed through or settled there. The area is therefore part of the broader story of migration and labour in East London. Nearby areas such as Stepney, Whitechapel and Spitalfields welcomed various refugee and migrant communities such as Huguenots, Jews, Bangladeshis and Somalis.

The path follows the scenic Thames route; at low tide, Stepney Beach becomes accessible and offers a peaceful spot for rest and reflection. The walk also passes St Patrick's Catholic Church – an opportunity for prayer and to learn more about the Church's work with refugees, including the nearby Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) centre.

The route is 1.5 miles long and takes approximately 35 minutes, not including rest stops. The route is relatively short, though some sections may have uneven pavements – please take care while walking.

The route:

- Arrive at **Limehouse DLR station**. You can get a refreshments and wait for your friends from the **Yurt Café at Royal Foundation of St Katharine** (*St. Katharine's Precinct, 2 Butcher Row, London E14 8DS*), just a stone's throw away from the station.
- From the Yurt Café, go through the nearby St Jame's Gardens towards **St James' path**. At a low tide, you can access the **Stepney Beach** via steps going down from **Narrow Street**.
- Follow the Thames path to **King Edward Memorial Park** (*The Hwy, London E1W 3HT*) which has green spaces, benches for rest and views over the Themes.
- Continuing alongside the Shadwell Basin, you will reach **St Patrik's Catholic Church** (*The Presbytery, Dundee St, London E1W 2PH*).
- Continue through the nearby **Wapping Gardens** and you will arrive at the **Jesuit Refugee Service** (*2 Chandler St, London E1W 2QT0*). Please note: it is advisable to call ahead if you wish to visit.



FEELING AT HOME

Home is a feeling not a Place.
Though made with bricks and mortar, they are mortars of the mind.
Surrounded by a woodland of hope
with a horizon of a fuzzy mountain
There are endless possibilities
of what I could make of my home.

The giggling of my sister is home,
the aroma of a positive attitude
as though it were mummy's jollof rice and fried chicken,
the whistling of birds in the backyard,
the sounds of daddy's fuji music playing in my head
making my head swell up like waves near the beach bar.
They say a house is made of walls and beams
but mine is made of Love and dreams.

Travelling around the world in search of a home
Who could have thought that the tree
in front of block three four seven
would become a tree in my distant memory?
Traveling in search of a home
just to find out my home
was always inside of me.

I AM NOW

Feeling at Home.

BÒBÓYÈ

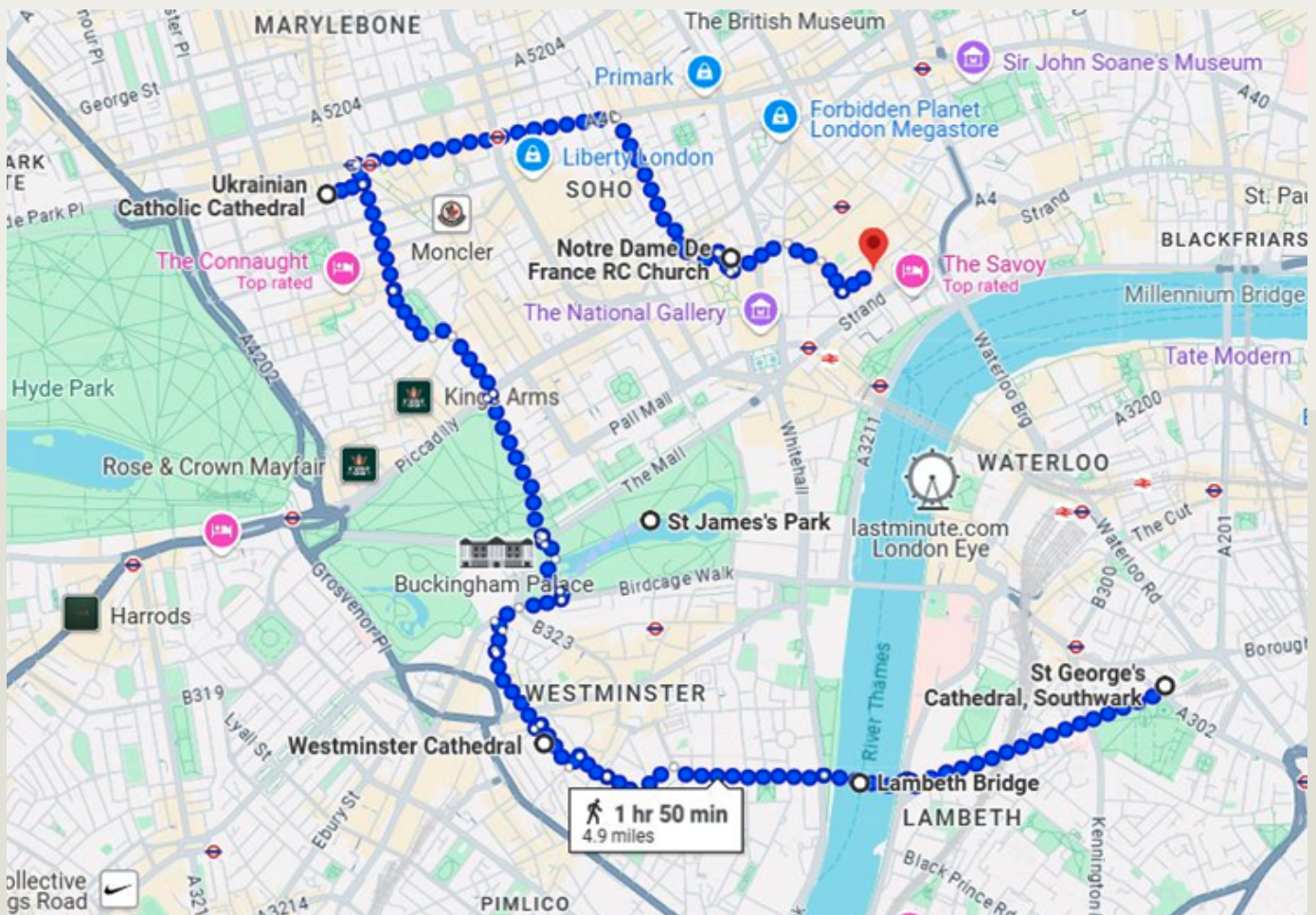
LONDON (B)

About the route:

This route weaves through central London, beginning in the south at St George's Cathedral and passing through a series of historic landmarks and Catholic churches that have supported migrants and refugees over the years.

It takes approximately 2 hours to complete (excluding rest stops).

While the terrain is generally flat, please be mindful of traffic, crowds, and busy crossings – normal city precautions apply.



·Start your journey at **St George's Cathedral in Southwark** (*Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7HY*). Southwark is one of London's most diverse boroughs, home to a remarkable variety of immigrant communities.

·Continue your journey over **Lambeth Bridge**. As you walk over the Thames, take a moment to reflect on those who have risked everything to cross seas and rivers in search of safety. Take a moment for prayer and reflection.

·Continue on to **Westminster Cathedral** (*Victoria St, London SW1P 1LT*) where you can enjoy a moment of silence and prayer. It hosts the annual "Mass for Migrants" which draws congregants from diverse Catholic chaplaincies, including Eritrea, China, Nigeria, India and the Philippines.

·Continue your journey through **St James's Park** – a peaceful spot for a well-earned rest. This is a place that has been enjoyed by many people from many walks of life, offering a chance to reflect on how migration and diversity have shaped the heart of London.

·Head next to the **Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral** (*Duke St, London W1K 5BQ*) which has been a refuge for those fleeing war, more so in the recent years. The cathedral not only serves as a place of worship but as a cultural and pastoral centre for displaced Ukrainian families, offering support and solidarity.

·From there, make your way to **Notre Dame de France in Leicester Square** (*London WC2H 7A*). This French Catholic Church is home to a vibrant refugee outreach programme, offering legal assistance, English lessons and even a winter shelter.

·Finally, end your pilgrimage at **Corpus Christi Catholic Church** (*1-5 Maiden Ln, London WC2E 7NB*), a quiet place in the bustle of Covent Garden. Its prayerful atmosphere and mission of welcome offer a fitting place to conclude your walk – with prayer, silence, and a renewed commitment to walking with others.

Forgive us for war, O Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners!
Lord Jesus, born in the shadows of bombs falling on Kyiv, have
mercy on us!

Lord Jesus, who died in a mother's arms in a bunker in Kharkiv,
have mercy on us!

Lord Jesus, a 20-year-old sent to the frontlines, have mercy on us!

Lord Jesus, who still behold armed hands in the shadow of your
Cross, have mercy on us!

Forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us, if we are not satisfied with the nails with which we
crucified Your hands, as we continue to slake our thirst with the
blood of those mauled by weapons.

Forgive us, if these hands which You created to tend have been
transformed into instruments of death.

Forgive us, O Lord, if we continue to kill our brother;

Forgive us, if we continue like Cain to pick up the stones of our
fields to kill Abel.

Forgive us, if we continue to justify our cruelty with our labors, if
we legitimize the brutality of our actions with our pain.

Forgive us for war, O Lord. Forgive us for war, O Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, we implore You! Hold fast the hand
of Cain!

Illumine our consciences;

May our will not be done;

Abandon us not to our own actions!

Stop us, O Lord, stop us!

And when you have held back the hand of Cain, care also for him.

He is our brother.

O Lord, put a halt to the violence!

Stop us, O Lord!

Amen.

BIRMINGHAM

Father Hudson's Caritas has plotted a walking route around Birmingham City Centre. This pilgrimage walk aims to bring people together and 'initiate reflection discussion, and action around love, hope and charity in the City.

They have put together a comprehensive guide explaining each of the stops on the route, and some points for reflection and action. You can download the guide at <https://www.fatherhudsons.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Birmingham-Pilgrimage-of-Hope-Booklet-Draft-1.pdf>

The detailed route map can be downloaded at <https://www.fatherhudsons.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Route-descriptions-and-maps.pdf>



PEACE

Things that give me peace are attending church services, travelling and being around children. The seasons of the CORONA epidemic have disrupted it a lot and I believe we're getting out of it soon, in Jesus.

To the best of my knowledge, I can describe peace as calmness of mind, the state of being in a cool worriless place of the heart. According to my religion, it's one of the fruits of the Spirit which doesn't come naturally but is given by God and should be desired and had with oneself and others.

There is a song that says- 'I've got peace like a river, peace like a river, peace like a river in my soul.'

Peace is like the calmness of the sea, especially very early in the morning, when everything is fresh and cool, no noise, no disturbances. This is how we as human beings should live with each others.

Anyone that has genuine peace will be healthy as they will not be worrisome, will not be depressed and will be happy with everything they do all the time.

Peace cannot be faked, nor pretended. It is natural. Peace makes one beautiful because people say the more you're happy, the longer you live.

In peace you have joy, good relationships with all, compassion and unending LOVE. You don't get moody or angry with peace in you.

When I'm at peace, I reason very well, sing to appreciate the God that I serve and pray especially to hear God speaking to me in a cool moment or environment.

It's good to have peace and be at peace with all mankind.

Thanks for being peaceful.

Margaret

DOVER

Seeking Sanctuary, a CSAN member organisation based in Southwark Diocese, is a charity raising awareness about the plight of refugees on our shores, as well as providing humanitarian assistance to those stranded in France.

Seeking Sanctuary has hosted Bishop Paul McAleenan, the Lead Bishop for Migrant & Refugees, in Dover on multiple occasions, to pray for and to remember those who have lost their lives crossing the Channel.

Seeking Sanctaury has plotted a walking route which takes you along the seafront and past the memorial plaques which comemorate the many people who have lost their lives seeking sanctuary in the UK.



Arriving by car, get to the roundabout at the entrance to the Ferry Terminal and leave on the A20 towards London. Take the first slip road to join Marine Parade near the Premier Inn and pay at a meter.

[LOCATION: Premier Inn Dover Central Hotel, Marine Parade, Dover CT16 1LW.]

Take the footpath alongside the sea and walk towards the Ferry Terminal. Cross the A20, to your left, via traffic lights, and continue to reach the path alongside the roundabout at the entrance to the Terminal.

Watch the ceaseless flow of HGVs and pray for those who risk their lives by boarding vehicles or crossing the busy Channel in a small boat.

[LOCATION: East Cliff Hotel, 28 E Cliff, Dover CT16 1LU]

Return to the Premier Inn, pausing to pray at the memorial plaques alongside the path, erected by CSAN member organisation, **Seeking Sanctuary**.

Continue alongside the sea, eventually bearing left along the Harbour Arm on the site of the former Hoverport, with fine views of the White Cliffs. The Lifeboat Station and Border Force facilities are on the right.

Pause to pray for migrants and for the relief workers who are traumatised by the need to rescue weak or dead new arrivals.

[LOCATION: RNLI Dover Lifeboat Station, Marina Curve, Dover CT17 9FQ]

You can retrace the walk to rejoin your car, or take the following inland diversion to see a little of the town and seek refreshments.

This is a flat walk easily traversed by the less able and by those using wheelchairs or prams.

MY RECIPE

Crushed and weighed down by life
I turned to the mighty sea-
battled every tide under strain
as waves batter the rock
they couldn't break.

The ambience of the atmosphere
filled me with a blend of harmony
and rhythm to create music
I stroked the piano
and music flowed endlessly.

Set off to my tantalising dinner-
succulent fish marinated in turmeric, chilli and salt,
made in coconut cream,
and fried rice.

I shared the cup of joy

shook up and gathered myself
to the graces from the nature to stride my past.

Rise and Glaze myself
Got abundant glory
To spread cheer.

Han

THE UNIVERSAL FEEL OF HOME

is when you are away.
You always feel as if
home is the best place to be–
you missed out on a lot

but new ventures are always good,
because there is knowledge and experience,
you can take back home–
different cultures, different people–
expands your vocabulary.

They say “NO PLACE LIKE HOME”
but sometimes you have to roam,
see new things.
Even when you go to new places,
you see people resembling folks back home.

Home is always a wonderful place
but anywhere you are
you should be able to make your home–
a place to reside, a comfort.
To think of it really, there are times
I miss the scent of real home cooked dishes–
the roasted fish, roasted breadfruit,
the ackee and salted fish,
curry goat and mannish–water,
the fun of parties with real reggae music,
but as I said,
“a bit of roam is good for home.”

Easton



USEFUL TIPS

Some useful tips to consider when preparing for your walk and whilst on your walk.





- Wear comfortable footwear. Choose supportive, well-broken-in walking shoes to avoid blisters or foot pain.
- Check the weather before you set out. Bring a waterproof jacket or an umbrella, and wear appropriate footwear if rain is expected.
- Bring essentials for your journey, for example: water, snacks, sunscreen and hat, plasters.
- Let organisers know if you have any medical conditions or mobility limits ahead of time.
- During your journey, stay with the group. If walking with others, stick together and follow the pace. Use a buddy system where possible.
- Always abide by common traffic rules and follow the route: use pedestrian crossings, avoid distractions when crossing roads and be mindful of uneven pavements.
- Take regular breaks
- Look out for each other in your group along the way to make sure no one is left behind.
- Identify the locations for toilets and rest areas.
- In churches, please be mindful of others and respect their space for quiet prayer or reflection. Check opening times in advance and consider calling ahead before your visit.
- If you decide to carry banners of any sort, or placards, please take care and be aware of any people or groups who may hold opposing views.



REFLECTIONS

Some questions to consider whilst on your walk.





“I was a stranger and you welcomed me” [Matthew 25:35].
What does this verse mean to you personally? Have there
been times when you have welcomed the stranger (or
when you were the stranger in need of welcome?



In what ways do you recognise the face of Christ in
refugees and migrants?



What stories or headlines have moved you recently and
why?



How can you inspire others to advocate for just policies
and compassionate treatment of those seeking
sanctuary?





How can you integrate prayer for migrants and refugees into your daily or weekly spiritual life?



What is already happening in your parish or local community to support refugees and migrants?

How can you get involved?



To learn more and to get involved with charities and campaigns in support of refugees across England & Wales, see the Call-to-Action on the CSAN website:
<https://www.csan.org.uk/love-the-stranger-call-to-action/>





JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity
and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen.