

August 2026

Bishop Jackie writes...



Walking the Camino

***'Blessed are those whose strength is in you;
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage' Ps 84:5***

Towards the end of May, just a few weeks after starting as Acting Bishop of Derby, I spent a week on pilgrimage. My heart had been set on walking the Camino do Santiago ('The Way of St James') for many years – and retirement offered the opportunity.

I wanted to make space for reflection on the pilgrimage of life. I hoped to connect with God and my Christian heritage, seeking wisdom and spiritual insight. And I wanted to walk those ancient paths in the company of fellow pilgrims. It is a matter of God's sense of humour that as I embarked on my travels, I found myself called into ministry in the Diocese of Derby.

This is how life is as people of faith. We trust our ways to God and trust God's timing too. In the end, it was the perfect time to reflect on being back in Derby, on God's providence in the twists and turns of the journey of life.

On the sixth day, our last day of walking, our guide gave clear instructions – though we had walked at our own pace up until now, for the very last section of the day, the two miles into Santiago de Compostela, we would walk together. Our group had bonded, with deep conversations at times, and companionable silence at others. To arrive together, at our destination, was a moment of great joy, and tears – we had done it. We had come to the holy place. That evening many of us attended the Pilgrims' Mass in the Cathedral – people of all nations and many languages, united in our worship and gratitude.

A prayer at the end of the Mass was said in English: 'As you kept them safe on their Camino way, may you keep them safe on their journey home; may they live the gospel of Jesus as their Camino of life continues.'

As we journey together in the diocese for this season, may we, as God's pilgrim people, live the gospel of Jesus.

With gratitude for our companionship and with prayers and blessings for the journey we share.

Bishop Jackie

**The Rt Revd Jackie Searle
Acting Bishop of Derby**