

Email your events to: comms@stalbens.anglican.org

The Diocese of St Albans in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Luton & Essex

Concerts & Drama

All Saints Hertford. There will be a performance by Adrian Platts including poetry, readings and dramatisations on **Thursday 19th April**, 7.15pm. Tickets will be available from 01992 587544 or from www.searchlighttheatre.org (small booking fee) Cost is £8 in advance or £10 on the door. See poster in bundle notices.

Holy Trinity Leverstock Green
RSCM Regional Choral Evensong on **Sunday 22nd April** - rehearsal at 2.30pm, service at 5.30pm; Repertoire from book King of Glory, King of Peace' and fee £6 includes a copy to take away. Visit www.rscm-stalbens.co.uk for booking forms or call Rosemary Knight on 01727 766871.

All Saints Church, Turvey, MK43 8EP
'Sing the Sweet Spring' - 'Cantamus' chamber choir, **Saturday 28th April**, 7.30pm. Songs and anthems for Springtime with various composers including 'A Norfolk Requiem' (1999) by Turvey born composer Paul Edwards. Conductor Gary Mudd. Admissions £8.00 (incl refreshments). Further details 07762 587743 or 07989 837819.

Holy Church & St Joseph Church, Midland Road, Bedford. RSCM Instrumental Workshop on **Wednesday 2nd May** 7.30pm-9.30pm run by Miles Quick. He will be looking at styles and techniques to help unite congregations and musicians in worship. Instrumentalists and singers equally welcome. Fee £6 booking forms at www.rscm-stalbens.co.uk or from Revd James Reveley vicar@standrewsbedford.org 01234 354234.

St. Marv's Ashwell Music Festival
Highlights include: **Friday 11th May** 6pm - Widdershins Puppet Theatre - a FREE event; **Saturday 12th May** 8pm - Motown Tribute Act - Mission Blue; **Thursday 17th May** 7pm - Young Musicians' Concert; **Friday 18th May** 8pm - Darius Brubeck Quartet; **Saturday 19th May** 8pm - An Evening with Ben Goldscheider, Horn & Piano recital; **Sunday 20th May**

6pm - Festal Evensong. Visit www.ashwellmusicfestival.org for details.

St Paul's Church, Bedford, MK40 1SQ
Spring Fair, **Saturday 28th April** Open 10-4. Stalls and activities for all ages. Further details and to book a stall in this magnificent church building contact 01234 340163. Email: Robin Bartlett robin.bartlett@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk or Madeleine Gamble admin@stpaulschurchbedford.org.uk.

St. Peter's Church, Lilley are holding a Festival of Flowers on **Saturday 5th May** and **Monday 7th May**, 10.30am to 4.30pm and on **Sunday 6th May**, 11am to 4.30pm. The theme this year is 'When I Grow Up'. Admission £2.50 (children free). Refreshments available in the Village Hall.

Talks & Courses

Bedford School Library, de Parys Ave., Burnaby Road, gate, MK40 2TU. "The Secret Diaries of William Wilberforce, MP and anti-slavery campaigner". Illustrated talk by Prof John Coffey of the University of Leicester on **Tuesday 24 April**, 7.30pm. Free to HA members. Others welcome with a donation. Details 07989 837819/01234 266839

Shaping the World Today

A 4 week BELIEF course

- 25/4 'Sexualisation of Society'
- 2/5 'Religion & the Modern World'
- 16/5 'Extremism'

Sessions run from 8pm-9.30pm at St Andrews Church Centre

Kimbolton Road Bedford MK40 2PF

Cost is £5 per session payable on the day. For information please call 01234 330314 or email belief@standrewsbedford.org



St Paul's Church St Albans

Jo Moody will be returning to St Paul's, along with some of her team, to lead

a two-day conference entitled 'Faith Empowered' on **Friday 27th and Saturday 28th April** 9.30am-4pm. She will also speak at a special healing service **Friday April 27th** evening at 7.45pm. Cost: Free but there will be a place to donate towards the costs of Jo's travel from America and to bless her ministry. For more information and to book your place, visit www.stpauls-stalbens.org/jo-moody/

St Nicholas Church, Rectory Lane Stevenage SG1 4DA 'Building Better Homegroups' with speaker Tim Thornborough on **Saturday 28th April** 10am-1pm (coffee from 9.30am). Top tips, biblical insight and innovative ideas to make your homegroup go with a zing. Tickets £5 inc. refreshments, booking advised but pay on door. Email rector@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk or call 01438 213587.

St Hugh's Church, Leagrave High Street, Luton LU4 0ND. 'Unbound Conference' on **Friday 11th May** (7pm-9pm) to **Saturday 12th May** (9am-4pm). Cost £11/concessions £6. See poster in bundle notices for full programme. to book visit www.houseofmercy.org.uk. For enquiries call 07712 308842.

Focolare Centre for Unity, Welwyn Garden City. Talk by The Revd Luke Geoghegan entitled:

'Whose Knowledge? University, government policy and the church'

on **Wednesday 6th June**, 6pm - 9pm. Cost: £15 (supper included).

Almost 50% of all young people now secure a place at university. But graduates are currently leaving university with debts of over £50,000.

What are the benefits of a university education, who benefits most and what are the benefits to society? The speaker will look at the facts in the context of current government policy and why, and how, the Church should be involved.

Book your place here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/whose-knowledge-university-government-policy-and-the-church-mdt-tickets-35173940202>.

Thy Kingdom Come Celebration will welcome Christians of all denominations and The Archbishop of Canterbury!



pray as an individual, pray as a family, pray as a church

10-20th May 2018 Praying for the ten days from Ascension Day to Pentecost is traditional, recalling the actions of the disciples following Jesus' ascension. Two prayers are the focus of attention this year: "Thy Kingdom Come," and "Come Holy Spirit," says Archbishop Justin in the TKC video for 2018, at www.thykingdomcome.global.

To get the most out of Thy Kingdom Come: **1) Commit** to pray your way - as an individual, a family or a church. For ideas on how to pray please visit - <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/prayerresources>. Sign up to Pledge2Pray at www.thykingdomcome.global

2) Hold or attend prayer events, such as 24-7 prayer, prayer breakfasts, prayer stations and prayer walks

3) Through prayer, be open to finding new confidence to be a witness for Jesus Christ in every bit of life - with family, work colleagues, networks, friends and neighbours.

4) Come to the 19th May Celebration: It begins at 6.30 p.m. put please leave plenty of time to find parking. Before the celebration (from 4 p.m.) there will be a variety of prayer spaces and fun activities on offer throughout the Cathedral.

Saturday 19th May 2018 was always going to be a memorable day, especially for royal-watching-football-fans-who-are-praying-for-new-disciples, with the wedding of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle, the FA cup final and Thy Kingdom Come drawing to a close for 2018.

Now it's also going to include Thy Kingdom Come's Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire celebration and the Archbishop of Canterbury is coming to join Christians of all denominations.

St Albans Cathedral will host the event, having seen more than 1300 people gather to celebrate and pray for people to come to know Jesus Christ last June.

Thy Kingdom come, which started in 2016, has progressed from being a call to the Church of England to pray for people to come to know Jesus Christ to become a call to prayer encompassing all denominations and many nations.

Archbishop Justin, who last visited St Albans Diocese in June 2015, shared his enthusiasm for this still-growing movement of prayer when he recently said: "I cannot remember in my life anything that I've been involved in where I have sensed so clearly the work of the Spirit."



Commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War

"I would suggest that nothing less than pledging ourselves to peace making and preventing further conflict will do if we are really serious about commemorating the centenary."

This autumn will be dominated by television programmes, newspaper articles and exhibitions marking the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Estimates vary, but it is thought that as many as 18 million soldiers and civilians were killed worldwide. Here in Britain around 1 million people were killed and 1.67 million injured.

Behind these horrendous statistics lie the tragic stories of individual soldiers who never returned to these shores and whose bodies lie in foreign soil.

If you visit the St Symphorien military cemetery, near Mons in Belgium, you will find two adjacent tombstones marking the graves of the first and the last soldiers to be killed in the First World War.

Seventeen year old Private John Parr was a local man, born in Barnet and brought up in North Finchley. After leaving school he worked as a golf caddy but then decided to enlist in the Middlesex Regiment despite the fact that he was only 14 years old. He became a reconnaissance cyclist and whilst on a patrol was killed seventeen days after the start of the war. It was thought he was shot by a German cavalry patrol, although the 17 year old's body was never identified.

Private George Ellison, a married Yorkshire miner who fought with the Royal Irish Lancers, had survived the battles of Mons, Ypres, Armentieres, Loos, Basseé, Lens and Cambrai. It is tragic that as the war drew to a close he was killed just 90 minutes before the armistice whilst on patrol near Mons.



Dr Alan Smith,
Bishop of St Albans

These stories could be replicated thousands of times. Hardly a community or a family in Britain were unaffected by death and suffering. As we approach the centenary of the armistice, the pressing question facing us is how we should commemorate the end of the war.

Karen Bradley, the Culture Minister in the government has suggested that the centenary should be marked by the ringing of church bells, just as they rang out at the armistice. Well, as a bell ringer, I am always keen to hear bells being rung. Yet we surely, as well as marking the moment in this and other transient ways, we need a response which is more ambitious and more fitting to honour the memory of those who died and suffered.

I would suggest that nothing less than pledging ourselves to peace making and preventing further conflict will do if we are really serious about commemorating the centenary.

It is easy to presume that peace is simply the absence of conflict. Yet in the beatitudes Jesus spoke about 'peace makers', suggesting that it is not a passive state but an activity which requires our attention and our energy.

Peace making starts with us. We need to make peace in our own hearts where it is all too easy to harbour resentment and jealousy. It was significant that following the Brexit vote, there was a surge in hate crimes across our nation, some of it rooted in xenophobia. If such feelings are not challenged and channelled, they can become the soil in which the seeds of conflict can flourish.



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Clergy Appointments

Jane Bass, presently Priest-in-Charge (SSM) in the benefice of Boinhurst with Keysoe, will be stepping down from this role, but will retain P/O.

Richard Brown, presently Assistant Curate in the benefice of St Hilda of Whiby, Grangtown, Middlesborough in the diocese of York, is to become Priest-in-Charge of the benefice of Holy Cross, Marsh Farm.

Dr Quentin Chandler presently Priest-in-Charge of the benefice of Marston Morteyne with Lidlington, is to become Rector of the same.

Alan Comfort, presently Rector of the benefice of Standon and the Mundens with Sacombe, is to become Vicar of St John the Evangelist Church, Upper Holloway in London Diocese.

Andrew Croft, is to be formally licensed as Pioneer Minister (Senior Pastor) at Soul Survivor, Watford.

Amanda Ferris, presently Associate Minister (SSM) at St Paul with William, Letchworth, has been appointed Hospital Chaplain/Spiritual Care Coordinator for Garden House Hospice, Letchworth Garden City.

Mike Jones, presently Vicar of St Mary's Luton, has also been appointed as Priest-in-Charge of St Paul's Church, Luton.

Kate Lomax, has been appointed as Associate Vicar (part time) of St Paul's Church, Luton.

Angela Lynas, previously Assistant Curate in Training (SSM) in Cheshunt Team Ministry, has become Associate Minister (SSM) in the Beane Valley benefice (Aston, Bramfield, Stapleford, Waterford and Watton-at-Stone).

Dr Rob Marshall, presently Priest-in-Charge (time limited, 0.5 stipend) of Digsweil Team Ministry, has now become Priest-in-Charge (with common tenure, 0.8 stipend) of the same.

Mike Pilavachi, is to be formally licensed as Pioneer Minister (Senior Pastor) at Soul Survivor, Watford.



Regional Evensong &

Instrumental Workshop

The next **regional evensong** is on Sunday 22nd April 2018, 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm approx at Holy Trinity, Leverstock Green, Hertfordshire.

An **Instrumental Workshop** with Miles Quick will take place on Wednesday 2nd May 2018 7.30pm-9.30pm at Holy Child and St Joseph Church, Midland Road, Bedford

The fee payable for each of these events is £6 per participant. Register before April 1st and you will only pay £4.

Further details and online application forms may be found using the following link: www.rscm-stalbans.co.uk/?cat=4

Please note that if you are bringing under-18s with you to either event you must accept responsibility for them on the application form. A parental consent form must be filled in for each under 18 year old as well. See <https://bit.ly/2E4dtrq>

Rural/Area Deans

The Bishop of St Albans has appointed the following Rural Deans:

Guy Scott, as Rural Dean of Biggleswade, remaining as Vicar of the benefice of Biggleswade.

Timothy Seago as Area Dean of Barnet, remaining as Vicar of the benefice of Totteridge.

Canon Michael Leverton as Rural Dean of Buntingford, remaining as Rector in the benefice of Ardeley, Benington, Cottered with Throcking and Walkern.

Diocesan Appointments

Mr Mark Dunwoody has been appointed as Senior Fresh Expressions Development Officer, based in Bedford Archdeaconry. He was previously Diocesan Missioner for the Diocese of Montreal, Canada.



On a chilly Palm Sunday, Dandy the Donkey joined adults and children on a procession to St Michael's, St Albans

Rejoice and be glad



Financially speaking, 2017 was not a bad year. Our Common Fund shows a deficit of just over £80,000 which is about 1/2% of our total expenditure (virtually breaking even). However, although parish share receipts showed a useful increase over the previous year, the percentage received fell by about 1% which was disappointing. The shortfall in parish share receipts was fortunately offset by some positive variances on a number of expenditure headings: otherwise, the deficit would have been higher. With fewer people coming to church, (although a good number of parishes are seeing growing membership), there is no doubt that many parishes do find that the financial situation is challenging. Please be assured that the Board of Finance is well aware of these pressures and every year the diocesan budget is reviewed in detail to identify areas where savings might be made so that the parish share request can be realistic. And our efforts will continue.

The plain fact is that collectively, the church members of today have to fund parochial ministry: that is where the parish share goes – to pay, house, pension and train our clergy and the clergy of the future. If we want to keep our parochial clergy then we have to find the money to pay for them.

I know that several parishes have joined the Parish Giving Scheme as part of their stewardship programmes and without exception, they have seen levels of giving rise with the prospect of increasing that income each year. You might want to look at this (there is a good deal of information on the diocesan web site about it) if you have not already done so. And if you think that it would be good to talk through any difficulties then do say – we are always very willing to meet and discuss problems.

Let us rejoice and be glad that we are able to proclaim our faith boldly, that we can sustain ministry in the parishes, schools and chaplaincies throughout the diocese and that with your help, we can continue to Live God's Love with generosity and joy, imagination and courage in all that we do. *Canon David Nye, DBF Chair*

New Book: Who Is My Neighbour? The global and personal challenge

Who Is My Neighbour? The global and personal challenge is edited by Revds Richard Carter and Samuel Wells and contributors include Archbishop Justin Welby, Brendan Cox, Archbishop Lord Rowan Williams, Sarah Teather, Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu and Professor Stanley Hauerwas

In the words of one of the editors, Sam Wells (Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields), whose mother came to the UK in 1938 as an asylum seeker, 'this is a book about migration, about cross-cultural relationships, fear, discovery, surprises, politics and faith...'. He continues: 'We are experiencing extraordinary movements of people... that reflect the political, climatic, social and economic changes affecting our continent and world... Migrants are the flotsam and jetsam of the ocean wave of global power... To turn our backs on migrants is to forget our identity, inhibit our renewal and deny our destiny.'

With much first hand experience of those who are displaced whether through homelessness, migration or a combination of those and other factors, the editors acknowledge that there is no simple answer to the 'demanding issue' of migration, but they criticise Western governments' policy to 'shoo people away as much as possible for as long as possible' and the way that migrants have become 'the visible embodiment of these terrifying risks that seem to have no limits or borders post 9/11' and 'the flashpoint of existing social tensions about taxation and welfare provision and shortage of housing'. Many of the UK and USA's most dynamic leaders and shapers were from immigrant families – and Jesus himself was a migrant, with displacement being a key theme in the Bible. 'Richly challenging and deeply engaging,' is the Bishop of Stepney's verdict on this book.

Paperback, 288 pages, 978 0 281 07840 0, £9.99

Unmissable Easter Sunday Broadcasting:

On BBC Radio 4:
Easter Sunday Service from St. Albans Cathedral,
0810, presacer, the Bishop of St Albans

On BBC iPlayer:
Songs of Praise, Sunday 25th March (Palm Sunday)
from St Albans Cathedral and St Martin's, Shenley

See P4 (overleaf) for examples of two activities in the Diocese of St Albans that are contributing to peacemaking.

New Field of Remembrance at Hatfield House



Fr Darren Collins, Rector of Hatfield writes: "Lord & Lady Salisbury, owners of Hatfield House, have had a wonderful Field of Remembrance landscaped into a slope, in front and to the side of Hatfield House. It is in commemoration of the loss of life and suffering in four years of fighting during 1914-1918 in World War 1.

Bishop Michael recently led a service to bless the Field, speikning the whole area with holy water. There were children from many local schools attending as well as representatives from the Army, Navy and Airforce and local dignitaries. The children placed wooden crosses bearing poppies, starting to populate the field of remembrance.

The service commenced with an introduction from Lord Salisbury who explained that he would like as many wooden crosses as possible placed between now and November 2018 in the Field. Then on November 11th this year, there will be a special service of remembrance led from the steps of the north front of Hatfield House, which will recreate the service held there in November 1918 after the armistice was signed, which declared a ceasefire.

Please visit the Field of Remembrance and place crosses during the summer, benefit service charities and attend on 11th November, more details to follow."

We can also make peace by working for a world in which justice and equality prevail. Many of the trouble spots of the world are places where ancient grievances have lain dormant for decades like unexploded bombs (think of Bosnia or Rwanda), only to be detonated when a spark sets off a chain reaction of tit-for-tat revenge. Perhaps the most important area that we need to address if we are to be peace makers is nuclear weapons. Last July 122 nations belonging to the United Nations voted for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a legally binding international agreement to prohibit nuclear weapons. The support of at least fifty countries was required to bring it into effect. By January 2018 the treaty had been signed by fifty-six states.

The treaty prohibits the 'development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance and encouragement to the prohibited activities'. For those states which have nuclear weapons, the treaty specifies 'a time-bound framework for negotiations leading to the verified and irreversible elimination of its nuclear weapons programme'. However, having a nuclear capability, the British government has been unwilling to sign the treaty.

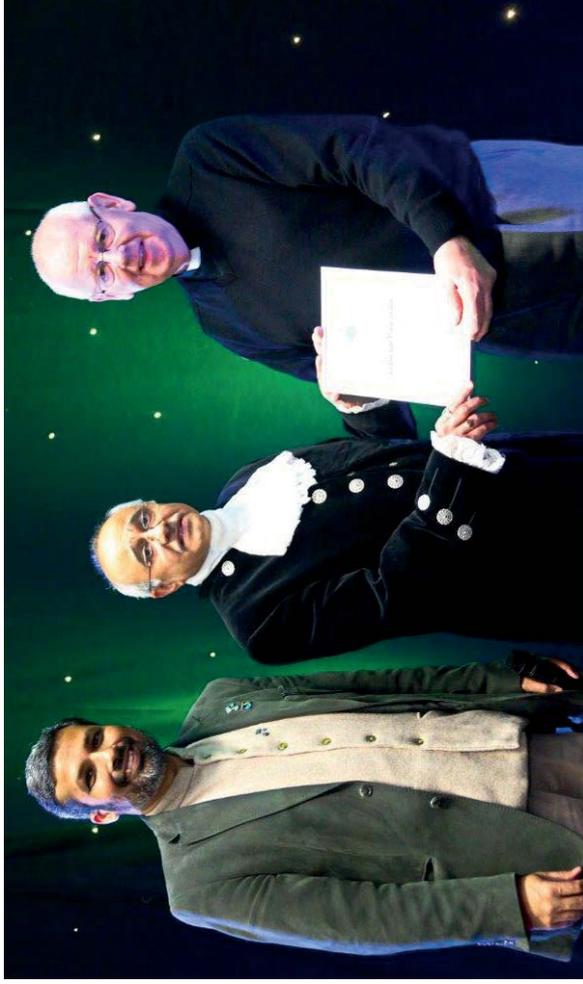
Meanwhile, many of us are concerned that in an unstable world where nuclear weapons are proliferating, we cannot afford to wait much longer. This was illustrated recently when, in response to Chairman Kim Jong-un, President Trump promised that if North Korea attacked the USA it 'will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen'. The problem is that if, God forbid, either leader were to authorise the use of nuclear weapons it is unlikely that either of them, securely shielded in bunkers deep beneath the earth, would suffer personally. The collateral damage would be the millions of civilians who had nowhere to shelter. It is for this reason that I long for our county to engage with nuclear disarmament, even if it takes us several years.

So to return to the centenary of the Armistice, I hope that over the coming months we will all reflect on the part that we can play as peace makers in today's world – peace in our own lives, peace in our world and peace in the light of the threat of nuclear war.

This is an abridged version of Bishop Alan's March 2018 Presidential Address to Diocesan Synod which can be read at: www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Presidential-Address-March-2018.pdf

+ Alan St Albans
bishop@stalbans.anglican.org

Grassroots: a positive effect on community cohesion for 25 years!



L to R: David Johnathan (Director of Grassroots), Clir Mohammad Ayub (Mayor of Luton), Canon David Lawson (Chair of Trustees)

For twenty-five years, Grassroots has had the same mission: enhancing community cohesion and developing positive relationships locally, nationally and internationally. This simple explanation of its purpose belies the complexity of its situation in one of the most diverse communities in the Diocese of St Albans: Luton.

Nearly 400 guests from different faiths and cultural backgrounds attended Luton based Grassroots Programme's 25th Anniversary Celebrations. Opening the celebrations, leaders of four Christian denominations lit a candle. This was a symbolic act which is about lighting a candle rather than cursing the darkness which is the very ethos of Grassroots.

Looking back on its twenty-five years of activity, David Jonathan, Director, GRASSROOTS, pondered the increasing, not just religious but also, political fundamentalism, majoritarianism and general intolerance. In response, he renewed GRASSROOTS' commitment to active participation, not commenting or spectating from the sidelines.

He recalled the comments he made at an earlier Luton



Bishop Richard was recently received by the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, with his friend from the Interfaith Network in the UK, Nirmal Palan. Bishop Richard said: "The Dalai Lama spoke of Ahimsa (non-violence), harmony between faiths and the importance of compassion."

No Pilgrimages for a year then five come along at once

This year, 2018, there will be no diocesan pilgrimages, but a programme of no fewer than five is planned for 2019 and 2020. Details are now available at www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/pilgrimages-abroad/. Here's a flavour.

Holy Land

In May 2019 Archdeacon Paul & Canon Liz Hughes offer a ten day programme to the Holy Land, based in Jerusalem and Galilee.

Santiago de Compostela

In September 2019, Archdeacon Janet will be leading a progress along the Camino Trail to Santiago de Compostela. This tour offers some limited walking but also uses air-conditioned coaches!

The 2019 pilgrimages are open for booking now. See the website for forms.

Oberammergau - 3 pilgrimages

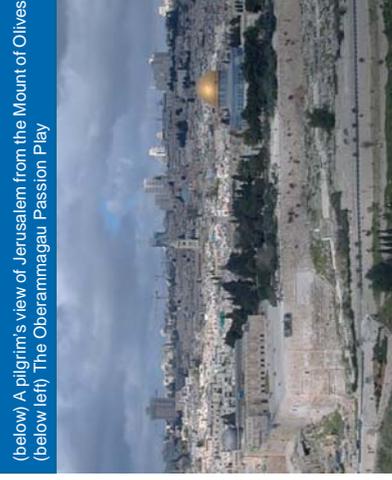
2020 is the year of the Oberammergau Passion Play and three tours are available, with bookings for each opening after Easter.

In June The Revd Dennis Stamps, Rector of Harpenden, will host a tour based in St Martin & Lofer; during the August school holidays Bishop Michael and his wife Lizzie will lead a programme staying in Imst, and in September The Revd Canon Abi Thompson and The Revd Dr Berkeley Zych, Sub Dean and Precentor of St Albans Cathedral, are leaders for a visit based at Strobl on the Wolfgangsee.

Please see the website for further details or email bookings@stalbanpilgrimages.org.uk if you have a general enquiry or wish to express an interest, without obligation.



(above) Cruz de Hierro - The highest point on the Camino pilgrims trail to Santiago de Compostela



(below) A pilgrim's view of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (below left) The Oberammergau Passion Play

