**The Revd Alison M Bailie**

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Last week I was in Pembrokeshire walking The Way of St David in the very hot sunshine - 13 miles a day but thankfully we all survived! This pilgrimage route finishes in St David’s, the smallest city in the UK (about 1500 people) and our pilgrimage ended at the cathedral there which, unsurprisingly, is dedicated to St David. In medieval times, this was a very well-trodden pilgrimage route and, day by day, would be filled with hundreds of pilgrims making their journey to pray in the cathedral, perhaps for inspiration, to find a new direction in life or for healing. Their physical journey was mirrored by an inward spiritual journey from the head to the heart.

The Bible suggests that the spiritual life is a journey. In Old Testament times, the Israelites would have gone on pilgrimage from their homes up to the temple at Jerusalem, often a journey of many days, and many of our psalms are songs (the songs of ascent) which the pilgrims would have sung and prayed on the way to the temple in Jerusalem. One of the best known (and one of my favourite) pilgrimage psalms is psalm 121.

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
    where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
    the Maker of heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot slip—
    he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
    will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The Lord watches over you—
    the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day,
    nor the moon by night.*

*The Lord will keep you from all harm—
    he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going
    both now and forevermore.*

As I walked last week along the beauty of the Pembrokeshire Coast, it was good to remember that wherever I go, the Lord goes with me as my strength, my help and my protector. I am never beyond his loving gaze – and nor are you. In all our comings and our goings, the Lord watches over us. As I lifted my eyes to the beauty and the majesty of the shining sea and rolling hills around me, I was reminded that the Lord, the maker and creator of all I saw around me, is the source of all beauty, of all majesty, of all life, of all that is good – but, of course, sometimes I forget, perhaps like the man in this reflection (author unknown).

*God Speaking through Nature*

*‘The man whispered, ‘God, speak to me’ and a meadowlark sang.*

*But the man did not hear.*

*So the man yelled, ‘God, speak to me’ and the thunder rolled across the sky.*

*But the man did not listen.*

*The man looked round and said, ‘God, let me see you’ and a star shined brightly.*

*But the man did not see.*

*And the man shouted, ‘God, show me a miracle’ and a life was born.*

*But the man did not notice.*

*So the man cried out in despair, ‘Touch me, God, and let me know you’re here’ whereupon God reached down and touched the man.*

*But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.’*

As we journey through each day, may the Lord give us eyes to see him, and ears to hear him, in our everyday moments and in the beauty of his creation around us. May we remember that he is our help and strength and that he holds us always in his gaze of love.

With my love in Christ and my prayers

**Alison**

**Sunday 1st August 10.30**

St John’s 10.30 am All Age/Service of the Word

St Leonard’s 10.30 am All Age

Zoom 6.30pm Service of the Word