

# **Give yourself a Holy Island**

## **Retreat**

**Ray Simpson**

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## **Retreats are good for you**

More people go on retreats than ever before.

Many people go on retreats who do not go to a church or religious centre.

The great majority of people who go on a retreat say they receive benefit from it.

People go on retreats for all sorts of reasons:

- \* to get rid of stress
- \* to find a breathing space
- \* to do something
- \* to read something
- \* to talk with someone
- \* to find out about spirituality
- \* to listen to creation
- \* to become real
- \* to find divine perspectives.

The great religions recommend retreats. In Moses' time God advised the people of Israel to spend one week a year living on the roof of their houses (See in the Bible: Leviticus 23. 29-43). This idea, which modern retreats also help to fulfil, is to get us "away from it all", to unclutter us, to free us from depending too much upon things. God's advice to three of Jesus' friends who were on retreat on the Mount of Transfiguration was to listen to his Son (Mark 9. 2-8).

## **A special place is good for you**

A special place is one which beckons and draws something out of you. This may be because in it

- \* nature renews you
- \* history speaks to you
- \* land or sea enfold you
- \* heaven draws near to you

## **Lindisfarne is a special place which has all these features.**

It is a nature reserve, and home to a teeming variety of birds.

It is the cradle of Christianity, and its priory ruins, museum and castle recall an ancient history that has not been overlaid or blighted by bad developments.

Twice a day its tides transform it into an island encompassed by the foam-flecked sea.

It is a 'thin place', where the distance between earth and heaven can seem only a hair's breadth, and where praise by night and day continues today.

That is why Lindisfarne also has the name Holy Island.

To combine a retreat with a visit to Holy Island is therefore a unique experience.

## **A real island and real rhythm**

Christians believe that although God is everywhere, God likes us to have special places that cradle in us a sense of God's presence. That is why Jesus went to mountains or deserts, and told everyone to create a private space for prayer (Matthew 6.6.). This special place may be a shed, an allotment - or a holy island.

Holy Island is not a romantic mirage, it is a real place. It is home to one hundred and fifty people who earn their living through fishing, farming and provision for visitors.

Tourists flow in with the ebb tide, but they recede with the full tide, and this rhythm anchors one in the twin call to reach out to people and to be alone with God.

For with the flow and ebb, its style  
varies from continent to isle;  
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,  
the pilgrims to the shrine find way;  
Twice every day the waves efface  
of staves and sandall'd feet the trace

Sir Walter Scott

AERIAL

PHOTO  
OF  
LINDISFARNE  
AXE SHAPE  
WITH CAUSEWAY  
LIKE A HANDLE

There is a legend that when Satan raised his giant battle-axe against the gates of heaven, God's lightning struck it from his hand. It fell into the sea and became the Isle of Lindisfarne. Photo of the axe-shaped island.

## **A traditional prayer for the Holy Island of Lindisfarne**

**PHOTO**

**Here be the peace of water lapping shore**

**Here be the peace of praise by night and day**

**Here be the peace of people serving others**

**Here be the peace of those who do your will**

## **Unexpected finds**

Half a million people now visit Lindisfarne each year.

Some come on holiday.

Some come as bird watchers.

Some come as pilgrims.

Some come out of curiosity, keeping half an ear cocked, not sure what they will find.

Stephen, aged 35? came on a bank holiday trip to Holy Island with his wife ..... They live in a large urban area. As they walked around the island something snapped inside Stephen. "We can't go on living the way we are - theft, pressure, restless noise... Society is sick. I want the peace, the rhythm, the caring, orderly ways that I find here. This couple went into the church and knelt down. They were not church-goers, but they decided to come back for a week's retreat. Now they keep on coming, and have changed their way of life. they try to live more simply, to reflect in their daily lives the rhythm they find on the island, and to nurture peace in their souls.

## **Retreat options on the Island**

Increasing numbers of people enquire about ways of making a retreat on Holy Island. There are various ways to do this.

### **Groups**

Groups book accommodation and organise their own retreats.

### **Retreat Days.**

The St. Cuthbert Project runs day retreats based at St. Cuthbert's Church, as well as weekly Island Prayer Walks on Wednesdays or Bank Holidays.

### **Individual retreats with an anamchara.**

The author or others can sometimes offer the service of an *anamchara* (soul friend) to people who book their own accommodation on the island. A session after arrival maps out goals and schedules that are appropriate to the person, who has use of the house library and chapel; a session before leaving gives a chance to reflect and apply lessons learned.

## **Do-it-yourself retreats with this book**

Any person, however unsure of their beliefs, can make a retreat. Use the prayers and readings as if you believe and see if this works.

## **Tools for your retreat**

Wellingtons and wind proofs for walking.

Books, tapes or videos (see page )

A dictaphone to record your inspirations - or,  
have a go at writing -

## **A journal**

Even if your spelling is awful, and you can't complete a sentence - you can still jot down words and thoughts that seem important to you. After all, no one else will see your journal, unless you want to share it with them.

What should you write? The answer is - anything that strikes you as 'deep down important'. This might include:

- things that make you angry
- things you run away from
- your heart's deepest desires
- memories that have shaped you
- dreams
- striking words you have heard or read
- people you need to forgive
- things you need to give up
- steps you need to take
- people to pray for
- attitudes that need to change
- how to arrange your time
- ingredients of a healthy diet for body, mind or spirit.

Now add to this list.

## **Take It Easy!**

Although it is good to make a retreat, it is not as easy as you may think! You may find it hard to get away; and when you arrive, you may find it hard to get into focus.

If you arrive exhausted, take time to sleep, walk, eat, and relax. If you come with deep hurts, perhaps buried under "overload", be gentle with yourself. Remember, rest is still God's best and normal way of healing. This is also true if you have been suffering deep depression. Good food and fellowship should come before intense prayer or solitude.

The pressures of modern life, and even a change in our normal routine, can make us tense. If you arrive tense, take time to unload and unwind. One way to do this is to make a list of the things that you must attend to on your return. and hang them up on an imaginary clothes line to return to later. Another way to unload is to go to a deserted stretch of shore, take hold of a stone which represents something you need to off-load, fling it into the ocean, and repeat.

Before we can have the energy to resolve conflicts or engage in spiritual exercises, we need to learn how to receive new energies into ourselves. So try the **Sun-bathing exercise**. Feel or imagine the sun shining upon you. Breathe it in deeply and rhythmically, saying words such as 'I breathe in love' or ...'warmth' or '...peace' ....

## **The a la carte retreat menu**

### **Take Your Pick**

The rest of this book is a kind of menu. The idea is that you choose from it what best suits you. It is a good idea to make a schedule for your self. An example of a daily and of a weekly schedule is printed on pages... and ...

You will need to arrange your schedules to suit your temperament, where you are in your journey in life, your energy level, the tides, and the weather. Remain open to the unexpected; God is full of surprises!

### **1. Build a Cairn**

Derek left behind his hectic life in London and drove to Lindisfarne. When his marriage, his job, and much else fell through, he contacted the Samaritans. After two years one of the Samaritans suggested he came to Holy Island for a week.

'I am not religious', Derek told me, 'and I know exactly; how I want to use this time'. Each day he walked to Emmanuel Head, the white triangle which marks the uninhabited end of the island. There he lifted the largest stones he could carry, and gradually piled them on top of each other to form a cairn. Each stone represented some hurt, anger, or mess in his life.

Before the final day Derek wrote down all the things he was sorry about and which he wanted to own up to and to put behind him. He put this list in a sealed envelope. On the final day he asked me to walk with him to the cairn to be a witness and an affirming presence. After standing in silence we put the envelope on the cairn and tried to set fire to it. The wind kept blowing out the flames, so I suggested that we tie the envelope to a big stone and fling it as far as possible into the sea.

This we did. It was as if a Wisdom higher than our own was telling us: 'Everything needs to be washed. In the ocean of My love your sins are completely lost to view'.

Perhaps you would like to take a few hours to build a small cairn yourself?



PHOTO  
OF  
EMMANUEL  
HEAD  
OR CAIRN  
ON STONY  
BEACH

## **2. Figure out St. Aidan**

A good place to meditate upon Aidan is at the famous St. Aidan sculpture in the churchyard. Aidan, whom Bishop Lightfoot called "the apostle of England", came to this spot from Iona, and from here sent out a stream of witnesses to Christ.

Meditate on the qualities expressed in four symbols:

**the face** - gentle, humble, winsome, of stature and vision  
**the torch** - a passion to pass on faith to everyone one meets;  
**the staff** - a shepherd's faithfulness;  
**the cross** - a protecting and encircling shield at one's back.

As you kneel or walk and pray write down anything God is saying to you. One person wrote this:

Oh Aidan,  
you had the vision of a population transformed in Christ.  
    You had the faith to come.  
    You had the gentleness to win the hearts of king and commoner.  
    You ministered in power and patience to the sick and dying;  
    You loved the people of the island.  
You lived simply and prayed much.  
You prepared a mission to the kingdom.  
    You are in pain that people are heedless of your Lord.

PHOTO

OF

ST.

AIDAN

STATUE

### **3. Find rhythm with the tides**

The ebb and flow of the tide is a remarkable aspect of this half time island. One can savour this anywhere on the island, but perhaps best of all on the causeway. As the incoming tide transforms the landscape into seascape, hope rises within you that perhaps, after all, the dull mediocrity of your life can be transformed by a different element flowing in like waves. Meditate on the drudgeries of your everyday life, and on the story of Jesus turning everyday water into wine (John chapter 2) . Now open your eyes to visualise the dimension of the Spirit transforming your everyday life.

The tides speak of the rhythms of creation, and they remind us that our lives too are designed to have rhythm. We live in a society with dysfunctional patterns. Which of these patterns rob us of the rhythms we should reflect? How can you better reflect the rhythms of the day? the week? the year?

Ebb tide, full tide  
Let life's rhythms flow  
Full tide, ebb tide,  
How life's beat must go.  
David Adam

Are you willing to "go with the flow" or are you resisting what God has for you? Are you like the arrogant but pathetic King Canute, who at Bosham Harbour in Sussex, forbade the tide to intrude further upon "his" terrain? Do you need to ask God for courage to take a tide at the flood, which, once missed, will be lost forever? Or is he asking of you patience to wait with an ebb tide?

### **4. Observe the skies and birds**

Look up at the birds. Or sit in the hide which is on the left of the path as you walk from the castle towards the white Emanuel Head triangle. What do birds teach us about the world of the Spirit? Read Matthew 6. 28 - end.

The pale-bellied Brent Geese who fly from the arctic to winter in Holy Island remind us that a Celtic symbol of the Holy Spirit is the wild goose. Which wild places does the Spirit wish you to fly into? In what ways are you trying to cage God's Spirit?

And notice the wild geese flying in formation. They tell us something about unity. When they fly together in this instinctive way they travel three times as fast as when they fly alone. What does this say to us?

When it becomes dark, look up at the stars. The shelters in which the Israelites experienced their yearly retreat had no roof: they looked up to God's star bank. They learned to discern the hand of God in the glory of the heavens.

Now turn your thoughts to Abraham, whose spiritual descendants we are. God told him, whose wife Sarah was infertile, that he would multiply his descendants as the stars in the sky. (Genesis 22. 15 - 19) What are the barren, faithless places in our lives? Ask God to bring to your mind any seeds of faith which he wants to multiply. Meditate upon these, and ask God to make them fruitful.

#### **5. Learn Oswald's secret of service**

If Northumbria's King Oswald had not invited and supported a Mission from Iona, Aidan could not have brought Christianity and 'a civilisation of love' to Northumbria. Oswald, who every morning prayed with his hands open to receive, was humble enough to walk on foot interpreting Aidan's dialect to the poor in the villages. Aidan used gifts of money from rich people such as Oswald to buy slaves their freedom. During an Easter Day banquet at his castle Oswald learned that a hungry crowd was outside: He ordered not only the food, but even the silver ware to be distributed to them. He died in battle thinking not of himself, but of his soldiers.

Oswald became a model throughout Europe of a good and Christian ruler. He is a symbol of authority as it is meant to be. There is value in meditating upon this in the light of the diffused authorities that interweave our lives today; and upon how we ourselves use the powers we have in our different roles. What roles do I have, for example at home or at work, in which I can get my own way, by threats, tone of voice, acquiescence, blame, money, turning a blind eye, dishonesty? In what ways am I manipulative, bossy, or unwilling to be vulnerable?

As a boy at Iona Oswald learned to love Christ. Imagine yourself there with Oswald, learning to model yourself after the "servant King". Reflect upon Isaiah 42. 1-4, Philippians 2. 1-11. Power corrupts.

A good place to meditate is by Lindisfarne castle, looking across to Bamburgh castle, where Oswald had his throne, and where his relics and those of Aidan were for a time kept.

PHOTO  
OF  
LINDISFARNE  
CASTLE  
WITH  
VIEW  
OF

BAMBURGH

CASTLE

BEYOND?

View of Lindisfarne Castle, designed by Lutchens

### **6. Immerse yourself in the world of the sea**

Cuddies beach, so named because it is believed St. Cuthbert often used it, is a good place to dwell on the mystery and marvel of the sea, though any part of the shore will do. This sandy cove is the opposite end of the island to the built upon area.

Become attentive to your bodily feelings as well as to your thoughts as you sit, walk, or lie by (or in) the sea. Is there awe? apprehension? playful happiness? crashing power?, fecundity? awareness of one's littleness? of beauty? of infinitude? It seems as if the Creator has put things in creation which mirror archetypes in the human soul. These in turn mirror something of God.

A retreat can be an opportunity to immerse yourself in something ( or Someone) other than yourself. Pay attention to that inner voice which calls you to take the plunge.

At Easter new Christians are baptised in the sea here. They think of baptism as a drowning of the false ego life, and an immersion into God. For baptism means immersion. It is an experience to be relived daily. St. Cuthbert used to pray while he was immersed in the sea. Identify negative things you have to 'drown to' at this time. Now plunge afresh into the ocean of God, rejoicing in his different attributes, wave after wave of them. You may wish to sing songs such this on the opposite page.

*Reading and reflection:*

Some suitable Scriptures are Joshua 24. 1-15; Job 38; Psalm 65; Luke 8. 22-25; Rev. 5. 6-14.

PHOTO

OF

SEA

O the deep, deep love of Jesus  
vast, unmeasured, boundless, free.,  
Rolling as a mighty ocean  
In its fullness over me.  
Underneath me, all around me  
Flows the current of your love  
Leading onward, leading homeward  
To my glorious rest above.

### **7. Walk the Pilgrim Way**

It is best to start at low tide near the bridge where the Causeway begins and walk (in Wellingtons or barefoot) across the sands towards Holy Island, following the posts.

Before you start read these verses from the Bible: Jeremiah 6.16; 18.13-16; 31.21; Isaiah 58.12. Write out or memorise these and meditate upon them as you walk. Let the posts stand for moral or spiritual landmarks that have been submerged, and which God now seeks to restore. Ask God to bring to your mind some of these key landmarks which need to be restored in our society. The author's book *Exploring Celtic Spirituality* examines such landmarks that include contemplative prayer, community, hospitality, healing of the land, and triumphant dying. The island towards which you are walking can become a symbol of the promised land, or of the kingdom of God. What is your vision of the land God wants to give us? What are the landmarks God wants you to help restore? What are the areas of life which God wants you to go in and possess on his behalf? What prevailing sins in our society and in ourselves delay the coming of God's kingdom?

*For reading and reflection:* The epic journey of the people of Israel through the desert recorded in the Books of Exodus and Numbers near the beginning of the Bible.

PHOTO  
OF  
PILGRIM'S  
POSTS

God be with you at every leap;  
Christ be with you on every steep;  
Spirit be with you in every deep;  
Each step of the journey you go.

Pilgrim's Way

### **8. Keep watch on the high place**

The Heugh is the high ridge that stands between the priory ruins and the shore. Climb the Heugh and stand in the remains of the chapel, or by the mini lighthouse which sends out automated signals to passing boats through the hours of dark. From this area people used to keep watch for invaders.

The Bible pictures believers as people who keep watch against things that destroy God's ways, and who put on protective clothing in order to withstand attack.

Celtic Christians were well-known for using 'putting on armour' prayers, which they named loricas. The most famous of these is St. Patrick's Breastplate.

Spend time here as if you are on a watch. Think of things that endanger a civilisation of love. Slowly, and repeatedly pray this modern armour prayer:

As I put on the belt of truth, may I be open to your word which is truth however it may come to me today.

As I put on the helmet of salvation, may your law be my guide and delight this day.

As I take up the shield of faith, may I hold on to your promises  
and know them in my life.

As I put on the sword of the Spirit may I be open  
to the promptings of your Spirit this day.

*Michael Halliwell*

Now make your own putting on armour prayers.

PHOTO

OF

THE

HEUGH?

:

### **9. Re-visit the ancient foundations**

According to the Bible God told his people to regularly re-live their history, which was 'His-story'. There is great spiritual value in retracing the steps of saints who brought Christianity to our land.

How wonderful it is to walk with God  
Along the steps that holy ones have trod.

*Theodore H. Kitching*

Pay a visit to the excellent Priory museum, and to the grounds of the Benedictine Priory. The original Celtic monastery and school was probably near this site. The Benedictine Order that developed around St. Cuthbert's shrine at Durham built a daughter house here; these are the remains that you see. In nearby St. Mary's Parish Church (parts of which are After he was caught in a storm on a mountain a man named Elijah heard a still small voice. You, too, once you have released feelings that block you from hearing that inner voice, may receive a whisper of guidance in the stillness that follows storm.

*For further reading and reflection: Psalms 70 - 75*

Chad was trained at Lindisfarne monastery and became the leader of the Christian community in the English Midlands. If a high wind arose, he would immediately stop whatever he was doing and pray God to have mercy on the human race. If the wind became a gale he would lie prostrate in earnest prayer. If there was a violent storm, lightning or thunder he would go to the church and devote himself to prayers and psalms until it passed.

When people asked him why he did this he replied: 'Have you not read "The Lord also thundered in the heavens and the Most High gave voice. Yes, the Most High sent arrows and scattered the people, shot out lightnings and discomfited them"? For the Lord moves the air, raises the winds, hurls the lightnings, and thunders forth from heaven in order to rouse earth's inhabitants to revere him, to remind them of future judgement in order to scatter their pride and confound their presumption. The Lord does this by calling to

their minds the time when he will come in clouds in great power and majesty to judge the living and the dead, while the heavens and the earth are aflame.'

Chad concluded: 'And so we ought to respond to God's heavenly warning with due fear and love, so that as often as he disturbs the sky and raises his hand as if about to strike. yet spares us still, we should implore his mercy, examining our consciences, turning from our sins, and thereafter behaving with such care so that we do not deserve to be struck down'.

## **11. Storm Heaven's gates with Cuthbert**

St. Cuthbert used to escape the busyness of Lindisfarne's Celtic monastery by wading over to the little Hobthrush Isle where he spent hours in solitary prayer. This is now known as St. Cuthbert's Isle, and a cross marks the spot of a former prayer chapel. At low tide you can still wade across. At other times you may sit on the rock face of the Heugh, and look down upon Cuthbert's Isle, or stand in the well that faces it by the beach wall.

The church historian Bede tells how Cuthbert used to 'storm the gates of heaven' with his prayers. Some readers who have a strong faith may wish to do this too. How?

Some people use the Lord's Prayer as a framework, naming places or situations. For example, 'Your name be honoured in ...', 'deliver ... from evil', or "your kingdom come in ...'.

Take time to visualise changes that take place in individuals and groups as you pray for them. Walk around praying God's will in to these areas that have been no-go areas for God.

Cuthbert, like other Celtic Christians, often prayed with his arms stretched out in the shape of the Cross on which Christ died. Try Cross-shaped praying: you feel empathy with the suffering of Christ and of the world. The outstretched arms are also a way of embracing the world, and compassion deepens your words as you pray in this way.

PHOTO OF ST.

CUTHBERT'S

ISLE

WITH

CROSS

**12. Gaze at the incoming tide**



Find out from a tide timetable the time of high tide. An hour or two before this, go to the near end of the causeway; better still, if you are prepared to walk back three miles along the dunes, go to the far end. An amazing transformation takes place before your eyes, as landscape becomes seascape. This mirrors in the physical world something that God can do in the world of the spirit.

Stay with this. Taste this. Ponder this.  
Say the following prayer:

Incoming tide of God - cover my feet  
I yield the direction of my life to you.

Incoming tide of God - cover my knees  
I yield the rule of my life to you.

Incoming tide of God - cover my hands  
I yield the shaping of my life to you.

Incoming tide of God - cover my heart  
I yield all my emotions to you.

Incoming tide of God - cover my head  
I yield my need for control to you.

Incoming tide of God - overwhelm me  
Carry me out into your unimaginable depths!  
*Written at gathering of Traidcraft representatives at Iona in 1996*

This entering in to a God-given inner rhythm that echoes the rhythm of the tides is not an experience for a few people while they visit an isle such as Iona or Lindisfarne, it is for everyone. For example, the pressed and pre-occupied population of Britain can daily see itself as encircled by God's seas, and daily become attuned so that it moves in the rhythm of God's tides.

This earth itself is a globe floating like an island in space.

This Holy Island Retreat offers something for everyone person on this earth.

### **13. Prepare the journey to harbour**

Go to the harbour and look at the boats. Celtic 'pilgrims for the love of God' sailed wherever God's wind blew them, and wandered wherever God's Spirit led them. Celtic Christians see all life as a journey. Where is God wanting to take you at this time? How do you need to prepare? What ties need to be broken in order that you become free to go? Remember, we can be free to move with the Spirit even when we feel as if we are in a desert.

The boats here are used in varying weathers to catch lobsters, crab and other fish; but there are times when the fisherfolk know that the boats should be left at their moorings. There is a time in our lives to set sail and a time to down anchor. Review your life. Try and discern the ways God has led you. In what ways are you being called to up-anchor or to down- anchor?

For some people, the final journey into eternity will be the focus for their meditation. This is often portrayed in the image of a boat calmly coming into harbour in the setting sun. A

good exercise for old and young is to imagine we are on our death bed, to review all we have and do in the light of eternity, and to hand ourselves over to God. Your meditation might lead you into a time of devotion, using hymns such as Guide Me O Thou great Jehovah.

PHOTO

OF

THE

HARBOUR

WITH BOATS

AND

MAY

BE

A

SUNSET

**Extending the retreat to nearby places**

If you have time and transport, you may wish to extend your retreat to include nearby places that are linked to Lindisfarne. These are ideal places to walk, sit or meditate in.

### **Bamburgh**

Visit St. Aidan's church. The site of Aidan's death, and the wooden beam which people believe is the one he leaned against as he died are preserved there.

In the grounds of Bamburgh castle are the remains of St. Oswald's chapel where this saintly king's relics were kept for many years.

This is a good place to use Menu 5, prayers of protection and the liturgy for St. Oswald.

### **Cuthbert's Cave, near Chatton**

From the centre of Chatton take the minor road north (not the B 6348). Continue along this road (which soon crosses the B 6349) for a mile or two until you see the sign pointing right to St. Cuthbert's Cave on the right. Drive along this track until the in the car park. Walk nearly a mile into woods until you see the cave on your left. It was here that monks brought Cuthbert's body after Vikings began to raid Lindisfarne. This was one of their stopping places on a journey of many years, before Cuthbert was finally laid to rest in a field that became the Durham of today. On a hill behind the cave you can look back upon Holy Island.

The cave is a good place to meditate on our mortality, the shortness of our life, and to ask: What do saints such as Cuthbert say to us? An exercise: Decide what you would like your epitaph to say.

### **Yeavinger, near Wooler**

Drive out of Wooler on the A697 towards Kelso . Take the first B road left (B6351). Before you reach Kirknewton you will pass a plaque on the wall on your right which marks the spot where the Roman missionary Paulinus taught the Christian Faith in this key Celtic town (which has now disappeared). He baptised people in the nearby River Glen for a marathon 36 days. A track on the right hand side just before Kirknewton church leads to a path over the River Glen. Here you may sit and meditate on those early Christians, and on the meaning of baptism. On a fine day this is a good place to write your journal.

### **Inner Farne Isle**

PHOTO

OF

INNER

FARNE

ISLE

In season, when the weather allows, there are regular morning sailings from Seahouses to the Farne Islands. The Island on which Aidan and Cuthbert prayed in solitude is known as The Inner Farne, and is looked after by the National Trust. Ring Billy Shiels tel: 0665 720308 to book a boat. This is a good place to pray as you walk amidst the stunning bird life, or kneel in the chapel built by the Benedictine mother house that grew up around Cuthbert's Durham shrine.

## **Spiritual warfare**

Bede tells us that Cuthbert sought out the "remote battlefield" of the Inner Farne Island: "At the entry of our soldier of Christ armed with the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, the devil fled and his hosts of allies with him." When a visit is not possible,

Try "putting on" God's armour piece by piece (Ephesians 6. 10-20). What are the evils God wants you to target: idols, resistances, demonic influences on yourself, on others, in the church, in society? Name them, rebuke them in Christ's name, and claim the area they oppress as Christ's. Praise is a powerful weapon; praying in tongues; quoting Scripture, or making the sign of the Cross. Sing or recite St. Patrick's Breastplate. Stay silently offering these places of the enemy to God.

Some may wish to dedicate a whole day to St. Cuthbert, to pray in these ways at Cuddies beach, Cuthbert's Isle, St. Cuthbert's Church, or at Cuthbert's Cave near Chatton. Many also pray en route at his tomb in Durham Cathedral.

### **Before you go home**

Before you go home, try to bring together the threads of the meditations which have been most significant for you, and to discern how God may be weaving a pattern. In Celtic patterns everything interweaves, nothing is lost. Offer your past, your thoughts, your future, in an act of devotion to God. Go forth encircled with the force-field of the Trinity, and of St. Aidan and the Lindisfarne saints.

God of the journey  
God of the call  
God of the thunder  
God of the calm  
Into life's troughs  
And into life's billows  
Come with your Presence  
that prevails

### **A specimen daily schedule**

We are all so different. A person of one temperament will come on retreat in order to be free of a time-table, to let their spirit, body and imagination roam without interruption. If you are such a person, this schedule will not help you.

Others need order and structure if their retreat is not to be wasted. We suggest that if this is your need, you make a daily schedule as soon as you are ready to begin a planned retreat. on your first day in retreat. The following is an example of a schedule that a number of people have found helpful.

07.30 Morning Prayer at St. Mary's Parish Church  
08.00 Eucharist at St. Mary's  
08.45 Breakfast  
09.30 Centering down, coffee break  
10.30 A retreat menu item  
12.40 Midday Prayer  
13.00 Lunch  
14.30 Walk, reading or a retreat menu item  
16. 15 Tea, reading, writing  
17.30 Evening Prayer at the Parish Church  
19.00 Supper  
20.00 Reflection on day, journal writing, music or video  
21.30 Night Prayer and retire.

### **A specimen weekly schedule**

You will have to vary this to take account of the weather and tides, and of your energies and moods.

### **Sunday - resurrection and rest**

Morning worship in church  
Afternoon walk by St. Coomb's farm.  
Observe the skies and birds (menu 4)

### **Monday**

Morning: Figure out St. Aidan (menu 2)  
Afternoon: Find rhythm with the tides (menu 3)

### **Tuesday**

Morning Learn Oswald's Secret of service (menu 5)  
Afternoon Build a cairn (menu 1)

### **Wednesday**

Morning Join the Island Pilgrimage Walk at St. Cuthbert's  
Church  
Afternoon Keep watch on the high place (menu 8)

### **Thursday**

Morning Find rhythm with the tides (menu 3)  
Afternoon Storm Heaven's gates with Cuthbert  
(menu 11)

### **Friday**

Morning Walk the Pilgrim Way (menu 7)

Afternoon Re-visit the ancient foundations (menu 9)

### **Saturday**

Morning A visit to Bamburgh or Chatton

Afternoon Menu 6, 10 or 12.

## **Accommodation and facilities**

The islanders produce a leaflet entitled Tourist Information which includes details of accommodation at hotels, public houses, B & B, and cottages to let. These leaflets are available free at the Post Office and the Island Store.

Marygate House (Tel: 01289 389246) has accommodation for groups, and also runs Cambridge House which has accommodation for single or married adults.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has hostel accommodation for young people. Contact 546 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3NG Tel: 0141 332 7752

St. Mary's Church of England Parish Church is on the site of the original Celtic monastery and its Vicars or Abbots go back to St. Aidan. It is open daily for worship and private prayer.

In the season, when visiting groups bring their own priest, St. Aidan's Roman Catholic Church has mass at times advertised on its notice board.

The St. Cuthbert's Holy Island Project is sponsored by the United Reformed Church in Northumberland and is based on St. Cuthbert's Church, Holy Island. This is open to visitors, and hosts informal Saturday night worship and occasional day retreats. Every Bank Holiday, and on Wednesdays of other weeks, there is a pilgrimage walk around the island (either morning or afternoon according to tides). For all enquiries contact the Director, Revd. Ian Fosten, The Manse, Lewins Lane, Holy Island, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 2SB Tel. 01289 389254

### **Some helpful resources**

*Celtic Worship Through the Year* Ray Simpson Hodder & Stoughton contains liturgies for St. Aidan, St. Chad, St. Cuthbert and St. Oswald which can be used with the appropriate menu item. It also contains Midday Prayer and Night Prayer for personal use each day.

*Pilgrim Guide to Holy Island* by David Adam, Canterbury Press. There are many other books by David Adam, Vicar of Lindisfarne, which are sold in the Post Office and local shops. These includes books on Aidan (*Flame in my heart*), Cuthbert (*Fire of the North*) and books of prayers such as *Rhythms of Life*.

Pamphlets on the different Lindisfarne Saints produced by Marygate House Trust are on sale in St. Mary's Parish Church.

*Heaven and Earth: A personal retreat programme* by Brother Ramon Marshall Pickering has suggestions and advice on making your own retreats, including cooking meals while on retreat.

*Holy Island* Pitkin Guide

*Holy Island* by Frank Graham Butler Publishing Rothbury. This booklet contains maps of the island.

*Lindisfarne Priory and Holy Island* English Heritage

*Melrose to Lindisfarne: St. Cuthbert's Way* Summary guidebook by Roger Smith and Ron Shaw

Ordnance Survey map Landranger 75  
1: 50 000 Berwick-upon-Tweed and surrounding area

*Time on your hands? ... step out on a St. Cuthbert's Awareness Trail* this free leaflet (with any donation) may be obtained from St. Cuthbert's Project, The Manse, Holy Island TD15 2SD

(Back page)

More people, from all backgrounds, go on retreat than ever before.

And more people visit the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, on the far North East coast of England, than ever before.

Put the the two together, a retreat on Holy Island, and you get a unique experience.

This book enables anyone to make their own retreat on Holy Island.

From its Holy Island a la carte Retreat Menu the reader may choose places to explore, themes to meditate on, things to do and words to pray.

Revd. Ray Simpson is author of the best-selling books such as *Exploring Celtic Spirituality* and *Celtic Worship through the Year*. He is founder of the Lindisfarne Mustard Seed Project, where he lives in a house of prayer based upon the Way of Life of the Community of Aidan and Hilda.

### **Some Videos**

*The Life of Lindisfarne* narrated by Kevin Whately and featuring David Adam. Pathway Productions

*The Story of St. Cuthbert* told by Cuthbert Mather Videomaker Norwich

*The Lindisfarne Gospels* The British Library

*Return of the Saints* Basil Hume Maudelene Company

*A Year on Holy Island* an extended version of the BBC's *An Island In Time*. BBC

*St. Cuthbert's Way* Bill McLaren A.T. Video Production

**A selection of music to listen to**

*Treasures: The Very Best of Iona* Iona the band.  
cd WHAD1303 cass WHAC 1303

*Lux Aeterna* David Fitzgerald  
cd ICCD20330 cass ICC20320

*Celtic Praise Vol 3* Sammy Horner  
cd ICCD21530 cass ICC21520

*Loose Goose Face Yourself* New Dawn Music 1 Beech Close Towcester NN12 6BL

*Chrysalis A new Song* Alistair Salmond Whytbank Music Edinburgh cass and cd

*Visions of Glory* Words: David Adam. Music: James Douglas. Sung by Caritas  
Eschenbach Editions Edinburgh cass

*Music from Columba* Pathway Productions for The Church of Scotland Edinburgh cass

*Angel Voices Ever Singing* Annie Mawson Voice and harp The Old PO, Tirril, Penrith.

*St. Patrick's Breastplate* Song and harp Ellen Wycherley Voice Noel O'Donoghue  
Auldgate Recordings Edinburgh

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Most of these resources are available in Holy Island shops

# Give yourself

# a Holy Island

# Retreat



Thank you for your order for the above book, which is still at the Printers. Your copy will be forwarded as soon as it is available.

# **Give yourself**

# **a Holy Island**

# **Retreat**

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Dear Steve,

Ray asked me to type the following and send it to you. It is an alteration to the page headed

**Accommodation and Facilities**

Marygate House and Cambridge House (Tel. 01289 389246) have accommodation for groups and also for those wishing to come alone on retreat.