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25 August 2010: Canon Gerard Hetherington, Parish Priest St Laurence Catholic Church

This pilgrim is moving to a new chapter

We are people on a journey, a Pilgrim People, as the prayer in the Mass for the Dead puts it: 'Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.'

This tells us that we must keep this goal in view as we make our way through life.

At the end of the month our Diocese in Portsmouth will join several others in making an annual journey to the Marian Shrine at Lourdes. A visit to Lourdes is a forcible reminder of the universality of the church. As a communion of faith we see our sick and suffering brothers and sisters and care and attention lavished on them by other pilgrims.

I am shortly to enter into another stage of my life's pilgrimage when I rehire from the office of Parish Priest. As I prepare to leave Petersfield, my prayer for you all is that the 'Peace of God which is beyond all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Phillipians chapter 4, verse 7).