



Pilgrim Paths

Chipping Norton Deanery

Chipping Norton Circular Walk

6 Miles

St Mary's Chipping Norton - Glyme Lane - Site of Cold Norton Priory - Over Norton

This leaflet, will give you clear guidance on the route to take and provide comments on points of interest. To help focus our thoughts, there are short reflections and prayers based on Psalms 84, 85 & 86, as well as advice on places to pause to catch both your physical and spiritual breath!

The trail begins and ends at the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, one of the great 'wool churches' of the Cotswolds. Full details of the building are available inside the church. Parking in the small church car-park is for the benefit of users of the church and Parish Centre, so you may find yourself blocked in after your walk if you choose to park there. However, spaces are often available in Church Street, and a nearby alternative is the large car-park in New Street.

The walk follows public footpaths over open country and minor roads. Some parts are over rough terrain, and there are stiles and kissing gates. It is not suitable for wheelchairs or buggies. Please respect private property, don't stray from footpaths, and follow the country code.

St. Mary's Church - Chipping Norton

Preparing : Inside the Church

Take some moments to recollect God's presence as you read this psalm

Psalm 84

- 1 *How lovely is your dwelling-place,
LORD Almighty!*
- 2 *My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my
flesh cry out
for the living God.*
- 3 *Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young – a place near
your altar,
LORD Almighty, my King and my God.*

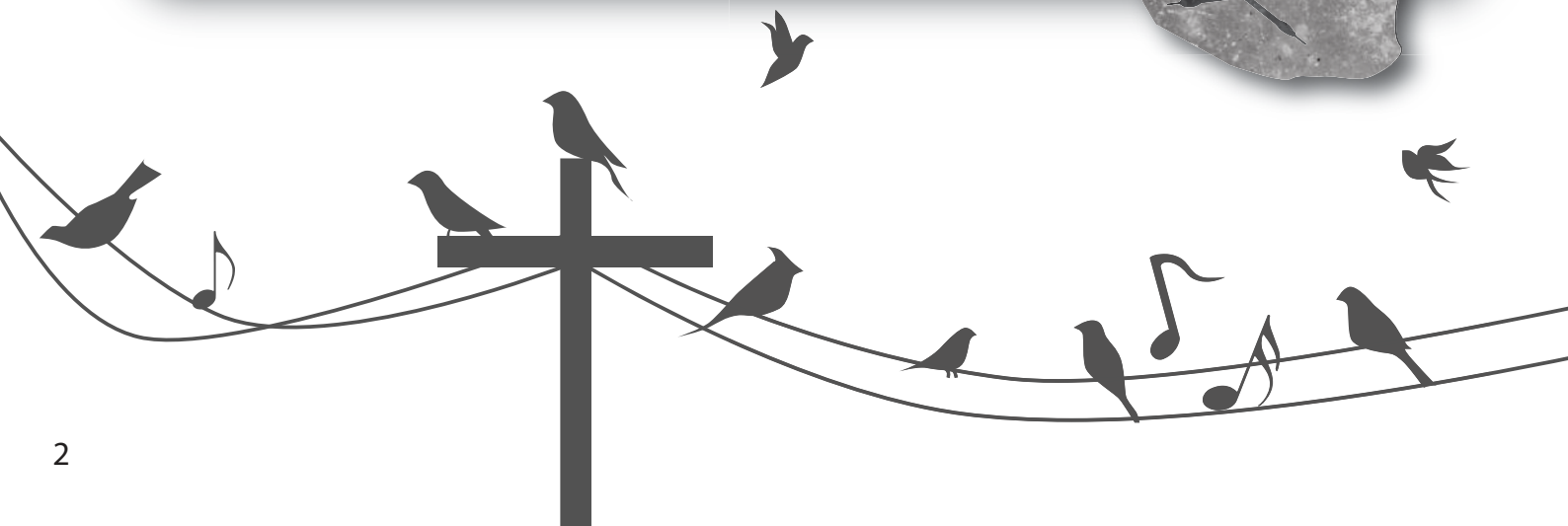
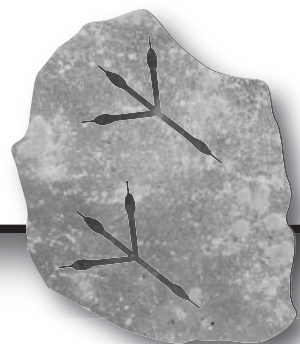


Like the Psalmist, acknowledge your 'displacement'...

.... where we are not in the place we should be.

.... where we are not where we yearn to be.

.... we are like birds searching for their nesting places.



- 4 *Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.*
- 5 *Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.*
- 6 *As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.*
- 7 *They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion..*



We are blessed.

Our hearts are set on pilgrimage.

Our God is with us!

As you start your walk, recollect Jesus' words; "Surely I am with you always."

The "Valley of Baka" is a name for any difficult and painful place in life, where everything seems hopeless and you feel helpless. But even though we go through the valley we don't expect to remain there.



The solution for Abraham and Isaac was to dig a well in the desert while, for Samuel and Elijah, it was to pray down the rain.

It's wonderful to receive a blessing, but it's even greater to be a blessing and transform a desert into a garden. True pilgrims "go from strength to strength" and trust God to enable them to walk a step at a time and work a day at a time. They are people of prayer who keep in communion with the Lord, no matter what their circumstances may be. "Blessed are those whose strength is in you." (v.5)

Adapted from Warren Wiersbe BE Bible Study Series

"Blessed are those whose strength is in you."

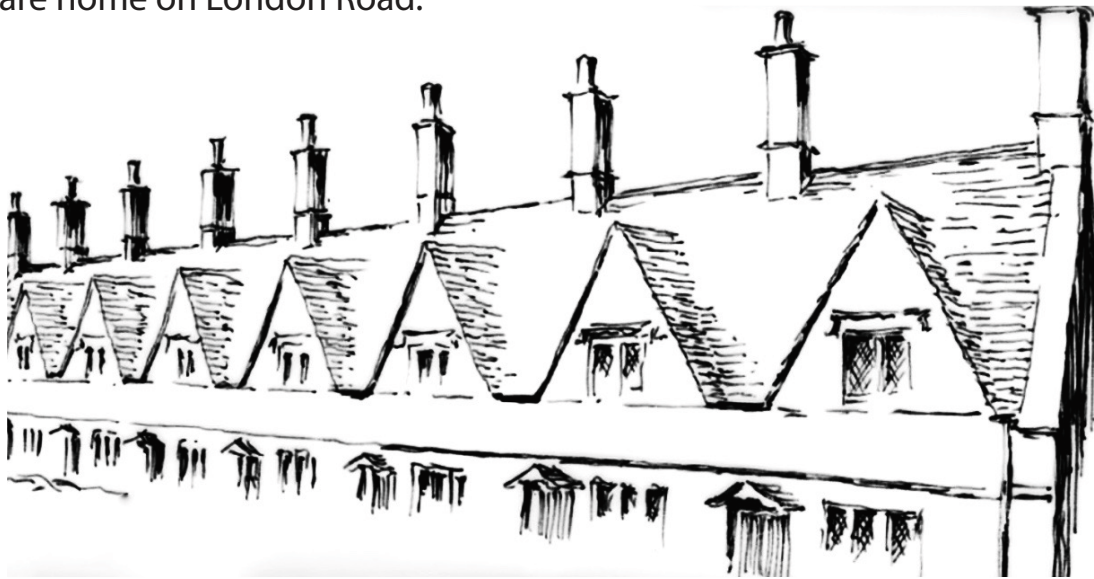
(v.5)



Leaving The Church

Turn Left

Turning left outside the porch, proceed up Church Street toward the town centre passing, on your left, the Old Vicarage. Stop at the picturesque eight- gabled (nine-chimnied!) row of alms houses, presented to the town in 1640 by Henry Cornish to house eight poor widows “of honest and godly life and conversation”. The memory of this great benefactor is preserved in the name of the new care home on London Road.



The Alms Houses remind us of the protection and shelter that God offers us on our life pilgrimage.

The Psalmist recognizes that God provides our shield. For Christians, it is Jesus, who is God’s anointed one. He shelters us as we look for help and in order to be a blessing to others.

**Blessed to be a blessing
Blessed to live your love
Blessed to share with others every blessing from above
Blessed to walk in mercy
Blessed to light the way
Oh, Blessed to be a blessing every day**

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*8 Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty;
listen to me, God of Jacob.
9 Look on our shield, O God;
look with favour on your anointed one.*



Psalm 84 continues to remind us of the power of God's Company.

*10 Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the
house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.*



Turn Right

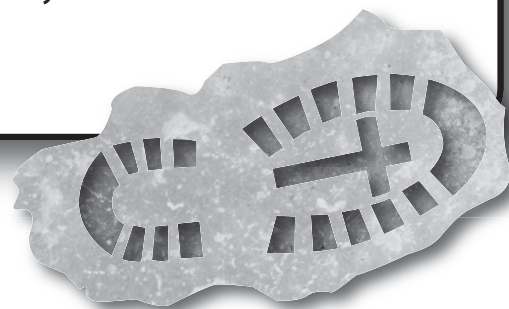
Turn right at the top and walk along Market Street to the market place. Pause at the seat by the horse-chestnut tree enjoying the splendid prospect of 'Topside', the row of grand 18th-century merchants' houses, some of which are in our local version of the Baroque style.

As we walk through the town, past the shops and businesses, we can recollect with the psalmist that he was happy to be just a doorkeeper in God's presence, rather than to be something more important but without integrity.

How far do you think it is true to say "it isn't what you do but how you do it that matters"?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the gifts, abilities, and opportunities you have given us. Help us to live in humility, do quality work, and serve our community. May our contribution reflect your character and nature to all we meet.
In Jesus' name. **Amen**



That's quite a statement, that first line of v.10!

Did the Psalmist really mean that he would exchange one day of praise and worship in God's presence for a thousand others?

Was he exaggerating for effect?

Maybe, but don't shrug off his point: his pleasure in enjoying God in the company of God's people was greater than anything that the world has to offer. If we can't join him in these feelings, maybe we could ponder why.

At the corner of New Street

Cross over

At the corner of New Street cross over to the fine Neo-Classical town hall, built in 1842, but continue straight on past The Fox into West Street and then left, around The Kings Arms, into Burford Road. Go past the roundabout and fork right, up the hill, remaining on the left-hand side. The semi-detached houses on your right are known as Brasenose Villas, and are a reminder that nearby Cold Norton Priory and its estates, having been acquired by the Bishop of Lincoln, were presented by him in 1513 to his newly-founded Brasenose College in Oxford. When you reach the coach park in front of Chipping Norton School, bear left on the path beside the school's dry-stone wall that goes straight on toward Glyme Lane. Stop by the school entrance. Its origins on this site date from the construction of a

grammar school for around 40 pupils in 1928, though it is now a large, modern academy with a highly successful sixth form. However, the town's original grammar school was linked to the foundation of the Holy Trinity Guild in 1450 by prosperous wool merchants..



Psalm 84 continues to use the sun as a metaphor.

*11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favour and honour;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose way of life is blameless.*

12 LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.



The metaphor of the sun is used here in the context of travellers.

There were no lighted streets or cars with headlights.

When you were travelling in the wilderness and it got dark, you had to stop. It got cold when the sun went down. Wolves howled in the darkness. So the travellers huddled together, waiting for the dawn. The rising sun meant that you could see your way again.

Our youth today can be subjected to circumstances filled dark images. Here are some lines from the 1981 film 'the Howling';

'It's all coming down right now From the nightmare we've created, I want to be awakened somehow.'

Prayer

All-powerful and ever-living God,
shine your light on our young people
who live in the shadow of darkness
Let the dawn from on high break upon us all,
and bring us to the light of your truth, in Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen



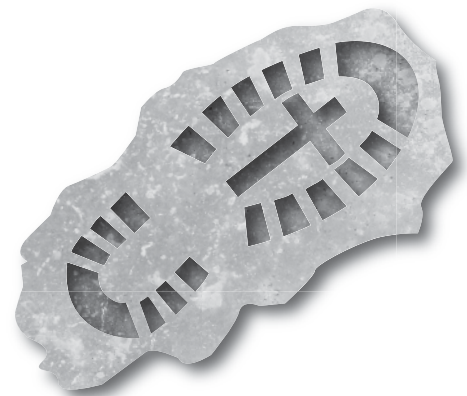
Glyme Farm

Follow the straight track of Glyme Lane past the allotments and into open countryside. After three-quarters of a mile you will reach Glyme Farm, a handsome group of stone buildings, behind which is a pond reckoned to be the source of the River Glyme. Enter the meadow on your right through the kissing gate, and continue diagonally across it through two further gates until you reach the footbridge over the stream. Pause here. The Glyme, though never large, and destined to be absorbed less than a dozen miles away in the waters of the Evenlode, yet has the honour of filling Capability Brown's lake in front of Blenheim Palace and there flowing under Vanbrugh's noble bridge.



Psalm 85

- 1 *You, LORD, showed favour to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.*
- 2 *You forgave the iniquity of your people
and covered all their sins.*
- 3 *You set aside all your wrath
and turned from your fierce anger.*
- 4 *Restore us again, God our Saviour,
and put away your displeasure towards us.*
- 5 *Will you be angry with us for ever?
Will you prolong your anger through all generations?*
- 6 *Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?*
- 7 *Show us your unfailing love, LORD,
and grant us your salvation.*



We can join with the Psalmist as he remembers God's mercy through past generations, although he is clearly living in a time of darkness. He says it feels as if God is punishing his people.

How does this resonate with you?

These first verses are all about God's grace. He restores, forgives, covers, sets aside and turns from his fierce [the word suggests 'burning'] anger..

Verses 4-7

Verses 4-7 are a prayer for revival and restoration.



As you watch the tumbling stream, you may like to think of the power of water to quench fire, to revive and bring new life.

Ezekiel's vision of water flowing from God's presence (ch.47) may well have been known by the Psalmist.

Fire and water; powerful pictures of God's nature!

Use the words of these verses for your own prayer.

Pilgrim Paths

Please draw your map here . .





Kissing Gates

Climbing the further side of the little valley, proceed through three more kissing gates as you walk through two areas of relatively recently-planted woodland.



Pause Here

Stop as you emerge and enjoy the view towards the ruin.

Psalm 85

*8 I will listen to what God the LORD says;
he promises peace to his people,
his faithful servants –but let them not turn to folly.*

Make this spot your own look-out post..... Listen!

“Look out to see what He will say.” (Habbakuk 2.1)

Be still.... Hear... Be silent ... Receive....

Prayer written by the farmer of this land

Dear Lord,

Please recognize my need to farm as you wish.

Help me to judge what I may take from this land.

That it will be no more or less than you think right.

Thank you for the seasons, for darkness and light.

Thank you for the wild life that shares everything with me.

Accept my love and appreciation as I serve and worship you.

Amen



Continue

Continue across pasture to a gate near the stream's exit from the field. Here you turn left into a pretty green lane that forms part of an ancient salt way. Climb up this lane for a little over a quarter of a mile [it can be badly churned up by horses' hooves] until you reach a gate leading into a large field grazed by horses. Pause here. Head for the farm gate to the right of the handsome, modern, stone farmhouse of New Chalford Farm.

"If my people who are called by my Name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7.14

Psalm 85 *9 Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
10 Love and faithfulness meet together;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
11 Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from heaven.
12 The Lord will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest.
13 Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps.*



London Rd

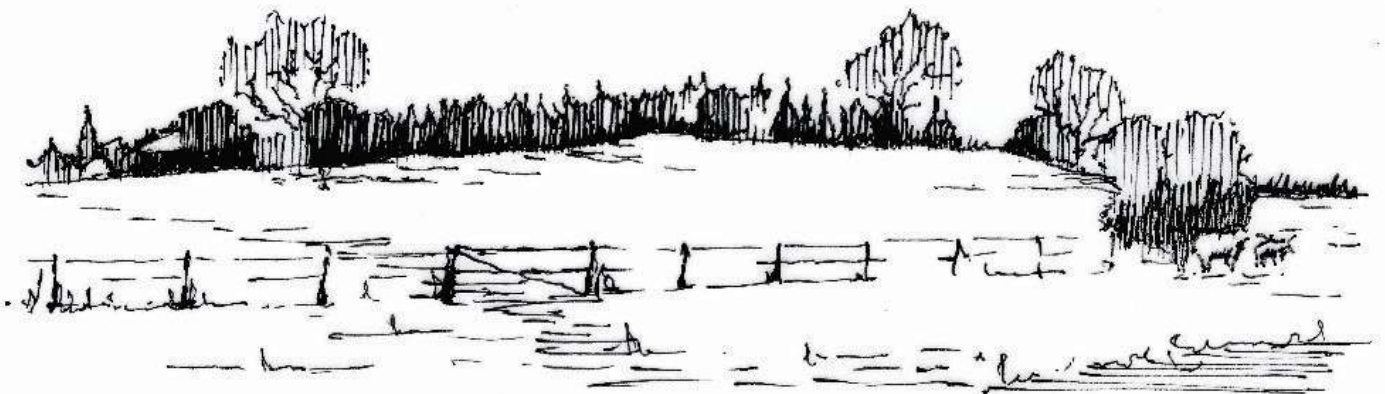
Once through the gravelled yard, follow the long, straight drive to its exit on the London Road. Over the road, take the footpath signed to the right, crossing the arable field to a hedge gap on the Oxford-Stratford road. Turning

right on the roadside path, look for a stile on the opposite side in the garden of the first house. Keeping close to the wall on your left, cross more stiles into a little-used and rather brambly track and a field. At the end of the wall the path forks to left and right. Bearing left, down to a stile near the opposite corner. Then go on down the slope to a field gate at the bottom left-hand corner of that field. Follow the track along the valley bottom to another field gate, where you will see Priory Farm on top of the rising ground ahead. This was the site of Cold Norton Priory, founded and endowed in about 1150 as a house of Augustinian canons dedicated to St John the Evangelist by Avelina, "Lady of Norton". Although some ruins appear in an engraving of 1729 by Buck, nothing remained by the time Beesley, the Banbury historian, wrote a letter on the subject to The Gentleman's Magazine in 1845.



Pause Here

on the rise, near the pond in the trees.



Take a moment as you look back down the way you have come and, following the example of the psalmist, think about yourself. What needs do you want to lay before God?

Psalm 86

1 Hear me, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

2 Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;

save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God;

3 Have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long.

4 Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you

5 You, Lord, are forgiving and good,

abounding in love to all who call to you.

6 Hear my prayer, LORD; listen to my cry for mercy.

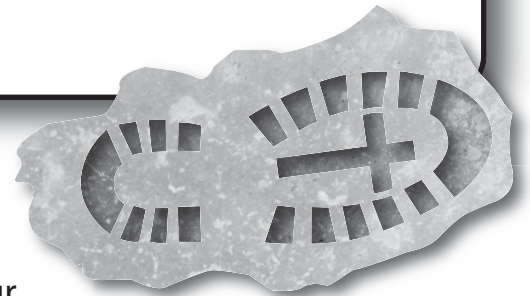
7 When I am in distress, I call to you,

because you answer me..



“We cannot by searching find out God, but we can by trusting.”

G. Brooks



As you continue the walk, you may wish to allow time to apply these verses of the psalm to yourself and your needs.

These words are from Philippians 4.6 in the New Living Translation

‘Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus’.

Continue

Head for a field gate to the left of the buildings, turn right and climb up the centre of the field, following the low point. Look for a dry-stone wall at the top with a pedestrian gate near the left end. Turn left onto Priory

Road, the lane from Chapel House to Heythrop. The foundation of Cold Norton Priory included, in addition to the main house, a 'hospital' dedicated to St Giles that probably offered hospitality to pilgrims and wayfarers. This can possibly be identified with a building that once stood by the main road and was known in later centuries as Chapel-on-the-Heath. A landmark known as St Giles's Well, last shown on a map in 1610, is now thought to have been on the site of a pond lying behind the buildings of Harris Piece Stud which you pass on your left. On crossing the main road and turning right, you see handsome stone buildings on both sides which were once part of the large and prestigious coaching inn that superseded Chapel-on-the-Heath in the 18th century. The principal section, on the corner of Priory Road, is now known as Chapel House. In a very real way, the Shell filling station and shop at Chapel House roundabout, which you now pass, continues the nearly 900-year-old tradition of serving travellers.

Cross the Chipping Norton-Banbury road to a pedestrian gate in the wall of Over Norton Park estate. Continue along this path, which eventually provides the finest view of the walk with the village and park of Over Norton in the middle distance. Stop here for a moment's reflection.

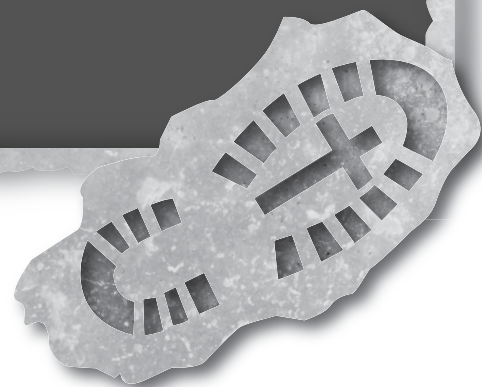


Psalm 86

- 8 *Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.*
- 9 *All the nations you have made will come and worship before you Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.*
- 10 *For you are great and do marvellous deeds;
you alone are God.*

Father, thank you for the beauty and bounty of creation. Help us to steward it well, and help us to prosper so that we may be exceptionally generous and bless others.

You may wish to use this part of the trail to pray for God to bless the people that come to mind as you walk.



Towards the Stream

The track becomes enclosed in trees and drops increasingly sharply towards the stream. In the summer months you might like to take a brief detour through the pedestrian gate in the hedge on the left (just before the hidden house on the right) along a footpath where, crossing the tiny stream, you'll find a small field that probably contains more wild orchids than you've ever seen in one place! From the gate at the bottom of the main track, enter the park and climb up the field, heading for a gate slightly to the left. To your right you may glimpse the mansion built for the Dawkins family in 1875, though the family have been lords of the manor of Over Norton since 1727 and remain so today. The present head of the family is Richard Dawkins, the eminent evolutionary biologist. From the gate look back at the valley.

Psalm 86

11 Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness;

*give me an undivided heart,
that I may fear your name.*

*12 I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart;
I will glorify your name for ever.*



Psalm 86 Continued

*13 For great is your love towards me;
you have delivered me from the depths,
from the realm of the dead.*

*14 Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God;
ruthless people are trying to kill me –
they have no regard for you.*

*15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*



We encounter many people with very different attitudes and opinions from ours. How do we engage with them while at the same time remaining true to our faith?

The psalmist here reflects on this. He knows only too well how easy it is to be inconsistent; to make compromises in our daily living that are not honest. Or to respond with apathy, indecision and weariness.

The antidote is, having acknowledged our weakness, to desire a teachable will. This is what the psalmist is asking of God.

Jesus said, 'the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.' John 14.26

God knows us so well! He is our provision. Rely on his faithfulness as you pray through these words of the psalm once again.



Over Norton

Take the short track to Over Norton village green. If you wish to visit St James's Chapel, follow the village street to the right until you reach a sharp left-hand bend. The chapel – first a cottage, then a village school – lies on the outside of the bend. Although it has long served as a chapel-of-ease to St Mary's, Chipping Norton, the building belongs to the Over Norton Park estate and is gratefully held at an annual peppercorn rent of 6d (though it is many years since this has been collected by the Dawkins family)! Continuing from the village green with its now rather sad-looking memorial fountain, follow the street left towards Chipping Norton, rounding another sharp bend at the opposite end of the village. The road drops steeply towards the bridge but, just before it, cross from the footpath to a gate. This gives access to a path known as The Cleeves which once formed the ancient route from Chipping Norton to Over Norton. Passing through a grass field and over the stream, the path continues in woodland on the side of the valley. At the far end you will see some of the extensive earthworks of Chipping Norton's former castle. It probably had its origins as a motte-and-bailey castle erected by Avelina's father Ernulf, from Hesdin in Picardy, who was given vast estates by William 1. However, Avelina's benevolence must have been learned from her mother, Emmeline, who in 1081 gave the patronage of the church to the Abbey of Gloucester. More than 900 years later the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester Cathedral remain the patrons of St Mary's Church. Continue past the cottage and re-enter St. Mary's graveyard through the black iron posts. Find a spot to sit down for a moment at the end of your pilgrimage as you complete Psalm 86 and reflect on your journey..

Psalm 86 Continued

*16 Turn to me and have mercy on me;
show your strength on behalf of your servant.*
*17 Give me a sign of your goodness,
that my enemies may see it and be put to shame,
for you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me.*



This is a prayer founded in confidence in God.

The Psalmist goes on asking, like the friend at midnight in Jesus' parable (Lk.11.5)

God always answers in his will, in his way and in his time.

It is in God's nature to help

It is in God's plan in salvation

It is in God's power.

The Psalmist wants his life to be a witness of God's goodness to him. It's his way of praying, "hallowed be your Name"

When our prayer is in God's will and bringing glory to God, we can be sure of his answer.

The parable of the friend at midnight is used by Jesus to illustrate the power of prayer, and Luke places it after Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer.

As we finish our pilgrimage, we re-commit our lives in the words of The Lord's Prayer.



Lord, teach us to pray.

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen!*