

I am restless until I rest in thee.

- St. Augustin

Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit.

- John 15:5

...so they went back into their country by another route

- Matthew 2:12

Joseph and Mary journeyed; the shepherds journeyed; and the wise men journeyed...as do we...and all were changed by it.

We are pilgrims, persons who journey to a sacred place...to a place deep within ourselves...a place where we might see in our soul the likeness of God...a place of encounter with Christ... a place of full communion with fellow strangers. (Pilgrim: from ME *pelegrim* from Provencal *pilgrim* from Latin *peregrinus*, meaning stranger.)

It is a long journey. It is a journey into the light of day, then into the darkness, and finally to the Light that inhabits the darkness...a Light that can never be diminished by darkness.

We are strangers to a world that does not fill our hearts with enduring Peace and Joy. We are exiles from a land where Infinite Love governs. We are spiritual travellers on the same journey into the Dark Night, in pursuit of Peace and Joy...Spiritual Peace and Joy...not as the world understands rest and pleasure. The Peace and Joy of Christ are ours because of our faith, hope and love, notwithstanding the turbulence and sadness that sometimes clouds our view of the Son. The Joy of faith, hope and Love is more robust than pleasure that washes away when the rain begins to fall. Joy is built solidly on a foundation of Christ-centred hope, which is not wishful thinking, but the concrete certainty that the Son-rise follows the darkest night and that new life follows the coldest winter.

This is my Christmas prayer for you and for those with whom you journey:

I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may be strengthened to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Ephesians 3:14-19