

When we, as stewards, think about tourism we need to look beyond the fabric to what it is all about. Why is the Minster open for tourists? What do we offer them?

Carl Jung was counselling a man who had been receiving therapy for six months but was getting nowhere with it. Jung told him, "Friend, I can do no more for you. What you need is God". The man asked how he could find him. Jung replied, "Find a group of people who believe in him passionately and you will find God".

Cathedrals, great churches and monastic foundations are centres of pilgrimage and hospitality. People come with a variety of motives: seeking God, preparing for their own death, performing acts of penance, and for many other reasons. Over the centuries a great deal of effort has been put into preserving these places, from the Crusades until modern times. In medieval days there was a cult of veneration of holy relics, but abuse of these was cleaned up at the Reformation. The reformers went too far. However there are still modern places of pilgrimage - Lourdes, Walsingham, Egmontou - which are part of our religious life.

We are rightly proud of the Minster's beauty and its history, but what else are we offering to the people who come? Why do we want them to come? What do we think they get from it? Are we fulfilling our role?

The monastic system was not just for monks and nuns; it was also for the benefit of people outside. Monasticism was based on the two foundations of hospitality and spirituality. For the stranger, the poor and the sick there was food, shelter, friendship and safety, and for these and others there was worship and learning. The Minster is not just for us. The following extracts from the Rule of St Benedict give us clues about how we should treat our visitors:

"The Reception of Guests:

"All who arrive as guests are to be welcomed like Christ, for he is going to say, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me". The respect due to their station is to be shown to all.....As soon as a guest is announced he should be met by the superior or by brethren with every expression of charity. When guests arrive or depart the greatest humility should be shown in addressing them: so let Christ who is received in them be adored..... So when the guests have been welcomed they should be led to prayer, and then either the superior or someone delegated by him should sit with them. The Divine Law should be read to them for their edification, and after this every kindness should be shown to them. The superior may break the fast for the sake of a guestThe Abbot should give all the guests water to wash their hands, and with the whole community he should wash their feet..... Special care is to be shown in the reception of the poor and of pilgrims, for in them especially is Christ received; for the awe felt for the wealthy imposes respect enough of itself.

We offer our welcome. We don't charge people to come in: we hope they will give generously but they are not forced to do so. They can come in, look round, ask questions, sit quietly, or pray, and they need pay nothing.

We offer spirituality. We give space for private prayer, we welcome visitors to our services, there is a place to leave prayer requests. The prayer cards often reflect a great need for a spiritual dimension in peoples lives. Heart rending things are laid before God here. We are trusted with these. People may light candles. This popular piety is not to be scoffed at; here is a simple way in which people can express what really matters for them. A chaplain or one of the clergy is always available for troubled people who need to talk.

We offer hospitality in our refectory.

We offer learning in our shop, our Visitors' Centre, in the Education Centre and through our stewards and guides.

That is our Pilgrimage Package.

We are fortunate that we are still able to treat people as individuals here and are not overwhelmed by vast hordes of paying visitors. We have the opportunity to treat them as we would treat guests in our own homes. We can, by that same token, ask people to observe our customs - gentlemen to remove

hats, to wear appropriate clothing, and not to climb over barrier ropes. We must also respect the wishes of those people who do not want to talk to us - different people have their own needs. We must not patronise: we will meet people of all faiths and none, and those "whose faith is known to God alone"; their faith may be different from ours, but it is not for us to judge.

Stewards are not overtly evangelists but they are part of the Minster's evangelistic mission. They are there to welcome everyone, whoever they are, even the annoying and the nuisance. 80-100% come to look at the architecture, but we hope that while they are here they come to some understanding of what the place is all about. We hope to sow seeds which may blossom in time to come. We may never know what good we do.

We are in a tradition of ancient pilgrimage, of people going to holy places. Some 120,000 people come here every year. We should let them go away again and hope that they have caught a glimpse of the Glory of God. Remember Carl Jung. Some of the peace and spirituality of the place will rub off on people and it is up to us to let it and to help it.