

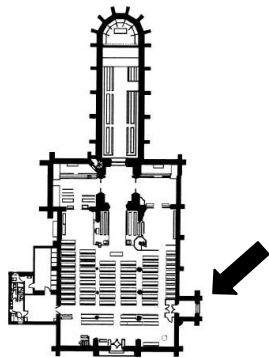
A Spiritual Journey around St Peter's

Many people come to St Peter's and admire its history and its architecture. There is a leaflet by the main doors to guide you through its riches.

Many people also come here because it is a place of prayer and reflection, and they admire its beauty and its peacefulness.

Would you like to make your visit today a real spiritual pilgrimage and not just a sight-seeing visit?

All that you need is contained in this booklet. Take lots of time to walk around. If you can't do it all today, don't rush it. Come back another day and continue where you left off.



Have a seat in the **porch**.

You are on the margins of the church here – neither in nor out. You're at the entrance to a house of God but not yet enfolded within it.

How do things stand between you and God at the moment?

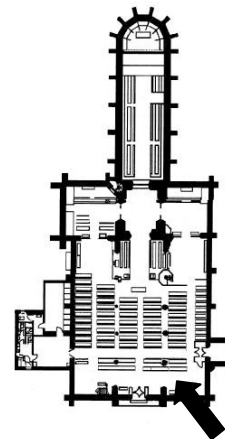
Does God feel close – around you, within you?

Or do you struggle with God seeming absent and elusive?

What are your feelings about God at the moment – about where he is or isn't involved in your life?

In life generally – at home, at work, with friends – are you an insider or an outsider?

What does that feel like, and do you want it to be different?



Now move into church and around the corner to sit by the **font**.

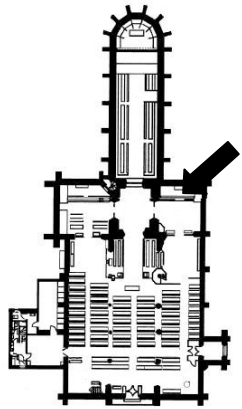
This is the place of baptism (or Christening) where we leave the past behind and make a new start with God. Jesus said, *I have come that they may have life – life in all its fullness*. The font is a place of death and life – it is a tomb and a womb.

Who or what makes you feel most fully alive?

Are there things in your life which have the opposite effect – things that deaden you?

What aspects of your life would you like to leave behind at the font today?

What new things would you like to take up – new directions in life, new relationships?



Walk down the aisle of the church to the **Lady Chapel** at the end. You'll see an altar with a blue curtain behind and a statue of Mary and Jesus to the side. Come and sit down. This is a place very much used for prayer by visitors to the church.

The big coloured window above the altar shows a Jesse Tree – Jesus' family tree, going back to King David's father, Jesse.

Think about your family – the people you know and those you've only heard of. What feelings do you have?

What traits – characteristics, features or habits – have you inherited from other family members?

What tensions, problems or hurts are there – or have there been – in family life for you?

What joys, successes or celebrations have you shared as a family?

Who (or what) else outside the family is part of your roots? How have you come to be the person you are? And how do you feel about how you are?

Move on out of the chapel to the space under the **tower** from where you can see the whole length of the church.

The large arches all around you support the weight of the high medieval tower above you. All its weight bears down on the ground around you. Have a look at the arches, and sense the force that is transmitted through them.

What weighs down on you? What are the burdens you carry (for yourself or for others, willingly or unwillingly)? After a while recall these words of Jesus, *Come to me all who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.*

Although the tower is a heavy burden it is also a place of vision – from the top you can see for many miles around. Can you get a different perspective on your own life, especially on any burdens you may be carrying? Can you imagine that you are looking down on yourself from above and seeing what's going on? What does it look like? What would you say to yourself?

Go towards the far end of the church now. Walk slowly towards the end of the Victorian Chancel where the Blessed Sacrament is kept (marked by a hanging light on the left hand side). This is the bread consecrated in a Eucharist to be Christ's body for us.

As you walk imagine that you are moving closer to God with every step. How does it feel?

Scary? Strange? Uncomfortable?

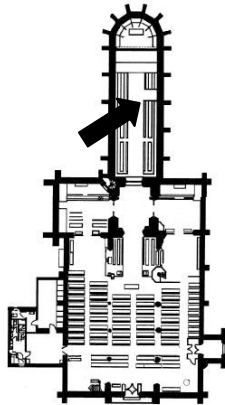
Empty? Wonderful? Overwhelming?

Come and kneel at the rail in front of the altar and just be silent for a while.

Then, after a while, look up at the angels all around the roof of the chancel, carved in wood and stone. We are not alone. Their wings enfold us with God's presence, and they bring us messages from him.

When you're ready move back down the church – but keep in mind the thought that you are not alone.

Even though you are leaving this holy place, God does not leave you.



As you get back towards the tower, stop and look at the hanging cross made by our school. Through the cross you can see out of the church doors –out into the world. It's like you're looking down from the cross with Jesus – looking down with his eyes of love, and feeling the pain of God's world.

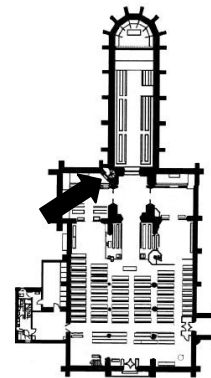
As you stand, mention to God

- the needs and problems of the world
- the people you know, especially any sick or in need at this time
- anything that you need help with now.

What do you think pains God still about the world?

How might God want the world to be different?

What pleases him about the world today because it reflects the life and values of his kingdom?



To the right of the tower (as you stand) is the Chapel of St Catherine and St Nicholas ('Santa Claus'!). It is also known as the Memorial Chapel. Have a look at the names inscribed on wood and stone and in the memorial book in its glass case.

Take a while here – standing, sitting, kneeling – to remember the people you have lost. Give thanks for what they have meant, and still mean, to you – and for how they made your life better. Amongst those who have died are there any you need to forgive?

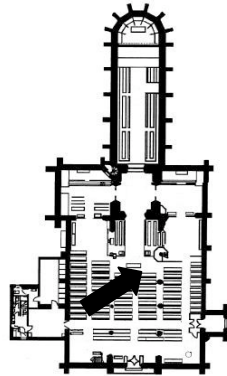
And don't leave without recalling your own mortality. The great gift of life on earth is one we only have for a short while really. What do you most want to do with the time that is left to you? How do you want your life to be different?

Finally, come to the altar in the centre of the church. This is where we gather as companions (which means, literally, 'sharers of bread'), where we receive the love of God and where we start to share that love with each other.

An altar is the heart of a Christian's world.

What communities do you belong to, and where do you most belong?

What are the most important relationships in your life?



Who loves you, and who do you love? Would you like that love to be different – stronger, more self-sacrificial, easier?

In front of the altar is a place to light candles. Come and stand in front of it.

What has struck you most powerfully as you've been on this pilgrimage? What thought, feeling or decision do you most want to take away with you today?

Light a candle as a symbol of this very special thing, and of your offering it to God for his blessing and his help.

Thank you for being here today.

May the Lord bless you
in your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and for evermore.
Amen.