

Patmos: Walking in the Footsteps of St John

Imogen Ward is a well-known travel writer,
living in London.

Going on pilgrimage to Patmos offers the opportunity to engage deeply with the spiritual riches of the island, unpack the Book of Revelation and walk in the footsteps of St John. Whether you're seeking a deeper understanding of your faith, a peaceful retreat or the chance to reflect and pray in one of the most sacred places in Christian history, Patmos offers something truly unique.

Pilgrimage is more than just getting away for a break; it is a journey of faith, an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of saints and deepen your relationship with God. On a recent pilgrimage, our group was reminded that the saints were ordinary people, like ourselves, who lived extraordinary lives of devotion to the Lord.

Last September, I joined the Patmos pilgrimage. Not having heard of Patmos before, the idea of visiting a beautiful Greek island was enough

Patmos is the place where St John received his visions for the Book of Revelation, a place where faith, history, and spirituality blended seamlessly.

to spark my interest, but it was the opportunity to learn more about the Book of Revelation that truly excited me. As a cradle Catholic, I often find it easy to fall into complacency and let my faith become routine. Patmos took me out of my comfort zone and gave me the chance to learn and grow alongside others who shared the same desire to deepen their faith. Patmos is the place where St John received his visions for the Book of Revelation, a place where faith, history and spirituality blended seamlessly. Each morning of the pilgrimage we gathered outdoors in the hotel courtyard, often as the sun was rising, and began the day with Mass and a talk. As we spent time reading the Book of Revelation, we also explored Patmos itself, visiting sacred sites like the Cave of St John, where it was said he received his visions. This cave, a space for quiet reflection and private prayer, allowed us to connect with the history of the island in a deeply personal way. Throughout the pilgrimage, we visited many other holy sites, including St John's Monastery, the Pighi Convent, the Koumana Convent and more, each with its own story and spiritual significance. For me personally, learning more about St John was one of the main



Monastery of St John the Theologian on Patmos island, the Dodecanese islands, Greece

highlights of the pilgrimage. Banished to Patmos in exile, St John's faith remained strong, and his writings in Revelation, though intimidating and perhaps scary at times, are essential for Christianity today. As someone who had not read much of Revelation before, I approached the text with an open mind, and what struck me throughout our discussions is how our faith can save us. The Book of Revelation, for me, reveals a powerful message: if we live a life devoted to Christ and stay steadfast in our faith, only good will come. God is a mighty power, and good will always triumph, evil has no power over us, remembering this in our daily lives can help us live with purpose and peace.

What also stood out to me during this pilgrimage was the shared spirit of learning. Even the priests who are long into their vocations continued to

seek new insights, asking questions and deepening their own understanding of faith. The discussions each evening, where we reflected on the day's highlights and learned more about Revelation, became an essential part of the journey. No one was made to feel awkward for speaking up, and together we were able to grow in faith and understanding.

As Fr Nick King, who led our pilgrimage, said, 'You come on pilgrimage as strangers and leave as friends.' I know that this rings true for myself and for many others who have been on pilgrimage. In just a few days, we found ourselves sharing a profound experience with each other, and we all left Patmos with a deeper connection.

From *Independent Catholic News*, with permission, www.jcjourneys.com/gpk-patmos