



Diocese of Leeds

Taizé Pilgrimage 2026

Handbook

25th July – 3rd August 2026

What are you seeking?

**Whether it's meaning, joy, peace,
community, a just world, direction
or even silence from all the noise,
come on pilgrimage to Taizé
and discover more.**

*Bless us, God of love.
Through the Holy Spirit,
always guide our steps
as we walk with the Risen Christ.
May we seek to become pilgrims of hope,
pilgrims of peace.*

Amen.

Welcome from Bishop Smitha

Welcome to our third pilgrimage to Taizé as a group from the Anglican Diocese of Leeds, and the first where we are joined by the Roman Catholic Diocese.

Being a pilgrim is about putting our trust in God as we seek to encounter him in the journey, in the conversations we have with the people we encounter, and in the particular spirit of the destination. Our journey is to help us fall better in step with Christ by entering the rhythms of grace and prayer in Taizé. The return journey is just as important. Sometimes it is only when we look back that we see how God has been shaping us for our future discipleship and development.

Our prayer is that each of us on this pilgrimage to Taizé will be shaped by the experience as we spend time in God's company. May it be an exciting adventure!

+ Smitha

This booklet, with information mostly taken from the Taizé website, will hopefully answer your questions. If, however, you can't find an answer here, then please ask.
taize@leeds.anglican.org

Travel Details

We will be departing from Huddersfield on Saturday the 25th of July at 10:15am. After a ferry crossing from Dover we will travel overnight by coach to the Taizé Community. Our estimated arrival time will be 8:00am on the 26th of July.

Please gather at 9:15am on the 25th of July outside Huddersfield University (address) for a prompt departure at 10:15am. This will enable us to have plenty of time for luggage to be stowed but remember to have your passport in your hand luggage for immigration check at Dover.

At the end of our pilgrimage, we will be departing Taizé at 11:45am to travel back to Huddersfield. This will again

be an overnight journey with an estimated arrival time of 5:30am in Huddersfield on the 3rd of August. This will be subject to travel on the day so please ensure you have a way of contacting whoever is picking you up!

Meal tickets are included for both the outward and return journey on the ferry. Please ensure you have an in date passport that enables you to travel between the UK and France! If your passport is not a U.K. passport, please ensure you have a Schengen visa for travel.

Life in Taizé

The meetings in Taizé take place around the community of brothers who live there. Everyone should be ready to enter fully into the rhythm of community life for the whole week – gathering with the brothers for prayer 3 times a day, joining with people from other countries for meetings, meals, small group discussions and practical tasks (serving meals, washing up, etc.). We will be sharing simple living conditions in tents/dormitories

and respecting the silence around the church and elsewhere on the site, especially at night.

Programme

From its beginning the Taizé community has been inspired by two aims: to live in communion with God through prayer and to be a leaven of peace and trust in the midst of the human family. A stay at Taizé is an opportunity to seek communion with God in prayer, singing, silence and reflection. It can be possible to rediscover an inner peace, a meaning to life and a new impetus.

Experiencing a simple life shared with others reminds us that daily life is the place where Christ is waiting for us. Some young adults are looking for ways of following Christ with their whole lives. A stay in Taizé can help discern this call.

Each day, brothers of the community introduce a Bible reflection, followed by a time of silence and sharing in small groups. In the afternoon, workshops help to deepen the relationship between faith and life in the

areas of work, social questions, art and culture. Young adults who wish can spend the week or the weekend in silence, to take time to listen to how God speaks to them in prayer, in the Bible or through the events of their life. You can also choose to spend two days in silence, from Thursday evening to Sunday.

There will be a theme for the year at Taizé and a letter from the Prior, Brother Matthew to focus on. Please see this year's letter '**What are you seeking?**' is in the appendix. You will normally be together with other people of your own age group. There is also a range of workshops later on in the afternoon that you can choose from. After the formal part of evening prayer is over, Brothers will stand at points around the church. This is an opportunity for you to have a private conversation with them, should you wish.

We would encourage you to circulate, chat and integrate with people from other countries to really make the most of your stay. You will be in small groups with people from other countries and this can become a long-lasting experience. Make the most of it!

We gather together as a whole Taizé community for worship, small groups and for mealtimes. Food is simple but will sustain your time on pilgrimage. Dietary needs are catered for, but specific requests must be made so please be in touch ASAP if you require a specific diet. Meal tickets will be distributed on the first afternoon. Do please bring what you need by way of snacks or for allergies/intolerances.

Each pilgrim to Taizé is allocated a job to serve the community, from cooking to washing up, helping clean parts of the site to managing the quiet areas, serving in the Oyak (shop on site) to being a 'Shusher' keeping everyone quiet in the Church – there really is something for everyone. Jobs are allocated following our welcome on the Sunday afternoon, which we complete as a whole group.

There is a small shop on site (Oyak) which serves soft drinks, beer, cider, wine and snacks at specific times during the week. There is also a gift shop which sells Taizé related and created goods such as pottery created by the Brothers of the community. Oyak is cash only, so

you might want to bring some euros to spend in this way, along with at service stations through the journey.

A typical day at Taizé

Daily Rhythm

- 8.15 am Morning prayer, then breakfast.
- 10 am Introduction to the day and bible teaching with a brother of the community followed by quiet reflection or small group discussion.
- 12.30 pm Midday prayer, then lunch.
- 2 pm Optional song practice.
- 5.15 pm Tea.
- 5.45 pm Themed workshops from Tuesday onwards.
- 7 pm Supper.
- 8.20 pm Evening prayer, then vigil with songs in the church, followed by night silence.

Friday Evening prayer is followed by prayer around the Cross.

Saturday There are additional 3.15 pm theme workshops and evening prayer is celebrated with candles to rejoice in the paschal mystery.

Sunday There is no morning prayer. Timings are: 8.45 am Breakfast, 10 am Eucharist, 11.45am departure.

**Scan the QR codes and
step into the footsteps of past pilgrims.**



Aaron



Tilly



Lithu

What to bring with you

Pack as light as you can and bring:

- *Passport, GHIC, Euros, travel insurance details*
- *Any medicines required for the duration of the trip.*
- *Bible, notebook and pen.*
- ***If camping:*** *tent, sleeping bag, pillow and sleeping mat/air bed.*
- ***If staying in dorms:*** *sleeping bag, sheet, pillow*
- *Toiletries, including a large towel (& spare toilet roll!)*
- *Sun cream and cap/hat.*
- *Something to cover shoulders & knees in church.*
- *Light waterproof coat (with hood).*
- *Torch and spare batteries.*
- *Musical instruments – flute, guitar etc. (small)*
- *Battery bank, there are limited charging points.*
- *Re-usable water bottle. There are fresh water points available 24/7 to refill bottles.*
- *Appropriate footwear e.g. comfortable and will dry easily.*
- *Prepare for warm but also wet weather!*

- *Something for the journey; hand baggage with passport, wallet, snacks, neck pillow, extra layers and anything else you may need for the journey – including medication. Once luggage is in the hold there is no access to it until we get to Taizé.*

Health

Please ensure you have appropriate medical cover and insurance.

Please apply for and bring your UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). You will need this for the reimbursement of any medical costs. Website details: <https://www.gov.uk/global-health-insurance-card>

Please make sure that your vaccinations are up to date, especially concerning covid, measles, mumps and rubella and whooping cough, as well as booster vaccinations for tetanus and polio. If you have had an infectious disease recently, please make sure that you are no longer contagious before coming to Taizé.

If you are sick during the pilgrimage, please go at once to the first aid station in El Abiodh. A nurse is always on duty. Please let one of the group leaders know.

Security & Safeguarding

The brothers of the community want Taizé to be a place of trust, a safe place for those who come to seek inner peace. Everyone needs to be vigilant about this. The community counts especially on the responsibility and watchfulness of group leaders. As part of the security measures taken in France for places of large gatherings police or military may be present. All baggage should be labelled and never left unattended.

If you become aware that any person has been subjected to sexual abuse or any kind of violence, please speak about it immediately to one of the group leaders, a brother of the community (through La Morada), or a sister (it is possible, day or night, to contact a sister who is a nurse through El Abiodh). You could also contact

Diocese of Leeds Safeguarding Office at safeguarding@leeds.anglican.org. Taizé asks all people taking part in the meetings to pay particular attention to people behaving suspiciously in any manner whatsoever, whether they are participating in the meetings or not.

If you have any safeguarding concerns during the trip please speak with a leader from the Diocese who will assist.

“What are you seeking?” Brother Matthew’s 2026 Letter

So many people are looking for meaning in their lives. They are searching for something greater than the easy promises that fill our screens so much of the time. Are humans not created for a real purpose? What can enable us to discover this?

When we try to live from the trusting of faith we sometimes ask ourselves: What does God want of me? We have so many desires. Which is the path I can walk with God?

During the past year, we have received visits at Taizé from young people from Ukraine, Palestine, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Myanmar and other places where war and conflict are rife. Their faith and their longing for just and lasting peace have been an inspiration to us. We have also heard the testimonies of people working in Gaza or with family living there. We can see the pain of those whose loved ones have been held hostage and hear the cries of those seeking justice under oppressive regimes.

I also spent some time with the brothers of our Taizé community who live in small fraternities in Brazil and in Cuba. Brazil is still affected by the legacy of slavery and great inequality. Yet there are people who refuse to give up; they are fighting to be at the side of the poorest. I think in particular of a community in the city of Salvador, where homeless people sleep in the church and help each other.

In Cuba, I saw a courageous people facing enormous difficulties. I met a grandmother who had given all her savings so that her grandson would have what he needed for the start of the school year. His mother, like many

other Cubans, had left the country as a migrant seeking a better future.

In many places, people are wondering: How can I use the freedom that has been given to me to express solidarity with those who suffer? They are seeking ways in which their desire to love and care can become real, making their lives meaningful by helping and serving.

Our world has so much beauty, but so much injustice too. What is my place in all of that? What am I being asked to do? This is the question which I often feel in my heart, faced with the complexity of life and the choices with which I am confronted.

In John's Gospel, the first words of Jesus are "What are you seeking?" I shared this question with a group of six young volunteers in Taizé from six different countries spread over four continents. What follows is inspired by what they told me.

To them and to all the volunteers who help run the meetings in Taizé, spending time with our community in

order to pray and to understand more about the call of Christ in their lives, I would like to say thank you.

Seeking Silence

After a week at Taizé, when asked what has been most important for them, many young people speak about the experience of silence. In a world which is hyperconnected and constantly on the move, this may seem surprising.

When we take time and disconnect from input that never ends, it is sometimes in silence that we truly encounter ourselves and also glimpse a greater reality.

In God's beautiful creation, the sound of the wind, the babbling brook and birdsong can embrace us and lead us towards that inner silence where communion with all that exists becomes tangible. A star-filled night can fill us with wonder.

Jesus entered the world in silence: * “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” * The One who was with God and was God before the beginning of all things came to be with us through a humble and lowly birth in the

silence of the night:*

the light which shines in the darkness.

And so this silence is not empty. It becomes a place of encounter. In silence we are not alone. But we struggle with it because our mind is filled with so many things.

As it says in the Rule of Taizé, “If your attention wanders, return to prayer as soon as you notice your distraction, without lamenting over it.”*

Many centuries ago, someone prayed, “My heart says of you, ‘Seek God’s face!’ Your face, God, I will seek.”* In the silence of our heart, will we turn again and again to seek God?

Prayer is often first of all a desire,* a silent longing for peace in the presence of God. When we do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit is there, praying in us in sighs too deep for words.* As we listen to that deepest part of our heart, we can realize that it is there that the Holy Spirit dwells. I am confronted with myself and with God, who is breathing in me.

Living God, teach me to seek you in the silence of my heart, in the beauty of creation, in listening to your Word, in welcoming your humble presence.

Can we commit ourselves to spending time each day to be silent and to enter into the presence of God? Perhaps we could start with just five minutes to begin with. Begin by reading a short passage of the Bible, or give thanks for what has been received during the past day; or simply take time to be.

Seeking a Direction

Silence makes true discernment possible. When we are seeking which direction to take, silence allows us to listen to what is deepest in us. We also need an inner freedom so that we can make a responsible choice. Such freedom involves accepting our limits, but without being afraid: fear is never a good counsellor, and God never forces our hearts.

Everyone is seeking both a sense of belonging and some form of security. And as we seek an authentic way of living, sometimes it is other people who can help us find

who we really are. Through others we may be surprised to discover something that we could not have found alone.

In John's Gospel, two young people are staying in the Jordan valley with their teacher, John the Baptist, whom they trust. Not wanting to keep them for himself, he points them towards another, to Jesus. And they leave to go after him.

When Jesus sees them, he asks, "What are you seeking?" When they reply, "Master, where do you live?" he tells them, "Come and you will see".

Those two questions sum up the process of seeking and discovering a direction for a life with Christ. Starting with our own desires, with expressions of our longing for greater life – "What are you seeking?" – we go on to confront them with the person of Jesus – "Master, where do you live?"

The Jesus who invites us to "Come and see" is gentle and humble of heart, and he loves us with a love that is unconditional, secure and unfailing. Will I dare to

respond to his invitation despite my hesitations and even my doubts?

Christ Jesus, show me the way and make me ready to follow it.

Who are the people who point me towards Christ?
Spend a moment giving thanks for them.

Seeking Joy

One of the volunteers at Taizé told me, “In my country, young people try to survive in a world that offers everything; but deep within, it is fear, anxiety and depression that dominate.”

We are faced with promises of joy all around us. But so many of these fail to lead to a lasting joy, and give just a short moment of pleasure.

Joy bubbles up from deep within when we realise that we are loved for who we are. When we understand that joy is a gift and not something we can claim, we can find we are ready to welcome it. Then we are no longer trying to produce it by force, and we are borne lightly forward.

Jesus was invited with his friends to a wedding feast, and after a while the wine ran out. At that moment, something is lacking: Jesus is among the poor. Meeting them in their poverty, he gives them what is beyond their expectations. What he wants for them is joy, and he does everything to make it possible.

I remember many years ago being in Kolkata at the mother house of the Missionaries of Charity. On the wall was a saying of Mother Teresa which reminded me that God accepts us with our frailty and does not ask us to be perfect. We do not need to be always strong.

Our inner poverty can make us worry that we are not good enough. This often leads us to disguise who we really are, deep down. But if we allow ourselves to stand with empty hands before Christ, he comes to fill them, transforming that poverty little by little.

Even at times when we feel sorrow, and joy seems far off, it is possible to remember how Jesus spoke of a joy that no-one will be able to take away.*

Merciful God, we would like to welcome your joy whatever situation we may be in. When we understand that you love us and open for us the way to a life that will never end, joy springs forth from deep within us.

Reflect on what we can do to bring joy to other people. Meet with someone in person rather than only virtually. Sometimes in a humble service given freely to others I receive far more in return than I had expected, especially when I see the joy on the face of those I am serving.

Seeking Meaning

In each one of us there is a thirst for meaning. Where can we quench this thirst? In our busy lives, somewhere within us there is a quiet voice which whispers that we are loved.

A leader called Nicodemus, who was seeking true meaning in his life, heard of Jesus.* He came by night to meet him and to find a way to put his thoughts into words.

Our deepest questions about faith, life and death, meaning and purpose often remain unspoken. But until

they are expressed, something in us is not satisfied, as was the case for Nicodemus.

As we seek, will we follow our questions until they bring us to the source of life? We may not find all the answers to our questions; but when we dare to follow Christ, we can come to a point where we have to entrust ourselves to God with a lucid trust.* Then we discover God's enfolding love and goodness.

The meaning of Jesus' life was not to judge humanity but to enable every human being to understand that they are loved by God. He comes to show us the path of an ever-greater love. That is his secret.

Nicodemus approached the light step by step. A year or two after meeting Jesus by night, he openly took his defence with the authorities in Jerusalem.* A few months later, when Jesus was hung on a cross, he showed great courage.* He dared to belong to the group of Jesus' friends. His courage led him into community.

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on.... I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me.*

Try to organise a gathering where each person speaks about how they find meaning in their lives. For some it may be from their faith, for others it may be through some kind of action, still others may have more questions than answers. Such sharing and attentive listening can be way of encouraging each other. If it seems appropriate, the gathering could begin with a song invoking the Holy Spirit and finish with a song of thanksgiving.

Seeking a Just World

Injustice – whether it involves ecological devastation,* inequalities, violence, oppression or war – stirs up a whole range of emotions: indignation, anger, sadness, sometimes despair. But as we rightly decide to fight against it, is there not a danger of becoming so locked in our own opinions that we no longer see beyond them?* There is even the risk of becoming prisoners of our own

algorithm and being caught up in the polarisation that threatens our societies.

Let us step outside our own box and allow viewpoints different from ours to challenge us, even when it is impossible to agree.

Sometimes we need to be ready to hold complex realities together, where no solution seems possible.* Listening to the stories from different sides can be overwhelming, but not to hear them would be unjust.

After evening prayer in the church in Taizé, a young woman said to me: “I have to recognise the violence that exists in me, but also to hold it alongside my need for contemplation.” I found this very liberating. Instead of suppressing that feeling, or pretending it didn’t exist, she placed it alongside her thirst for God.

There is a danger that the destructive forces which are in each one of us can take hold of us. It is so easy to demonise people, even whole nations. Then we risk being sucked into a spiral of violence and perpetuating it. Contemplation – prayer – opens us to another

dimension, leading us to be reconciled with what we carry within us and to find ways of building bridges.

The Holy Spirit is there to lead us on the path where we can make courageous decisions. Brother Roger, who began our community life in Taizé, spoke of a creative violence of the peacemakers* which enables them not to give in to the temptation to leave the path of the Gospel.

Jesus embodies the world of justice and right relationships which the Gospels call the Kingdom of God. But he got angry and overturned the tables of the sellers and money-changers in the Temple to make room for God.* Jesus spoke vehemently against religious hypocrisy, but he was also able to welcome a religious leader like Nicodemus. He was familiar with the Pharisees and accepted their hospitality,* but he also shared meals with people excluded from society. He had an unfailing love for the lost sheep of his people Israel,* but he admired the faith of a Roman officer and healed his child;* and he allowed himself to be challenged by the faith of a pagan woman he met on a journey abroad.*

Taking the risk of establishing relationships with people who were different,* Jesus fostered trust and incarnated God's reconciling power.

If we know that the light shines in the darkness and that, through simple gestures of human goodness, the love of God can win, then we are set free to act.

Christ Jesus, in your life on earth, you did not hesitate to denounce injustice, but you sought to build bridges with those you met on your path. Increase our thirst to bridge the separations which divide people and nations so that justice may flourish on earth.

Which concrete steps can we take to build bridges where there is division? It is difficult for one person to act on their own. Reflect with others; put ideas together; reach out as a group to those on the margins of society. What does it mean to listen to people with different opinions from ours, to understand their fears, whilst holding on to our own Gospel values?

Seeking Community

One of the volunteers at Taizé told me, “I want to live in accordance with my values and Gospel values. When I make a decision, I ask myself, is this acceptable for others, for the planet and also for me? We want to build a better world.”

Community with each other, with creation, with God – after the isolation of the pandemic, are we ready to rebuild a world of community,* a caring world?* Everything is linked; we all belong to each other in our common home, the creation which has been gifted to us.

At the Cross, Jesus’ community had disintegrated. Judas betrayed him. Peter denied him. Most of his friends ran away. All Jesus’ work to build a life of loving communion, of being welcoming to all, seemed to have ended. He had taken the risk of being ready to give his life even for those who were to reject him. But at the darkest moment, community is reborn at the foot of the Cross.*

According to John's Gospel, four women and one man remain with Jesus right until the end. Without words, they are simply there. They become witnesses to the communion that Jesus continues creating even when nothing seems possible any longer.

Hostility and rejection break human communion. On the Cross, Jesus takes this hostility and rejection on himself, rebuilding communion even at the moment of greatest suffering.*

At the Cross, Jesus gives his beloved disciple to his mother as another son, and he, representing all the future disciples whom Jesus loves, takes her into his home. A new family is born: the community of believers in Jesus, the Church – born not in a human way out of triumph and victory, but out of a love which is greater than the mute silence of suffering. Who could be excluded from such a communion?*

In the Church, we are called to stand together with those who suffer, with the victims of injustice.* We are all humans, called to welcome one another in fairness and

uprightness, where the freedom and integrity of each person is respected.

Jesus finishes his work when he dies on the eve of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week,* just as God finished the work of creation on the seventh day, having seen that all “was very good”.* The gift Jesus makes of his life on the Cross is the beginning of a new creation. He dies a violent death – but “streams of living water”* flow from his body,* water which is nothing other than the Holy Spirit renewing the face of the earth.

The body of Jesus is placed in a new tomb in a garden, the garden which our earth is meant to become.* And in the silence of the seventh day that follows, the wounded creation, of which we are part and which is entrusted to our care, begins its secret transfiguration.

Christ Jesus, you gave your life for each person, and you show us how far you are willing to commit yourself to us. May we stand at the foot of your Cross with your mother Mary and your beloved disciple, and welcome what you tell us.

With whom are we asked to stand? How do we experience community? Students can share a house together, pray and share meals, especially with overseas students; others meet weekly in somebody's home. Make those who feel they are on the outside welcome, overcoming the feeling of injustice in a simple way.

Seeking Peace

We long for peace – inner peace and peace in this world which God loves so much. “Begin the work of peace within yourself, so that, once you are at peace, you can bring peace to others,”* said a believer of the 4th century.

When Jesus meets with Mary of Magdala in the garden on Easter morning, he asks her, “Why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”* Her tears turn to joy as she realises that the one she longed for has not been overcome by death. And Jesus then sends her to share what she has seen and heard with his other friends.

Shortly afterwards, when Jesus meets them and they are still full of fear, his first words are “Peace be with you!”*

Entering into their fear, he opens them to the peace of his presence. Breathing upon them the Holy Spirit, he gives them the responsibility for continuing his work of reconciliation.

The peace Jesus had promised them before his death, a “peace which the world cannot give”,* is much more than an absence of conflict. The biblical word shalom includes the sense of restoration and wholeness. This is the peace of God entrusted to us so that we can foster and develop it.

When we help others discover the freedom and the peace that they are offered, when we do what we can to break down barriers of hostility or the walls that keep them confined, then we are taking part in the very life of God. And when we look at creation with wonder and gratitude and show care for it, are we not walking on the same path?

All of us have a need to let ourselves be bathed in the peace that the Risen Christ promises each one of us. In this way we can journey together and accompany each other, sowing hope* step by step. Even through the

simplest gestures, will we seek to become signs of reconciliation, pilgrims of peace, each in our own way, wherever God has placed us?

Listen to the voices of those who suffer from deadly conflicts or from the violence that we have to face in our societies. Maintaining contact with people who live in war zones can be a way of doing this. Support those striving for justice in countries with oppressive regimes or with governments that promote war. Would some of these people be ready to share their testimony? Prepare a prayer vigil for peace and share some of these testimonies. Listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us today.

Final Details!

Leaders

The leaders of the 2026 pilgrimage are:

Safeguarding, pastoral/settling in, first aid

- Bishop Smitha Prasadam (Bishop of Huddersfield)
- Peter Prasadam (Team Leader)
- Revd Rebecca Mathen (Team Leader)
- Jessica Wilkinson (Team Leader)

Locations

Drop off and collection – University of Huddersfield,
Queen Street South , outside Barbara Hepworth
Building.

Taizé - The Taizé Community, 71250 Taizé, France.

Emergency Numbers

- Taizé - +33 (0)3 85 50 30 02 (in English) (Monday to Friday: 11:00-12:00 CET)
- Anglican Diocese of Leeds - tbc
- Roman Catholic Diocese of Leeds - tbc
- French Emergency Services – 114
- Diocese of Leeds Leaders on Site - tbc

**We look forward to seeing you at
9:15am on the 25th of July!**

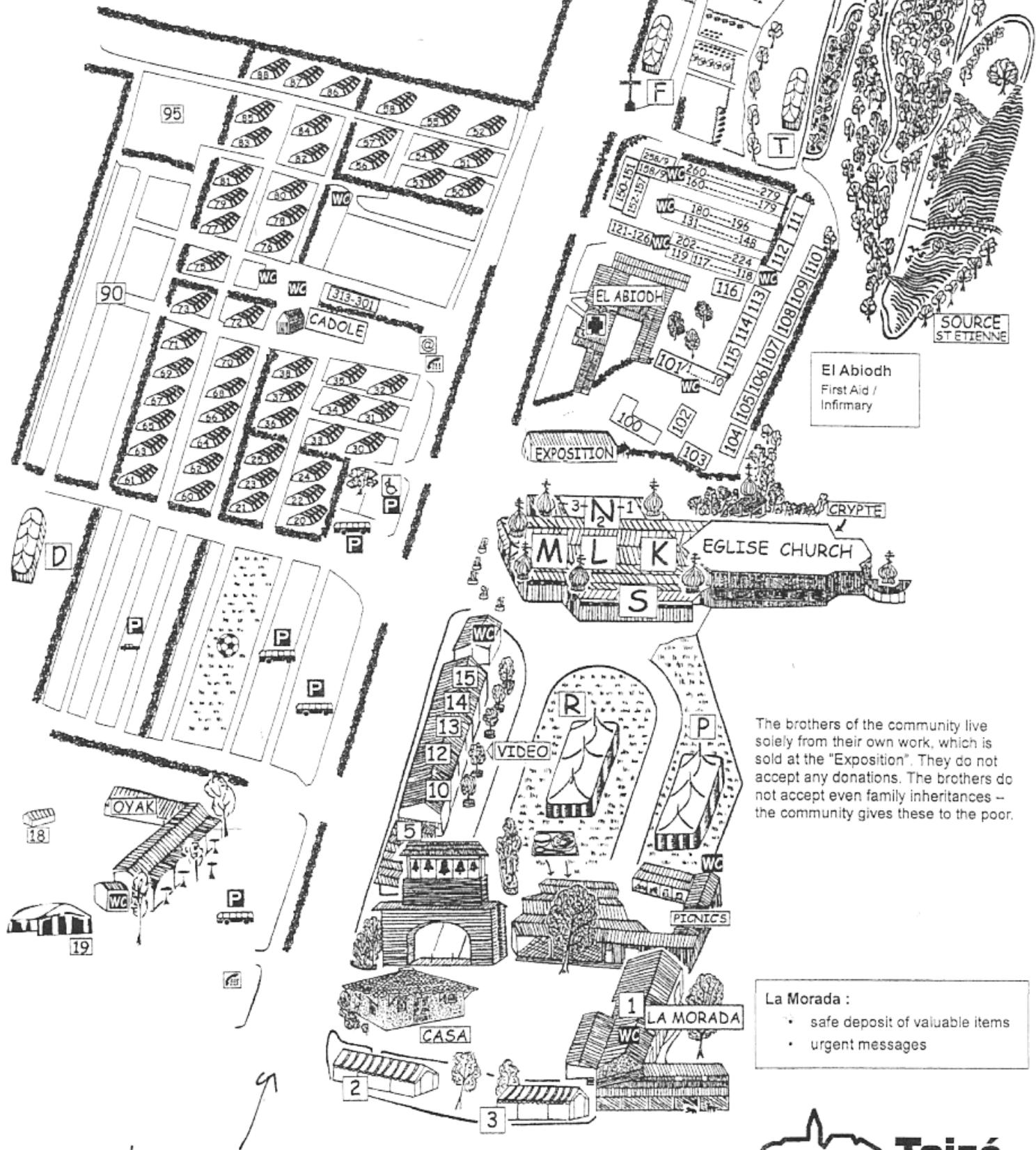
Your accommodation	
	Bible reflexion for each day

time	place

First work rendezvous	day	Time	place	with

The wood and St. Stephen's spring are open late morning and in the afternoon. It is a place of silence. Out of respect for others, please be quiet there...

Paths have been made to make it possible to walk safely out of the way of vehicles. Please use them.



In preparation for the pilgrimage you are invited to discover more, ask questions and worship in the style of Taizé in a variety of locations.

Times and locations

22nd February

St. Oswald's Church, Bradford at 9:30am
All Saints Church, Bradford at 11:15am

21st March

Leeds Cathedral at 1pm

25th April

Holy Nativity Church, Mixenden at Noon