



It's a different kind of pilgrimage

GETTING away from it all sometimes works out being more stressful than dealing with the things you're actually trying to get away from.

Packed beaches, crowded resorts and wild nightlife can be great fun but there comes a time in life when what you really want is a relaxing, interesting break peppered with a bit of fun and good company.

Pilgrimage mightn't be a word that springs to mind but the modern version of this spiritual journey offers all that and more.

Lourdes, Fatima and The Vatican are the traditional destinations but if you're looking for something different then walking the ancient pilgrimage route of Via Francigena, which links Canterbury to Rome might be just the thing.

This famous route was first recorded by Archbishop of Canterbury, Sigeric, who walked to and

Tours can be self guided or guided and are available all year round. Booking from Ireland is available from walking and cycling holiday specialists, Camino Ways, with prices from €575pps, or €695 single for six nights.

The price includes luggage transfers between hotels, breakfast, dinner and a holiday pack including 24/7 assistance over the phone. Flights have to be booked separately. For more information visit caminoways.com or call 01-5252886.



from Rome to be consecrated by the Pope in the middle of the 10th century. The Via Francigena is dotted with many outstanding highlights and has become popular among Irish tourists in recent times.

Famous Irish people who've followed in the footsteps of Archbishop Sigeric include Brendan Behan, Patrick Kavanagh and Brian O'Nolan (Myles na Gopaleen).

More than 2,000 kilometres long, the route passes through England, France, Switzerland and Italy passing beautiful places of interest like the famous Canterbury Cathedral, Lake Geneva, the Great St Bernard's Pass and the Swiss Alps.

The highlight of the trip is the last 100 kilometres, the most famous and the most walked section, from Viterbo to the St Peter's Basilica. This section passes by the beautiful lakes Vico and Bracciano, as well as the relaxing pools of thermal water near Viterbo, before en-

tering Rome via the ancient Appian Way.

The route is actually split into 16 sections, each one taking approximately one week, with travellers booked into 2* or 3* hotels along the way. Each section starts and finishes in a large city or centre of interest like Canterbury, Reims, Lausanne, Siena or Rome.