

## Gang of young people go on pilgrimage.

A group of young people from Harborough are challenging recent perceptions of youth. Is your perception of young people gangs, antisocial behaviour, knives and drugs? On Saturday a coach load of young people from Harborough and Leicestershire will set off to join five thousand other young people from across the world in a monastic community in Burgundy, France. The group will spend a week camping in the tiny village of Taizé, home of the Taizé community. They will join the monks for prayer three times a day, meet with other young people from different countries and cultures, and talk about how they can help their communities be better places to live in when they get home. Of course, being young, they will party in the evenings.

Event organiser, Revd Jonnie Parkin said "Taizé is an amazing place. It changes people. It gives them confidence, hope and belief. Most young people who go are surprised at how much they love it. After all, they are going to a monastery- it's not exactly something they would normally get excited about!"

The trip, which runs every year, is so highly thought of that the Bishop of Leicester, Rt. Revd Tim Stevens, normally joins the young people in Taizé. This year he is unable to come as he is at the Lambeth conference. However, he has sent the young people this message

'I send you my love and best wishes as you leave for Taizé. It is with great regret that I can't be with you this year but, as many of you will know, I am currently at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury with the 650 other Bishops from the Anglican Communion. I have been to Taize on many occasions, and each time I find it a place where I can be still and reflect and learn more about God and his will for me. The opportunity to mix with people from many nations and share our common faith and humanity is something of the greatest importance for each of us, for the future of the Church and the human race.

As you spend this week in France, I will be praying for you and I hope you will pray for me and those at the Lambeth Conference, which is another gathering of people from all over the world brought together by their common desire to serve God wherever we find ourselves."

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Ends

The group will leave for Taizé on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 1.40pm from Great Bowden Primary School. All of the group have given their consent for photos to be used in the media.

More information can be obtained from

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The website for the Taizé community is <http://www.taize.fr/en>

They also have photos available for press use [http://www.taize.fr/en\\_article2835.html](http://www.taize.fr/en_article2835.html)