



**Archbishop Stephen offers a Pause for Thought today on BBC Radio 2, reflecting on his recent pilgrimage of St Cuthbert's Way.**

Last week I slowed down Zoe – I switched everything off and went on a long walk.

In fact I walked the St Cuthbert's Way from Melrose in the Scottish borders to Holy Island in Northumberland.

And the world opened up to me. I saw orchids growing in the hedgerow. A hare racing up the path ahead of me. Seals basking on the rocks. A cairn on an isolated hill top in the Cheviots.

None of this could be seen from a car window. I had to get off the beaten track. I had to slow down.

I slowed down to what some people call the speed of thought, or what I like to think of as God's pace, walking speed, the speed of prayer.

Someone once said that Jesus changed the world at three miles per hour. What they meant, is that he walked everywhere.

And as he walked, he met people and listened to them and ministered to them and talked to them and changed them.

And what might also be implied, is that our feverish demand for speed, and for getting everything done yesterday, is also changing the world, but not necessarily for the better.

It seems these days that many of us, including me, want to get from A to B in the quickest possible time by the shortest possible route. But not only does this put every moment of the day under enormous stress and the endless pressure to produce and achieve, it means I miss out on all the beauty in between, things that can only really be appreciated by slowing down. Some things – you might even say the best things – simply can't be done in a hurry. Like producing the best wine, or cooking a really good stew, or growing a garden.

And as I walked, this was my prayer: Lord, make me slow to rush ahead of you – because that's what I think is happening in so much that is wrong and confused in our world today and we see it's devastating effects in displaced people, heat waves, flood, forest fire and famine - but make us quick to follow where you lead, and find a new and better way of inhabiting this earth.

You're probably not able to go on pilgrimage this week as I was lucky enough to do last week, in fact it's been hard to get anywhere with the various strike action – so perhaps there has been a chance for some slow time, downtime, time to enjoy your day. I might take a long cut home. Throw away the teabags and rediscover the lost happiness of those two minutes we used to have when we warmed the pot and waited for the tea to mash. I'm going to switch off the telly tonight. Put a chair in the window. Look at the world. See what I can see. Count my blessings.

You see, I don't want any more time saving devices in my life, because they just add to the pressure of fitting more in. I want some time creating

devices. Things that will slow me down.

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