

DOES PILGRIMAGE HAVE TO BE RELIGIOUS?

<p>LOURDES</p> <p>In 1858, a vision of a woman appeared to young girl called Bernadette Soubirous. Bernadette told her local priest that the lady had described herself as 'Immaculata Conception' in the local French dialect. This was a phrase scholars and cardinals in Rome were beginning to use about Mary, Jesus' mother.</p> <p>Mary showed Bernadette a spot of land. When Bernadette began to dig, a spring poured out. People believed the water had miraculous healing properties. The spring that gushes from the land is today believed to cure illness and disease. Pilgrims visit the spring at Lourdes, now a huge church standing over a grotto where the spring still flows. between March and October. 250 hotels and a massive industry has grown to meet the need.</p> <p>The Roman Catholic church recognizes 69 claims of miraculous healing after bathing in Lourdes.</p>	<p>'TREKKIES'</p> <p>Star Trek's creator, Gene Roddenberry, imagined a future utopian universe. The many different life forms, human and other, collaborate and cooperate in the interests of galactic peace.</p> <p>The 'replicator', a machine that can create anything at all, including another replicator, means all conflict over resources and ownership has ended, as money and goods can be created easily.</p> <p>The term 'trekkies' was first coined in 1967 when fans of Star Trek wore pointy ears to a science fiction convention. The first <i>Star Trek fan magazine, called Spockanalia</i>, was produced in the same year.</p> <p>Also in 1967, Leonard Nimoy, the original Spock, arrived to sign autographs at a festival in Oregon. And was besieged by thousands of people.</p> <p>In 1969 some fans complained to a Canadian TV station when live footage of the Apollo 11 moon landing replaced an episode of Star Trek.</p>
<p>IONA</p> <p>In 563 CE an Irish monk called Columba left Ireland and arrived on the Scottish Island of Iona. His aim was to spread Celtic (Irish) Christianity.</p> <p>Columba and 12 companions founded a monastery on the island and encouraged many Scottish and Northern English tribes to become Christian.</p> <p>In the 6th- 8th Centuries Iona was an influential monastery producing important art and writing, including illuminated gospels and stone-carved crosses.</p> <p>Vikings began to raid the islands and coast around Iona in 794 CE. The monastery's treasures were stolen repeatedly. By 849 CE the monastery was abandoned. Iona is seen as the birthplace of Scottish Christianity. From the 9th Century many Scottish kings were buried on the island.</p> <p>Iona Abbey is now an ecumenical church, hosting the Iona Community, and thousands of pilgrims a year.</p>	<p>CERN</p> <p>The Large Hadron Collider, otherwise known as CERN (<i>Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire</i>) is a 27 km-long vacuum tube built under Geneva. CERN's mission is to find out what the universe is made of.</p> <p>At CERN physicists look back in time, to the first few seconds after the Big Bang 13.7 billion years ago, by creating similar conditions.</p> <p>Sub-atomic particles are sent round the tube at speeds approaching the speed of light. About 600 million particle collisions are produced per second.</p> <p>In 2013 a theoretical particle called the Higgs particle was detected at CERN, culminating a 40-year search.</p> <p>Visible matter only accounts for 4% of the universe. One of CERN's aims is to locate 'dark matter'.</p> <p>250,000 people are employed at CERN; physicists, mathematicians, engineers and other scientists from all over the world.</p> <p>CERN runs many free tours every day. Scientists who work at CERN take groups of 10 people around the site answering their questions and discussing the impact of the work.</p>