

We were alone – the pilgrims of the sea –  
One boundless azure desert round us spread;  
No hope, no trust, no strength except in Thee,  
Father, who once the pilgrim people led.  
(*Brendan Part II, Celtic Daily Prayer*)

**In The Celtic Way of Prayer, Esther de Waal introduces the lost term *peregrinatio* and contrasts it with the standard word ‘pilgrimage’.**

It is ‘not necessarily following any clearcut pattern of having some end and goal in view so that the purpose can be clearly established and then followed...it is essentially an inner journey...

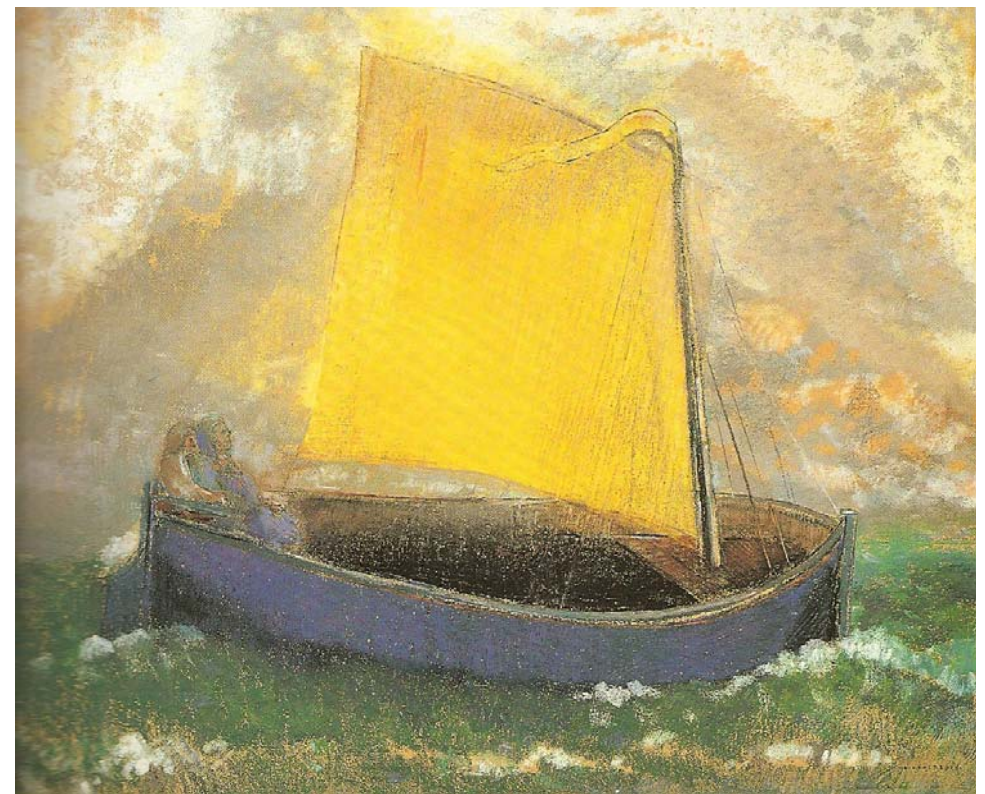
...the word itself is almost untranslatable but its essence is caught in the ninth-century **story** of three Irishmen drifting over the sea from Ireland for seven days, in coracles without oars, coming ashore in Cornwall and then being brought to the court of King Alfred. When he asked them where they had come from and where they were going they answered that they ‘stole away because we wanted for the love of God to be on pilgrimage, we cared not where’...There is no specific end or goal such as that of a reaching a shrine or a holy place...Ready to go wherever the Spirit might take them, seeing themselves as ‘guests of the world’ what they are seeking is the place of their resurrection, the resurrected self, the true self in Christ which is for all of us our true home.

...this should not be mistaken for restless wandering, the person who is never at rest but goes on continually seeking, drifting, living off other people, hoping for something new...the openness of the *perigrinatio* should never tempt me to forget that without the still centre the journey, whether inner or outer, is impossible.

And, ‘I must not forget that I shall not find Christ at the end of the journey unless he accompanies me along the way.’ †

There is a sense of adventure , of openness to possibilities, abandonment to God and expectation of fulfilling his will...	the sea takes me; where I do not know, but I gladly go.
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(*Brendan voyages, Part IV, Celtic Daily Prayer*)



At first we hardly see the sailor, still less that she has a companion. Both are lost, hidden, secret within the boat’s blueness, the colour of heaven. The two – because the mystic heart is never alone, an angelic Presence, the hidden God, is always with her – do not steer the boat, do not even try to direct it. They sit surrendered, allowing the Spirit to take them where He chooses. The sea is not still for the one who prays, it heaves and is turbulent, but the tossing of the boat is part of the mystic journey.

It is the outward stress that makes the surrender of trust vital. The sail alone catches the full brightness of God, and it is that brightness, overhead, not tangible, that dominates the picture. But the brightness binds the sailor, she cannot see where the Spirit is taking her, and she leans back, at rest, content in His spiritual choice. It is not in the minutiae of daily living that she abandons choice, but in her prayer. The daily living is the choppy sea, but her prayer is the deep faithful blue of the boat, the bright loving gold of its sail, all that bears her forward in a power not her own.

*Sister Wendy Beckett The Gaze of Love on Odilon Redon’s Mystical Boat*