

# *Walking the Camino's Way*

Images & recollections from a pilgrim's 555 mile walk  
along the Camino de Santiago



*via Scaughdt*  
... an (i)am publication  
(3<sup>rd</sup> edition)

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... *Thank you.*





*The Lord is my shepherd, and I need never want or fear ... Even in times of hunger, I am allowed rest in green pastures. And even in times of drought, I am ever led to still waters.*

*My Soul is repeatedly restored, and ever leads me onto paths ripened with opportunities to make peace where there is strife, and bring Love where there is mistrust.*

*Yea, even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, still will I fear no evil. For You are with me – your rod of righteousness & staff of solace ever showing me The Way. You prepare a feast before me every morning, and do so even in the presence of my enemies ... And you anoint my head with oil at every sundown, readying me to soon be born anew.*

*My cup runneth ever over ... and I bow my head in gratitude.*

*Love and Mercy are the essence of all that is, and as such will follow me for all the days of my life ... For I dwell in the House of the Lord – and pay homage for its amazing Grace with every moment, with every word, with every deed, and with every breath.*

(inspired by ~ Psalm 23)

“The Camino -- the Way -- the Road ...

What is the Camino?

Are we walking for the spiritual within us?

Or are we searching for culture in the villages along the path?

Is it for sport that we walk – or as a tourist on vacation?

The Camino is not for achievement or sightseeing, my Friends ...

Its challenges are worthy of higher things.

On the Camino you seek and find your True Self ...

On the Camino you rediscover true Fellowship with others ...

On the Camino you climb the staircase of Principles & Virtues -- by learning to speak them more than merely pondering them, and choosing to live them more than merely speaking them.

The clear aim of Faith is the bold enlivenment of the perfection within us.  
Getting to know your Self, you become reacquainted with the Christ internal.

The Camino is universal --

Throughout the world there are those who would persecute & exclude,  
and yet the Camino shows us another Way.

On the Camino we more readily choose --

... to believe that humans are more virtue than vice,

... to accept that our mistakes are our opportunities,

... to persist in living – to get up again after we fall,

... to love from a place of Love as opposed to one of fear,

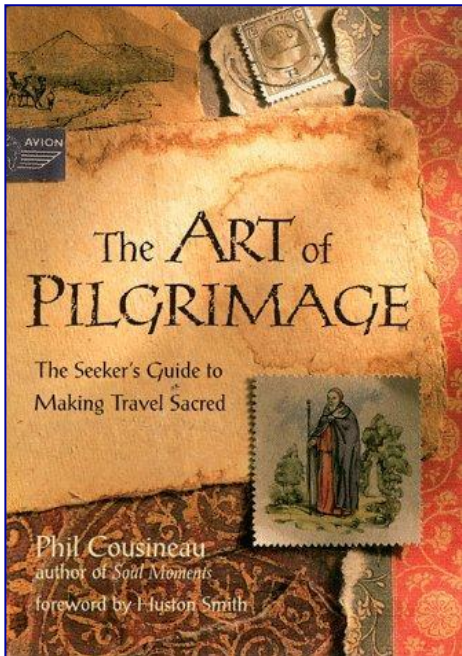
... and to act freely; knowing that Faith is a privilege and not a burden.

When we sense the depths of what Love truly means and what Love truly IS, we will then finally fully comprehend all that surrounds us ... There may be signs along your way, and yet your direction of travel must always come courageously from within ...

And to always find your True Path, humbly choose to walk the way that leads towards the betterment of this beautiful world ... Bravely choose to walk the Way of Peace.” ~ inspired by Augusto Losada Lopez



## Introduction



It was sometime during the Fall of 2007, and I was house-sitting for a Friend in Chicago ... I was a few weeks into the gig and had settled in to my routine pretty well – which mostly consisted of writing, engaging a bit of community service work, and reading. And then one day I got a phone call from my mother, essentially asking me whether or not I had ever heard of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage and wondering whether or not I would consider accompanying her on such a journey were she ever to decide to go. Well, seeing as how I was serendipitously reading “The Art of Pilgrimage” by Phil Cousineau at the time of her call – and seeing as how pilgrimage in general had fascinated me for many years beforehand, I found her proposal to be quite intriguing.

A few months thereafter, sometime in the Spring of 2008, mom did indeed decide to take the trip to northern Spain that September, she did indeed ask me to accompany her, and I did indeed agree to do so.

And this book is a primarily pictorial relaying (interspersed with various sayings & snippets from the journal I kept during that Great Walk) of that most incredible Journey. The walk itself covered roughly 555 miles (which happens to be roughly 888 kilometers) and we traversed that distance in roughly 40 walking days – departing the French border town of St. Jean Pied du Port on September 21<sup>st</sup>, and arriving at Finisterre on the coast of Spain on November 1<sup>st</sup>. It was a truly amazing adventure – one that I would heartily recommend to anyone without hesitation, and I am happy to be able to present at least a small portion thereof in this tome for your viewing & reading pleasure.

Though we have all been conditioned to believe that we must travel far to learn the lessons that traditional pilgrimage brings, one of those lessons is ironically the Truth that every day is a pilgrimage; that no matter where we happen to find ourselves, there is wonderment in which to revel and wisdom from which to glean ... And thus it is that I wish you all the same – both during the perusal of this tome, as well as in every moment thereafter.

**Peace to all ... S**



## *A condensed HISTORY of the Camino de Santiago*

The primary Camino route is believed to have originally had significance for the ancient pagan peoples of the Iberian Peninsula, among them the Celts -- and later the Romans. The site of Santiago de Compostela itself may have been a Roman shrine. It is believed that prehistoric beliefs in some sort of resurrection after death inspired pilgrims from ancient Europe to make the journey to Finisterra, the westernmost spit of land in Europe, and the place where the sun seemingly fell to die in the ocean (and then be reborn in the east the following day). Some pilgrims made the journey to purify their Souls, while others journeyed there in the hope that witnessing the “dying sun” would prepare them for their own ultimate voyage – their own death. Indeed, pagan influences can still be seen all along the Camino, and many pagans still walk the Camino to this day.

That having been said, the Camino de Santiago has “officially” been proclaimed a Catholic pilgrimage in more modern times – a designation that came about as follows:

After Jesus' crucifixion (roughly 30 A.D.), many of his disciples dispersed around the Mediterranean region to preach, and **James** is reported to have traveled to the Iberian Peninsula -- modern-day Spain and Portugal. James returned thereafter to Judea, where he was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great. Afterwards, tradition & legend hold that his body was transported to Santiago de Compostela, with some stories having it that it was claimed by followers and carried by sea to the Iberian port of Padron in Galicia, from which from which point it was carried inland for burial at modern day Santiago. And supposedly there his body lay – forgotten until the 9th century.

Then, sometime in the early 800's, **Pelagius** (a hermit living in that part of Spain) had a vision in which he saw a field of stars that led him to what proved to be an ancient tomb containing three bodies. He immediately reported this to the local bishop, Theodomiro. Bishop Teodomiro then informed King Alfonso II of Asturias that the tomb had been discovered containing the remains of the apostle Santiago (St. James) and two of his followers. Shortly thereafter, in 814 A.D., Alfonso II declares **Santiago the patron saint of Spain** -- or of what would eventually become Spain ... A few years later a small village named **Campus de Ia Stella** (which means “Field of Stars”, or possibly the Roman word for cemetery, “componere” -- to bury) and a monastery were established on the site. News of the discovery spread and a steady trickle of pilgrims began to arrive. Miracles came to be attributed to the site, and these miracles encouraged pilgrimage and the pilgrimage elicited more miracles -- all of which was greatly encouraged by the powerful Archbishop Gelmirez of Galicia, who was anxious to promote Santiago as an official pilgrimage destination.

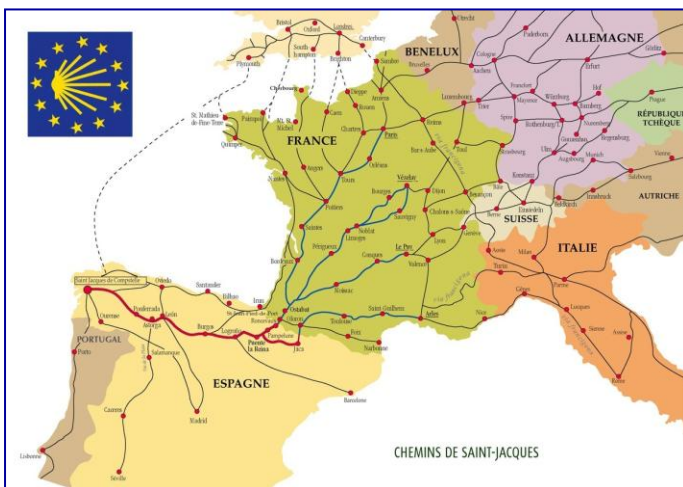


The earliest recorded **pilgrims** from beyond the Pyrenees visited the shrine in the middle of the 10th century, but it seems that it was not until a century later that large numbers of pilgrims from abroad were regularly journeying there. The earliest records of pilgrims that arrived from England belong to the period between 1092 and 1105 ... Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela reached its **peak** during these years, and Santiago was considered one of the three pilgrimages that would grant one the complete expiation of all sins (the others being the “Vis Francigena” to Rome, and the pilgrimage to Jerusalem).

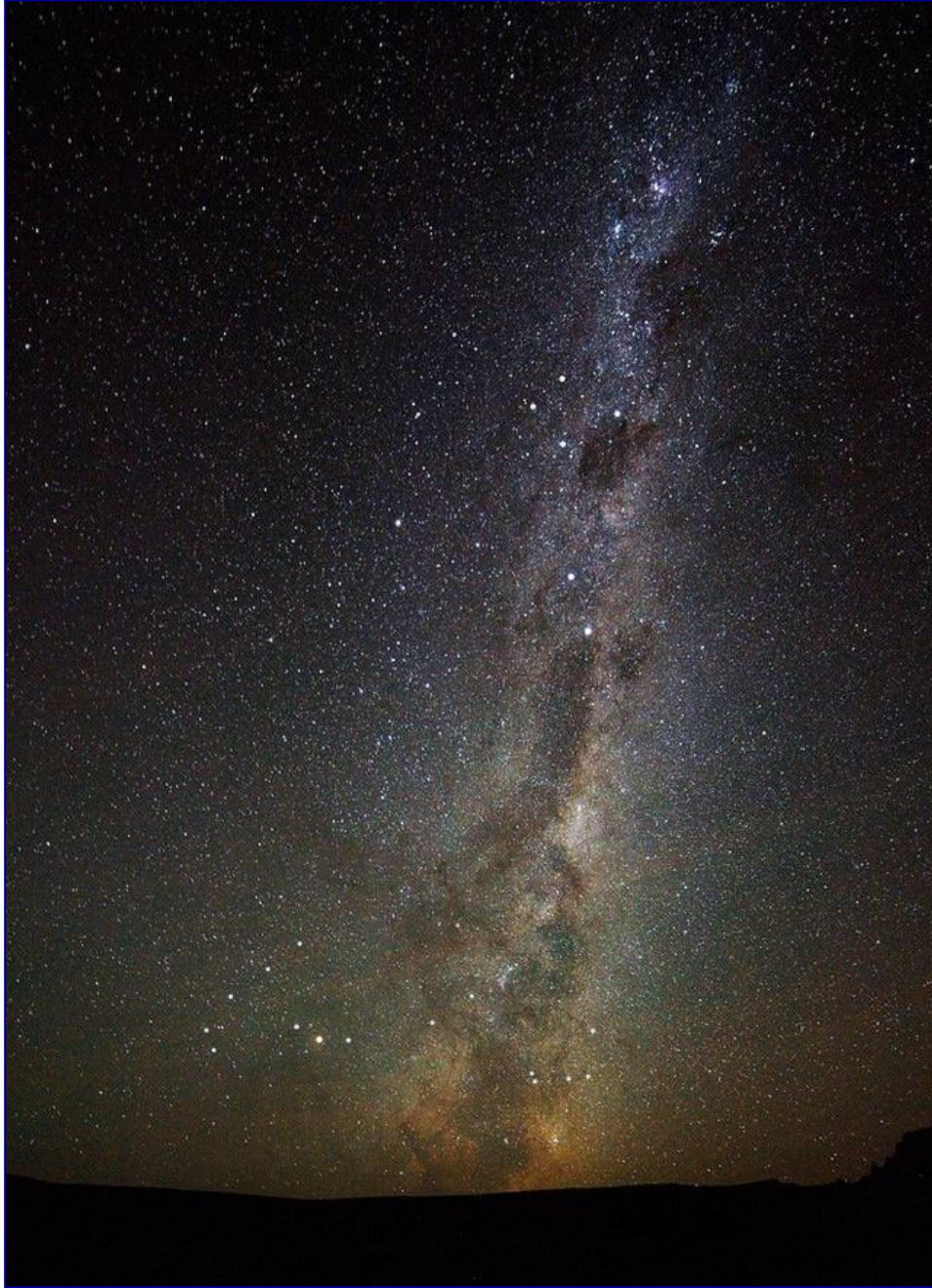
By the 12th century, the Camino had become a rather organized affair and what is widely regarded as the world's first travel guide, the *Codex Calixtinus*, provided the would-be pilgrim with the rudiments of what he or she would need to know while en route. In addition, a massive infrastructure developed to support the pilgrims. Bridges were constructed across rivers to draw pilgrims to certain cities and pilgrim hospices were chartered by religious orders and kings. All manner of commercial businesses were established to both take advantage of and to support pilgrims. Across France and Spain the pilgrimage route led from shrine to shrine, just as a caravan route leads from oasis to oasis.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Camino's popularity lessened (in part due to Spain's military engagements with England and France at the end of the century), and the Age of Enlightenment two centuries later certainly didn't encourage its rejuvenation either ... And yet throughout it all, the pilgrimage to Santiago never completely died out. One small piece of evidence to its continuation comes from the journals of John Adams who, while making a land crossing from the Galician coast to Paris in December of 1779, wrote that he “*always regretted that we could not find time to make a Pilgrimage to Saint Iago de Compostella.*”

Boosted by being named the very first “European Cultural Route” in 1987, today tens of thousands of pilgrims set out on foot each year from their front doorstep, or popular starting points across Europe (including St. Jean Pied du Port in southern France, from when mom & I commenced our 2008 journey), to make their way to Santiago de Compostela.



Interestingly enough, the popular Spanish name for the astronomical Milky Way is also *El Camino de Santiago*, and that heavenly road was said in legend to have been formed from the dust raised by traveling pilgrims.



“Pilgrim how you journey, on the road you choose, to find out why the winds die and where the stories go ... All days come from one day, that much you must know, you cannot change what's over, but only where you go ... One way leads to diamonds, one way leads to gold. Another leads you only to everything you're told ... In your heart you wonder, which of these is true, the road that leads to nowhere, the road that leads to you ... Will you find the answer in all you say and do? Will you find the answer in you? ... Each heart is a pilgrim, each one wants to know, the reason why the winds die and where the stories go ... Pilgrim in your journey you may travel far, for pilgrim it's a long way to find out who you are.” ~ Enya



## *September 17, 2008 ... And so it begins*

“Tomorrow is the day. We leave the house at 12 noon and will not look back -- an opportunity for this pilgrim, who frequently lives in the past and the future, to truly practice mindfulness of the marvelous now.

We fly from Chattanooga to Atlanta, then Atlanta to Madrid, and then on to San Sebastian in northeastern Spain. There we will either ride one bus and two trains or find us a taxi driver who will drive us over the Pyrenees to our starting point of St Jean Pied de Port in southern France.

We have chosen to arrive following a route that is not part of the Camino, and it is a little circuitous, and yet I think all true pilgrimages in life are meant to be the same. We will spend the first two nights in a hostel called L'Esprit du Chemin (We got the last two beds available, of course) ... We will relax for a day in St Jean to help get over our jet lag and ground us for the walk, and then we will put our feet on the Way on Sunday morning the 21st of September.

Our minds, hearts and Souls have already somehow started the Journey, and we leave you with words from one of Stephen Levin's beautiful poems -- ‘Step after step, breath after breath; we are able to step within each step, to find the breath within the breath, and within that -- the sacred.’” ~ inspired by Suzanna



Here are Mom & I standing in front of the altar used during our “Pilgrim's Mass” the night before. It was a universalist service dedicated to blessing Mom & I for our journey, and uplift Lawrence, who was to “hold the space” while we were away ... The marigolds on the altar were strung by our dear Friend, Jyoti.



*"And I begin with deepest Gratitude ...  
Gratitude for this Great Life,  
in which I have already received more  
blessings than I ever thought possible to attain.  
I ask for nothing more for myself –  
only to be given the chance to serve  
Love's Highest Good  
with the rest of my days."  
~ Scaughdt*

### ***September 20, 2008 ... Arriving smoothly***

We arrived smoothly yesterday in the gorgeous town of St. Jean Pied de Port - the only village I can think of at the moment that rivals the raw beauty of those I've seen in Switzerland ... There are 22 pilgrims in our hostel (the *Esprit de Chemin*) from 7 different countries -- Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Canada, and even another mother/son pair from the United States (Montana) ... It was a veritable symphony of languages while we ate a "four-star" dinner last night. We also lucked into a local cultural festival this week, and were blessed with a concert after dinner featuring Basque chants sung by a male choir in the cathedral here.

Now, as we watch other pilgrims set out this morning, we are both eagerly anticipating our own start – all while simultaneously being thankful for today as a day of rest ... We will relax and enjoy this lovely place today before setting our feet to the trail tomorrow.



Here is the front entrance of our very first Pilgrim's hostel, which also turned out to be by far the nicest one we would stay in the entire journey. How fitting, in retrospect -- as a pilgrimage is not taken to soak in "spiritual pampering", but rather to be confronted with challenges (both internal & external) that serve to expose one to the rigors of life, and thereby peel away the dross of ego.

*"This pilgrimage is not about attaining more Joy for myself, but rather is an opportunity to strengthen my Soul -- that I might more powerfully bring Joy to others."  
~ Scaughdt*



Here I am standing in the street near our hostel after obtaining my “Pilgrim's Pass”; a document pilgrims use to verify their “sacred status” and thereby gain access to the many pilgrim hostels found along the way.

*“When Love is purely given, it always arrives safely at its intended destination.” ~ anonymous*



Here is a view of St. Jean Pied du Port (which loosely translates as “St. John's walk through the portal” or “St. John's haven of departure”) ...

*“Peace is impossible without both mercy and humility.”  
~ Thomas Merton*





... and yet another view of St. Jean Pied du Port, this one taken from the upper tier of our hostel's backyard garden. The mountains you can just see to the far left are the ones we will be crossing in two days time.

*"You will recognize your own path when you come upon it, because you will suddenly have all the energy and imagination you will ever need." ~ Jerry Guilles*



Here is a peek down the street from our hostel door. This will be the way we set out along the Camino tomorrow morning.

*"The Way of Peace -- both beginning and ending in this present moment; always beginning with gratitude, and always ending with Love"*  
~ anonymous





Here is a cute house we saw today while out & about ... We walked through the town quite a bit today, and everything we saw was orderly and clean, and the people just as very friendly.

*“A teacher can only put our feet upon the path and point us the way. That is all. It is wholly dependent on the individual to make his or her way to Truth.”*  
~ Paul Twitchell



This is a wonderful juxtaposition between the two groups of “tourists” who most commonly visit St. Jean Pied du Port -- pilgrims & artists.

*“Share your Truth with words only when asked to do so ... Otherwise, let gentle silence roar your Soul's symphony.”* ~ anonymous



This is a public fountain of potable (i.e. drinkable) fresh water; what would turn out to be a typical (and most welcome) sight along our route.

*“To connect with the Great River we all need a personal path, but once you get down there you find there’s only one river.” ~ Matthew Fox*



I thought this was the perfect symbol for the Camino; representing moving slowly yet steadily along the Path itself, all while gently turning inwards to inevitably – and repeatedly – reunite with your own Soul.

*“To return to Source, one must often travel in the opposite direction.”  
~ Rene Daumal*



And here I am looking clean and refreshed after our jaunt through town ...



*“The pilgrim sets aside his mere onlooking, and becomes an active witness to Life’s perfect Beauty instead.” ~ anonymous*





We also went up to the castle ruins on the bluff overlooking St. Jean to see what we could see ... This visage of old stone next to running water (notice the old millstone over the nearest portal) would regularly accompany me for almost the entire length of the Journey.

*“When we no longer know where to turn,  
our real Journey has just begun.”  
~ Phil Cousineau*



Here is mom journaling that evening in the hostel garden’s lower patio ...

*“And here is a great & future challenge:  
to transform every ‘normal moment’ of my  
life hereafter into its own pilgrimage; and to  
allow my personal myth to unfold fully  
therein.” ~ anonymous*



## *September 21, 2008 ... Modest beginnings*

We start the day with a pilgrim's breakfast that is as typical as last night's "5-star" dinner was not ...



*"Uncover what you long for and you will rediscover who you are ... Alter what you long for and you will shift who you are becoming ... Release what you long for and you will Become who you've always been." ~ inspired by Phil Cousineau*

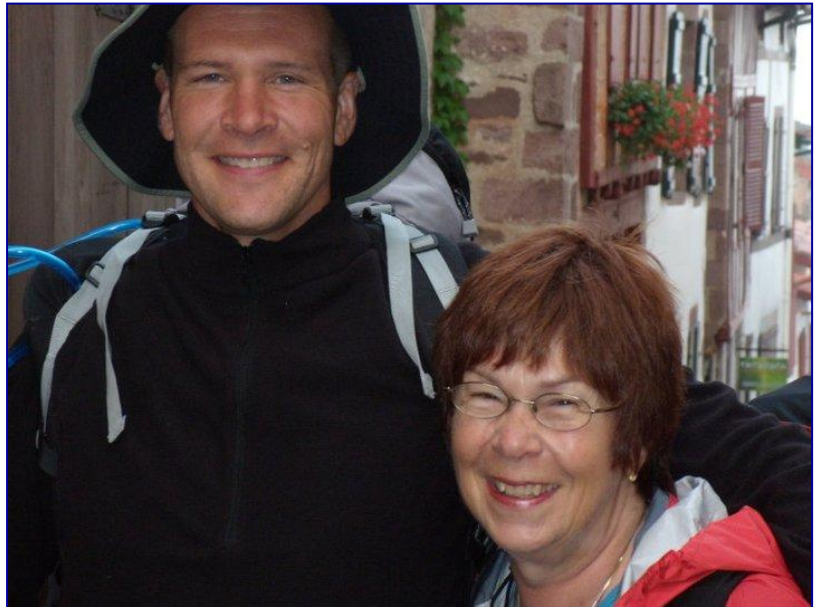


*... And we're off!*

*"Ask where the good road is, the godly paths you used to walk ... Travel there, and you will find rest for your Souls."  
~ Jeremiah 6:16*

Yes, we are indeed still  
a little sleepy ... 😊

*“Now is the time to  
live your ideal life.”  
~ Phil Cousineau*



The foothills of the Pyrenees ... What a absolutely gorgeous start to an  
absolutely amazing Stroll!



*“Journey forth Faith-fully ... Listen humbly & attentively ... Follow guidance  
resolutely ... Detach from results completely.” ~ anonymous*





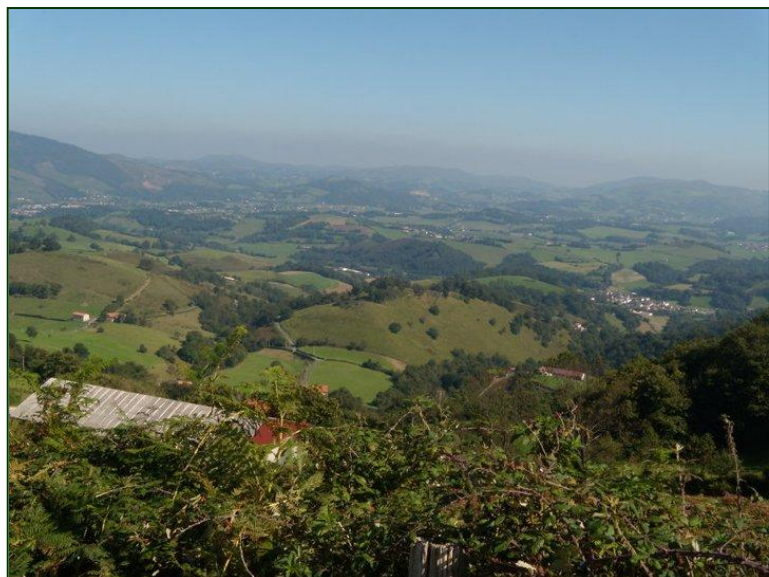
I'm pretty sure this view gazes back towards St. Jean, though I'm not 100% certain. Regardless, even though The Way got pretty steep pretty quickly, we both flowed smoothly onward ... and upward ... and upward ... and inward.

*"Practice your faith until you know it by Heart." ~ Phil Cousineau*

... up Up UP, we go!

*"Desire may thrive on  
mystery, but Love demands  
honesty to survive."*

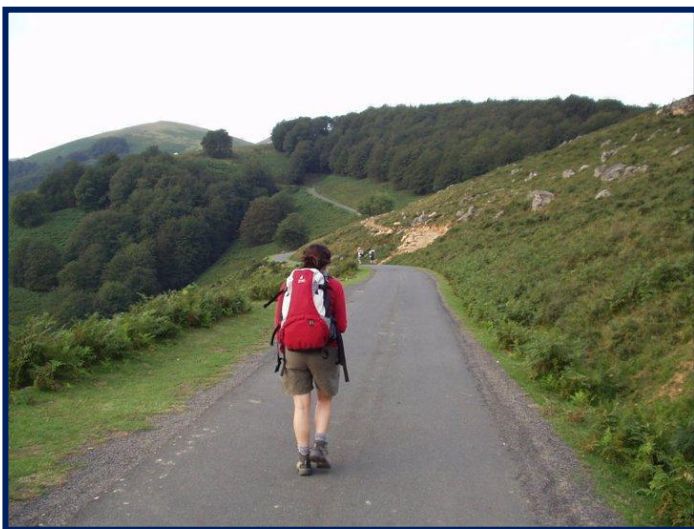
*~ D. C. Abrahms*





Now *that* is a view! Though it was interesting how, even here at the very beginning of the Journey, such vistas (which this picture does not do justice) inspired more of a gazing within than a wonderment without.

*“When you follow your Bliss,  
doors open where there were no doors before.”  
~ Joseph Campbell*



*“Do not seek to follow in the  
footsteps of men of old; Seek  
instead what they sought.”  
~ Matsuo Basho*





Mom quite prudently decided to break the hike over the Pyrenees into two stages. This was our first stop — a place called Orisson; a “town” consisting only of this relatively new hostel.

*“We are embodied Souls. As such, we have no choice but to act out our Faith.”  
~ Huston Smith*



*“Are you going to stay in your coffin of mediocrity? Or are you going to break out of that cage and take the Journey to find your Self?”  
~ Anthony Lawlor*

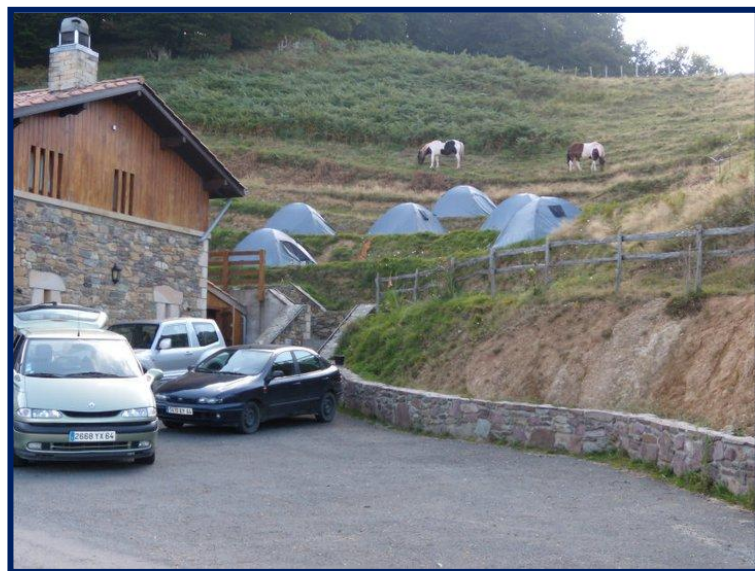


What turned out to be a very familiar sight and our main staple along The Way: fresh bread.

*“There is Joy at the heart of all things.” ~ Phil Cousineau*

Interestingly, when the hostel itself fills up, the last pilgrims in are provided with tents at Orisson. With less pilgrims on the road at this time of year, it was unusual to have to use them, and yet some of our fellow travelers did on this night.

*“Always remember that your days are blessed. You may know how to profit by them, and you may not, but blessed they remain nonetheless.” ~ Nadia Boulanger*





*September 22, 2008 ... Up & Over*

Crosses made by previous pilgrims were a familiar site along the entire route, though this is the only time I ever saw one placed in a cow patty. Somehow, I found the symbolism of the “purity rising out of the shit in-Sight-full ...



*“Every sound, the music of the spheres ...  
Every sight, the rainbow on God's doorstep  
... Every utterance, a possible poem of  
prayer.” ~ anonymous*



Cresting the Pyrenees was truly spectacular ...



*“The Universe (God) always answers clearly. The trick is not in learning to ask the right questions, but rather in learning to see the answers that are already present.” ~ anonymous*



Here I am making the first of my many mini-cairns along the Route. The white dots on the hillside behind me are sheep ...



*“No one can bring you peace but yourself.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*

... and then we come upon a mountain shrine decorated by pilgrims past.





*“We have not ever to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us ... We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find God. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence.” ~ Joseph Campbell*







A miniature stone arch ... Even here on high, the wondrous abounds.

*“Homeless, I wander in the company of God ...  
And make the Universe my companion.”*

*~ Basho*



Look closer ...  
... even closer than that.

*“The pilgrim announces the ineffable by  
not speaking of it at all.” ~ anonymous*



*“In our deepest hopelessness rests the  
essence of our Life's Work ... When deepest in  
shadow, the Light of epiphany shines brightest.”  
~ anonymous*

No matter where I am in the  
world, I'm always somehow  
Home when I see moss ...

*“He who has chosen to ride a  
tiger, can no longer choose to  
dismount.” ~ Chinese Proverb*



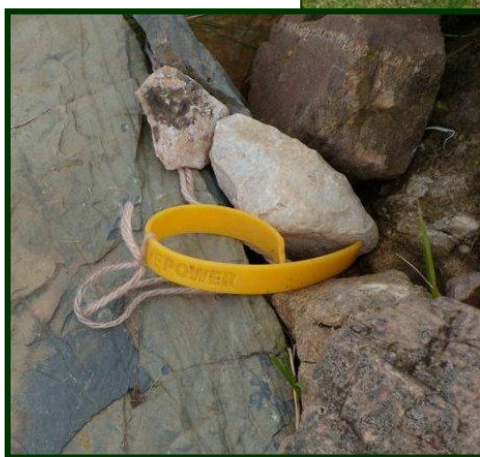
Heartfelt beaming to all beings of Heart ...





We come across our first “Pilgrim Cairn”, a monument made over time as pilgrim after pilgrim placed single stone after single stone here -- one upon the other, upon the one. This *is* the “bigger picture” ...

*“What is the use in praying if, at the very moment of prayer, we have so little confidence in God that we are busy planning our own answer?” ~ Thomas Merton*



And here, a pilgrim's offering upon the same cairn ... How fitting that it is “power” that was discarded!

*“We cannot see things in perspective until we cease to hug them to our own bosom. When we let go of them we begin to appreciate them as they really are. Only then can we begin to see God in them.” ~ Thomas Merton*

*“It is the Wilderness (i.e. the barren, the depressed &/or the painful times in life) that gives us the continual opportunity to **Love Life anyway.**” ~ anonymous*

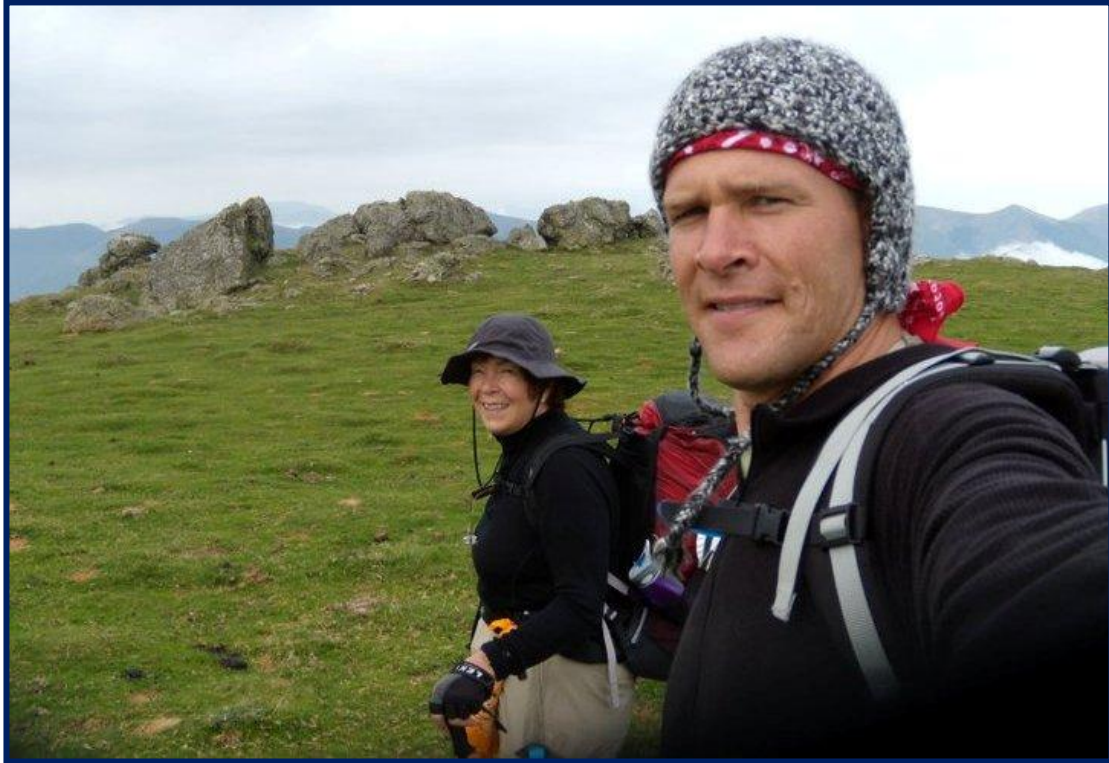


To get out of the chilly wind, Mom & I stopped here and ate a short repast amidst the boulders seen in the background – and enjoyed a lunch break taken at the Top of the World.



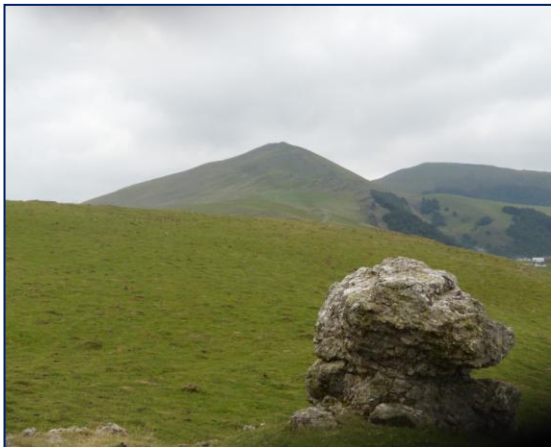
*“Your mind knows only some things. Your inner voice, your instinct, knows everything. If you listen to what you know instinctively, it will always lead you down the right path.” ~ Henry Winkler*





And here is the view from those very boulders ...

*“It is an understanding with the Great Spirit or Creator that we will follow His ways” ~ Dennis Banks*



Sheep! 😊

*“If you would have your son to walk honorably through the world, you must not attempt to clear the stones from his path, but rather must teach him to walk firmly through them ...” ~ Anne Bronte*



*“If our emotions die in the Wilderness, our humanity dies with them.” ~ Thomas Merton*





We're now headed towards the top!  
(Mom is the first pilgrim from the left)

[**Notice** the reverence being offered by the pilgrim wearing light blue. Such displays were commonplace — both witnessed in others and engaged in myself. During any pilgrimage (at home or abroad), when the sludge of everyday worries & desires has been completely removed, the desire to openly express a raw & unboundaried Gratitude sometimes becomes overwhelming — resulting in such open exultations of Love.]

*“This idea of how everything is interconnected ... It sums up the human condition to me, and it helps me on my path.” ~ Jeff Bridges*



The hermitage “at the top of the mountain” was closed, which provided a nice message for us all – namely, that it is now time for us to leave home and go forth into our lives to actively CARE for others ...

*“I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among the creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a spirit capable of Kindness and Compassion.” ~ William Falconer*

And then we came across this a very high highland farm ...



*“Many spiritual teachers have spoken of a first-hand experience of the world as an important part of the path to Enlightenment.” ~ Bell Hooks*



And then this Shrine appeared along The Way ... Offerings were humbly made;  
Blessings were almost certainly received.



And here, Mom also made an offering of Pilgrim's Bread -- brought all the way from the Sending-off Ceremony we shared a few days earlier 5000 miles away.

*"Because in the school of the Spirit man learns wisdom through humility, knowledge by forgetting, how to speak by silence, how to live by dying."*

*~ Johannes Tauler*





The Way is allWays marked — albeit sometimes more clearly than others. 😊



*“Over every mountain there is a path,  
though it may not be seen from the valley.”  
~ Theodore Roethke*



I thought this was amusing at first – a marker informing us that we still had almost the entire Path to go before attaining our goal ... And then I realized that many pilgrims walk the Way from locations much farther away than southern France. I met one pilgrim who was walking to Santiago from Ireland and another all the way from Jerusalem ... Now *there* is a healthy dose of Humility for you!

*“Some like to make a little garden out of life itself  
and then walk down its path.”  
~ inspired by Jean Anouilh*



Taking a break in some ruins by the side of the trail ...

*“By confronting us with irreducible mysteries that stretch our daily vision to include infinity, nature opens an inviting and guiding path toward a spiritual life.”  
~ Thomas Moore*



... and then onward we flow,  
deeper into the fog.

*“This, then, is our Wilderness: to live  
facing imminent despair, but not to  
consent.” ~ Thomas Merton*





On many days, the Journey consisted of traipsing from yellow arrow to yellow arrow -- all while dipping into and out of our conscious awareness of the walking & the Walk.

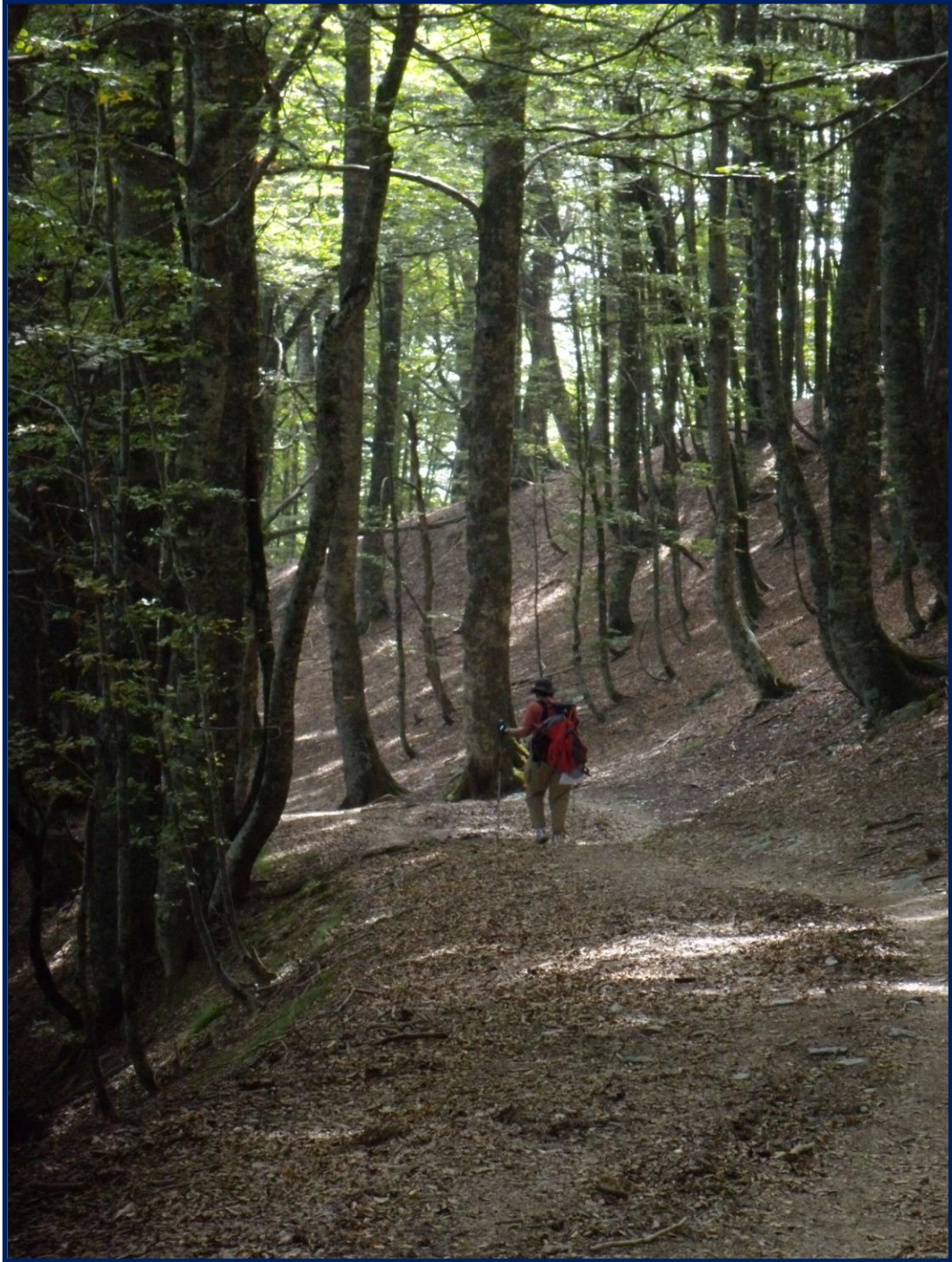
*“Detachment is not insensibility. Too many ascetics have failed to become great Saints precisely because their rules and practices merely deadened their humanity, instead of setting it free to develop richly ...” ~ Thomas Merton*



We have now crested the Pyrenees and are flowing down into Spain. This steep (and seemingly ever steeper) path wound down through the woods towards Roncesvalles, where we would be spending the night.

*“Remember when life’s path is steep to keep your mind even.” ~ Horace*





*“Everyone who got where she would one day go  
had to first begin where she already was.”  
~ inspired by Richard Evans*





Taking a well-appreciated rest ... We're almost there, Mom!

*"All great masters are chiefly distinguished by the power of adding a second, a third, and perhaps a fourth step in a continuous line ... With every additional step you enhance immensely the value of your first." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*





*“If your heart is large enough to envelop your adversaries, you can see right through them and avoid their attacks. And once you envelop them, you will be able to guide them along the path indicated to you by heaven and earth.” ~ Morihei Ueshiba*



*“A man is good when he finds Joy in serving others, evil when he takes joy in harming them. He is virtuous when he finds peace in a selfless life; sinful when he takes pleasure in a self-centered one. Hence, the things we choose to Love tell us who we are choosing to Be.” ~ inspired by Thomas Merton*





And then we flow smoothly into Roncevalles ...

*“Treat each moment preciously ... be more patient with yourself and with others, recognizing that there are millions of moments on the path to any worthwhile achievement.” ~ Menachem Schneerson*



Our bedroom tonight is the largest sleeping room along the entire Camino. This hall used to be an infirmary for pilgrims. It currently sleeps 160 people, and on this evening it was completely full.

**P.S.** How amazing it was to experience firsthand that a sizable portion of the world’s inhabitants (if this room is an accurate sample) are snorers!



*“We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness.”  
~ Thich Nhat Hanh*

Remember to take off those shoes ... 😊

**P.S.** The kind young man to the left of Mom is David, a thespian from Slovakia who we ended up seeing many times over the next few weeks.

*“Strangers are just friends waiting to happen.” ~ unknown*



That evening we celebrated a traditional Pilgrim’s Mass, where pilgrims from all over the world and from many different faiths were blessed in a beautiful, gentle, multi-lingual ceremony in the little town’s cathedral ... This picture shows a “shrine” to Saint James located therein.

*“If the path be beautiful, let us not ask where it leads.”  
~ Anatole France*

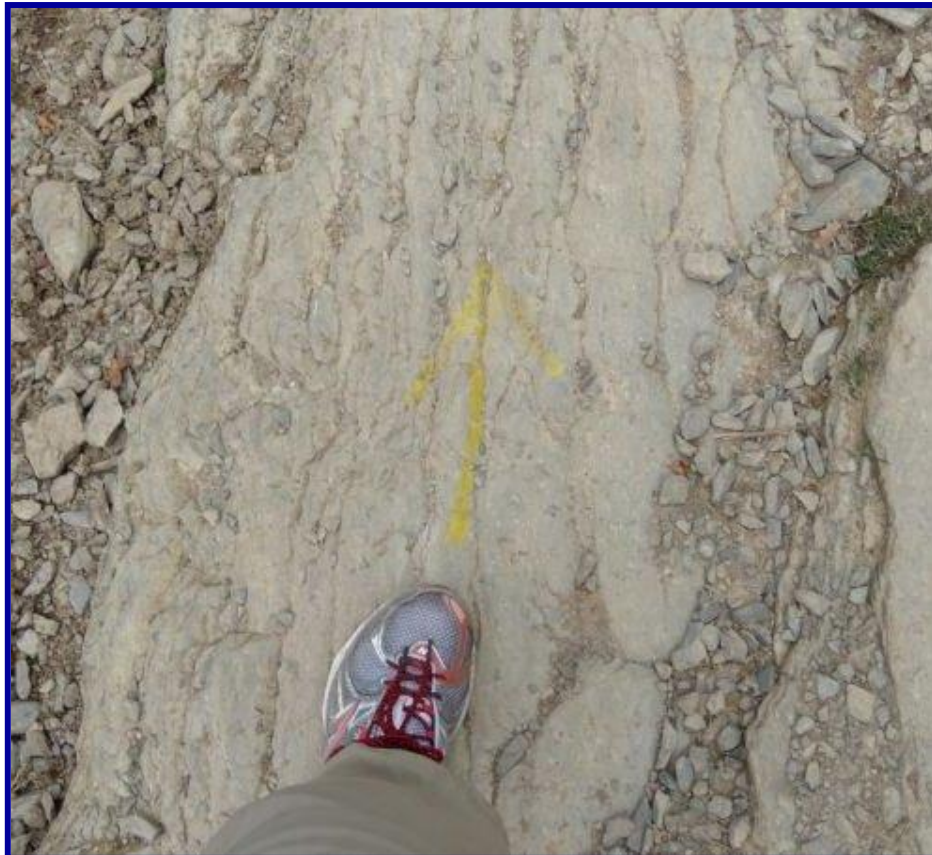


“We´ve made it over the Pyrenees! We took two days to do it (a very smart move) and have arrived in the hostel in Roncevalles (also known as Ronceveaux) ... The weather was fantastic along the way and the views were stupendous ... We slept last night in a room with six beds and tonight´s room has 160! We´ve already walked with pilgrims from South Korea, South Africa, Brazil, Hungary, England, the Czech Republic, France, and Spain! ... Our feet are fine and our spirits are high ... Will attend a Pilgrim Mass tonight and begin again tomorrow morning ... We each started the journey with 28+ pound packs, though have both jettisoned quite a bit of unneeded items along the way, and are now walking rather comfortably ... More updates to follow.” ~ Suzanna

### ***September 23, 2008 ... The Music of Living***

Today was my first experience with “the solitude phenomenon”; where I could set out with dozens of other pilgrims (in this case, over 160 of them) from the same location at roughly the same time, and yet within an hour be completely alone on the Path -- an experience that was bizarre (and quite wonderful), to say the least.

*“You are capable of more than you know ... Aim high. Behave honorably. Prepare to be alone at times, and to sometimes endure failure. **Persist!** The world needs all you can give.” ~ E. O. Wilson*



*“There is no emotion without the inherent power to tempt you towards the ruin of selfishness; and yet it is only emotions steeped in Kindness that can ever carry us to Peace.” ~ anonymous*

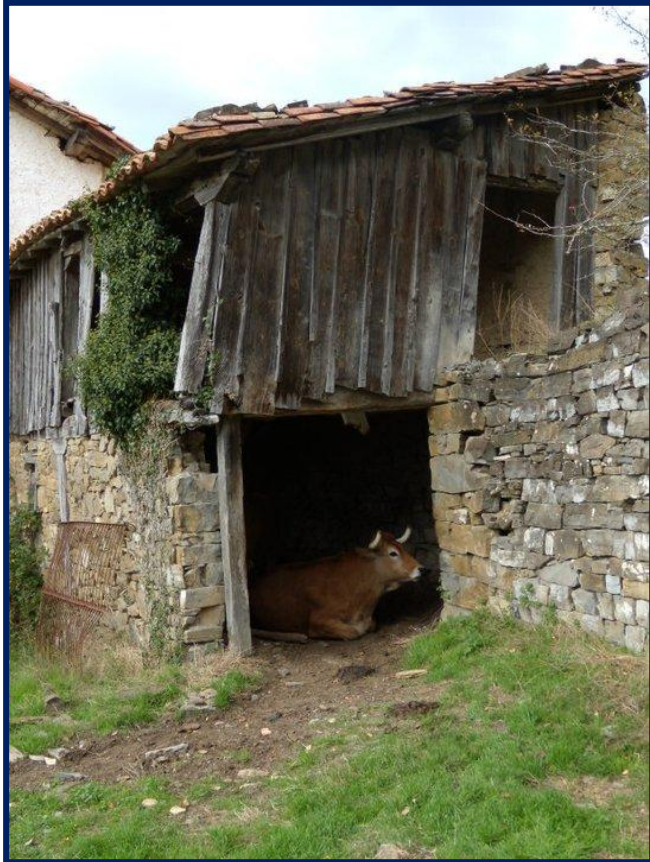


*“Love is not some great internal mystery ... Love is the stuff of which the world is made ... In this moment, I reach out my hand ... In this moment, I give the world to you.”*

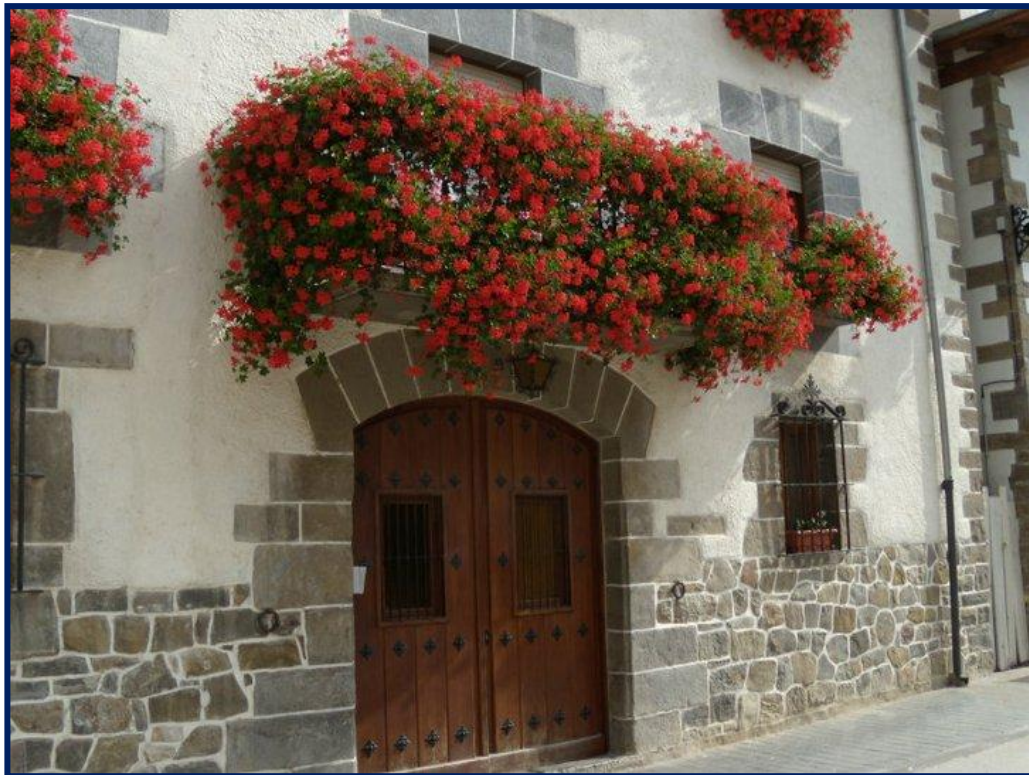
*~ anonymous*







*“Sooner or later something seems to call us onto a particular path – saying: This is what I must do ... This is who I am.” ~ James Hillman*

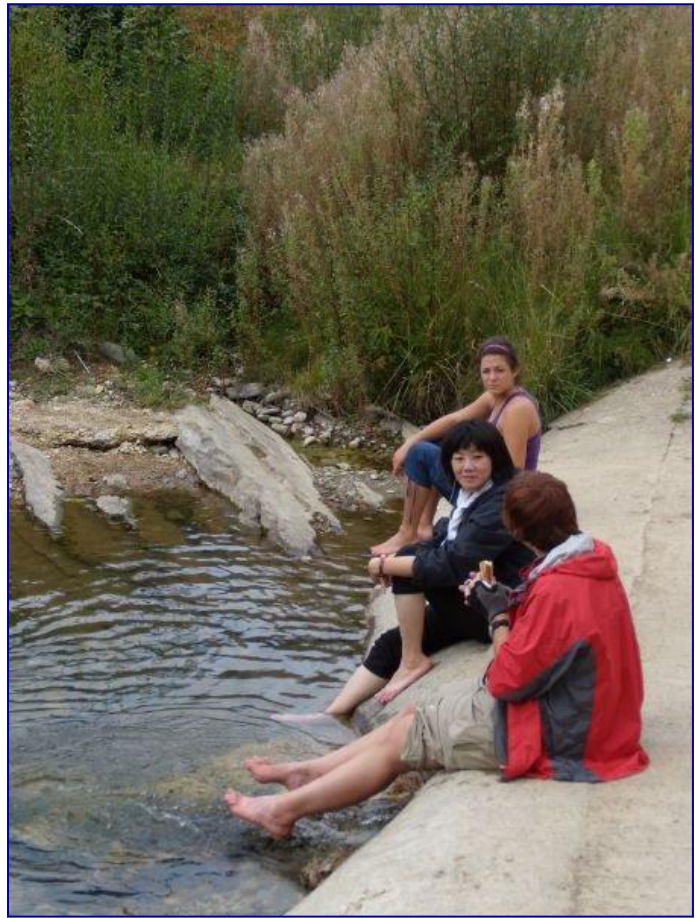


*“Beauty awakens the Soul to act.” ~ Dante Alighieri*

We take a break and mom  
cools her feet in the cool waters  
with two fellow pilgrims.

*“Living is the constant  
adjustment of thought to life and  
life to thought, in such a way that  
we are always growing, always  
experiencing new things in the old  
and old things in the new.”*

*~ Thomas Merton*

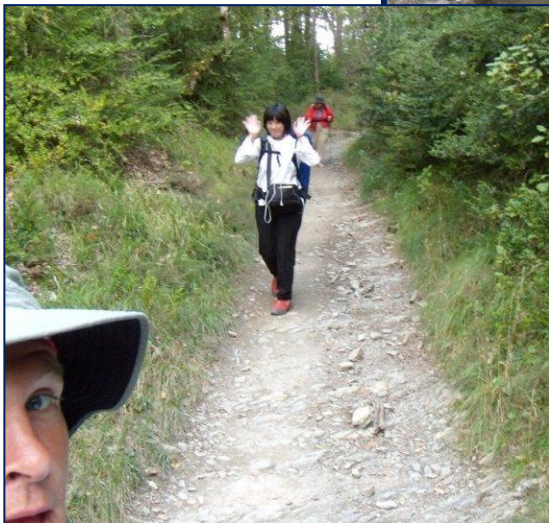


*“A truly joyful pilgrim is the one  
who rejoices in others’ Joy.”*  
*~ anonymous*



And here are “The singing Norwegians” ... We met these ladies many times during the first few weeks of our Camino trek. Every morning they had a ritual where they would gather on the Path at sunrise and welcome the Sun into the day – truly beautiful stuff!

*“We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a soft shadow that never wavers.” ~ G. Buddha*



And here once more is Minsu – a pilgrim from South Korea who, a bit like me, was accompanying her mother along the Camino.

*“Life is about giving, and the rest is taken care of.” ~ Peter Cajander*

*“There is no hope for the person who struggles to obtain a virtue in the abstract. Everybody has an instinctive desire to good things and avoid evil ones. But that desire is sterile as long as we have no direct experience of how it feels to **be Good.**” ~ Thomas Merton*





*“Prudence can indeed guide us from futile effort,  
and yet no courageously caring deed is ever wasted.”  
~ anonymous*



And then we came to the town of Zubiri ...



*“Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment” ~ Morihei Ueshiba*



And we cross the bridge into town ...



*“In the spiritual life there is no such thing as an indifference to love and hate ... Tepidity is merely hate disguised as Love.” ~ Thomas Merton*



This was our room in *Albergue Zaldiko* in Zubiri; representing a pretty accurate feel for the typical accommodations I experienced along the Camino.

*“If you share your light with the world, truth and goodness will be your constant companions.” ~ Michael Teal*

We got settled in, and then enjoyed our first Camino shopping experience, in a typical Spanish small-town grocery ... Such stores were rough going at first for a vegetarian, and yet I soon realized how surprisingly little food one needed on The Way. Bread and dark chocolate (and occasionally apples or tomatoes) proved to be my main snack staples, and I don't ever remember being hungry while walking.



*“Gratitude takes nothing for granted; is ever responsive; is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God.”*

*~ Thomas Merton*

“We arrived today in Zubiri ... Deeply overcast skies, like those seen in much Spanish art, were great for walking ... It was mostly downhill all day as we continue down the Pyrenees, and it was amazing that 160+ pilgrims could start today's journey at roughly the same time, and yet each somehow find our own time and space –that we each had many hours of walking in which we were both completely alone.

As this glorious day comes to an end, **Suzanna** is thankful for: hiking sticks that allow her to walk without using her trifocals, her red jacket that reminds her of St. Michael (who represents courage), the opportunity to give Reiki energy to a fellow pilgrim from Ireland while a doctor from Hungary treated her injury, Lamaze breathing and her wide female pelvis that help her to carry her pack with ease, her husband and two sons -- and oh yeah; thank you as well to Shirley MacClaine for saying it is OK to hang underwear on your backpack to dry! 😊

Also on this day, **Scaughdt** is thankful for: The Divine (a.k.a. God, Chi, Prana, the quantum connection etc) that resides within everything and binds all of us together, for the Beauty that resides all around us in every moment (if we but choose to LOOK), for the Goodness inherent in every Human Being (even though we have to look more closely for it with some than others), for the awesome Power of unconditional LOVE, for the constant opportunity we have to Care for others, and for the grace we have all been given to choose to be kind to others when it is difficult to do so.” ~ S & S



*September 24, 2008 ... Gifts and their Giving*

And we're up – and we're off – and we're back in the Peace of The Way ...



*“As you simplify your life,  
the laws of the universe will be simpler;  
solitude will not be solitude,  
poverty will not be poverty,  
nor weakness a weakness.”  
~ Henry David Thoreau*



And then, we get our first sign of the “Tissue Bandit” ...



I at first was critical of whoever was littering the Path with these sneeze-catchers, until I realized after a time that they were always perfectly clean and always left in places where one might otherwise stray from the Path. Mom was even saved once from getting lost by seeing a tissue ahead of her on the trail. As such, I came to remember that life’s “bandits” are often actually its “saviors” — and that seeing the difference between the two is only a question of attitude.

*“Acceptance and tolerance and forgiveness; now **those** are the life-altering lessons.” ~ Jessica Lange*



This lovely group of “singing Swiss” was walking the Camino and stopping in every church along the way to sing a hymn. Here, Mom & I were blessed with an impromptu concert during a rest stop along The Way ...

*“Happiness is not so much in having as sharing. We may make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”*

*~ Norman MacEwan*



Wild horses seen along the way ...

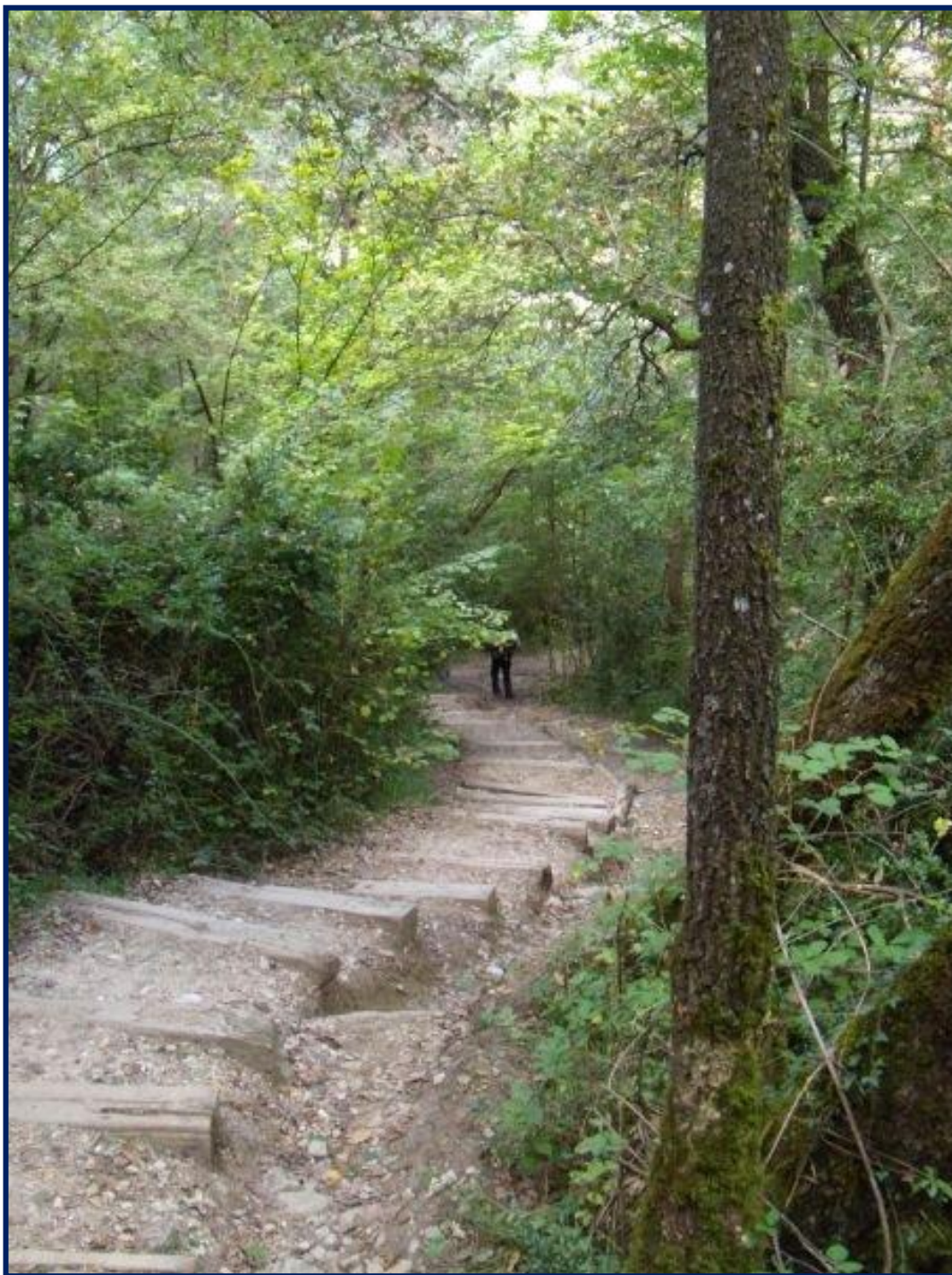


*“God the Holy Spirit is omnipresent – it extends through all space, with all other matter.” ~ Orson Pratt*

... and then wild horses leading The Way themselves!



*“Straight-away the ideas flow in upon me, directly from God, and not only do I see distinct themes in my mind’s eye, but they are clothed in the right forms and harmonies.” ~ Johannes Brahm*



*“Signs always come to us;  
whether or not we See them depends solely  
upon our chosen state of Being  
once they arrive.”  
~ anonymous*





My typical Camino lunch was bread, tomatoes & cheese (with a little high-grade dark chocolate for dessert) ... Even though I ate it over & over & over again along The Way, I never tired of it.

*“To seek the timeless way we must first know the quality without a name. There is a central quality which is the root criterion of life and spirit in a man, a town, a building, or a wilderness. This quality is objective and precise, and yet it cannot be named.”*

*~ Christopher Alexander*

Here she is! Mom & I walked the Camino with uniquely different tempos, which had me typically flowing ahead of her and then regularly waiting until she “caught up”. Today provided one of the few exceptions ... During a short water break, I was writing in my Camino journal and Mom blew right past without seeing me. Of course, when I later stopped to wait on her, she never showed up – because she was ahead of me! No big deal, as word of our respective whereabouts traveled up and down the Path via other pilgrims until we met up here a short while thereafter ...



*“Life is made up of a series of judgments based on insufficient data, and if we waited to run down all our doubts, it would flow past us.” ~ Learned Hand*

Back on The Way – and closing in on Pamplona ... Stone bridges like this one were another regular blessing of Beauty along the Camino. As an avid “path-maker” and “staircase builder”, I really appreciate good trail-work, and these bridges were greeted constantly with profound admiration.



*“For real Love is inexhaustible; the more you give, the more you have. And if you go to draw at the true fountainhead, the more water you draw, the more abundant is its flow.” ~ Antoine de St. Exupery*

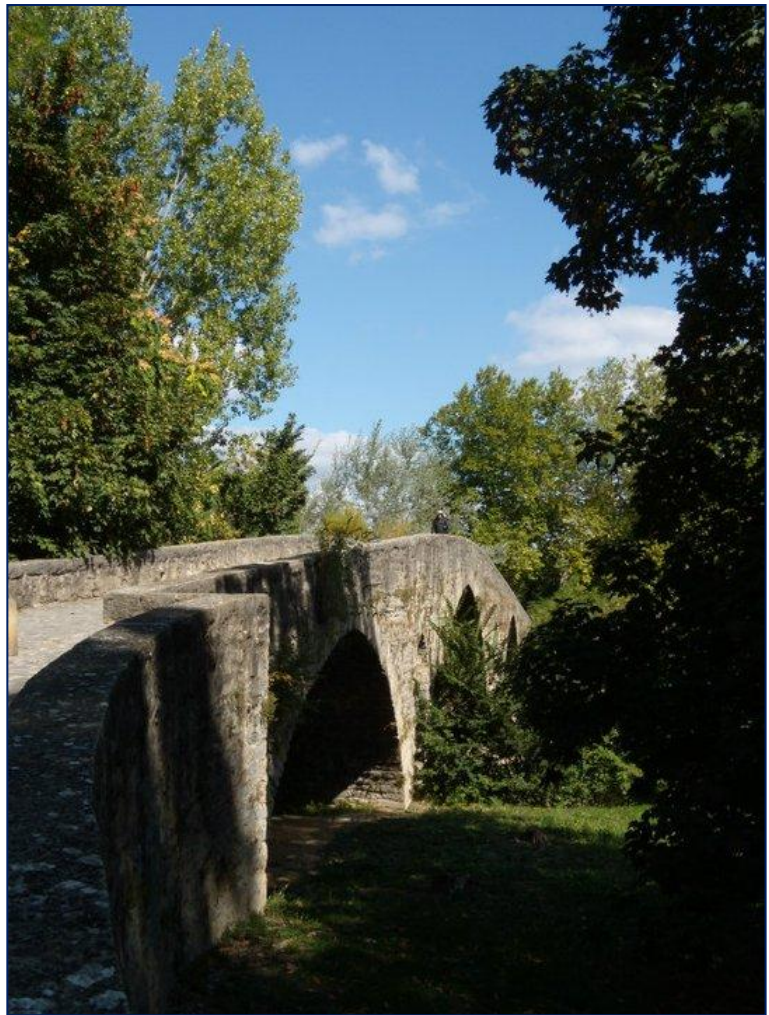


*“Every rest is well deserved, and every task -- a Blessing.” ~ anonymous*

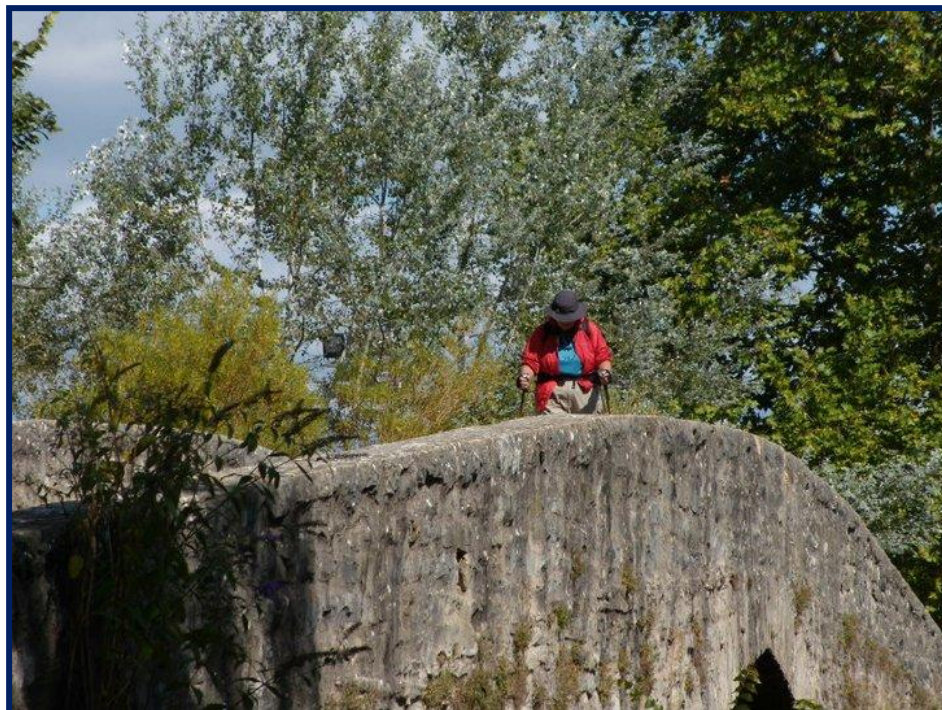


Crossing yet another  
beautiful bridge ...

*“It’s not the destination. It’s  
where we already are, what  
we’re already experiencing ...  
It isn’t the process of getting to  
the end, but rather the process  
of ever more completely being  
where we already are.” ~  
inspired by Theresa Mellott*



*“Gratitude is the bridge between obstacle and blessing.” ~ anonymous*





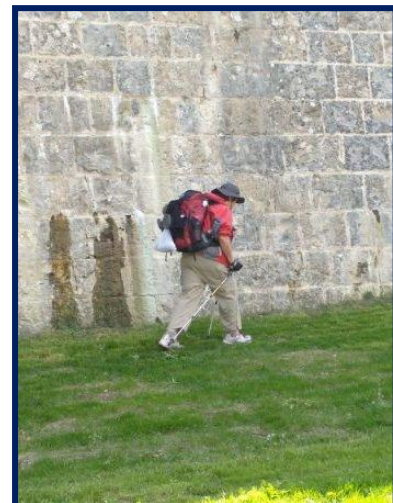
Entering Pamplona ... I remember feeling more than a little weird in this large city; constantly surrounded by so many people. After the deep Peace of the countryside, it took more than a little getting used to. Maybe that is why we only paused here for a short while before heading to the next village to spend the night.



*“Let love flow so that it cleanses the world. Then man can live in peace, instead of the state of turmoil he has created through his past ways of life, with all those material interests and earthly ambitions.” ~ Sai Baba*

Mom was a true inspiration for many people along our Way. She didn't go very fast, but once she started going, she just kept on keeping on -- quite remarkable, really.

*“I kind of entered a flow state ... You are not thinking ahead. You are just thinking about what is in front of you each second.” ~ Aron Ralston*



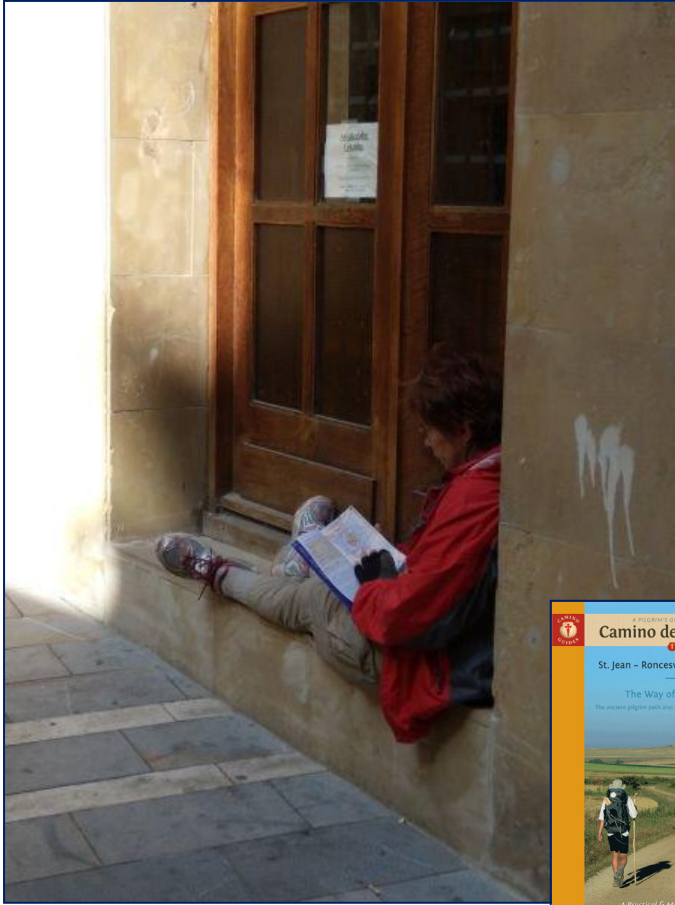




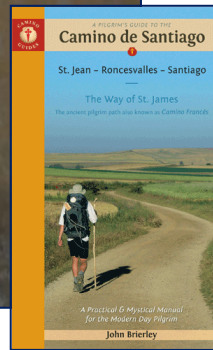
See what I mean about the stark contrast in the “vibe” between the countryside and the big city? **And** yet still, there is Beauty to be found here as well ...

*“The Beloved is perfectly beautiful when perfectly loved ... Every ‘flaw’ seen is only a reflection of the beholder’s flawed affection.” ~ anonymous*

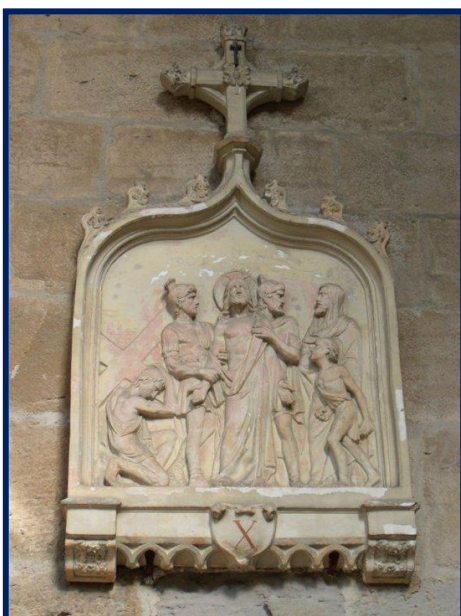




Mom's Camino guidebook was "A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago" written by John Brierley and it truly is a "spot on" handbook to have. Indeed, if any of you ever plan on walking the Camino with a guidebook, I do indeed recommend obtaining this one ... Of course, it is also more than possible (and *possibly* a bit more Meaning-full) to walk The Way without a guidebook at all. I did this for two of the 6 weeks of this Journey, and had many amazing experiences that would not have manifested themselves had I been following standard "guidebook-advice."



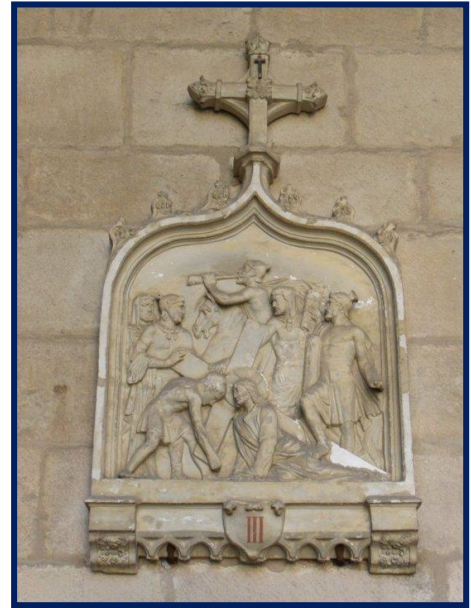
*"At the same time, new concepts and abstractions continually flow into the picture, ... abstractions for which our language lacks adequate terms."*  
~ Benjamin Whorf



I found it intriguing that almost every time I entered a church or a cathedral along The Way, I was always drawn to either the third or the tenth Station of the Cross. This sculpture (found in the Pamplona Cathedral) depicts the Tenth Station — where Jesus has his clothes taken from him just before his crucifixion. Powerful metaphors abound herein, one of which being cleansing self-centered behaviors in order to prepare the True Self to purely serve others.



And here is the depiction of the Third Station – where Jesus falls for the first time during his walk to Golgotha; where Jesus received no help after stumbling; when Jesus had to get up and push through on his own power. This is a vision apropos for any pilgrimage, where the fundamental purpose is to relieve yourself of all conventional support structures, in order to face your fears and desires alone – to walk on boldly despite their calls to collapse, and thereby to finally free yourself from their grasp.



*“The journey of life is like riding a bicycle. We know that we get on the bicycle at some point and start to move. We know that we will someday stop moving and dismount. And we know that if we stop moving and do not choose to dismount, we will indeed fall.”*  
~ inspired by William Golding



Here, sunlight illuminates a Cathedral wall through a stained glass window ...



*“So many different lives opening before me,  
and all of them both Joyous & Power-full —  
as long as I make Love their foundation.”  
~ anonymous*



And then we arrive at our hostel in Cizur Menor ...

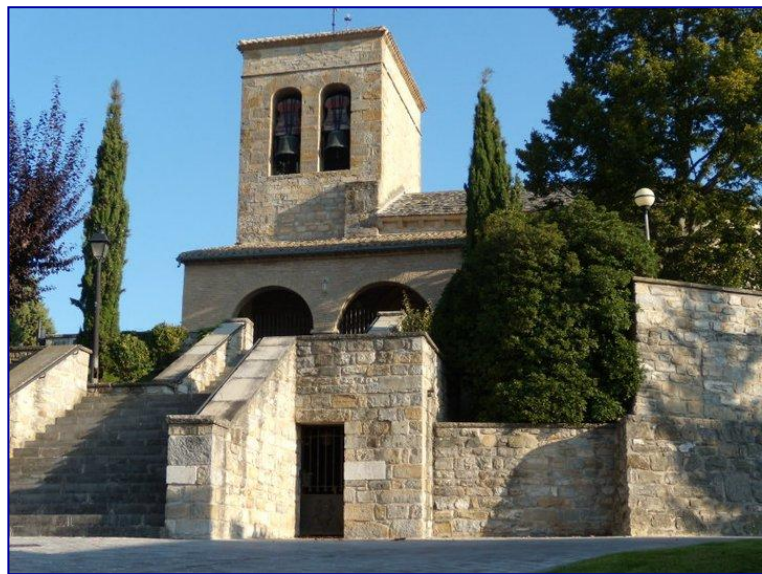


*“I will let Love guide my Heart forevermore, and I am humbly grateful for having been given the opportunity to make this courageous choice.” ~ anonymous*

Here, the chapel across the street from the hostel.

*“She saw beyond God’s own ineffable eternity; she saw that there were ranges of life beyond our present life; ranges of mind beyond our present mind — and above these she saw the splendors of the Spirit.”*

*~ Sri Aurobindo*



## *September 25, 2008 ... Something pretty Important*

*“Today I realized something pretty Important:  
If you are not struggling to get anywhere else,  
you cannot ever get lost.” ~ anonymous*



Such profound barrenness would accompany us for the better part of the next three weeks. This portion of the Journey was the “wilderness” that brings more than a few pilgrims to their knees. It is walks such as these that mandate that we first go deep within ourselves to cleanse what is hindering our ability to truly Love others. It can be a most disconcerting journey, and yet for those who persist through this trial, a profound mixture of Calm & Joy awaits them on the other side.



*“We don’t receive  
wisdom; we must  
discover it for  
ourselves, after walking  
a journey that no one  
else can take for us or  
spare us.”  
~ M. Proust*





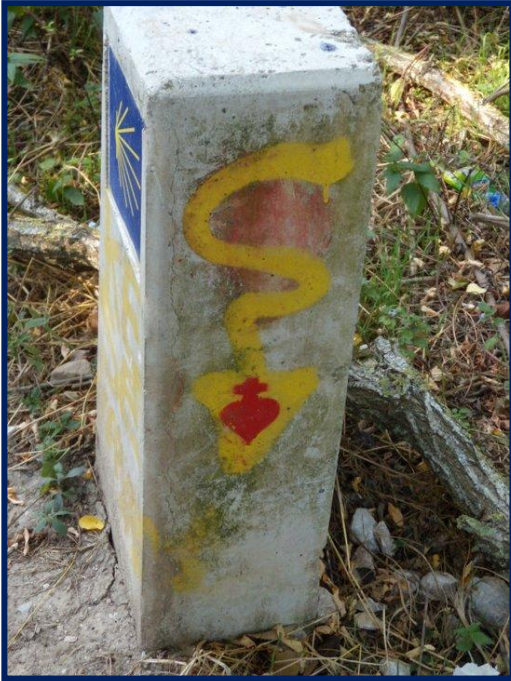
This hilltop was the first of many “side trips” I made; times when I saw something that intrigued me and simply left the Path to go and see for myself. On this particular “detour” (there are actually no detours on the Camino -- just as there are no real detours in Life), I went through this dusty field and climbed the hill to the cathedral on top. The view (seen externally & *Seen* internally) was truly spectacular.

*“You journey to sacred shrines and holy rivers; and yet the priceless jewel is within your own heart.” ~ Granth Sahib*

Here is my good Friend, Klaus from Germany ... Like many pilgrims I met, Klaus was walking The Way to rekindle a long-lost connection with the Divine. Impressively, Klaus had suffered a stroke in his past and had limited use of half his limbs. Still, he persisted day by day on his Trek, and did indeed make it to Santiago, after walking some 500+ miles to do so. Just as intriguing, this picture was taken on one of their very first days on the Trail for the 2 Danish ladies pictured, and I later heard that one of them returned to Denmark the day after this photo was shot, feeling that the emotional toll of the Walk was simply too great to bear.



*“Your journey never ends. Life has a way of ever changing things in incredible ways.” ~ Alexander Volkov*



*“The road less traveled is sometimes the softer path.” ~ Suzanna Alexander*



*“The Path is its own destination; its beginning is the end of you.” ~ anonymous*



*“The Path is the goal; its end is merely your Beginning.” ~ anonymous*

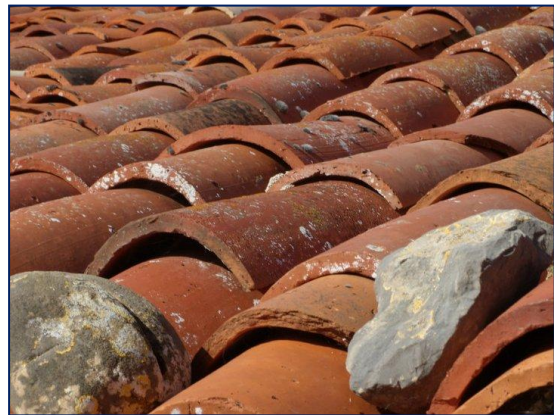


The Camino seems to keep saying, over & over & over again: “Unless shown otherwise, keep heading the way you’re going”. In life, I think this translates to, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” -- or maybe, “If you’ve got it already, quit searching for it.”



*“Once fear is faced, its true substance is revealed as vapor-thin ... And once this realization is known, fear can be set free ... And once our fear is set free, we ourselves become free; free to access the Beauty that is ever-surrounding.” ~ anonymous*

*“To remember who you truly are, you must first let go of everything in your life reserved for ‘someday’ or ‘just in case’.”  
~ anonymous*



A famous metal sculpture of pilgrims (and *for* pilgrims) at Alto de Perdon — translation: “Repentance Peak” ...



*“All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes. We might not see it now, but when our bodies are purified, we shall see that it is all matter.” ~ Joseph Smith, Jr.*



*“There is only one royal road for the spiritual journey ...and that road is **Love.**”  
~ Sathya Baba*



Without a doubt, this was the smallest yellow “Way-marker” along our entire 555 mile Journey ...



*“It is not what we do or where we go, but **why** we go where we go to do what we do that matters.” ~ anonymous*



This is an image that reflects most of my moments on the Camino — paths like this one, through relatively rugged landscapes like this one, with no one to be seen for miles ... like this **ONE**.

*“You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have truly lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of Love.”*

*~ Henry Drummond*

We then came to this lovely shaded shrine “in the middle of nowhere” along the Path. We stopped here for a while to rest and soak up some Peace.



*“In the beginning of accepting our Calling, there is indeed a ‘Gethsemane moment’ of overwhelming anxiety. And yet, once we detach from our fears and set out upon our chosen path of service, there is only Joy.” ~ anonymous*



A bit later – it's lunchtime on the Trail ...

*“The spiritual life is first of all a life. It is not merely something to be known and studied ... It must be lived.” ~ Thomas Merton*



*“To know Self is to Love Self ... To Love self is to accept self ... To accept Self is to recognize God within self.”  
~ inspired by Thomas Merton*

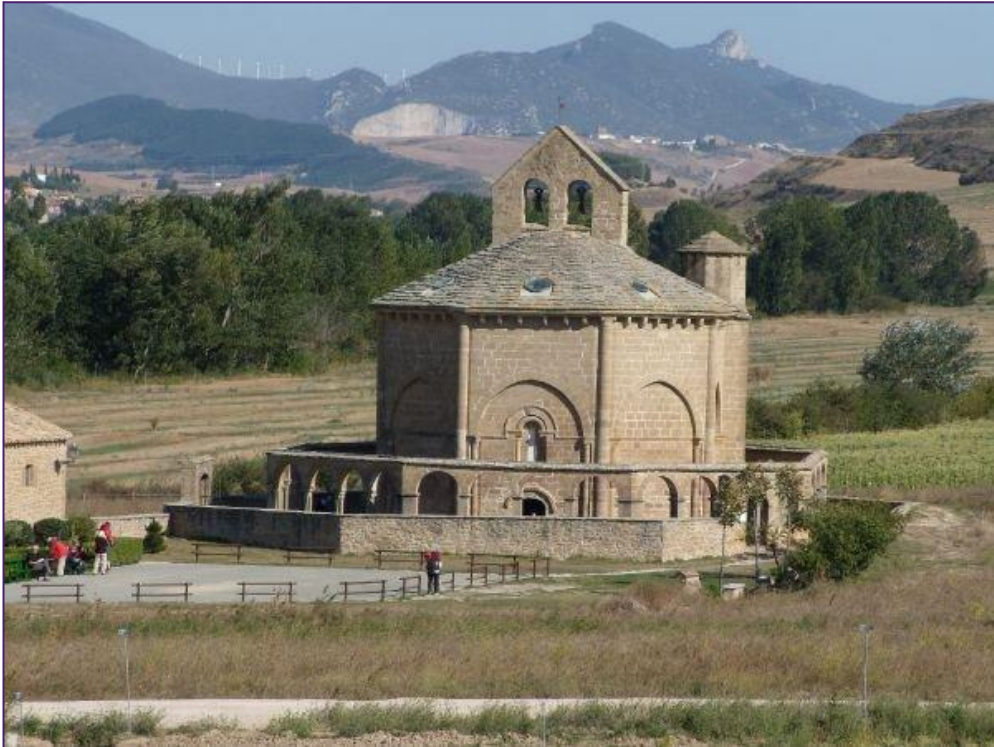


The scallop shell is the primary symbol associated with Camino pilgrims. When early pilgrims would walk to “the end of the Earth” (Finisterre, Spain — about four days’ journey on foot from Santiago) to cleanse their Souls, they would find a scallop shell on one of the beaches there and then walk back home; bringing the shell as “proof” that they had completed the Journey. Though most pilgrims these days tend to only walk to Santiago, many carry a scallop shell with them still.

*“It’s an individual taking a journey, that’s the perspective. It happened here, and it could happen anywhere. The idea of leaving home is commonplace — and yet it is actually the idea of finding home that is universal; of finding what Home means.”*  
~ inspired by Alan Cooke



We flow onward, and come to the Sacred Space that is the church at **Eunate** ...



*“We can only seek that which we have already found. We can only ask questions to which we already know the answer.” ~ anonymous*

Here, a peek inside Eunate's "cathedral" ...



*"This being human is a guest house ...  
... every day a new arrival." ~ Rumi*





It is quite intriguing that the baby Jesus sitting on Mary's lap on the altar here is holding his right hand in such a way as to form the Indian mudra known as the "half flag" – a symbolic gesture commonly associated with Raghu; said to have been a son of Gautama Buddha ... HmMMMM.

*"Just as water flowing from streams and rivers fills the ocean, thus may all of your moments of goodness touch and benefit all beings; both those here now, as well as those gone before." ~ unknown*

The ceiling in Eunata ... (a place, by the way, that was seriously "juiced")

*"When desire is a hunger, spirit becomes a body ... When desire is emptied, the body becomes spirit."  
~ inspired by Saadi*



Departing Eunate; a next-to-last look back ...



*“As your faith is strengthened you will find that there is no longer the need to have a sense of control... You will find that things will flow as they will, and that you will flow with them, both to your great delight and to your great benefit.”*  
~ Emmanuel Tenney

Gazing back down the road; back towards the church ...

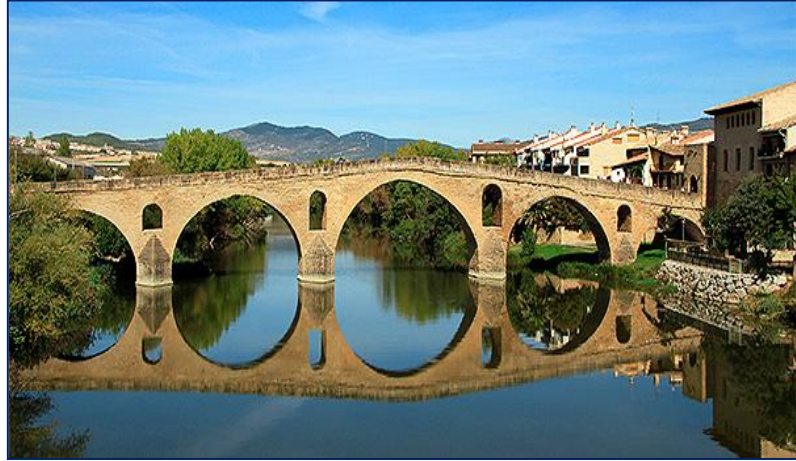
*“It has already been a journey of great significance.” ~ inspired by Mitchel McLaughlin*





Arriving in Puente la Reina ...

*“If we’ve helped but one person to smile, we’ve succeeded in our journey. However, our work doesn’t end there. We’ve been dealt a life sentence, and we must now choose how to live it.” ~ inspired by Lorraine Reed*



“Pilgrims care for each other’s soles and they care for each other’s Souls. It is amazing what the context of the Camino does ... We speak the communal language of the road and find little need for more ... We share food with each other, smiles with each other and courage for each other. Someone said today that she did not think we would be this way with one another in a five star hotel, and yet maybe so one day -- there is always hope.” ~ Suzanna

## *September 26, 2008 ... Cleansing The Way*

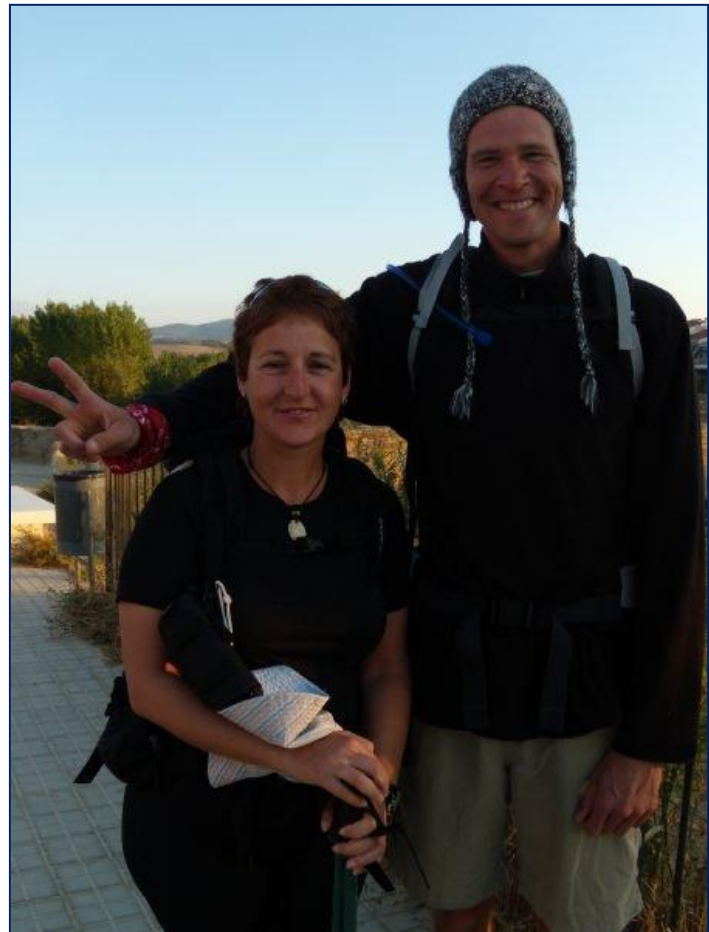
Leaving Puente la Reina – glancing back ...



*“It’s been a long journey.  
It’s something you have to  
take one day at a time. I  
actually like it that way, it’s  
really taught me how to  
appreciate what I have.”  
~ Angela Daigle*

Here I am with Mercedes, a fellow pilgrim from the Basque country -- a region that includes parts of France & Spain, and a region that happens to also include the town of St. Jean Pied du Port, our Camino’s point of origin.

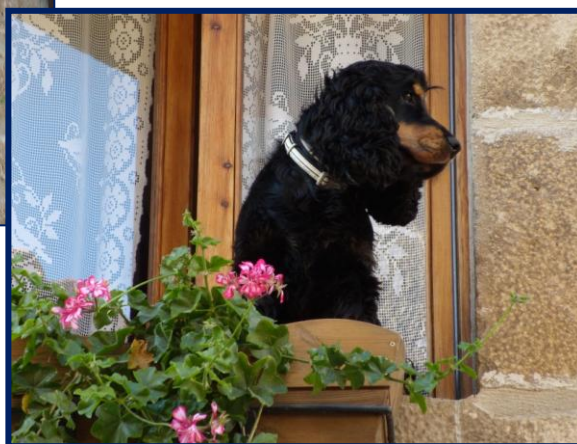
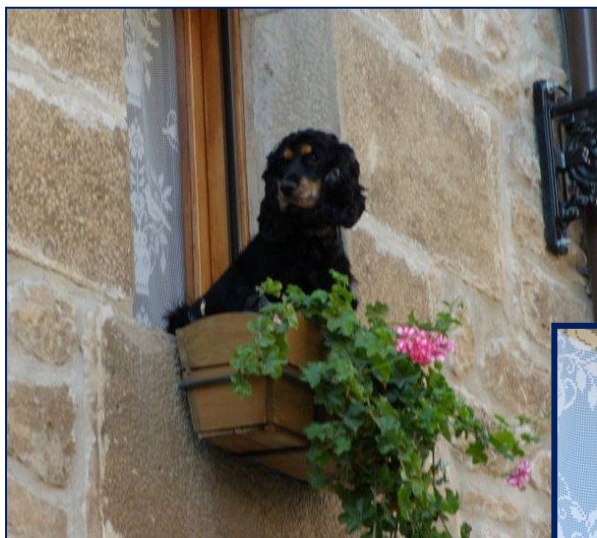
*“For this is the journey that men and women make, to find themselves. If they fail in this, it doesn’t matter much else what they find.” ~ James Michener*





Here, a pilgrim cheerleader ... 🐶

*“The eye which opens to God’s presence is in the very center of our humility, in the very heart of our freedom, in the very depths of our spiritual nature.”*  
~ Thomas Merton



Looking for a snack  
... One of the many  
advantages to walking  
the Camino in the early  
Fall: ripe wine grapes!

*“All God’s gifts are  
good, and yet if we  
selfishly rest in them ...  
they will lose their  
Goodness.” ~ inspired by  
Thomas Merton*

England is renowned for its cairns and megaliths, and yet Spain has a few as well. These stones were absolutely massive; seen here from quite a distance.



*“A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are remade in the image of what you desire. To unify your life, unify your desires. To spiritualize your life, spiritualize your desires. To spiritualize your desires, desire to live without desire.”*

*~ inspired by Thomas Merton*





Here I am -- the Camino's most joyful garbage man (I didn't collect all of this trash myself today -- merely the bag on top) ... I don't even know why I started picking up trash while walking The Way. I just started one day a few days into the Journey, and kept doing it for several weeks thereafter ... I would simply find a plastic bag on the side of the Path, and that would be my cue to start collecting all the garbage I saw alongside the Path — and I simply did so until that particular bag was full. Then I would throw the bag of trash away and look for the next one ... It felt good -- somehow just plain “right” -- to care for the Camino in this manner.



*“Everything flows and nothing abides;  
everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.”*

*~ Heraclitus*

... a steep climb through the streets of a small village (possibly Villatuerta – just before Estella) ...

*“Life flows on -- ever within you, and even  
without you.” ~ George Harrison*



We make it to the outskirts of Estella. How wonderful to be able to drink pure water from a public fountain — even just outside a fairly large city!

*“Help us to be ever faithful gardeners of the Spirit, who know that without darkness nothing comes to birth, and that without light nothing flowers.”*

*~ May Sarton*

Here, mom is resting a bit next to the pristine waters ...

The engraving on the wall next to mom says, “Good bread, pure water and wine, meat and fish bring Contentment.” Personally, I’m not so sure about this one, unless we attach the archetypal meanings to this saying -- where “bread” becomes selfless service, “pure water”



becomes the connection to one’s Soul, “wine” become unconditional love, and “meat & fish” become the sustenance that come from our Caring interconnection with others ... Now *those* things do indeed bring complete Contentment!

*“Grown men can learn from very little children, for the hearts of little children are pure, and the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss.” ~ Black Elk*



Entering Estella ...

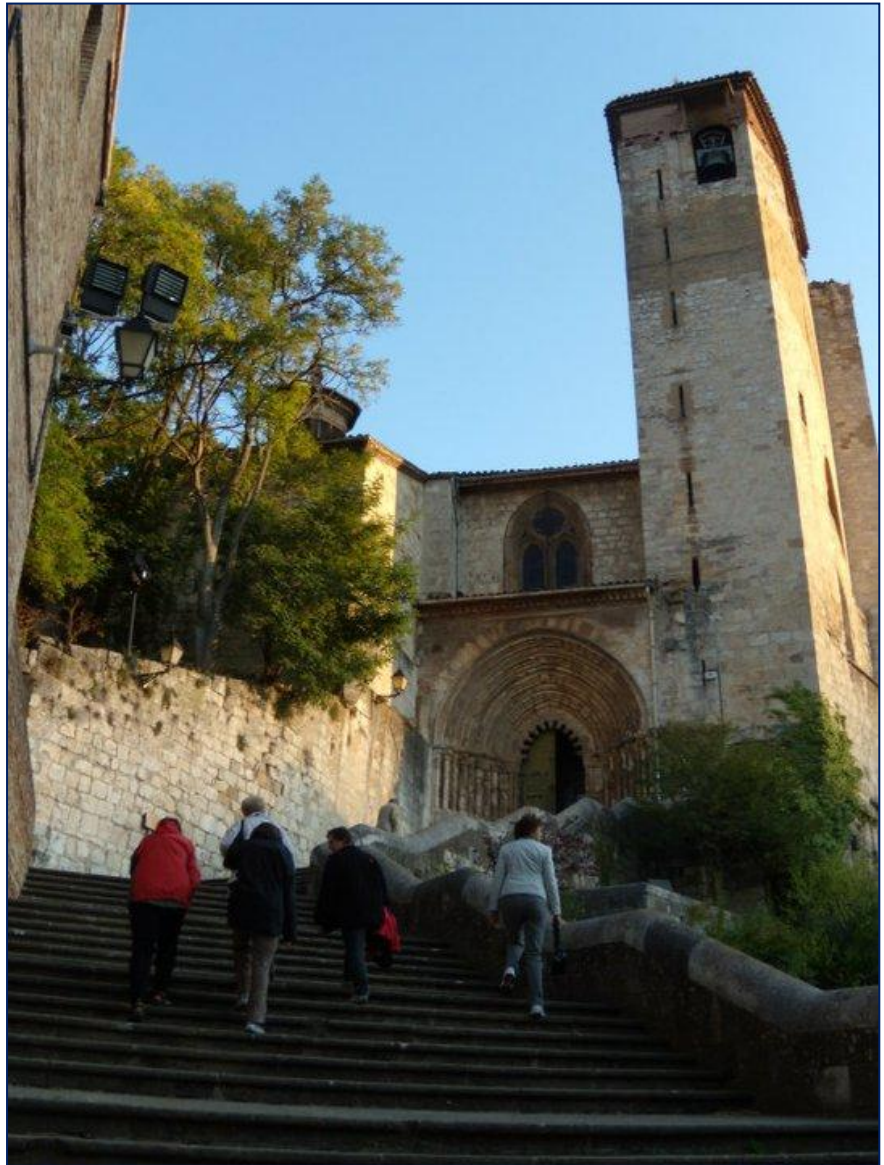


*“No journey carries one far unless,  
as it extends into the world around us,  
it goes an equal distance into the world within”  
~ Lillian Smith*

Head into an old church, the Iglesia de San Miguel, with some fellow pilgrims ...

*“The traveler who resolutely follows a rough and winding path will sooner arrive than he who is always changing direction -- wasting the hours of daylight looking for smoother ground and shorter passage.”*

*~ S. Johnson*



... and lighting a candle therein to send a dear Friend some much needed Peace.

*“By releasing the attachments to our relationships, we rise above their complexities and can appreciate them as the simple embodiments of Love that they are; priceless opportunities to care deeply for others, and thereby care for life itself.”*

*~ anonymous*



## September 27, 2008 ... The Pilgrim Family

“Today’s entry is dedicated to ‘the Pilgrim Family’ that develops as one undertakes any Great Journey with others ... It seems that, regardless of our different walking tempos and cadences, many of us tend to regularly meet back up both during the day and at the end of our days ... And every time this happens there is such a warm, sincerely joyous reunion when we do so ... The everyday stresses and societal conventions have been peeled away, so – and this, regardless of whether we are retirees, young adventurers, home-free peace pilgrims, or corporate executives. We are all literally ‘in the same boat’ -- We all have the same distance to walk, through the same stunningly beautiful countryside, in the same heat or cold, and with the same stresses of mental and physical fatigue (some would say exhaustion). And this realization that cannot be overlooked reminds us all constantly that we are truly Family ... And so we greet each other as such every time we re-cross paths ... Would that all the world’s citizens (especially our ‘leaders’) be required to engage this Walk together as well! It would be such a Peace-filled planet thereafter. Maybe one day it will be so, and yet in the meantime, let us all go forth today and be kind to one another (especially when ‘least inclined’ to be so). Let us all remember that ‘There is no way to Peace; Peace *is* the way!’” ~ inspired by Gandhi



I had heard about such “wine fountains” from friends and guidebooks, but this is the only one I saw during the entire Trek. Even though I rarely drink alcohol, I did regularly have a glass of red wine in the evenings after walking along the Camino. Like any activity or practice in life, it is good to release yourself from all rules or vows or promises related to doing or not doing. Only in this way can you preserve your *priceless power of*

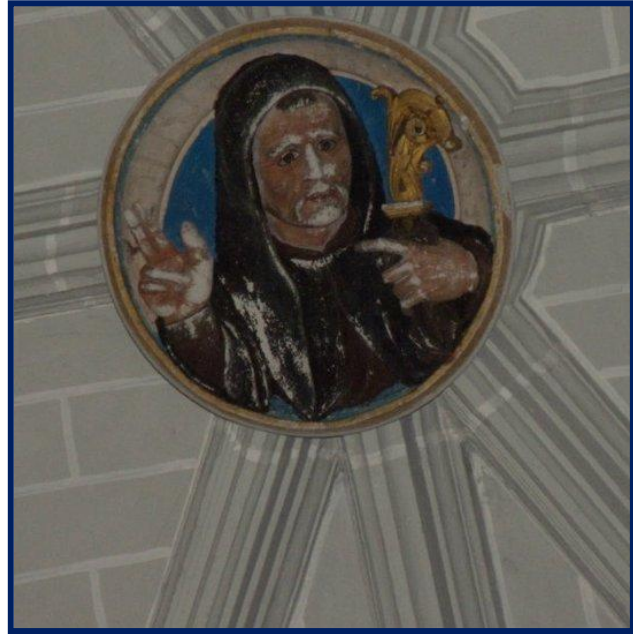
*conscious choice*. If you think an action will bring others Peace (or yourself Peace, that you might thereby better bring Peace to others), then do it ...

Life can truly be that simple.

*“Enjoy life with those around you;  
Learn from those before you;  
Care for those behind you.”*

*~ anonymous*

Here, an image of Saint Francis of Assisi, who happens to be making the mudra of the “half flag” with his right hand (just like the statue of Jesus on the altar in Eunata) -- a sign associated with Raghu, who is believed to have been a son of Gautama Buddha.



*“Let your mind start a journey through a strange new world. Leave all thoughts of the world you knew before. Let your Soul take you where you long to be ...”*  
~ Eric Fromm

Now *that’s* a grapevine!



*“Spiritual poverty has little to do with not having any money or only owning a few possessions. Spiritual poverty is detaching from the seeking of personal happiness. Indeed, it renounces anything & everything that would tempt us into believing the illusion that we are separate from — and ‘more special’ than — others.” ~ inspired by Thomas Merton*





*“The truth that a spiritual man seeks is the whole Truth ... something that sustains homage within the service of our actions.”*

*~ Thomas Merton*

*“Encounters speak to us like demons when they inspire fear or sadness, or when they tempt us to yearn for more. They speak to us like fellow humans when we are inspired by them to return to a truly Caring way. And they speak to us like God when the experience of them immerses us in Oneness; bringing us sensations of clarity and joy, while filling us with inner warmth & stillness.”*

*~ anonymous*





This nice fellow from Brazil was only seen by me for a few days during my Journey, and yet his ebullient happiness somehow spilled upon me and remained by my side for the rest of the trip.

*“We are each transient expressions of God’s ineffable majesty.” ~ unknown*

Here is David from Slovakia again — quite the clever fellow ...

As far as clothes-washing was concerned, the daily ritual for most pilgrims involved hand-washing what few clothes they were carrying and then letting them air dry overnight. Sometimes pilgrims (including myself) would be seen drying their clothes by pinning them to their backpacks during the next day’s walk, and yet this is the only time I ever saw anyone using a grape arbor as a dryer... Fantastic!



*“The journey is the reward.” ~ Chinese proverb*



Again, here are our friends, the singing Norwegians ...

*“Of journeying the benefits are many: the freshness it bringeth to the heart, the seeing and hearing of marvelous things, the delight of beholding new cities, the meeting of unknown friends” ~ Muslih-uddin Sadi*



This is one of my favorite Camino pictures, taken on one of my favorite Camino days — on this day the Path was wide and rolling and easy -- like much of Life (if we but **let it be so**).



*“The feeling remains that God is on the journey too.” ~ Teresa of Avila*

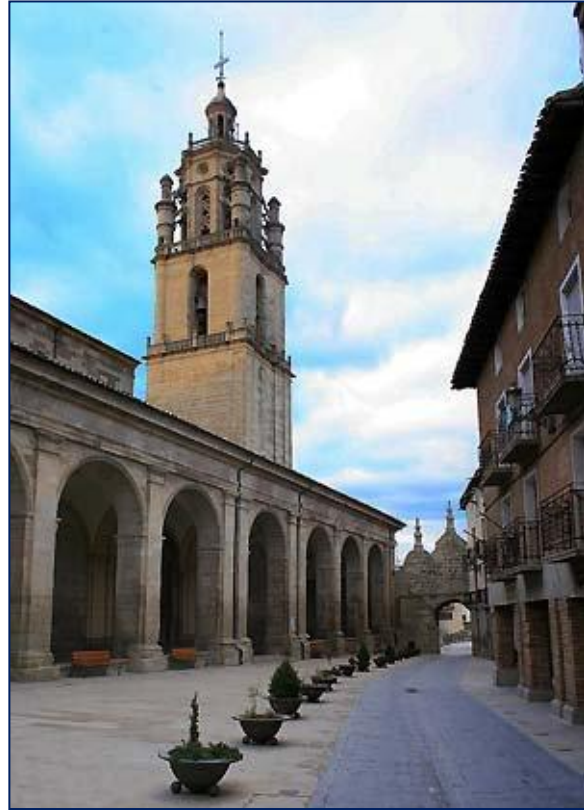


A little further along, I climbed up a huge hay-bale stack by the side of the Path (much like the one in this picture). Once on top, I simply sat down and calmly watched as dozens of pilgrims calmly passed me by — each of them flowing smoothly towards their Destiny ... It was truly beautiful.

*“All other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered for others in a spirit of Joy.” ~ M. Gandhi*

And then we flow into Los Arcos to rest for the night ...

*“It’s never too late to be what you might have been.” ~ George Elliot*



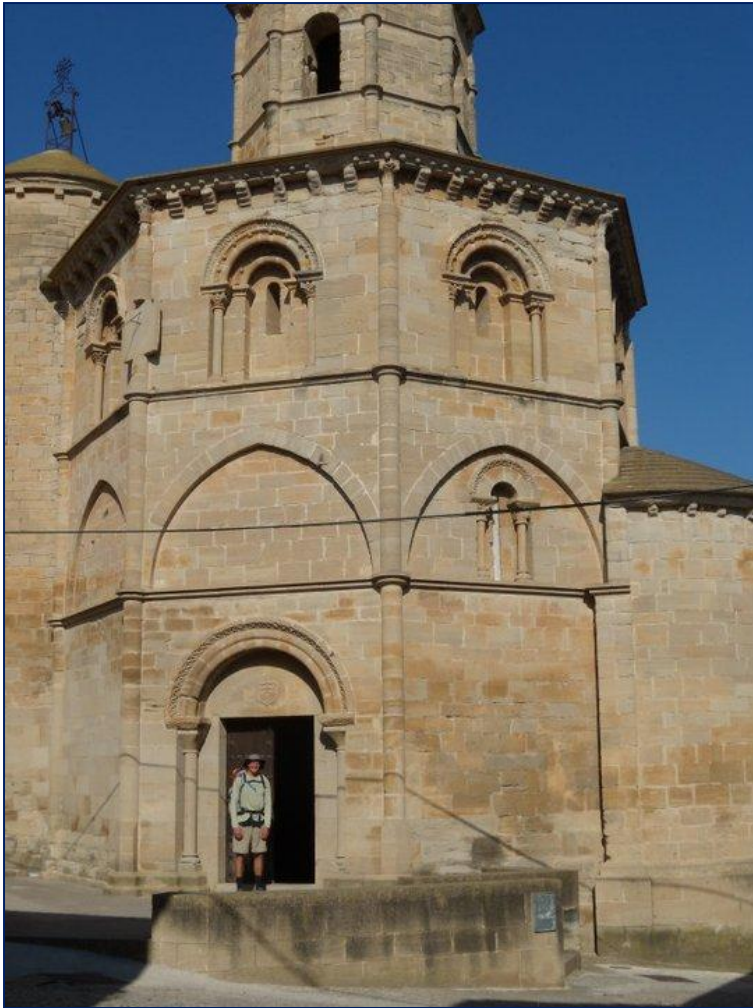
### ***September 28, 2008 ... Through the Sleeping Dirt***

And then it was back on our Way, flowing from village to village through miles and miles of “sleeping dirt” — fields that were dry & dusty; already longing for the next drop of rain.



*“You are not here merely to make a living. You are here to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget that errand.”  
~ unknown*





This church was built to closely resemble the architecture of Eunate, and yet it was missing much of the vibrant energy that was coursing through that other, far more sacred space – a discrepancy that gave me pause to wonder: what does make a place “alive with the spirit”? For certain, it is not mere “natural beauty”, nor is it mere “architectural genius”. It is not even the “energetic residue” of the lingering, loving intentions of those who have passed that way before (as this relatively “dead” church illustrated). No, there is something *more* present in such special locations — much, much more. But from whence does it come?

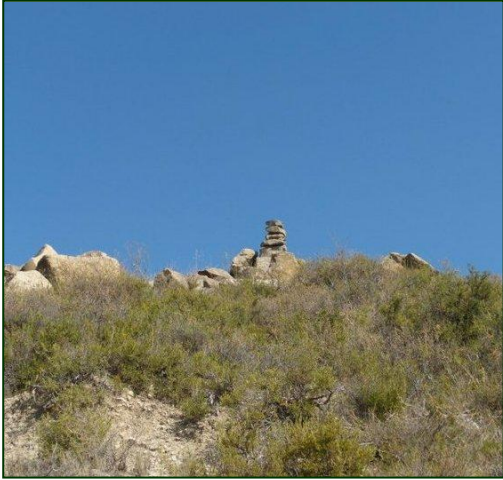
*“The Spirit is truth, and the Spirit is the Holy Spirit ... and the Spirit is expressed towards man as redeeming Love.” ~ Roland Allen*

*“It is our humble acquiescence to all that **IS** that allows us to experience an intimate Awareness of the momentary All that merely seems to be.”  
~ anonymous*





*“When solitude was a problem, I had no solitude. When it ceased to be a problem, I found I already possessed it.” ~ Thomas Merton*



... and then into the vibrant (yet for me exceedingly “cold”) town of Vianna ...



*“True solitude has to be a communion in something greater than the world — as great as Being itself ... It is clothed in the friendly communion of silence, and yet this silence is related to Love.” ~ Thomas Merton*



Below is the entrance to our hostel in Vianna ... I'm pretty sure this is the first of many places where I woke up in the middle of the night amidst the external cacophony of dozens of snorers and the internal chaos of loose and frenetic energy (that all pilgrims tend to shed while processing the previous day's awakenings) ... My solution: get up and find some solitude — in this case by taking my sleeping bag to the dining room and sleeping on one of the tables there.

*“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes ... Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward.” ~ Lao Tsu*



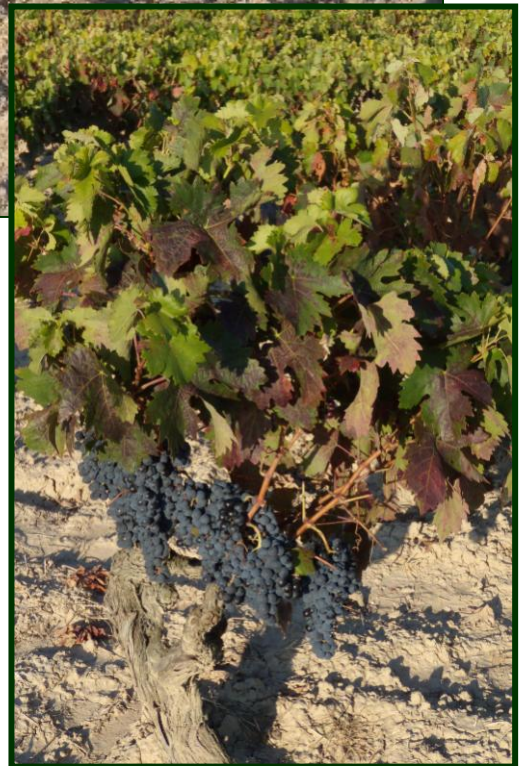
“We made it into Viana and was wondering along the way -- Who is this person who is walking? Who is this trudging up and down and around mountains every day for over eight hours a day? Who is this sleeping after all that walking sometimes 100, sometimes 20, sometimes 10, sometimes 4 pilgrims in two and three tier bunk beds? And who is this praying -- .in abandoned monasteries where thousands have prayed before, where the fountain water still bubbles up through layers of moss and limestone? ... I am asking these questions as somehow I seem like someone else at times. Today I found shade under a young olive tree – and then I got lost – and then I was rescued by two Spainards who were picking figs from a single tree in a pasture – and then I was encouraged to continue on by a ‘patron’ who rode up on a beautiful white stallion ... The Camino continues ever onward – it never ceases.”

~ inspired by Suzanna



## *September 29, 2008 ... Recalling the Great Harvest*

The harvest has begun here -- and I had a feeling that my own internal “harvest” was beginning as well.



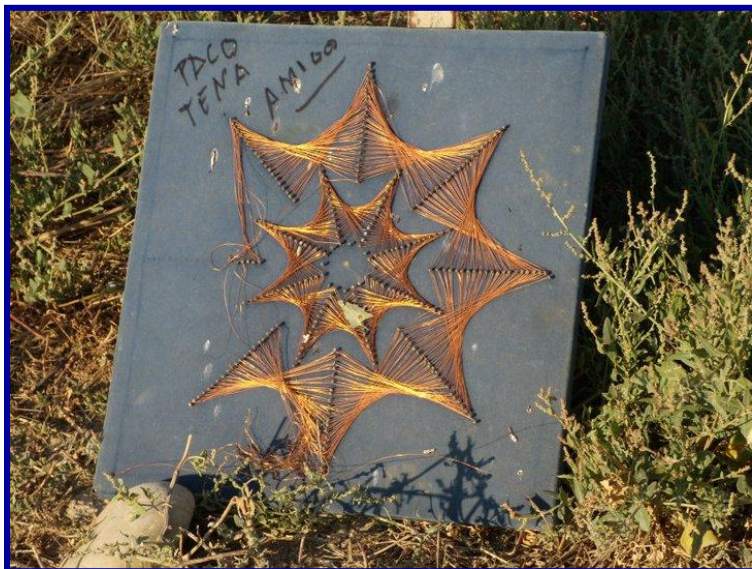
*“We are not meant to erase our fears or conquer our desires ... Rather, we are to **live as One with others** by transcending the same with acts of courageous Kindness.”*

*~ anonymous*





*“A man knows when he has found his vocation when he stops thinking about how to live and he begins living.” ~ Thomas Merton*



This “shrine” had me recalling memories of a 6th grade math project ... making forms like this one is how I first learned geometry.

*“When I am no longer involved in the measurement of life, but rather in the living of it, I rediscover a form of prayer in which there is no distraction. In those moments, my life becomes a prayer.” ~ Thomas Merton*





*“Let me seek, then, the gift of silence and solitude, where everything I touch is turned into prayer: where the sky is my prayer, the birds are my prayer, the wind in the trees is my prayer, and the others I happen to meet are my prayer, for God is all in all.” ~ inspired by Thomas Merton*

We then enter Logrono, another large city in which we do not wish to remain long ... Here, I'm seen waiting in a town market to buy some fruit for the Journey.



*“Even when it speaks, humility listens ... It is not speaking that breaks our silence, but rather the anxiety to be heard ... The humble man speaks only to be spoken to.” ~ Thomas Merton*



Mom -- here seen departing Logrono ...

*“Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint you can on it.” ~ Danny Kaye*



Pilgrim-made crosses like these adorned almost every fence we passed along the route. Archetypally, the cross is quite the powerful symbol -- representing the union of God, the self, and the Soul (along the vertical axis) that a person attains in every moment of raw gratitude (the left) felt during every act of joyful self-sacrifice (the right).

*“For the Master who has dedicated his life to Loving, opportunities to do so are always underfoot.” ~ anonymous*

Amidst a sea of pilgrim-made crosses, we found a lone circle — some would say the feminine within the masculine ... I would say the Divine that is felt all around us, within the Divine that is merely seen as “above” or “below”.

*“My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive.” ~ Albert Einstein*



Here, our resting place for the night, a pilgrim hostel in Navarrete ...



*“All truly contemplative Souls have this in common: not that they gather in the desert or that they shut themselves up in reclusion, but that wherever the Divine is, there they Are ... and vice versa!” ~ inspired by Thomas Merton*

“Thinking today about how Time and Space somehow ‘stretch’ while on a pilgrimage of this magnitude/length ... In the beginning of each day, before my personal walking-cadence is found (and before any fatigue sets in), there is the normal stream of thoughts and ponderings. There are also more pilgrims around, and therefore more friendly conversation ... As each day progresses, however, space seems to ‘bend’ and I often look up and realize that I am completely alone on the Path ... And even in places of Beauty so magnificent that my breath is literally taken aWay (which is regularly the case), there is a sense of timelessness -- a dream-like quality to the whole experience ... Many days I ‘wake up’ and am already at the conclusion of the current phase of that day’s Walk. Other days I walk ‘briskly’ and seem to get nowhere ... And yet all the while, there are less and less thoughts that I haven’t thought a hundred times before, and I am left more and more alone with my True Self, all while marveling at this body that walks the road without thinking about where it is going; at this mind that chatters its way ever into the fog of the future; at my emotions that swing seemingly without reason between joy and terror ... And in the end I am left only with the Soul that resides within, waiting patiently and happily for me to let all of it go -- and **simply BE** in gratitude for this beautiful Life.”

~ Scaughdt



*September 30, 2008 ... Awakening to Choice*

*"It's when we awaken to choice that we sit with the heavens and redesign ourselves." ~ with Dorothy Gilman*



*"And this is the mystery of our vocation: not that we cease to be men in order to become angels of gods, but that the Love of my man's heart can become God's love for God & men." ~ Thomas Merton*

In honor of my mother, here are a few of the things I have learned from her over the past 40 years: Be kind to others ... Live above the conventional ... Work with resilience ... Remain cheerful ... When asked, share your Truths ... Remain calm in crisis ... Care for the downtrodden ... Serve others joyfully.

***Thanks, Mom!***



*"To know the road ahead, ask those who are coming back." ~ Chinese proverb*

Perfect wine grapes; representing the perfect Love that resides within us all ...



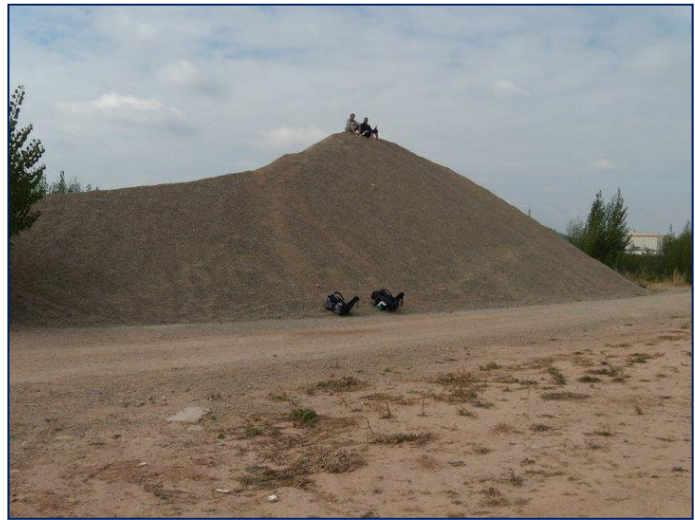
*“How interesting how the Camino stretches time & space,  
as the monotonous cadence of the Walk plods all thought into silence  
and one is left to witness the body walking of its own accord —  
to witness the mind wandering amidst its own compulsions;  
and all the while the Soul remains serenely at Peace  
while carried along its way.”*

*~ anonymous*



Greetings, my Friend! Come on up and enjoy the View ...

*“But, we also have the freedom to choose another life ... one that better reflects who we are, why we came into existence, and where we want to end up. That is known as choosing the left hand path; the one wielded by the eternal dancer.” ~ unknown*



... Earnestly — come on **UP!**

*“Man is born to live, not to prepare for life.” ~ Boris Pasternak*

Welcome to the “bigger picture”: with your feet buried deep into the Earth, and your view stretching far beyond the horizon ...

*“May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, and dangerous; leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.”*

*~ Edward Abbey*



Here, many mini-monuments left reverently by previous pilgrims ...



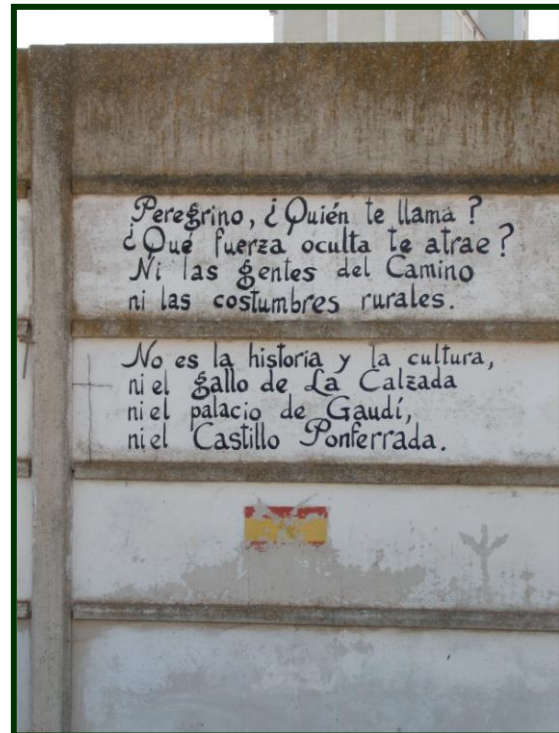
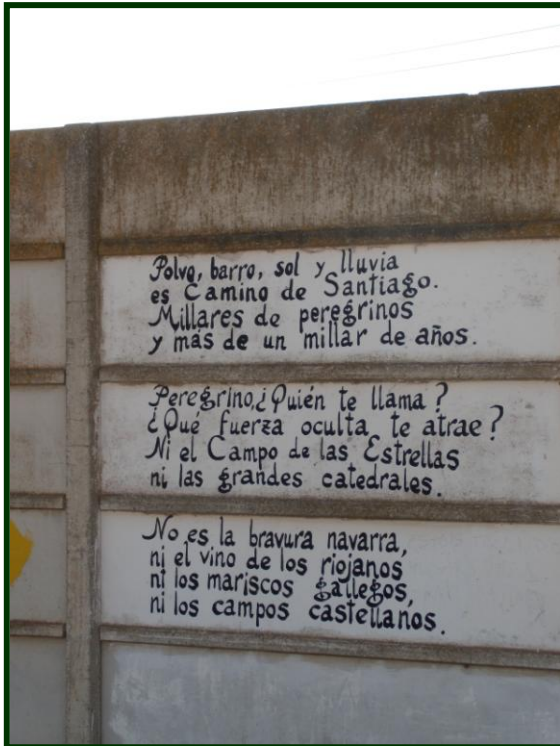
*“Let us emPower our paths with the Calm Bliss that can only come when all our hopes and desires and fears have been released.” ~ anonymous*

Poetry and pilgrim-graffiti have been seen all along the route. This particular example outside Azofra has been here for quite some time and is apparently somewhat famous. I’m still waiting on the translation, but I hear it’s quite lovely.

*“You have to shine very brightly to illuminate the way.” ~ Camino graffiti*





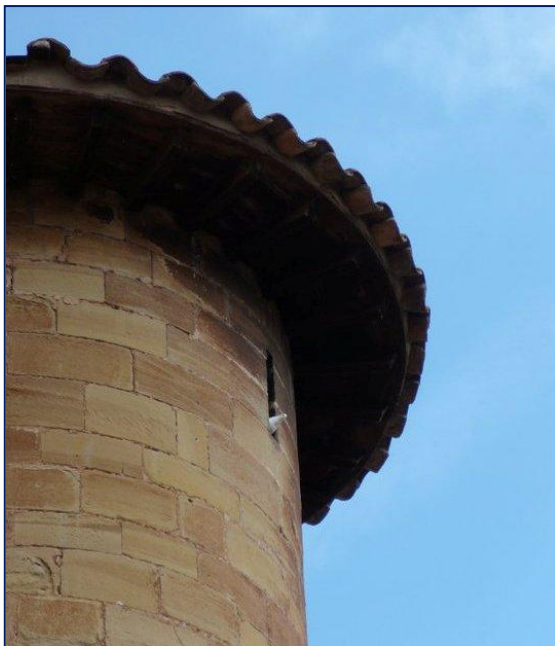


Mom & I after entering Azofra ...



*“I’m sure you have a theme: the theme of your Life. You can embellish it or you can desecrate it, and yet it’s your theme nonetheless ... and as long as you follow it with courage, you will indeed experience harmony of life and peace of mind.”*

*~ inspired by Agatha Christie*



Good omens abound along The Way (in this case, the white dove of Inner Peace).

*“All grapes feel alone & separate before becoming a single wine.”*

*~ Camino graffiti*



Here is the hostel where we stayed the night (in the town of Azofra) ...

*“The unexamined life is not worth living.” ~ Socrates*



And here is our hostel's beautiful courtyard ...

*“We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.” ~ Joseph Campbell*

And here is a pic showing its tiny yet quite clean rooms ...

*“Each man's life represents a road that winds toward himself.” ~ Herman Hesse*





After settling in, washing our clothes and hanging them to dry, mom enjoys a little journaling (while soaking her tired feet) ...

*“If life’s journey be endless,  
where is its goal? The answer is, it  
is everywhere. We are already  
within a palace which has no end ...  
By exploring it and extending our  
relationship with it, we are ever  
making it more and more our own.”*  
~ R. Tagore

“The weather continues to bless us with a wind that wipes our brows and pushes us up mountains, a sun that gives us dry trails, and clouds that offer shade when we need respite from the sun ... We have left the long-haired sheep and wild horses of the Pyrenees behind, along with the asparagus and artichoke fields of Navarre, and now our days are filled with walking through the vineyards of Roja.

All kinds of grapes grow here, all pruned in all different ways. They are almost ready for harvest and the wineries stand silently and quietly waiting to make the season’s fresh libations -- such a wonderful metaphor for our walk ... I really feel as if I am walking a labyrinth and am only in its second circuit – the orange one; encountering and cleansing the challenges of creativity and fun and boredom and action ... We are healthy and doing well. Some fellow pilgrims have encountered bed bugs and yet we have found none in the municipal refugios in which we have been staying. We also have been blessed with hot showers each evening ... It really is amazing to rediscover what truly matters. I have not needed Spanish to communicate as the only words I need to know are fruit, water, cheese and bread.”

~ Suzanna



## *October 01, 2008 ... Communicating with the Divine*

Yesterday, while we were eating lunch, a man who appeared to be homeless approached us and asked for money. I gave him a few Euros and we chatted a bit before he ambled away. He didn't go too far, though, and I noticed that he had the air of a traveler about him — not that of a Camino pilgrim, mind you, but that of a Traveler; someone who actually *lives* a nomadic existence. He simply seemed calm — somehow smoothly at One with his surroundings ... Anyway, as he was departing, he came back to our table and gave me a car-radio antenna. It was wrapped in its original packaging and everything! I gratefully accepted this bizarre and Wonder-full gift, and wore it on my pack for many days thereafter.



*“If you are facing in the right direction,  
all you need to do is keep on walking.”*

*~ Buddhist saying*

And yet another harmonious section of the Path (I am the 5th pilgrim from the top) ...



*“I learned that sometimes a journey can take you to a place that is not on any map.”  
~ unknown*

Right on, Mom!

*“Letting go is required to truly Love another, and gratitude for life ‘as is’ is required to truly let go.” ~ anonymous*



This particular pilgrim was especially inspiring. He spoke only Spanish, but we communicated enough to know that even though he had suffered a stroke (he walked with a severe limp and couldn't really use his left arm), he had already walked all the way to Santiago -- and was now walking all the way back home!

*“Once the leap of Faith is made, the Peace of Love becomes self-perpetuating.” ~ anonymous*



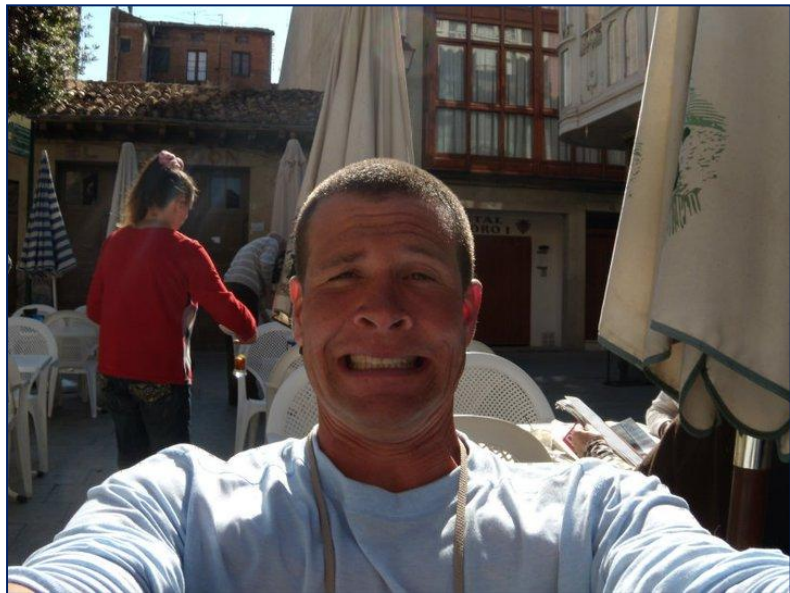
A typical Camino ritual: the coffee break — this time enjoyed with Mom, and our friends Minsu (from South Korea) and Klaus (from Germany).



*“We have stories to tell, stories that provide wisdom about the journey of life. What more have we to give one another than our ‘truth’ about our human adventure as honestly and as openly as we know how?”*  
~ Saul Rubin

Me during that same coffee break ...

*“Life is a journey up a spiral staircase; as we grow older we cover the ground covered we have covered before, only higher up ... The journey is both repetitious and progressive; we go both round and upward.”*  
~ W. B. Yeats



I have been desiring clothes similar to these for the longest time. Does anyone know where I can find some?



*“True merit, like a river, the deeper it is, the less noise it makes.”* ~ Edward Lindley Wood



The town of Santo Domingo ... This pic was taken near the hostel where we will spend this night.

*“The Road goes ever on and on, down from the door where it began. Now far ahead the Road has gone, and I must follow, if I can. Pursuing it with eager feet, until it joins some larger way. Where many paths and errands meet. And whither then? I cannot say.”*

*~ J. R. R. Tolkien*

“Greetings once again! We enjoyed a shorter walk today into Santo Domingo and the more relaxed tempo was good for our bodies and minds ... It was an unusual day today as well, shared with many pilgrims we have never seen before and most of them walking very quickly past us ... These harried encounters brought me to pondering my own tendency to look at life in terms of ‘goals’ and ‘distances traveled’ and ‘achievements accomplished’ ... Just where is it we are all trying to get to? And does it really matter if we arrive there at all when we really aren’t aware of the reasons we are travelling thereto in the first place? ... So today, I set aside my ‘plans’ and my ‘destinations’ and chose instead to simply **BE** where I already was -- not an easy task for a ‘chronic doer’ like myself. And yet, even for me, it was possible to be thankful for my past experiences *and* set them aside; to be curious about the thousands of different options/paths opening before me when I return from this pilgrimage *and* to set them aside as well ... Today, I simply was where I *was* (and am where I *am*) -- and that was quite a Peace-full choice indeed ... Wishing you all a similar experience of the wondrous Here&Now today (and everyday)” ~ Scaughtd

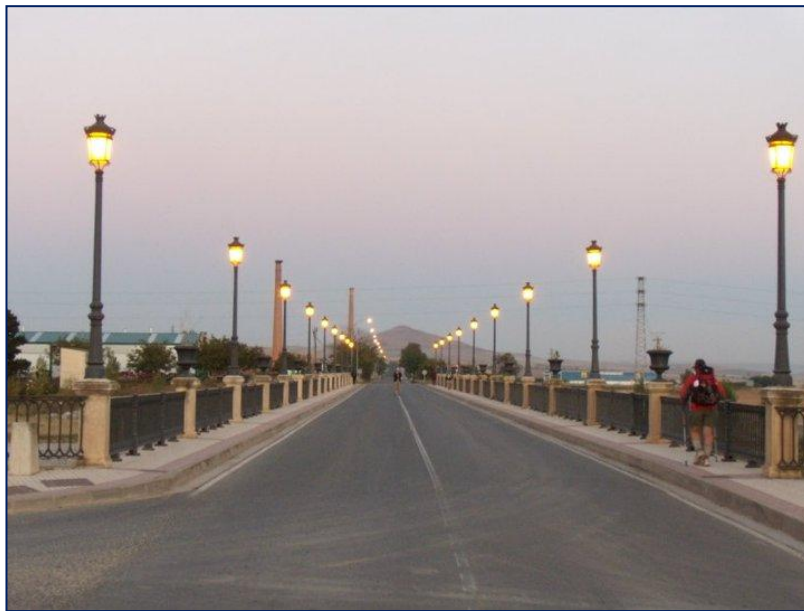


## *October 02, 2008 ... Into the Morning's Light*

Heading back onto the Trail in the early morning light ...



*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that “the good life” is about avoiding pain and thereby “being happy”, and yet the Camino teaches us that true Joy comes not from avoiding our pain, but from transcending it (via acts of radical Kindness).” ~ anonymous*



*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that abundance is everywhere and that all of us deserve to be “wealthy”, and yet the Camino teaches that true Wealth is appreciating the things we already have, by using them to further the Joy of others.” ~ anonymous*



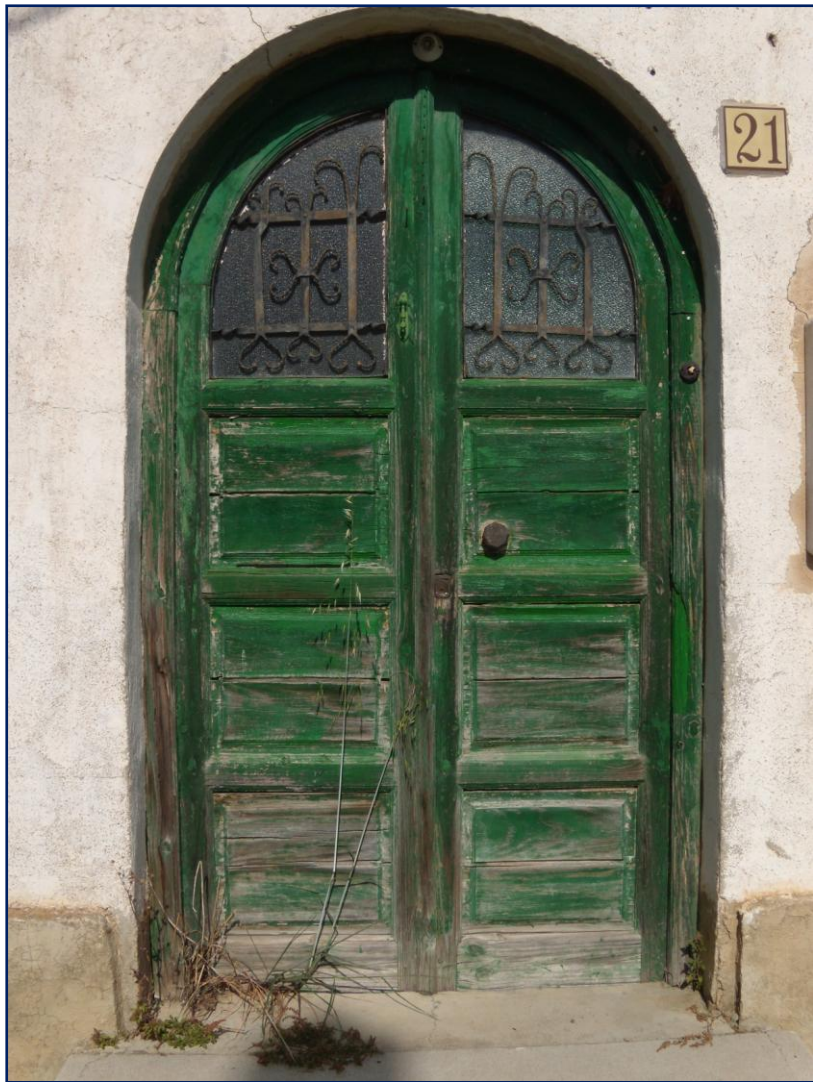
*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that we are supposed to set a goal & strive then to “get there”, and yet the Camino teaches us that we are all already Right where we are “supposed to be”; that there is nothing more important than the good we can already do in this one Here&Now.” ~ anonymous*

*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that we need to “save up” our sustenance for possible times of lack in the future, and yet the Camino teaches us to relax into the moment and have Faith in the providence that is always showered gently upon those who choose to live in Kindness.” ~ anonymous*



*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that “letting go” allows others to love US more purely, and yet the Camino teaches that having compassion for others (while detaching from the results of that Kindness) allows our Love FOR THEM to remain pure — something that is of far greater importance.” ~ anonymous*





And then we arrived at our hostel in Tosantos ...

*“Every step in  
the dark turns out  
in the end to have  
been on course  
after all.”*

*~ J. Tarrant*



This hostel is one of the many “donativos” one can find along the Camino de Santiago. Donativos are hostels that run purely on donations, where the pilgrims are cared for without any obligation to pay for those services -- leaving only what they can or what they feel is just ... Many of these hostels have gone bankrupt due to a trend of the recent past where people would walk the Camino posing as pilgrims, simply to receive the free lodging and free meals that these refugios provide. And yet, despite this abuse, many donativos remain open -- providing an invaluable service for those earnest pilgrims who might not have much money, and especially for those pilgrims who are walking as “mendicants”; without any money at all ... I personally walked roughly ten days of my Camino as a mendicant, and was extremely grateful for the donativos that sheltered me during this time.

*“We never with our eyes see our own Soul; yet we have a Soul. We see many rivers, but we know not their first spring and original fountain; yet they too have a beginning. ... When ye are come to the other side, set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters and to your wearisome journey, and shall see, in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God’s wisdom, ye shall then be forced to say, ‘If God had done otherwise with me than He hath done, I would never come to the enjoying of this crown of glory.’”*

*~ Samuel Rutherford*



**P.S.** If anyone would like to support these priceless sanctuaries of selfless kindness, please send your money to one of the following addresses. I personally stayed at all three of these locations during my pilgrimage, and joyfully attest both to their humble meagerness and the sincere & gentle caring they provide any pilgrims fortunate enough to find them ...

***Albergue Parroquial de Tosantos:***

***San Francisco de Asis***

attn: *Jose Luis Anton*

Calle Sta. Maria s/n

Tosantos 09258

Burgos, Spain

***Casa Calocal***

attn: *Paz*

Iglesia 4

09199 Ages

Spain

***Peaceable Kingdom***

attn: *Rebekkah Scott*

Calle Ontarion 2

Moratinos 34349

Pallencia, Spain



Jose Luis Anton, the “manager” (for lack of any better term) of the hostel is the first true Saint I have ever met. His entire being smoothly emits a warm Kindness to everyone he meets, as he totters about his day incessantly singing Latin arias to God (and what a wonderful voice he has!) ... Pictured below is the “sacred sanctuary” he helped renovate in the attic of the hostel, where every night a ceremony takes place for all the pilgrims who have arrived on that particular day. The ceremony is one of reverence and gratitude, and culminates with every pilgrim present reading a prayer from a pilgrim who has passed through the hostel sometime before. The prayers are organized by language and kept in the glass case at the foot of the altar ... (The handouts on the floor contain the texts of several of the most commonly sung hymns, written in five different languages.)

*“It is well to remember that the entire population of the Universe, with one trifling exception, is composed completely of others.” ~ Andrew J. Holmes*



It turns out that the “hospitalero” (a word for the volunteers who reside at the hostels and help care for pilgrims) here had acquired the flu just that day, and that Jose Luis could use some assistance until Detlef (the afflicted hospitalero) recovered. It was here in this room that I received the epiphany that I was indeed to provide this service. So, after checking with Jose Luis to see if this would be acceptable to him, I asked Mom if it would be OK with her for me to stay behind for three days and help out ... She wasn’t too thrilled about the idea (understatement), and yet bravely consented. And that is how mom’s two weeks of walking truly “alone” commenced, and how my two weeks of walking as a mendicant pilgrim began as well.



*“It was already late enough, and a wild night, and the road full of fallen branches and stones. But little by little, as you left their voices behind, the stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds, and there was a new voice which you slowly recognized as your own, that kept you company as you strode deeper and deeper into the world, determined to do the only thing you could do—determined to save the only life you could save.” ~ Mary Oliver*



*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that it is a good thing to “manifest your own desires”, and yet the Camino teaches us that Life loves us so much that every self-centered desire we have is inevitably taken from us.” ~ anonymous*

Preparing dinner together with Jose Luis (center of picture) ...



*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that our own health is our primary asset, and yet the Camino teaches us that health is meaningless unless it is used to further the Peace of others.” ~ anonymous*

With the exception of my brother, Jose Luis does more with “little” in the kitchen than anyone I know ...

*“Lesson from the Camino: Conventional “wisdom” would have us believe that “there are no shortcuts”, and yet the Camino teaches us that the Highest Good in any moment always flows the smoothest route; its Love always arriving immediately in the Heart of the Beloved.” ~ anonymous*



On this night, pilgrims from over a dozen different countries shared the same table for the evening meal ... We are indeed all ONE!



*“Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself than of other people, nor does it mean having a low opinion of your own gifts. It means being free from thinking about yourself at all.” ~ William Temple*

... and then there was the singing together. The woman in this picture was a relatively famous television personality from Holland at the time (What a voice!), and the young man was from South Africa.



*“Where the voice of the wind calls our wandering feet,  
Through echoing forest and echoing street,  
With lutes in our hands ever-singing we roam,  
All men are our kindred, the world is our home.”  
~ Sarojini Naidu*



Here were the sleeping quarters at Tosantos, where each pilgrim received a sleeping mat and enough space to lie down on the floor — and that was far more than enough ...



*“Humility provides everyone,  
even him who despairs in solitude,  
with the strongest relationship  
to his fellow man”  
~ F. Kafka*

## *October 06, 2008 ... Served by the Service*

My three days of service come to an end, and I feel so blessed to have been able to serve other pilgrims with the same gentle selflessness I have been shown over the past two+ weeks. As I depart Tosantos, I turn and gaze back upon the famous local church which has been literally carved into the side of the mountain. Talk about a “house built on stone”!



*“We are like a ship fastened to the shore ... We are like a swimmer who prefers to walk rather than take to the water. O my God, sever these moorings — loosen the thread from the wings of my Soul — plunge me into the sea.” ~ Peter Eymard*

This HUGE lock was seen by mom on the main portal of that same church. What does it say when our most sacred spaces must be protected from desecration by their own? And what can we each do to bring about a shift in the same?

*“Consider the rights of others before your own feelings, and the feelings of others before your own rights.” ~ John Wooden*



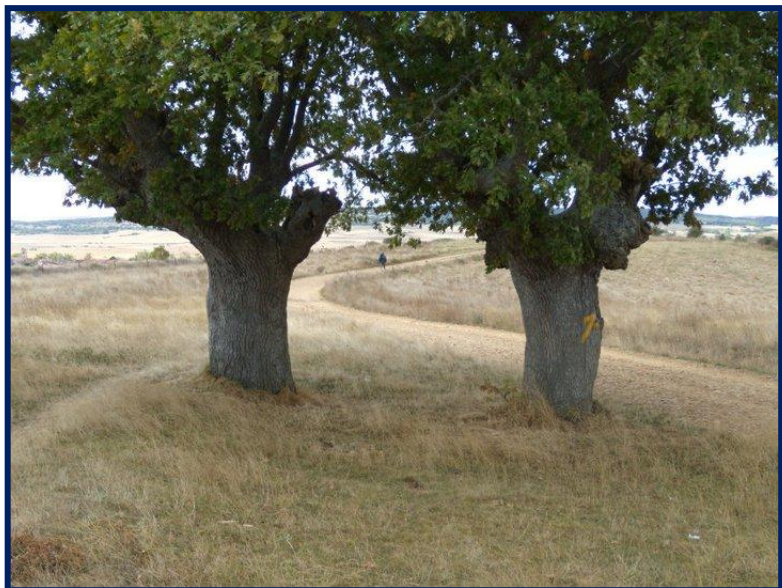


And then I return to The Walk ...



*“I am every moment more & more accepting of all that IS, and less & less desirous to experience anything that merely could be ... Life will bring the change. My privilege is to simply remain open as it continually does so.” ~ anonymous*

*“There is nothing else worth waiting for when Love has already entered your life.” ~ anonymous*





*“The Way must first be walked to be Felt, and it must be Felt to then allow for its lessons to be comprehended. In rare cases, Wisdom can indeed be known without an intuitive feeling, and yet experience — the walking of a Truth — must always be lived before such an epiphany can be truly understood.” ~ anonymous*





... entering Ages, a quaint little village recommended to me by Jose Luis for its mendicant-friendly hospitality ...

*“Wisdom is meaningless unless communicated with Joy.” ~ anonymous*



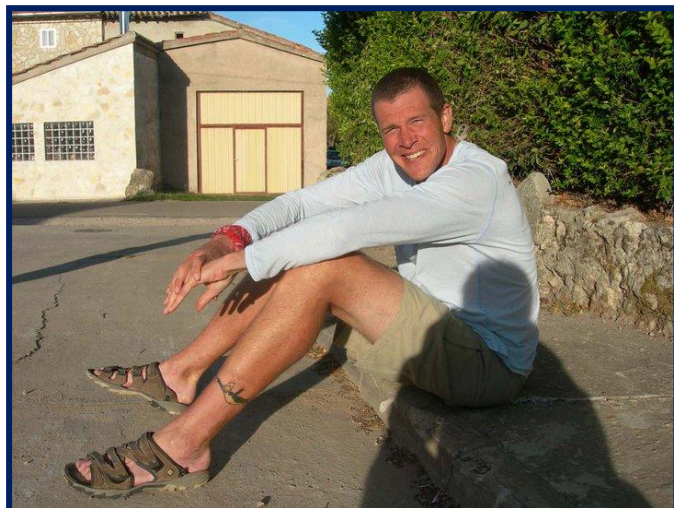
Flow with little difficulty to “The House of the Snail”, my donativo hostel for the night. It was more than rustic, and yet the Love with which Paz (its resident manager) cared for us all made it one of the most recuperative nights of my entire Camino.



*“What would life be without a few desires?” ~ Detlef (Tosantos hospitalero)*  
..... *“Pure Contentment.” ~ Scaughdt*

Relaxing with fellow pilgrims before dinner ...

*“Dismiss your desires, and then your difficulties can be utilized as portals to deep Gratitude.” ~ anonymous*



*October 07, 2008 ... Letting the Camino walk You*

*“Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending.  
You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds?  
Lay first the foundation of humility.”  
~ St. Augustine*



*“I am an already ripened sunflower,  
still bowing towards the sun.”  
~ Suzanna Alexander*



All the stones at the base of the cross have been placed there by pilgrims over the years. Monuments like this are very dear to me — reminding me that humanity has been searching for “the goodness within” for many centuries; a search that has already led many to rediscover that goodness rests in a Kinder way of Being.



*“An act of goodness is of itself an act of happiness. No reward coming after an event can compare with the sweet reward that went with it.” ~ Maurice Maeterlinck*

Just a little further on, I “found” this incredible stone spiral near the path. A mystery of mysteries — surely one person didn’t do this alone. I have built labyrinths half this size that took many hours to lay out in this fashion. Was it a group of pilgrims that created it, or maybe a group of local citizenry? Either way, it remains magnificent, and I am thankful to all who were involved with both its birth and its maintenance ...



*“Only those who will risk going too far  
can possibly find out how far one can go.”  
~ T. S. Eliot*

Here, the center of the same spiral ...



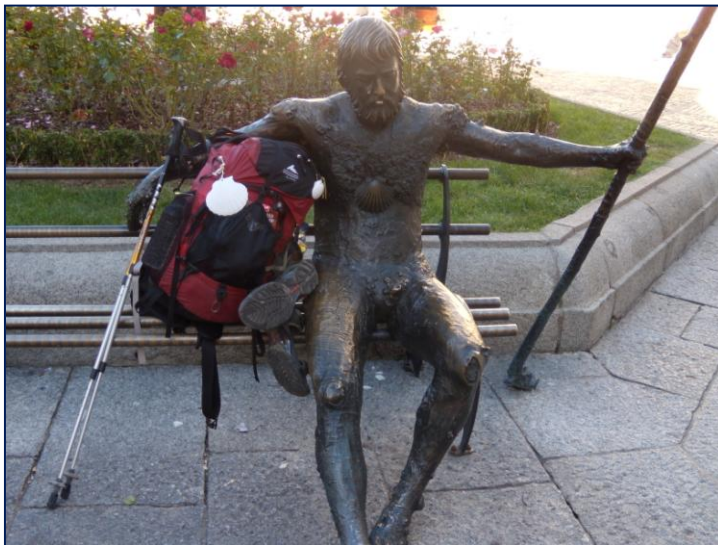
*“May the path of your life  
always match the path of your Heart.”  
~ Camino graffiti*



*“For the pilgrim, the magic of the Path is in the signs and in the silence.”*  
~ Camino graffiti



*“If you judge others, you have no time to Love them.”*  
~ Camino graffiti



And then, I come across the beautiful Burgos Cathedral ...



*“Because it is too difficult to be fair, it is prudent to be lenient.”  
~ Camino graffiti*

It was somewhat stormy when I entered Burgos that afternoon (Mom had taken the above picture several days beforehand) – and I am not very fond of large cities anyway, so I flowed onward looking for shelter ... I found the photo below online of Tardajos, the city where I stopped this evening. The major difference between my experience of the town and this image: I walked the majority of the afternoon through a driving rainstorm and stumbled into this somewhat forbidding town at dusk. Due to my late arrival, I was the last to enter the donativo hostel there, and all the hot water had already been used up by the pilgrims who arrived earlier. It was to be the only time I showered in cold water the entire Camino ...

*“We have not even to risk the journey alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us ... And where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a God; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be with all the world.”*

*~ Joseph Campbell*





“I always loved being in the tent when it rained at Girl Scout camp. Now I know what it is like to be a walking tent ... Rain and cold and wind all day and my pace was the fastest yet just to keep me warm and trying to get to a shelter. In the midst of the challenge, a gorgeous rainbow, beautiful art in a hidden rest stop and my laughter at the craziness and God laughed back. Dreamed all day of the shelter with hot showers and of course got cold showers. Uhmhhh - even my Teva sandals broke in the mud. Found that a wheat field called to me and said walk here it is easier than carrying a pound of mud on each foot. Helped a friend whose knee gave out and she has returned home to France. Many people we started with have left due to most people doing just several weeks a year from different places in Europe.” ~ Suzanna

### ***October 08, 2008 ... Reborn Within***

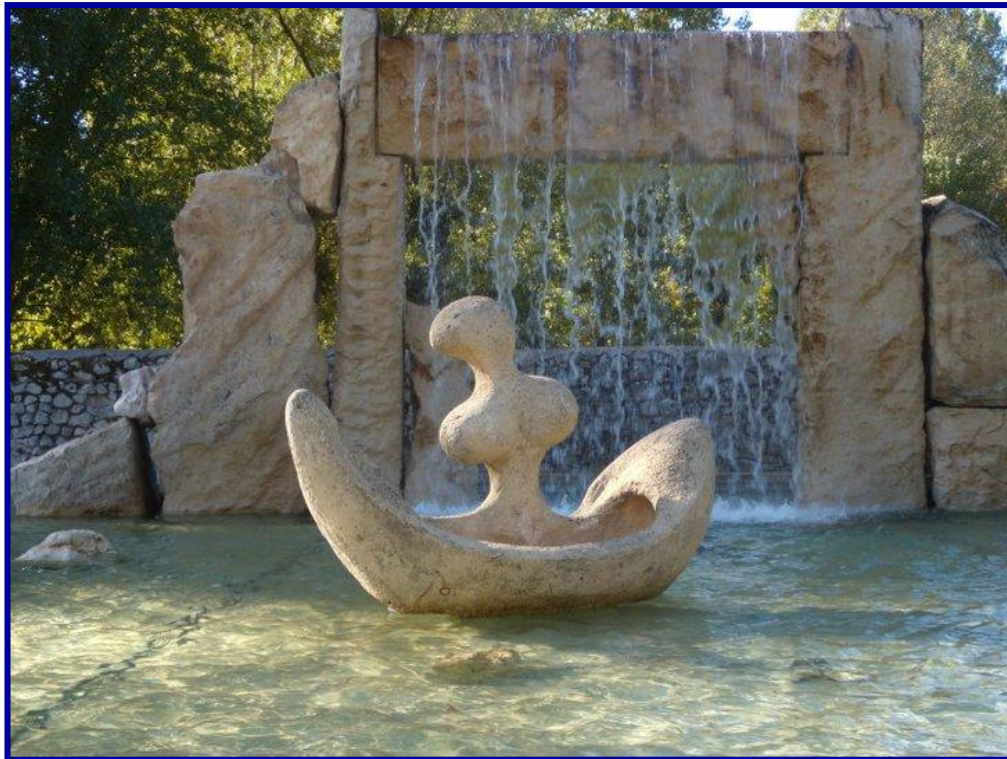
The storks here keep reminding me of that famous myth of the stork that brings babies to families; a myth that is as prevalent in Europe as it is in the States. This got me to thinking not only about the metaphors involved (namely, that our own rebirth doesn't come from “somewhere else” either, but rather from within) — but also about the pilgrims I had met from all over the world ... To that end, here is a list of the nationalities of the pilgrims I met on my Camino: Canada, Quebec, USA, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, England, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Malta, Mallorca, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Israel & South Africa ...



*“The richness of the human journey is here. Listen. Pass it on, so that there will not fall from our future the enchantment that begins with the honored words: Once upon a time, long ago and far away, in a deep forest, there lived a child – like you.” ~ anonymous*

*“Babbling without listening  
is like sex without adoration,  
is like thinking without being present,  
is like praying without humility,  
is like ‘intimacy’ without sacrificing the ego,  
is like pleasure without Peace —  
... all of them meaningless wastes  
of our lives’ priceless moments,  
and the ability we have all been given  
to fully enLive the same.”*

*~ anonymous*



*“Regardless of where we are,  
what we are doing &/or with whom,  
Meaning is always ours for the  
making.” ~ anonymous*





*“Dear God, I sometimes fear --  
Let me have the courage to Love  
anyway ... Dear God, I am  
sometimes sad -- Let me have the  
courage to be joyous anyway ...  
Dear God, I am sometimes  
desirous -- Let me have the  
courage to do good for others  
anyway.” ~ anonymous*

Here, the “Meseta” (Spanish for “plateau”) is in the full force of its raw nothingness. Traditionally, this 200+/- mile stretch of the Path is the region where pilgrims often experience the internal catharsis & purification that comes from the prolonged exposure to such radical austerity. Personally, I found this section of the journey very soothing -- though I respect that I am definitely in the minority in this regard.



*“Why not go out on a limb ...  
Isn't that where the fruit is?”  
~ Albert Einstein*

And then there were the “oases within the desert”, with San Bol (shown in the very center of this picture) being one such stop for me ...



This small, extremely austere hostel has only been staffed by “floating hospitaleros” for years — where one pilgrim simply decides to stay on for a time and care for others until another pilgrim agrees to take over that service. I was deeply moved by the place when I arrived. My original intent was simply to give the resident caretaker my very last Euro as a symbolic tribute to all the wonderful stories I had heard about the place from other pilgrims. A Dutch woman (who called herself “Naisah”) was the hospitalera at the time, and she simply smiled when I told her my intentions. “I think you’ll be staying here tonight”, she said as she made me a tea ... She was right. The place was too magical to leave right away, and I remained for a day and a half — bathing in the ice-cold, spring-fed “bathtub” in the backyard, warming myself by laying on the fire-heated floor tiles thereafter, reveling in the amazing conversation by candlelight in the evening, and facilitating the building of a labyrinth in the yard the next day ...

*“A bend in the road is not the end of the road,  
unless you fail to make the turn.”  
~ unknown*



San Bol, as seen across from its front entrance ...



*“You don’t have to know the entire road; you just have to take the step that is before you.” ~ inspired by MLK, Jr.*





*October 09, 2008 ... What you can, with what you Have*

Help build the San Bol Labyrinth the next morning before setting out ...



*“The traveler Sees what he sees,  
the tourist sees what he has come to see.”  
~ G. K. Chesterton*



Fully re-charged with the *Love* of San Bol, I'm back on The Path once again ...

*“When you are everywhere,  
you are nowhere ... When you are  
somewhere, you are everywhere.”  
~ Rumi*



“How far are you going to walk?” ~ Scaughdt to fellow pilgrim  
“**Today.**” ~ fellow pilgrim to Scaughdt



Through the ruins of St. Anton ...



*“Ubi Caritas et Amor,  
ubi Caritas, Deus ibi est.”*

*~ Latin hymn*

[Where there is Kindness & Love,  
... God is truly present.]





*“Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity.”  
~ Henry David Thoreau*



And then, my first glimpse of Castrojeriz ...



*“Lord, help me to remember the past  
with gratitude, live the present with  
enthusiasm, and look to the future with  
courage.” ~ Pope John Paul II*

*“Only by going  
alone in silence,  
without baggage, can  
one truly get into the  
heart of the wilderness.  
All other travel is mere  
dust and hotels and  
baggage and chatter.”  
~ John Muir*



Entering Castrojeriz ...



*“A bit of light, a bit of warmth ...  
and a full heart to continue the Journey.”  
~ Anne (a fellow Camino pilgrim)*



And into my Castrojeriz hostel ...



*“Examine the wear  
of yesterday’s footsteps.”  
~ Rochelle (a Camino pilgrim)*

“I arrived tonight in Castrojeriz and appear to be roughly three walking days behind Mom, though tend to walk farther and faster than most with little effort, so think I’ll catch up to her in roughly three days even if she keeps walking her normal pace ... The wonders that abound here are too numerous to relay at the moment (in this cool little Spanish bar with lots of older gentlemen having quite the boisterous, grand time), though I will share that I stayed last night in San Bol, a little pilgrim hostel alone ‘in the middle of nowhere’ with no running water and no electricity. I bathed in an ancient healing spring that has been channeled into a pool in the backyard, and then remained awake late into the night eating great communally cooked food and talking about Peace & Purpose by candlelight ... I think if I were to die today, I’d like my tombstone to simply read: ‘Dear God, Thanks!’” ~ Scaught

*October 10, 2008 ... Connected to the World*



*“When you feel like a connected part of the world, it’s possible to know your own value.”  
~ Robin (a Camino pilgrim)*

*“The questions that I came with, I have found no answers for. And yet on the Way, I am finding answers to many questions I never knew I had.”  
~ Mayela Redando (a Camino pilgrim)*



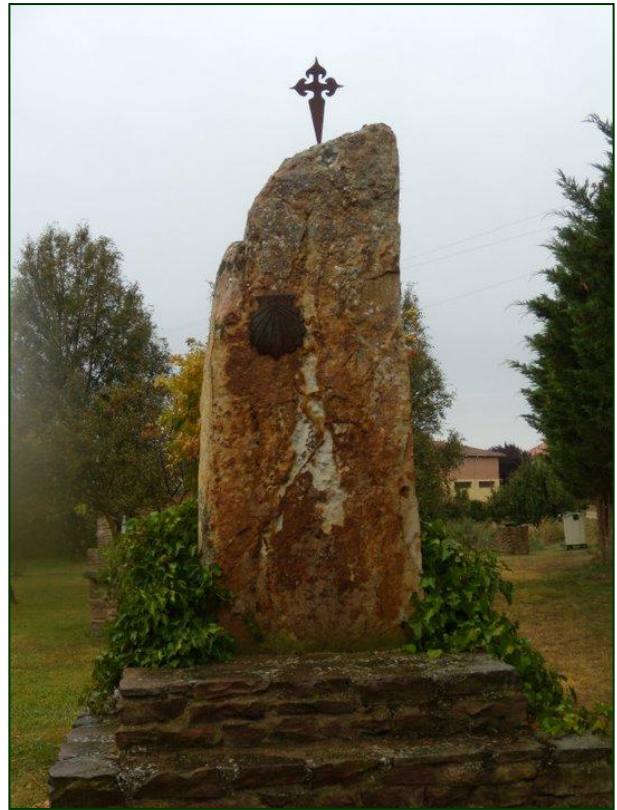
Here, another one of the Meseta’s regular-yet-infrequent oases of **green** ...



*“Tread the world softly, humble & kind ... Above all be grateful for the time you have been given on this beautiful Earth.” ~ Chris Leach (a Camino pilgrim)*



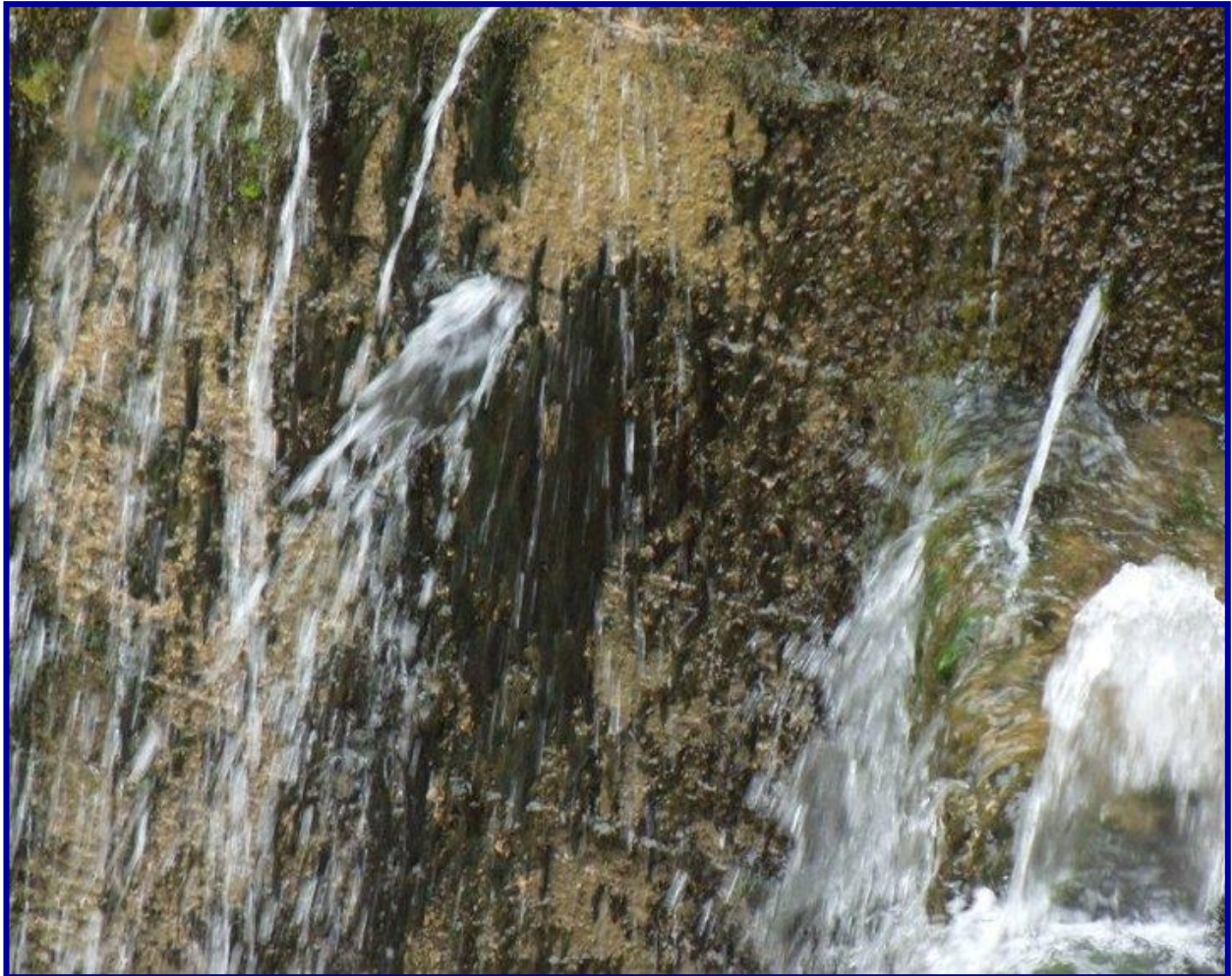
*“So what is fear, even when we are afraid of fear itself? And where goes that same fear, when we choose to show it kindness instead?” ~ anonymous*



*“It’s not about getting what you Love, but about choosing to Love what you’ve already got.” ~ an anonymous Camino pilgrim*



*“Gibran is partly right when he said, ‘You cannot truly know Love unless Love shatters you’ ... Of course, the Camino reminds all its pilgrims that it is we, not Love, that do the shattering -- and that it is Love and Love alone that makes us whole again.” ~ anonymous*







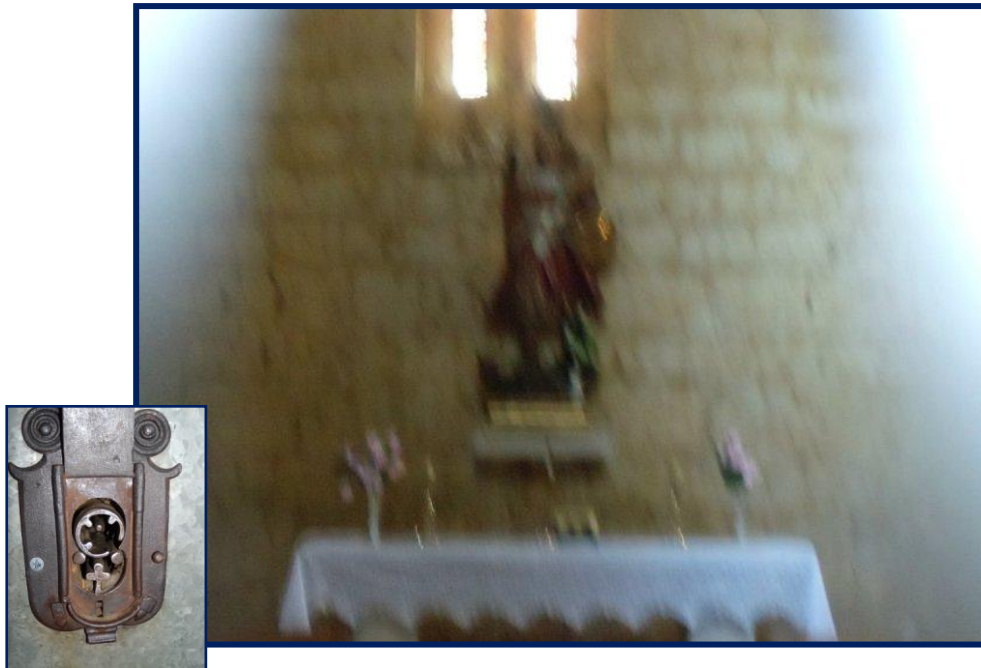
*“Where are you headed?”* ~ an exhausted Scaughtd to a fellow pilgrim (looking for some hint as to where I might best stop for the night)

*“I don’t know ... Santiago, I guess. Do you want to come along?”*  
(~ the fellow pilgrim’s wise reply)



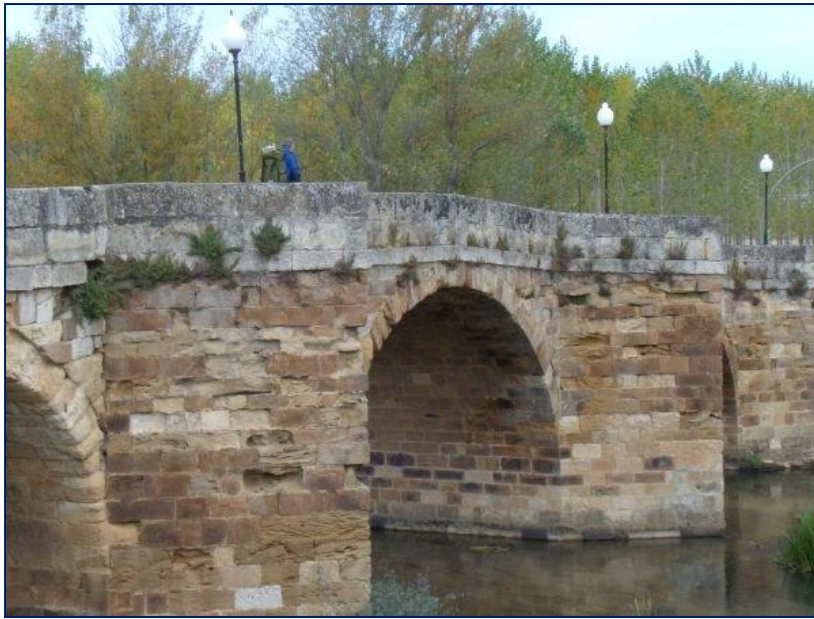
*“What is the least we need to achieve the most?  
The Courage to Love those most we love the least.”  
~ anonymous*

This is the altar of the church in the picture above.  
(The door was locked so Mom shot this picture through the keyhole!)



*“Love is an inexhaustible source of energy.” ~ Camino graffiti*





*“The talk was small, but each word had weight; there seemed to be a profundity of interest concentrated in his steady gaze — a wealth of deliberation in his slow speech.” ~ Eric Brende*

Even as I continually reminded myself to remain in the moment and simply flow with whatever the Way gave me, I did have “catching up to Mom” in the back of my mind. This led to some verrrrry long days of walking — today being my longest, where I ambled along the Path for over 40km (25+ miles). It was exhausting (mostly because of my thoughts that were regularly focused on how tired I was), and I found a new level of respect (if not awe) for Peace Pilgrim, who averaged 20 miles per day over many *decades* (many of those years as an “elderly woman”). Of course, she herself gave the “credit” for this amazing feat to the flow of energy that interconnects all things; a source of energy into which we can all tap when choosing to live for others as opposed to for ourselves.

*“As for goals, I don’t set myself those anymore ... I take things as they come and find that patience and persistence tend to win out in the end.” ~ Paul Kane*



Here is how it looks heading into Villalcazar ...



*“Wield means precisely fitted to their ends.” ~ Eric Brende*

And here is my hostel for the night, were I met a German fellow who had walked all the way from Jerusalem — regularly treading over 50km (30 miles) a day while doing so!

*“We need not wait for chance or disaster.” ~ Eric Brende [i.e. We need not wait until someone “needs help” to be Kind]*

The manager here was less than kind at first (I think he thought I was a “mooch pilgrim” when I asked if his place was a donativo), and yet he warmed to me under a steady shower of unconditional Kindness.



*“Words are worthwhile only when they lead to Peace.”  
~ Nanja Naisah*



## October 11, 2008 ... Caring for the Flowers

*“Love seeks not to change whatever is. Love cares for the flower that already exists in the other; often doing so by letting her depart and blossom beautifully elsewhere.”*  
~ anonymous



This German fellow has been caring for pilgrims with his healing hands for years - - massaging their feet, tending their blisters, soothing their stress. I didn't stay here, yet I did get news from him about Mom when I passed through, as she had stayed in this hostel only a few nights prior (and had made quite the positive impression) ...



*“It is not what happens to us that hurts, but rather our negative reactions to those painful events that constrict our energy and cause our suffering. Nothing ever happens **to** us; everything happens **for** us.”* ~ anonymous

*“Our truest Love is known whenever we gently tend the wounded; remembering, of course, that not all others' “blisters” are physical.”*  
~ anonymous



At this point, a portion of the Walk traverses an ancient road originally built by the Romans ...



*“No need to tell a fearless one to breathe freely. He does it without thought or effort. As a consequence, his energy is large & strong.”*

*~ Elizabeth Towne*

After another verrrry long day of walking, one in which I had been turned away by several hostels after they heard that I was a mendicant (i.e. a pilgrim walking The Way without money), I came to the town of Moratinos ... The first thing I noticed on its outskirts were these Spanish wine-cellar, known as “bodegas”. I remember laughing out loud as I, in a state of pseudo-delirium, shouted “Hobbits!” with sincere delight ...



*“You can do anything you steadily purpose to do. Unless you happen to aim for something that seeks to enslave the free will of another, only vacillation can defeat you.”*

*~ Elizabeth Towne*





Entering the town of Moratinos ...



*“Every day is a journey, and the journey itself is Home.” ~ Matsuo Basho*

Of course, there were no hobbits here in Moratinos, and yet I did serendipitously stumble upon ***The Peaceable Kingdom*** (a donativos hostel not found in any guidebook) run by Rebekkah Scott and her husband.

*“I have food to eat of which you do not yet know.” ~ Jesus Christ (John 4:32)*



“Greetings one and ALL! ... After two long-distance Walkings (40km two days ago and then 36+ yesterday), I have arrived just short of Sahagun in the tiny (population 20+) town of Moratinos -- and what a Blessing that arrival has been!

I started the day flowing easily through the city of Carrion de los Condes, where I paused in what I thought was an empty cathedral to softly allow a whistled ‘lament of reverence’ to echo through its vaulted ceilings ... I myself was brought to tears by the sheer Beauty of the moment, and turned to leave only to witness an elderly gentleman kneeling in the back pew praying tearfully along with Me ... We exchanged a Knowing salutation in silence and went our separate Ways without uttering a sound -- truly a Sacred Moment that I will always treasure.

Of course, the Camino -- like Life -- never provides such Bliss without an accompanying challenge to transcend; a challenge which I intimately engaged on the next 20km of walking through a ‘wasteland’ literally assaulted by hordes of gnats! For the first few km I laughed them off, assuming that they would be going their merry way ... And yet, over the next 12+ miles, they increased in number with almost every step! And it was not only their vast numbers, but their almost insidious desire to fly into my nose, ears and mouth that made the trek a form of torture for all of the pilgrims on this day’s route ... I was admittedly ‘miserable’ for much of the journey, and yet just past its midpoint, I was left with nothing else but to laugh in admiration at the cleverness of my little friends with regards to finding a way into my throat no matter what I did to stop them. And as my laughter increased, my annoyance dissipated -- and as my irritation left my mind, I began to be thankful for the small wonders around me: the fact that cloud-cover was saving me from the added burden of the sun’s heat, the fact that I (like all other conscious pilgrims on Life’s Journey) have been given the opportunity to choose how I see uncomfortable situations, the fact that simply my sincere amusement over our shared plight proved to be a powerful service to other pilgrims who were suffering from the gnats’ incessant onslaught more than I was ...

And then, as the Camino (and Life) is wont to do, once my yearnings for more comfort and less pain were released and replaced with sheer Gratitude, the source of my dis-ease ‘magically’ disappeared as well -- and I walked the last 10km gnat-free!

And, as if that weren’t Blessing enough, I hobbled into the tiny town of Moratinos to somehow find a refugio of which I knew nothing -- a place called ‘The Peaceable Kingdom’ run by a couple (the woman of which having been born in raised in Apollo, PA, no less!) ... Whereas before I had been showering cold and ‘sleeping’ in rooms holding 8-20+ (often snoring) pilgrims, now I have been given the entire place to myself -- with a hot shower and a bed with sheets in my own private bedroom, great food, and stimulating conversation ... Even better, the woman-manager (Rebekkah Jean Scott) is in need of help and I have offered to stay here for another day to hand-till manure into her yard and flower/vegetable beds.



As such, I'll be heading tomorrow morning the 20km to Bercianos, and after that on to Leon (another 42km thereafter) ... As I have been 'going with the Flow', I am never sure where I'll be staying each night; stopping whenever my body wants to stop &/or whenever someone offers to take me in. And, as I have no more money, I don't really know when I'll be writing my next entry here online ... No worries, of course, as the Camino (like Life) always provides for those who choose to courageously Walk in humble selflessness (a Truth I radically experienced in Hawaii and one that I have been happy to re-experience here over the last several days!)

Sending you all the Peace and Joy of Oneness, and wishing you all the perfect Happiness that comes with every courageous act of Kindness ...

Until then, Be Now! ... *Scaughdt*'

### ***October 13, 2008 ... Called ever Onward***

After staying an extra day in Moratinos to help Rebekkah with her garden, today I set out once again upon The Road ...

*"Whether walking a pilgrimage or journeying through the everyday, our True Self's perfect pace does not vary ... Regardless of whether our days are steep or flat, rocky or smooth, filled with hardship or soaked with joy, we walk our Way." ~ anonymous*



*"Mere happiness comes from pleasures (that are fleeting) or successes that inevitably ring hollow. Peace, on the other hand, comes from willingly doing what is least liked, for those least liked, at a time & in a manner seemingly least likely to succeed." ~ anonymous*

“I felt somehow ‘called’ to leave my comfy donativo hostel in Bercianos to somehow provide assistance in the next town of Burgo de Ranero (refugio pictured below). Of course, I arrive there and there is no assistance needed -- *and* there is no food provided to pilgrims at the hostel -- *and* the next donativo is many miles away.

No matter, as the gracious manager there allowed me to stay the night, and yet I was still hungry and a slipped a bit into the “woe is me” of the ego ... After speaking with a fellow pilgrim from Germany about the Camino in general, some ‘switch’ inside me flipped, and I was flooded with such an intense wave of Gratitude. I simply KNEW that I didn’t need to eat anything to tonight. I KNEW that I was somehow being cared for. And I KNEW that even if no food ever came to me again, it was an honor to do all I could to serve Humanity & the Universe before I died anyway ... Well, no sooner did I choose to believe that (Every belief is a choice, of course. I was fortunate in this case that I had already experienced the validity of these Truths for several years prior to this particular ‘dilemma’) than my hunger completely disappeared (a common experience whenever choosing to enter a selfless state of Being) ... Even more amazing, while I was sitting there in my newfound Bliss, my German friend sauntered over to me and let me know that the manager had allowed us to make dinner with all the food that yesterday’s pilgrims had left in the fridge! So Andrew (my German friend) and I cooked up a fantastic dinner and ate it laughingly on the front porch while watching a light rain shower the town ... Thank Yooooouuuu!!!” ~ Scaught



*“The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same. Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination.” ~ Don Williams, Jr.*

“The Camino really is a time-space warp ... Every day that I walk my shadow leads me on, as we are always walking westward ... Souls are lost and found on this pilgrimage for sure. It at times feels like a giant whirlpool drawing me deeper and deeper within, and as with all whirlpools, some are spun out before going into the deep center ... Rumi once wrote – ‘Something opens our wings. Something makes boredom and hurt disappear. Someone fills this cup in front of us. And we drink – and taste only sacredness.’” ~ Suzanna



## *October 14, 2008 ... of Light & LOVE*

I awoke verrrrry early this morning with a strong feeling that I needed to leave town “**Now**”. While on a pilgrimage of this magnitude (and during life in general, come to think of it), it is always wise to adhere to these intuitive “blasts of guidance”, regardless of how irrational they might seem ... So that’s what I did, and I was blessed with a super-peaceful exit through the misty town — walking for many hours with the almost-full moon as my only companion on the Way ...



*“I am Light & I am Love; a condensed facet of God -- journeying steadily in every moment towards a remembering of the same.” ~ anonymous*

I walked this particular path quite Peace-fully for quite a few miles this morning ...



*“As every view of life is equally delusional,  
why not choose a Wonder-full one?”*

*~ anonymous*



*“Every true leap of Faith  
is always made directly into  
the Here&Now; never  
towards your personal hopes  
for what could be, or should  
be — or even can be. And  
always remember: make  
your leaps Joy-fully, or  
don’t make them at all!”  
~ anonymous*



And I head back into “the Big Bleak” -- a place that has come to feel like Home to me; where there is nothing to distract me from my inner quests of knowing my Self -- of reconnecting with the Divine that lives both within and all around me.



*“Our task is not to ‘take care’ of others,  
but rather to care FOR them.”  
~ anonymous*

Later in the day, upon entering Leon, I get a little dose of humor — possibly due to hitting some sort of emotional “wall” near the end of this day; one of those “everything is meaningless”, doubt-steeped crises of faith that comes to every pilgrim (and probably every human) at least once while walking their own Way ... Mine came today, and I was utterly shattered by it ...

After walking a short way past the billboard pictured below, I sat down in a park and slipped into a deep, dark funk; not really even knowing why. My ego just kept whispering that my whole life was pointless; that no one was listening to what I had to share, and that I was wasting my and everyone else’s time with my efforts – that everything I was trying to accomplish was essentially going to amount to nothing ... (Ouch!) ... Then, a miracle happened (though it might not seem like a miracle to you, a miracle it remains): a group of younger pilgrims came by, sat down next to me, and gave me the last of their food while offering a few gentle words of encouragement. Their pure act of kindness proved to be more than I could bear, and as they walked away the “dam broke” and I wept deeply — not out of depression, mind you, but simply because I had received the very same selfless kindness from them which I have been championing to others; that I had been allowed to experience firsthand just how Power-full and Meaning-full that kind of selfless LOVE truly is! ... And then Purpose washed back over me, I dried my eyes gratefully, and I headed onward towards that night’s hostel.

*“When you have completed 95 percent of your journey, you are only halfway there.” ~ Japanese proverb*





Here is my hostel for the night, a very large affair run by some very kind nuns in downtown Leon ...

*“Receiving is always at least partially dependent on external circumstance. Pure Giving, on the other hands, is 100% the choice of the Giver.” ~ anonymous*



*“There is a vast difference between knowing Love and being ‘in love’ ... The latter desires forever to be loved, while the former longs only to Love.” ~ anonymous*



The Cathedral of Leon, one of my favorite churches on the entire Camino ...

*“It is true that where there are ‘angels’, ‘demons’ tend to gather. And yet it is also true that, where there is darkness, the Light always comes to brighten the Way.”*  
~ anonymous



The incredible stained glass windows of Leon’s Cathedral -- I found the image below online (taken by another pilgrim), and even though it is phenomenal, it doesn’t even come close to representing how enrapturing this place actually is when the setting sun shines through these colored portals ... I was truly blessed to experience this wonder first-hand, and it changed me for the better forever.



*“It is not enough to merely love being Loved, and it is not enough to bravely get close to leaping. One either leaps into purely selfless Love or one walks through the rest of his/her life longing for the same.”*  
~ anonymous



## *October 15, 2008 ... Reuniting with the ONE*

Leaving Leon ...



*“Does true Love need to survive prolonged separation? Of course not! Love doesn’t recognize ‘absence’ of any kind. For the true Lover, the Beloved is always nearby, whether holding her hand or walking from him many miles apart.”*

*~ anonymous*

I reunited with Mom this morning ... I had just left Leon and was walking joyfully into the day, thinking that I could maybe catch up to her in a few days, when I heard her calling to me from above – which was quite the bizarre feeling, that, let me assure you! ... Anyway, she had stopped yesterday at a hotel just outside of Leon and felt that she would simply wait for me to flow past. It really is a minor miracle that she saw me, as we were in a pretty busy section of town, with lots of folks milling about, and if she hadn’t been looking for me at that moment, I would have walked right past her ... Of course, as anyone who has walked the Camino can attest, the Way is connected by a loosely forged chain of such “minor miracles” ... These pictures are of the altar of the church across the street from her hotel.

*“When both the dust of the Camino and the trials of life stick to our soles [and our Souls], Star of Compostella, will you show us how to Love again?”*

*~ anonymous*



*“Lovers always Love anyway. It is the mere privilege to powerfully Care that is priceless to the one who truly Loves; not the experience of Love itself.” ~ anonymous*



*“Searching for enlightenment for one’s self ensures that it will not be found. Enlightenment is born in Oneness. Searching for Peace for one’s self ensures that it will not be found. Peace is born in selflessness. Searching for Love for one’s self ensures that it will not be found. Love is born in giving.” ~ anonymous*





And then we enter the town of Orbigo ...



*“Jesus, my friend and guide  
... You, the representation of  
God in the flesh ... You, the  
fountain of our pure  
communion with the Divine; of  
the freedom to choose to Love;  
of Love itself ... You, who are  
my Joy-full and willing  
servant; walk always with and  
within me; ever showing me  
The Way of selfless  
Compassion.” ~ anonymous*

This is the famous bridge at Orbigo, upon  
which medieval knights used to joust ...

*“Pilgrim, are you walking with your heart  
or with your head?”  
~ Camino graffiti*



And here, the beautiful courtyard of our  
hostel in Orbigo ...

*“Time is a companion that goes with us  
on a journey. It reminds us to cherish each  
moment, because it will never come again.  
What we leave behind is not as important as  
how we have lived.” ~ Jean Luc Picard  
(Star Trek: The Next Generation)*

## *October 16, 2008 ... Dancing with the Divine*

An eerily-typical deserted village ... In the beginning of the Journey, we would come across barren towns like this one and I would simply assume that the inhabitants were taking their “siesta” ... Later I realized that it often didn’t matter what time of day we walked through them; there was simply no living thing to be seen -- no animals, no children, no ladies hanging out their laundry ... It really did add to the whole “Twilight Zone” feel to the experience -- *and* I do still wonder where all the people were ...



*“Bizarre travel plans are dancing lessons from God.” ~ Kurt Vonnegut*



We followed a manure truck for part of the Way today. There is a metaphor here, but frankly, I just don’t want to go there ... 🤔

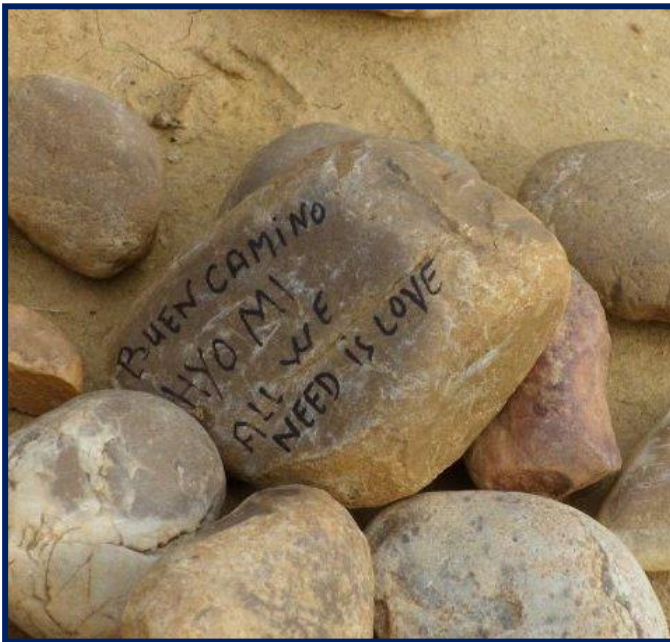
*“What you discover on your own is always more exciting than what someone else discovers for you.” ~ Terrence Rafferty*



This was a fascinating “art garden” that appeared as if it sprang up impromptu fashion over several weeks ... There were the usual miniature “pilgrim’s cairns” everywhere made of stones from the Path, and yet also these obscure modern-art type sculptures. Mom spent a lot of time looking at them all, while I simply gave them a respectful nod and was on my Way ...



*“There are no foreign lands. It is only the traveler who is foreign.” ~ Robert Louis Stevenson*



This is so True — especially when reading “Love” as a verb ...

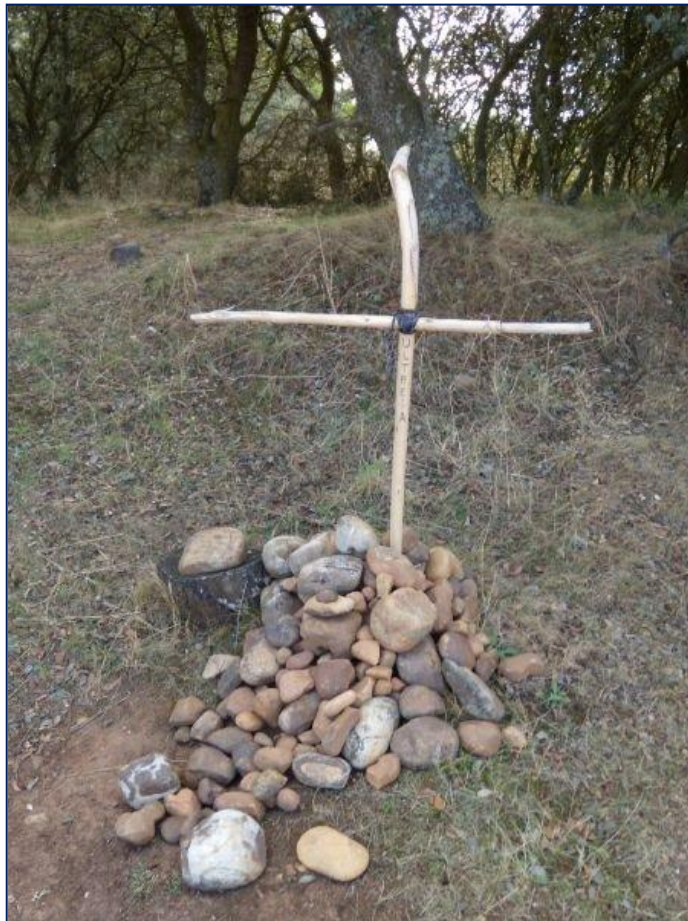
*“The experiences are so innumerable and varied, that the journey appears to be interminable and the Destination is ever out of sight. But the wonder of it is, when at last you reach your Destination you find that you had never travelled at all! It was a journey from here to Here.” ~ Meher Baba*



*“Real Faith: When in doubt, don’t!” ~ unknown*



*“If you are determined to ‘push the river’\*, you will ensure the very thing you push against.” ~ anonymous*



[\*The term “push the river” relates to any attempt to make what clearly **IS** morph into what we think it “should be” instead.]



*“What you don’t own about yourself owns you ... Your work is to discover your world and then with all your Heart give yourself to it.” ~ Robin Sharma & G. Buddha*



*“I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I intended to be.” ~ Douglas Adams*





Heading down into Astorga ...



*“The feeling remains that God is on the journey, too” ~ Teresa of Avila*

*“It is only in the future the we become cowards ...  
In the Here&Now, we all have hearts of lions.”  
~ anonymous*





*“Compromising one’s True Self to remain with a loved one brings only pain to lover and beloved alike.” ~ anonymous*

[And yet we are also to remember that the True Self knows only giving, and as such cannot ever be compromised by any form of truly selfless Generosity]

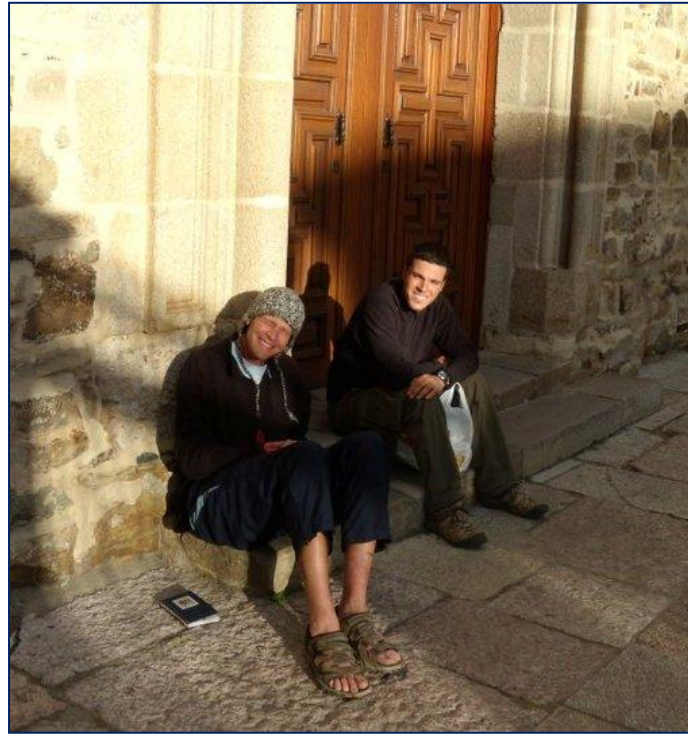


This picture brings to mind something profound about cleanliness and Godliness — and yet now, at least as a pilgrim, I relate it not as much to the body as to the Soul.

*“There is an electric fire in human nature tending to purify – so that among these human creatures there is continually some birth of new heroism.” ~ John Keats*

Hanging out in a sunbeam  
with Felipe from Brazil ...

*“There is great meaning in  
life for those who are willing to  
journey.” ~ Jim England*



“After twelve days of walking separately our paths joined again in La Virgen del Camino -- the first city past Leon ... We each experienced the amazing desolation and emptiness of the land and life of both the Meseta and then the industrial region leading into Leon. At times there were no birds, crickets, or sounds, and even the religious symbols such as crosses that had until then guided us were often absent ... We understood this emptiness and left no trace but our tears ... We are so glad that we were able to experience this time each in our own way and found each other again only after finishing the Work ... When I got to the town of La Virgen and found the alberques closed for the season, I knew I still wanted to stay and slow down for Scaughdt to catch up. So I got a two star hotel room with a balcony overlooking the cathedral of the Virgin and had my own toilet and shower and sheets for a change. The evening mass and rosary were lovely and I experienced several real-life pilgrims: villagers with disabilities walking slowly into and out of the church services. The next morning -- while packing up and knowing I would see him -- Scaughdt ‘magically’ appeared sauntering down the sidewalk. It was a joyous reunion with much story-telling. Today as we walked to Astorga it was as if the ‘shadow of the valley of death’ was over for me, and I was greeted with a new born calf, then a manure spreader, then an absolutely fantastic folk art pilgrim statue that had been generated and added to by all us ‘crazy from the wasteland’ pilgrims who had made it through ... I joined with another pilgrim from Germany in adding our own additions to this work of art and then discussed the pain and despair we had felt in Leon ... Then we both laughed, we both breathed deeply, we both gave thanks, and we both kept walking.” ~ Suzanna



*October 17, 2008 ... Leaving the Basement*

On the Way into Rabanal ...

*“His pilgrimage was rewarded with new wisdom, which would never have been his had he remained in his basement.”*

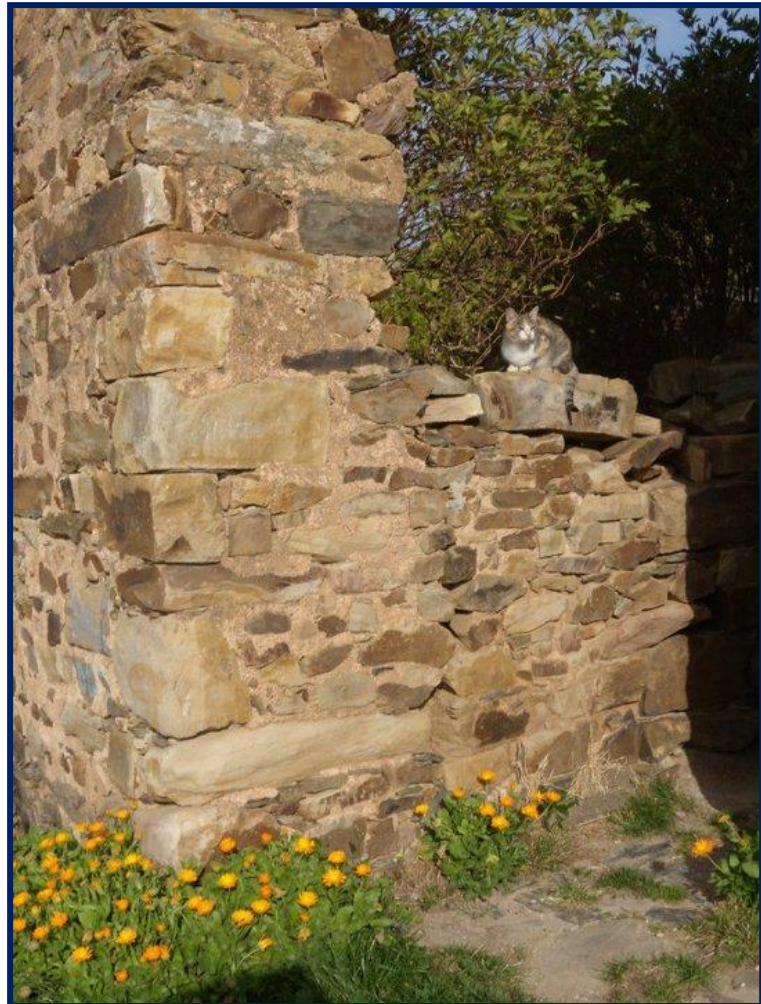
*~ Kurt Vonnegut*



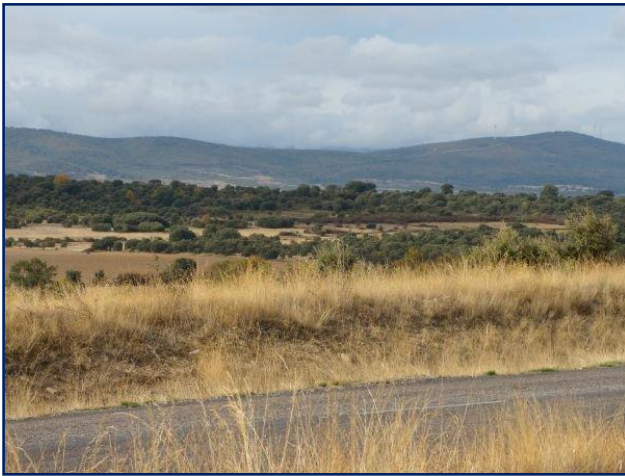
*“And as we wind on down the road our shadows taller than our Soul, there walks a lady we all know who shines white light and wants to show how everything can still turn to gold.”*

*~ Led Zeppelin*

[**Hint:** See “the lady” as selfless **Love**]

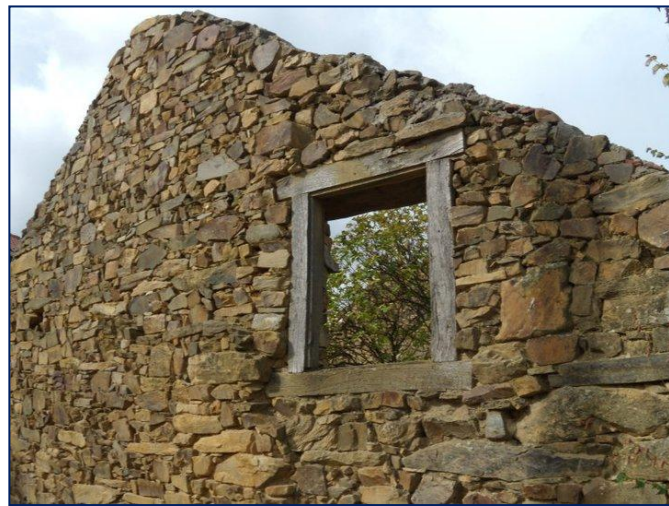






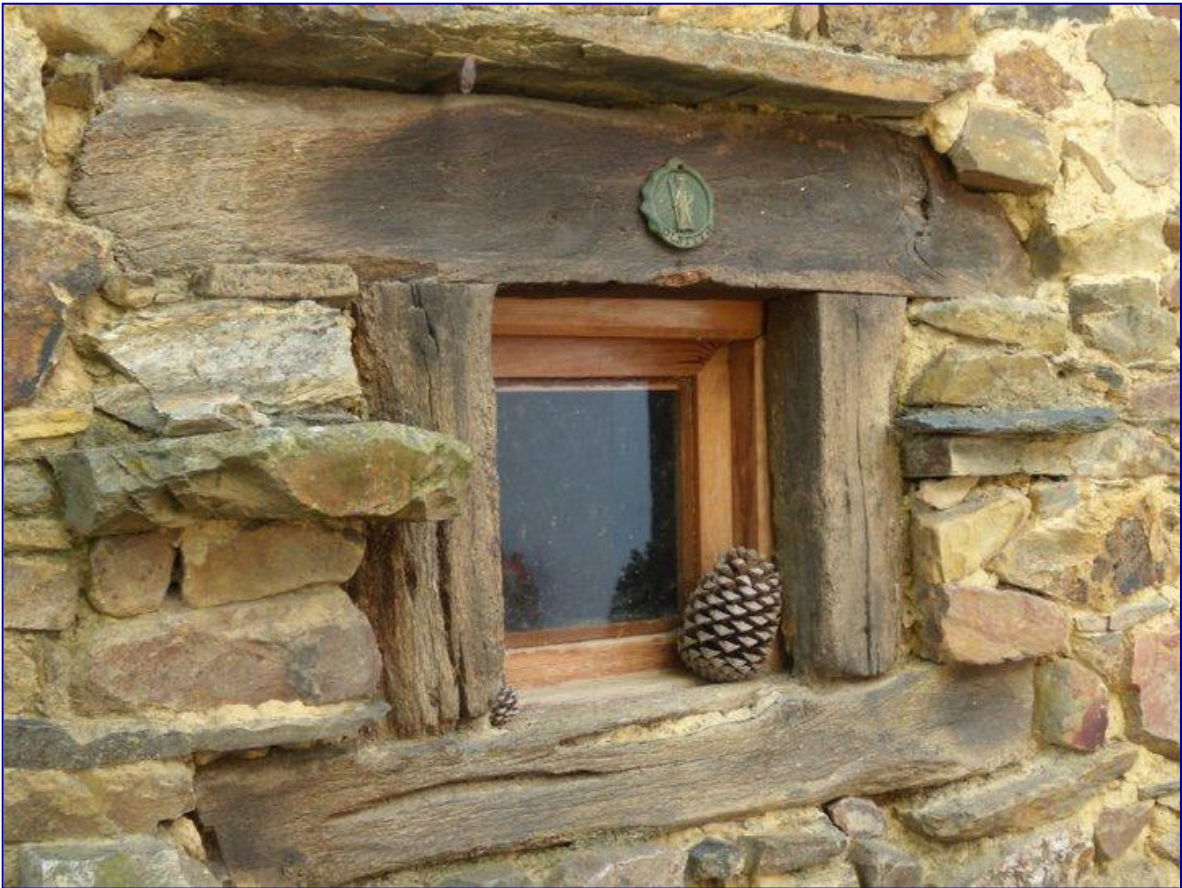
*“It is very important to pay attention to the road. It is the road that teaches us the best way to get there, and the road enriches us as we walk its length.”*  
~ Paulo Coelho

*“And if you listen very hard the tune will come to you at last, when all are One and One is all, the be the rock and not to roll ... And she’s paving the Stairway to Heaven.” ~ with Led Zeppelin*



*“When faced with confusion or conflict, it is best to adopt the Franciscan method of resolution: unconditional acceptance via active Kindness.” ~ anonymous*





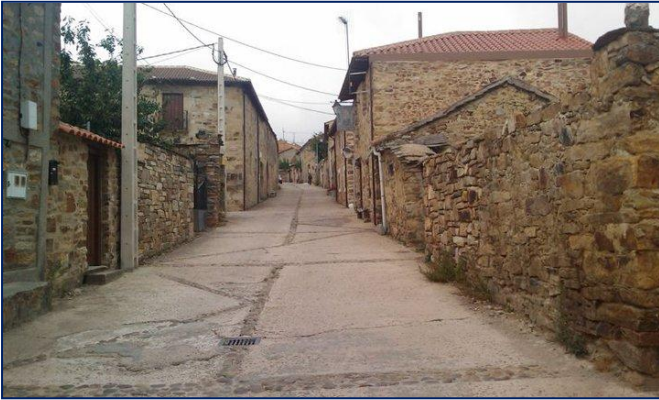
*“You cannot tap into real Love without willing self-sacrifice.” ~ Scaughdt*

We’ve entered the region of hand-laid slate roofs ... Beauty-full!

*“You cannot know  
Love by being loved.”  
~ anonymous*

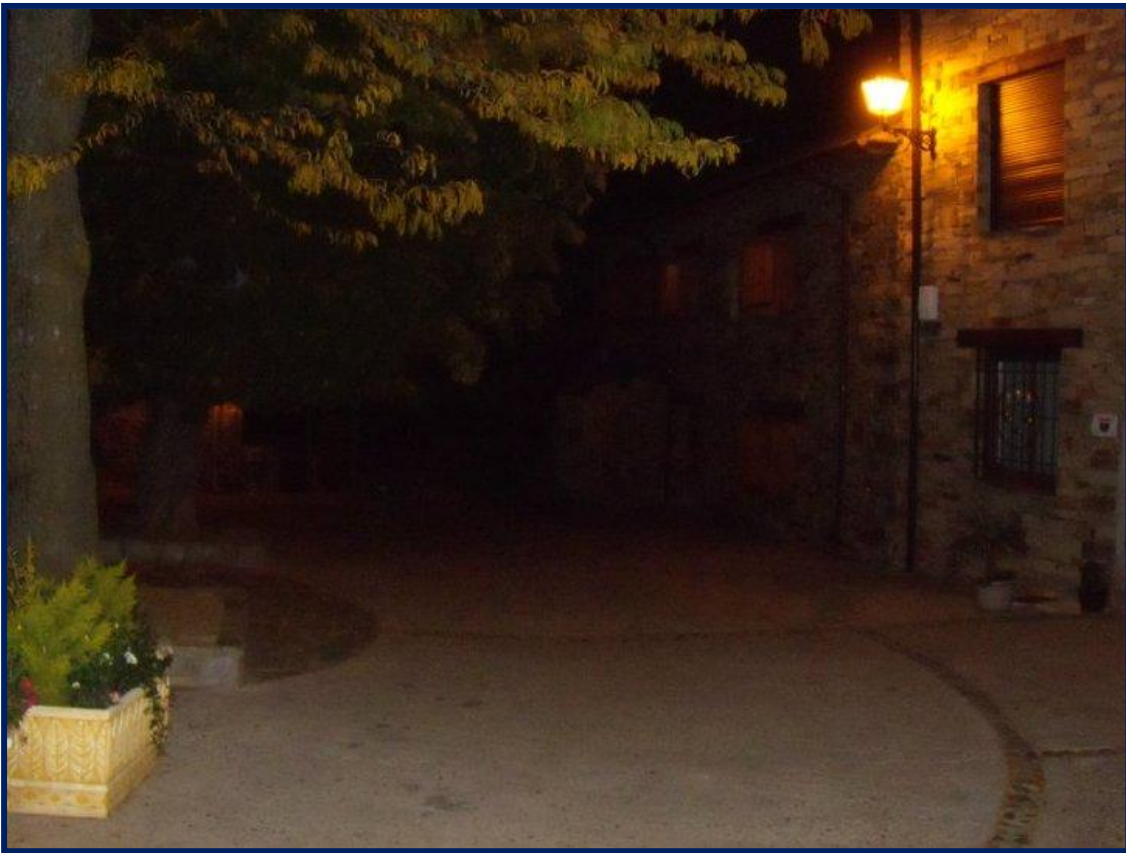


Entering Rabanal ...



*“The greatest explorer on this earth never takes voyages as long as those of the man who descends to the depth of his heart.”  
~ Julien Green*

Here is an evening shot of our hostel in Rabanal, the Refugio Gaucelmo. It was next door to a small monastery known for taking in pilgrims for shorter stays of monastic living ...



*“More than genetics, money or education, it is our journey that defines who we are -- neither the experiences we encounter nor the happy or traumatic events we may have endured, but rather how we dealt with those events; how we treated others therein and thereafter.” ~ inspired by Jose Harris*





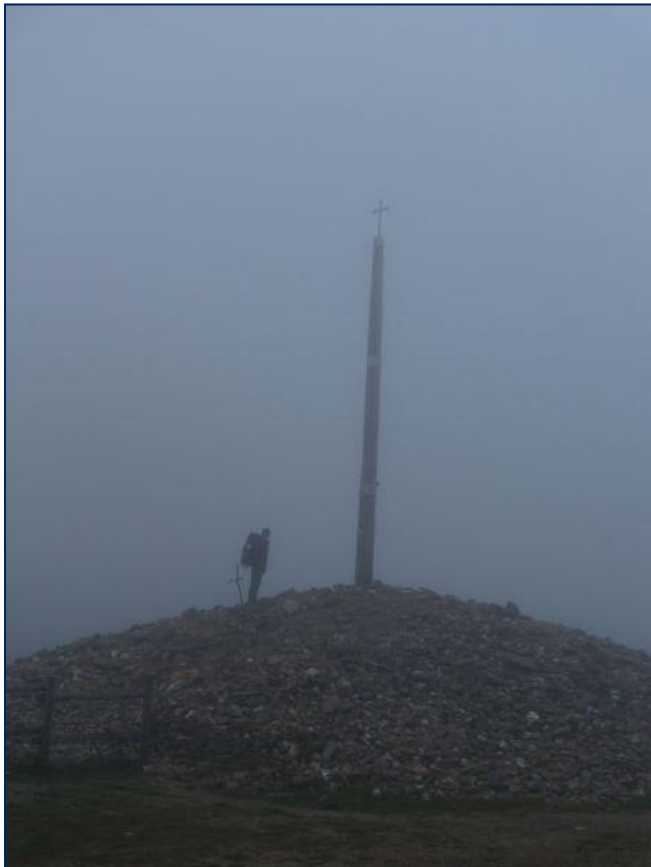
*“For the initiate of The Way, the proper hierarchy of focus is indeed God, followed by Humanity, followed by ‘loved ones’, followed by all others. And yet for the Master of The Way, there is no hierarchy at all — All are One, and all are equally worthy facets of the Divine.” ~ anonymous*

## *October 18, 2008 ... Scaling the Steepness*

Into the mist; heading up the steepness towards Manjarin -- one of the last vestiges of the Knights Templar ...



*“We are always manifesting an external reality that harmonizes perfectly with how we are choosing to Be (or not to Be) internally.” ~ anonymous*



The “Cruz de Fero” (the “Iron Cross”); one of the more famous landmarks of the Camino ... Here pilgrims place a stone upon the pile -- preferably one that they have been carrying since the beginning of their Journey -- to symbolize the letting go of an emotional or mental encumbrance from their past.

*“I place my stone reverently at the pinnacle of this immense pile of detritus and somehow KNOW that I am free; that my life is once again re-dedicated to my true Purpose.” ~ anonymous*



*“And the truth is that as a man’s real power grows and his knowledge widens, ever the way he can follow grows narrower; until at last he chooses nothing, but does only and wholly what he must do.” ~ Ursula K. LeGuin*



This is an actual farmer’s house literally “in the middle of nowhere” (or on the outskirts of everywhere, depending upon your chosen perception) ... Even by American standards, this location is extremely isolated, and gives the term “self-sufficiency” a whole new level of meaning.



*“The desire to go home that is a desire to be whole, to know where you are, to be the point of intersection of all the lines drawn through all the stars, to be the constellation-maker and the center of the world, that center called Love.”*

*~ Rebecca Solnit*

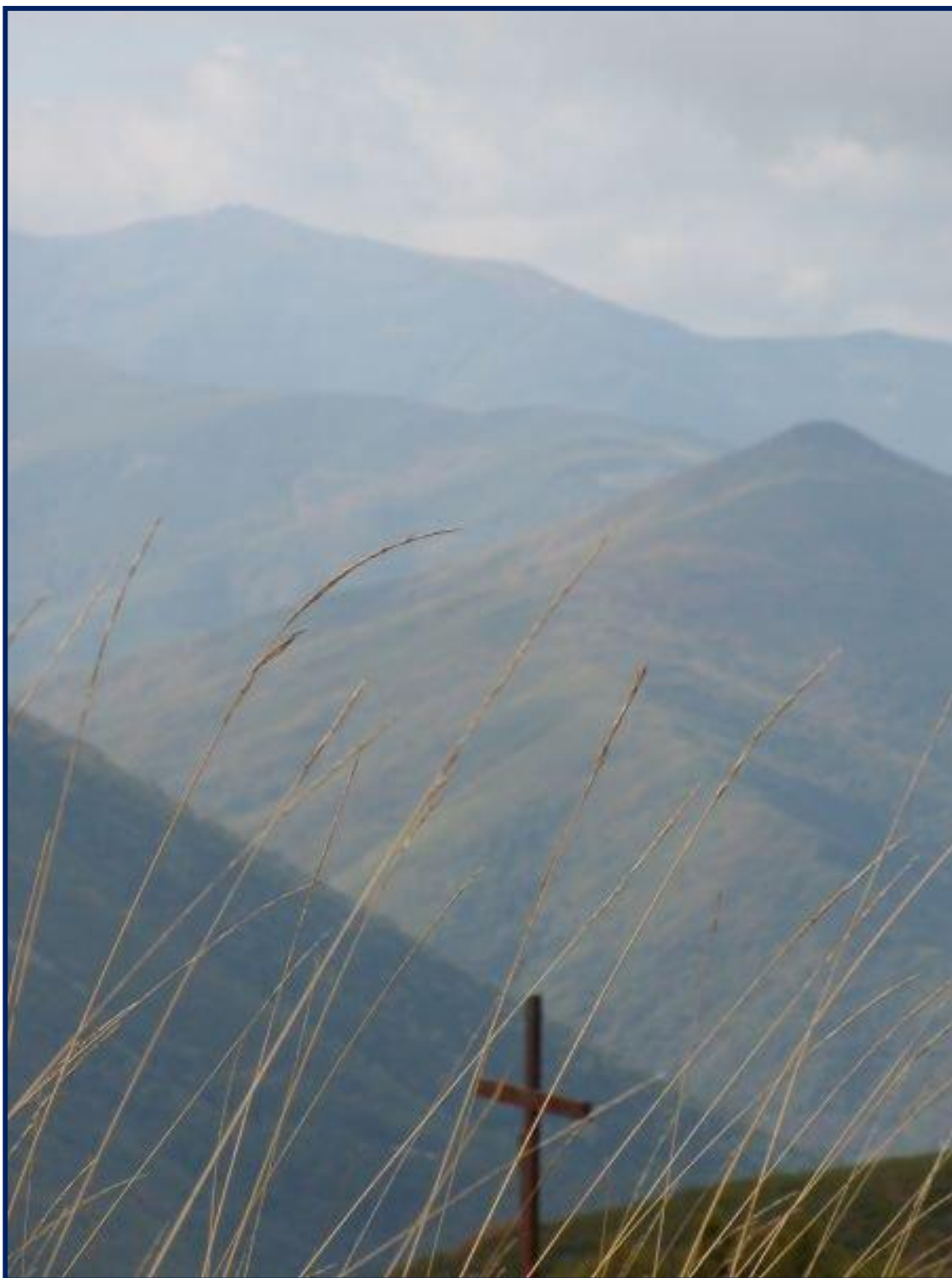


*“The miracles of our dreams lie beneath our foot soles — in each and every tiny step we take as we journey to the stars ... I reckon the destination isn’t the only miracle.” ~ Besa Kosova*



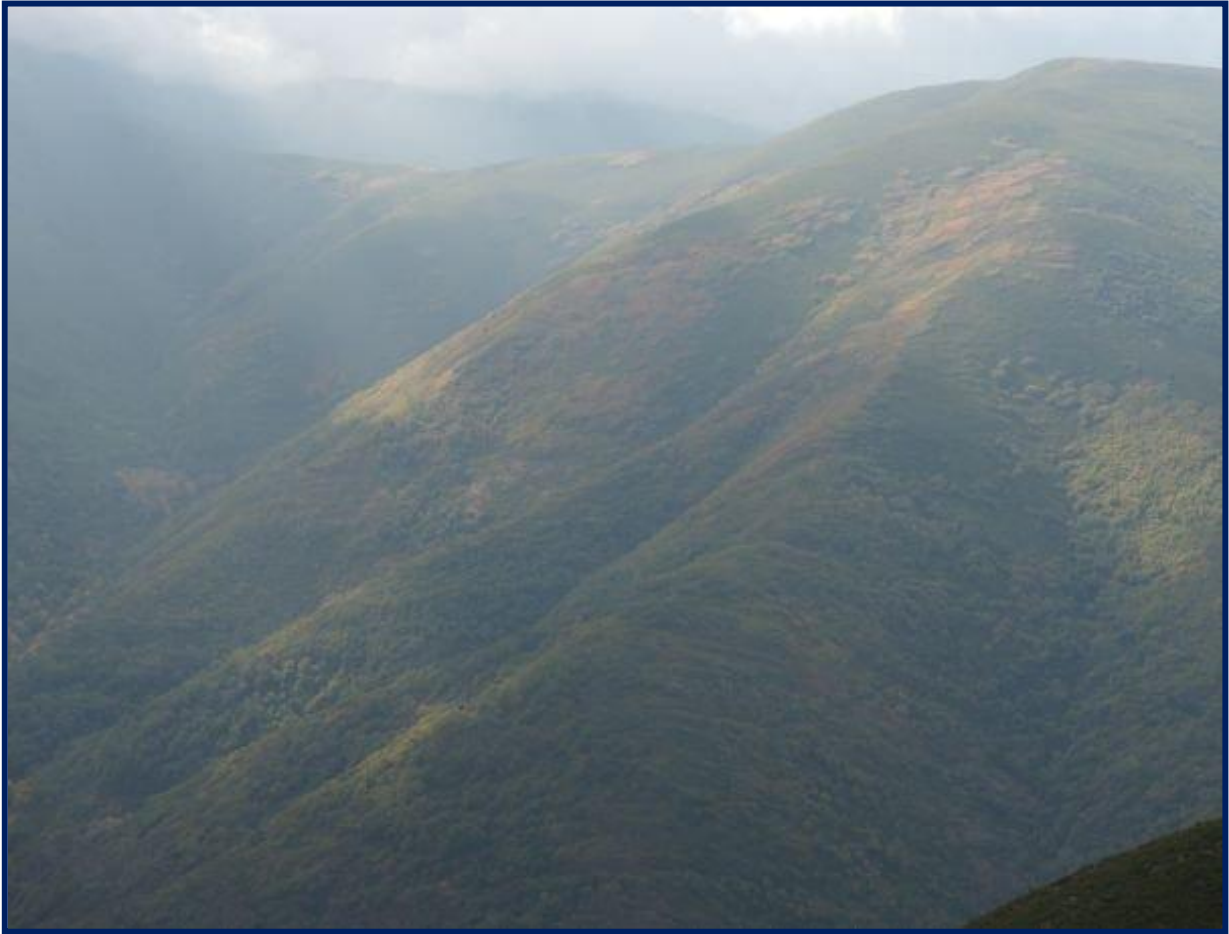
*“Long enough have you dream’d contemptible dreams. Now I wash the gum from your eyes. You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light and of every moment of your life. Long have you timidly waded holding a plank by the shore ... Now I will you to be a bold swimmer; to jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to me, shout ... and laughingly dash with your hair” ~ Walt Whitman*





*“For where thy treasure is,  
there also will thy heart be.”  
~ Luke 12:34*

*“A journey, I reflected, is of no merit unless it has tested you.” ~ Tahir Shah*



And then we head into the quaint mountain village of Acebo ...



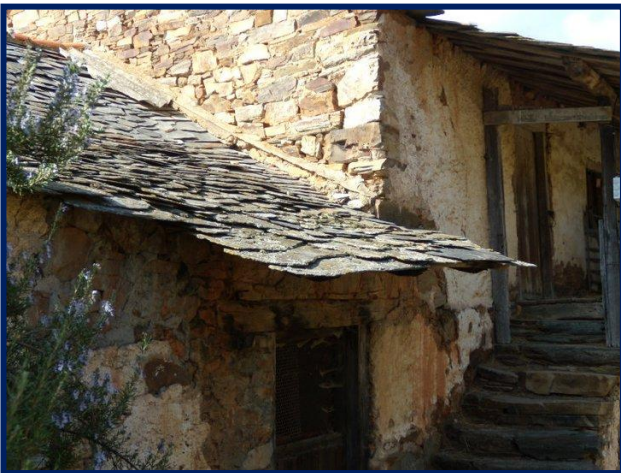
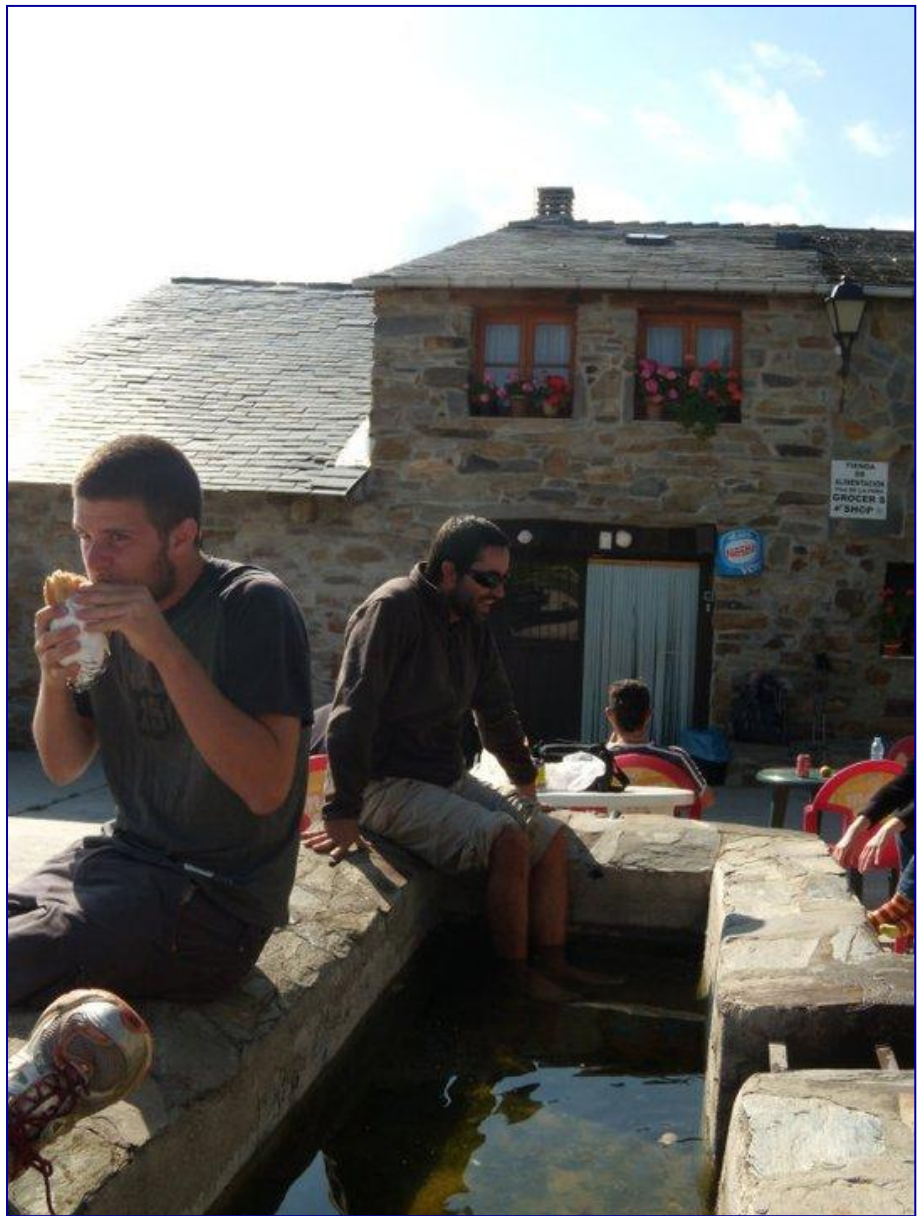
*“It is far. But there is no journey upon this earth that a man may not make if he sets his heart to it ... there are no mountains he may not climb, there are no deserts he cannot cross; save a mountain and a a desert of which you are spared the knowledge, if love leads him and he holds his life in his hand counting it as nothing, ready to keep it or to lose it as Providence may order.”*

*~ H. Rider Haggard*



Here, a Pilgrim's  
rest stop ...

*"You are not on a  
journey to God;  
you are on a  
journey **with** God."  
~ S. Mariboli*



*"God has arranged strange ways for  
some of us to find him. Sometimes He  
brings us on long physical journeys;  
sometimes He leaves us at home and  
makes the journey internal."  
~ Abigail Hartman*

The Path starts to get quite rocky in places ...



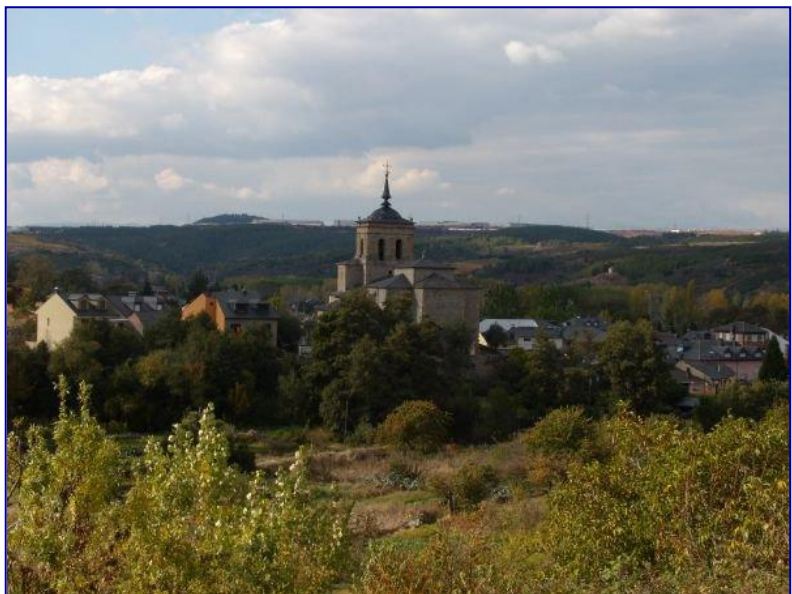
*“Life is a valuable and unique opportunity to discover who you are. But it seems as soon as you near answering that age-old question, something unexpected always happens to alter your course. And who it is you thought you were suddenly changes.”*

*~ Richelle Goodrich*

And then we head into Molinaseca, where we will rest for the night ...

*“No single decision you ever made has led in a straight line to where you find yourself now. You peeked down some roads and took a few steps before turning back. You followed some roads that came to a dead end and others that got lost at too many intersections. Ultimately, all roads are connected to all other roads.”*

*~ Deepak Chopra*





Mom didn't have any cash to pay for a hostel, so we used her credit card and actually spent a night in a hotel. In the image below, Mom & I are sampling what was by far the worst wine we drank the entire trip. At least it came in a pretty bottle ... By the way, I couldn't rest Peace-fully in our room that night, so got up and tried to sleep on the floor of the hotel's reading lounge. A maid found me there, woke me up, and then gave me my own room to sleep in -- for free!



*“The path to our destination is not always a straight one. We go down the wrong road, we get lost, we turn back. Maybe it doesn't matter which road we embark on. Maybe what matters is that we embark.”*  
~ Barbara Hall

It just goes to show you: books & covers -- bottles & labels -- and people & behaviors ...

*“In all hero stories, the call to go on a journey takes the form of a loss, an error, a wound, an unexplainable longing, or a sense of a mission. When any of these happens to us, we are being summoned to make a transition. It will always mean leaving something behind ...The paradox here is that loss is a path to gain.”* ~ David Richo



## *October 19, 2008 ... Reaching for the Top*



We are up early the next morning and back on the Road ...

*“How you climb a mountain is far more important than reaching the top.”*

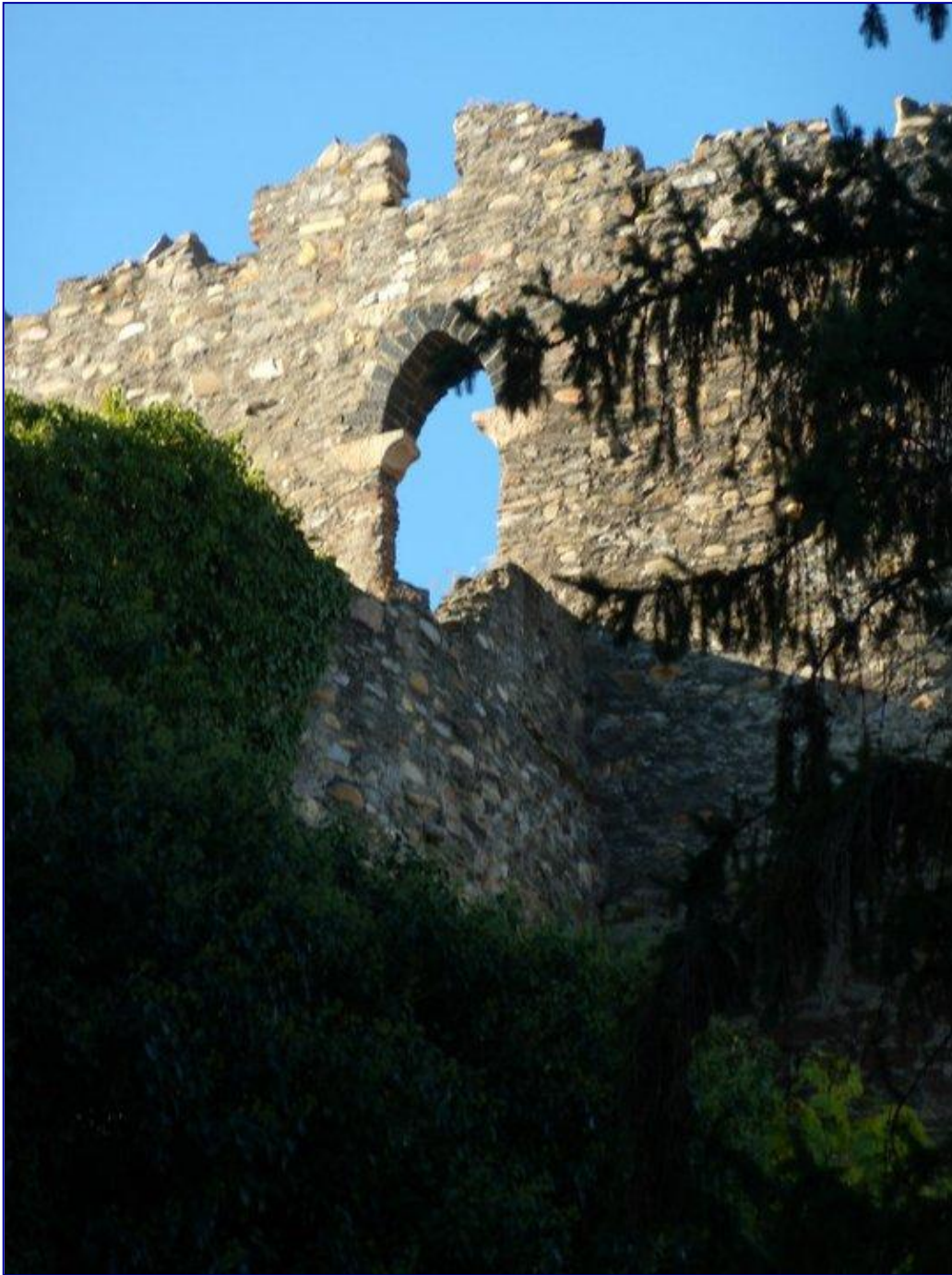
*~ Yvon Chauinard*

We pass through Villafranca, where this castle once belonged to the Knights Templar (in the 1500's I believe), who felt themselves responsible for the protection of passing pilgrims ...

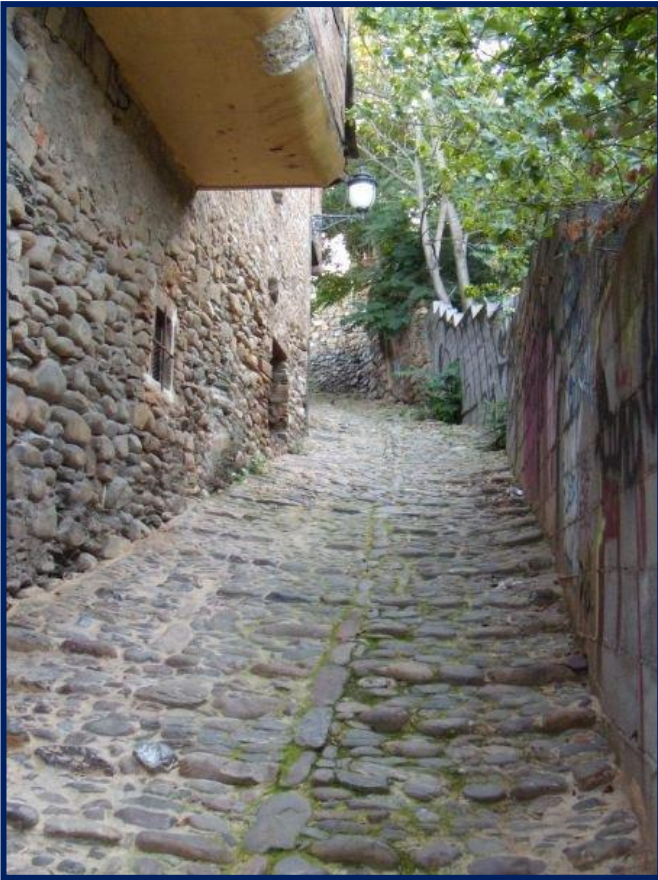
*“Not knowing is the greatest life motivator. So enjoy, endure, survive each moment as it comes to you in its proper sequence -- a surprise.” ~ Vera Nazarian*





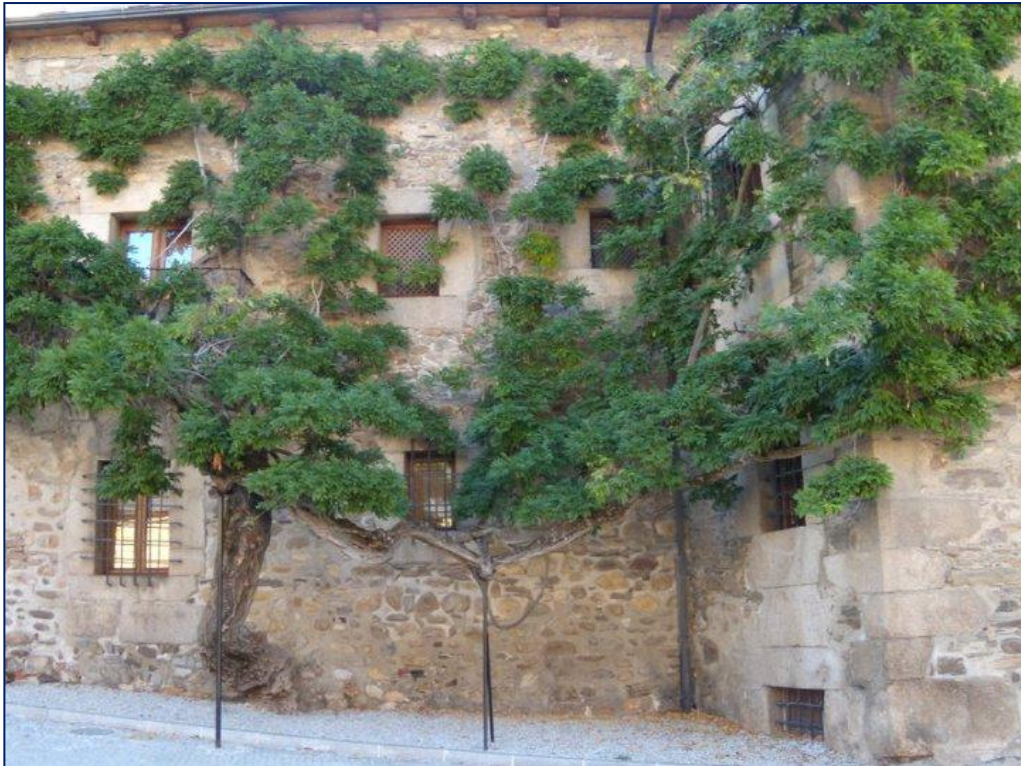


*“This goes in spirals, perhaps in circles,  
but whichever way it goes,  
I will follow it”  
~ Hermann Hesse*



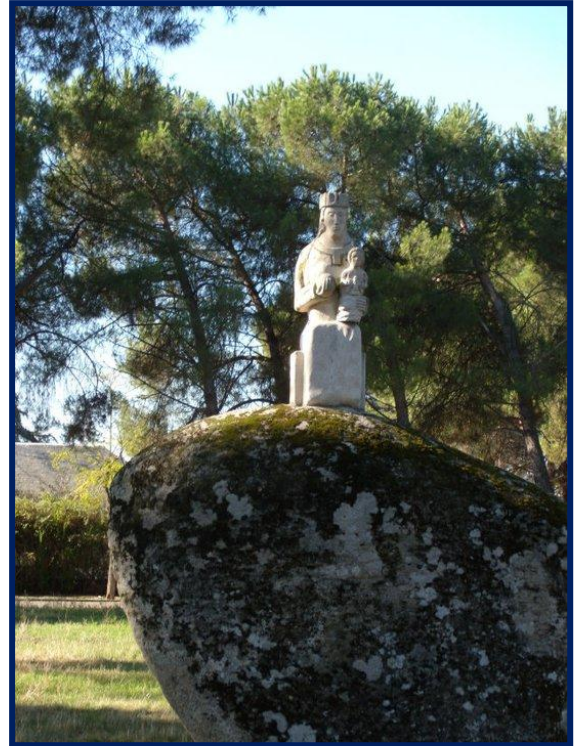
*“Adelante con Amor.”*  
~ *Camino graffiti*  
[“Onward with Love”]

*“Health is the greatest gift and contentment the greatest wealth ...” ~ G. Buddha*





*“Every family has a story that it tells itself, that it passes on to the children and grandchildren. The story grows over the years, mutates, some parts are sharpened, others dropped, and there is often debate about what really happened. But even with these different sides of the same story, there is still agreement that this is the family story.” ~ A. M. Homes*



*“Set out from any point. They are all alike. They all lead to a point of departure.”  
~ Antonio Porchia*

This is super-nice Ann (from Malta), who was walking the Camino with her super-nice boyfriend James (from Ireland) ... We spent quite a bit of time walking the same stretches of the Way with them, and even ended up entering Santiago together.

*“Cherish every moment with those you Love at every stage of your journey.” ~ Jack Layton*





*"It is the story that matters not just the ending." ~ Paul Lockhart*

This was our hostel in Cacabellos ...

*"All journeys eventually end in the same place: Home." ~ Chris Geiger*



And here -- a part of the typical pilgrim's routine: arriving at the evening's destination, registering for a room, taking a shower, washing clothes, eating dinner, communing with others, journaling (pictured here), and then hitting the sack.



*"There comes . . . a longing never to travel again except on foot." ~ Wendell Berry*



## *October 20, 2008 ... Walking Together*

An international crew of co-walkers (as was usually the case) -- Felipe from Brazil, Lisi from Germany, Mom & I from the United States, and Lisi's mom (Barbara) also from Germany ...

*"Every person is a new  
door to a different world."  
~ unknown*

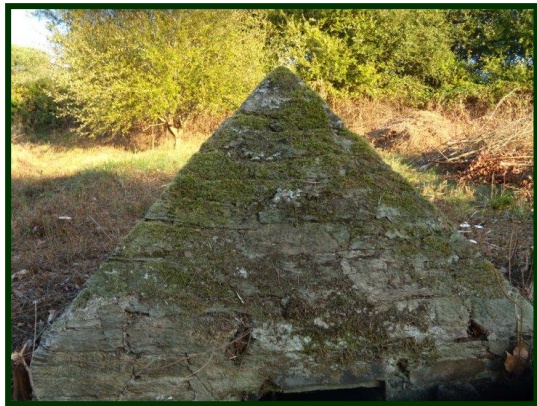


*"Two may talk together  
under the same roof for many years,  
yet never really meet;  
and yet two others at first speech  
become old friends"  
~ Mary Catherwood  
[Let us all choose the latter]*

*“An activist is one who is actively involved in creating community, whether that is locally in their neighborhood or internationally. It is an admirable quality.” ~ Jasmine Guy*



This was quite the interesting structure, apparently built over the opening of a fresh water spring. Why the pyramid shape, I wonder?



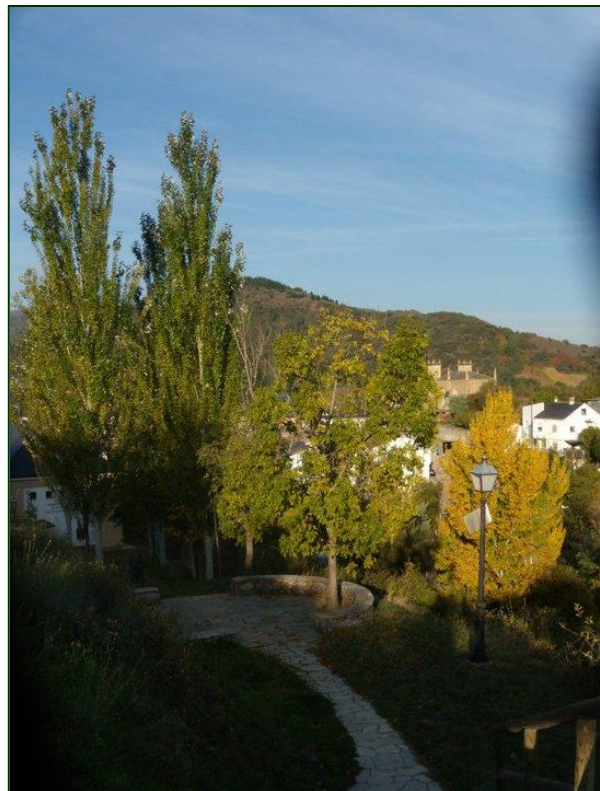
*“It is possible to enhance your comprehension of Truth by flipping all your analyses of reality from the critical to the complimentary. The more Wonder-full you can describe a person or a situation, the closer you’ll get to the objective Truth of the matter.”*

*~ anonymous*

Entering Trabadelo (I think) ...

*“If the path be beautiful, let us not ask where it leads.”*

*~ Anatole France*





*“I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and that it cannot be approached by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect.”*  
~ J. Krishnamurti



Here, we see one of a pilgrim’s two major pit-stops: entering churches (the other being stopping for coffee) ...

*“The difficulties you meet will resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed, and light will dawn, and shine with increasing clearness upon your path.”* ~ Jim Rohn

If cleanliness is next to Godliness; then those that clean are Divine ...



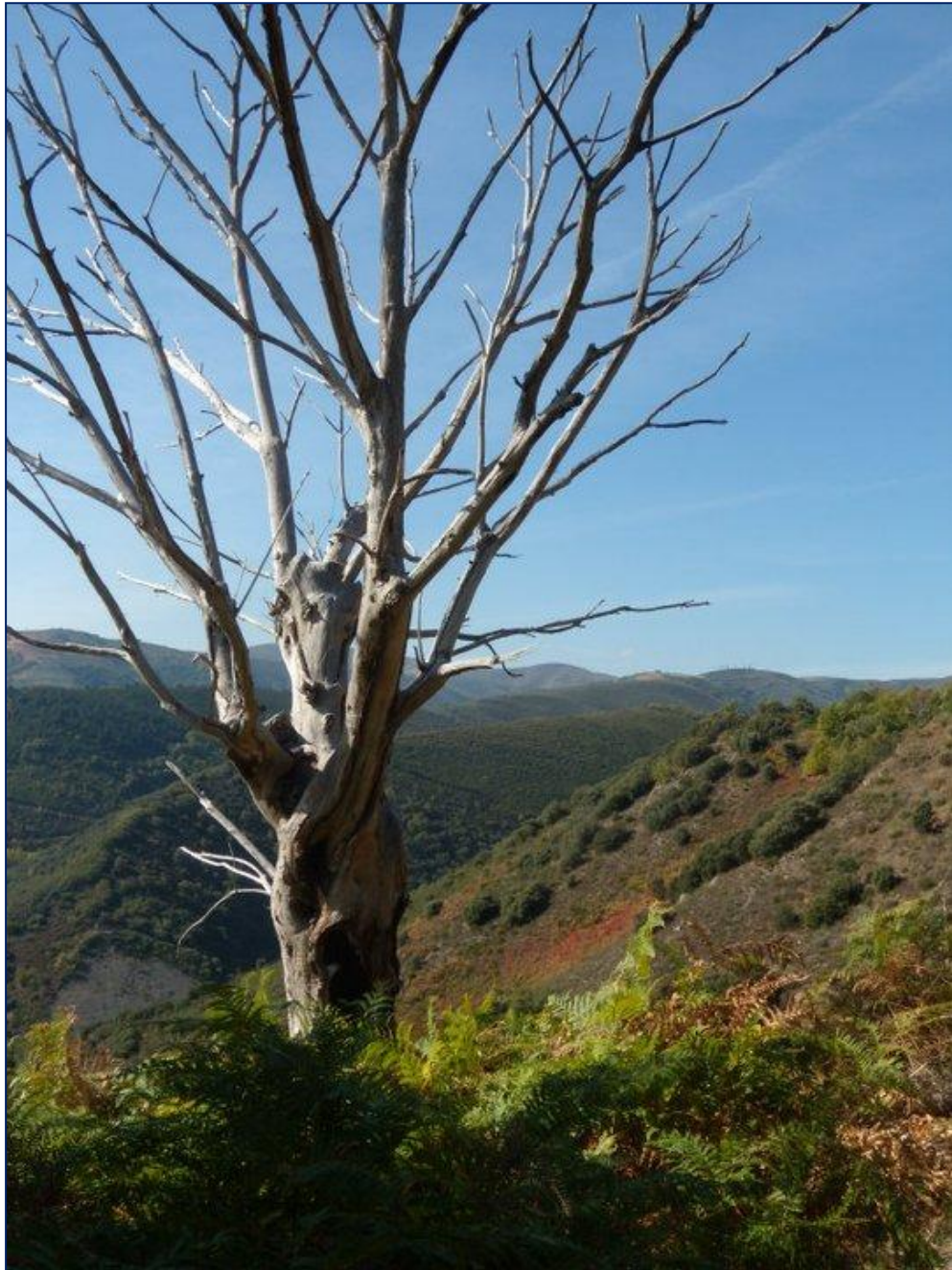
*“Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence.” ~ Henry David Thoreau*



*“Advance, and never halt,  
for advancing is perfection.  
Advance, and fear not the thorns in the path,  
for they draw only corrupt blood.”  
~ Khalil Gibran*

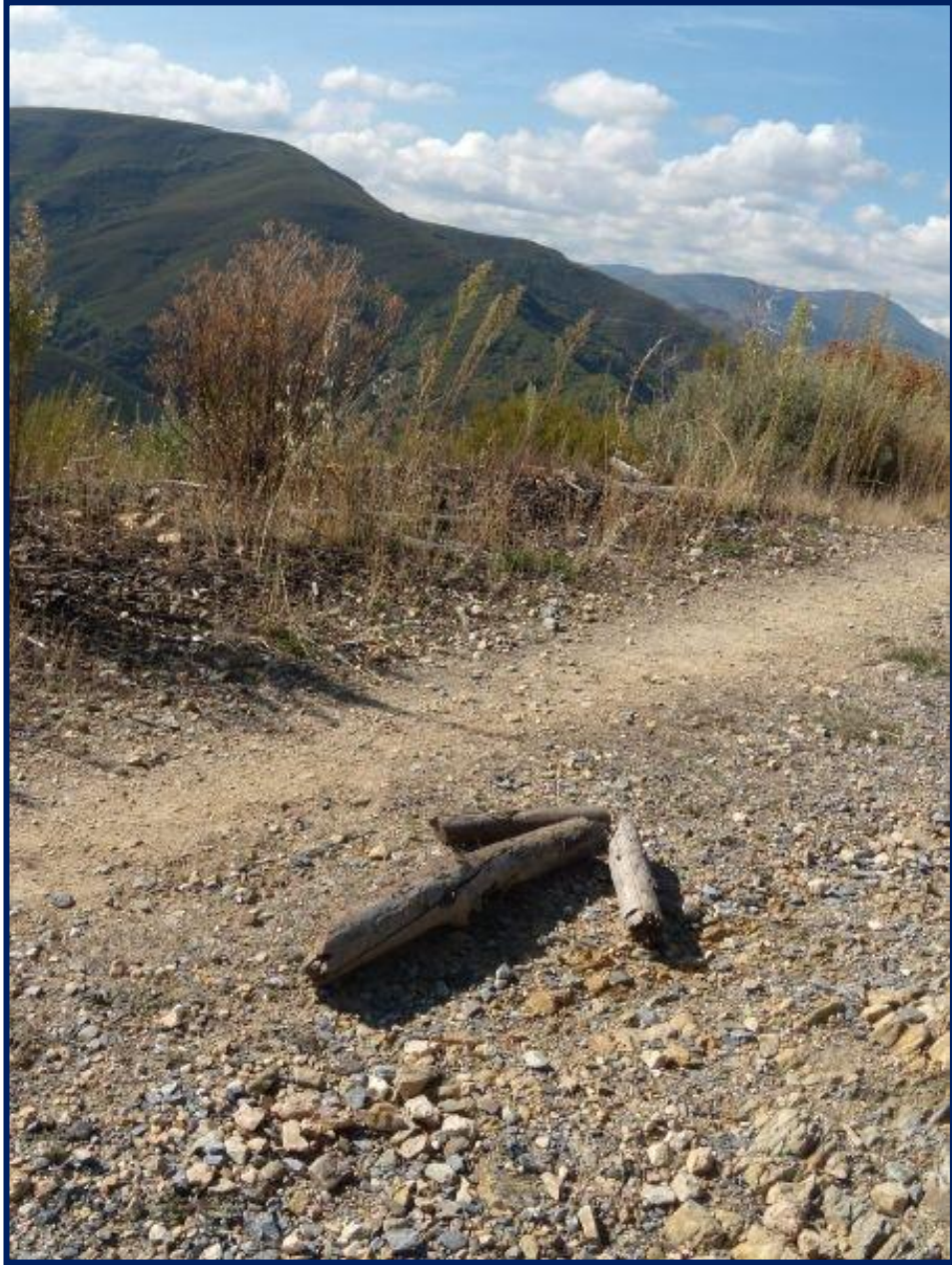


There were two primary alternatives along the Path today ... I took “the high road” along the crest of some mountains and got lost — the only time I did so on the whole 555 mile Trek (a metaphor? Hmmmmm) ...



*“Towering genius disdains a beaten path.  
It seeks regions hitherto unexplored.”  
~ Abraham Lincoln*

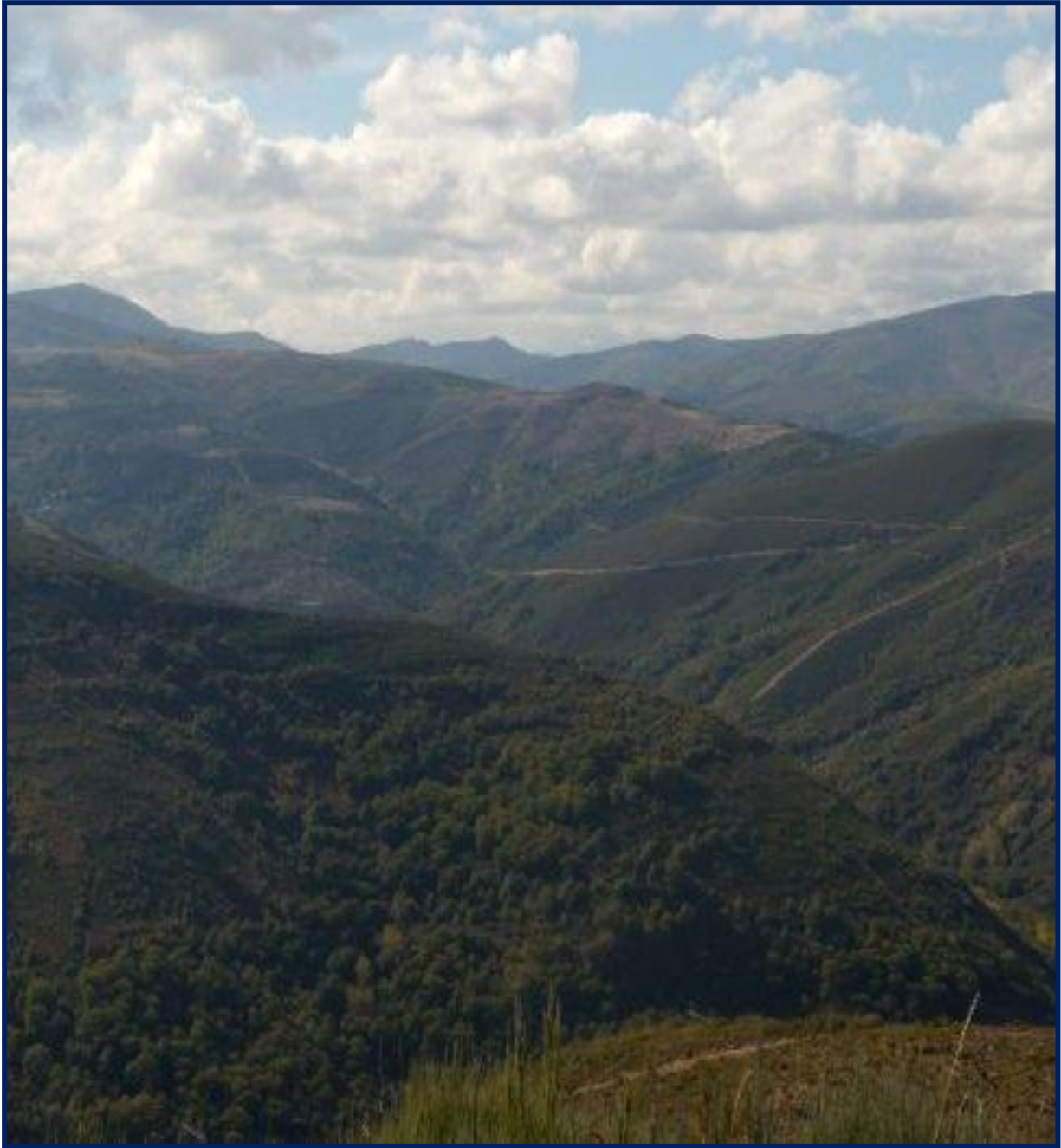
There were very few Way-markers along this stretch of the Path, so fellow pilgrims had made their own for those who followed. I adopted this service as well, and found out later that my arrows had actually helped my own mother stay “on track”. Of course, that only proved to be the case along the later phases of today’s Walk, once I myself found the Path again ...



*“No one saves us but ourselves ...  
We ourselves must walk the path.”  
~ G. Buddha*



*“Where am I?”* ~ Scaughdt (asked to fellow pilgrim)  
*“Paradise!”* ~ the fellow pilgrim’s wise response



Local folks harvesting chestnuts from some verrrrrrry old chestnut trees ...



*“Happiness is the harvest of a quiet eye.” ~ Austin O’Malley*



*“Care less for your harvest than for how it is shared, and your life will have meaning, and your heart will have peace.” ~ Kent Nerburn*





Green is the archetype of unconditional Love; a door that is always open, even when appearing to be locked ...



Mom & I had planned to meet in Vega de Valcarce, and yet I knew I was way ahead of her and it was already glimmering into darkness. I didn't think there was any way for her to make it to me -- and the hostel at VdV had a funky vibe (pay attention to life's vibes!), so I walked on a few more kilometers to Ruitelan ...



*“May what I do flow from me like a river, no forcing and no holding back; the way it is with children.” ~ Rainier Maria Rilke*

I had heard about Ruitelan's donativo hostel (“Pequeño Patola”) from other pilgrims along the Way, and it turned out to be everything recommended and more. Carlos, the manager, was stern but caring, which means a lot at the end of a long day of walking and wandering and getting lost (and eventually finding my way back). After all, Kindness is Kindness — no matter how or from whom you receive it.

*“A kind act can sometimes be as powerful as a sword.” ~ Rick Riordan*



After stowing my things, this is the room where I chilled out that evening (to some really good chill-out music, I might add). At dinner, the other pilgrims and I were introducing ourselves and I was asked where I was from. I suddenly didn't know how to answer the question -- having come to feel so much like a world citizen that to identify myself with only one particular country almost seemed dishonest. Fortunately, a Hungarian pilgrim helped me out by smiling gently, leaning towards me slightly, and saying, "Today, you are from Spain."

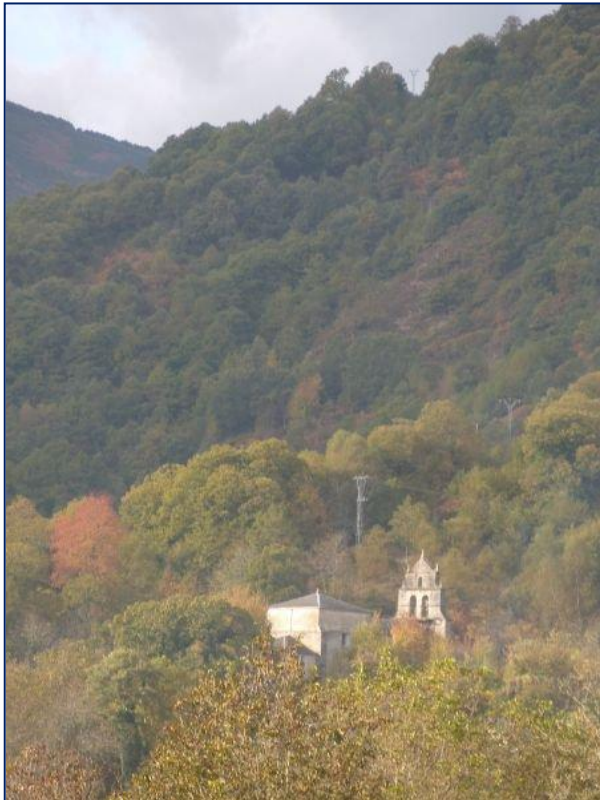
*"With the past, I have nothing to do;  
nor with the future. **I live now.**"*

*~ R. W. Emerson*



### ***October 21, 2008 ... An inner Fitness***

Ruitelan is the commencement point for the steepest climb of the Camino -- up to the mountaintop town of Oebreiro. Maybe I was just getting fitter, but I didn't find the trek today all that challenging. Maybe the relative difficulty or ease of the particular stages of the Camino depend more on one's inner state of Being than one's level of physical fitness ...



Come to think of it, this seems true for Life in general as well.

*"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will." ~ M. Gandhi*





*“Life’s true Gift is not the immediate revelry in physical pleasure or emotional comfort, but rather the opportunity to consciously delay such gratifications in order to honor the Gifts one has already been given.” ~ anonymous*



*“Realizing on the way up that everything in our past is an integral facet of each present moment, and that everything within our Here&Now is already an integral facet of every moment in or future. As such, an entire lifetime is actually one, single elongated moment.”  
~ anonymous*





*“One of the secrets of life is to find joy in the journey.” ~ Matthew Buckley*

*“The only real journey is the one within.” ~ Rainer Maria Rilke*





Into the mystical town of  
Ocebreiro ...

*“I don’t know that I believe in  
the supernatural, but I do believe  
in miracles, and our time  
together was filled with the events  
of magical unlikelyhood.”*

*~ John P. Barlow*



Below is the church at Ocebreiro shrouded in mist, as the day turned steadily foggier & a storm rolled into town. The church has a small antechamber just inside with remarkably good acoustics (Jose Luis had told me about it while I was serving with him in Tosantos), so I made that room my very first stop to try it out upon arriving -- and was truly astounded with the results...

*“I make it smoothly into Ocebreiro and head directly into the church’s ‘chanting chamber’ there ... I begin to softly sing and the perfect reverberations therein had God singing back to me. As I continued, the reverb of the reverb layered tone upon tone; coupling me with my Soul and with what many call “the Divine” in a chorus that culminated in God singing to God through me.” ~ Scaughdt*



## *October 22, 2008 ... The Greatest Craftsman*

We awoke early and hit the Road while the town was still completely fogged in. After a time, of course, the fog cleared and we made our way smoothly along. The statue pictured here is eerily similar to the one Finisterre pilgrims see just before reaching the lighthouse at the coast ...



*“This breathtaking Universe of ours is not only strikingly intelligent in its operation, it is also a very friendly place. Our world wants us to live great lives, and it wants us to be Happy.” ~ Robin Sharma*



*“Whenever we ignore our opportunities to act with Faithful\* kindness, the Universe tends to re-mind us of our needless cowardice shortly thereafter ... Of course, the faithless refuse to see these reminders as such, and yet they are ever there to be seen nonetheless.” ~ Scaughdt*



**\*Note** as well that when I speak of *Faith*, I am **not** speaking of any kind of religious certainty. Rather, I am speaking of our ability to be humbly uncertain of our beliefs, and yet to choose to act with Kindness towards others anyway ... Let all with ears to hear, choose to Listen – and all those with eyes to see, choose to Perceive!

*“But, when the work was finished, the Craftsman kept wishing that there were someone to ponder the plan of so great a Work, to love its Beauty, and to wonder at its Vastness.” ~ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*



Mom took this picture of the inside of a tiny mountain chapel. You can almost feel the warmth of the place through the image ...

*“Look around you, and see the holy ground upon which you walk.” ~ Nick Harrison*



This nice fellow was selling hand-carved staffs to pilgrims by the roadside. I gladly accepted one from him and ended up taking it all the way to the coast ...



*“When you have no companion, look to your walking stick.”  
~ Albanian Proverb*



Now *that* is an old chestnut tree!



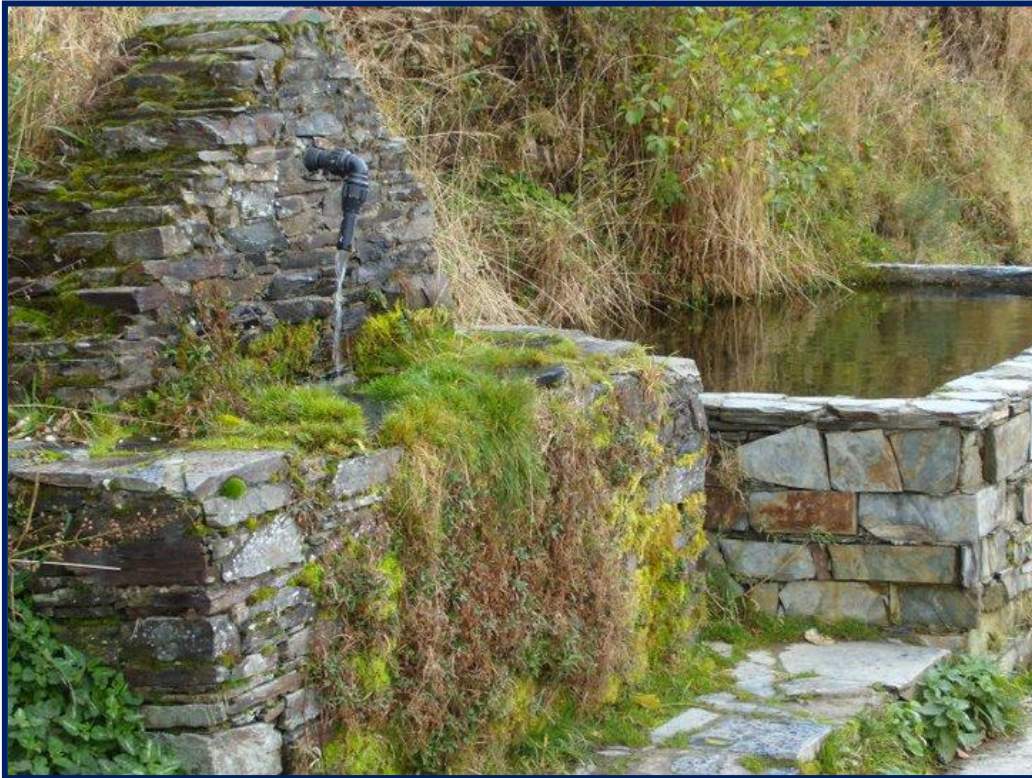
*“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders,  
but they have never failed to imitate them.” ~ James Baldwin*



The pristineness of these waters matching the renewed purity of our Spirits ...

*“He saw no color but those he knew, ... but they were fresh and poignant, as if he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful. In winter here no heart could mourn for summer or for spring.”*

*~ J. R. R. Tolkien*



And here, our hostel for the evening (in Triacastela) ...



*“A wonderful day! An infinite expanse ... [both] in Nature, and in the possibilities to live with our Selves. When we live in the moment and accept the great gift of life, then every day and indeed every moment becomes a miracle.” ~ Andreas (a Camino pilgrim)*



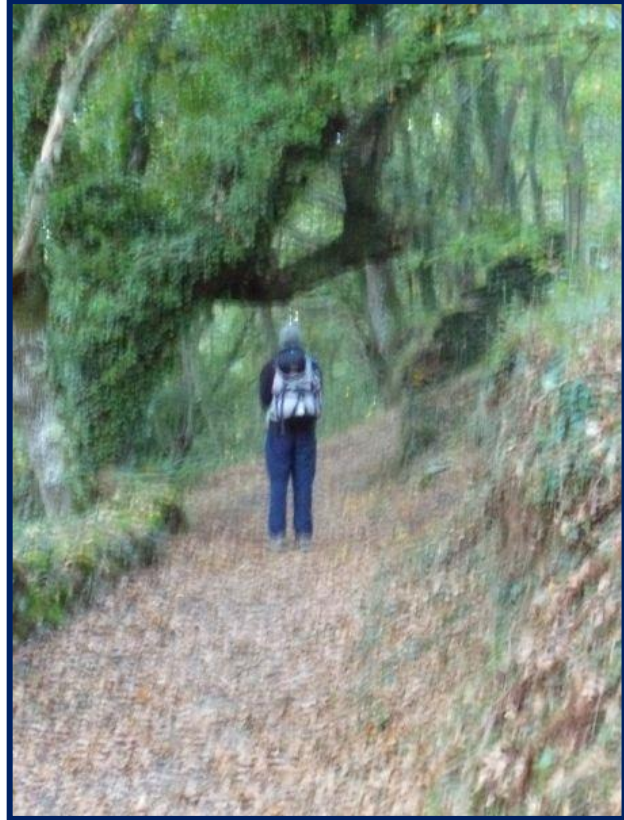
*October 23, 2008 ... Shimmering in the ONE*

This “hot spot” reminded me of the Earth-energies I felt while circumnavigating the Tor in Glastonbury, England. At both locations, the “juice” that flowed through me actually caused my pupils to dilate!

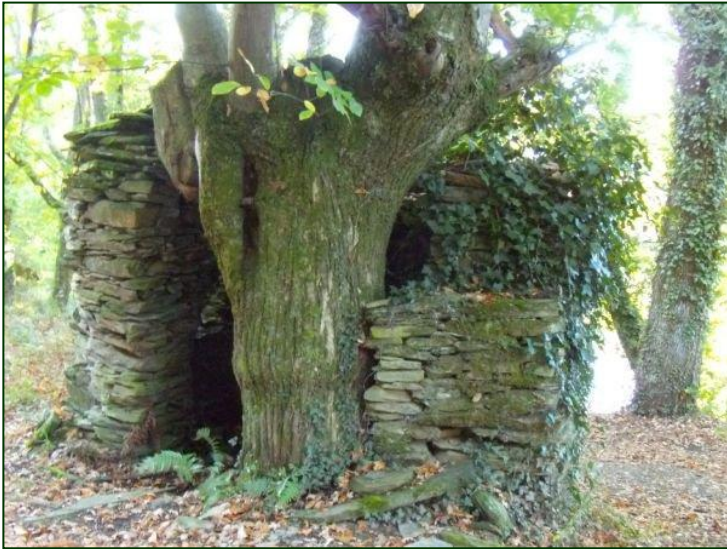
*“Life engenders life. Energy creates energy. It is by spending oneself that one becomes rich.”*

*~ Sarah Bernhardt*

*“The most Beauty-full walking day yet — a misty, frosty morning growing warm & sunny, while strolling past mossy waterfalls and slate-roofed cottages ... A deeply spiritual Path lined with the calm of fern-covered tree trunks and the timelessness of moss-coated rock walls.” ~ anonymous*







*“Truly selfless Love allWays engages the moment’s most courageous act. Thereafter, if said act inadvertently happens to cause pain, Love engages deeds more gentle (and thereby less courageous) instead.”  
~ anonymous*

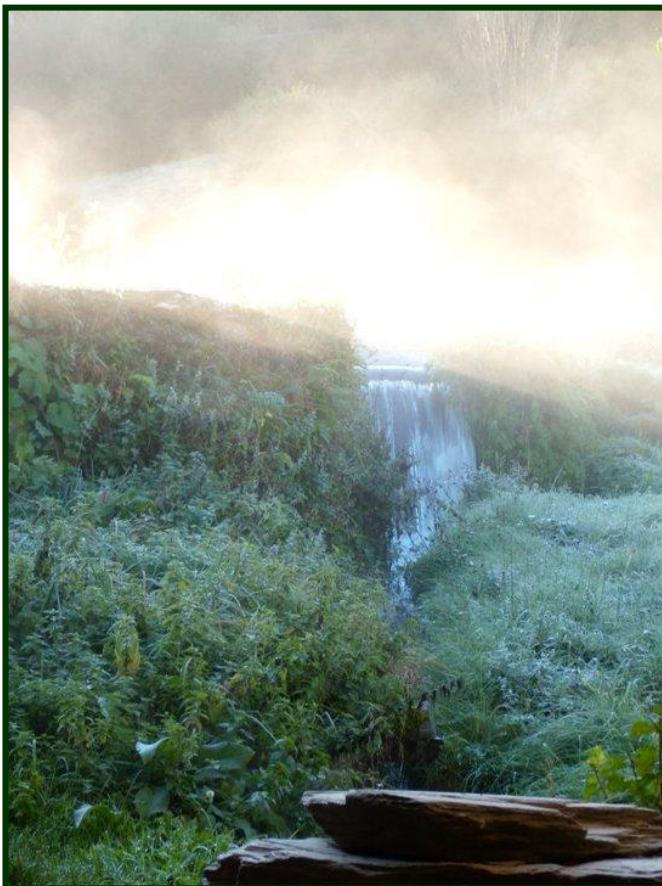
*“When you interpret the signs that are always present, it is wise to See what they actually say, as opposed to what you wished they were saying.” ~ anonymous*







*“The pilgrim is free of familiarity, and thus more readily recognizes the omnipresent Truth of Oneness; our innate interconnection with all things.” ~ anonymous*



*“Choose to See others as ‘BIG’ [i.e. Good] even if they choose to be ‘small’ [i.e. unkind] ... If someone persists in behaving selfishly, it is indeed correct to adjust your response accordingly, as long as you continue to See them as Perfect.”  
~ anonymous*

The famous monastery at Samos ...



*“It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking becomes our preaching.” ~ St. Francis of Assisi*

Though only inhabited by about a dozen monks at the time, the monastery here is still inhabited, functioning & self-sufficient.

*“We enter Samos and I realize that, though the monastic lifestyle has always appealed to me (even as a small boy), I have not been Called to live as a monk at this time – but rather have been given the privilege of being a mobile messenger of Love (and maybe even a messenger to monks)” ~ Scaughdt*





*“The most important reason for going from one place to another is to see what’s in between.”  
~ Norton Juster*



*“Though the road’s been often rocky, it still feels good to me.” ~ Bob Marley*







*“After having left Samos, I pause by a roadside grotto [pictured above] to reverently reaffirm my complete willingness to give my life completely to the service of the Highest Good. And just as I finish this thought, I opened my eyes to see a lone fish leap high out of the pristine pool, jubilantly affirming my prayer.” ~ Scaughdt*

Bridges too, over calmer waters ...



*“Not I, nor anyone else can travel that road for you. You must travel it by yourself. It is not far. It is within reach. Perhaps you have been on it since you were born, and did not know. Perhaps it is everywhere”  
~ Walt Whitman*

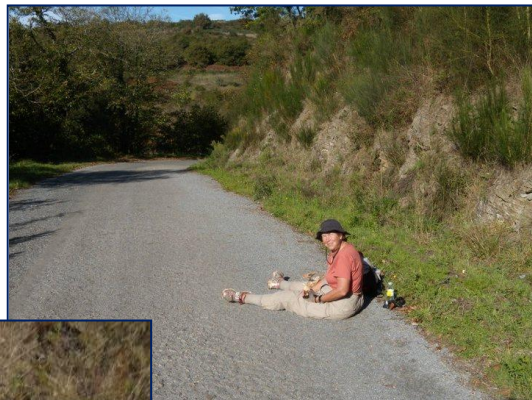


*“Walking through fragrant representations of Paradise; every corner turned revealing a fresh scene of idyllic Beauty.” ~ anonymous*



Lunch here is as good (or better) than anywhere else ...

*“Sometimes you struggle so hard to feed your family one way, you forget to feed them the other way — with spiritual nourishment. Everybody needs that.” ~ James Brown*



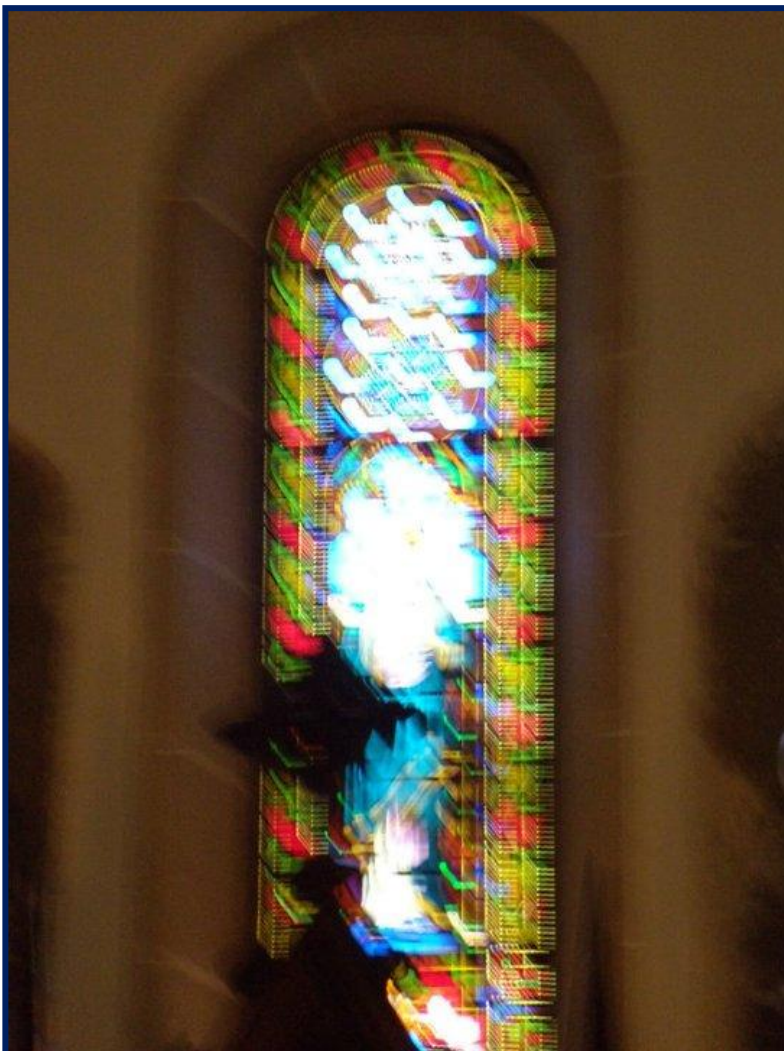
*“In truth a family is what you make it. It is made strong, not by the number of heads counted at the dinner table, but by the rituals you help family members create, by the memories you share, ... by the caring and love you show to one another.” ~ Marge Kennedy*

While flowing through Sarria, we pass by this interesting “ad” for a pilgrim supply store ...

*“The highest quality of imagination [and indeed of Life in general] is to flow, and not to freeze.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*



Here, sunlight flowing through a Sarria church window ...



*“God is Light is Love is  
Light is God.” ~  
anonymous*



This was our hostel in Sarria ...

*“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned ... I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself.”*  
~ Maya Angelou



Here, the hospitalera on call works for over fifteen minutes to gently tape my disintegrating Pilgrim's Passport back together (it had gotten soaked repeatedly by rain and sweat, and had completely fallen apart) ...

*“Guard well within yourself that treasure, Kindness. Know how to give without hesitation ...”* ~ George Sand



Roasting chestnuts on the open fire with fellow pilgrims ...

*"I believe in feeling connected. Love is something that grows, that comes from nourishment ... It builds."* ~ Gisele Bundchen



The image below accurately reflects the feel of a typical evening as a pilgrim -- sitting with newfound friends, reveling in sitting and being, soaking up warmth and enjoying good conversation ...

*"Growth is seen in the successive choirs of our friends."* ~ R. W. Emerson





## ***October 24, 2008 ... Always shouting YES***

*“If others aren’t openly saying ‘Yes’ to who you are and what you have to offer, then they are simultaneously saying ‘No’ -- or at the very least ‘Not right now’. Fortunately for us all, both the Divine (God felt in Nature) and our Souls (God felt within) are always shouting ‘YES!’” ~ anonymous*



*“Love is the courage to set aside all hopes for the future, in order to relax into each moment’s endless opportunities to Care.” ~ anonymous*



*“Enlightenment is nothing more than the choice in any given moment to enLive your Love’s deepest meaning.” ~ anonymous*





*“There is a **huge** gap between wanting to Care for another, and actually doing so.” ~ anonymous*







*“The Master, which resides within us all, teaches others their own Truths by allowing them to notice the actions that reflect the same.” ~ anonymous*

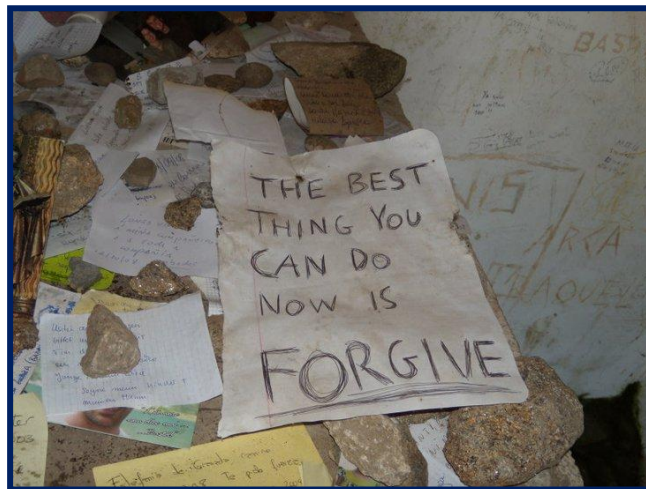
This elderly French woman walked the entire Camino pulling a wagon!



*“The effectiveness of any spiritual practice is directly proportional to the purity of the humility with which it is practiced.”  
~ anonymous*

We then came across a Path-side pilgrims' shrine. This is a fair representation of many similar shrines I saw along the Way; places where pilgrims would leave notes and stones and other small tributes to their unique Quests for peace ...

*“Good morning to the day: and next, to my gold! Open the shrine that I may see my Saint.” ~ Ben Johnson*



[And remember: “Forgive” is a verb.]  
*“In others, we can only clearly notice  
either the wonders that we currently are,  
or the challenges we are ready to transcend.”  
~ anonymous*





*“Deep loyalty to only a few,  
precludes knowing a great Love  
for the many.” ~ unknown*

*“Abundance is not something we acquire.  
It is something we tune into when we give.”  
~ inspired by Wayne Dyer*



The bridge to Portomarin ...



*“Whatever your  
pace, know that  
you will arrive.”  
~ anonymous  
Camino graffiti*

... and the stairs up into town.

*“A hero is the ordinary  
individual who finds the strength to  
persevere and endure in spite of  
overwhelming obstacles.”  
~ Christopher Reeve*

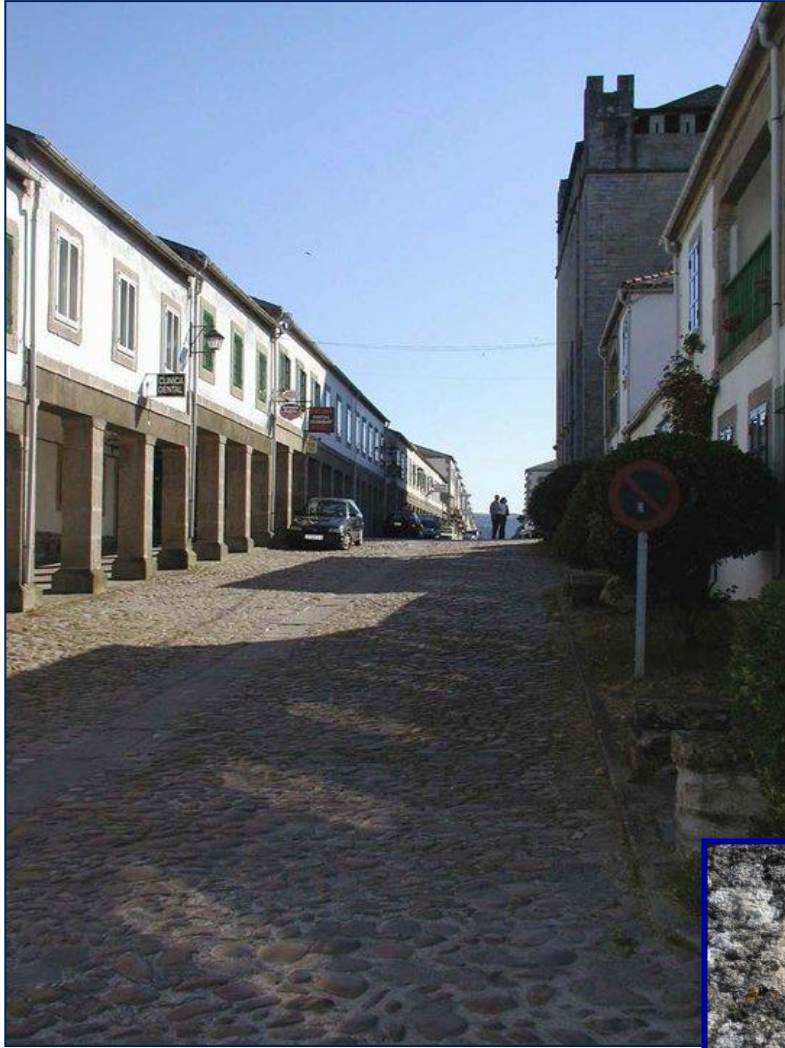




This is probably my favorite picture from the entire trip; a fabulous archetypal representation of what it means to walk a pilgrimage ...

*“Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but rather is the form of every virtue at its testing point.” ~ C. S. Lewis*





Up through town; heading to our hostel ...

*“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters and create many ripples.” ~ unknown*



We are two of last pilgrims to arrive at the hostel that night, and yet arrive we did!

*“Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air.” ~ John Quincy Adams*





## *October 25, 2008 ... Into the misty Morn*

Leaving Portomarin in the very early, very misty morning ...

*"I enter the world called real as one enters a mist." ~ Julien Green*



Occasionally, we would see Way-markers counting down the kilometers to Santiago (and thereafter, to Finisterre). I liked this one because it shows the numerological value for the name "Scaughdt" – which is 83.



*"Tests of Faith come in many forms, and yet seem to arrive only occasionally. Of course, as far as our challenge to become truly Human is concerned, there is only one test — and it is constantly upon us." ~ anonymous*

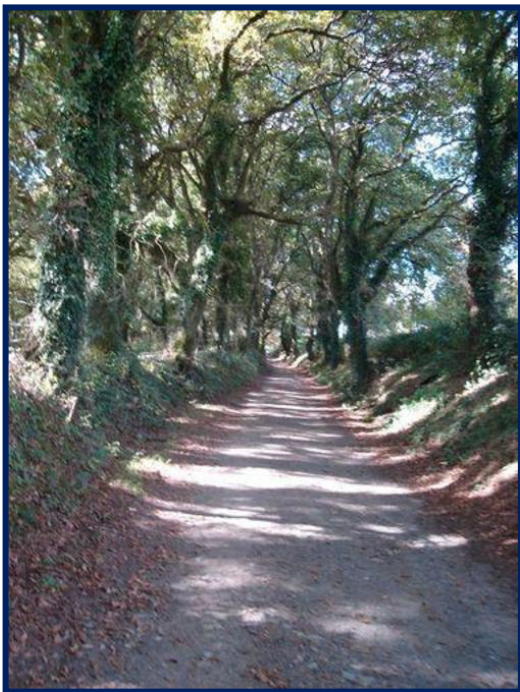
As we neared Santiago, the yellow arrows that marked the Way were often accompanied by the Spanish word “casi”, which means “almost” ...

*“Spiritual food is not spiritual unless eaten spiritually.” ~ anonymous*



*“The only way to truly Respect another person’s “right to privacy” is to to snuggle right up next to them ... The only truly Respect-full distance to keep is none at all.” ~ anonymous*

*“Confession is actually the opposite of repentance. Confession is a verbal affirmation of one’s shortcomings, while repentance is an active shift towards one’s innate perfection. As such, engaging in the former always precludes the latter.” ~ anonymous*





We then arrive at tonight's hostel in St. Xulian ... There was something "dead" in the vibe here. The hostel itself was extremely posh and the food was extremely high quality (both represented in its cost, which was quite exorbitant), and yet there was a stark disconnect between the proprietor and the pilgrims. Of course, an integral part of any such perception is projection, so I was left to wonder what it was in my own life that was inspiring a similar annoyance ... Uncomfortable clarity is clarity nonetheless. Now all that remains is for me to joyfully USE what I then learned ...

*"Compassionate detachment is not understanding what needs to be released, but rather comprehending with clarity what has already departed." ~ anonymous*



*"Look deeply with your heart, for what is essential is invisible to the eyes." ~ Enrique Dominguez (almost certainly inspired by Antoine de St. Exupery)*



## *October 26, 2008 ... Rebirth of real Self*

If we are willing to deeply look and humbly listen, the external Universe (specifically our immediate surroundings) continually communicates with our internal Awareness. And it does so not so much with “booming voices” and spectacular visions as it does with subtle, archetypal “whisperings”. In the case shown below, this fledgling yellow butterfly was a reminder that both I and my mission are being completely reBorn on this pilgrimage (the archetype of yellow = Self emPowerment + the archetype of butterfly = transformation of Self; both meanings made especially profound by my small Friend perching calmly on the index finger of my left hand -- the hand of clear perception -- before smoothly flying away) ...

*“Nature hath nothing made so base,  
but can read some instruction to the wisest man.” ~ Aleyn*

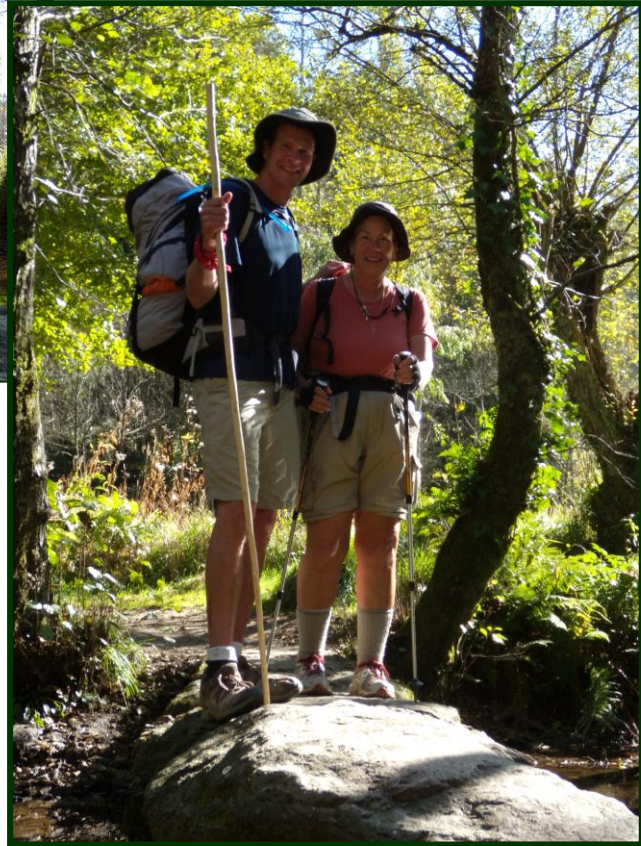


*“I will not allow anyone to walk through my mind with their dirty feet.” ~ M. Gandhi* [This quote shifted to the positive becomes, “I will keep my thoughts focused on ideas that harmonize with the Wisdom of the One.”]





*“Bravery is a self-centered crushing of fear with bravado ... while true Courage is being deathly afraid, and yet choosing to Love anyway.” ~ anonymous*



And then we arrive at the hostel in Ribadiso ...



*“Compassionate detachment leads inevitably to an Awareness of just how complete our Freedom is, in that we comprehend both our deep interconnection with others **and** the complete counter-productiveness of every one of our duties and obligations. To Love as One, we must be free to do so with complete willingness. Love is either completely volitional or completely non-existent.” ~ anonymous*



*October 27, 2008 ... Flowing into LOVE*



*“It is impossible to simultaneously struggle to Love someone while you are truly Caring for them. Love is either Joy-fully given or non-existent.”  
~ anonymous*

*“Let’s choose today to quench our thirst for the ‘good life’ we think others lead by acknowledging the good that already exists in our lives. We can then offer the universe the gift of our grateful hearts.” ~ Sarah Ban Breathnach*





We then came across this memorial to Guilmo Watt, a pilgrim who died at this point on The Way -- something that still happens occasionally, even in modern times.



*“It requires greater courage to move on in one’s inward journey into new realms than to stand defiantly for outer freedoms.” ~ Rollo May*



*“Man is not the lord of beings.  
Man is the shepherd of Being.”  
~ Martin Heidegger*

Here, a “Pilgrim’s Pit-stop” at Arca de Pino ... After getting a snack at this little cafe, we headed through the outskirts of town and saw a sign for a neat little hotel, where we chose to stay for the night. We could have gone on to a hostel on down the road, and yet it was almost as if we were purposefully slowing down now near the end — maybe trying to savor the last few days of the Journey.

*“If they say to you: Whence have you come?, say to them: We have come from the light, the place where the light came into being ... If they ask you: What is the sign of your Father in you?, say to them: It is movement and it is rest.” ~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 50)*



“Wow -- it has continued to be amazing, one step at a time ... The three days walk from O’Cebreiro to Portomarin (Oct 21-24) were absolutely magical. We could see snow covered mountains behind us as we walked through mist and frosty mornings. The pastures were intimately connected by the most amazing rock fences, and the grass was the greenest I have ever seen ... It is paradise here, and I hope to bring that feeling home with me.

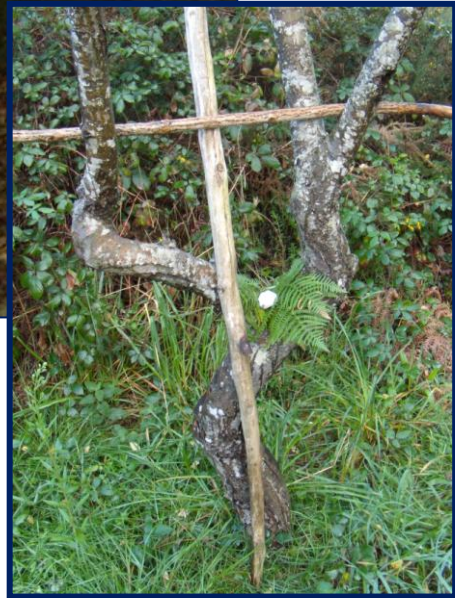
Yes, we are getting close to Santiago and many feelings related to the ending of this part of the journey are coming up ... We are excited as well because we will have time to continue on to Finesterra. “Ultreia” is the pilgrim greeting often used here from pilgrim to pilgrim, and it means “onward to the horizon” – a destination it looks like we will indeed attain ... I can feel the effort and wonderment of rebirth occurring every day, and I wonder: Do we each realize the immense strength we all possess when we surrender to the pull of the Source?” ~ Suzanna



## *October 28, 2008 ... Owing up to Life*

Now, here on my last day of walking before arriving in Santiago, I came to the realization that this Journey has become truly *mine*, precisely because I did **not** walk it for my own personal benefit, but rather solely to bring Peace & Joy to others ...

*“I would argue that the second greatest force in the Universe is ownership, and the first – the willing abandonment of the same.” ~ inspired by Chris Chocola*

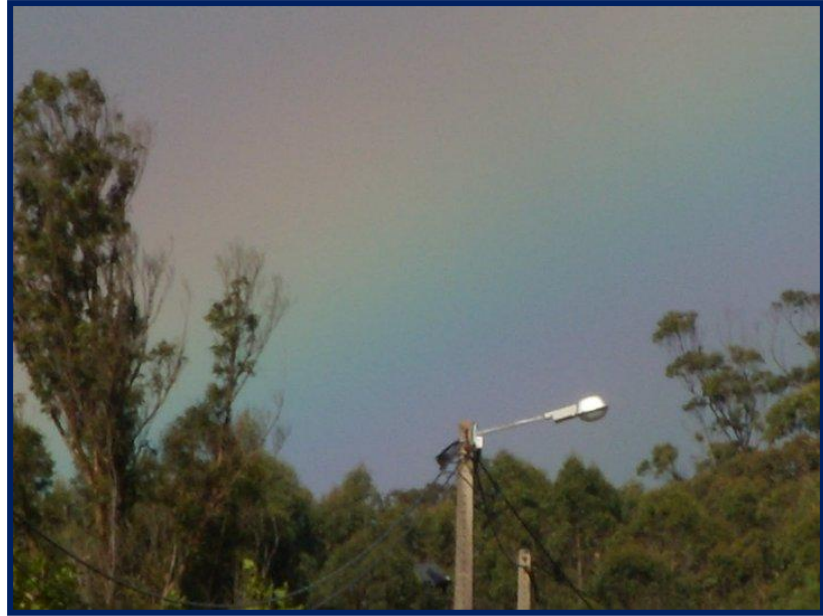


Santiago is getting verrrrry close!



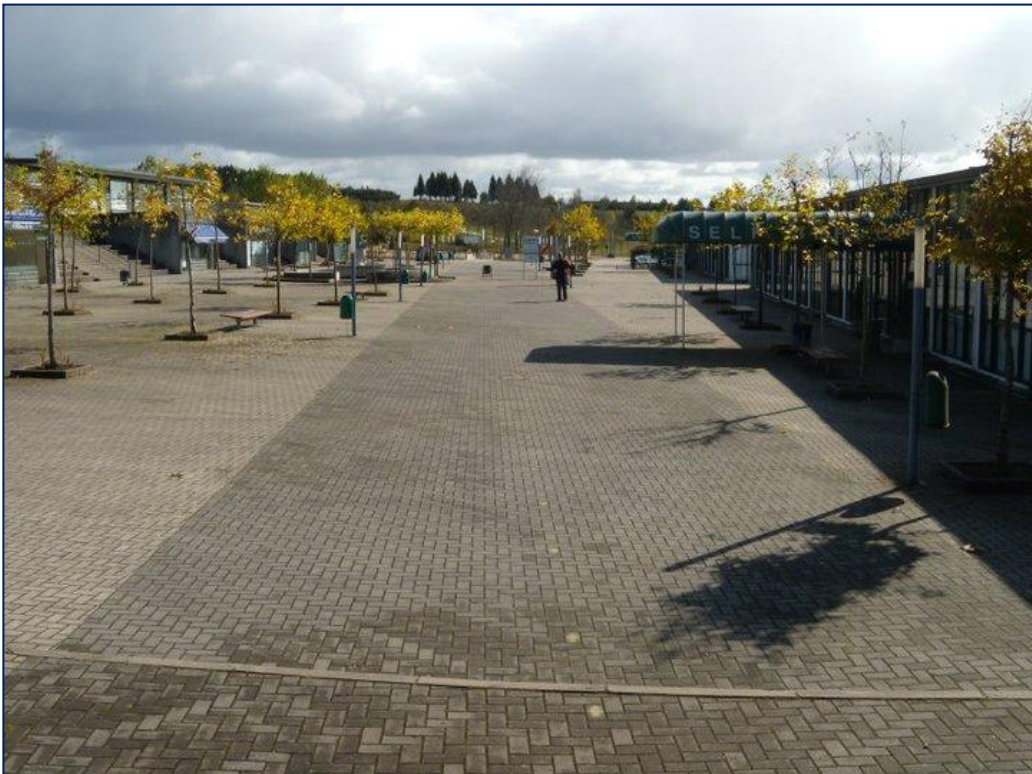
*“Life is a pilgrimage. The wise man does not rest by the roadside inns. He marches direct to the illimitable domain of eternal bliss, his ultimate destination.” ~ Sivananda*

*“And as he spoke of understanding, I looked up and saw the rainbow leap with flames of many colors over me.” ~ Black Elk*



Our passage through the humongous pilgrim’s hostel-complex of Monte de Gozo was more than surreal. The hostel at Ribadiso, where we had stayed just two days previously, had been completely packed, and yet this monstrous place was *completely empty* ... I think we saw only two other pilgrims the entire time we paused here. Like most of the rest of this Journey, it was deliciously odd ...

*“The past itself, as historical change continues to accelerate, has become the most surreal of subjects – making it possible... to see a new beauty in what is vanishing.”  
~ Susan Sontag*

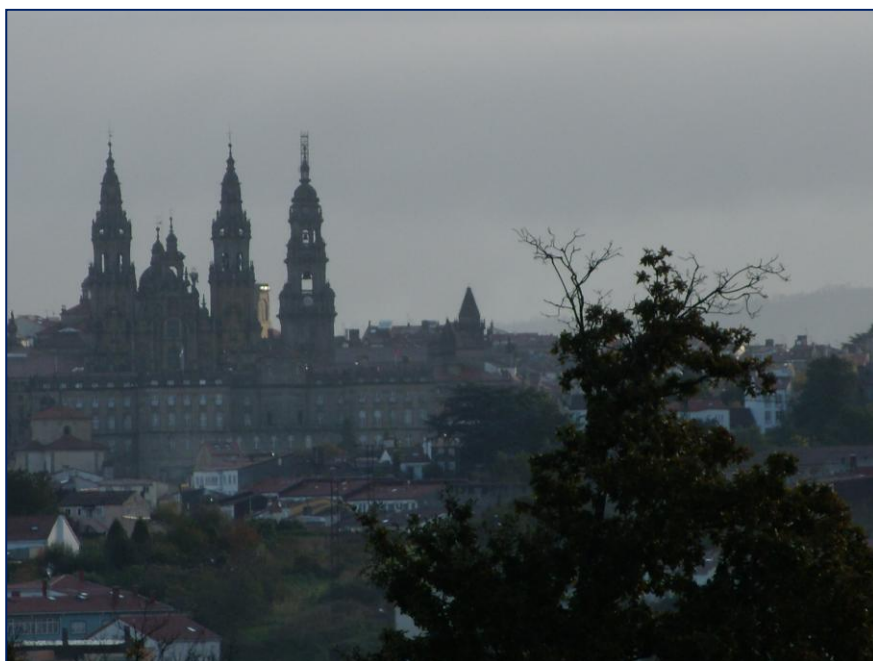




This is the pilgrim's monument of Monte de Gozo ("Mount Joy") -- the lookout from whence pilgrims could traditionally first glimpse the Santiago Cathedral.



*"Death comes to all, but great achievements build a monument which shall endure until the sun grows cold." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*



This is a beautiful relief set into the side of the monument that faces Santiago. I really like the way dozens of pilgrims have steadily filled the pilgrim's bowl to the point where it is now overflowing in an abundance of detachment and gratitude ...



*“I have held many things in my hand,  
and have lost them all;  
but whatever I have placed in God’s hands,  
I still possess.”  
~ Martin Luther*



*“Our greatest happiness does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed us, but is always the result of a good conscience ... and freedom in all just pursuits.” ~ Thomas Jefferson*



***We made it!*** Roughly 555 miles in 38 days (37 walking days for Mom; 33 for me) ... Mom, you are amazing! Camino, you are even more so ...



*“I think the important thing now is to have a celebration and then with determination move into our common, shared, different future.”  
~ Michael Higgins*

*“Perhaps home is not a place, but simply an irrevocable condition.”  
~ James Baldwin*



We enter the older section of town, and are very near the Cathedral now. As we get closer, a physically noticeable sense of Joy can be felt — steadily welling up from the Heart, more and more with each subsequent step ...

*“The beating Heart of the Universe is holy Joy.” ~ Martin Buber*



Pictured below are Ann from Malta and James from Ireland ... We have walked the last several days with them, and they are two of our favorite people on the entire Camino. It is somehow only fitting that we are all entering Santiago together ...



*“Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.” ~ Anais Nin*



*It is accomplished!*



*“Set yourself joyfully on fire,  
and they will come from miles around  
to watch you burn.”  
~ John Wesley*

The timing couldn't have been better, as this fellow started playing his pipes the very minute we rounded the corner to enter the Cathedral. I truly adore good bagpipe music, so this was an extra special treat for me ...

*“There are ... just two indications that a transformation is taking place within you toward a higher consciousness. The first symptom is that you stop worrying ... You become light-hearted and full of joy. The second symptom is that you encounter more and more meaningful coincidences in your life, more and more synchronicities. And this accelerates to the point where you actually experience the miraculous.”*

*~ Deepak Chopra*

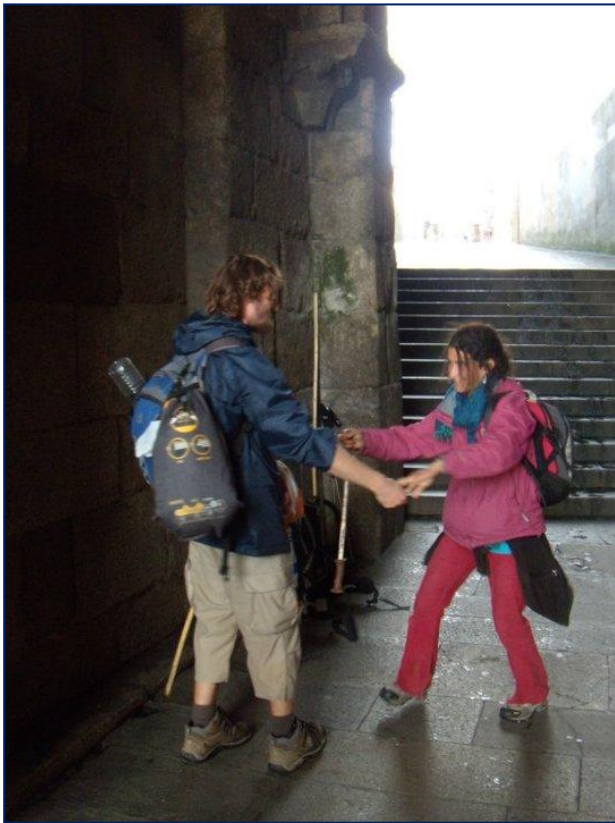


Mom was also quite obviously thrilled to have arrived. She tends not to hold back her Joy — a character trait I admire immensely ...



*“Things won are done ... Joy's soul lies in the doing.” ~ Shakespeare*





*“You and I are all as much  
continuous with the physical universe as  
a wave is continuous with the ocean.”  
~ Alan Watts*

*“The purest form of  
reverence is humble revelry.”  
~ anonymous*



Of course, sincere gratitude can also take on other forms equally powerful ...

*“Let parents bequeath to their children not riches, but the spirit of reverence.” ~ Plato*



*“He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are fully closed.”  
~ Albert Einstein*



And here is the Santiago Cathedral in all its glory ... Even with immense expectations preceding it, this place does anything but disappoint -- simply majestic!

*“Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.” ~ John Milton*



Dancing and supplication are indeed powerful ways to pray ... *and* sometimes our deepest reverence takes the form of a smile.

*“By having a reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world By practicing reverence for life we become good, deep, and alive.”  
~ Albert Schweitzer*



*“All roads indeed lead to Rome, but theirs also is a more mystical destination, some born of which no traveler knows the name, some city, they all seem to hint, even more eternal.” ~ Richard Le Gallienne*





One of the most important rituals for many Santiago pilgrims over the years has been to enter the Santiago Cathedral and touch foreheads with this carving of Saint James. For some reason that was never lucidly explained to us, the statue was now off limits to everyone -- even pilgrims, some of whom had walked over 1000 miles to touch it. Personally, I wasn't attached to doing so -- I simply "touched" it by sending it a focused "ray" of Gratitude. And yet one fellow pilgrim was noticeably distraught at not being allowed to complete his pilgrimage in this manner ... So, I did what any selfless servant would do; I distracted the guard with some poor Spanish (mixed in with some dramatic hand gestures) while pointing in the opposite direction, allowing my pilgrim friend to sneak under the barricade and "complete" his pilgrimage ...



*"Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts." ~ Henri Amiel*

And once again, the tenth Station of the Cross beckons me towards a sincere and pure preparation for what I am to do. Even though it is still not clear exactly what that Service is to be, I am clearly to prepare diligently by purifying my thoughts, my emotions & my behaviors ...

*"There is an electric fire in human nature tending to purify – so that among these human creatures there is continually some birth of new heroism."*  
~ John Keats



We head into the “Pilgrim’s Bureau” (I have no idea what the Camino’s administrative body is actually called) to receive our “Compostela” -- the certificate (written in Latin, no less) that officially verifies that we completed the pilgrimage to Santiago. To obtain such an “honor”\*, one must simply obtain a Pilgrim’s Passport and have it regularly stamped at hostels along at least the last 100 kilometers of the Way. [\*Note that the greatest Honors in life have nothing at all to do with either certificates or recognition.]



Later we partook of probably the weirdest combination of foods I have ever eaten ... We stayed in a hotel that night, as Mom has decided to walk with me to the coast (as opposed to taking a bus) and wanted a good night’s rest before setting out. Of course,



no hostel means no prepared dinner, which meant a shopping trip that just didn’t jive at all ... It was still fun to celebrate our arrival -- and the wine, as was almost always the case, was outstanding.

*“I’d like to repeat the advice that I gave you before, in that I think you really should make a radical change in your lifestyle and begin to boldly do things which you may previously never have thought of doing, or been too hesitant to attempt.” ~ Jon Krakauer*



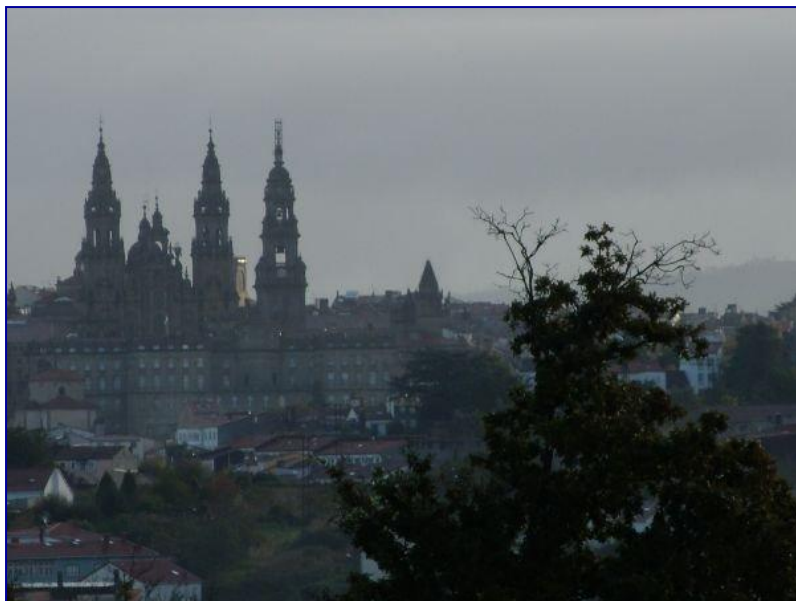
What was I saying about the wine?  
*“A day without laughter is a day  
wasted.” ~ Charles Chaplin*



### ***October 29, 2008 ... Moving on; glancing Back***

A look back upon Beauty-full Santiago as we set out for the coast. The Walk to Finisterre was an additional 50 miles. There were far fewer hostels along the way — primarily because there were far fewer pilgrims making the Journey. This meant longer distance to walk between hostels, and yet we felt ready for the challenge.

*“Pick the day. Enjoy it – to the hilt. The day as it comes. People as they come ... The past, I think, has helped me appreciate the present, and I don’t want to spoil any of it by fretting about the future.” ~ Audrey Hepburn*





*“Detachment doesn’t mean you don’t let the experience penetrate you ... On the contrary, you let it penetrate you fully ... By allowing yourself to dive in, all the way, over your head even, you experience [it] fully and completely ... [In this way], you know what love is.” ~ Morrie Schwartz*

I pause in a sunbeam to revel in the Lord’s Prayer\* and end the same with a feeling of immense admiration for the ability of our interactive Universe to constantly, powerfully, and yet gently guide us all — both to release our self-centered behaviors, and to replace them with others that are selfless and kind ...

*\* “Dear Father, who art in Heaven within me, hallowed is thy Way of Love. Thy Kingdom ever arrives, and thy will is ever done on Earth, just as it already lives in Heaven whenever I choose to Care ... Thanks be to you for my daily sustenance, and for forgiving me my shortcomings, just as I continue to forgive others theirs ... You never lead me into temptation, and always guide me away from its selfish traps ... For thine is the entire Universe, and all its Power, and all its Wonders -- Now and forevermore ... Amen.”*



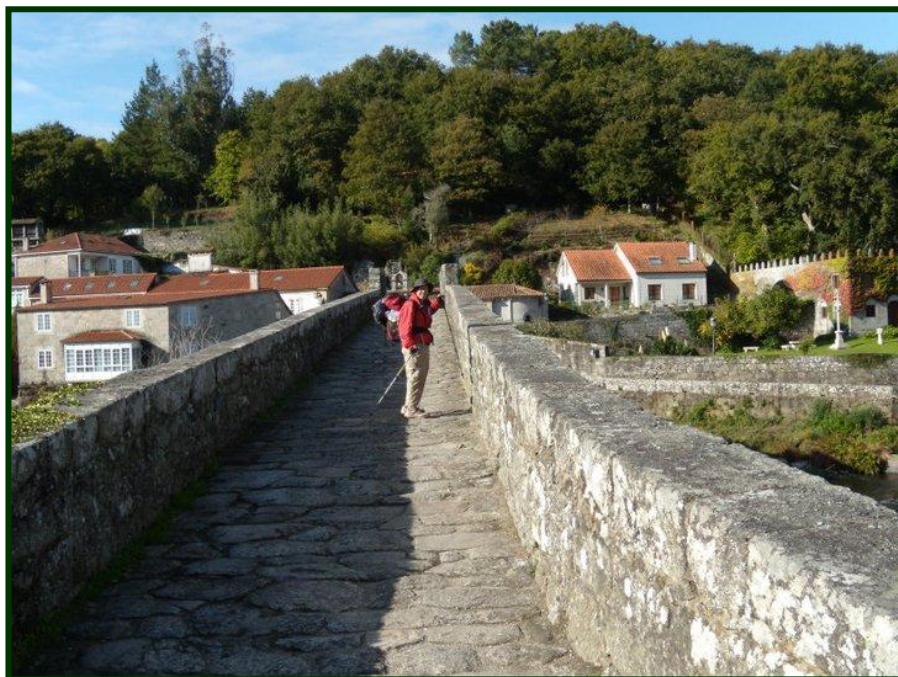


The beautiful town of Puenta de Maceira ...



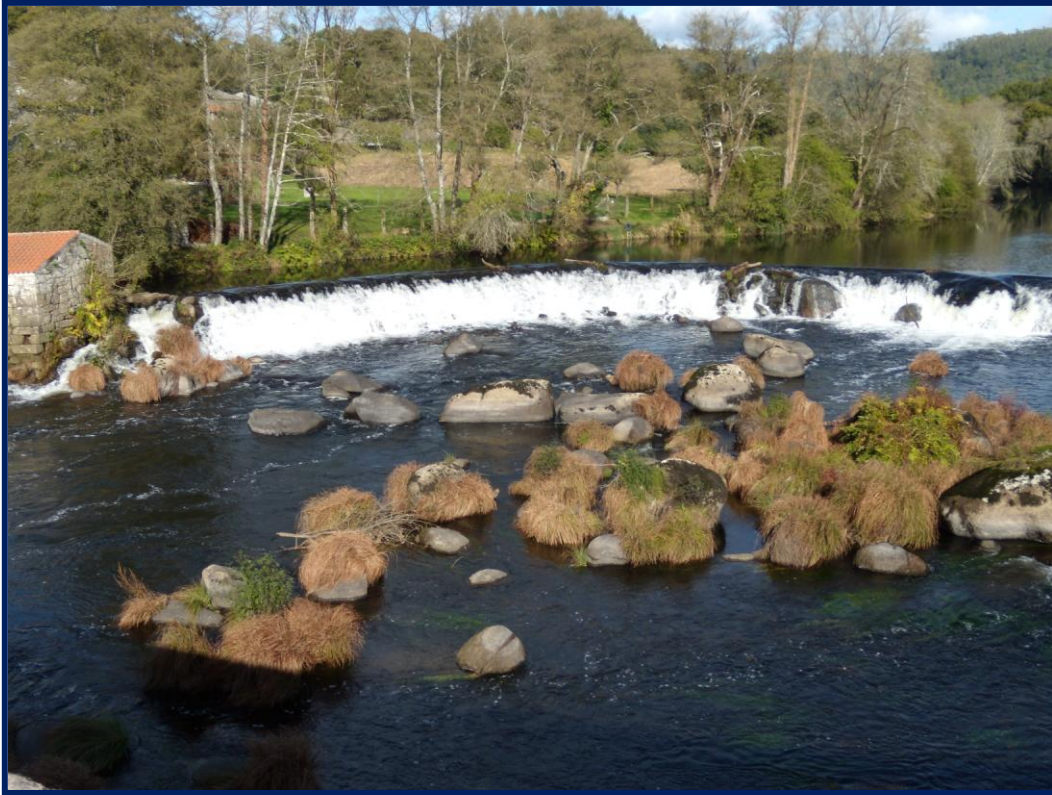
*“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Avoid resisting them ... Let reality be reality. Allow things to flow naturally forward in whatever way they wish.” ~ Lao Tsu*

*“Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known.” ~ A. A. Milne*





*“There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” ~ Albert Einstein*



*“Who am I to decide which path is ‘worthy’? As long as I Love others courageously, there can be no compromise, and there can be no failure.” ~ anonymous*

*“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.” ~ John Holmes*





We make it to our hostel in Nigreira ...

*“A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.” ~ Lao Tsu [A good traveler never ceases to travel towards his Destination ... and never ceases to arrive wherever she already is.]*



These very old corn-cribs were regularly seen today along the Way.

*“Judge not each day by the harvest you reap, but rather by the seeds that you plant.”*

*~ Robert Louis Stevenson*

### ***October 30, 2008 ... Another one of those days***

Today was another one of those days that shatter previous limits as far patience and endurance are concerned. Not only did we walk well over 20 miles (much farther than Mom had ever walked in one day), but three times we entered a town that began with the same name as our hostel’s village, only to realize (over & over again) that we would have to keep walking. Sheesh! And yet, persistence always lends its destination, and after a verrrrrry long Walk, one that ended in a thunderstorm that actually hailed on us (!!!), we finally arrived at our hostel in Olveira at dusk.

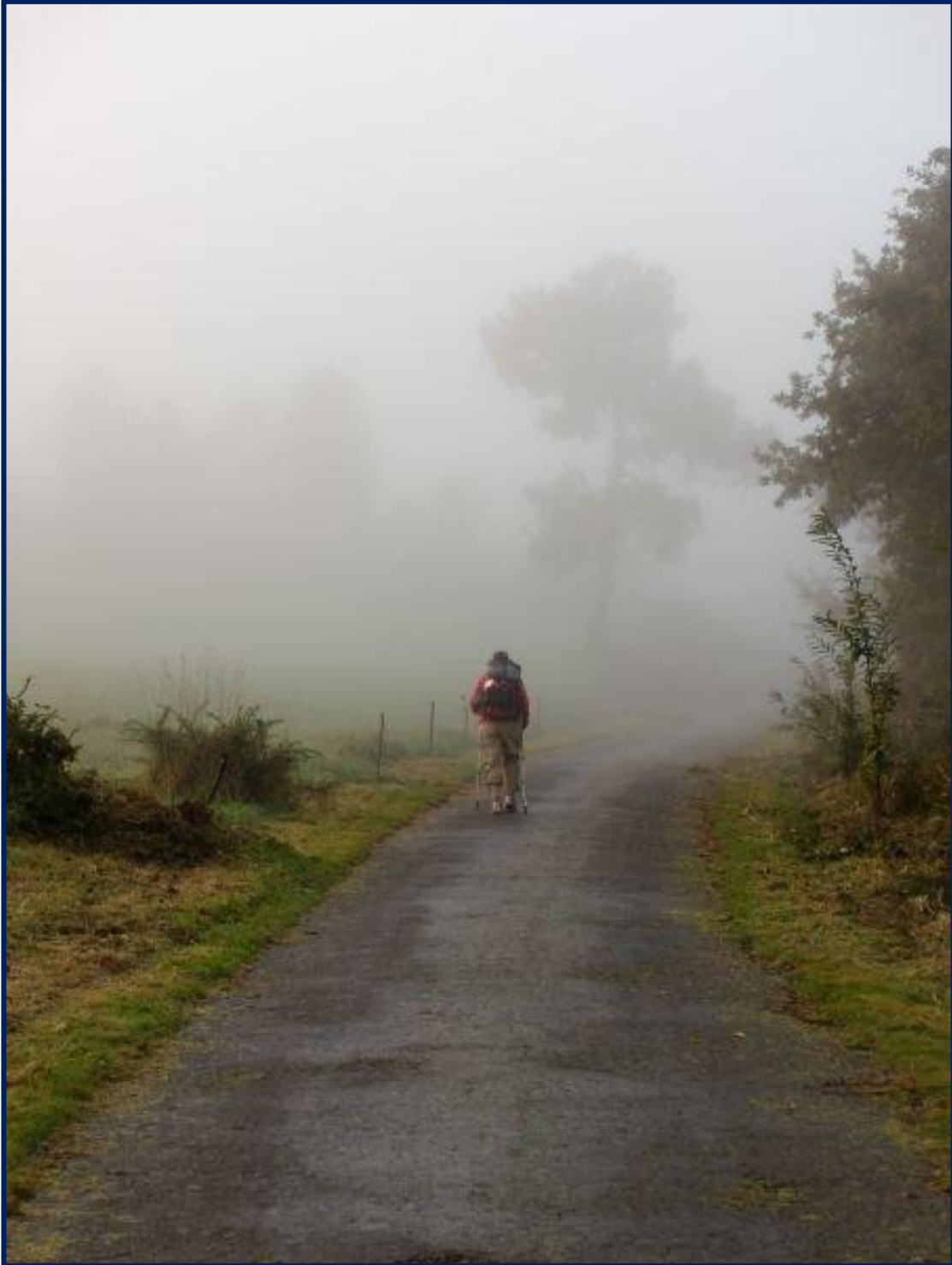
*“Faith is the gentle middle way, the ‘narrow path’ so easy to stray from and yet always near at foot. It is neither nebulous dogma on the right, nor is it the concrete reasoning of the left. No, true Faith is always humbly aware of its own uncertainty, even while it strides boldly towards life’s next wondrous explanation.” ~ anonymous*



*“The conscious melding of humility with gratitude allows the Universe to fill all your life’s voids ... Real Gratitude never merely copes, just as true Love cannot merely tolerate.” ~ anonymous*

***October 31, 2008 ... a Good Start***

*“A good start is half the work.” ~ Irish proverb  
(a Good Start is realizing that there is no finish)*





For some odd reason, the kilometer countdown to the coast now starts to be displayed verrrrry exactly on the Way-markers, and often in seemingly Meaning-filled numerological combinations ... Hmmm

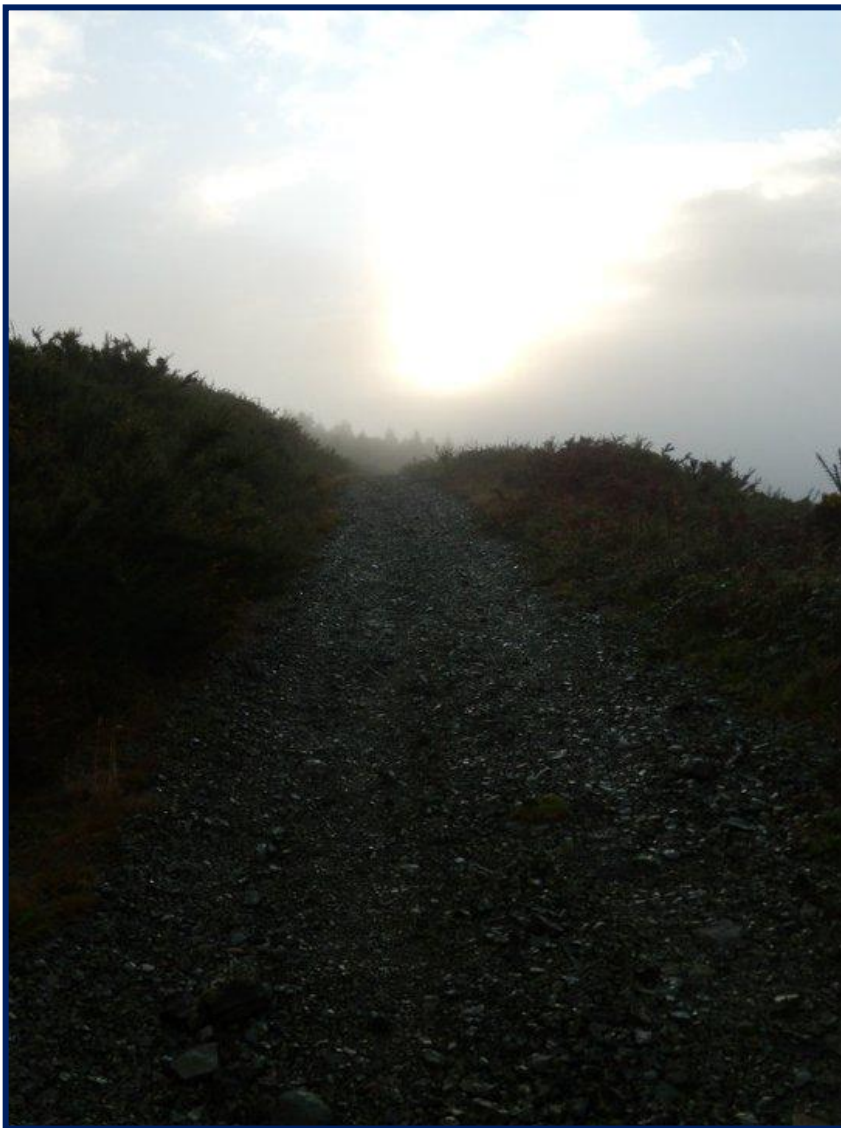
*“Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should.” ~ Camino graffiti*

[Knowing & knowledge often don’t mix; neither do perception & pondering]



*“The mystery of Love is greater than the mystery of death.”  
~ Oscar Wilde*

One section of the Walk today was “paved” with these unusual green stones ...



*“here is the deepest  
secret nobody knows, here  
is the root of the root and  
the bud of the bud and the  
sky of the sky of a tree  
called life; which grows  
higher than the soul can  
hope or mind can hide ...  
and this is the wonder  
that’s keeping the stars  
apart: I carry your heart  
(I carry it in my heart)”  
~ e. e. cummings*

*“Days of death grant moments of rebirth.” ~ anonymous*



I then come across this gorgeous animal, peering at me calmly through the fog ... Interestingly enough, the archetypal significance of a black horse is — “true Freedom is always found in Grace-full Solitude”, and its green eyes represent “therein able to See true Love clearly” ...

*“A wonderful fact to reflect upon: that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other.” ~ Charles Dickens*



*“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough ... It turns denial into acceptance [and] confusion into clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.” ~ Melody Beattie*

*“Only a child sees things with perfect clarity, because it hasn't developed all those filters which prevent us from seeing things that we don't expect to see.”  
~ Douglas Adams*



*“Our silence is not pure  
unless we can remain quietly still  
within a horde of revelry.”  
~ anonymous*







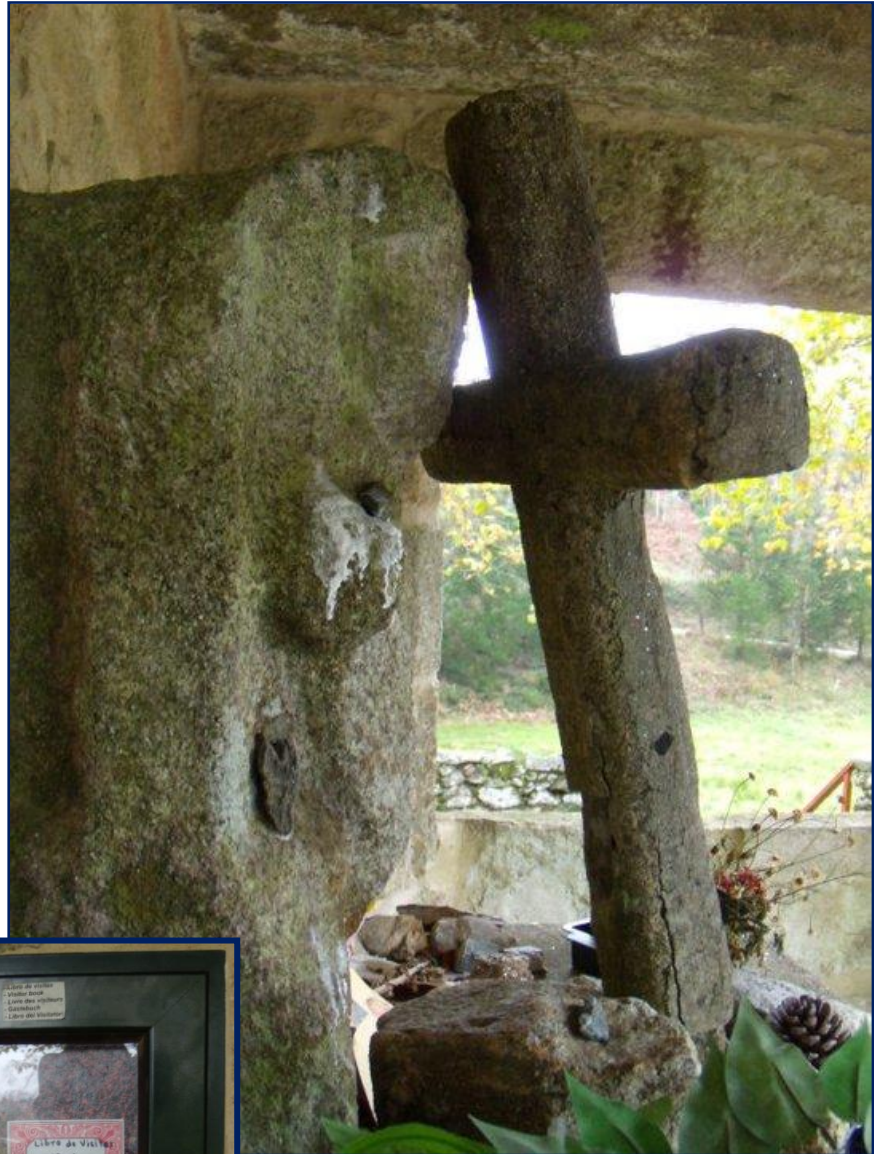
*“Our calm is not pure  
unless we can be at peace  
during times painful.”  
~ anonymous*



*“Our Love cannot be pure  
until we can be Kind to our enemies.”  
~ anonymous*



*“Make space for  
others & their  
choices ... Allow  
them to blossom into  
their True Selves.”  
~ anonymous*





*“Keep choosing the highest, most loving response to every situation.” ~ Robin Sharma*

*“The external body is cleansed in the shower, but it is polished with physical labor. The internal body is cleansed via fasting, but it is polished with good nutrition. The Soul is cleansed by repentance, but it is polished with selfless acts of Love.” ~ anonymous*



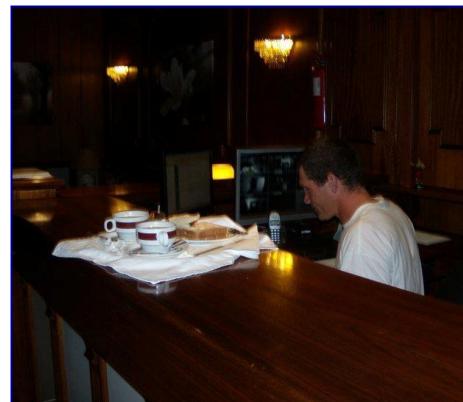


We head into Corcubion and another hotel, where Maria del Mar (Maria of the Sea) treats us like royalty, letting us use her main computer to check our emails -- and she even brought us coffee and toast while we did so!



*“A human being ... experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness ... Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures.” ~ Albert Einstein*

*“Three things in life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.” ~ Henry James*



*“In the end, though, maybe we must all give up trying to pay back the people in this world who sustain our lives. In the end, maybe it’s wiser to surrender before the miraculous scope of human generosity and to just keep saying thank you, forever and sincerely, for as long as we have voices.” ~ Elizabeth Gilbert*

“Our walk into Santiago was phenomenal. Even though we were prepared for large crowds, we once again found ourselves able to walk alone in reverie and reverence. We ran into some Camino friends from Ireland and Malta (James and Ann) and made the final walk into the cathedral with them. It was AMAZING! We even had a bag pipe playing in the square for us as we arrived and we literally danced for joy ... After briefly touring the Cathedral, we both felt called to continue the pilgrim’s journey all the way to Finisterre on the coast, ‘the end of the world’. I had the option of taking a bus there, but chose -- or the path seemed to choose for me -- to walk instead ... Several times over the last three days I have questioned my sanity with regards to this choice ... And yet, seeing the ocean today made it all worthwhile. Just like the pilgrims of old I am sure. We chose to stay outside of Finisterre and walk to the end of the Camino tomorrow, as both of our bodies are slowing down and we are truly feeling the importance of this moment.” ~ Suzanna

### ***November 01, 2008 ... The Beginning of the End***



*“Behind all seen things lies something vaster. Everything is but a path, a portal or a window opening onto something other than itself.” ~ Antoine de St. Exupery*



*“The Path has no value once you arrive.” ~ Camino graffiti*  
[So choose to keep going -- ever onward, ever deeper into the Now]



Finisterre is now in sight!

*“When you are moving toward an objective, it is important to pay attention to the road. It is the road that teaches us the best way to get there, and the road that enriches us as we walk.” ~ Paulo Coelho*



*“The journey of a thousand miles may begin with a single step, and yet the journey of a lifetime immediately ends without one.”  
~ inspired by Lao Tsu*

*“The journey is what brings us true Happiness, not its goals or destinations.”  
~ inspired by Dan Millman*





*“Stories never really end...even if books like to pretend they do. Stories always go on. They don’t end on the last page, any more than they begin on the first page.”  
~ Cornelia Funke*



*“If we are only happy to possess wealth, we must continue to endure poverty.  
If we are only happy to have comfort, we must continue to experience suffering.  
If we are only happy to be loved, we must continue to relive our loneliness.  
If we are only happy to have arrived, we must continue to repeat our Journey.”  
~ anonymous*



We arrive at “the end of the world” -  
- and it’s closed! ... Mom & I were  
planning on staying a few days in this  
lighthouse hotel, but it turns out the  
lighthouse is not open in the winter  
months (we just missed its last open  
day this year) ... This was a bit  
disappointing for us both at first (those  
darned expectations), and yet we were  
blessed by finding an amazing  
hostel/B&B later that afternoon.



*“I used to want a perfect ending. And  
yet now I’ve learned that some poems  
don’t rhyme, and some stories don’t have  
a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is  
about not knowing, about choosing to  
change, about taking the moment and  
making the best of it, without having to  
know what’s going to happen next.”*

*~ inspired by Gilda Radner*

## *November 02, 2008 ... And End to this Beginning*

This is a view of the beach near our hostel (the “Playa del Fora”), the place where I would later complete my Pilgrimage by burying many of the articles of clothing I wore during the Camino, saying a prayer of gratitude, bathing naked in the sea, and professing my intention to give the rest of my life to the service of Love ...



*“On the seashore of endless worlds children meet ... They build their houses with sand, and they play with empty shells. With withered leaves they weave their boats and smilingly float them on the vast deep ... On the seashore of endless worlds children meet. Tempest roams in the pathless sky, ships are wrecked in the trackless water, death is abroad and children play. On the seashore of endless worlds is the great meeting of children.” ~ R. Tagore*

Here is the famous “bronze boot”, beneath which many pilgrims fulfill a traditional ritual by burning the clothes they wore while walking the Camino ...



*“I will greet this day with love in my heart ... Henceforth will I look on all things with love ... I will love the sun for it warms my bones; yet I will love the rain for it cleanses my spirit. I will love the light for it shows me the way; yet I will love the darkness for it shows me the stars. I will welcome happiness as it enlarges my heart; yet I will honor sadness for it opens my Soul.” ~ inspired by Og Mandino*

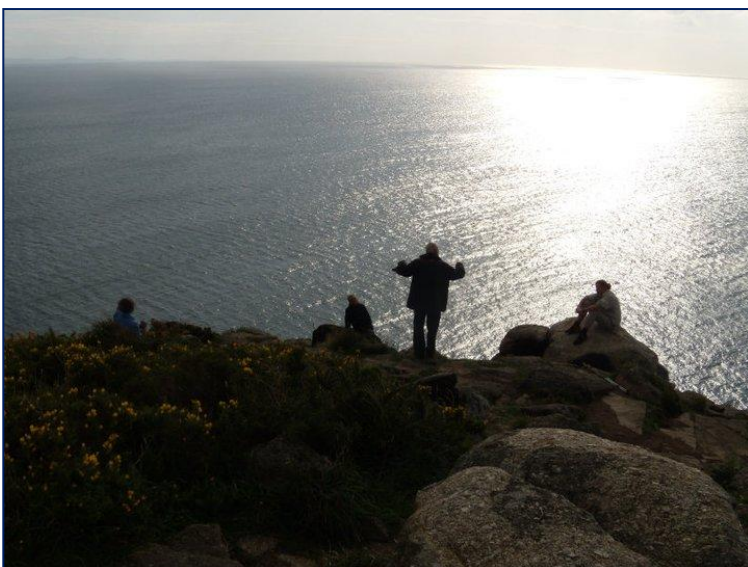


*“Life has loveliness to sell, all beautiful and splendid things, blue waves whitened on a cliff, soaring fire that sways and sings, and children’s faces looking up, holding wonder like a cup.” ~ Sara Teasdale*

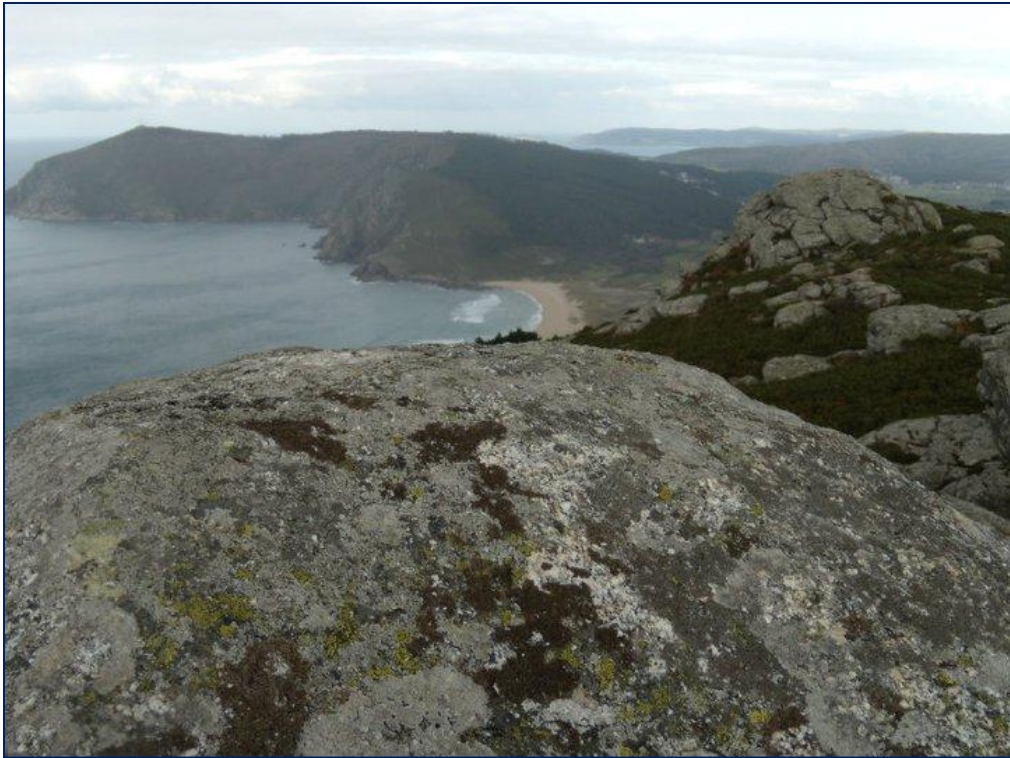


*“Feed your concerns to the fire. Breathe deeply and rejoice.” ~ Jonathan Huie*

*“Pilgrimage — like Love — is a privilege, not a burden. The true Pilgrim walks the Road to humbly reconnect with the Divine; not to ‘better appreciate’ his own blessings. The true Pilgrim returns from his Journey to serve others; not live a ‘better life’.” ~ anonymous Pilgrim*



*“If we are always arriving and departing, it is also true that we are eternally anchored. One’s destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things.” ~ Henry Miller*



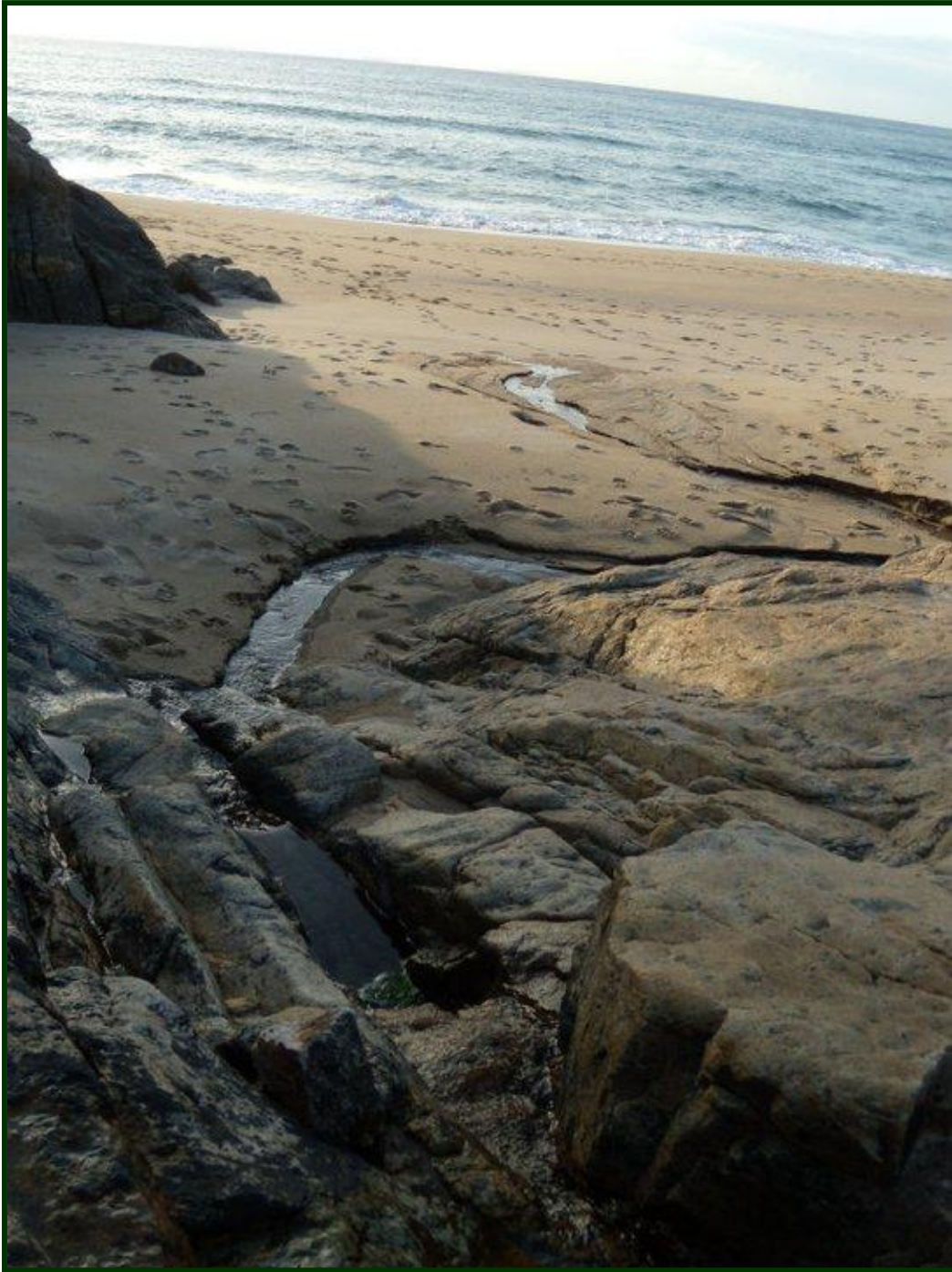
*“What we see depends mainly on what we look for.” ~ John Lubbock*

*“Destiny rarely stands in the way of the wise.” ~ Lucius Annaeus Seneca*





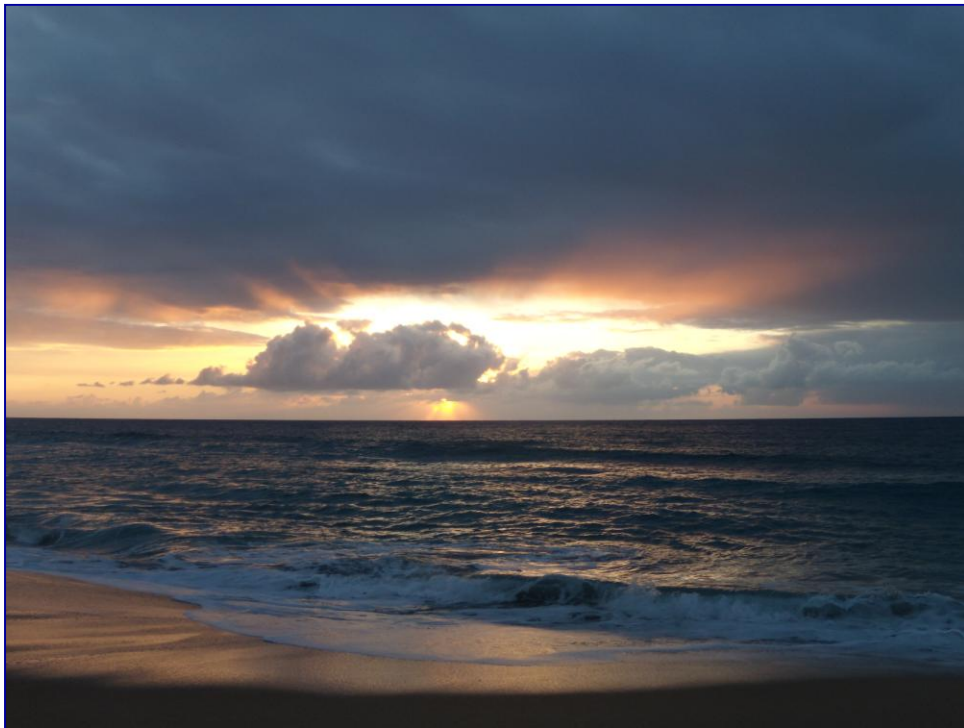
And on this day, I returned again to the Playa del Fora, and performed my end-of-pilgrimage ritual (just around the rock seen on the left) ...



*“Ritual will always mean  
throwing away something important”  
~ Gilbert Chesterton*



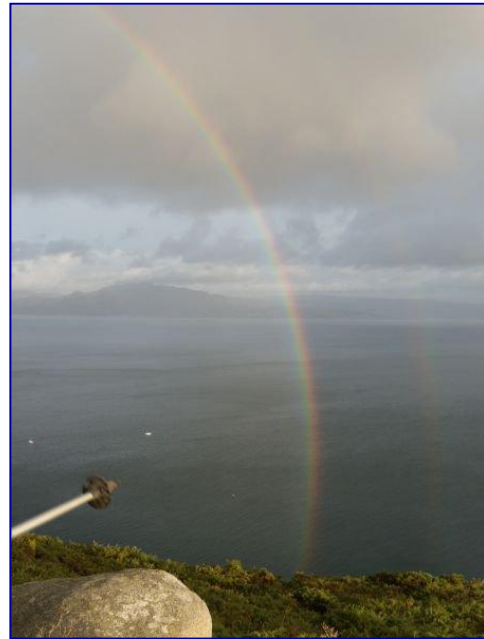
*“Teach others to enliven all that I have taught you ...  
And this is my sole Commandment:  
that you shall Love one another  
in the same way that I Loved you.”  
~ Jesus Christ  
(Matt 28:20 + John 15:12)*



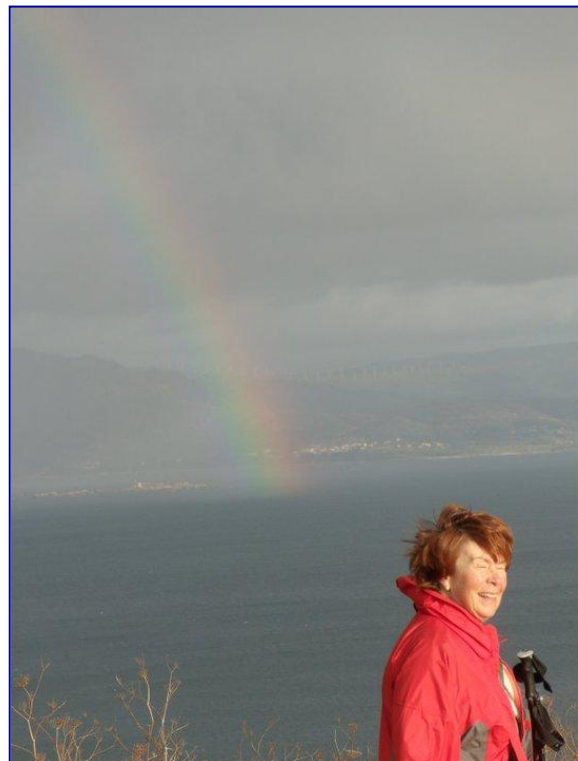


*November 03, 2008 ... The Promise of Life*

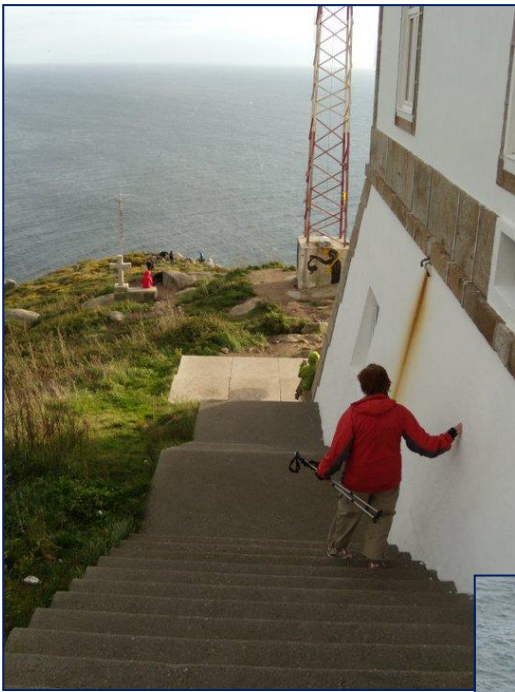
*“Joy-fully proceed through every Portal of Service that opens before you.” ~ anonymous*



*“Don’t dream your life ... Live your dream!” ~ Camino de Santiago graffiti*



*“Each day brings greater clarity and new blessings. And to me, that’s what this beautiful unfolding of life is all about.” ~ Robin Sharma*



*“Circumstances do not create you ... You create your circumstances.”  
~ Benjamin Disraeli*

*Whoever says “That’s impossible”, should not disturb those who are making it happen. ~ unknown*



*“Every encounter of every day is a reunion with yourself.” ~ unknown*



*“When Love is stripped of all desire,  
that is The Way.”  
~ 20th Patriarch*



*“Be the change you wish to see ...  
In a gentle way, you can shake the world.”  
~ Mahatma Gandhi*

*November 04, 2008 ... Finding our Harbor*

Here's the harbor in Finisterre ...



*"If a man knows not what harbor he seeks, any wind is the right wind." ~ Seneca*

And here, Mom is getting ready to head back to Santiago -- and then home ...



*"The top of one mountain  
is but the base of another."  
~ Robin Sharma*



*November 05, 2008 ... Opening with Closure*

Back in Santiago for one more visit to the Cathedral ...

*“Everywhere is walking distance -- if you have the time.” ~ Steven Wright*



Inside the Cathedral during the Pilgrim's Mass ...

*“What is to give great light must joyfully endure burning.” ~ Victor Frankl*

Mom up on the Cathedral roof ...



*“If you look the right way, you can  
see that the whole world is a garden.”  
~ Frances Burnett*



The view from the Cathedral rooftop ...

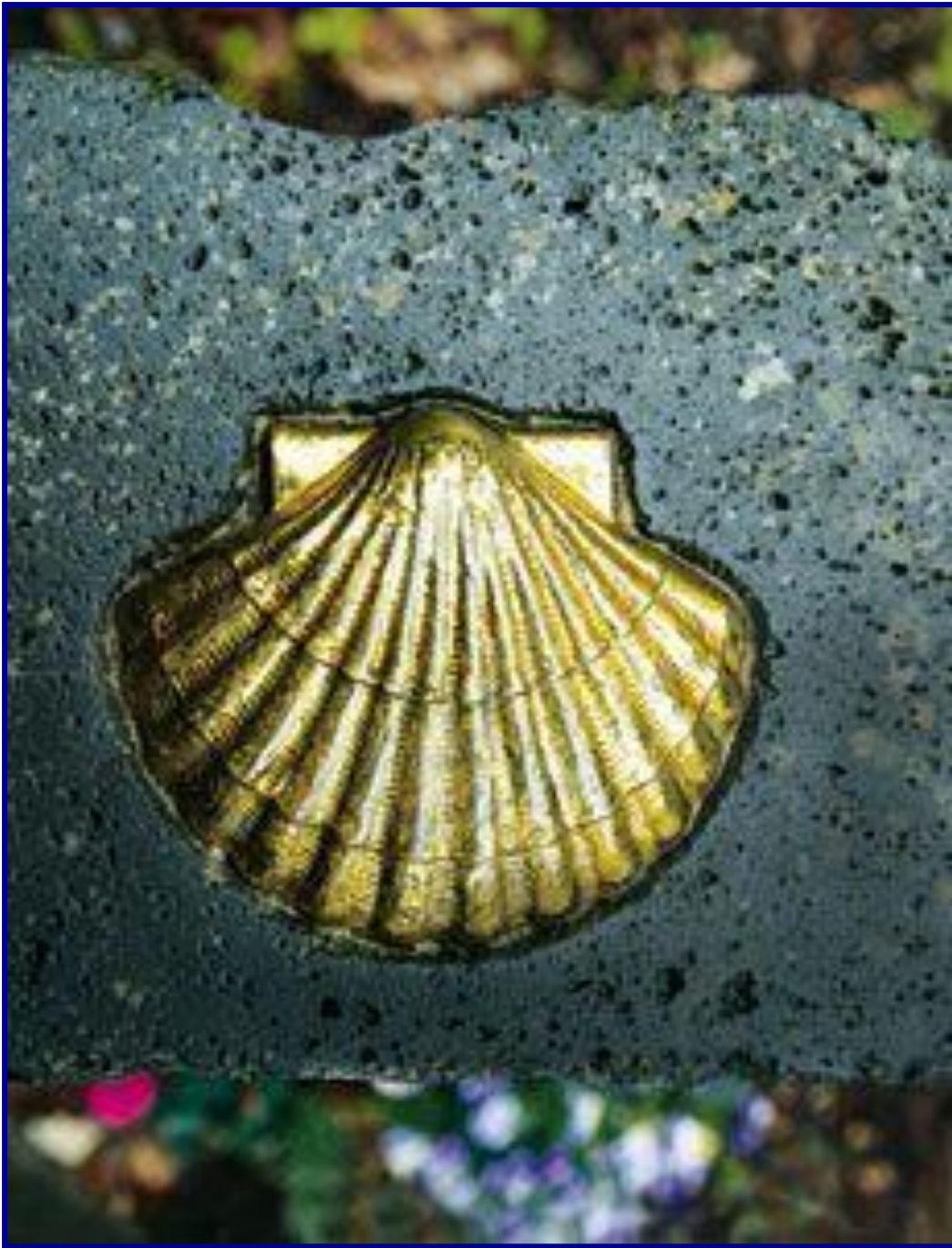
*“Those who live nobly, even if they live obscurely, need not fear that they will have lived in vain. Something radiates from their lives; some light that shows The Way to friends and neighbors, perhaps even to long future ages.” ~ Bertrand Russell*



For these Spanish tourists, Mom is a true celebrity — and actual pilgrim who actually completed the Camino!

*“For your life to be great, your Faith must be bigger than your fears.”*

*~ Robin Sharma*



*“The ultimate aim of the Quest, if one is to return, must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but rather the wisdom and the willingness to serve others.”  
~ Joseph Campbell*



## The Way: 555 miles of Spiritual Sauntering ...



*“To always find your True Road,  
humbly walk for the betterment of the world.”  
~ Augusto Losada Lopez*

“Greetings once again ... With our 500+ mile Trek behind us, we are back in Santiago preparing for our return flight to the States ... It still hasn't really sunk in for either of us the true awesomeness of our Journey these past seven weeks, and we are both excited to download our photos and use our personal journal-notes to remember (re-Member) what we have experienced and learned along the Way ...

Even though it will take some additional days (if not weeks or months) to completely digest what happened for us here on the Camino, one thing is already quite clear: we are both eternally grateful for the Love and support we received from you all during this amazing adventure ... Some of you gave us strength via email messages, some by kind thoughts, & others via loving prayers ... Know that we both deeply appreciated these gifts, and are sure that your well-wishes helped to make this pilgrimage the phenomenal, life-shifting experience it has turned out to be for both of us ... Blessings of Love & Gratitude to you all!” ~ Suzanne & Scaught



## *A Pilgrim is ...*

A pilgrim has a dream that constantly wakes him.  
A pilgrim awakens, even while he sleeps.

A pilgrim has a vision that always carries him.  
A pilgrim travels, even when he dreams.

A pilgrim is keenest when his eyes are closed.  
A pilgrim must sometimes forget everything in order to See.

A pilgrim has a humility that always spurs him.  
A pilgrim is forever on his way.

A pilgrim wanders in devotion to Love;  
becoming a perfect reflection thereof.

A pilgrim does not quench his thirst with whatever is offered.  
and touches each cup with gentle lips.

A pilgrim does not let taste judge the meal,  
and chooses new words to say old Wisdoms.

A pilgrim constantly massages the Earth with his feet  
and continually caresses the sky with each breath.

A pilgrim knows that breathing is praying;  
and thereby becomes himself a breathing prayer.

A pilgrim uses the sun as his mirror  
and bathes in the wind and the rain.

A pilgrim sees insecurity as the possibility of possibilities;  
allowing his dread to dance under the sun.



A pilgrim knows that, even though he may travel in circles,  
with Love he cannot ever go astray.

A pilgrim knows his detours to be essential to his Journey;  
with Purpose he both walks and spontaneously pauses.

A pilgrim knows that his mind must gently rest on the horizon,  
even while his Soul remains firmly under his feet.

A pilgrim surrenders to the present moment by gazing just beyond it.  
A pilgrim listens ... listens and watches.

A pilgrim mines his memories for Truth,  
and then chooses to paint them anew.

A pilgrim waits without boredom;  
traveling even while “going nowhere”.

A pilgrim's goal touches the Earth as little as possible,  
and yet his destination fills everything he perceives.

A pilgrim's goal is completely detached from his Path,  
and yet his destination unites the Earth with his very Life.

A pilgrim makes all decisions on Faith,  
and yet he has a constant Guide in his Heart.

A pilgrim's Way has no beginning and no known end,  
and yet his travel's beginnings create its conclusion.

A pilgrim never returns from his Journey,  
and yet he is in every moment returning to the ones he Loves.

~ inspired by Bodvar Schjelderup



*“And I will take one from a thousand  
and two from ten thousand,  
and they shall Become a single One.”  
~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 23)*