

Camino Contemplations (A Message from Pastor Dave) W2

Well I have crossed the Pyrenees; around 6000ft and 28 km.....not the Rockies but beautiful nonetheless. They reminded me of the Welsh mountains and were full of sheep, shepherds, cattle and wild horses. The cattle had cow bells which gave an eerie echo in the early morning mist.

An overnight stay was required in the mountains at a bunkhouse (see photo) with some forty other pilgrims. Not a great deal of sleep was had as there were six to a room with a new olympic sport of competitive snoring; the loudest won. Unfortunately the winner was in my bunk; he snored from 9pm to 6.30 am and rattled the woodwork.

The evening though was a great occasion with a shared meal, stories and backgrounds. At one point we each had to say who we were, where we were from and why we were walking the Camino. The sincerity of folk really struck me but I was deeply saddened. Each shared personal motives, some deep, some with humour and clearly lots was left unspoken; however not a single person mentioned God. Here we all were on one of the biggest Christian pilgrimages in the world yet God seemed absent from people's conscious thoughts. The Pilgrims expressed numerous challenges that they were facing but their solutions linked to nature, people, inner peace, quietness, physical health and rest; but not God.

My reading of the day seemed to address this. In Acts 5: 12-26 the apostles were freed from a physical prison and instructed by an angel to "tell the people all about this new life," vs, 20. My fellow pilgrims were in spiritual prisons looking for the wrong keys to freedom. 1 John 1 tells us of this new life, how it appeared in Jesus and how we can walk in its light through forgiveness. It struck me how they and we seek peace and rest....freedom from our prisons! Isaiah 26: 3-4 tells us that this peace comes through trust, Romans 15: 13 adds joy to this peace if we trust. Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 shows how rest, a sabbath (spiritual) rest, comes through belief. The question is though what do we trust and believe in? For my fellow pilgrims the answer seemed to be anything but

God; so sadly their imprisonment seems destined to continue. For us, who know God, we have to ask; do we really trust Him, do we really believe His promises or are we in our own prisons of fear and restlessness seeking other keys to freedom?

The call to us is to live in this freedom; having peace through trust and rest through belief. More than that though; to tell others of this New Life!

As I resumed the journey, after the mountains, I was confronted with a road sign (see pic) reminding me of how far there is to go. We all have a long way to go in our life's journey and in guiding others to find this New Life. May Isaiah again encourage us, "...the path of the righteous is level; you the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth. Yes Lord, walking in the way of your laws we wait for you....." 26: 7-8a.

Bon Camino **Footnote.**

As you read this on Sunday 19th, God willing, I will be in San Juan de Ortega

