

Camino Contemplations (A Message from Pastor Dave)

W3

Since last writing I have walked through the foothills of the Pyrenees and entered the La Rioja region. Before leaving Navarra I walked through Pamplona, where Hannah worked during her degree years (known more for Hemingway rather than Hannah; which surprises me!), and also stayed in Los Arcos. This latter mentioned small town was hosting a bull run and Fiesta as I arrived at 4pm. The street party, supported by a ten strong drum band and live DJ led music, was still going at 7.30am as I began my next day's walk!

Soon I visited Viana where Wes and Sherry Koops live and work as G.E.M missionaries, (I kept calling Wes, Les; can't think why!). The connection was made through Lynne McCarthy. The couple run 'Pilgrims Oasis,' a respite room for weary travellers (offering light refreshments, supplies, foot care and Jesus!!!). I visited with them twice. Wes explained that most travellers arrive in Viana between days 6 to 8 of their Camino walk. By this time, he says, they are more open to themselves, prayer and talking about God. On a separate discussion matter he also raised the question, "Who do you serve?" I mention these two points because, for me, they connected with my earlier observation from Orisson where around forty Pilgrims made no mention of God in their reasons for walking the Camino.

It struck me that as travellers get further into their walk their connections with 'normality' lessen and they see matters with more clarity (certainly the case for me). Whether they realise this or not they begin to see 'who they serve,' or what governs their lives (again my experience). This brings them, and me, closer to the reality of God.

It takes time though to process. At best our motives are mixed because our hearts are deceitful and known only and truly by God (Jer. 17: 9-10). We cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon (Matt. 6: 19-24); for the latter we could read money, self-sufficiency and personal gain. Our 'masters' can be difficult to see and identify.....

we may for example: live a certain lifestyle; seek to please people (Eph. 6: 7); try to gain achievement; have an addiction; or be in an unhealthy relationship or situation.

Due to the 'masters' in our lives God seeks to bring us into true freedom by conforming us to the likeness of Jesus Christ. He therefore tasks us to identify our 'masters' to ensure we obey Him; working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2: 12-13). To find the resulting peace and rest we need to trust and believe. So my question to us all today is, "Who do we serve?" 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 you read this, God willing, I should be in Burgos; 290 of 815 km completed. I attach photos of Wes & Sherry, their Oasis and one of me to prove I am here!

