

## Camino Contemplations (A Message from Pastor Dave) W7



Mountain top experiences. We all have them, Moses did, the disciples did and very recently Novak Djokovic did. He climbed Mt Sainte-Victoire in France to gain a new perspective when his game wasn't going well. It changed his season; he has gone on to win back to back Grand Slam titles (tennis - if in doubt speak to Elaine 🎾).

Many walk the Camino to achieve such an experience. At the highest point on the Pilgrimage (1515m) on Monte Irago is the Cruz de Hierro, the Iron Cross, where pilgrims have added their stone of hope, love, sacrifice, mourning, thanks and so on to an enormous pile at its base (see pic).

As you know I love mountains (one of the reasons for moving 😊 to Winnipeg). On the day my route took me passed the iron cross I sought and found a higher peak for some solitude and reflection (see pic). As with Djokovic I find perspective in such settings and am able to really listen to the Lord (and what an amazing privilege it is to be able to come into the Lord's presence wherever we are!). I considered the many people who have placed stones at the foot of the Iron Cross. In conversations with some it was clear that they have no relationship with the Lord and little knowledge of Him, opting instead to hope in this ritualistic act. Others do believe and were making the walk part of their act of faith. Either way folk were and are seeking answers.

In God our, eternal Father, we find our answers. We are occasionally blessed with 'mountain top experiences' where the Lord grants us renewed insights and vision. The truth though is that we also live in the valleys. Christian preachers have written and spoken on this very topic over the years (such as Spurgeon and Chambers). Their advice has been to hold onto the given vision as we live in His strength in the valleys. Moses had to as he descended the mountain and found the people in idol worship (Ex. 32) and some of the disciples had to after witnessing the transfiguration (Matt. 17) but going on to see their Lord hung on a cross.

As I descended Monte Irago I met a cyclist pushing his bike up. He commented, looking up, that it was hard work getting to heaven. I said that I believed Jesus was the only route. He looked at me and answered, "It's hard to believe in Jesus."

As we seek answers in our lives let us fix our eyes on what is eternal, the Lord Jesus, whether on mountains or in valleys (2 Cor. 4: 16-18, Hebs. 12: 2). Let us also remember the many others who seek answers, find it hard to believe in Jesus or do not know the Lord at all; how can they unless someone tells them! How beautiful are the feet on the mountains of those who bring such good news (Roms. 10: 14-17, Is. 52: 7)! For all of us our hope and answers are found at the foot of the cross through which we can boldly approach the throne of Grace (Hebs 4: 16).

## Bon Camino

As you read this reflection, God willing, I will only be a few days away from Santiago!! I have moved on from statues and hawks as friends as I have met a new one (see pic), please don't tell Nell!!!

