



From +John...

Dear Friends,

Greetings and all good wishes from Portugal. I have been on the road for 11 days now and have arrived at a small town called Mealhada, having now walked 284 kms.

I have been reminded again, as I was reminded when I walked the Camino eight years ago, that many people make pilgrimages and have done so for hundreds of years. Pilgrimages are traditionally journeys to a holy place — a place where saints have walked, a place where God has met people and blessed them. For Catholics it may be Jerusalem, Rome, Fatima, Compostella; there are of course also many pilgrimage sites for people of other faiths. People through the ages have journeyed with God on pilgrimage — to perform a penance, to ask for healing, to pray for places where there is war or national disaster, to pray for friends, or as I am doing to pray for vocations. Pilgrimages are opportunities to travel lightly, to walk free of daily routines, to meet people, to make friends, to enjoy and celebrate God’s creation. An opportunity, too, in the travelling, the conversations and the silences to reflect on the journey of our lives and on our journey homewards to God. This is proving to be a kind of retreat for me, and I am getting good exercise at the same time; it is wonderfully relaxing spiritually rewarding.

I have a number of prayers I pray each day, and many things I am recording in my Prayer Journal. I share one of the prayers with you with the prayer for you that it may help you on your life’s pilgrimage.

God of the guiding star, the bush that blazes
Show me your WAY.

God of the stormy seas, the bread that nourishes
Teach me your TRUTH.

God of the still, small voice, the wind that blows where it chooses

Fill me with LIFE.

God of the elements, of our inward and outward journeys
Set my feet on your road today.

May God bless me with a safe journey,

May the angels and saints travel with me

May I live this day in justice and joy.

With every blessing
+John

Cardinal John has limited wifi access but he has been able to post on his Facebook page the following entries: Please keep Cardinal John in your prayers as he walks and prayers for vocations in the Archdiocese of Wellington.

May 9 2018: I have now been walking for three days on my way to Santiago de Compostela. In these early days most of the other pilgrims (mainly Portuguese) are actually doing the Camino to Fatima. Today we



passed the 100K mark to Fatima. It occurred to me as I walked along praying for vocations that all the other pilgrims would have prayer intentions to. These roads and walkways are therefore places of deep prayer. Most of the pilgrims so far speak very little English, but we have the language of prayer in common. You too are all being held in prayer. Thank you too for your prayers for me.



May 11 2018: This morning I left Santarém early as I wanted to get to Porta do Sol (the Gate of the Sun) overlooking the River Tejo. As I saw this beautiful scene I thought of a saying of Thomas Merton - “every

rising morning is a promise of Christ’s glorious rising.” A great saying for Ascension Thursday here in Portugal, and it fills me with hope as I walk and pray for vocations.

May 16 2018: I am now nine days into my walk to Santiago and have about 270 kilometres behind me. As I walk I pray to a number of Saints who accompany me along the way, St James of course whom legend has is buried in Compostela -pilgrims go there to pray for many intentions. Thank you for joining me in prayer as I pray for vocations.



News:

- Please remember to keep in your prayers **Fr Brian Austin**, who died peacefully on Sunday 13 May. May he rest in peace.
- We give thanks to **Sr Mary Scanlon** LCM who, after many years in Wellington, is moving to Christchurch.
- **All clergy**—Please remember to RSVP for the mini Clergy Assembly being held in June. We need to know numbers for catering purposes.