



From +John...

Dear Friends

Today we finish our meeting of the Bishops Conference in Auckland and I fly out of New Zealand for five weeks.

As many of you know I walked the Camino eight years ago, leaving St Jen Pied de Port in France, up over the Pyrenees and on to Santiago de Compostella which I reached 30 days later and after almost 900 kilometres of walking. This is known as the “French Camino”.

On Sunday 6 May I will begin walking from Lisbon to Compostella, the same place as last time, but this time it will be the “Portuguese Camino”. In 2010 my intention as I walked, prayed and reflected on this ancient pilgrimage was to pray for vocations to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Wellington. I will be doing the same this time. You might like to join me in praying for Vocations as I walk to what is remembered as the tomb of St James.

The Camino was a wonderful experience for me last time. I appreciated the time to walk and pray, to reflect and ponder as well as meeting many other pilgrims along the road and generally thinking about life’s pilgrimage. I am sure that these next few weeks will be just as blessed as last time. It was very much like a retreat last time, and there are images and moments of discovery fixed very clearly and vividly in my mind, some of them are as clear and sharp—and just as important as images and discoveries I made on a 30 Day retreat over thirty years ago.

I will be carrying a little book with me entitled “A Pilgrim’s Guide to the Camino.” For each day of the pilgrimage this guide book has much practical information, with a section called “The Practical Path” and another called “The Mystical Path”. One of the day’s Mystical Path reflections says this:

“Have you found the waymark that points you in the direction of our true Destination? Does it look familiar or are you left in doubt as to the right course to take? One thing is certain, it will only be found by following the wisdom of the heart. Everything we see

The scallop shell is one of the most iconic symbols of the Camino de Santiago and today it is used, along with the yellow arrow, to guide pilgrims heading to Santiago de Compostela along its many different routes



with the physical eye is likely to lead us away from the mystical. We have become intoxicated with the things of this world and fallen into a deep stupor. We search for relics housed in stone buildings that mask the true home of spirit. We have forgotten the way Home”

There are many such reflections. I will have plenty of time to pray and ponder, to reflect and to give thanks. You will all be with me as I journey on pilgrimage to the tomb of St James.

With every blessing.

+ John

News

- Please remember in your prayers **Fr Brian Austin** who has been admitted to Wellington Hospital.
- Resources for **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** (13—20 May) have been distributed to all parishes. Please remember to share and use these resources.
- Date Saver: All priests are reminded of the **Clergy Assembly Day** being held on Tuesday 26 June and the **Jubilee Mass and Luncheon** on Wednesday 27 June. More information on both these events will be sent to all clergy within the next week.

We need a spirit of holiness capable of filling both our solitude and our service, our personal life and our evangelizing efforts, so that every moment can be an expression of self-sacrificing love in the Lord’s eyes. In this way, every minute of our lives can be a step along the path to growth in holiness.