



From +John...

Dear Friends,

A walk-through Portugal and Spain to the tomb of an apostle (St James) is obviously not possible for everyone. I am very aware that I am incredibly privileged to have been able to embark on this recent adventure. It was a walk filled with many blessings; many hours each day to pray and reflect, people from all over the world (I walked alone but met along the paths and in the evenings), beautiful and spectacular scenery, hot sunny days and fantastic food and wine.

However, it was a pilgrimage, and as I experienced eight years ago when I walked the French Camino, many of the experiences reflected the day to day challenges and experiences of life. Every day, as I started to walk I asked the assistance and company of the Saints I had chosen for my companions, Mary and Joseph, St Paul, St James (because of going to Sant Iago), St Anthony of Padua (born in Lisbon where I started the pilgrimage and whose Feast day was yesterday 13th June), St Catherine of Sienna and St Mary Mackillop. There were many times when I reflected on how much they all walked in their lives and what lessons I could learn from them.

There were two Scripture quotes I reflected on every day, “**Remain in my love**” (John 15:9) and “**The Lord delights in his people**” (Psalm 149:4). It was a blessing to be able to “remain” in God’s love and to know that God was enjoying this too.

Many times I sang (and I am not a singer) the Taize Magnificat and the hymn “Gentle as Silence.” It is such a simple hymn and has such profound words.

***Oh, the love of my Lord is the essence of all that I love here on earth.
All the beauty I see God has given to me, and the giving is gentle as silence.***

***Every day, every hour, every moment have been blessed by the strength of God's love.
At the turn of each tide God is there at my side, with a touch that is gentle as silence.***

***There've been times when I've turned from your presence, and I've walked other paths, other ways.
But I've called on your name in the dark of my shame, and your mercy was gentle as silence.***

Day after day I experienced the gentle generous giving of God – and thought of what we have been saying here in the Archdiocese in terms of Stewardship about receiving the gifts of God with gratitude and using them responsibly. I had the opportunity in the silence of my walking to discover anew that “**every day, every hour, every moment**” were blessed by the strength of God's love.

I also knew I was accompanied by much love and prayer from people here at home. I thank you sincerely for that. The point of my pilgrimage was to pray for vocations, that intention was very much in my prayer every day. I ask that you continue to pray with me for vocations.

With every blessing

+ John



News

- This is the last chance to register for the Clergy Mini Assembly Tuesday 26 June starting 10am with morning tea and Clergy Jubilee Mass, Wednesday 27 June. Everyone is invited to attend the Clergy Jubilee Mass at 11am at St Patrick’s Church, Kilbirnie on Wednesday 27 June. Thereafter all clergy will transfer to The Pines, Houghton Bay for the Jubilee Lunch.
- We congratulate Mons John Carde and Fr Patrick Maloney on 60 years of priestly ministry. Congratulations also to Bishop Paul Martin SM on his 25 years of priestly ministry. We also congratulate the many Marist Fathers who are celebrating significant jubilees this year. **65 year** - Fr Patrick McCann, **60 years** - Bishop Robyn Leamy, Frs Gerald Arbuckle, Earl Crotty and Vincent Curtain **50 years** - Frs John Caddock, Barry Malone, Michael McVerry and Kevin Stewart, **25 years** - Fr Patrick Breeze. May God bless each of you as you continue your priestly ministry.

**If we allow the Lord to draw us out of our shell and change our lives, then we can do as St Paul tells us:
“Rejoice in the Lord always; I say it again, rejoice!”**