

September 2020

To my fellow Pilgrims!

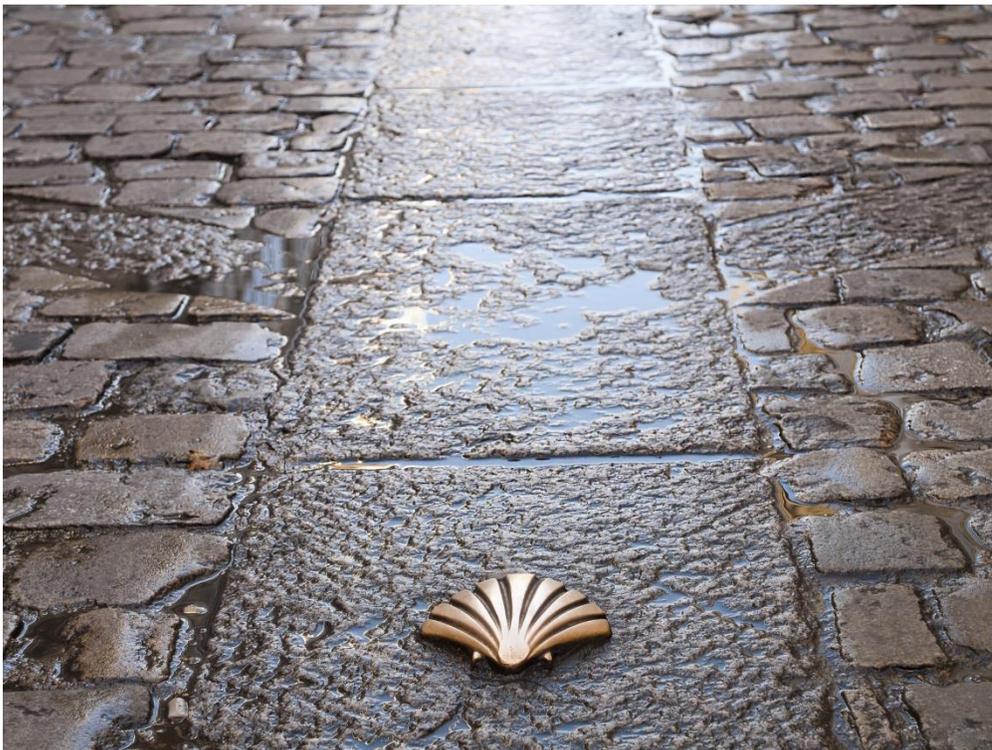
It's been just over six months since the coronavirus inserted itself so deeply into our lives. From the beginning we have struggled to find ways to sustain our spiritual lives even as we suffered our distancing from one another. Our faith intimated to us that it might even be possible our spiritual lives could find an opportunity to grow while thrusting down deeper roots.

With thoughtfulness we chose the symbol of the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage as a guide for our movements in Church. It was a practical choice, i.e. we needed guidance regarding our movements around church as a safeguard against spreading Covid-19. It was also a spiritual choice because we had the sense our journey through this troublesome time might hold an opportunity to be a pilgrimage for each of us as individuals and for us as the parish-community of St. Vincent's.

If we see and experience this time as a pilgrimage, there are some things to be on the lookout for and be mindful of.

A pilgrimage requires leaving one place - comfortable and "usual" as it might be - in order to go to a place that holds the promise of something new...especially something new that expresses itself in how life is then lived. Leaving is not always easy...especially when there was no opportunity to pack anything for the journey. The pilgrimage was simply there before us...waiting.

The “terrain” of the pilgrimage is always a mixed bag! There are certainly those days when the weather is perfect but there are days when it can be oppressively hot or bitterly cold...yet we continue to move! The road may be smooth and straight while, at what always seem inopportune times, it can be the cause of stumbles and falls...even injuries. Yet, the pilgrimage was simply still there before us...waiting.



The “inner” terrain parallels the physical one. It is the place of wonder-at-beauty; the place of questioning-in-exhaustion; the place of sadness-in-loss; the place of doubt-in-God (and ourselves and others, as well). Still, the pilgrimage is simply there before us...waiting.

All endured...all suffered...all embraced with the understanding that the unknown waits to be known in a deeply personal and life-changing way.

It's been long pilgrimage for us, and we don't know what joys and what afflictions yet lay before us as our pilgrimage continues. As fellow pilgrims one of our privileged tasks is to "companion" one another.

Sharing our outer and inner terrains with one another as we traverse them gives us strength, courage and wisdom. I would like to extend an invitation to each of you to share your experiences and insights as fellow pilgrims, thereby encouraging one another as we continue to walk the uncertain path before us. Just email your insights and experiences to me and I will make sure they are shared with our fellow pilgrims!

Let us celebrate and honor the "stuff" of our pilgrimages for they hone our spirits and in our heartfelt sharing we give strength and renewal as we all continue, together, this remarkable pilgrimage we are on!

This is the pilgrimage we are on. May St. James' spirit walk with us and be our companion. He knew the trials of the physical journey and he knew the challenges of the inner journey. He knew the profound meaning discovered at pilgrimage's end.

Fr. Ray