

NEWS FROM

Celebration!

A People Serving the Church

2015 - 2016



Thanks to the support of my community, I have been away for two months engaged in a time honored pilgrimage trek across Spain to the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela. This is commonly referred to as the *Camino de Santiago* (Way to Santiago). There are actually many Caminos crossing Spain and Portugal to this medieval cathedral, the home of the remains of St. James the Apostle and huge censor that swings the width of the basilica up to the ceiling in a most dramatic fashion. I walked the *Camino Francés* (French Way), the oldest established route. Starting

at the French border in the Pyrenees, it's about 500 miles due west across the northern tier of Spain, almost to the Atlantic Ocean. It might sound epic, and I guess it is, but walking on the average of 15 miles a day, sooner or later, you get there. When I told my immediate family of my desire to do this, my brother's response was, "Can't you take the bus?" Well, yes, but the point is to join with what millions of pilgrims have done through the ages and to experience a time of contemplation and communion with God, nature, fellow walkers and oneself. I have been asked what were the highpoints of my experience.



While I am still reflecting on the whole of it and wondering in a way what it was all about, a few aspects come immediately to mind.

Staying in the *albergues* was half the fun. These are the hostels established exclusively for pilgrim walkers. You would walk from one to the next in the course of the day. You could only spend one night for you were expected to move on the next day. They are meant to provide a dry sheltered place to spend the night. They came in all shapes and sizes from 8 beds to 400. They ranged from basic to luxurious from a "think camping" perspective. They could be operated by the local government, a local parish, convent or monastery; a donation-based endeavor; a simple mom and pop business offering in a little village; or a for-profit business. I stayed in all sorts, making up quite a rich



tapestry of experiences. This really produced some memorable experiences. I especially favored those that offered communal meals in the evening. I generally walked alone, "solo" as they say, so it would be a wonderful counterpoint conclusion to the day to sit around the evening dinner table with other *peregrinos* (pilgrims). Sometimes there might be a Pilgrim Mass or a Blessing Service later in the evening.

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2015 Conference attendees

A good time of fellowship, worship and teaching was had by those who attended the 2015 summer conference led by Bonnie Thurston. By popular demand she has agreed to come again June 17-19, 2016, Topic: The Sermon on the Mount.



Plenary session led by Bonnie Thurston



In July, Steven presided at the baptism of Samantha Evangeline Guzie

With godparents and parents:

Jen Farra, Chris Guzie (with Dominic), Marilyn Swager, Michelle Guzie (with Samantha), Joe Beckey



Earlier this year, we received an inquiry from The Anglican Order of Preachers as to the availability of our facilities. In October, representatives from the Order visited the Community's Saturday Eucharist and Common Meal. Prior to the Eucharist, a Service of Reception into the Order was held in the chapel.



Br. James Stefanos Thomson of Buffalo, NY, places the conl on the new novice, Br. Brent Whetstone of Warren, OH. Br. Christopher Hamlett of Augusta County, VA, presides.

A few years ago a gathering of young families and singles, primarily from Crestmont Alliance Church, began meeting every other week for an informal meal followed by worship and teaching. Last Fall the leadership, whom we had come to know through the ministry of Aliquippa Impact, asked to use the Celebration Center because individual homes were no longer able to accommodate increasing numbers. This Fall a second City Group began to meet on alternate weeks, with the same basic format. These are indeed encouraging signs of the Kingdom of God taking root in Aliquippa.



Informal meal



Worship and Teaching



Childcare



We embarked on some major property improvements this past year: new 3rd floor dormers (front and back); new siding and ceilings for the back porches; and a long anticipated sidewalk and porch steps behind the 6 houses in the 2nd block of rowhouses.



Zac-the-Cat putting his "paws of approval" on the new steps

Dave (who lived with the Community in Scotland) and Jane Porter, longtime friends of the Community, spent a week in Aliquippa as part of their around-the-world trip. First stop: a Pirates game at PNC Park.



In the Fall, some 40 friends and family gathered for the baptism of Josephine Rose Marie Mackey, whose father, Geoff, is Director of Student Affairs and Alumni & Church Relations at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge. The service, which began with a Service of Light, included elements from the Orthodox, Lutheran and Episcopal traditions.



Ministers, godmothers, and parents, Geoff and Erin.

On his annual visit, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Epting, Bishop Visitor to the Community, received the Renewal of Vows from Chapter members Steven McKeown, Joe Beckey, Mimi Farra, James von Minden and Bill Farra.



*Bill and Mimi, with
Sr. Heléna Marie, CHS,
leading daily worship*



Mimi and Bill attended the 3rd annual CAROA/NAECC (Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas / National Association of Episcopal Christian Communities) conference at the Community of Transfiguration, Columbus, OH, April, 2015.



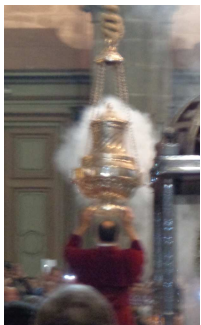
Perhaps, what I think about most are the friendships formed with other *peregrinos*. You click with certain people, and without orchestrating it, you keep running into each other through the days and weeks. I have countless amazing stories of happy reunions when bumping into one of my Camino friends that I thought I had lost track of. I guess the whole setup of walking 500 miles, up and down mountains, through rain and sun, makes for a truly bonding experience. There are all kinds of people on the Camino. It's a traveling United Nations with a range of ages. One demographic group that

I found touching was seeing an elderly parent walking with one of their adult children. There was something about that sight that seemed so sweet and endearing to me. One pairing that I ran into frequently for the first two or three weeks was a very elderly, somewhat crippled, French man walking with his very fit 50-something son who walked so patiently at his father's pace day after day. It just about brings tears to my eyes when I recall it.

Then there is just the pure enjoyment and challenge of walking across this area of Spain. Its scenic beauty varied from mountains to plains to coastline. I could amuse myself by saying I'm in the Rocky Mountains today, or the Smokey Mountains, now it's Texas hill country, Oh, Kansas today, now the vineyards of up-state New York, and finally the Oregon coast.



On the spiritual side, there is the opportunity to saturate oneself in quiet and contemplation, freed and separated from one's usual concerns and responsibilities. The vast majority of the walk was very rural. I could sense myself out in the middle of nowhere Spain in this cathedral of solitude where one can hear the noise of silence. The opportunity and luxury to have over 40 days to reduce life



to simple components of walking, eating, sleeping, and to have clear head-space to listen to God and oneself, void of the noise and chatter of normal over-stimulated, multi-tasking life - this was perhaps the main intention of such a pilgrimage.

Most profoundly, there is the memorable aspect of joining a part of history that has been going on since the 9th century. I am now one of the millions of pilgrims that have walked their way to *Santiago de Compostela*. I first heard about this pilgrimage cathedral 43 years ago. 3 years ago I felt a desire and beckoning from God to pursue this quest. This year, I found myself sitting in the Cathedral of Santiago on All Saints' Day, November 1, 2015, during High Mass with the *botafumeiro*, the famous large swinging sensor, wafting me with incense, thinking: this is truly incredible. I am so blessed. Although bedbug bitten, flea bitten, sleep deprived, rained and even hailed on, literally stopped in my tracks by strong winds, having suffered two rounds of colds followed by laryngitis (always the case with me), lost in farm fields and vineyards, physically pushed—I had the time of my life. *James von Minden, S.C.C.*



After a long and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, on April 28, 2015, at the age of 62, May McKeown died peacefully in Allegheny General Hospital, Pittsburgh.

May was born in Glasgow, Scotland, where she later worked as a pediatric nurse in a premature baby unit. In her days in the Methodist Church in Glasgow she was the first woman Senior Steward in the history of the Scottish Methodist Church. In 1978 with her husband, Steven and children, Stephanie and Christopher, May visited the Community on the Isle of Cumbrae. She said that she came primarily out of curiosity, only to find a place where she wanted to stay because she found a place where she could put life and work and prayer together. When the Community relocated in 1985, the family remained on the Island, waiting two years before receiving a visa to join Celebration in Aliquippa.

May was a talented artist, confectioner, hostess, serving the Community in many roles over the years: Guardian for Vocations; Annual Conference Administrator; ACE Women's Training Program for women from the County Jail (with Alison Stanley); Organizer of Hospitality; Keeper of the Mail List.

May's Memorial Service was held at St. Titus Church to accommodate the many expected visitors. Representing Steven's primary places of liturgical ministry, Bishop Dorsey McConnell (Pittsburgh) and Bishop Mark Hollingsworth (Ohio) presided.



Musicians: Bill Farra, Wiley Beveridge, James von Minden, Mimi Farra, Gabrielle Faetini (guest violinist)