

CAMINO IGANTIANO, Spain, July 14-28, 2013

University of San Francisco, Regis College, Regis High School, & Boston College

Reflections by Emily Czarnik-Neimeyer



Sunday, June 23, 2013 – Pre-Camino

Welcome to my reflections about the Camino Ignaciano (Ignatian Camino) pilgrimage!

I will be participating in this Camino journey (as a University Ministry employee) from July 14-28, 2013 in Spain through the University of San Francisco (USF) with staff and faculty of USF. I look forward to getting to know the other people in my walking group and know that we will have A LOT of time to get to know one another - walking, eating, worshiping, praying, joking, and more. There will be thirteen people my group, a bit more than half of which are from the University of San Francisco. With three weeks until the Ignatian Camino (Camino Ignaciano) pilgrimage walk, I am feeling excited, humbled, and in awe for what is to come on this spiritual and religious journey. In the past couple weeks I get flashes of the pilgrimage scenes to come in my mind, glimpses that fill me with curiosity and peace. I have my tickets purchased, Euros in

hand, and a handful of items purchased for the trip so far, such as a hiking pack, socks, hiking shoes, quick dry leggings, books, and a Nalgene. The sight of my new Nalgene makes me sentimental for my college years, which is when I first started using one as a camp counselor and continued to hike with it after that, such as during my time studying abroad in Wales. Just the sight of a Nalgene represents nourishment, hiking, and adventure to me, all of which I believe the Ignatian Camino will involve.

I am no longer in college though - now I am guiding and leading college students on their own journeys through my work in University Ministry at the University of San Francisco and taking an entirely new journey of my own on the Camino Ignaciano. Amongst other things, the Camino represents a time of recollection, renewal, and re-application for me. I look forward to walking and living in community, to learning more about the life and landscapes of St. Ignatius of Loyola (who started the Jesuit order), to breathing in the culture, to physical challenge, to practicing Ignatian Spirituality, and to visiting (religious) communities. I am incredibly grateful to be able to participate in this pilgrimage and am looking forward to being abroad. I can only imagine what I will have to reflect upon at the end of each day and will use The Examen, as read below.

- 1. Become aware of God's presence.**
- 2. Review the day with gratitude.**
- 3. Pay attention to your emotions.**
- 4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.**
- 5. Look toward tomorrow.**

I believe that the following prayer by Teilhard de Chardin, SJ can describe where I am at in this phase of "Camino anticipation." As I move forward in this prayer, I will mull over Jose Gonzalez' song "[Crosses](#)," which I have loved since college and an amazing Jesuit I worked with used during a student retreat.

"Patient Trust"
-Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something
unknown, something new.
And yet it is the law of all progress

that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability—
and that it may take a very long time.
And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.
Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.



Here's my new Nalgene for all my hydration needs.



A week ago I bought my new Keens for the pilgrimage.



Here are my new hiking/running leggings. Let's hear it for dry fit clothing in humid Spain!

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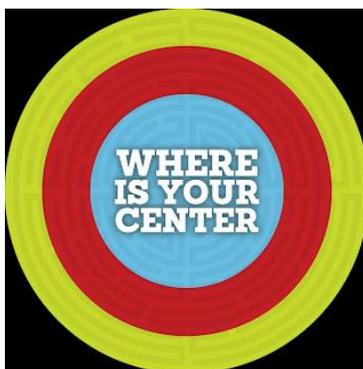
Here I am.



Here he is - St. Ignatius of Loyola.



My spirituality and religion in the world and on this Camino as a woman are very important to me, and this image speaks to part of them!



This is the logo of University Ministry at the University of San Francisco. Where is your center?

July 3, 2013 – Pre-Camino

With just about two weeks to go until the Ignatian Camino, I am feeling eager, excited, and restless to begin!

In the past weeks I have been pondering and praying about Ignatian Spirituality and all that it brings to life. In these ponderings, I have been filled with weight and wonder around the topics and theology of God in all things and who I interact with each day, reflecting on emotions, God in my family, being open to the "now," intersections of oppression, friends who are getting married, my future, and more. I think about gratitude and all that I have to be grateful for in my life, such as the opportunity to walk the Camino Ignaciano. In my preparation for the Camino

and just because I want to read it, I have been reading *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything* by James Martin, S.J. (as seen below). I have thoroughly enjoyed reading the book thus far, and it has provided me with a source of theoretical and theological engagement and challenge. I have also reflected on love in this book and the topics on love that James Martin brings up early on in his book; I am moved by his openness on the topic of love, as well on other components of daily/weekly/monthly Jesuit life.

The Jesuits are called to move and live around the world, on an eternal "pilgrimage," per say. I have been reflecting on this for the Jesuits and also for my life; I am now solidly in my mid-twenties and feel at peace in this age period. I still want to continue to travel the country and world though, to continue to my pilgrimage. I feel torn about wanting to do this when I am with beloved friends from the Midwest who I have been able to spend golden time with this past June. Being with them makes me think remember that it will not be bad to set down roots some day, and to do it in a city and a community of people who I hold close to my heart. [HERE](#) is more information about the history of The Way of St. Ignatius (or Camino Ignaciano), which speaks to the ongoing journey of this pilgrimage - and of life in general - for St. Ignatius..



It is clear that St. Ignatius of Loyola started to recognize and experience more gratitude, in different ways, after he was hit by the cannonball and experienced isolated recovery. His changed spirit and, thus, changed thinking patterns through God, encouraged him to focus more on how he could be aware of and grateful for his life. With gratitude can also come love, in all forms, which I know is a focus of mine throughout the pilgrimage. "Contemplation to attain love in our pilgrimage" is the focus of Day 28 on the pilgrimage, as seen on the Camino Ignaciano webpage [HERE](#). This phrase is beautifully simple and also indefinitely complex.



It is important to recognize how other spiritualities contribute to testimonies of community and faith, recognition that should be had in the following quote by the Iroquois Nation. *"We bind ourselves together by taking hold of each other's hands so firmly and forming a circle so strong that if a tree should fall upon it, it could not shake or break it."*



This is the symbol for the Jesuits; it's a Latinization of the Greek IHC (Iota Eta Sigma), being the first three letters of the Greek form of Jesus: IHCOYC.



Recently I have been reflecting on the March 2013 immersion to Colombia that I co-led with two other Resident Ministers through University Ministry at the University of San Francisco. In the picture above some of the USF students and I are dancing with children in an indigenous village. I feel very grateful to have been able to work and experience international immersions through the Jesuits, which have opened my mind and heart more to the world (and also more to my own history). My recent reflections on the Colombia immersion have helped me to contemplate how my world will change and what I will learn during the Ignatian Camino. I am open to experiencing what comes on the Camino and to the intricate connection of all humans.



Here I am in front of one of the main University of San Francisco signs; I'll return on July 29.

July 14, 2013 – On the Camino

LOYOLA

The time start to the pilgrimage in Loyola (Loiola) was a time of transition, introduction, and peace. The entire group of thirteen pilgrims came together the night of July 14 in a convent and guest house of Religious Sisters to eat, get to know one another, and be introduced to the Camino by our Spanish Jesuit guide, Joseph. Joseph is from Barcelona and would be our constant companion through much of the Camino. The group learned soon enough that Loyola is located in the Basque region of Spain; the residents of the Basque region are called Catalonians and speak an almost entirely different language than Spanish, which is called Catalan. We would go on to hear Catalan during most of our pilgrimage.

My heart was full in Loyola – full of the surrounding geographic beauty and peace, full of the sounds and interactions of the new group, and full of the mystery what was yet to come. I was excited and eager to learn more about Loyola, myself, and God and understood how one could be inspired to do so in a place like Loyola. During our couple days in Loyola we talked about the family and childhood of Ignatius, visiting the house he grew up in. It was a wonder to walk the halls where Ignatius lived with his big family, growing up in a family of prestige and military investment. For me, the most remarkable and spirit-filled time in Ignatius' childhood house was celebrating mass in the room of his Conversion. Many members of the group commented on how sacred and holy this room felt, and it was there that we were all undoubtedly moved by the life and times of St. Ignatius. We went on to visit the Loyola Basilica, the nearby town of Azpeitia, and walk around the local area. After transitioning a bit into Basque culture, the spirit of Ignatius, and a new time zone, we moved on via bus to a day in San Sebastian.



JORBA

The village of Jorba greeted us with small town charm, a swimming pool, and a young Priest who runs the Camino de Santiago hostel (connected to a small chapel) the gourmet restaurant within it, and three local churches. This young Priest is a marvel, to say the least; he was incredibly warm and accomodating to our group, and the four-course dinner he put on for us was phenomenal. The group could feel that this small hostel had a feel of home, and it was amazing to think about how many pilgrims had passed through this hostel (and all the places we walked, for that matter). I was inspired by this Priest, who brought the word “multitasking” to a whole new level. If Ignatius were still alive, I could picture him serving a small town like this priest was doing on a daily basis. All of these services at this hostel helped the fact that many of the group members were starting to experience deep, painful blisters on their feet. Thus began more time spent in the evenings caring for our strong, weary feet with the guidance and help of Joseph, our Spanish Jesuit guide. In Jorba and after, Joseph would tend to our blisters every night. The group woke early the next morning to take a bus to a small town in order to meet up with the other part of our whole group. The bus stop was right across the street, and a small bakery was open next door. Before boarding this bus, part of the group bought some sweet flat bread from the bakery.



MONTSERRAT

I have never before had an experience like I did in Montserrat, a lovely, powerful place nestled in the national and religious park of Montserrat. The Benedictine Brothers run and maintain the grounds, running multiple masses each day in the grand, beautiful cathedral on the plaza. It was in this place that Ignatius had a vision and comfort by the spirit of Mary and laid down his sword for a pilgrima staff and gourd (for drinking water). The institution of Montserrat includes the basilica, monastery, the hostel that we stayed in, an art gallery, a hotel, a large restaurant, cafes, shops, and a great deal of plaza space overlooking the hills. After finishing our delicious dinner in the restaurant, we attended the public evening mass and then made our own Stations of the Cross in the plaza and sanctuary of the basilica. As we were the only ones in the cathedral at the time (other than a couple Brothers), there was an immense sense of calm and Spirit present during our time together during the Stations. The night ended with a celebration of mass in the chapel devoted to Mary, which is tucked away in a hollow of the basilica. The morning at Montserrat brought a breakfast buffet, with the sun rising over the mountains.



MANRESA

After a powerful, challenging final trek of 24,5km, we made it to the city of Manresa. Here ended the walking part of our pilgrimage; Manresa was a resting place for both our group and Ignatius and meant a the beginning of the end for our pilgrimage group. While in Manresa our group visited a city office for a guided vial tour about the history of the Medieval city of Manresa, as well as a walking tour of some of the places that Ignatius spent time in Manresa. Two significant places in which we spent time and celebrated the liturgy were in the Cave and in a small church and home on the outskirts of Manresa. Ignatius spent a great deal of time in a weak, seemingly unconscious state in both locations, repenting and praying. It was in both locations that he experienced significant enlightenment and also internal pain, and at the church he needed to be convinced by the family living there to enter the house so that they could provide him with food and drink. It was at this house that Ignatius experienced a vision of Mary, a vision that reassured and encouraged him to move forward. During our time in Manresa we also went to the St. Jaume plaza, where there were preparations for the feast of St. James. It was on this day that our group heard about the tragic news of the train crash in St. Jaume Compestela; this news was chilling and saddening, as a large number of the people who died on the train were pilgrims in Spain as

well. Our group commemorated them and prayed for their families during a minute of silence on our train, recognized by the entire train before it left Manresa to Barcelona.



BARCELONA

We ended our pilgrimage in the gorgeous, hot city of Barcelona, and our place of residence was in a boarding school run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. The students were on summer vacation by then, and we slept in their single rooms, each with a bathroom attached. The Sisters were very kind, ensuring that we were well fed and knew our way around the building. Our meals here, as at many other locations, were full of bread, olives, and meat. The days in Barcelona were filled with (Ignatian) sight-seeing, as well as free time and recuperation after almost 100 miles of walking. The sights in Barcelona over the course of two days included the Sagrada Familie, St. Ignatius Street, and “Parròquia de la Mare de Déu del Carme.” In all of its splendor, Barcelona brought the mind and senses alive, as did all of the places along Ignatius’ journey. After walking through cornfields, highways, and forest, I believe that all the stimuli of Barcelona helped me to better transition back into the city of San Francisco. Before the whole group parted ways and flew back to the States, we spent an evening together doing a verbal and written evaluation, dinner, and liturgy. I am so incredibly grateful to have been a part of this July 2013 Ignatian Camino experience and to have seen the spiritual journey and world through the sights and sounds of St. Ignatius of Loyola! This reflection does not nearly include all that we experienced and way on our pilgrimage walk – and, thus, the Camino of life is yet unfinished.

