

The true Camino is in yourself and it unfolds at every moment!

“It will unfold”

These were the words of Father Jose as we ended our 2019 Ignatian Camino-our pilgrimage together for 30 days.



House of La Cova of Manresa

I felt a sense of disappointment that it was over after so much anticipation for this experience. I had trained, planned, hoped and prayed for some sort of transformation, for my conversion. What kind of conversion I did not know, but I knew I was looking for something.

I was looking for spiritual direction, a renewed sense of both my faith and my purpose in life. I wanted to deepen my friendship with God as sadly, I had been neglecting this friendship for many years. I had high hopes. But what I have learned in the months following my walk across Spain was that this was really just the beginning of my journey.

I returned home with a sense of satisfaction and improved physical strength. I had walked across Spain! I had eaten huge sandwiches, delicious meals prepared by nuns and savored fruits, freshly picked from the trees and fields. I had managed to feel content with just a few articles of clothing and some sparse accommodations. I laughed with my new friends and shared some special meals and special moments. I immersed myself in the Spanish culture and discovered the beautiful churches and their people from the towns along the

way. I learned about art, culture, and, most of all, I learned about St Ignatius.

Lapoblación

Figs sweet as honey

Alfaro



Father Jose was the conduit who showed us the ways of St. Ignatius. We learned about discernment and the concept of Magis. I learned to ask myself the question-are my actions and thoughts directed towards God-or away?? I prayed and read and sang the Servant Song each day. As I walked in grateful silence, I prayed for the

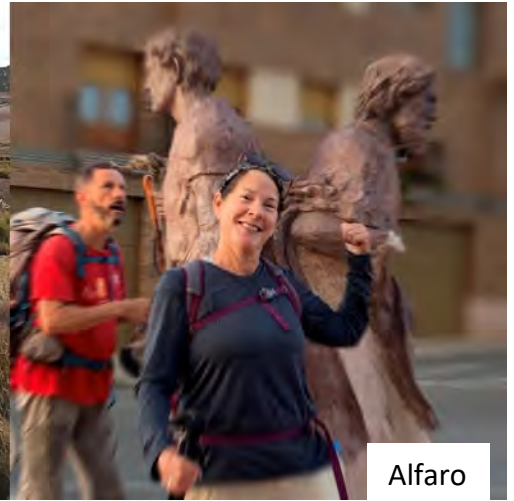
people I love and I prayed for guidance. I solidified my interpretation of what faith in action means to me as I was challenged by the attitudes of my fellow pilgrims. But still I had hoped for more...



Opakua



Pina de Ebro



Alfaro

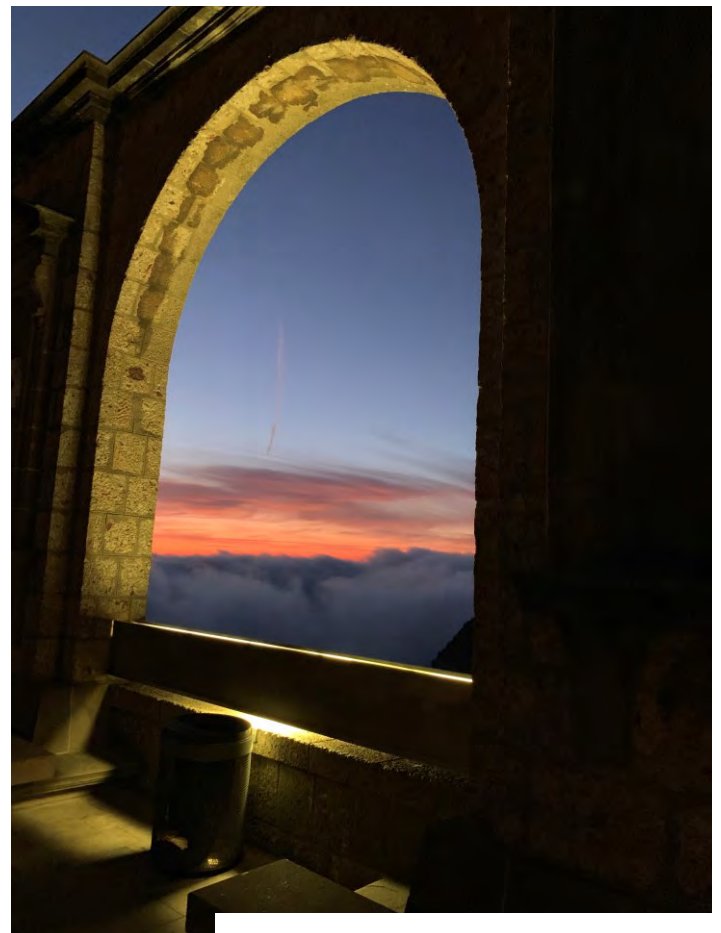
I returned to my home, life started back up and I jumped right back on the gerbil wheel of life. I longed for the days of simplicity. Walk, eat, pray, wash my socks, then repeat.

Months went by and the Camino was becoming more and more of a distant memory with each passing day, only to be recalled as I looked down at the tattoo of the sunflower, acquired in Barcelona, and imprinted on my leg.

Then God had a new way in store for all of us. The Way of Corona virus 19. This was a new, unfamiliar and unwelcomed pilgrimage that none of us had signed up for willingly.

I expected to feel imprisoned by the restrictions, but what I really felt was freedom. Another chance to step off the gerbil wheel of life for a time. Perhaps things were unfolding?? I recalled the days in Zaragoza where I was inspired in the laundromat, where I surprised myself by the pleasure found in spending a day alone with myself and my thoughts. I delighted in the experience of allowing myself the freedom to wander in the cathedral, soak in the dancing in the square, and savoring my ability to be present in these moments, with no clear agenda.

I have always thought of myself as an extrovert-someone who needs to be around people, to have a plan and a calendar filled with work and social engagements. But perhaps I have been mistaken in my approach to life-about what I really need or what God needs from me?? Perhaps I haven't taken the time to pay attention to myself-to understand my true needs and wants and to discover what actually brings



Montserrat Monastery at Dawn

feelings of peace and a connection to God. Perhaps I need this peaceful contemplation to better connect with God and myself?

Maybe I did learn more than I realized on my walk with St Ignatius and the pilgrims? Maybe walking across the bridge in Manresa was just the beginning of my true journey? Maybe it is not for me to know right now? Maybe what I have learned is that I need to be patient with myself and patient with God (this is hard for me) but if I keep walking, little by little things will continue to unfold...and I will better understand what I left behind in the countryside of Spain.

This opportunity I have had to walk the Ignatian Camino with Father Jose was a gift from God and one of the many blessings of my life for which I will always be grateful. My hope and prayer is that the experience will continue to unfold as I make my journey through life.

Thank you Father Jose!

Robin Krawczyk, September Pilgrimage 2019



The Orange Arrow shows the Way