

After the *Camino Ignaciano*

I have wanted to walk the *Camino* for seven years and I was really hoping to make my dream come true during the Jubilee Year of the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius' conversion. I was granted!

I left with great joy in my heart, inhabited by a deep sense of gratitude. I tried not to have any expectations. Life has taught me that it is often our expectations that cheat us, that prevent us from recognizing and enjoying the gifts present in the reality. The only thing that worried me a bit was my physical unpreparedness.

I have been making pilgrimages to biblical and Ignatian kilometers! Pilgrimage, an icon of life and a constitutive state of every Christian, is a means that helps me greatly to return to the Essential, to the (cf. Deut. 32:18), to regain vigor in the following of Christ. Moreover, doing it in a small group of people who are seeking the Lord together helps me not to lose sight of the community

dimension of my Christian faith. For if we do not keep the Other and others together, we deceive ourselves.

The *Camino* crosses woods, countryside, hills, mountains, villages, towns. It brings together nature and culture; silence and W/word; Creator, creation, creatures. It is an experience that reactivates and ignites the senses of the body; it helps you to savor what the Lord gives in matter in its primary state and that then the extraordinary ability of man can transform. From the springtime rejoicing of the fields in bloom, to the jubilation in the wine glasses that an ancient wisdom transmits from generation to generation, just to give an example.



Going up to MONTSERRAT

The *Camino* simplifies, awakens, cleanses the eye, educates, heals... You are forced to leave behind the superfluous, the useless weights that prevent you from moving forward. And not only the physical ones! Then your companions, with their care and attention, remind you that there is no real happiness if it is not shared.

Ignatius – whose story of salvation speaks so much to my life – was always present in my days. He was my invisible companion on the journey, who over the years accompanied me to meet the Invisible. It always moves me to retrace the steps of his life, because they help me to retrace my own and to recognize the Lord's immense love for me.

I returned home without having received any enlightenment about my doctorate... but I did receive other, more underlying, profound graces. An inner healing after an event that had caused me great pain. An intuition of concrete commitment to the service of the poor. A confirmation of the pastoral apostolate I wish to carry out. In addition to the meetings and relationships received as a gift from the Lord's generous gratuitousness. Thank you, Fr. Josep Lluís sj. Thank you, dear pilgrim friends.

AMDG!

Monica

