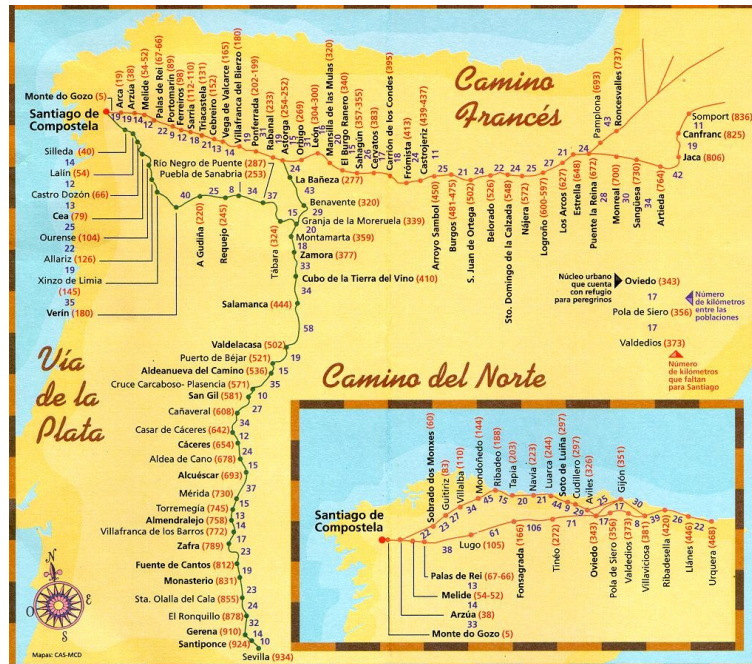


Camino Presentation at Synod

I'm sure I don't need to tell you who are based in this Archdeaconry about the Camino, or the pilgrims who walk or cycle into Santiago de Compostela having followed one of many routes in - indeed, has anyone here walked it?



You may be wondering 'What can he tell us that we don't already know? After all we all come from a Chaplaincy, so we know how they are made up, and what they do'. But I would suggest that what we have is different in many ways, and its probably easier to list what we don't have.

We don't have a **resident congregation**. Our people come to us having completed their pilgrimage for prayer, a chat or a service, and an opportunity to share the Blessed Holy Sacrament - and then they fly away home, and we may not see them ever again.

Because we don't have a fixed congregation, we don't have a **Chaplaincy Council**, or **Chaplaincy wardens**, or secretary, treasurer etc

We don't have a tie to a **particular location**. Whilst we base ourselves in Santiago de Compostela, our ministry is to the pilgrims of the Camino, who walk or cycle into the city from one of a number of different routes - we are **not** the Santiago Chaplaincy.

We don't have a **permanent Chaplain** - our Chaplains visit for a period of time, and then they too depart to their home ministries.

We don't have **representation yet on the diocesan website** and have to do our best with self publicity by means of posters, and Facebook - but we are working on this with Andrew and Damian.

And we don't have any **money**, apart from a small fund ring-fenced for us by Nick Wraight, which we gain from a limited amount of fundraising ... and the occasional donation from those who wish us well. Our chaplains all pay their own way - flights and other travel costs, and food etc whilst on duty.

What we do have is a successful ministry, and it is something so special that some of our Chaplains have already been for two stints and are booked in again for this season.

My background to all this is that I walked a decent chunk of the Camino Francés 11 nearly 12 years ago and 6 days after getting home from that, I flew to start my ministry in Portugal, the following spring I walked the Way of St James across the Algarve. This is the point where we entered Galicia - the man with me is an Irishman who linked up with our small group early on - I'd not seen him before, and haven't since, but we shared some fine discussions together en route.



When I walked into Santiago, I was disappointed that there was, in my view, a poor reception - nowhere to sit and talk, nobody fresh to share or pray with, and no Anglican Eucharist,- so it was good to see an item on the diocesan website suggesting a chaplaincy that

would do just that and offer ministry to those who called out for something more than the circus that is the RC Pilgrim's Mass. I contacted Fr Geoff and the next thing I knew I was in Santiago for a couple of weeks 18 months ago.

The mainstay in Santiago is Sybille Yates (on right below), resident in the city, with experience of both the dioceses a clergy wife, and exceptional experience of the Camino which she has walked a number of times. Also on the photograph is Revd Miriam Fife, from the Norwich Diocese - Miriam has booked in to minister again with us this year.



Sybille lives in the City and offers continuity for us and accommodation for Chaplains and needy pilgrims. So that first visit of mine involved me lodging with Sybille and another, like me, former Area Dean, albeit from Scandinavia, and we shared time offering the Sunday Eucharist at

the Parador (hotel) and open house at Sybille's for anyone who wanted to drop in, with a home Communion on the Wednesday evening, followed by a supper which we supplied.

After that first visit it was agreed that I was, somewhat informally, appointed to be Lead Chaplain for the ministry in Santiago and Alasdair Kay, another chaplain involved at the time, would look to trying to establish a group of walking chaplains who would, as the name implies walk parts of the Camino as spiritual companions - this is currently on hold, as Alasdair has taken on a new parish in the Salisbury diocese and is concentrating his efforts there.



Since that meeting we have moved forward. The Archbishop of Santiago has now authorised our use of a church just 10 minutes from the

cathedral. This is Santa Susana - the Ferris Wheel did cause me some concern when it was being put up, but thankfully was not put into operation during our services and was removed a few weeks later! You can just see the wheel and hence the church from the cathedral - left hand photo below.

The other photo shows Sybille's workforce sent to dust the pews and generally sort the church before our first service there. To the



right, Alan Pearce, a camino stalwart and friend of Sybille who was of invaluable help, from Australia, and central, a communicant who's name I forget, who wanted to help.



Camaraderie is important to us, and we don't always meet the person we are taking over from or handing over to. Here was one, one-day overlap as the Cunninghams from Belfast met with the Stills from Devon (the Exeter Diocese). Both couples are with us again this year - the Cunninghams, for the third time. **AND** the

photo on the right shows Miriam with Fr Manny Domingo from the



Philippines - the RC priest who is responsible for the Mass in English each day, of which more shortly.

Archbishop Julian has also allowed our shared use of the ecumenical centre, just opposite the Cathedral's north door. Looking at the picture, the steps on the left lead down to the cathedral's



north door, the place with the white rectangle is the Archbishop's residence. Above and to the right of that is the San Martin hotel, including the projecting section and immediately to the right of that, in part conceded by the cypress trees is the centre. The people walking away from you are just about to cross the Camino Francés.

Furthermore, with help from Emma in the Tufton Street office, we now have a range of Chaplains, including three from the US, and



two from Finland, and a full roster of representation in the city from our season there - from just after Easter, until late October.

These photos show the gathering after our first Eucharist in Sta Susanah, and coffee in the cafe just 100m away



Our schedule for the weekdays tends to be Morning prayer together, and then a visit to the RC Mass in English (also something new since I did my walk). This usually led by Fr Manny, whose photo I showed earlier, who has made us so welcome, and he is helped by a group of Irish nuns who take it in turn to come over to work with him. The service is usually in a chapel in the cathedral, but as the cathedral is being refurbished internally at the moment, in preparation for the Holy Year, other chapels are being used and the Botafumerio is not being swung.

After the Mass in English, is a time for 'Fishing for Pilgrims' where we call to various key places in the city - in my case the corner cafe which does excellent Bacon and Eggs - you may be surprised at how many people are happy to chat with someone in dog-collar who actually welcomes them to tell their story. In the afternoon we gather at the ecumenical centre and carry on the invitations and friendships - except on Wednesdays when Sybille offers her house for Communion and a fellowship meal

Saturday, Sybille is pleased to refer to as a 'day-off' but it doesn't really work, because folk still want to chat and can't be ignored - but it is good to find a few moments to top and tail the sermon for the next day, Sunday which involves the Eucharist and a time for coffee and something to eat in fellowship.

It is really full on ministry. The first Eucharist in the Santa Susana church saw 20 pilgrims and the second saw 25 - open house communion numbers have varied from just a couple to over 20 in a very small reception room with some folk seated on the stairs - and



it is a welcomed ministry, by those who have benefitted and those who have participated, and we have been told is welcomed the ever more co-operative RCs under Archbishop Julian.

What we need now is:-

- a) A continuous inward trickle of money to basically fund our hospitality, keep us supplied with wafers and wine, photocopying and other day to day items. I can't see us being in a position for a while of being able to contribute to chaplains costs, but perhaps one day
- b) Any donations of books, perhaps another communion set to save having to take the one we have around with us in a basket or anything else that you might have and not need - do let me know, and
- c) Most importantly we need publicity, so that groups and individuals know that we are there - I have one charity with a number of pilgrims set for a charity raising Camino for the autumn, and we are tailoring a greeting and service for them, and a travel company that organises led pilgrimages has expressed interest in an arrangement with us - any publicity would help us grow and who knows what God will bring our way. and
- d) Your prayers would be much appreciated.