



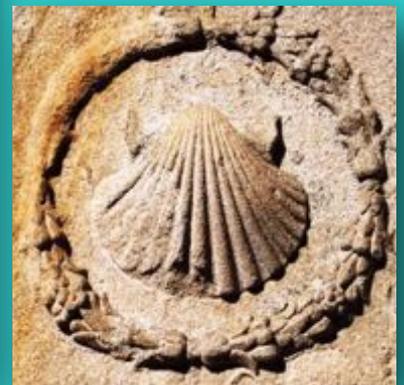
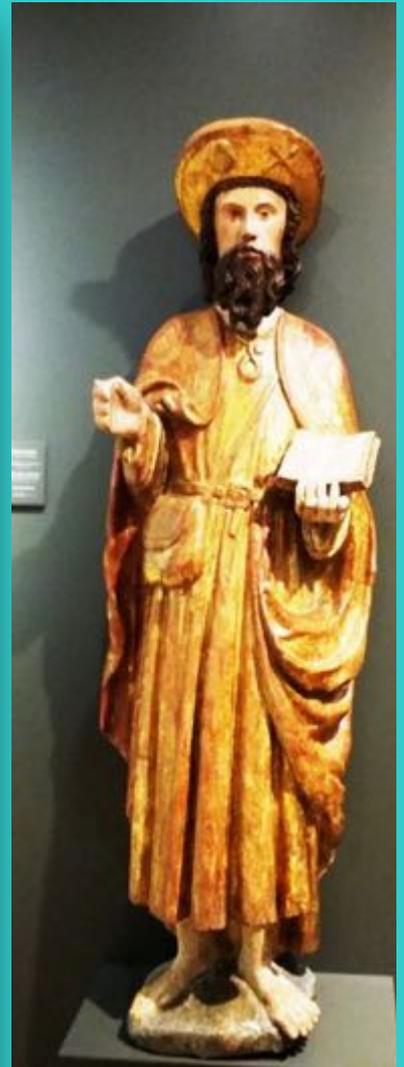
Adventures With God:

Living the Camino in Daily Life

Fr Chris Gorton

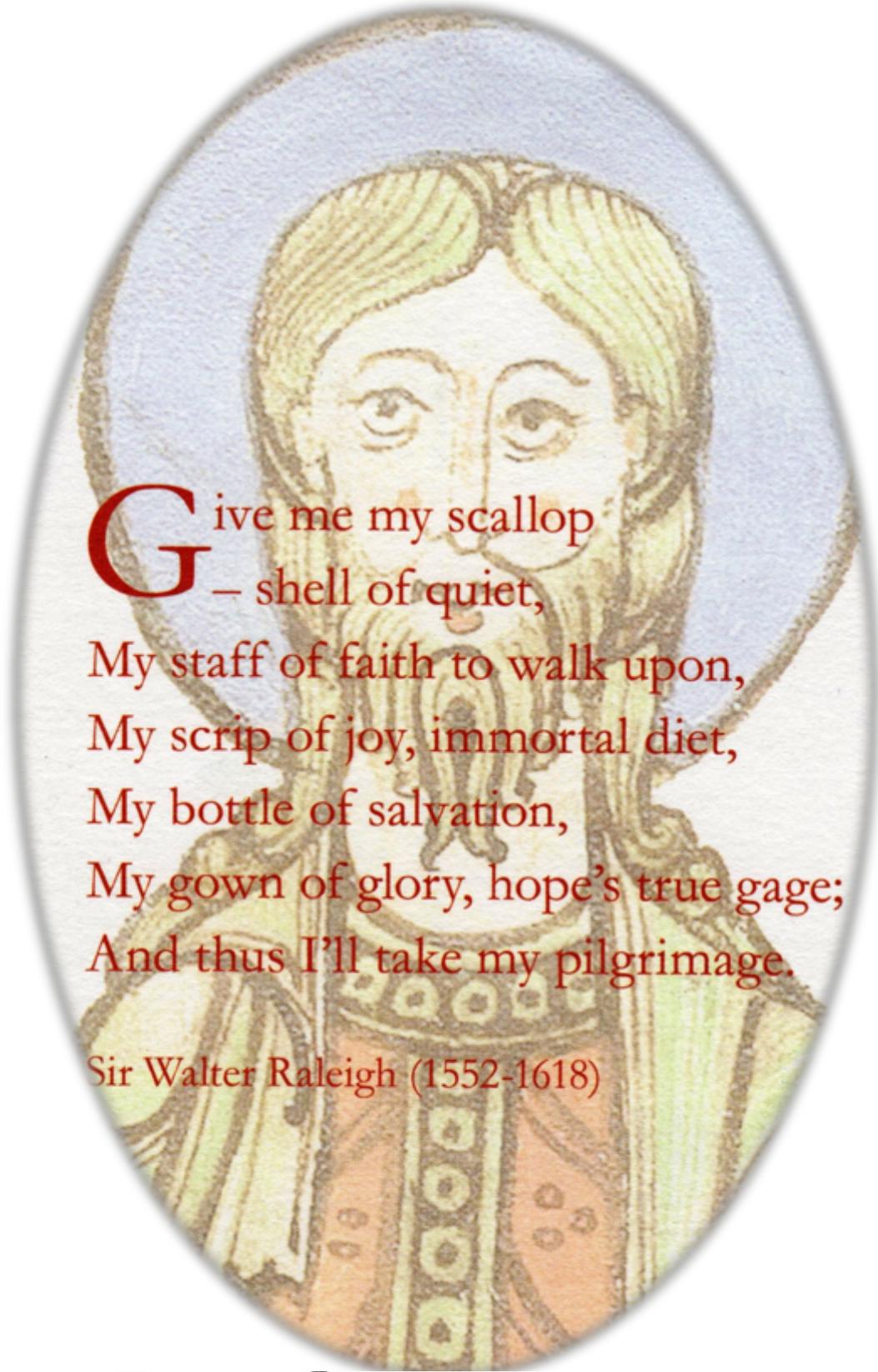
The Camino Frances

Destination Santiago de Compostela



Part Five: The Arrival



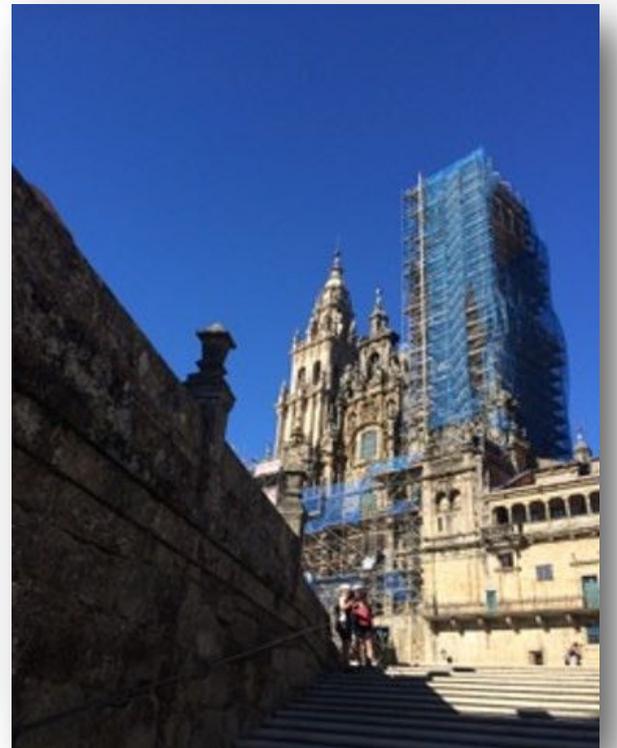


Give me my scallop
– shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618)

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA
COMPLETION STAMP





Arrival

And so to the arrival, the fourth part of medieval pilgrimage, the part that can often take on too much significance and much of the importance of the journey itself be lost as a result. Having made a number of long distance journeys in the past I was aware of the mixed feelings that they brought, that in some ways could be a bit of an anti climax. No brass bands, no flag waving, no speeches or applause and a definite sense of 'now what do I do?' After a length of time with a definite goal or purpose it is a bit daunting to arrive at that goal. Well it is if we see it in human terms of success or failure, having achieved something. In those terms the arrival at a place of pilgrimage always has the danger of being an anti-climax especially if the journey there has taken a number of years. The German group I met a few times in previous years, this year have completed another leg of their journey and will hopefully arrive next year.

But what then?

Arrival is a mountain top experience! I remember one pilgrim saying that they didn't see the point in walking down hill. I did suggest that if we don't do that then we would be stuck up a mountain and when Peter suggested that at the Transfiguration it wasn't taken seriously. God gives us mountain top experiences, special moments in our lives, that help us on our journey. The Transfiguration came before the journey to Jerusalem and the suffering and death of Jesus (and gave a glimpse of the resurrection).



For a number of years I had imagined what it would be like to arrive in Santiago and wondered if I would actually ever to be given the privilege of arriving there. So no wonder it felt like Christmas Eve as we were within five kilometres poised ready to arrive early in the morning on the 2nd of July, 2016. I will let my diary tell the rest of the story and what happened next. And then dear reader you are pretty much up to speed and know as much if not more than I do as I write these experiences to share with you. I will begin with a transcript of the YouTube podcast that I made that afternoon. It is the only one I made on the whole journey:



"Well today is a very special day for me. I am here in Santiago da Compostela. So I wanted to share this moment with my family and with my friends and my family, who are my friends in the parish and all those

who are with me in spirit today. So first of all, to assure you that my thoughts and my prayers are very much with all of you All of the intentions that I promised I'd bring are with you today. This is an extraordinary journey, it has been an extraordinary journey since 2012 I set off from home on the 25th of July and I remember celebrating mass with Mum and Dad on the 24th of July the eve of St James and now for years later I am here in Santiago. I am here with my brother Dominic, and I'm here with Martin a very good friend of mine on the Camino and so today we arrived early this morning. We had five kilometres to walk, we arrived it was beautiful and tranquil. We had chance to go



in to the cathedral to pray at the statue of St James and to pray at the tomb. Then we went and without much of a queue we sorted out our certificates and we came back for the mass at midday. It is very special to remember everybody at Mass,



that's the greatest moment. The priest at the mass, the main celebrant reminded us that Christ is the centre of all that we do, that he is the door and he is the Way.

And very unexpectedly I was allowed to speak some of the Eucharistic prayer in English and then, you may know, there is a very famous, very big thurible in Santiago that sweeps the whole of the cathedral and I didn't think that we were going to see that today, but at the end they began to set up and I was allowed to put some of the incense in, which was an extraordinary moment. At the end of the whole mass I was allowed to give the blessing for Pilgrims. So all of you are very much with us today, so we've been able to do everything that we wanted to do, to remember everybody at the tomb and now we're celebrating, but we are celebrating with all of you. So goodbye, God bless, my journey continues, hopefully to Lourdes but you are all very much with me in my heart in my prayers."

4.20pm July 2nd Santiago



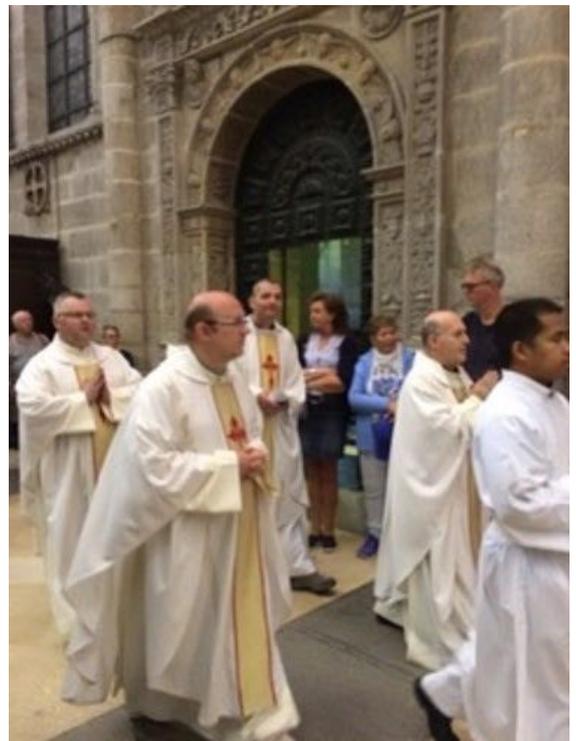
Saturday 2nd July 2016

An extraordinary day thanks be to God! I'm sat in the hotel at 5.20pm after a very, very special day. Celebrated mass last night for some of the pilgrims, one from Spain, one from Italy, Dom, Martin and a lady from Germany. I talked about seeing the cathedral for the first time like a lighthouse but actually Christ is our lighthouse, our way, our truth and our life and he is with us as we carry on our journey as pilgrims.



Early start on the road at 6.30 and I prayed the rosary and Divine mercy and was aware that suddenly we would arrive. Due to work at front of cathedral after arriving in the square we had to enter by the side. I sang 'Lord I need You.' Visited the statue first then the tomb. Then went in with Dom and blest the icon at the tomb. And gave it to him. Then we went to get our

certificates, there was only a small queue then had a cooked breakfast. We put rucksacks in hotel then coffee then back to cathedral. Dom and Martin sat where they could see thurible in case they used it. So I went to sacristy ready to concelebrate. They checked my Celebret which I would expect and I was invited to say part of Eucharistic Prayer Two. Then I ended up sat at the front, giving out communion, and they used the thurible and I was

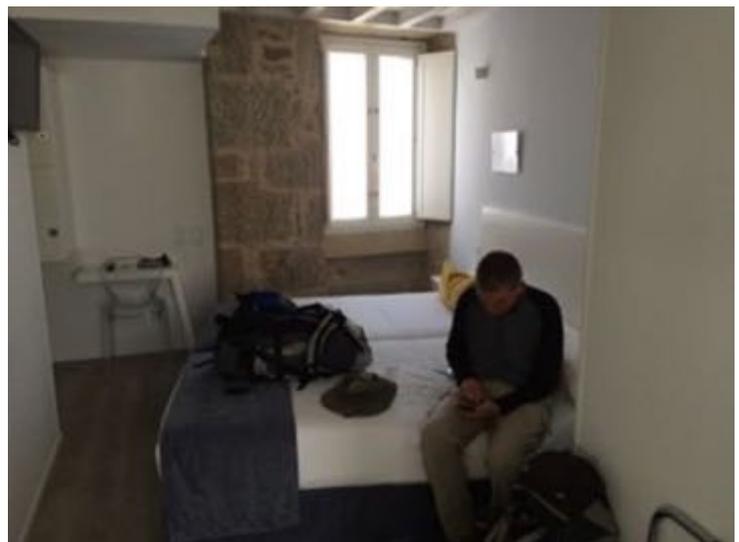


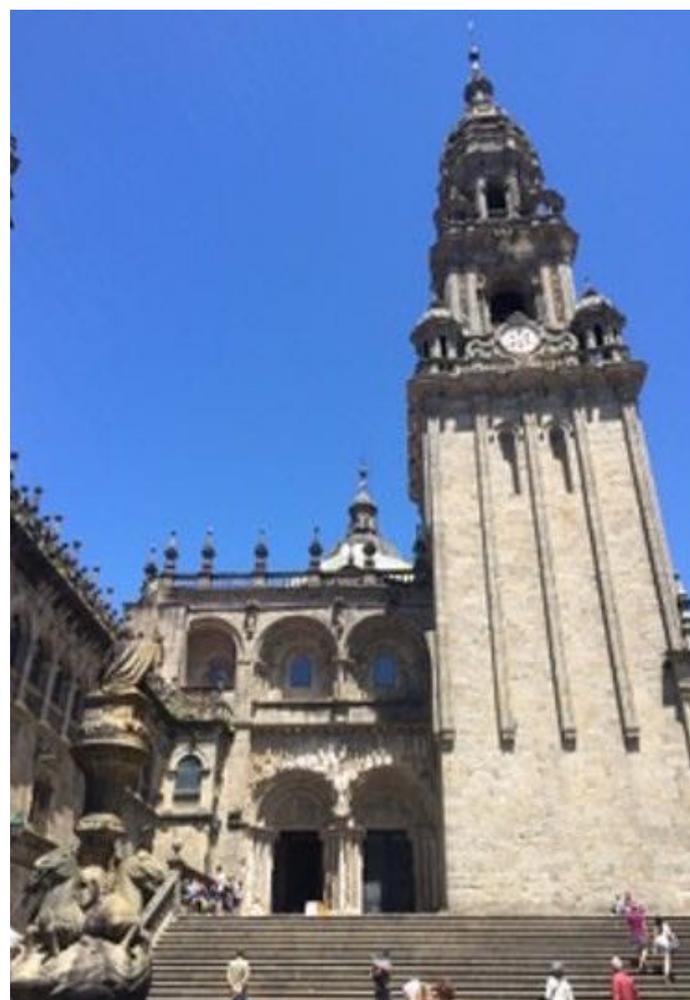
invited to put some incense in and then to give the Pilgrim blessing!! Extraordinary..

So since then we have been meeting people and celebrating and going out again in an hour. I've decided to leave early tomorrow rather than go to the Cathedral again as it could take away from a very special day. I'm planning on celebrating mass early with Dom and walk with him towards the station then 20 kilometres to place I missed last time. So today is a very special day **AMDG** and tomorrow the adventure continues and could be much harder. Dom takes mum's ashes with him and I walk to Lourdes to be open to God's healing and intercession of Our Lady

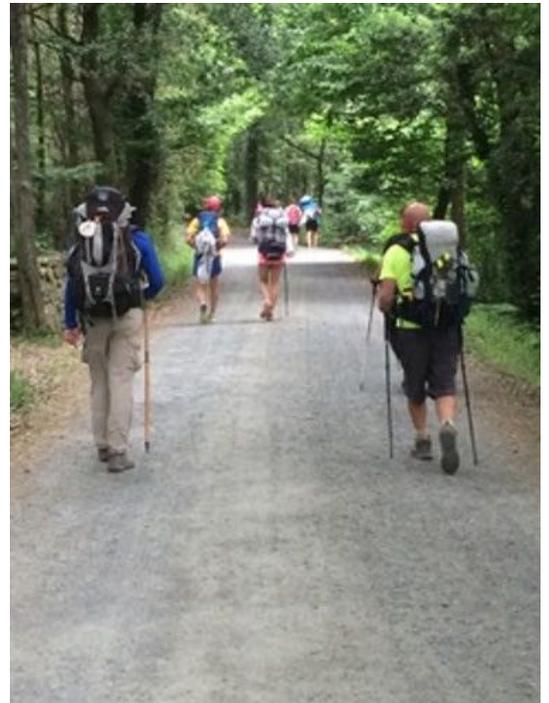


ARRIVAL





Views and sights of Santiago

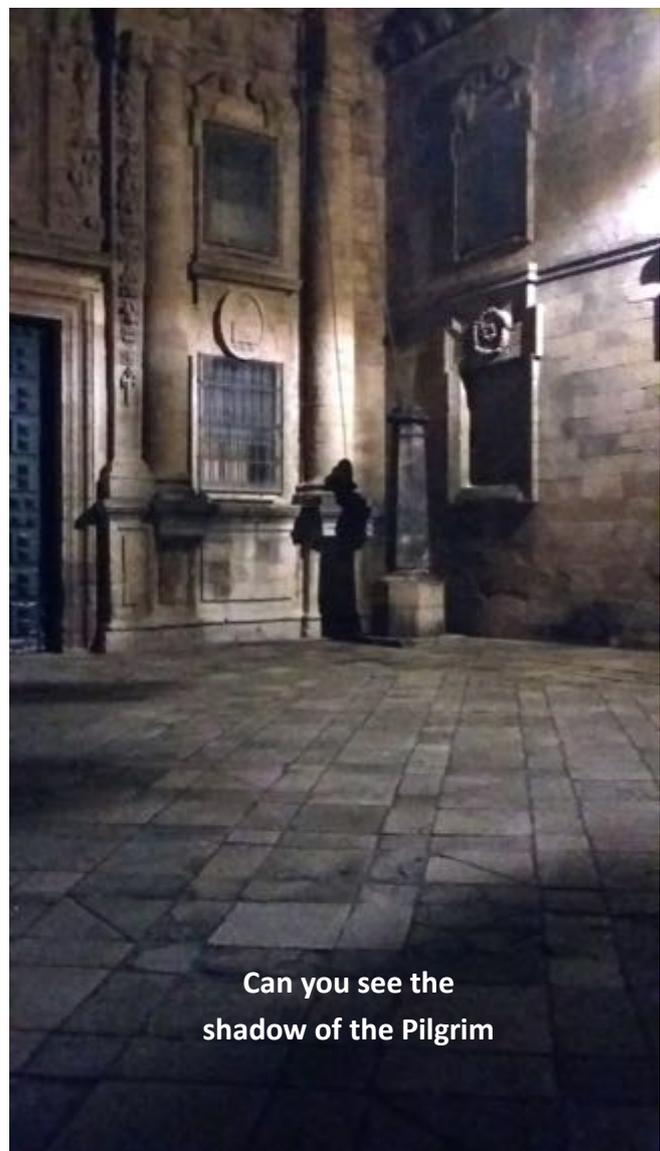
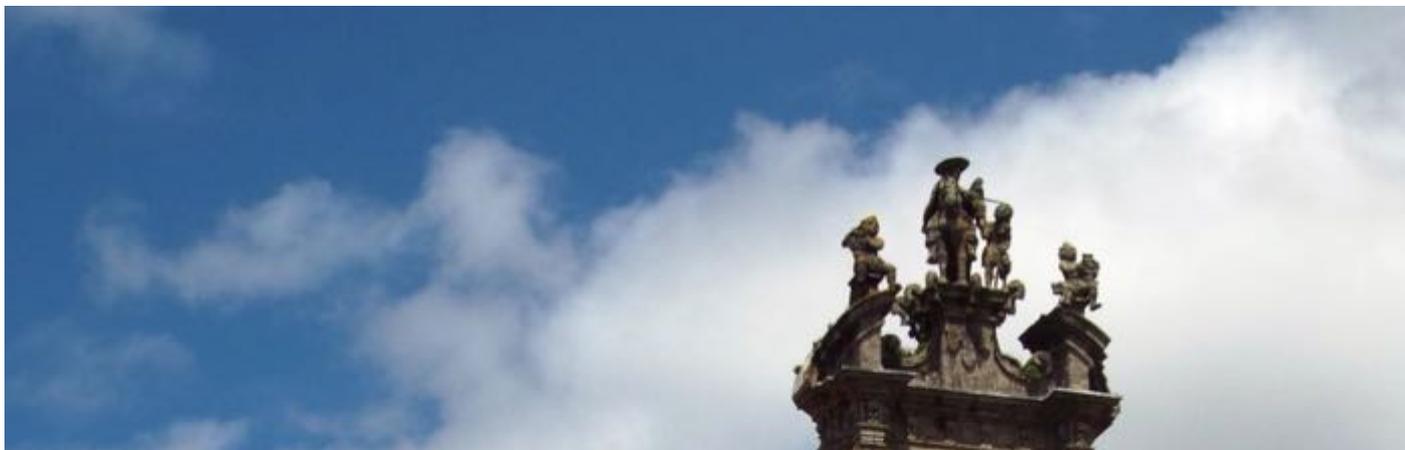


**On the journey,
Walking
Eating
Sleeping**



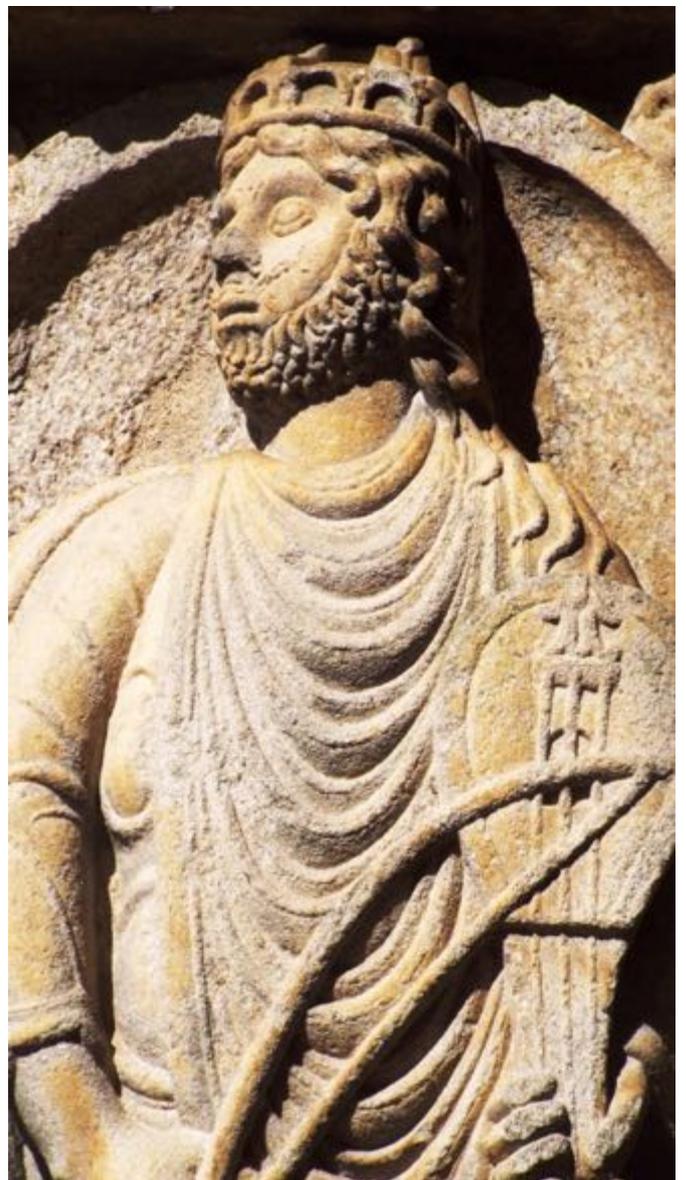
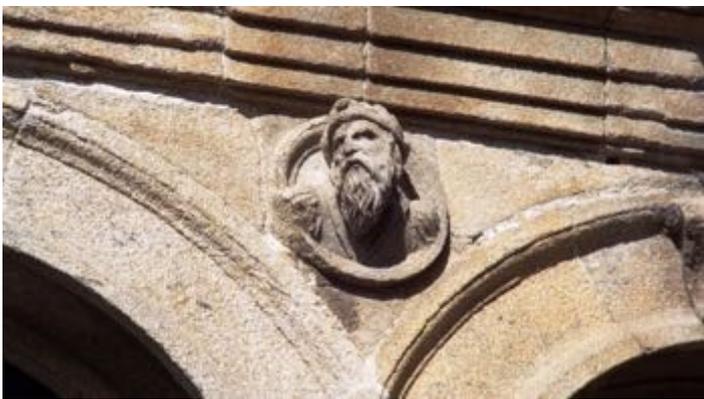


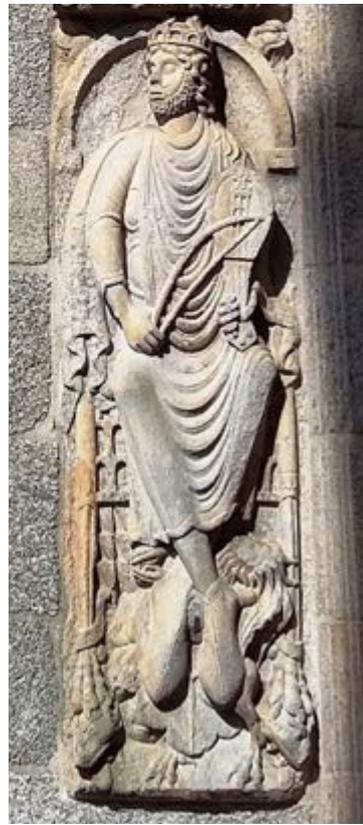
Photos above taken by Dom, Fr Chris' brother when he joined him for the last part of the Camino Frances

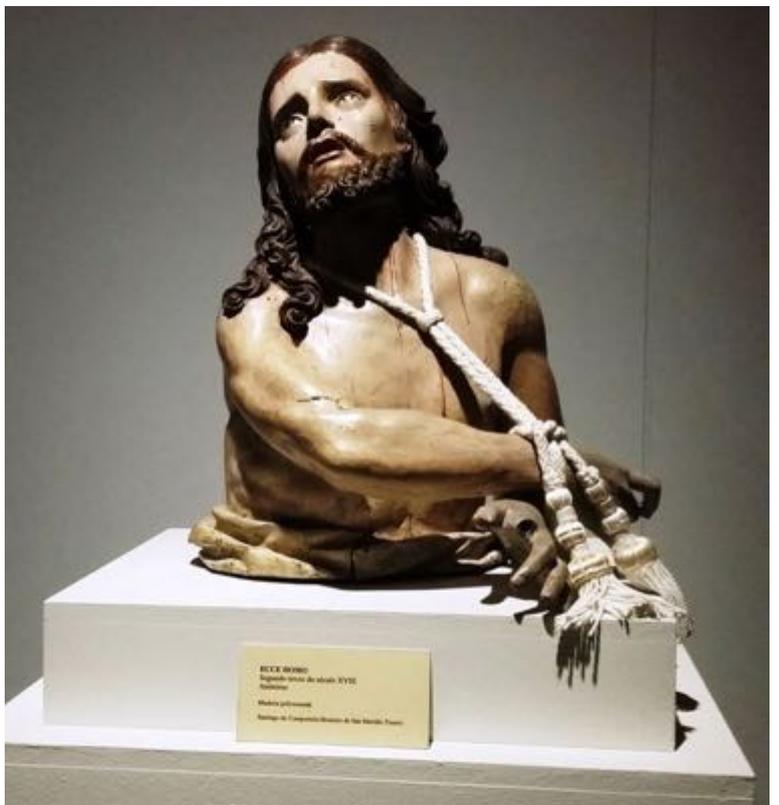
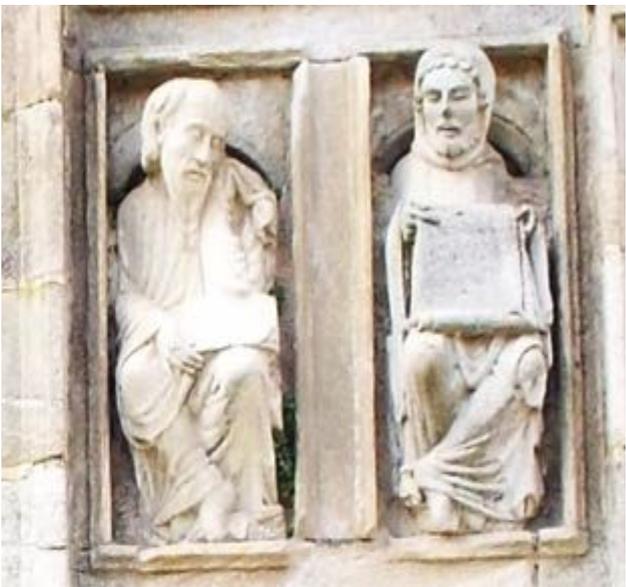
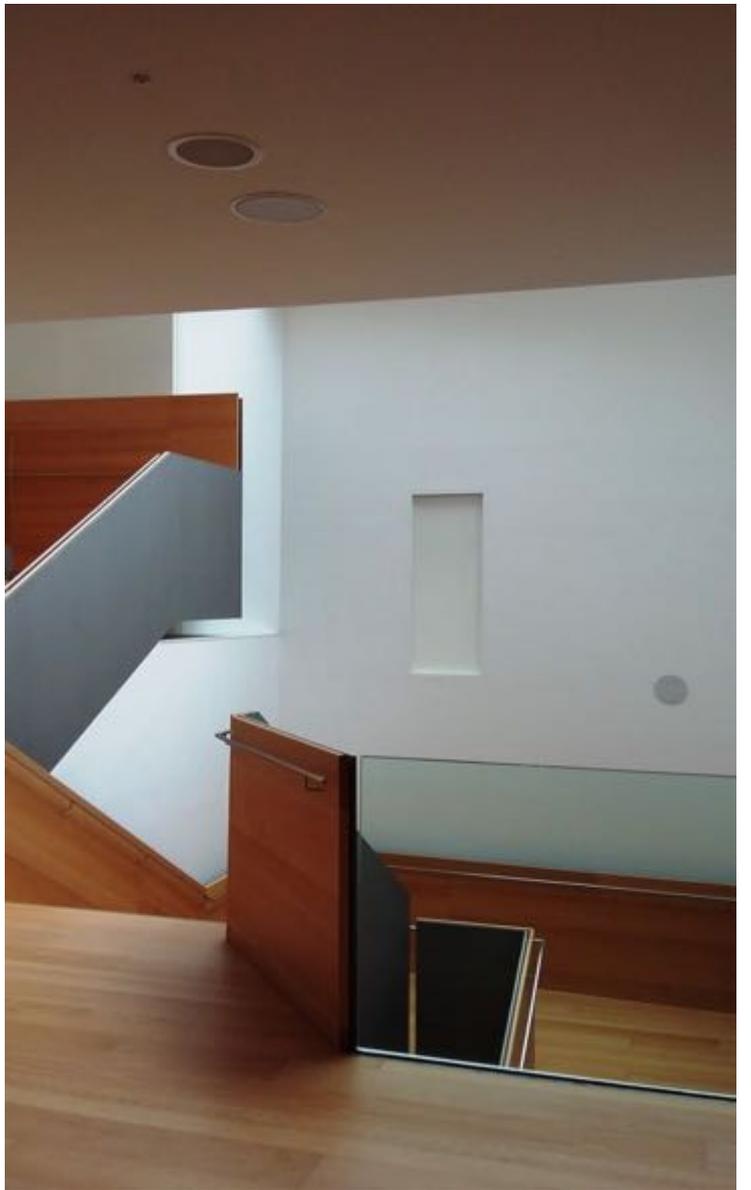


Can you see the shadow of the Pilgrim

Santiago's Remarkable and historically unspoilt Cultural Heritage in terms of its Architecture, Art works, particularly the Religious carvings, paintings, stonework and sculpture. All to be seen in and around the Cathedral, churches, Museum of Pilgrimage, University, and the surrounding city Civic buildings.







Art work and architecture photos by Len Bates taken during his visit to Santiago on his Camino Ingles 2016