

Reflections for 25th July 2021

St. James the Apostle

The Way

A few years ago a friend gave me a film on DVD, because they thought it might interest me – and they were right. It is called ‘The Way’, and it stars Martin Sheen as a father who is adjusting to the recent death of his son as he walks the Camino (which means ‘the way’). The Camino is a traditional pilgrimage route across Europe and northern Spain to the city of Santiago de Compostela, and to the cathedral which, according to tradition, contains the remains of St. James. In our calendar for the church year, we remember St. James the Apostle this Sunday, on July 25th.

Partly as a result of watching this film, I wanted experience walking the Camino for myself, and over recent years I have been able to go on pilgrimages to walk several sections of it – but not all, so far.

Pilgrimage is one of the richest images of the Christian life, the journey of following Jesus. My Camino pilgrimages have involved meeting a variety of different people, and sharing parts of the journey with them. There have been good times and great experiences, as well as some setbacks, and hard times and painful moments. And, along the way, the gift of encountering God anew in some unlikely places and unexpected moments.

Any walk, any journey, and any part of our lives, can become a pilgrimage – a journey with God – if we approach it with an open heart, and learn to be attentive to any way in which we may encounter God anew, and receive God’s blessings.

Revd John Waller

Lord, be for us
a companion on our journey,
a guide at our intersections,
strength in our weariness,
defence against dangers,
shelter on the way,
shade against the heat,
light in the darkness,
and comfort in discouragement,
so that we may return renewed,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible readings: Acts 11. 27 – 12. 2; 2 Corinthians 4. 7-15; Matthew 20. 20-28

Story: James and John – who is the greatest? (based on the gospel passage)