



LOG Newsletter
2019

As this year spins towards its close, we are reminded of the animals that fill our lives: The little Donkey revered for carrying the pregnant Virgin Mary to Bethlehem, Rudolph, Santa's Reindeer, the Camels which transported the Three Wise Men to Bethlehem and the Robin which often features on Christmas Cards.

The reminder for the LOG Reunion on Saturday 5 October 2019 was sent out separately this year.

SCHOOL NEWS

Please refer to the following websites for information.

1. Loreto Convent School Nana Sita Road (previously Skinner Street) Pretoria at www.loreto.co.za This has an updated "Timeline" to include the 140th Anniversary of Loreto Sisters in Southern Africa.
2. Loreto School Queenswood at www.loreto.co.za
3. Loreto Primary School, Strand, Cape, at www.loreto.co.za

NEWS OF LORETO SISTERS

1. We mourn the passing of Sr. Linda Prest in January 2019 and Sister Marian Moriarty in August 2019. Both had funeral Masses at Nazareth House Chapel. Both were remembered in Obituaries in the "Southern Cross".
2. Sister Marian worked extensively with refugees. See the "Pretoria News" of Wednesday 11 September 2019.
3. Sister Emer is overseas at present and will not attend the 2019 LOG Reunion.
4. Go to www.ibvm.org for further information on the activities of Loreto Sisters.

LORETO OLD GIRLS NEWS

LOG Commendations

We sing the praises of

- Ursula (Sinovich) Jadrijevic (Skinner 1966) who leads us at Mass for hymn-singing and plays jolly tunes during our LOG Reunion in the Shirley Kay (School) Hall. Bravo, Ursula, and thanks! You are our wonderful and faithful musician! Bravo!

LOGS on Holiday

- Gracie Pozzo (Skinner 1947) had an enjoyable holiday in Natal this year. The seven-day tour was organised by Maxima Tours and included a stay at Drakensville, a visit to the Drakensburg Boys Choir and a visit to uShaka World in Durban. Well done!

- Maureen Greet (Skinner 1955) again visited her friend near Mossel Bay, twice this year.

LOG Travellers

- Neja/Kornelia (Jadrijevich) Du Chenne (Skinner 1959), with members of her family, went to Medjugorje in September 2019.

A note on Medjugorje – for years many travellers visited Medjugorje without the Church's approval. Finally, in the "Southern Cross" of 21-27 August 2019, we are told that Medjugorje pilgrimages have now been authorised by the Pope. More than 40 000 apparitions at Medjugorje have been claimed over 38 years. Medjugorje attracts up to 3 million visitors annually. The Marian centre offers a model for new evangelisation.

LOG Regional Reunion

- Hillcrest LOGS of 1973 held their 45th class Reunion on Saturday 24 November 2018 at 12h30 in Pretoria.

LOG Wedding

- Claire, daughter of Katherine (Joseph) Marshall (Hillcrest 1971), was married to Mark Swacina at Witbank Cathedral on 15 December 2018. Katherine's sister Felicity (Joseph) O'Donnell (Hillcrest 1974) and her husband Dennis attended the wedding. Felicity is Claire's Godmother. Congratulations.

LOG Achievements

- Maxine, daughter of Jean-Marie (Fouché) Murray (Skinner 1988), achieved not only a Silver medal but also a Gold medal at the Tae Kwan Do SA Championships on Saturday 7 September 2019 at the Sun Arena. Well done!

LOG visit to Portugal

- Gail (Atteridge) Carreira (Skinner 1971) and her husband Mario, had a three month stay in Tomar, Portugal. They also attended the wedding of a friend in Holland. Well done!

LOG memories

- Adrienne (Connell) Humphrey (Lydenburg 1958) writes as follows:

As requested, I am sending the history of my mother, Enid De Souza. I mentioned that Enid De Souza was head girl in Pretoria in 1925.

My story is about 2 Loreto Convents. Lydenburg and Pretoria.

Enid De Souza was born in Lydenburg and attended Loreto Convent for Primary School. She then moved on to Loreto in Pretoria. Enid became Head Girl. My mother was very popular and did well at Loreto, Pretoria.

After matric she trained as a teacher and then taught at the Catholic All Souls School in Coventry, UK. She also did a trip around Europe. She kept an excellent diary which I still have today.

Enid returned to South Africa and was posted to a school in Swaziland. In Swaziland she met Patrick Connell and they got married in the chapel of Loreto Convent, Lydenburg.

I was 3 to 4 years when shortly after Enid became very ill she died tragically. Because of these consequences I was then placed at Loreto Convent, Lydenburg. My Grandmother, Ellen de Souza, gave me a home. I went from Grade One to Matric at Loreto.

Those days became the happiest days of my life. I was head girl in Matric. My guardians throughout my school years were my father, Patrick Connell, my grandmother, Ellen De Souza, my Loreto nuns, who were always good to me.

Audrey Geary from the All Souls School in Coventry sent me books every year. Two books for my birthday and two books for Christmas. So from a young age I have learnt to love reading.

The old Loreto Convent in Lydenburg is now A National Monument.

Thank you for requesting me to share these memories.

- Cecilia (Bettini) Wilson (Skinner 1968) writes as follows:

Although I left in Standard 9 to go to a private commercial college, the 11 years spent at Loreto Skinner Street are still vividly etched into my memory; the good and the bad, the latter being Mother Gabriel cutting my fringe at assembly in the quadrangle and a teacher throwing a blackboard cleaner at me whilst Merope Nicholls and I were having a lovely chat at the back of the classroom ... I could go on and on!

LOG Pilgrimages

- In September 2018 Joan (Acker) Kerswill (Skinner 1971) went on a pilgrimage to France. This pilgrimage covered places such as Lisieux, Chartres, Solesmes Abbey, Lourdes, Avignon, the Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette, Le Puy Cathedral, Ars, the Shrine of St. John Vianney, Nevers and a full day in Paris to include Sacre Coeur and Notre Dame.

- Felicity (Joseph) O'Donnell (Hillcrest 1974) and her husband Dennis had a wonderful tour as outlined below. Their tour included the Camino.

My 2018 Pilgrimage (a Camino de Santiago experience)

My husband, Dennis and I began planning this pilgrimage early on in 2018, after I had been rushed into hospital to have my gall bladder removed. This was very traumatic and could have turned out badly. This gave us more reason to have a truly spiritual thanksgiving pilgrimage, not indulging in luxuries. There would be no hotels and no luggage being transported. We decided on the Portuguese way and as the time approached, I became more anxious. Would I manage? Would my feet cope? Would I get blisters? Would my back pack be too heavy? Would we find beds in the Albergues? And so the concerns and fears grew too.

To make the most of our costly air tickets, we decided to add on a few more countries to our itinerary. We included England, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Lisbon and the island of Madeira. We planned to be in Madeira for the feast of the Assumption. We finally left South Africa on 15 July, 2018 and enjoyed a month's holiday in the UK and Europe, walking at every opportunity ensuring we would be fit for the Camino.

Ireland was magnificent and our stay in Knock was very spiritual. I thought and prayed for all the Loreto sisters who had an influence on me in my school life at Lydenburg and Hillcrest. Thank you to you all!

Portugal was also awesome. We managed to get to Fatima too. It is such a privilege being a Catholic and being able to spend time at these Shrines. The time spent in Madeira was great. If anyone gets the opportunity to get there for the feast of the Assumption, take it. Prayers, processions, flowers, fireworks, genuine people and good food are all part of these celebrations.



Our pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago de Compostella had many 'God moments'. We encountered some very friendly people and every day had new best friends. We struggled with accommodation at the municipal albergues (reminding me of dormitories at Hillcrest.) They were always full as the younger pilgrims got in before us and it is worked on a 'first come, first serve' basis. After trying four places on our first night and being rejected, we became so despondent. We now understood how Mary felt when she was told there was no room in the inn. We soon learnt that 'hostals' were good alternatives. Of course they were more expensive but we overcame that by sharing our meals



On our third day we had a tough time finding accommodation again. We were rejected four times. Our fifth place was a convent, the Santuarion da Aparicions. When we got there, it was closed for renovations. The nun sitting at a desk either liked the look of us or saw the desperate look on my face and called us in. She eventually found us private accommodation with an old couple in a private home. While waiting for Ricardo, she invited us to go up to the chapel of apparition. She explained that this was where Our Lady appeared to Lucy (one of the Fatima children). The peace and tranquillity was beautiful. That was another God moment as we may have missed this if we had found a place to stay earlier. But the stress of not knowing where we would be sleeping each night was awful. After two more nights in Albergues and two more days of rejections, we got onto WiFi and decided to book accommodation for the next two nights.

Our dream had been fulfilled. We walked in the footsteps of St James, exploring his ministry and finally arriving at Santiago de Compostello where his body lies in the Cathedral. We had overcome the exhaustion, the pain and the stresses. We made sacrifices of thanksgiving. WE DID IT! YES, WE DID IT!



We arrived just in time for Mass at midday. The moment arrived at the end of Mass when the incense was lit. Then there was the swinging of the Botafumeiro, the giant thurible. This was a very moving experience.

I look forward to some more adventures, perhaps another Camino one day.

- Louise (Post) Fouché (Queenswood 1988) and her husband, Francois Fouché, undertook the Camino. Francois writes as follows:

LIFE ON THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

On Good Friday two years ago my wife Louise (an old girl from Loreto Convent Queenswood) and I set out from St Jean Pied a Port, a small village at the foot of the Pyrenees Mountains, on the border between France and Spain. Destination: the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. We were pilgrims on the Way of St James of the Field of Stars-the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

Perhaps it is necessary to take a step back and just recount how we came to this point. Five years previously I had to close my business and suddenly after 20 years of hard work found myself unemployed. Now this was not just an employment crisis but a life crisis. Even though I was Catholic, I had grown up in a strict Calvinist, Afrikaner environment. From my mother (who was Catholic) I was drilled that people never got divorced, no matter what. From my Calvinist environment I was drilled that you earned your daily bread by the sweat of your brow. Being over 40, employment opportunities were bleak. I decided to go back to university and do my Master's Degree to improve my opportunities.

About two years later we started a programme in our extended family called Life in the Spirit. It ran from Easter to Pentecost, and included a number of assignments. One was to ask for a gift from the Holy Spirit, and to decide what you would do if you received the gift. You had to write these down on a piece of paper that would be put on a plate on the eve of Pentecost and set alight. Only yourself and the Holy Spirit would know what was written down.

On the day before Pentecost my brother-in-law and I traveled to Lambertsbaai on the West Coast to celebrate Pentecost with Fr Gregory Charnock, a very spiritual priest, who had introduced us to the Life in the Spirit programme. On entering Lambertsbaai my brother-in-law turned to me and asked where my piece of paper was. As a not-so-dedicated participant in the programme I realized that I had never done the writing exercise. I scrambled for a pen in the cubby hole and fished out an ATM slip from my wallet. What would I ask of the Holy Spirit? Employment sounded like a good request and I wrote it down. What would I do if I received the gift? What about doing the Camino? A nice hike in the north of Spain for six weeks sounded like a very good idea. I wrote down that I would do the camino in five years. (What was I thinking?—maybe I should have offered to say some Our Fathers and a rosary!!)

Two years later I got a good job. While I was celebrating, my dear wife said “but what about the Camino?”. I then started reading up about the Camino. One book stated that: “an oath of pilgrimage is binding on the soul. Failure to fulfil such an oath passes to the next generation.” I read that aloud to my children. A chorus of objection flowed from their lips—I was in this on my own, even if they had to put me on the plane in a wheelchair!! Ungrateful spawn of my loins.

An incident happened prior to our leaving that made me think that a higher hand was at work in this whole pilgrimage. Because I had to take seven weeks leave, I could not take leave for two years. I had to literally only take leave for emergencies. I had exactly the number of leave days left that I needed. I needed a visa. So after much stressing about deadlines I made an appointment at the Spanish consulate in Cape Town. I managed to coordinate it with a meeting in Cape Town so that I would not have to put in a day's unpaid leave. Upon arrival I was greeted friendly enough by a consular official that started processing the application on a computer. Then he dropped the bombshell. I had to bring my passport back in two weeks to have the visa pasted in! Instead of returning the passport immediately the telephone rang and he started a conversation. This really irked me because I now had to find a way to return without taking leave. And would it be so difficult to ask the person at the other end of the line to just hold a minute while he hands me back my passport? After a leisurely ten-minute conversation, he hung up and turned to hand back my passport. Suddenly something on the computer caught his eye. What now I thought? Then he sat down behind the computer and said to me: “Your visa has been approved—this has never happened so quickly before”. I got my visa immediately and did not have to come back in two weeks' time. I immediately decided that I had to make the pilgrimage before I got zapped by lightning or something from up high.

A few years previously I had, reluctantly, made a pilgrimage to Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If I sound like a world traveler, I am not. My mother-in-law sponsored that pilgrimage. On one of the days we went to a talk by Fr Svet, a Croatian, Franciscan priest. The theme of his talk, in broken English was: The meaning of pilgrimage. It boiled down to three words: Pilgrimage is Prayer. Just as Jesus says in Matthew 6:6 that one has to go into a quiet room, lock the door and pray, so one leaves behind all, family, work, stresses and goes on pilgrimage to find the quiet time to not just talk to God, but more importantly to **hear** what he is saying. And I am glad that I took the full seven weeks, because it takes a while to stop being worldly in the conversation with God and start being spiritual.

Two further things happened before we left. One was that for my birthday the previous year I asked Louise to buy me a Daily Missal so that we could follow the readings for the day. God knew that telling people to be holy was not enough, he had it written down! And still we don't get the message. The second was a sermon by a visiting priest, Fr Larry Kaufman on the Samaritan woman at the well from John 4. What was of interest to me was the progress of the discussion, first disdain, then interest, then intellectualization then spiritualization, and finally acceptance. These steps were clearly visible during the course of my pilgrimage. Perhaps just a comment to prospective pilgrims. Give yourself enough time to follow through. At a meeting of the Confraternity of St James, the organization in South Africa responsible for pilgrimages to Santiago, one lady asked if three days were enough? She had a wedding in London over a weekend and then had to attend a conference in Germany from the Thursday. She even had her diary out. And I was thinking how this conversation was playing out in Heaven. "God I can fit you in between my sister's wedding and the conference. Would that work for you Lord?"

Which brings me to two hours into the Camino and Louise and I looking at each other and saying; "What the heck have we gotten into?" It was only two hours into the Camino and we were bushed. Perhaps God knew what he was doing because a light rain started and we could only see about ten meters ahead of us. I think that if we knew how high we had to climb, we would have stopped on the first day. Louise was a bit shell shocked as we stopped for the first day after eight kilometers. She could not see us making the entire pilgrimage. I knew from my military days that we could, the rule is to take as many breaks as was necessary, eat, drink, even sleep, but never stop. Here was lesson one in Christian faith, you can reach God, in spite of everything, just don't stop believing. An interesting observation on my relationship with Louise, during the first five weeks of the pilgrimage she was taking strain and struggling to keep going, and I supported and motivated her. During the last week I couldn't any more and was flagging, and she became the one to keep us going.

Perhaps it is necessary to say some word regarding the process of pilgrimage. As a Catholic, pilgrimage and understanding pilgrimage is easy for me. However, others don't understand and therefore do not achieve the full value of pilgrimage. I started reading the book "Elders" by Ernst Grundling to get a feel for the Camino but soon realized that it was not what I was after. The first thing is that I prepared weeks in advance for the Camino, not physically but spiritually. He just jumped on an airplane to go for a long walk. After the Camino I was talking to a distant family member and he said that he too wanted to walk the Camino. My first question was why do you want to do it. He looked at me in a weird way as to ask: "what do you mean Why?". He had no idea why he wanted to go on pilgrimage. As Fr Svet would have asked: What is your prayer, what do you want to speak to God about? I knew that my prayer on the Camino was one of thanksgiving. A prayer of thanksgiving for the employment that I had received. I met an Afrikaans, Protestant woman from Port Elizabeth in Santiago de Compostela, and asked her the same question. She told me that she was very blessed with a happy family, a good income and a large house. When a friend told her about the

Camino she decided to do it as an act of thanksgiving. She clearly had a good grasp of what the Camino was about-better perhaps than my Catholic relative.

Also necessary before leaving is a pilgrim's mass. I asked our local priest to do one and he did it the week before we left. Of importance is the blessing of the rucksack, shoes and walking stick. The Sunday before that, at the normal Mass, I made our declaration of pilgrimage. This was an important step in the past as it allowed the whole community to assist and participate in a pilgrimage. Louise took an old shoebox, made a slit in the lid and put some sheets of paper next to the box at the back of the church. I made a deal with the parishioners: If they were willing to pray for us every day we would take their prayers to St James. We also contacted family and friends. In the end we had forty responses. Every day we offered up the suffering (yes, we suffered!) of that day for the intentions of one of the persons on the list. And if you think it is just symbolic, consider one of our last days before Santiago. As I said, I really took strain the last week. On this particular day I was at rock bottom. Louise suggested that we just walk a couple of kilometers and reassess after that. About an hour into the day, I suddenly got a weird feeling. It was as though a slight breeze was blowing **through** my body. I got the fright of my life. But it was as though it softly propelled me forward. I then realised that somebody must be praying for me at that moment, probably back in South Africa. It lasted for about twenty minutes-the time it takes to say a rosary. We made our twenty kilometres that day!

During the pilgrimage it is necessary to talk to God. It's what it is all about. On the leaflet that the Confraternity gave us during their meeting was a comment by one of the pilgrims: "I was looking for God but did not find Him". Well the first question I want to ask is did you take your Bible? Louise and I started each morning with the Daily Missal readings. Because it was the Pentecost season, Easter to Pentecost, all the readings were about the Holy Spirit. This was instrumental in my forming a spiritual understanding of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, we said the rosary every morning when we started walking and did two Novenas, the Novena of the Divine Mercy during the week after Easter, and the Novena to the Holy Spirit in the week preceding Pentecost. Pilgrims should take note the Spanish Bishops Conference has instructed that each church on the Camino must have a pilgrim's Mass every day between the 1st of May and 31st of October. Masses are usually between 17:00 and 19:00 and are displayed at the auberges. Asked the hospitaliero working at the auberge for the place and time of mass.

At one auberge (as the pilgrim's hostels are known) we shared a room with two Italians covered in tattoos. Louise was quite concerned and whispered: "They are going to kill us in our sleep!" One of them had an eye tattooed on his leg, with a Latin inscription. Louise, whose curiosity overcame her fear asked him what the inscription said. He replied that it was a quote from the book *The Little Prince*: What is important is invisible to the eye. At the convent of Madres Benedictinas in Sahagun the Mother Superior handed out a slip of paper to each pilgrim rolled and neatly tied with a piece of string. Unfortunately, it was written in Spanish, but the quote ended with the Bible verse from which it came. Luckily Louise had taken a small Gideon version of the New Testament and Psalms. Louise's quote was from Matthew 27:20 "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Interesting the Spanish version stated: "Fin del Mundo-to the end of the World". Mine was from Luke 11:11 "Ask and it shall be given unto you". God talks to you on the pilgrimage if you are willing to listen.

Ernst Grundling stated that the end of the Camino at Santiago was a bit of a disappointment. Our experience could not have been more different. We arrived at the cathedral a week earlier than I had calculated. I built in enough time that we would finish even if we had some challenges but this was not necessary. One of the reasons is that we never walked on

a Sunday. This gave us a rest day. Many of the pilgrims that we met along the way that walked ahead of us early on, we found later had to take breaks of a number of days because of injuries. Our rest days meant that we never missed a day of walking. When we arrived in Santiago we met many of the pilgrims that we thought were many days ahead to find that they had only arrived the previous day. Because pilgrimage is a process it demands certain actions. Before leaving make a declaration of pilgrimage and have a pilgrim's mass. Then attend mass every day on pilgrimage, read the Bible daily and say the rosary-add a Novena or two for good measure. Then close the eye of this world and open the eye that sees the things that are important.

When a pilgrimage ends there are also a number of actions. One: do an act of charity, I gave my long pants to a priest to give to the poor when the weather turned warmer, it lightened my load at the same time. However, a cold spell a week later made me regret this. Two, go to confession. Three attend the pilgrim's mass and receive the Eucharist and Four do a vigil at the tomb of St James. We arrived on Ascension Sunday, a week before our planned arrival on Pentecost. There was some festival going that day. We were both past suffering and pain and did whatever we could just to put one foot before the other. The last few kilometers to Santiago could have been to the moon for all we felt. It just did not end. As we entered the city I saw a garden with some roses in it. I picked two and said a small prayer for the owner from whom I had just stolen the roses. I needed them for the Mary, the Mother of pilgrims, because I needed all the help I could get to do those last few kilometers. Just before we entered the old city I saw a small sign pointing to a Dominican Convent. About two hundred meters before the cathedral I saw the towers. We were here, I could almost touch it! Suddenly one of the pilgrims we met previously appeared out of a side alley and greeted Louise with a shout and started a conversation. I could have happily beaten him with the roses!! There was the cathedral, our destination for 800km just two hundred meters away and he wanted to have a talk and catch up on old times! Eventually I dragged Louise away and rushed to the cathedral. I am coming Lord. We have arrived, You may now open the heavenly choirs and angels may sing hallelujah. Open the Portico of Glory so that Your servants may enter. We walked twice around the cathedral before we realised the Portico of Glory was closed for renovations! We had to enter through a humble side door. I rushed past the main altar because I was looking for somewhere else. If I knew my Catholic bretheren well the cathedral will somewhere contain a side chapel dedicated to Mary. And so it was. Behind the main altar was a small side Chapel dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians-how appropriate. I laid the two roses down and Louise and I walked outside into the sunshine. We were finished. Well, finished walking but not finished with the pilgrimage, that would have to wait a week until Pentecost. While we were sitting against the cathedral wall suddenly friends we made during the pilgrimage started appearing. And for the rest of the day we kept on bumping into other. What a joyous reunion. And we sat as seasoned pilgrims, enjoying our rest.

Later that day we received our certificates from the pilgrim's office and set off to the Seminare Minor, the auberge in Santiago. On the way there we got a message to the Seminare Minor was full. The visitors to the Ascension festival had filled up even that great space. Louise burst out in tears. During the whole pilgrimage we had never not had a place to stay-twice we were the last two persons to book in, but we were never turned away. Now here at the end we face this catastrophe. Then I remembered the sign to the Dominican Convent. I left my bag with Louise and set off to find the place. When I got there I found that part of the convent had been turned into a small hotel and yes one last room with a double bed and our own shower was available. To us it could have been the Ritz. I booked it immediately, went back to fetch Louise and we spent of last night of walking in luxury (even if it was only one star).

Then we took a week off to go to the sea at A Coruna and Finisterre (end of the World in Spanish). Unlike Ernst our destination was Santiago and not some Celtic place of worship. I had no problem going to Finisterre but I was taking the bus! Which brought us back to the cathedral in Santiago the Saturday before Pentecost. Time now do end the pilgrimage as expected. There is confession in English every day after the English mass. We arrived too late for that. But surely in a Holy city such as Santiago it would be easy to get confession in English. After stopping about twenty priests in the street and at the cathedral, all denying command of the English language it dawned on us the challenge might be greater than we anticipated. A sense of panic was taking hold of me. What if I could not do confession? Would my pilgrimage be wasted and all for naught? That night a sense of foreboding took hold of me at the Seminare Minor where we were now booked in.

Pentecost Day arrived and I was up early. Time for the vigil. All night vigils are no longer possible as theft at the cathedral meant that it was closed between 21:00 and 07:00. I was at the cathedral door at 07:00 with my white shirt on. I had carried it from South Africa, and over 800kms while it lay at the bottom of my rucksack. Louise had gotten a white dress in Santiago as well. She was supposed to carry hers from South Africa but after a number of shops and many dresses she still had not found one to her liking. There, a few meters from the cathedral, she found the perfect dress. Ah, the women in our lives! The white clothes were symbolic of old pilgrimages. It was kept as a sign of renewal. The old clothes, torn and weary from month of pilgrimage were burned or given to the poor and new clothes put on as a symbol of the new person (see 2 Cor 5-7). I went to the vigil alone, Louise would join me later for mass.

Down at the crypt of St James I was surprised at how small the space was, perhaps three people could kneel and three stand. During the day hundreds of pilgrims pass through in a queue, but this early in the morning there were only four. I started with a rosary as the kneeling places were already taken. After about twenty minutes a person left and I could kneel in front of the crypt. I slowly read the forty intersessions of the parishioners and friends. Then I said my own prayers. After about an hour I sensed that more people were arriving and that I should leave. My vigil was over. I went up into the cathedral and sat down in the quiet. It was cool and nice. I sat in the very front row, at the isle, in the "arms" of the cathedral. After about an hour at 09:00 Louise joined me. We read the daily readings and said a rosary, and sat waiting for mass at 10:00. This was the parish mass and conducted in Spanish. We were going to receive the Eucharist at the pilgrim's mass at 12:00 so we did not go to Communion. As the parish mass finished half a dozen men, dressed in cassocks seemed to appear from the stonework of the cathedral itself. They produced a thurible the size of a small washing machine, hung from the roof of the cathedral some thirty meters above. The priest ladled in incense with a small garden spade!! Then, by pulling on the rope they swung the thurible from one end of the cathedral to the other. Because we were in the front row on the isle it went right over our heads. I felt that I could almost touch it. What a sight! I remember feeling that it was fitting. The smoke of the incense rising has always been a symbol of the faithful's prayers rising to God, and I felt that St James was taking our prayers that I had delivered two hours previously in the crypt to God. How He answers them I cannot tell, but at least I felt that I had delivered them.

After mass I said to Louise that we should quickly get a cup of coffee at a coffee shop around the corner from the cathedral as it was still an hour to the pilgrim's mass. But still the issue of confession hung heavily on my mind.

At about 11:40 I suggested to Louise that we should return to the cathedral if we still wanted to get a good seat. As we came around the corner the queue to enter was stretching down the stairs and past the fountain, about 150 persons still waiting to enter. The cathedral was

full!! No amount of pleading with the guards at the door would allow us to the front of the queue. Patience was thin but we joined the back of the queue. Those were the longest twenty minute of our Camino. As the mass started we entered and the doors were closed about five persons behind us. There was nowhere to sit. But being a good Catholic, I knew that right at the back of the cathedral would be standing room. After about five minute of climbing over legs and squeezing past mass-goers we found some standing room at the back. There are about sixteen confessionals arranged around the inside wall of the cathedral. A priest came walking past and opened a confessional. Inside I could see a poster saying Espanõl, Italiano and English. I still wanted to indicate to Louise that this was a Godsend but she was already closing the door of the confessional and sitting down. She had seen the sign as well. After she came out I wanted to enter but a young lady in and Italian soccer team shirt cut in front of me. I waited. I don't know what she was confessing but she was in there a loongg time. About half an hour. Even her boyfriend, who was standing close to us, seemed to get uncomfortable.

When she came out I dived in. As I came out Communion was coming to an end. There were about five people ahead of me. Another two minutes and I would have missed Communion. There was a murmur from the pilgrims when the Bishop did not swing the thurible after mass. When we left Louise and I were stunned. Vigil, thurible, Confession, Communion. Not the way we planned it but in its chaotic ending, it was perfect. Any doubts about the Holy Spirit being in control of this pilgrimage was firmly put to rest.

Now I have to turn to the final part of the pilgrimage. Reaching Santiago, or any other place of pilgrimage, is not the end of a pilgrimage. The final act is to encourage others to go on pilgrimage. A passage that I read in the weeks before we left referred to a demoniac out of whom Jesus had driven his demons. The young man immediately announced that he would follow Jesus, but Jesus sternly forbade him. Rather Jesus ordered him to return to his village, to his family and friends saying: "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." (Luke 8:39) If you return from pilgrimage and do not declare how much God has done for you, you have not completed your pilgrimage. I pray that this testimony will help you decide what your prayer is and that you would take that prayer to God on the Way of Saint James of the Field of Stars.

God bless and Buen Camino.

Francois and Louise

LOG Enlightenment

Fr Kevin Reynolds writes as follows:

THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST

I am sure many readers are familiar with the name of Richard Rohr. He is an American Franciscan priest who is one of the best known spiritual writers of our age. Some might know him from his daily meditation on the internet.

Fr Rohr's latest book, THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST, was published earlier this year. It is the summation of his 75 years of experience and reflection. As such, it is rather intense in that each page contains a wealth of meaning. Therefore, the book needs to be read slowly and prayerfully.

Here are some telling observations in the National Catholic Reporter's review of the book, the subtitle of which is "How a forgotten reality can change everything we see, hope for and believe" (and, if I may add, liberate us in a remarkable manner).

First, the author's principal sources of inspiration are his earthly Franciscan tradition and the writings of St Paul.

It is suggested that one might begin with Appendix I, "The Four Worldviews", in which Rohr describes the *incarnational* view of reality, something evident in the Eastern Fathers, Celtic spirituality and many mystics. This *incarnational* worldview is defined as the Christ mystery, "the indwelling of the Divine Presence in everyone and everything since the beginning of time". God is not only in all things, but all things are in God.

The Christ mystery is the "transcendent" element in everything, but also the "infinite horizon" that pulls all things forward; it is the name of everything in its fullness.

Rohr emphasizes that he does not propose a *pantheist* view, but rather a *panentheist* one, that God is within all things. In short, there is no significant distinction between the natural and the supernatural, the holy and the profane.

The first incarnation, Rohr says, is creation itself. The second is Jesus of Nazareth, Christ's historical manifestation in time. Christ is personalized in Jesus in a world already soaked with His presence. Thus, Jesus who is both fully God and fully human reveals the universal pattern of self-emptying, death and resurrection. His life parallels the natural process itself which places Him in the cosmic process of ongoing incarnation.

Since incarnation is a continuous cosmic event, its third manifestation is in the community of believers, the body of Christ. Hence "Christ" is the universal metaphor for the ongoing incarnation, first in creation, then in the historical Jesus, and finally in those who follow Him.

The incarnational worldview is experienced especially through great love or great suffering. The work of religion is to help one recognize and recover the divine image in everything. This is the "forgotten reality" that will change everything. Since the schism of 1054, sadly the Western church no longer paid as much attention to this reality as it did in its first millennium.

Rohr describes in a very down to earth way the effect of this forgotten reality in his own life, like seeing The Universal Christ in the face of his beloved black Labrador dog, Venus. I can concur with this when I gaze into the face of my brother's black Alaskan/Chow, Hatchiko.

Experiencing The Universal Christ is made easier if one begins with the starting point of *original blessing* rather than *original sin*, the latter being first advanced by Augustine in the fifth century.

LOG Obituaries

We note with sadness and sincere condolences the passing of the following.

Carl Stegmann, beloved husband of Carol (Greet) Stegmann (Skinner 1971) on 3 August 2019; Jennifer (Jenny) (Muntz) Draper (Hillcrest 1955) on 2 December 2018; Diane (Leech) Scheckle (Skinner 1969) on 20 June 2019.

LOG Memoriam

Carl Stegmann husband of Carol Stegmann (nee Greet - matriculated Skinner 1971) and father of Andrew (29) and Peter (26) and brother-in-law to Maureen Greet (matriculated Skinner 1955) passed away suddenly at home on 3 August 2019. He is best remembered by us as a family as a wonderful, loving, caring and supportive husband, father, brother and friend to many. He was always there for us all and interested in and encouraged us in everything we did. He will be forever in our hearts: Carol, Andrew and Peter Stegmann and Maureen Greet. Thank you for all the special memories.

Advertisement 1

Congratulations to Father Eoin Farrelly (SDB) and Sister Patricia Finn (FMA) for the excellent publication, "Faith Journey, Towards the Sacrament of Confirmation" under the overall title of "Living the Word, Learning the Faith". The books consist of a "Catechist's Guide" and a "Young People's Guide" for year B. In 2017 the two books for year A were published. The books are obtainable from the Catholic Bookshop in Cape Town at 0214655904.

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Two interesting books found at the Paulines display table at the "Divine Innovation" Conference are Deborah Ward: "Overcoming Fear with Mindfulness" and Mike Murdock: "The Leadership Secrets of Jesus". Obtainable from Paulines Multimedia Centre at 0116225195/89 or Cell 0726169544.

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Museum websites are

<http://worcestermuseum.org.za/main/> and <http://www.drostdy.com/>

If you are in Worcester, Cape, or Swellendam, Cape, perhaps you might like to visit the museums.

LOG To Do List

Here is your exciting "to do" list: Scratch around for news, memories, events, all adventures (funny or otherwise), festivities, achievements, anniversaries and bereavements for future LOG Newsletters. Look on the website www.loreto.co.za for LOG newsletters from 2011 to 2019. Also for Reports and photos of LOG Reunions.

Send your news contributions to loretooldgirls1950@gmail.com