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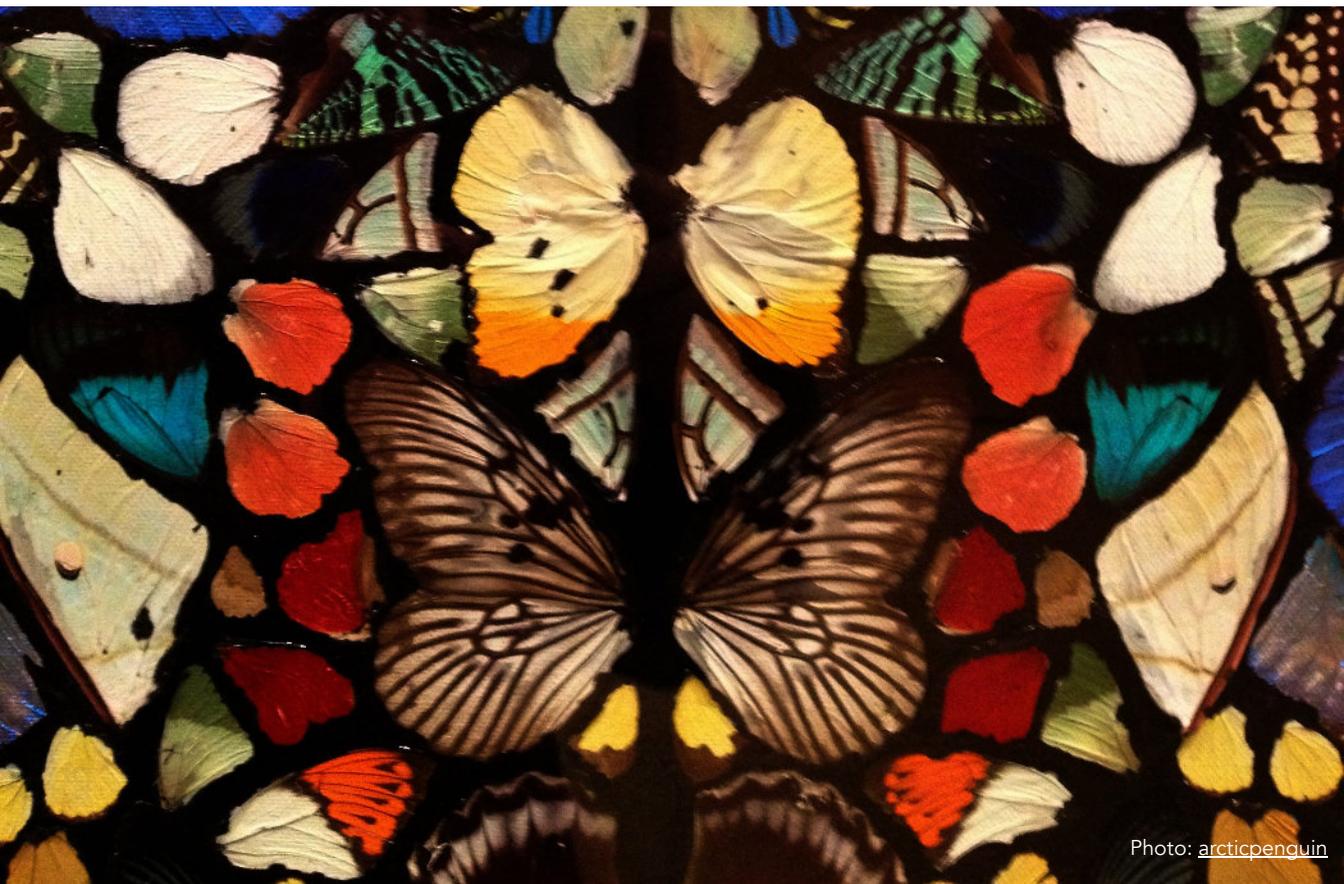
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RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese. We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please [email the editor](#).

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Finding the Right Balance



Re-invention takes time. Sometimes it seems like there's a chasm between the people we are and the people we want to be.

About six years ago, I started taking concrete steps towards reducing my carbon footprint and living in a more sustainable way. The first thing I did was to stop using plastic produce bags at the grocery store. I realized that, if I used six produce bags per week for 52 weeks, I was throwing out 300 bags per year. I've now been using the same Ziploc bags for produce and bulk items for years.

I've made a lot of other changes over the last six years as well. I started composting to cut down on kitchen waste, I use both sides of printer paper before recycling it, and I switched to using dried soap nuts instead of laundry detergent to wash clothes. My most recent project was turning an old fitted bed sheet into fabric gift wraps, which I was really excited to use for the first time over Christmas.

I want to be a person who buys as little as possible and reuses or repairs items before disposing them safely. But that takes time and energy, and I'm finding that, the more progress I make, the further there is to go.

I want to use less fossil fuels, which means walking, biking, or taking public transportation more. But what do I do when it's -40 degrees? I also want to grow my own produce or buy it from a CSA and get my meat from a local farm, but that takes money. So how do I balance the steps I *want* to take with the steps I *can* take at the moment?

In this issue on Re-invention (aptly named for a new year and a new decade), we are looking at ways we can shake things up in the Church. Former bishop Don Phillips offers some thoughts on re-inventing worship, and Michelle Owens from the Centre for Christian Studies challenges us to re-invent our relationships. We will also follow up with the six pilgrims from St. Margaret's who walked the Camino de Santiago last May.

Re-invention takes time. I constantly remind myself that I only started six years ago. I might never stop finding ways to change my habits to live in a more sustainable way, but I'm doing the best I can, and that's okay.



Kyla's new fabric gift wraps.



Kyla Neufeld is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

Present in the Marketplace

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Photo: [Sam Beasley](#)

Jesus moved along the seashores, hillsides, upper rooms, and worship places. He adapted to unique situations.

Jesus' ministry and mission was to embrace the moments and people present to him. Whether Hebrew, Greek, Slave or Free, Jesus was fully present to the other. As a Christian disciple, I raise the question, "Am I adaptable to the myriad of situations and people with whom I find myself?"

Parish communities are generally warm, considerate, compassionate, and inviting with one another. Are we always that way with the world we are called to serve? I think we are often distracted by the many worries that surround us, causing us to want to fix people, get over hurdles, and put things behind us. What if God is calling the parishes of Rupert's Land to something that looks like the way Jesus lived ministry and mission in the world? Jesus lived as one who, by necessity, adapted his words and actions to ensure that God's will was at the centre of his deep and plentiful relationships. Jesus hauled his whole self toward the people and situations he was dealing with, never holding back the resources at hand to provide for others. He taught his disciples to live like the widow of might and the woman with the jar of perfume: loving unconditionally.

We are a particular set of skills and resources that God chose long ago to develop, morph, and teach to be ready for the here *and now*. Our gifts have been entrusted to a discipleship that has promised to live life in the very same way the Gospels depict Jesus. This

Body of Christ has been strategically hauled along by God into the schools, workplaces, homes, and marketplaces, re-invented as they are, to bring the same calm, healing, freedom, justice, and love we all have received.

You and I are disciples, who understand that God welcomed us into this present here *and now*, and called us to further God's purposes. "To learn to be God's creatures means we must learn to recognize that our existence and the existence of the universe itself is a gift," says Stanley Hauerwas in *The Peaceable Kingdom*.

"It is a gift that God wills to have our lives contribute to the eschatological purposes for creation. As creatures we cannot hope to return to God a gift of such magnitude. But we can respond with a willingness to receive. To learn to be God's creature, to accept the gift, is to learn to be at home in God's world. Just as we seek to make a guest feel 'at home' in our home, so God seeks us to have us feel 'at home' by providing us with an opportunity to appropriate the gift in the terms with which it was given – that is, gratuitously."

Illuminated, empowered, resourced, and sent: that is the Body of Christ in 2020. When next we are in the marketplace, let us posture ourselves in such a way that we present an accessible and safe window to God's love.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert's Land

Re-Invention for Worship: Intentionality, Instruction, Intensity, Inclusion

DON PHILLIPS

Photo: [Sam Beasley](#)

It's tempting to begin this piece by claiming that its "brought to you by the letter *I*." Levity aside, the challenge facing our Church to re-invent itself, and its worship in particular, is serious and complex. Employing music bands and video screens is no more effective than a person deciding to update their wardrobe in order to be more effective in their employment or their personal relationships.

While the Church's presence in the local neighbourhood may be the top priority for its impact in the world, the Church's core identity lies in its worship life. It is in worship that members and non-members alike experience the Church's primary purpose, values, and nature as an identifiable body. And it is through worship that the Church and its members create meaning for their existence – both for the challenges of contemporary living and for their understanding of ultimate reality.

The overall mission of Christ's Church, and for each Christian, is to enable others to experience God in their life in such a way that illuminates their understanding of themselves, and this creation, as beloved by God. The greatest potential for this to happen lies in experiencing the risen Christ in the midst of the Christian worshipping assembly.

While the certainty of having an encounter of the Risen Christ ultimately depends on the invitation of Christ and the openness of the worshipper, there is much that worshipping congregations can do to enrich the experience of God's transformative grace. However, this encounter faces two specific challenges in the

dominant culture of contemporary western society. Firstly, we have been formed by modernity to believe that all of reality is contained within a rational frame – experiences that can be examined, explained, and, at least potentially, controlled. The corollary of this is that we are not intentionally open to experiencing reality beyond these boundaries – entities that we can neither fully understand nor manipulate. Hence, a person coming to worship in order to explore the Christian faith is not expecting, or looking for, a spiritual encounter with the Divine beyond their rational world.

Secondly, since we live in this finite, rational world, the only way we can experience God is through the power of symbols, which mediate God's real presence into our lives. Hence, our worship is full of symbols – bread, wine, water, ritual, vestments, incense, music, art, etc. However, these symbols are only effective if their presence connects with a worshipper's spiritual life-experience or theological understanding. This is the second contemporary challenge. Many people today have little or no Christian history, biblical, or theological foundation upon which to draw. For example, the symbol of the cross has little potency if the observer does not know about Jesus' crucifixion, or any notion of its purpose or significance.

Therefore, how can we help to make the presence of the risen Christ more "real" in our worship?

Intentionality. As in our other personal life encounters, we speak and behave differently in

a group when we are aware of a particular person we care about. We refer to them by name, and we make room for their contribution to our gathering. So it must be in our worship as well. Leaders and other participants alike must be intentional in acknowledging, welcoming, and celebrating the presence of the One who is our source of love, healing, forgiveness, joy, and hope. The way we praise, pray, seek God's Word in Scripture readings and homilies, and commune around the Table needs to celebrate the presence of the living God in our midst.

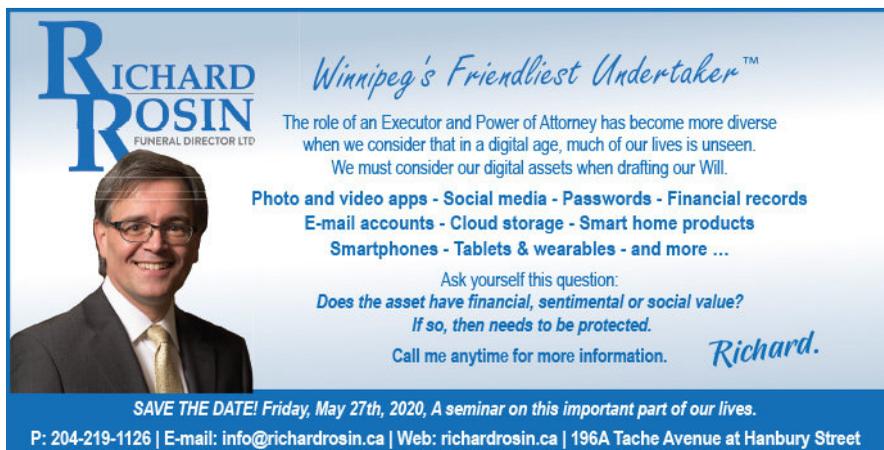
Instruction. Whether it's with a new job, a new culture, or a new relationship, we all need instruction in order to appreciate and "make sense" – meaning – out of the new situation. Worshipers need to be able to learn the significance of our symbols and symbolic gestures – why bread and wine is prayed over; why texts are sung; why worship leaders are robed; why we share the Peace.

Intensity. Our learning about how symbols work (semiotics) shows that, in order to be effective, symbols must come from our common experience of the ordinary (bread, wine, water, written and verbal texts), but then must be used in extraordinary ways – with prayer, with specific ritual gestures, with authoritative texts – in order to *intensify* our experience of them. We have enough familiarity with the symbol to know what it is, (e.g. bread) and yet we are stretched by our experience of the symbol to be open to new spiritual realities associated with that

symbol (incorporating Christ into ourselves). Worship needs to be sufficiently intense to move us beyond the familiar and comfortable to new experiences – new truths – and the potential for transformation.

Inclusion. While intentionality, instruction, and intensity are key to worshippers experiencing Christ in the gathered assembly, the experience must take place in such a way that *they feel included*. If the experience excludes or even alienates the worshipper, not only is there little chance of a grace-filled encounter with Christ, it may actually serve to further distance the person from that possibility in the future. Everything that takes place, even admonishing and confronting our failings, must happen in such a way that we are certain they are taking place precisely because we belong – precisely because the redeeming love of God convinces us that we deserve nothing less.

Intentionality, Instruction, Intensity, and Inclusion – all critically important ways that our Church needs to re-invent, not so much our liturgy, but rather the way we worship. When we focus on these principles in our worship, not only will we be better prepared to embrace the inquiring Christian in our midst, we will be much better ministered to ourselves by the One who promises to be in our midst when two or three gather in Christ's name.



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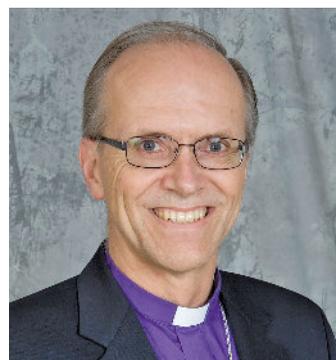
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Donald Phillips is the retired Bishop of Rupert's Land and currently serves as an occasional sessional lecturer in liturgical and contextual theology. He lives with his spouse, Nancy, in Winnipeg.

Relationship and Community for the New Year

MICHELLE OWENS



Photo: [Trust "Tru" Katsande](#)

While we mark the beginning of the liturgical year with candles and Advent songs of anticipation, the secular New Year arrives with more of a bang – countdowns, calendars, and champagne corks – and resolutions to re-invent ourselves. Fitness classes will be busier in January, and stores will promise an organized home with their enticing rows of containers. The excesses of the holidays will give way to the moderation of a dry January and healthy eating for many folks.

The turning of the seasons – liturgical and secular – invite us to turn our attention and focus to the wheel of Creation. We focus on what is present in our lives and what is lacking, and mindfully engage in change. As Christians though, we are called to broaden our gaze and goals beyond our own “self-improvement” and commit ourselves anew to the path of discipleship.

I know that my gym will be more busy in the New Year. How I wish that it would be the same

in our churches! For too long, we’ve watched our pews become empty and wondered when new people would arrive. Yet, despite the spiritual longing felt by many Canadians – new and old – our doors seem to be an impenetrable barrier. When I reflect on re-invention and the Church, I am convinced that we need to re-invent our practices of evangelism. I have heard yoga devotees or weight lifters enthusiastically preach the benefits of their practices and invite others to join them more often than I have heard mainline Christians invite people into our practices. Can we re-learn enthusiasm for transformative practice – for body and soul?

We are, I think rightfully, shy of evangelism, having yoked it to the catastrophic violence of colonialism. But I think we are also shy of inviting people into our faith communities and fearful of judgment. We might be uncertain of exactly what we are inviting someone into – especially other than a pew on Sunday morning.

Do we know what our Christian spiritual practices are? Are we ready to share in the rhythm of the daily office? Can we tell a story about how our faith has been good news?

One of the more incomprehensible tenets of Christian belief is our articulation of the Trinitarian nature of God. Three persons, but one substance, eternal, begotten, processing one from another – tangled enough that it is no wonder the Celtic symbol of the Trinity is knotwork! Nevertheless, at the heart of Trinitarian theology is the assertion that relationship is central to divinity. God is in relation within God-self, in relation with us, and in relation with all Creation. We are called, therefore, to deepen our relationships – with one another, with God, and with all our relations in the natural world around us.

We are called, not to be Christian, but to be Christians in practice *together*. This can be the hardest part – the messiness of community and relationships. The invitation to the table is expansive and challenging – a reminder that the table and the Church do not belong to those who have become accustomed to familiar seats and songs and comfortable with roles and rituals. The challenge is not one of “welcoming others,” but of understanding that some of us

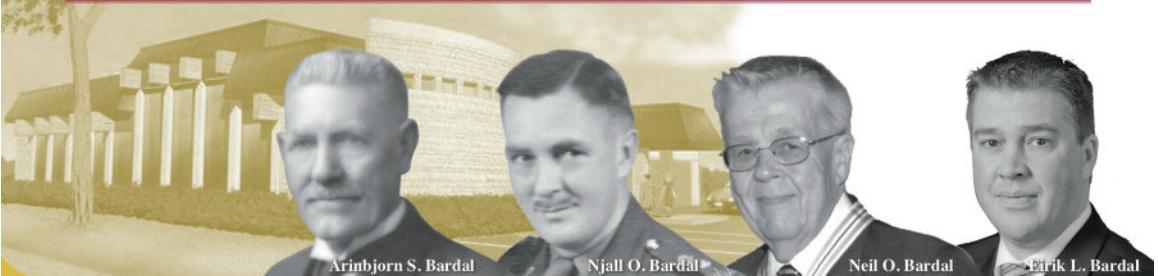
have been taking up seats and authority that were never ours by right. The radical call of discipleship invites new people into leadership in the Church and congregations out into their communities. The radical call of relationship necessitates the re-invention of the Church community. The good news is that we are not alone. This is also our challenge – to step out of our illusion of individualism and self improvement and walk as companions together on our faith journeys.

As we step into the turning of our path that comes with the New Year, may we be attentive as we walk. May we watch for those whose paths intersect with our own. May we boldly share our faith stories and humbly listen to the stories of others. May we be moved. May we re-commit ourselves to traveling together and being open to changing our course.



Michelle Owens is a diaconal minister, and the Principal of the Centre for Christian Studies, a national theological school in Winnipeg with connections to the Anglican Church of Canada and The United Church of Canada.

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Parish News Roundup

St. John's Cathedral Anthem Contest

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist is pleased to announce the 200th Anniversary Anthem Composition Competition. Using our theme "Celebrating God's Faithfulness," entrants are invited to submit unpublished anthems on or before February 29, 2020. Three monetary prizes (\$2200 for first, \$1200 for second, \$800 for third) will be awarded by a panel of judges. The three pieces will be premiered in Winnipeg on May 31, 2020, as part of a choral festival at St. John's Cathedral. The composer must bear in mind the desire for a broadly accessible anthem for use in many places other than St. John's Cathedral.

Requirements:

- The composer must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- The anthem text must be, in some form, a proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- The anthem may be written for up to four-part choir, SATB voicing.
- The anthem must include organ accompaniment.
- The anthem's length is to be three to five minutes.
- The composer must secure rights to any texts not in the public domain.
- Scores must be submitted as a PDF file, including complete contact information.

The three winning compositions become the property of the Corporation, Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Please send completed scores to: st.johns2020events@gmail.com.

New Theology Courses

During the Winter 2020 term, St. John's College will co-sponsor two theology courses with Canadian Mennonite University (which will be granting course credit). These courses can be taken at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

"The Christian Life" with Graham MacFarlane at St. Margaret's Anglican Church in Winnipeg on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 through 9:30 p.m. This course focuses on various aspects of the Christian life flow from the prior acts of God. The course considers the life of the individual Christian and the life of the Church. It explores how ethics and ecclesiology are grounded in the doctrine of God.

"History of Liturgy: Eucharist" with Andrew Rampton at St. John's College on Tuesdays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. This course traces the origins and development of Western eucharistic liturgies. Primary and secondary sources will be explored with an aim to critical assessment of why liturgies change, develop, and evolve in the ways that they do in particular contexts (cultural, economic, geographical, political, etc.). Sources used are slanted strongly toward Western practice, particularly Anglican and Roman Catholic, but Protestant liturgical developments are not ignored.

Either of the above courses can be taken for credit, or on a formal audit basis, or for your own personal formation. Both start on January 7, 2020. For information on how to register or about the courses contact:

[Graham MacFarlane](#) (for The Christian Life)

or

[Andrew Rampton](#) (for History of Liturgy)



This page of the Parish News Round Up is sponsored by Richard Rosin. For more information, see his ad on page 6.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held January 18–25, 2020. Here in Winnipeg, a city-wide ecumenical worship celebration will be held on the evening of January 19, 2020. The theme for the 2020 Week of Prayer is “They showed us unusual kindness” from the chosen text of Acts 27:18–28:10. Congregations are encouraged to hold services highlighting prayer and worship in their various traditions.

Resources for this year’s Week of Prayer will be out soon. They have been prepared by Christian churches in Malta and Gozo, who celebrate the Feast of the Shipwreck of Saint Paul on February 10 to mark the arrival of Christian faith to these islands.

Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund

PWRDF’s partner in Burundi, Village Health Works, is helping displaced peoples in the Mayengo Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp improve their food security and nutrition by implementing a kitchen garden program.

“Now my meals are varied, and I do not come to the Kigutu clinic for food supplementation anymore. My kitchen garden provides me with enough food to harvest and feed my family,” says Rekatubane Annonciate, who received seeds, a sprayer, a shovel, and a wheelbarrow as part of the program.

[Read more on this story here.](#)

ReNew: Resourcing Pastors for Ministry Conference

Each year, Canadian Mennonite University sponsors ReNew: a Resourcing Pastors for Ministry conference. This year it takes place February 11–12, 2020. Its focus will be congregational Faith Formation, with some concentrated attention on youth ministry. The keynote speaker is Andy Root of Luther

Seminary in St. Paul, along with Tom Yoder Neufeld, of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, contributing Bible studies on Ephesians.

This year’s conference centres on the theme, “Christians are Made, Not Born: Transforming Faith Formation.”

What might Tertullian’s claim that “Christians are made, not born...” mean for the Church today? How can our commitment to Christian formation nurture faith and form disciples in our children, youth, and young adults – and indeed within the whole congregation?

ReNew 2020 will explore what faith formation means in our time: How might congregations create an ecology for growing mature Christian disciples of all ages who witness faithfully in a variety of church and community settings? How might they more effectively nurture faith throughout all stages of life, with each segment of the congregation growing in faith, and each using their gifts to support the growth of others.

[You can find registration information here.](#)

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Watch the Light Spread: Stories from the Camino

In December 2018, Rupert's Land News [introduced the six pilgrims](#) from St. Margaret's – three youth and three adults – who were heading off to walk the Camino de Santiago. Here are their stories from the trail. – KN

Becky Slater

I was one of the six pilgrims from St. Margaret's to take part in the Camino Pilgrimage in May 2019.

As a member of St Margaret's Church and an experienced hiker, it was a unique experience to walk with these wonderful young people. I loved the time walking and talking together along the well-travelled path that many walked before us.

I loved meeting the interesting people we walked beside and going into the small intimate churches along the way. We participated in Vespers, Compline, and Mass, all in Spanish, which turned out to be an unexpected joy. I had told my group that the churches were not a draw for me. I have been in many churches in my lifetime, and this pilgrimage was more about the company and the walk in Spain. These churches along the way, with their simple wood benches, wooden beams, and white walls, filled with pilgrims from many countries all worshipping together, touched my spirit and fed me. The young folks I walked with touched my heart and helped me to focus spiritually.

I loved the energy and beauty these friends brought to the pilgrimage. I retired this year, and this pilgrimage was the greatest gift I could have received.

Walking the Camino is a chance for individual pilgrimage, but as a group we drew inspiration, strength, and love from each other. It was a faith experience that had unique impact and will stay with me forever.



Anil, Iona and Faith in Santiago.

Anil Pinto-Gfroerer – Grade 12

On a pilgrimage you travel everywhere, covering countless miles, terrains, ascents and descents, bends and turns. One of my favourite parts of the walk was, in moments of severe weariness, looking back and remembering the land we had crossed, just little things like a creek or a certain break in the trees, even a cat we saw while passing through a town or a beautiful flower. Walking was so simple and yet so unbelievably profound.

The people we met on the Camino were also so deeply a part of our journey. I remember Iona and I having a conversation nearing the end of the walk. One of us said something along the lines of “it’s crazy how easy it is to love strangers when you spend every minute together and share your life in a way.” It was again the little things, like brushing your teeth together and talking about the day with whatever words you shared. It was such a fascinating experience talking to someone from Germany or Japan or France in Spanish! I really don’t know very much Spanish and neither did they, yet it was the only language we shared.



A stream in Villafranca del Bierzo.

Though the journey itself was my favourite, it was the spiritual aspect that made me keep going. Prayer was such a consistent part of the walk – just stopping in chapels and churches to kneel down, the act of signing the cross with

holy water, it was beautiful. Whenever my mind wandered to places that scared or worried me, I could just keep praying and walking. While preparing for the trip, I remember thinking “What am I going to do with my brain? I am just going to be left alone with it for 13 days, like I don’t know what I will think about, how will I stay sane, surely this cannot turn out very well!” But it was amazing how little I thought and how much the movements of my feet, the words of those I loved and were beginning to love, and the sights I saw occupied me. I felt so blissfully free in those moments. Without the simplicity and quiet of prayer and the time that we were given, I don’t think that that kind of freedom would have been possible, the kind of freedom and peace that I haven’t felt ever in my life.

The Camino itself is such a beautiful journey because it allows for balance. There is time, time to pray and contemplate, time to plan for the future, time to explore and experience, time to enjoy and dance and meet new and fascinating people, time to shop and eat and indulge and be frugal. There is so much space to be. The Camino is different than other kinds of life journeys because it has all these elements. You can eat well, and go out and be jovial, and you can be sore and weary and broken, and you will grow in faith and in yourself. Really, I think that everybody should do the Camino, in some shape or form at some point in life, it is so good.

“Buen Camino de Vida.”

Iona Taylor – Grade 12

The Camino de Santiago, a journey of three words: simplicity, community, and God.

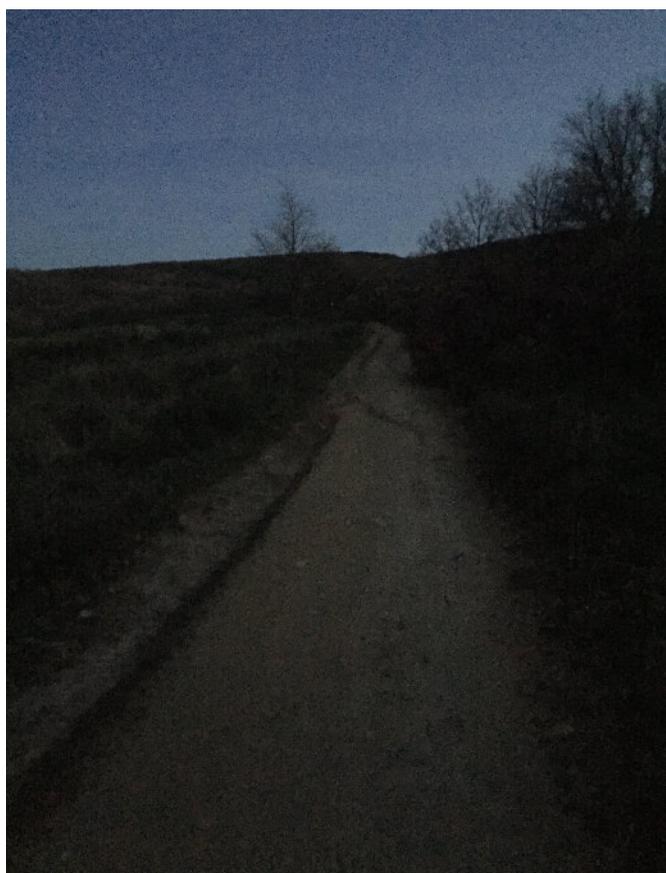
Everything about the pilgrimage was so much more simple than I could have thought. There was one solid goal everyday: get to a town to sleep. No aimlessness, no pressing work to worry about, and no complicated situation to sort out. There was so much space and freedom to leave my spirit free to roam and dance. All things to be worried about were carried on my back, leaving not much to agonize over. I have never been so happy with

so little. This simplicity allowed so much time to love and connect with all the pilgrims because no one had anything better to do than listen to one another. This simplicity was made painfully aware in my soul when I returned home to schoolwork, unfamiliar clothes, and too much to carry on my back.

Another aspect of the Camino that I keep close in my heart is the community. I did not meet a single pilgrim that was not kind, open, and vulnerable with me. Everyone, whether it was a nod or a conversation stretching over multiple days, was able to connect with one another because of the communal suffering, hope, and perseverance we all shared. Everyone on the walk shared these beautiful experiences and, no matter why, we all had one concrete goal: Santiago. This meant that no matter the pace you moved at, you were bound to run into someone you had already met. We were a travelling community. Journeying together allowed for the flourishing of such beautiful bonds with people along the way, ones I miss so much that my heart hurts.

I went on the Camino knowing it was a spiritual journey, but what I did not realize was just how much the act of physically walking would solidify the notion of “walking with God.” Each step of the way, I was walking with Him, never abandoned or forgotten. The more I walked, the less I thought of worrisome thoughts. I saw the beauty of God everywhere around me, in the raindrops tip-tapping on tree leaves, in the sunrises, in the wildflowers and birdsong, but I also had concrete opportunities to connect with Him, offered by all the small chapels and churches along our walks where I could kneel down and search the small sanctuaries for words of praise or worry that had maybe escaped me while being consumed by pain or a conversation during the walk. I could cross myself, feel the hard wood against my knees, light a candle and bring holy water up to my forehead even when I did not know what to say. His presence was all-encompassing and steadfast.

My soul aches to return everyday.



Leaving Rabanal at dusk.

Mark Gareau – Youth Leader

After being on the Camino de Santiago with our youth, there are a few things that have stayed with me. For myself, it is a renewed understanding of simplicity and progress, and seeing how it affected our youth. Many times in my life, I thought that satisfaction, growth, and serving the Lord would come from a life of complex challenges and routines. The Camino showed me that this does not have to be the case. The simplicity of the pilgrimage gave me a sense of peace I had not experienced in a long time. Intertwined in this is that my sense of accomplishment changed. No longer did it need to be big leaps and bounds; it can be as small as being able to take the next step.

Most importantly, it was being able to watch our youth experience the Camino for themselves. To watch as they overcame their struggles, shared joy in our progress, and

shared stories with our fellow pilgrims. The youth stood out as the only youth early on in our journey and that attracted a lot of attention from fellow pilgrims. It was amazing to see how these other believers would open up to our youth and share stories of their faith journeys. It is an experience I hope can be shared with many youth in the future.



Anil and Iona walking in Galacia.

Faith Nero – Grade 11

For me, the Camino experience was enriching in so many ways. During the trip, I was able to strengthen my relationship with God through being surrounded by His creation and seeing Him in the people around me. The mountain top was when I felt closest to Him; the vast blue skies and faded peaks across the flowery valleys will always be treasured in my memory.

The people along the way were so diverse, but always friendly and determined. I was able

to better myself as a person through reflection and pushing myself further than before, both physically and mentally. By walking about 20 kilometres a day, you begin to feel it, but by the third day a good night's sleep will do so much more than you could imagine! By spending so much time in my head, I found a more defined version of who I am and who I aspire to be. To top it off, I couldn't have chosen a better group of people to go with. I would never trade the Camino experience for anything in the world. It has made me better as a person, and it was one of the most enriching events in my life!

Rebecca Widdicombe – Youth Leader

My favourite part of the Camino pilgrimage was the mornings. We'd wake up in the darkness to beat the rush out of the hostel, and walk quietly as the sun slowly rose. Sometimes, you couldn't see more than a few feet in front of you and you had to trust that the road just kept going. It made me think of how the disciples must have felt as they travelled by foot to spread the Gospel and build the Church. Since we left the week after Easter Sunday, this was very fitting – we had our feet washed on Maundy Thursday, we had been to the empty tomb, and now we were going out into the world.

When I dreamed up this idea of a youth pilgrimage, I imagined it would help teens walk toward adulthood and discover the light of Christ inside them. But in the end, what I found was they were already the Light, lighting up the Way for everyone they encountered. Pilgrims from all over the world were astonished by them and took so much delight and sustenance from each of them. There was no "discovering" themselves – they were simply being. It was humbling to walk beside them and watch the Light spread.

All photos courtesy Rebecca Widdicombe.