



**4** Christian Calling  
Amidst Climate Crisis

**6** Faith is the Workshop  
of Resurrection

**9** Gary Russell on Pockets of  
Grace in a Profane Economy

**12** Walking the  
Camino de Santiago



Publisher | Bishop Geoffrey Woodcroft  
Editor | Jude Claude  
Accounting | Joy Valencerina  
Advertising | Angela Rush  
Layout & design | [cityfolkcreative.ca](http://cityfolkcreative.ca)

Rupert's Land News is published 10 times per year (September - June) by the Diocese of Rupert's Land, in the Anglican Church in Canada. It connects churches and communities from Portage la Prairie, MB, to Atikokan, ON, by offering news, events, opinions, and ideas to 4,000 readers per month. RLN is available in a variety of formats:

[Website](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#)

We also deliver timely news and information via a weekly email. [Sign up here](#).

Advertising - RLN accepts advertising in our monthly magazine and our weekly email. [View our rate sheet](#). To discuss advertising call (905) 630-0390 or [email us](#).

Editorial offices:

Anglican Lutheran Centre  
935 Nesbitt Bay  
Winnipeg Manitoba, R3T 1W6

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](#).

Contents copyright 2023 by *Rupert's Land News*. All rights reserved.

Cover: [OMK](#)

**A LONG STANDING TRADITION**

Arnhjorn S. Bardal, Njall O. Bardal, Neil O. Bardal, Erik L. Bardal

**The Only Funeral Home Owned and Operated by the Bardal Family**

**neil bardal**  
INC  
FUNERAL CENTRE

Call: **949-2200**  
(204)

[neilbardalinc.com](http://neilbardalinc.com)  
[info@neilbardal.mb.ca](mailto:info@neilbardal.mb.ca)

One Winnipeg Location Only  
Across from Brookside Cemetery

**3030 Notre Dame Avenue**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3H 1B9

# Faithful Thomas

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Thomas was an informed and excited disciple of Jesus Christ. "From now on you do know [God the Father], and have seen him" Jesus proclaimed to him. This phrase from John 14:7, goes with Thomas into the retreat rooms of disciples in John 20, following Christ's resurrection.

I have read a lot of commentaries and ponderings by people who, in reflecting on Thomas' story, write on why it is okay to doubt, or on why Thomas should have done better, or on how doubts are a natural part of being Christian.

I wish to put something before the Church that takes a different trajectory. I would like to suggest that Thomas doubted *the story told by the gathered disciples*.

O Thomas, how I value and desire the context in which you received commission from the master, in which you were able to see and know God. I do not always see God, and that to me is more frightening than seeing a risen Saviour. You, Thomas, are becoming a lens which continually refocuses my attention upon God; the Parent, the Child, and the Spirit.

Every year, following Ash Wednesday, I work to understand how I have not commended the faith that is in me, and I ask how I shall commend that faith, and with whom I shall commend that faith. Christ's commissioning of disciples and apostles of every age pushes us out of locked and secret doors to a world which has a great hunger to know and see God; and it is this which raises several questions for me regarding Thomas. Where were you, friend, when the others were in secret? Did you go off

and hide in fear? Or did you go about your days, continuing to know and see God? Did you know that others, particularly the female disciples, were beyond the secret doors meeting and tending to Christ? What brought you back to the secret door, and were you allowed to tell your story? Did you see and know God behind the secret door?

The company of disciples, gathered secretly behind locked doors (John 20:19), fail to convince Thomas of what they have seen and heard. I have spent a career dwelling on Thomas, the less-than, the doubter, and on the secret meeting of the disciples. And I now ask forgiveness for my cheap rendering of the Gospel. Thomas, Mary of Magdala, Jesus' mother, and many others perform not in secret, but are vulnerably exposed to the

scrutiny of others; yet their faith and courage make them to be the voices of the most compelling stories of the resurrected Christ.

I value Thomas' discipleship. He is loyal, faithful, inquisitive, and clear. His discipleship is that of an eyewitness to Jesus' living story, and he is, for those who cannot be eyewitnesses to Christ incarnate, Jesus' co-architect of his story. He speaks not only as one who has touched the wounds of Jesus, but as one who has also worn wounds so that many shall come to know and believe.

My hope and prayer for each of you is that you rediscover the excitement, the pure, exhilarating rush of knowing and seeing the Father, while telling again the story which is now your own.



*Apostel Tomas met winkelhaak*  
(Apostle Thomas with square),  
Marco Dente,  
1517 - 1527



Geoffrey Woodcroft,  
Bishop of Rupert's Land

# Commissioned

Photo: [Daniela Paola Alchapar](#)

What is it which we as Christians are called to? This month's issue deals with questions of Christian commission. In our Community Catechesis section, Ryan Turnbull deals with the question of Christian calling in the face of climate crisis, and considers what it might mean for our faith communities to act in true solidarity with the earth and with our creaturely others, close and far away. Next, David Driedger writes on how Christian daily life engages with the

events of Easter, with Christian faith functioning as continual workshopping of the resurrection. Then, May's issue presents an interview with Gary Russell on his work *Radical Grace and the Economy*, which posits that our calling as Christians puts us at odds with the logics of dominant economic systems. Finally, youth from St. Margaret's Anglican church reflect on their experiences traveling the El Camino, and the complexities of Christian pilgrimage, literal and spiritual.



Jude Claude is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

## Christian Calling Amidst Climate Crisis

RYAN TURNBULL

Photo: [Friends of Family Farmers](#)

In a 1988 letter from the Conference of Catholic Bishops in the Philippines entitled, "[What is Happening to our Beautiful Land?](#)" the Bishops called on all Christians and people of good will to notice and take action regarding the growing ecological devastation that was spreading across their islands and around the world. After outlining the problem and providing some theological reflections, the bishops offered a series of practical recommendations for

individuals, churches, and governments. While we in Canada have become accustomed to these kinds of practical recommendations being around issues of consumption, "You should recycle more, eat less meat, stop flying, reduce your driving, add more insulation," etc., the calls that these Filipino bishops made were for individuals to build solidarity through community groups and direct action on the land.

The emphasis on solidarity with communities and the land, and I would add, all living creatures, is an important element of what Christian social teaching has come to call "[integral ecology](#)", an approach to thinking about environmental issues that focuses on showing how "the environment" is not just one of a number of political issues but is in fact integrally connected to all sorts of issues. In our Manitoba context, we might think about the hog industry as an example of a sector that provides all sorts of intersecting opportunities to build solidarity across different vectors. The industry employs a lot of temporary foreign workers at multiple levels, so there are opportunities to build solidarity around immigration and labour rights. There are questions of animal welfare that can help us build solidarity between eaters, producers, and the wellbeing of pigs. Finally, there is the issue of how feed is procured and how waste is treated that creates opportunities for building practices of solidarity with the soil and the waterways affected.

As [Wendell Berry](#) reminds us, when we eat "'we depend upon other creatures and survive by their deaths. To live, we must daily break the body and shed the blood of Creation. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament. When we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is a desecration. In such desecration we condemn ourselves to spiritual and moral loneliness, and others to want.'" But what does it mean to break the body and shed the blood of creation "knowingly, lovingly, skillfully," or "reverently"? At this point, many might think about local solutions, investing in local food production, or tackling neighbourhood issues. However, the critical feminist, [Val Plumwood](#) has given a really important warning about focusing on the local too exclusively. According to Plumwood, for every local place or food system, there are countless shadow places. Shadow places are the places that take our pollution, waste, exhaust their soil fertility, and have their labour exploited. These can be quite near us, or far

away, but every system of production and consumption inevitably creates these places. One of the challenges that we are confronted in building solidarity in the face of climate change is that all of our local efforts always have implications for these shadow-places, and we should take care to build our coalitions in such a way that does not forget this.

This June, St. Margaret's Anglican Church and A Rocha Manitoba are joining forces to host a joint conference on climate change and creation care. This is the first in an annual conference series by A Rocha called "Consider the Lilies" and the St. Margaret's contribution for this inaugural event is entitled "Be Not Afraid." There will be a variety of speakers and workshop facilitators that will help lead Christians in theological reflection on the challenge that the climate crisis and care for our common home present to all people. There will be lectures and presentations from world-leading international ecotheologians like [Norman Wirzba](#) and [Anupama Ranawana](#), as well as contributions from more local leaders like [Trevor Herriot](#) and staff from A Rocha Manitoba and St. Margarets. The challenge before the church and the world is large, but there have been faithful voices from around the world, like the Filipino Bishops I mentioned above, who have been faithfully thinking, working, and responding to the issues of creation care for generations. We are not in this moment alone, and you are all invited to join us as we listen, learn, and take steps to respond this June.

For more details about the full schedule for the conference and to register, please visit: [arocho.ca/consider](http://arocho.ca/consider)



Ryan Turnbull is a Theologian based in Winnipeg, MB. Having grown up on a cattle ranch in western Manitoba, Ryan Turnbull has a deep interest in the intersection of theology, decolonization, ecology, place, and friendship.

Maybe it's just me, but the resurrection seems to remain something of a stumbling block.

In some traditions the resurrection is heightened and isolated as a test of faith, with Christians being called to believe in the full alignment of this miraculous event with all modern disciplines of knowledge. Here the point ends up being that dead flesh was resuscitated. In other traditions the resurrection is understood to be made up entirely of literary metaphor; it is a moving image of life's dramatic transformations. Here the point ends up being that there are images of the resurrection everywhere in life.

To put it a little crudely we might say that one is a material understanding while the other a spiritual one. My sense is that we are trying to domesticate and settle something in order to make it fit, to find its place so that we will not be caught off guard or overwhelmed by it.

If the resurrection is simply a matter of confessed belief, then it becomes a test which is able to weed out the faithful from the unfaithful. This model can reinforce unhealthy forms of authority and limit questioning.

If the resurrection is simply a metaphor, then it can become a little too slippery, a sort of empty aesthetic, a superficial image that we will believe only with sufficient literary, artistic, or musical skill. The resurrection can remain a metaphor whose meaning or impact is always deferred, always open to yet another interpretation or dispute. The resurrection is simply a nice thought.

Increasingly, what I find fascinating about the resurrection in scripture is that it is not a given. What I mean is that the resurrection is not consistently present across our texts like notions of holiness, or justice, which can be found on almost any given page.

For most of the Bible the understanding was simply that one died, and the dead, all of them, simply resided in the grave or Sheol. Maybe, if you were lucky, your bones would be gathered with the bones of your ancestors.

But we do find in the Old Testament a sort of workshopping of resurrection. Strange images crop up.

## Faith is the Workshop of Resurrection

DAVID DRIEDGER



Photo: [Praewthida K](#)

There is, for instance, a collection of Psalms attributed to the Children of Korah, which meditate on the seeming impossibility of forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. But suddenly, small glimpses of something beyond belief emerge:

Psalm 88 reads,

**Do you work wonders for the dead?  
Do shadows rise up to praise you?  
Is your steadfast love declared in the grave?  
Are your wonders known in the darkness?**

Some suggest that the group described in these psalms is connected to the Korah who disobeyed Moses in the wilderness and as a result was swallowed up with those around him by the earth—by the grave. The text seems to come from a group carrying the shame of a past tragedy that can never be made right and yet cannot be let go. They work at the question of justice and forgiveness over and over so that they present every angle of it before God, until eventually they wonder if perhaps God can do something yet, even with the dead.

And so we find small, tentative affirmations of faith in what is possible even in the face of death.

Standing before the dry bones of a dead nation the Lord asks Ezekiel, “You, mortal, can these bones live?”

Jonah, sunk at the bottom of the sea, in personal agony cries out,

**The deep surrounded me,  
Weeds wrapped around my head  
At the roots of the mountain  
Out of the belly of the grave I cried.**

And Daniel—written in the face of unrelenting and violent injustice where abusive powers seemingly face no consequences—reports a vision, which declares that injustice and violence must be held to account and that those who suffered should be redeemed. The book says that some will rise from the dust to their glory, some will rise to their shame and, in

all this, the wise—those who led many in justice—will shine like the stars forever.

And so with Daniel and later apocalyptic literature we find that some things, if they are to happen at all, happen outside this life.

Resurrection emerges in the Old Testament as people have faith in the God who created them and who desired to save them, even when no hope could be seen. Again, I won’t offer any precise claims about what exactly the resurrection means, but we see its emergence and persistence as people wrestled with life, suffering, death, and faith.

In the book of Romans, Paul sees the resurrection as a sort of spiritual discipline by which we die to the world that we might then rise in Christ. Our life of faith, then, is also the workshop of the resurrection.

Modern examples of this resurrection logic abound. Orlando Patterson surveyed the global history and sociology of slavery and came to view it as a form of “social death.” In slavery, symbolic and material forces strip humans of those elements that allow us to recognize and treat someone as human.

Patterson begins [his book](#) with a simple epitaph from the escaped slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass who wrote, “I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom.” The resurrection is freedom from the prisons oppression creates.

I think of those dealing with addiction and the stigma associated with it, those with mental illness, or those suffering abuse.

With situations like these we may think of the women who prepared spices for Jesus’ body, and all those who offer small acts of care, who reduce harm, who reduce decay in situations which seem without hope.

Manitoba Harm Reduction Network [released a video](#) recently that talks about their peer support workers. These are people who have lived experience with drug use who help others where they are at. The video powerfully overthrows the idea that some people have that providing safe ways of taking drugs is

promoting drug use. It shares how these peer workers are trained in administering Naloxone, which reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. One person shared that nearly every peer he knows has saved someone's life. Sometimes the work of resurrection is being able to offer, in whatever capacity, care and life to another.

I think of local Indigenous activists. I think, for instance, of the group which gathered around a sacred fire on the Manitoba Legislative grounds to honour those children taken to Residential schools who never returned. Another group still gathers at a small camp outside the Brady Landfill where the remains of yet another Indigenous woman, Linda Beardy, were found. This group gathers, refusing to give up on the lives of their sisters.

I think of all the things that can lead life to feel like death. We can have all we want and yet feel laden in chains. Whatever the cause, these experiences are real. Many of our lives become workshops of the resurrection.

As a Mennonite whose tradition has placed a high emphasis on peace, I am called to the workshop of resurrection. Violence is kept alive by the often very understandable desires for vengeance and protection. Frail and imperfect as we are, we must be willing to practice a life that seeks first a kingdom not of the world. This is not to escape the world, but to identify and reject how the world uses violence for its way of peace.

Jesus refused the powers of this world. He refused to use the world's violence or to obey it. On Good Friday we saw that the world could not abide this refusal, and on Easter we celebrated that the world could not overcome it.

Practicing the resurrection includes fellowship, learning, and celebration. It includes solitude, suffering, and death. Faith does not ask that the faithful come in glory, but reminds us of the opposite.

The resurrection bars nothing and no one.

As Paul says to the Romans,

*Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right*

*hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.*

*Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Even for those who are unable to enthusiastically celebrate the resurrection, there can be good reason to live into it.

**We live into the resurrection for ourselves and others, whether we are in dark valleys or green pastures.**

**We live into the resurrection against economies and nations of greed**

**We live into the resurrection for the communities decimated by this greed.**

**We live into the resurrection against violence.**

**We live into the resurrection for peace.**



David Driedger is Leading Minister of First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg. David lives in the West End of Winnipeg where he spends some of his free time supporting local activists and organizations as well as working as an independent scholar and writer.



# Gary Russell on Pockets of Grace in a Profane Economy

JUDE CLAUDE

Photo: [Kseniya Lapteva](#)

Gary Russell has a PHD in economics and spent many years as a teacher in the field. But over time he became reticent about what he was teaching, recognizing there was something he didn't fully believe in.



His questioning and exploring eventually manifested as a blog, "[The Profane Economy](#)" where he worked to develop his thoughts and articulate them in an accessible format. Russell notes his desire to make his ideas widely understandable: "I billed the blog as economics my grandmother would understand."

After 2 years of working on the blog, Russell moved to working on producing a document which would lay out the false assumptions of mainstream economic models.

"I spent years trying to pinpoint what was bugging me--what do I really believe in? I must have rejected a hundred drafts. I consider the Holy Spirit to have been with me in writing, not letting me give up... Basically, what came to light was that Christ came here to turn everything on its head, and that the most central tenets of my field were quite upside down."

The resulting work [Radical Grace and the Economy](#) gets at this upside-downness by framing the discussion of dominant economic systems against the backdrop of "radical grace." When asked why this framing is so significant, Russell explains:

"Conventional economics says that transactions are life, period. The general equilibrium model is the absolute core of mainstream economics. It is a model of perfect

competition, and within it the highest goal in life is to get what you deserve in a fair transaction, or to get more if you can. Economics says free competition will ensure everyone will get exactly what they deserve, even if everyone is trying to get more."

In contrast, he says "Christ was not transactional, period. He said just give for the sake of giving, for the sake of loving your neighbour. That's profoundly radical. To give, whether someone deserves it or not, and regardless of whether the person receiving can give you something back, in the economic context is grace. Society has abandoned grace and instead worships transaction."

Throughout the *Radical Grace* document Russell presents a basic structural incompatibility between a vision of God's grace and that of current dominant economic systems. A condensed list of these oppositions, correlated to the 9 chapters of the work and referring to the primary virtues economics denies, looks something like this:

1. **Denial of Grace:** "There's more to life than transactions and fair exchange." Radical grace runs counter to the dominance of these models.
2. **Denial of Vocation:** Conventional economics draws our aspirations away from vocation and service, in favour of empty consumption. Economics is all about how to get what you want." But in the Christian tradition, and specifically articulated in the Franciscan tradition of which Russell is a part, there is "more joy in giving than getting."
3. **Denial of Abundance:** "Scarcity rules economics, but God is all about abundance. We are called to live in

granted abundance." As Gandhi said *"There's enough for everyone's needs, but not for everyone's greed."*

4. **Denial of Community:** "In dominant economics, the community that shapes us down to our very language is discounted and de-legitimized. We're all just individuals." In actuality, community is the norm and the individual is grounded in it.
5. **Denial of the Individual:** At the same time as the individual is held up over the community in the field of economy "what makes us uniquely individual is ignored. 'Economic man' is an empty consumer, not doing anything but taking in. God given unique qualities and vocation are neglected."
6. **Denial of the Humble:** In mainstream economics, "the humble, Christ's favourite people, are pushed down and vilified, while winners are glorified." This is opposed to the Christian vision in which the "last shall be first and the first shall be last."
7. **Denial of Justice:** "Markets worship a fake justice which is nothing like God's justice. The understanding is that if you have efficient markets everybody gets rewarded for their productivity." In contrast, "God's justice is community justice. It's people caring for each other and making sure no one goes without."
8. **Denial of Mother Earth:** "Mother Earth is just a pile of resources to the economist." In contrast, Russell points to Saint Francis who "prayed appreciation for brother dirt." Russell relates this to understandings found in Indigenous cultures about human relationship with the land, noting the significance of the phrase "The land is family."
9. **Denial of Entitlement:** Mainstream economics deny certain fundamental "entitlements." Here Russell speaks to colonial economics. He explains that as Christians, we should believe that

"everyone's entitled to a place to call home, a community to call family and the right to live their calling in their own way. Colonialism takes all those away from many people." He adds that it's "not only about land grab, but things like slaughtering buffalo, taking away means of subsistence, the use of residential schools, the imposition of patriarchy, the suppression of LGBT people."

Russell is a member of the Anglican Franciscan Third Order, as well as a member of Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church. He explains ways these two communities have influenced his project.

"Franciscan communities are 'pockets of grace,' living with each other in radical generosity, standing up for the marginalized, and challenging the excesses of capitalism that rendered them marginal."

"Francis of Assisi resolved to actually live the way Christ counselled us to live... He also recognized there would be people like me, too deeply ensnared in the culture to become a beggar, but still wanting to follow Francis to the best of our ability, so Francis formed the Third Order, ... asking us to discard the excess baggage of life that gets in the way of walking the good road, and take on a calling of serving 'the least of these.'"

Russell says that over the course of the project, he has come to recognize shared values between Franciscan thought and the wisdom of various Indigenous cultures. He mentions as an example potlatch ceremonies of various Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest:

"It was a huge ceremony of radical giving; those who had more came with more and gave them away to those who had less. The Canadian government outlawed it, because they were threatened by the challenge it posed to the colonial way of life." He notes other common ground: "The identification with community, looking after each other, living within the Creator's abundance, honouring and healing the broken—these are resonant with Franciscan sensibilities."

Russell believes it is important for church communities to think about and engage with the economic systems in which we find ourselves. "People, including parishioners, are living their lives according to a set of preposterous assumptions, supplied by economists, that are utterly contrary to their faith and they don't know it," he says, and he suggests the aptness of the conversation for our present time: "This is the right time to turn things right side up again, when the state of the world is starting to make people think that something is radically wrong here; there is!"

He also indicates that there are challenges to unravelling the systems in which we find ourselves. He notes the ways we are currently materially bound by dominant economic systems, for instance needing to abide by their logics in order to feed our families. Beyond this he notes how we have internalized the values of mainstream economics "We are all raised in this profane culture," he says, and are "indoctrinated" by it. But, he says, "people are not totally satisfied," and he believes we can progressively work towards societies of radical grace.

Russell offers a few directions for this, such as "living together in *pockets of grace* in the belly of the beast," and "standing with those who are denied food, shelter and dignity, pushing hard for their needs, and demanding justice, as an intermediate step toward living in grace."

For himself, the "initial battlefield... is debunking." He recognizes the large scope of change needed, but he comments that he takes encouragement from the "Indigenous perspective of planting seeds to bloom in seven generations."

For now, Russell's work, which has undergone several iterations and is now available in a workbook form, has gotten some traction in his faith communities. He was featured recently in the (Catholic OFS) Franciscan Action Network's official publication and FAN is considering ways to use his work going forward. He has also been presenting workbook sessions to a local Third Order

Franciscan group. Additionally the Society of Saint Francis, the predominant Franciscan Order within the Anglican Communion, has asked him to conduct sessions during their upcoming convocation in Phoenix in August, and its Task Force on Colonialism (of which Russell is a member) will use his workbook as a resource. He has also recently conducted sessions for St. Margaret's Anglican Church's Lenten Discussion Group.

The feedback he has gotten on the text has been good, Russell says. "People are appreciating that it's making them look at things in a different way than they're used to looking at them. Looking at things in a different way is what I'm all about."

He is also hoping to develop smaller versions of the workbook, though it's no easy feat to try and reduce what he considers to be ultimately an "accomplishment of 20 years." He would like though to create a presentation version of the text of just an hour and a half long, with instructions for presenters. He would also like to see a printed version of the workbook come to fruition, and envisions a possible secular rendering of the text.

With all these ideas in motion, Russell also remarks "At my age, 78, I'm trying to pace myself, so I'm putting my work out there for others to pick-up, while still doing some presenting when I can."

In terms of diocesan engagement, Russell encourages people to take up the workbook for local discussion groups. He says "My message is 'pick it up and play with it.' Engagement has to come from the ground up."

He hopes that ultimately the workbook might be a helpful tool in forming more *pockets of grace*.

"Form your communities. Maybe that's all we can do. Maybe if I can put together a few pockets of grace, I'll have accomplished something."

To read an overview of *Radical Grace and the Economy* and download the full workbook visit <http://radicalgrace.ca>.

## Walking the Camino de Santiago with the Saint Margaret's Youth Group

Photo: [Burkard Meyendriesch](#)

The Camino de Santiago or "Way of St. James" is a renowned pilgrimage leading to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Northwestern Spain. Saint Margaret's Anglican Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba has sponsored several groups of parish youth to travel the El Camino. Below are reflections from the most recent pilgrims on their experience.



I first heard about the Camino in 2019 when Saint Margaret's launched its first Camino trip. Although the pandemic made planning for the trip uncertain, I decided to join the second iteration, along with some of Saint Margaret's youth. After packing a single bag—containing the necessary supplies for 12 days of walking—we were thrown head-first into an alien environment. The goal was straight forward, walk to the next location, eat, sleep, repeat. Day after day we did this, the deadlines and obligations of modern life stripped away. Although it was simple, it could never be described as predictable. On most days, I woke up oblivious to where we were going or even what we were having for lunch. While the task of

walking over 250 km would appear monotonous, the conversation was plentiful and scenery always offered a source of variety. The landscape was ever-changing, from overpasses towering over a dense forest of vegetation, to a dirt path snaking across wide open fields.

The churches along the trail ranged from quaint and homely with a handful of pews to the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral with its elaborately carved stone facades and gargantuan censer. All of these, no matter the size, provided a rest from the trail and time to reflect. One of the things I thought about while in these places was the amount of people that had to come together to make this pilgrimage possible. Priests performing evening services, people who maintained the hostels, our parish members back home who made this idea of a trip into reality. I think the whole operation is a testament to what Christians from many different backgrounds can accomplish under a unified goal and the power of Christ. I hope that the youth of Saint Margaret's will be able to experience the trail for years to come.

Buen Camino!

- William



The Camino de Santiago pilgrimage done with Saint Margaret's youth group was a unique experience that I will never forget. I first got involved with the Camino group as they were looking for someone to plan out details. Planning a global trip with COVID restrictions changing daily was no easy feat, and it is perhaps a miracle that we did indeed make it at all (not without several setbacks and changes in plans in the pre-trip stages). Regardless of the

challenges, the planning stages of the Camino seemed purposeful and exciting.

Now, the actual walking of the Camino was a different kind of challenge. I didn't think of myself as having a lot of expectations, but I suppose I subconsciously did. I found myself daily battling a fog of desires of what I wanted the Camino to be and what it appeared to actually be: A series of closed church doors, pilgrims who turned out to be simply adventure-seekers, clear shrines of colonial attitudes, and following in the footsteps of a saint who was overtly displayed with the title "Moor-slayer." I think I wanted the Camino to be simple. As it turned out, it was perhaps too much like the real Christian journey—full of contradictions, pain, confusion, and disappointment. There were connections with a few inspiring pilgrims, and still so many other journeys that seemed to lack so much. The beauty of the path we walked was woven through all of this, but not without telltale signs of a suffering earth. And yet, we walked on.

- Rachel

Walking the Camino was in many ways not what I expected it to be. When I first decided to go on the Camino I did not really understand the purpose of a spiritual pilgrimage. If I don't believe the bones of Saint James are buried at Santiago, then what is the significance of walking there? One thing that encouraged me of the trip's relevance to spiritual growth was the testimony of Saint Margaret's youth that had walked the trail a couple years before. They spoke of the travelers they had met—strong people of faith who dispensed wisdom into their lives, and of the powerful experience of seeing multiple churches a day and taking a moment to pray. I was also told that the Camino changed their lives.

While we were on the trail, some people spoke of having a Camino moment, an “aha” moment on the trail where questions they had been wrestling with received answers, and they left transformed in some way. This seemed to me the standard, the norm of a Camino walk. These expectations, while I was somewhat skeptical, were met with disappointment. There was no life-changing moment by the end of the trail, and the majority of our traveling companions were not people of faith who could share their story and give us wisdom. I thought the purpose of a spiritual pilgrimage would be revealed to me through walking one, but I remain confused.

It is easy to focus on the ways that I was disappointed or confused. Despite nothing grand happening, God was there in the beautiful mundane. He was there in the persistence to get up together as a community and walk, in the conversations and the poems we wrote, in the joy of the simple pleasure of dunking in the creek, in the Catholic family we met who shared their story with us, in the travelers who did not know the God we were there for, but with whom we could talk about our reason for hope. God was there in the connections and reliance we had on each other. I live in faith that pilgrimage is a spiritual practice.

- Sarah



Over Christmas this year I walked the Camino with my family. My church paid for my ticket because I was supposed to go with our youth group over the summer but I got Covid immediately before the trip. I was very grateful to be able to still go on the Camino with the help of my church.

It was a beautiful experience and unique because we went in the off-season. One of the unique experiences happened on New Year's Eve. We walked into Tricastella where we were staying the night. We arrived in the town around 4:15pm, feeling very hungry from walking all day. The people at the hostel told us that a supermarket had opened at 4:00pm. We walked over to the store only to learn that it was



not open because of New Year's Eve. Similarly, all the restaurants we saw were closed. We were looking at a map, and trying to see if there was any other place we could get food, and some local guy was walking by and so we asked him if he knew if there were any places open where we could get food. He told us that the supermarket had opened at 4:00, and we walked over to it together to show him that it was closed. He apologized and walked away. Next to the supermarket was a hostel with vending machines in the window. My dad went looking to see if he could get food from them, and me and my brother were sitting on the curb, when the same guy walked by again and asked us if we found a place for food. We said no, and he said he would see what he could do and walked away. My dad came out with no luck and so we sat on the curb and thought of how we could get food. But then the guy came back with two bags of food for us and said "Buen Camino," and we thanked him lots! It felt so special.

My pilgrimage was a beautiful experience. Walking through all the old towns, I felt immersed in Christian history. I could feel God's presence in all of the beautiful forests and churches on the walk. Then when I got to Santiago de Compostela I was in awe. The church was not at all what I was expecting. Seeing the exterior made my jaw drop because of how big and stunning it was. It was a beautiful ending to the pilgrimage.

- Elia



  
THE COURTYARDS  
AT LINDEN POINTE

# A TALE OF TWO WINTERS



Stop enduring the Winnipeg winters and start experiencing the Linden Pointe life. It is time to set aside the snow shovel and step into what retirement living should be.



The Courtyards at Linden Pointe presents a vibrant living experience for independent seniors. A community designed with premier amenities and light care assistance to promote an active lifestyle.

We call it Brightwater Tailored Living™.

YOU ARE INVITED FOR A PRIVATE TOUR

TO BOOK YOUR TOUR TIME • (431) 778-6105 OR [LISA.BRIGHT@BWLIVING.COM](mailto:LISA.BRIGHT@BWLIVING.COM)

# LINDEN POINTE

A BRIGHTWATER COMMUNITY

75 Falcon Ridge Drive • Winnipeg, MB R3Y 2C2