



Instituto Id de Cristo Redentor
misioneras y misioneros identes
Presidente

Message to the Pilgrims of the Idente Jacobean Way on its 37th Edition

Dear pilgrims on the Way of St. James:

Always, every year, hoping to transmit the spirit that our father Founder, Fernando Rielo, has wanted for us on the Way of St. James, the President of our missionary Institute addresses a message, seeking to reflect what our prayer pleads for you, in all the countries of the world. This year, it is my turn to do it in an unexpected way, nothing less than walking with all of you.

I am grateful for this opportunity, because I have seen many times, in many countries and in every religious culture, that pilgrimages, even if they are very different, have a common characteristic: ***an unexpected grace is received.***

This is what happened to Mother Teresa of Calcutta on the day she began her journey to a distant convent for a spiritual retreat. At the beginning of that long journey, she met a hungry and sick man and in him she could read God's will for her own life. This meant a change in her way of giving herself to others, as we well know, moving from the education of young girls to the care of the poorest and most abandoned.

Something similar also happened to our Founder, Fernando Rielo, because he was on his way to visit the House of the Virgin in Turkey, following his impression that Mary would show him something for the good of his missionaries. But, upon stopping in Rome and visiting the Basilica of St. Andrew of the Valley, he tells that he already received as a gift, as a grace for all of us the Trisagio, the prayer that opens and closes the day, placing our life in the hands of our heavenly Mother, whom we call Mother of the Mystical Life.

Let us not forget that our case is no different. Undoubtedly we start with an open heart and ready to listen to what God himself wants to transmit to us. He will do it more intensely than we imagine.

Let us keep in our minds and hearts the example of the Magi, those three pilgrims who literally found the Child God they were waiting for with a cultivated mind and an innocent heart.

A pilgrimage, like this one to Santiago de Compostela, is traditionally made by walking together, sharing moments of silence, dialogue and community prayer, rest and meals. As our father Founder used to say, ***we must take advantage of this***

situation to welcome what will certainly touch our sensibility, by means of three sources: God, Nature and Society.

God will speak to each one of us in silence, in the moments when we can reflect on our ordinary life, the problems we do not know how to solve and the dreams we have not been able to realize, especially the good we would like to do for our neighbor and do not see how to achieve it. But it will also remind us of the good things we have received, especially forgiveness for our mediocre life. On the Camino we will learn to be more grateful, even for the lack of comfort that always affects travelers, which will make us appreciate material goods, but above all the mercy that falls from heaven like rain for those who confess to sin and do not hide their weaknesses.

Nature will be closer to us these days and will remind us that we did not create it, that it is full of mysteries, starting with our body and soul. Just as it happens to poets and wise men, we will admire the day and the night, we will see landscapes and creatures in a new light, and we will give thanks for the shade, even for the rain that sometimes will soothe us under the sun.

Finally, **Society**, in all its dimensions, starting with the small family that we form on the Camino. Also the welcoming friends who already know us from other years and are waiting to embrace us with a hospitality inherited from centuries ago. We do not forget those who pray for us, those who have asked us to entrust their lives to the Apostle St. James and those who await our return. The Society is also the millions of human beings who walked before us, those who for centuries faced difficulties of all kinds, even giving their lives to reach Compostela. Their memory, the art and the constructions they left in their wake, will make us more sensitive to the divine voice. As we stand before the remains of St. James, let us give thanks to those who have preceded us on the road, in life and in truth.

Pope Francis pointed out in 2016, during the Jubilee of Mercy, that a pilgrimage is not an act of masses, even if many people come together. We have to contemplate it, he said, as something very personal, very intimate, where each one of us walks carrying our history and our faith, our lights and our shadows, confident that our humble effort will have a response.

Certainly, the pilgrimage helps us to get out of ourselves, out of that world that every human being builds in the heart to try to take refuge from fear and responsibility. This is so true that all spiritual and religious traditions have intuited that each place has a special strength or grace. The ancient Greeks went to Delphi, the Peruvians to Cuzco, the Buddhists to Kapilavastu, the Muslims to Mecca and the Jews to Jerusalem.

Christ embraced this universally recognized reality, saying that he himself is *the Way, the Truth and the Life*. With this He teaches us that the arrival is important, but every step at His side has a value, a meaning, and thus we will better understand that this world is not our dwelling place, but that we can live like Him, always aware that every instant is a step towards our heavenly Father, even if our faith is small or non-existent.

We are going to a place where God has worked the miracle of many conversions, some of which we remember with special admiration and gratitude because they have taken place in our pilgrim group.

Surely we will help and encourage each other with a different, renewed generosity.

Surely these days will also be filled with a different, blessed happiness.

Surely we will never forget the footsteps of those who were beside us in silence conversing or singing, because all that is transformed into prayer.

We ask St. James the Apostle and our father Founder to lead us to the presence of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

¡Buen Camino to all of you!

Luis CASASUS
President of the
Idente missionaries