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Volunteering and faith:

Voluntary Service along The Way of St. James to Santiago de Compostela The European Cultural Route for Centuries – Modern Pilgrimage today

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Final word



1a. The Pilgrimage – an Expression of faith

- Making a pilgrimage is an important expression of devotion for many Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews and Moslems
- The Hajj – an obligatory religious observance for Moslems
- Many Christians revere Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela as holy sites worthy of pilgrimage

1b. The most pilgrims have similar Necessities

- Room and board for every day
- Risks *en route*: illness, lost luggage and sore feet
- Probably funds

240 million pilgrims per year all over the world



2. The Way of St. James across Europe

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There are St. James' ways all over Europe.

Pilgrims still wend their way to Santiago d.C. from all over the world – to the tomb of the Apostle James.



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2. The Way of St. James across Europe

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A European Route of Pilgrimage for over 1000 Years – Historical view

44AD: Apostle James the Greater decapitated in Jerusalem.

The corpse, interred in the Sinai, later translated to Spain.

Ca. 850: “Discovery” of St. James’s tomb in Galicia, Spain

950: First acknowledged pilgrim: the bishop of LePuy, France

1075-1188: Construction of a cathedral in Santiago de Compostela

1150: First pilgrims’ guide (in Latin) Liber Sancti Jacob

1495: First pilgrims’ guide in German: 500,000 pilgrims that year

16th-19th C: Pilgrimage neglected through wars and the Reformation

1867: 40 pilgrims reach Santiago / 1985: 690 pilgrims

1993: 99,436 pilgrims / 2006: 100,377 pilgrims

2010: 272,135 pilgrims / 2012: 192,488 pilgrims



3. St. James' Pilgrimages: ancient and modern

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3a. Mediaeval Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela

Pilgrimages during the Middle Ages: difficult and fraught with danger:

- No “made” roads
- The Way is not signposted or marked
- Coin-of-the-realm carried on one's person
- Lack of shelter
- Rife with brigands and wild animals
- Numerous tollbooths
- Lack of bridges – rivers had to be forded

The return journey traipsed entirely on foot as well

Pilgrims on The Way of Saint James – 1568



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3. St. James' Pilgrimages: ancient and modern

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3a. Pastoral care and private infrastructure

This made pilgrimages safer:

- ***Confraternities of St. James*** built bridges over rivers
- Religious orders founded wayside hospices
- Hostelries opened in the Alps and Pyrenees
- Monasteries and nunneries provided hospitality
- Building of chapels, churches and cathedrals
- Private and commercial services



3. St. James' Pilgrimages: ancient and modern

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3b. Pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in our day

- Rather less of piety; much more adventure
- want a real break and some time to themselves
- Yet: people still seeking a sense of purpose
- “Spiritual” tourism booming and creating jobs
- Hosting pilgrims: a motivation for voluntary service
- Well signed (yellow arrow), well organized way
- Many active volunteers: helping hands





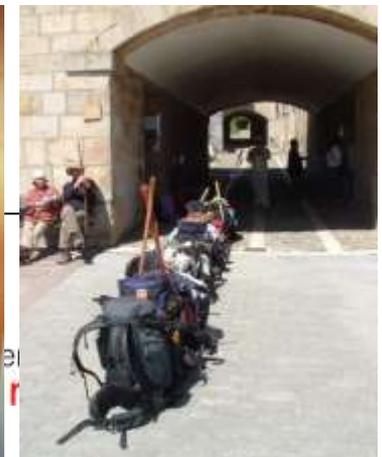
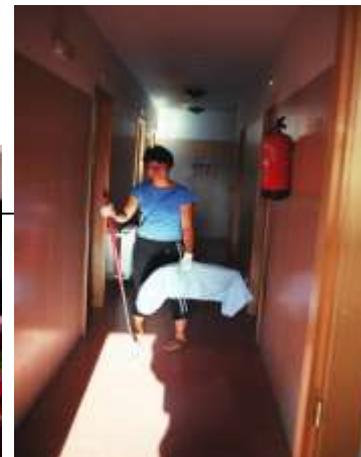
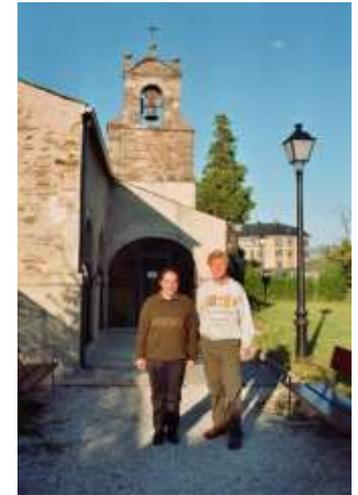
4. Volunteering and voluntary service along *The Way of St. James*



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Providing adequate accommodation *en route* for an ever-increasing number of pilgrims is one of the biggest challenges confronting the volunteers. But there are plenty more (volunteer) jobs to be done:

- signpost the route and maintain it
- host pilgrims in hostels or shelters
- provide “pilgrim’s passports”
- give route information to pilgrims
- help sick or disabled pilgrims
- offer an evening prayer
- Clean the shelters ...



5. The European Cultural Route

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UNESCO World Heritage: In 1993.

The Way of St. James was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site

European Cultural Route: 1987

The first route awarded *European Cultural Route* status was *The Way of St. James* (“The French Route”: 800km)
1987 saw 2,905 pilgrims; 2013 saw 215,880 pilgrims!



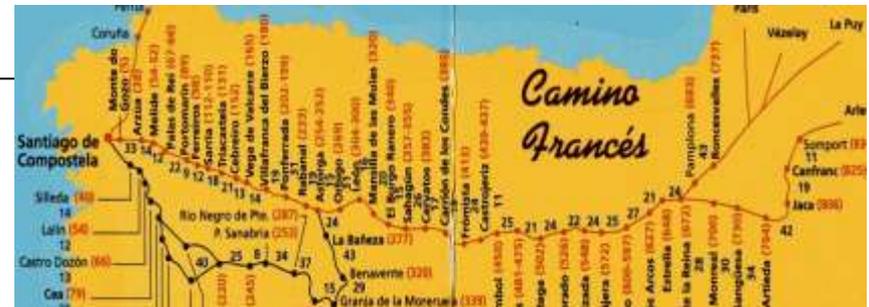
Such cultural routes implement fundamental principles in Europe: human rights, democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue and mutual exchange, enrichment across frontiers and the centuries



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5. The European Cultural Route

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The Resolution on Rules for the awarding of “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certification” (2007):

- Co-operation in research and development
- Enhance of awareness of European history and heritage
- Cultural and educational exchange for young Europeans
- Contemporary cultural and artistic practices
- Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

26 European Cultural Routes, include:

- The *Via Francigena* between Rome and Canterbury
- The *European Mozart Route* between Milan and Salzburg
- The *European Routes of Jewish Heritage*
- *Saint Martin de Tours route, a Symbol of Sharing (2005)*



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5. The European Cultural Route

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The St. Martin of Tours Way or the *Via Sancti Martini*

Saint Martin of Tours has been in Europe's collective consciousness since the 4th C. He was a tireless traveller around Europe throughout his entire life, a European ahead of his time, **a man who symbolised the universal value of sharing.**

- Born in 316 in Pannonia (Hungary), to pagan parents
- Raised in Pavia, Italy; his father served in the Roman army
- He enrolled himself in the army at about age fifteen.
- 337: Stationed in Amiens, France, Martin reputedly cut his cloak in twain and gave half to a poor man, who was dying of cold. His faith revealed to him, he became a Christian.
- 354: Martin stopped serving in the Roman Army
- 371 – 397: Bishop of Tours
- Buried on 11th November 397 in Tours



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5. The European Cultural Route

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2016 will see the 1,700th anniversary of St. Martin's birth.

By then, various opportunities for sharing will be set up all along the Route of St. Martin. Caritas is even involving refugees, people of lesser means, the disabled, the older generation and those who are homeless.

“Way Stations of Sharing” along the *Blue Route* are in the planning stage. Volunteer assignments for the St. Martin's Routes include:

- On-the-spot Sharing: “Dividing your Cloak Today”
- Establishing and signposting the route
- Active groups: St. Martin's parishes, kindergartens, Caritas and others ...
- In Germany: 600 churches, 500 Caritas .
~~many streets, places, schools and~~
at least many persons named Martin



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Towards a “Culture of Sharing” in Europe.



The Way of St. James / Via Sancti Martini

European Cultural Route

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**People in modern pilgrimage, from all over the world...
... want a real break, time to themselves, quickest way: “on foot”
... sense the spiritual power along the way and in the holy places
... are open to see the need and act on it – cultural of sharing**

***The Way of St. James* is “the Way to know yourself”**

In former times, religious orders tended to itinerant travellers. Nowadays, volunteers have taken their place and render different kinds of compassionate service. Such volunteers are a bridge between the ancient and the new ages.

At the end: 3 minutes video: The Way of Saint James, more than just a journey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJr2FzPnn1A>

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