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REGNUM CHRISTI NEWS OF THE WEEK

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Changing Hearts US Stresses "Returning the Culture to God"

Archdiocese of Indianapolis "Criterion"
newspaper features Kay Dodds and her
Changing Hearts Apostolate

*The following article about the Changing Hearts Apostolate organized by Regnum Christi member Kay Dodds is reprinted with permission from the **Criterion** newspaper of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Indiana. (Click [here](#) to read the article in the **Criterion** online.)*

By Natalie Hoefler

As the Dodds family gathered for a Labor Day weekend celebration five years ago, conversation turned to the state of the country.

"We were all talking about how horrible the culture is," said Kay Dodds. "Someone said, 'Kay, you get right on it!' I saw [my husband] Don's face sink, because he knew what that would do to me."

It turns out Don was right. Since that conversation in September of 2009, Kay and her team have launched a national initiative of prayer and fasting called Changing Hearts US, seeking to change hearts—and the culture—across the nation and beyond.

'The Lord opened doors'

“I tried to ignore the comment,” said Dodds of her relative’s challenge. “But the Lord wouldn’t let me alone.”

Nor did she leave the Lord alone. Dodds, a member of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, started an unusual novena—nine days with time spent in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, in addition to prayer and fasting at home.

By the end of the novena, an ecumenical plan had emerged. It was a grand plan, and Dodds was concerned.

“I said, ‘Lord, if you really want this, you’ve got to open some doors for me,’ ” she said. “One was for my husband to agree that the plan was feasible. Second was for [then-St. Michael Parish pastor Benedictine] Father Severin [Messick] to agree and approve the plan. And third was for local ministers to agree.

“The Lord opened all three doors.”

The plan was to distribute bookmarks with a prayer for a change of hearts to local Christian congregations, and to have ecumenical prayer services monthly throughout 2010 at various churches in Hancock County, including St. Michael Church in Greenfield.

The year of efforts ended with a large ecumenical gathering for song and prayer at Park Chapel Christian Church in Greenfield in October of 2010.

When it was over, Dodds felt relief.

“I told my spiritual director, [Legion of Christ] Father Robert [DeCesare], ‘I think we’re done!’ He looked at me with a straight face and said, ‘But the culture hasn’t changed yet.’ My face dropped,” said Dodds.

‘Prayer, fasting and education’

Four years later, what started out as a local ministry has become a national non-profit organization called Changing Hearts US.

“We have three goals to help change the culture—prayer, fasting and education,” Dodds explained. “We need more prayer warriors because

that's how we're going to change the culture, and we need to educate because the mainstream media isn't going to tell the truth."

Changing Hearts US still encourages prayer through monthly ecumenical prayer services at churches in Hancock County, with St. Michael Parish hosting one on July 17.

Prayer is also still promoted through distribution of the bookmarks. But now they're finding their way far beyond the boundaries of Hancock County into perpetual adoration chapels and churches in all 50 states.

'I settled on two minutes'

In 2011, a way to address prayer, fasting and education at the same time presented itself when Dodds was invited by a local Christian radio station owner to have her own hour-long radio program.

"That was way too long," she said. "I settled on two minutes."

With the help of Jim Ganley, general manager of Catholic Radio Indy, Dodds created the current format of the radio spot.

"We pray for two states each week, offer a fasting suggestion, and give one praise and one prayer point having to do with a moral issue," she said. "We pick something in the news that most people probably haven't heard about, or give a comment about things that are making headlines."

In addition to the Christian station near Greenfield, the spots now air on 89.1 and 90.9 FM Catholic Radio Indy at 10:55 a.m. and 4:55 p.m. They also air on Real Life Radio 1380 AM, a Catholic radio station in Lexington, Ky.

Dodds now records her messages via Skype through the station in Lexington.

"On Wednesday mornings, they call and we Skype it, and in 10 minutes they send it back," said Dodds. "It saves so much time."

'I ran ... yelling, "Alleluia!"'

Prayer services, bookmarks and radio spots were a good start, but Dodds was told she needed to get the message on the Internet for it to really take off.

“One day, I talked to a friend about needing to get on the Internet,” she said.

“Then one night, the phone rings. A man says, ‘I understand you have a need for a website for Changing Hearts US. I believe in your message. I’m a web developer, and I will put a website together for you for free.’ I ran through the house yelling, ‘Alleluia!’ ”

The website shares the Changing Hearts US prayer in four languages, posts a newsletter with the text of each week’s radio spot (also available in newsletter form via e-mail), features a prayer intention section and offers a means to order bookmarks and donate.

“We also had a girl put up a Facebook page for us,” said Dodds.

“Of course, this is all volunteer. No one here gets paid.”

Going global

To help further spread the message of prayer and fasting to return the culture to God, Changing Hearts US became a non-profit organization last year as an apostolate under the umbrella of the Legion of Christ’s Summit Seekers, Inc.

“That opened new doors,” Dodds said, noting that the non-profit status enabled the organization to apply for grants.

In 2013, with a grant for \$2,500, Dodds and her team had red bracelets made with the message, “Return the culture to God” written in English on one side, in Portuguese on the other, and included their website. They gave the bracelets to a group of World Youth Day pilgrims from Kentucky to distribute at the week-long event in Brazil.

“[The kids] told a story how on the last day, a group from Argentina came up and said ‘Are you the group with the red bracelets? We’ve been looking for you! Do you have enough for us?’ And they did!” said Dodds.

Through the message of the bracelets, Changing Hearts US now has three youths in Brazil helping to spread the message in their country.

'The power of one'

The success of the World Youth Day bracelets is just one example Dodds cites as proof that the Changing Hearts US message is working.

"I also see [results] in Hancock County, where I see the churches working together in unity to return the culture to God," she said.

"And I can't help but feel our prayer and fasting has helped a number of the recent changes," she said in reference to several religious-related rulings by the Supreme Court in June.

Such results give Dodds hope.

"I think people feel powerless," she said. "The culture is so strong. What can one person do?"

"But I encourage people to have faith in the power of one. The Lord calls us to try, not to succeed—that's his job. Nothing would happen if we didn't try.

"One person can stand in the gap and ask God, through prayer and fasting, to change the culture."

(To join, support or for more information on Changing Hearts US, log on to www.changinghearts.us. To receive their newsletter via e-mail, contact Kay Dodds at praywithus@changinghearts.us.)

Following is the Changing Hearts Prayer.

Dearest Lord,

We come to you with heavy hearts. We have strayed so far from your word. We seek forgiveness and guidance. By forgetting you and straying to false philosophies, we are becoming a godless people. In our selfish and weakened state, we have renamed our offenses to hide our sins. We have allowed it to be said:

That the unborn is a “non-person” who has no rights;
That euthanasia is “death with dignity”;
That neglecting discipline with our children builds “self-esteem”;
That filling airwaves and theaters with profanity and pornography is
“freedom of expression”;
That homosexual unions are “alternative life styles”;
That placing politics above moral values is “enlightenment.”

Lord, we know you are a powerful God, and because of our offenses you could erase us from the Earth. But we hope in your word, “if my people, who bear my name, humble themselves and pray, and seek my presence and turn from their evil ways, I myself will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and restore their land” (2 Chr 7:14).

Please change our hearts and forgive our sins! Give us the courage to proclaim your truth to our culture. We pray all this in the Name above all Names, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Life is killing me

Regnum Christi Live – July 21
By Jim Fair



I know this will sound a bit morbid, but I have been thinking about death of late.

No, I have not had a discouraging trip to the doctor, nor am I steeped in a death-contemplating depression. Quite to the contrary, I have a wonderful family, fulfilling career, sufficient resources to meet my material needs and the fishing has been good this summer.

So...why do I think about earthly demise? Because it is such a natural part of life, and things have been happening around me.

I look at the daily newspaper and the Middle East has erupted (as it tends to do every few years). Crazy fanatics are killing Christians in the Sudan and Nigeria. Hurricanes, tidal waves and earthquakes have been wreaking havoc for the past few years. Planes full of innocent people get shot down. And, of course, several people have died in the past couple years who were dear to me.

Until the past few years, when a friend or family member died, they usually were much older than I am. Oh, there was the occasional accident or disease that took someone “before their time,” but that didn’t happen often to me personally. Today, people my age and younger are dying. That isn’t because death comes sooner these days, but because, well, I’m getting along in years.

One is assumed (or presumed) to get wiser with age. In my case, I can only hope that is true. Who am I to judge?

But I do know that I’m more comfortable today about my eventually passing. Don’t get me wrong; I don’t want death to come any sooner than absolutely necessary. But the older I get, soaking up knowledge and experience, the more I realize how much I don’t know and will only know by seeing God face-to-face.

Like many people, I have a bucket list. By societal standards, it isn’t exotic. A few places I want to visit...some people I want to meet...better relationships with the people I love...and, yes a Ford Mustang with a throaty V8 and manual transmission.

But I won’t find the really important bucket stuff in this life. I can just prepare for God to answer my long list of “whys” and fill my bucket with love – provided I get past the pearly gates.

Our culture focuses on getting the most out of this life. But the older I get – and realize the impossibility of “doing it all” – the more I anticipate with joy the peace that will come in the next life. So many questions in this life. So few answers in this life. Such complete satisfaction in the next life.

Church Building

U. S. A. | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

Family from Houston, Texas, aids local Quintana Roo, Mexico, residents in constructing new house of worship

Elaine Trevithick and her family from Houston, Texas, recently joined other Regnum Christi missionaries and local residents of Quintana Roo, Mexico, to help build a local church there, to be called the Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel.



Quintana Roo is located near Cancun, Mexico. (Click [here](#) to watch the YouTube video of their work in progress.)

Elaine and her husband, Mark, participated in the February “[Cana in Cancun](#)” marriage retreat this year with Fr. Simon Devereux LC.

“During that retreat we had Mass at the Guadalupe chapel, and saw they were building a more permanent structure,” said Fr. Simon. “Mark and Elaine were inspired to return with their family to help with the Guadalupe chapel.”

Mark said he was impressed by the wonderful work he witnessed during the marriage retreat at the nearby [City of Joy](#), a project involving several charitable organizations, including Regnum Christi, to aid the needy.

“Helping them build the church was greatly inspired by the marriage retreat,” agreed Elaine. “If we had not of made that one day trip to City of Joy, and to the (nearby) town, and met the people that were going to the church for Mass, and seeing that they were building the church,



The church building project



there would have been no inspiration. It was actually my husband who asked me afterwards, ‘How would you feel about helping them build the church?’ That is all he had to say and I took the ball from there and ran with it.”

Members of the group will be returning in the fall of 2014 to help to put on the Our Lady of Guadalupe church roof. That stage of the project will cost \$6,000 US dollars, and the entire project will cost \$30,000 to complete.

Materials are still needed, so anyone who would like to donate can contact Mission Maya (the



Promoting the Mission Trip



The Way of St. James

Regnum Christi Live – July 22, 2014
By Kelly Luttinen



The Way of St. James, more commonly called “The Camino”, is a series of pilgrimage routes throughout Europe culminating at the purported tomb of St. James in Compostela in northwest Spain. Although it is internationally well known, the pilgrimage was most recently popularized by the movie [The Way](#), starring Martin Sheen and one of his sons, Emilio Estevez.

You can find out more information about the Camino on the Internet. Here are a few links:

<http://www.santiago-compostela.net/>

<http://www.csj.org.uk/>

Some of our own Legionary priests have taken, or are currently taking, this pilgrimage, including Fr. Jose Felix Ortega LC and Fr. Edward Hopkins LC. Fr. Edward has been sharing blogs from his walk now in progress on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/RegnumChristiNY>

Following is his Day 1 installment:

Dear friends in Christ,

On Tuesday we began our (El Camino) walk in the little town of Porriño. We were surprised by so many hills, mostly "uphill," but it was a shorter distance than days to come, so we couldn't complain. The countryside is beautiful. We tried to stick together and stopped to pray briefly at each church or shrine on the way. At the churches and at most of the coffee shops we got our "Pilgrim credentials" stamped with their own particular emblem. But by the afternoon we had begun to spread out. Two of the group managed to wander a couple miles off course but soon found their way back. We later gave them a hard time in good spirit...

While most of the way is very well marked, there can be some spots where it is easy take the wrong route. But it is all part of trying to follow the Lord on HIS Camino.

I had a very blessed experience while walking with another pilgrim (Evelyn Auth). We just began to take a long downhill path before entering our destination town, when we saw a man leaning down from his wall above the path, his hands full of freshly picked fruit for us. He had seen us on the path, as he drove home and quickly ran out back to his orchard. He was as joyful and as welcoming as one could imagine. He obviously enjoys blessing the pilgrims who pass with his fruit. He claimed that the plums would begin to go bad in a week, so he'd rather give them away. We visited with him for about 10 minutes, as he left us to feed another group of pilgrims from Italy who also came by at the right time.

After a grateful farewell, we continued down the hill and soon bumped into a young couple from Germany, who were pushing their bikes up the path (it was that steep). The young man identified himself as without faith; their

journey was “NOT” spiritual. He was doing the Camino for her (they were actually going backwards toward her grandparents place in Portugal). She admitted that while she was not really practicing, she was doing this for her grandmother who had died a year earlier, a woman who herself had done the Camino more than once. We tried to encourage them (suggesting) she was doing this for love of her grandmother so it was spiritual for her. And since he was doing it for love of this girlfriend, and love is spiritual... well, he was doing something more spiritual that he had imagined.

It is true that on the path of life, we encounter people unexpectedly, people we don't know or would not seek out. But God puts them in our path and puts us in theirs. What a lesson on God's constantly active Providential Plan!

After doing a spiritual reflection together after lunch, we left for where we are staying and had Mass to end the day. I celebrated for the group, but since about a dozen Spaniards joined us, it became a Spanish/English liturgy. We thanked God for the days' blessings. And the priest who welcomed us to celebrate at his parish gave us all another stamp for our Pilgrim pass.

More tomorrow. Good night!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward Hopkins, LC

Meeting New Friends

Regnum Christi Live – July 22, 2014
By Fr Edward Hopkins LC



The following is the second blog in the series from Fr. Edward Hopkins LC, who is walking “The Camino de Santiago” the pilgrimage through France and Spain to the tomb of St. James in Compostela in northwest Spain. You can follow his blogs on the Regnum Christi New York Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RegnumChristiNY>.

Day 2 installment:

Dear friends in Christ,

Sorry, I have gotten behind with a couple really long days. But here is a long summary of our Camino:

We begin our day (2) by a gathering at the local parish church. We prayed together and began our meditation, each one of us walking in silence for at

least 15 minutes, usually much more. We didn't come across too many other pilgrims initially except for a young man from Portugal – Andres -- and a younger girl – Elena, in her mid-20s from Italy. They had met in Porto, Portugal, at the start of their journey and agreed to accompany each other. Both of them walked with us most of the day.

Elena recently had to leave her job for health reasons and so decided to do the Camino getting ready to start a new chapter in her life; clearly she was searching. She, like many others, came alone to do the Camino, clearly an independent spirit...After a visiting with her for a while (with my rusty Italian) she admitted that she no longer had a relationship with God. She then shared with me what she had never been able to tell anyone, some difficult experiences she'd suffered a few years earlier. The illnesses and death of relatives seemed responsible for drawing her away from the faith she'd lived through her school years. I tried to encourage her. It was huge that she finally shared this with someone. Elena seemed relieved and appreciative, but God would have to help her heal and re-establish her relationship with Him. I wanted to pray with her but it wasn't the right moment. She needed that quiet time walking alone.

I later was able to walk and talk with Andres (his English was decent and we both spoke Spanish). He was about 40, divorced, father of two. He was carrying the burden of a divided family. His 18-year-old son lived with him and his younger daughter lived with his wife. What most impressed me was when he told me that he was doing the Camino for someone else. I guessed that he was referring to his estranged wife. He seemed at peace and had a very gentle disposition.

The walk was a beautiful one, amazing views of inlets of sea, bays and rivers... still a few more hills than we expected. This became a running joke since our organizers had assured us that it was basically a "flat" camino. I'm sure there are bigger hills out there. But we really managed well... Still no blisters or sprained ankles yet. It was close to a 20-kilometer day. We were a bit more spread out as we neared the end.

We'd regroup every so often when we stopped for a rest. But by the time we reached our destination, Pontevedra, we were ready to just sit down and enjoy a good lunch. We parted company with our two young friends who went off to settle in at the local "Albergue", the simplest lodging available. They agreed to join up with us for Mass in the afternoon.

The highlight of our day came after lunch. The good Lord keeps reminding us that He is in charge and has only good plans for us. After lunch at a simple restaurant, I went with (my companion) Carlos to find a church where we could have Mass. We found St Mary Major, the largest church in town. There the pastor welcomed my saying Mass there, but recommended I consider doing it at the Sanctuary, a small chapel just a street away. Turns out Sister Lucia of Fatima has lived there for several years. She had been quietly moved around from convent to convent after the 1917 apparitions of Fatima. This I guess was so that she not to be bothered or questioned. She later settled in the Carmelite convent back in Portugal.

We had Mass in what was at one time Sr. Lucia's room. Even more impressive was that she had experienced apparitions of the Blessed Mother holding a heart covered with thorns alongside the Christ Child. The Child Jesus (seeming 9 or 10 years old) had first appeared to her within the convent as she was taking out the garbage. She didn't recognize him as Jesus so after scolding him for being there, she sent him to pray an Our Father and Hail Mary in front of the Blessed Mother's statue. The next day she was surprised to see him: "You again!" When she asked him if he had prayed to the Blessed Mother, he asked her if she had done what the Blessed Mother had asked her! This was the start of a new effort on Sr. Lucia's part to communicate the message of Fatima.

We were awed by the whole experience, discovering the place, the explanations that the women in charge kindly gave us, and of course the prayerful Mass. I thought it so fitting that shortly after we started Mass, some children peeked into the room. I motioned that they come in. So we were joined by two Mexican families (one living close by) with 4 beautiful

children who assisted as well as anyone at Mass. The Lord seems to hinting at this theme of children!

We basically floated back home that night, tired but inspired!

We prayed for you in Pontevedra! Thank you for your prayers... they are being felt!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward Hopkins, LC

The Spirit of Service and Welcome

Regnum Christi Live – July 23, 2014
By Fr Edward Hopkins LC



The following is the third blog in the series from Fr. Edward Hopkins LC, who is walking “The Camino de Santiago” the pilgrimage through France and Spain to the tomb of St. James in Compostela in northwest Spain. You can follow his blogs on the Regnum Christi New York Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RegnumChristiNY>.

Dear family and friends in Christ,

Today we leave from the city of "Caldas de Reis" and make our way 18.5 kilometers to Padron. We can use the shorter distance given that we are

beginning to feel the effects more. Everyone seems to have suffered some issue, though no one is complaining. MariAngeles has her ankle wrapped but doesn't say a thing. Maria also has had a cold and yet gets up each day to walk the distance. I have been fortunate, though I think I may have strained some tendon on the top of my foot; now I use my sneakers rather than boots and once we get going, with a little Advil along the way, I feel fine and use my walking sticks to the full. Everyone seems determined to walk the entire distance each day. Weather continues to be sunny (mostly 70s and a bit more in the afternoon) but with a gentle and cool breeze. I am sure to stay hydrated along the way, mostly uphill now. We are more aware than ever of God's grace which gives the strength to go forward.

We are still blessed by shaded paths for the most part. So many homes have their own grape vines - not sure they can be called complete vineyards - that I can't help thinking that they all must make their own wine! No time to stop and ask... But I do repeat to myself: "I am the vine and you are the branches... remain in me and your will bear much fruit."

I try to accompany different members of our group when I am not praying and they are close by. I also have tried to be available for confession, usually in the churches we visit, but the opportunities have been too few. Today was a smooth road. The last part was mostly sun and road. We are meeting more pilgrims along the way. A large group from Malaga, a French couple, a younger Spanish couple, Portuguese Boy Scouts... It is interesting that all ages are to be found here. And they come for different reasons, many not even specifically religious. Yet, the Lord seems to be working in each of their lives as he is in ours.

As we get within a few kilometers, 6 or 7, Carlos again runs to the finish, this time along with his daughter Victoria. I am happy to just finish (today's journey)! We gather little by little and settle in to have a lunch. It is curious that meal times in Spain are quite different from what we are used to... so we end up eating often and not trying to determine what meal is lunch or

dinner. And then add to this, it doesn't get dark until around 10 pm and, well, it is a wholly different rhythm of life.

God is blessing us each day but it seems in a special way when we prepare to celebrate Mass. This time when I go off to look for a place to do Mass I find the main Church full of people just about to start a funeral Mass. The bells of the town have been ringing, clearly someone known to all and the people are quick to gather and practically fill the church. It is curious to find many of the men of the town standing outside the church for the entire Mass (not because there is no room inside) - at least they honor the faithful departed. After Mass everyone processes down the main street out of town to the cemetery located where we entered the town. What a sight!

In the meantime, I have checked out a couple other options, the chapel at the other end of town is closed, serviced by the same priest who did the funeral. So we resort to asking the Religious Sisters who run a school here, "La Encarnación", in the middle of town and they generously welcome us! I can't get over the spirit of service and welcome that thrives along the Camino. Hope we can bring some of that spirit back with us... It is another special grace. The chapel is small but beautiful. The vestments are heavy and Sister apologizes, but really, what a small sacrifice for such a privilege. We pray mostly in English today. The first reading: "When Israel was a child I loved him..." Responsorial Psalm: "Let us see you face, Lord, and we shall be saved." The Sister who received us so graciously, after Mass tells us the history of the place. A local man left all his inheritance to the Sisters for them to build a school for the education of girls. The school, though now coed, is full today and continues to imbue children with the Faith. As we pray in silence after communion the shouts and chatter of children is heard from just beyond our chapel. God speaking again? As we leave we find a group of children playing (what else?) soccer... It's good to see some things don't change. We are seeing the Lord in many faces here.

Everyone is tired. Time to get some quality sleep... it never seems to be enough. But we sense that God has more blessings in store for us on our last day of the Camino.

Thank you again for your prayers. We are blessed to be able to "bring you along with us". God bless you and your families!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward Hopkins, LC

Corpus Christi

U. S. A. | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

Touching story from St. Brendan the Navigator parish in Atlanta, Georgia, about the new corpus on the crucifix at their church, and the artist who created it



The artist tried to make the face "command a sense of peace."

On June 22, 2014, (the feast of Corpus Christi) the parish of [St. Brendan the Navigator](#) in Cumming, Georgia, ran a special edition to its parish bulletin. The article stated: "This particular Solemnity, The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, was selected as a very appropriate time to share the full story about the design and installation of our new corpus in the Sanctuary at St. Brendan's." (Click [here](#) to read the article and see the entire corpus.)

The pastor of the parish is Fr. Matthew VanSmoorenburg, LC.

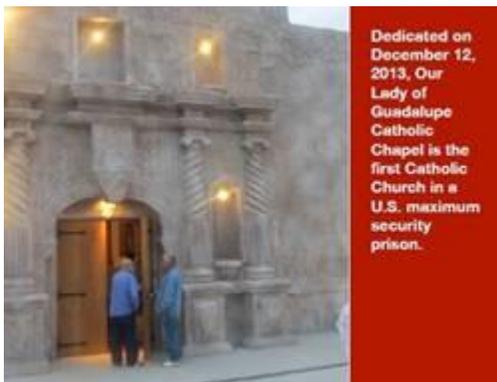
The new corpus was created by an unusual artist, a prisoner serving a life sentence at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, also known as Angola Prison.

The warden at Angola Prison considers it a mission to help his inmates spiritually. He strongly supports their practice of religion, and says more than 50 percent of the prisoners there identify themselves as Roman Catholic.

Angola is the only maximum security prison in the US with a Catholic Church on the grounds, Our Lady of Guadalupe. The church was dedicated on December 12, 2013, the

feast day of its namesake.

(Click [here](#) for a YouTube video of the church dedication.)



One of the inmates at the dedication ceremony said, "...men, broken men (he points to himself), can come to this place, this refuge, and learn to love, experience love, fulfill their potential as human beings."

Following is a quote about the creation

of the St. Brendan's corpus from the artist:

My name is My Marty James Hebert.

I am from the town of Franklin in south Louisiana. When I was 21 years old I got into a fight with a man and killed him. In 1995 I was convicted of 2nd degree murder and sentenced to mandatory life in prison. When I was asked to carve the life-sized Jesus for the crucifix I had some doubts whether it could turn out as I envisioned. I never worked on anything so large and so life-like. I enlarged a picture I was given and made a paper of it. But I also wanted to carve my interpretation of the physical aspects of Jesus. He worked as a carpenter and therefore would have been strong, but in the last years on earth as He was traveling and teaching He would have eaten modestly, taking only what His body needed. I wanted him to look slim but still see the muscle definition in His body. The face was the most challenging. I used all my imagination in how I could make it command a sense of peace. When I began the detail carving stage I would stand it against the wall and spend the evenings looking at it in different angles. I didn't know how well it would turn out but I knew I'd do my best. I knew it would be displayed in church for all to see and it would represent Christ's sacrifice for us. I am not a great artist like Michelangelo but I did put my heart



Marty Merbert with St. Brendan's parishioners Mike and Diana Artzer.



and soul into 10 weeks of work. I hope it gives reverence and hope to all who see it.

Marty, we think you did a wonderful job!



Corpus Christi

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The artist tried to make the face "command a sense of peace."



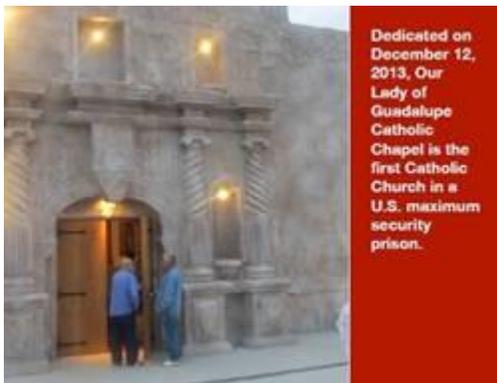
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feast day of its namesake.

(Click [here](#) for a YouTube video of the church dedication.)

One of the inmates at the dedication ceremony said, "...men, broken men (he points to himself), can come to this place, this refuge, and learn to love, experience love, fulfill their potential as human beings."

Following is a quote about the creation of the St. Brendan's corpus from the artist:

My name is My Marty James Hebert.

I am from the town of Franklin in south Louisiana. When I was 21 years old I got into a fight with a man and killed him. In 1995 I was convicted of 2nd degree murder and sentenced to mandatory life in prison. When I was asked to carve the life-sized Jesus for the crucifix I had some doubts whether it could turn out as I envisioned. I never worked on anything so large and so life-like. I enlarged a picture I was given and made a paper of it. But I also wanted to carve my interpretation of the physical aspects of Jesus. He worked as a carpenter and therefore would have been strong, but in the last years on earth as He was traveling and teaching He would have eaten modestly, taking only what His body needed. I wanted him to look slim but still see the muscle definition in His body. The face was the most challenging. I used all my imagination in how I could make it command a sense of peace. When I began the detail carving stage I would stand it against the wall and spend the evenings looking at it in different angles. I didn't know how well it would turn out but I knew I'd do my best. I knew it would be displayed in church for all to see and it would represent Christ's sacrifice for us. I am not a great artist like Michelangelo but I did put my heart

and soul into 10 weeks of work. I hope it gives reverence and hope to all who see it.

Marty, we think you did a wonderful job!



Marty Merbert with St. Brendan's parishioners Mike and Diana Artzer.



The Obstacles of Daily Life

Regnum Christi Live – July 23, 2014
By Fr Edward Hopkins LC



The following is another installment in the series from Fr. Edward Hopkins LC, about walking “The Camino de Santiago” the pilgrimage through France and Spain to the tomb of St. James in Compostela in northwest Spain. You can follow his blogs on the Regnum Christi New York Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RegnumChristiNY>.

Dear friends in Christ,

As in life, I am catching up on our adventure here in Spain. I have kept you all very much part of my steps. There is a tradition here where people leave small stones on top of the mile (kilometer) markers symbolizing the intentions that they carry with them. Well, I have you all in my intentions, my souls... in fact at times I even remember you by name as I stop to stoop down and gather more rocks or to place one on top of the markers.

Well, we left the town of Pontevedra a little earlier than our past departures. Thank God since this day will be a long 23 kilometer walk. The pilgrimage has progressed with many blessings. We are certainly feeling more tired but walking most of the day has a way of invigorating the spirit and keeping you awake! Our weather has been unbelievably excellent! We were expecting rain this morning but it cleared up by the time we began to pound

the pavement. In fact, today we were blessed with even more dirt paths (my favorite - since the pavement definitely is felt more readily in the feet and the knees. I am holding up so far) as well as shady trees covering most of the way.... thank you Lord for the shade.

Yesterday, I felt bad because our young friends failed to join us for Mass. I wasn't entirely surprised since they were as exhausted or more than, having traveled since Porto, which will end up being 220 kilometer journey for them, not to mention that Elena has not been in Church for a while. But God blessed us with another couple on our path. I was just finishing my meditation, actually felt more like a contemplation... I was almost floating along enjoying the sights of nature, the overhanging eucalyptus trees and foresty ferns... the scents of the eucalyptus reminded me of my old college campus of Thomas Aquinas in California... when two of our group, Charlie and Maria called back to me - they are always ahead of us setting a real good pace, but also giving us a beautiful example of a couple that walks and prays together (in life as well as on the Camino). When I joined them they introduced me to a young Italian couple (Maria and Charlie being of Italian descent can speak and understand the language) walking along with them, Francesco and Donatella. They have been traveling a long way since Porto; this is day 10 for them. Donatella has her ankle wrapped but keeps going. Well, she really wanted to talk.

So I lent her my ear as we went forward. She has a very deep spiritual soul and being an artist has received some beautiful images from the Lord. I encourage her to continue to seek and develop the inspirations and messages she has perceived of late... they may well be from the Lord. She also seems to be searching. I think she and Francesco, in their 30s, seem to have begun to date some months back. She suggests that she has some issues with the Church, like many young adults, but I don't sense that she is far from Christ and his Church. She is very grateful for our visit and as we enter the final kilometers she and Francesco fall off the pace. We hope to see them in Caldes de Reyes when we arrive and find our typical spot

waiting for the rest of our group on the Camino at a restaurant near the entrance to the town/city. But they never show up. In fact we actually make our way into the town itself to find a better place to eat. Seafood is plentiful and delicious in these near costal towns! The meat is very good too. And ice crème is always on the menu for desert!

The final couple of our group joins us, having already eaten along the way. We share stories and rest our feet as we try to recover from the long trek. I am a little disappointed that again I failed to find a way to pray with our new young friends or to even share information so to stay in touch. The city/town is too big to expect to easily encounter them again; (though I kind of hope against hope... if God wants it). Oh well, such is life. God often brings us together to simply plant a seed and then we move on. Even Jesus and his disciples did this often. St Paul though found a way to stay in touch with his spiritual children. I wish I were more like him.

Well, the Lord has a way of surprising us. As we are finishing our lunch who walks by us but our first friends, Andres and behind him Elena! We all share a joyful greeting. Turns out that she was so tired and sore that she simply crashed in Pontevedra the day before and couldn't manage to walk to the other side of the city to join us for Mass. OK, so you'll have to join us today! We agreed on a time and place near where they are staying, even though I have not had a chance to secure a permission yet. Trust...

I soon walked ahead with Charlie to find and secure the Mass site. We climb the stairs to reach the huge Romanesque Church... doors closed... talked to neighbors, even rang the bell - a real bell that was loud enough to call a whole monastic community together...one twice, three times... nothing. No sign of life. We tried our best but could not get anyone to come to the door... late siesta? Turns out that there is only one Dominican on duty there and he is close to 90!

I wanted to do Mass there since that is where we agreed to meet with Andres and Elena. Just then we meet a fellow pilgrim, a young Franciscan.

Yes, he is wearing his robes all the way from Porto, Portugal. (I am traveling in lighter gear!) He is from there, traveling with a small group of young adults and about a year away from ordination. Hermano Miguel is full of life, very outgoing and friendly. Well, he has heard about the plan for Mass from our friends. So together we set out to find a church after unsuccessful attempts at awaking the old Dominican. We cross back over the river and find another large Church waiting for us. It happens to be very special - having a large stone under the altar on to which the boat that brought St James to be buried in Santiago was said to be moored. Unfortunately we find more obstacles - is this not our daily life! The power is out and they are working on it. The church janitor is an older man with a very rough Spanish character. He gives us no hope of doing Mass there: the priest is out, no light... and there are two women preparing for a choir practice. "Forget it!" Hmmmm... My Franciscan friend (capuchin), Miguel, then goes into action. "This man is not the one who will get us permission... I will go and talk with the young ladies preparing for choir practice." I stayed in the pews to pray for a little miracle... I think God wants us to have Mass.... And why not use the Franciscan charism to get it done!

The young ladies call the pastor. He has arrived by at the rectory and will be right over. He gives us permission as long as we start soon and don't mind the lack of light. No problem, my kindle will give me the Mass parts and readings for today! Charlie arrives back with the rest the group and Br. Miguel returns with a young Portuguese priest and the rest of their group (7 or 8). So we celebrate Mass in both languages, with Portuguese singing, two "short" homilies (really!) and so many graces! I even attempt some prayers in Portuguese, since I am celebrant. Before finishing Mass I have noticed Andres sitting with our group but also Elena sitting back behind everyone. She is coherent at least as she is still finding her way back to God and her Catholic Faith. After Mass there is not much time. We need to set off for our lodging. But this time I don't miss the chance. Our group together prays over Elena and I give her a blessing. She seems appreciative and receptive... another step on her path? Another seed to be

nurtured by God with time and more journeys... I am at peace. I am sure that she is on the path, his path!

Well, this is getting too long to be a blog or a brief note or update. But again it is just a sign of how much God is with us, blessing us and leading us. Thank you again for all your prayers. It is working! Keep them coming. We pray for you all and offer our steps and efforts for your intentions!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward Hopkins, LC

Regaining Trust

U. S. A. | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

Fr. Benjamin Clariond LC is interviewed on the EWTN program Vaticano

A recent “Vaticano” report broadcast on the EWTN network featured Fr. Benjamin Clariond LC discussing the Legion of Christ and Regnum Christi reform process.

The report gave an overview of our history and renewal, and Fr. Benjamin clarified how the appointment of Fr. Gianfranco Ghirlanda as consultant to the Legion of Christ will help in that process.



“He will participate in those general council meetings which he

considers important to participate,” said Fr. Benjamin.

He said Fr. Ghirlanda will also help with the “daunting challenge” of finding a canonical structure for the whole of Regnum Christi, and the relationship between all the vocations within the movement.

Fr. Benjamin stressed the most important issue facing the Legion is regaining trust. He said the Legion and Regnum Christi have been undergoing a process of “soul searching,” attempting to clarify our charism and renew our constitutions.

“There are people who don’t trust us to follow through on the reforms we have already started, and that’s only normal and they have the right to do that,” said Fr. Benjamin. “I would ask them also to give us a chance. We really want to do things right. And the presence of the assistant in Fr. Ghirlanda is also helpful because he will help us avoid pitfalls along the way of the implementation.”

Click [here](#) to see the report on YouTube.

Coming to the End of the Road

Regnum Christi Live – July 24

By Fr Edward Hopkins LC



The following is another installment in the series from Fr. Edward Hopkins LC, who is walking “The Camino de Santiago” the pilgrimage through France and Spain to the tomb of St. James in Compostela in northwest Spain. You can follow his blogs on the Regnum Christi New York Facebook page:<https://www.facebook.com/RegnumChristiNY>.

Dear family and friends in Christ,

I could not believe it is the last day of our Camino! It is a bitter-sweet kind of thing. Part of me is glad to finish (you know which part that is!) and part of me wishes it would continue. I am really beginning to get into the rhythm of walking and praying... my neck and even my back are hardly bothering me... and we can all use these graces!

We left for Santiago as early as we could. It is a sunny day again, maybe a little warmer, closer to 80. I have just a couple spiritual directions to finish as we set off. Walking and talking works. We visit some of the large Churches as we leave Padron. Most are closed but we pause for a photo and a prayer. Signs of the Apostle Santiago are more present and obvious. A large statue we pass may be either Santiago or the iconic pilgrim. We then make a snack stop, a now favorite means of perseverance, though

each one's intake varies. It is here that we are surprised again by a "chance" re-encounter with Camino friends.

As the last of us walk into the little snack bar, joyful greetings resound in different languages. I look up to see (friends) Donatella and Francesco. They never made it to the last town but stopped short due to her bad ankle but got on the road earlier than we did today. In good spirits and back to walking, they join us for the snack. He seems even more open and friendly than when we first met. After chatting, some translations and exchanging contact information and a group shot, we all set out again. I will not see them again until Santiago, but they travel with some of our group for much of the way.

After finishing the last spiritual direction and another unscheduled stop, I leave most of the group to catch up to Carlos. Although he is not running, he is walking along quickly. After a good distance, Carlos decides to take a detour since he has run out of water. I keep going since we are sure he will catch up quickly. But it takes longer, since he also gets water for his wife Maria and their daughter Victoria and takes time to get it to them. Meanwhile, I am walking along not too fast, enjoying the paths, now more road and the solitude.. so peaceful. I know that there is not much quiet Camino left and I want to soak in all I can and hear all He has to say.

As we get closer to Santiago, strangely enough the signs are fewer and less visible. In fact, I am beginning to wonder if I am on the right road. Maybe I was enjoying it too much and wandered off the path or missed a turn... So I stop on what seems a city street and ask a poor fellow sitting in the shade. He seems homeless and tells me that I am on course, just to keep going ahead into those woods. Before I move on I sit down to adjust my shoes and roll up my pants. It is getting hot. We continue to visit and he asks me for money, of which I have none. (I am never sure who to help and how much...) I tell him politely that I have nothing but I would like to give him the best I have - that is a blessing. He firmly rejects it: "No quiero bendicion." I ask him why but he won't give me an answer. I think maybe

he feels it's a poor substitute for what he most wants. He explains that he is out of work. I tell him I will pray he gets work, but he is not interested in that prayer either. He lives in Santiago but moves around a bit. More conversation reveals that he has no family. After trying in vain to encourage him, it is time for me to move on. But I tell him that even if he doesn't want it, I will be praying for him. I bid him farewell and he gives me a friendly but short: "Buen Camino." I must be sure to keep praying for him... since he has no family, I just became his brother. I think that is what Our Lord intended. (Wish I had some of that money...)

A good half hour later I find myself walking across a bridge with another, rather large city or at least suburbs sprawling in front of me. I believe it is Santiago... almost there. Well, not really. Most of the way has been uphill but the real test comes during the last few kilometers when you think you are closer than you are and it seems like you are climbing a mountain... and the streets really are uphill! Carlos catches up to me just before we begin this climb... so I can't ease up now. None of those "yellow arrows" that were once so common to keep us on course. In fact, Evelyn's comment to Steve when they reached this point has now become an epic quote: "Steve, find me an arrow!"

People respond to our questions and keep us on track as we push through the city. Pretty soon we are going down those old narrow streets, carved out hundreds of years ago when they must have looked wide to ancient eye... when we suddenly spot one of the Cathedral spires! This is going to be big.

Remember that the whole reason for doing the Camino is to reach the tomb of St James. In fact, the Camino became "THE Pilgrimage" back in the middle ages when pilgrimages to the Holy Land were no longer possible with the military rise and domination of Islam, and even Rome became too difficult and dangerous given the conflicts and wars there at that time. So Santiago became the place to go... the pilgrimage to do... for all of Europe, so that you could visit "the Tomb of the apostle".

We walk into the square and I can't even see it all at once, nor can the camera. We hear an incredible choir singing across the plaza. The city is full of culture and is not shy to share it... a lot of pilgrims! (Some say 1000 a day.) We decide to quickly go up the steps to see the inside the Cathedral before going to clean up at the hotel. It is as beautiful as I imagined but we'll need more time to appreciate it all. For now I kneel down to pray for all of you for whom I have done this Camino and thank God for giving us the strength to do it. We've come home.

Again our special grace moment comes with Mass. We are here for the 7:30 vigil Mass. Our group gets split up but all make it to the Mass. I am able to go in time to ask to concelebrate. The Cathedral is full. The religious sister who helps there tells me that we are fortunate. Normally the famous giant Thurible (Incensor) is swung only regularly at the end of Sunday masses (the sweet smelling smoke symbolizing the prayers of the pilgrims ascending to heaven!) but this evening the church is full and we will see it done at the end of our Mass! Wow! Three to four feet tall, pulled up and down by about 7 or 8 men in robes, it swings back and forth the width as well as the height of the transept (the naves that make a cross with the length of the Cathedral). It is truly a sight! Even more importantly I am one of two priests present and able to concelebrate!! The Rector/pastor of the Cathedral asks me to do a couple prayers of the faithful in English as well as a part of the Eucharistic prayer. (I didn't tell him there were only 8 of us... well, not counting you.) I am exhausted but I don't faint. The Mass is beautiful.

Donatella and Francesco said they were not going to make Santiago today... Then Maria tells me that as they walked along she invited our Italian friends to join us for this Mass but they said they couldn't. Then she pleaded saying that I would be concelebrating, even though Maria had no idea whether I would be able to or not... I guess given how God had blessed us up until then (at each MASS), she knew! So it seems Francesco and Donatella didn't want to miss this. They didn't. After Mass we gather

and I am happy to see our friends and their smiles. And they loved the Mass... another seed, another step of faith, another grace!

I will have to write tomorrow to finish... there is so much. Sorry to not know how to keep this short. But you all know me. God bless you and your Caminos!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward Hopkins, LC

A picture of hope

Regnum Christi Live – July 24

By Jim Fair



Meriam Ibrahim met the Pope today.

These courageous women escaped from Sudan. She had been tortured, beaten, sentenced to death, forced to deliver her baby while bound in chains on the floor of a cold jail cell, released, returned to present, sought asylum in the American Embassy in Sudan and finally was released for good. She is on her way to the United States to join her husband, an American citizen.

This faithful woman's crime was being a Christian. And her treatment in Sudan is echoed around the world every day as Christians are persecuted and killed by the thousands each year. Perhaps we are on the road to a global religious war. But today, the sight of a woman and her baby meeting the Holy Father gives me hope.

Supernatural Fruit

U. S. A. | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

The new “Food for the Journey” Retreat Guide will focus on the antidote to sin, the Eucharist

What is the antidote to the poison of sin? The answer to that question is examined in the latest Retreat Guide from RCSpirituality.org.

Food for the Journey, the newest edition to the many retreat guides now on the website, will be available on August 1, 2014. You can preview the introduction to this new guide at <http://rcspirituality.org/>.



Fr. John Bartunek LC explains how our first parents, Adam and Eve, betrayed God by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, making the “Tree of Life” off limits. But God’s plan of restoration involved giving us a new “Tree of Life”, so to speak, the cross of Jesus Christ. Through His cross, we have the antidote to the forbidden fruit – Jesus’ own body and blood in the Eucharist.

The new Retreat Guide will reflect on God’s gift of the Eucharist, “highlighting its wonders” and provide practical advice to get more out of the Mass.

Go to RCSpirituality.org for more information, and don’t forget to provide your feedback and to consider supporting this good work with your donations.

Reaching Santiago and So Much More!

Regnum Christi Live – July 25, 2014

By Fr Edward Hopkins LC



The following is the last installment, written July 19, in the series from Fr. Edward Hopkins LC about walking “The Camino de Santiago” the pilgrimage through France and Spain to the tomb of St. James in Compostela in northwest Spain. All his blogs are on the Regnum Christi New York Facebook page:<https://www.facebook.com/RegnumChristiNY>.

Dear family and friends in Christ,

I am now in Rome preparing to start my month long spiritual exercises - not to preach but to do them myself... 30 days for the first time! Please keep me in your prayers this month, as I will you.

Our Camino ended in a way that should not surprise by now, with more blessings. We went in the morning after arriving to Santiago in order to get our "Diplomas" for doing the Camino. After that we made a quick visit again to the Cathedral in order to give the statue of St James a hug! It is one of those traditions here. The rest of the Cathedral was inspiring as well. People from all over the world coming together to honor Our Lord and his Apostles who have gone before us and have shown us the Way. In fact after celebrating our Mass here I met a fairly large RC group from Mexico!

I am sure there was much more to see: the night life in Santiago... a lot of music on the streets.... And more monuments to faith... but we had to get on the road home because we have planned on the way to visit Avila, where St Teresa of Jesus began her reform of the Carmelites. The trip was smooth. Carlos was a great driver. We stopped for our traditional 2nd breakfast and finally came into Avila! What a sight! I had seen it once before but only in passing when I studied in Salamanca about 30 years ago! The old part of the city is surrounded by a huge wall, preserved in its medieval look. We didn't have time to walk around on top of the wall - but we went through the city... hasn't changed much in the past few hundred years I suspect. We skipped a museum to stop in and see an old convent of St Teresa... we thought it was a kind of museum - it was that and more.

My real target was the convent of the Incarnation - famous since St Teresa began there, and I have heard much about it over the years. In fact the sister of one of my Legionary classmates is now Prioress (superior) there. Well, we never got there...

When we reached the house of St. Joseph's (the museum and more) we discovered that this was precisely where St Teresa began the reform when she left the Incarnation.... And that it was still a CONVENT of the discalced Carmelites!! We were amazed and our amazement grew. I had not celebrated Mass yet but we were OK since we did the vigil last night, but I still like to celebrate Mass each day if I can... My plan was to celebrate back at the LC house once we arrived in Madrid.

Yet as we were in the chapel of the Convent of St Joseph, having begun to realize its significance, one of our group asked a volunteer who cares for the place about having Mass there. She in turn went and spoke with one of the Carmelite contemplatives within the cloister. Not only did she give us permission, but permission to celebrate in the exact original foundation where St Teresa began, a little chapel next door, not always open and accessible!! A few minutes later and we would have been too late to do it.

We were very excited. I then had the opportunity to speak with the sister (who remained hidden behind the turnstile). She was very kind and gentle, one of the older sisters there I'd guess. When she confirmed that I was a Legionary she encouraged me: "You have suffered much... experienced something quite extraordinary (referring to these past few years since the scandal broke)... the Lord in His kind providence is with you... purification is always good... We love the Legionaries and have been praying very hard for you. You will be fine and have in an important mission... we will continue to pray for you!"

This was beyond just a special grace. It really touched me. I very much admire and esteem these Carmelites who still live a very austere life, barefoot and with only what they most need. And one of their first apostolates is to pray for priests. As I left the window... I knew I had a lot to give thanks for... for the group and on my own behalf.

The Mass was quiet in that little chapel, joined by 3 Spaniards, so we again celebrated in Spanish and English. This house that St Teresa and her first sisters first moved into measured only about 20' x 10' at most; though the chapel had been slightly expanded behind us. The man who gave them the house gave it with one condition that he be buried in their convent. He died as soon as they finished fixing up this first convent and his tomb was in the floor in front of the altar. There was a kind of window in the wall where his wife would hear Mass from in those first days when this was it and the cloister did not allow for more. How great things begin so small! Another lesson of grace!

I should add that there was a small holy water font in the corner that was actually connected to a spring or well used by St Teresa from those first years on. It still runs and miracles have been attributed to its use by the faithful. But its water had been almost used up. We gathered what we could. Then the hidden Sister sent me a small bottle of holy water from that same spring. We also got a larger bottle for the rest of the group and still have it with me.

Much more could be said, but after this we had little need (not to mention little time) for anything more.

I have just one more reflection that I hope to have time to relate concerning one of the greatest graces of this pilgrimage for me: encountering my Legionary brothers and communities in Spain and now in Rome. I doubt I can do justice to this grace but I will try. From the moment of my first stay with the LC community of Madrid up until now in Rome the charity (that I had first been so impressed by 34 years ago when I entered) has just kept going deeper. The Fathers were welcoming, warm and kind, looking after all my needs. It was a joy to see some whom I had not seen since many years ago; Fr Jesus Maria Delgado was a classmate, now Territorial Director for Spain - it had been 23 years since I had seen him, basically when we were ordained together by St. John Paul II. Others, younger ones, I greeted for the first time, like we had know each other for years! In fact because of them, I was able to briefly join the community of those doing their philosophy studies (middle years 10-12 years of formation) in Sorrento where we have a house for summer rest. They treated me to a day of hiking and swimming... and then found a way to get me back to Rome in time for my spiritual exercises that begin tonight. But it is more than what they did. It was the simple, joyful and generous spirit with which I was received. They make you feel like someone important. Now that is the Legion I loved and entered so many years ago. And here it is alive and well!

Funny how going away, we discover what really is so close since I find the same charity at home in my community in Rye, but I guess it becomes normal. What is the Lord saying to me, to us? I will let each of you answer that yourself. But I thank God for all that he has blessed me with: my family, souls - my spiritual family (all of you) of which you are part... and of course my community and the Legion.

I look forward to going deeper in these mysteries and especially that of my relationship with Christ who is everything for me. I thank you all for your

prayers, behind so many blessings. I thank you for your prayers anticipated over the next month. And I promise that I will do this retreat for you as well, since in the end a priest is not a priest for himself but Christ, his Church and His spiritual children.

Sorry, it is impossible to express all this as it should be expressed. But with confidence in his grace and love, I look forward to getting back home in a month, renewed and hopefully closer to real holiness!

Thank you for walking with me. God bless all of you and your families!

Yours in Christ,

Fr Edward Hopkins, LC

Jim Fair
Communications Director
Legion of Christ
312-953-9864