

Santiago Pilgrimage Information

**This sheet and other information will be posted on the
Oratory's Web site -- www.oratory-toronto.org -- under Youth Activities**

Departure: Monday, May 4, 2009 -- 9:45 p.m. -- Air Canada 836. Be at airport by 7:15 p.m. We arrive in Madrid on Tuesday, May 5 at 11:10 a.m.

Return: Sunday, May 17, 2009 -- Air Canada 837 -- Arrives in Toronto, at 3:20 p.m. the same day.

Airline tickets must be fully paid for by Wednesday, February 18. At that time, we will find out the cost of the applicable taxes. The total cost of the airline tickets as of today (January 9) is \$1,056. Pilgrims who are collecting frequent flyer points or have a credit card that provides travel insurance can use the cards to pay their fare. Pilgrims can also write cheques to me (Fr Martin Hilbert) and I will pay the travel agent. Travel health and cancellation insurance is not included in the price of the trip. I can arrange to get some for you from the travel agent.

I need to collect the balance of the \$2,200 by 1 April 2009. (The cost of the trip for the youth will be reduced by our fund raising efforts and donations from various supporters.)

You need a valid passport to get into Spain. If you have one, check it now to make sure that it is not expired. To obtain a passport go to: <http://www.ppt.gc.ca/index.aspx?lang=eng> If you don't have a passport, you won't get on the plane.

Pilgrims under 18 need a letter of permission to be escorted out of the country. I will get a form online soon that you can download. This form will have to be witnessed. More details to come.

Our itinerary in Spain is (tentatively) as follows:

May 5: Arrive in Madrid at 11:10 a.m. Take the 2:15 p.m. train to Leon. Mass. Sleep in hostel attached to the Benedictine monastery.

May 6: Early morning Mass. Visit to Cathedral. Take bus to Ponferrada at 11:30 a.m. Arrive Ponferrada at 12:50 p.m. Lunch and sightseeing in Ponferrada until late afternoon. Take shuttle bus to Villafranca del Bierzo. Vespers and dinner in Villafranca. Take taxi to Vega de Valcarce (179.5 km -- these figures are kilometers to Santiago).

May 7: Walk 11.5 km (steep uphill) to O Cebreiro (168 km).
(If any pilgrim simply cannot walk the distance -- fatigue, blisters, etc. -- there is the possibility of calling a taxi. The rates for an average day's distance are approximately 30 Euros or \$50. Taxis are not included in the price of the pilgrimage. If you need a taxi, you must be prepared to pay for it yourself.)

May 8: Walk 23 km (mainly downhill) to Triacastela (145 km).

May 9: Walk 19.2 km to Sarria (125.8 km)..

May 10: Walk 26 km to Portomarin (99.8 km).

May 11: Walk 25.8 km to Palas de Rei (74 km).

May 12: Walk 27.7 km to Arzua (42.3 km).

May 13: Walk 17.8 km to O Pino (24.5 km).

May 14 & 15: Walk 24.5 km to Santiago and have Mass in the Cathedral. Stay in hotel in Santiago for two nights.

May 16: Leave Santiago at 10:30 p.m and sleep on the overnight train to Madrid.

May 17: Arrive in Madrid at 8:00 a.m. Take subway to airport. Check in. Mass in airport chapel. Fly home just past noon. Arrive in Toronto at 3:20 p.m.

Although I have only put down Mass on a few occasions, there will be Mass every day. Pilgrims are also expected to pray Lauds (Morning Prayer), Vespers (Evening Prayer), Compline (Night Prayer), and the Rosary in common. (Booklets will be provided.)

What to take:

- Back pack.
- Water bottle.
- Hiking boots and socks. Flip-flops for bathroom. Possibly one lighter pair of shoes.
- Very light sleeping bag. A liner or a blanket may be all that is necessary. Plastic painters drop sheet to cover bed so as to provide a protective layer against the possibility of lice or bed bugs. (This drop sheet can help with waterproofing your back pack during rain.)
- Two pairs of pants -- quick drying.
- Shorts (if you are so inclined).
- 3 pairs of underwear and 3 T-Shirts
- 2 long sleeved shirts
- A light sweater. The temperatures may drop to 5 or 6 above zero.
- Rain gear. There will be rain. I use a good waterproof windbreaker for the top only. Others prefer to have something waterproof for their legs as well.
- Brimmed hat.
- Something to sleep in.
- Toiletries. Light. Share resources.
- Small towel.
- First aid kit. (No need to bring your own. Fr Martin has a fairly elaborate one.)
- Needle and thread.
- If you are bringing a camera, don't bring your recharger. There are just a few plugs in each albergue and many pilgrims waiting to recharge batteries. Not worth it.
- Plate, cup, knife, fork, and spoon.
- Very small light source -- an LED on a key chain is plenty.
- Ear plugs to keep out the noise of snorers.
- Travel documents.

What do we do for food?

This will vary from day to day. Sometimes we will eat a restaurant. Sometimes we will stop at a supermarket and get provisions. The one thing that I would like to make clear here is that everyone is responsible for food. On past pilgrimages to Midland, the Junops spoiled us with their excellent cooking and frequent services. This year they are walking and will be just as tired as the rest of us. So each one of us has to co-operate.

One of the attractions of the pilgrimage is that each day there is something new. Sometimes there will be a big pot in the albergue and other pilgrims will be cooking and invite us to join them. At other times, we might want to host others. Sometimes, we might want to break up into smaller groups of 4 or 5 and each group fend for itself. Without knowing the details of the place -- price of the restaurant, how good the kitchen facilities are, location of supermarket, other pilgrims -- it is impossible to plan. The only thing that is certain is that we all have to be willing to pitch in. I will decide whether the group finances can handle a restaurant and if not, how much money per person the group can spend at a supermarket. But if we go to a supermarket, it does not necessarily mean that one person will buy all the food and prepare it. **Food will be a group effort.**

I would like every pilgrim to let me know the following information:

Name as it appears on passport.

Passport number.

Will you pay me by cheque for the airline ticket?

If you want to buy your tickets by credit card, I will need the credit card details.

Do you want me to get cancellation and travel health insurance for you when I buy the airline tickets? I will post the price of this on the web site.

Do not worry. I will not post your personal info on the web site.