

ST. MARGARET'S YOUTH

CAMINO PILGRIMAGE JULY 2022

The 2022 Camino Pilgrimage was birthed in 2019 when the St. Margaret's Youth Group walked their first Camino. At that time, the parish committed to a trip every three years for youth in Grades 10-12. But launching Camino 2022 was a faith journey in itself with the pandemic interrupting the preparatory period. It was with hope that participants gave their deposits in March not knowing if they truly would end up walking those well-worn trails four months later. We give thanks to God that they did and are very grateful for the Diocesan Youth Ministry Grant of \$10,575 which helped make Camino 2022 a reality.

The pilgrimage gave St. Margaret's Youth an opportunity of a lifetime as a group of four youth and four leaders walked 268 kilometres from Leon, Spain to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela between July 6-18. It also presented a tremendous challenge with the heat dome over Europe. Walking with blistered feet in temperatures often breaking 40 degrees through towns where many chapels remained closed because of the pandemic was not what the group envisioned when they signed up in wintry Winnipeg. And yet, the pilgrims persevered. They returned to tell stories of encouragement, finding one's pace, and trusting God with the unknown. They spoke of lessons learned with regards to acceptance of self and others, attending services in Spanish and Latin, Compline sung around a fountain, and conversations with fellow pilgrims from around the world. They also recalled the delight of wading in creeks and the tremendous joy of ice cream! The memories made and impact on the pilgrims' lives will be long-lasting.

There is more to the story though. A fifth youth pilgrim had to drop out of the trip due to illness two days before the departure. Thankfully she was able to use her flight voucher to complete a 7-day pilgrimage with her family over Christmas 2022. The gift of the trip (and of the Youth Grant) expanded to even more members of our parish and will continue to do so as Youth start dreaming about Camino 2025.

Submitted by Tracy Curle

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