



Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

Stepping into the Camino of 2020

One of the cards I received these holy days had a picture of the young Tobias holding the hand of the Archangel Raphael. In his other hand he was carrying a fish, while his little dog followed at his heels. The Renaissance artist who painted this scene from *The Book of Tobit* however, used poetic license and included the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. Three angels, Tobias, the little dog and the fish.

By the way if you have never read *The Book of Tobit* from the Jewish Scriptures, it is well worth the endeavor – 14 short chapters of intrigue, romance, mystery and human complexity. It's a gem.

I placed the picture in a prominent place and have spent time each day contemplating it.

This prayer emerged...

"May Raphael (who is the patron of healing and travelers, you'll understand why, if you read the story) accompany me as he did Tobias, on this sabbatical year, and especially when walking the Via Francigena from Canterbury to Rome. May he guide and instruct me along the way. May Michael (who in the painting is clad in armor, sword drawn) protect me from all danger and harm and fend off anxiety. May Gabriel, depicted holding the same lily he presented to Mary at the Annunciation, open my eyes and heart and reveal God's plan as he did to the girl in Nazareth."

With the three Angels accompanying me, I felt my apprehension and overwhelmedness giving way to joy and antici-

pation. I'm having to obtain an extended Italian visa, as the maximum time an American citizen may remain in the Schengen Area Countries of the European Union is 90 days. The Via Francigena is at least 117 days. So, the Prior General of the Camaldolese is kindly applying through the Vatican for me. Another Angel. Once I receive the visa I hope to leave promptly for South Africa and begin my Camino-sabbatical.

I pray the same three Angels will accompany you as you step into the Camino of 2020 and may they do for you exactly what, I pray, they'll do for me. And so we'll be united in journeying, mystery and Angels during this New Year.

Love and Blessings,

Michael

I Choose to Begin

I love all beginnings, despite their anxiousness and their uncertainty, which belong to every commencement. If I have earned a pleasure or a reward, or if I wish that something had not happened; if I doubt the worth of an experience and remain in my past – then I choose to begin at this very second.

Begin what? I begin. I have already thus begun a thousand lives.

Rainer Maria Rilke
EARLY JOURNALS

Buen Camino, Michael

As Michael embarks on his year of discovery and contemplation, we wish him a blessed and safe "Buen Camino." Our new masthead reflects, while Michael may now be out of sight, that he remains in our minds and hearts, as we do in his. This newsletter will continue while Michael is away. We hope to post updates from him as he treks the 1,900 km Via Francigena. We ask that you join us in keeping Michael in your prayers.

Some retreat recordings are still available on CD

There are still some *Cave of the Heart I and II; Camino II and III; Celtic Spirituality I and II; and Contemplative Ways of Being I, II and III* retreats available on CD. All 13 of Michael's retreats are available as downloads. Each is a full retreat, consisting of 5 talks, totaling over 5 hours. Visit:

<https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/MichaelFish>

Retreat scheduling

If you are an organization, group or retreat center interested in booking Michael for 2021-2022, please contact Laura Hipke, (818) 248-4747 or laura@hipkes.com.

Support needed for Michael

Michael is entirely self-supporting, receiving no outside financial assistance apart from his own ministry. Your tax-deductible donation to Hermit Fish, his 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, helps to sustain Michael's ministry. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475

Visit: <https://www.hermitfish.com/donate>