The pilgrim's hostel **L'Esprit du Chemin** has been in existence now for five years! We would like to celebrate this milestone with something special for your journey on the camino to Santiago de Compostela or to Cape Fisterra, but also further, on the camino through life.

Our **Esprit Cards** are just like a travelling companion. A companion who offers you emotion and wisdom, who puts questions and quotes before you and hands you ideas. A soulmate for your walks. These cards have been gladly created and given. Celebrate life and enjoy your journey!

Arno and Huberta
The call

Once upon a time the Camino came across your path. Now it captivates you. You are resolved: I am going to do this! You set out on your pilgrimage, weeks or months on end.

how did the “call” for this adventure manifest itself?

who or what was the messenger?

it is usual not to obey a call instantly. We start by assembling the necessary courage. Do you recognize it? How was it for you?

what triggers you to set out on the journey right at this moment?

“Now the Lord said to Abram: go forth from your country”

(Genesis 12:1-2)

now is the time. You take the step from dream to action: you announce the start of your journey. Think about it: how? where? and to whom? and … tell!

www.espritduchemin.org
The departure: preparations

You make arrangements, you choose your route, you decide what to take along and ... what to leave home, you start some training hikes and prepare yourself mentally as well.

- what do you intend to gain with your journey?
- what are your expectations about your way and about yourself?
- what held you back earlier on?
- which role do these old barriers play now?
- what is the most important thing that you take along?
- which certainties fall away and which have not yet fallen away?

“The real quest is not looking for new landscapes but looking with new eyes”

(Marcel Proust)

► choose a challenging and inspiring form to record your adventure.
The departure: farewell

This moment is inevitable: you are really going away. Only then you truly realise what you have and also that you must leave it behind.

- how do you say farewell before starting out?
- who and what do you leave behind?
- is saying farewell hard to do for you?
- what does parting mean to you?
- what emotions are stirred up inside you?

“Perhaps love is partly: to learn to let go, to know when it is time to say farewell”

(Sergio Bambarèn)

▶ make “letting go” meaningful to yourself: how are you going to do it? Give yourself a new assignment regularly. That is to say “letting go” is what you do every day ..

www.espritduchemin.org
On the way: the first stage

You are on your way into an unknown future. The whole road lies still open in front of you.

what emotion does it bring you?
what does it do to you?
what other previous moments in your life resemble this emotion?
“The first step is the hardest” is sometimes said. How did you take your first step? Was it the hardest?
which step in your life was more than worth it?
which step would you never take again?

“Also a journey of a thousand miles, begins with one step”

(Lao Tse)
On the way: the mountain

It was quite a long climb, but what a panorama! The world lies at your feet and all the things you worried about first, seem minute specs in a far-away past.

◆ which experiences were the pinnacle of your life?
◆ which was then your own role?
◆ which part did other people play in it?
◆ which insight did such an overwhelming experience bring you?
◆ what did your experience mean to others?

“If you stay with your feet firmly planted into the ground, you will never make any progress”

(Loesje)

walk up the mountain at an easy pace, just as your breathing will allow you to. Inhale through your nose, breathe out through your mouth. In this way, you will save energy for other things.
On the way: the ordeal

River deep – mountain high. You are exhausted, devastated. What am I doing here? What is the purpose of all this?

- when was it that you had lost courage?
- what were the trials you had to meet head-on?
- did they come from within or from outside?
- who and/or what helped you to climb out of this mental abyss?
- what insight did it offer you?

“If you accept the journey to Ithaka, wish then for the road to be long, full of adventure, full of experience”

(Constantine Cavafy)

► you will find an enormous amount of monsters in Roman Churches. They are symbols for the dangers on our path through life. How many did you encounter today?
On the way: the staff

It is only natural, after all those miles you get injuries. You are looking for a sturdy staff to lean on.

- who and/or when was your rod and staff to lean on?
- asking for help, does it come natural to you?
- can others call on you for support? Do you do so unconditionally?
- which essential motto would you carve into your staff?
- you can also keep other things at bay with your staff. Against what do you want to protect yourself? How?

“You do not fall, because you are weak, but because you think that you are strong”

(Yiddisch proverb)

today, choose one thing of which you think will be out of your reach, and ... do this!
On the way: the merry inn

In some places you feel at home as soon as you arrive.

- what does “home” mean to you?
- who or what do you need to feel home somewhere?
- how do you go about it now that you are on your way?
- how do you see to it, that other people feel at home with you?
- do you feel “at home” with yourself? What do you do for it or leave out for it?

“By staying true to yourself, in the end you will also take best care of others”

- look closely how others organise their own place when they are on the road, and today create your “home” on purpose in one place.
On the way: hospitality

You knock on a door somewhere, the door is opened and you are immediately invited inside for a meal.

what kind of hospitality did you experience on your journey? What does it mean to you?

would you open your door to a stranger, looking for a place to spend the night? (“pilgrim” literally means: stranger)

and for your family and for your friends? Does it make any difference?

do you behave like a guest in the eyes of the local population? How do you know?

“Open people are a blessing to us. In their vicinity, we can also open up. Their sincerity heals”

(Anselm Grün)

walk in silence for a distance and greet full of attention people and things that come your way.
On the way: the source

For days on end you walk the *Meseta*, the Spanish planes. You are elated to come across a source.

- which are your sources?
- when do you turn to them?
- which period in your life was really refreshing?
- from which sources do you take strength, now that you are on your way?

“**One of the most important elements of your inner life is: the ability to interact to reality, to see the value and beauty of everyday things, and to come to realise the grandeur which surrounds us everywhere**”

(Thomas Merton)

- decide on one point in time. Exactly at that moment you stop, wherever your are, to regain strength for half an hour. Let the thing this place offers you, be an inspiration to you.
On the way: the image in the dream

By walking and walking our spirit takes his own flight of fancy. Sometimes we see ghosts, sometimes we just have a crystal clear insight.

- Are there moments, in which you have lost your mind, seeing ghosts? What occupied your mind?
- How do you handle it?
- At which moment did you have an epiphany?
- How do you recognise the difference?
- What are you longing for? What are your most audacious dreams?

“God, give me strength to accept what I cannot change, the courage to change what I can change and the wisdom to recognise these two”

(Francis of Assisi)

today, on your way surprise someone in such a manner that you could not have thought it possible yourself.

www.espritduchemin.org
On the way: the shell

Symbols belong to life. Pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago make themselves known by a shell, for ages on end. It offers significance, creates a bond and opens doors.

- what does the shell mean to you?
- what other symbols do you have with you?
- what do they mean to you?
- which symbols do you recognise in others?
- which symbol that you encountered, has as special significance for you?

“The essential is to the eye invisible, you can only truly see with the heart”

(Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

along the road create a small monument for someone who is dear to you, just with objects you carry along or that you came across.

www.espritduchemin.org
On the way: the candle

Walking along you often come across a chapel or a church. Sometimes you step inside: you light a candle, sing a hymn, write something in your diary or you stay a while in silence.

◆ for whom or for what do you wish to light a candle? With what intention?
◆ what are you thankful for?
◆ do you bring an offering of gratitude along the way?
◆ when or for whom or what do you sacrifice yourself?
◆ which are the lights of hope on your path through life?

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light is able to. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love is able to do so”

(Martin Luther King)

light a candle today and turn it into a special moment.
On the way: the sound of silence

When at home, you hardly have time for it, but this journey may bring you into an emotional state to allow the sound of silence to enter.

_do you ever make time for moments of silence? If so: how do you do it and what does it mean to you? If not, what pulls you back?_

_shrouded by the sound of silence....., what wells up inside you?_

_with which question did you start your quest?_

_which question would you like to lay before someone else?_

_which is the answer that you now give yourself?_

“I am standing still for a moment and that is quite a progression”

(Bertold Brecht)

▶ “Walking is just like meditating.” Today give it some extra thought. Become more aware of what this means to you.

www.espritduchemin.org
On the way: the signs

On the *Camino* arrows and other signs show you the way. They offer you security: you are on the right track.

◆ which course is your life taking?
◆ how do you know that you are on the right track?
◆ which decisions have pointed you in the right direction?
◆ how did they come about? Which resources did you have?
◆ how do you rate doubts? Positive or negative?

“Lessons do not come earlier that that you are ready for them, and if you watch the signs, you will learn everything you need for the next step”
(Paulo Coelho)

watch how many signs you encounter today. Which ones really show you the way?
On the way: time

You take your time to go from one place to another. You travel much slower than you normally do, in another rhythm, in another space.

- How does it feel to take it slowly?
- Do you have different thoughts, or look or act or feel differently because you take it easy?
- Are there any moments, that you have to kill time? How do you handle this situation?
- Do you live right in this moment: here and now? Or rather more in the past or the future?
- Is time your friend or your enemy?

“You, people from the West, you have watches. We have time”

(African proverb)
The companions: the other

After a while you are used to walking by yourself. If anyone asks you to be your companion, you may hesitate.

◆ what do you expect from a companion?
◆ what do you have to offer a companion?
◆ when is there a genuine meeting of souls?
◆ who are the most important companions on your path through life? Why?
◆ who or what are your figurative companions?

“One good turn, deserves another”

◆ see how others meet you. Today take some practice in an aspect which appeals to you.
The companions: God

You might not expect it, but you may come across God on your journey.

- how does God look according to you?
- how are things between you and God?
- has God ever let you down?
- have you ever let God down?
- which subject would you like to talk about with God?

"Wherever two or three gather in My name, I am in their midst"

(Matthew 18:20)

- turn your attention to the fact that today God walks along with you or that God might walk along with you. Become aware of what it does to you.
The companions: the saint

From the Middle Ages on millions of people go on a pilgrimage to seek out the tomb (presumably) of Saint James (=Santiago).

◆ which meaning holds Saint James for you?
◆ who are in your opinion the modern saints? How do they inspire you?
◆ what are the most important rules you follow in life?
◆ which three essential rules would you like to present to others?

“When I arrive at heaven’s gate, the Eternal will not ask me why I have not been Abram or Moses, but He will ask me why I have not been more myself”

(Chassidic wisdom)

▶ today let someone know, who is an inspiration to you, that he or she is important for you.
The companions: you yourself

To be on the road with yourself. Awareness. Self knowledge as a test or challenge, who knows?

◆ which of your own character traits, do you bump into?
◆ what can you tell about your body?
◆ what can you tell about your emotions?
◆ what can you tell about your thoughts?
◆ are you a good companion for yourself? Why?

“Some people say, that our lives are like a little feather, which dances in the breeze. Others say: we have a destiny which we must find and follow. Both of them might be true”

(from the film “Forrest Gump”)

do sharpen your senses today: listen, taste, sniff, observe, feel and.. enjoy.
The arrival

Your pilgrimage has come to an end. You are standing in front of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela or in Cape Fisterra. An ending and/or a new beginning?

how does it feel?
have you now really reached the goal of your pilgrimage?
has this goal changed on the way?
which insights have you gained?
how do you proceed from here?

“There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way”

(Buddha)

celebrate your arrival!
The home coming: the journey back

Some people touch the walls in Santiago or Cape Fisterra and immediately return home. Others take a rest for a while.

- how do you mark this change?
- how do you say good-bye to the Camino?
- who and what do you leave behind?
- what do you carry with you?
- what does the return journey mean to you?

“Bonding and letting lose; the heart beat of life”

- say farewell to your journey with eyes wide open!
The home coming

After having been on the road for weeks or months as a pilgrim (= stranger) you have arrived home now.

what does it mean to you, the home coming?
for whom or what are you longing?
how do you see to it, that this home coming is just like you want it to be?
how can you make others share in your experiences?
how does your quest get a place in your home?

"Insight without acting, does not result in change"

you can only come home once after such a journey. What do you see? What do you hear? How does it feel? Just go on, putting down your experiences.
The home coming: the road continues

You have been home now for some time. You can look back on your journey. What now?

- which meaning does the *Camino* have for you? And for others around you?
- how does it get a place in “every day’s life”.
- how does your road continue?
- what is your next destination?
- how do you intend to follow this continuing road?

“Where-ever you go, you always take along yourself”

- you are on your way to your next destination: announce your start. Think about it: how? where? and to whom? and... tell!