

# Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

## Michael's Via Francigena Journal

With Michael trekking the Via Francigena to Rome, in lieu of his usual reflection, we are sharing some of his photos and journal entries from along the route.



**Circa 21 June:** I set my alarm for 05:30, however was awake at 05:00 and a little voice said, "Get up!" I dressed, packed, went into the lobby and met my first pilgrim, finishing his breakfast, Tom from Texas. He has been walking for over a month from Canterbury. Today's walk is 25.6km. It began by following the River Orbe and then branched in a forest. It was wonderfully cool, but I became lost twice as the signage was confusing and erratic. The upside of the morning was polyphonic bird songs. I don't think I've ever heard anything so varied and sustained.



**Circa 28 June:** I confess I was apprehensive setting out just before 06:00. It was overcast and cool. The route, almost immediately, left the road, near the hotel, and the ascent began into a forest. It was dark because of the tree cover and no sun. The path was slippery from yesterday's rain. It was steep, I had to keep stopping to catch my breath. After 3+ hours, I arrived at Sembrancher, and ordered a coffee and pastry. Went outside changed my socks, massaged

my feet and set out again for the final two hours. Finally, I could see Orsières down below and thank God I was on a road. So, I knew it shouldn't be long and I could possibly make it before the clouds opened. Just as I arrived at the door of the hotel, the rain started, I could swear I caught God smiling!!



**Circa 5 July:** I have a new rule on this VF, not to look at the distances or times on the yellow sign posts, as they depress me. As long as I'm going in the right direction, that's all that matters. I was about 3/4 of an hour from my destination, Chatillon, and passed a house where a woman was working in the garden. It's the prerogative of the locals to greet first, so I walked on, especially as her dogs were going mad. I heard her call out and thought she was quieting the dogs and then she called again, "Would you like a glass of water?" So kind, by now it was hot and my camelback water was also warm. She went inside and returned with an ice cold, large bottle of water for me to take on my way. I asked if I could take her photo, she quickly straightened her hair and clothes, a refreshing encounter.



Arrived in Chatillon, an interesting town built on either side of a deep gorge and spanned by a number of bridges, some going back to Roman times.

## Michael news

Michael has been walking the Via Francigena for just over a month now. Navigating the Swiss and Italian Alps proved particularly challenging, but he is now well into Italy. The unseasonably hot weather in Europe has made his trek considerably more difficult. At this writing, he recently left Pontremoli, making his way toward Rome. We will continue to share some of Michael's reports and photos in the next *Buen Camino*.

## Levanté 1 Retreat Schedule

**JULY 31-AUG 6** | Sisters of Notre Dame, Belmont • Online only

**AUG 26-28** | Mercy Conference and Retreat Center • Online & On-Site  
2039 North Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131

**SEPT 23-25** | Mary & Joseph Retreat Center • Online Only

**OCT 6-9** | Mercy Center Auburn  
Online & On-Site  
535 Sacramento Street, Auburn, CA 95603

**OCT 28-30** | Bethlehem Center  
Online & On-Site  
2371 Arbot Road, Nanaimo, BC, Canada

**NOV 18-20** | St. Francis Retreat  
On-Site Only  
549 Mission Vineyard Road,  
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

For information about *Levanté 1*, visit:  
<https://hermitfish.com/levanté-1-retreat-houses>

## Thanks for your support

Michael is grateful to everyone for your continued prayers, good wishes and support. Donations to Hermit Fish, Michael's 501(c)(3) nonprofit, are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475

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

Creative and logistical support for Michael, his *Buen Camino* newsletter and HermitFish.com website are provided by Enigma | LA, [enigma.com](http://enigma.com)

To be added to Michael's email distribution go to <https://www.hermitfish.com> and scroll to the bottom of the page to sign up.