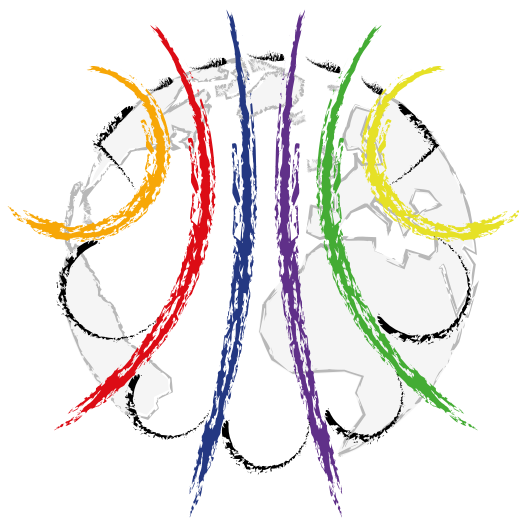


Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE DECLARATION OF THE
CAMINO DE SANTIAGO
AS FIRST EUROPEAN
CULTURAL ITINERARY



compostela

GROUP OF UNIVERSITIES
GRUPO DE UNIVERSIDADES

THE COMPOSTELA PRIZE SERIES

The content of this publication is the result of a keynote speech given by Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, prize winner of the XXI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia, at the International Seminar 'Camino de Santiago and Europe' held at the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain), on 23rd, 24th and 25th October 2017.

The author reviews his experiences as a promoter of the Santiago de Compostela Declaration in the year of the 30th anniversary of the statement as First European Cultural Itinerary. He explains the relevance of the Pilgrimage for the creation of Europe and presents his assessments of the present and future reality.

Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

**30TH ANNIVERSARY OF
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CULTURAL ITINERARY**

THE COMPOSTELA PRIZE SERIES

**Keynote speech of
Marcelino Oreja Aguirre
on 'The *Camino de Santiago*,
great European cultural itinerary'**

*International Seminar
'Camino de Santiago and Europe'
University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain)
23rd-25th October 2017*

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PREFACE

The Compostela Group of Universities (CGU) is a large, prominent, open and inclusive network of 64 member universities*¹ around the world.

Its overarching goal is to facilitate cooperation in the higher education sector, the aim of which is to promote the cultural heritage surrounding the *Camino de Santiago*, understood as a social phenomenon that has contributed decisively to the definition of the concept and the nature of Europe.

The publications of the Compostela Group of Universities provide a means for bringing the numerous activities of the network and its members to the attention of the wider public.

Those publications are clustered as follows:

1. The European Issues Series (EI), which is devoted to up-to-date topics related to the European citizenship;
2. The Way to Santiago Series (WS), which deals with subjects of the *Camino de Santiago* to promote the symbology of pilgrimage and the preservation of its cultural heritage;

*¹ Number of members of the network for the academic year 2017-2018.



3. The Compostela Prize Series (CP), which is related to winners of the International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia, annually awarded jointly by the regional government of Galicia (Spain) and the network.

This book is the third in The Compostela Prize Series. The two previous ones are: 'Václav Havel as a Dramatist' (2002), and 'Bach 2000: Music between Virgin Forest and Knowledge Society' (2003).

AUTHOR

Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

Marcelino Oreja Aguirre is President of the University Institute for European Studies of the San Pablo-CEU University (Spain), President of the '*Ad Sanctum Iacobum Peregrinatio*' Foundation, as well as honorary member of both the Royal Academy of Moral and Politics Sciences and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.



Doctor in Law by the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain), he has held numerous positions of political and diplomatic significance in the Spanish and European history, as for instance: Minister for Foreign Affairs in Spain during the Transition (1976-1980), Secretary General of the Council of Europe (1984-1989) and European Commissioner (1994-1999).

It is praiseworthy his intervention in the signing acts of the Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations and in



the joining of Spain to the Council of Europe, as well as his collaboration in the elaboration of the first draft of European Union By-Laws, which culminated in the Maastricht Treaty (1992).

Adoptive Son of Santiago de Compostela and winner of the Golden Medal of Culture of this town, he is the promoter of the Santiago de Compostela Declaration (1987) which designated the *Camino de Santiago* as the first cultural route of the Council of Europe.

For his work to set the path that marked the future of the Pilgrimage routes as crossroads of European Values, Marcelino Oreja Aguirre received in 2017 the XXI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia.

INTRODUCTION

Both the Compostela Group of Universities and the regional government of Galicia (Spain) created in 1996 the International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia to recognise a natural person or a legal entity that have contributed with their labour to the unification of Europe and to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the *Camino de Santiago* and its values.

Since its creation, six prizes were awarded to institutions and another sixteen were awarded to individuals from academic, scientific, social, cultural or political fields.

Among those prize winners we find Marcelino Oreja Aguirre, a Spanish jurist, politician and diplomat, who was awarded the prize in 2017 for his work in favour of the construction of Europe and for its promotion of the Santiago de Compostela Declaration, through which the Council of Europe promulgated the *Camino de Santiago* as the first European cultural itinerary.

The Presentation Ceremony of the Prize to this authority was held in the city of Pécs (Hungary) as part of the 23rd General Assembly of the Compostela Group of Universities and the 650th Jubilee of the host university (University of Pécs, 19th September 2017). Over there, in the presence of representatives from the more than 60 member universities of the network and other guests from the academic and social fields around the



world, Marcelino Oreja received the golden shell, symbol of the *Camino de Santiago* that inspired the emblem of the Compostela Group of Universities.

Nevertheless, this ceremony was not the only occasion on which the community of the network enjoyed the magnificence of the prize winner. The first meeting had taken place three months before, on 20th and 21st June in Santiago de Compostela, where a press conference and a series of meetings were held with regional government authorities. And, another meeting would be later, on 23rd October, at the University of Santiago de Compostela in the frame of the International Seminar ‘Camino de Santiago and Europe’.

The content of this publication is precisely the result of the keynote speech given by Marcelino Oreja at the above-mentioned Seminar on the ‘30th Anniversary of the Declaration of the *Camino de Santiago* as First European Cultural Itinerary’. The author reviews his experiences as a promoter of the idea, explains the relevance of the Pilgrimage for the creation of Europe and presents his assessments of the present and future reality.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION OF THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO AS FIRST EUROPEAN CULTURAL ITINERARY

It often springs to mind that living is not a matter of watching the world go by, but rather of returning. Today, I can say quite emphatically that, on this occasion, I am returning to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the *Camino de Santiago* as First European Cultural Itinerary with the passion of being an Adoptive Son of *Santiago de Compostela* where, in 1987, I was honoured with being awarded such an accolade on the initiative of the then Mayor of the town, Xerardo Estévez, backed by the entire Corporation. I must confess to them that I really appreciate this distinction with particular satisfaction, and I feel specially proud of it.

Many have heard me explain that the idea of proposing the *Camino de Santiago* as First European Cultural Itinerary arose during my acceptance speech as Secretary General of the Council of Europe, in 1984. I was accompanied by two dear friends, the special advisor to the Council of Europe of the day, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, whose collaboration was extremely valuable and for whom I am always held in esteem, and José María Ballester, an excellent civil servant in the Institution who has and still continues to be highly active in matters concerning the *Camino* and to whom valuable signposting throughout Europe are to his credit.

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT



Shortly after my declaration at the Parliamentary Assembly in the Council, we began to take steps to put it into practice, and I was advised that there already was a work plan with programmes to do with diverse pilgrim roads, such as the ‘*Ruta de los Celtas*’ (Route of the Celts), ‘The Cistercians’ or ‘The Silk Road’, but we proposed ranking the *Camino de Santiago* in first place.

‘This is how I explained it to the Committee of Ministers, pointing out the importance of developing intercultural dialogue and the need to underline our common European identity based on the multiplicity of our diversities.’

This is how I explained it to the Committee of Ministers, pointing out the importance of developing intercultural dialogue and the need to underline our common European identity based on the multiplicity of our diversities. In other words, based on our recollections, sometimes complementary, although at times, opposing. The *Camino de Santiago* could help us to promote the cultural dimension of the regions as privileged places for experimentation, innovation and cohesion, without overlooking the spiritual dimension that the *Camino de Santiago* entails.

I cannot go into detail here about all my travels to capitals to explain my work programme as Secretary

DISCOVERING ROUTES ACROSS EUROPE

General and, therefore, the *Camino de Santiago*. However, I shall mention some of them such as, for instance, my trip to Iceland, where I visited the President of the Republic whose first words were that she was aware of my interest in the *Camino de Santiago*. At which, she assigned three History professors to accompany me on my visit to the place, some thirty kilometres from the capital, where there were remains of a church from which, centuries ago, pilgrims would depart heading for the coast to embark for France, and from there, they would follow the so-called ‘*Camino Francés*’ (French Route).

In all of the Nordic countries, I found remains of churches, chapels, hospitals, and the name Jakob Kerke bore witness to the starting point of pilgrims. As they advised me both in

Norway and Sweden, the Vikings, who used to inhabit western Scandinavia, were the first to come into contact with the Jacobean pilgrimage and, following their Christianization, they accepted the worship of St. James. Apparently, in the Latvian documents dating back to the 14th century, numerous characters named Jacob appear, and also in Estonia there are similar place names, such as Jakobsberg, Jadosbhof and Jakobsruhe. In 2013, in Lithuania, I was invited to a Congress on the *Camino de Santiago* where I noticed their enormous interest in getting to know its meaning in detail and their eagerness to cover stretches of the *Camino*.

On my visit to the United Kingdom, I was received by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher at 10 Downing Street. She asked me what I would like to visit in London, and I replied that I had arranged a meeting at the House of Commons after which I would visit St. James Palace. I noticed her surprise since, as she told me, there were numerous other buildings that were worth a visit, but I explained that it was there where the pilgrims would meet to start their trip to Santiago and thus its name. I agreed to send her information on the *Camino de Santiago*.

On my trip to Paris, after visiting the Government, I came across Cardinal Roger Etcheagaray, a fellow Basque, who accompanied me to *Rue St. Jacques* next to the Cathedral of *Notre Dame*, and he told me a thousand and one anecdotes about the French pilgrims.

Years later, thanks to José María Ballester, I met the Bishop of Le Puy-en-Velay, Monsignor Henri Brincard, who gave me a detailed explanation of the *Via Podiensis*, the oldest in France leading to Santiago, known as *La Via de Bourguignon* and *Teutons*.

He gave me an extremely beautiful explanation of the route followed by a Bishop of Le Puy of old, in the year 951, and of how he travelled escorted by over one hundred people, describing in great detail and explaining the monasteries that he visited on the *Camino*, describing his experiences as he went, the pace of the walk, the room for freedom, the search for spirituality, the natural and cultural heritage, and of how he found a collective memory.



One of the fondest encounters that I had on my travels through the capitals was in Liechtenstein, where the Prince received me in his castle. I explained to him that during his country's presidency in the Council of Europe, in 1987, the *Camino de Santiago* was proclaimed European Cultural Route. He was enthused by the idea and so he conveyed the message to his son Prince Johann who, at that time, was ambassador in the Organisation and helped us so much to launch the project. His grandson is the current Prince of Liechtenstein.

At the end of my visit to twenty countries, including Spain, where the news greatly excited King Juan Carlos, the main task was to draft a Declaration that would highlight the need to bring the *Camino* back to life. To achieve this:

**BRINGING
THE CAMINO
BACK TO LIFE**

- In the first place, in the Declaration, authorities and institutions are called upon to identify the various roads to Santiago as a whole inside Europe. I then discovered that the *Camino de Santiago* covering the north of Spain—known as the ‘*Camino Francés*’ (French Route)—was none other than the final stretch in a complex network of roads and itineraries stemming from all points in Europe that took the pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela. The logic itself of considering the various roads as a worldwide *Camino* entails recognising these other alternative roads, such as the sea routes or the misnomer of secondary roads, especially in the north and northwest of Spain that are also a part of the Santiago de Compostela universe. Not long ago, I visited Cordoba where they pointed out to me their enormous interest in the *Camino*.
- In the second place, it is proposed signposting these roads using a common emblem. It was an idea designed to underline the symbolic nature of this itinerary and to visualise it across Europe as a whole. It is the emblem of a stylized scallop shell facing west that can be read in three ways: it recalls the traditional symbol of the pilgrims while, at the same time, it involves two new elements: a dynamic sense of walking westwards besides the commemoration of converging roads, which is consubstantial to our itinerary.

In this regard, I must also recall the feelings I had 30 years ago when we placed the stone evoking the Declaration in the centre of *Praza do Obradoiro* (which we are now commemorating). I have to confess that each time I return to Santiago, I look at it with emotion and acknowledgement.

- The Declaration also calls for developing a coordinated restoration and rising the value of the architectural and natural heritage surrounding the *Camino*.
- The Declaration also proposes launching cultural entertainment programmes aimed at rediscovering the historic, literary, musical and artistic heritage, created by the pilgrims. This task involved the great work of the Arch Confraternity of the Apostle St. James. The work carried out since then is nothing but admirable.
- The Declaration mentions the ongoing relationship between towns and regions scattered across the *Camino* where artistic creation is encouraged in order to renew this tradition and bear witness to the interpersonal values of European cultural identity.
- Lastly, attention is drawn to the fact that faith, which has encouraged pilgrims throughout history and has gathered them together in a common aspiration over and beyond any differences and national interests, should inspire us today, especially the young people, to build a society grounded on tolerance, respect for others, freedom and solidarity.

After 30 years, this declaration is still valid and essential for linking its content with the various roads to Santiago. These are so beautifully described in the treasure known as the *Codex Calixtinus*: it recommends itineraries whose main stages are marked by the prior existence of places of worship that pilgrims should visit on their religious and penitentiary itinerary. Their remains are preserved today in the form of churches, chapels and stone crosses that mark out the various roads, not only in Spain or France, but also the length and breadth of the European continent.



Travelling along these pilgrim roads at present also provides a reading which, apart from any confessional or religious option professed by numerous pilgrims, is inscribed in the broadest framework of a life experience or a personal experience of a spiritual nature. So many centuries of pilgrimage have acted as a crucible for a series of values that give meaning both to pilgrimage and to the itinerary. One only has to delve into the phenomenon and listen to the experiences of those who follow these byways in our day to notice that walking to Santiago de Compostela involves a personal disposition, in practice translated as values such as: solidarity, joint effort, pursuing a common ideal, living together, dialogue and becoming acquainted with the 'other', which is acquired throughout the different stages. For this reason, today like yesterday, those who walk to Santiago de Compostela return as new people, as those who have known other horizons, who have lived with other people, sharing the anonymous status of the rambler, people who have found themselves, many of them compelled by the very nature of the 'road' to the very idea of Transcendence. For those seeking to delve into the life and meaning of the pilgrim, I recommend them to read an excellent book, published by one of the greatest experts, Paolo Caucci, in his admirable work on 'Life and meaning of the pilgrimage to Santiago'.

These pilgrimages have left a deep mark throughout the European continent, from Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Slavic countries to the Mediterranean, both in terms of what we now call cultural heritage of an immaterial or intangible nature, and of a material order. Its content is so immense that travelling along these roads also allows for a cultural or practical reading of the same. One of the features of these pilgrim roads has been precisely the fact that they are, in turn, roads of civilisation. Roads on which Gothic art and Romanesque art can be found—suffice it to recall the trilogy made up of the porches of Conques and of Moissac with the *Pórtico da Gloria* in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela—. Roads along which epic literature and the lyricism of the troubadours flow together. Roads where erudite and popular music blend. Roads on which the affluence of pilgrims leads not only to building monasteries and hospitals, fountains and shelters, but also to founding towns

and cities, leading to an original form of linear town planning.

With the splendour of the *Camino* and of its influence on art and literature, Santiago, along with Jerusalem and Rome, became a goal in medieval society. Since the first moment, the phenomenon of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela became a catalyst for Christian *societas*.

Urbanisation, the medieval borough or the suburb, began with the style of the *Camino*, as it is plain to see in the Spanish cities of Pamplona, Puente la Reina, Estella, Nájera, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Castrojeriz and Triacastela. And, in our day, suburbs and streets going by the name of Santiago appear all over the European continent.

That said, all that world founded on the *Camino* cannot make us forget a paragraph in the *Codex* that states, ‘Just as the sun makes the moon to shine, in the same way, the immense power of the Apostle illuminates Spain and Galicia’, and I would add, the whole of Europe.

What does this ‘illumination’ mean, shining from the seat of the Apostle’s tomb? In my opinion, more than anything, it is the intra-history of the town itself.

As I recalled 30 years ago in this same place, in Santiago de Compostela there used to be, and there still is, a way of living that is like the course of life, marked by day-to-day experience of the divine. That is the essence of Santiago de Compostela. Therefore, an eminent supporter of Galician autonomy reminded me on numerous occasions, a man who honoured me with his friendship, Domingo García-Sabell. I have also frequently commented on this to another very dear, much admired friend of mine, President Gerardo Fernández Albor, whose 100 years we celebrated a few weeks ago.

‘Those who walk to Santiago de Compostela return as new people, as those who have known other horizons, who have lived with other people, sharing he anonymous status of the rambler, people who have found themselves.’



The same occurs with the *Camino*. This made understanding possible beyond borders, in hard times where individual and even collective communication were hazardous.

The *Camino* thus became the focal point of universal culture, thanks to the ongoing exchange with representatives of different ways of living. Having said that, by saying universal, I mean all-embracing, i.e., with transcendent values. Values —and it is good to remember this today— that call for spiritual values. Values that unify human beings without them losing, not even for a moment, their own specificities. That is what I would call transcendent human purpose. And, this led to a notable thing that occurred and still occurs on the *Camino*: the fact that diverse cultures that reach the long-desired goal do not lose their originality.

FOCAL POINT
OF UNIVERSAL
CULTURE

The reason is that what unifies, draws different cultures together on the *Camino* is not, needless to say, only the biology of the human being, nor is it his psychology, nor the socio-economic factors, nor political conditioning factors. At least as far as I am concerned, what draws together, what reverts man back to his most primal, essential being, essential roots is, through projects involving existence, that friendly merging with the transcendent.

In other words, the link with belief understood as a sphere of life, which covers all the rest, which unifies them and, for that very reason, justifies them. This is how Monsignor Julián Barrio, Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela, with whom we learn so much as we listen to his talks and homilies, has explained it many a time.

The *Camino* meant the possibility of such rooting. And, Santiago de Compostela stands for the realisation of this rooting, over and above any line of human force, over and above the particular ways that each nation might have of understanding the world.

Santiago and its *Camino* are, then, the underlying roots —in the strictest sense of these terms— for each one of us, having

become what can be called ‘present reality’. Present reality that previously could have been dormant in our soul, but which, on the *Camino*, is catalysed and takes on renewed vigour. It is as if an inheritance, an old inheritance reaching back centuries, were pushing us. And, the *Camino* forces us to be inheritors. In short, to be reconnected.

By the way, some weeks ago, in Pecs, in the heart of Hungary, I attended an event organised by the Compostela Group of Universities for the presentation of the Golden Shell awarded each year to someone who has contributed to promoting the *Camino*. There are almost 70 universities that have joined this programme, where the University of Santiago de Compostela plays an important role, with Professor Teresa Carballeira Rivera on its Executive Committee who, in a tremendously efficient manner, contributes to promoting and developing it. I can assure you that I felt thrilled to participate in that event, which shows that the *Camino* is well implanted throughout the continent. I am convinced that it will soon appear in Hispanic American countries interested in the same. In my reflection during this trip, once again, I realised that, as I mentioned earlier, there is a two-fold binding: to the values of transcendence and to the values of European culture.

We may consider that if Europe stands for one thing, with the three-fold Greek, Roman and Christian source that lie in its origins, it is the need for severity and rigour in all that concerns the spirit. Ultimately, in culture.

As a long-time believer in the European Union, I have always believed that it is not possible to wax poetical when talking about Europe, especially in these decisive times of forging its future which, to say the least, are digressive, and the more demanding we are, the better. Europe is, among other enormous things, an illustrious, tenacious memory. To this

‘If Europe stands for one thing, with the three-fold Greek, Roman and Christian source that lie in its origins, it is the need for severity and rigour in all that concerns the spirit. Ultimately, in culture.’



we are inevitably bound. Therefore, this living, active, fertile European memory shows us throughout the entire *Camino de Santiago*, whose granite stones are something like the sediment of the history of the West, where notes of authenticity, originality, rationality, dedication and diversity survive. This was how even Professor García-Sabell reminded me of this.

If we were to look into each of these notes in their hidden meanings, we would realise that the whole is the very heart of European culture. For this reason, today, at this 30th Anniversary of the Santiago de Compostela Declaration where the *Camino* was proclaimed the First European Cultural Itinerary, invaded as we are by so much Euro-pessimism, overwhelmed by so much disconcerting news about the future of Europe, I would like to bring to mind, with all my strength, the words of Pope John Paul II, at the Mass for the Pilgrim, in 1982, which sums up a complete programme for the reconstruction of Europe: 'Find yourself again. Be yourself. Discover your origins, revive your roots, revive those authentic values that make your history glorious and your presence beneficent on other continents. Rebuild your spiritual unity in a climate of complete respect for other religions and genuine liberties. Do not be proud about your conquests to the point of forgetting their possible negative consequences. The other continents look to you and hope to receive from you the same reply that St. James gave to Christ: I can do it.'

This is the voice that should echo in our conscience, especially in the times we live in. With that in mind, I take the liberty, in view of this two-fold manifestation of spirit and culture, to reflect on the present and future of Europe.

In Europe, we have suffered from irresponsible practices in the financial sector, with unsustainable public debts, a lack of competitiveness in numerous European States. We have failed to comply with the rules approved in the framework of the European Union, we have mistrusted the workings of institutions and we have not been aware of the requirements imposed by globalisation.

We need to introduce structural changes, modernise public administrations, reduce unnecessary expenditure, suspend privileges and generalise the sustainability of social systems.

It is vital to bolster social cohesion. The countries with more social power are the most successful and have the most competitive economies.

We need to finalise Monetary and Fiscal Union, with the corresponding economic and political mechanisms.

It is necessary to develop a public European space that requires a greater level of cooperation between the European Parliament and national parliaments and, in short, we must make a national Federation of States reality and take into account that Europe cannot be either technocratic, bureaucratic nor diplomatic. It must be democratic.

EUROPEAN COOPERATION

But is that all?

My reply is that it is not. Because there is something prior to banking Union, to the Fiscal Union, to the Monetary Union or to political Union. That is precisely what has failed and without which it is impossible for us to move ahead. The *Camino* of Europe forces us to reflect on the main cause of all the evils affecting us, the real source of the situations that we are going through, the why we have come to the crisis that we are suffering from today.

As far as I am concerned, it is essential, as Pope John Paul II stated in Santiago, for Europe to find itself again, to revive its basic principles and to recover its values.

We are witnessing a real change in the social model that has found a breeding ground in some indisputable facts: apathy, our society's comfort zone. It is then when relativism rears its head and spreads in a society plunged into a crisis of values.

We have not been able to show any resistance to those who stand up for relativism. Those who advocate this have known how to make society believe that those who stand up for values



and principles are not, in fact, good democrats, but rather are merely dogmatists, radicals and fundamentalists.

Such an environment, which has been skilfully created, has led to a certain reverential fear of dissenting from what is a supposedly dominating trend, involving the socialisation of nothing.

For this reason, I consider underpinning our behaviour in terms of values. Values that need to be underpinned by principles, otherwise when they are only supported by mere social conventions, they are 'devalued' and end up by crumbling.

The *Camino de Santiago* reminds us that Europe must be built on solid principles basically rooted in two traditions: the Judaeo-Christian and the Greco-Latin, with the nuances of the Age of Enlightenment. To curtail one of these legacies is as much as to maim the West. Such are the values of these traditions that make up the reservoir of European heritage, a reservoir open to the positive influence of other civilisations, but without having to renounce the unshakable principles on which our way of life is grounded. Europe is an open continent, able to rescue the best of all cultures around the world. However, we can only speak of the existence of Europe if we, in turn, acknowledge that there is a set of values on which the structural unit of our continent rests. Europe cannot be understood without freedom. Europe cannot be comprehended without solidarity, without respect for the law, without a democracy of values or without a policy of truth.

These are the thoughts that the *Camino de Santiago* inspire in me, which are an invitation to dream of a better world, not solely based on technical advancements or scientific revolutions, which are vital, but also, and above all, on people's ethical behaviour in search of the true road, in transcendence that unites us all with our sights set on a common horizon.

In one of the most beautiful books on the 'Christian roots of Europe', Monsignor Romero Pose reminds us of how the pilgrims to Santiago, as they reached the end of their *Camino* and caught sight of *Monte do Gozo*, the goal and town of the

Apostle, would sing, ‘*Got Sanctiagu. ¡E Utreia! ¡E Suseia! Deus adiuva nos*’ (Good St. James. And beyond! Even further beyond! God help us.). The joy of having reached a goal did not detract from the conviction that man had to carry on walking; that by making headway along a road in our history is nothing more than a start to man’s final history that does not peter out in the finite.

*‘Making headway
along a road in our
history is nothing
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man’s final history
that does not peter
out in the finite.’*

History tells us that the pilgrim, after being next to the tomb of St. James, would turn to contemplate the infiniteness of the ocean and would feel that he was touching nature that summoned up the unattainable. There, at Finisterre (Land’s End), he would burn his clothes to feel lighter and free so that not even the dust from the *Camino* were no obstacle to find himself.

In the past, the image of the pilgrim to Santiago, depicted in the iconography in all corners of Europe and America, managed to synthesise our history.

Today, the *Camino* still welcomes life and the search for countless ramblers and that, most certainly, has been contributed to by the Declaration that we commemorate today. My closing message is that it is not enough to find the road. There is a need to tread the surface of the road where more words are hidden than in the secret diaries written by the pilgrim. The *Camino de Santiago* only keeps its secrets for he who goes on a pilgrimage. These secrets include recovering values that we need more than ever right now.

I fully share the words of Fernando Santos Urbaneja who stated that ‘Europe will have a future if it regains its past and adapts it to changing times, preserving, where need be, while incorporating, in other cases, the best from each era’. All this in the wake of spirituality and of humanism, which leads not only to respecting the stranger, but also even to helping

THE WAY TO
THE NEW
EUROPE



him and sharing ideas and assets with him. The features that are noticeable on the *Camino* can point the way to the new Europe.

Because:

1. There is spirituality on the *Camino*.
2. There is plurality. The *Camino* excludes no one.
3. There is respect for the earth and environment.
4. There is austerity, i.e., living with less or even living with little.
5. There is cooperation rather than competitiveness.
6. There is solidarity with the vulnerable.
7. There is humanism and equity on the *Camino*.

Those of us who have travelled along the *Camino* know that what vanishes among pilgrims are distant, hierarchical and formal relationships, succeeding in building a common, all-encompassing, egalitarian and spontaneous 'us'. After just a few hours of pilgriming together, we find ourselves enveloped in an atmosphere of companionship, generated by a common enthusiasm: acceptance and tolerance reign over them all. A group of pilgrims is, in its best moments, a paradigm of living together, an ideal replica of what the community could be.

Pilgriming leads us to live life in family, but in the broadest sense. Being a pilgrim, in its proper sense, is one of the best things that a person can do.

I bring these lines to a close with my petition to our Patron Saint that he might help us always, but especially in these times that we are going through in Spain, since we need to reclaim our enthusiasm and hope, without forgetting the wise words of our Ingenious Knight Don Quixote: 'The enchanters may be able to rob me of good fortune, but of fortitude and courage they cannot'.

'Being a pilgrim, in its proper sense, is one of the best things that a person can do.'

Madrid, 31st October 2017

Marcelino Oreja Aguirre

XXI International Prize Grupo Compostela-Xunta de Galicia

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