

Being content with less,
creates space in the heart
for more love.

Margo Vader, *Take A Little Soul Time*



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“La gente de Jerusalén y todos los de la
región de Judea y de la región cercana al
Jordán salían para oír a Juan”—Mateo 3:1-12

The Second Sunday of Advent

December 4, 2022

Santiago and Simplicity

by Gary Manning

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—Margo Vader, *Take A Little Soul Time*

When I was preparing to walk the Camino de Santiago, I spent a fair amount of time on various online forums attempting to learn as much as possible about the practicalities of day-to-day life on “The Way.” Of particular importance to me was figuring out what “essentials” I should take with me in my backpack. The general rule of thumb for pilgrims is that the weight of the backpack and its contents should not exceed 10% of one’s body weight (in my case, this was around 15 pounds).

Over the course of the weeks leading up to my walk, I packed, unpacked, and repacked my gear at least a dozen times. With each round of packing and unpacking, I would make tortured decisions about which items to include and which ones to leave behind. I remember reading advice from one experienced pilgrim who contended that the fundamental lesson of the Camino was learning to “let go of the fantasy one could fortify oneself against every possible circumstance.” This pilgrim went on to say, “Simplifying what you carry will not only be easier on your knees and shoulders, but also on your mind—because you’ll spend less time worrying about keeping track of things you’ll likely never use anyway.”

By the time I took my first steps toward Santiago, I had managed to get the weight of my pack down to 16.4 pounds! And guess what? Some of the things I had identified as “absolutely essential” were never needed, even though I carried them for 480 miles across Spain.

When Matthew tells us about John the Baptist in today’s Gospel reading, he makes special note of John’s minimalist wardrobe and limited dietary requirements. The message of repentance John proclaimed was of such hefty urgency, he couldn’t be burdened with extra stuff. He was a man on the move. Whatever else John might need for his ministry would have to



Worship

Advent Day 8

Read Luke 3:1-6.

**How does the story of John
the Baptist fill your heart
with hope?**

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The Way of Love

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