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The Nature of Pilgrimage: Similarities and Differences Between El Camino de Santiago de Compostela and El Santuario de Chimayo

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The Nature of Pilgrimage: Similarities and Differences Between
El Camino de Santiago de Compostela and El Santuario de Chimayo

by

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Abstract

This project looks at two holy sites in the Christian world and their respective pilgrimages: El Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain and El Santuario de Chiamyó in New Mexico, USA. The project first discusses the general background of pilgrimage, specifically in the Christian tradition, laying some theological and historical foundations. It then looks at the history of El Camino de Santiago de Compostela up through the modern day, tracing the importance of the pilgrimage and the associated saint, Santiago Mayor (The Apostle James the Greater). The project then continues to El Santuario de Chimayó and discusses its development through pre-Christian native beliefs in the area, the associated saints Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas and El Santo Niño de Atocha, and its birth and growth as a holy site. The project concludes by tying El Santuario de Chimayó back to Santiago de Compostela, looking at the medieval hagiography, presence of Santiago, and transformations similar between the two but also the unique development of identity at each location. This comparison between these two unique sites connected by heritage hopes to provide perspective on the evolution of Christian pilgrimage throughout time and history by illustrating El Santuario de Chimayó as a continuation of evolution of the spirit of El Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

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From Compostela to Chimayó: The Continuation and Evolution of Christian Pilgrimage

I. Introduction

Tucked in the red hills of New Mexico is a tiny brown adobe church. The shrine known as El Santuario de Chimayó sits quite a way off the most travelled routes in the area and in no way does it give the impression of prominence (see Fig. 4). Yet somehow, this tiny shrine has received remarkable attention, from Catholic pilgrims and later from other curious visitors. Pilgrimage has been a major part of El Santuario's legacy, drawing walkers from up to 100 miles away. Many of the visitors come to behold images of *Nuestro Señor de Esquíputas*, *El Santo Niño de Atocha*, and *el pocito*, a tiny hole from which a holy dirt is taken. It is these legends, the healing powers of the dirt from *el pocito*, the healing powers of the venerated images, and the miraculous apparitions of the images, that are the cause of Chimayó's prominence. Despite its isolation in the hills, El Santuario maintains a very wide-reaching sphere of connections, from the diversifying demographics in America, to diversifying issues in the modern world. These connections span time as well, drawing from the Spanish and Latin American traditions of *Nuestro Señor* and *El Santo Niño*, the pilgrimage tradition that flourished in medieval Europe, and even the emblematic Santiago de Compostela. It is to this pilgrimage in northwest Spain that El Santuario can connect itself historically and thus, the development of the shrine at Chimayó has made itself, in a sense, a simultaneous continuation and divergence from the pilgrimage spirit that has existed at Santiago de Compostela since the Middle Ages.

II. *Pilgrimage*

Both Santiago de Compostela and El Santuario de Chimayó are likely best identified as pilgrimage sites for the Christian, specifically Catholic, tradition. Where do the pilgrimage traditions come from and why has it become so important in Christian practice? Understanding the origins of pilgrimage in humanity, Christianity, and the modern day will help to illuminate some of the phenomena that present themselves in Santiago de Compostela and Chimayó.

Pilgrimage is a practice with deep roots in Christian tradition, but also in religious traditions around the world. While the idea of pilgrimage exists today, the meaning and gravity of this practice in the modern day is qualitatively different than it was in ancient times or its heyday in the Middle Ages. Defined by Davidson and Dunn-Wood, pilgrimage as a “journey inspired by inner or outer forces toward a physical, and perhaps inner, religious goal,”¹ is a phenomenon present in virtually all major world religions. Devotees would travel to the temple of Zeus, shrines of Osiris, and shrines of other gods and goddesses. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is sometimes considered an ancient example of pilgrimage. Religious pilgrimages were most common in ancient and medieval times, though many persist today. The Muslim *Hajj* to Mecca is a famed pilgrimage that has remained for centuries and, even more surprisingly, maintained its religious gravitas as well. Buddhist and Hindu pilgrimages have also survived with their religious significance largely preserved in the modern day.

Christian pilgrimage has had a very dynamic character in relation to pilgrimage, involving many holy locations, many motivations, and many participants. The term pilgrim comes from the Latin word *peregrini*, meaning “stranger” or “foreigner.” In this sense, Christians were

¹ Linda Kay Davidson and Maryjane Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Research Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1993), 16.

considered *peregrinis* on earth, foreigners on a journey between earth and heaven.² Thus, life was a spiritual pilgrimage with the pilgrim as an aimless wanderer on earth.³ Pope Calixtus II argued in his *Veneranda Dies* sermon that Adam, Abraham, and even the disciples were pilgrims in the fallen world.⁴ Jesus himself is the main pilgrim model in his wandering of the desert and even in his post-resurrection journey to Emmaus.⁵ This was the first of two pilgrimage models in Christianity.⁶ The second type of pilgrimage became the journey to a specific holy site. This was a practice borrowed from pagan tradition and references in Matthew 23:29 (“the tombs of the prophets and ... the monuments of the righteous”) arguably suggest that certain sites were venerated by the faithful in biblical times.⁷ Over time, “travel to a site which is known as a point of connection between the spiritual world and those in this physical space” would be the prominent pilgrimage form in Christianity.⁸

This means that holy people and holy events were the focus of pilgrims. Locations where biblical events happened were the first pilgrimage sites. As the faith grew and gained saints around the known world, visiting the tombs of saints became another pilgrimage practice. Then, mixing people and events, relics became a major focus of Christian pilgrimage, starting in the Middle Ages. Items touched, used, or related to saints, or even body parts of the saints themselves, were seen as spiritually powerful, the connection between heaven and earth desired by believers. Miraculous occurrences such as healings and apparitions quickly became associated with relics and cults developed around these saints and their relics. Thus pilgrimage

² Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700-1500* (Hampshire: Palgrave and MacMillan, 2002), 2.

³ Heb. 11:13 Vulgate

⁴ Thomas F. Coffey, Linda Kay Davidson, and Maryjane Dunn, *The Miracles of Saint James: Translations from the Liber Sancti Jacobi* (New York: Italica, 1996), 24.

⁵ Yu, “Two Literary Examples of Religious Pilgrimage,” 204

⁶ Davidson and Dunn-Wood, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 23.

⁷ Anthony C. Yu, “Two Literary Examples of Religious Pilgrimage: The “Commedia” and “The Journey to the West,”” *History of Religions* 22, no. 3 (1983), 204.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 24

expanded outside of the Holy Land and later outside of the homes of known saints to anywhere that could confidently claim to possess an item related to a saint.

Many religious pilgrims travelled voluntarily (with no order from the Church) to holy sites to venerate the saints and relics.⁹ Other pilgrims would make a vow to complete a pilgrimage to a certain holy site should its patron saint would grant a healing or miracle. This vow turned the voluntary pilgrimage of devotion into obligation.¹⁰ Other forms of obligatory pilgrimage came as orders from the church and its priests as a form of penitence. Though monetary indulgences replacing penances reduced the practicality of pilgrimage in later centuries, long distance pilgrimages continued.¹¹ The crusades, declared in 1095, were considered a pilgrimage by some accounts as the remission of sins was offered to those taking up the sword.

The destination of pilgrimages drew many pilgrims, but just as important was the journey of a pilgrim, the actual *peregrinatio*. The journey of a pilgrim was intended to be arduous and trying. Travel in before the modern day was inherently more difficult, modes were slower, safety was less common, and travel ways were thus more dangerous. On top of this, however, the pilgrim added extra difficulty to the journey in a vow of poverty. Pilgrims were intended to travel with little or nothing as a physical practice of their dependence on God for all provision. In this way, pilgrims carried out the ‘wanderer’ meaning of *peregrine*, depending on God for all provision.

Historical records do not mark a clear date of the origins of this physical type of Christian pilgrimage. Classical historian Eusebius recorded possible pilgrims to Palestine in the 3rd and 4th Centuries while Origen recorded his journey to Rome and its “ancient church,” ostensibly a

⁹ Webb, *Medieval Pilgrimage*, 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹¹ Davidson and Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages*, 67.

pilgrimage.¹² The difficulty in identifying pilgrimages is that they were not often called pilgrimages, though their proceedings often resembled what can be considered a pilgrimage. The First Crusade marked a major change for pilgrimage by naming pilgrims and their journey as a pilgrimage. Crusaders were called *peregrinis* undertaking a *peregrinatio* to the Holy Land.¹³ Before this, pilgrimages were rarely called by name.

Following the influence of Jesus Christ, the first main Christian pilgrimage site was the Holy Land, in veneration of the sites and objects touched by Jesus' life. Pilgrimage to the Holy Land flourished in the 4th Century.¹⁴ Perhaps a result of Muslim conquest in the area, the Holy Land pilgrimage later declined. By the 8th Century, pilgrimage there had been eclipsed by a new destination in Europe: Rome.¹⁵ Pilgrims would travel to visit the land of the Pope, the church of St. Peter, and the many relics. The Crusades represented a new but militant revival of Holy Land pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. A few centuries later, a third pilgrimage site became a hub for Christian pilgrimage: Santiago de Compostela. Claiming to host the body of St. James the Greater, this destination grew in the 12th Century thanks in large to Archbishop Diego Gelmirez's efforts.

Evidence suggests that despite various societal restrictions, nearly every demographic in Christian Europe participated in pilgrimage. Clergy, nobility, peasants and even the unfree all appear in the historical record. Evidence suggests that as the Middle Ages progressed, pilgrimage became more of a plebian activity.¹⁶ Even women, despite the societal restrictions, are recorded as participants in some pilgrimages.¹⁷

¹² Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 90-92.

The Middle Ages were the peak of Christian pilgrimage in Europe and the rest of Christendom. The Protestant Reformation brought a major paradigm shift to the significance of pilgrimage in Christianity. Because of its association with cults of saints, veneration of physical images, and indulgences, pilgrimage came under heavy criticism by reformers.¹⁸ Martin Luther took this further and condemned pilgrimage, writing in 1520 that the vows and works of pilgrimage are “devilish delusion[s].”¹⁹ To Luther, pilgrimage was misrepresented as a good work and led pilgrims to forsake the needs of their families for adventure.²⁰ Furthermore, pilgrimage sites considered more holy distracted believers from their own parish churches and gave countless other opportunities to sin.²¹ Martin Luther’s words represent the concerns of many during the Reformation, when the nature of worship and faith changed. Responding to the problems seen in the Catholic Church, emphasis on worship turned towards “spirit and truth.”²² This meant that physical manifestations of veneration like relics, holy sites, and pilgrimages were less important, if at all. The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th Centuries continued the rejection relic veneration and pilgrimage as superstition. Webb notes that it is possible, though by no means proven, that pilgrimage declined in the 15th and 16th Centuries.²³ Davidson and Dunn-Wood observe that some locations even saw increased pilgrimage.²⁴ Despite the debate, what is certain is that pilgrimage was not the same after the Middle Ages.

One other change to Christian pilgrimage was the trip to the New World. On the back of Catholicism’s planting in the Americas, relics, miracles, and subsequent pilgrimage traditions

¹⁸ Dee Dyas. “The Reformation Onwards.” Pilgrims and Pilgrimage.

<http://www.york.ac.uk/projects/pilgrimage/index.html> (accessed May 20, 2014).

¹⁹ Martin Luther. “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,” in *Three Treatises*, trans. Charles M. Jacobs, rev. James Atkinson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 59.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, 76-77.

²² Jn. 4:24 NIV

²³ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 42.

²⁴ Davidson and Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages*, 28.

took root. In the New World European culture met with Native cultures. In some instances Spanish tradition overtook the native ones, and thus many Latin American locales bear Spanish Catholic names and imagery. In some places, however, the two blended. Catholic priests often would “baptize” native religious customs and sites for the sake of making Christianity accessible to the natives.²⁵ As a result, the legends and claimed miracles of shrines in the Americas often carry native undertones.

Moving into the 20th Century and modernity, Christian pilgrimage continued on its paths around the world. In Europe, pilgrimage has continued and even arguably has experienced a kind of revival. No longer do pilgrims travel solely for faith and for blessing. Popular culture has molded modern pilgrimage into a tourist attraction. Pilgrimage routes are popular adventures and their sites are popular tourist spots. Travel literature and media popularize these locations and guide visitors to these locations. In the Americas, Catholic devotion in Latin America remains strong and thus continues to draw religious pilgrims. However, the trend of non-Christian pilgrims is worldwide. Many Protestants have been known to visit Catholic shrines throughout the Americas. Completely secular pilgrimages have also arisen, especially in the United States, such as to Graceland or Kennedy’s grave.²⁶ Pilgrimage survives in the 21st Century around the world; people are undertaking long, arduous journeys in search of a greater fulfillment, Christian or not.

²⁵ Ramón A. Gutiérrez, “El Santuario de Chimayo: A Syncretic Shrine in New Mexico.” In *Feasts and Celebrations in North American Ethnic Communities* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 74.

²⁶ Davidson and Dunn-Wood, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages*, 37.

III. *El Camino de Santiago de Compostela*

One of the most iconic, and longest-lasting, pilgrimage routes is El Camino de Santiago de Compostela. Pilgrims walk across the northern coast of Spain to the cathedral (see Fig. 1) in the northwest corner of the country on a route that reaches as far east as France and Germany. With roots in the early Middle Ages, the cathedral and pilgrimage flourished, faded, and revitalized over the course of one thousand years.

For Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrim's purse, staff, and scallop shell, are the emblems of the pilgrimage (see Fig. 2). The pilgrim's purse signifies that "the pilgrim, trusting the Lord, must carry along a small and moderate provision...prepared for receiving and prepared for giving," depending on God while also participating in alms-giving. The pilgrim's staff serves as "a third foot" and "implies faith in the Holy Trinity in which one must preserve".²⁷ The staff that literally supports the pilgrim as he walks represents the Trinitarian God that supports the believer in his spiritual journey. The scallop shell brought back from a pilgrimage, though unique to Compostela, recalls the triumphant theme of the palm branch serving the same function from the Holy Land. These symbols serve as tokens of "triumph" and "good work".²⁸ The journey of a pilgrim is both a physical struggle and a spiritual struggle, both of which built dependence and faith in God in ancient and medieval Christianity.

Santiago de Compostela was one of the three main pilgrimage sites for medieval Christians and continues to be a major site for all pilgrims in the modern day. The cult of Santiago does not have a concrete appearance or history in Galicia. There is evidence that suggests the cult of Santiago was precluded by the cult of St. Martin of Tours. From the 6th to the 8th Century, political upheaval potentially drove Spain to take Santiago as its protector saint against the

²⁷ Coffey, Davidson, and Dunn, *The Miracles of Saint James*, 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

Moors and their exclusive patron against the Carolingians.²⁹ The origins of the site, the location of the relics of Saint James, the founding of the chapel, and the development of the Camino to Santiago, are not concrete, but more based in legend. Legends claim that Saint James the Greater, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, travelled to Spain in the 1st Century AD to evangelize to the Iberians. He later returned to Jerusalem where he was beheaded around 44 AD by Herod Agrippa I.

Santiago's *translatio* (transferring of his body from Jerusalem to Spain) is a story of further legend. The numerous hagiographical legends carry many deviations on how Santiago's body made its way to Galicia. Some legends claim that angels carried Santiago's body by air, others that his body was moved in a glass boat or even a floating massive stone that would later mark his final resting place.³⁰ These versions of the story, however, were officially dispelled by Pope Calixtus II in a sermon recorded in the *Codex Calixtinus*, a 12th Century manuscript concerning El Camino de Santiago.³¹ The version of the legend claimed in the *Codex Calixtinus* holds that Santiago was simply set afloat in the sea by his followers, and miraculously guided to Galicia.³²

While there is no way to create a historically accurate account of Santiago's *translation*, there exist common themes and symbols in many of the hagiographies that suggest overarching themes in the legend. In all accounts, Santiago is guided miraculously from Jerusalem to Galicia by the sea, perhaps a reflection of his own 'translation' from suffering to paradise, and of every Christian's journey through life.³³ A divine presence, be it angel pallbearers or a miraculous arrival to Galicia suggests that there was divine support for this *translatio*. All stories end in

²⁹ Alberto Ferreiro, "The Cult of Saints and Divine Patronage in *Gallaecia* before Santiago," in *The Pilgrimage to Compostela in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Maryjane Dunn and Linda Kay Davidson (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2010) 12-14.

³⁰ Coffey, Davidson, and Dunn, *The Miracles of St. James*, 12.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 11.

³³ Ibid.

Galicia, leaving at the very least no doubt that the believers of these hagiographies agree that the key is Santiago's location in Galicia.

Many miracles have been claimed in relation to Santiago de Compostela, in many locations. Medieval believers throughout Europe, from Spain to Germany and beyond, claimed that Santiago appeared or performed miracles on their behalf. Measuring the credibility of each claim is logistically impossible as well as difficult, but there does exist a collection of 22 miracles claimed by believers that are held up as accurate by Pope Calixtus II, who compiled them as part of the *Codex Calixtinus*. The miracles compiled take place between the 8th and 12th Centuries, and the demographics of the beneficiaries are quite intriguing. The recipients themselves are diverse: some Spanish, some French, others Italian, and even a German and one Greek.³⁴ The locations of the miracles are also quite diverse, rather than solely occurring at or around the Santiago Cathedral. Santiago appears on the sea, in Portugal, in France, and even in the Balkans and Middle Eastern lands.³⁵

This diversity in all facets of the miracles is quite interesting in contrast to observed trends of miracle stories. Diana Webb cites a study in her book, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, ca. 700-1500*, that suggests most early medieval miracle claims occurred at or around the shrines and focused on the physical presence of some related relic.³⁶ The study also suggested that the range of miracles did not expand to farther reaches until the late middle ages, around the 14th and 15th centuries.³⁷ The *Codex Calixtinus* makes a grand claim that all people of almost every nationality make their way to Santiago de Compostela, making an excessively long and specific

³⁴ Ibid., LIV.

³⁵ Ibid., LV.

³⁶ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 58.

³⁷ Ibid.

list.³⁸ Perhaps the diversity of all of these miracles suggests that Santiago de Compostela carries an international appeal and significance, a concept that might have been ahead of its time. The one common factor is pilgrimage, either before or after the miracle, linking the two for the association of the people.

The church at Santiago de Compostela and the cult of Saint James took a while to take root and grow in Galicia after the *translatio* allegedly occurred. Legend holds that the location of Santiago's grave was once again relocated in the 9th Century under Spanish rule, and a chapel was built over the site. While it is unknown when pilgrimage actually began to Santiago, when it grew, or by how much, the efforts of Pope Calixtus II and Diego Gelmirez in the 11th and 12th Centuries are largely responsible for the growth of Santiago de Compostela in the Catholic world. Diego Gelmirez was the bishop of Santiago de Compostela starting in 1100, and then the first archbishop once it had gained the status of Archdiocese in 1120. He worked tirelessly to build the prestige of the diocese of Compostela, to raise his own prestige, and to promote the cult of Santiago to these ends. His building programs were also quite ambitious. He took over the see as construction on an expanded cathedral was underway, but his building programs demanded so much human and monetary expense that the residents of Santiago de Compostela revolted in 1116 and again in 1136.³⁹ Pope Calixtus II also promoted the cult of Santiago, citing himself as the author of the *Codex Calixtinus* (though he likely actually wrote very little of it). After the reigns of each of these high officials in the church, Santiago de Compostela was a much more prominent pilgrimage site, one of the three main Catholic destinations, sharing the stage with the likes of Rome and the Holy Land.

³⁸ Coffey, Davidson, and Dunn, *The Miracles of Saint James*, 18.

³⁹ Barbara Abou-el-Hajj, "Santiago de Compostela in the Time of Diego Gelmírez," *Gesta*, 36, no. 2 (1997), 167.

Little is widely accepted as accurate concerning the history of Santiago de Compostela from the 1st Century through the 11th Century. What is generally known is that Santiago was believed to have been transported to Galicia following his martyrdom, discovered at the site upon which the cathedral now stands, forgotten, but then rediscovered in the 9th Century. Little is known about the significance of the pilgrimage, the relic, and the cult through these years. Thanks to the efforts of Pope Calixtus II and Archbishop Diego Gelmirez, Santiago got more attention in the 11th and 12th Centuries, and thus, more historical attention in these times.

The growth of discussion of pilgrimage also grew in these centuries throughout Europe. Little is officially said of pilgrimage before the 11th Century. One large catalyst was the development of the Crusades. Some records of the speech of Pope Urban II in 1095 proclaiming the First Crusade mention him calling this expedition a *peregrinatio*, a “pilgrimage” in which the crusaders were *peregrinis*.⁴⁰ While pilgrimages certainly existed in some form prior to 1095, Urban II’s words help to create a language for the faithful to describe trips made to holy places for devotion, giving rise to an acknowledged tradition of pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages was in general quite an undertaking. Few people other than the nobility had the opportunity to travel outside of their village in their lifetime. Travel was arduous no matter how it was done, building up the ideas of suffering and sacrifice as key values of the pilgrim’s journey. To this theme, pilgrim’s often travelled with little or nothing, in order to reflect their dependence on God to make it through each day and to each destination. Little was recorded about the routes for wide access. El Camino de Santiago is somewhat unique in having a medieval ‘Pilgrim’s Guide.’ The *Codex Calixtinus* contains an aptly named *Pilgrim’s Guide* section. It describes four main routes to Santiago throughout Europe, naming destinations along the way, and providing some other information and warnings. Despite this, there is little to

⁴⁰ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 19.

suggest that this *Pilgrim's Guide* actually served the named purpose.⁴¹ The routes themselves were often dangerous, as robbers or other wrongdoers could threaten to harm pilgrims. Such was the premise for several miracles compiled in the *Codex Calixtinus*. The *Pilgrim's Guide* section of the *Codex* is filled with mentions of the dangers of robbers and deceptive innkeepers and merchants and threatens damnation to those who take advantage of Santiago's pilgrims. There still is very little evidence that would inform us as to how many pilgrims actually visited Santiago de Compostela, or actually undertook pilgrimage at all in the Middle Ages. Literature can only suggest that as it was a common topic, it was a more common practice.

Following the 15th Century, religious turmoil in Europe led to change in pilgrimage. The Protestant Reformation's condemnation of Catholic abuses included pilgrimage and thus, spirituality within the individual would be the focus. As a result of fragmenting Christianity, mostly outside of Spain, pilgrimage became more dangerous as kingdoms split and allegiances based on religion often fell apart. Local pilgrimage seemingly became more common and international pilgrimage saw a decline.⁴² The epic wars of religion and empire that ensued in the 17th and 18th Century certainly did not make travel easier. The secular Enlightenment was another ideological challenge to pilgrimage. This time from outside of Christianity, the Enlightenment challenged the illogical and possibly superstitious nature of pilgrimage and the devotion attached to miraculous relics. There are speculations that pilgrimage declined following the 15th Century, but because documents are lacking proof of numbers, these remain only speculations.⁴³

Pilgrimage experienced a revival in the modern day, around the 20th Century. The character of pilgrimage had changed however; the Christian devotion of the Middle Ages was largely

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 125

⁴² *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

gone. Tourism was a big contributor to pilgrimage now. In 2001, less than half of the pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela claimed religious motives.⁴⁴ A big category was ‘cultural’ inspiration, a wide category that could include historical research, emotional connections, or any other motive.⁴⁵ “Anyone from art historians to those emotionally on the run,”⁴⁶ is now attracted to Santiago de Compostela. Volumes of literature in many genres have discussed this historic journey and even some films, such as Emilio Estevez’s *The Way* have covered the topic.⁴⁷ In the present day, Santiago de Compostela has turned into a destination unique to each traveler. For some it is a Catholic site for devotion, for others it is a trip for another religious or new age spiritual experience; some travel to experience Spain, others travel to isolate themselves from their problems.

IV. *El Santuario de Chimayó*

The development of Santiago de Compostela laid the foundation for Christian pilgrimage in Europe during the Middle Ages and beyond, themes from which would show up an ocean away on the American continent. All over the New World Catholic pilgrimage traditions flourished in conjunction with the existing cultures and religions. This syncretism seen throughout Spanish America is very apparent at El Santuario de Chimayó, which carries many facets reminiscent of medieval Catholic pilgrimage—Santiago de Compostela, specifically—that have adapted to the cultural exchanges that have and continue to occur around Chimayó.

⁴⁴ Tim Moore, *Travels with my Donkey: One Man and His Ass on a Pilgrimage to Santiago* (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 2004), 53.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Moore, *Travels with my Donkey*, 53.

⁴⁷ *The Way*, directed by Emilio Estevez (2010; Los Angeles, CA: Icon Entertainment International), DVD.

El Santuario de Chimayó is a very unique site in the Americas where many brands of spirituality meet, along with later forms of devotion, activism, and belief. Despite its relative youth in comparison to other pilgrimage sites around the world, it has experienced a very interesting history, especially in the contexts of pilgrimage and new world and age developments. The mixing of Pueblo Indian and Spanish Catholic belief systems, the unique New World environment, and the unique location of the little locale of Chimayó in relation to world events has shaped a very diverse but specialized pilgrimage tradition.

There is a wide variety of histories of El Santuario de Chimayó and its spiritual importance. It is most widely known for its *pocito* filled with “holy dirt” alleged to have miraculous and curative powers. For this reasons, many pilgrims travel to El Santuario to obtain some of this dirt. There are also two images associated with El Santuario, Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas and El Santo Niño de Atocha. The chapel(s) at Chimayó are dedicated to these images, and miracles are also attributed to each.

Before the arrival of any Europeans, the Tewa Indians, a language subgroup of the Pueblo people, occupied the area now known as Chimayó. Archeological ruins suggest that Pueblo Indians were settled in the area between 1100 and 1400 AD, though they were not present when the Spanish arrived.⁴⁸ 20th Century Native descendants claim that a Pueblo settlement called *Tsimajo'onwi* (*onwi* meaning ‘pueblo’) once stood on the site where El Santuario now stands.⁴⁹ It is actually from the Tewa language that the name Chimayó descends. The Tewa word *Tzimayo* is believed to mean “place where big stones stand”.⁵⁰ Other variations include *Tsi*

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1987), 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 14

⁵⁰ Dana Engstrom DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario de Chimayo in Chimayo, New Mexico* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1999), 2.

Mayoh, in reference to the hilly area, and *Tsimajo*, which is interpreted as “flaking stones of superior quality”.⁵¹

Tsi Mayoh held an important position in Tewa cosmology. Around the pueblo stood four hills, atop of each were shrines. These hilltop shrines served as “earth navels” where the sacred and spiritual world met with the earthly.⁵² According to these Tewa legends, the hills were home to many “great geysers of hot water” until the Tewa twin war gods killed a giant, causing a great fire to erupt and dry the water, leaving only mud.⁵³ Other native descendants claim that a healing pool (*tsimajopokwi*, ‘pokwi’ meaning ‘pool’) was situated at the current site of El Santuario and the bursting fire left only healing mud in its place.⁵⁴ These claims were made by 20th Century descendants of the Tewa people, so the story may have been influenced by the development of El Santuario’s miraculous healing *pocito*.

Other evidence suggests that pilgrimage was also an important feature of Tewa spiritual life prior to European arrival. Elizabeth Kay notes that “it was a practice of the Rio Grande Pueblo people to make midsummer pilgrimages to their sacred hills and mountains to clean shrines, sweep the trails to them, and pray for rain.”⁵⁵ The belief in earth with therapeutic properties also was not unique to the Tewa people. Nearby Hopi and Laguna Pueblo people had similar rituals of rubbing clay on the body for healing, while Zuni, Hopi, and Navajo people practiced geophagy, the eating of earth.⁵⁶ While the authenticity of these claims may be hard to prove (or disprove), the existence of the claims of Tewa spirituality that parallel the characteristics of El

⁵¹ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵³ DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario*, 2.

⁵⁴ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 14.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

Santuario de Chimayó at least suggests that the people believed that the local natives have a part in this important spiritual location.

Juan de Oñate led the Spanish expedition into New Mexico and the land of the Pueblo people in 1598, bringing European faith to the foreign lands. However, the first image of El Santuario's devotion has its start over a thousand miles south, in Guatemala. The origin of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuilas (see Fig. 5) traces back to a town known as Esquípuilas. By the 19th Century, this town was known for its shrine, which had long been venerated for two reasons: “a crucifix known as the Black Christ, or Nuestro Señor de Esquípuilas, and the earth around the shrine which was believed to have miraculous curative powers.”⁵⁷ For two centuries this town and shrine had been visited by thousands of pilgrims yearly, “in search of cures and blessings.”⁵⁸ Even before European arrival, Kay notes that “pre-Columbian Indians had long made pilgrimages to the area around Esquípuilas to drink from its sulfur springs and to eat the earth, both regarded as having medicinal value.”⁵⁹ Interestingly enough, the themes of geophagy, pilgrimage, and healing sites show up in Esquípuilas, Guatemala in ways very similar to the distant Tewa site.

The “Black Christ” image, however, comes from the founding of Esquípuilas in the 16th Century. In 1524, the Chorti Indian chief Esquípuilas surrendered his people, sparing the bloodshed seen elsewhere in Latin America. The Chorti people were resettled in the 1560's and 1570's and their town was named Santiago de Esquípuilas in honor of the noble chief. In 1578, Catholic priests built a chapel near the revered sulfur springs and the Christianized town pooled

⁵⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 30.

its silver to purchase a crucifix for the altar.⁶⁰ The Christ on the crucifix was black, giving rise to the name, Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas. Some argue that “the smoke of many candles and incense has turned the image to smoky black,” or that the image reflects the natives’ misgivings about a white Christ associated with their white European oppressors.⁶¹ Regardless, the healing powers once associated with the sulfur springs were then attributed to Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas. Miracles were confirmed by the Catholic Church in 1737.⁶² This birth of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas quite vividly reflects how existing native beliefs melded with arriving Catholicism, to create a new hybrid.

The transportation of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas from Guatemala to New Mexico is shrouded in mystery. The trail turns cold from Guatemala until the name Esquípuas shows up in Santa Fe’s baptismal records in 1805. Then, a letter dated November 15, 1813 from a Bernardo Abeyta to Reverend Fray Sebastián Alvarez asks for permission to build a chapel to “honor and venerate, with worthy worship, Our Lord and Redeemer, in his Advocation of Esquípuas.”⁶³ Another letter from Alvarez the next day mentions that “the miraculous Image of Our Lord of Esquípuas has been already honored for three years”.⁶⁴ This places the arrival of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas around 1810. However, this is the end of concrete historical record of the image’s arrival, multiple legends tell variations of an overarching theme of how Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas came to be venerated in Chimayó.

Many popular legends exist concerning the discovery of the miraculous crucifix of Esquípuas in Chimayó. The most common story holds that it was discovered by Bernardo Abeyta during

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Stephen F. de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas in Guatemala and Chimayo, New Mexico.” In *El Santuario de Chimayo* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Publishing Company, 1956), 3.

⁶² DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario*, 3-5.

⁶³ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 11.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Holy Week in 1810.⁶⁵ This is the version told by a granddaughter of Bernardo Abeyta and recorded by Kay, Borhegyi, other scholars on Chimayó, and affirmed by the chapel's publication as the most popular telling:

“It was during a Holy Week when Bernardo Abeyta, a good member of the fraternity of Jesus Nazareno Or Penitentes, was performing the customary penances of the society around the hills of Potrero that he suddenly saw a bright light shining from a hole in the ground near the Santa Cruz river. He rushed to the spot and with his bare hands dug out the miraculous crucifix of Our Lord of Esquípuas. He called all the people of El Potrero to see and venerate the precious finding. They soon notified Father Sebastián e alvarez, and a procession was organized to take the crucifix to Santa Cruz. It was placed in the niche of the main altar. Next morning the crucifix disappeared from its niche and was found again in the same hole where it was first discovered. Another procession was formed to carry it back to Santa Cruz, but the same thing happened this time and once more it had to be taken to Santa Cruz for the third time. By this everyone understood that the crucifix wished to remain in El Potrero, and to venerate it properly, a chapel was built above the hole.”⁶⁶

An extension to this narrative holds that an anonymous traveler brought the crucifix to the area and died. Casimiro Roca, priest of El Santuario writes in his autobiography that this traveler buried the large crucifix to lighten his load, but died before he could return for it, leaving it to be miraculously found by Abeyta in 1810.⁶⁷ Borhegyi records another variation in which the traveler was a small priest who was killed by Indians and buried with the crucifix. Years later,

⁶⁵ Julio Gonzalez, S.F. and Jim Suntum, S.F., *El Santuario de Chimayo: The Shrine of Our Lord of Esquipulas* (New Mexico: Sons of the Holy Family, 2012), 13.

⁶⁶ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 17-18.

⁶⁷ Casimiro Roca, *A Little Priest for a Little Church: The Story of the First Pastor of El Santuario de Chimayo* (New Mexico: Sons of the Holy Family, 2012), 33.

flooding uncovered the body and crucifix to be discovered by the people, merging then with the three miraculous returns of the popular account.⁶⁸

Other legends include different characters that brought the crucifix to Chimayó. In one, a mysterious mule with a coffin-like box on its back appeared outside “the fabled church” and inside the box the sacristan discovered the miraculous crucifix.⁶⁹ Still others involve the crucifix being “found in a hollow tree, near a large rock, or protruding from the earth.”⁷⁰ One variation even features an apparition of San Esquipulas leading an ill Abeyta to the site of his apparition, where Abeyta was instantly healed.⁷¹

A more malevolent spirit appears in the native legend. In it, a man finds the crucifix (this time spelled *Escapu’la*) partially buried, so he takes it to the priest, who tells him to take it to Santa Fe. Like Abeyta’s tale, it returns to its hole, and the man starts to carry it around with him. His wife does not like it and threatens to burn it, and as punishment the wife is paralyzed by the crucifix.⁷² The man’s prayers to this “santu” are what heal his wife, and thus, the lesson follows: “people say that when they make a promise to San Escapu’la they must keep it.”⁷³

The historicity of these legends may be virtually unprovable, though Kay notes that the burial of valuable relics was common, and burial often turned these objects made of silver black. Additionally, Kay writes that “buried religious treasure was also a popular folklore theme in Spain dating to the years of Moorish occupation,” a theme that likely travelled to the new world with the conquistadores.⁷⁴ Another tie to Spanish folklore is the *ciclo de los pastores* (“the

⁶⁸ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 18.

⁶⁹ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 39.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷¹ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 18.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷³ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 42.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

shepherd's cycle), a body of legends common from the 9th to the 13th Centuries in Europe.⁷⁵

These stories feature miraculous apparitions leading shepherds to buried objects, often involving apparitions or unusual lights or sounds. The repeated transport and return of the object featured in Abeyta's legend is them stemming from these *ciclos de los pastores*.⁷⁶ More practically, however, Borhegyi speculates that since Abeyta correctly spelled Esquípuas, he somehow had direct knowledge of the Guatemalan cult and thus instructed a santero to make a crucifix in the style of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas.⁷⁷

The contexts and commonalities of these stories may not reveal an accurate story of the cult's arrival, but they can shed light of the religious culture of Chimayó's past. Kay describes the parallels with *el ciclo de los pastores* and medieval shepherd's legends as representing ties not only to medieval religion but to Christ's birth and the adoration of shepherds.⁷⁸ Borhegyi points out the historical context of the founding legends, a so-called "secular interlude" from about 1800-1850 "after the recall of all the Franciscans".⁷⁹ Being in New Mexico meant the settlers were on the frontiers, both separated from constant contact with priests and the official Catholic Church and close to a native threat. Bernardo Abeyta's Penitente order was a secular order that arose in this absence of the Church. This detachment from centralized religious authority might mean villagers were more accepting of miracles, myths, or superstition. A study in Italy by scholar Michael Carroll found that "Christians often turn to magic when they are faced with some perceived danger," which a constant native threat would surely supply.⁸⁰ Regardless of the truth of these accounts, the dangers and stress of frontier New Spain—perhaps reminiscent of

⁷⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁷ de Borhegyi, "The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas," 20.

⁷⁸ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 45.

⁷⁹ de Borhegyi, "The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas," 19-20.

⁸⁰ DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario*, 48.

Moor-occupied medieval Spain—provided a healthy environment for these miraculous legends to grow, especially recalling medieval Spanish story-telling traditions.

The story of Chimayó continues with a second miraculous discovery, that of El Santo Niño de Atocha, the second ‘saint’ of El Santuario (see Fig. 6). In 1856 Don Bernardo Abeyta, the founder of the Esquipulas cult in Chimayó, died.⁸¹ Just the next year, in 1857, a chapel dedicated to El Santo Niño de Atocha was built by Severiano Medina, signifying the arrival of the cult of El Santo Niño to Chimayó.⁸²

To understand the arrival of the Santo Niño cult to Chimayó, we must first trace the image back to its roots in Mexico and Spain. In 1566, miners travelling to the town of Fresnillo got lost, stopped at a spring, discovered silver, and this founded the town of San Demitrio. The crucifix in the town’s church, El Señor de Plateros (another name to refer to the town and church), was believed to perform miracles.⁸³ Then, in 1789, a new church was built for the town and an image of the Santa María de Atocha (also known as Nuestra Señora de Atocha) was sent as a gift to the church from Spain, where a cult dedicated to the image had grown in Atocha, a suburb of Madrid. This statue of Nuestra Señora de Atocha featured her carrying the infant Jesus, which was detached from its mother statue on Christmas Eve.⁸⁴ By the 19th Century, the Child Jesus remained detached from its mother and Thompson notes, “the focus of devotion shifted from El Senor de Plateros and Santa Maria de Atocha to the Christ child, who became known as the Santo Nino de Atocha.”⁸⁵

⁸¹ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 15.

⁸² DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario*, 5.

⁸³ John Thompson, “Santo Niño de Atocha,” *Journal of the Southwest*, 36, no. 1 (1994), 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Miracles were thus attributed to the Santo Niño and a *novena* (small prayer book) records nine such miracles. The book, allegedly written in 1841 by Don Calixto Aguirre, the beneficiary of the ninth miracle, tells of the earliest recorded miracle by the Santo Niño, occurring in 1829.⁸⁶ This first miracle tells of an imprisoned woman whose freedom is secured by a child named Manuel de Atocha. She then follows this child on foot toward Fresnillo but loses sight of him in the night. When she reaches Fresnillo her search for the child leads her to recognize the Santo Niño statue in the church as her rescuer. The dates of these miracles suggest, according to Thompson, that the cult of El Santo Niño spread quite quickly, shown by the great number of *santos* of El Santo Niño made in the “golden age” of santo-making in New Mexico, which happened not long after the recorded miracles.⁸⁷

Just like Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas, Santo Niño de Atocha has its own set of legends as to how it found its way to Chimayó. The most common story, as told by a member of Medina’s family, holds that Severiano Medina travelled to Fresnillo in Mexico, where he obtained a statue of the Santo Niño, for which he built a chapel in Chimayó, next to the chapel of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas. Borhegyi, however, also claims that this was a maneuver by “a jealous neighbor” of Abeyta’s who “wished to capitalize on the fame and revenue of the Sanatorio.”⁸⁸ Another variation of this legend tells that Medina was cured of a rheumatism by a Manuel de Atocha (recalling the miracle in Santo Niño’s *novena*), prompting Medina’s pilgrimage to Fresnillo.⁸⁹ Still other variations tell of Medina receiving instruction to pray to Santo Niño or making a pilgrimage vow for his healing.⁹⁰ Another tells of a man instructed by a miraculous vision to

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 3-4.

⁸⁸ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 21-22.

⁸⁹ Thompson, “Santo Niño de Atocha,” 4.

⁹⁰ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 47.

bring a statue of the Santo Niño in California.⁹¹ In this legend, the man discovers it missing in the middle of one night, though it returns by morning, suggesting the statue's animism. Later legends bear resemblance to those of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas. One tells of a farmer and his daughter being guided by the sound of bells underground to the discovery of the Santo Niño.⁹² This story also then attributes miraculous cures to El Santo Niño.⁹³ However, Borhegyi argues that this healing is not usually associated with the Santo Niño version of the Christ Child, and can only be attributed to the santo's confusion with the Christ of Esquípuas. Further melding with the Esquípuas cult leads to some tellings of the legend claiming that it was the Santo Niño who was found in the miraculous hole at Chimayó.⁹⁴ This is indicative of the later blurring of the narratives and devotions of the now 'competing' santos of El Santuario de Chimayó.

From 1857 onwards, there seems to have been two saints at El Santuario de Chimayó. Still in the absence of strong and centralized Catholic authority, it should not seem strange how the lines of these legends and histories were blurred. In the wake of the introduction of El Santo Niño, it seems that the Santo Niño virtually overtook Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas. An 1890 record of pilgrimage mentions El Santo Niño, but nothing of Esquípuas, reinforcing the conclusion that the Santo Niño cult had become the predominant one.⁹⁵ The legends of both santos, collected in the 20th Century, bear many resemblances to each other, with many featuring the respective saint being found in the miraculous hole or dug up thanks to miraculous sights or sounds. This suggests that as the cults competed and interacted in the frontier town of Chimayó, they very

⁹¹ DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario*, 42.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ de Borhegyi, "The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas," 21

⁹⁴ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 48.

⁹⁵ Michael P. Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination: Rethinking the Academic Study of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 121.

likely blended—or possibly one cult effectively absorbed the other—into the religious culture existing today.

Following the founding of the Esquípuas cult during the “secular interlude” and the founding of the Santo Niño cult in the 1850’s, little is said or written of El Santuario de Chimayó or its pilgrimage tradition for the rest of the 19th Century. 1890 marks the first recorded pilgrimage to Chimayó. María Martínez made the pilgrimage on a *promesa* (vow) made by her mother when María had fallen ill. The account tells of María rubbing the holy dirt over herself, a practice that Borhegyi argues had already been established at that time.⁹⁶ Little else is known of the numbers or demographics of pilgrims in this age.

The church itself had been in decline throughout these years, suggested by its donation to the Catholic Church in 1929. In the 1920’s several “anglos,” namely John Gaw Meem, Frank Applegate, and Mary Austin, fans of Spanish colonial art and architecture rallied support to save this heritage in New Mexico.⁹⁷ El Sanutario de Chimayó was one of their interests, though it was under the ownership of Maria de los Angeles Chaves, a descendant of Bernardo Abeyta, since 1915.⁹⁸ With the support of a private donor, Austin secured the purchase of El Santuario de Chimayó from Chaves, and in 1929 with Meem as the witness, transferred the deed to the Catholic Church.⁹⁹

Still little exists concerning El Santuario de Chimayó in the early 20th Century, concerning the chapel or any famed pilgrimage. This changed in 1946; the Second World War provided a watershed moment for pilgrimage to Chimayó. The April 29, 1946 publication of the Santa Fe

⁹⁶ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 20-21.

⁹⁷ Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination*, 126.

⁹⁸ Gonzalez and Suntum, *El Santuario de Chimayo*, 16.

⁹⁹ Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination*, 128.

New Mexican featured an article telling of a large mass following a pilgrimage of WWII veterans to Chimayó.

“More than 500, probably the largest congregation ever to attend services at El Santuario, Chimayó’s famed chapel, were present at 10 a.m. High Mass yesterday which culminated the weekend pilgrimage of veterans to that tiny community. Twenty-three veterans—all but two members of New Mexico’s 200th Coast Artillery which was captured on Bataan—made the 26 mile march, the last 11 miles of which was over mountainous terrain.”¹⁰⁰

These survivors of the infamous Bataan Death March in the Philippines in 1942 were New Mexicans and likely quite familiar with El Santuario and its santos. It is said that these soldiers made pilgrimage vows to El Santo Niño de Atocha that they might survive captivity, which the survivors fulfilled in 1946. Several sources claim that this pilgrimage was a tradition started in 1945 and continued by thousands of veterans and POWs there is little evidence of this claim. However, Kay notes that from then on, thousands of pilgrims made the trek to Chimayó.

Pilgrimage to Chimayó, though undertaken throughout the year, is most closely and famously associated with the Holy Week. Some claim this has been a long-standing tradition, though Carroll astutely points out that many writings misconstrue facts to portray this point. Evidence of a Holy Week pilgrimage tradition only appears after WWII, leading Carroll to suggest that, despite popular claims, the Holy Week tradition is relatively new.¹⁰¹ It is difficult to come to a confident conclusion on this matter, considering the silence of sources before 1946 and the post-war sources. What we can confidently claim is that El Santuario was resurrected, along with its pilgrimage, in the post-war decades.

¹⁰⁰ “500 Journey to Santuario for Mass,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 29, 1946, 1.

¹⁰¹ Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination*, 125.

El Santuario experienced a revival in many ways upon the arrival of Father Casimiro Roca in the 1950's. This "little priest" help repair the eroding church building, as well as the decline of parishioners when the Parish of the Holy Family was created in 1959, with Chimayó as the seat.¹⁰² In his autobiography, Casimiro Roca describes the state of disrepair in which he found El Santuario, and the necessary renovations that were made. Repairs needed to be made to the adobe building and its foundations. He describes not only the structural renovation of the church but also the spiritual and cultural renovation. In order to bring more parishioners, more masses were conducted at El Santuario and in traditional ceremonies were made to appeal more to tourists in order to bring revenue.¹⁰³

Under Roca's pastorship, Chimayó saw a unique flourishing of general pilgrims as well as specialized pilgrimages. In the 1960's, pilgrims grew in number so that in 1971, the parish required more than one priest.¹⁰⁴ In 1970, the site was declared a National Historic Landmark, furthering Chimayó's growth.¹⁰⁵ The prominence of El Santuario grew more as expansions were made, grottos for veneration were added, and in 1980, twenty Latin American heads of states even visited.¹⁰⁶ In 1989, Fox counted 50,000 visitors to Chimayó.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Roca notes that by 1980, "there were hundreds of pilgrims that spent entire nights in prayer, but there were also many who milled around the ground for nothing more than curiosity, indicating the growth of both religious and non-religious visits."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Roca, *A Little Priest for a Little Church*, 24.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰⁵ Marion Amberg, "Following the Cross to Chimayó," *Catholic Digest*, April 2011, 76.

¹⁰⁶ Roca, *A Little Priest for a Little Church*, 61.

¹⁰⁷ Steve Fox, "Sacred Pedestrians: The Many Faces of Southwest Pilgrimage," *Journal of the Southwest*, 36, no. 1 (1994), 46.

¹⁰⁸ Roca, *A Little Priest for a Little Church*, 65.

Today, up to 300,000 people are said to visit Chimayó in a year, though not all are, strictly speaking, pilgrims.¹⁰⁹ On Good Friday, culmination of the Holy Week pilgrimage, as many as 30,000 visit, many of whom made pilgrimage.¹¹⁰ It is hard, however, to identify how many of these visitors are pilgrims who walked to the chapel. Unlike the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, there is no strict route or distance to cover on the way to Chimayó. Distance varies from short distances to as far as Santa Fe (30 miles) or Albuquerque (80 miles), still other pilgrimage movements start over 100 miles away.¹¹¹

Motivations for pilgrimages to Chimayó today are quite diverse. Many sources write of *promesas* still being popular, a promised pilgrimage upon granting of a prayer.¹¹² These often can be for healing, represented by the artifacts left behind to show the healing completed, such as crutches. However, Carroll's observations show that more personal items such as pictures are left behind, suggesting there is something more motivating pilgrimage.¹¹³ Prayers for family, then, may be the more common motivation. War was a large factor at Chimayó, starting with the Bataan survivors in 1946 and continuing in the Korean War as families would visit to pray for the safe return of sons. One source even mentions a visitor claiming her reason being that her team had reached the Super Bowl.¹¹⁴ Like Santiago de Compostela, as Chimayó's popularity has grown, so has the diversity of motivations for pilgrimage.

The modern day has also provided opportunity for other, more unified pilgrimage movements. Fox notes that pilgrimage has a grassroots appeal that offers "powerful deliverance from modernity." The 1970's saw some organized movements born. Casimiro Roca recalls a

¹⁰⁹ Amberg, "Following the Cross to Chimayó," 74.

¹¹⁰ John B. Wright, "El Santuario de Chimayo: New Mexico's Lourdes," *FOCUS on Geography*, 47, no. 2 (2002), 9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹¹² Fox, "Sacred Pedestrians," 46.

¹¹³ Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination*, 119.

¹¹⁴ Fox, "Sacred Pedestrians," 46.

“pilgrimage of the Archdiocese,” in which the Archbishop led a walk from Santa Cruz Parish to Chimayó on Good Friday.¹¹⁵ He also recalls a large youth pilgrimage. “The Pilgrimage for Vocations” was founded in 1973 and quickly grew to include 5 routes covering over 100 miles each and a group of over 100.¹¹⁶

The proximity to Los Alamos provided El Santuario de Chimayó another opportunity to interact with the modern world outside. Founded on April 16, 1942, the “Prayer Pilgrimage of Peace” was a unique pilgrimage starting from Chimayó and ending in Los Alamos.¹¹⁷ People gathered at Chimayó for mass and then runners carried a bag of El Santuario’s holy dirt to Ashley Pond in Los Alamos.¹¹⁸ This modern pilgrimage was highly symbolic, bringing soil from “a place made holy by the love and sacrifice of many people” (Albuquerque Journal, 4/15/84) to the pond in Los Alamos that recalls the area’s preatomic history.¹¹⁹ The pilgrimage even grew to incorporate many outside the Christian tradition, bringing all under the focus of peace.

The “Prayer Pilgrimage of Peace” is indicative of a unique movement in which El Santuario de Chimayó is involved. The pilgrimage was a positive alternative to past polarizing anti-war protests.¹²⁰ Pilgrims still travel to this little chapel in the state where the Nuclear Age was born, profoundly changing the whole world, to pray “never again”.¹²¹ Other pilgrimages have grown alongside Chimayó, in contrast to the Nuclear Age. Kay observes that Chimayó is a “cultural magnet,” and it serves just as that, offering a medium to engage with larger world problems. Runners’ movements in the 1980’s also were attracted to the magnet at Chimayó. Recalling the Native American running tradition, these movements brought another culture into the fold. The

¹¹⁵ Roca, *A Little Priest for a Little Church*, 59.

¹¹⁶ Fox, “Sacred Pedestrians,” 47.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹⁸ Kay, *Chimayo Valley Traditions*, 79.

¹¹⁹ Fox, “Sacred Pedestrians,” 49.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

Prayer Pilgrimage of Peace tapped this resource, as did a 1980 Pueblo-to-Pueblo Race, commemorating the 1680 Pueblo race. Finally, in 1986, Chimayó was one of three sites in the U.S hosting the Peace Flame for the Earth Run.¹²² In the modern age, this tiny chapel tucked in the hills of New Mexico became a medium to engage with issues and cultures worldwide.

V. *Connections*

Santiago de Compostela and El Santuario de Chimayó are two unique but excellent representations of the living and changing character of pilgrimage. Though quite different in many facets, their similar origins provide a framework through which to observe pilgrimage as it develops in the modern day. From the religious journeys in the Middle Ages, these two show what pilgrimage has become and where it might be going.

Both Santiago de Compostela and El Santuario de Chimayó were born into times of considerable peril in the lands. In early Medieval Spain, the Moors had pushed far into Spain and were threatening the Christian faith in the Iberian Peninsula. In Colonial New Mexico, Chimayó sat on the frontier and faced dangers of native attacks and isolation from the safety of centralized power. The birth environments of both shrines seem to indicate that imminent danger would lead people to turn to a savior within their faith for comfort and protection. In Spain, Santiago was simultaneously the pilgrim Santiago, a comforter and magnet for devotion, the warrior Santiago *Matamoros* ('Moor slayer') the patron saint of Spain and its warriors from the Reconquista onwards (see Fig. 3). By contrast, in Chimayó, Nuestro Señor de Esquímulas and El Santo Niño de Atocha were more saviors from very real peril, like the lost and powerless.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 51.

From these origins we can further trace a line between these two iconic Catholic shrines. El Santuario de Chimayó carries the heritage of medieval Spain in its legends and saintly imagery. The legends of Nuestro Señor de Esquíputas and El Santo Niño de Atocha arriving in New Mexico are reminiscent of those from the time of Santiago de Compostela's rise. El Santo Niño seems to have even come from the suburbs of Madrid in the time of the Reconquista; legends claim that a Santo Niño in Madrid was able to bring food and water past Moorish guards to imprisoned Christians. While the accuracy of these legends are largely unfounded, the veneration of Santa María de Atocha, the statue with child transported from Madrid to Mexico, perhaps represents another medieval Spanish cult born out of the perils of Moor-occupied Spain, something that would be later transported to Spain's colonies in the New World.

The imagery of El Santo Niño even bears resemblance to Santiago de Compostela. The image features El Santo Niño standing (later sitting), wearing a pilgrim's hat like that on images of Santiago the pilgrim, carrying a pilgrim's staff with a gourd for water and a scallop shell on his cloak, recreating the key items borne by Santiago (see Fig. 6). This imagery would have connected El Santo Niño to Spain's patron saint Santiago in the Reconquista era, continuing the legacy of Santiago through this Santo Niño.

Most directly, Santiago is prominent through the New World, thanks to the spread by the Spanish in the 16th Century. Warriors in the Americas, just like their counterparts fighting in Spain, saw Santiago (in his *Matamoros* character) as their patron. Thus, Santiago would come to the New World with the Spanish explorers and appear at the aid of the Spanish. For this, from Argentina to the United States, numerous locales bear the name or variations of the name Santiago. His appearance is recorded 14 times in the New World, one very close in relation and geography to Chimayó. In 1599, Juan de Oñate's forces were gravely outnumbered but achieved

victory thanks to the apparition of Santiago.¹²³ Legends claim that he appeared “in the sky ... riding a white horse with his flaming sword as he came to their aid,” recalling the imagery of Santiago’s famed appearance at the Battle of Clavijo in Spain in 844.¹²⁴

In Chimayó at El Santuario, Santiago is an important image. Shortly after the building of Abeyta’s chapel in Chimayó, nine *bultos* (saint statues) were commissioned, one of which was an equestrian Santiago.¹²⁵ A grotto depicting Santiago in his Matamoros character also stands on the church grounds. The Fiesta de Santiago, held on his feast day of July 25, was also an important tradition in Chimayó, though it was slowly forgotten in the 20th Century until 1976.¹²⁶ Father Casimiro Roca revived the importance of the Fiesta de Santiago and its reenactment of the *Los Moros y Cristianos* and the folk dance *Matachines*.¹²⁷ Both are Latin American traditions, Spanish mixed with Native American, which recall the Spanish *Reconquista* origins of the veneration of Santiago. While El Santuario de Chimayó’s veneration is focused on Nuestro Señor de Esquímulas and El Santo Niño de Atocha, Santiago’s strong presence in image and tradition provides strong connection to Spain and Santiago de Compostela.

The resemblance of El Santo Niño and the existence of Santiago in Chimayó suggest that El Santuario de Chimayó, in a sense, is a continuation of the devotion of Santiago de Compostela. Santiago’s own presence in Chimayó is evidence of the expansion of Santiago outside of Spain. Ideas of Santiago travelled from Spain, through exploration and combat, to the New World. From there, the Spanish veneration of Santiago spread all the way to the New Mexican frontier. El Santo Niño’s own resemblance to Santiago’s pilgrimage imagery and the veneration of

¹²³ E. Boyd, “Señor Santiago de Chimayo,” in *The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas in Guatemala and Chimayo, New Mexico* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Publishing Company, 1956), 29.

¹²⁴ Conchita Lucero, “Santiago Our Protector,” (New Mexican Hispanic Culture Preservation League, 2014).

¹²⁵ Boyd, “Señor Santiago de Chimayo,” 29.

¹²⁶ Amberg, “Following the Cross to Chimayó,” 12.

¹²⁷ Roca, *A Little Priest for a Little Church*, 43.

Santiago in the Middle Ages points to the continuation of Santiago de Compostela's pilgrimage spirit to New Mexico. El Santo Niño, whose predecessor was Santiago, provides the same patronage and imagery to the New Mexican people whose predecessors provided the outline of veneration in their devotion to Santiago de Compostela.

One striking similarity between both Santiago de Compostela and El Santuario de Chimayó that very much reflects the changing nature of pilgrimage is the character of the audience drawn to the sites. The pilgrims visiting these sites are vastly different from the devout Christian walkers of times past. Visitors are now more akin to tourists and the pilgrims themselves are more curious adventurers. Not necessarily Catholic or even Christian, many modern pilgrims are seeking the experience historic walkers might have had. Other pilgrims seek a quasi-spiritual experience or even a simple escape from the repetition of life. This diversity of nature is more well-documented at Santiago de Compostela than at Chimayó because of Santiago's prominence in world tourism and popular culture, though this is not to discount Chimayó.

The diversity of pilgrims and visitors to El Santuario de Chimayó has grown as well. Traditionally, Chimayó was a Spanish colonial town, featuring almost exclusively Hispanic residents. Being a catholic shrine in Spanish America, El Santuario would draw predominantly Hispanic Catholics. However, the revitalization of El Santuario de Chimayó in the 20th Century has also brought wider audiences. In fact, the revitalization was largely in thanks to Anglo-Americans, namely John Gaw Meem, Mary Austin, and Frank Applegate. These American Protestants represent a larger contingent of Anglos interested in Spanish Colonial history in the 20th Century US. Their fundraising and donation of the shrine to the Catholic Church in 1929 helped to save the church.

Now, more Anglos, Protestants, and general non-hispano-catholic visitors flock to Chimayó. El Santuario was named a National Historic Landmark in 1970, marking its importance to all of the US. Thus, visitors to El Santuario de Chimayó today are many Hispanics and Catholics, but also many other demographics interested in discovering the spirituality and culture at Chimayó.

Both of these distant pilgrimage sites demonstrate that pilgrims are very diverse in the modern world. No longer do pilgrims fit a certain description, image, or motivation. Pilgrims can be Christians, but they can also hail from any religion, regardless of destinations. Even further, pilgrims can often be irreligious, seeking some other form of spiritual experience by manner of walking to an important location. Some may even be detached from spirituality and instead seeking great culture, history, or knowledge. The only uniting factor amongst modern pilgrims is their journey. For some reason, pilgrims still undertake an arduous journey to these great destinations. This might suggest that pilgrimage today is focused on the struggle and subsequent reward of such a journey. Regardless of religious or intellectual stance, pilgrims seem to be seeking *something* in their journey, perhaps even seeking the journey itself, which will subsequently yield profound revelation in the form of faith, peace, spirit, or knowledge.

For as much as El Santuario de Chimayó has grown as a parallel and continuation of Santiago de Compostela, a very unique identity developed at Chimayó. The pilgrimage at El Santuario de Chimayó has developed in a different direction than that of Santiago de Compostela, something that further illuminates the changing nature of pilgrimage in the modern day.

Perhaps the most fundamental difference of Chimayó from Santiago de Compostela is the character of the ‘saints.’ In fact, Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas and El Santo Niño de Atocha are not saints. They are two images of Jesus Christ, one on the cross, the other as a child. Whereas

at Santiago de Compostela, veneration is directed, through his body and relics, towards Saint James the Greater, veneration at Chimayó is not directed at Jesus Christ. Instead, devotees directly venerate the objects themselves, as if they were alive, or a saint themselves. In fact, as legends of Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas spread and varied, some even credited the work to a “San Escápula.”¹²⁸ Though they are in no way saints or images of saints, the images at Chimayó are treated as saints.

This veneration of objects is quite common in Catholicism throughout the Americas, a product of the syncretism between Catholicism and Native Beliefs. As churchmen would often baptize native holy traditions and locations, native practices found their way into New World Catholicism. In Guatemala, Mexico, and New Mexico, miraculous healing tied to certain grounds became tied to religious objects, founding many cults of veneration. In Chimayó, Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas and El Santo Niño de Atocha were the two objects. Their place names (Esquípuas and Atocha) point to two other locations where these images were venerated. Other locations throughout Latin America experienced this veneration of other holy objects themselves rather than saints.

Another possible reason for this interesting veneration of ‘magical’ holy images at Chimayó is the need for a savior in the face of perceived danger. DeLoach cites a study claiming that suggested Christians “often turn to magic when they are faced with some perceived danger that they lacked the methods to control.”¹²⁹ Frontier New Mexico was quite dangerous, with many enemies, few allies, fewer resources, and still fewer priests to regulate religion. In the absence of central church authority, religion could easily become whatever the villagers needed. DeLoach also mentions that these images were found in Chimayó when the people of the village needed

¹²⁸ de Borhegyi, “The Miraculous Shrines of Our Lord of Esquipulas,” 19.

¹²⁹ DeLoach, *Image and Identity at El Santuario*, 48.

them most, suggesting that the arrival of these images was not as much miraculous but a meeting of the people's religious needs.¹³⁰

The unique environment thus greatly influenced the nature of Chimayó's holy images. While syncretism is common anywhere cultures meet—Santiago de Compostela even saw this occur between pre-Christian Galicia and Saint James' Christianity from Jerusalem—the absence of central Catholic authority meant that this shrine would not be like traditional European shrines. Anything was fair game to be venerated; the images themselves became the saints. Furthermore, in Chimayó, multiple saints met, mixed, and overlapped, creating a blended and somewhat confused veneration. The unique brand of syncretism demonstrated at El Santuario de Chimayó shows just how much the cultural environment both affects pilgrimage and is affected by pilgrimage. The cultural environment greatly shaped Chimayó's character, but the appeal of Chimayó's pilgrimage demonstrates how pilgrimage appealed to a new audience much different from the traditional pilgrims of Europe.

The widening of pilgrimage's audience and participants is a key facet of modern pilgrimage. Today, people travel from all over the world to take part in El Camino de Santiago de Compostela. Spain and Europe no longer dominate the pilgrim populations. In Chimayó, international visitors have also grown respectably, even outside of Anglo-Americans from around the United States. Unlike Santiago de Compostela in Spain, however, El Santuario de Chimayó has managed to maintain a strong representation of its native culture. El Santuario has held on to its Hispanic identity. Ramón Gutiérrez writes that even in the present day, the majority of visitors are Hispanic and an even stronger majority are pilgrims.¹³¹ Born in New

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹³¹ Gutiérrez, "El Santuario de Chimayo," 83.

Spain, Chimayó was almost exclusively of Spanish and Hispanic descent. As the village changed hands into Mexico and the United States, the population has remained predominantly Hispanic. While Santiago de Compostela has seen a sharp decline in Spanish and other European participants in exchange for more international participants, El Santuario has maintained its original Hispanic dominance and identity.

Michael Carroll argues directly against Gutiérrez, claiming that the pilgrimage culture of El Santuario de Chimayó is not quite what is claimed. He argues that the pilgrimage tradition does not trace back as far as legends claim; historical records can only recall pilgrimage as early as 1890. Furthermore, he claims that because of this unproven history, the deep Hispanic Catholic roots and participation claimed by past authors is not correct.¹³² While the historical record does not directly support much of the cultural and hagiographical heritage of El Santuario, what is important to remember is that the heritage is important to those who claim it. The dominance of these claims shows that many people believe such to be true. While the actual authenticity may not be quite the same, the fact that people claim such a heritage does suggest that the Hispanic Catholic culture is still important to Chimayó, even if it developed through myth and ideas rather than reality. Carroll does acknowledge this importance of El Santuario to New Mexican Hispanics.¹³³ Regardless of whether the deep Hispanic Catholic mass pilgrimage roots of El Santuario are true, the fact that it is now widely claims is proof enough that El Santuario holds an important place in Hispanic culture.

Beyond just being represented by Hispanic Catholics, El Santuario has even come to represent Hispanic culture as well. The culture of “low riders,” cars modified to sit lower to the ground, often associated with Chicano culture has associated itself with Chimayó. Robert Ashley

¹³² Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination*, 123.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 115.

calls Chimayó “the spiritual center of the Low Rider world.”¹³⁴ Perhaps because of Chimayó’s lasting link to Hispanic culture, and more importantly Chicano culture in the United States, the Chicano low rider culture has attached itself to Chimayó. Alongside pilgrims walking to Chimayó can often be seen many low riders. Some even describe the Good Friday pilgrimage as involving low riders, “hundreds of Lowriders from all over the state of New Mexico mak[ing] the annual pilgrimage.”¹³⁵ Beyond just the Hispanic identity of El Santuario’s pilgrimage, Chimayó also features a strong showing of Chicano culture tied directly to the chapel. While Santiago de Compostela has developed a very international identity, one very much focused on tourists of all walks of life, El Santuario de Chimayó has developed the opposite, a very specific cultural identity and an iconic role within this culture.

The 20th and 21st Century ‘pilgrimage’ movements, as they are manifested in both Santiago de Compostela and Chimayó, have taken two diverging characters. In Santiago de Compostela, the international and historical significance of the site has meant a growth in pilgrimage. This pilgrimage has taken the shape of thousands of individuals making the trek across northern Spain to reach the cathedral. They come from all walks of life and claim a plethora of motivations. Most importantly, the character of this pilgrimage now carries a strong tourist flavor. As a result of the growing number of pilgrims and the mixing of religious and nonreligious motives, the pilgrimage to Santiago no longer carries the spiritual gravitas it once did. Images of the pilgrimage have become commercialized and souvenirs are common all along the Camino, especially in the city of Santiago. Furthermore, great numbers of books and novels have been written about the Camino. Some are religious, others sightseer’s guides and memoirs, but these

¹³⁴ Robert Ashley, *Now Eleanor’s Idea* (New York: Lovely Music, 2007), 5.

¹³⁵ “El Santuario De Chimayo - Raza Report A Lowrider Pilgrimage!,” *Lowrider Magazine*, Jul. 1, 2010, accessed Apr.8, 2014.

all suggest that Santiago de Compostela is now a popular topic and destination for world travelers, sightseers, and tourists rather than a spiritual destination.

In Chimayó, while the tourist appeal is quite present and growing as appreciation for the shrine's importance to Hispanics and the American Southwest, the same sightseeing nature of pilgrimage seen in Spain is not present. Most pilgrims are still Hispanic and most are still Catholic. What has developed at El Santuario is a collection of organized pilgrimage movements and events. These movements are characterized by groups of individuals uniting for a single pilgrimage revolving around a single cause or purpose. In Chimayó's history, this took the form of youth pilgrimages, pilgrimages commemorating Native American running traditions, and other cultural causes.

The 1980 Pueblo-to-Pueblo Race commemorating the running traditions of local Native American tribes saw El Santuario participate in modern culture. Furthermore, Chimayó's location has given it opportunity to partake in the global world. The "Prayer Pilgrimage for Peace" from Chimayó to Los Alamos put Chimayó into the nuclear world. Through the relay-style pilgrimage, the holy dirt from Chimayó's *pocito* travels from the little chapel to Los Alamos, the birth of the nuclear age. An alternative to anti-war and anti-nuclear protests, this pilgrimage is a non-polarizing positive prayer for peace. Even more on the world scale, El Santuario's selection to be one of the USA's three hosts of the Peace Flame during the Earth Run in 1986 demonstrates Chimayó's ability to reach beyond its tiny hills to bring its spirituality to the world. While Santiago's grand pilgrimage appeal is a mass of sightseeing pilgrims, Chimayó's grand pilgrimage appeal comes from movements uniting the tiny chapel with the aspirations of the world stage.

VI. *Conclusion*

El Santuario de Chimayó, thanks to its unique environment, developed a pilgrimage tradition vastly different from that seen in classical examples such as Santiago de Compostela. El Santuario demonstrates a different model of veneration, cultural identity, and pilgrimage identity. These differing traits show that pilgrimage in the modern day has diversified in complex interaction with its local, international, and historical environment. What do all of these differing characteristics tell us about modern pilgrimage? Modern pilgrimage is no longer a quest for God as much as it is a seeking journey. What is being sought is entirely the choice of each pilgrim. For some, it might be a Christian journey, for others another kind of spiritual quest. For others, it might be a completely intellectual or personal struggle. Santiago de Compostela demonstrates the diverse identities and motives of modern pilgrims all of whom are still united under one goal: to struggle on a physical journey in hopes of achieving some form of insight or wisdom.

El Santuario functions as a continuation of Santiago de Compostela, in image, practice, and identity. As a continuation, however, El Santuario demonstrates more developments of modern pilgrimage. For Chimayó's pilgrims, the struggle is often united and organized. The goal is often a collective ambition, from cultural heritage to world peace. Even the Chicano lowriders make a journey (though far different from walking) to Chimayó seeking a spiritual center and unity. Perhaps most importantly, while Santiago de Compostela represents pilgrimage drawing seekers into itself, El Santuario de Chimayó represent pilgrimage reaching outside of its small world and little chapel to bring the search for wisdom to the outside world.

VII. *Appendices*

Illustrations



Fig. 1: Vasco Roxo, “Church of Santiago, Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain,” photograph, 2005, *wikipedia.com*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santiago_de_Compostela_Cathedral (accessed

May 21, 2014).



Fig. 2: Joaquín Guijarro, “Colegiata de Nuestra Señora del Manzano. Santiago peregrino,”

photograph, ca. 2014, *Centro Virtual Cervantes*,

http://cvc.cervantes.es/artes/camino_santiago/sexta_etapa/castrojeriz.htm# (accessed May 21,

2014)



Fig. 3: Antonio Jose Fernandez, “Apóstol Santiago,” photograph, 2008, *flickr.com*, <https://www.flickr.com/search?sort=relevance&text=matamoros%20burgos> (accessed May 21, 2014).

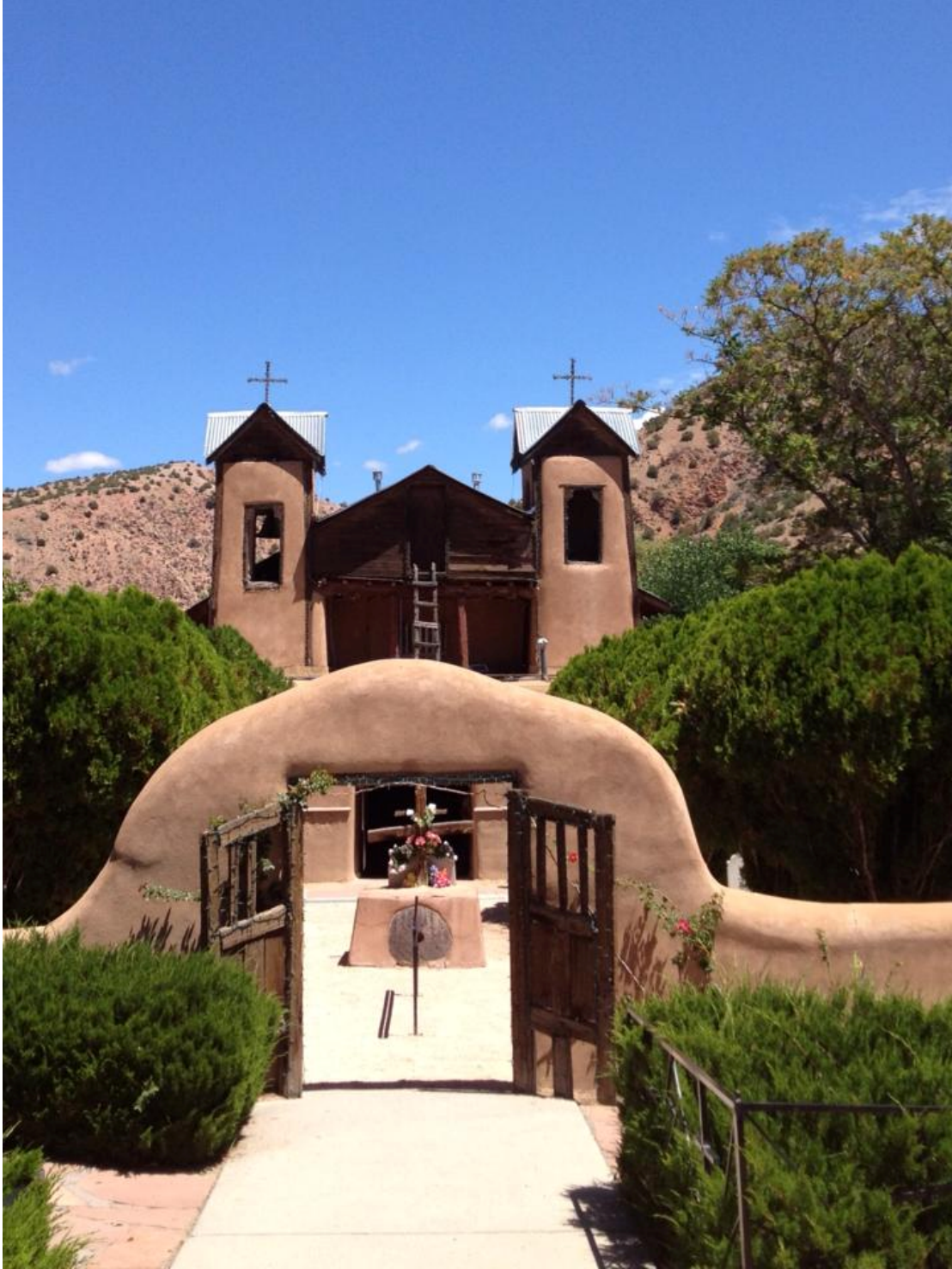


Fig. 4: Roger Ortega, “El Santuario de Chimayó,” 2013, JPEG image.



Fig. 5: “Nuestro Señor de Esquípuas,” photograph, 2010, *elsantuariodechimayo.us*,
<http://www.elsantuariodechimayo.us/Pilgrim/CloseupPages/SantuarioSenorEsquipulas.html>

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Fig. 6: “El Santo Niño de Atocha,” oil on canvas, ca. 19th Cent., *johntoddjr.com*,

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Integration of Faith and Learning

It can be quite difficult to find a place in the faith for the study of history. What could studying and understanding history contribute to the Church and, more importantly, to the faith of each believer? In my years at Seattle Pacific University, I have begun to discover the place of history in contributing to the faith. Just as other disciplines contribute theologically by answer the question of what it means to be human through their fields, history gives us a picture of what it means to be human based on who we were. By learning about what it history tells about humanity in generations past and present, we can also begin to use history to learn about God.

Dr. Bill Woodward provided a threefold discussion of history's direct contribution to the Christian faith. First, he says, history gives us the context of God's self-disclosure to mankind.¹³⁶ It was in the creation, when time began; it was in the incarnation, when time met eternity; and it is in the consummation, when history and time will come to an end. The second revelation of history is the agent of God's unfolding plan. In history, we can know that Jesus reigns in all things throughout all of history and that he calls us humans to be agents of His plan.¹³⁷ This leads to the empowering knowledge of human purpose. This can be in the human experience, in culture now and the consummation to come, but it is also in personal experience, in prayer and in the vocations in our lives.¹³⁸ Through faith, history empowers believers to seek God and participate as agents in His plan.

In this project I have sought to discover and apply God's self-disclosure in a very direct way, through pilgrimage. Most broadly, pilgrimage is a struggle towards something greater, something that we Christians would term as invariably being God. Nearly everyone can find some sort of pilgrimage, whether temporal or otherwise, in their life. The Christian faith is a pilgrimage through

¹³⁶ Bill Woodward, Lecture at Seattle Pacific University, Seattle WA, 1 October, 2012.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

life towards God and salvation. The ancients struggled on journeys toward home or enlightenment. Pilgrims today travel in search of purpose or escape from the concrete jungles and spiritual bondage of modern life. As believers, we can see that people are searching for something that we trust only God can satisfy. This project has been a pilgrimage of my own, albeit a literary one. On this journey I have found God through those who seek Him on temporal treks. While the evolution of pilgrimage discussed in this project shows that these two exemplary pilgrimages of the Catholic tradition do not and will never hold a monopoly on pilgrimage tradition, it is this very evolution that tells us that God's plan is still working to reveal Him to people in changing paradigms.

What does this mean for our participation? As Luke 10 tells us, we are to love our neighbors. Dr. Holsinger discusses acting "neighborly" on many levels. These can be "neighbors in space," like the neighbors in the Good Samaritan parable.¹³⁹ For these neighbors, we can join them on their pilgrimage through life, perhaps showing them where we found God on our own journey. Dr. Holsinger also discusses our "neighbors in time."¹⁴⁰ We can love our neighbors in time by developing an understanding of what happened, why it happened, and what it means. From that we can develop empathy towards those who came before us. Through this project, I feel as though I've learned about pilgrimage and what it has meant to humanity in relation to God. Furthermore, this knowledge that I have compiled suggests to me that I can be neighborly to those around me in the present by participating in the pilgrimage through life and the needs of my fellow pilgrims. Finally, as a historian, this project has helped me relate my neighbors-in-time's search for revelation to my own. With this empathy I can better participate in the world of those before me and those around me.

¹³⁹ Don Holsinger, Lecture at Seattle Pacific University, Seattle WA, 2 April 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

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