



■ Father John Tetlow, pastor of the Cathedral Basilica, left, Deacon Mike Elison, chancellor and Historian Elizabeth Gessner of St. Augustine met with representative of the cathedrals along the Camino de Santiago.



■ The 14-member delegation representing the diocese and the City of St. Augustine traveled to Spain in July as part of the Alliance of Cathedrals of the Camino.



■ The Alliance of Cathedrals is signed by the participating pastors. A statue of St. James, seen here, was brought back to the Cathedral Basilica

Cathedral Basilica Joins the Camino del Mestizaje Pilgrimage

BY LILLA ROSS

St. Augustine has been on the map since 1565, but now it's on a new map as the anchor for the new Camino del Mestizaje, which will become a network of pilgrimage routes in the Americas.

The Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine will be the starting or ending point for pilgrimages down the East Coast of Florida and across North Florida to the Panhandle. But the Camino del Mestizaje, which means the Way of Mixed-Race Peoples, will extend to Texas, California and South America.

The Camino del Mestizaje, 13 years in the making, is a project of the Instituto Nauta, whose mission is to promote Spain's legacy in the Americas, according to Katy Lockard, archivist of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

The Camino del Mestizaje will be modeled on the Camino de Santiago, a network of European pilgrimage routes dating to the 10th century. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims travel to Spain every year to walk one of the routes in Spain, France and Portugal that end at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

in Galicia in northwestern Spain.

The Cathedral in Compostela was built over the bones of St. James the Apostle, who visited Spain in the first century and

whose body was returned there after he was martyred. They lay undiscovered until the ninth century when a devotion grew on the site, which the Vatican recognizes as the third greatest pilgrimage site after Jerusalem and Rome.

A statue of St. James, known as Santiago in Spanish, sits atop the Cathedral's Portico of Glory, illustrating salvation history through the Old and New Testaments. It is a tradition that at the end of a pilgrimage, pilgrims visit the portico to say a prayer of thanksgiving.

"People walk the Camino for various reasons: to seek an indulgence, to do penance, in memory of a loved one. Or, they are at a crossroads, trying to figure out what God wants them to do next. Some people do it for the sheer adventure of living, the joy of the moment," said Deacon

Michael Elison, chancellor of the diocese who has walked the Camino. "You will find what you need no matter what you think you are looking for ..."

"People share their stories, as much or as little as they want to tell. It's almost like confession because you probably are not going to see them again," Elison said. "Walking the Camino is called a great equalizer because people from all over the world, from all walks of life converge on the route. It builds understanding."

Elison was part of the 14-member delegation representing the diocese and the city of St. Augustine that traveled to Spain in July, where they met with representatives of the cathedrals along the Camino de Santiago and the Instituto Nauta.

They signed a charter joining the Alliance of Cathedrals of the Camino and establishing the Camino del Mestizaje.

Father John Tetlow, representing then Bishop Felipe Estévez, signed the charter in a ceremony at the Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba in southern Spain.

The St. Augustine delegation was presented with a statue of St. James, carved by Juan Vega Ortega.

The statue, which accompanied the delegation on their tour of the cities on the Camino, is now at the Cathedral in St. Augustine. It was unveiled on July 25, the feast of St. James. An outdoor shrine for the statue will be built in the west courtyard. The shrine will be the starting point for pilgrims traveling the Camino de Santiago as well as the Camino del Mestizaje.

"For people who have done the Camino,

there's an identification with the statue. It's an experience that is materialized in the statue. The Camino never ends. You're always asking, where do I go now?" said Dr. Timothy Johnson, the Craig and Audrey Thorn Distinguished Professor of Religion at Flagler College.

The Camino also shows the remarkable universality of the church, Johnson said.

A pilgrimage ends with a Pilgrim Mass at the Cathedral, where the priest announces all the language groups represented by the pilgrims.

"Christianity comes into focus in a unique way," Johnson said. "Any way to promote universality through communion and collaboration is important."

Signing the charter is just the beginning. How the routes will be established still needs to be worked out, Elison said.

The plan is to try to follow the original path of the Franciscan missions. Only Mission Nombre de Dios in St. Augustine still exists. The Camino de Santiago has way markers in the shape of shells that guide pilgrims, and something similar would mark the route of the Camino del Mestizaje, Elison said.

And the routes would need to have infrastructure – places of food, shelter and other services – to support the pilgrims who would be traveling on foot, by bicycle or even horseback.

The Florida routes will run down the East Coast from St. Augustine to Miami and west from St. Augustine to the Panhandle.

In California, the El Camino Real is a 600-mile route linking the 21 missions and other sites established by Franciscan Junipero Serra. The missions are a day's walk apart.

Another route could be established in Texas, linking the Alamo with the other five mission sites.

In South America, the Inca Trail is a popular hiking route but not yet a pilgrimage route.

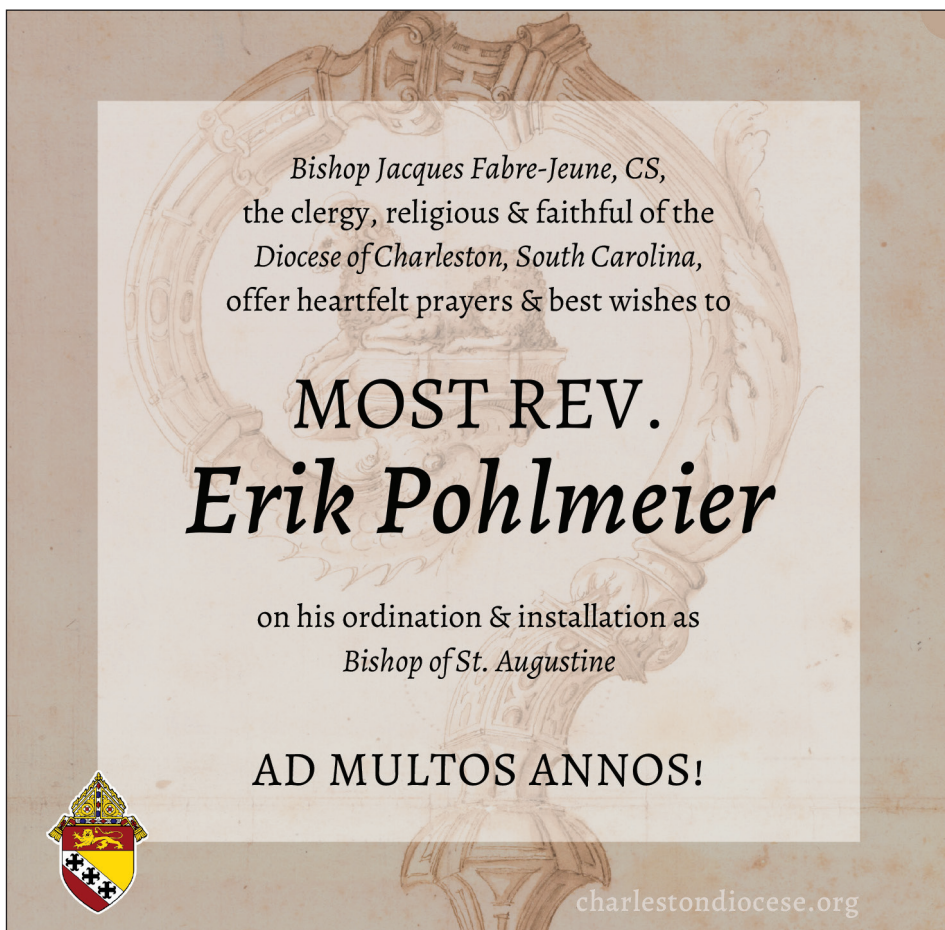
Six years ago, a pilgrimage route was established in the Diocese of St. Augustine. The Baby Steps Camino is a 30-mile, three-day pilgrimage on the beach from St. Paul Parish at Jacksonville Beach to the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Leche at Mission Nombre de Dios in St. Augustine. This year's pilgrimage will be Dec. 2-4. 🐦



Congratulations!

**Bishop-elect Erik Pohlmeier,
May God bless you as you serve
the people of God in the
Diocese of St. Augustine.**

 **THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE
of
PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE**




*Bishop Jacques Fabre-Jeune, CS,
the clergy, religious & faithful of the
Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina,
offer heartfelt prayers & best wishes to*

**MOST REV.
Erik Pohlmeier**

*on his ordination & installation as
Bishop of St. Augustine*

AD MULTOS ANNOS!

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