

## **News from the University of St. Thomas**

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### **'Sacred Steps' exhibit, opening April 14 at St. Thomas, tells the story of pilgrimage**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The story of pilgrimage – "travel for transformation" – inspires 39 photographs, paintings and sketches by eight artists from across the United States and Canada for an exhibition that itself will travel to the University of St. Thomas in the spring.

"Sacred Steps on the Camino," which opens April 14 in the Lobby Gallery of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center on the university's St. Paul campus, was created at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

The exhibition's display in Minnesota is made possible by support from the Program for Cultural Cooperation Between Spain's Ministry of Culture and U.S. Universities; the Xunta de Galicia and its Xacobeo Foundation for pilgrimage studies; and St. Thomas' College of Arts and Sciences and its departments of Art History and Modern and Classical Languages. The exhibition, administered by the Spanish Embassy in Washington, D.C., opened two years ago at William and Mary; by the time it arrives in St. Paul, it will have been shown in eight U.S. cities from coast to coast as well as in Montreal and Toronto.

Free and open to the public, "Sacred Steps" will run through Friday, May 29, in the Lobby Gallery of O'Shaughnessy Educational Center on the St. Paul campus. The gallery is open 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and noon to 10 p.m. Sundays.

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela, also known in English as the Way of St. James, is a vast network of pilgrimage routes that in many cases created the highways of medieval Europe. They all have as their final destination the cathedral of the city of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia (northwest Spain), purported home to the remains of St. James the

Apostle. The cathedral has been one of Christianity's premier pilgrimage sites for centuries. From the 12th through the 15th centuries, the trek to Santiago attracted as many as a hundred thousand pilgrims every year. Today, scholars and spiritual seekers have begun anew to join the pilgrims, whose numbers approach a quarter million each year.

The "classic route" of the pilgrimage, says Dr. George Greenia, the exhibition's originator and curator, spans from either side of the French border to Santiago de Compostela, about 500 miles. "I've met folks who have walked more than 1,500 miles from their homes deep in central Europe," he said. "But to get your Latin certificate of completion at the cathedral offices, you only need to do the last 62 miles (100 km) on foot or 124 miles (200 km) on either horseback or bicycle." On his six treks on the Camino, Greenia has biked about 2,000 miles and walked another 1,500 by various routes, "but there are thousands of miles of Camino pilgrimage routes just in Spain that I've never traveled." Along the way, he's found scenery and monuments "astonishing ... [and] enriching friendships every day."

**Opening reception and lecture:** Greenia will give an opening lecture, "The Camino de Santiago: Pilgrimage, Medieval and Modern," at 7 p.m. Friday, April 17, in O'Shaughnessy Educational Center auditorium. The lecture and a reception to follow, featuring Spanish food and music, are free and open to the public.

Greenia is professor of Hispanic studies at William and Mary, where he also is director emeritus of the Program in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. He also is editor at large of *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures and Cultures*, and founding editor of *American Pilgrim* magazine. In 2007 he was knighted and inducted into the Order of Isabel la Católica by order of King Juan Carlos of Spain. He also received the 2007 Distinguished Editor Award of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals for his work on *La corónica*.

**A local connection to this exhibit:** Among the artists whose work is featured in "Sacred Steps" is Rev. Jerome Tupa, O.S.B., a Benedictine monk of St. John's Abbey and retired professor of French at St. John's University, Colledgeville. His watercolors and large-format oil paintings on pilgrimages have been featured in galleries in Paris and across the United States. An image of his painting, "Santiago de Compostela," included in the exhibition, is attached.

**More information:** To preview the exhibit online, visit [www.sacredstepsinspain.com](http://www.sacredstepsinspain.com) <<http://www.sacredstepsinspain.com/>> . For more information, call the St. Thomas Art History Department, (651) 962-5600.