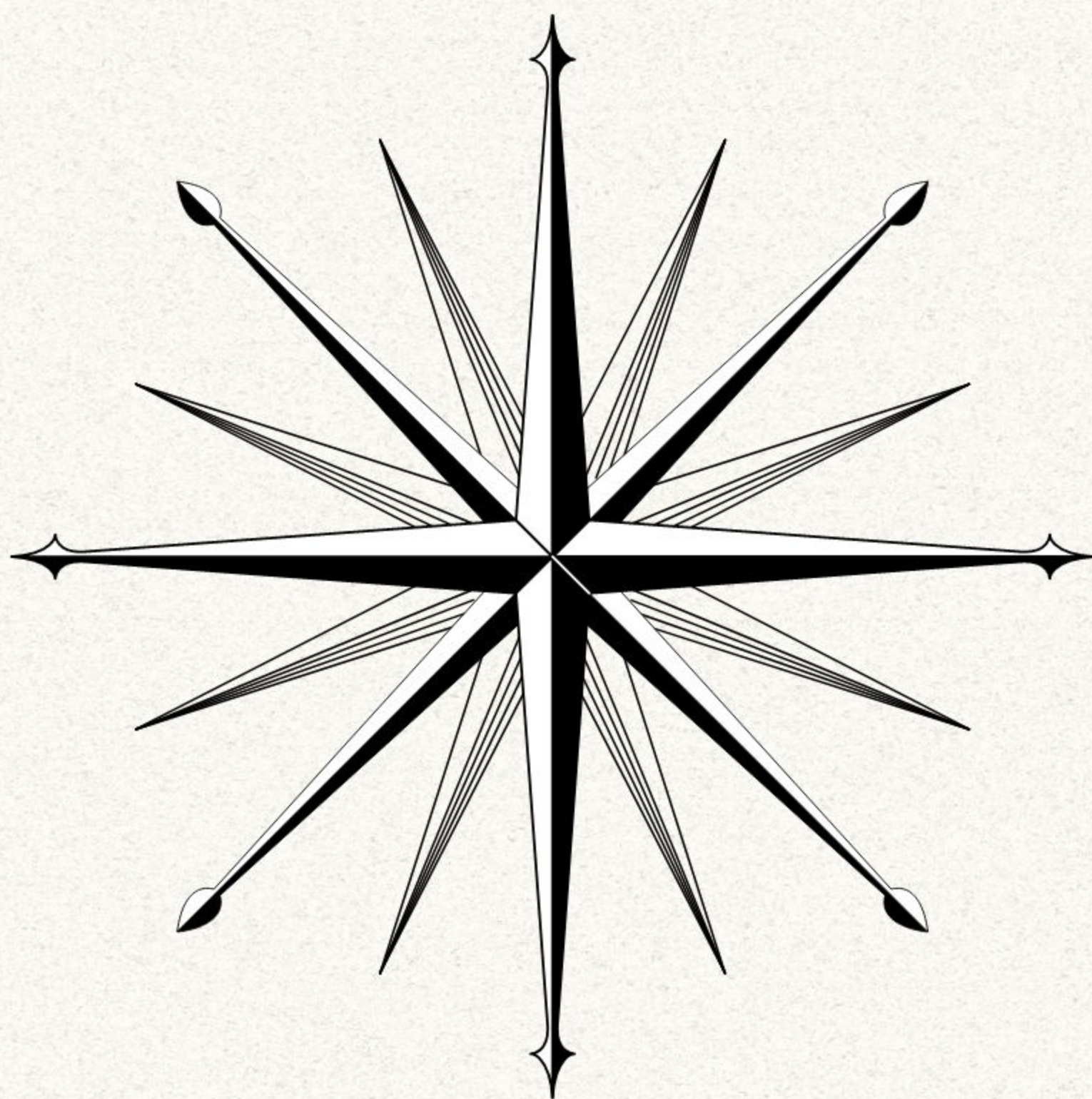


LITURGIES FOR THE PILGRIM



SETH GROTZKE

These liturgies are for those who are preparing to walk, who are walking, or who have walked the Camino de Santiago.

Read them until they are prayers. Pray them until they are yours.

¡Buen Camino!

A Liturgy for the pilgrim

O God, our Father,
Lord over heaven and earth,
We lift our voices to you.

May this journey of uncounted steps
Lead to a closer relationship to you
And a clearer vision of ourselves.

May this burden we carry
On our back and in our soul,
Be felt, explored, and finally released.

May those we meet along the path
Both give and receive
The hope and encouragement needed.

May the destination of our pilgrimage
Be a place of finality
And of new beginnings.

We come to Jesus,
We who labor and are burdened down,
For he has promised rest.

We pick up his yoke,
Learning from him,
For he is gentle and lowly in heart.

We seek his rest for our soul,
For his yoke is easy,
And his burden is light.

We ask for rest.

Give us rest.¹

1. Matthew 11:25-30

A Liturgy on awaking

My ever present Father,
Who never sleeps nor slumbers,
Forgets or wonders,
Guide my steps.

I am sore and scattered.
I have spent night after night in beds not my own,
In company not familiar,
In conditions not ideal,
And I am weary.

Today I take another step,
Walk another hour.
O God,
Guide my steps.

You promised that you would never leave nor forsake your own.
You promised that you would know the path of the righteous.
You promised that you would guard your children.

Guide my steps.

Today I may stumble and fall.
Give me strength to rise again.

Today I may lose my way.
Give me wisdom to find it once more.

Today I may see a once buried part of me.
Give me courage to face it.

Today I may meet someone in need.
Give me eyes to see them as you do.

Today I will keep walking.

Guide my steps.²

2. Hebrews 13:5–6

A Liturgy for packing

I have too much, Jesus.
I have too much.

You who had nothing extra.
You who gave it all away.
You must laugh at my idea of simplicity.

But you also know me.
You know my home and bedroom,
My closets and cupboards.
You know all the possessions I cannot even remember.
You know that this pack,
Bulging as it is,
Is a big change for me.

But I still have too much.

I carry so many things "just in case."
I fear that I might need them tomorrow.
I wonder if I will be uncomfortable,
Cold,
Hungry,
In need.

I am not as trusting as a sparrow for my next meal.
I am not as confident as the lily for my daily clothing.
You reminded us that your Father provides for them.
And that he would provide for us.
But I still wonder.

I still fear the "what if" of today.
I worry about tomorrow.
And those thoughts are a burden.
I carry them every day.

O loving Jesus,

Give me eyes to see
And ears to hear.
Give me faith to live today
Unencumbered by the risks of tomorrow.

I have too much, Jesus.
I have too much.³

3. Matthew 6:25-34

A Liturgy for the first tired steps

My God. My King. My Savior.

May these labored, yet deliberate steps mirror my inward journey.

One more step toward faith.

One more step toward hope.

One more step toward love.

One more step toward you, Jesus.⁴

4. 1 Corinthians 13

A Liturgy for leaving the gracious albergue

O caring Father, giver of all good gifts,
Thank you for the night you gave me.
I laid down and slept.
I awoke again, because you sustained me.

I was fed.
I was sheltered.
I was cared for.
I was given a clean bed.
I was given a kind word.
I was treated as one fashioned in your image.

I know that I do not deserve it.
I know that I cannot expect it.
Even your Son, the heir of all things, through whom you created the world.
The radiance of your glory.
The exact imprint of your nature.
The one who upholds the universe by the word of his power,
He was refused entrance.
He had no place to lay his head.

But yet you, in your overwhelming grace and goodness,
Provided for me a host who saw my needs,
A sink to wash my face,
A meal to fill my stomach,
A bed to rest my body,
A rest to refresh my spirit.

O good Father, bless this place.
Pour out on my hosts your grace in excess of what they showered on me.
Give them strength to treat the next pilgrim as they treated me.
Give them eyes to see the need of the heart for those who enter tonight.

Give them hope to keep going when they are met with rudeness or hostility.
Give them love for you and others.
Give them peace.⁵

A Liturgy for leaving an
inhospitable place of rest

If I were James or John, I would call down fire on this place.
No one should be treated in this way.

I am angry.

I am confused.

I am discouraged.

Jesus, I don't know what happened.

Was it me?

Was it some unknown argument moments before I arrived?

Was it a hurt or injury from years ago?

I am lost.

Oh Jesus, you know the sting of rejection.

You know the feeling of being pushed out into the night.

You know the sound of the slam of the door,

The click of the lock,

The fading footsteps,

Inhospitality.

Now I have felt it.

I was weary and hoped for rest,

But I found resistance.

I was hungry and hoped for nourishment,

But I found crumbs.

I was alone and hoped for friendship,

But I found I was only an inconvenience.

Jesus, you know.

You know whether this was for me to learn,

To see a fault and need within me that must be addressed.

If so, please reveal that deficiency within me.

Jesus, you know.

You know whether this was for me to yearn,

To increase my desire for the good country, my true home, your presence.

If so, please heighten that longing within me.

Jesus, you know.

You know whether this was to soften the ache of pain,

To use our interaction to ease a stabbing word or act of which I was no part.

If so, please reveal yourself and so soothe their pain.

Jesus you know.

You know whether this was in your redemptive plan

To use me as a mirror to a heart that you are seeking to mend.

If so, please do your tireless and perfect work in them.

Jesus you know.

You know whether this was another act to confirm a hardened heart

To use another pilgrim as proof of the depravity of a heart turned inward on
itself.

If so, please break the heart of stone.

Jesus you know.

I cannot call down fire, for I too may be consumed.

Oh Jesus, have mercy.⁶

6. Luke 9:51-56

A Liturgy for walking in the cool of the morning

Jesus, thank you for this refreshing hour.

The coolness of this day is such a gracious reprieve.
The heat and dust,
The sweat and grime,
The shooting pain and nagging frustration,
They are absent.

Instead it seems as though you have given this special place to me for this hour.

The trees hushed above.
The dew on the grass.
The song of the birds.
The laugh of the stream.
The steady movement toward my goal.

Even my own body seems to know this moment is different.
My aches of yesterday are quiet right now.
The weight of my pack is present, but not obtrusive.
My sore feet know that they are doing exactly what they were made to do.
I am tired, but content.

Thank you Jesus for this hour.

You have made it
As you have made all that I see and all that is beyond my sight.
It is by your power that all things exist and hold together.
Even the heavens cannot hide their Creator behind their brilliance.
I am a mere babe.

Who am I to receive this hour?
Why would you give me this special moment?

You care for all creation,
From the insects to the great beasts,
From the soaring eagles to the simple plankton,
From the depths to the heights,
From the east to the west,
But yet you have set your thoughts on me.

Oh Jesus, you are majestic over all.⁷

7. Psalm 8

A Liturgy for an injured pilgrim

Good Physician.
Gracious Savior.
Gentle Shepherd.
Care for this hurting soul.

Our hands are weak.
Our abilities are insufficient.
Our strength is small.
We turn to you.

You who calmed the sea,
Calm this heart.
You who cast out the demons,
Banish any evil here.
You who fed the crowd,
Feed this faith.
You who healed the sick,
Heal this friend.

Our ways are not your ways,
Our plans are not your plans,
Our will is not your will,
So make ours to align with yours.

And in so doing,
Through a hurting body,
Bring the tender soul to your gracious presence.⁸

8. Psalm 23

A Liturgy for when the bar is not open

My heart sinks, O God.
I am frustrated.
I am hungry. I am tired. I am in need of refreshment.

But the bar is closed.

I know that this is a simple thing.
I know that this is easily solved with more walking, another kilometer or two.
But I had hoped.
That hope was deferred.
Now my heart is sick.

I have not fasted for forty days.
I have not been floating adrift in the ocean.
I have not been lowered into a pit and left for dead.
This is small.
This is insignificant to mankind.
But it is still frustrating.

But while it is small, it also is revealing my heart.
Let me not be like Esau in his hunger and cast away what is irreplaceable.
Use this small moment to shift my heart.
May this minor correction lead me on a better path.

Please take my frustration and turn it to gratitude.
Please take my disappointment and turn it to peace.
Please take my annoyance and turn it to laughter.
Please take my longing and turn it to you.⁹

9. Philippians 4:10-13

A Liturgy in thankfulness for coffee

O Father of lights, from whom flow all good gifts,
I thank you for this simple cup.

Though unassuming, it is surprising.
Though uncomplicated, complex.
Though ubiquitous, significant.

In this moment I am experiencing something that is global in nature but
extremely local.

I sit in a small café on the Iberian Peninsula,
I hear the hum of conversation but understand little.
I smell espresso mingled with unknown aromas.
I sit on a simple chair but in an exotic place.
I am surrounded by the familiar but feel foreign.

And this drink that I sip speaks to the giftedness and cooperation of mankind.
Trees cultivated in gardens in far off places
Produce beans that are harvested,
And dried,
And sifted,
And packaged,
And shipped,
And roasted,
And ground,
And brewed,
And handed to me in a ceramic cup.

The making of this beverage has been through a succession of hands.
From the farmer,
To the laborer,
To the shipping engineer,
To the inspection agent,

To the delivery specialist,
To the barrista,
And finally to me.

In exchange for this incredible collaboration
I pay a few coins.
A trifle for this logistical miracle.

O good Father, I thank you for this steaming cup.
You made us to cultivate the earth and garden this globe
And this is only one small fruit of that labor.
In your image we exercise dominion over the ground,
That, because of our sin,
Fights back with thorns and thistles.
But because of your grace,
Gives way more often than not,
To our plows and pruning sheers.

O Father, thank you for this small cup.
Thank you for your image bearers around the world and in this room.
Thank you for your unfathomed creation.
Thank you.¹⁰

10. James 1:16-18

A Liturgy for clear fountain water

O God from whom all blessings flow,
I thank you for this refreshing water.

My lips were parched.
My tongue was dry.
I had passed through a waterless place.
But you have satisfied.

You who spoke into existence all things
Have made such a gift from a substance so common.
There are times that I am frustrated by your gift falling from the sky
Soaking my socks
Filling my basement.

I have been angered by its excess.
I have been sick from its want.
Before an ocean,
I have been amazed by its vastness.
Before a droplet,
I have been mesmerized by its symmetry.

You make your rain to fall on the just and the unjust.
You satisfy the thirst of the world's rulers and the lonely and forgotten.
You have stored this water in the clouds and in aquifers.
You have caused it to rush down rivers and sit in lakes.
You have used this water to flood the earth.
And you have used water to wash the disciples feet.

And here I sit beside this fountain and find refreshment.

It is unadorned and undiluted.
It is clear and clean.

It is abundant and free.
It is a small picture of your grace to me.

Your goodness to me, my God,
Is more vast than the ocean,
And more present than this cup.¹¹

11. John 4

A Liturgy for kind villagers

I don't deserve the kindness of strangers, O God.

Thank you.

Thank you for this demonstration of your common grace.

You have reminded me again that you keep evil at bay,

Your image in us impels us to value others,

You care for your children wherever they are.

Thank you.

Thank you for these men and women who give what they have,

Who point me in the right direction,

Who walk with me to the next turn,

Who speak too quickly for me to understand but don't get frustrated,

Who smile.

Thank you for those who painted the arrows

And those who laid the cobblestone.

Thank you for those who clean the fountains

And those who pick up the trash.

Thank you for the lady who watches from the window

And greets me with a smile.

Thank you for the man with the cane

Who keeps the dogs from nipping at my heels.

Thank you for the gardener who shared her produce.

And thank you for the one who planted the fruit trees so close to the road.

Thank you for the child that shared her laugh with me.

Thank you for the elders who shared their bench with me.

Thank you for the panadería that baked this bread.

Thank you for the pharmacy who cared for my feet.

Thank you for the waitress, who without complaint

Cleaned up the mess I made.

Thank you for the couple who encouraged me in my own language.

Thank you for the stranger who gives of themselves.

Thank you that today I am the stranger who can receive.

Thank you.¹²

12. Luke 10:25-37

A Liturgy for when treated unkindly.

O Jesus, rescue me.
I am angry and resentful.
I am fearful and discouraged.
I am confused and unnerved.
All of them bundled together,
One coming to the surface and then disappearing while another takes its
place.

What did I do to deserve this treatment?
I opened up with another.
I thought we were agreed.
But then I was treated as an enemy.

Is there something that is within them
A memory, a similarity, a fear,
That was triggered by my presence or my actions?

O Jesus, you were treated as an enemy,
Yet you are the friend of sinners,
The lifter of the weak,
The protector of the helpless.

You were carried to the cliff.
You were forced out of town.
You were stalked in the darkness.
You were nailed to a cross.

O Jesus, you felt the disapproval of the elite.
You felt the betrayal of friends.
You felt the abandonment of humanity.
You felt the wrath of God.

But yet you forgave.
You prayed for your tormentors.
You fed those who forsook you.
You held out your hands to those who doubted.

O Jesus, you know my heart.
You know the pride that lies beneath my actions.
You know the fear that motivates so much of what I do.
You know the anger that undergirds my words.

O Jesus, you know my heart.
You know my desire to love.
You know my desire to make peace.
You know my desire to give hope.

Forgive this treatment that I have received,
O Jesus,
And forgive me.¹³

13. Luke 23

A Liturgy for when thoughts of
doubt rob my freedom

I am caught in a trap, O Lord.
I am imprisoned.

Like shackles around my soul,
My doubts and fears crush me.
With every step I take,
I hear their rattle behind me.

I am a fraud.
I am a hypocrite.
I am weak.
I am worthless.

Like a serpent,
My thoughts constrict me.
I can hardly breathe.
My eyes are dim.

I was wrong.
It was all my fault.
I am the problem.
Everyone can see it but me.

Like an undercurrent
My memories sweep me out to sea.
I am thrashing in the deep.
I am being pulled under.

I have let them down.
I have betrayed their trust.
I wasn't there when they needed me.
I could have done more.

O Jesus, rescue me.

I want to rejoice in you.

I want to find joy in you.

I want the thought of you to motivate my daily choices,

The hope of your return to propel me.

But my anxiety and fears multiply.

Their thousand heads rear in a thousand places.

Hear this whispered prayer from a weak heart,

And I will praise you yet again.

O Spirit of God, give me peace.

Silence the Accuser.

Gag the lies.

Muzzle the hounds of doubt.

O King Jesus, guard my heart.

Watch over my mind.

Be my shield against the shadow.

Lead the garrison against my enemies.

O Great God, renew my heart.

May all that is good fill my thinking.

May your praise be on my lips.

May your eternal peace be with me.

Amen.¹⁴

14. Philippians 4:4-9

A Liturgy for when I realize I have
been walking for miles in
bitterness

O God, I am bitter.
I am eaten up inside.
I have lost myself in my thoughts.
And I am worse for it.

I don't want to exchange the present for the pain of the past.
I don't want to forsake the gifts before me for the injuries I have been dealt.
I am only suffering twice.
That previous affliction is reaching its bony hand up from the grave and
refusing to release me.

Or perhaps I am refusing to release it.

I don't want to be one who cannot grow.
I want to be free.
I don't want to be one who cannot overcome.
I want to be stronger.

But here I am, stewing in a hurt,
Encouraging it to saturate my being,
Asking it to flavor my soul,
Bidding all its evil infuse every part of me.

I didn't conscientiously choose to mediate on this.
It rose up before me like new growth.
And I failed to kill it.
I studied it. I cultivated it. I nurtured it.

Now I have lost unknown time.
I have bypassed unseen joys.
I have produced unnecessary anxiety.
And I find myself in unfamiliar territory.

O God, please forgive me.
Please release me.
Please revive me.
Please restore me.

Where there was true sin,
Reveal it.
Remove it.
Destroy it.

Where there is true repentance,
Forgive.
Heal.
Calm.

Dig deep into my heart, and the heart of the one who sinned against me.
Uncover what is hidden.
Deal with what is rotten.
Restore what is right.

Let the evidence be presented by your infinite knowledge,
Not my fallible and warped memories.

Let the defense be demonstrated by my identity in Christ,
Not my filthy rags of attempted righteousness.

Let the judgment be determined at your bench,
Not my petty and vindictive heart.

Let the retribution be meted out by your hand,
Not from my overreaction or my

Let the reconciliation be enacted by your Spirit,
Not my passivity.

O God,
I give my pain to you.
I give my bitterness to you.
I give my vindication to you.¹⁵

15. Ephesians 4:31-32

A Liturgy on seeing a friend again

Thank you Father.
Thank you for the unanticipated joys,
The serendipitous laughter,
The delight of seeing a friend unexpectedly.

God, you knew.
You knew I needed this interaction today.
You knew the refreshment it would be to my soul.
You gave me this special gift.

Thank you.

Had I known the loss I would feel during our separation
Our parting would have been too much for me.
But the joy I have felt upon seeing my friend again
Has shown me how deeply I have felt their absence.

O God, thank you.

You created us for relationships.
We are not mere automatons.
We cannot be reduced to our chemicals.
We are not accidents,
Or a cosmic mistake.
We are humans who love because you formed us in your love.

This friendship, every friendship, you have given to me
Is a reminder of the intrinsic value of meaningful relationships,
And an impetus for actively engaging in such.

You walked in the garden with your children,
In the cool of the day they conversed with you.

I can only imagine the questions and stories,
The excitement and laughter which were shared.

But we all walked away from you,
We all lost those intimate moments.
The tear was deep.
The loss incalculable.

Yet you have left us with daily guideposts,
Arrows pointing back to you.

O Father, this friend is one of those.
Our times of laughter and joy,
Honest reflection and heavy tears,
Remind me that I was made to know and be known by another.

So thank you.

Thank you for the joy of seeing my friend again.
Thank you for the time we have had.
Thank you for the respite from loneliness provided by presence.

And thank you that this relationship,
One among many,
Is pointing me to you,
My Creator, my God, my Friend.¹⁶

16. Genesis 1

A Liturgy on leaving a small town
where I wish I could spend my life

O Knower of the heart,
Make me to know myself.
Discerner of thoughts,
Open my eyes to myself.

I feel such a longing while leaving this village.
There is something inside of me which I cannot explain.
It is as though I were finally in my home,
As though I were finally at rest.

How can I put in words what I cannot even understand?
How can I explain what I can only feel?
How can I describe what I experience only in its loss?

I felt as though I were made for this place.
It was like a dream made true,
A desire fulfilled,
An answer to a question I had never asked.

If I could, I would never leave.
If I could, I would take up my life here.
If I could, I would live out my days in this place.
If I could, I would.

But something deep inside of me tells me
That it isn't so much the village,
But the longing,
That is the answer.

A veil has been pulled back
Separating the temporary from the eternal,
The transitory from the permanent,

The shadow from the reality.

And the very act of pilgrimage is what revealed it to me.

The curtain would have never opened if I had not walked here
With my life upon my shoulders,
Foreign soil under my feet,
And a desire in my heart.

And the shadow would return if I stayed
With no destination before me,
No urge to keep moving,
No forward momentum.

But this brief moment,
This sensation of home,
Of rest,
Of joy,
Of permanence,

This visual delight,
Of thick stone walls,
Of wooden beams,
Of springs,
Of gardens,
Of peaceful mornings,

Was closer than I have ever felt to my true home.
My heart is searching for the city,
One with foundations sunk by the Creator himself,
With every detail and design bearing the imprint of the Eternal Architect,
Every stone and beam placed by the Sovereign Carpenter.

But the price is high,
For to find this home I must wander
I must admit that I do not belong.
I must bear a burden
And walk the pilgrimage.

I could remain at home, if I were convinced that my homeland were not
before me.

I could fully embrace my country, if I were not in exile.
I could be eternally content, if I did not believe there was something better.
I could rest on earth, if I did not feel heaven in my bones.

O Eternal God,
Take this longing in my heart and amplify it.
May its faint whispers grow louder.
May its presence be closer.
May its burning be brighter.
So as to keep me on the path to your eternal city.¹⁷

17. Hebrews 11

A Liturgy for crossing an ancient bridge

Preparing to cross:

O Lord, I stand ready to cross this river
And the means that I have is this stone bridge.
May my steps across these worn stones,
Mirror my steps of faith in your saving grace.

While crossing:

I feel the permanence and soundness of construction
And remember the skilled hands that have lain each stone in place.
I see its symmetry, its utility, and its beauty
And in it I see a metaphor for your work.

Having safely crossed:

O Lord, I have crossed another river
And the ancient bridge did not fail me.
May your hand keep guiding me in safety
Until we meet on the far side of life's final river.¹⁸

18. Revelation 21

A Liturgy for when I can't sleep
because of the noises in the room

I am exhausted, yet I cannot sleep.
I have tossed and turned, yet nothing changes.
The snoring, the rustling, the noises all around,
Are pushing me beyond annoyance.

O God, rescue me from what I might say or do in my frustration.

My body is exhausted after walking all day.
My mind is ready to rest and be renewed.
I have so far to walk tomorrow.
I cannot face the day with a night like this.

O God, calm my fears of tomorrow.

The other pilgrims are exhausted as well.
They are not snoring, and rasping, and scratching,
And creaking, and crinkling, and talking,
In order to provoke me to wrath.

O God, let me be gracious with the others.

I lay here with noisy thoughts
And no sleep in sight.
I can't change a thing.
I am not in control.

O God, quiet my soul.¹⁹

19. Psalm 121

A Liturgy for when my thoughts
won't stop

My thoughts won't stop, Lord.
My thoughts won't stop.

I cannot control which direction they fly.
I'm scattered.
I'm anxious.
I'm restless.

Fear consumes me as my imagination soars
Reaching new heights of inventive power
For things which have never, and could never happen.
And I plummet to earth again, exhausted.

My mind replays the memory roll
Of actions and conversations and thoughts
From weeks, months, and years ago,
Leaving me with the uncertainty of a past of my own making.

Options and choices, decisions and possibilities,
All parade through my head,
Dizzying me with their twisting outcomes,
While they clamor for my attention.

O Lord, my thoughts won't stop.

Speak peace over me.
Calm me.
Quiet my soul.
Be my rest.

I give you my past. I can change nothing.
I give you my present. I am your servant.

I give you my future. I can foresee nothing.

For you are worthy to receive all glory
and honor
and power.
Amen.²⁰

20. Psalm 46

A Liturgy on seeing the sun rise
over the rolling fields

You have given us this sunrise.
You have graced us with your beauty.
You have overwhelmed us with your majesty.
Your staggering artistry draws praise from our hearts.

Your heavens, O God, shout out your majestic power.
The celestial spheres you fashioned,
Loudly proclaim your skill as Creator.
Every day,
And every night,
The heavens overflow their banks with evidence,
Showing us, teaching us about you.
Without a language, they make us understand.
They are voiceless, yet we all hear clearly.
No one can claim ignorance of what they speak.
The gathered voices of the sun, the moon, the stars, the sky,
Can be heard in every place.

This morning the sun stepped out of his tent,
A radiant bridegroom ready for life,
A warrior charging across the sky.
He storms into battle,
War horses rushing,
And exhilaration on his face.
From one end to the other,
He lights aflame the resting heavens.
Nothing can hide from him.

This sunrise is another note in the melody of your great song,
And I add my small voice to it:

Hallowed be your name!²¹

21. Psalm 19

A Liturgy for when the scenery
doesn't change for days

Will this never stop?
Does this go on forever?
O God, I am weary of this wandering.
I am ready to be done.

I have grown accustomed to new sights and sounds coming to me.
I can cross borders and timezones,
Languages and cultures,
In minutes, hours, a day at most.

Living at the speed of light,
My attention is short from the constant stimulus.
Access to the world in the palm of my hand,
I can choose where I am.

But here, moving at the pace of my feet,
I feel as though nothing changes.
My life has come to a grinding slog,
Trudging on.

Oh God, I ask that my eyes see again.
May I behold your unfiltered creation,
Not through a screen I control,
But through the very senses you have given to me.

I ask that I can enjoy the sound of the gravel beneath my feet.
I ask that I can enjoy the rhythm of walking a straight path.
I ask that I can enjoy the picture of a vast, unchanging horizon before me.
I ask that I can enjoy the sense of moving for hours but remaining still.

May I rest in this stillness,

In your presence.²²

A Liturgy for when the mountain
seems so tall

Help me, O God.
I am weak and weary.
My strength is almost gone,
Yet the mountain rises higher.

Help me, O God.
I am powerless and downcast.
My hope has faded,
Yet the path continues on.

Help me, O God.
I am at my end.
I have nothing more.
I am in your hands.

All I ask is this:

**Give me one more step,
And I will take it for you.**

Repeat until rest is found.

O God,
Receive these tired steps as an offering of praise.
May they be a fragrant offering, acceptable and pleasing to you.²³

23. Isaiah 40

A Liturgy for when someone
carries my pack

O Jesus, I thank you.
I thank you for sending this kind pilgrim.
I thank you for providing me with a reprieve.
I thank you for reminding me that I am not alone.

I had faltered.
I had stumbled.
I would not have risen again,
Had I been alone.

And yet, while I am thankful for this relief,
I realize that I carry a weight on my soul just as heavy.
For I feel guilty that I require help.
I feel ashamed that I am needy.

I do not want to receive a service I cannot repay.
I do not want to cast my burden on another.
I do not want to be indebted.
I do not want grace.

And saying this I realize that I am in greater need
Than I have ever imagined.
For apart from grace,
Who am I?

Apart from your grace,
Apart from your sacrifice,
Apart from your cross,
What am I?

O Jesus,
As the weight I carried on my shoulders

Broke me,
May the gift of kindness shown to me be used
To heal me.²⁴

24. Romans 3

A Liturgy for when I carry
someone's pack

King Jesus,
You have given me strength,
Enough to help another.
I am honored to use it.

What energy I have I give to you.
What thanks I receive I give to you.

This small act is not a transaction.
It is not an exchange.
It is not a trade.
It is an offering,
A prayer.

Thank you Jesus.²⁵

25. Matthew 25:34-40

A Liturgy for when I miss home

Father, I miss my home.
I miss the comforts of my room, my possessions, the same bed every night.
I miss the familiarity of my neighborhood
And using my language whenever I walk out the door.

Father, I miss my friends and family,
Those who know me and care for me,
Those who know my past and still love me,
Those who need no backstory.

Father, I miss the security, stability, and ease.
I miss the opportunity to make plans,
For the evenings or weekends,
Sure of where I will be.

I miss the ease of knowing what to do
If I get sick,
Hurt,
Lost.

I have enjoyed this time.
I chose this pilgrimage.
But I still feel this longing for home.
Use this in my heart, Father.

May this aching for home
Remind me of your good gifts
Which were so easily taken for granted,
Ignored, or forgotten.

May this burning for home
Increase my love for those

Friends, family, and neighbors
Who I have pushed aside in daily life.

May this longing for home
Expand my heart to include
Both my familiar homeland,
And this new place I tread.

May this yearning for home
Draw me toward my future home,
Being prepared for me,
In your unshielded presence.²⁶

26. John 14:1-14

A Liturgy for when I think I can't go
another step

O Lord,
See me.

My feet have stumbled,
My steps are nearly gone.

O Lord,
Hear me.

I am weary.
I am downcast.

O Lord,
Speak to me.

I need peace.
I need hope.

O Lord,
Strengthen me.

I am yours.
I am yours.²⁷

A Liturgy while resting in the shade of a tree

I thank you for this tree.
I thank you for this shade.
I thank you for this rest.
I thank you Father.

When I turn from that which pulls me away from you,
Those who mock and scheme,
I find my true joy in you,
And my heart can sing again.

You make my soul like this great tree,
Drinking from streams unseen
Growing, flourishing, bearing fruit,
Blessing the weary beneath its branches.

You have blessed me with this moment.
You have blessed me in this pilgrimage.
You have blessed me in my life.
You are my blessing, Father.²⁸

28. Psalm 1

A Liturgy for when I stumble

I am vulnerable,
To each unseen stone
Tangled root,
Uneven step.

All waiting assailants.
To leave me prone.

I trust in you,
The lamp for my feet,
The light for my way,
My ever-present Protector.²⁹

29. Psalm 119

A Liturgy for when the blister
changes my plan

You know, Father.
This was not my plan.
This is not my desire.
This is hard for me to understand.

My body, though capable of
Moving me across great expanses,
While carrying a heavy burden,
Is crippled by a blister.

My mind, while efficient in planning
Great adventures and grand feats,
While navigating cultures and languages,
Is fixated on a discomfort on my foot.

My soul, flourishing in pilgrimage
Meditating and communing,
While alone and in groups,
Is crushed by a small injury.

The injury is small,
But permeating.
It is hidden,
But assumed by all.

And now, I must change my plans
To accommodate a discomfort,
Which I cannot change
Or ignore.

O loving Father,
Eternally wise and vigilant,

Caring and careful,
Please use this for your purposes.

Heal my soul,
Strengthen my mind,
Give rest to my body,
Through this blister.³⁰

30. 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:4

A Liturgy for when someone pays
for my drink

To be spoken in the presence of, or after parting ways with, the one who showed generosity.

When you walk through strange lands,
When your path leads you far from friends,
When your soul is fading,
May another do so to you,
As you have done to me.

When you have lost your way,
When your mind is full of doubt,
When you have no peace,
May another do so to you,
As you have done to me.

When you are consumed with fear,
When the future seems dark,
When the night won't end,
May another do so to you,
As you have done to me.

May another do so to you,
As you have done to me.³¹

31. Luke 6:27-36

A Liturgy for when sitting in the
park after a long day.

My feet ache.
My back is sore.
My legs are weary.
But I am content.

Thank you Jesus.

The path was difficult.
The sun was hot.
The kilometers were slow.
But I am at peace.

Thank you Jesus.

This shade is cool.
This grass is soft.
This place is calm.
I am blessed.

Thank you Jesus.³²

32. Psalm 97

A Liturgy for while eating a picnic
lunch under a tree

Bless this food, O Bread of Life
And nourish our bodies
As you care for our souls.

Bless this drink, O Fount of every blessing
And quench our thirst
As you satisfy our every longing.

Bless this moment, O Eternal of Days
And revive our weary bodies
As you renew our feeble faith.³³

33. John 6

A Liturgy while enjoying drinks with friends

We lift our glasses to you, O King.

You have brought us together.
You have merged our paths.
You have opened our hearts.
You have blessed our days.

We lift our glasses to you, O King.

There is a bond between us,
That we could never forge.
A picture of your varied grace
A living display of your love.

We lift our glasses to you, O King.

At this moment we gather,
Perhaps one of many to come,
Or for, perhaps, the last time,
And we enjoy this gift you've given.

We lift our glasses to you, O King.

May our laughter be a song to you.
May our tears be a prayer.
May we point one another back to you.
May we joy in your gift of friends.

We lift our glasses to you, O King.³⁴

34. Revelation 19

A Liturgy for when guilt runs
through my mind for miles

There is guilt that runs through my mind
As deep as a canyon
As swift as a river
And I cannot escape it.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

I fully accept my wrongdoing.
I have owned my sin before you.
You have made me a different person,
But the shadow from the past darkens my horizon.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

I feel enslaved to what I did,
Never able to find reprieve.
My past is shackled to a former me
And I fear I will never be free.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

O Jesus, I look to you upon that cross.
I see the nails, the thorns, the spear.
I see the pain and agony.
I see your death for me.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

I stand before the frigid tomb
Where darkness covers the light.
I sit and wait and wonder with
The world engulfed in night.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

I see the angel.

I hear the shout.

The stone is moved.

Death is cheated.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

Your perfect life, an offering.

Your unjust death, a sacrifice.

Your bodily resurrection, a battle cry.

Your heavenly ascension, a victory procession.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

And now I claim what you have bought,

And offered freely to all like me.

I receive forgiveness, deep and swift,

Freedom from condemnation.

Have mercy on me, for I am a sinner.

For there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus.³⁵

A Liturgy for when I doubt for my
future

O Eternal God,
Holder of the heavens,
Knower of all things,
Give me peace.

My need is great.
My knowledge is small.
My fear is palpable.
My hope is almost gone.

I have never known what the future would hold
Yet in this moment I feel the most vulnerable.
There are more questions and fewer answers
Than at any other turning point in my life.

I feel weak.
I feel alone.
I feel exposed.
I am like a lost child.

I stand here at a crossroads in my life and
I can see dangers at the end of every path.
I desperately want to make a good choice,
But I don't have the information I need.

O God of Light and God in the Shadows,
Knower of all and Concealer of mysteries,
Speaker of worlds and Keeper of silence,
I trust you in my doubt.

These things are too great for me.
To know the future is too much for me.

I choose to calm myself.
I choose to quiet my soul.

I am a child in your lap.
I leave it up to you.³⁶

A Liturgy for when my heart is
burdened for a suffering friend
back home.

Jesus, compassionate friend,
Faithful brother,
Make your presence known
To my suffering friend.

I am here,
And they are there.
There is a distance between us,
But their pain is present within me.

I wish to be close,
To sit together,
To cry together,
To hope together.

But we are far.

I walk alone in my thoughts
When I could be by their side.
I dwell on the darkness of the unknown
While they sit in their suffering.

I wish to comfort,
To commiserate,
To remember past joys,
To find faith.

But we are far.

O Jesus,
If only I had been there.
If only I could have arrived in time.

If only...

O Jesus,
Gentle Savior
Weeping Friend
Giver of hope

O Jesus,
The Resurrection and the Life
Plunderer of Death
Liberator of tombs

Be not far!³⁷

37. John 11

A Liturgy for the heat

Hear my cry,
O God.
Hear my cry.

My strength is gone.
My flesh cries out.
My very soul is parched.

By day I walk exhausted
By night I toss in bed
I find no relief.

I thirst for water
Like an animal being hunted
I search for shelter.

I dream of cool streams.
I imagine shade.
I remember times of rest.

Why are you crushed, o my soul?
Hope in God!³⁸

38. Psalm 42

A Liturgy for the cold

My hands are numb.
My toes hurt.
My face aches.
My whole body shivers.

O God,
See me here in my discomfort.
Strengthen my weak body.
Restore my soul.

Father,
Watch over me.
Walk beside me.
Be near me.³⁹

39. Psalm 130

A Liturgy for the meal at the end of the day

We thank you for this meal, Father.
We receive your gift of provision,
This food for our nourishment,
With hearts full of gratitude.

Glory to you!

Today we have walked.
We have battled the elements
And our own inner fears.
But now we rest and rejoice.

Glory to you!

Our bodies are weary from the burdens we carry
And our souls feel the strain of the unseen.
We are exhausted,
But now we laugh and sing.

Glory to you!

Tomorrow we will lift our packs again
And walk out the door
To whatever the path holds.
But now we eat and drink.

Glory to you!⁴⁰

40. Psalm 100

A Liturgy for washing socks in a sink

These are my socks.

Sweat and dirt,
Stains and snags,
Grime and crunch,
These are my socks.

Dip and soap,
Scrub and scour,
Rinse and wring,
These are my socks.

Torn and worn,
Scented and soiled,
Limp and damp,
These are my socks.

For my feet.

Thank you God, for my socks.⁴¹

41. Matthew 6:25-34

A Liturgy for when the person next
to me won't stop talking

They won't stop, Jesus.

I feel as though their words are drowning me,
Wave after wave of prattle washes over me.
I have my own thoughts, my own fears, my own ideas.
I don't need theirs.

But I feel as though I can't say anything.
Maybe no one else has ever listened.
Maybe no one else genuinely cares.
And to be honest, I can see why.

But I want to be different.
I want to love the hard to love.
I want to be gracious to the awkward.
I want to be like you.

You have heard our cries.
You have listened to our voice.
You have seen our afflictions,
Our toils, our oppression.

Yet you haven't walked away,
You haven't silenced us.
You haven't stopped your ears.
You have listened.

Help me in this moment to care
With a love not my own.

Help me to slow the deluge of words
When it is near to folly.

Help me to assure and comfort
When there is a real hurt.

Help me to counsel and encourage
When there is an open ear.

And help me to forbear and cover over,
When there is a frustrating behavior.

O Jesus, let this one who is so concerned with being heard,
Know that they have your full attention.⁴²

42. Matthew 15:21-28

A Liturgy for putting on wet shoes

Squeak.

Slosh.

Squish.

Slop.

May these wet shoes speak,
Telling others,
And reminding me,
That discomfort needn't stop my next step.⁴³

43. Proverbs 15:19

A Liturgy for when someone
shares their internal burdens with
me

O God, I am too small for this.

You laid the foundation of the earth.

You sunk the bases and laid its cornerstone.

You drew praise from the stars.

You shut in the sea with doors.

You clothed the earth with clouds.

You put a limit on the waves.

You woke up the morning and taught it how far it could run.

You fill the sea and set the gates of the deep.

You know where light dwells and darkness hides.

You hold the key to the storehouse of snow and hail.

You tell the wind where to play.

You throw the rain and carve a path for lightning.

You send ice and turn the waters to stone.

You bind the stars in their places.

You send the clouds and number them.

You feed the lion and take meat to its young.

You place food in the raven's mouth.

You know the hiding place of the mountain goats.

You set the wild donkey free.

You bind the strength of the wild ox.

You understand the mind of the ostrich.

You give strength to the horse in the face of battle.

You command the eagle in the heights.

You fashioned the Behemoth.

You draw out Leviathan.

You carry the world in your hands.

Carry this pain as well.

I have heard what I understand not.

I know not the beginning or end.
I have no wisdom to give.

Carry this pain.

You calmed the storm.
You fed the crowd.
You healed the sick.
You raised the dead.
You comforted the grieving.

Carry this pain.

Speak lest I open my mouth.
Comfort lest I harm.
Soothe lest I inflame.

Carry this pain.

We cast this burden on you for you care for us.⁴⁴

44. Job 38-41

A Liturgy for when I fear I won't
have changed by the time I reach
my destination

What if it's a mere placebo?
What if I am lying to myself?
What if it is just a feeling?
What if I really haven't changed at all?

What if I'll be the same
When all my walking ends?
What if the difference I imagine
Is merely the smell of different air?

What if my destination will prove
That even a pilgrimage can't change me?
What if I am condemned to remain
Who I have sought to leave behind?

O Father, change me.

I fear that there might be no hope
For my transformation,
If this lengthy journey did nothing
To right what has been wrong.

O Father, change me.

Let each step of this pilgrimage
Be an act of removing of the old self,
An untwining of the
Stained, soiled, and polluted.

Let each sunrise, stream, and conversation
Be an act of renewing my mind
To direct my thoughts to you,

Giver of truth, goodness, and beauty.

Let each word, prayer, and deed of kindness
Be an act of forming my new self
To follow your Spirit
In faith, hope, and love.

O Father, change me.⁴⁵

45. Ephesians 4:17-32

A Liturgy for when I fear I will have
to end

Home awaits
With all that is good as well as tedious.
And I am not sure whether I can go back.

I have found a new rhythm.
I have become a different person.
I have seen life more clearly than ever before.

Going back means owning my past.
Going back means seeing those who know me.
Going back means accepting that this is done.

This journey has been difficult but simple.
I have walked and I have slept.
I have had one goal.

I have had no one to please or assuage.
I have had no one to answer to or fear.
I have had no one else to feed or clothe.

Knower of my thoughts,
King over my fears,
Comforter of my sorrows,

Mold me.

Fashion my mind to accept the next stage.
Prepare my heart to treasure your promises.
Instruct my soul to kiss your providence.

O Father, when I've reached my destination,
May I embark on the next journey

As one who has walked with you.⁴⁶

46. John 21

A Liturgy for when I hear the
church bells ring

I was dead
Now I live.
Once was lost
Now am found.

They call me back.
They tell my story:
Fled from house.
But came back home.⁴⁷

47. Luke 15:11-32

A Liturgy for when I enter the plaza

King of Creation and Ancient of Days,
I stand in this place overwhelmed by awe,
At the art meant to point us to you.

Pulled from the earth and fashioned with skill,
Held together by an invisible force,
This proclaimer of glory speaks to all who will listen.

Rising up, grasping for the heavens
Yet firmly affixed to the ground
From which it came and to where it will fall.

Clothed by skillful hands
Knit together to shield and protect
The bones hidden within.

Its great song,
Echoing through the streets,
Draws all to come listen.

Filled with shadows and light,
Every corner fashioned by hand
And finally given the breath of life.

The journey leading to this moment,
Filled with dust, pain, and struggle,
Only magnifies the wonder.

If we knew You not,
We would be tempted
To fall down and worship.

Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed by your name.⁴⁸

48. Psalm 139

A Liturgy for when I receive my
Compostela

I was dead in my sin
It's grip held me every step that I took.
Like a fettered slave I followed this world's course,
Obeying its prince and his henchmen.

I lived by my passions
My desires and anger
Knowing not what could be
If I were free from this death.

But God, in his mercy,
And his love without limit,
While I yet was chained,
Made me alive through his Son.

By grace, grace alone,
He has rescued and saved me
Freeing my soul
And washing me clean.

Seated with Jesus
In his heavenly court,
My shame has been covered
My debt has been paid.

All this I've been given
Not from payment or debt
But grace upon grace
Poured out upon me.

O Jesus,
I don't pretend

That I could ever earn
What you have paid for with your blood.

This Compostela,
Though once thought to pardon,
Is merely a paper,
Repeating what's true.

I'm forgiven in you,
By your work alone
And I receive it by faith
In praise of your glory.⁴⁹

49. Ephesians 2

A Liturgy for when I pack up for
my flight home

Into my pack
For the last time
I place what I've carried
For days upon end.

O Jesus, knower of all
You have seen every step
Every smile
And tear.

And now you see both
As I finish my course
And prepare to return
To what I consider my home.

How can I enter
My once normal life
And not carry this with me
Feeling its weight?

Who I'm returning
Is not anything like
Who I was, a life ago,
When I first lifted this pack.

I handle each item,
Battered and worn,
And give thanks to you
For how it has served me.

Thank you for the wool
And the cotton,

The silk
And the nylon.

Thank you for the towel
And toothbrush,
The hat
and the jacket.

Thank you for my wallet
And passport,
My light
And my phone.

Thank you for this shell
I found along the way.
And thank you for the bandage
Shared in my need.

The simplicity of my life
Over these days
Is represented by objects
In my small bag.

O Jesus,
My King and my brother,
May I never forget
Who I've become on this path.⁵⁰

50. Mark 6