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Mission Connections

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Jo Ella Holman | Mission co-worker serving in the Caribbean

Journeying on the Way

Dear friends in whichever land you happen to be,

Trips seem part of the American lifestyle—or at least for certain segments of our population. Some of these trips are short: we go to the mall, to the farmer’s market, to lessons, or to appointments. Some are longer: on vacation, on business trips and on mission trips. The “going” is part of the busyness of our modern lives. Sometimes all this movement so fills our time that we scarcely know if we are “going or coming”! I have definitely been experiencing this sensation of constant movement that threatens to make me lose sight of why I travel from here to there. In scarcely three months this year, I have made four trips to other countries and two trips within the country where I live. So I have had reason lately for reflecting on the nature of trips and how they can fill our lives—or drain them.



The word “journey,” however, can evoke a different sense of movement: one with perhaps a deeper meaning and purpose, one that is longer somehow than a mere “trip.” And the pace is dif-

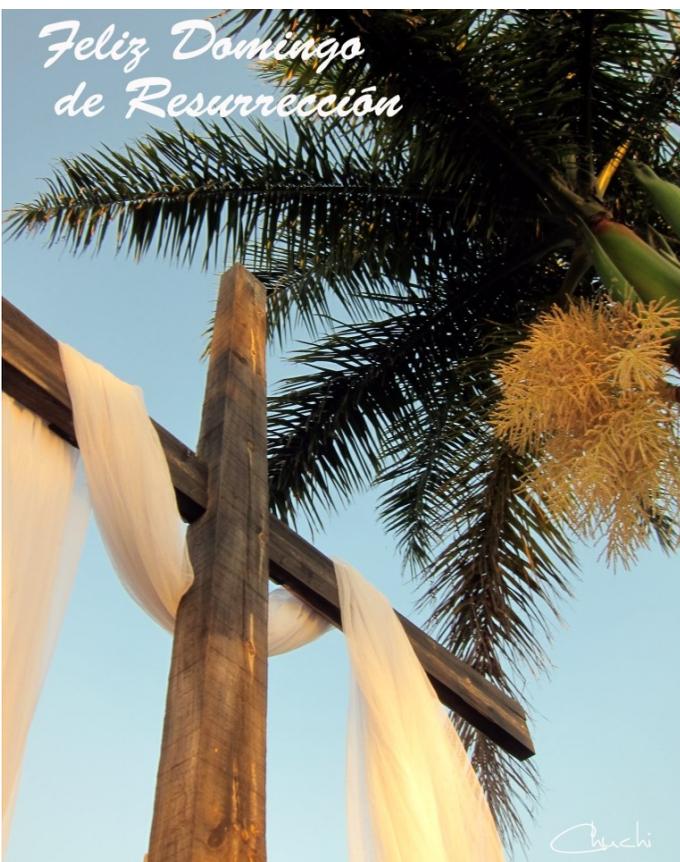
Thank you for supporting Jo Ella’s work as regional liaison for the Caribbean Region. Your prayers and financial support have helped Jo Ella facilitate programs of PC (USA) partner churches and organizations as well as support mission personnel serving in the region.

ferent. There is a slowness to journeys that happen in stages and involve some meandering, taking an indirect route to a distant destination.

The Bible is filled with stories of people traveling, of people on the move. Sometimes they are fleeing calamity, as Mary and Joseph fled with baby Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath. Sometimes they are sent with a difficult task like Jonah, who was commanded to go to Nineveh to call the people to repentance. Sometimes they are on a journey, a meandering walk through the countryside, like the journey Jesus took with his disciples on his way to Jerusalem. Certainly, in Mark’s and Luke’s Gospels Jesus is on a journey that becomes instruction on the purpose and meaning of Jesus’ mission and death.

Over the past two years three different friends have walked the pilgrimage route to St. James of Compostela in northern Spain. They have each remarked on the positive effects that journey has had on their lives and on their faith. They speak of it as a journey of the soul, in which the destination itself is less consequential than the walk. There are different routes for this “way” of St. James, crisscrossing Europe from different starting points. Pilgrims meet a variety of travel companions and share stories and meals for a brief time before moving along at their own paces.

I am trying both to see and to transform my own “trips” into “journeys” as I continue to serve with the churches and peoples of the Caribbean, especially in this Lenten season. It is the walking with companions on the Way that gives meaning to the “trips”—not the tasks or the projects, but the relationships, the conversations, the friendships developed and the bread shared together.



Resurrección, Matanzas, Cuba

I pray this same transformation for each of you. As a people, we are too busy, too anxious, too fearful. We need a slower pace and time for reflection, alone and together. We need shared meals and shared dreamings. Please pray with



Route marker for the Way of St. James of Compostella

me for our nation, for our churches in the U.S., and for the churches and peoples of the Caribbean.

Thank you, friends, for being my companions on this journey, for your prayer support and for your financial gifts that enable me to continue serving with our friends in the Caribbean. May we continue to journey together with them and with all others as friends on the Way, ever mindful of our common call as “followers” of Christ and members of the household of God. And may we celebrate together the joy of Easter morning!

Grace and peace to you,

Jo Ella

Connect and support the mission work of:

Jo Ella Holman

Serving as World Mission's regional liaison for the Caribbean Region

You are invited to continue supporting Jo Ella's work through prayer and encouraged to get to know her through updates like this, personal letters and emails. If you are able, please support this ministry through financial gifts. Individual donations may be made on-line at pcusa.org/give, or mailed to the address below. Churches are asked to send donations through your congregation's normal receiving site (this is usually your presbytery).

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Thank you for reading about Jo Ella's ministry.

