



NAVIGARE

VOLUME 1.1

Fun Facts

1. There are a total of 17 Autonomous Communities and 50 provinces in Spain.
2. Spain is known for having the best Metro stations in the world.
3. The verb "to burp" in Spanish is *eructar*.

Did You Know?

A classic Spanish breakfast consists of bread (there's always bread at the table), olive oil, jam, coffee or Cola-Cao, milk (hot & cold).

2 Truths and a Lie..

1. Robert doesn't like soccer.
2. I did not get sick on the pilgrimage.
3. Stephen is the third out of four children in his family.

*answer is at the end



Here's your 1st trimester writer, spreading his wings in the mountains of Spain.

Let The Adventure Begin!

Hello, I am Dominik Scelza and I will be in charge of writing the Navigare newsletters for this first trimester.

Before I bring you along this wonderful journey, let me properly introduce myself. I am 19 years old, traveling from ole Denver, Colorado. I am part of a family of five, with Colombian and American heritage (meaning I have a little bit of a headstart on the Spanish), and I love to make people laugh or smile. Now, let the story unfold...

Our adventure of a lifetime began with our much anticipated yet exhausting flight and the rest is history.

Now, without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, I give you Navigare Vol. 1.1 all together in new form!





Proof we made it off the plane alive.

Welcome to Spain!

Ladies and gentlemen, we finally made it to the enchanted land of Spain! After much anticipation, more paperwork than I have seen in my life, and exhaustive travels, all the Navigare finally landed in Spain in the last weeks of August.

As soon as we stepped off the plane, it was all “GO, GO, GO!” We all made a quick stop at the House of Formation in Madrid to grab camping gear before making another trip to Villaescusa, a common place of retreat for the Disciples. In fact, when we arrived, the Disciples were finishing their Spiritual Exercises of the year. After a couple days in silence, the Disciples ended their exercises with some fine wine and an extravagant dinner, celebrating Fr. Luis Granados’ American citizenship (making this year’s first Exercises with an American citizen)! The Disciples were able to verbally and emotionally welcome us to Spain and the community. Unbeknownst to us, there is a tradition in which we are “baptized” (in further context, there is a pool outside the retreat house in Villaescusa). Fr. Luis was the first victim (he was thrown in Superman-style). As I was watching this take place, little did I know I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Not too long after I was “baptized,” all the Navigare eventually got the same treatment (some of us twice).

We haven’t been in Spain for a week and our schedule was already jam-packed. The year's just getting started...





Leonardo taking a classic selfie with us on Pico Urbion.



The Americans all together, smiling (or at least trying to).

Convivencias And The Pilgrimage

Soon after our time at Villaescusa, a small town outside the city of Cuenca in the province of Castilla-La Mancha (prepare for some Spain geography lessons in some of these newsletters along the way), we headed to Derroñadas for the Convivencias Regionales. The Convivencias consisted of centering on the theme of Hope for the year with the Disciples' schools Stella Maris Colegio La Gavia and Stella Maris College, asking fascinating questions about the students and their studies, the relationship between teacher and student, families, and much more. After all the elegant dinners and glasses of wine, us Navigare, along with some of the junior Disciples, began our 5-day pilgrimage to Monasterio de Valvanera, home to the Marian site of "La Virgen de Valvanera."

Boy, were we in for quite the adventure! Mountain peak after peak, early mornings, rain, heat... Mother Nature sure wanted us to remember this pilgrimage. Not to mention the fact that all the Navigare were not used to hiking days at a time, much less by kilometers (which felt so much shorter than miles). The altitude was also something to keep in mind during our climbs as well (hydration a close second; I learned that the hard way). We certainly haven't felt this kind of sore before. I felt pain in places I didn't even know I could. Hiking, bathing in cold mountain water—quite the wake-up call, doing makeshift laundry, finding the best place to sleep with shelter among many other things. A couple of us may or may not have had some stomach issues as well.

In spite of all that, this pilgrimage certainly set the standard for what was to come ahead and provided glimpses into what this year of Navigare will give us, especially the desire to be great in all our activities and daily life. And to top it all off, a little extra spiritual help from Our Lady of Valvanera and the Lord with daily prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, and some homemade liquor from the Monastery of "La Virgen de Valvanera."

Settling In

After the final stretch of the pilgrimage and one final trip, all the Navigare have made it to Madrid at last! We finally laid claim to our territory (our names are on the doors, so it's official).

Following a nice and much-needed weekend to relax (our feet, especially), we began our Spanish studies at Universidad Eclesiastica San Damaso (Stephen) and a Spanish academy Inhispania (Robert and yours truly). I guess you could say we had another first day of school. Robert, Stephen, and I have this month of September to speak in English along with the Disciples while learning Spanish, however once October hits, we are still able to speak in English, but the Disciples can or have to answer in Spanish. Once November comes around, all the cards come down and it's Español the rest of the year. We have been getting used to the bell at 6am with Mass at 7:30 along with a light and quick breakfast (Mothers, when I say light breakfast, I mean light; however, coffee and chocolate milk are involved). In order to get to class, we learned how to take the Metro (meaning we save money on gas). To make sure we exercise once a week after eating filling meals and not counting calories, we have soccer or *abem*, **fútbol** on Wednesdays at 8 with the community.

In regards to how good the Navigare are at fútbol, well... let's just say we Navigare aren't going to get an invitation to play for Spain at the next World Cup (we're making progress... *slowly*, but surely). In addition to our studies, we also help 4th-6th graders how to speak and read English from 3-5pm at Stella Maris Colegio. The kids have been so fun to meet; they always ask where we have been when we don't see them. We also get to see how hard English is to learn when it's not your native language (English is a pretty weird language, come to think of it). The Navigare also have started to work with some of the apostolates the Disciples lead as well. Hikes to the mountains, countryside drives, inaugural Masses, you name it. On weekends, we sometimes make trips to the ever so wonderful land of Villaescusa for retreats.



Out for bocadillos, are we?



Fruity Saturday!



Rites of Passage

One last note: earlier this month, Br. Tomas introduced the Navigare to the “rites of passage.” Our first rite revolves around the theme of *greatness*. We celebrated our first rite of passage (pictured to the left) with an Adoration, followed by a speech from our very own Br. Tomas Sastre, offering our greatness to Our Lady with our studies and the year at large. All us Navigare then lined up beside each other in front of the altar, reciting the Navigare prayer.

“Our Lady, Star of the Sea Help me to always sail under your protection, Stretch my heart so that I may embrace the greatness that God is calling me to and open my heart to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Guide me on the journey towards Christ, that no matter the storms I will encounter or the difficulties I will face, that I will never stop sailing towards Him. Amen.”

As we have been given our challenge to be great this year, I’m reminded of when I used to play soccer as a child. My team had potential, but most of the time, our goal was to keep a shut-out for the first half of the game. A shut-out means no goals scored for either team (0-0). In other words, our objective was to play safe. But this year is not a year to “play it safe.” When all the cards are down, this year is a year of greatness. In other words, let’s play to WIN.

Answer: I *did* get sick on the pilgrimage, but at least I made it to the monastery beforehand.