

# Lens 26th letter from the Via

Date: 01/08/17

|          |          |              |     |             |        |
|----------|----------|--------------|-----|-------------|--------|
| Location | Garlasco | KM's to Rome | 868 | Steps Today | 37,883 |
|----------|----------|--------------|-----|-------------|--------|

Mortara was a small village which did not have much of interest for the wandering pilgrim. My level of fitness now has reached a level where I don't have to collapse on the bed for a couple of hours before venturing out to look at where I am staying. But I face the perianal problem in Italy, generally arriving at the village between one and two everything is closed, except for the shops that provide gambling outlets. Many of the Tabacs now have poker machines and scratch cards and both types of gambling are very popular. To my disappointment they have replaced maps with the machines. Most of the Tabacs in the past supplied good regional maps. The walk today was much better than previous days, there was some forest walking and most of the day was on dirt rather than tarmac which was pleasant on the feet. Also, there were lots of fish in the rice channels. The channels are a little more natural today as they are dug into the ground or have used existing water courses, all in all a very nice walk.

I was walking through a forest and came out on a main road which I had to cross. On the other side of the road was a lady working on a tablet device. I thought she must have been counting the passing traffic. As I crossed the road it was evident that she was not counting the traffic but counting on the passing traffic to use her services. I also noticed that a small umbrella was mounted on pole beside the road which must be the signal that the shop is open for business.

She was a very attractive woman, was she a dear damned witch of Babylon -that I could not resist. I had a fifty euro note in my pocket so I enquired what I could buy for my fifty euros and was surprised at what fifty euros would buy. I guess her overheads are very low, an umbrella, a chair and a blanket for in the bushes.

For those who may be unaware of the pilgrim code, it is to get to your destination as cheaply as possible. Many of the places on the way being aware of this code offer the "pilgrims discount". So, I asked the question. I was politely informed that there is a premium for pilgrims as they are always filled with remorse once the transactions is completed and are hard to move on and half of them try to talk her into making the journey with them. I explained I wasn't one of those type of pilgrims but it held no sway. Without access to my pilgrim's discount I decided to continue on my way with my fifty euros intact.

I would have liked to supply a photo but she asked me not to take one, I suspect she may have been an illegal worker and didn't want any record of her workplace.

Passed this wasps nest (no reference intended), it was attached to a boom gate on a railway line, not sure this would be the ideal conditions for setting up a home. In the channels, today there were lots of the beautiful blue and black dragon fly's. Tried unsuccessfully to get a photo with their wings expanded in full flight but have concluded that my little cameras shutter speed is too slow to get a decent picture. They are the most beautiful of creatures and it's easy to while away time watching them, but time is what I have plenty of on this walk.

After a busy working life, I am finding this trip a real detox of work stress and recommend that if you are reading this at work get up, take a stretch and go for a walk. (any boss who won't let you is a bum).

