

Len's 30th letter from the Via

Date: 6/08/17

Location	Carpaneto	KM's to Rome	770	Steps Today	43,798
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Last night in Piacenza it was 38 degrees at 11.00pm. There was a slow-moving wave of people walking around the streets attempting to stay cool. It was a languid, colourful caterpillar of people, I joined in. It was also compulsory to have an ice cream in your hand which after some prodding by the people around me I acquired my own ice cream.



Piacenza is stunning by night. The historical centre was all lit up and impressively displayed the architecture of the buildings. One of the buildings on display was the San Francesco church which was just opposite where I was staying.

On arrival at the B&B San Francesco last night (I was the only inmate in the monk's cell) I took a photo of my feet. Those who have been following the blog from the start would know

about the trouble I had with my shoe selection. Thanks for the suggestions and the sympathy. This photo shows I have solved the problem with the purchase of the Merrells and wearing two pairs of socks. The veins are a little bit raised but I had just walked 39 kms. Why is it that you always end up walking more than the guidebooks list as the kms. between places? This is a photo from my cell window (6th Floor) of San Francesco's church. It's a beautiful church but not opened to the public.

There is much adoration of St Francis and given my middle name is Francis, I tried to win some credence with my host but she was having none of it, she explained that Saint Francis took a vow of poverty and I didn't look very poor. I told her I had visited his hermitage at Assisi and sat on the rock at Spoleto where he meditated but still no credence was forthcoming. Next time I visit I am going to be poor, obscure, plain and little, she may think I am soulless and heartless. I have as much soul as Francis and full of as much heart.

After a hearty breakfast, I was on my way. A short time later the heavens opened and we had a violent downpour. I guess with all the heat we have had along with the amount of water about there had to be some evaporation happening and the clouds decided it was time to give it back to us. I didn't mind the rain so much, what I minded was that during the thunderstorm the temperature only dropped three degrees from 35 to 32 and as soon as the rain stopped it went back up again and became a little bit steamy.

You might be wondering how I know the temperature all the time, I don't have an app I have been relying on the chemist shops who all have the green sign out the front which displays the temperature and the date. There are a lot of Chemists in Italy I make no speculations as to why this is so, nor do I offer any speculations as to why there are so many optometrists in



the main shopping streets. In one small village, I counted five shops where you could buy glasses, obviously a major fashion item in Italy thanks to Ms Loren.

I was soon in the country again and have left the rice paddies behind. The local crop now is

tomatoes. Acres and acres of Roma tomatoes all ready to be machine picked, transported off to the processor, canned and sent to Australia as prime Italian tomatoes. I am not going to be fooled anymore as the machines take all the tomatoes whether they are ripe or not. I sneaked into the field and felt the ripe ones, they all had that very hard skin that has been breed into tomatoes to allow them to be machine picked.

I was walking along a country road looking with curiosity at all the tomatoes and the infrastructure that is required



to grow and harvest the crop. A old Nona accosted me asking what I was doing as she worked in her own vegetable plot next to the farm crop, I think she thought I was some kind of inspector. I managed to communicate my interest in the growing process and asked her if she would eat the tomatoes out of the paddock. Her response will earn a few hail Mary's next Sunday, she went on to explain (I think) that she grew all her own tomatoes, which were the heirloom type with the crinkly skin, so she didn't have to eat the rubbish tomatoes her son grew. I guess that says it all.

Just outside Carpaneto I came across this old church, I thought the brickwork was of such beauty I should share it with my readers.

I don't know how these buildings have survived given the amount of wars that have been fought in Italy over the last two hundred years but we should all be thankful that they have.



Today was a tough day with the rain then the heat then more rain then more heat, especially after yesterday monster walk. When I arrived at the hotel I was exhausted and probably looked a little unruly. The hotel staff in the pretty little village of Carpaneto (Hotel le Maison) could not do enough to make my stay comfortable. They moved me to a different room which was away from the hustle and bustle, one of the staff insisted on carrying up my bags and wet gear even though she was about half my size. Next morning, they went out of their way to make sure I was comfortable and fit enough to do that days walk bonne treatment.

Pilgrim Tips:

Toilets and water are a real issue in the countryside, in most instances you will be able to get water in the cemeteries and in a lot of cases there are nice clean toilets.