

## A Huge Question – November 14, 2017 – Marshall, TX, USA

This posting is a little outside of my normal writing. I try to answer everyone's question as we travel. I think the following question has been in one fashion or another on everyone's mind who allow me to include them on our trip. Therefore I am sending the answer to one of Nancy's cousins' question to everyone.

*I have so enjoyed sharing your adventures. Just curious...have your encounters with so many cultures/religions changed the way you see or understand the world and the human experience? I guess that's a pretty big question, but I think it may be what you have been seeking?*



Your question is HUGE!

I have always wanted and enjoyed exploring the world. I almost find home to be too confining. It is the exploration and discovery of new -- be it a mountain, a bird, a temple, a culture, a person, an art piece or something as simple and beautiful as a new sunset that has always driven me to explore and travel the world. I have to see what is around the next corner. And it isn't just me. Sometime it is Nancy who is leading us around the next corner.





I know that our travels have changed me. I am less afraid of the world or being in the world. Yes, there are bad people in the world that would like to do harm to you and me but there are so many more people in the world who want to assist us, learn from us, teach us, share with us, get to know us and at times rescue us.

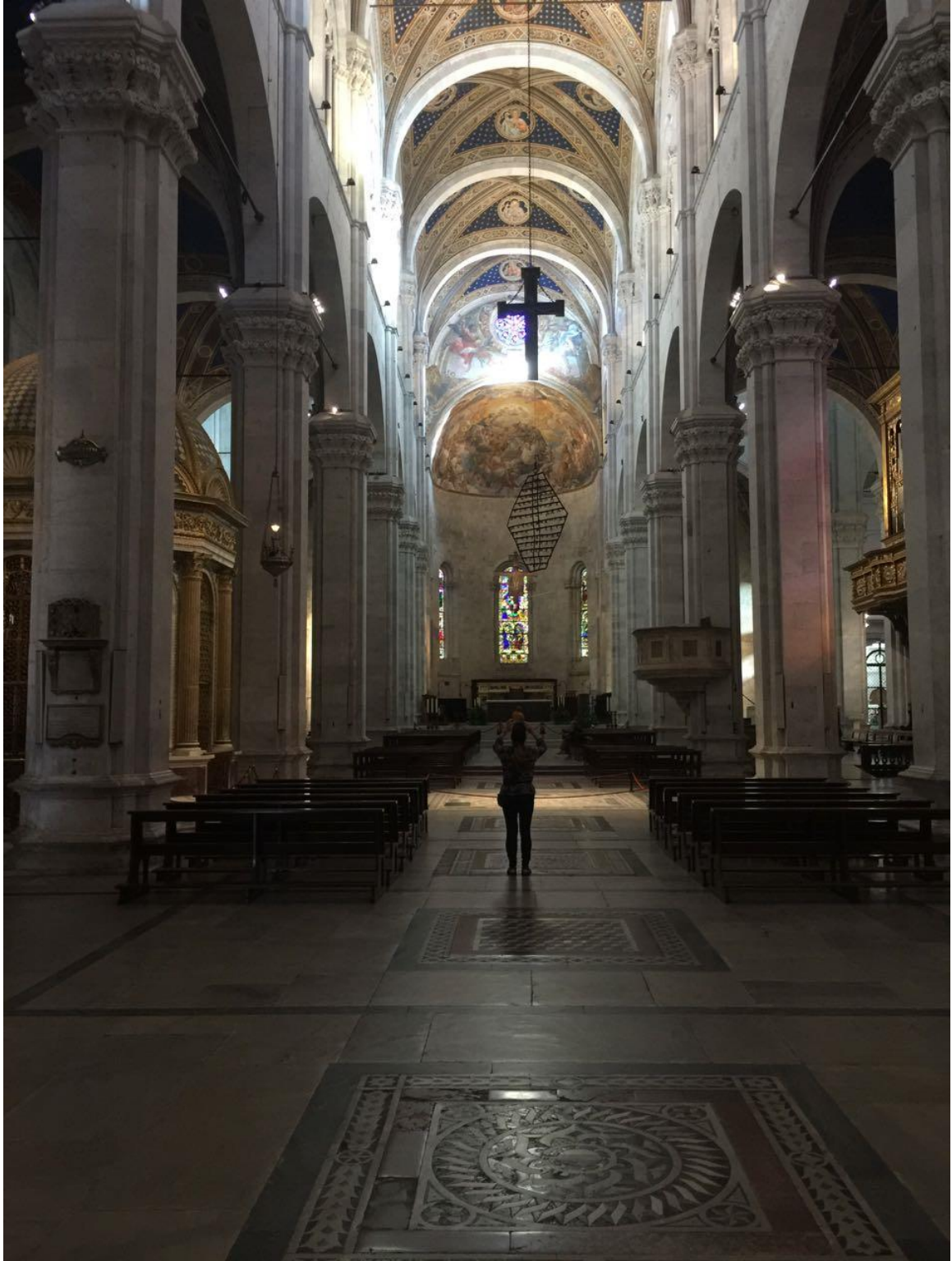


Each religion we have encountered has pluses and minuses -- both in the yesterdays and todays. For example: In Italy you see the fabulous art financed by religion, you witness through this art the hope it gave the (Catholic) people, and you then understand a little more why these people worship their God. In the same art you see horrific tortures, deaths, and more to those who hold these religious beliefs and those holding these religious beliefs inflicting torture and death upon others who don't share these same religious beliefs (saints, the Grand Inquisition, and Jesus). Another example: You read about a terrorist in the name of the Islamic faith who beheads an American and the next morning you have two young Islamic ladies with scarves covering their head helping you at the neighborhood store -- you know one is evil but the other shows you that not all is evil. Knowing there is less evil than good outside your knowledge or comfort zone reduces your fears and increases the joy of living.



Side note -- Religions we have been exposed to as we travel:  
Christianity (Catholic for the most part plus Anglican and Presbyterian; and saw the occasional Lutheran, Baptist, Eastern Orthodox church);  
Buddhism including: Tibetan (all 4 major schools), Hinayana, Mahayana and Theravada;  
Shamanism;  
Shinto;  
Hinduism (various divisions);  
Sikhism;  
Jainism;  
Zoroastrianism (Parsi people);  
Islam;  
Dreamtime (Australian Aboriginal people); and  
tribal animism plus several Mormon and Jewish temples.  
Also exposed to the ancient Egyptian deity gods in the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy.





When you are traveling you must learn to accept others for who they are not who you think they should be. You learn to trust people who don't think, act or look like you. When traveling you have much less control over things and therefore require the assistance of those not like you. When traveling you will feel a sense of *debt paying* to a country's people for what others in the same country have provided you. There is a sense of owing others for what others have given you and this sense of owing is a good feeling. When traveling you will spend time communicating with other people who don't understand your language but with a smile, a nod, and a handshake convey your needs and the appreciation you have for them assisting you.





In summary, our travels have let Nancy and I explore the world and this exploring has been much more than just new mountains, birds, temples, cultures, people, art pieces or sunsets -- it has opened my mind to the fact all people are different yet the same. A great majority of people no matter their religion, location, politics, etc. have good hearts and enjoy discovering you as much as you enjoy discovering them.



I am sure many of you could write or say this better than me but this is my best effort at answering a HUGE question.

Thanks for writing to us as we travel,

Tom  
Marshall, TX, USA









*Thank you for a very thoughtful and insightful reply! I think the answer is "yes"; your travels and encounters have changed the way you see and experience the world in a very profound and positive way. What a wonderful experience! Again, thank you for sharing it with us all.  
Connie*



