What is a Pilgrim? and why?

“A [pilgrim] does not, I think, much mind the uninteresting places. He is there to be inside them, as a thread is inside the necklace it strings. The world, with unknown and unexpected variety, is a part of his own Leisure; and this living participation is, I think, what separates the [pilgrim] from the tourist, who remains separate, as if he were at a theatre, and not himself a part of whatever the show may be.”

Phil Cousineau; The Art of Pilgrimage; p.145

The story of Phil Cousineau walking the labyrinth at the Chartres Cathedral in France, and the old frenchman in black felt beret, tapping his arm with the crook of his oak walking cane, “Do you know where I can find God?” (a mad theologian)

Phil Cousineau; The Art of Pilgrimage; p.158

Imagine someone tapping you on the shoulder while you bask in reverie at a strange and marvelous church; one of those cathedrals of ancient history in Europe, or simply in the church of your childhood. He is whispering in your ear, “Where can I find God?”

Quick, what would you tell him?

Phil Cousineau; The Art of Pilgrimage; p.158

“With a slight but significant shift of perspective required of a pilgrim on a sacred journey, what was once a snarl becomes a test, disappointment turns into challenge,” grief becomes a blessing.

Phil Cousineau; The Art of Pilgrimage; p.143

The five excellent practices of Pilgrimages

• Practice the arts of attention and listening
• Practice renewing yourself every day.
• Practice meandering toward the center of every place.
• Practice the ritual of reading sacred texts.
• Practice gratitude and praise-singing.

(based on Confucius’ thoughts about the practices of wise leaders; The Art of Pilgrimage; p.126)

“Patience, silence, trust, and faith are venerable qualities of the pilgrim, but more important is the practice of them. No one ever escaped the shadowy corridors of a labyrinth without them.”

Phil Cousineau; The Art of Pilgrimage; p.132