



**ADVENT 2015 LETTER
PRIESTLY FRATERNITY IESUS CARITAS
BROTHER RESPONSIBLE**

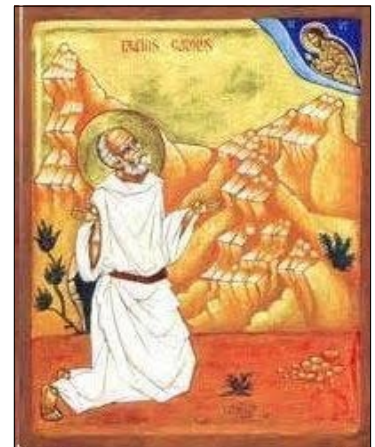
Dear brothers,
with Advent we have an important space for our personal and community renewal of the values of the Gospel that we ought to integrate into our lives: to await the Messiah preparing our interior home; waiting with the brothers and sisters of our communities preparing an open place of welcome, without locking ourselves in because of fear, prejudices or the feeling of being the only ones who really care about things; to await with joy because the Child once more comes as a child and not an adult; to await in this Year of Mercy, this year which is also the



Centenary of the passing of Brother Charles, that men may be merciful and may cease to do harm to themselves, with death and suffering, either out of religious fundamentalism or disregard for the lives and rights of others. Peace, dialogue, forgiveness, tolerance, and mercy are not the most cherished values in our world. We only think of them when danger is at hand or when our privileges are cut back. Sometimes we feel nothing can change, or that all is getting worse. Pope Francis invites us to step out of our pessimisms, defeatism and lack of confidence. May the Messiah bring us that peace, an end to the suffering of war refugees, an end to trafficking of arms, humans, drugs, and of resources that impoverish even the very poorest. May God's Messiah be born once more in Mary of the least and most humble of people, and restore joy, human rights, bread and laughter. How sad it is today to see families, even children, portrayed carrying arms, in greeting friends or relations for Christmas. Sad and pathetic, but fact.



Advent is a favourable time to take advantage of a Day in the Desert, to allow ourselves be led by the Lord; a time of hope and of interior renewal. The desert puts each of us in our place, conscious of our limitations and poverty. In Advent the Desert has the flavour of awaiting a friend or relative at a train or bus station, or at an airport; we see Jesus come down an escalator, or appearing among many people with his light luggage, raising his hand to say, "Here I am, thanks for waiting for me, and for coming to pick me up". *"Nowhere better than in the desert can one hear the call of God to change the world. The desert is the realm of truth, the place where one lives on essentials. There is no room for the superfluous. You cannot keep accumulating things that are not needed. Luxury and ostentation are inconceivable. What is crucial here is to find the right way to live"*. (Commentary of José A. PAGOLA on Luke 3,1-6) Jesus is close at hand.



All the news coming in about the start of the Centenary of the definitive encounter of Brother Charles with the Father, in many places throughout the world, among the ordinary people and in the fraternities of the whole Family of Charles de FOUCAULD,

fill me with joy and hope; we are all called to live deeply what Abandonment is; to be able to say with one's hand on one's heart, "do with me what you want". Let us leave aside all fear of the unexpected. Let us open the door to whoever comes. To live the Centenary according to the charism that unites us as a Family is to cultivate friendship with people, it is to be with whoever needs us, it is to live according to the Gospel. As we the international team said in the Letter from Perín, it is to live deeply this message of universal brotherhood of Charles de FOUCAULD, so necessary for our world and our Church, appreciating what we receive from the most ordinary of people and from those who suffer wherever they may be.



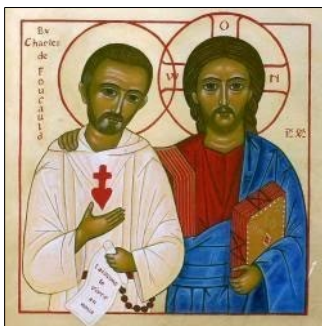
We ought to proclaim in our parishes that the people of God, like Brother Charles, have much to say to us, above and beyond sad messages, superficial or frivolous messages, appeals to personal security or to consumerism and ostentation. Charles de FOUCAULD thus comments on Matt. 5,3 (*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven"*): *"Hope! Salvation is at hand; Heaven is close at hand... One thing is necessary: to be poor in*

spirit... Poor in spirit is to be truly poor to the bottom of our being; truly detached from all, not only from material goods, from the desire for them, yet forgetting oneself, to have one's soul empty of all earthly desires... Empty of all and full of God... Through God we will feel these desires for others...But all for God: only He satisfies us".

We followed with deep concern the visit of Pope Francis to Africa, as a messenger of peace and mercy. We shared his meeting with other cultures and with Islam; this brave man who carries Jesus wherever he goes, albeit as head of State on occasions surrounded by security, he gives us hope and brings back the joy of working for the Kingdom as diocesan priests. Mercy that he shows with his life, in the steps that he takes to renew the Church so that it really may be the Church of Jesus, the difficulties he meets within the Church itself, there is no doubt that it is the action of the Spirit. Let us unite our prayers for him and for all that we'll receive from him through his word and witness in this Year of Mercy.



Let us be united in prayer also that the conclusions of the Synod on the Family may open the Church to advance in the struggle for life, the lives of people, those who were misguided in their marriages, those who are poorly regarded for their sexual condition, those who feel and are Christians but who do not conform to the established model. We all know people who are divorced or separated, people of faith, who till now have felt themselves marginalised by the Church. We might consider: from how many of our brother priests or friends are we divorced? Why do we at times treat as enemies those who share our ministry? What breaks ecclesial communion, ideas or those whom we dislike who hold these ideas or attitudes?



At the Synod on the Family, present not only with his voice but also with his vote was Hervé JANSON, Prior General of the Little Brothers of Jesus: we must thank him for his testimony on the family of Nazareth and his courage to break with patterns "of good behaviour".



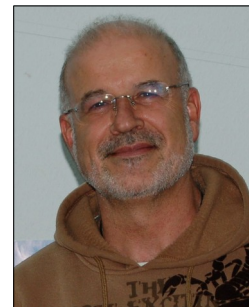
Thanks, Hervé, for the simplicity with which you expressed this universal brotherhood of being with the least, in fidelity to the charism of Charles de FOUCAULD and as a person who lives the Gospel in the lowest place. Nazareth is not just a reference for us; it is also the model of the domestic and parochial community, of brotherhood.

Remembering our sick brothers, our brothers in war-torn countries, or in situations of extreme poverty, remembering all, I wish you from my heart an Advent of renewal, and a Christmas where we allow Jesus to be present in our lives, our decisions, in our relationships and in our work.

With an embrace of hope,

Your brother

Aurelio SANZ BAEZA, brother responsible



Perín, Cartagena, Murcia, Spain, December 8, 2015,
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary and beginning of the Year of Mercy.

