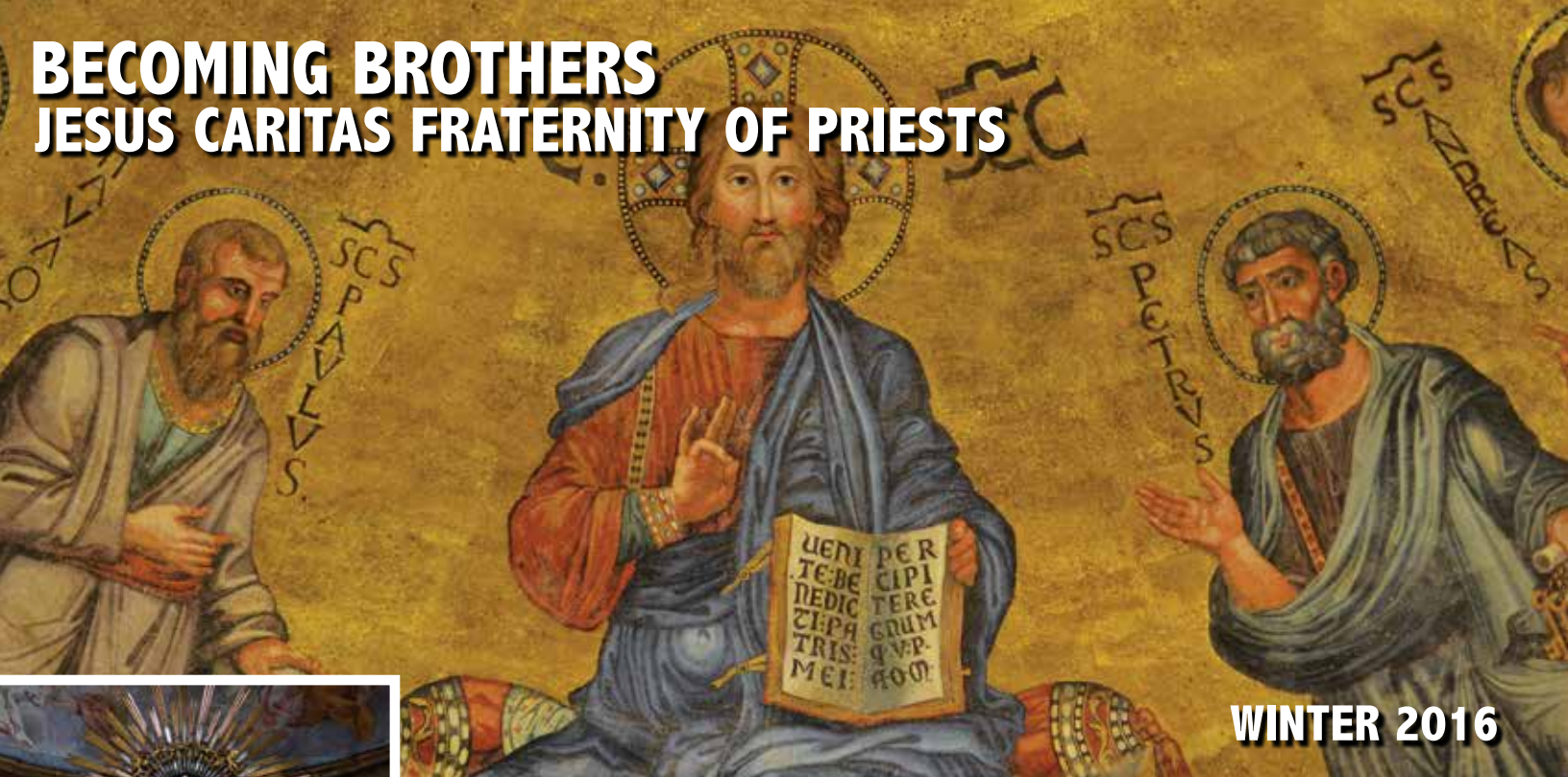


BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



Blessed Charles de Foucauld Meditating on the Scripture by George Strohmeyer 2

Letter From Kansas City International Council *Jesus Caritas Fraternity Of Priests* October 27, 2016 3

Mini Retreat for Priests 6

Upcoming Events 8

From the Responsible

God who is infinite, all powerful, has become man, the least of men. My way is always to seek the lowest place, to be as little as my master, to walk with him step by step as a faithful disciple. My way is to live with my God who lived this way all his life and who has given me such an example from his very birth. — Charles de Foucauld

Dear Brothers,

The way of Blessed Charles is not an easy spirituality to live out. But it is a beautiful way – to walk with Jesus step-by-step as a faithful disciple. My life has been wonderfully enriched as I walk this way with my brothers in fraternity. To be aware of the way of the Incarnation, the way of Nazareth; to be aware of a God who loves us so very much that, as Creator of all, he was willing to become creature; is to be aware of a love so great that it must be shared, especially with those on the peripheries of such love.

The primary content of this newsletter shares with you the International Fraternity's "Letter from Kansas City." The International Council calls us to be more aware of the charisms of Bl. Charles and how his spirituality can

enrich our life and ministry as diocesan priests. What does this rather odd French hermit in the Sahara have to teach us? He may have been ordained, but he never lived a life that was anything like a normal diocesan priest – if there is such a thing as "normal." Yet, the life of Charles

De Foucauld was centered on God and was animated by prayer and humble service. This is a good foundation for anyone who wishes to live a life of missionary discipleship.

At our meeting in Kansas City, the National Council reflected on the fact that the "American" experience of fraternity often is not much more than a support group. This is not a bad thing, but many fraternities throughout the world are trying to experience

continued on page 7

Blessed Charles de Foucauld Meditating on the Scripture

by George Strohmeier

Little Brother of Jesus, Charles de Foucauld, considered prayer as that state in which the soul looks wordlessly on God, solely occupied with contemplating, with looks that love. In his own words: “While uttering no words, even in thought... while everything is silent and asleep, while everything is drowned in darkness, I live at the feet of my God, pouring out my heart in love. They are hours of incomparable happiness.” (Adapted from *Experiencing Jesus*, by John Wijngaards, MHM)

Charles de Foucauld would meditate on the scripture in the following way (with slight variations added for practicing Lectio Divina with one or more other persons):

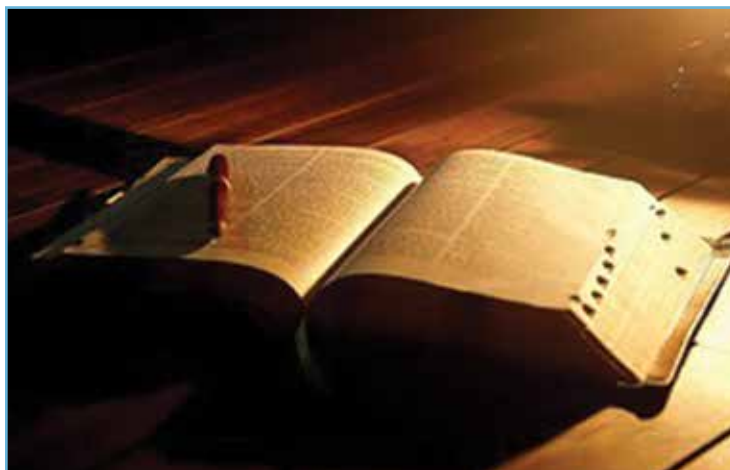
+ **Read a scripture text with great attention, perhaps more than once, then put aside the words you just read and “force yourself” to silence, that is, listen into silence, with no attempt to think, feel or find meaning in what you just read. Just be silent, with great single-minded attention, Do this to muster your fully receptive attention and to let the Word confirm its meaning in you. Trust your capacity to come to full attention to bring full meaning.**

+ **Then read the scripture again, listening attentively in the same spirit of silence:**

❖ **Out of this silence, ask: “What do you want to say to me, O God?”**

❖ **Listen to God put into words the message God wishes to speak to you through the biblical text; Wait for the Spirit to speak, like Quakers do. It doesn’t have to be literal. God speaks in many and different creative forms. Try not to let the word “preach” to you, rather let the Word “reach” to you. Be open to whatever rises up in you, perhaps something unexpected.**

❖ **Write down words only as the Spirit of God “speaks” them to you.**



(Then, in a group Lectio practice, we could speak to others whatever we wish to share in answer to the question “What did God say to me in this reading?”) Simple and brief is OK.

❖ **Putting aside your pen and paper, read the Scripture slowly and attentively once more and say to God: “As for me, this is what I want to say to you.” Let your words be your intimate and heart felt response, using “I” words, not “we” or “us” words.**

(In a group Lectio practice, you may wish to speak aloud what you wish to say to God)

❖ **After this, remain quietly in God’s presence, as suggested in *The Book of Privy Counseling* (Chapters 1 and 2,) by the anonymous fourteenth century writer: “See that nothing remains in your conscious mind save a naked intent stretching out toward God. Leave it stripped of every particular idea about God and keep only the simple awareness of God. Nothing matters except that you willingly offer to God that blind awareness of your naked being, in joyful love, so that grace can bind you and make you spiritually one with the precious being of God, simply as God is in himself.**



Letter from Kansas City International Council

Jesus Caritas Fraternity Of Priests

October 27, 2016

Dear Brothers,

We began our meeting of the International Council with a special remembrance of our deceased brothers, Tony PHILPOT, former International Responsible, and Giuseppe COLAVERO and Hermann STEINERT. All our brothers have been in our prayers, our thoughts and our hearts.

Our first theme was to do a review of our lives, that is, how we have lived and been since our last meeting in Aurelio's house in Périn, Spain. These days in Kansas City have been very rich in contacts with and in time spent with the people of Mark's three parishes and other religions - multi-ethnic and varied, diverse lay groups, religious, students of various schools, the simple people for whom Mark is a good shepherd. Thank you Mark for all the work of welcome and for facilitating things.



We also met brothers of the fraternities of the United States, gathered as the National Council in Kansas City on 25 October; we shared prayer, Eucharist and dinner with Jerry, Joe, Greg, Ron, John and Bob. We felt friendship and closeness. And we have been touched by the pain of our brother in fraternity, Mark's housemate Tom, 82 years old who was attacked and robbed at the entrance to his house during our stay and who is recovering in the hospital.

The place where we worked, the Sanctuary of Hope, has helped us to be a fraternity and to work on the diverse topics that we brought as our agenda. The house has helped us live in a climate of work and prayer. Liturgy of the hours, adoration and Eucharist, and even a half-day in the desert, have made it possible for us to be close to God and to you.

continued on page 4



LETTER FROM KC *continued from page 3*

The objective of our meeting has been to take our pulse as fraternity and to study the diverse realities on the continents and the questions that inter-religious and inter-cultural dialog pose to us, challenging us as persons, as a Church and as fraternity. We see a world threatened and attacked by fundamentalists, terrorism, political crises in many countries, the lack of a response by governments and the increase of populist movements — all this causes our societies to be more closed and fearful of those “outside.”

Reviewing the two continental assemblies held this year, the First Pan American Assembly in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and the Asian Assembly held in Cebu, Philippines, and looking to the next European Assembly in Poland in July 2017, we received and studied the calls given to the International Team. These included especially the development of the fraternities and of our personal lives as diocesan priests who follow the charism of Charles de FOUCAULD, deepening in the missionary character of going to the peripheries, which Br. Charles showed us in the last stage of his life and before his death. From all our reflections, studies and dialogues etc, we are able to say that the theme of the next General Assembly in Bangalore, India, 15-30 January 2019 will be:



Missionary Diocesan Priests Today Inspired by The Witness of Charles De Foucauld.



We have elaborated a questionnaire for all local fraternities of the world to review and answer; it will be sent to the regional responsables and published in our web site www.iesuscaritas.org. We heard and considered the proposals of the Pan American Assembly which have shed much light on all this.

We believe that Charles de Foucauld has been compartmentalized in a monastic model, and it concerns us how we identify with his charisms as diocesan priests. For this we want to re-identify with his missionary spirit, both as contemplative and as a man of the street, toward Muslims (in his case) and with the people with whom he lived his Nazareth. This reflection points to a response to the call to be missionaries along the lines of the intuitions of Brother Charles, to be a Church in Mission, a Church like the Good Samaritan, that gets off its donkey to attend to those most in need,



to a wounded world, to an abandoned humanity, a people without hope, and to be a Church in dialogue and encounter with other religions, cultures and societies.

We have seen the necessity of creating a Directory for the Month of Nazareth that will better serve the development and life of the fraternities. For this we asked the collaboration of three brothers who have accepted this job, reuniting and forming a small fraternity in February 2017 in Spain: Manual POZO (Spain), Fernando TAPIA (Chile, and Continental Responsible for America) and Jean Michel BORTHERIE (France.) Thanks to them for this service to the Fraternity. The document should be approved in the General Assembly in Bangalore. It is necessary to gather material of concrete experiences, some of which were expressed in the last assembly in Poissy.

We have heard the echo of different world events on the occasion of the Centenary of the Easter of Brother Charles in local fraternities, countries and in communion with the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld—lay, religious, communities... What we hear fills us with joy and peace. As does the naming by Pope Francis of two members of the Fraternity of Priests as cardinals, in Myanmar and Malaysia; we are joyful and strengthened.

Mark presented us the financial report of the worldwide Fraternity. Thanks to the fraternities that help economically each year. We also invite the fraternities that do not collaborate that they would make an effort to strengthen the common good of the Fraternity no matter how small your financial contribution may be. Thank you. From this moment we need to reduce our expenses and save money for the General Assembly in India.

The next meeting of the International Council will be in Bangalore in January of 2018, one year before the General Assembly, to prepare, concretize and become familiar with the meeting site and to give flesh to an assembly that expresses all that the brothers of the world want to say, propose and support; our intention is to be very concrete in the activities, reflections and conclusions that are made.



without reserve, without evading responsibility, and with boundless confidence. For all this, we trust in you and in your great and sincere hearts and we send you our sincere and brotherly affection.

*Emmanuel, Jean François, Félix, Mark, Mauricio and Aurelio
Sanctuary of Hope, Kansas City, Kansas, United States, 27 October 2016*

We want to say to all that today, in the present moment in our world, with its great questions and challenges, with the situations that get out of hand and those we can handle, in this present moment of the Church, with Francis in front, as pastor and man of God, with varied pastoral and spiritual lines that are sometimes opposed, Charles de Foucauld, through his Family of Fraternities has much to say and contribute with his message of encounter between persons and different societies, and with his call to be the presence of Jesus without fear,




Mini Retreat for Priests

Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests is sponsoring a Mini Retreat for Priests from February 6-8, 2017 at Ignatius House Retreat Center in Atlanta, Ga. This is the oldest continuous gathering of the fraternity on a regional basis in the United States. Ignatius House occupies 20 wooded acres overlooking the Chattahoochee River.

All priests are welcome. The presenter for these few days is Fr. George Strohmeier, a priest of the Diocese of Erie. George is well known for his involvement in Jesus Caritas.

The Retreat will cost \$50. The Retreat House asks for \$100 a day, which includes all meals and snacks, a private room with private bath, an easily accessible conference room and chapel all on the first floor. So, the total cost will be \$250. We will begin with dinner at 6 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 6, and conclude with lunch Wednesday on Feb. 8. Two of the rooms are wheelchair accessible.

Fr. Nick Mansell is the responsible for this retreat. For more information and for reservations please call him at 478 957-5226 or e-mail him at claman225@aol.com. Arrangements can be made for transportation to and from the Atlanta airport.



At very reasonable prices, Lenny Tighe has taken the initiative to produce beautiful medals, lapel pins, and Jesus Caritas crosses. You can view and purchase these items at <http://cristianosunidos.org/foucauld2016/shop/>

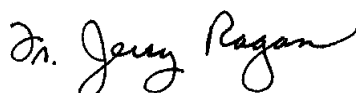
From the Responsible *continued from front cover*

something more as they explore the charisms that informed the spirituality of Blessed Charles. So, we decided in coming newsletters to explore the different aspects of the spirituality that Blessed Charles lived out.

In this issue, Fr. George Stroh-meyer of the Diocese of Erie shares on the important role that scripture plays in Fraternity. George recently directed the Fraternity Retreat in Northeast Ohio and will be directing the February Retreat in Atlanta.

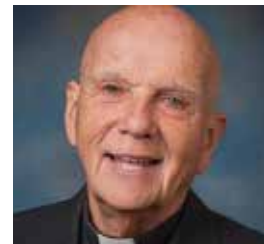
Rejoicing in the way of the In-carnation, I pray that you and your faith communities may be richly blessed this Christmas season and experience much grace as the coming year unfolds.

Fraternally,



Fr. Jerry "Hap" Ragan

P.S. – The Letter from Kansas City mentioned that Fr. Tom Kearns was brutally beaten and robbed during the International Councils stay. 2016 was not a great year for him, but he is in good spirits and bouncing back after undergoing surgery to repair broken facial bones. Tom is very grateful for your prayers and support.



Fr. Tom Kearns

National Fraternity

National Responsible

Rev. Jerry Ragan
1420 Monte Sano Avenue
Augusta, GA 30904
706-733-6627
Email: hapragan@hotmail.com

Western Council Member

Rev. Joseph Greeley
3519 St. Pancratius Place
Lakewood, CA 90712
562-634-6111; fax: 562-634-7817
Email: spanpastor@sbcglobal.net

Central Council Member

Rev. Gregory Pawloski
St. Catherine Church
PO Box O
Indianola, NE 69034
308-364-2428
Email: gppawloski@yahoo.com

Eastern Council Member

Rev. John B. Jacquell
Holy Rosary Church
2701 East Avenue
Erie, PA 16504
814-456-4254
Email: pastor@sjberie.org

South Central Council Member

Rev. Bob L. Amundsen
Immaculate Conception Parish
715 Cabrini Drive
Lafayette, CO 80026-2676
303-665-5103 Ext. 106
Email: frbob@lafayettecatholic.org

Northwestern Council Member

Rev. Ronald H Belisle
1200 E. Phillips Lake Loop Road
Shelton, WA 98584
360-427-4300
Email: ronbelisle@hctc.com

International Council Member

Rev. Mark Mertes
Blessed Sacrament Church
2203 Parallel Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66104
913-321-1958; fax: 913-321-1997
Email: frmarkkck2010@gmail.com

Bishop Liaison

Most Rev. Donald F. Hanchon
4311 Central St.
Detroit, MI 48210
313-596-7444

International Hermano Responsible

Padre Aurelio Sanz Baeza
Perin, Cartagena, Murcia, Espana
Email: asanz@quintobe.org

JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS

1420 Monte Sano Ave., Augusta, GA 30904



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Augusta, GA
Permit No. 1746406

Upcoming Dates

February 6-8

Atlanta, Ga.

Jesus Caritas Retreat at Ignatius House

July 17-21

Camarillo, Calif.

Jesus Caritas National Assembly

It is hoped that each fraternity might have a representative at the National Assembly. All priests are welcome. Fernando Tapia, the Pan American Responsible, and a priest of the Archdiocese of Santiago, Chile will direct a Day of Recollection and oversee the election of the National Responsible. St. John Seminary in Southern California offers a great setting for this relaxed triannual meeting of the National Fraternity. A registration form will be in the next newsletter.

What does the Fraternity offer the Diocesan Priest?

- ❖ The Fraternity is a place of friendship and brotherhood for diocesan priests.
- ❖ The Fraternity offers a method that is simple but effective because it is based on a realistic way to live a spiritual life for diocesan priests.
- ❖ The Fraternity helps the priest to live in his particular place.
- ❖ Priests in Fraternity are encouraged to be faithful to themselves and to one another. It is a place for sharing to help face the difficulties of our humanity.