

Priestly Fraternity Jesus Caritas
LETTER FROM KARACHI – PAKISTAN

National Assembly
03-05, November 2016

Fraternal greetings to our brothers all around the world!

Coming near to the actual day of the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of our dear Blessed Brother Charles de Foucauld, we 25 brothers representing different fraternities from various parts of Pakistan: Islamabad-Rawalpindi (1), Faisalabad (3), Lahore (3), Multan (4) Karachi (14) assembled from November 03 through November 05, 2016 at the Dominican House of Formation in the historical Christ the King Na Seminary Karachi campus.

Among us were senior and young priests, Friars belonging to religious congregations [Dominicans and Franciscans] and a few lecturers and professors of National Catholic Institute of Theology Karachi, some with extensive years in the fraternity, others experiencing the fraternity life for the first time.

The choice of Karachi was made as a practice to have the National Assembly once in North (Lahore) and once in South (Karachi) of Pakistan. This time the Dominican House of Formation was chosen as our venue not only for its calmness, serenity and natural beauty but also to recollect old days of friendship with the Dominican Friars and due to their admiration for the life and mission of Blessed Charles. These few days we lived in joy and communion in the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth.

Overall theme of the Assembly was ***Martyrdom – Mission and Challenges***. Liturgical prayers, daily adoration, celebration of the Holy Eucharist, sharings, common meals and our handwork gave the Assembly a spiritual and fraternal atmosphere.

On November 03, His Excellency Joseph Coutts, Archbishop of Karachi invited the participants to St. Patrick's Cathedral, where first we had a Requiem Mass for Bishop Rufin Anthony (Bishop of Islamabad-Rawalpindi) who had passed away a few weeks ago.

Therefore after, Archbishop welcomed us in the Archbishop's House and exchanged views of mutual concern. He appreciated the spirit of the Fraternity and was happy to see priests coming from faraway places making tedious journey. We shared fraternal dinner with him.

In conferences we learned about the life and mission of Blessed Brother Charles. Arthur Charles the Asian Responsible, briefly gave the review of the Asian Assembly held this year in July 15-22 , 2016 in Cebu – Philippians.

We were blessed to have our brother Emmanuel Asi, the member of the International Team with us. Through his reflections, sharing and guidance on: ***Mercy and Relationships in the Light of Brother Charles***, we received in-depth information, knowledge and awareness that Brother Charles lived the teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord who was merciful himself. Brother Charles understood the power of encounter with the person of Christ; this encounter led him to passionately seek out Christ in simple, hidden and ordinary places and people.

After having heard the reports and sharing of different Fraternities, we felt enriched and challenged. It was reported that at this time there are 7 Fraternities [Islamabad-Rawalpindi (1), Faisalabad (1), Lahore (1), Multan (1) Karachi (3)] and 41 Brothers who are totally committed and are following every step of the Life of the Fraternity. Among these 11 have done the Month of Nazareth.

Through the reports and sharing we felt the need to seriously evaluate our Life in the Fraternity. Keeping in mind our Pastoral assignments and activities, in many ways the self-giving and faithfulness among our brothers was impressive. Many shared that for them Jesus Caritas Fraternity is a very vital part of their lives and it helps them to live their priesthood meaningfully. Others said that the sense of fraternity has helped them to be faithful to their priesthood as they strive to shout the Gospel with their lives.

We were glad to celebrate the 50 years of priesthood of Benjamin Joseph from Lahore Fraternity. We considered his presence as a sign of commitment and dedication.

Ample reading material both in Urdu and English was provided to everyone especially to those experiencing the Assembly for the first time.

At this Assembly we also had secret ballot for the election of National Responsible. After the explanation of the policy and procedures, with round of two ballots Saleh Diego from Karachi Fraternity was elected for 3 years. In a celebration of the Holy Mass he presented his councilor team Inayat Bernard (Lahore) and Abid Tanvir (Faisalabad) which was endorsed by everyone.

A Committee is formed for the forthcoming Week of Spirituality of Brother Charles to be held on the Asian level in November 2017 in Lahore.

A questionnaire in view of the XI General International Assembly to be held in Bangalore in January 2019 was read and explained by Emmanuel Asi. The Fraternities in due time, will discuss and submit the answers as required.

Special thanks were extended to organising team and the hosts.

We also discussed our future plans, a few of them are:

- To strive to serve the poor and marginalized
- To introduce Jesus Caritas Fraternity in the other Dioceses of the country
- To make known the core goodness of Jesus Caritas in a way that young priests will recognize it
- To deepen our experience of and commitment to the charism of Blessed Brother Charles
- To give more importance to Desert Day, Review of Life and Adoration
- To intensely follow 'priest visiting priest'
- To exhibit the joy of being a priest of Jesus Caritas

At the close of the Assembly proceedings, everyone expressed the feelings of gratitude and of being blessed to attend this national gathering and to be immersed in the charism of Brother Charles.

Yours

Pakistani Brothers of Jesus Caritas

Karachi

November 12, 2016