



Dear friends,

September 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the consecration of the first brothers and sisters to the Community of Jesus. The first commitments were made in the hermitage of Santa Creu in Montserrat (Barcelona) on 29th September 1968, our official birthday, in the presence of founder layman Pere Vilaplana who died thirty-five years ago. Today, accompanied by you all, relatives and friends, we celebrate 50 years of community life.

Montserrat saw the birth of our community after ties of communion and friendship with several monks of that abbey, especially with hermit monk Father Estanislau Llopart. He presided over that celebration and was during all the early years a spiritual counselor and guide in our personal growth and in that of the young community.

It was three years since the closing of Council Vatican II and renovation could still be felt in the Church. We, students, workers, young men and women who were making our way in life heard the call to commit to the Gospel in our daily lives. Our country was then under a dictatorship, after a fratricidal war of painful memory. However, cultural and social changes were underway, and a number of trade and students' unions as well as cultural and spiritual associations were emerging. With some more permeable Pyrenees that allowed us to look beyond, especially towards France, we got to know movements of spiritual renewal. We were drawn by the message of Charles de Foucauld and Albert Peyriguère: living Nazareth, being Christians "at the heart of the world". Contemplative and missionary at the same time. A maybe too ambitious objective but one which has been essential to us all the way through the years and still is today.

All of you children, parents, friends, companions in faith, neighbours of Tarrés know we have tried to lead dedicated lives. Each of us in different ways, according to our ages, jobs and personal and family situations. The gift of God has brought us here with the help of caring counsellors, your generous love and the contribution of all our brothers and sisters who have devoted part of their lives to the Community of Jesus. Inevitably, and due to our fragile human nature, we have gone through difficulties, crises and split-ups. However, there have been joyful times of sincere inner research, of gratuitousness in our commitment, of risk, growth and maturation.

Our community, a gift of God. Living the Gospel in community, a gift of God. Friendship, a charisma that identifies us, has knotted us and given us the strength to be faithful to God's project: "Love". Jesus and his disciples have shown us what spiritual friendship is: both demanding and respectful, always loving.

Before finishing, we would like to say thank you to those we have met along our long journey.

First of all, we would like to thank Claretian Father Antoni Andrés who has accompanied us during all these years, discretely, humbly, always there for us. He has been a great example to all of us and a devoted friend for whom we feel the deepest affection.

We are profoundly grateful to the monks of the Benedictine abbey of Montserrat, wise counsellors and beloved friends, already departed: Father Abat Cassià Just, Father Estanislau Llopart, Father Vilanova, Father Oriol Diví and, lately, Father Joan Carles Elvira. They will always be with us.

We would like to thank the diocesan bishops of Barcelona, Tarragona, Lleida, Valencia and Jaca for their support, and all the priests, monks and nuns from these and other dioceses. Most especially, Cardinal Narcís Jubany, who firmly believed in our project and promoted it.

We cannot forget the religious order of Hieronymite nuns at Sant Maties Monastery in Barcelona, a community of contemplative nuns who have offered us counsel and unconditional friendship along these fifty years.

Our most sincere gratitude to fraternities, communities and groups of the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld in our country and abroad. They have been and are an example of commitment for us, and most of all, friends in the Friend.

We are particularly grateful to the people of Tarrés. The community of Jesus would not be what it is today without that first warm welcome 50 years ago. You are the reason why we are celebrating our anniversary here, today.

Finally, it would be unfair not to express our gratitude and love to our families: to our parents, most of them already departed, to our children and grandchildren. They all carry with them a trace of the spirit of the Community of Jesus. We humbly and joyfully believe that, with the help of God, we have instilled in them some of the values that guide us, like True Friendship.

Thank you very much to all of you on behalf of the brothers and sisters of the Community of Jesus.



Tarrés, 16th September 2018