

ADVENT LETTER 2018
BROTHER RESPONSIBLE
PRIESTLY FRATERNITY IESUS CARITAS

Dear brothers,

On this feast day of our brother Charles we begin Advent: the weeks of hope that are a reflection of the hope of all humanity. Our humanity, in permanent crisis, a humanitarian crisis with many aspects, pains all of us, and we cannot hide it in our Church or remain indifferent. May celebrations with our communities, personal prayer, life in fraternity, be of closeness to



that part of humanity with whom we live in our places and in those who are far away. Advent motivates us to listen to the voice that cries in the desert of all those who raise their voice for survival, in their desire for peace, work, and freedom. Humanity keeps hoping for liberation; the poor who hope for salvation, those threatened by war, the displaced searching for a secure place... There



are millions of people in this situation. For them too Jesus is proclaimed and we, as missionaries, ought to proclaim him.

The Church is living through a difficult moment because of the crisis caused by the allegations of the abuse of minors, and Pope Francis is responding with humility and courage to the world. This is a testament to the search for the truth. Francis too is a witness to the truth.

We are preparing our World Assembly 2019. We are called to reflect on our identity as diocesan missionary priests in the charism of Charles de FOUCAULD. This is a task for all the brothers, supporting the regional responsables, praying for all the brothers of the world, for the fraternities that are beginning and those that are ageing.

A HUMANITY IN CRISIS

Every day we receive bad news of men and women, children, young people and the elderly, who suffer from causes that are not always clear to public opinion and the media. We know that it depends often on the hidden interests of economic powers and governments who hide very harsh realities in their countries, even if they belong to the “First World”. Victims of wars, of violence, of drug-trafficking, of the male domination over women in many cultures, the victims of poverty, cry out in this wilderness, where voices demanding justice abound. Voices that intermingle with others that seek vengeance, or those of “nothing is going on here” or “Go back to your country”. We too have a voice, the voice of Jesus, the one announced by the prophets. A voice that should emerge from our faith, our missionary



vocation, in the style of Nazareth which is to be with the people of our town or city, with the most humble among them, because only the humble teach us to be humble. Brother Charles discovered Jesus in the midst of the simple people: may we learn from him.

AN ADVENT THAT INVITES US TO BE RECEPTIVE



This Advent time is an invitation to listen, to stop the clock and, in a contemplative attitude to listen to the Word, the silence of God in adoration, and to listen to our brothers: our brothers of the Fraternity, brother priests of our diocesan presbyterate who, sometimes, are hard for us to listen to and accept because

prejudices kill dialogue and encounter; the people who come to us seeking answers to their problems, or who share in pastoral, social, work with us, or, simply, are our neighbours. Let us open the door, let us leave the best place in our house for whoever seeks, and not accustom ourselves to a dynamic of good advice and easy words. To show our poverty, our limitations for fixing "damaged machines", wounded hearts, is to allow God to act. He is indispensable. It is he who heals. Jesus is not indifferent to anything, and this Advent he encourages us to open our hearts and to allow ourselves to be inundated by the love of God and the love of the people. Let us recover the joy of following Jesus and help many sad people to transform their failure into triumph, to love themselves a little more.

A CHURCH THAT SUFFERS

We are all suffering the consequences of child abuse hidden in many dioceses of the world. The Church is losing credibility, influence, etc. We could just say that this has always happened, that it was inevitable... We would not be faithful to the truth. We know that this open crisis has not yet ended. Pope Francis is also suffering for all of this, and is facing the music, asking forgiveness on behalf of those who did harm, listening, opening paths for a solution that offers justice for the victims, and this man deserves our support. Let us live in communion with Pope Francis, with enemies in his own Church, but with the support of all good people, whether believers or not, who see in Francis a prophet of our time, a consistent man who, despite being "head of State", is a human being, sensitive to the suffering of humanity. I am sure that, from all this crisis, something very positive will emerge for the life of the Church and the proclamation of the Kingdom. Let us unite our prayer for fraternity with the Pope, wherever we may be.



DECEMBER 1

102 years ago, Charles de FOUCAULD definitively placed himself into the hands of the Father. Today is a day to give thanks to God for him, for what he transmitted to us with his intuitions, for the mission he carried out with the people who were his neighbours, for his crazy dreams. Brother Charles has helped us in our vocation and our spirituality to live in friendship with Jesus and with people, in the Nazareth that we each live, with our age and desire to live, in silence and in proclamation. It is a gift from God that deserves our continuous thanks. Let us take time to value this gift: let us place in this day's adoration before Jesus all that has come to us from Charles de FOUCAULD which, probably, are not so much his spiritual writings as his testimony of life, of love, of abandonment, of trust and generosity. Let us make the prayer of abandonment even if it is hard to accept that we still have much left to make it completely ours.



OUR WORLD ASSEMBLY

From the 15th to the 30th of January 2019 we will celebrate our World Fraternity Assembly in Cebu, Philippines. The central theme is to deepen our character as diocesan missionary priests in the charism of Charles de FOUCAULD. Everything concerning the Assembly is announced on our web-page iesuscaritas.org



On the site's green Home Bar is the preparatory questionnaire, the Assembly program, the registration sheet... So far there are few inscriptions received and only one continent (America) has presented the answers to the questionnaire, as well as some regional fraternities. It is advisable that we do not leave these tasks to the last moment.

Courage with everything. I know that we are all very busy and we have little time. Let's make an effort. It fills me with joy to receive emails with inscriptions and answers to the questionnaire, and I understand the difficulties that this implies for some fraternities.

All the regional responsables or delegates, previous international responsables and the continental responsables will be coming to the Assembly. Some of our brothers cannot pay for their trips, because of the situations in their country. The world fraternity takes care of these expenses as far as possible, but nowadays it is very difficult to be able to cover all the necessities. Some fraternities of Europe and America have responded by paying the bill of a brother from Africa, or from America itself... Thank you. I am asking fraternities for your readiness to help in their journey brothers from Haiti, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cameroon, Rwanda, Madagascar, Pakistan, India and Bangla Desh, who still do not have their plane ticket. It is an important effort that will make possible the presence and participation of these brothers in the Philippines.

Thanks to the Filipino Brothers for all the work in Cebu to make the assembly possible. Let us trust in the goodwill of all the brothers in the world to demonstrate that the Fraternity is more than a group of priests, a form of spirituality: It is sharing what we have. Thank you. Our next brother responsible, who we will elect in Cebu, and his new team will help us to

continue making fraternity possible out of our realities and dreams.

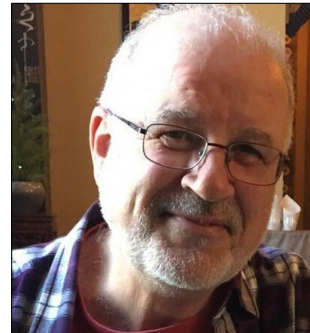
A STEP TOWARDS CHRISTMAS



In these weeks of preparation for Christmas we will arrange the best place of our life for He who comes to stay. The Angels announced the Good News to the shepherds, and they announce many joys to us. There are angels who call to us at the door, or on the phone, or on the street, and who tell us, sometimes without knowing it, that God is with us. There are faces that make us see Jesus in the hospital, in prison, in reception centres for refugees. Angels in the persons of our sick or very old siblings, who have given everything for the Church, for the fraternity, for the poor. Faces of anonymous people

who do good without expecting anything in return. The Angels of the simple people of our parishes who help us in pastoral action, or with their presence in the celebrations, or offer us the best they have of their closeness and friendship. They are angels without wings, but with a voice that no one can silence.

With hope this Advent for a better world, a Church free from the sorrows of the past, a fraternity of brothers working in the tasks of the Kingdom, a world renewed by efforts for peace, for human rights, against all inequalities, my desire is for a Christmas full of God, of Jesus brother and friend. A big embrace.



Aurelio SANZ BAEZA, brother responsible

Perín, Cartagena, Murcia, Spain, 1 December 2018,
Feast of Blessed Charles de FOUCAULD

(Thanks so much, Liam, for translation to English)