

Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests

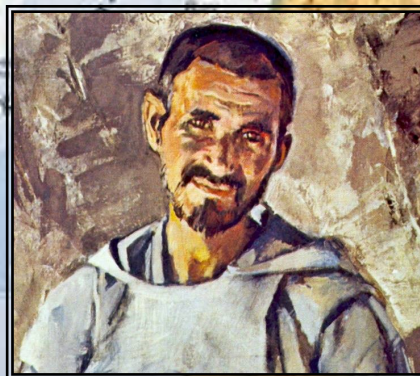
Be Brothers! uk & eire

New series 26

June 2021

(Was "BB's UK"
till this issue.)

*With a newly
'internationalised'
"Be Brothers" and a
new Responsible for
the UK fraternities
of Jesus Caritas, we
start a new era!*





Brothers, At the age of seventy I find myself 'elected' National Responsible for the Fraternity in Britain. Being in active retirement, without the responsibility of a parish, I have the time and energy for this role. I am very happy to take it on, since I believe Jesus Caritas is of great value both to the priesthood and to the whole Church.

**From the
new UK
Responsible**

My personal involvement with the Fraternity began shortly after I was ordained in 1979. In those days, despite doing a Month of Nazareth, I did not really appreciate the value of the charism of Brother Charles, so it was more of a priestly support group than a true Jesus Caritas Fraternity. Nevertheless it kept going through many ups and downs and changes of membership; it was always an important part of my life. In more recent times, thanks to the two-day recollections and the Month of 2016 organised by Don Stoker, the very special gift of the spirituality of Br. Charles has become clear to me and an essential dimension of my own spiritual life.

In his recent Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis wrote: *"Blessed Charles directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being and asked a friend to 'pray to God that I truly be the brother of all.'"*

Most of us are not called to the Saharan desert, but we do find ourselves living in a spiritual desert which can challenge our faith and leave us feeling depressed about the state of the Church and our society. The spiritual legacy of Br. Charles, 'Jesus Caritas' can, I believe, be a constant source of renewed hope and inspiration for ourselves, our brother priests and the whole people of God. With our National Team I hope that in some small way we may share his vision with you all.

Brother Charles, pray for us! *Stephen Squires.*

+

Fraternity news

- **"Be Brothers uk & eire" by email:** This copy is being distributed by email as a PDF file to all UK & Irish brothers via their Responsibles and also to UK fraternities as 'hard copy.'
- **The UK National Team** has, since June, met by "Zoom" technology on 30/10/20, 18/1/21 & 24/2/21 & will meet early on 13/10/21. Decisions made show below or elsewhere in this issue.
- **The Assembly of European Regional Responsibles:** Because of the pandemic, they have decided not to hold the Assembly in 2021 but to delay till 11-18 July 2022 in Annecy, France.
- **Canonisation of Br Charles:** Fr Bernard Ardura, the Postulator for this, has said there is a Consistory of Cardinals on Monday 3rd May; which is the signal that a date will be announced.
- **A 'Month of Nazareth'** is to be held near Broadway, Worcs. over Mon. 6th September - Fri. 1st October 2021; see more on page 16. Recommended for every brother once in your life!
- **The annual meeting of UK Responsibles** will again be held via "Zoom" at 2.30pm on 13th October 2021. A link will be sent to Responsibles. All other brothers are welcome to join in. The National Team are considering running quarterly meetings for different regions of GB.
- **The annual UK Jesus Caritas 2-day mini-retreat** returns at Boars Hill Carmelite centre, Oxford, in Jan. 2022. The booking form with the dates will be emailed to Responsibles later.
- **While sorry to hear Hugh Sinclair's Birmingham fraternity has folded,** it could hardly be for a better reason! (cf. e.mail page 18.) Fortunately Stephen Squires has, in recent years, set up 2 other Birmingham Archdiocese fraternities, and Paul Johnson yet another.
- **PRESS DATE for the November "Be Brothers uk & eire" is 1st August for full articles, snippets accepted till Aug. 15th.** Contributions from Irish fraternities especially welcome. +

As "Be Brothers" welcomes the Irish contingent to its fold, the Irish National Responsible, Niall Ahern, offers-

A word of introduction



A warm and fraternal greeting to all our UK brothers as we commence this new and exciting link with you through BE BROTHERS. We are delighted to avail of this new engagement with you and are confident that as we pray for one another we will in turn "strengthen our brothers" (Lk 22:32).

Our Fraternity in IRELAND began over four decades ago In Dublin when the Little Sisters came amongst us and some brother priests became involved with them. Immediately our UK brothers supported us and Tony Philpot came and introduced us at first hand to the charism of BR CHARLES. Small beginnings - great acorns!

We have grown and matured since and continue to be blessed by the presence of the Little Sisters in Belfast. Our numbers hold fast even if our age profile is concerning and we have about thirty five groups who meet in small numbers and are sustained under the inspiration of the Prayer of Abandonment. The upcoming canonisation of BR CHARLES has given new impetus to us all and with fraternities throughout the world we feel greatly supported by the international team - especially during this pandemic time. The meditations and themes they have explored with us have given us graced food for thought. We have used zoom and e mail to stay in contact here over these past desert months and look forward to meeting nationally for our Christmas and summer retreat gatherings as soon as circumstance allows.

Fratelli Tutti has provided a wonderful source of encouragement and the recent visit of Pope Francis to IRAN has been a global witness to all that BR CHARLES held as precious. We have called on one another to persevere in the shared review of life which has supported us in the current isolation and brought a deepening of fraternal compassion and love which we might not otherwise have experienced.

We have had to commend to God's loving care several of our brothers who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. May the fullness of joy which we hope they now experience - support us on our journey.

Thank you on behalf of the brothers in Ireland for your willingness to respond so positively to our invitation for deeper communion and may the days ahead be marked with shared fraternal care and deepening commitment to all that holds us together as "*Little brothers of Jesus Caritas.*"

Niall Ahern, Irish National Responsible.

Niall is assisted by a Team of:

- *Philip Bradley (Dublin; treasurer,)*
- *Fergal Cunnane (Dunmore, Co. Galway;*
Secretary, to whom correspondence may be forwarded)
- *Joe Deegan (Clara, Co. Offaly; national representative on the European team.)*

There are 17 Irish fraternities of both diocesan and religious priests from all over the country with a continual outreach to include younger members.

There is also a community of the Little Sisters of Jesus at 10 New Barn Green, Belfast BT12 7HS 0044 28 90328 877; and the coordinator of the Lay Fraternity is Mr. Bill Sutherland at 40 Balally Grove, Dundrum, Dublin 6. 003353 89 418 9190.

Letter to the Brothers around the world

With the imminent canonisation of Bro. Charles, our International Responsible, Eric Lozada, has proposals for us.



Beloved brothers, Peace and fraternal love to you all at this time of pandemic!

Like Mary of Magdala announcing the resurrection of Jesus to the eleven, I am humbled yet filled with great joy about the things I am about to tell you. The Risen Christ, in preparing the brothers for the good news, instructed Mary to “go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee. There they will see me.” (Mt. 28: 10) Galilee is Jesus’ chosen place to be seen in his serene but glorious appearance after his painful crossing. It also is a place of encounter, transformation and renewed commitment to follow him beyond the passion event. While they narrated to one another their anxiety about the future, confusion and guilt about all the things that have happened, Jesus came in their midst. He patiently led them to see with new eyes their small stories of disillusionment and pain in the light of the bigger story of the Kingdom of God. Only after experiencing the forgiveness and peace of God in the Resurrected Christ that the brothers were marked permanently by a renewed joy and dauntless courage to cry the Gospel with their own lives until their own martyrdom.

In the same way, Jesus is inviting us to go to the Galilee of our fraternal communion - local, national, regional and international – and see again Christ’s event in our world and history. With the same spirit, allow me to share with you some proposals, calls for reflection and action vis-à-vis our preparation, celebration and post celebration activities in relation to the canonization of Bro Charles. These proposals are coming from our on line meetings with the international team. It is our hope that we all go collectively and individually to a space of gratitude, joy and awe for this gift. May the same gift also engender renewal, grounding and recommitment for us who have been inspired by the life and witness of Bro. Charles. It is important to note that we are celebrating this gift with the other members of the spiritual family.

So, how shall we celebrate the canonization of Bro Charles? Though the date has not been fixed, we feel it is important to plan and organize our gratitude and joy. Before anything else, allow me to pose this question with you: How important is the canonization of Bro Charles to you who follow his spirituality? How do you understand it? May I invite you to hold this question for some time and listen very well to your inspired valuation of the event. Your personal and the other’s personal discernment when shared and listened to would serve as a wellspring from which our creative planning and celebration of the event could take their inspiration.

It is our firm conviction that this canonization is not about glorifying Bro Charles. This is very much counter to what he lived for. Rather, it is about affecting and effecting renewal in the Church, in our world, in the clergy building on the charism, intuition, message, legacy of Bro Charles. Our Church today, through the courageous leadership of Pope Francis is moving towards mission to the peripheries, renewed evangelization, care for our common home, forging human fraternities for global peace. The pandemic has exposed a more complex virus that is infecting a greater divide between the rich and the poor, increasing tensions among political leaders of our globe, market economics that edges out human and ecological accountability, culture that has become fast and loose with high-speed digitalized information. The diocesan clergy is in need of an icon that inspires greater radicality in living out the Gospel and a spirituality that grounds our ministry in the non-conventional ways of Jesus in Nazareth. Bro Charles has always been and will always be a witness pointing to Jesus. After he lived what he passionately believed, we are invited to take on the path he trod with the same love and intensity until our last breath.

So, here are our humble proposals:

- That the canonization be not merely a one-day event but a prolonged process distinguished by three different phases: PREPARATION; CELEBRATION; PERIOD AFTER CANONIZATION;
- That we invite every lay person, religious, deacon, priest, bishop to participate in our local, national, regional and international processes of reflection, prayer and action, if possible, together with the other members of the spiritual family;
- That in our **Preparation Phase**, we are guided by the following themes for personal and communal discernment: *The Situation of the Poor in our World Today* (by Fernando Tapia); *The Biography of Bro Charles and Its Validity Today* (Honore Savadogo); *Essential Elements of the Spirituality Inspired by Bro Charles and its Actuality Today* (Tony Lanes); *Our Way of Evangelizing Inspired in Bro Charles' Witness* (Fernando Tapia); *Interreligious Dialogue In the Life and Intuitions of Bro Charles* (Jean Francois Berjonneau). They will be available weekly at our website – www.iesuscaritas.org. We read, reflect, pray and be moved into action by these jewels of Bro Charles. May I make a humble appeal to the continental responsables to motivate the national and local responsables to check on our website for these documents so that we could all be drinking from the same well together;
- That our reflections may give birth to creative liturgies, missionary and solidarity actions to the peripheries in the local, national, regional or continental levels, if possible, in collaboration with the other members of the Spiritual Family;
- That the Association of the Spiritual Family of Bro Charles shall organize a vigil on the eve of the canonization in Rome and on the day after the canonization at St Peter's, there will be a thanksgiving mass presided over by the Most Reverend John MacWilliam, Bishop of the Sahara. More details shall be announced as soon as the date is fixed.
- That in the **period after canonization**, we zealously announce Bro Charles and his spirituality by organizing weeks of Nazareth for young people and for priests who are interested and by facilitating international Month of Nazareth by language.

Thank you very much. May the Universal Brother, St. Charles de Foucauld intercede for us that we may be renewed as missionary diocesan priests and courageous disciples of Jesus of Nazareth today.

Sending to you the brotherly affection of the members of the International Team.

Your servant-brother, *Eric Lozada*. +



*"School of Life"
concluded from
page 14.*

Our own experiences of love and trust: We will pray this prayer very differently according to our own experiences of love and trust. The brokenness of our world deeply affects our desire and our ability to trust. If the most fortunate among us can think of so many reasons to be cautious, what of those who have been deeply wounded? Who of us has not been betrayed at one time or another? But, in the last analysis, is it not the deepest yearning of our heart to let go and to abandon ourselves to love?

Charles introduced this meditation saying, *"May it not only be the prayer of our last moment but that of all our moments."* May this prayer be a help for each of us along our way. +

Report from a long-standing fraternal group of Imams and Catholic priests

Introduced by Moira Poitier.

Sat 24/10/2020

Dear Bob, I am glad to share material with you, which in turn (gets) shared more widely.

I am sharing more here - this was sent to me by Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, who thought it might interest me and the fraternities. Michael is a real friend to us.

As you will see it is a response to the terrible atrocity perpetrated last week in Paris in the name of religious duty. I found inspiring the fact of a long-standing fraternal group of Imams and Catholic priests in Marseille. Maybe an idea for the UK, if they don't already exist - and certainly in keeping with our Foucauldian spirituality and roots.

Moira Poitier (National Responsible for the UK Lay Communities of Bro. Charles.)

Translated from the French.

From: Christophe Roucou roucou.christophe@gmail.com Wednesday, 21 October 2020

Good morning. The Marseille-based imams-priests group, which has been meeting for 10 years, has written a message following the recent assassination of Mr Samuel Paty in Nice. This group says its condemnation of any terrorist act, reiterates the importance of meeting, dialogue, welcoming cultural and religious riches and differences and also its readiness to witness a respectful and peaceful life together.

Don't hesitate to spread this message through your networks and contacts.

Christophe Roucou, Member of this group.

Message from the imams-priests group of Marseille

We are a friendly group of imams and priests from Marseille, to which are added a Muslim believer and a Catholic nun. On a regular basis, for the past 10 years, we have met to exchange, share and deepen together through listening, reflection, questioning the elements of our faith, our culture, the facts of society.

We are convinced that we belong to the same humanity, that we are beings of relationship and that our origins, our opinions, our political currents and our religions are places of mutual discovery and enrichment.

Like the entire French national community, we are deeply shocked by the horrific murder of Mr Samuel Paty, professor of history at the College of Conflans Sainte Honorine. This cowardly and abject murder of a teacher violates fundamental principles of the Republic such as freedom of expression, freedom of conscience, secularism. We are deeply convinced of the merits of these principles. We would like to express our support for the family of Mr. Samuel Paty, his loved ones and all the staff of the National Education. We recognize the importance of their work.

Our group is modest but it is a sign among others that it is in the dialogue conducted with frankness and respect that ignorance, misunderstandings, prejudices will recede and leave more room for a more peaceful and fraternal life together. The work is in front of us and it needs everyone.

More than ever, as citizens and as believers, let us talk about citizenship, secularism, religious belief and the place of religions, violence and terrorism, in public debate and in all places of education of young people, including, by invitation, in public and private schools. It is only by using words that ignorance and barbarism will be reduced.

- We are concerned about the growing climate in our country and targeting Muslims and their structures that work within a republican framework.
- We are available for any initiative that would lead us to witness together, with believers of other religious traditions and agnostics, to what leads us to serve the republican ideal in its three dimensions of "liberty, equality and fraternity."
- We refuse to give in to fear or division.
- We have made a decision to live together as brothers, welcoming our diversity with its challenges and benefits.

Marseille, October 21, 2020

- Messrs Azzedine Aïnouche, Farid Bourouba, Salim Bouzred, Haroun Derbal, Nassurdine Haidar, Mohsen Ngazou, Abdessalem Souiki, Madame Saïda Driouiche.
 - Fathers Thierry Alfano, Jean-Louis Barrain, Philippe Barrucand, Martin Durin, Jean Lahondès,
 - Jean-Pol Lejeune, Laurent Notareschi, Christophe Roucou, sister Christine Pousset.
- +

***Inspire the dream—
"Fratelli Tutti"***

***Niall Ahern is a diocesan priest and Irish
National Responsible of the Jesus Caritas.***



The International Fraternity of Jesus Caritas rejoices in the theme and scope of the recent encyclical of Pope Francis – FRATELLI TUTTI - and by the renewed appeal for universal brotherhood amongst all men and women. And it is encouraging to observe that towards its conclusion the person of Charles de Foucauld stands with Saint Francis of Assisi from whose Admonitions this document draws its inspiration. Blessed Charles, due to be numbered among the saints this month, embodied in every way the aspiration and concrete expression of what universal brotherhood signifies.

Pope Francis concludes this timely exhortation:

286. In these pages of reflection on universal fraternity, I felt inspired particularly by Saint Francis of Assisi. Yet I would like to conclude by mentioning another person of deep faith who, drawing upon his intense experience of God, made a journey of transformation towards feeling a brother to all. I am speaking of Blessed Charles de Foucauld.

287. Blessed Charles directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being and asked a friend to 'pray to God

that I truly be the brother of all'. He wanted to be, in the end, 'the universal brother'. Yet only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all. May God inspire the dream in all of us. Amen.

Charles de Foucauld's dream followed the same route as that of Francis of Assisi. Like Francis he underwent radical conversion. He was poor and, like Francis, he wanted neither works nor buildings but witness. Like Francis, he lived in an age replete with problems for the church and for the world. One can often wonder about the reason for this natural similarity between the Saharan mystic and the saint of Assisi. This encyclical sharpens focus: both of them lived in an age which suffered from the same social and religious contradictions but also the same pressure for an authentic return to the gospel: both of them recognised that in frenetic activity there was an inevitable fragmentation that affects all. They condensed the complexities of their search and the contradictions of their wounded world into two incisive ideals – the notion of poverty and that of universal brotherhood. They were both committed to the culture of encounter – listening to the other at a new depth so that one's own way of living may be challenged and made new. They promoted dialogue and solidarity as the effective way to respect the common good.

We note that this encyclical is subtitled 'On Fraternity and Social Friendship' and has been written by Pope Francis with a stated purpose:

It does not claim to offer a complete teaching on fraternal love, but rather to consider its universal scope, its openness to every man and woman. I offer this social encyclical as a modest contribution to continued reflection, in the hope that in the face of present day attempts to eliminate or ignore others, we may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words. Although I have written it from the Christian convictions that inspire and sustain me, I have sought to make this reflection an invitation to dialogue among all people of good will (FT, 6).

This encyclical will be globally appreciated because the Pope recognises that the human conscience is in crisis and distanced from transcendent values and we are all experiencing the numbness that the void of interconnectedness exposes. When the last Israeli president Shimon Peres visited Pope Francis six years ago to promote the idea of a Parliament of World Religions, the Pope took time to reflect and discern since there is a risk that we 'secularize' transcendence and treat it as a political tool. Pope Francis wishes to make the idea of fraternity a fundamental notion and leans on the witness of Saint Francis and Brother Charles as exemplars of this ideal. They are the mentors of his dream for all of humankind.

As we travel with Brother Charles through his eventful life we see the continuum of this fraternal ideal take root and develop: as a wayward and questioning youth, as Moroccan explorer, as a novice at Notre Dame des Neiges, as a Trappist at Akbes, as a servant at the Poor Clares in Nazareth, at Jerusalem, as a hermit at Beni-Abbes and in the Hoggar. In the life and writings of this universal brother we discover one of the great spiritual figures of the twentieth century. Born in 1859 into an aristocratic family, after a radical conversion experience in the prime of his life, de Foucauld retreated from France to the Sahara, where he lived among the local Muslim Tuaregs. He was assassinated in 1916. This conversion moment is crucial in the central call of FRATELLI TUTTI. The encyclical is written in an invitational style. The invitation is, however, unremitting and is focused on nothing less than a personal conversion of heart; a direct and individual call by Pope Francis to universal metanoia in the light of his astute assessment of the fragility and polarization of today's world. The choice of Charles de Foucauld as the one who exemplifies a unique response to this invitation to universal fraternity, marks him as a person of significance to our modern world and his witness deserves further study to shape the realization of the dream that FRATELLI TUTTI proposes. The Jesus Caritas Fraternity is a unique meeting place for us all to engage in the study and implementation of this challenging but encouraging encyclical. The dream can be the reality. +

Prayer of Abandonment: Father, I abandon myself into your hands;

A school of life: The 'Prayer of Abandon' of Charles de Foucauld

By Little Sister Cathy Wright.

(Written c.20 years ago. The editor is indebted to Moira Poitier for forwarding it to us.)

I have often regretted that more is not available in English on the life and spirituality of Charles de Foucauld. So I was glad when

Robert Ellsberg recently re-published some of Charles' writings in Orbis' "Modern Spiritual Masters" series. At the same time Br. Antoine Chatelard, (Who died January 2021; see Moira Poitier's e.mail, page 18. Ed.) a little brother of Jesus, continues doing research into the life and writings of Charles, most of which, unfortunately, has not been translated from French. In this article I will draw on many of Antoine's insights and in particular, those about de Foucauld's well-known Prayer of Abandon."

Simple Presence and Friendship: For those who do not know him, Charles de Foucauld was killed in 1916 in the Sahara Desert. He had gone there to live in the image of "Jesus of Nazareth"; to live a life of deep prayer among the people of North Africa, a sort of evangelization through simple presence and friendship.

He had been born into a wealthy, French family, and orphaned as a child. He lost his faith and wandered unhappily for many years. His rediscovery of faith radically changed him and gave meaning and direction to his life. Charles then spent seven years as a Trappist monk and three years as a hermit in Nazareth, years in which his understanding of his vocation evolved through a life rooted in prayer and meditation on the scriptures. It was at the end of this period that he felt led to the Sahara and to the people who lived there.

An intimate portrait: The Prayer of Abandon has been used in many contexts. To understand it from Charles' perspective you have to know that his prayer style was very Jesus-centered, the fruit of a deep personal relationship with Jesus. There was nothing abstract about his prayer. He often dialogued with Jesus (today we would call it active imagination) and he wrote many of these conversations down as a way of helping him to focus his prayer, especially in times of dryness.

The Prayer of Abandon was not written as a spiritual testament at the end of Charles' life. In fact, he wrote it in the early years as a Trappist. The well-known text is actually taken from a longer meditation, a prayer that Charles puts onto the lips of a dying, crucified Jesus. That is important to know. And as with most of our prayers and meditations, it reveals more about Charles' own relationship with God than that of Jesus. As it was never meant to be read by others, it paints a very intimate portrait.

I am using the text as it is more popularly known rather than the complete text. The difference mainly lies in the removal of repetitions.

Charles introduces the meditation with these words: *"It is the last prayer of our Master, of our Beloved... may it be ours... May it not only be the prayer of our last moment but that of all our moments."* *"Father, I abandon myself into your hands. Do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you. I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me and in all your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul. I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father."*

Continued on page 14

do with me what you will. Whatever you do, I thank you. I am ready for all,

On going into the desert *Niall Ahern has forwarded two articles that appeared in an earlier Irish version of "Be Brothers."* (Unfortunately they were received in un-editable form) *The first is by Oliver O'Reilly; I hope to fit the second, by Fr. Rufus Hally, in the November "BB; uk & eire."*

Our fears of being alone drive us to noise and crowds. We keep up a constant stream of words even if they are inane. We buy radios to strap to our wrist and stereos and videos to augment the colour television so that if no one else is around at least we are not condemned to silence. T.S. Eliot analyzed our culture so well then he wrote Where shall the world be found, where will the world resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.

The definitive alternative is to cultivate an inner solitude and silence that sets us free from loneliness and fear.

Settle yourself in solitude and you will come upon him in yourself, says Teresa of Avila.

Charles de Foucauld who loved the writings of St. Teresa realised early in his priestly ministry that there is a solitude of the heart that can be maintained at all times. Crowds or lack of them have little to do with this inward attentiveness. It is quite possible to be a desert hermit and never experience solitude. But if we possess inward solitude we will not fear being alone for we know that we are not alone. Neither do we fear being with others, for they do not control us. In the midst of noise and confusion we are settled into a deep inner silence.

At times however, we must go to the desert to discover a lonely place, because a life without a quiet centre easily becomes

destructive. When we cling to the results of our actions as our only way of self-identification, then we become possessive and defensive and tend to look at our fellow human beings more as enemies to be kept at a distance, than as friends with whom we share the gifts of life.

In the lonely place we discover that being is more important than having, that we are worth more than the result of our efforts. We discover that our life is not a possession to be defined but a gift to be shared, we become aware that our worth is not the same as our usefulness. In an affluent society the lonely place or desert becomes an oasis. It is the rare occurrence. It is hard to find but essential to my spiritual wellbeing. The desert saves me from the engulfment by too much, too often, too long. There I search for and find true meaning to life.

Yahweh used the desert as the novitiate for his chosen people:
*I am going to lure them away,
Lead them into the desert
And speak to their hearts.* (Hosea 2:16).

Jesus lived both in inward heart solitude and also frequently experienced outward solitude. He inaugurated his ministry by spending forty days alone in the desert (Mt. 4: 1-11) Before he chose the Twelve he spent the entire night alone in the desert hills (Luke 6:12). When he received the news of the death of John the Baptist,

I accept all; let only your will be done in me and in all your creatures, I wish no more than this.

he *withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart* (Mt. 14:13). After the miraculous feeding of the five thousand Jesus made his disciples leave; then he dismissed the crowd and went up into the hills by himself . . . (Mt. 14:23). Following a long night of work, in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place (Mk. 1:35). When the twelve had returned from a preaching and healing mission, Jesus instructed them "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place" (Mk. 6:31).

Following the healing of a leper Jesus *withdrew to the wilderness and prayed* (Lk. 5:16). With three disciples he sought out the silence of a holy mountain as the stage for the transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-9). As he prepared for his highest and most holy work Jesus sought the solitude of the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-46). Seeking out a solitary place was a regular practice with Jesus.

Charles de Foucauld's love for the scriptures drove him into the desert in abandonment to the Father. He thought of the desert as a route to bring divine charity to men who were abandoned. He chose to live there to serve, suffer and share in littleness. In the Sahara he used to bless the insomnia permitting him to make his meditations:

Two o'clock in the morning – How good of you, my God to wake me up! Still six hours left with nothing to do but contemplate you, to stay at your feet, just saying: I love you.

Like Jesus, being tempted in the wilderness, Charles also had to endure the pain of the desert. *The desert does not sustain the weakling, it crushes him. Who makes the effort and fights back can survive.*

(Little Brother Milad Isad)

However Charles was greatly inspired in his efforts by the writings of St. John of the Cross: *Love does not consist in feeling great things but in knowing great deprivation and great suffering for the Beloved.*

The desert forces confrontation with ultimate realities, wild beasts and angels, God and the Evil One. It is not for the timid, the unprepared. The desert is the place where a man feels his feebleness most, because he is obliged to cease those human activities which are often an alibi or a veil that hide God from him. It is the place where a person feels most acutely his need for the aid of the Holy Spirit in order to persevere in his weakness and remain faithful.

The desert experience will probably involve what St. John of the Cross calls "*the dark night of the soul*". This is not something destructive. On the contrary it is an experience to be welcomed as a sick person might welcome a surgery that promised health and well-being. What is involved may be a sense of dryness, depression, even lostness.

The dark night is one of the ways God brings us to a hush a stillness,

Into your hands I commend my soul; I offer it to you with all the love of my heart. For

so that he may work as inner transformation upon the soul. St. John of the Cross sums it up: *Oh, then, spiritual soul, when you see your appetites darkened, your inclinations dry and constrained, your faculties incapacitated for any interior exercise, do not be affected. Think of this as a grace, since God is freeing you from yourself and taking from you your own activity.*

However well your actions may have succeeded you did not work so completely, perfectly and securely – owing to their impurity and awkwardness – as you do now that God takes you by the hand and guides you in darkness, as though you were blind, along a way and to a place you know not. You would never have succeeded in reaching this place no matter how good your eyes and your feet.

In the desert we lose our over dependencies on this world, whatever world means – father, mother, children, career, success, rewards; and we can form a community of faith in which there is little to defend and must to share. Renewed in faith we take the world seriously but never too seriously. In our contemporary society we suffer all the effects of the weight of modern civilization as it accelerates the rhythm of our days, and we can become spiritually tired due to over-busy and wearisome lives.

All things in nature, animate and inanimate, function in harmony with a minimum of friction, conflict and noise. Through the desert periods in my life God helps me

to discern the correct rhythms of living and the essentials of life. The desert can be an empty room, a kitchen, a church, a mountain, a field, a garden, a Lough Derg. It is anywhere I hear a call to silence. Aloneness, waiting, endurance, listening. It is here I establish my true identity. *He who brings himself to nought discovers who he is.*

If I live only in community I can begin to live off community, fade into the composite, become a wall-flower or parasite, lose my individuality. The desert can help me discover the primary colours that make up my life and contribute to the glory of community. Not only do I discover my own true worth in the desert but also the worth of community. The person of Jesus is both individual and universal. Charles de Foucauld's approach to Jesus was totally individual in the desert yet he became known as 'universal brother'. RenHVoillaume sees the need to join the crowd and the desert so that we all become contemplatives in the market place.

A desert can bloom or a desert can bury and accordingly affect the person, whatever the Lord wishes. The sun and wind have varying effects. Either way I will gradually come to a better perspective of life, of community, of myself. God may combine burning and blooming in one desert experience as outlined by St. John of the Cross. The desert is mystery to which I surrender in faith. It is a risk, so I fear. Charles de Foucauld answered that Fear is the signpost of duty. The desert takes me away from the complexities of society while at

I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands, without re-

the same time making it possible for me to enter more deeply into the mystery of God and life. This experience simplifies my cluttered life and increases my capacity to discover mystery, not only while there, but also on my return to community.

I do not dictate terms while in the desert, I am forced to yearn and cry out to God. The desert stretches and enlarges me by the yearning it generates. If I live a life of self-indulgence quite the contrary happens. I grow smaller, my concentration becomes narrower, and my expectations become more petty. I do not know deep sighing, deep longing. I live on the surface, in the immediate, only skin-deep in tastes and values. I have become scattered and distracted by trivial matters. I have lost a purity of heart, a singleness of purpose. I feel myself being attacked by the ants and insects of life.

However in the desert, if I allow the Word of God into my heart, into my memory, before my eyes, on my lips, then the desert will bear fruit

in my life not matter how hungry, tired, forlorn, I might feel for the moment. Angels will minister to me in whatever for or time the Lord wishes.

The desert is always a unique experience of the providence of God in my life. On my desert day I allow the Lord and myself to see into my mind and heart. I may need a Bible to coax or cajole my stubborn will. I look at my life honestly and see all happenings in the past as God purifying and moulding me in his image. I try to forgive myself for my mistakes which God has already forgiven. I take particular attention of my resentments and seek the Lord's healing. I look for the pointers in my life at present and see them as the Lord's directives for the future. If I am lucky and brave enough I may have a faithful friend or friends to share some or all of these revelations with, afterwards. As soon as I believed that there was a God, I understood that I would not do otherwise than to live only for him.

Oliver O'Reilly (Kilmore)

FR OLIVER O'REILLY is an Irish parish priest and ministers in the diocese of Kilmore. An active member of the Fraternity, he had worked in Nigeria for several years and is an outspoken voice for justice and peace.

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History of the British fraternities?

Interest has been expressed in putting together a history of the fraternity in GB. Might any of our elder statesmen be prepared to pen some notes on its earlier development, or even on how it came to be established in this country? Such info. could be forwarded initially to our National Responsible, Stephen Squires, as per his details on the rear cover.

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serve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father. *(Brother Charles.)*

"A School of Life" continued from page 9

An obstacle to praying: Possibly one of the biggest obstacles to our praying of this prayer along

with Charles and Jesus is our wounded trust. We might want to take a few moments to consider how we trust. We might want to give thanks for those moments when we were able to trust in the face of difficulties and for the peace and sense of inner freedom that was born of that trust. We might also want to consider the things that are obstacles to our trust. Charles himself had to learn to trust, having not only been orphaned, but then seeing so many other significant people in his young life taken away in one way or another. We can only speculate as to the role all of this played in the loss of his faith.

An obstacle to communion: Trust is finally an essential element for communion whether with God, others or even our own selves. Without trust we are unable to build that community of disciples of the One who showed us the way to love.

Not resignation but love: So, let us now turn to the text. For Charles, Jesus is praying to the One whom he calls "Abba, Father." It is not a prayer of resignation but a prayer of love. It is the abandon of a love that is capable of throwing itself into the arms of the beloved. It trusts the beloved to be there.

A 'Eucharistic prayer:' It is a very "Eucharistic" prayer. It is Jesus' act of self-offering *"with all the love of my heart"*. It is a very active self-giving of the one who said, *"No one takes my life, it is I who give it."* It is Eucharistic in that it is a prayer of thanksgiving. *"I thank you for all, I am ready for all, I accept all."*

In the original text this thanksgiving is repeated three times and is linked not only with the desire to be one who does the Will of God but as one who receives the Will of God into his life and prays for its fulfillment in all of creation. Jesus', and Charles', one desire is to do the Will of God, to be obedient.

How will Jesus live his death? The Prayer of Abandon is the prayer of the Cross. Jesus is no longer praying for the cup to pass nor even for the strength to drink this cup. That was yesterday and so many things have happened in between. Jesus is dying now and there is no escape.

The only choice that is left at this hour is that of how Jesus will live his death. What will be his attitude? He can revolt in the face of the injustice of it, for it is unjust. He can be embittered by the jeers and mocking. He can turn to hardened resignation - but Jesus chooses to live this moment with a love that is really hard for us to grasp or imagine.

Love that defies the power of death: This prayer is a declaration of a love that defies the power of death. It proclaims a love capable of trust, a trust in the power of love even in the face of annihilation. Jesus believes that love will have the last word.

Jesus alone: Charles shows us a Jesus who seems to be alone. It is no longer the moment of the "our Father". There is a tremendous intimacy in the way Jesus calls God "my Father". Jesus is facing the deepest solitude of which we are not only capable, but must all ultimately face.

It is the threshold where we are each alone. Jesus is literally at the point of losing himself and he loses himself in the Father. *"For you are my Father"*. It is the abandon of love.

Grow into the likeness of Jesus: Charles de Foucauld made a conscious effort in his daily life to grow into the likeness of Jesus, his "beloved brother and Lord." He had to struggle with himself just as we do with ourselves.

Charles does not refer explicitly to the 'Prayer of Abandon' throughout his life. But from his other writings and what we know of his life it seems to have expressed his basic attitude towards God, one that saw him through the ups and downs and struggles - and ultimately, in the face of his own violent death. It was a school of life as well as of death.

Concluded on page 5

Jesus Caritas UK accounts for 2020

From our Treasurer, John Nolan



INFLOWS	£
Retreat Income	1,530.00
Subscriptions	
Subscriptions 2019	30.00
Subscriptions 2020	2,170.00
TOTAL Subscriptions	2,200.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	3,730.00

OUTFLOWS	
Postage	26.60
Printing & publishing	231.54
Retreat expenses	2,060.00
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	2,318.14

OVERALL TOTAL **1,411.86**

Balance as at 1 st January 2020:	£2,789.03
Balance of inflow over outflows	£1,411.86
Balance as at 31 st December 2020	£4,200.89

Details:

1. 72 brothers paid subscriptions of £30 for 2020. Some of these subs were received in 2019, and so are not recorded in the accounts for 2020.
2. 72 brothers is about 59% of the nominal total of 122 in the Fraternity
3. 29 brothers paid a voluntary contribution of £10 towards the costs of the International Responsibles Meeting originally planned for 2020.
4. 46% of members paying subs paid the £10 extra
5. The Boars Hill retreat expenses comprise £1,760 for the accommodation and meals plus £300 for the retreat giver, a total of £2,060.
6. £1,530 was received from members towards the cost of the Boars Hill retreat which was £2,060. The difference of £530 is due to the costs of the retreat giver and one payment of £130 which could not be banked and which we have been unable to recover.
7. Due to Covid-19 there were no physical meetings in 2020 and so no meeting expenses.

Summary 2015—2020

		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Start of Year	£	1,237	1,845	2,298	2,163	2,407	2,789
Inflows	Subscriptions	1,950	2,580	1,740	1,080	2,440	2,200
	Retreat Income	0	0	0	0	0	1,530
Outflows	Retreat expenses	0	0	0	0	0	-2,060
	Postage	0	0	0	0	0	-27
	Printing & Publishing	-388	-652	-437	-505	-738	-231
	Meetings	-445	-465	-913	-331	-1,320	0
	Transfer to International Fund	-509	-1,010	-525	0	0	0
Balance		608	453	-135	244	382	1,412
End of Year		1,845	2,298	2,163	2,407	2,789	4,201

A Month of Nazareth
Mon. 6th September - Fri. 1st October 2021.

Stephen Squires is planning to lead a **Month of Nazareth in September** for UK

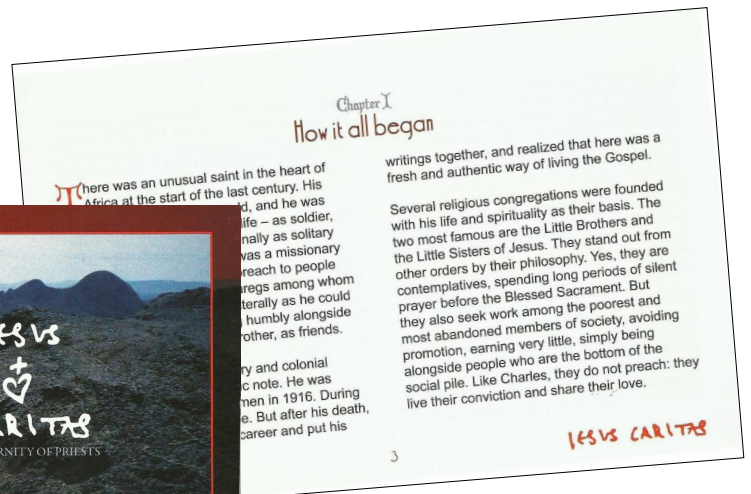
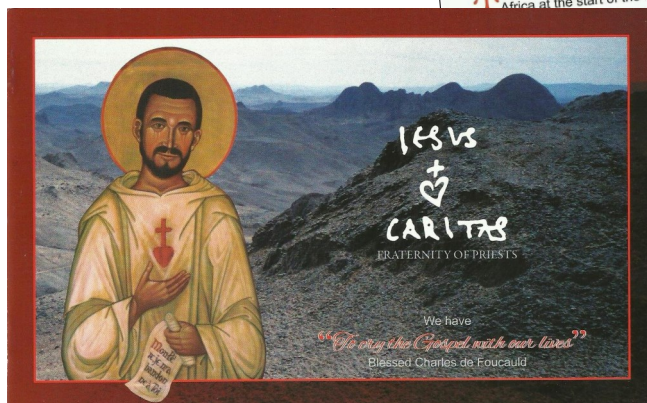
brothers and any others interested at the “*House of the Open Door*” residential retreat centre near Broadway, Worcs. (So our Responsibles' Meeting, normally September will, for 2021, be in October.) **Sean O’Gorman** has agreed to come from the Northants fraternity to lead the retreat week which concludes the Month.

We featured the unique “Week of Nazareth” that Stephen facilitated at the “House of the Open Door” Summer before last, in the November 2019, “Be Brothers uk.” It is always recommended that every Jesus Caritas brother attempts to take part in a “Month of Nazareth” at some time in his life, and here is a golden opportunity to do that without needing to travel to one abroad.



For the admittedly small team present, Stephen’s week went down as a resounding success; combining all the elements of a “Month” such as communal living, sharing, living something of Brother Charles’ life and learning a little more about him and the fraternity. The editor could not strongly-enough recommend a return to the good food, comfortable facilities and beautiful premises of the “HoD” in the so-relaxed surroundings of the village of Childswickham.

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The UK National Team has produced a scanned reprint of this very handy booklet containing the late Tony Philpot’s inspired text on the origins and life of the priests’ Fraternity. 60 copies have been taken by the Irish fraternities, leaving 200 which will be offered to UK fraternities to assist their recruiting efforts which must reach a climax as the canonisation of Brother Charles takes place (that date still unavailable at press date.) 28 pages (incl. covers) A5 Landscape format on art paper similar to the hard copies of “Be Brothers,”

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Among the delightful number of
E.mails received by the editor
since the last issue:

09 October 2020

Thanks, Bob, for “*Be Brothers.*” It was a good read, even better than before! Perhaps due to the variety of sources of main items that resulted from the initial lack of material contributed from our usual sources...

Peter Coxe (*Plymouth fraternity.*)

25 October 2020

Hi Bob, Thanks for the copies of *Be Bros* that arrived yesterday. You have done a great job as always, 25 issues!..

Stephen Squires (*Birmingham Maryvale and Broadway fraternities.*)

Mon 26/10/2020

Dear Bob, Thanking you for the pdf letter (“*Be Brothers*”) which I will read. We lost another brother who was in England before me. Funeral -restricted...- on Friday morning.

Not sure whether you had come across Thierry Jaques, who lived in Peckham with Ian Latham (and others, at times..) Now, we pass on to lay folk, and yourselves... not forgetting Pope Francis !

Your brother,

Xavier Chevillard (*Little Brothers of Jesus H/Q, Belgium.*)

We announce the death of our brother Thierry Jacques - this morning 24th October. Thierry had told us on the 16th that he had tested positive for COVID19 , and at that time, the result was that he could not leave his room as a precaution against infection. On Monday 19th, he mentioned a little fever. But on the 22nd, a Little Sister of the Poor phoned me to say that Thierry had had to be transferred to hospital for respiratory failure. So he was on oxygen. You may know that in addition to his age, 86, he had a few health concerns, which he was managing peacefully. He was very well adapted to life in this big house. Now the Lord has called him back; we pray for him and to all his intentions. Frère Thierry JACQUES 18/01/1934 – 24/10/2020.

The Mass was available on this link : <https://vimeo.com/473856898/2f8f8604ae>

Sat 24/10/2020

Dear Bob,

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of your latest edition of what should perhaps have been entitled 'Be Brothers and Sisters', at least for this edition !

E.mails continued overleaf

E-mails continued from overleaf

I am glad I was able to share material with you, which in turn has been shared more widely.

I am sharing more here (*see page 6*) this was sent to me by Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, who also shared the news that Mgr Claude Rault (White Father and Emeritus Bishop of the Sahara) is very ill with Covid - he needs our prayers.

God bless all your work and keep you safe.

Moira Poitier (*National Responsible for the UK Lay Communities of Bro. Charles.*)

(*Nb: The Lay Communities are developing their website- www.jesuscarritas.info Ed.*)

27 October 2020

Dear Bob, Thanks for the latest *Be Brothers*, thanks too for keeping it going.

Sadly, the group I was in [*Birmingham*] has collapsed. Two members are now Bishops and another member has gone to Rome as a Spiritual Director and the rest of us have moved further away. I am happy to continue receiving the magazine but do not need six copies. I will let people know they can get the on-line version. I hope to join up with another group if possible, Covid permitting.

Delighted to see that Bro Charles is to be canonised.

God bless you,

Hugh Sinclair.

*Hugh's fraternity in December 2012.
Now-Bishops Pat McKinney and David Oakley
were at that time in this fraternity!*

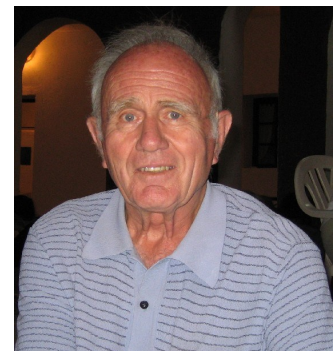


Sat. 2 Jan 2021

Dear All, We have received today news of the death of Little Brother Antoine Chatelard, whose name you will know as the esteemed biographer of Charles de Foucauld ("*Journey to Tamanrasset.*")

This is the message from Little Brother Taher in Tamanrasset :

" He left us on the evening of January 1st, the day our diocese prays for the fraternity of Tamanrasset, which he joined, I believe, in 1954 and had left for the fraternity in Marseille in 2016. He tested positive for Covid and died from internal bleeding. He has joined Charles de Foucauld, whom he accompanied for so long..

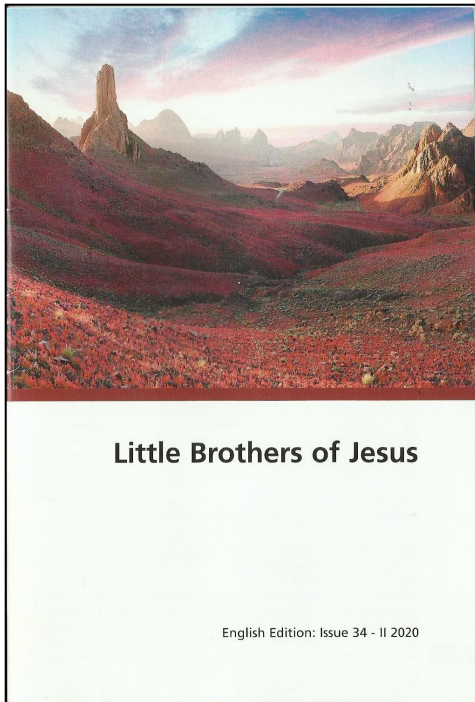


Let us thank God for the life of Antoine and pray, on this World Day of Peace (1st January), for the Little Brothers in Tamanrasset and Assekrem especially, that their humble witness will continue to bring the peace of the Lord to all those they meet,

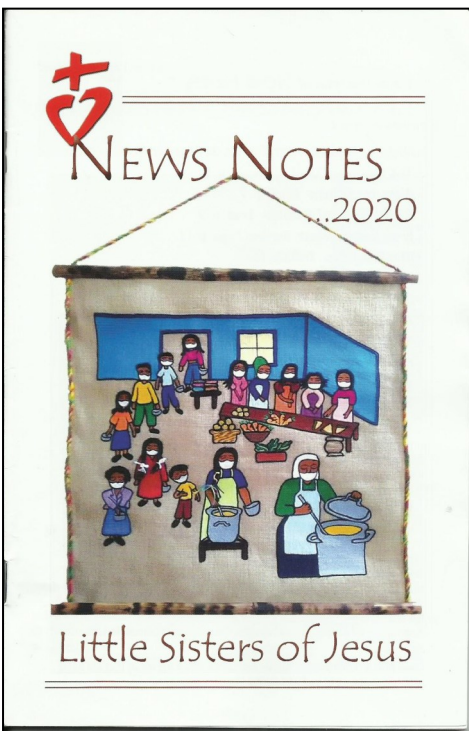
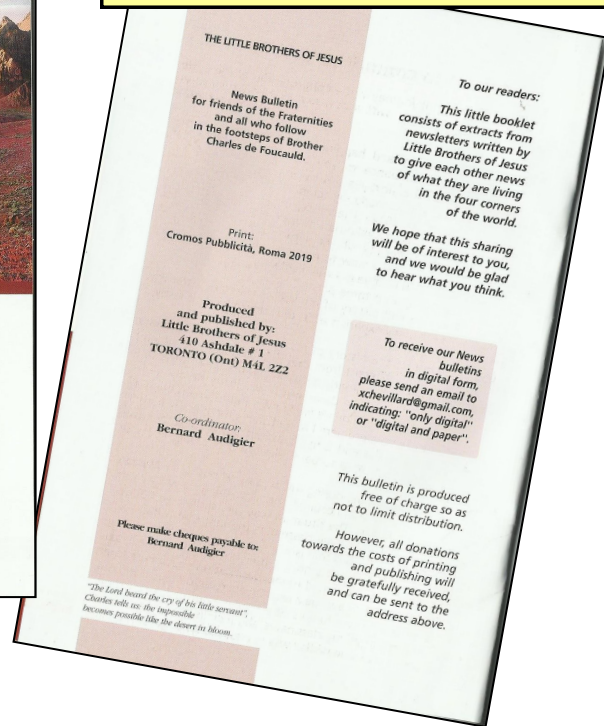
With every good wish for this coming year - stay safe !

Moira Poitier.

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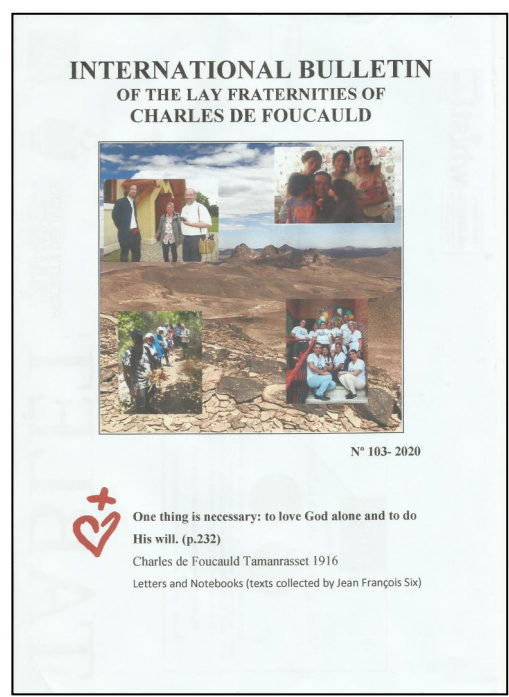


Periodicals received



The Little Sisters' banner from Chile bears the message-
 "Who said all is lost? I come to offer my heart."
 Being so full of inspiring stories of the sisters' exploits all over the world, the Jesus Caritas UK team will be paying from national funds for each UK fraternity to receive a copy each year. Be sure to share it around!

The International Bulletin of the Lay Fraternities is available from them by e.mail as a PDF file.



Reminders

We publish June and November editions of "Be Brothers uk & eire" each year.

In Eire changes to the distribution (by e.mail) should go to Niall Ahern as below, and in UK to Bob Rainbow. Editorial material should also be sent, preferably by email, to the Editor at:

Fr. Bob Rainbow

Tel: 01766 514515.

Email: ra-r@hotmail.co.uk

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Porthmadog, Gwynedd.
LL49 9RT. UK.



We use an on-line printer for "BB's" while Clifton fraternity pack and post it for the UK.

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International Responsible:

Fr. Eric Lozada
(Philippines)

International Jesus Caritas documents can be seen in English on our International website:



<http://www.iesuscaritas.org/en>

Eire National Responsible:

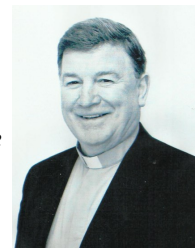
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Requested annual subscriptions are UK £30, Eire 50E per person per annum.

In addition to local needs, these assist the financing of international Responsibles' meetings with any substantial surplus going to assist fraternities in developing countries. The UK subs. also covers the printing and distribution of "Be Brothers uk & eire" in the UK (distributed solely by e.mail in Eire.) Subs. should be sent, payable to: "Jesus Caritas Fraternity," to the appropriate Treasurer as above; otherwise direct to the relevant bank:

UK: 40-19-22 01376586 (but drop John a note of whom the credit was made for) or

EIRE: IBAN: IE16 AIBK 9331 0417 8720 00 (BOC: AIBKIE2D) +

Website for the UK fraternities: <https://www.jesuscaritaspriests.org.uk>