

# *Be Brothers! uk & eire*

New series 27

November 2021

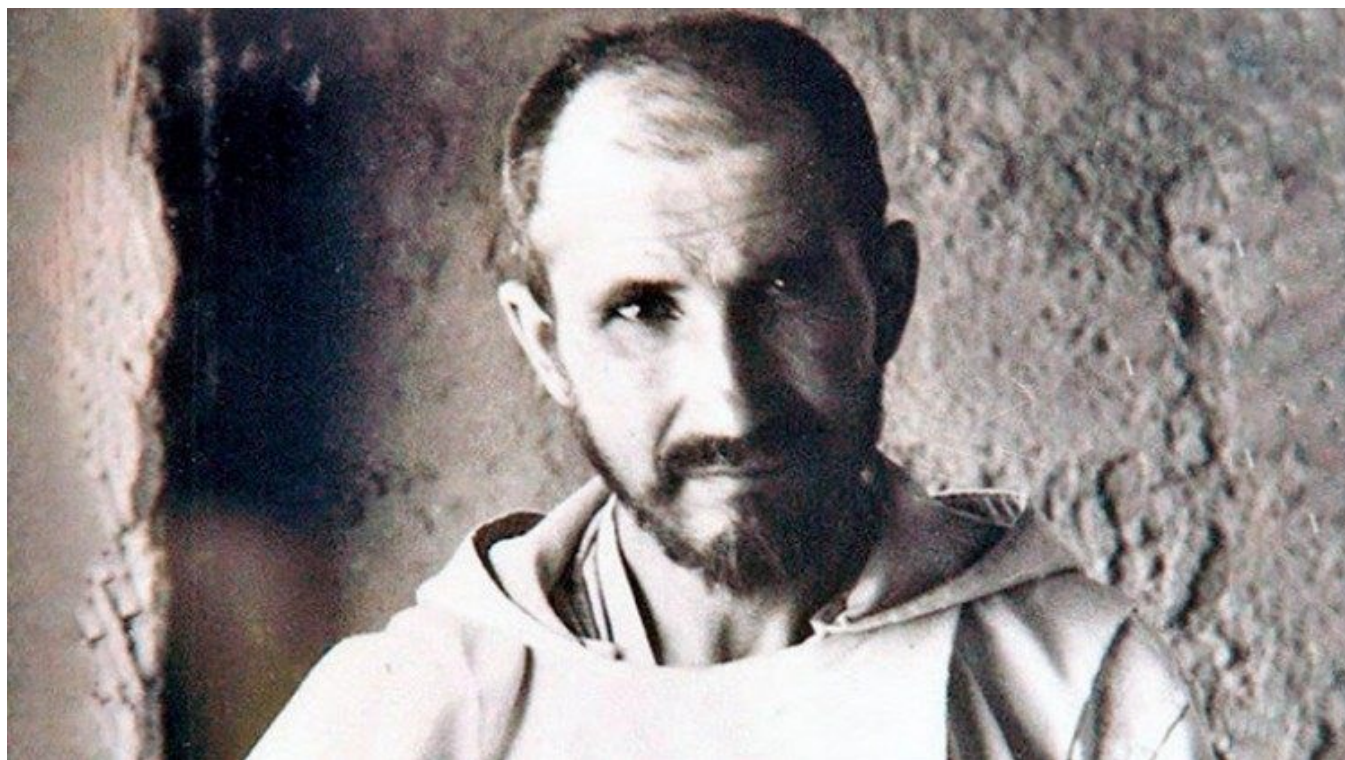
(Was “BB’s uk” till  
the last issue.)

## *The long-awaited announcement, from Vatican News:*

*“Pope Francis will canonize **Blessed Charles De Foucauld**, considered to be one of the pioneers of interreligious dialogue, together with six other Blesseds, during a Canonization Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on 15th May.*

*“The announcement was made on Tuesday 9th November by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. It follows the Ordinary Public Consistory of 3 May 2021, whereby the Pope had authorized the canonizations, without however setting a date for the ceremony due to the health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.”*

+



*Dearest brothers,* I am most grateful for the enriching variety of material submitted for this edition of “*Be Brothers uk & eire*” (the second under that newly-internationalised title) but it has meant a few contributions have had to be left over for a future issue.

I particularly welcome Peter Coxe’s description of our “Month of Nazareth” in September, all Moira Potier’s assistance and, of course, the material from Ireland. However, DO keep it coming; and, as always, I appeal for *local news*– what you usually or unusually do in your own fraternity. Do take Michael Jones’ wonderful piece on page 14 as your inspiration!

As we finally approach the year of Brother Charles’ canonisation (yes, perhaps not what he sought, but one of those necessary things ‘pour encourager les autres?!’) let us keep in our prayers the need for each of us and our whole poor world to heed his example of universal fraternity, and of learning from those who are different to us. Perhaps it will even enable us, by the grace of God, to navigate a way through the perils of global warming. God bless,

*PS: Do note Chris Bergin’s invite (page 17) to Mass in Arundel Cathedral on the occasion of the canonisation!*

*From the editor*

*Bob.*



## *Fraternity news*

- **“*Be Brothers uk & eire*” by email:** This copy is being distributed by email as a PDF file to UK & Irish brothers via their Responsibles and also through UK fraternities as ‘hard copy.’
- ***The UK National Team*** has, since June, met by “Zoom” technology on 5/5/21, 14/7/21 & 13/10/21. The Team has been augmented by the co-option of Peter Coxe. Decisions made show below or elsewhere in this issue.
- ***Canonisation of Br Charles:*** See front cover!
- ***The annual UK Jesus Caritas 2-day mini-retreat*** returns in 2022 at the delightful Nympsfield Convent, Front St., Nympsfield, Glos. GL10 3TZ (as Boars Hill is now very expensive.) Arrive for supper Tues. Jan. 18th, leave after lunch Thurs. 20th, at £60/night. 19 single rooms only, with a few en-suites or ground-floor for the neediest (though there is a lift.) Lifts can be provided from stations at Gloucester (from the North & South) and Stroud (from the East.) You should have received a booking form for sending to Barnabas Page on < [barnabas.page@gmail.com](mailto:barnabas.page@gmail.com) > 01594 833173. 4 High Nash, Coleford, Glos. G116 8HN, stating any special dietary or other needs. Cheques also via. him, payable to "Jesus Caritas Fraternity."
- ***Invitation to Irish retreat:*** See opposite and page 5 for an invitation to the British brothers to join their retreat over 2nd-5th January in Dublin; Peter Codd and Bob Rainbow are known to be coming from GB.
- ***While sorry to hear that Hallam fraternity has folded,*** (cf. *e.mail* page 18) it is good to know that their last members will continue to keep in touch via “Be Brothers.”
- ***Please note Stephen Squires’ phone*** is corrected on the back cover to: 074847 19463.
- ***UK Subscriptions:*** Treasurer John Nolan will appreciate receiving GB 2022 subscriptions in January (details on back page.) ***Note the new GB national banking details.***
- ***PRESS DATE for the June 2022 “Be Brothers uk & eire” is 1st March for full articles, snippets accepted till March 15th.*** Contributions from UK & Eire fraternities very



# *Greetings from the Irish national Resonsable, Niall Ahern*

*(With pictures from the National Fraternity gathering in Mullaghmore, County Sligo)*



*Dear Brothers,*

Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum - it is wonderful to share the very recent good news of blessing that our cherished Little Sister Magdeleine of Jesus has been today [14th October] declared Venerable by Pope Francis. Her extraordinary witness to the presence of Jesus in each of his little ones is an inspiration for us as we attempt to follow her way. Coming as it does during this year of the Canonisation of Brother Charles emphasises for us more than ever before how contemporary their message is for us all in the Church of the present day. May our awareness of their graced lives bring us to the place of deeper and loving witness.

I am [enclosing] some photographs from our recent National Fraternity Gathering in Mullaghmore in County Sligo which was a source of great encouragement for over thirty of the brothers who came together during this time of fraternal encounter with Jesus. We were of one voice in our joy at being together after such a long time of separation.

We hope to continue the momentum of these days by gathering together in the Dominican Retreat Centre ([www.goodnews.ie](http://www.goodnews.ie)) in Tallaght in Dublin 25 (eircode D24KA40,) for our post-Christmas retreat commencing the afternoon of Sunday, January 2nd 2022 until after lunch on Wednesday, January 5th 2022. All participants are invited to book as soon as possible directly



*From the Irish national responsible, cont.*

to the Retreat Centre [dominicanretreats@gmail.com](mailto:dominicanretreats@gmail.com). The Retreat Centre number is 01-4048123/01-4048189. Non-

residential participants are also very welcome and those who wish to come to stay either before or after the Retreat will also be facilitated and this might be of benefit for those who have to travel long distances or who wish to have a more protracted period of rest. Our Brothers in the UK have warmly expressed an interest in being present with us and we greatly celebrate the opportunity to be together with them over these sacred days. We look forward to the upcoming addition of the UK/Eire edition of "Be Brothers" and thank Bob and all who are involved in its valued production.

You may find the link [Seeds Planted in Afghanistan](#) interesting. The author sees parallels between the experience of the Church in Afghanistan and that of Charles de Foucauld. You may want to pass on the link to the Brothers.



Please book early for our post-Christmas Retreat and if you have any queries please feel free to contact me at 087-7973432 / [frniallahern@gmail.com](mailto:frniallahern@gmail.com). Since it is difficult to keep an updated database of Fraternity members I would ask that all who receive this email forward to as many of their own Fraternities as possible in order that all the Brothers will feel welcome and included in all our endeavours.

With blessings as we approach the month of November and remember our dear departed with especial gratitude to all those in the Fraternity in whose footsteps we gently follow.

#### *IRISH FRATERNITY GATHERING*

After such a prolonged Covid shutdown - it was a real joy to gather with over thirty of the Brothers for a few days of fraternal prayer and retreat in Mullaghmore in County Sligo during the month of September last. Our days had the usual format with some powerful witness talks by some of the brothers and this combined with Adoration and the splendid scenery made the time together especially graced and blessed. Our theme was from Psalm 116 - 'I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living'. On the last evening Doran, the bishop of the diocese, joined us for prayer and refreshments and a new enthusiasm seemed to grow in the group with the hope that younger priests might join us for future gatherings. We especially remembered our UK Brothers that the Month of Nazareth would be fruitful and engaging for all concerned and we were greatly enhanced by the accompaniment of our Little Sisters in Belfast over the days. Our final day included a specially prepared Service of Light for deceased brothers whose example and love have been the foundation of our coming together. Rest in Peace.



**NEW YEAR INVITATION**

*We cordially invite our UK Brothers to join us for a post-Christmas few days of fraternity and prayer at the Dominican Retreat Centre in Dublin in January 2022. Dublin is very well catered for with airline traffic and the Centre is a very welcoming home for priests. The retreat commences on the evening of Sunday, January 2 and concludes after lunch on Wednesday, January 5 and the theme of the few days together is from Psalm 46:10 - ' Be still and know that I am God '.*

*In addition to booking with the Centre, please advise me directly of your intention to be present either by e mail / [frniallahern@gmail.com](mailto:frniallahern@gmail.com) or by telephone / 087 7973432. This is a heartfelt invitation from us all and holds the key to a mutually enriching moment together as brothers - so do please consider it seriously and make contact. The retreat is at Dominican Retreat Centre, Tallaght, Dublin. D24 KA40, tel 01 4048189/4048123, [dominicanretreats@gmail.com](mailto:dominicanretreats@gmail.com). about 30 minutes from airport.*

As we prepare for these days together, we are mindful that amidst all the Christmas preparations we will hold a stillness in our hearts: Let every heart a manger be! May our cherished Brother Charles lead us to the true meaning of the Incarnation.

In the peace of the Infant Jesus.....Niall AHERN / National Responsible. +



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

*Personal Reflections by Peter Coxe (Plymouth fraternity) from the Month of Nazareth held at The House of the Open Door community (HOD) at Childswickham, Broadway, Worcs.*

The Month started gently in an early September heat-wave. We settled in Monday evening and Tuesday morning to HOD, a venue proved favourable at our June 2019 mini-Nazareth. We self-catered for 3 weeks under Peter Codd's fine culinary leadership, eating simply, healthily and well; yet spending far below our food budget!



The rest of that week we were nourished by the insights of Moira Potier (European Lay Responsible) into the Lay Fraternities and started our manual work, with one HOD project enriched by the engineering skills of Peter Codd and Bob Rainbow. I volunteered mainly for scrumping and apple picking and peeling, as the rich harvest was short of labourers. Some also painted garden seats or Scripture texts for outdoor Stations of the Cross in need of repair.



The desert day that week (and in weeks 2 and 3) was blessed with fine weather. On each, I endeavoured to visit at least one local old Church, and I walked to the hills for the final desert day. I was moved by the sheer scale of destruction at Evesham Abbey, by the Passion symbols carved in stone at a country church and I noticed my strong preference for walking in open space



### *A Month of Nazareth continued*

(where I could see everything) rather than through woods (where I sensed darkness, uncertainty and unsteady footing). These feelings seem to mirror my life very well – nostalgia for an imagined golden age, awareness of my painful vulnerability and my liking to know exactly what’s going on around me!



Our “day off” that 1<sup>st</sup> week was a visit to Worcester Cathedral, connecting me again to medieval Catholic roots.



Our 2<sup>nd</sup> week was blessed by a day with Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, who gave us fine input on Islam-Christian dialogue. The HOD members invited us to dine with them, after which the Cardinal described his ministry of many moves under obedience and the delight he took when he could live among Muslims at the grass roots.



Another day off involved a drive to the village of Upper Slaughter, in the heart of the Cotswold hills, and a pleasant visit to the church there, a hill-walk and pub lunch under the fine direction of John Nolan.



On Sunday we concelebrated with Barnabas Page at Newent, about 30 miles south in Gloucestershire, and I was struck by a vibrant Somali family living in the Presbytery, a most welcome enrichment of a seemingly white, middle-class parish.



Prof. Chris Hewer enriched our 3<sup>rd</sup> week with a potted exposition of Islam, his speciality; and all initially seemed well on Friday evening, with a weekend ahead to transition into the final retreat week.



However, on Saturday morning, despite only having very minor cold-like symptoms typical of autumn, I tested positive for COVID, probably caught from sitting next to the Cardinal who after his visit tested positive several days before me. 2 other brethren, including Stephen our Responsible, tested positive 2 days later, but Peter Stodart and Bob were OK.

So, in the event, we had to have our retreat via Zoom with our speaker Sean O’Gorman and 2 non-resident participants, keeping the infected and uninfected in different rooms. I “attended” Mass in our house and Adoration chez Sean online and received Communion in real time. We delayed the last day of the retreat to enable those who could drive home to do so, then resumed for the final day. I take my hat off to Stephen Squires for reorganising



these last seven days.

After the Month, we had accumulated plenty of written and video material for reflection, so Stephen and I continued our retreat face to face in our bubbled self-isolation.

Throughout the whole experience, the HOD community was most supportive. Thankfully, it seems we kept COVID contained. While in such circumstances many would have itched to go home, I enjoyed the extra time! Providentially, I had no Masses to rearrange as the place where I usually preside is closed for October refurbishment.

A few personal themes I picked out from the Month are as follows:

- Lay and clergy together: I am first a human “little brother Peter” rather than a privileged “Fr Peter;”
- Ecumenism/Interfaith: Jesus Way/Truth/Life calls me to learn from him through listening to Muslims, atheists, etc;
- Adoration invites me to greater physical & mental stillness before the Sacrament (or, with good reason, elsewhere;)
- Fraternity at HOD: I need to treat strangers with the same kindness & appreciation shown by brethren/HOD to me;
- Manual work: I need a better balance between intellectual/pastoral exertion & mundane tasks;
- Meals: There’s a place for feasting with others & for fasting from (physical & virtual) social contact. Neither is bad;
- Desert: There’s more to it than energetic walking or “pilgrimage” on foot to old hills, abbeys & churches;
- Health: Despite getting mild COVID I think I’m in better mental shape trying to live in the spirit of J Caritas (e.g. seeking more patient abandonment) than in the previous year of trying to get on top of things by personal exertion;
- One step enough for me*: It’s more important for me to do the next right thing in the moment than to worry about results or things going to plan;
- Eldad & Medad: Just as COVID safety doesn’t mean spiritual self-isolation, God works wonders not only through Church structures but is also with me “outside the camp” in social environments where, as a neuro-diverse person, I don’t “fit in” neatly - the Lord is especially present among the marginalised. +

*With space here forbidding their inclusion, I can send some details from each of our 3 speakers’ talks if you contact me as on the rear page.  
Bob Rainbow.*



## ***History of the British fraternities?***

***Still no response to the idea of 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. Sad were this information to be already dead in the water? +***

## *Follower of Charles—Priest and*

*Martyr The second of two articles, forwarded by Niall Ahern, that appeared in an earlier Irish version of “Be Brothers.” (Unfortunately they were received in un-editable form) This one is by Fr. John Hally.*

*This article is penned by John Halley about his late brother Fr. Rufus Halley*

This is the seventh time that I have tried writing. Perhaps if I had been able to cry when they were putting Rufie into the earth then I would be able to write this more easily. But my feelings were bottled up then, I couldn't produce a single tear. They are still bottled up now, but I 'm going to write what comes into my head.

My first vivid memory of Rufie is set in the kitchen of our home in Ireland and I was just six years old. He had a packed of cookies and he offered me one. I said, "Thanks, can I take two?" This made him so angry that he snatched back the cookies and shouted at me, "Now you won't have any!" I bawled with shame and fury but he didn't care. Walking out of the kitchen, he went to his car and drove off, taking the cookies with him.

I can still see his black Morris Minor, through the blur of the tears in my eyes, receding in the distance, impervious to my tears. Later that evening, we met again in the kitchen and I said, "Could I please have a cookie?, I promise I'll only take one", and he said, "Sure, take two". I was reformed and so all was forgiven. Right or wrong, Rufus was always my inspiration.

### **Voice of Reason**

Fifteen years later he was renouncing such a 'medieval' approach to correction. In those days we were both in England, I was doing my Ph.D in engineering and he studying Islam in Birmingham. Meanwhile I had scandalised my family by becoming an evangelical Christian at university. What I kept secret what that in London I had gone further and become involved with an extreme faction of evangelical Christianity, a cult interested only in proselytising and which insisted everyone else was going to hell.

Under pressure I agreed with them that all Catholics must go to hell, including Rufus and the rest of my family. However I couldn't believe it very seriously, since I continued to confide all my secrets to Rufus and never to them, until one day I told him all about it. I said that as this cult had been hammering at my defences they had somehow gained a handle on me. I remember Rufie said only this: "A handle? Now that's not a good thing, when somebody has a handle on you, and wants to use it". Though I remain an evangelical Christian, from that moment I never let any grasping organisation get a handle on my soul. And I told the cult to get stuffed.

### **Brotherly Differences**

Rufus has a different style to me. While I was always impressed with fancy things that glorv and

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



martyrdom (I'm still like that, a sucker for the epic picture). Rufie was more practical and preferred funny things. He was forever finding spiritual significance in boring everyday events.

He introduced me to the story of Charles de Foucauld, the Frenchman who left Western society to live the life of the unseen Christ in a small village in Muslim North Africa. De Foucauld was killed by gunfire during the First World War. It is still a bit hazy as to why he was killed, or by whom. Though de Foucauld was considered a failure in his lifetime, dying without any 'converts', he left a big impression on those he met. Today the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Charles de Foucauld are among the most vibrant orders in the Catholic Church, taking monastic vows but living alongside ordinary people. My brother was very excited at the thought of nuns and monks doing proper jobs in factories and sharing serious poverty. That was far too gritty for me. Over the years, Rufie continued to grow closer to the ideas of Charles de Foucauld and I continued to hide from them.

### Visions of Glory

But when we talked he didn't entirely deny me the epic splendour that I craved. One such moment was the evening he told me of his decision to work in Lanao del Sur. He would be in Malawi, "the Islamic City of Malawi". He said his life would henceforth be dangerous. I was full of excitement. After all I was young and young

people like risky adventures. When he shared with me his vision of dialogue with Islam my enthusiasm grew. I had always had a romantic love of the religion of Mohammed, without ever having met a single Muslim. Maybe I read the Arabian Nights too much when I was young.

Finally, he told me about the spirituality of the Sufis, about Ibn El-Arabi who had so inspired the young Saladin and about Rabi'ah al Adawiyya who is said to have run through the streets of Baghdad wielding a firebrand and a bucket of water, and threatening to burn and drown Hell with these words:

*Lord if I love you  
out of fear of hell,  
Throw me into Hell.  
And if I should love you  
in hope of Paradise,  
Deny me Paradise.*

And so he went to Malawi. And his gift for being as enthusiastic about everyday things and ordinary people's preoccupations would make just as much of an impression as his love for Islamic philosophy and mysticism, probably more. That was over 20 years ago.

### Missing Rufie

What I miss most is his laughter. There is a kind of humour that thrives between close friends and which is utterly unique to that friendship. As the friendship develops, so the dialogue grows with it and also the humour. Eventually you find new things which only that one person will understand and laugh at. Rufus began this process with his

*Continued overleaf*

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

*Continued from overleaf*

humorous view of world events and personalities, and as we talked I began to develop a similar capacity.

Between us there evolved an alternative history, a joke history of the world. Whenever we met or wrote letters to each other, we updated this history, adding new chapters and new jokes all the time. We spent many happy hours in this way. Even now, I will often wake up in the still dark hours of the morning inspired by some new connection. I know that only Rufus will get the joke. But Rufus is gone.

#### **Finding Place**

That Rufus was murdered is hard, and the hardest part is not knowing why he died, or who really wanted him dead. You could call his death "martyrdom" but there is nothing epic or glorious in it now. Sometimes, like in the 'failed kidnap attempt' theory, it seems like a sort of glorified accident. But if it really was like that, then my brother shared the death of so many in Mindanao with whom he shared his life. And so I, and others, have been compelled to share the indignity suffered by countless others in this world: to lose a dear one to injustice, to stupidity, to ignorance.

As with the death of Charles de Foucauld, many times I have been tempted to believe that the sacrifice was pointless. I hear the call for justice and see it swallowed whole by conspiracies of silence and fear. And this is a bitter pill for me to swallow.

"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" (Psalm 37).

Where are those seeds of his work? Bless those robust, cheerful souls who see evidence sprouting all around them like a runaway garden! I haven't been so lucky. But perhaps it is not the plan for all of us to see the same things.

And I have found some little things that start to wash away my bitterness. For example the work of Charles de Foucauld no longer seems dull and, though it is not my vocation, I do not run from his ideas any more. Instead they stir in me a longing like the Song of Songs does. Something else happened too.

For many years before his death I had found churchgoing difficult. I was so trapped in self-righteousness that the company of other churchgoers was virtually unbearable to me. Then one day I found myself in church again, and as I looked around I realised that I was no longer irritated by people.

That was shortly after my brother's death and so I see it as his parting gift to me. I believe that God will complete Rufus' work, and that those of us who are willing to wait and pray may see some of it. But if this experience of mine is any guide. God's work may be so quiet that we will see very little. Until one strange day we notice that the fear, the hatred, the darkness has moved on. No bells, no music, just gone.

*John Halley*

*FR RUFUS HALLY was an Irish Columban priest who promoted dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Asia. He was shot dead in 2001 and was mourned by both communities. +*

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

## *Reconfinement, attacks... Charles de Foucauld, a saint for today.*

*Forwarded by Moira Potier, European Lay Responsible, from Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald (who spoke at the recent "Month of Nazareth.") Text dating from 2/11/20.*

*Charles de Foucauld, who lived among Muslims, embodies a powerful message of universal brotherhood. Here are the keys to the spirituality of the desert missionary's dialogue to ponder in this time of fear aroused by terrorist attacks.*

### **Soon to be canonised**

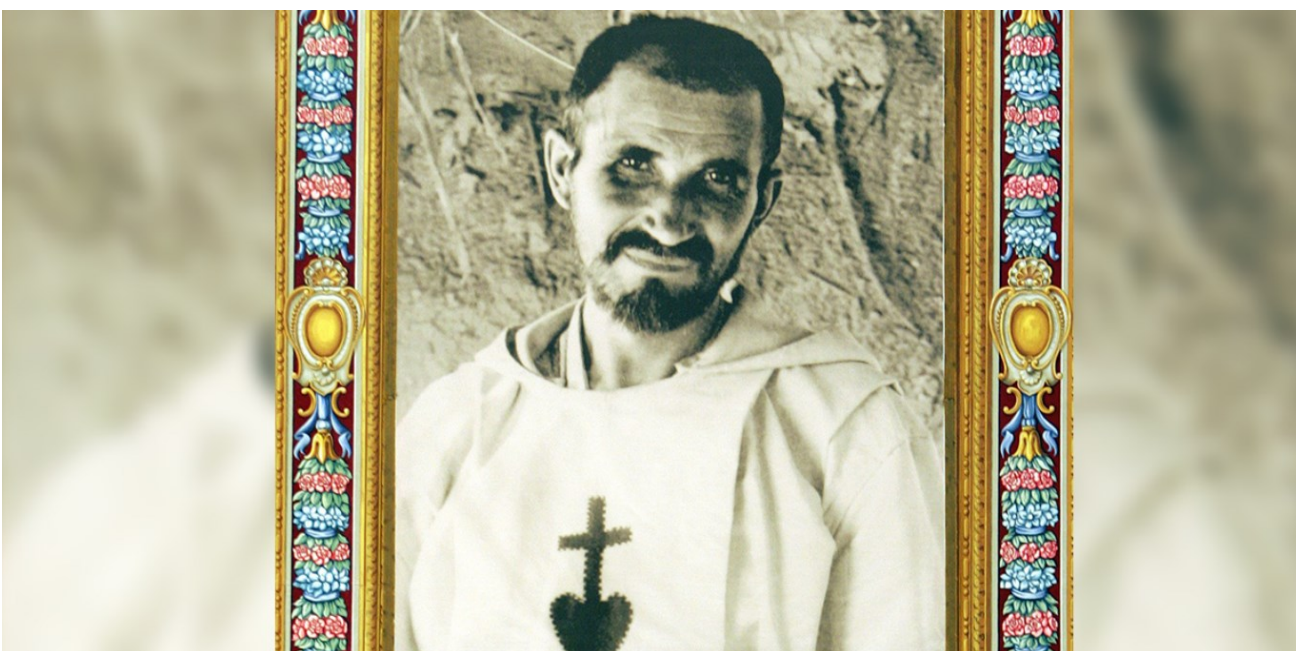
Charles de Foucauld testified throughout his life to the great consistency of his apostolate of prayer, silence and friendship among his Muslim brothers. His way of evangelizing and carrying Jesus is recognized as a model, the "poor" being for this mystic of the desert those who had never heard of Christ. If Charles de Foucauld is a saint for our time, it is because he is the saint of forgiveness, mercy and genuine dialogue.

### **To be a living gospel**

Charles de Foucauld's method is the apostolate of the goodness of the "universal brother". This desert mystic wished to show with his whole life what it is to be a living gospel. *"What are you prepared to do for these people?"* asked his local religious superior in the Sahara, Mgr Charles Guérin. The missionary then told him that he was ready to go to the end of the world and to the end of time.

### **Being a universal brother**

For Brother Jean-François Berjonneau, of the Fraternité Sacerdotale Iesus Caritas, author of an essay *"Spirituality of Dialogue by Charles de Foucauld,"* we can consider the latter as a pio-



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

neer of dialogue. The missionary instituted with the Tuaregs of Tamanrasset was *"this dialogue of life presented by the Council and in particular by the encyclical Ecclesiam Suam of Paul VI, as the fundamental basis of all dialogue"*, he explains.

He devoted all his energy and a large part of his time to learning the language of the people with whom he lived, starting very simple conversations, rooted in the things of everyday life, opening up to the poetry of this people . This is how he opened a dialogue between himself and his hosts in an atmosphere of trust to the point that he became a friend to them.

### Be a friend

Charles de Foucauld spent a long time familiarizing himself with Tuareg poetry. He understood that poetry is a way for a people to express with its own genius the feelings that inhabit it: joys, wonders, emotions, raptures but also sorrows and fears that can arise in its relationship to the other , to nature, to the divine ...

### In the footsteps of Charles de Foucauld:

No deep friendship is possible then, without communing in its way of being in the world and in nature. This soon-to-be canonized desert mystic thus showed that the mission of the Church, as Brother Jean-François Berjonneau explains, opened a spirituality of dialogue with those who do not share the Christian faith, but also with those who do. share. Here are some keys practiced by the mystic of the Sahara:

- Accept the change of scenery by leaving "home" and going to the land of the other;
- Respect the freedom of others;
- Gain trust and become a friend;
- Adjust to God's gaze on yourself and on those who do not share the same faith;
- To come together on the common ground of humanity;
- Encourage spiritual dialogue whenever possible;
- Knowing that meeting the other is always linked to the Paschal Mystery.

A method of one whose holiness radiated already throughout the twentieth century, which still seems so inspiring today. +

Charles' Assekrem retreat



Charles' statue in Strasbourg, where he grew up.



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

## News from the Lay fraternities

*(A fine proposal  
to prepare for the canonisation  
of Brother Charles; from Euro  
lay Responsible, Moira Potier.)*

*To the Lay Fraternities  
of Charles de Foucauld  
& others:*

Dear Sisters and  
Brothers,



We have been asked by the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld to try and prepare ourselves as much as we can for the imminent canonisation of our brother Charles.

They suggest that countries try and organise special events or projects to mark this momentous occasion. In discussion with the Little Sisters here in the UK, we thought one such project might be to ask for personal testimonies from individuals that could be posted on our website [jesuscaritas.info](http://jesuscaritas.info) (which is still very much alive, though in the process of upgrading).

These testimonies would try to answer the following questions :

- How did I meet Br Charles ?
- What influence has he had on my life ?
- How does he accompany me in my daily life ?
- What aspect of his life has touched me the most ?

We know from our own experience, and from listening to many other people, that Br Charles usually 'enters' our lives through the witness of people we have met. This project is therefore an opportunity for us to become witnesses in the virtual world - so that people accessing our website can 'meet' us through the accounts of our experience, and hopefully be attracted to learn more about Br Charles and be drawn, like him, to an encounter with his beloved Jesus.

My own 'story', which I am going to write, begins when I was 3 years old and met a rather strange, All-bran eating Frenchman - Little Brother Roger Frety, one of the first members of the family of Charles de Foucauld to come to the UK.....I am sure your own stories are equally interesting and will all be different and fascinating to read.

This invitation is being offered to our English speaking sisters and brothers in Ireland, Malta and America - you are most welcome to join us ! Don't hesitate to get back to me if you need to discuss this further.

With love to all. Moira. *(Moira's contact details are available via the editor.)* +



*A quite charming picture from Moira's presentation to the "Month of Nazareth" on the Lay Vocation and the lay fraternities, of **Madeline Delbrel, 1904-1964**, whom Pope Francis declared venerable on 26/1/18.*

*A child playing in the street has cast aside her spinning-top when Madeline engages with her— crouched at the child's level, head cocked in profound listening, the very essence of care and compassion; letting the little one speak, and learning from her.* +

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

## *News from the GB fraternities* (See also the e-mails on pages 17-18.)

### *Clifton Fraternity*

Each August Clifton fraternity break from their usual meeting and have an overnight invitation from their Jim Williams, with a meal usually lavishly provided in his presbytery in the old market town of Chipping Sodbury, north of Bristol. But on 4th August this year circumstances dictated that all should eat in the restaurant next door; it doesn't look as if the sense of fraternity was any the less! +



### *Southwark Dartford Fraternity*

What to title our fraternity news? A Desert Day at Minster Abbey? Not catchy. Just to say that we usually meet at St Anselm's, Dartford thanks to our brother Fr Stephen Boyle and we have lunch provided by two lovely parishioners [ married.] .So from being the Emmaus group I guess we are now the Dartford Fraternity.



When we used to meet at the Emmaus Retreat Centre, which has closed, we would spend the Day on our own and then meet up for review at 5pm followed by a meal out together. This worked well. I did not venture far as it is a bad time of year for hay fever. Two years ago we went to Minster Abbey for our DD partly because Chris Basden is PP of Ramsgate and several members are Kent based. We met up at 12 noon at Minster. It was officially closed but they let use their facilities. After packed lunch we had about four hours to wander or sit in the gardens or in the church. We were not sure whether we could join the Sisters for Vespers so went

to St Augustine's Shrine (Ramsgate) for our own sung version of Vespers. The weather was cloudy but perked up the evening. It was lovely singing together for the first time. It was also lovely for me to see the sea.

We all had a meal at the Sands Hotel in Margate. We had two separate tables but we had great sea views from the restaurant. We invited Fr Anthony Charlton to join us as we missed him. He has joined Fr Peter Stodart in his fraternity as they are so few. We were also joined by Fr Romany who is assistant priest at St Bede's Clapham Park. He had been with Fr Chris and it was Chris who invited him to join us. He had been Parish Priest for many years in Egypt. It

was my first meal out since the first lockdown, apart from a couple of meals at Dartford in the presbytery at previous meetings. So it was really delightful to be with the brothers and to watch the sunset. I think everyone enjoyed the experience. It wasn't a long DD but it was the best solution during Covid. We met in the tea shop's upper room for our Review.

Our newest member [who came on 27th July] is our youngest at 29 and only just ordained a priest. We have two other brothers in their late twenties and early thirties. I am not the eldest, with Chris three months behind. Up to last year Canon Frank O'Sullivan was the oldest brother at 99. Sadly he died at 99 and a half. This is all a bit jumbled. I could write something properly but not sure if people would want to read it. I phoned David Standley recently. His cancer has come back again but they are going to deal with it. He is amazingly cheerful. Enough rambling!



*(Thanks to Michael Jones for the text & Chris Basden for the excellent photos. When can we see such local news from other fraternities?) +*

Charles at Beni Abbas.



# Smiles



**Wife:** I'm heading to the store, do you want anything?

**Husband:** I want a sense of meaning and purpose in my life... I seek fulfilment and completeness within my soul... I want to connect to God and discover the spiritual side of me...

**Wife:** Be more specific, Beer or Vodka?

*I heard a suggestion that "BB's" should include **puzzles on Jesus Caritas topics**; anyone fancy making up a word-search or crossword?*

*Just to start you off- how many common English words of more than 3 letters (not names and excluding plurals) can you make from the letters of the one word "Tamanrasset?!" (It's measured in dozens!) Send your answer to the editor- winner to feature in the June 2022 "Be Bros.") +*

## ***Pope Francis' message for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly***

***(Published June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021) Penultimate paragraph:***

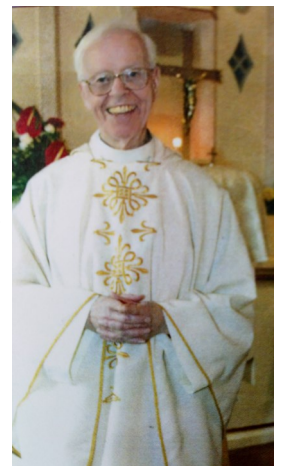
*Dear grandmother, dear grandfather, dear elderly friends, in concluding this Message to you, I would also like to mention the example of Blessed (and soon Saint) Charles de Foucauld. He lived as a hermit in Algeria and there testified to "his desire to feel himself a brother to all" (Fratelli Tutti, 287). The story of his life shows how it is possible, even in the solitude of one's own desert, to intercede for the poor of the whole world and to become, in truth, a universal brother or sister.*

+

## ***Obituaries***

Paul Lyons said at the October Responsibilities Meeting that **Chris O'Brien** of his fraternity had died in the last month. *(Any short obituary submitted can be published next time.)*

**Canon Desmond Millett**, always with that wonderful smile, "grand old man of Clifton fraternity," died peacefully on Saturday night 18<sup>th</sup> September. Famous for dashing up the railway embankment in his '70's to talk down a suicidal man who was holding up the main line, and well known to always get far more candidates for 1<sup>st</sup> HC and confirmation than any other parish! *Canon Millett's body was received into The Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Chippenham, Wilts., on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October at 4pm followed by Mass. The Funeral Mass was celebrated on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 11am followed by a private Burial in Chippenham Cemetery.*



*From Xavier of the Little Brothers of Jesus in Belgium:*

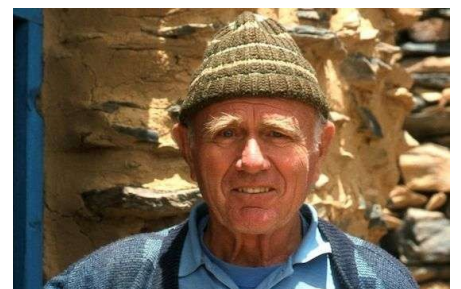


We announce the death of our brother **Thierry Jacques** - this morning 24th October. *"Une vie sure les pas de Charles de Foucauld."*

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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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.

+





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

**Sent:** 11 October 2021      **Subject:** RE: Annual Meeting of Responsibles:

Dear Bob,

My apologies that I'm not able to make the [Responsibles] meeting on Wednesday, but Fr Aidan Murray (monk of Worth Abbey) will be joining you on behalf of our fraternity.

You may like to know that, given that not many of us are planning to be in Rome for the canonisation of Br Charles – whenever that may be! – we're thinking of celebrating a Mass in Arundel Cathedral for members of Jesus Caritas groups and anyone who'd like to either celebrate Br Charles or find out more about Jesus Caritas. This would be followed by some sort of refreshment. Details will be finalised as and when we get a date, but I'll keep you posted and we're very happy for the invitation to be shared.

With many thanks for the work of the National Team,

God bless,

Chris Bergin (*A & B W. Sussex fraternity.*)

**Sent:** 25 September 2021      **Subject:** Hallam Fraternity

Dear Stephen Squires and Bob,

Regretfully, I need to inform you that our small Hallam fraternity has folded. Our group had become increasingly precarious for some time. Billy Steele (our member from the Leeds diocese) had gone into care, and my own retirement a year ago not only deprived us of a favoured countryside venue for our meetings, but left only two (of the remaining four) in active ministry. In addition, we lost momentum during the COVID lockdowns. I've consulted the two 'active' priests, and I sense they have no great desire at present to resume regular meetings.

As the Responsible, I confess that perhaps I haven't been as pro-active as I could have been, but with several minor upheavals - retirement, re-locating twice, and treatment for a cardiac problem, my energy levels haven't been that great.

Don Stoker remains committed, but he agrees that it's time to call it a day as far as the Fraternity is concerned. And he too has had health issues, and he feels a bit more fragile than he used to.

Obviously we won't need printed copies of the next issue of "Be Brothers". But I'm wondering if either Don or I (or both) could remain on the mailing list for on-line copies? I know Don certainly wants to keep up his contact with the national and international scene. He may well be in touch with you himself.

I'm copying this e-mail to Bob Rainbow, for his information. God bless and take care of you,

(Fr) Martin Clayton (*Hallam fraternity.*)

*E.mails continued overleaf*

*E-mails continued from overleaf*

**Sent:** 27 July 2021    **Subject:** Our Jesus Caritas Group

Dear Bob,

Hope you are well. Having asked you to reduce our number of Be Brothers our fraternity has grown again. We had our meeting today. We are now 10 and possibly 11. One of our former members has returned and hopefully will come again. Fr Chris has invited An Egyptian Coptic Rite priest to join us and he came at our Day in the Desert review and liked it. We also have a newly ordained priest – only last week! Is it possible to get some more Directories and also the cards with the Prayer of Abandonment. My supply from 1999 has run out. If I should approach someone else, please let me know. Many thanks.

With every blessing.

Michael Jones (Southwark fraternity.)

*(Editor: Both the printed "Directory" and the "Prayer of Abandonment" cards have been out of print for some time. Their texts are available on our national website (see bottom of rear cover) but the National Team has instead reprinted the colour brochure containing Tony Philpot's admirable text on the fraternity that I believe was first published by the Maltese fraternities; it was illustrated in the June "Be Bros." Copies are available from Stephen Squires, as on the back cover.)*

**Sent:** 17 May 2021

Dear Bob, Thank you for the latest *Be Brothers*. I found the contents very inspiring. Very well done to you for the work entailed and to all who contributed.

Peter Codd (*Portsmouth fraternity.*)

**Sent:** 16 May 2021

Dear Bob,

Thank you for the electronic copy of *Be Brothers* and the paper copy, which arrived yesterday. Congratulations on bringing together yourselves and Eire ! I am also glad we were able to share material from the Lay Fraternity with you and thanks for including it in this edition.

If I could just add a little correction - my surname (often confused) is POTIER not Poitier (like the town and actor) ! Also I am no longer the UK Responsible for the Lay fraternity - having ceased to be that in 2019, when I became European Responsible.

The UK Responsible is Sue Williamson, who is included in your posting.

Thanks again and hopefully see you in September. God keep you safe.

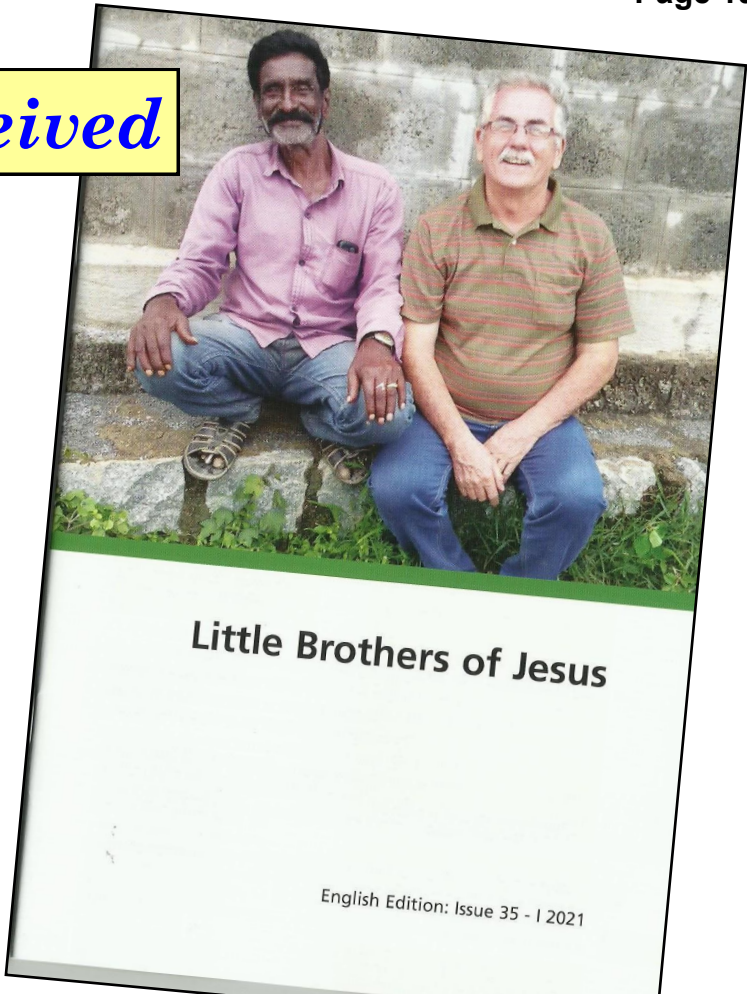
Moira. (*European lay Responsible.*)

*(Editorial apologies –I did know better- and noted for the future! Bob.)*

*Periodical received*

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Worth trying to reproduce just one of its remarkable stories:

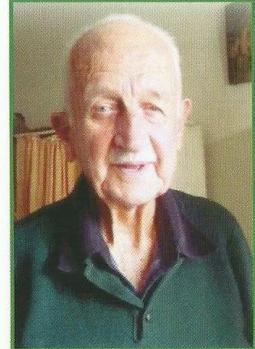
**« I have come to pray for my brothers in the lowlands »**

*François has been living for 65 years in the fraternity of Mahieddine, a popular district of Algiers. He joined for a month's retreat the brothers of Assekrem, the rocky plateau of the Sahara where Charles de Foucauld spent a few months. Several hermitages were set up there. Why do you pray differently in this place? François explains it to us:*

**I**n Algeria since 1956, this is only my 3<sup>rd</sup> month-long stay here. The 1<sup>st</sup> included climbing the closest peaks. The 2<sup>nd</sup> was during my desert year at El Abiodh in 1980. The 3<sup>rd</sup> has been taking place in November 2020 at the 'Cana' hermitage ("Do whatever he tells you").

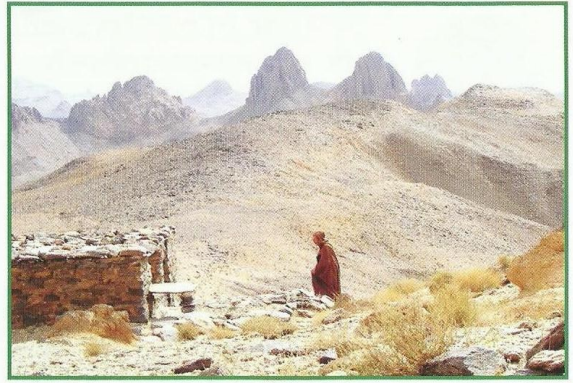
Over the years the viability of the hermitages has improved. Coming from Algiers, after 8 days in Tamanrasset, Ventura and I joined Jean Marie, who as soon as we arrived went to the 'Bethlehem' hermitage.

With everyone in their own living space, we meet at 8 o'clock in the morning for the Eucharist. Every morning Ventura gives us what we require to survive (the 1<sup>st</sup> day the Blessed Sacrament).



François.

Having come from Algiers, I arrived with the intention of praying for my brothers on the plain, caught right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing this, I was supported by the lives of Brother Charles, of Madeleine Delbrêl, of Marthe Robin, of Thérèse of Lisieux, of Ignatius of Loyola, but also by the Prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, at their request. The Bible renewed my relationship with Moses and the Prophets



Invitation to prayer.

and especially with Jesus in the Gospels, read slowly one after the other.

A little out of breath due to my age, I only wandered around two of the hermitages to while away a morning. One of the blessings of l'Assekrem, is the presence of the sun, the cold and the wind : together or separately, they are all piercing.

Brother Charles came to this summit to meet the nomads at pasture. Here he discovered the beauty of the site and continued to study the language of its inhabitants with his interpreter. Today, if we were not here, l'Assekrem would perhaps be a mere tourist spot, a remnant of colonial occupation. Foreigners can only come up here with a police escort. Communal guards, the Weather station and the Civil Protection service are based here to guarantee the safety of the area...

Why do we pray differently on this summit than elsewhere? The quality of the dry air, the purity of the sky, the variety of the peaks rising up towards infinity, invite us to a deeper knowledge of and relationship with the Creator, to a more authentic detachment from oneself, and to a more freely offered prayer.

My only regret is that I have not come more often to this place where God's love is expressed more strongly than elsewhere.

## 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:**

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

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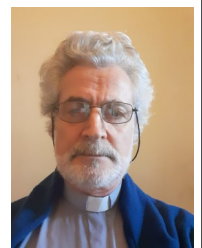
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In addition to local needs, these assist the financing of international Responsibles' meetings with any substantial surplus going to assist fraternities in developing countries. The UK subs. also covers the printing and distribution of "Be Brothers 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:

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