

# *Be Brothers!*

*Britain & Ireland.*

Jesus Caritas  
Fraternity of  
Priests

New series 29

November 2022

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Statue of St. Charles in Viviers, S.E. France, where he was ordained in the seminary chapel.

We were blessed as an Irish Fraternity by having over fifty of our Brothers come together for four wonderful days of communion and love in the west of Ireland last September, to mark this special year of joy and bask in the gentle afterglow of grace following the canonisation of Brother Charles.

We had a tranquil and contemplative time together and enjoyed having Bob Rainbow from Britain walk amongst us and give us new insight and encouragement. Jim Murphy led us on the themes of FRATERNITY / CONTEMPLATION / REVIEW OF LIFE and all the

brothers contributed in a myriad of different ways to ensure we journeyed in unity of vision and focus. The presence of our Little Sisters was a core benediction and a constant reminder of the depth of simplicity and attentiveness to which we are all called.

We were and remain so thankful. As one brother remarked so beautifully afterwards: *"In being thankful for the retreat, I am reminded of little Bernadette Sourbious's advice to a young novice who was attending to an elderly sister - 'Do not lead your sister to the point where she may express thankfulness for your care, because to be present in love to one another is thankfulness itself'. Such was our experience together. Thanks be to God."* So keep our next national retreat date in your diary! It is Sunday, September 24 - Thursday 28 2023.

We held a special commemorative Mass for our deceased brothers and continue to remember them during this month sacred to the memory of those who have gone before us. Requiescant in Pace. And as we approach Advent may each brother experience a new and deepening faith in the mystery of the Incarnation.

Beannachtai - *Niall Ahern* - Reponsible / Ireland

**Brothers  
together**  
*From the Irish  
Responsible*



## Fraternity news

- **“Be Brothers Britain & Ireland” by email:** Copies are distributed by email as a PDF file to British & Irish brothers via their Responsibles and also through British fraternities as ‘hard copy.’
- **Sorry to hear from Paul Glover** of another fraternity ceasing to meet– Liverpool.
- **The British ‘Regional’ Team** has, since the last issue, met ‘by Zoom’ on 1/6/22 and ‘live’ on 14/9/22, with sundry informal communications in-between. Decisions made appear below or elsewhere in this issue.
- **The annual British Responsibles meeting** had to be hastily reconvened when the rail strike made attendance difficult. Instead a small group met at Broadway, Worcs. on 14/9/22 (see pic. page 14.) We regret there was no time even to initiate a “Zoom” link.
- **European Assembly:** Steve Squires is expecting to represent British fraternities at Annecy over 11-17 July 2023.
- **2023 British retreats:** Note these dates: January 17-19th (4 members of the British team present separate talks related to Bro. Charles or the fraternity) and July 3-7th 2023, both at Nymphsfield Convent, Gloucestershire. Lifts from Stroud station. Details from British Team members (rear page.)
- **Irish retreat:** 24-28th September 2023. Contact Niall Ahern (rear page) for details.
- **A website is being developed for the Irish fraternities** (See rear page for British site)
- **PRESS DATE for the June 2023 “Be Brothers Britain & Ireland” is 1st April for full articles; snippets accepted till April 15th.** Contributions from British and Irish local fraternities very welcome.

# *The Canonisation of the “Universal Brother,” Saint Charles de Foucauld*

*-a personal account by Fr. Jonathan Cotton  
(Nottingham fraternity)*

*“In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40.*

Myself, John Nolan our British Treasurer, and his wife Hazel, teamed up to represent some of the English and Welsh pilgrims present for this long-awaited celebration of the canonisation of our Brother, St Charles de Foucauld, on 15th May. There were a whole variety of events organised in Rome during the week, but I am concentrating on the two main Masses and a meeting with the Pope on the Wednesday.

It was joy to concelebrate at the papal Mass with upwards of a thousand priests, and many thousands more people from around the world, filling the Square and overflowing down the via della Conciliazione towards Castel Sant’Angelo. I joined a group of American priests who were staying in the same hotel as me. The papal choir was magnificent throughout, leading the chanting and hymns, and enriching the celebration with motets. The crowds participated enthusiastically, adding their own chants and cheers, especially when their particular saint’s name was heard and during the Pope’s homily. The growing heat of the sun did not seem to deter us. The gathering was a truly memorable experience of that universal brotherhood or universal “fraternity”, longed for by Brother Charles, proclaimed by Pope Francis, especially in his encyclical letter on fraternity & social friendship, and desperately sought today by the millions in the human family who are broken by their experience of war, displacement, migration, homelessness and famine. Brother Charles, who died, murdered, in obscurity in December 1916, is a timely and much needed witness held up today by the church to inspire the human family.

This was the second time I have seen Pope Francis. This time it was obvious that his mobility had become severely restricted. We received a booklet containing the whole ceremony in Latin, Italian and English. The Gospel was chanted in Greek and the Prayers of the Faithful [a Bidding Prayer] were in French, Tamil, Spanish, Dutch, and Italian. The Rite of Canonisation is inserted at the beginning of Mass. After calling on the Holy Spirit, by the singing of the traditional prayer “*Veni Creator Spiritus*” – *Come, Holy Spirit*, and calling on heaven with a Litany of Saints, the names of the men & women to be canonised are called out by the Pope and he confirms that they can be enrolled among the Saints and can be venerated by the universal church, with their authentic relics and images venerated, too. Then, some relics of the newly declared Saints are incensed and the Pope promises to publish an official decree concerning



*Continued overleaf*



the newly canonised. The Mass continues as usual with a rousing singing of the gloria and the readings from the Mass of the Sunday.

The other nine Canonised with Brother Charles were: Titus Brandsma, Lazzaro known as Devasahayam, César de Bus, Luigi Maria Palazzolo, Giustino Maria Russolillo, Marie Rivier, Maria Francesca di Gesù Rubatto, Maria di Gesù Santocanale and Maria Domenica Mantovani.

At the end of the Mass, myself, John and Hazel enjoyed a relaxing lunch together, only to discover at the end of the meal that our American priest friends were on a table behind us! John and Hazel were to return to England on Monday morning.

On the following day, Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May, there was a Mass of Thanksgiving for the whole Charles de Foucauld spiritual family inside St John Lateran Basilica. The main celebrant was Cardinal Angelo de Donatis, the Vicar General of the Pope for the Diocese of Rome. It was a truly international celebration, reflecting the many countries around the world where the various expressions of the Saint Charles de Foucauld Family can be found: religious orders of men & women, lay associations and fraternities of clergy, singles and family groups. Once again, I sat with my American priest friends. I was very happy to discover that a few rows in front of me was Fr Niall Ahern, the Irish National Responsible, whom I last met 22 years ago when we shared a course in Ignatian spirituality at St Buenos

in North Wales. We were due to meet up twice more during the day.

The Mass reflected a variety of languages and cultures, with eighteen songs and chants from around the world, including “*Sing a new song*” by Daniel Schutte. The Gospel was chanted in Arabic. The drumming and dancing accompanying the Procession of Gifts overflowed into the congregation, expressing genuine joy felt by all. At the end of the Mass people were in no rush to leave, mingling together, exchanging greetings and taking photographs. Eventually, I joined my American friends and their party of parishioners and we retired to enjoy lunch together in a restaurant opposite the basilica.



*Niall Ahern and Jonathan Cotton  
at St. John Lateran*

Then, it was time for me to go to the Irish College for a 3.00pm meeting of the European Responsibles. A separate Report has been written about this meeting (next page.) The day concluded with a meal together at a local restaurant where I was able to sit next to Fr Niall and catch up on our news and swap stories with others at the meal, both humorous and more reflective. A late night trip on the Metro took me safely home to my hotel for an early flight back to England the following morning.

One Meeting I was unable to attend was the one on Wednesday May 18<sup>th</sup> when Pope Francis met members of the Charles de Foucauld Spiritual Family Association. This Association brings together The Little Brothers of Jesus and The Little Sisters of Jesus and 18 other religious or-

ders and associations for priests, religious and lay people inspired by Brother Charles.

Here the Pope revealed that he was greatly supported by the story and spirituality of Brother Charles when he was studying theology as a young man. At a time of crisis, Brother Charles' spirituality helped him focus on the essentials of Christianity, a simpler spirituality, without getting lost in secondary things – i.e. Jesus and charity, placing the Lord and the service of others at the centre of one's life and action.

Pope Francis then went on to summarise what the spirituality of Brother Charles meant to him. He said that the witness of this spirituality is so much needed in a world today where we can lose sight of our brothers and sisters. *“The simple purity of the Gospel is found in silence, prayer, adoration and service to others.”* He pointed out that it is this spirituality that leads to “universality” – “living as a brother to all, starting with the poor.”

Looking back on my visit to Rome, first, I am left with a stronger sense of the fraternity our brotherhood offers to our fellow priests and deacons, and I want to communicate this to them. And, second, I have a greater desire to explore the life of Brother Charles by centring my life more closely on Jesus, reflecting on the gospels and adoration, seeking out opportunities to love all without exception, especially the hidden poor, and those who think they are forgotten. These are ones Jesus calls and identifies with as “the least”..

### MEETING OF EUROPEAN RESPONSIBLES—IRISH COLLEGE, ROME, MONDAY 16th MAY 2022 at 3PM (Shortened notes from Jonathan Cotton.)

We shared **our main experience of Brother Charles**. An inspiring variety of responses included his daily Adoration, his trusting in God for his new community of Little Brother & Sisters even though he died before it came about. His “living Nazareth”. His loving of Christ in the Tuareg. His silent witness. His dying in obscurity – the same as Christ.



Our British report was received with thanks. It was decided to hand out **a letter from the German Fraternity** as an example of the situation in Europe. Namely, we are older with fewer younger members. It is difficult to find Leaders and Responsibles. All are becoming busier – e.g. less priests but responsible for more churches. One of the Brothers had completed **an analysis** of the National Reports which helped to clarify the world-wide situation.

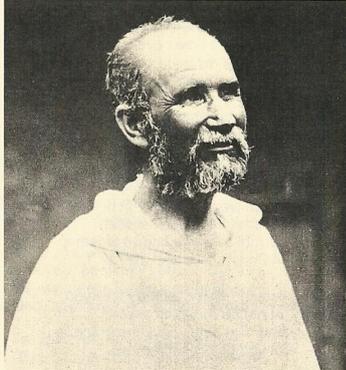
**Communication** was highlighted as an issue worldwide. But, there are no clear strategies to address the shortage of numbers for future Meetings. **Month of Nazareth:** variations are being tried around the world to cater for those who cannot afford time for a whole month. In France, they divide the Month into two fortnights per year. In USA, they have a one week sampler. [The 30 days version is available as well]. Other varieties are being tried. **Commitment:** it was noted that some Fraternities have “friends” of the Fraternities [who think they are a good idea etc!] but do not commit to a Fraternity or willing to start their own.

**The next Meeting** is in July 2023 in Annecy, France. **To aid communication**, this email address was given for all queries regarding the European Meeting: [jpdeegan@gmail.com](mailto:jpdeegan@gmail.com)

The brother from **Burkina Faso** asked for prayers. The military have seized power and the President is under arrest. Corruption is widespread, with civil unrest, terrorist attacks and kidnappings. As a minority religion, Church members experience frequent hostility. May Saint Charles intercede as a minority Church witnesses to the peace which only Christ can give. +

# Saint Charles de Foucauld

*Mass Celebrating his Canonisation*



*Immaculate Conception  
Catholic Church  
Stroud*

*Wednesday 13th July 2022  
2:00pm*

Clifton fraternity arranged for Mass to be celebrated in honour of Bro. Charles' canonisation at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Stroud, Gloucestershire (where Clifton brother Gary Brassington is parish priest) on Wednesday 13th July.

Gary presided and Barnabas Page preached, with Regional Responsible Stephen Squires adding a few words afterwards. It was followed by tea and cake, with the Clifton fraternity moving on to their monthly meeting at nearby Nympsfield that same evening.

The editor is indebted to Clifton brother Jim Williams for these photos. +

Priests on l. are Stephen Corrigan, Richard McKay and Vincent Curtis.



Fr. Gary Brassington, pp., presided.

Above: Frs Stephen Squires, Barnabas Page, John Blacker and Peter Stodart (all also on r. in the other pictures.)



## *Letter from the International Team about the spread of our priestly fraternity*

*September 2022 (This and many other international Jesus Caritas communications- even "Be Brothers!" -are always available on the international website, <http://www.iesuscaritas.org/en> )*

*"Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch" Lk 5,4*

Dear brothers,

### THE CANONISATION OF BROTHER CHARLES

His canonisation in Rome on 15 May this year was a great experience for all who were privileged to witness this event. Again and again, it was said that for the spiritual family of Charles de Foucauld the canonisation is a great gift. But much more, his life and spiritual journey and his charism is a great gift – not only for the Spiritual Family, but for the whole Church. The gift of his charism has not been changed or increased by the canonisation but has been brought into the light and has been officially recognised by the Church.

We are convinced that belonging to our fraternity with its special characteristics can support the priestly ministry very well and form it in a valuable way. Some of us would perhaps no longer be priests if they had not met brothers of the priestly Fraternity Jesus Caritas.

### SHARING OUR GIFT

From this conviction we want to take a new impetus to make our priestly Fraternity known, especially in places and countries where there are no fraternities. We want to offer our Priestly Fraternity as a way of living our ministry accompanied by brothers, to remain in living contact with the Holy Scriptures as one of our most important sources for spiritual growing, to develop the contemplative dimension of our lives through adoration and desert-days and finally not to lose closeness and service to the poor in a simple lifestyle.

Therefore, dear Brothers, we ask you to reflect intensely, alone and in community, on the possibilities you see for spreading the seed of the charism of our priestly Fraternity. Are there regions in our own country, are there neighbouring countries, where we could offer the charism of our priestly Fraternity?



### IN COMMUNION WITH OUR SPIRITUAL FAMILY

At the origin of the formation of our priestly Fraternity were the Little Sisters and the Little Brothers. Their way of living the Gospel, which was so new at that time, fascinated many priests very much. These priests did not want to become religious, but to remain in the ministry as diocesan priests, but they wanted to live something of the CdF charism. This is how the priestly Fraternity came into being in France in the 1950s, first called "*Unio sacerdotalis*", later Jesus Caritas.

This observation of the origins can be significant for us today. For in order to have a starting point for the spread of the priestly Fraternity, the environment of the Little Sisters and Little Brothers is still one of the best milieus today. For "new plantings" it is therefore certainly good advice to put out feelers in this direction.

In Rome, at the meeting of those responsible for the various branches

*Continued overleaf*

of the Spiritual Family, we noticed something else: In many countries there are branches of the spiritual family, especially lay communities, but no fraternities of priests. Probably a point of contact could be found there to make our Fraternity known and invite some priests to participate in it and introducing them to “the spiritual means” we have.

## HOW TO PROCEED?

Three aspects seem important to us:

### 1. The preparation phase:

Here the first question is: Do I, do we really have the conviction that it is good if someone gets to know the priestly Fraternity and joins it? Where this conviction is lacking, there is probably no reason to start with an initiative to spread the priestly Fraternity. This conviction must be shared by some priests, because a “mission project” is not a matter for one person, but always for a small group.

Another important stage in the preparation is the search for contacts and points of contact. This is probably one of the most difficult tasks, to find a group of priests who are willing to commit themselves to a few days with CdF. Finally, the preparation should also include prayer for a good outcome. We are convinced that especially older priests from our midst will be happy to take on this ministry.

### 2. The implementation phase

The most suitable way seems to us to organise a “WEEK WITH SAINT CHARLES DE FOUCAULD”. In this week there should be two focal points: a) Presentation of the biography of CdF b) Presentation of the priestly Fraternity with its means of spiritual growing. These days should be embedded in an atmosphere of prayer, fraternity, joy and service.

### 3. The follow-up phase

Just as every newly seeded plant needs care and nurture, so it is with a newly founded Fraternity. It needs accompaniment to be able to stand on its own feet. For this, integration into the national and continental level is important, but above all contact and exchange with experienced priests. The concrete form of this “mentoring” will be very different and depends on the respective circumstances and persons. It seems important to us to plan some form of accompaniment right from the beginning.

Dear brothers, we know that all attempts in this direction are not easy. But we think it is important and it seems to us that now is a good time to do it. So we urge you to talk about this and carry out some initiatives. We especially ask the continental and national responsible brothers to make this letter a priority concern in your next assembly. We also ask that you inform us of any steps you take in this direction. Perhaps we have ways to support you.

We wish you courage and confidence in your important ministry.



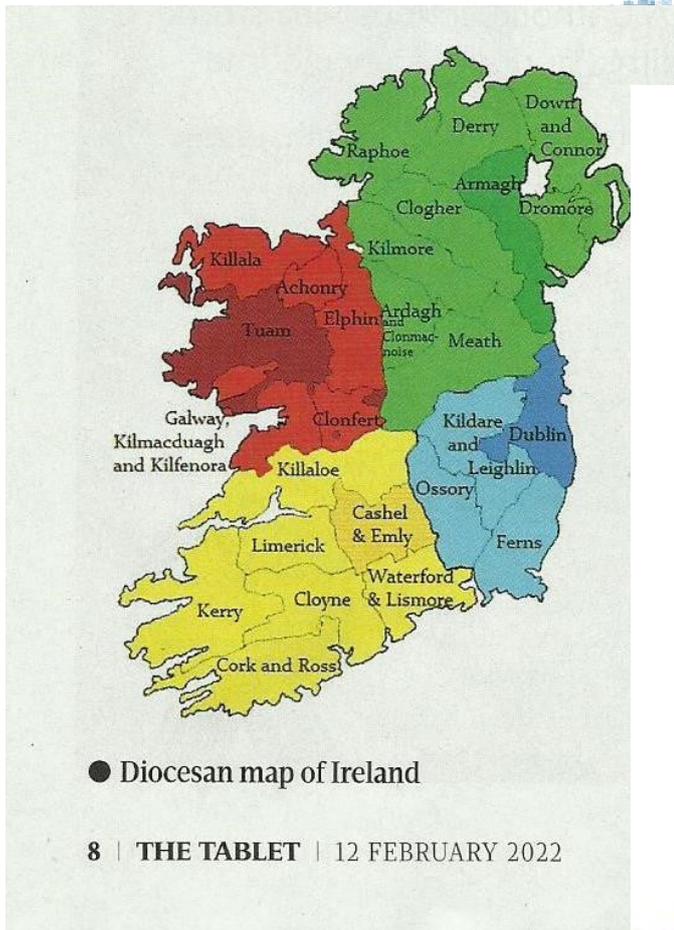
*The international team- Eric, Honoré, Fernando, Tony and Matthias.* +

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

# Where are our fraternities?

*With both Irish and British readership these days, many may have no idea where quoted fraternities are based. Might these diocesan maps assist?*

*Acknowledgment is made to "The Tablet."*



● Diocesan map of Ireland

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

## Annual Irish retreat- Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo

*Sun. 18th—Thurs. 22nd September.  
The editor was very glad to represent the  
British fraternities.*

But worries were dissolved as soon as Seamus Connell's friendly face appeared at the Dublin ferry port door on September 18th. Not only that, but he had arranged car transport to Connolly station for a train leaving 5 minutes after our gaining the platforms! Here the good news was heightened by Seamus, who with some well-hidden disability, was able to provide free journeys for us both, seeing he was allowed to take a 'carer' with him!

After 3 hours of watching the Irish countryside float by on the comfortable modern train, another brother was able to ferry us the 15 miles or so from Sligo station to the little West coast fishing and tourist village of Mullaghmore, sited on its own rocky Atlantic peninsula -a haven of just 2 hotels, 2 bars, a single general shop, and the "Start of the Sea" diocesan retreat centre, a large former Mercy convent. It stands overlooking the harbour (built by Lord Palmerston in the 1840's) with the impressive mountains of Benbulbin and its peers rising across the bay.



After a fine greeting from Niall Ahern, Irish Responsible (sic) in person, who was throughout these days in full command of operations –the perfect host- the welcome continued throughout the week. Had Britain and Ireland really ever had problems?! The Irish welcomes were fullsome and genuine, and I was soon aware that the trials, joys and brotherhood of priesthood in Britain are just the same across the water! One sadness was to awake on the second day to see a Fr. Michael Ryan taken to hospital with chest pains; he remained there for the week.

The week developed much like our British Jesus Caritas events, with daily Mass, exposition, reviews of life, scripture sharing, daily full 'desert' afternoons and fine talks provided by Jim Murphy, whom I had known in the same capacity during the English "Month of Nazareth" in Morocco back in 2008. I did not take notes of all his talks, but the following resounded: Story of a young curate's spiritual director urging him to an hour's prayer a day, with the retort he was too busy; only to be countered by "In that case you need to start with TWO hours!" Our daily "hour" should involve A.C.T.S; Adoration/contrition/thanksgiving/supplication. Also, "All we have in Jesus Caritas is one another;" "Jesus Caritas saved my frenetic life" and "Be a sign of the love of Christ; simply friendly. Love one another *as you are.*" All Jim's talks and the Masses were picked up by a laptop with webcam and at time of editing are still available on [www.churchtv.ie/jesus Caritas](http://www.churchtv.ie/jesus Caritas) . Hearing the Common of Mass in Irish was a first for me (Welsh would have been more familiar!)

The queen's funeral was broadcast on the Monday and I 'skipped lessons' so as to watch throughout the day. But it was intriguing to be able to just turn my head and see out of the window the

Not having been an 'ambassador' before, it was a voyage into the lesser-known for myself– a British priest with, unusually, no Irish ancestry at all; and only having set foot on the famed 'emerald isle' four times before– the last a good 20 years ago.



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

very harbour where her majesty's second cousin, Lord Mountbatten, had sailed to his fateful meeting with the IRA back in 1979, (On a 4km. walk round the rocky peninsula, I came across a plaque to that terrible day; see the picture here, too.) A large and well-planted "Peace Garden" exists next to the Centre.

One evening we watched a YouTube film on Bro. Charles, "A useless life," from the interesting series available at "netforgod.tv." Then at the last Mass I was one of several presented with a small framed image of Br. Charles' 'heart and cross' symbol; deeply appreciated! On the final evening there was reconciliation followed by "fiesta," with tables laden with food & drink and live Irish folk music from 4 brothers, as shown on the pictures!



All in all a wonderful experience of brotherhood, with many contacts made for future reference. One particular point of interest was an assertion that the Irish fraternities had been founded from Britain, not least by the exertions of Don Stoker (of the former Hallam fraternity.)



*Final rendition by Niall Ahern and Jim Murphy!*



**Back row** l-r: Niall Ahern, Gabriel Murphy, Dan Lane, Aidan Hamill, James McDonagh, Pat Connaughton, Paul Kelly, Paul Kelly, Alan Geoghegan, Liam Ó Cuiv,  
**2nd row from back:** Terry McElvaney, Finian Connaughton, Oliver O Reilly, Larry O Keefe, Jim Murphy, Pierce Mullin, Sean Coyle, Pat McManus.  
**Middle row:** Ciaran Dallat, Joe Deegan, Andy Doyle, Oliver Kelly, Bernie Moloney, Joe Clavin, Larry Wallace, John McEvoy, Stephen Farragher.  
**2nd row from front:** Tommy Towey, Charlie O Gorman, Gerry Comiskey, Michael Hurley, Seamus Connell, Peter McCarron, Dan Kavanagh, Tom Coyle, Ray McCullagh, Fergal Cunnane, Martin Halpin, Adrian Eastwood.  
**Seated:** Michael Cooke, Michael Donnelly, Bob Rainbow, John Hughes, Sr Emiko, Sr Helene, Peter Farrelly, Ciaran Whitney, Finbarr O Leary. (Group photo by Fr. Stephen Farragher) +

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

# Our way of prayer

*Martin Drennan*      *A priest of Ossory, and  
Bishop Emeritus of Galway Diocese.*

***“The Lord waits to be gracious to you” (Is 30:18).*** This is an excellent definition of prayer. The God we relate to in prayer is above all a God of life, a God who has great gifts to give us. To meet him in prayer is to discover the life he gives when he forgives, heals, consoles, inspires. Since God is life, then those who truly come into contact with him become more alive to themselves, to others, to his gracious presence. His longing is to be gracious to them. So that this can happen he waits for them to slow down, to let their hard-packed lives find space in which to be attentive to what he is offering.

Prayer begins, then, with an emptying out of preoccupations, with a letting go of being busy, with becoming poor before God. He gives where he finds empty hands (Augustine). He does not dump his gifts on us. Rather, he waits until we are receptive because we need to make space for what he holds out to us. The Pharisee and the Publican story illustrates that (Lk 18: 9 – 14). The Publican has the need and desire to receive, while the Pharisee is so self-sufficient that he feels there is nothing lacking in his life. The Publican shows the kind of humility that is basic for prayer.

God longs to be gracious to us. This he tends to do in two ways. Firstly, he accepts us as we are and secondly he calls us to grow. While our love is always conditioned because of our past experiences, his love is unconditional. God’s love for us means that it is alright to be who we are when we come into his presence. He is very fond of me (Edward Farrell).

Our first response to that love is to relax in his presence and we need to relax if there is to be quality to our listening. In the presence of a really good person we don’t feel judged. In God’s presence we are known as we are and welcomed with joy.

As well as accepting us as we are, he wants us to grow. His love sees what we can be. He knows what we can become with the help of his transforming action. He therefore seeks to transform us through his word and through his presence in the events of our lives. His way is that of graciousness, of gentleness, never the way of violence. He wants us to allow him to be gracious to us; he says that we are his work of art in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10). and when he says *“You are always with me and all I have is yours” (Lk 15:1).*

## HE HAS PLANS FOR ME

A sign of maturing in prayer is a growing self-acceptance, a being more at ease with the temperament and history he has given me. While he loves me as I am now, he has plans for me, plans to give me hope (Jer 29:11). His word prunes (Jn 15:3). He extends us, stretches us so that we take on his way of patience, forgiveness, encouragement.

One of the fruits of prayer is the purification of our attitudes, where we learn to begin to see ourselves, others and the events of life as God sees them. The Lord is the potter moulding us in his ways, asking us to try to understand and say ‘yes’ to what he is doing in and through us (Jer 18:1 – 12).

Our prayer is much more likely to be fruitful if, like the first disciples of Jesus, we come in search of something. Jesus says to us what he said to them, *“What are you looking for?” (Jn 1:38).* A desire for God, for his life, for his graciousness: this is basic to prayer. That desire is his gift, it is his spirit at work in me. When God gives me a desire for something, it is a sign that he intends to give me the gift (Augustine). This desire, this felt need for God sharpens my listening to his word, to his presence.

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

Nicodemus came with a restless heart because he felt a lack of something in his life as a respected Pharisee. He was disposed to receive, willing to be led, albeit with considerable hesitation at the outset. He was open to listen and wrestle with what he heard. What Jesus offered him in the first place was acceptance, friendship. What began with a series of anxious questions eventually flowered in a silent presence on Calvary (Jn 3:1–10; 19:39).

When Nicodemus first came to Jesus he was not sure what he really wanted of the relationship. His fear of a new beginning gradually gave way to commitment to Jesus and to the courage to act on that commitment. On Calvary, Nicodemus staked his future on his friendship with Jesus. Contact with Jesus had transformed his life permanently. He had finally found what he was looking for. The pattern of his journey in discipleship is offered by the Fourth Gospel as a model for all who would enter into a serious relationship with Jesus. It is also an insight into the transformation that happens when we are present to Jesus in prayer.

In praying the scriptures two simple questions guide us: 1. What do I hear in this passage? 2. How do I feel about it?

Zacchaeus heard his hunger for wholeness answered in Jesus' word that salvation had come to his house. He heard that news with joy. This joy overflowed into generosity, in his promise to restore fourfold. He had need of good news; he heard words that were life-giving; he felt joyful and this joy inspired his response.

Nicodemus brought his search to Jesus, heard with some trepidation how Jesus called for a new birth from above. The word of Jesus brought up fears in him, but he stayed with those anxieties and was given the capacity to overcome them. Through the presence of Jesus fear was transcended. He tried to be receptive to what Jesus had to say, he felt fearful, he sought understanding, was given help. His worry inspired his request for clarification of what Jesus meant.

### **STAYED WITH HER PAIN**

The Samaritan woman heard Jesus ask her to call her husband (Jn 4:16). She felt found out and therefore angry with Jesus for touching some of the pain points in her life. She stayed with her pain and allowed Jesus to set her free from her guilt and resentment. She heard his word; she felt deeply about it; she allowed him to take away her prejudice; she went back into the town transformed into an apostle of joy.

The word of God can stir up feelings of wonder, of guilt, of thanks, of anxiety. It can arouse anger that leads to a prayer for understanding.

Psalm 23 can be heard as the story of God's care as a shepherd and give rise to a profound prayer of gratitude for his presence in the valleys of darkness. However, the memory of the valleys of darkness can give rise to resentment for the ways into which God has led us. In that case we need to listen to what the anger means and try to discern where God was leading us. He leads us in unexpected ways so that we can learn to depend on him. His way is to lead us into poverty so that he can meet us there as saviour. The valleys of darkness have a purpose and a meaning.

Through prayer God is actively seeking to transform the whole of our lives. This entails the transformation of our ideas about him, about ourselves, about life. He also seeks to touch our feelings, so that painful memories can be healed. Our emotional baggage is our greatest hindrance to growth.

Any of our lives may be marked by prejudices, resentments, fears, false expectations, illusions. The Lord wants to heal our fears and give

*Continued overleaf*

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

*"Our way of Prayer," continued from overleaf*

us courage to take responsibility for the reality of life, for its opportunities and limitations. He wants to transform our anger into positive directions where the energy anger gives is used in constructive ways. He heals us of guilt and of anxiety, drawing us to greater trust in him.

What the Lord asks of us is that we allow him the initiative, that we trust his guiding presence. He wishes us to bring the reality of where we are now and offer that to him. Prayer is standing unprotected before him. He may ask us to forgive an enemy, to let go of hurt from the past, to have greater courage, to be more convinced of his love, to be more understanding and accepting of ourselves and others, to take on a new understanding of our past.

The Lord's life-giving graciousness is always drawing us to greater inner freedom. We can see that growing interior freedom emerge in the lives of Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, Peter, Mary of Magdala. It is very obvious on the Emmaus Road (Lk 24:13-35). All of these disciples took the risk of friendship with Jesus. Through it they found their true worth and found their expectations changed rather than fulfilled. +

## *News from the local fraternities*

*Not much news received this time, but Michael Jones (Southwark Dartford fraternity) e.mailed on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept:*

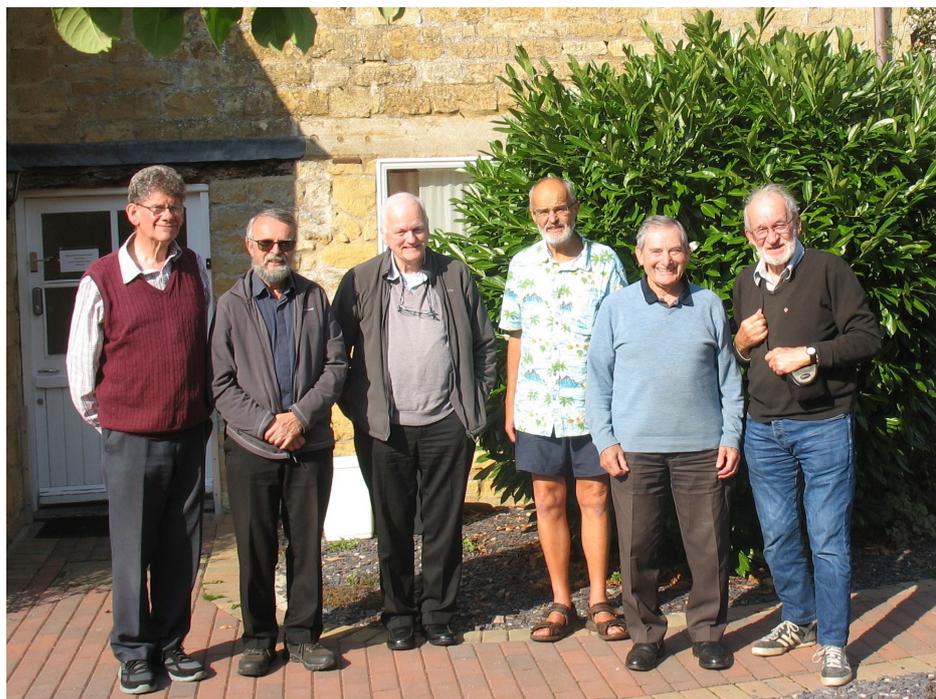
We have not met since end July and not much has changed. We are still 10 on the books although one member is studying Canon Law in Rome. +

*Is any other local fraternity (British or Irish) able to contribute to this section?*

## *The annual September meeting of British Responsibles*

Regrettably a rail strike made attendance in London difficult and it was hastily relocated to the "House of the Open Door" retreat centre near Broadway, Worcs on 14th September; but a very low attendance resulted.

Representing their own fraternities were: Stephen Squires (Birmingham,) Barnabas Page (Clifton,) Jonathan Cotton (Nottingham,) Peter Coxe (Plymouth,) Peter Codd (Portsmouth) and Bob Rainbow (Wrexham.) +



## *British Fraternity interim Accounts*

*1/1/22 through 11/10/22 from John Nolan, treasurer.*

<b>Income</b>	Subscriptions 2022	1,290.00	(NB: Subs 2020: £2,200; subs 2021: £2,220)
	<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,290.00</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>	Advertising	240.00	Tablet advert for canonisation of CDF
	Bank Charges	15.40	
	European Assembly	1,000.00	To support less well off fraternities
	LSOJ	150.00	For "Footnotes" - their annual magazine
	Misc	3.00	
	Printing/Publishing	386.21	Two editions of "Be Brothers"
	Meetings expenses	100.00	At HOD Sept 2022
	Retreat expenses 1	249.00	Representing the fraternity at Irish retreat
	Retreat expenses 2	411.53	Nympsfield - retreatant costs
	Travel expenses	136.00	
	Website	227.99	www.jesus Caritas priests.org.uk
	<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>2,919.13</b>	
	<b>Deficit</b>	<b>1,629.13</b>	

## *Smiles*

### *Jesus Caritas puzzles:*

Last time I asked- **how many English words, of 4 letters or more, NOT names or plurals, can you get out of—"Saint Charles de Foucauld?"** I made 77; 38 are 5 or more letters viz:

*Faint; four; ford; cauldron; defect; laud; seal; char; cart; sine; cosine; triad; sale; fail; cause; article; field; fail; failed; lurch; lest; lost; last; land; lend; laid; chat; chest; dilate; undress; found; find; fend; trench; drench; cant; dint; fint; flail; flare; fresh; cold; fold; sold; heart; sleet; treat; neat; feat; stile; stain; train; drain; fret; fried; afraid; defend defect; reflect; refine; define; edit; adit; fodder; sodden; force; forced; lure; cure; duress; dear; near; fear; leer; leat; sneer.*

However as there does not appear to be interest in this feature, it will be discontinued forthwith. +



(HWS  
+  
CARITAS)

## *Stop press, subs:*

*British Treasurer John Nolan requests that all British subscriptions be collected in January and forwarded to him; details to do this are at the foot of the rear page. (NB: Note subs. shortfall this year above.) +*

## *Among e.mails received by the editor*

**From:** Paul Lyons  
**Sent:** 06 September 2022  
**Subject:** Fr. Kevin Jones RIP

Dear Brothers,  
 Yesterday we received the sad news that Kevin died very recently, and unexpectedly. We remember him as a faithful member of our fraternity in Hook.  
 Kevin had a great sense of humour and he will be greatly missed, but I'm sure that he will continue to pray for each of us in the communion of God's kingdom.  
 Kind regards,  
 Paul  
 (*Portsmouth fraternity Responsible*)

**From:** Xavier Chevillard <xchevillard@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 23 June 2022 09:56  
**Subject:** Re: "Be Brothers Britain & Ireland:"

Thank you Bob, for the sharing of this "Be Brothers."

I appreciate the link more so since I retired from the General Fraternity of the Little Brothers (like 3 others) at our Chapter that was held eventually in Avila before Easter.

So, my new address is:

Xavier Chevillard Fraternite,  
 3/11 rue Romain Rolland  
 F- 59000 LILLE            email unchanged

I was happy to take part in the international zoom sessions with the Lay Fraternity in May, and also in the link up with the people from Leeds Justice & Peace (also in May), but I did not go to Rome for the canonisation. Heaven is celebrated everywhere !... I am glad you picked up on the LBJ bulletin that I sent.

Reading testimonies about Fr J Hamel (June 2022 issue) brought to mind what I had read in a letter from Ventura (Assekrem) . He sent the brothers a photo of a surviving rose bush that had been given to them by Muslim friends from Tamanrasset in sympathy after the murder of Fr Jacques Hamel. My comment is of wonder and thanksgiving so that miles away Muslim people in Tamanrasset would feel the pain and trek some 50 miles or so to express their grief to our brothers in that place where Charles de Foucauld had lived. **God is great**, indeed, to allow these human acts of compassion. To me it speaks of these people, their faith, and their regard for this Christian presence in their country (Algeria).

You may find details of our General Chapter on the [jesuscaritas.info](http://jesuscaritas.info) website. LS Katrina was helpful in uploading that for us.

Your brother,

Xavier (*Little Brother of Jesus.*)

+

# Obituary

## Rev. Monsignor William Steele

(29 Oct. 1930 - 3 Aug. 2022)



*(Photo taken by Mrs. Rowan Morton-Gledhill, Leeds Diocesan Communications Officer.)*

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Mgr. William Steele, who died in St James' University Hospital, Leeds on the afternoon of Wednesday 3rd August; a true stalwart of Jesus Caritas and formerly a frequent attendee at our national events.

*A full obituary written by the Leeds Diocesan Archivist, Robert Finnigan KSS can be found at [Mgr William Steele RIP | Diocese of Leeds](#) and may also be obtained from the "Be Brothers" editor; but the following tributes have also been received:*

**From:** Fr Peter Codd  
**Sent:** 09 August 2022

Dear Bob,

George Hay sent some fine thoughts about Billy and Paul Lyons, also, sent a comment worth including. I shall simply forward their email messages for you to edit as you think best. I should like to express my appreciation for the great blessing of having spent many splendid holidays in the company of Billy, together with George and Cuthbert. Only God knows how much their companionship supported me over the last fifty years.

Peter (Portsmouth fraternity & National Team member)

**From:** Paul Lyons  
**Sent:** 09 August 2022

"I'm just giving thanks for the life of Billy -may he rest in peace. He was a great teacher and a man of great intelligence. He formed many clergy, people who will be grateful for his teaching.

Paul Lyons (Portsmouth Responsible)

**From:** George Hay  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 9, 2022

Dear Peter, here is my note on Billy. I hope it is OK.

Fr Billy has been a good friend to me since we first met as new students at the English College in Rome, both of us having done National Service and a degree at University before starting seminary formation. We were entering a strange new world, put into cassocks on the night of our arrival.

*Continued overleaf*

We have shared much in the following nearly 70 years. As a fellow student I admired his clarity of mind, understanding the Latin lectures and able to interpret them for us. This ability to understand and share knowledge was one of his gifts. I remember an Ushaw student telling me that they appreciated his theology lectures because of their clarity. He became an expert in ecumenism and inter church relations where these gifts were important.

Another quality I admired was his spirituality and faith. When I was Rector at the English College I asked him to become Spiritual Director. He gave us very good and encouraging spiritual talks and, I am sure, guided wisely many students. He could listen, understand and encourage in faith and prayer.

Besides this, over many years, with Peter Codd, I and for a time Cuthbert Rand, have shared many holidays together often in the Highlands. Billy was never practical and left cooking mainly to Peter and a little to me, but we enjoyed his wit and knowledge and shared much together including the Prayer of Abandonment, as three of us belonged to our local Jesus Caritas Fraternities. May he and Cuthbert rest in peace.

George Hay (Plymouth fraternity.)

Fr Billy's Requiem Mass was celebrated at 11.30am on Friday 9 September (at Leeds Cathedral) – it was livestreamed via the cathedral YouTube Channel [www.leedscathedrallive.org.uk](http://www.leedscathedrallive.org.uk) and at time of going to press was still available to view there.

Please pray for the repose of Fr Billy's soul and for his family and friends at this time. *Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.* +

## *An excerpt from Pope Francis' forthcoming message for the Poor, 13th November 2022*

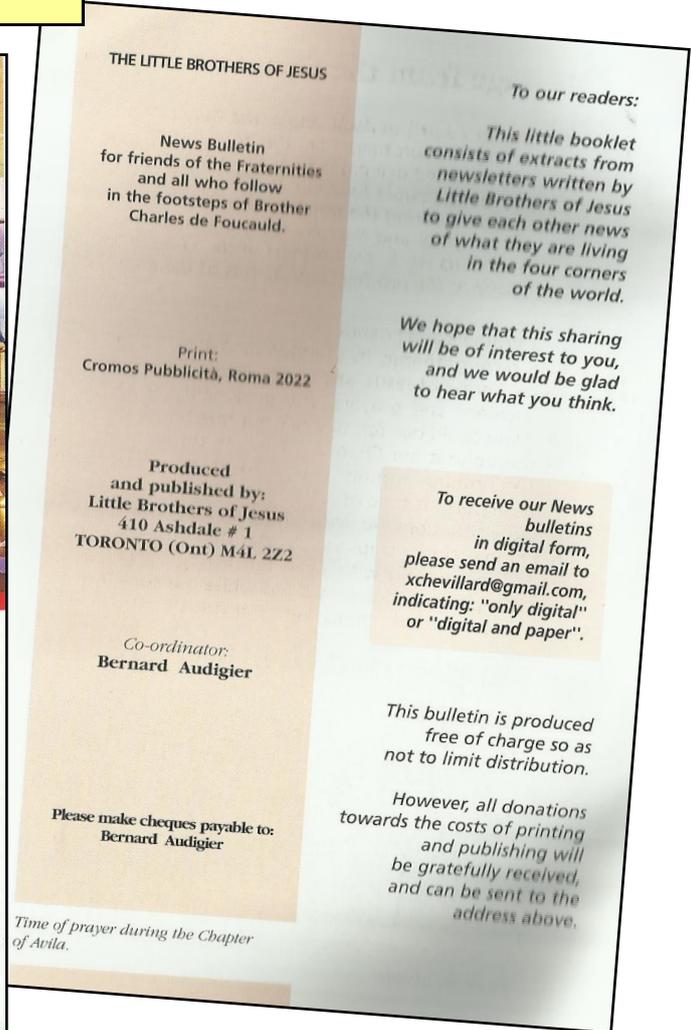
10. **On 15 May last, I canonized Brother Charles de Foucauld**, a man born rich, who gave up everything to follow Jesus, becoming, like him, a poor brother to all. Charles' life as a hermit, first in Nazareth and then in the Saharan desert, was one of silence, prayer and sharing, an exemplary testimony to Christian poverty. We would do well to meditate on these words of his: *"Let us not despise the poor, the little ones, the workers; not only are they our brothers and sisters in God, they are also those who most perfectly imitate Jesus in his outward life. They perfectly represent Jesus, the Worker of Nazareth. They are the firstborn among the elect, the first to be called to the Saviour's crib. They were the regular company of Jesus, from his birth until his death... Let us honour them; let us honour in them the images of Jesus and his holy parents... Let us take for ourselves [the condition] that he took for himself... Let us never cease to be poor in everything, brothers and sisters to the poor, companions to the poor; may we be the poorest of the poor like Jesus, and like him love the poor and surround ourselves with them"* ( Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Meditation 263). [1] For Brother Charles, those were not merely words, but a concrete way of living that led him to share with Jesus the offering of his very life. +

# Periodical received



## Little Brothers of Jesus

English Edition: Issue 37 - I 2022



# Nazareth

Paul Churchill

One of the main themes in Charles life was the reality of Nazareth. Nazareth is a place in Palestine where Jesus grew up. Charles lived there for many years. However, Nazareth was not just a physical place for de Foucauld. It was more a divine environment in which the work of God could be carried out. Nazareth was the place of the ordinary, the unimportant, the normal. Nazareth for Jesus was the place of love, both human and divine. I marvel about the gifts of love of the Mother who was the channel of a graced human love which supported Jesus. It was where for most

of his life on earth He grew, humanly speaking, in his relationship with God and learnt so much for His mission. Nazareth is where God touches us by means of the human love in our homes, wider family and society.

Nazareth remained at the heart of de Foucauld's ideas. It was the space where real evangelisation could take place, the space where God is actually met. It is clear to me that Ireland is searching for such a spirituality which will help it in the future.

*Paul Churchill is priest of Dublin diocese. The reflection is extracted from "Human Love and Nazareth in the Life of Charles de Foucauld."*

+

We publish June and November editions of "Be Brothers Britain & Ireland" each year. **In Ireland changes to the distribution (by e.mail) should go to Niall Ahern as below, and in Britain to Bob Rainbow. Editorial material should also be sent, typed and preferably by email, to the Editor at:**

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

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**Requested annual subscriptions are Britain £30, Ireland 50E per person annually.**

In addition to local needs, these assist international Responsibles' meetings with any substantial surplus going to fraternities in developing countries. The British subs. also covers the printing and distribution of "Be Brothers Britain & Ireland" in Britain (distributed solely by e.mail in Ireland.) 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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**Website for the UK fraternities: <https://www.jesuscaritaspriests.org.uk>**