

Be Brothers!

Britain & Ireland.

Jesus Caritas
Fraternity of
Priests

New series 30

June 2023

In this issue-

- *Editorial*
- *Fraternity news*
- *Letter to the brothers*
- *Bishops of N. Africa*
- *A brother's calling*
- *Spring message for Irish brothers*
- *Desert day deserted?*
- *To Rome with Clifton*
- *Post-Christmas retreat*
- *E-mails to the editor*
- *Obituary*
- *For your recruitment*
- *Periodical received*
- *Contact reminders*
- *And, as always, much more!*



*Summer retreat venues—
Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo
above; Nympsfield,
Gloucestershire, below.
See page 2.*

In Britain at least, there can be a tendency to get depressed about Jesus Caritas!

Editorial

From the Editor

Fraternities are often seeing reduced attendances, of increasingly aged clergy, resulting in several closures of fraternities in recent years. And even our retreats tend to have lower attendances these days. It reflects the general state of the European Church, where there is much concern about reduced attendances and fewer vocations to priesthood and religious life.

But let's look at the other side! Peter Codd has been instrumental in starting a new fraternity in Portsmouth Diocese, as a result of running a recruiting day for his diocesan clergy which, by all accounts had a commendable attendance. Several diocesan fraternities took advantage of our national (regional) responsible's request to have a message about our July retreat put into their Ad Clera. And only today, as I write in early June, a fresh enquiry has come in for the retreat from just this source! I also encourage fraternities to include their details in their diocesan directories under 'associations groups and societies' and in any diocesan newspaper (has yours?!)

Personally, I feel that an obsession with numbers, whether in the fraternity or our parishes, is the wrong focus. I am convinced that it is quality rather than quantity that we should be promoting.. If we have a strong faith and promote all the best activities, then 'quantity' will settle wherever the Holy Spirit wants it. Did Charles de Foucauld get depressed when he failed to recruit a community? Well that was eventually more than achieved, but after he had died. Unfortunately there was no resurrection without crucifixion first!



Bob (Hon. Editor)

Fraternity news

- ***“Be Brothers Britain & Ireland”*** -is distributed by email as a PDF file to British & Irish brothers via their Responsibles and also to British fraternities as 'hard copy.'
- ***The British 'Regional' Team*** has, since the last issue, met 'live' on 19/1/23 and over 17-18/4/23, with sundry informal communications in-between. Decisions made appear below or elsewhere in this issue.
- ***A new supply of the reprinted 'Philpot' brochure*** on the Fraternity is available free from Steve Squires; excellent for your recruiting. His contact details on the back cover.
- ***The annual British Responsibles meeting*** takes place at the Hinsley Room (behind Westminster Cathedral) 12-4 on Weds. 13th September. Please send a rep. if your Responsible isn't free. *Any* brothers are also welcome.
- ***European Assembly:*** Jonathan Cotton is to represent British fraternities at Annecy over 11-17 July 2023.
- ***2023 British retreat:*** July 3-7th at Nymphsfield Convent, Gloucestershire; input from Pat Kilgarriff. Lifts from Stroud station. Form from British team members (rear page.)
- ***2023 Irish retreat:*** 24-28th September. Contact Niall Ahern (rear page) for details.
- ***The 2024 British post-Christmas mini-retreat*** will be Tues. - Thurs. 16 -18th January.
- ***Note that each “Be Brothers” is filed on the international website*** <http://www.iesuscaritas.org/en> soon after publication.
- ***PRESS DATE for the November 2023 “Be Brothers Britain & Ireland” is 1st September for full articles; snippets accepted till Sept.15th.*** Contributions from British and Irish local fraternities very welcome.

Letter to the brothers around the world

From the International Responsible

Introduced by the Irish Responsible, Niall Ahern: <responsiblejireland@gmail.com>
MAY 15, 2023.

Dear Brothers,

Greetings as we approach Pentecost and may the Spirit enlarge your hearts as we are gifted at this time of renewal. I attach an anniversary letter from Eric and it is always good to hear from him. We will be gathering to hear him in person in Knock from the afternoon of Sunday, July 2 to lunchtime on Thursday, July 6 next. If you have not already booked - please do so NOW by contacting Ethna at St Mary's Hostel in Knock / 083 4699884 / 094 938 8156 and ask to join the LISTENING HEART RETREAT. Will be delighted to greet you there DV.

BLESSINGS - NIALL -087 7973432



Philippines, May 15th 2023

(In celebration of the first anniversary of the canonization of Brother Charles de Foucauld)

“He (Brother Charles) understood that God wanted him to be satisfied with clearing a path so that others could plant better. But he was thinking only in terms of announcing the Gospel to the people of the Sahara. He had no idea God was working through him to prepare a gift for the entire Church.” (Archbishop of Marseilles, France, preaching about Brother Charles leading to his canonization)

Dear Brothers,

Warm fraternal greetings to you all!

How is everything with you at the moment? What are significant experiences of joy, growth, transformation in your personal life, your friendships with brother-priests in your diocese, in your ministry to those in the peripheries? What are spaces of discouragement, stagnation and struggle? How are you coping? To whom do you go for support? Where are you being led by the Spirit in your resolve to be a joyful missionary of the Risen Christ? How are you growing in the discipline of daily adoration, review of life, desert day, gospel meditation, attending monthly meeting? How do these spiritual practices strengthen your commitment to a call within a call to be a universal brother, gentle presence, contemplative companion, prophetic preacher, missionary disciple of Jesus of Nazareth in the footsteps of Brother Charles?

I humbly pose these questions with you. Questions are like compass for the soul seeking the True and the Good amidst the complex, diverse, confusing paths of our world. Like you, I honestly struggle with these questions. Precisely, in this tension, the grace of God works unconditionally to mellow our hearts. The key is to hold the question long enough until it strips us naked of all that is not true and not good in us. AA people have this to tell us - keep coming back to the practice. We are not “super” human beings who always live from our ideal. No, we are wounded, weak pastors who, very often live from our frailties and inadequacies yet we are so dearly loved and are called to love like the Master.

Brothers, I have the occasion to write to you as we celebrate the

Continued overleaf

Continued from overleaf

first anniversary of the canonization of Brother Charles. I was a witness to the joy and jubilation last year at St Peter's Square in Rome. It was a Kairos moment not only for us but more so, for the universal church. When his name was announced at the beginning of the Eucharist, joyful cheers and loud claps of affirmation and gratitude to God were heard from the people. Now, the same euphoric joy is lived out in the chronos of concrete, little yet decisive acts of prophetic witness in the peripheries, inspired by the contemporary message of Brother Charles. The call of the synod on synodality invites us to participate in a universal journey as fellow pilgrims (not tourists), brothers and sisters all, walking side by side each other, collaborating, discerning and listening to one another where the Spirit is leading our world today.

In the course of our preparation last year, we from the International Team have asked with you – how has the canonization made an impact on you? Now, one year after, we ask with you something more specific – now that Brother Charles has been recognized as a gift to the church, what should we be doing to share this gift with others who may be lost, lukewarm, curious, sympathizers but wanting to deepen their spirituality. Like the mandate of the apostles after the Resurrection to spread the news that He is alive, we have been called from being too inward-looking to be more out-going, to tread on unfamiliar territories, starting from simple personal encounter in the tomb of our losses, on the disappointing road of our Emmaus or in the breaking of bread with the poor and the marginalized. It was the Spirit of the Risen Christ that fired them up to be courageous, tireless, and joy-filled missionaries. How about us? What is our story? How have we been fired up in our mission to pass on the gift? How could we initiate personal encounters with brother priests of our diocese to brothers beyond our diocese or country? How do we do mission with the other branches of the Spiritual Family in the spirit of fraternal collaboration and co-responsibility for the gift?

In the Philippines, we have organized ourselves with the other members of the Spiritual Family and are committed to be fellow pilgrims, recognizing our unique gifts yet called to witness unity, social friendships, fraternal sharing, co-responsibility in the life-long journey of missionary discipleship and fidelity to the charism of Brother Charles.

How about you and your local fraternity, the national and continental fraternities? Where are you being led by the Spirit? What is yours to do? We cannot be content just to limit ourselves to our own little world and forget the bigger reality of God's Kingdom here and now.

May the coming of the Spirit like tongues of fire set our hearts aflame as we take on the task of doing mission like our very own Brother Charles. Though things were not always clear to him where to go and what to do, he never stopped in ambivalence and half-heartedness. Rather, his passion to imitate the love of God in Jesus of Nazareth so consumed him that he tirelessly wrestled with every human condition that separates us from God, from the poor and from one another. St Charles de Foucauld, pray for us!!



With much love and fire,

Eric (Lozada)

An icon with Charles from France



Communication of the Conference of Bishops of the North African Region (CERNA) Forwarded by Moira Potier (European Lay fraternities Responsible) back in 2020, but still pertinent.

Following Charles de Foucauld - Siblings today in North Africa

We have been delighted by two recent events and we wanted to share them together with the faithful of our Churches and our friends. Both are of particular importance to us in North Africa. This is the prospect of the upcoming canonization of Charles de Foucauld, and Pope Francis' encyclical on brotherhood.

INVENTING A BETTER WORLD

Our churches have lived in recent months to the rhythm of their peoples. For many, the pandemic has disrupted work, education, travel, health, family, community and Eucharistic life. It has increased the difficulties of the weakest (those who do not have a car, social protection, regular employment, solid health). It has also stimulated creativity, including in the lives of our churches, self-help initiatives, and encouraged to improve the use of social networks. It has invited us to reflect on the dysfunctions of our societies: economic, ecological, social, our rhythms and our ways of life. To invent a better world.

Our countries have struggled to face their own challenges, starting with the war in Libya. Until recently, our brothers in the Tripoli church had electricity for an average of five hours a day, and those in Benghazi were still without a church, bishop's office and shelter following shelling at the beginning of the war. This gives an idea of what their neighbours can also experience. But the cessation of fighting gives hope. Elsewhere, the challenges are in the order of transition or political and economic developments.

All our countries are challenged by migration, from their own citizens and from those who cross our countries. They reveal ecological, economic and political imbalances and tragedies. They call for our help, our brotherhood. They are of concern to our fellow citizens and to our rulers. Christians continued to live, pray, act.

Two ecclesial events have just shed particular light on what we are experiencing and causing joy: the prospect of the upcoming canonisation of Charles de Foucauld, and Pope Francis' encyclical on brotherhood.

TOWARDS THE CANONISATION OF CHARLES DE FOUCAULD

Charles de Foucauld was a European whose life had been transformed in contact with Palestine and North Africa, Morocco and Algeria. Frivolous, he rediscovered the taste of high values. A wealthy heir, he left everything to come and live there in the utmost sobriety. Agnostic, there he rediscovered the fervour of faith. Centred when he was on himself, he developed an intense curiosity for the discovery of the other, his culture and his language. Nazareth "*where Christ took the last place so much that no one could take it away from him,*" as Father Huvelin, his spiritual accompanier, intrigued him and inspired him with a love that would no longer be extinguished in a humble and hidden life. Having become a monk and priest, he wanted to be a missionary and to proclaim the gospel. Attentive to respect for others, he wished that his whole life would "*cry out*" his love and attachment to Jesus Christ, even if his lips did not pronounce the Name of it. Passionate about the Sahara and its inhabitants, he wanted to bury him-

Continued on page 9

A brother's calling

by Deacon Michael O'Donnell (Glasgow)

Originally published on the website of the Mill Hill Missionaries.

“You’re not a priest. What do you do?” I remember asking a Religious Brother many years ago. When young I had served Mass regularly and could appreciate what priests did; but ‘brothers’ were new to me!

Later I undertook some research into ‘Religious brothers’ as their vocation continued to intrigue me. In this, I knew they were able, academically well-qualified and pastorally experienced men who answered the call to service in a way which was personal to them.

The vocation of a brother is ‘to brother’. They do this through encouraging, listening, sharing and accompanying one’s brothers and sisters in Christ as they journey through life. A brother can be a member of different communities such as his religious community, family, friends, workplace, and within the locality he lives in.

A brother’s calling to service can be in areas such as education, social work, nursing, manual work, community work, justice and peace, parish work as well as being a member of their community. But first and foremost, he is a brother.

A number of years ago, I spent some time speaking with Br Guy who was a Little Brother of Jesus. They had been founded in 1933 by a small group of men as they felt called to follow the witness of the now St. Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) who lived alone in the Sahara Desert in Algeria among the Tourareg people. This founding shows “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a grain of wheat, but if it dies it yields a rich harvest” (Jn 12:24).

The first Little brother to come to Britain was Br Roger who in 1952 began to establish the brothers’ presence in Leeds. Br Guy came from Lyons in 1961 and lived in Leeds in the same house as his neighbours. There were no external signs that the house was occupied by a group of brothers. This was deliberate as the brothers identify with their neighbours. They don’t go out to the people from a big house in an affluent area; they live among them.



Assekrem: Charles de Foucauld's hermitage

He shared that the brothers live in places which are deemed to be areas where poverty in its many forms is present. They live the Gospel through sharing in the everyday lives of their neighbours, in their joys and sorrows also in working as others do. Here, they have the vocation of being a presence. Br Ian who lived in Leeds then moved to London told me “The brothers’ charism is to be contemplatives in the world.”

Little brothers would not undertake any form of church ministry. Br Guy worked in a factory alongside people from the area. He was the union shop-steward so in many ways he was the ‘the voice of the voiceless’.

Brother Ian said “the brothers find in ordinary life a meeting place with God as Jesus did”. As Charles de Foucauld wrote *‘It is only necessary to live among people, sharing the human condition and being present to them in love’*. Little brothers see their vocation as *‘living the life of Nazareth ... the hidden life of Jesus of Nazareth’*.

Br Xavier lived for over thirty years in Leeds with Br Guy. He too experienced the life of locals through both working and experiencing redundancy. This happened to many as industry was changing.



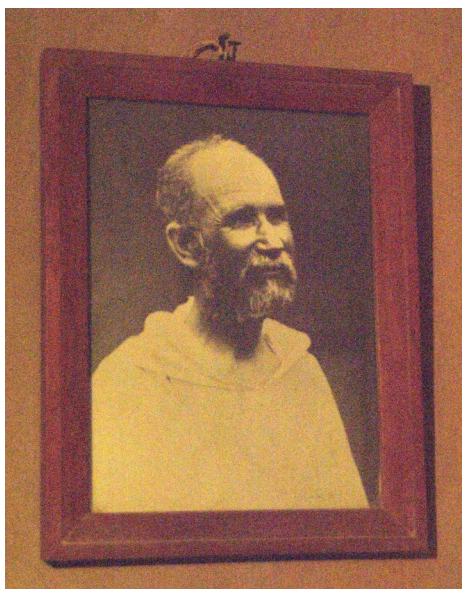
Bro .Ventura (Assekrem)

Br Thierry came to Leeds in 1971 where he worked on a building site. In 1973 both and Br Yvan founded a community in London and soon Br Thierry became involved with the L'arche community where people with disabilities and assistants lived together.

Occasionally a brother may be ordained priest enabling the brothers to celebrate the Eucharist as a community. One of the brothers, Br Ian, had been living in London for many years when he was asked to be ordained. On the morning of his ordination, he was at the local college cleaning offices as he did most days! Although ordained, Br Ian was first and foremost a brother.

In Leeds Br Guy got involved in the local community through volunteering at the Development Education Centre as well as being involved with Justice and Peace. He was a man who shared compassion towards others particularly refugees and asylum seekers. He remained in Leeds until his death in 2013.

Today, there are only one hundred and thirty Little Brothers of Jesus in the world and, sadly, they are no longer in Britain.



On Vocations Sunday we often hear the bishops and priests asking us to pray that more men answer the call of God to the priesthood and be shepherds of the flock. Yet rarely do I hear ‘Let us pray for more men to answer the call of God to be Brothers’.

Pope Francis chose the theme for this year’s Vocations Sunday as ‘Vocation: Grace and Mission’. He states that ‘our common vocation is to give ourselves in love’. People live their baptism in various ways, that is as laity, religious, or ordained as all have a role within, what is called, the ‘vocational symphony’. Here, each of us have a contribution to make in living the gospel.

In relation to this, let us hope more men may, like Br Guy, Br Yvan, Br Ian, Br Thierry, and Br Michel did so, discern the call ‘to brother’ and give themselves in love. +



Spring message from the Irish Regional Responsible to all the fraternities in Ireland



Dear Brothers,

Spring is in the air today as we celebrate Saint Brigid's feast and there are signs of light and new life all around us. I send you thoughts of joy at this moment in your ministry!

Some of the Brothers experienced such joy as we gathered in Belfast with our Little Sisters for a farewell Mass and meal together before they depart our shores after 50 years amongst us. It was a blessed if poignant time together and they depart with gracious memories and hearts filled with faith and gratitude. It would be kind to send them wishes over the next days if you have a spare moment / lsjbelfast@gmail.com / 0044 28 9032 8877 .

DIARY DATE 1: As I have already indicated our annual national JESUS CARITAS gathering for retreat will be in Mullaghmore from the afternoon of Sunday, September 24 to lunchtime on Thursday, September 28 next and please place that date in your diary NOW! I would appreciate your confirming your booking with me directly as soon as possible. Many thanks.

DIARY DATE 11: A LISTENING HEART: Ministry to Priest Programme : - has commenced as part of Knock Shrine outreach. It is a wonderful initiative. The first major event is a National Retreat for all priests which commences on the afternoon of Sunday, July 2 to lunchtime on Thursday, July 6 next. We are exceptionally privileged to have Fr Eric Lozada - our International Leader of Jesus Caritas - as director of the retreat. He is a graced and gentle man who inhabits the charism of Brother Charles in a remarkable manner. Booking is with me or directly with Ethna at St Mary's Hostel in Knock - ethna@stmarysknock@gmail.com / 083 4699884. I hope you can join with us for these special days.

A big thank you to Sean Coyle who has forwarded [this video](#) (Sorry- not available on the printed copy! Ed.) of St Charles' Prayer of Abandonment, sung by Les Padrés, priests of the Military Ordinariate of France. You may like to share it with the brothers.

Meanwhile - Gabhaigi ar bhur ngluine, fosclaigi bhur suile agus ligigi isteach Brid Bheanaithe !!

In communion - NIALL / 087 7973432

NB: COMMUNICATE THIS INFO TO THE BROTHERS IN YOUR FRATERNITY.

A LISTENING HEART / A Ministry to Priests Programme has commenced as part of Knock Shrine outreach. It is a wonderful initiative. The first major event is a National Retreat for Priests which commences on the afternoon of Sunday, July 2 to lunchtime on Thursday, July 6 next. This is a Vincentian organised event and the retreat director is Fr Eric Lozada / International leader of Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests. Booking is directly with Ethna at Saint Mary's Hostel in Knock – 083 4699884 / ethna@stmarysknock.com / LL 094 938 8156. Hope you will be able to join us there.

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

CERNA, continued from page 5

self there by mysteriously offering for God his life, his science, his services and his prayer. Not being of the same blood, culture or religion, he nevertheless wanted to be considered a brother by them, because it seemed to him the highest testimony of God's love that he had known in Jesus Christ. He died silenced, killed by accident like many civilians, during a skirmish of the First World War.

He was a man of his time. He did not go beyond all the prejudices of his time. But he paved the way for others, trying to work after him as "universal brothers", to work towards a true brotherhood of human beings and peoples beyond differences.

Without a companion or disciple at the time of his death, he sparked a spiritual movement that marked the entire century after him until today. It has aroused throughout the world a spiritual family with many branches, many of which are present in our North African countries: Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, Little Brothers of the Gospel, Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Priestly Fraternity Jesus-Caritas, Secular Brotherhood of Charles de Foucauld, Discepole del Vangelo,

In the coming months, we invite you to re-discover Charles de Foucauld, so let us work, transform and convert with the Lord who transformed "Brother Charles". We can then welcome his life as a star, his conversions - admirable or incomplete - as a call, his example as an aid, his canonisation as a grace.

BROTHERS ALL

The encyclical "*Tutti Fratelli*" given by Pope Francis challenges us in a particular way. It is explicitly part of the declaration on universal brotherhood signed in Abu Dhabi in early 2019 by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al Azhar University. It is a first for a text of the Magisterium to make such mention of the role of a Muslim in the reflection of the Pope. This joins something from our experience of meeting with moslems that can make us grow in our own faith and in the intelligence of God's calls.

In keeping with social encyclicals, this encyclical is not only aimed at members of the Catholic Church. It is resolutely aimed at the whole world and is addressed to anyone of good will. In a way it gives the world as a limit, or rather as a horizon, to the Church.

In the Maghreb, we experience on a daily basis this Church that cannot think of itself without a bond of brotherhood and mission with the other non-Christians. The encyclical ends by opening the space to a universal fraternity in action, with the evocation of Charles de Foucauld, to the canonization of which our churches must prepare to reap the fruit.

Everyone might wonder what particularly puts fraternity to the test in their personal life and in the context in which they find themselves. In North Africa, we experience a fraternity challenged by religious difference. This is especially true in families where one of the members has become a Christian. The path takes time for the new Christian to recognize the lights already received in the context of his Muslim family; and for his family to recognize that his new religious orientation has made him no less good, no less brother or less citizen.

On the continent and in our countries, the difference in colour is also a challenge, and many Christians, students, migrants and religious in sub-Saharan Africa, know something about it. Fortunately, the same people can sometimes also bear witness to the brotherhood created after the struggle to restore it through their perseverance, their humility, their mercy. We experience that brotherhood is a struggle because the weapon of peace is first and foremost in us.

Concluded on page 10

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

CERNA, concluded from page 9

COMMITMENT

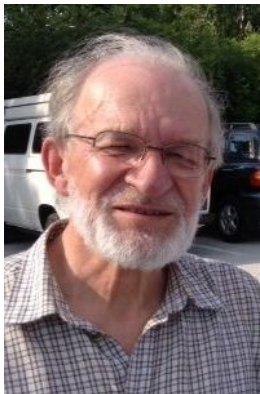
We urge you to read the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* and prepare for the canonization of Charles de Foucauld.

With you, we want to renew our commitment to build universal brotherhood through communion between us, through ecumenical effort with other Christian denominations, through Islamic-Christian meetings and with all people of good will, especially in favour of peace and for the care of our "common home".

May Our Lady of Africa, Saint Cyprian and Blessed Charles de Foucauld encourage us in this spirit.

Cristobal LOPEZ ROMERO, George BUGEJA, Ilario ANTONIAZZI, Jean-Paul VESCO, John MacWILLIAM, Mario LEON DORADO, Nicolas LHERNOULD, Paul DESFARGES, Sandro OVEREND,

Leaders of the churches of Rabat, Tangier, Tripoli, Tunis, Oran, Laghouat-Ghardaia, Laayoune, Constantine and Hippo, Algiers and Benghazi on the feast of Saints Marcel of Tangier and, Maximilian of Tebess, October 30, 2020. +



Desert Days deserted?

An opinion by Bob Rainbow (Wrexham fraternity.)

My very first introduction to Jesus Caritas, back in 1983, was to see the curate of the parish I was visiting as a clerical student go off for what he called a 'desert day' at a nearby abbey, and I thought- "That's a nice way of getting away from parish pressures!"

And, joining his fraternity, things developed and I grew to know and deeply respect Brother Charles. The ideal of a monthly "day in the desert" has remained with me, but from long-term experience with two different fraternities now, I fear that Jesus Caritas brothers may more often honour the "day" in its absence. Feeling that that is a valuable experience missed, I have, as I write, come to the end of a "desert day" and feel compelled to put down something of my experience of the "day."

First, I claim to be no more of an expert on the "day" than anyone else, but here goes. The only way I have ever found to make the "day" is to blank off a day in the diary before such gets booked for something else; this was absolutely essential in busy parish life, needing a good month or two to keep it free. Now in (active) retirement I can book it after the week's advance weather forecast has promised a dry day. Many will use their Desert Day to prepare a "Review of Life" to share at their next fraternal, but Aurelio sanz Baeza, the International Responsible emeritus, differed and always maintained that when going off for a desert day, one should take absolutely nothing with one- NO resources of any kind; it should be nothing bar you and God. Now, I have not quite risen to that, but today I resolved first, that the computer should remain resolutely switched off at the wall for the day, and so also with the television. I rarely use a mobile, anyway. I did sneak just one listen to the news on the radio, feeling one ought to know if the world was ending today, but that was it. Also, I did no household jobs that would keep for another day; the mind has to remain focussed on the job in hand.

I made my "hour" (well rarely more than a 3/4hour actually!) as usual first thing in the morning and

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

once breakfast was cleared I headed out. I am one of the luckiest people in the world to be able to walk in wonderful countryside straight from my Snowdonia retirement cottage, but others may have to drive to get fresh air. I headed down a quiet lane, and first stopped to admire the view of fields and mountains from a slightly elevated field gate. I already felt the stresses of a busy Summer slipping off, and gave thanks to God for the view and the wonderful air. Further on I stopped at a church of ancient foundation that is in the care of the "Friends of Friendless Churches." I have usually entered, but this time it was, unusually, locked. Wanting to make another meditation here, I set up the tea-light I had brought, in a windless corner of the porch and communed with the Lord here for a while. I find the sight of the "Light of the World" brings Christ to me, noting also his work of creation as the wax is soaked up the wick to burn into water vapour, some possibly feeding the wonderful waterfalls of this district- such an inspiring awareness of God's creating power!

After, I pondered round the old churchyard, with its very close-packed box-tombs, noting such details as were offered, of local lives lived and worked a century or two ago. How different village life must have been then! I continued my walk down the now unmetalled lane and enjoyed the peace and the lack of interruption bar a single couple walking. I had brought my rosary, a devotion I had little used till recently, and as I ambled, meditated on the sorrowful mysteries as a support for the people of Ukraine, so sorely tried at the moment. After crossing a main road, I went down another no-through lane, to our other local deserted church. I didn't expect to get in here, but again marvelled at churchyard records of the hamlet's 'rude forefathers.'

By the time I had got home again, I must have walked a lonely 4 miles or so, but felt thoroughly invigorated, thanking God my 77-year-old legs still served so well. After cooking supper I settled in the lounge, lighting the log fire for the first time this autumn, and saving on the central heating at the same time. It was now time for an hour or two's spiritual reading, and I found succour in a more in-depth than usual perusal of the articles in the current "Tablet" journal.

Was it worth it? Was it more than just fulfilling a "Jesus Caritas" duty? I like to think so. No great sky-splitting epiphanies, but that's not the point. I was able to review my present lifestyle, and to give thanks to God for his multiple graces to me. There will be plenty of food for a "Review of Life" if my turn for such comes up at the next meeting of our fraternity!
+

*An icon with Charles
from Ukraine*



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

To Rome with Clifton Fraternity

(Compiled by the editor and Michael Healy)

Having over the years visited Spain, Paris and North Wales, seven ever-peripatetic members of Clifton fraternity achieved Rome for 4 days in May this year, under the excellent guidance of Michael Healy (right of centre in the photo at Piazza Navona) who trained at the English College there.



Flying from Bristol to stay at the very welcoming guest house run by the Brigettine Sisters, conveniently centrally-placed in Piazza Farnese (where we were privileged to say Mass in the tiny chapel where St. Brigid of Sweden herself died,) walking tours covered much ground including the Trevi Fountain, St. John Lateran basilica and an exclusive tour of the “Scavi” ancient necropolis below St. Peter’s, culminating with a few minutes pause just a few feet from the small casket our archaeologist guide said contained some bones that were “95% certain” to be of St. Peter himself (found directly below the basilica’s high altar.) [Excavations Office \(scavi.va\)](http://Excavations Office (scavi.va) refers) refers. A metro ride also took us to experience the enormous basilica of St. Paul’s-Outside-The-Walls (and Paul’s casket) and a little further to Tre Fontane where we were welcomed by the Little Sisters of Jesus at their motherhouse, which included a small museum of artefacts belonging to Bro. Charles, with one of his sandals and his chalice. (For your editor, this complemented similar museums at Our Lady of the Snows monastery in S.E. France, and at the Poor Clares in Nazareth.) The final treat was to be taken by the sisters down a very long winding path to the tunnel down which was located the tomb of Ls Magdeleine, the order’s extraordinary founder.

The programme achieved, as provided by Michael Healy:

Monday 1/5/23

- From Piazza Farnese
- through Campo di Fiori to Piazza Navona (picturesque square)
- Photo by Bernini’s fountain of the 4 Rivers
- Onto San Luigi de Francosi for 3 Caravaggio pictures of St. Matthew
- Pantheon (too crowded to enter!)
- St. Catherine of Siena
- Elephant obelisk (a reminder of hard Holy Office persecutions)
- Trevi Fountain (famed for pickpockets)
- Back to Santa Brigida.

A retired sister shows us St. Brigid’s chapel



Tuesday 2/5/23

- 87 bus to Colosseum
- Basilica of San Clemente- 3 levels of history; nb. Mithridatic bulls & pools
- 4 Coronati martyrs; Augustinian church
- St. John Lateran basilica – beautiful baptistery

The extraordinary baptistery at St. John Lateran’s



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

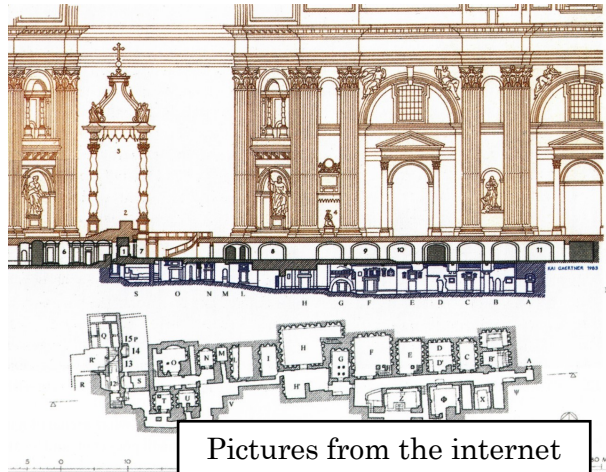
Wednesday 3/5/23

- Stroll leisurely through streets to Trastevere over the Tiber
- Santa Maria's fine basilica
- Onto St. Peters Square
- Wait by the obelisk for Jim.
- Tickets to the excavations down to the "likely" Tomb of the Founder Apostle.
- Finished by coming up to the big Basilica.
- Mass and Supper at the English College.



Thursday 4/5/23

- Pilgrims in search of Bro. Charles, our patron.
- 64 bus to Termini station for Metro to St. Paul's Outside the Walls.
- Look around. Light lunch. See the Beda building
- Onto Tre Fontane - where the 3 springs sprung up where St. Paul was beheaded.
- The Trappist monastery where the monks & sisters were solemnly singing None at 3pm.
- Sr. Emma was the first to welcome us in.
- Little Sister Luigina (superior) then showed us to the splendid display rooms that somehow captured the spirit of Charles in the desert. A single sandal, a saw, a prayer-book.
- Lsr. Giuliana cut the cake & served us tea. We took photos – names (incl. Lsr Tigist) – offered our gift.
- Finally, below the chapel in silence, we were shown down to the Catacomb where Mother Magdeleine of Jesus was laid to rest.
- Excellent supper (back near home.)



Pictures from the internet (own photography banned.)



St. Paul's-Outside-the-Walls

+



Fond farewells from the Little Srs



Last of some great Italian suppers!

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

British fraternities' post-Christmas mini-retreat

A brief summary from Bob Rainbow.

Without any known available director for the January 17-19th retreat at the Nympsfield, Gloucestershire, base of the Marian Missionary Sisters of the Poor (a recent Nigerian foundation) the British regional team decided on do-it-yourself, four members each talking about one aspect of Bro. Charles teachings.



So on Tuesday evening Bob Rainbow presented a short PowerPoint he had made on "The spirit of Nazareth and Universal Brotherhood," where he not only reviewed these aspects of Br. Charles life and teachings but suggested how they are, and could be, applied in our contemporary lives.

On Wednesday morning Peter Coxe spoke on 'Fraternity.' As his life matured, Charles finds his goal of fraternity not in excess wining and dining with his friends, but by pouring out his life to the dregs for God, Peter went on to suggest how some aspects of his own vocational process paralleled that of Charles.

Wednesday afternoon saw Peter Codd talk about our own "Reviews if Life." He referred to a preaching of the Gospel by way of example, and went on to describe a format for making the Review in our fraternities.

Finally, on Thursday morning, Barnabas Page spoke on the "Prayer of Abandonment." The prayer can be applied to specific situations, eg. accepting the status quo, or being patient with discussions on the Synod. It involves patience, letting the Holy Spirit take the lead, living with uncertainty, etc.

Some full-page notes on these presentations are available from the editor.

+



News from the local fraternities

NOTHING at all received this time, bar the e-mails opposite.

PLEASE may your editor have your local news, even if it's no more than a description of what you do every time you

meet! (All fraternities have variations.) And decent pictures would be like gold dust! The editorial file of full articles is also depleted at the moment (bar a couple too long to use.) +

Among e.mails received by the editor

From: Fr Peter Codd
Sent: Tuesday, 29 November 2022

Dear Bob, greetings and thank you for the information.

We are all set to begin, in January, a second Fraternity in the Diocese, largely due to the cooperation of a newly ordained priest, James Lewis. James is very keen. He attended our *Come and See Event* and has read Sr Kathy's book, *The Universal Brother*.

James has booked a week's holiday in Algeria after Christmas and hopes to visit Tamanrasset. He returns just before the Mini-Retreat, which he wishes to attend. I shall send him the booking form. If you have your own account of your visit to Tamanrasset, please send it to James with any encouraging comment, together with the present Be Brothers online.

Many thanks, in anticipation and wishing you a blessed Advent,

Peter Codd (of Portsmouth fraternity)

NB: The new fraternity has begun to meet with seven brothers; well done!

From: Niall Ahern
Sent: 01 December 2022

Dear Brothers,

Greetings in fraternal love on the Feast day of Little Brother Charles and may his spirit of trust in Jesus be renewed in us as we mark the day under his inspiration and guidance.

Today is an appropriate moment to share the grieving news that our beloved Little Sisters have made a decision after much prayer and discernment to relocate and it goes without saying that we will miss their presence in our fraternities and our country. We will be blessed with the remembrance that they were present to us in Mullaghmore this year for our annual retreat and know that we will remain in communion of prayer. Please contact them at this time to share your appreciation. 10 New Barnsley Green, New Barnsley, Belfast BT12 7HS NI. Email: lsjbelfast@gmail.com. Tel: 004428 90328877. May the benediction of God accompany them into their bright future.

And may Advent hope as proclaimed by Isaiah over these graced days dwell richly with you.

BEANNACHTAI –
NIALL.
(Irish Responsible.)

A photo from the final MASS with Niall and the Little Sisters Emiko, Joselyn & Helene in Belfast before their departure in February.



E.mails continued overleaf

E-mails continued from overleaf

From: Aurelio SANZ BAEZA

Sent: 21 January 2023

Dear Bob,

I change the news on our website iesuscaritas.org [to show "Be Brothers" there.]

Have a holy and fine weekend.

From 29 December I'm in the hospital: fracture of fémur. 3 January I've operation. I loss to much blood in 3 days. Now I'm on the marists brothers residence a few days for stability of my left leg before to be again in my parish.

Abrazos.

Aurelio
(*International Responsible emeritus.*)

Best wishes and prayers for your recovery, Aurelio! (Editor.)

Received by the British Regional Team

February 2023:

Dear National Responsible brothers!

As Treasurer of the International Fund, I would like to thank you for all the contributions that were paid in during 2022.

2022 contributions were received from the following countries: Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, USA, Belgium/Flanders, France, Dominican Republic, Asia, Chile, Chad and Austria.

The total income amounted to: € 16.938.-.

The expenses in the past year amounted to: € 17.006.-.

This results in a small loss of: € 68.-.

Most of the expenditure was for travel and accommodation costs for the international team that attended the canonisation in Rome and then went to Austria for a working week. Other expenses were the support of various national and continental meetings as well as a donation for the organisation team of the canonisation in Rome.

I kindly ask you to continue to make a solidarity contribution to our account in 2023. I especially thank those countries that regularly transfer their support. Those countries that have the possibility to support us but have not yet done so, I ask you to consider whether you might not also take over this good tradition.

With fraternal greetings and in the hope that the spirituality of Brother Charles might be a powerful help to you in your priestly life and work, I extend my warmest greetings to you

Matthias KEIL

Treasurer of the Int. Team.

+

Obituary

Rev. Shaji Punnuattu Thomas

(1972 - 2023)

Both his parishioners at St. David’s, Tywyn, Gwynedd, and his brothers in Wrexham fraternity, were deeply shocked to receive the news that on Thursday 23rd March Shaji died in his sleep at the presbytery, aged 51. He was dearly loved by all for his gentle demeanour, pastoral care and love of telling little jokes. These are notes from the diocese:



Fr Shaji came to the Diocese as a member of the SDV Congregation in Holywell, and served in Holywell and Hawarden, as well as acting as the Chaplain at St Richard Gwyn High School, where he was regarded with affection. Fr Shaji took the bold decision to leave the “Regular” (member of a priestly Order) and become a “Secular” Priest of the Diocese of Wrexham. In this position he was appointed by the Bishop to be Parish Priest in Denbigh, before moving to Blaenau Ffestiniog, and then to St Mair, Our Lady Help of Christians, Machynlleth, and St David, Tywyn. He was in his twenty-third year of Priesthood. Through his death, the Diocese and the Parish have lost a dedicated and committed priest, a friend to many. We extend to his sister Sister Dr. Betty Thomas, OSB, his many friends in this country and in India and his parishioners past and present, our condolences at this time of his death. Please remember him in your prayers. May he rest in peace (From “Wrexham Clarion” diocesan periodical.)



Funeral arrangements for Fr Shaji:
 Monday 24th April 11.00 a.m
 Fr Shaji's remains were brought to the St Mary's Cathedral, Wrexham. Vigil for the Deceased and Reception at the Cathedral. Until 3.00 p.m. there was opportunity for private prayer and the paying of personal respects. (During this time the coffin remained open)
 3.00 p.m. Funeral Mass in the Syro-Malabar rite followed by the Evening Office of the Dead
 Tuesday 25th April 11.00 a.m
 Funeral Mass (Roman Rite) - St Marys Cathedral Wrexham (where his sister his sister Sr. Dr. Betty Thomas, OSB delivered a beautiful colloquy) followed by Interment at Pantasaph Friary Cemetery.
 +



No Rush, No Haste

Michael Hurley

Time,
 Where do you go?
 I strain and pant,
 Anxious to contain you.
 Yet, you steal away
 With each escaping moment.

The desert day
 gave me richer time.
 St. Senan's ancient church
 Where ancestors sought shelter,
 The country's yearly greening,
 The ageless Shannon sweep,
 Shanid's far-seeing castle,
 All hint at timelessness.

Richer still
 The silence of eternity
 Unmeasured, uncalculated
 To lead my returning spirit
 Deep within
 Where I am grasped
 In the womb
 of the divine rest.

And now I know that
 In your will
 There is no rush, no haste.
 Your time is mine
 to accomplish
 What bears fruit. +

Michael Hurley is a Dublin Diocesan Priest

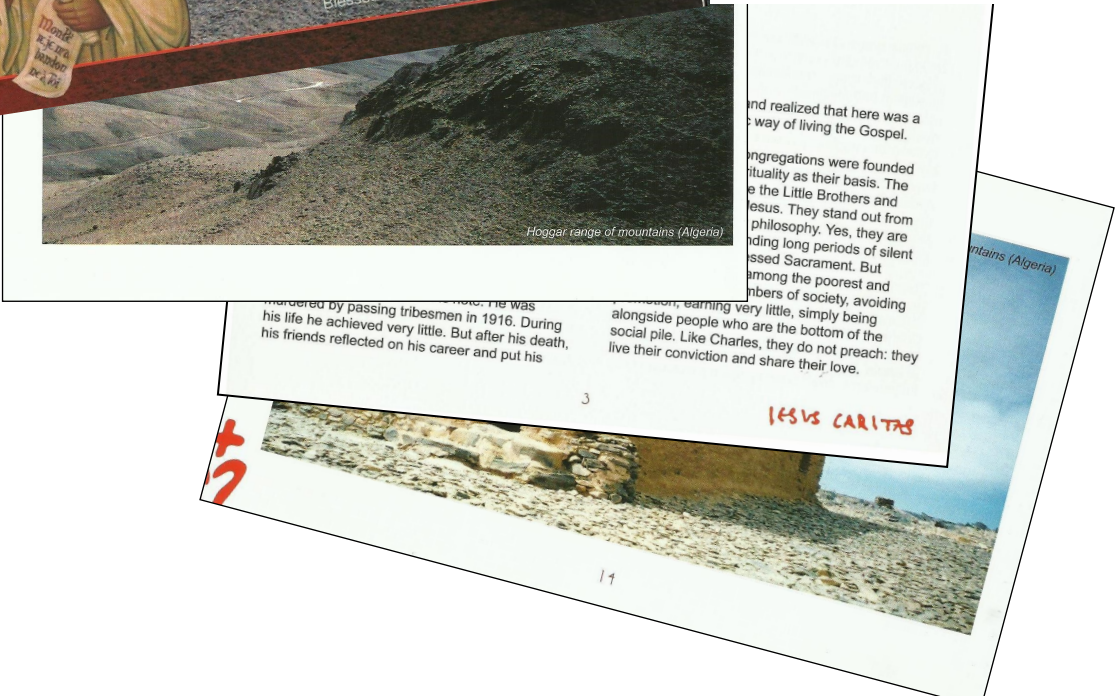
For your recruiting



Recently reprinted for a second time is the late Fr. Tony Philpot's excellent description of the origins and ethos of Jesus Caritas.

24 pp., full colour, art paper, A5 landscape format.

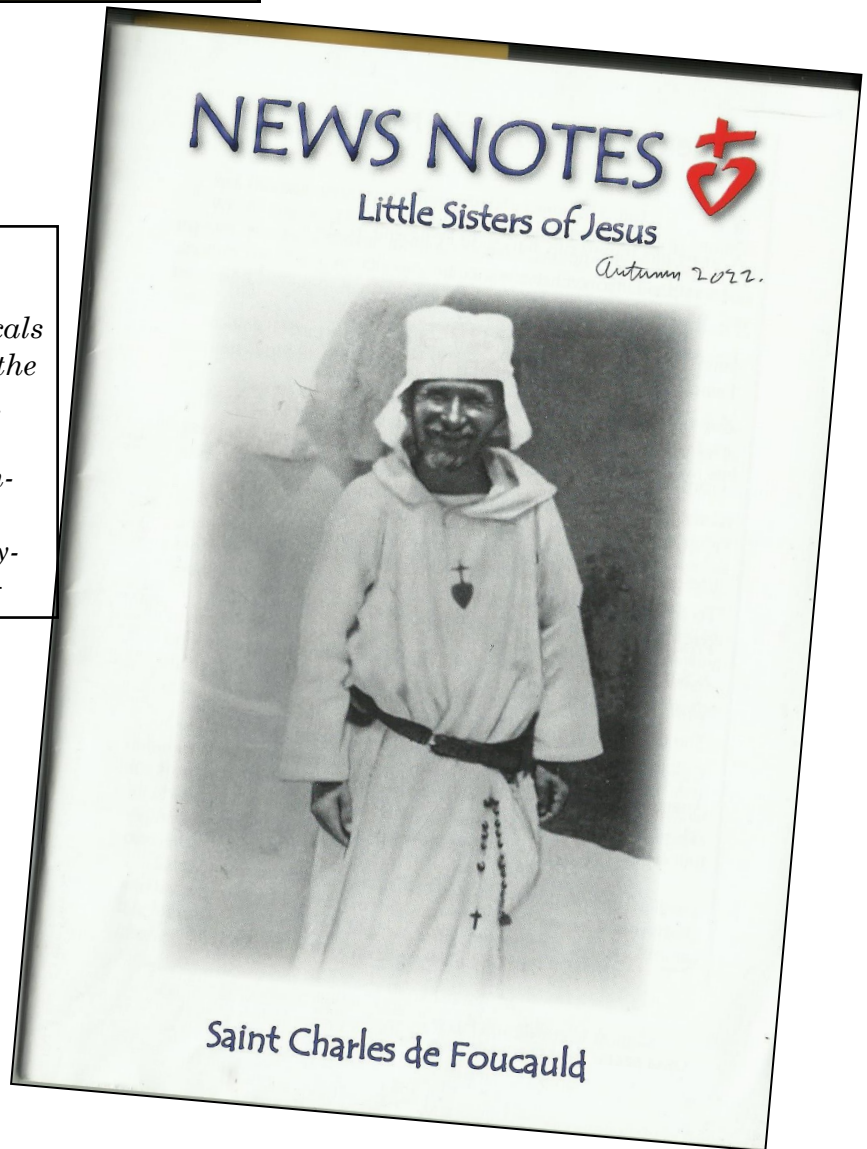
Copies are available free from both the British and Irish Regional Responsibilities (contact details on the rear cover of every "Be Brothers.") +



Periodical received

Autumn 2022 issue.

These inspirational annual periodicals of the Little Sisters of Jesus (one of the family of communities following Br. Charles de Foucauld) are sent from your editor as an e.mail PDF attachment for circulation among all the British priest fraternities and to anyone else interested. +



A prayer for the day

Lord,
May we be wholehearted
in the way we live our lives.
May we be inspired
by people like Charles de Foucauld,
who could not imagine belief in God
with reservation.
Like him, may we respond
to the witness of sincere people,
brothers and sisters of whatever faith.
Amen.

- This "Prayer for the Day" was presented by Fr. Oliver Crilly (Derry Diocesan Priest) on BBC4 as part of a week-long series. +

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Email: ra-r@hotmail.co.uk

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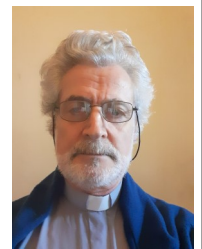
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In addition to local needs, these assist international Responsibles' meetings with any substantial surplus going to fraternities in developing countries. The British subs. also covers the printing and distribution of "Be Brothers Britain & Ireland"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