



# Little Brothers of Jesus

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**THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF JESUS**

**News Bulletin  
for friends of the Fraternities  
and all who follow  
in the footsteps of Brother  
Charles de Foucauld.**

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*To our readers:*

*This little booklet  
consists of extracts from  
newsletters written by  
Little Brothers of Jesus  
to give each other news  
of what they are living  
in the four corners  
of the world.*

*We hope that this sharing  
will be of interest to you,  
and we would be glad  
to hear what you think.*

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## Far from the temples of the powerful...

*At the last General Chapter, Laurent was elected to be part of the new General Fraternity. After many years living in the suburbs of Rome where he worked in a cleaning company, one might think that this is a radical change of life: "No," Laurent tells us, "it is a question of living with the 'little ones' in the same way, experiencing it in sharing with the brothers everywhere in the world".*

**T**his evening, as I wait on a layover between my connecting flights at Addis-Ababa airport, I have been reflecting on my recent past and this very different present. I have been thinking about the connection (if there is one?) between my "yesterday" and my "today".

I have just come back from a short trip to Tanzania (with a stopover in Kigali in Rwanda). I was seduced by the beauty of these two countries which are overflowing with a thriving abundance of flowers, fruit and children. I went there to meet our brothers in Mlangareni and Murugaragara.

The presence of the Fraternity in East Africa is now greatly reduced. We are no longer in Rwanda. In Tanzania, Lorenzo Cantu is alone in Murugaragara and is thinking about returning to Italy. The Brothers of the Gospel who had three fraternities in East Africa are now only in Mlangareni (Arusha) with two brothers, Bruno and Clementi. For several years now Édouard has shared their lives, and Pius, from Bamenda, who came for a year, is returning to Cameroon at the end of December. I hope that these brothers will soon write newsletters where they will be able to speak much better than me about the lives they are living.



*Laurent.*

Our collaboration with the Brothers of the Gospel does not end there as Yonga, from Cameroon, is going to go to Mlangareni to spend two years there studying philosophy at the Arusha Study Centre where Clementi is already studying. Then it is planned that they both continue studying together in Cameroon.

I do not want to dwell on the fragility of such a situation for both us and the brothers of the Gospel. Much has already been said about this. I seek only to communicate to you, this evening, what is guiding me in my new service, in faithfulness to what the Lord has had me experience up to now.

Following Him on the Nazareth road, has led me (the same as each one of you) to see and choose – following his example – with whom to live. Who to belong to? With Nino and Silvio, our place was clear. This is how the abyss that separates a cleaner from those who decide the course of society has continued to make its mark on my life, in retirement in the Tor Bella Monaca neighbourhood, 25 minutes away from the centre by metro, which might as well be an eternity for the people living in the neighbourhood.

Today the service that has been asked of me can only be related to what I have experienced. I think that this link is not only personal to me but that it has something to do with the unity between all of us.

Where I find myself with my brothers is where I feel they live without any thought of seeking power.

I believe that this is what Charles de Foucauld saw in the life of Jesus in Nazareth. He does not seek any power and sees himself as a “pioneer”, certainly not as a leader. May each one of us live in the freedom to which the Nazarene invites us, so that like Him, we may live far from all the temples of the powerful, clearing this land where it is possible to live happily knowing that the path passes by Golgotha.

I embrace you,

*Laurent*

## Let myself be welcomed

*The Mahieddine housing estate is a popular housing estate in Algiers where the Fraternity has been present for decades.*

*Christian, a nurse by profession, who lived in Tamanrasset, rejoined the brothers to help them when one of them fell ill.*

*He stayed there and tells us about the welcome:*

**A**lthough usually rather verbose in writing for the regional news, I must confess to a guilty silence for ages when it comes to writing for the international newsletter. It is this sad fact that has made me determined to share with you a little about my fraternal life through these few lines taken from the latest monthly regional news, including by way of introduction, the journey I have been on, for those of you who don't know me well.

After 20 years in Marrakech and 7 years in Paris with my mother, who died in 2015, I spent 2 years with Jean Michel at the hospitality village for addicts in Berdine, then 3 years in Tamanrasset before going up to Algiers to look after Jean, who died in mid-May '22 at the St Augustin retirement home where I have been a nurse for 2 and a half years. I am writing to you from the Mahieddine fraternity where I still live with François.



*Christian (left), two Little Sisters of Jesus of Algiers and François.*



*Christian in Tamanrasset.*

A few lines now to tell you that I have been well since the last time I wrote my news. I am still very busy what with my care work at St-Augustin and being at the fraternity with François, interspersed with Eucharistic celebrations and various diocesan meetings at the Diocesan House, the 'Hussen-Dey chapel or at Our Lady of Africa, these being opportunities to maintain relationships with the many brothers and sisters here in Algeria!

Since the closure of Caritas, I no longer give classes at the school for care assistants, which is less stressful for me, even if I was starting to take a liking to it, and leaves me more time for me or for emergency services, such as caring for an elderly lady for ten days, who finally died yesterday.

I still feel like a newcomer on the Mahieddine estate, but I am slowly getting used to it, always touched by the extreme sympathy and unobtrusive good will of the neighbourhood, from the grocer to the baker, from the locksmith to the green-grocer, from the little neighbour to the old Hajji. Jean is often remembered, still present among us after his recent death and François is part of the landscape, and I too feel welcomed!

Every evening, Ahmed, Armand's old colleague and an old and faithful friend of the brothers brings round meals prepared by his quiet wife with great thoughtfulness and if we no longer enjoy daily soup from our adjoining neighbours, it is only because of the mother's advancing age and because the daughter has cancer. Our former neighbour Amar regularly comes from the others side of the city to visit us.



Yesterday, old Khadija who lives alone on the fourth floor brought us a loaf of bread, to thank me for having fixed four hinges on the doors of her dresser. She forced my hand with authority as much as she thanked me with extreme gratitude. I appreciate the simplicity of this neighbourliness and this spirit of generous spontaneity. And one month ago, three young people anonymously brought us a whole meal.

As for our friend Rachid, though he is unobtrusive so as not to impose himself on us too much, he is nonetheless committed to cleaning up the estate every morning from sunrise: as I surprised him one morning at 6 o'clock, filling his big bin bag with bottles, packaging, and cans, thrown away during the day by the careless, I said to him "God will give it back to you", he answered me: "My rewards, is to serve the estate."

In the afternoon, the children play football, the young surf, sip their drinks or chat and the elderly play dominoes in small groups of old friends from the estate, hotbeds of cheerful conviviality between old septuagenarian colluding friends, lined



*Christian with the group "Chemins et Dialogues" in Tamanrasset.*



*Christian with the bishop of the Sahara Mgr. John MacWilliam and Taber (from Tamanrasset).*

up on an old eucalyptus trunk or seated on bits of cardboard. I believe that the "casinos" in Mahieddine have no cause to be envious of those in Las Vegas !

For 2 months I have been without my broken smartphone, a practical handicap, but good for training to avoid spreading myself too thinly, communicating less in favour of doing what is essential, and experiencing the rosary thanks to the rosary beads offered to me by the young Algerian, Ghani. I have been learning again to meditate on the mysteries with Mary, entrusting to her the many intentions around here and in the world that more than ever is in waiting.

I have just realised that it is 40 years this month since I entered the Fraternity. The years pass and the Lord is always faithful and truly merciful. Thank you to the Fraternity for having accepted me as I am and for having given me so much.

I will stop there so as not to bore you and offer you my warmest wishes!

I fraternally offer you my vows of fidelity, through His grace,  
*Christian*



## Dare to address conflicts and difficulties

*It is not so easy to face the difficulties of fraternal life and to dare to speak about them. Mirek, who has also just been elected to the service of the General Fraternity, tells us about the rich experience of the brothers in Poland on this subject:*

**A**fter the Chapter in Avila, I returned to Poland, where I worked until the end of June. My work there coming to an end was a very fraternal and emotional time for me. For the last 9 years I had spent the majority of my time there, I had forged many relationships, had good memories and had various different experiences ...

In recent months there have been many different events. There was, of course, the canonisation of Brother Charles in Rome at which several brothers were present. Apart from this main celebration there were also several other meetings, solemn Masses, vigils or other events in different corners of Poland, in which we were able to participate.

Usually there are 2 official meetings per year in the Polish region. Normally they are early May and November. This time there was also the meeting at the beginning of May in Izabelin, during which certain difficulties and conflicts came to light that remained with us for another two and a half months. During this meeting we studied among other things a document from the Chapter entitled: *"A time of grace to follow Jesus: the experience of decline and its challenges"*. We liked it but we asked ourselves how we could put it into practice and discover God in our own weakness and diminishment. It is a challenge for our daily lives.

In the middle of June Marc arrived in Izabelin to have a session with us (especially Kuba, who is a novice) looking at the topic *"Being a brother: a call at the heart of our lives"*, that we all enjoyed.

In early July, Sang Shim and I were able to join in a 6-day retreat that took place in Zakopane, a tourist town located in the mountains of southern Poland. All the brothers from Poland



*At the Izabelin fraternity. 2nd row: Filip, Wojtek, Kuba, Mirek; front row: Andrzej, Kazek, Slawek.*

and two of our friends took part. The facilitator was Karin, a German laywoman, who has extensive experience in giving contemplative retreats and spiritual accompaniment. It was quite unusual because it is rare in our Polish Church for a retreat to be given by a woman, and moreover one who was not a nun but a married woman. We tried three times to organise this retreat, but each time insurmountable difficulties arose, related either to the pandemic, or more recently, to the arrival in Poland of several million refugees from Ukraine, who have been welcomed by different organisations, many ordinary families, as well as probably by all religious orders and retreat centres. So we found, almost miraculously, not an ordinary retreat centre, but a centre meant to accommodate friends and families of rather traditional Diocesan Right nuns, who first of all looked at us with great suspicion: "a woman from Germany giving a retreat to men and what's more in French ? Unheard of! And who are these men? They look very suspicious and unusual for religious brothers!"

Fortunately, with time we gained the favour of the sisters, so that at the end of our stay we said a very long farewell to them in a cordial and friendly atmosphere.

The retreat took place in the spirit of the Jesus Prayer proposed by Franz Jalics, a Hungarian Jesuit, who died last year.

He had a very deep and interesting life. When in 1976, together with another Jesuit, he was living in the slums of Buenos Aires, he was abducted by the military and imprisoned for over five months in inhumane conditions. During this period of deep physical, mental and spiritual suffering, he found refuge in the prayer of Jesus who accompanied him until the end of his life.

During these several days on retreat we remained in silence, while praying for several hours a day. Each day, Karin introduced us to the theme of contemplative prayer, with the help of biblical and spiritual introductions. We were also able to benefit from personal support from her and from group sharing. Every one of us experienced this time differently and at the same time, it was an opportunity for us all to enter again into a deep relationship with the Lord, who remains constantly in our hearts, and to renew in us this union of love with Him. This time of silence and prayer also helped us to discover within ourselves the various darknesses and obstacles that stand in the way on our spiritual path. Our natural first reaction is to reject and hide this darkness, but, in this way there is always a part of us that cannot be healed or redeemed. So this time on retreat, also helped us to do the work of welcoming within ourselves this difficult reality in order to then turn with confidence towards Jesus, remaining in His healing presence.

Thanks to this atmosphere of profound attentiveness, by the end of the retreat we were more prepared, in terms of the community of brothers from Poland, to face with more openness and truth the conflicts and difficulties that have besieged fraternal life in Poland over the last few months. It was certainly not easy, but here again, Karin's presence was of invaluable support, when her caring, positive, non-judgmental outlook and her ability to listen empathetically to others, helped



*Mirek with Theo, a brother from Germany.*

us to experience this sharing as a community in the best way possible. This fraternal meeting developed over two stages: the first was like the usual going round and giving our news, but was limited to a personal sharing, with no questions or interaction; where the emphasis was on listening to oneself and to others.

The second stage was more difficult, but allowed us to be more truthful with one another and deepen our personal relationships. It entailed telling each brother in turn how we each experienced our relationships with them. So, here the positive and difficult aspects of fraternal life were addressed. Just like during the first stage, here too, when somebody was speaking, everybody listened without interrupting or responding. All this was done in complete freedom, and everyone was free to say what they wanted without being forced, but everyone still spoke, each in their own original way. Although it was impossible to address all the personal problems in the relationship with a particular brother, this sharing prompted more than one brother to continue the individual conversations after the meeting.

I think that we were all satisfied with the meeting, and several times the subject of the retreat and the fraternal sharing that followed it, came up in our conversations over the next few days. It would be good to have this type of sharing on a regular basis, it would make fraternal life much easier, would allow us to understand each other better, to deepen the relationships between us and possibly allow us to resolve conflicts before they become too overwhelming. It is an important path to take and offers hope for the future.

## “Touching the flesh”

*Hervé was in charge of the Fraternity for 14 years and therefore participated in the regular meetings of the Superiors General. We reproduce here large excerpts from a talk he gave in May 2021.*

*The theme of the meeting was: “What does it mean for me to “make myself the neighbour” of my brothers and of the wounded ... to “touch the flesh of the wounded”?*

**T**o “touch the flesh” is a paradox in the midst of confinement where we must apply social distancing by proscribing all physical contact!...

« You shall not hide from your own flesh and blood. » Is 58: 7

At the beginning of his encyclical “Fratelli Tutti”, Francis suggests that we meditate on the parable of the Good Samaritan and the stranger on the road (cf. N°56...): he showed himself close to this wounded man, like a brother, he, the stranger!... How do we take care of the one or the other on our way?... Indifference or compassion?

We are on the way, and it is certainly a long way to become a true brother, a sister, to other people who are different from us: this sometimes requires overcoming blocks, apriori judgments, even wounds!...

At the end of his encyclical, Francis, speaking of Charles de Foucauld who wanted to be “the universal brother”, remarks: “it was only by identifying himself with the least of these that he succeeded in becoming the brother of all” (N°287)... Francis puts his finger on a fundamental point of our vocation to follow Jesus of Nazareth: Indeed, the Little Brothers of Jesus “find in the imitation of Jesus in Nazareth,” say our Constitutions, “the proper form of their contemplative life in the midst of the world” (C1), “participating truly in the social condition of the poor” (C2).

Like Jesus in Nazareth, a town from which nothing good can come, like Charles de Foucauld who settled among the most re-



*At the fraternity of Marseilles: Robert, Immanuel, Hervé, Jacques and Yves.*

mote people in the Hoggar desert, we must go towards those who are nameless and without influence, wanting to be close to the excluded, with the desire to identify with them, to share their fate...

This requires first of all that we allow ourselves to be welcomed by those to whom we wish to be close, because it is they who finally accept us and allow us to enter their world... We are at their school, just as Jesus learned to be a little Nazarene and to grow up in this environment!...

And to do this, we must remain close to this wounded world with whom we wish to be and concretely share the fate. This closeness is experienced with all our senses: to listen to the cry of those who are desperate, as Jesus listened to the cry of the Syro-Phoenician woman; to really see these situations that we live with, as Jesus knew how to see the poor widow who had put all she had into the Temple treasury, or Zacchaeus perched on a sycamore tree; touching physically, like Jesus touching the leper, the blind man, or the deaf-mute; feeling and sympathising, like Jesus in front of the tomb of Lazarus or next to the widow of Naïm accompanying the body of her only son; tasting also the joy of our neighbours, like Jesus at the wedding in Cana...



*Hervé with Isidore at Fouban.*

I tried to live our desire to share the fate of the little ones who welcomed us, first in the northern districts of Marseilles, known to be hot spots where young people, often unemployed, indulge in drugs and a thousand petty crimes, more or less important...

Later, I was posted to Cameroon: I was then 36 years old. I was very lucky to find work fairly quickly in my first job related to agriculture. In Fouban, in the west of Cameroon, I worked in a training centre for young farmers who came from the surrounding villages and who often only had a primary school certificate: for two years, they were given practical and theoretical training in agriculture, market gardening, animal husbandry and animation, before returning to their villages, which are very isolated in the mountains. The situation in the villages is difficult and is not well regarded: in Cameroon, to call someone a villager is an insult! The aim was therefore to give these young people dignity through this professional training and pride in the exercise of this beautiful profession of farmer-breeder! Once they returned to their villages, where the majority were Muslim, I also followed up by going to live with them in their families and by working with the groups

they had created once they were back in their villages. These groups organised themselves to do community work and to save money in order to improve the living conditions of their village, for example to develop springs, build a school, or buy a mill to grind maize which is their main food. In one village, they decided to buy a mill because the women had to go far to grind the maize; we had regular meetings with the group, and each time the village Imam came to participate. When, after two years, the mill could be bought, it was a great celebration in the village, bringing together the small Christian community and the large Muslim community of the village. The Imam spoke and thanked us for this success. I was very touched by what he said, and I promised the young people that on my next visit we would go to the Imam's house to thank him. This is what we did, and after listening to me thanking him for his testimony, the Imam spoke and what he said touched me enormously: "Brother Hervé," he said, "I have seen you come to our villages for several years now, living with us, participating in our joys as well as our mourning, sharing





our food and our nights: your way of being simply with us has helped me to live my faith as a Muslim better and I thank you for that! I confess that I did not expect such a statement, which moved me deeply, and I could only return his compliment because for me too, his regular presence at our meetings, even though he was an old man, had helped and encouraged me in my personal life!...

\* \* \*

For more than 12 years now, my work has completely changed, as I have found myself in Brussels to be at the service of my brothers! I have become aware of the fragility of our small, ageing and diminishing Congregation! It is perhaps a limit, but it is above all an element that pushes us to put all our trust in the Lord: humbly, and in a completely free way, we are there to witness to the Love of God for the smallest: our fragility brings us closer to the most fragile, and allows us to let the Lord act in us!...

I was able to realise how important it is for the brothers to



*With friends.*



*Hervé in the Jura vineyards.*

feel listened to, respected in their differences, sometimes in their wounds or frailties, warmly welcomed as being each one unique, loved by the Lord. I tried to have the same look of tenderness that the Lord has for each one of us, and to take care of each one, beginning with the most isolated and those who remained a little in the shadow of others who speak easily, who were not heard because we did not pay much attention to what they could feel or express: this was a revelation for me, and I wanted to be especially attentive and close to them: to take special care of them!... I am sensitive to what Francis says in *Fratelli Tutti*, No. 79: *“Let us take care of the fragility of every man and woman,..., with an attitude of solidarity and attentiveness, the attitude of closeness of the Good Samaritan”*...

One point seems very clear to me: we are all wounded men



and women who need brothers and sisters! This awareness helps me to live mercy and tenderness towards my brothers and sisters, as I myself need it!

Along with this concern for closeness, to which I am very sensitive..., there is another value which seems to me to be very important and which has always been present in the exercise of our religious obedience, that of co-responsibility in transparency! In the service that I am currently living, this is concretised in the principle of subsidiarity: to know how to delegate and to trust in transparency in the decisions to be taken! The current crisis forces us to live this out more intensely, and that is a positive point!

We are not alone, and *“we are all responsible for the wounded who are the people themselves and all the peoples of the earth. Let us take care of their fragility...”*. (Fratelli Tutti N°79)...

But Francis reminds us that it is not success that is important, but rather fecundity: to give birth, to give birth to life or to revive it by our way of caring for others, that is the essential thing for us! Francis quotes our founder, René Voillaume: *“It is not a waste of time to love the smallest of men as a brother, as if he were alone in the world”*. (Fratelli Tutti N°193) This is a message that René wrote to the Little Brothers in February 1950, and his sentence continued as follows: *“Whatever his moral misery, I dare say that he is as worthy of love as God Himself”*...

Following Jesus in Nazareth, ... our only response is to be with the wounded, disarmed, without great means or power -

*"it was only by identifying with the least of these that he succeeded in becoming the brother of all,"* wrote Francis about Charles de Foucauld - but by being creative with our small means, to love as closely as possible, without fear of wasting our time, the one whose fate we share, like Jesus stripped on the Cross, side by side with the two bandits...

\* \* \*

I will conclude my speech with the recent testimony of one of our brothers who lives in Beirut:

*"Many practising Christians, deprived of Eucharistic communion, were experiencing pain and distress during this period, and I felt solidarity with them. But I thought that this 'fast' was also a moment of grace when the centre of the Eucharistic mystery was being moved. Not a day went by without us learning of the death of someone we knew. The celebration was no longer in the churches or in our chapels, but where Christ suffered and died, in hospitals and homes for the elderly. This pandemic invited us to live the Eucharist differently. Several times during this period, I read the Eucharistic prayers, transporting myself, by thought and heart, to those places where the suffering Body of Christ is exposed: hospitals, prisons, refugee camps, migrant boats, neighbourhoods ruined by wars... Pope Francis speaks of the 'Church on the move'. I have tried, guided by him, to move from the Eucharist of celebration to the Eucharist of compassion ..... Each celebration now calls me to be 'in a state of going out' to the peripheries, and first of all to this closest periphery, our neighbourhood of Nabaa, where so much distress is hidden."*

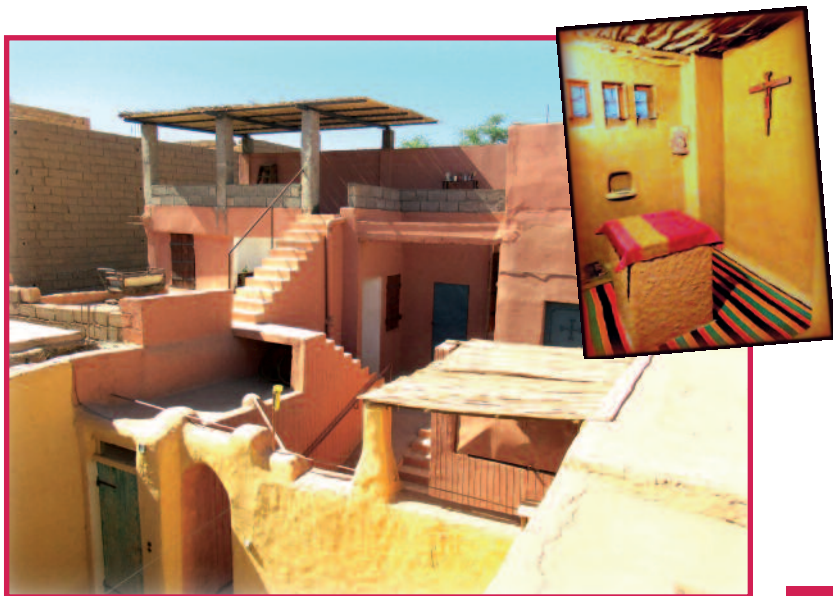
Thank you for listening!

Hervé

## What does our task of announcing the Kingdom consist in?

*Taher has been living with Algeria for a long time, and in particular in Tamanrasset, where neighbours and friends know well the reason for the presence of the brothers as Christians in this country. In spite of everything, certain "clichés" still circulate: an opportunity for Taher to reflect again on the task of announcing the Kingdom, which is the task of every baptised person.*

**A**t the beginning of July a short interview with me aired on the Echourouk TV channel; it had been filmed a year earlier in Tazrouk. The journalist finished the programme by saying: "Taher came here to convert people; he didn't succeed but he stayed anyway". Nearly every day I meet people who up until now have seen this programme on Facebook. The people who know us know that this comment is not



*The Tamanrasset fraternity and the chapel.*



*Taber, Hervé and Jean Marie.*

true, but for those who do not know us it seems obvious that is why we came to Algeria.

This way of seeing things can be explained by many of the writings of Charles de Foucauld who shows that his charity was aimed in this direction; or by the presence of Christian Algerians who, in the 90s, were a “divine surprise” that were not expected and that made the Church rejoice. Many see in them the future of the Church in Algeria, even if the vast majority are not Catholic. All of this worries the authorities who would like to stop conversions.

For many Algerians, charitable activities are considered as being aimed in this direction. They would not be selfless. After the recent ban on Caritas, which was sanctioned by the State, the Bishops of Algeria spoke to the ministries concerned about the “charitable activity that has always been the hallmark of the Catholic Church in this country and without which she cannot be herself”.

This has all caused me to ask some questions. This “charitable activity” is indeed part of the very being of the universal Church, but would there not be a Nazarene part in the Church that could do without it? Not forgetting too the words of little Thérèse : « At the heart of the Church my mother, I want there to be love. ». What was Jesus’s “mission” during his thirty

Nazarene years? Isn't there a "Catholic" way to live and be accepted in this country?

I would like to try and answer these questions.

First of all I am struck by the fact that it was essentially the Kingdom that Jesus announces to the crowds (meaning to all men and women, whatever their religion or if they have no religion). And the charter of the Kingdom is the Beatitudes. It is surprising to note that nearly all of those to whom Jesus said – in one way or another – *"your faith has saved you"*, are people on the margins of religion: a Roman, a Canaanite, a Samaritan, a publican, a sinner, a thief on the cross, and so on... It seems to me that the mystery of Jesus is too "incredible" for Him to have desired that everyone should know Him. What He wanted was for everyone to enter the Kingdom.

To some (including us) He announced His Passion and His Resurrection, and something of His mystery. And it is now up to them to announce the Kingdom. But what saves is not sharing the bread and the word of Jesus, but being admitted to the Kingdom. *"We ate and drank in front of You and it is in our squares that You have taught"* and He will say to you *"I do not know where you are from. Away from me all evildoers"* (Luke13 : 26-27)

But then, what does our task of announcing the Kingdom consist of?



Taber, Christian, Zbyszek and Jean-Marie.



*Taber (right) with Christian, brother from Algiers.*

First of all, to pray to the Lord to open our eyes to see this Kingdom present among all those who live out the Beatitudes.

And then that our gaze on them, that our sharing in their lives, makes them see that they are “blessed”, with a happiness that does not come from this world and that we would like to share with them.

Well at the end of the day, Jesus wanted to live in solidarity with the poor, those who are hungry, those who cry, those who are persecuted in their search for justice, and even – in His baptism by John – with sinners on the road to conversion, to finally « be placed among the ranks of evildoers ». And now He

needs us *“to complete with our flesh what is missing from His suffering for His body which is the Church”*. What is missing from His suffering is that it is experienced by the sinners that we are (while He was righteous), today and in this country. This is what the Bishops of Algeria say: *“It can, in effect, only be the Catholic Church that is part of the life of society in solidarity with the inhabitants of this country”*. And perhaps these “sufferings” that we have to offer are less ours than those of all those with whom we are in solidarity, as John the Evangelist suggested to us (John 6-9) when he told us about this boy who offered five barley loaves and two fish that Jesus used to feed the crowds. It is indeed our work as priests, as baptised people, to present in the Eucharist all that our fellow travellers experience, all that is lived in this country and for this country, for this « crowd ». In this our mission is essentially priestly, while introducing us to the heart of the mystery of Nazareth, beyond the dimensions of our small, daily, local life.





*In Tamanrasset: Jean-Marie, Hervé, Christian and a friend.*

To finish, I would like to quote from this text, written in around 1930 by Marie- Noël, a French poet torn between her love for God and her love for the world, and whom I consider to be a true mystic:

*“There is in the Catholic a satisfied, superior being –the one who possesses the truth – full of security and certainty. If he bows to the other thought – he bows – it is in order to save it, i.e. to circumvent it, to seduce it, to win it for God. It is for him only an object of compassion and conquest. He loves it out of mercy. He despises it out of faith.*

*No exchange is possible. A Catholic gives. He does not receive.*

*That is why I am a bad Catholic. Every soul is my equal. I have given my best to everyone, the little light that I had, but I have also – and from all sorts of people – received a lot.*

*Did I have real faith ?”*

Taher

## Peacemakers...

*Newly elected prior of the Fraternity,  
Rodrigo participated  
for the first time in the general assembly of the Union  
of Superiors General, at the end of November 2022 in Rome.  
He gives us an echo of it.*

**W**e met, about 125 brothers, in a relaxed and fraternal atmosphere at the Fraterna Domus house, in Rome. The main theme was: to be peacemakers, to which was added justice and the integrity of creation. We showed what is done at the level of our Church and of our religious life,



of which the South Sudan project is an illustrative and inspiring example. It has been said that it could even be a model for an intercongregational project, and an effective response to one of the many current social challenges. Several representatives of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, which is a body composed of members of the USG and the UISG (International Union of Superiors General), and even of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development also explained their apostolate and explained how they understood and put into practice this fundamental



*Rodrigo with Pierre (left) and friends at the fraternity in Ansan, Korea.*

challenge of our mission as congregations. For example, they insisted on the importance of understanding this aspect in a transversal way, which involves each one of us individually and also as a group with realistic tasks at several levels, without abandoning, but instead stemming precisely from our charisms. Therefore, it is up to all of us to do something to respond to this call, in a world that is so wounded by so much violence of all kinds.

During the various presentations, it was pointed out that the struggles for social justice and peace in our world, as well as for the care of our common home to which we must devote our efforts, were well emphasized in the encyclicals *Fratelli Tutti* and *Laudato Si*, and inspired by the icons of the Good Samaritan and the Samaritan woman beside the well.



*Rodrigo with Hi-Su, at the fraternity of Hongje-dong (Korea).*

The urgency in responding to the wounded by the roadside was emphasized, which today symbolizes entire human groups, who bring the Passion of Christ up to date, overwhelmed by war - 31 countries involved in armed conflict were mentioned, by hunger, by the desolation often caused by illegal migration, by religious persecution, etc.

The prayers and Eucharistic celebrations that we shared were the expression of our trust in the Lord, who leads the story, in the midst of our limitations and of our social contradictions, towards the new Earth and the new Heaven and the renewal of the offering of our people and congregations in order to collaborate with these three essential characteristics of His Kingdom (justice, peace and ecosystems).

The highlight of the meeting was the audience with Pope Francis, behind closed doors, on the morning of the 26th, at the



*Rodrigo and Nozomi (a brother from Japan).*

Vatican. If anyone wants to read the Pope's message, they can go to the website//[exaudi.org](http://exaudi.org)

Rodrigo

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