

# *Be Brothers!*

## *Britain & Ireland.*

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**Jesus Caritas  
Fraternity  
of Priests**

New series 33  
November 2024



***It's what fraternity is all about– Clifton prepare to share a slap-up meal out at Chipping Sodbury (North of Bristol) in August 2024.***

***(Several other brothers absent!)***

## Editorial

I give up this slot for important news just in literally as I was about to order the printing of “Be Brothers:”

Niall Ahern, Irish Regional Responsible emeritus, writes to say that after meeting in Knock for the discernment of a new National Responsible, JOE DEEGAN of Meath Diocese has been chosen. His contact is [jpdeegan@gmail.com](mailto:jpdeegan@gmail.com) 086 3853045 / 086 3853042.

Two brothers have agreed to work with Bob Rainbow as Irish contacts for BE BROTHERS:

LIAM OCUIV [liamcuiv@yahoo.com](mailto:liamcuiv@yahoo.com) 086 234 2170

ALAN GEOGHEGAN [nasraya@gmail.com](mailto:nasraya@gmail.com) 085 185 2815

Niall will continue to arrange the Irish National Retreat - so welcome to all in Mullaghmore in Sligo / Sunday August 31 to Thursday September 4 2025.

+

Bob

## 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 Irish brothers were due to hold** their annual retreat near Sligo over Sept. 1-5, and a gathering in St Mary’s Hostel in Knock on Nov. 12, facilitated by European Team members Eddie Lagae and Boris Schluessel. Irish ‘Regional’ (= National) Responsible, Niall Ahern, is looking for a replacement.
- **The XII World Assembly of Jesus Caritas** will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, over May 6 to 21, 2025. To represent British fraternities, contact < [frstevesquires@aol.com](mailto:frstevesquires@aol.com) > 01386 47597; to represent Ireland, contact Fergal Cunnane < [fergalcunnane@gmail.com](mailto:fergalcunnane@gmail.com) > 00353876699588, or via the editor for either.
- **The British ‘Regional’ Team** met on 9-10/4/24 & 22/10/24. We are looking for a new Regional Responsible to replace Steve Squires, and for new Team members (poss. a new “Be Bros” editor or co-editor or a new website editor?) £700 has been voted for the International Team, incl. for fraternities in poor countries. We hope to reprint Ian Latham’s booklet “*The Vision of the Gospel that filled the mind and heart of brother Charles.*” It is hoped to have a national retreat 30/6/25-4/6/25 with LS Kathy McGee. Effort is needed to encourage Desert Days and the Review of Life; also to link better with fraternities in the SE of England.
- **The annual British Responsibles meeting in September** has been discontinued.
- **The 2025 British new year mini-retreat** will be led by Bishop David Oakley (a Jesus Caritas brother) Tues-Thurs. 14-16<sup>th</sup> January. for the first time at Wistaston Hall nr. Crewe ([www.orc-crewe.org](http://www.orc-crewe.org)) £175. Form with details on the website (see bottom of rear page) or from < [frstevesquires@aol.com](mailto:frstevesquires@aol.com) > 01386 47597.
- **Note that each “Be Brothers” can be viewed on the international website:** <http://www.iesuscaritas.org/en> soon after publication.
- **Please remember in your prayers Michael Jones**, Responsible of Southwark Dartford fraternity, who continues unwell.
- **Apologies for quite forgetting in the June edition to welcome John Whisstock and the 5 brothers of his existing fraternity based in Frinton-on-Sea, Brentwood Diocese**, into connection with our national fellowship; well done for having existed independently and under our radar for so long!
- **PRESS DATE for the June 2025 “Be Brothers” is 1st April for full articles; snippets accepted till April 15th.** Contributions from British & Irish local fraternities welcome. +

## *Comments on the “Review of Life” provided by Peter Codd (member of the British National Team)*

First, a prayer before making a Review:

*Holy Spirit of God, we believe that you are at work in our lives and in our time. We thank you for all that is best in us. As we share our cares, hopes and disappointments in this review of life, Keep us alert to the presence of Jesus walking beside us. Enable us to discern where he wants us to be, with him, as he continues to save the world. Let that mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus. Lead us into the mystery of his death and resurrection. Amen.*

Brother Charles didn't do a monthly “Review of Life” in the strict sense of the word. For one thing, he lived a solitary and not a community life. Nevertheless one sees him continually seeking the will of God. He wanted always to do more, to better imitate his “Beloved brother and Lord, Jesus Christ;” to “cry the Gospel” with his whole life.

*“Our entire life”, he writes, “however silent it may be; the life of Nazareth, the desert life, as well as the public life, must be a preaching of the Gospel by way of example; Our whole existence, our whole being, must cry the Gospel everywhere; Our entire self must breathe Jesus; All our acts, our whole life must present the image of the evangelical life; All of our being must be a living sermon, a reflection of Jesus, a perfume of Jesus, that shines like an image of Jesus.”*

What I'd like to offer here are suggestions on how to prepare a “Review of Life” and suggestions about how best to receive a brother's presentation most helpfully. I'll suggest various methods to explore, which may help to keep the exercise fresh month by month and, may perhaps, stimulate a little discussion to conclude this reflection. Surely, in these words, Brother Charles gives us motive for our monthly Review of Life – a valuable tool to check our direction and blow away the chaff.

Ideally, the short presentation we share with our brothers each month should be a written summary of the fruit of our monthly Desert Day. **Please do book the date, monthly in your diary.**

**Firstly**, when we share anything of our personal spiritual journey, we are showing trust in one another to maintain **confidentiality**. We are inviting those listening to try to discern what the Holy Spirit is leading this brother to understand and to help him by wise comment and by prayer and encouragement. Those listening may, themselves be edified and, perhaps, receive direction. But, I can't emphasise enough the need for us to be gentle and sensitive towards one another in offering any response. The Review is not confession of faults/sin and we are not judge of one another, charged with correcting or admonishing one another!

**Secondly**, usually, a Day in the Desert is spent away from our normal centre of working and living, to avoid interruption. But, it need not be so if circumstances suggest otherwise. As it happens, I am retired, living in Newbury, a town in Portsmouth Diocese. I live in a small house, owned by the Diocese, but about two miles from the Parish Church/Presbytery, so, most days, I do get to church for Mass, but it isn't usually convenient to spend an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. So for a Day in the Desert, I will often try to include a visit to a Church for a period of Eucharistic adoration.

**Thirdly**, there are several methods of beginning a Desert Day; listen to this quote from the Jesus Caritas “**Directory**”

*Continued overleaf*

*“The Review of Life means a common act of faith in which we talk about events in our lives and share our cares, our hopes, our disappointments. It means laying our lives openly before each other to discover where the Lord is calling us. All this demands great courage, but our review of life is indispensable, for it is first of all to look with love at the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our time. Whenever we make a review of our lives we are called to conversion. It opens our eyes to what is best in us. It keeps us always alert to the Lord who may call us in ways never expected. It helps us to find the Lord himself, always greater than we thought, always different, so often disconcerting. There is an overall unity between the review of life and the other activities of the Fraternity. The Review is prepared preferably in the desert, and always in prayer and, if possible is written. It is better not to make it at all than to improvise on the spot.*

*“It presupposes an atmosphere of prayer, of listening to the word of God, of attention to one another. No need to fear moments of silence. We must have the courage to put questions to one another gently but frankly. We should not be put off by fear of possible tensions or clashes. False friendship is the death of a true review of life, and therefore of the fraternity.*

*“If in a review of life together you help someone to discern the call of the Lord, you must support and assist him in putting it into practice. Each member should be one with the others and feel responsible for them. An honest review of life can introduce us into the mystery of the life and death of Christ at work in us. Sometimes it will lead us to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”*

Sometimes it is fruitful to reflect specifically on Brother Charles’ search to know and follow and love Jesus, reflecting, for example, on the **poverty** of the Divine Word-made-flesh, working in Nazareth; the **humility** of Jesus, born in a stable in Bethlehem; the **obedience** of the Son, our Saviour, sent to suffer and to die for sinner, including me and you. Then ask, does the witness of my life reflect that poverty of spirit, that humility and gentleness towards others, that willingness to be obedient to the will of the Father? - **Abandonment? Universal Brother? Visitation**, i.e. bringing Christ to others and recognising Christ in others? These are a just a few suggestions.

In sharing this, my personal review with you, I’ll try to illustrate some of the points I’m attempting to make, so I’ll interject comments from time to time, to explain further and please feel free to interrupt, if you want more explanation or discussion. Obviously, in what follows, I am only demonstrating one approach out of a number of possible ways of beginning a Desert Day. And this particular Desert Day was one in which I spent most at home in my guest room!

My Day began, much as normal and including presiding at the Parish Mass, since the PP was away. When I arrived home, in heavy rain, it seemed wiser to use my guest room as the venue for quiet reflection. For my desert day, I try to devote a period from after morning Mass until late afternoon each month and, if going out into the country take a packed lunch. But this time I took my lunch up to my temporary retreat, avoiding the temptation of radio or dealing with post.

Each month, I begin with a conscious prayer to invite the Lord to put into my mind whatever he wishes and pray for the grace to be open to receive.

I’ve learnt by experience the need to watch out for weak tendencies, due to ingrained habit - I’ll comment further on these, if anyone would like to know more. Suffice to warn against getting bogged down in baggage from the past, or waylaid into continuing some pastoral activity (e.g. homily/talk/school liturgy/meeting agenda).

Sometimes, I begin my reflection with Centring Prayer or praising God for the beauty about

me. Sometimes I have something swirling around in my mind from the past/month which I am pondering, but have not felt able to focus on with sufficient attention to do it justice.

This time, I knew what was uppermost on my mind; it was the sense that a significant person had gone from our midst and I'd not felt I'd spent the time I'd have wished to recall Pope emeritus Benedict's influence in my own life. It was like the death of Pope Benedict & some specific quotes from a variety of commentaries were waiting for me to savour more attentively and fruitfully. Benedict's last words were, *"Jesus, I love you"*



*Br. Charles (3rd from L.)  
with local tribespeople*

I'd been waiting for just more time and space to stay with that scene and those words. The time spent meditating was richly rewarding. It brought a sense of peace and satisfaction. Then, I pondered a section of Sacramental Theology from one of Benedict's books, which had been a great help to me and, also, his teaching on the place and meaning of Eucharistic Adoration. I recalled the insight gained and felt deep gratitude and privilege for that.

I thought about the quote concerning Benedict's diagnosis of the ills of our age, particularly, *"The dictatorship of relativism"*, and the current debate about Parliament being used as the source of authority for allowing gender change to be recognised struck me as a prime example!

I read, again a couple of paragraphs I'd highlighted in *Caritas In Veritate*, pars. 78 & 79 :

*"Openness to God makes us open to our brothers and sisters and to an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity"*

And, writing about 'development':

*"Development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer, Christians moved by the knowledge that truth-filled love, Caritas in Veritate, from which all development proceeds, is not produced by us but given to us."*

Finally, I dwelt on two passages in Bishop Philip Egan's recent pastoral quoting Benedict on dying and death: *"With God"* he said, *"there is perpetual, unending encounter, with new discoveries and new joy. ... At the same time, I look forward to being reunited with my parents, my siblings, my friends."* In one of his books, there's a consoling passage on that intermediate state after death when the soul, having left the body, awaits the resurrection of the flesh on the Last Day. Benedict links this to the 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharistic Prayer, when we ask God to *"grant all who sleep in Christ a place of refreshment, light and peace. What does this mean? Not a waiting-room,"* he says, *"but Jesus Himself. When we die, Jesus clasps us to Himself. It's like the joy of being gathered with the Lord in Eucharistic Exposition. There, secure in His loving presence, we gaze upon Him, adoring Him, whilst being cleansed of our sins and being made new."*

Benedict spoke, too, about the centrality of a personal friendship with Jesus Christ, on which all else depends. This brought me back to the initial reflection and, indeed, to the logo of Brother Charles, *"Jesus Caritas."*

So much for my personal *review of Life*. I'd welcome any comments; help to discern further insight; your own experiences of how the review of life occurs in your own fraternities and the help you experience. Please do share from your own experiences. +

## *Letter of Convocation for the XII World Assembly of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 6-21, 2025. (Posted on the International website, <https://www.iesuscaritas.org/en/> on 16/7/24.)*

*Dear Brothers,*

*In a world torn apart by wars and wounded by the suffering of the innocent, especially the elderly, women and children, Pope Francis has raised his prophetic voice countless times to remind humanity of an essential truth of the Gospel: “YOU ARE ALL BROTHERS” (Mt 23:8). He has painstakingly carried out significant activities, both inside and outside the Church, with Christians and non-Christians to achieve the longed-for universal brotherhood and world peace.*

We, disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, inspired by the testimony of St. Charles de Foucauld, who made UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY the nucleus and horizon of his life in God, want to make a significant contribution to this cause, both within our presbyterates and in the civil society of which we are a part. For this reason, the theme of our Assembly is: PRIESTS OF IESUS CARITAS: WITNESSES AND FORGERS OF PRIESTLY AND UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY.

In the attached annex is the Questionnaire that the National Responsible need to answer with kind attention and the main topics that would set the direction and process of our meeting.

Our Assembly will take place at the Monsignor Aguirre House of Spiritual Exercises, Santa Rosa 2341, B 1644, city of Victoria, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina (the house is one hour from downtown Buenos Aires). It will cost approximately US\$600 or Euros 560.

Who are the participants?

According to our Statutes (Art. 19), the following are invited to participate in the Assembly with the right to speak and vote:

1. *the International Responsible and his team,*
2. *the two International Responsibles who preceded him,*
3. *the four Continental Responsibles and their Teams,*
4. *the National Responsible of the different countries,*
5. *some delegates specifically invited by the International Responsible and his team.*

To enter Argentina, citizens of some countries require a visa.

Click [www.migraciones.gov.ar/accesible/indexdnm.php/visas](http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/accesible/indexdnm.php/visas), download the registration form and fill it up. Send a scanned copy of your passport with your address and contact information<sup>1</sup> to Tino (robertoferrarulujan@gmail.com) for the invitation letter. These documents must be processed well in advance so that we could still avail of cheaper airfares. Thank you very much.

Let us hold this Assembly close to our hearts in prayer so that it may bear the fruits that the Spirit has called us to do and be in our times. We humbly entrust the common aspirations and concrete plans of our Assembly through the intercession of our Brother St. Charles de Foucauld.

In Jesus Caritas,

*Eric, Matthias, Honoré, Tony and Fernando (The International Team.)*

*1 Contact information is a collection of information; namely, name of residence and/or work-place, its address; nature of your work; telephone number of residence/place of work; your personal mobile number*

Read in PDF: *[from the original entry on the International Website:]*

- [1. LETTER OF CONVOCATION FOR THE XII WORLD ASSEMBLY](#)
- [2. ANNEX TO THE CONVOCATORY LETTER](#)
- [3. REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE WORLD ASSEMBLY en](#)

*(See page 2 for our Irish and British contacts for the Assembly.)*

*A long time since Pentecost, but the editor has space to fill!*

## *Pentecost letter to the brothers around the world*

*Posted on 18/5/2024 by Eric Lozada, International Responsible*

*“Come, Holy Spirit... and renew the face of the earth...”*

*“Come, Holy Spirit, come!... Come, Father of the poor! Come, source of all our store!... O, most blessed Light divine, Shine within these hearts of ours... Heal our wounds, our strength renew; On our dryness pour your dew... Bend the stubborn heart and will; Melt the frozen, warm the chill; Guide the steps that go astray...”  
Amen.*



Dear Brothers,

Greetings of peace and fire in the Spirit!!

How are you? What have been your joys and desolations in the ministry? It is important to take time to name and attend to them for a more balanced and joy-filled ministering. I am holding you close to my heart while I am writing this letter from Galilee Centre in Tagaytay, Philippines while doing Shepherd's Training for vicars for clergy and seminary formators.

I ask: What is the face or what are faces of the earth that we beg the Spirit to come and renew? It may be good for us to stop and take a long look at our fluid world today with the eyes of faith and reason. When we don't do the seeing, we let a very politicized view as the only absolute one. There is a temptation to surrender the view of faith to the reductionist sight of secularism and to abandon reason to the deterministic lens of unbridled materialism. When we invite the Spirit to come, we admit that by ourselves we find it difficult to see, that we are blind in our unredeemed, wounded, frozen, dry and stubborn ways of seeing and understanding. So, as we pray, Come O Holy Spirit, we beg Him to intervene in our lives, to renew our hearts and minds that we may see as He wants us to see so that we may appropriately re-

spond to the realities of our world. The prophetic invitations of Pope Francis to be joyful missionaries of the Gospel, go to the peripheries, to collectively care for Mother Earth, to be brothers and sisters all, are spirit-filled vantage points from which we see and respond to the why's, where's, what's, and how's of our world today in the light of the Gospel.

Many of us are in situations of injustice, poverty, destruction, violence, migration, minority and it is a bit myopic to see the world from a pessimistic, helpless lens. Or some of us may be in situations of better opportunities, abundance, power, privilege, honor and the temptation is to look at the world from the lens of an indifferent bystander. I feel that it is important for us, after we clarified our identity in Cebu in 2019 that we are missionary disciples of Jesus of Nazareth inspired by the footsteps of Brother Charles, that we specifically ask the Spirit to resurrect us from the tombs of comfort, narcissism, indifference, clericalism, entitlement and rekindle hearts of simplicity, tenderness, fraternal concern, generosity so that we become authentic agents of the Spirit for the transformation of our world right where are placed. We also dream



together to be builders and forgers of fraternity which is the theme of our next world assembly.

In our practice of the spiritual means of daily adoration, daily meditation of the Gospel, monthly desert day and monthly fraternal meeting along with the spirituality of Nazareth simplicity, we may not be very consistent but we continue to be inspired by our aging brothers who have been witnessing the life. Touched by the Spirit, our poverty is also our strength. In the spiritual path, numbers and age do not matter much but quality of witness, few we may be. Our constant coming back to our spiritual practices train our minds

and mellow our hearts so that our missionary engagements with the world are coming from our closeness to God in Jesus of Nazareth and our formative encounters with the poor, one person at a time. When Pope Francis has invited us to be surprised by the Spirit in our walking together and in our listening to one another in this synodal church, the process has become the message. When we dream together for a more peaceful and fraternal world, we commit ourselves to peaceful and fraternal processes at all levels and in all faces. For there could be no peace from violence and there could be no peace in communities when persons have bitter and unreconciled hearts. It was Mahatma Gandhi who said that peace is the weapon of the strong while violence is the weapon of the weak. Violence is the weapon of those who mask their fears, insecurities, envy, helplessness with armors that threaten the lives of every human being, including that of Mother Earth. So, we pray with conviction, Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, renew our strength, bend our stubborn heart and will, guide the steps that go astray.

May the intercession of our big Brother, St Charles de Foucauld, strengthen our resolve to be missionary disciples of the risen Christ and forgers of fraternity in our very volatile world. Please pray for me your little brother as I continue to hold you close to my heart in prayer.

Your servant-brother,  
Eric LOZADA, international responsible  
+



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

*A further tribute to my friend **George Hay,**  
14th November 1927 - 1st April 2024.  
(From Peter Codd, Portsmouth Diocese.)*

**There is an excellent Obituary on the Plymouth Diocesan website, outlining George's character, background and fruitful ministry as a priest of Plymouth Diocese, including his service as Rector of the Venerabile, in Rome. (Featured in the June "Be Brothers." Ed.)**

I knew George as a dear friend, with whom I shared many summer holidays over a period of fifty years, together with Billy Steele and Cuthbert Rand. George and Billy were both loyal members of Jesus Caritas and through them I became aware of the Fraternity.

George and I met at a Counselling Course at the Grail in 1973. George and Billy met twenty years earlier as seminarians at the Venerabile. Both had finished their university degree courses and completed their compulsory National



Service. They had formed a deep bond of friendship and continued to go on holiday each summer; Billy in Leeds Diocese, early on posted as Dogma professor at Ushaw and George in Plymouth Diocese, soon appointed Priest in Charge of Crediton Parish and Catholic Chaplain to Exeter University.

Billy met Cuthbert at Ushaw. They shared interests in outdoor pursuits and railways. George enjoyed the outdoor and fly fishing. I, too, enjoyed the outdoor and anything to do with water. So George and Billy agreed between them to invite Cuthbert and me to join them for a summer holiday, camping in Scotland. We continued to do this annually until I went to Africa. I re-joined them during my home visit after three years and when I returned permanently to Portsmouth Diocese, by which time they had started hiring a holiday cottage each summer, instead of camping!

Sometimes, after celebrating Mass and Divine Office together, we would split up in twos for the day and joined up in the evening. Other days we would go somewhere as a foursome, either trekking, including mountain paths, or go to visit some local attraction. It is hard to put into words how joyful and refreshing those holidays were. We got on well together, but George was the one who took the lead in forging the bonds that made it endure over the years. George had great wisdom, but a lovely gentleness about him, that so many people will acknowledge. But, sharing summer holidays and many other shorter get-togethers was a special experience, I shall treasure. I thank God for the gift of friendship and the many friends. George is one of those most special friends. May he rest in peace and may we all meet merrily in heaven, by the mercy of God. +

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

## *Eric Lozada, our International Responsible, writes on 23rd October from his National Assembly in Tagum, Philippines.*

*(One of various letters available on the Jesus Caritas international website, <https://www.iesuscaritas.org/en> )*



*“I shall complete the journey... Do not be afraid. On the journey outward all will be well; on the journey back, all will be well; the road is safe.” Tobit 5,16*

Dear Brothers:

Warm greetings from Tagum!!!

Travelling from several parts of the country, we are 17 brothers and a little sister gathered for our national assembly at Bishop Joseph Regan Spirituality Center, La Filipina, Tagum City, Philippines. The journey coming in was specifically challenging for our brothers from the prelature of Marawi who have travelled the whole day by land negotiating dangerous cliffs and roads under construction. Their presence, however was truly inspiring especially because after the 2017 siege, they continue to live as nomads, pitching their tents at the neighbouring Iligan diocese and Marawi is still in shambles. Displaced but never disconcerted, they thrive in a climate of uncertainty made worse by political manipulation and religious extremism. The spirituality of Nazareth and fraternal solidarity both amongst themselves and with the people has sustained them. Their situation is ameliorated with the coming of some religious priests determined to do mission there. Together with their bishop, they come in full force. Little Sister Cecilia Grace helps us see the connection between the fraternity's beginnings and Marawi. The late Bishop Benny Tuftud, then bishop of Marawi invited Little Sister Madeleine in the early 1970's. Up until now, the prelature has been the nexus of Muslim-Christian dialogue in the Philippines. The presence of Jimmy, a newly ordained deacon is a seed of hope to the fraternity of aging and weakening membership.



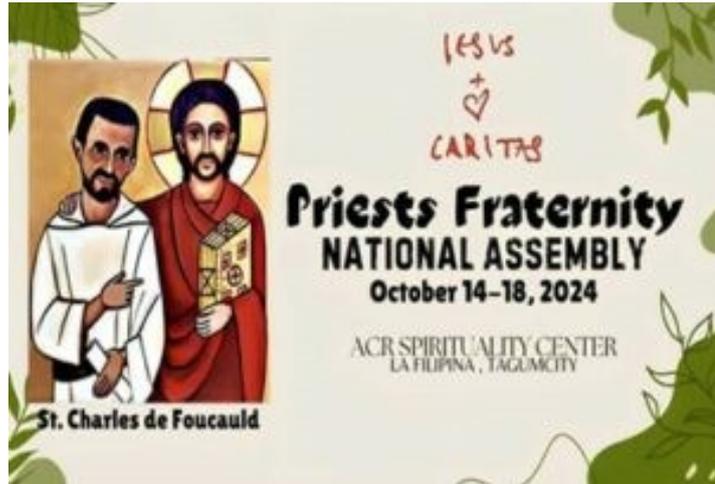
### *The beauty of the place*

Bishop Joseph Regan Centre is managed by Ancillae Christi Regis (ACR) Sisters. This local congregation of sisters which was founded by the late Bishop Reagan in 1989, the first bishop of the diocese of Tagum owns this 2-hectared centre, seated on a hill and a meadow with newly built facilities which could accommodate close to a hundred retreatants. The beauty of the scenic view from its veranda is equalled by the routine exercise of climbing up and down stairs between our sleeping quarters and our gathering place. We are welcomed in the evening of the first day with a very heavy downpour. Mother Earth is calling us to appreciate the lush greenery of the place and the abundance of fresh water. The warm hospitality of the sisters and the first-class cooking of Sr Mabel (with special treat of freshly picked vegetables and herbs from the garden) make our stay truly refreshing and restful.

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

*The rhythm and substance of the assembly*

After the personal introductions, little sister Cecilia shared with us little sister Cathy’s presentation on “**For A Synodal Church of Communion, Participation and Mission: Looking at episodes in the life of Little Brother Charles of Jesus: Shedding light on our Synodal process.**” The presentation empowers us to see the rich mutuality between the soul journey of Brother Charles and the synodal processes of a synodal church. We hold the same spirit in the afternoon as we appropriate and share in small groups our review of life in terms of identifying companions and guides in the understanding of our vocation and mission in the church and re-



calling moments of listening, speaking out, celebrating, discerning and forming. Bishop Edwin in his homily at Mass exhorts us to a level of affective solidarity in their ministry of encountering and befriending the Muslims in Marawi. At the heart of our assembly is a day in the desert. This day of prolonged solitude and intimacy with God is prepared in the evening with a personal vigil at the feet of the Beloved. During our evening Eucharist, we share our desert experiences in the intimacy of the triad. From the day in the desert, we take on the path of looking intently on the essentials of the Spirituality. Both in seeing together and in listening to one another guided by the directory, some emerging concerns surface: that the Month of Nazareth is not anymore a “conditio sine qua non” for members yet it is strongly encouraged; that regularity in the practice of the spiritual means, correspondence with members and attendance to monthly meetings for a year qualifies one to be a regular member; incorporation of the spirituality into the basic ecclesial communities’ practice and spirituality; introduction of the spirituality to the seminaries. We hear concrete realities and practical concerns during the business meeting: that the local fraternities need rekindling and animation through visitation; that the pioneering experiment of doing the Month of Nazareth in Marawi needs further discernment and planning; that the novena to St Charles de Foucauld prepared by the Kapatiran will soon be available; that the next national assembly will be in Palo, Leyte on July 21-25, 2025. Our fraternity night was graced by the presence of Bishop Medel of Tagum.

“Go on your way; behold I am sending you like lambs among wolves...” was the Gospel exhortation during our final Eucharist. We head home filled with new insights and renewed spirit.

“The harvest is abundant but the labourers are few...” We commit to continue the journey with revived sense of co-responsibility and collaboration trusting on the Spirit who is always ahead.  
+



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

# Fraternity

Notes by Peter Coxe (member of the British Regional Team)

## John Donne reminds us that no human is an island, but what does this mean?

I'm struck by the number of funerals where mourners choose *Isaiah 24 – NRSV v.6* “*On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.*” The prophet offered this vision in contrast to the devastation of the Holy Land. Many mourners may be thinking sadly of never seeing loved ones again at the more luxurious kind of celebrations they may remember from the past, only to feel the future gap left at the table whenever family & friends eat together.

I try to imagine the young Charles de Foucauld inviting acquaintances & friends to lavish parties. What was going on in his heart? I believe his motive lay far deeper than showing off his wealth. Despite frequent socialising, I guess he felt lonely, isolated & disconnected. Hence repeated desperate attempts to find friendships deeper than (quote) “*Having a good time*” (unquote) with friends and acquaintances.

Ironically, he starts to find a deeper sense of connection as he risks his life to map out Morocco, chooses a travel companion from another culture & learns from the great respect shown by Muslims towards their religious commitments. An almost solitary expedition engendering deeper connection with self/others! As Charles develops fascination for the desert, I guess he may be picking up vibes from what some people today call “God of the great outdoors.” I picture the Hound of Heaven approaching him from 2 sides through creation’s beauty & the sense of the divine laid bare in Islamic culture.

Charles hasn’t yet found what he seeks, but his yearning’s been awakened.

Another major step forward is meeting Abbé Huvelin in a confessional. He thinks he’s having a solitary intellectual struggle, but wise Huvelin intuits that Charles needs to get honest about his shortcomings & talk about them. This enables Charles to find a much deeper connection with God, which will necessarily lead to a far closer fellowship with other humans.

Various positive apparent coincidences during my undergraduate years led me to realise I might have a priestly vocation, which I should at least tentatively check out, just in case it was genuine. This led in due course to six fulfilling years in seminary, where it became increasingly clear I was on the right track. Like Charles de Foucauld on his many new projects, I went joyfully into my 1<sup>st</sup> curate placement, only to find after a few years the cap didn’t fit. The same happened in my 2<sup>nd</sup> placement, ending in a breakdown & a year’s residential treatment in the lovely setting of Angmering, W Sussex, but no full diagnosis.

Over time there, I developed some sense of fraternity with fellow residents as together we shared insights from psychology, a subject I found fascinating. Despite the helpfulness of that year, on many of the subsequent specialised ministry appointments that followed, I often floundered, if not founded. The main exceptions were 2 periods in seminary environments where I studied a 2-year licentiate & took on 7 years as academic tutor.

As the need dawns on him to give his whole life to God, Charles’ relationship with everybody & everything else will change forever. Charles now has to face the question of “How?” He tries out a number of solitary & community vocations. A cap may seem to fit for a few

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

years, but sooner or later he feels like a square peg in a round hole. Each time he re-ponds to grace even more generously, he comes closer to the sense of fraternity he seeks, & yet it's elusive, like the music of an unfinished symphony never reaching perfect resolution. Paradoxically, his seemingly totally senseless death at the hands of a nervous teenage guard shows in spades the meaning of his life: Laying down his life for his friends, & indeed for his enemies too. Charles finds the goal of fraternity not by excess wining & dining with friends, but by pouring out his life: as if emptying a bottle to the dregs & allowing it to be strained by all the apparent obstacles of life that seem to thwart his aspirations. Isaiah's prophecy of "*a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear*" is fulfilled for him in such an unexpected way. I reflect on my own unfinished personal journey towards fraternity. My first 52 years of life with an undiagnosed autistic condition often left me feeling a deficit of fraternity as I struggled to fit into so-called "normal" society. There were exceptions to this: In 6<sup>th</sup> form & university, life seemed to make more sense. My mathematical & scientific study & love of music together with the cradle Catholic faith which I never lost provided some sense of order and harmony to my life. My social clumsiness felt a bit less problematic. Maybe I was in my natural element, as was Charles while mapping Morocco or retreating in Assekrem.

Regular table fellowship was certainly a major factor enhancing my mental & spiritual wellbeing as I listened to the life journeys of students, staff & visitors & I believe I had useful insights of mine to share. I imagine Charles de Foucauld giving great solace to stressed French officers, the starving Tuaregs, passers-by & many more. I was struck by his "rule of life" which, though unachievable, involved alternate long periods of time alone for prayer & dictionary work & long hours of open-house availability to the constant stream of people wanting to see him.

While for me a seminary environment made it relatively easy for a balance between prayer, study & contact time, parish ministry is far more erratic & less predictable, which can make the sense of fraternity far more fragmented when colleagues with unsynchronised busy schedules pass like ships in the night. The seminary was repurposed, no longer needing a full-time academic tutor. The less structured diocesan role assigned to me took its toll on my mental health & I was diagnosed with an autistic condition plus anxiety & depression & I was recommended 6 months of residential treatment, where again I felt a stronger sense of fellowship.

I think of Charles de Foucauld during the famine at Tamanrasset falling ill. Thanks to the fraternity of the Tuaregs over-generous with their precious goat milk, he revived & discovered how important it is to receive love as well as give love. This is perhaps one of the deepest types of poverty & fraternity. We need to avoid extremes of being self-contained or over-dependent, balancing better as we progress in loving God, neighbour & self more healthily, in a spirit of sound self-identity and mutual interdependence.

I guess that, if Charles had been watched by a psychologist, he would at times have been diagnosed as depressed. Like me, some of us in this room may have known depression from the inside. Most, if not all of us, have been able to empathise with someone sharing openly about their experience of this. As depression is so common in our society & one of its known antidotes is to foster a healthy sense of connection, Charles de Foucauld has much to offer by way of how he lived fraternity & wrote about it. This can take us beyond treating Jesus



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

Caritas as a mere social support group or aid to prayer.

Over the years, I've sometimes facilitated the singing of office hymns. There's only one office hymn that several clergy told me they don't use. I beg to differ! It comes tomorrow & goes like this:

*“Alone with none but thee, my God, I journey on my way.  
What need I fear, when thou art near, O King of night & day?  
More safe am I within thy hand, Than if a host did round me stand.  
My destined time is fixed by thee, & death doth know his hour.  
Did warriors strong around me throng, They could not stay his power;  
No walls of stone can man defend When thou thy messenger dost send.  
My life I yield to thy decree, & bow to thy control In peaceful calm,  
for from thine arm No power can wrest my soul.  
Could earthly omens e'er appal A man that heeds the heavenly call!  
The child of God can fear no ill, His chosen dread no foe;  
We leave our fate with thee, & wait Thy bidding when to go.  
'Tis not from chance our comfort springs, Thou art our trust, O King of kings.”*

At first sight this this seems to drive a coach and horses through ideas of fraternity and to negate John Donne's no-one being an island, but in fact it brings out a deeper facet of fraternity. John 15's parable of the vine reminds us that the branches are connected to one another through the vine. This leads towards true unity, of which Christian unity is only one part. If we tried to create fraternity from a purely horizontal man-made perspective, we'd end up with wonderful social facilities, halls, community centres & cafés, probably attracting some wealthy benefactors, but our community wouldn't be a Christian church.

At the same time, if our personal relationship with Christ the Vine is genuine, our Eucharistic & other devotion leads us to reach out to neighbour rich & poor, just as Mother Teresa & her Sisters would spend the early morning with Jesus in the Chapel & then meet Him in the street as they served the people. So, while the word “fraternity” sounds nice in principle, it involves the double hard graft of reaching into contemplation of Jesus & reaching out inclusively to the poorest of the poor, whether their poverty be spiritual, material or both. At many times in either or in both of these tasks, we may feel alone, as did Jesus in Gethsemane, but this is part of the cost of discipleship.

I offer a few snippets from Ali MERAD, *Christian Hermit in an Islamic World*. As “universal brother” he entered into their concerns, laughed and played with the children, cared for the sick and the poor and dispensed simple hospitality to a constant stream of visitors. The “Universal Brother” displayed great zeal in the service of the Saharans who came to see him, or whom he met in the course of his rounds through the oases and ksour of Saura, Touat and Guerara, or through Tidikelt and the Hoggar. He devoted himself to alleviating poverty and disease by distributing food and giving freely of his care and remedies.

The numerous biographies of the Universal Brother record this ardent life: of a man of prayer, a scholar and an indefatigable traveller through the boundless desert where he chose to carry out his apostolate. ... the “Christian marabout” appeared primarily in the guise of a Frenchman, and not some lone Frenchman, lost as it were in the Muslim majority, but a Frenchman surrounded, honoured and respected by military officials. The ambiguity and the risk of confusion were real, and Charles de Foucauld was aware of it. Hence his fear of seeing Muslims view all Europeans and Frenchmen with the same mistrust: “Will they know how to distinguish between soldiers and priests,” he asked, “to see us as servants of God, envoys of peace, universal brothers?” (ECR.SPIR., p. 252).

And one piece from Little Sister Kathy, *The Universal Brother*, who ends her chapter, “*The Universal Brother*” as follows: ‘*The*

*Concluded on page 17.*

## Among e.mails received by the editor

**From:** Little Sister Emiko  
**Sent:** 22 June 2024  
**Subject:** Thanks

Dear Fr. Bob

We received BE BROTHERS No.32

Thank you for your service. We have a little group called FRIENDS OF BR. CHARLES. They get together here at Hackney once a month to deepen their friendship with each other and with Br. Charles. Please pray for them.

I am OK to put my email on the Nov. edition to pray for Friends of Br. Charles. Your photo is very nice with rainbow, you looks like St Patrick. (! Ed.)

L.Sr Emiko

**From:** Xavier Chevillard  
**Sent:** 24 June 2024  
**Subject:** News from the Little Brothers of Jesus

Dear Bob,

Thanking you for the Be Brothers magazine; which makes me realise that I missed you from the sharing last week. Apologies for that.

Happy feast of St John the Baptist,

Xavier (*Lille, France.*)

On Mon, May 27, 2024 Donald Stoker wrote to the Irish Regional Responsible as below (*see follow-up overleaf:*)

Dear Niall,

I felt very moved by Gerry Reynold's account of the birth of the Fraternity in Ireland ("*Be Brothers "June.*") A half century has elapsed since that visit to Dublin but the impression it left on me remains indelible: as you say over there - 'it was moity!'

In reality, the ground had already been prepared by the witness of the Little Sisters in Labre Park. Also dear Charles Walker, visiting Chaplain to the YCW had recognised the opportunity of my travelling to share Br Charles' message with interested clergy in Dublin. In the event I found myself welcomed by a remarkable bunch of men including Gerry Reynolds and Peter Lemass who showed me around Dublin: the Little Sisters, the Forty Foot, an old people's Home, the Kiltegan Fathers, and finishing most memorably with Charlie a brother priest who wasn't well but cheered up enormously when demonstrating how to break in the horse he kept in an adjoining field. For a city boy like me it was a fascinating hour. I took my leave feeling I'd learned what

*E.mails continued overleaf*

*E-mails continued from overleaf*

was meant by the 'craic'. But what stood out most in that brief visit was openness and hunger to know more. Gerry himself summed it up well in his words to Peter: *'If you try - I'll try'*. Praise the Lord for them both!

Don.

From: Niall Ahern  
 Date: Mon, 27 May 2024  
 Subject: Re: Seeds of the Fraternity in Ireland (cf. *June 2024 "Be Brothers"*)  
 To: Donald Stoker

Beautiful story Donald - and two beautiful men . I was blessed to have known them both and we live on their blessed legacy. Perhaps some of the brothers might join us for our annual JESUS CARITAS national gathering in Sligo on September 1 next...please spread the word as we spread the welcome.

Peace be with you - FRATEERNALLY - NIALL

**From:** Kathy Mckee <lsjkathy@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** 16 November 2023  
**Subject:** RE: "Be Brothers" November 2023:

Hi Bob,

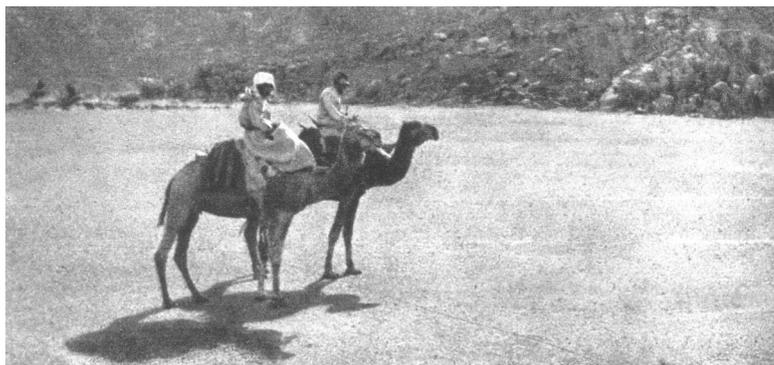
Thanks for sending us our copy of Be Brothers. I really appreciate your dedication. Too bad you're so far away.

We're in the process of getting our annual little magazine published. There's a company here in Fakenham that do quite a good job. Fr Tom Trahern asked me to do 2 days on Br Charles for the priests of the Brighton and Arundel diocese next year. I think that's around Gatwick! I've just done my time in airports since I went for 5 weeks to Rome for our Chapter. I was a translator. Afterwards I had a week in the little brothers' hermitage in Spello. Lovely! Then I went to Canada for 2 weeks to see my family.

Am now back in Walsingham...quite happy to be back really.

We have an Indian little sister with us for 2 years. She's working at the Shrine welcoming pilgrims. So many of them are Asian. She's a great presence...and great in the house as well.

Lots of love from the 4 of us. Your little sister Kathy.



*Fraternity, continued from page 14*

*universal little brother, like his universal elder Brother, had his feet firmly planted in the real world, with all that that implies.” Jacques Maritain, who became a little brother towards the end of his life, wrote: “You cannot touch human flesh without soiling your fingers. But soiling your fingers is not the same thing as soiling your heart.” (Humanisme Intégrale, Paris: Éditions Montaigne, 1968, p.252)*

I would like to finish by saying that if I soil my fingers, once I notice they're dirty, I can wash my hands. If I soil my heart, I'm likely to wallow in my inadequacy and shame for a long time and need to be rescued by the universal elder Brother. Like Brother Charles, I find the walk to the confessional leads towards the destination of universal fraternity. I still have far to go!

For personal reflection I suggest a look at

- Isaiah 24 on the banquet
- John Chapters 15 to 17
- Luke's version of the agony in the garden,
- *Presbyterorum ordinis nn. 7-9, especially n. 8,*
- Some of the literature on Charles de Foucauld
- *Fratelli tutti*
- and/or a fresh review of life

Heart > hands. Hence fraternity > nice meals together.

Potential positive function of psychological conditions: even anxiety/depression. +

## *Nazareth in hospital* Bob Rainbow reflects on recent experience

***We hear so much about the selfishness, greed and violence of this world these days. But, by contrast, if evangelical poverty and humility are prime parts of the concept of “Nazareth” that so captivated Charles de Foucauld, then surely these are found in plentitude when in hospital.***

I managed to fall, backwards, down 3 feet on July 3<sup>rd</sup> (how is another story!) fractured part of my pelvis and was unable to put any weight on my right leg. So as I start to write 5 days later from my bedside chair in the orthopaedic ward of our local general hospital, I am able to watch humanity in a very different environment to usual.

First off must be the attention that the nursing staff and doctors offer; absolute lessons in pastoral concern, patience and help with, apparently, no justified request too much trouble. And, with contemporary NHS staffing levels, these are very busy people. I witness to having received nothing but the best of genuine care and patience, not least from the physiotherapist who has just assisted me, with crutches, in *very* slowly conquering a whole flight of stairs!

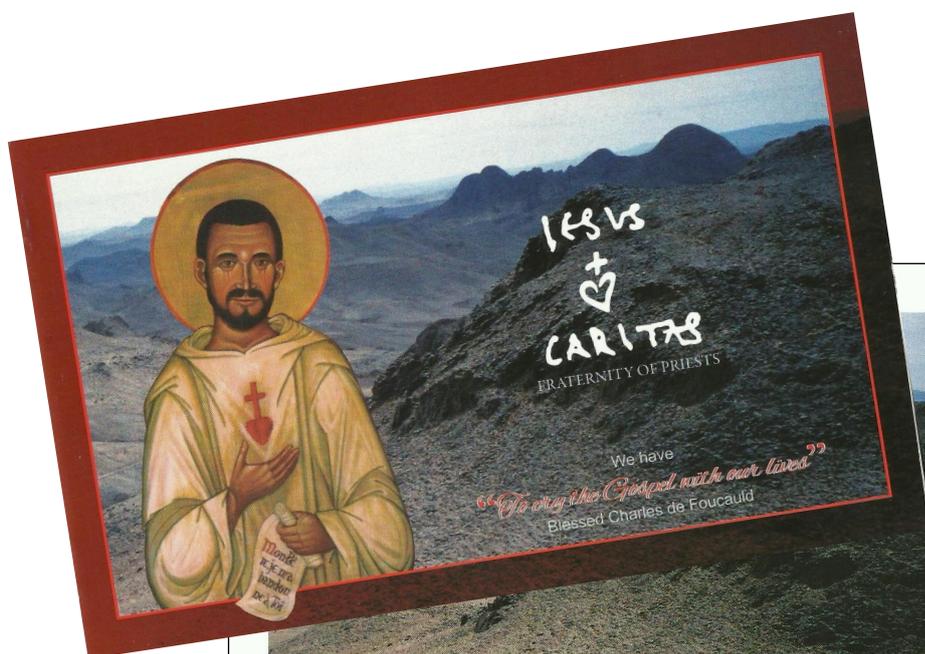
But there is Br. Charles' concept of poverty, too. Even forgetting those times of physical suffering that accidents or operations may entail, there is poverty in the daily life of the ward round. I was trying to say Evening Prayer a little earlier and had to make FIVE starts on the magnificat, such was the pace of injections, food menus to fill, drug administration, blood pressure tests, meal deliveries, etc. without even mentioning the consultants' ward rounds! One would love to be able to pray well at this time, but has to accept that prayer will be peremptory snatches rather than deep contemplation! So, for now, it may be just in tranquillity of soul that one must offer up the experience as best as one can.

Finally, as I now work through the remainder of an 8-week convalesce at my widower brother's house, it is here again that I experience Nazareth, in having to be a child served with meals and such other personal help as I may need, and being extremely curtailed in how far I can hobble, or in what of my normal activities I can achieve for now. But it could have been SO much worse- just 2 inches from smashing my head. Must be much more careful in future, but God *is* good! +

## Jesus Caritas British Accounts 2023

*(As provided by John Nolan, British Regional Treasurer)*

Inflows	£	£
Nympsfield Retreat Jan 2023	£170.00	
Nympsfield Retreat Jan 2024	£330.00	Monies in advance
Subscriptions	£1,510.00	
<b>Total inflows</b>		<b>£2,010.00</b>
Outflows		
LSOJ for annual mag	£-	
Nympsfield Summer 2023	£550.00	
Nympsfield Team meeting	£390.00	
Printing and postage	£478.77	
Responsibles Meeting: Westminster	£100.00	
Retreat subsidies	£650.00	JC to Annecy
Travel	£108.64	
Website	£242.99	
<b>Total outflows</b>		<b>£2,520.40</b>
<b>BALANCE</b>		<b>-£510.40</b>



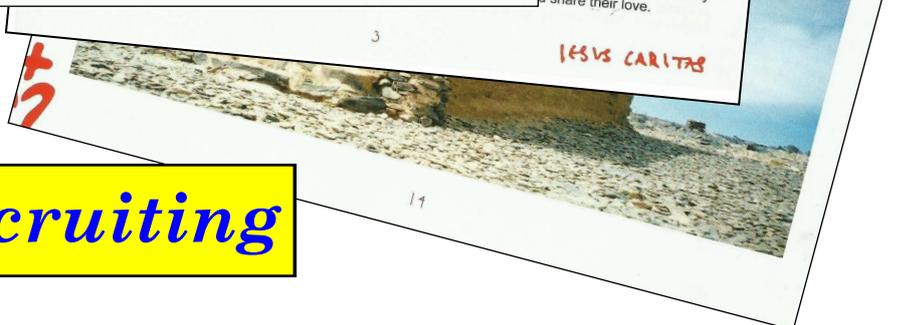
Reprinted for a second time is the late Fr. Tony Philpot's excellent description of the origins and ethos of Jesus Caritas.

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

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

... the Little Brothers and Jesus. They stand out from philosophy. Yes, they are living long periods of silent Eucharist. But among the poorest and poorest of society, avoiding any little, simply being at the bottom of the world, they do not preach: they share their love.

mountains (Algeria)



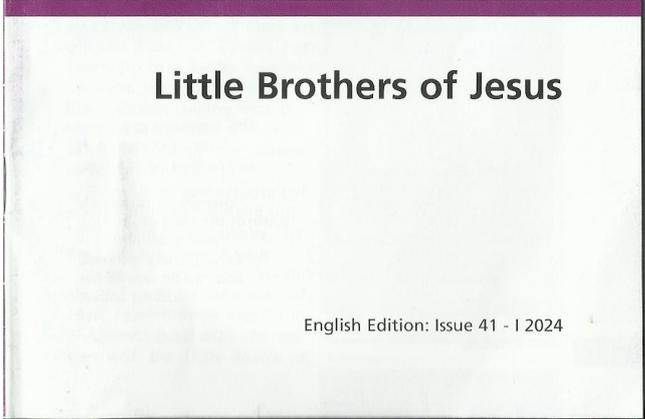
For your recruiting

# Publications received

*The Little Brothers magazine and the Little Sisters' "News Notes"* are now received and passed on electronically to all British fraternities (and any others who ask the "Be Bros." editor.) Much inspirational reading therein! +

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF THE LAY FRATERNITIES OF CHARLES DE FOUCAULD N° 109 – June 2024  
 -has been received via e.mail from Moira Potier <moiradelamorandiere@gmail.com > containing:

- \* Editorial 3
- \* Dear friends of the Fraternity Lay Charles de Foucauld 4
- \* I need the eyes of others 6
- \* The fraternities of the world gather in Canada 8
- \* News from the Fraternities 11
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  - \* The Arab World 26
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- \* Subscriptions 42
- \* Prayer to the Holy Family of Nazareth 43



# Treasurers' appeal:

Pleaser remember that our individual annual subscriptions become due on 1st January; see details for making payment on the lower rear page.



*These not only cover "Be Brothers," but assist in the running of the Regional teams' work, with a proportion going to the European Team and on to the International Team, and through them some helps fraternities struggling in impoverished lands. Our contributions help to hold the whole worldwide Jesus Caritas organisation in fraternity. Should there be any problem in paying, note that offerings of any amount are appreciated.* +

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

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



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**Requested subscriptions are Britain £30, Ireland 50E per person, each Jan. 1st.**

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:

**BRITAIN, Nat. West Bank:** 60-19-14 a/c: 34455906 BIC: NWBKGB2L

IBAN: GB16NWBK60191434455906. (Tell John Nolan whom the credit was made for.)

**IRELAND:** IBAN: IE16 AIBK 9331 0417 8720 00 (BOC: AIBKIE2D)

+

**Website for the GB fraternities:** <https://www.jesus Caritaspriests.org.uk>