



Be Brothers!

Britain & Ireland.

- *Editorial*
- *Fraternity news*
- *British Summer retreat*
- *God on a desert day*
- *Called by my name*
- *Link with Ls. Magdeleine*
- *St Charles de Foucauld*
- *International Responsible*
- *Ian Latham, deathbed*
- *E-mails received*
- *Irish national retreat*
- *Your recruiting*
- *Publications received*
- *Reminders (rear page.)*

**Jesus Caritas
Fraternity
of Priests**

New series 35
November 2025



Monument Charles de Foucauld Photo by Rabanus Flavus (See page 10)

Editorial

I really must stop apologising for getting “Be Brothers” out late!

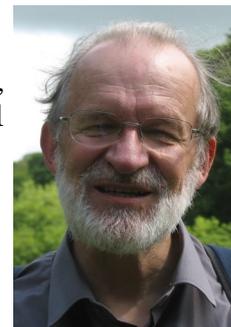
The problem with retirement is that, thinking one has all the time in the world, one may say “yes” rather too often! Thus a busy Autumn supply round, coupled with medical and many other activities, are my excuses.

But there’s another problem for “Be Brothers,” too, in that the editorial cupboard is nowadays so bare that I have to fill spare pages with extracts from the many stories around the world that get posted on our International Website. Yet following Cathal Price’s remarkable testimony in the last issue, I do commend to you Lit. Bro. Ian Latham’s deathbed message on page 12 of this issue; would we could get more tales of this quality!

PLEASE, see if you can pen even a single paragraph, perhaps on how you fraternity fares; you will be surprised how interesting it can be to learn how others, in different circumstances, survive. And a particular appeal to our Irish brothers to do that; not hearing from them very often!

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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 British ‘Regional’ Team* has not met since the Summer retreat owing to the delay in our new regional (national) responsible being able to take up his post. They hope to meet electronically on 12th November.
- *The British post Christmas mini retreat* is over 13-15th January at the Bernardine monastery at Brownhill, near Stroud. Gloucestershire. Our speaker will be Fr John Inglis (Arundel & Brighton Diocese.) Details from Barnabas Page, barnabas.page@gmail.com
- *The Irish National Retreat took place at Mullaghmore in Sligo* / Sunday August 31 to Thursday September 4 2025. (See page 17.)
- *Two brothers are acting as Irish agents for “Be Brothers,”* forwarding material for publication to the editor. Liam O’Cuiv’s and Alan Geoghegan’s details on the rear page.
- *Note that each “Be Brothers” can be viewed on the international website:* <http://www.iesuscaritas.org/en> soon after publication.
- *Clifton (Britain) fraternity brother Matt Ancombe* has started working for the missionary Society of St. James in the Diocese of Huánuco in central Perú. (See e.mail & pics page 15.)
- *Apology that the weblink in Joe Deegan’s meditation* on page 16 of our June “Be Brothers” came out truncated; see: <https://www.iesuscaritas.org/en/documentos/propuesta-de-revision-de-vida-cuaresma-2025-aurelio-sanz-baeza/>
- *PRESS DATE for the June 2026 “Be Brothers” is 1st April for full articles; snippets accepted till April.15th.* Contributions from British & Irish local fraternities very welcome.



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The bi-annual British Summer retreat

*At the Marist Convent in the Cotswold village of Nymphsfield,
7-11th July, with input by Lit. Sr. Kathy McKee*

Some Random notes by Bob Rainbow

(Fuller ones available from Peter Coxe on application)

1st talk, Mon. evening: Ls Magdeleine (Founder of the Little Sisters.)

Kathy is Canadian but at home in GB. Had 10 years of Formation in Birmingham and worked at an injection moulding factory and then at a hotel.



There is a lot more in Ls Magdeleine about Br. Charles de Foucauld than may be realised. She died in 1989. Kathy met her when a novice. LsM spoke of Br. Charles as if she really knew him. One can get to know him after he died by what he did, etc. LsM adapts him to a different, post 1918 world.

Br. C. was a 'little brother' in the house of Nazareth, in the least of the least places. But for LsM, Bethlehem is where Jesus 'went down' originally. A different dimension of 'littleness.' She adds a feminine touch to Charles, who was a pioneer, radical. He was very demanding of himself, although in community one does have to toe the line somewhat.

WWI changed the world, so LsM is different to Br. C. (eg. his colonialism was never questioned.) Not so in LsM; treat others as on one's own level and not be paternalistic. Br. C matures as he goes on, learning from mistakes.

The sisters' Foundation was made in 1939 and had 10 years development. Fidelity means being open to changes. The Holy Family needs to be open to the world. Be human and Christian before being religious. The Eucharistic presence of Jesus has to inhabit one. There are all different groupings; tribes, military groups, etc. but Br. C. wanted to be a *universal* little brother.

LsM selected from Br. C's 1000's of writings to form our Prayer of Abandonment.

Born in 1898 (Br. C. was just into Nazareth at that time) and in Paris (but connected to Lorraine where the family roots were) she was the youngest of 6; a religious family. Her brothers were killed in WWI,



1952, Tibet

and Spanish 'flu killed her sisters. It affected her. She is 23 when she reads the life of Brother Charles. Her father dies when she was 27. She became a headmistress. In her work, she spread Christ to the workers, trying to be one of those who work, thus imitating Christ.

Right from the start, there was no apostolate; just living with the people; 'All things are possible for those who believe.' In reading Charles' life, she saw him as a living Gospel; coming back to the source.



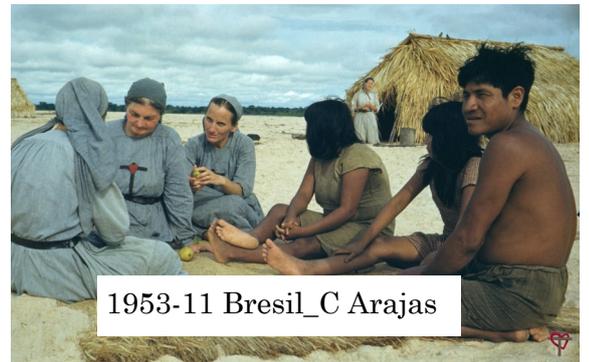
(Picture by Jude Iroh MSP)

2nd talk, Tues. morning: *Ls.Madeleine's early period:*

At 38, she gains osteo-arthritis in her shoulder and doctors recommend leaving Nantes' damp climate. So she goes to Algeria with her mother, Anne, but has no idea what for. *"God will take you by the hand, and obediently I followed."* The whole foundation rests on these words.

Br.C. tried to set up a '*Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*' At Boghari Fr. Leclerc was energised by these words and LsM met him. She lives in an Arab district of the town and sets up a sewing group and soup kitchens. She goes to visit the nomads on long desert walks. She had thoughts about a confraternity. Then, a dream of Our Lady with the infant Jesus and *"Mary gave the child to me; Jesus as all purity and love and we fused together."* The infant Jesus becomes her constant companion, given to her to pass on to the Little Sisters. (*See illustration, p. 17.*) She only ever told this to Fr. Voillaume. Like the shepherds going to Bethlehem, we have to make a first step. God comes to us *as we are*. Excessive concentration on one's own sins can be a block. There needs to be a concentration on God who became so little. Cf. Pope Francis on tenderness. In spiritual abandonment God abandons himself into our hands; and we need to reciprocate in trust. This is the opening gift as LsM starts in Algeria in a whirlwind of activity.

She goes to El Golea where Charles is buried and meets Fr. Voillaume, who has already started the Little Brothers according to Charles' Rule; monastic. A meeting of LsM's spirit of 'out to all' and of Br.C's monastic way will form the new community. The bishop organises for the sisters to provide a year of novitiate. They go to exceptional lengths to help people, and one of those comes to say, *"You love us and are one with us."* A constitution is written for her community, starting with quotes from Br. C. The community is founded on 8th Sept. 1939 (just a few days after WWII starts) and they are given a building in Tobourk oasis.



3rd talk, Tues. evening: *Building Toughourt together, and how she educated her first converts:*

It was a derelict house covered in Sahara sand on the outskirts of the town. A statue of baby Jesus, with broken arms, was found and set up; it is still there now. A wounded Christ, linked to the cross. She hires local youth and nomad children. She enjoys so many different people helping and will work *with them and so build relationships*. She was somewhat frightened of the Little Sisters of the Gospel who do not understand the natives and fail to lift them up. She wrote later on how happy the children were to help; it was *not 'child labour' as we see it! They knew she loved them*. LsM became more aware of just how hard the life of the poor can be.

The first postulants come in 1940, but are worked too hard and leave. She returns to France for funds while her mother, Anne, stays on in a congregation. Fr. Rene Voillaume speaks of *"the second call"* that comes at a low point. LsM plans to make a film and show it to raise funds and vocations. She emphasises that people have dignity; important in a war. She always refers to 'Jesus,' and not 'Our Lord,' etc. Between arriving in August and December she gains 5 candidates and is to open a novitiate in Lyon, while she is on the road for funds. The 'Prayer of Abandonment' is made here to hold the group together. It is said in the morning, whereas the Ls' now say it in the evenings. She speaks in churches, cafes, bars, etc; gaining confidence.

There is need for them to have their own formation house so they can acclimatise to Algeria and prays for this in confidence, and the archbishop offers her a house! (near Toubruk.)

She saw that friendships can cross national and cultural boundaries. The success was the fruit of *encounters* – she saw everyone as co-workers (eg. The Syrophenician woman in the Gospel, with each of them remaining who they are, yet her child gains its healing.

Toubruk is the cradle of the community, and she forms her sisters by correspondence. Be human and Christian before being religious; able to mix with people. She wants to pass on the idea of human holiness; NO self gratification, love that is selfless. She is updating Charles for a world that has changed. There is a risk of religious being mired in formality, whereas she wants to be open; building friendships, go to the cinema, etc. The more human one is, the more religious one can be. Jesus fully with people, and a model for them. No timidity, fearless, 'virile!' Don't fit everyone into your mould; Jesus is the model. A Jesuit in publication said that some say this system is wonderful, while others say it will ruin seminary life, etc!

(Weds. was a Desert Day, see the foot of page 6)

4th talk, Thurs. morning: *Fraternity.*

She was back to Toughourt in 1942. The novitiate for the Little Sisters is to be run by themselves. Learning Arabic was important. Louis Massignon (Br. C's novice who left) helps.

LsM's remarkable attitude to German soldiers who killed her sisters: 'Love enemies' and prayed for them. It allows her to look at their faces. One time she was threatened with death at a checkpoint, although they later apologised and allowed the use of military transport to Algeria and Rome. She writes to Voillaume that Br. C. is LIFE; so his writings are less important than what he actually did; that matters.

She wants to make an establishment in Rome so she is not perceived as a 'foreign' congregation. She wants them to be 'little sisters of no account,' promoting 'spiritual childhood' (though this is not to mean suffering being crushed.) She sees the Pope and leaves her constitution with him. She prays to Jesus that 'if we can't be poor, we should not have been born poor.' The sisters are to work, like Charles did. A pastoral aim in view. But contemplative, too, like Nazareth. They are to be ordinary people and contemplating one after another. The Lit. Sr's and Bros. are in formation with Fr. Voillaume at El Abiod (Charles' burial place.)

In the street, LsM gains the insight that they have to be world-wise (like Br.C. in the streets of Nazareth.) The first community work is in a light bulb factory. She wants to found a middle-East community and to be Oriental Rite. In 1949 she hands over to Ls. Jean (an early sister.) Communities of 3 to 4 are started in many poor countries of the world, and she wants vocations from local countries.

Fraternity was at the heart of Br.C's mission. LsM is not happy till she goes to the farthest peoples. The sisters are to live more and more as one of them, and to avoid the illusion that they are the ones who have something to give. Sr.M. wants to tear away all that is French about her.

Andrea Riccardi of the St. Elgiddio; communities without community; weakness as a characteristic of your community. It is no good for Christians to shut themselves up. Cultural change brought about by changing oneself and being outgoing; unlike an environment that needs governors and industrial decisions. The world thirsts for Christians!

5th Talk, Thurs. evening: *Sr.M's camper van in E. Europe* ("Shooting Star.")

After WWII, there are movements for unity world- wide; UN, EEC, etc. LsM wanted to go to Russia; the van means a freedom from surveillance. A little brother is found to drive and act as chaplain, a Br. Roger. The visit to E. Europe goes well, so to try Russia. 2 sisters are trained to drive, and they go to E. Europe each Summer of LsM's life, with the Bl. Sacrament



1972-05 TF etoile filante

aboard. There are problems with the car, and lots of adventures. They carry little gifts to encourage people, and in 1964 she gets a visa for Russia. Relations with the Orthodox are not as strict as they are now, and she arranges to receive HC with them, which meant going to confession first (having a chart of sins in Russian to point to!)

Very quickly candidates for the fraternity come from these Eastern countries, though there are huge cultural changes; including with Vatican II. She had to lie about their identity in some countries. They are there to meet people; a mission of fraternity. The van (outside) and her dress had to be red; the colour of the Sacred Heart as well as of communism.

In 1983, some sisters are expelled from Russia and LsM does not go there again till 1988. She wrote to President Gorbachev about unduly harsh border guards and had a reassuring reply! It shows you CAN talk to them! The Visitation was the model of her visits; LsM bringing the Blessed Sacrament to these countries. What is carried within shines out although it isn't of oneself. The mutual recognition of the Visitation. On these trips the sisters showed little fear. There was an attitude of order and peace in the van.

6^h Talk, Fri. morning: *LsM's trips to Europe from Stalin's death in 1955:*

LsM knew JP II from the Cracow days.

1981 was her last trip, at age 91! She was very frail and had to lie down on the journey. *"The weaker we are, the safer we are with God."* On the way to Rome from Marseilles in 1989 she breaks her hip and is soon dead. Her death allowed to be said what couldn't be said during her life (eg. praise.) She had the gift to see the very best in every person. *"Be leaven in the dough of the world"* (or are just part of the dough.) Kathy had a call from her dad who gave reasons for being a sister.

If there were an extra vow, it would be to die for Islam. She wanted Br. Charles' 'last place,' and gave up being in charge 10 years after the foundation. The daily Prayer of Abandonment and a renewal of vows. To pour out one's blood with Jesus and Charles (blood = life.) Wanted to be allowed martyrdom (like the martyrs.) Came from Bene Abbes with a wounded heart. The world's passions resonate with her because Christ's sufferings were so real for her. Life presents enough sufferings; you don't need to look for any more. *'Have joy when you experience immolation.'*

The Prayer of Abandonment needs to become the core of our lives.

(Sister K. finished with 2 mins. of silent prayer, and we then each chose one line to quote from the Prayer of Abandonment.)



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God reveals himself on a 'desert day' *At the British Summer retreat (Bob Rainbow.)*

Wednesday on the British 2-yearly Jesus Caritas national retreat week is usually a "Day in the Desert;" an opportunity to 'catch God napping' as we scatter across the beautiful local area in search of the Lord who, as we all know, loves to keep hiding!

From the convent retreat house at Nymphsfield village, atop the Cotswold hills, I set out walking Westwards on the lane to the main road. Cresting a rise on this perfect Summer's day, I gain the first vista across the wide Severn vale, over the raised area of the mighty Forest of Dean, to the Welsh hills, with the "volcano-shaped" Sugarloaf prominent on the far horizon (though it



was never a real volcano!) Even at 80, God still has vistas for my life, too.

Walking on, I pass a field of standing wheat and feel compelled to divert to feel an ear of the corn in my hand. Looking up the field's sweep to the horizon, I thank God for his fruitfulness; but I do ask, why cannot the hungry of our world also know this productivity? God doesn't seem to be answering our prayers for Gaza, the Horn of Africa or Ukraine, so I resolve to miss my second daily meal at home (only a sandwich normally!) so as to add fasting to my petitions.

Crossing the main road I am on the Cotswold Way path that runs for 80 miles of the Cotswold escarpment, as it sweeps down to farmland below. And I am soon at Coaly Peak public viewpoint, and standing in front of a Neolithic barrow- a long tomb whose core of very large Cotswold limestone stones have become denuded of their earth cover. I am brought to remember the absolute shortness of life- such a very small window of opportunities opened for each one of us before the baton of caring for the planet passes to so many other generations; I must use my remaining time well.

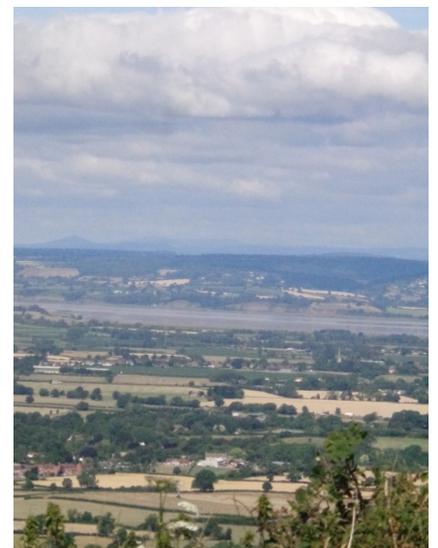
I am now in full woodland and, away from the road, I first notice the silence- there is no wind and all I hear is the occasional call of a bird -possibly a Buzzard- circling above in search of prey. Amid the trees- perhaps 80ft. tall, and rejoicing in the sunlit vista their leaves compete for, I ponder how long it took them to grow; and give God thanks for the peace that enables us to hear His own voice.



After a mile or so of this idyllic walk. I come to Uleybury Hill Fort -taking its name from the village of honey-coloured stone cottages way below, and first find a bench on which to have the very welcome lunch provided by the Centre. Moving onto the ramparts of the 'fort,' I marvel at the need our prehistoric ancestors had, which made such a gigantic set of protective banks necessary, and found the wealth of labour to build them with antler-picks and wicker baskets. They are a level circuit of a full mile, with other isolated hills keeping them company, plus one of the best points for that same Westward vista, that never ceases to draw the eye. My pondering here is on the protections built against war, something we still haven't cracked, and on the fears and stresses that motivated men in time immemorial, as too often they do today.

Time is pressing and I resolve that in the scorching July sun my aching knees need the easier route home along the 2-lane road, but it is also not without interest. On my left I pass "Hetty Pegler's Tump," the other side of a field. It is another of the many Long Barrows in this upland area, and got named after the "village idiot" ('learning difficulties') who used to sit atop the bank. A final chance to ponder on my own mentality; how far can I consider myself 'sane?' How much do I respect others' mental limitations, or would I want them all to be as "sane" as me?!

A truly wonderful "Day in the Desert," providing no little historical and natural interest, but also personal peace with unlimited food for thought too. Praise God for his creation, and for the peoples who have tended it throughout human history. +



“He called me by my name”

-a story from Jim Murphy, Diocese of Ossory,

One of the Little Brothers, George, worked as a nurse in a care facility in Normandy looking after special needs young people.

One of his patients was a 14 year old boy called Charlie who was hyperactive and on a heavy regime of medication to help calm him down. Every day Charlie was either asleep or dozing and caused nobody any bother. George was very concerned about this chap who was so tranquilised and unable to participate in the daily programmes. So he drew up a programme of physical exercises for Charlie beginning with short walks and gradually going further. They cut down on the medical regime and increased the promenades. They noticed that Charlie was now sleeping much better and his personality was shining through. Even on his days off work George still turned up for the walks. They went down through the meadows and into the forest, they learned the names of the trees and the flowers, they listened to the birds and took time to smell the roses. In no time Charlie was a new man and was enjoying his 18 years. Now he looked forward to every day and the surprises George had in store for him.

However, after four years George was called to join a new fraternity in Toulouse and began working at another care centre. After thirty years had elapsed he had the opportunity to visit his friends in Normandy again. He said that it was the joy of his life after all the years working and caring for people that when he entered the sitting room of the old facility Charlie stood up, now a young man of 48 years, and he called me by my name.

Charles de Foucauld’s method of evangelisation was FRIENDSHIP. His door was always open, his welcome was warm for every individual who crossed his threshold. Charles loved the little people in the desert and learned their language and sang their songs.

Nazareth was made up of little things and a simple way of life. Jesus of Nazareth calls us to be brothers and sisters respecting our dignity as the beloved of the Father. Each one of us is called by name.

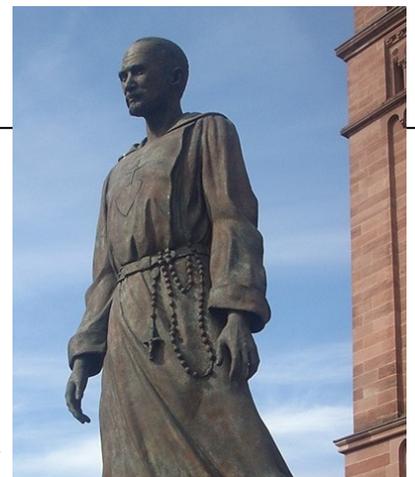
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St. Charles de Foucauld, concluded from page 10)

Little Brothers of the Gospel, and Little Sisters of the Gospel—draw inspiration from the peaceful, largely hidden, yet hospitable life that characterized Charles. He was beatified in 2005 and canonized in 2022.

Reflection

The life of Charles de Foucauld was eventually centred on God and was animated by prayer and humble service, which he hoped would draw Muslims to Christ. Those who are inspired by his example, no matter where they live, seek to live their faith humbly yet with deep religious conviction.



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



***A linkage with
LSr. Magdeleine
-from Michael Healy, Clifton
Diocese (SW England.)***

< *LS Magdeleine's tomb*

On a trip to Tre Fontane, near Rome, a couple of years ago, six brothers of Clifton fraternity were delighted to meet up

with the Little Sisters at their generalate. In their traditional hospitable style they showed us not only a tiny museum with Brother Charles' simple artefacts, but also the tomb of Little Sister Magdeleine. She died in 1989 and was buried along a catacomb-like tunnel so delicately lit that I wondered what on earth this holy Foundress could have been like.

Happily the inspired choice of our British Fraternities to invite a lively Sr. Kathy McKee to lead us on our 5-day Summer Retreat at Nympsfield, Gloucestershire, last July proved to be a heaven-sent opportunity to discover more about this remarkable woman.

What stood out in her life and shone out from the very beginning growing up in France, was how she saw herself as being wholly in the hands of God. *"You should let God lead you like a child by the hand and follow him even if blinded by his headlight"*, her Spiritual Director Rene Voillaume had told her. Aided by this insight, she set about offering her life, taking the lowest place and following the utterly simple life of Jesus beyond limits. Would her travels in a converted camper-van even drive her to cross over the Russian border? Rene Voillaume had advised her yes, she should go because, he reasoned, *"by surrendering your weakness to God's providence and power you will know the next step by step but not the end.!"*

In the end of course many Sisters were inspired by her enthusiasm to serve the poorest of God's people and began to join her Congregation. But she always insisted *"to be Christian and human is more important than being religious."*

Her ability to perceive in each person *"that piece of truth they carry in their heart"* sounds Quaker-like. It somehow flows naturally from helping people see themselves that *"they are better than they think"*. This led her in time to compose what we now say as the *Prayer of Abandonment* through joining up fragments of Brother Charles' writings.

Being brothers took on a near literal significance when she met up with Muslims who intrigued her with their talk of total self-giving or "immolation" as an offering of blood. Maybe in this sense she saw how in effect we could become blood brothers!

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Footnote on the Little Sisters:

In addition to their annual "News Notes" magazine, they publish a 3-monthly online journal called- *"A Smile on the World,"* which is available on their website here:

<https://littlesistersofjesus.net>

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

St. Charles de Foucauld

(September 15, 1858 – December 1, 1916)

*-with acknowledgement to Franciscan Media's
"Saint of the Day for 1st December" (See cover photo.)*

Born into an aristocratic family in Strasbourg, France, Charles was orphaned at the age of 6, raised by his devout grandfather, rejected the Catholic faith as a teenager, and joined the French army. Inheriting a great deal of money from his grandfather, Charles went to Algeria with his regiment, but not without his mistress, Mimi.

When he declined to give her up, he was dismissed from the army. Still in Algeria when he left Mimi, Charles reenlisted in the army. Refused permission to make a scientific exploration of nearby Morocco, he resigned from the service. With the help of a Jewish rabbi, Charles disguised himself as a Jew and in 1883, began a one-year exploration that he recorded in a book that was well received.

Inspired by the Jews and Muslims whom he met, Charles resumed the practice of his Catholic faith when he returned to France in 1886. He joined a Trappist monastery in Ardeche, France, and later transferred to one in Akbes, Syria. Leaving the monastery in 1897, Charles worked as gardener and sacristan for the Poor Clare nuns in Nazareth and later in Jerusalem. In 1901, he returned to France and was ordained a priest.

Later that year Charles journeyed to Beni-Abbes, Morocco, intending to found a monastic religious community in North Africa that offered hospitality to Christians, Muslims, Jews, or people with no religion. He lived a peaceful, hidden life but attracted no companions.

A former army comrade invited him to live among the Tuareg people in Algeria. Charles learned their language enough to write a Tuareg-French and French-Tuareg dictionary, and to translate the *Gospels* into Tuareg. In 1905, he came to Tamanrasset, where he lived the rest of his life. A two-volume collection of Charles' Tuareg poetry was published after his death.

In early 1909, he visited France and established an association of laypeople who pledged to live by the Gospels. His return to Tamanrasset was welcomed by the Tuareg. In 1915, Charles wrote to Louis Massignon: "The love of God, the love for one's neighbour...All religion is found there...How to get to that point? Not in a day since it is perfection itself: it is the goal we must always aim for, which we must unceasingly try to reach and that we will only attain in heaven."

The outbreak of World War I led to attacks on the French in Algeria. Seized in a raid by another tribe, Charles and two French soldiers coming to visit him were shot to death on December 1, 1916.

Five religious congregations, associations, and spiritual institutes—Little Brothers of Jesus, Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Little Sisters of Jesus,

Concluded on page 8)

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

Message from our new International Responsible brother, Carlos Roberto

-taken from the International website (English version,)

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

Dear Brothers of the Fraternity,

I thank God for the excellent experience of fraternity we shared at the 12th International Assembly in Buenos Aires (6 to 21 May 2025.) In a special way, our gratitude goes to Eric (international Responsible emeritus) and his team for organizing and coordinating the entire meeting, without forgetting the welcome and logistics team in Argentina, coordinated by Tino. May God bless you all.

Certainly, Brother Charles continues to inspire us to “shout the Gospel” in our ministry, living out our mission “for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel,” as everything we shared in the national and continental reports presented during the assembly still echoes in our minds and hearts, as well as in our group conversations, at the table, or during the outings we enjoyed.



I waited for the first online meeting of the International Team to write you this letter. I wanted to listen to and share with the brothers of this “coordination fraternity” that is beginning, the “memories, feelings of joy, hope, and the challenges” that remained after the Assembly, so we can work on them over the next six years.

Among all the concerns, two draw our attention the most. First: **our fraternities are aging**, and second: **new priests are not joining our fraternities**. Why are we not reaching the hearts and wills of the young? Is this related to our life testimony, or are these signs of the times? One thing is clear: we have a problem with the continuity of the Jesus Caritas Priestly Fraternity, and we need to pray and reflect on how to face it.

It is true that we are going through a change of era with radical transformations in all areas of life, especially in the values that guide human life. Ancient problems of humanity mix with fictitious problems from fake news. Communication in this digital age, with its algorithms, alters people’s perception and way of understanding existential reality, their relationship with God, and their ability to live in fraternal relationships with one another. Added to this are the uncertainties and fear of a possible third world war, where what is at stake is not only geopolitical conflict but also ethnic and religious tensions. Consequently, it affects our life and existence, that is, “our witness,” since this world surrounds us on all sides and seems to contradict our desire to act and live out our spirituality.

Nevertheless, it is in this time that we are called to live the spirituality of Nazareth, of the last place. While the digital world demands spotlights, microphones, glitter, and likes to appear loud and clear, and to constantly show itself to be “seen and heard” by others, the spirituality of Nazareth, lived in the Jesus Caritas Priestly Fraternity, following in the footsteps of Brother Charles, goes in another direction: silence, hiddenness, and simplicity; detachment and living with humble means; lowering oneself to serve the least; intimacy with Jesus of Nazareth to witness goodness and universal fraternity.

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

We want, like Brother Charles, to uphold the gift of Christ, which makes us brothers to all, and to pray and act for this world wounded by war and violence. But a question remains: is our spirituality in contradiction with the current world? I don't think so. Is it possible to touch the hearts and minds of people through the internet? I believe so, but we must learn more in order to better evangelize in this world. Is it possible to touch their hearts so that they may encounter Jesus, the poor servant, and experience "being with Him" and becoming His followers? I believe so. What we cannot do is stand by idly, thinking we are too busy—managing the parish, the seminary, the pastoral work, etc.

Brothers, I believe we can make a difference where we are, if we live with closeness, kindness, and love. Let us look to Brother Charles. What do we see? A man who lived the reality of his time, determined to imitate his Beloved Jesus Christ; determined to witness what Jesus would do if He were in his place. Let us pay attention to the reality that surrounds us, both the difficult and painful situations and the joys and hopes that inspire us, whether in the world or in our fraternities.

But first, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, as Brother Charles did. He pointed to Jesus, seeking in Him the inspiration to witness the life of Nazareth; Brother Charles lived "Nazareth" in all places and situations he found himself. Let us listen to the Beloved Jesus of Nazareth, whom Brother Charles listened to so attentively—every word, every action, and how He encountered people—and tried to imitate Him. At each Eucharist, let us celebrate with our Beloved Jesus His offering of life; and let us also offer our own lives, making ourselves an offering with Jesus, as Brother Charles did, to collaborate in the salvation of people.

Brothers, our Beloved Jesus of Nazareth is the "only model" where we can find the answers we so deeply need for today's world.

In the name of Jesus, a big embrace with all my affection,

*Fr. Carlos Roberto dos SANTOS,
International Responsible +*

Lit. Bro. Ian Latham from his deathbed

Extracts from the Little Brothers' Newsletter

(Newsletters N° 665, February 2007)

Author of the book we advertise on page 18.

I am going to recall a fact that goes back quite a long way in the past, about thirty years perhaps, which has a link with what I am living now.

While living in India, I had been to Pondicherry to see Giuseppe Marinoni who was living all alone, and I fell ill as happened to me several times in India. Giuseppe and others advised me to ask for the hospitality of the bishop, who had room. He welcomed me very warmly, showed me to my room and we ate together in the evening.

The following morning, I found myself on the balcony with an elderly Tamil priest (who had been Vicar General, as he told me later). He was a man full of experience while I was a young brother not supposed to have any knowledge. Having started to talk of things and other people among ourselves, the elderly priest suddenly said to me, "I am troubled, would you have the kindness to help me? I feel that all my physical forces are disappearing, and I only have enough strength to eat, sleep, get dressed and all that is already too much and exhausts me. And then my thoughts are more and more

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

confused, I do not know what I am doing, I can no longer think clearly and the worst of all is that every feeling of devotion, which previously I had without any trouble, if one can put it like that, tends to diminish and often totally disappears. To tell the truth, I no longer know how to pray at all. Could you help me, advise me, and teach me how to pray again?"

I was taken aback: a man of such experience was asking me, who was very young and had little experience, for advice on a subject as personal and intimate as prayer! I admired his simplicity and humility, and admire them even more today now that I am living the same situation as his.



Today I am living exactly the same experience, and I need the same help and the same support. My body is becoming weaker and weaker. I get angry easily because I am unable to do the most simple things, like dressing myself in the morning, or putting my papers and thoughts into some kind of order. For example, in order to make this tape recording, before starting I had to set myself to it a dozen times and ended up with something of very little value. And the worst of all is that my relationship with the Lord is so weak, and truly, with prayer I feel I am at the beginning; I do not know how to set about it.

In fact, my experience of ageing is linked with Parkinson's disease. When I learned that I had this disease, without having thought of it before, I had the clear feeling that Michel Delobea, who had just died after 10 years of this disease, had handed over to me. That did not cause me to panic, and little by little I learned, after that, to take Parkinson's no longer as an enemy that was destroying me, but as a friend who was walking the path of life with me and was pushing me, in its own way, to move forward and complete the course.

This feeling has never left me, quite the contrary, and I was very surprised when the nurse, who was a specialist in Parkinson's, who was following me in the Peckham Health Centre, said the same thing to me one day: that it was necessary that I should take this illness as a friend, and treat it as a friend. I believe that this is fundamentally true, and the fact of seeing Parkinson's in this way has truly been a great help to me.

I had to live the experience of ageing with Parkinson's in trust and do everything I could on my side to maintain this trust: trust in the Lord, trust in my brothers and trust in my own ability to cope with this new situation.

I told myself that perhaps it was not a bad idea to take a little look at our Constitutions and to see what they said about ageing. For me, in fact, it was clear that I had reached this final stage of life which moves towards the ultimate encounter.

And in fact I found the Constitutions very relevant, firstly through the very simple advice that I found in them: do not forget the Sacraments, confession, the anointing of the sick, which I had never thought of asking for myself, while recommending it for other people, and, of course, and before all else, the Blessed Sacrament, this very special presence of Jesus which Brother Charles loved so much.

But afterwards, and this is the new thing that struck me most because I asked myself the question of how to prepare myself for this final encounter, the Constitutions say, "He (the Lord) will prepare you himself for this encounter."

That was a great consolation to me, a source of courage, because I saw so well that on my side I could do very little and my fidelity was very limited. The Constitutions themselves also say, in the same context, that one should not rely on one's own fidelity but on the fidelity of the Lord who has called us and is not going to leave us.

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

For me, this question of trusting in the Lord, of hoping in him, has never been something easy. I believe that, being very centred on myself and wanting to be master of myself as much as possible, I have always thought that of course the Lord is helping me and does the more important part, and even that he does almost all of it, but also that it was for me, at least, to ask him to come and help me, and so in the final analysis, everything depended on me and on my own fidelity and not on His fidelity to me.

This is a simple and elementary thing, I feel, in the Christian life, but I am learning it slowly and it is this experience of Parkinson's that obliges me, if I can put it this way, to see this elementary truth.

One morning, when I woke up, I saw that I could give thanks to the Lord from the bottom of my heart for my life, for the Fraternity, for what I was living in the present, and do that in a true and sincere way, as I had never been able to do before.

And a little later, I no longer remember when exactly, this very positive grace was accompanied by a strong feeling that I was no longer drawn to judge others, as I used to do; I ask you to excuse me and I would prefer not to have to say that, especially in relation to some of you, thinking that I was better than others and that my path was the true and only one and judging your situations and attitudes. These are things that one does not very much like saying, especially if one thinks of the Lord's words, "Do not judge" which have always struck me but which have never borne much fruit in me.

This was a grace that I had often asked for and now it was given to me freely. And even more than that, I received the grace, as St Paul says, of thinking that others were better than me. I used to think that Paul was expressing himself in this way because of his fiery and exaggerated temperament. And suddenly I understood that what he was saying was really true, purely and simply true, and that I was obliged to accept that and admit it.

Another thing that struck me in the Constitutions is that they say that one should simply abandon oneself to God like a little child, this living the Prayer of Abandonment that I had recited so easily, but had lived so little.

"I am ready for all, I accept all" means, quite simply, abandoning oneself with Jesus to the Father. In thinking back to what I lived and shared once with the Little Sisters, it seems to me that in the Psalms there are indications that prove that Jesus has not shown only the little child as a path of spiritual progress, and even in a sense as the only path that is necessary and required, but that he himself lives like a child and that the words he spoke from the cross, "Father, into your hands I abandon my spirit" were the proof that at that moment he was, in the deepest sense, the true child of the Father, the most one with Him and the most entirely given to Him.

In the same section, our Constitutions add that one becomes a child even through the weakness and disorder that one lives.

I believe that in order to be a child, it is necessary to accept also this abandonment into the hands of others. That is part of the abandonment to God the Father, and for me this abandonment always goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the Child Jesus, and of me with Him, into the hands of the Virgin Mary and, on his level, St Joseph.

I see, all the same, that abandonment, which is the fundamental reality that I am called to live at this moment, needs to be accompanied also by the courage to do all that I am capable of doing in order to maintain my physical strength, mental competence and intelligence, and also to maintain, regarding my part, the spiritual gifts that I receive, especially this peace without which all the rest, if one can put it like that, would have no point of support in me.

Perhaps the only thing that is rather general, which I notice in rela-

Concluded on page 16)

Among e.mails received by the editor

From: Fr. Michael Jones
Sent: 04 July 2025
Subject: RE: June "Be Brothers Britain & Ireland:"

Dear Bob,

Thanks for your email. Fr Jude Iroh from our fraternity should be with you for the retreat. He will update you with news from Dartford. Fr Peter Murphy has joined Fr Tony Charltons group. Fr Chris Basden had a serious op for cancer, to remove the cancer and bladder etc. But it went well. He is recuperating. God bless and hope you are still well.

Michael

(Southwark Dartford fraternity.)

+

From: Father Matt Anscombe
Sent: 06 October 2025
To: (Brothers of Clifton fraternity, GB)
Subject: Saludos desde Nuevo Progreso

Hi Barnabas & Michael,

Hope all is well.

A quick greeting to you and the lads from Jesus Caritas (please pass on my best wishes).

All is going well here. 8 weeks in. Been in an urban parish for 6 weeks. Lots of Masses. Getting used to celebrating the liturgy in Spanish etc (I've felt a bit like a newly ordained priest). Currently in Diocese of Huánuco in central Perú. 5 times the size of Clifton. A mix of parishes in the selva and sierra. Currently in the selva in Nuevo Progreso. Small town with parish church and serving 20 communities, the furthest being well over an hour. The bishop has encouraged me to take a look at a far flung mission parish (9 hours from here and 250 miles. Roads pretty sketchy). Currently trying to arrange the bishop to organise some accompaniment there as the priest I'm with is a bit nervous of the roads.

God is good. Good experiences. The grace is in being present to the people. They are simple folk here. Bit of a novelty having a gringo with them.

Bolivia in November for 6 weeks of language school. Appointment next January, which may well be in this diocese but I'm open to the needs of the Society. Our director happy for me to explore possibilities here on this diocese to throw into the mix.

¡Cuidense hermanos!

A few photos! That's guinea pig on the plate.

Mateo (Matt Anscombe in Peru)



E.mails continued overleaf

E-mails continued from overleaf

From: Anthony Charlton

Sent: 08 August 2025

Subject: Peter Stodart and Be Brothers

Dear Bob

I am writing to let you know that Peter is now in St Peters Care home in Meadow Road, London. This is run by the Little Sisters of the Poor.

He does not find it easy to organise his life and he is still a member of our Jesus Caritas group.

Do you mind in future sending the Be Brothers to me.

I have just received the June copies of Be Brothers.

Yours fraternally

Tony

(Peter Stodart was the British regional [national] Responsible till a few years ago. Ed.)

Ian Latham on his deathbed, concluded from page 14)

tion to our Constitutions and which speaks to me very powerfully, (but I believe that this also speaks to you all as well, each according to his situation in life), is what is said about salvific suffering. Someone has also given me a text by John Paul II on this same subject. It is something that is difficult to believe in, but the experience of life that each person has shows us that it is true.

Lived with Jesus, suffering can have a value for me and for others. Nothing is lost, and it is precisely through this experience of suffering that God is purifying me and forming me and that I am in true union with so many people who are suffering in so many different ways. Perhaps one can reach the point of living something that has always been very dear to me, but which I have never managed to live, and that is to be a saviour with Jesus.

As St Martin said, "I am ready to die, I am also ready to live, if you wish, Lord". If one lives, or tries to live, in union with the Lord, living and dying are the same thing. And for me, this openness to Jesus is always done through the Virgin who received him first and who, I believe and in any case I hope, receives him also in me, to the extent to which she helps him to allow it to produce within me the fruits of his Spirit.

Good bye for now.

(Text supplied by Lit. Bro. Xavier Chevillard in France.)

+

The Irish national retreat
At Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo,
31st August—4th September
Alan Thomas reports.



Our annual Jesus Caritas Retreat took place in the beautiful setting of Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo. Fifty eight participants attended, with an age profile from the 40s to the 90s — a rich gathering of experience, faith, and fraternity.

We were greatly blessed to have **Fr. Peter McVerry SJ** (*picture above*) as our facilitator and guide throughout. Fr. Peter, a well-known social justice campaigner and one of Ireland's most respected advocates for the homeless, provided deeply inspirational and challenging input that became the foundation for our daily sharing. Fr. Peter shared with us from his extraordinary experience of working since 1974 in Dublin's north inner city, where he first encountered young people sleeping rough. In 1979, he opened his first hostel for homeless boys aged 12–16, and in 1983 he founded the **Arrupe Society**, later renamed the **Peter McVerry Trust**, to tackle homelessness, drug misuse, and social disadvantage.

Under his leadership, the Trust has developed numerous services — hostels, drug detox and stabilization centres, and permanent housing for homeless individuals. By 2024, it had supported over 12,000 people across Ireland. Despite his remarkable achievements, Fr. Peter spoke with humility and warmth, never using notes — an impressive feat, particularly for someone in his 80s. His talks were not only inspiring but also deeply challenging, calling us to reflect seriously on how we live the Gospel in today's world.

He began by saying that everything he shared came from what he had *learned from homeless people, and he placed **compassion** at the heart of his reflections.* When speaking about the **Eucharist**, he reminded us that Jesus did not simply say, *“This is my body” and “This is my blood”, but “This is my body given for you” and “This is my blood poured out for you.”* In saying *“Do this in memory of me,”* Jesus was calling us to live lives of self-giving service, just as He did when He knelt to wash the feet of His disciples.

Fr. Peter also spoke of seeing **everything as gift** — cultivating a deep sense of gratitude for all that we have and a heightened awareness of the privileges many of us enjoy. On **prayer**, he offered a striking image: that we can know God no more than a small boy can comprehend the distance of the stars from the earth. For him, prayer is the choice to “waste” an hour in God's presence, especially since God has gifted us 24 hours each day.

Fr. Peter's understanding of **sin** was also thought-provoking. He sees sin as more **institutional and systemic** than merely personal — reflected in the comfortable lifestyles we maintain in the developed world, even as we recognize their impact on others. For example, he mentioned how we accept frequent air travel despite knowing its major contribution to global warming and the suffering it causes the world's poorest.

Throughout, his reflections were deeply **scripture-based**, rooted in the **Christian call to compassion**, and closely aligned with the spirituality of **Br. Charles de Foucauld** and the **Jesus Caritas Fraternity**. Participants expressed sincere gratitude to the **Caritas Fraternity team** for inviting Fr. Peter McVerry to lead our retreat this year.

Warm appreciation was also extended to **Frank, Louise, and their team**, who welcomed us so graciously and cared for us as always as if we were part of their own family during our stay in Mullaghmore. +



Bishop Fintan Monaghan-Closing words of appreciation

Long out of print but reprinted by the British Regional Team is Little Brother Ian Latham's

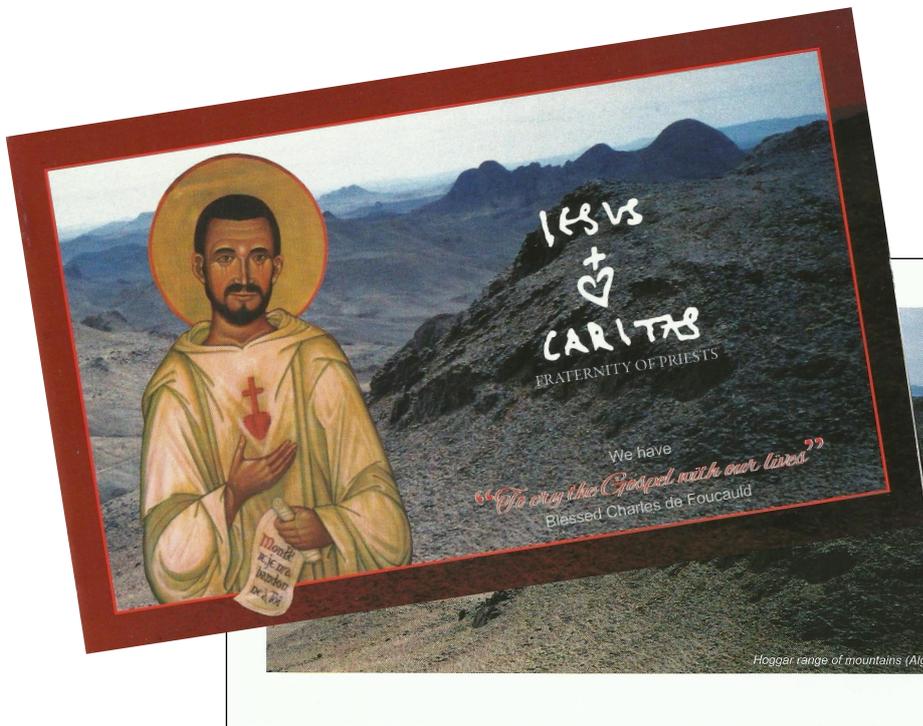
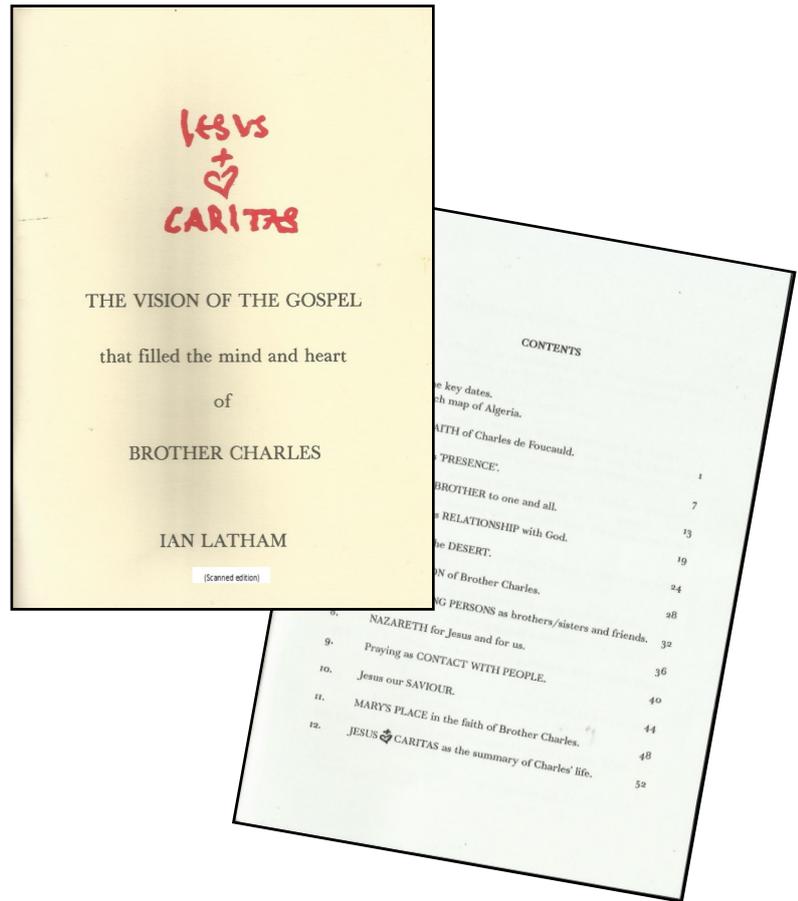
“The Vision of the Gospel that filled the Mind and Heart of Brother Charles.”

It provides a very useful summary of Br. Charles' teaching, in conveniently short dedicated chapters.

Offered free of charge, copies can be requested from Stephen Squires via frstevesquires@aol.com or Barnabas Page on barnabas.page@gmail.com

It can be used as a study tool in fraternity meetings.

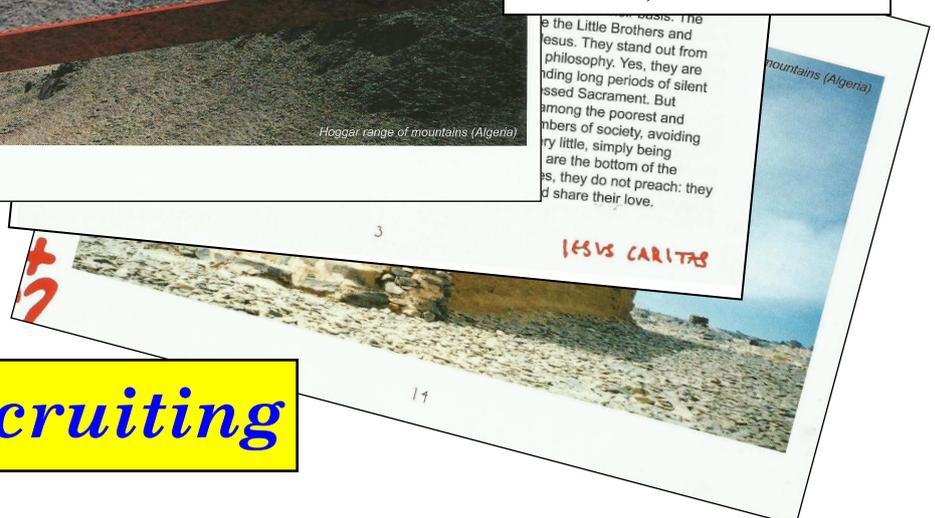
Scanned from an original copy; 54 pages in A5 portrait format, on 160gsm. paper. 12 chapters, preceded by a timeline for Br. Charles and a simple map of Algeria. +



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.") +



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!

(Both are due later this year.) +

A message for us all from the Little Brothers' 2022 chapter meeting

Forwarded by Lbr Xavier Chevillard in France (previously in Leeds, GB.)



Message from the Chapter [AVILA 2022] of the Little Brothers of Jesus:

Dear Brothers and Friends,

We have gathered in Chapter in Avila, the land of Saint Teresa of Jesus, and you have been very present in our discussions and prayers. The personality and life of Teresa of Avila could not fail to mark our meetings and challenge us throughout our Chapter: *"Nada te turbe! Solo Dios basta!* (*"Let nothing trouble you! God alone is enough"*)

During this important time of reflection, we paused to be attentive to the situations we live with, to all our stories woven from our many relationships with each other and with those around us... We are constantly learning, each time, to walk together with the little ones, the voiceless and the uninfluential of our societies. It is in this spirit that we are part of the current process of synodality promoted by Pope Francis. It is with them, and often through them, that we discover the love with which God loves us all, by humbly sharing their plight, as friends and brothers... As St Teresa of Avila wrote to her sisters: *"The Lord is in the middle of the pots! Let us not hesitate to find him in the kitchen!"* Yes, the Risen One is very much present in the most ordinary, everyday life, as in the midst of our doubts and worries. *"See me in them, and like me in Nazareth, live with them, lost in God,"* Jesus said to Brother Charles in a meditation when he was considering where to settle in the Hoggar. In the Fraternity, we sometimes have to face conflicts among ourselves.

During this Chapter, we had to face them, and we lived with them in a climate of deep listening and prayer to allow each one to express himself, to try to enter into the problems of the other, respecting the diversity of approaches: an extremely strong time in which we experienced the life-giving breath of the Spirit. +

Treasurers' appeal:

Pleaser remember that our individual annual subscriptions become due each 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 assist in holding the whole worldwide Jesus Caritas organisation in fraternity. If there is 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 Joe Deegan 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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Email: ra-r@hotmail.co.uk

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

After 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 posting of "Be Brothers Britain & Ireland" in Britain (solely by e.mail in Ireland.) Subs. should be sent, payable to: "**Jesus Caritas Fraternity,**"

to the appropriate Treasurer as above; otherwise direct to the relevant bank:

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