

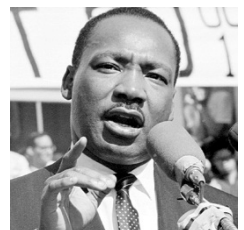
N° 90- December 2013
From Nazareth to Universal Brotherhood
Special Edition : European encounter- Malta




**Special Edition :
 European
 encounter-
 Malta**



**News of the
 Fraternities**



 **Bread of
 Life with
 Martin Luther
 King**

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Lay Fraternities the world over,
we hope you are well.

With all that is happening to us presently, wars, misunderstandings,
plots... in the Middle East, on this same earth as Nazareth, we learn to
go further toward universal fraternity in the steps of Charles de
Foucauld to attain peace and reconciliation with ourselves and with
others.

Through the European Meeting, we deepen our belonging to this
Fraternity spread all over the world.

With Martin Luther King, we reflect on some ideas about peace with
oneself and the others.

Charles de Foucauld and Little Sister Magdeleine of Jesus accompany
us with a little Christmas message.

As always we bring you the news from the Fraternities.

May the blessed Christmas period bring back peace to our countries and
particularly peace in our hearts so that we may become sufficiently
“contagious” to pass it on to those near us and beyond.

Good reading and good meditation

Ever united in prayer.

Letter to Father Jerome in *This dear last place*, p. 184-185

‘You are now in that period of life which corresponds to the early childhood of Jesus. He is learning to read on his holy parents’ knees. He is not yet concerned with the salvation of souls, except in the inner bursts of his heart, praying God for the salvation of mankind, but he is concerned with no particular soul (...): He is a little child, He sees and knows only Mary and Joseph. He lives exclusively with them. He does not help Joseph in his work. He cannot, He is a little child. He learns to read on Mary’s knees, learns his short lessons, sits at her feet, smiles to her, kisses her, keeps quiet and works while looking at her. This life is enough for Him, Him the Son of God, for many years, may it be enough for you too, my dear Father, it is yours for many years. You are five and learning to read, your studies are short, you do as you are told, ‘whoever listens to you listens to me’, as five years old Jesus did all that his parents asked Him ‘Fast’ and you fast ‘Stop fasting’ and you stop ‘Wear these clothes’ and you wear them, ‘come here’ and you come, all that you are told as you are told: you are five years old, there is no need of big penance, just to obey as a five years old child. The Son of God has wanted to be five years old, just be five, six years old with Him; study with Him on Mary’s knees, under Joseph’s gaze. It is the very perfect imitation of Jesus. If you do so, you will be very rich and strong at the end of your studies, as you will have learnt obedience and humility with the habit of keeping in Jesus’ company, imitating Him in your deeds, later He will lead you to the desert. From there to Gethsemane and Calvary. For now, live with Jesus, Mary and Joseph as if you were alone in the world in their company, in the little home of Nazareth, it is there, in that place, in this isolation, that the little child Jesus did His first studies, do yours with Him. Be His little brother.

Charles de Foucauld



« Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve»

This text was presented by Spain during the European delegates' meeting in Malta, 12 – 16 July 2013

FROM NAZARETH TO UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

NAZARETH IS A PLACE

It is the geographical place that God chooses to grow among men, to take root in the human. In the time of Jesus, Nazareth is a small village in Galilee, Galilee that was despised among the nations, a village from which people thought nothing good could come (Jn. 1: 46): such was Nazareth. In the eyes of Charles de Foucauld it was a unique village where Jesus, the Unique Model, learned to be a man, grew under his human parents.

Nazareth is where Jesus found his place, where he came down, in the words of Luke, and, as Charles de Foucauld said, all along his life Jesus kept coming down, he didn't claim any privilege due to who he was, he came down to that place where one can humbly serve men, where he is small, approachable, vulnerable. In this sense Nazareth is where one can seek the last place. It is everywhere. While some have the power and the duty to know where they will be most useful to their fellowmen, others, the majority of people, have to live where life places them.

This place is known for not being a way but a residence. Nazareth is where one takes root, it is the opposite of nomadism and nomadic life, but Nazareth can be lived with continuous displacements. Any sign of human rooting is one of the values of Nazareth.

Nazareth is not Bethlehem, the real city, nor is it Capernaum, site of the first manifestations of Jesus and of his preaching, nor is it Bethany,

where he found rest and friendship. Much less it is Jerusalem, which represents the location where the visible manifestation of the Saviour took place, the place of visibility. Nazareth is the place of non-visibility. This is what Charles de Foucauld puts under the terms of obscurity, hidden life, shadowy life, where you live as unknown and even despised.

NAZARETH IS A TIME

Nazareth is a duration of thirty years of the life of Jesus. The incarnation of God could have happened otherwise. And yet, this is where the realism and the truth of the Incarnation are situated. It is necessary that Nazareth lasts a long time, because it is God's eternity that penetrates within the time of men. As the Kingdom needs to grow as a grain sown in the earth, Nazareth is the long period of concealment of the grain, the ripening time, the time of incubations, using the words of Charles de Foucauld it is the awareness that we all should have that everything takes time, and in particular all things of God.

As he was rebuked for being too slow, Saint Vincent de Paul said "*Beware of walking ahead of God*".

Nazareth is the time spent in prayer, in pure loss of oneself. It is also the time spent at work and the time lost. For Charles de Foucauld that was those days in front of the Blessed one or meditating in his cabin. In Tamanrasset that was the nearly 11 hours of work per day over 10 years. It was the time spent listening, in relation with his neighbours, communicating.

To refind the sense of time, does it mean to drop out?

NAZARETH IS A LIFESTYLE

To characterize that style, summarizing what it meant for Charles de Foucauld as for Jesus, as well as for those who want to follow him, the main characteristic is the "ordinary life", the life that ordinary people lead, the one that is not a specialty. It is the life of everyone. Nazareth is

not what sets us apart in our lives in relation to the world we live in, that's not Nazareth. Nazareth is not choosing the unusual in our lives, but rather, embracing the everyday and the ordinary. Paul Claudel says that "*living the present and living with passion is to begin to live in eternity*".

Nazareth is a life without originality. It is where you can always be discreetly serving. It is a constant reference to the life of Jesus. In a world where everything is done to be noticed, to be seen, to be compared to what others do, a world where rivalry and competition play an eminent role at consumption level, one cannot speak about Nazareth without regard to poverty, humility, simplicity of life. You can read the arts. 23, 24, 25 and 26 of the 'Directoire de Charles de Foucauld'. Taking Jesus of Nazareth as a model one cannot follow the path of enrichment. To quote Charles de Foucauld in a letter he wrote to his sister on October 13th, 1899:

"Yes, dear, I ask and will always ask more and more for you. Above all, do not worry, do not worry ... Have a simple life, avoid useless expenses; increasingly, in your manner and your way of life, get rid of everything that smacks of world, vanity and pride ... crazy things that only lead to diminishing our future glory in heaven, to extending our purgatory, to weigh on our responsibility of having given a bad example to others, to make us sympathetic with a way of being that natural reason condemns and the Christian religion further condemns, and which is followed to be like the others while it would be better to give a good example rather than to imitate their folly ... Yes, discard all that is useless, all that smacks of the world, but do not panic, do not fear for the future ... Do not suppress everything, anything that may be useful to your inner spiritual progress. Do not economise on good books or alms, do not discard anything of that kind, on the contrary, get more (...) The best way not to lack of anything is to share generously with the poor, seeing them as the representatives of Jesus and as Jesus himself ... "

NAZARETH IS A WAY OF BEING

More than a way of acting, it is a way of acting in the logic of love. Is Nazareth the silence? Yes and no. No, because Nazareth is a place of listening, communicating, sharing and a place of friendship, where the Word is transmitted through ordinary people conversations. Yes, Nazareth is the silence because Nazareth is shouting the Good News from the rooftops without talking, without preaching, just by loving. Nazareth is the priority given to love lived, priority to what is, rather than what is said. Nazareth is a way of meeting others with respect, attentive listening, with no desire to transform them, it is a certain way of being with them, with no other concern than expressing to each one the greatest love possible.

Nazareth is a sense of futility and gratitude in a world where efficiency and performance are the only motivations, a predilection for poor means, the ones that Jesus used in his public life, a predilection for the little things of everyday life, those that take the value of infinity and eternity if you live with love. More than a way of acting, it is a way of being with men and women.

Nazareth is also a way to be with God, that contemplative look that is, essentially looking at God through the humanity of Jesus, a contemplative view of the creation, a close look at the action of his Spirit in each person and in the movements of history and the world. Nazareth is being with Jesus, as Brother Charles said, *being next to him in everything, as the chosen disciples before they were sent to mission.*

Extracted from A. Chatelard and P. Marangon by Eutiquio Sanz Miguel



« We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools»

Extract from a speech- March 31st 1968

NEWS OF FRATERNITIES

AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

A look back at Revision of Life

In its message, the International Team says, “... *make it a point to keep time for revision of life. You will see that contemplation and friendship are ways through which Jesus requests us whether he may act within us and inside our groups.*” Words are not enough for me to stress how much the introduction of Jean Pierre Dupont – and I take this opportunity to greet him – and the sharing which followed, during the International Meeting, have very much caught my attention.



What is the value of our meetings without the ‘**stop**’ that revision of life provides?

I hence asked myself how to do to promote it in our local fraternities? Everybody knows, there’s a first step to every journey. Mine was to meet with the three diocesan leaders to discuss our viewpoints. Our first meeting was held on 24th of January. We came out with a calendar of quarterly meetings, of which the one of 7-11 August at Ouagadougou will be a session of reflection and formation, to make us reflect on our commitment in the fraternity, in the light of the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld. This will enable us to start the reflection on revision of life. There will also be time for a more detailed account of the international meeting to members of fraternities.

Brief activity report on fraternities

It has not been possible to hold meetings at the level of dioceses since the start of the year. Nonetheless, each local fraternity holds its monthly meeting as per its calendar.

The fraternity of Tampouy:

The fraternity meets every second Sunday of the month. Their program for this year is to use the sheets 'Living the Gospel with Charles de Foucauld'. The members thus seek to deepen their knowledge of the Gospel and the writings of Charles de Foucauld. Each member takes turn to present a theme. They also attend the Adoration, individually or together, every Friday. However, each one is left free to attend the daily Eucharist. The participation in the 'Day of Desert' and the revision of life scheduled for this semester was somehow weak. The fraternity attempted to hold its meetings at the Marian sanctuary so as to participate in the salvation provided by the Holy Sacrament. Since the sanctuary did not run the programmes it had planned, and given the difficulties of transport, the choice of the location of the meetings was left to the organizer. In order for members to bond together, we recommend that meetings be held at the homes of members.

The fraternity of Somgandin:

The fraternity meets the second Sunday of the month just as that of Tampouy. At the first meeting this year they re-read: 'The Way of Unity'. At the next two meetings, a priest helped them reflect on: 'Seeing with the eyes of faith' and 'Looking at Islam with the eyes of a Christian'.

The fraternity of Kaya:

The members of the fraternity of the Diocese of Kaya meet once a month for sharing. Every week, they meet at the fraternity of the Little Sisters for Eucharist and Adoration. Every Friday, they go to mass followed by 'Office of readings' with the pastoral helpers.

The fraternity of Ouahigouya:

The Bishop of Ouahigouya has nominated Father Sawadogo P. Adrien as the **chaplain** of the secular fraternity of Ouahigouya. The diocesan leader Zio Eugénie has been transferred to another Diocese to serve there. A new organization team has been set up.

Rose KERE

MADAGASCAR

NEWS FROM MADAGASCAR FOLLOWING BONN 2012: VISITS TO LOCAL FRATERNITIES

One core goal of The National Team of the secular Fraternity of Madagascar for 2013 is the visit of local fraternities by José and myself. The visits span over four days starting on Thursday evening and ending after lunch on Sunday. Those visits are held every two months starting January 2013 and covered 6 groups of 3-4 fraternities each. We have regrouped fraternities by region to make the costly trips easier. High transport cost is a drawback for most members. It holds them back from being able to take advantage of **trainings and retreats**.



Fraternities are found in five different dioceses. The first two visits were in missions of our diocese. Approximately 20 persons attended each time. In May, Jose and I went in a diocese in the north of Madagascar, located 640 km from our home town of Mahajanga. 57 persons attended. The last visit we held was in the mission of Andriba in the south of our diocese. This mission has 6 fraternities. Approximately 40 persons attended. Among them were catechism teachers and mission inspector. The 5th visit is scheduled for 12-15 September in a mission located at the south western end of our Diocese. We either reach there by boat or by airplane. The last visit shall be in the capital city, Antananarivo, in November, where there are 3 fraternities in 3 different Dioceses.

Three main events **characterize** these 4 days **of conviviality**: sharing of life, prayers and formation. The formation is focused on ‘The

Way of Unity’, the spirit which moves the fraternity, adoration and the desert. All the fraternities are newly set up. People appreciated our report on the international meeting in Bonn. It strengthens their sense of belonging to the fraternity and tells us we are not alone. Although the fraternity is not *well known in Madagascar it is moving forward in its mission to evangelize. We feel part of the crowd of lay persons following the footsteps of Brother Charles attempting to come together to work in the field of the Kingdom of God altogether with our brother and Lord Jesus Christ.*

This experience turns out to be very enriching for the Lay Fraternity of Madagascar: for the national team as well as for local fraternities. We are just starting to stand on our own feet. It therefore forces us to learn more and more of the spirituality of Brother Charles. We strive to be creative for people to understand the spirituality in Malagasy (needless to say we undertake a lot of translations: slide shows on adoration, the desert, the road to unity and the life of Br Charles).

These meetings make a lot of things possible for individual members of fraternities. For instance: meeting one another, praying together, getting to know one another especially those of different fraternities, to share their experience of the fraternity and their everyday life. But above all that, it is an opportunity to take new forces together, to experience the happiness of brotherhood regardless of one’s living standard, which varies greatly, in the different fraternities of Madagascar.



Dominique



« Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step. »

MAURITIUS

Early 2013: the country mourns

Everybody shall remember 2013 as a tragic year.

30 March; Holy Saturday: Within 2 hours of heavy rainfall, the roads of Port Louis, the capital, became torrents.

The canals built to evacuate surplus water flowing from the nearby mountain turned out to be insufficient. The death toll: eight persons: dead in flooded underground parkings including a mother and her son, in an underground



passage used to reach a commercial center from a main street.

3May, 9 am: A bus goes downhill to the capital, its brakes stopped to respond for a while. In order to avoid hitting other vehicles, the driver attempts to turn in a lateral road. He failed. The toll: 10 dead, 40 wounded. Interestingly, a pregnant woman came out alive: a passenger explained that he had instinctively protected her.

The fraternity

The fraternity lived a special time as we went for a retreat over the 5-7 week end of July.

The theme we chose was: ‘Seeing a brother in all humans’. It forms part of our resolution that each one of us attempts to become closer to Br Charles through his writings.

We had at heart that each member contributes to the organization of the retreat.

As it began, in silence, we let the Gospel of Matthew 25 touch our hearts in the same way it touched that of Br Charles who explained: ‘I do not think that any other words in the Gospel had as deep an impression on me and transformed as much my life as those ones:

‘Anything you do to one of these little ones, it is to me that you are doing it’. (Letter to Louis Massignon, Tamanrasset, 1916).

Then we read the letter Br Charles wrote to Dom Martin in 1902; that letter where he voices out his indignation that government tolerated slavery. We used the letter as an introduction to sharing against what injustice that each of us feels one has to stand up.

Education was a concern which often came out. For instance, responsible parties are helpless when they meet teachers who do not see it their duty to pay attention to weaker students, lest that the more capable ones suffer, the teachers argue.

But for us who are close to children with learning difficulties, we suffer with them. We just guess they cannot give a name to the injustice and lack of consideration they face. We believe they are hurt because when we try to make them study they sort of reject us, even if it is an attempt to teach them little things on geography or mathematics. Indeed, this problem has been occurring for years now. Yet, it would seem that very few people engage themselves in this fight.

How about you? Are you in any way worried or concerned about the education children and teenagers receiving around you?

Nicolas

TANZANIA

Br Charles and the communion his followers in East Africa - An annual event

Over the years the Charles de Foucauld fraternities in Tanzania and Kenya have been meeting to strengthen their bonds as common followers of Br. Charles Spirituality. This annual meeting included different religious groups and the lay fraternities in Tanzania and Kenya. The religious communities include the Little Sisters and Little brothers from Mwanza and Arusha and Nairobi. The lay fraternities include those from Dar-Es-Salaam, Arusha



and Mwanza and Nairobi. Because of the accessibility of Dar-Es-Salaam this annual event has most of the time taken place in Dar-Es-Salaam. During this meeting the religious and lay fraternities come together in communion to follow the footsteps of Brother Charles. This is through reflecting on the life and simplicity of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The laity and the religious in communion do adoration and Holy Eucharist, Desert experience, Review of Life and discuss other issues of the continuity of this communion.

This year this communion of Brother Charles took place in Dar-Es-Salaam from the 12-14 July 2013 at Mbagala Spiritual Center. This is a spiritual center in Dar-Es-Salaam that is run by the Little sisters of St Francis of Assisi. Attending were representative from Dar-Es-Salaam and Mwanza. Arusha had planned to send a representative but could not attend because of circumstance beyond control. We did not have any representative from Nairobi. This year's communion was however blessed by the attendance of the East and Southern African International team representative Mr Claude from South Africa. On behalf of the Dar-Es-Salaam lay fraternity, I would like through this space to thank Mr Claude for accepting our invitation to attend the East African Brother Charles communion.

Dar-Es-Salaam was represented by one fraternity of Dar-Es-Salaam with 6 members present and Mwanza was represented by one fraternity from Nyakato with 3 members. The Little Sisters were represented by Sister Perpetua. With the presence of Mr Claude from South Africa, there were 10 members attending. There were four men and six women. Among those were two young couples, one from Dar-Es-Salaam and another from Mwanza.

Mr Claude Arrived in Dar-Es-Salaam on the 11th and he was welcomed at Mwalimu Nyerere International Airport at around 4:00 pm. The other delegates from Mwanza arrived on the 12th July in the evening and some arrived at Midnight since Mwanza is more than

1000km from Dar-Es-Salaam. On the same night we worked on a timetable that would guide us through the two days. The following morning after mass at 6:30 and breakfast at 8:00, we had a gospel reflection from Sister Perpetua (Little Sister) before we went into reports on different events from our fraternities. One of the reports was the Bonn 2012 international Assembly from Elvis Joseph Miti with the support of Mr Claude.

One of the main issues that we discussed was the challenge of being recognized by the local Church. Like most of the fraternities, the Tanzanian Lay fraternities are not officially recognized by the local Church. The following are the resolutions that we made:

1-To ensure that each fraternity makes some efforts to be recognized by the local Church. The challenge however would be ensuring we do not go against Br. Charles emphasis on the life of Jesus of Nazareth whose life was not so much recognized by the authority.

2-To extend the East African Communion of Br. Charles to South Africa, Mauritius, Madagascar and other countries in Southern Africa. It was agreed that the next communion of Br. Charles could take place in Tanzania in 2015 if the other countries would agree with this idea.

3-To improve in payment of membership fees and the 50USD to the international team. The Tanzanian fraternity has already raised this money and working on the mode of payment

4-We also discussed the issue of Nairobi and see how we could revive the Nairobi fraternity. It was agreed that Mr Claude with the support from Tanzania could plan a visit to Nairobi and see how they could work this out

On Sunday afternoon we had time together to visit some of the members of the Dar-Es-Salaam lay fraternity homes and those who could not attend because of some problems. We therefore visited Mr Vedusto home some 50km from Mbagala Spiritual Center and we visited



Mama Mkuwa (some 30km), one of the oldest and founder members of the fraternity. From those visits the delegates realized how far apart the members of the lay fraternity in Dar-Es-Salaam were living thereby making it so difficult for them to meet regularly.

On Monday morning, Mr Claude was invited to visit different families including Mr Elvis J Miti some (45 km) and Mary Mwakaliku's home (some 26km) before we left Mr Claude at Mwalimu Nyerere International Airport for departure.

On behalf of the Tanzania lay fraternity; I would like to thank all the members of the lay fraternity for their participation in this communion of Br. Charles. It is important to mention here, Sister Pulkeria who is our treasurer for her support and ensuring that our funds are safe. She could not attend the meeting and we missed her so much. Special Thanks to Mr Peter Matessi the Secretary of the Br. Charles Communion for calling for this meeting. Special thanks for the management of Mbagala Spiritual Center for their warm welcome, the food, accommodation and the beautiful environment that made praying much easier. We therefore pray that the Br. Charles will continue praying for us so that we could live according to his dream—the simple life of Jesus in Nazareth.

Elvis Joseph MITI

EAST R.D.CONGO

NATIONAL TEAM TOUR OF Bukavu and Uvira Dioceses

As part of its activities, the national team of the Lay fraternity East DRC organized a tour of Bukavu and Uvira Dioceses respectively from 7-8 June and 9-11 July 2013.

07 to June 8, 2013: Diocese of Bukavu

Xaverian Missionaries Center of Panzi in Bukavu accommodated 21 responsables representing 14 parishes and four members of the national team. The meeting began with a day of retreat led by Father Paul Lushambo, the team spiritual guide. The



theme of the retreat was: "Faith at the heart of our world." It was a very rewarding time for the participants to deepen and strengthen their growing faith.

Among different activities of the day, there was adoration, prayer silence and Mass. The second day was devoted to reporting and election of the new diocesan team. This day allowed the team to make an overview of the lives of different fraternities in Bukavu. The leaders of the fraternities had this opportunity to elect new leaders at the diocesan level. These elections were moderated by Titus Wenga, national leader. After voting by secret ballot, François CITERA was elected diocesan responsible replacing Bisimwa Dieu-Donné. The day ended with some messages of thanks and encouragement from Father Paul.

From 9 to 11 July 2013: Diocese of Uvira

9th July will remain etched in our memories after the ambush by militia gangs experienced by the delegation led by Titus, as they were travelling on a public transport along the road to Kamituga. They got away with their lives after having been robbed. The meeting took place in the old building that once housed the diocesan minor seminary located 180 km west of Bukavu. 63 members including 24 men and 39 women from Kasika, Mulambula, Mwenga, Kamituga and Kitutu parishes attended the meeting. The presence of Father Alphonse Musafiri at this meeting is a sign that our fraternity is rooted in the local Church. For three days, participants learned the following theme: "In the Footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth in the light of Brother Charles."

François CITERA

AMERICA

ARGENTINA

In order to be able to understand our fraternity life in Argentina better, be it as an individual or in a group, we would like to take you to its origin and to its present national context.

In 1957, little sister of Jesus Madeleine Geneviève, who was called “Malena” by everyone at the time, arrived in Buenos Aires searching for a place to stay. The first Argentinian fraternity of the spiritual family of Charles de Foucauld was founded on 8th September by Malena together with little sister Thérèse Nicole of Jesus and Maria Amalia Carbone, the first Argentinian postulant who had waited for them (and who still lives among us 50 years after consecration) in Avellaneda by the river Riachuelo which flows through Buenos Aires.

And after a visit of Guy Riobé, general responsible for the Priests’ Union, followed by little brother René Voillaume, lay fraternities and consecrated women’s and men’s institutes were instantly founded in 1958.

For the lay women and men it was also a discovery of Jesus as a person, following in the footsteps of Brother Charles who lived under the daily light of Nazareth through the mediation of the gospel, prayer, adoration, brotherly love, simplicity of life in solidarity with the poorest in order to accompany them in their struggle to change structures of injustice and situations of exclusion and marginalization.

The situation of the country was not easy. After a decade of being governed by the people, there was a military coup d’état by a dictator in collaboration with very powerful national and multinational economic groups who wanted to return to the ancient liberal capitalistic regime full of injustice, inequalities, exploitation and misery.

After numerous years and several different military and civil governments, the misery reached its peak towards the end of the 1960s

by awaking political activity and new rebel movements came up until the formation of armed groups with different tendencies (guerilla).

Until this moment, the lay fraternity was strongly attracted by the contemplative life with an almost purely religious vision and personal support of others but a strong vocation towards a major compromise with the community and the political, social and economic reality started to come up where a stronger political commitment was needed such as a form of working on the construction of fairer and more human structures of consent, especially with the poorest, the little sisters of Jesus and the little brothers of the gospel.

The little brother Arturo Paoli, who had founded the first fraternity of the gospel in Fortin Olmos, a small town north of Santa Fe, was an important organizer of this commitment.

But there was also a large group, about half of the entire group, who did not want to leave the designated path which caused a major crisis. In the end, it was decided, that everyone chose very freely what they wanted to do without losing focus on the very charisma of the fraternity.

As a consequence, members got involved in different social and professional organizations, unions, teaching, studying, non-governmental and political organizations etc., following the conditions of life and their individual personal vocation. This was in many respects a very intense and rich period in the life of the lay fraternity.

However, on 24th March 1976, a military coup d'état established a civil military dictatorship. This was the most cruel and bloody period in the whole history of our country with thousands of prisoners, kidnappings, hostages, torture, "disappearances" and assassinations which lasted until the end of 1983 when the country became a democracy again through free elections.

Although the hierarchy generally suppressed the dictatorship, a large number of women and men, professionals and lay people in the Church were persecuted, arrested, kidnapped, imprisoned, tortured, assassinated or they simply disappeared.

Among these, there were also members of our fraternities who died martyrs. We would like to remind of some of them:

From our lay fraternity: in Cordoba, where she worked on the fringes of society with little brother of the gospel Nelio Rougier (who also disappeared), Nelly Sosa de Forti was kidnapped and assassinated. And also Marita Fernández and Felipe González with his little boy were kept as prisoners for several years. After a while, Marita could escape the Good Shepherd prison where she had been under arrest as a religious person.

In Buenos Aires: René Flores lost his two brothers Antonio and Francisco who were kidnapped, tortured and killed. María Adela Barraza with her husband and Gustavo Naser with his family were also victims of persecution. Little brother of the gospel Mauricio Silva from Uruguay, who had been a municipal road sweeper in the streets of Buenos Aires, was kidnapped whilst he was at work, tortured and assassinated.

The Irish Patrick Rice was a little brother of the gospel and he worked with the little brother and postulant Pablo Gazzari and the capuchin monk Carlos Bustos with Fátima Cabrera, who was catechist, as well as other companions in an isolated house; they were captured, kidnapped and tortured. Paul and Carlos were never to be seen again. The Irish ambassador paid for the release of Patrick following the necessary steps made by the responsible members of the fraternity of the gospel who had come from Belgium. He successfully left the country and was taken to Ireland in order to recover. He came back to Venezuela in 1977 where there were little brothers of the gospel and in 1980, he started to work in a leading position of the FEDEFAM, the international organization of parents and friends of the arrested, kidnapped, disappeared and killed defending human rights and for those who died in Latin America, by devoting himself to an intense pastoral project of this kind.

Fatima, who had disappeared and had been tortured together with Patrick, stayed in prison for two years and another two years in freedom under surveillance in Buenos Aires. She reestablished her contact with Patrick and dedicated herself to the same struggle.

In 1984, they decided to get married and they had three children who supported them in their work defending human rights. In 2008 the Irish University of Cork bestowed Patrick with an Honorary Doctorate for his relentless fight. He died in New York in 2010 during one of his journeys. One of the places where the most cruel detentions and tortures had taken place, the la Marine School of Mechanics, was handed over by the Government to the following organizations defending human rights: the “Mothers of the Square of May”, the “Grandmothers of the Square of May” (who are still searching for their grandsons who had been stolen from their missing parents during the dictatorship), FADEFAM, “Sons” (of missing parents) and others in order to be used as a large cultural space to preserve the memory of what had happened. Once, there had been there a catholic chapel. Patrick and Fatima worked hard in order to create an ecumenical area dedicated to the religious victims of the genocide. After his death, his name was given to this place which is now called the “ecumenical center Patricio Rice”. A few months before that, the Irish president stopped there on one of his journeys as an homage to him and in order to lay down a commemorative sign for the distinguished citizen of Ireland. With the help of the fraternity, Fatima was entrusted with the organization of various activities and ecumenical ceremonies to keep the memory alive.

The Argentinian government is a pioneer in the area of crimes against humanity committed during the dictatorship and it has prosecuted thousands of defendants who had been convicted and sentenced for their crimes after 30 years of dictatorship in about a hundred legal proceedings.

These events have influenced the life of the Argentinian fraternity profoundly, who has always contributed to the defense of human rights and who has taken part in numerous calls for justice for acts of abuse

committed against individuals and institutions up to the present. The lay fraternity has had an active role in the trials for cases of kidnapping and in order to give evidence against the acts of cruelty. The little brother of the gospel Jesús Silva, brother of Mauricio and also road sweeper, escaped detention as he was outside of Buenos Aires when Mauricio was arrested. Jesús Silva, who was supported in his fight by Elena González (of the fraternity in Venezuela) and by the fraternity of the gospel were present during the trial concerning the kidnapping, torture and assassination of Mauricio. The lay fraternity of Buenos Aires pleads the case. Fatima and Patrick, René and Adela appeared as plaintiffs and as witnesses in various trials and we accompany the actions and activities of the different institutions for human rights.

Following the tradition, we have organized the Way of the Cross on 31st March, the Holy Saturday, together with various churches, denominations and civil right association in order to commemorate all the victims of the military dictatorship which ended 37 years ago.

Between the last days of April and the first days of May, we had the pleasure of welcoming Gislene and Roberto from Sao Paulo, Brazil, in Buenos Aires who stopped here on their journey to meet Raquel and the fraternity of Montevideo in Uruguay.

In the union of prayer and love with the sisters and brothers throughout the world

Adriana, Luis & Fernando

VENEZUELA

In the course of our 2012 National Meeting, we decided to meet in Valencia on a national basis, this year. Indeed, for about twenty years, there has been in this town a fraternity of a dozen members, among them Alberto Guevara, now in need of dialysis every second day. A few years ago, he was, with his wife Jennifer, our national coordinator and the fraternity wanted to make sure he would be present during this meeting. Valencia, an important industrial centre of the country centre/north, is equidistant, about two hours drive, from Barquisimeto as well as from Caracas, and closer to Ciudad Guyana. (These are the towns where the other fraternities are nowadays located).

We have tried to organise a life sharing experience longer than the usual week end, on the theme of formation to life sharing in view of Brother Charles' message and the pillars of the fraternity, with the participation of all the fraternities.

As a number of us are teachers, we met at the end of the school holidays, from September 2 to 8: 36 members of the lay fraternity and Fernando Portillo, representing Luis and Adriana, came from Buenos Aires with Marian, his wife. Two Little Brothers of the Gospel very close to the groups of Bojo and Ciudad Guyana, and a Little Sister of the Gospel visiting the fraternity of Los Teques (a suburb of Caracas) were also present. We stayed in the former Diocesan Seminary, an enormous building over a century old, presently used for youth activities, right in the centre of town.

We had a whole week of sharing without the fatigue of an overlong trip or the bother of having to return too soon. A beautiful liturgical celebration at the end of the first day, on the theme of Br. Charles' life and spirituality, highlighted the elements of thought and praxis essential to the LAY COMMITMENT of OUR FRATERNITY (including the political commitment) to be responsible for the common good. Our hosts of the Lay Fraternity of Valencia took the pleasant initiative to offer us an outing on the second day. The children of a number of us were also present, organised by Alicia (teacher from the local Fraternity) in pre-fraternity. All this facilitated our sharing and allowed us to know each other.

Each morning, a team from each fraternity led in turn the common prayer and presented the themes previously chosen: Br. Charles' life and message (Caracas), Nazareth: prayer, friendship, commitment to the impoverished (Valencia), desert and revision on life (Guayana), lay fraternity and organisation (Bojo-Barquisimeo). This was followed by sharing groups and work in common to sum up the experience: Br. Charles' life, his message rooted in the life of Nazareth. Also the review of life came up as one of the main centres of interest when evaluating the formative aspect of the meeting. The acceptance of differences and the conflicts in the fraternal friendship have also been positively dealt with, thanks to the longer than usual time spent together. "Now I am well aware of what I am committed to in the Fraternity and why" said one of us. Many evenings have been spent making decisions in view of preparing the Meeting of the American Fraternities, as planned in Bonn last year. The meeting will be held in Caracas. From February 1 to 8. As representative of the coordinators of America, Fernando's direction and help have been much appreciated. We are expecting you all with much enthusiasm and fraternal feelings and we urge you to start thinking of your representatives and of the financing of this meeting so important for all the fraternities. During the meeting, as every two year, we have elected our national coordinator. Fidelina (Bojo – Barquisimeto) has been reelected until 2015.

We must mention finally the moments of daily prayer; we also greatly appreciated the evening of ecumenical prayer with the participation of ministers from different Christian denominations, friends of Manuel who share with him the spiritual welfare of the sick. Of special mention, the Wayuu ritual which Antonio (Zulia) blended in the morning prayer prepared by his region. During the opening and closing Eucharistic celebrations, nine of us expressed their commitment to the fraternity. A small cross made of coconut shell, decorated with flowers in the traditional Venezuelan manner of the 'Cruz de Mayo' symbolising fertility in harmony with nature, made by our artist Jennifer, was offered to them.

Our own place assessment is that today the Lay Fraternity of Venezuela confirms its active presence of faith, solidarity, social

commitment within concrete realities, it is growing and getting stronger in the spirit of Nazareth and Charles de Foucauld. How can we use this experience to strengthen our fraternity and improve the quality of future meetings? We already have concrete proposals to organise meetings, training in view of joining the fraternity, to decide the standard for coordinators and for the commitments to the fraternity, which we hope to share this year. **We wish to emphasise our aim to intensify our efforts to “spread the ideal of our Fraternities among the young people, in order to insure a ‘generational’ continuity so that the Fraternity keeps growing, doesn’t get old and doesn’t die.”**

Our national meetings are always held at the end of the week closest to December 1; we ventured to organise a longer one at a different date. We always used to count on the intellectual and material help of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Gospel or of a priest. This time, we have dared prepare it among ourselves in a rented room. In the past, we always invited masters of ceremony; this time, we did this ourselves...

DARE TO CHANGE is the movement of the Spirit perceived at this moment in our fraternity for our life, personal as well as communal, national and ‘NUESTROAMERICANA’, on our way toward the Kingdom of the Father of Jesus, the murdered Nazarene, now ALIVE RESSURECTED!!!



« Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates It.» A Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King

NORTH AMERICA

Philadelphia June 1, 2013

Sirens in the background. The whirr of the fans in the room. Staples of a meditative experience on an unseasonably hot day in a church in North Philadelphia.

Sometimes I think I'll come up with anything to be distracted when trying to meditate. Mr. Sandman is a frequent visitor also. I suppose for someone like me (and likely for a lot of amateur meditators), our keynote speaker, Monsignor Daniel McGlynn had the perfect message. His pitch to us was to not fret too much about the nuts and bolts of our meditation, but to concentrate on the one thing that sustains us all – the love of Jesus – as demonstrate by the host in the monstrance – if one is available. Like most truly spiritual people I know, Monsignor Dan expressed that /so comforting/ concept that God already has our backs – and that in our effort to realize that, we will have our peace. His dedication to Charles de Foucauld was in a similar vein...in Charles' embrace of the silent, obedient simplicity of Nazareth, he experienced the love of Jesus in one of the most remote and forgotten places in the world.

In a sense we fraternity members from America that have been around a while, were blessed to know a priest by the name of Brian Karvalis whose Williamsburg, Brooklyn parish (Transfiguration) embodied the hospitality aspect of Charles ministry. Father John McNamee who discovered Fr. Karvalis in a search for prelates who were really making a difference on the social scene presented some of the particulars of Brian's charism. Included among them having as many as 35 undocumented Hispanics living with him in the church out rectory and the setting up of between 15-20 family groups who met weekly to enhance their spiritual knowledge and connectedness. All this on the

Williamstown turf and the out and out hostility of the ultra-conservative, Hasidic Jews who lived there.

Our final guest speaker of the day was Father Lennie Tighe from Boston, who very likely does more to keep alive the wonder, splendor and humility of Brother Charles' life. Finding a biography of de Foucauld some 50 years ago as a seminarian, getting around the lights out rule with a flashlight under the covers, Lennie was hooked. Today he oversees the de Foucauld website with fresh pictures and information galore. (Like too /galore/ at times.) Then there were the wonderful pictures and presentations about Bonn, Germany where the international was last year. The incredible food and hospitality was also a staple of a great, great day.

But in the end, seems to me the highlight of the day was to camaraderie and friendships that are nurtured at these events. With a new element this year, and with the incredible effort and perseverance of Phyllis Grady, about ten out-of-towners stayed together at a dorm at Temple U. and because of that, we got to join them for dinner both Friday and Saturday night. Lots of walking on Philly streets and lots of connecting as we jammed into available cars. Sitting at an outside restaurant sharing food and stories – it was really special.

We not only 'dared' to meet the other, we reveled in it.

From Jim McGovern



« The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people. »

AUSTRALIA

NEWS FROM THE LAY FRATERNITY IN ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Greetings from the Charles de Foucauld group in Adelaide, Australia. This year our group has celebrated its 18th anniversary. We meet monthly and begin each meeting with a conversation about current affairs. We then reflect on the Gospel and this is followed by silent



meditation around an icon. We conclude our meditation with the Prayer of Abandonment. Each December we have a longer meeting with a shared lunch to celebrate Charles de Foucauld's feast. In December 2012 our prayer reflection focused on pictorial images of Charles de Foucauld and the desert and we listened to Charles' writings on the role of the lay apostolate where he offered Priscilla and Aquila as models from the early Christian communities.

In the middle of 2012 we also prepared a poster in collaboration with the Melbourne fraternity which we sent to the International Assembly in Bonn to represent Australia. Melbourne and Adelaide each have a fraternity and the cities are about 800 kilometers apart. Australia is part of the Asian region and in 2005 a member of the Adelaide group went to the first Asian Assembly of the lay fraternities in South Korea where contact was made with fraternities from South Korea, India, Sri Lanka, Japan and the Philippines. Early in 2013 the Adelaide group read some

of the personal accounts from the International Assembly in Bonn which were reported in the International Bulletin.

Each member of the Adelaide group has a different involvement in the wider society and some examples are: teaching, working in a hospital, volunteering at a local primary school, accompanying a refugee family so that they can make connections with life in Adelaide, being involved with the local St Vincent de Paul Society, attending formation courses for contemplative prayer and spiritual direction. One member has previous experience with being a chaplain at the women's prison, and another member seeks to make connections with her isolated neighbors in an apartment block.

The monthly meetings are a place where we can find support and nourishment to continue our involvements in the local community and also find a place to deepen our understanding of the meaning of the Gospel.

Michele Cochrane



“The good man doesn’t look at the physical particularities but knows how to discern the deep qualities that make people human, and therefore brothers”
From: The Strength to Love

THE ARAB WORLD

Despite the difficult situation through which the region is passing, the Fraternities in Syria and Lebanon continue to meet. On 20-08-2013, the Fraternity of Damascus celebrated its second anniversary. They began with a Mass and then together with the people of the parish, they watched a movie about Brother Charles. In their encounter with the Parish, the Lay Fraternity also talked about the other branches of the Spiritual Family. At the end everybody enjoyed a piece of cake together, while the event was crowned by the blessing of the Maronite Bishop Mgr Samir Nassar and the priest Gabriel Ghanem.

In Egypt, they decided to tackle the subject of "Faith."

The Fraternity of Algiers met on October 4th after the summer holidays and they had the theme: "How to be Priest, Prophet and King ... in one's community, in one's Christian life among one's people?"

LEBANON:

The Middle East is going through a very critical period. The Christian existence there is in danger by murder, persecution, and expatriation. Therefore, we pray the lord Jesus, King of Peace, through the intercession of Our Mother The Virgin Mary, to grant us faith, hope, love and strength to be able to live in peace and to witness and live the Bible.

Here comes a report about the fraternity in Lebanon throughout the last six months:

The fraternity is preparing a leaflet of selected hymns to be used in the encounters and assemblies.

The fraternity has finished printing a special booklet called “Return to the roots to contribute to a new evangelization.” The booklet aims at introducing the fraternity in a clear and simple way.

During the encounters, many important subjects have been discussed:

- “Daring to proclaim our faith” with Father Youssef Assaf
- “The apostolate of the lay” on the example of Priscilla and Aquila.

From 26th to 28th July, the fraternity had the first Nazareth time in ten years at the St Mobarak monastery-Dlebta. The theme was “Between me and you, a pact of eternal friendship”. We focused on the friendship with Jesus. This friendship is not an ideal and impossible one, but it is what Jesus lived with his disciples, who he considered his beloved friends. Furthermore, many Christians saints, priests, monks, and lay people lived this friendship with Jesus. As people committed in the spirituality of Brother Charles, our mission in the society to contribute as baptized to the “new evangelization” would not be fulfilled if we do not renew our relation and friendship with Jesus. The Nazareth time gave indeed to us the opportunity to rediscover our friendship towards Jesus as well as His friendship towards us.

We deepened this subject through a meditation about the friendship of Brother Charles with Jesus as well as the relation of Moses with God as reported by the Old Testament. We also celebrated the Holy Mass, had time for adoration, a desert’s time and finally watched a film about St Bakhita’s life.

Every year, the Fraternity organizes an entertaining get-together instead of the monthly encounter. This year there was a dinner on August 30th.

The whole family of Charles de Foucauld in Lebanon (Little Sisters of Jesus, Little Brothers, Little Sisters of Nazareth and the Lay Fraternity) had the annual entertaining outing on September 15. We visited Our Lady of Zahle, then we visited the castle of Ksara famous

for the winery. After that we had lunch at the Jesuits' monastery in Taanayel, where we had a great time of sharing and partaking with the whole spiritual family. On that day the fraternity celebrated its 19th anniversary.

The fraternity will keep regular encounters twice a month, of which one of them is an hour of adoration at someone from the family of Charles de Foucauld.

EGYPT:

Egypt is going through a difficult period in its history, similar to what could be called a difficult birth. It suffers and we suffer with her, looking forward to the birth of a new Egypt.

From January 25, 2011, the Egyptian revolution has faced many abortion attempts; the Muslim Brothers have taken hold of it to install a fascist and religious regime. When the Egyptian people realized this, it started a second revolutionary wave on June 30, 2013, with the support of the Egyptian army. The Egyptian people have understood the aim of the Muslim Brothers to get hold of the State, ground their power and impose on the people a unique system, eliminating the Egyptian identity and its pluralistic culture.

They have tried to create divisions among the Egyptians, on confessional and religious basis.

We must study the question with objectivity. American and European medias generally describe what happened as a military coup, but we find that it is the popular will to which the army has given its help so that the people and the army save Egypt from a new 'taliban' experience.

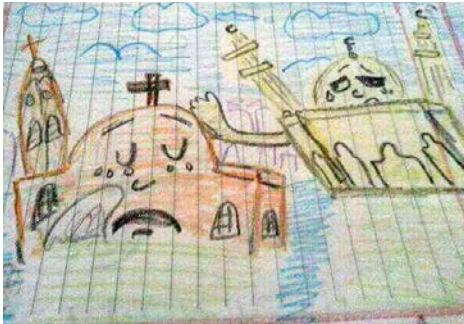
Indeed, any revolution has a bill, a price paid by the people. Over the two and an half years of the Egyptian revolution, the economy has greatly suffered and is on the brink of collapse. Tourism, one of the

main sources of national income, is completely paralysed, with, as a consequence, youth unemployment for many who work in this field; this has a strong impact on the economy; the poor are getting poorer.

What future do I see: a country where all people share equality of rights and responsibilities, a country open to all without discrimination of any group, a country which respects the rights of others and accepts differences. It is up to us to teach the children of tomorrow Egypt about these values of tolerance, sharing, welcoming the other, culture of peace.

In this context, I remember the sentence of Martin Luther King: ‘either we live together like brothers, either we die together like idiots’.

Emad Zakir, Principal of the school of Hagaza



Drawing by a Student in High Egypt which is presently circulating on Facebook.



“God has two stretched arms. One is strong enough to encompass justice, the other gentle enough to surround us with grace” From: The Strength to Love

EUROPE

A DAY OF RELAXATION FOR THE FRATERNITIES IN LIÈGE

Following the initiative of Johanna Ceyskens, about 20 people from the region of Liège and members of the fraternities of Brussels came together in the beautiful village of Deigné (Commune of Aywaille) on 21st August for a walk and a picnic.



After that, there was a guided tour of the museum of stones which is situated in the old power station of Carrières de Sprimont in the heart of the factory which is still operating.

Through different tools, old and recent products, we were able to discover the different stages of working with stone, the working conditions of the tradesmen, ... as well as the works of about 15 artists produced during the 20th international convention of sculpting that took place during this month of August.

All in all, it was a precious moment of conviviality and of experiencing renewal.

Henri Roberti



DOSSIER – EUROPEAN ENCOUNTER IN MALTA

The European fraternities came together for their Conference in Malta from 12th to 16th July before having a holiday time. Germany, England, Belgium, Spain, France, Hungary, Italy, Malta and Poland had followed the invitation of the European responsables.

They shared four days with a dense schedule but rich in exchange on the topic: “From Nazareth to a universal fraternity”.



Practical topics such as the planning of meetings and finances were addressed as well as relations with the Spiritual Family and the preparation of the centenary of Charles de Foucauld`s death. We all share the desire to celebrate his life rather than his death and to make him known around us.

We also suggested a relay on the European path of St. Martin in order to associate ourselves with the route suggested by the European cultural centre; walking in order to know, to admire and to share with those who we meet along the way. It is not about walking the whole route but rather about taking advantage of the opportunity to open ourselves towards others and to really meet them.

The Holiday that always follows this Conference reunited about 80 people from 8 different countries! The discovery of the beautiful island of Malta and of St. Paul who had run aground here, experiencing the much appreciated and diverse life together, exchanges that make you think, meditative pauses for the morning prayer preceded by silent adoration, source of life: all these ingredients were assembled for our happiness without even counting the beauty of the location: the seminary of Rabat and his rector who welcomed us in a friendly and generous manner!

Thank you to Malta, to its dynamic team and to England who have prepared the vacation with them – a social gathering in the heart of the Mediterranean!

Annie Bijonneau



Reflection on “Encounter in the Mediterranean”

In any encounter, including current social communication e.g. Facebook, there is a risk of having much information without any meeting between people. There is also a risk that the communication can be exploited by the powerful.

The theme of “Encounter” is important for being human, for being Christian. There is the necessity of people to meet. There is a depth to the “Encounter” theme, i.e. people are not just being together in the same place, but are given the chance to meet the other as other, not just be a copy of myself.

The depth of what this means is to meet God, also to meet others as human beings. Through meeting together we discover that we are of the mystery of God, the mystery of each other and the mystery of friendship. But if we organize all the practical things perfectly and we miss meeting, all is lacking – life, love, and the values of friendship. So it is not just an encounter like taking pictures to take home.

In looking at Br. Charles we get a deeper insight into what encounter means.

Nazareth: presence – hospitality – encounter with the poor

1. Nazareth: as radical presence

Saying that Nazareth is central to Charles de Foucauld and his spirituality can be like a cliché to those who spent so many years exploring and living his way of life. But to explore it furthermore not only helps us to get the nuances but also to get insights to our questions. As the renowned theologian Gisbert Greshake states “*we ought not to speak of 'the' spirituality of Nazareth, but rather of a variety of spiritual orientations that revolve around the keyword “Nazareth”. (...) if one were to isolate the single perspective of “hiddennes”, one would diminish the full significance of “Nazareth” for spirituality*”¹.

- For Br. Charles, the source of the Nazareth experience is his love of Christ that led to his imitation of Christ: “*The first effect of love is imitation*”. This led him to a life of humility, prayer, silence and contemplation. This also meant wanting to bring Jesus and his Gospel to others not through “words” but through a modest life of prayer on their behalf and in their place, through unconditional openness and radical presence among the people.
- “*For the many*”: this phrase changes everything. For him Nazareth implies being both closed and open; withdrawn from others and being ready to offer hospitality; contemplation and reaching out. But it is precisely this “for the many” that drives him to a radical existence for others. “*I see myself, in astonishment, pass over from a contemplative life to a life of caring for souls. And, indeed , not because this is what I want to do, but because the people need it.*”² (7th January 1902: letter to his cousin) In Beni Abbes he writes: “*I desire that all inhabitants – Christians, Muslims, Jews, pagans – consider me as their brother, the brother of all men*” ... “*to be wholly there for the people of the area*”. While living in this context, he then speaks out against injustice and slavery.

¹ GIBBERT GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, in *Communio* 31 (Spring 2004) 16.

² Gisbert GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 20.

- Amongst the Tuaregs, who had never heard of the Gospel: "*I can do nothing better for the sanctity of souls than to bring the seed of the divine Word to as many as possible – not through preaching but through my actions.*"
- "*Walking through the world unknown, as Jesus did in Nazareth, like a person wondering in the night ... poor, diligent, modest, gentle and beneficent as he was*".
- This is a way to become present for the people you live with and gain trust: a humble presence before God; a poor and humble presence amongst human beings like Jesus of Nazareth.

- ✓ What strikes you in Jesus' way of encountering others?
- ✓ What inspires you?

2. Hospitality – in a concrete way

- What provided a model for his own establishment were the so-called "Zaouias", the Islamic centres of hospitality, which offered travellers accommodation and shelter, whether they be pilgrims or beggars, no matter who happens to be standing at the door. Thus, the "newly discovered" characteristics of Nazareth come to include hospitality, a variety of relationships and a missionary presence.³
- Radical "presence" among and for: *Direct evangelization is not possible at this moment: the only possible way to live is the life of Nazareth, in poverty and its humiliations, in worship, in manual or intellectual work ... And all of this with the goal of gaining people's trust, to earn their love and in a gentle and friendly manner, through*

³Gisbert GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 20.

*brief conversations, to correct their false ideas about natural morality”.*⁴

□ This meant becoming involved in the affairs of those around him. Charles proposes plans for an administrative reform in the Sahara region, protests against arbitrary confiscations or unjust administration of rights; he is an advisor in political and economic affairs; takes interest in the new technologies that serve to develop the Sahara (railways, roads, the telegraph, meteorological stations) and defends them; he gives advice regarding the economy and the care and control of medicine; he teaches the Tuareg women knitting and crocheting. He teaches them the language and gathers together the Tuareg literary tradition.⁵ This is what the word “*presence*” means for Br Charles: “*Humble and lowly presence before God and humble and poor presence among men, just as Jesus himself lived it in Nazareth.*”⁶

- ✓ How does this theme of “presence” inspire you in terms of the people you live with?
- ✓ In concrete terms, what would you imagine this to be?
- ✓ Have you any positive experiences of this reality?

3. Encounter with Christ – Encounter with the poor

The essence of Br Charles is this: not losing, whatever it costs him, the love of Christ Jesus. A love that gives birth to his radical and absolute desire with which he wants to follow Jesus till “*the folly of the last place*”. To reach this aim of friendship with the Nazarene it is necessary to renounce everything, above all himself, living a life of total availability: “*Not do anything else ... except to remain in the hands of God, ready for everything that he asks, available, but ... humble,*

⁴Letter from 1 October 1906 to Abbe Caron, in GIBBERT GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 23.

⁵Cf. GIBBERT GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 23.

⁶Gisbert GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 24

grateful, trustful" (Letter, 29 July 1897).⁷ He seeks his friendship: "*Love consists not in feeling that one loves, but in willing to love; when one wants to love, one loves; when one wants to love above everything else, one loves above everything else ... I bless God for this life so hidden, so lost so similar to his life in Nazareth*" (10 September 1899).⁸

Choice: he dedicated his extraordinary abilities both technical and scientific to the service of those who are considered of no value for the majority of people. He managed to become the brother of all, because he renounced to possess that which he could have easily kept. He accepted the nothingness of others and relived it from inside through the expression of total dedication of his life: no one felt he has no place for him in his heart, *'largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore'* (1Kings 4,29).

Contemplating Christ and thus become transformed in him. This leads us to become the Church of the poor that becomes a sister of every creature, thus promoting the spirit of universal brotherhood. We are indebted to Br. Charles for this.

The basis in Br Charles is :

○ God is Father of all, good and bad (Mt 5, 45)

○ The incarnation is the mystery of the Word, image of the invisible God, who came to live among men to dialogue with them and for them *'the firstborn among brothers'* (Rm. 8,29)

Church as people of God called not to close herself in a citadel but to go out in a continuous diaspora to be leaven and stimulate the human potentiality of love and progress.

Universal brotherhood for Br. Charles meant total and authentic communion with the last of the earth; for him *'life of Nazareth'* meant

⁷Antonio FURIOLI, *Charles de Foucauld. L'amicizia con Gesu*, Milano 2002, 78.

⁸Antonio FURIOLI, *Charles de Foucauld*, 79.

the last place in the heart of the city of man, near those put aside, those not wanted, despised, used, in everything sharing their reality.

Vatican II:

□ There is a link between the “Church of the Poor Group” (during Vatican Council II Msgr Maximos V. Hakim - Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch - took Fr. Paul Gauthier as *peritus*. The latter was familiar with de Foucauld’s emphasis on Nazareth.) The group was headed by Cardinal Lercaro of Bologna and they linked with Pope John XXIII’s statement who at the opening of the council in a ‘Message to the world’ described the Church as “*the Church of all people, and in particular, the Church of the poor*”. Lercaro took up this expression in a speech he made to the Council in December 1962, in which he said: “*This ought not to be simply one theme among many at the Council, but must become the central question. Theme of the Council is the Church, insofar as she is above all the ‘Church of the poor.’*”⁹

□□ In line with Gauthier’s initiative, they analysed the situation of the Church in terms of a schism: “*between the incarnation of Jesus Christ in the visible Church and the other mysterious incarnation of the poor Jesus in the poor ... If sanctity and poverty are synonymous expressions in the Old Testament, if Jesus, the Holy One, appeared as poor among men, then the holy Church on earth can only be the poor Church, and conversely only the poor Church can be the holy Church. The danger – the schism and the heresy – consists here, as it always does, in the fact that that which is a unity becomes separated: the mystical body, in which the poor have a privileged place through Christ’s will, is on earth no other Church but the Catholic and apostolic Church*”.¹⁰ Thus not only presence among the poor but the return to the ‘poor face’ face of the Church.

⁹Gisbert GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 27.

¹⁰Quoted in Gisbert GRESHAKE, *The Spiritual Charism of Nazareth*, 27.

□ *Lumen Gentium* 8 “Just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and obedience, so too is the Church called to follow the same path”.

- ✓ To what extent is the Church truly the ‘Church of the poor’?
- ✓ Is she a poor, defenceless and lowly Church in the midst of society’s power struggles?
- ✓ How is Pope Francis recovering this under developed theme? In what way has he inspired you? Where do you see parallels with Br. Charles’ Nazareth spirituality?

Father Jimmy Bonnici

Fr Jimmy Bonnici is 41 and a priest of the Diocese of Malta. Visiting the Little Brothers' Fraternity in Spello (Italy) as a seminarian, he came into contact with the spirituality of Nazareth, which has since then been one of his main sources of inspiration. He is the present Rector of the Archbishop's Seminary in Malta. He has been for years in close contact with the Lay Fraternity of the Island. Besides his native Maltese, he can speak English and Italian. He can also read French and speak a little bit of it. He is the accompanying priest of the International Team.



GLOBAL FRATERNITY IN A GLOBAL WORLD

Charles de Foucauld was a *universal brother*, a bridge traversing worlds which were different and distant. Choosing to go and live in the heart of the Saharan desert, he reached one of the furthest outposts of European presence in a faraway and hostile territory. At the same time, through correspondence he kept up a closely knit ramification of relationships with his family, his friends and with the French Church.



Those who knew him were amazed at his ability to approach and be near the populations among whom he lived, adopting their lifestyle and habits, and yet remaining profoundly French.

Through his life, his scholarly work of the Tuareg language and traditions, he wanted to make the Tuareg known to the French while at the same time make the French known to the Tuareg. He was a bridge between these two worlds also in prayer, offering to God at the Adoration prayer the needs of both worlds.

We too are called to be bridges between countries and continents. The encounters we have at the continental and international level put us in contact with brothers and sisters whose home is far away, they give us the opportunity to get to know their culture and to participate in the events that weave their personal lives and the life of their country.

* * *

Fraternity is mainly lived at the grassroots, each one with his or her family, with one's neighbours, in their own environment. The structures at the National and International level are such that they facilitate communication. For this reason the Fraternities scattered around the world have been invited to establish between them twinning

relationships (Little Guide 5.10) “in order to share the news, ideas, literature and prayer, so as to mutually grow in the Foucauldian spirituality.” Some twinnings have already been established and the establishment of others should be encouraged.

Following the Assembly in Bonn in 2012, connections of acquaintance and friendships came alive among the delegates, and these links are making progress through e-mail exchanges obviously in special occasions as at Christmas and Easter, but even in other occasions like Pentecost, Corpus Domini or in other special meetings of the Fraternity and events at the national level, like the canonization last Autumn of Fr Berthieu, the first saint of Madagascar. Others have started friendships of a more personal nature. We think that these spontaneous endeavours should be encouraged.

When a person we care for lives in another part of the world, we care about what happens in his country. In this way, the news that the means of communication deliver to us daily of what is happening in other countries acquire another dimension. For example, knowing that there is a Fraternity in Syria, we are interested to have news of the conflict that is taking place over there. We are especially interested to know about our brothers and sisters who live over there and not only about the impact that the conflict is having on Europe.

At times our brothers and sisters call our attention to countries and situations that are either overlooked or whose importance is played down by the international press. For example who knows what is really happening in the Central African Republic? There, the Muslim minority (not more than 10% of the population) took power through war last March and is now beginning an islamisation programme of the country.

More recently, at the end of June, Rania from Lebanon drew our attention to rising tensions in her country as a result of the civil war in

Syria; the intra-Muslim conflict between Sunnites and non-Sunnites runs the danger of spilling beyond the Syrian border. Certain clashes between armed groups and the Lebanese army have already had several casualties leaving many injured while a number have lost their lives.

However, God be thanked, there is not only bad news. At the beginning of March, Peter from Nairobi shared his enthusiasm for the peaceful and regular manner in which the Presidential elections in Kenya took place; an enthusiasm all the more justified when one remembers the bloodshed of a few years earlier at the previous Presidential elections.

* * *

According to the *Way of Unity*, the International Team “should be the sign of unity with all the fraternities and has responsibility for giving support, encouraging growth and maintaining liaison throughout the world.” This takes place through communication between the members of the Team, their periodic meetings, usually every two years and through organizing the International Assembly every 6 years. At the IA delegates from all over the world get together to share and encounter as well as to elect the new International Team.

The present International Team, elected at the 2012 Bonn Assembly, consists of Claudio and Sylvana Chiaruttini (Europe and interim Asia), Joseph Yessi (Africa), Luis and Adriana Torres (America) and Rania Chaiban (Arab World). Claudio was chosen by the Team to be its co-ordinator and Rania to be the editor of the International Bulletin.

Bringing together an international community of brothers and sisters and turning it into a global family requires human will and effort. Bringing God into the world, incarnating Him requires our commitment, disposition, time and also financial resources.

Financial resources of the Fraternity are necessary first of all so as to make the structure function properly. There is also another important

goal: utilizing the resources gathered in the rich countries to contribute towards encounters of the Fraternity in other continents and to relieve the burden of expense for delegates from the poorer countries at international gatherings. The International Team makes use of these resources in a way that generates a sense of co-responsibility: it is requested that each national Fraternity provides as much as possible of the required expenses and the international account provides for the shortfall, to the extent that it can.

In this way through its financial contribution, the international account acts as an agent of levelling between those who have means and those who lack them. In this way we all become equal, and have equal opportunities to meet, pray, share and deepen our relationships, removing cultural, social, language, political and a hundred other barriers as we hold the hand of the other, embrace the other, listen to the other, laugh and cry with the other. The other becomes a person I know, a friend on the same path following Jesus.

Claudio and Sylvana Chiaruttini



Final Declaration of the Delegates' Meeting

Lay Fraternity Charles de Foucauld

Malta, July 2013

During our European meeting in Malta, we developed the theme "From Nazareth to universal Fraternity".

Every country shared its experiences of the life of Nazareth by emphasising that we cannot try to live "universal fraternity" unless we have already reflected on it and lived it in our base fraternities. These fraternities are the real space for learning to live a fraternal life. It is

there that we are encouraged to look at our life with the eyes of God's love and to take up the **challenge to live the Gospel simply and joyfully.**

In everyday life and in every country, we meet persons affected by disease, illness, solitude, injustice, handicap, exclusion or immigration. Each of these persons needs a warm and compassionate presence and attention. Thanks to the Maltese team, to Thierry and to Marc for their testimony. With them, we assert that this presence and this attention must be supported by laws, by professionals, and that it be adequately financed, **in order to acknowledge and respect every person's right to human dignity.**

It is essential for each one **to recognize others and feel recognized by others as equal in dignity and as a unique person and therefore as a brother.** Thus it is indispensable to:

1. **Analyse** what causes suffering and injustice in Europe and in the world
2. **Involve ourselves** personally and collectively in denouncing the causes and in concretely experimenting ways to open a future for youth and for humanity.



“The human race must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such method is love”.

In his first journey to Lampedusa, Pope Francis, by provoking mentalities to better understand and to welcome immigrants, reveals a Church which is closer to the "**Good news announced to the poor**". It is in the life of Nazareth, in daily life, that we try to live the Good News according to the charism of Charles de Foucauld.

The St Martin European Cultural Centre of Tours proposes "public-spirited sharing" which aims at drawing up perspectives for tomorrow and to contribute to a global vision of a future based on solidarity. Some of our fraternities will take part in a relay walk following the path of St Martin **to involve ourselves in this common construction of a universal fraternity.**



What the participants had to say

“It was a blessed time of sharing and friendship in simplicity in God’s presence.”

Annie Bijonneau- France

“The weakness of human means is a cause of strength. God uses contrary winds to lead us to port”. Charles de Foucauld April 20, 1900.

Bernadette Masereel- Belgium

“I have been very impressed by the welcome and the serenity of the Maltese Fraternity. Thank you a thousand times!”

Myriam Noiset- Belgium

“It was wonderful...! A lot to be said, nothing to criticize”

Alain & Jacqueline Gontier- France

“There was the discovery of the island of Malta, its culture, and the richness of the others which came out of the exchanges and this unity in faith and fraternity which help us grow and bring us to aim for universal good.”

Laurence Fernandez- France

“Malta, time of exchange between sky and sea.”

Jacques Servais- Belgium

“In the fraternal spirit of Charles, we listened to and shared with others, prayed and played together.”

Louise Russel- England

“In the heart of Valetta, a discovery: in the district of drugs, casinos, games, the Millenium Chapel is an oasis of peace with Eucharistic adoration open night and day and accompanied by the Poor Clares prayer.”

François and Andrée Guicciardi- France

“Thanks to the Maltese fraternity, we came together, rooted in prayer, we lived a wonderful experience, meeting local people and members of the European Fraternity, exchanging our thoughts and our lives.”

Rita Tyberghien- Belgium

“The meeting in Malta gave the opportunity to experience the internationality and unity of the Lay Fraternity, the fraternal welcome and generosity of a nation with whom we share the same Fraternity! We are the large family of Brother Charles! Thank you very much.”

László Emmanuel Medgyessy- Hungary



“The only way to know God and to become a saint is to love our enemies”
From: The Strength to Love

“Kind welcome, simplicity and participation in the diversity of the fraternity, here we are, me you and God and the whole world.”

Luigia Pattano- Italy

“We arrived with our particularities and our diversity, gathered around a same brother, Brother Charles, in the face of God, in prayer and adoration, we discovered that we are sons and daughters of a same Father, universal brothers and sisters.”

Christine Robitaille- France

“Refreshing impressions of community under a hot Mediterranean sun.”

Matthias Stoppok & Dr. Birgit Opielka – Germany

We are a family of 4 who attended and here's 1 sentence from each of us.

1-Thanks for the blessings received at the the vigil before the Blessed Sacrament, silent adoration + final thanksgiving Mass.

2-Being in St Paul's cave made the hardships St Paul faced more real and made me meditate more deeply about his saying " it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"

3-Br. Charles' love + humility became evident through the daily readings + evening dramas.

4-Grateful thanks to delegates + Maltese Fraternity who excelled in working so hard to make it a spiritually uplifting + fun filled family holiday.



Ruy, Mary, Gary & Jason Pereira - England

News from the Association – Family of Charles de Foucauld

Disciples of the Gospel

1973-2013: 40th anniversary of the foundation of the fraternity

Last June, we met in a community assembly, to reflect on this particular milestone for the history of the Fraternity. It was an opportunity to remember that history guided by the text from **Deuteronomy** where we compared the 40 years of the Israeli people in the desert with the 40 years we lived in the Fraternity.

We decided to celebrate this anniversary on Sunday 15 September 2013 together with our families, friends and all those close to us. During this day, some friends of the Fraternity gave their testimony, followed by the celebration of the Eucharist presided by the bishop of Treviso Gianfranco Agostino Gardin. Our foundation dates back to 22nd August 1973, on that day we had the funeral of Sister Assunta, one of the sisters who founded the community. She was ill since long, so we did not perceive her death as unexpected. However, we found a strange coincidence that she died on that day. We saw that as an opportunity to come back to faith, back to the meaning of life and an invitation to read the events of life in the light of Easter's dynamism where resurrection necessarily passes through the cross.

During those months, in the new house of the fraternity, we had the opportunity to accommodate individuals and groups. This summer, our whole Fraternity had the possibility (and the blessing) to have the annual spiritual retreat. We reflected and meditated on texts of the Gospel which showed us how women lived their faith in a very particular way. The theme of the retreat was 'Believing with a woman's heart', presented by Paola Bignardi, a lay person, former president of the Italian Catholic Action.

We also held at our place the new experience of the biblical week for children. With the help of other youngsters from parishes, we have led a summer camp to help children learn the story of King David and

the culture of his time. This gave the opportunity to children to immerse themselves in the culture where Jesus himself grew up. It also enabled them to experience very special moments with their parents. A different way to approach the biblical texts!

Little Sisters of the Gospel

This summer, two events marked the life of the Fraternity: the celebration of our jubilee and our general chapter.

At the eve of our chapter, we were a large group to gather at Montmartre to celebrate, with joy and thankfulness, how God has been faithful to us and to offer all that we lived during the 50 years of our history. The night we spent together in adoration was a highly memorable part of this celebration.

“Au revoir” Sister Genevieve

In 1952 three Little Sisters, 22-28 years of age, buried themselves in the heart of the Amazonia "without thinking of returning". Their diaries, which retrace the life of this Fraternity from June 1952 till the end of 1954, have been edited by R. Dumont and published in French by Karthala in 2011, under the title “En Amazonie. Renaissance de la tribu indienne des Tapirapé” (In Amazonia. Renaissance of the Tapirapé Indian tribe) ISBN: 978-2-8111-0466-5. The book was presented in issue 86 (Dec. 2011) of the International Bulletin.

Little Sister Geneviève of Jesus was among them from the very beginning. After sharing 61 years of her life with the Tapirapé, she died on 24th September and was buried in their village. This report is taken from an article by Lenonardo Boff



published in *Koinonia* (<http://www.servicioskoinonia.org>) on 11th October 2013.

The sisters came to know from French Dominican monks who were doing missionary work in the land of the Araguaia, that the Tapirapé were extinguishing. From 1500 they were reduced to 47 because of Kayapó's incursions, white's diseases and lack of women. In the spirit of Brother Charles, going to live together and not to convert, they decided to join the agony of a people.

Upon arrival, sister Geneviève heard the chief Marcos saying: **“The Tapirapé will disappear, the whites will finish us, the land has value, the game has value, the fish has value. Only the Indians are worthless.”** The people had internalized the fact that they were worthless and were inevitably doomed to disappear.

They went to them and asked them hospitality. They began to live with them the gospel of brotherhood, in the fields, in the struggle for the daily cassava, in learning their language and encouraging all of them , including religion, in a supportive travel without return. **Over time they have been included as members of the tribe.**

Their self-esteem grew. Thanks to their intermediation they obtained that Karajá women married Tapirapé men, thus ensuring the survival of the tribe. From 47 they were, they are today almost a thousand. In 50 years, they did not convert a single member of the tribe. They obtained indeed much more: **they became the midwives of a people, in the light of whom had understood his mission as one to "bring life and life abundantly," Jesus.**

When I saw the face of an Indian Tapirapé and the aged face of the Little Sister Geneviève, I thought: if she had dyed her white hair with *tucum* she could pass for a perfect Tapirapé woman. She has achieved the foundress' prophecy: "The sisters will become Tapirapé and from there go to the others and love them, but they will always be Tapirapé.



« The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people. »

The website

The site www.charlesdefoucauld.org is online in the French version, but there are a few pages in English. **You are invited to supply information and announce your activities.** To do so, please contact Antoinette on: antoinette_roberti@yahoo.fr

Subscriptions

It is really desirable that those readers, who can afford to do so, contribute financially to the International Bulletin. The amount is €20 every 2 years. The payment of subscription raises problems of a financial and logistical nature (such as bank charges), and consequently it is advisable to become organised accordingly.

For the subscribers of the English edition:

The way to proceed is to combine the subscriptions for each country so that members pay the subscription into the account of the Fraternity in their own country. Then the national secretariat will deposit the total subscriptions into the International Account specifying “Subscriptions for the International Bulletin.” They will then send a list of the names and addresses of the persons concerned to Claudio Chiaruttini at the email address: chiaruttini@t-online.de
Here is the account for the deposit:

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These material aspects need not however be an obstacle to the dissemination of the Bulletin, which is an important link between the fraternities around the world and which allows us to become aware of their richness and vitality. The dissemination of the Bulletin therefore remains a priority for the International Team. We would like to intensify the dispatch of brochures to Africa and Latin America and it is with the help of your contributions that we can achieve this.

Send articles and news for the Lay Fraternity's Bulletin to the email: courrierfscf@gmail.com

“Spirit of Infancy” - “Spiritual Infancy”

When God reveals Himself in a child,
harmless and disarming,
voices soften, hands empty
Faces open up

In the eyes... a star slowly rises
All safety devices collapse, useless

Then comes the joy of discovering
That no sin, no misery can ever prevent
God to be near!

The heart exults... the Son's spirit sings within it!
Another within shouts 'Beloved Father'!

The human heart rejoices in its humanity
And lets itself be led by the Father's Son...

Free, renewed, it listens to the meaning of events,
It sees the faces of its brothers and sisters in a different manner
It takes the risk of the Gospel:

'Happy you, simple hearts...'
'Happy you, makers of peace'
'Happy you, the kind hearted...'

'You welcome Jesus infant from the hands of the Virgin Mary,
his mother
To bring him in turn to the world,
Him, the Lord God, with a child's heart full of confidence.'

Little Sister Magdeleine of Jesus