



Beloved members of the fraternity

As International team we would like to share a few thoughts with you. Together we live our present reality with its grave challenges and open our eyes for the graces of our faithful God.

### **I. We share a common humanity**

We are all trying to come to terms with the effects of Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

We try to take care of our health and that of others.

We experience fear and anxiety as we never know where, when, from whom it can reach us.

We experience insecurity due to the enormous impact on the economy and the side effects.

We experience sadness when we hear of the suffering of those who have to bear the illness alone, be buried without a proper farewell, lose their job, suffer on the level of mental health.

We grieve lost friends and miss our usual routines, the contact with friends, loved ones and those we minister to.

We hunger for the Eucharist and for communion.

We are humbled.

### **II. We share a common spirituality**

We have been gifted with faith, hope and charity.

We have encountered Jesus in the limits of Nazareth.

We received some tips on how to navigate the desert.

We had a fair degree of stretching so that our hearts could expand, reach out to the periphery, become universal brothers and sisters.

We were seeking to “Walk together in hope: renouncing, denouncing, announcing”.

We have been taught to prayer of abandonment.

We are grateful.

### **III. We are prophets of a future not our own<sup>1</sup>**

May this challenging time be an opportunity to dig deeper into fresh waters of our faith and spirituality. May we not be too overwhelmed by what is happening and embrace the present with hope. As Brother Charles wrote to one of his Trappist brothers:

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by St Oscar Romero.

“To receive the grace of God ... you must go to a desert place and stay a while. There you can be emptied and unburdened of everything that does not pertain to God. There the house of our soul is swept clean to make room for God alone to dwell ... We need this silence, this absence of every creature, so that God can build his hermitage within us”<sup>2</sup>.

May we dig deeper with Brother Charles to search with love and total determination

- Not to keep previous patterns and lifestyles
- Not to protect the status quo
- Not to dwell in superficial comfort

But to let ourselves be surprised by God and

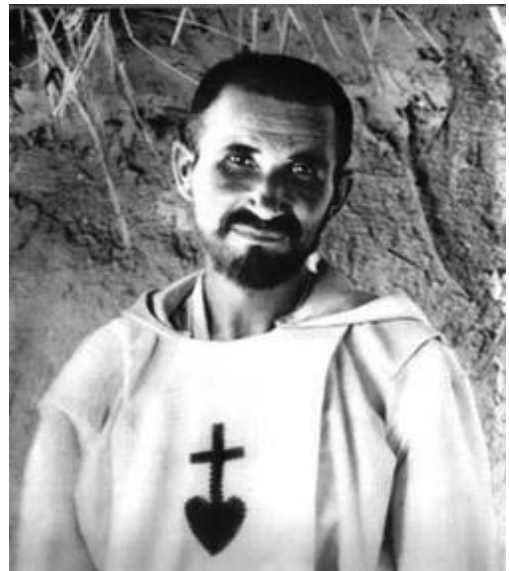
- discover in what way God is with us today
- discover how to love Jesus, imitate Him and, with Him, reach out to others
- To abandon ourselves with complete trust in the Father.

*For the International team,  
Jimmy Bonnici, accompanying priest,  
Dominique Bertinau and François Citera for Africa,  
Mayela and Willian Seijas de Olmos for America,  
Alishbah Javed and Myrna Aquino for Asia,  
Brigitte Leport and Laurence Fernandez for Europe,  
Maria Ratiba Bouali for the Arab World.*

*Father,  
I abandon myself into your hands;  
do with me what you will.  
Whatever you may do, I thank you:  
I am ready for all, I accept all.*

*Let only your will be done in me,  
and in all your creatures –  
I wish no more than this, O Lord.*

*Into your hands I commend my soul:  
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,  
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,  
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,  
and with boundless confidence,  
for you are my Father.*



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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in BONNIE THURSTON, *Hidden in God. Discovering the Desert Vision of Charles de Foucauld*, Notre Dame (In) 2016, 68.

