

On Monday 28th, we meet at Barcelona airport. Fifteen of the nineteen branches of the Spiritual Family are present. We head for Tarrès, where the Comunitat de Jesus welcomes us.

Participants : Sabine (française), Fraternité Charles de Foucauld ; Maité (française), Institut séculier Jésus Caritas ; Christine (allemande), Petites Sœurs de l'Evangile ; Andreas (allemand), Petits Frères de l'Evangile ; Mirek (polonais), Petits Frères de Jésus ; Gilles (canadien), Petits Frères de la Croix ; Jean-Marie et Joseph (vietnamiens), Missionnaires de Jésus Serviteur, Institut séculier ; Else (belge), Petites Soeurs de Nazareth ; Ciro (canadien), Fraternité séculière Charles de Foucauld ; Matthias (autrichien), Fraternité sacerdotale Jesus-Caritas ; Josephine (centrafricaine), Petites Sœurs du Cœur de Jésus (Bangui) ; Mercé (espagnole), Comunitat de Jesus (laïcs) ; Antonella (italienne), Disciples de l'Evangile ; Kasia Anna (polonaise), Petites Sœurs de Jésus ; Giovanni Marco (italien), Petits Frères de Jesus-Caritas ; Claude Rault (intervenant- évêque émérite de Laghouat- Ghardaïa, Algérie), et aussi le bureau qui a préparé cette session: Brigitte (Fraternité séculière), Régine (Institut séculier Jésus Caritas) et Giuliana (Disciples de l'Evangile)

Tuesday, 29 April 2025

Intervention by the Comunitat de Jesus (excerpts)

Perhaps you are wondering why we exist, how the community began, why a community of lay people seek to live the precepts of the Gospel in fraternal friendship, why we are here.

We must begin by explaining **las scollas**. It is a Catalan word. It sounds like life review groups, but it is not that. In Catalan, it is a group of boys and girls who dance the sardana. It means a group of young people who have the same project and who support each other. The scolla is important for the community.

We began to review our lives, but not in the Jesuit style of see-judge-act. We began with a Gospel text in a group of no more than five people. During for 20 minutes, we would



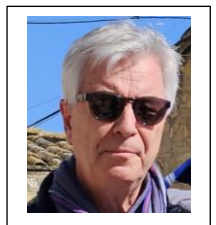
all talk together and one member would talk about their life. We would say, for example, 'Mercé, today it's your turn to talk.' And for an hour and a half, she would share her daily life, her experiences, her truth. Another characteristic: **it was weekly, every week, nothing took precedence over this meeting, with a strong commitment.** We did this in every house. Another characteristic was that men and women were together. In the 1970s, we could talk about anything, including sexuality. We could talk sincerely about life without wondering whether we liked someone or not. And that was the great strength of the community because, for example, I did that from the age of 17 to 30. Every week we shared the Gospel, and every year with a different group, because what is very important is to be open, not to always have the same people. To commit oneself in the light of the Gospel. It was not just a human friendship. We read the Gospel a lot, every week, every week. That is the basis of the community and it still exists today. Things have changed in the way we do things: we are adults, couples have children, grandchildren. Life has passed. Fifty years already! There were a hundred of us, today there are forty. But there is a group that meets every month on Zoom, other groups still do scolla.



That is the basis of good friendship... When we were part of the spiritual family of CdF, Bishop Mercier said to us: 'We can see that you love each other very much, that there is a strong friendship between you.' But it is not ideal. We have many problems because we are very normal people, each of us has a family, we work, we do everything, but this basis of friendship still sustains us. This friendship is our identity.



Later, we wanted to share more. That's when the 'foyers' came into being, apartments where we would meet **several times a week.** We would pray, often comment on the Gospel, and share our experiences of the day. This encouraged dialogue between us and was a way of being faithful. We were young, interested in many things, and we dedicated time to meeting with our brothers and sisters, to pray and share. There were all kinds of situations: single people, couples with or without children. It was a way of living as a family. We learned many things: listening, sharing time, money, etc. **It was a school of life for many.**



The whole community meets for a **monthly retreat.** It is an opportunity to share and learn silence. The other meeting of the whole community is Easter, from Thursday to Sunday. **Every year, we celebrate Easter together in Tarrès,** an Easter prepared throughout the year.

What binds us together? **Friendship with Jesus, friendship with our brothers. A welcoming friendship** to all those who come to us with problems and suffering. We welcome them as brothers and sisters. We believe that this is the mission of the community.

The community was canonically recognised in 1965 in Barcelona. It was born in the wake of the Council. Two pillars of its spirituality: Charles de Foucauld and Montserrat, the Benedictine abbey, with which we have had many links from the beginning.

Our connection with Montserrat:

In Montserrat, there was a Benedictine hermit who lived in the mountains, Father Stanislas, a man of God who had a very simple, very solid spirituality. The community would visit him and talk with him. He was a good guide for the community. It was through him that our founder, Pedro, discovered Tarrès. We spent a few days in the summer at the parish house in Tarrès and began our relationship with Tarrès. The people were very welcoming; at that time, faith was very important. We renovated one house, then two, and so on. Together with the people of the village, we built the hermitages. We shared a whole life story and grew up with the people of the village.

Tarrès is our home, but it is also a place that welcomes a wide variety of groups and individuals who come here to experience a period of retreat. You are welcome to visit whenever you wish!

Our connection with Montserrat continues and is important to us. We go there for retreats, and a brother has been appointed by the Bishop of Barcelona as our spiritual advisor.

Our connection with Charles de Foucauld:

- The community discovered Charles de Foucauld through Father Peyriguère and the translation of his book 'Let Christ Seize You'. This led us to discover the writings of Charles de Foucauld.
- We also had a long relationship with Michel Lafont, who came here and whom we visited in Bordeaux: he always listened to us and encouraged us. Our relationship with him connected us to the message of Charles de Foucauld.
- One text by Charles de Foucauld particularly touched us: 'We need Priscilla and Aquila'... Bishop Mercier told us: that is your charism!

We have grown in our relationship with the Spiritual Family through our friendships with people such as Bishop Mercier, Little Sister Madeleine, etc.

Every step we have taken has always been through friendships with people.

In conclusion, it remains to be emphasised that we love to celebrate, get together, eat together and sing!

Presentation by Margarita Saldana Mostajo

(Excerpts from notes and slideshow)



THE CONVERSION OF THE GAZE

The subject of the conversion of the gaze is particularly dear to me. I have recently been working on the conversion of the five senses. Today we are going to focus on the conversion of the gaze. I am going to give you a few pointers that may shed some light on the general theme of this meeting. I am delighted that the second part will be led by Claude Rault.

I believe this subject is really important because we see, but we do not always look at what we see. We will also see what dispositions we need in order to be able to look today in a more appropriate way, in the manner of Jesus. This is the framework I am going to propose for our reflection this morning.

Our dear Pope Francis has called this Jubilee of Hope and he told us in the Jubilee Bull:

'Christian life is *a journey* that needs *strong moments* to nourish and strengthen hope, that irreplaceable companion that gives us a glimpse of the goal: the encounter with the Lord Jesus.' Bull 9 May 2024, no. 5

I invite you to feel our gratitude for being called to walk this path of hope in communion with all humanity, which struggles and advances painfully towards its fulfilment... and for the grace of living in Tarrès a powerful moment that will strengthen the hope of the whole family...

Our lives are filled with words

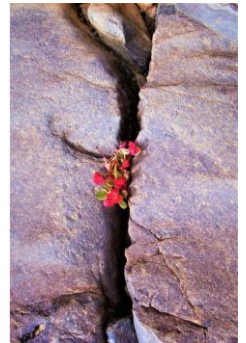
I would like to begin with the observation that our lives are filled with words. There are many words in our lives. Most of them are empty words. They pass through our daily experience without really leaving a trace. If, at the end of the day, we review our day from this perspective, tracing the words we have spoken throughout the day, we realise that most of these words have disappeared; we don't even remember what we said. So they are rather banal words. Then there are also words – and I think it is important to be aware of this – there are words in our daily lives that are rather deadly because they cause a kind of death, they somehow extinguish life in us and around us...

These are also words that we say too often, with which we hurt others. We regret having said them. So there are banal words, deadly words. And also, I hope we have experienced this, there are words that I would call vital words. These are words that make life grow in us and around us, words that are rooted in the person of Jesus, in the Word of God that we meditate on day after day. Like Brother Charles, we must read and reread the Gospel, meditate on it. And from this encounter with the Word, vital words are born. These are words that help us go through our daily lives with more joy, more mutual trust, more hope.

This Easter season we are experiencing is an invitation to listen, as if for the first time, to certain words that can still surprise us.

I really like this image, a photo of Tamanrasset sent by our Sister Martine, a photo that speaks to me of the dynamism of Easter, of life springing forth from the depths of this rock that appears to be dried up.

So life can always surprise us. Martine says that there is a lot of life in the desert, even if you need a keen eye to see it, because it is not the kind of life you find in a forest or in fertile fields, but there is life there nonetheless.



‘Mary!’

Listen to the name Mary Magdalene received in a completely new way on Easter morning. How her heart leaps!

This is how the heart of the risen Christ leaps with joy when he sees himself recognised by Mary Magdalene.

‘Rabboni!’

Mary... Rabboni... Two words that were undoubtedly spoken in the context of the relationship between the historical Jesus and Mary Magdalene, and which take on a whole new meaning when spoken under the pressure of Easter.

It is in this Easter spirit that we also receive this invitation to observe these words that God still addresses to us today.

‘Look!’

To welcome these words, to welcome them in their newness, we must open ourselves inwardly to a Paschal process of conversion.

That is why I chose this flower, which takes root on a hard, rather dry surface, but also grows through a break, a crack, a wound in the stone. This speaks to me of the Paschal process of conversion that we must go through in order to welcome this word: look!

We often associate conversion with Lent, whereas **conversion**, when viewed not as a process of moral effort but as a willingness to allow oneself to be shaped and transformed internally by the risen Christ, **is truly an Easter process**. Its roots are in the experience of the desert, but it only comes to fruition at Easter when we experience this passage through the desert, which allows us to touch and sometimes painfully experience certain shadows, a certain kind of death within us that opens us, with great surprise, to the life of the risen Christ and to the new life that already dwells in an unfinished way in this world. So let us also open ourselves to this paschal dynamic, to this passage. We will have to leave behind certain old, outdated ways of approaching reality in order to allow ourselves to have our eyes opened in a new way by the risen Christ, who comes to apply the eye salve we need to see reality with him and as he does.

We need this paschal process because very often we think we have already seen everything, that we already know everything!

This suspicion produces a certain scepticism that comes from within. We have already seen so much, fought so hard, that we are tired. That is why we are called to receive these words in a new way. Look! I invite you to join me in taking a look at the prophet Isaiah:

‘Look! I am doing something new’ (Isaiah 43:19)

Context of this text

To immerse ourselves in this verse, which connects us deeply with the experience of Israel but also our own: This verse belongs to the second part of the Book of Isaiah (a book composed of three large sections, each very different from the other). The second section (40-55) is what is called the Book of Consolation. Where does this story take place? What is happening to the people of Israel?

At the time this verse was addressed to them, the people of Israel were in exile in Babylon (end and beginning of the 6th century BC).

Throughout their history, God's people have repeatedly experienced deportation and colonisation. Not all of the people were deported; some remained in Jerusalem. The group that went into exile eventually became accustomed to being far from their homeland. It is quite curious, but we can also understand it from our own experience. When Cyrus arrived, a liberator who would allow the Jews to return to Israel and rebuild the Temple, when this good news of return became possible, what was the people's response? One might think that the people would be overjoyed, but no: the people faced a **dilemma: the desire** to return to their land **but also the desire to settle down**. This is not very different from the experience the people had already had in Egypt, where they were not free but had more or less enough to live on. This is what the people will regret losing when they set out on their journey to freedom. The dilemma deeply affects the discernment of God's people when faced with this opportunity to return to their own land.

What does Yahweh say to the people through the prophet of Israel? The most profound message is **that God, who was the Creator, who was the God of the covenant with Israel, is still at work**. God's work is not a thing of the past but is always present; it is a continual creation, always current.

So in the midst of this dilemma, there is a key that opens up for the people: hope. It is a call to believe that the God who created us is still able to recreate us and give us a new future.

This is where this expression comes in: **Behold, I am doing a new thing**.

Looking is more than seeing; it is directing one's gaze towards something. Seeing depends on light coming from outside. Seeing is directing our gaze towards everything that enters our field of vision. Looking

is much more than that because it requires us to direct our gaze intentionally. We all see, but we don't all look at the same things because **looking implies intention, a decision.**

We can ask ourselves a question: **Do we always want to look at everything we see?** Are there realities we would rather not look at?

I draw your attention to the fact that this word, **'Look!'**, is **not a suggestion or advice, but an imperative that cannot be postponed.** We do not say: if you like, if you feel like it, look. No, it is an imperative, almost an order, we must do it.

This access to reality, which comes to us through this gaze, does not come from our own initiative, it is not something we decide to do, even if our freedom will also be called upon to adhere to it; but above all, it is an imperative that comes from outside, from a reality that is outside of us. It is **a call that resonates.** I would even say that this call, this imperative, is a provocation.

The word provocation comes from the Latin 'provocare', meaning to call to go forward, further. So we are called to look, we cannot remain still as long as there are realities that attract our gaze.

Look! This provocation, we can say, comes to us from the One who saw and looked at the universe born of his hands. This provocation comes to us from the God of the Exodus; the God of Israel is the One who sees and looks, who also listens to the oppression of his people in Egypt, who is constantly aware of the gap between his plan and the way humans have decided to live it. And when he looks at all this, he does not remain impassive, he does not wash his hands of it, but he commits himself, he acts and accompanies his people. Remember the encounter between Yahweh and Moses in the Exodus. Yahweh commits himself; he could have sent a legion of angels to transport his people to the Promised Land, but he makes a covenant with mediators who will help him to accompany the people.

Look! This imperative that is given to us is also a capacity that we will not develop as individuals or as a group of individuals, but as a **'community of vision'**.

In a way, by being connected through these bonds woven between us and with Brother Charles, we are invited to develop a common gaze, a shared gaze on certain realities of our world.

Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti* (9.55), spoke to us about a world closed off by shadows. We are called to develop this gaze in a world that is closed off by many shadows. We cannot always live in the shadows; it brings us back to fear, in a way to death.

In Fratelli Tutti, we will explore some of the shadows that the Pope pointed out. It is in these shadows that this call to look descends upon us. Faced with what we see, we can choose not to look. However, **the Word directs our gaze precisely towards those realities that we can and sometimes prefer to ignore** because it is easier to remain in our little lives, telling ourselves that we cannot do much about it anyway.

The shadows of global marginalisation, and in our cities, we experience every day people who go through life in first class, while there are so many people who are marginalised for many and varied reasons that we will not mention here. How many thousands are marginalised by loneliness, poverty, etc.? Sometimes there can be a lack of imagination in our Church. As an aside, when I see the cardinals preparing to elect the next Pope, I think to myself how difficult it must be to belong to a community where the ability to lead a human community towards the fulfilment of faith is solely in the hands of men.

The shadows of human rights that are not universal enough: we see this every day in the right to housing, the right to healthcare – I often say that we in the northern countries are privileged even when it comes to

dying, because we die when we are ill, whereas around the world there are thousands of people who die without even knowing they were ill – the right to education, the right to live where we choose to pursue our life plans, etc.

The shadows of conflict and fear. It is not only wars, but also conflicts and small acts of violence that affect us in our daily lives. It is truly a shadow that prevents us from moving forward and becoming a community of vision.

The shadows of borders that threaten human dignity. We have images of all these people who are kept outside the borders we have drawn. They are kept outside to protect us, to protect what we have decided is ours, our property. Sister Martine told us yesterday that thousands of sub-Saharan people have been thrown out to the edge of the desert, driven out of Algeria.

The shadows of communication that is nothing but an illusion. With all the means of communication and networks available, one would think that we are more of a community, and yet suicide is the leading cause of death among adolescents in Spain. And this risk can also fall upon us. How often do we think we are communicating when our communication can become very superficial with short messages that are limited to a few exchanges, while we do not take the time to forge bonds?

I am taking this little journey into the darkness with you to make you aware that **we can pierce the shadows** precisely **if we look at them with new eyes...** This call is a call to develop together, as a community of vision, a new way of seeing.

In other words, we must ask ourselves: where does Jesus look? Who does Jesus look at? How does he look?

Call to develop a 'Samaritan gaze': (Lk 10)

In Luke 10, known as the parable of the Good Samaritan, which I prefer to call the parable of the man wounded on the road because, for Jesus, the protagonist is always the one who is wounded, not the one who helps. Let us go through the story we know by heart to show that all the differences in the characters' reactions are based on the way in which each of them approaches this man who is wounded, who is cast into the shadows of this world.

There are three characters who pass by on this road. All three see him. What do they do?

- **The priest and the Levite**, when they see him, **make a detour so as not to look**, because they know that if they look, they will have to get involved.

The Samaritan also sees him, but he makes a different choice, **the choice to look at this man**, and, as happens to all of us, when he looks, **he is moved, feels compassion, approaches and gets involved...**

- **The priest and the Levite turn in on themselves**, towards the narrow world of their own interests.

The Samaritan looks beyond himself and therefore perceives the wounded humanity that calls out to him.

- **The priest and the Levite** are well-educated people, they know what to do and what not to do, they know the Law. They choose to apply the legitimate Law. They know that if they touch a wounded, bleeding body, they will remain unclean. They know that if this man dies, they will remain even more unclean. What they do is legal.

The Samaritan, who is a stranger, does not know the Law. He **sees the reality of an injured body and violated dignity, and dares to touch 'without gloves'**. I emphasise 'without gloves': in the healthcare world, gloves are always worn, even for tasks that do not require them. Without us being aware of it, these gloves say something; they silently tell the other person that they are a threat to me. Jesus will be the one who touches wounded humanity without gloves.

- **The priest and the Levite** have in common with us that they are very busy people. When they see this wounded man, they do not see the present. **They see what remains to be done, what awaits them at the Temple in Jerusalem, and they cannot waste time.**

The Samaritan lives in the present. He is also a busy man; we can see that he is not going to stay. But faced with the urgent need of this wounded man, he knows how to stop and adjust his watch to the real time that marks the need of the other. This is a call to us...

The Samaritan God, who is the God of Jesus, is the one who directs our gaze to the darkest realities of our world, our cities and villages, our Church, our spiritual family, our fraternities. These are realities that we often do not want to look at; we look away. The Samaritan God will pause on these dark realities to pierce them with a new gaze.

We may ask ourselves: **Does our gaze need some correction to resemble that of Jesus, to see as He sees and with Him? What are the distractions or cataracts that divert or obscure our gaze? How can we face them and correct them?**

Once our gaze is purified, we can grasp the second part of the verse: 'I am doing something new'. It is not a change of perspective for nothing, it is a change of perspective to discover something new. 'Something new' emerges, yes, but it does not germinate on its own. It is a call to pierce the surface of reality to discover at its root the active love of a God who is always engaged.

To grasp what is new, we must cultivate a believing gaze. Here are a few pointers.

- **A believing gaze contemplates the present with lucidity, seeing things as they are without sugar-coating them.** It is not limited by what we would like to perceive, but is able to enter into reality as it is with confidence.
- **This believing gaze, penetrated by the lucidity of the Spirit, detects everything that stands in the way of God's plan in history:** attitudes, beliefs, structures, situations, modes of relationship, etc.
- **This believing gaze boldly denounces the shadows,** pointing out everything that must disappear so that the new heavens and the new earth can emerge.
- **This gaze already recognises** the emerging reality through **signs that are already present, in a concrete way, in the folds of everyday** life. It is not a bitter gaze, because it recognises that in the midst of the shadows there are small signs.
- **The believing gaze rejoices, gives thanks and celebrates the action of God,** who is doing something new here and now. The resurrection of Jesus is not a happy ending but the victory of life. The resurrection of Jesus is also the most urgent sign of this new life that has begun in history, which is following its course but is already manifesting itself through concrete signs that the believing gaze is able to discover and celebrate.

With our brother Charles, let us sharpen our gaze to see as Jesus sees, to be able to look as he looks:

'Wait, fulfilling all your daily duties to the best of your ability, and while you work, keep your gaze fixed on Our Lord who is within us' (Letter to Mother Augustine, Tam, 19 February 1916).

Visit to the village – meeting with the mayor – Eucharist at the parish church



Welcome by the Mayor of Tarrés, Carles Mora Tuxans

Welcome to Tarrés. We are honoured by your presence. We are very happy to welcome you. We admire the commendable work you do, your commitment and your dedication to serving others. Make the world a better place every day. The Comunitat de Jesús is a living example in our town.



Tarrés is a simple village with simple people. We are surrounded by nature that does not deceive; it shows itself as it is. Similar to its citizens. We are like an open book. Our ancestors built stone benches and houses, lime kilns, vaulted huts and cisterns. Their lives were very hard, but they worked hard and kept their families going. They were religious people, they asked for God's help and attended mass every Sunday. When the Comunitat de Jesús arrived in the town, it brought with it many young people from Europe and around the world who organised work camps and assemblies and lived the Gospel with joy and hope.

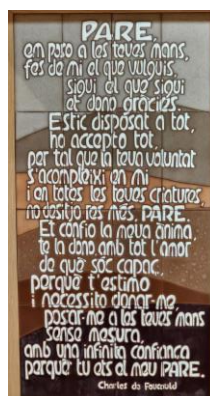
Today, the spirit of Saint Charles de Foucauld continues to accompany us at all times, inspiring our daily actions and giving us the strength to continue serving.

The most significant problems affecting our region are: lack of housing, lack of decent jobs, and depopulation because young people are leaving to live in Lleida and Tarragona. Tarrés is one of the few towns that is growing. Our profile is that of a young family with young children. People who visit us fall in love with this town and this land.

I hope that your time here with us brings you happiness. May the encounters you have be fruitful and give you the strength to continue the wonderful work you are doing.

We wish you all the best.

Celebration at the parish church



Address by Bishop Claude Rault, Bishop Emeritus of Laghouat-Ghardaïa (Algeria)

CHOOSING HOPE

Why 'choose'? It is a word that has haunted me for a long time. I had been appointed Provincial of the 'White Fathers' (Missionaries of Africa) for Algeria-Tunisia in the early 2000s. In accepting this responsibility, I had some idea of the weight it carried, as it was necessary to strengthen the communities after a dark decade. We had not received any new recruits for more than 10 years, and a new wave (from outside Europe) was on the horizon. To achieve this, it was necessary to ask a number of elderly confreres to change communities or even return to their countries of origin (in Europe). This decision was, of course, very difficult for me and caused me some discouragement in the face of considerable resistance. In short, I opened up to a friend who was visiting, who finally said to me, 'Do you choose, or do you suffer? Did you accept your position solely for the rewarding aspects? Did you choose everything, including being challenged and criticised? Choose and don't suffer!



This thought, summarised in a few words, came to me like a welcome slap in the face that woke me up and taught me to choose rather than suffer. It has been a great help to me in my life and in the responsibilities I have taken on.

It is daring to say that hope is a choice! It is so at odds with the flood of information that hits our screens, newspapers, smartphones and even the rumours that circulate every day: look at the situation in Ukraine, Palestine, Sudan, the DRC and also in sub-Saharan Africa... and also those small, latent wars that flare up regularly, and which some of us are familiar with.

The political situation is also worrying, with leaders succumbing to war of words even in countries that until now had enjoyed a certain stability thanks to a proven democratic system. Heads of state elected in a completely transparent manner are hiding or revealing intentions worthy of great dictators. The world of money is becoming the world of power.

And our Church, especially in the West, is not spared either! You know as well as I do about the sexual scandals that afflict it, the decline in religious practice...

On a personal level, we may face the challenges of age, retirement, illness, difficulties at work and with housing, isolation and the high cost of living.

We have every reason to despair about the future and even the present. But... let us not cultivate despair or hopelessness. That would be contrary to the Gospel.

JESUS' CHOICE

Is this really unique to our time? Let us turn to Jesus. Many dangers already hung over the manger visited by the shepherds - men who were more or less marginalised because of their profession - and also visited by the wise men who had come from afar. And now King Herod is already going to attack the baby Jesus, for fear that he will take his place. After being forced to go to Bethlehem for the census, the family from Nazareth is forced into exile until the tyrant's death. Thirty years later, Jesus leaves Nazareth for a public life that will be very troubled. The situation in Palestine was still not very encouraging: the Roman occupiers imposed very harsh demands on the people. The religious authorities, in the hands of a powerful priestly family, oppressed the common people by forcing them to follow impossible practices. Corruption was rife on both sides, among the occupiers and the occupied. Jesus lived for 30 years in these conditions in Nazareth, in complete anonymity, leading a simple, ordinary life, following the rhythm of the seasons and religious festivals. Then one day, moved by the Spirit, he emerged from this anonymity and declared in the synagogue of his village, Nazareth:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

Taking up a prophecy from Isaiah (61:1-2), he has just lit the beautiful flame of Hope in his tormented world. But he will be thrown out by the people of his own village, who do not take seriously this improvised preacher whom everyone thinks they know.

But he will continue on his way, proclaiming the Good News of God's love for all people, healing the sick and feeding the crowds.

'He went about doing good,' the apostle Peter would one day say. He will experience death, crucified like a bandit. But this death will not have the last word, and he will rise again on the third day, drawing us after him into the Kingdom he had announced. He has lit the flame of Hope forever. It is this Hope that we celebrated at Easter. Looking back on his journey on earth, in this land of Palestine, have times really changed so much? What was happening in his country is still happening in our world today, and his Good News continues to spread. That is why we are here!

HOPE AS A GIFT

Following Jesus, we are therefore 'pilgrims of Hope', having chosen Jesus. I told you that it was a choice. But it is not just that. Hope cannot be acquired through our own efforts alone; it is not enough to choose it, it will not fall upon us at the snap of our fingers, and I am not going to offer you solutions like a recipe. It is a matter of welcoming it, and welcoming it as it comes. It may knock at our door, it requires our faith, it does not impose itself. It is sometimes difficult to recognise, because it can come unexpectedly. 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me' (Rev. 3:20). Jesus knocks at our door... Pope Francis had this reflection before the conclave: 'I have the impression that Jesus is locked inside the Church and is knocking to get out.' (1)

Let us therefore be watchmen of Hope. How can we recognise it? It makes no noise, it is discreet and can only be seen by those who are ready to receive it. It shines through in the Beatitudes that Jesus proclaims at the beginning of his public ministry. He is beginning to be known and crowds are flocking to hear him. And the message he gives is surprising, undoubtedly contrary to what people expected of him. In this declaration, Jesus is focused both on the present and on the future. So it is with our Hope. It takes root in the present and projects us into the future.

"Seeing the crowds, he went up the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to teach them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:1-10).

This discourse of Jesus is a great cry of hope for today, and it tells us how he sees his disciples and the crowd. First, he makes a statement about the present: those who have the spirit of the poor are already in the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is already there, within them. They do not know it, but Jesus already welcomes them into himself. The same is true for those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. They too are already in the Kingdom. Jesus ranks himself among the little ones, the humble, the afflicted, the poor in spirit, today, right now. This present, this today, is the root of Hope. And it is the pledge, the promise of

the future. To hope is indeed to desire what is to come; hope projects us towards a future that is not blocked, that is not closed.

Often, when I travel on the metro, when the trains are crowded and overflowing, we squeeze together to make room and no one wants to stay on the platform, I think of the Beatitudes and I like to recite them at that moment as a prayer. Among all these people, there are the poor in spirit, those persecuted for righteousness' sake. They are already in the Kingdom. But there are also the meek, the afflicted, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers. If Jesus were on the underground... in our squares, in our streets... I believe he is there somewhere... he would proclaim the Beatitudes.

Have you thought about it? The underground is the sanctuary of the Beatitudes. There are lots of simple people there, modest, humble fathers and mothers who do their jobs every day, love their children and their neighbours, keep our economy going, are fair and charitable. But we don't talk about them in the newspapers. They don't make the headlines. But they are the People of the Beatitudes, they are pilgrims of Hope, but they don't know it. So here is Jesus' declaration, receiving this gift that he gives us for today and for tomorrow. It is the gift of Hope. The one we are celebrating in this jubilee year.

THE JUBILEE: 'A YEAR OF THE LORD'S GRACE'

If I have chosen to begin with a rather realistic vision, it is to show that it is not an easy choice, but one that is rooted in the very life of Jesus from the first moments of his earthly existence and throughout his life. What he came to bring to the world was a great breath of fresh air capable of renewing it. And he founded a community that would take up his mission. This chain of transmission of Hope has continued unbroken to this day. Let us not complain too much if we are few in number, if Peter's boat is buffeted by strong winds. Jesus is in it. In Nazareth, he announced 'a year of grace from the Lord'. And here we are, entering a 'Jubilee Year', symbolically marked by the opening of one of the doors of the Basilicas of Rome and other churches around the world reserved for this purpose. Our Pope Francis invites us to become 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

"Everyone hopes. Hope is contained in the heart of every person as a desire and expectation of good, even though we do not know what tomorrow will bring. The unpredictability of the future sometimes gives rise to contradictory feelings: from confidence to fear, from serenity to discouragement, from certainty to doubt. We often meet people who are discouraged and look to the future with scepticism and pessimism, as if nothing could bring them happiness. May the Jubilee be an opportunity for everyone to rekindle their hope. The Word of God helps us to find the reasons for this. ('Hope does not disappoint' No. 1).

We have therefore been invited to cross this threshold, to become 'Pilgrims of Hope' and to rekindle this small, perhaps flickering flame: it is the very Spirit of the Lord within us. If we have not already done so, let us take the step; it is always the first step that is the hardest. We may hesitate, as if this invitation were an illusion. Let us think of the disciples of Emmaus returning from Jerusalem on the evening of Jesus' resurrection: 'We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel' (Lk 24:21). Their eyes were fixed on despair and disillusionment, even though Jesus himself was in their midst. It was when he broke bread that their eyes were opened: the sign of this sharing was enough to reawaken their faith. And the two pilgrims returned to Jerusalem to announce this good news to their companions. If our hope is being tested, let us open our eyes. Is not Christ himself walking with us, pilgrims of Hope?

HOPE, BELIEVE, LOVE.

I quote Pope Francis:

"(18). Hope, together with faith and charity, forms the triptych of "theological virtues" that express the essence of Christian life (cf. 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:3). In their inseparable dynamism, hope is the one that, so to speak, guides, indicates the direction and goal of the believer's existence."

Hope is not like a little orphan girl. It does not exist on its own. Faith, Hope and Love are inseparable triplet sisters. They cannot live without each other, even if they do not look exactly alike. They are sisters, the same blood flows in their veins: that of Jesus who gave his life for us and for the scattered children of God.

'Hope,' writes Pope Francis, "is born of love and is based on the love that flows from the Heart of Jesus pierced on the cross... And his life is manifested in our life of faith, which begins with baptism, develops in docility to God's grace, and is consequently animated by ever-renewed hope and made unshakeable by the action of the Holy Spirit (2)."

Hope is born of faith in Jesus and is nourished by the love that flows from his ever-open Heart. Believing awakens us to Christian life; we have made that choice, and we make it again at different moments in our lives. We will make it again together on Easter night.

Faith is a solid foundation and supports the other two. It is faith that opens us to hope and allows us to cross the threshold, making us 'pilgrims of hope'.

"It is no coincidence that pilgrimage is a fundamental element of any jubilee event. Setting out on a journey is characteristic of those who are searching for the meaning of life." (5)

Hoping, believing and loving give meaning to our existence, and we see around us that our world is lacking in meaning and sometimes seeks to fill this void with temporary artifices. How can we put this into practice in our lives?

GIVING SUBSTANCE TO OUR HOPE.

Hope needs to take shape in our lives and cannot leave us in the clouds as if it were just a dream. And this can only be done by stepping outside ourselves. Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom of God, but he put his words into action: healing the sick, forgiving sinners, lifting up the desperate by offering them a future. This was his plan in the synagogue of Nazareth, and his entire public life was the fulfilment of that plan. The apostle Peter summed it up in a few words: *'He went about doing good' (Acts 10:38)*. Saint Brother Charles de Foucauld, unable to proclaim the Gospel with his words, followed this path through his choice of pastoral care based on kindness. And this kindness is within our reach, as Pope Francis reiterates: *"This is why the Apostle Paul invites us: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer" (Rom 12:12). Yes, we must "overflow with hope" (cf. Rom 15:13) in order to bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love we carry in our hearts; so that faith may be joyful, charity enthusiastic; so that everyone may give even just a smile, a gesture of friendship, a brotherly glance, a sincere listening ear, a free service, knowing that, in the Spirit of Jesus, this can become a fruitful seed of hope for those who receive it (8).*

A few days ago, I was finding it difficult to really get back to work in the face of news of a world in turmoil and in search of meaning. What's more, it was a Monday. I found myself stuck in front of my computer: writer's block! And I had to make progress on a piece of work on Hope. So I left my office and went to visit an old friend of mine, who is the same age as me, has worked extensively in show business, and has retired not far from my community. He has gone blind and lives in a small room on the 6th floor of a flat without a lift. Every morning he goes downstairs to attend Mass at a nearby church, does his shopping, and prepares his only meal of the day... In short, I went to see him. He is in the dark, sometimes in the cold, alone.

I thought I was bringing him some comfort, but it was he who, thanks to his serenity, his inner peace, his faith, and his hope that the Lord would come for him one day, comforted me. And I returned home, overcome by the quiet grace that emanates from this man. I felt him anchored in Hope, and he passed on his hope to me.

"The image of the anchor evokes the stability and security we have in the midst of the stormy waters of life if we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus. Storms can never prevail because we are anchored in the hope of grace, which enables us to live in Christ, triumphing over sin, fear and death. This hope, which is much greater than daily satisfactions and improved living conditions, carries us beyond trials and urges us to walk without losing sight of the greatness of the goal to which we are called, Heaven." (Pope Francis. No. 25)

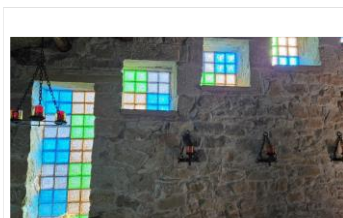
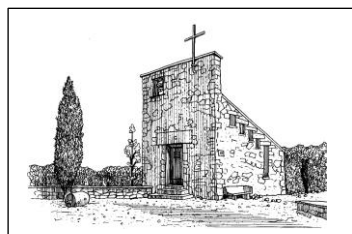
This, then, is what we are invited to do. To cross the threshold of Hope, to set sail and, when the storm threatens, to cling firmly to the anchor of Hope. And to tirelessly set sail again because our world needs us. It needs Hope.

1) Marco Politi. Francis among the wolves.

Presentation of Horeb

The Horeb group has applied for admission, and its two leaders, Julia Crespo and Jose Luis Vazquez Borau, will present the history and life of their group, which was founded in 1978 and is present in 18 countries. This group has already been recognised by the Archbishop of Barcelona (2018) and the Spanish spiritual family (2020). The general meeting voted to admit Horeb to the AFS on 2 May 2025.

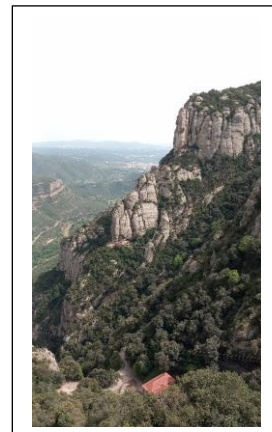
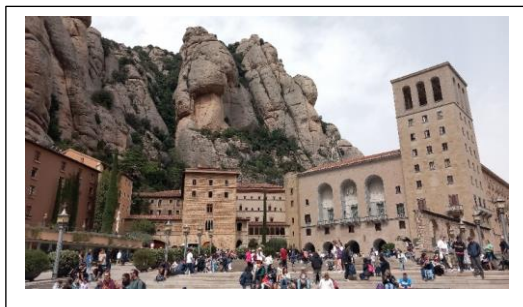
.Visit to the Hermitages and Eucharist



Thursday, 1 May 2025

Montserrat

We participate in the Eucharist and are then welcomed by Father Abbé, who tells us about this jubilee year, during which the monks are also celebrating the monastery's millennium. Before the meal, we discover the mastery of the Montserrat children's choir.



Poblet



On the way back, we stop at the Cistercian monastery of Poblet, where we attend vespers.



Friday, 2 May 2025

Renewal of the board

A new board was elected, consisting of: Else Vanbergen (Little Sisters of Nazareth), Josep Dalmases (Comunitat de Jesus), Mirek Kruk (Little Brothers of Jesus) and Giuliana Stocco (Disciples of the Gospel), who was already on the previous board.



NOUVEAU BUREAU

Else

Giuliana

Mirek

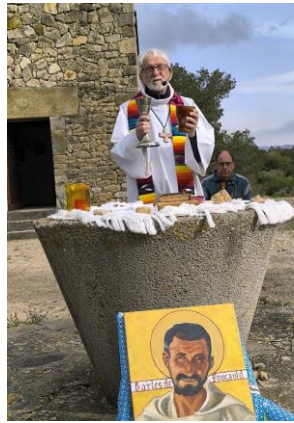
Josep

Date and location of the next assembly

The next assembly will take place in 2028 in Castelfranco (Italy) at the Disciples of the Gospel sisters' convent.

Lunch - Eucharist - festive evening





Messages received for the meeting

Representatives from the various branches shared testimonies of hope with us, based on situations experienced by members, but also situations where hope seemed to have been extinguished. The Little Brothers and Sisters of the Incarnation of Haiti and the former bishop of the Sahara, Bishop John Mac William, sent in their testimonies on the theme. The Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart in chapter told us about their communion.

1- Letter from the Little Brothers of the Incarnation - Francklin and Emmanuelle with all the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Incarnation

Dear Giuliana, Régine and Brigitte, and the whole family gathered in Tarrès,

We would like to thank you for your fraternal support and your prayers. Unfortunately, we cannot join you this year because for months now, four years today, the country has been facing general unrest with escalating violence that is intensifying every day and from which no one is exempt!

We are living through this serious situation day by day, fearing what tomorrow will bring. The country is cut off, with no transport possible and no flights, making it impossible for us to see our brothers and sisters in the west, south and east of the country. The fraternity of Saintard in the north, which some of you know, has been closed since December 2023 after the invasion of bandits...

Pandiassou, in the Central Plateau, the cradle of the Fraternity of the Incarnation, which seemed calm, is currently under attack and we are very affected, especially since the latest massacre in Mirebalais carried out by bandits, which forced more than 51,000 people to flee the city and head towards Hinche.

We are trying to be there for the large number of displaced persons, more than two hundred families since February 2024 to date, most of whom have lost everything in the attacks by armed gangs. The number of people exceeds our capacity to accommodate them, but we are trying to use the resources we have to help everyone around us by providing them with accommodation when possible, welcoming children into our schools, serving meals primarily to children but also to everyone else in the restaurant according to their means, providing drinking water, a community store, access to medical centres and telephone calls. All this is done in order to meet some of the needs of everyone, which is appreciated by the population and facilitates the integration of displaced persons who have come to the area. But managing all this is difficult and resources are increasingly limited! What will tomorrow bring?

During Lent, we felt it was very important to organise and offer one or two days of retreat with different groups such as school pupils (there are more than 1,600 of them), teachers, medical staff, married couples, farmers, children and young people from the area with some parents on the theme: 'Let us walk together in Hope'. Their testimonies show the joy of having experienced this powerful time.

We thank the Lord for this privilege granted to the fraternity which, despite the difficulties we are experiencing, reminds us that 'Every Christian must be an Apostle' and 'My Apostolate must be that of kindness,' as Saint Charles de Foucauld tells us.

We are deeply moved by the departure of our Pope Francis to the Father's house. May his departure strengthen our hope and support our mission.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, we wish you all a wonderful gathering and a Happy Easter!

2- Excerpts from the letter of Bishop John Mac William, who remained in Laghouat to welcome his successor, Bishop Diego:

Here are the main events that marked these three years:

Beni Abbès. Due to their age, the Little Brothers of the Gospel had to leave the hermitage of Saint Charles in Beni Abbès in 2024, after more than fifty years of presence. Along with them, the Little Brothers of Jesus withdrew their last brother, who was also elderly. For five years, we searched far and wide to find a congregation, preferably one linked to the spirituality of Saint Charles, that could send a new community to continue the presence in this highly symbolic place of pilgrimage and encounter with the people of the region. Without success.

Fortunately, and with great generosity, two congregations, the Capuchins and the Spiritans, have agreed to send one priest each, already in Algeria, to ensure continuity, at least on an interim basis. It is therefore a “mixed fraternity”. For the moment, there are no young people, which will be very important for the future. A third volunteer, a lay person, has been waiting for a visa for nine months now.

Do you, the members of the AFS, have any men who would be willing to join this fraternity? Work on the hermitage is progressing little by little in the hope that we will not give up.

The Little Sisters of Jesus still have their house in Beni Abbès, which they visit regularly. They recently spent three months in Beni Abbès. But it is still the issue of visas and the lack of sisters in the country that prevent them from resettling there to resume the good work they were doing with women.

Tamanrasset. It is still fragile. The Assekrem fraternity maintains a strong presence, a place of prayer and a welcome for visitors. There are always pilgrims who come from abroad, especially now that Algeria offers tourist visas for the south. And then during the winter and spring holidays there are many (too many) Algerians who visit from Tamanrasset since the road is better than before. There have been volunteers who have come to lend a hand from time to time, but here too, the PFJ fraternity needs to be strengthened.

Their fraternity in Tamanrasset continues to maintain good relations with the population, Tuaregs, other Algerians from the north or south, migrants... and tourists.

The Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart continue with Sr Martine alone. A DCC volunteer spent a year with her and we hope that a couple will arrive soon. We keep the current chapter of the PSSC in our prayers.

Touggourt. The community of the Little Sisters of Jesus in their mother house in Touggourt continues its mission among the women of the city and the activities related to their beautiful garden.

El Meniaa. Our project to restore the tomb of Saint Charles de Foucauld, as well as the church and its surroundings, is still in the planning stage because our efforts to bring in a manager have encountered the same difficulty (visa!). If this comes to fruition, and the volunteers assure us that funding could be found, it would be a good place for pilgrimages and other interfaith activities.

The Church of Saint Joseph has been declared a national heritage site (along with the old ksar, the mosque and the Al Boustân hotel in El Meniaa).

The Bishop. Thus ends my term as Bishop of Laghouat-Ghardaïa, and after eight years I join Claude Rault as emeritus. Diego, still young, is already a veteran of the diocese and therefore at least partially in tune with the spirituality of Jesus Caritas and the AFS.

I have placed myself at the disposal of the White Fathers, who have appointed me once again to North Africa. If all goes well with my health, I hope to be in the community of the White Fathers' provincial house in Algiers to serve as best I can.

I thank you all for your support for the diocese of the Sahara and for me as bishop, especially through your prayers. Let us continue to do so in the name of Jesus and his faithful "Brother Charles".

3- Message from the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart gathered in chapter - Bénédicte



Dear sisters and brothers of the AFS,

Our chapter, which took place in La Houssaye-en-Brie from 23 April to 4 May in the form of a chapter assembly, has just come to an end. It was a time of thanksgiving for all that we have been given to experience over the past five years. It was also a time to deepen our understanding of what we, the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart, are today for the Church and for the world, and to listen together to what the Lord is calling us to do. This journey, listening to the Spirit, was experienced in the form of spiritual conversation, very well accompanied by two members of ESDAC, Sr. Mercedes Lopez and Jean Henri Michau, a lay person. We recognised that the Lord has passed among us...

A new General Council has been elected for five years:

Bénédicte Rivoire: Prioress

Élodie Blondeau, Rufine Chamand, Philomène Dakouo: counsellors.

Thank you for your communion during your meeting in Tarrès. We prayed for you! I am delighted that Marga was able to lead a spiritual time with you...

May your prayers continue to accompany us during this new term of office.
With fraternal love

Testimonials from participants

'Thank you, Lord, for allowing us to experience [during these few days] the Church of the early centuries. I am convinced that this is what the Church of tomorrow will be like'.

I echo this sentiment expressed by Claude Rault^[1] during a moment of communal prayer. It powerfully expresses what we experienced at this year's General Assembly of the International Association of the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld (AFS). There were about twenty of us, representing 15 of the 19 communities linked to the spirituality of Charles de Foucauld, recognised by the AFS.

This meeting takes place every three years. The last meeting was held in Rome, just after the canonisation of Brother Charles. This time, we were welcomed by the lay community 'Comunitat de Jesus' in Tarrés, Spain (more precisely in Catalonia). It was an opportunity to discover this small community, founded in the 1960s, whose main charism is hospitality and friendship in the spirit of the Gospel. In the early years, they gathered for weekly 'las collias', meetings around the Word, sharing experiences and reviewing their lives. This high frequency of meetings allowed them to forge deep relationships that still endure today. We had the opportunity to experience the strength of these bonds throughout the week. They are mainly married couples, as well as a few single people. Today, there are 41 members left, out of an initial membership of over a hundred. Several times a year, they organise a weekend retreat in Tarrés, a small picturesque village discovered more than 50 years ago, which has become their community centre. They come there regularly and have renovated several houses. They have also built a few hermitages with the help of the local inhabitants. They love the place and take good care of it. What best expresses the strength of their bonds is the annual Easter Triduum experience shared with the villagers. They prepare for this event throughout the year. Living with them and among them brought us back to the experience of the early Christians, which, as Claude Rault said, will also be that of the Church of tomorrow.

The theme of our meeting was inspired by the Jubilee Year: 'In our fragility, hope!' One of the conferences called us to change our perspective, to allow ourselves to be transformed by our encounter with the Risen One.

The small group discussions allowed us to share experiences, some of which were surprisingly personal and profound, for which I am immensely grateful. In the evening, each community shared signs of hope in the fragility experienced in daily life, fragilities linked to advancing age, the lack of new members, illness, death and situations of conflict and violence in our different countries. Each day, in addition to community prayer around the psalms, we were united by a carefully prepared Eucharist.

On the last day, many members of the Comunitat de Jesus arrived. With them, we celebrated the end of our meeting with a wonderful meal, songs and dances. The inhabitants of Tarrès were also able to join in the open-air Eucharist. A Gospel, used by Brother Charles, a precious relic held by the Community, was placed on the altar. The atmosphere of this last day reflected the character of the whole fraternal meeting and the bonds that had been formed. Personally, I felt at least 30 years younger and I am very grateful to our General Superior, Sr. Eugeniya-Kubwimana, who asked me to represent her at this meeting. I will end, as I began, with Claude Rault's prayer, which sums up and reflects this beautiful gathering: *'Thank you, Lord, for allowing us to experience the Church of the first centuries. I am convinced that this is what the Church of tomorrow will be like.'*

Kasia – Anna, Little Sister of Jesus

During the Assembly held in May 2025 in Tarrès, I would highlight the growing closeness between the participants as the days went by. It began with a profound sharing by the Comunitat de Jesus, explaining its roots, its evolution and its current reality. The sincerity and transparency in communicating who we are set a tone that permeated the course of the days.

There was a genuine communion between the different groups, a sense of belonging and connection. Despite our diverse origins, both geographical and spiritual, it was clear that what united us was the same vocation and the same roots: the Gospel and Charles de Foucauld.

There were many details of conviviality and mutual care. More than polite harmony, there was a sense of delicate affection. Joy and good humour accompanied practically every moment. And during the celebrations, reflections, and visits to Montserrat and Poblet, there was a feeling in the atmosphere that something unique was being woven on these looms. The presence of Jesus and Brother Charles slipped between our clothes...

The summary could well be: between the participants and between the families, a true friendship was born, one that leaves a mark and is a pillar for everyday life.

Josep Dalmases, Comunitat de Jesús

At the turn of April and May, I had the opportunity to participate for a few days in a meeting of the spiritual family of Charles de Foucauld in Tarrès, west of Barcelona. I had often heard about this place, as our chapter was held there in 1990, although I only knew it by name.

Today, it brings back vivid and unforgettable memories of joy, community, brotherhood and sharing. One of our Polish brothers, who had participated in that chapter 35 years ago, was so enthusiastic and delighted with the experience that on his return he even wanted to introduce the custom of dancing the sardana and drinking Spanish wine into our Polish community. At a time when Poland was just emerging from a long period of isolationism, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, was something extraordinary. Today, I understand this tradition much better, having discovered and experienced for myself the importance of the spirit of celebration and the Sardana dance for Catalans. Those few days spent in this charming little town were an intense, beautiful and profound experience for me. I did not know many of the participants at the meeting beforehand, yet we quickly formed deep relationships and felt like one big international family. Despite the diversity of languages, nationalities and professions, I did not feel any distance; on the contrary, I felt a deep sense of brotherhood and closeness.

The warm atmosphere created by the Community of Jesus, whose members came in large numbers to Tarres, was certainly very helpful. They welcomed us with exceptional warmth and hospitality. The simplicity, generosity and openness with which they surrounded us was contagious, and everyone was touched by this evangelical attitude of sharing, as in the days of the first Christian communities. Moreover, the word that the members of the Community of Jesus often repeated and which seemed to me to best reflect their relationship was 'friendship'. It was, in a way, the foundation of the whole encounter, thanks to which these hospitable Catalans cooked, sat down at the table, celebrated and prayed. Everything took on a simple meaning and harmonised



Of course, I could have shared many impressions and experiences, such as the visit to the magnificent sanctuary of Montserrat, surrounded by rounded peaks, where the extraordinary Madonna 'la Moreneta' is venerated, or the visit to the magnificent medieval Cistercian monastery of Poblet, not to mention the charm of another sanctuary offered by God, the beauty of nature in this region. However, I would like to highlight one aspect that particularly struck me during this meeting: the attention and respect with which the participants approached the topics and questions proposed, for example during the discussion and vote on the question of the admission of the 'Horeb Community' to the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld. The opportunity to meet different people, to exchange ideas with them, and the sincerity of the enriching experiences we shared in small groups were also extremely important and valuable to me.

The theme of the meeting was to discover hope in our fragility. Reflecting on this topic, I realised how often we focus on the negative aspects of our message, how, inspired by the media, we talk about dark and pessimistic things. Thanks to this topic, I began to look for what brings hope and I began to see more and more positive signs. I realised all the good that is happening around us, but which we talk about so little, which we see so little. So I left Tarrès much richer in new experiences, beautiful encounters and new relationships that I hope will last, but also encouraged to change my view of the reality around me, to be more Eucharistic, that is, to live each day with more gratitude. It was with this immense gratitude that I left, and I still carry it in my heart.

Mirek, Little Brother of Jesus

Simple joy in the heart of a field of almond and fig trees.

Last April, I had the joy of participating in my first meeting of the great spiritual family of Charles de Foucauld, in Tarrès, Spain. For a week, we reflected on the driving forces within this vast community and the many challenges it faces in a constantly changing world: how to embody the message of the Gospel today and make it relevant within our common home? The challenge is there, and so is our hope.

During our stay, we shared, prayed and discovered together the wonders that God accomplishes through the diversity of our branches. From the very first day, a deep joy settled in: the joy of reunion, even though most of us had never met before. I had this strange feeling of meeting old friends, as if we had known each other for a long time. Despite our differences, I felt a real, peaceful and joyful communion: that of the same spirit, the same love for Jesus and for Brother Tamanrasset.

I was very touched by the welcome I received from the Comunitat de Jesus. Their simplicity, humility and silent hospitality were for me a living testimony to the Gospel. They embodied the discreet and loving presence that Brother Charles sought so hard to live: to make oneself small, to remain in the joy of service, in the fraternity of daily life. **I still carry in my heart the image of this community surrounded by fields of almond and fig trees.**

The moments of prayer and singing, and the visit to Montserrat, were highlights. But what struck me most were the personal exchanges, especially during the reviews of life. In these exchanges, often very simple and sometimes deeply moving, I heard the sincerity of each person's heart: the true desire to follow Jesus in the

reality of their lives, with their frailties, their hopes and their struggles. In these moments, I felt deeply the presence of Christ among us, He who hides in the simplicity and truth of hearts.

We live in a wounded, fractured world, where the message of the Gospel sometimes seems to fade away, as if covered by noise and indifference. Yet, in Tarrès, I felt an inner certainty: God is there, very present. He walks with us, poor among the poor, silent but faithful. I returned with the conviction that, even in our limitations, our poverty is a place of grace. We do not have many resources, but we are rich in heart, rich in hope. It is this hope, rooted in trust, that allows us to move forward, step by step, in peace.

This experience in Tarrès also reminded me of an essential call: to dare to encounter others. To reach out to others, to risk difference, to listen, to dialogue. In a world where so many walls are being built, I understood once again that our mission is to build bridges, to seek unity in diversity, to bear witness that it is possible to live as brothers and sisters. It is by drawing on the roots of our faith and spirituality that we find the strength to give primacy to relationship and communion. The spirituality of Nazareth speaks to me more than ever. In Nazareth, everything is hidden, but everything is full of God.

For me, this meeting in Tarrès was not only a beautiful moment of fraternity; it was a sign, a light on our mission journey. As head of the Secular Fraternities, I saw it as a call to serve even more faithfully this communion between our fraternities around the world. Our mission in the Church is to keep this flame of fraternity alive and to share it with those around us.

I have a deeply joyful, peaceful and hopeful memory of Tarres. There I tasted the beauty of a poor and fraternal Church, alive in its diversity, faithful to the Gospel. I believe that we are called, each of us where we are, to be beacons of hope: not bright lights, but night lights that persist, that warm, that reassure. In the night of this world, it is often the smallest flame that shows the way.

Thank you, Tarrès.

Ciro Piccirillo *Fraternité Séculière Charles de Foucauld*



Thanks to the Comunitat de Jesus
for its hospitality

so brotherly and cheerful!

