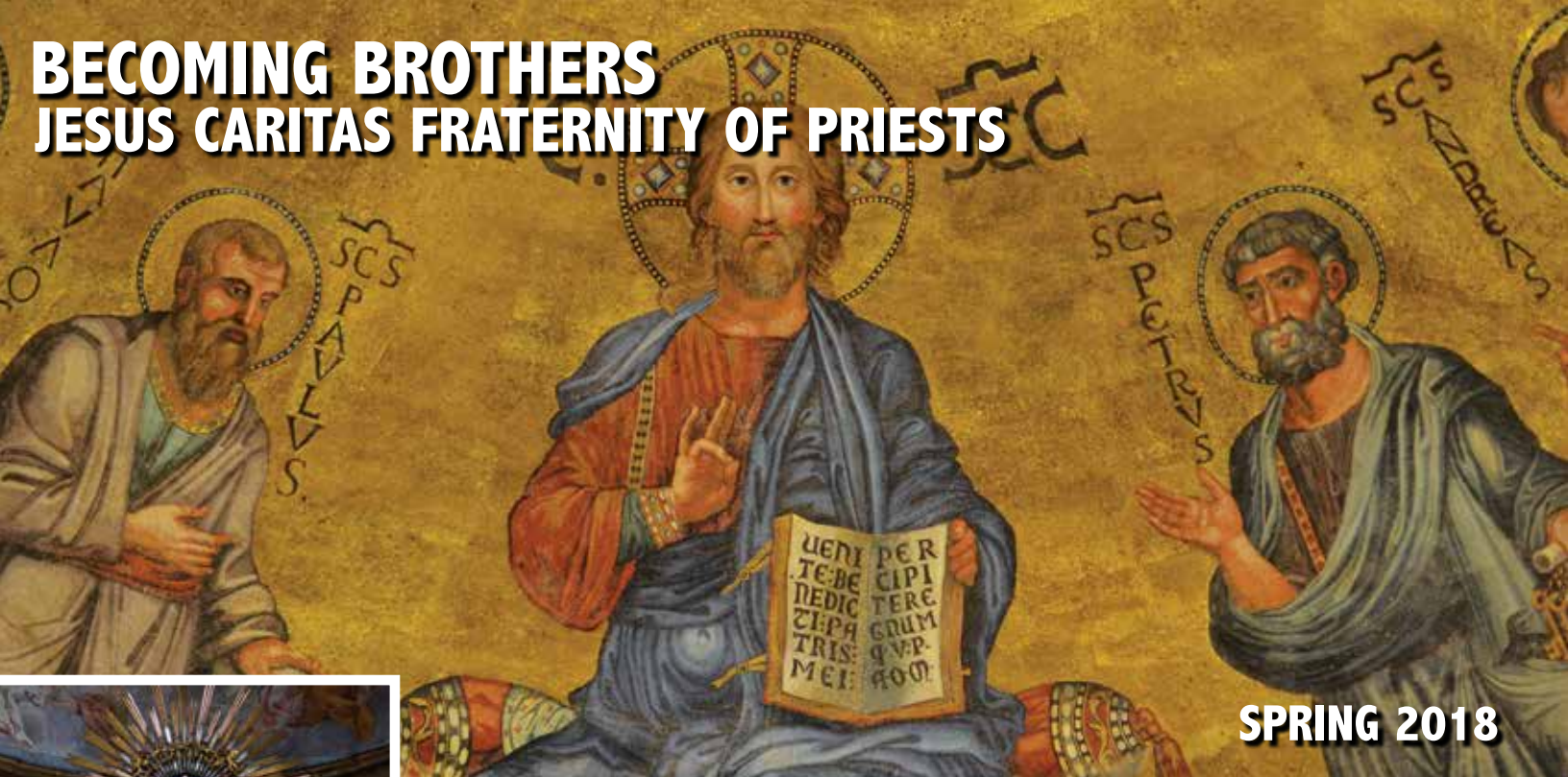


BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



SPRING 2018



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From the Responsible

Dear Brothers,

The Easter Season should have been a time to rejoice in the new life of nature and in the new energy of our recently initiated members. I did experience some of that, but for a variety of reasons – some minor health issues, our wretched national politics, news of more priestly scandals, among others -- I was feeling more discouragement than joy. And then May 2nd I took a trip to Philly and met with a group of seminarians from the Diocese of Arlington at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary and got my “happy” back.

Promoting our Jesus Caritas Fraternity as a solid spiritual foundation for a great priestly life has been a passion of mine for the past dozen years. Blessed Charles would be proud of me, because like him I have had very little success in growing our Fraternity. But I experienced joy and renewed hope that the Fraternity has a bright future as I met with Andrew Clark, Mike Lewis, Tim

Courtney, Zinjin Iglesia, Mike Nugent, Dan Reuwer, Sean Koehr and John Paul Heisler. They are an amazing group of young men. Most are just completing their first year of formation. All of them seem spiritually mature. Some have already made a 30-day Ignatian Retreat.

Zinjin already had devotion to Blessed Charles. He had picked up a brochure on the Review of Life that his Spiritual Director, Fr. Herb Sperger, had brought back from a presentation that I made to a group of Seminary Spiritual Directors back in October. He shared the brochure with some friends from the Diocese of Arlington and they began meeting weekly with two men sharing their review each week. Before I arrived with more resources, their formation in Fraternity consisted of that one brochure, which they would review at every gathering. They had fun teasing each other with the section that concerned what a Review of Life is not.

continued on page 2

Review Of Life - A Suggested Method

1. The Responsible leads the group in the Prayer of Abandonment.
2. The members have determined the order in which they will share. Someone speaks a prayer over the person about to share, asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. The brother shares his review of life.
4. The responsible invites clarifying questions. Then all pray quietly.
5. Each brother has an opportunity to speak about the review presented. All will listen for repetition, indicating that some thought has struck more than one person and may have special significance.
6. The brother who has shared indicates if he feels satisfied, or if he wants to add something further.

What it is *Not*

- It is not talking about general problems or general concerns, either of the Church or of ourselves or the world.
- It is not a review of our calendar or a summary of what is going on in our personal lives.
- It is not the psychological analysis of a situation.
- It is not a vocal exercise in the theory of ministry.
- It is not a detailed examination of conscience, nor is it a particular examine on some moral failing.

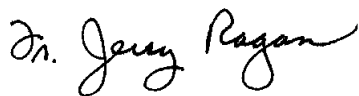
N.B. The entire brochure can be found under the resources tab at jesuscaritasusa.org

From the Responsible *continued from front cover*

I've included that section in this newsletter. I've also included some of the quotes that I shared with them on the Desert Day.

This is the season of Ordinations. It presents us with an opportunity to reach out to the new priests in our Dioceses and invite them "to come and see" how the Fraternity has enriched our lives as Diocesan priests. It could be as simple as a note of congratulations or inviting them to share a meal with your fraternity. The sems from Arlington are already aware of the challenges that they will face, and yet they have a wonderful missionary spirit. They take the spirituality of the Fraternity very seriously because they believe it will equip them for their future lives as missionary diocesan priests. Uplifted by their enthusiasm, I will continue to share the good news of our spirituality with all my brothers in the priesthood. I ask you to join me in this mission.

Fraternally in Christ,



Fr. Jerry "Hap" Ragan

P.S. It is not too late to join us for the Vacation Days in Detroit. Bring a friend who has not experienced a national gathering of the Fraternity. We are going to have some fun.

Prayer in the Desert

Of course, God is omnipresent, but we are not always present to God! The desert can, and often does, remove many obstacles. Distractions are removed, attention is concentrated, and so emptiness is created, which can, grace aiding, become an expectant and welcoming emptiness, a space for God.

As always, Blessed Charles referred to the example of Jesus. Had he not spent 'forty days' in the desert...and did he not go off apart, to pray in desert places, alone with his Father? Charles is clear that the desert-life was not that of Jesus, as it was for John the Baptist, or, we could add, for the Qumran community. But, as Charles loves to insist, Jesus did regularly and frequently retire to desert-like places, as though to renew and prolong the intimacy and strength of his original 'forty days'...

The concrete experience of living and travelling in the 'real' desert of stone and sand tends, of itself, to free the heart from false and multifarious attachments, and so the heart, thus freed, and as it were 'alone', is open to respond to the calling of God who 'speaks' to the heart that is 'pure', that is, free and given over to His presence. God thus uses nature and grace to lead the soul of His bride back to Himself, by the 'bonds' of tender-love, healing, enlightening, uniting. – Ian Latham Ibj

Perhaps the greatest temptation, humanly speaking is to look for certain results from the Day itself, rather than to be disposed to whatever the Lord might give or not give on that day! For the day many go into the countryside, to the ocean, or for long walks. Others may simply go to an empty room and spend the day there.

The desert is not primarily a physical place but the place where God meets us. Usually the simpler and less distracting the surroundings, the more favorable the conditions in which to wait on the Lord and listen to Him. We find it so important that each person approach the day with a generous and open spirit. When one begins to attempt the Desert Day, he might discern with his brothers how he should enter the day. He might initially need some materials or the Word. He might need to vary the length or frequency of the Day. What does each one need to experience his own finiteness and God's abundant love for Him?

– Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests: An Overview of Spirituality and Method

The Fraternity asks each man to factor into his month a "Day in the Desert". The idea is to deliberately to separate yourself from the active side of priesthood, and to submit to God, welcome God in to your life in a prolonged way. This monthly day of quiet also enables us to think through the way our life is going, to look compassionately but critically at our successes and failures, to thank God for his perpetual presence in our lives, and to prepare what we shall say in the "Review of Life" when next our Fraternity meets. – Tony Philpot

Letter From Santo Domingo

II Pan American Assembly – 19 To 24 February 2018

Dear Brothers:

In a climate of prayer, joy and shared fraternity, national responsables and delegates from Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Haiti, Dominican Republic, United States and Quebec-Acadie have gathered. We thank God and all who have collaborated through their prayers, work and financial contributions so that this meeting would be possible, especially our brothers from the Dominican Republic and also those priests and deacons who covered for us in our parishes.

We reviewed the path of our fraternities the past two years and verified that many of the proposals elaborated in the last assembly were put into practice. We would like to spotlight the celebrations of the centenary of Brother Charles' second birth realized in all our countries through symposiums, Eucharists, retreats, publications, posters etc. This permitted us to introduce his person and spirituality to many brother priests, deacons, lay persons, religious and seminarians.

During our assembly we focused our attention on two relevant facts in our countries: migration and the mistreatment of our Mother Earth. These are true signs of the times that we want to examine in the light of the Word of God and the social teaching of the Church, especially as given by Pope Francis, and as seen in the spirituality that we have received from Brother Charles de Foucauld. The goal of this communal discernment was to discover the will of God and to more deeply commit ourselves to a true ministry for migrants and a caring for our Common Home.

Listening attentively to the reports from each country we heard that in one way or another we are committed in these two areas, but that we need to do much more because we are dealing with people's lives, with families, and with vulnerable communities. They are victims of a savage capitalism that destroys without mercy as it worships the god of money.

The two presentations of our brothers Eleuterio Ruiz and Carlos Roberto Dos Santos: "Strangers and Refugees, Reflections on a Challenge of Our time in the Light of the Scripture" and "Biblical and Pope Francis' Reflections on the Environment" enlightened us.

It has been clear to us that the Lord asks us to "go in search of the most abandoned," as Brother Charles

did in his time, who in this case are migrants who arrive in our countries in situations of great vulnerability. The Word of God is specific: "You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God" (Lev 19.34). And Pope Francis shows us a very concrete way to express this love: welcome, protect, promote and integrate our migrant brothers and sisters.

We have also felt a strong call to care for our Common Home and to make ours the question Francis offers to humanity in his encyclical "Laudato Si": "What kind of a world do we want to leave for those who will come after us, to children who are growing up?" (160).

We want to reflect more on this theme in our fraternities and with our presbyterates so as to have a prophetic stance; we also want to network with church and civil organizations to protect the environment and preserve the beauty and integrity of creation, which is God's gift to all humanity. Charles' non-consumer lifestyle encourages us to live in simplicity, in austerity and in harmony with nature.

We are happy and hopeful regarding the calling of the Synod for the bishops of the Pan-Amazonian Region. We will collaborate actively in its preparation and afterward put it into practice.

During our assembly we visited the communities of a local parish in Santo Domingo. This visit put us in contact with the holy people of God, who, from their poverty show us the urgency of being authentic with the obligations that God has shown us in this assembly, which were taken up in our Desert Day and in the Review of Life which we did in small groups.

We ask the Holy Spirit to make us more faithful each day to the charism of Brother Charles, so that we can share it with many members of the people of God and continue developing a "Church that is poor and for the poor."

Your brothers of the II Pan American Assembly,
Santo Domingo, 24 February 2018

Mark Mertes, Dick Rossman, Hap Ragan,
Alex Trejo, Fernando Tapia, et al.

The 2018 Universal Brother Award

The National Fraternity is delighted to announce that Fr. Thomas L. McCormick has been selected as the 2018 recipient of the Universal Brother Award. This Award is presented by the Jesus Caritas Fraternity USA to a Diocesan priest who exemplifies the spirituality of Blessed Charles de Foucauld and has discovered through his message a way of living the Gospel more fully to the ends of the earth, in fraternal sharing with his brother priests, in caring for the least among us, and in silent adoration of our Eucharistic Lord.



Fr. Tom McCormick is a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Denver. In retirement he has been traveling throughout the West to promote the work of the Maryknoll missionaries, for whom he holds a great admiration, because Tom himself saw missionary activity as an important element of the Diocesan priesthood. Throughout his priesthood in addition to parish work, Tom has been involved with a variety of other ministries. As director of Catholic Community Services-Northern, he set up social services in Ft. Collins, Loveland and Greeley Colorado. His work also included the experience of Campus Ministry at Colorado State University as pastor of John XXIII University Parish. In 1975 following in the footsteps of Fr. Dan Danielson, he became the second priest to lead

the United States branch of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests.

Long before we heard Pope Francis encourage the clergy to reach out and be with the folks on the peripheries of life, Tom was already there. His missionary spirit led him to ministry in Colombia and Mexico. The Archdiocese of Denver established a Mission in the Diocese of Monteria-Colombia in 1979. This mission continued with rotation of other diocesan

priests and a lay mission team for 15 years. Fr. McCormick was the priest-leader for the first five years of this foundation. He also started the new mission in the Diocese of Hermosillo (Sonora) Mexico. Returning to USA, much of his ministry was among the Latino populations in Colorado.

Fr. Tom McCormick is considered to be a "Priest's Priest" with a heart of gold and deep desire to serve the poor. There is nothing he likes better than to gather in the twilight of the day with brother priests and a glass of cheap scotch. And as soon as he gets his second knee replacement he intends to be back on his bike crashing into windshields. The Universal Brother Award will be presented to Tom at our national gathering in Detroit during the week of July 2nd. Join us for the celebration.

Jesus Caritas Vacation Days - July 2-6, 2018 Detroit, Michigan

It is not too late to join the fun. Of the top 10 cities to travel to in 2018, according to Lonely Planet, Seville, Spain is #1. Can you guess where #2 might be? Would you believe Detroit, Michigan? Detroit!!! Really!!!!!! Yes, really. Talk about an American City that knows about living the Pascal Mystery. In 1940, Detroit was the fourth largest city behind New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. In 1950 its population peaked at 1,849,568. Detroit's population is now 677,116, which drops it to 21st in the nation. In the last few decades, it has been overwhelmed by poverty, crime, and abandoned buildings. Detroit knows a lot about the dying part of the Paschal Mystery. It's the kind of city that Blessed Charles de Foucauld would have been proud to vacation in.

Yet the Detroit of today is on the rise and experiencing a revitalization, with abandoned buildings undergoing commercial real estate developments, young couples, community gardens, and new businesses breathing new life into the city. So, "come and see" what it is like to spend a few days of vacation with priests who have been living the fraternal life for years. We will stay at the St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center. The price of the five day stay is \$375. There will be good food and fireworks, fellowship and good fun together. If you've never been to the Henry Ford Museum, it alone makes it worth the trip to Detroit. Please, email Shannon Axon at jesus.caritas.usa@gmail.com and she'd be happy to get you registered. If you plan to fly in, Shannon will need your arrival time so we can pick you up.

Week of Nazareth

*...an overview of Jesus Caritas Priest Fraternity at
St. Martin University in Lacey, Washington
Monday, July 9 - Friday, July 13*

An Introduction to the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests

The week is built around seven practices of Jesus Caritas (Fraternity, Living the Gospel, Simplicity of Life, Eucharistic Adoration, Day in the Desert, Universal Brother, with particular emphasis of Review of Life, with many consider the heart of fraternity life). The day begins with an hour of Eucharistic Adoration. Following each general session is a period of reflection with readings and appropriate exercises. Then there is a fraternity meeting that uses a Review of Life to examine oneself in the light of what has been discussed.

Jesus Caritas invites any priest inspired by the spiritual insights of Brother Charles de Foucauld, whether in a Jesus Caritas fraternity or not, to join in a week of learning, reflecting, fraternity, and re-directing one's spiritual life!

For registration or additional information, contact: Fr. Ron Belisle at ronbelisle@hctc.com

May Reflections

Daily prayer starters in the spirit of Brother Charles deFoucauld by Joe Diele

1 - JOSEPH THE WORKER

To express the value of solitary contemplation to the worker's world, and to the contemplative world, and to the contemplative world the worth of corporate labor, put your prayer into your work and your work into your prayer. Give work its true value in union with the divine worker, Jesus, the carpenter. (*LSM*)

2 - ATHANASIUS, BISHOP AND DOCTOR

We are made to be deeply mixed into the crowds, like Jesus on the roads of Galilee: hemmed in and pushed from all sides, he maintained his inner peace, even as he hugged the little children, raised up poor sinners, consoled the afflicted, healed the sick. (*LSM, writings*)

3 - PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES

There I found it all, the ideal I was dreaming of: following the Gospel fully, embracing total poverty, burying myself in the midst of abandoned groups of people... and above all, love in all its fullness: Jesus-Caritas, Jesus-Love. (*LSM*)

4 - Dig into the Gospel, and you will see how Jesus will enlighten your inmost being. His words will be your "life". They are the words of God himself. They contain the most solid nourishment there is. (*LS Magdeleine, p.21*)

5 - "If you do not become like this little child, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." (*Mt. 18:3*) These words you had not understood. Maybe the explanations you had been given were mistaken or far from reality, not taking into account the real helplessness and weakness of a little child. So then, to make you understand better, the Lord had reduced you to helplessness- perhaps the helplessness of being sick and unable to make the least effort of your own, or the still more painful helplessness of somebody

struggling without strength in the midst of temptations, when work and suffering seem unbearable... (*LSM, Green Booklet*)

6 - Prayer in one way makes real a presence of love. Take for example what happens when you are parted from someone you love. The love you have for that person can carry you to him, even without your actually thinking about him; however when there are at the same time prayer and love, then you really come close to the one you love. (*Rene Voillaume, Faith and Contemplation, p. 31*)

7 - The weakness of human means is a source of strength - Jesus is the master of the impossible. (Bro. Charles, writings)

8 - You will love Jesus with a measureless love, a "crazy" love, which can't imagine not having an urgent need to be like the beloved, to resemble him. And you will strive to walk in his footsteps, to follow him all along his earthly journey. (*LSM, writings*)

9 - You ask me if I am ready to go somewhere else besides Beni Abbes to spread the Holy Gospel; For that, I am ready to go to the end of the world And to live till the last judgment. (*Bro. Charles, a letter*)

10 - Prayer is not a psychological need, it is demanded by faith, and it is a demand by our baptism in Christ. It has been said that prayer is the breath of the soul. (*Rene Voillaume, Faith and Contemplation, p.31*)

11 - The fraternities should be small houses of love where the Sacred Heart burns so as to light that fire which Jesus came to bring to the earth, oasis of prayer and hospitality which radiate so much holiness that the community is lit up and warmed by them. A little family, which imitates so perfectly the virtues of

Jesus, that the people around come to love Jesus. (*Bro. Charles, Letter to H. de Castries, 12 March 1902*)

12 - NEREUS AND ACHILLEUS, MARTYRS; PANCRAS, MARTYR
Real love makes great demands on the one who loves. To love as Christ Jesus loves, involves a willingness to serve the smallest and most insignificant of his brothers and sisters, to give our lives to them, as he did. This is the only way in which people will know us for his disciples and friends. (*LSM*)

13 - Rene Voillaume Born Into Eternal Life God only speaks if one reduces oneself to silence. (*Bro. Charles*)

14 - MATTHIAS, APOSTLE

We are inundated with requests to take over the running of schools, hospitals and dispensaries, to which we have only one reply: we want to be 'one of them'. In other words, we wish to become one with the poor, the humble and societies outcasts... Our aim is friendship, which implies equality, so that we may love and help one another. This is our only vocation. (*LSM*)

15 - ISIDORE THE FARMER

A vocation is not chosen but found, and once found to be embraced wholeheartedly. (*Bro. Charles*)

16 - Look on the map of the world and see if there isn't in some corner a handful of people who attract no one precisely because they are just a handful scattered over a great distance... Do not listen to those who tell you that you're wasting your time to go throughout the world in search of that one lost sheep because large numbers await you elsewhere... (*LSM*)

17 - Let us then follow Jesus' teachings, his counsels, his words, his example... rather than those of such an such a master or such and such a saint, if they should diverge even in the slightest from those of "our only Master", the only one who is perfectly Holy, "Jesus". (*Bro. Charles, LS, p. 24*)

18 - JOHN I, POPE AND MARTYR

If you are here at Beni-Abbes, this is because something has happened in your life, something resulting from a personal encounter with God, an encounter involving profound, I might even say essential, changes in your relationship with God and in your social behavior. And we ought also to consider whether a call of this sort does not also involve responsibility for a mission entrusted to us. Once you are active, in the Fraternity, in a given environment, you will find it easier to realize that your vocation involves a mission. That mission is to share the lot of the poor, to work with them for their liberation and, more than all else, to show them Jesus Christ. (*Rene Voillaume, Follow Me, p. 16*)

19 - Join Jesus in his immolation for the salvation of all, and in particular to offer the divine feast to the poor. At the same time, Nazareth becomes wherever is most useful to my neighbor... for those most in need... for the abandoned. (*Bro. Charles, ordination notes.*)

20 - BERNARDINE OF SIENA, OFM:PRIEST

God leads us along such unexpected paths!... Only let us be faithful and let ourselves be carried along with great love. (*Bro. Charles, Letters to my Trappist Brothers*)

21 - Let us never worry about the future : at each instant of our life...let us do what the will of God imposes on us at the present moment. (*Bro. Charles, Meditation on the Gospel*)

22 - When we are in love, don't we find the time we pass with the beloved perfectly well spent and good? Isn't that the best way to use our time, unless the desire or well being of the beloved calls us else-where? (*Bro. Charles, meditations, LS p.39*)

23 - It is love which should help you be recollected in me, and not distance from my children. See me in them, and just as I did in Nazareth, Live close to them, lost in God. (*Bro. Charles, diary, 1904*)

24 - I am nothing, but Jesus has given me a tiny spark of his love. We can't continue to let people suffer all around us, and not go out to them under the pretext that we have to protect ourselves, like a soldier who, in order to keep his uniform impeccably clean, avoids the mud of the trenches and the danger of the bullet wounds... (*LSM p. 43*)

25 - BEDE, OSB, THE VENERABLE, PRIEST AND DOCTOR; GREGORY VII, POPE;

MARY MAGDALENE DE PAZZI, OCD VIRGIN

From the moment in which we begin to judge anyone, to limit our confidence in him, from the moment at which we identify the person with what we know of him and so reduce him to that, we cease to love the person and he ceases to be able to become better. We should expect every-thing of everyone. We must dare to be love in a world that does not know how to love. (*Bro. Charles*)

(*Bro. Charles*)

26 - PHILIP NERI, PRIEST

All our thoughts, all our hearts should be occupied just with the love and contemplation of Jesus, enjoying the company of our Beloved.. so we should be there with Him: sometimes looking at Him without saying anything, sometimes asking Him questions, always enjoying His presence... (*Bro. Charles, meditation on MK. 6,30-32*)

27 - AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, OSB: BISHOP

To love, what is it?... It is to desire passionately... the welfare of the beloved. (*Bro. Charles, Meditation on Luke 10:27*)

28 - Littleness: Jesus who is to be imitated is the one who took the last place so firmly that no one could take it from him.

(*Bro. Charles*)

29 - To do the Father's will that is our life. (*Bro. Charles, Meditation on the Gospel*)

30 - We find that we don't love enough; yes it's true, we'll never love enough. But the good Lord knows from what clay he has formed us, and He loves us more than a mother can love her child. And He who doesn't lie, has told us that he will not reject anyone who comes to Him. (*Bro. Charles*)

31 - THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Surrendering one's life into the hands of the Creator at the hour of death and recollecting oneself at prayer to commune with God in the silence of one's soul are both actions which depend on the same faith in the transcendent and immanent reality of an incarnate God who is Love and Author of human life.

(*Rene Voillaume, The Truth Will Make You Free, p. 138*)

JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS

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