



PO BOX 763 • Franklin Park, IL 60131 • [P] 260-786-JESU (5378)

Website: [www.JesusCaritasUSA.org](http://www.JesusCaritasUSA.org) • [E] [Jesus.Caritas.USA@gmail.com](mailto:Jesus.Caritas.USA@gmail.com)

## What the Jesus-Caritas Fraternity of Priests Is for Me

*by Gaudencio B. Rosales, Archbishop of Lipa, Luzon, Philippines*

In 1978 I was introduced into Jesus-Caritas Fraternity of Priests by Little Sister Marlene Carla of Jesus from the first group of the Little Sisters of Jesus in the Philippines. In the same year I joined the first meeting of the priests of the Jesus-Caritas in Manila (perhaps, also the first in the region of Luzon).

For nearly twenty-two years now I have chosen to stay in the Jesus-Caritas because I sense that within this Fraternity of Priests I find the roots of my priestly prayer, priestly fraternity, family and austerity. I was that it simply whisked by so fast that I could not always put a face on many people in numberless encounters, individuals and sometimes crowds. Like many priests I was in constant search of being better and doing things more effectively for people and for God.

Seven years in the Priesthood and soon after the close of the Second Vatican Council, I joined a study group that searched and studied for ways of efficiently adapting to and implementing the Decrees of the Council. Our study group, called then "Apostolic Union of the Clergy" led to a loosely organized Priests' association. The group slid into a structureless prayer and study group among priests. Then in 1974 I was ordained Bishop and was ushered into the life and vocation of a pilgrim, moving from one Local Church to another - three big and far-distant assignments in nearly 20 years.

Although I committed myself to prayer a long, long time ago, the prayer support that the Fraternity has provided is quite different. Jesus-Caritas has insisted on persevering prayer and quiet; it encourages and supports simplicity both in prayer and life. I found out that I am most myself in the Jesus-Caritas, at home in the simplicity of need and wants that its spirit cultivates. In my desert days I have spent the quiet by the window of the seminary chapel and was not threatened when I passed the afternoon siesta on top of three joined chairs, unbothered, peacefully and uncensored!

At the Cebu International Assembly in 1994 I met again our General Responsible, Father Tony Philpot together with many of the Brothers who came from more than fifty nationalities. I never forget the day Fr. Tony asked me when I made my Month of Nazareth. In the presence of some of the Brothers (I believe Father Klaus Beurle was somewhere nearby, certainly within hearing distance), I made an open confession that I had never made one, reasoning that I was very, very busy as a Bishop. Tony encouraged me to make one, at the earliest possible time. I pledged I was joining the next Nazareth Month, in English, where it may be.

1995 was a scheduled Month of Nazareth either in Israel or Cameron Highlands, Malaysia (July). The rest was a history of grace for the Jesus-Caritas and for me in particular. I made my MONTH OF NAZARETH, the novitiate of the Jesus-Caritas, at the MEP's Fathers' House with 32 other priests from eight different countries. Aside from the shared brotherhood in most



PO BOX 763 • Franklin Park, IL 60131 • [P] 260-786-JESU (5378)

Website: [www.JesusCaritasUSA.org](http://www.JesusCaritasUSA.org) • [E] [Jesus.Caritas.USA@gmail.com](mailto:Jesus.Caritas.USA@gmail.com)

of the things we did, our night adoration, deep personal prayer, doing the laundry, house keeping, dish washing and garden work allowed me to touch again the roots of a love for quiet, solitude and oneness with God. That love has never been lost, I found out. It weakened at some points, but it was always there, waiting to be stoked into a huge flame. Jesus-Caritas' Nazareth Month allowed me to rediscover and appreciate these treasures.

In the three Local Churches I have been assigned to (Antipolo, Malaybalay and Lipa) I tried to introduce the priests to the care, camaraderie and fraternity of the Jesus-Caritas. The commitment to personal prayer was well encouraged by a commitment to people. The Jesus-Caritas made sure to every priest that the tension between prayer and the active ministry is not really a contradiction, but a heavy pressing of one on the other, begging recognition and encouragement, inspiration and confirmation.

On days when priest are busy with activities in the parishes, schools, barrios, offices and various groups and movements, the easiest alibi for missing one's prayer and a witness to a simplicity in needs and life is the activities themselves. What I noted in the Jesus-Caritas Fraternity is the Review of Life put before the Brothers are themselves the reminder to personal commitment to the ideals of the Fraternity and the simplicity of one's priestly witnessing. In my 22 years of life in the Fraternity I have never seen anyone threatened by the commitment of either self or another. When some left the group it was because a better way of life was either discovered or they simply did not need the help and encouragement provided by the unity of the group.

Because the Directory allows re-joining the Month of Nazareth again, I would like to repeat my own experience in that spirit of the Nazareth Home for the Jesus-Caritas brothers in order to deepen the roots of a more personal commitment to prayer, to be more present to people and to be ever ready to recognize the face of God in those I call my neighbor.