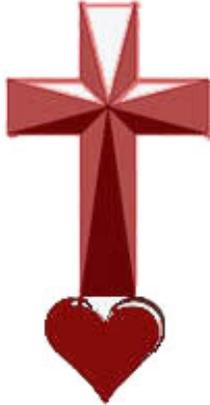


## DIRECTORY



*In 1976 the General Assembly of the Jesus Caritas Union of Priests took place at Montefiolo, near Rome. They agreed to issue this Directory. to replace the former Statutes. They also agreed on a change of name. from Union to Fraternity. in order to stress the need for universal brotherhood. both among priests. and by priests towards the entire human family. The delegates went to Rome. to receive the blessing of Pope Paul VI. Not only did he bless them. but he also thanked them for being for him a source of hope and consolation. "Be ardent", he said, "to spread among your diocesan fraternities, that burning love for Christ Jesus and that consuming concern for the redemption of the world so fully expressed in the life of the hermit of Tamanrasset. In this way you will continue to give us your indispensable co-operation in upholding the Catholic priesthood, and its identity. That priestly identity has never consisted in anything else. and never will, than in the exclusive and permanent gift one makes of oneself to the Lord, along with a total availability to people, with a view to leading them along the way that leads to knowledge of God as he really is.*

### Chapter One: SPIRIT AND AIM

#### **For the Sake of Jesus and the Gospel**

The FRATERNITY is like a magnet. It draws priests. They come to it for different reasons—some for friendship and to experience trust among brothers, others to be listened to and accepted as they are. Jesus loved for his own sake draws some, others come as pilgrims pioneering new ways for the Church.

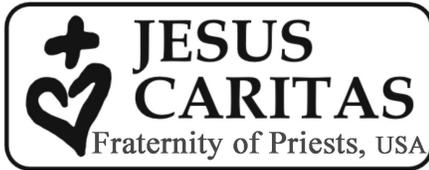
But more than anything it is for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel that we come together in the FRATERNITY. We work alongside him as he continues to save the world. We recognize him in the Eucharist, which is the center of our lives and the very heart of our faith.

Brother Charles has helped us to rediscover where our Christian and priestly vocation springs from: 'I love Our Lord Jesus Christ with a heart that wants to love him more and more. But anyway I do love him and I could not think of leading any other life but his'. And so we see as the key to our lives the words Jesus—Love, JESUS CARITAS.

The Gospel calls us. It is the power of the risen Lord which speaks to men and sets them free. We want to listen to this word of God in our age, to treasure it as Mary did, to live it and even to shout it out with our lives. We want to encourage each other to leave all for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel. Brother Charles saw his vocation as this Gospel life: 'Let us return to the Gospel or else Jesus will not live in us'.

#### **To be Brothers of all Men**

Meeting Jesus in the Gospel and in the Eucharist led Brother Charles to meet him in his brothers: 'As often as you did it for the least of my brothers, you did it for me'. (Matthew 25:40). He lived among the



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most deprived, sharing their lives. He was one of them and worked to help them better themselves.

They called him the 'Universal Brother'. He looked on his ordination to the priesthood simply as a new way of being at the service of all.

As diocesan priests, we have to live this brotherhood, if we are to carry out, for all mankind, that mission the Church has entrusted to us. On us depends the preaching of the Gospel. It is by sharing the lives of men and women that we learn from them just what the love of Jesus means. In our turn we are impelled by the Gospel to kindle in others the flame of human brotherhood.

The Lord lives with us in the Eucharist. His presence invites us also to be one with all mankind, with a loving care for those that no-one loves. Such care is for us a form of contemplation.

### **In Abandonment to the Father**

If we say each day with Brother Charles: "Father, I abandon myself to you, do with me what you wish", we express our desire to give our whole lives to God and to men without holding anything back. It is the responsibility of our fraternity to help us understand this abandonment and to practice it as God calls us day by day, and wherever he wishes us to go.

## *Chapter Two:* **AT THE CROSS-ROADS OF THE WORLD AND OF THE CHURCH**

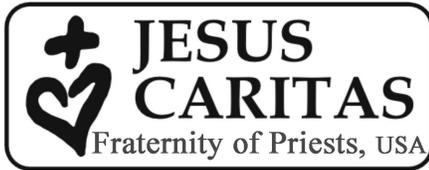
Today individuals and whole peoples demand the right to shape their own destiny. They want responsibility. They dream of justice and brotherhood. They try to build a new world, in the teeth of tension, disappointment, violence.

The People of God are part of all this. Only within this context can they discover the powerful appeal of the Risen Lord. Even the Church has its own family tensions. and it suffers also from the division of the churches.

The priests of Jesus Caritas cannot stand aside. They have to live the Gospel in today's world and in today's Church, not in some religious ghetto. That is what Brother Charles did. He was a realist. And so it is their responsibility to go along w with their people. to share their cares and their joys, to struggle with them for freedom and to search with them for hope. For it is in this way that the Kingdom of God comes to birth.

The fraternity must help us to recognize and to undertake this responsibility through the Review of Life and through prayer. Sometimes it may be necessary to make one's position clear in public and on particular issues there may be unavoidable rifts. Guard-dogs have to learn to bark!

The Review of Life will bring each brother to look again at his faith, his ministry and his identification with his people.



### Chapter Three: IN THE SPIRIT OF BROTHER CHARLES

'Let us look at the saints, not to imitate them, but to imitate Jesus.'

The life of Brother Charles was a continuous effort to live completely for God and to be a brother to all in the context of his time. Our fraternities have grown out of this witness, and many have been drawn by it to join. As a FRATERNITY we can say who we are only with reference to Brother Charles. But that does not mean a slavish imitation of everything he did. The gift of Brother Charles to the Church has yet to be fully discovered. It is up to each fraternity to keep searching for it in its own time and in its own place.

If we love God and love men there are certain things we must do. So Brother Charles wished to be one with the poorest of people. He imitated the simple life of Nazareth by being a workman. He gave up the privileges of his class and country. He had a welcome for all. whatever their customs. nationality, social class, or race.

In his person. son Brother Charles made the mystery of the Church present in a pagan world. This drove him to 'shout out the Gospel with the whole of his life'. He was for ever searching for a new way in which the Church could be present among destitute people who are not Christian. For half a lifetime he labored to bring to birth little fraternities which saw the light of day only after his death.

Brother Charles kept attached to the Church and her ministers, even when they weighed him down by being so short-sighted. As a missionary he had the courage to be an innovator, believing that Jesus was 'master of the impossible'.

Everything Brother Charles did sprang from his faithful love of Jesus. This love led him to make definite time for prayer and reflection. His daily routine was marked by penance.

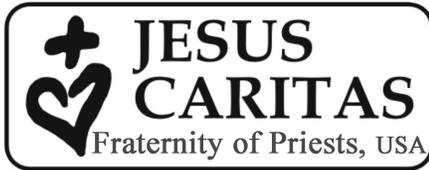
He meditated every day on the words, actions and spirit of Jesus in Holy Scripture. Through reading the Divine Office he took part in the prayer of the Church. With Jesus he adored the Father in a Eucharistic prayer that was both courageous and persevering. With Jesus he interceded for all. He celebrated the memory of the passion and resurrection of Jesus in the daily Eucharist. He set aside for himself long periods of solitude, days in the desert, nights of prayer, retreats and regular times for spiritual reading and intellectual work.

From his conversion on. Brother Charles became more and more a man of the beatitudes. He became really poor, even to the point of accepting a seemingly useless death. He became chaste and single minded in his love for Jesus, and in his neighborly love for all. He became obedient and yet was a man of initiative, who continually sought the Father's will and how he might be a partner in the sacrifice of Christ. He had a great hunger and thirst for justice. He wanted to create peace; for that he was ready to suffer.

### Chapter Four: OUR WAY

The way the fraternities travel cannot be limited by regulations, rules, or statutes.

The charism of Brother Charles, and what we experience in the fraternities, helps us to discover in



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practice where the Lord is leading us. The pages that follow should be interpreted with this in mind.  
The Fraternity

The fraternity is not simply a means for reaching personal perfection. What it really does is provide a setting for us to hear God's voice. It is the setting in which for each of us the drama of the Gospel comes down to earth. And so it is a genuine community of the Church.

It is a community of brothers, a place where everyone feels he is recognized and accepted just as he is, where differences are respected and welcomed. It is the place of sharing and of openness to one another, where true friendship comes to be. This friendship is expressed in many ordinary ways: recreation together, visits, letters, phone calls.

But to live in fraternity means especially that we bind ourselves to one another. Each must feel responsible for all. While the fraternity should be concerned for every priest who wants to join, The fraternity is a community of the Church, a place where Jesus meets us. Like the disciples at Emmaus, sharing our cares and sharing the word and the Eucharist, we discover the ever active presence of the risen Jesus, the Savior of the world.

The fraternity gives us the opportunity to learn together how to pray. In the light of the gospel truths, we challenge each other with courage and gentleness, to discover the Lord's call. In this way the fraternity helps us to experience the variety of God's gifts among our brothers and opens us up to universal brotherhood.

The fraternity is the sign that we too want to live as universal brothers, and that we believe that in Jesus Christ this is possible.

A fraternity usually consists of five or six priests.

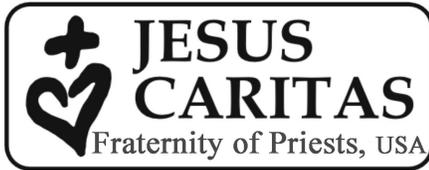
Whether it be a small group that meets each month, a team that works together, priests who live together, or some priests who are looking for an opportunity to meet one another. the important thing is the fraternity day. This get-together includes, as far as possible, relaxation, a meal, talk, review of life, Gospel sharing, silent and prolonged prayer and celebration of the Eucharist. It takes time to do all this. That time we must give.

Most fraternities meet regularly. But there are a number of priests who live in isolated places. Everything should be done to enable them to link up with the fraternity so that they can share by letter in the review of life, receive an invitation to meetings, to retreats and to the regional Month of Nazareth.

All the brothers, especially the responsables, must concern themselves with keeping contact with these priests by writing to them, visiting them, and giving them friendly support.  
The Decision to Live in Fraternity is made in Stages

After a certain length of time in fraternity it is up to the members, taking account of the life-situation of each, to ask a priest who wishes to join, to make up his mind whether or not to take part in the fraternity, especially if he attends meetings irregularly. Normally the priest who wishes to confirm his membership, not only of the fraternity but of the world-wide FRATERNITY, takes part in a Month of Nazareth and makes an explicit commitment. He is then considered to be a member of the FRATERNITY.

To keep the fraternities vital and to ensure concern for each member, to guarantee links with other fraternities and to maintain their ecclesial character, someone must be made responsible. The brothers



expect this man to see to meetings (place, date, sharing of tasks) and to ensure that each one has the opportunity to express his thoughts. He should draw concrete conclusions from what is said, remind all of their commitments, and plan retreats. He should maintain contact with other fraternities and other priests, ensure personal contact outside these meetings and pray for his brothers. He is among them 'as one who serves'.

The Review of Life

We often hear about review of life, but the term covers different things, e.g., discussion groups, sharing of the Gospel, review of apostolic life. For us in the Fraternity the review of life means a common act of faith in which we talk about events in our lives and share our cares, our hopes, our disappointments. It means laying our lives out openly before each other to discover where the Lord is calling us.

All this demands great courage but our review of life is indispensable, for it is first of all to look with love at the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our time. Whenever we make the review of life we are called to conversion. It opens our eyes to what is best in us. It keeps us always alert to the Lord who may call us in ways we never expected. It helps us find the Lord himself, always greater than we thought, always different, so often disconcerting.

There is an overall unity between the review of life and the other activities of the fraternity. The review is prepared preferably in the desert, always in prayer and, if possible, is written. It is better not to make it at all, than to improvise on the spot. It presupposes an atmosphere of prayer, of listening to the word of God, of attention to one another. No need to fear moments of silence. We must have the courage to put questions to one another gently but frankly. We should not be put off by fear of possible tensions or clashes. False friendship is the death of a true review of life, and, therefore, of the fraternity.

If in a review of life together you help someone to discern the call of the Lord you must support and assist him in putting it into practice. Each member should be one with the others and feel responsible for them.

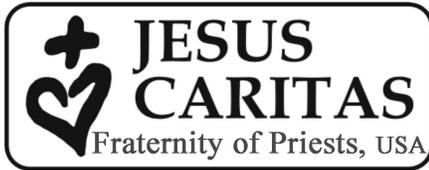
An honest review of life can introduce us into the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. at work in us. Sometimes it will lead us to the sacrament of reconciliation.  
Contemplative Prayer

If we are to bring into being an authentic fraternity, each member's life must have its roots in a spirit of contemplation. Yet the ways of prayer are often painful. The

Holy Spirit himself comes to help us in our weakness. He helps us persevere in close companionship with the Lord Jesus. We must read and reread the holy Gospel in order to have always before our minds the actions, words, and thoughts of Jesus so that we may think, speak and act like Jesus.'  
(Brother Charles)

Three things stir us daily to greater fidelity and prayer. These are the love God showed us in the gift of his Son who even died on a cross for us; the witness given us by Brother Charles; and the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Being faithful in prayer entails a Eucharistic adoration which is regular and prolonged. We try to spend a whole hour every day. It also entails a reflective reading of Scripture and the monthly practice of a 'day in the desert' which is an important means of recognizing the Divine Absolute in our lives. Each one has to find the rhythm of prayer best suited to himself. With the fraternity he undertakes, in his review of life, to look precisely at those points where his fidelity in prayer, to God and to his brothers, is in question.



## Commitment

Since the FRATERNITY began, life in fraternity and the practice of review of life have led us to discover, in love of God and love of people, a demand that is absolute. We have been led to give expression to that discovery in a commitment traditionally called consecration. At the same time there are certain problems about this consecration. Experience has told us that we must not consider it as we do religious vows. Nor should we equate it with consecration in a Secular Institute.

God first loves us. So we want to do something to recognize his love. We want to commit our whole life to thanksgiving. This love gives us freedom to place our life, both present and to come, in his hands.

This step is taken in the light of the Beatitudes and for 'the life of the world'. It may be an act of personal and definitive abandonment to the love of the Father; it may be the gift of one's life to minister among the poorest; it may be a commitment to devote one's self entirely to the liberation of a people. Each one's situation and personal charism will shape the commitment he makes.

First of all we have to learn to live without resources in a world lured on by riches; to live in a state of dependence in a world where abuse of power leads to oppression, and blocks the path to personal self liberation; to live by love in a world where those unloved are more and more numerous; to live fraternity, in a fragmented world, and a divided Church.

Commitment means also learning to join forces with what is best in people, as they use their talents for the benefit of all. For people in their hearts have a spirit of service which leads them to recognize their responsibility to others, and the spirit of love, which gives a meaning to their lives.

The role of the fraternity is important, when we make this step. Each one asks his brothers to witness his commitment and to be jointly responsible for it.

In practice what we undertake is to live in fraternity, according to the spirit of this document.

The fraternity should help the brothers to make of this commitment a definitive act in response to the love of God. Such an act is advisable only after personal growth, following an extended experience of pastoral ministry and of life in fraternity.

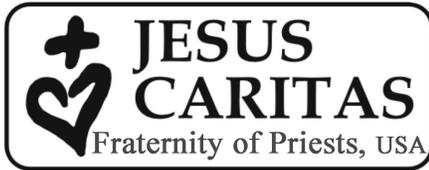
At first this response to the love of God will be expressed in a commitment for a set time, that is renewable. Ultimately it will be expressed in a definitive commitment. But whether the commitment be temporary or definitive it should be reviewed each year in fraternity. The purpose of this is to keep the commitment fresh and realistic, in the spirit of this document.

## Chapter Five: A MINIMUM OF STRUCTURES

There is always more than we realize in the charism of Brother Charles. The horizons presented here are those which we have so far discovered. Different regions have lived out different aspects. It is for each region to deepen its investigations, and to communicate its findings to the rest.

## Meetings

In the conviction that no fraternity can exist in isolation, and that communication with others is indispensable, the FRATERNITY provides a variety of occasions for meeting, at different levels.



Experience has shown the importance of some of these meetings:

- + Recollections, for one or two days, every six months, based on a theme.
- + National and international annual retreats for a week.
- + Months of Nazareth. either at the time of definitive commitment. or as a renewal of that commitment.
- + Retreats in solitude.
- + The General Assembly every six years to permit of a thorough review of the FRATERNITY.

These meetings not only aid personal renewal but also provide an experience of community life. of life in fraternity. They give an opportunity for the fraternities and the regions to be renewed. and to discover the universal dimension of the Church.

Correspondence

As well as these meetings one very important means of contact is the bulletin in all its forms, (individual, fraternity, regional, and international). This correspondence can provide a form of universal sharing of the gifts and experiences of each. It presupposes that everyone participates in this means of communication. More elaborate writings on certain topics are also of common benefit, and absolutely necessary for deepening the faith of the fraternities.

Such bulletins are especially useful to brothers who are isolated or far away.

The Function of the Responsibles

There is a need for someone to be responsible, at each level of the FRATERNITY, to care for the fraternities and maintain their ecclesial dimension. Experience shows that renewal of the fraternities depends on renewal of responsibles.

The role of the man responsible for the local fraternity is dealt with in the last paragraph of the second section of Chapter 4.

The role of the diocesan or interdiocesan responsible is to provide for joint meetings of local fraternities for days of recollection, retreats, etc.; to help local responsibles and to ensure that links are maintained between them by regular meetings. He is also the link with the Region,

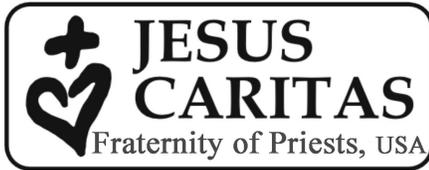
He needs to pay special attention to new fraternities, still in the process of formation, especially by encouraging their members to participate in Months of Nazareth. He should have a special care for isolated fraternities, and for older fraternities, to help them to break out of any routine they may have got into. and start afresh.

He will recognize the concern he should have for the aspirations and spiritual needs of all the diocesan 'presbyterium'.

The Regional Responsible

A region is composed of a group of fraternities established in a territory which has a geographical or linguistic unity.

The first task of the regional responsible, or of the team of regional responsibles in one country, is to make manifest how much the needs of men and women in that country are challenging the FRATERNITY to go on deepening its values.



It is in conjunction with the diocesan responsables that he carries out this task: by organizing Months of Nazareth, meetings, recollections, retreats; by a regional newsletter; and by brochures presenting the FRATERNITY.

In his meetings with the other regional responsables and with the General Responsible, he can test whether the FRATERNITY is genuinely evolving in his country. In collaboration with them, he can keep it aware of its universal dimension.

The General Responsible

The FRATERNITY throughout the world is lived in different ways. There are different emphases as it evolves from one place to another. Such diversity obliges the General Responsible to be the guarantor of unity, by recalling the charism of Brother Charles; by helping each region to discern where the Lord is calling it; by facilitating exchange and dialogue between the different regions; by having particular care for regions which are just beginning, or which are in difficulties, or isolated; in recognizing, with the aid of his team, a region in formation as a constituted region. This he does at the request of the region, having regard to certain criteria: the existence of several fraternities; stable commitment; participation in the Month of Nazareth; the election of a responsible; a newsletter.

The means of carrying out this task are personal meetings and meetings of his team with the regional responsables, international meetings, visits, the international newsletter and the General Assembly.

After his election the General Responsible chooses his team of collaborators with whom he forms a fraternity. This will entail for them a knowledge of each other in depth, regular work and review of life together.

He designates from among them an assistant, who can replace him in case of necessity.

In the constitution of the team he consults the General Assembly and submits his proposal to its vote.  
How Responsibles are Designated and their Mandate

Because of the special character of the FRATERNITY, its diversity, and the way it has evolved, the task of the responsables demands spiritual and creative dynamism as much as administrative qualities.

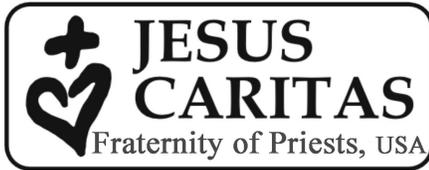
It goes without saying that a responsible must have committed himself in a fraternity in a stable fashion, and have taken part in a Month of Nazareth.

Every election within the FRATERNITY will be prepared by consultation at the various levels of the fraternities.

The fraternity responsible is elected by the members of his fraternity. This election is confirmed by the diocesan responsible.

The Diocesan Responsible is elected by the members of the diocesan or inter-diocesan fraternities. This election is confirmed by the Regional Responsible after agreement with the local Bishops, since this responsibility is a service to the Church.

The Regional Responsible is elected after the members of the fraternities and the fraternity and Diocesan Responsibles have been consulted. A list of candidates is proposed. All those who are members of a fraternity, and are committed in some stable fashion, can participate in this election. The General Responsible follows the development of the election, and confirms the result, after the Bishop of the member elected has given his approval.



The General Responsible is elected by the General Assembly (after indicative votes) according to the following procedure: a majority of two-thirds in the first two rounds; an absolute majority in the following rounds. He must have the approval of his Bishop.

The term of office for a responsible of a fraternity is three years. Other responsables hold office for six years. The term of office is not renewable, except, after a break, for the local fraternity responsible. The General Assembly

The General Assembly is composed of Regional Responsibles; delegates from regions in formation, with a consultative vote; the General Responsible and his team; former General Responsibles, with a consultative vote.

The Assembly comes together every six years, convoked by the General Responsible or by his assistant.

It assembles: for a review of life of the FRATERNITY; for an exchange of ideas on an international level; to adapt the rule of life to new situations; to elect the General Responsible. Finances

it is up to each member to pay his share to ensure that the FRATERNITY is able to carry on from day to day and to develop. Such financial solidarity is a concrete way to express one's membership of the FRATERNITY: Each region should appoint a treasurer and decide what amount of its funds is to be used for the region and what is to be given for development in other countries.

The international fund shall be the responsibility of the General Responsible. and shall be kept by an international treasurer.

## ADDENDUM

*MEETING in Algiers from the 16th to the 30th August 1982, the General Assembly of the Fraternity approved some texts designed to clarify certain aspects of the life of the Fraternity. These may serve at a future General Assembly to effect a complete revision of the Directory.*

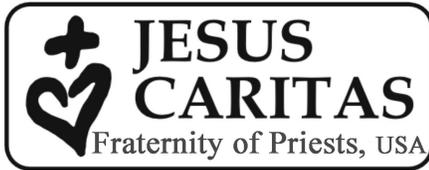
### **1. Relations with the local Church**

The Fraternity lies at the crossroads of the world and the Church. It is at the heart of a people commissioned to follow Jesus by proclaiming the Good News to the poor. The faithful pursuit of this calling has made us (with many other priests) aware of difficulties and tensions within the Church itself.

Nevertheless, it is in the Church we live. In her we discover the Gospel, the Eucharist, and the love of the poor. We have no desire for separation. As long as we are with her we must live with dissension and controversy if only in 'the silence of private prayer'. (Guy Riobe)

To live in the community of the Church means to share the cross of Jesus in some respect. The Fraternity can sometimes, on this rough road, become an instrument of true reconciliation.

Diocesan priests as we are we want to belong to our local churches. The Fraternity strengthens our desire for communion and collaboration with our Bishop, with other priests and with the whole people of God. In such a genuine relationship there is a duty of criticism friendship and solidarity with all.



We want especially to share our own experience of brotherhood with all priests. We want to watch for every opportunity to promote a more brotherly and gospel-like way of life. We want also to be closer to the poor, more open to all, and more concerned for local churches in every continent.

## **2. An Ecumenical Dimension**

We welcome as participants in the Fraternity brothers belonging to other Churches or Christian communities. We want them to think of themselves as full members of the Fraternity.

At the same time, we recognize those differences which exist between us, particularly regarding the Eucharist. The problems that arise should be regulated on a local basis, in the spirit of fraternity, and with reference to the laws and customs of the authorities and Churches concerned.

## **3. Bond with the Family of Brother Charles**

Right from its origins, and in many regions, the Fraternity saw the light of day and developed in contact with other branches of the family of Brother Charles. It rejoices in sharing with them all the same inheritance, keeping regular family ties at the universal level as well as individual countries, where we are called to live the same commitment 'for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel'.

## **4. Isolated brothers**

In several regions, priests of the Fraternity live too far from each other to be able to meet regularly. They find, by following the example of Brother Charles, that it is possible to have a very full life in the Fraternity, sharing in the life of their own people and their pastoral team, whilst keeping in contact with the members of a fraternity by means of the occasional retreat, month of Nazareth, or other meetings, as well as by means of correspondence.

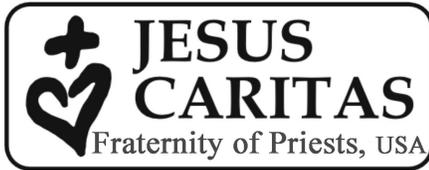
## **5. The Month of Nazareth**

Among the paths trodden by the Fraternity, experience has shown the importance of the Month of Nazareth. This is a period of some length (about four weeks) during which priests seek a deeper experience in their relationship with God and the Fraternity, in the spirit of Nazareth. This spiritual search is pursued via a careful reading of the Word of God, adoration of the Eucharist, days in the desert, etc.

It is at the same time a contemplative reflection upon the life and ministry of those participating, in particular a review of life in fraternity. The Month is a sharing of fraternal life at every level: prayer, reflection, manual work, leisure, etc. There is a deepening shared spiritual awareness of the great original intuitions of the Fraternity, with an attempt to confront the conflicting appeals of the Church and the world, the situation in which priests have to live. The Month is often experienced by brothers as a turning point in their ministry, or as a final preparation before their commitment to the Fraternity (consecration). Some brothers feel the need to repeat the Month after some years of life in fraternity.

In the same way, some Months have been opened in recent years to priests who do not form part of the Fraternity, to deacons, seminarians, religious and laity.

Each region organizes the Month according to its own resources and in the spirit of open-heartedness.



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## **6. References to Brother Charles in the 1976 text**

Certain paragraphs of the 1976 Directory which speak of Brother Charles lack historical objectivity.

The Algiers Assembly proposes that the Fraternity Council should work in conjunction with a specialist on the work and ideas of Brother Charles de Foucauld, with a view to revising these paragraphs: such revision to be approved by a future Assembly.