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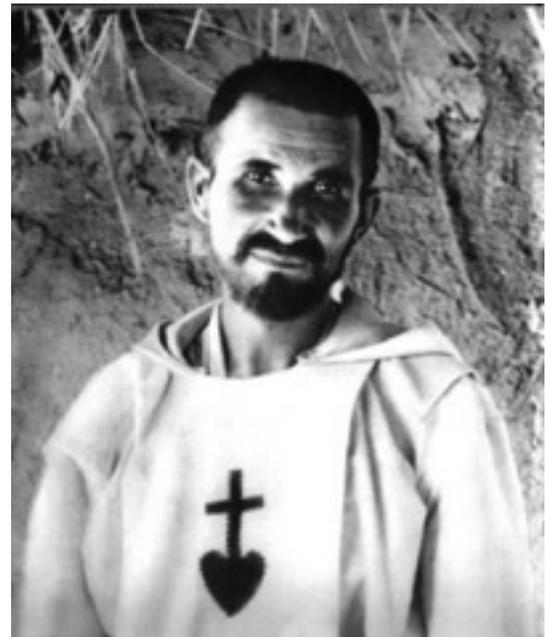
## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF JESUS CARITAS

### [Legacy of a spiritual master who loved the desert](#)

### [Eightieth Anniversary of the Death of Charles De Foucauld](#)

In September, 1951 six diocesan priests from France attended a retreat given by Father Rene Voillaume, then the Prior General of the Little Brothers of Jesus. Through this contact and the writings of Charles de Foucauld, they observed this "spirituality" of Brother Charles and the spirit of the Little Sisters and Brothers of Jesus. Living in the presence of God and at the same time living in the midst of humankind. They recognized how well it might assist them to live as diocesan priests. Thus the origin of fraternity lies in the meeting of two movements: the quest for a more authentic spiritual life for diocesan clergy, and the spiritual movement that stems from Charles de Foucauld. Three fraternities were organized in France in 1952.

The first retreats of the Fraternity given by Fr. Voillaume, were attended by about forty priests each year. Under the patronage of Archbishop Charles de Provencheres, the Fraternity was erected as a Pious Union in September, 1955, and then later a petition was sent to Rome that it might become a Secular Institute with vows when its statutes were approved. After some years, the Fraternity chose to withdraw that request. At the present, it refers to itself simply as the Fraternity but in 2002 the Congregation elevated it to a Priestly Association by accepting its statutes. The Fraternity came to the Americas first through Brazil, Chile and Peru. In North America the first Fraternity was formed in Montreal in 1959. Many Americans came into contact with the Fraternity for the first time when Fr. Voillaume made a nation-wide visit in the spring of 1959. The first U.S. Fraternity began in Brooklyn in 1960, and was soon joined by another. In January, 1964, a group of priests in San Francisco, who had been studying the ideas of Jesus-Caritas, attended a retreat given by one of the Fraternity members from Montreal and began meeting as a fraternity thereafter. A National Month of Nazareth in Connecticut in 1968 drew representatives from Fraternity groups in Brooklyn, San Francisco, Oakland and Detroit. Soon after a decision was made to continue no longer under Canadian leadership, but elect our own National Responsible.



Dan Danielson (Oakland, CA) was the first.  
Succeeded in 1974 by Tom McCormick (Denver, CO).  
Howard Calkins (New York) was elected in 1979,  
followed by Michael Smith (Savannah) in 1985.  
Don Dunn  
Donald Hanchon  
Paul Esser



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1999 Greg Pawlioski  
2002 Felipe Estevez

Jesus-Caritas fraternities are now found throughout the United States and in most countries of the world. Its members number around four thousand worldwide with about 1200 in the United States. There are also lay Fraternities and similar groups for sisters. following more or less the same pattern as the priest Fraternity. Together all these various groups form a kind of family in the Church drawing their inspiration from Br. Charles de Foucauld. While growth in priest support groups in the United States has had a particularly significant impact on the spread of Jesus-Caritas Fraternity in the United States. some more common features have influenced its spread throughout the world: the desire for a realistic spirituality for diocesan priests. the inspiration of Charles de Foucauld and the Little Sisters and Brothers of Jesus. and the availability of Jesus-Caritas retreats or personal contact with members of a fraternity.