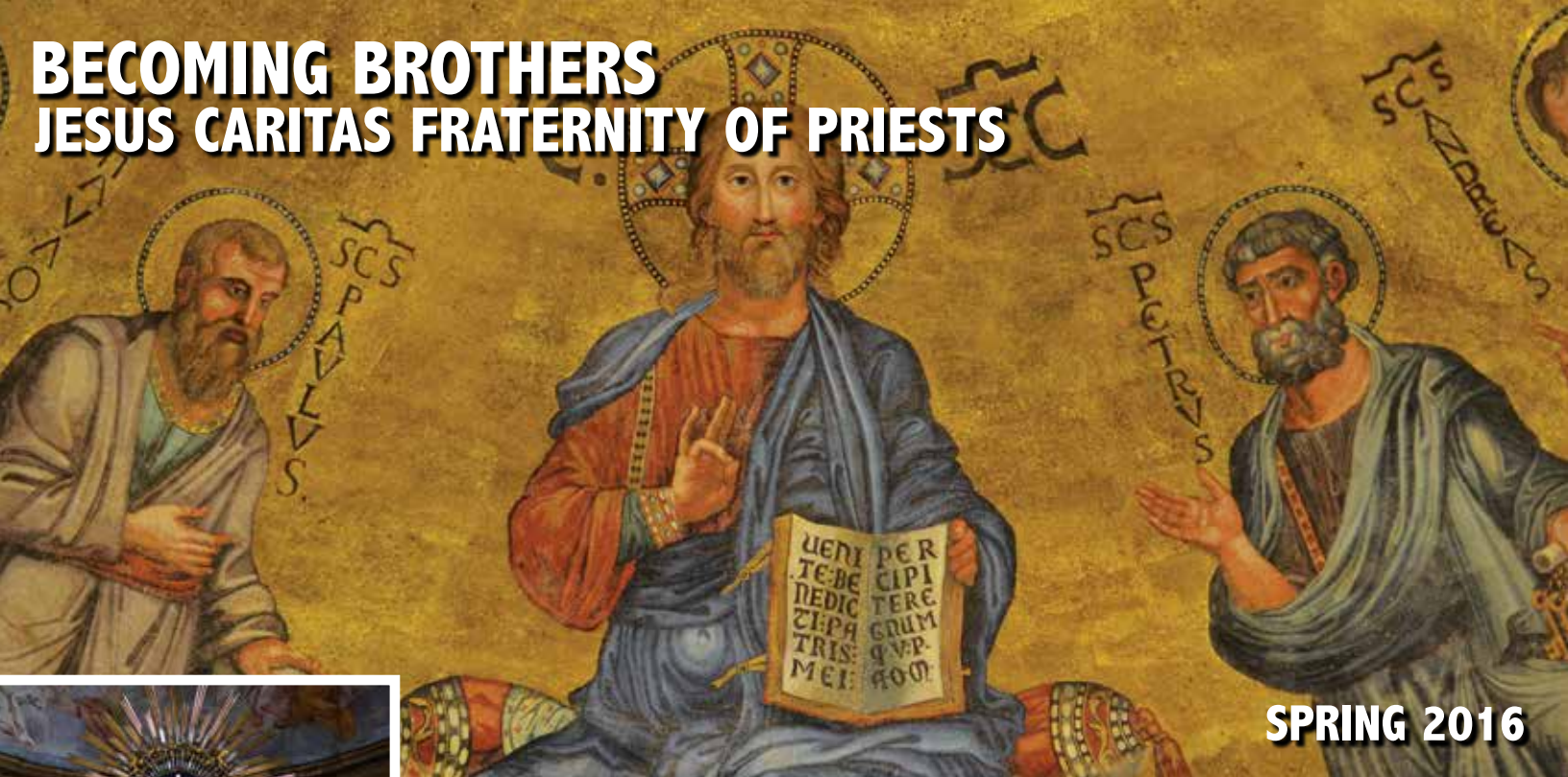


# BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



SPRING 2016



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## From the Responsible

Dear Brothers,

I pray and hope that after a busy Lent and Holy Week, you are taking some much needed rest. As you read this, I hope to be out on the course at Augusta National following Jordan Spieth as he defends his Masters title. This would be in answer to the question that Pope Francis posed in his Chrism Mass homily last year. "Do I know how to rest by accepting the love, gratitude and affection which I receive from God's faithful people?"

My honest answer would be, "I am still learning." I've become fairly consistent in taking an hour of adoration, and that helps. I've turned to some very talented parishioners to help with the work of organizing our National Office, and they have been a tremendous help. And I feel such tremendous support and encouragement from you, my brothers. I am grateful that many

of you have already returned your dues and feel "anointed" by the kind notes that some of you wrote. Still, the task of caring for a large faith community and giving our fraternity the attention that it deserves overwhelms me at times.

It is comforting to know Pope Francis understands and is praying for us. I am grateful for your patience with me, and for your own good work in promoting our fraternity. Our priesthood is enriched when we reach out to one another. Over the years, my brothers in fraternity have helped me be accountable for a spiritual life that gives vitality to my ministry. This is a wonderful gift that we need to offer our brother priests, especially those who are lonely or spiritually adrift. The Month of Nazareth is our formation in a spirituality that nourishes the diocesan priesthood. I'd ask you to do

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*If the Lord is so concerned about helping us, it is because he knows that the task of anointing his faithful people is demanding; it can tire us. We experience this in so many ways: from the ordinary fatigue brought on by our daily apostolate to the weariness of sickness, death and even martyrdom. The tiredness of priests! Do you know how often I think about this weariness which all of you experience? I think about it and I pray about it, often, especially when I am tired myself. I pray for you as you labor amid the people of God entrusted to your care, many of you in lonely and dangerous places. Our weariness, dear priests, is like incense which silently rises up to heaven (cf. Ps 141:2; Rev 8:3-4). Our weariness goes straight to the heart of the Father. — Pope Francis, Chrism Mass Homily, April 2, 2015*

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# Letter from Cuernavaca, First Pan American Assembly of Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests

*Cuernavaca, Mexico, February 15 – 19, 2016*

Dear Brothers:

We write this letter to you with much joy and hope at the end of our First Pan American Assembly. Three brothers from the International Team and delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, United States, México, Quebec (Canada) and the Dominican Republic have met at the Retreat House, “Madeleine Chollet,” in Cuernavaca to pray, reflect and give new impulse and mission to the fraternities of our countries.

Providentially, our Assembly coincided in part with the visit of Pope Francis to Mexico, and this permitted us to situate it within the great spiritual and ecclesial renewal movement that the Holy Spirit is breathing in our Church through the gestures, words and teachings of the Holy Father. There is a great resonance between the intuitions of Brother Charles and Pope Francis’ approach. It is a theme that we have studied deeply through a text by Javier Pinto. This reflection has confirmed the validity and reality of our spirituality in a pluralistic world, which is wounded by violence, injustice, drug trafficking, corruption, exclusion and impunity; we heard of this on the first day of our Assembly.

We feel, on that matter, the historic responsibility to be the first co-workers with this Pastor who



*The participants of the First Pan American Assembly in Cuernavaca, Mexico, February 2016.*

came from the end of the world, in the construction of a poor Church for the poor. Like Brother Charles, we want to multiply and intensify our presence in our countries in the “peripheries,” both geographic and existential, to be believable witnesses of the mercy of our Father God. Availability, austerity, simplicity, humility and the joy of Jesus of Nazareth should mark our style of life and our manner of being pastoral. Despite the diversity of languages and cultures we were able to understand one another, pray and work together, in a realization of Pentecost, although there were amusing things such as Mark Mertes’ inability to say the word “periferia.”

Certainly the Holy Spirit accompanied us and inspired us every day, from Eucharistic Adoration in the morning through dinner in the evening. The spirit of fraternity, collaboration, patience to understand the language of the other, joy and apostolic enthusiasm that have filled our hearts during these days are unequivocal signs of his vivifying presence. We have lived universal fraternity as our own spirituality.

Our Mexican brothers were completely devoted to taking care of us down to the slightest details, as did Sra. Edith Montes de Oca and Sra. María Elena Cruz, who each day delighted us with delicious meals. We now all feel a little

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Mexican having shared its history of persecution and martyrdom, a history always sheltered by the Virgin of Guadalupe and sustained by a firm faith. We feel part of this People that pilgrimages in America and each day we want to share more its destiny, its hopes and its struggles, locating ourselves, like Jesus, with the poor and excluded of our societies.

We feel a call to be more consistent with our spirituality and to help one another to live the means of spiritual growth that it offers us, particularly the MONTH OF NAZARETH. We want to revalue it and inspire all the brothers that have not yet made the Month to participate in it. A deep spirituality will help us to be, like Brother Charles, universal brothers, while respecting the truths of other ways of following Jesus, particularly in our presbyterates.

Only permanent and prolonged contact with our beloved Brother and Lord Jesus and the fraternal life will permit us to have an evangelizing presence that is constant, fertile, joyful and hopeful in the human peripheries in which we develop our work. We know that the charism of Brother Charles is shared by other groups of this Spiritual Family: Little Brothers and Little Sisters, consecrated lay persons, marriages, young etc. We want to strengthen the bonds with them and make known our spirituality, especially to the young.

We are sure that the charism of Brother Charles, enriched with the testimony of so many saints and martyrs of America is a great contribution to live the faithfulness of Jesus and his gospel on our continent. Because of this we want to share it with our brothers in the presbyterate inviting them to know and to participate in our activities; this includes those in the seminary.

You will find a more detailed and flavorful account of our Assembly in the document “Chronicle of Cuernavaca” as well as a collection of proposals for growth in the specific areas of our Fraternities, to wit, Spirituality, Fraternity, Pastoral Mission, Connections within the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld, and Growth. You can find this in the document “Proposals for Growth”. Both will be published at the website, [www.iesuscaritas.org](http://www.iesuscaritas.org).

Finally, we announce to you that we have elected Fernando Tapia Miranda, a priest of the Archdiocese of Santiago in Chile, as Continental Responsible for a period of six years, to maintain and increase the connections and shared services within the Americas, and to prepare the next Continental Assembly that will take place in two years (2018). May the Lord Jesus bless our Works and make them very fertile for the growth of our Priestly Fraternities in all of the continent. To Him be honor and glory forever and ever.



## Fr. Dan Danielson The Next Step

As the Retreat Director for the 2016 Month of Nazareth, Fr. Dan Danielson plans to cover some key issues – the importance of contemplative prayer, the role of intercessory prayer, and the challenges of living the Gospel as practiced by Fr. Charles de Foucauld (especially in regards to simplicity and poverty). But woven throughout Father's talks during retreat week is a question that hits the bullseye of our discernment walk with Christ. Indeed, it is a question that can – and should – be asked of anyone, and it is one that Father has asked himself repeatedly throughout his life: "What is the next step to which the Lord is calling me?"

"During the retreat, the focus won't be so much on our role as priests, but on our role as Christians," Fr. Danielson says. "Of course, as priests we live out our role as Christians through the priesthood. But this driving question pertains to everyone as we explore what it is that the Lord wants us to experience. It's not about being perfect, but about discovering where we are further being invited to go or what we are further being asked to do."

Which is why making time to attend the retreat is so important. The

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*"For me, taking that next step brought me to Jesus Caritas which has been the most significant structure in my spiritual life. I am 78 years old, I don't like to travel very much anymore, but out of loyalty I will do it because that's how much this Fraternity means to me." - Fr. Dan*

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question, for all its simplicity, requires the gift of time in order to be able to delve into it adequately, and the retreat week offers many opportunities to be free from distractions, to have days of recollection, to be in relationship with God, and to use the quiet time not so much for speaking, as for listening to what God is saying about what that next step needs to be.

"It's very simple," Father says. "For example, let's say you are not being faithful in prayer. Well, you just can't say that, 'Okay, now I'm going to be faithful in prayer.' No, you have to explore what the next step should be that will lead you to be more faithful in prayer."

And sometimes, the next step takes you where you never imagined you'd go. Fr. Danielson says that the years he was a seminarian were not

easy ones – in fact, he harbored a secret wish that he would be kicked out of the seminary. Then, one year before his ordination, he came across an advertisement in a publication out of the University of Notre Dame called Apostolic Perspectives by Fr. Leo Putz, and for the first time Father heard about a fraternity movement where priests could find spiritual support. So he sent off for the booklet, and when he subsequently ordered 50 more, they were sent to him with the condition that he hand them out – which he faithfully did until he was told to stop proselytizing. But Father was so intrigued that shortly after his ordination to the priesthood, he became a member of Jesus Caritas, eventually serving as its first National Responsible and writing The Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests, the American

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# 2016 Registration Form

Experience – the main booklet which is still used to communicate the Fraternity to priests in the United States.

“I never, ever expected that God would lead me in this direction,” Father says. “After my trials in the seminary, I was actually tired of seminarians – truly, the last thing I imagined that I would be doing was working with fellow priests. But this was my next step, one which has evolved into a lifelong ministry of educating and supporting the clergy on the parish, regional, national, and international levels.”

Today, Fr. Danielson is one of the Fraternity’s oldest living members and is looking forward to hosting the retreat week during the Month of Nazareth. And while he has a lot to share about what it has meant to be a member for 50 years, Father says the retreat is not about what he has to offer and that his role isn’t meant to be prescriptive – rather, he hopes to provide the stimulus to encourage reflection in discovering where and what that next step should be. To be sure, discovering the answer isn’t always easy, but it’s a path that leads to true contentment.

“I certainly have been surprised at the turn my life took, but it has been very fulfilling,” Father says. “For me, taking that next step brought me to Jesus Caritas which has been the most significant structure in my spiritual life. I am 78 years old, I don’t like to travel very much anymore, but out of loyalty I will do it because that’s how much this Fraternity means to me.”



## MONTH OF NAZARETH 2016

July 4 - 29, 2016 | Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, N.Y.

Please choose one:

- Month of Nazareth (\$900) |  Imbedded Retreat (\$300)  
(July 11-15, 2016)

Please provide the following information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Transportation \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese \_\_\_\_\_

Airplane: \_\_\_\_\_ Car: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight Information

(Christ the King Seminary is approximately 30 min. from Buffalo Niagara International Airport by car)

Airline: \_\_\_\_\_ Flight Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Car Travel Information

Arrival Date and Time:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any special dietary needs:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Jesus Caritas. Send your registration form with payment to:

Jesus Caritas Month of Nazareth | 1240 Monte Sano Ave. | Augusta, GA 30904

*At its Nov. 3 meeting, the National Fraternity decided to offer three partial scholarships for the Month of Nazareth. There is one scholarship for a priest ordained after June 30, 2006, one for a retired priest, and one for an international priest. The scholarships cover half (\$450) of the room and board for the Month plus a \$200 transportation allowance. The scholarships are offered on a first-come basis. Cost of the month will increase to \$950 after May 1, 2016 and cost of the week of retreat will increase to \$325 after June 1, 2016.*

## PASSIONATE FOR GOD AND HUMANITY: *Pope Francis and the great intuitions of Br. Charles*

*This is the first part of a three-part reflection written by Javier Pinto. This is the document that animated much of the discussions of the Pan American Assembly. The Full Document can be found online at [www.jesus Caritasusa.org/](http://www.jesus Caritasusa.org/). Parts two and three will appear in upcoming issues of this newsletter.*

*“It is by loving people that we learn to love God” (Charles de Foucauld)*

### 1. CHARLES DE FOUCAULD: WITNESS FOR OUR TIME?

We are commemorating the centenary of Brother Charles’ death. A century has passed since that afternoon of December the first, that saw fall, in the sands of the Sahara, the wounded body of the universal brother, the friend of the Tuaregs, the Marabout of the red heart. 1 He is one who, by sharing the vulnerability of his neighbors, was hit directly by the violence in the environment. Since then, despite the apparent failure of a life ended in solitude and abandonment, his testimony has continued to impact the lives of countless men and women and inspired many initiatives. Through all of them, we have tried to propose a particular way of living our relationship with God and humanity: appreciating the everyday as a place of divine manifestation, closeness to the poor and openness to universal brotherhood. In the twentieth century the Dominican Yves Congar recognized the strength of Brother Charles’ testimonial, seeing in him one of “the beacons lit by God on the threshold of the atomic century” 2: a light of hope, manifested as a calling to be followed, in a century marked by injustice, division and war. It is in this sense that the theologian Ludwig Kaufman liked to establish a close link between the figures of Foucauld, John XXIII and Bishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, presenting them as authentic expressions of Christianity for the future. 3 At the beginning of the third millennium, how can the testimony of Brother Charles still be seen as a current example for our time?



Apart from the formality, the beatification of Charles de Foucauld, in November 2005, reminds us that the testimony of the blessed can become a real source of inspiration for the life of those who follow Jesus’ footsteps. As for our Brother Charles, the broad outlines of his life remain significant in a world that is reluctant to abandon the culture of selfishness, violence and exclusion. It is indeed this perspective that Pope Francis demonstrates, when referring explicitly to the person of Foucauld, recognizing him as a true “apostle of kindness,” an example of fraternal closeness to the poorest and most abandoned.4 It is important to note that these words are not expressed as part of a widespread praise of the virtues of Blessed Carlos. In them are reflected the feeling of someone who knows him and is convinced that this particular way of proclaiming the Gospel has become more topical at this time. It should be noted that the first encounter between Francis and the figure of Charles de Foucauld is placed in the context of Latin American church history in the second half of the twentieth century. During this period Fraternities, through their different facets, were becoming present in various countries in the region, revealing the fate of the poorest. Without attempting to define the personal impact this could have on the spiritual life of the Jesuit Bergoglio, we can say that during his ministry, especially as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the opportunities to share closely with Fraternities were never missed.5 This contributed in some way to generate a certain

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proximity between him and the spiritual path inspired by Foucauld, a relationship that is evident in some of his recent speeches. However, it is not only his words, but also his attitudes that allow us to establish some links between them. Before addressing some of the texts which Francisco quotes regarding Foucauld, it is well worth deepening certain aspects of his practice that are in perfect harmony with the intuitions of Brother Charles.

1. Marabut is a term used in Muslim tradition to speak of a godly man or to refer to someone wise and respectable.
2. Quoted by J. J. ANTIER, "Charles de Foucauld", (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1997) p. 16.
3. L. KAUFMAN, "Three Pioneers of Tomorrow's Future Christianity" (USCC, 1986) p. 203
4. Speech on the eve of the opening of the Synod on the Family.
5. The presence of the Little Sisters of Jesus since 1957, the arrival of the Little Brothers of Jesus, the testimony of secular fraternities, the memory of Mauricio Silva, Little Brother of the Gospel killed by the dictatorship and the emergence of priestly fraternity underscore that this spiritual path has put down deep roots.

Javier Pinto Contreras, Theologian  
Paris, December 1, 2015



*"A bunch of overfed, over spoiled old priests, but happy and enjoying a few days together." (Doug Brougher, New Orleans).*

Where do you go when you are tired? Ten fraternity brothers gathered at the Jersey Shore last summer for some wonderfully renewing rest. John Jacquel, of Erie, sent in this report:

August 24-28, 2015 saw 10 of our brothers enjoy a vacation week at San Alfonso Center in Long Branch, New Jersey. From Colorado and Minnesota, from Florida and Georgia, from New Orleans, New York, and Nebraska as well as Cleveland and Erie they came – and biked, swam, sunned, read, walked and toured. They enjoyed meals and Masses and movies together. They observed Holy Hours and Happy Hours and headed home refreshed. Side trips explored Philadelphia and the local medical center, as well as the Boardwalk restoration (thanks to Superstorm Sandy in 2012). Next year's fraternity event will be the Retreat Week at Christ the King Seminary near Buffalo, NY (July 11-15, 2016) – so mark your calendars now!

## List of Council Members

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## From the Responsible *continued from front cover*

everything possible to encourage the priests in your own fraternity and beyond to make the time for the upcoming "Month" in July.

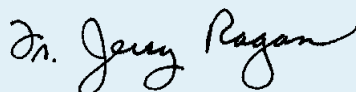
You might consider making the Month of Nazareth yourself, even if you have already made the Month already; even if you are retired. I am delighted that Jim O'Donnell will be making the Month again in celebration of his 60th Anniversary of Ordination. Think about joining him. Or, if you are retired and still have a few free weeks in July, think about filling in for a younger priest who couldn't make the Month without your help.

Much of this newsletter concerns the recent Pan American Assembly held in Mexico, but our more immediate task as a fraternity is to give our best efforts to promoting the Month of Nazareth. At the Assembly, we discovered that other countries have different ways of approaching the Month, but we all agreed that there should

be some common elements. So we asked the International Fraternity to develop a directory for the Month of Nazareth that fits all countries, taking into account any local social and cultural peculiarities. Towards that goal, our International Responsible, Aurelio Sanz, has already asked Manuel Ponzo of the Spanish Fraternity to develop an overview of the Month that will be published as soon as possible.

In this Easter season, I pray that all our efforts will bring new life to the Church and to our Fraternity. And I pray that all of you may find some much need rest.

Fraternally,



Fr. Jerry "Hap" Ragan  
Brother Responsible, USA

## Upcoming Dates

**July 4 – 29**

*Month of Nazareth  
East Aurora, NY*

**July 11 - 15**

*Jesus Caritas Retreat  
East Aurora, NY*

**October 24 – 26**

*National Fraternity Meeting  
Kansas City, Kan.*

**December 1**

*Centennial Commemoration  
of the Death of Bl. Charles*