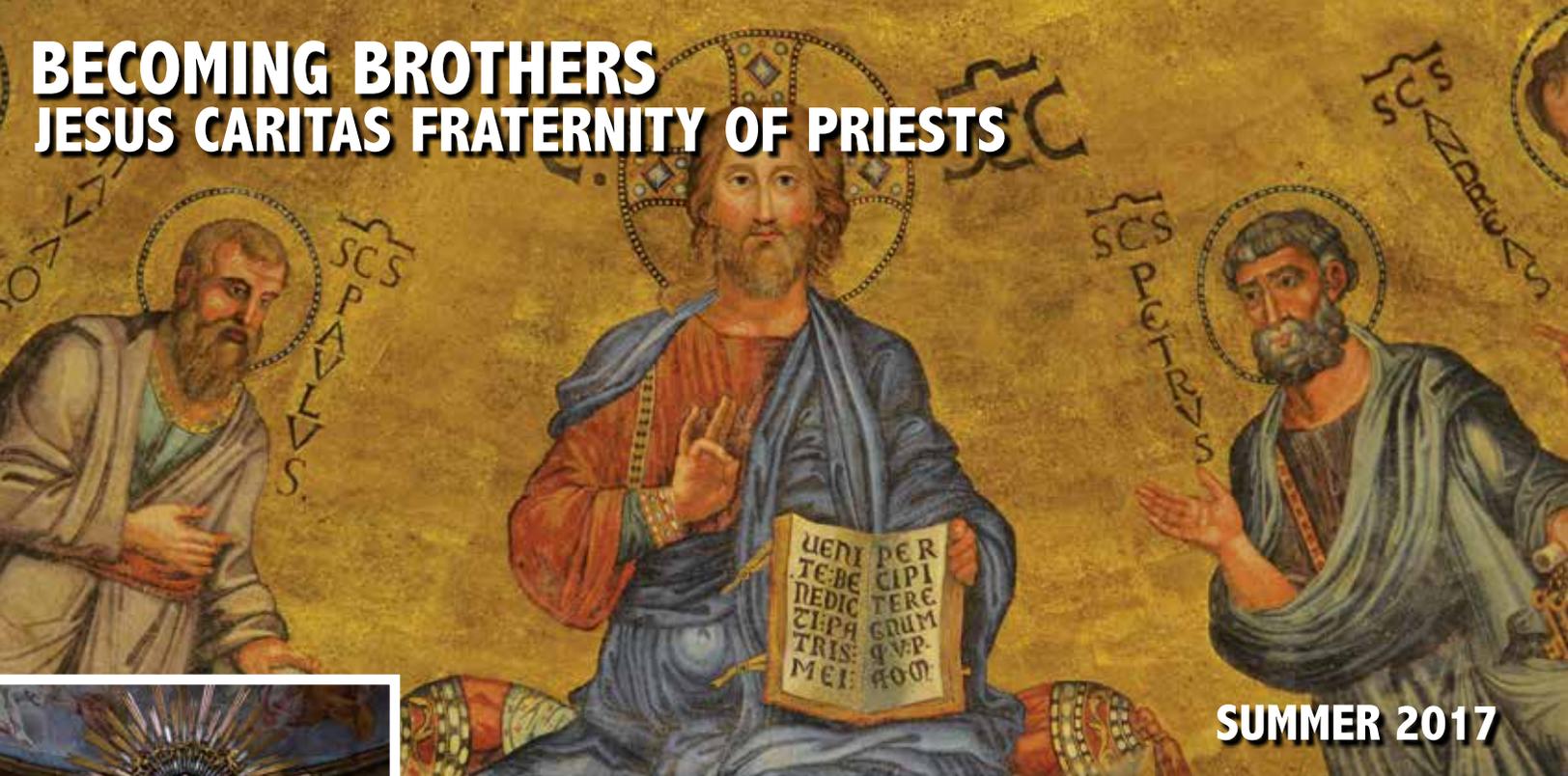


BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



SUMMER 2017



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From the Responsible

Dear Brothers,

Fr. Ed Frank was already in retirement and living at St. Mary on the Hill when I arrived in 2002. We would share a common life and fraternity for eleven years until dementia got the best of him. The hard task of telling Ed he could no longer drive was made a little easier when a Parochial Vicar arrived from Canada to serve in the parish. Fr. Raj did not have a car and Ed generously turned his car over to him. Eventually, Ed found a very caring community in his hometown of Rochester, N.Y. with the Sisters of Mercy, Ed passed on to glory with his dear cousin, Sr. Joyce Wittman at his bedside on June 8th.

Ed was 90 years old and 60 years ordained. Even with dementia, there was a genuine happiness and joy that always bubbled up in him. It was never put on, never fake. There was a spark, a divine spark of joy that lived in his heart and came through in his words and actions.

And as I reported in the last newsletter on Friday of the First Week of Lent here in Augusta, a surgeon discovered that Fr. Mike Smith had inoperable cancer of his abdominal wall. Mike was a former National Responsible and he was my "father" in fraternity. Twenty-four years ago when I came South from Philadelphia, it was Mike who introduced me to the Fraternity. He

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Howie Calkins *and the* Paradox of 21st Century Fraternity *by Fr. Mark Mertes*

We remember gratefully our dear brother Howie Calkins who passed away this past Good Friday. Thank you to Sammy Taylor for keeping us up to date and for all his loving attention to Howie's needs these past several years. Howie's passing has called forth some reflections in my heart. Knowing that his funeral was imminent, and given that Holy Week and Easter Week in my parishes were filled with already scheduled events, I internally decided that I would not be able to attend his funeral, whenever it might occur. When I heard that the funeral was to be on a Saturday, April 22, because of my Easter week and weekend schedule, I chose not to attend.

While I was comfortable with my decision, I felt, all week long, the pull of this important event. To say farewell to one of our early leaders in the Fraternity, and to do whatever I could to support other brothers in the Fraternity at this time of loss seemed to me of inestimable value. I know that through the miracle of air travel I could make it happen. On the other hand, I felt the call to be in my parish.....or in my case, my parishes. For it is in my parishes that I participate in Br. Charles' charism of being present and of "shouting the gospel with my life."

In fact, Br. Charles deliberately made it impossible for himself to be physically and geographically close to those he loved and what was familiar: "I chose Tamanrasset, a village of twenty families in the middle of the mountain, at the heart of the Hoggar and of Dag Rali, its main limb, away from all the major centres. It does not seem possible that there could ever be any garrison, telegraph or European here, and there will not be a mission for a long time. I chose this distant spot where I want the only model for my life to be the life of Jesus of Nazareth." (Two Dancers in the Desert, Charles Lepetite, p. 53) To be in Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests has been for me a constant encouragement to discover the Risen Christ in all that is simple, hidden and ordinary, especially as I walk with my people on the peripheries of life. For me it is a paradox that I hear Br. Charles' call to be with on the periphery, and



at the same time I have unprecedented resources to travel, to communicate, to basically do whatever I chose to do. I have abundantly more resources than my people! They don't have my freedom to travel, to get about as they wish; my parishioners are bound by limited resources, immigration issues, demanding work schedules and bills to pay which render them unable to often even attend a parish meeting.

In the end I took this to prayer (what else can we do!?). It was at Eucharist, and in praying the Liturgy of the Hours, and in adoration that I could actively participate in our universal vision of our priestly fraternity. What did Br. Charles experience as he gazed into the monstrance all alone in the desert of Algeria? Communion! One of my favorite images of Howie, (apart from him pondering life while smoking his pipe) was him in our holy hours at national gatherings making a profound bow, on both knees, before the Blessed Sacrament. At those moments we gaze into the mystery of Christ's love, the Mystery that inspired and sustained Br. Charles, the Mystery that allowed him to live so apart from the world and at the same time be intimately connected with it. It is the mystery of Communion, Christ present in the Hoggar and in Mount Vernon, in the young and the old, in the healthy and the infirm, in the stranger and the friend, in my parish and in your life. Christ is present all ways and everywhere, gazing on us kindly and accompanying us to new Life. Now, Howie receives the loving gaze of Christ in a new way; may we share anew in this Communion. Amen!

In Humble Thanksgiving

by Fr. Mike Smith

The contacts renewed and celebrated during last year's celebration of 50 years of ministry in south Georgia made me even more deeply aware of the full and abundant life with which God has blessed me. When I was found to have terminal cancer between March 3 and 10, I found nothing on my "bucket list" to do, except pay my taxes and give humble thanks. The cards of support in illness have far surpassed those of my anniversary. I have even heard from a childhood companion who addressed me as "my first best friend." My first college roommate sent me an apology for being such a drag on my life, something I had never even thought about. I keep being touched by the creative kindness of your words and the

cards that you have chosen. The beauty of nature—sunshine and flowers—here in our own yard, combined with the delightful recall of love and friendship over 75 years, leaves me with little desire to extend my earthly life, but rest in the assurance that the love of God, hidden with Christ in Glory, is greater than any of the blessings already sampled. My walk with Jesus began with Lent, reached a decisive stage around Holy Week and now I join the whole family of Christ, being illumined anew with his words of wisdom, lifted up by singing chants of victory, made stronger than death by that food our hearts can never forget. So, I find myself feeling very content and satisfied to live out whatever time God has planned for me here. My

doctor has promised to monitor what the "enemy" is doing, so that I can plan how to say 'A DIOS' with the same sense of joy, hope and good humor that I have cherished and cultivated as long as I can remember—which isn't that long. I did not get where I am now without all of you. I am depending on you to get me safely home, where I will still not be "retired" till I can have you with me.



How Can We Move Towards Becoming A Universal Brother? *By Fr. Ron Beisle*

1. By the awareness of our own biases and prejudices, and the way we show them. By being mission-conscious and generous in our donations to missionaries.
2. By extending our ministry beyond the members of our congregation who are comfortable and secure.
3. By tailoring our vacations to allow an experience of the "third world" where there is scarcity, and survival is the engine that drives daily life.
4. By living in simplicity, and avoiding what is ostentatious or extravagant in our residence or the car we drive or the dress we choose.
5. By curbing our speech and avoiding such generalizations as "welfare cheats", "scam artists", and "illegal immigrants."
6. By treating all people with courtesy and kindness, and developing a blind eye to those who seek to manipulate us in our role as priest.
7. By learning a foreign language which would assist us in our ministry.
8. By tempering our reactions to political statements that would infringe on the basic human rights of others.
9. By informing ourselves of the restrictive ways of immigration and employment.
10. Getting an international perspective on news by deliberately watching BBC or other foreign broadcasts.

Terrorism in God's Name

Musings of a Nigerian

The specter of terrorism and its association with religious fervor is a sensitive issue for many people that has also occupied the consciousness of our age. From an experiential standpoint, I have never personally been a direct victim of the religious violence that has come from the fault line of my country's Christian-Muslim divide. The closest I came to experience such violence was living under the constant fear that we would be attacked by Muslim extremists (a common occurrence) during my seminary days in the hitherto serene plateau city of Jos in central Nigeria.

This is not to say that senseless religious violence has not ever hit close home. In 2001, a priest alumnus of our seminary from the northern Archdiocese of Kaduna fell victim during one of northern Nigeria's incessant religious uprisings. Pulled from his car and dragged to a ditch, a mob of fanatical Muslim youth gouged out his eyes before bludgeoning him to death. Ten years later, a parish at which a seminary mate was pastor was bombed while celebrating the Christmas liturgy, an attack that left dozens dead. The Islamic terrorist group, Boko Haram (meaning Western education is forbidden) that would later kidnap hundreds of school girls, claimed responsibility for the heinous attack. The situation is not any different today. As I write, Muslim Fulani herdsmen are ravaging the farmlands of rural Christian communities in our central Nigerian region, leaving a trail of death and destruction in the process. In fairness, it is not only Christians who have been at the receiving end of atrocities perpetrated by radical Islamic groups. Statistics show that Muslims themselves have borne their fair share of terror unleashed by their co-religionists.

This past school year, I have had the opportunity to teach an elective on Christian – Muslim dialogue, part of which course was a class visit to the Mosque of the Muslim Community of Palm Beach. This would be my second mosque visit, having earlier accompanied a colleague who was been honored by the Darul Uloom Institute in Pembroke Pines, Florida, for his work at the service of community and religious harmony. Both

visits left their mark on me as regards the potentials and possibilities for interfaith dialogue.

But I do not believe that we should be naïve to the real intentions of expansionist Islam. The statements and actions of people who espouse this brand point to the distrust and suspicion that stand in the way of honest engagement between religions and cultures. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is reported to have said in 2001: "We will export our revolution throughout the world...until the calls 'there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah' are echoed all over the world." In the period leading to 9/11, Osama bin Laden is reported to have boasted, "I was ordered to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah, and his prophet Mohammad." Some would argue that the phenomenon of massive migration is turning up to being a subtler and effective tool of this expansionism than the traditional conquest model of jihad. Credence seems to be given to this fear especially when such wave of new immigrants resists genuine integration into their new cultures.

But it is neither fair to paint a whole group of people with a broad brush no matter the evil of violence a minority group claims to do in their name. The temptation to pigeonhole whole groups of people must be resisted as not all Muslims are violent people in the same way that not all Christians are good people. Here we must learn from the welcoming heart of the Holy Father, Pope Francis whose sympathy to the plight of refugees from volatile regions in the Middle East is borne out of the fact that they too are fleeing from the hands of extremists to escape the inhuman living condition of their homelands in search of better opportunities and a healthy future for themselves and their families. What his example teaches us, and by the way this is a gospel imperative, is to be welcoming of others simply for the sake of their being our brothers and sisters in the family of God, as such act is equivalent to welcoming Jesus himself and his holy family of Mary and Joseph who were themselves refugees in Egypt, in flight from the wrath of Herod.

ame:

Priest *by Fr. Dan Melaba*

What gives me hope is the rapprochement that the Church has made to adherents of other faiths in our time. Vatican II's declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate*, expresses this solicitude: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men," [NA, 2]. Speaking specifically about Islam, the Council expressed sentiments of the Church's esteem of the Muslim religion and then threw the challenge to both Christians and Muslims: "Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, this Sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom," [NA, 3].

This is the spirit that must accompany whatever efforts that are geared towards greater harmony in the human family and all of God's creation. This is precisely what Blessed Charles de Foucauld also embodied in his quest of being a brother to one and all, following in the footsteps of the God who became one with us so that He will be "our Brother." His life and example of universal brotherhood in the territories of the Sahara (now a hotbed of militant Islam) set him out as a model and inspiration, especially in our search for dialogue with the religion of Islam and its adherents. One fruit of this dialogue would be in every child of the true God, Christians, Muslims and all people of goodwill condemning and standing up to the oddity and incongruence of savages shouting Allahu Akbar (God is great) while committing terrorist acts.

* Rev. Daniel Ter Melaba is an Associate Professor and Director of Field Ministry at St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, Boynton Beach, Florida.

Upcoming Events

Regional Retreat "Grateful Living"	Loyal Retreat House Clinton, Ohio	October 8 – 13, 2017 info: (330) 896-2315
II Pan American Assembly	Dominican Republic	February 19 – 23, 2018
Vacation Days	Pacific Northwest	Summer 2018
XI General Assembly	Bangalore, India	January 15 -- 30, 2019
Month of Nazareth	TBA	Summer 2019

Preparing for Jesus Caritas International Assembly in Bangalore

When you gather in fraternity this summer please discuss the Bangalore Questionnaire and e-mail a report of your responses to the national office: jesus.caritas.usa@gmail.com

THE BANGALORE QUESTIONNAIRE

Part One: Human

How do our political, economic, social and cultural realities touch me and my fraternity?

Part Two: Church

How have we, as a diocese, parishes and communities, been inspired and illuminated by Evangelii Gaudium to be a Church reaching out to the peripheries? What are the obstacles and dangers in this journey?

Part Three: Fraternities

How do we experience the spirituality of Br. Charles through the Review of Life, Day in the Desert, Eucharistic Adoration, and accompanying the poor?

Also, please provide the following information:

- a. Number of priests in your Fraternity _____
- b. Number of brothers that have done the Month of Nazareth _____
- c. Support to other Fraternities _____
- d. Contacts with the Spiritual Family of Br. Charles _____

From the Responsible *continued from front cover*

pointed the way for me to a simple, joy-filled priesthood that was rooted in sharing the love of God. I will be forever grateful to him.

Father Michael Heffernan Smith, 78, a priest of the Diocese of Savannah for 51 years died at Ogeechee Area Hospice in Statesboro early on the morning of June 21st, 2017. As you can read in his reflection, he remained in good humor and strong faith until the end. Mike always had a grateful heart and was deeply aware of the goodness of people in his life.

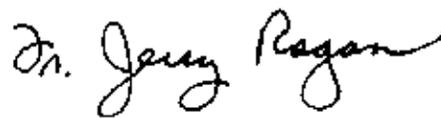
On Good Friday, April 14th, 2017, Msgr. Howard W. Calkins, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York died after suffering several years with Alzheimer's. Howie was also a former National Responsible who was beloved by so many in our Fraternity. He would have been both humbled and bemused to know that he died on Good Friday. He died six weeks shy of his fiftieth anniversary, having been ordained on May 27th, 1967. I am grateful that Greg Pawloski was able to attend his funeral on behalf of the National Fraternity. And I am grateful for Mark Mertes reflection on his prayerful discernment not to attend the funeral.

I also mourn the death of Fr. Richard Altenbaugh who passed away on May 29, 2017 after celebrating his 57th anniversary, May 26, 2017. Richard faithfully attended the regional retreat in Atlanta every year. And a good international friend, Fr. Félix Rajaonarivelo, from Madagascar on the eve of Pentecost, June 3rd, after a brief battle with liver cancer gave his spirit to God and began the life of the blessed. Felix was a member of the

international team and continental responsible of Africa. I was last with him in Kansas City this past October and he pulled me aside to thank me for all that the Fraternities in the USA had done to support the Fraternities in Africa. I was deeply touched by his grateful heart.

In the midst of this season of letting go and saying farewell, I too must say goodbye to my home and journey forth. After 15 years as Spiritual Father of St. Mary on the Hill (with 2400 families), my Bishop has asked me to take on a new assignment. The "going to" will not be all that hard. It is a little parish (150 families) on Tybee Island with wonderfully involved lay leadership. But the letting go is very hard and always will be. Pope Francis has called us to a deeper love of our people and it has been such a great blessing to share God's love with the people of my faith community. So, pray for me in this time of transition and all our brothers who are on the move. Pray especially in thanksgiving for those who have gone on to Glory. How good it was to be in fraternity with them!! Help us Lord to figure out a way to share the life-giving support and spirituality of the fraternal life with a younger generation of our brothers.

Faternally,



Fr. Jerry "Hap" Ragan

Membership List

The wrong return envelope was sent out with the dues letter this year. We apologize and hope that all the mail was forwarded to us. In the fall newsletter we will list all of our dues paying members. It is never too late to send in your dues (\$50.) to the JC – USA National Office at

1420 Monte Sano Ave., Augusta, GA 30904.

Thank you for your support.

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