

JESUS-CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS

INTRODUCTION

1. In 1969, Dan Danielson did the fraternities in the U.S.A. a great service in expressing the lived experience of the Jesus-Caritas Fraternities at the time. The very fact that his booklet, *The American Experience*, has remained valuable for almost 18 years testifies that it was a work of the Spirit. This present rewriting hopes to remain faithful to the purpose of the initial writing, that is, "to present the spirit and direction of the 'Union' as reflected through some of the most common experiences of the Fraternities in the United States."
2. When this booklet was reprinted in 1984 by Edward J. Farrell and Donald F. Hanchon, they made mention of some language shifts, especially the word 'fraternity' instead of 'union'. This change was made in the International Directory for Jesus Caritas which was adopted in 1976 at Montefiolo and "postscripted" without substantial revision by the General Assembly meeting in Algiers in August, 1981. We hope that this document also reflects the spirit and direction of our International brothers.
3. Our thanks to David Lichter of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee who completed this rewriting of our experience of Jesus Caritas in the United States while serving as a spiritual director of the North American College in February 1987.

THE FRATERNITY: WHY AND WHAT?

4. Since 1969, priests in the United States continue to experience daily the Church's growing pains, including fewer priests, more lay ministers who need guidance and support, and a relationship with a society which increasingly reflects non-Gospel values. Dioceses seek many ways to meet the needs of those priests who feel the stress and demands of ministry. Many priests desire ways to commit themselves to one another for personal support and for professional and ministerial growth, knowing that they need no longer stand alone. Renewal programs for priests, most notably Ministry to Priests and Emmaus help address these pressures. Many other spiritual growth groups, such as charismatic groups, provide hope and fraternity for many priests. What then is distinctive about Jesus Caritas? Priests within the Fraternity have been pondering this question especially since our National Assembly in Milwaukee in 1983. We see this rewriting as a critical and opportune moment to re-express our understanding of Fraternity.
5. Many are initially attracted to fraternity because it is the only support group structure available in the diocese. For some it fulfills a need for mutual support in the midst of an active and, at times, lonely and demanding ministry. For others it might be a realistic and concrete expression of what *Presbyterorum Ordinis* emphasized in paragraph 8. "Each and every priest, therefore, is joined to his brother priests by a bond of charity, prayer, and every, kind of cooperation." Yet, its greatest gift is a spirituality which helps keep Jesus and His Gospel at the center of hectic, even compulsively busy lives. This spirituality, which is the distinctive core of Jesus Caritas, fosters an intimate love for Jesus centered in the Eucharist, promotes a contemplative attitude toward activity, and empowers a ministry to and solidarity with God's poor wherever they are met.
6. Jesus Caritas is an International Fraternity which means that our American brothers' are linked in purpose and compassion with many brothers throughout the world. The General Assembly in 1982 described this perspective as. "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." While our local fraternities are predominantly formed and shaped by the needs of their members, this global characteristic grounds and guides, giving perspective and bonding to our individual groups, challenging us to be universal brothers.

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7. This Fraternity takes its inspiration from the life and charisms of Charles de Foucauld. While some of our local groups still find Brother Charles to be a strange and distant person whom they have yet to meet in depth, they find themselves united in heart with this man who sought to know and imitate Jesus, to encounter Jesus loved for His own sake as the source of his ministry. For many groups. Brother Charles is becoming like another brother in their midst whose presence and life story become as much an influence upon them, as their own lives. Above all, each priest finds these words of Charles resonating within him, helping to focus his Christian and priestly vocation: "I love our Lord, Jesus Christ, although with a heart that wants to love more and better. But nonetheless, I love Him and cannot bear another life than that which leads to Him."
8. In practice, what does it mean to be a Jesus Caritas Fraternity? As concretely experienced, the Fraternity is a brotherhood formed by five to seven priests who agree to meet once every month for Scripture sharing, contemplative prayer before the Eucharist, and a shared review of life with ample time for some friendly conversation and fellowship usually over a meal.
9. The commitment is to be brothers for each other in a way that our responsibility to each other will lead us individually and as a group, to grow in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, recognizing Him at the heart of our life and ministry. Any structure or spiritual practice fostered within the group is meant to facilitate this commitment and growth. As Rene Voillaume puts it, the fraternity is based simply "on our love for one another and the presence of Jesus in our midst." The purpose of the group, therefore, moves beyond only recreation, socializing, or theological and ministerial discussions to that deep level where the members seek that union with Jesus and His Father's Will in their personal lives.
10. As part of the Church, the group takes on the pilgrim nature of the people of God. Each person comes to his brothers where he happens to be in his life. The members see themselves committed to Jesus and to one another and not primarily to a set structure that they need to follow. Each fraternity develops according to the needs, hopes and personalities of its members. Growth within the fraternity will look like any human growth with its plateaus and crisis points.
11. Any fraternity will need to be very realistic about and watchful for the dynamics of the group. Two important rules should be kept in mind. The group should give itself an initial period of time commitment, six months to a year, to offer themselves trustingly and faithfully to each other. This is vital for creating the climate needed to lessen our normal tendencies to be guarded or defensive. Secondly, it is not advisable for a fraternity to shift its members constantly, adding or subtracting, because growth in trust can easily be jeopardized. A small steady group can safeguard the intimacy needed for candor, care and confidence.
12. Because time is needed for this gradual growth, joining a fraternity usually cannot provide the help needed by a priest who is at a point of serious crisis, whether he is trying to decide about remaining in active ministry or is under great emotional or psychological stress. Most often these men cannot afford the time and patience required for the gradual growth in trust. Counseling or some other form of therapy would be more suitable at this time of their lives. After a fraternity has been together for some time, these and many other questions can be addressed, prayed over and worked through. While recognizing that each of us has his particular difficulties over which he struggles, a priest should usually consider joining a fraternity when he is committed to priesthood and desires to grow in that ministry.
13. The Fraternity is not a 'program' which is introduced to a diocese as the Ministry to Priests or the Emmaus program. These programs are presented at a gathering of priests, most

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often with the Bishop participating. The full participation of the presbyterate has much to recommend it. Diocesan collegiality and renewal are evident benefits from these programs. In contrast to these more sophisticated programs, Jesus Caritas fraternity is a simpler ministry of priest-to-priest, and does not entail waiting for a diocesan initiative towards priestly growth in spirituality.

14. A few priests who desire to explore the possibility of committing themselves to one another in their spiritual journeys can start a fraternity. This booklet, contact with an experienced member of the fraternity, and mutual self-offering would be adequate starters for any fraternity. More information will be found in Appendix C at the end of this booklet.
15. While Fraternity is a small group of priests committed to one another, it is not meant to be in any way a clique or secret organization. Learning how to be brothers to one another in the small group is meant to help us become better brothers to all our fellow priests, to our Bishop, and to help us minister in a more fraternal and collegial way overall.
16. A fraternity needs to be a relatively small, consistent group for trust to develop. However, a new member can enter at the group's discretion. The group must be ready to invest adequate time to help all members come to know and trust each other so that all can share again at the same depth and with the same concern that they enjoyed before the new person entered. Such efforts have usually brought new life and vitality. Normally, experienced members of fraternity should assume the responsibility of helping priests form new fraternities, rather than have a fraternity constantly trying to take on new members.
17. Members of Jesus-Caritas do not see the fraternity adding anything to the call which the Church addresses to all her priests. It simply offers some priests a way of answering that call. As secular priests we are called to sanctify ourselves with the people of our diocese, in and through our ministry. Jesus-Caritas offers certain emphases, practices and a focus to that call to help us respond more authentically and faithfully to our vocation as secular priests. The following paragraphs will attempt to order and highlight these elements of the Fraternity.

MEETINGS OF THE FRATERNITY

18. We discover the heart of the Fraternity, its spirituality, lived out when a fraternity gathers together. What is shared in common on this day allows the brothers to reflect upon and to celebrate the workings of God in their lives of discipleship and service. Each brother is expected to be present and responsible to the brothers on this day.
19. Practically, this meeting would occur at least once-a-month. Less frequency leads to too little reflection on the part of individuals and the group. More frequency is usually pastorally impractical. In most cases at least two periods of the day would be set aside: a morning-afternoon, afternoon-evening, or evening-overnight-morning. Many groups have found the overnight to offer the best opportunity for prayer, sharing and time together. Some groups choose to begin with time of solitude, others with social or a shared meal. What is most important is that the group shares a common understanding of how essential their presence is to each other. Groups will usually reserve these days for months in advance, giving them the highest priority.
20. Each brother is responsible to come to this gathering having prepared himself in his desert day for this review of life. (Both of these will be explained separately.) This preparation will communicate to the brothers the seriousness with which this quality, graced time is taken.
21. The brothers focus their attention on Jesus present among them and for them, who desires to strengthen and encourage them through each other in their love of Him and their service

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of His Gospel. The fraternity seeks to encounter their brother Jesus in silence, in the Word, in the Eucharistic mystery, and in the life and ministry of one another. The structure of the day is intended to foster the climate within which this can happen. The ordinary elements of a fraternity day include:

- praying with and sharing the Word.
- adoration of Jesus in the Eucharistic Mystery,
- review of life,
- time for friendly, relaxed fellowship.

COMPONENTS OF THE FRATERNITY MEETING: SCRIPTURE

22. We approach God's Word as a Word of Love and Life, spoken to each of us personally. How the scriptures will be incorporated will vary with each group. Some groups begin by proclaiming a selected passage to one another, then after going off in silence, return to share the fruit of that Word in prayerful reflection. This sharing is not intended to be an exegesis of the passage nor a sharing of ideas for a homily, but how the Word interprets our lives, speaks intimately to us as disciples of the Lord. Some will let one scripture passage be the centerpiece of their review of life. In whichever way we might have the Word speak to us, we can hear Brother Charles exhorting us, "Let us return to the Gospel; if we are not living the Gospel, Jesus is not living in us."

EUCHARIST

23. Brother Charles experienced the Eucharist as the 'treasure' of the presence of Jesus and the center of his life. As priests, we also have come to experience the Paschal Mystery of Jesus as the rhythm and pulse of our own lives and ministry. While this is predominantly experienced while presiding over the celebration of the Eucharist, the prayer of Christ's Risen Body, and while ministering to God's people, the fraternity also invites us to rest in His Mysterious Presence in a quiet and contemplative way of Adoration.
24. For Brother Charles, the central Mystery of the Eucharist was uncomplicated and profound: Jesus handing over his life for His people. This unrepeatable self-offering is powerfully and symbolically entered into and imitated in another simple way by our silent presence to Jesus. When a group spends an hour of watchful centered prayer in the Eucharistic presence, this prayer can radically and richly complement the communal Eucharistic Worship with God's people. As Rene Voillaume describes this reality: "To live by the Eucharist means handing oneself over to people, and becoming for them out of love and out of Eucharistic Contemplation, food that is worth eating." Some groups also choose to celebrate the Eucharist together as part of their day.

THE REVIEW OF LIFE

Purpose

25. The review of life¹ is a central practice in the life of fraternity. It fosters a disciplined and deliberate discernment upon the call of God addressed to each of us individually and, when reflected upon in fraternity, it leads to an appreciation of the group's ecclesial vocation.
26. Its fundamental theological principle is well articulated in Chapter 11 of the Vatican II Document. *Gaudium et Spes*: "The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the

¹ DIRECTORY p.11 "to look with love at the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our time."

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Lord, who fills the earth. Motivated by this faith, it labors to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs, and desires in which this People has a part along with other people of our age. For faith throws a new light on everything", manifests God's design for total vocation, and thus directs the mind to solutions which are fully human.

27. We recognize that Brother Charles understood and lived by this dynamic of faith when we find him writing, "the soul who lives by faith is full of fresh thoughts, fresh tastes, fresh judgments; fresh horizons open up before him..."
28. The Review of Life rests on two fundamental facts: (1) God acts through the events, or at least more forcefully through certain events, of our lives to become present to us. to manifest his love and to bring us to renew and deepen our union with him;² (2) and the Holy Spirit is truly among us, especially as we seek Jesus together as brothers.³
29. It is the Holy Spirit who in some way is heard through the fraternity members and through their reflections on the "event" presented.
30. When we regard the importance of all the happenings of our lives, we can appreciate Brother Charles' love for Jesus of Nazareth. For Charles. Nazareth is where we meet Jesus in the "ordinariness" and "hiddenness" of all that makes up our days.
31. Each event is potentially religious in importance. Our Christian faith has revealed to us the central "event" of Salvation: the Paschal Mystery. Our whole life, therefore, is lived within this dying and rising of the Risen Lord in our lives. By our baptism we know that we are immersed in this saving reality. Our vocation is to come to live out the mystery, meaning and movement of Jesus in our lives, to throw on every cross the light of the resurrection. In the light of Jesus' Word to us, each event of our lives can lead us to put on the mind and heart of Jesus, our brother, to make his attitude ours.
32. In every event, therefore, God is calling us to discover him, to walk with him, often not knowing where we are going. He is calling us to see him, though an event may be all confused and full of contradictions, mixed with our selfishness, doubts, pride and fears. The effort on our part is to respond to the God who is calling us to break through these barriers. Frequently we find new barriers, or go back behind old ones. As much as we search on our own to discover this calling, at times we are more aware of the help we need to see the God who is present, to see how he might be present, and to walk with him. This help in part comes from the Holy Spirit through our brothers in fraternity. The fraternity can assist us in discovering in all the events and associations of our daily life the many spiritual guideposts that Jesus places along our path in order to bind us to himself.
33. We do not share a review of life by talking about general problems, general concerns, either of the Church or of ourselves and the world, by offering psychological analysis of a situation, nor by theorizing on ministry. The dialogue with our brothers on one particular "fact" of our lives must be grounded, incarnated, in something real. The review of life helps us truly live in the full light of faith. In the review of life we are not speaking of a detailed examination of conscience, but rather of a prayerful examination of Christ's working in us. It is really a corporate effort at the "discernment of spirits," examining the impulses of our hearts and our bright ideas, in the light of the Gospel and the presence of Christ and our brothers.

³ DIRECTORY p.11 "It helps us to find the Lord himself, always greater than we thought, always different, so often disconcerting."

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34. The "fact" mentioned may be a specific conversation or occurrence, a decision to be made, an opportunity before us, etc. Above all, the concreteness of the "fact" and the movements of the heart, our feelings and emotions, which accompany it are most important. Perhaps the question we are most trying to answer is: "In the midst of all that I am doing for Christ, what is Christ doing within me?" By narrating the details of the event and listening to what goes on within us as we share, we seek to know whether we are moving toward or away from the Lord. We must be faithful both to revealing the humanness of the event in all its detail and to discovering our Living God present there.

Preparation

35. Because of the deeply spiritual quality of the review of life, one must prepare well in prayer and with scripture. He should prepare first of all of the desert day and immediately by the "hour" of adoration which precedes the review of life.⁴ To think up "facts" and blurt them out in fraternity meeting without prayerful preparation in the light of Christ' Word will not lead to a very fruitful realization of the possibilities of renewal offered by the review of life. For here "two or three are gathered together" in the name of the Lord, looking in faith at events of salvation

Practice

36. How is the "event" communicated in the group? The earliest process goes back to Canon Cardijn and his work in Belgium. The procedure, as it was adapted in Jesus-Caritas, is quite simple, designed to facilitate communication. While each group has tailored the process to its specific style, it is usually expected that each person, in no special order, submit briefly and succinctly to his brothers in fraternity the concrete event which has been previously prepared on the desert day or during some other prayer time. Another way of putting it might be that each brother presents to his brothers the concrete situation within which he has sensed God's presence and wherein he has been searching for God's will!. The group respects each person's faith sharing, offering support and being willing to explore and to challenge as invited to do so by the brother sharing. It is important that the brother presenting express to the group what he needs most from the group at that time. Each person should have the time to share, although on a given day one brother might need more help to explore his life situation and how God is calling him. While each brother might not need his faith reflection explored, each one need to be acknowledged for what he has shared. Experience has shown the fifteen to thirty minutes for each brother usually is sufficient.
37. If we are committed to be present to, reverence, and be open with on another in the review, honesty usually grows the longer the fraternity is together. Then we learn to listen better, and gradually grow in intimacy and honesty to the point where we are drawn to take more personal responsibility before God for each other. Some brothers have expressed the experience as coming to reverence and adore Jesus present in the brothers as He is present in the Eucharist.
38. Of course, we might feel anxious at first. We can fear being accepted for who we are, being thought of differently. We may think we have nothing to offer our brothers. In times of sharing we might also fear offending our brothers, coming on too strong, asking our brother to do something that we ourselves are not doing, or pointing out our brother's excuses or self-deception. We fear all these things might separate us from each other. All these can

⁴ DIRECTORY P.11 "The Review Is Prepared Preferably In Th Deser, Always In Prayer And, If Possible Is Witen. It Is Better Not To Make It At All, Than To Improvise On The Spot."

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gradually be overcome. We must be very respectful of what or how much a brother chooses to share in any review. With this regard and reverence for one another, we assist one another to approach the Lord with our lives.

39. Brothers have come to appreciate how sharing the review can complement and encourage other relationships of spiritual direction and the sacrament of reconciliation. For many brothers the review itself has given them invaluable spiritual guidance, while others have been led to seek a spiritual director. As the review has brought some to experience in depth God's mercy and tenderness, they have reacquainted themselves with the richness of the Sacrament of Penance. Some have become each other's confessors. Brothers come to recognize what is important to share in the review and what they need to share with their spiritual director or confessor. For each brother, however, the review fosters a growing capacity and desire for noticing more clearly, understanding more profoundly, and choosing more freely and generously God's love for him and Jesus' invitation to follow him.
40. By joining a fraternity, we are saying we need one another and are willing to risk expressing that need. We do not want to present ourselves as being only self-contained, self-assured, or self-confident, thus keeping our brothers from either trusting us or helping us. Our faith in the presence of Christ and his Spirit in our midst helps us to share with our brothers our own feelings and insights, however stale they may seem. We might find it difficult to take responsibility for others, so we must assure each other that we want each other to do so and together seek ways in which this can be done most helpfully. Humility, simplicity, openness, and a real concern for our brothers are all indispensable qualities for growing in sharing the review.
41. The goal of the review, therefore, is not to solve our brother's problem directly or to make an infallible statement that "thus and so is clearly the will of Christ for you." Rather we place our brother in the presence of Christ and under His Word. In this faith climate we open ourselves to the reality of his situation and help him to deepen his understanding and strengthen his spirit to respond faithfully to the invitation of Christ himself. While this presumes honesty and frankness, it presumes mutual respect and love even more.
42. The review of life might involve, if a brother expresses such a need, going into the background of a situation, questioning him on specific matters, giving practical advice or opinions, restoring the reality of a badly distorted view of a problem, etc.. The aim of such exploration, if requested, would be simply trying together to see Christ and His Will in all the "facts." The fraternity does not make decisions for a member, though it may encourage him strongly in one direction or another. A decision is always up to the individual brother. When asked to enter into such an exploration, we always need to avoid judgementalism or artificial preaching, replacing them with care and confidentiality. What each brother is asking of his brothers in fraternity is to help him live faithfully his commitments as a Christian, priest, and member of Jesus-Caritas. He is basically entrusting his commitment to his brothers in Christ Jesus. That is a fearful thing to do and comes only gradually, under the influence of grace and love. It is in this deepest sense that our commitment in Jesus-Caritas is not to the structures of fraternity but to the Lord and the individual members of the fraternity.

FELLOWSHIP

43. The review of life does not stand alone. The review grows as Fraternity life grows. Neither stands alone and both will experience growth in depth given time and effort. For this reason, a fraternity needs to set aside time at each gathering for some simple socializing, whether it be over a meal or some refreshments. Sometimes a day away together can also be very beneficial. Above all, their presence to each other requires mutual and consistent

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commitment on the part of all the brothers. When a member misses a meeting, he should, if at all possible, give his review of life in writing to the responsible to be shared with his brothers when they gather. Only serious circumstances or unforeseen pastoral obligations (e.g. funeral) should pre-empt being present to share the Day of Review. Over- commitment or busyness does not constitute sufficient cause and should be challenged.

REFLECTION ON BROTHER CHARLES

44. The fraternities will also deepen their understanding of and commitment to Jesus-Caritas by spending some portion of the time studying aspects of fraternity life. Some might use the writings of Brother Charles. All are encouraged to use resources, such as this booklet. Be Brothers the bulletin on the Fraternity for all English language groups, and the Directory issued from the 1976 General Assembly at Montefiolo (near Rome. Italy).

PRAYER IN FRATERNITY

45. One of the specific areas in which the Fraternity together searches out the will of Christ is prayer. Today we find a real hunger for genuine prayer along with a restlessness over what prayer is appropriate for each of us. Many priests, particularly after some time in the priesthood, find themselves torn between a life of contemplation and a life of pastoral work. Many different solutions are proposed for that tension. Others feel themselves losing a vital, personal contact with Jesus, which is a much more serious problem. Some even lose all conviction about the place of prayer in their lives. This sense of loss is what brought many of us to Jesus-Caritas. We desire the grace given to Brother Charles who wrote: "You gave me a tender and increasing love for you, O Jesus, and a taste for prayer, trust in your Word, and a longing to imitate you." We have discovered a threefold dimension to the life of prayer within Fraternity. While these do not encompass all Christian prayer, they do represent the ideals and emphases of contemporary Fraternity Life: Contemplative Prayer and Eucharistic Adoration. Praying with the Scripture and the Prayer of the Desert. We believe each practice helps us become more aware of God in the ordinary moments of our lives.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER AND EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

46. The Fraternity Life stresses contemplative prayer and time devoted exclusively to it. The life of Fraternity, while not denying other forms of prayer or ruling them out a priori, points in the direction of a prolonged period of an hour each day spent in this type of prayer. As mentioned earlier, this prayer of adoration would be spent in the Eucharistic Presence. Foucauld would describe it as. "...that state in which the soul looks wordlessly on God, solely occupied with contemplating Him, telling him with looks that it loves Him, while uttering no words, even in thought." For Brother Charles it was the experience of love, waiting on and with Jesus. "...I live at the feet of My God, pouring out my heart in love of Him. telling Him I love Him. while He tells me I shall never love Him as much as He Loves me. however great my love would be. They are hours of incomparable happiness." Members of Fraternity find themselves praying for this grace, allowing themselves to be drawn back to the Mystery of Eucharist celebrated in community, now nourishing them in the silence with Jesus given for us.
47. This prayer cannot be simply selfish, an exercise for its own sake, nor for "storing up" grace and energy for ministry. Primarily it is an act of love for Jesus. In the presence of Jesus we need to realize the authenticity of our ministry as we struggle with balancing our prayer and action. Above all we need a personal relationship with Jesus loved for His own sake.

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48. This prayer time will not come easily or immediately to most priests. Often we did not learn to pray in the seminary and we have not prayed very much since. The main struggle in our prayer may well be making ourselves available to Jesus in the Eucharist without any sense of warmth or intimacy at all. "wasting time with Jesus." Perhaps this is the greatest gift we have to give to the Lord in these days. Perseverance has always marked prayer in all circumstances, waiting on Jesus even in the midst of anxiety and darkness. It requires faith and personal love for Jesus in order to pray, as well as a willingness to let Him take a look at our lives. It takes courage to say "no" to an activity or nervous drives. First we must come to a conviction about the need for this prayer in our lives.
49. The focus of this prayer time is not on "getting in the hour." nor is it even postulating the necessity of making formal prayer the center of our lives. Many priests today seem to find Christ more easily in their parish and in their ministry than in prolonged periods of reflection and prayer. If we develop a fixation about the "requirement" of an hour of adoration, we will become discouraged by the effort required or will react to the observance expected. Much more is at stake than being faithful to a rigid prayer schedule. It is a question of a living faith in Jesus that is difficult (though not impossible) to find by any other means. Because we are imperfect, it is almost impossible for us to live in the spirit of Adoration, seeking and seeing Jesus in all that we do. unless we set special time aside for prayer in a daily, weekly, and monthly rhythm. We do need a prolonged time just to calm down and to be open to the Lord, to meet Jesus on personal terms
50. We believe that Christ is present to the whole of our lives, in the world around us. in the people with whom we live and work. We know when we are truly present to others that we likewise encounter Jesus. Yet. this Jesus-in-life we often miss. Prayer and contemplation are needed even to focus our hearts and minds to see Christ revealing and giving Himself to us in the rest of our life. This prayer also helps us detect the obstacles in ourselves which make us hesitate to give ourselves to Christ.
51. The Fraternity can be of great help in sustaining this practice. We are able to reflect upon our self-deception or excuses, assisting us to see that such prolonged daily prayer is possible for a priest who really desires it. We might explore with our brothers what might be a rhythm of prayer that can be sustained. Sometimes members of Fraternity might try to come together for the "hour" several times during the month if they can, as they find praying in Fraternity to be a great help. The Fraternity can also help in exploring and authenticating other forms of prayer as well. Above all. prayer must be tried to be found fruitful. A theoretical discussion on the appropriateness of one form of prayer or another will hardly convince anyone of it one way or another. The members of Fraternity seek to respond to the invitation of the Lord to come apart for awhile with Him. This too is a matter of growth in conviction and practice. Our starting point is right where we are at the moment. From time to time we allow our efforts at prayer to be the subject of our Review of Life so that we may be helped to respond ever more faithfully and generously, without guilt feelings, to the Lord who loves us.

PRAYING THE SCRIPTURE

52. Scripture plays a very important role in Fraternity. Again, the goal is to know Jesus alive in our midst and to appropriate His mind and heart. Brother Charles approached the Word of God with simplicity and expectation. Before praying over the Word, Charles would ask, "What do you want to say to me, O God?" In the silence he would listen, often writing the message that would come to him. He would then respond, "For my part, this is what I want to tell you." This was followed by silent adoration, "saying nothing else, gazing on the Beloved." That word would guide his day.

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53. The individual members of Fraternity grow toward the time when they spend about fifteen minutes a day in meditative reading of the scriptures, either the readings of the day or the Sunday. This contact with Jesus in the Gospel naturally leads to contemplation and adoration and in fact is often included in the "hour" by many brothers. There is a natural preference for the Gospels in Jesus-Caritas. but the rest of the scriptures are not to be neglected because of that.
54. While this praying with scriptures becomes a part of each person's personal prayer life, a sharing of the Gospel is always a part of each day of review. We hear the Word of God concretely addressed to us. especially when discussed together. This Word challenges us if we allow it to speak to us, if we do not just pick those passages to which we always relate well and skip over the less desired or familiar. This meditative reading is not an exercise in intellectual understanding alone, nor a matter of exegesis primarily (though at times this may be necessary), but it is standing under the Word of God addressed to us and being ourselves analyzed and interpreted by it. In discussing the Gospel together the effort is not to arrive at a definitive exegesis of the text nor to discover good ideas for next week's homily, but to ask what Christ is saying to us personally not just intellectually. The danger is that otherwise we will fall into the clerical habit of treating the scriptures as our possession instead of being possessed by them.
55. All this stems from a desire to take the Gospel seriously, especially its message of love, simplicity and poverty. The Fraternity is a great help in this effort to live the Gospel day to day. It is a great encouragement to be together with brothers who are striving in faith to understand and live the Gospel more perfectly. Even when we fail (and for the most of us, that is often) the Fraternity helps us to see that failure too is part of the Gospel message provided we have faith in the God who saves us.
56. Again, only gradually does a fraternity grow in appreciation of the place of scriptures in its life and in the lives of its individual members.

PRAYER IN THE DESERT

57. Perhaps one of the directions-of-growth in Jesus-Caritas hardest to appreciate is the concept of the "desert". The term comes from the spirituality of Brother Charles, and is a classic theme within the history of Christian spirituality. Perhaps, for the American priest the day could be called the "day of solitude" or the "day of simplicity". Specifically, the fraternity member is expected to spend one full day (at least six hours) each month, completely apart by himself, alone with the Lord without materials to read or other spiritual props. It is a great help if one can get away the night before and spend the next day in solitude.
58. It takes time for members to realize the purpose and to feel the need for this day. Many members in the U.S. have not yet really tried the Desert Day. Those who are faithful to it, even in its difficulty, will discover its immense benefit for their Christian and priestly lives. Most experience their own radical poverty and total dependence on the Lord and His love. The prayer of the day is simply setting aside the time for the Lord and giving Him a chance to get through to us. In devoting our time solely to Him, we cease all those human activities which can often cover or veil our radical need for God. We come to experience our creaturehood. our fragility, and our deepest desire to live in Him and for Him. The "desert" is frequently a place of temptation. Some brothers are beset by melancholy, interior desolation, or aridity in the day; others by discouragement. Here one also acutely feels the need for the Holy Spirit in order to persevere in his weakness and to remain faithful. The

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desert is an intensive stripping down to essentials, coupled with a strong sense of the Lord's presence and adoration of Him. It is an experience of emptying oneself and experiencing that God alone is the Absolute of one's life. Perhaps the greatest temptation, humanly speaking, is to look for certain results from the Day itself, rather than to be disposed to whatever the Lord might give or not give on that day!

59. For the day, many go into the countryside, to the ocean, or for long walks. Others may simply go to an empty room and spend the day there. During this day, the review of life should be prepared prayerfully, reflecting upon and interpreting in faith the present understanding of our spiritual life. The desert is not primarily a physical place, but the place where God meets us. Usually the more simple and non-distracting the surroundings, the more favorable the conditions in which to wait on the Lord and listen to Him.
60. We find it so important that each person approach the day with a generous and open spirit. When one begins to attempt the Desert Day, he might discern with his brothers how he should enter the day. He might initially need some materials or the Word. He might need to vary the length or frequency of the Day. What does each one need to experience his own finiteness and God's abundant love for Him? Faithfulness and prayerful discretion will lead him to God on this Day.

POVERTY

61. We do not assume poverty or simplicity in any structural form, that is, we take no religious vow of poverty. Nonetheless, we find ourselves daily faced with the Gospel challenge, living in the midst of the wealthiest nation and in a ministry which often provides us with the best and richest. As we are in the world, we must learn to use its goods effectively in serving the people. In our modern technological world, we recognize that material poverty is, subordinated to the legitimate obligations of our diocesan ministries. We are convinced that poverty must be an interior freedom, a freedom of heart, which makes us generous servants in the midst of this world's wealth.
62. In recent years, the International Fraternity has challenged the U.S. Fraternities to look at the people and places where all the brothers serve, especially those in third world countries. So many live out the charism of Brother Charles, the way of Jesus of Nazareth, to be one with the poorest people, to be one with all humankind. This is expressed clearly in the statement from the General Assembly of Algiers, 1982, where it says, "...we renew our choice to take the way of the poor. There are many ways to find it. It can be: 'for the poor, with the poor, like the poor' (L. Boff)... .The Fraternity should continue to foster a spirit of commitment to the poor, each one of us having to express clearly this service, in his own situation and following his own vocation."
63. The consciousness of the world's poor in the International Fraternity holds a sensitivity and challenge for every U.S. brother. For some members, the Fraternity has helped them discern very difficult choices as to where God might be calling them to serve, accepting diocesan-sponsored mission parishes, inner-city or poor parishes, or other parochial or non-parochial assignments which have demanded much sacrifice. Each of these choices, as well, reflect the call to live out the concrete concern for poverty in their lives.
64. Perhaps, the longer one is with the Fraternity, the more one is drawn into the manifold aspects of Gospel poverty. How poor a means Jesus-Caritas itself is to reach the Lord. How poorly equipped each of us is to accomplish the mission of Jesus on earth. Yet, our striving to address the reality of Gospel simplicity concretely and not theoretically leads us to embrace our total dependence upon Jesus in our personal lives. It draws us into a spirit

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of freedom and detachment regarding our human means for accomplishing God's ministry. Our very acceptance of our ministry and the people we serve allows them to become the very means for pastoral simplicity, our own way of being poor without illusion. As we face failures, accept sometimes very painful sufferings, and live with personal inadequacy or insufficient personnel or resources, we are led to embrace more fully the mystery of Jesus' self-emptying love.

65. Often the Fraternity can help an individual member translate general concerns about lifestyle into concrete choices, in order to keep him from that self-deception which frequently accompanies money matters. For instance, any major expense or general use of our income might be examined together with the fraternity in the spirit of the Gospel. This will always be a sensitive matter for diocesan priests. We should not view this as getting permission to spend our money, but desiring to explore how we might best use our material resources for our wellbeing and for the mission of Jesus with the help of our brothers in Christ. Most U.S. Fraternities have not yet come to terms with nor explored in depth this dimension of pastoral poverty.
66. Overall, this dimension of Brother Charles' spirituality remains for us a source of unease and discomfort. We continue to listen to the Spirit speaking to us through what happens within us, as well as through the mission of our Brothers throughout the world. How can we best be one with them, with Jesus among them?

GATHERINGS WITH OTHER FRATERNITIES RETREATS AND RECOLLECTIONS

67. Many individual fraternities have found that periodic days of recollection or a yearly retreat have been very useful ways of deepening together their understanding of the Gospel call and exploring in common the spirit of Brother Charles. Some fraternities would offer together a day of recollection to which other interested priests could come to familiarize themselves with Jesus-Caritas. Some dioceses and districts offer annually a week-long retreat for fraternity members and those interested in becoming more familiar with the fraternity. These days of recollections and retreats would usually try to include, along with conferences on the themes of Jesus-Caritas, some or all of the core components of fraternity life: scripture reflection, review of life in small groups, a desert day, Eucharistic contemplation and celebration. These have proven to be very instrumental in bonding together existing fraternities and in making known the Fraternity to other priests. Therefore, they should be initiated and encouraged by fraternity and district Responsibles.

MONTH OF NAZARETH

68. The Month of Nazareth offers brothers a more extended and deeper experience of Fraternity life. In the U.S., the National Council seeks to organize a month annually, usually mid-July to mid-August, in order to experience living in fraternity with 12-15 other brothers throughout the country. While practicing the core components of fraternity life, mentioned above, those participating explore in a contemplative way their lives, ministry, and their relationship with God in the spirit of Nazareth. As the Directory points out, "The Month is a sharing of fraternal life at every level: prayer, reflection, manual work, leisure, etc." For many it becomes a turning point in their ministry and commitment to Jesus and to Fraternity. This Month remains the ideal for all members. Knowing that individual fraternities and districts can be enriched by the presence of one of its members at the Month, a goal might be to have fraternities sponsor a member yearly, assisting in arranging coverage for that priest's responsibilities at home.

FRATERNITY STRUCTURES

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69. The Fraternity continually emphasizes that any structure exists only for assisting our growing together. For that reason, a minimal amount of structure is desired and developed. We look to each local fraternity, district, and our National Council to assist the Fraternity in remaining faithful to this ideal and making best use of the structures developed.

LOCAL RESPONSIBLE

70. Each local fraternity chooses a "responsible" or coordinator whose tasks would be both inspirational and practical. Inspirational, in so far as he is willing to guide the group in being faithful to the vision and purpose of fraternity life, accountable to each other, and bonded to the wider Fraternity. Practical, because he is to oversee the arrangements for and the facilitation of each gathering, maintain contact with the district responsible, and assist him in the planning of recollections and retreats.

DISTRICT RESPONSIBLE

71. A district varies in number of fraternities due to geography and other conditions. Each district chooses a "district responsible" to coordinate the communication between and the activities among the fraternities, to be the spokesperson for the Fraternity with other Church structures within his district, and to maintain communication with the National Council. Ideally, this responsible should be chosen by the fraternity members in his district, but, if not feasible, he will be appointed by the National Responsible.
72. In regards to local fraternities, he should have a current knowledge of the members in his district, including their names and addresses and the fraternities' health and commitment to the ideals of Jesus-Caritas. He should meet at least yearly with the local responsables to review the fraternity life and to plan gatherings, such as recollections and retreats. He can also foster a consciousness of being part of the larger Fraternity by inviting to gatherings persons who could share the goals and spirit of Brother Charles, such as the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, or present first-hand experience of work with the poor in this country or foreign countries. He should encourage members within his district, especially individual fraternity responsables, to make the Month of Nazareth and to familiarize themselves with and to discuss the basic elements of Fraternity by means of the printed materials available to them.
73. The district responsible also takes responsibility for maintaining contacts with others responsible for priestly renewal, such as the Directors of Continuing Formation of Priests, representatives of other priest renewal programs, the Vicars for Priests and Clergy, and the Bishops within his district. He would do this personally or delegate others to assist him. The Fraternity views this communication as central to its vision of being brothers and vital to its purpose of fostering spiritual renewal.
74. Finally, the district responsible communicates with the National Council on the state of the local fraternities and sends them the names and addresses of his members through an annual written report. He would attend personally or send a district representative to the national meetings. While the District Responsibles usually meet in National Assembly every three years, the National Council may call additional National and/or Regional Meetings of District Responsibles. The National Responsible might also request assistance of the District Responsible for starting new fraternities, seeking speakers, or sending needed publications. Again, he may do these himself or recruit others to assist him.

NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

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75. The National Responsible is understood to be a priest who has walked with the Fraternity for several years, has matured in its spirit and shared its charism, and made the Month of Nazareth. He is elected by a national assembly for a period of three years, which is renewable for another three years.
76. The National Responsible appoints up to four fraternity brothers to serve with him on the National Council for the duration of his three year term. He has complete discretion in these appointments but may consider regional representation or other factors. Along with sharing his duties, they are to form a fraternity with him. meeting together twice a year, sharing their lives and assisting one another to provide national leadership for the fraternities.
77. The Council is also expected to review and discern how the needs and concrete situation of the people of the country are challenging the Church and the Fraternity. The Council will address such specific needs as the publication of a national newsletter, publication and distribution of material on Jesus-Caritas. planning and coordination of Months of Nazareth, and coordination of regional retreats. The Council shall maintain an updated mailing list of those in fraternities throughout the US and produce a national listing of priests by diocese. Central to the work of the Council is the establishment and maintenance of a network of communication and mutual responsibility with the various District Responsibles throughout the country.
78. In his service to the fraternities, the National Responsible may appoint additional brothers to staff positions such as Editor of the newsletter Director of the Month of Nazareth. Director of Publications & Resources or Treasurer.
79. The National Responsible is the link with the General Responsible and his International Council, and represents the country at international meetings. He shall call a national assembly every three years and with the help of the Council strive to promote the extension of the Fraternity and deepen the life of those already existing.
80. The expenses of the National Responsible and Council will be borne by the national treasury with a report of income and expenditures being made annually.

GENERAL RESPONSIBLE AND INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

81. The General Responsible and his International Council fulfill the same function on the international level as the National Responsible and his Council. He is elected and his council is chosen for a six year term. A General Assembly of delegates from the various nations where Fraternity is established meets every six years to review the condition of the Fraternity and discern what new challenges are being presented to us by the present situation of the Church and the world. The Fraternity emphasizes that this structure and positions are not ones of undue authority, but willing service as the brothers need it.

APPENDIX A: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF JESUS-CARITAS

82. 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

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movements: the quest for a more authentic spiritual life for diocesan clergy, and the spiritual movement that stems from Charles de Foucauld.⁵

83. 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 and has no juridical status.
84. 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.
85. 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.
86. 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.
87. 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.

APPENDIX B: THE PLACE OF BROTHER CHARLES OF JESUS

88. Since many priests in the United States begin or join fraternities out of the need to be with brother priests on a level of spirituality, many consider Brother Charles only after some months in fraternity. Diocesan priests often characterize their spirituality as not being of any particular "school" except the school of discipleship discovered in the Word and Sacrament and lived out with their people. For this reason, a priest can be initially cautious when being introduced to a recent historical figure like Charles and the movement which has grown from his spirit and charisms. Those who have been in fraternity, however, have found that Charles inspires and challenges us to become more reflective about our own spirituality.

⁵ cf attached APPENDIX for a continuation of the History by Fr. Juan Romero

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89. Specifically, he manifested his own striving for a contemplative approach to ministerial life, a simplifying of life according to the Gospel mandate, a realization of the constant call to live the Paschal Mystery which he expressed in terms of detachment, an emphasis on Jesus' presence in the poor, and a global consciousness of being a universal brother. These particular aspects were accompanied by his strong religious intuitions about the preference for certain perennial Christian emphases, such as solitude, silence, Word of God, spirit of adoration, and a Eucharistic-centeredness. While being a universal brother, he never was a member of a fraternity. While longing to establish a community, he never had a member. He was a human being: attractive and enigmatic, a product of his time yet classically mysterious.
90. From the vantage point of our own diocesan life, we could view him as offering some balance through "counter-themes", so to speak, to the main themes of our active priesthood. As ministers of the Kerygma, proclaiming God's Word in season and out, he challenges us with the silence out of which the Word must be spoken and the witness of our lives "from the rooftops" in which that Word must be enfolded. As ordained servant-leaders of God's people, he reminds us of the "hiddenness" of Nazareth, of the ordinary and seemingly uneventful characteristic of Diakonia and the failure of his own aspirations. As builders of Koinonia, he makes us examine the depth of solitude and the breadth of being a universal brother that keep us aware of the source and end of all community life. As presider over the sacred Eucharistia of Jesus, he invites us simply to be in the presence of our brother Jesus and to grow in intimate desire for Him and in His passionate love for His people that they may all be one.
91. From the above reflections, we can see how Brother Charles remains a prophet to the fraternities. He inspires us by his charisms and challenges us by his own commitment to a total abandonment to God's will, to be truly present, as an equal, to our people, especially by our life and love, and to live in faith without constantly seeking results from our work. These inspirations, when reflected upon in Fraternity, challenge us to commit our lives to Jesus, through our brothers, for His people. In so doing, we can grow into a full ministerial spirituality, rooted in our common baptism and ordered to service in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.
92. As fraternities grow, they usually experience a felt need to learn more about Brother Charles, to stay in contact with his spirit through biographies, his own writing, or with those, such as the Little Sisters and Brothers of Jesus, who live out his spirit in a consecrated way. Perhaps the best way will be through the witness of experienced fraternity brothers who have tried to "translate" into their own spiritual life and journey the inspirations and challenges of Brother Charles.

APPENDIX C: HOW TO GET STARTED?

93. You who have read this booklet are the reason for which it has been written. Members of the Fraternity in the U.S. wanted to try to communicate their "experience" of the spirit and life of Jesus-Caritas today to other priests who might be looking for something like this.
94. This booklet is available in reasonable quantities without charge. We realize that this can only give you a general idea of the Fraternity. Conversation through person-to-person contact will help bring this experience alive. While we are always limited in personal resources, we would certainly attempt to make available to you someone who could come to meet with a small group of priests to discuss the Fraternity, to answer questions, to have a retreat together - whatever might be most helpful.

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APPENDIX D:

THE JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES:

THE EARLY HISTORY 1963 – 1973

by Father Juan Romero

INTRODUCTION

1. At the national retreat for members of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of priests, held at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California in July 2010, Father Jerry Devore of Bridgeport, Connecticut asked me, in the name of the National Council, to write an early history of Jesus Caritas in the United States. (For that retreat, almost fifty priests from all over the United States had gathered for a week within the Month of Nazareth, in which a smaller number of priests were participating for the full month.)
2. This mini-history is to complement *A New Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Msgr. Bryan Karvelis of Brooklyn, New York (RIP), and the *American Experience of Jesus Caritas Fraternities* by Father Dan Danielson of Oakland, California. It proposes to record the beginnings of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities in the USA over its first decade of existence from 1963 to 1973, and it will mark the fifth anniversary of the beatification of the one who inspired them, Little Brother Blessed Charles de Foucauld. It purports to be an "acts of the apostles" of some of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity prophets and apostles in the USA, a collective living memory of this little-known dynamic dimension of the Church in the United States. It is not an evaluation of the Fraternity, much less a road map for its future growth and development. Its immediate purpose is to be a simple report of some of the main facets of the early history of Jesus Caritas in the USA, an "Observe," if you will, of our beginnings and common roots in this country. Any consequent "Judge" or "Act" is presently outside the purview of this paper, and will be left for future analysis and commentary. It may be used as an organizing tool for potential growth of the Fraternity, and may it be of interest to the presbyterate of the universal church and the People of God. This monograph is dedicated to the glory of God and the service of His people. I dedicate it to the memory of Msgr. Bryan Karvelis of Brooklyn, pioneer promoter of fraternity among priests in the United States of America.

Unlikely Patron: Charles de Foucauld

3. Charles de Foucauld, an ascetic and monk who became known as Little Brother of Jesus, is an unlikely patron saint for diocesan priests. However, as the one who inspired the International Fraternity of Jesus Caritas, he is precisely that. Charles Eugene de Foucauld, at the relatively

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young age of 58, was assassinated in Tamanrasset, Algeria at the beginning of December 1916. Pope Benedict XVI beatified him on November 13, 2005. Since his beatification, the feast day of Blessed Charles of Jesus is celebrated on December 1, the anniversary of his death. Having been murdered, he is considered a martyr. Although the only group he ever directly founded was a lay fraternity of the Little Brothers of Jesus, Blessed Charles has inspired a multitude of other groups. He is also counted a co-founder of the Little Sisters of Jesus.

4. The influence of Brother Charles of Jesus was first felt during the late Nineteenth Century in Africa where he labored as a quasi hermit, and then in the early Twentieth Century at his homeland, France. In the early 1960's, Peter Heinermann brought the story of Brother Charles and the Jesus Caritas Fraternities to places outside of Europe. Canadian priest Jacques LeClerc was the coordinator of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities in Canada, their national "responsible." He brought the fraternities of Brother Charles to the American continent by way of Montreal. With its strong French connection, Montreal was fertile soil for the development of Jesus Caritas Fraternities; others were already established in many places throughout the world. However, they had not yet entered into the United States. By 1963, the beginnings of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities in the United States coincided with the opening of the Second Vatican Council.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF *JESUS CARITAS* IN THE UNITED STATES, 1963 TO 1973

5. Branches of Jesus Caritas Fraternities began to bud in New York and California, and various other places throughout the United States. Msgr. Bryan Karvelis of the Brooklyn Diocese in New York, and Father Dan Danielson of the Oakland Diocese in California were the Peter and Paul of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities in the United States.

Msgr. Bryan Karvelis

6. Ordained in the late 1950s, Msgr. Bryan Karvelis died in October 2005, after half a century of priestly ministry and just a couple of months before the beatification of Brother Charles of Jesus. Bryan had grown up in St. Boniface Parish in Brooklyn, and served for almost fifty years as pastor of Transfiguration Parish in the same town. Former New York socialite Dorothy Day, turned apostle-to-the-poor, greatly influenced him. He settled homeless people – mostly immigrants from Latin America – in the rectory, the basement of the convent, and in a shelter across the street from the church. He also turned the former convent into a refuge for AIDS patients.
7. Charles de Foucauld, like Dorothy Day, was also a powerful influence on the life Msgr. Karvelis who is remembered as an "urban contemplative." (*National Catholic Reporter*, March 10, 2000) In 1966, Msgr. Karvelis began "mini churches" at Transfiguration Parish in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, as a way for parishioners to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus

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and his message. “Each ‘fraternity’ consisted of fifteen to twenty members who meet in the church basement for study prayer and reflection,” the National Catholic Reporter wrote in the early spring of Jubilee Year 2000. Within his parish, he organized Jesus Caritas-type fraternities akin to the *comunidades de base* of Latin America. They became the organizational basis for the whole parish – a community of small communities – and his parish council practically functioned as a Jesus Caritas

8. Fraternity. Karvelis lit a holy fire in Brooklyn, and it inspired a group of highly enthusiastic social-action type priests with a new zeal. The priests of his parish and others of surrounding parishes came to recognize that they needed more prayerful reflection in order to balance their priestly lives. They were going about doing good, and busy about many things, but perhaps not giving sufficient attention to the one thing necessary.
9. Msgr. Bryan Karvelis wrote about the Eastern USA experiences of Fraternity in *A New Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, a homage to the Broadway play of that title. His option to serve the poor cost him dearly in his later years, as he suffered from hostile non-Catholic elements that literally beat him various times. In spite of illness that included a kidney transplant, Father Karvelis continued to be enthusiastic about having founded Jesus Caritas Fraternities.

Father Dan Danielson

10. Father Dan Danielson spread the word of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities along the West coast and in other parts of the country. He had been ordained from St. Patrick’s seminary for the Diocese of Oakland in 1963. In 2005, on the feast of the Assumption, a few months before the beatification of Blessed Charles, he wrote his reflections upon on the history of Jesus Caritas in the USA and on his own association with the Fraternities. These are some of the highlights:
11. Sometime around 1962, while in theology at St. Patrick’s seminary in Menlo Park, a suburb of San Francisco, Danielson came upon a publication called *Apostolic Perspectives*, a small magazine published by Holy Cross Father Louis J. Putz, on the Ave Maria Press.
12. The article that intrigued Danielson talked about a movement among diocesan clergy for fraternity and spiritual growth although it did not mention either Charles de Foucauld or Jesus Caritas. It seemed that this movement was advancing toward the status of a secular institute, a canonical status recognized by the Church only since 1947. He proceeded to send for further information at a given address in Brooklyn. In due time, a certain Father Bryan Karvelis sent Danielson a copy of the article he requested, but –surprisingly – no bill was enclosed. Danielson sent away for more copies of the article on Jesus Caritas Fraternities to distribute them among fellow seminarians. However, the rector called the seminarian aside to reprimand

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him for distributing the article, and instructed him to cease proselytizing. After that, Danielson distributed copies sporadically, but only upon the explicit request of a seminarian.

13. Another seminary professor, quite different from the rector, Sulpician priest Father Frank Norris, attended a meeting in Montreal, and brought back some information on Jesus Caritas Fraternities. After ordination in 1963, Danielson began a Jesus Caritas Fraternity within his Diocese of Oakland. Members of his group soon attempted to start up other groups, but then realized that was a mistake. They returned to their original group that became Dan's core priest-support group, and it remained so for the next forty-plus years until the present.
14. The custom of post-Christmas Retreats began in 1964, and these gatherings nourished his group as well as other groups. The same kind of retreats soon spread to Southern California for new Jesus Caritas groups that were also springing up there. Besides these shorter retreats, the Month of Nazareth was introduced to the United States by Father Jacques LeClerc at Holy Cross Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut. Father LeClerc was national "responsible," i.e. coordinator, of the Jesus Caritas fraternities in Canada. Among the Month of Nazareth attendees in Connecticut were Fathers Dan Danielson of Oakland and Father Bryan Karvelis of Brooklyn. This was the first time these two met face-to-face.
15. That Month of Nazareth became an encounter among several future prophets, apostles and evangelists of Jesus Caritas Fraternities. Also present there were Fathers Ed Farrell of Detroit, author of books on priestly spirituality, Winus Roeten of New Orleans, and Fred Voorhees of the Diocese of Buffalo. Each was a pioneer in the spread of Fraternities within his own area throughout the United States. These "four evangelists" saw the need for some structure within the U.S., independent of Canada. As a result, they selected Dan Danielson as the first National Responsible for the still-fledgling Jesus Caritas national priests' association in the United States. The Fraternities grew, but in an American style.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

16. The years when Jesus Caritas Fraternities of priests were growing in the United States were tumultuous. The spirit of the sixties went from hope at the beginning to dissent, conflict and turmoil at the end. The March on Washington in August 1963 ushered in hope to the country and the world that maybe we could overcome divisions of race, and the opening of the Second Vatican Council in October gave great hope that God's Spirit would breathe new life into the Church. Many of those hopes and dreams were dashed during the tumult that followed, especially toward the end of decade. The assassinations of Rev. Martin Luther King and of Robert Kennedy in 1968, the stormy convention of the Democratic Party in Chicago that summer, Woodstock and what it symbolized, and widespread disorders in cities were signs of

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the times in civil society. In the Church, discord followed the publication of Paul VI's encyclical on the regulation of births.

17. Meanwhile, the Church as a whole was becoming more socially conscious. Many Catholic clergy, women religious and lay people followed the non-violent leadership of Rev. Martin Luther King. Cesar Chavez, the unapologetically Catholic charismatic leader and founder of the United Farm Workers Union, challenged Catholic priests and bishops to support with more than words the right of farm workers to organize their own union. In the spring of 1969, Mexican American clergy, led by Chicano priests in Texas, organized themselves into a national organization of PADRES, an acronym that translates into Priests Associated for Religious, Educational and Social Rights. The PADRES were claiming that a significant “sign of the times” for the Church in the United States was that over 25% of Catholics in the United States were Spanish speaking.

IMPACT AND RESPONSE

18. Turmoil and conflict in the United States and throughout the world certainly had its impact upon Catholic clergy. Their worlds had been rocked. As a result, many were deciding to leave active ministry, and some married. Father Danielson was concerned about the growing fallout among American clergy, and was convinced that Jesus Caritas Fraternities could help the priests hold on to their priesthood through emotional and psychological support of one another within the fraternities. He thought elements of “sensitivity sessions,” after the fashion popular on the West Coast, might be a helpful adaptation to the fraternities while keeping the general structure and emphasis of international Jesus Caritas: the Gospel, Eucharist, and the Review of Life.
19. Msgr. Karvelis, on the other hand, was convinced that the way for priests to hold on to priesthood was to cling to Jesus Christ Himself in the manner exemplified by Charles de Foucauld. Karvelis emphasized the central importance of love for Jesus and fidelity to the Gospel mandate of serving the poor. This was the great example Jesus gave to diocesan priests and to all, and it was well exemplified by Brother Charles.
20. In 1970, after the Month of Nazareth at Connecticut, Father Danielson attended a Jesus Caritas International Assembly in Valmont, France—near Lourdes. He went with one question in mind: Were we in the U.S. “schismatics” among the Jesus Caritas Fraternities of the world? He asked himself the question because most priests in many of the Jesus Caritas groups with which he was familiar were negligent about paying dues, and lacked explicit long-term commitment (a “covenant”) to the ideals of the international fraternity. He found that the representatives of the international Jesus Caritas not only welcomed their brother priests of the United States as members, but they fully embraced them as fellow diocesan priests who were also serious about

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living the Gospel. The international brothers saw their American counterparts also committed to spiritual growth, especially in their love for Jesus, regular prayer, and devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. At that meeting in France, Peter Hiernemann was elected as International Responsible.

21. Father Danielson realized that one of the first things that he needed to do – now that the right hand of fellowship had been extended to the American brothers – was to develop a presentation about the Jesus-Caritas Fraternities for the priests of the United States. It had to be, he determined, “realistic, and true to the experience of the existing groups in the United States.” About twenty priests of the USA Fraternity produced a twenty- paged mimeograph publication called *The Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests, the American Experience*. Eventually, it was printed in booklet form, has been revised extensively twice and is still the main booklet used to communicate the Fraternity to priests in the United States. During the ‘70s, Danielson promoted two Months of Nazareth at the Franciscan Seminary in Santa Barbara.
22. The basics of Jesus Caritas fraternities were catching on throughout the country: daily holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, meditation on the scriptures with a predilection for the Gospels, simplicity of life, loving solidarity with the impoverished, commitment to one’s own fraternity, and monthly (or at least occasional) Day in the Desert in preparation for Review of Life within the monthly meeting of the Fraternity.
23. An insight into the review of life was contributed by Father Tony Leuer, a member of the Fraternity in Los Angeles, who had long been familiar with the observe-judge-act method of the Jocist movements. With its emphasis on concrete facts from the members’ lives, it is somewhat akin to the methodology used in Liberation Theology and in broad-based Community Organizing that some Jesus Caritas priests like Father Dan Finn of Boston have used as a pastoral tool. Such an approach is firmly based on the virtue of Prudence as expounded by St. Thomas in *Quaestio* 42 of his *Summa Theologica*. Prudence is directed to action for a good result, and is based on reflection. The virtue, rightly understood, echoes the well-known formula OBSERVE-JUDGE-ACT. Evaluation follows, and deepest learning takes place within the evaluation phase, the review of life. Canon Joseph Cadijn had used that method to develop the Young Christian Workers in Europe. All of this is part of the virtue of Prudence, and the theological basis for the Review of Life.

BRANCHES SPREAD

24. Within a relatively brief time, Jesus Caritas Fraternities spread through the eastern corridor, to the Midwest, and into the south. Msgr. Bryan Karvalis passed the baton, a branch of the new Jesus Caritas tree, to Father Fred Voorhees of the Diocese of Buffalo. Father Fred transplanted

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onto the good ground of New York and then Detroit where it bore savory fruit for the East Coast and Midwest. The powerful charism of Blessed Charles of Jesus independently touched Father Winus Roeten of New Orleans who planted the seed of Jesus Caritas in his diocese. Father Roeten, in turn, influenced Father Doug Brougher, also of New Orleans, and they facilitated the development of other Fraternities throughout Louisiana.

25. Only a few years after his ordination toward the end of the sixties, Father Howard Calkins of New York, experienced the turmoil of the times through very unpleasant changes in assignment. That experience – a “happy fault” – provided the catalyst for beginning a new fraternity. By 1970, Father Calkins, together with three or four others, made an “*engagement*” (pronounced the French way) or commitment to live the charism of Brother Charles through a Jesus Caritas Fraternity. He followed this up with a “consecration” at TABOR, New York in 1971. This commitment-*engagement*-was somewhat analogous to a religious profession, but that is not the custom today in Jesus Caritas Fraternities.
26. California was an important focal point for the propagation of Jesus Caritas on the West coast and in the entire nation. The seminary at Menlo Park, for the Diocese of San Francisco as well other dioceses, was a true “seminary” for seedlings of new fraternities. Father Jim Flynn of the San Francisco Archdiocese tended the garden of new vines there, and influenced Bay area priests to become members of Jesus Caritas Fraternities. They included Fathers Harmon Skilin, John Armisted of Stockton, and Tony McGuire of San Francisco. Father Flynn used to send many young priests, such as Jack McCarthy, for higher studies at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He strongly influenced them, and they in turn became multipliers of Jesus Caritas Fraternities.
27. In Southern California during the mid sixties, through the inspiration of Msgr. John Coffield and others, Father Frank Colborn began a support group of “Young Christian Priests” based on the Jocist Movement. The YCP quickly morphed into a Jesus Caritas Fraternity, one of the earliest and longest lasting in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Among other early pioneers of Jesus Caritas in Southern California were Father Peter Nugent and future Bishop Joseph Sartoris. Msgr. Wilbur Davis, originally of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, who had been a member of Jesus Caritas, is credited with building the House of Prayer for Priests in the Diocese of Orange, a favorite meeting place of Fraternities.
28. Father Dan Danielson was the original inspiration to Father Larry Clark of St. Cecilia’s parish in Los Angeles, and he became one of the earliest members of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity in Southern California. In the years 1968-69, Father Clark hosted various groups of priests, and later lessened his connection with Danielson. Tony Leuer and Peter Beaman picked up the

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Danielson connection, and spread it to others by promoting other Fraternities within the Archdiocese.

29. In 1972, Father Juan Romero--having been in Frank Colborn's Fraternity for about six years--was released from the Los Angeles Archdiocese to work with PADRES, the national organization of priests working with the Spanish speaking. Making inroads into the greater Southwest, Romero began a Jesus Caritas group in San Antonio where the headquarters of PADRES was located. Father David Garcia, a former national board member of the Fraternity, credits Romero with being godfather of Jesus Caritas in the San Antonio Archdiocese. From there, Fraternities spread to others parts of Texas.
30. The Fraternities specifically targeted diocesan priests since religious order priests already had "fraternity" built within their structure as religious. Nevertheless, several religious order priests joined Jesus Caritas fraternities in partnership with their diocesan brothers. The sense of priestly fraternity grew during the decade of the '70s as Jesus Caritas Fraternities continued to spread on both coasts as well as throughout the United States. In principle, the spiritual focus of Jesus Caritas remained the priority, but sometimes emotional and psychological support of a priest trumped the specifically spiritual dimension of his fraternity. During the 1970's, Father Dan Danielson had a national bully pulpit as an officer in the National Federation of Priests Councils, and as a popular retreat master for priests. He used it effectively to make presentations about the Jesus Caritas Fraternity as a source of supportive community life in diocesan priesthood.
31. "There is no question in my mind," Father Dan Danielson testifies, "that the Jesus-Caritas Fraternity has been the single more important structural part of my priesthood in terms of what it means to be a priest."
32. Most of the critical decisions in my priestly ministry of forty-two years, would not have been well made without the support and discernment provided by my Fraternity. I find myself continually challenged by the life and charism of Brother Charles, a challenge that is filled with encouragement most of the time, with only occasional feelings of "I'll never get it."
33. The focus of this presentation has been Jesus Caritas Fraternities for Catholic clergy in the United States from 1963 to 1973. With the selection of Father Thomas McCormick as successor of Father Dan Danielson as new National Responsible in 1974, the first decade of Jesus Caritas Fraternities in the United States ended. McCormick, originally of the Midwest and later of Denver, served in that position until 1979. As a young priest studying at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. during the mid-sixties, Father McCormick encountered the Little Sisters of Jesus. He noticed that one of their menial jobs was to clean toilets at the University. Father Tom

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was curious about this humble and self-effacing group that was so faithful to their spirituality inspired by Brother Charles de Foucauld. They lived it out, communicated it, and developed themselves in it. These Little Sisters of Jesus were becoming catholic in their vision and mission. They were dedicating themselves totally to humbly living the Gospel as practiced by Charles de Foucauld. From very early on, the Little Sisters of Jesus served as a kind of powerful underground, promoting the spirit of Charles in a very simple, yet immeasurable manner.

34. Several National Responsibles representing every corner of the nation have well served the Fraternity of Jesus Caritas over the years. A number of members of Jesus Caritas have become bishops in the American hierarchy, and more than a few fraternities of bishops exist in the nation.

NEW PHASE

35. In the Jubilee Year 2000, The “Rocky Mountain Roundup” inaugurated the Third Christian Millennium for Jesus Caritas priest fraternities in the United States. At the International Assembly held in Cairo in 2001, an American priest gave a report on the state of the Jesus Caritas Priest Fraternities in the United States. The American character of individualism tends to be eclectic, and it resists what some priests may perceive as an imposition of outside rules. “Some fraternities are vibrant, some just social, and some suffer from *rigor mortis*,” Father Greg candidly reported. The Review of Life is “a central practice in the life of the fraternity... a means of accountability...a kind of litmus test for living the fraternity and priesthood in our lives,” he continued. Hospitality, love of Scripture, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, simplicity of life and a love for the poor are some of the charisms that marked the life of Brother Charles, and that are attractive to many American diocesan priests. However, other practices that Charles inspired or advocated, such as a monthly Day in the Desert and giving an account of the use of one’s economic resources (a form of evangelical poverty) are observed “with more difficulty” or in the breach.
36. He reported that there were about four hundred Fraternities in the United States, totaling over fourteen hundred members. The structure consisted of a National Responsible that is considered “Regional” within the organization of the International Jesus Caritas. The Responsible has six district Council Members to be co-responsibles with him, each representing various regions of the expansive country. Father Greg further reported that some bishops encouraged their priests to join Jesus Caritas Fraternities, and that Fraternities were being introduced into seminaries. Although there was constant growth of Jesus Caritas priest Fraternities during the nineties, their number did not double in that decade prior to the closing of the millennium.

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37. The life and death of Charles de Foucauld has had great impact throughout the world during the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. His impact upon clergy throughout the world has been immense, and his influence has reached the lay faithful as well. The International Assembly of the Secular Fraternity of Charles de Foucauld from twenty-four countries was held at Araruama, Brazil in 2000, and took as its theme “To Live Nazareth.” Participants were called to live simply and encouraged to “pursue solidarity with all those excluded, individually and collectively, in order to counter all the negative effects of globalization. Speakers encouraged listeners to adopt definite positions on issues in order to join with those groups—such as Amnesty International and other Justice and Peace networks--that advocate for human dignity.
38. At a time that many Westerners see every Arab as a militant Islamic fundamentalist, the life of Brother Charles of Jesus is a counter-cultural witness to a secular society polarized by multicultural and inter-religious conflicts. His words—echoing Jesus—exhort us to “Be patient...loving as God...reject harshness, condescension, the militant spirit that sees those who differ as enemies...[and to] see in every human being a beloved brother/sister, friend.”
39. Little Brother, Blessed Charles of Jesus, pray for us!

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE JESUS-CARITAS FRATERNITIES OF PRIESTS IN THE UNITED STATES

By Fr. Dan Danielson, the first national responsible.

When I was in the seminary in the early 60's, looking forward to ordination to the priesthood, it seemed to me that the one thing that the seminary provided that the priesthood at the time did not seem to provide was some sense of fraternity among priests. I was concerned about this.

About that time, I came across a small advertisement in a publication out of the University of Notre Dame called **Apostolic Perspectives** published by Fr. Leo Putz. It spoke of a Fraternity Movement for Diocesan priests. It made no mention of Charles de Foucauld, but it did give an address where one could write for further information. I promptly did so and received a several-paged mimeographed publication put out by a Fr. Bryan Karvelis from Brooklyn and a priest from Rochester, New York. It told all about the Jesus-Caritas Union of Priests, at the time a group moving toward becoming a Secular Institute. I waited to receive a bill, but none ever came. So I order 50 more copies and began to distribute them to the other seminarians at St. Patrick's seminary in Menlo Park, California on the sole condition that they would read it.

This was going along fine, until the Rector of the seminary called me into his office, accused me of proselytizing and told me to stop. I sent the remaining

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copies that I had home with my parents and would retrieve a copy from time to time when someone requested one.

At this same time, one of our professors, Fr. Frank Norris, S.S., had some contact with priests in Montreal and he brought back information about Jesus-Caritas. A group ordained a couple of years ahead of me, (I was ordained in 1963, between the first and second session of the Second Vatican Council) actually began a group when they were ordained.

When I was ordained for the Diocese of Oakland, several of us made an effort to form a group which embraced three ordination classes. We were stumbling along OK. We decided to have a post-Christmas Retreat, as Christmas was so important to Brother Charles. We gathered the day after Christmas and invited anyone currently in a Fraternity as well as anyone interested in the Fraternity to join us. That first Christmas of 1964, we were faced with how to get a new group going. We made a decision, which subsequently we realized was the wrong decision, to ask one of the members of an existing group to leave his group and help form a new group. I was that selected member and began a new group with priests from three different dioceses. That core group is the one I am still a member of after 41 years.

For some of these post-Christmas retreats we would invite the Responsible from Canada to join us, at the time Fr. Gilbert Leclerc. These retreats lasted until the year 1968 but became so large and unwieldy (the last one had 80 participants) that we could not find priests willing to organize and run them after that time. But most of the Fraternities in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles came out of the experience of those post-Christmas Retreats.

We had heard something of the Month of Nazareth, but knew very little about it. However, when I was selected to begin Graduate studies in Theology, I decided to take part in the Month that was being held, I think for the first time in the United States proper, at Cromwell, Conn. at Holy Apostles Seminary. It was a wonderful experience. It was there that I learned for the first time that the Fraternities exists in three other places in the USA, Detroit (Fr. Ed Farrell), Brooklyn (Frs. Bryan Karvelis and Bill Frederickson), New Orleans (Fr. Winus Roeten).

By the end of the Month, we felt that the Fraternities had developed to the point where we needed our own National Responsible, independent of French-speaking Canada. I was asked to assume that position. My main qualification was that I was from the West Coast and was to be studying on the East Coast and in my travels back and forth, I could be in contact with the Fraternities. There was no term of office or job description, just a title.

It seemed to me that the first thing that needed to be done was to have a new presentation written that presented the Jesus-Caritas Fraternities to the

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priests of the United States in a way that was realistic and true to the experience of the existing groups in the United States. I set about doing that. After creating a rough draft, I sent a copy to twenty priests of the Fraternity to receive their criticism and suggestions. In the light of those suggestions and corrections, the booklet, **The Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests, the American Experience** was born. At first it was simply 20 mimeographed pages that I sent out to anyone who requested information. Eventually, it was printed in booklet form, has been revised extensively twice and is still the main booklet used to communicate the Fraternity to priests in the United States.

I did make an effort to contact priests around the country, to make the Fraternity experience known and available to those who were seeking some kind of supportive community life in diocesan priesthood. I began to be asked to give priests' and seminarians' retreats, starting in 1970 and always made the Fraternities one of the conferences of the retreat. I would meet groups at airports, flying to and from the West Coast a couple of times a year. In general, communication was what my years as National Responsible were about. I also saw that we held a couple of Months of Nazareth at Santa Barbara, California.

Eventually, it seemed to me that it was time for someone else to take over the National Responsible role. I convened a meeting of representatives of the fraternities from around the country in Menlo Park, at the site of the Vatican II Institute in 1974 and there we elected our next National Responsible, Fr. Tom McCormick from Denver.

In reflecting on my experience outlined above, it is clear to me that the early success of the fraternity's growth was because so many priests were looking for some sense of fraternity with other priests and they found that a group having a spiritual focus and a practical way to go about it fit what they were looking for. Priests were looking for priestly support groups. Most of them did not know anything about Charles de Foucauld and certainly were not attracted to the Fraternity because of being inspired by his life or caught up by his charism. To most priests, Brother Charles was the providential accident from whose inspiration came this opportunity to be with other priests in a supportive and honest way.

Many also were not interested in and some actively resisted anything resembling a "national organization" of Jesus-Caritas Fraternities. They would not sign a covenant (as was requested in the early days) and they would not pay dues. They just wanted their own Fraternity.

This issue has remained a challenge for the Jesus-Caritas Fraternities in the United States. In 1970, I took part in the International Assembly at Valmont, France (near Lourdes). I told the delegates from the Fraternities from around the world that I had come to find out whether or not we were schismatics. But if we were, we were unrepentant schismatics. While many of the delegates,

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particularly those from a French background, were very taken up with Brother Charles, they did not kick us out because we weren't. At that assembly, we elected Professor Peter Hunnerman as the international responsible.

The other factor that helped the Fraternities in their early development is that we were the only game in town. There were not other models of priestly fraternity around. Today, of course, that is very much changed. We are one of several models and priests are drawn to one or another of them depending on their diocesan exposure or personal taste. There are Emmaus groups, and a variety of groups that the Vince Dwyer Ministry to Priests program helped to develop. There are groups that are primarily social, groups that study together, groups that are almost therapy groups. The Jesus-Caritas model is still very alive and well and these groups often tend to last longer than many other models of groups, but it is now only one model among many.

Today, it seems to me there are several issues that need to be looked at further and that seem to be in development.

Increasingly, seminaries are seeing some sort of small groupings within seminary formation as very important. It is important that Jesus-Caritas be offered as one of the models for achieving that, a model that can be carried beyond initial formation into active priesthood.

A good many of the fraternities in the United States are graying and in many cases not too much has been done to help younger priests look at the Fraternity as a possible help to their priestly and spiritual lives. Until priests of younger years are invited and attracted to the Fraternity experience, it will not become a vital force in priests' lives in the United States.

The charism of Charles de Foucauld has been growing in influence for several decades, though our fraternities did not start there and many have not gone there. But the whole value of the hour of Adoration, the Day in the Desert, Universal Brotherhood, Poverty, standing under the Gospel, has been seen to be most beneficial if the fraternity is to be really supportive at a deep level, beyond the superficial. The quality of the Review of Life is generally quite good and struggles that priests have are readily brought to the group. But how much openness there is to the particular way of God as opposed simply to human wisdom, will depend on the other spiritual aspects of Fraternity life, I believe. To be continually challenged by these dimensions is important for the present and, above all, for the future.

There has been more contact with other members of the spiritual family of Brother Charles and this has helped to deepen the spirit of Brother Charles in the life of Fraternity members. To see his charism lived out more radically is a great source of encouragement to live it more deeply ourselves.

There is no question in my mind that the Jesus-Caritas Fraternity has been the single more important structural part of my priesthood in terms of what it means to be a priest. Most of the critical decisions in my priestly ministry of 42 years,

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would not have been well made without the support and discernment provided by my Fraternity. And I find myself continually challenged by the life and charism of Brother Charles, a challenge that is filled with encouragement most of the time, with only occasional feelings of "I'll never get it".

What the future will hold for the Fraternities is beyond my vision obviously. Not everything that is vital and important at one era of the Church's life is equally important at another time. But I remain grateful for the existence of the Fraternity at a critical time in my own life and consider its existence a sign of God's love and providential care for me.

Fr. Dan Danielson
Pleasanton, California
August 15, 2005
The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin