

HOW WE CAN LIVE THE GOSPEL

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."

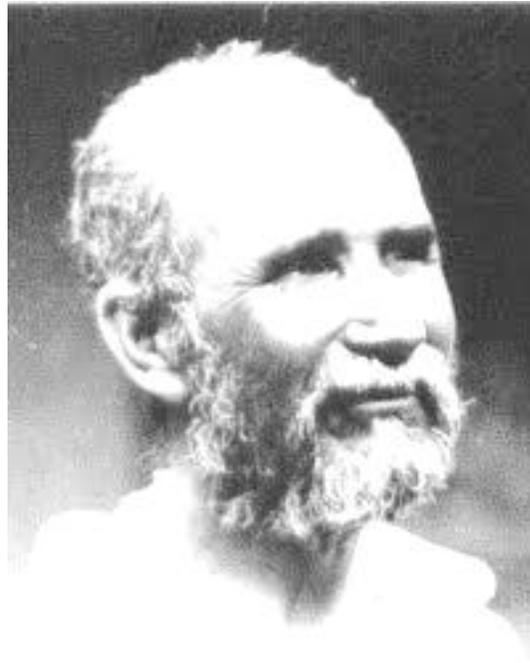
Praying the Scripture

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.

Day by Day

The individual members of Fraternity move 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 fraternities, but the rest of the scriptures are not to be neglected because of that.

Use during the Fraternity Meeting

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 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.

Do's and Don't's

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 .

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. 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.

*Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests --
AN OVERVIEW OF SPIRITUALITY AND METHOD,
(Fifth Edition, April 1987), sometimes called the
'American Experience'*



PRAYER OF ABANDONMENT

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you.
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only Your will be done in me and in all your creatures.
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands, I commend my soul;
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for You are my Father.

CHARLES DEFOUCAULD

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Jesus Calls

Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.

Matt. 7:24

Response of Brother Charles

Our entire existence and being should shout the Gospel from the rooftops. Our entire person should breathe Jesus. All our actions and our entire life should proclaim that we belong to Jesus. Our lives should be a mirror image of an evangelical life. Our entire being should be a living sermon, a reflection of Jesus, a scent of Jesus, something that proclaims Jesus, that makes others see Jesus and that shines like an image of Jesus.

de Foucauld, Meditations on the Holy Gospel
MSE 314

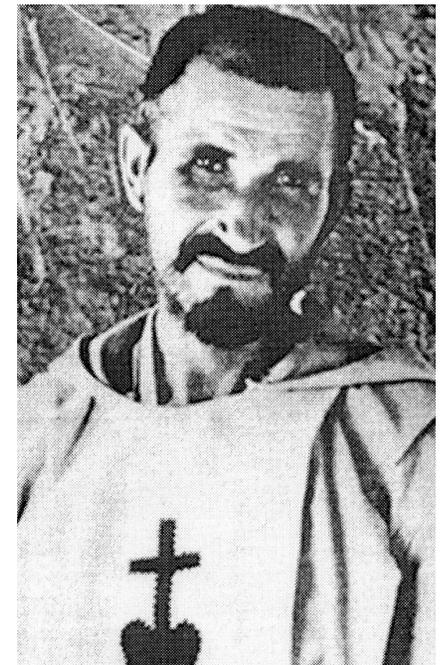
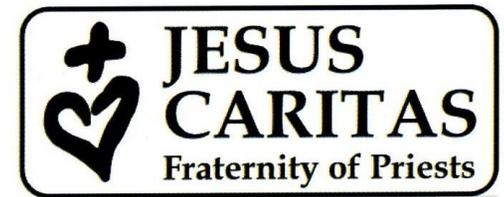
My Response

To a Muslim friend who jokingly asked Brother Charles, "Are you praying for my conversion?" he replied: "No, I am not praying for your conversion; I am praying that you do the will of God." That statement says it all. I could hope for a change in my friend which would make me happy, but would that evolution correspond to the will of God? That is the ultimate test.

Lafon 15 DAY WITH CHARLES DE FOUCAULD P. 38

WAYS THE GOSPEL IS USED IN THE FRATERNITY MEETING

1. Reading and praying the Gospel of the following Sunday - but not using it as homily preparation.
2. Reading a selection once for understanding followed by discussion; a second time to interiorize it by expressing our feelings; a third time by turning it into prayer.
3. Using a passage that corresponds to the particular theme chosen for that particular meeting.



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