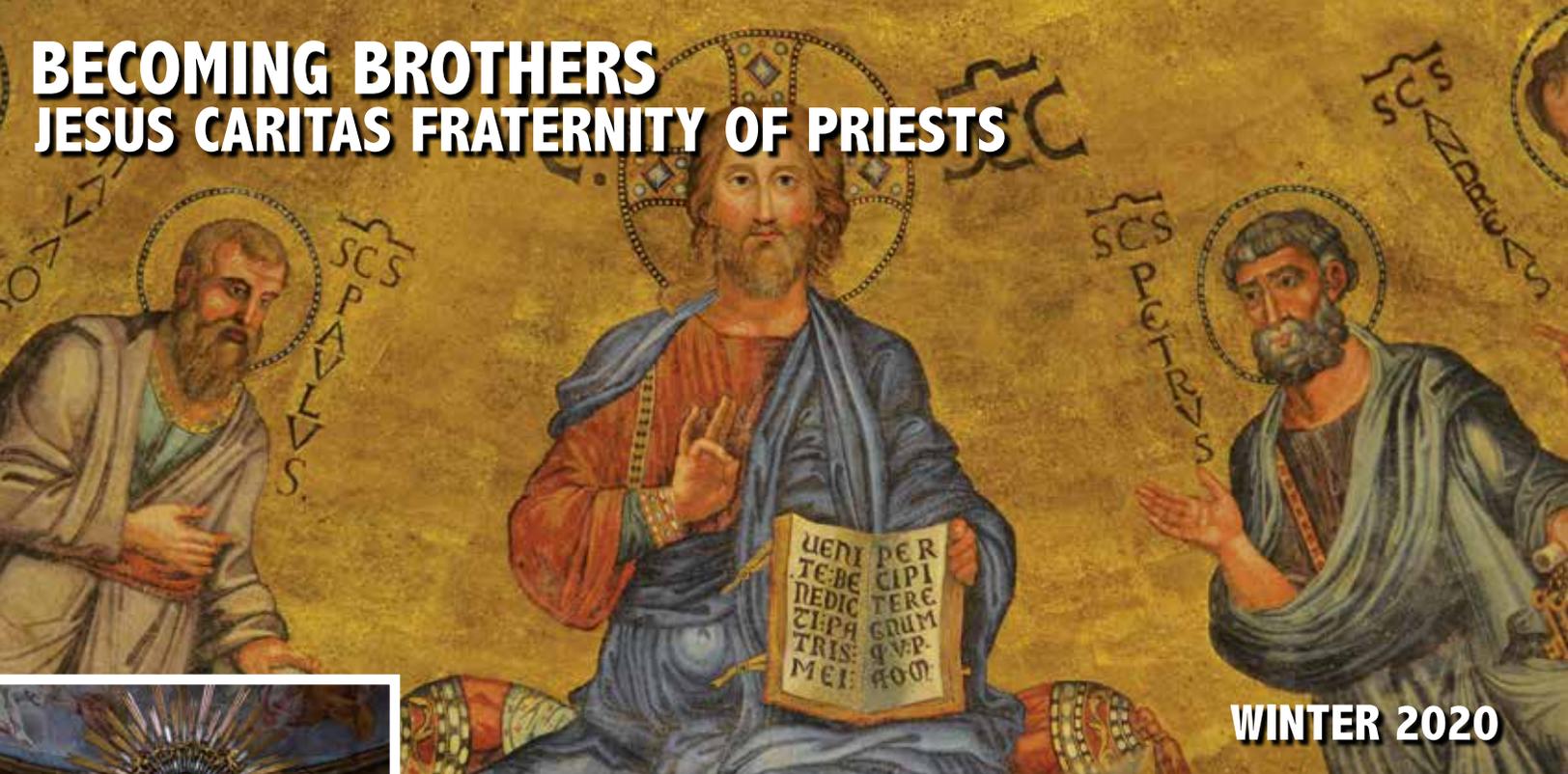


BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



WINTER 2020



IN THIS ISSUE

Letter from the
General Responsible 2

A Fraternal
Spirituality
for Diocesan Priests 4

Jesus Caritas
Fraternity of Priests
National Assembly 5

On The Two Popes,
Truth and Love 6

Upcoming Dates 8

From the Responsible

Dear Brothers and Friends of the Fraternity,

***The Spirit lives to set us free,
walk, walk in the light.
He binds us all in unity,
walk, walk in the light.***

One of the great joys of being a national responsible is participating in international meetings of the Fraternity. Included in this newsletter is a letter from our international responsible, Fr. Eric Lozada. Unfortunately, Eric is even more verbose than I am, so I edited his letter somewhat. His complete letter can be found on our webpage. And as Eric reported my Augusta fraternity is becoming quite fragile. I am still committed to the remaining brothers, to Peter, David, and Tom, but I felt the call to form a new fraternity at Tybee. So, now I am experiencing the joy of walking in the light, with Brian, Michael and John. As always, our Assembly, July 20 – 24 in Detroit, will focus on strengthening our fraternal life and encouraging new fraternities among a younger generation of priest and seminarians. Please try to send at least one of your fraternity brothers to the National Assembly.

Last year, during the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests International Assembly in the Philippines, I became fast friends with Fr. Jean Zougouri (who spoke just a little more English than I spoke French) and Fr. Honoré Savadogo (a brilliant priest who spoke at least 5 languages). Honoré has the humility, holiness, and intellect to be our

continued on page 7



LETTER FROM THE GENERAL RESPONSIBLE TO THE BROTHERS ALL OVER THE WORLD

“A child is born for us, and a Son is given to us...” (Isaiah 9:5)

Beloved brothers,

I am so sorry that this Christmas letter comes to you as a new year's message. It's just that in our diocese I am asked to do a couple of sensitive ministries that many at times, I lose my balance. Wrestling with evil and all its complex shadows that damage persons, relationships and institutions like the church, I repeatedly struggled to fall into the hands of a loving God for light, inner peace and love. But at times, I feel sad, angry and helpless. And so, by the grace of God, I am here, better late than never.

Allow me to embrace you with warm greetings of joy in your local fraternities, dioceses, country and continental fraternities. Though many of you are still without faces to me but I continue to whisper each of your names before the Beloved. (Thanks to our directory but it needs updating). Last year, I was privileged to have met brothers from Haiti, Dominican Republic, Southeast USA, South Korea and Myanmar. In a special way, the Haiti meeting of the Association of the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld last April has both grounded and expanded my knowledge of the Spirituality and Tradition. Thank you, sisters and brothers for the hospitable welcome, brotherly exchanges and humble witness.

I would like to start with the first question that Yahweh asked Adam in Genesis: where are you? I ask this question periodically just to check how grounded I am with my reality. Reality is not really mine but God's reality in me and in the world and how free or unfree am I in responding to it. Adam was unfree, afraid of his nakedness, hiding from God, guilty of his sin. Without his knowing it, he operated from a distortion that alienated him from God and from his truth. From Adam came forth a whole “cracked” humanity....

In his Christmas reflection on the Nativity scene, Pope Francis reminds that the most admirable sign is that a humble infant God entrusted himself into the hands of a broken humanity. While most of humanity was not ready,

the shepherds, animals, the manger were ready. They represent humanity receiving God in its lowest poverty, brokenness, imperfection, filthiness and by this radical act of self-donation, we become what we receive...

Allow me to bring into the picture Bro Charles, his wildlife, excessive behavior, restless energy, passionate letters. He spent all his life trying to ground himself on the Mystery of the Incarnation. “Lord, if you exist, let me know you.” His was a cry for an experiential knowledge of God. He wrestled with the Mystery. And in God's gentle and patient ways, he led him into a liberated response to the forgiving love of God. “Now that I know that there is a God, I cannot but give my whole life to him.” Jesus did nothing other than to go down and this marked Bro Charles permanently. The radical littleness of God at the Incarnation bore fruit to a life of further growing down into the radical humility of God in Nazareth. From Bethlehem to Nazareth, two foundational mysteries of God revealed in the life of Jesus and when we get this right, in the footsteps of Bro Charles, our lives, our way of doing mission as diocesan priests and the way we see the world is changed forever.

The unassuming humble God of Nazareth may have subtle invitations for us in the complex realities of our local, country, regional and international fraternities, our dioceses, our church and our world. In the April gathering of some 20 members of the Association (i.e. members of the different branches of the Foucauldian family) we learned of Haiti as a poor country but rich in faith. Our Little Brothers and Little Sisters of the Incarnation have a very prophetic and concrete presence in the lives of the Haitians in various programs and social services. Yet, corruption in the political system is making the country still in a dark tunnel of poverty, uncertainty and unrest. Frs. Jonas Cenor and Charles Louis Jean, former little brothers of the Incarnation started a fraternity with 3 brothers in 2015. Fr. Fernando Tapia invited them to the Pan-American Meeting in 2017. With occasional visits from Fr. Abraham Apolinario, they continue to look for

possibilities to meet regularly. The problem is not only distance but more so, the political climate is making travel dangerous. Where is God inviting us?

In the Dominican Republic, fraternities in Santo Domingo and Santiago are very alive yet getting older. The presence and life-witness of pioneer member and retired Bishop Rafael Felipe is like a lighthouse to both clergy and seminarians of the diocese of Beni. He has been introducing the fraternity to the seminarians and had preached a couple of priest retreats on the Fraternity. However, Fr. Angel Marcano, asks the question that still seeks for answers: why after 30 years, have we not grown? Where is God inviting us?

I was privileged to have attended the 40th anniversary of Fr. Jerry Ragan in Tybee Island, Georgia, USA in May. His rectory is a fraternity house where priests could come and spend the night. He drives for 3 hours every month to Augusta to meet with the brothers, including Fr. Peter Clarke who is already 91. Starting with adoration, then review of life and ending with an agape, their meeting has been very regular and intimate but with the death of Fr. Michael Hull and with no new members the fraternity fragile. Where is God inviting us?

The fraternity in South Korea is young and vibrant. Fr. Paul, who has lived in Tamanrasset for some time, started the fraternity in 1994 with Fr. Philip Yoon and is joined in by mostly young pastors. Christianity in Korea is unique because it is laid on the foundation of the blood of thousands of martyrs who are mostly lay people. The brothers contribute from their personal money in order to put up a house where they could meet for the monthly meeting. Just like many, they struggle with desert day, review of life and the English language. Seeing Frs. Eugene and Matthew and how they live, the fraternity in Myanmar has an ascetic face. The brothers, though, struggle with finding regular time for meeting, desert day and review of life. Where is God inviting us?

Cardinal Benjamin Stella, the prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome has written a letter to us, expressing his deep closeness with us and that we may “live afresh and with joy our mission according to the guiding principles” of the Holy Father. He, however, spelled out some concrete challenges: that we may

take seriously the Nazareth month; that our fidelity to the means of spiritual growth *ad intra* is a necessary requirement for authentic mission *ad extra*; that our going out to the peripheries needs to be accompanied by our ongoing conversion in order to bear fruit. The international team is scheduled to meet with the Cardinal in Rome in July this year.

In our team meeting last October, we, your brothers on the international team have discerned a major path that we need to take. We train a team of itinerant priests who will introduce the Fraternity Week (modeled after Brazil) to 4th year-theology seminarians, young priests and even make it available as annual retreat for priests. We need to write to the local ordinaries and we are starting this venture in Asia.

Finally, my gratitude to the financial acumen and hard work of Fr. Matthias Keil of Austria, our general treasurer and Fr. Matthias Fobe of Germany, our financial consultant. The international team has agreed that brothers who need assistance to attend the Month or meetings abroad should first be supported by their own local and national fraternities and only then will the international fund be asked to help out after due consultation with the continental responsible. This is to put a stop to a sub-culture of entitlement and using the fraternity as a passport to travel abroad.

Brothers, Christmas is the opportune time for us to give birth. We move forward to the new year by looking back at the Father who gave us Jesus. We too need to give birth to our simplicity of life, joy of being, humility, loving compassion to poor. Side by side, together as brothers and friends, we walk by faith not by sight for our on-going configuration into Jesus' life and ministry as inspired by Brother Charles and for our life-giving mission work with God's beloved people.

Kindly offer a prayer for me, your inefficient brother-responsible.

With my fraternal embrace,

Eric Lozada, 1 January 2020

A FRATERNAL SPIRITUALITY *for Diocesan Priests*

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. Yet we view Blessed Charles de Foucauld as a prophet for diocesan priests. He inspires us by his charisms and challenges us 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.

OUR FRATERNITIES ENCOURAGE:

- Contemplative Prayer
- Devotion to the Eucharist
- Solitude, especially as experienced in a Desert Day
- Simplicity of life
- Closeness to the poor
- Friendship with all which we call universal brotherhood

Our Fraternities of four to seven brothers meet once a month. The brothers focus their attention on Jesus present among them through each other in their love of Him and their service of His Gospel.

THE ORDINARY ELEMENTS OF A FRATERNITY DAY INCLUDE:

- Praying with and sharing the Word
- Adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist
- Review of life
- Time for friendly, relaxed fellowship



*In the midst of all that
I am doing for Christ,
what is Christ doing
within me?*

For more resources on the elements of Fraternity go to our webpage: <http://jesuscaritasusa.org>

Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests National Assembly

July 20 – 24 in Detroit, Michigan

For the triennial National Assembly of Jesus Caritas Fraternities, we will gather this summer at the St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center in Detroit with introductions of the participants on Monday evening, July 20th.

On Tuesday the focus will be on the Spiritual Wellbeing of the Diocesan Priesthood with presentations and discussions on Formation and Ongoing Formation (woefully spotty) in the Spiritual Well-being the Diocesan Priesthood. On Wednesday we will introduce the “Week of Nazareth” which is our new effort at formation in the spiritual charisms of the Fraternity. Wednesday afternoon Fr. Abraham Apolinario, the former International Responsible from the Dominican Republic, will help us prepare for the election of a new National Responsible. Thursday is a desert day with the election of the new Responsible on Thursday evening. And the new National Responsible will wrap things up for us on Friday morning.

Room and Board for the Assembly will be \$ 436.00. Ideally, each fraternity would send at least one member. If you plan to attend, please text Fr. Hap Ragan at 706-267-1073 or email Shannon at jesus.caritas.usa@gmail.com with your name and contact information.

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National Responsible

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On The Two Popes, Truth and Love

I was intrigued by the announcement that a new film—*The Two Popes*, depicting the Papal transition from Benedict XVI to Francis in 2013—would be released in some theaters and eventually on Netflix before the end of 2019. Having lived through that astonishing transition, and having commented in it in these pages at the time and subsequently, I looked forward to seeing this film, directed by Fernando Meirelles (*City of God*) and written by Anthony McCarten (*The Theory of Everything*, *Darkest Hour*, and *Bohemian Rhapsody*), and starring Anthony Hopkins (*The Silence of the Lambs*) as Pope Benedict XVI and Jonathan Pryce (*Evita*) as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio (later Pope Francis). The trailers were beautifully filmed, featuring two of the greatest actors of our time, each bearing a striking resemblance to his character and both giving riveting performances.

Because its theatrical release in November was very limited, I had to wait until December 20 to view *The Two Popes* on Netflix. By then I had watched various interviews and read differing reviews of the film. I recognized that its genre is “historical fiction”—which I enjoy as long as it is plausible, as I find *The Crown* to be. Like that ongoing masterpiece dramatizing the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II, *The Two Popes* is “based on true [historical] events,” with many scenes portraying what might plausibly have been said by the characters in private, but is not billed as “a true story.” Neither *The Two Popes* nor *The Crown* claims to be a documentary. Clearly recognizing the genre (historical fiction) of these productions can help audiences appreciate them all the more and evaluate them more justly.

The Two Popes is based on the following historical facts: 1) that after the death of Pope Saint John Paul II in 2005, the cardinals in conclave elected Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as the new Bishop of Rome, as Benedict XVI, on the third ballot; 2) that many sources indicate that Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, received the second largest number of votes on at least the first and second ballots; 3) that the styles as well as their personalities and nationalities of the two men appear to be in stark contrast; 4) and that although Cardinal Bergoglio had turned 75 and submitted his letter of resignation from



the See of Buenos Aires to Pope Benedict in 2011, as required by canon law, it had not yet been accepted when the pope resigned on February 28, 2013.

Based on these facts, McCarten wrote a play, *The Pope*, on which his screenplay for the movie *The Two Popes* is based, that asks the question, “What if the two men had met sometime in 2012, and if they had, what might have transpired?” Note again that neither the play nor the film makes any claim that such a meeting actually happened.

The film begins in 2012, with Cardinal Bergoglio, in his familiar and easy-going way, teasing his local postmaster about his stamps not working, because he has written to the pope and not yet received a reply. Another party to the conversation surmises that the letters contained his request to retire and begs him not to. But he replies that he has made up his mind and has already booked a flight to Rome, whereupon she hands him a letter the postmaster had entrusted to her, containing an invitation from the pope Benedict to the cardinal inviting him to Rome to discuss the matter in person.

To make a long and multi-layered story short, the two men meet at the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo, a more private venue than the Vatican. During a walk in the gardens, their differences in temperament and pastoral practice become evident. Each man represents and embodies a specific virtue: Benedict, the truth; Bergoglio, charity. They depart in opposite directions, to rest until supper—which they eat separately in adjoining rooms. The

continued on next page

From the Responsible *continued from front cover*

first African Pope someday. I introduced them to the game of Farkle. Honoré introduced us to the wonderfully rhythmic hymn whose first lines are printed above. I loved the joyful spirit with which he taught us. The Fraternity here in the United States is old and fading but in Burkina Faso where they are from, it is young and vibrant.

Sadly, only a couple miles from where Honoré lives, four people were killed at a Catholic church last May, the latest in a series of attacks on Christians in the African country. At least 10 Catholics, including a priest, Father Simeon Yampa, were killed in two extremist attacks on Catholic parishes earlier in May. Gunmen also killed a Protestant pastor and five members of his congregation in late April.

Please keep Fr. Jean and Fr. Honoré and the Church in Burkina Faso in your prayers. Pray that the Holy Spirit will keep them strong in faith, hope, and love as they give

witness to the light of God's love even with the dark threat of ongoing violence hanging over them.

In his letter Eric asks, "Where is God inviting us?" That's a great question as we prepare for our Lenten journey. As a prelude to answering that question, I'd suggest that you might take a trip down memory lane and reflect upon all those with whom you've "walked in the light." With whom are you presently "walking in the light?" God is good. I've been blessed to walk with so many of you. Thank you for showing me the light of God's love.

Fraternally in Christ,



Fr. Jerry "Hap" Ragan

On The Two Popes *continued from page 6*

chill between them begins to thaw when the pope joins the cardinal for a more informal chat, during which each tries to connect with the other, with some success. They agree to continue the conversation the next day, but the pope is urgently summoned back to the Vatican when Gianluigi Nuzzi's bombshell of a book, *Sua Santità: Le Carte Segrete di Benedetto XVI* ("His Holiness: The Secret Letters of Benedict XVI"), based on the Vatileaks, is released.

Only the next morning is the pope free to resume his conversation with the cardinal—in the Sistine Chapel! Again, Bergoglio asks permission to retire and Benedict shocks him by refusing, revealing that he had decided to resign the papacy, but had feared that Bergoglio would be elected to succeed him. Now that the pope has come to know the cardinal better, he has discerned that it is time for him to resign and accepts the possibility that Cardinal Bergoglio could succeed him as "my correction." There are two moving scenes in which each confesses to each other. The audience learns, partly through flashbacks, what each considers his greatest pastoral failure, eliciting sympathy from the audience for both.

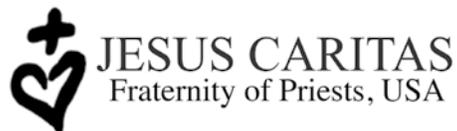
The rest is history. Benedict did resign and Bergoglio was elected Pope, taking the name "Francis." The two men reportedly enjoy a friendly relationship, but their respective "fans" do not seem to enjoy the same. As Phyllis Zagano put it in her review of the film in the *National Catholic Reporter*, "Pope and future pope. The one is an eminent theologian, cerebral and rigid. The other is an affable pastor, interested in change but not in compromise. Each is rather likeable, in his own way. They discuss. They disagree. They agree. By the time the credits have rolled, they seem to have moved a tad closer."

Would that their respective camps may do the same in 2020, recalling that "while truth is vital, without love, it is unbearable," as Bergoglio paraphrases Benedict's encyclical *Veritatem in Caritate*, 30, to the pope who wrote it.

Fr. Douglas K. Clark is the retired pastor of St. Matthew Church in Statesboro in the Diocese of Savannah, GA. He is the former editor of the Southern Cross and continues to be an award winning columnist.

JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS

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Upcoming Dates

Jesus Caritas USA Assembly

St. Paul Retreat Center

July 20 – 24, 2020

Detroit, MI

Week of Nazareth

(details will be in the next newsletter)

September 2020 – Shelton, WA

October 2020 – House of Prayer, L.A., CA

January 2021 – Tybee Island, GA

February 2021 – Midwest *(place TBD)*