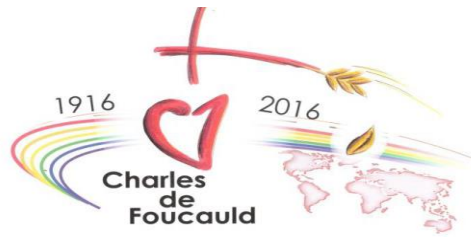




Community of Brother Charles, Britain

March 2016



Appeal to pray for peace

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are living through difficult times. Many countries are experiencing social turbulence while others live under the constant threat of violence brought about by extremism and racial and ethnic hatred. As we commemorate the centenary of the death of our dear Brother Charles let us give flesh to our spirituality and globally, as Fraternity, unite in Prayer for peace and unity in the world through the intercession of Blessed Charles de Foucauld.

Let us pray for Christians and Muslims, especially in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, who are the first victims of torture, abuse, injustice... but most of all they are the victims of the complacency of the rest of the world that looks on with indifference. Because these "little ones" are poor, powerless and ordinary, they do not form part of the mighty society. Let us therefore open a special place for them in OUR lives as members of the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld. It is what he would have done.

Let us pray for the now hundreds of families in Europe who have lost dear ones to extremism, to a war that is visiting them in their own towns, their own homes, their own schools. The places which are meant to be their shelter have become new battlegrounds soaked in innocent blood. Let us pray for those of European birth who abandon country and family to misguidedly join in the drunken spree of violence in the name of jihad.

Let us pray for minorities all over the world: political, religious, racial, ethnic, gender, people with disabilities, who suffer in silence while the world looks on, helpless or indifferent. Let our prayer take flesh and become a voice for the voiceless, an actor for the powerless and a source of dignity for those who have none, or lost the little they had.

Let us pray for the millions of refugees, violently uprooted from their homes and deprived of a decent living. Let us pray for the children of these families who are deprived of an education, nutrition, sleep, a warm bed in the winter, friendships, and the memory of a happy childhood to feed their emotional stability in adulthood. Whenever we can, let us be for them brothers and sisters who reach out in solidarity and friendship. Let us be strong enough to become vulnerable for their sake and meet them on their own terms, not imposing ours.

Let us pray for the societies torn apart by the drug wars especially in Central and South America. Let us pray for their governments that they may battle violence and corruption and restore peace, stability and prosperity to their peoples.

Let us pray especially for the perpetrators of violence, that the Holy Spirit may light up the blindness in their hearts. Let us pray for these fellow brothers and sisters, created in God's image and redeemed by the blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who think that violence is a solution to their and the world's problems.

Like Brother Charles let us be harbingers of peace in our families, in our neighbourhood, in our town, in our country and across the miles as we unite, one Fraternity, one family, one Society.

Let us remember that differences are there to be celebrated as they make the fabric of life and society rich and beautiful. However beneath it all we are all human: we all love the same, laugh the same, mourn the same, and most of all crave for peace in our lives.

In this Centenary year especially, may God Bless us all.

the European team of the Lay Fraternity
February 2016

In remembrance



Michael Prentice of the
Walsingham fraternity

and



Josephine Kerbey (right) of the
Liverpool fraternity

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Become what you receive *By Marie-Odile Hervé**

Become “good bread” for humanity, for it is only the bread that we have shared which can satisfy us. Baptised, we are called to be living bread for our brothers and sisters. “Become what you receive, become the Body of Christ”, become other Christs, he who said “I am the Bread of Life”. “Flowers before bread”, say the Little Brothers of the Poor. I think flowers and bread go well together. It is up to me, who look after the flowers in the place where I live, to be the bread. The bread of true friendship, of a kindly presence, the bread of a warm hand, of a smile, the bread of a word of comfort. That’s what I try to live in my Ehpad retirement home, where frail people wait for little gestures which give them greater courage to live. On my storey, I’m in charge of the flowers. It’s a joy to pick them in the garden. My modest arrangements are appreciated by residents and staff. Their warm thanks feed my heart. These are people weakened by

disability or great age who become “good bread” for me. Our mutual thanks are a bit like the “Mass” in action. “Ite missa est”. Yes, the Mass continues. Words and bread exchanged in our daily routine deepen friendship, which then becomes a fraternal communion.

The eucharist is not only celebrated at the altar, as my experience with my priest brother Yves testifies. I was in intensive care, fully wired up, after a brief coma. Yves visited me roughly every other day. I couldn't speak, but I appreciated his presence, his smile, his few but reassuring words and his prayers. One day I wanted to express my thoughts to him. On a board I managed to write: “The Lord – shepherd – rock – shelter – living water – bread – light – rest – tenderness and compassion – FIAT!” Yes, *fiat!* This was a great step forward for me, who, to start with, had only thought: “Why, Lord?” This exchange was like a small Gospel sharing, a mini-liturgy of the Word.

One day our time together was even more special. With great affection and sweetness Yves took my hand in his, one of the warmest of hands. I felt that the two of us, together, were strongly united with Christ, adoring in the deepest of silences and in great peace. It lasted a long moment. The tubes and wires no longer existed. I felt as if in another world. Was it heaven already? It was a very strong presence. “Real presence”? Eucharist? Certainly an intimate sharing of a Bread which was not of this world, in the love of the Lord and in thanksgiving. In my state, sacramental communion was not possible. But in these precious moments, when I was so weak that the doctors were almost without hope, Yves and I had had a unique experience of communion. Thank you, Yves. Thank you, Lord. Is not the eucharist a great THANK-YOU”?

Despite the doctors' prognosis, I came through. During the weeks and months which followed, I was led to pray at the bedside of people at the end of their lives. I tried to be for them the “good bread”, murmuring a few Aves or bits of well-known hymns and psalms, invoking Our Lady in the way they liked. Their look, and sometimes their smile, tasted like good bread. Their hand also which did not let mine go.

The most important thing which happened was, with my brothers and sisters, to be with our beloved priest brother Yves, who was in palliative care. With him I tried to be the bread which brings comfort, as he had done for me two years earlier. Throughout his priestly life he had experienced the bread of the word and the eucharist which he had shared with the People of God. The hour had come for him to hear the final summons, which I murmured to him: “Come, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Master”. Deeply mourning but with the Breton Faith received from our forebears and a strong hope in Life, we committed Yves into the Hands of the Father on October 9th, 2012.

At the banquet of the elect I like to imagine him singing with his customary enthusiasm, aglow with the blessed THANK-YOU of a mysterious eucharist.

**Marie-Odile was a long-time member of the Foucauldian community in this country before returning to her native Brittany. She lives in a retirement home in Rennes.*

Dates for the Diary, in celebration of Charles' centenary year:

- **May 4th, Feast of the Blessed Martyrs of England and Wales** - day trip to Canterbury - 12:00pm Mass at St. Thomas' Church, followed by a visit to the Cathedral to see the Book of Modern-day Martyrs. Charles is listed in this book..
- **June 20th, Feast of Ss Alban, Julius & Aaron, protomartyrs of Britain, and the Irish Martyrs** - day trip to St. Albans with a tour of the Cathedral.
- **27th October, date near the time of Charles' conversion and to celebrate the Six Welsh Martyrs and companions** (feast day on 25th of October) - day trip to Paris with a visit to St. Augustin's Church.
- **14th-18th November, two-for-one-night accommodation at Walsingham gathering** - L'S Kathy will be leading us in reflections on Charles' spirituality.

If you want any further information concerning any of these pilgrimages, contact:

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