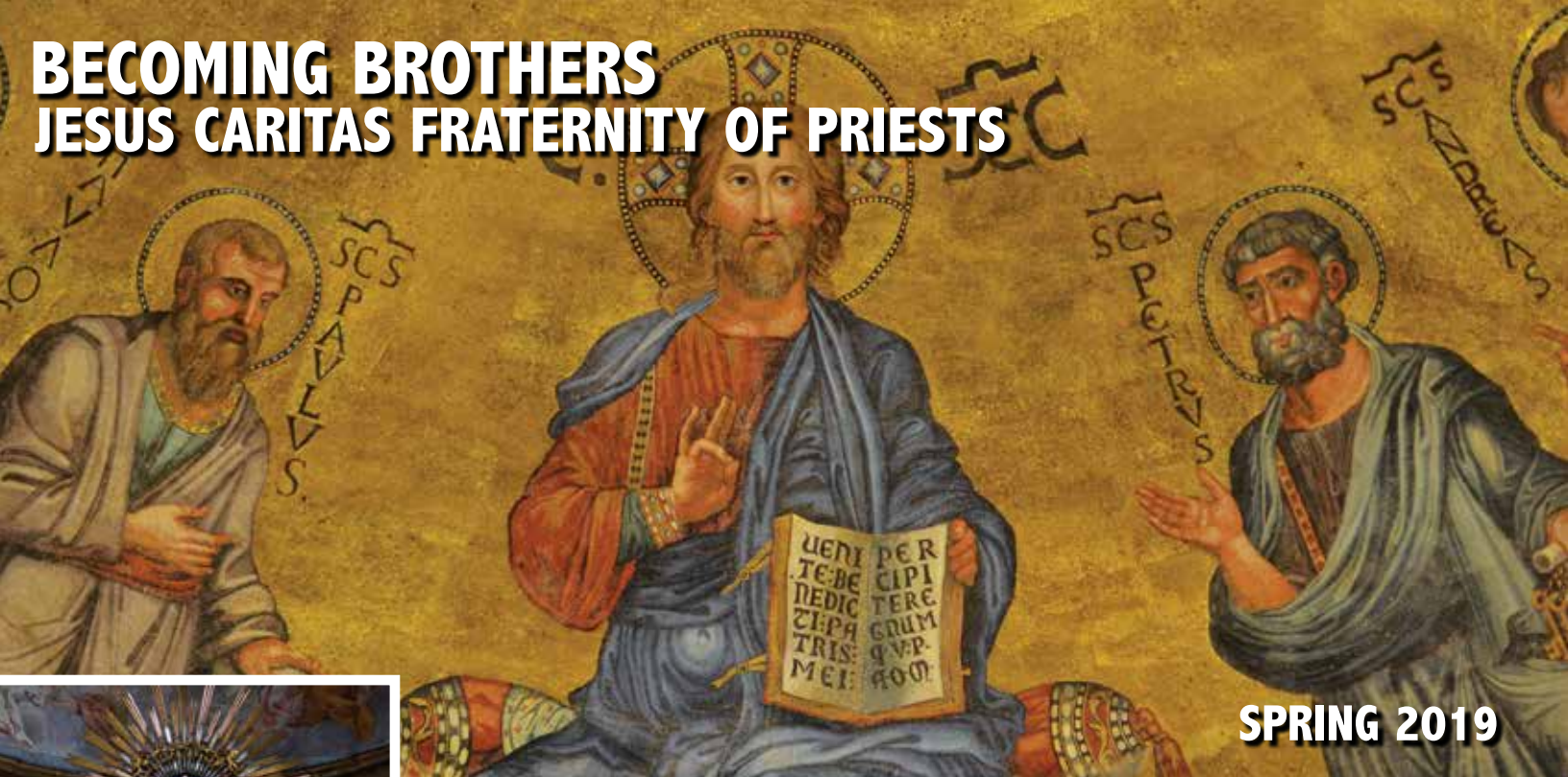


BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



SPRING 2019



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From the Responsible

Dear Brothers,

There is a fairly strong pessimism gene that runs in the male lineage of the Ragan Clan. I remember walking into my Dad's office when I was a seminarian. He looked sad and defeated. He had just come from a meeting where he had been unable to convince the union trustees of a needed change in the health fund that he was managing for them.

My Dad and I had such a wonderful bond of love that I know my visit helped to lift his spirits. I don't remember if the health fund issue was ever resolved, but I do know that our visit that day was a little participation in the Paschal Mystery. It is a Mystery that families participate in every day through the little and sometimes big experiences of "dying and rising."

That memory of a little paschal moment shared with my Father so long ago came to mind recently during a Holy Hour as I worried about the future of our Fraternity. Five years ago, when I accepted

the responsibility for leading the Fraternity here in the United States, I promised that even though we are greying, I would not be the one to "turn out the lights."

We've not had a successful Month of Nazareth since 2013. Young priests might see our spirituality as a good foundation for the diocesan priesthood, but seemingly want little to do with our organization. I know I have given a good effort to my role as Responsible, yet the 'dark' seems to be advancing and the light of a healthy organization seems to be fading. Those thoughts weigh heavy on me.

As so often happens during my Holy Hours Jesus lightened the burden of my worries. I was able to laugh at myself and that pessimistic gene that too often stymies my forward progress. As with most movements in the Church, there may come the day when our time as past. But I believe we still have a gift to share. And no matter the future of the Church or

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MONTH OF NAZARETH

September 23th to October 18th, 2019

Tybee Island, Georgia (Beach Community for Savannah, GA)

Director for the Month is Msgr. Bob Amundsen (Archdiocese of Denver)

- Use one or two years of your continuing education time and allowance for this Month.
- The cost of the Month is \$1500 including the retreat – scholarships available.
- The Fraternity at Tybee Island is the place of the Month. It is in the midst of the St. Michael Faith Community on a barrier island off the coast of Georgia where the Savannah River meets the Atlantic Ocean.
- Enjoy the Indian Summer at the beach and exploring Savannah, the low country, and sightseeing with your fraternity brothers on the weekend.
- The final week is a 5-day retreat with priests from across the U.S. at Marywood Retreat Center on the beautiful St. John's River outside of Jacksonville, FL.
- If you need coverage while away, the National Fraternity can help find it.

Sometime in your life as a priest in Jesus Caritas it is important to set aside an extended time to pray, study, and devote oneself to the charisms of the Fraternity. The Month of Nazareth presents an excellent opportunity to step back, evaluate, and prioritize anew the practices and principles to which we have all made a commitment.

The daily rhythm of fraternity life deepens our appreciation for the:

- Spirituality of Nazareth
- Life and Faith Journey of Brother Charles
- The spirit and structures of Jesus Caritas Priests' Fraternity and other relevant themes.
- The gifts of the Fraternity.

Such an endeavor takes time and freedom from the distractions, preoccupations, and energy draining tasks with which we are bombarded in our everyday ministry.

For three weeks, the participants live by supporting each other not only in prayer and faith sharing, but also in service to each other, e.g., food preparation. One day a week is given over to the Day in the Desert, which is a prayerful welcoming of God into your life, hopefully without distractions. There is also the challenge of living with and valuing the disparate personalities, temperaments, ages and experiences, strengths and weaknesses which such close living affords. Forming a fraternity for these weeks is critical in order to experience the benefits that can be received by living out the Jesus Caritas way of life. The fourth week will be a five-day retreat to be held at Marywood Retreat Center in St. Johns, Florida. The retreat week is open to priests from throughout the country.

For more information about the Month or to register for the Month, please email Mrs. Shannon Axon at jesus.caritas.usa@gmail.com or call Fr. Jerry Ragan at 706-267-1073. Sign-up early. The Month will be limited to 8 priests.

Reflections on the Cebu General Assembly (and my 6 years on the International Council)

By Fr. Mark Mertes

I wanted to share a few reflections from my time on the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests International Council. Perhaps the greatest value to me was the ability to form, even if only for 6 years, a fraternity with brothers from around the world. Our International Team did that by meeting annually for 10 days in one of the countries in which we lived. This was a challenging commitment at times! I recall landing in Madagascar in September 2014 and thinking to myself, “What am I



doing here?!” At that time I had many parish responsibilities and I was having some health issues as well. It was then that I discovered that our meetings were what I would call “a laboratory for fraternity.” As we had to patiently translate everything into several languages, as we shared prayer from the perspectives of various cultures, as we dealt with the challenges of being in a new and “simpler” place like Madagascar, I realized that this is precisely the work of fraternity into which we are all invited: encountering Christ in and through one another.

For the first four years our International Council worked on fraternity business and publications and made plans to have representation at various activities, assemblies, Months of Nazareth and retreats around the world. For the last two years we made plans for the 2019 General Assembly in Cebu. We discerned the theme, “Diocesan Missionary Priests inspired by the witness of Brother Charles de Foucauld.” To break open this theme our General Responsible, Aurelio Sanz Baeza, divided up the responsibilities for the International Assembly among the International Council Members. Specifically in the assembly we were gifted with daily biblical insights from Emmanuel Asi, a biblical scholar, teachings on Brother Charles from Honoré Savadogo of Burkino Faso who

has a doctorate in Charles de Foucauld and is at least tri-lingual, Mauricio Da Silva’s teaching on Mission and also Methodology, and Jean Francois Berjonneau’s teaching on the Way of Charles de Foucauld. I plan to summarize Jean Francois’ talk at share it with the USA because it is a beautiful reflection on the dynamics of encountering Christ in the other. Fernando Tapia of Chile also presented a very practical document on best practices for the Month of Nazareth.

As the 44 brothers from 25 countries were praying together I felt both amazed and sometimes worn out at the splendor of it all: brother diocesan priests from all over the world united around the mystery of Christ and service to the people of God. In the Assembly I was struck at way in which Jesus Caritas priests in attendance are leaders in their presbyterates and dioceses. Jesus Caritas worldwide produces a lot of bishops and cardinals! I recall saying to Jerry Ragan at one moment, “How can we share this amazing event with our brothers in the USA?!” It is indeed a unique and gifted perspective that we are given through Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests. One of the highlights of the assembly is the cultural night that we have at the conclusion as priests from all over the world get up and perform some silly song or meaningful tradition from their own country. With the hospitality of the Augustinian Sisters showing us the way we all felt right at home and free to be ourselves. Great fun! Then after 15 days together we headed back to our parishes all over the world. My goal now is to direct my energy and attention to my brothers here in the USA where I pray that we can have a “new Pentecost” in the Fraternity. May we be inspired by the witness of Brother Charles and the power of the Holy Spirit!

Rev. Daniel

PATRIARCH OF JESUS CARITAS USA

Fr. Dan Danielson had an incredible impact on so many of us. He gave us a solid spirituality that led us deeper into the mystery of God's love. Dan was the Spiritual Director for our last National Retreat held in 2016 at Christ the King Seminary in Buffalo, N.Y. And he was the first recipient of our Universal Brother Award at the 2017 Assembly in Camarillo, CA.

Dan Danielson was born in San Francisco and raised in Oakland, CA. He entered the seminary after eighth grade -- a decision that he calls "a terrible idea then and now" -- and was eventually ordained into the newly created Oakland diocese. He was ordained on March 2, 1963 and soon after his ordination he formed the first Jesus Caritas Fraternity in the United States.

In the years that followed, Dan helped launch numerous programs, including the Vatican II Institute for Continuing Education of Clergy, and assumed diverse diocesan leadership roles. At the national level, he was a member of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, co-founded the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy, and helped write a bishops' conference document, "The Spiritual Renewal of the American Priesthood."

Perhaps the most deeply felt ministry in his own life, Fr. Danielson was elected the first U.S. Responsible of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests. His passion for encouraging fraternity among priests also inspired him to lead 100 priests' retreats over his lifetime.

Reflecting on his life, he expressed gratitude to God for having been a priest at the time of the Second Vatican Council. "It was the most exciting time in the church in 400 years at least," he recalled. "It was so positive, so creative, so adventuresome, so open to trying things to serve the kingdom of God. I would not trade any of my life (with the exception of the minor seminary) to do it over again."

Even in death, Fr. Dan wanted to speak to us. He gave the following letter to Fr. Paul Minnihan, the pastor of the Catholic Community of Pleasanton, where Dan had served as pastor for 22 years. Both Paul and Dan deeply loved the people of that faith community. Sadly, at the age of 52, only six weeks after he buried Dan, Paul died after a brief battle with aggressive cancer. No doubt, Paul had his bags packed.



Fr. Fernando Tapia, Bishop Donald Hanson, Fr. Dan Danielson, Fr. Jerry Ragan

E. Danielson

DECEMBER 11, 1937 – JANUARY 5, 2019

My dear brothers and sisters,

I have often repeated to you some advice of the faith life: “Keep your bags packed!” I have had mine packed and I have now completed my journey with a grateful heart. I want to thank you for the many expressions of sympathy, concern and above all prayers during these last months. Fr. Paul has been especially helpful. The prayer that has sustained me most of my life is this:

*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.*

+Blessed Charles de Foucauld

I have prayed it unceasingly that I might really embrace all the phrases and not just recite words. By the grace of God, I have been able to do that for the past few months. My body will be placed in a crypt at St. Augustine Cemetery that I may rest here among the people whom I have served and loved as family for 22 years. By God’s grace and mercy, I look forward to greeting you with great joy when your journeys are completed. In the meantime, please remember to “Keep your bags packed.”

Fr. Dan

National Retreat

Marywood Retreat Center -- St. Johns, FL

October 13 – 18, 2019



Join us at Marywood Retreat Center for a week of retreat and fellowship with other priests from across the country, led by Fr. Julian Peters, OSB who is

Director of Saint Meinrad Institute for Priests and Presbyterates. The Institute aims to keep both priests and presbyterates holy, healthy and effective in various ministry settings and stages of life. All priests are welcome, especially those who are interested in exploring the Spiritual charisms of the Jesus Caritas Fraternity for living a happy and holy life as a diocesan priest.

- Marywood Retreat rests on the St. Johns River just minutes from Jacksonville and St. Augustine FL.
- Its 100 acres of beautiful tranquility is accented with towering live oak trees and gardens making it a perfect environment for retreat
- 60 motel-style rooms
- Executive chef and dining room
- Beautiful grounds and dock on the St. Johns River
- Daily Eucharist and Adoration in a beautiful Chapel overlooking the St. Johns River
- Private room, and 12 meals are included. The cost of \$500. includes the director's stipend. Scholarships are available.

To register for the Retreat, please email Mrs. Shannon Axon at jesus.caritas.usa@gmail.com or call Fr. Jerry Ragan at 706-267-1073.

Thank You for Your Support

You did not disappoint. There was a generous response to our appeal for support. The National Fraternity has decided to do away with dues and rely on the generosity of our brothers to grow the Fraternity. Your support will allow us to continue to share our spirituality with priests and seminarians throughout the United States and also help the Fraternity to grow in less affluent countries.

We will publish the names of our donors in our Summer Newsletter. It is never too late to send your check to "Jesus Caritas" at:

Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests
PO Box 2638
Augusta, GA 30914

Another easy and painless way to support the Fraternity is through AmazonSmile, a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. If you are already an Amazon customer it is easy to set-up. Go to smile.amazon.com and follow the prompts. You can check out thousands of charities but of course we'd be grateful if you chose "Jesus Caritas Fraternity of Priests." Then anytime you shop at that site, we will receive a small donation. Thank you so very much.

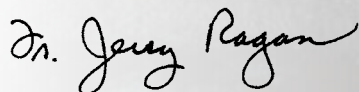
From the Responsible *continued from front cover*

our Fraternity, I do believe that God will have the last word and it will be a word of life and a word of love. For I believe that Jesus Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

If you have an idea of how we can better share the spirituality of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities, I hope you would share it with me or one of the members of the National Fraternity. And please, please, please, help me overcome my pessimism. Do all you can to promote the Month of Nazareth, especially among our younger brothers. If you've not made a Month come join us on Tybee in September. At the very least plan to join your brothers as we gather for the triannual National Retreat at Marywood Retreat Center near Jacksonville, FL in October.

May we always rejoice in the Resurrection moments of our lives! Happy Easter!

Fraternally,



Fr. Jerry "Hap" Ragan

National Fraternity

National Responsible

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Upcoming Dates

September 23 – October 13

Month of Nazareth, Tybee Island, GA

October 14-18

Jesus Caritas Retreat, Switzerland, FL