

Buen Camino

Newsletter of Fr. Michael Fish, OSB. CAM

Br. Charles and the Little Sisters

On Sunday 15 May 2022, together with nine other women and men, Pope Francis elevated Charles de Foucauld, better known as Little Brother Charles, the Universal Brother, to sainthood.

I discovered Br. Charles 50 years ago, this Frenchman from an Aristocratic background, a



soldier in the French Legion stationed in the Sahara, where he lived a rather scandalous, hedonistic life. To everyone's surprise he underwent a conversion, became a priest and for years searched for where he belonged in the Church, spending time as a Trappist monk and in Nazareth.

Looking back over this period in his life he wrote, "All that sadness and inde-

cision was You and I didn't recognize you." A quote I have revisited often in my life!

Eventually, Charles returned to the African desert where he lived as a hermit among the Tuareg people and was killed by a nervous raider in 1916. He never had a single follower or convert, living as he did among the people of Islam. But Charles left a rule of life that was discovered years later by a French priest and a laywoman that birthed a number of religious communities in the Church, the most well-known being the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus.

It was the Little Sisters, who I first met in Johannesburg in 1971, living, as they always did among the poor, who introduced me to Br. Charles and his spirituality, which they incarnated so beautifully. This is a spirituality that has shaped my own journey and continues to nourish me.

The Little Brothers and Sisters do not evangelize in any way. They simply live among the marginalized poor as neighbors, accepting their living conditions, seeking employment in factories, fields and supermarkets, being the presence of Jesus to those around them. They always have particularly simple, tastefully appointed, chapels where each little sister spends an hour in quiet each day before the Blessed Sacrament.

I have had the privilege of encountering them in a number of countries and huts in the Zulu village, where I lived for ten years. It was one of their fraternities which they generously gifted to the Redemptorists for a novitiate.

I mention Br. Charles and the Little Sisters because in these challenging times in which we find ourselves I wonder if we couldn't learn something from their way and life:

*Being the quiet presence of Jesus in our situation,
Being a concerned, caring neighbor,
Engaging the stranger with kindness and a smile,
Having a place of simple beauty in our home for prayer,
Spending time, daily, in quiet and adoration,
Speaking the Gospel by how we live.*

May Charles, the new saint on the block, become a friend, brother and example for us.

Blessings,

Michael

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 de Foucauld

I confess, when I was a young Redemptorist, I prayed this beautiful prayer by Little Br. Charles daily and with ease now, and here is the confession, I pray it much more carefully realizing it's demanding surrender!

Michael news

Upon arriving in Barcelona, Michael spent a few days with family, before picking up the Via Francigena near the Swiss-French border. At this writing, he has progressed south, around Lake Geneva and is trekking the rigorous route into the Swiss Alps on the way to St. Bernard's Pass. From there, Michael will enter Italy on his way to Rome. We will share some of Michael's reports and photos in the next *Buen Camino*.

Levanté 1 Retreat Schedule

JULY 10-15 | Mercy Center Burlingame On-Site only
2300 Adeline, Burlingame, CA 94010

JULY 17-22 | Mercy Center Burlingame On-Site only
2300 Adeline, Burlingame, CA 94010

JULY 19-26 | Villa Maria del Mar Retreat Center • On-Site only
21918 East Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

JULY 31-AUG 6 | Sisters of Notre Dame Online only

AUG 26-28 | Mercy Conference and Retreat Center • Online & On-Site
2039 North Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131

OCT 28-30 | Bethlehem Center Online & On-Site
2371 Arbot Road, Nanaimo, BC, Canada

For information about *Levanté 1*, visit: <https://hermitfish.com/levante-1-retreat-houses>

Grateful for your support

Michael wishes to thank everyone for your continued prayers, good wishes and support. Donations to Hermit Fish, Michael's 501(c)(3) nonprofit, are fully tax deductible. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated. FID: 82-2489475

Visit: <https://www.hermitfish.com/donate>

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