



Community of Brother Charles, Britain

April 2011



The Walk of Prayer and Praise

12th February - Led by Kathy Carroll of the Enfield Community

Kathy shared: "I always think that this kind of 'walking away' from the business and routine of daily living and stopping to thank God for the fresh air and the use of all our senses brings us closer to God and the beauty of His creation in us and around us." Abbotswick was a beautiful place for this day and Kathy led us in a reflection of the Good Shepherd and in prayer throughout the day.



The Chapel of St. Saviour's Priory in London – 25th March

The community gathered to celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation and were blessed with sunshine and the warmth of this special place in the heart of east London. We reflected on Mary's "Fiat", its relationship to Br. Charles' Prayer of Abandonment and how that is reflected in the circumstances and choices of our lives .

"A letter from Br. Marc to Brother Charles"

Printed in the News Bulletin of the Little Brothers of Jesus, December 2010

Very dear Charles, my brother,

I would have liked to have seen your expression on November 13 2005 when they unrolled a gigantic portrait of you at St Peter's in Rome. I ask myself if you would have liked it much. So I would like to explain to you why it was important for us to have this celebration, and why your life touches us.

To tell the truth, your life did not start well. Orphaned very young, exiled because of the war - those are emotional wounds that leave their mark and might have destroyed you. In fact, you very nearly lost your 'self'. "At the age of 17, I was like a madman," you wrote. You had money and you took advantage of that, but it did not fulfill you. On the contrary, you felt, "a painful emptiness, a sadness, an infinite distaste and boredom". Those are your own words. What I find marvellous is that this wounded part of yourself, this thirst to be loved and to love, became the springboard for your life. It is not for nothing that 'brother' was one of your favourite words, a word of openness and relationship to the other. You never knew it, but when your 'accompanier', Abbe Huvelin, introduced you to the Father Abbot of a monastery where he was sending you to do a retreat, he wrote to him, "This man makes religion a love affair". That gives me hope in the face of situations of woundedness.

You were very faithful to your family and your friends, affectionate and close. They kept your letters, thousands of them! But there is one thing that touches me greatly: for you Jesus was a friend just as real, living and close as other friends. Of course you were a monk for some years and then a hermit. But later, in the Sahara, when you wrote that, "from 4h 30 in the morning until 8h 30 in the evening, [I] do not cease to speak to and see people: slaves, the poor, the sick, soldiers, travellers, the curious" how were you able to keep your heart alert to the living Jesus? You gave us your secret: "Let us go back to the Gospel," you said. "It is necessary to try to allow yourself to be impregnated with the spirit of Jesus by reading and re-reading, meditating and re-meditating constantly on his words and examples which act like the drops of water which fall on a stone again and again, always in the same place...". However busy our lives may be, there is room for friendship with Jesus. And frequenting Jesus does not place us up on a little cloud, it can end up making us just as human as you were, human beings in Jesus' fashion.

This is one of the great things that you have taught us: being 'human' is sometimes the only way to break down the barriers and to speak of God. At the end

of your life, you went alone among an unknown people, and the only thing that you did was to draw close to them by respecting and valuing their culture, by letting yourself be welcomed by them and believing that God was working, even if it takes "centuries" as you said. When you died, Moussa, the Tuareg chief, wrote these simple words to his sister: "Charles the marabout did not die only for you people, he also died for us all. May God give him mercy and may we meet him in Paradise!" Today, you know, there is a lot of talk about communication, but each person is enclosed within his own little circle because difference creates fear. With you, on the other hand, your passion was to go to the one who was furthest away, and you lived this to the end. What a spirit you give us!

Basically, I know what expression you had on November 13: the expression of the blessed! The one seen on the photo of you, which I am including. It is a little fuzzy, but we can clearly see that you are smiling and walking towards the other, moving towards the encounter. That is you completely! And it is that which we love in you.

Permit me, please, to finish my letter as you finished yours to your friend Gabriel: "Just as I love you with all my heart, so too I embrace you with all my heart."

Marc, your little brother.

L'Bro. Marc will be leading us in the Nazareth Weekend.

See information enclosed.

Dates for the Diary:

- 10th - 12th June – Nazareth weekend with Br.Marc leading us in reflection at Jordans YHA, Beaconsfield, Bucks.
Cost: Weekend stay – £55
Saturday only – donation for weekend expenses.
Application enclosed.
- 19th - 28th July 2011 – European Family Holiday in Hautes Vosges, France “Our Lady of the Mountains” Theme – “Roots and Buds” - contact Louise for details and booking.
- 5th -10th August 2011 – Flemish holiday/retreat at “Ter Dennen”, The Trappist Monks of Westmalle (Sint-Pauluslaan 8) – contact Louise for details and booking.
- 14th - 16th September – Walsingham gathering with Simon Scott Plummer leading us in this year's 950th anniversary of Richeldis's vision. We also will be celebrating the birthday of Br.Charles which is on September 15th. Booking form will be included in the next newsletter.

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“It is love which should help you
be recollected in me,
and not distance from my children.
See me in them,
and just as I did in Nazareth,
live close to them, lost in God.”
~ from Charles' diary 1904

*Have a blessed Holy Week and Easter.
May you experience the peace and joy which this season brings.*

Do you have sharing, reflection, comments?
If so please send to: Louise Russell, 80 Rattray Road, London, SW2 1BE
0207 326 0834 (cdf-gb@jesuscaritas.info)

**Pictures from the gathering at The Priory
on the Feast of the Annunciation**



Photos by Keith Ware



Nazareth Weekend 10th - 12th June 2011

Please print

Name _____

Address _____

_____ (phone) _____

Please tick

Hostel sharing (three to a room)

Camping (space for 4 tents only)

Hotel accommodation (two/room)

Saturday – day only

Special Dietary Needs: _____

Any other special needs: _____

Please send £5 booking for Weekend stay to:

Louise Russell

80 Rattray Road

London, SW2 1BE

Deposits, please, by 31st May



Jordan's YHA

Jordans village is home to the Mayflower Barn, William Penn's burial place and the 17th century Meeting House associated with the early Quaker movement.

Direction: By car – easy access from the M40

By rail – from Marylebone Station, London (half hour)

from Birmingham Station (2 hours)

By bus – 305 High Wycombe Uxbridge

353 Slough Berkhamsted