

## LETTER TO ALL 1st DECEMBER 2025

I've deepened my thoughts through revisiting Margot's blue book—which I encourage you to read again—and also through a book by Cardinal Aveline from France.

I am profoundly touched by the kindness and gentleness that Brother Charles cherished and that Margot also greatly encouraged.

See for yourself what she writes:

**The fraternity took the name of Jesus Caritas: Jesus Love, in December 1956** (blue book, page 115). Let us pray to the Holy Spirit, she recommends, that he may make us aware of its full depth and demands.

She also recalls the words of **Pope Pius XII to secular institutes**: since through our consecration we do not leave our social environment, our insertion in the world, Pius XII invites us to "put more light in our eyes, more smiles on our lips, more grace in our manners, more delicacy in our kindness, more discretion in our sacrifice, in our giving and in our self-forgetfulness."

**Margot continues:** do we, like Brother Charles, have the anguish, the concern for the sufferings, joys, hopes and struggles of one another, but also of all those whom Jesus has charged us to redeem with Him? Do we look at them as He does? Do we love them as He does?

Does it tear us apart like it tears his heart out in the face of hatred and discord?

How much we need to review our lives to learn brotherhood!

Jesus Caritas: two words that sum up the whole life and programme of Brother Charles.

When we fully dedicate our lives to God's love, we begin to share the same feelings that Christ Jesus had: a deep love for his Father and for his brothers.

**Blue Book, pages 123 to 125 Margot repeats:** let us have favourable prejudices about our sisters, let us welcome newcomers and relieve the loneliness of those who are isolated... And if we do so with kindness and gentleness, we will be imitating Our Lord, following in the footsteps of Charles de Foucauld. We can be confident about this!

I went to see what **Cardinal Aveline of Marseille in France** says about **conversion path of Charles de Foucauld** (that is the title of the book) to find what he says about kindness and gentleness of heart.

His exploration of Morocco (1883/1884) disguised as a Jew taught him what it means to be a poor and despised person, what it means to depend on others. By putting his life on the line, he realized just how much humanity is capable of kindness—having been rescued multiple times throughout his travels—as well as selflessness and the hope for redemption. He was profoundly touched by the prayers offered by Muslims.

After his conversion, he embarked on a long journey of discernment to respond to God's call. Dazzled by God's mercy towards him, he constantly sought to imitate his Lord and Master.

In **Akbes**, when he was in the Trappist monastery, then in **Beni Abbes and Tamanrasset**, he was moved by the needs of the inhabitants of the region; he became one of them, opening his small mud house called La Fraternité to welcome unconditionally all those who passed by. In a letter to Bishop Guérin, he wrote from Beni Abbes: "To get a true picture of my life, you need to know that my door is knocked on at least ten times an hour, more often than not by the poor, the sick, passers-by..."

**Whether he was at the foot of the tabernacle or receiving visitors, he was always with Jesus.**

He gave immense importance to the Word of God; he placed his trust in the goodness of the Heart of Jesus and in the power of the Eucharist. **The Word, the Heart and the Eucharist were the three pillars of his fraternity house.**

**Charles de Foucauld, a missionary** who wanted all human beings to go to heaven, was primarily obedient to the Church, but he also took initiatives and had an extraordinarily strong inner impulse towards ever greater presence, friendship, dialogue, and service.

In the encyclical **Ecclesiam Suam**, **Pope Paul VI** wrote: "One does not save the world from the outside; like the Word of God who became man, one must assimilate the ways of life of those to whom one wishes to bring the message of Christ... one must become brothers to men... the climate of dialogue is friendship, or better still, service."

In a letter to his friend Joseph Hours in 1912 about the **apostolate of the laity**, Charles de Foucauld wrote: "Charity obliges Christians to love their neighbour, which is to say, every human being as themselves... Every Christian must be an apostle; this is not advice... it is the commandment of charity."

I conclude this letter with these powerful words from St Charles de Foucauld, which summarise a conversation he had with Abbé Huvelin in 1909:

**"My apostolate must be the apostolate of goodness. When people see me, they must say to themselves: since this man is so good, his religion must be good. If they ask why I am so gentle and good, I must say: because I am the servant of one who is much better than I am. If only you knew how good my master Jesus is. I would like to be good enough that people would say: if this is what the servant is like, how good must the master be!"**

May we all grow in goodness; that is my wish for each of you. Happy feast day to all.

Maité Lebarbier. General Manager, FJC.

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