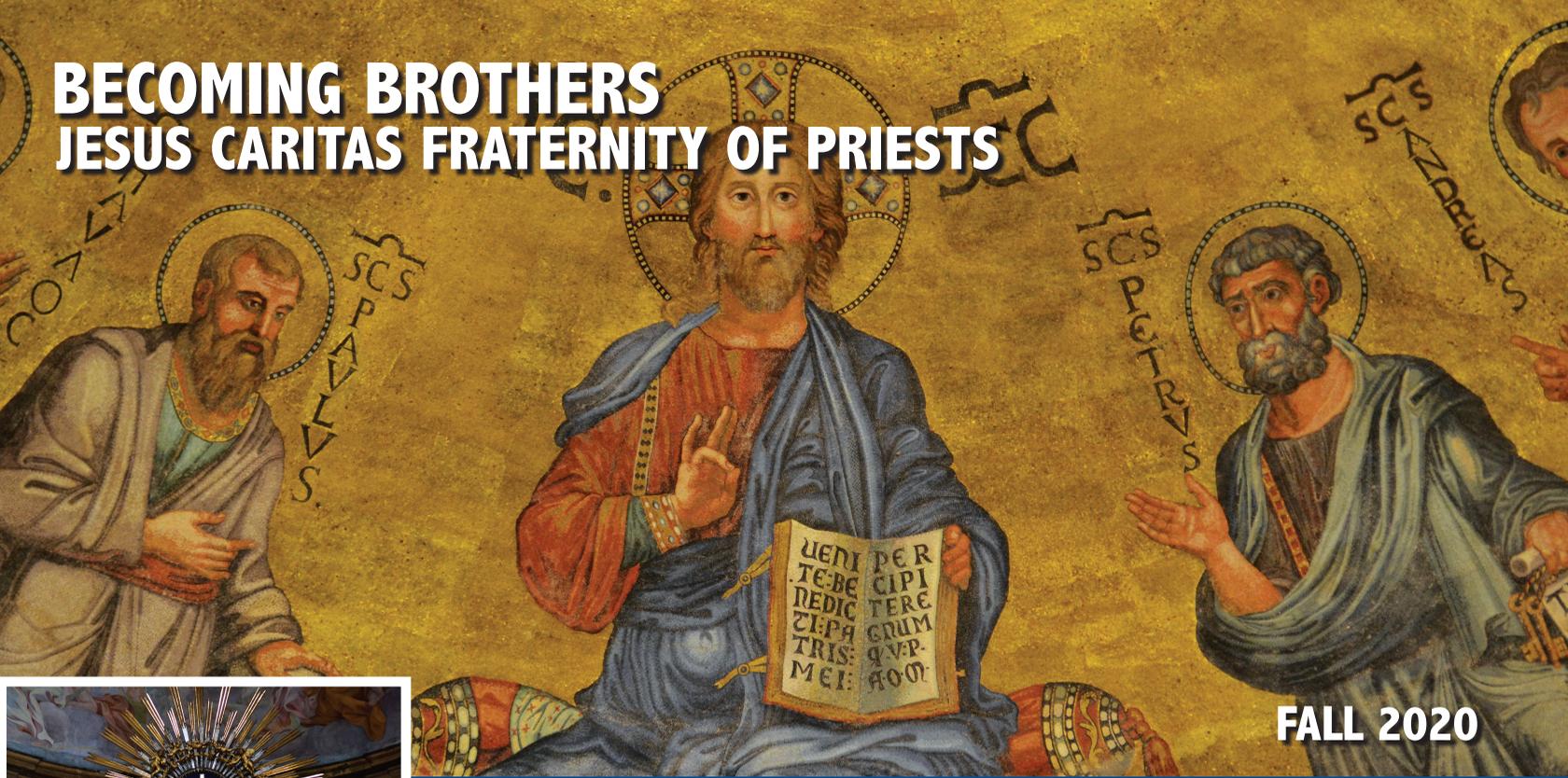


BECOMING BROTHERS JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS



FALL 2020



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FROM OUR INTERIM NATIONAL RESPONSIBLE,

JOE GREELEY

Dear Brothers and Friends of the Fraternity,

As you read in the last Becoming Brothers, I am the interim National Responsible for the United States until next summer. We will convene in Detroit (registration forms will be in future issues), which was the plan this year until Covid 19 hit the scene. Our Assembly will be from July 19-23, 2021, so save the week. please. That is presuming that the world will have gotten some control over this virus. We all know people who have died or gotten very sick from it, please keep all of them (us) in prayer.

By way of introduction, I am a priest of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, ordained in 1974. I joined the Fraternity in 1976, and the National Council in 2002, after living the Month of Nazareth in 2001. I joined the Fraternity for a very simple reason: Many of the best priests I knew in the Archdiocese were in the

Fraternity and I hoped that by joining it, something would “rub off” and I would be a better priest. It has been one of the greatest blessings of my life.

I am currently retired and live in a little town called Lucerne Valley in the high desert of Southern California (elev. 3000 ft). There are three of us who own the home, two are retired. So, like Brother Charles, I live in the desert; unlike Brother Charles, I have all the amenities of modern life.

I thank Hap Ragan for his years of service as our National Responsible. He did a great job and is still someone I will go to for advice and help. I also thank the other members of the National Council,



What Your Brothers are Reading

Henri Nouwen with Cristensen & Laird
SPIRITUAL FORMATION (*Harper One, New York, 161 pp*)

I am not sure who wrote this book. To be sure it is the teachings of the deceased spiritual guide, Henri Nouwen. But the post-mortem work of Michael Christensen and Rebecca Laird was to compile his books, lectures, and correspondence into a coherent presentation on seven different spiritual movements from the time of our youth, midlife, and late life. So what is classic Nouwen and what are editorial connections are hard to determine.

Nevertheless it is easily read and transferable to our own spiritual journey. Not turgid, not verbose, not unrelated to modern life it speaks convincingly of our

common need to bring the lofty concepts of the mind to the practical and inward dictates of the heart.

Each chapter begins with a story, usually from a source other than the traditional Catholic shelf of heard-it, done-it. His analysis is clear and concise and contemporary, no worry about getting lost in theory and speculation. The chapter concludes with exercises for going deeper into spiritual formation. It adds ways to reflect and journal. There is a unique section on “visio divina” which uses artistic representations to view the topic from a refreshingly different angle. These are in the centerpiece of the book.

So if you want to stop that incessant yawning you have suffered from in your spiritual reading, this book is for you!

rhb

For Your Distribution

Order from:
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Tega Cay, sC 29708
blchdefoucauld@gmail.com

The following in packets of 100. \$15 Add \$4 for S/H — enclose payment

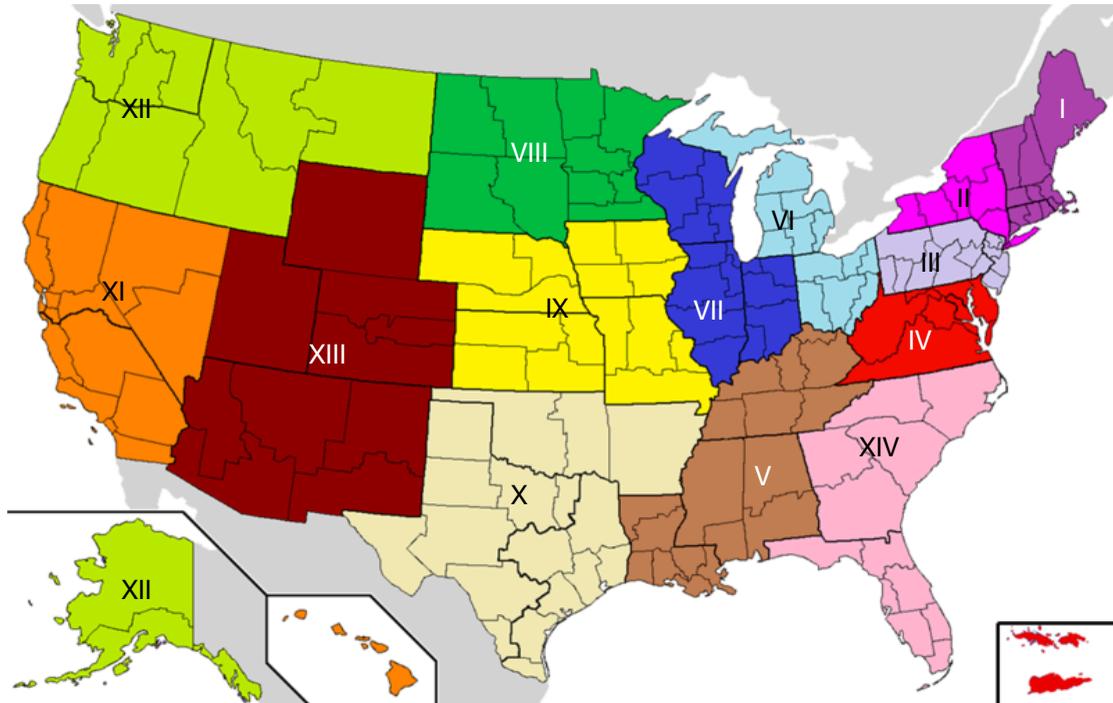


Adapting to the Pandemic

Our 37-year-old fraternity has now had six monthly Zoom meetings and we’re getting better. We had planned to meet “in person” on March 17th, but had to forego the green beer in Union City, PA, and find our own supply as we stumbled and struggled with our first internet adoration, prayer, lectio, and review of life. Over the months, we’ve taken turns “hosting” the adoration (as in the past) and we’ve gotten better about distributing the link so we can use iPads and laptops. When we used smartphones, all we saw was our brother’s ear – as he is hearing impaired and holds it up to his head to make out what we’re saying. Tom Suppa (who helped initiate various renewal programs in our Diocese and served on the National Council back in the late 1980’s), George Strohmeier (a co-founder of L’Arche in the U.S. and member of the Gannon University community, as well as meditation leader), and I have just welcomed Pat McCormick (former Navy chaplain and retired Atlanta priest) who returned to his hometown of Erie and searched for a fraternity to join – and we found each other by the Holy Spirit’s leadership.

— JOHN JACQUEL, ERIE, PA

NATIONAL JESUS CARITAS **Fraternity of Priests**



Interim National Responsible
 Msgr. Joseph F. Greeley 30441
 Bourbon Rd.
 P.O. Box 2008
 Lucerne Valley, CA 92356-2008
 (424) 744-1035
 joegreeley47@gmail.com

International Responsible
 Rev. Eric Lozada
 ericlozada@yahoo.com

Bishop Liaison
 Most Rev. Donald F. Hanchon
 4311 Central St.
 Detroit, MI 48210
 (313) 596-7444

National Administrator
 Mrs. Shannon Axon
 Jesus Caritas Fraternity
 P.O. Box 2638
 Augusta, GA 30914

International Liaison
 Rev. Alex Trejo
 PO Box 1185
 Mattawa, WA 99349

(509) 932-9151
 alextrejo00@yahoo.com

Region XIII
 Msgr. Bob L. Amundsen
 Prophet Elijah House
 1300 S.Steele St.
 Denver, CO 80210
 (720) 891-5968
 frbobamundsen @ msn.com

Region XII
 Rev. Ronald H. Belisle
 1200 E. Phillips Lake Loop Road
 Shelton, WA 98584
 (360) 427-4300
 ronbelisle@hctc.com
 (Also interim Becoming Brothers Editor)

Regions I, II, III, IV, & VI
 Rev. John B. Jacquell
 2701 East Avenue
 Erie, PA 16504
 (814) 456-4254
 pastor@sjberie.org
 (Also Recording Secretary)

Regions VIII, IX, X

Rev. Gregory Pawloski
 PO Box O
 Indianola, NE 69034
 (308) 364-2428
 gppawloski@yahoo.com
 (also Nat'l Responsible Emeritus)

Regions IV, V, XIV
 Rev. Jerry "Hap" Ragan 802
 Lovell Ave.
 Tybee Island, GA 31328
 (706) 267-1073
 hapragan @ hotmail.com
 (Also Treasurer)

Responsibles Emeritus
 Rev. Mark G. Mertes
 (903) 406-6876
mmertes@archkck.org
 Rev. Thomas L. McCormick
 (303) 625-3345
frfulano@gmail.com
 Rev. Richard Reiser
 (402) 340-0645
rreiser@sjvomaha.org

A PILOT OF A WEEK OF

Several days before the WEEK OF NAZARETH was to be piloted in St. Joseph Parish, Wenatchee, I got nervous. Can I communicate to the 5-6 priests that will be there about my vision of the JESUS CARITAS FRATERNITY OF PRIESTS, about the role of Charles deFoucauld, about overcoming divisiveness, about whether my personality could blend well enough with this group of extern priests.

I have fretted over this project for at least three years. I am swamped with the guides and worksheets and resources that has brought my computer to the point of exhaustion. I have visited possible sites for a Week: McKenzie River, the Retreat house in Beaverton, St Martin's College in Lacey. I traveled to Viviers France where Charles studied and was ordained, to Our Lady of the Snow Trappist monastery where he spent time as a monk, to Caldera, Chile for the youth Week of Nazareth centered heavily on manual labor; to Cebu and met with a member of the fraternity of our new Responsible; and finally to the Monastery in Conyers GA to try to convince other members of the National Council on our need of an abbreviated form of a Month of Nazareth.

LOCATION

The building is very attractive. The meeting room was perfect for our size of group. The governor had restricted the size of groups in this phase of the pandemic to two to six people so we wiggled into compliance (except I found out later that Chelan County was still in the prior phase!) Sleeping quarters were comfortable.

I was worried about getting the equipment up and running. But a seminarian from Georgia came to my aid; he was a convert, became Catholic as a result of a college report on JP II, but Impressed by Yakima seminarians

working in the orchards with migrant fruit pickers changed dioceses. Straight from the Jesus Caritas playbook!

CONFIDENTIALITY

7/13 The presentation on this issue was my attempt to put into words what had been informally given. My point is that it needs to be said and resaid, and formulated as a clear policy at the next assembly.

“SEEDS OF THE DESERT”

We watched a DVD on Charles which elicited Fr Teo to describe the “Great Smokey Mountains” of his native Cebu (the garbage dump) where people survived by collecting resalable refuse. He was a Divine Word missionary in Cebu serving this very area.

PRAYER OF ABANDONMENT

7/14. Nothing went quite right. 3-hole binder materials hadn't been synchronized. but finally got the pages with the meditation on Prayer of Abandonment which was a good way to formally begin our sessions.

REVIEW OF LIFE

Then I couldn't find my Keypoint presentation on Review of Life so had to ad lib it ... and omitted several key issues. Not that anyone criticized me but I felt foolish for the long delay. I'm not nearly as well prepared as I had presumed. Our review after the reflection period went well. I sense a great loyalty to church and diocese on the part of these priests.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Of course this is the central issue in any Christian group but it did not provoke any head of steam. Fr Teo

OF NAZARETH — AT 95°

impresses me with his spiritual insight. I propose a Reflection sheet that would trace spiritual and/or moral development and I will work on that. Another Filipino priest arrived but without Fr Jack Shaw, a 90-year old veteran of Jesus Caritas. It seems that his brother Bill was taken to the doctor with unusual symptoms and the two of them live together in Wapato. They have all been very kind to me.

SIMPLICITY OF LIFE

The reflection sheet turned out to be a winner. Everyone seemed very interested in the classifications but some tweaking needs to be done. Vocabulary was unfamiliar to this foreign born group, e.g. “Wardrobe”. Meaning of other phrases was ambiguous, e.g. “seeking medical attention” which doesn’t point to an excess of hypochondria. All agreed we should add “sporting events & equipment” & “entertainment” to the ways priests spend money. I was amused to note how many entitlements were expected and I am not sure if the group factored these gifts into Simplicity of Life.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

They all seem compliant with the need of an hour of prayer daily. I had hoped to get more variety on the reflection sheet “Eucharistic Profile”; may be it needs to be re-written.

UNIVERSAL BROTHER

An easy one— they were meztizo and I was able to identify myself as metis. They are embodying that truly Catholic quality! Again, I was amused at lunch when someone asked for “gravy” for his salad (Meaning salad dressing of course). So we talk differently, so what?

DAY IN THE DESERT

I caved in; it was 95° inside the building and I was frustrated that I couldn’t find Costco to refill my gas tank. I was washed out & asked Alex to take session 6 and I went to bed, The heat is debilitating; I’m disappointed I didn’t have a chance to show my Atacama Desert photos from Chile when I truly had a day in the desert. This morning I feel a lot peppier and have resolved to drink more water to avoid dehydration. My plan is to go Ohme gardens.

But when I drove up to the entrance the sign said “Closed see you next season” so my plans collapsed as victim to the coronavirus epidemic. I had driven past a sign to the Confluence Park so that was my backup. I walked on a biking bridge over the Wenatchee River, slept a bit in my car, tried to find a restroom that was open, and then found a picnic shelter where I could journal a bit, Most of our sessions had been engaging and we left satisfied — except for Living the Gospel. So I spent the Desert Day trying to chart my own faith journey through childhood on, and develop a reflection that would catch the imagination of my fellow priests. . Fr. Alex had the Mass and after the homily got reports of the day, and I found them inspiring. So I feel all is well on that point.

FORMING FRATERNITY

Since these guys all had some experience of Jesus Caritas I sensed that a little background on the movement with a stress on the blessing Yakima provided us in the USA with the Petit Vieux frère (Des Dillon), a local icon. I tried to end with a “clinic” listing a series of problems that fraternities might have, but this did not resonate with them.

continued on back cover

From Our Interim National Responsible *continued from front cover*

who have taken on a part of the National Responsible tasks as Hap outlined in the last Becoming Brothers.

I mentioned the pandemic above. At first it was something vague and out there, grabbing a lot of headlines. Then a few people I know came down with it and recovered. Now I have two funerals of people I have known and worked with, and who have died from it, coming to pass in the next few weeks. I know we're all tired of it, but I would simply like to pose some questions. How is God speaking to us, to me, in all of this? What is God trying to tell me? Am I listening? Am I bringing to bear the Prayer of Abandonment during this time? What are the blessings that will at some future date, and even now, come out of this? My developmentally disabled brother Paul always has his "antenna up" for things he likes to look for. It seems to

me that this very long Lent that we are going through is a time to keep our antennae up, to see where God might be leading us, as individuals all the way up to the whole world.

One blessing that is already coming into being is the emergence of virtual retreats. I am very hopeful that this will open new doors for priests to learn of the great gift of the spirituality contained in the writings of Blessed (soon to be Saint) Charles de Foucauld. How this will unfold is still a mystery, but it does give hope that we will continue to grow in Faith in these trying times!

From the desert, your brother,

Joe Greeley

International Team Lays Down the Red Carpet for *Canonization*

How proud we are that Brother Charles deFoucauld, the inspiration and spiritual guide of the Jesus Caritas Fraternities of Priests, will be canonized at a date yet unset. We appreciate the five proposals of the International Team to help us celebrate this event, and anticipate its presentation that will eventually be on Facebook under "Jesus Caritas America."

- The situation of the poor in the world today.
- Relevance of Brother Charles today.
- Essential elements of spirituality
- The witness of Br. Charles in evangelizing.
- Interfaith dialogue today

These when released will certainly be more flavored with socioeconomic implications, but in the meantime I venture to propose for a focused Review of Life of our fraternities the following questions based on these five themes:

1. Brother Charles sought out the poorest people on earth in imitation of the Poor Man of Nazareth.

Where can you in your setting find the poor and those needing special attention?

2. The life of Brother Charles moved through distinguishable steps in his journey: pampered child, dilettante, scholar and explorer, conversion, a restless religious, a commitment to the forlorn and impoverished. Explain to your brothers the steps you have taken to the point you are now.
3. What did Charles find in his stay in Nazareth that molded his unique spirituality?
4. Attempt to explain your own efforts to evangelize under Brother Charles rubric of Universal Brother.
5. Refer to the Parable of the Two Sticks in Ezechiel 37:15. Our human tendency is to divide, but the divine tendency is to unite. What have you (or your fraternity) done to bring amity and unity to your community?

rhb

Can Jesus Caritas Fraternities Move into the Future *with Zoom*?

So your fraternity meetings have dropped to zero. There is no place to meet. There is a dismal tone to your daily time before the Blessed Sacrament. What to do?

To shrug and give up is the first reaction. But it is certainly not-hope-filled or Christ-centered. So I am venturing out on thin ice (which is not a likely autumn response) and suggest an approach more technical in nature and challenging to the grey matter — but can be a re-affirmation of JESUS CARITAS in our lives.

So if you are willing to take the bait, here is the first step. Three or four of you could volunteer and be first in line for the spiritual vaccine.. You would give a hint what day in the week you could take part in a ZOOM meeting. You would get a return email that would contain an invitation and materials to review beforehand.

Let me use the Week of Nazareth as a model. The set of tri-folds are distinguished by having the materials from Fr. Dan Danielson's AMERICAN EXPERIENCE all numbered by paragraph. Attached would be a reflection sheet with thought questions again keyed to the paragraph numbers in AMERICAN EXPERIENCE. Your at-home response could be a few words to a short paragraph.

Note that this exercise has been preparation for a meeting. And a forty-minute meeting at that! It lines up with the preparation of a Day in the Desert, but modified to a pandemic environment. Think of all the times you've cheated and came to a fraternity meeting without preparation. And here you are at last — clear headed, articulate and prepared. See what grace can do!?!?

The next step is to join the meeting. You check the invitation from the host, an email with the day and time (it may vary according to different time zones). It provides a single click line and you are soon on line. You have prepped by combing your hair (assuming you have enough to comb) and manned your device by downloading the ZOOM program on your desktop, laptop, iPad, tablet or smartphone. You have checked it out to see that the camera isn't aimed into your bathroom (like mine was the first time I tried it.) Your gorgeous

visage can now be visible to all member participants. Remember, you have to keep smiling for 40 minutes until our free version of software decides it has had enough of you and kicks you off-line.

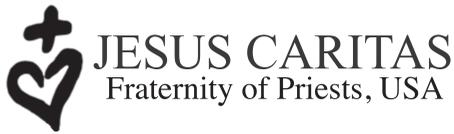
The host, or "responsible", has to make sure all are introduced, and that we are finished with our throat clearing and can give the responses quickly, clearly. He introduces an issue from the tri-folds or the pages from a spiritual book such as Nouwen as reviewed in this issue of "Becoming Brothers.", and we go round robin with a Review of Life focused on the topic prepared. Not quite the format of a conventional meeting but a way to compress it in an executive manner. As the short meeting comes to a conclusion, the Responsible can summarize the discussion and lead us in the Prayer of Abandonment.

Very compressed. He alerts us to the fact that there will be a follow-up email.

Let's walk through this using the Week of Nazareth tri-fold as a model.

1. Week one: I get an email with a tri-fold containing a section of AMERICAN EXPERIENCE. I read it.
2. I follow up with brief notes correlating to the same numbers on the Worksheet.
3. The Reflection Sheet focuses on applying the particular charism to my own life experience and could be prepared in Daily Adoration or Day in the Desert.
4. Next Week: I join the ZOOM session for my own learning in the teaching segment.
5. But also in the Review of Life I track my own spiritual journey focused on the Reflection sheet.

Would something like this work? Do you feel you could handle an adaptation of meeting using something similar to the above. Read John Jaquel's experience of ZOOM in this issue of BB and let someone know on the national Council and maybe we can move into the challenges of the future.



A Week of Nazareth *continued from page 5*

ENGAGEMENT (final day)

I had selected the Mass for Priests:

- Preface of the Chrism Mass,
- OT readings of Moses' argument with God about leadership and the appointment of the seventy,
- Ephesians 4 with what it takes to form a community and how a variety of leadership roles emerges.
- Gospel of Luke's commissioning of the seventy to go in pairs to the peripheries.
- Fr. Alex received their statement of commitment (sometimes referred to in French as "engagement") and if I take the words seriously the week reached its goal. Alex gave each a gift from the Phillipines.

MY BLESSINGS

- For Alex and his low-key approach which muted my high-key push.
- For Gaby our cook as cheerul and upbeat as she is buxom, and her role in our meals.

- For the seminarians who helped me with all the technical junk. In heaven, will the computers work the way we want?
- For Fr Ramirez who got me cough drops and lip balm the evening I wimped out from heat exhaustion. And woke me up to give me a blessing in bed!

MY CONCLUSIONS 7/20/2020

- Jesus Caritas in the US has not developed a culture sufficiently strong to pass on the movement to a succeeding generation.
- The Week of Nazareth as I have compressed, compiled and tweaked it can definitely serve as an introduction or re-view of what fraternity is. It is not in competition with The Month of Nazareth.
- The 3-part format of a) Presentation, b) followed by a quiet reflection on the trifold, c) then a focused review of life, is very workable and stresses the need of preparation for the review of life.