

FRATERNITY OF THE HIDDEN LIFE

There is currently no secular institute for men that is based on the spirituality of Bl. Charles de Foucauld. I would like to remedy that. Currently the fraternity is in the process of being formed; men are sought who feel called to a mainly hidden life of holiness in the practice of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. If you sense a calling to the life of Jesus at Nazareth, to live as leaven in the world, please contact me.

The Life

“The life of Nazareth is that of the majority of people, very much like their ordinary life. It is also that of religious who live a hidden, contemplative life and, at the same time, are in touch with the people around them.” – Fr. Charles de Foucauld

When we seek to draw near to God through a consecrated way of life, we look first to Jesus. As Bl. Charles said, he is our model. Then, we look to those who embraced the charisms of life that we are seeking. We look to those members of fallen humanity who persevered and showed us how we might follow The Crucified One in the concrete situations of life.

The ideal of Brother Charles de Foucauld was to live the hidden life of Jesus at Nazareth. The Son of God spent 30 years of his life hidden, buried, in the joys and tediums of everyday life. Though God incarnate, he lived and worked among others. He was The Leaven, The Salt.

Hiddenness as exemplified by Bl. Charles does not mean a complete obscurity of our call. He was a visible sign of the Church in the midst of others, especially in the midst of unbelievers. The hidden nature comes from, as much as possible, burying ourselves in the everyday banality and beauty of life in a secular world. It is a gentle presence of witness. We are also hidden because so much of our spiritual life is never seen by those around us. Hours of adoration, The Divine Office, and retreats are usually performed as a solitary. In this sense, those around us will never know the sacrifice and lonely battles of the spiritual life we lead. They also, though, will not be present to our deepest joys of the interior life.

To live this life requires the initiative to pray when no one is there to encourage us. It also requires a never-failing trust that God is always there, deep inside, in the unending splendor of the Trinity. Only with His grace will we persevere and triumph.

Following is a list of the core spiritual obligations. After the Obligations will be suggestions on ways to unite our prayer with the ideals of Bl. Charles de Foucauld.

The Obligations

- A readiness for apostolate among those you encounter. This may take the form of assisting and praying for the poor, the elderly, the sick, the forgotten, or simply those neighbors and coworkers around you.
- Daily Mass when possible.
- Holy Hour of Adoration – *“Remain here, and watch with me” – Matthew 26:38.*
 - Adoration of Jesus was of critical importance to Fr. Charles. We would do well to imitate him in his love of staying with the Lord.
- The Divine Office – *“Seven times a day I praise thee” – Psalm 119:164.*
 - The prayer of the Church. Let us join ourselves with our brothers and sisters throughout the world in giving praise to God.
- Once a month, a Day in the Desert - *“I will allure (him), and bring (him) into the desert” – Hosea 2:14.*
 - We draw away from the world to spend a day in silent recollection and love. With only a Bible and our breviary, we seek to abide in God.
- To be under the guidance of a spiritual director - *“He who hears you, hears me” – Luke 10:16.*
 - As Fr. Charles wisely said, the first thing one needs when entering the desert is a guide. To the best of our ability, we must find a spiritual director and be obedient to them.

Prayer Suggestions

Depending on our life situation and attraction to specific spiritualities within the Church, our prayer life might include some of the following:

- The Rosary – *As celibates, we cannot do better than to cling to the Blessed Mother.*
- 20-30 minutes of meditation per day, ending with a concrete resolution – *“I meditate and search my spirit” – Psalm 77:6.*
- Loving attention to the Indwelling God that dwells within our soul.
- ...And any other prayer methods that are approved by the Church.

The daily prayer requirements will take sacrifice and time; however, consider the time, attention, and love that parents devote to their children. May we who have forsaken marriage and children never be accused of having a lesser love towards God.