



**para el mundo - pour le monde - for the World - para o mundo - per il mondo**

To be a Brother today is above all to keep the memory of Jesus alive. In particular, the Jesus-Brother, who shared his life with the marginalized of his time: Galileans like himself, women slaves of social and religious patriarchy, children ignored by family systems that favored the adult provider of sustenance, sinners labelled by a religion of rites and sacrifices, politicians allied with religion who imposed heavy burdens on the working majority...

This is the Jesus-Brother, whose disturbing memory I am invited to remember, more than with words, with my presence in the ordinary life of today's marginalized and in my community. I belong to a religious institute whose mission is the evangelization of youth, and in this area I receive the daily invitation to be a Brother among young people; The invitation is always fresh and challenging. In the past it was to prepare my classes in the most efficient way and to be present on the courts and playgrounds of our schools.

Being a Brother in 2024 is another story for a 72-year-old religious, when the gap between young people and my generation is abysmal. To be a Brother is to keep myself in the background, above all to help understand the complexity of the change of era and the inability of the old ecclesial and educational structures to give meaning to their young lives. I witness a generation that fought its own battles I grew up with the background tune of John Lennon's *Imagine*, Latin American dictatorships, the *desaparecidos* (disappeared people), the emerging of liberation theology, and the commitment of religious life to the world of the poor. That agenda is still in force with other actors; however, I cannot pass it on to the new generation.

To be a Brother is to allow young people to write their own history. I can suggest some questions, share my joys and sorrows, but above all listen to them and observe in their eyes what God reveals to me. We have some young Brothers in our communities and schools, with other priorities. I admire their courage to go beyond the traditional curriculum (religion, faith education, catechesis) and discover new paths for a youth spirituality, very far from what we taught with so much zeal and which should be "doctrinally correct".

For me being a Brother today is like breathing every day, but the air of the 70s and 80s has changed and I am happy that other Brothers close to young people are exploring new paths.

Bro. Hugo Cáceres, cfc



# THIS IS HOW I SEE A BROTHER .....

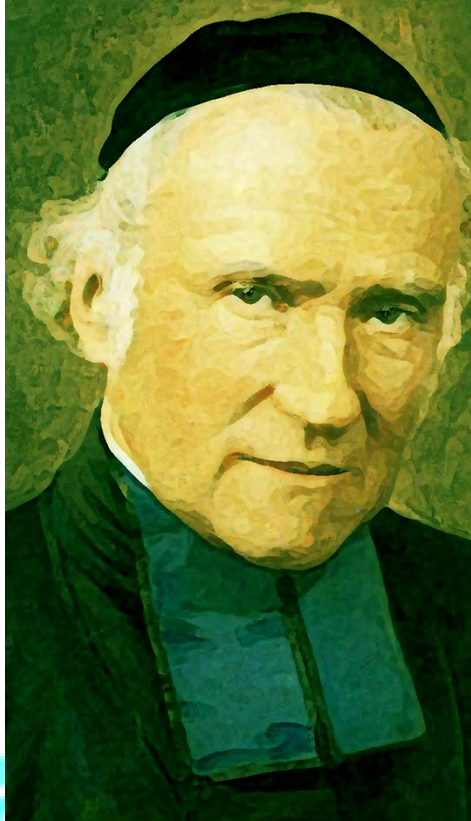
To say Brother is to feel welcomed and valued in richness and diversity; to feel sent from a secure and open mooring in the Church to a shared mission and a shared charism. The Brother is a house, a home, a place of rest and departure, a haven of shared, fraternal and community life, incarnated and real. The Brother is a simple presence like the one Gabriel wanted. The closest witness of a God the Trinity to make himself present among men. Thank you, Lord, for the Brothers (Jaime de Ponga, Spain).

I could name many Brothers who have been important to me. Of all of them I can say that they are the 'glue', those who unite the teachers, the students, the coaches, the catechists, all those who do quiet work in the reception, in the offices of the schools. With them we walk in the footsteps of Brother Gabriel (Fernando Gil. Teacher. Spain).

After 37 years in the School, I am grateful for and bless the presence of the Brothers throughout my life. I felt them to be teachers, family, light, guides, counsellors, supportive presences at different times in my life and unconditional companions. They made me feel that Nazareth in the school is not a utopia. That Gabriel's legacy must continue to be present. And that my school is my home (Lili López des Rotours, Argentina).

I met the Brothers when I was 12 years old and they have really been an important part of my life. In the seminary, during the postulancy and the novitiate, I discovered that the Brothers are much more than teachers. They are like guides and mentors who help to understand life, showing how faith and science connect to everything we do. Now as a professional, I continue to see how the Brothers make a difference, not only in the classroom but in our whole school community. They are always there, helping and teaching, and that is something that really inspires me (Carlos Villafuerte, Ecuador).

*The name  
of Brother  
inspires  
simplicity,  
kindness  
and charity*



For me, 'to be a Brother today' is to continue being the Brother that I have known throughout the 33 years that I have worked in the school. In working 'side by side' with the Brothers as a teacher, coordinator, in pastoral ministry, etc. I have had: welcome, support and friendship (César Niño. Teacher. Spain).

To be a Brother today is to be 'more than human'. In fact, in a context of social change, of changing customs and fashions, the religious Brother, by virtue of his commitment to a life of poverty, obedience and chastity, has the pressing obligation to have a high spirit that 'transcends' that of any ordinary man. His life must be a struggle, not for self-fulfilment like that of any ordinary man, but rather for the little ones, the poor and the sick (Mr Parfait, Burkina Faso).

Today it is difficult to find someone who dreams of entering religious life. 'Being a Brother' means that someone has really been chosen by the Lord to fulfil a great mission. It means putting aside your personal likes and dislikes and putting the mission entrusted to you by the Lord as your priority. The most significant thing about being a brother: the willingness to sacrifice (Mrs. Bibing, Philippines).

In my opinion, a Religious Brother today is expected to be kind, gentle, happy, positive and sensitive to himself, to others and to society. His life should not be to 'preach' or deliberately proselytize to others, but to set a good example. (Mr Peter Paul. India).



# FOR ME, TO BE A BROTHER TODAY IS...



On July 14, at 6 o'clock in the morning, the alarm clock calls me. It tells me that today begins the first day of my 88th year. I thank God for creating me, making me a Christian and loving me as a Brother. If in the past, to say 'Being a Brother today' was centred on common life, and especially on work, professional work or apostolic activity, today it asks of me sensitivity, attention, availability, especially for those who suffer, or who are in crisis. It asks of me adaptation and a positive vision of reality, it asks of me attention, serenity, joy in dialogue and in service (Br. Carlo Ivaldi. Italy).

To be a Brother is to be committed to our fellow human beings and to see to it that in some concrete place we are serving God, to make this world a better place for all. In these days in which we live, the most significant thing for me is to bear the name of Brother and to try to live as such. Brotherhood is the origin and the strength of Christianity. I am a Brother! We are brothers! With all the people I deal with on a daily basis, I can make fraternity a reality in words and in deeds (Br. José M<sup>a</sup> de la Fuente. Spain)

For me, being a Brother means having freedom, a fundamental place to connect with God and to accept each other as members of the community. It is a challenge and, at the same time, a vocation that brings a genuine experience to our lives, being 'simply Brothers'. (Br. Elvis Quintero. Venezuela)



**The heart  
of a Brother...**

The call to be a Brother is for me the most beautiful gift. In this way, living in community, I can achieve peace through prayer, work and love. I feel and live this reality as it is written in the motto of the Brothers of the Holy Family (Br. Valen. Indonesia).

In response to a changing society, the Brother puts his talents, his youth, his energy and his time for the benefit of children, young people and families who are often lost and disoriented, like the Good Shepherd. With his simple way of life, he brings a smile to people's faces and opens horizons of hope. He becomes the voice of the desert, crying out and calling for solidarity, peace and fraternity. Every smile he gives and every flame of life and hope he kindles in the heart of another brings him great joy. The Brother finds greater joy in giving himself, his time and his knowledge to others, without expecting any reward (Br. Samuel Gnargo, Burkina Faso).



**... like that  
of Brother Gabriel.**



To be a Brother for me today is, first of all, to take great care of my relationship with God: to be a man of God. *Without me, says the Lord, you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5); To be a Brother for me today is to promote the universal brotherhood that comes from Christ (Mt 23:8);

To be a Brother for me today is to become a servant in the image of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve (Mt 20:20-28) (Br. Jean Paul Mbengue, Brother of St Gabriel, Senegal).



# BEING A BROTHER: A STORY

The Brother's vocation is always born in a fraternity (a group of brothers and sisters in a family). Fraternal relationships profoundly and permanently mark the development of each person. The vocational call is a fundamental event, even if it is only with the passage of time that its full extent is measured, because it takes the person out of his family environment (often also cultural) to open him to new dimensions among which is the Christian dimension, and more specifically the dimension of religious life. By the act of religious profession, the religious responds to God's call and commits himself to follow Jesus of Nazareth by sharing his life choices, by putting his goods in common, by living in celibacy and obedience in a community that has a Rule of life and a mission. This simple way of living at the same time identifies the Brother and places him in relationship with other forms of Christian life (married or celibate people, priests, deacons, religious, etc. bringing the specificity of his charism for the good of all, especially the most in need.

But if the Brother's vocation is a personal story, it is also a community and collective story. In the Bible, the name 'brother' designates not only the sons and daughters of the same family, but also the members of the chosen people who live the covenant with God and even those who are part of other nations. The universal brotherhood, which begins from the origins of hu-

manity, reaches its fullness in Jesus Christ 'the firstborn of many brethren' (Rom 8,29).

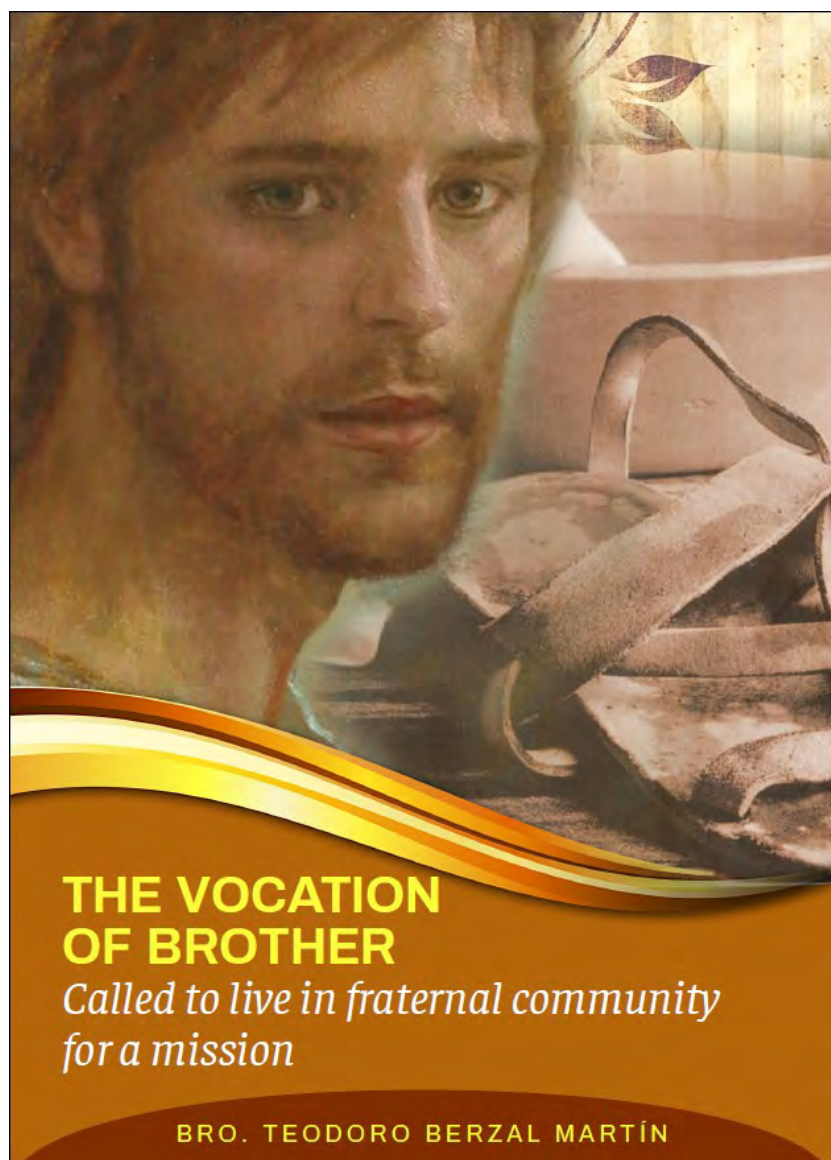
As we know from the books of the New Testament, the first Christians called each other brothers. This appellation has been preserved throughout history to underline the bonds created by baptism between those who share the same faith. But it also has a civil use among the members of an association or a group sharing the same values.

The more restricted use of the term 'Brother', specific to religious life, dates back to the first monks who lived in community. Later it was used to distinguish lay religious from clerics.

In the modern sense, the congregations of Brothers came into being with St. John Baptist de Lasalle, founder of the 'Brothers of the Christian Schools'.

We Brothers of the Holy Family follow this line of closeness to the laity without losing our religious identity.

Brother Teodoro Berzal  
Sigüenza, July 2024



## THE VOCATION OF BROTHER

*Called to live in fraternal community for a mission*

BRO. TEODORO BERZAL MARTÍN