

## Final Message of the European Delegates of the Lay Fraternity Charles de Foucauld

Minsteracres 11th-15th July 2019

We, the European Delegates of the Lay Fraternity Charles de Foucauld, gathered at Minsteracres, England, and shared with each other the life of our countries and our local fraternities, and reflected on the theme chosen for this meeting ***“Build bridges, not walls”***.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, listening to His Gospel, which is a plea for humanity and also for the whole of creation, we try to overcome our personal limitations and pull down the walls that are built to exclude our brothers and sisters in humanity. Charles de Foucauld, the Universal Brother guides us along this path towards the most marginalised, the smallest, the ones who are the least in society.

Those of us who participated in the General Assembly of the Lay Fraternities in Lebanon last year, or in the Assembly of the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld in Haiti, were witnesses to the suffering and extreme poverty of people because of war, corruption, exploitation and natural catastrophes. Yet we also saw seeds of hope and joy sprouting among young people, something that challenges us.

Belonging to the universal fraternity of Charles de Foucauld, we are urged to take a position against the way migrants are rejected by ‘Fortress Europe’. The Gospel of the Good Samaritan invites us to welcome the stranger, open the door to him or her : it is Jesus who knocks.

At a time when fear of the other and the move to withdraw into ourselves, personally and nationally, seem to be gaining ground, we had the experience of meeting each other without barriers and listening to our differences, respectfully and fraternally – a sure sign of hope.