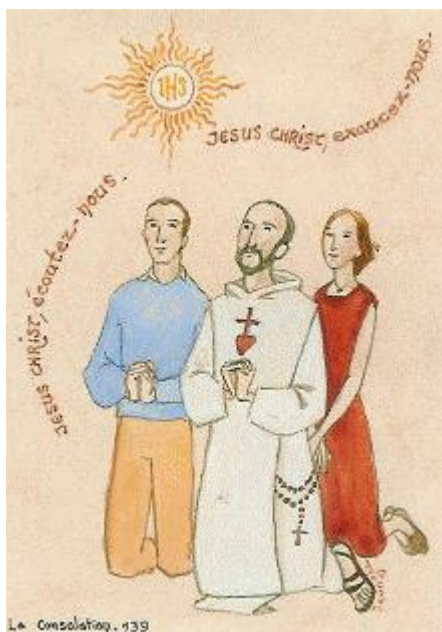


Br. Charles V – Saviour with Jesus

Right from the time he arrived in Beni Abbes, Brother Charles thought of the good that could be done by Sisters among the people of the Sahara, but in the tense religious context that reigned at the time, it was scarcely feasible. So then he thought of inviting lay nurses to come. The Acts of the Apostles showed the role that had been played by lay people in the process of evangelisation at the beginning of the Church. He thought of the good that could be brought about by new Priscilla's and Aquila's. He imagined that merchants or gardeners, both celibate or married could have a very great influence, showing what the Gospel meant in daily life.



Alone in this part of the Sahara, with no companion, the idea came to him during his retreat in 1907 to found a confraternity in France that would be animated by the same spirit that he lived: imitation of Jesus, adoration of his presence in the Eucharist and work for the evangelisation of non-Christians. Confraternities were very popular at the time. Br Charles himself belonged to a few of them. But he didn't see a single one for the evangelisation of the indigenous peoples of the French colonies.

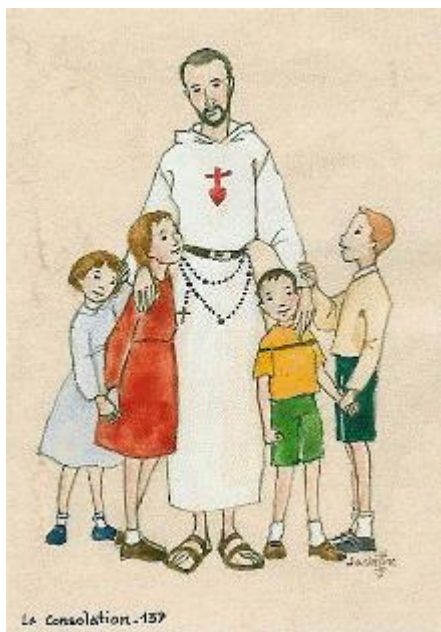
He wrote the statutes for what he wanted to call the Union of the Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was based on his own Rule. He wanted to obtain their approbation but from his far away Sahara mail took so long that it was impossible to get anything off the ground. He needed to go to France. Besides, his sister was asking him to come because his nieces and nephews were growing up and didn't know him.

He left Tamanrasset on Christmas day 1908. Henceforth he will journey without his tent and won't celebrate Mass on the way. It makes his journey much lighter, therefore quicker and cheaper. But even a quick journey took a month and a half! On his way to Algiers he met Mgr. Guerin in Ghardaïa to discuss his plans. He was in Algiers by February 13 and two days later he took the boat for Marseilles, arriving in Paris on the 18th. He went to see Fr Huvelin who encouraged his plans for a confraternity but told him to speak of it with the Bishop of Viviers since he officially belonged to that diocese.

Fr Huvelin and Br Charles spent a night of adoration together in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Paris. Louis Massignon joined them. He will long remember that freezing night. Until then he had only known Br Charles through letters. Massignon, like Br Charles had had a

spiritual awakening among Muslim people. At one point he had even contemplated joining him in Tamanrasset.

It had been almost 20 years since he had said goodbye to Marie de Bondy. Abbé Huvelin asked him to go see her because now she was the one who needed him. He then went to Our Lady of the Snows and to his bishop, to present him with the statues he had written for his Association. Bishop Bonnet thought he needed to ask Rome's approval before looking for members and encouraged him to look for a priest in France who could look after the project in his absence. But Br Charles didn't have many acquaintances among the French clergy and those he did know were very busy. Finally, Mgr. Guerin, volunteered to look after presenting the statues to Rome.



The second week of his visit was spent at his sisters'. Many family photos were taken as he got reacquainted with his nieces and nephews.



He travelled back to Algeria on March 7, his stay in France having lasted less than a month. He stopped in Beni Abbes on the way back.

He arrived in Tamanrasset on June 11 and simply wrote in his notebook *Deo Gracias*. In the month of August, he received Laperrine's visit. The army wanted to build a fort around Tarahouat, about 50 kms from Tamanrasset to guard the road that led towards Niger. They wanted to call it Fort de Foucauld, but Br Charles protested strongly suggesting that they call it Fort Motylinski in honour of the one who had helped him at the beginning of his language studies. He had died from typhoid, shortly after his return to Algiers, probably weakened by the

long journey to Tamanrasset. Br Charles will always insist that all his linguistic works appear under Motylinski's name.

1910-will be marked by the death of a few of the people who are closest to him

In March Mgr. Guerin, the young bishop of the Sahara dies from typhoid that he caught while nursing the sick. There had been a deep friendship between the two. Five years earlier Bishop Guerin had come to visit Br. Charles in Beni Abbes and as he left, Br. Charles wrote:

For the first time in many years I felt alone Monday evening, as you disappeared little by little into the shadows. I understood and felt that I was a hermit...And I remembered that I had JESUS and I said, « Jesus, I love you. »

Beloved Father, how grateful I am for your visit, the good you did to me.

Fr Huvelin dies on July 10 and Br. Charles learns of it on August 15.

He will write to Massignon: *The last words spoken to me by Fr Huvelin were "hope and confidence". So I'm passing them on to you. Let us do our best without looking at our weakness, sure of God's help...The post has just brought me details of the final moments of the one at whose hands I was converted 24 years ago and who, since then, has remained my beloved father. He was fully conscious right to the end but could hardly speak. The last two things he said were, "we will never love sufficiently" and "our worth depends on what we love". Those two things summarize his life.*

Laperrine left the Sahara to go back to France.

Br Charles wrote to Marie:

My solitude grows. I feel more and more alone. Some have gone off to the Homeland, others now have their life somewhere far away; one feels like the olive forgotten at the end of the branch after the harvest.



That same year, Moussa ag Amastane was brought to France along with two other Tuaregs by the French authorities. He saw the July 14 military parade in Paris and was awarded the Legion d'honneur. He was shown many factories and they even brought him to a cabaret. Br Charles regretted that they didn't show him anything of Christian France. Moussa went to spend a weekend with his sister and her husband and was received at their chateau for a weekend. The family had been forewarned to have plenty of milk on the table for meals!

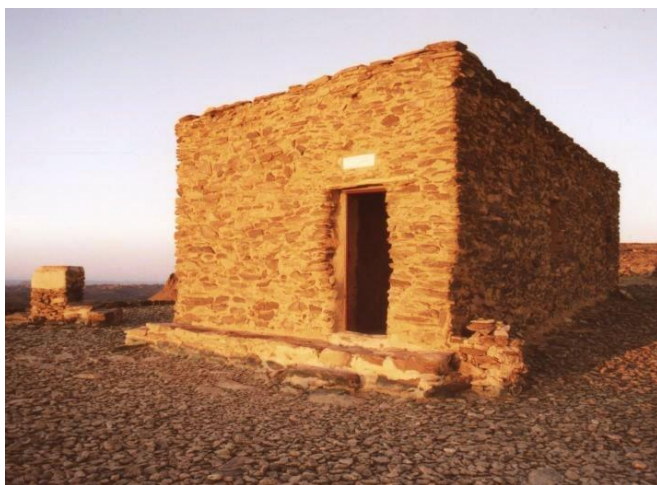
On his return, Moussa wrote to Br Charles from Algiers:

« Praise to the One and Only God, —and the blessing of God on Mohammed.

« From Algiers to the Hoggar, on the 20th of September 1910, — To the honoured, the excellent and the dearest among all, our friends Mister, the marabout Abed Aïssa. The sultan Moussa ag Amastane greets you and wishes the grace of God Most High and his blessing. How are you? If you want our news, just as we ask for yours, we are well, thanks be to God and we only have good news to give you. We are back from Paris after a happy trip. The authorities in Paris were pleased with us. I saw your sister and I stayed two days with her; I even saw your brother-in-law; I visited their gardens and their houses. And you, you are in Tamanrasset like a poor person! On my arrival I will give you all our news in detail.

« Ouani ag Lemniz et Soughi ag Chikat send greetings. « Goodbye! »

The construction of Fort Motylinski finished in 1910. Br Charles decided to take advantage of the presence of builders to have his hermitage enlarged and build himself a second hermitage on top of Assekrem, some 60 kms from Tamanrasset.



During his stay, Motylinski had seen the place and spoken of it being a magnificent grazing ground with plenty of campsites all around. Having been bitten by a viper Br Charles wasn't able to accompany him. But he had wanted a second hermitage. Its construction will be much dearer than he had thought because of a complete lack of water.

The following year he went to live there with Ba Hamou in order to continue their linguistic efforts and live among the nomads. He was awestruck by the beauty of the place and wrote to his cousin:

The view is more beautiful than anyone can express or even imagine. Nothing can give you an idea of the forest of peaks and rocky spires I have at my feet. It is a marvel. You cannot see it without thinking of God. I have a hard time taking my eyes away from this wonderful view. The beauty of it and the impression of infinity it gives you bring you close to the Creator

He brought to Assekrem a big supply of food as well as Fr Huvelin's altar which had been bequeathed to him, but at the end of a few months, Ba Hamou could no longer stand the cold and the isolation. They had to return to Tamanrasset.

The workers had also toiled at his hermitage, adding another room and raising the roof by one metre. There were now three rooms: a chapel, a bedroom/office, and a room where he kept his stocks. Doctor Vermal from Fort Motylinski gave its description:



His hermitage is incredible. Imagine a 15 metre long room, that's Fr de Foucauld's home, like a tube. Inside there is an amazing quantity of stuff: books, crates etc., everything installed in a makeshift library, but in perfect order. I still can't understand how so many things can fit into such a tiny space and there still be room for living. Two people could never pass in front of each other, no matter how things they be.

Since the building only has length we work side by side. I have a table made out of board from cases and an incredible tripod that pinches my backside most painfully. But what does it matter! Here you breathe peace, serenity and work. Father works all day long at his dictionary; he hardly ever goes out. My attaché does the cooking. At lunch time we eat inside, not face to face because there's no room but side by side. In the evening, once the sun has set we first dine in front of the house and conversation goes on until late. I experience a real pleasure in being in the presence of such a good person, and my heart will be heavy at having to leave him. He's a man that you grow attached to the more you know him.

Laperrine used to call his hermitage the Frigate because it reminded him of a long narrow ship that sailed on a sand of sea.

Captain Laroche gives a totally opposite description of the place. On seeing his hermitage for the first time he noted, *"What an idea to come and settle here. How very sad!"*

Second journey: January 1911

After Mgr. Guerin's death Br Charles wondered what was going to happen to his statutes. Mgr. Bardou, as Mgr. Guerin's successor should have taken care of it but nothing seems to be happening. In 1911 Br Charles decides to make a second trip to France to see Bishop Bonnet. But he says that he needs to continue waiting for an answer from Rome. In Lyon he meets Mgr. Crozier who had founded a confraternity to which he belonged. He had hoped that he would be able to look after Br Charles's planned Association but he wasn't well. But he gave the name of one of his followers, Joseph Hours, a lay man, asking him to contact Br Charles.



Br Charles' letters to Joseph Hours present us with a precious synthesis of his thoughts towards the end of his life. In one of his first letters he speaks on one of his favourite themes: what means should be employed for the evangelisation of Muslims? It could be summed up in one simple phrase: "Look on every human being as a beloved brother"

He writes to him:

Every Christian must be an apostle. This is not a counsel, it is a commandment,

Be an apostle how? By goodness, kindness, friendliness, the example of virtue, by humility and mildness, always such attractive and such Christian attitudes. With some people they should never say a word about God or religion, but wait patiently as God waits patiently, be good as God is good, show respectful affection and pray. With others they should speak of God to the extent that these are ready for it,

Above all, apostles must see every human being as their brother or sister: "You are all brothers and sisters since you have only one Father and he is in heaven. Be charitable, mild and humble towards all people. This is what Jesus taught us to do. ...Read the Holy Gospels over and over continually in order to have Jesus' actions, words, and thoughts constantly in mind. In this way, come to think, speak, and act as Jesus would, and not by the examples and modes of the world, whose practices we quickly fall back into if we take our eyes away from our Divine Model.

It's not easy but difficulty isn't there for us to stop trying. The greater the difficulty, the more we must rather set to work rapidly and strive with all our might. God always helps those who want to serve him. Never has God failed his creatures. It is we creatures who fail God so often.

How did he live this Apostolate of Friendship or of goodness?

Br Charles always considered himself as someone who cleared the ground, preparing the way for evangelisation. His work on the dictionary is one aspect of this apostolate of friendship, but he also had a real apostolate of conversations! In speaking of his plan for a confraternity he wrote to his new spiritual director Fr Voillard:

I consider myself less capable than almost any other priest of undertaking the steps that are needed to carry out this endeavour, having only learned in life to pray in solitude, keep silence, live with books and at most, speak informally one on one with poor people

His goal in his conversations was to bring forth what was best in each one. The golden rule was love that allowed you to discover the manner in which to proceed with each one.

Let us remember that souls are different. Following God's example in this psalm (Ps 51). Some souls you have to attract in one way, another by another method, each one according to what God has put inside of them. He leads one in a certain way and others in another way, each according to what God has put inside of them. It would be a catastrophe if we had only one single way of doing things and if we wanted everyone to do the exact same thing; We must study people and lead them to God, each according to the path to which God has called them.

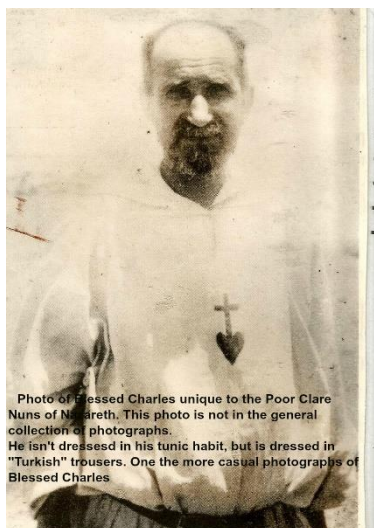


Photo of Blessed Charles unique to the Poor Clare Nuns of Nazareth. This photo is not in the general collection of photographs. He isn't dressed in his tunic habit, but is dressed in "Turkish" trousers. One the more casual photographs of Blessed Charles

He was no longer a help provider as in Beni Abbes, but trying to imitate the One who made himself close to every human being, revealing to them the pleasure God finds in entering into conversation with us.

He wrote to Mgr Guerin:

I never hesitate to prolong conversations and allow them to last a very long time when I see that they are useful for souls; sometimes I spend entire days explaining and showing pious picture books when I see that they are useful; I sometimes spend the whole day explaining and showing books of holy pictures or reading passages from the holy Gospel in Tuareg.

On top of holy pictures, he also had a kind of kaleidoscope whereby he could show slides to his friends. Marie de Bondy had sent some dolls. How different this way of living Nazareth when you compare with what he lived with the Poor Clares. But that too was a necessary stage.

He always attached a lot of importance to one on one conversations. He had written notes for future missionaries. Among other things he had noted:

One on one conversations are most useful and one must really create opportunities for them; public conversations with several people speaking are usually fruitless, useless and you should flee from them.

He has left us traces of his conversations with Moussa. It's especially with this chief that he tried to cultivate an awareness of the innate sense of natural religion within each person. Since Moussa was a nomad, Br Charles never knew when he would show up. He had a notebook in which he would jot down things to say to Moussa. Here are some of them:

4° Reduce expenses. Be humble. God alone is great. He who thinks himself great, or who seeks to be great, does not know God.

12° Never lie to anybody; all untruth is hateful to God, for God is truth.

14° Never praise a person to his face; when you think highly of someone it shows itself in your trust and your actions. There's no point in saying it, It's very low to flatter someone.

15° Don't be slow and lazy, manage your time.

17° Never ask the captain for sugar, tea, or anything; bring what is necessary, and if you lack anything, put up with it. If you ask, you get what you want, but at the same time you obtain what you don't wish for—contempt."

He also jotted down some of the things that he wrote to him in his letters:

« God sees each one of your words and action. Remember that and perform each one of them with the thought that he sees them.

« Perform each one of your actions as you would have liked to have done the mat the hour of your death.

« No one knows when they will die. May your soul be constantly as you would want it to be at the hour of your death.

« Each evening, reflect on your thoughts, words and actions of the day, asking God for forgiveness of all that was bad and for all the sins of your life, as if you were going to die during the night and say to God from the bottom of your heart:

« My God, I love you above all else.

« My God, I desire whatever you desire.

« My God, whatever you wish me to do, I want to do. »



He slowly came to realize that his destiny wasn't to convert people to his own faith, but to bring them close to God. With Christians he also practiced this apostolate of conversation.

A Protestant doctor who was staying at Fort Motylinski often visited Br. Charles in Tamanrasset and recalls:

Before sunset Father used to allow himself an hour of recreation. He would wander back and forth in front of his hermitage. He would then speak in a very friendly manner about all

kinds of things. We would walk side by side. He would place his arm on my shoulder, laugh and tell me about the Tuaregs and his memories. In the beginnings he would ask me each day how I had spent my time. He would make me undertake a kind of examination of conscience, and would blame me if I hadn't looked after some Tuaregs or studied Arab or Tuareg.

His friendship with the Tuaregs wasn't a one-way affair, just as the Visitation isn't a one-way evangelisation. The Tuaregs responded in their own way and that contributed to fashioning his countenance as a universal little brother. On his return from his second journey to France he wrote to H de Castries:

My first days back here are anything but days of solitude. The Tuaregs welcomed me back with such affection that I was very touched. They are constantly visiting me.

A few months later he will speak again of this friendship with the Tuaregs:

I spent all of 1912 here in this village of Tamanrasset. The Tuaregs are very consoling company; I can't tell you how good they are to me, how many upright souls I find among them; one or two of them are real friends, something which is so rare and precious.

We have several letters that his Tuareg friends wrote to him from far away: This one from Moussa was written on the back of an envelope:

*It's me Moussa, chief of the Hoggar,
I say, I send my friend and companion the Marabout, servant of Jesus, many, many greetings. Praised be God for your health. We miss you a lot.
I saw your young friend Ouksem. He gave us your news. Thankyou very much!
We are well if you are well.
Tedawit, Akhamouk, Litni, Rakhma and everyone greets you.
I send my greetings to Genral Laperrine and Nieger and all of France.
The lieutenant planned on meeting me where I am with my tents and we would have gone together to Air. Now he has changed his mind.
He has given me two months before I have to go meet him in Ti-n-Zawaten with all my people. We still have 40 days before that date.
Don't abandon me. I ask you one thing: pray for me a lot.
Greetings! No more paper.*



After his death, the Tuaregs were asked what they thought of him. "He never made us wait".

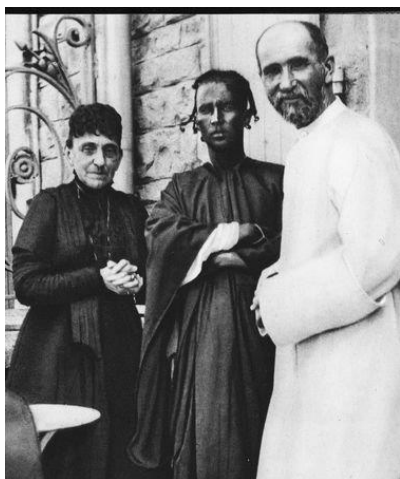
Pope Francis commented on the reciprocal nature of his relations with the Tuaregs during the prayer vigil that preceded the synod on family life.

Through his fraternal closeness and his solidarity with the poor and the abandoned, Br Charles came to understand that it is they who evangelize us, they who help us to grow in humanity.

In 1913 he undertook a third journey to France.

On the one hand he wanted to ask advice about how to proceed with his confraternity since Rome still hadn't sent its approbation for his statues. On the other hand, he wanted to bring a young Tuareg called Ouksem, son of his close friend Chikat, to France. He thought him likely to one day be chosen as chief and wanted him to see France and meet Christian families. This time he will spend 3 months in France. He writes to his cousin Marie:

It means taking a long period of time away from my parish and my parishoners, true enough, they're Muslim parishoners but that 's all the more reason to look after them, because they know the truth just that much less. On the other hand, a long one on one with one of the best among them will be useful to all.



This time Bishop Bonnet will tell him to start getting names for his Association so that they can be presented in Rome. He needed 50 names. He starts looking for adherents among those he meets as he journeys. The first to sign up was his cousin Louis de Foucauld's parish priest. The Directory published in 1961 gives a complete list of the names of the first group. The list of names more or less follows the direction of his journey. He had a lot of difficulty finding adherents. But lucky for him an entire Carmel signed up. The last one to put his name on the list is Louis Massignon.

He will manage to find a Sulpician, Fr Laurant who will be ready to undertake the necessary steps. This Association will be important for the future because at his death Br Charles was hardly known except for by his family. It's the Association that will contact Rene Bazin after his death, asking him to write a biography. That was the book Fr Voillaume and L Sr Magdeleine read.

With Ouksem they will go all around, often in first class. They begin with a pilgrimage to la Sainte Baume together with Charles de Blic, his godson. He will recall that on this occasion Br Charles paid the driver a gold coin. Charles de Blic complained because it far exceeded the wages for the driver. But Br Charles turned to him saying, "let off, I know what I have to do". Perhaps he wanted to accomplish an extravagant gesture, as his patron Marie

Magdeleine had done. We Ouksem they will go on to Switzerland to see the Alps. They will also go to visit Laperrine in his home as well as a few other soldiers known in Libya.



While in France he tried to meet his childhood friend Gabriel Tourdes.

“If you have your photo you should send it to me so that I recognize you when we meet. I don’t have mine. But this is what I look like: no teeth, no more hair, a full grey beard. I look a bit like a wild man!”

They will have a long stay at Barbirey where Mimi and her family live. Together with Ouksem he will learn to knit so that they can teach the people back home in Tamanrasset. Once he is back Ouksem will write to Br Charles’ nephew, “The knitting goes on. Me a gazelle, the marabout a snail.”

Strangely the trip doesn’t seem to have made much of an impression on Ouksem. As soon as he returned his family took care to send him far away to guard the camels. Towards the end of his life, those who had heard the tale of their journey seemed to know it better than he did.

On his return, Br Charles took up his work on the dictionary once again. He wrote to his cousin:

Don’t worry. I don’t have the strength any more to kill myself working. When I do just a little bit more than my limit I feel it straight away and I slow down. I put all I can into it, but it’s far from being as much as I used to do. Besides I’m so often interrupted by visits that I have plenty of unplanned recreations.

He never abandoned his hope that one day he would have a companion and wrote to Fr Antonin at Our Lady of Snows who asked him for some information about his life.

He writes:

You ask me about my life: it’s the life of a missionary monk, founded on these three principles: imitation of the hidden life of Jesus in Nazareth, adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament, establishment among the most abandoned non Christian people...there are none of those minute prescriptions that regulate life in Trappist monasteries, but it’s a very simple family life.

He won't have many candidates, but L Sr Magdeleine will draw on that when she begins to found her first fraternities. Even if Br Charles spoke about adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament, he never had exposition in Tamanrasset. According to the liturgical rules of the day, one couldn't expose the blessed sacrament without a minimum of three adorers who would cover a period of at least 8 hours. Not only was he unable to fulfill these requirements, but at the same time that he had received permission to celebrate Mass alone, Mgr. Guerin had had to inform him that he wasn't allowed to reserve the Blessed Sacrament. And so he spent 6 and a half years with an empty Tabernacle before he was granted a special dispensation.



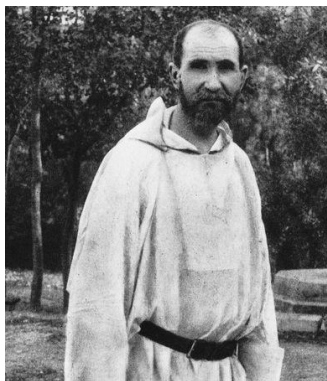
He senses that his life is going toward the end. Earlier on, the apparent failure of his life discouraged him but now he trusted in what he called "Jesus' means"

The means Jesus used at his birth in the Manger, at Nazareth and on the Cross are these: poverty, utter lowliness, humiliation, rejection, persecution, suffering, the cross. These are our arms, the ones used by our divine Bridegroom who asks us to let him continue his life in us. Let us follow him as our sole model and we are sure to do much good, for in that case it will not be we who live but he who lives in us. Our acts will no longer be our own, human and frail, but his divinely efficacious acts.

That attitude will mark his final years.

The first world war will break out in 1914. We can sometimes be troubled at reading some of the things he wrote and said in that context. But certainly this war stirred up wounds that dated back to childhood. He wondered about returning to France to work in first aid at the front, but all those who knew him encouraged him to stay because his pacifying influence was more needed than ever.

Drought still persisted in the Hoggar. Moussa and his men were far away in Adrar where there was good grazing ground for their camels. But they were incurring frequent attacks on the part of Moroccan raiders who took advantage of a weakening of France's presence in the Sahara. These attacks were getting increasingly close to the Hoggar and Br Charles feared for the safety of the local population in Tamanrasset. It had doubled since 1905 and there were now 102 inhabitants. He felt responsible for the local people, especially since cultivators are such a temptation for roving bands.

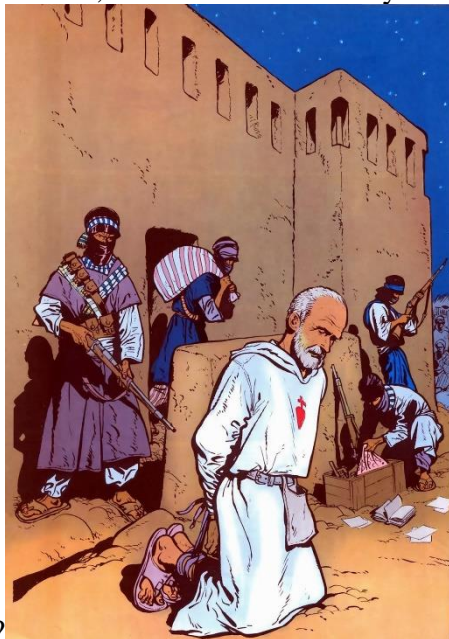


The idea of building a “bordj”, such as he had seen in Morocco came to him. Inside the “Bordj” the local population could seek refuge in case of attack. He consulted the local people before building and they seemed to think that it was a good idea. With Paul who has turned out to be quite a good mason, brick making began in June 1915. Paul has a wife and children. By June Br Charles started living there, because he needed the door and windows of his hermitage in order to finish the rooms inside the bordj. The local people had said that in case of an attack it would be good to find the bordj inhabited and stocked. So Br Charles ordered a large stock of wheat and dates. The French army also deposited some guns in the bordj, after teaching the local people to use them in case of attack.



While he was concerned about attacks coming from the west, the real problem was brewing in the East. The Sennusis, that had begun as a puritanical brotherhood had become a politically motivated movement that organized resistance against the European occupants. The Tuareg tribes in the area close to the border had been won over to the Senussi cause. Moussa was also under pressure to join them. He had a fistful of letters from them.

By staying in Tamanrasset, Br Charles was keenly aware of the risk he was taking. What



did he think about death?

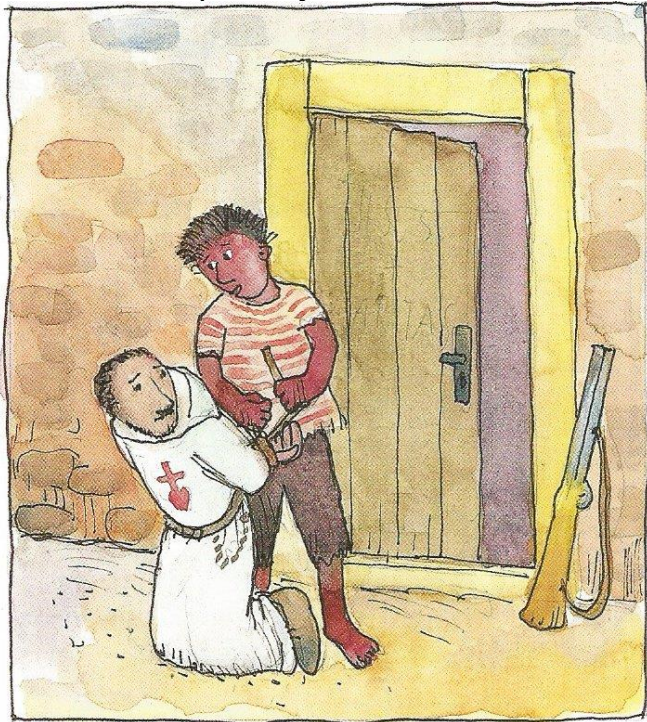
Ever since he had witnessed the Armenian genocide he had expressed the desire to die a martyr.

He had not been found worthy the first time, but prayed that another time he would not be rebuffed. This desire for martyrdom comes back regularly in his retreats because they expressed a consummation of his desire for imitation.

Prepare constantly for martyrdom and receive it without a shadow of self-defence, as did the Lamb of God. Receive martyrdom in Jesus, through Jesus like Jesus and for Jesus.

When he was younger, his desire for life had not been so strong. On the 20 of July 1914 he wrote to his cousin: *I cannot say that I desire death. I used to; but now I see so much good that needs doing, so many souls without a pastor, that I want above all, to do a bit of good and to work a bit for the salvation of these poor people.*

And it's precisely when the desire to live is strong that he will meet his death.



The first of December that year was the first Friday of the month, day specially dedicated to the Sacred heart. The post had passed in the morning and he spent part of his day writing letters so that the mailman could take them on his return from Motylinski. During these war times, he was anxious to receive news and reassure his family and friends.

Among his letters one was found to Marie de Bondy. He wrote her words that strongly recall Fr Huvelin's last words.

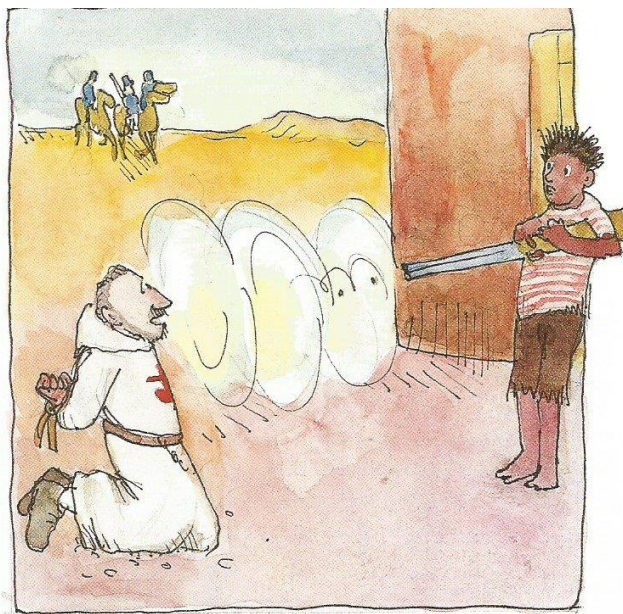
Our self effacement is the most powerful means we have for uniting ourselves to Jesus and doing good to people; that's what Saint John of the Cross repeats at almost every line. When we can suffer and love, we can do much, we can do the most that we can in this world: We feel that we suffer, we don't always feel that we love and that is an additional suffering. But we know that we want to love and to want to love is to love.

His schedule suggests that he was saying his rosary at the time that someone knocked at the door. *Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.* A voice cried out, "The Post" He opened the door and held out his hand toward the hand he saw extended in greeting. But instead his hand was seized and he was violently yanked out of his bordj.

Paul recounts what then happened:

On December 1, after having served the marabout's dinner, I went to my zariba, about five hundred yards from there. It was about 7 o'clock, and dark.

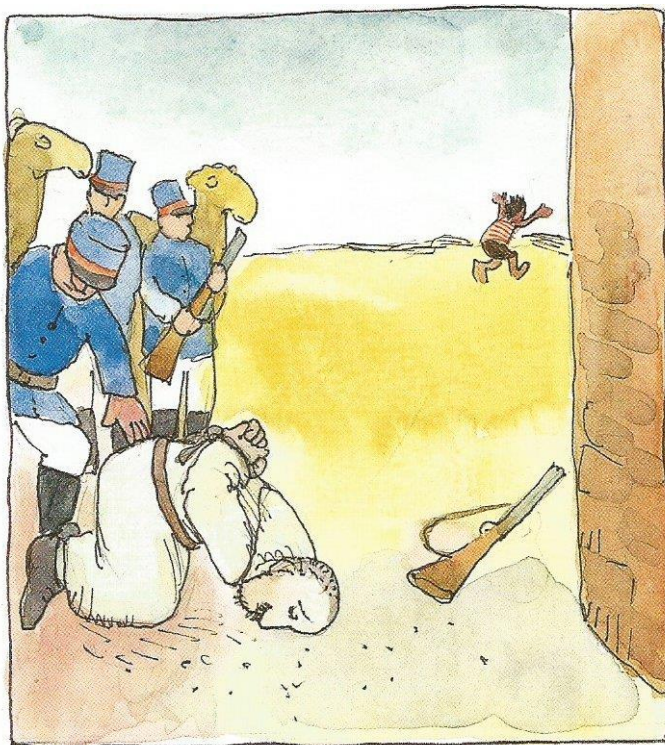
"A short time afterwards, when I had myself finished my meal, two armed Tuaregs sprang into the zariba and said to me: 'Are you Paul, the marabout's servant? Why do you hide? Come and see with your own eyes what is happening: follow us.' I replied that I was not hiding, and that what was happening was God's will.



"On arriving near the marabout's house, I perceived the latter seated, his back to the wall, on the right of the door, his hands bound behind his back, looking straight in front of him. We did not exchange a single word. I crouched down as ordered, on the left of the door. Numerous Tuaregs surrounded the marabout; they were speaking and gesticulating, congratulating and blessing the hartani El Madani, who had drawn the marabout into the trap, foretelling a life of delights for him in the other world as a reward for his work. Some other Tuaregs were in the house, going in and coming out, carrying various things found in the interior—rifles, munitions, stores, chegga (cloth), etc. Those who surrounded the marabout pressed him with the following questions: 'When does the convoy come? Where is it? What is it bringing? Are there any soldiers in the bled? Where are they? Have they set out? Where are the Motylinski soldiers?' The marabout remained impassible, he did not utter a word. The same questions were then put to me, as well as to another hartani, who was passing in the wadi and caught in the meantime.

"The whole did not last half an hour.

"The house was surrounded by sentinels. At this moment one of the sentinels gave the alarm, shouting: 'Here are the Arabs! Here are the Arabs (the soldiers of Motylinski).' At these cries, the Tuaregs, with the exception of three, two of whom remained in front of me and the other standing on guard near the marabout, went towards the place whence the cries came. A lively fusillade broke out. The Tuareg who was near the marabout brought the muzzle of his rifle close to the head of the latter and fired. The marabout neither moved nor cried. I did not think he was wounded: it was only a few minutes afterwards that I saw the blood flow, and that the marabout's body slipped slowly down upon its side. He was dead.



Was he a martyr? It's a question many have asked

But there is no evidence that he was asked to recite the Shahada. Besides the motives underlying his death have never been clear. Did the group want to kidnap him for ransom, were they acting in the name of the Sultan of Djanet who had asked for the disappearance of all influential Europeans? Or were the raiders simply interested in the booty inside the bordj?

During this time of war, he met a violent end as did so many others, but it was a death for which he had prepared.

My Lord Jesus, you died and you died for us. If our faith in it were real, how much we would want to die, and to die as martyrs. How much we would want a death in suffering instead of fearing it. Whatever may be the reason for which they kill us, if in our souls we receive a cruel and unjust death as a blessed gift from your hands, ...Then whatever may be the reason for which they kill us, we will die in pure love. And our death will be a sacrifice of pleasing fragrance. If it is not a martyrdom in the strict sense of the world and in the eyes of other people, it will be one in your eyes and will be a very perfect likeness of your death. For though we may not have offered our blood for our faith in this case, we will with all our might have offered it in sacrifice for your love.

Paul and another man from the village went off to warn the military at Motylinski of what had happened. When they came they saw that the village people had buried the body of Br

Charles and the other Ara soldiers killed with him in the cavernous hole from which the clay had been drawn to make the bricks for the bordj.



Inside the bordj, Captain Laroche found the pyx containing the Blessed Sacrament which had been thrown into the ground. Br Charles body like that of his Lord had fallen into the earth like the grain of wheat. Did he sense the 100 fruitfulness that followed his death when he wrote:

You tell me that I will be happy with that blessed happiness on the last day...that as miserable as I am, I am like a palm tree planted besides living waters, the living waters of the grace...and that I will give my fruit in due season...you promise that as long as I keep trying and stay on the battlefield, even as poor as I may seem in my own eyes, I will have borne fruit on the last day.

And you add: you will be a beautiful tree with leaves that are eternally green, and all your works will prosper and bear fruit for all eternity. My God how good you are.

A year later, Laperrine moved the bodies a few metres away into proper graves.

And in 1929 when the beatification process was begun, the body (in spite of Br Charles written request that he be buried in the place where he died) was transported more than 1000 kms away to El Golea to lie in a cemetery where there was a Christian community. A church will later be built there and it's at its inauguration that Fr Voillaume and L Sr Magdeleine met for the first time.

Having come to the term of Br Charles' life, let us give the final word to Moussa who, on learning of his death wrote the following letter to his sister.

Letter of Musa ag Amastane to Madame de Blic.

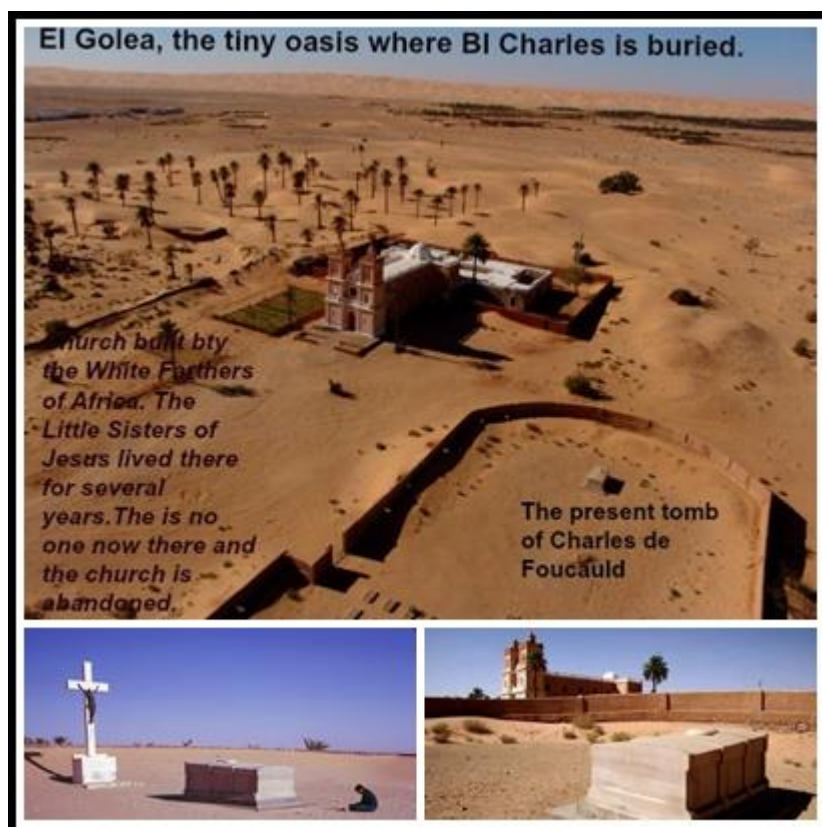
"Praise to the one God.

"To her Ladyship our friend Marie, the sister of Charles our marabout, whom traitors and deceivers, people of Azjer assassinated, from Musa ag Amastane, amenokal of Hoggar.

"Much greeting to our aforesaid friend Marie! As soon as I heard of the death of our friend, your brother Charles, my eyes closed; all is dark to me: I wept and I shed many tears, and I am in great mourning. His death is a great grief to me.

"Say good-day for me to your daughters, your husband, and all your friends, and tell them: Charles the marabout has died not only for you, but for us all. May God have mercy on him, and may we meet him in paradise!

"Translated at Fort Motylinski, December 25, 1916."



CLARIFICATION on the ISSUE OF FIRST CLASS RELICS OF BLESSED CHARLES DE FOUCAULD.

Many people ask for relics of Blessed Charles de Foucauld.

NO first class relics were issued by the Postulation Cause of the Beatification, for general distribution. By The diocese of Vivier was the diocese of which Blessed Charles was incardinated.

Blessed Charles was a diocesan priest of the diocese of Vivier with permission of the bishop to be attached to the White Fathers of Africa. The diocese of Vivier chose NOT to issue any relics.

The tomb of Blessed Charles is almost inaccessible. The tomb It is now in the central desert of Sahara of Algeria , in the tiny Moslem town of El Golea. The tomb is a massive piece of granite, that could only be opened by destroying the tomb.

The new directive from the Holy See is that the **Church will only issue first class relics to bishops for public veneration. First class relics are forbidden now to be issued to private individuals.** The same with Second class relics. **None were issued.** If you see Second Class relics for sale on Ebay, they were not issued by the Diocese of Vivier and thus are probably not authentic.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Diocese_of_Viviers
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Diocese_of_Laghouat
- <http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/> **Congregation of priests responsible for territory of which Bl Charles lived.**