



Societas Sacratissimi  
Cordis Jesu  
BETHARRAM

*Superior General*

F.V.D.

Rome March 19th, 2020

**Letter to all the Betharramite families and communities  
on the occasion of the feast of Saint Joseph - 2020**

Dear Betharramite brothers and sisters,

Lent is always a time of grace. In the midst of the “global desert”, the Lord calls us once again to conversion in a difficult, strange 2020 that is challenging us with an unsuspected reality. As Christians we look for an answer in the Word of God, the Living Word, the Word that Saves because it is Christ himself who speaks in it. Its richness is revealed in the liturgical texts and we hear it resonate internally in all its truth, since it illustrates like never before the drama that battered humanity is going through.

Two centuries ago, Saint Michael showed us how Jesus, obedient to the Father, comes into the world out of love, *taking the place of all the victims; while the “man is cold before God,... and even among the priests, there are very few who say as their divine Master: “Here I am”, “Yes, father”* (The founding text).

From the reality of those who today are plagued by the pandemic, and due to the fear it causes, the inescapable question arises to a God who, we know, is provident and never abandons us. In contrast, the self-sufficiency of the media, the perplexity of the science, and the arrogance of the powerful of this world, can hardly do anything before the fragility of the human being. A neglected Creation reacts. Only its Creator can help to understand what is happening to his work. He will not come to our rescue if we do not turn to him.

In a world inhabited by millions of people, Betharram is just a small family. We might ask ourselves: May this turn out to be an advantage?

This is, without any doubt, a good opportunity to be more united, to listen to each other from the heart, to talk together, to be closer to our brother. Whether in joy or pain, a jovial spirit strengthens our lives as religious and lay people. “Always joyful”.

Today reality “forces us to stay at home”, to safeguard our own people. Community life is in a “privileged” position because we can look into the eyes of our brothers, celebrate the Eucharist, pray together, entertain ourselves, in an unexpected conventual life ... We are also in contact with those who are outside, willing to communicate (through the different social media) and give us strength in this time of trial, anguish and uncertainty. I also think of the loneliness of those who are affected by the frightening evil that afflicts the world.

It is a great paradox that in the “year of mission” and of “going out to the peripheries”, we have to stay, by decree, “inside the house”. But we can better live this *forced period of desert* through periods of prayer, with some offerings and sacrifices pleasing to God: “*a humble and contrite heart will not spurn*” (Ps 50:17). So ... can you be a missionary without leaving home ...? My thought goes to the words of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, a contemplative Carmelite, the “Patroness of missions”

-and she really was one! - "In the heart of the world I will be Love" and "From heaven I will be at your side ..."

Today, March 19, we celebrate the Feast of Saint Joseph, Father and patron of the Church, and we meditate on his role as foster father of our Savior. A *decree* forced him too to change his plans and to go with Mary to Bethlehem. He did not hesitate to do so, he obeyed.

God the Father trusted him, and into his hands commended Mary and the Child Jesus, his beloved ones.

Furthermore, Joseph knew how to accept each challenge with unshakable Faith, carrying out generously everything God asked him to do in order to safeguard the members of the Holy Family. He protected its fragility in astonishment, but without doubting a single moment of his mission. He worked for them. With his perfect example he brought up Jesus as a just man. With graceful chastity, he cared for Mary and the Child Jesus so that the three of them could live in peace and mutual tenderness in the eloquent silence of Nazareth. He rejoiced in the sanctity of "his son" and had the grace to die in Jesus' and Mary's arms. We must contemplate deeply Saint Joseph in this moment of trial! He is clearly speaking to us of the Father's love for us!

We have done many projects for this 2020. We may have to wait like Joseph, Jesus and Mary did in Nazareth to see them come to fruition. Perhaps the Lord will not ask us to wait 30 years ... But it seems clear that, given the present situation, we must postpone many activities that we have planned, and pragmatically take on board only what we can do well, in the coming months, or even further ... We will keep you posted about it on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, beloved Betharramites, I invite you, along with my collaborators, to make this Lenten season a "Choral Hymn to Mercy". A hymn similar to the one you hear in the dusk in the empty cities, giving encouragement and hope to everyone from the terraces.

In each psalm that we proclaim in community, through the faith of the psalmist, the Word of God comes to life with great realism. God, the Father, has mercy on his People, even when it is often entrapped by infidelity, indifference and idolatry, along his pilgrimage.

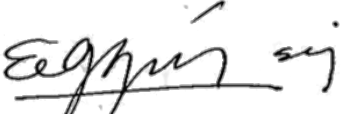
*Have mercy on me, God, have mercy, for in you my soul has taken refuge.  
In the shadow of your wings I take refuge till the storms of destruction pass by.  
I call to God the most High, to God who has always been my help (Ps 56:2-3)*

By the grace of God, the only *crown (corona)* that Saint Joseph wore in his life was that of holiness and it is the same crown to which all of us should long for.

To each Betharramite residence and community, I send my wishes that you may find hope and courage, under the protection of Our Lady of Betharram: *We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God.*

*In Corde Iesu*



  
P. Eduardo Gustavo Agín, scj  
Superior General