

*What is our progress and perfection made up of?*

*It is made up of performing all our ordinary actions well.*

*What do you mean by our actions?*

*Those which are part of our station in life, of our vocation and our ministry.*

*What do you call our ordinary actions? The most ordinary, the most common place, our daily actions.*

*What do you mean by "performing our ordinary actions well"?*

*1. Doing them exactly as we should without missing any, cutting back on them or moving them around.*

*2. Doing them with feeling: corde magno, animo volenti.*

*3. Performing them with perseverance, that most precious of qualities! Forward march! (N. 65)*



Societas S<sup>mi</sup> Cordis Jesu  
BETHARRAM

99  
2014

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NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE  
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA  
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA  
FAMILY NEWS

News bulletin of the Congregation  
of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram

A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Jesus, the favourite Son,  
beloved of the Father

## In this issue

Page 4 • † Fr. Luis Oteiza Izaguirre

Page 5 • † Fr. Joseph Saint-Pé

Page 6 • † Br. Pedro W. Merlo

Page 8 • Community across the  
nations

Page 12 • The Nativity offers a  
newlook on life

Page 15 • Notices from the General  
Council

Page 16 • Bird's eye view of the  
Congregation

Page 18 • The 11 vicariates (11)

Page 23 • Anniversaries

Page 24 • Listening to  
St Michael...

When Saint Michel speaks of Jesus, it is always about a person who is lively, dynamic and driven by a "generous impulse" that always goes forward. Always "outwards" to paraphrase Pope Francis. This figure of Jesus, constantly moving is not a naive image on the part of Father Garicoits. It is the fruit of much prayer and reflection on the person of Jesus in the Gospels. It is also one of the features of the Incarnation. This involves becoming flesh, moving from one state "... his divine state... the form of God" to another, that of the "form of a servant, counted as one of us."

Upon entering the world, he began his journey ... Here I am! I come to do your will, O my God! ... (Manifesto) The child-God shows us the way, he leaps, he runs, always going forward ... (DS. 107). Jesus Christ, rising like the sun from his tent, rejoices like a champion to run his course (Ps 18; DS. 42). What a leap! From the Father's heart to the heart of Mary and from her to a manger! (DS. 43). This is the generous impulse of the Heart of Jesus, the Word (RV 2).

The Jesus that St. Michael Garicoits entrusts to us is almost always in motion. Missionary, he leaves behind the se-

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curity of the glorious Trinity to become man; he comes close to all those who are wounded in life, especially in their human relations; he himself becomes a victim. This is the extraordinary "spectacle" of the incarnation.

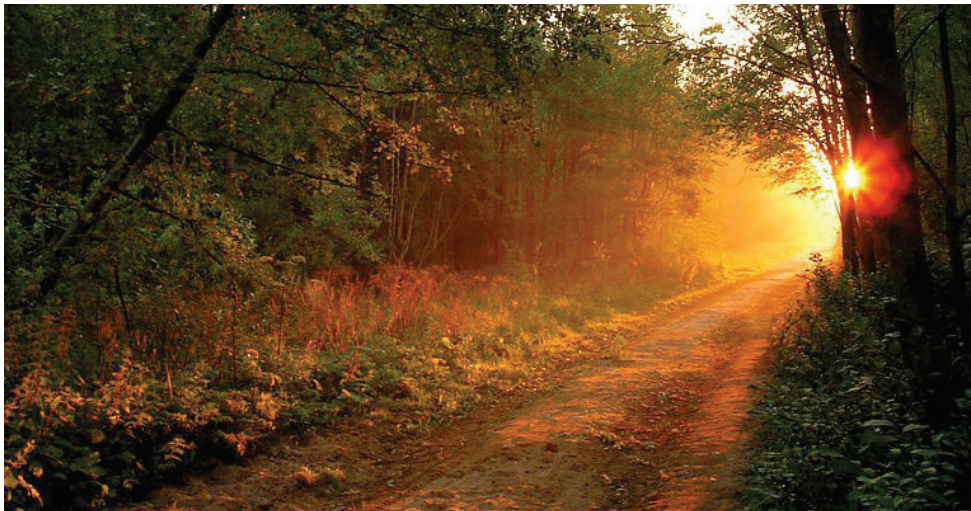
In John's Gospel, Jesus presents himself as the Beloved Son and the one who is sent (a missionary) from the Father. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw his glory; the glory of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth (John 1: 14).

No one has ever seen God, but God-the-Only-Son made him known: the one who is in and with the Father. (Jn. 1: 17). Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world; instead, through him the world is to be saved. (Jn. 3, 16,17). In the verbal confrontation between Christ and the Jews in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, Jesus constantly uses the phrase "the one who sent me", demonstrating how he is

radically united (to the Father) accompanied by him and never deserted in the mission he wants to achieve.

In the Synoptics, its striking to find the same dynamic on the part of Christ before his birth He is carried in Mary's womb, to visit Elizabeth causing John the Baptist to rejoice within the womb of his mother. He is a missionary from the womb of his mother. This is true again for the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. He is brought as an infant to the Temple, to Egypt and to Nazareth. Then again he comes to Jerusalem this time as a pilgrim where he will freely reveal himself to accomplish the mission received from the Father.

The Synoptics also present him as the itinerant Preacher who goes from village to village announcing the Gospel of the Kingdom. He is a rabbi who leads from the front, and his disciples, men and women follow. "Get behind me!" (Mk 8: 33.). To follow Jesus is to walk in his footsteps on the road he will trace for us. John says that Jesus is the way. While Luke insists



DECEMBER		
14	Buon compleanno	F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	Happy birthday 30 años de sacerdocio	Fr. George Varghese Korandakkatte P. Carlos Escurra
16	Happy birthday	Fr. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong
17	Buon compleanno	P. Giuseppe Lietti
18	Buon compleanno	P. Giulio Forloni
20	50 anos de sacerdócio 45 años de sacerdocio	P. Antonio Scarpa P. Paulo Vital Campos P. Bruno Ierullo
24	Happy birthday 65 años de profesión	Br. Gerard Sutherland P. José Rovegno
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Francisco Daleoso
27	Buon compleanno Happy birthday	P. Alessandro Paniga Fr. Chan John Kunu
28	Feliz cumpleaños Happy birthday	P. José Miguel Larrosa P. Hiran Thomas Klinbuakaew
29	Happy birthday	Fr. David Pitak Bi-Thu
30	30 ans de sacerdoce	P. Patrick Moulié
31	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Théophile Dégni N'Guessan
JANUARY 2015		
1	Happy birthday 15 años de profesión	Fr. Valan Peter Kanagaraj Fr. Peter Nonthaphat Mayoe Ho. Daniel Pavon
3	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Sergio Gouarnalusse
7	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Jesús Cano
8	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Teodoro Miguel
10	Happy birthday	Fr. Yesudas Kuttappassery
11	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Locatelli
13	Buon compleanno	F. Angelo Sala

young vocations are the needs of the time faced by us.

**Another area of our focus is in common mission project of Congregation; affiliation and preferential option for the poor-** see the face of Jesus in the poor, love and care for them is our style of service. Through our social foundation "SMART" and Children Care Homes we are sharing this message in the society. Secondly we give attention to the service to the families through family centred approach in mission in our family apostolate, renewal programmes and faith formation. The development of lay association our pastoral centres is one of the examples for this ministry. Finally our focus also in participation in universal mission of the Church and Congregation: we give always priority to reach out the places of mission needs in India and abroad where others are unavailable, thus empowering Church and the society through the ministries of the time. Our places of mission in India are the concrete examples of the choice of 'venturing pioneering roles' in the society. All our members are serving not only in India but also in England and France as a witness of our mission choice.

The presence of mission centres and institutions are the needs of the time in India to dialogue with people of various cultures, religions and races. Through our Vicariate Website and Vicariate News letter -"SMILE" we have made small progress to bring this mission awareness among the people and religious in our

society. In this process of transition, we are grateful to so many invisible hands and generous hearts in accompanying and supporting us faithfully. We remember with gratitude Vicariates of England and Thailand for their solid support and collaborations and all the members of our Betharram family. Following the spirit of Pope Francis, let us see the world with the eyes of Jesus, love with the heart of Jesus, serve with the hands of Jesus and be humble instruments of God to "AWAKE THE WORLD" – "Always Forward" in the footsteps of St. Michael.

that, "when the time came for him to be lifted up to heaven, Jesus "set his face" to go up to Jerusalem (Lk. 9, 31). And he went up on a high mountain to be transfigured; he got into the boat so as to address the crowds or to cross to the other side of the lake ...

This continual moving and travelling can also be seen in parables: the sower went out to sow .... The owner of the vineyard goes out at different times of the day to hire ... The Good Samaritan passes and approaches the half-dead man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho ... the shepherd will seek the lost sheep to find the ... woman who loses one drachma, searches the entire house, carefully trying to find it. The good father runs to meet his son, the prodigal, and kisses him; he even leaves the banqueting hall to invite the elder son to come in... the man who discovers a pearl of great price, goes and sells all that he has to buy it.

John speaks of Jesus as sitting on the edge of Jacob's well in the middle of the day, tired of the journey. He sits at the Last Supper as he did at the supper offered him by Simon the Pharisee, among the sinners and publicans. He sits in the home of Martha and Mary at Bethany, and when he gives the Sermon on the Mount.

The agony in the Garden is the first step on the Way of the Cross: he leaves the Upper Room to go to Gethsemane. There, he was arrested and taken to the house of Caiaphas, and then to that of Pilate, then to Herod's palace and finally again to Pilate. From there he is led to Golgotha carrying his cross, on which he will be nailed and lifted up. The itinerant missionary Jesus is also the "humble and obedient" one, whom no one can stop until all is fulfilled:

the lifting up on the cross and the crucifixion.

But we also see him as missionary in his resurrection where he goes out to meet his own: Mary of Magdala, the women, the apostles in the upper room, or apostles by the Sea of Galilee where they were fishing. He walked beside his disciples on the road to Emmaus. Until finally he ascends to Heaven.

And contemplating Christ in his itinerant and missionary movement, I admire his calmness, his obedience, his inner and outer freedom to focus on the "one thing necessary": to please in all things the Father, who loves us so much and who is concerned about the happiness of all men. This is the secret spring that inspires his way forward: the loving will of the Father.

To resist this would be to surrender to the temptation to stay turned in on himself instead of living for the joy of the Father and the service of man.

The temptations are precisely the proposal for a quick solution that give an apparent gratification, but take away that ease, that freedom, that joy, that mobility, that roaming, that sense of mission that allows you to find the loving will of the Father in situations always new and sometimes surprising

"In the morning, before sunrise, Jesus got up, left and went to a deserted place; Simon went to look for him, and when he had found him, he said: "Everyone is looking for you" And he replied, "Let us go and proclaim in the neighbouring villages because this is why I was sent. ". And he preached in their synagogues and in all Galilee, and expelled demons." (Mk. 1: 35-39)..

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj  
Superior General



## IN MEMORIAM

### Father Luis Oteiza Izaguirre SCJ

*Azcoitia (Spain), 25 January 1930 - Mendelu (Spain), 30 November 2014*

Father Luis Oteiza was born on January 25, 1930 in Azcoitia (Guipuzcoa, Spain). He did part of his studies at Mendelu. When we were young, we got to know each other in Balarin and became friends then. I knew he was always interested in us, the Bel Sito alumni. His novitiate was in 1947 the year of the canonization. To the delight of Father Buzy we were 20 novices! He made his first profession at 18, at Balarin ... then he took the path to Bel Sito just when it was founded in 1948. He was ordained in the cathedral of Bordeaux in 1954. We were together in a district of the city for pastoral work. This friend had a noble bearing, was quite discreet, and not over talkative.

He was sent in 1960 to the communities of Barracas and Rosario in Argentina, where he spent four years before returning to the communities of Spain. When he returned to Mendelu he went with Father Ayerza to the College of Azpeitia about 60 km away, close to Loyola. He was also superior of the Apostolate house. After the closure of Azpeitia, he was called to France in 1997 to the community of Pibrac, an opportunity for a year of ongoing formation. Then in 1998 he went to Our Lady of Refuge in Anglet, where he remained about four years.

I know that in Anglet, he was much appreciated. The Spanish and Basque sisters could share with him in their native language.

Returning to Mendelu in 2002, he was chaplain at a hospital in San Sebastian. He



also eagerly embraced information technology.

But slowly he began to fade ... He often went to the parish of Hondarribia, on Sundays, but couldn't always remember the way back ... This was because of a fairly rapid progression of Alzheimer's disease. The new retirement home «Caser Betharram» right next to the Mendelu community was there to receive him.

He spent about three years there. After a few minutes of a very friendly and smiling presence, he would then become vacant. And he passed away in a similar fashion. On 30 November, in the late evening, he died at the age of 84. We pray for his eternal rest and for Bétharram in Spain.

*We thank Fr. Gabriel Verley SCJ for sharing some of his memories.*

sition mainly in the areas of animation, mission and community life. In this process the Indian Vicariate has become the part of Blessed Miriam Region that also includes England and Thailand under the leadership of the Regional Superior Rev. Fr. Austin Hughes. The Sacred Heart Vicariate of India is at the service of the Church under the animation of the Regional Vicar Fr. Biju Paul and the counsellors. In the field of mission there

is a movement from formation to pastoral and social ministries. Besides two formation communities there are six parish centres serving both the Latin and Oriental Christians in South

(Karnataka) and North East (Assam and Arunachal Pradesh) of India under the care of Betharram. There are two Children Care Homes namely Fr. Xavier Children Home (Bangalore) and St. Michael Children Home (Mangalore) in Karnataka for the destitute and orphan children and an education centre of diocese – Don Bosco School in Assam under our care at the service of the society. Collaborative mission of India, Thailand and England is a growing reality at pre-

sent information and pastoral mission. From the 'communities of formation' to the 'communities of mission' is also an emerging reality of the Vicariate.

#### **Vision: Formation with Mission**

Mission of Betharram at present is to offer Spirit filled, simple and resourceful missionaries and communities capable to meet the challenges and needs of the Church and society. It is not enough

to form a "minimum religious priest" who cannot be a blessing to the society. In founding our religious family, St. Michael saw religious life as a way to holiness and way to mould heroes of faith

in the Church and society for renewal. We hope that India will be a youthful branch of Betharram with 30 Indian priests in five years to bring evangelization and Good News in all the areas of the society. Therefore growth in personal holiness and care for the members through integral formation is one of the present priorities of the vicariate. Availability of well prepared formators, education in secular and frontline ministries and supportive system to nurture



### Emerging Betharram in Incredible India

India is the land of surprises and diversities, richness in culture, population and natural resources. It is the Mother of world religions, art, music and the land of largest democracy. Geographically India can be called as a continent rather than a country. But I prefer to call India as "the rich country of poor people." Because it is in this midst of richness and contradictions, Betharram has relevance and mission among the people in this land of mysticism.

### Emerging Betharram

Indian foundation of Betharram was concretely made with the opening of the first formation house "Shobhana Shaakha" at Bangalore on September 4, 1995. The primary mission of Betharram at that stage was to lay down a solid foundation moulding future Indian missionaries at the service of the Church and society under the leadership of Frs. Enrico, Jose Mirand, Xavier Ponthokkan and Brothers Michael and Gerard followed by other missionaries from Europe and Thailand. The Betharram mission in formation became a unique place for many young men from various cultures and regions of India to experience the cha-



risms of St. Michael and inspired them to dedicate their lives for God and society as consecrated persons. Betharram has grown in its mission of forming future missionaries with our own two well established formation houses at Bangalore (Shobhana Shaakha) and Mangalore (Maria Kripa). Besides there is a Regional Novitiate House- "Michael Bhavan" for the formation of the students from the Blessed Miriam Region at Bangalore. By the grace of God and selfless service and sacrifice of missionaries, Betharram in India has succeeded to offer 21 Indian priests at the service of the Church and 36 brothers are in various stages of their religious priestly formation.

### Betharram at Transition

Indian Betharramite mission is going through a process of evolving and tran-

## Father Joseph Saint-Pé scj

Lectoure (France), 7 March 1938 - Lourdes (France), 2 December 2014

Fr Saint-Pé was such a humble man, as I discovered in these last few weeks that he went under a different name: to the members of the religious community of Betharram, he was "Joe" and to his family "Jojo"! So that no one feels left out, I will call you by the first name of your patron saint, also a faithful, present and humble man like you "Joseph".

Joseph, you left in the silence of the night waiting for the day. You left after a few weeks while waiting with lucidity, courage and faith for a cure for the illness which took you away. You left us this Tuesday 2 December, the date you were expecting to return to Betharram to continue caring amongst your religious brothers and the staff of the Retreat House which you knew. You left us during the days that the Church is entering the time of advent: the time of waiting for the Saviour who comes to give us life. Yes, the time of waiting which also punctuated your human and spiritual life. Could this be a message that you leave us living your passage in this time of advent so that we turn our eyes towards the future, towards the star of Bethlehem which will shine, towards the child that will be born: Emmanuel, God with us? Could this be a witness that you deliver to us, a testament of hope so that we continue on our journey?



You left at the start of advent, a time of hope, a time of waiting with at its heart a quiet joy. However this morning we stumble faced with your departure, before the death which pains us.

We must welcome the words of Isaiah at the heart of our pain. Comforting words which open up hope. In colorful language, the book of Isaiah announces the sumptuous banquet that God will provide for all peoples on Mount Zion. He will not only put an end to Israel's humiliation, but will wipe away tears from all faces in a sign of reconciliation with the entire human family. Thanks to the Lord God of the



universe, life will have the last word. «The Lord will prepare for all peoples a feast on his mountain ... He will destroy death forever.» Yes, Joseph, you left in the silence of the night waiting for the day.

In light of your life, Joseph, Christ's words resonate in a particular way in our hearts, words which speak to us too. «Stay dressed for service and keep your lamps burning ... Blessed are those servants who the Lord finds awake when he comes. He will take on the servant's role and they will be the guests at the table.» Yes, Jesus exhorts his disciples to remain in service dress, like the servants in the parable waiting for their master on his return from the wedding. But with the arrival of the master, the situation is reversed. It is he who will take on servant's role and bring to the table those who have waited. But this reversal of roles is appropriate to only one master, Jesus of Nazareth, the Emmanuel, who came to serve and not to be served. In turn, every disciple is invited to follow this example of master-servant because we are not engaged in an uncertain, blind future. We expect someone who tells us that we are expected ourselves. Yes, Joseph, you left in the silence of the night waiting for the day.

Is it not that day that we want to celebrate in accompanying Joseph this morning? That day when life is stronger than death, ever since Easter morning. This day the Lord God of the Universe awaits us as a shepherd, like the good shepherd who prepares for his friends the table of his Body and his Blood, which, beyond the valley of darkness, leads them to the heavenly mansions where there will be only grace and happiness.

At the heart of our pain, that hope gives us the strength to believe that life is stronger than everything. May this hope unite us to give thanks to God for all that Joseph was able to begin throughout his life as a religious man and priest. May that hope nourish our faith.

You the God of life, You the source of love, give us the power of your Holy Spirit to believe, through the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus, that Joseph lives in You, with You for that day which never ends: eternal life. Amen.

Jean-Dominique Delgue scj  
Regional Vicar

## Brother Pedro Waldomiro Merlo scj

*Cajuru (Brazil), 28 June 1934 - Sao Paulo (Brazil), 3 December 2014*

Fr Pedro Waldomiro Merlo, 1934-2014, was born in Santa Rosa di Viterbo, a small town with a population of just over 20,000, in the state of Sao Paulo (Brazil).

A discrete man, we know very little of his childhood or youth. He usually attended the Parish of "Bel Ramo" in Sao Paulo, where he built a trusting friendship with Fr En-



Mangalore in order to found a Carmel. In the early eighties the Servantes de Marie of Anglet, and other religious women congregations, have the idea to invite Fr. Gaston Hialé to hold some refresher courses and retreats. As well as the name "Betharram", even the St Michael spirituality widespread along the country. Some young Indians take an interest in the congregation and ask to become Betharramite religious. The General Council proposal to the chapter of 1987 starts from the above mentioned note.

The new General Council immediately starts working how to launch the project. The Fathers Vincent Landel, now archbishop of Rabat, and Mirco Trusgnach are appointed coordinators and leaders of this new work. In the following years they fly over the seas several times, the first time in April 1988, in order to keep contacts with the sisters, bishops, local clergy and with the aspirant Betharramites. Everything has to be built: relationships, solutions, choices, credit-line, houses, ... The first young arrive, Xavier, Britto, Biju Paul, ... the Betharram pillars in India. From the beginning the whole Congregation is involved: Xavier studies in England, while Britto and Biju Paul make their novitiate in Italy.

But in order to make young people missionaries in their own homeland the congregation needs a house of formation in India. After some considerations, the choice falls on the town of Bangalore in the Indian state of Karnataka. This place becomes the first betharramite residence, called Shobhana Shaaka, indian name of Beautiful Branch. It was opened on 1 September 1995, a week after the ordination of Xavier, first Indian Betharramite, who died tragically in a car accident in 2006. The first community is made up of father Enrico Frigerio, Brother Michael Richards, the first Indian professed Britto and Biju Paul and the first postulants. In the following years Brother Gerard Sutherland, Father Joseph Mirande and Father Xavier Ponthokkan join the community. Four years later, a new residence, Maria Kripa, is opened in the town of Mangalore, to welcome the young aspirants and postulants. The house of Bangalore becomes the residence for young professed, whose number is growing every year: in 2005, ten years after the founding of Betharram in India, the young professed Betharramites are already 45.

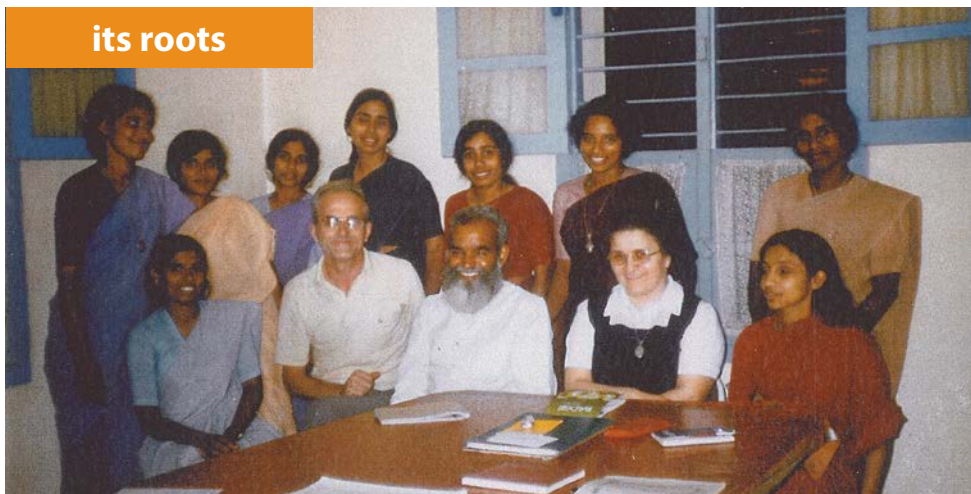
2007 is an important year for the young "Indian Betharram": in November Bangalore is chosen as the seat of the Council of Congregation, and the Vicariate of India is established with a own Superior vicar, Father Biju Paul Alapat. The Indian mission is now a young but well-established fact.

Roberto Cornara

## THE ELEVEN VICARIATES OF THE CONGREGATION

### The Vicariate of India

#### its roots



After a 7 or 8 year stay in France and particularly in Anglet, where they were guided by the Betharram Fathers, 9 Indians became Servants of Mary and went back to their country. In 1982, they asked Fr Gaston Hialé scj to preach their retreat in February 1983 while he was on his way to Thailand to visit the Betharram missionaries. The Superior General of the Servants of Mary paid a visit during the retreat: they spoke about their future in India and they brought up the idea of establishing Betharram in India while committing themselves to help in this project. The proposal of the Sisters was submitted to the members of the General Chapter of 1987, at the request of the Rev Fr Pierre Grech.

*"The outgoing General Council informed us that, under the request of two religious women Congregations working in India, some contacts have been established with the Church of this country about the possibility of accepting Indian religious in the Congregation of Betharram. This is not a way to look for vocations, but to help some young people of this country to discover the Betharramite Religious Life and to become missionaries in their own land. This initiative is a spiritual and financial commitment for us. The whole General Chapter asks us to carry on the contacts for that purpose."*



The betharramite adventure in India starts with this short note written in the XXII General Chapter Acts of 1987. The presence of Betharram in the Indian subcontinent dates back to 1870 when Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified went to

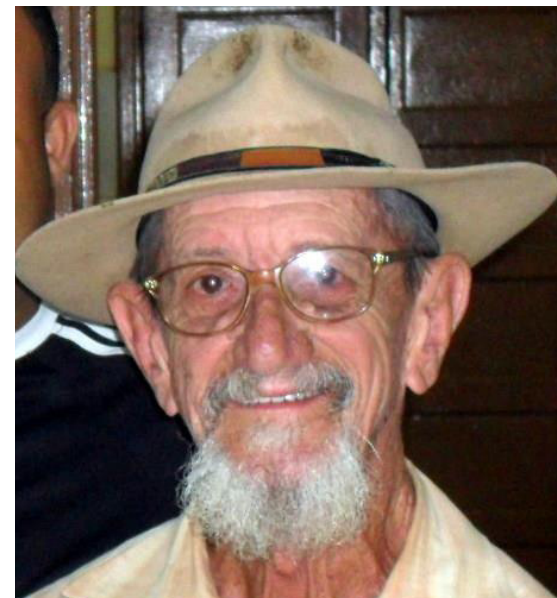
rique Lasuén, who was living there at that time. After getting to know him better, Fr Enrique invited him to live in the presbytery, where he was able to offer small services as an assistant. Gradually, he joined in the life of the congregation, so much so that in 1993 he became a novice.

As a consecrated brother, he always lived discretely and undertook the most humble services in the communities of Paulinia, Belo Horizonte and Sao Paulo.

He nurtured a particular devotion for Our Lady of Conception of Aparecida, whom he would lovingly call "My little mummy."

On December 3, on St. Francis Xavier's feast day, died at noon Br. Pedro Waldomiro Merlo SCJ, of the community of Vila Matilde, Sao Paulo (Brazil). He returned to the Lord after a few weeks spent at the hospital.

May our Lady of Betharram, St. Michael Garicoits and the Venerable Fr. Auguste Etchecopar receive him in his eternal home.



Br Pedro, you were an unassuming man, the joy of our communities, always smiling wherever you would go...

Mauro Henrique Ulrich de Oliveira scj  
Regional Vicar

#### Our deceased

- Friday, November 14, **Mr Antonio Longoni**, Fr Mario Longoni's brother died in Albiate, Italy. We express our heartfelt condolences to our dear father and we pray for the repose of his brother's soul. The Betharramite religious and lay associates express all their sympathy to the bereaved family.
- On December 4, **Mr Firmin Firmin Etcheverria**, 84 years old, brother of Fr. Dominique Etcheverria SCJ (of the community of Pibrac) died at Esterençuby (France, Basque Country). We offer our condolences to Fr Dominique and his family and we promise to keep them in our prayers.



### Community accross the nations

**What would be the natural sign of the bonds, which exist between members of the same religious family? At the time of trial, at the time of need, or simply when you are called to witness that a religious family is not a group of people worrying about their private affairs and personal interests; what would be this sign? We can find the answer in art 224 of our Rule of Life and in the experience lived by the Region of Blessed Miriam of Jesus Crucified.**

**Small is beautiful:** The family of Betharram is not large like the Jesuits or Salesians nor big and powerful like the Franciscans, nor do we have large monasteries like the Benedictines. Our family is small with less than 300 fully professed members. But small is beautiful and we have a right to be here. Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP once described small Congregations as akin to the plants in a rainforest. There are many small species in a rainforest, each with their own part to play in the ecology of the whole. So it is with a small Congregation: we have our part to play in God's ecology, and our charism has been three times blessed by the church, God's rainforest.

**The good old days:** Before our divisions into Provinces in 1947, all members did their basic training together. So whether you were born in Birmingham, Bordeaux, Bologna or Buenos Aires, you studied philosophy in Nazareth and theology in Bethlehem. You had a common formation and you knew all your contemporaries in different countries.

Exchange of personnel between countries was very common back then. So it frequently happened that an Englishman would serve in China, a Frenchman would serve in Argentina, a Spaniard would serve in Thailand, and an Irishman would serve in Palestine. It was a system that worked reasonably well until world politics made it impossible. The concept of 'Inter-Provincial Aid' was launched at the 1969 General Chapter, but except for the designated mission countries like Thailand, Palestine and Ivory Coast it didn't really grow.

**The new age:** But since our regrouping into 3 Regions in 2008, the new 2009 Rule of Life and the impetus that the 2011 General Chapter gave to forming international communities, exchange of personnel is again on the agenda. In our own Blessed Miriam Region it has happened quite naturally and has now come to be a necessity. In 2002 when England became a Province and took on responsibility for the emerging Indian Delegation I was aware that com-



exciting to see in the decree, the names of some of the religious of Betharram that we have known: Fathers Bruno Ierullo SCJ, Gerard Badie SCJ, Constancio Erobaldi SCJ, Sergio Gouarnalusse SCJ and the late Fr. Enrique Miranda SCJ and Br. Juan E. Casaubon SCJ. We congratulate them all!

### Region



#### India

**Children's day** ► 14th of November (birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru) has been set to celebrate as children's day all over the India. Nehru became the prime minister of India just after the independence of India. His birthday is celebrated as Children's Day. He worked great for the well being of children as well as youngsters after the independence of India. He worked so much for the education, progress and welfare of the children of India. Our community in Mangalore also celebrated the Children's Day with all the Children at St. Michael's Care Home.



#### Thailand

**Gathering pf Betharramite Alumni** ► In September and October, some religious of the Vicariate organised a gathering of Betharramite alumni. These are some of the main aims pursued: create a good relationship between the present members and the Betharramite alumni; think back on the time spent in the seminary and share the present difficulties; encourage them to be good Christians and to support each other in time of difficulty; keep alive St Michael's charisma by establishing an association of "Companions of Betharram" in Thailand, by encouraging young people to join the Betharram Congregation and by supporting financially young people in formation.

**A grace-filled day in Maepon** ► Maepon, November, 23: After preaching the annual spiritual retreat in Chiang Mai (November 17-22), Fr Enrico Frigerio paid a visit to some mission posts, where the religious of Bétharram are carrying out their service. At first he visited Maepon (Chiang Rai area), a centre giving shelter to children coming from the surrounding villages. On the Solemnity of Christ the King, during the Eucharistic Celebration, a group of children of the Centre, along with some adults coming from the nearby villages, were baptised, confirmed and given the first Holy Communion.







### Congregation

#### The one who dearly loved our family ►

In the afternoon of December 6, Pope Francis received in private audience the Cardinal Angelo Amato SDB, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience, the Holy Father authorized the Congregation to promulgate the decrees regarding 3 miracles and 5 heroic virtues. It was therefore recognised that the miracle was made through the intercession of the Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified.



weaknesses. Then every religious had the opportunity to freely express their "dreams" about the future of the Vicariate.

#### Holy Land

**Zarqa ►** Thursday, November 20th, Br. Jean-Paul Kissi Ayo was ordained deacon. The celebration was presided by Monsignor Maroun Lahham, Auxiliary Bishop of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem for Jordan: Best wishes, Br. Jean-Paul, for your ministry of deacon!



### Region



#### Argentina - Uruguay

**Betharramite proud...** ► Dr. Gustavo Dimonaco, the General Manager and Legal Representative for the College of the Sacred Heart of Rosario, sent us the following news: The Rosario City Council has passed a resolution stating that our Sacred Heart College is the best and outstanding one in the City. In this way, the people of Rosario their gratitude for the work in education and pastoral care that the College has given them for the last 114 years. The text of the decree reminds us of the many priests, religious, lay teachers and non-teachers who, through their personal commitment have been able to embody the real meaning of God coming into our world. It is



*Wilfred, Vincent and Pascal scj, students at Oscott College and ordained as deacons in 2010 in Olton*

munication between the two parts of the Province was somewhat strained and prone to cultural misunderstanding. So in 2006 I spoke with Fr. Xavier about the possibility of a few India students coming to England for a part of their priestly studies. That way a new generation of Indian religious would come to know us in England, and we in turn would come to understand them better.

**Students at Oscott:** This became a reality when in 2007 Pascal, Vincent and Wilfred came to Solihull and studied theology at Oscott College for 4 years, before being ordained priests. They gave a youthful impetus to community life in England as well as helping us to understand the mentality of young Indian religious rather better. To this day they continue to convey a deeper unders-

tanding of the England vicariate to the vicariate of India.

#### Sheep stealing?

When the Indian communities began 20 years ago we always said that we would not take Indian religious to fill European vacancies just because vocations in Europe

are very scarce, as this would be a form of neo-colonialism or even theft. But the situation has changed since then, and we now need to maintain a certain level of community in England in order to continue to support our Indian communities. Without a UK presence there would be no funds to support formation elsewhere. It is for this reason that we have dared to ask Fr. Wilfred to become Vicariate Superior, Fr. Mongkhon and Fr. Vincent to be parish priests. We estimated that we needed three communities to make the Betharram presence in England viable until the day when vocations start arriving again in England.

**Feeling the blessing:** We were very much blessed in that the three who have come to England from Thailand and India all knew each other during formation, and they all knew Brother Gerard

### Region



#### Italy

**Assembly ►** Wednesday, November 26, about thirty Italian religious held the Vicariate Assembly at the betharramite residence of Albiate, guided by the Regional Superior, Fr. Jean Luc Morin SCJ and the Regional Vicar for Italy, Fr. Aldo Nespoli SCJ. The Superiors introduced the members of their respective communities following a questionnaire to show the "health" of their prayer life and community life, as well as their community and apostolic project. After this "Tour of Italy", the Regional Superior urged every religious to feed their "dreams" about the Vicariate starting from their resources, their challenges and their

who has been a very important link in this process. They have also been very adaptable and have accepted that they have much to learn and need support.

**Registration:** To receive Asian religious on long term visas we had to be registered with the UK Borders Agency and fulfil all their demanding requirements. These regulations are designed mainly to impede Islamic terrorists and people with forged work permits, but the process has been tricky and costly and requires complex documentation. If we successfully obtain a long term visa for a priest it costs a minimum of €1,000, and even if we are unsuccessful we still have to pay. This is before the costs of air travel are included. Even a short term visa can cost €200. But the religious we have had both long term and short term (e.g. Fr. Stervin & Fr. Chan) have been a blessing to the vicariate and a credit to themselves and their generosity of spirit.

A generous spirit and a willing heart: A great generosity of spirit has been evident when religious have been asked (either by the Regional Council or the General Council) to serve for specific ministries abroad. And here I think of Fr. Stervin & Fr. Pornchai in Pau, Fr. Chan as novice master in Bangalore, Fr. Kriangsak at the Formators' course in India, and Fr. Jose Kumar in the Holy Land. And while the Regions were being born both Fr. Tidkham and Bro. Gerard gave generous service working in formation in Bangalore. Historically of course our Bangalore foundation was greatly de-

pendent on the generous service of Fr. Enrico, Fr. Mirande and Bro. Michael. Those who left their home country did so with great generosity, and they braved the questioning of suspicious immigration authorities each time their short term visas were renewed.

### Blessings and difficulties: Firstly the difficulties:

- Some resistance was felt to multiple international placements in England 10 years ago as it seemed that the financial burden was born entirely by the England vicariate. But this has diminished as the benefits of receiving religious from abroad have become tangible.
- Long term visas still require a costly and time consuming process, and the regulations change every year. Those like Fr. Chan who go to India for a long period have to endure much insecurity about their visa status.
- Cultural adjustment is an issue for everyone who serves away from their homeland, but only the passage of time can alleviate this.
- The placement of religious abroad doesn't follow any grand scheme but only happens when a particular need arises. So this can leave some young religious wondering? Why was I not chosen to go to England? Why was I not chosen to go to Israel? Why was I not chosen to go to France? It is not easy to see how this should be addressed.

### Announcements by the Superior General and his Council

On 20 November 2014, the Superior General received from the Congregation for the Institutes of Religious Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life **the indulgences for leaving the Congregation** conceded to **Fr. Butrus Rufail Al-Hijazin** who will be incardinated into the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to **Fr. Dario Silvero** who will be incardinated into the Diocese of Encarnación (Paraguay). We wish to Fr. Butrus and Fr. Dario to be good shepherds in the way indicated by Pope Francis.

### Schedule

#### Next meetings of the General Council

19-20 December 2014  
3 - 4 February 2015

#### Meetings in January 2015 at the Generalate

22 - 25 January	Commission for the session for on-going formation
25 - 26 January	Meeting of the Superior General and his Council with the Superior of the Region St Michael Garicoits, Fr. Jean-Luc Morin, the Superior of the Region Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified, Fr. Austin Hughes, and Fr. Jiraphat Raksikhao scj, about the prospects of a foundation in Vietnam.
27 January - 1 <sup>st</sup> February	Council of the Congregation

### Other informations

**On the website of the Congregation**, in "Magazines & bulletins", will be put at your disposal the publications and bulletins produced by different groups of Betharramite Religious or Lay Associates (only in the original language).

You can already read a few *AMICI News*, bulletin of "A.M.I.C.I." association for the missionary cooperation of the Italian Vicariate, and *Fraternel*, bulletin of the lay group *Fraternité Me Voici* of the Vicariate of France-Spain.



your my love and faith in the Father, raising up the motto "Fiat Voluntas Dei" like a flag that directs us to the right path and to observance of charity. To celebrate this event means to go back and discern the historical event as a current, real and particular manifestation. If we don't focus our attention again on God's involvement in our lives and if we don't share the joy of love with others, we fall into the same mediocrity as the Israelites, hiding that Light under the bed which should instead light up the whole house, or keeping quiet about that announcement which should reach to the ends of the earth. The nativity scene shows us how to communicate our experience of God to those who have not yet tried to encounter Him. Our experience of God, which comes from our meeting with Him, is a joyous and rich display of hope lived out

with those who have felt abandoned, forgotten. The "Here I Am" of Jesus, contemplated and embraced by St Michael and inherited by us through the Charism, is not a place of refuge uttered only in sanctuaries or in great events, but is a continuous pilgrimage of our hearts towards the Heart of Jesus, in the style of «Campo Volante». That is to say, being ready and willing to live the adventure of the Gospel, to which we have been called. May the choice of a Betharramite always have, as a reference point, the divine mystery of God; May His presence be perceived in the light of faith and may we, by grace, be able to live as useful, willing and able men, in the will of God extending that «Here I am» of the Incarnate Word.

Victor Torales scj



### The Blessings:

- Our Region has been enlivened by the cross-border sharing and exchange of the last few years. In spite of the 8,000 km distances, the 7hour time difference and the great cost of international travel, our communities have been enriched and made livelier.
- We have developed a greater sense of the international Betharramite family and have a heightened awareness that our family does not belong to this or that ethnic group, but that we all belong to the family of the Heart of Jesus.
- Our perspective on the church has been enriched as in each land we see more clearly that 'normal' is not defined by what we have experienced from our childhood in Bangalore, Birmingham or Bangkok, but that we belong to a Universal church with people of many different rites and shapes and sizes and colours.
- The work of formation, much too large now for an individual vicariate has greatly benefitted from pooled resources, advice and formators.

**Conclusion:** Although most of the above is covered in one little article (224) in our Rule of Life, it really flows from the whole spirit of our Betharram tradition. We have been people of an international consciousness since way back in the time of Saint Michael, and even though we have never been huge, our vision

has always had a strong international dimension, which has influenced our understanding of charism and call. Terra Sancta gave us a love of the scriptures. China gave us a love of the Orient and Argentina confirmed our educational mission. Today we are learning anew about the mystery of our place in the world, and as fast communications and climate change have taught us so much about global inter-connectedness, our small religious family with its strong sense of community across borders has so much to offer to God's rainforest.

Austin Hughes, scj  
Regional Superior

### Christmas offers a new outlook on life

In the department of Tacuarembó (Uruguay), where the density of population does not reach 6 inhabitants pro km<sup>2</sup>, our brothers (Fr. Angelo, Fr. Wagner and Br. Victor) will offer this year to the local Christian community the joy of a Christmas celebration around the altar.



Christmas is a celebration shared throughout a large part of the world. It is celebrated with family, friends and all



*Brother Victor Torales scj*

the important people in our lives. Drawing near to Christmas, a certain nostalgia rises up within me, of my childhood home in Paraguay: the little nativity scene prepared with shrubs and mud statues, seasonal fruit that the family, reunited on Christmas Eve, shared at dinner, the Rosary and wishes for a "Merry Christmas". This year, far away from this family warmth, Christmas will have a new sense since it will be experienced with my religious community in the rural communities of the new mission in Uruguay. After many years, these communities will again be able to celebrate Christmas with the Eucharist. Thanks to the Betharram missionary ministry, Christmas will have another value, another way of em-

bodying faith in our life, another way of discovering and contemplating Jesus in the life of the community.

But, beyond the traditions or the things that generate our expectations, what is Christmas? Christmas, as God's intervention in human history, is a feast which through celebrations or events, renews the event of the incarnation of the Son of God in our humanity. One could say with St Michael "What a sight!".

I cannot help contemplating the "willingness" of Mary and Joseph in considering the mystery of the incarnation. In the first place, it is the same God that takes the initiative of revealing himself through Mary's "Ecce Ancilla" and Joseph's obedience. Then there is the joy that gives rise to the work of God, expressed in Mary's Song. And, finally, the courage of Joseph in going to Bethlehem and in finding a place so humble, yet at the same time great, so that the Saviour could be born.

The "Here I am" of Mary, of Joseph and, above all, of the Child Jesus, manifests itself in this little manger, and is expressed in a fragile, poor, vulnerable manner. Nevertheless, God wanted to pitch his tent among us so that all these troubles might find meaning in the yearning of Mercy and Love.

The Nativity is a marvellous sight, which amazed St Michael Garicoits. For Michael, the incarnation of the Son of God was the secret resource which drove him to the experience of dying to self, becoming small, like nothing. In contemplating the Son taking on the human condition, St Michael became conscious of his own

vulnerable, poor, wretched humanity. But in that crib, in this poverty, he nevertheless identified a path, a path marked out by God in a real and particular way; and, in that aspect, St Michael always managed to discern, to see, to admire and to live faithfully to the plan of God, revealed in the Child humbled and broken in the crib.

This same intuition and this same spirit accompany me in this stage of my missionary placement, as pastor and, above all, as religious brother.

Being an event that helps to redefine our life and response to God, I'm using the wait for Christmas as a good time to see and judge myself, inside and outside, in such a way that Betharramite action will be in keeping with the Will of the Father; and that the "Here I Am" we profess will be a true display of God's intervention in the humanity of those who share our life and faith.

That fact that I live in Uruguay connects me to the situation of those who live with us and who observe us, so that they can really be conscious of the goodness of God and of His mercy and, above all, of His closeness to us, in the life of our religious community or in the personal life of each brother,

The birth of the Child Jesus as an opening and self-revelation of God for us, invites us to rediscover his will in our desolation and, through our relationships with others, by sharing the gift of charisma, to transmit the infinite love of God within the limits of our own position. The celebration of the Nativity, like Betharram, pushes me to renew with fer-