



In the Haute-Loire Department (France) a family man, called Sauzet, was sentenced to death for arson. On learning of his condemnation, this individual who so far had shown little in the way of religious feelings, suddenly changed; his soul was consumed with feelings of remorse, his heart was filled with God's love and his final moments were those of another Good Thief! "My God, my God, he kept repeating, I am too happy!" For me, this is an easy death, seeing that I deserve to be put to pieces for my many sins. Filled with such feelings and while speaking with the chaplain he would add "Father, I am going to jump into heaven! Soon I shall see my God face to face!"

On arriving on the scaffold he paced up and down for a few minutes; then the chaplain said to him: "My friend, warm yourself up; you are cold." "No, Father, I am not cold, placing his hand on his heart.

The evening before the Father Superior had read the account of this death and had suggested to the religious at Igon to meditate on the good sentiments of the prisoner.

He was full of admiration for him and added that these sentiments bore all the hall marks of real holiness. The prisoner was full of joy and his trust in God was boundless. Yet his trust in God's mercy was soothed by a gentle fear and awareness of his own unworthiness.

(From the Cachica Notebook nr 8)



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BETHARRAM

103  
2015

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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

The Kingdom of God can be compared  
to the smallest of seeds

Where ever it is to be found on earth or in Heaven, our Betharram family is going to celebrate with great joy the canonization of Blessed Mariam of Jesus Crucified, the young Carmelite with the white veil, the young Arab woman, the "little nothing" as she liked to call herself.

The first cause of our joy will be the contemplation of Marie sharing the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit after having been faithful to the Gospel on this earth. Such a perspective assures us that it is possible to take the Gospels seriously and to live them out fully and in great simplicity. We can see in the life of Blessed Mariam of Jesus Crucified that these words of the Gospels are full of life: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, to have revealed these mysteries to the poor and the humble"; "blessed are the poor in spirit....." "Whoever humbles himself will be exalted..." "The kingdom of heaven can be compared to the smallest of seeds or to a portion of yeast which a woman takes and which makes the dough rise; it can be compared to a treasure or to a pearl of great price..."

Mariam lived as if she was a fugitive: She was illiterate, wore the white veil (meaning that she was not obliged to attend the choir being unable to read the psalms), she used to call upon

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one of her sisters to write up the accounts of her mystical experiences or to write letters. There is no doubt that she was great by her experiences of God's love; God chose her to be his confidante and intermediary to prove his love to the Sisters in the community. She was faithful to God's love like her mother St Theresa, through the piercing of her heart which took place in the Carmelite Monastery of Pau on May 24, 1868. This experience of God's love, like that of the beloved, was to be followed by the cross, sufferings, humiliations, misunderstandings, scorn and union with her Spouse, the crucified Christ, through the sufferings of the stigmata.

Even though she was considered to be the "little nothing" she had her position and moral standing in the community. It was she who, for example, planned and directed the building of the monastery in Bethlehem where she fell and fractured her arm. Gangrene set in and carried her off on 26 August 1878 at the early age of 32. As the poet says: "He who is loved by God can but die young". Great was the influence she had on her

spiritual director, Father Estrate and on the foundress of the Carmelite monastery in Bethlehem, Mlle Berthe Dartigaux; after her death they both forgot something of the Gospels of which she had witnessed in their presence by her words and deeds! She had influence also on Mother Veronica of the Passion, founder of the Apostolic Carmel, for whom she had great affection and with whom she shared her spiritual experiences.

Mariam also had great affection for our Betharramite family; she always took a great interest in it, suffered for it and did all she could for it. Her writings prove that for her our Congregation was of divine origin; as St Michael Garicoits used to say, our Congregation is beloved by God. It was a source of sorrow for her when, in a vision she saw our Congregation like a garden of beautiful flowers suffocated by a huge spider's web preventing it from breathing. She brought pressure to bear on Mgr Lacroix demanding that he send the Betharram Rule of Life to Rome, since it was then the best time to send it. Father Estrate took it in charge with the help of a diocesan priest, Father Bordachar. Neither of them really understood their mission until they saw that things beyond human nature were happening. And so it was that thanks to the wisdom and foresight of a young "Arab" who was illiterate, the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram became an Institute of Pontifical right. Just as in a human family there has to be a father and mother: our Father is St Michael Garicoits, our Mother is Mariam Baouardy! Thank you, Mariam; we shall never be sufficiently grateful to you!

Our young Arab, Mariam, also had a missionary soul so much so that she was at the origin of the foundation of two Carmels – one at Mangalore in India and the other at Bethlehem in Palestine. She was one of the team that set

sound of the bell everybody was up on their feet. They began to form a human chain and, aided by the people of Lestelle and Montaut, awakened by the sound of the bells, they were able to control the fire [...]. They were unaware for a few days as to the cause of this blaze, but on repairing the damage they found scattered in the frame of the vault of the chapel, large piles of woodshavings and two bed sheets containing a large amount of woodshavings, pushed well into the arches of the vault; this discovery showed that neither carelessness nor any Act of God was to blame for the disaster, pushing all responsibility towards spitefulness.

Mr. Eliçabide pronounced himself in favour of the suspension of the school. But the Superior took measures so that nothing changed there. ... [...] Mr. Eliçabide left Bétharram at the beginning of the holidays. Mr. Garicoits had already sent Mr Didace Barbe to Dax to be prepared for his Teaching Diploma. [...]

The Congregation of the Missionaries was gradually growing. The ancient works of Bétharram, the missions and the pilgrimage, were developed slowly but steadily; devotion to the Virgin of Betharram resumed its old vigour. The Blessed Virgin restored the titles with which she had revealed herself to Betharram (Beautiful Branch). *Stella Matutina, Morning Star* for our country [...]; since 1837 she especially shone down on the youth and farmers and from 1834 she sent the Superior of the house to encourage and direct the Daughters of the Cross at Igon, in



the region, for the education of the daughters of the people. *Salus infirmorum*: Since the great revolution, the tradition of families was to send the infirm to Betharram and for more than 39 years some extraordinary cures delighted many villages [...].

But the great title of Mary *Refugium peccatorum* increased the most since the establishment of the missionaries. The presence of Mr. Garicoits in Betharram, outside of working days in Igon, Mr. Fondeville constantly available for confessions throughout his life, the presence of the missionaries during the summer [...] called to Bétharram

a great meeting of people not only during the month of September, according to custom, but throughout the year.

During Lent 1838, 1839, 1841 and 1842 the [local] population provided for the many penitents. At that time they also began to organise private pilgrimages from distant regions [...]: openly pious people of

good will would go to Betharram to strengthen themselves, to purify themselves more and more from the past [...]; others would go there to regain peace of conscience, to break away from long-lasting scandals, to lay the foundations of a wholesome life. Several climbing Calvary felt overcome by Grace and could not return without easing their conscience with a good confession.

Simon Fondeville scj  
(1805-1872)

(to be continued)



*About establishing the school... The fire at the chapel... The Mr Eliçabide episode... The development of the sanctuary and the pilgrims*

Bétharram was visited by its new Bishop, Monsignor Lacroix, during the holidays of 1838. He gave his approval to the way of life they had adopted, and confirmed and increased old powers [...]. This year, 1838, saw a primary school open in Betharram...



Mr. Garicoïts had brought together in Betharram some children from Lestelle, in the year 1835. They were taught to read and write; they served Mass. But as academic zeal was awakened, they had to arm themselves with the law. Mr. Eliçabide, who had renounced the priesthood and had taken his Teaching Diploma, had opened a private school in Bordeaux. Mr. Garicoïts had had him as a pupil of philosophy in 1829 and he called him gladly. The region, happy about the news of a primary school in Betharram, did not fail to send its children. Up to 120 of them were counted during the years 1838 and 1839. [...]

It was at this time, in 1838, that Betharram opened its doors to the deacon Mr Didace Barbe. [...] In 1838 he was received into the priesthood and he asked to enter the community of Betharram. It was clear that Our Lady wanted to raise up Betharram to continue to stretch out and make her "beautiful Branch" flourish by calling such a pious person, as learned and dedicated as Mr. Didace Barbe.

However Mr. Cassou of Igon, a pupil of the great Seminary of Bayonne, had also given himself to the community. He had just been

promoted to the priesthood in the summer of 1838. An energetic soul with above ordinary intelligence, sound judgment, fervent zeal and steadfast piety, Mr. Cassou promised much. [...]

Since 1832, Mr. Garicoïts had with him the young Didace Barbé from Lestelle, whom he had cared for, for the lower classes; he placed him in the minor seminary of Saint-Pé to read classics; Later he would become a very useful member of the congregation. The year 1839 presented nothing remarkable in the work of the house; the school and missions were going splendidly. A dark cloud, however, loomed on the horizon: Mr. Eliçabide let himself be carried away by a false compassion for his relatives [...], at considerable expense and financial outlay, which forced Mr. Garicoïts to reprimand him several times; but his conduct worsened yet. So much that the Superior told him that he could no longer be employed and he predicted that one day he would become an assassin and would end up on the gallows. This dark cloud which saddened Mr. Garicoïts and those he confided in, became horribly clear due to a fire on 9th April 1839 at midnight. The fire started in the attic [...]. At the

out for Mangalore; a Carmelite monastery was founded and a beginning was made on the mission for an Apostolic Carmel. In the Mangalore Carmel she suffered greatly from the jealousy of her sisters because they didn't understand her. Obedient to Mgr Ephrem, the Carmelite bishop of Mangalore, she returned to live in the Carmel in Pau. At the same time she was available with Mother Veronique de la Passion to be part of the team which would go and found the Carmel on the hills of Bethlehem, where she asked that the Priests of Betharram should be chaplains; something similar happened in Nazareth in 1910. It was certainly Mariam who pleaded for the Betharram foundation at Bangalore, Mangalore and Hojai, and for the wealth of vocations which the Lord showered on us allowing the incarnation of our charism in the rich culture of India. There were countless other signs in favour of Betharram. It was Mariam who helped us to overcome the reticence of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, of the Franciscans, guardians of the Holy places, and of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which were all against the installation of a community in the Holy Land in 1879. The general reply was "No" save that of Pope Leo XIII who said "With God nothing is impossible!"

Our presence in the Holy Land was a great chance for the Betharramites to be formed for years – philosophy in Nazareth and Theology in Bethlehem. Thanks to this same presence our Fathers were called to take direction of the Patriarchal Seminary at Beit Jala. During her journey to Nazareth Mariam called at Amwas (Emmaus). With that interior sense of the things of God which is to be found in the heart of the poor she would say: "This is where Jesus shared bread with his disciples." True enough subsequent archaeological digs discovered the remains of a third century Baptistry, a Byzantine basilica

and another dating from the times of the Crusaders witness that for those days this holy ground was an important place of pilgrimage. The benefactress Berthe Dartigaux bought the piece of land for the Carmelites of Bethlehem intending to found there another Carmel; in a similar fashion she bought a smaller piece of land for the Betharramites, their chaplains and on which they built a house.

Oh Mariam! You proved the extent to which you love us. We also love you very much for you are the model which shows that the Gospel of the poor can be lived. We ask you to protect our two communities in the shadow of the two Carmelite houses: in the one at Bethlehem there are four novices from Africa preparing to adopt our charism under the guidance of their Novice Master; in the one in Nazareth an Arab brother is accompanying the local Arab Christian community; another has arrived from India to study Hebrew so as to have a better understanding of the Bible and to accompany Hebrew Christians. As I often ask you, help us to live in truth and in love and save us from every illusions in the power of the Holy Spirit.

On the 17th May, in this year of consecrated life, we shall accompany Pope Francis who is going to declare you a saint. With the entire Carmelite family celebrating the 500th anniversary of the birth of St Theresa of Avila, we shall applaud and rejoice as we express our joy which will re-echo the glory which you are enjoying in Heaven. We shall be overcome with emotion when on the facade of Saint Peter's we shall see your portrait together with that of the three other women: Marie Alphonsine, a Palestinian like yourself, Emilie de Villeneuve, French, and the Italian Marie Christine of the Immaculate Conception.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj  
Superior General

## SNAPSHOTS OF BETHARRAMITE LIFE

### *One example of domestic economy*

Snap taken by Fr Jiraphat  
Raksikhao scj:  
Br Emilio Pleepor scj is  
taking care of the goats in  
Ban Garicoits



always been warmly welcomed and felt very much an inside member of a large family. I have also been very impressed with the care and concern for others which is very much part of the Betharamite spirituality. As a lay member I feel very much part of the lay community. The relationship with the Priests and Brothers is very special. It has always been warm and welcoming and as a group we feel drawn to support the Priests and Brothers whenever possible and to share in a small way their spirituality through the teachings of St Michael. In spite of Father Brian retiring and leaving the parish a year ago our SCJ companion group continues to flourish. Father Brian in his generosity comes back to the parish for our meetings which we hold monthly in members' houses.

The Companions from many SCJ parishes gather on several occasions each year. Around St Joseph's Day we have a day retreat for Companions. We also meet on a day near to the feasts of St Michael, the Sacred Heart and The Holy Cross. The feasts of Our Lady of Betharram and Blessed Miriam are celebrated in our own parishes as these feast days occur during the summer holidays when many Companions are away from home. We also hold a sponsored walk on the Clent Hills at the end of September each year to support the SCJ Missions. We look forward to all of these occasions to meet with the Priests, Brothers and lay members of the SCJ. They are great spiritual and social events.



I would say the SCJ spirituality has a great effect on our lives. For over twenty years we have been 'fed' on the writings and spirituality of St Michael. We feel very fortunate to be able to discuss aspects of the faith at all of our now monthly meetings. We also follow aspects of St Ignatius' spirituality, which was very influential in St Michael's life. I think the aspects that have most influence on our everyday lives are that we try to stay close to God in prayer, we try to live daily discerning God's will for us and we try to emulate the care and concern for others which is shown by the Priests and Brothers.

I have noticed that as the years have passed we have become very much at ease in the company of the Priests and Brothers. I have also noticed how much this becomes obvious to new members who join us. They are immensely attracted to this warm, comfortable, friendly atmosphere. I have not yet mentioned charisma but that is exactly what it is. It is almost tangible and very infectious.

June Arran



## LAITY AND THE CHARISM OF BETHARRAM

### The charism given for sharing with all

**GIVEN BY GOD, THE CHARISM ALWAYS COMING "FROM ON HIGH". BUT HOW DOES IT MOVE ABOUT? WHILE TELLING US HER STORY OF A BETHARRAMITE LAY ASSOCIATE AND HER AFFECTION TOWARDS OUR RELIGIOUS FAMILY, JUNE IS GIVING US THE BEGINNING OF AN ANSWER.**

My own involvement with the SCJ community goes back about 27 years. At that time I was preparing children for their First Holy Communion in school and I was in the habit of taking them on an outing each year as a spiritual experience and to develop their understanding of the sacrament.

One year someone suggested taking the children to Garicoits House in Worcester. I had never heard of the place, of St Michael Garicoits or the SCJ Community, but I made enquiries and planned a visit with my little ones. The children spent a wonderful day there assisted by Father Austin Hughes and Brother Michael Richards. Father Austin led the day spiritually and entertained with his guitar and Brother Michael attended to the children's domestic needs by providing them with drinks. For about three years I continued to take the children to Garicoits House in preparation for receiving Holy Communion.

Then unfortunately the Priests and Brother's left the house. Strangely, this coincided with Fr Brian Boyle arriving at my parish of St Joseph's, Whitnash. Fortunately Father Brian agreed to lead the day for the children and he led their special day for a few years.

Soon after Father Brian arrived at Whitnash the Companion group was formed (1991). In the early days we met weekly – a group of about twelve of us. Father Brian introduced us to the life and spirituality of St Michael

Garicoits. The written work we followed had been collated from his letters and sermons. In 1997 we visited Betharram for the 200th anniversary of the birth of St Michael. It was a lovely celebration enjoyed by all.

In 1998 Lennie (my husband) and I went to Thailand and we visited the seminary in Sampran. We were made very welcome on our brief visit there. It felt like meeting with part of the extended family. This feeling was prevalent again about 2 months later when we arrived in Uruguay. We were in Montevideo and investigated a cross we could see from a distance. It turned out to be one of two on the top of the parish church of The Immaculate Conception. We went inside the church and were amazed to see an altar of Our Lady of Betharram. At the back of the church we found windows associated with St Michael Garicoits – his image and his birthplace, which we had previously visited. I was very excited. It felt as if I was visiting long lost relatives – there was a bond!

During his time at St Joseph's Father Brian was renowned for his care and attention to anyone in need and particularly to the sick. He made frequent visits to the hospital both day and night, and he even visited the sick in neighbouring parishes to comfort them in their illnesses.

I have been a lay member of the SCJ's for 24 years now and in my various meetings with members of the Priests and Brothers I have

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF ROME

### The notes of Francis



**ONE OF THE FEW THINGS POPE FRANCIS HAS BROUGHT ALONG WITH HIM FROM ARGENTINA AND HE KEEPS IN HIS APARTMENT OF "CASA SANTA MARTA", IS A WOODEN STATUE OF SAINT JOSEPH SLEEPING. WHEN HE HAS A PROBLEM, POPE FRANCIS PUTS UNDER THE STATUE SOME NOTES PLEADING WITH HIM FOR GRACES.**

*«The Scriptures seldom speak of Saint Joseph, but when they do, we often find him resting, as an angel reveals God's will to him in his dreams. In the Gospel passage we have just heard, we find Joseph resting not once, but twice. This evening I would like to rest in the Lord with all of you. [...]*

*Resting in the Lord. Rest is so necessary for the health of our minds and bodies, and often so difficult to achieve due to the many demands placed on us. But rest is also essential for our spiritual health, so that we can hear God's voice and understand what he asks of us. Joseph was chosen by God to be the foster father of Jesus and the husband of Mary. As Christians, you too are called, like Joseph, to make a home for Jesus. To make a home for Jesus! You make a home for him in*

*your hearts, your families, your parishes and your communities. [...]*

*I would also like to tell you something very personal. I have great love for Saint Joseph, because he is a man of silence and strength. On my table I have an image of Saint Joseph sleeping. Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the Church! Yes! We know that he can do that. So when I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath Saint Joseph, so that he can dream about it! In other words I tell him: pray for this problem! [...]*

*Do not forget Saint Joseph who sleeps! »...*

*From the address to the families  
(Manila, 16 January 2015)*



### Father Jean Laclau, SCJ

Bérenx (France), 17 June 1923 - Bétharram, 19 March 2015

Homily at the funeral of Fr. Jean Laclau, SCJ  
Bétharram, 21 March 2015

(Ws 2: 23; 3: 1 - 6.9 | Jn 15: 1-8) This Gospel flowed from the heart, it seems to me, for someone who was parish priest of Saint-Estèphe for about thirty years. He had raised the art of wine, if not to a divine art, at least to an art of life: a celebration to open the senses and to share friendship.

Too bad for those who made fun of his domestic rituals (a stemmed glass vase, a grilled steak, a good choice of vintages and words). Although he spoke about them differently, he didn't want to separate tenderness and succulent food, the gentleness of faith, the sweetness of hope and charity, and the small pleasures of life, daily treats as modest as they were precious.

During a last visit, while I was trying in vain to remember the motto which he was fond of and which celebrates his home town, he whispered to me wide eyed: "You're wrong. I will tell you: Oh beautiful Orthez, sweetness and gaiety, fine gastronomy!" This may seem laughable, but it was his way of taking his leave, without seeming to be touched by it, without inflicting his suffering on others...

Fr. Laclau was not a naive man, he was truly modest, an aesthete in his way. He did not waste his time justifying his enjoyment of life and of people; he was too busy gleaming a little happiness, too curious about music and flavours. As soon as you approached him, his face is lit up, sparkled. He greeted you with "Adi gouyat!" in which all



the cordiality of a priest of the Sacred Heart was focused. In any situation, he had the grace to do his best without taking himself too seriously. In his company, we gained a better understanding of why humour starts as humility and finishes up as love ("amour").

This philosophy of existence, this refinement of intelligence perfectly suited the professor of philosophy, this wise man, so human in his work and in his enthusiasm. After Bétharram and Ozanam, after Foucauld where he had been so happy, even when retired from teaching, he remained an educator and a pastor. Even when alone, withdrawn to the community, he remained brotherly, he was religious in its first sense of being "the bond that connects us." Yes, Fr. Laclau was naturally gifted, supernaturally even, to connect earth and heaven, reason and prayer, the body and the soul, also creating connections between hearts.

available to the community and to the mission entrusted to me.

Vocation animation is a demanding activity. Yet it is a job I love because, by helping young people in their discernment, I have deepened my own vocation, by becoming aware of the joys and difficulties that accompany me. And I continue to grow every day because I am aware that my difficulties are sometimes linked to an excessive zeal.

In the mission of a Formator and in religious life in general, personal witness is fundamental. I like to remember often the famous phrase of Father Antonio Vieira SJ: "Words move, examples teach". Since the task of vocation promotion was given to me, I have endeavoured to ensure that

all religious of the vicariate feel involved. That is difficult for various reasons, including geographical distances, but I can see that my Betharramite brothers show great interest in vocations. I am very grateful to my brothers for their help and for the witness they offer every day. I am especially grateful to all those with whom I frequently dialogue and who are my best advisors and true collaborators in this shared mission that makes us men available to do the will of God, immediately and without fear.

Eder Chaves Goncalves scj



80 anos de presença Betharramita em Passa Quatro,  
Fazendo a Vontade de Deus.



## PRACTICING THE RULE

### A new impulse for vocation promotion

ON AUGUST 24, 2013, FR EDER CHAVES GONÇALVES WAS ORDAINED AS A PRIEST AT MEDEIROS (BRAZIL). IT WAS YESTERDAY ... OR JUST ABOUT! TIME FLIES, BUT ENTHUSIASM REMAINS HIGH. YOU CAN FIND IN THE GENUINE WITNESS OF OUR BRAZILIAN BROTHER ALL THE VIGOUR OF A YOUNG SHOOT FULL OF PROMISES.

FR EDER IS CURRENTLY «PROMOTOR VOCACIONAL» IN PASSA QUATRO, WHERE THEY HAVE JUST CELEBRATED 80 YEARS OF THE BETHARRAMITE PRESENCE IN THE COLLEGE SÃO MIGUEL... FOR A RENEWED AND RADIANT YOUTH!



Article 139 Our witness as a religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, happy to live our own vocation in a fraternal and apostolic community is a living invitation to follow Christ in the footsteps of Saint Michael Garicoits. Each vicariate will put in place, a pastoral project for vocations. Our communities must willingly welcome those who desire to come, see and experience our life. We help them to discern what the Lord wants of them.

I try to live section 139 of the Rule of Life starting from personal and community prayer, dialogue, service and the support that I receive constantly from God and also my brothers in the Congregation of Betharram.

I recognise that to witness to the virtues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the footsteps of St Michael Garicoits is a great challenge. However, this challenge also lifts me from my comfort zone to strive each new day to live the vocation I have received from God, repeating constantly the prayer

of our founding father: "More than men of prayer, we must be prayer itself." These words inspire in me an obedience which must be lived more for love than for any other reason.

I now live with joy and satisfaction my religious and priestly vocation in our family and in the local religious community. Often I feel very busy with activities that require a lot of attention and energy, but I try to succeed in giving of my best, because I know that I have received many gifts and I ask God help me to make them

In this day and age, Fr. Laclau is one of those referred to in the book of Wisdom: because they put their trust in the Lord, they see the truth; because they were faithful, they will remain with him in his love, because God, "gives his chosen ones grace and mercy." Grace, mercy, love, here we are at the heart of the Gospel!

In his preaching Christ willingly employed images of growth, parables evoking nature, the grain which is sown grows both day and night. Here, with the vine, we reach a high point. Everything depends on this stunning revelation received by the disciple whom he loved: what unites Jesus to his disciples is the same substance that unites him to the Father. It is the same vital current, the same sap, the same love. And it is the same spirit!

The branch can only live united to the vine. Without this link, it is dead. Similarly, the disciple only lives when deeply attached to Christ. Apart from him we can do nothing. By being attached to the sap, the entire body of the Church feeds and grows. In this way the life of God develops slowly in us. Day after day, mysteriously but in a real way, it overcomes obstacles, spreading into a stream of eternity.

Grafted in Christ, our existence is called to grow and become fruitful. Little by little, we find that we are capable of bearing fruit, a fruit of justice and peace. On condition that we remain in him, through prayer and the sacraments. Provided that we maintain this unique relationship where we are known and loved, where we feel motivated to love in turn. On condition that we accept this unconditional love delivered at each mass. On condition that we live from

it and nurture others from it.

It is impossible to describe all these others who resemble us. They make up our surrounding lives: parents, brothers, faithful parishioners of the Gironde, friends of Casablanca, of Pau and elsewhere, not to mention the beneficiaries of a generous indulgence in return for a service rendered, a kind word, a pleasure given. I will no longer resist the pleasure of a final anecdote.

Fr Laclau, I remember it as if it were yesterday: hunched in his indestructible suit jacket, hands behind his back, walked leisurely along the cloister of Saint-Michel or the corridors of Maison Neuve. They - his superiors! - had torn him away from his dear parish of Médoc, he didn't really blame them, even if he wasn't fooled: the role of priest after 80 years was like his jacket, a little too broad, a little too heavy for him.

"I err...", he repeated to those who were willing to hear him. It meant: "I want to spend some time with you. I say, will you come back?" And near the end, in this bed where he was confined at the very end, he gathered his last strength to murmur: "I am a worry to myself." By this you understood: "I languish in this existence. Who will quench my thirst for fullness? Who will revive my taste for life? How much longer must I wait to see the vineyards of the Lord?..."

You are there now, dear father, and we can only rejoice from the fruits you have given us. Having come to full maturity, the fruits are now passed into the wine press of pain, poured into the cup of the covenant, revealed in full light, and now flow in you, for you, to the glory of the Father.

Jean-Luc MORIN,scj

## LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Oh, these accounts...!

**FR JEAN-DO, REGIONAL VICAR OF THE REGION ST MICHAEL GARICOITS, HAS JUST BEEN APPOINTED REGIONAL BURSAR OF THE SAME REGION. IN SPITE OF HIS BUSY SCHEDULE, HE HAS DECIDED TO TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORNS. OH YES, MANAGING THE ACCOUNTS OF A REGION IS A BIT LIKE DOING SOME SPORT! ONE MUST NOT FEAR TO SPEND ONE'S TIME IN KEEPING WATCH OVER THE MONEY OF THE CONGREGATION. AND TO START OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT, HE POPPED OVER TO THE GENERALATE IN ROME. WHAT FOR? YOU MAY ASK. FR JEAN-DO HIMSELF WILL EXPLAIN.**

I have just spent two whole days of work with Father Graziano Sala at the General Household, to see how to organise the service of the Regional Bursar's Office. We have to recognise that tracking our personal accounts and those of the Community is not always an easy task as this asks for application and clarity. However, it is necessary and important to know how the goods are managed, which are at the disposition of each religious brother for his life, his mission. The congregation must know how it is progressing towards responding better to different calls from the world and from the Church. This work gives me the opportunity to reconsider the vow of poverty which I try to live by. I understand better the different calls sent out here or there, in the Councils or Assemblies or Chapters, for a certain rigour in the way we manage the goods entrusted to us. Returning our accounts isn't for the purposes of spying but rather it is a liberty which is exercised for the good of each member of the Community, let alone that of the Congregation. A Community radiates through the inner freedom that can transpi-



re in the life of every religious brother, also by the detachment that each brother tries to live through, following the impoverished Christ, giving his life totally. This following of Christ is also translated through this loyalty to return accounts for the good of the Community, which is in truth demanding. To 'live poverty' is a Paschal path where truth, simplicity and humility are attitudes which are asked of me. So, yes, it is paradoxical: knowing how to return accounts, month after month, is certainly an exercise of simple calculations but it is also a spiritual exercise. Why then all this resistance and slowness which is within us, to return our accounts? When we are sure that doing our accounts gives us freedom. It is with this that I leave Rome after 2 days of work, not forgetting the brotherly and family welcome received at the General Household and at Miracoli. Thank you.

Jean Dominique DELGUE scj

fully integrated into the Uruguayan society. de Montevideo, Mgr Daniel Sturla.

Saturday, March 14, in the Parish of the Sacred Heart of Barracas, was held the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the group of the Betharramite Lay Associates.

On March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, in the chapel of the College of the Sacred Heart of Rosario, the Education Community met Fr Gaspar. It was a very meaningful meeting expressing a true communion and the joy of knowing that the mission entrusted to the Education Community (which is made up of lay people and religious) is to educate young people on the faith through the particular «shade» of our betharramite charism.

### Paraguay

**Postulants & aspirants** ► Friday, March 6, during a beautiful Eucharistic celebration presided by Mgr. Ignacio Gogorza, scj, and concelebrated by Fr Osmar Caceres, formator of the postulants, by Father Javier Irala, Regional Vicar and by Frs Raúl and Fulgencio, 3 new postulants were officially welcomed into the formation house, along with 4 aspirants hailing from different parts of Paraguay. At the end of the celebration all were treated with tasty pizzas prepared by the aspirants themselves. In this joyful atmosphere the Vicariate opened the doors to these young people.



## Region



### India

**February, a short but eventful month in Mangalore** ► The month of February had been a month of blessing for the community and the family of Betharram.

A three days Retreat was organized for the aspirants, under the guidance of Rev. Fr. John Chan SCJ.

The community also organized a Lenten retreat for the youths from the neighbouring parishes which was guided by Rev. Fr. Biju Anthony SCJ & Members of the Divine Retreat Centre from Potta (Kerala).

We also welcomed the new postulants of the Apostolic Carmel Convent (Mary Hill). The community also conducted a retreat for Catholics and Non-Catholics students of Carmel Central School.

We also experienced the warmth and love of our dear companions Ms Emilia and Mrs Laura from Italy, who were staying with us for some time.



We had the official visit of the Episcopal Vicar for religious Rev. Fr. Pius James De Souza, who enlightened us on the theme of Consecrated Life.



### Region



#### France-Spain

**Laity** ► On March 14 and 15, the Lay Association «Me Voici» organized a recollection in a Cistercian monastery in the Diocese of Auch.

They were joined by other lay people who are not members of the fraternity, but linked to Betharram through bonds of friendship.

The reflection was guided by Fr Jean-Luc Morin SCJ, Regional Superior, and the topic was the one chosen by the Association for this pastoral Year: "Let yourself be surprised by the tenderness and meekness of the Heart of Jesus." Fr. Jean-Dominique Delgue SCJ, Regional Vicar, shared with the laity the project of the Vicariate aimed at involving the lay people in carrying out some specific services side by side with the religious communities.

The Religious of the Vicariate want to walk side by side with the laity, in order to help each other to respond to the respective vocations as lay people and as religious. For this, the year dedicated to the consecrated life is a favorable time to go a long way in the right direction.



### Region



#### Argentina-Uruguay

**Canonical visitation** ► From February 23 to 27 in the community of Adrogué, Fr Gaspar Fernandez Perez, Superior General, guided the spiritual retreat of the Vicariate. This was the beginning of the canonical visitation held in the Vicariate until next March 26.



From March 3 to 9, during his canonical visit, the Superior General visited the community of Montevideo-Tacuarembó. The community, after giving back to the Diocese the care of the Parish of the Immaculate Conception, is much more available for the new mission: Fr. Victor is in charge of the pastoral care in the College «de los Vascos» in Montevideo for two weeks. The rest of the time is devoted to the missionary activity of the first proclamation of the Gospel in the Diocese of Tacuarembó. Mons. Julio César Bonino, Bishop of Tacuarembó, is very grateful and appreciative of the presence of our brothers and of their mission work.

The Superior General then had the opportunity to attend the great celebration of «Patria Gaucha» and to concelebrate the «Criolla Mass» presided over by the new Cardinal of Montevideo, Mgr. Daniel Sturla. It was a beautiful experience of a Church

### For love of the community life

JOINING THE BETHARRAMITE RELIGIOUS LIFE IS ALSO TO EXPRESS YOUR LOVE TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY LIFE LIVED IN FRATERNAL COMMUNION. AT VILLA BETHARRAM (ADROGUÉ), NOVITIATE HOUSE OF THE ETCHÉOPAR REGION, THE FORMATION COMMUNITY BRINGS IT OUT EVERYDAY, IN THEIR WORDS, ACTIONS AND SILENCE. WHATEVER THE DECISION THEY ARE GOING TO TAKE AT THE END OF THE YEAR, THE NOVICES SERGIO LEIVA (FROM PARAGUAY) AND MARIANO SURACE (FROM ARGENTINA) HAVE BEEN SHARING FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR AN EXPERIENCE AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THEIR FAITH.

#### Sergio

We have begun this 2nd year of novitiate with the second week of the Spiritual Exercises. Thanks to all the help given us by St Ignatius and thanks to the fruits of the work already done so far we can decide on our way of life. For me, I have chosen consecrated life and religious life here at Betharram, for I understood that little by little I was having the spiritual experience of St Michael. I had made it so much mine that I felt the need to go for greater depth, and I decided that this was the best way to lead my own life.

Consequently during this second stage I want to be fully faithful to the choice I have made, by living each moment like a consecrated soul and by becoming a consecrated Betharramite according to the will of God.

#### Mariano

During this 2nd year of novitiate I intend having a closer look at myself so as to have a better knowledge of myself: the virtues, fears, wounds and God's presence in my personal history. This is a fundamental exercise. So far it has helped me to accept myself just as I am and to experience God's mercy during the first week of the exercises. During this 2nd year I want to live the charism of the Congregation in depth. Why the charism? Because in the charism I see God's Will. I can see God inviting me to be faithful to it, without personal projects but to be available to collaborate with the projects of the Congregation, letting Love be the sole motive.

My plan therefore is to know, accept, put into practice and assimilate fully the Betharramite charism in my own



life. In a word, to be a religious who is following the generous urge of the Heart of Jesus so as to love Him and follow Him ever more closely.

### **Daniel, has anything changed compared to the 1<sup>st</sup> year of novitiate?**

Sergio and Mariano began their novitiate in March 2014, but in reality on 27th June on the feast of the Sacred Heart they began what we call their “canonical novitiate”. Those first months of the novitiate (stage 1) helped lay the foundations of the community, we got to know each other and recalled what had already been important during the postulate. We also took time to become aware of the commitment undertaken, to consolidate it and encourage each other for the way ahead. The programme for each novice had to be planned whether as an individual or part of a community. Hence the definition of a PCA (Apostolic Community Project) and a PVP (Personal Life Project).

At the beginning of stage 2 of the novitiate (stage 1 of the canonical novitiate) we developed in depth the spiritual dimension, with the first two weeks of the Spiritual Exercises (Mercy, the choice of Jesus, and the choice of a way of life). During the third and fourth stage of the novitiate we worked on the charism, on religious life and community and were able to see what we had completed. At this point the experience of the third and fourth week of the Spiritual exercises as well as the apostolic novitiate outside the novitiate community is of vital importance.



*From the left to the right : Br. Juan Pablo, Fr. Gerard, Fr. Daniel, Fr. Francisco, Br. Mariano, Br. Sergio sci*

### **How does the community come to terms with the life of the novitiate?**

I think you would need to put the question otherwise, because the community is one of formation. We are all participants in the work of formation, obviously in function of the duties and services which each one renders. This means that together we build our PCA. We talk about it, weigh it up and adapt it according to the needs of the moment. We could put the question like this: what does each member of the community bring to the formation of the novices? First of all each one shares his life experiences with its light and shadows. There we have a priceless treasure which each one owns and from which we learn most.

Then each one has a community service,

either apostolic or part of the formation. In a word I could describe it like this:

- Fr Paco: he is the superior and “father” of the household; he is also chaplain and gives talks on the Rule of Life.

- Fr Badie: he is the patriarch and our “grandfather.” He is confessor and gives talks on the history of Betharram, the early companions of St Michael and the first Betharramites.

- Bro Juan Pablo: he is our treasurer and “big brother”; he is the link with the College San Jose de la Plata; he also gives Bible lectures (for example this week on the kerygma in the Gospels, according to the liturgical calendar which we are following in preparation for the 3rd and 4th week of the Spiritual Exercises.)

- Fr Daniel: Novice master and Regional Vi-

car; I participate at the weekly meetings for formation and I am responsible for accompanying the novices on their personal programme. And of course there is also the contribution of the novices themselves.

- Bro Sergio: he is a trained nurse and cares for Father Badie. He is also a catechist and visits the poorest families in the footsteps of St Vincent de Paul. His is a silent service.

- Bro Mariano: he looks after the upkeep of the house, assists the treasurer and is responsible for welcoming guests. His mission is specially directed towards the welcoming of whoever knocks at our door.

### **After a few years as Novice Master what do you consider to be the greatest difficulties that you meet in achieving the plans laid down in the Rule of Life?**

I think that the greatest difficulty in following Jesus Christ with all that involves is to find the difference between the will to follow Jesus and the will to discover who we are and to follow it through. This means that during the Postulancy it is necessary to develop the human dimension: check what it is which drives the young man forward; encourage the process so that there is no need to look at self but to follow in the foot-steps of the Lord. If that can be achieved one can say that there is only one way to follow with all that can be involved; if we don’t achieve this then the journey becomes not only difficult but even impossible. As St Michael says: “*Man is led forward by love; it is the secret spring that must be discovered in postulants and novices: if it is no there...*” We know from experience how that can finish.

Daniel González sci