

*Listening
to St Michael...*

During a theology class, he read us a letter in which a priest of the diocese of Tarbes told him of a resolution he had made: he had to declare that day to his 82-year-old mother that he was going to leave to enter the order of Father Muard. Ten years ago he had thought of entering a religious institute and had always postponed it. At last, he said, I have made a decision, and I am going to open my mind to my mother, and then I shall go. Since I took a stand, I feel a great joy... The Superior added that great consolations always follow such major resolutions. This he had (noticed) in others and experienced in himself; he concluded by saying that one should not be dilatory.

(From the Cachica Notebook nr 3)



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BETHARRAM

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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

Being missionary disciples
of Jesus' Heart (3)

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Jesus' mission did not end with his death and his ascension into heaven. Those who were fascinated by his way of life, the way he behaved and spoke, became his disciples. They lived the experience of his death and resurrection like that of the gift of the Holy Spirit; it transformed them imprinting a new direction on their lives, communicating to them this generous impetus which eventually established the Church through them. Trained in this way, Christ entrusted them to continue his mission throughout history: «As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you» (Jn 20, 21). «Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands as I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time» (Mt. 28: 19-20).

Our Fathers of the 19th General Chapter, meeting in Betharram in 1969 as one of the reforms sought by the Council, were inspired and had the wisdom to formulate the

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Jesus healing the woman suffering from haemorrhage, mosaic of the Cathedral of Monreale, 1189

charism in the Rule of Life. The charism of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus:

- the **spirituality** of the disciple: *to reproduce and to manifest the impulse of the Heart of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, saying to His Father: "Ecce Venio", and surrendering Himself to all His wishes for the redemption of mankind* (RdV 2);

- the **mission** to be true missionaries: *continuing of the impulse of the Incarnate Word saying to His Father: «Here I am», for the salvation of humanity* (RdV 13 and 9). It is impossible to be a missionary without being a disciple, just as much as it is to be a disciple without being a missionary.

Our Mission as religious of the Sacred Heart consists precisely in this continuation of the action of the Heart of Christ, the Incarnate Word, offering Himself to the Father to accomplish His will of salvation (RdV. 9). United in Christ, we others, the Betharramite religious and laity, offer ourselves to the Father to fulfill his plan of salvation: *«to reveal to the*

people of our time the compassion, mercy and the loving face of God the Father» (RdV. 9).

Our role is to make the person and the message of Jesus of Nazareth known to the people of our time, because only by knowing him, is it possible to know the Father and how much he loves everyone. By following the Incarnate Word who, *«the Father consecrated and sent into the world* (John 10.36) *we in turn are consecrated and sent to be in the world, by our whole religious life, a sign proclaiming Jesus Christ»* (RdV. 13).

Daily faithfulness to both the large and small services required by the situation in which we live our vocation and mission, is the source of witness which provokes for some the inescapable question: why is this so? This has already been expressed by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 21. Without these services, an expression of loyalty, there is no witness. It is the fruit and the sign of how we live. But this witness is not sufficient for the missionary. It is important for the missionary

The former Secretary, becoming Canon at the death of Monsignor Loyson, took his protégé to Bagnères to the hot springs. These holidays were gentle for the old and infirm Canon: Michael's devotion was boundless and charmed his benefactor; he liked to hear him speak about the methods of the professors at Aire who had initiated him into the clergy; He was careful not to forget the venerable Abbot Dupuy, Superior of the Dax Seminary, where he followed the philosophy course; in turn, Father Garicoits missed nothing out from the familiar conversations of Mr. Honnert: He engraved most deeply into his memory the lessons he received and gradually stripped himself of his rustic customs from childhood, through contact with the man most versed in politeness and good manners of the purest propriety.

It was thus prepared, that he entered the Minor Seminary of Larressore, as Lecturer

and Professor, following at the same time a Theology course under the direction of Mr. Claverie, Superior. It was then that a strong union formed between these two souls, which continued unto death. But while Our Lady was preparing her new man for the sanctuary at Betharram, Mr. Lassalle continued to direct the Major Seminary entrusted to him, with the generous and distinguished cooperation of Messrs Destenabes (brothers) and Mr. Labarrère. The pilgrimage became better regulated; and the savings grew which were put aside for the works that were in Father Lassalle's heart, just as the time approached for these works to be fulfilled.

Simon Fondeville scj
(1805-1872)

(to be continued)



Saint Michael Garicoit's Youth

...and this treasure was a young Basque man whom he had recruited in 1797, born in Ibarre from poor but religious parents, who lived a pure and simple lifestyle - it was Michael Garicoits...

The poverty of his family had placed him as a servant in a good countryman's home, near Saint Palais, at the age of 12 years. It is from this house and in this capacity that Michael Garicoits attended the catechism of the excellent and distinguished priest of Saint Palais, Mr. Barbaste. His simplicity, modesty, diligence, and above all sound judgment soon won the heart of the charitable and good clergyman. After having prepared him for and given him First Holy Communion, he enrolled him in the town's school and introduced him to the rudiments of the Latin language; his progress was slow but steady; in 1814 he was awarded prizes in class and academic inspectors praised him for his success in his exams. It was at this time that he showed, with religious piety, his affection for the first exiles, who brought to France much desired peace. Yet what one noticed in him, was a real outrage on seeing his native soil trampled by the foreigner. However, the good and pious priest, having learned that the Bishop's Diocese wanted a young Basque for certain services of the Secretariat, did not forget his protégé; he presented him to Monsignor Loyson with careful notes of the judgment he had made about him. The Bishop undertook to give him Latin lessons and Mr. Honnert, Secretary of the

Diocese, the so-called black bishop, took charge of him. Led by this intelligent, wise, gentle and firm hand, which had attracted the esteem of the three dioceses administered one can say that through Mr. Honnert, the young Basque made great progress in piety and in his classes. In 1818 he was entered into Philosophy at Aire; and it was there he met, and was tutored in Mathematics by, Mr. Laurence who was approaching the priesthood and who would be in a few years' time, together with his disciple, the collaborator of the works of Mr. Lassalle; one of them would be in the Minor Seminary of Saint Pé, and later Bishop of Tarbes; the other would be in Betharram first as the collaborator of the old man, and later as his successor. Mr. Garicoits often recounted the care given to him by the Monsignor and Mr. Honnert. Sometimes the good Bishop threatened to hit the spirited Cantabrian with a stick, to correct him. But a mission preached in Bayonne by the Missionaries of France made that little mischief disappear, to the great edification of young Garicoits who also benefitted from the exercise. The holidays of young Basque were spent in the Diocese of the Bishop, until the Bishop's death, and at Mr. Honnert's house, for as long as God left his benefactor on Earth.

to recognise that he lives with humility, gentleness and daring (parresia, EG n.259, with boldness) to the point of saying: «If I am this way, it is because of Jesus, he changed my life. He can do the same for you if you seek to know Him. *«There is no true evangelization if the name, teaching, the life, promises, the kingdom and mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed»* (EN 22).

The means of achieving the mission plays an integral part of the mission itself. Imitating Jesus incarnate, we also go out and meet people, not to condemn them, or to make us their enemies, but rather to draw them to knowing and following Christ. And all this is possible only in humility, commitment, gentleness, tenderness and mercy. Compassion is as essential to our interior life and our relationship with God as it is to our exterior life and our relationships with people (RdV 10; MS 200). My heart burned in seeing the witness of so many humble Betharramites who in the ministry of their confession radiated tenderness and compassion. It was evident in the joy and peace that people showed after their confession, as well as in the affection shown to these holy priests.

In the role of missionary, it is not a question of presenting yourself as a master above all in the religious ministry. It is just a case of witnessing and creating a favourable environment which will help those with whom we interact to discover the face of Christ, *«in the depths of our hearts,» where there is a «ceaseless fermentation.» «Our mission is to reveal this face of God by the witness of our lives and the proclamation of the Word»* (cf. RdV.15).

Joy is another feature of the missionary. It comes from the experience of having been comforted by and having encountered Je-

sus: this is in life and in death; in success or failure; in suffering or celebration. Like Pope Francis, Saint Michael used to say: «the Priests of Betharram, felt drawn to dedicate themselves to imitating Jesus, humble and obedient, (vocation, discipleship) and to working wholeheartedly to bring happiness to others, (mission, be a missionary) (Manifesto).

The Rule of Life expresses the joy of the mission well, which becomes a witness, awakening in others the desire to be happy as we are. Each day, the cry of the Incarnate Word: *“Father, Here I am!”* strengthens our vocation and our mission to bring the People of God to the Father. How blessed we are to live as witnesses to Jesus Christ, source of our joy, giving ourselves, *“totally to bring to others that same joy”* (RdV. 11).

We cannot forget that the essence of the mission is pastoral charity as we are reminded by John Paul II: *“The essential content of this pastoral charity is the gift of self, the total gift of self to the Church, following the example of Christ. Pastoral charity is the virtue by which we imitate Christ as Himself, in giving and service. It is not just what we do, but our gift of self, which manifests Christ's love for His flock. Pastoral charity determines our way of thinking and acting, our way of relating to people.”* (Pastores Dabo Vobis 23).

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj
Superior General

SNAPSHOTS OF BETHARRAMITE LIFE

For your holidays, choose your hemisphere!



*January is the holiday month in the Region Fr Auguste Etchecopar: before joining the Council of the Congregation in Rome, Fr Tobia Sosio paid a quick visit to his native place and he gave in to nostalgia (see the Armani glasses and the limited edition of Ferrari...); In the southern hemisphere Fr Guido Garcia scj had some downtime in the footsteps of Saint Peter, getting a miraculous catch of fish too... yet without even casting the nets!
We wish all our brothers in South America a fruitful new academic year!*

Send us your pictures of Betharramite Life

day' once a month with shared reflections during mass, and a retreat at the end of the year.

Systematic and personal guidance: once a week each young person in formation has a personal encounter with the formator.

Academic study: in the morning from Monday to Friday, young people attend their respective training institutes, Institute of Religious Life and Higher Institute of humanistic and philosophical studies. A certain part of the afternoon is devoted to a few hours of personal study at home.

Other courses: lectures on spirituality, seminars on affectivity, sexuality and the use of media; computer courses and Spanish.

Community Meeting: once a week.

Manual Labour: household, garden and yard.

Sport: three times per week.

Community excursions: three or four per year.

tion to consider his vocation as a caring and committed response to the Church. The experience of community and the personal encounter with the formator are for the young person in formation, privileged spaces of growth and preparation. It is important to make a regular evaluation with every young person and to adequately prepare him for the next stage of his formation (novitiate).

As a simple religious, what features and moments do you most appreciate in this service entrusted to you?

Osmar: I greatly appreciate the community times (times of prayer, the Eucharist, study times, sports, fraternal sharing dur-

ing meals). I also appreciate the times of systematic personal accompaniment with each young person in formation.

Among young people in formation most of which come from country areas, I rejoice in their ability to quickly adapt to a new lifestyle; I am also humbled by the trust, openness, joy and enthusiasm they show in community life and in personal meetings.

Pascal: Small things which makes me happy, like when young people try to speak English, take responsibility for the things entrusted to them, or when they are appreciated by their professors at college.

Glecimar: Formation is a sacred ministry for me, a special time that reconfirms my choice and my vocation in God. In addition to promoting and developing my ability to listen, accompaniment forces me to face directly my own history and helps me recognize that God is in charge of the sustaining and the history of each one of them ... This is when you place in the hands of God, your own history and your life. Being a formator is also for me, an unparalleled opportunity for my own formation and learning.



WHAT EXPECTATIONS DO YOU NOTE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THESE YEARS OF FORMATION?

Osmar: Four young people expressed their desire to complete their formation process, overcoming the difficulties and challenges that arise. They are happy to live in the formation house and await the arrival of new aspirants who, as of February 25, will be integrated into our formation house.

Pascal: Expectations: that these young men could become committed Religious, be available for the needs of others. And become true witness of the Gospel. Objectives: that they come to know themselves with their own limitations and talents, that they have an interior experience of Christ through prayer, that they adapt themselves to live in Betharramite way of life. Last but not least: to open themselves to the realities of life today.

Gleclimar: These young people come to us with great expectations. I can witness in my experience that to speak of oneself and talk of one's own history is a starting point for getting to know oneself and accepting one's own reality. I also notice in them a genuine desire to experience, understand and live the "presence of God" in their lives.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE DURING THESE YEARS OF POSTULANCY?

Gleclimar: In accordance with the Ratio Formationis, our goal is to help young people know themselves better, to accept to become free and responsible human beings. From this point of view, systematic and personal accompaniment helps them think about their lives and their personal history,

Organization of the period of postulancy: example of the house of Lambaré where currently are located 4 young people (a candidate in the 2nd year and three others who are just starting).

1st period (initial stage): we invite every young person in formation to an experience of growth in all dimensions (human, spiritual, community, intellectual, missionary, vocational and charismatic).

2nd period (pre-novitiate) besides work on the dimensions of life, every young person is invited to live a deeper experience of personal prayer in the light of the Word of God, shared with the community. Furthermore, through the personal interview, the candidate is helped to experience the charism of the Congregation and to put it into practice through service in the life of the community and through pastoral work in the parish.

Prayer life: Lauds, Vespers, time of personal prayer, recitation of the rosary, adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, a 'desert

their predisposition to a life of prayer, their ability to live in community and their sensitivity to the ecclesial and social reality. This is in my opinion a special moment that promotes a concrete discernment of vocation for one's whole life.

Pascal: In the Postulancy year they are encouraged a lot to develop in the human dimension. Though all the dimensions are very important, this particular dimension is given primacy. Their time table is prepared in such a way that all the dimensions of growth are accommodated. The most significant elements of our postulancy are spirituality, then intellectual and community life.

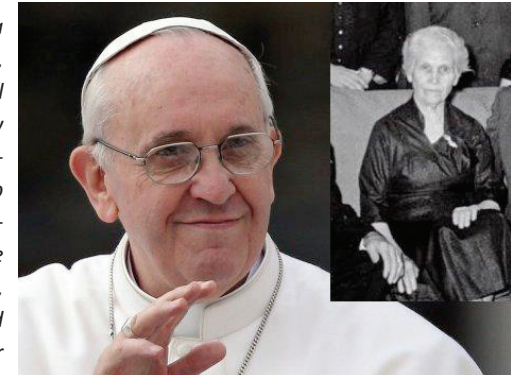
Osmar: My hope is to help each postulant to complete an initial experience of growth in all aspects of his life, an experience that allows him to live freely the option of following Christ in a Betharramite religious life. I want to help every young person in forma-



Granma Rosa the first catechist of the Pope

ROSE FOR FRANCIS, CATHERINE FOR SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS, AND SO MANY GRAND-MOTHERS OR RELATIVES HAVE BEEN THE FIRST EVANGELIZERS IN THEIR HUMBLE POSITION AND IN THE INTIMACY OF THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT.

"I had the great blessing of growing up in a family in which faith was lived in a simple, practical way. However it was my paternal grandmother in particular who influenced my journey of faith. She was a woman who explained to us, who talked to us about Jesus, who taught us the Catechism. I always remember that on the evening of Good Friday she would take us to the candle-light procession, and at the end of this procession "the dead Christ" would arrive and our grandmother would make us — the children — kneel down and she would say to us: "Look, he is dead, but tomorrow he will rise". This was how I received my first Christian proclamation, from this very woman, from my grandmother! This is really beautiful! The first proclamation at home, in the family! (Vigil of Pentecost with the ecclesial movements, 18 May 2013)



"May my grandchildren, to whom I have given my whole heart, have a long and happy life but if pain, sickness or loss of a loved one should fill them with sadness, may they remember that one breath taken at the Tabernacle, where the greatest and august martyr is present and one glance at Mary at the foot of the cross, will act like a balm that is able to heal the deepest and most painful wounds."

Granma Rosa

"In my breviary I have the last will of my grandmother Rosa, and I read it often. For me it is like a prayer. She is a saint who has suffered so much, also spiritually, and yet always went forward with courage. (Interview by Fr. Antonio Spadaro)

"And I remember my first experience of ecumenism. I told it a little while ago to the leaders of the Salvation Army. I was four or five years old, but I can still remember it clearly. I was walking down the street with my grandmother, she was holding my hand. On the other sidewalk there were two ladies from the Salvation Army, with those hats with the bow they used to wear. And I asked my grandmother: "Grandma, are they nuns?" And she said to me: "No, they are Protestants, but they are good people". This was the first time that I had ever heard someone say something good about a person of another religion, about a Protestant. At that time, in catechesis, they told us that everyone was going to hell! (Press conference on board the flight from Colombo to Manila, 15 January 2015)

Evaluation and projects

IN THE MONTH OF JANUARY YOU CAN FIND QUITE A FEW CHEERFUL PEOPLE AROUND IN THE GENERALATE: FOREIGN ACCENTS, FAMILIAR FACES AND SOME FRANK BURSTS OF LAUGHTER ALONG THE STAIRS. IT IS THE MONTH DEVOTED TO THE CONGREGATION COUNCILS AND MEETINGS: WORK, LONG MEETINGS, ANIMATED EXCHANGES, AND TRUE AND FRATERNAL SHARING BOTH IN PRAYER AND REFLECTION FOR THE WELLBEING OF OUR RELIGIOUS FAMILY.

Council of the Congregation

with Frs. Gaspar Fernández Pérez, Enrico Frigerio, Graziano Sala, Tobia Sosio, Laurent Bacho, Jean-Luc Morin, Gustavo Agín, Austin Hughes.

From January 27 to February 1, the Council of the Congregation was held in Rome: a rich experience of fellowship. According to the new Rule of Life, adapted to Canon Law, the Council of the Congregation is no longer the decision-making body. It has become however an excellent opportunity to share concerns, hopes and projects: that means the life of each Region and each Vicariate. From the agenda proposed by the Superior General, we first opened our hearts and listened to the experiences of the three Regions, and the eleven vicariates. A concern already flagged up at the last General Chapter was the promotion of vocations: what do we do and what could we do? Not only in the 'youngest' vicariates but also in vicariates where for many years candidates for religious life have been scarce, even if not totally absent. Everywhere there are signs of hope appearing, perhaps because of the great influence of Pope Francis, but also because of a thirst for spiritual life that we perceive in those whose hunger is unsatisfied by our consumer society

(and there are many, especially among young people). The activities of these six days of the Council were naturally marked by the inauguration of the Year of the Consecrated Life, with the beautiful letter that the Pope sent to all religious. Each day, one of the councillors animated the morning prayer by extracts from this letter along with the psalms, hymns, quotes of St. Michael and passages of the Word of God. Given the richness and depth of our sharing, the time reserved for morning prayer seemed too short. Quam bonum et quam iucundum ...(ps 133.1) when meetings are enriched by celebrations and prayer. Our reflections also focused on other issues such as shared mission with the laity, ongoing formation (thinking of the session next year, scheduled for the religious of over 40 years of age), the General Chapter already close, the need for ever greater communication within the Congregation (with the modern means of communication that technology offers us and with the instruments alre-

A time for clarifying one's vocation

WE CONTINUE OUR VISIT TO THE FORMATION HOUSES OF THE CONGREGATION. AFTER LISTENING TO THOSE IN CHARGE OF VOCATION PROMOTION, YOU CAN FIND HERE THE ENTHUSIASTIC AND PASSIONATE ACCOUNT OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED TO WORK WITH THE POSTULANTS.

THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE POSTULANTS ARE USUALLY YOUNG RELIGIOUS WITH A SPECIFIC PREPARATION IN THE FIELD OF FORMATION AND DISCERNMENT. ALL OF THEM PREPARED THEMSELVES TO THE BEST OF THEIR EFFORTS. THEY ARE FULLY AWARE THAT BY "FORMING" OTHERS THEY "ARE FORMED" BY THE YOUNG PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO THEIR CARE. LET'S LISTEN TO THEM!

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DEDICATED TO THIS SERVICE?

Pascal: For the past one year and eight months I have been carrying out this service. When I took up this responsibility I had no idea about it. The only thing I knew was that I was placed to work in formation.

Osmar: For me, it's been a year since I assumed this task in the formation house of our Lady of Betharram at Lambaré, at the request of superiors.

Glecimar: I started this ministry in 2013, for the spiritual accompaniment of young candidates at Passa Quatro where this stage of aspirancy was based and where it still continues.

My training for this ministry began with a personal initiative. I felt indeed challenged and called to fully live my vocation by deepening the practice of spiritual direction. This is how I started the CAP, personal spiritual accompaniment courses set up by the Jesuits of Itaiaci (Sao Paulo). Once in possession of this precious instrument, the Etchecopar Region, through my Vicariate asked me to accompany pos-

tulants. I am now beginning a course for formators in Sao Paulo, organized by the association "Transcender" following the guidelines of Jesuit Fr. Rulla.

Pascal: I am learning with the help of formators course. I have attended various seminars on formation for formators and superiors. Having said this I always seek the help of all my elder brothers in my community who advise me from time to time. Secondly I go out and meet various religious communities' superiors (priest and Nuns) who help me in this endeavour.

Osmar: I went for three years to the School for Formators in Cordoba (Argentina). I followed the course of empowerment for Guides & Spiritual Accompanists (for spiritual exercises) at the Itaiaci Centre for Spirituality in San Paulo (Brazil). Both courses have given me many tools for accompaniment in formation. I have attended meetings at regional level (ERAVOF), where I shared with other formators on the status of formation in each Vicariate. I also took part in the development of a joint formation project for our Region.

templation (with the letters of Fr. Martin and monthly mediations of Fr. Giancarlo) and times of meeting in groups. With the extended leadership team, we realized that personal contact was more effective than the written word.

The expectations of the laity during the annual retreat are not so much related, it seems to a particular theme as to the gathering as a whole. That is why we attach great importance to hospitality, dialogue, listening to personal problems and at the same time highlight personal encounter with the Lord. Recreational times, the time taken to prepare the kitchen (of course all participants take a hand in this!) are moments of great richness, where, as a family, everyone puts his gifts at the service of the community.

It is gratifying to see that we share recipes and we exchange advice on child rearing. During the retreat theory becomes practice. We don't talk about community ... we live community. We do not hold seminars on service ... we actually live service.

Sunday, the day dedicated to the celebration of the Eucharist and the barbecue, participation is greater, as we open the meeting to all those who have accompanied us from the beginning, whether parents, neighbours and friends.

Recently, we have been as an animation team in the various communities (some over 400 km away) and there we organise meetings involving many people. The hope is that monthly meetings can be organised in each community, with suitable help. We encourage the same principles of community as used in the October retreat.

A place that brings us together and allows us to maintain contact is the Lay Betharramite Family page in Facebook. As a lay community we are sponsoring young people from the Mission of Santiago to go to university in the city.

For two years, we have experienced a new activity: shared holidays with family and community. The ideal is that different families live this time together for a week or two, sharing meals, house works and expenses.

We speak here on behalf of the leadership team. We are happy to be of service to many brothers who strive to live more intensely their baptism. Each encounter with them is a feast day. Every word, every gesture, every recognition expands the heart. Daily fatigue, illnesses, sorrows are made bearable when they are shared. This is a great contagious joy which multiplies when we unite as in a chain, through prayer, being confident in God's blessing.

Our objectives? Continue to grow in community as a group of lay people and, if possible, welcome other members ... Continue to visit communities and foster a climate that allows everywhere the formation of communities faithful to Jesus, with a Christian life style... Offer a personal and community spiritual accompaniment ...

We ask only to be instruments in the hand of God of love ... to be Betharramites loving God in the Betharramite style. Available and offered, obedient, cheerful, ready to go at the first signal.

Gabriela & Diego Canton

ady at our disposal). We welcomed two items of good news : the canonisation of Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified and the beatification of Father Louis Cestac. Both events will certainly help us live better our charism in communion with the whole Church.

My personal experience leads me to say that the time and resources involved in these meetings allow us to grow in brotherhood, co-responsibility and mutual

help (spiritual and material). Sometimes we are tempted to undervalue the importance of these meetings, but they are however, moments that promote unity and help us to overcome the constant temptation of individualism and self-centredness in our lifestyle or our multiple activities.

Tobia Sosio scj

Commission of the on-going formation session in 2016

with Fr. Jacky Moura, Fr. Gustavo Agin, Br. Andrew Ferris, Fr. Gianluca Limonta, Fr. Graziano Sala.

The Preparatory Commission of the on-going formation session, which will take place in 2016, met in Rome from 22nd to 25th January 2015. Well aware that ongoing formation is a slow and gradual process of creating in us the new man in Christ, we tried to develop a well thought out route to visit the holy places, in order to bring about in each of us a review of our own life.

However, from this a question arose: why prepare this formation opportunity with such care? We believe that these days will be a "time of grace" for the religious participants, to the point of allowing them a new summing up of their life between experience and the Gospel, between vocation and the calling to be a Betharramite today. In fact, as stated by Father Amedeo Cenci, a man of great experience in the spiritual field, "ongoing formation" is not what comes after the initial training but, as paradoxical as it may seem, it is what makes

it possible; it is the primary idea or generator that guards it and gives it identity". Each participant will come to the Holy Land with a specific experiential baggage, with wounds to heal and joys to share and, above all, with the opportunity to go back to their own community with a renewed look at their future.

In the four weeks of the session that await us, we would like to probe thoroughly our humanity, our being believers, our being consecrated, in order to enable us to live the maturity of the Faith in the reality and uniqueness of everyday life. Finally, I like to think, as stated by Pope Francis in his letter for the Year of Consecrated Life (2015), that the session of 2016 will let us experience how "journeying together is always enriching and can open new paths to relations between peoples and cultures that appear in this period fraught with difficulties"

Gianluca Limonta scj

“Criteria for discernment”

IN OUR RULE OF LIFE, THIS TITLE INTRODUCES THE ARTICLES CONCERNING THE DISCERNMENT OF THE MINISTRIES. THE WORDS ARE CLEAR-CUT AND GO STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. IS IT NOT TRUE THAT, IN THE FIELD, LIFE OVERTAKES AND DICTATES THE RULE? FR MARIO ZAPPA SCJ, WHO HAS BEEN MISSIONARY IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, IS TRYING TO PERSUADE US OF THAT. IS HE GOING TO TELL US THAT THE HEN CAME BEFORE THE EGG...?!

WE THANK HIM FOR GIVING US THIS SIMPLE AND DOWN-TO-EARTH WITNESS, IN A VERY CLOSE CONTACT WITH A REALITY WHERE THE GESTURES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS THROUGH OUR BROTHERS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WORDS.

It is said from the outset, «Be listening to what the Spirit says to the Churches,» and for the most abandoned, «procure for them that happiness of knowing they are loved by the Father.»

These are the people you're going to serve, the ones who make you experience what is expressed by the Rule of Life.

At the moment you may be living through a difficult times, but over time, you have real experiences and live the joy of being where the Lord sends you, through your superiors.

During the celebration of the Way of the Cross one Good Friday, in a village of just over fifty faithful Christians, a woman from another church joined us. At the

end, she came up to me and said, «I love Jesus Christ too.» In the rite of the Way of the Cross, this woman experienced an encounter with Jesus Christ. For her, Jesus Christ was alive.

Article 130. Sons of Saint Michael Garicoits, we should imitate the quality of his listening to what “the Spirit says to the Churches” (Rev 2.17) in order to respond to the needs of the Church and of humanity.

Article 131. We should choose what serves humanity best, particularly the most deprived, and “procure for them that happiness” of knowing they are loved by the Father.

In another village, Montorio, in Italy, just after my arrival, two young people came to me saying, “Let’s see if you are able to repair the roof of the church”. The state of the church walls was really disastrous. One of my friends who came to visit me and to celebrate Sunday

mass with his family, said on entering the church, «When you come into the church here you should wear a miner’s helmet. You never know ...» With this challenge the two young people wanted to say to me, «It doesn’t matter what you

The Community Spirit (a lay recipe)

THE RECIPE MAY NOT EXIST, BUT THE WILL AND THE COMMITMENT DO EXIST TO CREATE THE SPIRIT AND THE FRATERNITY OF A BETHARRAM COMMUNITY FOR LAY PEOPLE. GABRIELA AND DIEGO CANTON, LONGSTANDING AND FAITHFUL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP FaLaBe IN ARGENTINA, EXPLAIN THEIR WAY OF BEING LAY BETHARRAMITES.

Our group of lay people was born of the concern and desire of lay people to grow as Christians and to deepen their Betharramite spirituality. We have always been assisted by the religious.

We identify ourselves as a “Lay Betharramite Family” because the spirit that we try to live is a spirit of fraternity, that of a family, as requested by St. Michael.

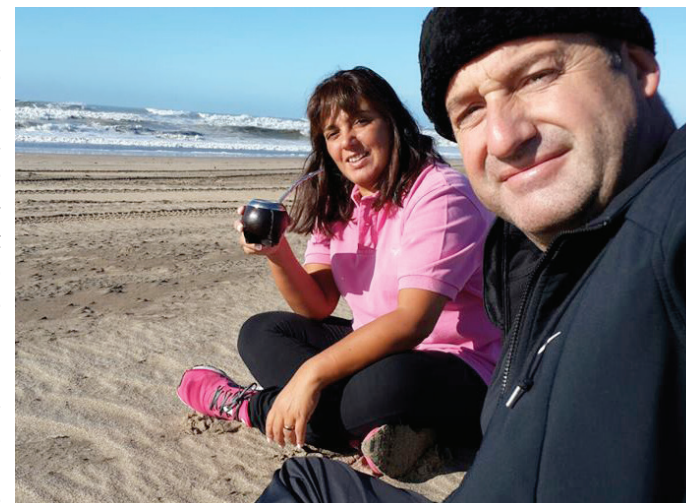
For a few years now we have met twice a year (for a half day) and we participate in an annual retreat at the end of October. It has been an opportunity to share life, prayer and formation.

From the beginning, we received the full support of Father Daniel Martin. He has been both father and teacher. He was able to share with us all his experience and knowledge. He longed with hope and trust for the awakening of the laity that the Church wanted to make pathfinders. He insisted on the human and Christian formation of missionary disciples, even before Aparecida. With passion he offered us his help to incarnate

the charism of Betharram. Fr. Giancarlo Monzani entered the team in the second phase, and carries out the task of accompanying us, according to his own original style.

The laity’s own reality is complex, making it difficult to discern common pastoral proposals: Children, grandparents, teenagers, working hours / education and respect for different levels of spirituality. As there are many elements of our reality and we try to reflect that.

We started to organise activities for the little ones, to create spaces for teens, moments of meditation and individual con-



NOTICES FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Announcements from the Superior General & his Council

The next meeting of the General Council is planned on April 27 and 28, 2015.

The Superior General, Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez, will be making his canonical visit to the Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay from February 21 to March 26.

Further announcement

The **directory** of the Congregation for 2015 is "under press". A copy will be sent to every Betharramite residence. The Regional Superiors will receive it as a pdf file too in order to print other copies if needed.



In memoriam

On 20 January, in Berberati (Central African Republic) **the father of Fr Zaolo Narcisse SCJ** (of the community of Dabakala - Ivory Coast) died. While we entrust him to the mercy of the Father, we embrace Fr Narcisse and his family in this time of trial.

We received the news of the death of **Dorothea** (aged 80) the sister of Fr. Ted Simpson in England, who passed away after some serious illness. May she rest in peace. Dorothea used to live in Olton Friary parish, and her children were enthusiastic members of the parish youth group.

The group of the Fraternity "Me voici" (Betharramite laity of France-Spain) informed us about the death of **Mr Claude Combe**, Dominique's husband, occurred on February 8 in Rilhac-Rancon (France). Dominique has been a member of the Fraternity "Me voici" right from the beginning. We pray with Dominique and her family for the eternal rest of Claude.

tell us. Let's see what you can do.» This is the challenge that stayed with me during the years I spent with them. You understand the Rule of Life by doing it, by living it and putting it into practice. In a village here in Central Africa, the head of the Legion of Mary had had enough of her husband. They had already had seven children, but he didn't respect her. One day she left her husband and children to go and live with another man. When I went back to the village, I asked the catechist for news of her, «How is Nelly?» and the catechist replied, «She still lives in another town, but when she comes back here, I see that she prays a lot.» That was the advice I had given her. For a year, two years, three years,

I said, «Do what the Spirit tells you.» At a big celebration, she came to confession, then she told me, «I'm going back to my husband.» The Lord had spoken to her; she knows it will be difficult, but she is going back to live with her husband and children.

Pope Francis, the day after his election as pope, told the cardinals concelebrating together, «A Christian without the cross is nothing.»

There comes a time when it's not you who brings the good news of the gospel, but your brothers and sisters who tell you the way to be a good Christian.

Mario Zappa, scj



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CONGREGATION

Region



Novitiate



Beginning of the novitiate ► Sunday, February 1, on the eve of the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, during the celebration of Vespers, four novices (Arnaud, Landry, Christian and Serge) officially started the canonical year of novitiate, at the novitiate house in Bethlehem. The Novices were welcomed by the Novice Master, Fr Jacky Moura SCJ and by the Superior of the community, Fr Henri Lamasse SCJ. Each novice pledged his commitment by signing the book of the novitiate. Finally, the Novice Master handed them a copy of the «Spiritual Doctrine».

Central Africa

The Vicariate meets the Regional Superior ► On January 17, the Religious of the Vicariate gathered around Fr Jean-Luc Morin SCJ (Regional Superior) in the community of St Michael Bouar, at the end of his visit to the Vicariate. It was an opportunity to assess the progress made in the



Region and to address issues of common interest (formation, education, economic development project). It was also an opportunity to look to the future with realism, confidence and solidarity ... All this in fraternal communion with the Regional Vicar, Fr Tiziano Pozzi SCJ, who is recovering from a surgery in Italy and he is expected in Central African Republic in early March.



Ivory Coast

Young Betharramites ► During this year, dedicated to the Consecrated Life, the community of Yamoussoukro will be more active in sharing the spirituality of our founder, with the laity. In this respect, on Sunday, January 25, the Betharramite Youth had a meeting, chaired by Fr Luc-Martial, to get organized and to share the charism of St. Michael. After the Group MIE, it is a joy to witness the blossoming of the group of the betharramite youth in the Parish of St Felix of Yamoussoukro.

Region



Argentina-Uruguay ► From February 9 to 11 there took place the Educators and Missionaries meeting of the Vicariate at Pilar.

Let us pray for this service dedicated to our Betharramite schools and missions!

Region



India

Presentation of the Lord ► On February 2, the Formation Community of Mangalore celebrated the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, World Day for Consecrated Life. The day started with Solemn Morning prayer, where Fr. Biju Antony enlightened the community with the Feast day message and thereby the representatives of the brothers along with fathers lighted the lamp which symbolized Christ as our Light. After a candle light procession, the day ended with a special blessing by Fr. Kriangsak and Fr. Biju Antony over the brothers and the Children of St. Michael Care Home. The day became more meaningful as Apostolic Carmel Sisters joined us for the celebration of the Eucharist.



Thailand

«Our home, our joy» ► This was the motto during the traditional celebration for the conclusion of the year at the "Holy Family Catholic Centre": as per tradition, for three days the Center welcomes young people and adults who in the past had been boarders for a few

years in the Centre. These were eventful days: sharing, prayer and entertainment.

On Wednesday, December 31, the Holy Eucharist was concelebrated (by Frs Pensa, Subancha and Sa-at) in the hall of the Centre, since in the Chapel there was no room for all. A great celebration followed to say goodbye to the year 2014 and usher in the New Year: the event, prepared by the senior girls, consisted of songs, dances and games. At the stroke of midnight some "flying lanterns" enlightened the sky, while all were exchanging wishes for the new year. The next day, in the morning, after the celebration of the Holy Mass, there was the most moving part of the celebration: all the "alumni", on their knees, expressed their gratitude to those who, along the years, had brought them up as their children.



Special meeting ► On 7-8 January 2015, the Thai Vicariate met with the Bishop Francis Xavier Veera, at Ban Betharram, Chiang Mai. These were the main points on the agenda: Plan for the pastoral ministry in 2015; Plan for the Spiritual guidance for the various ministries; Encouraging the members of the Betharram Congregation to go forward.

