

*Listening  
to St Michael...*

*In the instruction of the 20th May Father Superior exhorted us to take a good look and see what are our dispositions in the service of God in our present state, what are the dispositions of our hearts for the perfection of our outward conduct; it can depend on experience, circumstances on many other events.*

*William Faber notes five points underlining the dispositions which should be ours:*

- In our present state, the service of God ought to be our unique or at least our main preoccupation.*
- We must hold on to this service of God without delay, without doubting and without looking backwards.*
- The slightest carelessness in performing of our duties should be like a sacrilege in our eyes.*
- We should detest mortal sin as being the greatest evil that can befall mankind.*
- Whether we are saved or damned, such a question should inspire us with the greatest of fears; it should make us reflect seriously and make its influence felt in all our actions.*

*(Cachica Notebook nr.15)*



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BETHARRAM

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NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE  
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA  
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA  
FAMILY NEWS

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## A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

### Garicoits and Cestac

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We, sons of St Michael Garicoits, are happy to share with the Servants of Mary the joy of the beatification of Father Louis Edward Cestac. We join them in thanking God for the precious gift of such a founder for the church in Bayonne and the universal Church, especially for the Church in France, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Ivory Coast and India.

Father Garicoits and Father Cestac were very good friends. Their friendship dated from their schooldays together at St Louis College. Although he was the younger of the two, Cestac was in a higher class, because Garicoits had to work as a servant in order to pay for his studies. Their friendship continued to grow when they were students at the Major seminary at Aire-sur-Adour. There Michael was a bursary student. Their friendship continued to deepen when they were teachers together at Larressore for three years.

They were both ordained priest for the Diocese of Bayonne. They both knew the spirit of independence and revolt which the French Revolution had sown in the hearts and minds of society as well as in the Church. They both sought solutions to the problems of their times, by

each founding a religious institute. But I think what was fundamental in both men was their commitment to living the Gospel, to be genuine disciples of Jesus Christ humble and obedient, Son of God and of the Virgin Mary. As a result of their meeting with Christ, they both accepted the reality of their day without judging it, but resolved courageously to bring the Gospel to it.

They had mutual trust and affection for each other. When as Founder Father Cestac had to compose the Constitutions for the Servants of Mary he went to Betharram attracted as he was by Mary's presence and sure of the welcome of his dear friend Father Garicoits. When he was in need of priests to give spiritual help to the Sisters, Father Garicoits would say: *"Concerning the matter you spoke about, certainly I am prepared to do anything; 1 In order to obey the Bishop; 2. All the more from my respect and interest inspired by the works of Fr Cestac. But I have taken the opportunity to tell Fr Cestac that there are problems in running the parish (...) The best thing would be to make arrangements so that we are not responsible for the parish. I would prefer them as assistants to Fr Cestac and to the Parish Priest, just that. (...) Please tell Fr Cestac that he can count on me to do whatever I can."*

That's how our congregation, as St Michael used to say telling Father Sauveterre, Parish priest of Anglet, without ever being



*Louis-Edouard Cestac (Bayonne, January 6<sup>th</sup> 1801 - Anglet, March 27<sup>th</sup> 1868) will be beatified on May 31<sup>st</sup> in Bayonne*

in charge of the parish. In 1860 Father Casau was the first Betharramite chaplain for the communities of the Servants of Mary working at the Social centre Notre Dame du Refuge in Anglet. The second one, also a Betharramite, was Father Salvat Etchegaray; he it was who helped in the realisation of many projects at the Centre, after the death of Father Cestac. It was Father Etchegaray who with the help of Father Etchecopar brought the constitutions of the Servants of Mary to Rome for their approval by the Holy See. The decree was signed on 15 April 1878, eight months after the death of Father Etchecopar.

Father Cestac was a shepherd who had the "smell of the sheep on him", just like

the public as Betharram's « Calvary » was not limited to recounting what is known as the Stations of the Cross, which only started at the tribunal of Pilate, but rather the exact whole circumstances of his Passion, beginning at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Three months later, in 1841, the Betrayal of Judas was exhibited and attracted the attention of experts and touched hearts. •• The appearance of Christ in front of Anne was depicted in the third station: the sculpture was placed there around the month of July.

Monsignor Lacroix came to Betharram on 6th September. He came to grant Betharram the constitution of a diocesan Congregation. He drew up the constitution and handed it over to the Community on the 11th or 12th September (1841). He gave the Congregation the name of Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, offering them to His Excellency the Bishop for all the duties he wanted to entrust to them in the Diocese, under the direction of the Superior for whom he reserved an appointment.

The Congregation consisted of:

1. Priests and novices, who added to the vow of chastity made in Holy Orders, that of obedience to the Monsignor and to the Superior; that of poverty by subjecting the use of their own goods and of those given to them by way of donation or final will and testament, to the permission of the Superior.
2. Assistant Brothers, also admitted to the Congregation under the same conditions of annual vows after two years of novitiate and perpetual vows after six years of profession. •• However, Mr Renoir •• continued casting two sculptures until the holidays of 1842: the Scourging and the Crowning of Jesus with the Crown of Thorns. He took his holidays until the month of November, after which he engaged himself

again in his work: the Condemnation of Jesus Christ by Pilate and the Meeting of Jesus and his Holy Mother. •• At the end of 1844, Mr Renoir, seeing himself on the brink of finishing the promised Stations of the Cross, prepared himself to furnish the great altar with a beautiful Virgin Mother in solid plaster. Also in the month of April, he put the sculpture of the crucifixion in the place where he was able to keep the beautiful figure of Christ crucified. The facial expressions were appropriate for the characters, the calm yet deep suffering of Mary; he only wished he had embodied it standing.

In the month of May, they blessed on the altar the statue of the Virgin, which was depicted begging to the child Jesus to throw a saving branch to the shepherd being swept away in the waters of the River Gave; The sculptor wanted to consecrate the old tradition in his statue.

However, Mr Renoir, after having placed the eighth station of the Crucifixion on « Calvary », and the beautiful statue of Mary on the great altar, left Betharram. They gave him 3500 francs net, after paying for the expenses to go to the Thermal Baths at Cauteret or Luchon, for travelling, for cloakroom/locker charges and for upkeep. They would certainly have wished to finish the work but the statues of the crosses had to be in cast iron or in molten iron; but the time to have statues in cast iron had not come. Anyway Betharram had exhausted its financial resources. The General Council in the sessions of 1845 wanted to allocate the sum of 1500 francs. The country's intelligent men had effectively recognised by this allocation of money that Bearn was endowed with a real masterpiece.

Simon Fonderville scj  
(1805-1872)

*(To be continued)*



## THE FONDEVILLE NOTEBOOK OR BÉTHARRAM FROM 1790

### About the arrival of Mr Renoir, the sad end of Eliçabide, the first constitution of the Congregation and the completion of Betharram's Calvary.

In 1839 Father Theodore Combalot visited Betharram on the day of Our Lady's Nativity Contest (a little competition organised to test the pupils' knowledge of the Nativity). The illustrious apostolic missionary was invited to have his eloquent talk heard, which was magnificent as always. However, shocked by the state of Betharram's own hillside « Calvary », he devised a plan to make a work of art in this charming place chosen by Mary. He promised a distinguished and Christian artist, a pupil of Pradier and Ingres.

In the Spring of 1840, Mr Renoir of the Congregation of St Vincent de Paul, appeared in Betharram and set up his workshop. ••

It was after Easter in 1840 that Mr Garicoits became extremely distressed to learn of the gloomy fulfilment of his prediction concerning the unfortunate Eliçabide. His detainment in Bordeaux, being held in custody for the triple murder of his adopted sister and her children, cast terror throughout the community and amongst the children at school. Mr Garicoits dictated a letter for the wretched prisoner to a Community priest. In reading

it, Eliçabide exclaimed "a saint has written this and an angel has dictated it"; a month later he wrote to Mr Cassou asking forgiveness of Betharram for all the suffering he had caused. ••

In the month of July 1840, Mr Renoir had finished his first sculpture, the Agony of Our Lord. •• Unfortunately, they used a caster who was not very familiar with this kind of work and he lost the sculpture; but this distressing situation discouraged neither the artist nor the Superior. Moreover, three months later, the sculpture of the Agony of Jesus in the Garden, the start of the Passion of the Saviour, was presented to



Jesus. He responded to the material and spiritual needs of the poor, young girls, and women who sold their bodies in order to survive. This was obvious by all the works of mercy. He gave away all his belongings in gifts to the poor; he opened an orphanage for street girls, a hostel for prostitutes and a college for their formation. It is in this same spirit that the social centre Notre Dame du Refuge continues to this day. What conversions! Some of the young girls and women even wanted "further more" (recalling the "magis" of St Ignatius); they became religious and "Bernardines". Father Cestac had only to let himself be guided and abandon himself to the Holy Spirit who was speaking to him through these women. And this is how the Congregation of the Servants of Mary came into being.

Besides the great friendship which Father Garicoits had for him, he was full of admiration for the person and good works of Father Cestac. *"Men thus unobtrusive and lost in God are capable of any good. The weaker they are, the stronger they are. For instance Father Cestac and his community of five hundred people, in complete penury from the material and spiritual point of view, going to confession after a month's interval to different confessors, without consistent direction, and nevertheless, this world is edifying like a Thebais."* (DS 295)

Father Cestac, with the help of the women he welcomed at the Refuge, continued transforming the sand dunes formed by the ocean into an orchard which can be still admired today.

The friendship and collaboration between these two men has lasted from 1860 right down to the present day and still con-

tinues between the Betharramites, sons of Michael Garicoits, and the Servants of Mary, daughters of Louis Edward Cestac. A community of three Betharramites is actively engaged in the chaplaincy at Notre Dame du Refuge. I also remember that in days gone by there were communities of Sisters in the service of Betharram, Casablanca and Mendelu. I shall never forget Sister Jacob, with her smile, working from morning to night in the Apostolate at Mendelu. What an example of fidelity and devotion to duty in the performance of her duties in the service of men and through them her service of God to whom she had consecrated her life. In the process of beatification several Betharramites collaborated with Sister Louise; I remember Father Jacky with his knowledge acting as postulator and Father Frigerio with his discreet service of mediation.

Through the intercession of "good Father Cestac" and of St Michael Garicoits, let us ask Jesus to fill us with mercy so as to be really missionary disciples, fully aware of the needs of our brothers and sisters and welcoming them with open arms. That's how "good Father Cestac" used to express himself as he entrusted himself to the Virgin Mary whom he greatly loved: *"I would like to entrust one thing to your prayer: May Our Lady open our hearts to the poor and the unfortunate! I am happy to note that Our Lady followed this route herself. Ours is the privilege to give to the unfortunate time and time again without measuring or making calculations."*

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj  
Superior General

### *The spirit of the place*



*May 1797. From a small farm on the Ibarre hillside come the cries of a lively infant just one month old. That was 218 years ago. And since then, what an amazing story! On that spring day in 2015, a group of children and teenagers hurtled down the slope of Garicotchea. Again fresh and joyful cries fill the valley. The spirit of the place is alive there, where the Lord has planted a seed of holiness.*

Picture by Fr. Michel Vignau, scj

We are also very happy to live our spiritual experience so close to the realities of the Holy Land, the land of our Lord Jesus Christ. This proximity to the source of our faith helps us to discover progressively a number of things that are useful for our spiritual, human and cultural formation as much as for our intellectual development. The various pilgrimages of the holy places helps to enlighten us about the mystery of the Incarnation that we always proclaim but especially at the Annunciation: The Word became flesh and dwelt HERE among us. We discover with joy and happiness the human dimension of our Lord: his origins, his footsteps, his history, which helps us to approach not only the gospel accounts more closely, but all the Holy Scriptures. We could take Holy Week experienced "directly" in the footsteps of the suffering servant, if we can express it like this. We were with him in the Upper Room for the last supper with his disciples and the washing of their feet and with him in his prayer in Gethsemane and then at the church of St. Peter in Gallicantu for the denial and the confession of Peter, then at the Holy Sepulchre for his scourging, his crucifixion, death and resurrection, and finally on the path to Emmaus with the two disciples. All these great moments proclaimed by the Catholic faith, we have



lived and continue to live them more closely. It is really a blessing that we welcome. The geographical location of our house made us the immediate neighbours of the Carmel of Bethlehem. (...) We are very surprised by the spirit of fraternity that has long reigned between the two religious families. We still keep in memory the warmth of the Carmelite welcome which we received a few days after our arrival. We participate in some of their activities: prayer times, sharing and moments of joy. With the perspective of deepening our knowledge of the doctrine and spirituality of our father Michael Garicoits, we also discover the richness of Carmelite spirituality through the image of the "future saint," Mariam Baouardy. We use her prayer to the

Holy Spirit to open our hearts every day. (...). We are in communion with the Carmel in the preparations for the big celebration, the canonization of Blessed Mariam on 17 May. (...) For this purpose, the prioress of Bethlehem requested that novices compose and record a song with an African rhythm in honor of the future saint.

The Holy Land is a land marked with extreme tensions. We became aware of this the minute we arrived through various exchanges and observations. The many and diverse problems regularly influence the lives of people here. Poverty, high unemployment rates, socio-cultural problems which cause some mothers to abandon their children, some Palestinian Christians unable to tread the soil of the Holy City (Jerusalem), they must await the annual authorization during Holy Week; the migration of young Christians, causing a significant decrease of Christianity in the Holy Land... We all carry these problems in our prayers and try, within the limits of our position, to be present alongside them, as recommended by our father Michael Garicoits. For example, we go in pairs twice a week (on Tuesdays and Thursdays), to carry out the service of the Good Samaritan in two social centres: Serge and Landry at *La Grèche*, a religious institution, run by the Daughters of Charity, that welcomes children abandoned by their families; Arnaud and Christian at *Niño Dios*, a shelter for the mentally ill, run by the Religious of the Incarnate Word. We try to be open to cultural realities around us, and we are learning here and there, the Arabic language to aid communication.





wards disabled children of Niño Dios. The evangelical life and the possible choice of a life of following Christ are shaped in all of this.

All that the novices experience is to be linked with them to the confirmation or otherwise of their vocation. You will therefore understand what joy the novice master can experience when in a weekly meeting, the novice shares some progress observed in a personal struggle with conversion, or an awakening to a new way to discover the face of the Lord, or in the recollection of a happy or painful memory that was the basis of a new and vital step forward. So with the novices, it is a matter of picking the fruits of the Spirit, helping them to assess their experiences and to reap the harvest as a valuable one for the future. It is also expected that some will occasionally cling to hidden thorns on the branches of the tree of life.

Another great joy, which is part of every father/son relationship is the trust given and received, giving the relationship a beautiful quality which lives in the heart. And then a precious moment of the day is the Eucharistic sharing of the Word and the Body and Blood of the Lord, bringing

a beneficial, convivial atmosphere. This year, in Bethlehem, (..) leads us to discover people who will become brothers since we are called to be family with them, and, in fact, live alongside people who are the same age as parents or grandparents. Each one carries the story of his own consecrated life. The community therefore becomes a place where fraternity becomes the rule. It is especially at meal times and in the chapel that this becomes a reality, because that's where everyone goes and there is laughter at the table, or a curious young person raises a question which gives rise to moments of great sharing.

The novice master shares with his assistant, the community superior, various aspects of the lives of the novices, and at community meetings, he communicates what is planned and what is progressing. For a community, it is, I think, a real commitment to host a group of novices and to have their presence all year, knowing that it is for them to see us as witnesses (for each other) to the fact that it is possible to be happy in this way of life that we have. And each person has his own way of being present in the novitiate

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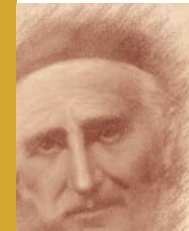
congregation of Bétharram for all their efforts given to this cause.

Before saying anything, we want to thank the Lord for the opportunity that He has given us to live the canonical year of our novitiate in the Holy Land. This is an opportunity that is not given to everyone who wants it and we are very aware of the privileges that we experience every moment. Our gratitude also goes to the role of the Blessed Mary of Jesus crucified for her intercession; we still remember the Novena called her name that gave us the chance to return the novitiate in the Holy Land. Our gratitude is also for the whole



## One of four principles

TO ADVANCE TOWARDS THE COMMON GOOD AND SOCIAL PEACE, TO GOVERN WELL AND TO GUIDE ACTIONS IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENT, WE MUST, SAYS POPE FRANCIS IN EVANGELII GAUDIUM, BE BASED ON FOUR PRINCIPLES: TIME IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE SPACE <sup>[222-225]</sup>; UNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN CONFLICT <sup>[226-230]</sup>; REALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN IDEAS <sup>[231-233]</sup>; THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE PART <sup>[234-237]</sup>. CAN THESE PRINCIPLES BE FOR US ALL THE CARDINAL POINTS OF DISCERNMENT?... ESPECIALLY SINCE OUR FOUNDER, EAGER IN HIS TIME TO ESTABLISH A NEW RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY, FELT SO STRONGLY THE VALUE OF ONE OF THESE PRINCIPLES.



There are truths which result from God's essence, and we cannot either destroy them or change them without touching the divine essence;

for example: the whole is greater than the part, there is no stick without two ends, etc (Cachica Notebook, nr. 22)

### THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE PART

234. (...) We need to pay attention to the global so as to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground.. (...)

235. (...) We need to sink our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place, which is a gift of God. We can work on a small scale, in our own neighbourhood, but with a larger perspective. (...)

236. Here our model is not the sphere, which is no greater than its parts, where every point is equidistant from the centre, and there are no differences between them. Instead, it is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness. Pastoral and political activity alike seek to gather in this polyhedron the best of each. (...)

237. To Christians, this principle also evokes the totality or integrity of the Gospel which the Church passes down to us and sends us forth to proclaim. Its fullness and richness embrace scholars and workers, businessmen and artists, in a word, everyone. (...) The Gospel has an intrinsic principle of totality: it will always remain good news until it has been proclaimed to all people, until it has healed and strengthened every aspect of humanity, until it has brought all men and women together at table in God's kingdom. (...)

These very brief extracts from EG are meant to be an invitation to meditate the integral text.

### On the eve of the canonization of the “little nothing”

IN THREE DAYS, BLESSED MARY OF JESUS CRUCIFIED, MARIAM BAOUARDY (1846-1878), WILL BE CANONIZED IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE. BORN IN GALILEE, “THE LITTLE ARAB” LIVED IN EGYPT, LEBANON, FRANCE, INDIA AND ENDED HER SHORT LIFE IN BETHLEHEM. FOR THE CHURCH, SHE IS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE CHRISTIANS OF EAST AND WEST.

FOR US BETHARRAMITES SHE IS ALSO THE ONE THAT GAVE US BIRTH AS A PONTIFICAL SOCIETY INSPIRED BY HER INTERVENTION AND TENACITY. FOR THIS ACT OF LOVE TOWARDS OUR FAMILY, WE RESPOND WITH INFINITE GRATITUDE AND CONSTANT DEVOTION.

AND AS WE APPROACH THE BIG DAY, “THE FIRST REASON FOR REJOICING, (AS FR GASPARD SCJ SAID RECENTLY) IS TO CONTEMPLATE MARIAM SHARING THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT AFTER HAVING LIVED THE GOSPEL ON THIS EARTH.

« Today, holiness - she said - is not the prayer, either the visions [or the] revelations, or the science of good-speaking, or the hair shirts, or the punishments; it is humility...

Humility is the peace. It is a queen, the humble soul, it is always happy. In the fight, in the suffering, it humbles itself; it believes to deserve more of it; it asks for [more]. It is always in peace. Pride brings confusion. A humble heart is the vase, the chalice which holds God. The Lord said: a humble, really humble soul, will make more miracles than the old prophets... »

Archives of the Carmel VII, 75-76)



Poster that the Betharramites placed at the entrance of the church Our Lady of the Miracles, in Rome

### Master of the novices, a special mission

TO FINISH OUR TOUR OF THE NOVITIATE HOUSES, WE ASKED FR. JACKY SCJ TO SPEAK OF THE SPECIFIC ROLE OF THE MASTER OF NOVICES IN THE FORMATION COMMUNITY, BEFORE GIVING THE FLOOR TO SERGE ARNAUD, LANDRY AND CHRISTIAN, OUR FOUR YOUNG IVORIAN NOVICES.

To be the master of novices seems to me to be a rather special situation. Last year in Betharram I saw quite a lot of Father Etchécopar who even as a young disciple was called by St Michael to become a novice master. I imagined the novices living in those early furnished premises in the attic of the monastery, where I have known very basic small cells. And every morning in my prayer near our father's room, I returned to the same question: «and what do I do with them today, what discovery shall I invite them to experience? » The novice master is alone with the Holy Spirit in this role of accompanying the novices. He has all the guidance in folders, scholarly books, the very considerable Ratio Formationis, reflections from the Service of Formation, his own experience of life and of formation, prayer and teaching.

And it is left to him to create each of the 366 days of the novitiate. Alone, it is his great responsibility to allow these young people to ponder these issues for themselves: the Lord appears to be calling me (illusion or reality ...?), is this calling to a religious life at Bétharram (what does that mean ...?), what I can rely on to sustain my whole life in this way of following Christ? And the Congregation charges him with the power at the end of two years to say, “I sincerely believe that N. should consider being a religious Bétharramite or not. Here are the elements that allow me to say that!” It is especially important to identify the “secret spring” that remains in our family the “test” for welcoming any novice into the Congregation. And who am I to discern this? I like to say, “it is only in the light of the Holy Spirit that this is possible.”

This is the concern with which it is important to walk every day in the little, sometimes monotonous, moments of ordinary life, offering care in the service of others, diligence and reverence in facing the Lord, through thoughtful gestures towards the orphans of the nursery or to-







daily life of a lay person. I wished my consecration to be like and yet different from that of the religious. I can't say anything more about my vocation because I am discovering it as I live it. However I know that it fills my life and makes me happy. Lately, when someone asks me how I am I answer that I am happy! I can prove that I am happy because God has given me life, that He had revealed my vocation to me, that He teaches me His lessons through Betharram, that He helps me to realise that I am poor, that I need Him and others, that He lets me love Him in so many people, because He loves me through countless numbers of individuals and because He tells my heart that He wants me to live and be

happy. All this fills me with hope because in the Incarnation Mary's joy was followed by fullness. This is why I know that one day, through God's grace and with the help of others, I too can produce fruits for the Kingdom and that will take place in the heart of Betharram.

María Eugenia Martearena

## One hundred years of service

At 6:00 PM, the Via del Corso is thick with tourists from all parts of the world, but their attention is drawn by a strange and colourful cortege of pilgrims: the Japanese are filming it on their mobile phones this strange view of men dressed in the outfits of ancient confraternities of Monteporzio Catone, at the same time other tourists are wondering at what can be the meaning of Litanies of Our Lady broadcast over the loud-speaker.

That's how, on the afternoon of the 24th April, the celebrations marking the centenary of the presence of the Betharramite Fathers at the sanctuary of the Madonna del Miracoli, Piazza del Popolo. It was with this procession and the crowded Mass which followed, that the auxiliary Bishop, Mgr Matteo Zuppi, Fr Gaspar Fernandez scj, Fr Natale Re scj, rector, and Fr Michael Vignau, delegate of the regional Vicar and rector of the sanctuaries in Betharram, together with other confreres from different towns in Italy, recalled that day a hundred years ago when the Sacred Heart Fathers began their service in the church at the foot of the Pincio.

It's not a church exactly like another church, but rather a sanctuary founded – in some hap hazard fashion or by providence! – after the miraculous rescue of a child from the waters, just like at Betharram. Such an event naturally ended up in a reflexion leading to the centenary celebrations of 25th April as part of the conference organised by the *BetAgora* communications centre on the theme "The Sacred Heart Priests and the pastoral care of worldwide sanctuaries". In the course of their history, the Betharramites were often involved in caring for sanctuaries. It was a golden opportunity to reflect on the history and meaning of the event. This was

well studied by Roberto Cornora, archivist of the congregation and Fr Ercole Ceriani scj, architect. The meaning was confirmed thanks to interesting information collected by Frs Mario Giussani, Enrico Frigerio and Tarcisio Giacomelli.

Marcellina Pedico, professor at the Pontifical University pointed out the pastoral projects of a "modern" sanctuary. Not only must a good liturgical construction and spirituality be on offer (the prayer groups which use the Miracoli church bear witness to this) but the sanctuary must promote opportunities for developing Christian culture and suggesting paths leading to the divine – for example the musical concert put on for the centenary. It must also offer spaces of charity in the solitude of the great cities and encourage ecumenical dialogues.

Thus the presence of religious in the sanctuary can be full of meaning. It can be a link with a pilgrimage or a tourist attraction but can also be a bridge in the search for faith or a more fulfilled life, for anyone who wishes. This is the type of church born of the reflexion of Pope Francis and which the Betharramite religious and laity from Lombardy and Tuscany greeted on St Peter's Square, carrying a banner on their way past his window during his Sunday "*Regina caeli*".

Roberto Beretta

## PRACTISING THE RULE

### Ob-audire

IN RELIGION, OBEDIENCE IS NOT A SHIELD THAT COMES ADORN A GOOD DEED, BUT A DISPOSITION OF THE MIND AND HEART THAT DOES NOT HESITATE. BASICALLY, THE ETYMOLOGY DIRECTS US: OBEY, FROM THE LATIN OB-AUDIRE = TO LISTEN TO SOMEONE. STILL, TALK OF OBEDIENCE IS NOT EASY. IMAGINE WHEN IT COMES TO WRITE ARTICLES OF THE RULE OF LIFE ON THE SUBJECT FOR THE BETHARRAMITES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW! HAVING WORKED IN THIS MISSION WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE REVISION OF THE SAID RULE, FR. BEÑAT OYHÉNART SCJ BACK HERE TO THE SOURCE OF THEIR INSPIRATION.

«Fortunately, there is the good Lord! «

It had to happen, it had to happen to me! Speaking of obedience when, too often, I noticed that those who talk about it the most, or the best, are too often those who act as they please ...

So, obedience...let's talk about it!

The first vow of a Betharramite? In the aftermath of a French Revolution that deconstructed the Church and society, Michael Garicoits saw bishops crying over the disobedience of many priests; from this sprang one of his intuitions to create a Congregation. Father Auguste Etchécopar, in *Thoughts* and Father Pierre Duvignau in *The Spiritual Doctrine*, devoted the longest chapters to obedience!

Our Rule of Life has balance in presenting the vows: 16 articles for «consecrated chastity», 12 for «evangelical poverty» and 14 for «Betharramite obedience»; and the choice of adjectives is not just chance! Chastity, poverty, obedience, Vatican II presents the vows in that order; so does Bétharram. And that's right! Love, only the love which gives meaning to the vow of chastity, can justify poverty and obedience. It is even said in article no. 64: «We live our religious obedience in the perspective of the mystery of Incarnation. [We are] united with Christ by the offering of

our whole selves in love ... «

Let us never forget: with Michael Garicoits, everything starts from the contemplation of God's Love which manifests the incarnation of the Son. The one who says «Here I am,» sacrificing himself through love until death, the most shameful death, that of the cross. At the sight of this marvelous spectacle we feel drawn to consecrate ourselves through our vows. Being obedient is not out of date! Talking of self-sacrifice is still relevant today! We cannot suppress or silence the passages of the Word of God.

In his founding document, Michael Garicoits leads us to the hymn of the letter to the Philippians: *"But Jesus Christ emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as men are; and being in every way as men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So, my dear friends, you have always been obedient; your obedience must not be limited to times when I am pre-*



Maria Eugenia and Fr. Daniel scj with other members of the Casa de Encuentro... on the web ; you can visit also the blog: <http://casadeencuentrocjdj.blogspot.it>

journey. In the light of all these experiences I asked Fr Daniel Gonzalez scj if he would be good enough to accompany me personally; very generously he accepted to be witness of God's work in my life.

I therefore got to know the Spiritual Exercises, in stages, over a number of years. How is one to pass on faithfully such a priceless gift, so deep, so human, so life changing, I don't feel up to it. I can but thank the Lord to have given St Ignatius the ability to scan the heart of man and offer all members of the Church a path for self knowledge, a way of meeting the Lord and be open to others. I thank God especially for the openness of our Father St Michael Garicoits who was able to drink at this source and point to the path for all Betharramites who would follow

him. Here is a charism which I feel is mine, a space where I can grow and develop in meeting Jesus, and which offers me the possibility of working for others, a community which loves me and lets itself be loved in return, contact with myself through means of the Spiritual Exercises to discover God's mercy and his Project of Love for me; this personal accompaniment helped me to grow in confidence for others and in what I could do. All this is the necessary foundation for me to discover that my life has meaning in so far as I can feel loved and encouraged to love others.

In an extraordinary manner on my way towards a fuller life I discovered that I wished to consecrate my life as a lay person to God, as a Betharramite sharing the same charism as others in the



## THE LAITY AND THE CHARISM OF BETHARRAM

### A Betharramite lay consecrated person

**AN ARGENTINE, PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS AND NATURAL SCIENCES, MARÍA EUGENIA COULD HAVE WORKED IN ONE OF OUR BETHARRAMITE COLLEGES. BUT NO, HER LINK WITH THE CONGREGATION IS DIFFERENT AND HER PATHWAY QUITE UNUSUAL. WHAT SHE TELLS US HERE, HELPS US APPRECIATE HOW THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CHARISM OF ST. MICHAEL GARICOITS GIVE GREAT STRENGTH WHEN OUR LIFE, OUR WORK AND OUR WORDS COMMUNICATE WITH SIMPLICITY, AUTHENTICITY AND ENTHUSIASM.**

I got to know the Betharramite Fathers about nine years ago when they used to come to say Mass for us at Adroque which was then my parish. When they prayed or shared the Word of God I always felt in total agreement with what they said or did and I would straighten up so as to listen to them more attentively. Then during the week I would go over what I had heard. After some time I decided to pay a visit to the Casa de Encuentro, at Villa Betharram, and to take part in some activities which they were proposing to the youth. I had just been through a sticky patch. I was trying to heal the wounds to my heart so as to start living again. What I was enjoying at the Casa de Encuentro was helping me to face the future with greater hope and to take my life in hand.

Looking back on it now I can make out the first steps made at the time. To start with I had to organise myself and begin making projects. Then I began to follow in the footsteps of a God who became Man for me and to go out to meet Him in his Word. Little by little He was taking tender care of me and

directing my life. On this path I wasn't left alone; but I was accompanied by the religious and laity who accepted me just as I was, and amongst other things helped me to discern, free myself, receive, take risks which were God's presence in my life; they were faces and hearts through which God showed me His love and allowed me in return to love Him through Betharram.

Some of the religious were good enough to invite me to be part of the work they were doing for the youth. Despite my lack of experience and the little I could offer, I was incapable of saying "No" for I couldn't keep for myself the treasure I was gradually discovering. Consequently, around the Casa de Encuentro a little community was coming into being and I was part of it. There were young married couples with their children, religious, single laity, and others seeking light. I believe that all this helped us and continues to do so – working with others, sharing the dreams, the hopes, the joys and sufferings of each one, knowing that we are companions on a



always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was." (Jn 13:1)

To Sister Marie-Raphaelina, daughter of the Cross, superior of the community, Michael Garicoits recommends, "The Lord has destined them (your sisters) to work in his service, not as slaves, but freely from love. Begin then by winning their hearts and their trust. Make sure they know how much you love them...(…) Love them without limits, and because God loves them and because they are made to love him, always act with gentleness." In the same way, further on, he insists and underlines: "THROUGH LOVE!"

*sent. Now that I am absent it must be more in evidence, so work out your salvation in fear and trembling. It is God who, for his own generous purpose, gives you the intention and the powers to act."* (Ph 2, 7 ff)

Doubtless, obedience is not without suffering. Even for Jesus: "My Father," he said, "if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!" (Mt 26:42) But what sovereign freedom Jesus has in the Passion according to the gospel of St John! And this extraordinary verse, "Before the festival of the Passover, Jesus, knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He had

Everyone has the right to be loved; everyone has the duty to love. With Michael Garicoits we see again "how we should look at things: there is a need to exercise the enormity of charity in the limited circle of our work." If everyone really takes time to listen to each other - not just when the wind changes or once in passing - then wouldn't life together be easier (in community, in vicariate etc)? Trust: wouldn't that be another name for obedience? Yes, "fortunately there is the good Lord" and he loves us!

Beñat Oyhenart, scj

*Articolo 64 - We live our religious obedience in the perspective of the mystery of the Incarnation. United with Christ by the offering of our whole selves in love, we become free, in giving up even our most legitimate aspirations by fidelity to the mission of the community. Thus we truly become disciples of Jesus "who walk with hearts quickened by a holy joy, running and leaping in God's service."*

## BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CONGREGATION

### Region



#### France-Spain

**Agenda packed with appointments** ► On 21 and 22 April two meetings were held in the Vicariate:

- Tuesday, April 21 all the bursars and the superiors of communities were present. The Regional Vicar (who is also Regional Bursar) invited Fr Graziano Sala SCJ, General Bursar, for a day of formation for religious. This meeting had long been expected by the community bursars, more and more busy in carrying out their service...

- Wednesday, April 22 the Vicariate Assembly took place and Fr Jean-Luc Morin scj, Regional Superior, was also present. In the morning Fr Graziano Sala SCJ resumed and expanded what had been said the day before during the meeting with the bursars and the superiors. Then some group work allowed every religious to share his experience about the different ways of living the vow of poverty.

In the afternoon, Fr Jean-Dominique Delgue SCJ, Regional Vicar, presented the accounts of the Vicariate. The meeting ended with a brief statement by the Regional Superior on the life of the Region.



#### Ivory Coast

##### Assembly

► From 6 to 8 April, the Vicariate held an Assembly in the community of Yamousoukro. April



7, the Assembly followed this schedule: faith sharing ("narratio fidei"), sharing of information on the life of the different communities, work done by the committees (vocations, economy and legal issues, communication), sharing of reflections starting from a questionnaire sent to each community in advance in order to evaluate together the procedures in view of the perpetual profession, priestly ordination and other issues concerning the daily life of the Vicariate. In the evening of April 7, the Assembly met with the Parish Council of the Parish of St. Felix and with the Fraternity Me Voici «MYE».

**Adiapodoumé** ► In April, the house of welcome of Adiapodoumé began its activities, by opening its doors to the Sisters Servants of Mary, who made a retreat led by the Superior of the community of formation, Fr Sylvain Dansou SCJ.



#### Italy

**Albiato** ► On April 28, the Religious held an Assembly. This is the 3rd meeting scheduled over five months, with

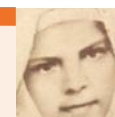


reference to the process of discernment of the Vicariate of Italy. On this occasion, Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez SCJ, Superior General, outlined some new missionary perspectives in order to foster the reflection on how to move forward. The Vicariate Council and the Regional Council will meet at the end of May and they will evaluate the suggestions emerged from these proposals. The aim of this process is to encourage the Betharramite Religious in Italy.

ramite Religious: this was an important event where discussions and exchange of experiences took place in a friendly atmosphere under the protection of Saint Michael Garicoits.



### Region



#### Thailand

**Today** ► Today - May 14, Feast of our founder, a eucharistic celebration presided by Mons Arpondratana has just taken place in Chiang mai. On this occasion the Regional Vicar, Fr Tidkham Jailertrit, delegate of the regional Superior, has received the renewal of the vows of 5 young religious.



### Region



#### Brazil

**Passa Quatro** ► On April 25 the teaching staff of the São Miguel College and São José Institute had a meeting with the Betharramite Religious in Brazil.

#### In memoriam



On Sunday, May 10th, **Fr Henri Lataste scj** returned to the Father's House. Fr Henri was 87 years of age and 69 years of religious profession. He was residing in a care home in Paris (France). Fr. Henri wanted to be buried in the cemetery of Betharram, with our Betharramite brothers. With his own family and the whole Betharram family throughout the world we pray for the repose of Fr Henri's soul. **We shall pay him tribute in the next issue of the NEF.**