

Listening to Saint Michael...

In the course of a conference during the holidays, he was speaking about those who imagine they have obeyed after getting their superior round to their way of thinking.

It is only all too often that in the secular society and even in religious life there are priests who say to their Superior: "I can't stay there; that post is not for me; put me in another place or I shall take my own decision."

I know what I am talking about! As a matter of fact have I not had the same feelings; did I not sometimes think of leaving everything frightened as I was by the accounts I shall have to render to God? It is then that the thought of Ibarre, my native village, would cross my mind.

Your poor old father is still there; how happy he would be to be looked after by me in his last days; the Mass stipends would be enough to live on; and if the worst came to the worst I can still dig the ground; the Assistant would be pleased to see me and I would see that lovely little church again. I imagine I can see it there on the hill with the Bidouze flowing by; I could even beg to raise money to embellish it. It is true I wouldn't have the cabriolet but I wouldn't need one in that part of the country.

There are the thoughts which come to my mind but I haven't time to think of them; in any case I look on them as temptations. However if it was God's Will I would render my accounts right now and would make off for these charming places when I spent so many years in innocence!

(Cachica Notebook nr. 48)



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

108
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

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Embrace the future with hope

This hope is not based on statistics or accomplishments, but on the One in whom we have put our trust (cf. 2 Tim 1:2), the One for whom "nothing is impossible" (Lk 1:37). This is the hope which does not disappoint; it is the hope which enables consecrated life to keep writing its great history well into the future. It is to that future that we must always look, conscious that the Holy Spirit spurs us on so that he can still do great things with us. (Pope Francis's letter to the Consecrated, 1, 3)

The future of Betharram will be prophetic or there will be no future. Pope Francis made it quite clear when speaking to Major Religious Superiors in reference to all consecrated life: "Radical evangelical living is not only for religious: it is demanded of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way." This is the priority that is needed right now: "to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth... a religious must never abandon prophecy". He repeats it in his letter to the consecrated (II,2) and on several other occasions.

113rd year
10th series, nr 108
14th October 2015



*Embracing the future continuing our journey together
Picture by the young pilgrims from Montemurlo (Italy) at Finis terrae, the "end the earth",
Summer 2015*

The prophet is quite simply a man of God, meeting Him, the Risen Christ, witnessing to his presence and explaining it in words. The prophet is one who has felt the need that *"to know Jesus is the best gift that can be given to anyone; to have met Him is the best thing that can happen in our lives, to make him known by our words and actions, is our joy"*. (Aparecida document 29). It is true! But for it to remain prophetic this experience must be cultivated by daily meditation of the Word of God, the celebration of reconciliation and the Eucharist as well as the practice of works of mercy.

The Betharramite prophet is a man who lives not for himself but for Jesus and others; in so doing he is being faithful to the Gospel message: *"Unless a wheat grain*

falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (John 12,24-25). The choice for this human philosophy is precisely what justifies our style of life of obedience, poverty and chastity. That too is true; listening to and enhancing the role of superiors instead of being individualists; by sharing our goods instead of disposing of them according to our fancies; being of service to others instead of dominating them by a life of selfishness.

The Betharramite prophet will be fraternal or will cease to exist. Similar to Jesus with his disciples: before or after announcing the Kingdom, the expulsion of demons or the curing of the sick, he al-

moved from the parish of Boeilh (Coarraz) to take up residence in Betharram. So after the trials and losses a new courage was emerging in keeping with the arrival of M. Mouthes. There is no doubt that these precious deaths which we witnessed and which greatly edified the Mother House of the Congregation were going to be a rich seed of new vocations.

In September 1859 and three days after the feast of the Nativity of Mary, one Sunday evening after Vespers, just as we were getting ready to go for a walk under the chestnut trees, a cry of "Long live the Emperor"! brought everyone back to the Chapel – priests, brothers and the remainder of the pilgrims who had not yet set out for their parishes. In fact it was indeed the Emperor and Empress entering the Chapel. M. Perguilhem's beautiful voice rang out for the chanting of "Domine, salvum fac" beneath the vault of the Chapel. Seeing that everyone was out of breath with all the energy put into the prayer, M. Fondeville spoke to the Emperor and asked him if Her Majesty, the Empress, would like Benediction. The answer was Yes and order was given to proceed. When His Majesty, the Emperor was seated, M. Fondeville approached him and said "Sire, we are very sorry not to be able to add the music of our organ to our singing. "Has your organ broken down? asked the Emperor. "We haven't one since 1790" came the reply. The Emperor said "you'll have one".

After Benediction Their Majesties visited the sacristy and chatted about the Countess of Chambord's robes. After chatting some more in the community room, the Emperor said to the Empress "Give your present; I've given mine". She then gave the Treasurer a 1.000 Fr. Bill. A few moments later Their Majesties were on their way direction Tarbes.

Simon Fondeville scj
(1805-1872)
(to be continued)



*Organ of Betharram, Napoléon III's gift
(photo by Fr Michel Vignau scj)*

THE FONDEVILLE NOTEBOOK OR BETHARRAM FROM 1790

The cholera at Bétharram... New members of the Congregation... Ordinations... Deaths... The Emperor and the Empress visiting to Bétharram...

For Betharram the year 1857 was a year of trials. Two years earlier at a time when cholera was devastating the surrounding countryside, Nay, Bruges, Asson, Saint-Pe and Lourdes, Betharram, Lestelle and Montaut only had a few cases; but in January 1857 there was such an outbreak of Typhoid Fever that nearly all the brothers and half of the pupils were effected, consequently the rest of the pupils were sent home. With 70 – 80 patients eight nurses were employed to administer 300 plasters a day. Young Saubat, a pupil from Pau, died suddenly; M. Gaye, Head of the College, Brother John and Pierre Lacaze, also from Pau. Among the pupils who had been sent home a few also died. However, by the end of February the outbreak had subsided and the pupils were able to return to the college in the first fortnight of March and celebrate Easter in Betharram.

In 1857 M. Pagadoy, a priest from Biscay and former professor in Saint Palais, and Bourdila, cure of Bruges and Nabaraa, cure of Borderes, entered the Congregation. The two latter took up duties in the Chapel as Ministers. M. Nabaraa was mainly responsible for accepting the Mass offerings and distributing them. M. Bourdila, who was returning to Betharram after 18 years absence spent in Parish duties, was appointed to the Philosophy for the novices, at other times he was sent to the parishes for retreats or missions.



Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie

In 1858 five other priests came to the rescue of Betharram – a consolation for the losses and to bolster their courage. These priests were ready to be useful members of the Congregation; they were Messrs Auge, Paradis de Pontacq, Souverbielle de Coaraze, and the two brothers Cazadepatz d'Estaut. Our Lady of Betharram had worked well for at the end of the year and the beginning of the next the community was once more going to experience a death. The worthy and learned M. Rosigneux died who despite his sufferings was still teaching rhetoric at the Ste Marie College in Oloron. In January 1859 Betharram's hopes were dashed with the death of Paul Carriere, a deacon from Abos; a month later Pierre Cachica, sub-deacon from Orthiez was struck down by an attack of croup. Meanwhile Monsieur Mouthes de Pontacq

ways took time to withdraw with them at a distance. He too shared with them his missionary experience, his life, his prayer, God's action in him and in others or the gifts which each one received. All this was shot through with sensitivity, respect, service, responsibility and forgiveness – all values resulting from the Gospel message. Consequently he will live united to Jesus and to his brothers and sisters, attuned to the things of God, and in a fraternal dialogue will practise discernment finding out what is God's Will in his daily life and the signs of the times.

The life of the Betharramite prophet and the communities who lead this kind of life, through their actions will display a zest for life, enthusiasm, joy and hope; they will stimulate the curiosity of those who see them living like this and who feel attracted to this life style. So the Betharramite prophet will humbly explain the reasons for his hope saying: "This is how I am because of Jesus, since the day I met Him and have discovered his love my life has changed and I have fallen in love with the Beatitudes as in this passage of Mt. 25."

Betharram embraces the future with hope because it is not a work chosen by men but by the Sacred Heart of Jesus who "begot it and shaped it" and continues to cherish it. Consequently thanks to the missionary spirit which has always been ours, for the last 10 years we have had the blessing of 55 ordinations and the commitment of five brothers and now we are invited to offer our charism to the Vietnamese youth.

Betharram embraces the future with hope because with that prophetic spirit,

rich with 246 religious in perpetual vows and 26 in temporary vows, we are many who every day meditate on the Word of God, seriously practising the vows and making efforts to be faithful to evangelical brotherly love, realising our mission in a prophetic and joyous spirit.

Betharram embraces the future with hope because we are many who love the charism left to us by our Father Saint Michael Garicoits and which by our actions and words we share with other souls in research.

Betharram embraces the future with hope because of the many laity, who impressed by our life-style, want to practise it and share with us the spirituality and mission of the charism of Saint Michael.

Betharram embraces the future with hope because of the many people, including Bishops, priests, male and female religious, laity (male and female), seniors, adults, youth and children whom we know, who trust us, have come to know Jesus through our ministry and are now praying that we remain faithful to our vocation.

Betharram embraces the future with hope because a countless host of witnesses, beginning with our Father Saint Michael Garicoits, Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, Father Etchecopar, precede us and accompany us with their intercession so that faithful to the Gospel in this life, we may continue on our journey until we meet with God and them in Heaven.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj
Superior General

SNAPSHOTS OF BETHARRAMITE LIFE

Heaven, in your eyes



*"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."
Psalm 138, 14*

Fr Beniamino Gusmeroli scj and the wonders of God in Bouar (RCA)

In the scholasticate in Andiapo-doume, where the Fathers are also in charge of St Bernard's Parish, the scholastics accompany the Fathers in the different Sunday Masses. They also help them in the chaplaincy of the different movements in the parish. They give their time for the teaching of catechism and to accompany the different prayer groups that exist in the parish namely: Vocational Groups, the choral, the pastoral care of children, youth and adult groups, the Legion of Mary, Friends of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Liturgical Group.

- These different tasks allow them, not only to experience with the Fathers the apostolic realities, but prepare them for the mission of tomorrow. It is something which also provides them with an even balance between the theology lectures which they are following and the apostolic realities which they are living.

- Where virtues are concerned there is apostolic zeal, commitment to the Betharramite mission, love of service, availability to be present beside our brothers and sisters in humanity.

Sylvain Dansou Hounkpatin scj



Community life is a foundation of missionary life for religious who are formed in the community, in order to witness the Word of God among the members, to share the happiness, respect, service and at the same time, to be ready to be both a message and a messenger.

In Sampran, our scholastics give cate-

chism classes to parishioners, teach languages to the young, visit the poor families, support ethnic groups of refugees in town, animate liturgical celebrations; they also do some charity work for slam people, visit orphanages, and cooperate with groups supporting drug addicts.

Jiraphat Rakhsikao scj

Community life & missionary life

DURING THOSE CRUCIAL YEARS OF SCHOLASTICATE, THE BALANCE BETWEEN COMMUNITY LIFE AND MISSIONARY LIFE IS ONE OF THE GREAT CHALLENGES FORMATION. PROMOTING THE FIRST WITHOUT DEVALUING THE SECOND... COMBINING THE TWO... HAPPILY OUR MASTERS OF SCHOLASTICS HAVE CLEAR IDEAS ON THIS SUBJECT.

Formation is a path way of growth and development to realise that each seminarian is called to “become another Christ”. To this purpose, our formation offers various apostolic experiences to our scholastics. Our Indian scholastics go to different parishes on Saturdays and Sundays. They collaborate with the parish priests to have a meaningful liturgy. They teach catechism to the children in order to inculcate in them the gospel values. They organise youth and altar servers meetings and mobilise them for

various church activities. They make regular family visits and also partake actively in the up-building of the Basic Christian Communities (BCC).

As you all know well that our society is a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-religious, these experiences will mould our scholastics to be integrated person with the virtues of availability, humility, Christian compassion, generosity, and respect for each other, dialogue and the art of relationship. These are of course learned and cultivated in the formation houses but gradually allowed to bloom and bear fruit in their respective parishes. It is not that easy “to bring to others the same happiness”. But it is our mission. Thus, though they are two different realities, they do not clash rather complement each other. They are like both sides of the same coin. One does not give its full meaning without the other.



Mangalore

Stervin Selvadass scj

The spirit of poverty



HAVANA, SUNDAY, SEPT. 20, AT THE CELEBRATION OF VESPERS WITH PRIESTS, AND THE DEDICATED SEMINARIANS THE HOLY FATHER FIRSTLY LISTENING HIS CARDINAL, WELCOMES HIS WORD. A WORD STRIKES HIM... A “DISTURBING” WORD... AND ON THIS WORD, HE IMPROVISES HIS HOMILY WHICH LEADS EACH OF US FACE TO OURSELVES AND THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: WHAT IS YOUR SPIRIT OF POVERTY?

Cardinal Jaime happened to say a very uncomfortable word, an extremely uncomfortable word, one which goes against the whole “cultural” structure of our world. He said “poverty”, and he repeated it several times. I think the Lord wanted us to keep hearing it, and to receive it in our hearts. The spirit of the world doesn’t know this word, doesn’t like it, hides it — not for shame, but for scorn. And if it has to sin and offend God in order to avoid poverty, then that’s what it does. The spirit of the world does not love the way of the Son of God, who emptied himself, became poor, became nothing, abased himself in order to be one of us.

Poverty frightened that generous young man who had kept all the commandments; and so when Jesus told him, “Go, sell all that you have and give it to the poor”, he was saddened. He was afraid of poverty. We are always trying to hide poverty, perhaps with good reason; but I’m talking about hiding it in our hearts. It is our duty to know how to administer our goods, for they are a gift from God. But when these goods

enter your heart and begin to take over your life, that’s where you can get lost. Then you are no longer like Jesus. Then you have your security where the sad young man had his, the one who went away sad.

For you, priests, consecrated men and women, I think what Saint Ignatius said could be useful to you (and this is not just family propaganda here!). He said that poverty was the wall and the mother of consecrated life; the “mother” because it gives birth to greater confidence in God, and the “wall” because it protects us from all worldliness. How many ruined souls there are! Generous souls, like that of the sad young man: they started out well, then gradually became attached to the love of this wealthy worldliness and ended up badly. They ended up mediocre. They ended up without love because wealth impoverishes us, in a bad way. It takes away the best that we have, and strips us of the only wealth which is truly worthwhile, so that we put our security in something else. The spirit of poverty, the spirit of detachment, the spirit of leaving everything behind in order to follow Jesus. This leaving everything is not

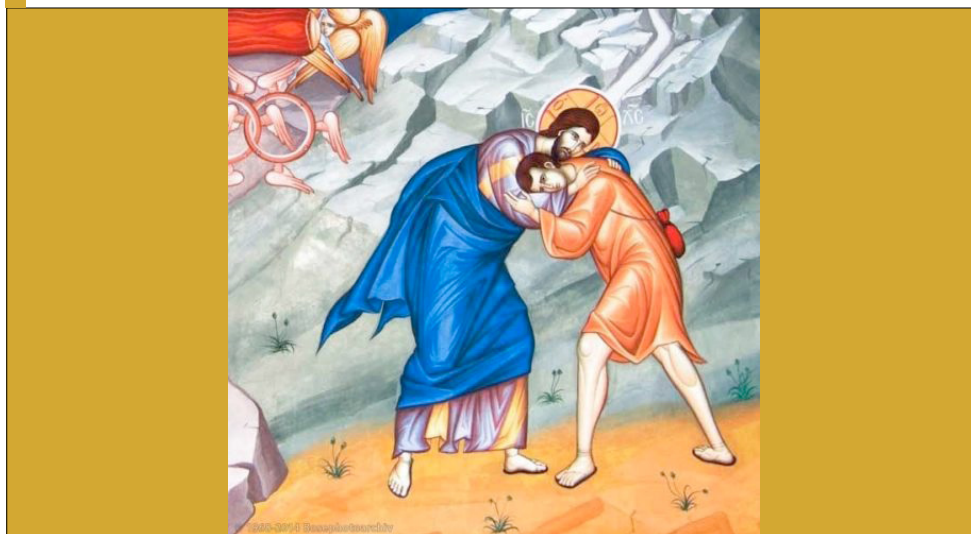
something I am inventing. It appears frequently in the Gospel. In the calling of the first ones who left their boat, their nets, and followed him. Those who left everything to follow Jesus.

A wise old priest once told me about what happens when the spirit of wealth, of wealthy worldliness enters the heart of a consecrated man or woman, a priest or bishop, or even a Pope – anyone. He said that when we start to save up money to ensure our future — isn't this true? — then our future is not in Jesus, but in a kind of spiritual insurance company which we manage. When, for example, a religious congregation begins to gather money and save, God is so good that he sends them a terrible bursar who brings them to bankrupt-

cy. Such terrible bursars are some of the greatest blessings God grants his Church, because they make her free, they make her poor. Our Holy Mother the Church is poor; God wants her poor as he wanted our Holy Mother Mary to be poor.

So love poverty, like a mother. I would just suggest - if you allow me - that you ask yourself: "How is my spirit of poverty doing? How is my interior detachment?" I think this may be good for our consecrated life, our priestly life. After all, let us not forget that this is the first of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit", those who are not attached to riches, to the powers of this world.[...]

Cathedral of Havana, Cuba
Sunday 20 September 2015



place all our trusts, our hopes joys and sorrows unto the Heart of Jesus. Their spirituality and their witness challenge us to be faithful to the Lord in all circumstances; to be simple in our daily living and to be available to everyone who is in need of us all. We pray that they will go from strength to strength in the vineyard of the Lord. May God bless all the Betharram

fluences us. We have been influenced very much and have become especially in our families more prayerful, helpful and understanding towards others. This Sacred Heart Congregation helps us to

fathers and brothers !

Companions from Mangalore & Bangalore
(India)

The Companions of Betharram in India began in two different ways. The first was through the local (mainly Malayali) Christians who have been coming to mass at our house chapel at Shobhana Shaakha Bangalore for nearly 20 years now. They feel close to us and are grateful for the pastoral care that we have given them. The second group began with the teaching involvement of generous Mangalore Christians (mainly Konkani speaking) who volunteered to give English classes to our young students. This they have freely done for over 10 years. Then since 2011 they became more involved with us as their generosity extended to helping with building our new House of Formation. They got together to supervise the quality of construction, monitor costs, and they raised a large portion of the total expenditure by going to the Gulf countries and asking support from their cousins and in-laws. More recently a group of a dozen or so came to Betharram on pilgrimage (July 2014) and were greatly encouraged both by the welcome they received and by their closeness to the source St. Michael's spirit and vision. They appreciate the simplicity of our family spirit and our willingness to be close to the poor and broken-hearted.

The Companions in India

LAYPEOPLE AWARE OF THE SPIRITUAL AND FRATERNAL WITNESS OF OUR FATHERS AND BROTHERS OF INDIA EARNESTLY DESIRED TO SIGNAL THEIR CLOSENESS TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

LIKE THE DEER THAT YEARN FOR RUNNING STREAMS AND GREEN PASTURES, THEY COME TO DRINK FROM THE SAME SOURCE AS OUR BROTHERS.

When we enter the Betharram premises, we feel very homely. We feel it as a place of welcoming and a lot of warmth among the fathers and brothers. Their simplicity, humility and their reaching out to the elderly for their spiritual needs touch us and attract us.

Some of us do gather every Friday for the adoration, rosary and Eucharistic celebration in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Whereas some other come on special occasions and significant

events like feasts, thanksgiving days, inauguration of the academics year, medical camp, teachers day, cultural events and so on. Some of us do come to teach the aspirants on weekly base in order to keep ourselves in touch with this community.

Christianity is all about love in action, respect and commitment – that is what we see in this congregation. Yes, Betharrmites spirituality “Here I am” in-



Some lay people from India at the Generalate House in Rome (2014)

Notices from the Superior General & his Council

During the meeting of the **General Council**, on **October 10th, 2015**, the Superior General, with his Council, **approved the appointment of several Community Superiors of the Region Saint Michael Garicoits**:

- **Br. Angelo Sala scj** as superior of the community of **Bouar-Saint-Michel**, 2nd mandate (under reserve of permission from the Congregation for Religious)
- **Fr. Tiziano Pozzi scj** as superior of the community of **Niem**, 2nd mandate
- **Fr. Beniamino Gusmeroli scj** as superior of the community of **Bouar-Fatima**, 2nd mandate
- **Fr. Jean-Marie Ruspil scj** as superior of the community of **Pibrac**, 2nd mandate
- **Fr. Giacomo Spini scj** as superior of the community of **Lissone**, 2nd mandate

During the same meeting, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, **decided to grant Fr. Emmanuel Congo an indult of excommunication for one year** in the Archdiocese of Albi (France).

In response to the request made by the Regional Superior of the Region Saint Michael Garicoits, and in agreement with the Regional Superior of the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, the Superior General **appointed Fr. Alessandro Locatelli (Vicariate of Italy) in the Vicariate of England** for three years renewable starting from October 1st, 2015. After a long-term experience in Olton some time ago, Fr. Alessandro is happy to go back to England and to do pastoral ministry with our brothers in England.

ON THE AGENDA

After his visitation in Brazil and Paraguay from mid-July to early-October, the Superior General, Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj will visit the **communities of Thailand** from November 22 to December 14.

A **journey to Vietnam** is planned for the General Bursar, Fr. Graziano Sala scj, from November 16 to 26.



In memoriam

On October 7, in Asuncion (Paraguay), **Mrs Heriberta Cabrera**, mother of Fr Javier Irala SCJ, Regional Vicar of Paraguay, returned to the Father's House. We entrust her to the mercy of the Lord and we pray Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to console her family.

LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Expositus

THESE LAST FEW YEARS, THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC HAS EXPERIENCED POLITICAL UPHEAVALS WHICH HAVE UPSET THE COUNTRY. ALREADY THE COUNTRY WAS IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION; IT HAS SUNKEN TO A GREATER DEPTH OF POVERTY. LATELY, AFTER A MOMENT OF RELATIVE CALM, THERE HAVE BEEN SPORADIC OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE IN THE CAPITAL BANGUI. THE PEOPLE HAVE TRIED FINDING REFUGE IN THE PARISHES. JUST LIKE THE LOCAL POPULATION OUR TWO COMMUNITIES IN BOUAR AND NIEM ARE EXPOSED AND VULNERABLE. HOWEVER, BROTHER ANGELO SALA SCJ, HAS RETURNED TO CENTRAL AFRICA AND REMINDS US THAT BETHARRAM IS WELL AND TRULY THERE WHERE OTHERS MIGHT NOT WANT TO RETURN.

It all happened overnight 25th to 26th September. A young Muslim was killed in an area of the capital, and his body was transported to the Central Mosque. This was the spark which inflamed the revival of the clashes between Muslims and Christians.

It should be made clear, I believe, that the crisis is not religious. The religious clash is only an excuse to take advantage of circumstances where the security and the reliable presence of Government institutions default to taking arms down into the street and surrendering to widespread pillaging, spreading panic to the heart of the population.

Unquestionably, these latest events clearly show that the Gospel ideals have not filled the people of Central Africa sufficiently deeply to change their reactions. Nevertheless, we mustn't give in to despondency, but rather take up the strength to draw from our faith and hope, the enthusiasm and motivation to continue and carry on our work of evangelisation.

Our Congregation operates in a difficult situation here. We must make the needs

of the people our own, travelling on the routes where safety is a meaningless word, with the fear of being stopped and having our car and money stolen. The difficulty of finding food, of getting fuel to make the electric generators work, or for our cars, the difficulty of getting medicine here, especially anti-viral medicine, which is vital to the 750 patients that we deal with daily in our St Michael Centre. In such a fragile social situation, it is often difficult to maintain a look of hope. The question is therefore "Why stay?"

Clearly our task isn't easy, especially when wrongs and death seem to have taken away all hope of change. However, we have decided to stay near the Christian communities and people who belong to other faiths and ethnic groups since, as Pope Francis reminds us often, the Church must serve the poorest and people who suffer.

As a Betharramite brother, I cannot deny that I have thought a few times about St Michael and his desire to set up a *mobile camp* of priests and brothers ready to go where others refuse to go.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CONGREGATION

Region



Republic of Central Africa

Vocation promotion ► On September 12 to 13, the community of St. Michael Garicoits at Bouar welcomed some young people willing to discern their vocation.

Br Gilbert Napétien Coulibaly SCJ, in his short presentation of the Congregation and consecrated life, tried to guide these young people, who wish to make a discernment, to identify the obstacles present in their inner life. After that, he made himself available to answer different questions. Replying quite openly to their questions he emphasized that religious life is such a beautiful call from God that it cannot be considered as a kind of shelter where one can find all kinds of material goods or a way to raise one's social status. He stressed in a special way that the religious is a person guided by God to follow more closely the Gospel in the footsteps of Christ; a person called and sent out to the world but constantly turned to God; a person who owns nothing and who does not live according to his/her will. The meeting ended with the Evening Prayer.

Ivory Coast

Adiapodoumé ► Friday, October 2, the formation community of Adiapodoumé inaugurated the new academic year of the community. This day was marked by the first community meeting during which all the members took practical decisions to better live this new year.

Region



Brazil

Belo Horizonte ► From 18 to 20 of September the community of Belo Horizonte, hosted the meeting of the Betharramite laity of Brazil. The many Betharramite religious and lay people who were present at the event had an enriching experience of the Betharramite spirituality.

On September 19 the community of the Scholasticate of the Region Father Auguste Etchecopar, Belo Horizonte (Brazil), blessed and inaugurated the new chapel dedicated to St. Joseph, "special protector of the Church and of the Institute."

Region



India

Hojai ► The academic and missionary community of Hojai under the vibrant leadership of Fr. Arul, held the celebrations of Independence day, cultural day and teachers' day with the students and staffs. The community also celebrated the Onam festival with a Solemn Holy Eucharist.

On September 8th the neighboring communities and the children joined together to celebrate the birthday of our Blessed Mother.

On 20th of September Rev. Fr. Jesuraj SCJ of the Hojai community was installed as the Parish Priest of Mukthi Data Shrine Hojai by His Grace John Moolachira, the Archbishop of Guwahati, Assam.

Just like an undeserved inheritance, I have often felt such wisdom changed into fraternity. I don't mean to say that Betharram has been changed into a paradise. I am very familiar with the suffering of community life. But I can say that the Betharramite is kind and gentle, that he greets you every day and says "thank you very much", who looks kindly on his brother, does not speak ill of him, speaks well of the one who governs the community (because he has a good opinion of himself and likes the job he has been given by obedience): he who has received everything from the community knows how to lead a simple life and choose certain austerities through love; he does not boast of his knowledge, his strength, his qualities, but calms his desires *"like a little child in the arms of its mother"* (cf. Psalm 130); he who prefers fraternal charity in

which we have chosen to live. This brother who will remain anonymous, is the great builder of that joy which I have experienced in my years at Betharram.... The joy which God has served me on a silver tray together with the mate, terere and cafezinhos (drinks typical from South America). And the other one? The one who made life difficult for me, or the one I betrayed by my conduct? I rejoice in him also, for he represents the reality of the Incarnation, and was to be found also in the group of disciples with Jesus. As Father Joseph Mirande would say: "He's one of us and that's enough" (from a sermon). Thank you, my difficult brother! Please forgive me for all the times I too was difficult. Perhaps the best remedy would be to be *always content* as St Michael encouraged us!

Gustavo Agin scj



Personally, I would never have been able to imagine that religious life was going to call me to live in situations of this type, where the choice made is put through a harsh ordeal. All that we are living through in Central Africa at the moment must be seen through the mystery of the cross of Jesus who died and rose again and who calls us to respond to our neighbour with great love. Our first objective is to keep on proclaiming the Gospel in this young Church, to try to put down the roots of the basic values of peace, honesty, jus-

tice and truth in the hearts of the Christians and in the rest of the population which is made up of different faiths and ethnic groups. These basics are vital in order to promote dialogue and a peaceful life together between different religions and ethnic groups, and in order to establish social cohesion which is the key element in building a better future for the Central African people.

Angelo SALA scj

The mission continues also thanks to the help of lay volunteers:

A container is about to leave Italy by boat and will arrive in Bouar & Niamey in a few months



"What are we sending?"

Father Piero SCJ sends the equipment necessary for the mission: all kinds of equipment, hospital equipment, furniture, building materials, etc ... We, volunteers of the RAINBOW missionary group, we give him a helping hand; we send him teaching materials, health care equipment, selected clothing, especially for children, and we try to respond to specific requests of the missionaries, etc.:

For example, Brother Angelo usually makes a list of what he needs for the St Michael health centre (this will be from office stationery - tacks, staplers, printing paper - to cleansing products, disinfectants and even an ice cream maker; this year, he asked me if I could find him feeding bottles for small children who had lost their mother and needed to be fed with artificial milk. Syrups, antibiotics are always useful.. Antivirals are also very useful, although more difficult to send.

Fr. Arialdo favors teaching materials, and the pressure barrels we provide it each year to make cheese

Fr. Beniamino, in addition to educational materials, is pleased to get recycled musical instruments like electric pianos or guitars. The baby clothes for the project provided assistance to single mothers and games for the children's centre are welcome.

Our missionary group prepares all materials for shipping by container (weighed packages, catalogued with a number, brief description and generic description). Many other volunteers bring many more. When Fr. Piero arrives to collect our filled boxes, it's like party time. It was a bit like being in Africa, children are happy to help

out and the atmosphere is very cheerful ... Paola Ruele (Rainbow Missionary Group, Trento, Northern Italy)

PRACTISING THE RULE OF LIFE

Around Christ, our Master

A SPOT OF RELAXATION? HOW ABOUT THE GARDEN OF OLIVES...! EXCEPT THAT THE DISCIPLES ARE ALL ASLEEP! A MOMENT OF COMMUNION? THE LAST SUPPER...! OF COURSE, BUT TREASON IS IN THE AIR! DOES THAT MEAN THAT MOMENTS OF FRATERNITY WITH CHRIST ARE NEVER PERFECT?

THE FRATERNAL FILTER DOESN'T EXIST. YOU CAN'T RELY ON MAGIC, IT MUST BE ON PERSONAL EFFORTS, PATIENCE, LITTLE CONVERSIONS - ONE'S OWN AND THOSE OF OUR BROTHERS - THAT WILL HELP US TO CREATE AND TO KNOW THE JOY OF THE BROTHERHOOD.

In days gone by when I was an active member of the JUBE group (a lay group of young Betharramites) founded in Barracas (Buenos Aires) we had a chat one day on "friendship and fraternity". Afterwards we were asked to choose a bible text which could illustrate something of ourselves. I chose this verse: *"Be joyful with those who are rejoicing; weep with those who are weeping"* (Romans 12, 15).



It was a time when I had many friends (most of whom are still there). But I had also lost some dear friends and had come to know both tears and pain. Since this verse was speaking to me, I chose it. Someone said that I had chosen it because I was a jolly person and that this disposition had something in common with the Gospel. I have never forgotten it and have done my best to be faithful to it.

Today I am happy to have the friendship of joyful people who look on me as a quiet type. Yet I must admit that in my heart lies a little child who can rejoice at the "clowns and artists of life". In any case that is how I have endured the joyful moments during meetings, around the camp fires, during community excursions: I have not gone short of times for laughing and enjoying myself! I have also learned that people have another attitude, demanding silence, attention, and respect. I thank God for letting me be witness of the tears of many religious and laity which have given way to the consolation of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes during the personal chat wounds, frustrations, traumatizations, mistaken

paths on which we have been travelling without knowing why, have made their appearances. But these misfortunes are still there and continue to hurt or cause hurt to others.

In theology someone said to me: "You used to be such a joyful young man, but now..." At first this remark caught me unawares. Something in me had changed at least as far as others could see. I was

giving off the image of an individual who was very serious. I was hiding something of myself in the mistaken idea that certain aspects of my personality had to die with the "old man" there present. (cf. Eph. 4). Happily we meet prophets who help us to save ourselves. For me such prophets were my formators, my brothers and a few well qualified lay persons.



Article 101

So that our community life is real and bears witness, all members of the community must feel themselves responsible for the climate of brotherly charity, necessary for the harmony and the development of each religious member.

The community is a place of communion, "where relations are less formal and where welcome and understanding are fostered. One discovers there equally, the divine and human value of the fact of being together freely, as were the disciples around Christ, their Master, in friendship, and in sharing times of relaxation and leisure."

Article 104

Our common vocation, respect for one another, and mutual trust will help to overcome the difficulties inherent in any life together. The process of forgiveness, words and gestures of reconciliation, build up brotherhood. Each puts at the service of all his gifts and his talents received from God.



The community contributes greatly to the psychological balance of the individual as well as the spiritual balance of religious life. To be cured helps to keep us smiling, feel like working and strengthens our vocation to a certain extent.

I would now like to quote four sentences from some of the "heroes of my life" but who are no longer with us. The example of their consecrated life and their words full of wisdom have left a mark on me.

- "My boy, to say thank you very much

means more than simply to say thank you." (Fr Juan Cravioti scj)

- "Those who are outstanding while still remaining hidden go much further in life than those who are always in the lime-light" (Fr Barriuso scj)

- "In the Congregation anyone who wants to be poor is definitely poor" (Fr Dario Rodriguez scj)

- "Listen, keep going on. You will have bad thoughts even in old age" (Fr Ceferino Arce scj).