



Painting by Juan Vladimir Martinovich

Listening to Saint Michael...

The finest works, the greatest virtues without obedience can only bring a great destruction. Obedience is the queen of virtues, the nurse, and the keeper of the other virtues.

Without obedience, in the highest positions, we are in distress; but with a disposition of lowliness and nothingness, we have a limitless trust in God with a taste sweeter than honey.

Those who cannot grasp the paradoxical nature of this spirituality do not have a solid foundation and are simply not religious.

Cachica Notebook, 41



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BETHARRAM

117
2016

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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

114th year
10th series, nr 117
14th July-August 2016

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You are lacking one thing

To all the characters in the Gospels wishing to fill their inner void, Jesus proposed an "extra" meaning to get out of the "self-reference" and to risk one's life for the Father and for others. Christ's proposition demands a personal reply. Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew, Mary Magdalene, Zacheus, Bartimeus risked their reply to Christ and decided to follow Him and become his disciples. The rich young man whom Jesus looked on and loved was unable to get by the "self-reference" because he had lots of great possessions; in the end he didn't follow Christ. The invitation of Jesus is in response to the emptiness in man's heart: *"there is only one thing that you are lacking"*.

For the disciples the art of learning the style of evangelical life was slow and difficult. From Peter's order, *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man"* to this *"We must obey God rather than men"*, Peter passed through many contradictions: *"God forbid, Lord, that that should ever*



happen"! (Mat. 16,22) (He wanted to avoid the passion, which earned for him the reproach "Satan"); "Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life!" (Jn. 6,68). "Even if all forsook you, I would never forsake you!" (Mt. 26,33). "No, I don't know the man" (Mt. 26,72); "Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you" (Jn., 21,17)

To become a disciple demands a real experience of conversion, a choice of life which supposes renouncing the organisation of one's life and deciding to leave it to Jesus. I do not do what I want but what Jesus wants; I do not love those I want, but those Jesus wants; I am not working to earn my living but to be of service; I don't organise my life thinking I can do it for my own good, I organise it with my community to be a greater service to others; I don't act in seeking my own interests but rather in seeking those of Jesus and the mission. That's what it means to live according to the Gospels.

That's how the project of formation is to be understood: renounce living for self to live for others, for the Father and for the brethren; that's the answer to be given to the question put by Jesus. The Formator must check that the young man in formation is progressing according to the project of the interiorisation and exteriorisation of the Gospel; that he is practising the virtues of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God: trusting in God, humility, gentleness, obedience, simplicity, poverty, commitment, forgiveness, respecting differences, responsibility... all to be lived with joy because such a life style fills me with joy, gives meaning to my life and fills me with enthusiasm.

To reach such a point one has to traverse many stages and trials, sometimes humiliations and insults identifying us with Jesus Christ. The young man in formation must practise such values so that he can make his own the conviction of Jesus: "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it but whoever wants to lose his life for my name and for the Gospel, will save it" (Mk. 8,35). The Formator must be sure that the young man in formation must be ready to go to such lengths to be faithful to the Gospel, so that he can present himself for Final Vows and Ordination. Otherwise we don't know who we will discover after the Vows!

It's not just a problem for Initial Formation. Many of us have forgotten that one day we made profession to live for the others and that finally, little by little, we have ended up living for ourselves. We have adopted the ways of the world. The mission, the service of others, have become a task which, with its income, helps us to fill our personal accounts. The mission which had been entrusted to me by my superiors has become my personal affair; instead of living for it, I am living to be at peace and in security. My community where, in the fervour of my first love, I shared my life and my faith with my brothers, has become private property depending entirely on what I think, on my choices, my tastes, my comfort and what interests me.

Sometimes that gives the impression that we are living and not entrusting ourselves to the Lord, that we have ready-made solutions to everything and by ourselves. Where comfort is concerned we

And later, in 3 June 1943:



"The fifth station and the crowning of thorns is installed during the last days in the chapel of St Louis, 1817 the royal chapel of Betharram; [...] We have no need to mention the merits of the new bas reliefs of Renoir. It is always the same perfection, the same poetry! If there was anything else to observe and to do it is that this station by the posture, the severity of the persons is without contradiction the most remarkable that has come from the hands of the artist." (Letter 21ter)

But in 1845, a new urgency arose:

"Dear Editor

You have frequently made your readers aware of the restoration of the Calvary of Betharram. This splendid work begun and continued by M Renoir, with so much talent and dedication, has already progressed a long way. [But] an unforeseen accident is at present preventing important work. While making soundings on the walls of the Chapel on top of the Calvary we have learnt that they are in a state of collapse. We have consulted experts who have confirmed our fears and we have sadly come to the inevitable conclusion that the Chapel must be completely rebuilt if we can safely install the bas-reliefs that were intended for it. A considerable sum is needed for this construction, added to the sum also needed for the completion of the Stations which will be in the region of 12 to 15 million francs and we are in no position to realise that sort of amount. For four years of making every sacrifice to pay non-stop huge multiple debts, we are now drawing on our last reserves and in addition we are paying M Renoir a bonus of 3,000 francs, without doubt far below adequate remuneration for his talent and our indebtedness to him, but sufficient to make it impossible at this time to continue the work which we are so keen to accomplish and which interests the whole region.

Fortunately we are assured that it will be completed. With the help of the General Council of the Basses-Pyrenees who have offered us a loan, and a guarantee from some generous souls, the new Chapel will rise from where the other stood; and without any danger the set of stations can safely be erected there; this locality will be endowed with a monument unique of its kind." (Letter 28)

Thus, with lack of money, the failing health of the artist, the work stopped.

Alexandre Renoir left Betharram in July 1845 but not without installing above the main altar of the pilgrimage chapel the

statue of the Virgin of the Beautiful Branch in its gilded frame.

(Source: Raymond Descomps, *Our Lady of Betharram* and Correspondence of St. Michael Garicoits, Volumes I and III).

THE CALVARY OF BETHARRAM (7)

Calvary restoration

Since November 7, 1825, Michael Garicoits has been in Betharram, sent by his bishop to assist Fr. Lassalle in the direction of the seminary. But in 1833, Bishop d'Arbou brings the seminarians in Bayonne. "Between the four walls of this vast edifice," the idea of founding a congregation made its way. In the meantime, life continues at Betharram and Saint Michael Garicoits, who will spend more than thirty-eight years, that is more than half his life, takes care "as good father" of the property entrusted to him...

We must make the old monastery liveable for a new community and renovate the pilgrimage chapel. But what about the Calvary, that Father Joseph tried to restore, as it is said, "with more zeal than artistic taste"? Madame Countess de Grandville wrote wishing that there were "more art and dignity" ...Father Combalot "an apostolic missionary", continues to host pilgrimages, but his heart sinks at the sight of scenes supposed to represent the Lord's Passion.

Nevertheless sensitive to the potential attraction of the place and taken by the devotion of the pilgrims, he gives Fr Garicoits the name of a Parisian artist,

who is "moreover a Christian artist" and who could erect an artistic Calvary. Thus, in spring 1840, Alexandre Renoir arrived in Betharram and began work immediately. By November 1841 the first tableau, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, is shown to the public, greeted by unanimous approval. Seven other tableaux follow. In the press, the art connoisseurs were ecstatic, so that by 1843, the talent of the artist who made the Calvary of Betharram became one of the must-see attractions of the Pyrenean countryside.

In March 21, 1843, Fr Garicoits wrote to the editor of the "Memorial of the Pyrenees":



"The Calvary of Betharram is going well; the fourth chapel is in place. It is the flagellation. We hope that it will be very much appreciated. The extensive studies of the artist on ancient monuments will not serve him badly this time. But this is not all; it was also a matter of giving to the Lord, an appropriate disposition under the executor's hand, to bring it to life with the sentiments that he used to have, to make the flesh disappear and the spirit to live. [...] Can one expect to find the triumph of the flesh where one finds death? And who could support the long line of profane statues of the way of the cross for so long? The proper character of these works should be to belong to the spirit. [...] Now the Calvary begins to take on another appearance. [...] Most of the monstrosities have disappeared." (Letter 20bis)

*Jesus and the
rich young
man
(Heinrich
Hofmann)*



are short of nothing, we have abandoned the trust we had in Providence in all our new projects. We haven't the humility to admit that we need the Lord's help in the face of so many problems which are without an answer. To do God's Will, as Jesus did, is impossible because it is contrary to the independence of the individual. We are embarrassed to admit our poverty, our chastity and obedience because we hear it said around us that these are contrary to our liberty; we don't accept the wisdom of the Cross because our choice for human rights prevents us from accepting the humiliations which, even if we don't look for them, are the best way of being like our Master.

Without serious and thorough ongoing formation at the start of genuine conversion in the spirit of the Gospels, without a daily examination of conscience, spiritual accompaniment and a life marked by adult asceticism which keeps

us attentive to the different situations of our daily life, it is impossible to be faithful to the Gospel.

This method of paying attention always allows us to choose the Evangelical values which console and enrich us. It helps us to cut out anything which cuts us off from the Gospel such as: individualism, relativism or unbridled consumerism. Let's see how all this is expressed with humility by Cardinal Loris Francesco Capovilla: "Every day when I examine my conscience I ask myself 'Young man who call yourself a Bishop of the Church, are you really a Christian?' Because it is not enough to be a Cardinal or Bishop. To be a Christian one must be a faithful and constant disciple of Jesus and that is something which is very difficult for all of us."

Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj
Superior General

...To the ends of the world



At 32 ° South and 55 ° West, with 5.86 inhabitants per sq. km: we are in the District of Tacuarembó (Uruguay). There are endless stretches of fields, long deserted roads, a few scattered villages, the occasional church, dozens of isolated sheep without a shepherd.

Faithfully, our brothers, here Fr. Eder Chavez Gonçalves SCJ, are stuck behind the driving wheel several hours to go and celebrate Christ's sacrifice at a humble country altar and bring the joy of the Gospel to the ends of the world.

Region



India

From May 13 to June 3th ► In preparation for the Solemnity of St. Michael our founder, the community of Hojai had monthly recollection lead by Fr. Matthew, the Diocesan Administrator, on the theme "The Spirituality of Availability of Mother Mary and St. Michael" on 13th May.

The Parish community celebrated the solemnity of St. Michael Garicoits on 14th with the children and the parishioners presided by Fr. Matthew.

In honour of the year of Mercy, the parish community also had "The Mercy Procession" on 18th; on 19th Fr. Arul and Fr. Jesu Raj celebrated their Ordination Anniversary with the Solemn Eucharistic Celebration with the neighboring priests and the children.

On the 25th, the Students of the school had the Environment Day with planting of saplings and a seminar on "Saving the Mother Earth" led by some environmental activists.

On 31st May the parish community had the solemn Rosary procession in honour

of Mother Mary. The Feast of the Sacred Heart was solemnized by the Eucharistic Celebration by the Archbishop of Guwahati Most Rev. John Moolachira on 3rd June.

Spiritual Exercises ► The novices of the Region had their one month Ignatian Retreat at the Ignatian Retreat Centre in Kannur (Kerala) from May 22 to June 22, under the guidance of Fr Raju Augustine SJ. This was a time of deep experience of oneself and the love of God through His Son Jesus and through the Vocation to the Religious life. It was also a time for our brothers to experience the richness of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and to find God in all things especially in the creation around us. This was in connection with the "Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*" - On care for our common home by Pope Francis".

Thailand

Sampran ► On 2nd June 2016 the community held the first meeting of the new academic year 2016-2017, under the leadership of Rev Fr Luke Kriangsak SCJ. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare the brothers for the new semester. We wish all the best to all of them.

NOTICES FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The Superior General, Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj, is going to make the canonical visitation of the **Vicariate of the Ivory Coast** from September 11 to 29.

On June 20th, the Superior General received from the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life the **indult granted to Fr. Eyad Bader to definitively leave the Congregation** and to be incardinated into the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Region



France-Spain

Mendelu ► The Bishop of San Sebastián (Spain), Mgr. Jose Ignacio Munilla, once a month calls the young priests of his diocese for a day of recollection. In the month of June this was in Mendelu, in the residence of the Betharramite community.

The Bishop gave a talk on God's mercy in priestly life: we are called by grace to share the ministry of the Lord Jesus, Eternal and High Priest.

The meeting then continued with the office of readings and a Holy Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament: we asked Jesus to make us visible signs of God's mercy in the world. The meeting ended with a fraternal lunch.

In honor of Miriam ► The ancient Carmel of Pau, founded in 1852 by the Carmel of Oloron, was under the patronage of the "Sacred Heart of Jesus"; that is why the Pau community wanted to start the celebrations in honor of St. Mary of Jesus Crucified in the evening of the feast of the Sacred Heart.

Fr Laurent Bacho scj, Superior of the community of Pau, sent this note: "At 8.30 pm we sang Vespers, followed by the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; the texts were taken from the writings of St. Mary of Jesus Crucified.

At 10 pm we held a candle lit procession in the courtyard of the house "St Michael" and we remembered the transverberation of the heart of Saint Mary in front of the

chapel "O. L. of Mount Carmel", dating back to May 24, 1868, and at the foot of the cross to show that St Miriam was in intimate communion with the sufferings of Jesus, her Master.

The next day, Saturday, June 4, at 9:30 am we sang the Morning Prayer in the chapel of Saint Michael, followed by confessions introduced by a common examination of conscience, inspired by some thoughts of St. Michael Garicoits. It consisted of two parts: "Thanks" for God's action; "Forgiveness" for the obstacles that we have placed to his action.

At 11:00 am, in the parish church of St. Teresa, there was the Eucharistic celebration presided by Mgr Molères, bishop emeritus of Bayonne."

This celebration was both an opportunity for prayer and an expression of joy with the well-appreciated animation of the "Little Choir of St Michael Garicoits" open to other singers of the city.

Central African Republic

Formation for the staff of HIV health centers ► On the initiative of Br Angelo Sala SCJ, both superior of the betharramite formation community "St Michel Garicoits" in Bouar and health center responsible, the last Saturday, May 21 it was held, in a room next the Bouar cathedral, a training day for the staff and management of HIV-AIDS health centers of Bouar area.

This training session was created and prepared taking into account the national guidelines both for the prevention and treatment of HIV or the management of malaria cases in Central African Republic.

Putting their hearts into it



BORN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THE PONTIFICAL WORKS MISSION WERE INSPIRED BY BLESSED PAOLO MANNA TO "ILLUMINATE, FIRE, ACT TO COORDINATE THE PRIESTS, AND THROUGH THEM, ALL THE FAITHFUL, ABOUT THE MISSIONS."

ON THE OCCASION OF THIS ANNIVERSARY, POPE FRANCIS ADDRESSED THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THIS ORGANIZATION TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE, NOT FORGETTING TO URGE THEM TO AN ESSENTIAL RENEWAL, WHICH CONCERNS EVERYBODY.

The mission builds up the Church and keeps her faithful to the saving will of God. For this reason, while it is important that you worry about the collection and allocation of the funds that you diligently administer in favour of the many churches and many needy Christians, a service for which I thank you, I urge you not to limit yourself to this aspect alone. We need "mystique". We need to grow in evangelizing passion. I am afraid — let me be frank — that your work is very organizational, perfectly organizational, but lacks passion. This can even make it an NGO, but you are not an NGO! Without passion your Union is not needed; without "mystique" it is not useful. And if we have to sacrifice something, let us sacrifice the organization, let us move forward with the mystique of the Saints. Today, your missionary Union needs this: the mystique of the Saints and Martyrs. And this generous work of ongoing formation for the mission is what you must undertake [...].

The recently founded Churches — which you help with ongoing missionary formation — can transmit to the older established Churches, which are sometimes burdened by their history and a bit tired, the ardour of a young faith and the witness of Christian

hope, sustained by the admirable courage of martyrdom. I encourage you to serve the Churches with great love, the Churches which, thanks to the martyrs, witness to us how the Gospel makes us participants in the life of God, and do so through attraction not proselytism.

In this Holy Year of Mercy, the missionary zeal that consumed Blessed Paolo Manna, and from which the Pontifical Missionary Union sprang, still continues today to kindle, excite, renew, rethink and reform the service that this Work is called to offer to the whole Church. Your Union must not be the same next year: it has to change in this direction, it must be reshaped by this missionary passion. While we thank the Lord for your one hundred years, I hope that the passion for God and for the mission of the Church will lead the Pontifical Missionary Union to also rethink — in docility to the Holy Spirit — in the perspective of an appropriate reform of its methods, an appropriate reform: namely conversion and reform, so as to implement authentic renewal for the good of ongoing formation for the mission of all the Churches.

Vatican City, Speech (extracts), 4 June 2016

LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

On the footsteps of Saint Michael Garicoits

SINCE JUNE 20, 13 YOUNG RELIGIOUS YOUTH FROM IVORY COAST, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, ARGENTINA, PARAGUAY, INDIA AND THAILAND GATHERED IN BETHARRAM FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SESSION FOR PREPARATION FOR FINAL PROFESSION.

IN THE ACCOUNTS WE REQUESTED FROM THREE "REPRESENTATIVES" OF OUR 3 REGIONS, WE CAN SENSE THEIR FIRST IMPRESSIONS, THEIR SPIRIT AND THEIR INTERIOR DISPOSITION THAT MAKE THIS SESSION NOT SO MUCH A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY, BUT AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE INITIAL FORMATION.

In November 2016, shortly before my final vows as a religious of Betharram, I made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the province of Cordoba (Argentina). During this month of intense prayer, I followed Jesus, our Lord, on the roads of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Samaria and Jerusalem, from his conception and birth to his death on the cross and resurrection.

How has this been possible without leaving my homeland? "In the spiritual sense," as taught St. Ignatius, that is to say by the imagination which, aided by the Spirit, helps us to contemplate the steps of the historical Jesus Christ from the Incarnation of the Word to the Tomb until today. This is the same route taken in his time, by our Founder who, at the end of his exercises, listened attentively to what Fr. Leblanc the Jesuit father said: "God wants more of you than becoming a Jesuit; you must follow your first inspiration, which I believe came from heaven and you shall be the father of a family who will be our sister. "It was the dawn of Bétharram ... More than six months have passed since my 30 day Exercises and here I am again on the steps of our holy founder, which

are also the steps of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man and founded on Love, which Michael experienced. But this time to the "spiritual senses" (still active and indispensable) are added the "physical sense" that captures and delights in the colours, fragrances, sounds, flavours and textures of the French Pyrenees (the same ones that delighted St. Michael Garicoits since childhood). And, as in other times – firstly the time of Jesus and his disciples, and that of Michel and his first Betharramites, this path is not enclosed in solitude. I am in fact accompanied by Betharramites from around the world, in the new century and in a dazzling diversity of cultures, histories and personalities, who have decided to answer the Lord's call, reproducing the generous impulse of the Word and saying, like Him at the time of his Incarnation: "*Ecce venio*" "*Huna ni*" "*Here I am*", "*Me Voici*", "*Eis-me aqui*", "*Aquí estoy*". So far, after seeing the monastery and shrine, where "among four walls" our Congregation was born, we visited the land where Michael took his first steps: Ibarre (his birthplace); Hosta (where he was baptized secretly in post-revolutionary persecution times); the

of employees of the community, he was concerned that they receive fair wages, and have their holidays. He willingly put aside some treats for them ... He was a scrupulous observer: he read the instructions on all packs of prescribed drugs, the ingredients and best before dates on all packaged foods. He liked to keep informed through the "*Feuilles Missionnaires*", the "*NEF*" the daily newspaper as well as political and social magazines. He then liked to discuss these readings. Personally attentive to the staff who looked after him voluntarily, he had a present for each one of them at Christmastime which he tastefully chose himself from *Carrefour* next door. A good shepherd, with great kindness towards his penitents, his advice was always much appreciated! He even received some of them in recent weeks. He was very close to his original family. Visits to faraway France became increasingly rare but that did not prevent him remaining close to his brothers, nephews and his great-nephews. There was a loving relationship, deep, full of humanity and warmth between them. The messages exchanged with his family when they learned of his departure to the Lord show this clearly. Loyal to his many friends both male and female. Wherever he lived he forged friendships which he sustained through letters, phone calls and emails.

Father Badie - a strong man, sometimes stubborn - was a true Betharramite of the *Ecce Venio*, which he lived by facing life's daily burdens. He was admirable in his commitment to life, a commitment that does not contradict his generous dedication and his willingness to go when

the Good Lord decided.

On the contrary! That commitment was a clear expression of the gift of his life, and a life given fully to the surprises that each day has in store for us. It was the light of his lamp always shining and bright with perseverance.

And when, in these last days, we felt we were losing him, not knowing whether it was because of medication or simply because of the advancing years, we could sense the heart of this consecrated man gently joining us, responding to the prayers, the glorias and Alleluias of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Our Father and Hail Mary of the Rosary, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us ...! ... Thy will be done ...! "During the farewell Mass on Monday 20 June, many of the Christian community in La Capilla, Adrogué thanked God for their having befittingly by the life and gifts of our dear Father Gerardo Badie: his nobility, delicacy, his integrity, his love of life, his cordiality and friendliness, his advice, an example of a simple life full of faith.

With his departure, there closes - for now - a chapter in the story of the legion of brave Betharramites of Bearn who left their dear Pyrenees to generously offering their lives to these lands of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Praise the Lord for the fruits received in abundance thanks to the gift of the lives of so many Betharramites! "*Montagnes Pyrénées, vous êtes mes amours!... Les montagnards sont là...!*"*

Francisco Daleoso scj

**Pyrenean Mountains, you are my beloved!... The mountain people are here ...!"; from a French popular song)

Father Gerard Badie scj

Benejacq (France), 18 April 1925 – Adrogué (Argentina), 20 June 2016

I lived with him at Villa Betharram from March 2014. Distressed strong and persistent stomach pain, the good Father Badie didn't think he would reach 90 years. He had lived long enough, he said, ... and never imagined he would reach that age... For him the party was over. He was awaiting for the time when the Father would take him and was totally ready. But man's thoughts are not God's thoughts. Last October, he was subjected to an operation of the intestines, against the advice of several people. And he recovered well from this operation, thanks to God and his doctors. Equipped with two permanent accessories (colostomy and catheter), he continued his journey.

On 18th April 2015 he celebrated his 90th birthday with much amazement and gratitude. It was a big Betharramite family celebration: a Mass and good meals, gifts and music... brothers both religious and secular... from far and wide ... telephone greetings, e-mails... a thousand congratulations!!! Hugs of joy, and thanksgiving!!! And our brother delighted, continued his days among us.

Always faithful to the courses he gave to novices Fr. Badie wisely dispensed pearls of wisdom old and new from the charism and spirituality of St Michael Garicoits, and from the life and virtues of many Betharramite religious. He would draw on the treasures of his heart.

He was always attentive to community



life: the Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, the rosary and meals too. The daily routine as much as the Festive extras made him so happy: a little ham, a good red wine, a bottle of champagne that reminded him his beloved France, or a TV program (rugby or football...), a film at home or at the cinema ... outings with Friends to go for tea and cake at a good *pâtisserie*, excursions for a few days with the community, (as in Brandsen, in July 2015, or Escobar, this March). Faithful to personal prayer, he turned the worn pages of his breviary, fingering his rosary tirelessly. Attentive to the welfare



mountains his parents crossed (in secret and for the same reason) to be able to marry in the bosom of the Roman Church; Oneix (where he worked as a domestic and where he was won by the tenderness of God); Garris (place of his First Communion he received after overcoming bitter Jansenists obstacles) and Saint-Palais (birth town of Father Auguste Etchecopar, our "Second founder").

Many things have changed, we are told, since the time of Michael. Small towns and villages once flourishing and full of life, present themselves, in the eyes of the traveller, as depopulated, quiet and prematurely aged. Yet for the open and attentive visitor, the environment that nourished St. Michael and which helped the Spirit to engender in his heart, the Betharramite charism is still there.

It is very difficult to select among many impressions created by this experience

the most significant one. Just as an example, here are two experiences that particularly marked me.

First, I note the strong impression Ibarre made on me. Among lush greenery of the mountains, were the paths Saint Michael knew, as a good shepherd when he was, pasturing the family flocks, I was struck by the simplicity of the place. It is true that the current loneliness accentuates the tranquillity of the place but it thereby gives the idea of a small secret place (like the grotto of Bethlehem, I guess), even more than other neighbouring villages.

St. Michael's farm is the last house of the village of Ibarre. You must get close to actual see it, hidden behind some branches. Furthermore, in those days there was not, as now, a Basque signpost to indicate the "Birthplace of St Michael Garicoits"; a saint still characterized by modesty and little known, except by

Betharramite religious, lay people and a few others. This concerns me, as a religious and Christian, and it allows me at the same time to identify the *modus operandi* of the Spirit. Far from denying what we are and what we were – it uses on the contrary our environment and our reality to launch us ahead into the future, to what he called us to: a simple Betharramite life, e.g. simple people, human, incarnated and who in their simple position, know how to live the immensity of charity. After the sobriety of Ibarre, I was struck by the farm of the Anghelu family. There I was able to share, at least in part and timidly, the Oneix ecstasy (a signpost, placed in his way, said St. Michael, that brought him up sharply; so great was the love of God he had experienced at that moment). We were greeted by the last two descendants

of the ancient masters of our founder: a brother and sister, nonagenarian singles. How not be moved by hearing Madame Anghelu exclaim, raising her arms *"Forward, always!"* And seeing her brother tell us, pointing with his cane to a large grey stone near the door of the house: *"Saint Michel stepped on this stone; that is why, when the concrete has arrived, I would not let them cover it."* These are some of the emotions I felt on the ground of St. Michael. I hope they will help other Betharramites to behold, by the "sense of imagination" the origins of our founder, and further deepen a little more the charism we received from the heart of God, through his humble availability.

Juan Pablo García Martínez scj

youths to make a kickstart. He let them know that nothing was lost to them and that we can all make mistakes but the important thing is that we realise it, have remorse, pick ourselves up and give our lives some meaning. Fr Vincent put some emphasis on the good fortune they have to still be young, so everything is still possible.

Brother Abib showed optimism in inviting the youth to cherish their freedom which is a gift from God and he therefore committed them to reclaiming this freedom as quickly as possible. But this happens through best behaviour during the observation period. Brother Hippolyte, native to an unstable area of Abidjan like some of the detained, invited the youth to fight to get themselves out of this situation as there is a champion within each of them.

This time of sharing and exchange drew to a close with the beautiful prayer, Our Father, with our hosts repeating it word for word after Fr Sylvain.

At the end of this visit, the delegation extended its heart, the heart of the whole Betharram family, through a tangible gesture as the Pope wanted - traditionally named 'work of Mercy' - by offering the fruit of our Lenten effort. This included clothes collected with the brothers of the Community, parishioners of St Bernard and friends of the Community, bags of rice, oil and sugar which were donated as gifts for the youth of ACRC.

Fr Sylvain promised other visits to the Centre's leaders in his words of departure.

Hippolyte Yomafou scj



Mass at Garacotchea, birthplace of Saint Michael Garicoits



Visit to the youth at the Abidjan Remand Centre

ON TUESDAY 7TH JUNE 2016, THE ADIAPODOUMÉ COMMUNITY PAID A VISIT TO THE YOUTH AT THE ABIDJAN CORRECTION AND REMAND CENTRE (ACRC). THIS VISIT, INITIATED BY THE SUPERIOR OF THE COMMUNITY, FR SYLVAIN DANSOU S.C.J., FELL WITHIN THE YEAR OF MERCY AS THE HOLY FATHER, POPE FRANCIS, WISHED.

By engaging Christians in the habit of Mercy, the intention of the Pope was to let us experience the love of God who consoles, who forgives and who gives hope. For us, Africans living in the Ivory Coast, the visit to the Youth at ACRC is a symbol.

Indeed, today the Ivory Coast faces an unprecedented security phenomenon, with adolescents from 10 to 16 years old on the front line. Sadly branded “microbes”, these youths sadly make themselves rulers of the streets in the Capital. Armed with weapons (machetes, knives, crowbars and other tools), they coldly attack residents without any qualms. Once put into remand, they find themselves in prison without any real help from relatives. The state tries to compensate and save them from delinquency.

Conscious that these children also needed a second chance after their crimes, the Adiapodoumé Community, at the end of Lent 2016, felt the need to go and visit them in ACRC’s home so as to show them the warmth of our love and to tell them that everything is still possible despite the wrongs they may have done at their age. Is that not what this holy year is about? Doesn’t it involve experiencing deep within us the joy of

having been found by Jesus, who, as the Good Shepherd, came to look for us because we were lost? For administrative, security and legal reasons, the whole community was not able to travel. So, it was down to a delegation of six members (Fr Sylvain Dansou S.C.J. and Fr Vincent Worou S.C.J., Brothers Yelouwassi Abib and Hippolyte Yomafou, aspirant novices Kouamé Emeric and N’Guetta Fulgence) that the visit could go ahead.

We were received by the Leaders in charge of the youth and were given the right to visit some places in order to immerse ourselves in penitentiary realities. Regardless of these realities which are a bit difficult for the youths (dinner at 4pm and being locked in dormitories from 4:30pm until 7am the following morning), we were able to observe good support from the State for these children. Courses in literacy, gardening, textiles, livestock farming and other forms of education are initiated by the State through Social Services in order to reform these youths with a view to a better reintegration into society. In turns, four members of the delegation were able to dispense some advice to these detained youths (76 in number, comprising 8 girls and 68 boys). Fr Sylvain showed his brotherly side by inviting the

« ...Within a dynamic grace and joy, but also spiritual deepening I discovered Betharram with its history and importance for my religious family. The first impression is the joy of seeing my dreams come true!

Until now, they had always spoken to me of Betharram, the sanctuary, the spirituality ... I myself had spoken to people while teaching them and sharing without ever getting to know this beautiful place of pilgrimage. [...] The masses celebrated in Garacotchea birthplace of St. Michel, Garris where he made his first communion and Oneix... the time for personal prayer and community meetings with Betharramite religious in mission who followed Saint Michael, a time of discovery – I think of

our special walk on the mountain where St Michael wanted to touch the sky! – It helped me to deepen my understanding of St. Michael and his spirituality. During this visit, several topics were addressed, namely the family, vocation, Baptism of the founder. Such themes helped me immerse myself in a personal reading of my family life, of my own baptism and my vocation.

My expectations are high. But something really important touched my heart... and I will return from this pilgrimage transformed and renewed.

May the Lord, through the intercession of St. Michael Garicoits, help me grow along this path he has designed for me!

Marie-Paulin Yarkai scj



« ...Encountering Anghelu family at Oneix and listening them about St. Michael was another remarkable event beyond the words. It was indeed a walk down memory lane. According to Fr. Etcheberry, St. Michael was in a state of trance during his First Holy Communion at St. Palais and indeed we were blessed to be at that holy place for the Sunday Mass followed by visiting our community at St. Palais and listening about the inspirational life of Fr. Etchecopar by our elder priests.

At the end of the first week of this session I am thankful to God for the fascinating insights on Life and Spirituality of St.

Michael and I reminded myself that we are both body and soul, and God does amazing things through both. How many years have passed since Michael’s life was ended? And yet I was able to encounter him, alive more than ever, and I know that all of us experienced the same thing. This encounter is unique and gives me a lot of motivation and hope.

Finally, I hope and pray that the Spirit of the Lord may help me to interiorise what I learnt from the School of St. Michael and implement them to my life hereafter.

Xavier Vipin scj

PRACTISING THE RULE

15, rue du Palais de Justice

THIS ADDRESS IS THE SAME AS ANY OTHER FOR THE POST MAN IN THE SMALL TOWN OF SAINT-PALAIS, BUT IT IS A PRIVILEGED PLACE FOR US BETHARRAMITES: THE HOUSE OF FR. AUGUSTE ETCHÉCOPAR, SECOND FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION, AND ESPECIALLY FAITHFUL DISCIPLE OF ST MICHAEL GARICOÏTS. FATHER BERTRAND SALLA SCJ TELLS US HOW ONE LIVES AS A BETHARRAMITE RELIGIOUS IN SUCH A SIGNIFICANT PLACE!

"To reproduce and to manifest the impulse of the Heart of Jesus ..." This is indeed the vocation of the spiritual sons of Saint Michel Garicoïts. It is a beautiful ideal, but how hard to achieve! As assistant priest in the diocese of Bayonne and specifically in the parish area of Saint-Palais, I try very modestly, to put this into practice. I realize that without the help of the Sacred Heart Himself, I can do nothing good.



Coming into this world, Jesus said: *"Here I am."* These words are so rich in love, obedience and generosity. And here I have a clear path that I am invited to follow. Despite my limits and my weaknesses, I am pleased to strive to enact the *"Here I am"* of the Sacred Heart. First of all, I take seriously the share of the work which is entrusted in parish ministry, especially in some specific points.

1. The preparation of the homily. Pope Francis insists on this in *"The Joy of the Gospel."* I take the time to read the texts of the Word of God, to dwell on them through

reflection and prayer. I also remember the words of St. Michael Garicoïts. I quote from memory: *"Holy Spirit, teach Yourself those I go to speak to now."*

2. The Eucharistic celebration. I recall the fervor that St. Michael Garicoïts and Father Etchécopar put into it. This helps me to enter more fully into the spirit of the celebration and to be as faithful as possible to the demands of the Holy Church, despite the distractions.

3. In my relationships with people I meet or groups that I accompany in reflection:

Article 2: Through Saint Michael Garicoïts the Holy Spirit has raised up in the Church a religious institute whose particular mission is 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.

"This heart calling from within, from whom we came and to whom we should give thanks for everything is the foundation on which we must build without ceasing and be raised ever higher." (Letter of Fr. Etchécopar to Fr. Magendie, from Bethlehem, 12th December 1892)

a word, a reaction, an attitude that can bring a little light.

In all this, I put my trust in the Lord. I firmly hope that God will always make my words and clumsy attitudes bear fruit. This hope makes me say: *"Here I am."* Our community of Saint-Palais is located about twenty kilometers from the birthplace of our founder. I have been a regular on the pilgrimage to Labarre since childhood. The pilgrimage takes place once a year. But it's every day that I am called to live in the spirit of St. Michael Garicoïts in our Betharramite community of Saint-Palais. We are five religious men in community: it is the same ideal that unites us. With our qualities and our faults, we try to support each other, to love each other, to put our skills to the ideal of service inspired by our holy Founder and by the Gospel.

In my case, I'm not a great talker. I prefer to apply myself to be as faithful as possible in making small daily services in the community. I find it very important to faithfully participate in the community prayer of the Breviary, three times a day. When I discover something in a reading that could interest my brothers, I share

it with them at the table. This can be a form of sharing that becomes of mutual benefit. Indeed, we need to encourage each other.

Our community is based in the home of Father Etchécopar. It is not the stone walls which, by themselves, have an influence on me. They do not have a magical power. However, they remind me that someone important was born here, that he was the favorite disciple of St Michael Garicoïts, because of the depth of his Christian, religious and priestly life.

Thinking of Fr. Etchécopar, the son of the house, keeps me alert, attentive to my religious vocation. It helps me not to let myself lapse into an easy, comfortable and mediocre life. Because human nature is quick to drag us down. In addition to this, the deceptive and hypocritical callings of the devil are always there. The memory of Fr. Etchécopar is a protective fortress for me.

Bertrand Salla SCJ