



Painting by Juan Vladimir Martinovich

Listening to Saint Michael...

The private examen is a source of division and ruin. God hates a man full of pride; you could almost say that God is in a hurry to abandon him to his outlandish weakness since he is blinded by his own pride. Man wants to mount his weak and blind reason as a rival to God. Such schemes are so repugnant in God's eyes that he outsmarts the best projects of human wisdom and renders them useless, every time wisdom is unwilling to seek inspiration in Him, the true and sole light.

Cachica Notebook, 12



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

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NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA
FAMILY NEWS

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of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram

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A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Father, not my will
but thine be done!

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The Will of God is a fundamental element of the Gospel as it is of our Betharramite charism. If it is well anchored in our lives whatever we are seeking or realising, either personally or in community makes of us children of the same Father, and consequently brothers among ourselves, brothers of the beloved Son who is always seeking to please his Father in all things.

In his contemplation of Phil 2, 6-11 and Hebrew 10, 1-10 in the *Manifesto*, St Michael Garicoits is fascinated by the relationship of filial obedience of Jesus with his Father, as we can discover in certain events of his life where he is seeking his Father's Will.

It is thanks to such events that we come to know the Heart of Jesus and what explains the reasons for his behaviour. He doesn't exist for himself but for his Father and for the rest of humanity. Such contemplations produced in St Michael the conviction and desire that the disciples of the Sacred Heart should be men totally forgetful of themselves and hooked

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on the Father's Will and the service of their brothers. This is why Saint Michael fought vigorously against "unchanging ideas", "personal will", "self worship" in those wishing to be genuine missionary-disciples.

There is more to the Gospel than simply obeying commandments. "There is one thing you lack...." (Mark 10, 21).

It simply means living with the fairness that the commandments demand; it also means being attentive to discovering the will of the Father in the different and changing situations of life according to the mind of the Gospel (*magis*). The life and teaching of Jesus tell us what these situations are so as to accomplish the will of the Father: be like Jesus living in truth and charity.

The will of God, at the moment of our

creation in his image and likeness, is that we should lead as full a life as possible.

By creating us in his own image and likeness God wants us to build a human community like the one which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit lead together.

At the moment of our creation God offered us this earth, asking us to take care of it, because it is the common property and because he wants us to share his goods among all mankind.

Jesus teaches us that we must not confront each other as if we were enemies, but rather that we should take care of all just like brothers, children of the same Father.

Following the example of the Word who became flesh we must get out of ourselves and come closer to the rest of humanity; and by the means of communi-

The complete "Calvary" comprised 8 small Charles guarding paintings and statues. People could contemplate the Passion of Christ in 14 stations.

In 1730, the "Calvary", which was to be found at Betharram during the entire 18th Century, was finished. But many benefactors were needed to maintain Betharram; the chaplains borrowed or begged. As such, "on the 25th April 1761, they requested 80 golden Royal coins ('Louis coins') from Mr De Capdevielle, Lord of Gomer, to provide for the household's needs."

A traveller from Bordeaux wrote in 1765, after his visit to Betharram: "The statues, larger than life, are rather skilfully made, the positions just right, the draperies well made". Chaplain Touton appreciated the living expression of the characters and

affirmed: "All that is missing is speech". Two precious relics of this "Calvary", conserved at the Betharram museum, and ranked by the Fine Arts, The Scourging of Christ³ and the vandalised head of the Virgin, explaining the judgment of the first witnesses. They give us, at the same time, a measure of the vandalism that was going to hit us during the revolutionary troubles.

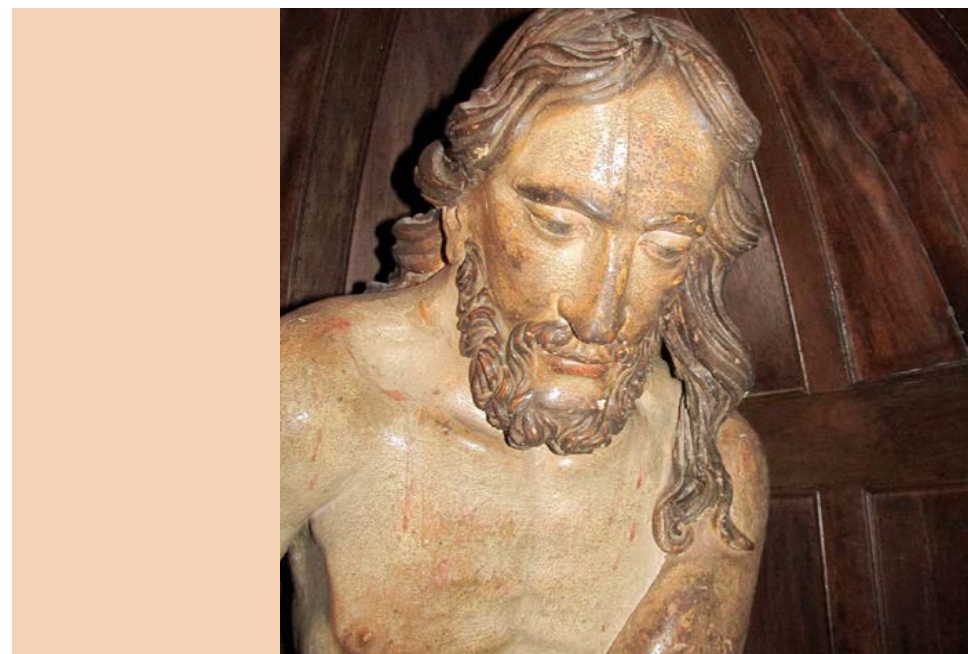
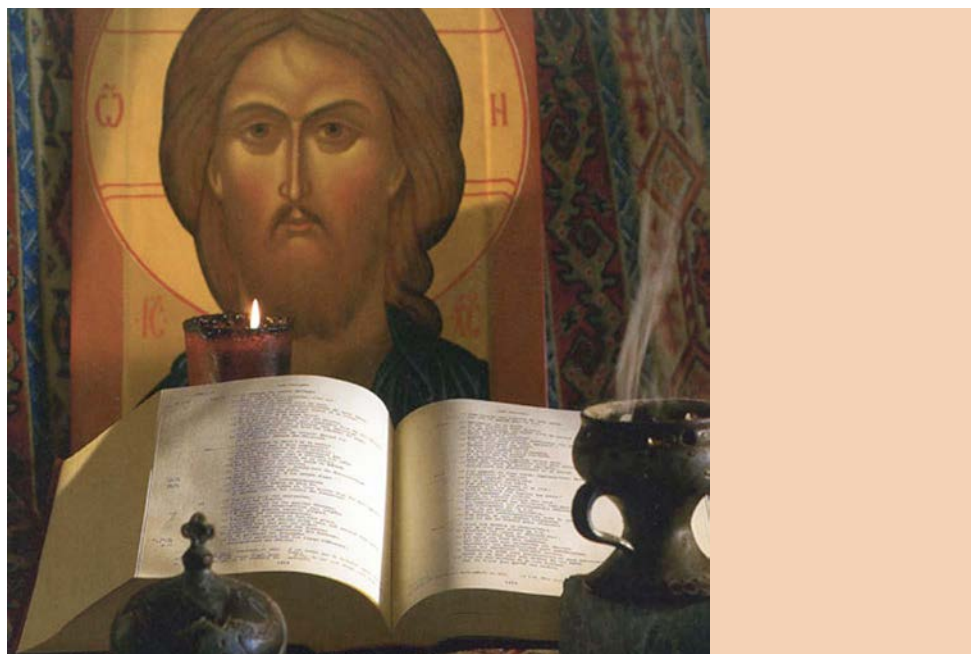
Raymond Descomps sc (1916 - 2009)

Extract from Notre-Dame de Bétharram - La Mère qui sauve and from «L'Écho de Bétharram» (1973)

¹ Municipality of Béarn

² See the illustration in NEF from February 2016

³ This sculpture is now at the entrance of Our Lady's Chapel



Betharram's "Calvary" until the Eve of the Revolution

Here we are back at the 17th century in Betharram. Inspired by his devotion to the mystery of the Cross and assured by the truth of the miracle of September 1616, the Chaplain, Hubert Charpentier, planted three large crosses at the top of the hill. This was the first "Calvary" at Betharram, inaugurated in 1623. Charpentier had conceived a more ambitious project that he couldn't see through to the end. Before his departure in 1638, the generosity of Louis XIII, King of France, had all the same allowed the building of a great Oratory, standing over the original chaplains' chapel: it is the sixth chapel, called the "St Louis" chapel, of the current Way of the Cross.

The reputation of Betharram, sustained by the wonders performed there, did not stop spreading. Whole villages came there, and the chapel of Hubert Charpentier proved to be insufficient. It is in all likelihood on that site that the chaplains had the current sanctuary built. Our Lady's Chapel was finished in 1661 and consecrated a little later by the Bishop.

As early as 1659, St Vincent de Paul wrote: "We are envisaging setting up a residence of our Company in a place of great devotion; this place, if it isn't the second, is at least the third most visited in the kingdom. It is Our Lady of Betharram, where miracles often happen ...". Indeed from the 17th Century, a remarkable tradition was established at Betharram: Whole villages organised a march each year, at a predetermined time. "Of all the parishes, Bruges¹ was the most hasty to come to Betharram, as early as 1623. According to the town's accounts, the pilgrims, numbering a thousand or fifteen hundred, marched in communities, preceded by the banner of St Martin and the clergy. Special marshals ensured order. At Betharram, the Mass was sung, by the chapel's choir, to the sound of the organ, and municipal magistrates came holding candles in their hands." (cf. Henri Lassalle SCJ, *Notre-Dame de Bétharram*, p226.) Lestelle made his pilgrimage on the morning of the Ascension and on the evening of 15th August, with the Municipal

Council at the front. The pilgrims who had come from far off places were already there on the eve of the big celebrations. The night had to be filled; chaplains organised prayer vigils. The more fervent pilgrims spent the night in the chapel. Others rested in hotels or private houses. Sometimes the crowd was so large that it was impossible to find shelter. If the weather was nice, the pilgrims would make a bed of ferns and sleep in the shadow of Betharram's "Calvary", wrapped up in their coats. At the time, there were still only four prayer stations. From 1705, through the drive of the chaplains' Superior, Baratnau, Betharram's "Calvary" saw a particularly glorious period. The simplification of the project depicted in the Lasnes engraving², made it possible to reserve all the resources for the interior embellishments of the Stations of the Cross. Baratnau gave up the symmetrical plan; this beautiful layout, so pleasing to the eye, was put aside. Starting in 1716, the work was efficiently carried out; it only took four years.

cation, listening and respect for others go out to meet them.

Jesus teaches us that the kingdom of God becomes more obvious in the humble than in the great of this world, in fragility rather than in strength, in our needs than in our pretended knowledge.

Jesus teaches us that to live as God's children and brothers of all, we must think of serving rather than of being served, of losing our lives rather than preserving them.

Jesus teaches us that, instead of seeking after success, power and money for its own sake, it is more important in all humility to offer consolation, dignity and self esteem to the rejects of society so that their quality of life should improve.

Jesus teaches us that human relations suppose humiliations and we must support them so that the spiral of violence gets no bigger.

Jesus teaches us to forgive: to forgive means giving up revenge; it means being ready to lose face rather than winning the contest, rather than inflicting suffering on our brother.

He teaches us to carry the cross of our position so that we don't become hemmed in by the suffering. We can overcome our sufferings by rising to the challenges inviting us to get out of ourselves.

The Risen Jesus encourages us to lead lives full of joy and enthusiasm, trusting in the Father who is faithful to his promises, always looking out for what is best for us and who takes care of us and never abandons us.

God wants all mankind to know his Son Jesus, and through Him to know the love

He has for each one of us; and thus all can experience real happiness.

These are also the criteria of our vocation as consecrated souls: poverty, chastity, obedience and fraternity.

They are also the criteria of our Betharramite vocation: humility, gentleness, obedience, devotedness and modesty.

Such criteria are not just human values; they are evangelical, and to make the best of them one must be aware of and experience the "God is all! I am nothing!" of St Michael; to us it seems useless: it is so hard!

Yet it is necessary if we are to live out our relationship with the Father by obeying His Will: "Leave me, Lord; I am a sinful man". (Luke 5,8). To know that God is everything and that whatever I am comes to me from his hand. This demands that I practice humility: without Him I am nothing. In my relationships with others I can recognise my limits and their talents, my values without making heavy weather of their faults.

I have been very surprised to come across the freshness of St Michael's "God is all! I am nothing!" in three different passages in Pope Francis' book *The Name of God is Mercy*:

"Recognizing oneself as a sinner is something else. It means standing in front of God, who is our everything, and presenting him with our selves, which are our nothing. Our miseries, our sins. What we need to ask for is truly an act of grace."

Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj
Superior General

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF ROME

With our nothing

IN THE CONVERSATION-BOOK **THE NAME OF GOD IS MERCY**, FRANCIS TELLS HIS INTERVIEWER: **"THE POPE IS A MAN WHO NEEDS GOD'S MERCY."** DID SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS NOT CONSTANTLY INVITE US TOO **"TO SURRENDER TO THE INFINITE MERCY OF THE LORD ... "AND TO "NOURISH THIS SENSE OF PROFOUND HUMILITY"?**

AS HIGHLIGHTED BY OUR SUPERIOR GENERAL, IT IS STRIKING TO FIND IN THE WORDS OF THE POPE SOME POINTS ON WHICH ST. MICHAEL HIMSELF INSISTED. BEYOND THE SURPRISE, THIS OFFERS A NEW INPUT TO REFLECT ON THE WORDS OF THE POPE AND OUR FOUNDER'S.



*God all, I nought. I nothing.
Corruption. Behold a steady-
ing formula, a good orientation for
our ideas, our feelings, our conduct.
This great principle should help us to
brush aside all those ideas and contrary
opinions which poison man's life, desecrate
the divine life, and end in devilish schemes,
practical paganism and impiety.
God all, I nothing. God all. Let Him be the
beginning, our middle, and our end in all
our works. When preparing a sermon we
should attribute to Him everything that is
good in the plan and its execution, after
which we must count entirely upon
Him for success, that is the good of
souls. (Saint Michael Garicoits,
DS § 52).*

During the Council of the Congregation, with the aim of not nullifying all the work, the team explained to the Regional Superiors the reasons behind this decision and handed over to them all the details of the project they had been working on, so that they can find an opportunity to make use of it during a regional or Vicariate meeting for the good of our brothers. We hope that at the Vicariate level sessions of ongoing formation will be organized and carried out following the procedure suggested by the team.

Decisions of the Superior General and his Council



In the meeting of the General Council on April 5 2016, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, decided to present **Br. Juan Pablo García Martínez** (Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay, Region Fr. Augusto Etchecopar) **to the diaconate**;

In the same meeting, the Superior General with the advice of his Council approved the **appointment of Fr. Raúl Villalba Maylín as Superior of the community of San José di Asunción** (Vicariate of Paraguay, Region Fr. Augusto Etchecopar);



On April 7th, the Superior General received from the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life

the **dispense for the appointment of**

- **Br. Angelo Sala as Superior of the Community of Bouar-Saint Michel** (Vicariate of Central Africa, Region St Michael Garicoits) for a 2nd mandate and

- **Br. Andrew Ferris as Superior of the Community of Great Barr** (Vicariate of England, Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified) for a 1st mandate.



Notice

Communication from the Team entrusted with the preparation of the session of ongoing formation in Holy Land

The team entrusted with the preparation of the session of ongoing formation in Holy Land, as required by the 26th General Chapter in 2011, this year has been holding a week-long session to take the final step in view of the “training course” (recyclage) which was going to take place in the month of July.

The aim of the team in planning this session of the ongoing formation was to help each participant to “review his life and his vocation” while at the same time visiting the holy places where Jesus lived and carried out his mission.

Unfortunately, in spite of all our efforts, the team had to give up and cancel the recyclage due to the great obstacles encountered.

Among the obstacles we want to voice the difficulty the Regional Superiors had in inviting the religious and getting them involved in the program; this is the reason why we had to postpone the session for one year because we wanted to motivate the participation by sending some working material to the participants before the session itself.

That is why last year we sent part of this material to those who seemed to attend the course for sure. Only very few religious sent in the answers we had requested. This led us to the conclusion that there was no sufficient motivation to participate in the “recyclage” as it was planned.

After this analysis, basically because of lack of interest on the part of the major part of the religious, the team, with the consent of the Superior general, has decided to cancel the ongoing formation session.

We apologise to those who were really interested and had decided to participate in the session. On the other hand, we ask you all to consider also the frustration felt by the members of the team who, along these years, put in a lot of time and energy to draw up the project.

« In the documents related to the process of the beatification of Paul VI, I read that one of his secretaries confided that the Pope, echoing the words I have already quoted from ‘Thoughts on Death,’ said, ‘For me it has always been a great mystery of God to be in wretchedness and to be in the presence of the mercy of God. I am nothing. I am wretched. God the Father loves me, he wants to save me, he wants to remove me from the wretchedness in which I find myself, but I am incapable of doing it myself. And so he sends his Son, a Son who brings the mercy of God translated into an act of love toward me... But you need a special grace for this, the grace of a conversion. Once I recognize this, God works in me through his Son’ (Ibid.).

« And then there is the homily with which Albino Luciani began his bishopric at Vittorio Veneto, when he said he had been chosen because the Lord preferred that certain things not be engraved in bronze or marble but in the dust, so that if the writing had remained it would have been clear that the merit was all and only God’s. He, the bishop and future Pope John Paul I, called himself ‘dust’. (Ibid.)

« The more conscious we are of our wretchedness and our sins, the more we experience the love and infinite mercy of God among us, and the more capable we are of looking upon the many ‘wounded’

we meet along the way with acceptance and mercy. (Ibid.)

« [Advice for a good confession] [A penitent] ought to reflect on the truth of his life, of what he thinks before God. He ought to be able to look earnestly at himself and his sin. He ought to feel like a sinner, so that he can be amazed by God. In order to be filled with his gift of infinite mercy, we need to recognize our need, our emptiness, our wretchedness. We cannot be arrogant. (Ibidem).



SNAPSHOTS OF BETHARRAMITE LIFE

A sweet and gentle heart



Religious life has its pleasures. Fr. Henri Lamasse SCJ knows a little of this, now that he has celebrated his 85th birthday in the Holy Land on the 19 February this year, surrounded by his brothers, those sharing the religious life, novices and the sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, such excellent bakers!

"Lord, I bless you for my life and I thank you for the brothers you placed on my path."

This month we too can offer a heart as tender and gentle to our own saint, on the occasion of his birthday on 15 April.

Picture taken from "Noviciat Terre Sainte" Facebook page

Region



Argentina

Adrogué ► Assembly of the Vicariate of Argentina and Uruguay. On 6 and 7 April, the Vicariate of Argentina and Uruguay held an Assembly, in the community "Villa Betharram" in Adrogué (Argentina). Msgr. Bonino, Bishop of Tacuarembó-Ribera (Uruguay), the diocese in which a Betharramite community does pastoral ministry, was invited to the meeting. Mgr. Bonino shared with our confreres his experience as a religious leader; he presided over the Eucharistic Celebration, and enlivened the table with Father Gustavo Agin SCJ, the Regional Superior, by playing the guitar and the piano. During the assembly the delegates of the Vicariate to the next Regional Chapter were also elected.

Brazil

Meeting of lay people and religious ► Lay people and religious belonging to the Betharram family of Passa Quatro gathered together to deepen and share the spirituality of St Michael Garicoits. At the end of this rich and interesting gathering, other meetings were planned.

Companions of Betharram held their annual retreat day at the Olton Friary. The day was directed by Fr Dominic who spoke about the Year of Mercy and the history of the religious life and how the Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers apply that life today. The day ended with the celebration of the Holy Mass of Our Lady of Betharram.

India

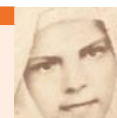
Celebrations at Shobhana Shaakha

► March 19 - Our St. Mariam Regional novitiate celebrated the feast of St. Joseph, the Protector of our family of Betharram with joy and happiness. A Novena with well wishers & friends prepared us all for this joyful and solemn celebration.

Rev. Fr. Biju Antony SCJ was the main celebrant and Fr. Biju Paul SCJ broke the word of God. This was also an opportunity to wish farewell to Bros. Rawee & Thanith (Vicariate of Thailand) who are going back home to Thailand. The celebration ended with a sumptuous meal in honour of St. Joseph.

Then as part of the Lenten spiritual programme the community made a Lenten pilgrimage to Anne's Hill with the companions.

Region



England

Olton ► On Saturday, March 12, the

Region



Italy

Lenten recollection ► On March, 10, in very quiet surroundings, fifteen Betharramite Fathers gathered in a retreat house run by the Dehonians (Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) for their Lenten recollection.

The Betharram religious came from the communities of Albavilla, Albiate and Lissone. They were guided by Fr Luigi Guccini to find out their image of God and to experience his mercy, during a holy hour and the sacrament of reconciliation.

Jubilee pilgrimage ► Saturday, March 12. Following the Jubilee itinerary proposed by the Diocese of Pistoia, the three Betharramite parishes of the pastoral area of Montemurlo (Italy), went on pilgrimage to the Cathedral of Pistoia to pass through the Holy Door and to celebrate the Eucharist with the Bishop, Mgr Fausto Tardelli.

More than 500 people of every age from the three parishes of Montemurlo, gathered on the square of the Cathedral of Pistoia and at 3.30 pm the procession led by Fr Maurizio Vismara scj entered the Cathedral through the Holy Door. At 4 pm the Bishop celebrated the Holy Eucharist in a Cathedral packed with parishioners from Montemurlo and expressed his joy for the testimony given by the people of God gathered together. The

children sitting at the foot of the altar enlivened the celebration and gave a touch of that simple joy which is a sign of the mercy of God.

Central Africa

Visit of the Nuncio ► Tuesday, 23 and 24 March - Mgr. Franco Coppola, Apostolic Nuncio in the Central African Republic and Chad paid a visit to the religious communities present in the city of Bouar, including the betharramite communities of Saint Michael and Our Lady of Fatima.

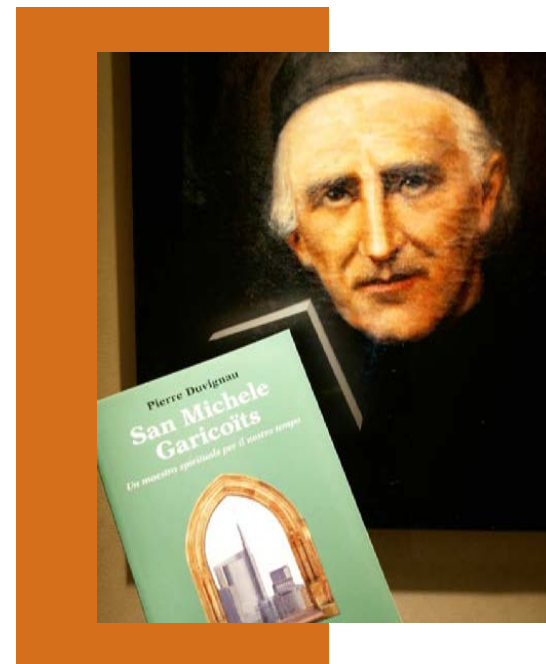
Tuesday afternoon, the Nuncio took the opportunity to speak with Br. Angelo Sala scj, superior of the St. Michael community and religious-in-charge of the Centre for the treatment and prevention of AIDS disease, along with Fr. Mario Zappa, Br. Gilbert Coulibaly, Br. Armel Daly and young brothers in formation. Wednesday morning the Nuncio presided over the solemn celebration for the Chrism Mass, in the Bouar cathedral, surrounded by all the priests of the diocese.

The lunch followed. In the afternoon the Nuncio visited the parishes including the parish Our Lady of Fatima where he was welcomed by Fr. Beniamino Gusmeroli scj and Fr. Arsene Noba scj.

During his homily, the Nuncio expressed "his pleasure and joy in seeing that the Diocese of Bouar is very active and is fully committed in the pastoral ministry thanks to the presence and work of religious men and women who, in their daily work, reflect the words of the Gospel."

Betharramite Library

DISSEMINATING THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST MICHAEL GARICOITS IS A MISSION EACH BETHARRAMITE RELIGIOUS IS CALLED TO. SO IT IS A GREAT JOY WHEN WE SEE LAY PEOPLE BEING COMMITTED TO THIS MISSION WITH GENEROSITY AND DEDICATION.



After the translation of the three volumes of the Correspondence of St. Michael Garicoits, completed in 2013 and published on the website of the Congregation, Mario Grugnola has been back to service by working one of the most important volumes on the Saint of Betharram written by Father Pierre Duvignau SCJ in 1962.

After over than 50 years after its release in France, the volume by Fr. Duvignau SCJ is a new entry in the Italian Betharramite library ; it is still a reference book for those who want to know more about the life and the spirituality of St Michael Garicoits and is often quoted in our lectures.

In 1962, Fr. Duvignau dared to entitle his book dedicated to our founder as follows: *A spiritual master of the nineteenth century*. He admitted in his introduction that such a title was "rather ambitious

[and that] Fr. Garicoits, so humble, would certainly have declined it."

Yet, at the beginning of the XXI century, St Michael Garicoits is still indeed the father and/or the spiritual guide of religious and lay people worldwide. Hence, the Italian publishers did not hesitate to update the frontage as follows : "San Michele Garicoits - Un Maestro spirituale per il nostro tempo", that is "Saint Michael Garicoits, a spiritual master for our time". There is no way Fr. Duvignau would have disapproved that!

Easter on the year of Mercy

ON THE OCCASION OF EASTER ON THIS EXTRAORDINARY YEAR OF MERCY, WE CAN UNDERSTAND MORE CLEARLY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AND MERCY. IN THE FIRST PLACE, MERCY FINDS A CLEAR AND WHOLE EXPRESSION IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. ST JOHN PAUL II WROTE: "IN HIS RESURRECTION CHRIST HAS REVEALED THE GOD OF MERCIFUL LOVE,... HERE IS THE SON OF GOD, WHO IN HIS RESURRECTION EXPERIENCED IN A RADICAL WAY MERCY SHOWN TO HIMSELF, THAT IS TO SAY THE LOVE OF THE FATHER WHICH IS MORE POWERFUL THAN DEATH." (DIVES IN MISERICORDIA, 8).

Mercy is closely linked to the Resurrection. They are both at the heart of the celebration of Easter and at the heart of our faith.

We also see this close link between Mercy and the Resurrection in certain parables, where the journey back home, the journey back to the Father, is a symbol of the Resurrection – something that all Christians experience when they receive forgiveness. Chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel contains 3 parables in which the chorus of 'lost/found' or 'dead/coming back to life' resounds. These Mercy parables tell of the resurrection experience in a deep and intense manner: the lost sheep and the joy of the shepherd; the drachma which was found again and the joy it brought to the woman; the prodigal son who "was dead but has now come back to life". There are also various episodes told in the Gospel where Jesus not only preaches the Mercy of God, but also lives it. In these episodes, there is a very close link between Mercy, Compassion and the Resurrection. For example,

when Jesus, before bringing back to life the son of Nain's widow, "felt sorry for her". (Luke 7:13.) Or when Jesus went to the tomb of Lazarus (John 11) and before commanding him to leave the tomb, "was greatly distressed".

In both cases, in order to express this feeling of mercy and compassion, the Gospel-writers use a term which refers to a mother's womb and also to the innards of the human being in general, these being considered as the source of sentiments, in the Bible.

In His Mercy, the Father doesn't abandon us in the tomb of our sin, but meets us and frees us. We often pray in Psalm 15:9-10: "my body too will rest secure, for you will not abandon me to Sheol, you cannot allow your faithful servant to see the abyss". Just as the tomb that received Jesus' dead body was transformed by the Father into a spring where life itself spurted out, so too at Easter, the Father, in His Mercy, transforms the hard stone of our sin into a bosom where we can be reborn into a new life.

you from assuming heavy responsibilities, but you were available for all those who needed a friendly ear and the sacraments which we could celebrate with you. Thanks to your special charism many of us benefited by the sacrament of reconciliation. You wanted us to begin by thanking God for all that was good in our lives. With such a positive look it was easier for us to confess our faults and failings. Full of trust in the future we could go forward once more. You were attentive to the residents, old and sick, in the Care Homes at La Houlette, l'Oree de Bouconne as well as our own Care Homes here in Pibrac-Brax where you paid many welcome visits.

For Father Dominic it was important to know the Christian names of each person and he didn't forget them! He spared neither his time nor his efforts to go and visit the sick.

He liked an open Church where all felt accepted as the children of the same Father. For the last few years he could no longer celebrate like before but on

Sundays he still liked to proclaim the Word of God in the Gospel, and he liked to be part of the discussions on the Word which we had one Thursday a month.

Prayer and adoration were important for him as a priest and a religious and they inspired his whole mission. For the children who knew him well he was the "good father" whom they trusted and who showed them the unswerving love of God our Father.

There is so much more that we could say about our dear Father Dominic But he never liked flattery!

Before he leaves us for his final resting place we want to thank from our hearts for his Mission here among us.

Dear Father Dominic, for us you have been a father, a brother and a friend.

Full of trust and gratitude we wish you "A DIEU" and may the Lord receive you in his joy, peace and love.

Someone from a parish said "A light has returned to the Light"! May this light for ever enlighten our pathway. Amen.

Françoise Grimaud

In memoriam

On March 16, after a long illness, the **father of Br. Armel Daly Vabié** (scholastic, community of "St Michael Garicoits", Bouar) died. We pray to the Lord that He may welcome him into the joy and peace of His heavenly home. We assure Br. Armel and his family of our closeness and our prayer.

On March 25, **Mr. Luis, Fr. Francisco Daleoso's brother** (of the community of Adrogué - Argentina), returned to the house of the Father after a long illness. We are close to Fr Francisco and to his family and pray for their dear one.

The April 7, **Mr. Michel Olçomendy, brother of Fr Jean-Baptiste Olçomendy SCJ**, passed away. He was 82 years old. Please let's hold Fr. Jean-Baptiste Olçomendy SCJ and his family in our humble prayers for their dear one.

Father Dominique ETCHEVERRIA scj

Estérençuby (France), 31 August 1932 - Comebarrieu (France), 4 April 2016

Dear Father Dominic or Brother Dominic (as I used to like calling you)

Here we are together this afternoon with your nephew and niece, the Betharram community, our priests and the priests of the neighbouring parishes who knew you well and appreciated you together with the Christian community of Pibrac-Brax. We are here to say a final *A Dieu* and to entrust you to our Heavenly Father. Your death fills us all with sadness because we were fond of you. Each one of us here can bear witness to all that he received thanks to you. Your discretion will probably take a knock but we all want to recall what has deeply touched us particularly at this moment when you are leaving us. Let us first of all recall the principal lines of your life as a religious and priest in the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Betharram. Your ministry began in Sidi Bel Abbes where you spent 10 years. You made your Vows in 1952 and you were ordained priest in 1962. After your mission in Sidi Bel Abbes you spent more than 40 years in the diocese of Limoges where you held many positions of responsibility: Religious Education for the children, the Pastoral Care of the Sick and Disabled, and with "Secours Catholique". Like Christ you were especially drawn towards the little ones, the poor, the rejects of our society, but also towards those feeling themselves vulnerable, were greatly in need of God's Mercy and, through you, needed a smile, an attentive ear, goodness and a word of



advice to help them to have the courage to pick themselves up and go forward. In 1996 while you were on a formation course to prepare you better for today's world you had a heart attack which kept you two months in the clinic at St Orens to recover your strength. In 2011 you spent the year in Pau and in 2012 we welcomed you to our parish Pibrac-Brax; you were celebrating your Golden Jubilee as priest and the next day the community was celebrating your 80th birthday! Because of your kindness and cordiality we quickly made you one of our own! Those four years spent with you have been good for us. Your age and state of health prevented



The found drachma, Godfried Schalcken, 1675-80, Private collection

Mercy is then able to achieve the resurrection of our brothers. Where Matthew speaks of the perfection of God (Matt 5:48), Luke speaks of the Mercy of God: "Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate." (Luke 6:36.). By these words, Jesus not only reveals what God is like, but he also tells us that we can contribute to the resurrection of our brother through our acts of mercy. In conclusion, here is how St John Paul II expressed this close link between the Paschal Mystery and Mercy: "The Paschal Mystery is the culmination of this revealing and effecting of mercy, which is able to justify man, to restore

justice in the sense of that salvific order which God willed from the beginning in man and, through man, in the world." (*Dives in Misericordia*, 7.)

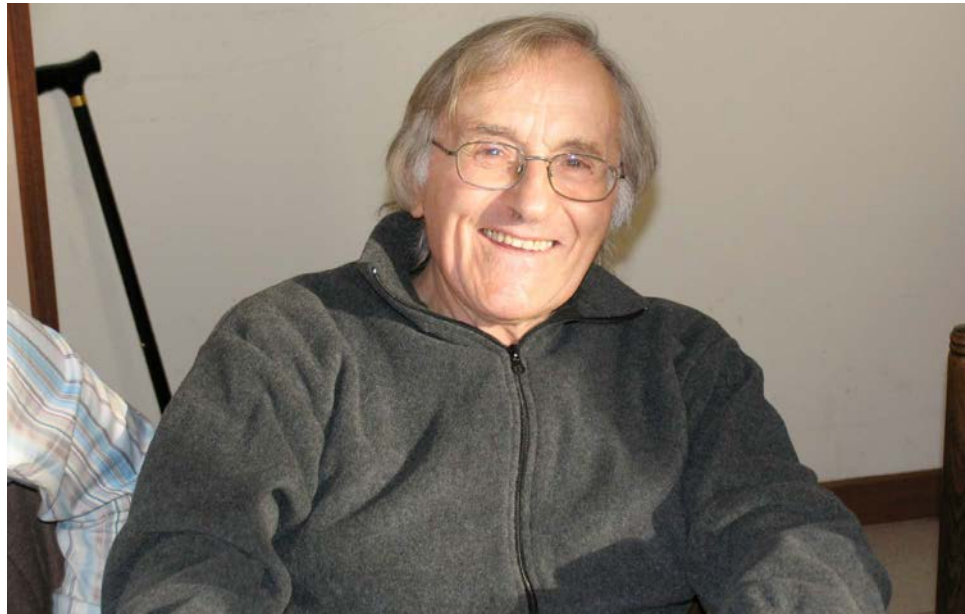
Enrico Frigerio scj
General Vicar

PRACTISING THE RULE

Love is not a mere word

FATHER ANDREA IS THE DEAN OF THE VICARIATE OF ITALY. HE SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE IN BRAZIL, THEN IN THE HOUSE OF FORMATION OF MONTEPORZIO AND RESIDES NOW IN THE BETHARRAMITE COMMUNITY OF ALBIATE. FOR YEARS HE WAS TREASURER OF THE COMMUNITY. WHEN YOU MEET FATHER ANDREA YOU ARE WRAPPED BY HIS SMILE AND HIS THOUGHTFULNESS, AND SO YOU FEEL AT HOME.

WE ASKED HIM TO TELL US ABOUT HIS LIFE EXPERIENCE. IN PARTICULAR, WE ASKED HIM TO TELL US HOW HE TRIED TO LIVE HIS SERVICE AS A BURSAR IN THE COMMUNITIES STARTING FROM THE RULE OF LIFE. THE RESULT IS A SIMPLE AND FRANK TESTIMONY...



Article 48.

Poor in heart we stay close to and in solidarity with the poor allowing that we may be challenged and evangelised by them. We commit to work to earn our living.

We accept dependence and occasionally hardship. We put our time and our talents entirely at the service of others. We try to live a simple lifestyle like that of the most humble in our area.

Between 1951 and 2014, and from Brazil to Italy, I was asked to take on the role of bursar.

I worked hard to achieve this act of obedience in the best possible way as a service to the community.

The word “service” speaks for itself and implies something else, ‘love’ for example. You cannot be a good bursar if you do not love your community, if it is seen as a collection of individuals, not as a family united by a greater love, the love of God, with common ideals and fraternal cooperation. Being a bursar is not so much a “profession,” rather it is a way of serving the needs of brothers first, promptly, with care and attention, and with a spirit of sacrifice, knowing how to foresee these needs, so that no one is out

of pocket. “Working to earn a living” is the duty of each of the brothers, who should not serve their own interests selfishly, but must instead present the fruit of their work, whatever that is, for the benefit of the community, conscientiously and with joy. The bursar must be the first to do so, to set an example.

Working “to make a living,” is simply being aware that one is poor. How many families today are in trouble because they have no work and have no economic resources? Living can become a little desperate for them.

To us in the Betharramite religious community, apostolic work is not in short supply! It requires that we stand united spiritually with all the people we meet in our ministry; and we must have the will to

do it with joy; this work expects constancy and serenity from us. I repeat: without love, we may live “like wealthy people” with no interest in the poor.

In Brazil, I lived a wonderful, unforgettable experience: the community worked hard, but was always happy, fraternal, with exemplary piety, happy in its poverty, and happier still to help all those who had neither money nor bread.

Pope Francis tells us that love is the concrete service that we give to each other. Love is not an empty word; it is a work to be performed and a service, humble, accomplished in silence and remaining hidden.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to all, to each according to his ability, to do good for the community, for it to grow every day.

It seems to me that today’s communities are not as spiritual as St. Michael would have liked. I wonder sometimes if they do not pass by on the other side of authentic humanity.

In short, we work to support ourselves without forgetting the poor. Christ was not spared his suffering. And we, who are called by vocation to follow Him, how do we live?

Let us open our hearts a little more and widen our gaze. Perhaps we need to learn. Basically, the training never ends!

Andrea Antonini scj