



Painting by Juan Vladimir Martinovich

Listening to Saint Michael...

The sea gives us a vague idea of what God is. From the sea mount the clouds which will shape all the rivers which water the entire earth; once these rivers have escaped from their source they rush towards that same sea from which they have drawn their origin in the first place. Is it not from the greatness of God that flow, so to say, all creatures and, as soon as they have been drawn from nothingness, do they not lean in the direction of this same immensity simply to get lost in it?

Cachica Notebook, 14



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

116
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 116
14th June 2016

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The Heart of Jesus

"By His incarnation, the Son of God worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin." (GS 22)

The Heart of Jesus is the Heart of the Word Incarnate. It is the mystery of Christ seen under the angle of the generous urge of the Heart of Jesus, the Word Incarnate as he offers himself to the Father to do his will for the salvation of souls (cf. RoL articles 2, 4, 9). When the Bible speaks of the heart, it is nearly always talking about the interiority of the individual (1 P.3:3,4), to the inner person.

Then, the heart is the original interior of the individual (Prov.27, 19). *"Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another"*. The roots of our feelings are to be found in the heart, but also our convictions and the reasons for our words, actions and decisions. And so



it is with the Heart of Jesus, the Word Incarnate. Article 2563 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: *"The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place "to which I withdraw." The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant."*

Jesus reaches his decisions in his heart. It is in the Heart of Jesus that the offering of the Word Incarnate "Here I Am" becomes a reality: the surprising decision to remain in Jerusalem to look after his Father's business, the decision to go elsewhere when everyone was looking for Him in Peter's house; the decision to retire to the mountain when the crowd wanted to proclaim him King; the desire to return to Judea on receiving the news of the death of Lazarus although earlier on there were death threats.

The Heart of Jesus is the source of truth. From this heart come radical calls exciting the hearts of those who are listening. He who loses his life finds it; he who keeps it loses it! If the grain of wheat which falls to the earth does not die it remains alone; but if it dies it produces a multitude of fruits. He who wants to be my disciple must renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me. Let him who wishes to be the first be the servant of all! He who humbles himself shall be exalted and he who exalts himself shall be humbled.

Father, if it is possible let this chalice be removed, yet not my will but Yours be done. It is for this that I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.

It is with his Heart that Jesus meets people. *"We ought to practice the art of listening which is much more than simply hearing. First of all in communicating with another person there is the ability of the heart to show nearness without which there is no real spiritual meeting. Such a gift helps us to find the right words and actions thanks to which we cease to be simple spectators."* (EG 171) Jesus meets his Father in the early morning silence of contemplation or at other moments of the day. But he also meets his Father in his missionary activities conforming Himself to his Father's will. Overwhelmed before the tomb of his friend Lazarus, Jesus exclaimed: *"Father, I thank you, because you have listened to me; I know that you always listen to me; but I am saying this so that the people around may believe that it is you who have sent me"* (John 11,41-42). His state of beloved Son sent by the Father is well rooted in his heart; His passion is to do the will of his Father by performing the works which he has been ordered to do; *to reveal to the men and women of our time the tenderness and mercy, the face of love of God the Father* (RoL. Art 9), so that each one may recover his dignity of son and brother.

Jesus meets the men and women in a heart to heart: the openness, sensitivity and attention of Jesus in his meetings with the people, have their origin in his Heart which is both meek and humble and because *he always looks with the eyes of the heart* (Angelus 19-07-2015). This is

From 1794 to 1825

Nine landowners in Lestelle formed an Association to buy the ruins of the chapels, and the path leading to Calvary "for a religious programme".

They did even better a few years later; they gave all the undivided sections to the house at Betharram, which was once more Church property since 1805. Even before that time great efforts had been made to revive the Pilgrimage. One of the Capuchins who had lived at Betharram for a few years following the Revolution, Father Joseph had refused to accompany his Brothers to Spain. He remained hidden in the countryside and rendered great services as a priest for those good souls who held on to their religion. He had witnessed the destruction of the Calvary; the day after such a disaster he began to think of plans for a total reconstruction. As soon as circumstances allowed and as soon as the Catholic religion was established once more in France thanks to Napoleon, Fr Joseph began operations. He went to a lot of trouble and with the passage of time he succeeded in making the sacred place suitable for the devotion of the faithful.

Mgr Loyson, bishop of Bayonne, brought the Junior Seminary to his huge diocese, and placed it under the direction of Abbe Lassalle, a former priest of Doctrine. In 1812, probably as a result of decisions of Napoleon concerning Junior Seminaries, the diocese thought of closing down Betharram's. Such a decision made the faithful react. "Don't

think of closing down Betharram's seminary! It can't be done! What we lived during the Revolution cannot make us forget the love we have for this place. During the Reign of Terror they tried in vain to make us desert the sanctuary. But no amount of threats could make us abandon the solemnities. Had only a stone remained we would have gone to see it; for the inhabitants of this part of the world it would have been like a stone in Bethel for the Jews.

It is known that the Terrorists had destroyed all the stations. If we are to believe those who had seen them the handiwork of our Fathers was magnificent. But it must be admitted that since the Revolution Betharram didn't shine through its Calvary. On two occasions efforts were made to reconstruct it and twice the handiwork could not be considered a work of art."

Abbé Menjoulet, « Chronique de Bétharram

It drew near 1825, year in which the abbé Michel Garicoïts reached Betharram.



Fr. Maurizio scj with Karim & family

parishioners who get together to find a house and the where- with- all to furnish it, helped to resolve the problems for the best. And so it was that on the 2nd February (the eve of the feast of Consecrated Life), Fr Maurizio and some parishioners welcomed a refugee family from Guinea into their new home - Karim Barry, his wife and their two children aged 3 and 5 years. They had attempted, like many others before them, to escape the poverty and violence. Karim had escaped towards Italy two years previously by crossing the Mediterranean on one of those overloaded boats which we see so often on TV. He was granted asylum as a political refugee and during those two years he had obtained a college diploma

in Italian and had found work as a gardener. Once he had been sufficiently settled he brought his wife and family to Italy where they were at last able to hold him in their arms! For the past four months our community has been living in close contact with the everyday reality of the refugees; for us it has a name, a story and a face. We are now part of their history and share their daily problems. It so happens that sometimes Fr Maurizio rushes to the hospital during the night to take Karim's daughter to E and A; or I may be called upon to mend a leaking pipe on the shower. We even buy an extra chicken for sharing. We sort out the

problems for getting a resident's permit. We even sometimes do some baby-sitting for their son Amaduri to allow his mother to go to her Italian classes. By our welcome we are being faithful to the demands of Mercy: being near to the poor and who are in need not only of food or money but of a familiar face which they can recognise.

Simone Panzeri scj



*"Jesus meets the men and women in a heart to heart."
(Étienne Parrocel, Jesus and the Samaritan)*

the look with which he meets Zacheus in his sycamore tree. By Jacob's well he awakens the longing for God in the heart of the Samaritan woman. He meets Peter on his fishing boat who, trusting the words of Jesus, has discovered a whole new world of things possible. This is how he loved the rich young man to the extent that he even suggested the Evangelical demands. He is deeply moved when he sees his Father taking an interest in the leper, in the widow of Naim mourning her only son, in the crowds like sheep without a shepherd, acting on their behalf so as to put all these situations to rights. With courage he stands up for the

woman taken in adultery, forgives her and asks her to sin no more.

In his dying moments and just as the soldier's lance pierces his side, we can lean towards his heart and see to what extent he loves us and see too that within there is nothing left because he has given all. He has only a few drops of blood and water left which he also gives. This is how the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist were instituted to prolong his gift so that we too may remain in his love, compassion, solace, forgiveness and salvation.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj
Superior General

Musical Kairos



It is Sunday, the lunch is over, the tablemates linger around the table...The guest, Mgr Bonino (Bishop of Tacuarembó) sits at the piano, Fr Gustavo takes his guitar. After two or three chords some voices joyfully join in.

The smiles are in tune with the melody.

On the piano, the small statue of Saint Michael Garicoits looks on the fruits of his first missionaries. Who knows, he may be willing to join in with the duet and sing some Basque songs.

He who is not welcoming cannot call himself a Christian

" ... THE JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY IS COMING UP , AND I MAKE AN APPEAL TO THE PARISHES, TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES, TO THE MONASTERIES AND THE SANCTUARIES OF ALL EUROPE TO EXPRESS THE REALITY OF THE GOSPEL AND WELCOME ONE FAMILY OF REFUGEES..." (ANGELUS 6 SEPTEMBER 2015). ANSWERING THIS APPEAL OF POPE FRANCIS, THE RELIGIOUS AND PARISH COMMUNITY OF MONTEMURLO (ITALY) TRIED TO FIND A CONCRETE RESPONSE AS A SIGN OF CLOSENESS TO THE LITTLE ONES AND TO THE MARGINALISED, BEARING IN MIND MAINLY THESE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS: "WE ARE CALLED TO GIVE A CONCRETE HOPE AND NOT SIMPLY SAY: "COURAGE, BE PATIENT!"

Every day on television we see unfolding pictures of the modern day tragedy of men, women and children taking to the seas at the peril of their lives to escape war or poverty and to seek hope in Europe. Such scenes appearing so often that they become more like an episode in some drama are far removed from our own lives. We become so used to them that we run the risk of being unfeeling of the pain and suffering of all those men and women living like refugees, escaping the poverty and violence which has turned their homeland and their houses into inhospitable territory. Our Rule of Life, No 115, asks us to be close to the various forms of poverty and not to be indifferent. This is the spirit which the call of Pope Francis during the Angelus of 6th September 2015 touched us deeply as a community: "In the face of the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees escaping death because of war and hunger, and who are on their way towards fresh hope, the Gospel calls us and requires us to be "near" to the smallest and most abandoned and give them reason to hope. It is not enough to say "courage! Have patience!" said Pope Francis. Christian hope is a fighter

with all the determination of one going towards a safe future. Therefore in view of the Jubilee of Mercy I call upon parishes, religious communities, monasteries, and sanctuaries throughout Europe to show the real aspect of the Gospel message and to take in a family of refugees." Afterwards, during a community meeting Fr Maurizio spoke to Fr Pietro and myself about the possibility of opening our three parishes of Montemurlo to receiving a refugee family. The decision was unanimous but how could we go about it. How were we to handle the official side? Where would we find the ideal place? Providence came to our aid! At the first clergy meeting at Pistoia, the Bishop, Mgr Fausto Tardelli resolved several of our questions by offering all the parishes of his diocese the financial resources and projects of Caritas who undertook to contact the different authorities for the distribution of refugees in the parishes.

The months following the meeting were decisive for implementing our project for Montemurlo. It was not easy to find a rented house! Suspicion of the refugees and fear created difficulties for us but finally the willingness of countless

Region



Argentina-Uruguay

Adrogué ► The Christian communities of Adrogué celebrated the feast of St Michael with a meeting which was attended by those who carry out a service in the Christian community. On the "Betharram Adrogué" Facebook page we read: "Called to the encounter!". This is the theme of our community assembly. Under the gaze of our Father Saint Michael Garicoits on his feast day, we looked at each other and we looked at Betharram; we looked at us as a serving community, celebrating the Word and sharing it... We could deepen the experience of our encounter, and ask the Spirit to make us docile, and live inspired by Him and not only by our strength and our criteria."

La Plata ► On May 13, the College San José celebrated the feast of St. Michael Garicoits too. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr. Francisco Daleoso SCJ and Br Juan Pablo, for the first time, carried out its diaconal ministry; the celebration was attended by all the children of the Primary School. During the

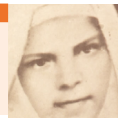
celebration, Fr Juan Pablo invited the children to highlight some aspects of Saint Michael Garicoits's life.

A group of third-year students came forward and wrote, on a blackboard, the virtues of Saint Michael: hard-working, good Samaritan, humble, generous, respectful, missionary, cheerful and compassionate.

Brazil

Vocation ► On May 21, in the Betharramite Parish of the Good Shepherd at Serrinha a day of vocation discernment was organised. The meeting was led by Fr Francisco de Paula scj and Fr Eudes Fernandes da Silva scj.

Region



Thailand

First professions ► On May 13, in Chiang Mai, the religious celebrated St Michael Garicoits. During the Eucharistic celebration, the Regional Vicar received the first vows of Br Peter Rawee Permpoonvicha and Br James Thanit Panmaneeekul and the renewal of the temporary vows of five scholastics.



Pastors and laity

ON MARCH 19, IN A LETTER SENT TO THE CARDINAL OUELLET, PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE LATIN AMERICA, POPE FRANCIS WARNED ABOUT THE DEVIATIONS AND THE DANGERS OF THE CLERICALISM. (EXERPTS)

We cannot reflect on the theme of the laity while ignoring one of the greatest distortions that Latin America has to confront — and to which I ask you to devote special attention — clericalism. This approach not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of our people. Clericalism leads to homologization of the laity; treating the laity as "representative" limits the diverse initiatives and efforts and, dare I say, the necessary boldness to enable the Good News of the Gospel to be brought to all areas of the social and above all political sphere. Clericalism, far from giving impetus to various contributions and proposals, gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness in the heart of her peoples. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and sacramentality of the Church belong to all the People of God (cf. LG, nn. 9-14), not only to the few chosen and enlightened.

From here then, we can ask ourselves: what does it mean that lay people are working in public life?

Nowadays many of our cities have become true places of survival. Places in which the throw-away culture seems to have taken over, leaving little room for hope. There we find our brothers and sisters, immersed

in these struggles, with their families, who seek not only to survive but among the contradictions and injustices, seek the Lord and long to bear witness to him. What does the fact that lay people are working in public life mean for us pastors? [...] He dwells among [our people], fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice. This presence must not be contrived but found, uncovered. God does not hide himself from those who seek him with a sincere heart" (EG, n. 71). It is not the pastor to tell lay people what they must do and say, they know this better than we do. It is not the pastor to establish what the faithful must say in various settings. As pastors, united with our people, it does us good to ask ourselves how we are encouraging and promoting charity and fraternity, the desire for good, for truth and for justice; how we can ensure that corruption does not settle in our hearts.

Often we have given in to the temptation of thinking that committed lay people are those dedicated to the works of the Church and/or the matters of the parish or the diocese, and we have reflected little on how to accompany baptized people in their public and daily life; on how in their daily activities, with the responsibilities they have, they are committed as Christians in public life. Without realizing it, we have generated a lay elite, believing that committed lay

NOTICES FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL

- On 3rd June, feast of the Sacred Heart, the Superior General addressed to all religious and communities, via the Regional Superiors, the **material for the preparation the General Chapter 2017**.
- In the meeting of the General Council on May 23rd, the Superior General, with the advice of his Council, approved the appointment of **Fr. Jean-Paul KISSI Ayo as Master of the novices of the Region St Michael Garicoits**.
- From June 20th to July 29th will take place the **session of preparation for final profession in Betharram**.

people are only those who work in the matters "of priests", and we have forgotten, overlooked, the believers who very often burn out their hope in the daily struggle to live the faith. These are the situations that clericalism fails to notice, because it is more concerned with dominating spaces than with generating initiatives. Therefore we must recognize that lay people — through their reality, through their identity, for they are immersed in the heart of social, public and political life, participate in cultural forms that are constantly generated — need new forms of organization and of celebration of the faith. The current pace is so different (I do not say better or worse) than what we were living 30 years ago! "This challenges us to imagine innovative spaces and possibilities for prayer and communion which are more attractive and meaningful for city dwellers" (EG, n. 73). It is illogical and therefore impossible to think that we as pastors should have the monopoly on solutions for the multitude of challenges that contemporary life presents us. On the contrary, we must be on the side of our people, accompanying them in their search and encouraging the imagination capable of responding to the current set of problems. We must do this by discerning with our people and never for our people or without our people. As St Ignatius would say, "in line with the necessities of place, time and person". In other words, not uniformly. We cannot give general directives in order to organize the People of God within its public life. Inculturation is a process that we pastors are called to inspire, encouraging people to live their faith where and with whom they

are. Inculturation is learning to discover how a determinate portion of the people today, in the historical here and now, live, celebrate and proclaim their faith. With a particular identity and on the basis of the problems that must be faced, as well as with all the reasons they have to rejoice. Inculturation is the work of artisans and not of a factory with a production line dedicated to "manufacturing Christian worlds or spaces". In my recent journey on Mexican soil, I had the opportunity to be alone with our Mother, allowing myself to be looked at by her. In that space of prayer, I was also able to present my filial heart to her. In that moment you too were there with your communities. In that moment of prayer, I asked that Mary never cease to support, as she did with the first community, the faith of our people. May the Blessed Virgin intercede for you, protect you and accompany you always!



Region



France-Spain

Three special days ► The Vicariate celebrated our Founder for three days with a series of activities: gathering of some lay associates with some religious, guided by Fr Beñat Oyhenart scj who gave a lecture on the theme of "Mercy"; after the First Vespers there was a meditation on the Calvary of Betharram followed by a celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation; Saturday, May 14 morning, the day of the solemnity of St. Michael Garicoits, there was a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided by the Bishop of Dax, concelebrated by many religious and attended by many lay people; Anne-Christine (Betharramite lay associate) held a lecture on the 400 years of the Betharram Calvary. Finally, on Sunday, May 15, a pilgrimage took place at Ibarre, native village of our saint. The day ended with a presentation of the family founded by St. Michael Garicoits taken care of by P. Beñat Oyhenart scj.

Cambo ► On May 16, Monday after Pentecost, Fr Laurent Bacho, scj, "Missionary of Mercy", was invited to lead a pilgrimage in the Parish "St. Michael Garicoits" at Cambo. Fr Laurent joyfully accepted this invitation, remembering that St. Michael Garicoits was vicar at Cambo for 21 months, from 1824 to 1825. Pope Francis asked the "Missionaries of Mercy" to be "convincing Preachers of mercy", "Heralds of the joy of forgiveness". Fr Laurent says: "I was impressed by this pilgrimage: there were about 300 faithful; a third of them clambered the mountain,

despite the rain. The climbing took an hour and the pilgrims were singing and pray the Rosary all along. This shows the richness of popular piety!"

Italy

A jubilee for the laity ► From 2 to 5 June there was a pilgrimage of the Italian laity to Betharram and to Pibrac, guided by Fr Mario Longoni scj. Some of the richest experiences, were the Eucharist celebrated in the "oratory" next to the room where St. Michael Garicoits died and the celebration for the Feast of the Sacred Heart at the foot of the urn containing the body of St. Michael, the visit to shrine at Lourdes. They also passed through the Holy Door opened by the Diocese of Toulouse at the Shrine of St. Germaine, in the Betharramite parish of Pibrac.

Ivory Coast

Vocation promotion ► Saturday, May 7, the day before the Vocations Sunday, a dozen of young people gathered in the Betharramite Parish of Saint Felix (Yamousoukro) to discern their vocation. Two reflections were proposed: "St. Michael Garicoits, the saint of the *Here I Am*" by Fr Luc-Martial scj; then a second topic on the "History of Betharram" by the Regional Vicar.

Central African Republic

Assembly ► Thursday, May 26, in Bouar, the meeting of the Religious of the Vicariate was held at the presence of the Regional Superior, who touched upon various topics: some issues concerning formation, plans for the future of the Vicariate and some issues about administration.



.... and by night.

Every year since 2002, we have been committed to maintain (among the activities of the Vicariate) this missionary endeavour that engages and energizes all of our communities. This year too, we can say that with God's help, the initiative has been fruitful. Despite the problems and limitations of the reality of our Vicariate, the strength and ceaseless vitality of the Gospel always inspires us and give us all the necessary strength to go with willingness, trust, hope and respect to "the places where others do not want to go" (RdV 132, cf. DS 231) Indeed, Sabará gives us the opportunity to embody

what is asked in our Rule of Life! It is a gift of God for us all ...! Those days were filled with joy ... for us and for those to whom we offered our fraternal presence by visiting them: bring them what the Lord says to our heart and our life through Betharram; offering them the opportunity to share the same joy, and for us to enter more deeply into their lives and share with them the hardships of daily victories, setbacks and trials ...; to inspire these men and women, young people, children, the elderly, with hope and the certainty that the Lord of the harvest needs each of us. It was a time of grace for our Vicariate! We can see already, though gently, that the Lord of the harvest is awakening in the heart of some young people the desire to follow Him; some of them who have been entrusted to us for help with their vocational discernment, participated with us in this mission. This is both a joy and responsibility of each of us, Religious of the Sacred Heart.

For me, it was clear to me that our testimony of joy and brotherhood touched people's lives, and that through him, Jesus spoke to those we met. In fact, the fraternity, simplicity and joy of our "yes" to Betharram have always been a contagious force that attracts.

We thank the Lord for all his blessings. May Jesus continue to support us with the strength and the light of His Word! Finally, we look to the loving protection of Our Lady of the Beautiful Branch to teach us to serve and dedicate ourselves to others as She herself served the Lord her God, and devoted her life to protect her Son, Jesus.



Among our missionary brothers: Br. Leandro, Br. Jeferson, Fr. Glecimar, Br. Mariano & Br. Iran

Glecimar Guilherme Da Silva scj

Newly Professed

THE REGION SAINT MARY OF JESUS CRUCIFIED AND THE REGION SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS SHARED WITH US AND WITH THE WHOLE CONGREGATION, THE JOY OF THE FINAL PROFESSION OF OUR THREE BROTHERS **BR KATÉ DÉDÉ CONSTANT (VICARIATE OF THE IVORY COAST)**, **BR ANTONY SILUVAI** AND **BR JACOB BISO PULIAMPALLY (VICARIATE OF INDIA)**. THESE BROTHERS SHARE WITH US THE IMPORTANCE AND THE JOY OF THEIR COMMITMENT WHILE MOVING THE FIRST STEPS IN THE CONGREGATION AS FINAL PROFESSED MEMBERS.



Br. KATE Déde Constant, scj

« My dear Betharramite Brothers, borrowing the words of the Apostle St Paul in his second letter to Timothy, I wish you grace and peace. May they be given to you from God the Father and Our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Tim.1,2.) I knew the Betharram Fathers in Abidjan while I was living with one of my uncles who

in 2004 was a Betharramite Lay Associate. I was then in my first year in preparation for my BTS in agro-food. After two years postulant in the community and Philosophy at the Major Seminary in Abidjan I was admitted to the novitiate in 2008. I made my first Vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on 28th July 2010 in Abidjan at Adiapodoume. After first

Vows I began Theology at the Missionary Formation Centre at Abodo (Abidjan) for four years during which I had a year's experience in the hostel for Street Children in Abodo, Foyer Akwaba, in 2012 with the Christian Brothers. When I had obtained my Theology diploma I worked for a year at the Tshanfeto Centre as Teacher's Assistant in Adiapodoume. During the academic year 2015 – 2016 I was sent to Dabakala to live with my brothers and the Djimini people, the "Here I Am" of the Incarnate Word

through the charism of St Michael Garicoits. And it was in that year that after ten years of spiritual, human, religious, intellectual and social formation that the Lord gave me the Grace of calling me to Perpetual Vows, through my Superiors in the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram. It was an experience and the one I had made with the Incarnate Word through St Michael Garicoits. He was the Apostle of the "Here I Am" who helped me to commit myself in my Congregation. I discovered the

Br. Jacob Biso Puliamally scj

« After completing my studies as I was deciding about my future I came to know about the Betharram Congregation from Fr. Paul Manavalan. He visited and told me something about the congregation, I spoke to Fr. Biju Alappat and joined the seminary in the year 2006, after completing my initial formation I entered the novitiate. It was during this

time I came to know more about our congregation and I began to love. When I did my first profession I decided with the help of God that this is my life and I will live it faithfully. During my theology and international session at Betharram, I came to know more about our congregation. There are certain faces I like to remember and thank such as Fr. Biju Paul Alappat whose concern for the vocation influenced

Br. Antony Siluvai scj

« From my early days I had a great desire to become a priest and when I expressed my desire to my parents, at first they were hesitant to send me. I was fortunate to get into a Catholic School, where God blessed me with the right knowledge of God and prayer life which helped me to get into a deeper spiritual life. As the days went on, my desire of becoming a priest increased day by day and when I completed my studies, I knew nothing about the ways and means of it, nor any idea of Religious life. At this juncture, I met Fr.

Livin of our Congregation. He just introduced only the name of the Congregation and I joined the Congregation in the year 2004. My formation during the initial stages helped to get to know more about the family of Betharram, which made me to realize that God has placed me in the right place – in the family of Betharram. After the initial formation, I entered the Novitiate, where, with the providence of God, I experienced more and more the fraternal love of the Betharram family. With this experience I made my first profession which gave me joy and made me

Even in the small things

EVEN IN THE SMALL THINGS CHANGE OF SCENERY. WE CHEERFULLY FLY OVER EUROPE AND THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO REACH, IN BRAZIL, THE BETHARRAMITE MISSION OF SABARÁ, WHERE WE FIND BETHARRAMITE RELIGIOUS, NUNS AND LAY PEOPLE. FR GILBERTO ORTELLADO SCJ TELLS US ABOUT 110 PEOPLE WHO MET TOGETHER TO DO THE WILL OF GOD.

"Doing the will of God... even in the little things of life. This is the phrase that guided the missionaries who gathered in the parish of St Sebastian de Sabará - MG, for Betharramite Mission (from April 21st to 24th).

- ✓ This mission was attended by the religious of the Congregation plus invited Religious of other congregations, as well as laypeople from the parishes of Setubinha, Passa Quatro, Belo Horizonte, Betim, Brumadinho (Minas Gerais), Paulinia (São Paulo) and Serrinha (Bahia). Also present were three young people in vocational discernment from Betim, Estiva and Congonhal (Minas Gerais). In total, about 110 missionaries answered "Here I am!" to the mission.
- ✓ The program was varied: a meeting for Betharramite

laity, formation sessions with married and unmarried couples and another meeting with the youth. In addition, the missionaries also had the opportunity to visit the centre of Sabará and get to know the ancient churches and historical places. Sabará has indeed a rich historical heritage.

- ✓ The missionaries also visited several families of parish communities, and on Saturday night they took part in a moment of relaxation in the square opposite St Sebastian Church. Finally, on Sunday morning, the closing Mass was celebrated in the Church of Christ Light.
- ✓ For its part, Sabará parish was also well prepared for this mission. About 80 families opened their doors to provide a lodging place for missionaries; parishioners also responded positively to provide food to feed the guests; Moreover, they organized themselves to take care of the cooking and cleaning and took an active part in the mission.

Saint Michael teaches us that "we don't need to do everything, but simply do what God wants." Following the teaching of our holy Founder, we can humbly say: 'Mission begun – mission accomplished' We have to wait for the harvest time to gather the fruits of the mission.



The Betharramite mission during the day...

small parish with almost 90 families. It is an Arab city and all activities in the parish take place in Arabic language. Though I can speak in Hebrew a little now, it is of no much use as far as pastoral activities are concerned. Therefore, most of my life participation does the dancing inside the realm of community life. And this demands from me and from all a great amount of recognition of community dynamism. Among them, that which gouges the happiness scale is the level of practice of vow of obedience.

This obedience yields its fruits in diverse faces. We manifest it in our community prayer, daily Eucharistic Celebration, Rosary, regular community meeting, and of course sharing the meal together. Here, how I as an individual and we as community respond everyday even to this small but integral part of community life is direct living of filial obedience.

The next legitimate thought would be to ask myself if the fruit of religious submission lead to my missionary spirit. The answer is an emphatic yes. Why? Because it is this attitude that alters my ideas of mission in an unknown land. Sometimes, I go to celebrate mass for the migrant Indian community that speaks the Konkani language. Couple of occasions, I had to celebrate mass for another Indian community speaking Malayalam language.

This is not a joke to do this task as I never learned these languages. I do have experience with these communities back in India, but that is in no way sufficient to offer spiritual services. Then, I place myself in the providence of God and submit my

will to his great design. My community is supportive of my actions because it also believes in submission to God's will. I must also acknowledge that my idea of obedience gets confronted and modification from the other members in the community. I do draw inspiration from the vast experience of the senior members of the community.

There is joy, sometimes, in sacrificing my intentions in order to do what the community demands from me. In the same breath, there is fulfillment, sometimes, in seeing how other members accommodate my views on certain project of life. Sometimes it is difficult to give up.

At the same time, that giving up gives birth to greater joy. Because, I hold that there is no real love and obedience if it does not pinch the false ego within me.

In conclusion, I am sure that my vocation is to put myself at the service of mission in a free and responsible manner learning how to pass from what pleases me to what pleases the Father. *'There is no contradiction between obedience and freedom'* (Ref: *Rule of Life*, No: 63). But, realization of this fact is gradual process of my being as Betharramite missionary.

Johnrose José Kumar scj

joy of giving myself for others , especially in community, at the Foyer Akwaba with the street children, at Tshanfeto with the young unschooled, in family for my parents, brothers and sisters, for my friends and for all God's children. I discovered the joy of self sacrifice for others for Love, rather than for any other motive. The joy to be found in work, the mission and in prayer. I would like to place my ministry under God's Grace. In my prayer I ask that his Grace will never be in vain for me (1 Cor. 15,10). I am learning

me, Fr. Michael Tidkham whose availability I admire, Fr. John Chan Kunu whose patience touched me, Fr. Stervin whose zealous pushed me to go ahead always in living our spirituality. I remain grateful to all my formators. As I am a member of our congregation I am Happy and I would like to say only one thing which I learned from the life of St. Michael and all the circumstances that I under went. It is

to feel one with the family and the final profession which I made recently, firmed up my deep desire to serve the Lord and the joy was in no bounds. With all my sincerity, I am very much grateful to God and all my formators who have been nurturing me all these years of formation. With immense joy and happiness I am proud to express that I am the member of the Congregation and through the Congregation member of the Universal Church. One thing that which I learned from the founder - St. Michael is that God has his own time and own plans which will ac-

all the time and I continue to learn to be humble, devoted, gentle and obedient. This is why I depend every day on the help of your prayers. For me a vocation is a sacred call which needs to be carefully nurtured and the best way to do this is through prayer. This is why I depend on your prayers to help me to nurture my vocation.

A very great thank you to all my Brothers in St Michael Garicoits and in Jesus Christ for all your help. May God reward you a hundredfold. Forward all the time!! ■

God who works and everything happens according to His plan and on His time, wait for His time in obeying the superiors. Thank you all fathers and Brothers. Please continue to pray for me. ■

complish according to his will and we are to surrender to his will. Once again, I wholeheartedly thank each and every one who have helped me to grow in this religious life and I also request all the members of the family, so that I remain loyal and faithful to the Congregation and Holy Mother Church. ■

PRACTISING THE RULE

Obedience and freedom

IN OCTOBER 2014, FR JOSE KUMAR WAS SENT IN HOLY LAND TO CARRY OUT HIS MISSION AND FORM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WANTED BY THE GENERAL CHAPTER IN 2011. SINCE THEN, THE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN CONSTITUTED AND GROWS THANKS TO THE AVAILABILITY OF EACH RELIGIOUS. WHAT FOLLOWS IS NOT THE ACCOUNT OF “AN EXTRAORDINARY GROWTH OR OF A BREATH-TAKING ANNOUNCEMENT”, BUT A CLEAR EXAMPLE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE... AND, AS ALL THE BETHARRAMITES KNOW, THE PROVIDENCE ADVANCES “WITH SMALL STEPS THAT SEEM TO LEAD NOWHERE. BUT THEN THINGS KEEP GROWING GRADUALLY, QUIETLY, FOR THIRTY YEARS ... AT NAZARETH”

It was on 12th January 2015, as I began my effort to learning Hebrew language in an Institute in the city of Haifa in Israel, this jerky conversation occurred. “Why are you here in Israel?” asked my teacher. “My Superior General sent me here”, I replied. “What do you want to do in Israel?” further questioned my teacher. “God will tell me. I need to listen to him through the words of my Vicariate. As of now, not everything clear to me as an individual”, I replied once again.

Little puzzled by the terms like Superior General and Vicariate, having no prior knowledge about these distinct religious flavor, the teacher continued to interview me, as she along with the new Jewish immigrants to Israel in my class, were curious to know about me and my responses. I was almost certain that they didn't comprehend most of my responses. However, at the end of the interview, the teacher laughed loudly in

Article 64.

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

Article 65.

Evangelical obedience leads to the growth of the person and the development of all his human abilities. It requires clear vision for a good discernment, a firm desire to live faithfully, and a heart totally directed towards mission. It calls for grace to recognise the call of God in events and people and to respond positively in faith to our superiors.

a sigh and surprise, and said, “Oh, only you people can do this. In this world of promising life, giving prominence to community will and not for individual

“In front of the house of Bethlehem, Fr Jose Kumar scj (left) with Fr Jean-Paul Kissi scj, recently appointed Novice Master of the Region Saint Michael Garicoits.



desire is worth appreciating.” I was deeply pleased to receive such admiration from the class, but I knew deep inside my heart that it wasn't as simple as the teacher comprehended about Obedience. I knew that it involves great share of meticulous reflection, conscious decision making and filial submission.

As I share my tryst with vow of obedience, let me take the mantle of introducing myself to the brethren reading this testimony. I am a Betharramite religious from the Vicariate of India, and was sent by the Superior General to the Vicariate of Holy Land. My arrival to the Holy Land in itself is a direct result of Betharramite

obedience. Had the General asked me to come to Israel for a year of studies, it would have been just a matter of pleasure and a hilarious visit, because I was also interested in learning Hebrew. But when asked to come here for a longer period of time, my ability to respond positively involves a sincere call to fulfill the demands of religious obedience intertwined with clarified thinking on future mission. At present, I live in a parish called St. Joseph Church, Shefamer that is located near Nazareth. We are three religious priests in our community: Fr. Firmin from France is the superior and Fr Eli Kurzum from Israel is the parish priest. It is a