



Painting by Juan Vladimir Martinovich

## Listening to Saint Michael...

*There are truths which result from God's essence, and we cannot either destroy them or change them without touching the divine essence; for example: the whole is greater than the part, there is no stick without two ends, etc. Whoever banishes God banishes his creatures. Once His existence is denied, His creatures become unworkable.*

Cachica Notebook, 22,23



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BETHARRAM

120  
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

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Supplement  
Regional Chapters (1/3)

### Forward, always forward!

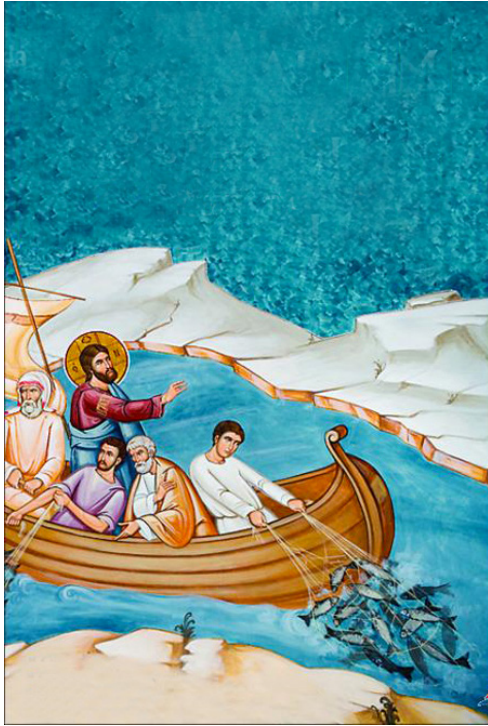
In the letters of St. Michael Garicoits, as in other writings, we often come across this expression, which has become very familiar to us, we who know the saint, love it and have decided to live the Gospel in the light of it. Let's look at some examples:

« Henceforth you will no longer look back, neither to right or to left; but always forward to the goal of your vocation... carrying like a warrior the crosses that go with your situation!... being careful not to take on extra ones that would hold up your glorious progress. I mean do nothing unwise under the pretext of mortifying yourself. » (Letter 24)

« When you realise that you have done something well and feel good about it, say; 'Amen.' If you are criticised for something that goes wrong, say; 'I did my best.' Then go ahead! In practice do your best to do the right thing. » (Letter 59)

« Be brave then! Always go forward! God wishes this! Always go ahead! Turn your back on temptations. Amen. » (Letter 78)





« *The Cross is everywhere. Simply be brave! This must never be wanting in a good Sister of the Cross. She must always seek to go forward in her holy calling, always forging ahead! Because the real good is there and especially at the end is the crown, and what a crown! So be brave, dear Sister, always, no matter what the cost!*» (Letter 129)

This "always forward" expresses the depth of his spiritual experience. It shows a spirituality of movement, peculiar to those who, in the footsteps of the Saint of Betharram, want to live with others in "mobile camps," without settling down or yielding to comfort. On other occasions, I have already explained that the Jesus who fascinates St Michael Garicoits is not the static man, but

the Incarnate Word always in motion: from the bosom of the Trinity to that of Mary, from Heaven to Earth, He is always seen on the road in the Gospel, traveling through the towns and villages of Galilee, through Judea, going up to Jerusalem, Jerusalem to the Cross and the Cross to the Glory of the Father. This journeying makes us pilgrims, not fixtures in this world. The pilgrim is on his way as long as he has not attained the desired end: here, union with Christ in heaven, our supreme desire, "*forward, always forward, to heaven.*" It is from this experience of pilgrims that we can cry: "Forward, always forward! In the Spiritual Canticle, St. John of the Cross says that we must never stop, neither to enjoy the benefits we have gained, nor for fear of danger; No obstacle can stop us: « *In search of my Love I will go over mountains and strands; I will gather no flowers, I will fear no wild beasts; I will overcome the strong and the challenges.* »

One can always be tempted to settle down, to wallow in the bitterness of one's pain, or to believe that, since a good result has been obtained, the goal is reached and it is impossible to go further. This is what these famous verses of St. Teresa of Jesus express: "*Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices.*" To cry "always forward!" is also to choose to constantly surpass oneself in love, it is to engage more and more in the gift of oneself, in both good times and bad times. Both are challenges for our lives to grow in humanity and to become genuine disciples of the one Master. To be the disciples of Jesus, to feel united and accompanied by him



contributes again towards strengthening this hope that the Cross gives.

At Betharram's Calvary, the Cross was knocked over by a forceful wind, then it stood up straight, radiant. Within this miracle, there is a vision of the story of its triumphs.

Throughout the centuries, the Cross has in fact had some struggles to withstand, some very violent struggles, and we have sometimes asked ourselves, during times when evil seems to be making its insolent progress, if the Cross might not be defeated for good. We were forgetting the great prophecy of Our Lord. We were forgetting that struggle is the great rule of

life, that the heavens suffer violence, that the disciple isn't above the master. We were also forgetting that so encouraging word from the Lord: Have faith, I have defeated the world.

Well, all these truths are brought out by the Miracle of the Cross.

The knocked down cross – this is contempt, blasphemy, betrayal.

The upright cross – this is the eternal triumph of Our Lord over his enemies.

*(to be continued)*

Abbé Maupas  
14 September 1916



## THE CALVARY OF BETHARRAM (10)

### The Cross, our hope

OLD DOCUMENTS GATHERED IN BOXES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN BROUGHT FROM BETHARRAM TO ROME IN ORDER TO BE CATALOGED AND KEPT IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE CONGREGATION. IN ONE OF THESE BOXES WAS UNEARTHED THE SPEECH PRONOUNCED IN THE CHAPEL OF BETHARRAM ON SEPTEMBER 14TH, 1916, BY ABBOT MAUPAS, DIOCESAN MISSIONARY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 3RD CENTENARY OF THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS.

100 YEARS LATER, THIS MEDITATION, WHICH WE SHALL PROPOSE IN TWO PARTS, STILL RESOUNDS WITH STRENGTH FROM THE HILL OF BETHARRAM.

Betharram, Betharram! You have been, in centuries gone by, the great home of the religious life of Béarn, the pious rendezvous of its children. Your Calvary, dominating the valleys and plains, protecting far away lands, continually carrying towards Heaven the homages of the scattered pilgrims, interceding for them. Next to you, souls believe themselves to be nearer to Heaven and, in fact, it is next to you that they have had a pre-taste; it is next to you that they have found the grace and generosity that lead them there. But about this past, my brothers, you keep hold of the memory. You have gathered in your homes and you have remained faithful.

Each year, you are happy to repeat the gesture of your ancestors; you carry out the same pilgrimage, you whisper the same prayers; like them, you fall to your knees at the foot of the statue of Mary and at the foot of the Cross. Like them too, you receive the maternal smiles of the Blessed Virgin and the graces of her Son; and each of you, based on the intimate experience of your soul, could say with me that you are always happy at Betharram and that you still receive there the blessings of Heaven.

For these benefits and for the benefits of three centuries of devotion, give thanks today to our Divine Saviour. Pray to Him with a fervent soul and meditate on the lessons that are given to you by the miraculous Cross of Betharram's Calvary, and you will begin the way home again, your hearts filled with a new courage and an unwavering confidence, as the feast we are celebrating is a lesson and a source of hope. The hope I want to speak to you about is before all, you understand, the Christian hope, that lets us wait with a firm faith for the Glory of Heaven, the purpose of our life, and the necessary good to reach there by commendable deeds.

This hope has therefore as its purpose, the grace of practicing good and of triumphing in the struggle against difficulties and against evil. But isn't the Cross simultaneously the source of all good, of all virtue, the symbol of the love of God, and His victory flag over Hell and over the world?

Also, it isn't possible for a Christian to look at the cross with a living faith, without feeling a strong trust in his divine Saviour rising up in his heart.

The occasion of wonder that we celebrate

at every moment, is what gives strength and joy to go always forward. To follow the example of Christ, (our reason for being and living) consists in pleasing the Father in all circumstances, in doing his will and in serving our human brethren so that their lives become dignified and beautiful. This is a realistic, embodied spirituality that values human situations and relationships, in which one learns to discover the presence of God. The whole gospel presents Jesus in this dynamic: do not hold back at all, always go forward.

« *Duc in altum* » (Put out into deeper water). Peter is discouraged: he worked all night in vain, but no fish in the lake. But he trusts the word of Jesus more than his own experience: therefore, just because Jesus says so, he convinces himself of the impossible and throws out his nets once more. By listening to Jesus, Peter catches the fish he no longer hoped to find in the lake. Despair gives way to confidence in the one who renews everything and to whom nothing is impossible. "*Leave me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.*" Jesus does not accept to remain on Mount Tabor, in spite of Peter who tried to capture this moment of happiness – ('he did not know what he was saying') in awe of what he had seen. But Jesus descends with the disciples to the plain, to continue his journey to Jerusalem. There are situations in which, in order to continue to progress, one must be strong and determined because the body or nature resists. This is what happens also for Jesus when he decides to undertake the ascent to Jerusalem, where he knows that the passion which he predicts three times, awaits him. Luke says that "*Jesus set his face...*" Saint Michael Garicoits says of himself something

approaching: "*In moments when nature inwardly retreats, I repeat the battle cry: 'Forward. God wills it' and then I stride ahead. Do the same, dear Sister.*"» (Letter 107)

What strength of will Jesus needed, in order not to hide or flee, not to protect himself, in this state of solitude, from the fear and anguish that he went through in Gethsemane! "*Father, if you will, remove this cup from me; However, not my will, but your will be done.*" "*Stand up! Come on! Behold, he that comes to me is near.*"

To always go forward, Jesus must face the unjust situation that will take away all his dignity and make him less than a worm. There is something beyond passion, the cross and death: the Father is waiting for him to give the gift of self to glorify him and to let everyone know that love is stronger than death.

Whoever lives for himself, to serve his own interests, to protect himself, to take advantage of everything and all in order to satisfy his personal whims, cannot go "always forward". Some people try to possess everything and claim to do it in the name of the Gospel and Jesus, who called them to offer them a missionary opportunity. But these people are not able to respond by giving the prophetic response that Jesus and everyone expects of them. They remain closed in on themselves, unable to go forward by sacrificing themselves in selfless devotion, following the offering of Jesus to his Father: it began at the moment of his virginal conception and culminated in the "*all is accomplished*" on the cross.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj  
Superior General

### Forever at our side



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*We remember with gratitude and affection the Betharram in Heaven. Our departed brothers are still at our side and we keep them in our prayers.*

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Villalba SCJ, spiritual assistant of our FVD group, with whom we shared what we experienced during those intense missionary days.

Getting to know all these people, listening to the story of each one, their difficulties and weaknesses, as well as their joys and successes, allows us to believe that we can help Jesus into many hearts, allowing us to be used simply as instruments. We had the opportunity to live and pass on to others the idea that happiness is not based on material things, but on the love that can be found in God.

The mission is one of the best experiences that can be given to us to live to grow in faith. To be able to trust God completely and reach out to other people, some of whom have an urgent need for us and others who teach us what loving God really means, in the turmoil of everyday and financial problems. This simplicity invites us to see the face of God in the essential things of life.

The work was intense, but so is the presence of God at all times and in every

person. God makes us perceive his presence in many ways. It was manifested amongst other ways, by giving us the gift of providential rain after a long drought that hit farmers in the area. Again He offered us the opportunity to play a modest role in His project.

After that experience, we thank God and all those who contributed to this mission in one way or another, a mission we have accomplished for His love and according to His will. We will face again the realities of the world, but we are convinced that being a missionary is a lifestyle worth living. God is with us all the time, but now it is up to us to continue to discover this love and to share it with others. We are always instruments in the service of Christ and of the Church, saying, "Here I am, without delay, without reserve for the love of your mission."

Noelia Fleitas Acevedo  
Commission for the FVD Missions





### Betharramite Mission FVD 2016

**"HERE WE ARE, WITHOUT HESITATION, WITHOUT RESERVE, FOR THE LOVE OF YOUR MISSION" IS THE MOTTO OF THE HUNDRED YOUNG LAY PEOPLE WHO HAVE TAKEN THE PATH OF MISSION, A GREAT EXPERIENCE IN WHICH GOD HAS NOT FAILED TO SURPRISE US AND TO FILL US WITH JOY.**

**ORGANIZED BY THE FVD GROUP, THE MISSION TOOK PLACE FROM 30 SEPTEMBER TO 3 OCTOBER IN THE CITY OF LA COLMENA, LOCATED 140 KM FROM ASUNCION, CAPITAL OF PARAGUAY, WHERE RELIGIOUS BETHARRAMITES WORK IN 29 "CHAPELS" (OR "CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES"). FR. OSVALDO CANIZA SCJ, SUPERIOR AND PARISH PRIEST, GREETED US AND HELPED TO ENSURE THE SMOOTH RUNNING OF THE MISSION IN NINE OF THE TWENTY-NINE "CHAPELS": POTRERO ALTO, POTRERO GARAY, SAN ANTONIO, SAN MIGUEL BARRIENTOS, JAHAPETY, BARRERO AZUL, APYRAGUA MARTÍNEZ AND CUE.**

It is difficult to explain all that we experienced during the mission. Days of rich experiences and emotions filled our hearts with indescribable love and showed us once again that Jesus still calls us and sends us to share joy.

If the mission took place during the first weekend of October, the preparation began much earlier, with meetings of the organizing group, preparatory visits to La Colmena and training meetings and prayer with the missionaries.

During this mission, we were fortunate to

be received by the families with whom we prayed, meditated on the Word, shared stories, laughed and cried. We also ran workshops for young people and children, we took time to play with the children and chatted with the young people. In addition, thanks to the support of the priests of the Congregation of Betharram, we could share the Eucharist with the members of each of the chapels.

We had a particularly moving and emotional moment during the adoration of the Eucharist, presided by Fr. Raul



### A time of courage



ANGELUS, Saint Peter's Square  
Sunday, 23 October 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

The second Reading of the day's Liturgy presents to us Saint Paul's exhortation to Timothy, his collaborator and chosen son, in which he thinks back on his existence as an Apostle wholly consecrated to the mission (cf. 2 Tim 4:6-8, 16-18). Now seeing the end of his earthly journey, he describes it in reference to three seasons: the present, past and future.

The present he interprets with the metaphor of sacrifice: "For I am already on the point of being sacrificed" (v. 6). With regard to the past, Paul points to his life lived with the images of the "good fight" and the "race" of a man who has been coherent with his duties and his responsibilities (cf. v. 7); as a result, for the future he trusts in being recognized by God who is "the righteous judge" (v. 8). But Paul's mission has been effective, just and faithful only thanks to the closeness and the strength of the Lord, who has made of him a proclaimer of the Gospel to all peoples. This is his expression: "the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the Gospel fully, that all the peoples might hear it" (cf. v. 17). [...] In Paul the Christian community finds its model, in the conviction that the Lord's presence makes apostolic work and the work of evangelization effective. The experience of the Apostle of the people

reminds us that we must be committed in pastoral and missionary activities, on the one hand, as if the result depends on our efforts, with the spirit of sacrifice of an athlete, who never stops even in the face of challenges; on the other, however, knowing that the true success of our mission is a gift of Grace: it is the Holy Spirit who makes the Church's mission in the world effective.

Today is a time of mission and a time of courage! Courage to strengthen faltering steps, to recapture the enthusiasm of devoting oneself to the Gospel, of recovering confidence in the strength that the mission brings to bear. It is a time of courage, even if having courage does not mean having a guarantee of success. Courage is required of us in order to fight, not necessarily to win; in order to proclaim, not necessarily to convert. Courage is required of us in order to open ourselves to everyone, never diminishing the absoluteness and uniqueness of Christ, the one saviour of all. Courage is required of us in order to withstand incredulity, without becoming arrogant. Required of us too is the courage of the tax collector in today's Gospel, who humbly did not dare even to raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!". Today is a time for courage! Today courage is needed!

## LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

### Accounts and meetings...

FROM 26 TO 30 SEPTEMBER, FR. GRAZIANO SALA SCJ, GENERAL BURSAR, ACCOMPANIED BY LUIGI PIROVANO (CO-WORKER IN THE CONGREGATION ADMINISTRATION), VISITED THAILAND TO MEET THE BURSARS AND THE NEWLY-APPOINTED COMMUNITY SUPERIORS AND TO TAKE STOCK WITH THEM OF THE CONGREGATION'S ONLINE ACCOUNTING SYSTEM.

Mr. Luigi Pirovano, our dear colleague from the Congregation administration, and I spent four days at the Vicariate House in Chiang Mai to guide our brothers from Thailand in charge of the communities in the community and Vicariate accounting system and in the use of the Congregation's online software. It was an opportunity to answer their questions, to listen to difficulties encountered, in other words, to share the problems of everyday life. Several weeks later, I would like to share some thoughts.

How many times in our communities have we ever said, "Why do you go to so much trouble doing the accounts?" "Basically, that's not what's important; what counts is to live with discernment and sobriety!" That is true. This is essential if you want to live the vow of poverty as religious Betharramites.

Nevertheless, I have always been taught that principles, if not accompanied by concrete applications, are only beautiful theories which do not stand up and end by disappearing without a trace.

Strong words about poverty are like beautiful scaffolds without anchor points that can collapse and have negative consequences.

Let us see what this phrase of the Rule

of Life means: "*By the vow of poverty, as religious we commit ourselves to owning nothing...*" (RdV 49) This is undeniably a fine sentence... Certainly, in the present day of Pope Francis, it produces a certain effect. We may even be tempted to draw some pride from it, but ... what does it mean? That is to say, how does each one of us put it into practice? What is the lifestyle of a Betharramite living in poverty?

The Rule of Life goes on to say: "*we hold in common our material wealth as well as our human and spiritual riches*". This clarifies one principle: for us Betharramites, living the life of poverty means sharing what we are and what we have. Is that all? No.

The Rule of Life continues: "*The holding of all things in common obliges us to depend on the superior for their use. We give account to him for the money and goods at our disposal*." (RdV 49) This is a second principle of practice: giving account. Have we finished? Not yet.

Also in article 49, it says: "*We use in good conscience the goods of the community in the measure that they are necessary for our mission*". The supreme criterion of our poverty, that is, what determines and clarifies the affirmation "to possess nothing," is the mission.

Let us make the point: living poverty

Chapter and welcomed the delegates from the Vicariates of England, Thailand and India. This Chapter will allow us to prepare our Region to have a fruitful General Chapter in 2017 in Paraguay.



## NOTICES FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL



With the consent of the General Council, the Superior General presents Br. Antony Siluvai and Br. Jacob Biso Puliampally (Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, Vicariate of India) to receive the minister of priesthood (Council's meeting on October 14 and 20, 2016).

In the meeting on October 27th, the Superior General, with the advice of his Council, approved the following appointments (Region Saint Michael Garicoits, Vicariate of Italy):

**Fr. Aldo Nespoli as Community Superior of Langhirano**  
**Fr. Maurizio Vismara as Community Superior of Pistoia**  
**Fr. Francesco Radaelli as Community Superior of Albiate**

### In memoriam

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 **Mrs Agnese Bulanti**, 92 years old, mother of Fr Beniamino Gusmeroli scj, of the community of Bouar - O. L. of Fatima (Central African Republic), died. We express our sympathy to Fr Beniamino and we promise to pray for him and for his dear mother.

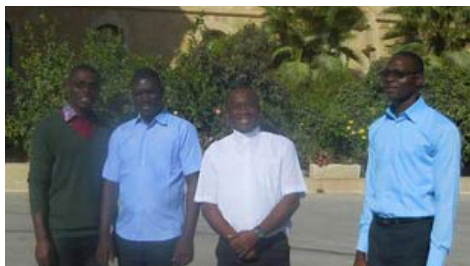


### Region



#### Regional Novitiate

**Bethlehem** ► The Regional Novitiate of the Region St Michael Garicoits eventually started the canonical year in the house of Bethlehem (Holy Land). On October 16, the postulants Patrice, Emmanuel, Fulgence, guided by Father Jean-Paul Kissi SCJ, began their retreat that will end on October 21 with the official announcement of their entering the novitiate. Let us keep united with them in prayer.



#### Ivory Coast

**Newly-ordained deacons** ► Sunday, November 6, in the betharramite Parish of the O. L. of the Poor of Dabakala (Ivory Coast), three of our young brothers were ordained as deacons: Br. Katé Dede Constant SCJ, Br. Valentin N'Guessan N'Zoré SCJ (of the Vicariate of Ivory Coast) and Br. Marie-Paulin Yarkaï SCJ (of the Vicariate of Central African Republic). The solemn celebration was presided over by the Bishop of the Diocese of Katiola, Mgr. Ignace Bessi Dogbo. Along with the Regional Vicar, Fr. Hervé Kouakou Kouamé SCJ, many betharramite brothers joined in this joyful event.

#### Central Africa

**Diaconal ordination** ► Tuesday, November 1, the Solemnity of All Saints, in the parish of O. L. of Fatima, Br. Armel Daly SCJ was ordained as a deacon. The concelebration was presided over by Mgr. Vincent Landel SCJ, Archbishop of Rabat (Morocco).

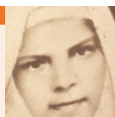
Along with the Betharramite confreres, Fr Gaspar Fernández Pérez, Superior General, joined the concelebration. A few days ago he started the canonical visit in the Central African Vicariate.

#### Italy

**Photo exhibition** ► From November 7 to December 17, at the "Centro San Fedele" in Milan the press photographer Vittore Buzzi will exhibit his photographs taken in different mission posts of the Betharramite religious working in the Central African Republic.

The exhibition entitled "At the black heart of the world" is a tribute to the Italian Betharramite missionaries for the three decades of presence in the village of Niem, where they arrived on the eve of Christmas in 1986.

### Region



**Regional Chapter** ► On November 7<sup>th</sup> the Regional Chapter of St. Miriam Region began at Shobhana Shaakha, Bangalore.

Rev. Fr. Austin Hughes SCJ, the Regional Superior convoked and inaugurated the

means three things for us:

1. the pooling of assets,
2. transparency in their use,
3. interdependence.

All this comes from the point of view of the mission.

Let us now return to our original question: why do the accounts? Why waste time on these boring things?

The answer is simple: this action of keeping accounts is a concrete way to live the vow of poverty.

It allows us to live the three principles indicated above: sharing assets, transparency, dependence. If we do not do this, each of us will look only to himself and we will all repeat tirelessly principles that we no longer believe ourselves.

In a climate of intense and joyful work, I have been able to note that all the religious present, not only the treasurers (directly concerned) and the superiors, but also other religious, wanted to lend themselves to the exercise to discover and to learn. In a nutshell, I rejoiced at their willingness to participate.

Equipped with a computer, with an unstable wi-fi connection, not always up to the needs of an online job, Luigi Pirovano's explanations were used by each person to draw up a budget for his own community. The necessity of such an operation was never more evident.

We then proceeded to insert the accounts



*Accounting in the computer age is a piece of cake, sort of...*

of the communities in the software of the Congregation. And while everyone's eyes went through pages of precise accounts, annotated simply in notebooks, the boxes of the software gradually filled up.

At 16:30, the day ended well with the traditional football game! In fact, this moment of relaxation also set the tone to the encounter: effort, but also entertainment.

Isn't that what the RdV calls for in article no. 103, when it says that there should be moments of "sharing and relaxation" in each community?

Graziano Sala scj  
General Bursar

### Father José Mirande scj

Artiguelouve (France), 10 May 1936 - Belo Horizonte (Brazil), 17 October 2016

On the morning of 17th October, Father José Mirande returned to the Father's house; to the Lord whom he so loved, near Jesus whom he saw so naturally in the person of the poor.

As a child of Béarn, he prepared himself for the priesthood in his country of origin. He did not hide the influence that Father Matéo had on him in his formation. Ordained priest in 1961, he did a pastoral year in Paris (1962). In 1963, the Congregation offered him the opportunity to come to Brazil. How much he loved our country! He immersed himself completely in our culture: the joy of the poor of our country was his joy, the struggle of the poor was his struggle; with them, he was trying to overcome the challenges. One can truly say that he nourished his faith by living it with the poor.

In 1967, after the first years lived in Belo Horizonte, he was entrusted with the responsibility of the parish of Our Lady of the "Belo Ramo" (Beautiful Branch) in Sao Paulo. Bishop Angelico, who had worked with him in the diocese, called him "my brother"; how many times have they helped each other for the sufferings of those who demand more justice!

As a man of coherence, the apostolic mission was not put in the second place of his religious consecration. On the contrary, he showed us that apostolic life is the very essence of our consecrated life. When requested by the Congregation, he returned to Belo Horizonte, and took responsibility for formation; this was in 1978.

He was Vice-Provincial, Coordinator of Latin American Communities, and General

Councillor. And all this did not come without suffering... In 1994, he was in Brumadinho, near Belo Horizonte. It is then that he left Brazil; He went to India where he remained for 9 years. What respect for this culture, and what admiration for the profound spirituality of this people! He told me one day that he would have liked to go to India when he was younger, in order to go deeper into this culture.

After having returned to Brazil, he became

aware of the fragility of his health. He went through his Calvary: 8 years of dialysis - suffering in the body but more in his heart that loved so much joyful contact with people... Since the time of Michael Garicoits, French Betharramites have always been present in Latin America; with him, their historical presence comes to an end..

Antonio Scarpa scj



Father José Mirande surrounded by his brothers on his 80th birthday

Monday, October 17: One of the Betharramite "prophets", Father José (a name he gave to himself in Portuguese), left this morning for the house of the Father. In the month of May, on the occasion of his last birthday, while celebrating his 80 years of age, our "Ze" pronounced one of his last prophecies: "I do not have much to say or to ask God! Simply I want to say thank you, since I am just about to leave". To be honest, I broke into tears because that was not exactly the sort of prophecy we wanted to hear. Yet his way of speaking and the serenity that was reflected in his gaze made us perceive once again the mysticism present in his life and gave rise to the feelings that are still vivid in us.

In Belo Horizonte, he integrated himself very easily in the formation community, and together with Fr. Enrique Lasuén, delivered a powerful testimony of commitment, of availability and of service. Animated always by a deep wisdom, Father José unsettled us by his ability to see into the future, far beyond what our eyes could see.

During these last months, the sickness became more and more aggressive in this man who had a great sensitivity. Yet, until this morning of October, and a few minutes before passing away, he remained firm, conscious and fully alert. "Ze" has gone, leaving us all aware that Betharram requires men capable and detached from themselves. His place remains empty ... We pray that what he leaves in each of us can flourish; thanks to his testimony, to the pain that still lives in us and to the nostalgia that will seize us. I share the feeling he himself expressed a few days ago to me after seeing a football game: "Thank you for the company ... Have a good rest!" I thank you Jose! Thank you for your company! I wish a good rest to you too, dear prophet! I Glecimar Da Silva scj