

## Region



ELECTED DELEGATES AND SUBSTITUTES FOR THE REGION FATHER AUGUSTE ETCHÉCOPAR TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2017

Deputies by right:

Fr. Gustavo Agín, Regional Superior

Deputies and substitutes elected during the Regional Chapter

*For the Vicariate of Paraguay*

Deputies:

1° Fr. Fulgencio Ferreira

2° Fr. Javier Irala

Substitutes

1° Fr. Osmar Cáceres

2° Fr. Crispín Villalba

*For the Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay*

Deputy

Fr. Daniel González

Substitute

Fr. Sergio Gouarnalusse

*For the Vicariate of Brazil*

Deputies

1° Fr. Paulo César Pinto

2° Fr. Gleciomar Guilherme

Substitutes

1° Fr. Francisco de Paula

2° Fr. Eudes Fernandes

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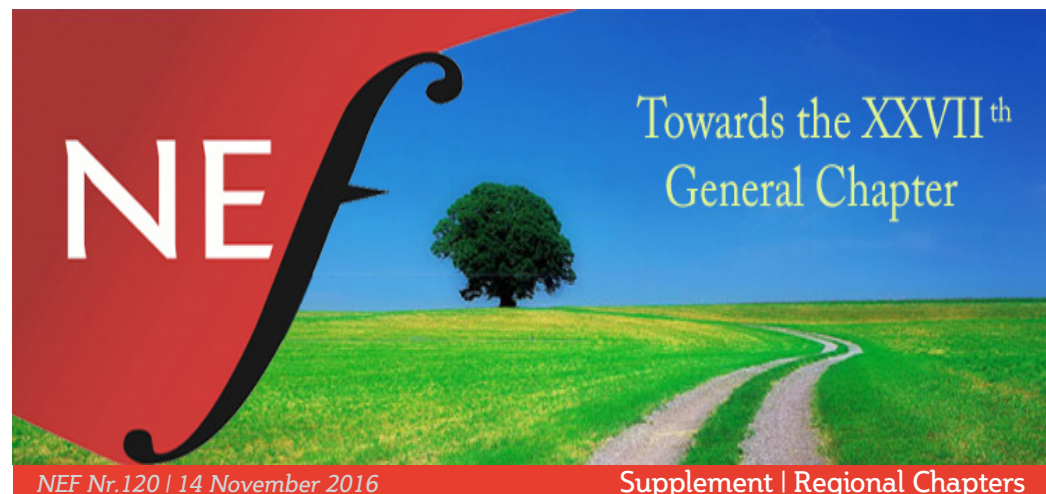
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Societas S<sup>mi</sup> Cordis Jesu  
BETHARRAM

120  
2016



## REGIONAL CHAPTER | REGION FATHER AUGUSTE ETCHÉCOPAR

From October 14 to 16 October took place in Lambaré (Paraguay) a Regional pre-Chapter to which were invited all the religious of the Region and the representatives of the laity from each Vicariate (Argentina-Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil).

After this pre-Chapter, the Regional Chapter gathered from October 17 to 19.



SCJ Retreat  
Centre in  
Lambaré

## THE REGIONAL 'PRE-CHAPTER'

### The voice of the laity

**DURING THE WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 14-16, WE WERE BLESSED TO HAVE A MEETING BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND LAY PEOPLE AT THE OUR LADY OF BETHARRAM PASTORAL CENTRE FOR THE 3RD REGIONAL CHAPTER. DURING THESE DAYS OF INTENSE WORK AND PRAYER, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN A BEAUTIFUL FRATERNAL AND COMMUNITY ATMOSPHERE, WE FOLLOWED THE METHOD OF SEEING, JUDGING, ACTING.**

We touched on many themes concerning the Region, after a survey of the reality of the Congregation through the different works of each country. We also discussed weaknesses & strengths in four basic areas: 1. Education, 2. Mission, 3. Lay people, 4. Religious.

Our common reflection also highlighted Social ministry, Ecological ministry, Education ministry and Community ministry.

All this sharing resulted in proposals for concrete projects. Our method has always been that of group work, uniting lay people and religious of the four countries, which created a rich diversity of ideas and points of view that complemented each other.

Beyond this intense work which I am certain has greatly enriched that of the chapter fathers, I have greatly appreciated this possibility which has been given to us to share with many lay people who live according to the Betharramite spirit. It was like a beautiful melody that we all perceived in unison. Creating new ties with Betharramites that I did not know and strengthening existing ties with those I had already



had the chance to meet is a precious gift of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Virgin of Betharram and our Holy Founder St. Michael.

Finally, what I draw from this pre-chapter experience I would express with the image of the disciples of Emmaus: religious and lay, we walk together on this path sharing joys and sorrows. By stressing the need to remain united and to work together, we advance side by side and especially with Jesus, who encourages us, explains the scriptures

of the Heart of Jesus in a more creative and profound way. The Heart of Jesus is incarnate in a culture recognising both its weaknesses and its strengths; He continues to call us with all our frailties. To listen to the laity expressing their profound insights on their faith in God and their adherence to the charism of Betharram was for me a moment of grace: "Have confidence in us; We have confidence in you ". I have experienced that the charism is for all and not reserved for a few individuals.

I have experienced in a profound manner a Betharram that wants to listen to the voice of God through humanity. Indeed, God's preferred instrument is human beings, ordinary people. It is a grace for Betharram to listen to all those who love and listen to the Heart of Jesus and listen to the Gospel. We can thus live our conversion of heart in a renewed way.

This is the pathway for hearing the many voices that exist in this world; Voices ignored or silenced by the many injustices of the world today. The way in which we have reflected on the call of His Holiness Pope Francis to be better disciples, to form more open and meaningful communities, to be closer to people and less Administrators of large structures.

Both the pre-chapter and the regional chapter gave me hope. Betharram is indeed present in the peripheries, not to criticise but to help; Not to condemn but to heal with the grace of the Heart of Jesus the wounds of soul & body of those who suffer socially. I perceived a concern for justice, more commitment to various margins where suffering is generated, such as with the abuse of alcohol and other drugs; More solidarity with the various situations of families who entrust their children to our colleges. May the parishes and the colleges placed under our responsibility be spaces of humanisation so that Betharram may extend the saving branch to the men and women who suffer.



in the neighbourhood is a sign of the option taken in favour of the Kingdom's special ones.

These are some of the experiences. It should be noted that they can only be achieved through networking with many lay associates and religious who are convinced that the path to being "Shepherds with the smell of the sheep" leads this way. Our conviction is that, in the years to come, spirituality and mission will be more than ever shared with the laity.

This is only a brief summary of the situation of the religious communities of the Fr. Auguste Etchecopar Region who have been pilgrims in these Latin American lands for 160 years. Let the will of the Lord be that we know how to find the way to respond as faithfully as possible to a renewed call to make the Kingdom more present and to anticipate through the witness of united and happy Betharramites the beatitudes of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

Gustavo Agin scj

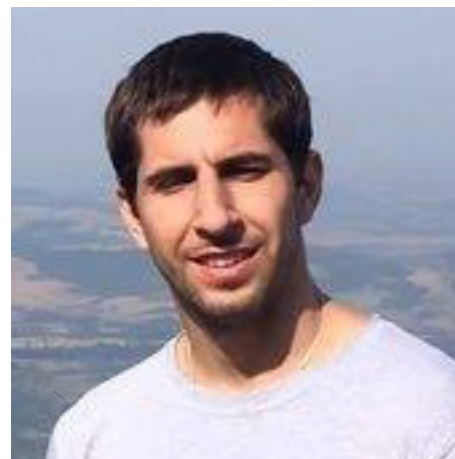


### ... Echoes of the Regional Chapter and (pre-Chapter)

By Father Fulgencio Ferreira scj

*An opportunity to live creative fidelity: during the experience of the pre-Chapter and the Regional Chapter, I perceived a family of Betharram trying to walk faithfully towards the Kingdom of God, animated by the charism that St Michael has bequeathed us. To share in this way the days of reflection with some of the People of God, united by the spirituality of the Incarnate Word, with religious and laity who perceive themselves as auxiliaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, each with its own style of life, I felt that God is calling us all, men and women, to collaborate in the building of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

*The encounter gave to us, the children of Saint Michael, the urge to live the impulse*



and makes himself present in the Eucharist.

I readily imagine St. Michael smiling, for - I am sure - he sees and approves of the work his 'mobile camp' accomplishes with great devotion and love. Ecce Venio.

Rodolfo Sánchez  
Leader of the F.V.D. Group

When I received the invitation to participate in the regional 'pre-Chapter', I felt honoured and privileged. Without realizing why I was chosen, I realised that once again the merciful Father asked me to say, "Here I am." And without knowing precisely the details of the meeting, but very enthusiastic about this great opportunity that had been offered to me, I prepared myself spiritually. Following the suggestions of the Regional Vicar in his letter, I read the ecclesial document *Misericordiae Vultus*; I also asked the intercession of the Holy Spirit, so that the meeting would bear fruit for all the family of Betharram.

The meeting exceeded my expectations. These three wonderful days were a source of human and spiritual enrichment, thanks to the experiences shared by my Betharramite brothers from Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Paraguay. All these people live the charism of Saint Michael Garicoits every



day, in the communities where they live and work. How beautiful it was to listen to my lay brothers and sisters who, in the works they do, put God's Love and Mercy into their daily lives! How many beautiful missionary initiatives are thus planned or accomplished! I felt challenged throughout these days by the Sacred Heart of Jesus: "Do you put your gifts at the disposal of all, or try

to keep them to yourself? Are you truly committed to this charism, witnessing to it through your life or have you simply reserved a small space to yourself without making the whole gift of your person?"

In the midst of such great spiritual riches, I was also rewarded on a human level. Indeed, here I am with two new friends: Eva, from Santiago de l'Estero (Argentina), whose life experience has touched my heart, and Franca, from Montevideo (Uruguay), with whom I share the vocation of Teacher. This is wonderful because, despite the

distance, we continue to be united by prayer and we support each other via the internet.

In conclusion, I would like to share a personal reflection. We are on the right track, but all of us religious & laity must make a commitment to promote together the Betharramite charism, to make it ours and to love it, so that other people will want to know it.

We ask the Blessed Virgin of Betharram to stretch out her beautiful branch so that we can find the most appropriate way to live in fraternal union, to aim for a clear and well defined common goal, in the time and place where we live. In this way we can be living examples of the "here I am, without delay, without reserve, through love" of our Father Founder, St Michael Garicoits. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Monica



The experience lived these days in Lambaré resonated in my heart as a call to live the incarnation more fully. This incarnation begins with taking responsibility for one's own life and that of one's brethren, embracing one's vocation and nurturing the charism that brought us together.

I was moved to feel that we, lay people,

are called to be more and more ourselves, more responsible, more united and more ready to stand alongside the religious in discernment, in decision-making and dedication for the Kingdom. And this is precisely what the religious have encouraged us to live. I was also moved to see religious called to be more and more

burdensome (permissions, accounting...) but we understood that we must adapt to what the Church is asking of us while at the same time aiming at greater simplicity. At another level, an ongoing issue throughout these years has been the difficulty of ensuring an animation of our communities, and so affirming our religious life style and fighting together against the prevailing winds of individualism and relativism. It has been difficult to find fathers who agree to be community leaders (superiors). While this task is no longer seen as a pleasurable activity today, it remains essential. The Vicars have gone to great lengths to persuade all the religious to participate, but at the cost of a great amount of energy due to lack of availability in some and lack of interest in others. Some people have exhausted their strength. This issue also arises in the face of certain formal demands stemming from the inevitable tension between what our Rule of Life expresses and the concrete life of communities today. This is yet another reason to seek new ways of witnessing to the lifestyle of a Betharramite community in an increasingly fragmented society. In other words, the community as a sign is threatened every day by individual interests and by many centrifugal forces that disperse energies. The Holy Spirit challenged us about this state of affairs, and we debated this subject at the Regional Chapter.

The need to be prepared to face the challenges of mission today has led us during these years not to lose sight of

ongoing formation. Many of us have been trained through pastoral courses and specialised formation courses. It is a reason for hope that the new generations have been trained in discernment and have welcomed with a willing heart the proposal to do the 30 days of Spiritual Exercises and also to learn to accompany people in the Spiritual Exercises through courses in Ignatian centres. Several brothers have attended or are now attending the Graduate School of formators in San Paolo (Brazil) or Córdoba (Argentina). Currently, they are already engaged in formation at regional level with the support of other experienced religious who live in formation communities.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that we have responded to new forms of Mission with the poor. In a Church that goes out to others we hear the call to commit ourselves more and more to society's casualties every day. The San Miguel Garicoits House was opened in Puente Remanso, as was the Clinic for Addicts and the Hogar de Cristo Centre (under construction) (Paraguay); The parish of the outskirts of Sabará and that of Setubinha in Minas Gerais and finally that of Serrinha in the State of Bahía (with 62 rural communities) (Brazil) ... and in the Sacred Heart basilica of Buenos Aires Help for the homeless by placing at their disposal "*Duchas [showers] del Sagrado*"; Missionary service in a very poor territory of Santiago del Estero in the north of the country (70 communities); In Uruguay, attention in the Barrio López to the poor



for the Betharramite family who must accompany them and help them to live out our common vocation. One religious from the Paraguay Vicariate has returned to the Congregation. Four others on the contrary have definitively left the Congregation and now belong to the diocesan clergy; two others have requested a dispensation.

**The Regional Chapter:** The third Regional Chapter met from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> at Lambare (Asuncion. Paraguay). We had also had a pre-chapter meeting with 30 other religious and laity from the three Vicariates of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina-Uruguay. The delegates were 18 in all.

The talk given by the Regional Superior was all about the fundamental points of the 2011 general Chapter. The aim was to look once more on the past of the Region with gratitude, to passionately live the present and face the future with hope. Where the Economy of Communion is concerned sharing within the Region

manifested itself in different ways. The two regional houses of formation are actually supported by pooling the resources of the three Vicariates: the Novitiate in Adroque (Argentina 2002) and the Scholasticate in Belo Horizonte (Brazil 2009). Also regular collaboration supports the regional mission in Tacuarembó, Montevideo (Uruguay 2013). The Region also contributes to the Formation Fund in the Congregation. This Fund also contributed to the refurbishment of the Regional houses and other missionary places. It also supports ongoing formation. The fact that there are financial means available is due to the work done in the Congregation's works in South America: 15 Colleges and 10 parishes, some in city centres and others in poorer quarters and they are all generous.

Great progress has been made in the presentation of the accounts but we intend to do more to show our dependence as a sign of the poverty which we chose through our consecration. We found certain procedures a little

“religious”; to be attentive to community life and to continue their commitment to the fecundity of their vocation, encouraged and accompanied by the laity. I am sure that we can be journey together, towards those who expect more effective and creative responses from us. I also realized that this dynamic of the incarnation becomes more and more clear in the « encounter with others»! The encounter becomes a means of discernment and a means of building up the Kingdom of God. This is how we enter into dialogue with the God who can be found in many men and women, especially among the most vulnerable and suffering; We “humanise” each other, seeing the Good News in one another, discovering more and more each time the face of the Incarnate God which so captivated St. Michael and which the Holy

Spirit has inscribed in the heart of so many Betharramites, Religious and lay. These are some of the treasures that I keep from this encounter and that I will continue to savor, discern, cultivate and share with my community. I ask God to help us to be faithful to His call to hear. During these days shared in Paraguay, the Lord, faithful to his style, was discreet but undoubtedly present among us. By allowing us to meet him thus in our brothers, he invites us to continue the way together, always forward, out of love, more than for any other motive.

María Eugenia



## THE REGIONAL CHAPTER

### The Father Auguste Etchecopar Region in this year 2016

AMONG ITS MANY TASKS, THE REGIONAL CHAPTER MUST EXAMINE "THE STATE OF THE REGION AND THE COMMUNITIES FROM A SPIRITUAL, APOSTOLIC, ECONOMIC AND DISCIPLINARY POINT OF VIEW".

WE ASKED THE REGIONAL SUPERIOR, FR. GUSTAVO AGÍN SCJ, FOR A SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION AND THE VARIOUS DYNAMICS UNDERWAY SINCE THE PREVIOUS GENERAL CHAPTER IN THE ETCHECOPAR REGION AND ITS THREE VICARIATES.

Nearly eight years ago with the implementation of regionalisation we began a new stage for Betharram in South America. It was accompanied by countless hopes, especially the hope to see greater fraternity which in reality existed already, but to see it transfigured by the Holy Spirit and to see it produce new fruits. There were certain fears expressed by the Fathers – for example "are we going to be able to respond to all that has to be done and undone in such a vast territory? What role is to be played by the new Regional and Vicariate Superiors who have since become "Regional Vicars"? What will be the results of a Regional Scholasticate? What will become of the financial resources of the Vice-Provinces? And what about man power? Are superiors going to oblige us to go into other Vicariates? Even to-day there are certain brothers who are still asking the same questions.

Like every new experiment,

this stage roused some worries which with the passage of time have calmed down and because the spirit which accompanied the changes was the result of a serious and opportune discernment. We felt that things couldn't continue as before. The majority of Congregations had undertaken these changes with more or less success. Thanks to the preparatory

work over a certain number of years for the revision of our Rule of Life, conditions were ideal which would allow Betharram to consolidate this new path. At the General Chapter of 2011 the Rule of Life was almost unanimously approved. A new pathway was opened up. The Etchecopar Region which began the year 2009 with 87 members (the postulants were included in the number) to-day is thus constituted: 52 religious in Final Vows; 6 scholastics; 0 novices (next year there will be four or five); 11 postulants; totalling 69 people in all. A few youngsters are asking to enter next year. Consequently we will probably be more than 70 by 2017.

Meantime the Region has taken on

pastoral duties in new areas. In the Brazil Vicariate certain parishes have been handed back to the diocese at the request of the Bishops. It gave us the chance to take responsibility for other parishes in greater need, either because of the sheer poverty of the people or a lack of priests. In the Argentine-Uruguay Vicariate the Regional Mission was taken over at Tacuarembó, Uruguay thanks to the collaboration both human and material of four religious from elsewhere. A religious from the Region (Vicariate of Brazil) was invited by the Superior General to live a missionary experience at Mendelu in the France-Spain Vicariate. In all this I can see a sign of availability and each religious was heartily thanked.

Several brothers from the Region have died, leaving a great witness of service and faithfulness to our vocation and mission. They add up to 15 Fathers and 3 Brothers. With the death recently of Fr Jose Mirande, there are no more French Betharramite religious in America.

On the other hand, the Region is blessed with new vocations. There have been several ordinations: 13 priests, two deacons. Two brothers made their Final Vows as religious brothers. There are 17 young religious; they are busy and happy in their mission and are a challenge

