



Painting by Juan Vladimir Martinovich

Listening to Saint Michael...

*Vice and virtue can be contracted by a single act, but heroic.
Hence the necessity of cooperating generously with grace in a conversion.*

Cachica Notebook, 36



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

127
2017

Generalate House
via Angelo Brunetti, 27
00186 Rome (Italy)
Telephone +39 06 320 70 96
Fax +39 06 36 00 03 09
Email nef@betharram.it
www.betharram.net

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NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA
FAMILY NEWS

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of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram

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A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Dear Betharramite Brothers,

*"Beloved, since God has loved us so much,
we too must love one another. (1 John 4:11)"*

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It is a little staggering that I address myself to you, with the certainty that this first exchange will be welcomed as the sharing of an elder brother. The Peace of the Heart, which proceeds from the Holy Spirit, was very present during this last Chapter; As well as the striking reality of our Charism, our vocation and our mission.

We have discovered that if we are faithful, we will be able to respond to the calls that the Church is giving us today.

The presence of many laypeople - who drink from the same source - has helped us to live a genuine fraternal experience. Things like listening, respect, joy and celebration have been the hallmarks of this time of grace. I take this opportunity to thank all those who have accompanied us by their constant prayer.

Since May 18, the role of Father Gaspar Fernández as a guide of the Congregation has ended, like that of his collaborators, Fathers Enrico Frigerio and Laurent Bacho. On the other hand, the General Bursar, Fr. Graziano Sala, and the



Councillor for the Missions, Fr. Tobia Sosio, were reappointed. The newly elected General Councillors are Fathers Jean-Do Delgue (France - Spain) as Vicar General and Stervin Selvadass (India) as Formation Advisor.

I will now tell you a few things about the author of this editorial (as I was asked, although there is little to say ...) And, by the way, I will answer all those who, like I must have asked myself, why? Who is this character coming from the "outskirts"?

So I was born on August 17, 1962 in Buenos Aires; But I was raised in the town of Avellaneda, in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. My father was a sailor in the merchant navy and my mother was a hairdresser. Both modest people, they always did their best to give my only sister and I a good education. I did my primary studies at the Sacred Heart College of Barracas; Secondary schooling in a Don Bosco School, with the Salesians. After the Falklands War in 1982 (between Argentina and England), I studied to

become a teacher of Economics. I practiced this profession as a layman for seven years at the Sacred Heart College of Barracas, as well as being a very active member of parish youth ministry groups.

This is where my vocation was awakened. In 1988 I entered the House of Formation of Adrogué (then in Martin Coronado), where Father Gaspar was my formator for eight years, with Fr. Martín. I finished my ecclesiastical studies as Professor and Bachelor in Theology and I was ordained a priest on 4 November 1995.

I took the Formator's course and after three years as a spiritual director in the colleges of San Joseph de Buenos Aires and Sacred Heart de Barracas, I was destined for formation, where I stayed for eleven years. I was a formator of postulants and scholastics in Martin Coronado for four years and Master of Novices for seven years in Adrogué. During these eleven years I was also Vicar of the Province of Río de la Plata. As of 2009, I accompanied the Region of Auguste Etchecopar as Regional Superior.

Given this meagre experience, I could not have imagined that my brothers could come to ask for this service... I remember that Pope Francis told the cardinals that: "You must make bishops from those who have no ambition to be so". My case is, I think, very similar. It is true that I have sometimes asked myself the question. What would happen if ...? The answers I gave myself at the time were not very convincing. But the time has come, I have accepted. At no time did I feel lonely. A growing Peace

arrived! Michael Garicoïts sent him to be trained at Dax: he obtained the diplomas that the law demanded. In the Autumn of 1840, all licences obtained, the school could even be opened up to boarders.

With the momentum of Father Didace Barbé, supported by his superior, Our Lady's School grew: in 1840, upper primary classes began; in 1847, secondary education began; 1855 saw the school's first students to take the Baccalaureat: three candidates, all three successful! The new Congregation threw itself into education: Orthez, Mauléon, Asson, Oloron ; and soon also Buenos Aires and Montevideo.

To affirm that Father Didace Barbé was a support for Father Garicoïts, is an understatement! In 1846, he was elected Counsellor; in 1851, he was made assistant to the superior, indeed chosen by him. Father Miéyaa was able to confirm this: the founder "dreamt of having him as his successor; and even while still living, would be prepared to stand aside for him." In 1855, Father Auguste Etchecopar became the confident of Father Garicoïts when the Society of High Studies in Oloron was dissolved. But, already, on the 16th October 1854, the General Assembly of Priests of Bétharram had accepted to go to South America. Father Didace Barbé was appointed to head the team. Without a doubt, Michael Garicoïts would have liked to go: he was ready to when Father Barbé's sister, a Daughter of the Cross, was saddened to see her brother go away... there were 8 companions embarking at Bayonne on 31st August 1856. They arrived in Buenos Aires on 4th November.

Not knowing the country or its language did not stop Father Barbé from speaking to the children: he became their catechist! On 19th

March 1858, the feast of St Joseph whom he cherished in particular, he turned an old leather warehouse into an educational establishment: San José High School was born. A year later, to the day, he set up in a completely new venue. If they lacked textbooks, he created them with the help of his colleagues. Whenever diplomas were demanded, he and his colleagues were successful in their exams. As superior of the little community, he never prevented the missionary efforts of Fathers Guimon, Harbustan and others. On the contrary ! Already by the end of 1856, he had created a spiritual centre in Buenos Aires, in the church of San Juan. In 1861, another was created in Uruguay in Montevideo in the Church of the Basques, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Here too, a high school was opened on 1st October 1867. His activity was limitless ; his dedication too. One would see him in chapel, in the dormitory, in the refectory, in class : everywhere ! Headmaster of the school and leader of the Community. Working and praying. A man of guidance for the younger and the older ones. But his ascetic life took its toll on his health. He had to go to class on crutches. One day, while dictating a lesson, he collapsed ; taken away unconscious to his room, he died there on 13th August 1869. Michael Garicoïts had already died six years beforehand.

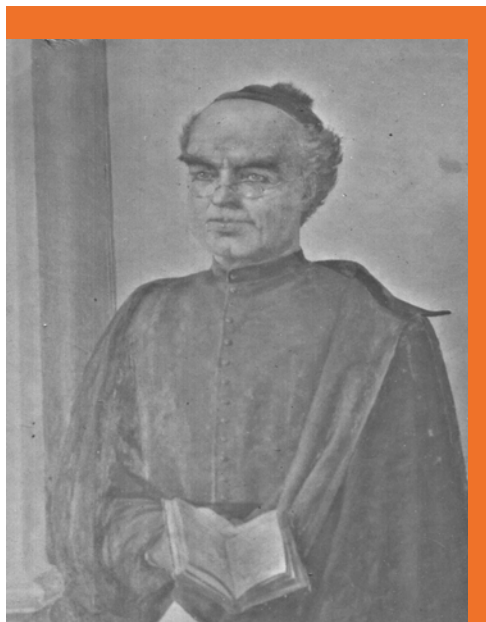
Perhaps we do not pay enough attention to what binds the founder to this much loved disciple ? An abundant correspondence existed between them, it seems; only fragments have been conserved. According to Father Magendie, Father Barbé destroyed these letters which were too full of praise towards him.

Beñat Oyhénart scj

THE FIRST COMPANIONS OF MICHAEL GARICOITS

Didace Barbé, a born educator

How difficult the beginning of the 19th Century was in France after the Revolution! In every way... Didace Barbé – Didace Casenave-Barbé, to use his full name – was born in Beuste, in Béarn on the 15th July 1813. His father, Pierre, was a carpenter; his mother, Catherine, a housewife and labourer, was employed on a daily basis to suit the needs of the neighbours... The child was baptised on the day of his birth. Without doubt, the parents had a strong faith. However, they only married on 31st December 1818, after they already had four children; Didace, the third of the siblings, was almost six years old. And his father died in 1819... The elementary education of Didace was given to him by his godfather, Didace Arague, a primary school teacher. From the age of 9 years, the child



became a teacher himself! That is to say, his uncle and godfather was keen to give a little sum of money so that he could help his mother to bring up his brother and sisters. At the same time, a retired priest at the presbytery taught him Latin.

At the age of 16, there he was at the little seminary of St Pé, which also trained a friend of Michael Garicoits, Bertrand-Sévère Laurence (who would be the Bishop at the time of the Lourdes apparitions). During the first year, his family provided his food; a collection amongst the people of Beuste payed for his studies. Then an uncle paid in 220 francs a year, and Father Fourcade let him off with the rest. In three years, Didace finished his secondary studies; he already taught the younger boys. The superior wanted him to be a teacher-seminarian. He followed the Theology course, which Michael Garicoits came to teach from Bétharram; and the latter became his spiritual adviser! Naturally, Didace wanted to go to Bétharram; the favour was granted to him by Monsignor Lacroix after the presbyterial ordination on the 22nd September 1838. And, on the 22nd October 1842, he made his religious vows.

Straightaway, Michael Garicoits earmarked Didace Barbé, a born educator, for teaching. Bétharram School, established in 1837, was in need of a Headmaster. Vincent Éliçabide, a lay-person, had left after two years: his financial demands exceeded Michael Garicoits' possibilities. He would be guillotined in 1840 after a triple murder. For a year, Jean Lacazette was the second Headmaster of Bétharram School; considered weak, he was unable to make decisions... Fortunately, Didace Barbé

spoke to me in silence ... Beyond the limits and fears that I feel, I am sure that the Chapter has elected with me a group of workers for the Kingdom who love Betharram and are ready to give their lives for Betharram.

We are the servants of the servants. This is the mandate that the Lord has left us: *"He who desires to become great among you will be your servant; And he that would be first among you shall be your servant."* (Mt 20: 26-27). His Word gives me confidence. I put everything in his hands.

My wish is to ensure that we all renew ourselves in fidelity to the Charism of St Michael, so that our religious life may be more creative, fraternal and sound every day, even if we have disagreement and differences.

"The encounter with others" is a necessary means to achieve it. So yes, we can go out in community to proclaim the gospel of Jesus all over the world. I realize that our family also runs the risk of disintegration in a changing world and a sense of relativism. The fashionable tempter "individualism" - knocks at the door of our communities to come inside and take root. If we open it, it leads us insidiously towards an isolated consciousness, toward self-referentiality.

We are now beginning to understand that it is not the crisis within religious life that causes disenchantment and indifference ... but rather a comfortable status quo that seduces us today, in order to leave us with a loss of meaning ... In some of us, discernment has disappeared and we must recover it.

Such a life prevents us from taking wings like St. Michael and so many Betharramites who preceded us. It prevents us from being witnesses to Jesus with the strength of the Passover.

Let's go forward without delay!

To go out, *"like a bridegroom coming forth from his tent, [...] like a champion joyfully running his course."* (Ps 18.6).

Go out towards the vulnerable lives of so many of our brothers and sisters who inhabit this land (sometimes very close to our communities).

Go out and give your life for Christ.

Bétharram gathered in San Bernardino (Paraguay), and proposed to "go out without delay eager to embrace life". Inwardly - towards the marginalised within our institutions - and outwardly - towards the marginalised of our world.

To serve, to heal, to grow, to comfort, to live in a joyful fraternity, to be the voice of those who have no voice, and the Light that illuminates so much darkness generated by the culture of ruin.

I affirm and maintain that an authentic Betharramite cannot sit on the fence faced with such calls. Our Betharramite heart calls for an inner liberation ... We need only listen to it.

Saint Michael knew "the cup of suffering", but he also knew an infinite joy, which impregnated his soul, stimulated him, and even made him touch heaven.

He could never resist this gift which he had received from the Most High. He nourished it with that love which he himself lavished on his brethren. The love that was destined to serve the Church in its poverty: ministers in tears, the growing dechristianisation of the land. He devoted his life to designing a religious family willing to obey. Ready to listen, accompany and forgive. A community ready to suffer for the Lord, to suffer less ... Ready to always do the Will of God. Such is his way, and ours.

Gustavo Agín scj
Superior General

Walking in the garden of the Lord



You have brought me joy, Yahweh, by your deeds, at the work of your hands I cry out, 'How great are your works... (Ps 92, 4-5) !

Iguazu Falls, May 2017

Fuenterrabia and to the fathers of Betharram who have come here.

A word and a thank you to the De La Salle Brothers who came in numbers, where Fr. Julián so often celebrated, administered the sacraments and then breakfast, with an insistence on breakfast.

60 years of presence with the Brothers: the first time I arrived at the Brothers in Irun, they told me that Father Julián had been there for 60 years. I had to listen with a careful ear, for I questioned him the next day, I thought I had misunderstood; And no, it was indeed 60 years of presence at the chaplaincy of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, here called Los Hermanos de La Salle.

I insist on breakfast as the Father had a very good appetite, and didn't count the hours at meal times! A good appetite and the art of telling funny stories or comical anecdotes of the fathers of Betharram. With a real taste for the monopoly to be "the one" that recounts these events of the past or these amusing facts ... Similarly, in matters of liturgy and in any writings of the Church or the Congregation. He would study scrupulously and above all seek out and identify the possible errors and then relate them with confidence and with an air of satisfaction. Thus Father Gaspar had to make him a mea culpa after one or two written things that were not quite exact (in the dates). Father Julián's life was essentially oriented towards the life of the Church, prayer, the service, the rosary, the Mass, both on radio and television, as well as reading.

Although of a reserved nature, it is the comical aspect of Father Julián that I

would especially like to emphasize, for, without putting on airs or a false self, he liked to amuse the gallery. Many, moreover, did not imagine this humorous vein behind the character.

Another emblematic detail of the Father was his outfit: thick glasses, motorcycle helmet and gabardine to go to celebrate the Mass. A whole panoply worthy of a reliquary! We have also kept some pictures in our drawers.

Another distinctive feature was his presence for years at the 10 o'clock mass on the parish. The father sang in a loud voice without tremolo, doing the readings himself while celebrating! In conclusion, I would like to thank the community of Mendelu and all those who have contributed to the fact that Father Julián remains with us in the community until very recently.

May the father rest in peace! And let us be assured that when we see him again, he will have a funny story to tell us, unless he makes a remark about some vagueness in this text!

Gerard Zugarramurdi scj

Mrs Lina Zappa, 91 years old, mother of Fr Alessandro Locatelli scj, of the community of Great Barr (England), died on May 15th, in Caslino d'Erba (Como, Italy).

Let us keep Fr Alessandro and his family in our prayer.

Father Julián MIGUEL GALERÓN scj

Villaquiran (Spain), 4 August 1923 - Mendelu (Spain), 27 May 2017

Father Julian was born on August 4, 1923, in Villaquirán de los Infantes, a village near Burgos (Spain). He had known the fathers of Betharram thanks to one of his elder brothers who had already entered the Congregation. Other Betharramites from Burgos whom he had met. Attracted by the same vocation, he entered the Apostolicate San Miguel de Mendelu, in Fuenterrabia, on September 12, 1933. It was there that he followed the first stages of his formation, which ended in the summer of 1940, Before proceeding to Balarin (Montreal du Gers), near Toulouse, from January 15, 1941.

Embarking on the *Monte Ayala*, he left Bilbao for Buenos Aires in February - March 1946 - to continue the mission in America inaugurated by Saint Michael Garicoits and which consisted in accompanying in their faith the many emigrants who left the Basque-French provinces to go "Make a fortune" in America.

In Argentina he spent one year at the scholasticate, then taught at the San José College in La Plata, and was a professor at the Apostolic College of Buenos Aires for two years.

He returned to Fuenterrabia on November 12, 1951, after making the Buenos Aires-Vigo trip on the *Juan de Garay*. Nine days later, he made his debut at the chaplaincy of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, replacing Father Alcorta (former Betharramite), who, as a musician, was to perform on that day the musical



direction at the convent of Mendelu. The chaplaincy of the Brothers was served by Betharramites who took turns serving this service every month. After a few years, the chaplaincy was reduced and refocused on the service of our Father Julián Miguel.

At the funeral of Fr. Julián, Fr. Gerard Zugarramurdi scj, his successor to the chaplaincy, evoked our brother with these words:

I would like to thank all those who attended the celebration and have a thought for all those who could not participate.

A special thanks to the family of Fr. Julián, who came from Burgos, Vitoria, or from Betharram for Brother Theodore.

Thanks to all the priests of Irun-

The three verbs of the shepherd



TWO YEARS AGO, AT THE ANGELUS, POPE FRANÇOIS MADE THE PORTRAIT OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD... OR RATHER HE DESCRIBED HIS ATTITUDE IN THREE ACTIONS, WHICH IS GOOD TO REMEMBER IN THIS MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART, OUR MASTER.

The Gospel on Sunday, 19 July 2015

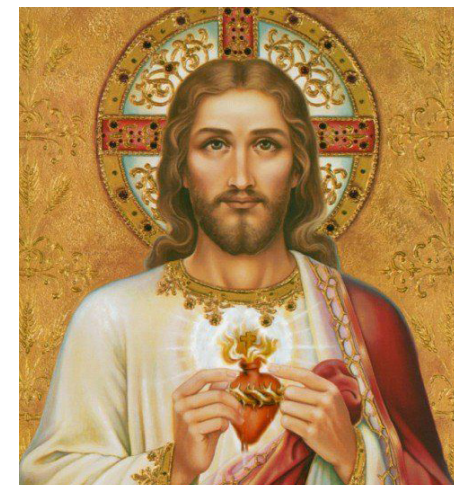
(Mark 6:30-34) :

«They were like sheep without a shepherd».

Today's Gospel tells us that the Apostles, after the experience of the mission, have returned content but also tired. Jesus, filled with understanding, wants to give them some relief; and so he takes them away, to a lonely place, so they can rest a while (cf. Mk 6:31). "Many saw them going, and knew ... and got there ahead of them" (v. 33). From this point the Evangelist offers us the image of Jesus of singular intensity, "photographing", so to speak, his eyes and gathering the sentiments of his heart. The Evangelist states: "As he landed he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things" (v. 34).

Let us recall the three verbs in this evocative photogram: to see, to have compassion, to teach. We can call them the verbs of the Shepherd. To see, to have compassion, to teach. The first and second, to see and to have compassion, are always found together in the attitude of Jesus: in fact his gaze is not the gaze of a sociologist or a photojournalist, for

he always gazes with "the eyes of the heart". These two verbs, to see and to have compassion, configure Jesus as the Good Shepherd. His compassion too, is not merely a human feeling, but is the deep emotion of the Messiah in whom God's tenderness is made flesh. From this tenderness is born Jesus' wish to nourish the crowd with the bread of his Word, that is, to teach the Word of God to the people. Jesus sees, Jesus has compassion, Jesus teaches us. This is beautiful!



A journey of twelve years

AFTER TWO MANDATES AS HEAD OF THE CONGREGATION FR. GASPAR FERNANDEZ IS READY TO AFFECTIONATELY LOOK BACK ON HIS TIME AS SUPERIOR GENERAL... THE PEOPLE, THE EXPERIENCES AND POWERFUL MOMENTS.

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FVD

*The lot marked out for me is my
delight: welcome indeed the heritage that falls
to me Ps.15.6*

Twelve years ago, just before I said "yes, I accept", I prayed these words of Saint Michael that I always say in my morning prayer: *Oh my God, you loved me so much! "Who am I? recognising and confessing my nothingness, my helplessness and my sinfulness: "Here I am, without delay, without reserve, without return! Forward! I know your heart, you know mine, Lord. You know that I love you: that is enough. Here I am! I am all because I can do nothing, because on my own I can only spoil everything. "Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory. " (DS § 8)*

During these twelve years I have visited each Vicariate four times as a privileged witness of what the Lord accomplishes in each religious and in the mission of each community. Through the religious of our communities, the Lord makes known his name and his face, and promotes the dignity of people through the gospel, education and health. I have also often been a helpless witness, to the resistance of some brothers to emerge from the self-referential. I have endeavoured to defend the coherence and authenticity of the consecrated life of Betharramite, often at the cost of conflict, misunderstanding and humiliation.

Every month, I devoted energy to the opening reflection of the NEF, "A Word from the Superior General". The intention was simply to provoke in my brothers a reflection on their spiritual life in the perspective of our Betharramite charism. I know it was not a wasted energy, because I know that many communities, some of them Formation communities, were using this work at their monthly meeting. In this way, I reflected one by one, on the chapters of the Rule of Life approved in 2012, to encourage religious as well as communities to know it better and to put it into practice with passion.

Convinced that the foundation of our consecrated personal and community life is the encounter of each one of us with the person of Jesus, our Lord, who gave a new direction to our life (DCE 1), I tried to introduce in Councils of Congregation the method of *narratio fidei*, to give importance to the sharing of the faith, sharing on what God accomplishes in the life of each one of us. This is what really brings us together, but sometimes we are very shy to talk about it. We talk more easily of football, liturgy and even of theology, than of the mysterious presence of God among us.

This too has not been a waste of energy, for I find that some time to share faith around a text of the Gospel or a writing of St. Michael is now common in the Regional Councils. This helps us in exercising discernment in decision-making. I understand that the



Last meeting of the General Council of Rev. Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj, as Superior General

In the meeting of April 22, 2017, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council,

- **approved the take-in-charge of the Sacred Heart parish of Pramila-Simaluguri** in the diocese of Guwahati (Assam) **and the consecutive erection of the new betharramite community in Pramila-Simaluguri**; the appointment of **Fr. Pascal Ravi scj as community superior has also been approved** for a first mandate. (Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, Vicariate of India);



- **admitted to final profession Br. Iran Lima da Silva**, of the Vicariate of Brazil (Region Fr. Auguste Etchécopar);

Br. Iran made his perpetual vows on Saturday 10 June, 2017, in the parish church of Belo Horizonte (Brazil). It is the new Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, who received the vows;

- **decided to present to priestly ordination** our brothers of the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, Vicariate of India:

- **Vipin Joseph Chirammel scj**
- **Michael Bistis Fernando scj**
- **Edwin Joseph Manavalan scj**
- **Jestin James Marottikkal scj**

- **decided to present Br. Jeferson Silvério Gonzaga scj to diaconal ordination**, which will be conferred on June 17, 2017, in the parish church of Setubinha (Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar, Vicariate of Brazil).



The new Superior General, Rev. Fr. Eduardo Gustavo Agín scj, called a plenary session of his Council from July 24 to 28 July 2017 at Betharram.

Decisions of the General Chapter

PENDING THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ACTS OF THE XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER IN FOUR LANGUAGES (FRENCH, SPANISH, ENGLISH, ITALIAN), FOR WHICH IT IS OBLIGATORY TO WAIT THE APPROVAL BY THE HOLY SEE FOR SOME AMENDMENTS TO THE RULE OF LIFE, THE SUPERIOR GENERAL INDICATES HERE THE ROUTE DRAWN BY THE GENERAL CHAPTER FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS.

We have proposed the following priorities for the coming years:

1. "Go out to drink at the same source". By sharing with the laity: a charism, a vocation and a mission.
2. "Go out to share". By organizing ourselves better in the animation of communities and in material matters, to better serve and to share more with those who have less.
3. "Go out to meet each person especially at the peripheries". For prophecy to lead us to those who are most in need.
4. "Go out to share the same joy". What we live by being called. Without forgetting "the first love". To serve the discernment of vocations.
5. "Get out of ourselves to communicate". The joy of our missionary life, in the truth and free from any self-referentiality.
6. "Betharram: a spiritual heritage, a campus and a place of mission for the Congregation". To live a renaissance starting from the Motherhouse, a place of mission and internationality.

Thus we have proposed to:

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| a. Prioritise the community in mission, against individualism. | e. Support the mission on the way to the Church of Vietnam. |
| b. Go out to meet vulnerable people, with the respect and love that Jesus and the Church demand. | f. Ensure the future of our brothers in matters of retirement and health care. |
| c. We commit ourselves to promoting and advancing the cause of canonisation of Father Auguste Etchecopar. | g. Training: with the challenges and joys of the Formation Service over the past 20 years, driven by a renewed spirit of fidelity and interculturality. |
| d. With Pope Francis, go out to "take care of the Common Home", integrating an ecological spirituality. | |

Councils of Vicariate and some communities have also adopted this dynamic.

During these last twelve years, the subdivision of the Congregation into Regions became consolidated. It was not easy to learn how to respect one another's sphere of influence. It has not been easy to harmonise the role of Regional Superiors and Regional Vicars. Sometimes power struggles have occurred; at other times friendship has prevented analysis of situations with objectivity. In some cases, the Regional Vicar did not follow

up on what had been decided: the Regional Superior departed (after a visit) and the contrary was done to what had been decided during the visit! Elsewhere, there was a lack of communication between the Regional Superior and a Vicar. Sometimes, the Vicar took important steps without consulting the Regional Superior. Most of these difficulties are overcome when the spheres of authority of each one are respected, and if one works by applying the law of subsidiarity in a spirit of faith and service. Regionalisation was a positive development as it overcame the isolation of the Vicariates and established greater unity in the Congregation, while respecting cultural diversity. Greater knowledge of the Rule of Life by all, the Superiors, the Vicars and the religious, will foster dialogue and allow us to re-read our lives and ways of helping each other retrieve our identity as consecrated



Thanksgiving mass in the chapel after the election of the new Superior General, San Bernardino, 18 May 2017

Betharramites.

During these twelve years, my greatest joys were: the 80 religious who made perpetual vows, the 7 formation sessions at Betharram for perpetual vows, the founding of the Ho Chi Minh City community, the work of revising the Rule of Life and the *Ratio Formationis*, the two meetings of Formators in 2007 and 2016, the meeting of the religious brothers in 2013 in Betharram ... The work of the Betharramite Formation Service was very intense, as were the energies deployed to improve formation, despite some negative results.

Nor has the cross been lacking in my life both as a disciple and as a missionary: To witness that some brothers have lost the enthusiasm of their first love and make no effort to get out of the false way of living into which they have settled; To witness that some brothers are more attached to money, power and

prestige than to the "humble and obedient Jesus Christ"; the dull disobedience of some brothers who listen only to themselves and have lost sensitivity to listen to God, brothers and superiors; the difficulty of accepting fraternal life in a community as something essential to the way of life that St Michael Garicoits wanted for us; the disappointment caused by the abandonment of religious in whom we had placed our trust and high expectations; The expulsions from the Congregation with which I had to proceed ... The most painful are those brothers who are not in the truth of what they have professed to be.

And now obedience puts me in a situation of standing down, it deprives me of the security that I had acquired during these twelve years. So after a year of Ongoing Formation, the voice of the superiors will indicate to me my new mission. I am convinced that this vulnerability is the only thing that allows me to encounter new people who will in the end help me to enrich myself spiritually. I did not become a Betharramite to be superior! I have never sought to be so, and I am once

again, in all simplicity, the consecrated man that I have always been, and from there I will continue to love this Congregation which the Sacred Heart conceived and formed through the intermediary of Saint Michael Garicoits.

After twelve years, my prayer is a thank you to the Lord for what I have lived and it echoes in this verse of Psalm 15: 6: "The lot marked out for me is my delight: welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!"

I thank the Lord for the few things that I have done that were significant or original: it is the Lord who has accomplished it with my good dispositions. I also thank the Lord for what the Lord could *not* do because of my limitations and my sins. So there is nothing I can boast of! Who would have stopped me if I could have done more! I have lived the devotion that my service for the Congregation demanded, with serenity, passion and joy. For two years, fatigue has increased my load, but I have not been able to stop myself. This is also a cause for gratitude.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj



Avila (Spain), where the new Superior General granted Fr. Gaspar scj to take a sabbatical year for a course of mystical theology

Elections and decisions of the General Chapter

Celebrated from May 6 to 22 at San Bernardino (Paraguay), the XXVIIth General Chapter elected on 18 May 2017,

Rev. Fr. Eduardo Gustavo Agín scj, 14th Superior General
of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram

Fr. Jean-Dominique Delgue scj, Vicar General

Fr. Graziano Sala scj, General Bursar (re-elected)

Fr. Stervin Selvadass scj, Councillor for formation

Fr. Tobia Sosio scj, Councillor for the missionary cooperation (re-elected)



In conformity with article 190 of the Rule of Life, the new Superior General gathered his Council in order to choose who will do the job of **General Secretary**: this task is entrusted to Fr. Graziano Sala scj.

General Chapter, Act II

A SIGN OF UNITY AND CHARITY FOR ALL THE RELIGIOUS OF OUR INSTITUTE”, THIS XXVII GENERAL CHAPTER WAS CERTAINLY MORE THAN EVER. SOME OF OUR CAPITULANTS BEAR WITNESS HERE TO THIS MOMENT OF UNIQUE ECCLESIAL COMMUNION IN WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF OUR RELIGIOUS FAMILY HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED BY PRAYER AND BY LISTENING TO THEIR VOICES.

Aldo Nespoli scj | What remains at the end of a Chapter? This question may be raised by the Chapter Fathers, among whom I count myself.

This experience left many impressions, still fresh. I am thinking in particular of the attentive and fraternal welcome of the Vicariate of Paraguay and the rigorous organisation of the General Council, for which we are grateful and thankful.

The conviviality that was established between religious coming from different parts of the world was a touching experience. The joviality and freshness of Thais, Indians and Africans bodes well for a genuine openness to the future: “Betharram lives” truly in them.

We thank our brothers from Paraguay for the good times spent together: the feast of Saint Michael at the San José College, the warm and fraternal welcome at the parish of Sagrado Corazón, the two days of visiting sites of natural and cultural and religious importance, such as the waterfalls of Iguazu and the first Jesuit and Franciscan foundations, today UNESCO heritage sites.

The fraternal and serious climate favoured the search for proposals for the future, especially since we have not yielded to the temptation of linguistic virtuosity to concentrate on content.



Fr. Tobia Sosio scj, great organizer of the XXVIIth General Chapter, along with the General Council, the Vicariate of Paraguay and the teams of the scj middle schools in Asuncion

I could go on and give other impressions, but that would detract from the point, namely, what is left of the Chapter? The theme “running, to embrace life’s call” has re-examined our positions and put us in an attitude of conversion and change of heart. It emerges that it is necessary to open up to the needs of the

with clear and common lines for all the works of the Congregation. To return to the source, to work in the missionary perspective.

- Promote communication and collaboration at the regional level, by creating networks to collaborate in the training of pastoral agents and to support their development. Prioritise the meetings of the laity and organize them periodically by varying the places.
- Recourse without fear to the various sciences and interdisciplinary work. Professionalize work teams where necessary. Be open to new forms of action and innovation.
- To assume the role of the lay Betharramites, both us and the religious. Develop spaces to work the spiritual realm of people in all spheres of life; This will enable us to form, especially the Betharramite charism.
- Faced with the different realities we face in colleges, parish catechesis and youth groups, we must be prepared to respond to an infinite number of situations and be able to identify the situations in which we have to call upon professionals, where we are not in a position to provide a solution or provide support. We need to train trainers who pass on the charism to newcomers, whether in colleges, parishes or lay groups.
- Improve communication and networking to work together and share experiences and situations. To live a shared mission in all vicariates.
- Given the lack of Betharramite

vocations, look for suitable places in schools and parishes. Form a team of lay and religious workers to work together for vocations for the Congregation and the Church.

- Being schools hosting students with disabilities, training teachers and working more the spiritual identity of our colleges.
- Struggle to reduce the gap between poor and rich from the testimony and the sober lifestyle of our religious and lay people.
- Use technology tools, social networks, share, publish, etc.
- Think of a project of education to love (affectivity and sexuality) for each vicariate.

APARECIDA 432. The family is one of the most important treasures of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, it is a patrimony of humanity as a whole. In our countries, a significant proportion of the population is affected by difficult living conditions that directly threaten the family institution. In our condition as disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ, we are called to work for this situation to change, and for the family to assume its identity and mission.

Church today, to revitalize the “flying camp” theorized by Saint Michael and synonymous with availability. So, what is left of the Chapter? The fear of not being able to carry out the resolutions of the Chapter. The phrase “running” translates the hope that pushes us to say “forward! “And what

makes us pursue the work, the fruit of the Holy Spirit who has accompanied us and will accompany us in future challenges. The same Holy Spirit that we invoked at the beginning of the Chapter, with the protection of the Blessed Virgin and of our Father Saint Michael.



Gerard Sutherland scj | *I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries. A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you. (Ez 36: 24, 26)*

The welcome we received was overwhelming; the Vicariate of Paraguay made things look so easy and well produced that it seemed as if nothing was overlooked, and yet I know from experience for this to happen a lot of preparation and hard work had taken place. The General Chapter, which is the highest authority in the our Congregation came together representing 14 countries; the 31 members of the Chapter gathered in a beautiful location in San Bernardino, in a new retreat house, not far from an impressive lake

Ypacarai.

This was my third Chapter and was my happiest because of the friendship, laughter, discussions, prayer and hard work, so that no language was a barrier, because our Congregation is small and beautiful and so I was able to renew friendships from other international meetings. Together we showed the true ‘Face of Christ’ by our care and attention to the small details; a truly international aspect of our community, which inspired us; working, praying, playing and sharing together and especially our meals together which were fantastic. For me this is the true meaning and spirit of Betharram. My memory is one of joys, smiles

Message from the laity of the Etchecopar Region

FROM 12 TO 14 MAY, IN PARALLEL WITH THE GENERAL CHAPTER, THERE WAS A MEETING OF THE BETHARRAMITE LAITY FROM THE THREE VICARIATES OF THE REGION OF AUGUSTE ETCHECOPAR. HIGHLIGHT OF THIS MEETING, THE FEAST OF ST. MICHAEL GARICOITS, DURING WHICH RELIGIOUS AND LAY PEOPLE SHARED THE WAY THEY LIVE. ALL HAVE REFRESHED THEMSELVES AT “THE SAME SOURCE” (RdV N ° 3), EACH ACCORDING TO HIS VOCATION. WHAT EMERGES FROM THE LAITY IS A VERY INTERESTING AND SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM.

We find that in our Region, and probably throughout the world, God’s place in people’s lives is decreasing, resulting in the dehumanization of people and a loss of the real meaning of life.

We note that the family is seriously affected, the realities we are facing show that the family, based on the style of the holy family of Nazareth, give way to the realities of the times.

Everyday difficulties cause young people to take refuge in unhealthy activities that harm their physical and spiritual health. At the educational level, it becomes

increasingly difficult to refer to spiritual values as countries declare themselves secular and the authorities and society limit the importance of the spiritual sphere.

Faced with this reality, we believe that we must strengthen the training and support work for the individual and the family; It is necessary to reaffirm the importance of the family, while remaining open, with a merciful gaze, to other realities, also welcoming them with great love and accompanying them from the spiritual point of view.

To this end, we propose to work on the following points:

- To work on a general course, at the level of the Congregation, conceived jointly by the laity and the religious,



Gleimar Guilherme da Silva scj | It was two days after the end of our Regional Chapter that I began to be a little worried about participating in the 27th General Chapter. At times, I identified with the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 1), and on several occasions my prayer brought me back to the dialogue between the prophet and God: on the one hand, I was afraid and felt a sense of insecurity; But on the other, the Lord encouraged me to offer a simple testimony of what the charism of Betharram offered me during these years.

These days of the Chapter have been singular, special and enlightening not only for us but also for the life of the Congregation. These were days of intense work, reflection and discernment; Nourished also with joy, sharing, exchange and fraternity. An experience that allows me to believe even more in Betharram for having seen in person his young shoots. Yes, Betharram is full of life!

The Chapter exhorts us to “Go forth without delay to the meeting of life! A concrete example was proposed to us with listening to the testimony of our dear Brother P. Yesudas, an Indian missionary in Vietnam; It is obvious that it is possible to go out to meet a renewed life. The young growth of Vietnam revives our hopes and encourages not only our soul to “go where others refuse to go”, but it also offers us the remedy necessary to fight the dismal discourse of these “prophecies” that want everything at all costs shrinking our young shoots and the present life in Betharram.



My participation in the Chapter allowed me to contemplate beauty. Among the most beautiful and perhaps the most intense realities we have seen the unity and communion that the Holy Spirit gives and inspires to those who come together under His protection. To this Spirit, which spreads over the Church and the world, we entrust the ministry of our new Superior General and his Council. In this same Spirit we give thanks to the Father for those who have preceded them. I leave with the conviction that Betharram is full of life, for it is the work of God. I am convinced, and at the same time called to answer this call of the Chapter: to go out to meet life, without reserve, without delay... out of love!

on our faces even when we shared honestly about the shape of our Vicariates (the joys and the sorrows).

What I take from the Chapter; I hope to share in shaping not only myself, but helping my community and my Vicariate to ‘show the Face of Christ’ to all those to whom we minister and what I have come to realise,

which also is important is that I have to show this same face of Christ to my community so we can share the joys of Christ.

I end where I began, with a big ‘Thank You’ to our hosts and to the previous administration for all the hard work and attention to the smallest details. Now is the time to move ‘forward always forward’ as St Michael liked to impress on us.

Daniel González scj | San Bernardino or Ain Karem? I must admit that I came to San Bernardino with the illusion of being able to rest because I came from an intense rhythm of activities and various problems. This dream was fuelled by the brand new house and the proximity of the lake. With the welcome of Paraguay and the festive climate, the stage was set. The fact of us all meeting each other and the smile on the faces of the brothers effaced the tensions... The illusion could settle. The Chapter began with its usual rite: the prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit, election of scrutineers and



secretaries. It was then that my dream broke before reality. Indeed, they had just elected me secretary with Father Jean-Do. But this moment finally gave rise to a time of Grace, because it helped me to place myself in the right attitude: to forget myself and prepare for the “surprises” of God ... which eventually go beyond our own illusions.

Unbeknownst to us, the theme was being concretised: “To go out without delay to the encounter with life”. This, I believe, has also made the particularity of this Chapter: Betharram has lost no time in looking at herself, but in looking “towards”. And San Bernardino became a “Ain Karem”, “the place of JOY”: where the gesture, the smile, an embrace, a joke... were our common language; Where one finds a diversity of cultures, colours, languages ... while feeling in family; Where we recognise ourselves as brothers because we drink from the same charismatic source...; Where the work realized by each brother, in his position, takes on

its full meaning...; Where the communal prayer and the beauty of the liturgy have expressed the joy of our consecration...; Where we have experienced the gift of God that is Betharram for the world...; Where we feel that it is necessary to go out together to meet the life, especially where it is not, and to share the one we have within us ...

Having gone to the XXVII General Chapter with the idea of living an illusion, I came back rich with an experience that filled my life with illusion and joy. And the most beautiful... is that this is a shared feeling. Forever always!!!

Stervin Selvadass scj | This is my first General Chapter that I participate. I am indeed overwhelmed very much by the family spirit that was manifested by the Chapter members. Yes, there was loving cordiality, growth oriented team work, genuine brotherhood, sincere sharing and a vibrant joyfulness. I think, this is what I am called to live in my community wherever I am and in whatever I do. This is the first fruit of my Chapter experience. Secondly, as the Chapter focussed on the theme 'Go out to embrace Life's call',

after having discussed about the life of the Congregation in its fullness, I am invited by the General Chapter ' to go out to love my community with its ups and downs'.

Thirdly, we say in English 'Gratitude is an attitude of the Heart'. My sincere gratitude goes to the Organizing team of the Chapter especially to the Vicariate of Paraguay. I was simply thrilled in the way they had organised it and the way they had taken care of every minute details to make sure our stay comfortable, pleasant and fruitful. I truly salute them. May God bless You...



The Chapter members 'Real Madrid' style

Jean-Paul Kissi Ayo scj | This chapter has really brought so much for my religious life; but more especially for my Betharramite religious life. It was my first experience in the midst of my elder brothers more experienced than me. The first things that I would like to underline is the warm welcome we received. The religious and lay people of the region of Father Auguste Etchecopar had given their availability, their attention and their care for the smooth running of this chapter. We were at home. I lived the chapter in a very good atmosphere, I had the impression that the language barriers no longer existed. There was a simplicity of relationships between young religious and elders. This has contributed to the quality of the work.

This experience gave me the opportunity to encounter the other Betharramite realities; the cultural diversity experienced in other regions. This allowed us to enrich each other. Even today, the treasure of Saint Michael continues to be lived and transmitted in many different forms and in different realities of the world. I was very marked by the sign FVD (Fiat Voluntas Dei = Amen, I come to do the will of God) which appears almost everywhere where there was Betharram. People are so proud and so happy to carry this sign in carrying out the work of God in Saint Michael. I was also marked by the good collaboration between laity and religious.

At the heart of our sharing, I saw and heard of Betharram is eager to carry the wealth of the charism so high. As the theme of the chapter says, "without delay, running to embrace life's call"; I leave this chapter with a will and an invitation to leave my "I" to encounter and share life with my brothers in community so that together we can put out ourselves as Mary for the mission of Betharram in the heart of the world.

I entrust to Our Lady of Betharram our new Superior General and his Council, that the Lord may accompany them in their service so that Betharram continues to go without delay running to embrace life's call.



Chapter members again in Playmobil style at the Itaipu dam. But no panic... the wearing of hard hats will not be among the General Chapter resolutions!