



Painting by Juan Vladimír Martinovich

Listening to Saint Michael...

It was a question of distinguishing the true Church from that which is not; but sanctity is one of her characteristics. The Church, no doubt, experiences in her heart many miseries, not only from the simple faithful, but also from priests, which make her blush, and disgrace her by their disorderly conduct. And though the church is not as old as the world itself, it should have ceased to exist long ago! But because it is as divine as its teacher, the apostasies of once-sure pillars, the most virulent attacks on the part of its adversaries, only make it more unshakeable. Amazing! That which, according to human wisdom, should have brought her to ruin, has made her more credible, and gained new disciples.

Cachica Notebook, 10



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

129
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

NE

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

115th year
10th series, nr 129
14th September 2017

Embracing life's call
in a context of crisis

Dear Betharramites,

In this issue

- Page 4 • With the loving watchfulness of God
- Page 5 • Heirs of God's promises
- Page 7 • Message to the lay associates
- Page 9 • Amendments to the RL
- Page 13 • The possessions of Betharram...
- Page 16 • Basque pilgrimage on the footsteps of Saint Michael
- Page 17 • Notices from the General Council
- Page 19 • Bird's eye view of the Congregation
- Page 22 • The first companions of Michael Garicoits
- Page 24 • Listening to Saint Michael...

Some time ago, when I was starting to work in the Fr. Etchecopar Region as Regional Superior, I attended a meeting of the Conference of Religious of Argentina. Pierre Arnold, a Belgian theologian working in Peru, spoke to us on this occasion of Consecrated Life in times of crisis. As he specialized in Andean Theology, he used an image of his culture to characterize the situation: we Christians, he said, 'must learn to dance during the earthquake.'

It was an expression as rare as eloquent, an optimistic proposal but difficult to put into practice. I have only once witnessed an earthquake (a frequent phenomenon in the Andes) and it is not pleasant. Above all, it does not give the desire to dance, but rather to run away or take refuge under a bed. You wait hoping the earth will quickly and definitively cease to tremble. There are always aftershocks. And this is what happens with what is called the "crisis - earthquake" that has been going on for a few years...

Eight years have passed since that time, and in 2017 the CIVCSVA (Congregation for Religious) proposed another image: "New wine; New skins!". This biblical metaphor, so fa-



The new wine must also acquire its own flavour, which comes from a strong experience of the God of Love, an experience which, as we know, is not merely cultural or from secular means, but which is a genuine spiritual journey. Unless this transcendent passage from the Word Incarnate to the concrete reality, which transforms Life involving a process of pain and joy and a paschal itinerary happens, I do not

think that the essence of our Betharramite being is reached. This spiritual orientation, which transcends all the circumstances of a given epoch, is always new. It is born of the Gospel itself, and becomes prophetic to the world, a witness among us which is intimately bound to our mission as consecrated people.

Simple statistical data tells us that, from 1965 to 2010, nearly 370 religious institutes have disappeared. The causes are many, but it shows that the "crisis" reaches more than a few: it affects everyone. It challenges us to go out to meet life, with the vital forces of the vocations that the Lord of the harvest sends us. To use the metaphor of new skins, we are called to contain the new wine, to soften our lives by listening with sincere dialogue, and not to lock ourselves in rigid positions, mutual criticisms, which would eventually burst the skins and spill the wine.

In Africa and Asia vocations are more flourishing. For those churches where Betharramites have been established for years, the wakeup call has sounded in several senses of the word. At the same time, new missions are challenged by the departure of the missionaries who came from abroad (France,

answer was that he was originally from Barcus, like Simon Guimon who knew how to convince him!

Joannès was born in 1825 into a deeply Christian family. In 1844 his fellow townsman brought him to Michel Garicoïts. He made his first profession in 1846 and his final vows in 1854. He gave this witness of our founder:

«This good father, not content with inspiring our souls with the fire of his word, often joined us to share in our most humble and menial work.»

Intelligent and lively, Brother Joannès was entrusted with all kinds of employment in Bétharram, Pau, Orthez or Asson. At the school of Asson, he was both cook and school teacher: a simple curtain between kitchen and class allowed him to supervise ovens and pupils at the same time...

In 1856 he was among the missionaries of America. With Father Barbé and Brother Magendie, in poverty and deprivation, he was at the establishment of San José college in Buenos-Aires: some rooms served as refectory, classrooms and dormitories and the kitchen was a basic outhouse. On rainy days, water came in from all sides: an umbrella protected the fire and the pot. But famine does not prevent either peace or joy. In 1862, Brother Joannès joined Harbustan and Irigaray in Montevideo. Here he was sacristan, porter and cook all at once. His conduct was exemplary; his example was more worthy than a homily! He attracted trust: more than once, the bishop took him on his apostolic missions.

In 1892, at 70, he returned to Bétharram, hoping to die there. He devoted himself to the sanctuary where Notre-Dame had welcomed him: he prayed there, worked

there, and welcomed pilgrims there.

Next came the laws against religious congregations. In 1903, at the age of 79, Brother Joannès returned to America, after saying farewell to his two sisters, Daughters of the Cross, to all his brothers, to the tombs of Fathers Garicoïts and Guimon, and to Notre-Dame.

He leaves a picturesque account of the journey. Welcomed with happiness in Montevideo, he was happy to return. He became an example of prayer, routine and work, often repeating: «I have only one more trip to take: the one into Eternity. He responded to this final call on 19 May 1910. This comes from a letter from Father Garicoïts to Brother Joannès in 1857: *"I see with indescribable pleasure that you are content with your position and the people with whom you have to live, especially Fr Barbé. It makes me see that you have certainly stopped listening to your character first... Continue, dear friend, to always watch over this, and to have no other rule of conduct, no further consolation than the pleasure of God"*. Would Brother Joannes have had a strong temperament, causing his frequent changes of community? Surely he has softened with time!

On August 21, 1861, Father Garicoïts addressed Brother Joannès: *"I had received your letter with great pleasure. What has made me especially hopeful of you is the desire to watch your character and to make progress on your strengths. So continue onwards! Be humble, obedient, content and faithful; and God will bless you and your family."*

Beñat Oyhenart scj

THE FIRST COMPANIONS OF MICHAEL GARICOÏTS

Fabien and Joannès

"Brothers are needed to help the priests of the Community". Father Auguste Etchécopar reported these words of Father Michel Garicoïts. It is therefore not surprising to see two brothers among the missionaries sent to South America in 1856."

Fabien Lhôpital was one of the very first brothers to enter Bétharram. Born in Pau in 1821, he came to Bétharram in 1846. After first vows in 1849, he became fully committed in 1855. His first role was to be a cook. It had become urgent for a brother to take up this job: domestic workers had robbed the poor community of so much. From Bétharram Brother Fabien was sent to Orthez; and from there to America, soon serving the San Juan community in Buenos Aires. «A simple life,» you might think, but it had its challenges as Father Garicoïts writes to Father Barbé, the superior: «Please tell Brother Fabien that I received his letter [where he speaks of the illness and death of Father Simon Guimon (May 22, 1861)] with much kindness; This is the Brother Fabien I know. (...) May he always be a good brother, and may the good Lord always give him the blessing of being a good brother. He will have a great reward from this. And on 21 August 1862, Michel Garicoïts replied to Brother Fabien: «I have received your letter with great pleasure. I recognize you very well in this, Brother Fabien. Through all the difficulties you mention to me, you have nothing to fear from obeying. In extraordinarily difficult circumstances, you will get along with Fr. Barbé. Abandon yourself to Divine Providence; even if you get sick, you will lack nothing. Fr. Barbé will come to your rescue, as well as to the help of all of us. It is our duty, but also our pleasure, believe it. (...) The important thing

is to behave well in serving God and the Sacred Heart community. The best way to do this is to be humble, like a small child, obedient, content and faithful.»

In 1871, yellow fever raged; Brother Fabien devoted himself to the sick. Contracting the disease himself, he died on 8 April 1871. His name appears, along with those of Fathers Larrouy and Irigaray, on a column erected in Buenos Aires as a token of gratitude.



Two lay persons are represented on the drawing illustrating the departure for America: they are certainly our religious brothers, Fabien and Joannès

Joannès Arostéguy arrived at Betharram before Brother Fabien and lived a more challenging life. Why did Joannès Arostéguy give up a job at the cathedral and become a brother at Bétharram? The

Italy, Spain, etc.). Thailand, India and Vietnam show a generous strength. We must reinvent ourselves in love, while remaining faithful to that "first love", without which it will be difficult to reproduce and manifest the same generous impetus that has seduced us.

In Latin America, the seeds are growing, and we must accompany them with a clear identity and an attractive mission. The vocations that are still seen in the New World are like the buds of an ancient vine. They are always there, and they must be valued and taken care of. As they are the result of an ever-changing and secularised society, these vocations expect from us a constantly adjusting pattern of formation. Do not expect them to come to us. Let us go to them without delay, as Jesus Himself asked His disciples to do.

Let us go and look for the workers for the vineyard.

The context of the crisis in Europe has been spoken of for long enough. More than a crisis, it would seem that this is a "opportunity", which we can certainly change, as long as it is seen as such and not as a call to withdraw into oneself and 'to provide against a difficult future' ... The absence of vocations and the growth of a high percentage of Betharramite religious at an age where they are in need of care speaks of a state characterised by a mature religious wisdom in the midst of a growing process of human weakness. There is a great paradox here, which challenges many of us and tempts us to huddle together, while others are inclined to pessimism, stagnation, and be distant from society and those who suffer more than we do. It is as though we are the bearers of a charism, but in a "vegetative state."

Is there something we can all do? Make this crisis an opportunity that calls, awakens, convokes and challenges.

Could it be possible to transform this crisis into "kairos" - as we have proposed so many times - without going through a profound process of personal and community conversion?

Will we succeed if we dialectically oppose one another?

Will we be able to discover in the Church the signs of God in the signs of the times?

Some think it is still possible. I believe it too, having in mind the words of St. Michael, when he spoke of the incessant fermentation of the Holy Spirit. I believe in that style of life to which we were called to serve Christ and the brothers, humble and obedient.

In fact, Consecrated Life in itself, has this character of witness. It is like an aspect of "Come and see" (Jn 1:39). Even if today's Church does not extend as much as it should, even if all the institutes were to disappear one day, her charism will probably still be there...

Will not this "last hour of the day", on the contrary, be the occasion to go out into the street to call the idle workers, so that they too come to work in the vineyard? (Mt 20:6).

Let's prepare our communities, as the harvest approaches. Let them be like a space of "supple leather" so that the new wine of those who feel called to Betharram find the conditions conducive to "ferment, breathe and ripen", by the care of some brothers who love each other as much as Jesus loved the friends the Father had given him.

Eduardo Gustavo Agín sci
Superior General

SNAPSHOTS OF BETHARRAMITE LIFE

With the loving watchfulness of God



On September 6th 2017, Brother N'dah Arnaud Kadjo renewed his religious profession to build a community according to the wish of St. Michael Garicoïts, perfect model of union with the Sacred Heart in the accomplishment of the will of the Father.

«As brothers responsible for one another, helping one another live in love as Jesus taught us, we seek “the good of the other, with the loving watchfulness of God himself”. The fraternal community climate also helps us grow emotionally and spiritually so we realise our mission as consecrated people.»

Bouar, Saint Michael Community

Fr Sergio Gouarnalusse SCJ, Regional Vicar for Argentina and Uruguay; Fr Paulo César Pinto SCJ, Regional Vicar for Brazil and Fr Alberto Zaracho SCJ Regional Vicar for Paraguay. The meeting was also attended by Fr. Javier Irala SCJ, the former First Vicar, who has just been appointed as Regional Bursar.



Region

India

Mangalore ► The community at Mangalore celebrated the feast of St. Miriam. Most Rev. Bishop Aloysius Paul D'Souza was the main celebrant for the festive Mass. After the Mass we had a festive meal together with all the friends and benefactors.

Benefactors and friends celebrated also the feast of Our Mother of Betharram with the members of the community at Mangalore. Fr. Biju Paul Alappat scj and Fr. Jacob Biso scj concelebrated with Fr. Andrew D'Souza, our parish priest of Bondel, the chief celebrant.

Thailand

Sampran ► On Saturday July 29 and Sunday 30, the Ban Betharram Seminary celebrated the 30th anniversary of its foundation. The festive days were full of events. On the days before July 29, some football matches were organized and many young seminarians



and religious were involved. On Saturday 29, a solemn Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the seminary, presided by H. E. Cardinal Michael Michai Kitbunchu, Emeritus Cardinal of Bangkok, the same Cardinal who inaugurated the seminary in 1987. Many priests, many Betharramite religious coming from different communities of Thailand and more that 500 faithful joined the cardinal for the celebration.

In his homily, the Emeritus Cardinal recalled the day of the inauguration. He thanked the congregation and the fathers for the work they have done over the past 30 years in the mission of Thailand and in the field of youth education. The Eucharist was followed by some joyful events and the dinner. On Sunday 30, in the morning, the Eucharistic celebration closed the festivities.

On 12 of August our Sampran community witnessed the ministry of acolyte of our dear Br. James Thanit Panmanikul and Br. Peter Rawee. The ministries were conferred by Bishop Joseph Pibul Visitnondachai, the bishop of Nakhon Sawan.



SCJ and Fr. Simone Panzeri SCJ. They gathered in Pau on the morning of August 8 and together they reached the community of Mendelu. The mornings were devoted to the reflection on the charism of St. Michael, the mission today, the reality of Ivory Coast (difficulties and strengths of a multicultural nation), solidarity and the preparation of information material for the camp (videos, brochures, 2018 program, info on Katiola...).

The afternoons were dedicated for visiting various places: Fuenterrabia, the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pamplona and Saturday the day at the beach.



These young people surmounted the barrier of the language difference and enjoyed their being together by sharing cooking and home cleaning services, learning how to be responsible for the good success of the camp and the good climate of collaboration that animates true fraternity, a great starting point for continuing the path to the Katiola Camp in 2018.

Central African Republic

Seeds of hope ► From Monday July 10, to Sunday, July 16, different events involving the youth were organized by the Parish Our Lady of Bouar at the Mission Centre "Charles Lwanga", under the leadership of Fr. Arsène Noba scj. More than 150 young people responded to this interesting initiative, aimed at fostering the sense of belonging to the Parish community



and at creating an atmosphere of joy and serenity in a country going through a serious crisis. During the month of August, the Betharramite mission «Notre Dame de Fatima» organized courses for 47 students attending both middle and high schools. This new initiative in the classrooms of the same Youth Center was organized by Fr Arsène Noba scj, and it was possible thanks to the availability of parish teachers who wanted to give their time to these young people.

Holy Land

Feast of St Mary of Jesus Crucified ► On Friday 25th August the Christians of the Holy Land celebrated the Feast of St Mary of Jesus Crucified with a procession starting from the Carmel monastery and passing through the streets of Bethlehem to the Milk Grotto. On Saturday 26th, day of the feast, a Mass presided by the Apostolic Administrator, Mgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa OFM, was celebrated at the Bethlehem Carmel.



First Regional Council

On August 15, the feast of the Assumption, the new Regional Council of the Region met in Lambaré (Paraguay), in the presence of the Superior General, Fr Gustavo Agín SCJ: Fr Daniel Gonzalez SCJ, new Regional Superior;



Heirs of God's promises

DURING THE GENERAL AUDIENCE OF AUGUST 23, POPE FRANCIS CONTINUED HIS CATECHESIS ENCOURAGING THE FAITHFUL TO LIVE THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE OF HOPE IN TODAY'S SOCIETY ESPECIALLY IN DIFFICULT AND VERY CHALLENGING SITUATIONS THAT MAY DISHEARTEN US. THE POPE REMINDS US THAT "OUR LIFE HAS A GOAL: IT IS NOT A SLOW DETERIORATION, BUT A ROAD TOWARDS A NEW FUTURE, WHERE WE WILL BE HEIRS OF GOD'S PROMISES".

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

We have heard the Word of God in the Book of Revelation, as follows: "Behold, I make all things new" (21:5). Christian hope is based on faith in God who always creates newness in the life of mankind, creates novelty in history, creates novelty in the universe. Our God is the God who creates newness, because he is the God of surprises.

It is not Christian to walk with one's gaze directed downward — as swine do: they always go along in this way — without lifting one's eyes to the horizon. As if our entire journey terminated here, in the span of a few metres travelled; as if our life had no goal and no mooring, and we were compelled to wander endlessly, without any reason for our many toils. This is not Christian.

The closing pages of the Bible show us the ultimate horizon of our journey as believers: the heavenly Jerusalem, the celestial Jerusalem. It is envisioned first of all as an immense tent, where God will welcome all mankind so as to dwell with them definitively (21:3). This is our hope. And what will God do, when we are with

him at last? He will be infinitely tender in our regard, as a father who welcomes his children who have long toiled and suffered. John prophesies in Revelation: "Behold the dwelling of God is with men... He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away... Behold, I make all things new" (21:3-5). The God of newness!

Try meditating on this passage of Sacred Scripture not in a distracted way, but after reading a chronicle of our days, after seeing the tv news or the front page of newspapers, where there are so many tragedies, where they report distressing news that we all risk becoming used to. And I have greeted several people from Barcelona: how many sad reports from there! I have greeted several from Congo, and how much sad news there is from there! And how very much more! To name only two countries of some of you who are here... Try thinking about the faces of children frightened by war, of the despair of mothers, of the shattered dreams of so many young people, of refugees who undertake terrible journeys, and who are

so often exploited.... This, unfortunately, is also life. At times one might say that it is this above all.

This may be so. But there is a Father who weeps with us; there is a Father who sheds tears of infinite compassion for his children. We have a Father who knows how to weep, who weeps with us. A Father who awaits us in order to console us, because he knows our suffering and has prepared a different future for us. This is the great vision of Christian hope, which expands over all the days of our life, and seeks to raise us up once more.

God did not desire our lives by mistake, obliging himself and us to experience harsh nights of anguish. He instead created us because he wants us to be happy. He is our Father, and if we here, now, experience a life that is not what he planned for us, Jesus guarantees that God himself is working out his redemption. He is working to redeem us. We believe and we know that death and hate are not the final words pronounced on the parabola of human existence. Being Christians entails a new perspective: a gaze full of hope. Some believe that life retains all its happiness in youth and in the past, and that living is a slow deterioration. Still others hold that our joys are only fleeting episodes, and that the life of mankind is bound in meaninglessness. Those who, in the face of many calamities, say: "Life has no meaning. Our path is meaningless". But we Christians do not think this. Rather, we believe that on mankind's horizon there is a sun that shines forever. We believe that our most beautiful days are yet to come. We are more people of the Spring than of Autumn. I would like to ask, now – each one answer in your heart, in silence, but respond: "Am I a man, a woman,

a boy, a girl of the Springtime or of Autumn? Is my spirit in the Spring or in Autumn? Each one answer silently. Let us view the buds of a new world rather than the yellowed leaves on its branches. Let us not cultivate nostalgia, regret and sorrow: we know that God wants us to be heirs of a promise and tireless growers of dreams. [...].

The Christian knows that the Kingdom of God, its dominion of Love, is growing as a great field of wheat, even if in the middle there are weeds. There are always problems; there is gossip; there are wars; there is illness... there are problems. But the wheat ripens, and in the end evil will be eliminated. The future does not belong to us, but we know that Jesus Christ is life's greatest grace, is the embrace of God who awaits us at the end, but who is already accompanying us now and comforts us on the journey. He leads us to the great "dwelling" of God with mankind (cf. Rev 21:3), with many other brothers and sisters, and we will bring to God the memory of the days lived here on earth. It will be lovely to discover in that instant that nothing has been lost, no smile and no tear. However long our life might be, it will seem to us to have been lived in one breath. And that creation did not stop on the sixth day of Genesis, but continued tirelessly, because God is always looking after us. Until the day in which all shall be fulfilled, in the morning in which tears shall fade away, in the very instant in which God shall pronounce his final word of blessing: "Behold" – says the Lord – "I make all things new" (v. 5). Yes, our Father is the God of newness and of surprise. And that day we will be truly happy, and we will weep, yes, but we will weep tears of joy.

Region



Pre-Regional Council

From August 24 to 26 ► A Pre-Regional Council held in Albiate (Italy) was summoned by the Regional Superior, Fr. Jean-Luc Morin SCJ and saw the presence of Fr Laurent Bacho SCJ (Regional Vicar for France and Spain), Fr Piero Trameri SCJ (Regional Vicar for Italy), Fr Théophile Dégni N'Guessan SCJ (Regional Vicar for the Ivory Coast). In mid-October, a plenary meeting will take place in Betharram.



France-Spain

Feast of Our Lady of Betharram ► On July 28, in the ancient shrine there was a festive atmosphere on the occasion of the solemnity of Our Lady of Betharram. The religious and the lay people were gathered at the «same source» around the new Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín SCJ, his council, and the religious celebrating the anniversaries of profession and priestly ordination.

The agenda of the day was quite full: at 8.30 am morning prayer with the religious of the «Maison Neuve» community, followed by a meeting of the Superior General with all the religious who had come to Betharram for this occasion. At 10.30 am Fr. Gustavo presided over the solemn concelebration at the Betharram Sanctuary.

A fraternal lunch concluded this first part of



the day.

In the afternoon, Fr Gustavo and the members of the Council had a meeting with the lay associates. The vespers celebration crowned this eventful and joyful day.

Fraternity Me Voici ► On August 5 and 6, the Fraternity «Me Voici» lived their annual meeting and their 2 days of reflection in Betharram. This year the Fraternity welcomed Mgr Vincent Landel scj, Archbishop of Rabat, who bore witness to the encounter with the other in Morocco. He made a connection with the theme of the General Chapter "Running to embrace life's call". At the end of the Way of the Cross, every lay person expressed their «Here I am» that engages them in the new academical year, with a new theme: «Dare to go out to meet the Other and Others».

France-Spain/Italy/Ivory Coast

Working to build fraternity... ► From August 8th to 13th, in the Betharramite community of Mendelu (Spain), a camp was attended by young people from France, Italy and Ivory Coast. In a climate of true fraternity, young people were involved in the preparation of next year's camp in Katiola, Ivory Coast. Eight young people were accompanied by Br. Emile Garat SCJ, Fr. Marius Angui SCJ, Fr. Davi Lara

In the meeting of the General Council held on September 6 & 8, the Superior General and his Council...

- appointed

Fr. Sergio Gouarnalusse as First Regional Vicar for the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar
Fr. Javier Irala as Regional Bursar of the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar
Fr. Osmar Cáceres Spaini as Master of novices for the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar

- decided to present to the order of diaconate **Brother Iran Lima da Silva** and to present to the order of presbyterate **Dn. Jeferson Silverio Gonzaga**, both from the Vicariate of Brazil (Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar)



On the agenda of the Superior General and his Council

At the beginning of his mandate, **the Superior General planned to meet the Regional Superiors with their respective councils.**

- The first meeting was held in Lambaré (Paraguay) with the Regional Council of the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar (from August 15 to 17) ;
- He is currently in Bangalore for the meeting of the Regional Council of the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified (from September 11 to 16). Then it is planned that he will pay a visit to the members of the formation community in Mangalore.
- He will then go to Betharram from October 12 to 26 for the Regional Council of the Region Saint Michael Garicoits.

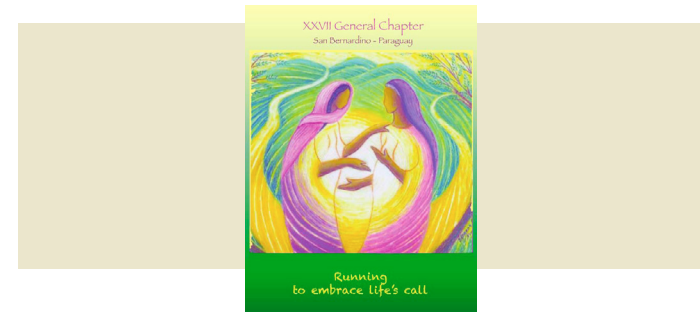
Meetings of the General Council:

6-7 November in Rome
18-20 December in Rome
2-3 February in Rome (plenary session)

Message to the Betharramite lay associates

AT THE END OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER HELD IN ST. BERNARDINO, THE CHAPTER DELEGATES SENT A MESSAGE TO THE BETHARRAMITE LAITY. WE PUBLISH THE UNABRIDGED TEXT IN THE HOPE THAT, THROUGH THE OFFICIAL CHANNEL OF THE CONGREGATION, IT WILL REACH EVERY ASSOCIATE LAY PERSON.

IT WAS QUITE NATURAL TO CONFIRM THE DYNAMICS — LAUNCHED A FEW DECADES AGO — AIMED AT WIDENING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE BETHARRAMITE FAMILY. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REAFFIRM THE BENEFICIAL BONDS THAT KEEP US UNITED. NOW, IT IS NECESSARY TO FOSTER THESE BONDS TO MAKE OUR BETHARRAMITE FAMILY GROW AND TO HELP US BETTER ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION.



BETHARRAMITE LAY & RELIGIOUS TOGETHER: EAGER TO EMBRACE LIFE

In these years of walking together and sharing the charism of our holy founder, we are discovering and feeling the call of God, to build His Kingdom in an increasingly complex world.

Being faithful to our charism of the «Here I am», we make ourselves available to respond to the call of Pope Francis, who asks for a Church that goes out to the encounter. The XXVII General Chapter has adopted a motto that echoes this call of the Holy Father. « Running to embrace life's call.» In this itinerary we have travelled since the last General Chapter, we have deepened the Charism, renounced to individualistic styles of work, assumed more community and cooperative styles to give integral answers to emerging new problems; this dynamic will not become possible if we continue to believe that we are the owners of the charism & not its bearers.

On May 14, the Feast of our Founder, the religious of the Chapter and laity of Latin America met in Asuncion to «share the same happiness.»

We rediscovered together the things that unite us.

We feel a thirst for a Betharramite spirituality in the laity, in the various countries with their richness and peculiarities, this thirst and diversity is an opportunity to live the charism that our founder bequeathed to us, so that we may be Good Samaritans in our time and our culture.

We belong to diverse cultural realities, and are convinced that the charism of the Incarnation is not exclusive to a group or a culture, it is not exhausted by one spiritual life, or one type of pastoral activity or commitment. On the contrary, it illuminates all dimensions of life. We value communion in diversity, and understand that here we still need to overcome certain resistances and rivalries in some religious communities and lay groups.

We value the work and capable service the laity offer to the Church, to mission and to families. A shared mission between lay and religious of Betharram will make our 'going out' more fruitful in the encounter of life.

We are aware that outside our communities there is much life in the different margins. We cannot be indifferent to these cries, we are also aware that without laypeople our responses would be limited and insufficient. Closeness to suffering will not be possible without a deep conversion and spiritual formation, respecting the vocations of each one.

The General Chapter recognises that the task of evangelisation, mission, education of children, young people and a fruitful family pastoral is the task of laypeople and religious; we believe that this joint task will foster a vocation ministry for the Church, the Congregation and for all families. At the same time, we value the closeness of the laity as they walk with us in the mission. From the General Chapter we reiterate our love and respect. We entrust ourselves to your prayers and assure you that you may always count on ours.

The SCJ Capitulants

In the meeting of the General Council held in Betharram from July 24 to 27, the Superior General, with the consent of his council, appointed the following religious:

Region Saint Michael Garicoits

| | |
|---|---|
| Fr. Jean-Luc Morin scj (for a second mandate) | Regional Superior |
| Fr. Laurent Bacho scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of France-Spain |
| Fr. Piero Trameri scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Italy |
| Fr. Pietro Felet scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Holy Land |
| Fr. Théophile Degni N'Guessan scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of the Ivory Coast |
| Fr. Tiziano Pozzi scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Central Africa |

Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Fr. Daniel González scj | Regional Superior |
| Fr. Sergio Gouarnalusse scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay |
| Fr. Paulo Cesar Pinto scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Brazil |
| Fr. Alberto Zaracho Barrios scj | Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Paraguay |

Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Regional Superior: | The mandate of Fr. Austin Hughes scj is extended to March 31st 2018 (cf. RoFL 198) Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj is appointed as Regional Superior from April 1st 2018 |
|--------------------|---|

Vicariate of England: the mandate of Fr. Wilfred Pereppadan scj is extended to March 31st 2018

Fr. Arul Gnana Prakash Maria Joseph scj Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of India

Fr. Chan John Kunu scj Regional Vicar for the Vicariate of Thailand

We place in the hands of Mary the work and availability of our brothers. Let us pray that this will renew in them the Spirit of service which animated the humble heart of our Founder.

Basque Pilgrimage on the footsteps of Saint Michael Garicoits

« Obra handiek ez dituzte hastapenak handiak. »
that is... : Nothing big has necessarily great beginnings

Pilgrimage in the footsteps of Saint Michael Garicoits
On August 30th, as well as every last Wednesday of August, pilgrims wanted to honor Saint Michael Garicoits from 7 am, with the first Eucharistic celebration of the day concelebrated by fathers Jean-Dominique Delgue scj (Vicar General) and Laurent Bacho scj (Regional Vicar of the Vicariate of France-Spain).

The urn of relics, brought from Betharram, allowed pilgrims to show their attachment to our Founder. Then the Eucharist, celebrated by Fr Jean Eliçagaray, collected about 600 people; the religious of Betharram were a lot and happy to see Fr Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj (former Superior General), who came to Ibarre with the religious of the Mendelu community. In the afternoon, they said the Rosary, Vespers and they walked

the Via Crucis towards Garacotchea (home of Saint Michael Garicoits).

A pilgrimage was performed in Basque both in singing and praying in a friendly way. The association «The Friends of Michael Garicoits» also helped to organize this beautiful day. We are pleased to see how the Congregation opened its wings, even starting from such a narrow place!



Garacotchea, birthplace of Michael Garicoits, and the little church of Ibarre belong now again to the Congregation



Amendments to the Rule of Life

SIX YEARS AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW RULE OF LIFE, IN THE 26TH GENERAL CHAPTER (BETHLEHEM), SOME PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS WERE SUBMITTED TO THE CHAPTER DELEGATES GATHERED AT ST. BERNARDINO (SEE ARTICLE 193 OF THE RULE OF LIFE). THE EXPERIENCE SOMETIMES DICTATES ITS LAW. SIX YEARS WERE NOT TOO MANY TO EMPHASIZE THE NEED TO REVISE A FEW ARTICLES.

ACCORDING TO THE CANON LAW, THE VOTED AMENDMENTS WERE IMMEDIATELY SUBMITTED TO THE CONCERNED VATICAN CONGREGATION (CIVCSVA) FOR THE APPROVAL. THE LATTER APPROVED THE AMENDMENTS WITH AN OFFICIAL LETTER ARRIVED AT THE GENERALATE ON SEPTEMBER 1, 2017.

THE SUPERIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL ARE DEVISING THE BEST WAY TO INCLUDE THESE AMENDMENTS INTO THE TEXT OF THE RULE OF LIFE ALREADY PUBLISHED.

All that which gives value to our Congregation are the people who have decided in full freedom to live in a community the charism and the mission that the Holy Spirit inspired our Father Saint Michael Garicoits. This life needs to be channelled and the human relationships must be protected so that people could be faithful to the purpose that unites them to form a community. The Rule of Life is there for that.

Not only does it express the charism of our Founder, but it also contains the proper law that governs us. This regulation is not rigid, definitive or unmovable. This is why the Rule of Life foresees that the General Chapter could modify it and indicate the way how to proceed. "If a modification is to be made to the Rule of Life (articles and statutes), the decision must be taken by two-thirds of the votes by the General Chapter. Moreover for the articles, it is necessary to obtain approval of the Holy See, on whom falls their authentic interpretation" (Article 193).

The new Rule of Life was approved at the 26th General Chapter. During the last Chapter, in Paraguay, proposals were made to make corrections. Most of these corrections have been approved by two thirds of the votes of the Chapter and have just been authorized by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life of the Holy See. The changes are indicated in italics and underlined below.

STATUTE 8

"... The Regional Chapter... elects one delegate for every 12 religious (or fraction of 12) in perpetual vows..."

➤ According to the Rule of Life, one delegate was elected for 15 religious. The Chapter Fathers observed that certain important realities of the Congregation had only one delegate to the Chapter. The criteria is being that of the proportionality of the religious. We are moving towards a more and more reduced presence

of religious born of traditional realities and a growing presence of new realities where the number of vocations is higher.

Article 248

"Chosen from among religious priests with perpetual vows, the regional vicars are appointed by the Superior General with the consent of the General Council, after consultation with the Regional Superior, for three years, renewable".

► This article did not indicate the duration of mandate of the regional vicars, it was assumed that it lasted six years like that of the Superior General, the members of his Council and the Regional Superiors. The experience of the last six years has taught us that it would have been good to be able to change after three years. On the other hand, the Chapter did not vote for the change of the duration of the mandate of the Regional Superiors to reduce it into four years because it was judged important that all the members of the Council of Congregation have the same duration of mandate, so that the governing team can count on a certain continuity and not be modified during the mandate.

Article 252

"After consultation with the Regional Superior, the Superior General with the consent of his council appoints a Regional Bursar for six years, renewable."

► The Rule of Life neither fixes

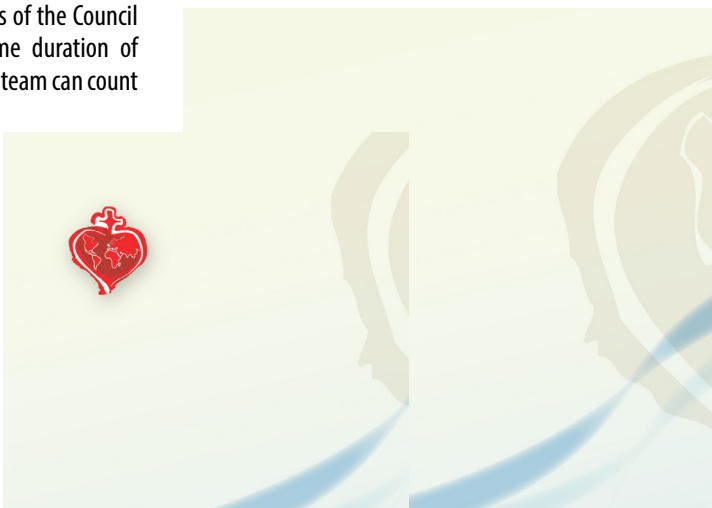
the duration of the Regional Bursar. The Chapter has approved that the mandate lasts six years and that the appointment can be renewed, following the same criteria of ensuring stability to the General Governing team.

Article 140

"The postulancy..."

This is realised in a community of the Congregation under the direction of a qualified formator, appointed by the Regional Vicar, with the consent of his Council and the approval of the Regional Superior and his Council."

► The Rule of Life did not indicate who has the responsibility for appointing the formator of the postulants in the Vicariate. Since it is the regional vicar with the council of vicariate who admits the candidate for the postulancy, it is logical for the Chapter that it be the regional vicar with his council who appoints



- Throughout the following years, *La Pyrénéenne* managed the property, bought, sold, rented etc. It also happened that certain members brought property – just as the Simonet House, close to the Sanctuaries, was given by Dr Flavien Lacq in 1911.
- After the 1914-1918 war, due perhaps to the patriotism shown by many religious, the French State was less rigorous in its application of these laws. Little by little, the religious came back.
- Even if *La Pyrénéenne* was able to legally manage the property belonging to it, the Congregation had to face another trial. The Diocese of Bayonne was said to divest itself of its property to Betharram ; the matter was taken to an ecclesiastical tribunal. Although recognised as being within its rights, the Congregation was made to pay a good sum to the Diocese for the buildings already bought back from the State... (Due to the law of separation of Church and State, the Sanctuary of Our Lady belonged to the municipality of Lestelle.)
- In 1953, *La Pyrénéenne* was at the origin of a new association : The Friends of Michael Garicoits. What was situated at Ibarre was returned to this association – notably the birthplace and church.
- In 1992, the efforts of Father Firmin Bourguinat, provincial Superior, led to a decree by the Prime Minister, recognising « the Province of France of the Congregation of Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram » as a



Congregation.

- From 2000, the Province of France, then the Vicariate of France-Spain, wished to be a lawful member of the associations of owners. Finally, with the support of Father Gaspar Fernández Pérez, Superior General, it was envisaged that all the property would return to the Congregation.
- Following the change in the Rules of Life, the statutes of the Province – known as the Vicariate – were updated, and the modification was approved by the Prime Minister on 14th January 2016.
- 25th July 2017: with the authorisation of the Commissioner of the Pyrenees-Atlantique region, *La Pyrénéenne* and the association "*The Friends of Michael Garicoits*" handed over to the Congregation all of their possessions and property rights, constructed and not constructed (see picture above). That way, a long work, which mobilised energy and forged amicable connections, came to a successful conclusion.

In a way, after a break of more than 100 years, the situation is getting back to normal !

Beñat Oyhénart scj

unhappy feast day as he would soon have to take the train for Irún ...

- On 10th August 1903, the General Chapter opened in Irún. An urgent question had to be answered : how could the estate be saved ? Firstly, that situated at Betharram (municipality of Lestelle and Montaut). It was decided to establish a Civil Society with shareholders – to protect individuals – « with the support of, and with the influential aid of, the Congregation. » And of course with the economic help of all the communities, in particular those in America. If they were for sale, all the property would be acquired ; it was difficult to separate what came from the diocese and what had been purchased by Fathers Garicoits and Etchécopar ...
- On 9th November 1906, the tribunal authorised Mr Château, a solicitor in Pau, to have all the possessions sold which had belonged to the dissolved congregation. Fifty-four lots were offered to bidders.
- In 1907, the sale of possessions took place :
 - * Since 16th February, all the lots had found takers.

- * The bidders registered and the tribunal set the 9th and 16th March as the sale by auction.
- * The 15th March, « *La Pyrénéenne* Anonymous Real Estate and Property Society » was established. It was made up of doctors, nobles, lawyers, priests – all very attached to Betharram – who gave themselves the aim of « friendly acquisition or bidding of all our land and buildings » and « the creation of all philanthropic works and bursarships ».
- * On 16th March, at the auctions, *La Pyrénéenne* acquired twenty-two of the largest lots.
- * Between 16th April and 14th May 1907, *La Pyrénéenne* bought at « cost price » the lots awarded to seven people; without a doubt, these were the nominees eager to protect the property of Betharram.
- * On 13th July 1907, the Board of Directors, « after a lot of research and negotiation » rented to Mr Croharé, Diocesan Priest, the old school and all the furniture. Teaching continued.



the formator of the postulants, and that such appointment be subject to the approval of the Regional Superior.

Article 205

*“The General Council (outside cases foreseen by common law) must give its consent on the following questions: a. b ...
n. the grant of the indult of exclaustation to a religious in perpetual vows;
o. the transmission to the Holy See of the request for an exit from the Congregation on the part of a religious in perpetual vows for a grave reason;
p. the dismissal of a religious in perpetual vows, with the four members of the general council who act collegially;
q...; r...; s...”*



- The General Chapter wished to include in this article No. 205 certain powers of the General Council which were dispersed in other places in the Rule of Life, especially since these were competences that had to be exercised several times during of the last mandate

Article 206

*“The General Council (outside cases foreseen by common law) must give its advice on the following questions:
a...*

*b. the approval of the opening of a house with the written consent of the diocesan bishop and the acceptance of a parish before signing the contract referred to Statute 2; ...
c.; d...”*

- The General Chapter voted this modification on the proposal of the General Council. In fact, when the Superior General was to confirm the acceptance of a new parish by the Regional Superior, there was a lack of clear references in the norm.

Article 236

*“The Regional Superior ...
He oversees the application of the regional project for putting into effect decisions of the Chapters and General Councils. He may, having consulted his council, extend, for a short period, the term of office of a Community superior, a vicariate bursar or a community bursar , or appoint an interim administrator.”*

- In conformity with the instructions of the Holy See, in the new Rule of Life, the Council of

the Congregation has no power to take any decision. It was therefore necessary to make the corresponding correction [*This point concerns only the edition of the Rule of Life in French, which is the reference version by the Holy See and had to be corrected*]. In Article 195 of the 1983 Rule of Life, which preceded that of 2012, the Superior General and the Provincial Superior were both entitled to extend the duration of the mandate of a religious for a short period of time. "The Superior General and his Council may extend for a short period the duration of the mandate of a Provincial or appoint an Interim Administrator. The Provincial Superior and his council may act likewise towards a local Superior".

► The commission which worked on the revision of the Rule of Life maintained this faculty of the Superior General in article 198 (f), but omitted to include this important competence in certain situations in article 236, which determines the functions of the regional superior.

Article 244

"The Regional Council gives its consent on following questions (which must still be submitted to the Superior General and his Council for approval):

- a. the request addressed to the Superior General for final profession;*
- b. requests for presentation to the diaconate or presbyterate addressed to the Superior General;*
- c. the request addressed to the Superior General for being dispensed from the vows;*
- d. the request addressed to the Superior General for leaving the Congregation;*
- e. the request addressed to the Superior*

General by the Regional Superior for the dismissal of a professed religious;
f. the appointment of the master of novices... etc."

► The Chapter decided to put a little order. Point a. taking its place among the other admissions which fall within the competence of the Superior General. This point a. proceeds from Article 245 d. Points c,d and e have been added, which fall within the competence of the superior general, but which must pass through the regional superior and his council. These decisions were very common also during the last mandate, that it is important to be clearly included in the competences of the regional council.

These corrections detract nothing from the value of the Rule of Life, for, as Saint Michael Garicoits says: *"Outside these rules, is merely individual interpretation, the reign of our own love."* (DS 221-225) The corrections also show that the Rule of Life can be modified to be better suitable in our time and help us more effectively and concretely to settle our relations. The Rule of Life is an instrument for us, persons and communities, to live our vocation and mission in the best possible way.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj

The possessions of Bétharram – A long chapter is closed

WHEN HISTORY COMES IN THE WAY, YOU HAVE TO ARM YOURSELF WITH PATIENCE. ON JULY 25, 2017, THE WORD "END" WAS WRITTEN UNDER A LONG CHAPTER THAT HAD STARTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY AND HAD DEPRIVED THE CONGREGATION OF THE PROPERTY OF ITS REAL ESTATE.

THE HAPPY CONCLUSION OF THIS STORY, RECOUNTED BY FR BEÑAT OYHÉNART SCJ, LEADS US TO PAY A TRIBUTE TO ALL THOSE LAY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SHOWN, ON THIS OCCASION AND THROUGHOUT ALL THESE YEARS, THEIR FOND ATTACHMENT TO OUR CONGREGATION. THIS ALSO REMINDS US OF THE NEED TO REFLECT ON THE METHODS TO BE USED TO PROTECT THE ASSETS OF OUR RELIGIOUS FAMILY HERE AND ELSEWHERE.

The history of France is very complicated. And so too is the French separation of Church and State.

At the end of the 19th Century in France, the governments showed themselves to be anticlerical. A number of Catholics, many Bishops, stuck to the archaic motto « *God and King !* » However, Léo XIII wished for all decent and reasonable French people, not just the Catholics, to recognise the legitimacy of the Republic ; that is the meaning of the encyclical «*Inter innumeras sollicitudines*», published on 16th February 1892.

In a context of increased conflict, even if more than 90% of French people were practising Catholics, anticlerical laws succeeded one another. In 1903, several congregations were expelled, following the Act of 1st July 1901 on associations. Article 13 of this law states : « No religious congregation can be formed without authorisation given by a law which determines the conditions of its function. It can only found a new establishment by virtue of a decree made in the Council of State. The dissolution of the congregation or the closure of any establishment could be pronounced by decree by the Cabinet. » Well, in 1901, more than 900 feminine congregations were authorised ; for

the men, only five ! Article 18 granted a period of three months to settle the situation. But almost all were refused and congregations dissolved, their possessions confiscated !

- From 30th October 1902, Father Victor Bourdenne, Superior General, prepared the religious brothers and fathers – almost all French – for expulsion. There were communities in the Holy Land and in America ; a base in Paraguay was prepared. But could all the religious brothers and fathers go abroad ?
- At the beginning of 1903, a house was planned in Irún, in Guipuzcoa ; a property was acquired in Belgium.
- On 4th April 1903, the Civil Tribunal of First Instance in Pau dissolved the Congregation of Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Betharram. Their possessions were confiscated. The fathers and brothers had to leave. Before the 1st August !
- 28th July 1903 : At Betharram, it was not at that time the feast of Our Lady - that resulted from the coronation of 28th July 1912 - but, rather, that of the Superior General, Father Victor Bourdenne: the feast of St Victor I, pope from 189 to 199, was celebrated on the 28th July. An