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## A word from the superior general

### The ability to react: a forgotten notion

*Going out to drink from the same source*

Dear Betharramites,

A long time ago, in Buenos Aires, when I was a child, I saw for the first time the movie "The athlete with bare hands" a biopic of St. Michael. Father Ceferino Arce scj used to show this French film to the students at the College of Barracas. He himself had dubbed it in Spanish taking the voice of all the characters! In one scene, Father Michael Garicoits climbed onto the roof of the Betharram Chapel to put out a fire that had suddenly taken hold and seemed unstoppable. The scene was dramatic: it showed a devastating fire, intensified by the powerful soundtrack. Without hesitation, the "Saint of Ecce Venio" took action and took control of the fire. He single-handedly extinguished the flames, while below, someone watching from the other side of the river, exclaimed: "What a man! What a man! ... "

As young movie-goers we were aware of the epic tone

of the film that tried to emphasise the virtues of the saint. But we did recognise in these images a kind of Betharramite courage that evoked the lifestyle of the fathers we knew: voluntary, austere, self-sacrificing, reckless, helping others without looking back. This exemplary manner of announcing Christ by risking one's own life, if need be, seemed to us contagious and worthy of imitation.

Courageous before the challenges of his time, St. Michael Garicoits acted unhampered by doubt, having discerned the path to take. He behaved in a very different way from many of us today, because the meagre human and material resources he had at his disposal had taught him two things: (i) to always have trust in Providence, (ii) never ceasing to engage his whole person. An indefatigable apostle, sleeping only a few hours a day, he was quick to react when necessary. He was a courageous, determined, quick man who combined vital energy with a great deal of prudence and gentleness. *Suaviter in modo et fortiter in re* (Gentle in manner and resolute in action).

Certainly times and people have changed. The age we live in today is complicated from a pastoral point of view. The temptation to stay at home is great ... It is easier and faster to solve everything without moving, via the Internet! While outside, in the street, religious indifference increases, secularism gains ground, the lack of basic Christian formation dominates, and the justice of the

Kingdom struggles to be heard. The message of Jesus Christ is no longer astonishing. He is often ignored, unfortunately. Thus, the waters of our baptism may evaporate in the face of this "fire" of postmodern society. As for us, insidiously "worldly", we struggle more to keep our place in a comfortable couch (as Pope Francis would say) than to go out on the world stage and announce the Risen One.

On the other hand, we know that being prudent does not mean being mistrustful or calculating. We must learn to act at the right time, like St. Michael. There is a virtue that could be defined as "the ability to discern what is best to do in the face of crisis" (in Latin, we traditionally speak of "solertia"). A Betharramite, ready to go out at the "first signal" of his superiors, should be able to count on this virtue. To show solidarity.

St. Michael Garicoits told us: *"Who are those who do good in a community? Generous souls, disposed to pursue the divine work despite a thousand obstacles; who expect to find there, not angels, but men appearing as men and acting like men, and who, in the face of these difficulties, know how to be humble, to live and to die."* (DS § 302)

When we undertake a pastoral ministry with the means at our disposal, it always seems easier to "copy, cut and paste" rather than reflect, discern, and be creative to witness.

Are we not able to present the message of salvation, the liberating Jesus, with new expressions, new

methods, and especially with fervour? And then, where is this constancy that expresses our commitment and our fidelity to his sending us on mission: "Go to the whole world. Proclaim the Gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15)? Things get worse when we have difficulties in reaching out to the poor, the left out and those who ignore Jesus, Lord and Saviour of our lives ..., and we choose instead to be at ease only with the noble and important people ... If we love those who love us: where is our merit ...?

How can we say that we live this availability if we rapidly look tired, and rarely show joy in our work, if we do not welcome those who collaborate with us, or if we pull rank where we have been placed to serve the Church?

We religious, when we say "yes" to a destination or a new mission, we agree to work with so and so... we agree to be part of a team - which is never perfect... - we accept to depend on each other - and not to be defensive with each other, (the opposite attitude). In short, we recognise that this mission is healthy and beautiful, simply because it is "ours", "entrusted to us", and this should be enough for us. We associate this understanding of mission and vocation with the term "position": a place where God reveals Himself, a place where, sooner or later, the Will of God will speak.

I have always been impressed by those religious able to work in adverse conditions, who do not have at their disposal all the personal or material resources, but their imagination

makes them sparkle. These are the religious who put their hand to the plough without pretension, without reserve or limit. Their focus is to serve the kingdom of God by integrating or even going beyond their own pet projects, guidelines or methods. They are not interested in "power". They have learned to look with the eyes of faith, are no longer afraid of making mistakes. Their generosity is limitless. These religious live many years of happiness and make other members of the community happy. They never give up.

In accepting the Cross, Jesus accepted a possible failure of the preaching of the Kingdom, the message of the Beatitudes, the friendship of his chosen, oblivion, etc. While hanging on the Cross, he could only contemplate the painful love of his Mother, the fidelity of the beloved disciple and the pity of some holy women who had courageously followed him to Calvary, chosen witnesses of the empty tomb.

At this Passover time, let us answer without reserve, without delay, without looking back, and out of love for the call of Jesus, the Risen Good Shepherd. With the Pope let us "Rejoice, be glad" (Mt 5,12), even when we are rejected, ignored or persecuted for Jesus' sake. Perhaps this is the most favourable time to renew our "Yes".

*Fr. Gustavo SCJ*  
*SUPERIOR GENERAL*

## Extracts from the Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis, Holy Chrism Mass, Vatican Basilica, Holy Thursday, 29 March 2018

At the heart of today's Gospel, we see the Lord through the eyes of his own people, which were "fixed on him" (Lk 4:20). Jesus stood up to read [... the passage of the prophet Isaiah].

He read it aloud: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..., because he has anointed and sent me..." (Is 61:1). And he concluded by challenging his hearers to recognize the closeness contained in those words: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4:21). Jesus finds the passage and reads it with the proficiency of a scribe. He could have been a scribe or a doctor of the law, but he wanted to be an "evangelizer", a street preacher, the "bearer of joyful news" for his people, the preacher whose feet are beautiful, as Isaiah says. The Preacher is always close.

This is God's great choice: the Lord chose to be close to his people. Thirty years of hidden life! Only then did he begin his preaching. Here we see the pedagogy of the Incarnation, a pedagogy of inculturation, not only in foreign cultures but also in our own parishes, in the new culture of young people...

Closeness is more than the name of a specific virtue; it is an attitude that engages the whole person, our way of relating, our way of being attentive both to ourselves and to others... [...]

Closeness, dear brothers, is crucial for an evangelizer because it is a key attitude in the Gospel [...]. We can be



certain that closeness is the key to mercy [...]. But I also think we need to realize even more that closeness is also the key to truth; not just the key to mercy, but the key to truth. [...]. Because truth is not only

the definition of situations and things from a certain distance, by abstract and logical reasoning. [...] Truth is also fidelity (émeth). It makes you name people with their real name, as the Lord names them, before categorizing them or defining "their situation". [...]

Here, let us turn to Mary, Mother of priests. We can call upon her as "Our Lady of Closeness". "As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God's love", in such a way that no one feels left out (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 286). Our Mother is not only close when she sets out "with haste" to serve, which is one means of closeness, but also by her way of expressing herself (*ibid.*, 288). At the right moment in Cana, the tone with which she says to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you", will make those words the maternal model of all ecclesial language. But to say those words as she does, we must not only ask her for the grace to do so, but also to be present wherever the important things are "concocted"[...]. Only through this kind of closeness can we discern which wine is missing, and what is the best wine that the Lord wants to provide. •

## A vocational pathway

*On the eve of his perpetual profession, which took place on April 8, Bro. Cristian Romero describes the path that led him to a definitive gift of self in the footsteps of St. Michael Garicoits. ●●●*



*“Like clay in the hand of the potter, so you are in my hand”, Jr 18:6.*

It is with a feeling of gratitude that I relate here my experience of faith and my vocation, which constitute for me a path of dedication and commitment.

My journey began when I heard the call of God in my village of Carpa Cué (district of San Joaquín), where I met Betharramite religious who, at the time, exercised their pastoral ministry in the parish.

Once in the Congregation, I was sent to the community of La Colmena

for a one-year community experience. Thanks to the contact with the people there, I deepened my life project and decided to take the next step.

My postulate thus took place in the communities of Remanso and Lambaré during three years with my other brothers and companions of this stage of formation. We studied philosophy at the ISEHF centre (*Instituto Superior de Estudios Humanísticos y Filosóficos*) of the Society of Jesus. It was a time of grace, because in addition to the intellectual formation I received, I was also spiritually trained by Father Mauro Henrique Ulrich de Oliveira and Father Angelo Recalcati, who deeply influenced my faith experience.

Later, I was admitted to the novitiate in Buenos Aires, to the community of Adrogué. During this stage, I benefited from the charism of the Congregation and achieved the apostolate which opened me up to love and selfless service. There, thanks to the guidance of Father Daniel González who was my spiritual advisor, I learned the meaning of being available, which today continues to resonate in me: “Here I Am”, knowing how to say yes to the God’s will and to rely on Providence.

At the end of the novitiate stage, I had an apostolic



*Moulded by the hands of God, including encounters with the brothers and the experiences lived together. In the photo: Fr. Alcides, Fr. Jeferson, Deac. Iran, Bro. Cristian, Fr. Juan Pablo, Bro. Leandro.*

experience at the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the community of Ciudad del Este, where I felt more strongly the desire to consecrate myself to God and to ask to continue my journey with the next step.

I thus made the first vows in my home village on 10 December 2011. After that, I was sent to an international mission of the Congregation, to the community of Villa la Punta in Santiago del Estero, Argentina.

For theological studies, I joined the formation community of Belo Horizonte (Brazil) for four years. It was a new time of grace where intellectual effort and apostolic practice shaped me later to be able to assume the "Here I Am" which characterizes the Betharramite, by living daily with people from poor districts and by

participating in pastoral ministry in a prison environment, while being accompanied by my trainers: Father Mauro Henrique Ulrich de Oliveira and Father Glecimar Guilherme Da Silva, to whom I am grateful.

At the end of my theological studies, I was sent to the community of La Colmena, where I am currently having a community and pastoral experience. It was there that I decided to answer, "Yes definitely," to the Father who called and consecrated me. That's why I am saying, "Here I am".

Fiat voluntas dei!

*Hno Cristian Romero scj*



*On April 8, 2018, near San Joaquin, Paraguay, Fr. Daniel Gonzalez scj, received in the name of the Superior General the perpetual vows of Bro. Cristian Romero scj.*

## I am in good company

*A new mission, a new service for the Congregation needing energy and renewed attitudes. For that, it is sometimes necessary to take time for inner renewal of oneself, in order to better serve others. ●●●*

After the election of the new General Council during the General Chapter of San Bernardino (Paraguay), my mandate of Vicar General, which had started in 2005, was coming to an end. For me, it was an important step, as it marked the beginning of a new way for my religious life, in the community and mission that would be indicated by my superiors.

Obedience has not been long to take shape : Fr. Gustavo and his Council asked me to serve the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified as a Regional Superior. Some time before, however, I had asked to be allowed to take a sabbatical year.

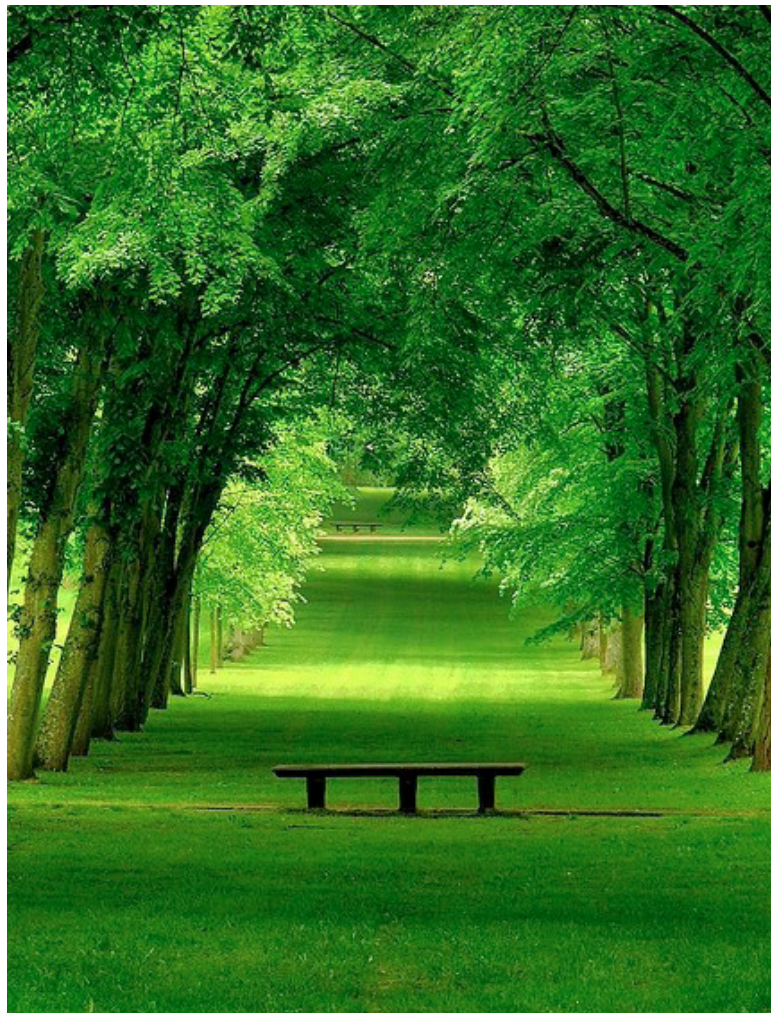
Thanks to Fr. Austin's availability, who agreed to extend his mandate until April 1st 2018 (Easter Day), I have been able to take this sabbatical time until this date. I began by an Ignatian Thirty days' Retreat (in Capiago, near Come in Italy), accompanied by a Jesuit Father. This strong experience allowed me to evaluate the religious life I have lived until today, and to prepare for giving a final answer, not only in words but also in my heart, to what Fr. Gustavo had asked me. Back in

Rome, I prolonged this sabbatical time by attending courses in the Claretianum, an Institute of Theology for Consecrated Life, affiliated to The Latran Pontifical University.

One of these courses was entitled « Evangelical paradox and Consecrated Life ». These lectures have given me a further light to accept the obedience I was asked for, an obedience which, from a purely human point of view, was somewhat paradoxical. Here is a definition of the term paradox : « a proposition the formulation of which sounds to contradict human experience and the elementary principles of logic, but which, after a critical examination, reveals itself to be valid ». If I replace the word « proposition » by that of « obedience », and the expression « critical examination » by the Rule of Life and the Gospel, for me as well what sounded like a « paradox » could prove itself valid. Indeed, if the charge allotted to me was not utterly « outside any logic », it did not belong, however, to « common experience » : Never, up to now, had a Regional been chosen outside his Region. I followed these lectures in the Claretianum with special interest, and particularly the last one focussed on the « paradoxical » words said by Jesus to Paul, when the latter asked to be freed from « a thorn in his flesh » : « My grace is enough for you : for power is at full stretch in weakness » (2 Cor, 12,9).

Here is a paradoxical assertion! How can strength reveal itself in weakness? These are not words found in the Gospel, and yet they were directly told by Jesus to Paul, when Paul was struggling with the difficulties of his mission towards the Corinthian community. These words annihilate logic and human experience, but illuminated by Paul's faith and experience, they reveal their full meaning. In the same letter, Paul had reminded us that « *we hold this treasure in pots of earthenware* » (2 Cor. 4,7). In short, we are poor, frail instruments, called to transmit the treasure of Jesus' Gospel. The strength is not in ourselves, but in the Gospel itself. It is the strength of the Gospel which transmits energy to us as well. This strength which is Jesus, and his Gospel, is revealed in our own weakness.

Saint Michael himself, in a letter to a Religious of Latin America, quotes this sentence : '*God's power is at full strength in our weaknesses*' (Letter 431, of which we only have a few lines) with another paradoxical assertion of the Gospel : "*Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness...Rejoice and be glad*" (Mt 5, 10.12). Saint Michael has made this paradox his own, by expressing it concisely but in the most efficient way : "*with God, the less one sees clearly, the more one walks surely*" (DS § 206),



an assertion irrelevant to human logic, but perfectly in keeping with the words of Jesus to Paul.

In this digression, I have tried to express how I felt unsuited with the task waiting for me. My brothers will know how to see, beyond my weaknesses, the treasure which has changed not only my life but theirs also : this treasure Saint Michael has made us discover : the joy arising from a life offered to the Lord. This treasure, enclosed in such a frail life as ours, which indeed receives its strength from the treasure confided to its care. This treasure, which the General Chapter in Paraguay made us contemplate in Mary when she visits Elizabeth, a treasure we are called to carry to kindle again, with



the lay people, by drinking to the very spring which is our charism ; a treasure which encourages us to a concrete sharing of resources ; a treasure in which the people we are sent to want to have their share, these people towards whom we go to fulfill the mission trusted to us by the Congregation.

It does not mean that, applying all this to the mission awaiting for me, I manage to get a clear view yet... but Saint Michael is here to

comfort me : "With God, the less one sees clearly, the more one walks surely. No greater wisdom, security or advantage than to throw oneself headlong into these apparent contradictions and these divine obscurities" (DS § 206). And I think I can hear him telling me : « you are in good company ! It used to be the same for Paul ; it was the same for me and, moreover, it was the same for Jesus himself! ».

*Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj  
Superior Regional*

## The true Betharramite

*The first orientation of the General Chapter: To go out to drink from the same source, is the point of departure of reflections, in community or personal. Two examples here from Fr. Wilfred (Vicariate of England) and Fr. Aldo Nespoli (Vicariate of Italy). ●●●*

Last month, our togetherness day in Nympsfield had a wonderful time to reflect on a couple of themes from the Acts of the General Chapter 2017. The inspiration to dedicate these days of reflection came from the NEF. It was addressed to us to take one of the themes from the General Chapter to reflect in our respective Regions these coming years. The First theme was taken from our former Superior General, Rev. Gaspar Fernandez report to the General Chapter who was speaking about the weak Betharramite Identity. We

had a *Narratio Fidei* based on the reflection of Rev. Joseph Mirande (Sr) about 'the Authentic Betharramite'. The fruitful sharing brought the affirmation of the beauty of being called ourselves as a Betharramite. It is not the name that refer the place but the core and integral part of being called as Betharramite by its joys, sorrows, challenges and its future. We all shared that the simplicity of the lifestyle of a Betharramite is the great strength of our spirituality. This helped our brethren to continue to discern their vocation and be faithful to the call they have received from the Lord. Many of us shared personally of their first meeting of a Betharramite. This sharing about our vocation story enriched our togetherness.

The second part was the theme of 2018 "To go out to drink from the

same source". This session helped us to see what we have already done and to draw from the same source of our spirituality and share it in our ministry to go out to meet others. Many of us accepted that our common heritage such as the Rule of Life, St. Michael's correspondence, Nef, will connect us to deepen our sense of belonging to our Betharram traditions.

As we are directly involved in the parishes and schools there is a great potential to share our charism and our life to the young and the old. The proposal of having personal and community projects will enable us to deliver an authentic Betharramite life style to share with our brothers and sisters.

*Wilfred Pereppadan scj*

We Betharramites following St. Michael Garicoits, believe that it is important to go on, today as in his time, to meet the demands and needs of the Church. In his day the immediate response of the founder was to send missionaries to Latin America; he also wanted his religious to form a «mobile camp», entirely available to the will of God.



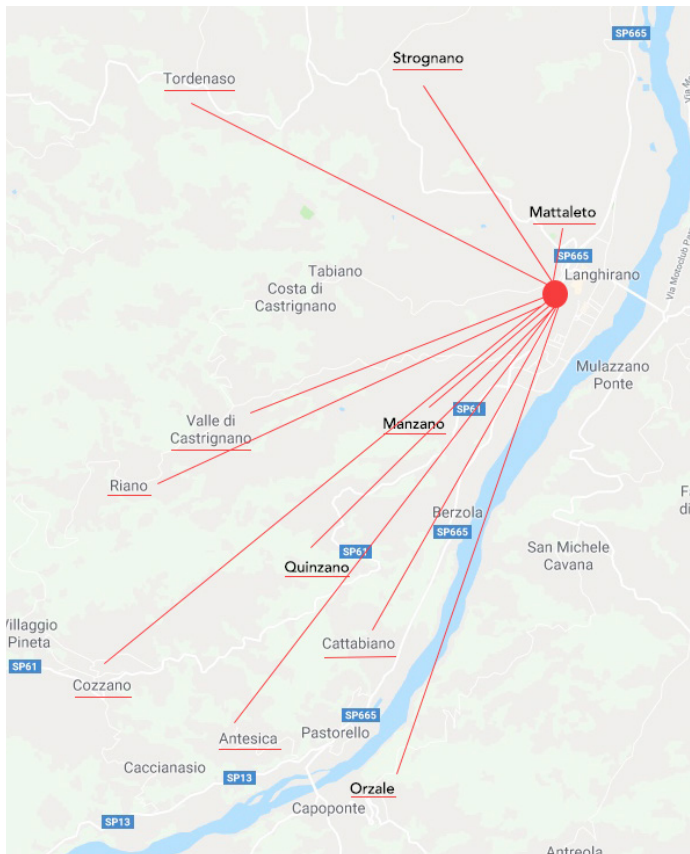
March 12 and 13 2018: two days of retreat for our family (Vicariate of England).

That shows how important for us is the task of evangelisation. Jesus exhorts his disciples: "Go and be my witnesses...".

In the light of this invitation from Jesus, our Congregation has acquired a universal look and dimension; we have enriched ourselves with new foundations, ever carrying our charism to new openings. As St. Michael says: "we want to give others the same happiness"; especially with those who seek meaning in their lives.

The Vicariate of Italy has striven to seek a path of renewal, to open up and meet the needs of the Church of our time, while taking into account the feelings of the Chapters and their calls.

Hence our presence in Pistoia, for pastoral work in a suburban district, with a focus on youth ministry, and a community open to encouraging vocational awareness.



*The twelve "chapels" of the parish of Langhirano (close to Parma), Vicariate of Italy.*

With 12 parishes scattered in the Apennines, Langhirano community (20 km south of Parma) is also trying to give an effective response to the needs of the Church of Parma which has an ageing clergy profile and needs a renewed priestly presence. The community is tasked with forming a fraternal and pastoral presence, in a missionary (mobile camp) style rather reminiscent of the animation of the «chapels» in Latin America, with celebration of the Sunday Eucharist as a privileged and familial moment of the community, or with a liturgy of the word where it is not possible to celebrate the Eucharist.

The animation of the parishes is supported by a valuable collabora-

tion with the laity. Catechesis: the Christian initiation of young people; the journey after confirmation; meetings for adolescents and young people; so many activities shared by everybody in the central parish.

The religious community, in addition to the ordinary parish pastoral work, deals with the formation of catechists, pastoral councils, the preparation of couples for marriage and preparation of parents for the baptism of their children.

Many non-European foreigners from several countries are present in the area in search of work. Among them are Christians who attend the parish, with whom we have tried to build friendships, but language is sometimes an obstacle.

The Church today is spurring us on, and to use the strong expression chosen by the Chapter itself, *"we need to get out of our comfort zone lest we become accustomed to mediocrity."*

*Aldo Nespoli scj*



## REGION SAINT MICHAEL GARICOTTS

FRANCE <sup>SPAIN</sup>  
 ITALY <sup>IVORY COAST</sup>  
 CENTRAL AFRICA  
 HOLY LAND

### France-Spain

On Holy Thursday, the community of the Maison Neuve at Betharram organised the celebration of anointing of the sick for all the residents, religious and laity. This sacrament is celebrated for all those who feel weakened by age or illness. Thirteen religious wished to entrust their weakness to the Lord so that they may be helped to live in trust with their weaknesses. Fr. Laurent Bacho presided over the celebration of this Sacrament of the sick with the oil blessed two days before at the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of Bayonne. Thus they expressed their desire *"with Our Lady at the foot of the Cross, to participate very closely in the redemption of humanity"* R of L 20).

### Italy

The religious of the Vicariate gathered in assembly at Albiate on April 5th, with the Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, for the conclusion of his first canonical visit.

Fr. Gustavo's report was first the subject of a personal reflection before a debate in the assembly. The religious welcomed in particular the invitation not to give in to pessimism in the face of an ageing profile and lack of vocations. It was emphasised how important it is to watch over our spiritual life and fraternal life in community, with particular care for the elderly or infirm brothers. In this regard, a schema has

been presented to facilitate the drafting of the community project. Much attention has also been devoted to the theme of communication so that all are better informed and more involved in the initiatives of the Vicariate and the various communities.

Most of all, the focus and care of the Church in this year of celebrating the synod for "youth, faith and vocational discernment" has been brought to people's attention; the theme should occupy pride of place in the reflection and initiatives of the Vicariate and of each community.

### Central African Republic

The canonical visit of the Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, to the communities of the Vicariate is under way. He is accompanied by Fr. Jean-Luc Morin scj, Regional Superior. These days Fr. Gustavo scj has already had the opportunity to meet with the new bishop of Bouar, Mgr. Mirosław Gucwa (consecrated bishop on February 11th). The canonical visit will conclude on April 24th.

### Ivory Coast

Some news from Ivory Coast vicariate: "We have just celebrated the Passover of our Lord in joy; Christ is risen, he is alive forever! Each community of our vicariate (Adiapodoumé, Yamoussoukro and Dabakala) expressed their joy at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A testimony to share. Without delay, the vicariate met together in Dabakala from April 4 to 6 for its second General Assembly. A fruitful and enriching meeting that

allowed us to make a brief assessment of the project of each community and the vicariate. All the religious were at the gathering.

A round up of community news in the vicariate. We took as our theme for this year: "going out to drink from the same source", one of the orientations of the acts of the 27th General Chapter. We focused on ongoing conversion, flowing from commitment to personal and community prayer, the sacrament of forgiveness and spiritual accompaniment. We are committed to sharing our spirituality with lay people and young people, to help them discover our reasons to be joyful.

Then we went to a mini report of each group or service or activities related to their relevant mission. Among others: the communication service, the group of the vocation animation, the office (place) of reflection and proposals for the autonomy of the vicariate, the group in charge of reflection for the retreat for religious, the mission with the Liliane Foundation for the handicapped, the group in charge of the plantations, those in charge of the works (Tshanfeto, the College of St Jean-Marie Vianney), the priests of the parishes entrusted to us, the group in charge of the workers camp of Katiola 2018, the group charged with formation of adults and young people. We also insisted on the need to follow up the question of land registration in order to legally register our property.

The team of formators recommended that everyone become more familiar with our Formation Guide.

It was a meeting where each religious was happy to express himself freely and where fraternity prevailed. On the whole it was a good moment of conviviality where we encouraged each other to go out again to meet life.

### Holy Land

On Sunday 18 March the Betharramite community of Bethlehem welcomed the Apostolic Administrator of the Holy Land, Mgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa ofm. Mons. Pizzaballa, during the pastoral visit to all the parishes and religious communities residing on his diocese, wanted to reserve this date to visit our community.

Mons. Pizzaballa was therefore welcomed into the community by Fr. Pietro Felet scj (Regional Vicar for the Holy Land), Fr. Jean-Paul Kissi scj (Novice Master), Fr. Jose Kumar scj, from the novices Hyacinthe et Jean-Claude and from the Sisters: Sr. Licy and Sr. Fabyana.



The Apostolic Administrator was accompanied by his secretary, Fr. Joseph. After the introductions and the exchange of news, all sat around the table for a fraternal lunch, followed by some prayer in the chapel.

Finally, the distinguished guest took his leave from the community.



**REGION V. FR. AUGUSTE ETCHECOPAR**

ARGENTINA URUGUAY  
PARAGUAY BRAZIL

### Argentina-Uruguay

160th anniversary of the San José College of Buenos Aires. On March 19, 1858, thanks to the Rev. Fr. Diego Barbé scj, the oldest Betharramite college in Latin America opened its doors: the San José College of Buenos Aires.

In a festive atmosphere, the flag-hoisting ceremony took place, then the Eucharist was celebrated in honor of Saint Joseph. Besides a large number of students, the parents, the teachers and the governing council of the college were also present.

“BETHARRAMITAS”: there is an editorial novelty in our religious family! The new issue of the bulletin of the VIARUR (Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay) entitled “BETHARRAMITAS” has been published.

We rejoice with the VIARUR for this initiative that we make available for all those

who are willing to discover projects, life and mission of the religious and the lay betharramites of the Argentina-Uruguay Vicariate.

### Paraguay

On Sunday 8 April, in the Vicariate of O. L. of Fatima of the Colonia Juan Sinfiorano Bogarín (Paraguay), during a solemn concelebration, Br. Cristian Ismael Romero SCJ made his perpetual vows. The celebration was presided over by Mgr. Claudio Silverio SCJ and concelebrated by Mgr. Ignacio Gogorza SCJ, by Fr. Daniel Gonzalez SCJ (delegated by the Superior General to receive the vows of Br. Cristian and Regional Superior of the Region), by the Regional Vicars: Fr. Alberto Zaracho SCJ (Regional Vicar in Paraguay), by Fr. Sergio Gouarnalusse SCJ (Regional Vicar in Argentina-Uruguay) and by Fr. Paulo Cesar Pinto SCJ (Regional Vicar in Brazil). Many other Betharramite brothers, from Paraguay and from other Vicariates of the Region, joined the concelebration.

Br. Cristian was accompanied to the altar by his parents and by a great number of faithful who did not want to miss



to attend this event, so meaningful for Br. Cristian and for the ecclesial community.

Congratulations, Fr. Cristian! May you be a credible disciple of the "Ecce Venio!", following the example of our Father Saint Michael Garicoits.



## REGION SAINT MARY OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

ENGLAND INDIA  
THAILAND

### England

New parish in the Land of Robin Hood: On March, 26, Fr Wilfred Pereppadan scj made the first contact with the new parish Mgr. Patrick McKinney bishop of Nottingham entrusted to the English Vicariate.

Fr Wilfred was accompanied by Fr George Mathew, Br Gerard Sutherland and Fr Enrico Frigerio, who arrived in Olton on March 22 to start his term of office as Regional Superior on April 1. Fr Joe Wheat, Vicar General of the diocese, was there to welcome Fr Wilfred, who

will officially take possession of the Parish in a near future along with two other members of the Betharramite community.

We wish Fr Wilfred and the community a fruitful pastoral work, particularly with the poor... but without robbing the rich!

### India

The Indian vicariate witnessed the First Profession of two brothers Avinash Sagayaraj and Pobitro Minj on 8th of April at Bangalore. Rev. Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj celebrated the Holy Eucharist and received their vows in the presence of Fr. Stervin Selvadass scj and Fr. Arul Gnanaprakash scj. Many Betharramites priests, neighbouring religious communities and lay Betharramites were present for the event. Thereafter the Indian vicariate felicitated the new Regional Superior and newly professed brothers. The event was organised by Shobhana Shaakha community.

The Sacred Heart Vicariate of India had its annual Vicariate Assembly on 09.04.18 and 10.04.18. The Theme of the Assembly was "Understanding ourselves for the mission". The meeting was started with the prayer song and reading from the Gospel. A Letter of St. Michael was read for the reflection. Fr. Edwerd SDB enlightened us all by his talk on Mission. The key points were 1. Relationship with God 2. Personal Transformation and



so on. Later in the day Rev. Fr. Enrico Frigerio gave a talk on community project and importance of that. In the afternoon Mr. Simon the auditor explained us of the importance of keeping the accounts and preparing the proper accounts. Evening we had the Eucharist celebration.



The following day the Regional Vicar of India presented the report on "Presence and development of Indian Vicariate" and other fathers shared their mission and community activities. We also discussed the matter of Finance and concluded the meeting with the prayer.

### Thailand

A catechists camp was held in the parish of St Paul, Huay Tong, from 1 to 8 April. The theme was "The Christian family, following Jesus". 135 young

participants were accompanied by 19 animators, including 2 priests, 2 Maepon sisters who work with us in the parish, 4 brothers of Betharram, 1 Stigmatine brother and 3 young people from the village.

We gave thanks to God for all his gifts and for his call because this time 36 children and 14 adults were baptised and 41 people received their first communion. We also thank all the benefactors who helped us during this 7-day camp. Thank you everybody! Always forward!



### *In memoriam*

On March 16, **Mrs. Marie Erbin**, aged 83, returned to the Father's house. Mrs. Marie was sister of Fr. Pierre Caset scj (from the community of Betharram "Maison Neuve" - Vicariate of France-Spain). We express our sympathy to Fr Pierre and his family and we promise to keep them in our prayers.





◆◆◆ In accordance with the decisions take during the session of the General Council on July 24-27, 2017, Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj started his term of office as Superior Regional of the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

◆◆◆ During the General Council of March 26, 2018, the Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, with the consent of his Council, appointed from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018:

- Fr. Chan John Kunu (Regional Vicar in Thailand) as First Regional Vicar of the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified;
- Fr. Wilfred Pereppadan as Regional Vicar in England for a second mandate;
- Fr. Austin Hughes as Regional Bursar of the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified.

Best wishes for good work!



◆◆◆ In the same session of the General Council, the Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, with the consent of his Council, decided to present to the Diaconate Brother **Andrew Manop Kaengkhaio** and Brother **Stephen Banjerd Chuensuklertaweekul** from the **Vicariate of Thailand** (Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified), in accordance with the Rule of Life 205/h.

◆◆◆ On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Superior General sent by mail a convocation letter to the participants in the next session focused on final profession, which is going to take place at Betharram, from Wednesday June, 20<sup>th</sup>, to Sunday, July 29<sup>th</sup> ; the attached programme of the session was drafted by Fr. Stervin Selvadass, General Councillor for formation, with the cooperation of the Formation Team.

The Animation Team, headed by Fr Stervin, is composed by Fr Glecimar Guilherme da Silva scj, Fr Sylvain Dansou Hounkpatin scj and Fr Simone Panzeri scj (these latter will take turns).

The participants are:

(for the Region Saint Michael Garicoïts) :

Br. Vincent Didier Gnaore Allelet,  
Br. Joseph Ouedraogo,  
Br. Habib Cossi Yelouwassi,  
Br. Hippolyte Adje Yomafou,

(for the Region V. P. Auguste Etchecopar) :

Deac. Iran Lima Da Silva,  
Fr. Jeferson Silvério Gonzaga,  
Br. Leandro Sebastián Narduzzo,  
Br. Ismael Cristian Romero,

(for the Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified) :

Deac. Stephen Banjerd Chuensuklertaweekul,  
Deac. Andrew Manop Kaengkhiao,  
Deac. Reegan Vincent Raj,  
Deac. Shamon Devasia Valiyaveethil.

### Others official notices of the Congregation:

The Regional Secretary of the Region Ven. Fr. Auguste Etchecopar sent to the Superior General and his Council (Cf. RdV 259) copies of the recent appointment decided in the sessions of the Regional Council for the Vicariate of Paraguay :

- Appointment of Fr. Tobia Sosio as bursar of the vicariate for a second mandate;
- Appointment of Fr. Wilfrido Romero as bursar of the community of Colegio Apostólico San José ;
- Appointment of Br. Sixto Benítez as bursar of the community of Ciudad del Este for a second mandate;
- Appointment of Fr. Tobia Sosio as bursar of the community of Colegio Apostólico San José of Asunción for a second mandate;
- Appointment of Fr. Raúl Villalba as bursar of the community of Lambaré ;
- Appointment of Br. Cristian Romero as bursar of the community of La Colmena.

## Encountering the Other and meeting others

*The members of the Fraternité Me Voici have set aside time to reflect on the theme of the year: "Encountering the Other and meeting others".*

*Pascale Ameil, a member, this year, of the Council of the Fraternity, will share the fruits of this reflection.*

•••

« Being with » - it is in this « with » that our encounter is played out. The Lord who wants to enter into communion with me, in the sacraments, in prayer, the Lord who calls me deeper, the one I meet.

Jesus, after his « walkabouts », withdrew to pray; and I can be caught up, overwhelmed sometimes in meetings and activities. If I don't return often to the Source, into the arms of my Father, I am an empty shell. Let God approach us, teach



us, console us; if we let him be a father, we will be able to walk on.

Jesus chose to be a « mobile camp »; what journeys do I have to experience? Will I let the Lord work through my hands, through my eyes, through my heart?

To extinguish oneself – this was a term, a way of living that was a little difficult for me to understand but it is starting to become clear: it is not to deny ourselves, but to empty ourselves of whatever blocks our relationships with others, our armour, our false-selves.... That is where simplicity, humility, simple and true words flow from. God wants to do something new with what we are, so... I must live as intently as possible where I am, and... forward !

Heading out is more than a simple openness to the world; either I wait for others to come to me (and sometimes that's much more comfortable as I don't have to stick my neck out as much) or I go to them (using my legs or by telephone, using words or simply by prayer).



And a strong word that comes to me in my married life (I will soon have been married for 35 years) is that the only image of God on earth is the union of a man and woman; and for our children, whether married or not, this song resounds in me: "You, who loves us, bless those that love each other, so that their love has You as its source .... So that their love is a sign of You."

To be accepted by another, my husband, my friend, my child, in conversation with so-and-so, and to give yourself to him or her, to share moments, what we are experiencing, or to be there without saying anything but just being present for the other person; in this otherness, when I allow

myself, when I get closer (although sometimes a lot of sensitivity is needed), it is fruitful.

God made us for Him. He created us to be happy and to help others to be happier. Joy comes after austerity. That's the way Jesus took the cross, which is important, without holding back, to say « Here I am ».

*Pascale Ameil  
Fraternité Me Voici*



About an hour from Toulouse (France), about fifty members and friends of Fraternité Me Voici met for two days in March for a time of spiritual renewal. They were accompanied by Fathers Jean-Luc Morin scj, Laurent Bacho scj and Vincent Worou scj.

## The calling to be a priest

*We all know that God calls! And we also know that this calling comes through someone else, often through family members in fact. Such was the case for Michael Garicoits. ●●●*



### Parents who thought a lot of the priest

It was quite natural for the young Michael to think about becoming a priest : priests in general were well thought of on both sides of his family.

- According to Father Miéyaa, a young Arnaud Garricoits was the favourite altar boy of Abbott Arnaud Lopez : in fact Arnaud lived with the Abbott, looking after him (whenever there wasn't too much work to do in the family's fields). The priest was from Ibarre, and was in office from 1740 to 1783. He was pious, devoted, loved the poor, and was very generous. He translated a book called « Glories of Basque Literature », which was written by a Jesuit called Rodriguez, and in fact Michael received a copy of it on the day of his First Communion.

- As for Gratianne – on numerous occasions she and her mother looked after Abbott Jean-Baptiste de Borda when he hid at Ordokia, where the Etcheberrys were tenant farmers on his brother's land (during the Terror<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Reign of Terror, also called The Terror, French La Terreur, the period of the French Revolution from September 5, 1793, to July 27, 1794 (9 Thermidor, year II). With civil war spreading, the Revolutionary government decided to make

- There are several witness accounts which state that both families worked together to help priests who disagreed with unjust laws of the French revolutionaries.

The families helped to get some priests across the Pyrenees : notably M. de Borda (the priest at Ibarre) and M. Eyhéribide (the priest at Saint-Just).

- It's therefore easy to understand how important it was for Arnaud and Gratianne that their marriage was blessed by a priest faithful to the Pope. And Michael's mother would certainly have told all these stories to her children, especially to him.

### I would like to be a priest

Michael's parents didn't need to suggest a priestly vocation to their son, their daily lives set the example. They were too honest to push him into something, and they didn't even have the money to envisage this future for their son. Yet one event was enough to kindle the flames in Michael.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April 1802, the church of Ibarre was beautifully decorated, having been re-opened to officially welcome the priest, Abbott Bidégary. He was a hero too – a close call with

“Terror” the order of the day and to take harsh measures against those suspected of being enemies of the Revolution (nobles, priests, hoarders).



cupboard, and solemnly imitates the different parts of Mass, and his brother Paul and the little boy next door join in too."<sup>3</sup>

« I want to be a priest »

It was a difficult path to make this dream come true. Following it seemed even more difficult than ascending a mountain to look for God in heaven. He needed to wait, and follow the different steps...

The first of which was to receive communion for the first time : on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1811.

Michael's father wanted Michael to carry on the family business, as was the tradition in the countryside. However, when the family came back to Ibarre

from Oneix, Michael made his point even clearer: "give me work to do, send me here and there, I will not not back down at all", but he spoke out even more strongly and said 'I'll go'; but you know that I still want to become a priest".<sup>4</sup> But then his grandmother (and also godmother) Catherine arrived at Garrotchea; she listened to Michael and spoke up for him!

The parents and Michael

3) B. BOURDENNE, *La vie et l'œuvre du Vénérable Michel Garicoïts*, p. 15.

4) P. MIÉYAA, *La vie de Saint Michel Garicoïts*, p. 92. This twofold stubbornness – (i) to always obey and to always express his desire – will be very useful, later, in front of Mgr Lacroix! He will be the winner, twelve years after his death!

the guillotine, and then having to live in exile, hiding out and continuing his duties as a priest. He was so devoted that he even went to a gendarmerie, incognito, to hear the confession of a dying gendarme. He looked after Ibarre from Saint-Just.

After returning from the ceremony, Michael took his mother aside and said in confidence: "Mother, I would like to be a priest"<sup>2</sup>. But how could they make it happen? Times were hard and the family were so poor.

His mother noticed that he was persistent: "(Michael) likes to pretend – he sets up an altar in the kitchen

2) A. BRUNOT, *Michel Garicoïts (1797-1863), le Saint du ME VOICI !*, p. 17.

worked hard, digging up the vines. Grandmother looked on from the sidelines as they talked about a young boy who was studying. Michael said: "I'd really like to study, just like him!". A long silence ensued, only to be broken by his father. "Gratianne, what are we to do with Michael?". Yet more silence! Gratianne didn't know what to say, she was caught between the wishes of her son, the will of her husband... and the realities of a harsh, very hard daily reality.

And of course, Grandmother heard all of this! She should really keep quiet and know her place. But she spoke out, rather harshly – and her words seemed to break the ice: "Arnaud, you don't know how to run your household! Michael has a talent and taste for studies, let him do what he's asked for!". Michael's father was disconcerted, but wouldn't back down, saying: "How are we going to pay for it?". Michael's reply was full of strength from the Holy Spirit: "God will provide!". Catherine, the grandmother, godmother and spokeswoman spoke out with unseen vigour and wisdom from above, saying "God will provide. And we will do what we can... we don't need to worry, we can find a school that doesn't charge for classes; and I am acquainted with the priest at Saint-Palais and I know he would help us". Michael started digging more actively! His grandmother asked him: "So? What would you do if you could start your studies?"; and straight away he answered "If I could

go tomorrow morning, I would!".

So that was it! Everyone fell silent, there was nothing else to say or argue about. They didn't quite understand it all, more discussions were needed in order to continue. But for the moment, time to wait for the next day.

It was a journey of 20km there and back for the people who went to market day. Even though she was almost 70, Catherine set out for Saint-Palais, to see M. Borda. He owed her his life: as a poor widowed tenant farmer on his bother's farm at Ordokia, she was looking after her crops and her children, yet still managed to hide and protect him during the darkest hours of the Terror. She did it out of duty, never longing for something in return: he needed her help, and she gave it. Yet now the tables were turned – she needed his help, and he gladly gave it. Upon hearing her problem, he immediately said: "Send him to me, there will be a place for him at the school at Saint-Palais". And any other questions or worries became incidental after that.

"Dearest and beloved grandmother, you had such great faith!". Such was the praise given by Michael when he became a priest.

While waiting for the day of ordination, he will live close by holy priests!

*Beñat Oyhenart scj*



*Let's not be anxious because of our faults: God who is faithful, often allows a man who is good in most areas, some obvious flaws throughout his whole life, so that he has good reason to humble himself before God and others, and recognise his nothingness. But does he have to absent himself from the holy table? Answer: Let him rather approach it with love and joy, saying, Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but I go to you, relying on your infinite mercy, on the treasure that overflows with your precious graces. I have and I feel, nothing within me; but I find everything in you: virtue, holy desires, and all good things.*

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