

In this issue

'Going out to share'
p. 1

Angelus, December
2nd p. 5

Ideas & pathways to
live the theme of
the year 2019 p. 6

Meeting with the
Regional Bursars
p. 7

Following Christ: an
adventure of faith
and conversion p. 12

A Mallorcan
pilgrimage p. 15

Notices...
p. 18

Father Joseph
Domecq scj † p. 19

Story of a spiritual
journey (II) :
Who did Michael
Garicoits inspire?...
p. 21

Saint Michael wrote...
p. 24

A word by the superior general

'Going out to share'

Dear Betharramites,

At the recent Council of the Congregation held in Rome in November, we chose a theme for the year 2019, taking the second theme of the General Chapter: '**Go out to share**'.

Saint Michael Garicoïts had been fascinated by a Christ who '*as a bridegroom coming from his tent, rejoices like a champion to run his course...*' (Ps 18. 6), a fascinating and dynamic Christ willing to save humanity for love, with absolute fidelity to the adorable Will of his Father who sends him. He was moved by this God-Man who totally humble in the virginal womb of Mary, surrenders to death on a Cross for our sake and, raised by his Father, comes to share with us his eternal joy.

Hence, '**To go out**', for a Betharramite, always implies a charismatic gesture: to come close to others, to humble oneself and to communicate the joyful experience of the Gospel so that, in the heart of the other, the Love

God rises. When we go out, we do so with a particular identity that, by responding to the call of the Church, becomes a vocational proposal for us. It is what we call: **mission-in-community**.

Mary was a specialist in going out and sharing. Abandoning her certainties, her projects and her dreams, Mary launches herself: always open to the Will of a God to whom she feels she totally belongs, a loving God who amazes her, surprises her and supports her in her lowliness.

The Virgin Mary goes out to meet Life to visit and share with his cousin Saint Elizabeth.



At the Chapter we declared that: *'We went out without delay to encounter life'. 'We went out to drink from the same source.'*

I confess that it inspires courage in me when I share life with those who, without worrying about what they carry in their backpacks, rush without delay to serve everyone, especially the poorest. They are the Betharramites who never get sick because they have stayed locked up, they never get depressed thinking that everything is already lost, they never lower their arms. Pope Francis proposes a Church 'going outwards', that is, not stuck in a comfort zone, nor gentrified, nor too concerned about the three 'C's' (Car, Computer and Cellphone).

When we left for a new mission we always felt happy. Though sometimes we go out weeping, if we go out by the will of God, He assures us that we will return singing (cf Ps 125, 6). How different if we refuse a particular mission, and settle for living a routine, never letting ourselves be disturbed, almost like 'ecclesiastical officials' who fulfill a schedule and do not transmit joy, but instead a silent bitterness...

It is as if we pretend to have - in a more or less conscious way - all the risks covered: our personal times, our exclusive incomes, our pastoral options, our non-negotiable preferences... abandoning the religious spirit which we freely choose, which is to

be available and healthily indifferent.

Things change when we allow ourselves to be questioned by reality and we **go out** to take on tasks, with a discipline and an identity that are worthy of what St. Michael said: leave without delay... but without 'going off track...'. Attentive to work, generous, devoted.

To go out respecting this vision involves a real and dynamic concept: it is enriched by listening attentively to the clamour that arises around us (Rule of Life. 18-19). Practising 'reciprocal listening' leads us to a better dialogue at all levels: interaction with Betharramites from diverse backgrounds; interaction with lay people who collaborate with our mission; promoting volunteering as an opportunity to go out and share; dialoguing with people in the margin; openness to new forms of communities, whose members embrace a life of faith, prayer, service.

'Going out (without going off track)' is in a way to prioritise community. To put a healthy frame of reference to our apostolic action.

...to share:

the first bethrramites, like the Apostles left in pairs to look after mission 'outside' and, at the same time, they watched over their own brothers, accepting them as they were, with their gifts and defects. They shared with them the sowing and the harvesting. They felt sent

by Jesus, who also wanted to teach them to share their bread with the poor (Mt 15, 29-37), without worrying too much about obtaining it daily, '*God showers gifts on his beloved while they sleep*' (Ps 126.2).

Wind the clock forward to our own day and we see that what we lack is not having a mission exactly (we all have one and there is so much to be done in the Church!), but **learning to share** it. I speak of 'sharing the return of the mission'. We need to believe that the mission that I perform also concerns my brother and is not simply 'my thing'. In listening to him I enrich and strengthen him and myself. The gospel tells us that the disciples shared their own experience with Jesus when they returned (Luke 10, 17-20) and told their sorrows and joys. Do we do it in community? It's about 'Going out to share.' Inside and outside the house.

'Sharing' is an essential element of our consecrated life of a Betharramite religious. We have been sent to evangelise **to share the experience of faith at several levels**, for example:

- as people consecrated to mission: accomplished in community;
- with our inherited charism: a way of being in and for the Church;
- with human and material resources to manage mission together, with a style that

- humanises and evangelises;
- with our experience and wisdom (senior religious);
- with strength, freshness and pastoral creativity (young religious);
- with a genuine sense of religious consecration (particularly strong sign in religious brothers);
- from our original gifts and contributions: cultural, generational, etc.;
- and with availability to children and young people: listening to them, respecting them, accompanying them.

Brothers, we are a small congregation with 275 members but we also have more than 120 young people in formation. New horizons are dawning for a Betharram that has yet to be built: **going out and sharing**. In this new year of 2019 we have the opportunity to start doing it, uniting ourselves to the heart of Jesus in the impulse of the Incarnation that says to his Father: 'Here I am', and that of Our Lady who responds happily to the messenger: 'I am the servant of the Lord.'

P. Gustavo SCJ
SUPERIOR GENERAL



*Happy Christmas to all the Betharramite
communities and to all the friends of
Betharram around the world
...and a Happy New Year 2019 !*

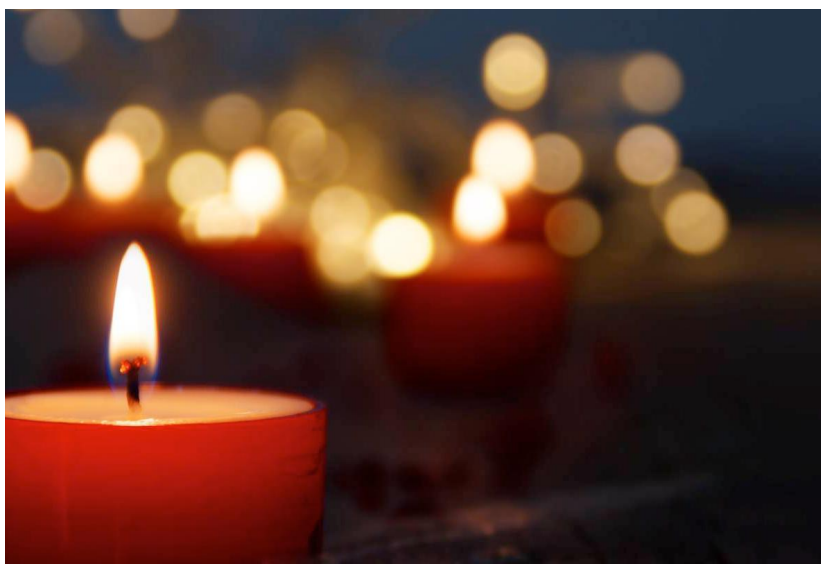
Angelus, Rome, Saint Peter's Square, Sunday, 2 December 2018

To be mindful and to pray: this is how to live the time between now and Christmas. To be mindful and to pray. Inner listlessness comes from always turning around ourselves and being blocked by our own life, with its problems, its joy, and suffering, but always turning around ourselves. And this is wearying; this is dull, this closes us off to hope. Here lies the root of the lethargy and laziness that the Gospel speaks about. Advent invites us to a commitment to vigilance, looking beyond ourselves, expanding our mind and heart in order to open ourselves up to the needs of people, of brothers and sisters, and to the desire for a new world. It is the desire of many people tormented by hunger, by injustice and by war. It is the desire of the poor, the weak, the abandoned. This is a favourable time to open our hearts, to ask ourselves concrete questions about how and for



whom we expend our lives.

The second attitude to best experience the time of awaiting the Lord is that of prayer. Arise, "look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Lk 21:28), the Gospel of Luke cautions. It is about standing up and praying, turning our thoughts and our hearts to Jesus who is about to come. One stands when awaiting something or someone. We await Jesus and we wish to await him in prayer which is closely linked to vigilance. Praying, awaiting Jesus, opening oneself to others, being mindful, not withdrawn in ourselves. But if we think of Christmas in the light of consumerism, of seeing what I can buy in order to do this and that, of a worldly celebration, Jesus will pass by and we will not find him. We await Jesus and we wish to await him in prayer which is closely linked to vigilance. •



Ideas & pathways to live the theme of the year 2019

One year finishes; a new one begins. Time goes on as a heartbeat: Diastolic and Systolic. The sequence of these beats keeps us alive and helps us grow. Each beat seems so different from the other and yet it matches the preceding one.

Like the beating of a heart, the proposals of the Council of the Congregation push us to go forward, without forgetting what we have learned this year. And if things seem to be repeating themselves, life invites us to go further, based on what we have experienced.

Thus, after insisting on the theme 'going out to drink from the same source' and without forgetting the resulting demands nor casting them aside, here we are, on the contrary, in a spirit of continuity, attentive to the second 'beat': 'To go out to share'.

...

The Council of the Congregation was a good opportunity to discuss this theme in different ways. In the Acts of the XXVII General Chapter, it concerned above all the field of government (need for formation of the regional vicars, and the bursars at every level –regional, vicariate and community–) and the economy of communion. On the other hand, the reflection that has matured during the Council has highlighted many im-



plications and has developed for the Regions and their Vicariates a set of 'pathways' that will help them to continue working in communities and Vicariates.

The fruit of this reflection is a kind of collection of ideas that does not claim to be a definitive and binding document. It has been conceived more as a canvas on which Regions, Vicariates and communities can draw their own picture... but using certain colours provided, precisely, by this collection of ideas. What are these colours?

1. The first color is... **listening**. Let us start from the basic idea that there can be no sharing if we do not know how to listen. Knowing how to listen to each other, in communities, vicariates, in the Region and the Congregation. We cannot propose a sharing without starting again from the sincere listening to our brother. It is only by listening to each other (and not only in the concerns of daily life, but also and especially during the *Narratio fidei*) that we can understand the value of... (see the following point)

2. ...the second color: an **Apostolic Community Project**. Only a community which fosters mutual listening, listening to the mission entrusted to the Congregation by the Church and listening to the input of the surroun-

ding reality, can come up with a shared project. A Project that is the reference point of the community, that allows everyone to evaluate the journey undertaken and not to lose orientation... A Project that must become an evaluation grid for the Regional Superior during his canonical visits.

3. Third color: **discernment**. A project lived daily with reference to mission is inevitably a valuable tool in discerning who we are and what we want to be. At all levels: community, vicariate, region and congregation. The Betharramite charism is a dynamic charism, which is not satisfied with what it does and always places itself in an attitude of availability in the face of new emergencies. Does that seem like a small thing to you? Let each of us think about our own experience.

4. Fourth color: **a concrete sharing**. Sharing also means making yourself available to others. Sharing is not so much a theoretical point as a practical, concrete question about the most everyday aspects of life, such as how we use money. The need for accountability... The attention to the lifestyle of the families around us.

Perhaps there is nothing new in all this? That's quite possible. Nevertheless, let us recognise that our drawings, over time, have faded a little. We need a little fantasy, dynamism, creativity.

The canvas is here. The colours? Here they are. For fantasy, dynamism and creativity, let us invoke the Holy Spirit! May He help us to make our religious family a work of art!

Graziano Sala scj
(Bursar and Secretary General)

Meeting with the Regional Bursars | Rome, 12-14 November 2018

News from the meeting of the Council of the Congregation (plus 3 Regional Bursars) in Rome on 12-14 November 2018. ●●●

The Word of God accompanied us during our days together; days which were full of shared moments and thoughts. We happily listened to several passages of scripture that called us to think about the economic life of our Betharamite family :



the handful of flour and drops of olive oil of the widow of Sarepta; the manager : a man who was neither arrogant nor chasing dishonest profits but rather a person who wanted to do good; "if your faith was as large as a grain of mustard seed"; "we are humble servants", "the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want".

The extensive overview showed how funds are shared within the congregation and also the operational limits. A

budget that is used for the Mission, with most of it going towards training, and some weaknesses in management of the budget. The lay members (Luigi Pirovano, Maria Grazia and Giuditta) asked many questions about our accounting procedures.

4 key principles were retained : honesty – transparency – generosity – pragmatism. These principles should be applied by each level of authority as well as by each religious. These are guiding principles which are common sense, but when we look at how we apply them to our work?, we can see some weaknesses.

The General Bursar presented the congregation's 2017 accounts, however Maria-Grazia clearly stated that major areas of the accounts are incorrect because several Vicariates did not submit their accounts on time, and several did not submit accounts at all. An online site is available for accounts to be submitted electronically, and when bursars are not able to do this, the Vicariate's bursars can work from accounts submitted in paper format.

It is difficult to accept this principle of submitting accounts each month. Indeed, older members of the congregation are used to submitting accounts once every six months. But once per semester is no longer current : how can we ensure that accounts are accurate when we are receiving so many receipts that need to be accounted for?

And, let's be truthful about something : we're very happy that our allowances and pensions are paid monthly and not per quarter or per six months.

So surely submitting the accounts each month is a natural expression of how thankful we are? We are humble servants after all. Putting into practice the rules that have been indicated to us will help us live with coherence and justice with our social environment.

During our meeting we also talked about our property assets : the size of which varies between vicariates. Our properties are historically important, but problematic when it comes to looking after and preserving them for the future. Saint Michel asked us to form flying camps – but this is a difficult task due to our existing property assets. Each Vicariate needs to continue discussions on this matter, including obtaining technical advice from lay people who are more skilled than us in this field. Vicariates are encouraged to set up Economic Committees if they have not already done so.

The charism of our Betharramite family brings us to live our religious life in the following of Christ: it is up to us to incarnate it very concretely, even in this aspect of economic life. Let us hope that the shared discussions and work of the extended Council of the Congregation will be well received by each religious and bear fruit in the future. May we be more and more united in our service of the Church and the world.

Jean-Marie Ruspil scj

Regional Bursar for St Michael Garicoits Region

Highlights of this theme:

- Sharing is going out to our fellow brothers and sisters. Sharing in the community, within the Vicariate and between Vicariates.
- The word "sharing" is only possible when there is a community and apostolic project (CAP).
- We must insist on the word "going out". When we go out, we are happy. When there is no mission (no "going out"), there is no joy, there is no CAP. When we go out we care about our brothers. Often, however, what is missing is the sharing after returning from the mission. The disciples are sent on a mission, on their return they share their experience with Jesus. The CAP helps to clarify and implement the projects.
- Sharing is getting out of our mentality, of our own projects.
- To share means that our missionary presence is the fruit of our community discernment:
 - * There is a temptation to choose our own mission or to say yes to a request from a Bishop without consulting the community or the Superiors.
 - * Discernment must be done in community, in the Vicariate, in the Region.
 - * Every discernment must take place in prayer, in a mutual listening, so that the Will of God may be accomplished;
- The "Here I am!" It is already "going out"... Sharing is giving others the same joy.
- Vocation is always an experience linked to going out. We must prove our availability with an attitude of going out.
- Sharing is an active attitude, not a passive one. Sharing is also making oneself available to others. It is not so much an idea, as an active, concrete action touching the everyday life, for example how we use our money. The need to account for it. Being attentive to the lifestyle of the families surrounding us ...
- The reason for the budget is precisely to provoke a reflection in the community, comparing the lifestyle of the community to the lifestyle of the local families.
- Sharing entails also being aware how much we have and how much we can spend. It means planning income and expenses (budgets). It means accuracy in accounting, the same accuracy we sometimes expect of the laity.

Concrete actions:

Sharing is knowing how to listen...

1. Each Vicariate organizes this year at least two assemblies around the theme of listening: to know how to develop our ability to communicate in order to share our spiritual life (narratio fidei) and to strengthen our ability to listen in order to accept, without prejudice and with freedom of heart, what the brothers share. If necessary, we seek the help of a facilitator.
2. This same theme should also be developed by the Vicariate Council (with the formators). We recommend that this meeting last for at least two days. In this way there will be time for the narratio fidei and for a mutual listening.
3. To accompany the community leaders (Superiors): the Vicariate Council will dedicate two days to the formation of the superiors.

Sharing means drawing up a common project:

1. The importance of the CAP; give practical indications on how to draw up a community project. A project should contain this question: why do we live in community? A project should help us to better organize our meetings: the sessions of narratio fidei, sharing the mission and trying to better celebrate our community prayer.
2. We need to deepen our desire for working together: the CAP is an instrument.
3. The CAP is not a theoretical exercise of writing a document that is soon forgotten. Instead it must become a reference point for the Regional Superior in his canonical visits. In this case: it is necessary, in some way, to make the reception of CAP official.
4. Encourage the Regional Vicar to visit the communities and help them to draw up the CAP. Ensure that the project be sent to the Regional Superior and to his Council before the beginning of the new pastoral year.
5. What do we mean by CAP? We need to start with the following questions: Why are we here? What is the purpose of our presence? What was the reason for coming here? What was the mission entrusted to us?

Sharing means knowing how to discern:

1. If we receive a request for a new foundation, we need:
 - to inform the community, the Regional Vicar, the Regional Superior;
 - to look into the content of the new mission, the resources necessary for carrying it out, the people to whom the mission is entrusted...
 - to evaluate the pros and cons in order to be able to decide in complete freedom, with the necessary indifference and reach an objective choice;
 - to share the elements leading to a particular choice so that the Regional Council can take a well-founded decision.

Sharing ... for an economy of communion:

1. For the sharing of goods: the Vicariate Council establishes a calendar of visits for the Vicariate bursar, whereby he can meet on a regular basis the community bursars and guide them in preparing and submitting the accounts to the Regional Bursar and the Bursar General at least quarterly.
2. During the Vicariate Assembly, attention should be given to financial issues. The Regional Bursar should be present.
- 3.. During the initial formation a training course on administrative matters should be developed. At present, how do we prepare our young in formation to deal with financial matters?
4. Drawing up the budgets: the bursars should meet with the Vicariate bursar for drawing up the budget. Make sure that the budgets be genuine. We need to carry on training people to prepare the accounts (income and expenses).
5. The Vicariate bursar should visit the communities on a regular basis.
6. Other points have been highlighted in a more specific way in the summary prepared after the meeting of the Council of the Congregation with the Regional Bursars.

Following Christ: an adventure of faith and conversion

My dear Brothers of Bétharram,

My name is Leandro Sebastián Narduzzo, I'm 38 years old, a musician and at the time of writing, preparing to make my perpetual profession.

I was baptised on October 5th, 1980 and raised in a Catholic family. From age 7 to 20, I was a member of a Catholic Scout troop. While faith might not have had any meaningful place in my life, I made my First Holy Communion, was confirmed and received the sacraments with serious intent as I knew, or guessed, that these were very important things.

I grew away from the Church during my teenage years but never really relinquished my Faith in God. This estrangement lasted until I was 28.

Up till then, the image I had of God was of an exacting God, whose rewards depended on my behaviour, who withdrew from me each time I sinned, who kept his eye on me. If you add to this image of God, a lifestyle that was not very ordered, you will get some idea of the pressure growing inside me, the nervous tension and edginess which would soon turn into despair: "If I don't get my act together, I'm going to be unhappy".

My life was disordered. At 28, I still hadn't completed my university education. I'd already changed courses three times without ever completing any of them. I had had several failed relation-



ships and my plans for a career in music came to nothing. I had started to seek spiritual fulfilment outside of the Catholic faith. I had changed jobs several times. I was left with nothing but feelings of emptiness. These experiences would not have had such an impact on me had I felt fulfilled, happy and content - but I didn't.

Then came the year when having looked for help from all sorts of places, I decided to go knock on a priest's door. From then on, all paths led to Bétharram: the Mass I was invited to was presided over by a Bétharram father; I thought I'd go on retreat and the first place I was recommended was the Bétharramite *Casa de Encuentro*; I went to have a chat with the priest in my original parish and, as luck would have it, he had been replaced by a Bétharramite. He became my spiritual director and subsequently, my master of postulants.

With the support of this providential mentor, I experienced my first ever Ignatian retreat and my first ever experience of a God full of tenderness, forgiveness, love and faithfulness. From that moment, I felt a joy within me that has changed my life for ever. I wanted to proclaim this joy and share this happiness with as many people as possible.

The following year my life was ordered and going well, I was committed and engaged in a project when I

heard the Lord's call; first in the form of a question: "Is it the Lord calling me?" and then later on, a gripping reality: "If I don't make up my mind, I shall dry up and wither". This process of discernment lasted for about two years.

In February 2011, with much joy, I enrolled in the postulate. My postulant master was Fr Daniel González. My family was sure I'd be back home within six months. But I completed my postulancy with much joy. This was a time which I devoted to studying philosophy, human formation and supporting young people with their catechesis. I made lots of friends.

In this same formation house, I entered the novitiate, a period of great growth in maturity. My novice master was Fr Guido García. It was then that I experienced my first major crises. The Lord was purifying me with fire. And yet as with everything that is achieved

only at great cost and demands commitment and effort, this turned out to be one of the most precious stages in my development: God does not let us conquer Him through the graces and gentle details that speak of His presence.

Dieu ne se laisse pas conquérir à travers les délicatesses et les détails qui parlent de sa présence... I also got to know many other novices, men and women, from other congregations, during the programmes offered by the Dominicans in Buenos Aires.

The novitiate enabled me to deepen my knowledge of our compelling charism. As I became more familiar with St Michael Garicoïts' conversion and with his passing from an implacable harsh God to a God "*dissolved in charity*", I too underwent my own conversion. And the tenderness of God, Jesus' voluntary renunciation of His

divine privilege and acceptance of human status, together with the "Here I am!" uttered by St Michael, gently won my heart. On December 1st, 2013, (the first Sunday of Advent), I made my first profession of vows in the chapel of the Holy Family in Adrogué. After visiting my family, I set out for Brazil where I was to do my theology, in the



Final profession of Br. Leandro, on December 8th 2018 in Adrogué Chapel

scholasticate.

Brazil was the first time I had felt so uprooted. It was the first time I had been away from the people I loved, my family, my friends. There was the change in language, customs, time-tables and brothers in the community. It was a real challenge. Overcoming my preconceived ideas was the hardest. This stage helped me to understand that God so arranges things that actually, we can be happy wherever He sends us.

In Belo Horizonte I worked with bible study groups while following my theology lectures at the same time. Delving into the Holy Scriptures and drinking from so sublime a source as this ecclesial experience was truly wonderful. At the University I acted as tutor to some pupils and received a bursary, like other Bétharramite brothers (such pride!), to further my research for my end-of-study thesis. The subject was God's tenderness as shown in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

However, emotional problems and community crises were not lacking. But with support and guidance from Fr Glecimar Da Silva, prayer and the presence of some very special people, I was shown into the light of God's face, every step of the way. My conviction to continue with Bétharram grew stronger at this time. I was able to ask to be made a reader then an acolyte, sign of the ever-increasing joy within me and the firm determination of my choice.

In 2017 towards the end of the scholasticate, Fr Gustavo Agín told me the

Council had been thinking about me as a missionary. They were offering me the opportunity to join the burgeoning community in Beltrán, Santiago del Estero (north-central Argentina), where we are engaged in pastoral care missionary work. I had not been expecting such an invitation, but I answered with an unequivocal "Yes", in the certainty that if the Lord wanted me over there, He would send me there, full of happiness.

Once I'd got to Beltrán, I again had to make radical changes and adapt to a different environment, new people, new places, different rhythms and customs, while forming a community with new brothers. This was a year of adaptation for me, devoted to life in Beltrán and its surroundings. But now I am comfortable in this place. I feel accepted, fulfilled, useful and loved. We shall see what the Lord has in reserve for this community. This year I have been asked to work in pastoral care of vocations in our Region.

For my journey thus far and, knowing that I still have a long road ahead of me, I have nothing but words of gratitude. I am happy and keen that everyone should know it. I should, if you would let me, like to share this contentment with young people who are wondering if in fact, Our Lord Jesus is calling them to Bétharram; and I should like them to know that there is life a-plenty here and that belonging to this great little family is worth it. *Always ahead!*

Leandro Narduzzo scj

A Holy Island? Mallorca has a mixed reputation in the UK. Popular as a holiday island for families, it is also the venue for thousands of British teenagers to celebrate exam results in August.. consuming heroic quantities of cerveza San Miguel in the process! But a local association called Spiritual Mallorca promotes the shrines and holy places of this island of saints. And it was to this Mallorca that the English Companions of Betharram came on pilgrimage in October. We followed the theme of the Paraguay Chapter, the Visitation: Mary goes out to share the good news with Elizabeth and finds that God has already been at work with her cousin. Having visited Betharram, Lourdes, Ibarre, Montserrat and Rome in previous years, we sought this time the saints of the holy island who have gone out to share the good news ... (even if some stayed at home.) In all cases Jesus was at work wherever they went.

Our Lady of Lluc: First stop was the Monastery of Lluc nestling in the beautiful northern mountains, the principal shrine of Mallorca, and a pilgrim site for over 1,000 years. At Lluc Mary is Mother of sorrows or Our lady of Compassion. Lluc is also HQ for the Mallorcan Congregation of Sacred Heart Missionaries who besides going out to many dif-



ferent countries, look after this shrine and a few other holy places on the island. Lluc is the most important Catalan shrine after Montserrat, and frescoes and mosaics there depict the local saints. As well as the ancient Mallorcan saints there are also several more recent ones, including martyrs of the Spanish Civil War 1938.

Ramon Llull: it was our first introduction to Ramon Llul the eccentric 13th century Franciscan lay brother who pioneered many discoveries in philosophy & science. He always described himself as 'a Catalan from Mallorca' and this 'Blessed' is remembered with reverence even by agnostic Mallorquins because of all he did for Catalan culture.

Like St. Augustine, Llull had a sharp and original enquiring mind and would debate with anybody on any subject. Like St. Augustine he too had a complex personal history. He married a respected local woman Bianca Picany with whom he had two children, but never ceased pursuing a string of extra-marital affairs. However, if St. Augustine's youthful exploits are lost in the mists of time, Ramón Llull's are well documented and do not make happy reading. After his conversion experience when he told his wife he wanted to become a Friar, she was perfectly content to wave

goodbye!

His genius in an age of religious belligerence was to reach out in peace to both Jews and Moslems, becoming proficient in both Hebrew and Arabic. At Miramar a spectacular cliff top site on Mallorca's northern coast he established a school for teaching missionaries both these languages. A self educated man who had never been to University he had an extraordinary confidence in the power of logic and reason to sway and convert. He died of injuries after a hostile crowd set upon him after a failed attempt to dialogue with Muslim preachers in Tunisia. Today's Mallorquins are keen to have him canonised as much for his contribution to Catalan culture as for his contribution to mission. They see him as their William Shakespeare.

Juniper Serra: At Petra home town of Juniper Serra (1713-1784) we venerated this Franciscan Missionary who went out to evangelise California and Mexico. He was declared a saint by Pope Francis in 2015. The simplicity of his family home evoked memories of Ibarre and Garicoitchea. The streets nearby carried pictures of many of the missions he founded. Quite a few familiar modern places like San Antonio, San Francisco, Santa Barbara and San Diego began as Juniper Serra's Franciscan missions.

Randa: At Randa Hill with a commanding view of the whole island we found the shrine of Our Lady of Good Health (Cura) another centuries-old

Mallorcan Pilgrimage site, now looked after by Franciscan lay-associates. Various hermitages were dotted around the hillside including one dedicated to St.Honorat. Honorat a 5th century bishop of Arles had never actually been to Mallorca but a French knight began a hermitage here in his honour in the 14th century. Here some of the first Cursillo meetings began in 1944. At all the major holy places the chaplains were quite happy to allow us to celebrate our own group mass, often joined by stray French and German pilgrims.

St.Alphonsus Rodriguez: At Palma the great attraction for us was the Jesuit church of Mont Sion (built on the site of the old jewish quarter) where the Jesuit laybrother Alphonso Rodriguez SJ. was a humble doorkeeper for 46 years. Roughly contemporary with a Jesuit theologian of the same name who wrote books on spirituality, this Alphonsus lived a life of quiet service but became an unofficial spiritual director to many. He is especially dear to English pilgrims because of the poem celebrating his humble service by Gerald Manley Hopkins SJ

Alphonso's service: Like Ramon, Alphonso had also been a married man, but always faithful and devoted to his wife. It devastated him when his wife and three children all died of sickness in quick succession. He afterwards tried to join the Jesuits, but they told him that at 40 he was too

old to think of priestly studies, but could become a lay brother. He lived for another 46 years. While officially simply the doorkeeper he became a spiritual adviser to many people in the town and beyond, including the great Jesuit missionary St. Peter Claver (admired by Pope Francis) who became apostle and patron saint of Colombia.

St. Catalina Tomas: this semi-enclosed Augustinian nun of the 16th century is honoured as patron saint of Mallorca. And her life bears similarities to our own St. Miriam Bouardi. Orphaned at an early age she became a Sister despite some opposition, and was surrounded by many strange spiritual phenomena and mystical experiences all her life. These included visits from angels, devils, Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Catherine of Siena. She had gifts of clairvoyance and prophecy, and wrestled both spiritually and physically with dark powers. She sometimes went into ecstatic trances for days at a time, and foretold the date of her own death in 1574. In Valdemossa, her home town she is known as the Beata Surprisingly she was the saint who made most impact on our little group of pilgrims. When I asked why, the common response concerned the powerful feeling of great love at her simple shrine and the fact that all over the village there were little pictures on the doorposts of Santa Catalina. Catalina never left her convent once she made her vows,

but her influence in homes and families stretches way beyond Mallorca. It is part of the mystery of god's grace that this humble little sister went out to share the good news, despite staying at home.

Our Pilgrims came back to Solihull happy to have met such great examples of mission, and also happy in the knowledge that people are called to 'go out' in mission in different ways, god gives us so many ways of serving, so that even the housebound can be missionary! Like Gerald Manley Hopkins we give thanks for the god of variety

Austin Hughes scj



♦♦♦ At the request of the Regional Superior of Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified Region, Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj, and of his Council, **the mandate of Br. Andrew Ferris scj as superior of the community of Great Barr (Vicariate of England) will be extended for one year**

from January 14, 2019 (expiration date of his first mandate). In summer 2019, the arrival of a religious from Thailand will make it possible to restructure the Vicariate of England, explained Fr Enrico scj in his letter (General Council Session on November 11, 2018).

♦♦♦ Dates of the **next meetings of the General Council:**

9/10 January 2019		20/21 February 2019
3/4 April 2019		5/6 June 2019

♦♦♦ **Agenda of the Superior General:**

On journey for the canonical visit to India: from January 13 to February 10, 2019

On journey for the canonical visit to Thailand: from February 27 to March 27, 2019



On Sunday, November 25, Solemnity of Christ King of the Universe, **Br. Habib Yelouwassi SCJ was ordained Deacon** at the Oloron Cathedral, by the Bishop of Bayonne, Mgr. Marc Aillet. We wish Br. Habib that the Lord will give him a fruitful diaconal ministry and fill him with his blessings.



The Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar announced four religious professions: Br. Thiago Gordiano and Br Leonardo Ferreira (Vicariate of Brazil) will make their profession on December 16th in Belo Horizonte, while Br. Anibal Romero Morán and Br. Oscar Mendoza (Vicariate of Paraguay) will pronounce their first vows on December 22nd in Ciudad del Este.

In memoriam

We received the news of the death of Sister Celeste Antonini (aged 80), the sister of Fr. Carlo Antonini SCJ, of the community of Albavilla (Vicariate of Italy). May she rest in peace. We express our sympathy to her family and we pray for her: may the Lord welcome her into his kingdom of peace!



Father Joseph DOMEcq SCJ

Bidache (France), 21 August 1936 - Pau (France), 26 November 2018

The book of Wisdom has just underlined an essential point of our Faith; death, a necessary passage to find true peace, perfect happiness and eternal life.

Joseph has been weakened by sickness in recent years; his health deteriorated and he had to use a cane with which he did have done well. He struggled for many months to save his appearance as a strong man, but his sickness ate him every day a little more and the heart did not provide him with necessary energy to fuel his will and his vivacity which he showed in his life. [...] It was not easy for him to accept his fragility and vulnerability. And yet even this stripping was necessary to him to accept this letting go, indispensable to accept the limits of our humanity which is our lot to all. [...] The Lord has blessed with graces him to make this trying experience but, despite all speed, of "the external man who goes to ruin but the inner man who renews himself from day to day", as St. Paul said.

If the book of Wisdom sheds light on this trying hour of death, the Gospel brings out the fruits that Jo Domecq produced in his life as Betharramite religious priest. He had many qualities but also faults, like you and me; he had his limits, his resistances, his contradictions, like all of us. He might have suffered from his brothers; he too could have hurt his brothers. All this is in the hand



of God—a merciful hand capable of making effective the reconciliations that would not have been concluded at the human level.

Our brother knew to deploy the gifts and personal capacities of which he was not deprived but which the Lord had granted him widely. As religious of Betharram, it is of course the Heart of Jesus who was his source of love. Because attached to this Heart of Love, as the branch is to the vine, he was able to spread love around him. There are many who have benefited from the compassion, kindness, indulgence and mercy of God. Thanks to his closeness to humanity and his priestly ministry. He knew to prolong the impetus of the Incarnate Word, came into the world not to judge him but to save him, by bringing consola-

tion, comfort and encouragement to the wounded of life and to those who are particularly hardened in this life. Many of you have testified to us that thanks to his human proximity and religious, you could pass through the dark hours. He had a remarkable empathy towards suffering and tests to allow them to overcome the obstacles that are inherent in human life.

As Jesus had been imbued with the loving heart of his mother Mary, Jo was very close to Mary here in Betharram in this sanctuary for 8 years and in Sarrance for 12 years. In this rejuvenated sanctuary, thanks to the sense of beauty he had and the team of collaborators and volunteers he had been able to surround him, it is in our turn the grace of tenderness, mercy and the compassion that we all have to ask for our communities, our families, our movements, our parishes and our neighborhoods; that we be more actors of sharing, peace, serenity and solidarity.

We do not forget that our brother dedicated the first 25 years of his ministry to young people; in the first place, at St Michel Garicoits Vocational Center, from which I am one of the fruits, as chaplain, teacher and bursar of the college of Betharram, then in Pau as chaplain of public institutions, the movement MEJ, the pastoral care of the young people of Béarn, summer camps and assembly outings during weekends. In the aftermath of the Synod of Young People, we should remember how much this ministry which was dear to him

needs to be pursued in the Church and by the congregation despite a less fruitful and deserted context. The mountain had been for him a training school very useful to young people and adults to experience sacrifice and effort, overcoming of their fatigue.

For Jo, now it is the time of harvest. In discretion, we know that he will not make long speeches to the Master of the vineyard whom he meets. Humility, it is the best way to benefit from the mercy of God, which is capable to forgive all our human failings. He can count especially on two of his predecessors who inspired him, here at Betharram St Michael Garicoits and in Pau, St. Mary of Jesus Crucified.

Your physical heart has not been faithful to you till the end. It has pained you. It has made you tired, sad. It is with satisfaction that you could say on this 26 November morning these words of our founder: *"Old heart, place in the heart of Jesus! Disappear forever, old heart. Take his place, O heart of Jesus. Give me to love you."*

Laurent Bacho scj

Who did Michael Garicoits inspire?

Since January 2018, the NEF has presented the spiritual journey of St Michael Garicoits through people who influenced him. To bring the series to a close, let's put it the other way round: who did St Michael Garicoits influence? In truth, it has to be recognised that he is not often quoted! Even if, in 2006, a Vietnamese priest, Thomas Vu Dinh Hieu – a bishop since 2009 – wrote about 'the Will of God according to the spiritual doctrine of St Michael Garicoits'; even if, in the Year for Priests (2009-2010), Michael Garicoits had been given as an example by the Congregation of the Clergy. Let's have a look. ●●●



The Daughters of the Cross, after Jeanne-Elisabeth Bichier des Ages.

'It's the good Sister who did everything. I am indebted to the good sister for all the good I have ever done'. In return, didn't Michael Garicoits also influence her? Sister Mary Magdalene, Daughter of the Cross, explained: *'The founder met Michael Garicoits in 1826; it was at the confessional. His discernment was favorable: he was sent by Providence!'*¹ On 1st July 1828, Monsignor d'Astros said to Sister Jeanne-Elisabeth *'You can ask Father Garicoits to hear the confessions of those sisters who have trouble talking to an ordinary confessor.'*² Soon afterwards, to the Superior at Igon: *'At that moment, I thought the best thing to do was to send all the Daughters in the direction of Michael Garicoits.'*³ When Michael Garicoits became Superior of the Seminary, Jeanne-Elisabeth said to the sisters: *'I'd prefer*

*it if you only confessed once a month to him, rather than see you go every week to someone else.'*⁴

Numerous letters from Father Garicoits to the Daughters of the Cross show his influence with them. When he died, the successor of Father André-Hubert Fournet, testified: *'that closeness, that trust was mutual! Our hearts were always open to his and his heart was always open to ours. In a word, we were of one heart.'*⁵ And he clarified: *'I can confirm that it was from him that the priests and superiors of this congregation of Daughters of the Cross obtained their principles.'*⁶

Louis-Edouard Cestac and the Servants of Mary?

If we forgot to mention Father Cestac amongst those close to Michael Garicoits, the Servants of Mary would be offended. Were

1) Conference given at Igon on 11 July 1985 during the session of 150 years of the Betharram congregation.

2) Fr Mieyaa: *The life of St Michael Garicoits*, p1336

3) *Ibidem*

4) Fr Mieyaa ac p1337

5) Bourdenne, *Life and Letters*, p231 quoted by Fr Mieyaa ac p1334

6) *Family News* 1947 p7 quoted by Fr Mieyaa ac p1341

the founders not friends? Were the first rules not written in Betharram in 1841? Don't the two spiritualities connect the '*Here I Am*' of the Sacred Heart and the '*I am the Lord's servant*' of Mary? All that is true! But... '*the dominant mark of their spirituality appears to be different: Michael and his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Edouard's to the Virgin Mary...*'⁷ When the latter went to Betharram, was he 'close to Our Lady' or 'close to his friend Michael'?

When the Virgin showed him there was no need to create the '(masculine) Servants of Mary', when the priest who assisted him turned out to be ill-suited, Cestac was forced to go to Garicoits: In 1861, Father Casau was chaplain at Our Lady of Refuge in Anglet.⁸ '*Workers for God, founders, they always cherished each other, but never copying each other, never imitating each other. (...) it is only through their successors that these men lent themselves a real contest, which they could only glimpse rather than test throughout their last days.*'⁹

What about Bernadette Soubirous?

7) Sr Isabelle Lordon, SM, Louis-Edouard Cestac and Michael Garicoits, *cross destiny*, in *Our Church* number 57 – March 2015 p32

8) Jean Casau, born in Benejacq in 1812, ordained priest in 1842, entered into the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1844, first as missionary then chaplain of the Servants of Mary in Anglet 1861-1864 and from 1868 to his death in 1880. (cf Fr Mieyaa ac p1145)

9) Fr de Madaune, *Priestly heroism in Fr Garicoits and Fr Cestac*. A Goudeaux, editor, Paris 1882 p82-83

In the 19th Century, the people from Lourdes were the pilgrims to Betharram: In February 1858, before the apparitions, Bernadette was there; indeed her Rosary came from there. To nourish his people, Michael Garicoits had a word with the neighbouring millers; during the period of scarcity in 1846, François Soubirous gave him some flour: a poor man saving the poor...

Monsignor Laurence, Bishop of Tarbes, directed Bernadette to Father Garicoits: since their days at the school in Aire where he taught Mathematics, he respected Michael; and the young girl, Bernadette, could not fear someone she knew through her family. No sooner had the apparitions been recognised, than Father Garicoits became one of the first donors to Lourdes; he searched for other donors, as far away as America. He was a pilgrim to the grotto, three times!¹⁰

What influence did Michael have on Bernadette? A large one, according to Fr Miéyaa! Unquestionable, according to Fr Jean Oyhenart! The latter confirmed: '*The visionary of Betharram was the confidant, the support and the guide of the young visionary of Lourdes.*'¹¹ There was no need to exaggerate! Bernadette was 14 years old at the time of the apparitions and 19 when Michael Garicoits died: at that time, could a girl of that social status have a 'spiritual director'? We can agree that a spoken tradition would have existed... However:

10) Cf Fr Mieyaa ac p1711

11) Fr J Oyhenart, *The Visionary of Lourdes St Bernadette Soubirous with the Visionary of Betharram, St Michael Garicoits*, 1988.

not one mention of "Garicoits" in Bernadette's notes and letters! No "Bernadette" or "Soubirous" from the Betharram Superior!

Would Lourdes kill off Betharram? Michael Garicoits responded: *'It is Lourdes that will send everyone to Betharram!'* And it was from Lourdes that Jean Soubirous (1878-1910) came to Betharram, nephew of Bernadette and religious brother of the Sacred Heart in Argentina.

So, who is the disciple of St Michael Garicoits?

Who aligns themselves with this saint of Betharram? Reserved people, doubtlessly... First of all, his first companions...

And especially Auguste Etchécopar!

The Society of Auxilliary Priests of the Holy Cross of Oloron having been dissolved in 1855, the young Father Etchécopar entered the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In July 1857, Father Garicoits called him to Betharram: as master of novices, he became his friend and his confident. Then secretary general of the institute (1863-1873), general assistant to Father Chirou (1873), finally third superior general (1874-1897).

At the head of the Congregation, he had three priorities: endorsement of the Society, the canonisation of Michael Garicoits and the consolidation of his work. At his death, these objectives were complete – the recognition and extension of the institute – or a good way towards it – in 1899, the introduction of

the cause of Michael Garicoits in Rome. The consecutive general Chapter at the death of Father Etchécopar (1897) declared him 'second founder'.

'He was universally regarded as a second Garicoits, as much in the diocese as in the Congregation: he equalled the founder in the practice of virtues' wrote Monsignor Jauffret.¹² Father Duvignau explained: *'He discovered more than any other, more than the first companions of the saint themselves, the excellence of this spirituality. He was totally taken with it from the first day ; He had no greater care than to soak it up completely and to pass it on to all his people.'*¹³

May all the Betharramites drinking from the same spring, religious and lay people, soak up the spirituality of St Michael Garicoits and pass it on! From 6th July 1947 when Pius XII canonised him, they no longer had the right to keep this spirituality for themselves!

*'As for us, let us remember and follow the line of conduct imparted by the revered founder... may others act differently, according to what the Holy Spirit has called them to do, for that is good; may they therefore stand out in the Church! The gifts are different, and so are the ministers. For us, our motto will always be: devotion and humility, following our role model, who made the most modest and the most dedicated man in the world..., Father Garicoits.'*¹⁴

Beñat Oyhenart scj

12) Monsignor Jauffret, Bishop of Bayonne.

13) Fr Duvignau, the man with the face of light

14) Letter to Fr Etchecopar, dated 13th January 1891, Bethlehem.



The Son of God (...) takes for himself our destitution and gives us his treasures: he takes on our weaknesses and raises us to his glory. He shares our troubles in order to help us in all our needs. St Stephen is filled with strength because Jesus took on his weakness. Jesus is in the stable in all his poverty... and St Stephen is triumphant and glorious in Heaven thanks to the merits of Jesus. St Stephen enters the glory of this God-man, he is enriched by his destitution, made greater and glorified by his shame; exalted by his humiliations and he becomes blessed by his sufferings. | M 411



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

Generalate House

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

www.betharram.net