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A word from the superior general

“The Source of Welcome”

*“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me,
and let him who believes in me drink”...
“Rivers of living water will flow from him.”
(John 7.37-38)*

Dear Betharramites,

Back in the 70's, 80's... the Betharram Chapel was opened up every day to welcome visitors, attracted by the Calvary, the Shrine of Mary and the Chapel of the Founder. A friendly Betharramite father named Jean Oyhénart (who lost an arm in the WWI) would receive those who came, furnished with his cassette recorder hanging gracefully from the sleeve of his missing arm. His jovial attitude said it all...

The years that have passed since then have not erased the memories of those who witnessed his guided visits, blessed by the simplicity of a religious who made the Gospel words his own: “Come and see” (John 1.39), and he enriched it with the slogan of San Michael Garicoits: Always be happy!

How important it has always been for Betharram to practice fraternal welcome! Receive the other as he deserves.. *'considering others as superior to oneself'* (cf. Phil 2. 3). I think that those who have the gift of receiving with a smile, with the glass of water ready, with a room ready, the bed already made, have pride of place in the Kingdom of the humble: they have put into practice the command to "Open your door". They have done it here, amongst us...

This precious gift is found in so many of our Brothers. The respect and concern for those who arrive, or for the one en passage, respect for the one who comes looking for a listening ear or a word of faith, have edified me. And I don't say this because of the welcome shown to me because of official protocol (and for which I am grateful); but, rather, for the times in which I have seen in our family that same attention that was paid to strangers, the simple and the small.

Sometimes it is nothing more than an extension of cultural values:

About Central Africa I have already spoken to you before... but how to forget the occasion when in a strange place a group of young people appeared to help change a tyre for the sweating Brother Angelo! And what about the jug of water that they brought to him so that he could wash his hands afterwards!

In Minas Gerais (and in Brazil

in general), for example, people are always made very welcome. When a visitor arrives, they invite him in. A coffee is offered. When someone participates for the first time in the Sunday Mass, he is invited to raise his hand before the celebration begins and a song is sung celebrating his presence: *Seja benvindo!* When saying goodbye to the community, you usually hear...: Come back always!

The hospitality of the Land of Jesus is well known: where there is a culture of sharing and it is not possible to refuse a dinner invitation, for example. I remember well meeting a Muslim man who was returning from the field with his harvest of cucumbers, as he drew near me (as I was about to pay him a visit), he offered me one: saying that he had to "share what Allah had given him in Grace".

In Ivory Coast they offer a glass of water when both you arrive and when you leave. You 'ask for the road' before leaving. It is like a "permit" granted by the head of the house or community so you can retire worthily from the place you are visiting. It is gratitude for the welcome and a sign of respect.

Twice I've been to India. What can I say about the hospitality! There a party is prepared, with many flowers, candles, a welcome speech and dances too. It is not unusual for crowns and pendants to be placed around the neck of the one welcomed, and sometimes

they even paint "the third eye" in your brow.

According to my brothers, in Thailand respect for the guest is very important, the same in Vietnam. Those two places in the East, as well as the noble England in the West, are places that I have never had the chance to visit just yet. However, I have shared some encounters with quite a few Betharramites from those places, to recognise in them that same virtue of hospitality.

Finally, in Uruguayan and Argentine lands there is a saying: "A maté is never refused, ... and a barbecue is never lacking ..." Its popular origin marks the hospitality of our peoples, blessed by a fertile land, whose European-American roots are the fruit of a meeting of cultures. Fruit that could be sweet or bitter (like the maté...), but whose result has been a remarkable openness to the weary traveller.

A separate paragraph dedicated to the Paraguayans, who love to meet, share and celebrate. The most precious symbol is the tereré (an infusion of yerba maté, ice, and other refreshing medicinal herbs that is shared in a group of friends).

What a contrast for this world in which we daily contemplate the face of discrimination, discord and violence! Let us be prophets of welcome and joyful proclamation of the Gospel today. To accept others is to receive everyone as Christ, especially those who do not have the means to repay us. Do it so that

they feel happy, loving them as well as God has loved us.

How good it is to see a Betharramite who is dedicated to listening, serving and accompanying people! And how sad when, perhaps out of fear, or because of a subtle and unjustifiable pride, we allow ourselves to be dragged by prejudices and we reject someone who seems different to us!

I think that dedicating time to people, even with small daily gestures, is like planting Life. It was a focus of St. Michael Garicoits when he told Father Barbé in Moncade:

I send you Brother Saint-Martin; He is a saint, but you have to teach him how to receive people, take him to the parlour and have him sit properly and then call the person who needs his attention, that's all; you don't need to go any further in terms of your job as a doorman... (Letter 296)

The one who dedicates time to another, receiving him, without criticising him or neglecting him (as burdensome, unattractive or inopportune) does a double work of charity. All of us one day were received with love and delicacy into this Family of Betharram. I'm a witness to it here in Italy!

With the same gratuity, I invite you to give yourselves. This is what poor people do: they are in solidarity with the pilgrim and give him even what they do not have. In Santiago del Estero the cry is

famous: *Paaasen!* (They're coming!) Then... a chair in the shade, a small glass of fresh water taken from the well, or a maté with homemade bread, how many countless faces are recalled, as I write this!

If we can do it in our communities, it may be the first sign that we believe that Betharram is alive in the Church. Because a welcome attracts vocations, even here in Europe. In the last meeting of Superiors General I heard the testimony of a young man who had gone to Taizé and remembered that the first night, when he arrived, they told him: "You are at home here".

We know that it is part of our essence to manifest and reproduce with sincere love these gestures of welcome, so that everyone feels welcome in our communities.

"He came to his own and his own did not receive him ..."

"... but to those who did receive him he gave them the power to become Children of God" (John 1.11-12a).

Fr. Gustavo SCJ
SUPERIEUR GENERAL



Homily of His Holiness Pope Francis - Holy Mass on the solemnity of Pentecost

Vatican Basilica, Sunday, 20 May 2018

In the first reading of today's Liturgy, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is compared to "*the rush of a violent wind*" (Acts 2:2). What does this image tell us? It makes us think of a powerful force that is not an end in itself, but effects change. Wind in fact brings change: warmth when it is cold, cool when it is hot, rain when the land is parched... this is way it brings change. The Holy Spirit, on a very different level, does the same. He is the divine force that changes the world. The Sequence reminded us of this: the Spirit is "*in toil, comfort sweet; solace in the midst of woe*". And so we beseech him: "*Heal our wounds, our strength renew; on our dryness pour your dew; wash the stains of guilt away*". The Spirit enters into situations and transforms them. He changes hearts and he changes situations.

The Holy Spirit changes hearts. Jesus had told his disciples: "*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses*" (Acts 1:8). That is exactly what happened. Those disciples, at first fearful, huddled behind closed doors even after the Master's resurrection, are transformed by the Spirit and, as Jesus says in today's Gospel, "*they bear witness to him*" (cf. Jn 15:27). No longer hesitant, they are courageous and starting from Jerusalem, they go forth to the ends of the earth. Timid while Jesus was still among them, they are bold when he is gone, because



the Spirit changed their hearts. The Spirit frees hearts chained by fear. He overcomes all resistance. To those content with half measures he inspires whole-hearted generosity. He

opens hearts that are closed. He impels the comfortable to go out and serve. He drives the self-satisfied to set out in new directions. He makes the lukewarm thrill to new dreams. That is what it means to change hearts. [...] The change that the Spirit brings does not revolutionize life around us, but changes our hearts. It does not free us from the weight of our problems, but liberates us within so that we can face them. It does not give us everything at once, but makes us press on confidently, never growing weary of life. [...]

The Spirit does not only change hearts; he changes situations. Like the wind that blows everywhere, he penetrates to the most unimaginable situations. In the Acts of the Apostles – a book we need to pick up and read, whose main character is the Holy Spirit – we are caught up in an amazing series of events. When the disciples least expect it, the Holy Spirit sends them out to the pagans. He opens up new paths, as in the episode of the deacon Philip. The Spirit drives Philip to a desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza... (How heartrending that name sounds to us today! May the Spirit change hearts and situations and bring peace to the Holy Land!) Along the way, Philip preaches to an Ethiopian court official and bap-

tizes him. Then the Spirit brings him to Azotus, and then on to Caesarea, in constantly new situations, to spread the newness of God. Then too, there is Paul, “compelled by the Spirit” (Acts 20:22), who travels far and wide, bringing the Gospel to peoples he had never seen. Where the Spirit is, something is always happening; where he blows, things are never calm.

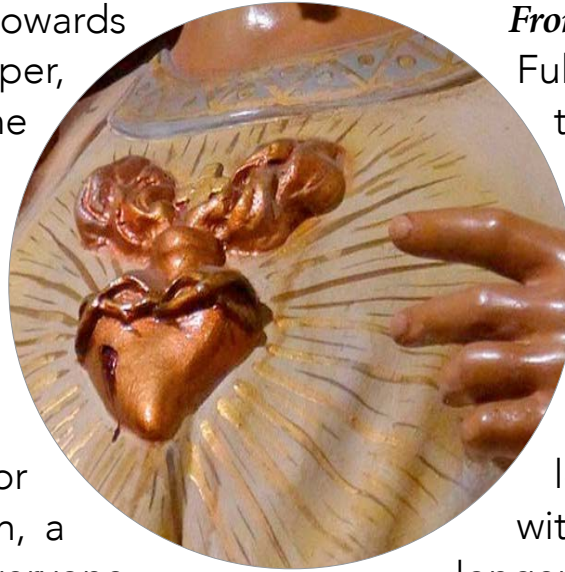
When, in the life of our communities, we experience a certain “listlessness”, when we prefer peace and quiet to the newness of God, it is a bad sign. It means that we are trying to find shelter from the wind of the Spirit. When we live for self-preservation and keep close to home, it is not a good sign. The Spirit blows, but we lower our sails. And yet, how often have we seen him work wonders! Frequently, even in the bleakest of times, the Spirit has raised up the most outstanding holiness! Because he is the soul of the Church, who constantly enlivens her with renewed hope, fills her with joy, makes her fruitful, and causes new life to blossom. In a family, when a new baby is born, it upsets our schedules, it makes us lose sleep, but it also brings us a joy that renews our lives, driving us on, expanding us in love. So it is with the Spirit: he brings a “taste of childhood” to the Church. Time and time again he gives new birth. He revives our first love. The Spirit reminds the Church that, for all her centuries of history, she is always the youthful bride with whom the Lord is madly in love. Let us never tire of welcoming the Spirit into our lives, of invoking him before everything we do: “Come, Holy Spirit!”

He will bring his power of change, a unique power that is, so to say, both centripetal and centrifugal. It is centripetal, that is, it seeks the centre, because it works deep within our hearts. It brings unity amid division, peace amid affliction, strength amid temptations. Paul reminds us of this in the second reading, when he writes that the fruits of the Spirit are joy, peace, faithfulness and self-control (cf. Gal 5:22). The Spirit grants intimacy with God, the inner strength to keep going. Yet, at the same time, he is a centrifugal force, that is, one pushing outward. The one who centres us is also the one who drives us to the peripheries, to every human periphery. The one who reveals God also opens our hearts to our brothers and sisters. He sends us, he makes us witnesses, and so he pours out on us – again in the words of Paul – love, kindness, generosity and gentleness. Only in the Consoler Spirit do we speak words of life and truly encourage others. Those who live by the Spirit live in this constant spiritual tension: they find themselves pulled both towards God and towards the world.

Let us ask him to make us live in exactly that way. Holy Spirit, violent wind of God, blow upon us, blow into our hearts and make us breathe forth the tenderness of the Father! Blow upon the Church and impel her to the ends of the earth, so that, brought by you, she may bring nothing other than you. Blow upon our world the soothing warmth of peace and the refreshing cool of hope. Come Holy Spirit, change us within and renew the face of the earth. Amen. •

Saint Michael Garicoits and the Sacred Heart | Return to the source

Since John leaned towards Jesus at the Last Supper, since he witnessed the spear piercing His side and since the spiritual thinkers, from the Middle Ages to the 17th Century, stepped into the breach, the way has been open ; or rather a heart is open, a living spring where everyone is called to quench their thirst. Michael Garicoits drew inspiration from it for a new community : through union with Christ, in submission to His Spirit, to become co-workers of the Sacred Heart (DS § 7), to love and to serve like Him.



From the Father's Heart –
Fully part of the Heart of this God who is Father, and who makes the first steps towards us: *"It has pleased God to make himself loved"*. With the incarnation, God no longer wants to do without man; God is no longer separable from man.

Also, after sending prophets, and in order to communicate his own life, He has spoken to us in person: *"while we were still his enemies, he loved us so much that he sent his only Son"*.

From the manger to Calvary, the saint of Betharram never grew tired of contemplating the one and same mystery: *"the divinity of Jesus Christ made visible, made palpable in His humanity"* (DS § 98). His personal touch was to go back from the pierced side to the first beat of the Incarnate Word. And from there to access the source: the heart of God himself. In the beginning was Love. And the way of love is to go constantly towards the other person. Such is the path recounted in the 'Manifestation', the founding text where St Michael Garicoits delivered the crux of his reflections¹ in 1838.

Faced with indifference and refusal, God does not force His way through. He gives His Son « *to be the magnet which draws us to divine love, to be the model which shows us the dynamic of love, and to be the means of attaining divine love.* » He is the appeal, because he attracts us to himself by awakening our deep desire, by raising it and guiding it to the Father. He is the role model, because we have to attune our behaviour, our way of loving, discerning and embracing the will of God « *dissolved in charity* » (DS § 100), to His. He is the way, because only grace can save love from its imitations, and from our inconsistencies. Reduced to ourselves, the task seemed superhuman. That is why the Son of God was made flesh. The originality of Christianity is not therefore to

1) *I tre momenti di questa contemplazione sono ripresi dal P. Joseph Mirande, cfr, NEF, gennaio 1984*

believe in God, but to believe that God was made man. St Michael takes everything down to this specific detail, which makes his spirituality so simple and so essential at the same time.

Through the Son's Heart – The Son of God enters into the world brought to life by the Spirit of His Father : the Father, the Son and the Spirit are one in the fulfillment of salvation. At each moment of His existence, the Son gives a body and a face to the love of God for everyone ; he embodies it. In human style, the Son becomes what he is for the Father: an offering of love, a total gift, a joy in the Spirit. The fullness, condensed in the constant 'Here I am' of man towards God and of God towards man. From one to the others, the Sacred Heart is, so to speak, the interface, the junction, of communication and of communion.

At the centre of the Manifestation as in the history of salvation, the hymn of the New Adam resounds (letter 112): *"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,... Then I said: 'Here I am, I have come to do your will.'"* (Ps 39,8 ; Heb 10,7-9). In the Incarnate Word, there is no distance between being and saying, between saying and doing. So, the Here I am delivers the secret of the Son by expressing the double desire of his Heart, both a call of love towards the Father and an act of love for the whole of humanity. Until his supreme gift (Phil 2.8).

Looking towards the Crucified One makes us understand the

passion of God for man: a painful passion for Him who took *the place of all victims* (destroyed): a loving passion which reveals the truth of emotions and of the project of the Father (obedient). With St Michael Garicoïts, the Heart of Jesus is not just a symbol of suffrance; he focuses all the dynamism of the initial Here I am. The Incarnation expresses an absolute openness to the world, an assumed vulnerability. God gives Himself to us for us to unite with Him. *"This is how God loved us..."*

To the heart of St Michael Garicoïts and to our hearts – The pascal mystery is just as much an object of adoration as a remit for mission. At the foot of the cross, Father Garicoïts holds back no longer: *"O my God, You have so loved me! O God, You have done so much to obtain my love. You have so desired and do so desire that I love You! ...My heart is ready, I will stop at nothing to prove to You my love."* (DS § 74) That is the gesture of birth of the religious of the Sacred Heart *"At the sight of this marvellous spectacle, the priests of Betharram felt drawn to dedicate themselves to imitating Jesus"*. Emotional union, through contemplation, leads to emotional commitment, in action.

"Here I am, without hesitation, without reservation, without looking back, out of love for the will of my God" (DS § 9) The words are addressed to God for the service of our neighbours. They contain a whole programme for living, the same

programme of the Sacred Heart (cf. DS § 6). *"Perfect dedication, from which 'devotion' derives its name, needs us to do the will of God with love. God likes us to give to Him with joy and, in all that He prescribes, it is the heart He is asking for."* (MS)

The charism of St Michael Garicoits expresses in his own way the crux of the Christian life: a response of love to the infinite love of God. Nothing more, nothing less, but just that. When we discover we are loved, we discover we are capable of loving. *« Forward, I know your heart and you know mine, O Lord. You know that I love you. That is enough. Here I am. I can do all things because I can do nothing. »* (DS § 8) So, since the life of God beat in a heart like ours, man is restored in his identity. Dehumanised by sin, he finds the dignity of a son

again. By receiving God, he also receives brothers to love. The only condition is to be transformed, to come out of ourselves, to accept the will of the Other as a way of happiness for all others. As that's exactly what it is to « bring to others » peace and hope, kindness and trust which are at the heart of Jesus.

"What does our Lord teach us? Tenderness everywhere: in the incarnation, His infancy, the Passion, His Sacred Heart, all his Person, inwardly and outwardly, His words, His works, His looks ...

What should mainly characterise our spiritual life? Christian tenderness. Without this tenderness we shall never possess that spirit of generosity with which we must serve God." (Saint Michael Garicoits, MS p. 200)

Jean-Luc Morin scj

A rather unusual match

Thailand loves football. They haven't qualified for the next World Cup, but away from the qualifying games, there was a rather unusual match played in Chiang Mai in January 2018. As per the usual tradition – after the morning's ordinations at the Cathedral and a celebratory meal, a football game is organised between – would you believe it – the Sacred Heart team and the Ecce Venio team! The members of the Sacred Heart team are priests and other religious from Chiang Mai diocese, and the Ecce Venio team members are from the teaching staff at the Cathedral.

What an unprecedented line-up : Sacred Heart against Ecce Venio. Is it Mission Impossible – will Ecce Venio be able to beat Sacred Heart on the football pitch ?

The pitch chosen is in the middle of town : it's out in the real world that this particular sparring match must take place. The pitch has netting around it to stop the ball disappearing, as the game



reaches unexpected heights of intensity! Sacred Heart cannot stop, otherwise it's definitely death! Ecce Venio are always in action and moving fast and there's no time for a time-out! They have to keep pushing forwards, and what a coincidence, each team's motto is "Always Forward!".

The spectators are really enjoying watching the two teams in action. Sacred Heart players play quickly and with good discipline – they take a moment to breathe, recover and stay playing as one team, each with a part to play. They are also fascinated by the agility of the Ecce Venio players, who are trying to get in the way of the Sacred Heart players' moves, and going so far as to fake an offside call in order to unsettle the Sacred Heart team's « polite » game.

The spectators slowly realise that this particular football game has a special atmosphere compared to what you would normally feel at other football games. On the pitch, there is a feeling of fraternity, joy and peace. Each player has his role to play, and plays his part without chasing individual glory. Quite a curious attitude from these teams!

Our spectators can't keep score and they don't quite know who won... but that doesn't really matter, does it ? As the final whistle blows, they can see that the most important thing is to have a great time, whether it's the Sacred Heart team whose important virtue is to « give all for free », or the Ecce Venio team, whose freedom to play is a real asset. The two teams out there on the pitch both want the same thing: to share this football game, this moment of happiness, and to share the passion that unites the two teams.

Jean-Dominique Delgue scj

Going out to drink from the same source, ...how?

Picking up the Acts of the Chapter, and then what happens? Which challenges does a Vicariate have to face in order to carry out the new orientations and particular instructions? Fr. Tiziano shares with us the experience of the Vicariate of Central Africa as a first stage on such a journey. ●●●



The latest General Chapter asked us emphatically to “go out, without hesitation, and meet the world”. In order to do this, we Betharramites need to strengthen our identity and to be conscious of who we are, so that we are not swept away in the myriad of streams that separate us and lead to nowhere.

So the first challenge is to really understand our Rule of Life. During his recent visit last April, Fr. Gustavo emphasised how our Vicariate lives “on the edge of the edge”, and expressed his admiration for our “simple and austere” life.

He did however leave us with a recommendation: to find our true “position”, that place where we really feel God calling us.

We should always remember that God called us to serve his church through the Betharram family. This is why our Rules, filled with the spirit and the wise words of Saint Michel,

are so important.

I do hope that each Betharramite keeps a copy on his desk, ideally accessible and not covered with dust. We should remember that these “small particles” can cause the most damage to our health. We should take great care of our Rules, and thus also our spiritual and apostolic lives... it is our duty as a religious.

But this isn't quite enough... In our Vicariate, the Rules are applied in different ways in each community, particularly when it comes to the time for community prayer. The importance of community prayer seems to be missing, and it needs to be re-established in a more profound manner within the vicariate, as a guide to our spiritual and apostolic life.

Each religious, the Council of the Vicariate and myself first of all are invited to acknowledge this. We can recognise that we don't make much of an effort to publicise our Rules or make sure that they are being read. We believe, and rightly so, that it is a faithful rendering of Saint Michel's spirituality for us to use in the service of the Church. So it seems more natural to us during our meetings and gatherings to take an extract from the *Spiritual Doctrine* or one of Saint Michael's letters. We rarely use

one of the Rules articles as a talking point... Are we Betharramites some kind of "free spirits"?

The General Chapter of San Bernardino reminds us that *"thanks to the Congregation, our vision has become more international and our cultural differences enrich us"*. Meeting other people always puts our personal "comfort zone" at risk, but it opens a whole other set of possibilities – a chance to leave our mediocre, daily, small-world routines behind us. Routines which, instead of opening our minds, close them off and turn us into nothing more than hypocrites.

Our Vicariate used to belong to the old Province of Italy. Over time, it welcomed young people from Africa and now two of them are Betharramites. Moreover, recently some religious from the Ivory Coast have also joined us. Next October, a religious from the "Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified" Region is going to be part of one of our communities in Central Africa. Our Vicariate is most certainly a welcoming one.

We have always tried to give our new arrivals maximum responsibility and maximum trust. One of them is the bursar of our Vicariate and others will soon take on greater responsibilities. If we are really each in our place, ready and willing to serve, we can value the differences between us. Father Gustavo reiterated that such differences help us work out what needs to be done, so that Love and brotherly spirit can be

strengthened.

Each of the religious at the Vicariate has a well-defined mission. This could lead to difficulties for community life, because individualistic behaviour may come to the fore. We need to be conscious of this, and sometimes, for the good of the community, stop working on the "emergencies". But that's not always easy. When you live and work with poor people, it's true that there are always emergencies – and you just need to keep a clear head and remember your responsibilities towards your own community.

This is why it's so important to have a community project, something simple but solid. To date only one of our communities has a confirmed project, that gets periodically reviewed and worked on. The two other communities only have two veteran religious each, so I think that a third religious is needed, in order to set up a community project within the rules. And the Providence has already set the wheels in motion. P. Gustavo said "I don't think you meant to put community life on the backburner".

We also take a moment to thank the young people who came on placement to us as part of their training.

The last General Chapter reminded us that *"the laity help us to remain faithful to our identity and encourage us to move forwards"*. Our Vicariate does not yet have a group of lay Betharramites. There were a few attempts to set something up but

they came to nothing. We must try again. That being said, our Vicariate often receives visits from lay people, who provide great support for our various social awareness projects. And these are people of all ages : from 18 to 80. Many have come back to see us several times and almost all fondly remember their time with us. Yes, numbers have diminished in recent years, doubtless because of the current difficult political situation; but perhaps also because we haven't been as forthcoming with our invitations. Nevertheless, we know that we can always count on them. Having lay people sharing our lives 24/7 is always interesting and stimulating.. and certainly helps us keep our feet on the ground.

And let us not forget our young people. Here is what San Bernardino reminds us (I mean the Chapter, of course!) "we need to keep our doors and our hearts open, so that young people in particular can get to know us more. To accompany them in order to enable them to discern their project of life or their vocation". And the Chapter for the promotion of vocations is starting... there will be other occasions to talk about this, to meet on a regional level and to meet with the Congregation, all the while remembering our Rules of course...

Let me finish up with a few words of hope, and tell you about a project for a new community in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic. I'll keep it brief because it is just at

the very beginning. In fact I'll let Fr. Gustavo speak for me; *"The missionary integration at Bangui is becoming clearer. We need to speak about it with Cardinal Nzapalainga [...]. There are two main objectives : pastoral care work with young people and vocations, and also missionary promotion in the Bimbo area of Bangui (an area of the city which is growing rapidly), where there is little Catholic presence"*.

And lastly, some words from our Superior General : *"May Saint Michel Garicoïts, who, through the Child Jesus, contemplated the mystery of God's love for the poor, help us to use the Vicariate to bring about a new chapter of mission, this time in Central Africa"*! Brotherly wishes to all!

Tiziano Pozzi scj

* As at September 2017, our mission at Niem is only geographically part of Central Africa, because the Central African State (with its administration) took itself out...

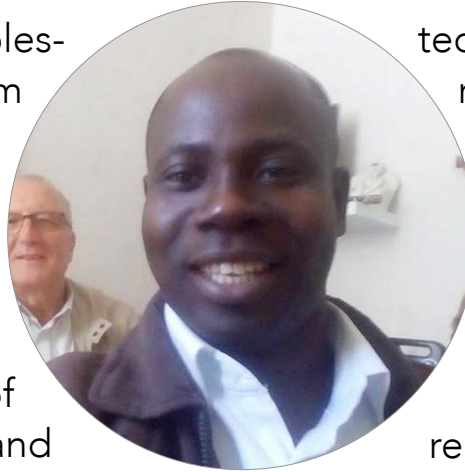
Pastoral ministry in the year preparing for perpetual vows

To thank God for all his blessings, such is the dynamism in which I find myself when sharing with you the evaluation of this year here in Betharram, our Source Place.

Indeed, full of the joy of discovering Betharram and its reality in order to live this free year fully, very early after my first week, I realized how rich the place was, what task and energy had to be engaged, since the harvest is plentiful but the harvesters rare.

The community welcomed me kindly and has helped me to integrate myself well. To say the Offices in the Oratory in front of St. Michael's bedroom, to celebrate the daily Eucharist in his chapel and in Our Lady's Sanctuary, and the Way of the Cross to the Calvary with its peculiar 15 Stations crowned by the Resurrection Chapel ; also the meetings with Father Laurent on reading St. Michael's letters, welcoming the pilgrims and visitors coming to our Center ; So many riches to discover and assimilate, which allowed me to renew myself, to deepen my knowledge of Betharram and Saint Michael. Though one year is not enough to master all the riches abounding in Betharram.

With Father Henry Marsaa-Poey, I am involved in the school of Betharram for pastoral activities and ca-



techism, a beautiful experience but which asks for more implication to be effectively present and more dynamic. The elderly Fathers in the Retirement Home greatly edify me and every time remind me of Psalm 91 :

"Ageing, he still bears fruit and keeps his sap and greenness..." The dynamism of the new team of the Home helps to foster a fraternal atmosphere.

I am also active in the almonery of the Henry 4th School in Nay, and I accompany the Scouts. Thanks to the proximity of Lourdes, I can live personal times of prayer at the grotto. All this is not without difficulties : moments of weariness, a gathering of elderly people being different from our African ways, a rather small community with many activities. However, I live these moments with an interior joy which makes me grow and open myself to the realities here.

Habib Cossi Yelouwassi scj

*Betharramite Brother from Benin,
currently in the year of special preparation
in view of the final profession,
(Community Notre-Dame / France)*



**CONGREGATION OF
THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS
OF BETHARRAM**

On May 14, memory day of our Father St. Michael Garicoits, has been a day solemnly celebrated by the family scattered in every latitude and continent.

We have received manifold information and testimonies about how the communities and the Vicariates have lived and underlined this anniversary.

In all these special events the core of the feast was the solemn concelebration in which the religious and the Betharramite laity wanted to thank the Lord for the gift of Saint Michael Garicoit's holiness.

In the Republic of Central Africa, the religious of the Vicariate gathered on May 12, all together with the Regional Vicar, Fr. Tiziano Pozzi scj. It has been a day of sharing, prayer and fraternity.

The religious of the Vicariate of Thailand had similar celebrations, on May 12, in Chiang Mai. The occasion of the feast of St. Michael Garicoits has been graced by the presence of Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj, the new Regional Superior. In the solemn concelebration, three of our young brothers made their first profession to Fr. Enrico.

In Betharram, cradle of the Congregation and place where the Saint lived and died, the festivities were focused on the 90th anniversary of the

blessing of the Saint Michael Chapel, which took place on May 14, 1928.

On the same day, the religious held the assembly of the Vicariate, followed by the gathering of the Council of the Vicariate. In brief: a meaningful and intensive day!

In Paso de los Toros (Uruguay) the feast of St. Michael was celebrated in three different occasions. First of all there was a prayerful moment in community with morning prayer. In the afternoon, a solemn mass was concelebrated by the three religious of the community, in the presence of many lay people and of the religious community of the Salesian Sisters. The day ended turning in a joyful celebration in the parish hall where everyone contributed for a shared table.

At the San José College of Asunción (Paraguay), during the concelebration presided by our Betharramite Bishops Mgr Claudio Silvero scj and Mgr Ignazio Gogorza scj. The young aspirants and postulants brought the statue of the Saint to the altar, so as to underline that they want to make their own the style and the spirituality of the Saint. The young people of the FVD Group enlivened the celebration with the songs and meant to reaffirm their commitment to imitating the virtues of Saint Michael. At the end of the Mass everyone had the opportunity to venerate the relics of St Michael Garicoits.

On Monday 14th May, St Michael Garicoits feast day, the "St Michael" community of Albavilla wanted to

celebrate the priesthood anniversaries of several Fathers. Fr. Alessandro Paniga scj, Superior of the community, presided over the concelebration and shared with the congregation Fr. Etchecopar's prayer to St Michael:

"Thank you, Father,
for everything we owe you.
It was you who initiated us
into religious life.
It was you who grouped us with
your mission from heaven.
For you we were enrolled under this
flag, which carries two hearts
with the sublime uniform:
Here I am! Ecce venio!
You were our guide, our light,
our perfect model, our strength
and our consolation.
Oh Father carry on!
Let us be your imitators,
as you were of Jesus Christ.
Protect all those
whom Jesus has given you.
Defend your work, the same work
of Jesus and Mary.
Let us be holy and perfect!"

Finally all the communities of Brazil solemnly celebrated the feast of Saint Michael Garicoïts, in different ways.

On May 13, feast of our founding father St Michael Garicoïts, Fr. Gilberto Ortellado SCJ celebrated twenty years of his priestly ordination, twelve of which spent in the Betharramite Vicariate of Brazil.

On May 14, solemnity of Saint Michael Garicoïts, the Betharramite laity and the fathers of the parish of Our Lady of Belo Ramo (São Paulo) ga-

thered together and celebrated our founding father with a Mass and a brotherly gathering.

We conclude recalling and making our the following prayer of Saint Michael Garicoïts (cf. DS 273): *"My God, do not look at my sins, but at the Society that your Sacred Heart has conceived and formed. Deign to grant it Your peace, that peace according to Your Will that alone can pacify it, and unite more closely all its members with each other, with their superiors and with Your divine Heart, so that they may be one as You and the Father and the Holy Spirit are one. Amen. Fiat! Fiat!"*



REGION ST MICHAEL GARICOÏTS

FRANCE ^{SPAIN} IVORY COAST
ITALY ^{CENTRAL AFRICA} HOLY LAND

France-Spain

Pau, 24 May 2018 - The Congregation celebrated the extraordinary event of the 150th anniversary of the transverberation of the heart of St Myriam of Jesus Crucified at the "St Michel" community of Pau, which took place on May 24, 1868 in the hermitage "Our Lady of the Mount Carmel". A triduum of preparation helped highlight the great significance of this event.

On the first day, the Superior of the Bayonne Major Seminary, Fr Philippe Beitia, gave a speech on transverberation; this was followed

by a candlelight procession on the site where this event took place 150 years ago.

The following day, Friday, the Vespers were solemnly celebrated in the chapel of the "Saint Michel" house of Pau, followed by a vigil of praise, in which the small choir "St Michel Garicoïts" and the Emmanuel community entertained the assembly with songs based on the message of charity and humility offered by Mariam.

On Saturday, after the morning prayer and the sacrament of reconciliation, Fr. Jean Luc Morin SCJ, Regional Superior presided the Eucharistic celebration in the church of Sainte Thérèse. The triduum ended with a convivial event.

Italy

The New Parish of Langhirano (Parma) celebrated the month of May welcoming the statue of Our Lady of Betharram into the city and taking it on a pilgrimage around the



12 communities of the pastoral unity. Fr Aldo Nespoli SCJ, Superior and Parish Priest of the community of Langhirano, highlighted the point that the motto of the pilgrimage was "Ad Jesum per Mariam" (to Jesus through Mary).

The pilgrimage of Our Lady of Betharram, after passing through the 12 communities of the parish of Langhirano, ended on May 31st.



REGION V. FR. AUGUSTE ETCHEPAR

ARGENTINA URUGUAY
PARAGUAY BRAZIL

Argentina-Uruguay

On May 18 and 19, in Adrogué, the second cycle of formation of "the ministry of listening" (Pastoral de la escucha) got underway. There were 34 participants coming from the colleges of the Vicariate.

These were days of intense work and of great dedication for the participants who decided to get involved in the task of listening to themselves in order to listen to others, to take life in their own hands, to be able to better accompany others.

Aware of the gift they have received, they have made themselves available to serve but not before being trained and accompanied in order to reach their own fulfillment. This is a way of taking concrete steps along the paths of our humanization and our following of the Lord in our educational process.



REGION SAINT MARY OF JESUS CRUCIFIED

ENGLAND INDIA
THAILAND

England

3 June - Parish priest for five years in the parish of Olton Friary, Fr. Wilfred left his new parish of Clifton (Nottingham) for an afternoon to come over to Olton and meet the parishioners who expressed their gratitude for the service he had done.

After the evening mass of the solemnity of Corpus Christi, presided by Fr. Wilfred, Fr. Austin, on behalf of all the parishioners gathered in the parish hall, underlined the precious work that with fidelity and passion Fr Wilfred has done in these five years.

For his part, Fr. Wilfred responded by underlying the most significant events that enriched his priestly ministry. He concluded with the traditional "goodbye" reminding us the meaning of this greeting: "God be with you" And all answered: and also with you, dear Fr. Wilfred!

And this is also the wish of all of us for the ministry that he has just begun in his new parish in Clifton, where he will soon be joined by two other confreres.

The exchange of greetings ended with the traditional farewell party.

Thailand

From 29 April to 16 May, Fr. Enrico

Frigerio SCJ, Regional Superior of the Saint Myriam of Jesus Crucified Region, made his first canonical visit to the Vicariate of Thailand.

Fr. Enrico met all the communities and called a Vicariate Assembly during which he highlighted some key elements of the community life. Fr Enrico finally accepted the renewal of vows of two young scholastics: Br. James Thanit Panmanikun SCJ and Br. Peter Rawee Permpoonwicha SCJ

On Sunday May 13, Ascension Sunday, the faithful of Huaybong and the villages of the district, gathered in the church of the Holy Family (Huaybong) to express their gratitude to Fr. Ugo Donini SCJ, who for twenty years has been their Parish Priest.



In memoriam

On May 17 2018 **Mrs Angela Ballarin**, 92 years old, mother of Fr Pietro Felet scj, Regional Vicar in the Holy Land, of the community of Bethlehem, passed away.

We express our sympathy to Fr Pietro and we promise to pray for him and for his dear mother.



♦♦♦ In the meeting of the General Council on June 4th, 2018, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, decided to present to the **priestly minister Deacon Reagan Vincent Raj** and **Deacon Shamon Devasia Valiya-veetil** (Region Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, Vicariate of India).

Our founder used to say: "we wished to offer priests to the Bishop entirely disposed to fulfil all the works that he wanted to give to them; entirely obedient, always ready to say: Adsum, here I am!".

[...]

From the beginnings of the Institute, the initial proclamation of the Gospel was one of our priorities. The international character of our religious family highlights the links between the local Church and the universal Church. (Rule of Life 114)

Best wishes to our Brothers for a fruitful minister!



The Rule of Life in Thai is then going to be edited for all our brethren of the Vicariate, probably with the same graphic design as the editions in French, English and Italian.

♦♦♦ A very good news...

The Rule of Life has been translated into Thai by a university lecturer who has offered his services to the Vicariate of Thailand.



FaLaBe, the family of Betharramite Lay associates

"The whole team is waiting for you with open arms. You are most welcome! ●●●

When people hear the word "FALABE", they do not know what it is, but once the acronym developed "FAMilia LAicos BEtharramitas", they get the idea of a family meeting to pray. We are far from that. Falabe is more than just a prayer meeting. Prayer is an important element among others which are equally important. We want to be friends, brothers, neighbours, companions. The human relationship is as important to us as the spiritual relationship. Our dream is to live as if we were a family. Hence this name FALABE.

A lay family...: Falabe brings together baptized people who are committed to sharing what they are and their way of life; they value listening and the wealth that is in everyone. They are not champions of faith, everyone is just who they are. But everyone is given the opportunity to share their experience of Christian life through the path inaugurated by St. Michael Garicoïts.

A Betharramite lay Family..., because we are united by the feeling of being close to the Betharram priests and brothers. Baptism is the starting point and our strength to live the faith. Betharram gives more flavour to this life. Saint Michael Garicoïts tells us that God loves us dearly, and that his

love does not depend on what we are in everyday life: our Father is merciful and wants to be with each one of us.

Once a year, we all come together to share together a time of "spiritual flavour". It is a weekend where we listen to Saint Michael, where we see how to face up to the problems of life of today, where we socialize and pray. How good these moments of life together are, times of leisure, of meetings, of work groups, of solitude with the Lord!

During the evaluation, we hear expressions of happiness, rest and peace. Some lay Betharramites also meet during the year, in small groups. A team of facilitators accompanies them and visits them.

It is an experience open to all those wishing to participate. There is no age limit. It is not mandatory that the whole family participates, although the sharing of all, parents and children, is a beautiful thing. Neither is it necessary, as we said above, to be champions of faith, for it is together that we grow progressively in the faith. To participate, you just need a dose of good will.

So if someone wishes to offer his joy, he can go to the nearest Betharramite who will indicate the way to him.

Giancarlo Monzani scj

Monseigneur d'Astros: the one who ordained Michael Garicoïts a priest

Mgr. Loison died suddenly in Bayonne on 17 February 1820. Mgr. d'Astros succeeded him. He kept the same secretary, Canon Honnert; Michael Garicoïts' protector was the link between the new bishop and his seminarian. ●●●



Who is Mgr. d'Astros?

A historian describes him as, "An ambitious one!" Would there have been sound ambitions, holy ambitions?

Paul Thérèse David d'Astros was born in Tourves (Var) in 1772. At eight years old he was tonsured! He began his ecclesiastical studies with the priest of Tourves. The Revolution then drove him out of his house. In 1793, at the siege of Toulon, he saw Bonaparte. Once released from military service, he went to Paris. There, in two days, 25 and 26 May 1795, he received the minor orders: the orders of the porter, reader, exorcist and acolyte, as well as the sub-diaconate and the diaconate! On 30 September 1797, he was ordained a priest in Marseilles.

When his uncle Jean-Etienne-Marie Portalis, a lawyer, became a State Councilor and one of the drafters of the Concordat, the abbot d'Astros was his chief of staff (8 October 1801).

On 12 April 1802 he was canon of Notre-Dame de Paris; then Vicar General of Paris; and, in 1808, Chapter Vicar. At that time, he knew the community of the Daughters of the Cross who were in Issy, in the diocese of Paris.

In 1810, he would not accept Mgr Maury as archbishop of Paris without the Pope's approval of this choice. He proclaimed the excommunication bull issued by Pius VII against Napoleon. That was a step too far! On 1 January 1811, the emperor imprisoned him! The end of the Empire liberated him on 19 April 1814; the Hundred Days (1 March 1815 - 10 July 10, 1815) forced him into exile in England!

In 1817 he was "nominated bishop" of Orange; in 1819 of Saint-Flour; and finally on 4 March 1820 of Bayonne; he was then "religious" on 9 July and "installed" on 13 August. From three departments in 1820, the diocese moved to one in 1822. In 1828 Mgr. d'Astros refused the archdiocese of Besançon; he accepted that of Toulouse and left Bayonne on 28 April 1830. He became a cardinal in 1850 and died on 29 September 1851.

To Father Garicoïts¹, he bequeathed, as well as to Father Guimon, the sum of 22,000 francs.

¹) Fr. Miéyaa always talks about « saint Michel Garicoïts », since his birth except for the first line of the forward to his "essay" of more than 1844 pages!



Mgr. d'Astros

"Saint Michael Garicoïts was marked very deeply by the influence of this prelate. He owes much of his priestly ideal to him. Devotion to the Sacred Heart, the primacy of the interior life for the priest, the necessity of the missions, the urgency of educating young people, are at his heart so many of Cardinal d'Astros' inspirations. » (Pierre Miéyaa)

Concern for the clergy and priestly ideal

Mgr. d'Astros continued and amplified the work of restoration initiated by Mgr Loison, firstly for the clergy and their formation.

Upon his arrival, he opened the small seminary of Larressore. In 1821, he created the Work of Seminaries and established two retreats a year for priests. In 1822 he created the small seminary of Saint-Pé; he required

six years of examination for young priests. In 1824 he set a regulation for pastoral retreats.

From 1825², he enlarged the Bayonne seminary. It required six years of major seminary: two of philosophy and four of theology, the last of which extended to the Christmas ordinations. In 1828 he published a Small Handbook for Priests for the diocese ...

Michael Garicoïts certainly received this spirit well, in love with a true priestly ideal: "Among the priests themselves, there are so few who say: Here we are... *Ita Pater*³. "At the sight of this prodigious⁴ spectacle, the priests of Bétharram felt themselves inclined to devote themselves to imitate Jesus, who was dying and obedient, and to endeavour entirely to procure for others the same happiness, under the protection of Mary, always disposed to whatever God would want and always subject to everything God did." (Founding text). Mgr. d'Astros supported the idea of this foundation... He was one of those bishops whom Michael Garicoïts saw crying...

Devotion to the Sacred Heart

Mgr. d'Astros certainly did not initiate Michael Garicoïts to devotion to the Sacred Heart, he who was

2) Michel Garicoïts became a priest on 20 December 1823.

3) Yes, Father.

4) The abasement and annihilation (kenosis) of the Son.

enlightened by God at Oneix. In 1825, in Cambo, in response to the request of young parishioners, the vicar began a Congregation of the Sacred Heart; the same year at Hasparren, the bishop gathered his Missionaries under the name of the Society of Priests, Worshipers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; from 1835 to 1838, their rule was followed by the first religious of Bétharram. The bishop always supported this devotion.

The need for missions

In Bayonne, then in Toulouse, Mgr. d'Astros favoured the creation of missionary bodies to evangelize cities and the countryside. But what of the *ad gentes* missions?

When, on 24 April 1860, almost in the evening of his life, Michael Garicoïts wanted to send the abbot Etchanchu to Uruguay, he wrote to him: *"I did not forget that in 1827 Mgr. d'Astros, who had more than thirty parishes in his diocese without a pastor, an almost uncivilised people, had sent an appeal to foreign missions to his major seminaries (Bétharram and Bayonne)... saying that the diocese could only win with such generosity."* More than thirty years later, Michel Garicoïts remembers...

In his letter of 9 February 1826, Mgr d'Astros is very clear:

"We see it as an obligation for us to take part in the work of the Propagation of the Faith; we still have a duty to show our clerics the career of foreign missions open to them. In

spite of the needs of our diocese, we are not afraid, we rejoice even, to see them enter this noble career, if God inspires them with the desire; and far from fearing that it could result in us a weakening of the sacred ministry, we hope on the contrary in the divine goodness, that in reward of our sacrifices, it will spread its blessings more abundantly on our diocese, on our seminaries, on the faithful and pastors: the little we have given will be returned to us a hundredfold... "

We could search again and we would find! Mgr. d'Astros - and Michael Garicoïts like him - advocated goodness and mercy in the confessional; he favoured frequent communion. Let us remember:

- Mgr. d'Astros ordained Michael Garicoïts a priest on 20 December 1823;
- In 1825, when he sent him to Bétharram, he said of him: *"Do you think that I am taking him away from parish ministry to make him a mere professor of philosophy? I want to make him the director of all my nuns; and you will see that he will revive the sap of the Christian and religious spirit in the diocese."*
- at Toulouse, at the decisive moment, he pushed him to found a religious society: *"Begin your work, and without anticipating Providence, follow it in all its directions."*

Beñat Oyhénart scj



"And for this God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names; so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the world below, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil 2.9-11)

What is the effect of the anointing of our Lord in us?

We are also kings, priests and prophets by the outpouring of this divine anointing, by the outpouring of the Spirit of Our Lord.

Q. What are our duties as kings, priests and prophets?

A. As kings, we must not allow ourselves to be overcome by our passions, not to render ourselves slaves to the thoughts of men; to have a royal courage, warrior souls; to have only great thoughts, to be magnanimous, beautiful, to aspire to what is higher.

As priests and spiritual priests, be neither criminal nor profane, aspire for the most holy... holy sacrifices, pure offerings ...

As prophets, we must not stop at earthly things... and not act according to earthly inclinations, but act with a celestial instinct; we must free ourselves from being in thrall to things present, and look to future things. In a word, as kings, priests, and prophets, we humble, deny, and devote ourselves in order to say, imitating Jesus Christ: Here we are... yes...

Q. What is the main effect of the holy anointing of Jesus Christ and the children of God?

A. One of the main effects of this divine anointing is gentleness. Oh our Lord was gentle! And the apostles, the first Christians were so gentle! | M 731



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