

## In this issue

Conceived and brought to birth in the sources of the charism p. 1

Address of Pope Francis, 7 July 2018 p. 4

The Vicariate of France-Spain p. 6

International Session at Betharram p. 7

Summer camp in Katiola: to dare, to act, to live p. 13

Father Angelo Bianchi scj † p. 17

Notices from the General Council... p. 19

History of a spiritual journey (8): A spirituality of « Here I Am! » together with Bossuet p. 20

Saint Michael wrote... p. 24

## The message of the superior general

### Conceived and brought to birth in the sources of the charism

*« Which religious is truly on fire with the spirit of our vocation?*

*The one who applies himself entirely and exclusively to the duties of his office with profound humility, a deep gratitude to God, a great generosity in responding to his grace, without running ahead, or going beyond the limits of his employment. »*

(DS § 233)

Dear Betharramites,

In recent years, we have spent much time reflecting on our religious identity. The laity helped us from their own perspective in the Church. And it has been a recurring theme during our meetings, a family theme that is born and reborn. The General Chapter has also presented this as a challenge for the age in which we are living. It asked us to go out to encounter life, but in what spirit should we do it? What is the tangible sign of authentic Betharramite religious life?

We can find answers by looking at our own vocation. It is often born of a strong experience of God. A kind

of «love story» that deeply marked us and led us to follow a new orientation as Christians. It is the result of an encounter with Jesus Christ who called us to the position we are in, even going so far as to accept our hesitation (cf I Sam 3: 9-10).

Many Betharramite brothers, whom we remember today with gratitude for their word and faithful witness, have challenged us to conversion, to an inner transcendence, going beyond our limits and our weaknesses. Their life response - simple, unconditional and generous - was accompanied by a confident surrender to the hands of the Father. It was their secret which, by a free gift, became our spring ...

Therefore, no one can boast of his own calling. Nobody was called to fulfil themselves by using the Congregation as a theatre stage. On the other hand, we were called to give life, to carry the Cross, to follow Christ. It was the Lord who came to meet us while we were «following the flock» (Amos 7:15). There would be vanity and self-sufficiency to not recognise it.

What a joy to meet religious who are detached and happy to devote themselves and be available to the missions entrusted to them!

The generosity of St. Michael Garicoits and Fr. Etchecopar was such that they no longer cared for themselves, so great had been their intimate experience of the merciful love of God the Father. The self-emptying of Jesus had permeated the vocational experience of our founder and his second successor. They never allowed them-

selves to «lose momentum» through the success of their personal work, or by the prestige they had legitimately acquired through their pastoral charity.

Betharramite vocational identity was forged in them as they met Jesus (to follow him), and their brothers (to serve them). Their lives, like ours, are made beautiful in the eyes of God whenever we pronounce this obedient and loving «yes», which we call *Ecce Venio* or *Ecce Ancilla Domini*.

To live today this experience of the encounter, to devote time alone with the Lord, is to give Him all that we are and all that we have, that He may use how he wants. And this, without sparing areas «where we do not let him in», No-Go spaces that we want to keep in the shadows, spaces of worldly freedom, which he actually knows all too well.

I sometimes meet brothers who have conceived their religious identity as a kind of «garden of roses», assumed in the early years of formation but whose perfume has inevitably evaporated over the years! The identity of the Betharramite missionary must be cultivated throughout life, to make it mature in the paschal dynamic of a serious interior life, embraced with passion.

I share the following principle: «Wherever a Betharramite evangelises in the name of Betharram, I am there too». This vicarial style of pastoral presence is also essential to make the missionary community more authentic and able to give witness. It is a

style that appeals, that attracts vocations, because young people see us sincerely united and enthusiastic.

The opposite is regrettable: ego-centered and individualistic behaviours, pastoral egoism, dissension and envy, recurrent discredit to authority, self-referentiality, whispering against those in authority; all this gives rise to polemics, bitter fruits that bury us little by little in the sad pit of progressive extinction. I would be tempted to say that they are the cause of the dreaded vocational sterility. Where fraternity is not a clear sign, there will surely be no vocations.

The brothers who live this identification with our charism help us not to be ashamed to express who we are. It would not be fair for us to live off the glory of the works of our predecessors and then do nothing to support the presence of Betharram in the world today.

To live authentically what we are, with more passion and hope, I propose some points of attention, that everyone can help increase in community:

- A fruitful inner life: nourished by prayer, lectio divina, fidelity to the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist, the daily and sincere examination of conscience.

- Selfless service and attention to the flock entrusted to us, especially the poor.

- Accompany spiritually those on the path of formation and allow ourselves to be accompanied, to be men of God, shepherds who carry the smell

of sheep, not officials.

- Live simply, live in a more austere way, live happily, expressing in community the joy of one who has his treasure where his heart is (Mt 6.21).

A Betharramite must have the characteristics of his vocational ideal, but also the traits and values of his own culture, which enriches the whole. There may be a tension between culture and the Gospel, but there is no contradiction between one and the other when the values of that culture express what is most human and transcendent in us.

Although culture or cultures have never been an «absolute» they must be confronted and enriched by the gospel. We know that God, and his Incarnate Word here and now, is the only Absolute. It is a question of loving our roots and forming ourselves, to arrive at a synthesis of life, from which radiates the Gospel of Christ, with its values that go beyond cultures and situations.

Our beautiful Betharramite synthesis of Divine Love, which can anticipate Heaven in every corner of the Earth, is regenerating, developing, and being reborn before the eyes of people of today, who may seem distracted but have an undeniable thirst for God.

*Fr. Gustavo SCJ*  
*SUPERIOR GENERAL*

# Address of Pope Francis at the conclusion of the dialogue with the Heads of the Churches and the Christian Communities of The Middle East

Basilica of Saint Nicholas, Bari, 7 July 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am most grateful for this graced moment of sharing. As brothers and sisters, we have helped one another to appreciate anew our presence as Christians in the Middle East. This presence will be all the more prophetic to the extent that it bears witness to Jesus, the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:5). Jesus does not draw a sword; instead, he asks his disciples to put it back in its sheath (cf. Jn 18:11). Our way of being Church is also tempted by worldly attitudes, by a concern for power and profit, for quick and convenient solutions. Then too, there is the reality of our sinfulness, the disconnect between faith and life that obscures our witness. We sense our need for renewed conversion to the Gospel, the guarantee of authentic freedom, and our need to do so urgently, as the Middle East endures a night of agony. As in the agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, it will not be flight (cf. Mt 26:56) or the sword (cf. Mt 26:52) that will lead to the radiant dawn of Easter. Instead, it will be our gift of self, in imitation of the Lord. The Good News of Jesus, crucified and risen out of love, came from the Middle East and has won over human hearts down the centuries because it is bound not to the powers of this



world, but to the unarmed power of the cross. [...] The faith of the lowly, so deeply rooted in the Middle East, is the wellspring from which we can draw water to drink and to be purified. [...]

Encouraged by one another, we have engaged in fraternal dialogue. It has been a sign of our need to pursue encounter and unity without being afraid of our differences. So it is with peace [...]. We commit ourselves to walking, praying and working together, in the hope that the art of encounter will prevail over strategies of conflict. In the hope that the display of threatening signs of power will yield to the power of signs: men and women of good will of different beliefs, unafraid of dialogue, open to the ideas of others and concerned for their good. [...]

War is the scourge that tragically assails this beloved region. The poor are its principal victims. [...] War is the daughter of power and poverty. It is defeated by renouncing the thirst for supremacy and by eradicating poverty. So many conflicts have been stoked too by forms of fundamentalism and fanaticism that, under the guise of religion, have profaned God's name – which is peace – and persecuted age-old neighbours. Vi-

olence is always fueled by weapons. You cannot speak of peace while you are secretly racing to stockpile new arms. This is a most serious responsibility weighing on the conscience of nations, especially the most powerful. [...]

With deep anguish, but with constant hope, we turn our gaze to Jerusalem, a city for all peoples, a unique and sacred city for Christians, Jews and Muslims the world over. A city whose identity and vocation must be safeguarded apart from various disputes and tensions, and whose status quo demands to be respected [...]

Hope has the face of children. In the Middle East, for years, an appalling number of young people mourn violent deaths in their families and see their native land threatened, often with their only prospect being that of flight. This is the death of hope. All too many children have spent most of their lives looking at rubble in-

stead of schools, hearing the deafening explosion of bombs rather than the happy din of playgrounds. May humanity listen – this is my plea – to the cry of children, whose mouths proclaim the glory of God (cf. Ps 8:3). Only by wiping away their tears will the world recover its dignity.

With this concern for the children [...] we will shortly let our desire for peace take wing by releasing some doves. [...] May our hearts remain united and turned to heaven, as in the days of the Flood (cf. Gen 8:11), in expectation of a fresh twig of hope. And may the Middle East no longer be an ark of war lying between continents, but an ark of peace that welcomes peoples of different backgrounds and beliefs. Beloved Middle East [...] "May peace be upon you" (Ps 122:8) [...], may justice dwell within your borders, and may God's blessing come to rest upon you. Amen! •





## The Vicariate of France-Spain

From June 20th to July 28th, our Vicariate was blessed with two great events; the International Youth Session and the first canonical visit of Father Gustavo Agin. ●●●

Our Superior General encouraged us to move on without being affected by the current events of the Vicariate that could lead us to resignation and discouragement. On the contrary, the inheritance received from our Founder urges us to keep hope alive: *"we are called to keep our hearts open and generous, without giving in to discouragement"*, Fr Gustavo said.

In our communities and during our personal meetings with him, we spoke about our great poverty due to the lack of vocations and to our difficulty in understanding God's call in the young people we meet. We also shared

with him our desire to live a more fraternal life, even if sometimes we are struggling in creating communion among us.

Father Gustavo also pointed out signs of hope that may be significant today:

- a rich spiritual heritage linked to our places, Betharram and Ibarre of course, without forgetting Pau, Pibrac and Anglet. This spiritual wealth largely compensates for the worries caused by our real estate heritage that is often an encumbrance. Our poverty also calls us to a financial sharing that has been improving and still requires our efforts;

- a life of personal and community prayer that attracts people from outside and is a sign of fidelity to our vocation as consecrated persons;

- close and enriching bonds with

the laity of the Fraternité Me Voici, and with many others with whom the religious share the mission. The meeting of July 28th in Betharram speaks volumes on this point;

- an international opening experienced by many religious



At the assembly of the Vicariate

of the Vicariate during their religious lives; this experience has shaped them and is an asset for today's spirit of welcome; our Vicariate needs this fresh air coming from elsewhere: this firm belief is shared by all of us.

This visit was a blessing for us and encouraged us to persevere in our commitment as consecrated persons

for the wellbeing of the whole congregation; the fidelity of the elders does good to the young religious of the other Vicariates.

We express our gratitude to Father Gustavo Agin for his encouragement.

*Laurent Bacho scj  
Regional Vicar*



► *Feast of the Holy Cross  
at Betharram, 2018  
Way of the Cross  
on Sunday, September 9  
at the Calvary.  
Vespers and blessing of  
the Holy Sacrament at  
the Chapel of the  
Resurrection.*

## International Session at Betharram | from June 20 to July 28, 2018

First and foremost I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our fathers, brothers, lay Betharramites and friends of Betharram for their generosity, availability and service during this session 2018. I am so glad too to share my experience in animating the international session 2018. We had the joy of having 12 participants, helped by Fathers: Glacimar and Simone. Our session was divided into 5 parts. First part (1<sup>st</sup> week) was "to know one another, to know better each other's vicariate

and region, to know more better about the Sanctuary of Betharram, Stations of the Cross, St. Michael's Chapel, Resurrection Chapel, Lourdes, Maison Neuve etc. Thanks to Fr. Jacky Moura who in deed guided us in this regard.

The Second part (2<sup>nd</sup> week) was "to go back to our original love for God". We reflected on our own families, our own proper vocation and our baptism as Fr. Bacho Laurent narrated us the Life story of St. Michael Garicoits in Ibarre, Oniex,

Hosta, Garris and St. Palais.  
 The third part (3<sup>rd</sup> week) was "to see how we live today the Gospel of Christ" in our present Betharramite way of Life, through the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. Heartfelt gratitude to Rev. Fr. Gaspar Fourthly (4<sup>th</sup> week), we travelled to Loyola and Javier where we reflected on the themes of Charism and Mission of Betharram.  
 The Fifth part (5<sup>th</sup> week & 6<sup>th</sup> week) dealt with the beauty of community life, the challenges of media, internet and alcohol. We remain grateful to Fr. Gustavo, Fr. Austin and Fr. Jean Luc.  
 The division of 5 parts was done in order to keep alive the aim of the session i.e. to deepen, to enrich our convictions and to share the same joy/happiness with others. In designing our international sessionists' project, grown up as we are, our youngsters emphasised on interiorization and personalisation on the various themes, through our prayer together, readings and reflections on the letters

of St. Michael, personal weekly accompaniment, testimony of our missionaries, walking to Lourdes, personal time in the room of our founder and in front of the relics etc.. We too had enriching moments like meeting our elderly missionaries, dialogue with the youth who were preparing to go to Katiola, encountering the lay betharramites etc. Our brothers shared sincerely their experience with them all and especially impressed the way the youth shared their faith life. It is to state that language is not a barrier for our fraternal living and sharing. All that we need is the language of love. This language of love ruled every activity of ours. It was a sincere, genuine effort of our participants. At the end of the session, our participants were once again refreshed "to go out" to share the same joy with all whom they will meet in their respective missions.

*Stervin Selvadass,  
 General Councillor for formation scj*

## My experience of the session •••

● I will tell my experience like a chronicle; because, first of all, I'm not good at writing, and secondly, because the simple story of the lived experience already conveys what I want to tell you. We have first discovered the Sanctuary of Betharram and we had the opportunity to get to know each other

better. Fr. Jacky presented to us the Sanctuary and the Stations of the Cross. In the art of these two sites, there is the whole history of salvation. They are places of meditation, which must be visited several times, which could surely have been done by Fr. Garicoits. Then, Ibarre, birth-place of





from all over the world. The next day we came back for the International Mass: an extraordinary experience. Then with Fr. Gaspar, we reflected on the vows, in particular by going to draw from the source of the profound experience of the love of God, manifested in Jesus. Our vows have meaning only if they are the fruit of an intimate and profound relationship with the Lord. Without that, they are nothing. This is one of the illuminations that I keep precious from this session.

We had visited Cambo and we celebrated Holy Mass in

Saint Michael, where his vocation and his great desires were born and matured. In discovering his house, his poverty, his "initial destitution", we were able to drink at the source of our own respective families, our origins, our desires and the source of our vocation. This was one of the most profound moments for me: going back to my origins.

We had visited Anguélu, where Michel discovered the God of tenderness; Oneix and Saint-Palais, where we discovered the house of Fr. Etchecopar and the history of him. There, we had understood the importance of Fr Auguste who knew how to preserve the spirit of the charism of Saint Michael Garicoits. He is our co-founder. We also went on pilgrims to Lourdes between prayers and conversations, between moments of silence and moments of solitude. There we shared our faith with people

the Church where St. Michael himself celebrated so many times. We visited Bayonne-where our Saint was ordained a priest. We went to the port, to the precise place, may be, where Betharramites left for America in 1856. What a family! What a lineage! Then, we left for Mendelu (Spain). From there, we went to Loyola and Xavier to taste from our Ignatian source. We had visited his house where Ignatius was

• [ gioia ]

forged his great ambitions and where he underwent his convalescence until he gave himself completely to God.

•

• [ signe ]

We had been in the room where the Saint had definitely converted. At Xavier, we were connected to our missionary dimension.

Let us never forget that our missionary impulse is the same impulse that animated Jesus to live in a state of permanent mission. We are simply men full of won-

der for Jesus and the Gospel. We are missionaries because we are “of Jesus”. There would naturally be a lot more to say. The intercultural experience, the sharing of tasks, the capacity to form a community all that made the session a key moment in my training. We are a small, big family that desires to be “of Christ” and share with everyone what makes us happy. • *Leandro Narduzzo scj*

- The session was indeed a special opportunity for me to enrich, share and deepen my convictions about the consecrated life, the spirituality of St. Michael Garicoits and live the demands of the dimensions of our congregation. moreover I understood the meaning of Ecce-Venio. As per the theme of the session: ‘to drink from the same source’ the session Tooke me to the basic root of our family of Betharram. The session revealed to me the very identity of Betharram- to be simple and poor. Each and every minute of the session was indeed worthful to deepen my understanding of Betharramite. There was joy, enthusiasm, freedom and co-operation to mingle with the participants and formator throughout the session. I realised there the language was not a barrier. The stay and outing, food was pleasant and memorable one. I thereby declare the session made me to realise that I am blessed to be a part of Betharram family. The lesson that I carry back home is to live the simple lifestyle and joyful community life. Therefore my mission

[unidad]

[frères]

[servizio]

[simplicity]

is to reproduce and to manifest the impulse of the Heart of Jesus.

Special thanks to all contributed specially the donors, formators, councilors to have this memorable session • *Reegan Vincent scj*

- The session was for me

[disponibilidad]

a rediscovery of “Betharram” that I believed to

knew, seen this preparation year lived in this same place. Indeed, being part of the community that welcomes and at the same time as a sessionist, I lived the simplicity of fraternal life and the joy of service. I was also touched by the reality of the internationality of the congregation, through the “Here I am” of St. Michael Garicoits with

[préférence]

my brothers from different regions, Vicariates and communities, and presentations of

[love]

their missions in these countries. The fraternal atmosphere both with the formators, the session

taking fathers, members of the session, gave me an inner joy.

To drink at the source in the footsteps of St Michel, in this beautiful village of Ibarre where nature still breathes it’s a good fragrance, it was a time of contemplation, meditation and thanksgiving. From Ibarre can come a Saint, yes a Saint who has opened his heart to Jesus Christ to do his will. Moreover, all the conferences and beautiful testimonies of our missionary fathers and brothers, allowed me to re-appropriate what is spiritual life (according to the RdV No. 4) which takes into account the four dimensions: “the life of prayer, the life of personal consecration, community life and the apostolic life”. I give

thanks for this exodus lived and the joy of meeting and discovering our "Holy Land".

• *Habib Yelouwassi scj*

• As per the theme of the session "to drink from the same source", I gained a lot of knowledge on our founder S. Michael, his spirituality and charism. This session also guided me to reread my vocation story and sing magnificat to God for the gift of vocation. The virtue I wish to carry back home and in my ministry is the very identity of Betharram, "simplicity - being simple and living a simple life style". A Betharramite is called to be the ambassador of the virtue of simplicity. • *Andrew Manop scj*

• At the end of this international session rich in emotion and in spirituality, I commit myself to live a daily Pentecost by making myself docile to the spirit of God through the life of personal and community prayer.

• *Hippolyte Yomafou scj*

• I commit myself to live the Gospel, with an awareness of all that Sequela Christi implies. Sometimes with joy, sometimes with crosses. I will do this by living in a religious community, living personal prayer and sharing the Word with others. May my religious life in a community be a testimony.

By living chaste, obedient and poor, integrated into a reality like that of 'La Colmena', I commit to carry this project by saying "Here I am". Without delay, without reserve, without return; all for love. Amen.

• *Cristian Romero scj*

• I remain grateful to God for giving me this opportunity to walk in the footsteps of our founder. I am passionate by St. Michael's zeal for the love of God and he kept the love of God alive. Through this session I learnt the importance of encountering Christ. Because it alone adds meaning to my religious life. Now I'm convinced that the true happiness is found only in Christ. Having found the true way to happy religious life, I wish to become a witness to Christ as «to bring the same happiness to others". • *Stephen Banjerd scj*

### [ source ]

• To live this international session with brothers who share the same aspirations and who drink from the same source, it comforts me and strengthens me in my choice. [...] And in the heart of our changing world, I want to prefer Christ more than anything and to share with others the same happiness. The fruits gathered at the end of this session are: joy, faith and trust in God who gave me brothers to love and who gave me the opportunity to live the gospel of Christ on a daily basis. • *Vincent Didier scj*

• This session brought me rich experiences with lot of challenges and convictions. Through this session I am convinced that my life will be meaningful only when I give myself totally to God, that is detach from the materialistic world and attach myself to Christ and His values. I wish to live my conviction by giving importance to prayer, vows, community life and being available for mission. By attaching myself to the God of love, I wish to be sign of God's love to others.

• *Shamon Devasia scj*

[ valore ]

[ humility ]

[ familia ]

[ passion ]

- I discovered and meditated the source and origin places of our religious family, cultures and living memories of the congregation.

[ vocação ]

This allowed me to better understand the spirit of the Congregation to better integrate it into my life as a young Betharramite religious. Thus, I come out strengthened in my conviction that it is in Betharram that the Lord has reserved for me a place to respond to his plan of love. This vocation can only be realized in a religious community where openness, availability and sense of responsibility are part and parcel of the fraternal atmosphere.

- *Joseph Ouedraogo scj*

- By living these days of session and community experience, I discovered the

- importance and value a deep relationship with God in a religious life of in prayer and discernment.

[ identidad ]

I want to follow Jesus, in conforming more and more to Him every day through the vows. I renew my commitment to this Betharram family by making the vows which help me to grow in love and service. ● *Iran Lima scj*

- For this project of life to be possible for me as for the brothers who accompany me, I commit myself to live faithfully the life of personal and community prayer; and with my brothers, to live the gospel where and when Jesus will call us and send us ...And let others could see it as a true witness of unity. ● *Jeferson Silvério, scj*

## Fruits of our Session

*We believe God has chosen us and called us to this very dear family of Betharram to be His sign of God's love. Through this session, we are convinced of our vocation in the family of Betharram, and enhanced our desire to love and be part of this family. We also are convinced that our vocation is meaningful if only we experience and encounter Christ who is poor, chaste and obedient. Thus we prefer Christ more than anything and imitate Him through our prayer life, personal consecration, living with our brothers in the community and in our mission.*

*To make these convictions a reality, we want to live the following:*

*Our profound and intensed prayer life: both personal and community prayer.*

*Our daily examination of conscience and personal accompaniment.*

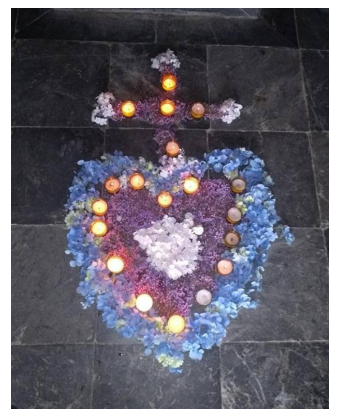
*The discernment in using the media, technology and other material things.*

*The frequent evaluation of the personal project.*

*To live our mission with joy of the Gospel, being a living testimony of Christ.*

*To live a simple way of life which is the identity of Betharram.*

*Thus, we share the same happiness to others.*





## Summer Camp in Katiola 2018: TO DARE, TO ACT, TO LIVE

*«To change the world, you first have to get out of bed!». This was the challenge launched by Pope Francis on the Eve of World Youth Day in Krakow 2016. And this is what young Betharramite lay people from France, Italy and Ivory Coast have taken to heart in living the experience of a summer camp in Katiola. ●●●*

During two years of preparation for this project, (sponsored by the January 2017 Regional Chapter), they first committed themselves to develop a project of sharing that would take them out of their comfort zone to « stir themselves » and go out to meet other young people of other cultures and other countries, and grow together as brothers and sisters.

They built this project on three pillars: to dare to encounter, to act in solidarity, to live in faith. From July 31 to August 15, 20 young Africans and Europeans modelled their lives around these three words, primarily to change the world ... starting from themselves and the challenges of meeting with the « other » which, if it is not always easy, is certainly rewarding. The « other » was represented by the stranger to be welcomed, be it European or African, and listen, understand the cultural diversity and life experience of each; «the other ». There was also a whole continent to discover: Africa, with its beauties and contradictions. The «other » was also the work of painting, gardening,

plumbing .... The « other » was the Ivorian Betharramite communities as well. The « other » is God whom we must discover in the gifts of which He fills the days lived together in the effort and the joy of fraternity.

To dare to encounter was the first challenge that young people embraced. The young people: 6 French, 4 Italians and 8 Ivorians immediately set to work to form a group that was as unified as possible, in which the sharing and the work done together would be real and authentic, despite the difficulty of reconciling the more individualistic style of European culture with the more open and social style of Ivorian culture. The meeting with the Betharramite communities of Adiapodoumé, Yamoussoukro and Dabakala, gave them a chance to experience an African familial style and to better know the reality of Ivorian life with its challenges and beauties. In each place visited, the young people took time to listen to the young people who lived there and learning of their experiences helped them know the richness and freshness of their (Ivorian) gifts. This richness is a gift for our Congregation, and we can receive a strong impetus via young people to go out and encounter life and venture with hope towards the future. As stated in the Instrumentum Laboris of the upcoming Synod: Young people do not perceive themselves as a disadvantaged category that should be protected as subjects needing

help and placed under guardianship, but as the most important resource for a better future, and as the part of society most able to understand the challenges of the present time. The youth meeting gave everyone the impetus to face the future with hope and decision.

The second pillar of the experiment was to act in solidarity. In the week of August 6 to 11, the young people accomplished various tasks in the college of Katiola: repairing the chapel, unblocking the channels that collect rainwater and building new ones...

Divided into 4 groups, of mixed nationalities, the young people rolled up their sleeves without hesitating before the task. It was a long and hard week for them, but it paid off for both the college and the fraternity. By getting closer to each other, they made the best effort to go out of themselves, forgetting their own positions and joining forces to build together something that was seen by all as the work of 'a group' and not that of separate individuals. At the end of the week, there was a time of evaluation where everyone shared with simplicity and truth the critical points, the challenges and the fruits of the Camp. In all, there emerged the desire to renew this kind of experience, by further promoting the space of sharing and reciprocal encounter. This desire to continue the journey together is a stimulus to improve the style of animation among young people throughout the Region,

emphasising serious support and creating more encouraging spaces for sharing and fraternity.

Finally, the pillar of the life of faith. The meeting with the Other, the Lord Jesus, the God of life, marked the beginning and end of each day of the camp, to remind young people that it is He who calls them to come out of themselves, to love and to discover during each day the signs of His love for them. Sunday Masses, lived in the Ivorian style of celebration, filled young Europeans with joy and amazement and certainly regenerated their way of standing before the Lord. The exchanges on the life of each group of young people related to Betharram were also profound. Everyone has found suggestions and incentives to grow in the family of St. Michael. These meetings were also a great opportunity for us Betharram religious: listening to young people has given us many challenges and the certainty that they are a treasure which we can embrace as we consider the future with determination and hope. It is they who sometimes reveal new ways that we have not seen. "Always forward, to Heaven!" Said St. Michael. This camp was really an opportunity for everyone to look forward with renewed confidence.

*Simone Panzeri scj*

## Testimonials of some of the young people

From my point of view, the summer camp was a very rich experience at different levels.

At the humanitarian level, first of all we were able to accomplish what we intended at Katiola. The infirmary was painted and decorated and a garden was made at the entrance. The chapel was thoroughly cleaned of its spider nests and the dust that had accumulated all these years. The tree trunks and bricks that encumbered the yard, and on which the students might have been injured, were moved and the yard was cleaned. Drains were made to prevent rainwater from stagnating and even an old pump was restarted. So at this level I felt useful even if I wanted to do more. Unfortunately we only had one week.

At the human and relational level too, we were able to share wonderful moments. We have been able to forge strong bonds with others; sharing the room, the bathroom and the meal all together has been beneficial to strengthening our links. Moreover, we were put in teams of life in a random way which made it possible to better discuss and to get to know each other. Friendships were created and we became a more united group.

At the spiritual level, we had regular prayer times, including lauds and morning Mass, which we organised ourselves in Katiola. In the evenings we had the common prayer that allowed us to be able to share together, to say thank you to God for the day and to

entrust him with the rest of our stay.

We had some problems with the organisation in Côte d'Ivoire, including the integration of young Ivoirians but overall everything went well.

In conclusion, this experience has been really good from my point of view and I am ready to leave for another project in Ivory Coast again or in another country.

*Nelly (Ivorian living in France)*

Before the arrival of our European brothers, I saw in this camp the opportunity of an exchange between cultures, a fermentation and a time of fraternity. In any case, that was what I was expecting ... My brothers arrived and this is precisely the journey we made together.

What am I taking back with me? The exchange between cultures. I have also learned new things through these exchanges and have been able to give what we have: joy and love. We return home happy to know that others are happy too and that they are happy to bring with them what they have learned from us.

I learned a lot too. We found ourselves one day in the bush, lifting logs, using paintbrushes, to do DIY decoration... These little things helped us to know our place with others; when we are with others, we always learn ... and when we learn, we always live love and know joy. And with love and joy, we will be happy and victorious wherever we are.

One word to define what we experienced? I would say ...: unity. But

whoever says unity, says fraternity! To be brothers, all together ...

*Venance (Ivorian)*

I came back from the camp delighted: I lived great moments of discovery as much by the places visited as by the meetings. I found a human richness, smiling and hospitable people. The work camp itself was also a challenge in the face of sometimes technical work, but team spirit and mutual support allowed us to succeed beyond our expectations.

I come out of this camp full of hopes, optimism for the future and even more rooted in my Christian faith of sharing, simplicity and humility.

*Elodie (French)*

In Ivory Coast, I experienced this life force - surprising, irresistible, wonderful - that is love. When I talk about love, I think back to all the beautiful smiles, the hands of children and women, full of scars and yet so beautiful. And what about hugs, those eyes full of amazement, like those of Isaac when he saw a camera for the first time. In Ivory Coast, the first thing you are told when you arrive is «Akwaba», which means «welcome». I felt welcome, and beloved too, because I received a lot, a lot of good. Africa, if you do not live it, you cannot describe it. I saw only a small part of it, and yet it seems I have seen everything, that is to say the essential. I cannot help think of the last Sunday with the children of the villages without smiling: we had organised a football match with them, and I wanted

to play but I did not have the proper shoes, and a young Ivorian left me her own. You understand? I gave so little and yet received so much in return! These three weeks were incredible, we sang, danced, laughed - enormously - worked, prayed, tasted the beauty of friendship and also the bitter taste of fatigue, a fatigue that however gave us a lot of peace. A song comes back to my mind. It goes, «One drop, Lord, you put in my hands, a single drop that you now ask of me.» I look at my hands today, Lord, and on the little crucifix I am wearing on my wrist, I see a little stain of paint remaining. Someone told me that the reason was very simple: You painted with me, You walked with me, You danced - surely better than me - but with me! Thank you for these wonders that You have placed before my eyes. «Wonder» is a word that we have often repeated these days, or better yet, we sang, sang and proclaimed it, it became our motto and I think it was so: we had a wonderful experience. I have so many things to say, but even poets, in front of the most beautiful things, cannot find the words. Thank you and thank you again to those who allowed me to experience this Land. I thank the fathers of Betharram, my family, my travelling companions, the African friends I just knew and whom I keep in my heart. Finally, I thank Saint Michael, who still today encourages us to say «Here I am» without fear. I also wanted to say my little "Here I am" to Africa and today I am happy. *Forward, always, to Heaven.*

*Alessandra (Italian)*



## Father Angelo Bianchi scj

*Passirana de Rho, 11 June 1937 – Langhirano, 3 August 2018*

In giving us life, the Lord entrusted to each of us a mission in the Church and in the world. Each one of us is a gift for our family, our friends, our fellow-religious and for all those we meet on our journey.

When we pay homage to someone who has just passed away, it is important, I think, to figure out the message that person has left us by how they lived their life, to keep them in our memories and to give thanks to the Lord.

Father Angelo was called to dedicate his life to the Lord in the family of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Betharram and in priestly ministry. He was ordained priest in Milan in 1962, after having completed his studies in Theology at Albiate.

St Michael Garicoits asked of his community that they live a lifestyle founded on the virtues of the Sacred Heart:

- An absolute obedience and availability;
- A simple life;
- An unfailing kindness.

So, Father Angelo tried to faithfully follow this lifestyle and we can all testify that he managed it. This is the message that he leaves us:

a) He obeyed promptly when, as a young priest, he was sent to do a University course first in Lissone, then at the University of Rome, where



he obtained a master's degree in Mathematics in 1968. He then immediately and enthusiastically made himself available when asked to put his studies to good use and open a new Scientific Sixth Form College, with some other brothers, in Bormio where he taught for 21 years, taking on responsibility for the budget, the directorship of the Sixth Form College and the leadership of the community.

b) Once the Bormio experience was over, he continued to teach Maths and Physics at the Sacred Heart College in Colico for another ten years.

At the age of 60, Father Angelo made himself available for a radical change in his own life by dedicating himself with a renewed enthusiasm to parish pastoral care in the Diocese

of Parma: firstly as Parish Priest at San Vitale Baganza, then at Parma as co-worker in the parish of Sant' Andrea in Antognano and finally here in Langhirano.

c) As for the simple lifestyle of Father Angelo, I believe that, for those who knew him, there is no need to comment. A Master of Mathematics, he lived in the greatest simplicity... An almost exaggerated and disarming simplicity. Many among you, in remembering him now, use the same expression to characterise him: "a simple person". A great value and a beautiful witness in the times we are living in.

d) For the last trait of the Heart of Jesus, contemplated by St Michael Garicoits and lived out by Father Angelo – unfailing kindness – I will bring to mind a personal memory: When I was at school with him in Colico, I was

surprised by his ability to teach with an "unfailing kindness" even with difficult, exuberant and at times provocative young people. He certainly drew his strength from a mysterious source, which he indicated to a good number of people in the secret of the confessional.

I believe I can say that Father Angelo lived out the mission that the Lord entrusted to him in the style of, and according to the virtues of, the Heart of Jesus, by leaving us an unforgettable testimony of a life made of apostolic devotion and lived out in simplicity and gentleness. For that, we give thanks to the Lord for sending him to us and we commit ourselves to following his example.

*Fr. Piero Trameri scj*  
*Regional Vicar in Italy*



### *In memoriam*

On June 12, at Rho (Italy), died Mr. Gabriele Canavesi, brother of Fr Antonio Canavesi SCJ, of the community "Bel Ramo" of Albiate (Vicariate of Italy). We join Fr Antonio and his family in praying for the repose of the soul of their dear one.



◆◆◆ In the meeting of the General Council on August 7th 2018, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, admitted to the final profession

Br. Gnaoré Vincent Didier ALLELET  
Br. Joseph OUEDRAOGO  
Br. Cossi Habib YELOUWASSI

from the Saint Michael Garicoits Region  
(Vicariate of the Ivory Coast)

## SCHEDULE

◆◆◆ The next **Council of the Congregation** will take place in Rome, at the Generalate House, from November 5th to 10, 2018.

◆◆◆ **The Meeting of the Council with the Regional Bursars** will take place from November 12th to 14th, still in Rome, at the Generalate House (cf. Acts of the General Chapter nr. 42)  
**The Superior General asked the Regional Superiors to take part in this meeting too.**

◆◆◆ The Superior General is currently making the **canonical visit to the Vicariate of the Ivory Coast** (from September 13th to October 6th); his next canonical visit is going to be to the **religious of the Vicariate of England** next December (dates to be set); initially planned at the end of the year, the canonical visit to Thailand has been postponed to early 2019.

◆◆◆ The Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life granted an **indult of departure from the Congregation to Fr. Joachim Viravit Sasai** (Vicariate of Thailand) to be incardinated into the Diocese of Ubon Ratchathani. (cfr. RL 314-316)

## A spirituality of « Here I Am! » together with Bossuet

From Cambo, Michael Garicoits went to Betharram! From his shortest stay - of 20 months - to his longest stay - of more than 37 years... His spirituality was developed and the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was born. Various encounters had already shaped Michael's reflection. The main thing – unquestionably – is the illumination at Oneix : God revealed himself to be full of love. And now ? ●●●



spirituality of Berulle<sup>1</sup> flooded his mind and combined with the Ignatian elements to end up in a synthesis".

Michael Garicoits met Bossuet first, then Ignatius of Loyola; it would be better to keep this order !

### What “spiritual masters”?

In his presentation of the *Spiritual Doctrine*, in 1949, Fr Duvignau scj wrote :

«Amongst the teachers who had quite a deep influence on him, we must mention St Augustine, St Bernard, St Alphonse of Liguori, while clarifying that he did not have a particular attachment to any of them. The only one who left his mark on him was the Basque saint from Loyola, Ignatius. During his retreat in Toulouse, Father Garicoits appreciated the male virtue of the Exercises. This book became his main spirituality manual.»

In 1963, at the publication of « A 19th Century Master of the Spiritual Life », the same priest expressed it in a different way :

“During his years of seminary teaching, Fr Garicoits met Bossuet [...]. From then on, Bossuet would be the inseparable companion of his nights until his death. He combed through all his works, pen in hand [...]. Through Bossuet, the

### Bossuet, “the Eagle of Meaux”<sup>2</sup>

Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627-1704), Bishop of Meaux, was a preacher and French writer; a writer indeed, and orator, with his eulogies. And he was so much more!

A priest from 1652, he went often to Paris for the sermons and praises of saints. So, he had different influences, especially that of St Vincent de Paul, whose conferences he listened to.

In 1670, he became Bishop of Condom (in Gers). A year later, he abdicated and became the private tutor of the son of Louis XIV. Though his Eulogies were masterpieces of eloquence, this art of expression did not much lend itself to the 10-year old child! However, his task only ended in 1680 with the marriage of the heir to the throne.

In 1681, he became Bishop of Meaux (East of Paris); hence the “Eagle of Meaux”. From then, he gave everything

1) See box on next page.

2) The nickname came from Voltaire. The eagle could fly in front of the sun without being dazzled. Bossuet was the only religious to stand up to Louis XIV, the Sun King, even giving a sermon on the duties of the rich towards the poor ! (Refer to Wikipedia.)





Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704)

the Jansenists... Victor Hugo accused him of persecution ! When Louis XIV wanted to limit the power of the pope, he defended gallicanism, a political-religious current which wanted to organise the Church of France in an autonomous way.

The Sacred Heart, who says: "Here I Am!"

to his mission, preached often, wrote the *Catechism of Meaux* (1687) and wrote *Meditations on the Gospel* and *Elevation of the Mysteries* for the religious of his diocese. There his spiritual genius was developed. He managed to visit all of his parishes.

Very present in his Diocese, Bossuet entered again into some controversy: against protestants and jews; against Fenelon (Archbishop of Cambrai); against

Michael Garicoits had to teach: he prepared himself ! Without forgetting anything that life had taught him... If the themes dear to Berulle<sup>3</sup> were to be found in him, it was Bossuet – himself a good Berullian – who manifestly marked out most the young teacher and his whole work<sup>4</sup>. The first approach

3) Jean-Luc Morin, *Le Cœur de Jésus chez Saint Michel Garicoits*, mémoire in preparation for his Theology degree, Gregorian University, 1994, P45.

4) Father Miéyaa spoke very little about the influence of Bos-

*The French School of Spirituality : everything except a school !*

*The French School of Spirituality? Under this term, in the 1920s, abbot Henri Bremond, a historian, put the Catholic Reform of the 17th century into ordinary French. This spirituality put the accent on the incarnation ; it clarified the relationship of the Word Incarnate with active charity.*

*Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629) is the first name to mention. We add Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660), the founder of the Company of the Mission (Lazarists) and St Jean-Eudes (1601-1680), a member of the Oratory of Jesus, then founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists). Afterwards came St Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651-1719), trained by the Sulpiciens and founder of the Brothers of Christian Schools, and St Louis-Marie Grignon of Montfort (1673-1716) who was behind several congregations.*

*Sometimes we refer to Bossuet who made a mark on Michael Garicoits !*

----- from Wikipédia

was made before the foundation of the institute, before the Ignatian retreats; at the time of the mystical manifestations of Christmas 1829 and 1830, noted Father Morin<sup>5</sup>...

In Cambo, Jeanne Dagoret introduced her curate to the devotion of the Sacred Heart, according to the customs of St Margaret-Mary Alacoque. If Michael Garicoits never separated the Sacred Heart from the person of Christ, it is because it was about "*repairing, with all strength, what ungrateful men put the Heart of Jesus through*". Getting closer to Bossuet distanced himself from the Paray-le-Monial model: he preferred "*internalising the relationship with the Incarnate Word which leads to apostolic action*" to "*the emotional compassion portrayed by St Margaret-Mary*"<sup>6</sup>.

In Bossuet, abbot Garicoits discovered an author who was "*very strongly Christcentric, leading everyone to Jesus, the Word Incarnate*"<sup>7</sup>. He made this way of speaking his own: From the moment of his divine conception, Jesus Christ *exultavit ut gigas ad currendum viam*<sup>8</sup>. From this moment, he cried out: "*Here I Am!*"<sup>9</sup> "*Here I Am!*" became the motto of the Word Incarnate, the Sacred Heart!

"Here I Am!" Here is the Heart of Jesus, here is the abbreviation of Christianity! To believe in the love that God has for us, is

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suet : a simple footnote while reproducing the Preface of the Constitutions of 1838. (Refer to Page 724.)

5) Jean-Luc Morin, *Le Cœur de Jésus...*, P50.

6) Refer to Jean-Luc Morin, *Le Cœur de Jésus...*, P65.

7) Father Denis Buzy, quoted by Jean-Luc Morin, *Le Cœur de Jésus...*, P65.

8) "*He set forth joyfully conquering*", P18 (19), 6.

9) Pierre Duvignau, *A Spiritual Master of the 19th Century*, P309.

the abbreviated version of the faith. Also, it is the profession of John: "I believe in charity!" (I John 4, 6). It says everything. He is made man ; I believe it! He loves and he who loves does everything.»<sup>10</sup> "Here I Am" is a near-equivalent of "love"!

To understand the influence of Bossuet, one text is enough: Father Jean-Luc Morin analysed it.

### The founding text

He agreed to appoint the "founding text". Although not signed, there was no doubt: it came from the founder. And, in 1838, he himself placed it as the foreword to the Constitutions. With Father Miéyaa, he could speak of the "Charter of the Congregation" that called for the religion of love from the Sacred Heart».<sup>11</sup> In one page, there was the whole spirituality of St Michael Garicoits! Fr Duvignau and others made a guide for it to let people get to know this Spiritual Master.

And yet, lots of sentences were copied from Bossuet, starting with the first line! Father Jean-Luc Morin<sup>12</sup> allowed the contributions to be identified. Below, in bold characters, is what Michael Garicoits took from Bossuet without changing anything; in italic letters, expressions which were close to those used by Bossuet. It was obvious that Michael Garicoits made the thoughts of Bossuet his own !

*Beñat Oyhénart scj*

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10) Pierre Duvignau, *A Spiritual Master ...*, P65-66. Refer to Bossuet, Praises of St John, 3rd point.

11) Miéyaa, P741.

12) See : Jean-Luc Morin, *Le Cœur de Jésus...*, annexe 5, page VII.

**It has pleased God to make Himself loved,**  
and while we were still his enemies, he loved us so much  
that *he sent his only Son:*  
He gave Him to us 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:*  
the Son of God became man.

At the moment He entered the world animated by the Spirit of God His Father,  
He gave Himself up to all God's designs for Him;  
**He took the place of all victims;**  
**He said: "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,**  
**but a body have you prepared for me;**  
**in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.**  
**Then I said: 'Here I am, I have come to do your will, O my God.'"**  
Jesus began His life's work **by this great act which he never discontinued.**

*From this moment onwards he remained always in a state of sacrificial offering,*  
annihilated before God. He did nothing on His own; His actions were always directed by the Spirit of God;  
His disposition was **one of constant abandonment to the orders of God, to suffer and do**  
**whatever He wanted:**

Exinanivit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.  
[He lowered Himself, becoming obedient until death, death on the cross.]

This is how God loves us: this is how Jesus Christ our Lord and creator  
became *an indescribable attraction for our hearts, a perfect model and an all-powerful help.*

*But we human beings are cold before God!*  
Even among the priests there are very few who say as their divine Master did:  
"Here I am, Ita Pater! [Yes, Father]"

At the sight of this marvellous spectacle, the priests of Betharram<sup>15</sup> felt drawn to dedicate<sup>16</sup>  
themselves to imitating Jesus, humble and obedient,  
and to working wholeheartedly to bring the same happiness to others,  
under the protection of Mary; she was always disposed to do what God wanted  
and was always submissive to what God did.

They have taken St Michael and St Ignatius Loyola as their patrons.

15) In 1838, the Congregation did not yet have religious brothers : they had to wait until 1840 for this.

16) « To devote oneself » meant in the past « to dedicate oneself by vows » ; the meaning remained here. » (Footnote by Father Miéyaa, P724). From the beginning, Michael Garicoits wanted a real religious congregation with vows ; that is where he would find the stumbling block with Monsignor Lacroix.



*Question: In what consists the religious perfection to which we must aspire under pain of mortal sin? Answer: In Charity. Q: and what is the strongest and most unequivocal proof of charity? A: It is to conform our will to the will of God in all things, to make this the object, the rule and the motive of all our desires and all our enterprises: to want what God wants, as He wants and because he wants it. Q: What must we do to act properly, Christianly, religiously? A. Apply this general principle to all our decisions and choices, to every little thing we do. | M 396*



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