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A word from the superior general

If you can’t get my meaning clearly, you can guess

Dear Betharramites,

In this month of the Sacred Heart I invite you once again to “go out to share”. Jesus Christ, humble and obedient, calls us to love him and follow him. What will we answer?

Already in the OT we have a “Here I am” spoken by Moses before Yahweh at Horeb. Trembling and shoeless, he steps towards the amazing bush which is on fire not consumed by flame. (Ex 3.5). The patriarch is called by name and he obeys. We religious were also called to take our shoes off on the day of our final vows.

When contemplating the life of Jesus of Nazareth, his total self-emptying stands out. This life cannot be understood as the fruit of a search for self-fulfilment. His life was obedience. He was centred in God, his Father, on the Kingdom of God and on his neighbour, especially the poor and the sinners. Jesus lives for the fulfilment

not of his own will, but of that of his Father who sent him (John 5.30; 6.38). This is his food (John 4:36).

But modern life with its distractions and focus on autonomy requires us to make an effort to live well the obedience we have all professed. If Christ is "our only Lord", then that commits us. In addition, we have a spiritual seasoning: "Obedience for love" is the "flavour" of our congregation; its "reason for being"; its "cornerstone" which, if missing, causes the whole building to collapse...

A modern mentality causes many people difficulties in believing in "direction" (*in Spanish: mediaciones*), so that few today will accept to be a superior. On the one hand there are those who do not dare to command, and on the other hand there are religious who refuse to let them do it. They go from reasonable objections to intransigent positions, threats, reproaches, etc. Better to continue where we are ...

Some venerable elders were men of God, who until the end of their days gave signs of being willing to go wherever they were sent. I recall the expression of an octogenarian priest who told me: "Every old tree that is transplanted loses some of its roots ... but if you ask me: "Here I am". A few months later he told me that he was very happy in his new placement. The greatest resistances are usually inside ourselves, and how good it is when we overcome them by faith!

Many young people, too, have "inherited" these good dispositions.

They offer themselves to the most difficult tasks, in poor areas, and are an example for others. Obedience is not only "contagious", but it is learned when we suffer it a little...: "he learned to obey through suffering" (Heb 5.8).

It saddens me to hear it said of a religious: "He always did what he wanted ...". Though I recognize that there are cases in which sudden necessity & anxiety has led superiors to 'burn green firewood', and the smoke of the Dissatisfaction has spread. Superiors are not exempt from discernment, from consulting, from developing proposals with the eyes of faith. For those of us who have to provide this service of authority (that is Regional Superior or indeed the Superior General, the supreme moderator), it is a great challenge to ask a brother to go on a mission to a new community. We are not exempted from praying, from being open to listening, dialogue, consultation and accepting changes in the responsibilities entrusted to us.

To make a discernment every time a change is proposed, you must have enough information; have a project in mind (even if incomplete) to propose to the candidate, taking into account other possible placements, to be sure that this change will help the brother grow and benefit the communities involved (the one he leaves and the one that receives him). This rigour will be welcomed by his brothers and win support from the superiors in the vicariate, and

be supported by the advice of the Regional Council. Once the change is proposed, the acceptance of the religious is expected, and calls forth his capacity to dialogue and respond in obedience to a formal request for a new mission.

How many know the arduous path of proposing a change? Do we ever think about how difficult it is to find a response to the needs of a community? If we did, we would hesitate before saying "no", although it is always possible to say no...

As in any family, so that some may study a specialisation, it will be necessary for others to "work in the field" (pastoral); others, meanwhile, will have to manage the goods so that they can find the necessary resources; others will have to organise the housework; others dedicate themselves to the 'education of the young' (formation); others serve more the poor and those who are vulnerable. Everyone has the obligation to collaborate. Going out to share implies guaranteeing synergy in family life.

We share what each person earns with their work. They celebrate their life in community and they live in love and forgiveness with one another. They open their hearts to the poor, the lonely and helpless and they experience insertion as a community into a Local church, etc.

Unfortunately, when we start from projects that seek only the self-realisation of each one (one person dictates the goals that constitute it;

he alone fulfils and accomplishes it), the whole building of obedience falls down. Is it right that only a few support the burden of the common life while others are free to enjoy 'their options', more or less rewarding?

Let's go out and share! But let it be the fruit of a synodal experience in which 'the self' does not put itself at the centre, but understands itself from communion with the other.

Isolation and loneliness are brothers of individualism. And it is natural that obedience does not fit with an understanding of the following of Christ in which every form of collective or institutional bonding is seen as a threat, or an "intrusion into my sacred space": that is, my *private* relationship with God, with others and with the world.

When the first Betharramites were asked to empty their pockets and share what they had, several left the nascent society. They did not imagine that this dispossession would lead them to fullness. Their obedience was relative... They did not want to understand what Saint Michael was proposing to them. That's why he used to provoke them by telling them: "If you can't get my meaning clearly, you can guess."

Fr. Gustavo SCJ
SUPERIOR GENERAL

SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS....

through Fr. Etchecopar

Letter of Fr. Etchecopar,
then Superior General,
to the religious

F.V.D.

Betharram, June 18 1886

Dearest Fathers and Brothers in Jesus Christ,

It is with great joy that I offer, in this month, your hearts to the divine Heart of our good Master.

I remember the feelings arising from the soul of our venerated Founder, when he recalled our special consecration to this adorable Heart and our solemn profession to love, to imitate, to propagate his devotion and the reign of his virtue.

I offer him again to God, redoubling his prayers to obtain for each of us a growing fidelity to our vocation, so beautiful, and so fitting to current needs.

Let's think about it, dear Fathers and Brothers ... Let's look at our coat of arms often, and then go to the bottom of our hearts to analyse the feelings that govern our words and actions. And if we discover traits of resemblance to the pattern given by God, chosen by us, let us give thanks to Him from whom flows every gift, especially that of the union with the Heart and the love of our God. If on the other hand, we notice a contradiction between the banner and the soldier who carries it, let us pray urgently to the Divine Leader who leads us, to give us new heart and a right spirit, worthy of him and of our vows.

And then always, repeating the cry of our little troop: «Ecce venio! Here I am !»

Here I am, according to the words of the Founder; in the service of humility and charity, in detestation of the pride and egoism of our time.

Here I am, united to my Saviour, in his obedience to his Father, and in his zeal for the salvation of souls.

Here I am especially the apostle of respect and perfect submission to Superiors, in hatred of the spirit of insubordination and selfishness which is the scourge of our time.

For that, dear Fathers and Brothers, we must often and always suffer. But, said Blessed Margaret Mary¹, in the Heart of Jesus, everything changes into gentleness; and then we are surely rewarded by seeing the extension of the reign of his heart, which (added the saint), has chosen for apostles poor men, despised and full of contradictions.

And this no doubt drives us to sense our unworthiness and impels us to immerse ourselves in the Divine Heart losing both body and soul into him. Our Lord thus sends us each day some little embarrassment or experience of powerlessness, some little cross in body or spirit, within us or without us.

Let us bless him at all times!

(...)

Note 1) St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, V.H.M. (1647–1690), was a French Roman Catholic Visitation nun and mystic, who promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in its modern form.

14 May 2019

Happy Feast
of the Sacred Heart!

“It is not just about migrants” ...

Message for the 105th world day of migrants and refugees 2019, (29 september 2019)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Faith assures us that in a mysterious way the Kingdom of God is already present here on earth (cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 39). Yet in our own time, we are saddened to see the obstacles and opposition it encounters. [...]

The most economically advanced societies are witnessing a growing trend towards extreme individualism which, combined with a utilitarian mentality and reinforced by the media, is producing a “globalization of indifference”. In this scenario, migrants, refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking have become emblems of exclusion. In addition to the hardships that their condition entails, they are often looked down upon and considered the source of all society’s ills. That attitude is an alarm bell warning of the moral decline we will face if we continue to give ground to the throw-away culture. In fact, if it continues, anyone who does not fall within the accepted norms of physical, mental and social well-being is at risk of marginalization and exclusion.

For this reason, the presence of migrants and refugees – and of vulnerable people in general – is an invitation to recover some of those essential dimensions of our Christian existence and our humanity that risk being overlooked in a prosperous society. That is why it is not just about migrants. When we show concern for them, we also show concern for ourselves, for everyone; in taking care of them, we all grow [...].

- *“Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!”*



(Mt 14:27). It is not just about migrants: it is also about our fears. The signs of meanness we see around us heighten “our fear of ‘the other’, the unknown, the marginalized, the foreigner... [...] To

some extent, the fear is legitimate, also because the preparation for this encounter is lacking” (Homily in Sacrofano, 15 February 2019). But the problem is not that we have doubts and fears. The problem is when they condition our way of thinking and acting to the point of making us intolerant, closed and perhaps even – without realizing it – racist. In this way, fear deprives us of the desire and the ability to encounter the other, the person different from myself; it deprives me of an opportunity to encounter the Lord.

- *“For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same?”* (Mt 5:46). It is not just about migrants: it is about charity. Through works of charity, we demonstrate our faith (cf. Jas 2:18). And the highest form of charity is that shown to those unable to reciprocate and perhaps even to thank us in return. “It is also about the face we want to give to our society and about the value of each human life. [...]

- *“But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight”* (Lk 10:33). It is not just about migrants: it is about our humanity. [...] As Jesus himself teaches us (cf. Mt 9:35-36; 14:13-14; 15:32-37), being compassionate means recognizing the suffering of the other and taking immediate action to soothe, heal and save. [...]

- *"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father"* (Mt 18:10). It is not just about migrants: it is a question of seeing that no one is excluded. Today's world is increasingly becoming more elitist and cruel towards the excluded. Developing countries continue to be drained of their best natural and human resources for the benefit of a few privileged markets. Wars only affect some regions of the world, yet weapons of war are produced and sold in other regions which are then unwilling to take in the refugees produced by these conflicts. [...] A real development, on the other hand, seeks to include all the world's men and women, to promote their integral growth, and to show concern for coming generations.

- *"Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all"* (Mk 10:43-44). It is not just about migrants: it is about putting the last in first place. Jesus Christ asks us not to yield to the logic of the world, which justifies injustice to others for my own gain or that of my group. "Me first, and then the others!" Instead, the true motto of the Christian is, "The last shall be first!" [...].

- *"I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly"* (Jn 10:10). It is not just about migrants: it is about the whole person, about all people. In Jesus' words, we encounter the very heart of his mission: to see that all receive the gift of life in its fullness, according to the will of the Father. [...]

- *"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God"* (Eph 2:19). It is not just about migrants: it is about building the city of God and man. In

our time, which can also be called the era of migration, many innocent people fall victim to the "great deception" of limitless technological and consumerist development (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 34). As a result, they undertake a journey towards a "paradise" that inevitably betrays their expectations. Their presence, at times uncomfortable, helps to debunk the myth of a progress that benefits a few while built on the exploitation of many. "We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved. They are an occasion that Providence gives us to help build a more just society, a more perfect democracy, a more united country, a more fraternal world and a more open and evangelical Christian community".

Our response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration can be summed up in four verbs: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. Yet these verbs do not apply only to migrants and refugees. They describe the Church's mission to all those living in the existential peripheries [...]. If we put those four verbs into practice, we will help build the city of God and man. We will promote the integral human development of all people. We will also help the world community to come closer to the goals of sustainable development that it has set for itself and that, lacking such an approach, will prove difficult to achieve.

In a word, it is not only the cause of migrants that is at stake; it is not just about them, but about all of us, and about the present and future of the human family. (...) •

From the Vatican, 30 April 2019

An overview of Life of the Vicariate of England at present

Betharramites in England serve in a wide variety of capacities: as Parish Priests, chaplains, spiritual directors and vocational guides. Today, we look forward to the future by living in small fraternal communities and undertaking various missionary activities to uphold the Church and the Kingdom of God. By the inspiration of our Founder we are called on to march, 'Forward always Forward'.

As Religious, we are, as Pope Francis says, living in this world to embody the Good News of Christ, who died and rose again. The vicariate at present has got its own difficulties and blessings. We all are doing the best for the Lord and his people in our own pastoral mission areas and Chaplaincy to the young people.

It really is a pleasure to note down the present life of the English Vicariate. In the last few years, the face of the Vicariate has changed. On the whole, I feel the Vicariate is in good health. Our presence (15 of us Br. Liam, Br. John, Br. Patrick, Br. Gerard, Br. Andrew, Fr. Ted, Fr. Brian, Fr. Tom, Fr. Dominic, Fr. Austin, Fr. Anton, Fr. Biju, Fr. Vincent, Fr. George and myself) and Fr. Enrico Frigerio SCJ, Regional Superior as well as Fr. Sylvain SCJ in five parishes which include two communities and pastoral missions of the Archdiocese of Birmingham as well as two



parishes, and one community in Nottingham are fruitful. Archbishop of Birmingham, Bp. Bernard Longley, expressed his gratitude for our pastoral work in the Archdiocese when Fr. Gustavo, Fr. Enrico and I visited him last

December. Archbishop Bernard also asked us to reflect on other possible non-parish missions, since we are mainly working in a parish set up. He feels that the religious communities along with their Charism and spirituality can offer more creativity and vision for the future. At our recent Togetherness day, we started discussions about this proposal and discernment.

Bishop of Nottingham, Patrick Mckinney was very grateful for our Betharramite presence in his diocese. He remembered and valued our ministry in the Archdiocese of Birmingham where he was a priest before he became the Bishop of Nottingham. The new community in Nottingham is taking small steps to fully establish as a community.

Although Betharram Fathers and Brothers here in England are a small community of religious. We remember our Founder St. Michael Garicoits saying, *"To serve God is to stay in complete dependence to His will in everything. Everywhere and always that God wants, how He wants it, because He wants it."* This hope helps us to face all trials that



we go through every day in our life in the Vicariate. We are very integrated with our pastoral ministry in the parishes as well as ministry to young people, thanks to the Chaplaincy work of our Brothers John and Andrew to the local Catholic Schools.

Overall, the parish ministry here in the Birmingham Archdiocese and Nottingham Diocese seems to prosper and the credit must be given to the missionary and pastoral zeal shown by our Fathers and Brothers in this regard. Lay companions of Betharram are actively sharing our spirituality and Charism of our Founder St. Michael Garicoits in our parishes. They meet regularly once a month and come together to celebrate our patronal feast days of our congregation in designated parishes and communities.

The atmosphere in our Vicariate is truly welcoming and brotherly. We have seriously considered the recommendation of Fr. Gustavo, re-

garding care of the elderly brethren. The Olton Community and Droitwich Community are good examples of the care for the elderly. We have our togetherness days four times in a year and our annual retreat at Nympsfield. We all try to be present at this occasion for our ongoing formation and our brotherly time of being together. At the last gathering, we discussed the importance of having an Apostolic Community Project (ACP). I have been informed that communities have already taken this seriously and it is being implemented.

Economy of Communion

The communities in the Vicariate are self-sufficient. Some of the communities and parishes also contribute regularly to the Vicariate. The Mission appeals in different parishes in the United Kingdom as well as money raised through different fund-raising activities in the Vi-

cariate and parishes have allowed us to support missions in India. Since 2018, we have responded to the call of the Generalate to support the Vietnam mission for five years with monetary help. These mission appeals are occasions to speak to the congregation in the church about our work and also to invite the help and support young people with regard to vocations.

Ministry at a Glance

The mission is and always has been rich and multi-faceted. All this reflects a unique spirituality. The recent Canonical Visitation of our Superior General Rev. Gustavo Agin SCJ has given us a new impetus to march forward with the conviction of going out to share the richness of our spirituality. He called all of us to be an example to give Christians an experience of the love of God in such a way that it could become the

very centre of their lives. We have taken this seriously in an effort to help people in our care to find God's will for them by a process of spiritual discernment, and then generously to put it into practice. This spiritual approach means that we engage with people and cultures by finding out how God is already at work in them, and then by helping them to cooperate with God to go further and deeper.

The places we serve and share our life have made us aware of realising the importance of internationality and interdependence. This is very evident in our communities in Olton Friary, Great Barr, Nottingham and Droitwich. The learning process to live with this diverse dimension is our missionary identity and it is a God given witness. As a result, we are happy to witness as well as proclaim the Good News to the people who are in our care with immense hope. This helped us to live the Gospel values and allowed us to dialogue with peoples of different cultures, faiths, and religions. We are also trying to be champions to promote and work with others to safeguard human dignity, nurture family, foster harmony, cultivate a culture of peace, and respond to the calls of justice and integrity of creation.



Sponsored walks: a healthy way to support our missions

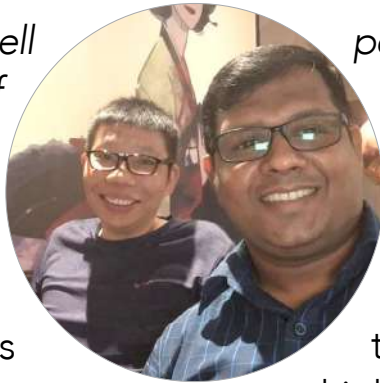
*Wilfred Pereppadan scj
Regional Vicar*

Good Shepherd Sunday in Vietnam

"Be shepherds with the smell of your sheep, in the midst of your people like Jesus the good shepherd", said Pope Francis.

Good Shepherd Sunday is the vocation Sunday. It was celebrated in every diocese as vocation day and given orientation about God's call in every one's life. Each one is called by God either to religious life or to family life and everyone is oriented and choose accordingly. Vocation to priesthood and religious life is something more which need more of sacrifice and leaving everything. It is God's precious gift that can be given to human being It needs discernment. Pope emeritus Benedict XVI would say:

"The discernment of a vocation is above all the fruit of an intimate dialogue between Lord and his disciples. Young



people, if they know how to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God's call". Pope Benedict in America: The Full Texts of Papal Talks Given During His Apostolic Visit to the United States" responses of his holiness benedict xvi

to the questions posed by the bishops, 16 avril 2008.

Vocation animation is also the responsibility of each and every religious of Betharram for the future and for the mission to carry out to the ends of the world. But recently Holy Father pope Francis said vocation is for the present and every priest and religious has the responsibility to attract the young people to Jesus our good shepherd and make them to be friend of Jesus. Vocation camps are the means to give them right directions and to orient to understand Jesus and to decide.

It was a great occasion for me to participate in the vocation camp which was held in the diocese of Thanh Hoa in the north of Vietnam along with our brothers. The diocese of Thanh Hoa invited me to come for the vocation camp and asked us to introduce about our congregation. We decided to participate in the camp





and want to present our congregation to the young people. It was also an opportunity to visit our brothers house and see the reality. I had gone to Thanh Hoa two days ahead of the vocation camp. Before that along with fr. Sa-at and Br. Peter we prepared the power point presentation about short history of our congregation and life of St. Michael Garicoits and the mission of our congregation.

In the beginning I visited the houses of our brothers and on Saturday evening I reached the Thanh Hoa bishop's house. They gave me a warm welcome, and I was the first one to arrive there. There I could meet some known faces of fathers of Thanh Hoa diocese and was happy to see them. After having dinner I went to rest. Next day morning it was really a wonder for me by seeing the arrangement that they had done for the camp.

They had prepared a flax where they had explained about each congregation and the founder and life and mission. It was really a great think. As the children come they go and read about each

congregation and learn more about the congregation. At 8 am all gathered in the auditorium: it was 1500 students both boys and girls from different parishes of the dioceses. We started the camp with the inaugural ceremony presided by Msgr. Joseph, the vicar general of the diocese and the director welcomed

the gathering. After that each religious had to present about their congregation. Br. Peter presented about our congregation through power point presentation.

After lunch we again gathered and I was invited to the stage and asked by the mc those who would like to know more about the congregation can follow. 26 students want to know more about Betharram. We were given a room and had to clarify about all doubts and our life and formation and mission. After that few students gave their address and contact and we gave ours to contact us. After that we had holy mass presided by the bishop and in his homily he spoke about the vocation to priesthood and religious life. After the mass in the evening at 6 pm the camp concluded. It was well organized and prepared well. It was a wonderful experience seeing such a huge number of students gathering for the camp. Thanks to all brothers and to Fr Sa-at for supporting and preparing the presentation.

Yesudas Kuttappassery scj

The House of the Child

La Casa del Niño (House of the Child) was founded 46 years ago, at Villa Betharram (Adrogué) by Fathers Bruno Lerullo SCJ and Francisco Daleoso SCJ. Faithful to the Gospel and conscious of the limits of their position, they knew how to listen to the needs of the more vulnerable and share the mission with a group of laypeople who had some love to give and the desire to serve. That is how the Casa del Niño was born, a symbol of the incarnation, of a shared Encounter and Mission from its first day of existence. Currently, the house welcomes about 60 children, aged from 3 to 5 years, to whom a basic education, food and complete support are given.

Originally, the work had the goal of accommodating children, daytime, whose families worked and needed help looking after their children. But, over the



years, this part of town has changed. Structural poverty and the plague of drugs have had a devastating effect. Most of the families are now unemployed. Many of them are exposed to forms of drug dependence, abuse, overcrowding and delinquency.

Faced with this truth, the mission of the Casa del Niño knew how to progress. Helping families to take care of their children was not enough. Today, it is necessary to offer children a space where they can find support, affection and tenderness, where they can feel at ease and cared for, so that they can connect to life in a positive way, let their enthusiasm run free, bring out their good side and integrate what is painful, be themselves and meet others, be able to say one day "here I am" for the world.

We are saddened to see that, despite our daily efforts, many of these children go home each evening to a house where they don't receive affectionate gestures, where there is no place for playing or enjoyment, where their dietary, hygiene and rest requirements are not satisfied. In certain cases, they receive contempt and violence. It is awful too to see them leave for primary school, to lose contact with many of the others, suspecting that given their conditions of life, the innocence of childhood will be taken from them. They will have



Fr. Francisco Daleoso scj among the children of the House



An almost entirely feminine flying camp

to learn prematurely to defend themselves in a world of great hostility, which will reopen their old wounds and cause new ones, which will influence their choices, their freedom and their desire for a good life.

In spite of everything, the mission maintains its direction, its joy, its hope, as we never step out alone. We share this love of Jesus for the poorest with the Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay, which assures the continuity of this work, by highlighting it and supporting it financially. We are also stepping out and sharing our duty with the team responsible for the educational mission of the vicariate. We can also count on the work and the humane qualities of the employees of La Casa, on the availability of volunteers and colleagues and on the encouraging and loving participation of the religious community.

So, with humility and effort, this welcoming space is taking shape. The children can experience love and trust there. They can keep this spark of life safely in their hearts which will allow them one day to

make choices in order to do good, for their own freedom and fulfilment. Or at least, when they are affected by life's difficulties, injustices and misfortunes, they will be able to draw from their emotional memory and remember with dignity, having been loved, having been cared for, having been a source of joy for those they met during this time in their childhood.

In caring for these lives, we can be in harmony with Jesus in his love for the poorest, in his urgency for the Kingdom and in the suffering of the Cross. But we also experience the Resurrection with Him, each time a child who has been deeply hurt by those who should be taking care of them, lets us embrace them, or comes towards us spontaneously with a gesture of tenderness.

These other "Christs" invite us to "go out to share", without having any guarantee of success, with our weaknesses and our fears, in a world that seems unaware of the right to life, to childhood and the right to grow up in good health and with love. But we go out with the certainty that we are not walking alone, and that in the momentum of going out, we have a pre-taste of the Mystery of the Encounter that we are ourselves the fruit of, that we are a part of, and that we walk towards, in the hope of contemplating it one day, fully, in the embrace of the Father.

*María Eugenia Martiarena
Betharramite lay associate*



In the meeting of the General Council, from the 5th to the 8th of June, the Superior General, Fr. Eduardo Gustavo Agín scj, with his Council,

- approved the appointment of Fr. Arul Gnana Prakash as Superior of the Formation Community of Mangalore (SMJC Region, Vicariate of India), for a first mandate, from June 5th, 2019 (R. of L. 206/a);
- admitted to final profession Brother Hippolyte Yomafou (SMG Region, Vicariate of the Ivory Coast) (R. of L. 205 h);
- decided to present Deacon Leandro Narduzzo (FrAE Region, Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay) to priestly minister (R. of L. 205 h).

And,

- he gave authorization to the Regional Superior of the FrAE Region, Fr. Daniel González, to swap a piece of land, property of the Congregation and located in Vila Matilde (SP, Brazil) for 15 apartments built in the same area. (R. of L. 295; 205 t);
- he gave authorization to the Regional Superior of the SMG Region, Fr. Jean-Luc Morin, to go forward with the project called «New Tshanfeto», especially by putting at the disposal of this work, dedicated to the integral growth of men and women, a piece of land located at Km 50 in Adiapodoumé, which belongs to the Congregation and which is now cultivated as an hevea plantation (R. of L. 295; 205 t).



..... **In memoriam**

Wednesday, May 29, died *Mr Augustin Marsaa-Poey*, brother of Fr Henri Marsaa-Poey scj, of the residence of Anglet (community of Anglet-Mendelu). He was 84 years old. We express our heartfelt condolences to our dear father and we pray for the repose of his brother's soul.

On June 5th, died *Mrs Kulanthai Theres*, 90 years old, mother of Fr Britto Rajan scj, of the community of Bangalore (Vicariate of India). We express our sympathy to Fr Britto and we promise to pray for him and for his dear mother.



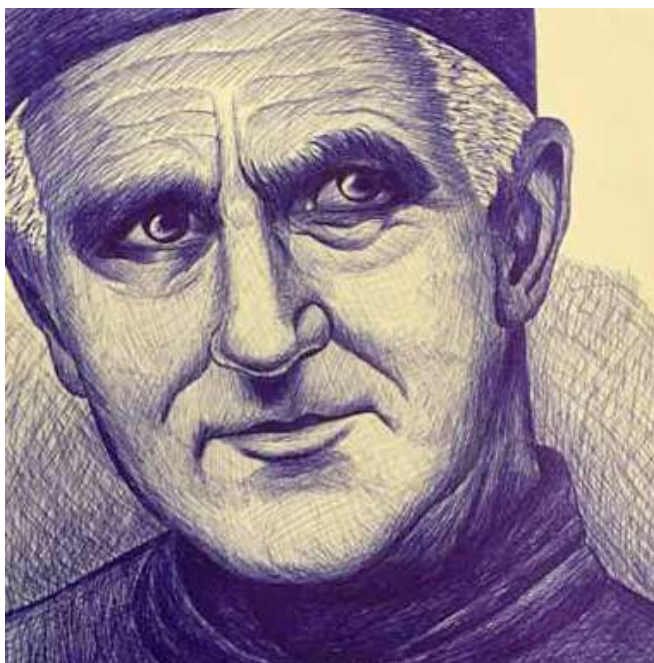
**CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEART
OF JESUS
OF BETHARRAM**

The solemnity of our Father St. Michael Garicoïts was celebrated throughout the world.

From Thailand, to India, from Vietnam to Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina, without forgetting the old Europe and Africa and in the communities that carry out their mission in the Land of Jesus.

All our religious communities, the lay Betharramites, the benefactors, many friends who know and live their Christian life following the Betharramite spirituality, have solemnly celebrated this anniversary. *"My God, look not on my sins but upon this Society which your Sacred Heart has conceived and formed. Deign to grant it your peace, that peace according to your will which 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 SAINT MICHAEL GARICOÏTS

FRANCE SPAIN IVORY COAST
ITALY CENTRAL AFRICA HOLY LAND



France-Spain

• From May 12 to 19, the Community of Notre-Dame hosted a group of 13 pilgrims from the Ivory Coast and enjoyed a family get-together with some of our brothers from the communities in our Vicariate.

After celebrating St Michael Garicoïts' feast-day in Betharram, religious and lay people together set off to visit Lourdes, St Michael Garicoïts' home village of St Just-Ibarre, the community at Saint-Palais, the Oneix house where St Michael worked as a servant and the community in Pau, St Mary of Jesus Crucified's former Carmel. An opportunity for sharing brotherly love with the lay members of some of our Fraternities in the Vicariate was not to be missed.

Thank you to all those men and women who gave so generously of themselves, thereby ensuring that this, the first time they had followed the steps of our



founder, was such a success for our Ivory Coast brothers and sisters.

• Friday 24 May we celebrated the Transverberation of St Mary of Jesus Crucified which occurred on May 24th, 1868 at the Carmel of Pau. Sung Vespers in the chapel of the Maison Saint-Michel in Pau (formerly the Carmel) was followed by a talk from Mgr Vincent Landel scj, honorary archbishop of Rabat, on his experiences inside a Muslim country. The torchlight procession scheduled to follow on had to be cancelled due to the rain, so the evening's events were concluded with a presentation of the relics of Mariam.



• With the fleeting visit from our brothers Andrew Ferris and John Dawson, who were accompanying a youth group from the Birmingham diocese on their pilgrimage to Lourdes, we spent another few happy international fraternal moments together with our brothers from England (Bros Andrew and John), Brazil (Fr Kito), India (Frs Reegan and Shamon) and Benin (Br Habib). The joy of the St Michael brotherhood was plain to see!

Ivory Coast

• In the course of an open day organised on Saturday 4 May, the community of Adiopodoumé welcomed parents,

friends and acquaintances together with lay associates, the Betharramite young people and children of "St Michael", who all drank from the "Here I am" wellspring.

After words of welcome spoken by the community superior, Fr Jean Paul Kissiscj, Fr Marius Angui scj gave a presentation on the life of the community and the different stages in formation. Brothers Aimé, Dieu-bénit, Arnaud and Fr Elisée Mambo scj then willingly shared their vocational experiences.

After celebrating the Eucharist, a brotherly meal brought all attendees, guests and hosts alike, around the same table together. The afternoon was given over to a guided tour of the house, and the whole proceedings passed in an atmosphere of joy and reunion.



REGION FR. AUGUSTE ETCHECOPAR

ARGENTINA URUGUAY
PARAGUAY BRAZIL

- What is "ERJOBÉ"? "*Encuentro Regional de JOvenes BETHarramitas*": It is an excellent initiative of the young people of the three Vicariates forming the Region. They will organise a gathering in Paraguay to share life experiences and faith, to grow, to strengthen the sense of belonging to the Congregation and to deepen the charism of St. Michael



Garicoits.

Who planned this meeting? The idea came from the "FVD" group: a group of young Paraguayans who are inspired by the Betharramite charism in their lives.

Where will it take place? In Asunción, in the Vicariate of Paraguay, from 8 to 14 July 2019.

The theme. It is the same theme on which the whole Congregation is reflecting and developing initiatives: "Going out to share", presented in a youth-friendly style. The organizers explained the theme:

Jesus, with passion and fidelity, "went out to share everything". Exposing oneself to being abused, suspected and discriminated against by an accusing society, in a certain way, like the current one. His secret joy flowed from that particular relationship with his Father, whom he wanted to please and obey to serve all men and women, especially the poor. Saint Michael Garicoits, fascinated by such an annihilation of the Incarnate Word, felt that he had to reciprocate this exclusive love, essential element in vocations, the "secret spring" that moves our hearts.

Good journey to all the young people who are preparing to live this important moment in the life of the Region!

For further information: <https://erjobe.org>



England

- The Bishop of Nottingham, Rt Rev Patrick McKinney, blessed the peal of six bells at the Church of Corpus Christi on Saturday 1 June 2019.

This peal, previously housed at the Church of St. Francis Clifton, the gift was generously gifted to the Church of Corpus Christi in an ecumenical gesture by the Church of England Community of Clifton when the Church of St Francis closed.

Corpus Christi is now the first Catholic parish church in the Diocese of Nottingham to have a ringing peal of bells.

Thailand

- From May 16 to 21, the Card. Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, was in Thailand on occasion of the 350th anniversary of the Apostolic Vicariate of Siam (1669-2019), which creation officially marked the establishment of the Catholic Church in what is Thailand today.

Our communities took part in this event with all the more joy and enthusiasm that the program of the visit included particularly significant places to our religious family.

"The Apostolic Vicariate of Siam, founded in 1669, went through various phases," the Cardinal recalled. "Today there are 11 dioceses in Thailand, a sign of the growth of the Church. Let

us recall with gratitude – he said – the work of evangelization initiated by the members of the Society for the Foreign Missions of Paris (MEP). Other missionaries and religious, men and women, belonging to various institutes followed in their footsteps and with apostolic zeal dedicated themselves to establishing the Church in this great nation."

Saturday 18, the Cardinal went to Sampran, where our formation community (with two residences) is located, to preside over the solemn Eucharistic concelebration of the 350 anniversary years.

After an important stop in Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand, he did a visit to our Maepon Mission Center on Monday, May 20. Hence he met our missionary community, where he was welcomed by Fr. John Chan Kunu scj, Regional Vicar in Thailand, who in his welcome speech briefly illustrated the presence of the Betharramite Congregation in the Diocese of Chiang Mai starting from December 1951. Then he recalled the work of Mgr Lucien Lacoste scj, first Bishop of the Diocese of Chiang Mai, and illustrated the history of the mission of Maepon along with the work done by the religious with the Karen population.

In his homily, Cardinal Filoni highlighted the point that Christians, like the apostles, are called to share their faith with those who do not know Christ yet. For the occasion, a large part of the population of the nearby villages reached the village of Maepon, making this particular visit even more joyful.

Approval Difficulties for the Rule of Betharram

by Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj

In 1835 the first companions of Saint Michael adopted the Hasparren Missionary Rule which, in practice, proved to be insufficient in their eyes. From 1836 to 1837, Father Garicoits introduced them little by little to the constitutions of the Jesuits. In 1838, he placed at the head of these constitutions the Manifesto, which expresses the new spirit according to which they must be interpreted.

On 6 September that year, Mgr. Lacroix, who had been bishop of Bayonne for a year, authorized them to follow this text. But three years later, on 9 September 1841, he imposed on them constitutions that he wrote and signed himself, inspired by the Sulpicians, the society to which he belonged.

While Saint Michael and his first companions aspired to a religious institution characterized by vows, a community life and the election of the superior by assembly, the bishop put them into a diocesan association where he intended to appoint the superior with his council, direct the mission and review the accounts. He did not authorize the profession of vows or give this association the chance of being approved by Rome. He went as far as to give them their name: Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Then the Bishop allowed them to conform to the constitutions of the Jesuits and, at the request of Fr. Gui-



mon, to profess vows, albeit in a limited way. These exceptions were maintained in the corrections made both in 1851 and 1853. This conflict between the Congregation and Bishop Lacroix started in 1841 and was prolonged and provoked a crisis within the Congregation, which would not be resolved until 1875.

After the funeral of the Founder on Saturday 16 May 1863, the Bishop met with the religious community present at Bétharram and "Mgr. Lacroix, we read in the report, said in the most formal terms that his firm and unchanging intention was that they keep to the constitutions of 1841; that all that had been attempted and carried out contrary to these constitutions had been the effect of a holy illusion"¹.

With these words the bishop drew a line under all the concessions he granted. At the same meeting, he appointed Fr. Chirou Superior, Fr. Auguste Etchécopar Secretary, and three councilors.

Three months later, Mgr. Lacroix returned to impose the constitutions of 1841 again, but accepted that the Superior and Council should be elected: Fr. Chirou was elected Superior and Fr. Etchécopar, Novice Master. The situation was difficult for the managing team, because it was caught between-

1) *L'homme au visage de lumière*, Duvignau, p. 55

en the bishop, who had the fate of the Congregation in his hands, and the majority of the religious, who wanted to remain faithful to the Founder. Faced with so much confusion, some left the Congregation.

Fr. Chirou's three-year term ended in 1866. The bishop kept him in office without informing the community. This created a bad atmosphere in the community and the situation became untenable. On 11 May 1868, without announcing his visit, Monseigneur Lacroix arrived in person at Bétharram and gathered only the religious of the Mother House to reaffirm his position categorically: "There can be no question for you," he said, "of forming a religious body. You are a purely diocesan society, engaged in missions and teaching, under the direction of the Bishop"².

The discussion focused on the vows, the most sensitive subject. The religious asked him what would happen, whether the vows would be mandatory or simply optional. The bishop answered that in his opinion they must be optional, but he would submit the decision to the vote of the assembly. The religious said that the religious of other residences should be consulted. The bishop was impatient and replied that the matter must be concluded. The result of the vote was of 23 voters, 16 votes for mandatory vows, 7 votes for optional vows.

Father Duvignau commented: "This improvised vote showed the depth of hearts and contributed greatly to improving the atmosphere. From this mo-

2) *Ibid.* p. 57

ment, we notice a rise of courage; the spirit of the founder has just won a victory that augurs others"³.

Until then, Fr. Etchécopar seemed to be in retreat. He supported Fr. Chirou with all his might. It was he who wrote all the minutes of the council. Shaken by the tensions of 11 May, the bishop made him come to Bayonne to draft new statutes that took into account the wishes of the Community⁴.

Faced with the Council's irregular situation, he asked Fr. Etchécopar, who "wishes and requests that the elections be held as soon as possible"⁵. Father Etchécopar could count on the confidence of the Community and the Bishop. He did not want to hear about elections, which would take another four years. The constitutions of 1841, which still bore the imprint of the Bishop, were revised. Bétharram was not going to accept them.

Fr. Etchécopar suggested to the Bishop - and he accepted - that it was the Community itself which was to draw up the constitutions and approves them before sending them to Rome. The new constitutions were written in August 1869. They are very timid about the vow of poverty. So they were rejected by Rome. On 7 August 1870, a new text was drafted, which took into account what Rome was asking for. This text was voted in and the return to Bayonne was sealed. Bishop Lacroix, for whom the concessions had a high cost, put the

3) *Ibid.* p. 59

4) *La Vie et l'Œuvre du Vénérable Michel Garicoïts, par Basilde Bourdenne, Beauchesne, 3e éd., 1918, p. 413*

5) *L'homme au visage de lumière, Duvignau, p. 61*

text quietly in a drawer of his office.

On 13 October 1871 Fr. Etchécopar returned to Bayonne, obtained an episcopal approval, provided that the constitutions were not presented in Rome.

Once the new text was in hand, it was possible to hold the elections, which had been requested for a long time. The General Chapter, chaired by Fr. Chirou, met on 20 May 1872. Fr. Etchécopar was elected vice-superior, visitor and secretary.

The Chapter also decided that once the Bishop's authorization was obtained, two members of the Congregation would go to Rome to present the constitutions. The bishop approved the acts, but maintained his veto that they should not be presented in Rome.

In August 1873, an extraordinary General Chapter was convened, but it was interrupted by the death of Father Chirou. The Chapter designated Father Etchécopar as Superior, up to the election chapter, set for 20 August 1874, during which he was elected Superior General by 30 votes to 34. The bishop's confidence in Fr. Etchécopar was such that he granted everything he asked, with the exception of the constitutions, which irritated him.

Mgr. Lacroix held in high esteem a Carmelite with a white veil, Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, who lived in the Carmel of Pau. He had an in depth investigation carried of the extraordinary phenomena of which she had been the subject. Now on 2 May 1875, she re-

Magendie
F.H.B. 87
Bétharram ce 3 Septembre 1873
M. Magendie
Mon très-aimé Compagnon,
Nous voici depuis le 39 du mois dernier
plongés dans le deuil. Notre si bon
supérieur, M. Chirou, a été emporté par
une crise qui n'a duré que 24 heures
ensemble. Après les vives douleurs qu'il
ressentait à chacune de ses attaques, il
s'en affaiblit rapidement et après s'être
confessé et reçu l'extrême-onction, il s'
est éteint sans secousse aucune.
O mon Dieu! quel coup! pour la Congrégation!
Quelles pertes!
Mais l'œuvre léguée est si précieuse
qu'il faut ne rien céder, que les
successeurs s'y dévouent et disent:
En avant toujours —
C'est la pensée qui me retient, mon
cher ami, malgré toute ma impuissance,
à la tête de l'Administration, jusqu'au
20 août prochain —

ceived an extraordinary message from heaven on two occasions, and once again on 4 May: this message said that Fathers Estrate and Bordachar must go to Rome before the end of the month to take the constitutions of Bétharram there. She communicated this inspiration to the bishop.

On 10 May, by order of Sister Marie de Jesus Crucified, Miss Berthe Dartigaux, the visionary's friend who was known to the Bishop, came to meet him to find out his answer. After praying

F.V.D.

Bétharram, the 3rd of September 1873

Fr. Magendie

My beloved Brother,

We have been in mourning here since the 29th of last month. Our good Superior, Fr. Chirou, was seized by a health crisis that lasted only about 24 hours. After the sharp pains he felt with each of his attacks, he quickly weakened and after having made his confession and received Extreme Unction, he died peacefully.

Oh my God! What a blow! Our poor Congregation! What a loss!

But the work that is his legacy is so important that for sure, we the survivors must devote ourselves to it, and say 'Always forward'

This is the thought that drives me, my dear friend, in spite of all my weaknesses, as the head of the administration until the 20th of August next. Thus the General Chapter decided. At the first sitting held after the burial of the dear departed, it declared that it did not want to proceed to any election and closed the meeting immediately. (...)

Fr. Auguste Etchecopar scj

together, the Bishop recognized that God's will was to send the constitutions to Rome; he signed them and gave them to her. From Anglet where he found himself, Father Etchécopar immediately went to the Episcopal Palace to receive the precious treasure.

In accordance with Mariam's instructions, he entrusted the constitutions of Bétharram to Fathers Estrate and Bordachar to take them to Rome. Everything was planned and went well for the approval of the constitutions of

Bétharram. On 30 July 1875, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars implemented the act of approval by praising and recommending the Institute of Bétharram. In the spring of 1877 Fr. Etchécopar went to Rome, accompanied by Fathers Estrate and Etchegaray, who acted as secretaries, to correct the text, which would be approved by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on 5 September 1877, after 36 years of conflict.

In Rome, they were not allowed to modify the order and the plan of the constitutions: the same titles and chapters were maintained, the Rule of St. Augustine was preserved. The content could be corrected.

This is why, under the rather unfortunate title of the Institute's Particular Devotions, Father Etchécopar succeeded in having only three articles approved: one on the Sacred Heart and the Charism, the other on Bétharram and Calvary, a third on devotions to the Heart of Jesus, the Cross, the sorrowful mysteries, the Virgin and Saint Joseph⁶.

Father Etchécopar did not cease to include the spirit of the Founder in the constitutions. He achieved this in the constitutions of 28 April 1890, ad experimentum for 10 years. Father Etchécopar no longer appears in the constitutions of 1901 on the other hand and the *Ecce venio* no longer appears in the text. •

6) P. Duvignau, *Petite histoire des Constitutions de Bétharram*, NEE, pp. 13-14



*Children and teenagers in Paraguay
caring for our “Common Home”...*



There is no age for listening to
the Word of God.

There is no age for hearing
God’s Call.

There is no age for tasting
God’s happiness.

There is no age for daring to look
the future in the face
with trust and hope.

There is no age for being
God’s Friend!



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