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## A word from the superior general

### Our call to live in community

Dear Betharramites,

While visiting the Mother House of Betharram in Brazil, I met a layman who was tidying up some old boxes belonging to a deceased priest. For several years this younger man had taken care of our elder brother. While he selected some mementos of that father whom he loved very much, I pointed out that there was also a Rule of Life among the papers and bits & pieces. He then took it, opened it and found to his surprise, between the pages, a picture of his son when he was a baby. With emotion, he understood that the priest kept him there and prayed for that child who today bears his name. The scene was silent for a moment and a strange Betharramite presence was tangible ..., the silence spoke ..., a bond of friendship and brotherhood united them beyond absence...

Perhaps you may wonder why this editorial begins by telling this episode. Maybe because I discovered in the bright eyes of this layman, one of many stories that

express that sense of family that we talk so much about among ourselves. It encapsulates so many occasions dedicated to creating bonds, and forging them with little gestures of care and concern for the brother who needs help. A love that flows, whether fraternal or filial, is always worthy of being highlighted.

By highlighting it, I come to the topic we are going to talk about today: our call to live in community, though not any old community but one in which gestures of love are not lacking.

We all know that this is not an easy project. Every Betharramite has a common experience of the charism, which constitutes our religious identity. But we also belong to different cultures, to different generations. According to St Michael: *"We are not angels, but men,"* and sometimes rather complicated ...

Through our lifestyle we were called to "share", especially: the faith, vocation and apostolate that has been entrusted to us. Thus the disciples shared with Jesus; So did Jesus with Mary and with Joseph in Nazareth. We are organised to work each in our own role, but united in a single project: to do the Will of God, more for love than for any other reason. All this in the image of the Son with the Father and the Holy Spirit within the Trinity. This is the source and model of our community lifestyle (Rule of Life 93).

We know that this is a lofty ideal to internalise, in these

times of individualism and social fragmentation. A community, which must make Christ present in the midst of the men and women of this world, cannot live disunited or indifferent to the problems that surround it. Being faithful here and now, with an incarnate and missionary style, anticipates the Kingdom of God in its historical - eschatological becoming. The founding Father himself exhorted us: *"May they all be one, as You, Father, in me and I in You; may they also be one in us, that the world may believe that you have sent me"*(cf. Acts 2,42; John 17,21).

It is a witness that helps us grow and sanctify ourselves. Indeed, community life sanctifies us! I confess that it causes me grief when some religious wearily repeat that phrase: *"community is my greatest penance"*. If we think like this, what a disenchantment it will be for those who come to see how we live! Unfortunately, many of those who turn away from our lifestyle seem to experience a "disappointment". They hoped to find a community of brothers who loved each other, but instead echoed the observation of Voltaire: *"They enter without knowing each other; they live without loving each other, and die without crying."*

Let us cherish what goodness there is in each brother. By giving him a place in our hearts, we identify with him; we prepare to carry his burdens to make them lighter. It is the gentle yoke of our life in Christ, which resembles those who live a mature love within a family. Christian families, who struggle

together in married life and truly love each other, are nourished by that same theological love that has also united us in fraternity.

I used to tell my novices at Adrogué: *"Every ministry entrusted to us to serve in community is not for acquiring prestige or power, but for our conversion."* We have an authentic mission "in our own home". Our goal: to always serve, without expecting the admiring glances or word of approval. Serve sharing faith, joys and sorrows with the brothers; accepting them as they are; love them simply because they are "Betharramites." How good it is to live in forgiveness, to live reconciled! (cf. Ps 133)

Let us build community, a community which is not an acquired right to which we would be entitled! Pope JP II invited us not to be mere "community consumers." We contribute work, talents and the communion of the goods that we are receiving. Let's do it with the graciousness of those who know they are grateful to the religious family, even accepting austerity of means.

I can visualise St Michael Garicoïts scrubbing the pots in the kitchen, sleeping only five hours, going up onto the church roof to put out the fire, washing the dishes with the brothers in Betharram and eating a loaf of bread standing in a corner of the house, before sitting down to hear confessions for many hours ...

I see it with the eyes of imagination and the heart of faith and I wonder: where does the modern cult of

relaxation and leisure come from ...? Since when does a Betharramite (who aspires to be a "useless servant") feel entitled to have "all his dreams come true?" [I can give some regrettable examples: a big car, this must-have professional course, an academic title, a position of responsibility, specialised food, dream holiday destination, favourite brothers, etc., etc., etc.] It seems so alien to our spirit that we have these claims ... The real Betharramites, tempered in spirit, were always adapted to everything, like St. Paul (Phil 4, 11-12), and accepted any deficiencies with joy.

That is why I also "dream" but with a reconciled Betharram, simpler, bolder and more committed in community. Let the community be: our home; charity: the sign of our home; the prayer: our oxygen; the Word and the Eucharist: our food; the poor: our friends!

Let no one feel alone in our communities! I often recall the picture of many religious who incarnate even today, in their mature age, that wise and generous figure capable of tenderly supporting the members of their community. Thank you for understanding fraternal love!

With those little gestures of each day, we will leave our old heart behind and dare to become the Heart of Jesus. May only *He* be the Heart of our communities!

*Fr. Gustavo scj*  
*Superior General*

# Letter of Pope Francis on the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the holy Curé of Ars – Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on 4 August 2019.

[...] Brothers, let us indeed acknowledge our weaknesses, but also let Jesus transform them and send us forth anew to the mission. Let us never lose the joy of knowing that we are “the sheep of his flock” and that he is our Lord and Shepherd.



For our hearts to be encouraged, we should not neglect the dialectic that determines our identity. First, our relationship with Jesus. Whenever we turn away from Jesus or neglect our relationship with him, slowly but surely our commitment begins to fade and our lamps lose the oil needed to light up our lives (cf. Mt 25:1-13): “Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me... because apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:4-5). In this regard, I would encourage you not to neglect spiritual direction. Look for a brother with whom you can speak, reflect, discuss and discern, sharing with complete trust and openness your journey. A wise brother with whom to share the experience of discipleship. Find him, meet with him and enjoy his guidance, accompaniment and counsel. [...].

The other essential aspect of this dialectic is our relationship to our people. Foster that relationship and expand it. Do not withdraw from your people, your presbyterates and your communities, much less seek refuge in closed and elitist groups. Ultimately, this stifles and poisons the soul. A minister whose “heart is encouraged” is a minister always on the move. In our “going forth”,

we walk “sometimes in front, sometimes in the middle and sometimes behind: in front, in order to guide the community; in the middle, in order to encourage and support, and at the back in order to keep it united, so that no one lags too far behind”... There is another reason too: because our people have a “nose” for things. They sniff out, discover, new paths to take; they have the *sensus fidei* (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 12)... What could be more beautiful than this?” Jesus himself is the model of this evangelizing option that leads us to the heart of our people. How good it is for us to see him in his attention to every person! The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is nothing else but the culmination of that evangelizing style that marked his entire life.

Dear brother priests, the pain of so many victims, the pain of the people of God and our own personal pain, cannot be for naught. Jesus himself has brought this heavy burden to his cross and he now asks us to be renewed in our mission of drawing near to those who suffer, of drawing near without embarrassment to human misery, and indeed to make all these experiences our own, as eucharist. Our age, marked by old and new wounds, requires us to be builders of relationships and communion, open, trusting and awaiting in hope the newness that the kingdom of God wishes to bring about even today. For it is a kingdom of forgiven sinners called to bear witness to the Lord’s ever-present compassion. “For his mercy endures forever”. •

## Role and tasks of a secretary...

...How should the application of a candidate for admission to novitiate, to first profession, or final profession be presented? What about the diaconate and the priesthood?

What about the foundation of a new community? Is a "verbal" agreement with the Bishop not sufficient ....especially if the bishop is "a friend of ours"? ...

What does happen with an extraordinary act of administration? And truly, what is the purpose of the minutes?

Basically, what is the role of secretary for? Is the Superior not enough?

In an attempt to confer a "right of citizenship" on the figure of the Secretary – on whom the Rule of Life insists so much – and to better meet the requirements imposed by the rules of the Code of Canon Law, the Superior General considered it urgent to convoke the Regional Secretaries, in order to reflect with them on the role and tasks entrusted to the secretaries in the Communities, the Region and the Congregation by our Rule of Life.

Considering the difficulties in bringing the three Secretaries together at the same time, the choice was made to hold personal meetings in order to address issues more specifically related to a given Region.

The purpose of these working days was to give each Secretary the



means to carry out faithfully the service required of him. Fathers Angelo Recalcati (in January, for the Etchecopar Region), Wilfred Poulouse Pereppadan (in February, for the Saint Miriam Region) and Piero Trameri (in June, for the St. Michael Region) showed great availability in this regard.

The service rendered by the secretary is above all a silent service. His work makes an authentic discernment possible: (i) whether it is the discernment carried out at the various stages of formation (e.g. admission to the novitiate, to first profession, to perpetual profession or presentation to the diaconal and priestly ministries), or (ii) whether it concerns multiple decisions to be taken in different fields, (iii) whether they are related to the situation of a particular religious (requests for exclaustation, leaving the Congregation, etc.) or (iv) for administrative matters.

The Secretary exercises a valuable service in collecting all possible information and places it at the disposal of the Major Superior (Regional Superior and Superior General) and the corresponding Council.

The Secretary performs a "memory" and "control" service. Through the preservation of archives, the organisation of communication in the Region and the drafting of minutes of Councils where discussions take place and decisions are taken, the

secretary keeps a historical record of what is happening in a Region and in a Congregation and checks that what has been decided is properly implemented.

The secretary signs the official documents. Far from being a mere formality, as we tend to think, this signature testifies to the veracity and authenticity of a document signed by the Major Superior, which is the fruit of collegial work, and not just the independent and sovereign decision of any Superior. The secretary therefore carries out a monitoring and verification service. He guarantees to his brothers in the same Region and to the Superior General that what has been decided corresponds to the truth and that what is requested by the Rule of Life has been observed.

The secretary knows how files are prepared or, if necessary, learns how to do so. He knows the procedures to follow for each question and submits them to the Major Superior.

For all these reasons, this service cannot be performed by a religious "in his spare time". This requires attention and a willingness to learn.

As I was saying, those days of meetings were intense but interesting.

This rereading of our Rule of Life has been beneficial to all of us. It has enabled us to understand that the service we perform does not make us bureaucrats, but helps us to give substance to the contents of a Rule which, while still beautiful, would become an ethereal, disincarnate, ephemeral thing. It was also an opportunity to recall that this service, if it were deprived of a soul and our rich spirituality as mediated by the Rule, would be merely a pure and strict observance of regulations and would not express the spirit that animates us.

*Graziano Sala scj*  
*General Bursar*



*Fr. Angelo scj*  
*(FrAE Region)*

I have been Regional Secretary for seven years.

When Father Gustavo, then Regional Superior, asked me to undertake this service, my first reaction was one of surprise: I had not received any preparation for this

work. But Father Gustavo reassured me: "Do not be afraid; we will work together." And then I said to myself: if I do not do it, someone else will have to do it! So I accepted. I knew that I had my limits, but also that I could count on the help of those who had more experience than me. I also knew that no one was expecting professional skills from me. The commitments to which I had devoted myself,

as a religious and Betharramite, are quite different!

At the time I was also in charge of formation in the Vicariate of Paraguay, which could represent both a difficulty and an advantage. In fact, my function within the Regional Council (Fr. Gustavo himself was clear on this point) was not confined to a so-called bureaucratic role. It was also about participating in the discussions and making my contribution. The role of secretary took up time I could have spent on formation. On the other hand, the Council had to make decisions precisely about formation, so it was important to participate.

The first aspect of the role of secretary: at first, I took note of what was said at Council meetings and drafted the minutes. At the next meeting, I had to accept the corrections. I admit that at the beginning, it annoyed me a little, but I got used to it. Little by little, I realized that my most important task was not so much to take notes as to try to look backwards and forwards at the same time: in short, I had to foresee deadlines and target dates in order to prepare the necessary and remind all Council members what had been decided. This made it possible to remain consistent and take the corresponding measures. In other words, I came to understand that if we were taking forward certain points at a meeting of the Council and we did not take it into account later, it was partly my fault. My responsibility was to keep all this in mind and to remember what had been said.

Reading the minutes of the previous meeting was important, of course, but we also had to take note of the outstanding issues and keep them in mind, in order to make as coherent a path as possible.

A second aspect is to take into account that each step reached requires the production of documents, permissions, notifications, etc. These documents must not only be produced, but also filed and formally recorded. Since until last year, I did not live in the main house of the regional secretariat, it was difficult for me to take care of this aspect. From this year on, I can devote more time to organizing the regional secretariat in San Juan, Buenos Aires.

The third thing I would like to highlight is what remains to be done. I will not talk about unrealistic dreams. I went to Rome, where I was expecting a meeting of the three regional secretaries. In the end, I was the only one. But I saw how the general secretariat was organized. I saw who works there and their way of working. From our regional perspective, it looks more like a mirage than a goal to achieve.

Nevertheless, there is something that can be done and is being done. First of all, it is a question of putting in order and classifying the documents describing the actions of these last years, the files of the religious of each vicariate and to make as coherent as possible an index.

The minutes of Council meetings require special attention. Before sealing these documents, conforming to

standard procedures, it is necessary to prepare the certificates containing the extracts of decisions taken and the votes cast which, where appropriate, can be requested later. This is a sizable task.

That a religious dedicates himself to this work is undoubtedly a positive thing. If this were not the case, many aspects of the life of the Congregation would be affected: in the first place, the superiors, directly responsible for the institutional aspects of the life of the congregation, would have to divert some of the energies

they use in the animation of the region, vicariates, communities and religious.

The problem is that it is a work that requires specific preparation that in general religious do not have. The indications of the Rule of Life are quite clear, but in the same way that we have recourse to qualified persons for the administration of material goods, would it not be advisable to do the same at the level of the regional secretariats? •



**Fr. Piero SCJ**  
(SMG Region)

When you read again the articles 257 to 260 of the Rule of life describing the regional secretary's role and tasks, you understand why, at the beginning of a new Regional Council, everyone hopes this role shall fall on one's neighbour, to whom, on such an occasion, incredible skills will be attributed.

An understandable psychological reaction, given the required load of work. It is an obscure work, unknown of those who have never lived this experience ; moreover, it adds itself to the responsibility of animating a

Vicariate, if the secretary is chosen among the Regional Council members.

Besides communicating the most waited-for informations, namely the decisions of the Regional Council, the secretary has to write out the minutes of the Councils and to prepare all the official documents : appointments of Superiors and bursars, transfer of religious, constitution of new communities and/or residences or their closing, presentation letters to the Bishops for pastoral engagements and so on... Documents to be kept in the archives and transmitted to the General Administration.

But, to my mind, the heaviest effort is to gather all the documentation of the religious in their formative years, a documentation increasing

as they get over the stages leading to consecrated life. For sure, it is the more gratifying work for a regional secretary whose Vicariate lacks vocations. It is also a delicate task, since you must handle the words which will help to draw the profile of persons belonging to far-off Vicariates you don't know enough. Imagine that sometimes the secretaries are more than 70 years old, inevitably affected with memory problems ! Happily, as the Rule of Life wisely foresees, they intervene only to back up the mental agility and the zeal of the trainers.

The regional secretary can cheer up partly because the statute 28 of the Rule of Life offers the possibility of resorting to a religious or lay assistant secretary, and to use the new communication technologies and new methods of working. The collaboration between the different authorities of the Region is fundamen-

tal : superiors, formators, Vicars and Regional Superiors ; particularly the collaboration with those who have special skills in using the new technologies. Thus it is possible, during the Regional Councils, to elaborate the drafts of numerous documents, to revise and complete them calmly afterwards, to file them systematically in a digital file (archives placed in a "cloud" of the Region), and then to benefit from the collaboration of lay assistants, such as Adriana or Corinne, who will undertake to print and archive all the documents of the Region on paper.

All this makes more supple and efficient, thanks to team work, the ungrateful but absolutely necessary task of the regional secretary. A task offered like a service and made lighter when it is shared. •



**Fr. Wilfred SCJ**  
(SMJC Region)

In February 2019, along with Fr. Enrico Frigerio SCJ, the Regional Superior of St. Miriam Region, I had opportunity to meet together with Fr. Graziano Sala our General Secretary to study to-

gether and implement the role and duties of the Regional Secretary in Rome. This has given me confidence to adapt and make available to this role as Regional Secretary more than ever before. There are responsibilities, I was not aware of before and this meeting allowed me to listen and to learn new things. The main outcome of the meeting was to learn how to prepare the documents in order to explain the procedures for

sending them to the General Administration. Such as, Documents and procedures for the Candidates who are applying for Final Profession, Opening a new Mission or Parish in our Vicariates, Erecting a new community etc... There were times when we sent relevant documents to the General Council for approval and they were not complete. For example, in the applications/ requests of the candidates and reports by formators in times there are phrases and sentences to be used specifically for each document. We have now taken on board these recommendations in order to rectify the mistakes and proof read before sending the documents or requests to the Generalate. The dossier prepared by Fr. Graziano

Sala helped me to understand these procedures and given me more clarity for the future in this regard. I am grateful to the Generalate for giving me this opportunity to learn and aid the congregation through my service as a Regional Secretary.

What we need to improve in our region are: The communication in the region, especially sending news to the main website of our congregation. Keeping up to date with the general state of the region, the different activities, works and houses. There are many activities and celebrations take place in our respective vicariates and we should show more interest in sharing the life of the vicariates and make it known through the website of the Congregation and the NEF. •

## Presence of the laity at the Elab 2019 in San Bernardino

There's nothing new in reflecting on living the faith and evangelisation with the laity. These days there is clearly a call from God, one in which the ministerial priesthood is no longer at the centre of the life of the Church but is seen purely within the concept of its purpose of service within a community. The priest is not at the centre of this community any longer but is just another member, together with numerous lay people. Clericalism is very tempting but, and I tell myself this over and over again: *"you are merely passing through, they stay put; the community exists already,*



*your job is to integrate".*

Now I think that we religious men and women are called by the Spirit to reassess and place a value on the vocation of the laity, and to work with them in the mission which the Church entrusts to us. Their presence is a necessity because they have the skills to deal with worldly matters. Due to priests dying out and a lack of new vocations, the commitment of parish pastoral work and educational engagement in schools have become impossible without the presence of the laity. Necessity and, above all the rediscovery of a

vocation specific to lay people have thus gradually led us to accept their presence. God knows why these things happen! We have become conscious of this while reflecting on what we have been living.

The presence of the laity has given new impetus to our work. The Holy Spirit has come down from Heaven and breathed new life through them. In the past, our schools were struck with a sort of paralysis. Now there is movement; where there was shadow, there is light; where there was obsolete lifeless organisation, now there is thriving new life. When the religious orders first relinquished the direction and then the financing of schools, the arrival of the laity, formed by the charism and standards of their profession, gave a new impetus to the education of our young people, one with a positive vision of the reality which the latter would be meeting. We now have eight schools in the VIARUR (Vicariate of Argentina and Uruguay). They all follow the same education model and offer a unique image of formation in the humanities and sciences without however losing the values of Betharramite spirituality.

These days we call the parish by the name of "common home". And, like any house or home, the parish is lived in by people with diverse occupations and responsibilities. Talking with the laity is talking about life. One cannot conceive of a parish without them: leading the liturgy and the music, catechesis and preparation to receive the sacraments, prayer groups, social action groups, action coordination groups, parish coun-

cils, finance committees, deacons... To paraphrase St Paul: there is diversity of gifts, there is diversity of ministries, but they all work to a single purpose: building the Lord's House (1 Cor. 12, 4-11).

Today, parish communities are enlivened by a greater willingness to work together. The relationship between priest and laity has enabled renewal in pastoral leadership. Latterly, the charismatic utopia of the encounter with people has taken shape. We've gone from the "but we've always done it this way" reflex to new ideas and proposals. This is how hitherto unheard of initiatives have come about, such as focussing on drug- and alcohol-dependency, providing showers for the homeless, "soup kitchens" and support for the schooling of children from poor families, making space for the consulting of doctors, psychologists, and various other "listening" ministries... In complete obedience to St Michael's invitation to us to go where nobody wants to go; and to Pope Francis who asks us to get out of the sacristy and live amid the people, to listen to their needs, to share with them that tiny drop of joy that springs from the heart. We are happy, with the laity, to make everyone else happy.

A very familiar reality is that of living the mission. I live in Beltran, a town of 6 or 7000 people, some 20 kilometres from Santiago del Estero. Throughout the year, we host many groups of 16 to 17 year old grammar or high-school pupils, who want to live the missionary experience. These young people come from our schools located in Argentina. They do all the preparation them-

selves, draw up a work programme, live for a week in remote deprived village schools where sometimes there is no drinking water, no electricity and no beds; they visit families in their homes, help children with their homework and join in the fun and games with them. When they return home, they are tired but enriched from the human point of view. This mission has now become a tradition. It is an action of education in the faith but its impact is greater on the one from outside doing the giving than on the one living here who receives. Encountering the joy of a person who is poor changes both the mindset and the heart. There's no need for a mobile phone if there is no Internet. Living cheek by jowl with the rural poor cleanses the heart of unbelief and of the desire to possess.

I can say that because during ELAB in San Bernardino (Paraguay), young people and adults spent the last few

days of the week on a mission in the parish of San Francisco Javier de La Colmena. In San Bernardino, not only did we discuss collaboration between religious and young lay people: we also tried to put such collaboration effectively into practice!

At San Bernardino, religious and lay people met to celebrate life *"Go out and share"*. *"We will quench our thirst at the same well."* It is the Spirit which brought us together. To invite us to the meeting, Fr Daniel wrote: *"We will be having a family get-together, to celebrate together. A celebration where there is joy in the encounter, at the presence of God... a celebration which testifies and reminds us of our common origins, we all share the same history, values, faith; [a celebration] which reminds us of who we are and where we come from; and so we feel we belong to the same community, to one and the same family."* ELAB has strengthened



our bonds. Fr Gerardo Ramos scj underlined the importance of having a range of skills. The ordained man is no longer the man who can do everything. Working with the laity on two or three occasions during the meeting was wonderful and enabled our understanding of the charism and the exercising of authority to grow. This meeting did, I believe, consolidate our mutual esteem for one another, and our friendship and willingness to strive together for the Kingdom. The world of school and parish is part of the Church's shared mission and, consequently, of the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region.

We are all called to evangelise in the culture and lifestyle of our people. Not only do we religious and laity alike have a mission to accomplish, but we

should think of ourselves as being a mission, open to the breath of the Holy Spirit. Fraternal correction is part of the process of growing together. Praying together, working together day by day, closeness, a shared life, enriches us in every sense of the word, both human and spiritual.

We should thank God for the presence of the many lay people who, day after day, work with us ordained men. Many were schooled by us and learnt about St Michael during their school days with us. And now, after their university training, they return to us as if they were returning home, to give of what they have received and of what has enriched their lives.

*Giancarlo Monzani scj*

## **VII ELAB San Bernardino 2019** | Fr. Éder Chaves Gonçalves scj. Paso de los Toros, Uruguay

To prepare ourselves for this VII ELAB (Latin-American Betharramite Encounter), Fr. Daniel Gonzalez SCJ, Regional Superior, proposed to each community to read and to meditate a few pages of the book *An Another Community is Possible, under the direction of the Spirit* of José Cristo Rey García Paredes, cmf. These extracts are closely touching the themes which we are trying to live in the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region: "Go out to share (To Discern)" this year and "Go out to the Meeting of Life and the various peripheries of the Community" (Mission) for the coming year. Prepared well by this common preliminary stage and by many other meetings and reflections, we did not have great difficulties to understanding each other, in spite of the variety of languages. On the other hand, the vast majority of us already knew each other, which favoured a real family meeting and a fraternal and pleasant sharing.

These days of our life in common took place in 3 stages: Tuesday and Wednesday with a full schedule and Thursday until 13:00. The themes were introduced by the Vicariate of Argentina: 1. The Betharramite tenderness, 2. The Religious Community Today. 3. Mission and collaboration. The first two points have been, in my opinion, particularly well developed with an ample vision, supported by references to the Bible, to the Tradition, to the Church Documents, to the Charism of the Congregation



*From left to right: Fr. Eder scj, Fr. Francisco de Asis scj, Mrs Aparecida De Cássia Ferreira (Betharramite lay associate from Brazil), Fr. Alcides scj, Br. Cristian Romero scj*

and enlightened by numerous examples from the daily life which gave us lot of joy, enthusiasm and happiness.

The presentation of the third point, although well led, finds itself limited by time. This, it seems to me, was detrimental to the participation and the end of the meeting, which, in my opinion, lacked a conclusion or at least some key ideas to shed light on the theme of the year 2020 where we will hold the Regional Chapter (around the middle of the year). Maybe, it's more of a personal expectation on my part. ELAB is, in my mind, an opportunity for discernment and preparation for the chapter.

ELAB gave rise to other meetings before, during and after. Before these three days, the young religious who could, met themselves in fraternity and to celebrate life. During these three official days of ELAB, a group of young Betharramites came from all over the Region lived a spiritual retreat. They participated in the Mass and in the dinner at the closing of the ELAB. The community superiors had a meeting of permanent formation and finally during the meeting of the Regional Council, the young people had prepared a mission with our community of La Colmena, an initiative which also participated by the laity, formators, religious and priests, in visiting the parish communities and in celebrating with the local people.

To all, good mission, with my affectionate and fraternal greetings!

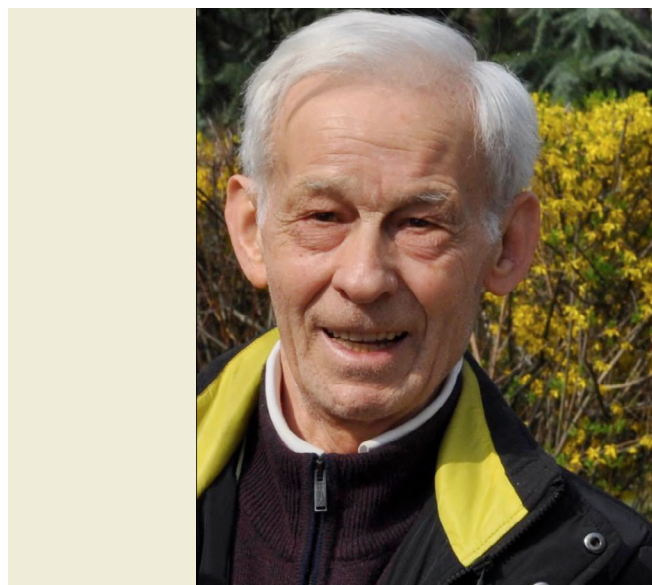
## Fr. Antonio Canavesi scj

5 May 1936, Rho - 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019, Albiate (Italy)

*Fr. Antonio was born and spent his childhood in Castellazzo di Rho (Italy). He entered in the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram, where he prepared himself for the consecrated life and for the priesthood. He sought to make his own the virtues of the Heart of Jesus: availability and absolute obedience, perfect simplicity and unalterable meekness, particularly in accepting in his life any kind of charge or mission: in the parish of Lissone; professor of mathematics at Colico College; teacher at the minor seminary (apostolic School) of Albavilla; parish priest in a mountain close to Rome, for three years in community with various jobs at Bethlehem in the Holy Land and for eight years in the Central African Mission, of which he was the co-founder, then a year in Ivory Coast; and again in Rome in the community of the Shrine of Our Lady of Miracles at Piazza del Popolo and assistant parish priest at the periphery; once again in Holy Land at Nazareth and in the last ten years as Bursar in Albiate where he ended his long and varied path of life.* | Fr. Piero Trameri scj, Regional Vicar in Italy

I had known Father Antonio at the parish of the Sacred Heart of Lissone, my home parish, and years later, it was he who accompanied me for the first time in Niem (Central Africa). It was on 5 July 1987. A few months earlier, at Christmas 1986, he had founded the mission of Betharramites in the Central African Republic, in company with Fr Arialdo Urbani scj.

For everyone here, in the mission of Niem, he was simply called *Baba Antoine*. For almost eight years, he was rather a peculiar father, surly at first but offering his heart to everyone. I had spent wonderful moments in his company. At that time, just like now, there was no television in Niem. So, after dinner, we were chatting a bit or playing endless card games. If our mission today is full of beautiful fresh mango trees, avocados, orange trees and manderines, thanks to him. He had planted them one by one, struggling tirelessly with the goats that were always ready to devour



every little bud. I remember him, on Sunday afternoon, he was going to settle in the garden with the radio and, surrounded by the children, he was developing a rather special oratory, which had nothing to envy to our Milanese oratories. At the driving of the Jeep, he was little adventurous and more than once instead of following the route of the red dirt track....he was opening new paths.

Today he has taken the better path, that of paradise. The path of peace and of joy of the definitive en-

counter with the Lord that he has always served with great passion in his priestly ministry.

Goodbye *Baba Antoine!* Here everyone greets you! *Bara Mo, Mo Gwe Nzoni. Nzapa a bata mo na ya*

*ti ngia na ti siriri ti lo* (Good bye Fr. Antonio. Go in peace. May God welcome you in his joy and peace forever!).

*Tiziano Pozzi scj*

## Fr. Jorge Murias scj

*21 March 1941, Buenos Aires - 12 August 2019, Buenos Aires (Argentina)*

Father Jorge A. Murias was born in Buenos Aires on March 21, 1941. The young Jorge studied at San José school from 15th to 17th, and this is there where Jorge heard God's call. To be faithful to it, he had to bravely face down the opposition of his parents.

He finished secondary school in 1958, and supported by the Congregation he traveled to France. He entered Novitiate in France, near Pau in 1959 and later began his scholasticate, near Bordeaux. His parents imagined he was pursuing an important career at some University in Europe. *"Until one day his mother – (who else but his mother?) – decided to find out the whole truth for herself, and took the only effective means: she set sail for Europe to see for herself. And she saw. She saw her son, a seminarist of several years, already committed to Christ for the sacred life of the altars. We don't know if she felt disgust or anger, but we assume that she did what any mother would do in these circumstances: she hugged her child no matter who he had now become. And thus it happened."*(in "FVD", Third



Series, No. 6, August 1966, page 10)

On June 17, 1966 he was ordained a priest, in the chapel of the Community of the then Apostolic School at Mendelu. And after ordination he returned to Argentina and worked for many years in pastoral work in San José School in difficult times. He was Rector of San José College from 1974 to 1982.

From then onwards, the Congregation authorised him to do pastoral work in the diocese of San Isidro. His pastoral activity unfolded in the academic life of the Catholic University of Argentina as a professor of Philosophy and Theology and director of the Centre for Spirituality and Pastoral

Action. In this University he defended his doctoral thesis on the topic *Time and Eternity in Charles Peguy* in 2000.

His other pastoral field was the Chapel of the Memorial, near Pilar, in the diocese of Zárte-Campana. In this chapel he celebrated Mass on Sundays and from there he directed the various movements he organised: Christian Movement for Rugby Players, the Christian Polo Movement and especially CELAFOR: Latin American Training Centre. CELAFOR organises different leadership schools: ELUL (leadership school for Latin American university students), ELAL (Leadership school for Latin America, which is oriented to adults and lasts only 4 days), and ELCAL (Leadership School for Change in Latin America).

In recent years, he continued with his work, along with new projects, such as the accompaniment of the "Espananos" (a rugby team formed by prisoners). Giving up the chapel of the Memorial caused him much

sadness. Healthwise, he experienced mobility difficulties because of some muscle aches he suffered. In his last checkup he was diagnosed with an extended tumor, for which treatment was not possible. Once he accepted the situation, he handed it over to the Father, saying his last *Fiat Voluntas Dei* on August 12, 2019, at 78.

The funeral Mass was celebrated, the next day, in the Memorial Chapel, presided over by Mgr. Martín Fassi, auxiliary bishop of San Isidro, accompanied by some 15 priests, among them the Betharramite fathers, Agín, Ramos and González; and a multitude of lay people. Most of them were young adults, (the fruit of a profound apostolate) who expressed their gratitude to God for the life of Father Jorge, in the celebration, while feeling in his going, very happy for what they had received.

*Daniel González scj*

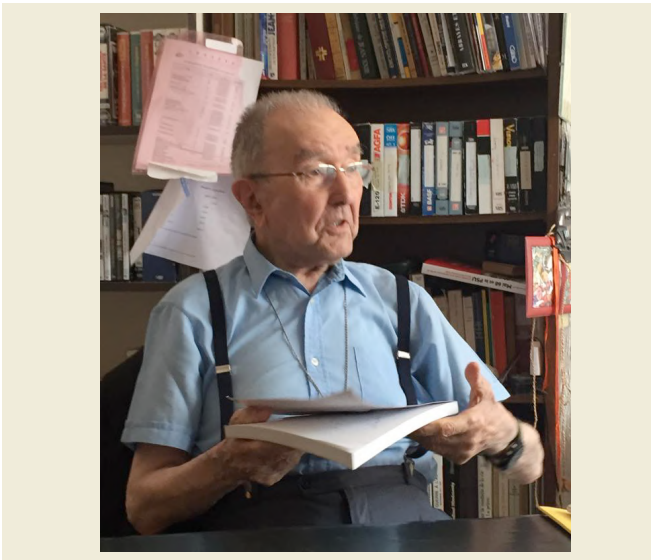
## Fr. Jean Gillet scj

*Capbreton, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1922 - 3 September 2019 (France)*

Early on the night of September 2/3, Fr. Jean Gillet passed away in a nursing home by the birth place of Saint Vincent de Paul. He entered there last spring after the closure of the nearby St. John Care Home in Buglose where he had been resident for nearly ten years. At the age of 97, he was the oldest priest residing in the diocese of Dax.

He was born on April 1 1922 at Capbreton in the Landes region of France. He made his first profession at Balarin and his final profession in Limoges at Ozanam College. He was ordained a Priest on June 2 1949 in Bordeaux.

Why and how did he become a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Bétharram?



Perhaps simply because, as the third vocation in the family, he followed his elders, who had also become "Betharramites"... They too passed away not so long ago... Nevertheless, he led his religious life as a teacher for 27 years and, since 1976, served our diocese for 28 years. Although he returned to his congregation, and to Bétharram at the time of his retirement in 2004, he soon asked to return to the Landes in 2006.

Fr. Jean could sometimes seem austere, reserved and even severe. But if we talked about rugby, another face, more luminous and talkative, would light up. He was first a player, then a referee, and then a Supporters Tour Operator, especially in Ireland in the season of the great international matches. He knew how to share his passion and, it seems, did not neglect the "third half" (post-match festivities...). Who would have believed it?...

No doubt the lasting memory of him will be that of the servant of Our Lady, at the shrine of Buglose. During his time there he served in the confessional, played the Great Organ as

long as he was able to climb the narrow spiral staircase. Later he reverted to the choir organ, more accessible at his great age. He played practically to the end, even when his fingers were painful with rheumatism. Sometimes wrong notes resulted (by the score!) causing loud grunts and grimaces on his serious face, visibly upset by such mistakes... His fidelity and availability deserve a salute and a true thank you.

Now he has reached the Father's House. The Bishop presided at his funeral in the chapel of the birthplace of St Vincent de Paul, Friday, September 6, at 10 a.m. Our brother was then transported in the afternoon to the cemetery of the Congregation at the calvary of Bétharram. May he rest in peace!

*From the testimony of Fr. HAYET,  
Chancellor at Bishop House Dax*

.....

..... **R.I.P.**

Fr. Pierre Caset scj (France, community «Maison Neuve» of Betharram) has lost his brother, **Mr. Jean-Louis Caset**, after a long illness.

In Brazil, the mother of Fr. Wagner dos Reis Azevedo scj (Superior of the community in Passa Quatro), **Mrs Maria Madalena dos Reis**, passed away at the age of 90. More recently, in Spain, **Mrs Emiliana Pérez**, mother of Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj, emeritus Superior General and present Master of the novices of the St Michael Garicoïts Region (community Basque Coast), returned to the Father's House.

*We extend our profound sympathy to our brothers and their families. And we assure them of our prayer and fraternal friendship. •*



**VIETNAM - HOLY LAND:** As part of a renewal of our presence in Vietnam and future projects in the Holy Land, **Fr. Shamon Devasia Valiyaveetil scj and Fr. Yesudas Kuttappassery scj gave the Superior General their availability for a new sending on a mission:**

- Father Shamon will contribute to a consolidating phase of our residence in Vietnam for vocations, with Father Albert Sa-at (from 1 October 2019);
- Father Yesudas will reinforce the community of Nazareth, with Fathers Jacky Moura scj and Elie Kurzum scj (from 1 January 2020).

The Superior General and his Council gave the Regional Superior of the Region Saint Michael Garicoits the **authorization to purchase a piece of land in Abidjan** (Ivory Coast Vicariate), in accordance with articles 295-297 of the Rule of Life. For now, it is only a matter of investing a legacy from the Vicariate of Italy for the young in formation. Any project concerning the use of this land is being discerned (in keeping with the will of the donor) and will remain subject to the approval of the Superior General and his Council.

On June 25, 2019, the **decrees of dismissal from the Congregation concerning Fr Roberto Amarilla and Fr Tarcisio Vera** (Paraguay) were confirmed by the Holy Father through the Congregation of Consecrated Life.

After the ordinations to priesthood in June and July (Frs Banjerd Stephen, Andrew Manop and Habib Yelouwassi), the **ordinations to diaconate of Brs. Joseph Ouedraogo and Vincent-Didier Allelet** were celebrated at the Saint-André cathedral of Yopougon (Ivory Coast Vicariate, SMG Region) on Saturday, July 13th by Bishop Jean Salomon Lezoutié.

The **meeting of the Council of the Congregation**, from 18 to 24 September in Adrogué (Buenos Aires), is upcoming. The members of this Council will have the joy of concelebrating **the ordination to priesthood of the deacon Leandro Narduzzo scj which is going to take place on September 21st in the basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Barracas** (Buenos Aires, Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay, FrAE Region).

Last but not least, **Hyacinthe Akpa N'Cho and Jean-Claude Djiraud** will make their first vows in the Congregation on September 14th in Adiapodoumé (Ivory Coast Vicariate, SMG Region).

# Father Etchecopar and the Cause for Father Garicoït's Beatification

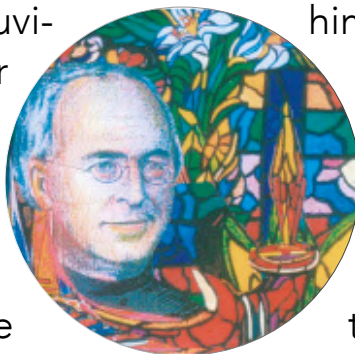
Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj

According to Father Duvi-gneau<sup>1</sup>, Father Etchécopar had two priorities in his mandate for governing the Congregation: consolidate the Congregation and do all in his power for the Church to recognise the holiness of the Founder, holiness that he was convinced of, having lived closely with him for seven years at Betharram.

The first thing was to ask Father Basilide Bourdenne to prepare a biographie of Father Garicoïts. To that end, he supplied him with all the documents he had available; he collaborated in the writing of the text and corrected all the proofs. The book was published in 1878.

Father Bianchi encouraged him to begin the case before the witnesses who knew Father Garicoïts passed away.

The moment seemed to come with the nomination of a new bishop at Bayonne, Monsignor Ducellier, and with the election of a new Pope for the universal Church, Leon XIII. Father Etchecopar tried to meet with these two authorities. He left for Rome on 25th November 1878 to deal with the case. He gathered information from the Congregation of rites and from Leon XIII who, during a private audience, encouraged



him to undertake to case of the Founder. On his return to Betharram on 18th January 1879, he sent to Father Bianchi the documents necessary for his mission as postulator. On the same day, he met with Monsignor Ducellier to ask him to begin an enquiry as soon as possible. Monsignor Ducellier accepted with interest the proposition of Father Auguste, who returned to Betharram very happy.

Also on the same day, 18th January 1879, Father Etchecopar sent a memorandum to the whole Congregation to announce the good news.

On 30th January, he asked the fathers of America to record facts and personal memories that they still had of Father Garicoïts in view of the process. Following the directions that had been given to him in Rome, he drew up a plan to facilitate the categorisation of these accounts: "*We must give what is certain and also what is questionable*" (to Father Magendie on 3rd April 1879).

On 26th February 1879, supported unanimously by his Council, he returned to Bayonne accompanied by Father Vignau, nominated vice-postulator, to be heard with the Bishop and move into action. On 13th March, he announced that the process would begin after Easter.

But the bishop was engrossed in

1) Refer to *L'Homme au visage de lumière*, p. 74

other matters: getting to know his vast diocese, learning about administrative questions, making ad limina visits, making the annual round of confirmations, examining the difficulties occurring in the Church in France. He recognised himself that he was not very efficient. Once more, Father Etchécopar had to get used to the slowness of the new bishop, as he had to do with Monsignor Lacroix. The promises of the bishop would come one after another for six years, before nominating the tribunal in charge of the process of Father Garicoïts. Without losing his calm and able to find justifications to his bishop, Father Etchécopar did not stop asking him during these six years to set up this tribunal. At the end of 1879, he wrote: *"One would say that we are on the eve of the opening of the process"*. The tribunal was formed little by little and held its first meeting on 3rd August.

The diocesan tribunal undertook a diligent job under the chairmanship of the Vicar General, Monsignor Inchauspe. The process would be considered at the heart of the Congregation of rites as an "excellent example of its type". Father Etchecopar was the first to bring his account to Betharram where the tribunal had run for eight days and where he would return on 17th October 1886. He followed the work of the tribunal and was delighted that the Father Garicoïts case advanced little by little, although the members of the tribunal (Messrs Cassou and Joanchu-

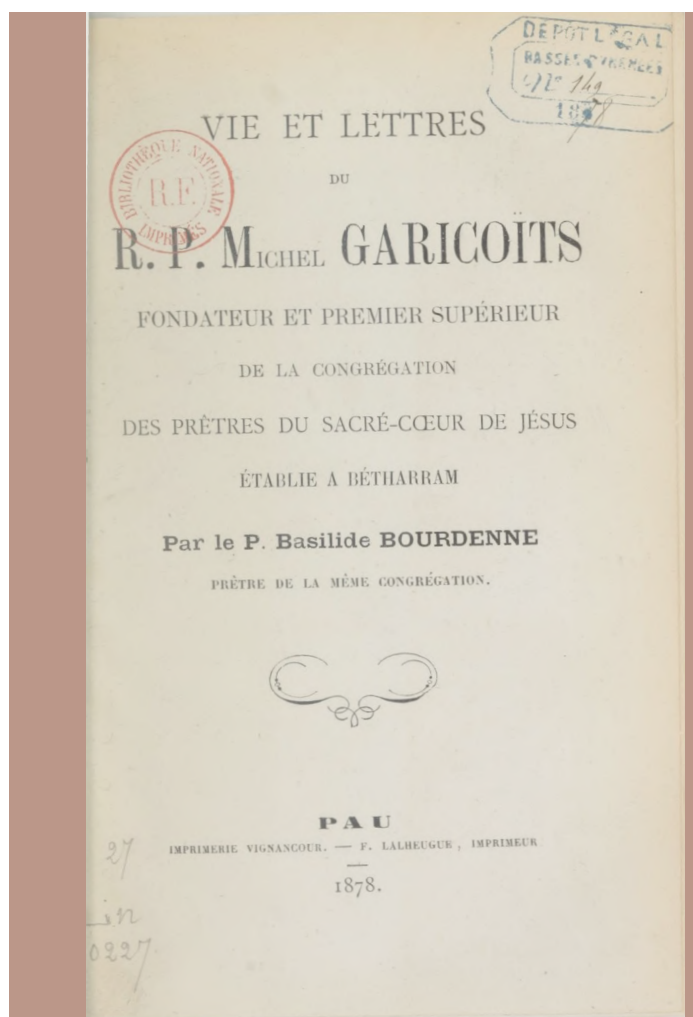
to, Assessors of the President, and Mr Joseph, the promoter) were also directors of the great seminary.

A new difficulty: Monsignor Ducellier was named Bishop of Besançon; the process would therefore see a brief pause until the arrival of Monsignor Fleury-Hottot, Bishop of Digne nominated at Bayonne. Father Etchecopar would take advantage of this time to do a stocktake of notes left by Father Garicoïts. The richness of this spirituality awakened in him such an enthusiasm that he burst forth into writing a memorandum sent to the Fathers in America, dated 4th December 1887: *"Oh may God, during your retreats, give you the grace of that intelligence, of that hunger inside, of that supernatural love for the doctrine of our Doctor and Father.... To build elsewhere following another plan would be to diminish, weaken, wreck the work of our Father! Absit! Absit!"*

The tribunal recommenced the work of the process on 3rd September 1888. In the series of statements they listened to, the members of the tribunal did not hide their deep admiration for the heroism of Father Garicoïts which came out of it.

Another difficulty: sickness struck the promoter, Mr Joseph, and the Bishop who died on 9th August 1889. The new Bishop, Monsignor Jauffret changed almost all the members of the process tribunal of Father Garicoïts, including its president.

The new bishop dealt with the case so well that it was finished in four



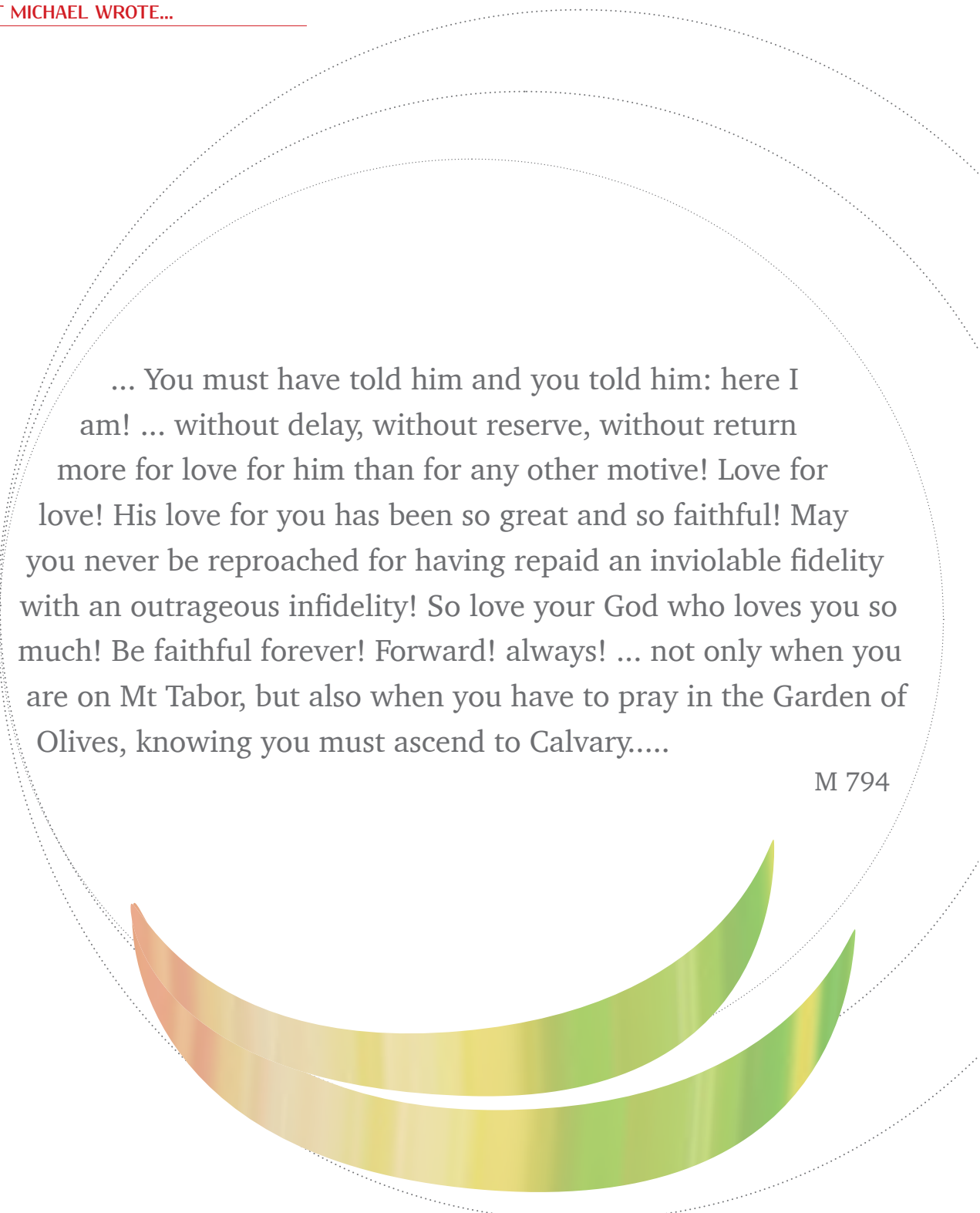
months. This is what Father Etchecopar announced in a letter on 14th October 1890: *"I inform you that the Episcopal Process of Father Garicoits is finished. We praise you God! The members of the tribunal are in admiration of this life so pure, so heroic."*

The tribunal appointed Father Miro, who was vice-postulator, to lead the work in Rome. Father Miro had already worked hard so that the process went well. Father Etchecopar, who was in Bethlehem, asked him to go with the process documents to the Holy Land, to leave them on the site of the Incarnation, the manger and the tomb of Our Lord. After which, Father Etchecopar accompanied Father Miro to Rome to return the file to the Congregation of rites

on 6th May 1891. In Rome, he visited all those who might be interested in the case and obtained an audience with Leon XIII.

On 22nd May 1891, he had only just got back to Betharram when he was asked for the writings of Father Garicoits, taken from the archives. The letters were still in the hands of their recipients. Father Etchecopar attempted to contact the owners of these letters, asserting that the Holy See was asking for them. What is more, he made Father Quilhahauquy responsible for gathering the manuscripts in question back into the archives and that is how he could announce on 19th July 1891: *"The writings of Father Garicoits are ready and have been sent to the Tribunal."* Learning that Rome did not require the originals, he nominated a team of scribes who, in a year, transcribed more than 17,000 pages. Six episcopal commissions compared the copies with the originals. Father Etchecopar got 43 consecutive commissions to speed up the work.

Rome also asked for the postulatory letters on behalf of the bishops and important persons to introduce the case. Father Etchecopar attended to this question himself. These letters arriving from all over and reaching in number 208 are considered an important proof of the *"fama sanctitatis"*. He had the joy of knowing the approval of the writings, but not the decree of introduction of the case, which would be put forward in 1899, after his death. •



... You must have told him and you told him: here I am! ... without delay, without reserve, without return more for love for him than for any other motive! Love for love! His love for you has been so great and so faithful! May you never be reproached for having repaid an inviolable fidelity with an outrageous infidelity! So love your God who loves you so much! Be faithful forever! Forward! always! ... not only when you are on Mt Tabor, but also when you have to pray in the Garden of Olives, knowing you must ascend to Calvary.....

M 794



Young in formation  
at the community of Bangalore

*Whom are they looking at?  
What voice are they listening to?  
What message are they receiving?  
Or... is it the beauty of the smile of the  
Master of Galilee which is conquering them among the flow-  
ers, which are the smiles of nature?  
Who knows...?  
The truth is that just with their smiles, their welcoming at-  
titude they express their willingness to diffuse the Joy of the  
Gospel!*



**Societas S<sup>mi</sup> Cordis Jesu**  
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