

NEF

Betharram

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A word from the Superior General

Saints like St Michael: a mission to our own existential peripheries

"This is the Will of God: your sanctification" (1 Thess 4, 3)

Dear Betharramites:

Each saint is a mission in himself. He responds to the plan of the Father to reflect and embody, at a certain moment in time, an aspect of the gospel. In this month dedicated to Saint Michael Garicoits, our founder - isolated but not alone - let his figure become a stimulus to enter our existential peripheries and make our whole life a mission pleasing to the Father. Let us evoke together how Jesus, slowly entered the heart of the shepherd boy of Ibarre, until possessing him completely, made him an authentic missionary.

This indomitable little Basque, older brother and heir to a poor peasant family, learned to be a shepherd of the flock from a very young age. From there the Voice of God called him, irresistibly, to the higher peaks. From the start, he had to fight his own wild temperament with the

weapons of asceticism, with his own mother aiding him with a "holy fear of God". Both in his studies and in the work he had to do for his livelihood, he managed to stand out: either for his seriousness, his lucidity or his influence on his peer group and his educators, who recognised in him early on the marks of holiness. But how did he do it? What was going on in his soul? What was his secret? Possessed by a Love of a God "*melted in charity*", he had discovered in intimacy with Him that, in order to serve him, it was necessary to incarnate his Word and adore him in the Eucharist. With that ardent longing he came to the priesthood, after having lived an exemplary discipleship.

Already in Cambo, as vicar of the parish, he learnt how to be active and discreet at the same time, eclipsing himself, so as not to hurt the sensitivity of the old parish priest, whom he had to watch over. He worked tirelessly and discovered that mission, in addition to boldness, requires balance, calmness, and faith sharing. He learned not to anticipate Providence, learned to pray, and to offer himself without reservation, so as to return to action more effectively. "Mission", for him, would not mean pure activism ... Before he was a missionary, he wanted to be a "man of prayer".

In Betharram, by the banks of the Gave de Pau, he learnt to plan seminars wisely, without attracting attention. He learnt to correct firmly but gently, (*suaviter in modo et fortiter in re*) and brought about with discipline and good teaching a change in the relaxed

lives of seminarians, who would end up loving and respecting him. He would be the superior of a handful of men, but also "*a superior of four walls*" ... without ever becoming discouraged.

As spiritual director, he guided, accompanied and sustained the vocation of many Daughters of the Cross, and did it with a particular sweetness that opened their hearts up to God. Knowing and respecting feminine psychology - he, who had managed to calm down the fierce cook of the seminary by joining in the washing up - created with all the sisters real bonds of friendship in Christ.

Inspired by the witness of religious life in Igon, the desire to found a group of chosen missionaries, who would be available, obedient & generous matured within him. He would only do it when - after discerning before God - he was bathed in divine light at the feet of the Mother of Betharram. As a fervent imitator of the Son of God saying to his Father: *Ecce Venio!*, the Seer of Betharram, guided souls and helped sinners to experience the Father's Mercy. In his "free time", he took care of the administration of the house ..., restored the Calvary ... and washed the dishes with the brothers ...

Saint Michael was a great missionary for vocations for the whole Church. With holy decision and humble respect, he gathered a group of auxiliary missionaries of the Sacred Heart. He welcomed them into a "small family" so that they became men of God, stripped of everything, ready to go, at the command of their superiors, to the

places of mission that the others reject.

Missionary Saint Michael would help melt the "ice" of indifferent souls with a burning fire that was passionate for Christ and humanity. He would teach with his testimony that "holiness is but charity fully lived": small, submissive and constant.

Without a doubt, the mission to America captured his heart, he gave all his support so that it could be carried forward, after deep discernment. He chose the best religious to send on this mission and so preserve the charism. Only out of heroic obedience to the Bishop would he himself stay in Betharram renouncing his own desire to go.

Thus, the whole life of Saint Michael the Missionary shows us the Christ of Easter always happy to go out to evangelise, leaving behind the fear of all the difficulties he would have to face.

Inspired by missionary Jesus - who was the "Gospel of God", the first and greatest evangeliser - he imitated him and invested his life in mission. In this was the secret of his effectiveness: full identification with the message he was announcing.

Good Father Garicoits lived fascinated by a Jesus who freely gave his divine life to humanity and did so without reservation, without wasting time, without turning back, ... continuously and for love. Mystic of the heart of Jesus, he drank from his open side, and taught his own followers to do the same, so that when evangelising, the stream of the water of Life would

arise in the mission countries.

Thanks to his witness of holiness and that of his disciples, who missioned for generations, we can say today: Here we are, yes Father! We have a name in the Church: BETHARRAMITES.

As missionary disciples - as pastors and not just officials - we are called to continue this generous impulse, to make it resonate, in each heart, in each "post" where we were sent to bring about the advent of a new Pentecost.

Working for our own sanctification and that of others is our goal. And it is not just a personal whim or a theoretical project but rather the fruit of being sent by the Church as a response to the cry of suffering humanity that thirsts. When a man suffers and laments, the heart of God suffers and laments too. And a good Betharramite should be willing to suffer with him.

In an increasingly complex world, where the poor wait endlessly for justice so they can live in dignity; in a cold world in which people young and old, children & whole families, no longer live in the shade of the message of the Love of Jesus that frees them from slavery; In a world so in need of witnesses of the Holy Spirit & hearts opened by the Word of God: Betharramites, anointed to heal, will always find - like Saint Michael - a place to be sent to serve, obeying out of love, going where others fear to tread.

Fr. Gustavo SCJ
Superior General

Catechese: 1. The mystery of prayer, 6 May 2020

[...] Prayer is the breath of faith; it is its most proper expression. Like a cry that issues from the heart of those who believe and entrust themselves to God.

Let us think about the story of Bartimaeus, a character in the Gospel (cf. Mk 10:46-52), and I confess that for me he is the most likeable of all. He was blind and sat begging for alms by the roadside on the periphery of his city, Jericho. [...] One day he heard that Jesus would be passing through there. [...] Thus, Bartimaeus positioned himself: he would have done anything possible to meet Jesus. [...]

In this way the man enters the Gospels as a voice that loudly cries out. He cannot see. He does not know whether Jesus is near or far away but he hears him. He understands this from the crowd which, at a certain point, grows and comes closer.... But he is completely alone and no one is concerned about him. And what does Bartimaeus do? He cries out. And he cries out and continues to cry out. He uses the only weapon he possesses: his voice. He begins to shout: *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* (v. 47). And he continues to cry out in this manner.

His repeated cries are a nuisance. They do not seem polite and many people scold him, telling him to be quiet. However, Bartimaeus does not keep silent but rather cries out even more loudly: *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* (v. 47): That beautiful stubbornness of those who seek a grace and knock and knock on the door of God's heart. He cries out; he knocks. That expression: "Son of David", is very important. It means "the Messiah" – he professes the Messiah. It is a pro-



fession of faith that emerges from the mouth of that man who was despised by all. And Jesus listens to his cry. Bartimaeus' prayer touches his heart, God's heart, and the doors of salvation open up for him. Jesus calls for him. He jumps to his feet and those who had first told him to be quiet, now lead him to the Master. Jesus speaks to him. He asks him to express his desire – this is important – and then the cry becomes a request: *"that I may see again, Lord!"* (cf. v. 51).

Jesus says to him: *"Go your way; your faith has made you well"* (v. 52). He recognises in that poor, defenceless and despised man, all the power of his faith, which attracts the mercy and the power of God. Faith is having two hands raised up, a voice that cries out to implore the gift of salvation. The Catechism states that *"humility is the foundation of prayer"* (2559). Prayer is born of the earth, of the humus from which "humble", "humility" derive. It comes from our precarious state, from our continuous thirst for God (2560-2561).

Faith, as we have seen with Bartimaeus, is a cry; [...] Faith is a protest against a pitiful condition the cause of which we do not understand. Faith is the hope of being saved. Lack of faith is becoming accustomed to the evil that oppresses us and continuing in that way. [...]

There is a voice in mankind's heart that invokes. [...] A voice that comes forth spontaneously without anyone commanding it, a voice that asks itself about the meaning of our journey on earth, especially when we find ourselves in darkness: *"Jesus, have mercy on me! Jesus have mercy on me!"*. This is a beautiful prayer. ●●●

Leave panic behind and come to fear of the Lord

During these 40 days of Eastertide which follow the 40 days of Lent, I often think of the first Christian communities who took refuge in their homes or in the catacombs, for fear of persecution. These situations of panic are however described differently in the Acts of the Apostles: *"The fear of God was in all hearts at the sight of the many wonders and signs worked through the Apostles"* (Acts 2:43). It is an interesting challenge to live our theme of the year: to transform panic into a holy fear.

Panic is not caused by God, said the Bishop of Ciudad del Este recently in his message to the diocese. Holy fear is a gift from the Holy Spirit. It does not mean fear, but awe at the signs of its presence. In the image of Moses, the Virgin Mary or the women in front of the empty tomb. At the time, everyone was afraid, then they heard the voice: do not be afraid, I Am ...; you enjoy the favour of God...; he is not here, he is risen. Believers are called to discover the presence of God in all events of our life, including where many perceive only darkness and death.

Panic

It's a fact: this microscopic virus causes immense fear. Every hour,

Fr. Tobia Sosio SCJ

General Councillor -
Community of Puente Remanso



television and newspapers inform us of the number of contagions and deaths. We are shown terrible pictures of dying patients, connected to a ventilator. Governments get either the support or the contempt of their people depending on how they manage the pandemic. According to some, this panic situation was caused artificially. We think of the newly rich and those who have accumulated fortunes in situations similar to the one we are living through. Everything is possible. Those of us who have lived in military dictatorships for some time know that to subjugate people, fear must be aroused. On all occasions, those who worship the god of money smell good deals.

The first Christians endured terrible persecutions, their suffering transformed into spectacle. It is obviously an exaggeration to compare this distant reality to the current situation, but it is true that panic has spread everywhere. Many incite it, probably by order from above. Paraguayan police were recently report-

ed for acts of torture on defenseless children and young people who allegedly violated their quarantine. Just recently, the story of a poor man went around on the net, who was violently assaulted and had his daily livelihood, his "*chipas*" (typical bread rolls), taken away from him.

If I emphasize this point, it is because, to escape panic, it is necessary to discern what is right from what is unjust, what comes from God and what comes from the evil one, what calls for our obedience and what invites us to non-violent resistance.

Fear of the Lord

This may not be the right term to express the state of mind of those who have gone from fear to awe. It is certainly right to be afraid of Covid-19. We must be careful, respect the rules of hygiene, social distancing and all the rules which, according to some, will force us into another lifestyle in the future. Can this fear be holy? I believe so, since it is inspired by love, by respect for others, by concern for health and life, by healthy and fruitful social coexistence, by the sincere search for medicines or vaccines that will help us to defend ourselves from this new evil and from others that are sure to come. (How can we avoid the newly rich?)

At the sight of the wonders and signs performed by the Apostles, the first Christians were seized with holy fear. What a beautiful sign that an el-

derly priest gave up his artificial respirator to leave it to a younger patient! ...and another who asked to be able to replace his priestly ministry with medical service, where he was most needed; or the nurse who placed herself in solitary confinement so as not to endanger her loved ones; or the doctors who sing to the sick, or the artists who unite to cheer up the population! ... and so many others. Each day has its share of constraints: the family is forced to reorganize at home, the teacher accompanies his students in virtual classes, the police are expected to be firm and friendly enough to enforce quarantine. Much has been said about the new heroes, they are the believers today. Those of us who are not content with the empty sepulchre, who want to meet the Risen Christ, and who want to be able to say to many brothers: do not be afraid. To do this, we must recognize and realize the signs and wonders capable of transforming panic into a holy fear.

It's Easter: when evil does not have the last word

This expression was used by the brothers in our community to comment on the great experience of a "shared cooking pot" organized to help poor people in the neighbourhood, who have been made more vulnerable by the quarantine, and also more hungry. The quotation from the Acts of the Apostles continues: "*The*



A stronger community is a community of solidarity

faithful all lived together, and owned everything in common" (Acts 2:44). This is the secret. The terrible persecution failed to disperse the disciples of Jesus. On the contrary, it favoured the strengthening of communities, organized and united by love and solidarity. What is defined today as a pandemic gives us the opportunity to testify to our faith, not only in virtual celebrations, but much more and better still in gestures of solidarity. Faith begets hope and translates into Love. This global crisis may give birth to a new humanity: changes will not happen so quickly, but it is certainly a moment that God offers us to testify that He lives, that He is eternal and that we are mere mortals, destined to be reborn to Eternal Life. We see the light, not at the end of the tunnel, but very close to us. This

is what allows us to move forward without panicking, even if the path is long and the future uncertain. The 40 days of Easter are not yet over. *"Do we seek to heal the world and so heal ourselves? Then let us see God in all things."*(Saint Michael Garicoïts, DS § 60) ●●●



CONGREGATION

14 May 2020

• On 14th May we Betharramites, religious and lay people, will celebrate our Father and Founder, Saint Michael Garicoïts.

On the same date Pope Francis, accepting the request of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity called all the faithful for a day of "prayer and supplication" to God for an end to the pandemic.

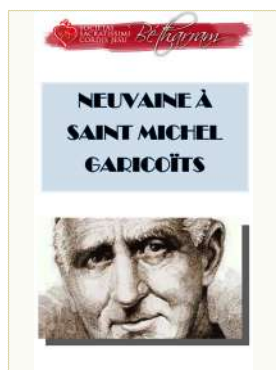
Since the feast of Saint Michael falls on the same day, we invite all the communities to live this moment of fasting, prayer and works of charity the day before or after May 14. This will allow us to join the prayer going up to the Lord of Life from all humanity hit by this pandemic.



REGION SAINT MICHAEL GARICOÏTS

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

• A novena to Saint Michael was made by the Ivorian novices of the Region, Br. Tah Toussaint Koumé and Br. Charles Fabian Mahan,



during their confinement in Pibrac. It was published on the website of the Congregation and will be available to all in the 'Multimedia' section, also for the English speaking people since Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj and Fr. Austin Hughes scj provided an English translation.



REGION FR. AUGUSTE ETCHECOPAR

ARGENTINA ^{URUGUAY}
PARAGUAY ^{BRAZIL}

Argentina

As a precautionary measure against the Covid-19 pandemic, Argentina entered a containment phase on 20 March. In the archdiocese of Buenos Aires, some parish spaces and chapels are being used as a shelter for the elderly who are more at risk, because they are marginalized, vulnerable or homeless.

At the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Barracas, our fathers responded to the appeal by providing a welcoming place where these elderly people can be in safe isolation and are not exposed to the infection of the coronavirus. "We are pleased to participate in this initiative, explained Fr. Sebastian Garcia scj, the parish priest. With some volunteers, we were already helping some people who are sleeping rough on the streets (especially with the "Duchas del Sagrado" [Showers of the Sacred

Heart Basilica], now closed because of the containment measures). We now have the opportunity to help our elderly brothers, 'our grandparents'. We can currently accommodate 14 of them, who can live through this containment period safe and well looked after, without being completely isolated."

You can be a missionary by simply opening the door of your house.



**REGION SAINT MARY OF JESUS
CRUCIFIED**
INDIA
ENGLAND
THAILAND

India

• "How marvellous are the works of God! How beautiful life is when we think of the wondrous things That are truly His".

Yes by the grace of God and his great love. We Betharram Fathers started a new mission in Assam Simaluguri village Pramila. The aim of our mission is to educate the new generation in Christ.

The education Center is known as Betharram Sacred Heart school. It was started in 2017 January with 21 children and 3 sections.

Our service is welcomed by the people and started to co-operate with us. Over the years, the number of the children has increased. Presently there 94 children divided into 5 sections.

Thanks to the Providence of Almighty

God, this year we have added 3 more classrooms and built new sanitary facilities for the children. We thank all the benefactors and supporters for their bounteous help.

We all are happy here and full of joy to render our generous service to our children. We are two fathers, two sisters, one brother and teaching staff to fulfill the needs of the children.



• On April 7, 2020 on the third day of the Annual Retreat of the Maria Kripa Community (Mangalore), Br.Pobitro and Br.Avinash renewed their vows of Chastity Poverty and Obedience into the hands of Fr Pascal, delegated by the Regional Superior.

Let us keep our brothers and all the community in our prayers, particularly in this time of lockdown.





RL 205/h ... Presentation to the Diaconate



The Superior General of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharam, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, with the consent of his Council gathered on April 16, 2020, presents to the Diaconate Minister **Brother James Thanit Panmanikun scj** and **Brother Peter Rawee Prempoonwicha scj** (Region SMJC, Vicariate of Thailand).

===== The Superior General, with his Council gathered in Rome on April 16, 2020, gave also his approval to:

RL 206 ... Dissolution and setting-up of a Community

• Community Superior ...

- the dissolution of the Community of San Juan Bautista-Beltrán and the setting-up of two distinct communities: *Community of San Juan Bautista [Buenos Aires]* & *Community of Beltrán [Santiago del Estero]* (RFrAE, Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay);



- the appointment of *Fr. Juan Pablo García Martínez scj* as *Superior of the Community of San Juan Bautista* (RFrAE, Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay) for a first mandate, from April 25th, 2020;

*

- the dissolution of the Community of Lambaré-Puente Remanso and the setting-up of two distinct communities: *Community of Lambaré* & *Community of Puente Remanso* (RFrAE, Vicariate of Paraguay).

- the appointment of *Fr. Raúl Villalba scj as Superior of the Community of Lambaré* (RFrAE, Vicariate of Paraguay) for a first mandate, from April 25th, 2020;

- the appointment of *Fr. Crispín Villalba scj as Superior of the Community of Puente Remanso* (RFrAE, Vicariate of Paraguay) for a first mandate, from April 25th, 2020;

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- the appointment of *Fr. Pascal Ravi scj as Superior of the Formation Community of Mangalore* (RSMJC, Vicariate of India) for a first mandate, from April 25th, 2020;



RL 206 ••• Appointment of the Master of scholastics •••

- the appointment of *Fr. Glecimar Guilherme da Silva as Master of the scholastics for the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar* for a second mandate, from December 16th, 2019.



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RL 205 ••• Regional Vicars •••

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The mandates of the current Regional Vicars will be expiring in August 2020 (except for the Regional Vicar in England).

Therefore, by a letter sent to the religious of the three Regions¹, via the Regional Superiors, the Superior General has launched the *consultation for the appointment of the Regional Vicars*.

By following the instructions described in the letter, each religious is invited to indicate, in order of preference, the names of the three religious who may be suitable for the function of Regional Vicar of the Vicariate where he resides (cfr. 248 of the Rule of Life).

The envelopes with the bulletins must reach the General Secretary in Rome by June 30th, 2020, final deadline.

The Superior General, with his Council, will proceed to the appointment of the Regional Vicars during a plenary meeting to be held in early August 2020.

1) except our brothers of the Vicariate of England who will be consulted next year.

Formation Session planned in June-July at Betharram: Given the state of facts caused by Covid-19, and after the videoconference with the full Council of the Congregation on 30 March 2020, in which everyone could express his concerns about the situation and the borders closing of the States, the Superior General has decided to **postpone the session for one year.**

This does not exclude the possibility that candidates make their final profession in 2020.

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On May 8, the Superior General sent an Official Notice to the Regional Superiors in relation to the postponement of the beginning of *THE INTERREGIONAL NOVITIATE "FR. AUGUSTE ETCHECOPAR" IN THE HOLY LAND* because of the Covid-19 emergency.

Plan "A" or Plan "B"

In brief, his message was:

'In my previous letter I mentioned that "Plan A" (let's call it this way) was that, if conditions allowed it, the Interregional Novitiate Fr. Auguste Etchecopar in the Holy Land would start in December 2020 (or January 2021).

Yet, this official start depends on a decision that we cannot take at the moment, due to a lack of sound information. Therefore, with my closest collaborators (and with the input of some of you), we considered more prudent to establish an alternative project as soon as possible, which we have called "Plan B".

This Plan B concerns the Regions where the Regional Novitiate 2020/2021 has not already begun; it is meant to provide a comprehensive and organized response to the candidates of the five vicariates concerned and Vietnam, who are awaiting a stable and responsible proposal of formation.

In view of this situation, on 1st July 2020, I will confirm, with the advice of the General Council, whether Plan A or Plan B will be implemented.'

The Superior General asked the Regionals concerned and their Councils to prepare a short project for their respective extraordinary Novitiates. And he has established that:

ALL EXTRAORDINARY NOVITIATES OF THE VICARIATES 2020-2021 will begin on the feast day of Our Lady of Betharram, 28 July 2020, and will end after 12 canonical months. This will allow the formators involved in the Holy Land Project to begin with the new group of novices from September 2021.

So, next July 1st, confirmation of the implementation of Plan A or B.

We are united in prayer with our brothers and with the friends of Betharram who have recently lost a beloved one. Betharram has been particularly affected by the death of two members of the same community of Albavilla, in the Vicariate of Italy. We entrust them to the motherly arms of Our Lady of Betharram and to the intercession of our Father Saint Michael Garicoïts.

Father Celeste Perlini scj

Paniga, 30 January 1930 - Albavilla, 9 April 2020 (Italy)

It was without fanfare that Fr. Celeste Perlini arrived in our community (2017) and it was also without fanfare that he left on Holy Thursday. Silence was one of the traits of his personality: he was not a big talker. But when asked for his opinion on economic problems, his words were measured, thoughtful and consistent.



Father Perlini - as everyone called him - has always been the quintessential bursar! A commitment that followed him everywhere... from Colico, to Gravedona and then to the St Joseph house and to the community of the Betharram Centre in Albavilla. This was also the case in Nazareth and Bethlehem in the Holy Land, then in other residences again in Italy.

The parish of Lissone knew Fr. Perlini both as bursar and as parish priest. When I went to meet him for information on my new field of activity, I found him not behind a majestic desk, but on the roof of the church arranging a few tiles, a job that took him several days.

Father Perlini changed a lot in these last two years as a chaplain to the Residence for the Elderly in Albavilla. Knowing how to engage others and address a little word to everyone, he made himself appreciated like a brother. I have even been told that with a lot of patience he won everyone's hearts and that he managed to speak at length even with the most reclusive types: he was no longer a man of silence.

And it is another kind of silence that today took him away from us.

Fr. Davide Villa scj

Father Perlini was a big man, like the Valtellina mountains, where he was born 90 years ago. Many knew him above all as a teacher and educator at the St. Joseph Apostolic

School in Albavilla, then at the Lyceum of the St Michael residence.

One of his former students said: "Father Perlini made the education of the new generations his mis-

sion.... a mission that he led not only in class, but also on the volleyball courts as coach of the school team and as president of the FIPAV coaches (Italian Volleyball Federation) of the Province of Como. A man of great build, but good and gentle, he has long been a father figure in Albavilla for his way of caring for the most needy. He was a very kind and charitable man, always ready to help those in need. He was also an excellent mason. An art learned from his family which he made available not only to the community of Betharram, but also to the commune. "

Work, even material, was his way of living the vow of poverty. Poverty that he could see and practice even in the long years spent in the Holy

Land, when he was the "guardian" of the residences of Nazareth and Bethlehem. A man of "Ecce Venio", he always accepted and lived with enthusiasm the many commitments entrusted to him: the experience of parish priest in Lissone, ministry with the sick at Sobiate Comasco and finally ministry of chaplain of the Ehpapad Opera Pia Roscio, again in Albavilla, among people he had known in his youth and who had accumulated in the meantime years and a few health difficulties, like him.

He was invariably in community every Monday for prayer, a good meal and a good glass of wine with his brothers. ...A little taste of perfect communion with the Father. ●●●

Father Angelo Pajno scj

Dervio, 5 October 1931 - Albavilla, 23 April 2020 (Italy)

Niem. 24th April 2020

Dearest Fr. Angelo,

The first thing I must tell you is a big Thankyou. Memories are rushing. Yesterday, many already said it and wrote it, but I like to repeat it : you have been a religious, a priest, always close to the people: generous, always ready to help without selfish motives, and even sometimes bearing the brunt. You were always and foremost taking care of others instead of thinking of yourself.

Of course, my first thought is for our dear choir "Lorenzo Perosi" (in the Betharramite parish of the Sacred Heart



in Lissone, Vicariate of Italy). How many things we have done! We travelled up and down Italy, we even sang in front of Popes Paul VI and John-Paul II, not to speak of the numberless times when we sang in the cathedral of Milano! Many good memories, but when I remember

them, the most beautiful is your faithfulness, your love for our choir. You really put your whole heart in it.

Let it rain, or by a thick fog, it did not matter: you drove your unforgettable Renault 4 to go and fetch the youngest chorists who lived far away. And their parents entrusted them to you without any fear.

And the parish, of which you were the priest during 13 years, and our district "on the other side of the bridge". You were one of the main movers of its growth.

And I must also tell you a big thankyou for my vocation. You were for me an example of devotedness to the people, near us, mainly the poor. When they came to see you, they never went back with empty hands. I remember your first day as a priest in Milano. It was on September 21st 1986. The choir- of course I was there- had participated in that feast. Then, on the next day, it was

my departure for the seminary... and on the day of my sacerdotal ordination, you were in the sanctuary of Caravina to welcome me.

And thankyou also for our mission in Central Africa which you always supported even in your last illness.

And now, a thousand episodes cross my mind, dates, places, and adventures come to my memory as if it were yesterday. The time we spent together was really wonderful. Yesterday, I listened to "our" songs: *O Sacrum convivium*, *Ave Verum*, *Beati qui lugent*, *O Bella mia Speranza*.

I stop here. Those who will read these few lines will be able to add their own memories, their smile, their thankyou for having met you...

Goodbye, dearest Father Angelo. And thankyou once more. You are *Sacerdos in Aeternum*.

Affectionately,

Fr. Tiziano scj



In memoriam

- (.) On April 27, *Mr. Marc Girard*, former director of the college of Limoges, passed away. Marc Girard had a very strong bond with the Betharramite family. In the 60s and 70s he was one of the pillars of the Ozanam College (Limoges). Later he cooperated with Fr Forsans, the last Betharramite director of the College, before taking over from him in 1976. A friend of Betharram has just left us. We entrust him to the Father's mercy.



- (.) On April 29, *Mr. Paolo Franchi* (aged 64), Fr. Giuseppe Franchi's brother, of the community of Ponte a Elsa (Vicariate of Italy), returned to the house of the Father. We are close to Fr Giuseppe and to his family and pray for their dear one.



“O Father, continue!”¹

EMBODY! NOT ONLY REMEMBERING THE FOUNDER, BUT GROWING HIS INTUITION.

There are two main directions for this: that the Church should recognize the work founded by Father Garicoïts and his spiritual inspiration for his sons. Between the founder and the young religious, recognition was immediately established: 1857-1863 were the crucible in a life shared in the service of the charism. The period 1887-8 saw the multiplication of long quotes from the founder: a turning point? The diocesan process resumed in 1888, the disappearance of the first companions surely played a role in this new awareness of the disciple. Until then, Father Etchecopar had alluded to this or that pithy expression of the founder. “*Ecco venio*”, “the law of love”, “the immensity of charity within the bounds of employment”, a strong and vivid translation of a still palpable memory: “I remember the impulses that escaped from the soul of the venerated founder... I picture it to myself...”². As much as possi-

ble, in Betharram, Father Etchecopar will not stop repeating this filial and emotional gesture: going up to Calvary and praying at the tomb of the founder. “*When I kiss the name of the one who is more alive and more powerful on the marble every day, I feel that I am being answered.*”³ “*I like to bow down to the grave and ask him to have a bigger care in his mind for all his children...*”⁴. The physical bond is transformed into a mysterious communion: “O Father, these are your sons, you have trained them, you are still training them ... to make them utter the cry of your tender soul: ‘*Ecce Venio*’...”⁵.

Privileged witness, he likes to make clear the characteristics of the founder that marked him and that describe this spiritual figure: “*austere like an anchorite, simple like a child, tender like a mother, humble like a lowly servant, tireless in activity, tender with an invisible strength, and at the same time organiser, teacher, chaplain... we saw it without ceasing, founding, raising and strengthening the sa-*

¹ 1st March 1885

³ Letter to Fr. Jean Magendie, Bétharram, 4 January 1883

⁴ Letter to the Fathers and the Brothers of America, Bétharram, 2 December 1880 ; letter to the religious of the College San José of Buenos Aires, Bétharram, 18 February 1881

⁵ Letter to Fr. Jean Magendie, Bétharram, 4 January 1883

¹ Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of America, Bétharram, 3 January 1881

² Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of America, Bétharram, 18 June 1886. See also the features of the founder: Circular to the houses in France, Bétharram,

cred work that has become our heritage...”⁶. The faces of the first companions, like the challenge of Argentina are for him, the living manifestation of a charism which is written in the life and flesh of so many religious; he confided to one: “*You who were one of the dearest children of our holy founder, one of his sweetest consolations.*”⁷ Also providential is this meeting with the Pope who assures him: “*From the heights of heaven, your founder has obtained for you in such a short time this union of minds and hearts which I consider to be a miracle and which is rare on such occasions.*”⁸ In the most faithful tradition to the founder, he firmly indicates with regard to Roman approval: “*The Church has found the Constitutions penetrated by the spirit of our venerated founder ... What Peter has blessed, God has also blessed and communicated his life through them for the fruitfulness of the Church.*”⁹ It is this almost sacramental confirmation that he seeks through his 8 stays in Rome.

The more the superior grapples with family life, the more he is convinced that “*a new era of light and fervour*”¹⁰ is at work. It is the life of the sons that becomes the place of rooting in the charism of the founder. It is the verification, the seal and the manifestation: “*Everywhere, we work with our eyes fixed on Father Garicoïts*”¹¹, “his

spirit hovers more and more over us, more and more sweet and strong”¹². His assurance is all the stronger since he measures it by a decisive criterion: holiness of life. The call to be “*living and speaking copies*”¹³ flows constantly from his writing: “*So let us be holy and perfect, let us keep and promote this great and rich heritage*”¹⁴! Elsewhere, he does not hesitate to speak WITH the founder: “*I limit myself to telling you all with Father Garicoïts... above all have God and his adorable will constantly before your eyes ...*”¹⁵.

The deaths of the first companions, like the geographic distances, are a sign of the urgency to transmit the treasure of the founder’s spirituality. He spent three months in Sarrance compiling and organizing these scattered writings to make them a source that would speak for themselves. The figure of the founder must remain that of the “*assured guide ... father full of tenderness ... unwavering support ... our strength in all our weaknesses ... model in everything that formed us and facilitated the path to Eternity*”¹⁶. Over the years, it takes place as a slow maturation of what the charism must be: the passage from the happiness of a shared life to the joy of a spirit that never ceases to generate. Thus is deposited “*At the base of our souls,... a first layer of gra-*

6) Circular to the houses in France, Bétharram, 1st March 1885; letter 1078

7) Letter to Fr. Jean Vignolle, Pau, 28 October 1887

8) Circular, Bétharram, 2 December 1879

9) Circular, Oloron, 18 February 1889

10) Circular, Bétharram, 15 June 1888

11) Letter to Fr. Jean Magendie, Bayonne, 7 February 1888

12) Letter to Fr. Jean Magendie, Bétharram, 29 June 1876

13) Letter 1066

14) Letter to Fr. Jean Magendie, Bétharram, 18 April 1879; letter 529

15) Letter to Fr. Jean Magendie, Bétharram, 3 February 1882

16) Letter to his brother Séverin

nite, primitive feelings ...”¹⁷. “Like him, with him let us say and repeat more in our actions than in our speeches: *Ecce venio! Eamus! Father, here I am! Forward!*”¹⁸.

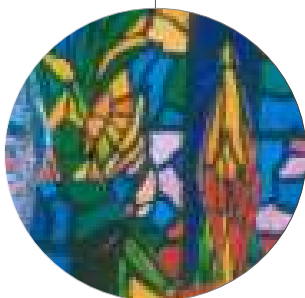
“Thank you O Father for all that I owe you, for all that we owe you. It is you who gave birth to religious life; it was you who as-

sociated us with your mission from heaven ... it was you who were our guide, our light, our perfect model, our strength ... O Father continue! May we be your imitators as you were of Jesus Christ! Keep all that God will give you. Defend the work of Jesus and Mary. May we be holy and perfect!”¹⁹ ●●●

17) Letter to his brothers Evariste, Séverin and Maxime, Bétharram, 24 July 1866

18) Circular, Bétharram, 8 June 1877, Feast of the Sacred Heart

19) Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of America, Bétharram, 3 January 1881



«L’Homme au visage de lumière... » translated into Spanish

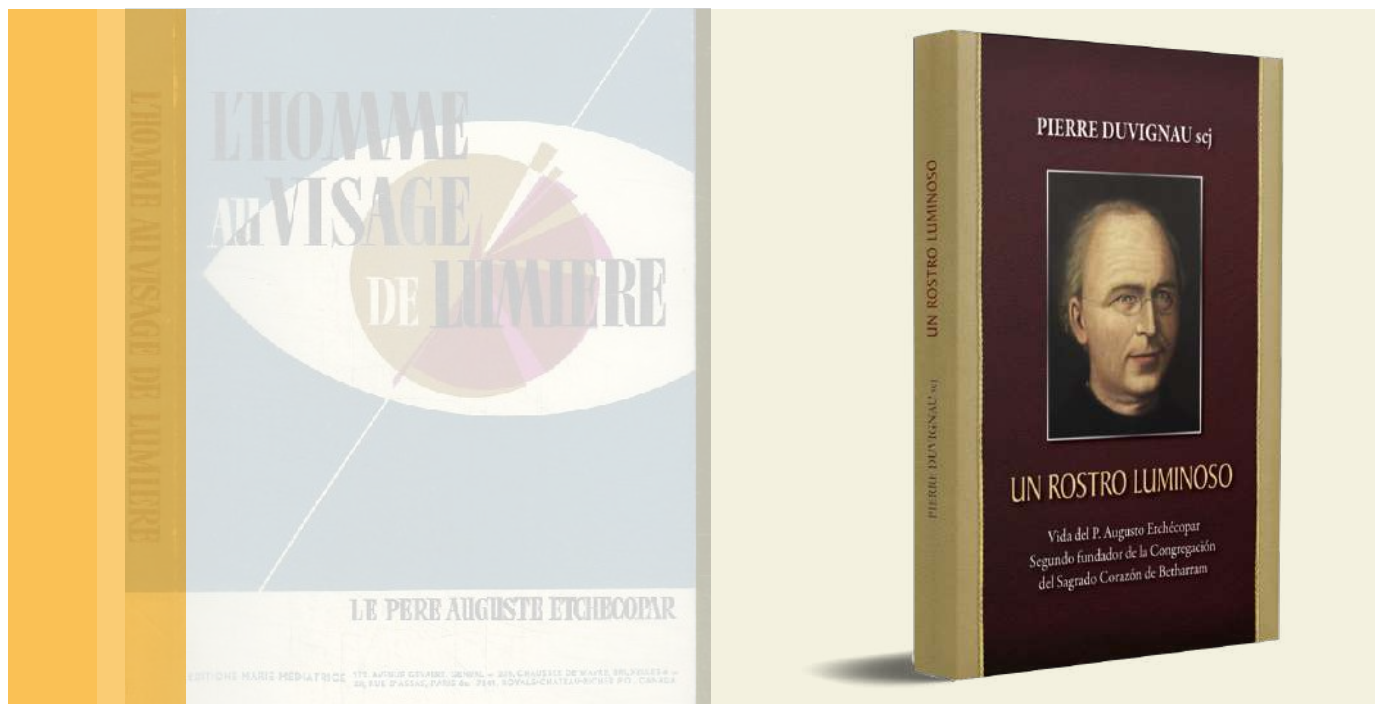
Fr. Angelo Recalcati scj: When I finished translating Father Etchécopar’s correspondence¹, I expected to experience deep satisfaction with the work accomplished. Instead I had the feeling that something was missing. Or rather someone was missing... Fr.Miéyaa, who could have done with these letters what he had done with Father Garicoïts’ correspondence. That is... someone who could introduce the addressees, and shed light on the allusions to people and places ... In actual fact, Fr. Etchécopar doesn’t economise on paper or ink (his descriptions of trips to America and the Holy Land are very full and remarkable; his report from the Eucharistic Congress in Jerusalem is very detailed). Nevertheless, there always seemed to be something missing.

So when I reached for the biography written by Father Duvignau, I understood where this feeling of something missing came from: we needed an overview of the figure of Father Etchecopar. When you look at something very closely, you lose sight of the whole; when we look from too far away, the details escape us.

It is true that Duvignau was not aware of all the letters that have been found since. However, it seems to me that he man-



1) ...of which there are several volumes! (Editor’s note)



ages to present many aspects which one does not grasp at first sight in the letters or, at least, which do not stand out in an obvious way. In this biography, Father Duvignau highlights the figure of a superior who, in a difficult context, succeeds in holding the helm of the Congregation, still in danger of sinking.

By reading Etchecopar's correspondence, one can get the idea of someone who always and only sees the positive side of people and events. One can even find exaggerated his incessant repetition of "Thanks be to God", "for the grace of Heaven", etc., even in the most painful situations. One could misread this as someone there who puts his head in the sand to avoid seeing difficulties. But on the contrary, Duvignau highlights his ability to make decisions and give precise directions, even when his health prevents him from intervening personally. I am convinced that by reading his letters one can obviously get to know Father Etchecopar better, but also that it is only possible to fully understand his writings by knowing what he has experienced and undergone. And Duvignau, in my opinion, helps us to discover this aspect of Fr. Augusto Etchecopar. ●●●



“Un rostro luminoso, Vida del Padre Augusto Etchecopar, Segundo fundador de la Congregación del Sagrado Corazón de Betharram” [*“A luminous face, Life of Father Augusto Etchecopar, Second founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Betharram”*], Pierre Duvignau scj, translated by Fr. Angelo Recalcati scj, 2020, while Volume IV of the *Correspondence in Spanish*, also by him, has just left the press.



SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS, FROM HEART TO HEART

... Who does not have a word or an expression or a phrase of Saint Michael Garicoits which often resonates in his heart like background music, like an incessant call to keep trusting in the Lord, like the signature tune of the One who wants to fill us of his presence and his love? ...

“Here I am!”

Here I am! – Father Garicoits – Have you called me?... You have sent me this surprise from above! What are you asking me?... Ah, you want me to have a conversation with you! Heart to heart... agreed! And publish it? While we are justifiably still in this quarantine which is going on and on... and is thrusting me into a certain boredom? Is it not a bit too soon...? How do you publish an intimate chat?... It is meant for the good of your children, my brothers also in quarantine because of this coronavirus...? So be it, here I am! If it seems useful to you: Here I Am! I am a little embarrassed... but here I am!

I will start by recalling to you the memory, still so fresh in my mind, of the enthusiasm that Father Carlo Trabuc-



**Fr. Francisco Daleoso
(Paco) SCJ**

Community of Adrogué

chi SCJ stirred up in me when he had invited me to become a priest... It was in 1951 in the month of May... I was 11 years old! During Y6 in the little country school I attended, he let me win a questions-answers game on the catechism and gave me my first medal with your image on it, large and silver-plated. On 23rd July, I entered the immense scholastic building at Barracas, impressed by its enormous and overwhelming size.... I cried into my father's shoulders while saying goodbye and again under the covers once I had gone to bed that night.

The following morning, I jumped out of bed, happy, telling myself : « I'm at

secondary school!" Once dressed, we all went to the chapel... where we sang: "To the beautiful Virgin, to the white star, love, love!"... It was the beginning of a dialogue which has become more and more familiar.

Six whole years! Then you gave me the chance to belong to Our Mother of Betharram. I entered into a congregation linked to Mary. And I put on the cassock, gladly, on the day of the Assumption, 15th August 1957... "*Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum, habitare Fratres in unum...*". How much sweetness I found in this 'here I am'!

And during the Marian Year of 1958 - 100 years after the appearance of Mary at Lourdes – I was a novice at Adrogué. On 19th January 1959, I took my first vows in the hands of the superior general at the time, the Very Reverend Father Joseph Mirande. Then there was the scolasticate: Philosophy, Theology... and three years later, the perpetual vows – 19th January 1962. Here I Am forever. No serious problems during these years... at least, not that I remember today. I was perhaps unaware or naïve... keen to do everything at any cost. Everything went well, as if gliding. I was calm, eager to make progress, to get there... I remember so well thinking that your charism of 'Here I Am'... submissive, humble, happy, steady seemed to me to be very suited to the person I was... to my way of being! In a way, tailor-made.

And it was under Mary's gaze, during the feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December 1964, that I was ordained priest of the Sacred Heart of

Jesus forever. How many times, Father Michael, have I contemplated your progression towards the priesthood on the stained-glass windows of our chapel! Now I was a priest of the Sacred Heart, like you.... I remember that for the first days I felt strange... I was afraid... to the point of crying on the first night, full of anxiety...

Since then, my *Here I Am!* has been achieved through the ministry, the apostolate, service, community life. As in every path, darkness and light each have their turn.

I had a dark beginning, when I had to become a teacher: without having been trained for it, I was asked to be a Spanish teacher in the secondary school...! Unfortunately, there was nothing but problems... it was a dark time: criticism from religious brothers, errors on my part, unruliness of pupils, ... depression, feelings of powerlessness, allergies, first sessions with a Psychologist ...

Do you remember that night in 1967 when I couldn't sleep? I went to the chapel and I said to the Lord: "I cannot take any more! It can't continue like that! If I have to go, I'll go, but I'll do it looking at you in the eyes!" And the light came. Sleep returned little by little. I started to walk amongst the shadows, to confront them, to find ways out... to mature. Then the light came, the joys of new encounters, with brothers in religion, friends, within and outside the community, who encouraged me (religious and lay, men and women). I thank them! There also followed enjoyable classes and different pastoral duties: retreats with the youth, with

families... pastoral services and community changes. Catechism at San José School, instructor at Adrogué, rector of San José School, parish priest at Atlántida, vicar at Santiago, parish priest at Barracas, missionary at Santiago... and now again at Adrogué, at the regional novitiate.

I always tried to move forwards: offer my *Here I Am* to those who asked, according to what I knew and understood... as several times I had to confront tasks without prior study: improvised novice master, while the selected person went to study in Rome... ; scholastics master, when the person prepared in Rome died... ; novice master when there was no-one else...

I passed through the valley of darkness: improvising resources to take on certain tasks... confronting harsh changes after the Council, when a lot of brothers of the Congregation had left the ministry... disappointments, shameful failures in Uruguay, amorous distractions, depression, powerlessness... but your hand supported me. Through Mary, I have always received your life-saving branch... I looked for some light in experienced priests: Jesuits of Colegio Máximo in San Miguel (Justo Assiaín, Jorge Bergoglio to il-

luminate my job of scholastics master in 1980, Andrés Zuining, Lopez Rosa throughout short retreats and some 30 days of spiritual exercises in 1985)... Prayer time with the Trappistes d'Azul, in different monasteries in Buenos Aires, Tucuman and Santiago del Estero...

At Adrogué, when I arrived in March 2014, tired... with a strong feeling of failure, depressed, I enrolled at St Mary's Spirituality Centre – Mary again! - for an update on supporting people, and Mary, the good Mother, took me by the hand and surprised me: before filling my head with the contents, she made me aware of the path to my own heart. A path towards something known but often mishandled, interrupted, perhaps abandoned, winding, never easy, but full of light and hope for those who persevere. It's the path that consists of tak-



SCJ Community of Adrogué (Argentina)

From left to right: Br. Antonio Bruno Soares Teixeira da Silva (novice from Brazil), Fr. Osmar Caceres Spaini (master of the novices), Fr. Francisco Daleoso, Br Mariano Surace (scholastic preparing for final profession).

ing on one's own personal history, the path of life: always opening horizons... unveiling the mystery that is each of us, inhabited by the Lord... continuing onwards.

Today, in these times of quarantine, the community opens its doors, its heart... in what we are given to do: we have signed a contract to use space in the house intended for spiritual retreats to set up a hospital there. We respond to requests which convey so much pain: by offering support by video call or telephone... celebrations and Sunday masses put on Facebook... bags of food intended for destitute families, some clothes... Yesterday – International Workers' Day – a plentiful dish of stew was served to 300 people in the area. That had been organised by lay people (La Casa del Niño, l'association de rugby, Prasam [a local association which ensures social services and runs a popular canteen and a local medical centre]) and the religious commu-

nity represented by Fr Osmar and Br Mariano. Plenty of lay people provided what was needed and many volunteers also offered their help to cook, serve and take care of everything... A HERE I AM... a bright community in which the Father of Kindness rejoices and which maintains social solidarity.

And as for me... I cannot go out... but this light of the Lord guides me to congratulate these brothers – lay and religious – to pray for them and for those who are going through such a difficult time, to deepen each Eucharist, to eucharistically experience my *Here I Am* here where I can do something. To be bread for my brothers, to be wine which brings joy and inebriates. As *He* tells me at each Mass and each day: This is my body, this is my blood... It's what I am, me Paco, just as I am today, and with what I am, what is mine (darkness and light). Come and eat! And let these days pass by doing what I can. Here I Am! *Fiat!* ●●●



Prayer of the “Here I am”

O Mary, here we come.

Receive us and present us to your divine Son.

O Jesus, here we come. Receive us from the hands of Your Blessed Mother and present us to Your Father.

O Heavenly Father, here we come.

*Receive us from the hands of Your Beloved Son;
we abandon ourselves to Your love.*

*Yes, O God, here we are, unreservedly now and for ever,
under the guidance of Your Holy Spirit, and of our superiors,
under the protection of Jesus and Mary,
our guardian angels and our holy patrons.*

One must do God's work joyfully, manfully, day by day, without worrying about success or the morrow. To each day suffices the evil thereof. I am entrusted with a mission: will it succeed or not? I must not be anxious about that, but go ahead with the trust and faith of Abraham. I must do what God tells me through His representatives and as He tells me. All the rest is useless preoccupation, fussing, and temptation I must not listen to.

If we had to listen to all that is said, all that falls from the lips of the selfstyled wise, judging without mission to judge, in spite of the Gospel 'Do not judge' condemning without mission to condemn: exhibiting a wisdom disapproved by God. (1 Cor. 1,19)! (...)

So from day to day, let us perform our task; because God wants it, as God wants it, even if one had to change one's office or method tomorrow, for the same motive of obedience.

(DS § 235)

*14th of May
1863 - 2020*

*Happy Feast of Saint Michael
to all!*



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
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