



This is our primary purpose which we must never lose sight of: that we who have joined the Society of the Sacred Heart by God's goodness should live in closest harmony, not only, in what is special to the Society but also on those points which seem of least importance. Insist on this point with our brethren, I beseech you. If we help each other in this way, how heaven will help us! It is by relying, not on our own strength, but on that of holy obedience that we shall undertake everything with joy and that we shall achieve it successfully.

Saint Michael Garicoits
DS § 161



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In this issue

From fear... to fullness of joy: the Risen Lord p. 1
Homily, Easter vigil in the holy night of Easter p. 4
Ardent devotion to St. Joseph p. 6
Good Friday Witness p. 8
First pastoral experiences in the parish p. 9
Theme of the year with Fr Sebastián García scj p. 12
Notices from the General Council p. 15
Bird's eye view of the Congregation p. 16
† Fr. Gaston Gabaix-Hialé scj p. 19
Signed: Etchécopar... p. 22
Obedience and joy p. 24

A word from the superior general

**From fear... to fullness of joy:
the Risen Lord**

"You too are sad now, but I will see you again, and then you will have a joy that no one can take away from you" (Jn 16:22)

Dear Betharramites,

Someone once said that we don't need to talk about joy all the time to be happy. We also know that it isn't easy to be happy if other things are weighing on our spirits such as fear or sadness. Joy is, and continues to be, a gift from God.

But the Gospel teaches us that the Lord usually breaks into our life, our world and our history by surprise. He does it every Easter, pronouncing our name, proclaiming peace, provoking in us the passage from fear to the fullness of joy.

Present context does not help! We live a devastating period, prey to a global plague that refuses to leave us. But Easter 2021 reminds us that He is the Resurrection and the life in a time of sickness and death. The resurrection confounds our expectations, as in the house of Lazarus. Where there was weeping and wailing, He comes to manifest the Glory of God. His arrival is always timely, just believe.

Yes, the risen one bursts into our lives, and passes through the walls of the present, finding us fearful and doubtful, like the apostles and the women at the tomb.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, the women to whom Jesus appears are still *"full of fear and joy"* (Mt 28.8): but already, in the following verse, we see how *they embrace his feet as they prostrate before Him* to worship him. The encounter with Christ makes fear give way to joy, just as the fog gives way, little by little, to the sun.

Will we be able to move from fear to joy? ... even if the fog is long and dense ...

Christ is alive! A large stone at the gates of death was pushed aside by the force of the Resurrection of the Son-of-God-made-man. No more ointments or perfumes, we have faith in the living Christ and a community of believers united and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

During the night of the Easter Vigil, the Light of the new candle is given to us and we share it with those by our side. Easter joy arises as we form a mosaic pattern from the joy of each individual Christian. Easter joy springs up from the transmission of the Good News itself. Easter joy is the only adequate reaction to the greatest revolution in the entire history of the cosmos: death is not still death but is overcome ... even in a bodily way ... Being subject to death is a certainty that we all have

(reinforced during the pandemic). But the power of death no longer reigns. Christ is alive, risen, the firstborn from the dead now and forever.

Passing to this Easter joy is not only an exultant experience, it is also a challenging one. Because it means moving from a comfortable and reasonable Christian life (adapted to this world) to a more evangelical pilgrimage life, ready to say "here I am" at any time. Coming out of the grave is to passionately want to have others share in the same joy we experienced. *"Something which has existed since the beginning, that we have heard, and we have seen with our own eyes; that we have watched and touched with our hands: the Word, who is life-this is our subject."* (1 Jn 1. 1)

The 2017 General Chapter invited us **to share that same joy**.

I will list **three simple reasons for joy**, as an example, but surely you will be able to think of more.

- Did you know that our Houses of Formation in the last 25 years have received and accompanied hundreds of young people (I am not exaggerating, there were no less than 300), of whom more than 120 religious have reached final profession and the vast majority of them today are priests? In those houses of formation they found fragility, but also joy: they lived with fraternal religious, workers in the vineyard with a sense of belonging to the family of Betharram and the Church.

by the offshoot and the source by the stream, the Institute is worthy of the new favors of the Holy See."

But nothing is more affectionate, I would dare say, or stronger than the praise of the Protective Bishops. They are: Mgr Perraud, Bishop of Autun; Mgr Billères, Bishop of Tarbes; Mgr Delannoy, Bishop of Aire; Mgr Ducellier, Archbishop of Besançon; Their Eminences the Cardinals of Algiers, Reims and Toulouse. I will name but a few.

Mgr Billères recommends to the Pope, "priests whose holiness had delighted him, a young Levite, and filled him, an old Bishop, with affectionate veneration."

Mgr Delannoy assures us that, "very small in number, we have been able to accomplish great works by the power of virtue and work," and that in our colleges, "at very little cost for the parents of our students, but at great expense of solicitude and zeal from the Masters, we get unanimous approval."

Mgr Ducellier does not hesitate to assert, "that it is impossible to find better and more valiant evangelical workers;" he declares that our Congregation, "well known to him, possesses to a high degree, on the whole, good priestly and religious spirit, esteem for duty, certainty of doctrine, diligence in work and austerity of life; filial and absolute dedication to the Church and to the Pope."

His Eminence Cardinal Lavigerie calls us an excellent Institute and he adds: "I know it personally, by its spirit of attachment to the Holy See, by its perfect regularity, modesty and all the other virtues; it was founded by a holy and admirable priest and I saw it grow before God and before men."

Finally, according to His Eminence Cardinal Desprez, we are, "the worthy children of a Father whose memory is a blessing" and our, "venerable organisation can be compared to a tree which spreads branches far and wide, laden with virtues, providing shade for a multitude of birds and food for a celestial life."

I stop, my Beloved Fathers and Brothers, so as not to overwhelm you with the weight of praise; deep down, these are full of lessons and teachings, and the more they exalt us, the more they force us to be great. What a happy necessity really, is that of moving forward with a corde magno and animo volenti, in the footsteps of our heroic Founder, as true auxiliaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! May the Blessed Virgin deign to grant us all this grace, for her best service and greater glory! Let us ask it during this month, by the merits of our glorious Patron, the very powerful and very good St Joseph.

Together with my dear Assistant, I send you all that we can draw from the source of grace and blessings from above.

To all of you in Our Lord.

Fr. Etchecopar, Priest

Circular letter of the M. R. Superior General

F.V.D.

Rome, 15 March 1889

My dear Fathers and Brothers in Our Lord,

So here we are in Rome, in the name of and for the interests of our dear Institute; we are in Rome because of the Founder, because of the good that his work has already done, and the good that it is called to do in the future; and with the welcome we receive everywhere and in the Sacred Congregation, it is easy to foresee that a new approval from the Holy See will be granted to us before the end of the current year.

It is therefore right to render the most humble and lively thanksgiving to heaven, repeating with Father Garicoïts: "God, from whom all good proceeds, is the author of our organisation; he manages it; he will keep it and advance it in his holy service."

Let us thank him again for the good spirit which has never ceased to animate our people and of whom I was able to say to the Holy Father, in my general report: "The crisis which France is undergoing has not affected the spirit of the Institute; the vows and the rules are faithfully observed there; we can say that each one does what is in the power of good will, to advance the perfection of his state."

Finally, let us express to the Lord our deep gratitude for the testimonies that the Ordinaries and the Bishops, our Protectors, hastened to make for us.

Before depositing these testimonial letters with the Sacred Congregation, I believe it is very pleasant and very advantageous to give you at least a few short quotes or a quick analysis of them.

Monsignor the Bishop of Bayonne begins his letter to the Supreme Pontiff: "I have the honour of having a regular Congregation in my diocese, founded by a holy priest whose Beatification Process we are instructing. The members of this Institute spread edification everywhere by their dutiful life, and do immense good by preaching the word of God and by the religious instruction of the youth."

In the eyes of the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, our Fathers, "are a demonstration of the wisdom which founded our Institute and of the sovereign utility for which God established it within his Church in these troubled times."

Mgr Bishop of Montevideo calls us, "The ornament, the splendour of his Diocese".

Mgr Patriarch of Jerusalem declares that, "If the tree is to be judged

• Did you know that the new places where Betharram is present in mission: India and Vietnam, as well as the not-so-new ones (Thailand, Africa and America) have grown and consolidated new communities? The Betharramite communities of Italy, France and England have contributed greatly to these plantations with human and material resources, and continue to do so.

• Did you know that the new apostolic communities are increasingly intercultural and rich in values. They constitute a wealth, and at the same time a great challenge. There is still much to do to open ourselves to the surprise of a new "multicultural Betharram". Of course, this openness requires religious with a solid identity, who live their vocation with enthusiasm and joy. With an interior life that sustains the fraternal communion among us and the service of the poor and marginalised.

Sometimes I wonder why some experiences of joy are not shared enough... Why are they not spread more widely to infect others? This would be a good pandemic!

God grant us the courage to share the same happiness. We may live in temporary confinement because of a sick world in a pandemic, but we must not remain like wet chickens enclosed within the walls of our own fears. The joy of the Gospel stirs us to go forth. For many of us, that joy of being anointed witnesses, plus the contact

with religious happy, courageous (and happily less-than-perfect) was the magnet that attracted us to be part of Betharram in the first place.

Since the 'true Betharramite' - as Fr Joseph Mirande (ex Sup-Gen) used to say "feels linked to Betharram with all the fibres of his being, he has made the interests of the Congregation his own; its joys, its sorrows and its hopes, are his life. To such an extent that he cannot think what his life would be like outside of Betharram. God made him for Betharram and He made Betharram for him. His place here has always been reserved; and now he occupies it. Slowly or quickly, his soul has been realised here. He feels comfortable... he is at home".

If we go from fear to Easter joy we will make ourselves more available and sensitive to the needs of others so that we can evangelise, so that everyone can live the experience of rejoicing with the same joy.

Questions:

• In what experience in my life have I most experienced the transition from fear to Easter joy?

• How do I express this joy so that some may happily choose to be Betharramite religious, priests, or laity?

Fr. Gustavo scj
Superior General

Homily, Easter vigil in the holy night of Easter

St Peter's Basilica, Holy Saturday, 3 April 2021

The women thought they would find a body to anoint; instead they found an empty tomb. They went to mourn the dead; instead they heard a proclamation of life. For this reason, the Gospel tells us, the women "were seized with trembling and amazement" (Mk 16:8) [...]. Amazement. A fear mingled with joy that took their hearts by surprise when they saw the great stone before the tomb rolled away and inside a young man in a white robe. Wonder at hearing the words: "Do not be afraid! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen" (v. 6). And a message: "He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him" (v. 7). May we too accept this message [...]. Yet what does it mean "to go to Galilee"?

To go to Galilee means, first, to begin anew. For the disciples it meant going back to the place where the Lord first sought them out and called them to follow him. [...] From that moment on, leaving their nets behind, they followed Jesus, listening to his preaching and witnessing the miracles he performed. Yet, though they were always with him, they did not fully understand him. Frequently they misunderstood his words and in the face of the cross they abandoned him and fled. Even so, the Risen Lord once more appears as the one who goes ahead of them



to Galilee. He precedes them. He stands before them and constantly calls them to follow him. He says to them: "Let us start over from where we began. Let us begin anew. I want you to be with me again, in spite of everything". In this Galilee, we learn to be amazed by the Lord's infinite love, which opens new trails along the path of our defeats.[...]

This is the first Easter message that I would offer you: it is always possible to begin anew, because there is always a new life that God can awaken in us in spite of all our failures. From the rubble of our hearts – and each one of us knows the rubble of our hearts – God can create a work of art; from the ruined remnants of our humanity, God can prepare a new history. [...]

Going to Galilee also means setting out on new paths. It means walking away from the tomb. The women were looking for Jesus in the tomb; they went to recall what they had experienced with him, which was now gone forever. They went to indulge in their grief. There is a kind of faith that can become the memory of something once beautiful, now simply to be recalled. Many people – including us – experience such a "faith of memories", as if Jesus were someone from the past, an old friend from their youth who is now far distant, [...]. A faith made up of habits,

Voici" fraternity found comfort, consolation and encouragement in him with a taste for deepening the spiritual life; he was also a benevolent confessor.

He had no mystical fancies but he introduced us to recognising the importance of contemplation which for him was "a continuous training to always read more deeply into daily reality in order to perceive every sacramental density". It was the moral fibre of François Varillon and Maurice Zundel.

He had been a religious full of hope in the various storms past and pres-

ent that the Church had experienced. One of his favourite borrowed reflections in Kierkegaard indeed proves it: "It is not the path which is the difficulty; rather it is the difficulty that is the path". He was a man of hope like St Michael Garicoits: "We must never hope more than when all is lost". Today, we give thanks to the Lord for letting us meet and know Fr Gaston; he was for us an indulgent father, an understanding brother and a discreet confidant.

Fr. Laurent Bacho scj
Regional Vicar



In memoriam

- On March 1st, at the age of 94 years, in Scuol (Switzerland), **Mrs. Ines Trameri** died. She was sister of Fr Albino Trameri SCJ (Vicariate of Italy). We express our condolences to Fr Albino and his family, and we assure our remembrance in prayer.
- On March 13, **Sister Delia Urbani**, religious of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity, aged 80, returned to the Father's house. Sister Delia Marie was sister of Fr. Arialdo Urbani SCJ (Vicariate of Republic of Central Africa) and Br. Severino Urbani SCJ (Vicariate of Italy). Sister Delia was a missionary in Zimbabwe, Zambia and, for some years, in Thailand. We express our sympathy to Fr Arialdo and Br. Severino and his family and we promise to keep them in our prayers.
- On March 17, at the age of 83 years, **Mr. Gianni Borghetti**, brother of Fr Livio Borghetti SCJ, (Vicariate of Italy), died in Rho (Milan). We are close to Fr Livio and his family and we pray for the eternal rest of their dear one.
- On 7 April, in Capiata (Paraguay), **Mr. Cesare Zaracho**, aged 42, brother of Fr. Alberto Zaracho scj, Regional Vicar in Paraguay, has died. He was killed, as an innocent victim, in a shooting between police and assailants of an armoured truck. He was on his way to the supermarket and was seriously injured in the shooting. We assure our prayers for Fr Alberto's brother. Let us invoke the mercy of the Father that in his kindness may He may give consolation to the family members, in this moment of great suffering.

Father Gaston knew from experience that faith is a journey, an interior exodus: «To reach your destination, you have to set out as you are; never disconnect yourself from the love of the Father, adhere in everything to his will» he confided one day. At the school of our founder, by emphasising the Here I am of the Sacred Heart at the moment of His Incarnation, he gave new life to the spirituality of Betharram. Studying our spirituality with passion, he made it accessible to generations of religious and lay people. And in doing this, he never lost sight of the horizon drawn by Jesus in the Gospel: «Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God». Knowledge which is an experience, a communion of life. (Fr. Jean-Luc Morin scj)



memories alive of his attentive presence in the crisis endured by the Church in that moment. It was there that he also accompanied the first generation of Indian sisters who had come to gather at Anglet. Fr Gaston would be the first Betharramite to visit India and support the beginnings of Betharram in India.

In 1977, after a brief visit to Vic-en-Bigorre the day after the death of his brother, Felix, at 51 years, he was called to set up the Great Seminary in Toulouse for 3 years, responsible for the young amongst us at the St Joseph's Centre.

In 1981, the General Chapter nominated him General Bursar with residence in Rome for the 2nd term of Fr Grech as General Superior. He would be the kingpin of the international session of 1985 for the 150 years of the founding of the Congregation. An important stage for our religious family to deepen our charism of "Here I am" and our spirituality based on the

God of tenderness, God dissolved in charity; we had numerous interventions from him in this sense.

In 1987, he was called to Pibrac, tasked with the training of 5 young religious who saw in him a gentle instructor.

In 1990, he was called to St Michael's House in Pau as superior; he would get to know and love St Mary of Christ Crucified, with the creation of the association "the Friends of Mariam", all while being open to different calls with the creation of the "St Gabriel Communion".

Then Betharram was the place where he prepared himself meticulously as he did not have the charism of improvisation for the retreats at our place and even to the Ivory Coast or in the other congregations. Twenty years later, we still remember the retreat "Do God's work joyfully".

Many religious and lay people of many walks of life, but also in particular lay people associated with the "Me

things from the past, lovely childhood memories, but no longer a faith that moves me, or challenges me. Going to Galilee, on the other hand, means realizing that faith, if it is to be alive, must get back on the road. It must daily renew the first steps of the journey, the amazement of the first encounter. And it must continue to trust, not thinking it already knows everything, but embracing the humility of those who let themselves be surprised by God's ways. [...] We are always worried that God will surprise us. And today the Lord invites us to let ourselves be surprised. [...]

This, then, is the second message of Easter: faith is not an album of past memories; Jesus is not outdated. He is alive here and now. He walks beside you each day, in every situation you are experiencing, in every trial you have to endure, in your deepest hopes and dreams. He opens new doors when you least expect it, he urges you not to indulge in nostalgia for the past or cynicism about the present. Even if you feel that all is lost, please, let yourself be open to amazement at the newness Jesus brings: he will surely surprise you.

Going to Galilee also means going to the peripheries. Galilee was an outpost [...]. Yet that is where Jesus began his mission. There he brought his message to those struggling to live from day to day, the excluded, the vulnerable and the poor. There he brought the face and presence of God, who tirelessly seeks out those who are discouraged or lost, who goes to the very peripheries of existence, since in his eyes no one is

least, no one is excluded. The Risen Lord is asking his disciples to go there even now: he asks us to go to Galilee, to the real "Galilee" of daily life [...]. In Galilee we learn that we can find the Risen One in the faces of our brothers and sisters, in the enthusiasm of those who dream and the resignation of those who are discouraged [...]. We will be amazed how the greatness of God is revealed in littleness, how his beauty shines forth in the poor and simple.

And this is the third message of Easter: Jesus, the Risen Lord, loves us without limits and is there at every moment of our lives. Having made himself present in the heart of our world, he invites us to overcome barriers, banish prejudices and draw near to those around us every day in order to rediscover the grace of everyday life. Let us recognize him here in our Galilees, in everyday life. With him, life will change. For beyond all defeats, evil and violence, beyond all suffering and death, the Risen One lives and guides history.

Dear sister, dear brother: if on this night you are experiencing an hour of darkness, a day that has not yet dawned, a light dimmed or a dream shattered, go, open your heart with amazement to the message of Easter: "Do not be afraid, he has risen! He awaits you in Galilee". Your expectations will not remain unfulfilled, your tears will be dried, your fears will be replaced by hope. For the Lord always goes ahead of you, he always walks before you. And, with him, life always begins anew. ●●●

Ardent devotion to St Joseph

"Heart of Saint Joseph,... I ask you to heal me and present me to the Heart of Mary."
(Fr. Auguste Etchecopar)

Father Auguste Etchecopar had a soft spot for Saint Joseph, because he knew that he could obtain from him many graces for himself and for the Congregation. Fr Denis Buzy scj testifies: *"Father Auguste gave to Saint Joseph a devotion of admiration and tenderness. 'After all this time,' he wrote in his retreat notes, 'what a joy it is to bow down before Saint Joseph! It is the best way to overcome my sorrows before presenting myself to the throne of Mary'. 'Oh ! Saint Joseph, he wrote again, I am not worthy, but I will become so thanks to you'. He wrote the prayer of Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, my sweetest loves. For you I will suffer, for you I will die! Nothing is mine, may everything be yours". And Fr Pierre Fernessole writes: "Father Etchecopar had a particular devotion of admiration and tenderness for Saint Joseph. Reading various passages from his correspondence or from his private notes, it would seem that he obtained many extraordinary favours through the intercession of this great saint."*

He spoke of him with very great affection ... He wanted to instill this de-

Fr. Alessandro
Paniga scj
Community of Albiate



votion in all his family. For example, he wrote to Father Magendie on March 3, 1874: *"May Saint Joseph protect you especially and all your dear confreres and all the works of our Society. Commend me to this great saint, who has given us so much and who has done so much for you and for the [work in America]."* And again the testimony of Father François Carrère: *"To Saint Joseph, he recommended hopeless cases, the works of the Institute (many of which were under his patronage), the sick and the sinners. The name of Saint Joseph was often on his lips and under his pen; he had his feast celebrated on an equal basis with those of Mary."*

According to the testimonies of certain confreres, it seems that he also had a vision of Saint Joseph. As Fr. Ludovic Pambrun reports: *"He was very devoted to Saint Joseph. I heard that one day, during the feast*



13 April 2021: After a few weeks in the intensive care unit at the «Spallanzani» hospital in Rome due to Coronavirus, **Fr. Massimo Motta scj** was called to the Father's House. Fr Massimo was 63 years of age and 25 years of religious life and was part of the community of Monteporzio (Vicariate of Italy). He died on the day we remember the death of Fr. Etchecopar.
We entrust Fr Massimo to the love of the Father.

Father Gaston GABAIX-HIALÉ scj

Serres-Morlaas, 29 July 1927 - Betharram, 22 March 2021 (France)

Fr Gaston was born on 29th July 1927 in Serres-Morlaas into a large family connected to the Bearnese culture, anchored in the Christian Faith ; he had 7 brothers and 3 sisters. His brother, Felix, two years his senior, arrived ahead of him at the Apostolic School of Betharram where he himself was an aspirant all through the second world war ; we can easily imagine all the difficulties he met in his youth.

On 23rd October 1946, he took his first religious profession at the end of his novitiate in Balarin. He was part of that last generation who went to do Philosophy in the Holy Land from where they would be driven in September 48 for Theology in the new training house in Floriac, Bel Sito.

On 28th June 1952, he was ordained priest at St Andrew's Cathedral in Bordeaux by Cardinal Richaud with 5 other Betharramites including Fr Olçomendy scj.

His first posting was in Betharram,



at the Apostolic School, as a teacher for 4 years, and then at Bel Sito at the Scholastic for 7 years. In 1963, he was named as Superior of the Apostolic in Betharram which became St Michael's Centre. We were amongst several religious to have benefitted from his support.

In 1968, a change of direction for 9 beautiful years as a chaplain for the Servants of Mary; many sisters keep



the Betharramites and had appointed, as first parish priest, Fr. Enrique Lasuén SCJ. It is also a celebration for the arrival of the Congregation in the Archdiocese as the 23rd male institute. Today in the Archdiocese there are about 50 male congregations. In compliance with the rules of safety and social distancing of this pandemic time, the parishioners, invited by the religious community and the Parish Priest Fr Francisco José de Paula SCJ, flocked to celebrate a preparatory triduum and the festive Eucharist presided over by the Regional Vicar, Fr. Paulo César Pinto SCJ.



REGION SAINT MARY OF JESUS
CRUCIFIED
ENGLAND INDIA
THAILAND

England



- The Vicariate of England in virtual assembly... On 19th March 2021, the Members of the English Vicariate gathered together virtually to celebrate the Solemnity of St Joseph. It was a beautiful occasion as we reminisced about St Joseph.

Each one shared a memory or reflection about the saint. After the sharing, Fr Austin Hughes presented and shared a reflection about the life of St Joseph and invited us to reflect more about him, the patron of the Church and of our Congregation. Fr Enrico Frigerio our Regional Superior blessed us with final prayer and Blessings.

Thailand

- Inauguration of a new church in Maepon

On March 6, in the parish of Maepon, the Vicariate inaugurated and blessed a new church dedicated to "Mary, Mother of the Church".

On this occasion, 19 students from the Maepon center and 2 students from the Chomthong mission center received the sacrament of confirmation from Fr. John Chan Kunu SCJ, Regional Vicar in Thailand.

Many Betharramite priests joined in this celebration.

There were many parishioners and also Buddhists who came to celebrate and share a frugal meal.

of Saint Joseph in Bethlehem, his joy was so overwhelming that it was believed that he had really seen Saint Joseph". The fact is also recalled by Fr. Jean Bergez who recounts: "He had an ardent devotion for Saint Joseph, and this devotion in the last years of his life became a real passion."

This ardor so overflowed in his sermons that, when he preached to the Carmelites of Bethlehem, he did so with such ardour that he thought he had gone over the top in his praise of Saint Joseph. He confided to me his doubts, but I reassured him. Seeing him celebrate Mass that day, I was convinced that he had received a special favour in communion and thanksgiving through the saint's intercession. One of our Fathers asked me if, on that day, Saint Joseph had not really appeared to him".

Father Hippolyte Paillas scj testifies thus: "Father Etchecopar associates Saint Joseph with devotion to the Virgin Mary. Not feeling worthy to present himself to such a great and holy Mother, he begged Saint Joseph to present him to his divine Bride ... And a prayer which was familiar to him was this: "Heart of Saint Joseph, in my heart there is pain pain. I ask you to heal me and present me to the Heart of Mary. Heart of Mary, eternally maternal heart, always show to me I beg you, the working of the motherhood that Jesus conferred on you while hanging on the cross, and present me to his divine Heart. "And again:" Here I am, Father, Je-

sus, Mary, Joseph, without delay, without reserve, without regret, out of love for you! "

Pope Francis also tells us in his Apostolic Letter: "the proper mission of the saints is not only to obtain miracles and graces, but to intercede for us before God... We need only ask Saint Joseph for the grace of graces: our conversion. Let us now make our prayer to him: Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, show yourself a father to us as well, and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen." (P.C.\$7)

Let us implore the intercession of Saint Joseph and of the Servant of God, Father Augustus Etchecopar, so that they help us to live with generosity, humility and spirit of sacrifice, our mission as children of the Heart of Jesus. "The month of March is over: O Saint Joseph, do not go away, stay with us for life and for death!"¹ .² ●●●

1) In a letter to his sister Madeleine, 29 March 1897

2) The various testimonies quoted in this article regarding Fr. Augusto Etchecopar are in the volume "Positio super Virtutibus" of the "Sacra Rituum Congregatione" of 1955.

Good Friday Witness

Always on Good Friday day the different Christian churches of Olton gather for a procession of witness through the town.

But this year the Pandemic rules made this impossible. So Fr. Biju suggested that the other churches join with our Children's Way of the Cross that we were already planning as a trail around the Friary Grounds, an alternative to the usual 10.00 am Way of the Cross made problematic by the pandemic.

So with help from St. Margaret's Anglican Church and Olton Baptist Church and the United Reform Church we had a most unusual Way of the Cross around our grounds from 9.30 am to 12.30.

Sarah Wood and Siobhan White, two of our catechists were the main organisers, liaising with Fr Austin, while an online booking system ensured that 'distance rules' were

obeyed. Family groups were sent around in 'bubbles' over the 45 minute trail at 5 minute intervals, with something for the children to collect

at each station... a drop of blood from Gethsemane... a coin from Judas ... a nail from Calvary, etc.

With participation from the different Olton churches each station had a unique style. Some had characters from the road to calvary with a story to tell; others were silent & meditative. Over the three hours more than 200 people prayed the way of the cross like this... a beautiful way to begin Good Friday with other Christian communities.

St. Margaret's church was particularly keen to animate a station based on Joseph of Arimathea. Why? There is a medieval English legend that Joseph of Arimathea once came to England on a trading journey bringing with him the boy Jesus.



the daughters of Jerusalem



the women who followed from a distance



Gethsemane

the community and our Congregation. Finally, we greeted him warmly for his kindness towards us. We were really pleased with his unannounced visit."



REGION FR. AUGUSTE ETCHECOPAR

ARGENTINA URUGUAY
PARAGUAY BRAZIL

PARAGUAY

• A further step...: On March 4, Robert and Benito, two young postulants from the Vicariate, set off to reach Adrogué (Argentina), where they will begin their novitiate in this pandemic year. Let us keep our young brothers in our prayer.

May this journey help them to be configured more and more to the annihilated and obedient Jesus.



• Vocational promotion

On Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 March, six young people took part in a vocational retreat at the Formation House of Our Lady of Betharram, in Lamaré. The retreat was led by Fr. Raul Villalba SCJ, Superior of the community and by Fr. Alberto Zaracho SCJ,

Regional Vicar. These days were lived in prayer, in enjoying games and sharing community chores.

The young people then went back home full of enthusiasm about the charisma of Betharram and determined to continue their vocational discernment. We accompany them with our prayers.



BRAZIL

• A virtual meeting of vocation promotion... On 23 March, the Vocation Promotion Team of the Vicariate organized a virtual panel discussion aimed at adult individuals engaged in vocational research who would like to get to know Bétharram and our spirituality.

The participants came from different States of the Federation: from Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Pernambuco and Paraíba.

• The long journey leading to the sixty-year presence in the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Nova Granada, Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte, started on March 5, 1961.

The then Archbishop João Resende Costa SDB had entrusted the parish to



REGION SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS
FRANCE SPAIN IVORY COAST
ITALY CENTRAL AFRICA HOLY LAND

Ivory Coast

• On 6 March the community of the formation house of Adiapodoumé held a day of recollection during the time of Lent.

The retreat began with the night prayer on 5 March and continued with morning prayer on the next day. This was followed by a reflection on the theme: "Forgiven sinners", given by Br. Emmanuel Assanvo scj. Introducing his reflection, Br. Emmanuel invited us to acknowledge our sin, and relying above all on the merciful love of the Father. Br. Emmanuel went on focussing on the following three points:

- God is a merciful Father: the essential characteristic of God is forgiveness,
- Jesus, friend of sinners,
- The sacrament of reconciliation is a bath that renews us and gives us the joy of resuming the journey towards holiness.

The retreat ended with the Eucharistic celebration.



Italy



- Unannounced but very welcomed guest

The Archbishop of Milan gave a nice gift to the Albiate community. This is how Fr. Alessandro Paniga scj, Superior of the community, speaks of this unexpected but very welcome visit: "Last night I concelebrated in the parish church on the occasion of the pastoral visit of Mgr Mario Delpini, Archbishop of the Diocese of Milan, to the pastoral parish community of Albiate. After Holy Mass I spoke with him about our community. He asked me if we were planning to meet him in our community. I replied that his visit to our religious community was not part of the program. He seemed to me that he was feeling sorry about it. He therefore expressed his desire to come and visit us. He suggested a slightly unusual hour: 07.30 am, before going to the parish of Agliate (near Albiate). I was delighted at this act of kindness. This morning (February 14) Mgr Delpini payed a visit to our community. We prayed together and he gave us his blessing. After the usual group photograph he had a coffee with us. He asked us several questions about

The myth tells how Joseph planted his wooden staff in the ground and it then grew into a marvellous tree... the Glastonbury thorn. My home town on Northeast England, Houghton-le-Spring had a shoot from this tree... the Gilpin Thorn created by a 16th century rector Bernard Gilpin.

This Glastonbury legend is referenced in the 'Jerusalem' hymn by the poet William Blake: *'And did those feet in ancient times, walk upon England's mountains green? And was the holy lamb of God in England's pleasant pastures seen?'*

An unexpected bonus was the gift to us from Olton Baptist Church of 40 miniature wooden crosses, left over from their Simon-of-Cyrene station.

And since the pandemic rules do not allow us all to venerate the same cross at our 3.00 pm liturgy we were able to hand these round to parishioners who had forgotten to bring their own cross for the veneration.

And did Jesus really set foot in England with Joseph of Arimathea? Who knows! But one thing we can tell is that he has used the pandemic to bring the Christians of Solihull a little close together, and in that sense he is surely walking with us. God works in strange ways.

Fr. Austin Hughes scj
Community of Olton

First pastoral experiences in the parish for two of our Vietnamese novices



Bro. Peter Hung Do Van scj
Community of Ho Chi Minh City

"Here I am Lord, I come to do your will".

First of all I thank God for his

blessing and his presence in my ministry and vocational journey. Now I am doing my ministry in Lam son parish, Thanh Hoa diocese, Vietnam. After I came back from India on 7/12/2020, I had to quarantine for 14 days in a government place and continue to quarantine at home for 14 more days. But then I went for parish ministry in Lam son parish on 15/1/2021, a parish of 2100 parishioners. This is the first time I

have done any ministry in a parish as a Brother. Life in parish ministry is very different with life in a formation house. Therefore I had to adjust myself to it in the beginning, for example: I had to get up at 4.15 am every day because the mass was at 5 am, I had to attune myself to people of all ages: teaching for children and new Christians, attending all groups and all activities that happen in a parish, accompanying the parish priest in his ministry etc...

What I learned in the canonical year novitiate was very useful for me to apply in my ministry. I have learned and absorbed many things from this time. This ministry experience also helped me understand more about

myself, the way that I was chosen, and it also let me have the chance to taste life in mission. St Michael Garicoits said that "Jesus Christ is our mirror, our example that we must never lose sight of, his life, his action, his interior and exterior way of life" So it is very important for me to look at Jesus as my mirror in my vocation and in anywhere that I may be. So I am very happy with ministry time in this parish, I thank the Congregation that I have been given the opportunity to do ministry in my mother land, my own diocese and I thank also those who supported and prayed for me during my ministry.

Thanks to all.●●●

Bro. John
Baptist
Nguyen Van
Thang scj
Community of
Ho Chi Minh City



I am grateful to Almighty God and the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram and to all the Fathers and Brothers for keeping me in your prayers during my mission experience. I am grateful especially to Father Hoa parish priest at Hoa Binh

Church in Vinh Diocese and those who helped me in various ways. After three years of experience in India and now returning to Vietnam I sense some changes in the life style and the culture of the people. Though I felt a little difficulty in the beginning, after a while with the guidance of parish Priest I loved the pastoral activities in the parish. I have had some experiences as follows: During my mission I experience the presence of Jesus through my Spiritual activities like Holy Eucharist, personal prayers, teaching catechism for the children

Meetings of the General Council on the 23rd and the 26th of March, 2021. With his Council, the Superior General...:



- appointed **Fr. Wilfred Poulose Pereppadan Regional Vicar in England** for a third term, that will expire in 2023, with the next General Chapter. (RL. 205/j ; 248)
- granted the **indult for leaving the Congregation to the scholastic Br. Patrice Kablan Angbo** (Ivory Coast). (RL. 311)
- appointed **Fr. Davi Lara Da Silva Master of the scholastics of the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region** and **Superior of the formation community of Belo Horizonte** for a first term from April 1st 2021. (RL. 206/a)
- admitted,
 - **Brother Joseph Pham Van My** to the renewal of the vows, for one year.
 - **Brother Peter Hung Van Do** and **Brother John Baptist Nguyen Van Thang** to first profession for two years. (RL. 161 - 149 et 150, since the community in Vietnam depends on the General Council)
- admitted **Brother Mariano Surace** (Argentina) and **Brother Sergio Leiva** (Paraguay) of the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region **to final profession**. (RdV 205/g)

• On March 19, 2021, on the solemnity of Saint Joseph, the Superior General issued a **Decree on the Guidelines of the Congregation for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons against sexual abuse**. These guidelines will be delivered to all religious through their respective Regional Superiors and their Regional Vicars.

The «**Guidelines for the prevention and treatment of cases of abuse**», have been specially prepared so that we can all, as a religious family, respond to this fundamental issue for the Church and society.

Pope Francis invites us to «create a new culture» – culture of transparency and not secrecy –, in which we take better care of ourselves. In this manner we can prevent abuses of power, conscience and sexual abuse from happening. Many of these abuses occurred within the Church, true crimes of the past that may happen again if we do not all and jointly take responsibility in this matter.

The General Chapter proposed a special motion to the Congregation (See Acts of the General Chapter 2017, nr. 157-159). In response to this, with these Guidelines, we want to help every Betharramite religious to be a diligent collaborator in creating safe environments for minors and vulnerable people.

embody this year's theme. Not in a naive, sanitised or disinterested way. If that were so, it's not worth the effort of carrying on. This is why sharing the same joy is of great value: because we experience the joy of knowing that the great love received from God is enough for us. This is why we wish to share that same love, which generates great joy, with our brothers and sisters, especially with those who feel their lives and faith most threatened. Go out to share the same joy. Which kind of joy? The joy of having encountered Jesus who changed our lives. The joy of knowing that Death does not have the last word. The joy of feeling like a community and as such, even if we don't think or believe in the same way, we are walking in the same direction. In fact, either we save ourselves together or no one is saved; we are determined to make our life a firm

and strong announcement against a certain culture in the world which rejects, excludes, oppresses and kills. We don't have the meaningless joy of mere conformists, bureaucrats, and Temple Traders, but the real joy of knowing who we are, what we want and where we are going. We do not live only for ourselves, but we put our lives at the service of others. We live true joy and we want to share it, so that the same joy is lived for the benefit of all, and so that no one is excluded from the celebration and from the encounter.

May we be encouraged to dream big and to share our joy. The joy that does not let us down, because it is the one that Jesus gives us. That Galilean, who gave his life for love, for you and for me.

It is a happy task to make others happy and fulfilled, through sharing the same joy! ●●●

as well as in group activities such as Eucharistic Youth, group of Charity, Teresa group of etc...I also had the opportunity to visit the families especially the poor and the sick. Also, I had opportunity to do some charity works like helping the family, giving gifts, especially during the Tet holidays and also during the retreat of the Lenten season. All these experiences helped me to understand the love of Christ and the value of service.

I was able to confirm my vocation to the Religious life and to respond to the call given by God. I'm grateful to God the almighty for his unconditional love. This mission

experience helped me to know who I am and to find a new self in my life through serving others.

Now I am reminded that as religious of Betharram I am called to love others as Christ loved us and be ever ready to serve others. Like our founder St. Michael saying Here I am.

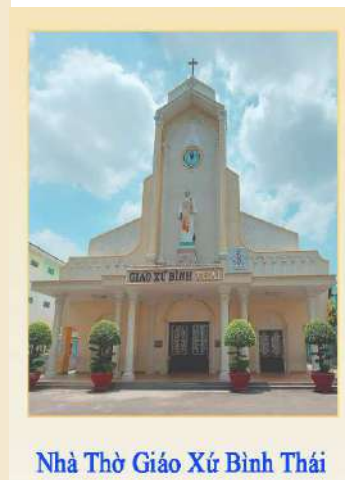
I feel joyful and happy to continue my mission in the Congregation and Find God in all things through the service of others.

I thank the Congregation and Parish priest and those who gave me an opportunity to do this mission experience and I thank you for all your prayers. ●●●



*Peter Hung
Van Do
&
John Baptist
Nguyen Van
Thang*

*are going to
make their first
profession in the
Congregation of
the Sacred Heart of
Jesus of Betharram
on April 26 in Binh
Thai parish in Ho
Chi Minh City.*



“Smile and sing”

Those of us who have been in the scouts or been explorers were perhaps taken by surprise when we read article 8 of the old law which commanded us to “smile and sing even in the midst of difficulties”. This is a lesson we have learned since childhood. This article contains an invitation to something much greater and much deeper than simple optimism. It is rather an invitation to become aware of a difficulty but at the same time not to give in to it, instead, to face it, to take charge of it and to realise it in our lives. We don't want to ignore it. Quite the opposite. And we do this by smiling and singing, that is, with joy.



This year, 2021, as a Betharramite family in all of its multiple expressions of life in the world we plan to take as our life motto “going out to share the same joy”. In this sense, the motto refers to the Law and takes it as a starting point.. We can also list many, many passages from the Gospel and from the NT that mention joy. I like the insistence of Paul of Tarsus to the Philippians: *“Finally, brothers, I wish you joy in the Lord. To write to you what I have already written before is no trouble to me and to you will be a protection. (...) Always be joyful,*

Fr. Sebastián
García sej
Community of
Barracas



then, in the Lord; I repeat, be joyful.. Let your good sense be obvious to everybody” (Phil. 3:1 & 4:4).

It is undoubtedly one of the founding texts that Saint Michael hands down to us in the preface to the Constitutions or “Manifesto”, since it is the task of the Betharramites to “work whole heartedly to bring the same happiness to others”.

It is not about trying to making a research project about the sources of the Congregation's theme for this year, but rather to live it out and try to contemplate it, in order to understand what it is about. Indeed if there is something which seems like a real challenge today, it is the realisation of joy. There are also those who may be offended. With COVID-19, we are experiencing one of humanity's worst pandemics which is wreaking so much suffering, which continues to take so many lives, which has caused so many victims around the world, so much pain, disease and distress, and is also a major cause of the growing gap between what it means to be rich

or poor. The pandemic has greatly contributed to an unjust system that makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, throwing millions of people, now considered as expendable, into marginalization and misery.

Many of us have also experienced the great difficulties created by having contacts “virtually”. While, on the one hand, this has safeguarded some connections, on the other hand, it has shown, for example in the field of education, the gap between “connected and disconnected”, the latter being the ones who have left the educational system. The pandemic is also social. The pandemic is also a school illness. Determined and valiant witnesses to all this were the teachers, at least in the sphere for which I am responsible. This was their experience: endless meetings via virtual platforms, teaching methods we had never been prepared for, making sure all pupils have this blessed connectivity, or even going to school to offer face-to-face lessons, putting their own health at risk and those of their families, or going to the neighborhood to see the current situation of boys and girls. Last year we experienced real challenges. And I emphasise the generosity with which the teachers have taken on their task. And I thank them. And I thank God for the gift of their vocation and their commitment.

Yet even in the midst of this pandemic we are invited to go out and share the same joy. Why?

Because in the face of adversity we smile and sing. Of course, we are not being moved by the desire to anaesthetise our conscience and to escape from reality, to take refuge in a false spirituality; if anything, the opposite is true. Wanting to live the Incarnation of Jesus as a model of life and template for inclusion puts us in an attitude of true joy. That joy is not just about being happy, having a good time, “relaxing”, but the ability to see the life that is in front of me with realistic eyes and consider everything as a gift. Joy is not generated by things that are given to us from the outside, but rather by deep convictions that are woven into the heart. Joy is revolutionary today. Because it challenges us and challenges the pandemic. We can then either surrender to the big conversation about how terrible the present time is and its impending existential catastrophe. Or we can take charge of what we are having to live through, take it on, get our hands dirty, get totally involved. Like Jesus, who became one of us and shares our humanity. In a pandemic above all, if in fact we want to find God, we must not look up at the sky, but rather we must immerse ourselves in the mud of history, in order to be able to contemplate the face of God in our brothers and sisters hit hard by so much injustice and so much suffering. There, in the heart of the world, is the Heart of Jesus.

In this way we will be able to