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A word from the superior general

Discretion, a necessary virtue for discerning the will of God

*“...Let us implore the Holy Spirit:
‘Give us a sense of what is right,’
and translate that sense into practice,
thus the face of the Community will change completely:
‘...and you will renew the face of the earth” [DS § 243]*

Dear Betharramites

The month of May, usually consecrated to our Father, **Saint Michael Garicoïts**, is enriched in 2022 with the closing of the year dedicated to his disciple and excellent collaborator: the **Venerable Father Auguste Etchecopar**.

These two *apostles of the Heart of Jesus* knew how to express with their whole lives, each in their own way, the beauty of the founding charism in all its dimensions. They were perhaps the most *discreet*, and therefore discerning, Betharramites we have ever known. In different but complementary times, they both shared the same desire to see the Congregation founded. They always sought to

be faithful to the divine inspiration of the charism, facing the many internal and external resistances they encountered along the way. The final discernment in the years that came after the Saint of Betharram will vindicate his original intuition. The Venerable Father Etchecopar will be *the bearer of the Divine Will* for the future Institute. During his government, a series of providential interventions will make possible the ecclesial confirmation of the nascent family, as a Congregation of Pontifical Right.

Forerunners in times of growth and expansion, both knew how to be attentive and available to God's call to invite the Betharramites of that time *to leave their land* to go on mission to remote places. They had to discern and choose these destinations well: in obedience to the bishops and the Pope, always praying before acting, listening to their collaborators; but, above all, thinking more about serving the People of God than affirming themselves. In this way they began to discern *the authentic Betharramite availability*, assuming challenges, overcoming obstacles and temptations -which are never lacking, even for the holiest- and discarding the options that were presented as "*apparent goods*", the result of haste, obstinacy or prodigality.

Discretion, -Saint Michael told us- "*Is a particularly necessary virtue for us who belong to a community whose origin, purpose and ministries are so sublime; to a community that came to be formed despite very poor material; What I maintain is that despite all the obstacles we put up and that we continue to put up in different ways, the Congregation finds itself in a very privileged position before God, the Church and herself.*" (DS § 243)

There were several paradigmatic moments in the early years of Betharram. One of them was the discernment of the work of America, during the life of Saint Michael, in 1856. Another was when Bishop Lacroix, shortly after Saint Michael died, wanted to give his own diocesan imprint to the work that the saint had founded, imposing once again the *St. Sulpician* constitutions that he had drafted in 1841. Later, Fr. Etchecopar and Sister Mary of Jesús Crucified -clad in holiness- would free the Society from that change unwanted by the Pastor of Ibarre. Discretion, finally, struck the right balance.

Saint Michael often said to his Betharramites: "Our nature and the devil always lead us to extremes. If they tell us: 'Don't take care of yourself so much', we ruin our health at the service of Satan... If they tell us: 'Take care of yourselves', we take care to the point of ridicule..." (DS § 242)

And speaking of the Congregation, he always invited them to be humble: "Without a doubt, what has already been done, what we all see, must arouse our admiration and gratitude; but, as far as each one of us is concerned: we should shrink from placing obstacles in the way of God's work through lack of discernment; afraid of suffering the same fate as the cedars of Lebanon that, after having aroused admiration, fell dragging the weakest to their own ruin".

Therefore, no one can boast of discernment: "Nothing should be more natural to us than the feeling of our shortcomings and our inability to acquire the spirit of discretion. In other fields, theological, political, philosophical, it is possible to see clearly; but the path of **discretion is a hidden, dark path, where it is easy to hit the rocks**. For this reason, the Church invites us to recognize at every moment that dependence, that incapacity that always asks for help for any work: That is what we ask: "**Grant us to taste what is right in the same Spirit.**" "**O God, put in me a pure heart and renew me from within with a firm spirit**" (Ps. 50, 12); "**Illuminate my eyes so that I do not fall asleep in death**" (Ps. 12,4); but we do it like children, without really knowing what we are asking for... Let us intelligently ask for that gift, the pleasure of that gift, the exercise of that gift! (additionally)... "**that discretion is extremely rare; it is missing everywhere: we have the habit of getting involved in other people's affairs, without the delicacy of discerning the inspirations of Jesus Christ, friend and spouse of our souls**" (DS § 243).

Betharramite brothers of the third millennium, today the Church also invites us to discern, in mutual listening to that Spirit who leads us prophetically to "*pluck up and tear down, to build and plant*" (cf. Jer 31:28). Therefore, I invite you to look at ourselves realistically. These are no longer times of expansion and growth. We are like a "little remnant" that can do anything with Christ, but that must

honestly ask itself: **Where and why are we? Where should we be? Where does God want us?** May be we have to *cast off and go*, leaving even places where we have served for years - to unfold our mission in a different community. A living community, that is a sign, that goes out with renewed ardour to meet those who suffer, are poor or are alone.

The synodal path that we want to follow is nothing more than a *great opening to listen to the Holy Spirit*, who blows where he wants. But to catch his hints, good dispositions are needed, and above all the virtue of *discretion*. Saint Michael wanted us to ask the Lord for it incessantly!

Thus what we discover in the preparatory meetings for the General Chapter will lead us through the ordinary (legitimate) paths to make fundamental decisions for the future of our religious family.

Let's go out together, since the weather is favourable! The future of all of us as Betharramites depends on it, in the same way that our good and venerable founder and his faithful collaborator understood it.

Fr. Gustavo Agín scj

Superior General





About the Rule of Life

Fr. Jean-Do Delgue scj

Since the profession of my perpetual vows in the Congregation, I happened, at least three times, to go for a spiritual retreat in a monastery, with only our Rule of Life. I organized my days according to the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises which suggest to have four times of prayer per day. For this, I elaborated a program, distributing the articles of the first seven chapters as a meditation subject. I reserved the evening for reading the last four chapters which are rather treating of administration and organization, but however as important, and so concrete to live in a religious community, specially to build it day after day with my religious brothers.

This meditation on the articles of the Rule of Life called me each time to memorize God's call in my life. The different articles of the Rule interrogated most deeply about my way to answer the Lord's call to the consecrated betharramite life.

They were leading me to verify how this call of God answered by the "yes" professed on the days of our commitments is a sacred history. There are no words, nothing but silence, to praise and give grace.

Each article of the Rule of Life offered me the chance of letting my heart be converted, since following Christ, at the heart of my human, religious and missionary life, knows its resistances, its difficulties, even its failures.

To live this experience in a retreat with the Rule of Life only is certainly a grace given by the Lord to renew ourselves so that we may say again : "Here I am, by love!".

This appropriating experience makes me pay attention to how I approach the Rule of Life daily, adapted to the moment, according to the needs, necessities or expectations:

An approach from time to time,

perhaps intermittent: after the initial training, the Rule of Life, we must acknowledge it, gathers some dust on a shelf of our study and is opened only on exceptional occurrences, such as the community meeting or a Chapter !

A juridic approach, to put forward or check the obligations to respect in order to be a "good religious"!

A nourishing approach: the Rule of Life does not have an arid or dry content, for it remains an inexhaustible source for our religious life. The more we take time for letting ourselves impregnated with the content of the articles, the more we (re)discover the deepness and inspiration it contains. It is rich, very rich, thanks to its biblical quotations, its extracts from the Magisterium of the Church and its texts of Saint Michael Garicoïts. It contains a dynamism which prevents us from marking time! It pushes us forward! It enables us to re-discover the Betharramite identity, since the articles are pervaded, upheld, by the charism our Founder left us. Our Rule of Life is a treasure we must use, to grow in giving our life following Christ chaste, poor and obedient.

At last, a spiritual approach: The Rule of Life, along our years of religious life, remains the

faithful expression of our religious consecration. It is indeed with the profession formula, inscribed in the heart of the Rule of Life (as by chance, this formula is found in the middle of the Rule of Life booklet!) that we commit ourselves for life in the Betharramite religious family, in front of the General Superior or his delegate.

So, yes, the Rule of Life is a compass in the heart of our consecration, as it comes to awaken in ourselves the gift of our lives, following Christ chaste, poor and obedient, in the Betharram family. *"Revive God's gratuitous gift, this gift which is in yourself since I imposed my hands on you".* (2 Tim 1,6). ■



Homily, Easter vigil in the holy night,

Vatican Basilica, Holy Saturday, 16 April 2022

[...] After seeing and hearing, the women ran to proclaim to the disciples the joy of the resurrection. They knew that the others might think they were mad; indeed, the Gospel says that the women's words "seemed to them an idle tale" (v. 11). Yet those women were not concerned for their reputation, for preserving their image; they did not contain their emotions or measure their words. Their hearts were enflamed only with the desire to convey the news, the proclamation: "The Lord is risen!".

How beautiful is a Church that can run this way through the streets of our world! Without fear, without schemes and stratagems, but solely with the desire to lead everyone to the joy of the Gospel. That is what we are called to do: to experience the risen Christ and to share the experience with others; to roll away the stone from the tomb where we may have enclosed the Lord, in order to spread his joy in the world. Let us make Jesus, the Living One, rise again from all those tombs in which we have sealed him. Let us set him free from the narrow cells in which we have so often imprisoned him. Let us awaken from our peaceful slumber and

let him disturb and inconvenience us. Let us bring him into our everyday lives: through gestures of peace in these days marked by the horrors of war, through acts of reconciliation amid broken relationships, acts of compassion towards those in need, acts of justice amid situations of inequality and of truth in the midst of lies. And above all, through works of love and fraternity.

Brothers and sisters our hope has a name: the name of Jesus. He entered the tomb of our sin; he descended to those depths where we feel most lost; he wove his way through the tangles of our fears, bore the weight of our burdens and from the dark abyss of death restored us to life and turned our mourning into joy. Let us celebrate Easter with Christ! He is alive! Today, too, he walks in our midst, changes us and sets us free. Thanks to him, evil has been robbed of its power; failure can no longer hold us back from starting anew; and death has become a passage to the stirrings of new life. For with Jesus, the Risen Lord, no night will last forever; and even in the darkest night, in that darkness, the morning star continues to shine. ■



Formation & Protection of vulnerable people

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Fr. Simone Panzeri scj

A fundamental dimension of formation in consecrated life is the growth and human fulfilment of the candidate. Training in the protection of the vulnerable is part of this. At first glance, you might think that this is a marginal area, one that needs to be known, but that many, at the end of the day, consider remote from their personal life experience, as if the subject only affected people who are "at risk" or sensitive to these issues.

In fact, on closer examination, this is not so. We need to get rid of the superficiality on these topics that makes us think we are "safe" from these kinds of serious situations, or that we are already experts in how to approach vulnerable people, or that makes us say that, in all of this, you just have to use a little more common sense.

To get rid of this superficiality, the protection of vulnerable people must



1.17 WORK TO DEEPEN THE GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH SITUATIONS OF ABUSE

[Cf. ORIENTATIONS & GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION 2022]

In the last General Chapter, the whole Congregation committed itself to the protection of minors and every vulnerable person.

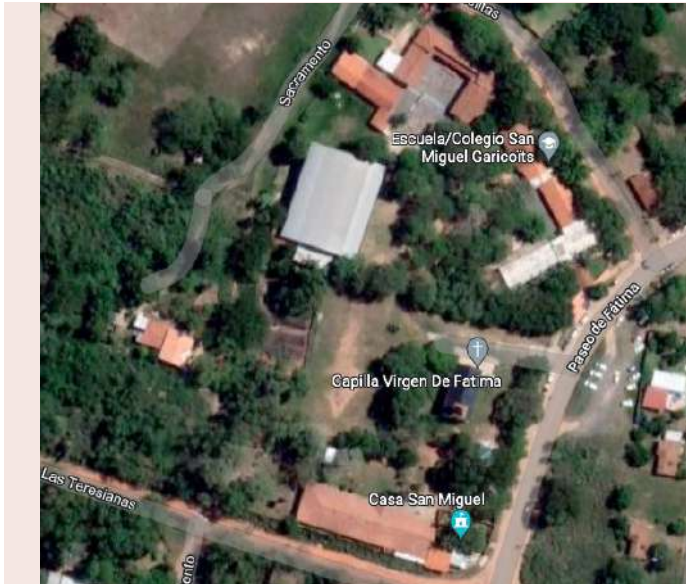
Since the Chapter, we worked to have our own document: Guidelines of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram for the protection of minors and vulnerable people facing situations of sexual abuse (19 March 2021). This document must be known and worked on in all the formation communities, from the first stage of formation onwards, so that all religious are well informed, have it clearly in mind and be committed to prevention and procedures in front of such a serious problem of the Church and of the society. »

be included in the training process by addressing the issue in a positive way and not just as an "alert" to what could happen in a serious way. It is necessary to place the subject within the framework of the development of the person's maturity, targeting two important aspects: the quality of the relationships, and the care and responsibility towards the people with whom we enter into relationships. The discourse on the protection of the vulnerable is grafted on to these two aspects of human formation. Indeed, it is sometimes assumed that those who enter a house of formation, especially if they are already adults or have a life experience behind them, have already attained a mature style of relationships, but this is not always the case. In the same way, we sometimes entrust this formation – on how to be responsible and take care of the people entrusted to us – to the pastoral experiences we have had. If these positive aspects are better taken into account during the training years and if they are combined with adequate knowledge in the field of protection of vulnerable people, they complement and enrich the necessary human growth of the religious in the future, so that he learns to live with more seriousness and maturity his relations with others, especially with the most fragile.

Another important aspect, which intersects the two preceding ones, is that of formation in a correct

understanding of pastoral care. Yes, this area is also about protecting the vulnerable and fragile. Care must be taken to form a style of pastoral care which does not become possessive towards people: one can easily fall into the trap of understanding care as the exercise of power over others, not only because of the role or ministry assumed, but sometimes because of a misconceived understanding of the profound meaning of pastoral care. It is not the exercise of power over the faithful entrusted to us, but it is foremost an exercise of listening and sharing. To be imbued with his knowledge and to make authoritarian use of the position as priest or religious are attitudes that do not lead to the care of the faithful, even less that of the most fragile and vulnerable.

Our formation in the protection of vulnerable people is therefore an integral part of the process of human growth and maturity, concerning right relationships with others, a mature balance between responsibility and tenderness that avoids falling into possessiveness and affective dependence and above all leaves to the other his space of freedom; so that our presence serves the development of those we meet. ■



...the community of
Puente Remanso (Paraguay)

“St Michael Garicoïts”
Listening House

Casa San Miguel Garicoïts (St. Michael Garicoïts House), wants to be known as a Listening Centre, in solidarity with the marginalised. It is located in a suburban sector of Barrio Remanso, in the City of Mariano Roque Alonso. It began as an extension of a project called PAPETRA (*Pastoral Care for the Prevention and Treatment of Misuse of Alcohol and Other Drugs*) of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Ciudad del Este, with Fr. Fulgencio

Ferreira scj.

The initial purpose of the Centre was to offer care to substance users and train volunteers in alliance with SENAD (National Anti-Drug Secretariat).

Since February 2018, it was decided that Casa San Miguel would have a more community-based approach, moving from individual intervention to a social-community one. Based on this new paradigm, the Centre began offering support,





guidance and spirituality services free of charge to people with limited resources, trusting that these spaces, generated through the different resources, would be a way of being a presence alongside the most vulnerable.

Since then, some Volunteers have been trained in Community Treatment, a method of working with people, groups, communities and networks who live in contexts of high vulnerability. This proposal was inspired by ECO-2 ¹.

This made it possible to apply the Community Treatment method in nearby neighbourhoods, particularly in Villa Bétharram², some other settlements, and the St Michael

Listening Centre itself.

'Settlement' means a set of dwellings, generally in a precarious situation that are grouped together and occupied spontaneously, with unlicensed tenure, with high rates of poverty, in conditions unsuitable for habitation or in degraded environmental areas.

The settlements are characterised by not having formal possession of property titles, or access to services or basic rights necessary for decent development.

The Casa San Miguel Centre's mission is to provide a space for prevention, support, guidance and listening, to men and women in situations of social deprivation due to lack of opportunity or exclusion. Its way of working is interdisciplinary and encourages Community.

Its first stage is to form a team and train volunteers and take time to gain a picture of the condition of the community, while strengthening the resources and spaces of the Casa San Miguel Listening Centre. Then

1) Developed by civil society organizations in Mexico and experienced in different countries, mainly Latin Americans, ECO² is a recognised intervention model with objectives of prevention, damage-reduction and treatment of situations of social deprivation, in particular, but not exclusively, those associated with use of psycho-active substances.

2) A few hundred meters from our community of Puente Remanso, "Villa Betharram" is an area located near the Paraguay River and thus baptized by families who settled there and built makeshift homes.



they will walk alongside, and gain insertion into, the Community and the local area as a way of solidarity, and spread the word about the Medical and Treatment Centres, in accordance with the specific needs of the interested parties.

Currently the forms of service are:

1- Active listening: as a method of inclusion and building a relationship

- a- Psychotherapeutic Listening: with psychology professionals, dedicated as clinical psychologists, to receiving and welcoming on a one-to-one basis the reality of those who come to the 'space'.
- b- Spiritual Listening: spaces of spirituality and sensitivity to the faith which each participant professes. Welcome them from a spiritual disposition that seeks a

space of transcendence.

- c- Spontaneous listening: which is the willingness to be present in the territory of daily life in which critical and developing situations happen that people, or groups, or the community itself experience.
- d- Mediation: make connections between agents in conflict, where the purpose is the flexibility of positions and the construction of mental spaces, in which the protagonists in conflict can meet.

2- Prevention spaces:

- a) Guitar, music, poetry
- b) Dance
- c) Crafts and paintings
- d) Education and Training

Workshops:

Important goals have been achieved in recent years. We are not trained or equipped for a specific treatment of drug addicts. However,

the active participation of several people from nearby neighbourhoods and settlements has been achieved. Even during the pandemic, the so-called “popular pots” were organised. Three cooking and Soya derivatives courses were taught, in collaboration with the National Government, and a community garden was created. Currently, about 300 litres of soya milk are still being produced and distributed to those in need. Women volunteers have offered to prepare bread, sweets and other derivatives of soya and sell them to those interested and, with this, create a solidarity fund for the continuity of the project.

On weekends the house is filled with children and teenagers for guitar, painting, dance, and craft classes. We plan to soon organise hairdressing, manicure, electrician

and other courses, in collaboration with the National Professional Training Service.

On April 28, Henri and Véronique, two French doctors, who volunteered to help in the field of health, joined our community. They will stay with us for three months.

In addition to its social engagement, the Religious Community, (comprising Bro. Víctor Torales, Bro. Sergio Leiva and Fathers Tobia Sosio and Crispín Villalba), also has responsibility of pastorally animating the Virgin de Fátima Chapel and the Colegio San Miguel Garicoïts.

From meeting to listening... we are called to bear witness to God's Mercy. ■



•\• Some news from the scj communities •/\•



» The second assembly of the Vicariate of **France-Spain** took place on Monday 25 April to reflect on the theme of General Chapter (second stage).

The meeting began with a long sharing based on the passage from the Gospel of Mark (Mark 8, 27-33). Each community presented its reflection and from the beginning, through attentive and available listening, all the religious made an effort to better understand the thoughts of everybody.

At the end of the day, it was decided to continue the reflection until June 20 on 3 points: 'Meeting with the laity "who drink from the same source"; "The vocations"; "Our presence in the foundation places of the Congregation"', with more details to come for the third stage (May-June).

» On Holy Thursday, the students of the Beau Rameau school (**Betharram**) gathered in the school chapel to celebrate Easter. Thanks to Father Reagan Vincent SCJ and two catechists, Anne-Marie and Marie-Arlette, the children attended a beautiful celebration, joyful and focused on life. Father Reagan was able to explain to the children this feast with the right words and some objects such as bells, a lamb and an egg. Then, with his guitar, he made



them dance and sing joyful Easter songs! No doubt the students will keep a wonderful memory of this celebration!

On the day after, on Good Friday, Fr Reegan led the Way of the Cross for the College students, followed by the adoration of the Cross in the chapel of the resurrection.

In the afternoon a group of faithful celebrated the rite of the Way of the Cross, climbing the Calvary hill, guided by Fr. Laurent Bacho SCJ and Br. Fulgence SCJ.

The Way of the Cross was followed by the celebration of Good Friday in the chapel of the Resurrection, with the reading of the passion and the veneration of the cross.

The celebration was presided over by Fr. Sylvain Dansou SCJ (in charge of the pastoral area).



» On 22, 23 and 24 April, the Religious Community on mission in **Nova Fátima**, Diocese of Serrinha (Brazil), welcomed the young Lucas de Araújo Oliveira, from the city of Conceição do Coité, who has already gone through a process of vocational discernment. With him the community also welcomed Joandson da Silva Jesus, from the city of Barrocas, a young lad who this year began his vocational discernment.

A few members of the community paid a visit to his family and then welcomed Joandson for a period of community experience.

It was an experience of sharing life and of mission, following Jesus' invitation "Come and see!"





» The new retreat center of the Vicariate of Thailand, built on a plot of land of the Congregation in **Chomthong** welcomed its first guests: our scholastics for their annual seven-day retreat.

The four so far completed lodges were blessed during a celebration on April 30 by Fr. Mongkhon, Fr. Kriangsak, Fr. Arun and Fr. Tidkham under a shining light and amidst lush vegetation.

The works do not stop here, but will continue for the construction of the chapel, a meeting room and a dining room.

» At the beginning of the month, in the chapel Our Lady of Fatima in **Puente Remanso** (Paraguay), Br. Sergio Leiva received the ministry of acolytate from the hands of the Regional Superior of the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar, Fr. Daniel González scj, in the presence of the Regional Vicar in Paraguay, Fr. Alberto Zaracho scj, members of the community and lay friends.



On May 7, 2022, in Ho Chi Minh City, Fr. Albert-Sa-at Prathansantiphong SCJ, delegated by the Superior General, received **the first vows of chastity, poverty, obedience in our Congregation** for two years by two Vietnamese brothers:

Fr Francis Xavier TRẦN VĂN Hồng
and
Fr. Peter LÊ NGỌC Sơn



The Superior General, with the consent of his Council gathered on 21 April, **admitted to postulancy the young Vietnamese** Joseph NGUYEN MINH The.



AGENDA:

The **canonical visit of the Superior General to the Vicariate of Thailand** is confirmed. The departure is scheduled for June 2 for a 4-week visit, which will include a short visit to our brethen in Vietnam.

The **next meeting of the General Council** will take place on 24 May.

Father Edward William Simpson scj

Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, 3 October 1929 - Olton, 13 April 2022 (England)

Father Edward Simpson went to his reward in heaven very peacefully on the Wednesday of Holy Week, from St. Bernards Care Home where he had been for the last four weeks, only 500 metres from The Friary where he had lived since 1980. He lived to see the 65th anniversary of his ordination the previous week, but gradually faded in strength until his body gave up. Members of the Friary community had taken it in turns to be by his bedside, and Fr. Austin was with him when he died. At 92 he was the oldest member of our England vicariate.

Born October 3rd 1929 in Bromsgrove Worcestershire, he attended Sacred Heart College Droitwich during World War Two, then worked in 1947 at the Austin car factory at Longbridge Birmingham, following in the footsteps of his engineer father. He entered National Service in the Royal Air Force for two years in 1948 as a Pay Clerk, and later joked that he was only man in the RAF who had never been on an aircraft.

He entered our novitiate in



North Wales in 1950 under Fr. Henry Bradley, where he subsequently followed his theology studies under Fr. Waddoups. In those days there was not much money around, so students like himself did all the house maintenance and repairs. His practical engineering skills became very useful there, and he installed a complete hot water system for the whole house in between studies. He was ordained by Bishop Bright in 1957 at Birmingham Oratory along with fellow student Tony Box (d.2011).

He spent the next two years in France, teaching English at our Apostolic school at Betharram,

and Fr.Benat Oyenhart remembers his valiant efforts to teach him English! He returned to England in 1959 to work in our Apostolic school at Sambourne near Redditch, and some of the pupils from those days still remember him with great fondness.

Academic study was never his forte, and he was always quite open about that, but he amassed quite a wide range of experiences and practical qualifications, for example in basketry, metal working, pottery and clay modelling, as well as motor mechanics, and electrical engineering. He installed a complete wiring system for stage lighting in the school hall at Sambourne. He was the only priest in the English Province to be a qualified bus driver, as well as a qualified athletics coach.

As the Apostolic school at Sambourne was gradually wound down, there was a need for people to work in our secondary school at Droitwich, and he was ear-marked to go in 1969 to St.Mary's, Strawberry Hill for teacher training. But at the last minute his superiors sent him to Droitwich as parish priest. He served there for 12 years, before being sent to Olton where he served as parish priest for a record 33 years.

The arrival of our community at Olton in 1980 was a slightly nervous time for our whole community as we were following in the footsteps of esteemed Capuchin Friars, some of whom were well known authors and TV personalities. But Fr.Ted's simple character soon won people over, and he served as a much loved parish priest for the next 33 years. One of the ways in which he engaged people at a simple level was to organise an annual parish pantomime which involved many people who were on the fringes of the church, and brought them into a quasi-communion.

He was always known in the parish as Father Ted, and it caused great amusement when in the 1990's a TV comedy series appeared about fictional Irish priests under the name 'Father Ted'. He never really warmed to this TV production, but it always brought a smile to people's faces when they met our real 'Father Ted' for the first time. In the TV series there was also a cook called Mrs.Doyle, so it caused even greater amusement when newcomers found that The Friary cook was also Mrs.Doyle!

People appreciated his simple manner and sense of humour, and though in the last few years of re-

tirement, his strength and vigour were very obviously failing due to chronic heart and kidney conditions, he was still happy to receive visits from people who remembered his service for their families in the previous decades. His ministry in Solihull Hospital and Marie Curie Hospice over three decades was especially appreciated.

One of the characteristics people will remember him for is simply his humility. He never sought the limelight, and was always content to let others shine. Ever obedient, he was always quick to obey those in charge, even if he viewed them as mistaken. Some put this down to his RAF experience but in reality it was his nature. As the 'elder statesman' of the Province he had to accustom himself to superiors who were younger than him for most of his life. Fr.O'Malley, Fr.Anton, Fr.Wilfred & Fr.Biju were just a few of these. They will all attest that he was a truly humble man. The gospel verses for his funeral on May 2nd were especially apt: *'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and*



Fr. Ted has been buried in Droitwich cemetery where other English brethren rest in peace.

of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children.' (Matthew 11.25) Father Ted would be very happy to be known simply as a child of God.

Fr. Austin Hughes scj



An evening conference on Fr. Auguste Etchecopar

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Fr. Philippe Hourcade scj

On Thursday 21 April 2022, the local community of the Miracoli in Rome organised a conference on the spiritual and historic figure of Fr Etchecopar. Thanks to the support of the Generalate, the Postulator of the Cause, Don Ettore Capra, was also in attendance.

Fr Ercole Ceriani, our genial MC for the evening, was in charge of ensuring the continuity and the presentations given by the various different participants. First it was the turn of our Superior General to speak. He gave us a succinct yet exhaustive presentation of the human figure of our 3rd Superior General. First, he stressed his deep family roots and the essential traits of his personality which already shone some light on the ways in which he dealt with matters arising when head of our religious family. In him, this was the source of the radiant light shining from his face.

Then it was the turn of the Postulator of the Cause to explain

what stage we had got to in the present process. Emphasising what had already been done in the period between the two world wars, he then explained the need for a relaunch, on the basis of the new criteria now required by Rome: venerability being assured, it was now a matter of opening an enquiry into his writings and knowledge of the historical facts. This was but a duty of the grateful children we are, in recognition of this elder who did so much for us.

Mr Roberto Beretta then talked to us about a few historical leads which demonstrate the interest Fr Etchecopar showed in the life of the religious family of Betharram, but not just in that family alone. His rootedness was in a genuine "sense of family", both human and religious. The extent of Mr Beretta's knowledge of Fr Etchecopar's story enabled us to get the full measure and complexity of what he had to face up to, and highlighted in particular his human

and spiritual qualities and his deep concern for the religious life.

Lastly, Fr Philippe Hourcade revisited certain human dimensions of our second founder's life in order to underline its immense originality: such a figure can be understood only from examining what actually evolved and developed in his heart through the Holy Spirit. The profound awareness which led this man to live out the realities of his faith, his desire to see heaven, was the slow but sure driver of his transfiguration which made of him a man of transcending light.

Afterwards all those present enjoyed the buffet prepared by the local community and the Generalate. Thank you to all the behind-the-scenes workers including Br Claudio, who set out the room and Betty, the house cook!

It goes without saying that one such evening does not allow one to uncover every aspect of such a personality. The wealth of both his existence and his collective adventure is worthy of further in-depth research, not only historical, but also practical in terms of the Congregation. This is certainly a challenge which such an evening



allows us to begin to take up. In these times where following rediscovery of the charism, our religious family is seeking its model of life, Fr Etchecopar is the living proof of a life that is both truly original yet completely faithful to what was given us by the founder! This is how tradition grows and continues. Fr Etchecopar was deeply convinced that the sanctity alone of the family members could be excellent proof of the sanctity of its root, Fr Garicoits. May it be the same for Fr Etchecopar, true disciple and master of the life spiritual! ■

Supplement of May

The spirit of Father Garicoits, the founder

| R.Fr. Gaspar Fernández Pérez scj

Pdf available on www.betharram.net

THE IMPRINT OF P. ETCHECOPAR FOR THE BETHARRAMITE FAMILY in 10 points

- 1 • Father Etchecopar is the second founder of Betharram.
- 2 • The family spirit. It helps us to be born and to grow in unity: "like the wheat that sprouts in fertile soil".
- 3 • The vocational discernment of Fr. Auguste Etchecopar model of other discernments.
- 4 • Father Etchecopar finds a treasure in Bétharram: simplicity, poverty, obedience, joy of serving. He took care of the nascent religious life inherited from St Michael Garicoits.
- 5 • The Charism : it comes from Saint Michael to us through Father Etchecopar and other companions. He is the true mediator for the formation of the future Betharramites.
- 6 • The difficult approval of the Rule of Betharram. The providential encounter with the saints and friends of the time... Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified, other benefactors...
- 7 • The foundation of the Bethlehem community. A real struggle that, with the approval of the Pope, will become peace and hope for the future.
- 8 • Fr. Etchecopar and the cause of beatification of Fr. Garicoits. His great commitment of gratitude, together with the definitive consolidation of the Congregation.
- 9 • Fr. Etchecopar visits the communities of America. The contact with the Betharramites oversea. The paternal gesture. The closeness.
- 10 • Fr. Etchecopar in the mother house of Betharram. The presence, for many years. The guaranteed continuity of holiness.

Betharram, 4 June 1863,

21 days after the death of Fr. Michel Garicoïts, the then 33-year-old Father Etchecopar, wrote to Father Henri Ramière ¹...

**He
was
a saint**



Oh ! yes, he was indeed a saint; we never saw him trying to find himself, but we always saw him engaged in seeking the will of God, and in accomplishing it. Oh! yes, he was a saint adorned with all the Christian, priestly and apostolic virtues. It was enough to see him to respect and love religion; he was a model priest, an admirable copy of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Did not the Lord himself wish to bear witness to the holiness of Mr. Garicoits, by calling him to Himself on the very day of the Ascension, at three o'clock in the morning, the hour at which this diligent worker started the day...?

HAPPY 14 MAY!

¹) Editor of the "Messager du Sacré-Cœur"



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