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Betharramite Obedience: willing to walk together... and to walk barefoot

*"He humbled himself to submit to death, even death on a Cross."
(Phil 2.8)*

Dear Betharramites,

When I decided to talk to you about Betharramite obedience, I felt that it is like touching the most essential fibre of our religious being. Here we must walk barefoot, because we are treading on 'sacred ground'. But this was the dream of Saint Michael for us, his 'mobile camp', so also for the laity who drink from the same source.

It is a long-awaited and telling dream, which should not be forgotten by his children, and it deserves to be a dream come true. I cite three of his thoughts:

(i) *"I wish we could bring together a society of priests who had as their pattern the very pattern of the Heart of Jesus, the Eternal Priest, the servant of the heavenly*

Father: **absolute surrender and obedience, perfect simplicity, unalterable meekness.** Those priests would be a true **flying camp** of chosen soldiers, **ready at the first sign of their leaders, to go anywhere they were called**, even and above all to the most difficult ministries and those that others do not want" (DS § 6).

(ii) Regarding the vow of obedience:

"In effect, by this vow, we commit ourselves to obey the superior when he sends us and intimates his instructions. But **isn't it our own experience that the superior almost never 'commands'?** **How many times, on the contrary, does he advise, prompt, or hint at his intention?** And then there begins a natural commitment to anticipate him, to arouse even in his heart and spirit, the joy it will give him to see it carried out." (DS § 201)

(iii) And he proposes a virtuous style: "do it out of love":

"In this way, the vow of obedience is an easy burden to bear; but the virtue of obedience **requires a filial abandonment, continuous self-sacrifice from the servant, from the son who loves his father more than everything else.** The vow is like a reflex we adopt, to always be subject to the virtue of obedience; it brings our conscience closer to duty; it is a help that keeps our eyes open to those duties..." (DS § 201)

In his struggle to found a religious congregation in Betharram, the questions of poverty and chastity took on different profiles that were refined over time; but *religious obedience* (initially very much relating to the Bishop and then later to the Superior) was considered fundamental from the beginning of our congregation. A Betharramite is obedient or he is not a Betharramite!

Looking back, our response, as inheritors of this charism, was sometimes heroic; sometimes doubtful, but in the end generous. A few others were like the son in the gospel: "Yes, father, I will go to the vineyard", but later ... said "no" (Matt 21.30). "Here I am and here I stay!"

In fact, when obedience is lacking in Betharram, "everything" is missing and vice versa. The high ideal of Saint Michael implies: "**Always obey, without reservation, without delay, without turning back, and out of love more than for any other reason.**" This helps grow in us with God's help a real virtue and not simply a nominal lukewarm obedience.

In a context in which personal projects tend to be overvalued, where free thinking and acting without restrictions are unconditionally praised, and where it is so difficult to adhere to common paths that require renunciation and self-determination, some religious live this vow as an experience of self-liberation, and others, in an arduous and painful way.

The Church invites us to set out on a synodal journey, listening to one another, to dialogue and discern together. But it seems that we are reluctant to walk that path barefoot, faithful to our charism. It could be that we have to remove *our buckled shoes* before setting out...

The Holy Spirit is habitually referenced through what we term "mediators": The Word, the Rule of Life, those in charge or superiors, the community, the poor and all those that the Lord placed at our side for the service of authority. In order to obey, one must create spaces of dialogue, listen to our brothers, to everyone, especially the smallest. Finally, it will be necessary to outline a common course that is faithful to our identity, vocation and mission.

Walking in obedience is like walking wounded, counter to a tendency to manage life as we please. Walking barefoot helps us remember that, in a religious person, the tendency to dictate and plan one's life with indiscreet autonomy always turns out to be a seduction of Satan! We have put our lives at the service of the Kingdom, at the service of the "mission of Christ" because we have discovered that it is worth obeying him. We have *known the Love that God has for us*, manifested in the obedience of Jesus to the Father.

The vow of obedience is rooted in a deep disposition of the heart: that Jesus and his Kingdom are the cause and origin of our availability, of our walking, of our being agile and vigilant (*idoneus, expeditus, expositus* - fitting, ready & visible) to live in gospel freedom.

The proclamation is well known: the Betharramite says "*Here I am*", *at all times and in the little things of life*... But I confess that it always reminds me of Peter's promises to Jesus at the last supper... because later, "*when the cock crows*..." But true Betharramites have "*Here I am*" engraved in their hearts more than on their lips, and they tend to work hard, without making a noise or showing off, since *love is more in deeds than in words*. (St. Ignatius)

When there is no obedience, the first one who falls into a crisis is the superior (St Michael knows something about it...), and this occurs

because the constitutions (the Rule of Life) are relativised, and the way of proceeding according to them is denied.

If there have been in the history of Betharram certain abuses of power that today do not help people to trust openly, then *this is a call to heal one another with mercy and fidelity*. In this way, we will prevent tensions and childishness from continuing to occur by forgetting that we are all brothers in the common search for God's will. We must recall that by obeying, we all have the mission of "*being a living memory of the charism*" (cf. VC 16). This implies eradicating all ideologies and all clerical paternalism.

The vow of obedience, lived prophetically, will always lead us to "leave our land", even without knowing where we are being led. He invites us to greet the city from afar "*whose architect and builder is God*" (Hebrews 11) and head towards the existential peripheries.

Finally, I thank the laity who always help us when they demand coherence in life. They invite us not to stray from our pathway, so we allow ourselves to be challenged each time, as Betharramites, we are called by our superiors to genuinely respond with an "*Ecce Venio*" to the dream of Saint Michael and Fr. Etchecopar, of walking barefoot.

Some questions to share:

- 1) Has it ever been difficult for you to accept obedience? What was the reason?

- 2) What response would you give to your superiors today, given the proposal for a change of community?

Fr. Gustavo Agín scj
Superior General



Message for Lent 2023 • *Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey*

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 January, Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul

[...]

The Lenten journey of penance and the journey of the Synod alike have as their goal a transfiguration, both personal and ecclesial. A transformation that, in both cases, has its model in the Transfiguration of Jesus and is achieved by the grace of his paschal mystery. So that this transfiguration may become a reality in us this year, I would like to propose two “paths” to follow in order to ascend the mountain together with Jesus and, with him, to attain the goal.

The first path has to do with the command that God the Father addresses to the disciples on Mount Tabor as they contemplate Jesus transfigured. The voice from the cloud says: “Listen to him” (Mt 17:5). The first proposal, then, is very clear: we need to listen to Jesus. Lent is a time of grace to the extent that we listen to him as he speaks to us. And how does he speak to us? First, in the word of God, which the Church offers us in the liturgy. May that word not fall on deaf ears; if we cannot

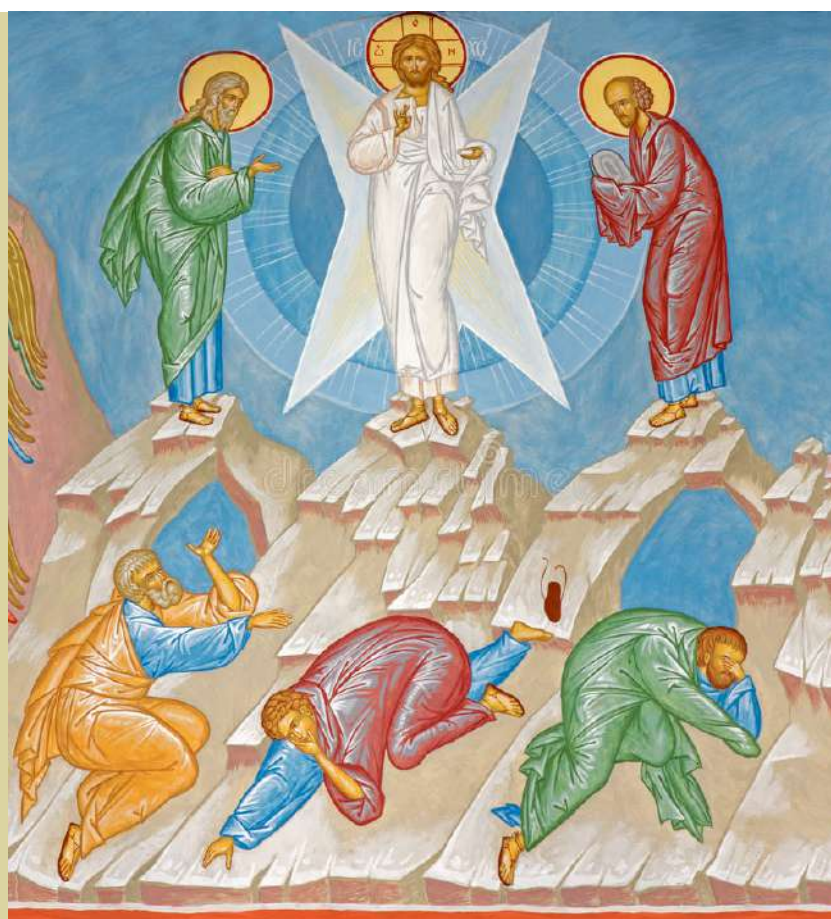
always attend Mass, let us study its daily biblical readings, even with the help of the internet. In addition to the Scriptures, the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need. Let me say something else, which is quite important for the synodal process: listening to Christ often takes place in listening to our brothers and sisters in the Church. Such mutual listening in some phases is the primary goal, but it remains always indispensable in the method and style of a synodal Church.

On hearing the Father’s voice, the disciples “*fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and do not be afraid.’ And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone*” (Mt 17:6-8). Here is the second proposal for this Lent: do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles,

its hardships and contradictions. The light that Jesus shows the disciples is an anticipation of Easter glory, and that must be the goal of our own journey, as we follow “him alone”. Lent leads to Easter: the “retreat” is not an end in itself, but a means of preparing us to experience the Lord’s passion and cross with faith, hope and love, and thus to arrive at the resurrection. Also on the synodal journey, when God gives us the grace of certain powerful experiences of communion, we should not imagine that we have arrived – for there too, the Lord repeats to us: “Rise, and do not be afraid”. Let us go down, then, to the plain, and may the grace we have experienced strengthen us

to be “artisans of synodality” in the ordinary life of our communities.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Holy Spirit inspire and sustain us this Lent in our ascent with Jesus, so that we may experience his divine splendour and thus, confirmed in faith, persevere in our journey together with him, glory of his people and light of the nations. ■





Meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the 2023 General Chapter in Chiang Mai

In July last year, our Superior General, Fr Gustavo Agín scj, convened the 28th General Chapter, to be held in Thailand from 9th to 29th June 2023.

In a spirit of synodality, the choice was made at that time to *«wait and see what emerged from the various different realities, so as to identify a theme that might*

best interpret and encapsulate what arose from our mutual listening». This was one of the principal tasks of the Council of the Congregation, which met as a Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter, in the Generalate in Rome from 20th to 25th February.

THEME CHOSEN:

« BE OPENED [Ephphatha!], ARISE, LET US WALK TOGETHER »

We were unable to meet face-to-face for three years but were able to have several virtual meetings, to share our desires and the sorrows we had to endure during this period. Joys and sufferings told the story of life of the Congregation of Betharram, indeed now somewhat fewer in number, but younger and more inspired by our dreams.

Over the five days dedicated

to the 2023 Rome Council of the Congregation, we lived a profoundly moving experience: we prayed; we meditated (led by Fr Nava, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Consecrated Life); we gave thanks to God in our celebrations; we shared the contributions received from all Betharramites the world over (motions put forward by the assemblies and regional chapters); we practised

XXVIII General Chapter

**"Be opened! Get up!
Let's walk together!"**

Chiang Mai 9 - 29 June 2023



listening (between leaders); we were deeply respectful of one another in our diversity (Betharram, the polychrome, the multicultural); but basically, we rediscovered what it is that unites us as brothers in the same Congregation: the legacy which inspired St Michael Garicoits and Fr Etchecopar, and which the Heart of Jesus conceived and formed.

The good news is that we avoided fruitless discussions and the kind of «accountability» theories which lead only to a pile of additional paperwork, which more often than not is met with indifference. Quite the reverse, we showed ourselves as we truly are and allowed the Spirit to speak: desirous of the Living Christ, of a better Church, less deaf, less dumb, no longer paralysed.

On Ash Wednesday, the ashes reminded us of what we are made and yet we continue to dream, full of hope, in spite of everything.

Who opened our ears and loosened our tongue? Ephphatha! (Mk 7: 31-37)

I believe it was Jesus himself who took us aside, brought us together and made us understand that, despite our current shortcomings, He loves us unconditionally. He is capable of bringing about a transformation of our lives consecrated by baptism, given freely in religious profession. He is capable of making us well, and of incorporating us into a New Betharram at the service of God's People.

And now... Do we want to be made well? (Jn 5:1-16)

If the answer is "Yes!", it will be important to allow ourselves to be cured of everything that paralyses-, distracts-, isolates- or causes us to miss the opportunity of experiencing His being close by our side. Not only do we need

to change, but also *transform ourselves* by allowing the Spirit to lead us to the waters of life, that flow and renew our identity as consecrated men. We have to spring up in one bound, pick up our stretcher and walk, barefoot, along the roads to the Kingdom, among the poor and the marginalised in the new peripheries, to form a single Community on a mission, a sign of the love that God has for all the Betharramites.

We are not alone, we are still alive, the Master shows us the way!

After two difficult years, we have, in 2023, decided to walk together, *journeying* with the People of God towards the Promised Land, which sometimes seems just out of sight, just over the horizon, but which is quite certainly there, in the place dreamed of by God. Faith is lighting our way! Come on, Betharramites, be open to life, get up and walk!

From the very first steps, we will soon realise that the initial route is not easy, but do not let us be discouraged for all that. Together with the Regional Superiors, we recognise the difficult circumstances in which we live as a Church, in a society that is post-secular and mostly



indifferent. Together we have chosen not to stop dreaming but, of necessity accepting reality, to take on the work of creating a missionary, fraternal, praying family.

We are conscious of there still being a lot of hope in the “here and now” Betharram. We assert that our dreams will become

reality if we are capable of growing, in a spirit of co-responsibility, and renewing our conversion to the Gospel, while remaining faithful to the received charism.

For the Chiang Mai 2023 General Chapter, we have proposed that we share: without allowing ourselves to be driven by voluntarism or ideological opportunism, but through a sincere re-reading of God’s signs in the «here and now» of Betharram. United, open, upstanding and on our way!

By walking together, after genuine discernment, no longer will the mission of the Betharram community be the result of the sum of individual projects, but rather a transforming synodal experience, which will enrich environments and structures since it stems from the Holy Spirit who sends us out as witnesses to the Kingdom.

P. Gustavo Agín scj
Superior General

List of the 34 members of

1	Members of right	Fr. Gustavo Agín	Superior General
2		Fr. Jean-Dominique Delgue	General Vicar
3		Fr. Graziano Sala	General Bursar
4		Fr. Stervin Selvadass	General Councillor
5		Fr. Tobia Sosio	General Councillor
6		Fr. Jean-Luc Morin	Superior Regional
7		Fr. Daniel González	Superior Regional
8		Fr. Enrico Frigerio	Superior Regional
9	Elected members	Fr. Laurent Bacho	France-Spain
10		Br. Emile Garat	France-Spain
11		Fr. Sylvain Dansou Hounkpatin	France-Spain
12		Fr. Ercole Ceriani	Italy
13		Fr. Mario Longoni	Italy
14		Fr. Simone Panzeri	Italy
15		Fr. Piero Trameri	Italy
16		Fr. Jean-Paul Kissi Ayo	Côte d'Ivoire
17		Fr. Vincent de Paul Worou Dimon	Côte d'Ivoire

Saint Michael Garicoits Region

the 2023 General Chapter

18	Elected members	Fr. Pietro Felet	Holy Land
19		Fr. Tiziano Pozzi	Central Africa
20		Fr. Juan Pablo García Martínez	Argentina-Uruguay
21		Fr. Leandro Narduzzo	Argentina-Uruguay
22		Fr. Raúl Villalba Maylín	Paraguay
23		Fr. Alberto Zaracho	Paraguay
24		Fr. Davi Lara Da Silva	Brazil
25		Fr. Paulo Cesar Pinto	Brazil
26	Elected members	Fr. Wilfred Pereppadan	England
27		Fr. Austin Hughes	England
28		Fr. Mongkhon Charoentham	Thailand
29		Fr. John Chan Kunu	Thailand
30		Fr. Luke Kriangsak Kitsakunwong	Thailand
31		Fr. Arul Gnana Prakash	India
32		Fr. Enakius Charles	India
33		Fr. Vipin Chirammel	India
34	Invited member	Fr. Albert-Sa-at Prathansantiphong	Vietnam

Each member has been called to the General Chapter individually by letter from the Superior General (cf. RL. no. 194).

As in the previous General Chapter, **Fr. Angelo Recalcati scj** gave his availability to be part of the interpreters' team.



The Vicariate of Thailand today

|

Fr. Chan John Kunu scj
Regional Vicar

After a look back at the origins of Betharram's presence in Thailand, Fr. Chan Kunu, Regional Vicar, focuses in this issue on the life of the Vicariate, 72 years after the arrival of our first missionaries.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the
Lord." (Is 55:8)*

1. Embracing to mission

The Betharramites played a fundamental role for the birth and the formation of the church in the north of the country, with the institution of missionary stations, the foundation of churches, chapels, the construction of the Cathedral of Chiang Mai, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the formation of seminarians. It would be impossible to describe in a few short sentences the immense work that has been done by Betharramites for the Church

in northern Thailand. Since then they have been serving tirelessly for the evangelization among the Thai, Karen, Lawa and Akha.

2. Starting Mission of Formation

After collaborating and building up the local Church for 33 years - God has a sense of humour - in 1984 the missionaries started welcoming young men willing to experience the Betharram life style and to drink from the same source of Betharram at Maesarieng district, without any certainty for the future. Fr. Mirco (Superior of Thailand) and Fr. Pierre Grech (Superior General) were instrumental in carrying out this project. On 20th January 1987 the Ban Betharram Sampran Seminary was officially inaugurated as the first formation house by Emeritus Card. Michael Michai Kitbunchu.

In these recent years the translation of the Rule of life into our language is

a further step in the right direction to make our spirituality more and more part of our culture.

3. The Thai flying camp

Counting from those in final vows, we are blessed with 27 religious; the average age is 47.

Age 30-40 = 12 religious

Age 41-50 = 8 religious

Age 51-60 = 4 religious

Age 80-90 = 3 religious

We have 26 religious priests (3 Italians, 22 Thais and 1 Indian) and 2 deacons. One scholastic made the final profession on 27th January 2023; 3 scholastics are doing their Theology in Lux Mundi college; one scholastic is taking care of Fr. Luzzi in Chiangmai. We have 5 philosophy students. 2 Vietnamese brothers, one in theology and one in philosophy.

As part of the England vicariate,

Fr. David Pitak and Fr. Dominic Athit are doing their ministry in England.

From the vicariate of India we have recently welcomed Fr. Michael Bistis who is collaborating in the Sampran community of formation.

To respond to the call of the General Council, in 2012 we welcomed in our vicariate some young Vietnamese brothers in formation and in 2015 the Superior General sent Fr. Albert Sa-at in mission to Vietnam.

4. Communities in Mission

The vicariate has 13 residences where we serve different villages, 3 mission centers forming 6 communities.

Since the residences are far apart from one another, each community draws up the community project in order to keep the spirit of community life under the animation of the superior and each community holds



a meeting at least once a month. The community project focuses on spending time in prayer, sharing of experiences, celebration, sports and relaxation. We acknowledge that we still need time to be more aware of living this spirit in actions.

5. Vicariate meetings

The religious of the vicariate are happy to continue the tradition of the missionaries to organize the meeting of the religious (starting from the diaconate) in Ban Betharram Chiang Mai, our mother house, once in two months. When they come to Chiang Mai, the religious attend the meeting organised by the diocese and the one organised by the vicariate. All the members attend regularly the meetings. We spend time in prayers, sharing our experience, celebrating our feasts and relaxing together. We also had online meetings at least twice during the pandemic.

6. Sharing the resources

We keep the allowances we receive from both dioceses of Chiangmai and Chiangrai in the vicariate bank account under the responsibility of the vicariate bursar who manages all the necessary expenses such as the expenditure for the different meetings, care for the elderly, Feasts of the Congregation, health care and health insurance, formation of Ban Betharram and Ban Betharram

Payao, contribution to humanitarian needs, etc.

We share the goods (mainly rice and vegetables) we receive from different parishes to support different centers, our mother house of Ban Betharram (Chiangmai) and the formation houses.

We are grateful to the congregation who pays the fees for our brothers studying at Lux Mundi college and St. Joseph college. We are grateful to the bishop conference who helps us financially to cover the expenses of Lux Mundi. We are also grateful to our benefactors and our well wishers who support us in different ways.

We remain grateful to God and to His Providence for all the missionaries who spent their life in different missions throughout these past 70 years. We are happy and ready to continue the same mission inspired by the *Here I am* for the glory of God, wherever we are call to serve. ■



... our presence in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

|
Fr. Shamon Devasia Valiyaveetil scj

Vietnam is a small and beautiful country with different cultures and religions; the communist party of Vietnam is leading the Vietnamese people. Vietnam has many traditions and values in common with other Asian Countries, mostly China, Korea and Japan: arts, cuisine, literature, teachings of Confucianism, lunar year etc.

Vietnam is known for being a popular tourist destination because of its beautiful beaches, its culture, amazing food (like pho [noodles]), friendly people, coffee, floating markets etc.

Although the country is blessed with many cultures and religions, it is a great challenge for the missionaries. Though we face challenges and difficulties in our mission journey, however we could experience the mighty providence of GOD in our journey. As the book of prophet Jeremiah 1:8 says "Do not be afraid of anyone, because I am with you

to protect you, says the Lord. We completely trust in the Lord as Psalm 91:10-11 says "No harm will come upon you no disaster will draw near your home. For he will command his angels to guard you in all your ways".

Our community

'How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity' (Psalm 133:1)

Our community in Vietnam is blessed with six members. Two fathers, Fr. Sa-at and myself, three professed brothers - Bro. John Baptist Nguyen Van Thang, Bro. Francis Xavier Tran Van Hong (Scholastics), Bro. Peter Le Ngoc Son (college student) and Bro. Peter Le Van Phung (Postulant). It is a beautiful and dynamic community. We grow together with the Betharramite spirituality, with lots of enthusiasm, loving and caring, sharing and nurturing, giving and receiving. As rule of life n. 94 says: "each of our religious communities is the sign of



Jesus Christ's love, bringing together all men in unity of the same love". That is why we are encouraged when our fathers visit our community.

After Covid, the visit of our superior general and Fr. Enrico and more recently the visit of Fr. Graziano Sala remind us that we are one family, called to work together with the charism of Betharram, to fulfil the desire of our founder St. Michael Garicoits, as our Rule of life Number 4 says, *"in a community life in which we manifest the sentiments of charity, humility, gentleness, obedience, devotedness contained in that first act of the sacred heart"*.

Our mission

"Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (mark 16:15)

Vietnam has the fifth largest Catholic population in Asia, after the Philippines, India, China and Indonesia. There are about 7 million Catholics in Vietnam, representing

7.0% of the total population. There are many religious congregations in Vietnam including local congregations as well. The main mission possible to do in Vietnam is to find vocations. The country is not open for the missionaries to do the mission like other countries; we cannot do mission work like schools, hospitals and other training centers. The main mission that is possible and we can do is that of vocation promotion, find out real vocations and train them, teach them about the religious life, train them to grow in the immense and deeper love of Christ. Only the local congregations are permitted to run kindergarden, old age homes and orphanages. We go for vocation promotion to different parishes mainly in north of Vietnam as our main mission in Vietnam is to take vocation and train them as good religious, as rule of life No 15 says *"The aim of our society is not so much to preach, hear confessions*

or teach, etc., as to form men well-disposed to perform these ministers worthily when the bishop or leader of the society ask them. The object of society is then to train and form these ministers so perfectly that at the first signal of the will of their bishop or superior they can be worthily chosen to work for the salvation of souls". Adding to this, during the summer holidays we send our brothers to different parishes for ministry and vocation promotion. Apart from that we render our services to the parish according to the needs of the parish priest. The community join with the Parish for important events, like Christmas, Easter, Lunar new year and so on. We also teach catechism and moral values to the benefactors' children and we organise summer camps for them.

Our Collaboration With Benefactors

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. (Acts 4:32)

We thank the Lord for blessing our community with benefactors. They are a great support for us in all the ways. I admire the generosity and the simplicity of our benefactors. Although they are not very rich but they generously help us with their means. They help many religious communities in Vietnam too. We also collaborate with them for the

charity work, like giving food to the poor, orphans, and visiting the old age homes etc. We also visit the families of our benefactors, especially during Christmas, singing carols and greeting and announcing the birth of Christ. We also visit them in the month of October, praying the rosary and sharing with them the story of our lady of Betharram.

This is the small sharing of the Betharramite mission in Vietnam. Let us all pray that the Almighty God may bless all of us. May our Mother of Betharram and our founder St. Michael Garicoits intercede for us. Let us be united in prayer. By prayer, we renew each day the sense of our apostolic vocation uniting us evermore perfectly to Christ (Rule of life No 88). ■

■ THE «PROPER» OF BETHARRAM IN SPANISH IS APPROVED

During his term as vicar general, Fr. Enrico Frigerio scj initiated an update of the Proper of Betharram with the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Various Episcopal Conferences have reviewed the liturgical translations of the Bible in their own language, just as they have for the Proper of the Mass. This means that the texts of the Proper of Bétharram (daily liturgy, the mass and lectionary) must correspond with the published work of the episcopal conferences.

In 2016, after much coming and going between the General House and the Vatican Congregation (called the Dicastery today), Father Enrico finally obtained the approval of the Proper of Bétharram in the Italian language, which in fact became the reference text for the other translations.

When I arrived in Rome, Fr. Enrico had already submitted the Proper of Bétharram in Spanish. Was it because of the pandemic or because of other factors...? Perhaps because of the Holy See's secret relationship with time? The fact is that the Proper of Bétharram in Spanish took five years to be approved. Blessed be patience!

The linguistic choice for the liturgical translation of the Bible became the Spanish of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina, since the majority of the Hispanic religious of our Congregation of Bétharram are in Latin America.

The Spanish version of the Proper, consisting of three elements, will be sent in pdf format to the Spanish-speaking communities by the end of the month.

While receiving the approval of this Proper in Spanish at the end of January 2023, I was able to submit a first version of the Proper of Bétharram in French (Father Beñat Oyhénart scj contributed to this). Hopefully we won't wait five years to get the approval.... After that we will submit the Proper in English, Portuguese, etc.

Liturgy has an important place in our community lives. It connects us and unites us every day for the glory of God and the salvation of men.

Fr. Jean-Dominique Delgue scj
Vicar General and Procurator General

■ On January 25, 2023, the Holy Father granted the dispensation from the priestly obligations to **Guido García (Argentina)**.

Meeting of the General Council on February 2023 :

■ The Superior General with the advice of his Council **approved the Acts of the Regional Chapter of the Saint Mary of Jesus Crucified Region** (RL. 206/d).

■ With the consent of his Council, he **presents the deacons of the SMJC Region Peter Phichet Wijunwayu and Mathew Phanupan Shaiconsrjinda** (Vicariate of Thailand) and the **deacons Avinash Sagayaraj and Packiaraj Kurush Michael** (Vicariate of India) **to priesthood** (RL. 205/h).

■ With the consent of his Council, he **admitted our Vietnamese Brother Peter Do Van Hung to the renewal of vows for two years** (RL. 245).

In the Peace of the Lord



India | On February 17, **Mrs Lourdu Mary**, 76, mother of Fr George Antony Anthonyswamy SCJ, of the community of Bangalore, Residence of St Lawrence, Bidar (Vicariate of India) has died. We convey our condolences to Fr George Antony SCJ, and we promise to keep him, his dear mother, and his family members in our prayer.

Central Africa | On March 3rd, **Marie Séverine Salle**, sister of Br Hubert Clément Salle SCJ of the interregional novitiate "Saint Joseph" of Bethlehem community, died at the age of 19. Let us pray for our brother and his family.

France | **Mr. Philippe Bavarière**, member of the *Fraternité Me Voici* with his wife Marie-Laure, died of a heart attack on Sunday, March 5, 2023 on the eve of his 75th birthday. We share his family's sorrow and pray for the rest of his soul.



Italy | On Saturday, March 11th, **Mrs. Annamaria Sala**, sister of Fr Graziano Sala SCJ, Bursar and Secretary General, of the Generalate community, died. Please let us pray for Fr. Graziano and his family during this time of grief.

Be children of obedience



F.V.D.

Be true children of obedience you, privileged ones of the Heart of Jesus and Mary, following the example of our holy Founder.

Cultivate obedience; and glory in the eyes of all, to be merely unworthy servants of Jesus and Mary. [...]

Obedience everywhere, always, in everything, with joy, in the smallest things; as the apostle says, whether you drink or eat, everything, everything in the name of Jesus, under obedience and out of love for Jesus.

This is the remedy for the great evil of our time... of the century that has become Pelagian again, undermining the reign of Jesus and his grace.

As for us, O my Jesus, reign, reign over us once more, reign over all our life, over all ourselves...

Fiat voluntas tua sicut in cœlo, where you are in all, [...], so that this obedience sanctifies us in the truth, unites us in charity, preserves us in perseverance. [...] Amen.

Fr. Etchecopar, in a letter to the religious of St Joseph's College Buenos Aires,

Bétharram, April 3, 1876



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

Generalate House

via Angelo Brunetti, 27

00186 Rome - Italy

Phone +39 06 320 70 96

Email scj.generalate@gmail.com

www.betharram.net