

In this issue

The affectivity
of religious: a
companion on the
road p. 1

Angelus, 30 June 2024
p. 5

Renunciation? p. 7

Emotions and conse-
crated life p. 8

Fraternal love in the
community p. 11

Affectivity and the
hunger for touch
p. 12

Notices from the Ge-
neral Council p. 16

Betharram at the
Château de Lesve:
The vanished Com-
munity of Belgium
p. 17

Oh Mary, here we
come! p. 20

The word of the superior general

The affectivity of religious: a companion on the road

*"Do we want to heal the world and heal ourselves?
Let us see God in all things; let us sacrifice everything to God,
so may He reign in us." (DS § 60)*

Dear Betharramites,

I remember very well, more than forty years ago, that afternoon when, speaking about my disordered affections and my sins to Father Ceferino Arce when - on one of the many trips I took with him in my car - he told me: "Agín, You will always have bad thoughts - learn to deal with them - you will have them even when you are old..." His comment left me thinking..., since I, as a young layman, considered this Father an exemplary person, to whom nothing happened, and I used to idealise him as a priest... (he deserved it well, as everyone testifies those who knew him). However, this "holy man" was also very human and did not deny that *the affective dimension* was central in the life of both the laity and consecrated people. His word

invited me to an inner work that would last a lifetime.

Another time, when I was a postulant, I asked a recently ordained Betharramite: Is it difficult for you to live the vow of chastity? He told me, not as much as one usually imagines..., *the most complicated thing is to have balance in affectivity*. This is how I would understand it later: along with the vocation received, we are given the grace to live it, but it is necessary to assume celibacy for the kingdom with great humility, always attentive and responsible.

The General Chapter reminds us of this in articles 62 - 63.

"...Against the "kingdom of the self" and its pitfalls, we must learn to expand our hearts, to be less self-referential. Our personal responsibility is to take seriously the freely professed vow of chastity. In other words, professing love without exclusivity, getting too close or trying to dominate..."

...Affectivity refers to the orientation of the heart. With the use of reason and good practice, it can lead to great good. At any age we are called to ensure our balance in life, to live a form of sobriety, to avoid activism, to respect our body, to do physical exercise, to free ourselves of the things that tie us down..." (cf. GC '23 – §§ 62 & 63)

In fact, responsibly embracing celibacy for the Kingdom of God means welcoming a gift and opening oneself to a great challenge. The challenge may be due to the impulse that provokes in us an ever-active affectivity-sexuality, or due to the circumstances of ministerial life, for example the detachment in affections (family, friends), the possible intimacy with other people in the pastoral relationship, the quality (or not) of the loneliness that accompanies the life of the young or adult religious, etc.

But celibacy is in no way a renunciation of affection and love. It is expressed in a vow of reciprocity and love destined to love everyone, not mediated by genitality. Only properly channelled affection and love are the guarantee of integrated celibacy. It is not a renunciation of human love to love God, since both loves are compatible. We could say that *for the celibate, well-being and happiness depend more on affection (loving and being loved) than on pleasure*.

If celibacy is not a function of love, it ends up generating narcissism in the consecrated person, a disguised or mystified selfishness, and even the blockage of the religious who does not know how to deal

with his affections, and isolates himself or misuses them. That is why without love there is no celibacy, there can only be "singleness."

The love of the celibate:

- Is a free love.
- Frees the interpersonal relationship from all domination, instrumentalisation, and exploitation.
- It is a love open to universality and oblation.
- It supposes a reciprocity different from that of a couple who live a conjugal love.
- It is more similar to the love of friendship (since it is not dependent on genitality).
- Does not exploit people for their own benefit.
- It does not have pleasure as a terminal objective.
- It is not exclusive love but open and inclusive.

Today the digital world has a great influence on our communities and on each religious person. It leads us to a great challenge of self-discipline in relation to its orderly use, consistent with our consecration and mission. The young people who approach us, the new vocations, are already digital natives. We must update ourselves, train ourselves and educate ourselves in the proper use of new digital instruments (which already use artificial intelligence). You cannot always live on the defensive against them, but at the same time you have to be constantly vigilant so that a consecrated person does not *develop dependencies* or live in a *state of emotional and existential disorientation* due to the misuse of the media. social networks, the internet, or AI..., etc. It is a risk that can lead us, little by little, to lose the direction of our own vocation.

It isn't unusual that, along the faith journey of a religious person, one can enter into some emotional crisis. In that case, we have to have the courage to face it, dialogue and allow ourselves be helped. A well-processed emotional crisis can be a moment of maturation and growth in the life of a religious. A sustained crisis without processing it can give rise to personality imbalances and even lead to a double

life with all the fatal consequences that it has for the person. 'A look of mercy' must be present in all these processes. Listen to the consecrated person and understand without judging. Demonstrate unconditionality, but also speak clearly. God is present in love, even when we make mistakes in loving and do not know how to love well. We are all vulnerable, both those who accompany and those accompanied.

Also the religious community, of which we talk so much, is of the utmost importance for a healthy and integrated experience of chastity. *Affection between the brothers of a community is the best antidote to loneliness and isolation.* Only faith in Christ, who called us to live together, gives meaning to the life of the celibate in community.

We Betharramites need to channel our affections as consecrated people, so that each person who comes to us can find a safe space where they can be cared for, protected and respected, as we witness to Jesus Christ, humbled and obedient, who invites us to live this beatitude: "*Blessed are the pure in heart because they will see God*" (Mt 5.8).

With a most fraternal hug,

Fr. Gustavo Agín scj
Superior General

TO SHARE IN THE COMMUNITY:

1. *What importance have you given to maturing emotionally during your initial or permanent formation?*
2. *What means helped you the most to overcome your eventual emotional crises?*
3. *Is it difficult for you to live alone? What means do you use to make it a lively or fertile solitude?*

Angelus, 30 June 2024

St Peter's square



Dear brothers and sisters,
happy Sunday!

The Gospel of today's liturgy tells us about two miracles that seem to be intertwined. As Jesus is on his way to the house of Jairus, one of the leaders of the synagogue whose daughter is gravely ill, a woman afflicted with haemorrhages touches Jesus' cloak. He stops to heal her. Meanwhile, word arrives that Jairus' daughter has died, but Jesus does not stop. He reaches the house, enters the girl's room, takes her by the hand, and raises her, bringing her back to life (cf. Mk 5:21-43). Two miracles: a healing and a resurrection.

These two healings are told as a single event. Both occur through physical contact. Indeed, the woman touches Jesus' cloak, and Jesus takes the girl by the hand. Why is this 'touching' important? It is because these two women are considered impure — one because she suffers from blood loss and the other because she is dead — and therefore there could be no physical contact with them. Instead, Jesus allows himself to be touched and is not afraid to touch. Jesus allows himself to be touched and is not

afraid to touch. Even before the physical healing, he challenges the false religious belief that

God separates the pure to one side, and the impure to another. Instead, God does not make this kind of distinction, because we are all his children. Impurity does not come from food, illness, or even death; impurity comes from an impure heart.

Let us learn this: in the face of bodily and spiritual suffering, of the wounds in our souls, of situations that crush us, and even in the face of sin, God does not keep us at a distance. God is not ashamed of us; God does not judge us. On the contrary, he draws near to let himself be touched and to touch us, and he always raises us from death. He always takes us by the hand to say: daughter, son, arise! (cf. Mk 5:41). Walk forward; stride ahead! "Lord, I am a sinner" — "Stride ahead; I became sin for you, to save you" — "But you, O Lord, are not a sinner" — "No, but I have endured all the consequences of sin to save you". This is beautiful!

Let us fix in our hearts this image that Jesus gives us: God takes you by the hand and raises you up again. He lets himself be touched by your

pain and touches you to heal you and give you life again. He does not discriminate against anyone because he loves everyone.

So, we can ask ourselves: do we believe that God is like this? Do we let ourselves be touched by the Lord, by his Word, by his love? Do we relate to our brothers and sisters by offering them a hand to lift them up, or do we keep our distance and label people based on our tastes and preferences? We label people. Let me ask you a question: Does God, the Lord Jesus, label people? Each person answer to themselves. Does God label people? And do I live by constantly labelling people?

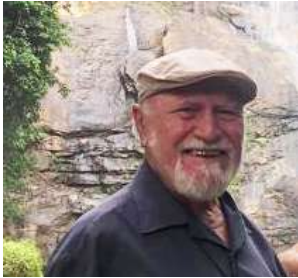
Brothers and sisters, let us look to God's heart, so that the Church and society may neither exclude anyone nor treat anyone as "impure", so that each person, with their own story, is welcomed and loved without labels, without prejudices — loved without adjectives.

Let us ask the Holy Virgin. May she who is the Mother of tenderness intercede for us and for the whole world. ■





Our affectivity



Renunciation?

| Fr. Angelo Recalcati scj

I don't think I'm wrong in saying that affectivity has always been a strong point (and perhaps at the same time a weak point) in my life and a characteristic of my personality that I always cultivated and that, at times, I needed to reorient.

I remember, in this regard, a time in my life when I shared a profound spiritual experience with a group of religious people. When we separated, we made a commitment to keep in touch by letters, since we were all from different countries.

With one sister, in particular, we decided to write to each other telling each other in detail what our lives had been like. Instead of writing an autobiography, I decided to write the "story of my affection" (the title I gave it). I remember that it began more or less like this: "When I

became religious, I had to decide to give up many things, but what I was determined never to give up was my ability to feel affection and express it."

One of the topics we had talked about most on that occasion was the topic of renunciation.

I remember the heated discussions about whether it was good to talk about "renunciation" or whether we should not talk, rather, about "election"

I always saw the theme of renunciation as repression, while talking about choice opens me to the other, to life, to other possibilities.

When I recounted, in that correspondence, the "story of my affectivity," I also recounted conflicts and difficult moments. But what always helped me overcome them and not lose the joy of my choice for

religious life was to know that I was always faced with my choice.

In fact, I experienced moments in which I had to choose between something right and something out of place, between something centred in navel-gazing and something that put the other, and sometimes the Other, first. But what always helped me emerge from the situation was knowing that I was called to choose and not to give up.

There is a page of the Gospel that

always inspired me and continues to inspire me: Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who opens the gates of the sheepfold and allows the sheep to enter and leave freely (Jn 10.9), without them ever ceasing to be "his" sheep. Therefore, because I know that I can enter or leave freely, I choose to stay in the fold, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. ■



Emotions and Consecrated Life

| Fr. Laurent Bacho scj

Consecrated chastity involves my emotions, my desire to love and be loved; thus, my sexuality is a dimension of my person taken into account by consecration. It is not only about mastering my physical impulses; my whole life is involved. Over 30 years ago, during a session for trainers, a Dominican told us: "*one can be pure of body but hard of heart.*" Therefore, it is my way of positioning myself in my relationships that needs to be questioned. Prudence is always necessary to avoid being overconfident. My selfish pleasure needs to be channelled so that my will to provide true happiness to others predominates. The temptation

of egocentrism, which shows itself through my needs to be satisfied, and my thirst to be recognized and appreciated, is always present, even if I deny it.

However, I have experienced that when these tendencies are overcome, I am fully happy. I become freer facing myself and in front of others. At the Chapter in June 2023, we were amazed by this beautiful thought from Father Joseph Mirande, the 8th Superior General: "*A Betharramite is a happy man. He has renounced many things, but not happiness*" (Acts 61). My emotions are at play in my relationships and become a battleground for me to overcome;

when I move from easy denunciation to marvelling at my brother, from vengeance to forgiveness, from indifference to sharing, from domination to service, I am happy to have this *"expanded heart"* that Saint Michel Garicoïts often spoke of. On the other hand, when I reduce the other to being my image ("you think like me"), or when I am convinced of having the monopoly on truth, my heart becomes invaded by pride; then sadness overwhelms me because the concern for myself has prevailed. This individualistic refocusing is not what I committed to, and thus it is a disappointing failure.

But it is also good to become aware that my life force and love is tainted by my weakness and fragility. I am not immune to failure; this makes me more humble and more indulgent towards my brother. These

acknowledged failures, especially in meetings with my spiritual director, become even more effective springboards when they receive the Father's mercy through the sacrament of forgiveness. Chastity does not reduce my energy of love; it protects me from all self-absorption, and I become a discreet but effective instrument allowing my brother to fully flourish. Nothing is definitively acquired; each day requires vigilance not to become self-absorbed by appealing to the Heart of Jesus: *"Old heart, make way for the heart of Jesus... take its place, O Heart of Jesus. Cut, burn, take."* ■





Fraternal love in the community

| Fr. Luke Kriangsak Kitsakunwong scj

How is our experience in respect of art 41 of the Acts of the General Chapter (fraternal life in community)?

First of all, we consider the vows: Chastity, Obedience and Poverty. I need to know myself first. The more I know who I am, the more I understand my brothers in our vicariate: we come from different background and each one of us has his own character. This point helps me to look back at the attitude towards myself, towards my brothers in the vicariate and towards the community I belong to. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta said "If we are humble, nothing will change us, neither praise, nor discouragement."

Through my own experiences I can say that the important and vital root for the growth of our vicariate is our honest and humble fraternal life. Even though we have to face many challenges, we are called to sit together and solve the matter. In order to do so, as Betharramites we need to have enough maturity to love and to respect our brothers.

To love the members and the community

First of all, as Betharramites we have to remind ourselves that we seek perfection of charity. When

we love God above all else and our neighbour as ourselves, we keep Jesus' words: *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (Jn14:15). *I need to become an active member in my community. At the foot of the saviour on the cross, St. Michael no longer holds himself back: "Oh my God, you have loved me so! Oh God, you have done so much to make yourself loved by me!... My heart is ready, I refuse nothing to prove my love to you."* (D.S. 89)

My experience tells me that maturity to listen and to accept is very important in order to live the community life because through this maturity we will know how to love each other. Love will allow us to listen with sympathy, to speak with tenderness, to care for one another, and to accept our brothers as they are.

Through fraternal love, our communication and sharing are the best way to reduce tension, age gap, and misunderstanding in the community. The more we listen to each other the more we will feel the joy of fraternal life in community.

For example, to sit together and have a personal communication with an open heart and mind, will create

an atmosphere of trust and sincerity and will help to break down barriers in the community

The role of the superior

For me, to be a superior is answering a call. So, we obey the will of God not the age of our leaders. The superior is an instrument in God's hands to lead the community. As superior I have to encourage and appreciate my brothers much more than to correct them. I have to accompany both members and communities. Especially through personal accompaniment.

Then as regional vicar I have to lead the vicariate according to the project of the Betharramite religious congregation. As members, we need to support and work with our superior at all levels. Today, I am a

superior and tomorrow I will be one of the members without any position. However, God never looks at our position but at the way we live. We are called to try our best to do our duties according to the needs of the congregation.

The elderly and sick religious

In our Thai culture we look up to the elderly. Personally, I think it is good for us as religious to show respect for the elderly religious and for those who are in hospital. We need to accompany and take care of them welcoming them with serenity and peace. Let us learn from the beautiful example of our founder St. Michael who took care of a disabled parish priest when he was the vicar at Cambo.

In the same way, the old members



Reunion of some Thai fathers with Fr. Pierre Caset scj, missionary in Thailand for more than forty years, on the occasion of the formators' session held in Betharram (1-7 July).

of the community are expected to set a good example for the young religious, by being open to the superior and to the brothers and by avoiding being over dependent, withdrawn, silent and sad.

Just like Jesus humble and obedient who by saying: "Here I am, I have come", He has fulfilled His Father's will. And like St. Michael who said 'Here I am, instantly, unreservedly, irrevocably, more by love than for any other reason'. Like our missionaries who planted the seed of the Betharramite 'Here I am' here in Thailand. Now we can witness the seed growing into a tree and becoming a shelter for many people. It is up to us to take care of that root so that the 'Here I am' is kept alive

with 'honesty and humility', by living our fraternal life in community as betharramites.

"When will we understand that of all our duties, the first and most indispensable, and at the same time the most precious, is to present ourselves constantly to God and His representatives, and surrendering ourselves to them, humble and devoted, while each of us says "Here I am"? O God, give us this spirit of your divine Son, Our Lord. My God, here I am! Here we are! Make us truly wise and ever rejoice in the consolation of your Spirit." (St. Michael to Fr. Didace Barbe, Letter 163, 1858) ■



Affectivity and the hunger for touch

| Fr. Austin Hughes scj

Cinema aficionados of a certain age in the UK and USA recall a 1955 B-movie 'Unchained' about a prisoner who longs to come home. And even those too young to remember it, know its theme song 'Unchained melody', recycled every 10 years or so: 'Oh my love, my darling, I've hungered for your touch, a long lonely time.' The lyrics are not Shakespearean but

they do speak to the hunger for touch that so many people felt a few years ago during the pandemic... fathers dying without the touch of their sons... children unable to hug their grandma... friends unable to embrace... We knew what it was like to hunger for touch.

But could this hunger be a pointer to the deep hunger we all feel to be touched by our God?



The ministry of Jesus was marked by the power of touch, and Jesus touched many people to reach across divides, even when to do so he broke Jewish law. Think of his touch when he healed the leper... his touch of the corpse of the young man of Naim... his sense of being touched by the woman with the flow of blood. Touch was an essential part of Jesus mission, because in him, the God who made heaven earth, touched our world.

And touch has always had an essential place in the church's ministry too... the laying-on of hands... the anointing with holy oil... the sign of peace... the joining of hands in the marriage ceremony... and the blessing of the sick. Without touch, our sacraments and

our pastoral ministry would lack any meaning. And priests and religious in particular have a ministry of touch.

But somehow in recent decades we have struggled to find authenticity in our touch. The recent child abuse scandals in the church, and even in our own Congregation, have been a wake-up call, alerting us to the times when we have lacked a true sense of the meaning of our emotions and feelings. The stories of multiple victims of clerical misdeeds are harrowing and shocking, and have shone a spotlight on the church in general and on priests and religious in particular.

Is this a new phenomenon? I am not sure. Two memories come to mind. The first is that during my studies of church history I came to

see that when the church came under the influence of stoic philosophers in the early Christian centuries, a suspicion of human emotion and passion developed which has distorted our attitudes ever since. Sadly this suspicion carried with it the seeds of a misogyny, which like the gospel parable (Matt 13.24-29) have produced weeds along with the corn.

The second was when I taught church history on the staff of the diocesan seminary and was involved in assessing candidates. I recall one young man the rest of the staff favoured because he didn't form emotional bonds with anyone and so was thought to be an ideal celibate. In retrospect I think that he was on the autistic spectrum, and that really accounted for his inability to form relationships. It explained too, his black and white judgements on the world. A misdiagnosis typical of the time.

The hidden blessing of the modern scandals is that they oblige us to be honest about human feelings, our emotions and our sexuality. Praise the Lord for this! They help us see too, that while our human emotions are God-given we need to develop the right disciplines to focus them and use them in a positive way. Nuclear physicists know that Uranium-235 can be used to generate electricity and bring enormous benefits to society, but it can also be used to make an

atomic weapon which would destroy society completely. Human feelings and human touch can be used both for good and for harm. And we need to learn how to handle our emotions as sensitively as any radioactive isotope.

The Chiang Mai Chapter in June 2023 recognised the importance of this, and several articles (69-73) highlight ways in which we can help one another to use feeling, emotion and touch in a way that serves God's Kingdom. These are crucial articles, and any community that spends time to reflect on them together will reap rewards. The touch of Jesus brought life healing and freedom. May God grant us the wisdom to bring that same touch to others. ■

International session of formation for the Congregation's Formators

"The General Chapter asks the Superior General and his council as well as the Regional Superior to organize an international meeting of all the formators" (Acts of the 28th General Chapter, n. 87). After having met the Betharramite formation team, the Superior General convoked the international meeting of all the formators. 18 formators had been invited.

Br. Angelo Sala SCJ and – due to the difficulties of obtaining visa – Fr. Valentin N'Zoré SCJ, Fr. Armel Daly SCJ, Fr. Vipin Chirammel SCJ participate via zoom. The other invited formators were present at Betharram under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Gustavo Agín SCJ.

Rev. Fr. Jean Messingue SJ, from Ivory Coast, was the animator of the session. He is a psychologist, formator, councilor, and director of the Jesuit Institute in Ivory Coast. Since he did not obtain the visa too, he animates the session via zoom.



6 days were with the six themes.

- Monday 1st July: In my experience, what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of formation?
- Tuesday 2 July: Why do we need a specific style of formation? what are the pedagogical elements for today's formation?
- Wednesday 3 July: Accompanying the young in formation and people in vulnerable situations.
- Thursday 4 July: How to accompany in view of emotional, spiritual, psychological and integral maturity. The psychological test at the service of vocational growth.

Friday 5 July: Spiritual exercises and Formation in discernment.

Saturday 6 July: Formation for the proper use of means of communication, a path of formation in a materialistic world.... Individualism....



In the Peace of the Lord

On Tuesday 9 July,
Fr. Livio Borghetti scj returned
to the Lord.

Fr Livio was 90 years old and 73 years of religious life. He was part of the Albavilla "St. Michael" community (Vicariate of Italy).

We entrust him to the mercy of the Father, who will grant him, as we hope, to live in the joy of his home.



May Saint Michael and Our Lady of Betharram intercede for him.

We will pay tribute to Fr Livio in the next issue of the NEF (september).

**In recent months, some brothers have lost a family member.
We heartily join them and their families in this time of sorrow
and pray for the eternal rest of their beloved one.**

Mr. Mathew Devasiya Korandakkatte, father of Fr. George Mathew Korandakkatte scj (Community of Droitwich, England), passed away on May 11th.

Mr. Martin Zugarramurdi, father of Fr. Gerard Zugarramurdi scj (Côte Basque Community) died on June 7th at the age of 94 in Urrugne (France).

Mr. Reigan Jose Manavalan, brother of Fr. Edwin Jose Manavalan scj (Community of Hojai-Langting, India), died at workplace accident in Luton, UK on Saturday 20th June.

Mr. Sahayaraj, brother of Fr. Fernando Michael Bistis scj (Community of Sampran, Thailand) died on Friday 28 June.

Mr. Giancarlo Riva, brother of Fr. Aurelio Riva scj (Community of Paulinia, Brazil), passed away on June 29th.



Betharram at the Château de Lesve: The vanished Community of Belgium

| Roberto Cornara, archivist

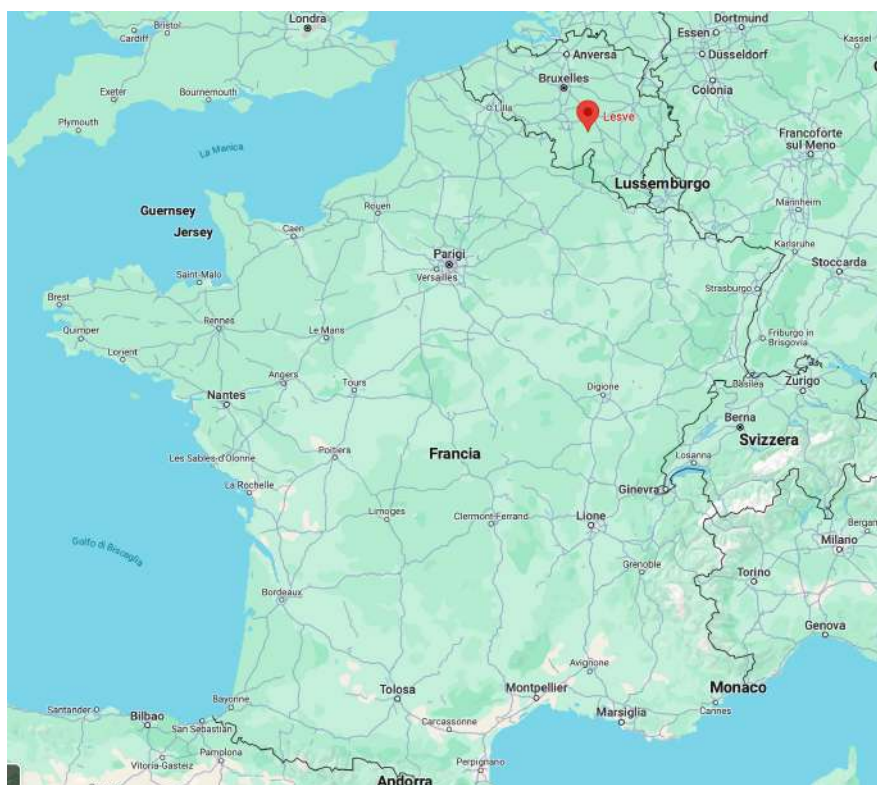
During the difficult times associated with the expulsion from France (1903), the Congregation had to take drastic measures to save the Institute, particularly its training houses. The Superior General and his Council had to face the reality: how to continue existing, how to survive the height of the storm?

The priority was to save the apostolic school, the Congregation's minor seminary. Two directions were chosen. The younger boys in the lower classes were sent to Spain, close to the border, where the apostolic school of Irun (a residence called "*Buena Vista*") was opened, and later moved to Mendelu in 1910. For the upper classes, the choice was to open a residence in Belgium.

Thanks to the interest of some families who were friends of Bétharram and who used to spend a few weeks on holiday in the French Pyrenees, a house was rented in Lesve, in the Diocese of Namur, owned by Baron de Rosée. At that time,

as today, this residence was known as the "Château de Lesve", a vast mansion nestled in a park of several hectares, with an adjoining farm, livestock, pastures, etc. The place was ideal for the maintenance and economic autonomy of a school and its numerous students.

Negotiations with the owners began in February 1903; a month later, the contract was signed. In May, the first priests left for Belgium. In August, it was the turn of the apostolic students, whose parents had agreed to part with them for all their years of study. At the conclusion of the General Chapter that ended





the same month, the General Council also moved to the Château de Lesve, which became the new General House for six years¹.

The life of the young seminarians in Belgium was not very different from that in Bétharram: classes, study, prayer, weekly walks... At the end of the school curriculum, those who wished went to the novitiate, which was then in Bethlehem.

Everything proceeded "normally," but no one imagined the war, the "Great War," as it was called then, which upset the daily routine. The German imperial troops occupied Belgium in August 1914. For the Bétharram community in Lesve, this marked the beginning of a long period of isolation. At

one point, the house was occupied by the German militias. In January 1916, Father Bourdenne, the Procurator General, met with Bishop Heylen of Namur in Rome. He reassured him about the good conditions in which the community of Lesve was living; so far, no one had been mistreated; supplies were guaranteed by international aid; however, any attempt to repatriate from the occupied zones was impossible. For several months between 1916 and 1917, the General Council had no news of the priests and apostolic students. The Holy See, the International Red Cross, and the ambassadors of Spain and Switzerland in Brussels were approached for information...

Finally, in early 1917, contact was re-established. Since no one could go to the novitiate, there were no

1) Fr. Estrade, elected Superior General in August 1909, decided to transfer the Generalate to Irun, Spain.

more apostolic students in Lesve, only philosophers and theologians, who had started their studies "to pass the time"... The General Council admitted all 30 young men to the novitiate, the largest group of novices in the Congregation's history.

Eventually, the war also ended, but the Belgian community, born in 1903 as a "temporary refuge" before being able to return to France, was living its final months. Indeed, thanks to the normalisation of relations between the French government and the Church, religious congregations gradually returned to France. Bétharram reopened in the summer of 1920; at the same time, the residence in Lesve was closed.

The Betharramite presence in

Belgium, which would be worth exploring and studying in detail, also allowed a few Belgian religious to join the Institute. Among them, the most notable was Father Louis Pirmez, who was among the first three founders of the mission in Tali, China, in 1922.

However, Betharram has not completely left Belgium. In Lesve, near the Saint-Wilmart church, a few steps from the "château," there is a small cemetery where the tombs of the Bétharramites who died during the seventeen years of presence in this country can still be found (or should be found) today. Three priests, two brothers, and one apostolic student remain the permanent presence of Bétharram in this land of Belgium. ■





“O Mary, here we come!

Receive us and present us to your divine Son.

O Jesus, here we come.

Receive us from the hands of Your Blessed Mother
and present us to Your Father.

O Heavenly Father, here we come.

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

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

(DS § 127)



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

Generalate House

via Angelo Brunetti, 27

00186 Rome - Italy

Tel +39 06 320 70 96

Email scj.generalate@gmail.com

www.betharram.net