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The Betharramite Community in Mission: How to Promote Listening and Creativity in a Complex Society

"Then Jesus went up the mountain, called those whom He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve, to be with Him and to send them to preach, so that they would have authority to cast out demons." (Mk 3.13-15)

Dear Betharramites,

We Betharramite religious live in community and have been entrusted with a mission at the service of the Church. We fulfil it by displaying a common vocation, inspired by a charism. An authentic mission is part of the charism, it is not dissociated from it, since it is not born from an isolated initiative, but from an ecclesial discernment, to which we respond from a specific identity that was given to us by the Holy Spirit. By making the charism present, assuming new missionary challenges in community, we join the dynamic of the missionary Church, whose essence is to evangelize.

Our service to the People of God is embodied in a local Church, in a specific time and place, from where new challenges emerge as from a fountain that will nourish apostolic life.

As religious, in general, it is quite difficult for us to accept our mission in community. We have a tendency towards individualism, or to settle in some position of security and comfort that gratifies us. I don't think we do it on purpose. We live, in fact, in a complex society, whose characteristics influence our way of approaching ordinary life. We are living through a post-secular era that imposes profound changes. We live amidst indifference towards the Christian faith, exposed to the growing secularisation of collective and individual freedoms, and can be overwhelmed by the signs of a dehumanising process.

Could it be that we will become a new version of those "icebergs before God" that Saint Michael spoke of?...

If that ice reached our communities, it would freeze the lives of the brothers and discourage the arrival of new vocations. Added to this cold is the temptation to "do what everyone sees fit", "every man for himself", or the "art of dying well"...

This current complexity challenges us to listen and to be creative in our community-in-mission. This is like a house where the embers of discouragement burn, but the fire of the Spirit drives us to go out once again to announce the Good News.

We all know that the first mission of religious life is above all: "to be religious life." We Betharramites, in particular, were entrusted with a missionary charism that implies a lot of dedication: leaving one's own land and one's culture, accepting a strong sense of itinerancy and dislocation, being artisans of communion and peace wherever we go, having the courage to always live on the borders of the Christian community. This is where we can "occupy the place of all the victims" (SMG), as Jesus did, out of obedience to the Father. We are apostles of the Heart of Jesus.

The entire Church is missionary and the whole church is the object of mission. Relations with the local Church are not always harmonious - Saint Michael also experienced this in his time - and misunderstandings appear from time to time when we Betharramites show a fragile sense of belonging to the religious family. Ecclesial discernment of works and people needs time and conditions of listening and mutual

respect to guarantee it. This ensures that abuse of power does not take hold at any level. We have to practice and mature that synodal spirit that is talked about so much. Saint Michael practised it in the most important moments of our history, so that that total and selfless availability that should characterise us would never be lacking.

How do we live, then, what was confided to us by the General Chapter of Chiang Mai regarding community in mission?

Acts No: 141 says:

“To promote listening and creativity, in a complex society, the Chapter calls us:

- a) to reinforce our identity, out of which we open ourselves. We listen, and we respond... without which we risk worldliness;
- b) to give importance to the value of prophecy; It is not just a doing, a role, but a being, a way of living;
- c) not to remain only with the traditional parish ministry. This guarantees an economic income but runs the risk of slowly leading us to an assimilation with the diocesan priest;
- d) to the development of Betharramite spirituality centres where we can offer formation, gain experience, produce and develop new material;
- e) to continue and deepen evangelization of the media and through the media...
- f) to discern to create communities that are multi-pastoral;
- g) as a Congregation, to create conditions (territorial, financial, people), to respond to these new chosen paths.”

We are witnesses in a rapidly changing world and we trust that the Holy Spirit works within hearts, communities, and all societies, with an unceasing ferment that makes the Kingdom more present and expresses its liberating fruits.

Like the apostles, gathered in community, we must go out, plant and water so that God will make it grow in his own time. Day and night the Kingdom of God grows and we do not know how.

On the surface of the earth, we see wars, division, abuses, conflicts, personalisms, poverty, misery, anguish; but at the same time, we,

apostles of the Sacred Heart, can do much with the Grace of God: we are like that grain of wheat that dies to give life!

As a community in mission, we give ourselves totally to what has been asked of us, without trying to take advantage of our position, but rather making it a living experience of the Love of God.

Our Betharramite life today? We are quite wounded, but not dead; impoverished but not inert; Tested, but not defeated. (cf. 2 Cor 4.8-9) It continues to grow under the merciful gaze of the God of Love. In the month of the Sacred Heart, let us consecrate ourselves once again to Him with all our mind, our strength and our spirit. As brothers of the same family, let us frequently dialogue with Him who, being a Son, has made us sons in religious life. And above all, *"before being missionaries, let us be men of prayer,"* or rather: *"may our whole life be a continuous prayer"* (SMG).

Happy month of the Heart of Jesus,

Fr. Gustavo Agín scj
Superior General

QUESTIONS TO SHARE:

1. *Which of the requests of the chapter (Acts 141) do you think are priorities for the coming years? Where do we begin?*
2. *Which of the realities described in the text most affect your community? What other challenges do you experience as a community in mission?*
3. *We pilgrimage in hope (despite everything...). Share your conviction or your missionary dream to help your brothers in the community to walk with their heads held high.*

Solemnity of Pentecost, Homily of the Holy Father

St Peter's Basilica, 19 May 2024



The account of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1-11) shows us two areas of the Holy Spirit's working in the Church: in us and in mission, with two characteristics: power and gentleness. [...]

Like the Apostles, we too are being sent forth, particularly at the present time, to proclaim the Gospel to all. We are sent into the world "not only geographically but also beyond the frontiers of race and religion, for a truly universal mission" (Redemptoris Missio, 25). Thanks to the Spirit, we can and must do this with his own power and gentleness.

With the same power: that is, not with arrogance and impositions – a Christian is not arrogant, for his or her power is something else, it is the power of the Spirit – nor with calculation and cunning, but with the energy born of fidelity to the truth that the Spirit teaches us in our hearts and causes to grow within us. Consequently, we surrender to the Spirit, not to worldly power. We tirelessly proclaim peace to those who desire war, proclaim forgiveness to those who seek revenge, we proclaim welcome and solidarity to those who bar their doors and erect barriers, we proclaim life to those who choose death, we proclaim respect to those who love to humiliate, insult and reject, we proclaim fidelity to those who would sever every bond, thereby confusing freedom with a bleak and empty individualism. Nor are we

intimidated by hardship, derision or opposition, which, today as always, are never lacking in the apostolate (cf. Acts 4:1-31).

At the same time that we act with this power, our proclamation seeks to be gentle, welcoming to everyone. Let us not forget this: everyone, everyone, everyone. Let us not forget the parable of those who were invited to the feast but did not want to go: "Go therefore to the streets and bring everyone, everyone, everyone, both the bad and the good, everyone" (cf. Mt 22:9-10). The Spirit grants us the power to go forth and call everyone with gentleness, he grants us the gentleness to welcome everyone.

All of us, brothers and sisters, are in great need of hope, which is not optimism; no, it is something else. We need hope. Hope is depicted as an anchor, there at the shore, and in clinging to its rope, we move toward hope. We need hope, we need to lift our gaze to horizons of peace, fraternity, justice and solidarity. This alone is the way of life, there is no other. Naturally, it is not always easy; indeed, there are times that the path is winding and uphill. Yet we know that we are not alone, we have the certainty that, by the help of the Holy Spirit and by his gifts, we can walk together and make that path more and more inviting for others as well. ■



The mission



To the rhythm of the periphery

| Fr. Beniamino Gusmeroli scj

The last General Chapter, in tune with Pope Francis' options, chose the peripheries as the privileged places of our mission. In the parish of "Notre Dame de la Visitation" in the Central African Republic in Bimbo, we find ourselves operating in the peripheries.

From a geographical point of view, we are on the outskirts of the capital Bangui: neighborhoods formed mostly by displaced people from the 2015 war, looking for a safe place from the incursions of the belligerents, therefore, extremely precarious social situations. The parish is a new foundation, entrusted to our Congregation.

In addition to the geographical position, I wonder here what are the characteristic elements of the "periphery"? **What is our insertion in this reality?**

For us here, the peripheries are a complex reality: every





year during the rainy season, being most of the neighborhoods located on the bank of the Oubangui river, they suffer severe floods that destroy the poor houses built in dried mud. The periphery here is the climatic conditions that exceed 40 degrees and there is no possibility of protection. It is the total precariousness in which most of the population finds itself. The periphery here is the situation of political insecurity; it is the lack of basic services such as drinking water, electricity, and the general absence of the state. The periphery here is the lack of adequate schools for preparing children and young people for their future. The periphery here is the lack of adequate health facilities: if you have the means to pay for medicines or health in general you can access care; if not, you go home hoping only in God. The periphery

is the wild modernity that invades, expropriating its own roots and immersing in an unattainable mirage of well-being, often getting by on the shoulders of others. In short, the periphery here is a decrease in the value of life, of one's own body, of the dignity of the person.

It is interesting to understand how people react to these situations. Poverty is a curse; wealth is a blessing. Wandering preachers, charlatans and improvised healers, and sellers of illusions promise well-being and health with miraculous interventions of God: "you will get wealth soon." Here resonate the words of Paulo Freire in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed": "The oppressed often flee their reality and identify with the oppressor, aggravating their situation." Alongside this aspect, there is the radical joyfulness of the

African soul even in the face of the most difficult situations: this too is the periphery.

How to react to this reality?

Religiosity is a factor of opposition to every form of evil. But solidarity and love are the appropriate response, a sign of hope. The large number of people who attend the parish, especially young people, are sensitive to the word of the Gospel: they listen to it and read it willingly. The very name of the parish is a call to an attitude of openness. We try to share the situation of the periphery with the people, even by

sharing our residence located in the middle of the neighborhood. The multiple activities go in the direction of creating solidarity, closeness, help in various sectors: numerous schools for the supervised children, wells for drinking water, support to single mothers, to the poorest, to farmers, and to young people in general through initiatives thought by them and supported by the parish. The visitation of Mary that gave joy to Elizabeth allows us to recognize the love of God, to root in the truth and to submerge in the path of human solidarity. ■



Youth: the “Now” of God

| Fr. Sergio Leiva scj

A vocational pastoral programme for young people has been under way in the Vicariate of Paraguay since last year. This is one preferred option for young people (PUEBLA¹ § 1186) which the Congregation hopes to take on in Paraguay, as urged by Pope Francis, because, he says, young people are the “Now”, of God². Faced with this reality,

1) Puebla Paper, General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate.

2) Cf Pope Francis’ Homily at Mass for the XXXIVth World Youth Day, held in Panama City on 27 January 2019.

we feel we are being asked and called to be their travelling companions (cf Lk 24, 17) and, together, for them, “with them and from them”, walking in the footsteps of the Word Incarnate (cf. He 10, 5-7; Jn 1, 14).

The first step of this project was taken at a Synodal Assembly of religious and laity (Counsellors and Animators) who wanted to stake their all on the young. In a spirit of discernment and mutual listening, we feel we have been invited by God Himself to undertake a journey alongside young people from



our various different missions. We also noted the silent exodus by some young people from our programmes, because they *"fail to find [in these programmes] a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues"* (cf Christus Vivit, 202). We also note that today's young people have to discern from a multitude of offers, distractions, directions, searches and "easy" solutions.

In this context, we want to propose Faith and to walk together like disciples of Jesus with them, guided by the Holy Spirit.

We have realised that Youth Ministry per se is not enough. We need a Ministry for Youth run by Youth itself (one young person bringing another on board). They must be the protagonists, the bearers of the message themselves. That is why it is necessary to be with them, to feel and

comprehend the reality of what it is to be one of the young people who pass through our missions these days; to get to know their worlds, their concerns, their way of talking; so we can listen without preconceived ideas, without moralism. This is the only way we can dream of a youth ministry in which they themselves actively participate in the evangelising ministry and are not just on the receiving end of our pastoral programmes (i.e. don't think or take decisions for them).

Faced with this major challenge, our first objective was to set up a community of young Betharramites in each of our missions. We gave them a presentation on what we proposed and from there, we started to walk with them. At present there are four such communities, i.e., around 80 young people in total, and other young people continue to join in.

On May 25th last, a meeting took place in La Colmena parish involving young counsellors and animators, with the intention of mingling, getting to know one another and listening to young people's worries and deepest desires, so they themselves can come up with ideas on what sort of missionary camp they'd like to experience this coming 26, 27 and 28 July.



One of the great challenges of Youth Ministry for vocations is to support, listen, accompany and dream of a pastoral renewal, adapted to the culture and thought processes of young people and embodied in the places in which they live. Let the

first action be not one of having the answer like having the recipe, but let it be one of listening, each to the other, in a climate of synodality, so we may together seek what and how we wish to live, enlightened by the charism of Betharram. ■

POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION **CHRISTUS VIVIT** OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND TO THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD

§ 202. *Youth ministry, as traditionally carried out, has been significantly affected by social and cultural changes. Young people frequently fail to find in our usual programmes a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues. The proliferation and growth of groups and movements predominantly associated with the young can be considered the work of the Holy Spirit who constantly shows us new paths. Even so, there is a need to look at the ways such groups participate in the Church's overall pastoral care, as well as a need for greater communion among them and a better coordination of their activities. Although it is never easy to approach young people, two things have become increasingly evident: the realization that the entire community has to be involved in evangelizing them, and the urgent requirement that young people take on a greater role in pastoral outreach.*



Betharram in Uruguay

| Br. Ismael Cristian Romero scj

In 2014 there was only one Betharramite left in Uruguay, Father Gavel, who was already seriously ill.

The Region has felt the need to respond to the challenge to start a new mission creating a community of priests ready to assume the most difficult ministries that others did not want to.

That is the way our community settled down, first in a district of Tacuarembó and in 2017 the bishop offered us the opportunity to assume the parish of Pasos de Los Toros. His successor, His Excellency, Pedro Wolcan, facing the lack of priests, asked the Congregation to take care of other close parishes: Achar and San Gregorio de Polanco.

The community (two priests and one brother) was ready to do it and the bishop has accepted that the brother was a vicar of the two last parishes with the help of one of the priests.

So far, we minister three villages very far from each other (150 kms from Paso de Los Toros to San Gregorio, going through Achar) and many remote rural communities under populated.

The community lives in Paso de los Toros. On Thursday, Father Angel

and myself go to San Gregorio and Achar, where we stay until Sunday afternoon to look after the different pastoral needs, while Father Daniel looks after the largest parish, Paso de los Toros.

Our task is to animate the pastoral activities (biblical reflexion, catechism, visiting patients and helping pastoral agents) in places where we are in charge of. In the three parishes, we take in charge about 15



First Communion group in a rural community



The parish community of San Gregorio de Polanco

rural communities.

What encourages us it to notice the way people come to see us and welcome us. Uruguay has not strong religious traditions and is strongly influenced by a pagan culture which has been prominent since the beginning of 1900. However people welcome us in a friendly way and thank us for our presence in many different ways. We are conscious we

will not succeed in having a crowd of people but the deep involvement of many lay people encourages us and tells us it is worth going on. ■



In the Thai today's' world what about the mission inherited from the first missionaries?

| Fr. John Chan Kunu scj

As the Vicariate of Thailand was born from the mission for the mission, since 1951, we continue the mission inherited from the first missionaries among the people of God such as

the Thai Lanna, Karen, Akha, Lahu and Thai Yai.

We continue welcoming and accompanying the children to educate and give them basic Christian, cultures

and moral values.

We continue welcoming and accompanying the young in the mission for formation since 1984 in three formation houses namely Ban Betharram, Payao, Ban Betharram, Sampran, Ban Garicoits to absorb and live the charism of the Ecce Venio: Here I am, I come to do your Will for the future Betharramites to work in the vineyard of God where we are called to serve.

We continue immersing ourselves from formation to mission and walking along with the people of God in forming 6 communities to give witness and live the spirit of the Ecce Venio alive in mission stations, parishes, centers and formation houses.

The mission is never completed therefore we need to read to sign of the time by opening our hearts and walking together is important to continue the mission we are entrusted to by the Congregation and the Church.

What are the new missionary challenges for the religious of the Vicariate?

In the midst of the developing influences as other societies in the world, the religious of the Betharramites in Thailand also facing with difficulties and challenges such as the influences of media towards the children and youngsters whom we minister even in our religious life, the individualism, self-sufficiency, reducing of vocation and the faithfulness to the charism of the Congregation.

At the same time the collaboration and join mission to accompany the young and the future mission in Vietnam and the projects of the Congregation particularly the collaboration of mission with other vicariates in personnel also challenge us how to prepare and response with love and enthusiasm. ■





The Church's mission involves inner renewal

| Mons. Michel Mouisse

The Church's mission today, which is received from through encounter with the Risen Lord, must continually lead us to a movement of inner renewal... Because Christ is alive, He lives in us: *"Everything He touches becomes young, becomes new, is filled with life."* (Pope Francis, *Christus vivit*, 2019, no. 1).

The great upheavals of our time, plagued from within by multiple crises, compel us to ask new questions, to change our ways of life, and push the Church to deepen its understanding of its mission in what is not just a time of change, but a true change of era.



In France today, there is no shortage of missionary initiatives throughout the Church - and that is a blessing. In our country among others, there are initiatives like the Kerygma approach, the mission conferences, for example... and in

Périgord where I was a bishop, the "bicycle pilgrimages", the Church Academy, the twinning with the diocese of Garua in Cameroon, etc.

And in Marseille, in the diocese where I have been chaplain at *Notre*

Dame de la Garde for ten years, I try with the other chaplains to be attentive to those who come to us in this place of welcome that is open every day, even on Sundays.

I spend a large part of my time welcoming, hearing confessions, and celebrating the sacraments. What a return to God in recent years, especially among those aged 35-50... Just the other day, I received three requests for baptism from young men: 32 years old, 28 years old, 17 years old... This aligns with the impressive and significant increase in the number of adult baptisms in France. I give thanks for all these returns to God...

I believe it is necessary to do everything possible so that each era, each generation, hears the wonders of God in their own language.

This means that there is no ready-made recipe for mission and there is no longer one single tool that would be valid for everyone, everywhere.

That is why it seems important in the current context to properly implement Synodality by learning to discern together the work of the Holy Spirit who makes all things new, in the diversity of missionary initiatives, and in addition, that we encourage one another in all that

is undertaken in the service of the Church's mission and in response to Christ's call to become missionary disciples.

That is why an attitude of surrender based on faith and trust must dwell within us to allow ourselves to undergo the inner renewal that gives Christ His rightful place.

+ **Michel MOÛSSE**

*Bishop Emeritus of Périgueux and Sarlat,
Chaplain to Notre-Dame de la Garde, Marseille*

During the General Council gathered on June 5, 6, 11 e 12 giugno, **the Superior General with his Council approved:**

S a i n t M i c h a e l G a r i c o i t s R e g i o n

Vicariate of Central Africa

- the suppression of the *Notre Dame de Fatima* community, from June 7;

Vicariate of Italy

- the end of our presence in Cerreto Guidi and the return of the parish to the diocese of San Miniato, from 31 May;
- the suppression of the community of Ponte a Elsa, from 7 June;
- the appointment of Fr. Giacomo Spini as Superior of the Community of Lissone-Castellazzo, for a 3rd term;
- An additional year of exclaustation was granted in the Diocese of Parma to Fr. Gianluca Limonta;

Vicariate of France-Spain

- the closure of the *Notre-Dame* community and the *Maison Neuve* community and the opening of the community of Betharram, from June 7;
- the appointment of Fr. Jean-Marie Ruspil as Superior of the Community of Betharram, from 7 June;
- the acceptance of the parish *Sainte Famille* in Pau;

Vicariate of the Ivory Coast

- Presentation of Deac. Jean-Claude Djiraud to priesthood;
- Presentation of Deac. Hyacinthe Akpa N'Cho to priesthood;
- Presentation of Deac. Emmanuel Assanvo Agniman or to priesthood;
- Admission of Br. Salomon Bandama to final profession;
- Admission of Br. Aurélien Emeric Kouamé to final profession.

F r . A u g u s t o E t c h e c o p a r R e g i o n

Vicariate of Brazil

- Presentation of Deac. Thiago Gordiano to priesthood;
- Two years more of exclaustation have been granted to Fr. Mauro Henrique Ulrich de Oliveira in the Archdiocese of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro;
- Permission has been given to sell real estate in Conceição do Rio Verde;

Vicariate of Paraguay

- Presentation of Br. Oscar Mendoza to the Diaconate.



Thoughts and Spiritual Doctrine: history of a book

| Roberto Cornara, archivist

During the summer of 1857, Saint Michael called Fr Etchécopar, (then a professor at the college of Oloron), to Betharram. To this young Betharramite, aged only twenty-seven, the Superior entrusted an important role within the Congregation: that of master of novices. It is a role for which Father Etchécopar felt ill-suited and unprepared. Having expressed his anxieties to Fr Garicoïts, Fr. garicoïts reassured his young disciple: *"My dear friend, I am very happy that you see the shortcomings that may be found in you; it is generally the lot of all priests since the revolution (the great one) to have to exercise the most sublime and difficult ministries, without being properly trained. God wills it.... let us pray and do the best we can, counting above all on his blessing, as true novices in this art of all arts..."* (Correspondence, letter no. 138).

For Father Etchécopar, it was the beginning of six years of intense spiritual communion with his master. He, master of novices, became a novice himself learning everything from the Saint of Betharram: *"I have been master of novices at Betharram since 1857... I was without experience and without the formation that such an important ministry requires; I can say that during all this time I have had no other 'book'*

than Father Garicoïts himself. When the bell announced his arrival, I went to his room, I explained my difficulties to him, I asked him for advice on the organization and direction of the novitiate, on the formation of the souls entrusted to my care, on the main subject of my instructions, finally on the most minute details..."

Perhaps to ensure that he did not forget anything and always had the precious teachings of Father Garicoïts to hand, Father Etchécopar wrote down the content of his daily "conversations" with the master. But that's not all: he added the notes taken during the weekly conferences given by the Founder to the Community. The general archives preserve two of his handwritten notebooks, precious documents from which to draw on, and, so to speak, breathe the spirituality of Saint Michael. They were transmitted under these two titles: *"Conferences and responses to various subjects by Fr. Superior"* and *"Notes on the conferences given by Fr. Garicoïts at Bétharram"*.

The General Chapter of 1887 decided that it could not take the risk of losing these two notebooks; their content was too valuable and important. (We are in the first years of the cause of beatification of the Founder of

Betharram). The work accomplished a few years earlier by Father Etchécopar was a precious testimony (perhaps the only one!) on the thought, charism and spirituality of Saint Michael. Thus, the Chapter "votes unanimously on the composition of a manual of religious life with the thoughts and words of Father Garicoïts, extracts from his conferences, letters and other writings" (Acts of the Chapter).

To achieve this mission, Father Etchécopar retired to Sarrance, from November 1888 to February 1889, 25 years after the death of Father Garicoïts, to put his notes and other written texts¹ in order, so as to bring

1) The archive also contains two manuscript notebooks, in which Etchecopar had orders to transcribe the letters of Fr. Garicoïts, before sending them to their recipients. The third volume of the Correspondence of Saint Michael is the nearly complete transcription of these two notebooks.

How were the 'Thoughts' composed?

According to a note from Father Cambet scj

Once ordained, the companions of Father Saubat were each sent to their post. Father Etchécopar called Father Saubat:

"My child, I will keep you close to me.

– That's it, said Saubat to himself, I must have upset someone..."

But no, it was because he wrote quickly that (Etchecopar) kept him:

"We have work to do together," said Father Etchécopar.

It was a matter of putting into writing the doctrine of the Blessed One. Father Saubat set up a large table and placed a number of piles of papers on it. Father Etchécopar, who had poor eyesight (a failing eye, perhaps?) looked on.

"What are you going to do, my child?

– You put yourself there, said Father Saubat, me here. When you talk about humility, I will write "Humility" in this little pile; when you speak of pride... in this other "Pride", and so on. (*)

– That's very good, very good," agreed Father Etchécopar.

Father Saubat copied. The Most Reverend Father read from his notebooks, or from papers that he had filled with notes. Sometimes he stopped suddenly, looking up: "Wait... don't write that!" It's not like that... ! »

He remained for a while in silence...

"Ah! yes, it's like this, exactly... Write!..."

This is how they made the "Thoughts" over many days. I got this from Father Saubat himself, who concluded: "You can be sure that it is a work of honesty.

Father Etchécopar wanted to do the best possible for Father Garicoïts. »

(*) This sentence was crossed out by Father Saubat who, obviously, had the opportunity to correct this account, and in a note he himself specifies the reason for this correction: "We did not speak like that to Father Etchécopar!".

out the thought and spirituality of his master. This three-month work bore fruit with the publication, in 1890, of the *Collection of Thoughts of Reverend Father Michael Garicoïts*, extracts from his conferences and interviews followed by a few letters, a work better known under the abbreviated title of *Pensées* ('Thoughts'). Hundreds of Betharramite novices have been formed with this publication!

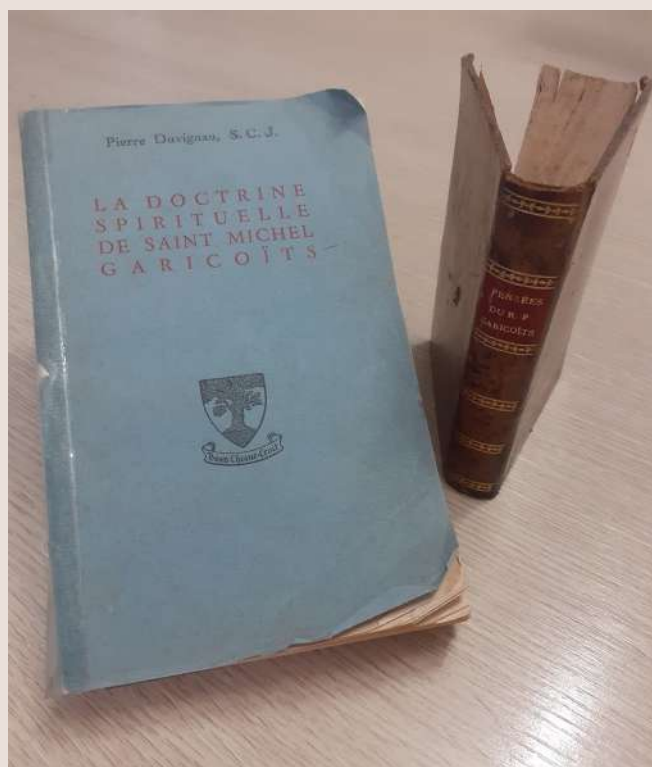
In 1935, Father Denis Buzy was elected new superior general of the Congregation. Among the novelties introduced by the new superior with a view to the upcoming canonization of the Founder², there was a constant commitment to relaunching the figure, the work and the spirituality of Saint Michael. While Father Miéyaa was responsible for publishing the correspondence of Father Garicoïts, the Superior General entrusted Father Duvignau with the task of revising the *Pensées* and presenting a new edition.

This is how in 1949 the volume entitled *Spiritual Doctrine* was published. The content of this book hardly differs from the *Pensées*, except for the addition of some new texts. What changes radically, however, is the thematic organization of the material, more adapted to the spiritual and theological climate of the 20th century.

In 2014, a new edition of the *Spiritual Doctrine*, developed by Father Beñat Oyhénart scj and entitled 'God

2) The canonization of Blessed Michael Garicoïts was scheduled for the early forties, but the war postponed "the honors of the altars" to 1947.

From the *Pensées* to *Spiritual Doctrine*



*Pierre Duvignau scj, in the introduction to the *Spiritual Doctrine*: 'We have taken up the idea of Fr. Etchecopar in his attempt at a synthesis. But while scrupulously respecting his redaction, thanks to the importance, quantity and quality of new texts we have been able to make a more complete reconstitution of the thought of the Saint. This explains the plan of the present volume.'*

loves us', proposed a numbering of the different paragraphs in order to facilitate citations of the text, thus used in the different translations available in the present day.

Basically, after a century and a half, we are still indebted to Father Etchécopar for his great work and for this intimate and spiritual union of these two saints, master and disciple, who shaped, the first one through his thought and charism, the second by his writing and editing, the life and history of the Congregation. ■



Detail of the painting on the boundary wall of our formation house of Adiapodoumé

IN
THE
SACRED
MONTH
OF
HEART

Love is what leads a man forward, says Saint Michael. It is the secret spring that must be discerned in postulants and novices. If it is not there you can do nothing.

“The devotion to the Sacred Heart consists in honouring by special worship the adorable Heart of Jesus, sacred furnace of divine love and source of graces for the world.”
(MS 63)



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