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The word of the superior general

Ongoing formation, to be able to serve better

*“And with many such parables he preached the word to them (the crowd),
as they were able to understand.*

*He did not speak to them except in parables,
but he explained everything to his own disciples privately.”
(Mk 4.33-34)*

Dear Betharramites:

In the eyes of many people, we priests and religious are people who study a lot... different languages, courses and degrees, ten years of initial formation... But, what is real in all this? Do we prepare ourselves adequately to announce the gospel according to the demands and the language of a changing world? Or is formation becoming an opportunity to feed a concealed self-referential individualism?

It is well known that people have a tendency to study what they like most, what we think is the fulfilment of our lives, and this seems fair. However, this is not exactly the

experience we should look for when we think of being disciples for the Kingdom, to which the Gospel of Christ calls us.

At the beginning of our formation, we often feel like the blind man in St. Mark's gospel: we do not see clearly, we see "*people like trees walking*" (Mk 8:24). Everything changes when, later, we mature in the experience of our own vocation. By accepting the Will of God, the same Jesus who spoke to the people in parables, takes us aside and explains to us the deep meaning of things (Mk 4:34). He educates us in our innermost self. And in this deep relationship with Him (which is not simple 'cosiness') the experience of formation grows. We learn to be docile to the Divine Master, who has his own timetable, content and methods...

Following Christ always means self-emptying, it implies living the paradox of the Gospel: "leaving everything in order to obtain", "going out to reach the goal", "losing everything to gain the Kingdom". In this sense, self-fulfilment (so much spoken of today) is rather a consequence of a freely assumed process of self-transcendence in Christ, and not a condition for following the Lord.

Ongoing formation lasts a lifetime. There are many ordinary resources available: the examination of conscience, lectio divina, the Eucharist, frequent confession, spiritual direction, the fulfilment of our missionary duties and activities, community service and prayer, meetings in community, in the Congregation and at the diocesan level; the preparation of the homily, the specific study of documents, readings, interpersonal relationships, the annual retreat, online courses, etc. These are actions of ordinary life that help us protect, cultivate and purify our human and vocational balance. They are all ongoing formation.

However, there are times in life when all these tools are not enough and it is necessary to take a deeper period of formation for ourselves, either because we feel weary, or because a relationship has wounded us, or because we have experienced a failure in the apostolate, or a disappointment, or because routine has worn us out, or because after a long time we are experiencing a change to another mission. This is when we need time and space that allows us to deepen our knowledge of ourselves, discovering the resistances that, through no

fault of our own, keep us blocked and prevent us from giving the best we have, cooperating in the maturation of our personality, our vocation and mission.

This would be the path of growth, maturity and fullness in the Spirit along which our relationship with Jesus, our Master, with the Father and with our brothers leads us. It is about freeing the “*secret spring of love*” that St. Michael Garicoits spoke of, because something keeps it blocked and takes away the drive, dynamism and commitment from our existence as Betharramites. In such times as these, it is not enough to take a few courses (in person or online) or read a few books. It is not enough to take a vacation or go on a trip of several days. We need to look at the fundamental experiences of our life, the motivations that guide our conduct, the purpose of our existence and our action: the re-encounter with the person of Jesus, who has given a new direction to our life, which, for some reason, has been fading, or has become a burden.

The 2023 General Chapter in Chiang Mai invited us all to be more attentive to accompanying religious in the first years after final profession and ordination. The Acts say:

No. 93: Our Rule of Life reminds us that ongoing formation “*is essential for the life and mission of our Congregation in the Church*” (RL n. 170). This reality invites each religious to be primarily responsible for his own formation, along a path of continuous growth and maturation. “*Ongoing formation fosters the maturity of the person, and is therefore never finished: it is a continuous process of growth.*” (Formation Guide n. 250). To help each religious on this journey of formation, the General Chapter proposes the following:

No. 94: 1. After having examined the departures of religious in recent years and other weaknesses during the first years of religious life, the General Chapter insistently asks *Regional Superiors to establish a plan of ongoing formation (POP) for the first three years of the newly ordained and new religious brothers*. The Regional Superior, with the collaboration of the Regional Vicar and the Superior of the community, should support the new religious. These points should be included in the personal project of the religious, in which his personal gifts and missionary enthusiasm should be valued.

We believe that all formation re-establishes the person as a true disciple. We propose useful instruments that should be taken up with faith and diligence, so that we may bear fruits of service in the pastoral and mission that is proposed to us.

Thus, *along the road*, as with the disciples of Emmaus, we are rediscovering the meaning of a well-incarnated and inculturated formation, since theories don't change the world, but rather the personal and community experience of a profound configuration to the feelings of Christ, humble and obedient.

May God bless you:

Fr. Gustavo Agín scj
Superior General

QUESTIONS TO SHARE IN COMMUNITY:

1. *Share the fruits of an Ongoing Formation experience that has helped you in your Betharramite discipleship.*
2. *Has your vicariate recently suffered the departure of a brother (to the diocese, dispensation of ministry, etc.)? How did experience it? In your opinion: Did something fail in the formation of this brother?*
3. *What importance have you given to Ongoing Formation in your religious life? What new experience could make it more fruitful?*

Dilexit Nos, Encyclical Letter Of the Holy Father On the Human and Divine Love Of the Heart Of Jesus Christ

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 24 October of the year 2024

The Importance Of the Heart...

What do we mean by "the Heart"?... Returning to the heart...

...The heart unites the fragments:

19.

The heart is also capable of unifying and harmonizing our personal history, which may seem hopelessly fragmented, yet is the place where everything can make sense. The Gospel tells us this in speaking of Our Lady, who saw things with the heart. She was able to dialogue with the things she experienced by pondering them in her heart, treasuring their memory and viewing them in a greater perspective. The best expression of how the heart thinks is found in the two passages in Saint Luke's Gospel that speak to us of how Mary "treasured (*syneterei*) all these things and pondered (*symbállousa*) them in her heart" (cf. Lk 2:19 and 51). The Greek verb *symbálllein*, "ponder", evokes the image of putting two things together ("symbols") in one's mind and reflecting on them, in a dialogue with oneself. In Luke 2:51, the verb used is *dieterei*, which has the sense of "keep". What Mary "kept" was not only her memory of what she had seen and heard, but also those aspects of it that she did not yet understand; these nonetheless remained present and alive in her memory, waiting to be "put together" in her heart.





Ongoing formation, how to make one's Betharramite vocation grow



Like pilgrims of Emmaus

| Fr. Davi Lara scj
Regional Superior

One of the priorities of our Congregation is formation composed of two big stages. The first one is initial formation, that starts with the entering in the house of formation and is at its climax with the presbyteral ordination or for the religious brothers with the final profession.

The second big step is the ongoing formation which starts after the ordination or the final profession according to the different cases and continues till the twilight of our life.

We have very much improved in the sphere of initial formation. The formees of the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar have met for a long time to share the experiences and challenges of their missions.

Our formation houses strive

hard to realize with great loyalty our project of formation. However concerning the ongoing formation, though improvements have been realized, much remains to be done.

We are, all of us, responsible for our formation process. Each of us must go on training himself to be faithful to his consecration and to be fit (*idoneus*) for the mission. It is the only way for us to reply to the challenges of the modern world. The daily meeting with the "Word", the retreat periods, spiritual attendance as well as therapeutic attendance, the study and the updating are only a few concrete examples of ongoing formation.

However, the usury of some brothers because of too many activities, pastoral frustrations,



problems with the community or health problems often jeopardize the training course, even sometimes the identity of the religious brother. So it is crucial to continue our pilgrim Mission path because to be a follower is to walk with Jesus and share his mission. Like Emmaüs the Master goes on talking with his followers' hearts, especially those who are in low spirits or exhausted. All along this path which requires commitment we will recover our identity of Betharramite consecrated person.

Young people are also victims of usury because in spite of the energy and generosity of their devotion they often lack experience and resilience capacity to face obstacles and challenges. Frustrations appear then, with the usury of the person (physical, spiritual, psychological) as a consequence. We need to walk

together and develop a project of both personal and community formation which allow us to be faithful to our religious vocation and to charism, to live our mission with enthusiasm and ability (*idonei*) cultivate brotherhood in our communities and make the feeling of belonging to the Betharram family grow.

For this, in the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar, we commit ourselves to go on accompanying the religious both in their personal and community path. Next year we will organize two meetings at the regional level: ELAB and the meeting of the young religious with temporary vows and with less than final profession). It will be a big opportunity to meet and share experiences. In the same way in each Vicariate we will commit ourselves to have periods of formation in our community

meetings and assemblies and also to keep enough time for our annual retreat.

May our patron, the Venerable Father Auguste Etchecopar, help

us to engage ourselves in the formation to continue to reply with the immensity of charity, within the limits of our position. ■



Formation is unique

| P. Beñat Oyhénart scj

“Speak to me about ongoing formation.” – My God! How difficult it is!

For “initial formation,” the Rule of Life and the Formation Guide can rely on the Code of Canon Law and the magisterium of the Church...

Initial formation: for those of us “who were between 18 and 25 years old in May 1968,” we were impatient for it to end! “Pastoral work,” or “service to the people of God,” was the most important. However, we did not approve of the priest welcoming his young vicar with these words: “Forget what you were taught in the seminary; here you will learn the real things!” Initial formation is irreplaceable; taking it very seriously is a necessity! For religious life as much as for ordained ministry...

To halt at initial formation is to

die! Our elders knew it! Soon after Vatican II, I recall Father Rémi Rous: “You, young people, you move forward! And that is right! We, the elderly, have the weight of old habits that slows us down! Move forward!” I also remember Father Joseph Canton, almost a hundred years old, handing me a newspaper clipping: “Look at this article: it might interest you!” They got it!

The consecrated life “must above all learn allow itself to be formed by daily life, by community and by its brothers and sisters, by everyday things, ordinary and extraordinary, by prayer and apostolic work, in joy and in suffering, until the moment of death.” (RL n°15; cf. Formation Guide n° 255)

Day by day, the community forms us: it allows us to reread our life, and not simply undergo it; it also allows us to welcome it as a gift

from God. Our various meetings are really important: meetings, sessions, retreats, etc. We must not say: "Meetings are useless." We cannot imagine community meetings which only happen once a year...

One day, the time comes to take a step back. 1990-1991 in Adiapodoumé, was for me a grace: the Catholic Institute of West Africa helped me rediscover a taste

for a more systematic reflection, with inculturation of the faith as a backdrop.

During a session of formators in the Holy Land, in 2000, a Salesian father assured us: "*Ongoing formation is the paradigm for initial formation.*" "*Paradigm*": a nice word! I like to think that formation is unique, from the beginning to the end of religious life. ■



Spità

| P. Daniel González scj

I've always been drawn to the image of God burning with love, while humanity remains like icebergs. Because, at the end, it all comes down to closeness, to an Encounter... and the Fire will eventually melt the ice.

As a teenager and young boy, the Lord came to meet me through Nature and the Word. In both paths, He used teachers to whom I am deeply grateful, and the Ignatian pedagogy has shaped my journey.

Creation and the Gospels have been spaces where I came to know Jesus and discovered myself. In that "face-to-face" encounter, my desire to "be with Him" was born and grew.

The joy of being with Him has always driven me to seek creative ways for others to have the same experience.

My initial formation and the academic training I received throughout my life have enriched my relationship with Him, fostered my personal growth, deepened my relationships, and guided my way of inviting others to draw near to the Fire that never stops melting.

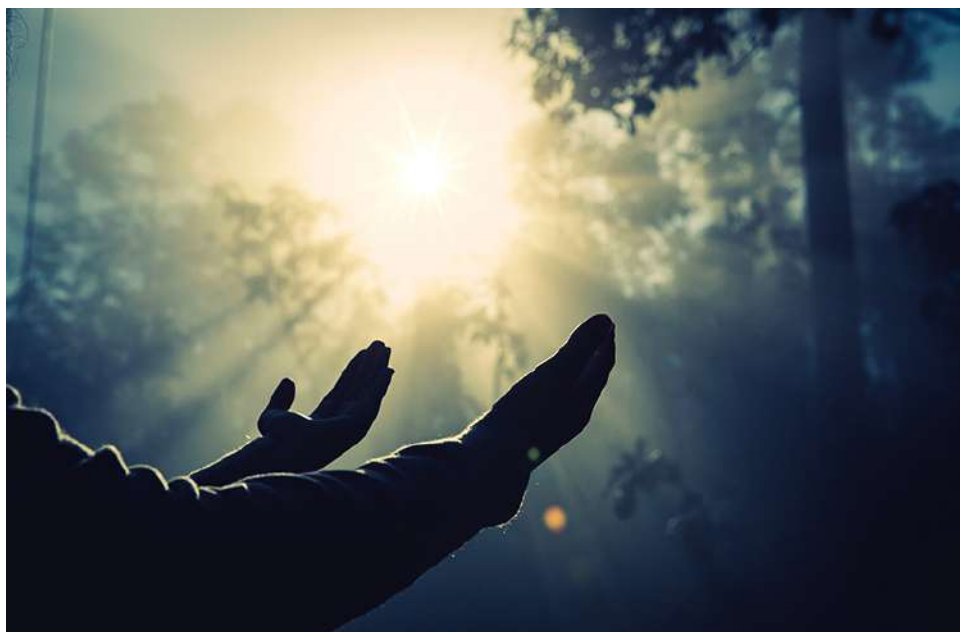
Some years ago, I began to feel an excess of words within me, sensing a need for more silence in my prayer: to silence the "I" and contemplate the "I Am." Guided by Franz Jalics's book *Contemplative Exercises*, I started this inward journey, trusting I would meet

my most genuine self and the God dwelling within me, where Deep Desire and God's Will become one, where Intuition and the Spirit will walk hand in hand. *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Mt 6:21) was the verse I chose

for my ordination card, and today it resonates within me with renewed strength.

In line with this journey and my desire to integrate my body in this new stage of life, I've started practicing Chi Kung, one of the methods of traditional Chinese medicine.

Though there is always a longing to gain knowledge to transform life, today, I seek a more active passivity to



be like clay in the hands of the Potter, allowing Him to continue shaping me, letting myself be embraced by His fire (ongoing formation).

I would like to sum up this journey in three words: Present - Presence - Gift. That is, making myself Present, to be in His Presence, and to become once again a Present (a gift). ■



My personal ongoing formation as scj religious and priest

| Fr. Nonthaphat Mayoe scj

I am Father Peter Nontharphat Mayoe. I received my priestly ordination on June 28, 2014.

In 2019, after 5 years of my ordination my companions and I had an opportunity to go to Vietnam.

There, we learned about different kinds of ministries. This helped us to support and help each other, which I consider to be very important in the life of priesthood.

Even though we are from different

places, countries, and cultural contexts, we learned to respect and support each other.

After that, during the Ongoing formation we the young priests saw the importance of forming a group together. So, in 2019 we established a young priest's group.

In June 17-19, 2024 we organized the first seminar for young priests on the theme "Be Opened, Arise and Walking Together". It was a week program, at the Betharram Foundation, Chom Thong District, Chiang Mai Province.

The seminar helped us to strengthen our community and priestly life. It enabled us to support each other in our ongoing formation, through listening, sharing



and encouraging each other, in strengthening our vocation as priest. Personally, it helped me to feel the love of God and inspired to go out and proclaim the good news of Jesus with courage and enthusiasm. Moreover, it strengthened the energetic spirit of the young priests and to be happy in our priestly vocation. For example, during our ongoing formation we as priests, need to love one another, understand each other, and share



our happiness in our personal and community life.

Now, I have been ordained for 10 years, and I see even more the importance to focus towards

my ongoing priestly life to bring happiness for myself, to the others and to the Betharram family. ■



Ongoing Formation: a Priority

| P. Jean-Paul Kissi Ayo scj

Formation remains an essential element in our journey of religious life. The end of initial formation always needs to be supported and accompanied to allow the young religious member to experience a smoother transition into the new realities he will encounter. It also enables every religious member—regardless of years of experience—to maintain their formation and growth, as religious life is a call to

continual conversion and dynamism in following Christ.

Following the last General Chapter in Chiang Mai in 2023, the Vicariate of Côte d'Ivoire is committed to implementing the recommendations on formation, amongst others number 99:

"The General Chapter insists that each Vicariate offer an intensive programme of ongoing formation for



the members of the Vicariate in the form of annual retreats, assemblies, recollections, virtual meetings, etc."

So, with the support of the Regional Superior, Father Simone, we have established a formation service within the Vicariate to develop a continuous formation program. It is also worth noting that the Region has an ongoing formation service, with representatives from each Vicariate to accompany, coordinate, and support ongoing formation in our various communities.

For several years now, our Vicariate has already been offering an annual retreat for all religious members. We gather with a preacher around a theme to meditate and pray, most often in the Ignatian spiritual tradition. Each year, we hold a Vicariate assembly on a regular basis with all religious members. Additionally, since last year, we have been holding two meetings per year for the perpetually professed members of the Vicariate

to share our experiences, encourage one another, pray together, live our spirituality, and have times of formation. Religious members also participate in formation sessions organised within their respective dioceses, for both religious members and priests.

The Vicariate's formation service also offers a program to accompany religious members on our annual meetings and according to their years of religious life experience. Audiovisual meetings will also be held to minimise travel and transportation difficulties. We are also connected with the Jesuit Institute in Abidjan, which offers ongoing formation for religious members, and some of our members are already participating.

Ongoing formation is a priority for us, and we are committed to fulfilling this essential aspect of our religious life in the Betharramite community. ■



The point of view of the formator

| P. Glecimar Guilherme da Silva scj

"A vocation can only come from God: woe to the man who claims this right for himself!"

1) Saint Michael Garicoits, *Spiritual Doctrine*, Chapter

This pearl of our spirituality has always been a puzzle for me. Indeed, since a vocation is such a particular

XV – *On Vocation*; § 286.

thing between the one who calls and the one who answers, I have always asked myself: at what point can a third person possibly enter into this story?

Throughout my journey as a formator, I have realized the importance of accompaniment, not only as a way for candidates to confront their motivations and their experience of faith, but also as a privileged way of bearing witness to the true fruits that arise from this dialogue and the result of these fruits in the experience of a definitive consecration to the Lord.

I had to discover that there was a very discreet way of working in someone's vocational journey. I also understood that the *Narratio Fidei* was an excellent tool for helping the candidate to grow in faith and to remain in his vocation, remaining faithful to the consequences of the response given to this call.

Thinking about the reflections that emerged from the 28th General Chapter on ongoing formation, I must confess that I was saddened (and felt hurt!) by the departure of so many brothers from the Congregation. The question arises: "Where have we failed?" But since we are also men who walk under the impulse of Hope, I try to look to the horizon and see what lies ahead. I welcome the challenges launched by the Chapter and the signs of the times. In this regard, the Vicariate of Brazil encourages and banks on

the participation of our religious in retreats and assemblies, emphasizing the value of this encounter and offering spaces of greater fraternal conviviality.

The goal is not only to cultivate these moments of common life, where we find ourselves, but also to focus on attentive and respectful listening to the concerns and dilemmas that some brothers may face.

As part of ongoing formation, and in accordance with the issues and proposals highlighted by the General Chapter, we are planning meetings for our young religious next year. Our aim is to promote and cultivate conviviality, the sharing of faith and life, in order to rediscover the feeling, the desire and the joy of belonging to the Charism and to our religious family. May God help us to live and bear witness every day to the beauty of responding to our vocation. May He help us make more real the authenticity of this first love by sharing our life, our faith (and even our pains!), embraced by Hope and supported by a true life of fraternity, welcome, listening and mutual respect. ■



Ongoing formation in the Vicariate of Thailand-Vietnam

| Fr. Kriangsak Kitsakunwong scj

“Permanent formation promotes the maturity of the person, hence why it is never complete: it is a continual process of growth”. (Ratio Formationis N. 250).

In order to help each religious in this journey of formation, the General Chapter underlines that each Vicariate should offer an intensive programme of ongoing formation for all its members.

With the help of my humble knowledge, understanding and experience, I would like to share about the importance of ongoing formation in our religious life, involving regularity and consistency on our life journey in all dimensions as Betharramite religious

and in activities at different levels.

At the Diocesan level: every two months a seminar is arranged and talks are given on various current topics for all the priests working in the diocese. Adding to that, every two months we hold a meeting with all the priests at a district level, where we have faith sharing during a Lectio Divina and the eucharistic celebration.

At the Vicariate level: we hold regular meetings every two months with all our members. We come together and share our joy with others through the Holy Eucharist, prayers, our mission experiences etc.

We arrange a regular annual retreat. We invite a priest from another



congregation to give talks on various themes in order to help and nourish the spiritual life of our members, and encourage our religious life journey.

These are the activities currently proposed in the Vicariate in terms of ongoing formation: Formation Courses (one year course or a summer course), some of our members are sent to study in India or invited to follow online courses for formators. Short courses or sessions based on religious life, psycho-spirituality and safe guarding and so on. They are organized both online or as classroom courses. Sabbaticals years organized by the religious men and women in Bangkok: for our members who celebrate their 25 years of religious life or priesthood and for those who are willing to participate. Personal retreat or recollections for those who want to renew their religious life by reflecting on their life journey and their mission. Personal reading and renewal on our

Betharramite Charism.

Through these activities, first we need to discern and focus on a specific field for the needs of the Vicariate: to prepare our religious members as formators, as religious involved in youth ministry or in spirituality; to help those who are willing to renew or refresh their religious life.

It is possible to meet the needs of the religious because ongoing formation is an integral part of our daily lives, it is a lifelong process. Each one of us carries the primary responsibility for our own ongoing formation. God's call does not stop at a certain age. God continues to transform our lives in a way we do not always understand. Like the first disciples, we are truly reborn in Christ, and yet at the same time we are still in the process of being reborn thanks to the ongoing formation. ■



The Superior General, Fr. Gustavo Agín scj, with his Council gathered on 21 October 2024 in Rome, took the following decisions:

■ Approval of the *appointment of some community superiors*:

- *Fr. Zugarramurdi for the Community "Côte Basque"* (Vicariate of France-Spain, RSMG) for a 3rd mandate from October 21st;
- *Fr. Joseph Ruspil for the Community of Saint-Palais* (Vicariate of France-Spain, RSMG) for a 3rd mandate from October 21st;
- *Fr. Marius Angui for the Community of Dabakala* (Vicariate of Côte d'Ivoire, RSMG) for a 2nd mandate from October 21st;
- *Fr. Raoul Segla for the Community of Katiola* (Vicariate of Côte d'Ivoire, RSMG) for a 2nd mandate from October 21st;

■ *Approval of the closure of the Community of San Juan Bautista-Barracas and the opening of the Community of Barracas with the approval of the appointment of Fr. Sebastián García as Superior*, for a 1st term, starting from 21 October 2024 (Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay); the house and church of *San Juan Bautista* in Buenos Aires will be returned to the Diocese from 1st January 2025, as requested by the Archbishop of Buenos Aires;

■ *The headquarters of the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar and that of the Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay are moved to the house of Lambaré (Paraguay) and to the Colegio San José in Buenos Aires, respectively;*

■ *Approval of the erection of the Ho Chi Minh City Community in Vietnam* (Vicariate of Thailand-Vietnam, RSMJC), from 1st December 2024, and *approval of the appointment of Fr. Albert Sa-at Prathansantiphong as Superior* for a 1st term, starting on the same date.

The Superior General has given his consent to rent a new house to welcome the canonically erected community.



■ **Presentation to the diaconate of Br. Nicolas Surasak Doohae** (Vicariate of Thailand-Vietnam, RSMJC).

■ **Admission of Br. Alwyn Crasta to final profession** (Vicariate of India, RSMJC).





Memories from Fr. Magendie: The arrival of the first Betharramites in Buenos Aires

| Roberto Cornara, archivist

The third edition (revised and expanded) of *The Life and Works of the Venerable Michael Garicoïts* was published in 1917, a work written by Father Basilide Bourdenne. It had first been published in 1878, then reissued in a second edition in 1889. The task of revising this first biography of the founder of the Congregation was entrusted to Father Jean Fargues, assisted by Father Ernest Lullier. For the chapter concerning the foundation of the American mission, Father Fargues decided to consult one of the founding members who was still alive, Father Jean Magendie, who had been only 21 years old when the first missionaries, led by Father Didace Barbé, set off for Buenos Aires in 1856.

In two long, detailed letters (both from 1911), Father Magendie corrected several parts of the saint's biography, drawing on his memories and on the now deeply rooted tradition of the South American communities.

In this issue of the "NEF", and in the next, we are giving space to Father Magendie, who, in a simple and concise style, describes the arrival of the first missionaries in Buenos Aires and the founding of the San José College.



Fr. Jean Magendie scj (1835 - 1925),
PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1913 IN ROSARIO (ARGENTINA).

« *I think it's good to outline our arrival in Buenos Aires briefly, leaving it to Father Lullier to expand and edit as he sees fit. On November 3rd [1856], very early in the morning, the Étincelle dropped anchor off Montevideo. Around noon, Captain Silhouette informed us that his ship was not going directly to Buenos Aires and, to avoid making us wait, he arranged to transfer us onto a small steamer called Pampa, which sailed between Buenos Aires and Montevideo. He even paid for our passage, so we departed Montevideo that same evening, November*

3rd, on the Pampa, and it was this little steamer that braved the rough storm that struck around 11 p.m., in the middle of and at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. Only after immense efforts were we able to drop anchor, which halted our journey; by the time we resumed it was the morning of the 4th, so that we did not arrive in Buenos Aires until 2 p.m., whereas people normally arrived around six in the morning. What's more, the Pampa bore no insignia indicating our presence on board. Also, back then it was not possible to telegraph a message from Montevideo to Buenos Aires, so finally, we just arrived at an unexpected hour.

All this resulted in our unnoticed and therefore modest landing ashore, whereas the Buenos Aires government had arranged a proper reception for us. The port captain had been instructed to come out to meet us with his boats and escort us directly to the San Francisco convent as soon as a ship was seen flying the French flag and the port of Bayonne's insignia. But none of this happened because no one knew we were on board the Pampa, as it carried neither the French flag nor arrived at the usual time.

So we disembarked simply, like the other passengers, and took a modest hotel right nearby, across from the dock, called the Hotel de la Marina, run by a Basque family named Çuburu. We needed food, so we had our first meal in America there; the next morning, we were taken to the San Francisco convent. After that meal, Fathers Barbé, Larrouy, and Guimon went to visit the bishop but didn't find him; he was on a pastoral tour. Before leaving, however, he had made arrangements for our reception and lodging. The lodging was to be

provided by the government, and a Basque committee was supposed to supply sustenance for us. Up to this point, the government and the committee were in agreement. But Mr. Sallano and other countrymen submitted a petition to the government requesting the Church of La Merced for our Fathers. Bishop Escalada would have agreed, but he encountered strong opposition. This refusal, along with other disagreements unknown to me, caused a division between the government and the committee, which ultimately disbanded without taking any action. Consequently, it was the government alone that provided our lodging and paid for our food for the entire time we stayed at San Francisco, from November 5th to December 16th. In the meantime, our Fathers, during Bishop Escalada's absence, were warmly received by Don Martin Boneo, Provisor (vicar general), and by Dr. Aneiros, the bishop's secretary, who later became the Archbishop of Buenos Aires. However, they could not offer anything to our Fathers at that moment but graciously promised to help them find support."

(Letter to Fr. Jean Fargues,
5 May 1911)

We know that the fathers stayed at the San Francisco convent until December; Father Magendie recalls that it was on the 16th of the month that the small community moved into a house they rented near the Church of San Juan and the Poor Clares' monastery, where the oldest Betharramite residence in Buenos Aires is located. ■



Our sanctification and that of our neighbour joined together, such is our principal and special end, the purpose to pursue everywhere, in the noviciate, in manual work, in prayer, conversations, etc. Everywhere and always, we must endeavour to become apt, uncommitted and open (“idonei, expediti et expositi”), but without interfering ourselves in any way whatsoever.

(Saint Michael Garicoïts, DS § 346)



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