

*News bulletin of the
Congregation of the
Sacred Heart of Jesus
of Betharram*

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Father Barbé's log (2)

Which is what we did pathetically, after which we abandoned ourselves to Divine Providence.

Monday 1st September – During the night a rather large hole was noticed on the Etincelle. The powers that be had been discussing what to do should we not return to Bayonne. Members of the Counsel, take good care, you might even have a problem on your hands if you wanted to call us back. Please God, don't let that happen. For a very long time we have been expected in Buenos Aires.

Everyone calmed down; a detailed examination of our boat was carried out and soon we saw that the damage was less important than we had originally imagined. We got down to the job of repairing the hole; our boat was quickly in working order and declared capable of continuing her journey. Thanks be to God!

(to be continued)

On the schedule of the General Council

February 14th, Albavilla

Introduction by Fr. Enrico Frigerio to the Acts of the Council of the Congregation, with the Religious from North Italy

February 15th, Adiapodoumé

End of the visit of Fr. Gaspar Fernandez, Superior General, to the communities of the **Ivory Coast**

March 13th-17th, Rome

Meeting of the **Commission for the Rule of Life** at the Generalate House (FF. Ierullo, Felet, Moura and Oyhenart)



Fraternal ■ correction

We apologize with those we may have forgotten in our **anniversaries list**.

We are also sorry for those we unintentionally made **24 or 48 hours older**.

And thank you for pointing out our mistakes or oversights. It depends on you that those youth indiscretions or **omissions be promptly rectified!**



104th year, n°2

February 14th,
2006

Family News

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 **A word from
the Superior General**

Love our vocation

Brothers, you have been called and chosen; work all the harder to justify it by good deeds. If you do all these things there is no danger that you will ever fall away. In this way you will be granted admittance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.
(2 Peter 1, 10-11)

This short reading from Lauds for Saturday of the first week draws my attention to the importance of loving our vocation so that our whole life is fully consistent.

A vocation is the experience of God's love for me personally, and therefore in his sight I am important. And if I am important for him, everything that concerns me interests Him. Since a vocation is a meeting, my sole centre of interest is Jesus, beloved Son of the Father, his person, his mission, his kingdom.

This is why, everything has meaning for me, even what is trifling humanly speaking. If such an experience becomes reality and conviction for me, then everything I endure has meaning and consistence: joys and sorrows, health and sickness, life and death, consolation and desolation, abundance or lack of it. What could be an unfulfilled psychological need has a place, meaning and value in my life.

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There in lies the secret of serenity and personal happiness. There also we develop the enthusiasm, the passion and joy with which to confront the activities of the mission. This is the secret which I must share with my brothers in community for their edification: may they be able to admire and be grateful for the Heavenly Father's action in me and may we trust him ever more.

My vocation is as alive, present and real today as the day I first met the Lord when he called me to follow him. I have followed him through difficult times, through doubts, and temptations. I continue walking at his side, and I continue trying to be like him, by being in communion with him, determined to be like him. The mystery of my vocation dates from the day I met him, when I was 15, 18, or 20 years of age and continues to be vital for me, so much so that without it I am nothing.

To keep alive and present this fidelity to our vocation requires us to have great trust in Him who chose us, and a serious undertaking to develop daily our friendship with him, whether by prayer, the Eucharist, reconciliation, spiritual counselling, faithfully performing our duty, community sharing, dedication to the mission, and practice of the examination of conscience.

This exercise should begin by a detailed appreciation of the graces the Lord has showered on me throughout the day. Where was the Lord present today, proving his love for me through the different events and meetings? Examination of conscience is a daily exercise of awareness, helping me to discover in my life the presence of a loving father who has loved me and continues to love me, who has chosen me and continues to choose me, who has called me and continues to call me to reproduce in my soul the image of his beloved

*To develop
daily our
friendship
with the
Lord*

Betharramerica
1856-2006



On board the Three-Master
L'Etincelle en route for Montevideo

31st August – 17hours. We are not only on board, but on the high seas. Thanks to the tug-boat, we crossed the estuary without incident, without our even noticing it. We are beginning to feel the boat rolling and pitching. The tug-boat which is still along side us, is carrying the priests who have been good to us. They are trying to let us know how they are feeling towards us, and we try as best we can to say thank you.. A few minutes later the tug-boat lowers its standard three times. It's the signal to say goodbye. L'Etincelle replies with all courtesy. We are soon on our own; the tug-boat has disappeared.

We go down to our cabins. Good Heavens! What a sight! What distress! On all sides, weeping and moaning! What is the matter? Quite simply, several of us are already sea sick. Anywhere else there would have been a word of sympathy for the unfortunate victims; here you just shrug your shoulders and carry on as before. This doesn't mean that there are no charitable feelings amongst us; but we are driven by an irresistible force to get to our cabins.

Here we are at last! Good Lord, how tired and overwhelmed we are! An indescribable weariness has taken possession of our entire being. Try as best we can to be brave, to be full of strength, it is plain for all to see that we are wasting away. Goodbye appetite, goodbye study, goodbye sleep. We want to stand up, impossible; we want to walk, just as impossible; we want to lie down, boring. You feel your head is exploding all the time. All of a sudden M. Guimon, who is in the same sorry state as the others, maybe even worse, calls: "Courage, my friends. We are saving souls". "Well done", we reply, "courage and let's have some supper".

Second episode
of our monthly
serial. Six
Betharramites
are sailing to-
wards America.
One of them,
Father Barbé,
is opening
his log to us.
It was 150
years ago. And
the adventure
goes on...



FEBRUARY

14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	F. Bertrand Belhartz F. Giuseppe Pozzi
15	Auguri per 45 anni di professione	F. Severino Urbani
17	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean-Luc Morin
18	Happy birthday	Br. Andrew Ferris
19	Joyeux anniversaire Por 20 de profesión, felicidades	P. Henri Lamasse P. Francisco de Paula
20	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Mirco Trusgnach
22	Happy birthday	Br. William Finucane Br. Charles Enakius Fr. Alberto Pensa
24	Por 10 años de sacerdocio enhorabuenas	P. José Asunción González
26	Happy birthday	Fr. Chodki Damronganurak
27	Happy birthday	Br. Johnson Kuryeadom
28	Joyeux anniversaire Feliz cumpleaños	P. Pierre Salla P. Francisco de Paula

MARCH

1	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	P. André Gillet P. Albino de Giobbi
2	Por 30 años de profesión, felicidades	P. Miguel Angel Cardozo P. Constancio López Morales
3	Happy birthday	Fr. Tidkham Jailertrit
5	Buon compleanno	P. Giuseppe Franchi
7	Joyeux anniversaire Happy Birthday	P. Joseph Saint-Pé Br. Xavier Irudayaraj Abraham
8	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Henri Marsaa-Poey
9	Happy Birthday Por 10 años de sacerdocio enhorabuenas	Br. John Peter Philip P. Osvaldo Caniza
10	Buon compleanno	P. Pietro Felet
11	Buon compleanno	P. Pierpaolo Nava
12	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Joseph Canton
15	Joyeux anniversaire Happy birthday	F. Paul Lamothe Br. Antony J. Livin Fernando
17	Buon compleanno	P. Natale Re
19	60 ans de profession, félicitations!	P. Eugène Lhouerrou

Son. Today I thank God because *for me his love is eternal*. And it is only after this that I judge my answer to his love. If I have failed to answer as his child, I ask his forgiveness.

To love one's vocation means that the whole purpose of my life, what I hold dearest above all else is Jesus, his Kingdom, his business. This means that I am not ashamed to be what I am: *To be a man, to be a Christian, to be a priest, a priest of Betharram, superior of this particular community. To be what I am and that in truth!* As Saint Michael wrote (Correspondence Vol II, p.28, note 3). I should conduct myself like this always and in all situations. It means that I carry on the struggle to maintain my identity, without trying to be someone else by taking as my model the secular culture surrounding us. In reality I could not possibly be someone apart from Jesus, who loved me and who gave himself up for me. (Gal 2.20)

Gaspar Fernandez Perez, SCJ

Father Etcheopar wrote... to his sister, February 14th, 1868

What a grace it is to feel deeply that we are nothing and that God is everything! Perfection is in there, isn't it? (...) Our failings are themselves part of the providential design of the Infinite Mercy. It is up to us to take the benefit of it, by facing ill-fortune, or better ill-nature, without losing our temper and even by having a joyful attitude... Is there any better reason for rejoicing than when a weak and proud nature is being defeated! (...) What can better glorify God than an unshakable trust that makes the best of the worst failings in order to improve one's prayer life and to cling more and more to God?...

*To be what
I am
and that
in truth!*

SPECIAL
CHAPTERFRENCH
PROVINCE

Called, consecrated, sent

We publish the contribution of Bro. Emile Garat, at the opening of the Chapter held at Betharram from December 27th to 29th. The prayers (in orange) are adapted from Saint Michael's writings published in Fr. Oyhénart's book: *En avant!*

Here we are, gathered for the second session of the provincial chapter, I am glad to be among you like in a family meeting. What an unusual idea to ask a Brother to share his impressions! (...) [In the hope that you will be lenient with me], I invite you to meditate on three issues: being called, being consecrated, and being sent. For us, Religious of the Sacred Heart, this is a life project that we have chosen, and that we must unceasingly remind ourselves of.

Called

Every baptised person is called to announce the Good News. But this call has stemmed in our human history: where do I come from? Who am I? Why did I choose to say yes to this religious family born at Betharram? History is made of my own life and yours, of our human adventure, even of the adventure of a congregation, of a Province. History has a spiritual and divine starting point and is made at the same time of human experiences. I believe that it is important – even necessary and inescapable – to know the story of our family, in order to understand the present time and also to plan and build the future with courage and efficiency, with a renewed trust and far reaching projects. How often did St Michael himself go over his own life history in his writings? St Michael heard God's call; he was so impressed by the religious life of the sisters at Igon, that he himself called other people through the example of the Incarnate Word saying to his Father: “Here I am”.



What impressed you the most?

There is not enough space to list all the wonders that I have discovered in Thailand. Flowers? Well, Thailand is the kingdom of orchids! Animals? Besides the hens rummaging everywhere and the roosters singing throughout the night, the dogs, the cats, the birds, there are also snakes, crocodiles, and elephants. Traffic? Traffic is incredible, with bicycles, autos, lorries, and mainly scooters and delivery tricycles all around. Just try to imagine a small motorbike with six people on board! Food? In the Thai cooking the rice is the king, prepared with pepper, herbs and spices, and the fruits are: bananas, papaya, mango, coconut, etc. Craft industry? Many original and artistic items: handmade fabrics, embroideries, ceramics, silverware, silk. The people? Such nice, smiling and gentle persons!

How is the Here I am expressed in this mission?

In the daily attentiveness to any kind of need expressed by the people. I could make a long laudatory tale about my Brothers, with a plenty of facts, encounters, adventures, and achievements. A sort of funny, bizarre, interesting and adventurous chronicle! Our Fathers - hard-working, resourceful, patient, cheerful, and optimists - have brilliantly overcome the difficulties of the language, the culture, the mentality. In my opinion, this is how the commitment enclosed in the expression: "Here I am!" can truly come through.

What does Betharram in Thailand look like?

Betharram in Thailand perfectly adapted itself to the rhythm of life of this marvellous country which is in a phase of high development at every level. It is a young country turned to future, longing for ever more social and economic welfare. The most evident resource is the human resource. In the Betharramite communities there are already Thai religious who are ready to take up and to develop the pastoral activities managed so far by Fathers and Brothers from Europe. There are now about forty young people in the Betharramite study houses. These students represent the vitality of Betharram in Thailand.

ประเทศไทย
Thailand (thai writing)

*God's love
is a hidden
spring*

to be found externally, but that it was like a hidden spring inside us that had simply to be unblocked. Once we tuned in to God's purposes, his love would flow through us like a stream.

Our small Society has never been an Order of great intellectuals like the Dominicans, or an order of great preachers like the Franciscans, but in our simple humble way we feel privileged to work with our brothers and sisters to unblock the flow.

Austin Hughes, SCJ



5 MINUTES WITH... FATHER ERNESTO

Fr. Ernesto Colli, from the community of Castellazzo (near to Milan) has just come back from Thailand. Travel impressions.

Nef - Have you already been in Thailand? What did you do there?

No, it was my first time over there. After a visit to our communities, I have spent three months in Ban Pong where our Fathers run the Holy Family Centre, a splendid structure hosting 200 persons: a numerous family, provided with a sewing and embroidery school Workshop, housing for the elderly and many children seriously committed to building themselves a future, in a serene and family atmosphere.

What drove you to go so far away?

A journey to Thailand these days, with the nightmare of the chicken virus, is certainly not very attractive. At 78 I wanted to test my physical resistance and accepted the invitation of my friends and former students, FF. Ugo Donini, Raimondo Perlini, Carlo Luzzi and Alberto Pensa, to go and see their missionary activities. In the invitation I sensed that they wished to let me know about their struggles, their conquests, their efforts, and their projects.

*My God, who am I?
Nothing, by myself. But I was shaped
by your hands: you crowned me with
honour and glory. You granted me
with a mind able to know you, to love
you and to serve you; and by this, you
allow me to enjoy your eternal happi-
ness. This is how you created me.
Thank you, my Lord. EA 41*

- The past generations have thought, lived, worked in the surroundings where I live: of what I have received, what do I hold on to?
- Who is/are the religious who marked me on my own journey?
- Which calls do I hear for today?

Consecrated

Through the vows we proclaim that God is the centre of our lives: In this lies the prophetism of the vows. To proclaim that God is love, that He is all that we need. Today, more than ever, it is true that from many points of view the vows run counter to the current mentality.

Our vows require a high quality of faith, of hope and love that seems to be far beyond our strengths. The Betharramite way of living religious consecration, following the model of the heart of Jesus, is based on two main laws: the law of charity which is the purpose, the means and the reason of our consecration; the law of obedience which goes along with charity and turns charity into acts. In charity and obedience, used to say St Michael, we live "the very programme of the heart of Jesus: absolute generosity and obedience, perfect simplicity, unchanging gentleness ..." DS 43

Chastity as "gentleness" is the quality of God who became man without crushing his humanity nor diluting his divine essence, in the full respect of those two natures. This is how it runs for chastity, true human love associated with the respect and non possession of the other. Poverty is expressed by humility or simplicity which are equal to truth. We are all modelled out of the same soil. By accepting this, we will go surety for a



certain fraternal equality, without ambitions, and we will build up communication among us, a community revealing the attention we have for the shortcomings of the people around us, and revealing our struggle for creating a counter-climate. Obedience is lived through discernment and dialogue, in daily life by listening and, of course, through dedication.

We can see that the three vows have many points in common, on which we should now focus our attention: freedom, love for charity, our vulnerability and prophecy. Consecrated life is based in particular on two pillars: prayer life, necessary to constantly be tuned in to the will of the Father; community life, which is not only the place where we draw our strength through the union and the verification among brothers, but which is also a decisive element of our prophetic witness.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, who said in the first act: « Here I am! », give me the sentiments of charity, humility, gentleness, obedience and dedication. Teach us to say, with the same feelings: « Here I am! » EA 83

- In my religious life, what importance do I give to the vows?
- How do I live out charity, humility, gentleness, obedience and dedication?

Sent

“Religious, for their part, find in their consecrated life a privileged means of effective evangelization... Thanks to their consecration they are eminently willing and free to leave everything and to go and proclaim the Gospel even to the ends of the earth... often they are found at the outposts of the mission.” (Evangelii Nuntiandi)

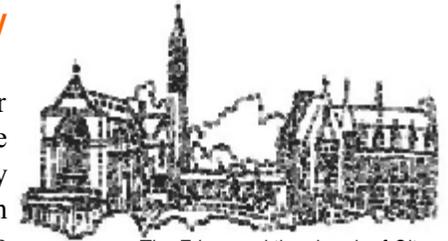
“Following the Incarnate Word, whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world (Jn 10,36), we in our turn are consecrated and sent to be in the world, by our whole religious life, a sign proclaiming Jesus Christ.” RofL 12



England: parish jubilee

It seems like yesterday

It is 25 years since Archbishop Dwyer invited us to Olton Friary, after the Capuchins solemnly pledged The Friary to the Archdiocese. So we moved from our old house in Worcester and made The Friary our H.Q. in England, and it has been the centre of our pastoral operations ever since.



The Friary and the church of Olton

In a quarter of a century the tide of priestly vocations has ebbed and flowed, and the church has radically changed its face in that time. We are a church with an emerging lay leadership, and our parish has been blessed with many competent lay apostles who have grown and flourished in God's service.

Simultaneously our English Province has been merged with our two rapidly growing communities on South India. Many parishioners have shared in the fruitful two way traffic that has grown up between Solihull and Bangalore, a traffic set to increase in the years ahead.

Way back in the 1960's Karl Rahner once said that Christians of the future would either be mystics or they would not there at all. But mystics are not weird and wonderful strange ascetics, they are simply people who feel that deep down, God has touched them and filled them with his love. And in recent years the thirst that ordinary people have felt for the 'touch' of God has been very evident, as prayer centres and retreat centres up and down the country can witness.

It is this need that we would like to try and address during our next 25 years here. Michael Garicoits our founder believed that the love of God was not something that had



Meeting on formation, January, 23rd-24th

On the road...

After having guided the novices of the Region and celebrated their first profession (in Asunción and Conceição do Rio Verde), the responsible for formation of the Region, with a heart full of joy, met up in Passa Quatro. In a serene and relaxed atmosphere, FF. Menezes and de Paula, for Brazil, Irala and Recalcati for Paraguay, Martin, Agin and the undersigned, for the Rio de La Plata, have spent two days working together, among the Brazilian young postulants and the Paraguayan newly Professed.

- Objectives:**
- To share on the experience in each (vice) province: formation in general; people in formation, vocation promotion (working methods, resources, results, local situation)
 - To tighten the links between ourselves and to streamline our criteria and our guidelines
 - To strengthen the formation curriculum, starting from what we have produced about the formation project for our Region.

- Constatations:**
- The importance of a well planned and well carried out vocation promotion
 - The presence of young people who are enthusiastic in following Christ in our Congregation. There is life in our family!
 - The need for a real discernment about motivations, the integral maturity of the person in formation, the need for a well-grounded catechises, initiation to prayer for aspirants and postulants... All this is the common ground for a regional noviciate.
 - The strong need to ensure personal guidance during the years of formation, particularly in the scholasticate. The viability of a regional scholasticate.

Back to our communities, we will continue our work by sharing our own reflections in a special way about the Regional Project in order to make it suitable for the local situation, in tune with our *Formation Guidelines* and the Rule of life, which is at present under revision.

From May 30 to June 1, we will gather again in Asuncion, to continue our journey together.

Daniel Gonzalez, SCJ

Following the Incarnate Word, we try to bear witness to God, to the love of God, to God who is Love. The Spirit is always with the missionary, even amidst the trials. By the action of the Spirit, the announcement of the Good News leads “to conversion”, that is to say to the full and sincere adhesion to Christ and his Gospel through faith. Saint Michael says: “To work for our own salvation and perfection, for the salvation and perfection of our neighbour, this is our element.”

Let's not forget that to be Betharramite is to be a missionary. We can make our own what John Paul II wished the members of Missionary Institutes to be: “They should revive the grace of their specific charism and courageously press on, preferring - in a spirit of faith, obedience and communion with their pastors - to seek the lowliest and most demanding places.” (Redemptoris Missio)

“Be perfect as your father in Heaven is perfect” (Mt 5,48): this is what Jesus asks us to be. My Lord, Father, we want to become perfect and we work for the perfection of our brothers. May all the means we put at the service of the others be helpful for our own spiritual growth. Render us obedient: we are means in your hand; you make us act, keep us united to you. Make of us capable men, free and fully open, to work for the salvation of our brethren; May we act with energy and generously, always where you expect us to be, as long as you wish. And when a mission is achieved may we go in peace and turn happily to other works. EA 261

- In the mission entrusted to me, where I am, in what way am I for the brethren what the sun is to the earth ?
- How do I practise, in the limits of my position, the immensity of charity?

Emile Garat, SCJ



French Provincial Chapter

Looking at the Acts

The Provincial commissions are study commissions whose duty is to provide the Provincial authorities with all the data and suggestions of the Province. They ensure the interest and participation of the religious in the welfare of the whole Province. It is the Provincial Chapter that decides how many commissions to have, elects their members and fixes their scope.
Rule of Life 1983 statutes 66-67

This article is not meant to be a report but a re-reading of the Chapter Acts in a Province stretching from Dabakala to Limoges via Fuenterrabia. During their meeting in Betharram from the 27th to the 29th December, 24 religious tried to integrate into the reality of their lives, the orientations of the last General Chapter and the Council of Congregation which followed.

How best to recreate a “community on mission”, while at the same time bearing in mind the signs of the times and the manpower available? To take up this challenge, a redistribution of the commissions seems the beginning of an answer. Three elected members are entrusted with this task; more than ever they want to throw open their discussion to others and make the entire Province aware of the dossiers.

Furthermore, their mandate has undergone important changes, symbolized by the creation of a new place for reflection and suggestions: the commission **laity-religious**. What is its purpose? “To rediscover our baptismal vocation common to all, and rooted in the charism of St Michael. Thus to serve the Church as a mystery of communion in the different states of life; and to enrich each other mutually by spiritual sharing and common initiatives. Through this partnership we recognize a sign of the times expressing God’s will for the Betharramite family”, according to the Acts of the Chapter. We couldn’t say it better ourselves.

This key idea of partnership is to be found in the other three instances of religious involvement. The commission of **Consecrated Life and Mission**, whose aim is the unification of the two ends of all vocation (consecration-mission), will invite the laity to its meetings. Exchanges, discernment, mature reflection on projects, are so many



Vice-Province of Brazil

Study houses in Vila Matilde and Passa Quatro ■ On January 31st, 2006, the General Superior, with the consent of his Council, decided to erect the scolasticate of the Brazilian Vice-Province at the community of São Paulo (quarter Vila Matilda, *Nostra Senhora do Belo Ramo* parish). On the same day, the Brazilian postulate house was created at the residence of São Miguel School in Passa Quatro (Minas Gerais State).

Ordained to serve by prayer and charity ■ On February 10th, the Vice Province rejoiced on the occasion of the ordination to the diaconate of Bro. Jair Pereira da Silva. The archbishop of Belo Horizonte, Mgr Walmor Oliveira Azevedo, presided over the celebration which was held in the municipal sport hall of Brumadinho, due to the big turnout. Best wishes to the newly ordained.

Vice-Province of Paraguay

Work on progress ■ The Paraguayan Religious will be gathering on February 20th and 21st to study how to implement the decisions taken at the General Chapter 2005 and the Council of the Congregation.

Vice-Province of Thailand

Homage to a great missionary ■ In the night of December 8th, the inhabitants of the villages of the parish of Maepon, scattered in the mountains, set out to attend on the day after the mass celebrated for Fr. Jean-Baptiste Bonnat (deceased on November 19th in France). In his homely Mgr Joseph Surasarang evoked the model of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and silent reserve incarnated by Fr. Bonnat, in the image of St Joseph. By gathering and forming a community united by Christian faith, the Maepon parishioners paid a thankful homage to the missionary father who “had left his own country and gave his life to bring the Good News”.



*Blessed Miriam
Region*



*Saint Michael
Region*

Every month, short news from the Congregation...

Province of France

A deacon from Benin in the Bearn ■ On February 19th, Sylvain Danson Hounkpatin is going to be ordained to diaconate in the St-Bernadette church in Pau. It is Mgr Pierre Molères, bishop of Bayonne, who will lay hands on our brother, member of the St-Michael Community since last September. Let us pray for our Brother.

Spain: prayer intention ■ Our Brother Fr. Leonardo Gallejones, parish priest at Benlloch (Castellon), is seriously ill. The Superior General would like all religious and lay Betharramites to ask the Lord for the recovery of Fr. Leonardo through the intercession of the Servant of God, Father Auguste Etchecopar.

Province of Italy

Priestly ordination announcement ■ Brs. Butros Alhijazin and Eyad Bader Salameh, currently involved in a community programme, respectively in Rome (Santa Rosa) and Montemurlo, have been admitted to priesthood. They will be ordained on April 27th in Amman, capital of Jordan, their home country.

Province of the Rio de La Plata

Mission 2006 : Announcing the Good News to the poor ■ After 20 years of running activity and for the 5th consecutive year, the summer mission of Betharram reached the Pellegrini department of Nueva Esperanza, 1300 km away from Buenos Aires and 230 from Santiago del Estero. As many as 50 lay and religious missionaries divided into four communities in order to ensure a human and pastoral presence with neglected people. To experience sharing, to go towards the outcast, to value the young people affected by injustice and disoriented, are as many different ways of sensing the love of the Father through an experience of fraternity.



*Father Etchecopar
Region*

ways of “deepening the apostolic religious life of Betharram.” The commission for **The Practice of Poverty** intends calling upon specialists, besides bursars, so that our property is better managed, and that there is real solidarity.

Finally, the commission for **Pastoral Care of the Youth** –the only one to retain its original title–appoints its natural partners: outside contributors, fellow congregations, the Fraternity *Me Voici*, and young people themselves. The broad lines are clear “Betharramite religious and laity are to promote and give incentive to a deep consideration on the meaning of a vocation in the Church. A genuine accompaniment of the young to help them find their place in society, in the Church and in our Betharramite family” Note the special mention of the contact with Ivory Coast and of missionary volunteers.

The motions adopted by the Chapter hark back to cooperation with the laity (for the accompaniment of groups in the Fraternity and the works of the commission). The service of missionary cooperation, actually under consideration, fits into this same logic of complementarity. In fact, it is communion that renders people more realistic and stronger at carrying on the mission.

Jean-Luc Morin,SCJ

There is yes a dead season! But it is actually when the seed fallen into the ground is preparing itself to germinate! No seed, no harvest! Engendering is necessary so that life can rise. The way goes otherwise to extinction, even though ashes are still warm! The Christmas Child is already *Redemptor hominis* and *Redemptor Missio...* What is the mission to me? “The transmission of the ineffable MESSAGE in a context of charity which opens the eyes and the heart.”

Gabriel Verley,SCJ

Conclusion of his speech at the chapter



On the go... notes from a provincial chapter

On January 19th, the Italian Province concluded with the second session the chapter work based this time on the reading of the acts of the General Chapter and the guidelines of the Council of the Congregation.

The primary purpose was to work for the implementation of the decisions. That is, we tried “...to pass from a **phase of, let’s say, good intentions to an implementation phase**”. It was asked that “during the group work sessions the Chapter would work with rigor and precision. It should avoid convoluted or rhetoric expressions, hackneyed statements; it should possibly examine proposals and resources which have not sufficiently been considered in the past. But the most important thing is to weigh up any proposal as to their **topicality and feasibility**. Intellectually attractive statements which are not referred to our world and therefore would sound anachronistic must be rejected” (from the introductory report to the Provincial Chapter).

Which reference points is our Province intended to follow in order to live and express (first of all within the Province itself and then outside) the given gift?

The first point where we should start from is **the purification of the vocation** given as a gift. Can’t we actually say that feelings of uneasiness and discomfort result from a lost of identity? For us, as for anybody, it is important to come back to the roots of our vocation to rediscover in it the spring which can give meaning again to what we experience in our lives. It is then a very short step to the experience of sharing. In fact, it comes almost *naturally* to anybody who can feel the happiness

*Coming back
to the roots*

*Giving
meaning
again to
what we live*



stemming from their vocation, to express their happiness and share it. It is very important to remind, in particular to the young generations, of the greatness of dreams. And it is only in the context of vocation that we can share the dream of God for each of us. It is only within this dream that we will be able to help each one to find happiness.

The other important point during the assembly was the emphasis put on formation. A context of new social, cultural and economic conditions calls for a new global training. While drawing inspiration from the wisdom and the richness of the past, this formation ought to allow us to look straight at the current situation and be able to anticipate: “*Look, I am doing something new, now it emerges; can you not see it?*” (Is 43:19) Formation always consists in a dynamic force predisposing people to discernment and to a wise understanding of daily life. Formation is therefore the element which enables us to be wisely and skilfully open to what surrounds us; it enables us to find out the new ways to be covered, so that we can *transform ourselves and transform the surrounding reality*.

This is always a long and difficult journey. But on this way we rediscover how beautiful it is to be part of a history which goes beyond us. We don’t start from scratch: we are carrying on the journey undertaken by numerous religious and lay people who, with passion, have dealt with the same difficulties, have faced this time and who, tenaciously faithful, knew how to share, despite all obstacles, *their own happiness*.

We can see that St Michael’s dream is still very topical: “*At the sight of this marvellous spectacle, the priests of Betharram felt drawn to dedicate themselves to imitating Jesus, humble and obedient, and to working wholeheartedly to bring the same happiness to others.*” (Manifesto of 1838)

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*Sharing the
dream of God*

*Drawing
inspiration
from the
wisdom of the
past*

*To find out
new ways*

