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Father Barbé's log (5)

In the distance appear four or five ships, who share the same sorry fate as our Etincelle. They are in serious trouble. But here is a consolation for today: there were fourteen communions, different from last Monday's.

Saturday 20th September - Our ship continues to roll, but at least it is bearable. We are doing on average seven knots. Noon! We have reached the Tropic of Cancer. We say goodbye to the Tropic where we were born. It's a parting like another. A rumour is spreading in our midst: it would seem that the Archangel of Buenos Aires has come out to meet us, and that now we are under his protection. Such an idea is perhaps not very poetical, so what! It pleases me, strikes me and is a source of consolation. So please let me enjoy it.

(to be continued)

On the schedule of the General Council

On 22nd May 2006,
Fr. Gaspar Fernandez
and Fr. Enrico Frigerio
will be attending the
audience granted by the
Holy Father to the Superiors of
the Institutes of Consecrated
Life, and to their Vicars.



From May 31st to August 1st will
take place the session for perpetual
vows, in Bethlehem, Nazareth and
Betharram for 9 participants coming
from the Ivory Coast, France, India,
Italy, and Thailand.

From May 24th to 26th, the
Superior General will take part
in the Assembly of the Union of
the Superiors General:
*For a faithful consecrated life,
anthropological challenges to
formation.*

To our Father Saint Michael...
Our prayers, our fidelity, our
thankfulness, our love, our joy,
in our hearts and in our
communities.



104th year, Nr. 5

May 14th, 2006

Family News

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



**A word from the
Superior General**

Our Father Saint Michael Garicoits

When I first entered the Congregation, it touched me to hear the Fathers and Brothers refer to St Michael Garicoits as "*Father*". I remember the ten days spent in Betharram, with Father Latapie, during our novitiate. How I was attracted and fascinated by the personality of St Michael! His poverty, his simplicity, his ardour for work, his contemplative soul, his whole life given to God, his love of the Congregation, his counselling of the Daughters of the Cross, the hours spent in the confessional. I was happy to note that he led a very simple way of life, where the extraordinary counted for little.

There were times when it annoyed me to hear us religious invoking *St Michael Garicoits* in our prayers. We would name him as if he were any old saint. Well, St Michael Garicoits is not just another saint for us. Recalling him to memory touches what is deepest in our selves. Hearing his name mentioned arouses deep emotions within us.

He is our model, our guide, our master, *our Father*. In his writings, Father Etchecopar often refers to him as "*our Father*" *for it is he who has begot us to the religious life, it is he who has associated us to the mission given him by heaven, and has enlisted us in his Charism.*

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14th May
St Michael
Garicoits
Best wishes!



*He was chosen
by the Holy
Spirit...*

*He discovered
that the secret
of everything
is love...*

*He died on
the cross of
obedience.*

Calling St Michael Garicoits “*Father*” is in the spiritual tradition of the fathers and mothers of the desert. Those men and women had had a strong experience of the God of Love of the Gospel, in the image of the apostles meeting with the risen Christ. As a result of this meeting they went on to initiate, to instruct, to correct, and to accompany all those wanting to have a similar spiritual experience.

Similarly, St Michael Garicoits is “*our Father*”. He was chosen by the Holy Spirit who wanted to adorn his Church with a new gift. It was the Holy Spirit who revealed to him the image of “*Jesus humble and obedient*”. As he got to know Jesus he discovered that the secret of everything is love. He received the Charism in a special way. This is why he had to show by his very life the value of humility and obedience to God *through love more than for any other reason*. The clash with the Bishop of Bayonne wasn’t about property or apostolic works to be undertaken. It was all about the treasure which St Michael Garicoits carried in his heart and which made him “*Father*” of a multitude of sons: namely his mystical experience, his life in the footsteps of Jesus humble and obedient, and his consecration by his vows and community life.

He had to die on the cross of obedience, feeling that the Congregation was falling apart and seeming to be a failure, whereas it was the thing he held most to and the very reason for his existence, for it was what God had wanted and revealed to him. Knowing Jesus humble and obedient demands - if we want to be credible - a commitment which changes a person into someone humble and obedient like Christ... This means for St Michael a life of love for the God who had chosen him in the simplest way possible. He didn’t think about himself; he wasn’t bothered about the success or failure of “his” undertaking. He was convinced that things willed by God progressed only if He himself upheld them. This is the dynamic of true love; for St Michael Garicoits the

Betharramerica
1856-2006



On board of the Three-Master
L’Etincelle en route for
Montevideo (5)

Thursday 11th September - Last night our ship was rolling about more than usual. At times we risked falling from our bunks. As for me, I clung on to mine as stoutly as possible, taking good care of myself in the first place and wanting to avoid hurting others. Just 40 centimetres above my bunk is M. Sardoy; together our bunks form two right angles since his divides mine into two equal parts, without leaning either to starboard or to port side. How the man snores! For him the ship is not rolling; it is only pitching and is bearable.

What are they talking about behind that partition? Let’s listen: it’s no secret, since at the top of their voice someone is shouting a whale! A whale! M. Guimon who saw it, decalres with his usual seriousness, that it’s the size of Betharram. I think he would die contented if he could see 50 of them at once. This is the desire he is constantly expressing. In my opinion it would be a magnificent sight. Can you imagine fifty whales the size of Betharram, frolicking in the water around our boat for the pleasure of a missionary?

Sunday 14th September - The sea is like it was yesterday. The captain is not pleased, but he is saying nothing. We try our best to be contented but we don’t always succeed. We are coming within sight of Madeira. M. Larrouy would have liked to go and say Mass there; I can assure you he’s not the only one. When for the last fourteen days and fourteen nights we have been constantly rocked and rolled around on the high seas, who cannot understand the happiness of at last setting foot on dry land, were it only for a few minutes? M. Sardoy gets the dreamers to abandon their dreams by starting up a song in honour of the Basque who, years ago, discovered the island of Madeira. Thankless history! You didn’t even take the trouble to preserve the name of this famous navigator!

We are going on
leafing through
the log of Father
Barbé. We are
within sight of
Madera. The
journey is
dragging on. But
the pleasure of
reading is
unchanged.



2006

MAY

14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno 55 years of profession 10 years of profession congratulations !	P. Paul Baradat P. Antonio Riva Fr. Edward Simpson Br. Pairot Nauchachawan Br. Jiraphat Raksikhao Br. Viravit Sasai
16	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Juan Antonio Morales
17	20° di sacerdozio, auguri !	P. Graziano Sala P. Antonio Riva
22	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	P. Henri Nadal P. Gianluca Limonta
23	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean-Marie Ruspil
24	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Leonardo Gallejones
25	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire Feliz cumpleaños	P. Angelo Petrelli P. André Lacaze P. Beñat Ségure P. Gerardo Ramos
26	Buon compleanno 50° de sacerdozio, auguri 50 years of priesthood, congratulations	P. Mario Bulanti P. Lino Gurini Fr. Bryan Boyle
29	Happy birthday	Br. D. Athit Kasetsukchai
30	Joyeux anniversaire Feliz cumpleaños	P. Raymond Laulom P. Bertrand Salla P. Julio Colina
31	Buon compleanno	P. Emilio Manzolini
3	Bon anniversaire	P. Joseph Mazerolles
4	Happy birthday 40° de sacerdozio, auguri	Br. Suphot Gabriel Liko P. Carlo Ruti P. Aurelio Riva
6	Happy birthday	Br. Subesh S. Odiyathingal
10	Bon anniversaire Feliz cumpleaños	P. Guillaume Etchébarne F. Barnabé Kpéhéléfopé Bakary P. Crispin Villalba
12	Buon compleanno Happy birthday	P. Angelo Bianchi P. Anton Madej
17	Bon anniversaire 40° sacerdocio, enhorabuenas	P. Jean Laclau P. Jorge Murias

JUNE

God of Love was far more important than the Congregation which had been willed, inspired and formed by a loving God; just as Abraham who was ready to sacrifice Isaac, the son of the promise, considered that the God who made the promise was more important; just as Jesus who considered his Father to be more important than the outcome of his mission and his own life; just as for the martyrs...

In order to understand that it is not simply a question of ideas, but of a real overwhelming interior experience, it is interesting to recall these accounts by Father Etchecopar:

I can recall the spiritual fervour of our beloved founder whenever he reminded us of our special consecration to this adorable heart, and our solemn profession to love, imitate and spread this devotion and his kingdom. (p.8, c..11, Betharram 18/06/1886)

One day he admitted: "The tears which I saw the Bishops shed encouraged me in my project to found our Congregation. But how slow and painful has been its birth! At times the obstacles were insurmountable! For me the very existence of our Society is a miracle!" (Circular IV, 15th May, page 53)

How often did Father Garicoits, his hand on his heart, repeat: "I burn, I am devoured by an inner flame, my mouth is on fire! It is unbearable! Never mind! Forward march! All that remains is God's will. I have sinned but I have already suffered. I too have confidence in divine mercy." He was purified in the melting pot of his sufferings! (Circular 1888, Here I am)

St Michael Garicoits is also "our Father" by the fact that in sharing his experiences, many find an explanation, a connection, and a meaning to their life. It can be said that by listening to St Michael's experiences many have felt and continue to feel something developing within them without which they could not live. This is what happened with his first companions: Chirou, Fondeville, Guimon, Larrouy, Etchecopar, who, attracted by his experience, assembled in community, not to carry out any mission,



He is "our Father", by the fact that in sharing his experiences, many find an explanation, and a meaning to their life.



– this would come later – but to live out the Gospel message with determination and in depth, by modelling themselves on Jesus *humble and obedient*. This is what happens also to us, his sons, whenever we are led to recognise a Betharramite religious, and every time that we deepen this charismatic experience.

St Michael is also “*our Father*” through the work of counselling which he undertook for the on going formation of all those who felt a call and who found in his charismatic experience an explanation for their own existence. St Michael used weekly conferences, yearly retreats for the teachers and missionaries, personal interviews whenever he was entrusting a mission or a ministry to someone, or whenever his religious were giving an account of the mission entrusted to them.

St Michael continues to be “*our Father*”. Like the Fathers and mothers of the desert, he continues to instruct and accompany us. First of all he helps us to understand and become aware of forces struggling within ourselves, so that we follow the good spirits and fight the evil ones. He helps us also to choose the standard of Jesus Christ. He helps us to understand, to love and to become like the gentle, humble and obedient Heart of Jesus. He helps us to have a passion for the Sacred Heart which we also have received as a gift, and which, instead of being dormant within us, is aroused and makes us happy by revealing our identity. Furthermore, he encourages us and helps us to communicate the same joy to others. By bearing witness to Jesus *humble and obedient* for us, religious and laity, Betharram continues today to make the Church more attractive. Without this witness of the sons of St Michael Garicoits, there would be something missing in the Church.

*Saint Michael
continues to
accompany us.*

*He helps us
to choose Jesus
Christ.*

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, SCJ

The little refrain from Betharram

Once upon a time there was a sermon which stirred me to the very heart of my being more than usual. On that particular day there was a phrase which resounded like a tune which you keep on humming to yourself: “Here I am without further delay, without reserve, and with no going back, for Love”. At that particular moment my mind and my heart were deeply touched.

Months passed by and then one day in November I had the chance of spending a few hours in Betharram, in the very place where St Michael Garicoits had lived. He was the author of that tune which wouldn’t leave me. What a joy to discover such a beautiful spot, even if it can appear austere at times! What a joy to have a brief and touching moment of recollection. At that precise moment I had the feeling that I was experiencing something that was beyond me. Later I had this confirmed because the wish to have a better knowledge of the spirituality of St Michael led me to the residence of St Michael in Pau and later to the Generalate in Rome.

In fact I had the opportunity of helping with the organisation of the ordination as Deacon of Brother Sylvain and of spending a few days with the community in Rome. Then I recognised a real family spirit, true hospitality, respect for others and availability; this for me was a moment of great grace which fuelled my longing to live according to the Betharramite spirit.

Thus it is that a sermon and a tune have led me to be part of the Fraternity which is starting up in Pau. Will they take me any further, Christ alone knows. For me the most important thing will be to answer “Here I am” in a response full of trust.

Corinne Sabin



Drawing by Fr. Dante Angelelli

Lay people bear witness

Intertwined words

Discovering a place and a family

Whether they have been knowing us for years or whether they have recently got to know us, lay people are knocking at the door of our communities. What do they keep from their experience? Two tales among others.

This is where God was waiting for me. At a first glance, between the Gave and the mountains, Betharram is caught in a stranglehold, but behind the walls do live communities ready to welcome people. Fraternal, praying communities, close to the poor, the humble, open to all those who knock at the door. An atmosphere of peace, serenity, a simple attentiveness which makes people feel immediately at home.

Spontaneously, I shared the joys, the trials, and everyone's work: a Father told his years in mission. All this life gave nourishment to the time of prayer in which I took part. A question came to my mind: wherefrom do those religious draw this joyful, trustful freedom, and their *joie de vivre*?

I progressively discovered the charism of Saint Michael experienced by the Religious, and the characteristics of the « Here I am »: humility and service. Could I draw inspiration from the same source? Each encounter lived intensively sound to me like a call for a new start.

A meaningful moment: the ordination of Sylvain Dansou. After a prayerful, touching and colourful celebration, the *Saint-Michael* community in Pau welcomed the parishioners. A good occasion, together with the members of the starting-up Fraternity, for putting ourselves at the disposal of the community and preparing the meals.

For the trust granted to us, we felt as though we belonged to the family. Discovering each person enabled us to widen and deepen the sharing and the service in the continuity.

The visit to the Generalate in Rome was the continuation of our discovering just as meaningful as that of the other communities. We found out with surprise that, if there is a hierarchy, it is the one of a Service shared in a joyful union.

Thérèse Maho

An unpublished text of Saint Michael

Flying camp: the Watchword

For the Jesuits the year 2006 is rich in commemorations. There is the 450th anniversary of the death of their founder – Ignatius of Loyola; the 500th anniversary of the birth of the great Jesuit missionary – Francis Xavier and also of the first companion of Ignatius, who was with him in Paris when he laid the first foundations of the Society of Jesus – Peter Favre who came from Savoie. All these celebrations cannot leave indifferent the sister Society as Father Leblanc says, thus confirming the intuition of St Michael. So, in order that the 14th May may be a worthy celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the mission in Betharram, *Family News* is going to offer you something original: some extracts from one of the conferences of Father Garicoits to his first companions, and when St Michael speaks to us St Ignatius is not far away.

According to St Ignatius, we are a kind of **flying camp** ever ready to rush to places where danger is greatest; meaning to say that we are not ordinary warriors but chosen warriors who only long for struggles and battles.

In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius represents Jesus Christ in whose service we are engaged, as a king inviting us to war, and later on as a general raising his standard, as if on the point of joining battle. We are warriors and our society is an army. Now in every war, order is of the utmost importance. Nothing can replace it. An army in disorder is a victim being led to the slaughter. But on the other hand if order is respected and respected scrupulously, the power of that army is doubled, or even tripled!

Well, gentlemen, order in our Society will have the same results. We will be terrific, formidable, and we need to be. We have many enemies. On the one hand there is the devil, the roaring lion as he is called in Scripture, constantly on the prowl. He knows only too well that once the ramparts have fallen, he can easily take possession of the ground and overcome us. On the other hand there is the world, the ruthless enemy of our perfection who must be crucified for



Saint Ignatius
of Loyola



Our father Saint Michael

us as we are for him. Oh! If we value our victory in the least, and we should do, let's make use of the arms which Jesus Christ and the saints used.

These arms are the different spiritual exercises which we practice – meditation, vocal prayers, spiritual reading, examination of conscience, study, corporal works, etc. because they are all ordained to this end.

It would be pointless using such arms in any old fashion, better still it would be dangerous or even ridiculous. Imagine a soldier wanting to use his arms according to his whims; it's obvious that such actions could make people laugh or could provoke misfortunes. We must conform to the Rules fixing the time –neither too soon nor too late; fixing the manner –adding nothing, taking nothing away. Let's not forget that we belong to a Society, that we form an army, that we must give each other mutual support, and that we are fighting under the same Chief. By abandoning the task which has been entrusted to us, by waging battle in a half hearted fashion, we are running the risk not only of being overcome ourselves, but of causing the downfall of the entire army.

Allow me to speak plainly. It is time for meditation; I could easily do it. However, for some unknown reason, I don't want to make it now. I am depriving myself of the graces which God would have granted me at that precise time. And that is not all. I am depriving the entire Society of all the graces that God had wanted to give it, if I had been faithful to the rule.

Finally by way of conclusion, allow me to share some reflexions with you and which seem to me to provide us with what we are already seeking, that is to have a profound respect for the rule, and to be resolved to establish it and keep it in all its beauty.

Justice and gratitude makes us love our Society with all the love and tenderness that a well mannered child has for

Is the catechesis an important activity in the parish?

Yes, it is. There is the catechesis for the children (9-11 years old children, for 2 years), also called the Family Catechesis since the parents too take part in it, and the catechesis for the confirmation (16-17 years old young people). Each of the 8 communities of the parish has its own group of children.

Are you in contact with local charitable associations?

In every ecclesial base community there is a charitable group. We coordinate those groups in order to provide a better help to the poor and the sick. The Caritas of the diocese has set up two *comedores* (canteens) where the children can have lunch and an afterschool snack. We ask also the Christians for help at Christmas and Easter.

Are the Santiagueños interested in the realities of the other Churches, i.e. the Church of the Ivory Coast, where you come from?

Due to my presence, the Santiagueños show interest in Africa and especially in the Ivory Coast, which allows them to escape prejudices against Black people. Some of them consider Africa as a country like Argentina, rather than a continent. Thanks to Internet, they yield to facts! When I show them the basilica of Yamoussoukro, they want to know the percentage of the Christian population and if the different religions get on with each other. One should know that 99% of the Argentines are Catholic, but there is today the presence of sects from Brazil (voodoo, macumba), a come back of paganism, fetishism, consultation of soothsayers, and spiritualism. This atmosphere of fear and doubt is a challenge for the Church, and it remembers me the experience of my own country. There is a need for more inculturation and for a change in the religious practise: faith is lived like a century ago.

A topical question to conclude: how will you celebrate Saint Michael on May 14th in Santiago?

The feast of Saint Michael gives me the opportunity to renew my commitment to follow him faithfully. On the same day I will be finishing a *cursillo de cristianidad**. We will then celebrate Mass before going to Buenos Aires where the annual retreat of the Province will be held.



* Movement of renewal and evangelization. (editor's note). "It is a way of experiencing an 'encounter' with Jesus, whose method I would like to know better."



Blessed Mariam
Region

Vice-Province of Thailand

Harvest of April ■ 35 is the number of young people in formation in the Vice-Province at the end of April: 9 new students in Payao, 16 at St-Joseph school and 10 postulants. Fr. Tidkham and Fr. Mongkhon went to visit the families of the seminarists in their respective parishes: a rich experience of pastoral activity, and also a precious opportunity to know better the background of the young new recruits. This respectful approach of the individual makes the formation of the youth at the study house easier.



In this year of the 150th anniversary of Betharram overseas, we wanted to interview a religious who lives in America... and comes from Africa. Let us listen to Father Gilbert Koffi Kouman, a Betharramite priest from the Ivory Coast, in Argentina since 2004.

5 MINUTES WITH... FATHER GILBERT

Nef - In which consists your mission in Santiago del Estero? First of all thank you for giving to me the opportunity to bear witness to this good experience of religious and apostolic life. Since March 2004, I have been carrying out my mission at the Saint-Roch parish by the youth, and the sick, and by means of various activities.

Since you arrived, what has been more remarkable? The sense of welcome of the Santiagueños [inhabitants of Santiago]! Thanks to their hospitality, I don't feel like a stranger. As regards Christian life, I feel impressed by the mass audience of women in the celebrations and their involvement in parish responsibilities. There is also the people faith based on a great devotion to the saints.

In your community and apostolic life, cultural differences are a help or an obstacle? - Cultural differences are a help and a stimulus. They allow me to know my neighbour and to receive much from him. This is how prejudices and misunderstandings can disappear. Our daily challenge is to live with the differences of our cultures but in union and fraternity.

In your case how is expressed the « here I am »? - It is expressed by being available to share my happiness with the most needy, especially the sick, in order to enable those men and women to discover the God of Love.

his mother. I say justice. There was a contract signed between the Society and each one of us. The Society has undertaken to feed us, and to provide us with the essential in health and in sickness. Each one of us has undertaken to consecrate his entire being in the service of the Society. And this includes loving it as well. I mentioned gratitude. What tender care she gives us whether for the temporal or the spiritual! What mother, and I mean the most loving of mothers, can do as much for her children? We must therefore love our Society, and love it with the same love she loves us; I mean that we should love her to the point of being ready to die for her honour and glory.

We should attach great importance to her existence. We should value the life of our Society – not any old kind of life, but a strong and vigorous life, and as far as we are concerned, a life which leads to eternity.

So, *Omnia secundum ordinem fiant! Let everything be done with propriety and with order!* (1 Cor. 14/40) That's not all. Our Society can be looked upon as a precious treasure which the Lord has placed in our hands. Let's be humble but don't let us get discouraged. Custody of this treasure has been entrusted to all the members without exception. What a misfortune it would be for us if we were to let such a treasure be lost! If contented to keep it intact, we didn't try constantly to make our little Society more and more respectable, more and more revered, and if we didn't, at least, try not to compromise its future.

You are all aware, and some of you better than I am, that the lazy and useless servant in the Gospel was condemned, not because he had lost his talent, not because he had wasted it, but because he hadn't exploited it. Do we not have something similar to fear? God forbid that such a misfortune should befall us! And to avoid that we have only to put into practise the advice given by St Paul, and which I like to repeat: *Omnia secundum ordinem fiant!* Amen.

From the
SCJ Archives in
Rome, Jean Ca-
zala Collection,
yellow file, 4th
interview

Father Etchecopar wrote...in his diary, on 2nd September 1855

Nothing can render the tone of faith, of zeal, which made the convictions in which Father Garicoits was engrossed penetrate deep down into people's hearts. We would go out of [his] lectures in a state of deep emotion, like after a retreat of several days. His words were as burning as fire, yet tempered by a true fatherly love.

He would become vehement and threatening making us tremble, when he spoke of oblivion, of the disregard for the will of God trampled underfoot like a soiled cloth; but soon after his fits of rage, of indignation inspired by an utmost apostolic zeal, he would say encouragements, and words of forgiveness coming from the deepest core of the charity of Jesus Christ.

70 years at the service of the youth in Morocco ■ In Casablanca last April 22nd, Charles de Foucauld middle school, run for forty years by the Betharram Fathers, celebrated its 70th anniversary of foundation. Even though the Institute is run by a Moroccan Moslem lady, it is still under the responsibility of the diocese (and his Betharramite shepherd). The education team prepared the celebration throughout the year.

« We give thank for all that has been lived and what we continue to live in this school which welcomes over a thousand of students, all Moslem Moroccans. It is an exciting challenge, writes Mgr Vincent Landel. And in order to face this challenge, we are going to build this year a college which should open at the start of the new academic year in 2007; Education ought to be a strong point of our presence in this country. By celebrating this anniversary, we cannot forget three of our predecessors who are buried in Casablanca: Father Joanlong, Father Léon Bur, Father Jean Amestoy who died respectively in 1943, 1958 and 1968. With Father Gaspar, passing through Casablanca, we went on a pilgrimage to the college and to the tomb of our Brethren, in the name of all Betharram. »

Province of France

The Pilgrims' spring ■ The pilgrimages are starting again in Betharram. Young people are setting the tone... which is quite normal as it is the season of buds and flowers! 300 young people from Lille with their auxiliary bishop, and 150 from the Moselle will spend over there the day of the 25th April: discovering of the sanctuaries, teachings, celebrations, Way of the Cross... So much joy, and a new pace... A time of grace for everybody! Between torrents and hills, between the restored sanctuary and the renovated monastery, Betharram strengthens its vocation as a welcome house and a place for renewal.

Province of Italy

Happy days for the Latin Patriarchate and the Congregation of Betharram ■ There were no less than 5

bishops, 2 Superiors major (the Superior General and the Provincial of Italy), about 40 diocesan priests and religious, and also numerous faithful, gathered on Thursday 27th April in Amman, around our Brethren Butros Hijazin and Eyad Bader, and their fellow student from the Latin Patriarchate, Tareq Hijazin. The beautiful and spacious church of the Sacred Heart in Talaa Elali, too small in that occasion, hosted the ordination to priesthood of the Jordanian trio.

The feast continued on the day after, on the occasion of the first mass celebrated at the heart of the Hijazin family, in the village of Smakieh. There again, the yard of the church was not large enough to host all the participants who came from Amman with a police escort. But at the following banquet, *mansaf* (rice with curds, and mutton) was served to everybody! On April 29th, it was Wahadneh's turn (not far from Tishbi, familiar area of the prophet Eliah) to rejoice for Eyad, native of the place. Like the day before, 2 bishops, a numerous delegation of Fathers and secular priests took part in the festivities. Once again, it all started with a welcome ceremony at the entrance of the village with music and dance, and ended with the traditional *mansaf*. Such an event remembers us how strong the link is between the Church of Jerusalem and the Congregation of Betharram, as Mgr Sabbah emphasised in his homely. *Ad Multos Annos* !



*Saint Michael
Region*