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Father Barbé's log (7)

Tuesday 7th October - M. Harbustan is really gifted at making discoveries. Yesterday it was a dead monster; today it's a live monster; yesterday it was far off, today it's near by. The short-sighted can see it. What is it? It's a shark, with its two little fins and a small fish whose gaily coloured skin is attracting everyone's attention. We would like to have a closer look if possible. Our request is granted and after countless manoeuvres the shark let it be known that it has no wish to be caught. Actually it comes closer, even seems to smell the tit bits we are offering, but as for opening its mouth, he's no fool! There are those here who say that it is witty. Witty said someone it's quite impossible. The little fish warm him. I have no difficulty in being of the same opinion. I have always maintained that the smallest are the best.

(to be continued)

➡ *Continues from page 8...* God walked side by side with mankind; and he died like any man; he is risen, and continued his journey with the disciples of Emmaus. All this reinforces my choice and gives me the keys in order to live concretely the charism of incarnation. I realize that God, in his kindness and grace, takes me with him and gives me the opportunity to live as he lived, side by side with any man, any brother, in order to be the sign of how he loves us. In all my activities, concrete and hard though they are, I can contemplate and bear witness to the presence of God in the life of all men, hence to bring the hope of Christ. A hope which opens to eternal life. (Province of Italy)

**The Family News will
make a break in Au-
gust.**

**Best wishes for the
feast of the Assump-
tion of Mary!**

**Let us meet again on
September 14th!**



104th year, n° 7

14th July 2006

Family News

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



**A word from the
Superior General**

The mystique and passion of Mission

I've just finished a book which interested very much, called *The Sun in the Night* by Bernard Olivera osco Abbot General of the Trappists. In a simple and accessible way it deals with the mystical experience of the Cistercians and gives me much thought for reflection.

For a monk his mystical experience is found through his quest and encounter with the mystery of God, lived especially in prayer - *lectio divina*, the divine office - but also in work and in community. The consecrated person is made for the love of God, this binds him to the one thing that is needed (*unum necessarium*). And this one thing that is necessary seizes all the dimensions of his existence.

This has made me think about our Betharramite life. We also are consecrated, bound by the love of God, we have chosen Him and we are vowed to him and his mission throughout all our life. That is why our prayer makes our consecration, our fraternal life and our mission mystical. Our consecration arises from prayer, sanctifies our fraternal life, and gives value to the sacred character of our mission. And our mission must be prayerful, holy and fraternal. It is not a matter of playing with words: what is in play is the unity of our religious life.

But the book that I have referred to has made me reflect on the sacred character of mission, a priority in comparison with the monk who consecrates himself first of all to

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*For religious
of the
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prayer. For us, mission must take the first place in our mystical experience, if we are not to separate it from consecration and fraternity. For religious of the apostolic life, our mission is a privileged place in the quest and the encounter with the love of God. Mission is the ground of consolation and desolation, of pastoral success and reversal, of encounters with people, and of separation also.

In the account of St Luke's of the return of the 72 disciples from their mission, does one not note the apostolic consolation of Jesus, an encounter with the Father of goodness and a missionary experience among the poor? "At that moment, Jesus was filled with joy under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and he said: *O heavenly Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I bless you for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes Father, for that is what it has pleased you to do.*" Luke 10. 21. There is the *Ita Pater...* yes, *Father* so dear to our Father St Michael.

I remember a story during the summer mission at Catamarca. With other missionaries, we had visited an old lady, who lived alone in a hovel. When she learnt that we were missionaries, she began by complaining that she couldn't come to church, because of her state of health. When we said to her that this was not serious since she was unable to go there, and that Jesus had come to her in her hut, she exclaimed quite simply and joyfully: "This is marvellous!" Both Pablo Bonardo, who accompanied me on this mission, and myself were filled with joy and praised our Father of all goodness.

I remember also Father Juan Craviotti, a great Argentine Betharramite. He was always in his office, occupied with some translation, preparing homilies or conferences. But he also took great care to plan his visits to the sick, hours in the confessional, and accompanying groups. He never gave way to frenetic activities, which his health would not

I can do no more. I sit down then I lie down on my bed. Finally, by 2 o'clock in the afternoon, I feel a bit better.

Everything is beautiful, magnificent. Above our heads the sky is pure and cloudless, and around us there is a circular band, 10 metres deep which is probably formed by the sea mist and which forms mirages capable of transporting you. How best to describe it? I haul myself up in the boat without anyone noticing, and then I strain my ears, determined to send you as faithfully as possible the sounds I can hear. Here's the story. I don't identify the speakers, I am not allowed to.

- Here's Gargantua! What a nose! What ears! What hair!
 - What a monster of an elephant! And this country house? How nice it is! It has everything: magnificent parklands, magical groves, beautiful gardens.
 - Here is the Convent at Igon, except that this one is more beautiful. Here is the pedestal for the Cross of the Calvary in Betharram and the other one for the good Thief's cross. Extraordinary – the bad thief's cross is missing.
 - Take a look at the two huge animals; they are each devouring something big which I can't identify.
 - And now we have a magnificent meadow surrounded by leafy trees. Can you imagine anything more enchanting? You can see the lawn covered with flowers. And how clear is the water in the stream which traverses it!
 - Ah! Here is a steamer – you would almost think it is the tug at Bayonne.
 - Here we have a fortified town with its ramparts and citadels. It is perhaps a plan of Sebastopol?
 - Here we have another town which must be unique. It's London. It's Paris.
- I'm worn out, so I'll stop. There is still plenty of materiel, but don't forget that I am ill, and I want people to remember that.

Sunday 5th October - The sea continues to be calm. Today there were 12 men for Communion and, shocking, there was only one woman. Any wonder we are becalmed?



Betharramerica
1856-2006



On board of the Three-Master L'Étincelle en route for Montevideo (7)

A new episode at sea with our dear missionaries. Even in a bad state, they keep on nurturing a witty spirit, with the head in the clouds...

Wednesday 1st October - Our second month at sea is beginning under unfavourable auspices. Very good! It must surely be a great source of joy for missionaries to have some share in the Cross of their Divine Master.

M. Guimon is suffering from hoarseness which makes you feel sorry for him. M. Harbustan is confined to a bed which is not amongst the most comfortable; as you know he is suffering from a severe migraine. M. Sardoy is not feeling well and so wants no lunch. Brother Fabien continues to suffer from the sore on his leg which he already had before leaving, but which has spread from the inside towards the outside. Brother Joannes has a sort of boil on his wrist which may well try his patience for some time to come. Finally, I'm ill myself. In short, only M. Larrouy and M. Magendie are holding out. That's enough. Long live Divine Providence!

4.00: M. Sardoy is better. We are progressing very slowly which is more tiring on sea than on land.

Thursday 2nd October - I had a laxative early this morning. I accepted it with all the stoicism of a philosopher and swallowed it in one gulp much the same way as I would have swallowed a glass of sweetened water. It was only a big glassful of some horrible looking liquid which tasted even worse. You can judge for yourself when I tell you how I was advised not to throw it up. I obey again, and for the first time in a month I try walking for the sake of walking. In reality, walking here is a great undertaking, requiring qualities which not everyone possesses. So here I am on uneven ground, leaning to starboard and larboard, as if between the parallel bars in a gymnasium, and having great difficulty in advancing. This goes on for a few minutes, after which

permit in any case. In speaking with this priest one felt that his pastoral activities were not an additional task. One felt the sacred character of these meetings with people who were also for him a meeting with the love of God.

I can also recall experiences of desolation, deception, reversal, indeed of depression. I won't speak about this. But I recall having learnt during my initial formation, in courses of spiritual theology that crises of faith became apparent in prayer among the contemplatives and among missionaries during pastoral reverses.

Pastoral activities or missions are neither pastimes nor moneymaking opportunities, nor a means of feeling good or a penitential practice. Pastoral activities are sacred because the love of God has presented them to us and we should seek them as a way of salvation for ourselves and for others. Such is the mystique which nourishes our passion for mission.



Gaspar Fernandez Perez, SCJ

Father Etcheppar wrote... to his mother Marie, on August 13rd 1860

As we approach the feast of the Assumption, I feel a double happiness, for after tomorrow, this will be the feast of my mother on earth and at the same time the feast of my mother in heaven. Oh, what these two names bring back to me! What happiness, what tenderness! To my mother in heaven, after God I owe everything; for I owe to her Jesus, her gentle Son, whom she has given to me, and to all men, as my saviour; to my mother on earth do I not owe everything, although in a lesser way? Has she not, in effect, given as much as she is able with holy examples, encouragements, embraces, the love of Jesus, with his knowledge, Jesus, all goodness, all richness, in this passing life in moments of suffering, in exchange for that which will never pass, and for that of eternal happiness?

Oh Mary mother of heaven! After Jesus, I love and will love nothing else but you in heaven! Oh Mary, my mother on earth, my dear mother of St-Palais and Oloron on earth I must love nothing else, but you, as my dear father, who was one with you.

*Thesis on Saint Michael***The memory and relevance of St Michael today**

At the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, a future responsible for formation from Vietnam presented a canonical thesis on Saint Michael.

On Friday the 23rd of June, the feast of the Sacred Heart, Thomas Vu-Dinh-Hieu, a priest from a diocese of South Vietnam presented his canonical thesis dedicated to a study of the will of God from texts of St Michael Garicoits. I was delighted to be present as the 'second reader' (who takes the role of the devil's advocate). Sent by his bishop to study spirituality so as to accompany seminarians and lay people, Father Thomas simply admitted how much this work had, set him on a spiritual journey. It was somewhat by chance by surfing the Web he happened to come across the name of Father Duvignau, as a way for further references.

The sharing between the interprovincial seminary and the congregation (notably Fathers Hiale, Moura, Delgue and Morin) gave further impulse to Father Thomas who spent three weeks at Betharram to do his research and at the same time discover the place, the Betharramite religious and enter into the spirituality of their life. He confided to me after the presentation of this thesis, that he would go back to Betharram on the following day, to give thanks to St Michael. To say in other words that his viva was a success.

What he has written is very well presented. It is remarkable that a foreign student has mastered the French language to do such a work. After an historical introduction, he conveys in the first chapter, the central part of our charism explaining our manifesto. In contrast to Father Duvignau who gave a classical presentation, inspired by the ascetic influence of his time, Father Thomas presents a Trinitarian perspective. The second chapter, attempts to point out certain challenges posed by this spirituality: how St Michael lived this will and how the *Ecce Venio* could become ours? The last part of this presentation is consecrated to a commentary dwelling on different sayings of St Michael.

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| 16 | Buon compleanno | P. Celestino Gusmeroli |
| 17 | Feliz cumpleaños | P. Gustavo Agin |
| 18 | Buon compleanno | P. Ernesto Consonni |
| 21 | Joyeux anniversaire | P. Joseph Domecq Fr. Martial Mengué |
| 25 | Joyeux anniversaire | Mgr Vincent Landel |
| 26 | Joyeux anniversaire 60 años de profesión | P. Jean Tapie Enhorabuena, P. Julián Miguel |
| 28 | Joyeux anniversaire | P. Alexandre Berhouet |
| 29 | Happy birthday 35 años de sacerdocio | Br. Gabriel Phonchai Sukjai Enhorabuena, P. Julio Colina |
| 31 | Joyeux anniversaire | P. Dominique Etchéverria |
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| 1 | Feliz cumpleaños 30 ans de sacerdoce | P. Ceferino Arce P. Beñat Oyhenart P. Laurent Bacho |
| 2 | Bom aniversário | P. Paulo Cesar Pinto |
| 3 | Joyeux anniversaire Happy birthday | P. Michel Vignau P. Suthon Kerawatanasakul |
| 4 | Happy birthday Joyeux anniversaire | Fr. Austin Hughes P. Luc-Martial Kouadio |
| 6 | Buon compleanno 25° di professione, auguri | P. Giovanni Trameri P. Alessandro Locatelli P. Beniamino Gusmeroli |
| 7 | 15 ans de profession | F. Emile Garat |
| 6 | Bom aniversário 70° di professione, auguri | P. Dante Angelelli P. Giovanni Trameri P. Lino Illini P. Jean Couret |
| 13 | Bom aniversário Joyeux anniversaire | P. Paulo Vital Campos P. Philippe Hourcade |
| 15 | 20 ans de profession | P. Philippe Hourcade |
| 16 | Buon compleanno | P. Egidio Zoia |
| 17 | 30° di professionne, auguri | P. Maurizio Vismara P. Carlo Sosio |
| 18 | Buon compleanno | P. Romualdo Airaghi |

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| 16 | Feliz cumpleaños | P. Henrique Lasuén |
| 18 | Buon compleanno Happy birthday 50 ans de profession | P. Giovanni Duca Fr. Mongkhon Charoentham F. Paul Lamothe |
| 20 | Buon compleanno Happy birthday | P. Carlo Antonini P. Beniamino Gusmeroli Br. Patrick Leighton |
| 21 | Happy birthday | Br. George Anthonyswamy |
| 22 | Feliz cumpleaños | P. Eleuterio Cabero del Pozo |
| 23 | Bom aniversário | P. Sebastião do Nascimento Pereira Ir. Mauro Ulrich de Oliveira |
| 25 | 30 años de sacerdocio | Enhorabuena, P. Emiliano Jara |
| 26 | Happy birthday | Fr. Xavier Ponthokkan Br. John Britto Irudhayam |
| 28 | Feliz cumpleaños Joyeux anniversaire 10 ans de profession | Mons. Ignacio Gogorza P. Jean-Dominique Delgue Fr. Barnabé Kpéhéléfopé Bakary |
| 29 | Joyeux anniversaire | P. Gaston Gabaix-Hialé |
| 31 | Buon compleanno | P. Carlo Sosio |

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| 1 | Buon compleanno Bom aniversário | P. Enrico Mariani Ir. Jair Pereira da Silva |
| 2 | Buon compleanno | P. Graziano Sala |
| 4 | Feliz cumpleaños Buon compleanno | P. Julián Miguel P. Eyad Salameh Bader |
| 6 | Feliz cumpleaños | Ho. Juan Cazaubon |
| 10 | Bom aniversário | P. Vicente de Menezes |
| 12 | Buon compleanno 55 years of profession | P. Maurizio Vismara P. Damiano Colleoni Fr. Anthony Box |
| 14 | Joyeux anniversaire Bom aniversário | P. Robert Daquo P. Antonio Scarpa |
| 15 | Joyeux anniversaire 65 ans de profession félicitations 60 ans de profession félicitations | P. Bernard Béhocaray P. Jean Tipy P. Jean Laclau P. Paul Fourcade P. Jean-Baptiste Olçomendy P. Guillaume Etchébarne |

It is a great motive of joy to see how the charism of St Michael, his spiritual and profound intuition, still speaks to the hearts of men and women who are quite different from each other. This is an encouragement, I would say even a sign, small but real of how we are invited to live in Asia. Father Thomas said with a smile that Vietnam could be the next place for a foundation of our congregation.

From my point of view, this journey together, has raised a number of questions. In effect, in his efforts to review St Michael's texts, Father Thomas has tried to give an account of the way in which the founder dealt with evil, and its place as to what is the will of God. The Thomistic conceptual tool both systematic and enlightening leads us to think that it is good to reformulate and reappraise today under pain of provoking misunderstanding or scandal. So if one can say that the Lord can make everything contribute to the good of the believer, even if he is bowed down with misfortune or evil; could one go as far as saying that God sends it deliberately? It is surely true that the more the Lord holds us in his hand so much the less will the trials of life have destructive effects upon us... in a manner of speaking, he accepts that these trials strike us... just as he accepted them for his own Son. By him, through him, and with him this sad and shocking reality of our existence, takes on a saving dimension.

It is always good that the spiritual charism, gift of the Holy Spirit given to all the Church, so that it may grow and give to the world the sign of the Gospel, be shared beyond the boundaries of the family which lives it. It was the case of Friday the 23rd of June, and because it appeared in the heart of this brother priest from Vietnam, we can believe that we will surprisingly have to say constantly: "Behold, I come without delay, without conditions and without any return through love!"



Philippe Hourcade, SCJ

*Session for perpetual vows (1)***Impressions from Holy Land**

From May 31st to July 11th, six young professed have put up the tent in Holy Land, for the first part of the session for perpetual vows. Before they took off for Betharram, we collected their impressions on two precise points: How did they feel by following into Jesus' footsteps? What impact on their approach to the charism of Betharram? Over to them... looking forward to other testimonies in the next issue!

***The vineyard and the young shoots*** / Raoul Thibault Segla

This first experience in Holy Land allowed me to discover and appreciate the love of God for his creature. I would like to give my impressions through the following story: the Lord, in his kindness and infinite mercy, planted a vineyard in Palestine; a welcoming, open, obedient and fertile land received it in its womb (the Virgin Mary). The vineyard grew, irrigated and looked after by Joseph. The shining sun and the twinkling star in Bethlehem made the plant give flowers (the Word became flesh). It took the grapes 30 years to mature, under the benevolent gaze of the rain and the sun (Nazareth). Being mature, the collected grapes were brought to the winepress in Jerusalem. Transformed into a tasteful wine, it became from then onwards the delight of the heart of those who are able to recognise and appreciate it as a good wine. God became one of us. To those who recognise and appreciate his value, he grants them the joy of being children of God. A space, a life, a story, faith, hope, love, patience...

This experience enabled me to understand more intimately what the heart of our Father Saint Michael wanted to express. Love spared no effort to remove man from the place where he had buried himself. This happiness, discovered, welcomed and transmitted by the Virgin Mary, is for me the confirmation of how I must be more than ever the vehicle of the charism of our religious family in my daily life. It is a matter of giving to others the same happiness, without delay, unreservedly and without return: "Love became one of us". (*Province of France, Delegation of the Ivory Coast*)

Land of fraternity / Napétien Gilbert

To tread the Holy Land for the first time gave to me a great joy, I would even say it was a marvel, a grace which the Lord made to me. The most remarkable points:

have to animate them by visiting them, and affording them the occasion to relax during our gatherings. I give courses to certain young people in conveying information. I encourage them to come to different reunions of prayer (Renewal, Legion of Mary) or Bible reflections to deepen their Christian lives.

I do not give up hope. We continue to lead all the activities, because there are great numbers of very dynamic young men and young women. Some of these wish to give their contribution to the life of the parish. I don't let them go! I give them responsibilities so that they know that the life of the parish comes back through them. I help them to understand that the future of the parish belongs to them and that I have in equal measure need of their help and experience.

This mission is not simple, but I am seeking to draw up a positive programme of activities for evangelisation. On the other hand, I have learnt what concerns the culture of this area, and to speak with some phrases in the language of this Djimini, to appreciate the local drink (tchapalo); to take part in their traditional dances; to know the difficulties of life, and the special of the joy of living in the country of the Djimini.

Let us always go ahead, dear brothers, in a life given to the risen Christ.

Élisée Mambo

If you wish to follow the daily history of Dabakala, or nearly all of it, you can get the circular letter from jeanmarieruspil@yahoo.fr. The *Nouvelles Ivoiriennes* which is their hundred and seventeenth issue, takes a look at Father Jean-Marie Ruspil in his day to day life with the community in mission.



A novice's letter from the Ivory Coast

Life experience in the land of the Djimini



Having come from Abidjan, we are to novices (Brice Herve and myself), who have been sent by Fathers Jean-Marie Ruspil and Firmin Worou to Dabakala for pastoral experience in the diocese of Katiola.

Dabakala is a town situated in the north east of the Ivory Coast, in the hands of the rebels. Since the war which has lasted for years the population of Dabakala finds itself in a climate of discouragement. A great part of the population has gone into the centre or the south of the country. Today, the consequences of this

crisis are numerous: changing money is difficult, the price of food; bananas, fish, etc. is high. On the other hand, the major product of this region, cashew nuts, has fallen to derisory prices. The population lives from day-to-day, in extreme poverty. A poverty which touches all economic activities. It is felt in the life of the Church. The offerings are insignificant compared to the distances that it is necessary to travel to celebrate Mass.

Our little community lives in the parish of our Lady of the poor. We share as a family the life of the population. In Pastoral life here, it is necessary to have great generosity, patience and love of Christ. Certain parish activities are only just about ticking over: CVAV, the Renewal Movement, Legion of Mary, and some no longer exist. like JEC, JOC, Scouts, AFC (Christian Family Association) etc.

The consequences of this crisis, create their own difficulties in preaching the Gospel, due to a shortage of time, in finding and encouraging the faithful. In my charge I have pastoral care of readers, those preparing for confirmation, altar servers and the Renewal Movement. I

First, the way the brothers of this community welcomed us at Bethlehem, their fraternal life, their openness to the outside world and their dedication. Then several holy places- in particular the cave of the nativity, the tomb of Lazarus, the Gethsemane, etc.- the life of the communities living in Holy Land, and also the diversity of religions. While it did not change my way of understanding and living the charism, it allowed me to go deeper into the spirituality and be faithful to it. (CI)

Following Christ humble and devoted / Latta Braga Serge


My first time in Holy Land gave me a great happiness. I found astonishing the deep and invading impact of modernity in this country. I came therefore to the conclusion that the *holiness* of this *land* was to be found elsewhere. As a matter of fact I found it by meditating the mysteries of the Christ, and in several places like the basilicas of the Annunciation, of the Nativity, the Holy Sepulchre, the Tabor...

Another grace: this journey took place on the occasion of a training session. This helped me to understand in depth the mystery of the Incarnation, to understand well the link made by Saint Michael between humility and dedication, in the virtues of the Sacred Heart. The dedication shown by Love, far from being caught up by activism, is a loving and generous self-offering to God the Father, by unreservedly welcoming his will expressed through his Son Jesus. This is the kind of humility experienced through dedication which the Holy Land made me understand and contemplate. Moreover this journey strengthened in me the desire and the choice of following the Christ: I understand better now that it is in my daily life, within my usual environment, that He invites me to follow him as he himself obeyed the will of his Father in common and daily situations, both in Galilee and in Judea. (CI)

Companion of Jesus in the daily life / Simone Panzeri

I have always considered my training, and my whole life, as a way of growth along which the Christ accompanies



me. Like on any journey, I experienced fundamental moments, which I always keep in mind, which sustain me and help me to go resolutely ahead. One of these moments is the experience of a gathering for vocation promotion in Holy Land, ten years ago. From then onwards I have seriously considered the idea of entering the family of Betharram. This year, for my second time in Jesus' land, I had the opportunity to review the way covered, to understand how God led me gently to the decision of being with him for ever. I reflected in particular on the concrete and daily aspect of the faith in Christ, which is particularly tangible here. By the visit to the holy places, I found remarkable the realistic and progressive character of my journey of faith. And this fills me with trust for the future, as I know that God is close to man and that he will be with me all along the journey. In this land, God made his home in real houses, inhabited by  p. 20 real people, with their daily joys and sorrows.

Saint Michael from a Lay point of view

Here and now, here I am

Roberto Beretta, journalist for the Catholic daily paper *L'Avvenire* and former young Betharramite student, reviews the here I am of Saint Michael.

I imagine I can see the face of Michael Garicoits and his exemplary course, and I asked myself after two centuries can this resolute Basque, so distant from our generation speak to us, we, who are so different from him here and now? As far as I can recall his words, from a kind of basic Betharramite catechism learnt at the serene school of his sons, he leaves me with one prominent idea. Every saint opens a personal way to God by discovering from one time to another a way to practise the message of the Gospel. Saint Michael had chosen for himself and his followers the *Ecce Venio* (here I am O Lord. I have come to do your will). He completed them by these words with 'without delay, without condition and without return, through love.' An austere way of life, quite exacting yet full of hope, of authentic and unshakeable faith, and peace.

firstly to live our religious life within community where we care for one another as brothers.

In your current apostolate, what impresses you more in those to whom you are sent?... - At present I live and work within the Parish Community of the Holy Name, Great Barr. I am privileged to meet and minister to so many people. To share my life of Brotherhood is something I truly treasure and value very much. But my ministry here in Great Barr also takes me into Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School where I am the Assistant Chaplain, working alongside Fr Colin. I value very much the presence and witness of young people. I am continually amazed at the dedicated and hard working teachers who educate our young people.

...and what about the general situation of the Church and the society in Great Britain? - I enjoy very much my life and ministry as a Sacred Heart Brother and the witness I might be giving to the presence of God in the world and his love for each person.

What is the commitment in which you feel more involved, and what is your dearest wish for our Congregation of the Sacred Heart? - Here in England the Province gathers on a regular basis for our 'Togetherness Days' of prayer and reflection where a deep trust and respect for one another continues to grow and mature. I hope that our experience here in England could grow and develop in other parts of our Congregation: not just holy sayings and slogans, not just giving the "correct" answer no matter how we really feel. Instead our trust and respect – the Community of Betharram – is based on truthful acceptance of who we actually are, what we really need and how we can help each other. As St Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians, "When I am weak, then I am strong."





A virtual and
for two reasons
brotherly
meeting with
Br. Andrew
Ferris, the
youngest of our
religious of
England.

5 MINUTES WITH... BROTHER ANDREW

How did you come to know the Congregation? What attracted you to Betharram? - I first came to know about the Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers of Betharram through a little advert in the *Universe*, a weekly Catholic Newspaper. I am told that the advert had been placed in the paper each week for quite a number of years. I was the only person to respond and eventually join the Congregation! I remember making my way home from my first visit to Olton Friary with a tremendous feeling of having been made very welcome and totally at home! The people I met had a deep sense of commitment to Religious Life and I wanted the same kind thing in my life. A few years later after much thought and prayer I asked to join the Congregation and made my home at the Friary.

Andrew, you are a religious Brother. In what way does this vocation make you happy? - A few years ago somebody commented as I left Olton to come here to Great Barr that 'Andrew has been a brother and friend to many people.' We belong to a Community of Brothers committed to each other through the making of Vows. We are called and invited by the Lord to be brothers and friends to one another. My personal happiness is in trying each day to fulfil this invitation.

About half of the English religious are Brothers (like at Betharram, on the death of Saint Michael). Does this give a particular touch to community life and mission in the Province? - I feel the witness and presence of Brothers who have not been ordained to the Priesthood is a gentle but firm reminder to the wider Community of Betharram of the importance of Religious Life. The Ordained Priests made their Religious Profession before accepting the gift of the Priesthood. We have a very special way of life and a witness to give and share with the world. But we are called

Another saying I remember but seems quite vague: from the beginning the founder wished to have a flying squad of priests, ready to go anywhere, wherever there was a need, work in all situations, and immediately whatsoever the call. Here I am. I am ready for everything but perhaps, not an expert in anything in particular: yet matured by a sort of amateurism, ready to mount whatever cause and often change mounts in the course.

It evidently means taking risks. In my experience as a lay person I do not cease to believe that such a programme lies at the heart of the Gospel, leaving each free to interpret and deepen in a responsible way, beyond the structures of a rule, and the accessories of a discipline which is impossible to follow in the normal state of life, the ordinary life. Thus the proposition of Saint Michael appears to me as much fruitful for him, as it is for me, living in the world and coping with evil, yet corresponding to a radical Christian way of life within the limits, the duties, the slowness and the sins of daily life.

How does one in effect link a ticket in the Metro and the Beatitudes, hours at the desk and contemplation, difficulties of being a father or mother and the quest for God, the banality of meetings everyday and the love of one's neighbour, in a word, to reconcile routine and holiness? Michael, the Basque, opens to the lay people, a new path, and a fundamental option for living in the world. Let us welcome the 'here I am' and say the rosary with a 'yes' for all occasions and unprovided ones, happy or sad; put into practise without delay, without condition, not only because of duty or the inevitable, but from deep conviction; and add to these actions love, each time that we can do these things.

Simple; indeed, simplistic? Perhaps. The passion of a priest from the last century reminds us that sometimes on this little Betharramite way one can develop an accomplished humanity, perhaps even an heroic one, and to experience the hundredfold promised through faith. In this sense, more than after two centuries, the little Shepherd who fought Eagles has still much to say to us, and also to us lay people.

Ecce venio!

Roberto Beretta



*Saint Michael
Region*

Regional noviciate ■ After consultations between the Provincial Superiors of France and Italy, the Superior General and his Council appointed Fr Herve Kouame Kouakou master of novices for the Region St Michael Garicoits on the 22nd of June. Father Herve is the current Superior of the Community of Adiapodoume. In 2001 he attended one year course of formation for masters of novices near Paris. He will taking up his post in September at Bethlehem and accompany several novices from the Ivory Coast and Central Africa.

Season of retreats ■ Fr Pierre Grech scj, current General Secretary of the Assembly of the Catholic Bishops of Holy Land will lead the annual retreat at Betharram from July 30th to August 4th. We indeed needed a voice from the Mother Church to preach at the Mother house. As for the Religious of the Italian Province, they will have their retreat at Albavilla which will be led by Mgr Antonio Ladisa, Rector of the Seminary of Molfetta and Assistant Director of the National Centre for Vocations, dwelling on the following issues: *Witnesses of the Risen Lord, Hope of the world.*

Province of France Delegation of the Ivory Coast

“Tu es sacerdos”, you are priest ■ On Monday 7th August Mgr Marcal Agboton, Archbishop of Cotonou, will be ordaining Br Sylvain Dansou to the priesthood. After Fr Firmin, he will be the second priest of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram from Benin. Ecce. Fiat. Magnificat!

Province of Italy

Religious-Lay people: objectives for 2006-2007 ■ On behalf of the Coordination and Formation Office for Lay People, Fr Francesco Radaelli has just presented the yearly project to the Council of the Province of Italy. Among different proposals, there is a reflection in-depth on the encyclical *Deus Caritas est* by Benedict XVI. The formative journey will be developed over two years and will focus on: the source of Love, the incarnation of

Love, the figure of St Michael, the Manifesto of the founder and the charismatic mission of the Betharramite family. At the same time, the communities will be made more aware of the aspirations of the Lay people. A gathering of pastoral helpers will be the crowning achievement of this project in 2007.

Vice-Province of Brazil

Completed council ■ On the 13th of June, the religious of Brazil assembled at Brumadinho. They completed their Vice Provincial Team in electing to the post of councillors Jose Mirande and Jose Antonio da Silva.

Late greetings ■ Although two days late, we wish a happy anniversary to Br Roberto Miner of Argentina and to Fr Dante Angelelli of Brazil for his priestly jubilee. He was ordained a priest at Bethlehem, on the 12th of July 1936. Our apologies to our elders for this omission in the NEF. Our gratitude and greetings for their fidelity and a fruitful ministries. And our best wishes for the future... under the gaze of Mary:

*Song to the white
Madonna*

Dante Angelelli, scj

*If doubts overshadow my faith with clouds
and my heart is fearful with brooding storms
O 'Virgin of the Star', enlighten me!*

*If the passion of Christ must be my lot
and the shadow of the cross shakes my strength.
O lady of Calvary, hold me up!*

*If my life is a victim in the wreck
May my battered heart reach the shore.
O Virgin of the Beautiful Branch, come to my aid!*



*Father Etebecopar
Region*

IN MEMORIAM

We pray for

- Fr. Amadeo Miguel Aguilar, professed at Balarin in 1932, ordained priest at Bethlehem in 1938, passed in 1961 to the diocese of Soria (Spain), and remains attached to the congregation.
- The brothers-in-law of Fathers Alessandro del Grande and Anselmo Ghezzi, the brother of Fr. Angelo Pajno; a brother of Fr. Antonio Cattaneo; the sister of Fr. Lino Gurini.