

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

Generalate House  
via Angelo Brunetti, 27  
00186 Rome (Italy)

Telephone  
00 39 06 320 70 96  
Fax  
00 39 06 36 00 03 09  
E-mail  
nef@betharram.fr

Visit us on our website  
www.betharram.org

## IN MEMORIAM

### England

On November 10th, Father **Cyril Hazlewood** passed away peacefully at the age of 93. His funeral will probably be at Olton on the 16th.

### France

On Monday 13th November took place the funeral of the mother of Fr. Joseph Saint-Pé (community of Limoges).

*Pray for them*

## Father Barbé's log (10)

the captain who was on board with us and in a tone of voice which struck terror into the hearts of all. (...) In our cabin we recite the Litany of Our Lady, the Litany of the Saints, the Rosary, etc. Elsewhere there are shouts, and weeping. We are invited to another part of the boat, where people do like us and pray. (...) Meanwhile, up on deck there's a terrible noise. The sailors are trying in vain to manoeuvre. They risk being swept overboard. They are held back with strong ropes tied to their belts and finally they are able to cast the anchors with incredible difficulty. Afterwards there was only the noise of the storm to be heard and we entrusted ourselves to Divine Providence.

For the sailors the danger had passed at 11h30; but for us and the other passengers who know nothing about storms, it was very real still at 4h00. (...) At last we arrive and at 2h10 on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1856 we are treading the soil we have come looking for from so far away. I leave you to imagine the feelings which are ours at this precise moment.

5.00 As from now, we have decided to cease writing our journal. All who read it are asked to pray for us and for me in particular.

**Continues from page 3** ▶ There is no lack of elements allowing our religious to face the future with hope for the success of their mission in Latin America. And this, in the path traced for them by the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of Celam, to be held in Aparecida from the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007: *Disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ so that through Him our peoples may have life.*

Gaspar Fernandez Perez, SCJ

(to be continued?)



# Family News

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



**A word from the  
Superior General**

## The Betharramite Mission in America

### In this issue

- Page 4: 150 years in America and always on mission
- Page 6: Is there cause to celebrate?
- Page 10: Bird's eye view of the Congregation
- Page 12: 5 mn with Fr. Pajno
- Pages 14-17: In memoriam, FF. Xavier and Raul
- Page 19: Fr. Barbé's log (10)

All this year, the Betharramite communities of the three (vice) Provinces of Latin America have been celebrating the 150 years of the Betharram Mission, launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1856 and the landing in Buenos Aires of Fathers Barbe, Guimon, Larrouy, Harbustan, and Sardoy, and Brothers Fabien and Johannes and the student Jean Magendie.

Celebrating meant recalling the charism of St Michael Garicoits which fascinated them, recalling their community spirit, their missionary ardour, their courage in facing the difficulties inherent in all beginnings, their care for the poor, witness the care given to the victims of the Yellow Fever, their sense of discernment to find their true place in the Church and society of the New World, their option for Betharramite education, which knew moments of great importance during those 150 years.

Four celebrations stressed the fragility, but also the vitality of Betharram in Latin America.

• **The second Regional Meeting of Betharramite Laity:** Passaquadro, Brazil, 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April. In Latin America, without the laity, the Betharramite mission would be unthinkable and impossible. 75 delegates from four different countries, all interested in a charism which helps them to be faithful to their vocation as laity, were able to encourage each other in the same spiritual research.

• **The Regional assembly of Betharramite Educators:** Asuncion, Paraguay, 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> July. During these last

**104th year, nr. 10**

**14th November  
2006**



*An  
evangelizing  
presence with  
the youth and  
families*

150 years education was paramount. Today there are many actors of Betharramite education, religious as well as laity; and thanks to them, our tradition as educators is well and truly alive as an evangelizing presence of the Church with the youth and families.

- **The Regional Assembly of young Betharramites.** Rosario, Argentine, 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>th</sup> September. 300 youth from Brazil, the Argentine, Uruguay, and Paraguay celebrated St Michael and the Congregation, for the joy of being able to share the charism amongst themselves and with adults, both laity and religious. They returned home with the determination to be actors in the future of Betharram.
- **The Fifth Betharramite meeting in Latin America.** Luque, Paraguay. 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The Betharramite religious of the four countries met for the fifth time since 1986; it was an important family event wanting to continue being faithful to the reality of Latin America, and to the spirit and missionary ardour of their forbears during these past 150 years.

Such meetings are stepping stones on the way to regionalisation demanded by the last General Chapter. They enable the religious and the laity to have an experience of ecclesial communion around the charism of St Michael. Despite the cultural differences, the charism helps us to be united by *embracing the generous movement of the Heart of Jesus saying to his Father: **Here I am**, at the same time submitting to his will for the salvation of mankind.*

The celebration was also important for the entire Congregation, whose eyes are turned hopefully towards the religious and laity of Latin America. There, if the fragility of our communities is important, the vitality of the Christian environment is more important. The challenge of community life adapted to the missionary style, of communities which aren't static but rather mobile, these are the preoccupations of our religious, often



Betharramerica  
1856-2006



**On board of the Three-Master  
L'Etincelle en route for  
Montevideo (10)**

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November** – Our 63<sup>rd</sup> day at sea. The sea is no longer whitish but definitely grey-green. This means, according to sailors, that in a few hours time we shall have arrived in port. We are excited! Noon: A shout goes up from the top. On looking out there is only water to be seen. The time has not yet come for the passengers to set foot on the land they have been longing for.

4h30: Arrived at last! The land we have been longing for is there before us; we can see it, we can contemplate it to our heart's desire. But where is Montevideo? Patience! Meanwhile we are mad with joy, we enjoy it, we laugh, and talk louder than usual...

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** - Our 64<sup>th</sup> day at sea. What a marvellous sight! We are opposite Montevideo, that is the most beautiful town the passengers have ever seen, opposite the most magnificent site that one can imagine. Today is All Souls Day; the church bells are ringing and we can hear them. But to experience how we are feeling, one would have to have spent 63 days at sea.

10.00: Now we are on board the launch for a visit of Montevideo. The inside of the town is not quite like the exterior. Of course there are houses and buildings of all sorts to delight us. (...) We visited two churches and found them full of people of all ages and sexes, all classes, in prayer on their knees. (...) 9.00: Our Captain doesn't want to go to Buenos Aires. He informs us that he will reserve a passage for us to Buenos Aires on a steamer and that we should be ready to leave as soon as possible. Immediately everything springs into action and within half an hour we were boarding the steamer after having bid farewell to our boat L'Etincelle. (...) 9h30: The most awful storm blew up, and the most sinister shout could be heard all over the boat: "*I can't steer her*" and this from

Here we are!  
After 64 days of  
navigation,  
exaltation, resi-  
gnation, and  
emotions, they  
have set foot  
on the land.  
They are the  
first Betharra-  
mites of the  
new world. And  
we are happy  
to have been  
travelling with  
them so far.



2006

NOVEMBER

17	15 anos de sacerdócio, felicitações! Feliz cumpleaños	P. Paulo Cesar Pinto Ho. Alberto Zaracho Barrios
19	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Narcisse Zaolo
20	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Alfredo Alonso
22	Buon compleanno	F. Claudio Mantegazza
23	Happy birthday	Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph Br. J.Bosco Parinya Wonganan

1	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	F. Fernand Fonquerle P. Francesco Radaelli
2	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Léon Laclau F. Émile Garat
3	Happy birthday  Bom aniversário	Br. Stervin Selvadass Fernando Fr. Biju Anthony Panthalukkaran Ir. Luiz Hernique Ribeiro
6	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Beñat Oyhénart
8	35° di professione, auguri	F. Giuseppe Pozzi
7	15° di sacerdozio, auguri	P. Beniamino Gusmeroli

DECEMBER

10	Happy birthday Joyeux anniversaire 40 años de sacerdocio, enhorabuena	Fr. Anthony Box P. Gilbert Koffi Kouman P. Mario Sosa
11	Buon compleanno Happy birthday	P. Luigi Speziale Br. Pascal Ravi
14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	P. Paul Fourcade F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	Happy birthday	Br. George Varghese Korandakkatte
16	Happy birthday	Br. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong
17	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Giuseppe Lietti F. Omer Koutouan Nanghy
18	Buon compleanno Happy birthday	P. Giulio Forloni Br. Maria Soosai Rajendran
19	25° di sacerdozio, auguri	P. Carlo Sosio
22	55 ans de prêtrise, félicitations	P. Jean Tapie P. Eugène Lhouerrou

threatened by activism and individualism, the heaviness of the institution and the weight of the past.

Besides, the missionary activity shared with the laity and the young is a great reason to hope. The outlook for future vocations is promising. Formation for the religious life according to Betharram, studied in a regional team, is taken with seriousness and demands, and provides the necessary solidity for the construction of the Congregation. Our charism is more and more incarnate because of the increase in the number of religious native to Latin America. The three (vice) Provinces are determined to pursue the educational pastoral with the laity, but at the same time, and in the spirit of the origins, to watch out for the missionary presence of our charism especially in the service of the disadvantaged sections of the population: Nueva Esperanza (Argentine), San Joaquin (Paraguay) missionary week in Brazil.

*The missionary activity is a great reason to hope*



Follows on the last page

*Father Etcheccopar writes...*

to the Religious of St Joseph's College, Buenos Aires, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1878

*How can we respond to all the graces bestowed on our Congregation – Betharram – by the Lord himself? Have a deep love for the Blessed Virgin to the point of wanting to imitate her as far as possible in her humility, her charity, her obedience, her perseverance, her modesty! And for this, think of how dear she is to God and how precious for us is her intercession with her Son. Let's be eternally grateful.*

*How else? Be consumed with a renewed zeal at the sight of the virtues of our Holy Founder. We are his children. Could we not be generous, very generous even, in walking, with God's help, in the footsteps of his religious virtues? Let's contemplate his life so as to be more deeply penetrated by it. It is our family heritage, to be transmitted faithfully, and without letting an iota of it be lost. This would be a great misfortune indeed.*

*So you see, dear Fathers and Brothers, the beautiful page of history provided by America. It is the most beautiful pearl in the crown of our Father. May it remain ever more beautiful, ever more sparkling on his forehead.*

*To achieve this result you must always be men of prayer, recollection, and mortification, both interior and exterior...*

**Retrospective****150 years and always on mission**

The small motor boat, shaken by a violent storm on the estuary of Rio de la Plata the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1856, remains in 2006 as the symbol of the South American Betharram taken up in the storm.

Our arrival in America corresponds to the missionary movement of French Congregations in the XIX century. The migratory phenomenon of the Basques gave them the occasion; the order of mission aimed high: it was a question then of *evangelizing the Basques, the French and the indigenous peoples*. The government from Argentina evidently saw in immigration the chance to populate the rural zones and to strengthen a nation which was still young. Naturally, and immediately, the first Betharrams placed themselves at the service of all without distinction. This pastoral realism was well in accordance with the insistence of the Founder concerning availability to the calls of the local Church.

Progressively, inserting themselves in the Argentinian national conscience, the Congregation also opened itself to the universal. Betharram began to think in American but, at the same time, remaining deeply attached to the Mother House. Its expansion responds, little by little, to a continental logic, even if the decision goes formally through the central administration, for the foundation in Brazil, for example. With the new foundations, national and diocesan solidarities are created much more, since nationalisms are still very alive in those countries. This reality must be taken into account, notably in order to put in their place the Regions programmed by the last General Chapter.

In order to carry out his spiritual intuition, Michael Garicoïts had begun by launching his community to the Parish missions and to teaching. In disembarking in Buenos Aires, then in Uruguay, this model, with the necessary adaptations, was naturally imposed. After the great initial expansions which led Father Guimon to the doors of

easy. Your months of suffering tell us only too eloquently. Luckily, Jesus leads the way and with his own Body opens the route for us!

Adieu, Father Raoul! Today we have two things to say to you:

- 1) Because we love you dearly, we free you from all the tiny events which have bothered or wounded any of us or our brothers through human weakness or for reasons which we ignore. Who is not without his little secrets? God alone knows and He has already forgiven you! We, members of your community do likewise! Rest in peace.
- 2) And because we love you dearly, you will always be remembered in this community of Barracas. *Because you have lived here, and because you continue to live here, helping us to be faithful.*
  - Thank you for your devoted service to the community, the college, the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the whole district.
  - Thank you for putting your priestly heart, on your return from Uruguay and at a time when you were already ill, into celebrating Masses having meetings, counselling, and radio broadcasts.
  - Thank you for the gift of your friendship which was typical of you. Yours was a heart full of tenderness!
  - Thank you for the seeds sown among us and which God alone measures justly!
  - Thank you very much, Father Raoul! We are praying for your eternal smile.

Francisco Daleoso, SCJ

---

By dispensation from Holy See, dated 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2006, Fr Ademar de Toledo of the Vice Province of Brazil has been incardinated into the diocese of Belo Horizonte.

---

So it is for our dear Fr. Xavier: he has moved on into an eternal abode and into a more lasting, into an everlasting relationship with the Father in the company of the saints...

We know, we feel it in our hearts that Fr. Xavier has reached that world of eternal bliss... May his life and his works encourage us also on our way to our Father's home. Adieu Fr. Xavier, Adieu! Adieu till we meet again in our Father's home!

Fr. Biju Alappat,scj

## IN MEMORIAM

Argentina



### P. Raúl Traverzaro (1929-2006)

Born in Las Heras, province of Buenos Aires, on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1929; entered the Congregation in 1945. Studied at Adrogue. Ordained on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1955, his was a fruitful ministry both as priest and teacher in the different houses of the Congregation: director of the colleges of San Jose

de La Plata, San Jose de Buenos Aires and Barracas, where he also served as Parish Priest in the parish of Montevideo. Last year, he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his ordination. He died at Barracas on the 29<sup>th</sup> October last, after a light meal. Let us pray for his eternal rest! Here below are the farewell message addressed by the parish priest, Fr. Paco, in the name of the community and the parish.

Adieu, Father Raoul! You have passed on; no more of your sallies, your impetuosity, your jokes! Your departure has plunged us into mourning, even Ting and Riel, your faithful companions are very sad this evening. Yesterday evening it was heartbreaking to hear them barking.

How dearly it costs us to experience that "extra" of life, the transformation of our being, created by the love of the Father, into a spiritual being, "in his own image and likeness"! You know how difficult the route is. It is not

Patagonia, the mission gave way almost exclusively to school activities. Then it re-emerged in quite a surprising way, and at the beginning under the form of Parishes. Father Magendie himself who exclaimed: "I did not make myself a religious to become a Parish priest!" became the pastor of the first Betharram Parish in America, the Sacred Heart of Betharram. Others followed. The movement grew after Vatican Council II, while the summer missions appeared. During that time, this apostolate mobilized the laity, more and more, and aroused animators of communities regularly evaluated and supported.

The school experienced its time of glory, raising our schools in Argentina and Paraguay to the rank of national cultural patrimony. The great peak or apogee of San Jose de Buenos Aires coincided with its centenary, but also with Vatican II, in the full crises of modernity. Without almost being aware, the figure of the religious-professor disappeared to the benefit of the one responsible for the chaplaincy working in a team together with the laity. Pastoral youth ministry was organized and gave good results, even if the new generations are not always outstanding concerning regularity! After a long time, the influence of the mass media got hold, in the formation of public opinion, of the relay of thundering sermons and of the disciplined class rooms. If the missionary spirit remains, the new forms of apostolic action are still hesitant.

The Congregation is mondializing itself and is rooted locally, thanks to the native vocations. Up until the time of the creation of Provinces, in 1947, the great majority of the religious carrying out the activity came from Europe. That source was exhausted, the effectives descended, but this sign, which caused concern, was nevertheless, bearer of hope: if we assist at the end of an important socio-cultural presence, this recomposition allows the South Americans to take in hand their own destiny. All of a sudden, we are present to a new departure for the inculturation of the Charism. After almost a century, our seminaries receive a stable number of candidates. We may call them inconstant:

they are the image of our society, with undeniable human qualities. But in spite of all, there are reasons to hope.

In the general movement of secularisation the laity, more and more, take their place in the Church and in the Congregation. Between the two wars, Catholic Action aroused a great desire for participation, more or less opposed by the military regimes and more or less well seen by the ecclesial hierarchies. The commitment of the laity is not less determinate in our days, whether as collaborators at all levels, in our schools and parishes, or in the summer missions. The Betharram laity have become a reality in our countries, forming fraternities with multiple features. With them, the religious themselves find the radicalism of their choice of life: to be a type of a fine provocative avant-garde in the Christian communities, but always united to the Bishops.

One hundred and fifty years after the start of the conquering mission and the triumphant school, having gone through the hours of confusion and helplessness and of detachment of the postmodern years, in our diverse countries appears a new form of Betharram life. Father Gaspar reminded us that Saint Michael, after the beautiful spiritual reflections, he experienced in himself the experience of the Mystery of the Incarnation, by obeying until death. Apparently we are in that stage of disappearing and of the bursting out of life.

Then why cry out in our boat: “Lord, save us”? The Risen Lord is there, even if he is asleep, and it is his Spirit who guides us and keeps us up. Will we doubt?

#### **Reflection of a scolastic**

### **Is there cause to celebrate?**

A hundred and fifty years ago on the 4<sup>th</sup> November, religious from Betharram set foot in America. It is obviously a good reason to rejoice and have a celebration. And yet, a rapid look at the present state of affairs paints a picture which is less than joyful... and so explains the question which opens this article.



José Mirandé, SCJ

heaven, the good and faithful servant, enjoying the beatific vision and encouraging us with the example of his life.

Though we have come together because of Fr. Xavier, it is not he who has brought us here. It is the Lord Himself who has brought us here around the mortal remains of Fr. Xavier, even as Fr. Xavier himself looks down from heaven, with the smile of contentment and indescribable joy.

Fr. Xavier was indeed the good and faithful servant. He was in fact all things to all he met welcoming, encouraging, enthusiastic, generous loving and forgiving. In his presence we all felt important.

Fr. Xavier was not by any means perfect. Yet he strove to be God like in his imperfection – sharing that love which he had experienced from God. Home or room, he made sure that he found the time to be united with three Lord. This was the secret of his cordiality and the smooth relationship he maintained with young and the old.

As a Betharramite, he was optimistic about the future of the Congregation and had plans to start new missions in the more challenging regions of the country. He was concerned that there should be no losses to the congregation on account of his actions.

He referred to Betharram as a “Branch of Reconciliation” and made this a reality in the hearts of all the Betharramites in India as also in the hearts of all those whom he encountered.

The words he spoke to me just three days before his tragic death still echo in my mind. Said he: “Biju, I am very tired and I want to go home and rest for a week!” Now he has unexpectedly, tragically and so suddenly entered into his eternal rest!

We see a ship moving out of our sight, vanishing on the horizon. But because it is out of our sight it is not true that it does not exist. Indeed it is moving on to new places, meeting new peoples and entering into new relationships.

## IN MEMORIAM

India

**Fr. Xavier Ponthokkan (1962-2006)**

It was his first year theology in St. Peter's Seminary, Bangalore (1989), when Fr. Xavier came in contact with Frs. Vincent Landel and Mirco Trusgnach. Through them he came to know more about the congregation. At the age of 27 he made an official application to Fr. Austin Hughes in order to join the congregation. He began his novitiate in England and made his first religious vows on 14th of September 1990 in the hands of Fr. Anton Madej. He made his theological and university studies in St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Alwaye, at the University of Kerala (India), and at St. Mary's college, Oscott, Birmingham. After 6 months of Pastoral experience course in a Salesian Community, he studied the Spirituality of Betharram in Sala Baganza. He was ordained as Priest on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1995 and became the first scj priest from India. Superior of the formation communities (in Bangalore, then in Mangalore), he was also the Superior of the Delegation of India since 2001. Seriously injured in a car crash, he died on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2006 in the hospital of Bangalore, surrounded by young scj brothers.

**The man who said yes to the Lord**

*I love this  
silence that  
allows me to  
rest my heart  
in thee*

Just 45, full of life and bubbling with energy, Fr. Xavier Ponthokkan was so cruelly plucked from our midst. Returning to Bangalore from Andra Pradesh after having completed some work, he fell victim to a road accident, near Anantapur. This tragedy has brought great sorrows to all those who have known this zestful young priest.

Today, as we gathered here to offer this Eucharist and to ask the Lord to be merciful to His servant. Fr. Xavier seems to be telling us: "Be Happy". He it is who has drawn us together from different parts – his lifeless body lying here before us as well as the memory of his youthful, service filled years.

Indeed we would have been happier to have Fr. Xavier with us, to encourage us all along the path of a life of service. But today that is not how it is; he is up there in

It is a fact that as Betharramites we are few in number. In the Province of Rio de La Plata there are 28 religious, the majority of whom are between 60 and 90 years of age. Looked at, the Betharramites are old and weary; the sick are more numerous requiring special attention and constant care in the communities. The age bracket of the 60 – 75 year olds exert themselves without sparing and give themselves with passion to the apostolate. In a college, parish or mission where once there were five religious, today there are, at most one or two. They get by as best they can, leaving behind the former "glory" of the colleges packed with Fathers and Brothers, like a faded colour photo of a far distant past. We have lost that "glory". We are the little remnant.

There is another point to be taken into consideration: the scarcity of vocations. At the moment there are only two scholastics for the Rio de La Plata. This means that, statistically speaking, the number of admissions is insufficient to replace those who can no longer assure their mission. The general picture is therefore worrying and even discouraging.

Is there cause to celebrate? Obviously not, if we are to go by this picture. It would be logical to celebrate the arrival of the first religious in America, without any fuss and low key – the simple historic recall of an event which took place and which will not be repeated, alas! If we cast an eye on the Gospel and the 2000 years of Church history, I am firmly convinced that one must die, so as, one day, to rise again to life; for to have rebirth something in self must disappear. *"Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest"* (John 12/24).

Peter is the one who fully understood what Jesus meant. After the Resurrection, he grasped that to be a disciple it was necessary to go to the end of the Paschal night. Likewise for Betharram. Right now it is the time of the dark night, of the ground giving way beneath our feet,



heaven closed, a sentiment of death and fruitlessness. It is the ideal time to invent new forms of living, to beget life, to be reborn. Without a doubt, for both religious and laity, Betharram is today traversing a time of purification.

Despite everything which saddens us, in the depths of our night a little light is flickering. We must be faithful to it, if we want to found our religious life afresh at Betharram. Because of this light, however fragile but enduring, I believe that it is worth having a celebration. Because this light is nothing other than the presence of Christ in our midst, the eternal novelty of his Gospel and the effort of helping all mankind to reach the Kingdom.

Of course, the majority of our religious are old. They don't know the meaning of retirement. One would think that at the age of 65 it would be all right to cease all activity and take a well earned rest. That's not how things are done in Rio de la Plata. Our religious live their vocation fully till the hour of their death; they continue working as long as illness allows them. "Bygone glories" are out of fashion; just the same, the religious devote themselves joyfully where ever their apostolate calls them, according to our charism and their lowly state. The days of glory are over and so much the better. If we have really renounced them we shall be ever more faithful to Jesus humble and obedient so dear to St Michael. Consequently the battalions of religious of days gone by must not become an obsession but bear witness to a period of which we are the children and heirs.

We must celebrate the 150 years going from the order for the mission given by the Founder to the landing at Rio de la Plata; celebrating the actions of so many religious who were sanctified in the different missions entrusted to them, in the upkeep of buildings, giving missions in country areas, constructing parishes or revitalising them, hearing confessions, education, comforting, organising camps, etc. It's not a question of celebrating past glories, but keeping in mind our fidelity to our charism and the person of the Incarnate Word.

**How did you enjoy this assembly?** - For me they were absolutely fantastic days. I was able to share, discuss and crack jokes with my brothers. Literally speaking, it was like in Psalm 133: "*How good and how pleasant it is when brothers live in unity*", whether at prayer, in the assembly, in group work, or in moments of relaxation.

**Was it you who prepared the liturgy for these days?** - True enough, I had prepared an *ad hoc* accompaniment with this title: *Witnesses of the Risen Jesus, hope of the world*. Celebration in the liturgy of the Risen Lord helped us to create real relations with each other and with God. Through the ritual, the prayers, the spaces, the situations and the individuals, experiencing the celebration as a meeting with Christ, aroused and nourished affective and effective bonds, capable of strengthening hope, of building community, of bearing witness to a common project, of dialogue and of a responsible commitment.

**How can the liturgy act upon the work of an Assembly?** - I am convinced of one thing: experience of the liturgy teaches us to hope. By displaying before us the true nature of an existence living for the present moment, at one's risk and impulse, the liturgy rebuilds hope. If the liturgy scatters all our illusions, it gives fresh life to trust, it helps us to exceed the feeling of powerlessness by enhancing the value of commitment; it dresses wounds; it prepares us to forgive and be forgiven, it prepares us to experiment gratitude, joy and freedom, sincerity and a sharing of life. By celebrating the liturgy as was done during this assembly, it becomes "*the City of God, perched on a mountain*". It touches the Father right to the heart, and draws numerous workers to His vineyard.

I shall conclude with this hymn from the congress of Verona; it is full of meaning and hope for our Province as for the entire Congregation. "*There are neither deserts nor brambles which cannot receive the seed sown by God. Like God, go out into the fields, make them fruitful. You will proclaim the harvest of the Father in the life of each individual. Let us bless the Lord! May he give us each day the joy of Easter for the life of the world!*"

\* Issue of the National Ecclesial Congress of Verona (October 2006) and the national Liturgical Week in Varese (August 2006), in which Fr. Angelo took part as a member of the Ambrosian liturgical commission of the diocese of Milan.

Mongkhon and Arun reported on the theme *Go and Teach about Jesus* (a first as delegates representing our congregation, a third as observers). In the course of the debates, our young priests were impressed by the references to the work of Betharram, and the expansion of the faith in the North of Thailand and in general, and among the Karens in particular. This was emphasised by the fact that the oldest lay participant was Peter Chan Lasom (101 years of age). He had been baptised by one of our priests, Elie Sablayrolles 60 years ago!



### 5 MINUTES WITH... Fr. Angelo Pajno

**Nef: What are the fruits of this Provincial Assembly?** - First of all I would like to say that there was good participation of all the communities. The serious work beforehand, helped towards an effective dialogue, unity of intentions and discerning answers. The work done in the Provincial groups also provided us with a good starting point. Each one trusted the Holy Spirit to inspire us with ideas and solutions. I noticed a great interest in the group work and assemblies, together of course with the necessary “evangelical patience” to reach our aims.

**What project was put forward for the Province?** - There is a project of training for future superiors. Beyond the canonical meaning of the title, the superior must be a “real facilitator”, capable of managing the different realities and above all of grasping both the different sensitivities and the problems resulting. In his *Doctrine*, St Michael supplies important spiritual instructions about the person of the Superior (DS 354 – 365). To be able to take on this role in a community and cooperate with the local Church demands doctrinal, pastoral, religious, and human competences. The objective is no longer a question of *production* but of *service given freely*. To create a community, you must have individuals. It is they who *are* and who *make* a community. The idea of power should become outdated to give place to an animation entrusted to a responsible religious, expert in humanity.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October, Fr Angelo Pajno had a ringside seat during the Italian Provincial Assembly for three reasons: as host of the assembly together with the whole of his community of Albavilla-San Giuseppe; as secretary to the Provincial Council and finally as master of ceremonies. He was therefore ideally placed to give us his interpretation of the event.

It is true that there are few of us in formation. But we believe in Him who loves us and is calling us. We believe in regionalisation which is becoming more necessary every day, making us brothers with Paraguay and Brazil and determined not to shut ourselves into a particular culture; but to be free to pitch our tent wherever necessary. We are continuing to accompany the youth along this path for vocations.

That’s what we must celebrate: life opening up a route; God who has a project for Betharram; all the initiatives rising from the ashes; the knowledge that with God “*when the way seems hazy, we must advance with confidence*”. There’s every reason to celebrate the 150 years presence of hundreds of religious, body and soul, who never boasted of moral perfection but rejoiced at being instruments in the hands of their Creator. We must have a celebration not so much for what we have been, but for what we are, our consecrated life, the task accomplished, the ideal of fraternity which we are creating, day after day with our brethren.

We must have a celebration because, in the end, as religious of Betharram, we are happy. Because we have left everything to follow Christ. Because with all our hearts we give ourselves to Him and want to remain faithful. Because, day after day, we are doing everything in our power to put into practice what we profess: get for others the same happiness. There will be no shortage of problems; we shall continue shouldering ever greater responsibilities. But feigned sadness cannot change real joy, the joy of a life given to God, seeds strewn on earth, the promise of eternal harvests.

And so, let’s celebrate! Let’s make merry! Let’s raise our hearts to God! Let’s be the living memory of the past in faithfulness to the present! Let’s proclaim to all and sundry that we are happy to belong to this poor, humble and fervent family of Betharram. There’s our festival. There’s our joy. There’s our treasure. Yes, there is every reason to have a celebration.

Sebastián García, SCJ

Sebastián García, 28 years old is member of the community of Adrogué (Argentina). He made his first vows in 2004 and studies theology in Buenos Aires.

## International Betharram

**Signs change, but the spirit lives on** ■ 1835, the Sanctuary of our Lady of Betharram saw the birth of a religious family. In 1845 its members took the name of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They adopted the emblem of the hearts of Jesus, crowned with thorns (Ecce Venio) and of Mary pierced with a sword of sorrow (Ecce Ancilla).

1854, the General Assembly of a Congregation approved almost unanimously to send missionaries to Buenos Aires in response to the appeal of the Bishop. On the 3 Nov 1856 eight religious sailed for America. It was the first foundation outside the diocese of Bayonne and the beginning of the worldwide work of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

2006, 150 years later, they are in 11 new countries: Uruguay, Palestine, Spain, England, Italy, Paraguay, Brazil, Thailand, Ivory Coast, Central Africa, India, without counting Belgium and China, Morocco and Algeria, where we are no longer present. As a result, the Congregation has created a new logo: a sign of recognition for our different realities. It retains the traditional elements, the heart surmounted by the cross but now with a map of the world. Today as yesterday, Betharram is presented as a heart: the Sacred Heart opened to the world.



## Province of France Delegation of the Ivory Coast

**Old boys from Algeria** ■ On the 15th and 16th of October, about 100 pupils from the College of Sonis Sidi bel Abbes joyfully invaded the shores of the Gave. It was a fine occasion to go over treasured memories of Betharram in Algeria, and to re-establish contacts of friendship.

**Return to our roots and beckoning calls** ■ On 3rd November, the French and Spanish members of a Society gathered with the Superior General at Betharram. At the end of his canonical visit Fr Gaspar Fernandez referred to the present situation, and indicated new directions. This official and fraternal occasion brought something more spiritual: the blessing of the altar in the oratory where St Michael held his conferences. On six polychrome panels and statuettes



*St Michael  
Region*

Sister Mercedes osb traced the life and message of St Michael; in the centre was the Tabernacle surmounted by a great Roman style Christ. The community of Notre Dame, and its hosts will profit from this superb meditation in wood and clay. One scene represents the Betharramites sailing towards America. And 50 years on, in France, and elsewhere, the mission field remains open.

## Province of Italy

**"Summa cum laude"** ■ On the 24th of October at the Teresianum, the Carmelite University in Rome, Father Pietro Villa passed his license in spiritual theology, which he began in 1984. His success has been recognised as he gained an excellent report in De universa. His thesis was the *Ecce Venio of St Michael Garicoits in following Christ* in which he did not failed to interest the examiners. Following the experience of the founder father Pietro has ably presented what he calls *The good news of here I am*.

**Modelled on Christ** ■ The parish of the Blessed Sacrament of Bitonto will be celebrating a double feast on the 8th December. Mgr Francesco Caccuci, Archbishop of Bari will ordain Br Simone Panzeri to the diaconate on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. On the following day at Brumadinho Br Jair Pereira will be ordained to the priesthood. May there be a union of prayer, between Italy and Brazil in the service of the Gospel, and in the growth of God's people.

## Province of the Rio de la Plata Uruguay

**Virtual parish** ■ On November, the 11<sup>th</sup> *Estamos aqui*, a newsletter of our parish of Montevideo, blows out its first candle. Its monthly printing will be enhanced by electronic information sent by the team of Fr Jose Maria Ruiz. (betharram@adinet.com.uy). On this occasion, the friends of Betharram will be reunited for a grand hamburger meal. Here we are, so let's go!

## Vice-Province of Thailand

**Asia's celebration of the faith** ■ From the 19th to the 22nd of October, Chiang Mai was the theatre of a great church event, the Asian Missionary Congress. Besides five cardinals, 80 Bishop's, 600 priests, 400 religious, and 300 lay people from 28 countries, our brothers Subancha,



*Fr. Etchecopar  
Region*



*Blessed  
Miriam Region*