

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

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## Michael Garicoits, God's shepherd (10)

At the same time, pilgrimages to Our Lady of Betharram resumed with even greater intensity. Pilgrims came from far and near, the celebrations were magnificent in the newly refurbished sanctuary.

By any chance could this sanctuary be a nuisance to the devil? During the night of April 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> fire broke out in the attics and spread towards the rafters of the sanctuary. All hands on deck to fight the fire! The whole village arrived and soon there was a human chain transporting water. But Father Garicoits realised the danger; if the beam between the house and the church isn't cut, the church will be burnt down. He made for the attic, jumped over beams, broke down a door and with an axe attacked the timber with all the power of his body. The smoke blinded him? The sparks burned his face? He hacks and will save the sanctuary, even at the peril of his life! True enough, he saved the sanctuary; he won and tomorrow, he will rebuild what had been destroyed.

(to be continued)



## Schedule of the General Council 13<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> November

Council of the Congregation gathering in Bangalore (India) the General Council and the (vice) provincial Superiors

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The truth is that we have been created through love and for love. To live in truth and in love is the guarantee of our liberty – liberty which is a gift for the mission. A liberty which we have to construct in every situation where we are obliged to strive for truth and for the good of others. Let us never forget that we are the bearers of the

Spirit of truth and love, and that *wherever the Spirit is, there is freedom.* (2 Cor 3,17)

Gaspar Fernandez,SCJ



# Family News

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



## A word from the Superior General

## In truth and in Love

Ephesians 4,14-16

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Last October while visiting the communities in Brazil, I spent an afternoon with Father Dante Angelelli, 96 years of age. We chatted about lots of things. At one point I asked him "What do you think of the new Pope, Benedict XVI?" "He's the Pope, that's all" was his reply. Another time the same question was put to me. And I replied: "I appreciate him very much for I can see that he is very involved in looking for and defending the truth, without bothering about the attacks on his image: Regensburg, Aparecida, the motu proprio on John XXIII's Mass." My answer surprised my questioner somewhat; he was expecting me to come up with the usual criticism of the Pope as a progressist, the sort of answer which I sometimes gave as the easy way out, under the influence of today's thought. Quite the contrary of the Pope's attitude.

Our Pope is the witness to truth and love. Already in his Episcopal coat of arms, he had inscribed: *Co-operatores Veritatis*. He feels entirely free as he proclaims and defends the beauty of Truth which is Jesus Christ, he must think that he has nothing to lose. Opinion makers will carry on saying "What else could we expect? It's Ratzinger!" For Benedict XVI Truth is supreme. It's not something abstract; it's a person, Jesus Christ and his manner of understanding the reality of the Creator and Creation. But he is also the Pope of Love: *Deus caritas est*. The theologian-Pope has amazed us all by reminding

105<sup>th</sup> year  
10<sup>th</sup> series, n°21  
14<sup>th</sup> November 2007



us of something as simple and fundamental for our Christian life as love.

Truth and Love always go hand in hand. Truth must not be belittled by putting it at the service of anything other than love. The first sign of love that we can give anyone is to tell him the truth. Love is Truth in action. Love is the revelation of Truth. It is therefore important for a Christian to live in truth and in love. The Truth will set us free.

- To live in truth and in love means to respect the opinions of others while not denying the truth of one's own identity;
- To live in truth and in love means demanding respect for our identity with the same courage as we respect the identity of others, without being fanatical *"always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope you all have,"* as the Apostle says (I Peter 3,15).
- To live in truth means that we are so inhabited by faith that we accept the limits and weaknesses of our human condition, so as not to imagine that either we, our holy Mother the Church, or our Religious family have the monopoly over error or sin.
- To live in truth and in love means to be deeply convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and instead of constantly doubting, under the influence of today's society, not to give way despite opposition, just like the martyrs.
- To live in truth and in love means undertaking always to speak the truth with humility and respect, with tact, even in situations where another answer is expected of us, even if certain individuals felt that they were being got at, and could threaten us because they are more powerful.
- To live in truth and in love means being able to proclaim with all our might and to propose freely what

*To live in truth means being inhabited by faith ...*

*Not to give up but to undertake always to speak the truth with humility and respect*

## *Michael Garicoits, God's shepherd (10)*



**When the commando becomes a regiment**

In the terrible years after the 1789 Revolution, the Church was constantly under attack. Wanting ardently to take the Church's defence, Father Garicoits probably would have liked to proceed with greater speed. If it was God's will that there should be delays, it was to allow him the time to reflect and pray. Little by little his ideas become clear and this is how he resumed them for his spiritual sons:

- *When he came on earth, Jesus said: "Father, I have come to do your will". Let's say likewise, every day. Better still: Let's do it everywhere, and in all things. And, if you need a second model, look to the Virgin Mary who called herself "the Lord's handmaid".*

- *Father, by what name shall we be known?*

- *Since we want to serve the Flock with a heart like that of Jesus, let's be known as "the Priests of the Sacred Heart".*

For these priests this wasn't any ordinary name. Cleared of all pride and selfishness, there is room only for Jesus in their life. So it is no longer their heart, mind or will which decides and acts: it is the heart, mind and will of Jesus acting in them. Consequently what success where ever they went preaching a mission, opening a primary school or a college! "God's commando" was well on its way!

When the mission has matured in the silence and the shade of the Virgin of the Beautiful Branch, it suddenly expanded. New candidates came to take their place under the direction of Fr Garicoits; some groups went preaching missions, others opened Catholic schools and colleges in the midst of awful difficulties. Priests from Oloron came to learn to be of greater service in their diocese. Soon the Basques who had emigrated to Argentina began to ask for a "commando". This was the beginning of the spread of the Congregation throughout the world; from 1856 onwards the Mother House in Betharram spread its wings.

From 1830 to 1860, the project of Fr. Garicoits became more precise and developed. The priests of the Sacred Heart grew in number...

The expansion was told by Rose Dardennes in 1967, and is reexamined by our readers in 2007.



2007

NOVEMBER

17	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Alberto Zaracho Barrios
18	Buon compleanno	F. Claudio Mantegazza
19	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Narcisse Zaolo
20	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Alfredo Alonso
23	Happy birthday	Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph Br. J.Bosco Parinya Wonganan

DECEMBER

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 Henrique Ribeiro
4	55 ans de profession, félicitations!	P. Dominique Etcheverria P. André Lacaze
6	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Beñat Oyhénart
10	Happy birthday Joyeux anniversaire	Fr. Anthony Box P. Gilbert Koffi Kouman
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 30° di sacerdozio, auguri	Br. George Varghese Korandakkatte P. Ernesto Consonni
16	Happy birthday 45° de sacerdocio, enhora- buena	Br. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong P. Daniel Ramón Martín Mons Claudio Silvero Acosta
17	40° di sacerdozio, auguri  Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Ugo Donini P. Alessandro Paniga P. Francesco Radaelli P. Giuseppe Lietti F. Omer Koutouan Nanghy

gives meaning and value to our life, so that others may have a taste of real life, rather than hiding it from others, especially the youth, being afraid to influence them.

- To live in truth and in love means witnessing the joy that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life for us, rather than being Christians full of hang-ups and afraid of showing that Jesus – his person, his actions, his words, his life, his passion, death and resurrection – is the saviour of the world.
- To live in truth and in love means being able to silence truth rather than use it for my own ends, my pleasure or to humiliate my neighbour.
- To live in truth and in love means having the courage to speak the truth when necessary, seeking the good of others even at the risk of offending them, but never seeking to harm them.
- To live in truth and in love means to have the courage to state one's convictions with humility and respect, even if that goes against the tide of today's attitudes and our peace of mind.

*Being able to propose what gives meaning and value to life...*

*Witnessing the joy that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life*

 follows on page 20

*Father Etcheepar wrote...* to Fr. Jean Magendie, of the American region, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1880

*In the course of my walks up to Calvary, I like to kneel before the tomb of our venerable Founder and to ask him for a liberal share of his spirit for all his children, and especially for those furthest away.*

*There is no doubt but that in his great goodness he intercedes with the Sacred Heart all the time to obtain for us to be gentle, humble, afire with love to death on the Cross.*

*Take heart, therefore, to be as our Father expressed, idonei, expediti, expositi, capable of everything, freed for everything, abandoned into the hands of our Superiors, as we say: Father, here I am, without delay, unreservedly, without looking back, for your love!*

Talk given to the Fraternity *Here I am* by Fr. Jacky Moura (Betharram, 28<sup>th</sup> July 2007)

### **Spreading St Michael's spirituality**

#### **From the individual to the universal**

All spirituality is a doorway to the Gospel. What Michael Garicoits discovered is known worldwide and becomes international in so far as on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1947 the Church recognised his saintliness. The universality of his spirituality was launched. The Congregation became the depository of his spiritual treasure. It is up to the Congregation to make it her way of life since this was the project of the foundation in the first place.

Father Auguste Etchecopar, the first novice master, organised the Congregation along the lines received directly from St Michael himself, particularly in what concerns formation. He is the man who really organised and harmonised the spirituality of this Saint. He collected everything that could be preserved and read of the thoughts, words and writings of the Founder. He really is *St Michael's Evangelist*.

Little by little according as its missionary activities grew, the Congregation was responsible for transmitting to Christians a message which was universal from the beginning. Our religious life has its origins in St Augustine's rule, adapted by the early Betharram Constitutions. St Michael's spirituality didn't figure there, apart from devotion to the Holy Spirit and to the Sacred Heart considered as a model. There was nothing very deep, apart from a few phrases taken from the thoughts of the Founder.

When in 1947 Fr Garicoits became St Michael, Fr Du-vignau undertook an important work of research and organisation of the Saint's **thoughts**. It was then that his core texts appeared: *La Doctrine Spirituelle* (1949), *Père, Me Voici* (1962) and *Un Maître Spirituel* (1963) were to be the means of getting to know the Founder. Apart from these texts, there were few developments in the knowledge of his doctrine spiritual in the 1960s.

Then these works had to be translated so as to get beyond simple slogans: FVD (*Fiat Voluntas Dei*), *Me Voici*, "little,

#### **1. The story of an appropriation**

more important. In the face of an uncertain future, it's best for us to be united and face the future with courage.

#### **How would you sum up the situation of Christians in the Middle East today?**

- The Christians caught between two blocks, Israeli and Moslem, are in danger of losing hope and of being tempted to emigrate. In fact many of our Christians have already emigrated. We don't really know what the future holds for us and we don't want to lose hope.

#### **Personally, how do you see the future of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land?**

- The future of the Church depends largely on the political situation of the region. We are praying for peace and we work for that. We try to build bridges between the two communities. On the other hand, the return of pilgrims to the Holy Land is a cure for our wounds.

#### **According to you, what role could our Congregation play in the Holy Land?**

- Having directed the seminary for 50 years, Betharram is not unknown in the Holy Land. I have just given a retreat to the priests of the diocese and I could see that those priests really appreciate us. We can't abandon them. I think that we must continue a discrete presence with the Carmelites and be present in the midst of the priests of the diocese.

At their request, the Superior General has dispensed the following from temporary vows on 23rd October 2007 ; Maria Soosai Rajendran, Xavier Abraham Irudayarai, Leo Jesu Dinesh, Samuel Anabothula Naga Raju, Vimal Selvaraj Anton Lourdu, Chirammel Vipin Joseph, Jomesh Elanghikuzhiyil, John Peter Sundar Raj, Joseph Pariyarth Devassia and Jerino Kevin Fernando of the Indian Delegation (English Province).



**5MN...**

#### **IN MEMORIAM**

Let us pray for **Fr Domingo Miner** who passed away on November 9th in La Plata (Argentina). 81 years old, he spent 50 years of his life in the Colegio San José de La Plata. A tribute will appear in the next edition.

Saubat”, the marvellous child of Lestelle-Betharram. But for Father Pierre it wasn't his home ground. It had to be rebuilt in a place which was to become, little by little, the Care Home with its limited horizon, and the offices... for him who was bursting with independence! Make patience flourish in the midst of countless reasons to be impatient! Accept not to be served at once! Enter into solitude even when surrounded by the Brothers. Realise that life had changed where he had come from. “the college of my days”... “the parish when I was in it”... The feeling that “if he had stayed on, things would have been different”.

The hopelessness of the disciples of Emmaus on the first Easter morning. The weight of human frailty, moulded by the Spirit... so slow to believe the full message. And the question: “Pierre, do you love me?” and the answer: “Yes, Lord, you know all things. “You know that I love you.”

Gabriel Verley, SCJ

*Betharram, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2007, funeral celebration.*

## 5 MINUTES WITH... Fr. Pierre Grech

From the 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> October, Father Grech spent two days at the Generalate and four at the Vatican at St Martha's. To get to know him better we put some questions to our former General Superior (1975 – 1987)

*Nef - How and for what reason have you abandoned Jerusalem for Rome?*

- I am the General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference for the Middle East; every year we have a General Assembly of all the Bishops of the region. This year this assembly has taken place in Rome.

*What was the programme and why do such assemblies seem important to you?*

- During this meeting we prepared the synod of Bishops from the whole world which will take place in Rome in October 2008 on the theme: The Word of God in the life of the Church. In the Middle East with its suffering, war and violence, such meetings between bishops are more and

obedient, unswerving, happy”, *Flying Camps*. These ideas formed part of St Michael's spirituality without swallowing it up. Extracts from his Correspondence were translated. An English translation of *Maitre Spirituel* by Fr Harrison appeared, but was never published. In Italy Fr Paniga brought out a brochure on the life of the Saint; *Aqui Estoy* gave the essential of the *Doctrine Spirituelle* in Spanish. All these works were for home consumption, so to speak.

Vatican II had encouraged each Congregation to review its founding texts and to rewrite its Constitutions. In 1975 the new Rule of Life for Betharram was published and opened with the Manifesto of 1838. It was here that St Michael had summarised the spirit of the Congregation, beginning with a contemplation of the mystery of Christ. *Ecce venio – Here I am*: this is the first act of the Sacred Heart; this is the heart of the message of faith given by St Michael. In *Family News* of 1980, the message is fully explained. In the following years the message will be fully shared within the Church (In the 1980s the cover of Family News bears the slogan “Here I am” in seven languages, including Basque and Thai.)

Two important moments in the history of the Congregation will clarify the discovery and sharing of this spirituality. First of all the gathering in 1985 in Betharram for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Congregation, prepared by a session in the Holy Land. The Religious find there the fundamental ideas of the early days, through a meditated reading of the 1838 Manifesto. Then in 1997 for the bicentenary of the birth of St Michael different initiatives are proposed in each region. In July 1997 an important meeting took place in Betharram regrouping religious and laity (in all 200 persons in the gymnasium). This marks the beginning of greater participation and deeper bonds of fraternity.

Two years later, for the first time the laity was invited to the most important meeting of the Congregation, together with delegates from the different countries. At this 1999 General Chapter the Betharram family stretches out officially to the laity who drink at the same source.

2. **Panorama of a community influenced by the spirit**

How did the rank and file take hold of St Michael's spirituality? First of all, in the **Province of Rio de la Plata** (Argentina and Uruguay) in 1987 in a declaration intended for the Youth Movement magazine, Fr Gaspar Fernandez tried giving a definition of *a young Betharramite*. He stressed the importance of the seriousness of the Incarnation, of the discovery and following of Christ from the contemplation of the "great mystery": the Son of God has become man", a précis of Christian life at the school of St Michael. From this deep-rooted spirituality flows the seriousness of the new evangelisation. For such missionary activity COLAMIBE was launched; then came FALABE, the Betharramite laity for whom Father Daniel Martin published in 1999 *Hojas de espiritualidad betharramita*. These were quarterly pamphlets with a topic. It is the same spirit: developing together the charism and commitment to the service of the Church.

In **France**, in December 1986, Fr Henri Lamasse edited a pamphlet entitled "A spirituality for all." In the summer of 1989 during a summer camp organised at Betharram a dozen youngsters discovered the place and the message; at the end of their stay they were joined by laity from Limoges and Pibrac seeking the same source. Thus, little by little, the fraternity "*Here I am*" began to be a reality.

In **Italy**, the *Association Il Mosaico* came into being from the accompaniment of HIV patients in Monteporzio (former house of studies now a hostel). For the laity as for the religious, the work with the sick is helped by the spiritual project of St Michael. Other groups are formed with the Italian priests, especially in parishes. After 1999, Betharramite spirituality helped launch a cycle of conferences entitled: "To be a man according to the ways of God"; there are two directions: *cordiality* (reaction of the heart) and *the choice of poverty*. Finally, the village schools opened by our Central African missionaries rely from 1986 onwards on a network of sponsorships – about 400 in all. Thanks to material solidarity something of Betharramite spirituality gets through.

In **England**, the "Companions of Betharram" were launched

Consequently between our fragility and our great ambitions, we think that *Me Voici* of the Congregation, assumed with St Michael's ardour, is the humble but powerful yeast in the dough which will make a new world to rise again.

Tobia Sosio, SCJ *Vice-provincial Superior*

## Fr. Pierre Lagouardat (1918-2007)

### IN MEMORIAM

France

Born on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1918 at Jasses (diocese of Bayonne), baptised on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Pierre Lagouardat made his First Vows at Balarin on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1938; he made his final vows on Easter Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1943, in Palestine. He was ordained priest in Bethlehem, 20th February 1944. His apostolic religious life was spent outside his native land: Morocco and Algeria to begin with, followed by 44 years in Paraguay, at Asuncion: at St Joseph's College either as teacher or prefect (1950 – 1957) then St Joseph's Parish, first as curate and finally as parish priest. In 1994 he chose to retire to Betharram where he died on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> October 2007.



Father Pierre Lagouardat travelled along the Road to Emmaus, on foot perhaps. For it was at Emmaus that he made his final vows as a Religious of the Sacred Heart. At Emmaus, things were far from over. In fact they were only just beginning! After six years spent in the Holy Land, Fr Pierre, chosen by Christ-Priest, couldn't come to Jasses to say his first Mass. There's a war on and journeys by boat are dangerous in certain zones. So, it's Algeria and Casablanca; he is in the first group at the Charles de Foucauld College, and there he will spend a year.

But he must leave North Africa, and his family in Bearn. Now begins for him his mission in Paraguay. Actually, he felt as though he was in heaven, active, generous, and appreciated. As a curate, he was in contact with people of all ages, but he was particularly attentive to the aged.

After 50 years, it was hard to leave this corner of paradise, where for a long time he had been with "Pai

*That same day, two disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem... As they were talking, Jesus Himself came up and walked by their side.*

*(Lk 24,13ss)*

crease, although down on the glorious days of times gone by. (At present there are 5650 pupils in our 5 colleges.) The Direction, both academic and administrative, has been entrusted to the laity under the guardianship of the Vice-Province for all questions juridical, accounting and educational. Regular meetings of the Directors and the Administrators help us to understand that we form one big family and that together we assure the great mission entrusted to us by the Church and the Congregation. Thanks to sponsorships by teachers and parents, St Michael Garicoits College gives free education to some 40 children from the streets.

Our next important mission is the service of the local Church in four big parishes that have been entrusted to us. The two parishes – San Joaquin and La Colmena - are rural parishes; the other two – San Jose and Ciudad Del Este - are city parishes. During the July holidays, with the team of priests we organised a Mission at which there were 92 participants (pupils and teachers from our Colleges, religious and laity from our parishes). In the course of one week they visited all the houses and villages of San Joaquin, and organised meetings in more than 30 Christian communities. As a result some of the participants wanted to take part in the Vice-Province's vocations meetings and even asked to be admitted as Betharramite postulants.

The formation and counselling of postulants and students constitutes the third axe of our mission in Paraguay. This is undertaken by the formation team – Father Angelo Recalcati, Brother Mauro Ulrich de Oliveira and Father Javier Irala. God continues to bless us with many vocations. Yet, for today's young people, it is not easy to be faithful to the Lord's call; the modern world is attractive, especially as globalisation encourages the youth of poor countries to copy models from elsewhere and even to emigrate to Spain or the USA. A one-to-one accompaniment can help the young aspirant to give himself to Christ and to come to realise that the resulting human blossoming far exceeds anything that the consumer society has to offer.

in 1985 so as to associate as closely as possible with the religious, those Christians working at the grass roots. The idea was to promote co-responsibility, mutual awareness and friendliness. In Worcester, in a property belonging to the Congregation, a guest house was entrusted to a group of laity. Finally, in Birmingham in a part where immigrants are in the majority, a Betharramite parish offers help, meetings and support to immigrants. Here is a further example of how the Congregation is at the heart of everything international.

In **Thailand** several possibilities for collaboration exist. For example, not far from the Golden Triangle, there is a children's village looked after by a community of three priests and a lay person. The children's schooling is taken care of, as is the learning of professional skills (weaving to prevent girls falling into prostitution) and Christian formation.

In **Ivory Coast**, where Betharram is present since 1959, the community at Adiapodoume revived the *Fraternity Ne Me* in 1980, Handbooks are published, and meetings organised; nationwide, retreats are proposed, helping to spread the Betharramite spirit.

In **Brazil** as well the Lay Associates got organized: seven groups gather together regularly around our Parishes and Colleges. A particularly meaningful annual gathering makes them feel more and more part of the big family of Betharram. On the same line, in Asuncion, **Paraguay**, a group gathers around Fr Constancio Lopez.

The international dimension of St Michael's message helps to make known that the Love of God is at the heart of our faith; *It has pleased God to be loved*. In the present state of the Church, and with the first Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, the God of love who is revealed to us has won over the hearts of Christians. In its own way, the spirituality of St Michael has been largely responsible for this success.

We must increase the knowledge of this God who is Father, who helps us to live out his project of Love and calls us *to procure a similar happiness for others*.

### Lay associates & religious in Brazil

#### To be more involved in the Church

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2007, the final day of their assembly, the Betharramite lay associates from Passa Quatro, Belo Horizonte, Conceicao do Rio Verde, Sao Jose dos Campos, Sao Paulo and Paulinia submitted in writing the following document:

- We, the Betharramite laity of Brazil, encouraged by the teachings of St Michael Garicoits desire:
- To contemplate Jesus, Incarnate Word, who gave himself totally into the hands of his Father, to his death and death on the cross;
  - Experience God's love in prayer, especially the Eucharist, in order to become ever more disciples and missionaries of Jesus;
  - To live simply by being wary of the attractions of the consumer society.
  - Witness to God's love through our love of our neighbour, especially the poor and those nearest to us.
  - Make real choices for the promotion of the family and the Christian formation of the youth.
  - A deep communion with the Fathers and Brothers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram, by living and bearing witness to the spirit of a family gathered together by God through a charism.
  - Support all the actions of Betharram in the field of education and the mission.
  - Favour the awakening of Betharramite vocations by our witness, prayer and a dialogue with the young.
  - Encourage all Betharramite aspirants, postulants, novices and seminarians in their training, by creating the right conditions for a future with the Betharram family, and for a greater service of the Church;
  - Show the importance of the sick and aged religious as models of fidelity to their religious profession.
  - Take part in small study groups, prayer and reflexion, so as to have a better knowledge of the Betharramite spirituality in relation to Church documents and to the challenges of our day.
  - Strive to do God's will unreservedly, without delay, without looking back, through love rather than for any other motive.

We rely on the intercession of the Servant of God, Father

### Province of England Delegation of India

**From the logbook of Mangalore** ■ The Maria Kripa community consists of 16 religious in formation and 2 fathers. Once in a month there is a day of recollection for a spiritual renewal. Twice a month are proposed literary programs, which consist of speeches on various subjects and some entertaining programs. For the World Mission Sunday, the community conducted some entertainment programs inviting the children from Balagraha and Vijaya Mary: all of them have enjoyed it. As we've remembered the first death anniversary of Fr. Xavier Ponthokkan, all the community members had gone to his home town to participate the Anniversary Mass and share our mourning along with his family members... On Sundays the Betharramite Students go for helping in the parishes, in the AIDS center, Old age Home and Leprosy Home. Our theologians have already began the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester. Others are fully immersed in their exams. The annual retreat is going to be held from 19<sup>th</sup> of November onwards. The day before, the community will welcome the Provincials and General Councilors. Our young Brothers are already praying for the success of the meeting, which will be held in Bangalore, (350 kms away from Mangalore) from November 13<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Vice-Province of Paraguay

#### Good news

I must admit that we are not very good at talking about all the good works that we do in the Vice-Province of Paraguay, for want of habit rather than for want of time. Therefore I am going to give you an account of some of our activities which will prove that we are alive and always willing to make progress despite our weaknesses.

The 20 religious who constitute the Vice-Province are deployed on three major axes of the Betharramite mission: first of all there is education, in close collaboration with a very capable laity. In the present period of social unrest in Paraguay, our colleges are in good health and enjoy the esteem of the families and the local Church. Far from diminishing, the number of pupils is on the in-



*Blessed Miriam  
Region*







Saint Michael  
Region

## Province of France Delegation of the Ivory Coast

**Protection of the artistic heritage** ■ A new project is launched in Betharram: the restoration of the Stations of the Cross rebuilt by St Michael Garicoits in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The wear and tear of time will be repaired, at the cost of 1.360.000 euros (global budget including approximately 75 % State subsidies). The Sanctuary association appeals to public generosity, for covering its part of the expenses. The target is quite clear: *in 1616 the cross raised itself, in 2016 the Calvary will be restored!*

**A Foundation in the heart of the Ivory Coast** ■ Mgr Joseph Aké entrusted Betharram with the Parish Saint-Félix de Sinzibo - and with the chaplaincy of the University situated on its territory. Fr. Jean-Marie Ruspil, Bros Serge Latta (deacon), Arsène Noba et Marius Angui (2<sup>nd</sup> year's novice), form the new community of Yamoussoukro. The Priests of the diocese and the members of the parish council made us welcome; the first contacts were supported by an Ursuline religious, Sister Marianne, who has been of great help in so many ways. Among religious it is natural to help each other." (Fr Jean-Marie)

## Province of Italy

**The Provincial Assembly at Albavilla** ■ We were 30 from different communities, who came together from the 16th to 17th of October at St Michael house to share our reflections as a Province on the past year and for the future. The committee for formation and vocations presented its plan. The economic situation in the Province has been impressive; appropriately entitled *optimism is the perfume of life*: without optimism it is impossible to make one's way but at the same time maintaining a healthy realism! The lay members of Betharram have reaffirmed the importance of mission founded on their calling by baptism. It would have been better for more time for further discussion but as the day ended it was time our final Eucharist. However the assembly was not concluded: the Superior General at the beginning of his canonical visit drew spoke to us in heartfelt words pointing to our future; words of love, taken from St John's letter, resolved our unfinished discussion; *let us love each other because he has loved us first.* (Boutros Alhijazin, SCJ)

Auguste Etchecopar and Blessed Miriam of Jesus Crucified and we beg the protection of our Father St Michael and Our Lady of the Beautiful Branch.

## Lay associates & religious in Italy

### Ideas to help us make greater progress

On Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October the 1<sup>st</sup> national Congress of Betharramite parishes was held in Albavilla. There were about 60 lay members in all, coming from Bitonto, Montemurlo, Rome, Parme, Lissone, Milan and Castellazzo.

This was certainly a very successful meeting, judging from the quality of the programme. Particularly appreciated were the talks given by Sergio Lanza, who is an expert on pastoral questions, and Enrico Frigerio, vicar general of the Congregation. It was also a great occasion for getting to know one another. It was also the first time for these "sister" parishes to meet. After the last assemblies for the centenary of the Province of Italy (2004) and of the former members of the Region of Albavilla (2005) it was another chance for progressing with the idea of a movement for lay Betharramites.

The following suggestions were the results of these two days:

- 1) Form potential pastoral teams or have a twinning system of Betharramite parishes.
- 2) Build up a Betharramite prayer- movement, a sort of invisible monastery bringing together in contemplation and intention, the resources of so many friends of Betharram prevented from taking part in the activities for different reasons (age, health, distance).
- 3) Organise, next year between the 24<sup>th</sup> April and the 1<sup>st</sup> May a pilgrimage to Lourdes and Betharram of lay Betharramites from all the parishes of the Italian province.

There are other forms of collaboration which already exist and in which the Betharramite laity could be better involved, for example: voluntary helpers in the hostel for Aids sufferers at

Monteporzio, sponsorship of school children in Central Africa to the magazine *Presenza* and the website [www.betharram.it](http://www.betharram.it) which has been recently renewed, and training sessions – which could be extended to the south of the peninsula; also spreading news about the slide show on the life of St Michael which has just had its preview in Albavilla.

Other than such initiatives, one very important point of the meeting is the knowledge that the Betharramite family can rely on a wide and solid network of friendship, abilities and support. Such a network is certainly the results of the work of the Sacred Heart Fathers, but it would be a pity not to cultivate it further so as to obtain the best possible results for the good of mankind.

### **Lay associates & religious in France**

#### **Lourdes 2007: an unusual assembly**

From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> October 6 laymen and women and 3 religious representing Betharram were present at this important Church event. One of them is going to tell us about it.

In all we were 1500- religious, male and female, and above all lay delegates representing the 35 000 laymen and women who, since 1976 – that is about 10 years after the Council Vatican II – have wanted to “*drink at the common source*” of about 100 religious congregations! The Conference of Major Religious Superiors of France had the initiative, for the first time in the history of the Church, of assembling, together with their religious guides, lay delegates whose wish it is to have spiritual links with a religious family.

From the very beginning of religious orders there were laymen and women who wanted to share in the spirituality of a religious family; they were known by different names – “third orders” and “oblates” with the Benedictines, “Community of Christian Life” practising Ignatian Spirituality, or the “Me Voici Fraternity” for the followers of Betharram spirituality.

Lourdes provided an opportunity for these groups of laity with their guides to compare experiences; on the one hand what the laity obtained by adopting the charism of a Founder – a charism is given not only for the Congregation, but also for the Church – and on the other hand what do the religious obtain for their life as they accept what the Spirit is sowing in the laity allowing them (the religious) to deepen their charism and put it to greater use. That is precisely what Pope John Paul II wrote in *Vita Consecrata*.

This first assembly wasn't intended to find out how many we were, but to think over the different routes and manners of groupings between the laity and religious, according to the charism of each religious family, and to deepen the theological stakes of this new form of life in the Church. The title which was posted at the door of the Church of St Bernadette said it loud and clear: *Spiritual Families: a new aspect of the Church?*

A laywoman, Marie-Jo Thiel, doctor and theologian, encouraged us by the theme of her conference: “*Behold, I stand at the gate and knock*” Charism can enrich the baptismal vocation of the laity, just as the laity can enrich religious life on condition that the laity are not being “clericalised” nor the religious “laicised”. Each one is to be faithful to the gift of the Spirit according to his vocation. There was also a round table handled with competence by Father Michel Kubler, editor in chief of *La Croix* Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, archbishop of Bordeaux, was invited to speak as were Sr Marie-Helene Martin, and Mr Nicolas Joanne. There were lots of hymns directed by Laurent Grzybowski, beautiful celebrations, exchange of news and views. In a word, from Friday evening until Sunday lunch time nobody had time to be bored.

Finally Lourdes looked radiant in the sun and the splendid autumn colours; reflecting as in a stained glass window the different gifts of the Spirit.

« Today, often as a result of new situations, many Institutes have come to the conclusion that their charism can be shared with the laity. The laity are therefore invited to share more intensely in the spirituality and mission of these Institutes...

The participation of the laity often brings unexpected and rich insights into certain aspects of the charism, leading to a more spiritual interpretation of it and helping to draw from it directions for new activities in the apostolate. »  
(VC 54-55)

Henri La-  
masse,SCJ