

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

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## Michael Garicoits, God's shepherd (11)

He was in great pain. His nights are terrible and next morning he is up saying his Mass, unsteady but determined. The cook would like to find something for his supper which wouldn't upset him during the night. Nothing doing, everything upsets him.

"It's unfortunate," the cook would say. And Father Michael would reply with his usual smile: "What do you expect?" We must always accept what God sends". At this point Father would adopt a severe ton of voice: "Through coercion? Not at all! What God sends is accepted with love and respect."

This was his last lesson. He died in the same night, dawn of the Ascension 1863. On that day, Jesus wanted to take him to Heaven which he had longed for so long.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 1923 Pope Pius XI beatified Michael Garicoits and on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1947 in the presence of a huge crowd in St Peter's Basilica he was canonised by Pius XII.

*Saint Michael Garicoits, little Basque shepherd but God's great shepherd, put in our heart your great desire of heaven and your care of others.*

(the end)



## Schedule of the General Council

### January 17-21st

Meeting of the Commission for the Rule of life (Fr. Pietro Felet, Bruno Ierullo, Jacky Moura and Beñat Oyhenart) at the Generalate House

### January 23rd-February 7th

Visit of general to our community of the Central African Republic



# Family News

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



## A word from the Superior General

## A sight to behold

What a magnificent sight! God's love can be seen, listened to, felt, tasted, and experienced! "Something which has existed since the beginning, that we have heard, and we have seen with our own eyes; that we have watched and touched with our hands; the Word, who is life – this is our subject". It could almost be filmed, because it's not a motionless sight but something dynamic. This is how God has loved us. What a sight for our contemplation! It is Jesus Himself, the beloved Son of the Father, made man, born of the Virgin Mary, and who has passed through this world doing good. Everything in him, his bearing, his actions, his relations, his relation with his Father and with mankind, especially the poor and the sick show us that God is love. In his incarnation, his birth and his life; in his preaching and his miracles; in his acts of compassion, greeting and forgiveness; in his passion, death and resurrection, Jesus shows us and reveals in our midst the love which God bears for each one, a God ready to lose himself so that we might have life.

Our Father Saint Michael Garicoits contemplates this spectacle in all its dynamism. St Michael's methods of describing the movements of Jesus are spectacular. For him Jesus is "the Spouse who surges from his tent, like a giant pursuing his quarry" (Ps 18,6) From his Father's bosom to that of Mary, what a step! On leaving the heavenly court he goes to the most awful and most unpleasant place on this earth – a stable! (DS43) I would invite you to open your Gospel; there you will find a Je-

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105<sup>th</sup> year  
10<sup>th</sup> series, n°22  
14<sup>th</sup> December 2007



sus walking along the shores of the Lake, traversing Galilee, going about his way, up and down the mountain, heading towards Jerusalem, climbing into a boat, arriving at Peter's house only to hear it said: *Everyone is looking for you.* And his answer to that: "Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came". (Mark 1,37-38)

The Jesus of St Michael Garicoits is not the Sacred Heart of Christ the King seated on his throne; it is Jesus the missionary as found in the Gospels. *In order to attain this spiritual union, one can imagine Jesus before us suffering, either nailed to the Cross or traversing Judea (Corr. I, letter III). He entered his career by the sublime act which he never abandoned. (Manifesto)* His generosity was immense but well ordered! *A generosity concerning duties, preferences; a deep generosity which finds something worthy of it self, where it can spread, give glory to God, just as well in Mary's womb, in the crib, in the poor house of Nazareth as in the glories of Heaven, at the right hand of his Eternal Father.*

*The contemplative is not an idle spectator; he takes part in the show*

The contemplative is not an idle spectator; he takes part in the show. In this feast of Christmas, contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation - this extraordinary sight - means taking on our resemblance to Jesus in his missionary momentum, like a gift and a duty. *"Give me a heart which truly loves. He believes and tastes the things of God; he rushes forward in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The man is led by love; that is the hidden spring which must be found in postulants and novices; that is the divine germ of life to be developed in their hearts. If this is lacking, there is nothing to be done."* (DS 111 - 112) The good disciple must be like his Master. The disciple runs, flies just like his master runs, flies and always facing forward. *From the moment of his birth, the Divine Child shows us the way; he dashes forward, he runs, always headed forward, in abandonment, in distress. (DS 107)*

## Michael Garicoits, God's shepherd (11)



**Like Jesus on the Cross**

Father Garicoits is largely responsible for the success of the pilgrimages: people come from far and near to hear him preach and ask his advice; his confessional is taken by storm.

Priests, bishops, and personalities come to consult him. From all sides, religious write to him; each group gives an account of its mission and asks for instructions. He answers each one at great length, shares the joys, sorrows, and difficulties of each and every one.

This didn't prevent him from berating the crowds of pilgrims, of visiting the school in Betharram when needed or calling at the convent whenever the religious needed him. He went the length and breadth of the diocese, sometimes by car, sometimes on horseback, in all weathers, on all roads. *"My friends, give yourselves to the Lord without delay, without reserve, without looking back, and through love," he would say.*

He was the first to put it into practice and wore himself out at it. Up every day at 3 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night! At such a rhythm the human machine is quickly worn out. At the age of 56 he suffered his first brain haemorrhage. By sheer will power he recovered and resumed his mission in the service of the Lord; he accepted to get round by car rather than on horseback. For a further 10 years he carried on his service, despite the attacks which made him more and more feeble. Finally, in 1863 he was stricken down with the illness which was to carry him off. He carried on just the same and as long as he could, and people seeing looking like death would say:

*"Father Garicoits, you haven't long to live.- God's will be done! We shall all go to Heaven"*

When a more serious attack surprised his friends, he said: *"Come on! Forward march, towards heaven! We must go to Heaven!"*

The last episode of Michael Garicoits's short biography.

Under Rose Dardennes's pen, the Saint of Betharram commits his last words: "Always forward... out of love!"



2007

DECEMBER

14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	P. Paul Fourcade F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	30° di sacerdozio, auguri Happy birthday	P. Ernesto Consonni Br. George Varghese Korandakatte
16	45° de sacerdocio, enhorabuena Happy birthday	Mons Claudio Silvero Acosta P. Daniel Ramón Martín Br. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong
17	40° di sacerdozio, auguri  Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Ugo Donini P. Francesco Radaelli P. Alessandro Paniga P. Giuseppe Lietti F. Omer Koutouan Nanghy
18	Buon compleanno	P. Giulio Forloni
23	35 ans de sacerdoce, félicitations Happy birthday	P. Joseph Ruspil Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph Br. J.Bosco Parinya Wonganan
24	Happy birthday	Br. Gerard Sutherland
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Francisco Daleoso
27	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Paniga Fr. Chan John Kunu
26	Happy birthday	Br. Luke Somnuek Phinitphornphan
28	Feliz cumpleaños Happy birthday	P. José Miguel Larrosa Br. Hiran Thomas Klinboakaew
29	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Nelson Cristaldo Alfonso
31	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Théophile Dégni N'Guessan

JANUARY

1	Happy birthday	Br. Valan Peter Kanagaraj Br. Peter Nonthaphat Mayoe
3	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Sergio Gouarnalusse
6	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	P. Sauveur Londaitzebéhere P. Roberto Cornara
7	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Jesús Cano P. Daniel Ramón Martín
8	Buon compleanno Feliz cumpleaños	P. Angelo Pessina Ho. Teodoro Miguel
10	Happy birthday	Br. Yesudas Kuttappasseril Br. Praveen A. Kumar Anandraj
11	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Locatelli
13	Buon compleanno	F. Angelo Sala

This dynamism is to be found in the celebrated *Forward march!* It means that everything must be done so as to keep alive the passion typical of the disciple, particularly at times when life gets heavy. Father Garicoits just like Father Etchecopar uses this expression at times of difficulty or temptation: "At times when nature is crying out, I repeat the war cry: *Forward march! God wills it! And then I go forward.*" (Corr. 1, letter 107) The expression "a flying camp" must be in this same dynamic.

St Michael Garicoits, a man of spiritual discernment, also advises discretion, the syntheses of opposites, warns against hyperactivity. We must be able to go into action and be able to stop, work and rest, be present and absent. Similarly the missionary Jesus of St John sits down to breathe, not on a throne by beside a well: "Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. (John 4,6)

Such must be the discretion of the missionary: *From the moment of his conception, Jesus Christ springs forward like a giant in pursuit of his mission (Ps 18,6) From that very moment he says: Here I am! And yet he remains nine months in his Mother's womb, 30 years at Nazareth before preaching his Gospel and dying for our salvation. He takes his time to do his Father's pleasure, and he dies at the time appointed by his beloved Father, whose pleasure is the sole motive of all he does. (DS 283-284)*

*Father Etchecopar wrote...* to his sister Madeleine, 23 Dec. 1883

*I'll take the first quiet moment to wish you a very happy Christmas! May the Divine Child of the Crib grant you all the desires of your heart which only longs for his heart. May his gentle Mother show you and help you to discover the Child lying in the Crib. May she let you kiss his feet by humility, his hands by pious works, his face by childlike gentleness. May dear Saint Joseph let you help him in all the services to be rendered to the Son and his Mother!!!*

*At time when life gets heavy, let us keep alive the passion typical of the disciple*

Gaspar Fernandez, SCJ



## The Spirit of Bangalore

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 5<sup>th</sup> day of the Council of Congregation, the Vice-Provincial of Brazil presided over the Eucharistic celebration. His homily expresses well the Spirit of the moment.

At the opening Mass for the 5<sup>th</sup> conference at Aparecida in Brazil, Pope Benedict XVI reminded us how the apostles when faced with the problem of the circumcision of the pagans, came together and after praying for a long time held a discussion and then reached the following conclusion: "it has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves" (Acts 15,28). This is how the Church functions: begs the light of the Holy Spirit, seeks a consensus and then decides in an atmosphere of communion.

Here we are assembled in Bangalore, like twelve apostles today, for the Council of the Betharramite congregation. We want a little of Peter's fidelity to honour the founding experience of St Michael and lend importance to our tradition. We would also like St Paul's daring and creativity so as to be aware of the cultures where "*here I am*" takes root and to interpret the signs of the times. Alas, our reactions remind one rather of Judas: our difficulty to forgive, to open our eyes to the sufferings of the poor, to love.

Many have been praying for our meeting. We are also in prayer, particularly at Mass, the mother of all prayers and the summit of our working days. The Gospel tells us the story of the widow who deafened a judge until he gave her justice (Luke 18, 1-8). God will heed our prayers and will enlighten us for the good of the entire Betharram family. Often we don't even know in what direction to go; that's a good opportunity to entrust ourselves to Providence. In the middle of the night everything seems dark and yet dawn has never been so near.

The living Christ is walking by our sides – by his Word, in the Consecrated Bread, in our mutual awareness, in respecting what's different, charity. Will the future of our Congregation be better for this meeting? It all depends on God and God is faithful. But it also depends on us; and we are called to pray and act following Christ, with a pure heart, and a real desire to serve. Forward march... For love's sake rather than for any other motive.

Vicente de Menezes, SCJ

dearly, but he got down to them with the same determination as his ancestors did in clearing the land.

He never spoke about his illness; nobody had ever heard him complain. Right up to the end, he did what he could willingly. He prayed, read, listened to music. He received his friends and parishioners. He welcomed all with a smile. He maintained silence, but despite this discretion he could be up to some tricks!

No doubt, the youngsters were his world. He won the hearts of several generations of pupils in St Joseph's College in Buenos Aires and in Rosario. He was a great sportsman who loved camps, starry nights, the beach, lakes and mountains. He was tireless walker, loved football, and where ever he was, did his weekly training. He had friends every where. A true friend, he loved visiting, telephoning, having guests, and always with the joy which was his.

He was a good shepherd to his flock and accompanied his pupils in their moments of difficulty in their studies or in matters of faith, and the parents in their family difficulties. People of all ages and all conditions would turn to this man of God. He was particularly attentive to the sick. In his heart there was a special place for the underprivileged; with his usual discretion he kept a special place for them in his visits, counsels, consoling words, as well as with food parcels and money.

On this 3<sup>rd</sup> December in the chapel of rest the faithful filed past with gratitude and piety. The Bishop, together with 28 diocesan and Betharramite priests presided over his funeral at the altar in front of which Fr Cabero prayed and offered himself to Christ for his people. In the cemetery, Fr Miguel Martinez – from the same part of the world and the faithful friend and Terio's guardian angel during his last year of suffering – pronounced the final adieu and struck up the hymn full of hope which never fails: *When night falls and when comes the hour to pass from this world to the Father, grant us the peace and joy of a happy and never ending encounter, Amen.*



Laguna Dalga  
(Spain)  
22 July 1945



Martin Coronado  
2 December 2007

Miguel Martinez, SCJ & Paco Daleoso, SCJ

tirely to Catholic education. A stickler for detail for pupils, teachers, parents and in general everybody in his care. He was implacable, but never unfair. On the contrary his firm and the level attitude gave him uncontested authority, esteem and respect. His vision as a teacher and his methods of discipline both original and effective brought him outstanding respect from pupils and old boys. "We try to correct without having recourse to sanctions," he said one day. Mgr Plaza, Archbishop of La Plata, often said that Fr Miner whom he much admired said he could, "direct the College with his little finger".

Until last July, he was present each morning to welcome pupils and teachers, but after that he began to gradually withdraw to his community, to his room, his crucifix, his altar... He died on the 9th of November 2007 after 40 days in hospital, surrounded with the care and affection of Fr Gustavo Angarola. Through Fr Miner, this generation of priests of Betharram, who were born educators, consecrated body and soul to our colleges, came about.

## IN MEMORIAM

Francisco Daleoso, SCJ

### Argentina

#### Fr. Eleuterio Cabero del Pozo

Just before 8 o'clock on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, at the beginning of Advent which prepares us for the coming of the Lord, Fr Eleuterio was called by God to the joy of his Kingdom...

His parents were country folk from Laguna Dalga, a village in the Leon valley. Youngest of five children, marked by the harsh climate of his native land, Father Eleuterio was humble, discreet, persevering, austere and silent. He was a faithful religious, assiduous to his community, a good companion, he was joyful and generous in his everyday life. On feast days he could enjoy a little extra – fine wine, or a cigar which he would savour slowly.

He was discreet and silent almost to the point of total silence. He kept for himself the serious errors of his brethren. He worked without making a fuss and didn't try to attract attention. He was aware of his limits, and made up for them by his silence. He didn't speak of his difficulties; many of the tasks accepted through obedience (e.g. Superior at Rosario, or Parish Priest at Santiago) cost him

## The Council of the Congregation, during and afterwards

Twenty years after the go-ahead given by a General Chapter for a foundation in India, and 60 years after the organisation in Provinces, the 16<sup>th</sup> Council of the Congregation celebrated these two anniversaries in its own way. On the one hand, by holding its assembly in Bangalore from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November, and so sending out a clear signal. It showed the vitality of Betharram in this huge nation, and encouraged the young Delegation still shaken by the death, a year ago, of its first Indian Superior and first Betharramite, Father Xavier Ponthokan. On the other hand, so as to respond to the modification of our religious family – ageing members, dispersion, inadequate structures – the regionalisation instituted by the two last General Chapters has been confirmed and given fresh impetus.

To begin with, the Council examined the implementation of the Congregation project drawn up at its last meeting in November 2005. A round of those present helped to see the progress and the weaknesses in the four points decided on in Betharram, namely, the consecrated person, community life, pastoral care of the youth, and openness to the laity. Then each Superior (vice) provincial was invited to choose two concrete actions for the coming two years. Next they reviewed and discussed different important dossiers: formation, missionary activity, pastoral of education, economy, collaboration with the laity, communication. This was the moment to reassert convictions, recall priorities, and back up initiatives.

The most important theme of our meeting was the reviewing of the orientation of the last general Chapter and of the following Council of the Congregation. On the basis of the programme produced in 2005, and of the work of the commission Rule of Life, it was decided:

1) to found on the Rule a reform designed to guarantee both unity (for a better service of the mission) and an





environment closer to the reality respectful of local situations (formation of vicariates).

2) To simplify the government of the Congregation, by passing from 7 Provincial and Vice-Provincial Superiors to 3 Regional Superiors by the beginning of 2009.

***St Michael Garicoits Region***, 6 vicariates:

Ivory Coast, France-Spain, North Italy, South Italy, Central African Republic, Holy Land

***Father Auguste Etchecopar Region***, 3 vicariates:

Brazil, Paraguay, Rio de la Plata

***Blessed Myriam Region***, 3 vicariates:

England, India, and Thailand

3) to allow a gradual transition through dialogue, awareness of personal situations and cultural differences, in a spirit of mutual help and communion.

It's not a question of adopting today's methods of acting and judging in the mega-provinces, nor of multiplying unreasonably authorities and travel. It's all about changing mentalities, of adopting another view of things, more supportive of the group, more flexible in deciding and acting, and better adapted to the environment. The Council of the Congregation has got down to it by adopting and adapting the framework set out in the revised edition of the Rule of Life.

Here now is the calendar we have decided: installation of the communities in 2008 in view of the new organisation; after consultation with the religious, nomination, in the first quarter of 2009, of the regional superiors, their assistants and the superiors of the vicariates; in September-October of the same year a meeting of the community superiors by region. At the end of 2009 the 17<sup>th</sup> Council of the Congregation will give their verdict on the operation and launch the next stage.

The years 2009 – 2011 will be the testing ground for the regionalisation. This will be assessed and submitted for definite approval during the General Chapter of 2011, which

20<sup>th</sup> of February 1937, Domingo entered the apostolic school at Barracas. He did his studies in philosophy and theology at Villa Betharram, Adroque, where he was ordained priest on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1949. He was appointed there and taught Spanish, Latin, Greek and history, then became prefect of discipline. The 20<sup>th</sup> February 1957, 20 years after he had entered the congregation, he was appointed Bursar to the College of San Jose de la Plata. First he taught Spanish, later religious instruction and became prefect of discipline. In 1984 he was appointed headmaster, a post which obliged him to give up teaching in 1990; a responsibility he carried on to the end.

He was a faithful priest, who celebrated Mass with great devotion and he engaged the congregation with his preaching. He was a good religious, having had a classic formation; he loved the congregation with all his heart. He accepted to be provincial administrator in difficult times when works were being changed. Only God knew what he suffered in this complicated situation. It seems certain that these hidden sufferings took their toll.

Pastoral work was not his strong point, which he recognized, and always sought help and freely accepted the collaboration of others. He was a man of solid conviction, being demanding of others but more so of himself. He distinguished himself by his love for the truth, integrity, and had an ability for work and organisation, order and discipline.

He read widely and he sought what was useful for that particular time, especially in regard to teaching and whatever could be useful to him. He loved to share his discoveries with confreres and teaching colleagues, his pupils and friends. Being keen on sports, he played especially football, each week even when he was over 70. He cultivated the art of friendship: how many have treasured his affection, profited by his advice, his loyalty, his care and his sensitivity, his kindness and his humour!

Competent in the class room, respected in the playground as a prefect of discipline, Fr Domingo gave himself en-

## IN MEMORIAM

## Argentina



Martinez  
12 May 1926



La Plata  
9 November 2007

## Fr. Domingo Miner (1926-2007)

You had what you desired  
your departure in silence after breakfast,  
discreet and unexpected.  
You kept a low profile In the company of those you respected  
yet close to many others you had not permitted to see your passing.  
You departed silently,  
without warning, without fuss, just as you would have wished...  
the frightful hours lengthened for you  
and the pleasant ones cut short:  
the meal with Sandra, the company of Sergio and Alejandro,  
the oncologist's assurance and assistance,  
the nurses' humanity and kindness, Matilde's desserts,  
Virginia's photos, Gonzago's chocolates.. you did not interrupt  
your sleep, not even for the Archbishop in that final siesta.  
You have had what you desired...  
the ciborium, nightly solitude, bloodless days, distribution of former  
goods so much of your life,  
and full knowledge that you would be soon leaving.  
I believe you never imagined a thousand faces of concern  
and the disarray your absence caused.  
And you have entered into eternal repose,  
spending your last night in the chapel of your dear College,  
in the company of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.  
Perhaps... but you have had what you desired  
God has given you his presence which you so much desired,  
Forty four nights of agony, like Jesus in the desert,  
like Saint Michael in Betharram,  
like Etchecopar in Rome  
or Sister Mariam in Palestine.  
Rest in peace, religious teacher of Betharram  
Gustavo Angarola, scJ

Father Miner, the youngest of 8 children, was born the 12<sup>th</sup> of May 1926 into a profoundly Christian family. Like his eldest brother who entered the Claretians, he heard the call to the priesthood but to Betharram. His mother was in the habit of saying proudly: "I have given one of my sons to the Sacred Heart, Domingo, a Betharramite, and another to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Joaquin, a Claretian."

will be preceded by the Regional Chapters which will have been prepared by the assemblies of the vicariates by the end of 2010. The revised edition of the Rule of Life will undergo the same fate and in the same delays, benefiting at the same time of all the contributions sent to the commission.

During the ten days of the session, the Council of the Congregation took place in an atmosphere of study, open and fraternal. In the reflexion led by the General Council and the Provincial Superiors, everything was put on the table: convictions and questions, resistances and hopes. Our exchange of views, borne on the strength of daily prayer, personal reflexion and community discernment reached a consensus expressed in the Acts.

Nothing of this would have been possible but for the care of the Sisters of St Joseph of Lyon – who hosted the assembly – and without the thoughtfulness of our Brothers in Shobbana Shaakha. During the whole of our reflexions, through their fervour and freshness, by their witness and service, entertainment and celebrations, our Indian Betharramites opened up their country and heart to their seniors. The best way to say "Thanks" will be to enter, with determination and trust, on the path traced in the Congregation. *Fiat Voluntas Dei.*

**Prayer for the Council of the Congregation  
(13-23 November 2007)**

written by the community of Shobbana Shaakha

*Father in Heaven, we come before you as your children, thankful for your love and support and confident to call you our father. We ask your blessings on our Council in Bangalore this year and pray for the family of Betharram through out the world. May we know a new experience of Pentecost and come to see your Holy Spirit working among us, making us new and strengthening your family. We ask especially for blessing on the family of Betharram in India, and pray that your sons may be led to walk in the footsteps of Saint Michael our founder. Father, we hand all things over to your care, confident in your mercy and in your loving purposes. With trust in your watchful care and in the embrace of our Mother Mary we make this prayer in the Heart of Jesus. Amen (Our Father)*



Jean-Luc Morin, scJ



On the evening of 14<sup>th</sup> November, the Council of the Congregation received two Indian Sisters of St Joseph of Tarbes. One of them, a former General Councillor, has founded an Ashram, a retreat centre open to apostolic religious and to any one wishing to take stock of his spiritual needs. Here is her address in French to us Betharra-mites meeting in Bangalore.

### Meeting with Sister Mary Lucy

#### The people that India needs

You have been shattered by the death of your first Indian priest, but don't be sad. What happened to Fr Xavier was no accident. God willed it so that you may have life here in India and elsewhere in the world. I am announcing a prophecy to you: for you it is a grace. During Mass a phrase from the Gospel came to my mind: "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, 23). You will have a rich harvest. You have only 4 priests here; but it's not the number that matters, it's the quality of life.

The Church in India has become powerful; she has property, money, hospitals, works but is that what India really needs? Above all she needs people whose life is fixed on God, religious who are radiant, and who emanate the Gospel. Do we? No! Religious life in India has become a question of comfort and power. You are at your early beginnings in India. Don't catch the same illness as we have. All too often we bear witness against the Gospel. We are in need of purification; we are in need of self control.

The Church offers us the Sacraments, but does she help people to meet Christ, to be converted for the construction of the Kingdom? Do people come to us asking: "Teach us how to pray, share with us something of the knowledge of God?" No, they come asking "have you a place in your hospital for our mother or a place for our son in your school? Isn't our life, received from Christ, to be given, consumed like the Eucharist? Is my religious life not a consumer good, a pleasure? Today people are looking for success, results. Our duty is to go out to the failures in life – the sick, the old, children, the disabled. The Lord speaks to us through the weak of this world.

We religious are called to be prophets. A prophet is some one who listens to God, who has experienced something

## BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CONGREGATION

### Province of France Delegation of the Ivory Coast

**A new priest of the Sacred Heart** ■ On January 12th, 2007 in the cathedral of Yopougon, Mgr. Mandjo will ordain F Serge Braga Latta as a priest. Let us be united through prayer and praise with all the Province and Delegation.

### Province of Italy

**Struggle against HIV** ■ As every year, the first of December was the world Day of the struggle against HIV/Aids, a disease that strikes 33 million persons and kills 5700 every day in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa concentrates 2/3 of the new contaminations, 61 % of which are women. In collaboration with the Province the Opera Madonna di Betharram is facing these challenges with two recent interventions: 1) near Rome, the renewal of the future House Jonathan Mann, for detainees and HIV-positive foreigners; 2) in the region of Bouar (Central African Republic), starting of an home care program for people affected by AIDS.

### Province of the Rio de la Plata

**Black eagle with silver hornero** ■ The 1st December Fr Ceferino Arce was awarded with the highest distinction of the Argentine Boy scouts: the silver hornero. The trophy, which is named after a South-American bird, comes to crown the services of black Eagle, totem of the former chaplain of the youth. Congratulations!

### Province of England Delegation of India

**From prayer to beach** ■ After the visit of the Council of the Congregation, eight days before, here comes another blessed Sunday for Maria Kripa, on November 25th: in peace and joy, the scholastics completed a week-long retreat guided by Fr Shiju. This young Dominican helped our brothers to reflect on some aspects of religious life drawing insights from his Dominican background and from his experience as master of the postulants. In the afternoon, break to all the brothers arranging for the community an outing to the seaside. Those who had made their retreat and all the others enjoyed some moments of relaxation in the sun. On the Panaboor beach, the scholastics were once again in peace and joy... but in a more direct way this time.



Saint Michael  
Region



Fr Etchecopar  
Region



Blessed Mariam  
Region





their theology there with our community in England. We appreciate this hospitality, brotherhood and are grateful to English province for their concern, sacrifice and guidance for the growth of Betharram in India. We hope that God may give us also the opportunity to offer our support through our younger ones and the mutual collaboration in mission.

#### *In your view what can India bring to Betharram?*

- India is a land of religions. Religiosity is the essence of Indian life, art and culture. Spiritual experience is highly valued in India and also spiritual men and women are held in high esteem and reverence. There are large number of Indians who accept, adore and follow Christ as the their Lord and Master though there are not official members of Christianity. Religious pluralism, spiritual consciousness, spirituality of unity in diversity are the treasures of India that can enrich our Betharram community.

#### *And Betharram to India?*

- In spite of its cultural and religious richness, India is at present wounded and is in need of liberation within. India is badly affected by the evils of cast system, religious fanaticism, communalism, gender discrimination economic exploitation of the poor and marginalisation of women, children and abandoned etc. In the soil of India, Betharram has to play it prophetic role as a branch of reconciliation and peace as Jesus was the binding branch of reconciliation between God and humanity. We are called to reveal this compassionate justice of God to the poor and suffering though our option for the poor, simplicity of life, strong God experience and personal holiness and life of fraternity.

#### *And a last word a more personal one?*

- God does not require us to succeed. He only requires that we try, we take each day as it comes. Our Father in heaven knows our needs, watches over our deeds, blesses in abundance. He repudiates our shortfalls and gently but firmly shows us the way forward. Let us not fail in renewing ourselves to be a Jesus whom we meet and see Jesus in whom we encounter.

of God, who interprets the signs of the times for society. Our whole life must bear witness to the Gospel. Let's not behave like missionaries of days gone by who tried to convert people, that is to get them to change religion; no, conversion means helping some one to turn towards the Kingdom of God, to construct it. We ought to be uncomplicated, and approachable. We should have dreams for today's men and women. And in order to dream we ought to be full of the Spirit who inspires us with what we can give others.

We have been called to re-found our congregation, to be faithful in the depths of our hearts to its charism, and communicate it to the whole of society and culture so as to respond to the needs of today. Gone are the days when we used to work only in our congregation; we've got to work as part of a team, with other congregations and the laity, including other religions. What we need are people who are brave enough to create something new.

When you recruit, don't stay in one place; go rather to different parts of India, otherwise there will be one language which dominates and this isn't good. Formation must be adapted to the needs. There is no easy solution; there is need for discernment with lots of patience and much prayer, be humble and open. It's never finished. The Lord is at hand. He is on his way, he is always with us on our route.

We need mystics. To bear witness we must be mystics. It is not enough to be a good religious, faithful to timetables and to community exercises. God should be our passion, our hunger and thirst, otherwise we have no business as religious today. We should be a Christ like presence in today's world. From the moment of his resurrection, Christ is everywhere present. We must believe in this presence and put into practise what it teaches. We should be Eucharistic souls, mystics. Amen.

Sr Mary Lucy

*Prayer is not just what happens in Chapel. It's not a matter of an hour. Prayer is to be found in my choices, the constraints under which I labour during the day, what motivates me. What is it that drives me to service, to the apostolate, to self seeking or seeking God? Prayer is a life centred on God, an attitude, a disposition of the soul. In the BhagavadGita it is said that work is sacred when it is offered. Mission consists in the offering of one's self, of belonging to Christ. Our entire ministry must flow from that.*



### 5 MINUTES WITH... Fr Biju Paul

#### *Nef - How did you and your brothers welcome and live the choice of the Council of the Congregation?*

- The news of Council of the Congregation in Bangalore brought joy and pride to the Indian community. We saw it as a special favour of God, an honour and appreciation to our Indian community and people. We welcomed this event wholeheartedly with enthusiasm and hope. Under the guidance of Fr. Austin we made arrangement for the Council in collaboration with Sisters of St Joseph of Lyon. We arranged special prayers everyday in our communities for the success of the Council. The members of the Council visited both our communities in Bangalore and Mangalore and had interaction with various religious orders, companions of Betharram etc. It was an auspicious occasion for our communities and people to meet, interact and learn from the fathers in the Council. The brothers in the community were filled with joy and zeal in the presence of fathers during the period of the council. We too believe that the members of the council had the same experience in India.

#### *One year after Fr Xavier's death how is the emotional situation and the strength of your young communities?*

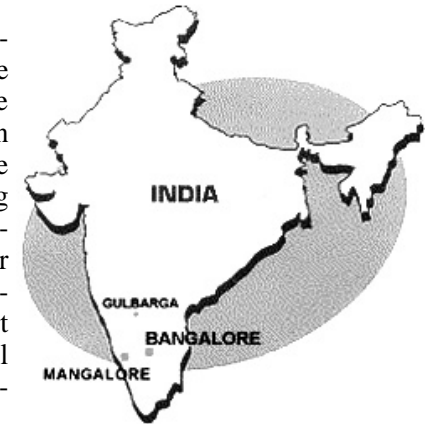
- The loss of Fr. Xavier was a big blow to the growth of the Indian Delegation since we have lost a respected elder brother and coordinator. But our faith and spirit of surrender to the God's will guide us to a new direction for our life. I see that this situation has also positively contributed to renew us as a community to be more strong, faithful and confident in guiding our mission. Though few of our students have taken different choice of life after the death of Fr. Xavier, now the brothers in the community are stable and have accepted the situation with courage and faith. During this period we could experience God's hidden protection and guidance through the personal presence of our various fathers and brothers from abroad. Fr. Austin and council showed their con-

Superior of Delegation, under 40 years old, Fr Biju Paul Alappat was the host of an important meeting: the Council of the Congregation, held in Bangalore on November 13-23rd. *Family News (Nef)* took the opportunity to have a look at situation and future perspectives in India.

stant concern, support and fellowship to make sure everything go well.

#### *What is Betharram at present in India?*

- At the moment there are 38 students in formation and very few formators. Besides there is a need to make a concrete opening in the mission where our young missionaries can receive their apostolic formation with the community. At present Fr. Britto is working as an assistant parish priest in Gulbarga Diocese, Bidar, North Karnataka while two of our brothers (Brs. Jose and Arul) doing their reGENCY with M.S.F.S. Fathers in Northeast part of India. Finally we need to create a local pool to support constantly for the mission and formation of our religious.



#### *According to you, what are the main challenges in the short and middle term?*

- India is a fertile soil for mission and vocation. Its spiritual heritage values and promotes religious way of life. Since our main concern is to form our future religious members with quality it demands the availability of well trained and experienced formation personal.

#### *As a Provincial Delegation what kind of partnership do you have with England?*

- The Indian Delegation is at present, largely depended upon our English province for its administration support and formation of candidates. There is a strong spirit of brotherhood, fellowship and mutual support between us. We are guided and encouraged in our daily life under the leadership of Fr. Austin and his council. The occasional visits of the members of English Province (From Br. Michael onwards) continued to strengthen this bond and encourage the spirit of belongingness and oneness in the heart of young ones in India. Besides three of our brothers (Wilfred, Paschal and Vincent) are welcomed to do