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The approval of the Society of the Sacred Heart

The Bishop wanted Berthe to get up she said “No, my Lord; I am speaking to you as to God’s representative; I want and must remain on my knees. The so-called divisions in Betharram will automatically disappear when Rome gives its approval. The Sister has promised this on the part of God.”

The Bishop, deeply touched, replied: “My child, I’m going to do it; just give me a little more time”. “If Jesus wanted you to have more time,” she said boldly, “I would have agreed. But Jesus has said to act quickly. So we must act quickly.”

“What a spirit” said the Bishop, overcome by her insistence! “Now, I’m going to sign the petition to the Holy Father, and you yourself can go and fetch it from M. Inchauspe along with the Betharram Constitutions.”

She was off like a shot. A few moments later, she was back. She fell to her knees and asked the Bishop to sign the petition quite simply. The Bishop fell to his knees also. Together they recited the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and three Hail Mary’s. The Bishop got up and straightaway signed and sealed the request.

6

(to be continued)



Note of the General Council

- **India:** Abraham Sebastian Nadackalaya Peedikayil, Praveen Anthony Kumar Anandraj and Praveen Antony Kumar, temporary professed, have left the community of Mangalore in May 2008 for a year of reflection.
- **France:** Fr. Gaston Gabaix-Hialé has been appointed Superior of the Community Maison Neuve (first mandate) at Bétharram.
- **Paraguay:** On the call of his Superiors, Bro. Mauro Ulrich de Oliveira will be ordained as a deacon on June 28th in Puente Remanso by Mgr Claudio Silvero.

On the Schedule

Up to July
31st

International session
in view of the perpetual
vows, in Holy Land
and Betharram



Family News

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



A word from the
Superior General

What kind of interior and what kind of exterior life!

Here I am! Jesus offers himself to God, his Father from the first moment of his conception by an act which he continues without interruption. Why did he wish to add an exterior and public act to an interior and secret act according to the law? So as to teach that it is necessary to be Christian not only in theory but also in practice, especially in what is of precept and what has developed through pious custom. D.S.41-42 D.S.47,106-107,135-136.

That is what St Michael says concerning the history of Christian spirituality in valuing the interior life as much as the public and exterior. It is important to value both aspects of faith, in contrast to reducing either: emphasizing Christian action at the expense of interior life, diminishes the interior life and reduces faith to an individual affair, and harms the prophetic and Christian witness in public life.

The discovery of the interior life begins by the effort of understanding oneself, followed by acceptance of and being reconciled with one's personal history, which leads to two fundamental dispositions: sincerity and humility.

The second stage of interior life is the discovery that God is present in the depth of my being, in the heart. I have searched for you everywhere but you were within me, said Saint Augustine. Moving from this revelation, it is necessary to learn to interpret and distinguish between consolation

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106th year
10th series, n°28
14th June 2008



tion and desolation, illusions and mistakes, certainty and conviction, joy and sorrow, to recognize in all these interior movements, the gentle host of our souls.

Being accompanied by someone with experience is necessary to really live this process and to share this fundamental experience: to understand the truth about oneself and to discern the promptings which lead us to the presence of Christ. By means of the Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius exercises us in working at the interior life. The first (a grace to ask for) is to understand with an intimate knowledge my sins and to hold them in abhorance. 63 *To ask for an intimate knowledge of the Lord who became man for me so that I may love him and follow him more closely.* 104 *To ask him for an intimate understanding of the many benefits that I have received from God in order that I may have a genuine sense of gratitude, and I am able to love his Divine Majesty in all things* 233. In repeating these prayers, I exercise myself in the apprenticeship of this intimate knowledge.

A word heard, an event, a person seen or encountered, some news, a reading from a passage of Scripture creates an echo in me and arouses feelings, interior movements which require all my attention since through them is revealed the incarnate and risen Word. These feelings become the springs of my exterior activity. If I can interiorise the gospel principles, instead of giving way to feelings of vengeance towards those who have harmed me, I will allow myself to be guided by the values of forgiveness which Jesus lived and taught. Rather than only thinking of myself and searching for what pleases me, I will know how to sacrifice myself in order to serve others and begin to think about their quality of life.

This intimate knowledge is not a kind of isolationism which takes me away from reality. It must have the characteristic and dimension of Christian reality: it arises from

Fr. Etchecopar and the approval of the Society of the Sacred Heart 6

by Pierre Mieyaa, SCJ



Divine intervention which both gratified and overwhelmed Father Etchecopar, is worthy of respect. Such is the respect that Fr Etchecopar changed his discretion into silence.. In everything, in his conversations and his correspondence, his voice and pen seem to be in a state of eclipse.

Right from the time of its foundation, on 8th September 1852, the Carmelite monastery in Pau had close ties with Father Garicoits' sons. Even before they were appointed chaplains to the monastery on the 16th December 1873, the religious living at St Louis de Gonzague had never refused to be of service to the Carmelites. In the community there is the 32 year old Father Estrate , the privileged confidant of Sister Marie de Jesus Crucifie, the admirable Palestinian mystique.

Suddenly and without a word of warning, on 2nd May 1875, this lay Sister announced a heavenly message to Father Estrate and Canon Bordachar, superior of the college at Mauleon, that they were to present the Betharram constitutions to the Holy Sea during the month of Mary. Alas! They didn't have the Constitutions in question. For the past five years they are lying in the Bishop's office in Bayonne. So, after a letter which had received no reply, on 10th May Sr Marie de Jesus Crucifie sent one of her friends, Mlle Berthe Dartigaux, to Bayonne to fetch them?

Mlle Dartigaux was welcomed with great joy by His Lordship. "My Lord", she said without further ado "I am here with a message. You told me in Pau that I was appointed to bring you the important revelations from Sr Marie de Jesus Crucifie". She then began reading the visions concerning Betharram together with the repeated order to send the Constitutions to Rome. When she had finished reading, she knelt down before His Lordship to make her point. When

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17	Joyeux anniversaire 60 años de sacerdocio, enhorabuena	P. Jean Laclau P. Enrique Lasuén
18	20°di sacerdozio, auguri	P. Elie Kurzum
26	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean Couret
24	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Dominique Etchépare
25	Bom aniversário	Ir. Marcelo Rodrigues da Silva
26	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean Couret
27	Bom aniversário 60°di sacerdozio, auguri	Ir. Robson Antonio Leite P. Piero Donini
28	Bom aniversário Feliz cumpleaños 35°di sacerdozio, auguri	Ir. Pedro Wladomiro Merlo P. Milciades Ortigoza Acosta P. Giancarlo Monzani, P. Piero Trameri, P. Mario Colombo
29	55 ans de sacerdoce Félicitations! 45 ans de sacerdoce	P. Jean Suberbielle, P. Pierre Salla, P. Pierre Grech P. Joseph Domecq
30	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean Lambert

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2	Buon compleanno	P. Massimo Motta
3	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Eugène Lhouerrou
4	Buon compleanno Feliz cumpleaños Joyeux anniversaire 65 ans de sacerdoce 60 ans de sacerdoce félicitations	P. Carlo Ruti, P. Enrico Frigerio P. Fulgencio Ferreira P. Hervé Kouamé Kouakou P. Raymond Descomps P. Alexandre Berhouet, P. Jean Tipy, P. Paul Baradat, P. Jean Casenave
5	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Lino Gurini P. Jacky Moura
6	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Gilberto Ortellado
7	Feliz cumpleaños	P. José María Ruiz
8	Joyeux anniversaire 35 ans de sacerdoce	P. Pierre Caset P. Jacky Moura
9	75 ans de sacerdoce	P. Joseph Canton
11	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Arialdo Urbani P. Joseph Ruspil
12	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Roberto Miner
14	Bom aniversário	P. Joachim Soares Moreira

an objective, social, human, psychological, ecclesiastical, cultural reality... which animates the real person who believes in the gospel, in all its corporal and spiritual dimensions. And this enables one to react with a new heart to challenges, by taking part in real situations and transforming them. *Thus with a lively sentiment of gratitude, I am able to love and serve in any situation.* 233



An authentic and mature interior life is manifested through virtue, action, ministering to others, collaboration, building brotherhood and communion in the church, solidarity, responsibility, forgiveness, dialogue, respect... this is the life in Christ of which the catechism speaks. Our actions are motivated by values and convictions we cultivate through our interior life. Then the exterior becomes as important as the interior. A rich and mature interior life which cultivates gospel values will show itself externally and with the same characteristics. When exterior behaviour does not correspond with the interior, one finds a life of contradictions.

St Michael Garicoits contemplates the beauty of this harmony between the interior and the exterior life of Jesus, the Master, in the sentiments of his heart, in his behaviour and his actions which he tries to imitate. In Jesus there are no contradictions, there is no yes and no. In him everything is in balance, everything is 'yes' to the Father and to men: *O you, my model! What peace, what forgetfulness of self, what delicate attentiveness, what an interior and exterior life! Especially, what a heart, what love, what kindness, what patience, amidst a sea of sorrow* (D.S. 48).

Gaspar Fernandez,SCJ

in memoriam

On May 14th, Mrs Angela Monzani, 91 years old, mother of Fr. Giancarlo (Rome-Miracoli), died in Colnago (Northern Italy). Let us pray for her and her family.

Father Etcheccopar wrote... to Fr. Magendle, 18th October 1879

I am writing to you during a trip to the birthplace of our Venerable Founder looking for traces of his youth. Actually we are busy collecting everything about his life, because the Bishop of Bayonne is thinking of opening the process Fama sanctitatis, next month.

I have noticed what we already know, namely that by choosing Fr Garicoits, the Lord chose what was poorest and weakest in the eyes of the world; Infirma mundi eligit.

His birthplace is a tiny little peasant house, consisting of four small rooms for the kitchen and bedrooms around a central area: so much for the ground floor, with an attic above. This poor dwelling house is the last in the village set against the mountain as if at the bottom of a funnel. In the kitchen is the small table on which at the age of 5 or 6 he play acted the altar and Mass, on it were bit of candles, and with the remains of a flower pot he pretended to be incensing the altar.

I visited the Angelu household where he used to guard the flocks from the age of 13 to 16. Everywhere signs of an extraordinary vocation were to be noticed; his piety, his happiness and passion were evidence of a very kindly disposition.

I am very happy with this trip which for me is full of gentle memories. I have been able to trace the beginnings of our Institute as if going upstream to the source of a river, in the rocks and solitude of the mountains where there is a feeling of being in the presence of a divine action.

Yes, as our Venerable Father used to tell us "It is God who wanted this work". It is all the fuller of his personality that he raised it from the lowest state, nearest to nothingness. What a source of joy, of gratitude, of trust in God, of esteem for our holy vocation, and of generosity to preserve the divine stamp and the seal of His Holiness on our work.

Let us all reflect on these things and show ourselves to be worthy ministers of Him who has called us to such an eminent cooperation.

*How do you perceive Betharram in India and Thailand?
What does it tell you on its mission elsewhere?*

Sebastian: In India Betharram is in full expansion and is bearing fine fruits: life generously given, burgeoning vocations, the Mission undertaken with determination. India is a lovely plant whose roots strike deep day by day, bearing beautiful flowers, but the stem is fragile. Formation must be consolidated, as well as the personal accompaniment of the future religious. All that encourages me to devote myself whole heartedly to the mission in my own country and region, when the time comes.

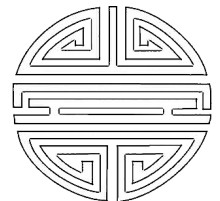
Guido: Betharram in Thailand has a rich missionary experience and a promising future. The faith has solid foundations among the mountain tribes. It has given many vocations. My stay in Thailand makes me enthusiastic to revive the mission in a Latin America whose Bishops are calling for a *new Pentecost*. At the same time, I realise that Betharram will be more and more Asiatic in appearance.

If you were dreaming about the future, what would it be like?

Guido: I think that the major challenge facing Betharram in Thailand will be the change of generations. The religious must keep as a priceless treasure the work of the missionaries from elsewhere, while, at the same time, shaping the new face of Betharram, very Thai in appearance, but it will be the sign that the Charism has taken root in their country.

Sebastian: Statistics and studies on the future of the Congregation can be multiplied. My dream is of a Betharram which is engaged in Missions which others are unwilling or unable to assume; a Betharram which discerns once and for all where we are and where we ought not to be, where we are not and where life is calling us. That will be a Betharram with a new visage: Asiatic, South American, African, Third World. In my dream I see it renewed and joyful, close to the poor and the youth, making attractive suggestions so that many will come knocking at our door, wanting to become sons of St Michael Garicoits.

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a wrench. Where the Church is concerned there is a big difference: 85% of Argentineans say they are Catholic; barely 2% of the Indians. To be in the minority is of no importance. In India, Christians are few but they are serious, fervent, convinced.

What did you find out about the Congregation, about others and about yourselves, thanks to this stay?

Sebastian: This course has helped me to get to know the International aspect of the Congregation better. It has helped me to realise and value the fact that Betharram is greater than Etchecopar Region; there are other faces and other experiences, that one can follow Jesus in the Religious Life in Asia as well as in America. India has helped me to discover who I am as a person and as a consecrated person. It has been a real Epiphany, a good experience. Finally I have become aware that Jesus is calling me to be beside him, to be with him, that such is his will for me.

Guido: During these last few months, I have discovered the rich history of the Betharram Mission in Thailand and its roots in China. I was excited by the route followed by the Religious who, for years, strengthened the faith of the mountain tribes in the north of Siam. While sharing their life I learned lots of things on the Mission. The uprooting and the solitude were means for me to grow in the theological experience and to put my trust in the Lord.

After 5 months what has made the greatest impression on you? What is the most precious thing you will take away from this experience?

Guido: What I remember best is the time spent in the mission outposts, the villages, with the Karens and the Akhas. It has been an unforgettable experience: celebrating the same faith with people so far away! For me, that's what makes the Church, living communion in what is different.

Sebastian: I am full of admiration according as I review this experience, as I detect the presence of Jesus, his kindness towards me, the generosity with which the Brothers in the Community received me. I am still amazed to see to what extent India has found a place for me in her heart!

In the footsteps of St Michael with Our Lady

What could be better than to begin the month opportunity chance and I grabbed it with all the enthusiasm possible. On 1st May I left Albiate with a group of Betharramite laity on our way to Lourdes and Betharram.

Organised by the Italian Province of the Sacred Heart Priests of Betharram, our pilgrimage was led by Father Graziano Sala, Provincial Superior, and included, of course, a visit to Ibarre - the little hamlet where on the 15th April 1797 the founder of the Order, St Michael Garicoits was born. It was an excellent idea as it allowed us to discover a charming corner of the French Basque country.

Prior to that, we had been to Lourdes, the Marian city, which had wrapped us up in its characteristic atmosphere of hope, prayer and peace; the night procession on the esplanade, with the torch-lights raised like so many hands straining heavenwards. The silent and prayerful presence of the sick with whom we fraternize here as nowhere else; the Mass celebrated at the Grotto of Massabielle at the dawn of a day full of an indescribable joy and hope. All that was enough to make us forget the fatigue of the journey and the worries left at home and which we'll find again with renewed energy.

From Lourdes we took a route which for 100 kilometres wound its way through emerald green fields, in the shadow of the Pyrenees, snow-capped at the beginning of Spring. All of a sudden, in the middle of this splendid countryside, appeared on the side of the hill a spotlessly clean cottage, lost in the green fields: Garacotchea, the family home of the Garicoits family. As I step inside I am deeply touched. Thanks to the simplicity of the mountains, I can feel the presence of the Saint. In my mind's eye I can see him as a youngster in the surroundings where his vocation grew, inside these bare walls and the vast pastures where he led his flocks.

From the 1st to the 4th May 2008, two coach loads of Italian Religious and laity went on pilgrimage to the birthplace of our Congregation. A friend of the community from Rome -Centre tells us about this event.



The ever present flocks are, to my mind, a link uniting the young Michael, Bernadette and a bit further off at the entrance to Toulouse, Germaine (the future saint who will give the Basilica at Pibrac its name). The three of them were

shepherds and Jesus' words seem to suit them perfectly: *"I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children"* (Mt. 11,25) I like to think that it was in the church at Ibarre, that St Michael's offering grew in his heart and mind and which was to become his life long project: *Here I am, without delay, without reserve, for ever, for love's sake.*

Leaving Ibarre to its peaceful existence, we reached Betharram where everything speaks to us of St Michael; the winding path up to the Stations of the Cross, the magnificent sanctuary of the Virgin of the Beautiful Branch, and where St Michael was chaplain for years and where St Bernadette and her family used to come on pilgrimage. We visited the museum, packed with interesting items; the bedroom where the Saint lived his last moments, the Chapel, near to Our Lady's Chapel and where lie the remains of him who dearly loved her.

On May 4th we were back in Italy. What have we brought back from such a pilgrimage? Lots of sensations and emotions, but above all, the longing to return!

Carla Farinetti

10 MINUTES WITH... Br. Guido & Br. Sebastian

Nef - Why and how did you come to spend several months so far from your own country?

Guido: As part of the year preparatory to Final Vows, we were given the chance of getting to know the life and mission of Betharram in other parts of the world. Personally, I discovered the mission in Thailand.

Sebastian: For this particular point of my formation, my superiors thought best to send me to India. They were not mistaken! I thank God for such a wonderful experience.

When you got there, what surprised you most?

Sebastian: Certainly what came as a surprise was the heat and the spicy food. I was amazed at the hospitality of the families and their deep sense of religious life. In India you can feel religion, it's not something parallel to life. Whatever his religion the Indian is profoundly religious.

Guido: It's fascinating to come close to a culture so different from one's own. I found a country which is both magnificent and hospitable. I was warmly received – just like the climate – wherever I went. The Thai people have a keen sense of what is beautiful. This is easily visible from their Temples. They preserve their values and traditions and are particularly attached to their king.

How did you cope with being uprooted, seeing different things, meeting others, another aspect of the Church?

Guido: Although I was in the Far East I felt perfectly at home. To be greeted by the religious of your own Congregation does away with distances; it's a terrific experience. I was very aware of the uprooting experienced by the "veterans" the European missionaries who brought the message of Jesus, and who remained the whole of their lives. Their example taught me that you can leave everything - family, culture - to bring the Gospel message to other latitudes.

Sebastian: It's hard to begin with, but with time, one fits in better and better, so much so that at the beginning I was longing to see the end of it, after five months leaving was



Guido and Sebastian Garcia are Argentinean. They are blood brothers but they are also Brothers by profession. Guido is the younger of the two – by 17 months – but he is the senior from point of view of formation. As part of the special year preparatory to Final Vows, they have just returned from a training course in our communities in Asia, and are now getting ready to join 11 other scholastics for the session in the Holy Land-Betharram. Between two planes they shared their impressions with us.

ing at precisely the same time. We can help him out. Father Alain has already set out yesterday evening. Next morning Fathers Phairote and Arun followed together with the Sisters and a group of young people. The funeral is set for 10 o'clock.

Meanwhile, the other youngsters left at the Centre, are busy with the cleaning and the upkeep of the garden. Two volunteers – French pensioners – and a volunteer from the Children of Mekong install the electricity in the new building for the girls. It will be according to the European standards of safety.

At 5 o'clock in the evening Fathers Phairote and Arun are back with the little delegation. Father Alain joins us later on. The youngsters from the Centre have organised an evening's entertainment in honour of the Fathers. Representatives from the surrounding villages came for the event. Their faces show their joy at receiving a visit from the Fathers. A few words of introduction, a short word of welcome from the youth and the adults, presentation of a bouquet of flowers, songs and dances and finally a gift to help with the pastoral activity – a laptop for Father Phairote and another one for Father Arun. Father Phairote leads the final prayer.

18th May 2008 – It's Sunday. At 8h30 the new Parish Priest, Father Phairote, presides at Mass, assisted by Fathers Arun, Alain, Carlos and myself. As Vice-Provincial, I give the official go-ahead for the missionary activity of our two Fathers: *May the Lord, who promised to be always with us, guide you on the route which he has prepared for you. May Our Lady of Betharram and Saint Michael help you, encourage you and light your way. Good work!* Father Rodriguez and myself left for Chiang Mai in the afternoon, accompanied by the shouts of joy from the young people from the Centre, the Sisters and Father Alain and the other people who stayed on. Life is a journey.

Alberto Pensa, SCJ Vice-Provincial of Thailand.

Congregation

Two months for a consecrated life ■ On June 2nd the international session of preparation to the perpetual vows started in Bethlehem. From the feast of Saint Benedict (July 11th) to the feast of Saint Ignatius (July 31st), it will take place in Betharram. The 2008 group is made up of 15 participants: 1 from RCA, 1 from India, 1 from Italy, 2 from Argentina, 2 from Thailand, 4 from Paraguay, and 4 from Ivory Coast (in Holy Land they will be guided by Fr Jean Lambert, Fr Laurent Bacho, Fr Gustavo Agin and Fr Chan Kunu). We wish our brothers all the best in this period of discernment and renewal!

Province of France

Pau: the festive House of St-Michel ■ On May 24th, the fest of the Blessed Miriam of Jesus Crucified was celebrated 140 years to the day after the ecstasy in which she received the mystical wound in the heart. After the spiritual conference and before the picnic followed by the adoration, Mgr Gardès, archbishop of Auch presided over the Mass at the ancient Carmel. In the afternoon: adoration and solemn vespers animated by a inspired choir.

Province of Rio de la Plata

Golden Jubilee ■ On May 4th a mass thanksgiving was celebrated for the 50th anniversary of Our Lady of Betharram and Saint Joseph Parish, in Martin Coronado. Presided over by Mgr. Rodriguez-Melgarejo, bishop of San Martin, the celebration was preceded by a triduum of preparation in the various chapels of the parish community: Orantes, Our Lady of the Consolation and Saint Michael Garicoits and led to the arrangement of commemorative statue of the "White Madonna".

Vice-Province of Paraguay

"Cogitamus ergo sumus" ■ On May 8th in Lambare, the vice-provincial assembly dealt with the issue "mystic of incarnation", taken from the 1999 General Chapter and proposed to the whole Congregation. The reflection started with a contribution of Br Daniel Pavon who clarified the concept and related it to St Michael's experience. The religious gathered then into three groups: they first analysed their own way of being a mystic of incarnation, and then came up with proposals in order to foster this dimension. This positive sharing should take place again during the annual retreat, at the end of August.



*Saint Michael
Region*



*Fr. Etchecopar
Region*



Blessed Miriam
Region

Province of England Delegation of India

A new mission ■ As Fr. Biju Paul, Superior delegate, referred to the last Council of Province, the bishop of Bidar-Gulbarga has entrusted to the Congregation the pastoral care of Saint Lawrence's mission. After two years of presence, Fr. Britto Rajan will be in charge of this foundation, the first one of this kind for Betharram in India. Possibly, the community will be established in Manna-Ekhelli (30 km south of Bidar) by June 2010 at the latest; step by step our mission centre will include, besides the house for our religious, some space for a Children's Boarding House and enough space for a few Regency Students or Novices in the second year. Two of our brothers are already training for this interesting project in Mangalore.

SAMPRAN PROJECT 2008

Sponsor a Betharramite student

The Church in Thailand is young, dynamic and full of promise. She bears witness to Christ in a Buddhist environment. The Seminaries are full of enthusiastic young men. In this situation the Sacred Heart Fathers of Betharram make great efforts to accompany these vocations and train them for Religious Life.

With the increase in numbers there is an important financial question. It would be a pity to have to refuse candidates because of questions of money. The Betharramites in Thailand live from the fruits of their work and gifts from their families. But it's far from meeting the expenses for

formation which mount to € 720.00 annually per person.

At the beginning of this academic year (June 2008 - March 2009) why not sponsor a young Thai Betharramite? The whole of the sum can be paid in one go, or by monthly instalments of €50.00. In exchange, the young students undertake to send news of their progress to their sponsors and to pray for their intentions.

For further information:
missio@betharram.org
 or contact: Sacred Heart
 Mission Centre, St Joseph's
 Murcott Road, Whitnash,
 Leamington Spa. CV31 2JJ

First three days at Maetawar

16th May 2008 – “Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for the land that I will show you” (Gn 12,1) A new adventure is beginning. The new missionaries, Fathers Phairete and Arun, together with Fathers Alberto Pensa and Carlos Rodriguez, leave Chiang Mai to go to Maetawar, in the Tha Song Yang district, in the diocese of Nakhon Sawan. After six hours journey, and a stop for lunch at Maesaring we arrive at Maetawar at around 5 o'clock in the evening. It's raining! They say that this is the dampest region in Thailand.

The boys and girls from the Centre greet us with the traditional Karen greeting: *omouchopeu*, as they shake hands with us. The Karen Sisters from Macpon are there with the young people. The Centre is constituted of several buildings around the chapel, built on the model of Mamouclo, the capital the “Karen State” in Myanmar (Burma). This latter was destroyed, so this faithful copy is a whole symbol. There is the Priest's dwelling house, built by Father Quintard (MEP), the Sisters of Macpon's quarters and who have been there since 2005, the boys' and girls' accommodation which is almost completed. There is a plan to rebuild the entire structure for time and the elements have not spared the Centre. Even the Chapel has been affected by the tail end of the cyclone Nargis which devastated the south of Myanmar at the end of April.

Father Alain Bourdery arrived at 6h00. He can't hide his satisfaction at receiving us; at long last here is someone who has come to help him. It would be ideal to be able to work together. Dream or reality? Let's say that it's a reality about to be realised. We drink to the success of the undertaking and end our day with a glass of good red wine. Good night.

17th May 2008 – Our pastoral work is waiting for us. A young 22 year old has died and it's his funeral today. But the funeral is at 140Kms from here at a village in a region entrusted to a diocesan Priest, who has an important meet-