

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

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

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

Visit us on our website
www.betharram.org

Betharram in Ivory Coast (1)

priest responsible for the equipment in the diocese, bustled about on the site. Young Fathers gladly rendered services in the parish: Father Prevost with Family Catholic Action, Father Suberbielle with the Legion of Mary and Father Monnot with “les Coeurs Vailants”.

On the 8th December they were amazed to see how the Christians celebrated the feast of the Immaculate conception. In any case it's the anniversary of the consecration of the parish Church “Our Lady of Lourdes”. For the first time, the Blessed Sacrament procession ended at the Training College “St Michael”; the Christians are justly proud of the construction of the first Catholic secondary school in the North. Mgr Durrheimer, presiding over the celebration, was happy to see that the Fathers living quarters was almost complete.

1

(to be continued)

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CONGREGATION

BRAZIL: Sacred Heart Priest ■ On Sunday January 11th, in the Saint Sebastian parish church of Passa Quatro, Br. Mauro Henrique Ulrich de Oliveira was ordained as priest by Mgr Guilherme Porto, bishop of Sete Lagoas. We keep united in prayer and thanksgiving with the Vicariate of Brazil and all the Fr. Etchecopar Region.

THAILAND: Evangelization yesterday, today and tomorrow ■ On December 29-30th in Huay Tong, 600 faithful and a score of priests have celebrated fifty years of presence of our congregation in the parish. Outdoor Masses, processions, shows and fraternal agape marked the celebrations led by Fr Jean Caset (priest) and Fr Chayot Charoenkun (Vicar). Before confirming 150 people, the bishop of Chiang Mai gave a heartfelt tribute to the missionaries of Betharram, and urged the Karen people to remain true to its spiritual and cultural traditions. Conclusive words from Fr Caset: “I am happy with the good cooperation and the steadfast faith of the Christians over these last 50 years: we must still go on announcing the unknown God.”



Family News

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**A word from the
Superior General**

Being what we really are: Betharramite Religious

In this issue:

- Page 4: General Council Announcement
- Page 5: An Indian story
- Page 7: Holy Land
- Page 8: 5mn with Fr Gerardo Ramos
- Page 10: + Fr R. Descomps
- Page 12: + Fr Giovanni Trameri
- Page 15: Betharram in Ivory Coast (1)

The Regionalisation of the Congregation has become a reality. We have created three regions, have appointed three regional Superiors and the 12 Superiors of the Vicariates. The reorganisation of the Congregation: there's no stopping life!

This new organisation of the Congregation is certainly a time of grace for each religious, for each community and for the whole family. This *Kairos* requires a genuine attitude of conversion from each one of us; it is a question of living at every moment and in every situation in fidelity to our meeting with Christ which has transformed our lives and helped us in this organisation so that, in all things we may love and serve God and his universal will which is the salvation of mankind.

Today, Saint Michael Garicoits is asking us in the words which he addressed to Father Jean Espagnol (Letter 194): *this is all I am asking of you, always and at all times to have the God whom you serve ever before your eye, and his will which we express by our way of life, and fulfil it; let us at least try to carry out that adorable will, each one according to the grace received and to our situation.*

The very existence of the Congregation is situated round the fidelity of each religious to his vocation, and to communion in each community – “that they may all be one” so dear to St Michael Garicoits; to the joyful witness of our obedience, our poverty and our chastity, in our commit-

**Happy
new
year!**

**106th year
10th series, n° 34
14th January 2009**



ment to the mission undertaken with the enthusiasm of our meeting with Christ – our deepest vocation – and not with the activism and seeking of compensations which by times mark our mission.

As Saint Michael stresses in the same letter: *For each and everyone of us the best cure for such ailments, as well as our duty, is fighting them in our own heart and in the heart of others, showing what we are by our fidelity to the whole breadth of our vocation and rank, respecting with equal fidelity the limits of our grace, our vocation and our rank.*

Making the most of the grace of this *Kairos* of regionalisation, the General Council here offers the Congregation this plan of animation for the year 2009:

- **From the 21st to the 31st January in Rome, Council of the Congregation;** the first four days, a speaker from the St Luke's Institute, Padua, will help us do a *sharing of faith*. The following days will be spent in making the new organisation in Regions and Vicariates functional.
- **From the 22nd April to the 7th May in Bethlehem, meeting of all the Regional Councils (Regional Superiors and Vicariates).** The first week will provide an opportunity of *sharing of faith*. During the second week with the Superiors of the Vicariates, we shall study the projects drawn up by the Council of Congregation.
- **In September and October 2009, in each Region, meeting of community Superiors,** as was decided at the Council of Congregation in Bangalore. The superiors are fundamental to the reorganisation and revitalisation of our Religious family. They are most important in accompanying the religious in the fidelity to their vocation and in the construction of communities

BETHARRAM IN IVORY COAST 1959-2009 - 1. The Foundation



Following the encyclical letter *Fidei Donum* of Pius XII in 1957, Betharram decided to come to the aid of the young Churches in Black Africa; there are many calls, where to go? In the Spring of 1959, Father Jean Mateo, provincial superior of France went on a fact finding tour of Senegal and Ivory Coast.

In July, the Congregation decided to go to Ivory Coast, to the diocese of Katiola, in the north of the country, to Ferkessedougou. Mgr Emile Durrheimer, of the Lyon African Missions (SMA), has total responsibility for the north, more than 1/3rd of the country. He succeeded in convincing Father Mateo that the buildings would all be ready on the month of October! It was a matter of opening a Teacher's Training College for the formation of Catholic teachers in 40 primary schools; the normal cycle of studies is spread over 4 years, at the end of which is a Teacher's Certificate.

Who to send? Father Peter Prevost who had done good work at the Catholic School in Saint-Palais was sent as Superior and Director; Father John Suberbielle, who had spent 6 years at Beit Jala was to be his assistant. The Benjamin of the group was to be Father Pierre Monnot, ordained only a few months earlier. In September it's the departure for the mission and the foundation; work has just begun on the buildings! Father Raymond Laulom, chaplain to the state schools in Bouake, joins the Community at Ferke for the school year.

On the 3rd November it's the inauguration of the first class for the 45 youngsters of class 6; in reality they are great big 18 year old lads! Our 3 founding Fathers spent the first few months in the parish, warmly welcomed by the Parish Priest, Father Won Wile, a Swiss SMA who was full of attention for them. Father Paulus, another SMA

It is nearly 50 years since our Congregation took its first steps in Ivory Coast. We are going to follow the story of this undertaking during this jubilee year. We shall owe it to Father Laurent Bacho, General Councilor and formator in Abidjan.



2009

JANUARY

18	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Antonio Cano
19	50 años de profesión, felicidades	P. Rogelio Ramírez P. Francisco Daleoso
20	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Victor Batailles
23	Buon compleanno	P. Ennio Bianchi
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Luis Oteiza
26	Buon compleanno	P. Albino Trameri P. Mario Giussani
27	Happy birthday Feliz cumpleaños	Fr. Brian Boyle P. Carlos Rodriguez
28	Happy birthday	Fr. Biju Paul Alappat
29	Joyeux anniversaire	P. André Grossard
30	Buon compleanno	P. Celeste Perlini P. Aldo Camesasca
31	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Mathieu Etchéneque

FEBRUARY

2	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean Suberbielle
3	Buon compleanno	P. Tarcisio Giacomelli
4	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Angelo Recalcati
8	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Firmin Bourguinat
10	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Henri Lataste
12	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Pierre Grech Fr. Raoul Thibaut Ségla
13	Buon compleanno	P. Mario Longoni
14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	F. Bertrand Belhartz F. Giuseppe Pozzi
17	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean-Luc Morin F. Serge Braga Latta
18	Happy birthday	Br. Andrew Ferris
19	Joyeux anniversaire 15 años de profesión	P. Henri Lamasse P. Daniel González
20	Joyeux anniversaire 65 ans de sacerdoce 15 años de profesión	P. Mirco Trusgnach P. Henri Nadal P. Gilberto Ortellado

which are prayerful, fraternal, hospitable and missionary. We would also like that during these meetings of superiors the sharing of faith should be used.

- **Before the end of 2009, a meeting will be held in each Vicariate**, according to Article 259 in the Rule of Life. Our plan is that every Religious in the Congregation will have been able to revive his vocation thanks to the method of *sharing of faith*.

I make use of these two sayings of St Michael, when he encourages us (in the same letter) to enter wholeheartedly into this dynamic of personal conversion, of brotherly communion and of the reorganisation of the Congregation: "*Hoc fac et vives et vivere facies multos alios.* You can understand, experience and do that; and you must do it more than any one else. May you come to understand this duty fully!*"

Gaspar Fernandez,SCJ

* Do this and you will live, and you will be the cause of life for many others.

Father Etchécopar writes... to his sister Julie, 8th January 1874

Happy New Year in the Lord Jesus! He has enlightened us by his light, sanctified and regenerated us by his blood. He is always our guiding light, our one and only way, our unique life, the only object worthy of our charity and our love.

And now it is the feast of the Epiphany. Through our sins we were like a den of thieves; through our double vocation of Christian and religious, he has made us into torches, into suns to shine in the world; he has placed us among his angels; he has transformed our hearts into his temple, his dwelling place, his paradise! He thinks only of our soul and the glory of his Father. May he be for ever thanked, adored, and loved by every living creature. Amen.

During its plenary meeting on 11-17 December, the General Council appointed



for a term running from 01/01/09 to the Gral Chapter 2011

Saint Michael Garicoits Region
Superior regional: Fr Graziano Sala
Vicariates Superiors

Central Africa: Fr Tiziano Pozzi

Ivory Coast: Fr Jean-Marie Ruspil

France-Spain: Fr Jean-Dominique Delgue

Northern Italy Fr Piero Trameri

Central & Southern Italy: Fr Aldo Nespoli

Holy Land: Fr Élie Kurzum



Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region
Superior regional: Fr Gustavo Agin
Vicariates Superiors

Argentine-Uruguay: Fr Enrique Miranda

Brazil: Fr Vicente de Menezes

Paraguay: Fr Javier Irala



Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified Region
Superior regional: P. Austin Hughes
Vicariates Superiors

England: Fr Colin Fortune

India: Fr Biju Paul Alappat

Thailand: Fr Tidkham Jaïlertrit

Scolastics Master for the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region : Fr Mauro Ulrich de Oliveira.

Members of the General Bursary Office, with Fr Gaspar Fernandez, Fr Enrico Frigerio, and Fr Jean-Luc Morin: Mr Luigi Pirovano and Mrs Maria Grazia Cavazzini.

General Council Announcement

Season Prayer ■ The 2008 session of the General Council finished on December 17th in Rome. Presiding over the Ending Eucharist, Fr Gaspar Fernandez said: "The great desire of Advent is the desire of the General Council for the whole Congregation: may Christ, hidden in Mary, be reborn in each of our brothers; may Christ be the only thing necessary for each of our brothers; may Christ shine in each of our brothers." In the work of reorganizing Betharam, this is a meaningful prayer.

General; he was to be the first non-French to be elected to this post. His mandate corresponds to one of the most complicated periods in recent history. The anti-establishment wave of protestations not only effected society, but also how to understand and assume the choice of religious and priestly vocations. In such a context the way ahead was far from evident. At the end of the 1975 Chapter, he resumed his functions as Procuror General, thanks to which he was able to be present at the 1981 General Chapter; it was the end of his presence in the General Council.

There now began a period of well earned rest and withdrawal from Congregation affairs. From then onwards his sole preoccupation and only pastoral action was in the service of souls. For 55 years as rector of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, piazza del popolo, Father Giovanni was a reference, confessor and spiritual director of a multitude of Romans. His Church and house were open to pilgrims where ever they came from. Countless were the relations, friends, honey-mooning couples passing through Rome who were at the receiving end of his kindness and hospitality.

Father Giovanni leaves us the example of a priest faithful to his priestly vocation, of an apostle of the confessional, of a religious conscious of the needs of others, both spiritual and materiel, of a man who was hospitable and kind towards all. Witness the countless persons who rushed to his bedside and who assisted at his funeral on the 12th January, in the Church of Our Lady of Miracoli. He was interred in the Congregation vault, in the Roman cemetery at Verano.

Here is what Father Giovanni wrote in the 1970's about the uncertainty of the young today in the presence of a vocation: "Life will not wait. She fixes her choices. What does she offer the undecided? Emptiness, constant contradiction, a pile of ashes. One can only give one's self to God totally and irrevocably." (NEF August-September 1972). Such remarks can resume the whole meaning of the life and work of Father Giovanni Trameri.

On 20 December 2008, the dispensation from vows was granted to Br Lawrence Santhiyagu Fernando and Br John Peter Philip, of the Indian Delegation.

IN MEMORIAM

Italy



Isolaccia
6th September
1916



Rome
9th January 2009

Father Giovanni Trameri

On January 9th, an outstanding member of the Betharram family went to the Lord : after a brief illness Father Giovanni Trameri died at the age of 92.

Born in Isolaccia (province of Sondrio) on the 6th September 1916, Giovanni Trameri entered the Apostolicat at Colico in 1928. He was one of the group of the first 5 children accepted in the Betharram Junior Seminary in Italy. After a year he left for Betharram where he remained from 1929 to 1935, in which year he passed his French Baccalaureate. On the 7th September 1935 he began his novitiate in Balarin (Gers), where he pronounced his vows of chastity, poverty and obedience on the 8th September 1936.

The newly professed religious left for the Holy Land to continue his formation. From 1936 to 1938 he studied philosophy in Nazareth, next came Theology in Bethlehem. His course should have finished in 1942, but the war, in a British protectorate – Palestine – was going to change all that. Under house arrest in the Salesian Seminary he stayed on until 1942. Meanwhile he made his final vows on the 20th September 1939, and was ordained priest on the 12th July 1942. At the end of the war he underwent surgery for an ulcer and only just returned to his homeland on the 5th July 1946. He left Palestine with Father Marco Gandolfi.

After ten years absence he was able to meet up with his family in Italy. He then joined the college in Colico where he was named Superior and Director in 1948. In 1953 he succeeded Fr Manescau as Procuror General of the Congregation, taking up residence at the Church of Our Lady of Miracoli in Rome, where he remained until his death.

As Procuror General of Betharram, Father Giovanni assisted at the General Chapters of 1958, 1964 and 1969. It was during this last Chapter that he was elected Superior

An Indian story to be meditated anywhere

Sunday, 30th November, Mangalore - The Betharramite scholastics are receiving their Dominican opposite numbers. Not for a theological discussion, but for a game of volley ball. The poster looks good: OP versus SCJ. It's a bit like Samson and Goliath!

On the one hand, the winners of the first leg; impeccably turned out (in the kit of the Spanish national team, with the addition of *Dominicans*) On the other hand, the team from Maria Kripa in disorder, wearing all the colours of the rainbow! *The great armada is on its way*, I thought to myself, fearing the worst for our team.

Half an hour later the game is a close thing; the players are focussed, the crowd captivated, including the Sisters from the Apostolic Carmel, our neighbours. Little by little the Betharramites set the rhythm: the action is all there. Result 3:1 when the whistle blew for the end. Apart from the result what is of interest here is the how. I can see a parable of Religious Life.

The Betharram team's secret lies in the modesty of its means. Our Brothers haven't an official jersey and are in no way bothered. If they did have one, they would wear it with the same naturalness: the essential is elsewhere, "*in your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus (Phil, 2,5)* Humble, means to be ever ready to learn, to challenge oneself, to train oneself so as to display one's gifts. It means cultivating discipline and flexibility, patience and perseverance. Betharramites don't belong to the great Religious Families but are in no way bothered. They are not humiliated by their mistakes but learn lessons from them. They are fully aware of their limits, they make the best use of what they have and give all they are. No need to be sure of themselves so as to believe it. When one is poor, no need to be bothered by what has been acquired; when one is humble, there is greater freedom to dare and to dream of great things.

Last November, the Secretary-Treasurer General paid a visit to the Betharram communities in India. On his return he brought us this delightful little story from the Formation house Maria Kripa.

Then, our Brothers have team spirit; their formation has got them used to the idea of group work for the common good. They distinguish between uniformity and unity in their way of presenting themselves and their method of action. They are different in build and in ability, but they grow rich together; in their differences they are complementary. They don't seek to shine but to be of service to their partners. They play as a group while, at the same time, making most of the qualities of each one. They don't cling to their positions, but are faithful to the position allotted them. They concentrate their efforts, stick together in trials, unassuming in success. In a word, thanks to their speed and availability, to their flexibility and their daring, to their gift of improvisation and adaptability to the pitch, the volley ball players of Maria Kripa reminded me of the famous "flying camps" so dear to St Michael!

The third secret is the importance of the leader, who like a big brother, is there to serve. The Captain of the Betharram team can listen, look and place his men; he keeps the ball moving, and leaves nobody out. He is there when things go right or when they go wrong; he cheers up the player who has made a double fault, encourages him and gives him a second chance. He checks too much excitement and keeps his mind on the game; he prefers long term construction to short term excitement. He keeps on repeating that the game is never over but that there is hope right up to the end. He never loses sight of the aim and passes it on to the others. The priority is not winning but to conquer whatever is individuality and resistance; to overcome oneself is to succeed all together.

Through all this there is a deep joy. Not the joy of the result, but the joy of walking together. The joy of pooling one's energy and weaknesses, for nothing is lost that has been given. The importance of happiness in the great as in the minor situations; the joys of life which have their origin in the joy of believing; joy which grows according to it is shared; joy as a mission: *working whole-heartily to bring the same happiness to others...*

Jean-Luc Morin, SCJ

retiring age, he arrived at the Museum and Sanctuary of Betharram, and took over as chaplain after Father Touyaret for the next four or five years. But he spent most of his time in the Museum; there are the collections of stones and rocks, not to mention the seismograph which is known throughout the most of France.

In the Museum he made use of his abilities in physics and geology; he had many contacts and fascinated his visitors. You knew when you went into the Museum but had no idea when you would leave! Years afterwards people were still talking of this old priest who was a fount of knowledge.

On his desk in the Museum he would prepare *L'Echo de Betharram* for which he was responsible for twenty years. And on this same desk he wrote the history of Betharram "*Our Lady of Betharram, the Mother who saves us*" In his spare time he used to go up to the Regional Library on the 4th floor; he didn't often speak of what was to be found in that library. It was in the Museum that he could speak Bearnais with lots of people from there and this made him intensely happy!

With the Museum and the sanctuaries he was living at the frontier: there was the back museum with all its secrets, the oratory was behind the organ; he had a workshop behind the extension of the gallery, behind the organ also. We can thus say that Father Raymond Descomps lived a bit at the frontier (in the right sense of the word, for it is at the frontier that one is the richer from the different people one meets). He was born at the frontier of Bearn and Chalosse, which explains everything!

Father Descomps was different from his fellow countrymen but this was his worth. God held an important place in his life; he was faithful to his Mass in this oratory where, in winter, the water nearly froze. In the Museum he was often seen with his Breviary in his hand. He was very devoted to Saint Michael, made him known and often prayed to him.

Happy those who keep guard at the frontiers of our humanity!

Firmin Bourguinat, SCJ

When you get back to Argentina, what are your plans?

- Besides publishing a book which will resume not only my sabbatical year, but my ten years of university work (if my editor doesn't change the title it will be called: *The Faith of Christians in face of the cultural pluralism of today*). I had hoped to continue teaching Theology as well as giving sessions and retreats as usual; I deem that they are means of evangelisation in depth of a culture. Despite my feelings, the Superior General has asked me, without abandoning my Theological work, to spend half the year at the regional novitiate in Buenos Aires, Argentina and the other half at the Regional House of Studies at Belo Horizonte (Brazil). We shall see!

IN MEMORIAM

France



Louvigny
19th September 1916



Betharram
1er January 2009

Father Raymond Descomps

Father Raymond Descomps was born at Louvigny in the Bearn on the 19th September 1916. He did all his studies in the Major Seminary in Palestine and was ordained in Jerusalem on the 4th July 1943.

It can almost be said that his life went by thirties. He wasn't far off thirty years of age when he arrived at Betharram College where he spent 30 years as teacher before going on to the Museum and Sanctuary for another 30 years. He has just left us at the age of 92.

As a new priest, he arrived at Betharram as teacher in the College, and student at the University of Toulouse where he got his diplomas in science, chemistry and geology. Thanks to geology he was able to abandon his pupils from time to time; he would set out on foot and later on with his Vespa, with his rucksack on his back, and a big hammer to break the rocks. His pupils can still remember his experiments in chemistry for the great joy of the pupils and of course, the joy of the teacher. It is said that there wasn't much silence in his class.

In 1954 he spent a short while in Saint Palais, in Etchecopar School but only for a few weeks. When he reached

Holy Land

Holy Land,
I often repeat it to myself!
Land full of contrasts and questions!
Land where the imagination gets lost in the twists
and turns of history. It's all about you.

Holy Land,
Land of clashes and deeply held convictions
Land of deliverance and distant dreams.
I am surprised to see you thus.

Holy Land,
Land towards which come all who thirst for Love and Truth.
I don't know you really yet.
Give me the key to your mystery.

Holy Land,
In the eyes of your disabled child
I have seen an ocean of love and waves stretching for ever.
The brightness of your horizon leaves me deaf
To the sounds of war from your uncompromising fighters.

Holy Land,
I want to take refuge in the hollows of your rocks where rest the
Martyrs of the Good News – of yesterday and today;
I bow down at the sight of your greatness and nobility,
I, the child from your next door neighbour, the country you know well.

Holy Land,
Yesterday evening I saw a disabled child running to the help
Of another sick child;
I ask you to extend your tender loving care to such signs of freedom.
Do we still need the blood of martyrs?

Rest assured! The silence of the night hovering over us;
The sobs of the land of Palestine are the sobs of the whole world;
And that day I'll come with my speaking tam-tam
And we shall talk about our common history.

Brother Serge is
from Ivory
Coast, and is a
1st year novice.
His pastoral
experience puts
him in contact
with sick
children in
Bethlehem.
They have
given him these
thoughts.

N'da Serge, SCJ novice



Fr Gerardo Ramos is Professor of Theology in Argentina. At the age of 40 he has just had a Sabbatical year in several communities on four continents. Let's take a look at this experience with him.

5 MINUTES WITH... Father Gerardo

Nef: Where did you get the idea of this “world tour” of the Congregation and how did it work out in practice?

- I got the idea from the document issued at the end of the Bishops' Conference of Latin America, held in Aparecida, Brazil in 2007 and which invited Christians to be like “missionary disciples”. I thought that spending some time in the different formation houses of the Congregation could be a good experience, both for myself and for others, by offering the kind of services I have been rendering in my own country for the past ten years in the different institutes and Theology departments. The project having got the “go ahead” from Father Gaspar at the time of his last canonical visit to the former Province of Rio de la Plata, I got ready a plan of action and set about how best to finance it. As a collaborator of the Catholic University of Argentina, I got a substantial grant covering 85% of an experience which was to last 14 months exactly.

What are the best memories you have? And what difficulties did you encounter? - I have an excellent memory of the Olton community. In two and a half months I didn't hear a single disagreeable word among the religious. Similarly at Bangalore where I was able to work and share in depth with the team of formators; likewise Sampiran, where I felt quite at home, despite the language barrier. In Bethlehem, I found the community life heavy to bear and I was completely lost at Adiapodoume. But all this was largely made up for by the 10 days spent at Dabakala and Yamoussoukro.

What lessons have you learnt from your trip: on the presence of our communities, and on formation and the mission? - Where ever I went I took good notice of everything – I read, reflected and wrote a lot. However, my answer is limited by the fact that I spent the major part of

my time in tropical regions under development, regions from which come the majority of the young men in formation. That gives you some idea of the kind of presence of the Congregation. From my point of view the principal challenge to the Betharramite formation lies in the consolidation of the vocational courses making them more personal more consistent and autonomous. I think it is the only way of developing a meaningful mission today, especially in urban areas. Naturally, community life and prayer life should be the real places where such points grow and are nurtured.

On what conditions can the Regionalisation bring a response to these challenges for our Congregation? - As I see it, with the new Rule of Life authority is vested in fewer people, with the risk of making the Regions like the former Vice-Provinces, but with fewer of them. To react to such a danger, I think care must be taken that the Vicariats retain their originality. Consequently, short term exchanges can be a wealth worth giving and receiving, so that little by little what is common to each region may have time to mature. I am delighted to see, that apart from Africa, the new Vicars are religious native to their own Vicariat. This should result in a greater inculturation.

What do you think are the weaknesses and strengths of Betharram in the Church and world today? - The weaknesses are to be found in the Old World with the difficulty of renewal with all that that supposes for a Congregation of European origin, and not only for Europe. Then there is the long formation which men from a poor or rural background must follow in order to be effective in an urban and secular world. Its strengths lie in the variety of pastoral activities and the vitality of the cultures in the Congregation; secondly the wish to improve on the initial and ongoing formation by opening them to the challenges of today.