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On the schedule of the General Council

14-29 June
Second and
last part of
the visit of
the Superior
general in
Thailand

11-25 June
Visit of the
General Vicar
in the Rep. of
Centre-Africa

Betharram in Ivory Coast (6)

In August 1981 the place of the mission of the community became important; Fr Laurent was to go to Pibrac where the Province was planning a formation community for the young members. Was it possible for us to carry on being responsible for the Seminary? No, all the more so since the return of Fr Dahiri to the diocese was already on the books. He has both the experience and the competence necessary. Should we leave the diocese so as to be closer to Br Jean-Claude who for the last few months was bursar at the Seminary of Ouagadougou? Have we the right to desert a diocese already short of priests, just because there have been a few problems of communication?

We undertook a real discernment; the community in place asked to be allowed to remain in the diocese; the Bishop suggested entrusting to the congregation the pastoral responsibility of the two parishes of Boniere and Dabakala. It is a pastoral sector, somewhat abandoned, attracting few volunteers, an ideal place for Betharram which was given the mission "to practise the greatest charity in the function of its duties, however limited it might be", "devotion to tasks which others don't want to undertake". Betharram therefore left this country which in reality had become too cute thanks to the national festival of 1979 with running water, electricity, television, tarmac... To strike out into the middle of nowhere!

Continues from page 15: faced constantly by its weaknesses, but bolstered by the courage which comes from the Heart of Christ. I must say that I am proud to talk about my family and happy to see the interest which it provokes. Isn't this one of the first points in inviting anyone wanting to come and share the happiness which we should procure for others. "The Spirit breathes where he wills", it's not by worrying that we will prepare the future, but rather by being trustful and full of happiness. That is my driving force for today.

6

Continues



Family News

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



A word from the Superior General

Praise the Lord, you who seek his face

In this issue

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At the beginning of consecrated life, when a Christian expressed the desire to consecrate himself to the Lord, his spiritual guide would get him to perform a work of reflection on himself; the aim was to help him to get to know himself in truth and to know the one true God revealed in Jesus Christ, so as to be united to Him through the practice of all the merits, attitudes and actions found in the Gospel. These exercises were designated under the biblical heading: *seek the face of the Lord*.

Today, the young men who come to us to share our life generally come with a view of doing something, or of performing some ministry. Generally speaking they want to become priests. That's OK but it's not enough. Diocesan seminaries are there for that. In the wake of the reflexions of Vatican II, we have rediscovered the originality of our charism and we have come to realise that before being priests, we were first of all consecrated, men of God. Some of us who had entered at Betharram to become priests, had the experience of St Michael's charism, they felt perfectly at ease and were better prepared to give themselves to others more generously for the mission.

In some places our community life became difficult and our life style identified us rather with diocesan clergy. It is true that the first companions of St Michael Garicoits were from the Bayonne clergy; their mentality was very diocesan. But there was another reason no less important: our style of formation, which instead of following the tradi-

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10th series, n°39
14th June 2009



tions of consecrated life, was often modelled on the diocesan seminaries.

It is therefore important that right from the start formators should tell the full facts to the youth knocking at our doors: namely that they are in the presence of a school of spirituality which the Church has approved by recognising the Congregation and canonising its Founder, as dear old Fr Mirande used to say. To be a disciple at such a school consists in seeking the face of God, as our Father St Michael Garicoits did and as he teaches us to do.

As soon as our quest for God is taken seriously, then we stumble on ourselves: passions, desires, motivations for our actions, some encouraging us to withdraw into ourselves, others encouraging us to give the best of ourselves to God and to others. Such an experience helps us to understand that the Christian life is a spiritual struggle, not against outside forces but against ourselves in order to reach that *self control* which is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5,23) to deserve and to ask for.

It is only in knowing myself in truth, in accepting myself with all my abilities, my weaknesses and my contradictions, and being ready to surpass myself, that I will be able to pursue my quest of the real face of God, not outside but deep down within myself

It is only in knowing myself in truth, in accepting myself with all my abilities, my weaknesses and my contradictions, and being ready to surpass myself, that I will be able to pursue my quest of the real face of God, not outside but deep down within myself, at the most intimate of myself: a God of love and mercy who accepts me, who wants me and invites me to change; because he wants me to be genuinely free, free to choose what's true, what's good and beautiful for my life, and who wants me to use it and consecrate it to what's best: the love of God and of the brethren.

In view of this, a serious personal accompaniment is fundamental, so that the postulant learns to put a name on the interior movements which prompt him. So, *when the outward good, illusions and deceptions* make their appearance in the course of his spiritual journey, it will be easier for him to make the free choices which will lead him to the fullness of life. This fundamental task which takes place during the postulant's formation, the brother will

BETHARRAM IN IVORY COAST 1959-2009 - 6. Questions.



A feuilleton by Fr Laurent Bacho, SCJ

On 4th August 1977 Fr Jean-Marie Keletigui replaced as bishop of Katiola, Mgr Durrheimer who was the last remaining missionary bishop in the country. The Episcopal ordination took place on 30th October, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Felix Houphouet Boigny. The reception was held in the shade of the mangoes belonging to the seminary. This change is going to require a much greater involvement of all the Christians in the life of the diocese. In the seminary there are signs of discouragement; on arriving in their final year at the Intermediary Seminary of Yopougon, our old pupils don't follow the programmes of the Major seminary but continue their studies at the university, since Public Service was offering interesting places. In September 1978, the Bishop sent Fr Dahiri to continue his studies; he is replaced by Fr Pierre Jacquot, SMA curate in Ferke. Collaboration is excellent with him as with a layman, Denis Coulibaly, lecturer at the seminary for the last three years.

With the new Bishop there is a new attempt at varying the mission; Fr Laurent Bacho is appointed curate in the parish of Katiola, while at the same time being attached to the seminary; he is chaplain to the Young, to the prison and is also responsible for an important agro-industrial complex for the production of sugar cane employing about 1000 workers, most of whom are immigrants from Burkina Faso. In August 1979 there is a new Provincial Superior, Fr Gabriel Verley, who came to fetch Fr Segur at Katiola to make him responsible for vocations! Fr Benat Oyhenart became superior of the community and director of the seminary, while at the same time looking after the finances and keeping on to countless hours of teaching! The new Provincial came to encourage the much reduced community and offer some consolation to Br Jean-Claude; the mission's carpentry workshop having burned down after the festivities of Christmas. Soon there was to be a new-comer to the community Fr Arialdo Urbani, formerly of Thailand. He was to be curate of the parish of Katiola.



2009

JUNE

17	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Victor Torales
17	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean Laclau
22	35 anni di sacerdozio, auguri	P. Tarcisio Giacomelli
23	30 anni di sacerdozio, auguri	P. Angelo Riva
24	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Dominique Etchépare
25	Bom aniversário	Ir. Marcelo Rodrigues da Silva
26	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean Couret, F. Marius Angui
27	Bom aniversário 45 ans de sacerdoce	Ir. Robson Antonio Leite P. Joseph Saint-Pé
28	Bom aniversário Feliz cumpleaños	Ir. Pedro Vladomiro Merlo P. Milciades Ortigoza Acosta
29	60 ans de sacerdoce 60 años de sacerdocio	P. Jean Laclau, P. Paul Fourcade, P. Joseph Mazerolles, P. Jean Gillet, P. Nicolas Ayerza, P. José Gogorza
	55 ans de sacerdoce	P. Mathieu Etchenique, P. Mirco Trusgnach, P. Bertrand Sala, P. Luiz Oteiza
	40 ans de sacerdoce	Mgr Vincent Landel
	40 anni di sacerdozio	P. Enrico Mariani
	35 anni di sacerdozio	P. Giuseppe Franchi
30	Joyeux anniversaire 30 ans de sacerdoce	P. Jean Lambert P. Jean-Marie Ruspil
2	Buon compleanno	P. Massimo Motta
3	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Eugène Lhouerrou
4	Buon compleanno Feliz cumpleaños Joyeux anniversaire	P. Carlo Ruti, P. Enrico Frigerio P. Fulgencio Ferreira P. Hervé Kouamé Kouakou
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 15 years of profession	P. Pierre Caset Br. Andrew Ferris
11	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Arialdo Urbani P. Joseph Ruspil
12	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Roberto Miner

JULY

continue it during the novitiate, until experiencing God's Love becomes the central axe of his life.

It's as if the road had stopped: I was looking for the Lord but only found myself. Once I have accepted myself as I am, and have decided to change with the help of Jesus – I hadn't yet discovered the strange type of guy I am – I must know, love, and follow Jesus passionately, for only He has the key to my full development. I must place in Him all my energy, my passions, my desires – *with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my strength* – to reproduce in myself the sentiments and attitudes of Christ. I must want to be like Him, in a way which transforms: experience relationship with the Father like a son; relationship with others like a brother; and relationship with objects like a master and not like a slave. All this, according to the expression used by St Ignatius: *to love and serve in all things*.

This meeting with Jesus Christ which has also been an experience of grace, must not be allowed to remain at the dazzling and impressions of the beginning; it must be reflected upon so as to absorb what it is worth through the practice of these Christian virtues, and the Betharramite ones especially: charity, humility, gentleness, kindness, and obedience. This is a task which is too often neglected in instructions but also in formation for Religious Life.

This is something which cannot be done on one's own. We have to be accompanied by elder brothers who have been along this route before us and in whom the Congregation has recognised the necessary competence to help others in their quest for God. They are Masters of Formation. Before accompanying us, they have had to struggle with their own demons; before us they have discovered and contemplated the loving face of God; before us, they have tried to be faithful to the Evangelical commandments. What a responsibility for the Congregation: to entrust this mission to men who are capable of assuming it by the seriousness of their life, their vocation, their conduct, their witness and by their preparation!

I must know, love, and follow Jesus passionately, for only He has the key to my full development. I must place in Him all my energy, my passions, my desires to reproduce in myself the sentiments and attitudes of Christ



Some thoughts on compassion and the Sacred Heart of Jesus

When we look at the icon, statue or picture, that is the most common Sacred Heart in our churches and homes, we see a sad looking Jesus pointing to his pierced heart with a hand that shows the holes of the nails of crucifixion. Sometimes the image has the pierced heart being held out to us. In both cases the appeal of the icon is that we meditate on the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross and make a free offering of love to “repay” him for the love he has shown. It is an image straight from the visions of Saint Margaret-Mary Alacoque.

For St Michael, however, the meaning of the Love of God made real to us in Jesus is quite different. Michael was fascinated by the words of Christ *as he came into the world*. It is the moment of incarnation that is the moment when the love of the Sacred Heart is poured out on us: *“Sacrifice and offering you didn’t desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, Here I am – I have come to do your will, O God.” (Heb10:5-7)*

When Christ emptied himself of the direct experience of the Godhead, this was the act that had him “take the place of all victims”. This is because he became what he had not been before - a human person into whom the Divinity had been poured. This outpouring must have been the greatest sacrifice of all *“Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” (Phil 2:6-7)*

This is what Saint Michael calls “annihilation” a very powerful word that unfortunately had bad associations today in a world where “annihilation” has been attached to the notion of total war and genocide. It is probably better to talk about “complete emptying” or “utter self gift”.

This being in a body (see above from Hebrews) makes humanity holy. The exchange of natures, expressed by the

He had no hesitation in going to the big urban parishes to get Christians to reflect on their responsibilities towards their Muslim brothers. There too his words disturb the God-fearing.

Such a life composed of friendly relations, of mutual help, is sustained and enlivened by long nights spent in the Chapel, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Celebrating Mass alone as he often did, he found there the source and dynamism of all his actions. There he found the solidarity with the people. He wanted to live Christ’s life in the midst of all, letting Christ be seen through his whole life and recognising Him in all mankind.

Some time after the Independence of Morocco in 1956 and thanks to the tough life style he led in the mountains, his health broke down. He was hospitalised in Casablanca where he died on 26th April. However he was buried in the village which he loved so much.

During his funeral service, a young Berber read this poem by way of adieu: “The marabout had neither wife nor children; the poor were all his family. He fed those who were hungry. He clothed the naked. He nursed the sick. He defended those who were unjustly treated. He welcomed the homeless. The poor were his family; all mankind were his brothers. May God be merciful to him!”

This poem was written not by some saintly evangelist from Jesus’ time but by a young Muslim of the 20th century! Isn’t it rather like what we are invited to practise in our Religious life as Betharramites, in our following of a certain Jesus!

In these times which are not always easy for the Islamic-Christian dialogue which is a challenge for our times, let’s listen to Fr. Peyriguère: “The real Christian who is authentic to the end and the real Muslim who is authentic to the end, how could they not understand each other and at times walk hand in hand? They own a moral and spiritual treasure in common which they must sometimes feel to be in danger. We must take others as they are because they have no choice but to take us as we are. Even if they haven’t the qualities we would prefer or if they haven’t them as we would like, they have others. There must be variety in life otherwise God will find it very boring, and so would we. Variety in each other’s qualities as in each other’s faults!”

A figure of the Church in Morocco

Father Albert Peyriguère (1883-1959)

This year we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the death of Fr Albert Peyriguère. For the majority of us he will be an unknown quantity. However he is linked to Betharram in some little way. He was originally from Trebons, a village not far from Lourdes and he lived in Morocco from 1926 till his death in 1959. He lived at El Kbab, in the Middle Atlas Mountains. From 1940 onwards, when he used to come to Casablanca he would come to recharge his batteries in our community at the Charles de Foucauld College and meet up with Fr Louis Duboe SCJ, who was from the same village. In any case, is the spiritual impulse generated by Charles de Foucauld so far removed from the “Here I am, for Love’s sake” taught us by Saint Michael?

Ordained priest in 1906 for the diocese of Bordeaux, it was while reading the life of Charles de Foucauld that he discovered what he was looking for, and wanted to try and become one of his disciples. After ministry in Tunisia and in Algeria, in 1926 he made his availability known to the Bishop of Rabat who understood his vocation. He was sent immediately to Taroudant to look after the typhus victims; he caught typhus himself but soon recovered and in 1928 moved to El Kbab, a village in the Middle Atlas Mountains, 35km from Khenifra. And there he stayed until his death.

He would share the life style of this Berber tribe, acting as nurse to look after the countless patients who would come to him or who he would visit in their nomadic camp sites. Thanks to the generosity of countless benefactors he could nurse, dress, and feed the population who had little to live on. At the same time he worked so as to have a better knowledge of the Berber culture. He defended the rights of the people against the protectoral administration and was several times threatened with deportation. But he always maintained his freedom of speech so as to defend the poor.

early Greek Fathers, as “God became man so that man could become God” (Iraeneus, Ad. Vers. Hears. 7,9) and at, for example, 2 Peter 1:4 in scripture leads to the notion of THEOSIS or DIVINISATION. At Colossians 2:9-10 we read: “For in Christ all the fullness of God lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is Head over every power and authority.” This *kenosis* or emptying is the great act of self giving love that characterises St Michael’s view of the Sacred Heart. It is completely linked to INCARNATION.

Christ’s life as a human person on Earth was an experience of suffering when compared to his experience of the Godhead. He joined us in the human condition of weakness and frailty – the very thing that leads us to suffer.

Perhaps at this point we should remind ourselves of the word “compassion” – the Latin *passus* connects with suffering. In English “compassion” means “suffering with”. To show compassion does not mean showing sympathy as if one were a powerful person to somebody weaker than oneself. Rather, it will always mean sharing or participating in the suffering of others.

Many years ago a wise Betharramite priest showed me how to do this. I was a student at the time. What had happened was that a boy of 16 had been electrocuted at his place of work – he had a part-time job to earn pocket money - by a faulty floor cleaning machine. He was a bright, gifted and good-looking person who was about to start on what would have probably been a successful academic career. And all this was wiped out in a moment. I was asked to accompany the priest on an urgent visit to the bereaved family. “What do we do?” I asked. “What can we say to them?” I still thought at that time that it was our job to fix things, to put them right.

“Nothing”, was the answer I got. “There is nothing we can do. But we have to be there with them and we have to be completely honest. If somebody asks why it happened, the only thing we can say is that we don’t know.”

We spent two hours with that family. Sometimes we just let the anguished words find their home in our ready listening ears. Sometimes we just held the hand of the boy's mother and sister. The only thing to do was to abandon oneself into God's hands and be there with the people, hoping that we were some sort of help.

This is a small version of the very large thing that Jesus did by coming among us at all. The Incarnation IS the Sacred Heart and it IS the work of God's compassion for humanity. As I write these words in Bethlehem it occurs to me that for us Betharramites, consecrated and lay, the icon of the Sacred Heart that should inspire us is not the famous St Margaret Mary statue but rather that of the Baby Jesus lying defenceless in the Christmas crib.

Colin Fortune, S.C.J.

Father Etchecopar wrote... to the Fathers and Brothers in America. 18th June 1886

Dear Fathers and Brothers in Jesus Christ, it is with great consolation that in this month I am offering your hearts to the Divine Heart of our good Master. I can recall the outbursts of fervour from the spirit of our beloved Founder when he recalled our special consecration to this adorable Heart, and our solemn promise to love it, to imitate it and to spread its cult and the reign of its virtues. I can imagine our Founder in Heaven, intensifying his prayers to obtain for each one of us a growing faithfulness to this wonderful vocation and one so appropriate to present day needs.

Let's think of it, dear Fathers and Brothers. Let's often look at our badge, then examine the depths of our hearts and study the feelings which govern our words and actions; and if we discover any traces of similarity with the Modal given us by God, and chosen by us, let's thank him from whom every gift comes; above all the gift of union with the heart and love of our God. If, on the other hand, we notice a struggle between the standard and the standard bearer, let's pray fervently to the Divine Chief who is leading us, to give us a new heart and a steadfast spirit, worthy of him and of our engagements.

ciated seeing the results of the Diocesan Synod which was in preparation at the time when I was leaving for Ivory Coast: parishes clustered and full of life, priests who have aged and a few younger ones full of enthusiasm for the mission, and above all a good number of laity ready to play an active part in the mission.

You have been actively engaged with the laity, as General Councillor in charge of the laity or in the parish, how do you see our sharing the mission with them? - There's something which means a lot to me, because it is capital for today and tomorrow. I was very happy to be able, this year, to accompany the group "Me Voici" from Limoges; It was with this group that we began our first faltering steps towards the creation of the Fraternity. There was a feeling that they needed a fresh relaunch to carry on with a group where they gather strength from their sharing on the spirit of St Michael and Fr Etchecopar. I was pleased to see the way they get involved in the life of the church in Limoges. They really depend on each one of us to be "brothers" with them in the discernment from day to day what keeps us faithful to the Lord's call, to be men of prayer, who are vulnerable but trusting, who are full of hope of a happiness received as a gift. With us they are engaged in our history through a call from the Heart of Christ. I have a feeling that there is a need in the Church today of a new relationship between priests and laity, the sort which new communities are putting into practice. For us Betharramites, in the spirit of Fr Etchecopar with his family, it is natural. Let's not be afraid of going as far as possible in mutual recognition, sharing of our prayer, and a real fraternity.

How are you feeling at the end of this special year? - I simply want to say, without too much ado, the happiness which is mine to have been called by the Lord who has led me to where I am today. I have discovered our family as a place of apostolic life, rich in so many different ways,

In memoriam

Jordan - On the morning of June 4th the mother of Fr Boutros, Rofail Alhijazin, of our community in Zarka, died. Let's pray for the repose of her soul and for the consolation of her family.

France - Father Jean Tipy died on 5th June at Betharram, at the age of 87. Fr Tipy had been head of Notre Dame School. We shall pray for him and will pay tribute to him in our next NEF.

great pillars Paul and Augustine. I was equally amazed at the activity of human intelligence to be creator with the Spirit. I even felt a certain joy at being intelligent!!! This isn't just an intellectual load that I am carrying back, but a renewed longing to restore better what has been given me.

Thanks to the parishioners in Pau, you even went on a pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Paul. What aspects moved you most? - That was another great grace of this year: I had dreamt of it and the parishioners of the Holy Family realized it for me. A cruise is wonderful, but accompanied by outstanding teachings, Easter celebrations, and exciting visits, it's out of this world altogether... And in this Year of St Paul I must admit that St Paul has become for me a wonderful companion telling us how best to be captivated by Christ. Following in his footsteps helps enormously in reading his Epistles with images before one's eyes. On the spot I understood how he wanted to take the roads in the Mediterranean region so as to announce what he had discovered of God's plan of Love. He was a man of triple cultures – Jewish, Greek, and Latin – and so found the right words to announce Jesus Christ. And he retreated before nothing to fulfil his mission. What a man!!!

This year you also renewed contact with the Limoges community where you lived from 1970 to 1981. How did you like being back? - After 28 years I found Limoges a totally different community; the numbers are down from 15 to 5; another house and not the buildings of Ozanam School; finally the mission – each one has his appointed ministry in the diocese. I found all this a great change. This year I also saw the changes in the Congregation, the ordination of a new Bishop, the “Ostensions”; these are ceremonies during which each village commemorates the saint who founded its church. I also caught up with past pupils from Ozanam, however my part time in Paris each week didn't let me be sufficiently involved. I also appre-

With Benedict XVI, Pilgrims of peace in a war-torn country

12th May, Jerusalem. Early in the morning, we caught the bus for Jerusalem. Contrary to all expectations, the travelers are not jostling each other at the station. A few minutes later, anybody would have thought that there was a general strike in the town: few private cars in the streets, shops shut, empty streets, the military everywhere. We set out for Gethsemani where the celebration is to be held. A police barrage obliged us to change route. As we were skirting the wall, another armed band ordered us to stop and let a stream of armed vehicles pass heading at top speed towards the ancient city: the Papal escort was on its way to the Mosque of Omar for a visit before the celebration of the day.

Once the road-block had been lifted, we made our way down towards Gethsemani; finally after a succession of electronic controls, we at last reached the place for the celebration. The Mass was scheduled for 16h30 so we had five hours to wait. Under a hot sun, the faithful are slow to answer the call, no doubt because of the excessive number of controls. From all sides of the valley, there were several armed groups controlling and following the slightest move... *How can anyone be expected to pray in the middle of all those machines?* I wondered.

In his opening address, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Mgr Fouad Toual, spoke out, without mincing his words, against the injustice, the occupation, and against all forms of violence in the birth place of Christ. His speech was loudly applauded in the midst of the total indifference of the security there present. Benedict XVI launched an appeal in favour of peace and an end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people. Mass continued in the presence of this small but fervent assembly. Rendezvous in Bethlehem next morning!

13th May, Bethlehem (the novitiate living quarters). Pressure is easier especially as the celebration is taking place on Nativity Square: we only need a few minutes to reach it

After his visit to Cameroon and Angola in March, Pope Benedict XVI made a visit to the Holy Land in May. The African novices from Bethlehem and their Novice Master assisted at the celebrations in Judea. Reporting.

on foot. All entrances were shut by the Bethlehem police who proceeded with the usual controls of identity, but without the deployment of materiel of their opposite number in Jerusalem. Security is to be congratulated for its discretion. Very quickly, the faithful invaded Nativity Square.

Faces were radiant with joy. We were able to admire the traditional robes worn by the young Palestinian ladies. It is a day for feasting and the atmosphere was conducive to prayer. As at Jerusalem, the Patriarch opened the celebration by maintaining the same tone as the day before. In view of all the misfortunes effecting the Holy Land, he demanded more justice, peace and love, and pleaded for understanding among the different religions. In his homily, the Pope expressed his support for the creation of a free Palestinian state. Later on, when he left the Square it was under the applause of a crowd wild with joy.

For us novices this visit was a source of pride, the pride of belonging to the universal Church. The Good News must be brought to all nations and our presence here on this soil is the reason why we want to consecrate our whole being to following Jesus Christ. May the Lord help intelligences to understand, hearts to love and wills to be ready to act for justice, peace and the development of the Holy Land.

N^o da Serge, novice

An Indian in Thailand

Our family of Betharram gave me a wonderful opportunity to live an experience in Thailand, as a part of preparation for my final vows. Though it is a Buddhist country there is harmony. There is no problem between the religions. People are very kind and hospitable. First three weeks, I stayed with our young brothers in the formation house at Sampran. Million thanks to all our benefactors who helped us to build such a beautiful house for the training of our future missionaries. I was teaching English to our young brothers and planting new plants in the campus. I saw a sense of belongingness and the spirit of family in our formation house.

5 MINUTES WITH... Fr Jacky

Nef - You have just had a sabbatical year. What does this mean for you? - I have finished a theology course on Creation thanks to which I have discovered the importance of the 7th day where God offers us his gifts freely and the possibility of giving thanks by becoming creatures with and like Him. For me a Sabbatical year is a moment for letting all my powers have a rest – powers which have been busy all along a very active lifetime, accepting other things to take their place, things neglected in the day to day routine of living – a bit like a piece of land left fallow. Vaguely, I felt the need of it so as not to exhaust the foundations of my reserves, intellectual but also spiritual, and satisfy my curiosity to have a better understanding of our post modern world, and to discover the right language to announce the Good News to the men and women of today.

Why did you choose the Centre Sevres and what studies did you do there? - The Centre Sevres assembles the Jesuit Universities in Paris. The Ignatian context interested me. The chance of fitting a Year's Formation into a free choice programme and being accompanied by a tutor suited me perfectly. The lectures which I followed were all about Man from different angles: "theological anthropology", "a psychoanalysis of self", "what to do about the feeling of guilt?" "St Paul's writings", "The Fathers of the Church", "the twilight of 17th century mystiques", "the Confessions of St Augustine" etc. 33 weeks at the rate of 10 hours of lectures a week and the personal work in the reference library. I rejuvenated from being in contact with the students, including wandering from room to room, long train journeys, fraternisation on school benches, the different conferences, the possibility of going to see a film, visit a museum... I made a fresh discovery of reading, enthusiasm at discovering astonishment at the extent of Christian thought in the course of history, with the two



Meeting with Fr Jacky Moura; from Paris to Limoges via Corinth, this 63 year old religious looks back on a year not quite like any other!

IVORY COAST
 2009
A portrait for a project (2) Yamoussoukro

Yamoussoukro, Institut National Polytechnique: something unusual in Africa, is a grouping of High Schools and Superior Institutes. The ultra-modern outlines of the south wing stand out against the sky of the rising sun. Fr Serge leaves his room at the University, and strides towards the lecture hall where he is going to say Mass. Who are his parishioners? Students like himself, only a bit younger. Every morning a little community gathers for Mass. Nothing like the congregations on Saturday night (from 400 – 500 young people fill the gym or the amphi), except the essential: the Real Presence which offers itself and which renews everything.

Serge Braga was born 31 years ago on the banks of the Lagoon, opposite Abidjan. In 2007, after eight years of priestly studies, the young religious got down to his profession studies once more. He has been a priest for a year, but Fr Serge knows the pressure of exams; with his generation he is the bearer of the hopes, the sufferings and challenges of an Ivory Coast which has difficulty in getting out of the crisis. But what is he doing here?

Fr Serge is not chaplain to the INP. And yet in the midst of this disorientated youth he is witness to other values. He is not there simply to get a diploma in Superior Technology. And yet he is working hard to keep up with the rhythm, and to be fully capable for his new mission: to direct the training centre for motor mechanics which Betharram intends to open in Adiapodoume.

It's a far cry from the great colleges and traditional networks, yet this initiative is in direct line of the educational traditions of the Congregation: respond to the needs of the moment, educate the individual, and be of service to their dignity. A good formation will not be a luxury in a sector where apprentices are often exploited. Not to mention the financial contribution that such a workshop could bring to the religious community. The cost of such a project is around €140.000 spread over 4 years. To launch the project, Fr Serge and his future mechanics are only waiting for a helping hand: ours!

Jean-Luc Morin,SCJ

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North Thailand is the place where most of our missionaries are working. So I was eagerly waiting to come over here. The day after my arrival, under the guidance of Fr. Tidkham, I started to travel to the Burma border (Maetawar) where our Fathers Peter and Arun are working. During my journey my mind went back to my own parish. As my grandfather was accompanying the missionaries, I had a chance to visit two stations situated in the mountains. Betharramite Fathers are doing a wonderful job! People who live in these mountains are very simple and receptive, with very colorful dresses. I had a good time with the children. After the Mass, as Fr. Tidkham asked me to speak a few words, I concluded by saying: "Jesus loves you."

I came to celebrate the Palm Sunday in Huay Tong where Fr. Chaiyot and Fr. Caset are working among the Karen tribes in the mountains. On Sunday everything was set for the Eucharistic celebration. The singing was so glorious. The children attending the catechism camp added color to the celebration. Coming back to Chiang Mai, I attended the chrisma mass in the cathedral. The outgoing bishop Mgr Surasarang celebrated the holy mass and I had a privilege to meet all our fathers in our house. Really it was a union between two generations, the old and young.

On the Holy Thursday, Fr. Chanchai took me with him to the Maipon centre for the Easter celebration. Again mountains, another climb. We celebrated the Lord's Supper in a village and stayed in the village. The people were very glad to see a new face. On Good Friday, we traveled to another village. Twice we were in danger. The jeep couldn't move because it was raining heavily. At last we reached the village where 16 adults were baptized during the Holy mass. After the mass sweets and Easter eggs were distributed. Then I stayed in the Maipon centre with Fr. Rodriguez who is working in this mission last 18 fruitful years.

After this experience with the Karen tribe, I came to Ban Pong. The community welcomed me with big smile. Here our mission is among the Akka tribe, through the Holy Family Catholic Centre for the empowerment of the women. I see a family atmosphere here. I have a great appreciation for this

John Britto Irudhayam, SCJ

centre, specially Suvaraphorn for her dedication and sacrifice. She helps the women in many ways, as well as Fr. Pensa. Last missionary from Europe, he is a great missionary as well as a visionary. Then, I began my third missionary journey with Fr. Pensa. Again high mountains and more climbs. Fr. Pensa told me that he used to walk on these mountains to meet people and attend their spiritual needs. I salute him for his commitment. I draw lot of inspiration from him...

So, Church in Thailand is young and vibrant. It is going forward in building the Kingdom of God. And our family, being a part of Kingdom works hard to bring the same happiness to others. Betharram I am proud of you.



Saint Michael
Region

BIRD'S EYE VIEW



Fr Etchecopar
Region

Vicariate of North Italy

The art of spirituality ■ At the end of April there appeared a new book written in tandem by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini and Fr Francesco Radaelli entitled *Allez au Large*. Eucharistic et dynamism ecclesial". It consists of meditations by the former Archbishop of Milan illustrated with works by our former Superior General. This is what I would call a happy meeting between biblical wisdom and an artistic sense.

Vicariate of Centre-Africa

A first ■ Betharram is going to have its first Central-African priest: Fr Narcisse Zaolo will be ordained on 21st June in the parish of the Sacred Heart in Barberati. Keep him in our prayers.

Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay

Great celebrations (1) ■ On 16th May at Barracas Guido Garcia was ordained priest and his brother Sebastian was ordained deacon. At 19h there were crowds in the Sacred Heart Basilica. Mgr Luis Fernandez, vicar Episcopal in Buenos Aires and Mgr Corrado Mosconi (auxiliary from Santiago del Estero) concelebrated with 15 priests. The father and sisters of the two brothers were very touched as was surely their mother already in heaven. The 80 metres long of the nave weren't enough to hold all those wanting to congratulate Guido and Sebastian. The feast carried on into the night, and included singing by a renowned Christian singer. On 17th May Guido celebrated his first Mass assisted by his brother. Deo Gratias!

Vicariate of Brazil

Evangelise by singing ■ More than 1400 assisted at the concert given by the Catholic pop group "Anjos de Resgaste" on 3rd May at Passa Quatro. Fr Jair and the parish council had had this initiative, the idea being the evangelisation of the young by the young. If Betharram has solid and serious vocations in Brazil, there is always the idea of connecting with the youth without missing out on the essential: Jesus, centre and Lord of our lives.

Vicariate of India

Great celebrations (2) ■ Frs Enakius and Stervin were ordained priests, the 1st by Mgr Peter Remigius and the 2nd by Mgr Yvon Ambrose, on the 23rd and 24th May in their parishes in Tamil Nadu: 2 days of popular festivities: the streets were decorated, bands, dances from the children, celebrations both beautiful and popular. "The southern coast of India is full of the sons of fishermen evangelised by St Francis Xavier. Thanks to such celebrations it is touching to see how their faith has remained lively. A *real experience of joy in the Spirit* said our Superior General. And as Fr Arul wrote afterwards: "these two ordinations are a blessing for the communities in India and for the entire Congregation."

Vicariate of Thailand

Ban Garicoits: the great day has arrived ■ After huge preparations, the new Betharram Seminary was ready for the blessing by Cardinal Michael Michai Kitbunchu on the 16th May. Greeting the Archbishop of Bangkok, Fr Chan told the story of the construction and reminded those present of the wealth of good will which made the whole thing possible. Then we went in procession, and with song, to the chapel for the Eucharistic celebration. In his address Mgr Kitbunchu called on all to put "me voici" into their lives, following in this the example of the missionaries who had worked so hard to increase the presence of the Church in Thailand, then he blessed the altar and the tabernacle. The day came to a close with a big outdoor picnic. It was a huge success thanks to the excellent organisation by the community and to the support of voluntary helpers and friends of Betharram, in Thailand and elsewhere.



Blessed Miriam
Region

OF THE CONGREGATION