

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.net



On the schedule of the Superior General

At the Generalate House (Rome)

14-20 January
Betharramite Formation Team

21-27 January
Council of the Congregation
(General Council + Regional Superiors)

28 January-3 February
Commission Rule of Life



Father Etcheccopar wrote... In his personal notes, Christmas 1855

Jesus is asking the world for a little corner where he can come into the light. But his own received him not. (John 1, 11). Why? Because they are vain, pleasure seeking, and greedy. Even if the world had offered its palaces to Jesus, Jesus would not have wanted them because he is humble, mortified and poor...

Around the crib are the humble and simple folk, Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds. If we want to be admitted in such holy company we too will have had to practise these same virtues.

If we want Jesus to be born in our hearts they must have the same qualities as were to be found in the crib, to be stripped of all affections for creatures and dead to all wicked inclinations.

*What are we waiting for to offer our God a place worthy of him? What are we waiting for to imitate his example?
Oh Jesus, make my heart like unto thine!*



Family News

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



**A word from the
Superior General**

What's new in the Rule of Life

In this issue

- Page 4: Advent, mystery of Love
- Page 6: Elements of a Betharramite Spirituality for the Laity
- Page 9: Bird's eye view of the Congregation
- Page 10: Centenary Celebrations at Droitwich
- Page 11: 5mn with Fr. Shaju
- Page 15: Betharram in Ivory Coast (11)

Forty years ago in 1969, the Extraordinary General Chapter, requested by the Council Vatican II approved the Rule of Life. It had been preceded in 1968 by the Interprovincial Commission; meeting in Bel Sito it had produced a remarkable piece of work as a result of the Consultation of all the religious, put in motion by the then Superior General, Fr Joseph Mirande. The complete documentation concerning this is to be found in the NEF of that period.

The final synthesis, based on all the materiel of that time, was excellent. Betharramite identity was well defined as our way of being disciples of Jesus: *Our specific mission is to reproduce and manifest the movement of the Incarnate Word saying to his Father: "Ecce Venio" submitting to his divine will for the redemption of mankind.* (R.L. 1969, 2, 12). The reflection in the first chapters was focused on three points: spirituality, community and the apostolate. When it came to characterizing our identity, the contribution from Fr J. Mateo was decisive.

Taking advantage of the restructuring of the part concerning the Government, the commission for the revision of the Rule of Life, put in place by Fr Radaelli, judged that the work done in 1969 ought to be improved with several contributions: about the post-conciliar thinking on consecrated life and elements concerning our charismatic identity which were brought to light during the session in Betharram, organised by Fr Grech in 1985.

The changes in the chapter headings already witness to the vocabulary settled on in the course of the years. *I. The Charism of the Betharram Family. II. The Mission of the*

107th year
10th series, n° 44
14th December 2009



Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. III Consecration through the vows. IV. The Betharramite life of prayer. V. Fraternal life in community. VI Our service in the Church.

The Manifesto has been reproduced in its entirety. This text which is considered to be fundamental is a good expression of our charismatic identity. The paragraph, omitted in the previous Rule, referred to Jesus Christ as *an appeal, a model and a means*, but made explicit the real circumstances for the foundation of the Congregation: namely the de-Christianization of the masses and the disobedience of the clergy, two painful realities which struck St Michael.

The expression Sacred Heart is to be found with greater insistence, both to qualify the identity of Jesus as *the generous surge of the Heart of Jesus, the Incarnate Word* (art. 2,9) and to name the Congregation (112, 113, 114, 30). The three dimensions are added: spiritual, community and missionary as well as the dimension of consecration (art. 4,6) The Betharramite mission is thus given the art of “procuring for others a similar happiness” (11), something on which much emphasis was placed these last years.

By using quotations there was an effort to include the theology of the religious Life after Vatican II, a reflection on the charism with new quotations from St Michael, Fr Etchecopar and even extracts from certain General Chapters, e.g. the 1999 chapter, article 18 and the letter from John-Paul II to the Superior General for the bi-centenary of the birth of St Michael Garicoits in 1997 (124). In this way they wanted to show how the identity of the Congregation was constructed down through the years.

Chapters I and II which express well our identity and mission have been left as they are, simply bringing the vocabulary up to date. Chapters IV and V have hardly been touched, for want of time. Little differences have been introduced by the use of some quotations. Evangelical charity is included through the use of a quotation from NMI 43: *the spirituality of communion*. (96)

The articles on the vows have been retained but the contents have been recast, after the remark according to which if they

tion and for the horizon ahead of us. “*Let the Magnificat be your favourite canticle*” – our Founder’s conviction is ours! We appreciate to work of Providence; during the bad moments we felt the hand of God. For several years our community had been reduced to two members; but the boldest decisions had been taken during these moments. All along those years our commitment has been fraternally accompanied by various general and provincial superiors who supported and encouraged us, inviting us to be daring!

The formation received in the congregation makes us sensitive to the “constant germination” of the Inner Master, the Holy Spirit; He is at work in all cultures and religions but often in a specific way in the heart of the poor; we believe it.

Sharing our spirituality with the laity who is close to us in the fraternity *Ne Me* encourages us to deepen the wealth that has been passed on by our Founder and the whole congregation. A day will come when we can also share our mission, taking into account our different states of life. We are a small congregation, used to working in the local church; we are not focused on our specific works and we are very committed to collaborating with the Bishops, Priests and Laity.

We are confident that our charism and spirituality are particularly suited to the Ivory Coast: the presentation of a God of love, full of tenderness, allows Christians to grow in filial trust in the Lord.

We are sure that everyone has in him “a secret spring of love” that allows him to lead a dignified life and bring happiness and joy of life all around him.

A bright future awaits Betharram in Ivory Coast if each religious deepens his roots in the “Here I am” of the heart of Jesus; if he is more daring in the mission, and builds a greater brotherhood in the community. Forward March, towards the centenary celebrations!

sent, one to Argentina and the other to England, Fr Antonia Canavesi and Aurelio Riva were appointed to Adiapodoume. The mutiny which divided the country seriously affected our communities which received a fraternal message from the Provincial Council.

In Summer 2003, delegates from the laity in the St Michael Garicoits region gathered in Adiapodoume; they adopted a life project promoting the complementarity of vocations of the laity and religious, expressing a common desire to demonstrate the impulse of the Incarnate Word in different ways. In September, the regional novitiate opened its doors in Bethlehem with Fr Laurent Bacho, novice master and three Africans and one Italian.

After the General Chapter of Mat 2005 which saw the election of Fr Gaspar Fernandez Perez, Fr Jean-Dominique Delgue was appointed to Pibrac; Fr Laurent Bacho became master of the scholastics in Adiapodoume, where he joined Fr Herve and Fr Theophile. In February 2006, they welcomed the Superior General for his first visit; he was pleased to see that the community had remained in Dabakala during the trial, that formators were accompanying young people, which seriously followed their spiritual journey.

The big news of 2007 is the opening of a third Ivorian community in Yamoussoukro with Fr Jean-Marie Ruspil, Br Serge, newly ordained deacon, a novice and a seminarian. Another change occurred on January 1st 2009: the provincial delegation of Ivory coast became Ivory coast Vicariate, one of six in the St Michael Garicoits region, with Fr Jean-Marie Ruspil as Superior, and Fr Graziano Sala as regional Superior.



■ In Conclusion ■

Thanksgiving flows from our hearts; we are amazed at the progress made during the past 50 years by our congrega-

were touched it would have been lacking in depth. Therefore they tried to improve it with all the post-conciliar reflection, not forgetting the Trinitarian and community dimension of each vow. Furthermore there was particular emphasis on love motivating the three vows, as our Father St Michael taught us: *For love's sake rather than for any other motive.*

The title of Chapter VI is: *Our service in the Church.* Previously Chapter VII was entitled *Apostolic Activities.* The new version is improved by the statement that the witness of fidelity to our consecrated life forms the very essence of our mission. Another addition – the mention of the two priorities namely *the service of the local church* (114) and *presence to any one caught up in the different types of poverty* (115-116). New spheres of activity are also pointed out: *the pastoral care of the youth* (117) *pastoral care of families* (121) *animation and spiritual accompaniment* (124), *the promotion of the individual* (125). The end of this chapter is also new: *criteria for discerning activities* (130 – 135).

The old chapter VI was entitled *Formation.* it is now part of Chapter VII under the title *Betharramite Formation.* This change in the order of the chapters seems logical; our missionary activities are part of our lives. Once our lives have been presented in their entirety, then we can tackle the formation necessary for that life. This chapter must be read with reference to the *Ratio formationis.* On this basis different stages have been added: *vocational accompaniment-discernment and postulancy,* concerning all the realities of the Congregation. Finally there is a review of *the time of temporary vows, final profession and the different types of formation for the religious-priests and religious brothers.*

The formula for vows has been improved by the introduction of certain expressions dear to our Founder, giving it a special cachet (152). Among the special devotions for the Congregation are: *solemnity of the 14th September, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, St Michael Garicoits including the man who was his disciple, the Servant of God, Fr Auguste Etchecopar, St Jeanne Elizabeth Bichier des Ages, Blessed Mary de Jesus Crucified who had a great affection for our family* (92).





Advent, Mystery of Love

We are in the season of Advent, the prelude to the Lord's Christmas. It is the eternal mystery of God who, through love for us, seeks us out rather than let us seek him, and comes out himself to meet us. This is a truth which we must never tire of proclaiming: "*God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son* (Jn 3,16). Or "*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.*" (Jn 1,14). What other name could be given to this attitude of God except "the mystery of Love"?

As he contemplated this mystery of a God who made himself so small and who lies hidden in the heart of humanity, St Michael was overcome with amazement. We too who are his disciples must never tire of being amazed at the sight of so much love. For the world which God loved so much is us. God loves our life, and wants to make it ever more important and generous. To achieve such an aim he became one of us, and chose to stand by us. This is the unexpected and immense good news which Advent brings us.

When we stop to meditate on this mystery, we are often driven by what we ought to be doing, on the commitments to be honoured, or ways to be followed. On closer scrutiny, the centre of our thoughts is us and our activities. On the contrary, Advent invites us to give pride of place to the loving action of God, what he has done and continues to do for us and for the whole of mankind.

Our Lady is the perfect model of such an Advent. After the visit from the Word, she sets off for the home of her cousin Elizabeth, who after meeting her Lord, sings with Mary the praises of Him who has done wonderful deeds.

And yet there is something more in God's loving attitude: with the fullness of time, he takes flesh and sets up his tent in our midst, to make himself known and to reveal his face. His arrival is meant to fulfil the longings which are ever present in the heart of mankind; as the psalmist says: *it is your face, O Lord that I seek; hide not your face from me.* (Ps 27, 8-9) Such an experience lends meaning to the whole of existence.

20th in St Bernard's Church by Mgr Landel. On September 14th three young Ivorians began their novitiate with the new novice master, Fr Jean-Dominique Delgue.

After the Jubilee of 2000, the educational form Tshanfeto, (*Get Up* in Ebrie language), open its doors; this is a centre for the agricultural education of youth who want to settle in their own village for gardening and raising livestock. The whole province is involved in this project, supported by the CCFD (Catholic Committee against Hunger and for development)

On September 11th 2001, there was an assembly of all the religious with the provincial Superior, Fr Benat Oyhenart, and which developed his life project: Betharram in Ivory Coast became a Provincial delegation, with Fr Kouame Kouakou Herve as first Superior.

▀ 13. Enlargements ▀

By early Autumn 2001, 18 young people were living in the formation house, including four professed members and four novices. The Fraternity Ne Me is growing after three retreats organised for the laity (those preached by Fr Gaston HIAL, *Work joyfully for God's work* attracted great interest) Dabakala has never been so well served with three religious-priests who were also in charge of a chapel called "Emmaus" as well as a project for a girls' hostel. In May 2002, the Superior General, Fr Francesco Radaelli, encouraged the young provincial delegation; there is a plan to build a community house in Dabakala, plans for helping the "Mother Province" of France and for the renewal of the formators team are discussed. Some projects will be lost with the serious socio-political crisis of September 19th.

Meanwhile the new academic year was accompanied by several changes: Fr Laurent Bacho took a sabbatical year, two professed members preparing for final vows were

professional, we called on an agricultural engineer from the Agricultural College in Purpan (Toulouse)

▀ 12. The First Fruits ▀

Betharram advanced with fragility; in 1998, Fr Jacky Moura, provincial Superior, asked Fr Gabriel Verley to become superior of the Home for the aged of Betharram. Fr Jean-Marie returned to France for a refresher course. Two fathers joined the formation house: a newly retired religious, Fr. Jean Couret and Fr Jean-Dominique Delgue, former provincial bursar.

September 14th, 1999 remains engraved in the heart of Betharram on both sides of the Mediterranean: Br Gilbert Koffi Kouman and Br Herve Kouame Kouakou were the first Africans to make their vows in the congregation, in the hands of the Superior General, Fr Francesco Radaelli, in the presence of the Provincial Superior, Fr Jacky Moura. Fr Francesco invited all religious to make of their whole life, “the liturgy of beauty”. At this celebration, participated the first postulant from Central African Republic, sent to our community for formation.

The end of the year is marked by the military putsch on December 24th. The difficult political situation is coupled with the accelerated turnover of staff; Fr Paulo returned to Brazil, Fr Jean Couret arrived at Dabakala; we moved out from Boniere for a more significant presence in Dabakala; Fr Benat Oyhénart was appointed Provincial Superior at Easter 2000.

For Betharram, the year 200 is also a year of rejoicing; Mgr Vincent Landel, young Coadjutor Archbishop of Rabat, ordained Fr Kouame Kouakou Herve as a priest in his hometown of Bengassou; Br Luc Kouadio-Martial made his final vows on August 15th in Adiapodoume in the hands of Fr Miguel Martinez Fuentes, General Bursar; Br Gilbert Koffi Kouman was ordained deacon on August

The Son of God, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is the name which contains and fulfils this route. *God sent his only begotten Son into the world so that we might live by him.* (1 Jn 4,9)

Thanks to St Michael, we rediscover the art of contemplating the mystery of God’s love for man. In the presence of the Child, the shepherds were able to “see” and “accept” the divine message of thanks and of peace to all mankind. Similarly, today man wants us to show him that same love and to bring him the same message of joy, hope and peace. That is the commitment which we must honour: through our life and our words, to tell of the eternal love which God bestows on his creation.

Together with the mystery of the Incarnation, the season of Advent questions us on our availability in the service of our neighbour. *Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will...Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.* (Lk 1,38) Here is the attitude of obedience, or rather the total submitting of one’s self to God, and the assurance that only He does “great things”. Consequently we are invited to shoulder the burdens and expectations of our neighbour, as men full of hope and capable of transmitting it.

The season of Advent is a precious time: it is the memory of the past (what we have been, unfaithful, far from the Lord), a celebration of the present (the joy of feeling that we have been saved and redeemed by the Lord), and anticipation of eternal life (remembering by our life style that we have no permanent dwelling here below, but that we are on our way to our eternal dwelling place). It is the measure of the consecration which is fulfilled totally in Mary, and which is a constant call to revive our faith, to be available, and to let God’s mystery touch us. As we welcome the invitation of John the Baptist to “produce fruits of repentance”, let us place ourselves in the school of Mary of Nazareth: let us receive and contemplate the gift of God’s infinite Love, the God who never ceases to love us. He is the first to love and asks for nothing in return. In a word, he loves... and he freely loves each one of us.

Angelo Riva,SCJ

Elements of a Betharramite Spirituality for the Laity

One of the resolutions of the General Chapter of 2005 concerning the laity was to identify some common points of interest highlighted by all groups. A questionnaire was sent out and with the contributions received a summary text was drafted. Fr Enrico Frigerio, the general councillor for the laity, brings this work to everyone's attention.

The person of Jesus: His life, his relationships, his actions, his words, his Resurrection

Jesus Christ in the Mystery of the Incarnation, the whole of his life in order to follow his example *and live the immensity of love in the limits of one's position, readily, unreservedly, irrevocably, out of love rather than by any other reason.*

Jesus Christ, annihilated and obedient, the beloved Son of the Father.

Jesus Christ in his generous impulse of his Heart, saying to the Father: *Here I am to do your will*, and surrendering himself to save mankind.

Jesus Christ, known, loved, interiorised, witnessed, proclaimed following the example of Saint Michael Garicoits.

To build and live the ecclesial communion

United with Christ from the day of the Baptism and fostering this union with prayer, with the Eucharist and by practising the human, Christian and betharramite virtues: humility (being simple and unassuming), obedience, gentleness, dedication, charity.

Live the values of the lay vocation. Live the joy of knowing and loving Jesus and of being his disciple and missionary.

Build the communion by living one's vocation as complementary to the betharramites religious and to other vocations in the Church.

Live also the value of the ecclesial communion in one's family, domestic Church, and with other families.

Set up groups of families of people willing to live this communion starting from the spirituality of Saint Michael Garicoits ready to transform the surroundings where one lives.

Sharing the mission of the Church

Through a fearless witness where one lives, this witness will stir up irresistible questions such as: *Why are they like this?* (E.N. 21)

Live in a mature way one's faith by practicing the discernment of the will of God in different situations one

BETHARRAM IN IVORY COAST 1959-2009



- 11. Maturity -

In October 1994 Adiapodoume was almost full up: 7 temporary professed, 3 novices, 5 postulants and 7 candidates for two formation Fathers who were also in charge of the Parish! In the Djimini sector, there was no shortage of work either. The annual retreat in September has become an important moment for the young and the not so young; in September the retreat was given by Fr Giacomo Spini, General Assistant, in charge of Formation, on the spirituality of the Founder "with great heart and willing spirit". He also received the First Profession of the 3 novices on 29th September, the same day as the blessing of the community Chapel. The Chapel would become the centre of the community, the place where each one could place his hand in God's hand, as is evident from the stained glass window designed by Fr Radaelli.

During the pastoral year 96-97 there was general mobilisation of the communities for the celebration of the bicentenary of the birth of our Founder; there radio and television broadcasts, a cassette of songs by the "St Michael Garicoits", various publications, before the celebrations to be held at Boniere and Adiapodoume. That year we were able to invite any of the laity who wanted to share our spirituality. There were several favourable replies; those associated with the laity formed the "Ne Me Fraternity" (*Here I am*) in the local language.

Great efforts were made for the creation of agricultural plantations with hevea, rubber plantations, palm trees and kola trees; some 30 plots near the motorway Km44. We think that in this way we will one day be less dependent financially on the French province; furthermore, agricultural work can also be very formative. In order to be more

Continuation and final chapter of the story by Fr. Laurent



2009

DECEMBER

14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	P. Paul Fourcade F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	Happy birthday 25 años de sacerdocio	Br. George Varghese Korandakkatte P. Carlos Escurra, P. Miguel Angel Cardozo
16	Happy birthday	Br. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong
17	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Giuseppe Lietti F. Omer Koutouan Nanghy
18	Buon compleanno	P. Giulio Forloni
20	45 anos de sacerdocio parabéns 40 años de sacerdocio	P. Antonio Scarpa, P. Paulo Vital Campos, P. Joao Batista Ribeiro P. Bruno Ierullo
23	Happy birthday	Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph
24	Happy birthday 60 años de profesión	Br. Gerard Sutherland P. José Rovegno
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Francisco Daleoso
27	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Paniga Fr. Chan John Kunu
28	Feliz cumpleaños Happy birthday	P. José Miguel Larrosa Br. Hiran Thomas Klinboakaew
29	Feliz cumpleaños	Br. Davit Phithak Bi-Thu
30	25 ans de sacerdoce	P. Patrick Moulié
31	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Théophile Dégni N'Guessan

2010

JANUARY

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

comes across. Discernment in different fields: politics, job, education, trade union, mass media, ecology. Option for the poor.

Take to heart one's integral education, Holy Scripture, writings of Saint Michael and of the Betharramite tradition, Social Doctrine of the Church (Cfr Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church). The Church in the heart of the world and the world in the heart of the Church (Puebla).

Have your answer ready for people who ask you for the reason of the hope you have, do not be ashamed of being a Christian and have the courage to proclaim Jesus Christ. *There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.* (E.N. 22)

To cooperate as much as one can in the missionary activities of Betharram.

Pray personally each day the following prayer and be aware that by praying it one expresses the communion with many other people scattered in the world: *O my God, You have so loved me! O God, You have done so much to obtain my love. You have so desired and do so desire that I love You! Here I am, O my God, here I am. My heart is ready. I will stop at nothing to prove to You my love. What do you want me to do? Here I am (D.S. 89). Our Lady of Betharram, pray for us. Our Father Saint Michael, pray for us. Blessed Miriam of Jesus Crucified, pray for us.*

Celebrate with some groups of laypeople or with a betharramite community the Feasts: 19 March (Saint Joseph); 25 March (The Annunciation of the Lord); 14 May (Our Founder Saint Michael); 2nd Friday after Pentecost (Sacred Heart of Jesus); 28 July (Our Lady of Betharram); 25 August (Blessed Miriam of Jesus Crucified); 14 September (Exaltation of the Cross); 22 December (day of the *Here I am* during the Christmas Novena).

To plan and carry out in the family a moment of betharramite prayer (daily, on Sundays, twice a week, etc.) consisting of a prayer to Our Lady of Betharram, the reading of

Proposal of minimum elements of the betharramite identity

a passage from St Michael's writings or from the Betharramite tradition, and sharing with the family members the content of the text and one's own experience, then winding up with the prayer: *O my God, You have so loved me!*

To create groups of lay people or families around a religious or a betharramite community in which the members plan and implement a project of formation starting from the Holy Scripture, the writings of St Michael or of the Betharramite Tradition, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, for example.

In each Vicariate and Region it would be good to have meetings at least once a year in order to favour the encounter of people, of families and groups concerned. The structure of these meetings can be different according to the project proper to each Vicariate and according to the culture of each country.

Our Lady of Betharram

Mother of the beautiful Branch,
You offer us the Infant Jesus:

We come to you, seeking protection and affection.

We ask you to be a living and maternal presence in our families.

Watch over the growth of our children.

Free us from unemployment, So that we can live with dignity.

May we always have something to share.

In you, Joseph found The tenderness and strength

Of the New Woman of the Gospel.

From you, Jesus learnt how to be faithful to the Father

And how to love men and women, his brothers and sisters.

Mother, we too want to live according to your example

And practise, in our daily life, your virtues.

Bless our ideals and all our efforts

to build a fairer and more united society.

Help us to create new situations where love has the pride of place.

Help us to find time to be in touch with the Lord,

Time for family and friends, time for relaxing.

In time of temptation, solitude and trial, give us your strength,

Stretch out your saving branch.

Amen.

the Missionaries of Saint Francis de Sales (MSFS) fathers. Though two of them are in the state of Assam, they are far from me. I hope to visit them before they complete the re-gency. I do communicate with them through various means.

Are your identity as a religious and the spirituality of Saint Michael supporting and inspiring you in your experience? Are they giving you a special trait? - The basis of my mission activities are on the foundation of the spirituality of St. Michael. I understand the true meaning of religious life and the relevance of "Here I come to do your will". I am privileged to be here in the North East India or else where, like St. Michael envisaged with the earlier missionaries. As I walk forward always, my identity as religious and the spirituality based on St. Michael, gives me enough strength to continue my commitments.

Based on what you live here, how do you envisage the future of Betharram in India? - The future of Betharram in India depends on true commitments and openness of one's attitude towards the congregation and mission. I feel that if everyone gives themselves like I give to the congregation, there is a bright future for us in India. I always give my best to the congregation, may be in different way, which I am not able to convince others by words or narrations! I remember the first meeting that I had with Fr. Gaspar, Fr. Mirande and Fr. Xavier soon after my ordination, the dreams and hopes they shared with me. It is possible to enter into the country of China or any places. I have shared with my bishop about our plan and my special interest from congregation. As part of his love and response to me, especially reward for my short time ministry in the present place, he has appointed me in a new mission in the same diocese from the middle of December onwards. It is a great sign of appreciation to us. Being in this new center, bishop has asked to look for a new our mission that is our own in this diocese or other dioceses. I humbly ask you (to the congregation) to support me as long as possible and anyone who are sincere to commit themselves in fulfilling the hopes of St. Michael.

In December, Fr **Gabriel Verley's** appointment as **Superior of the community of Anglet-Saint-Palais** (France) was approved by the General Council.

In 2009, Fr Melchor Escurra (Paraguay) and Fr Roberto Cornara (Italy) have obtained the dispensation from the obligations of the priestly ordination. Let's accompany them with our prayers.



people. In my mission centers we are having three main tribal groups (Adivasis, Santhalis and Boros) and smaller groups from Bengalis, Nepalese and Assamese.

We are doing ministries like conducting masses in the villages, administering sacraments (most of the times baptizing people), teaching catechisms, boarding children, running schools and other out reach programmes.

Of course the place where I am living is slowly coming back from the troubles. It is beyond writing and narrations. Sometimes each day of our life is a long story of trusting in God's providence. In a week, there are bhand (local strikes) two or three days. Last couple of months, the militants and naxalites are making more problems.

The ministry here is different from my usual one. The Village chapels made up of bamboo woods, furnished with cow den paste, etc. People are mostly not well dressed from our city understanding. But these things are not bothered us. We are worried about how to useful and effective for them. I really enjoy and feel happy and comfortable in spite of the difficulties.

You are at the service of the local church in a very particular environment; how do you cooperate with the diocesan clergy? - I am doing the ministry of the Arch Diocese of Guwahaty. What my bishop and diocesan administration has asked me to do is carried out without any reservation. It is wonderful to work with them. They love me and extend their support towards me always.

You have been sent by the congregation: how do you take this project on yourself? - I am doing the congregation mission through diocesan projects. Though I am exclusively with the diocese of Guwahaty, I am keeping in mind of the direction from the superior general and the generalate mission directions. Being in an appointed place, I am slowly exploring our congregation mission that is vested on me by authorities.

Are there any links with the brothers doing their regency in the region? - Our brothers are doing their regency with

Vicariate of France-Spain

An Ivorian celebrated in Limousin ■ On December 6th at Saint-Francis Church of Limoges, Father Graziano Sala, Regional Superior, received the final vows of Bro. Alfred. Christian Nandjui. In his homily, the Superior of the Vicariate of France-Spain and former novice master of Bro. Alfred, invited him to put out into the deep of the total giving. The same friendly atmosphere was found during the buffet gathering the Betharramite family with friends.

Vicariate of Centre-South Italy

United for a better service ■ The closure of the residence of Mariotto was decided in late 2009, so the four religious working in Puglia will now live under the same roof in the Parish house of Bitonto.

Vicariate of Brazil

Milestones along the road ■ On November 21 and 22, seven young men made a vocational discernment retreat. in Passa Quatro. Moments of worship and meditation on the following topics: Samuel's vocation and prayer; Mary, the first one to be called by the Father; St. Michael and the Betharramite family. Rich moments of sharing about vocation and experiences were also on the agenda. In this Year for Priests, everyone took the opportunity to deepen the expression of the holy Curé of Ars: "The priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus, it is also a great gift, not only for the Church but for all humanity."

Vicariate of India

Smilte at life ■ The Betharramite press is enriched by a new newsletter. The first issue has just been published under the winning title *SMILE* – which stands for "St. Michael Information Link". A good way of keeping in touch with Betharram in India.

Vicariate of Thailand

Betharram Foundation ■ On November 24th, we came to know the Congregation in Thailand is registered as Foundation. Thanks to the hard work of Fr. Chanchai Temaroonrung for the whole year, now Betharram is officially recognized. "Let us thank God and glorify His name always", as invites us Fr. Tidkham Jailertrit, united to all the Fathers and Brothers in Thailand.



*St Michael
Region*

BIRD'S EYE VIEW



*Fr. Etchecopar
Region*



*Blessed Miriam
Region*

OF THE CONGREGATION



Centenary celebrations at Droitwich

On the feast of the Sacred Heart the members of the English vicariate, priests and brothers, members of our parishes, Old Boys of the College, and lay associates converged on the church of the Sacred Heart in Droitwich. This very special celebration to commemorate the coming of the Fathers of Betharram, the first priests of the Sacred Heart to Droitwich. The whole celebration was meticulously organised by the parish.

The first priest to arrive at Droitwich was Fr Joseph Dospital in 1909. Although the Congregation had been in England since 1903 when Father Abel Costedoat was invited to the Birmingham diocese by Archbishop Illsley, the uncle of our late Fr Philip Illsley SCJ. From that time Droitwich was to become the centre of the congregation in this country for over 80 years. The beautiful mosaic church was built in the time of Fr Dospital who carefully watched over its construction and the mosaic work depicting the all embracing arms of the Sacred Heart above the sanctuary and the glittering lives of saints and martyrs of England portrayed by myriads of dazzling mosaics.

The beautiful liturgy celebrating this occasion and enhanced by the choirs of the parish was led by Bishop Pargeter who replaced Archbishop Vincent Nichols who had, a few weeks earlier, been appointed to Westminster. On the sanctuary were all members of the English Vicariate, local clergy, and former pupils of the college who were priests. Fr Colin Fortune, superior of the Vicariate, preached on our devotion to the Sacred Heart and God's love which had been manifest over the years in the lives of those priests and Brothers who worked in the Parish and College and even those who work now in the parishes of those present at the Mass. He emphasised that the good works of students of the college in all walks of life were a reflection of God's love as they experienced it in the college. All who had been inspired to live by that spirit of the Sacred Heart when living amongst us were carrying on the same witness as the priests who taught and nurtured them. On this day it was as though there were a

cloud of silent witnesses, priests and brothers of our Congregation gone before us in the sign of Faith, whose lives and works had been spent in the service of the Sacred Heart in the Midlands. Among them would be Fr William Lythe who founded the College of the Sacred Heart, Father John Wadpoups whose influence and endeavours had built up the Province to what it is today.

After an uplifting and inspiring Mass people flocked out to meet friends they had not seen for years. Everyone spilled out into a marquee and the Parish Centre. This was the opportunity of meeting past pupils and renewing friendships. This occasion was an opportunity to look back and hear from the people the good that had been done over the years and an encouragement to go forward with love and trust in the Sacred Heart into the future.

5 MINUTES WITH... Father Shaju

Nef: Can you tell us about the why's and how's of your new ministry? - I am doing the ministries in the arch diocese of Guwahaty, in Assam. At present I am in a place called Nagrijuly, the last mission of the north East part of this diocese and the nearest mission to the county of Bhutan. The bishop has given me this place to have a deep experience with various tribal groups. It is interesting and demanding. I am really enjoying the mission activities here so far. Though the languages, cultures and atmosphere are different and difficult, I feel everything is going on well.

What did you find on your arrival there? What is the framework of your activity? Is it different from your usual one? - I arrived in Assam with lots of hope and commitment. I am keeping it up by the grace of god. The frame works of my activities are similar like most of the mission centers are having in their respective places. Most of the centers are having schools, boarding and catechetical programmes (similar like in the mountains of our missionaries in Chiang Mai). The interior ones, like my present one, are having many villages with various tribal

Dominic Innamorati, SCJ



After three years of ordination and a few years in the formation house, in the South of India, Fr. Shaju Kalappurackal has been working in the forefront of our mission. Interview with a « frontier betharramite ».