

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

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On the
schedule of
the Superior
General



2nd fortnight of
February

Stay in the
Vicariate of France-
Spain

follows from page 3 ▶ his flesh for our food and his blood for our drink. (Jn 6, 66-70) What nourishes our faith, is the person of Jesus in all the circumstances of his life, what they do to him personally, the reactions and acts flowing from his heart, based on the relation of his preferential love for his Father. It is in these events, favourable or not, of our existence, that we must conduct ourselves as disciples of Jesus, and not worry about our personal prestige. There you have the **hidden manna** of the Gospel.

(DS 258-259)

Gaspar Fernandez, SCJ



The Betharramite adventure in China

help and their work soon became similar to that of the best missionaries. I would add that the apostolic spirit of these religious has the greatest effect." Now that they had been formed, it was time to think of sending them into the South-West of the Yunnan which was the sector allotted to them. They arrived there in the last quarter of 1924.

Right up to 1929 the Betharramites worked with the Foreign Missions Fathers under the control of the Apostolic Vicar in Yunnan-Fou. In 1928, Fr Etchart and Mgr de Gorostarzu discussed at some length about the place and boundaries of the future Betharramite Mission; Mgr de Gorostarzu wanted to have the Mission Centre in Se-Mao, in the heart of a very unhealthy region. Mgr de Guebriant, Superior General of the Foreign Missions, settled the discussion by handing over Tali, with its favourable climate, and where the Betharramites wouldn't have to sacrifice their first missionaries right from the beginning.

Finally, on 22nd November 1929, the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, by letter apostolic "Munus Apostolicum quo in Terris", split the apostolic Vicariat of Yunnan-Fou and detached the Sous-Prefecture in order to create the Independent Mission of Tali-Fou entrusted to the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram; on the 18th May 1930, the Very reverend Father Etchart was named first superior.

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(Continues)



Family News

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



A word from the
Superior General

The Hidden Manna

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Manna was the miraculous bread which the Lord sent down from Heaven to his people every morning in the desert. (Ex 16, 1-19) Jesus assures us that he is the true bread which has come down from heaven (Jn 6,51) In the message from the Spirit to the Church at Pergamum, in the Apocalypse, St John writes: "I shall give hidden manna to the victorious one" (Ap 2, 17). In his *Elevations on the Mysteries*, Bossuet speaks of the hidden manna to explain the special grace of expecting and meeting with the Saviour, granted to the Old Man Simeon by God.

In his letters of Spiritual Direction, especially those addressed to the Daughters of the Cross, St Michael describes faith experience in the same language as is found in the New Testament: *milk and solid food* (Heb. 5,12-14; 1Cor 3,1-3). The food of the *piety of milk on Tabor* is the spirituality best suited to beginners who feed on consoling experiences. Then he talks about *solid food* which is the spirit of charity of Jesus Christ, *a food much cherished and loved by Our Lord, and which he used extensively throughout his mortal life, which consists in never doing his own will but always doing the will of God, whatever it might be, in all circumstances and with all manner of persons however disagreeable they might be, always able to esteem and cherish them even to the point of sacrificing himself for them, and for that very reason they are providential* (Corr. 1: letter 77) For St Michael, the hidden manna is much more than accomplishing God's Will in all things; it is perfect charity, fidelity to God and to his Will in times of trial, when everything seems to be going against him who believes.

Happy
2010

10th year
10th series, n° 45
14th January 2010



For St Michael the hidden manna expresses the quintessence of the Gospel, what is most specific in what it proposes for our life. It is the grace which consists in being identified with Jesus despised and humiliated: I desire to be poor along with Christ in poverty rather than rich, to be insulted along with Christ so grossly insulted, rather than to be thought well of; I would rather be thought a helpless fool for the sake of Christ who was so treated, rather than to be thought wise and clever in the eyes of the world. (Sp. Exercises No 167). This is what St Ignatius calls the 3rd degree of humility, and what St Michael recalls in the Spiritual Doctrine.

In a letter addressed to Fr Didace Barbe, St Michael Garicoits wrote: "It is really past describing! But, what of it? When one has definite ideas, it is difficult to get rid of them and one is though to be wasting time when things don't go as we would want them. It is out of the question to understand, taste and accept whole heartedly what is considered incomprehensible, empty and a failure what one is obliged to do through obedience. **Unfortunately it is still the hidden manna for several**" (Corr. 1, letter 163)

This message from St Michael to Fr Barbe follows on after a reprimand about the behaviour of some of the missionaries who had just arrived in Argentina. They wanted the Holy See to grant them the title of Apostolic Missionaries, so as to be free to evangelise without the need of rendering an account to the Bishops. With this in view, and bypassing both St Michael and the Bishops of Bayonne and Buenos Aires, they appealed to the Archbishop of Auch (Corr 1, letter 162) Such behaviour maddened St Michael who had already opposed the project when it had been discussed in Betharram; it was nothing more than ill founded zeal, which wanted to be rid of the obligation of obedience, of love in the limits of one's position, for the simple satisfaction of personal success.

In this particular situation St Michael draws up the comparison of two attitudes: (1) the one an illusion and individualist; the religious thinks he is acting on his own in pursuit, not of a mission, but his own personal satisfac-

THE BETHARRAMITE ADVENTURE IN CHINA 1

+ Fr. Joseph Séguinotte, "L'Écho de Bétharram", September 1944

Yunan is a huge province in the south of China, neighbouring Tibet, Burma, Laos and Tonkin. It is about three fifths the size of France. For years it had been evangelised by the Fathers of the Foreign Missions of Paris, several of whom had already been martyred. On the 17th September 1874, in her Carmelite Monastery in Pau, Sr Marie de Jesus Crucified witnessed miraculously the torture of Fr Baptifaul, a missionary in Yunan. Finally both the workers and the resources running out, evangelisation didn't go very far because in 1922, when the first of our Fathers arrived, Mgr de Gorostarzu, apostolic vicar, pointed out that only 2/3 of the territory was under the stewardship of the missionaries, of whom there were only about twenty for 16.000 Christians and 15 million pagans or Muslims.

To help them the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, in 1921 asked Fr Paillas and his Council to send missionaries for the establishment of an independent Mission which would be entrusted to the Betharram Fathers and be detached from the Apostolic Vicariate of Yunnan-Fou. Countless volunteers responded to the Superior General's appeal; however only three were chosen: a Basque, Fr Pierre Erdozaincy-Etchart, Fr François Palou and a Belgian, Fr Louis Pirmez.

For the first time, on 22nd January 1922, Betharram bid farewell to them in a touching ceremony and towards the end of February the first Betharramite missionaries were making their entry into the Yunan. Immediately they got down to studying the Chinese language, and a few months later, they began to exercise their ministry around Yunnan-Fou. In less than two years Mgr de Gorostarzu speaking of the real progress in the Mission, could write in his report: "One of the reasons for such an increase is due to the hard work of the three Betharramite Fathers who had come to our aid. After four or five months studying the language and culture these hard working men, were able to give our confreres valuable



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JANUARY

18	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Antonio Cano
20	Joyeux anniversaire 50 años de profesión	P. Victor Batailles P. Wilfrido Romero
23	Buon compleanno	P. Ennio Bianchi
25	Feliz cumpleaños 20 anos de profissão religiosa, parabéns	P. Luis Oteiza P. Wagner Azevdo do Reis
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

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 15 años de profesión religiosa, felicidades	P. Pierre Grech P. Raoul Thibaut Ségla P. Fulgencio Ferreira
13	Buon compleanno	P. Mario Longoni
14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	F. Bertrand Belhartz F. Giuseppe Pozzi
17	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean-Luc Morin P. Serge Braga Latta F. Hyacinthe Ali Konan
18	Happy birthday 15 años de profesión religiosa, felicidades	Br. Andrew Ferris Hno Gustavo Angarola
19	Joyeux anniversaire Feliz cumpleaños	P. Henri Lamasse Hno Raul Villalba Maylin
20	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Mirco Trusgnach

tion . When one has definite ideas, it's difficult to get rid of them; and one is convinced of wasting one's time when things don't go as we would like them to; (2) the other: the religious has plans for a mission, not from care but in the spirit of obedience and according to the missionary plans of the diocese; he is not worried whether they are good or bad, as long as the missionary project is reached. *One can understand, appreciate and accept wholeheartedly what appears incomprehensible, empty and a failure what one is obliged to do through obedience. This unfortunately is the hidden manna for several.*

It happens that we often come across Christians, religious, even Betharramites who have obviously not yet understood the Gospel. Jesus Christ remains hidden for them and they misunderstand the meaning of discipleship which is the result. When I was stressing this point during a retreat for some Betharramites, one of them said to me: It was great before the Council, but not now; to day it would be contrary to human rights. The genuine Christian life

demands that we go that far. I often tell the Father Masters that they must accompany the novices to go the full extent of the Gospel experience, which must be backed up by the hazard of life. If this road is not fully followed, the first major crisis will demolish the spiritual life of the religious lacking in love for Christ and his Mission, or else he will become used to events thinking only of himself.

In the Eucharist the hidden manna is Jesus in his paschal mystery – Jesus poor, covered with infamy, seemingly useless and senseless, Jesus in his glory thanks to these same trials. To be with Jesus in communion means being ready to be transformed into him and like a disciple to respond to those situations which life can provide. When we are in adoration before the Eucharist is this really the Jesus we are contemplating? Perhaps we ought really to reread John Chapter 6 while thinking about the hidden manna of St Michael Garicoits. After that no one will be surprised by the way Jesus is abandoned by all those who are revolted at the idea that he is the bread come down from heaven, giving



Father Etcheopar wrote... to a Community, 16st January 1886

Dear Fathers and Brothers in Our Lord, I am happy to write to you myself and to offer you my best wishes from the bottom of my heart. I am condemned to total rest but I am praying as I think of you, of your occupations and of your problems. How happy we will be at the hour of our death, to have worked prudenter, dulciter, foriter (prudently, gently and powerfully), for the sole love and sole glory of Jesus and Mary! Let's help each other on the way. As for me, I promise you to remember you constantly at the feet of Our Divine Mother!

The Messiah is in your midst

A religious sent us this story but without naming the author. It's priceless.

Once upon a time there was a monastery victim of serious difficulties. Its walls had once echoed with the chants and enthusiasm of generations of religious, but secularisation had struck it. There remained only the Father Abbot and four monks, all in their seventies, in an abbey full of silence and sadness.

In a neighbouring forest there was a poor hut where a Rabbi had withdrawn full of age and wisdom. The monks held him in high esteem and they were comforted by his prayerful presence. One day, the Father Abbot decided to go and see him to open his heart and ask for his help. The Rabbi received him with warmth, but could only sympathise with his sorrow. "I know your problem," he said with a sigh. "People have lost their wits. It's the same for us. Nearly no one visits my old synagogue now a days."

These two God fearing men were overcome with sadness, then recovering their serenity they opened their Bible while discussing spirituality. As they were separating they fell into each others arms. "It was so good to meet again" said the abbot, "but I am leaving with the same outlook: the forthcoming death of my community. Would you not have the tiniest bit of advice to give me" "No, I am sorry" replied the Rabbi "I have only one thing to tell you: The Messiah is in your midst."

When the Abbot returned to the monastery, the monks plied him with their questions. "Well how did things go? What did the Rabbi say?" "He was unable to help me," replied the

archate. There is nothing like it to arouse the desire to carry on faithfully in such an effort of creativity. As I face such challenges, I can hear Br Paolo as we were sharing our faith, inviting me to rely on community discernment! To rely also on the support and help of men like Abbouna Shaofani as I discover the kind of life these people lead here and now. It is only with others that, and little by little, a future can be programmed for us Betharramites, each man with his talents.

May our simple life in the Vicariat help us accomplish this, and help our Congregation in its wish to be here! Such a service isn't possible without the internet, here in Nazareth. My words are more personal through what I feel in what Charles de Foucauld learned here of Nazareth spirituality: at the heart of a life of intimacy with Christ, becoming someone who can share a simple presence with all those who have become his neighbours. There are many things which ring true with our own Betharramite spirituality of the Incarnation, of a loving availability to the Father's Will. Here Christ began by being silent for 30 years before launching out on his mission to Announce the Kingdom! Although he was the Son, He learned to live the simple life of his contemporaries, to say with all his human heart "ABBA" HERE!

Finally, a few personal words, the more I walk around in the Galilee countryside and get to know it, the more I love them... despite or because of the personal wrenches and conflicts.

I also recall what Gustavo and Roxana were telling us at Catamarca in 1995 about the type of Betharramite life style for the missions; somebody said to them "You at least are not like others; they pass on! You, you stay here with us!" Finally the ideal of Emmaus is the best ideal! "Stay with us, Lord, the day is drawing to a close!" In his footsteps, let's cultivate the Spirit of Christ and let's remain with our human brothers and give them a sign of The presence they are expecting without daring even to hope or believe in it.

tians are longing to see their life, and their faith deep rooted in the silence, contemplation, and the interior life of Christ. Here as elsewhere, the demands of a spiritual life are a real commitment in a world where everything is moving too fast. Here, even more so than elsewhere, Carmel should be a place of genuine reconciliation which is to be found in the knowledge and experience of the risen Christ. The Carmelite Monastery of Nazareth which consists of a dozen different nationalities is a living parable of this.

Such a service is not cut off from the environment. Such a service has been entrusted, by providence, to our little Congregation which meantime has become international. Next comes the acclimatization through language: French for the service here, Arab and Hebrew for local living. Thinking only of our presence here in terms of "saying a Mass" would mean cutting ourselves off from the richness of the Christian life here... On condition of being able to open our eyes to see and observe! On condition not to be carried away by the constant stream of pilgrims.

First of all, Betharramite religious life, by our commitment to a real incarnate life in the Spirit of Christ (by the way Nazareth is an excellent house and school for such a spirituality) calls us also to the apostolic availability like Jesus Christ who used to go from town to town, totally given to the Announcing of the Gospel of the Kingdom of His Father.

It is essential because History has transformed Galilee into a local entity, woven with internationality, overcome and shattered by the shock of the will of politicians. To concentrate on French, Italian or English (because of service and convenience) is to risk changing our lives and service into a magnificent ivory tower! If the Arab language is essential (90% of the Christians are Arab speaking), for loyalty to the State and partaking in the international religious life for the sake of the service, finally obliges us to pay attention to the question of languages. It's no small challenge!

When he received me, Mgr Marcuzzo told me all the good which our religious family has rendered to the Patri-

Abbot. *"All we did was cry and read the Torah together. Finally he left me with these words: "The Messiah is in our midst. But I don't understand what he means by that".*

During the following weeks and months, the old monks were haunted by that saying which they tried in vain to understand. *The Messiah is in our midst.... perhaps he meant to say that one of us is the Messiah? And if that is so, who can it possibly be? Father Abbot? Yes, if he was thinking of anyone, it's surely the Abbot. He has been a sure guide for so long!"*

"But, he could have been alluding to Br Theodule; he has everything going for him. Everybody knows that Brother Theodule is a saintly man. In any case, he was hardly thinking of Br Horace! He's hard to get on with; he can easily get angry. And yet you have to admit that he is often right. Who knows if the Rabbi wasn't thinking of him?"

No danger that it could be Br Philibert. Philibert is a real numbskull! A real washout. And yet he has the gift of always being there when wanted. Could he be the Messiah? One thing sure and certain, it can hardly be a half wit like me. And yet, if that were so? If I was the Messiah? No, not me. How could I be that important in the eyes of God? Out of the question that it's me!"

Caught up in their thoughts, the old monks clung on to the idea, however slight, that perhaps the Messiah was in their midst. And that possibly, however improbable, that the Messiah was each one of them, and so they began to have a better opinion of each other. Little by little the religious began to change; there was more respect, more tolerance for each other. They were now living like men who at last had found something.

Visitors detected a new spirit, a climate of truth and friendship. They returned to the monastery, brought other visitors. Things began to pick up; people flocked from all sides, and the stalls were filled once more. And so it was that in the space of a few years the monastery became a living community, and thanks to the wisdom of the Rabbi, it became a fount of light and of spiritual life.



Fr. Angelo Bianchi, 72 years old, is a member of the community of Parma (Italy). Flashback on a busy life...

5 MINUTES WITH... Father Angelo

Nef: What did your ministry consist of in Parma? - I arrived in the province of Parma in September 1999, after a long career in teaching. I felt a real need to be “a full time priest” in a parish situation. The provincial superior at that time, Fr Piero Trameri, considered my request, and here I am. To begin with, I was named parish priest at San Vitale Baganza, then I came as a help for Fr Giacomo Spini, parish priest of Barbiano Felino. At that time the community was living at Barbiano, where I had the usual activities of a parish priest: catechism, preaching, Mass, visiting the elderly and the sick, equipment of the premises etc. The parish wasn't very big (about 400 souls) but this responsibility was exciting. It was lovely to be in contact with the children, the youth and the adults and to pass on to them the love of a God who has always loved me. In their own way they too adopted me, and so we did quite a long way together. In December 2003 the community took responsibility for the parish of the Apostle St Andrew at Parma. Fr Giacomo Spini was named parish priest, and since then I have been his assistant priest. In view of the fact that our ministry would involve students. Fr Gianluca Limonta was sent to join us. My duties hardly changed despite the fact that I was entirely dependent on my parish priest. Actually, in Parma I am responsible for the after confirmation class; I look after the elderly and the sick, as well as adult catechises. Here too I am aware of the kindness and graciousness of the people I meet. As you can see, it is a very exacting ministry because it demands constant preparation, and above all it requires constant dedication. I am very happy with what I am doing just now.

I agree it is a rich experience; can you tell us what you did at Bormio? - Ah! Bormio, my first love! After I had obtained a degree in Maths in Rome in 1968, Fr Marco Gandolfi, the provincial superior, made me begin my ministry in Bormio. Consequently this is how I have always understood my work: teaching and the parish are for me the two parallel lines of a single track, lines carrying the

Being Chaplain in Nazareth. What for?

Freeing a priest specifically for that! Just to “say” Mass for a religious community at a time when so many other communities are without a priest! What if the priest isn't there only “to say a Mass” a day. *Haram!* Poor chap as they say here. *Haram* for him, for the Church and for others also!

I like to recall the words of Fr Jean Tapie, who led an extraordinary experience here and made an impression on people. “It's a real service of the Church!” he used to tell me. How can you think of it like that? May I, after spending three months here, lay down some markers. If it's only a question of “saying a Mass”, any priest can do that. But a little theology teaches us that the aim of the Eucharist is first of all the construction of the Church; the community; the Carmelite Community in this instance is a sign placed in the centre of the Church and the world. This is why when he comes to celebrate Mass, the priest becomes first of all a companion on the way of faith of these women. For the life of this particular community, the worthy and deep celebration, a certain kind of presence (both discreet and real, omitting all kinds of cold and detached service) requires real effort on the part of the servants.

True enough, Mgr Marcuzzo reminded us of this face on 14th November during his homily for the inauguration Mass for the opening of the centenary of the Carmel at Nazareth, the community, through their prayer life and sacrifices, is a source of holiness for the entire local Church, witness the fruits: Blessed Marie de Jesus Crucifie, Blessed Marie Alphosine Ghattas (foundress of a local congregation, the Rosary Sisters), Blessed Charles de Foucauld who lived here between 1897 and 1900.

How can one be that companion on the way which will allow such a special community to display the whole wealth of the gift that they are for others. This is what is at stake for the Church; didn't Vatican II remind us that the call to holiness is for the whole Church? Here as elsewhere, Chris-



men to perform these services and themselves devoted their time to prayer and preaching.

The Apostles' programme is really magnificent: announcing Jesus to those who don't yet know him and praying to the Father to look after the young Christian community to help it grow and get stronger.

At Niem there is a stable mission which has been in existence for the past 20 years only; the needs and emergencies have hardly changed. I also feel the same needs as the Apostles, and at the same time there is Jesus' urgent appeal related by Mathew, and which I would sum up in these words: *I am poor, and no one is looking after me.*

It's not easy to work in the middle of the poor. Their requests are many and are often justified. The people depend a lot on us and we missionaries are overwhelmed by their requests.

There's no point in hiding it, for them we are important; thanks to us thousands of boys and girls can go to school; we care for a lot of people who otherwise could never consult a doctor in town, and even less buy the medication, above all for the mothers and children; sometimes we even can give them food, and we sometimes take their defence in the face of the authorities.

There is really so much to do!! In his Gospel Jesus calls us to care for our neighbour, to take him to our heart and at the same time he invites us to consider ourselves "useless servants".

We aren't super men; we have our weaknesses and our short comings; sometime we would love to be left alone, to be left in peace" And then there's a knock at the door....How can we not open?

When I feel "emptied", when loneliness becomes a burden, I think of all those people who hold me in high esteem, who are fond of me, all those who support me from afar, and not only by their generosity: but by their prayer and especially by their friendship. I can't think of a better remedy!

Tiziano Pozzi, SCJ

same truck: God's presence for the young thanks to maths, confessions, preaching, and replacing priests in the parish. It was no small matter to open a scientific lycee, to get permission of the Minister of Education, or to add literary and professional sections for languages and computer science. The fathers in the community always worked in the same way. I am not likely to forget Fr Clemente Albusceri, first director of the establishment. Today the school has closed down, but the memory of the Fathers is still alive. Many of the past pupils with their diplomas in hand have taken over factories in Bormio. During the summer holidays I have visited them and what a joy it is to see them all again. God has certainly rewarded our efforts both as priests and educators.

After Bormio came the Betharramite College in Colico. What difference did that make for you? - There wasn't much difference really. My life in the college was a closed circuit, but in reality nothing had changed; I continued giving lessons and helping out in the parish. There was one important difference however; at Bormio the pupils were destined only for the University; whereas at Colico they were preparing also to be surveyors. In any case, both experiences were very interesting; they helped me to advance and mature in my priestly and religious vocation, according to the spirit of St Michael Garicoits.

Apparently you stayed for a while In Thailand: What did this do for you? - Yes, I was lucky to have been able to realise such a dream in my old age! I had always wanted to be a missionary, but life and obedience have kept me in Italy. I suppose it was God's plan for me. Last year I spent three weeks in Thailand with Fr Alberto Pensa. There I discovered lots of places, situations of wealth and poverty, catholic schools and seminaries; and especially our own seminary at Sampran. In the middle of these Betharramite students I had the impression of reliving my own scholasticate – their joy of life, and their desire to grow in the love of God, their kindness... because of the language, I felt all this from the exterior only. They even

gave me a packet of Thai pimento seeds which I sowed as soon as I got back and which have given a good harvest.

I am not likely to forget the time spent with Fr Alberto (I even brought back an album of photos). I can still recall the lovely looks of the little girls in his Centre, their generosity and their kindness. I must also mention the young Thai priests working side by side with the European missionaries. I would love to renew this experience, God willing, as I would love to visit our houses in America... one day, who knows in the hope that it will not be too late!

What advice would you give a young man studying his vocation, and wanting to have an experience with the Congregation? - I would advise him to begin by living for a while in a community, in a community able to admit him and who is willing to grow with him and take St Michael's project seriously with him. Where is such a community to be found? That is the question. In my opinion superiors ought always to feel that they are in formation, and never think that they have reached their goal. On that condition, welcoming a young man will produce the fruits of a vocation.



*Saint Michael
Region*

Vicariate of Ivory Coast

Close to the mentally ill ■ Pastoral of the sick is part of the deep experiences of the Yamoussoukro community. Each week, Bro Omer (deacon) and Bro Constant (2nd year novice) go to the psychiatric home held by the Brothers of Charity for different activities and ecumenical prayers. This kind of ministry touches them deeply ...



*Fr Etchecopar
Region*

Vicariate of Paraguay

A blessing in Asunción ■ On December 27th the grotto of Our Lady of Betharram was inaugurated and blessed. The event gathered the community of the chapel of the same name, in the presence of the Vicariate Superior of Paraguay, Fr Xavier Irala, Fr Milciades Ortigoza and Fr Constancio Lopez. Placed in front of the chapel, the grotto is dedicated to the Holy Virgin protectress of children and families. May she spread showers of blessings on all the area.



*Blessed Miriam
Region*

The novices in the ashram ■ The Thai and Indian novices from Bangalore spent a few days in the Anjali Ashram: (December 11th-20th). During ten days, they lived there a simple way of life: vegetarian food, community service, practicing Yoga, daily inspiring thought from the "Guru", prayer and Eucharistic celebration in "an inculturated style", etc. So each one had an opportunity to grow in their self-awareness" and encounter God in silence.

Vicariate of India

Betharramite for ever ■ On December 27th, Bro. Jose Kumar made his Final Profession in the hands of Rev. Fr. Austin Hughes in the chapel of Shobhana Shaakha (Bangalore). As the Superior regional himself stressed on his homily; "Bro. Jose has no gold to offer the Baby Jesus, but his life and his total self. Always forward! dear Bro. Jose. We are always with you!"

"Unum sint" ■ On December 30th and 31st, the religious of India gathered in Bangalore under the guidance of Fr. Austin, the Regional Superior and Fr. Biju Alappat, the vicar of India. The meeting took place in an atmosphere of brotherly sharing and listening to each other. On the agenda: small groups work, whole assembly discussion, video presentation of each community, and also time for relaxation (like volleyball match between temporary and final vows members).

Confessions of a Priest-Doctor

It was in 1983 on the Monza circuit that Pope John Paul II launched an appeal to the crowds of young people who were there that day. "You are the future of the Church; don't be afraid of Christ!" I was one of them. It is now 15 years today that I have been living at Niem.

Recently there are two passages of the Bible which I have in mind. The first one is to be found in Mathew, concerning the last judgement: "I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was in prison, naked, a stranger, sick... and you looked after me (Mt 25, 31-46). The second one is from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 6; as the Apostles were more and more involved with works of charity, they chose some

A year ago, Fr Tiziano Pozzi was named Superior of the smallest scj Vicariate in the heart of Africa. Since 1994 he is in charge of the Hospital in Niem. Here he talks on behalf of the other five professed (Italian and Central African) who work with him.