

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

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On the  
schedule of  
the Superior  
General

#### 24-26 November

In Rome, meeting of the  
Union of the Superiors  
General

#### 8-25 December

Canonical visitation to the  
Vicariate of Holy Land

#### Note of the Gal Council

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010  
was approved the  
appointment of Father  
François Tohonon Co-  
kou as **superior** of the  
community of  
Dabakala  
(Vicariate of  
Ivory Coast)



## The Betharramite Adventure in China

brainwashing bore fruits, at least to all appearances. One 15 year old orphan declared in a meeting: "Until 1949 the Church's doctrine was pure; since then it has been contaminated by imperialism". However when it was a question of breaking away from the Pope, all the Catholics, even the progressives, refused to give way and the government was forced to compromise for the time being.

However such a task had its result at the preparatory meeting for the constitution of the Reform Committee; all the Catholic families were obliged to be present as well as the leaders of all the communities in Tali. Once the meeting was declared open, all the Catholics abstained from speaking; the officials were obliged to harangue the assembly for three hours about the dangers of imperialism, which was infiltrating the Church in China by foreign missionaries. Such a flood of eloquence concluded with a wild speech by a Protestant Minister, who spoke of the great ancestors – Luther and Calvin – and who condemned all foreign missionaries to hell. With minds thus enlightened there was voting for five names imposed by the police! How could it be otherwise? Our friend, the government envoy, had carried off the day!



Best wishes

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, the Feast of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, **Br Martial Mengue will make his final vows** in the hands of Fr Tiziano Pozzi, superior of the Vicariate of Central Africa. The celebration will take place in the parish of Our Lady of Fatima in Bouar. Our wishes, our greetings and our prayers are with this new Central African professed member.



10

(Continues)



# Family News

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



A word from the  
Superior General

## Idoneus, expeditus, expositus

What feelings should divine intervention not inspire in us! What love, what respect for the Congregation! What a shock at the thought of being called into it! What joyful and constant diligence to work for its interests **to form men worthy of her idoneos, expeditus, expositos, men ready for anything, freed from everything, and totally open to whom it may concern.** (DS 272)

This extract taken from *Spiritual Doctrine* is strong language. It presents great admiration for the mystery of the Congregation – three exclamation marks in three phrases. It contains the radicality of the Gospel with the triple insistence: *everything, everything, totally*, echoing the **no delay, unreservedly, no return, through love**. It is the portrait of the Betharramite religious: *suitable, free, open*. These are the qualities which make the religious of the Sacred Heart someone who is free, detached, who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit and of the Superiors can answer to the needs of the Mission of the Church, and thus better serve mankind and more especially the poor.

These three words ought to be the subject of our daily *awareness examen*, to train our hearts with much care and attention; thus, there would be no settling into seemingly subtle righteousness keeping us in a false situation without our even knowing.

Idoneus: **the man ready for anything**. Ready for success as for failure, for praise as for criticism, for gratitude as for

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108<sup>th</sup> year

10<sup>th</sup> series, nr. 54

14<sup>th</sup> November 2010



scorn, for cold as for heat, to live comfortably as to go short, to stay as to leave. Ready to serve, to live in brotherly community, to practise love, to obey because there is nothing to lose, to give and not to count the cost, to get lost instead of seeking oneself, to seek in all things the good of the brothers in community and of those entrusted to me by the mission. We haven't placed our trust and our hope in men or in human words, but in the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ, Word Incarnate, our Creator and our Lord.

**Expositus: Freed from everything:** This fundamental availability is only possible in being careful not to be dependent on anything whether material or spiritual. Our vows of chastity, poverty and obedience help to detach us from people, things, institutions, honours; they prevent us from imagining that we are indispensable and cannot be done without; they keep us from thinking that that nobody can do better than me what I please. *Stripped of everything especially of ourselves* (DS 45) says Michael Garicoits... We are the disciples of Him who emptied himself to become one of us (Phil 2, 7): he renounced himself on the Cross by going right to the end, knowing that thanks to his offering, his Father was reconciling the whole of humanity. We are the disciples of the lamb who has become our Pastor (Ap. 7, 17). Like him we want to be humble, obedient, steadfast and happy, for to those who are like that Jesus reveals what he has learned from his Father (John 15, 15).

**Expositus: Totally open to whom it may concern.** Such detachment is possible on one condition: that we are not closed in on ourselves, our interests, our pleasures, our needs,... on the contrary we must be open, eyes and ears attentive to the action of the Spirit in our lives and the wishes of our superiors. They have received mission to help us out of ourselves, by pointing out the concrete calls at our measure in the different commitments taken by the Congregation in the service of the local Churches and of the Universal Church.

## THE BETHARRAMITE ADVENTURE IN CHINA 10

+Fr. Arnaud Pucheu, "L'Écho de Bétharram", March 1952

**Towards the three autonomies.** Once the government envoy was installed in Tali, "Church reform" would probably progress at top speed. He quickly got to know all the Catholic families, threatened some, encouraged others, that is the progressives, by employing them to keep an eye on what we were doing and to report everything we said.

Monsignor's catechist thought of hastening the constitution of a reforming committee with all the guarantees of religious orthodoxy. Round about 15<sup>th</sup> November there was a meeting to elect the president and the delegates. Monsignor's catechist had the absolute majority of the votes. The result was loud complaints from the minority in the pay of the police, hidden at the back of the assembly room. The Chinese priest, member of the assembly, was roughly shouted at by one of them: "Get back to your hole! You know nothing about the latest ideas". The dispute went on, the two sides appointed delegates to the police who will judge the difficulty. That's what they were waiting for; they delivered their verdict in these words: "The brain washing not finished! After another month's study you will be ready for the reforms."

On the following Sunday to the horrified surprise of the majority of Catholics, the meeting room was flooded out with official delegates who begin examining the Catholics. Obviously their knowledge of the three autonomies was scandalously insufficient. There must be a change of methods and teachers. Vote! In the face of so much pressure and scandalous lack of trust, Monsignor's catechist withdrew. Five Catholics were then elected who will be appointed for a whole month, to teach the Catholics the exact meaning (the government's) of the three autonomies. For a whole month the Catholics were obliged to assist, at least two by family, at the brainwashing sessions. The subject matter was distributed by our police friends: all the scandalous accusations that could be brought against the Church, imperialist bandwagon in China! Our orphans were also forced to attend these meetings. The



### THE COMMUNISM AND THE MISSION IN TALI

DECEMBER  
1950 -  
DECEMBER  
1951



2010

NOVEMBER

14	30°de sacerdocio	P. Gaspar Fernández Pérez
15	Feliz cumpleaños	Hno Alberto Zaracho
16	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Narcisse Zaolo
17	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Alfredo Alfonso
18	Buon compleanno	F. Claudio Mantegazza
19	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Narcisse Zaolo
22	Happy birthday	Br. Liam Finucane
23	Happy birthday	Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph
24	Buon compleanno	P. Giacomo Spini
26	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Giancarlo Monzani
	Happy birthday	Fr. Chaiyot Charoenkun
28	Happy birthday	Fr. Dominic Innamorati
	Buon compleanno	P. Ercole Ceriani
29	Happy birthday	Fr. Kriangsak Kitsakunwong Br. Jesurai Mariadas
30	Buon compleanno	P. Andrea Antonini

DECEMBER

1	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Fernand Fonquerle
	Buon compleanno	P. Francesco Radaelli
2	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Émile Garat
3	Happy birthday	Fr. Stervin Selvadass Fernando Fr. Biju Anthony Panthalukkarar
	Bom aniversário	Ir. Luiz Henrique Ribeiro
4	55 años de sacerdocio	P. José Rovegno
6	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Beñat Oyhénart
9	65 ans de profession	P. Dominique Etchepare
10	Happy birthday	Fr. Anthony Box
11	Buon compleanno	P. Luigi Speciale
	Happy birthday	Br. Pascal Ravi
14	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Paul Fourcade
	Buon compleanno	F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	Happy birthday	Br. George Varghese Korandakkatte
16	Happy birthday	Br. Sa-at Prathansantiphong

We are not the centre of the mission; no more than the Congregation or even the Church is the centre. The centre of the Mission is Jesus Christ who is to be presented to all men and all women. As Pope Benedict was saying speaking to the journalists on board the plane which was taking him to England *“I would say that a Church which was trying to be attractive is already on a sticky path. Since the Church is not working for herself, she is not working to grow in number and so increase her power. The Church is at the service of ANOTHER. She is of no use to herself, or to be a strong body, but to bring the message of Jesus Christ to the people.”*



Gaspar Fernandez,SCJ

*Father Etchecopar wrote...* to Fr. Jean Magendie, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1893

*The diocesan commissioners instructing the cause of Fr Garicoits are amazed to see him for 40 years working with such depth, such solidity and clarity that they wrote: “Happy the Congregation to have such a Master, such a founder. No, the members composing this Congregation don’t need to look anywhere else for instruction; they wouldn’t find better, not even as good as the deep strong doctrine, so well expressed and communicated with such soulful feeling which makes Truth both known and loved.*

*Oh, my dear Fathers, Brothers and Children! If this is how strangers talk and feel, what should the children be thinking and feeling? Our senior Fathers who knew him and whom he formed in his own image, whom he fed with his own bread, were saints and heroes. The mere thought of them fills me with delight so that I am almost carried away. When, on Calvary, I let my eyes wander from our Father’s tomb to that of his sons, I cannot help but feel utmost confusion at the sight of my great wretchedness and hope in the powerful protection of that portion of ourselves already in heaven.*

*Have courage, therefore, and be confident! And at the sight of so many examples in our family, let’s hurry up and continue their heroic battles... with our eyes ever fixed on our beloved Crucified Lord and on his open heart!*



### Fr Etchecopar's intuition – a call for today

Since I have been here in the Holy Land, I have been reading a collection of letters from Fr Etchecopar, dating from the time when the foundation in Bethlehem was under consideration (1877 – 1878).

There is no denying the historical interest; but it is backed up by a reflexion on how to read and understand the signs of God's Will. This intuition at a precise moment in History, and far beyond the shape which the mission has since taken and even afterwards, could be very useful for today.

The joy can be felt at the amazement under the pen of the religious: the fact that "the Holy Father has just authorised, directly and immediately" (letter 445, 25/12/78) the presence of religious from Betharram to be chaplains to the Carmelites seems to him to be a definite sign of God's will. It comes as confirmation of the missionary zeal which drove the members of the Council when there was a question of commitment a few months earlier. "At the first mention of the project the Council fathers exclaimed: it's a wonderful work!" Fr Etchecopar, usually so prudent and at the same time as aware of the problem of a shortage of religious, as of the difficulties relating to the local religious authorities, was well geared up by a similar dynamism: "I am wondering, in the presence of the Lord if we shouldn't make an exception here in view of the great grace it would be to have an opening in the Holy Land" (L 284, 23/01/77). Since then the Congregation has responded to other appeals, and has been capable of being of service to local Churches in all fidelity and humility.

Today the crisis and the shortages are no less and there is no lacking of challenges. History mustn't make us forget the call to be a flying camp of men available for the mission. The Congregation has suffered many painful changes in its time. As I read Fr Etchecopar's correspondence, it seems to me that the foundation in Bethlehem contains the

characteristic of God. I love the logo of the FRAT: "Get up and walk" towards your brethren, and be witness of the Risen Christ through your visits, your letters, phone calls, meetings, reflections, sharing the Gospel message, and prayer. Just like a tiny seed, the FRAT which was founded in 1945 in Verdun, is today very much alive in more than 150 countries on the five continents.

***Through your contacts with the poor and the sick, what have you learned?*** - First of all I have learned the value of the individual, whatever his age, social standing, health, nationality or religion. I have also learned to approach confidently the other person and break his isolation; I can believe in what he can do, be near to the abandoned, and fight against then mentality of hand outs. Finally, I have come to know my own poverty which I believe can surpass the gift of God's Love.

***With the religious of your generation, you have gone from large communities dedicated to a single mission (schools) to small versatile communities, how do you feel about that?*** - It was hard to begin with. But now when I look back I can see the value of these versatile communities: community meetings where each one can relate his mission, the problems he is facing, his successes, his sorrows and joys; community prayer and especially Mass and the Office; days of fraternity and friendship which help us to get to know each other better; accepting each other as we are, helping each other to be faithful to our consecrated life with great respect...

***What phrases from St Michael's message have been a help to you and continue to do so today?*** - In my religious life what has helped me and continues to help me today is the *Heldu naiz*, the *Here I am* of St Michael helping me to act "within the limits of my situation" "through love rather than any other motive", "Bethi aintzina", "forward march"!

ments and Services and local teams. Finally there was the joy of trying to respond to all the calls from the Bishop of Limoges and other Bishops in the South-West Region as Diocesan or Regional Chaplain of the FRAT, with the agreement of the Community and Superiors.

*In these recent years the presence of Betharram in the field of Education has greatly diminished. How do you feel about this evolution?* - It's painful and yet I feel confident in view of this new orientation of the French province. It has helped us to respond to other appeals from the Bishops. I consider these appeals as many challenges for the Congregation: In a world marked by individualism, help in forming responsible adults; in a world which has lost its way, be places of Christian formation; in a world seeking meaning, provide a spirituality based on the Charism of St Michael Garicoits. Does the Charism of Betharram not call us to continue the work of education with the youth?

*You have been very committed in the service of the "simple folk" as Chaplain to Caritas and the FRAT. Can you tell us a bit more?* - My mission at the service of the simple and poor is still exciting today in the midst of all the difficulties. What makes me happiest is the fact that as chaplain or priest-companion to the Movements and \services where the laity are the first responsible for their mission, whether it is Feminine Catholic Action, the FRAT or finally the Secours Catholique or visiting the housebound. The most important point of these commitments is to be able listen, welcome, and create bonds of friendship. As I see it, this is the first mission of the Church which is to witness to God's Love through human relations, through dedication and friendship. The second is the team, the team spirit to get a move on, to get out and about visiting another person, and be responsible for the man or woman, encouraging them to do likewise. All this with the patience

seed of an intuition which, although very demanding, will help us to be constructive by our obedience.

There are two angles which are striking, which just like threads of gold, are outstanding in the course of events: first of all there is the care that religious life can be daring and the other the fact of real goodness in the service rendered.

The Superior was very conscious of the value of religious life when in discussion with the Patriarch himself. "Allow me to depend on you, Mgr, so that this beloved son will always find with you the advantages and real treasures of the society and religious community which he is sacrificing by going off on his own to live in isolation" (L 329). For him this expectation is fundamental for the success of the mission. It is the sign that the exception is at the service of the mission, but that it is never an easy option.

For the responsible that he was the goodness of this mission is not just connected with the place where it is to be accomplished. It is a response to a fundamental dynamism often expressed by him: the service of the chaplaincy to the Carmelites, contact with whom by different religious would be a good thing because it would be a strong "spiritual swap" of the marvellous encouragement for an energetic spiritual life. (L 284, 356). This is the real foundation on which the discernment is based to decide on the possibility or not of giving a favourable response.

If the form of the mission changes, we can easily find in the intuition of Fr Etchecopar traces of the essentials to which we must adhere so that by our fidelity we may be creative. Rooted in it, we shall be able to reach the bravest of decisions, to choose the most unexpected of solutions in the service of the Church and of the world. To the question "Who are we?" Fr Etchecopar and many others after him, have amply responded. To the question "What keeps us going?", we often reply by saying the importance for us in simply sharing with the men and women of today an incarnation which reveals the face of Christ. The

question “What do we want to do together?” summons up a personal vision and a brotherly sharing of faith. It is our responsibility because it is the part we have to play in the Father’s work for our Congregation. May the Spirit help us, may the intercession of Fr Etchecopar enlighten us on our way as disciples of St Michael - a way which has been so powerfully opened for us!

Philippe Hourcade,SCJ



### **Blessed Miriam Regional Chapter**

#### **Fraternity and Challenges without frontiers**

The week before the beginning of the Regional Chapter, the English Vicariate happily welcomed members of the region from Thailand and India. Fathers Pensa, Tidkham, Suthon, Jiraphat and Subancha all arrived safely from Thailand and Father Biju Paul, Biju Antony and Enakius also arrived from India. There to welcome them was the Olton community led by Brother Andrew who was also a member of Chapter, Father Austin the Regional Superior was also there to welcome our guests and also taking part for the English Vicariate were Fathers Colin Fortune, Anton Madej and Deacon Wilfred. Sadly we were missing three of our brethren, Father Chan who is presently working in Bangalore India, Father Mongchon in Sampran Thailand and Father Subesh working in Bongaigon Thailand. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and we hope that they will eventually be able to visit England one day soon.

During the few days before the meetings were to take place the Fathers were taken to visit parts of the English Vicariate and also a new parish venture taken on by Father Anton on behalf of the Vicariate. There are two small parishes joined together and they were both very welcoming to all our Sacred Heart Fathers and Brothers. After a small reception at Clayton we journeyed to the next parish called Ashley. A Mass was concelebrated at the little country parish and then we all joined the people of the parish for a very pleasant buffet supper.

### **5 MINUTES WITH... Father Dominique**

*Nef: Your name is very Basque and you have been living in the Limoges area since 1969; tell us how your vocation came about and how you have landed in the Limousin?* - It’s true! With such a name and my accent I can’t deny my origins. In June 1944 a Betharram priest, Father Ithuralde arrived in my native village, in the heart of the Basque country, to preach a retreat. For First Communions. It was my first contact w9th the Congregation. And that’s how I arrived in Betharram... studies at the Apostolicat and at the college in Betharram. Novitiate, scholasticate, 28 months National Service during the war in Algeria. Before and after my ordination by Mgr Lacoste, Bishop of Tali, I spent a considerable length of time at the Sonis School at Sidi-Bel-Abbes in Western Algeria. Here I had the immense grace of living in a community of young religious-priests. They were dynamic, generous and joyful and marked my life. After 1968, catechism in France had just undergone a huge evolution with the participation of lay catechists. Then in September 1969 I was called to Limoges.

*The greater part of you ministry has been at the service of the youth; what have you gleaned from this experience?* -

At the service of children, youth and adults I spent ten years first of all in Algeria, a quarter of a century in Limoges; at the Ozanam college and a few years at Ste Jeanne d’Arc college in the St Michael parish. At the request of the Bishop I was appointed to accompany the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides as their diocesan Chaplain for 15 years and finally the Christian Fraternity of the Sick and Disabled. This is an Evangelisation Movement commonly known as the FRAT. What were my greatest joys in all that? Seeing two boys becoming priest-religious and two Girl Guides becoming religious; there was also the joy of working with other adults: catechists, leaders in the different Diocesan Move-



Fr Dominic Etcheverria has been based at Limoges, in the centre of France for the last 40 years (the time of fulfilment according to the Bible). Then quite simply he has accepted to recall for us what he has done and what has been fulfilling for him as religious of the Sacred Heart of Betharram.

deepen our knowledge of Fr Etchecopar's heritage. The vigour employed in translating the texts of our charisma is a clear sign of his love for the Betharram family and the depth of his feeling of belonging to it.

Despite his diabetes Michael devoted himself without stinting to the parish and college in Coronado. In the performance of this heavy charge and as far as was possible, he expended "the immensity of charity in the limits of his position."

His love for our religious family was perhaps rooted in the deep affection which he bore his own family. He would often telephone his sister Pilar, and just before the death of his brother Angel he paid him a visit. He preciously kept a video recording of his parents' voices. Child of Leon he had kept the nostalgia for home. Neither time nor distance had in any way lessened his love for the fatherland.

It hurts to think that Miguel died on his own. Circumstances were such that he spent the major part of his time on his own at Martin Coronado. He was a man of communication and hospitality, member of a fraternal and warm family, yet he died on his own and during the night. As a Vicariate we must continue to ask ourselves what the Lord is saying to us through Miguel's generous life.

Guido García,SCJ

*Dear Father Miguel, I thank God that I knew you. I have the best of memories of you. You were a good patient, methodical, organised, and always attentive to "half full glass"; you were an optimist, with a deep faith, and a childlike spirit which made you limpid. You used to give me your poems, as limpid as your music. Thanks to your e-mails you taught me computing.*

*We believe and are convinced that you are with the Father in heaven and who received you with the outstretched arms of his Mercy. He too thanks you for your priesthood, which gave peace, trust and faith in Divine Providence. The witness of your life has been a great help to me; and I am sure that it will continue to be a light for many others.*

*Dr. Claudia Aspe (Buenos Aires, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010)*

The first Chapter of the Region, Blessed Mariam, took place from the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of October in a historic place, the library of Olton Friary, the same place where Cardinal Newman, recently beatified, preached in 1873 at the opening of the chapel. The theme of the reflection was taken for the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (4:7): "We are only earthenware jars that hold this treasure, for clearly such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us" (4: 7).

The overview of each of the three vicariates showed up their respective strengths and weaknesses. The aging of the northern hemisphere contrasted with the expansions of vocations in the south. (There are 14 native ordained priests and 38 young men in formation in Thailand; nine priests and 33 students in India). In an open and frank exchange the delegates looked at the human vulnerabilities, institutional and financial, in the region. A mutual willingness to work together as a Region came out of this. Finally the representatives were elected for the General Chapter: FF. Colin, Pensa, Tidkham, Biju Alappat, and Br. Gerard.

The meetings were accompanied with a happy and prayerful liturgy organised by Brother Andrew while the catering was taken care of by the Brothers of the Community with the help of some good parishioners who constantly support the life of the community at Olton. To finish the third and final day, the Companions of Betharram from Olton and Small Heath were there to host a final meal which was a mix of English fish and chips, shepherd's pie and more spicy dishes that had their origin in both Thailand and India.

Although we cannot claim this to have been a historic Council like Nicaea or Chalcedon, there was a growth in understanding, mutual respect and love, comments Superior regional: "We were all conscious of being as fragile and worn as 'old clay pots' but we were quietly confident that we also carried a treasure within." (Fr Austin) We wish our brother of the Region a safe and happy journey home! Apart from the cold of our northern country, we are delighted to have had their company and presence over these last few days.

St Michael  
Region

### Vicariate of Central Africa

**Dashing golden jubilee** ■ The festivities surrounding the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima Parish took place from the 21<sup>st</sup>–24<sup>th</sup> October. In presence of the founder, Fr Valentin (OFM cap) and of the actual parish priest, Fr Beniamino (SCJ), these three days of conferences, reunions, and celebrations speak well for the future. See you for the centenary!

### Vicariate of France-Spain

**Petite Therese in the main chapel** ■ On the 20<sup>th</sup> October, Betharram welcomed the relics of Saint Therese of Lisieux. Visiting the diocese of Bayonne the reliquary stopped at the sanctuary for a “grace filled day”, so said the Chaplain.

### Vicariate of Holy Land

**Bethlehem Promotion** ■ The St Michael Region now has three novices under the care of Fr Herve Kouame; on 14<sup>th</sup> September Yarkai Marie-Paulin (CA), Bahi Djison Hermann and N’Guessan N’Zore Valentin (CI) began their canonical year.

### Vicariate of Brazil

**A faith festival** ■ During an unforgettable ceremony, prepared by the Vila Matilde Catholic community, Brothers Luiz Enrique Ribeiro and Robson Antonio Leite were ordained deacons by the Bishop of Sao Miguel Paulista on 24<sup>th</sup> October. Parents and friends had come from far and near (Tres Pontas Conceicao de Rio Verde) to be with them. The Regional Superior wrote: “It was an experience to meet Jesus who humbles himself to share with his sons the charisma of service with Betharram and for the benefit of the Church. The Region now has four deacons and a fine group of young men in formation – source of hope and pride. Congratulations to the newly ordained and may they always be at the service of all!”

### Vicariate of Thailand

**Long live the friends of Jesus!** ■ From 16<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October at the Holy Family Centre in Ban Pong the catechetical camp took place. The theme was: “Reveal Jesus to your friends.” Fr Phonchai and the Betharramite Brothers conducted the event. 157 children took part in the camp and at the end 49 of them made their First Communion.

Fr Etchecopar  
RegionB<sup>ed</sup> Miriam  
Region

## IN MEMORIAM

### Argentina

Palacios de la  
Valduerna30<sup>th</sup> September 1942

Martin Coronado

13<sup>th</sup> October 2010

### Father Miguel Martínez Fuertes

I was deeply saddened when I learned of the death of Fr Miguel Martinez Fuertes. I spent the year 2007 with him in our Residence Martin Coronado. God willed that I should meet up with him as a guest, the week end preceding his death.

In May 2005 we had been pleasantly surprised by the news that Miguel, until then General Bursar of the Congregation, had decided to return to the former Province of Rio de la Plata, today the Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay. Born in Palacios de la Valduerna, in the province of Leon, Spain, Miguel was one of the rare old pupils of the Apostolicat of Mendelu to have persevered. The formation he received for his religious life led him to France where he studied from the time of his novitiate. He also cultivated his lifelong passion: music. In this part of the world we often repeat the celebrated *Senor, aqui estoy* which he composed. When recalling that period Michael loved to remember Fathers Mansanne and Brunot, the first for his musical talent, the second for his biblical and theological prowess.

After ministering in the Basque country and in Saragossa, Fr Miguel was called to America in 1980; destination: Paraguay, where he left an indelible impression. Those who knew him as we did appreciated his deep humanity, his fatherly attention, his sense of service, and his cordiality. One got the impression that with him one was greeted “just like at home”.

I was witness of the kindly care with which he rallied round Fr Cabero from Leon, just like himself. Fr Cabero, diagnosed with cancer had undergone surgery many times. During his convalescence Miguel was ever at his side: an example of Betharramite fraternity.

But there was another department of importance - his work as a translator was of the utmost importance to us Spanish speakers. Thanks to him we can have access to our founder in the original, read the articles in the NEF, know and