

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

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## The Betharramite Adventure in China

the Betharramites. They will be in the hands of two Chinese Fathers, helped by seven or eight native religious Sisters. From a human point of view, it is catastrophic both for our Mission and for the whole of China. Will these Christians hold on?

Dear Brothers and friends, I am leaving you this prayer which a young Christian from Tali offered me as he kissed me good bye when I was leaving by plane: "Father, Father, pray for us; the struggle is terrible and we don't know if we will be strong enough to withstand the storm." ■



*Father Etehecopar wrote*

*... in his personal diary, Christmas 1852*

11

(the end)

*Let us be detached from the things of this earth, so as not to fall into the fault committed by the inhabitants of Bethlehem. Ah, if St Joseph and the Blessed Virgin had looked more respectable, if there was a hope of getting some gold from them, they would not have been refused hospitality in such a cruel manner. But, it's the love of the things of this world which closes hearts. There was no room for them (Luke 2,7)...*

*And so it was that Jesus Christ was born in a poor stable, with poor shepherds for sole companions. From the moment of his birth, the Divine Child is (1) our Saviour. He sheds tears, he shivers, and each one of his tears, each one of his little sighs, was more than enough to redeem a thousand worlds. (2) Above all he is our Master. (...) From the first moment of his life he has become our modal. From the beginning, this adorable Master practises the virtues which sum up the whole of perfection. Humility, poverty, and the mortification which results from them.*

*Oh Jesus, our life and my all, detach me from the things of this world. Your crib, your humility, your poverty, that's what I admire with you, what I long to love with all my heart. Let me bow down at your feet to adore you! I want to get smaller and smaller so as to match up my limbs with yours, Oh Divine Child, so that you may sanctify me and change me into yourself.*



# Family News

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

 **A word from the  
Superior General**

## With St Michael Garicoits before the Crib

When contemplating the Mystery of the Birth, our Father St Michael Garicoits keeps his eyes fixed on the Child Jesus small, poor, fragile and feeble. *Poor little child! Dear Child Jesus, you have been born for me!* (DS 106) He contemplates this Child in his present state, contenting himself with *a crib and some coarse swaddling clothes* (DS 251). He looks at him inside and outside.

From the outside, he is a Child, a movement: "*a spouse coming out of the room, a champion, delighted to enter the race*" (Psalm 18,6). He leaps from his Father's bosom into that of Mary, from heaven into the crib, he makes his way, rushes forth, runs, goes straight ahead, trembles, weeps and cries out: **Here I am.**

His **Here I am** speaks of an unconditional radicality; he is ready to do anything, to accept anything in a spirit which is generous but well ordered. Well ordered, because he is performing his duty in his present situation; vast, because he is proving his generosity both in the crib and everywhere else (DS 42).

St Michael's contemplative eye goes straight to the heart of the Divine Child to discover his feelings, his attitudes, and the reasons which brought him into this situation. He is suffering cold, humiliations, worries and disgust (DS 108); he can be seen humiliated and devoted (DS 43) obedient and contented.

This penetrating look helps St Michael Garicoits to understand *this action so obvious, so urgent of the Word made Flesh to unite us with his Father* (DS 110). *Thanking the Fa-*

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**Happy  
Christmas**

**108<sup>th</sup> year  
10<sup>th</sup> series, nr. 55  
14<sup>th</sup> December 2010**



ther, carrying out his will is the reason for all he does (DS 283 – 284). *The other reason is me: (he gave himself up) for love of us. To draw mankind back to the memory and love of their Creator. Our Lord Jesus Christ shows them the Divinity now visible and palpable in his humanity. Behold him here in the Crib and under the Eucharistic appearances* (DS 109).

St Michael Garicoits also contemplates Mary and Joseph. Outwardly, he sees them poor, simple and respectable. Inwardly, they are responding to God's love with modesty, humility and gratitude (DS 107). St Michael discovers the link existing between the *Ecce venio* spoken by Jesus and the *Ecce ancilla* spoken by Mary, his Mother. *It is the same humility, the same charity, and the same unlimited obedience. It is the same sentiment, the same happiness in the same devotedness, in the same vocation to the same community* (DS 42).

The devil is shocked before the Child Jesus in the Crib, humble and obedient. *To think that I, such a powerful angel, should have to obey the carpenter's son, and adore him in a Crib! I refuse to serve! (Jer 2,20). I can hear the order. Let all God's angels adore him (Heb 1,6; Ps 98,5). To adore this humanity and recognise this superior! I refuse to serve! I will not obey!* (DS 212)

As for the shepherds, *they are not shocked at the sight of a tiny baby in utmost misery. How can one be amazed, or shocked in the presence of the humiliations and sufferings of his Master? On the contrary, the shepherds come running and adore, for they are encouraged by the lesson of the **Word made Flesh**, for Our Lord has come down from Heaven to teach us how to please his Father, how to do his will, how to value humiliations and sufferings just as the world places value on honours, how to seek the Cross with greater zeal than the men of this world seek the honours of here below* (DS 109 – 110). And this is possible because, just like Mary and Joseph, *the shepherds have received Jesus Christ and his divine life in their hearts, they meditate, they go over the message, they think about the Divine Word* (DS 111).

## THE BETHARRAMITE ADVENTURE IN CHINA 11

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

Despite the disgraceful pressure on the part of the police, it doesn't seem that the movement for progress had yet reached Tali. After the setting up of the reforming committee, the Bishop continued asking permission of the police, as before; the parish priest continued to show the rough copy of his sermons to the Government Censors. "Spiritual powers are no concern of ours" the reforming committee told the Bishop. However, at the beginning of January, one of the reforming chiefs together with his family was settling in in the Convent, on police orders. He's the overseer in the mission. The Bishop as well as the other Fathers and the Christians must refer to him; likewise for all correspondence.

**The situation today in the Mission:** In the diocese of Tali there is only Mgr Lacoste and Fathers Toucoulet and Spini left, and they are carrying on as best they can to assure the bare essentials of their ministry; as for Fr Barcelonne at Tchou Khoula and Fr Londaitzbehere at Hia Khouan they are forbidden any ministry in the service of the Christians; two Chinese Fathers, Frs Liou and Fou are banged up in their sector of Kouti and Pe pei lou, and would prefer to die rather than to follow close on the heels of the reformers. Sister Albine St-Michel, the sole remaining one of the eleven Daughters of the Cross still in China, is being detained by the police probably because she had done an enormous amount of good.

The Fathers at the Burmese frontier have left, as well as the four Fathers from South Yunnan who rejoined us at Kunming on 8<sup>th</sup> January in excellent health and wearing hiking gear! They will be following us back to France at fortnightly intervals.

And so this mission of some twelve thousand souls, three quarters of whom are but neophytes, scattered over a territory half the size of France and speaking four or five languages will be all that remains after the final departure of



### THE COMMUNISM AND THE MISSION IN TALI

DECEMBER  
1950 -  
DECEMBER  
1951



2010

DECEMBER

14	Buon compleanno	F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	Happy birthday	Br. George Varghese Korandakatte
16	Happy birthday	Br. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong
17	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire 50 ans de sacerdoce	P. Giuseppe Lietti F. Omer Koutouan Nanghy P. André Lacaze
18	Buon compleanno 45 años de sacerdocio	P. Giulio Forloni P. Wilfrido Romero
23	Happy birthday	Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph
24	Happy birthday	Br. Gerard Sutherland
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Francisco Daleoso
27	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Paniga Fr. Chan John Kunu
26	Happy birthday	P. Somnuek Phinitphornphan
28	Feliz cumpleaños Happy birthday 35 años de sacerdocio	P. José Miguel Larrosa P. Hiran Thomas Klinboakaew P. Tobia Sosio
31	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Théophile Dégni N'Guessan

2011

JANUARY

1	Happy birthday  Joyeux anniversaire 10 años de profesión	Br. Valan Peter Kanagaraj Br. Peter Nonthaphat Mayoe Fr. Antoine Adamou Hno Daniel Pavón
3	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Sergio Gouarnalusse
7	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Jesús Cano P. Daniel Ramón Martín
8	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Teodoro Miguel
10	Happy birthday	Br. Yesudas Kuttappasseril
11	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Locatelli
13	Buon compleanno	F. Angelo Sala
14	Feliz aniversário	Ir. Glecimar da Silva

Nobody is talking but all are in amazement as they contemplate, and adore the mystery of God's love made man. There is only one Word, that of the Father giving himself in his beloved Son, this tiny vulnerable Baby in whom he has told us everything, according to the message of St John of the Cross. *"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!"* (Mk 9,7) This Word is to be heard in silence. The angel breaks the silence by announcing to the shepherds *a good news, a great joy for the whole of humanity; the new born baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, is your Saviour, the Messiah, the Lord* (Lk 2, 10-12). The whole heavenly army changes their silent adoration into a song of praise: *Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth* (Lk 2, 14). The silence of their contemplation is broken by the noise of the shepherds arriving at the stable. As they hurry on their way, they talk about what *has been told them about this Child* (Lk 2,17). Then there is the noise of the departing shepherds; full of joy they return to their flocks, praising God and telling everybody what they have seen, heard, touched, and felt (Lk 2,20).

St Michael Garicoits also contemplates the arrival of the Wise Kings, who are like searchers seeking the face of God: *They know nothing about it, but they go ahead just the same: "We have seen his star". They cling to the slender signs from Providence; they are to be followed with zeal and perseverance, follow them until the star stops: "We have found Jesus Christ"* (John 1, 41). *He is the rock; whosoever lives in him stays upright* (DS 184).

As we reach the end of our contemplation with our Father St Michael Garicoits, let us reflect for a moment and draw some benefits for our lives, for the life of the Congregation, just five months away from our General Chapter in Bethlehem:

1. *What a school! What a master! What power and what gentleness in these lessons at the crib! What efforts to win the greatest of sinners!* (DS 109)

2. *What could be better suited to fill us with love for him and to make us generous in his service? "I can do all things in him who is my strength"* (Phil, 4,13; DS 108)



3. *Let us be proud to be the disciples of this Child; let us love in truth, let us believe and taste the things from God; let us rush and fly in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ (DS 111).*

4. *Providence does not advance making great proclamations, nor does it do any great acts, It begins simply with a little crib and a little child. A little narrow path which is a blind alley. Yet it is all on the way and still advancing, slowly, silently, for thirty years, in Nazareth. Then the seed suddenly becomes a big tree spreading its branches worldwide. (DS 183 – 184)*

Finally, conclude with a colloquy, reflecting on what I ought to say to the Three Divine Persons, to the Eternal Word, to the Mother of the Word Incarnate and Our Lady (or to St Joseph, to a shepherd or one of the Kings). And, according to how I feel within myself, follow and imitate Our Lord as closely as possible, as if he had just become incarnate for me. Recite **The Lord's Prayer** (Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 109).

Gaspar Fernandez, SCJ

### Thank you for this year and for the community

Lord, to live is to seek you	When I look at what I am going
To feel that you are there	through I can see you at the centre of
To conform our life to your Word.	my community
To live is to struggle,	And I become an echo of what they
To rejoice at being sons in the Son,	are feeling.
And sing the wonders	<i>They recognised Him at the breaking</i>
that you have done.	<i>of Bread. (Luke 24,31).</i>
Let your Spirit sing and dance	Day after day we have shared the
And make his way in us.	Bread of your Word
So that the fullness that comes from	And the Bread of the Eucharist.
you May be a source of happiness	You have come out to meet us,
for our brothers.	To encourage and to love us.

Belarin (le Gers) before he was 17 years of age. He made his first vows on 15th August 1941. Then came his seminary studies at Nazareth and Bethlehem; finally he was ordained priest in Bordeaux on 29th June 1949,

Well deserved praise has been heaped on Fr Fourcade, but I, for my part, would like to stress either his role as teacher and educator. Appointed to Betharram College in 1953 either as a French and Latin teacher or as supervisor in the dormitory (for in those days, the Fathers were so numerous that they did everything), or as educator in the construction of small scale models of planes and boats. Messages of appreciation of his actions in so many functions from those who had profited from them have been joined by messages of total gratitude.

Without wanting to, Fr Fourcade dedicated himself totally to his mission as teacher and educator. This mission was shaped by love and consequently with clarity – clarity together with discipline and energy specially needed in the formation of 4th and 3rd year pupils. For many, this religious from Betharram will have been the solid rock and sure foundation which many of them had been deprived of.

This priest and religious was very engaging; better still he attracted many souls. Who can count the number of clocks repaired by his skilful hands, or the many items of furniture restored to their original beauty! If he didn't get on well with his enemy or with those of little faith, on the other hand he had the gift of total sincerity. He was generous of heart and was witty. His feelings sometimes got out of hand hidden by a Roman medallion. He was a man of duty and a man of prayer, so he couldn't imagine that his services were counted, no more than his visits to check the water at the College and Lycee Betharram. Peremptory in his work, he was similarly in sympathy for he had to have total freedom to give the measure of his friendship and fraternity. Thank you, Father Fourcade.



Lons  
14 December 1923



Betharram  
3 December 2010

Henri Marsaa-Poey, SCJ

friends, and over the years many people tried to encourage, cajole and persuade him to lose weight. All our religious communities made repeated attempts: all to no avail. Colin was often *blasé* about his increasing weight but his brethren knew this was bravado, as he was often depressed about the multiple threats to his health brought on by obesity. By the time he suffered the fatal heart attack in Birmingham Symphony Hall on December 1st he had reached 191 kg. *Ecce sacerdos magnus*.

In spite of growing health problems, and fully aware that his father and his brothers all died aged 62 Colin accepted the job of Vicariate Superior at 59. In just two years he gained a much greater awareness of the Congregation internationally, pastored the fragile Vicariate and gave this new ministry all his best efforts. His sudden death during Elgar's Cello Concerto played by the CBSO was a terrible shock to those around him and to his brethren in the family of Betharram, but it is how he would have liked to die.

Now he is with the Lord in a place of happiness where all effects of physical ailments have been wiped away. How he will enjoy the messianic banquet, the good company of the saints and the music of the spheres! His passing leaves a large empty space here on earth, and he will be missed not only by his brethren and his step-mother Esther, but by many for whom he was an assurance of the love of the heart of Jesus.

Austin Hughes, SCJ

## IN MEMORIAM

### Father Paul Fourcade

#### France

Father Paul Fourcade was born on 14th December 1923 in Lons, one of a family of five children. He was only 12 years of age when his father died on 7th July 1935. The family was in mourning for a beloved father. Dressed in black their admirable mother continued to rear the children – four boys and one girl, Yvonne.

At an early age Paul intended to enter religious life. After the apostolicat in Betharram, he began his novitiate in

Your Table has assembled us  
and the daily Bread was plentiful.

Health for body and  
peace and joy for the soul.

Lord, meeting you in prayer  
has become the principal meeting  
place for the brethren.

*May they love each other!*

(John 13,34)

Community has been  
our second great gift.

You called us to Barracas  
where you have been ever waiting for us.  
You invited us to give ourselves fully,  
And together with you, to accept the  
challenge to build your Kingdom.

And like a good wine grower,  
you have purified our feelings  
and desires,

You have fortified the call  
to a *common union*,  
You have made us your Church,  
your daily dwelling place.

*Go, therefore, baptise, teach...*

(Mat 28,19)

You sent us out  
to announce your Kingdom.  
And we went with all the commit-  
ment that was expected;  
In community we devoted ourselves  
to the allotted tasks,  
Overcoming difficulties and weariness,  
Discouragement and even joy.

So, like the first Christian Community,  
after your Ascension,

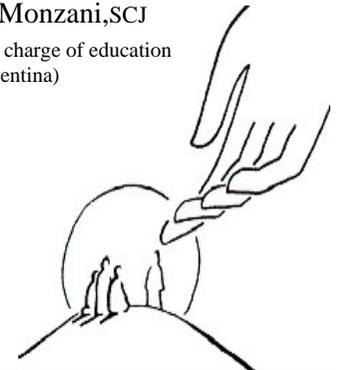
Began to walk on its own,  
We learned to put into practise the  
novelty you were asking us to do:  
Mission, formation, education.

Your Spirit enlightened us and led us  
on the path. We let ourselves be led.

In our educational community  
we came to know new words:  
Schedule, Presence, The laity and  
their autonomy, Service, Respect...  
Words which instilled new life into us,  
A fresh momentum making us more  
transparent to your Presence.

Lord, I thank you for this year  
which you have given me.  
Thank you for inviting me to walk  
by your side,  
And since I have felt  
that I was loved,  
you placed me  
in your Sacred Heart.

Giancarlo Monzani, SCJ  
Community in charge of education  
(Barracas, Argentina)



**Log book****Hail the Dawn**

For a whole week with John, a priest friend who was from there, I had been wandering up and down that magnificent and captivating country. We had got up at the crack of dawn to say Mass in the neighbouring convent. 4h25: a few nightlights lit up the entrance to the chapel. On opening the door, a flood of light welcomed the visitor. No fewer than 250 sails were hoisted in the silence and prayer – 250 religious *Lovers of the Cross*. We made our way silently to the sacristy. A few minutes later, just as we were in position at the foot of the altar, there was a burst of music, clear and captivating. It's not yet daylight but the sun is shaking up their hearts; no doubt about it at all, the Beloved is waking up!

After breakfast we visit the house: the Juniorate (70 girls in formation), the kitchens, the herb work shops, the dispensary... everywhere there was the same application to work, everywhere the same dignity in the smiles. Catholic Education has no rights here but the Government is interested only in people of school age. Consequently the Sisters opened a kindergarten. As we visited a class the Mother General smiled at a pink faced little girl. "*She's called Therese, she told me. She was abandoned and left on our door step; she's the first child that we found!*" Since then, little Therese has 250 Sisters for mother.

The road is getting bumpy and the countryside more and more exciting. After the town and its noise, now as far as the eye can see there are rice fields, mountains looking like sugar lumps, cyclists with their pointed hats who stop on the side laughing at the sight of the oncoming four by four. Our route ends in a church yard. The local priests are waiting for us. Their average age is 35 years. "*Grace*" is sung at the microphone for a dozen or so guests. Each one helps himself from the dishes. My chopsticks are in a tangle. This is the moment when my opposite number introduces Joseph Thuan.

with gratitude what the experience had given him: a deep sense of having been touched by God with the love of Jesus. It was this experience that helped him gravitate towards the Congregation of Betharram. His brother Alan had been a Jesuit missionary in Guyana for 10 years by this time, but Colin preferred the gentle spirituality of St. Michael to the heroic demands of Ignatius.

After a shaky beginning at the Birmingham Seminary Oscott College, Colin perhaps conscious of being older than the other students and anxious that life was slipping away was put onto the 'fast track' and was ordained at Olton at the end of June 1986. He spent the next five years teaching English and RE at the Sacred Heart College and helped pioneer the new GCSE exam. He was a pastor to the young boarders and also worked in the parish.

From here he went to St. Joseph's Leigh in 1991 and spent 4 years as chaplain to St. Mary's Astley the largest Comprehensive School in the Liverpool Diocese. It was here that he developed a very personal ministry to the disturbed. People of all ages troubled about evil spirits, troubled about personal relationships or troubled about their orientation would beat a path to his door. For many who felt marginalised by the church or forgotten by God he was an assurance of the constant love of the Heart of Jesus for all, a truly Betharramite ministry.

For the last 15 years he was parish priest at Holy Name Church, Great Barr on the north side of Birmingham, a very busy parish. But much of his energy went into his work as a Chair of Governors at Stuart Bathurst School, where staff and students alike were grateful for his endeavours, in this very difficult ministry. His previous experience in the world of teaching was usefully employed here.

Throughout all this time Colin's presence was larger-than-life, partly through his great convivial wit, his erudition and his booming voice, but also through his sheer physical size. Even in his twenties his obesity worried his

**in memoriam**

Let us pray for **Mr. Prasert**, father of Alfonso, a novice in Bangalore, who died on November 27th in Thailand.

**Ms Maria Teresa Trivelli**, sister of Brother Fiorenzo (Generalate House), who passed away in Menaggio (Italy) on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Mr. Valan**, the youngest brother of Fr. John Britto Irudhayam (Bangalore), who died in Tamil Nadu (India).

## IN MEMORIAM

## England



Solihull

3<sup>rd</sup> November 1949

Birmingham

1<sup>st</sup> December 2010

## Father Colin Fortune

The late 1970's produced an unexpected upturn in religious vocations in England after ten years of decline. Inspired by Cardinal Hume and Fr. Michael Hollings in Westminster and spurred on by the election of John Paul II, many young men started once more to hear a call to priesthood or religious life. Colin entered Novitiate in 1979 along with Terry Langman another ex-teacher like himself. Their Novice master was Fr. Frank Dutton who looked after them at 38 Hill Avenue, Worcester, the annexe to Garicoits House, too small then to contain the growing number of students.

Within a year the whole community had moved to Olton Friary which was Colin's home parish. There in Solihull Colin was born on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1949 to Olive and Cecil, humble traders who kept a baker's shop. Like his two older brothers Alan and Ron, Colin was gifted and intelligent and after education in local schools graduated in 1971 with an English degree from Lampeter a tiny College of the University of Wales, an unusual choice in those days for someone whose knowledge of literature, art and music was so wide ranging. But Colin never forgot his time in Wales and retained several friends from that period.

The friends he made as a young man were always a part of his life both in his teaching days in Birmingham catholic schools like Archbishop Masterson and later when he worked as a priest at the Sacred Heart College Droitwich. He would meet up with them regularly right up till his last days to share music, art, conversation, good food and fine wine.

Colin was a mixture of ancient and modern: his tastes in food and clothes were often those of a Victorian Gentleman, but he was always au fait with recent developments in politics, economics, teaching and spirituality. The catholic charismatic movement of the 1970's influenced him profoundly, and although he later withdrew from active involvement in prayer groups he always recognised

I hadn't noticed him so far, although he was up all the time for the service. John had mentioned the existence of a 23 year old lad attracted by Religious life, but it all seemed very unreal to me: after spending two years in the parish to test the Lord's call, rather than joining the many candidates at the seminary, to be driven by an ideal without ever coming in contact with a community, and asking his Parish priest to direct him towards a religious community. This young man was very bothered and so he turned to John, who happened to be there on holidays. John informed him of my arrival, and so we met up at the Angelus time.

That afternoon, Joseph, John and I took some time together. Joseph repeated his wish and his availability with a certain calm. To the question which I was longing to ask: "*Why ask admission of a small congregation, totally unknown and even non-existent here?*", he replied: *My only real reason is that you are here*" John translated and then stopped. Since there was nothing else to say, I left Joseph all the "Betharramite documentation" I had assembled, that is two prayer cards from my Office Book, one of St Michael with the prayer *Me Voici*, the other Our Lady of Betharram, *Protectress of Youth*. I also promised to pass on to the Superior General his written request to begin an experience of his vocation with us.

I resumed my journey, deep in thought and happy about this unexpected meeting. What a magnificent lesson in faith, typical of the Christians of that country: free despite all the obstacles, free and daring because humble and trusting, not in themselves but in God alone! I had a living example of this a little later in the Parish of Perpetual Help. As we had stopped to greet the Parish Priest who is also the Vicar General, we were greeted by a man worn out in the Communist prisons, but of an extraordinary intellectual and moral vigour. During the course of the conversation about pastoral care, and about the people in the sector etc., Fr Peter allowed himself one solitary personal allusion: "When I was freed, I left a small prison for a much larger one." And that prison was his country under the yoke of the Party. It is the "society of lies", as he defined it, passing in the space of a

few years from ideological materialism to economical materialism, from Marxist totalitarianism to the tyranny of the market. And the Church continues to resist ever and always, in the name of the rights of God and of man, which are inseparable. Before leaving we stop for a moment before the statues of Our Lady and the Sacred Heart; the time to entrust to them this Church and this people! They have suffered so much and they had so much to teach us!

In the evening we reached Meson, John's native village. I was happy to meet his parents, and I got to know the rest of the family. What an honour it was to be received in their midst. It's not far from their house to the church. The day will finish as it started with the Eucharist. In an instant a young priest swaps his tee-shirt for a respectable cassock. The altar servers were as excited as they always are. The church was packed, even on a week day and in a village where the Christians are in the minority. The Mass was said for John's grandfather, farmer and catechist, who had died in deportation in the 1980s. Afterwards, everybody assembled before the Lourdes grotto: thanksgiving under the stars.

In my pocket I can feel a sheet of paper folded in four destined for Fr Gaspar: Joseph Thuan's letter. No, I haven't been dreaming. All these meetings took place the same day, a day as full and as beautiful as a new birth. It was night but we celebrated the dawn of salvation. It was 8<sup>th</sup> September, feast of Our Lady's birthday. It took place in Vietnam: the land – *Viet* - the south (in relation to China) – *Nam*, a land where there is a tiny little seed for Betharram... God willing!

Jean-Luc Morin, SCJ

*Post scriptum*

1. In Vietnam there are 26 dioceses, 3,000 priests, 12,000 women religious, and 6,5 million Catholics for a population of 83 millions.
2. The first name Thuan means "the will of God."
3. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010, the General Council admitted Joseph Vu van Thuan to pursue his discernment in view of Religious Life with Betharram. On the 12<sup>th</sup> November, Mgr Joseph Nguyen chi Linh, Bishop of Thanh Hoa, expressed his delight at this news, and hoped that our charism would attract other young men in Vietnam.

are not wealthy enough to support their Churches' needs, and so help seems to come from wealthier Catholics in Bangkok and abroad. When we came in 2006, Betharram had nine European priests, all near or over retirement age. Today, there are just five left working here. Betharram's work falls increasingly to their younger priests, 15 of them, mainly from the Karen people, and who work with the Karen or Akha. Nearly all our postulants are Karen.

*When you return to England, how does this experience continue to mean something to you?* - We always hope that our students enjoyed the course and made progress with their English. We think mainly of their selflessness and good-humour, when they have little or no money and few possessions; whereas, we, in comparison, have so much of both; and they are as happy, if not happier. Arriving back in England to the cold of winter and the excesses of a commercial Christmas does not compare well with our warm and simple three months in Thailand. We wish we could take a 'bottle' of this good feeling home with us and spread it round.

*Have you kept up contacts with your past pupils?* - We see our former students when we visit the Betharram Seminary in Sampran; we often meet up with others, who have left Betharram, around Chiang Mai, at Mass or when they visit us as they pass through. It is a delight to see them and marvel at how much English they have retained and to find out what they have gone on to do, (university, catechists, farming, tour guides.)

*Finally, what means a lot to you and which you would like to pass on to your pupils or to others?* - Our faith and our family are the most important things to us and we hope to share our lives with the students and theirs with us, during our time together. We always feel we get more from them than they do from us. Will have to close there as a former student has just arrived with two fresh coconuts to drink!!



5 MIN WITH...

23 years, who have just completed their secondary education and are having a pastoral year before deciding whether to continue their studies at the senior Seminary. We arrive in early September and return home for Christmas. We teach mornings and afternoons during the week, concentrating on practical spoken English. The students have already studied English throughout their education and know a lot of vocabulary and grammar, but not how to say it. From the very first moment of the first lesson, they are out of their seats and talking to each other and us; it comes as quite a shock after their previous formal training. At first, they are shy and hesitant but soon become more confident, and even have fun, and laugh at each other's mistakes, as they correct themselves. We start each session with a prayer and a song in English.

We live above the classroom and the students live above us, so we meet and talk and socialise outside lessons all the time. On Friday afternoons, we always go on a visit to some Chiang Mai tourist spot: elephants, umbrella factories, mountain top palaces etc. Sharing these experiences is a very real way to practise and use English. Occasionally we spend weekends together in the mountain Karen villages that they come from. We are always made very welcome by their people. From this closeness of sharing study, everyday life, Mass, prayer and play together, we become real friends with the young men; their enthusiasm, constant smiles, easy laughter and humility are wonderful qualities which we always admire and don't often see at home in England.

***More broadly, what is your view on the Church and on Betharram in Thailand?*** - Most priests in the Chiang Mai Diocese have many small villages in their parish, up to 70, and therefore have to travel to each in turn saying Mass, relying on local catechists to hold services in the weeks or months they can't be there. The devotion of the Karen people is truly marvellous to see, and humbling, for "sophisticated" Westerners like us. Most of these villages

## Generalate House

**Sisters in the Mission** ■ On November 14th, the Superior general and his vicar attended the opening of the Jubilee year of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. With a solemn celebration in their General House, presided over by the Minister General of the Friars Minor, the Sisters kicked off the celebration of the 150th anniversary of their foundation. The day before, was held the presentation of their places of mission, including the Niem dispensary (Central African Republic), where a community of Franciscan Sisters has been cooperating with our Betharram community for 20 years. It was an opportunity to thank the Sisters for their invaluable cooperation.

**University degree** ■ On November 29th, Fr Théophile Dégni N'Guessan obtained his canonical degree at the Camillianum, the Institute of Health Ministry. Fr Théophile, for three years a member of our community in via Brunetti, Rome, has brilliantly ended his studies by discussing a thesis entitled "International guidelines and universality of ethic norms in the biomedical research on the humans, and their application in the developing countries: the case of Ivory Coast". At the beginning of 2011, Fr Théophile will join his new mission post. Always ahead, in Rome as in Yamoussoukro!

## Vicariate of France-Spain

**Living springs** ■ As a preparation for the Advent season, a few laywomen, involved in various pastoral activities of the diocese of Bayonne gathered in Betharram on November 22nd for one day of "spiritual break". Father Gaston Hialé helped them to (re) discover the spiritual basis of their mission by presenting "the foundation of St Michael Garicoits' spirituality: The Here I Am of Christ". This contact with the Betharramite spirituality, the first for many of these ladies, was fruitful. The group has already planned another spiritual break around St. Michael, a day which will be widely open to any lay people at the service of the mission of the Church.

## Vicariates of Italy

**From the ugly duckling to the Dove... of the Holy Spirit** ■ November 7th and 8th the Betharramite Lay Associates had a meeting in Fornovo for a "Week end of the Spirit". The participants were happy to discover that being together is



*Saint Michael  
Region*

a boost to know each other better. At the meeting were also present: Luigi Accattoli, journalist of the "Corriere della Sera", who gave a lecture about "Christian Laity: the ugly duckling wants to fly", Fr Gaspar Fernandez, Fr Enrico Frigerio and Fr Francesco Radaelli, religious in-charge of the Italian Lay Associates. All appreciated the hospitality and were looking forward to another meeting to see whether the plans of this meeting have been fulfilled. We hope this is the case.

### Vicariate of Holy Land

**Mary, Miriam & the others** ■ On November 14th, the Carmel of Nazareth celebrated the 100th anniversary of foundation: in fact, the same day in 1910 arrived the first eleven Carmelites from Bethlehem. During the Mass of Thanksgiving, the Sisters renewed their vows in front of Mgr Marcuzzo, Patriarchal Vicar for Israel. The community of the Holy Family Carmel now consists of 18 nuns from twelve countries, with Fr Damiano Colleoni and Fr Philippe Hourcade as chaplains.

### Father Etchecopar Region

**Three times three makes 2010!** ■ The year 2010 ends with a flourish in the Latin-American part of the Congregation: three novices coming from the three Vicariates of the Etchecopar Region will make the vows in our Congregation. On December 12<sup>th</sup> at Villa Betharram in Adrogué (Argentina), Br Juan Pablo Garcia Martinez made his first profession; on December 17<sup>th</sup> in the Saint Francis Xavier Parish in La Colmena (Paraguay) it will be the turn of Br Alcides Ramon Riveros Diaz; finally, on December 19<sup>th</sup> on Brazil, Br Charles Alves Dos Santos will close the celebrations of this decade. Let us share the joy and prayer of Betharram in South America.

### Vicariate of Argentina-Uruguay

**Lights of the Immaculate** ■ On December 8th, the Church of the Immaculate Conception of Montevideo celebrated the 140th anniversary of its inauguration. To mark the event, the parish entrusted to Betharram offers various events throughout this year: concerts, festive meals, etc. Another highlight was the Parish Mission Day on November 24th. After the Mass celebrated by Fr Enrique Gavel, the Christian community of the "Vascos" (Basque



Fr Etchecopar  
Region

people) walked the streets of the city centre. This experience of direct evangelization responds to the concern of the bishops of Uruguay for a "Church in a state of mission." A call in line with the spirit of St. Michael Garicoits.

### Vicariate of Brazil

**Friendly yours...** ■ On November 20-21, the first informal gathering between formators and pupils of St Michael College (Passa Quatro) and St Joseph Institute (Conceição do Rio Verde) was organized by the Deacon Luiz Henrique. This event, aiming at creating for young people some opportunities of sharing, praying and having a good time, was a real success. What a pleasure to see the joy of the students, and what an encouragement to further improve the cooperation between the two Betharramite institutions in Brazil.

### 5 MINUTES WITH... Brede and Bruce



Every year a couple from Birmingham spend part of their retirement at the service of our community in Thailand. For three months, not only do they teach English voluntarily to the postulants, but they also share their life in Chiang Mai, where the session is held, or wherever else. This is a meeting with laity, who are partners in the Betharramite formation: Brede and Bruce Vaughan.

**Nef: Can you tell us something about yourselves and what you are doing in Ban Betharram, Chiang Mai?** -

We are both former teachers and Youth Leaders from Birmingham, England, with three grown-up sons and a grandson. In 2006, a Betharram priest in Birmingham, Father Dominic Innamorati, was looking for an English teacher to help the students in Thailand and we volunteered, as a challenge and a change of lifestyle for us. Now, after five years, it's like home from home. I had been an English teacher all my working life, but I took an EFL course to find out how to teach English as a foreign language. It has been more than valuable.

**Specifically, how are things going there?** - Each year we teach a class of ten postulants, young men between 18 to