

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

Generalate House
via Angelo Brunetti, 27
00186 Rome (Italy)

Telephone
+39 06 320 70 96
Fax
+39 06 36 00 03 09
E-mail
nef@betharram.fr

Visit us on our website
www.betharram.net

The Extraordinary Life of Sister Marie

Like all the little Arab girls of her age, she didn't go to school and so learned neither to read nor write, spending her time doing house work, as a preparation for her marriage which usually took place at 12 years of age. Being naturally lively and intelligent she would reflect on the words she heard when burying the birds.

She was indifferent to the care of her family about her toiletry, already she was thinking about death and even dug a grave in the garden to lie down in, thus soiling her dress and drawing down on herself the reproaches of her aunt. She was also marked by two old men who visited her uncle's: one was a bishop relation who spoke to her of God "that she was to prefer above all things"; the other a hermit, who on a passing visit told her uncle "Please take good care of that girl. Look after her!"

She had an early devotion to the Blessed Virgin, kept her Saturday fast a secret and cut flowers to adorn the icon of the Virgin Mary; these flowers struck root in the vase, people talked of a miracle, but her Parish Priest, concerned about her humility, reproached her. Mariam will keep all her life the memory of her early infancy in Abellin.

1

(Continues)

Continues from page 3 → selves be dominated by them. Not looking for satisfaction nor being overcome by humiliations, persecutions and all kinds of sufferings, seeking in all things the face of God, his presence in our lives and always doing his Will in all situations whether favourable or not. The result is self mastery, renouncement, temperance, poverty, alms giving, fasting, a simple life style and strength of soul.

At the beginning of this New Year, it would be good if every Betharramite, where ever he is, should revive his identity as a consecrated soul: so, the graces which God will bestow on us for our General Chapter will fill us with joy and happiness!

Gaspar Fernandez, SCJ



Family News

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



**A word from the
Superior General**

Always keep in mind...

In this issue

- Page 4: How about going to the cinema?
- Page 7: God in human weakness (1/4)
- Page 8: Bird's eye view of the Congregation
- Page 9: Obtaining the same happiness for others
- Page 11: 5mn with Fr. Omer
- Page 15: The extraordinary Life of Sr Marie (1)

Always keep in mind: first and foremost God and his adorable Will; next our type of life which expresses so well the divine Will for each one of us. Try with all your might to aim at this in so far as grace and rank allow, by embracing with great charity the full extent of your grace and rank, respecting at the same time their limits with great sensitivity. (DS 89-90)

These words of St Michael Garicoits express with great clearness and firmness the beauty of the consecrated vocation of the man who has determined to follow Christ totally in his human condition, connected, dependent, and conscious that everything he is and experiences are God's gift. The primacy of God in our lives is what keeps us going: God, his holy Will, our type of religious life, grace and position.

Our God is the God of Jesus Christ: A God-Love who realises the communion in the difference of the three persons. A God-Love who is Father and loves mankind to the point of sending his Son: Incarnate in the womb of the Virgin Mary, obedient to the Father, he traversed this world doing good to mankind, he sacrificed his life on the cross for the salvation of mankind; the Father raised him up from the dead thus proving his fidelity to the promise by accepting his offering of love for our salvation. A God-Love who continues to be present with mankind by his Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the disciples of his beloved Son Jesus and, through the Church, continues his mission: to strive for a better world.

Happy
New Year
2011

109th year
10th series, nr. 56
14 January 2011



To be a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram is much more than praying alone or in common, more than performing great pastoral activities, more than devoting one's self to certain types of devotions. To live as a Religious of Betharram means feeling and showing a constant communion with God in prayer, according to one's position, in relation with the brothers in community, in our contact with the men and women entrusted to us in our ministry, in our pastoral activities; in order to discover God's action among our fellow men and to tell them of his love manifested in the person of Jesus.

The theological experience of our life is the fact that by public vows we have freely chosen God to be our only necessary. We have got to know God's love for us; we have believed in it and have responded by consecrating our lives to him; by living for him and seeing his loving presence in everything, according to the criteria of the Gospel and by carrying our cross daily as he has taught us. As well as that, we give our time, our talents, and our being to his cause, to his project for salvation to the Kingdom *in order to love and serve his divine majesty in all things* (Spiritual Exercises 233, St Ignatius Loyola). The religious is someone who has built his life project on the first commandment: *"You will love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might* (Dt 6,5). *This is the First commandment. Here is the second which is like it: you will love your neighbour as yourself"* (Math. 22,39).

The theological awareness of our life shows a way of life characterised by Christian virtues expressing our divine filiation: humility, obedience, faith in Divine Providence, praise, adoration, reverence, gratitude, devotion and service of God and his projects, seeking the truth, listening to his Word, prayer, prudence, discernment of his Will in the events of our daily life and position... so many expressions of the spirit as a result of the certainty of being sons because I have received all thing from the Father: "My

The Extraordinary Life of Sister Marie

1. A Child of Galilee

Mariam Baouardy (1846 – 1878) came from Abellin, a small Galilean village lying between Nazareth and Haifa, and 3km as the crow flies, to the north of Shefamar. In the 1930s when Fr Brunot visited it, it must have looked like it was in Mariam's time: dirty streets, houses in ruins where some 600 inhabitants were living. But "the whole place was completely changed by the incomparable magician of the East – the sun. Abbelin was a poor village like so many others in Turkish Palestine."

The father of the future Blessed, Giriez (George) Baouardy manufactured explosives, hence his name; just like his wife, Mariam Shabin. He was from the regions near the Lebanon. The family, of the Melkite rite, was poor, hard working and pious, but it had been marked by a heavy trial: twelve boys had died in their infancy to the great affliction of the parents. The father, falsely accused of murder was imprisoned for a time in Acre, before his innocence was recognised and he was freed. Father and mother made a pilgrimage on foot to the Manger in Bethlehem (170km) to pray for another child who would be left to them. Their prayer was answered in the person of a little girl born on the 5th January 1846, and whom they called Mariam. Two years later another boy was born called Boulos.

In 1848, shortly after the birth of Boulos, father and mother died, a few days apart. A maternal aunt took in Boulos in Tarshiha and a paternal uncle took Mariam to his home in Abellin. Mariam was spoilt at her uncle's, and signs of her extraordinary destiny began quickly to appear. She had been given a cage of little birds. The little girl that she was wanted to wash them thanks to which they died. In her desolation, she hear clearly a voice which she could never forget saying "That how everything passes! If you give me your heart I shall be yours forever."



Sr Marie de Jésus Crucified, the young illiterate Galilean who has become the glory of the Holy Land, had a most unusual destiny. In 1983, year of her beatification, Fr Medebielle, SCJ, related the story in the review of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem (pages 201 – 239). From Pau to Bethlehem via Mangloire, Blessed Mariam will accompany this year of our General Chapter; may she help us to place it under the sign of the Spirit!



2011

JANUARY

14	Feliz Aniversário	Ir. Glecimar da Silva
17	65 ans de profession	P. Jean Tapie
18	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Antonio Cano
20	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Victor Batailles
21	50 años de profesión	P. Mario Sosa
23	Buon compleanno	P. Ennio Bianchi
24	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Sylvain Keita Nguebata
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Luis Oteiza
26	Buon compleanno	P. Albino Trameri P. Mario Giussani 20 años de profesión P. Osvaldo Caniza
27	Happy birthday Feliz cumpleaños 15 anos de votos	Fr. Brian Boyle P. Carlos Rodriguez P. Mauro Ulrich de Oliveira
28	Happy birthday 10 anos de votos	Fr. Biju Paul Alappat P. Jair Pereira da Silva Hno Sixto Benítez
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	P. Pierre Grech P. Raoul Thibaut Ségla
13	Buon compleanno	P. Mario Longoni
14	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Bertrand Belhartz F. Hyacinthe Ali Konan Buon compleanno F. Giuseppe Pozzi
17	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean-Luc Morin P. Serge Braga Latta
18	Happy birthday	Br. Andrew Ferris

child, you are always with me, and everything that is mine is yours" (Luke 15,31).

The consequences of all this is a life style characterised by fraternity, the awareness of being brother to all mankind in whom is to be seen a son of God, just like us, and a brother of Jesus Christ who through his incarnation united himself to the whole of humanity. The results are the Christian virtues: not to esteem one's self better than the others, no rivalry, listening, respect, forbearance, kindness, chastity, devotion, service, justice, compassion for the suffering, defence of the downtrodden. forgiveness. etc.

The consequences of all this for our life involves freedom as regards all creation entrusted to us by God. This is evident in our life style by the responsible use we make of the goods of this world, in so far as they help us to be sons of God and brothers of all mankind, and yet not letting our-

Father Etcheccpar wrote... to his sister Madeleine, 5th January 1895

My dear Sister, may the Star of Faith lead us in the footsteps of the Magi; may Holy Hope support and strengthen our steps; may Love unite us to the God of Love, to the Immense, the Eternal who became a day old infant in a Crib through love in order to ravish our love.

"He gives us his law, he gives himself. For such great benefits, he orders us to love him! Oh sublime! Oh charming law! For what reason? what utmost gentleness to commit our love and our faith to this God"

Here are my wishes for a happy feast day for your goodness and kindness, for all that I owe to those who help me in the Lord.

Thank you for your letter. It arrived just at the time of the hustle and bustle of the New Year visits. I received our visitors in my bedroom, giving each one, as is the custom, a handful of sweets. Because of the snow I didn't go to the College; but the pupils came here – about 80 of them. In our community room in front of a big fire they told me their wishes and even expressed them in song!

How about going to the Cinema?

RECORD OF THE FILM

« *Of Gods and Men* »

In cinemas:
8 September 2010

Directed by
Xavier Beauvois

Starring Lambert
Wilson, Michael
Lonsdale, Olivier
Rabourdin,...

Full length
French Drama
Lasts 2 hours

Synopsis

A monastery in the
Magreb mountains,
in the 1960's.
Eight French
Catholic monks
living in perfect
harmony with
their Muslim
brothers....

Everybody happens to have free time, and there are thousands of ways of filling it. Sometimes going to the cinema helps spending a fine evening in pleasant company. To watch a film may even launch the idea of a community review... How about going to see *Of Gods and Men*?

In the spirit of *Into Great Silence*, Philip Groning's documentary dealing with the daily lives of the Carthusians, I watched the film *Of Gods and Men*. It is the story of the drama of some religious kidnapped and assassinated at Tibherine in the Algerian Atlas Mountains, in March 1996.

While I was expecting to be following the ins and outs of a complicated judicial enquiry which has still to be fully explored, I suddenly found myself in the depths of monastic life with the characters buried in nature between prayer, singing, meals and service of their neighbour. This film is not a political thriller against the background of international intrigue. It does not dwell on the martyrdom of the monks. Accustomed as we are to speed, special effects and deafening noise, one finds oneself in a world of slowness and contemplation, inhabited by people capable of an extraordinary love and compassion and ready for the supreme sacrifice for they have dedicated their lives to others once and for all.

That rings true with the description of the Cistercian monk taken from the Trappist website: "The Cistercian monk doesn't live alone but he is united with the other brothers in seeking God together, in community, under the rule of the Abbot. In this quest for God, fraternal life is first of all a school of charity where people united by a similar desire help and encourage each other mutually. Furthermore, that allows for a gradual awareness of one's weaknesses and limitations. By experiencing his own wretchedness in God's mercy, the monk is led little by little on the route of humility and understanding towards his brothers, while the patience of his brothers helps him to feel the tenderness of God. (...) The monk lives in fidel-



tions. Finally in Tshanfeto, I try to help Brother Alfred bring a spiritual and psychological help to any of the young people in formation. It is worth noting that many of them are carrying a very heavy burden of personal history.

Imagine that one of the youngsters should challenge you on your reasons for living: what would you answer him? - That life is worth living and it is evident that trials are part of life, and that they strengthen our character. This is why, when things are hard and all seems lost, we must continue believing in God; he is the God of the impossible! On the other hand, I like to give what I have and what I am; and as long as I can get a smile from someone or wipe away a tear, that's reason enough for me to live and to hope.

With two Presidents declared, Ivory Coast has been going through tough times for the past two months. How are you coping with it? - It's true that the situation is tangled, as the Psalmist says: "even the priest and the prophet who are going through the land don't understand". People are expecting a lot from us priests, just a word. I must say quite honestly that in both camps there is falseness and lies. We have been robbed of the truth, for in reality only one President has been elected. Personally, I try to listen and avoid taking sides in front of my parishioners. In community we talk about it, discuss it, on the strength of the television news or the newspapers, without getting too worked up and trying to be as clear as possible on the vagueness which exists on all sides.

At the beginning of this New Year what are your wishes for St Michael's family, both religious and laity? - I would wish us all never to lose that tiny spark which made us run in the tracks of St Michael, following Christ. May we be ever more brothers, so as to witness before all that love is possible and that mankind cannot constantly be longing for material goods. And so a holy and happy New Year 2011 to everyone! Thank you for giving me this chance of sharing something of myself in all simplicity. Once again, thank you and forward march!!!

In memoriam

Fr Anthony Box, SCJ died on January 7th in Birmingham (England), at the age of 77. We pray for him. We will remember him in the next issue.



because we were with scores of different nationalities; that was really the universality of the Church. My Philosophy and Theology studies helped me to mature. As for my sorrowful mysteries, I was somewhat annoyed at being delayed first time round for my final vows. But today, with hind sight, I would say that all is grace: I learned the meaning of failure and being misunderstood which can help me to be witness of hope for those around me. I would also add that I came to understand to what extent my desire to live as a Betharramite religious was a really deep desire and it had to be purified. Let's say that my sorrowful mystery ended in a glorious mystery, without the shade of exaggeration.

You were ordained priest on 3rd June 2010: what did that change in your life? - I'm still the same Omer, but it's how others see me that has changed. I am now spoken to with more respect, and "Father" is added to my first name! Within me there is the desire to witness to something, that it is God who guides our personal history. I feel that I am responsible for the salvation of all those who have been entrusted to me, so much so that I don't take time to relax whenever I am called upon for some spiritual activity. I believe more in the power of prayer and I take seriously all the requests for prayer: "Father pray for me!"

What is your ministry now in Adiapodoume? - With the other Fathers I share responsibility for the parish; personally I am chaplain for the Pastoral care of the youth and the Base Communities which I visit regularly. Parallel to all this there is the Pastoral in our chapels where I love to go and meet the People of God in the villages.

Since the opening of the first college in 1837, education has been part of the DNA of Betharram. What place does it occupy in your life? - I am chaplain to the youth in St Bernard's consequently the young and myself try to stimulate our young people in the presence of the challenges in Ivory Coast. I am persuaded that an authentic living of the Gospel can be a great help for that. I also receive any of the youngsters who want to talk, ask ques-

ity and perseverance in community till the hour of his death. He seeks unity with the Abbot and with the brothers in perfect obedience, co-responsibility, and dialogue in real freedom and openness to a genuine friendship."

I must admit that this is not an easy film; the spectator is required to pay constant attention, eyes and ears for a whole two hours. From intense dialogues, careful centring of the image, a good choice of music, the film uses all the tools at its disposition. It describes a spiritual journey, a demanding adventure in the seeking of oneself; it is interesting to discover that alongside the daily life in the monastery, rhythmized by the unrelenting succession of community actions, there is the agitated night life where there are explosions of anguish, doubt and prayer.

It is a film which drives one on to meditate, seek, and concentrate on the truths of which daily life is woven. It is a film which provides an opportunity to discuss, in community, how each one leads his life beside his brethren. It is a film which allows us to deepen our convictions on authority, service, our prayer life, the freedom to express one's ideas while respecting those of others. It is a film which speaks of the quest for God, of religious dialogue, which speaks of martyrdom, and of the love which begets life. It is a film which speaks of the humanity, however fragile of the monks, of their discussions as to whether they should stay or leave, of the meaning of authority, of their own personal history, which becomes linked in the course of their discussions like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, according as the decision to remain faithful to their vocation in Muslim territory becomes clear and convincing

I saw the film and continue to dissect it. It is a slow moving film, with a wealth of country sides and faces. As I watched the succession of images and the story, I began to ask myself what is the meaning of belief in God, to be a religious, to put one's life at the service of the neighbour. I wondered about a vocation which seems to totter before life's cruelty, and at the same time, gets things back on an even keel, and urges one to go to the depth of things. It is

When a team of foreign workers were murdered by an Islamist group, fear takes possession of the whole region. The army offers to protect the monks, but they refuse. Should they leave? Despite the growing threats surrounding them, the monks' decision to remain at all costs grows stronger by the day.

This film is inspired by the life of the Cistercian Monks of Tibherine in Algeria from 1993 until they were kidnapped in 1996.



only after deep reflexion that the choice is made to carry on walking in the only direction, to go forward and go out to meet the other person.

I have been faced by a critical vision of a spirituality which leads to making reckless choices, in appearance only, a spirituality leading to pluralism. A spirituality leading to death, to meet the other one. Here there is talk of communion, of travelling with the other person, even if he is different, the other person who is my equal, even my brother in death. A spirituality ending in martyrdom (the final scene). Death assumes a sacred character and everything becomes unique: the monks, the monastery, the village, and the soldiers. Everything merges into a final as tragic as it is extraordinary.

The excerpts from the spiritual testament of the Father Abbot, Christian de Cherge, the quotations from the psalms, a few liturgical sequences, bear witness to a spiritual research of a high order, lived out in their daily life of simplicity and poverty.

Their life which is poor but rich in humanity is well illustrated by the person of Brother Luke, the doctor who quotes Pascal ("One never does wrong so well and so joyfully as when it is by conscience"); in his cell there is a copy of the "Scourging of Christ at the Pillar" by Caravaggio. As if in the "Last Supper" just before the kidnapping, he offers his brothers the best wine (the chalice) and the heart rending notes of Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

It's time for the credit titles and then there is this awful scene: the people get up and prepare to leave the cinema even before the music had stopped. As I left the cinema I heard one lady made this commentary which struck me: "The producer has been able to make the monks appear quite human." Could we be so cut off from the world? In my opinion there is ample materiel for reflexion on how we live "our humanity", "our charity", and "our community life".

Angelo Riva, SCJ



SUMMER MISSION SONG 2011

Author & Composer: Léandro (Adrogue)

We want to be an echo
of God's voice
Where it restores courage
Obtain the same happiness for others
Of being called to his Love.

Life grows by our sharing
On it's own it loses its energy.
We want to replace easy tepidity
Through the joy of fulfilling our mission.

*And so, Father, send us, Oh send us
Oh Christ bless us and guide us*

We are so longing
for God's love
That we can only go further afield
Sow and console, deepen life
Decided and shouting "Here I am!"

Mary, our Mother and Mother of Jesus
The Lord's first missionary
She will go with us and will pray to her Son
To change us into an echo of her voice.

*Oh Spirit, be the one to demolish frontiers
Before the Good News of love.*

5 MINUTES with... Father Omer

Nef: How did you come in contact with Betharram; and what was the attraction? - I must say that my family is Catholic and always gave a good reception to my wish to become a priest. It so happened that thanks to a sister of my father I met religious from the Cameroon. At the end of our chat he said to me "I feel that you have a vocation for Betharram". I don't know how he came by this prophecy; in any case he was very friendly with Fr Barnabe, who was still a Brother at that time. And so it was that accompanied by my father, I landed in the Adiapodoume community. That's how it all began. I was drawn by the calm: far from the noise of my native Abidjan, there was a space full of the warmth of those who were going to become my brothers in community!

What have been the different stages of your "mysteries" – Joyful, sorrowful, or luminous of your journey? - If I understand the question correctly, I would say that the fraternal community during our formation helped us to enjoy our youth. The inter-novitiate periods were moments for getting to know other realities of the Institute and other cultures,



Fr Omer Koutouan Nanghy is 32 years of age ; he is in the Formation Community in Adiapodoume, in Abidjan. During the Regional Chapter of the St Michael Region (Betharram 13-15 January) NEF wanted a native religious to have something to say.

Today the surge is being pursued under the theme for this year for the interior mission of Betharram: "Obtaining the same happiness for others." This phrase, taken from the founding text of our Congregation (the Manifesto written by St Michael Garicoits in 1838) highlights the deep meaning of our mission. Evangelisation consists in sharing the happiness which is ours when we meet the God of Love in our lives and in our history. It means being able to say with St John "We have recognised the love God has for us and we have believed in it" (1 John 4,16) and to launch out in the adventure: spreading the message of God's love beyond all frontiers.

That's the experience of St Michael and his first companions for the past 150 years as they responded quickly to the cries of their brethren, the inhabitants of the immense pampas in need of pastors and educators. It is the experience of many Betharramites, the experience which each one of us can remember when we left everything to follow Jesus and to dedicate our lives to knowing this happiness and to communicating it in the life giving meeting with the Risen Christ. It is the same experience that we want to continue, as we re-echo the call of Christ in our hearts: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28,19).

In our Latin-American countries the mission has a particular sound; for years now the Church on this continent has been inviting us to a preferential option for the poor. It is our choice today as we try to discover the face of Christ in those we meet: peasants stripped of their land, victims of the plague of Chagas, the breakdown of the educational and health system, political cronyism, and different forms of exploitation. In the midst of such a reality, Jesus repeats his invitation "to procure the same happiness for others". May Mary of Betharram, may our Father St Michael and Father Auguste Etchecopar intercede for us so that we devote ourselves wholeheartedly to this mission. Forward march!

Guido Garcia,SCJ

The Incarnation: God in human weakness

1. Bethlehem, "One of the little clans." (Micah 5, 1)

Bethlehem wasn't unknown in the Old Testament yet it was only relatively important because of its geographical situation, 12 km from Jerusalem. There is a deliberate contrast between the powerful proud Jerusalem and the modest hamlet Bethlehem, just at the entrance to the desert. The prophet Micah loved to stress that it was in smallness and weakness that the power of God was manifest. This prophecy was well known to the Jewish people; proof: in the episode of the Magi (Math 2,6) Mathew tells us that the Scribes quoted to King Herod the phrase in Micah to guide the route of the Magi towards Bethlehem. But who remembered that Jesus was born in Bethlehem? For his contemporaries he was a Nazarene.

Whenever God intervenes in the world, he doesn't use centres of important influence but rather villages of little importance. God comes to overturn the history of mankind making use of what is of little importance in their eyes. Besides, isn't it amazing that God gave this lesson to Samuel in Bethlehem? "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see, they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." (1 S. 16,7)

In Bethlehem it is in a stable, the shelter for animals that the Son of God is born! St Michael Garicoits is amazed by this chosen humility: "The Incarnate Word is a God who is humble and obedient. From his Father's womb to that of Mary, what a step! Leaving his beautiful Heaven he goes to the most vile and most unpleasant of places, a stable!" And all this takes place at night as if God wanted to be born in total discretion and without trimmings. At the birth of the child, Mary is not the witness of the shimmering stars and song which make the Magi and the shepherds hasten to the stable. No, her joy is to be found in the shadows of the stable. She wraps him in swaddling clothes, sets him down and watches over him. It would be useless trying to detect in this scene the slightest heavenly sign like the one telling the world of something happening.



The Almighty wanted a share in our weakness by taking our human condition: such is the marvellous mystery of the Incarnation, heart of our spirituality. The charisma of Betharram, the "Behold here I am of the Heart of Jesus", is an incomparable treasure; it has been given to us but we carry it in "vases of clay".

Here is the first of four monthly meetings. They are to prepare us spiritually for our General Chapter in Bethlehem (14th – 31st May 2011) using the recollection preached in Adiapodoume last December..

In her Magnificat Mary announces God's saving action which effects her in the first place because she is "*the humble servant of the Lord who scatters the proud heart-ed*" (Luke 1, 48-52).

Bethlehem is always considered to be the Good News which was announced first of all to the shepherds, the lowly, the people of little importance; they live at some distance from the village caring for their flocks and can therefore not always be faithful to the rules of the Jewish religion. If God becomes humble and poor it's so that the most despised and marginalised are not afraid of Him and can easily have access to him in total simplicity; only the shepherds can feel at ease in the presence of a baby lying in a manger; it's their daily situation! God's humility can allow such fraternity among men, between the lowly and the humble. The shepherds *are people of little importance in Israel for they live at the margins of the practising community. They are lowly and poor*". They are the first witnesses to come to Bethlehem. With the shepherds, it is the perfect illustration of what Jesus will proclaim: "*I thank you, Father of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants*" (Mt. 11,25).

Laurent
Bacho,SCJ

Extracts from the
recollection to
the Fraternity *Ne
Me* •
18/12/2010
continues...



Congregation
of Betharram

Generalate House

Good start for 2011 ■ The beginning of this year will be quite demanding for our Roman quarter: from January 24th to 31st, the relevant commission will give the final touches to the New Rule of Life; from January 26th to February 5th the commission (made up of the members of the Council of the Congregation) in charge of the preparation of the General Chapter will hold a meeting. Both these teams rely on your prayers in order to carry out faithfully their job, in view of the Chapter which will be held in Bethlehem from May 14th to 31st this year.

Something new in via Brunetti ■ On Christmas Day, the refurbishment of the chapel of the Generalate has been completed after seven months of work: an excellent piece of work conceived by Fr Francesco Radaelli and a call to prayer for all who live in via Brunetti or are just calling for short periods.

Vicariate of Ivory Coast

The little kings (magi) of Yamoussoukro ■ On January 2nd, Epiphany Sunday, the children from the betharramite Parish of Saint Felix became "Star Singers". By groups, they went to meet the people living in the three areas of the neighbourhood, presenting their best wishes. At the end of the Mass they received the stars and they went round to give them out: they carried out their mission with great enthusiasm during this Missionary Childhood Day.

Vicariate of Holy Land

Nazareth, crossroad of religious men and women ■ The visit of Fr Gaspar gave the idea to the Betharramite community to gather the consecrated people of Nazareth, on December 15th (Daughters of Charity, Little Brothers of Jesus, Sisters of Notre Dame, Oblates of the New Path, Salesian Fathers and Sisters, Sisters of Nazareth...). The sharing has been rich: despite being a minority, all religious men and women believe in the importance of their voluntary service in favour of those who attend their institutions, be they Jewish, Muslims or Christians.

Obtaining the same happiness for others

For the past 25 years, the Betharramites of Argentina and Uruguay - both religious and laity - have felt the call to renew their commitment to the mission, by going beyond the traditional frontiers, such as colleges, and working at evangelisation of the different localities in the north west of Argentina and in Bolivia. This renewal of the missionary spirit is one of the fruits which have matured thanks to our returning to the sources of our charisma: Betharram was born poor, humble and for the mission. A whole missionary tradition of born of it, marked amongst other things by the influence of the CoLa-MiBe (a Betharramite missionary community of laity), with the emblematic image of the Barreiro-Flores pair. The missionary expansion took its full toll thanks to the efforts of the Provincial Superiors, FF. Chivite, Ierullo, and Fernandez Perez, and was supported by the tireless and generous toiling of Fr Sergio Gouarnalusse.



St Michael
Region