

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

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The Extraordinary Life of Sister Marie

little sister'. How precious is her example in a world torn and divided and which can easily sink into injustice and hatred, paying no attention to the rights of others to a dignified and peaceful existence."

The festivities marking the beatification concluded with a triduum in Bethlehem: on the 2nd December the postulator of the Cause pronounced a panegyric in the presence of the Carmelite family. On the Saturday there was the celebration presided over by His Excellency Mgr Lahham for the Melchite rite. Finally, on Sunday 4th December the closure of the triduum took place in the Church of St Catherine, presided over by the Patriarch Beltritti. In the evening, the first of the pilgrims returning from Rome made their way to the Carmelite chapel. After having venerated the mortal remains of Blessed Mariam in the beautiful casket provided by Fr Radaelli, they were able to visit the convent and the steep path where she had her fatal fall in August 1878. They were also able to visit her poor first floor cell, and reliquary containing the fractured bones of Sr Mariam's arm, cause of her death.

The news of two extraordinary cures of cancer patients in America and Italy through her intercession roused spirits. If Sr Mariam was going to be invoked in such cases she would certainly have lots to do and the success could hasten the cause of her canonisation. But as this event was linked, according to the prophecy, to the canonisation of Pius IX, his involvement in controversial political questions might mean that canonisation is not for just yet.

Continues from page 17 ▶ sufferings of Christ is fulfilled. By thus accepting God's will in the manner of Jesus of Nazareth, he gave us the best lesson of his perseverance in trials, the echo and expression of his proverbial faith, as well as his deep Betharramite spirit.

Rogelio Ramírez Cardozo, SCJ
(Fr Miguel Angel's uncle)



10

(Continues)



Family News

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



**A word from the
Superior General**

The Charism of the Heart of Jesus is also for the Laity

Through saint Michael Garicoits, the Holy Spirit has also called lay people to live their baptismal vocation, enlightened by the charism of the Incarnation. The sharing of this spirituality with the laity who drink from the same source, leads us religious and laity in the same family of Betharram, to a mutual enrichment and to better live the dynamic of the Charism. (R of L 3)

The 1999 General Chapter added these lines to what was then Art 2 of the Rule of Life. These determining few sentences are the expression of an experience: the laity, in contact with religious communities a bit everywhere, have been enthusiastic about the spirituality and mission of the Sacred Heart which has helped them to be faithful to their Christian life. There are countless examples to prove this.

When this takes place with other charisms, changes nothing in the experience of our brother religious with our brothers the laity. How can we not recognise there a grace of Pentecost in the wake of Vatican II? When our Father Saint Michael Garicoits founded the Congregation, only priests and religious were agents of missionary activity. It was to them therefore that he suggested sharing the charism. Today, the new communities and religious movements offer to share their charism not only with priests and religious, but also with the laity both married and sin-

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gle. The same Spirit, who was present at the origins of these new ecclesial realities, opens up the treasures of traditional charism and invites the faithful laity to live by them, whereas in days gone by they would have been reserved solely for consecrated souls.

Faith, hope and charity are our common heritage with the laity in the same way as Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. In common we also have communion and the mission. We religious can lead this new life born of the meeting with Christ, through the vows in community to devote ourselves exclusively to what is God's, which is the mission itself. The laity live it through the communion of marriage and family life, developing their mission through their work and their commitments whether social or political. We are not expected to live these differences as opposition but as complementary; each vocation needs the others for it to grow in authenticity.

Similarly, as the charism of St Michael Garicoits gives added colour to our common life, to our consecration and our mission as religious, so too it gives real originality to marriage, family, work and social commitments of our brothers the faithful laity. Since our consecration, our community life, our priestly ministry and mission are enrichment for the charism, so too is marriage, the family, work and social commitment of the faithful laity.

Before all else faith is something other than a personal experience: God loves me, he seeks me, I meet Jesus, I know him, I love him and follow him by giving myself up to him, and committed to pursuing his mission. I, a man, I have met, and loved this woman and have given her my life through love. I, a woman, I have met and loved this man and have given him my life through love. Thus we form a family unit like a project willed by God in which we practise the Betharramite virtues of Love, humility, obedience, meekness, and dedication. These are virtues to be practised as a couple, as a family in the context of our

The Extraordinary Life of Sister Marie

10. Festivities of the beatification

In Rome on the 14th November 1983, Pope John Paul II welcomed the Latin and Melchite Patriarchs, their Bishops and some 300 faithful who had come to assist at the Beatification of Sr Marie de Jesus Crucifie. The Pope returned to the meaning of the event: "Mariam is the fruit of the Holy Land. Everything about her speaks to us of Jesus. First of all there are the places where she lived: Nazareth near which she was born, Bethlehem where she accomplished her sacrifice, Mount Carmel, symbol of the solitary life of prayer which was to be the setting for her religious life. But she brings us closer to Calvary because she constantly bore the cross of Jesus in her life, as well as adding the name "crucified". In her the Beatitudes find their fulfilment. Looking at her one can almost hear Jesus saying: *Blessed are the poor, blessed are the humble, blessed are those who only seek to serve, blessed are the meek, blessed are the peace makers, blessed are those who are persecuted.*" Her entire life is one of untold familiarity with God, of love of others, and joy which are real evangelical signs.

Sr Marie de Jesus Crucifie proves to be the perfect daughter of the Church. She is a reflection of the different images of the Greek-Melchite Church in which she was christened and brought up, and the Latin rite where she learned about the Carmelite life. Outside her native land she was attached to the Christian communities in the Lebanon, Egypt, France, and India. She shared in the Church's missionary activity, and its longing for unity; she was attached to the Pastors of the Church especially the Pope in Rome, Pius IX. For the Church must be One in the difference and riches of tongues, cultures and rites. Finally, she who had often been mistreated by events and people never grew tired of sowing the seeds of peace and of bringing people together. She wanted to be 'everyone's



by
Father Pierre
Médebielle, SCJ
1906-1995
in "Jérusalem"
Review of the
Latin Patriarchate
(1983, pages
201-239)



2011

NOVEMBER

9	80 ans de profession	P. André Gillet
15	Feliz cumpleaños	Hno Alberto Zaracho
16	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Narcisse Zaolo
17	Feliz cumpleaños	Ho. Alfredo Alfonso
18	Buon compleanno	F. Claudio Mantegazza
22	Happy birthday	Br. Liam Finucane
23	Happy birthday	Br. Arul Gnana Prakash Joseph
24	Buon compleanno	P. Giacomo Spini
26	Feliz cumpleaños Happy birthday	P. Giancarlo Monzani Fr. Chaiyot Charoenkun
28	Happy birthday Buon compleanno	Fr. Dominic Innamorati P. Ercole Ceriani
29	Happy birthday	Fr. Kriangsak Kitsakunwong Br. Jesurai Mariadas
30	Buon compleanno	P. Andrea Antonini

DECEMBER

1	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	F. Fernand Fonquerle P. Francesco Radaelli
2	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Émile Garat
3	Happy birthday Bom aniversário	Fr. Stervin Selvadass Fernando Fr. Biju Anthony Panthalukkarar Ir. Luiz Henrique Ribeiro
6	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Beñat Oyhénart
7	20 anni di sacerdozio	P. Beniamino Gusmeroli
8	40 anni di Professione	Fr. Giuseppe Pozzi
9	5 años de sacerdocio	P. Jair Pereira da Silva
10	45 años de sacerdocio	P. Mario Sosa
11	Buon compleanno Happy birthday	P. Luigi Speziale Fr. Pascal Ravi
14	Buon compleanno	F. Fiorenzo Trivelli

professions and social engagements in community, in consecrated life, in our ministry and mission.

What is original in our charism, whether for the religious or for the laity, has its source and secret in the personal experience of the meeting with Jesus as it was experienced by St Michael, a meeting which gives a new orientation to our lives. When it is shared with others this personal experience can become a community experience. This personal beginning is fundamental both for the religious and for the laity. We cannot form a Sacred Heart community if each of the members has not had this experience like St Michael, beginning with the novitiate and right throughout the formation years. Similarly we shall not have genuine groups of Betharramite laity if each one hasn't had this same personal experience of meeting with Jesus. Contact with a community or with a Betharramite group can be a beginning but if it doesn't become an aid in making this personal experience, the link will be neither strong nor viable.

To my mind there are two elements of Betharramite spirituality which are fundamental for the laity: *the Incarnation and the "position"*. The Heart of Jesus, Word Incarnate, is in adoration and obedience to the Father at the same time as in solidarity with the men and women whom he serves and saves. Following the example of the Heart of Jesus, Betharramite laity want theirs to be modelled on the Heart of Jesus to adore the Father, to obey him, do his will and show solidarity with all mankind in the disinterested service which seeks the good of all.

This personal "position" will be the genuine cadre of the double fidelity to the Father and to the service of mankind. As a result of the Incarnation, the position will be limited: Jesus was born in Bethlehem and nowhere else. He lived for thirty years under the Governor Pontius Pilate – no more – nor at any other point in time; he lived in Palestine and never left it. He only gathered one group of Twelve Apos-





ties and a more important group of Disciples; he was in contact with a limited number of people and not with all the inhabitants of the known world of the day. **Yet, in the limits of his position, he showed an unlimited love.**

In their turn the Betharramite laity are called to live this boundless love just like Jesus, at the heart of their limited personal situations; with their partner and the children given them by God, with their colleagues at work, in the factory, in their leisure time and political party, with the members of the NGOs where they are engaged, and with the groups of Betharramite laity. Not only are they called to live this life of love but to live it intensely, with feeling, joy and generosity, **convinced as they are that each individual is where God intended him to be, because that is God's will, and doing what God wants him to do.** Little by little those who share their existence begin asking themselves the questions of which Pope Paul VI spoke: **Why are they like this? Why are they living like this? What is inspiring them? Why are they with us?** (*Evangelii nuntiandi* 21). By answering these questions they will render an account of their faith and hope because, as they will announce, their meeting with Jesus has completely transformed their lives. Consequently, Jesus will already be announced, even though they haven't made a specific effort in this sense.

Gaspar Fernandez, SCJ

Father Etcheopar wrote... to Fr. Jean Magendie,
Montevideo, 3 April 92

Why do we have to be for ever repeating our favourite mantra: "We are the Sons of saints: noblesse oblige! The route is traced; there is an abundance of ideal means; forward march therefore in the footsteps of our beloved Father, with a lively spirit and his stout heart".

Father Miguel Angel CARDOZO

Miguel Angel was born 2nd August 1955 to a deeply Christian family. While still young the Lord's call to the priesthood found an echo in his childlike conscience. He loved to be an altar server, faithful and happy in his beloved parish dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

In those moments of childlike closeness with God a prayer rose from his heart: "Lord, I want to be a priest!" His prayer directed to Heaven was answered and in 1984 he had the grace of being ordained priest in the Betharramite family.

And thus began Fr Miguel Angel's exciting adventure in his following and imitation of Jesus Christ, in the announcing of the Gospel, full of joy and hope.

After his ordination Fr Miguel Angel revived the joy and enthusiasm of the Betharramite family in Paraguay. His enthusiasm was genuine, contagious and well balanced and never failed as the result of misunderstandings, nor in the face of problems or difficulties supported for Christ.

Fr Miguel Angel had the chance of getting to know Christ in his native land – Bethlehem. He even did some biblical studies in the holy city of Jerusalem, strengthening his faith, his hope and his love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

On his return to Paraguay and enriched by all that Biblical knowledge, Fr Miguel became the official guide of the many pilgrims in Jesus' homeland. But very quickly he had to abandon such a magnificent apostolate because he had already been struck down by the illness which was going to cause his early death on 11th October 2011.

Throughout his prolonged sufferings, lovingly accepted and in joyful hope, without a murmur of complaint, he came to understand that the priest is identified with the suffering Christ and that in him what is lacking in the

IN MEMORIAM

Paraguay



Asunción
2 August 1955



Asunción
11 October 2011

Argentina

On October 27th Mr. Alfredo Julián Miranda, father of Father Enrique, returned to the house of the Father. We join Fr. Enrique and the whole family in this time of trial and we pray for the repose of his soul.

Paraguay

On October 27th, Mr. Ramon Domingo Irala, brother of Fr Javier age 72, died after a long illness. We pray for him and his family.

 Follows on p. 20

Can you give us your impression of Vietnam and its Church as a whole? - I met the bishop of Thanh Hoa Diocese, in Ho Chi Minh City. I was impressed by his warm welcome and his heartfelt words: all this is a good sign for our future. We had a chance to pay a visit to Joseph Tuan's family: they are very nice; they offered us tea, and a good lunch. I could see the poor conditions they live in, but also the atmosphere of strong faith. I believe that God blesses this country very much, all the churches and parishes are flourishing. The Catholic people have strong faith and they are very committed. In the future, we hope there is place for our mission, maybe in the north since there are few religious congregations there.

Through Tuan and through the encouragement of bishops, priests and sisters, the Providence, "forced our hand" – so to speak – in order to dare do something in this country; the last general Chapter confirmed this choice. How do you see this commitment? - I think the General Chapter took the right decision in approving this project. Now we join our efforts. We already know how to establish our congregation in Vietnam, with the help of many people. If this is the will of God, we will carry out this project. Joseph Tuan is our hope for the future, I will try my best to accompany him.

Back in Sampan, what do you feel it is important to share with your brothers in Thailand and elsewhere, in order to awaken their attention toward this project? - I have already shared this project with the brothers in the community. I think they understood well and some of them might have special interest and prepare themselves for this project in the future. I told them to study the Vietnamese language. I shared my experience with Father Tidkham, the regional Vicar, and he gave his support and encouraged me to go ahead. He also promised to share his views with the brothers during a community meeting. Many people asked me to talk about my visit to Vietnam and all the reactions were positive and full of hope.

Benedict XVI to the youth: "Do not keep Christ to yourselves!"

Dear young friends, as the Successor of Peter, let me urge you to strengthen this faith which has been handed down to us from the time of the Apostles. Make Christ, the Son of God, the centre of your life. But let me also remind you that following Jesus in faith means walking at his side in the communion of the Church. We cannot follow Jesus on our own. Anyone who would be tempted to do so "on his own", or to approach the life of faith with that kind of individualism so prevalent today, will risk never truly encountering Jesus, or will end up following a counterfeit Jesus.

Having faith means drawing support from the faith of your brothers and sisters, even as your own faith serves as a support for the faith of others. I ask you, dear friends, to love the Church which brought you to birth in the faith, which helped you to grow in the knowledge of Christ and which led you to discover the beauty of his love. Growing in friendship with Christ necessarily means recognizing the importance of joyful participation in the life of your parishes, communities and movements, as well as the celebration of Sunday Mass, frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation, and the cultivation of personal prayer and meditation on God's word.

Friendship with Jesus will also lead you to bear witness to the faith wherever you are, even when it meets with rejection or indifference. We cannot encounter Christ and not want to make him known to others. So do not keep Christ to yourselves! Share with others the joy of your faith. The world needs the witness of your faith, it surely needs God. I think that the presence here of so many young people, coming from all over the world, is a wonderful proof of the fruitfulness of Christ's command to the Church: "Go



What follows is an excerpt of the homily given by the Pope Benedict XVI on Sunday August 21, 2011 during the closing Eucharist of the World Youth Day before a more than one million young people.

A spiritual viaticum for all the young people from 7 to 99 years old!





into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). You too have been given the extraordinary task of being disciples and missionaries of Christ in other lands and countries filled with young people who are looking for something greater and, because their heart tells them that more authentic values do exist, they do not let themselves be seduced by the empty promises of a lifestyle which has no room for God.

Benedictus PP XVI

The youth "of Madrid" tell us ...

In the wake of the testimony that Br. Andrew Athit Niyomtham gave us about his experiences during World Youth Day in Madrid (see NEF No. 64, October 14, 2011, p. 10), we have received several accounts of the same experience. World Youth Day had a remarkable impact worldwide. We therefore wanted to let these young people speak: they are close in different ways to the Betharramite spirituality, and wished to make us share their life experience and faith. Can we see a kind of a "dress rehearsal" in view of a "Betharramite" participation in the next World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro?

Umberto La Morgia



■ For me World Youth Day was both a paradox and something beautiful. What was exciting about the whole experience was precisely the inconvenience and the unexpected. I knew the town very well for I had lived there for a year and I had also had a trip to Madrid. This time it wasn't a matter of a two hour flight to get there but two days: a bus from Rome to Civitavecchia, from there by boat to Barcelona, then a bus to the terminus in Madrid. And all that to go and see the Pope that I can easily go and see whenever I like at the Vatican, for I live in Rome!

I wondered what all that could mean. Well, it allowed me to enjoy this experience like a pilgrimage in the company of other young people. The best moments of this journey were the ones when things went wrong, were unexpected

shared also his joy. I feel proud of him because being the first candidate he is alone, but he is facing all the difficulties with confidence and patience.

Do you think that being alone in his position is a drawback? What is envisaged for his formation project in the months to come? - I feel that it is not easy for him to be alone; but many friends in the center are very good and helpful for him. I think it would be better for him to have a companion. The first step for him is to discern God's call in following Christ. We have planned to invite him in our community in Thailand for a short visit, to experience the community life and to practice his English with our brothers. I hope that this first formation step will make him feel comfortable in living our spirituality.

Do you believe that it is important to put this formation project on a regional level (Asia)? - Vietnamese culture and Thai culture share many aspects. That is why, with the guidelines given by the General Council, it will be easier for the Thai vicariate, to take on board the formation process of this candidate.

It is vital that the Europe be present with the richness of its tradition in implementing this project and I am ready to give my cooperation. Local priests and religious are encouraging us to establish a community in Ho Chi Minh City: I think that we have to take quite seriously this suggestion.

One of the objectives of this visit was to extend the call to Betharramite religious life to other Vietnamese young people. How were you received? - Fr Jean-Luc has started with Joseph and we are proud of him: we encourage and support him, but we need to put in more effort to create a community. I am sure that St Michael is quite happy about this project and he is praying for us. Bishops, priests and lay people are helping us in many ways to find new candidates, to form them and instill in them our charism.





5 mn with...

On October 10-25, Fr Jiraphat Raksikhao and Fr Jean-Luc Morin travelled across the Vietnam from North to South. After the General Chapter of Bethlehem, the whole congregation is involved in this project.

Hence the need to take stock of the project with the superior of the scholasticate of Sampran, who is the guide and the referring person for the Vietnamese candidates.

5 MINUTES WITH... Father Jiraphat

Nef: Why this second trip for you to Vietnam, eight months after the first one? - First of all we wanted to share at a deeper level with Joseph Van Thuan our happiness and eagerness to have a new Betharramite candidate; then to know more about Vietnam, its Church, and the feedback of the people.

Vietnam is a beautiful country, rich in nature; we could experience God's love through the people's hands and their warm hospitality. I think that every project begins as a small seed, and slowly grows bigger and larger thanks to human work. I am convinced that our project in Vietnam will grow in the future but we need someone ready to start and put in it a lot of energy and self sacrifice. I take this opportunity to thank Fr Jean-Luc for his courage and dedication, who asked me to join him in this venture and put all his trust in me.

In this second trip to Vietnam we could improve our communication and relationship with the local bishops, priests, religious and laity.

What change took place in between? - Our first trip was a bit of a tour to know Vietnam as a whole. I enjoyed taking pictures of the different aspects life in Vietnam. We had not yet introduced our congregation to the people, and I felt a bit scared of the communist government. In our second trip we deepened our contacts with our friends in order to share with them our project. All the priests and religious we met were friendly, kind and generous to us. I could also see the improvement made by Joseph Tuan, for his English, and for his desire to be a Betharramite.

You met Joseph Tuan twice; what do you think about him? - He gave us a kind and warm welcome. This helped to overcome the language barrier. He talked quite frankly and openly about his desire to be part of our community and he

and at first glance took me by surprise. Even Mary was destabilized by the Annunciation! Leaving by boat as if I wanted to escape from my day to day existence, my habits and my motionlessness; to take to a sea which I was to cross and confront, made me realise that I had reached an important moment in my life, that I was at the dawn of a new surge. My spiritual director told me that the sea was an enigma, the limit, and that lots of people travel but never succeed in confronting it. They set out but not really; they remain rooted to the spot. Beyond the sea God is waiting for us. And willy-nilly I dared to set out and it was wonderful.

On arriving in Madrid at 03.00 with the other boys from the parish I made for the Madrid Fair Ground; from there we were taken to a sort of hangar where thousands of lads were asleep in bed. When we were told that this was where we were going to sleep I thought it was a bit of a joke. I was sure that we would be given a room or something like it. However this new experience helped me to get to know myself and to be adaptable, but I felt that I was part of a much larger community and of a project. In that hangar we were all Italians and I had a sense of pride of being part of a Catholic and active Italy!

The days were long, hot and intense; but there was great joy in our hearts. I felt that I was part of a new wave of evangelisation in a town and country like Spain which today needs to be re-evangelised. The pilgrims from the whole wide world were all smiles and full of joy and I think that this was the greatest witness to Christ's love. The fruits of the Holy Spirit could be seen on their faces. Nobody lost patience, nor their joy because of the sudden downpour which flooded the final WYD vigil. The inconvenience of sleeping between leaves and the rubbish on the Cuatro Vientos esplanade didn't deter the young pilgrims. Finally it's not the one in the comfort zone who feels OK but the one with peace in his heart.





Santiago Campos
Cervera



PARAGUAY

Jimena Irún S.



PARAGUAY

The theme for the second day was full of meaning: *“rooted and founded in Christ, strengthened in the faith”*. For me this was an invitation to rip out the roots of evil in my life and to rebuild it on real positive values so that it is well balanced and is leaning on the reality which is God, avoiding compromises and syncretisms of the Colossians. This WYD has given me the chance of making a definite choice in life: the choice of Life, that is Jesus Christ.

This is why I would like to launch an appeal to all the youth especially those who have not yet met the Lord, in the words of the Holy Father: *“Dear youth, rooted and founded in Christ, you can live your identity to the full.”*

■ They say that you should never have high hopes in the face of an event; otherwise there is risk of being disappointed. Obviously this doesn't apply to the WYD for as soon as I heard that I was going to be there, my expectations were multiplied, but the experience largely outdid them. I am convinced that those days definitely marked a before and an after on the spiritual route of those who were present at the event.

What a joy it was to visit the place and to see two million pilgrims assembled for the same purpose: people belonging to different human families, spoke my own language, namely the language of the soul. The presence of the Holy Spirit was particularly evident in that crowd. I was very affected by the Holy Father's addresses; he appeared very fatherly and in his talks would refer to us as his dear friends”.

■ Much of what was experienced during the WYD would be difficult to explain. To understand them you would need to have been present. It would be impossible to explain the energy and joy that was there; only God could be at the origin. As I wandered through the streets I saw young peo-

od that the Archbishop and the community of Parish Priests managed to convey to our communities.

Vicariate of Ivory Coast

The family grows ■ Jean-Joseph, Arnaud, Richard, Yannick, Landry and Serge are six young men, all of them of Ivorian nationality, who have started a new journey in the Betharramite religious life following in the footsteps of St. Michael Garicoïts.

Vicariate of India

New Betharramite Mission ■ On October 26th the Betharram Fathers and Brothers started their mission in Hojai, (Assam, Northeast India) with the celebration of Divali (Feast of light). Fr. Thomas Mattathilany welcomed Fr. Subesh and Fr. Wilfred on behalf of the Archbishop of Guwahati. From today onwards this mission of Christ the Redeemer is in the hands of the family of Betharram.



Bed Miriam
Region

OF THE CONGREGATION

Note of the General Council

- ▶ The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, has approved the appointment of the following **Community Superiors** of the Region Fr. Etchecopar:
 - [VIARUR] Fr. Bruno Ierullo (Education Com.) | Fr. Guido García (Formation Com.)
 - [VIPAR] Fr. Rogelio Ramirez (Com. Colegio San José) | Fr. Crispín Villalba (Com. Colegio Apostolico San José) | Fr. Angelo Recalcati (Com. Lambaré) | Fr. Fulgenzio Ferreira (Com. Ciudad del Este) | Fr. Osvaldo Caniza (Com. of La Colmena-San Joaquín)
 - [VIBRA] Fr. Aurelio Riva (Com. Vila Matilde) | Fr. Francisco de Paula (Com. Paulinia) | Fr. Jair Pereira (Com. Passa Quatro)
- ▶ The appointment of Fr. Guido García as **Master of the Novices** of the Region Fr. Auguste Etchecopar has also been approved.
- ▶ **Congregation Meetings for January 2012:** The Superior General has convoked...
 - from 11th to 21st the Council of the Congregation
 - from 19th to 21st the Regional Bursars (*to be appointed*)
 - from 23th to 28th the Betharramite Formation Team (Fr. Jacky Moura is one member of it. We apologize for not including his name in the note published in the last issue of the Nef.)
- ▶ On October 5th, the Superior General with the consent of his Council has granted an indult of three years of excommunication in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to Fr. Butrus Alhijazin (Vicariate of Holy Land).

Viet
Nam

Congregation

Third journey to Vietnam ■ In the month of October Fr. Jean-Luc Morin, along with Fr. Jiraphat, paid a new visit to the first Betharramite candidate in this country, Joseph Vu Van Tuan. A meeting with the pre-seminarians and the religious of the two cities in North Vietnam gave an opportunity to make them know about Bétharram and to pave the way for its future, in two dioceses in which there is a great vocational vitality and yet the men's religious life is not (yet) represented. The Bishop of Xuan Loc, Thomas Din Hieu, gave a warm welcome to the guests and expressed his hope that charism of St. Michael will soon enrich the Church in Vietnam. (See also *5 mn... with Fr.. Jiraphat*, p. 14)

Vicariate of Italy

Visiting Italy ■ Fr. Jean-Luc Morin, Superior of the Region, and the Vicar of Italy, Fr. Aldo Nespoli, have started a fraternal visit to the communities. These meetings are meant to foster a better understanding of each other and a sharing of experiences.

Platform 528 ■ In the community "Our Lady of the Miracles" in Rome arrivals and departures continue. After Fr. Albino Trameri, on October 18, Giovanni Parolari, a young man who spent a month in Rome for a community experience, left for Bouar (Central African Republic). The day before, the community opened the doors to Domenico, a young man who started his process of discernment and will be in Rome until June 2012.

Saying goodbye to the South ■ On Sunday, October 30, in the presence of Mons Francesco Cacucci, Archbishop of the Diocese of Bari-Bitonto and many diocesan priests and religious was closed the Betharramite community of Bitonto. Greetings and heartfelt thanks from the Archbishop, for the 23-years long Betharramite presence in this diocese, were followed by a thanksgiving speech given by the Regional Vicar for Italy, Fr. Aldo Nespoli, who spoke on behalf of the fathers who served over the years in the parishes of Mariotto and of Bitonto. The fathers expressed their sincere gratitude for the welcome they received to this church in 1988, for the journey done together and the meaningful pastoral experiences, for the warm atmosphere of brotherho-



St Michael
Region

ple from all over the world, all dressed alike, united by the same faith, singing the same hymns, reciting the same prayers in different languages and having the same project and the same slogan, the slogan proposed for the WYD: **"Rooted and founded in Christ, strong in our faith"**.

■ I never thought that the WYD would be such a unique experience, such a personal experience letting me experience the love which Jesus gives to all in a Community composed of individuals from different cultures, races and countries. I came to realise that it was not just nice talks found in the catechism or through the experience of the FVD group. I was also able to experience this through my group: Jesus I love you! He loves you and I am a miracle of that divine love! It's true and this is why He is calling you. He wants us to be witness to this True Love.

During the vigil the Pope said: *"God loves us. Such is the great truth of our life and which gives meaning to all the rest. We are not the result of a stroke of luck but at the roots of our existence there is the great project of God's love. To remain in his love is to be rooted in faith, because faith is not just accepting abstract truths but a close relationship with Christ making us open our hearts to the mystery of love and to live like people who know they are loved by God. If you remain in Christ's love and rooted in faith, even in the midst of contradictions and suffering you will meet the source of joy and happiness. Faith isn't opposed to your most exalted ideals! On the contrary faith livens them and brings them to perfection. Dear Youth, don't model yourselves on anything save on Truth and Love; don't model yourselves on any other than Christ."*

Magnificent words from the Holy Father! I can say that today I don't just believe in what I see. But as the Pope



Sofia Giménez
Irún





Fr. Phairote
Nochatchawan
SCJ



said “Faith isn’t simply accepting abstract truths.” My faith is also the result of that close relationship which opened my heart during that Day. All that I saw was very real, tangible; God’s grace and the love which conquered all the Youth present! I wasn’t an isolated case! Now I know it better than ever for I experienced it directly!

■ To have been able to feel the extraordinary power of the WYD in Madrid – more than 2 million young people making the Stations of the Cross, celebrating the Eucharist, assisting at Mass with the Pope in perfect harmony – has renewed my energy and given me the courage to make a success of the evangelisation in the Church, especially in Maet-awar when the Catholics are only a small minority.

We have been able to be in contact with Christian communities of the ancient rite, for example the French and Spanish. A lot of the Youth were impressed and have come to realise to what extent the Faith is rooted in the hearts of the people. Afterwards when we reflected on our own mission in a country which has only met the Gospel 50 years ago, we felt invigorated to help extend the Christian faith in our country.

France, especially with Lourdes and Betharram, is a special place of pilgrimage. Personally, I have greatly appreciated this experience, probably because it was my first visit to the cradle of our Congregation after my ordination seven years ago. I had always dreamt of visiting these places. But seeing Lourdes and Betharram displaying a Church so full of life is perhaps one of the deeper reasons: pilgrims come from the whole world to ask Our Lady for help and in return they, like me, receive answers and encouragement for their lives. ■

Sarrance, passing the baton

Sarrance is the site of a Marial shrine worth a visit with its monastery, the cloister of which is beautiful and typical of the region. It is a village situated at the foot of the Somport pass, well known to the cyclists of the Tour de France.

Since the 19th century this shrine has been looked after by the Betharram religious. This goes to show to what extent Betharram is linked to this place. We cannot but mention the commitment of all the religious who assured their ministry there and for which the people of Sarrance are truly grateful. For the past ten years Fr Joseph Domecq has been assuring the service of the sanctuary not without difficulty but with great energy.

The monastery lying next to the sanctuary receives pilgrims on their way to Compostella as well as groups for a time of reflection, for mountaineering or skiing. During their reflection on the future of the communities, the vicariate decided to leave Sarrance and to pass it on to others. The hand over took place in spring 2011 and it is now the Premonstratensians who are going to care for the sanctuary.

On Sunday 4th September for the feast of Our Lady of Sarrance, the Bishop of Bayonne, Mgr Marc Aillet, led the pilgrimage. The Church was packed with all the pilgrims from the Aspe valley and elsewhere. It was time to pass the relay over to the Premonstratensians, to thank Fr Domecq and to wish him God’s speed. The Eucharist was a moment of intense fervour and faith. The emotion of the faithful could be read on the faces of all present when Fr Joseph Domecq got up to say good bye with well chosen words to the point; *it’s a beautiful place without a doubt but you would have to live there to know what it’s like in Winter.*

The celebration ended with the usual glass of wine! Long may the new community continue to greet all those who will come to pray to Our Lady of Sarrance!



The Regional Vicar for France and Spain tells us about the passing of the relay from Betharram to the Premonstratensians in the animation of Sarrance, on September 4.

Jean Dominique Delgue SCJ