

they born than they are faced with countless difficulties, as they wend their way between rocks and ravines; now and again they disappear from view only to reappear again towards the end of their journey and to flow into the sea. If ideas and projects are sterile, they will soon die; if on the other hand they are valid and mea-

ningful, even in the midst of difficulties and suffering, they will finally succeed in finding a way of being firmly established.

by Roberto Cornara

►The end

Announcements by the General Council

- On November 16th, the Superior General, Fr. Gaspar Fernández, approved **the appointment of Br. Angelo Sala as superior of the Bouar-St-Michel community (RCA)** after receiving the indult granted by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life.
- In the meeting of the General Council on December 3rd, the Superior General with the consent of his council, **admitted to final profession Br Yesudas Kuttappassery, Br George Antony, Br Jesuraj Mariadas, Br Rojo Thomas Kaviyil, Br Satish Paul Raj J., Br Jude Daniel Vijay from the vicariate of India;** Fr. Gaspar delegated Fr. Austin Hughes, Regional Superior, to receive the vows of our brothers during the ceremony which will be taking place in Bangalore on January 6th 2013.
- November 14th was the deadline for submitting to the Generalate **a logo for the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of Saint Michael's death.** The theme: "From the heart of Christ to the heart of the world". The members of the commission, set up for the occasion, have just started their work in order to pick out the best logo and proclaim the winner who will take part in the World Youth Day next July (2013) in Rio de Janeiro, at the expenses of the Congregation. Thank you to all those who have participated in the competition! Now it is time just to wait for the announcement of the winner.



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2012



Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

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NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA
FAMILY NEWS

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

110th year
10th series, nr 77
14th December 2012

A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

From the Heart of Christ to the heart of the world

In this issue

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Chapters of the Betharram
Congregation (11)

We have already begun to prepare our hearts and our communities for the jubilee of the **death of our Father Saint Michael Garicoits** which will begin on 14 May 2013. The theme of this celebration, "*From the Heart of Jesus to the Heart of the World*" is intended to express the missionary dynamism of our charism. The forthcoming feast of Christmas together with the contemplation of the extraordinary spectacle of the Incarnation is encouraging us to take our vocation seriously.

St Michael Garicoits discovered the Master in the contemplation of the missionary Heart of Jesus. Jesus, the beloved Son of the Father, left the bosom of the Father to enter the womb of Mary and from there to enter the heart of the world, in the manger, to reach the heart of the sick, the poor and sinners. *The Incarnate Word is a God, humble and obedient. From the womb of the Father to that of Mary, what a gigantic step! By stepping down from heaven, he went to the most awful and most disagreeable spot possible, a stable!* (DS 43).

From the moment of his birth, says St Michael, the

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS OF BETHARRAM

11 - The latest step: regionalisation

The subdivision of the Congregation, introduced in the first place as an experimentum, received definite approval at the 2005 General Chapter which also saw the election for the first time of a Spanish General Superior, Father Gaspar Fernandez Perez. With the renewal of his mandate at the Chapter held in Bethlehem in 2011, it is now his responsibility to proceed in putting into practice the regionalisation of the Institute overcoming the problems inevitably raised by the new structures. It has therefore been necessary to review and update the Rule of Life, the final edition of which has recently been approved by the Holy See.

From a historical point of view the process of Regionalisation could be considered as a return to the past, dropping the idea of a Province and resuming the monolithic structure of the Congregation prior to World War II. It is a fact that the legal institution of the Province seems to have run its course and to have finished its role. For the past two decades a new approach to our presence in the world and our place in history seems to have been evolving so that it should be more meaningful and effective in rediscovering and in raising the tension and attention so typical of St Michael. Furthermore there is a fresh way of viewing formation, both initial and on-going, so that



At the General Chapter in Bethlehem 2011, the participants approved the articles of the new Rule of life, one by one.

this formation while bearing in mind cultural and national specificities, can reach beyond the narrow mentality connected with each country to open up to a greater co-responsibility and sharing in the Church and in society. The rediscovery and revitalisation of the idea of subsidiarity, dear to St Michael, is gradually making its way so as to be ready to go wherever obedience and the priorities of the Church and of mankind can call today.

In the course of these last years the Congregation, in the realm of ideas and actions, is committed to rising above certain mentalities and certain standardised facts. History has taught us that ideas and projects are like the course of certain rivers; no sooner are

synagogues and chasing evil spirits. (Mark 1, 32-39).

Love of the Father and of all mankind was the secret of the generosity of his commitment, it deeply motivated the Heart of Jesus, the Incarnate Word saying to his Father: "Here I am!" so as to transmit the fullness of life to all mankind. **From the Heart of the Father, through the Heart of the Son, to the Heart of St Michael and to our hearts too...** from heart to heart. *Is love not the foundation word of our religion? Is the history of salvation not a history of love? The finest and most dramatic with episodes like the Fall of Man or the death of a God on a cross? Love? Didn't St Michael always want everything to be done through love? He wanted to see a spark of it in the novices; "If love is lacking there is nothing to be done!" he used to add.* (Fr Joseph Mirande [sr], NEF nr 141, 1964 p. 305-307)

The Heart of Jesus was transported with love as he contemplated the Father's special love for mankind, especially for the least among them. **"I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do."** (Luke 10, 21-22).

The Heart of Jesus contemplated his Father and had a deep love for Him whom he wanted to please in all things. He contemplated mankind for whom he had a great love, a love which he proved through his compassion, his interest and his sensitivity for their sufferings, their

Divine Child traces the route for us; he rushes forward, he runs, he is forever leading the way in neglect and in distress (DS 107). In the Gospels Jesus is presented to us like a wandering Rabbi; hidden in Mary's womb he brings the joy of salvation to John Baptist and Elizabeth; and from Nazareth he went to be born in Bethlehem. In the arms of Mary and Joseph he was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem, then on into Egypt and finally returns to Nazareth. At 12 years of age he made his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Later he goes through the towns and villages preaching the Kingdom of God, goes back to Jerusalem there to live his Paschal mystery, carrying his Cross up to Calvary, to rise again from the dead and finally ascend into Heaven.

Jesus lives out his relationship with his Father naturally and in deep communion with Him, lives out his compassion for mankind. For example: *When evening had come and after sunset, they brought to him the sick, and those possessed by an evil spirit. The whole town was laying siege to his door. He cured all kinds of sicknesses, he chased many evil spirits, and forbade them to speak of him because they knew who he was. Long before dawn the next morning, Jesus got up, went out and withdrew to a desert place there to pray. Simon and his companions set out to look for him. When they had found him they said: "Everybody is looking for you". But Jesus replied "Let's go elsewhere to the neighbouring villages so that, there too, I may proclaim the Good News; for this is why I have come into the world". Jesus went through the whole of Galilee, proclaiming the Good News in their*

DECEMBER

14	Buon compleanno	F. Fiorenzo Trivelli
15	Happy birthday 35 anni di sacerdozio	Br. George Varghese Korandakkatte P. Ernesto Consonni
16	50 años de sacerdocio Happy birthday	Mons Claudio Silvero Br. Albert Sa-at Prathansantihong
17	Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire 45 anni di sacerdozio	P. Giuseppe Lietti P. Omer Koutouan Nanghy PP. Ugo Donini, Francesco Radelli e Alessandro Paniga
18	Buon compleanno	P. Giulio Forloni
23	40 ans de sacerdoce	P. Joseph Ruspil
24	Happy birthday	Br. Gerard Sutherland
25	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Francisco Daleoso
27	Buon compleanno	P. Alessandro Paniga Fr. Chan John Kunu
28	Feliz cumpleaños Happy birthday 5 anos de profissão	P. José Miguel Larrosa P. Hiran Thomas Klinboakaew Hno. Osmar Vicente Caceres Spaini
29	Happy birthday	Br. Davit Phithak Bi-Thuk
31	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Théophile Dégni N'Guessan

JANUARY 2013

1	Happy birthday	Fr. Valan Peter Kanagaraj Br. Peter Nonthaphat Mayoe
3	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Sergio Gouarnalusse
5	5 anos de profissão	Ir. Eder Chaves Gonçalves Ir. Francisco de Asis Dos Santos
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

sickness and their sin; he wanted to cure them and save them by encouraging them to be approached by the Father's love. "As he stepped ashore, Jesus saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at some length." (Mt 14,14; Mark 6,34).

The heart of the disciple of Christ, like St Michael, is constantly echoing to the dynamism of the Heart of Jesus, like the heart of a missionary-disciple. "Give me a heart which really loves; it believes, tastes the things of God; it rushes, flies in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ". (DS 111). *If only our entire being, our bodies, our souls had but one movement, one generous momentum to be swept along by the spirit of love, repeating: "Here I am!"* (DS 146).

That is how we are Betharramite missionary-disciples: religious and laity together, men and women, children, youth and adults. Like our Father St Michael we naturally enjoy moments of intimacy with Jesus and his Father just like those engaged in the generous and faithful service of mankind throughout the world. From the Heart of Jesus to the Heart of the World.

The heart of the real Betharramite is in constant communion with the heart of Jesus through prayer, in joy and in thanksgiving, in the responsibility of performing one's duty, in the offering of our life to the Father and the constant and generous service of the brothers. Why is our Congregation called the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus?



Precisely because it is united in a special manner to the divine Heart saying to his Father: "Here I am!" (DS 44).

The heart of the Betharramite learns from the Heart of Jesus to be the worshipper of the Father who is patient and merciful towards all men.

From this intimacy with Jesus, humble and obedient, the heart of the Betharramite learns compassion and goodness in the face of the needs of those with whom he lives. He cannot stay there quiet and contented; he can be seen always on the move, rushing out to meet the destitute in their poverty, on the fringes of society, in their sickness; or lacking in common sense, wise judgement and happiness.

The heart of the Betharramite is like that of Jesus; like that of a child, obedient, constantly trying to be agreeable to his Father: gentle, humble, merciful, generous in the service of men, his brothers.

Swept along by the missionary love of our charism, the Betharramite constantly divides his time between the Heart of Jesus and the heart of the world so that the men and women he meets

will recognise in the Heart of Jesus, the love the Father has for us, and that they will experience the same joy as he in the contemplation and life in the intimacy of the Heart of Jesus, a Heart which is joyful, obedient, meek and humble.

In order to meet with mankind we must live at the heart of the world. **The heart of the world** is a strange place. St Michael used to call it "**the position**". There one can find values and anti-values, the good seed and the tare. It is at the heart of the world that one can "interpret the signs of the times", thanks to which one can recognise the *real signs of the presence or plans of God*. (GS 4 and 11). The heart of the world thus becomes the "theological scene" of God's presence and will, since he himself was incarnate in Jesus Christ and he is familiar with everything pertaining to man. At the heart of the world there is wickedness,

injustice as well as sin; but there is also so much of the Word and the Kingdom that like Jesus, we must learn to discover and display such values so as to develop them. We must learn to love the world in all its complexity just as God himself loves it "*God so loved the world*" (John 3,16).

The Betharramite who springs from the Heart of Christ to the heart of the world must practice the opposite movement. He is familiar with the needs, the sufferings, the successes as well as the hopes that he discovers in the heart of mankind; for him this is possible through prayer where he experiences joy and gratitude, bringing them to fruition in the offering which the Beloved Son makes to the Father whom he loves.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, sci



St Michael Garicoits wrote...

Which is the easiest and most perfect of all the intentions? Is it the one which includes all the others which are equally good? Reply: It is the one which the Lord himself proposed as he said: Here I am to do your will; my food is to do the will of him who sent me. With this intention we would avoid so many faults; it would enrich us with so many good things, would make us so useful to ourselves and to our neighbour; it would make us capable of performing the greatest actions (Psalm 115,12).

What do we need to do so as to will what God is asking? Reply: God deigned to love us first and to glorify us in so many ways! The memory of so much love, of such great honours which God bestowed on us will revive in us the desire to love him too. (M 398)

morning of the day after the religious shared on two themes proposed by the members of the community: "Fraternal life in community" and "Promoting and welcoming vocations".
"Spezial" recognition ► Fr. Luigi Speziale was raised to the rank of Canon of the Holy Sepulchre by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Fouad Twal. The ceremony was held on Wednesday, December 5th, during Vespers, in the Patriarchal Seminary at Beit Jala. This is a recognition given to Fr Luigi for the service he rendered to the Patriarchal Seminary for 42 years! With this recognition the whole Betharramite family has been honoured: the Betharram religious had been in charge of formation in this seminary for many years.

Vicariate of Ivory Coast

Let us share our riches ► On Saturday, November 24, the lay Betharramite had a meeting in the community of Adiapodoumé to reflect on the spirituality of St. Michael. The keynote was given by Fr Laurent Bacho: "The virtues of the Sacred Heart: humility and gentleness." Then Fr Sylvain Dansou gave his contribution on the jubilee year of St. Michael and on other pieces of news regarding the Betharramite family. On the same day, in the Parish of St. Bernard was held a retreat for 340 catechumens: children, youth and adults. The theme was: "How to nourish your faith during the Advent Season?"

Vicariate of Paraguay

Art. 273... at least once a year! ► On October 30th, the communities of the Vicariate gathered for the third "Inter-community Meeting" at La Colmena. The meeting was an opportunity to reflect on the Year of Faith.

Fr Gustavo Agin, the Regional Superior, who was visiting the communities of the Vicariate, attended the meeting too.



Vicariate of Brazil

Vocation stories ►

On November 2-4, a vocational meeting was held in Belo Horizonte and eight youngsters took part in it. The meeting was organised by the team in charge of vocation promotion in the Vicariate (Fr Wagner, Br Eder, Br Davi, Br Jeferson) supported by Br Marcelo and the scholastics. Fr Mauro, the Regional Vicar and Master of the Scholastics, inaugurated the meeting which included moments of reflection on vocation and different people shared their experience. Among them a young couple - parents of one of the young boys present at the meeting - shared their experience in living their marriage as a vocation. Then, Fr Joseph Mirande told the story of his own vocation. After prayer there were also moments of relaxation and celebration.

New deacons ► On December 8, three Betharramites, Marcelo Rodrigues, Francisco de Assis dos Santos and Eder Chaves Gonçalves were ordained deacons in the parish church of Our lady of Betharram at Vila Matilde (SP). Let's join the Vicariate to pray and thanks the Lord.

In memoriam

On November 15th **Mrs Rosa Nauboon**, 49 years old, sister of Fr Suthon of the MaePon community (Thailand), died after 2 years of illness. Let us pray for our brother and his family.

Fr Simone and will eventually be available on line. The deepening of Betharramite spirituality is to be helped by the letters of our Founder or an event in his life which can possibly connect with present day life. A local member of the group will write a brief summary of the events in the different parishes and each of the Friends of Betharram will be able to contact the others via the Social network or a blog which is in preparation.

Virtual communication doesn't seem to pose a problem. The first local meeting on the theme of the "Desire for Heaven" has already taken place, but this is not enough. For public meetings of all the Italian groups a calendar has been drawn up for two yearly meetings during Advent and Lent. The first one has just taken place during the Bank Holiday weekend for the Immaculate Conception, the 8th December is a bank holiday in Italy. Rome was chosen as the meeting place for this first meeting. With the help of the

programme it was desired to finalise membership of the group: give the same joy to all! After the opening prayer came the Adoration to leave place for evangelisation in public. One of the youth from Lecce (Southern Italy) staying with the Fathers in Rome just then had a simple idea: leave the doors of the Church of St Mary of the Miracles open on the Piazza del Popolo in the heart of the Eternal City; the young people would meet the passers by and talk with them about the Faith, (bearing in mind the theme of the year launched by Pope Benedict XVI) and about St Michael.

Some are already saving up their money to be able to fly off to South America but there is still a lot to be done! There is no doubt that the road is steep but it is hoped that we will succeed. Already the first fruits are beginning to appear!

Young Betharramite laity from Italy

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Vicariate of France-Spain

Betharramite heritage ► On Thursday, November 8th the team - appointed by the Superior General - in charge of the enhancement of the site of Betharram had the first meeting. Aware that Betharram and its material, spiritual and pastoral future belongs to the whole Congregation, the 9-member-strong team (5 religious & 4 lay people) called to study and propose a project. The goal of the team is to help the Congregation to take decisions about the future of Betharram. Next meeting on January 11th, at Betharram, of course!

Vicariate of Holy Land

Rofl, art. 273 ► On 28 and 29 November the Assembly of the Vicariate was held in Bethlehem. The religious gathered around the Regional Vicar, Fr Pietro Felet and the Regional Superior Fr Jean-Luc Morin. On the first day the novices were also present and the exchange revolved around the theme "The Year of Faith and the Jubilee Year of Saint Michael". On the



"PAENITENTIARIA APOSTOLICA, DE SPECIALI MANDATO SUMMI PONTIFICIS, PLENARIAM LIBENTER CONCEDIT INDULGENTIAM, SUETIS CONDICIONIBUS RITE ADIMPLETIS, OMNIBUS FIDELIBUS VERE PAENITENTIBUS LUCRANDAM . . ." No, this is not some medieval document which a librarian has dug up, but the opening lines of the decree in Latin and signed by the Grand Penitentiary himself, Mgr EMMANUEL S.R.E. CARDINAL MONTEIRO DE CASTRO, ON 20TH SEPTEMBER 2012 BY WHICH A JUBILEE YEAR HAS BEEN GRANTED TO OUR RELIGIOUS FAMILY, MARKING THE OCCASION OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF OUR SAINTLY FOUNDER, SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS.

Part 1 of the decree contains a brief summary of the history and spirituality of Betharram which I, in my capacity of General Procurator, had forwarded to the Sacred Penitentiary to request and justify the grace of a Jubilee Year. Here is the text of the decree:



“ THE APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, by virtue of the faculties accorded by the Sovereign Pontiff, freely grants a Plenary Indulgence, subject to the usual conditions (Sacramental Confession, Holy Communion and prayers for the Pope's intentions), to all the faithful who are sincerely disposed. This indulgence can be applied as an offering for the souls of the faithful who are in Purgatory, by visiting in the course of a pilgrimage a place under the pastoral care of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram, by partaking piously at some celebration or by spending a shorter time in recollection, finishing with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and invocations to Our Blessed Lady and St Michael Garicoits.

a. At the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Betharram, any day.

b. At other sacred places: On days named in the request and on other feast days to be announced during the Year of Faith.

The elderly, the sick and all who are house bound may also gain a Plenary Indulgence on condition that they have the intention of fulfilling the usual conditions as soon as possible; and if they are spiritually united to the Jubilee celebrations or pilgrimages, by prayer and the offering of their sufferings to God through the intercession of Our Lady.

So that God's forgiveness which is to be obtained through the authority of the Church may reach the faithful as easily as possible thanks to pastoral charity, this Penitentiary sends out a pressing invitation to the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Betharram to be available as willingly and generously as possible for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Jubilee sites.

This decree is valid during the whole Jubilee Year for Saint Michael Garicoits, notwithstanding anything to the contrary.

I now take the liberty of adding the definition of an indulgence as given by Pope Paul VI in the Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum Doctrina* in 1967.

“An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church, which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”

This is an opportunity for anyone with pastoral responsibilities to explain to the faithful the meaning of indulgences, the difference between plenary and partial indulgences, the places, times and conditions required to obtain an indulgence, especially the times and places connected with the Jubilee Year of St Michael and the Year of Faith, which we are actually celebrating.

In what concerns the “appointed days in the requesting letter” times and places linked to the Jubilee Year for St Michael, here are the dates and events mentioned in the letter:

- At Betharram solemn opening of the Jubilee Year with a concelebration presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux, 14th May 2013.
- Participation at the WYD Rio de Janeiro, 23–28 July 2013 with the youth who collaborate with us at different missions.
- Mass in the Church St Louis des Francais, Rome, on 23rd June 2013, preceded by a prayer vigil in the Church of St Marie des Miracles, the pastoral charge of which was entrusted to us

nearly a century ago.

- Meetings on Betharramite spirituality at different levels (community, vicariate, congregation).

Let us remember also certain important dates for our Congregation:

- 14th May, solemnity of the “dies natalis” of our holy Founder St Michael Garicoits.
- 28th July, feast of Our Lady of Betharram.
- 25th August, feast of Blessed Marie of Jesus Crucified, who has deep historical and spiritual links with our Congregation.
- 26th August, feast of St Elizabeth Bichier des Ages with whom we have deep spiritual links. Of her St Michael used to say: “This is the dear Sister who did everything. All I did was to execute her plans”.
- Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- Solemnity of the Annunciation of Our Lord. (The “Ecce Ancilla” echoing the “Ecce Venio”).
- The Exaltation of the Holy Cross. St Michael founded our Congregation at the feet of the Calvary of Betharram.
- St Joseph, special patron saint of the Institute.

Finally, we must not forget the pressing invitation sent especially to the Betharramite priests-religious to be available for any of the faithful wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, an invitation expressed in the words dear to St Michael and to our Betharramite tradition, “with a great heart and generous soul”. This is the attitude in which we wish to live this Year of St Michael!

Enrico Frigerio, scj

First fruits of a great hope

LAST MAY THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, FR GASPAR, LAUNCHED A PROPOSAL TO THE YOUNG WHO ARE CLOSE TO OUR COMMUNITIES OR ALREADY ORGANISED AS “BETHARRAMITE” GROUPS: PARTICIPATE IN THE WYD IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN JULY 2013 AND IN AN EXCEPTIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING (THE FIRST ONE EVER), ESPECIALLY DEDICATED TO THEM ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF ST MICHAEL.

AT THE SAME TIME HE ALSO INVITED THE RELIGIOUS “TO ENCOURAGE AND TO ORGANIZE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE WYD AND THE BETHARRAMITE DAYS...”. IN ITALY, SPURRED BY THIS INVITATION, A SMALL GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE HAS COME TO LIFE. THEY ENTHUSIASTICALLY MET THE CHALLENGE AND FOUNDED THE SO-CALLED “BETHARRAMICI/BETHARRAMFRIENDS” GROUP. HERE BELOW YOU CAN READ WHAT THEY HAVE TO SHARE ABOUT THEMSELVES . . .

We are a group of Friends of Betharram, all under 35 years of age. This new-born group came into being in October 2012, the Italian subsidiary of the Betharramite Youth to be found in various places in parishes entrusted to the Fathers of the Sacred Heart.

This Italian group came into being thanks to opportunities offered for some time by the Congregation. First and foremost there was the pilgrimage to Betharram in July 2012, marking the centenary of the crowning of the statue of Our Lady of the Beautiful Branch. A few young men from the parishes of Lissone and Montemurlo knew each other; they see that there are other people, either in Italy or in France, closely connected to the same Congregation; they want to know more. Then came the invitation from the General Superior, Father Gaspar, to the whole Congregation, but more especially to the Formation team, to constitute, as quickly as possible, a group of young people connected to the Betharramites.

The invitation, very much in the news just now, is linked to the forthcoming World Youth Days (WYD) to be held in Rio de Janeiro celebrating its 28th edition in July 2013. It will be preceded by the **BetharraMeeting**: the world wide meeting of young people who appreciate the



charism of St Michael.

Prior to packing for Brazil where we shall be welcomed at Passa Quatro in a Betharramite College with other youth groups from the city and from the wider world, there is a feeling that in Italy there is the urge to start a group.

The first meeting which saw the creation of the Friends of Betharram, consisted of the first eight participants, accompanied by Fathers Simone and Aldo Nespoli, and were all received at the Montemurlo parish for two days in October. This therefore marks the birth of the group of young Betharramite laity, which is not an alternative to the catechetical activities already in place; what is suggested is an autonomous monthly meeting managed by the members of the group themselves. Eventually there would be outside speakers; the whole has been orchestrated by

5 minutes
with...*from outside?* -

Yes, the Maepon Centre is supported by the government as far as food and students uniforms are concerned. The centre is also supported by the Alfon, the Maekong education fund; they are sending some voluntary workers who give their help to the centre for a few months.

Is the cooperation with the sisters of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception (known as the Maepon Sisters), a significant element for the running of the Centre? - Actually, seven sisters are helping us in the Centre. This co-operation is enriching our fraternal life in this community as Betharramite religious: wherever we are and whomever we are with, we are living and helping each other as one family.

How do you keep in touch with the other betharramite communities in Thailand? - We have a chance to meet our brothers once in two months in the Community Meeting at Chiangmai. We also meet them on special occasions such as Christmas day, Easter day and so on. During these "Family Meetings" we try to make our fraternal life stronger, to share our missionary experience, to better know each other and to keep the vision of our founder alive.

Is the Chiang Mai diocese supporting you in your mission? - Yes, The Chiang Mai diocese is supporting us with the salary for our catechists and covering the expenses for the catechism camps. We are also involved in all the activities of the diocese.

What values are you keen to pass on to these Karen young people? - Here in Maepon, they are growing in faith and in the Christian values; our wish is that they can share what they have received with the people who are living among them. Those young people come back to share their experience and help us on some occasions.

During the whole day you are involved in activities with the youth, plunged in a luxuriant nature still protected from the modern world: aren't you almost in paradise? - During most of the day we are involved in all the activities with them: Eucharist, prayers, manual works, games; in all this we try to keep a personal contact with each one of them. We teach them how to live in this world as human beings carrying in themselves the image of God.



INCARNATION

Listening to the murmuring of the crowd and trying to respond

In his message on December 8 1962, Pope John XXIII said: "We seem to hear a great and confused murmuring rising from all corners of the globe". To be able to hear this murmuring is it not necessary not only to be present to the world, **but to be at the very heart of the world**, experiencing its hopes and sufferings, and sharing "the sadness and anguish of mankind". On the part of the Church there is real solidarity with the whole human family" (GS 1)....a solidarity which is not an outward show. **Is that not the Incarnation?**

To hear such a murmur should we not be there like Christ at the very heart of this world, on today's routes; should we not be going out to meet the people, see them, understand them, listen to them, hold them in high regard, love them...?

- Is this not what Christ meant by saying his "Here I am" to his Father?

- Following in his footsteps "the Christian community is really and intimately in solidarity with the human race and its history" (GS 1)

- The Incarnation began with Mary's YES and will continue with Christ's "Here I am" to his Father throughout the whole of his life, in reply to "the murmurings" heard on his route here below.

- This Incarnation is carried on by us, Christians and Religious, in the realities of everyday life where, in Christ's name we must be "the proximity of God" for mankind.



Mons. Landel with Benedictus XVI

It is pursued in concrete terms on the simple "route", the route which we take on our daily commitments. And on that route there are all the surprises of the meetings: wonders and sadness; people of every human and social condition, regardless of their nationality, culture or religion. **"The Incarnation is not something invented, it is to be accepted.** Through the Incarnation we come to see differences which become a wealth. And as with Christ, this journeying with the companion can change the course of events not only in people's lives but in our own lives too; think for a moment of the Disciples of Emmaus. On that route there are even realities which go against what we think. That's not a reason for taking the alternative route. It's at that precise moment that we understand the **gratuity of the Incarnation** ... it is not

going according to my fixed plan! On this road, Christ, pursuing the dynamics of the Incarnation, quite simply and with his humanity accepted all the genuine situations which came his way. Are these situations not the "murmurings" of which the Council speaks? There are some which are very noisy but the less noisy ones are no less important and require of us "Here I am" in reply! It is here that we can see the most evident signs of God's love for the whole of humanity. **Isn't that also the Incarnation?**

Meeting and listening on the route. Listening to the needs of mankind as Christ succeeded in doing is it not an invitation to listen to the heart of that man called to experience the tenderness of God in the realities of the world? Didn't all those individuals whom Christ met, afterwards go out and proclaim that gentleness which they had experienced in their own lives. They had understood to what extend the Heart of God had affected them by its tenderness.

On our way, by meeting and listening to our brethren we are invited **to hold our neighbour in high regard and to value every situation.** Is this not a sign of the Spirit present in everyone of these situations; can we not now be amazed as we experience how close we are to the reality and to the germs of life bursting forth from the many human realities, even if on first sight things are not as exciting as we would wish them to be.

Accompanying, meeting, listening, and respect, do they not lead us to love, to that look of love cast on each individual; is it not the look of love of Christ who put

so many people on their feet again; that same look which helped so many people to get started again.

- Is this loving look not a look full of mercy?
- Had God not been merciful, would there have been the Incarnation, would human life have been taken seriously?
- Is the "Here I am" of the Incarnation not an extension of God accompanying his People?
- Is the Incarnation as we experience it today not the extension of this presence of God in today's history; today, the Incarnation couldn't exist without us; what an exciting responsibility is ours!

Doesn't St Michael invite us in a very special manner to be faithful to the "passion of the Incarnation";

"At the sight of such an extraordinary spectacle, they felt driven to sacrifice themselves in imitation of Jesus, humble and obedient, and to devote all their energies to obtain the same happiness for others" (St Michael p.149)

Isn't such an incredible sight the motorway going directly **"From the Heart of Jesus to the Heart of the World"** (theme for the 150th anniversary); even if this motorway sometimes looks more like a winding road or better still an undulating track! But that's where we shall experience the Incarnation.

+ Vincent Landel, scj

the community of Maepon

QUESTION: IS MAEPON (THAILAND) A TINY OR A BIG COMMUNITY? LET'S COUNT TOGETHER: TWO BETHARRAMITE FATHERS (FR SUTHON AND FR LUKE KRIANGSAK), SURROUNDED BY 7 RELIGIOUS SISTERS AND ... ABOUT 200 HUNDRED KAREN YOUNG PEOPLE FROM 8 TO 17 YEARS OLD, LIVING 24 HOURS A DAY, AROUND 300 DAYS A YEAR IN THE MAEPON CENTRE. TINY OR BIG? WELL, IT IS UP TO YOU ...! ANYWAY, THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LOOKING AFTER THESE YOUNG PEOPLE HAS DEFINITELY A FUNDAMENTAL TASK: MAKE THESE 200 YOUNGSTERS, LIVING APART FROM THEIR FAMILIES FOR MOST OF THE YEAR, FEEL AT HOME AS ONE FAMILY!

Nef: From the small village schools scattered in the mountains to the foundation of the Maepon Centre of Fr Séguinotte in 1955, what was the idea of our early missionaries? - The idea of Fr Séguinotte about the mission in a Karen country was to cultivate the Christian faith in the life of the people; like a small seed growing into a big tree, because he saw that the Karen people are poor and have no education. That is why he built the Centre for education, and gave a chance to the people for study.

The aim of the Centre was to make people stand by themselves in faith, love and hope, deepening their knowledge about Christian values. Now we can see the fruit: among Karen people there are priests, nuns, catechists, and many want to become Catholics.

This means that the Maepon Centre is not only a school. - Exactly. The activities of the Maepon Centre revolve around the education and Christian formation of Karen children. In our mission we put in all our efforts in supporting the poor children.

Is the Centre getting some kind of support



DAY SCHEDULE

AM: 6:00 getting-up; 6:30 Mass; 7:00 housekeeping and/or animal care; 8:00 breakfast; 8:30-10:00 Karian lesson and catechism; 10:30-12:00 lessons; 12:00 lunch. PM: 1:00-4:00 lessons; 4:00-5:00 cleaning, animal care and workshops; 5:00 sport and shower; 6:00 dinner; 7:00 evening prayer; 7:30-8:30, religious songs (Karian or Thai), games, homeworks; 8:30 bedtime.

On Fridays & Saturdays evening: video until 9:30pm; **For the seniors (over 14),** Bible study three times a week; **On Sundays:** Mass at 9:00am; free time in the morning (without television); 1:00pm television or video; 3:00pm sport & leisure time outside.