

It has pleased God to make Himself loved, and while we were still his enemies. He loved us so much that he sent his only Son: He gave Him to us to be the magnet which draws us to divine love, to be the model which shows us the dynamic of love, and to be the means of attaining divine love: the Son of God became man. At the moment He entered the world animated by the Spirit of God His Father, He gave Himself up to all God's designs for Him; He took the place of all victims; He said: 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure'. Then I said: 'Here I am, I have come to do your will, O my God.'

Jesus began His life's work by this great act which he never discontinued. From this moment onward he remained always in a state of sacrificial offering, annihilated before God. He did nothing on His own; His actions were always directed by the Spirit of God; His disposition was one of constant abandonment to the orders of God, to suffer and do whatever He wanted: "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross".

This is how God loves us: this is how Jesus Christ our Lord and creator became an indescribable attraction for our hearts, a perfect model and an all-powerful help. But we human beings are cold before God! Even among the priests there are very few who say as their divine master did: 'Here I am, Yes Father!'

At the sight of this marvellous spectacle, the priests of Betharram felt drawn to dedicate themselves to imitating Jesus, humble and obedient, and to working wholeheartedly to bring the same happiness to others, under the protection of Mary; she was always disposed to do what God wanted and was always submissive to what God did. They have taken St Michael and St. Ignatius Loyola as their patrons.

Of the three paragraphs in this Manifesto, the first one expresses the aim and object of the Incarnation of the Word to which the Congregation must adhere; the second one expresses the ideal and disposition of Christ who is to be their model; the third one expresses the ideal and disposition of the priests of Betharram copied exactly from those of Christ. There is no mention yet of the Sacred Heart, but

everything that our Saint wanted to express is there; we even have the presence of Mary "always ready for whatever God wanted and always obedient to whatever God willed".

This therefore is the second rule of the Congregation.

Pierre Duvigneau, scj

(to be continued)

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Societas S^{mi} Cordis Jesu
BETHARRAM

79
2013

NEF

NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA
FAMILY NEWS

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

111th year
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A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Pastoral of Vocations at Betharram

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Work for Vocations ought to be our primary pastoral preoccupation. If the charism was for us an opportunity of meeting with Christ, the source of a new orientation of our lives giving meaning to everything and filling us with joy, we cannot but offer the same opportunity to others so that they too may have the same experience. We could say that the Pastoral for Vocations is our first step in our mission because it's all about proposing the God of Love, manifested in Jesus Christ, humble and obedient. That's what it's all about in the first place and not a question of recruiting numbers so as to continue our good works. Without that fruit in the first steps of formation it's impossible to pursue the next steps.

If on the one hand numbers are not important, on the other hand if there are no candidates there will be neither formation nor religious in the future. When we read the history of the arrival of our religious in Italy, it is remarkable to notice that their first preoccupation was to welcome vocations for the Congregation. The story is similar elsewhere.

For a long time this work was entrusted to one religious in charge of vocations; the others simply left it to him. That's what's happening today too. Yet promo-

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS OF BETHARRAM

2 - The Jesuits' Rule

The Rule of the Missionaries of Hasparren could move the piety of a missionary group but was soon insufficient according as Fr Garicoits shared with his disciples his ideal of a real religious life as he had perceived it during his retreat in Toulouse in 1832. The author of *La Vie de St Michel Garicoits*, P. Bourdenne, gives this description of the early days of the Community:

"Fr Garicoits had received from Fr Leblanc a copy of the Thesaurus of the Jesuits. He was so taken by the presentation of this work and wishing to have a better knowledge of Ignatius's masterpiece, he made a careful study of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. The impression left on him was immense. A short time later he distributed a copy of the Thesaurus and the Constitutions to each of the priests. Meanwhile he tried to imbue them with the spirit of the texts until such times as to prescribe them."

That's how 1836 and 1837 passed. Under the influence of the Founder, the young community slipped gradually into the mould of the new Rule.

"In 1838, continues his biographer, these Rules had become part and parcel of the way of life of the Community so that Fr Garicoits asked Mgr Lacroix who had just been named Bishop of Bayonne, to be good enough to approve of them so that they would have legal status".

The Bishop gave his approval in these terms: "Get the spirit of these Constitutions firmly set in your minds and observe them while awaiting the rules which will be given



Saint Ignatius of Loyola

you in accordance with the constitutions mentioned above. 6th September 1838."

Of superior quality to the Rule of Hasparren, this new Rule consisted of the 52 articles of the Sommaire of the Jesuits and the 49 articles of the Rules of the Society of Jesus, except for a few paragraphs which were cancelled out because they were not considered suitable for the young society.

This modified version was kept safely in a copy book belonging to Fr Cassou who was to die prematurely 2 November 1846. Another document of considerable importance was to be found in the same copy book. Not satisfied with the removal of certain passages from the Jesuit texts so as to make them acceptable for Betharram, Fr Garicoits preceded the new document by a manifesto, composed by himself, and which was to state what was deepest in himself and meant to be a guide to the Betharramite interpretation of these rules. This founding text gives us an insight into the charism of our Founder better than anything else.

tion of vocations ought to be the worry of each one in so far as we believe in our own vocation, our mission to the young and our Congregation. In a world where it is constantly being said that there is great thirst for God, we should try and find the right means to propose our charism to the young, seriously and in a language which speaks to them. It has never been easy to lead a Christian life in a responsible manner. No easier today than yesterday! Indeed, it's not simple to be close to the young and to accompany them. I would like to share with you a reflection which I read in the Spanish magazine "*Vida Nueva*" (No 2.823, 10-16 Nov. 2012, pg 50).

"The first groups of students to be catechised were university students; some of them had had no religious education or formation. They knew nothing in this domain, its language, its structures, its history, its rites or its contents. And there were endless prejudices or stereotypes, received and created with all the means of communication which were their principal source of information. This doesn't mean to say that they had a holy horror of all things religious; they were indifferent for the most part, they were from another planet as they were wont to say. I happened to be in a theatre in the middle of a bunch of students who knew nothing of the parable of the Prodigal Son, of the Beatitudes, who knew neither the Lord's Prayer nor the Hail Mary. The total disappearance of all religious knowledge is obvious, even though how it occurs may vary from place to place in our own country. This makes you think and is symptomatic. These students were

signs of the end of a world or signs of a great void about the wider dimensions of life.

The new Evangelisation must be an occasion for reflecting on the methods of the transmission of the message as we reflect on why they were such a failure during the last century. It will also be a chance to reflect on the right language to employ in the transmission of the Gospel message in a world submerged in images and sounds but which is totally ignorant of silence and true values" (Francesc Torralba, philosopher).

On this question and on others it is evident that we must ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest. I am convinced that this passes through the intermediary of a pastoral of vocations, which uses the Exercises of St Ignatius as a method of spiritual accompaniment. The joyful witness of our own lives in our communities is also necessary. But it's not enough. Just as for evangelisation there is the answer to the unavoidable question: "Why is it so?" to be given in fidelity to our hope, with both simplicity and gentleness, as we say "Since I have known Jesus Christ, humble and obedient, and since I have met him, I am happy. You too, you can be happy when you get to know him, loving him and meeting him in prayer" How are they going to get to know Jesus humble and obedient if nobody talks to them about him? What will the world and the Church be like if there is not somebody who, like Christ, is willing to be faithful to this humility and obedience? What is going to become of us if we haven't had the cour-

FEBRUARY		
14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno	F. Bertrand Belhartz F. Hyacinthe Ali Konan Fr. Giuseppe Pozzi
17	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Jean-Luc Morin P. Serge Braga Latta
18	Happy birthday	Br. Andrew Ferris
19	Joyeux anniversaire Feliz cumpleaños	P. Henri Lamasse Hno. Raúl Villalba Maylin
20	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Mirco Trusgnach
22	Happy birthday Buon compleanno	Fr. Charles Enakius Fr. Alberto Pensa
25	Joyeux anniversaire	F. Élisée Mambo Sika
26	Happy birthday	Fr. Chokdi Damronganurak
27	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Arsène Raymond Noba
28	Joyeux anniversaire Feliz aniversario	P. Pierre Salla P. Francisco de Paula
29	25 años de profesión	P. Sergio Gouarnalusse
MARCH		
1	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno 55 años de profesión	P. André Gillet P. Albino de Giobbi PP. Constancio Erobaldi, Enrique Gavel
3	Happy birthday	P. Tidkham Jailertit
5	Buon compleanno	P. Giuseppe Franchi
7	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Joseph Saint-Pé
8	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Henri Marsaa-Poey
10	Buon compleanno	P. Pietro Felet
12	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Joseph Canton
13	Buon compleanno	P. Natale Re

age to propose this style of evangelical life?

Our witness to Christian life is as precious as it is fragile. It is to be seen shining in the lives of the martyrs, throughout the history of the Church. And it shines still today wherever it is genuine. Our witness to the Christian way of life is not something to be added to everything else. It is our very life in its authenticity with Christ, in its characteristics, his attitude, his actions, and his words which we want to reproduce. Our entire Religious life is a sign announcing Jesus Christ (Rule of Life 13).

Everything that we are and do is evidence of someone other than us, of the very person of Jesus Christ. Our main preoccupation is not to bear witness but to lead our Christian lives in truth – this will be witness enough. We must be Christians because of what Christ represents in our lives, and not for others to notice; they'll see it all right.

The witness that we bear will be limited; it is the witness of sinners. We are constantly invited to be converted in the ascetic dimension of our lives so that we may be faithful to our following of Christ. It sometimes happens that the inconsistencies of others take away what is of value in our Christian lives no matter how responsible we may be in how we lead our lives. Therefore they are of great worth because led in all sincerity and not for the value that others can attach to them. In the same way our Christian



way of life may be meaningful for some and leave others indifferent even driving them to violence, resulting in persecution instead of admiration. This is what happens in the parable of the sower; he sows good seed in all types of soil which receive the seed as best it can, resulting in the harvest which we see. (Mark 4, 1-20)

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj

Meetings at the Generalate in Rome

COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATION (JANUARY 21-27)

The Council of Congregation met at the Generalate from 20 – 27 January 2013. This was a tough week of hard work in communion with the different realities of our Congregation represented by the Regional Superiors and the General Council. The Rule of life wants this meeting to be held every two years but the custom exists of holding it annually, which is easy to do in view of the limited number of delegates.

It was therefore a great experience of communion: French, Spanish, English and Italian, the four main languages spoken in the Congregation were represented, but better still there was the life of the Congregation with the hopes and fears of each Vicariate. Obviously the main topic of discussion was the forthcoming Betharramite Jubilee marking the 150 years since the death of our Founder; we all feel committed to making this year a time of grace. Our charism has been around for many years from the Heart of Christ to the heart of the world, thanks to the inspiration of St Michael and to the fidelity of so many religious and laity and to the will to continue to grow.

The Mother House at Betharram will certainly be the meeting place as well as the starting point for much of the activities; St Michael's Chapel is due soon for refurbishment; there will be a new site for his statue and the whole place will be restructured. It is the most precious heritage of our Congregation and we all feel that we must do everything possible to make the best use of it.



The principal responsibility of the Council of Congregation is to implement the decisions of the General Chapter. Everything is functioning with a lot of enthusiasm and disponibility. The international communities at Pau, Olton and Great Barr are being formed, and preparations are under way for the formation of other communities at Mendelu and Droitwich, and maybe in Vietnam. Awareness of the international dimension of the Congregation is more and more noticeable in the different Vicariates especially with the young religious: it responds to a careful discernment carried out in view of clear and attractive projects. It is a sure way of self renewal and to instilling new life into situations where discouragement and fatigue could prevail.

We also discussed the laity and the different ways in which they can participate and enjoy the fruits of the charism of Betharram according to the life style and culture of each country. We are better able to distinguish the principal characteristics defining

remember his counsels, his booklets and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

He was parish priest at Martin Coronado. There too he applied himself to his task with passion. He relaunched the Pastoral Centre for the Family in the parish. All will remember his homilies and for the rousing feast days in the sector: "Our Mother, the Virgin of Betharram, is on an outing today to go through the streets of Martin Coronado". They will also remember his zeal as he tried to revive the new Evangelisation in the parish. Such was his zeal that he would work himself into a state because not everyone understood his projects. There were sometimes consequences for his health and this would cause him great sufferings.

He had a very clear idea of his vocation as a consecrated soul and of his Betharramite identity. He held St Michael Garicoits in very high esteem. He knew in depth the charism left us by the Saint; he often read and reflected on his writings and used to say that "...by an intuition which projected him into the future, he had discovered the very essence of the Gospel".

As a witness there is his "Kerygmatic Composition on the charism as key to the New Evangelisation" and the "Hojitas de espiritualidad", a note book which he edited during 10 years, as a service for the laity, in whose vocation he firmly believed. But he wanted the laity not in the pulpit nor in the sacristy but there where life had placed them and in the experience of the sacrament of marriage.

We must remember Martin's fascination with contemplation – in the face to face with Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and whom he had known, loved, followed and preached. In the depths of his heart he repeated what he often said in psalm 145 (144). The Lord is true in all he says, and faithful in all his doings. He replies to the desires of those who fear him, he saves them. The Lord will keep all those who love him, but the wicked he will destroy. May my lips proclaim the praises of the Lord! His most holy name, may all mankind bless him forever and ever. Amen! (123, 19, 20, 21).

Gustavo Agín & Gaspar Fernández, sci



Saint Michael Garicoits wrote...

St Ignatius recommended obedience with such insistence! – rules, letters about obedience, and about religious perfection. Why? First of all, without being outstanding in the practice of virtue which is attributed in the first place to Jesus in Scripture (Phil 2,8; John 6,38; Psalm 39,9) those who profess to have our Saviour as their modal will never reach his perfection, not by a long chalk. Secondly, since the rules are not binding under pain of sin, their observation would soon be a bore if it wasn't backed up by a deep respect for the Superiors' orders. Thirdly, because on its own obedience can produce all the other virtues in the soul and having once produced them can preserve them. Finally, what constitutes the essence of religious life is the vow of obedience. (M 400)

Father Daniel Ramón Martín

Rosario de Santa Fé, 7 January 1939
Buenos Aires, 2 February 2013



On 2 February 2013, the day celebrating consecrated life, Fr Martin presented himself to the Father in company with Jesus. The rapid deterioration of his health allowed him to be fully conscious of the great moment when he made the oblation of himself to the Lord, oblation which began on the day of his first profession at Villa Betharram, Adroque, 55 years ago.

Martin was born at Rosario 7 January 1939. He was very young when he lost his mother. His father, grandparents, and above all his aunts, Ana and Marta, provided him with a Christian education. Since they knew Fr Carraro, a Betharramite missionary from China, and thanks to his intermediary the religious of the Sacred Heart College, Daniel Ramon entered the apostolicat, Barracas, at 10 years of age.

As a child he was sickly, hard working, lively and mischievous and was able to make very good use of the serious education which was given in the Betharramite School. From there, he left for Adroque where as teacher he had the Master of Novices, Fr Permasse and, in the scholasticate Fathers Craviotti, Rodriguez, Cerutti and Camy, among others.

He was ordained in 1962, "the year of the Council" as was inscribed on his ordination card. He had been trained in traditional theology, but he willingly accepted, absorbed and handed on the new currents in Christology, Ecclesiology, in Pastoral and the Theology of Religious Life. Fr Martin's usual expressions included "evangelisation and kerygmatic catechism", "the Paschal mystery of Christ", "the Church is the living Body of Christ today in history", "the sacrament

of marriage is the 'we' of love". While absorbing everything from Vatican II, Martin succeeded in preserving his love for the interior life which came from his traditional formation.

He felt all the tensions in the wake of the Council: Medellin, Puebla. A few misunderstandings led him to withdraw for a time from Betharram to be parish priest at La Paz (Province Entre Rios) in the diocese of Concordia. Here he continued to work with the same pastoral and spiritual zeal. It was given to Fr Etcheverria to fetch him and bring him back to the community at the San Jose d'Asuncion College. There were no hard feelings and a large dose of humility. In the San Jose parish he fell in love with the Neocatechumenal movement; he used to visit the sick and tried to associate the laity with the life of the parish.

Martin had a great love of life and for his religious and priestly vocation. He had the soul of a missionary. He took his role as Master of Novices very seriously and aimed at working the interior life. He judged the Spiritual Exercises to be an excellent means for meeting with Jesus Christ and for discernment. Many young Betharramites, formed at Adroque, will always

the profile of Betharramite laity. In some countries they are more highly organised than in others; but it is more and more obvious that it is up to us religious to be more open to them so that the treasure which we inherited from St Michael may reach them too.

From the Heart of Christ to the heart of the world: how can we ever forget the brilliant intuition of Vatican II defining the laity as "a man of the Church at the heart of the world and a man of the world at the heart of the Church". That was 50 years ago and still the Church doesn't give the laity their breathing space (they have never and no where conquered the heart of the Church). The Council of Congregation encourages us to increase or at least not to stifle the many signs of life and hope present in the different groups of laity in the Vicariates.

We discussed several other topics during that week of Congregation communion: consolidation of the funds for Formation, vocation animation, participation at the WYD in Rio de Janeiro, preparation for Final Vows, the financial situation of the three Regions, (Europe is sharing with others the financial crisis, whereas the emerging countries seem to be more optimistic); in the great and modest Betharram family we are being invited to practice the economy of communion.

A shared prayer in the beautiful chapel at the Generalate renewed our faith and our availability: on the first day we sang "Here I am" and we shall continue to sing it in our different places of mission.

Tobia Sosio, scj

SERVICE OF BETHARRAMITE FORMATION (28-31 January)

Frs. Laurent Bacho, Sylvain Dansou Hounkpatin, John Chan Kunu, Jacky Moura, Gustavo Agín, Guido García & two invited religious: Frs. Simone Panzeri and Stervin Selvadass

The members of the Service of Betharramite Formation together with Fr Gaspar Fernandez Perez, held a few days meeting. In the course of these days of intense work we took the opportunity of having a good look at the reality of formation in our religious family, of sharing our joys and fears, the joys and hopes of the mission entrusted to us, and of seeing together what the immediate future holds for us.

Similarly, we were able to pool



the life of our different houses of formation worldwide, what the young in formation are able to achieve at every stage of initial formation, the challenges which each Region must face.

Together with Fr Enrico Frigero who happened to be with us, we took stock of the 2012 session preparatory to Final Profession. All the formators who had been present at that session gave their impressions and then told us about the anxieties which the sessionists themselves had expressed, together with suggestions for improving forthcoming sessions.

An updating of the Ratio Formationis was necessary since the new edition of the Rule of Life (February 2012). The Ratio had been improved by the introduction of article 4, chapter 1, namely "Rudiments of Betharramite Education" and other points proposed by the formators. Armed with all this new material we set about composing a new and final edition of the Ratio, which should be published soon, once certain finer points have been dealt with.

During these few days and in presence of the masters of novices of the three Regional novitiates (Bethlehem, Adroque and Bangalore), we made a careful study of the section dealing with the Novitiate. We spoke about the reality of each of the novitiates and we were able to note the real benefits of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius as a priceless tool in the sharing of our charismatic heritage. The Ignatian month is now proposed to the novices as the central axis of this stage of their formation to help them gain a deep experience of

God's love and the following of Christ. As a matter of fact the Spiritual Exercises help the novice to progress in his knowledge of the Gospel, a personal meeting with Christ, an experience of the charism, the choice of his vocation and his availability for the mission (Ratio Formationis 98).

Finally, Fr Graziano Sala gave us a complete picture of the financial situation of the Congregation from the point of view of Formation. It is worth noting the solidarity which exists between the vicariates who practice a real communion. It is necessary however for all the religious to increase their efforts in supporting formation.

We finished our working session at the end of January; we shall each return home decided to pursue the mission which has been entrusted to us. May the Lord, through the intercession of Our Lady of Betharram, of St Michael, of Blessed Mariam and of Venerable Fr Etchocopar continue to bless our work and to walk ever at our sides. Forward march!

Guido García, scj

São Miguel Paulista. To our newly-ordained deacons, our best wishes!



Community & Parish

► On January 27, in the community of St. Francis of Assisi (which is part of the Parish "Our Lady of the Beautiful Branch") in Paulinia (SP), a parish assembly was held with the participation of 214 representatives of all communities and movements of the parish. The aim of the assembly was to evaluate the mission carried out by the community and to draw up a pastoral project for the next pastoral year: the Year of Faith; the 150th Anniversary of St Michael's death; the WYD; the Charity campaign launched every year by the Bishops' Conference of Brazil. On the agenda: prayer and singing sessions, sharing and reflection on the different themes for the communities and movements.

Annual Assembly ► On January 28, evening, the Religious of the Vicariate of Brazil began their annual Assembly in Belo Horizonte, chaired by Fr Mauro Ulrich de Oliveira, Vicar of Brazil and Fr Javier Irala, the First Regional Vicar of the Region, who is present on behalf of the Regional Superior, Fr Gustavo Agin, who these days is in Rome for the congregation meetings.

Vicariate of India

Professions ► On January 6th six Betharramite Brothers made their perpetual vows in Shobhana Shaakha, Bangalore.

Very Rev. Fr. Austin Hughes scj, the Regional Superior, received the vows and offered the Holy Eucharist. Let us remember our newly-professed members, George Antony, Yesudas, Jesuraj, Rojo Thomas, Sathish and Jude, in our prayers!



Vicariate of Thailand

A Happy Jubilee ► On January 4-5, the Karen Tribe of the Chiang Mai Diocese celebrated the 60th anniversary (1952-2012) of their evangelisation in the church of the Assumption at Maepon. The Karen people expressed their heart-felt gratitude to the Betharram missionaries for bringing the Gospel and for sowing in them the seed of the Catholic Faith. The Bishop of Chiang Mai Diocese and his predecessor were also present.

Note from the General Council

On January 24th, the Superior General with his Council approved the appointment of **Fr. Mario Sosa as superior of "San José" college and parish** (Vicariate of Paraguay).

IN MEMORIAM

On December 23rd, the brother of Fr Bernard Béhocaray scj, **Mr. Battit Béhocaray** died at the age of 78, at Chéraute (France). We join Fr Bernard and his family in praying for the repose of the soul of their dear one.

Vicariate of France-Spain

On-going formation ► In September 2012, the formation team of the Region of Saint Michael Garicoïts met in Adiapodoume (Ivory Coast) and stressed the importance for young religious belonging to different vicariates, to meet together and share their experience for their personal and community growth. In order to reach this goal, Frs Gérard Zugarramurdi (from Betharram), Simone Panzeri (from Rome), Emmanuel Congo Winonga (from Pibrac) and Stervin Selvadass Fernando (from Pau) met on Saturday January 12th in Pau, under the guidance of a Jesuit, Fr Guy Lepoutre, for a day of sharing, prayer and on-going formation. They had the opportunity to know each other better and to reflect together sharing joys, projects and challenges that they live in their respective communities.

Internationally yours... ► Two days later, Fr Pornchai, from Thailand, joined the international community "Maison Saint-Michel", at Pau, wanted by the General Chapter of 2011, which is now complete. The day after, Sr. Vinaya (India) and Sr. Charmaine (Sri Lanka), established the first presence of the Apostolic Carmel (Bangalore) in France. If we add to this the new presence of Fr Stervin and Br Emile, this renewal bodes well for the continuation of the project consisting in making of this "in-



spired place" a spiritual centre, a house of welcome, a centre for formation and a mission animation for the town of Pau.

Vicariate of Ivory Coast

A few Ivorian ... Youth Days ► Sunday, January 13th a youth meeting was held in the parish of Saint Bernard at Adiapodoumé. This meeting was held on the initiative of the youth ministry committee, chaired by Father Sylvain Dansou and Bros Hyacinthe and Jean-Paul and in cooperation with the Parish Council. The youth of the parish (they were about 200) had the opportunity to discuss and share their experience about their involvement in the different activities of the parish. After this meeting, the youth felt encouraged to play a more active and dynamic role in the pastoral activities of the parish, supported by their faith rooted in Jesus.

Saturday, January 19, as part of the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Michael, the community of Adiapodoumé organised a vocational day for young people. The reflection given by Fr Sylvain Dansou allowed these more than 60 young men and women to deepen the spirituality of the Betharram family.

Then in Yamoussoukro, on January 27th, some young people, led by Br Alfred, went for a pilgrimage to Sangrénou to celebrate the week prayer for the Christian Unity.

Vicariate of Brazil

Ordinations ► On December 8th, in the Parish "Our Lady of the Beautiful Branch" (SP), our brothers Éder, Francisco and Marcelo were ordained as Deacons by Mons Parrado Carral, Bishop of the Diocese of

REORIENTATION (2015) TEAM (FEBRUARY 1-6)

Fr. Gustavo Agín, Fr. Gianluca Limonta, Fr. Jacky Moura, Fr. Graziano Sala, Br. Andrew Ferris.

Just a few days before the feast of the Presentation in the Temple – day of rejoicing and prayer for Consecrated Life - there was a meeting at the Generalate in Rome of the Reorientation Commission to study the formation session for religious aged 40 and more, due to be held in the Holy Land in summer 2015.

During the six days of intense work, I can safely say that as a member of this study group, in a genuine spirit of service and fraternity, we tried to build a programme with a Biblical orientation and based on experience; this programme aims at helping the future participants in this meeting at relaunching and strengthening their own human dimension and their vocation, to arrive at a new life synthesis between experience and Gospel, between vocation and Betharramite vocation.

With the help of our discussions we began to construct a formation programme which should help the participants, after some years since Final Profession or ordination or the last period of "rest" or session, to take stock of their lives as men and religious of Betharram.

In the light of what Pope Benedict XVI says in the motu proprio Porta Fidei (6 – 2) "Through faith, this new life shapes the whole of human existence according to the radical new reality of the resurrection. To the extent that he freely cooperates, man's thoughts and affections, mentality and conduct are slowly purified and transformed, on a journey that



is never completely finished in this life."

Besides as the Acts of the XXVI General Chapter reminded us in the beginning of Part 4, it is necessary to insist on "the priority given to On-going Formation, based on the personalised accompaniment of each one which favours the experience of God and a deepening of vocation" N. 4.

With this in view the session days in the Holy Land will be punctuated by times of reflexion and sharing with the richness and special character of the Biblical sites: Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem etc. to favour the revitalisation of an itinerary which is both human and faith orientated, of which the 10 days Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius will be the crowning point.

In the necessary balance between work and rest essential for taking on board the priceless experiences of those days spent in these historic places, the participants will have ample time to embody in their own lives and their mission these words so dear to St Michael: "Here I am, Lord! Without delay, without reserve.... simply for Love".

Gianluca Limonta, scj

The Three Regional Superiors

AFTER TWO YEARS OF SERVICE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE REGIONS AND ON THE EVE OF THE JUBILEE YEAR, WE ASKED FR. JEAN-LUC MORIN, FR. GUSTAVO AGÍN AND FR. AUSTIN HUGHES GATHERED IN ROME FOR THE TRADITIONAL APPOINTMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATION (21-27 JANUARY), TO TELL US ABOUT THE LIFE AND THE PROJECTS RUNNING IN THE REGIONS.

FROM THEIR REPLIES WE CAN HAVE A QUICK BUT PRECISE OUTLOOK OVER WHAT THE CONGREGATION IS LIVING TODAY AROUND THE WORLD...

Nef: After two years as Regional Superior how do you perceive the Region of which you have responsibility? What are its strong points? And its weak points?

FATHER JEAN-LUC: It is not easy for me to resume my vision of the St Michael Garicoits Region; it is number 1 because of its history and population – a long and rich history, five vicariates, eight nations, some 20 young people in formation, about 140 finally professed Religious whose average age is the highest in the Congregation. The two most important communities in the Region are respectively the Care Home in Betharram and the Formation House in Adiapodoume. It's symbolical on the one hand of the seniority and spiritual and human heritage which it represents and, on the other, the hopes of the young generations of the Church and society, which is mounting principally in Africa.

Talking of seniority makes you think of ageing; it's not easy to imagine the future and our resistance to changes. Speaking of youth brings to mind identity crises and problems of growing up! Attitudes which expose the strength of our weaknesses on one condition: discover the truth, beauty and enthusiasm of our charism. So, old age can lead to wisdom, indifference to activism, and



Fr. Jean-Luc and Fr. Gustavo

a kindly glance full of faith for others. Then in the light of the Word of God and the meeting with the brothers the impatience of the early stages is transformed into a longing to learn and the ability to question one's motives, into a newness and creativity which makes all things possible.

So when I take a look at myself, when I view the numbers then I am full of hope when I think of the eternal freshness of "Me voici" of which we are all bearers and which carries us too! Then when I get submerged by questions and lose sight of the deeper meaning of my functions, I take out letter 253 from our Father St Michael – What is lacking on our part to draw down God's blessings on (Betharram)? A high opinion of our vocation and mission, an interior and habitual readiness to fulfil all the duties of our sta-

authentic catechises.

For the Vicariates: the annual retreat on topics from the Charism of St Michael Garicoits (VIBRA);

1. The visit and/or a procession with the relics of St Michael Garicoits which are actually at La Plata (VIARUR)
2. Pilgrimages with the laity to the "Holy Places" Betharram and the Charism. (VIARUR – VIBRA).

For the Region: A Spanish edition of the Correspondence of St Michael Garicoits in 3 volumes.

1. Regional meetings of the laity and educators.
2. Preparation days for the WYD in Brazil.
3. A meeting for the young religious of the Region.
4. Sessions on St Michael in the missions and before the forthcoming priestly ordinations (3).

FATHER AUSTIN: The Jubilee year of St. Michael will be marked in all three vicariates by all the normal Grand Liturgies involving local bishops and lay friends supporters and co-workers, but besides this we all have our hopes and Jubilee Projects. In India we hope to see the new Seminary opening at Mangalore; In Thailand we hope to properly launch a new mission to refugees in the Ratchaburi Diocese, while in England we want to advance the progress of the Betharram Spirituality Group and share more of our Spirituality with parish and school groups.

England has a significant number of Religious Brothers so we will be very happy to join in with the St. Michael Region Pilgrimage planned for Religious Brothers

in Betharram & Ibarre in September.

Enthusiasm for World Youth Day in Rio has been a little dampened by the

thought of costs and logistics, but we are working on an alternative Betharram Youth project for the three vicariates to take place in Thailand in early 2014 before the Jubilee year ends.

Finally, looking back on events since the new Region began in 2008 I am amazed and delighted by how much we have been blessed, protected and supported. I had never ever expected to be appointed a Regional Superior and always considered myself inadequate to the task, but the last four years have been a lesson in how God comes to the aid of the weak and inadequate. My favourite image for this is the gospel parable of the farmer who threw seed on the soil and it grew even while he was asleep... "Whether he is asleep or awake, be it day or night, the seed sprouts and grows. How? He does not know" (Mark 4.27) God made things grow for us, even when (especially when?) the Regional Superior was asleep!



helpers has been significant. In England the Companions of Betharram are a significant extension of the Betharramite family, while in India the lay associates have taught our younger students English, and helped raise funds for the new seminary. The Thailand lay supporters are more loosely organised but their help, friendship and financial support has been very strong especially for the seminaries at Sampran.

This year we are having the 150th anniversary of the death of St Michael: how are the communities, the vicariates and the Region going to celebrate this event?

FATHER JEAN-LUC: The geography of the event is good to our Region, at least in the northern part. Betharram will be the centre of many festivities for our family: launching of the Jubilee by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Bordeaux, 14 May with the "World Premiere" of the St Michael Gari-coits Mass sung by the "Petit Choeur"; retreat for the religious of the Region by Fr Gaspar Fernandez, followed by the feast of Our Lady 28 July; international session for the Brothers followed by the feast of the Holy Cross, presided by Mgr Vincent Landel SCJ.

At Pau as in Rome and Albiate there will be an exhibition of photographs dealing with the cradle of the Congregation, accessible to a much wider audience. On 1st June a choral of 60 young Jordanians from our community at Zarka will begin in Pau their European tour to celebrate Blessed Mariam. In the Eternal City on 23rd June there will be a solemn Mass

in the church Saint Louis des Francais preceded by a prayer vigil in the Miracoli church. There will be retreats for the laity, events connected with the WYD, and afternoon sessions for the children's catechism classes in Betharram. In Ivory Coast there will be meetings for the youth, music festivals etc. It would be impossible to mention all!

But what is important is not so much the quantity of events and celebrations as the quality of the spirit which will move them; there will be the desire to revive in ourselves the gift which we received; the will to enhance what has been given to the Church, namely the desire "to obtain for others the same joy".

Each vicariate must make use of meetings and recollections to deepen their sense of sharing and apostolic commitment in the light of "Me Voici"; each community, by being attentive to the quality of their prayer life and fraternity, by opening up their chapel and community table to the laity – young and old – will bear witness to the joy and availability of the Incarnate Word. In a word, nothing more than to be what St Michael wanted us to be to the best of our ability. Surely nothing less!

FATHER GUSTAVO: Among the many activities we can mention:

For the communities: renewal in the Charism to be seen in their community projects.

1. Popular celebrations in the schools and parishes with the laity.
2. Adopting the theme and the logo proposed by the Congregation in the communities and spreading the charism by

tion in life, according to our rules and as real instruments of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Yes, "with a modicum of faith and religious spirit we are short of nothing" to keep things ticking over and to advance together, according to his Holy Will.

FATHER GUSTAVO: It is a look full of peace and mercy, just like the look Jesus gave Peter, realist and full of hope. In times of solitude and subject to the Mercy of Our Crucified Lord, close to Christ, to all appearances overcome. At other times, when in company: seeing without understanding, advancing in the dim lights of faith, but united with the brothers.

What is positive?

1. The spontaneity of the young religious and their "healthy dissatisfaction" which defies us to launch out towards new horizons in the construction of the Kingdom
 2. The spiritual hunger of the laity and their contribution to the shared mission.
 3. The wisdom of our senior religious who accept to give up certain things e.g. their vision of events, our good works, ties of affection, to make room for the challenges of a renewed Religious Life, in the context of Church uncertainties.
 4. The departure of certain members who, although it hurts us, is a paschal sign in the face of living in truth what we are: Betharramite religious.
 5. Some parishes were claimed back by some bishops; this enables us to respond in a spirit of obedience as a "flying camp".
- The failings?*

1. There are religious suffering from fatigue, discouragement, a feeling of disunion transmitting unwillingly bitterness

(perhaps misunderstanding the projects, a feeling of solitude, or perhaps because the construction of the Kingdom by a new Betharram leaves them perplexed, or perhaps for other reasons not yet expressed).

2. The new Church challenges are sometimes obscure while we are obliged to maintain big buildings or rewarding tasks. Hence our slowness in taking up position in favour of the poor and the excluded.

3. The risk of becoming middle class by rampant materialism, either as priests or as religious. The current ideology to which each one adheres, his culture, or his age doesn't exclude him from this danger.

4. The lack of real commitment to maintain a renewed interior experience of God's Love. Little time dedicated to the interior life. There are those who are swamped by all the distractions provided by the mass media and the internet.

FATHER AUSTIN: Our Blessed Miriam Region is a young growing Region with all the excitement, joys and growing pains of new life.

Of the 57 fully professed members of the Region, 41 are young religious from India or Thailand, and double that number are students in formation.

Some of the young priests have shown themselves capable of shouldering serious responsibility both in their own countries and elsewhere. I think of Fr. Chan in India, Fr. Wilfred and Fr. Mongkhon in England and Fr. Stervin and Fr. Pornchai in France. They have brought to the ageing Vicariate of England a sense

of dynamism and purpose that has been a great blessing to all. They have also highlighted the sense of internationality in our Betharramite family.

The blessings and spiritual exchanges have gone in several directions. The two younger vicariates have given us energy and enthusiasm, while the 'elder brother' vicariate has given a sense of stability, financial support, a link to tradition and a much needed broader perspective. For Thailand especially the 'elder brothers' have also included Italy, France and Spain.

The historic witness of the older European Betharramite missionaries has been especially important in Thailand where their unselfish pioneering spirit founded the Diocese of Chiang Mai and set an example for others to follow. I have heard Bishops in both India and Thailand saying to me: 'please let us have some of your religious to do the same work in my Diocese that they have done in Chiang Mai.'

As in all new missions, finance is a problem, especially for formation (particularly in Thailand), but this could become a stimulus towards self-sufficiency and a help towards discerning which works to support or to release.

If there is a weakness in all this, it is about a less-than-sure grip on the spirituality of St. Michael, but this affects not just Thailand and India but England as well. I suspect that at the crucial periods in the middle of the 20th century, when the world needed a reinterpretation of the spirit of St. Michael for our times, we just did not have enough people equipped to do this, like the Franciscans or the Je-

suits did.

I thank God for all those dedicated religious in several countries who have tried to remedy this in recent years. In all three vicariates some giant strides have been made with the reintroduction of the Ignatian Exercises.

What projects is the Region engaged in just now?

FATHER JEAN-LUC: The 2011 General Chapter set the compass on a project for life and the mission: the creation of international communities with a view to instilling fresh life into the old tree, and to expand new energies for spiritual animation and evangelisation. Three locations were earmarked for the Region: Pau, Nazareth and Mendelu. The first project, enlivened by the arrival of young reli-



Fr. Austin, with Fr. Gaspar

gious from India and Thailand, is in full realisation; the second is still being researched and the third is in the process of discernment.

Naturally, because of its historical importance and our love for it, Betharram couldn't be left out of the picture. So since last Autumn, at the request of the General Superior and with the help of an expert and some lay friends, a working party is reflecting on our present situation and the future of the Mother House. It's not just a financial and material question although it's evident. It is a question of being a community on mission. It's a question of our fidelity to the past but above all of our coherence with the Founding project, in the light of the signs of the times.

Consequently what is acceptable for Betharram is full of meaning for the whole congregation. The question is: "Do we want to live? What do we want to live out?" We can be sure and certain that the question "How" will come up with an answer, at Betharram or elsewhere.

FATHER GUSTAVO: In the Regional project as a result of the life of the Vicariates and the communities we can note:

1. Revival of Vocation animation (after the departure of some brothers after crises and two years desert) 5 candidates from Brazil (VIBRA) and 4 from Paraguay (VIPAR) (9 candidates in all) have entered in 2013.
2. The formation of formators: two in VIPAR and two in VIBRA have begun following specific courses and undertaking responsibilities in Formation Houses.
3. Progress in a new experience of Re-

gional Mission in Uruguay, option of the Regional Chapter 2010.

4. With the young renewal of the missionary spirit for Betharramite good works.
5. Encourage in the communities a more brotherly spirit with the community apostolic project.
6. Involvement of the laity and greater cooperation with them for evangelisation thanks to the education Pastoral (they facilitate 15 schools in the Region).
7. Constitution of regional teams for Ongoing Formation, Vocation animation and formation, Education, missionary animation, the economy of communion. Yearly meetings. Regional activities.
8. A gradual updating of the financial project. Communion of the goods of the Region and those of the Congregation.
9. Accompaniment of the young religious by meetings, dialogues and the delegation of certain responsibilities.

FATHER AUSTIN: Projects little and large abound in all three vicariates. In Thailand we have tried to focus on ministry to Karen refugees from Myanmar in the border areas in three Dioceses, while in India we have started a mission to the north-eastern tribes with a community living in a predominately moslem area. All three vicariates have international communities, and in England we are in the process of forming three international communities, giving important positions of responsibility to the younger religious of Asia. Their willingness and their ability to grapple with ministry in a European environment has been a great blessing in these last few years. In all three vicariates the work of lay