

your of compulsory vows by 16 votes to 7. In this new predicament, Mgr Lacroix promised new constitutions which would bear in mind the wishes of the community and summoned Fr Etchecopar to Bayonne to help in the writing of the text. It was obvious that in such a situation the presence of the young General Secretary was symbolic. To tell the truth the new Episcopal constitutions were even less solid than the previous ones.

Writing on 19 June the Bishop said "I had been asked by the majority of the priests to make vows compulsory, I was obliged to include it in the constitutions." But in the following paragraph seeing that some had suggested the inclusion of some priests unwilling to make vows, he charged head first into the debate. He wrote: "It seemed to me that the idea of association or affiliation was not to be restricted like that. It is best therefore that association should be accepted as a matter of principle."

According to this new document there would be two classes of Betharramites: those bound by vows and those not. The Bishop concluded thus: "The constitutions and rules will be read to you; each one of you can reflect on the text, but there will be neither discussion nor debate in com-

munity about the contents. Each of you will decide freely and will choose vows or association."<sup>1</sup>

But the Bishop was going to be disappointed for the second time. In the notes of Fr Bourdenne one can read: Despite the authority of Mgr Lacroix, who would write two more letters a few days later, and despite the high esteem in which he was held, only a tiny minority decided to sign up. It is safe to say that the 1868 Constitutions were still born.

Pierre Duvignau, scj

to be continued ►

<sup>1</sup> *La Vie et l'œuvre du Vénérable Michel Garicoïts*, Basilde Bourdenne, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p. 413.

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Societas S<sup>mi</sup> Cordis Jesu  
BETHARRAM

81  
2013

# NE

NOUVELLES EN FAMILLE  
NOTICIAS EN FAMILIA  
NOTIZIE IN FAMIGLIA  
FAMILY NEWS

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

A WORD FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

## Collegial Government: Chapters

The Church founded by Jesus Christ in the likeness of the Trinity, is a Body, a People, an Assembly, a Community formed by all those who believe in Him and have been baptised. The most important challenge for this Body today is to preserve unity while respecting differences. Today, more and more the Church is defined as a mystery of missionary communion.

This value of communion is to be seen in how personal and collegial authority is exercised today: The Pope and the councils, the Pope and the College of Cardinals, the bishops and the Episcopal conferences, superiors and chapters. Here we have examples of participation which prevent authority becoming the affair of one individual. The tradition of Religious Life in the Church exercises a

similar communion and participation. This is to be found at community level, vicariate assemblies, regional and general chapters. This is clearly stated in our Rule of Life: "The general chapter represents all the religious and is the supreme authority of the congregation." (No 180).

The general chapter which meets every six years is a time of grace, a "kairos" for the Congregation. According to the Rule it is an ecclesial event (No 180) because the decisions

111<sup>th</sup> year  
10<sup>th</sup> series, nr 81  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2013

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS OF BETHARRAM

4 - New Episcopal Constitutions (1868)

These new constitutions are less well known than the precedent, for they barely saw the light of day. However they are one more step in this saga. The 1841 constitutions, modified in 1851 and again in 1855, underwent a third modification in September 1863, when Mgr Lacroix asked the community at Betharram to nominate a superior whom he would install himself and to elect a

Council. The new administration thus formed was to last three years; in reality it was maintained in place by Mgr Lacroix himself until 1872, despite repeated calls from the community.

Consequently the unease was destined to grow. Between 1863 and 1868, 27 members left the Congregation, and for those who remained it was more the memory of Fr Garicoits which held them rather than

some judicial structure. No one knew whether the vows were an obligation as had been the case during the founder's lifetime, or whether they were optional as the letter of the constitutions seemed to suggest.

It was at this point in time that something happened! On 11 May 1868, Mgr Lacroix arrived unheralded in Betharram, assembled the members present and told them that it was out of the question for them "to form a religious body, but only a simple diocesan society."

The question of vows was immediately raised. Not daring to settle the question on his own authority, the Bishop declared that he would leave it to the assembly vote. The vote was held there and then, and despite the expectations of the Bishop, the community declared itself in fa-



*From the assemblies of the vicariates (here, Italy of Center/South in 2010), and from the Regional Chapters to the General Chapter...*

representative to 15 religious or part. (Statute 8). The mission of the general chapter is "to examine the situation of the congregation from a spiritual, apostolic, disciplinary and financial point of view". The chapter sees to it that the charism retains all its beauty and strength at the very heart of the inculturation necessary in the different situations, times and

cultures. It studies the problems, indicates orientations, draws up norms and adopts financial decisions. It elects the superior general as well as the members of the general council (Rule of Life 192). All the religious of the Institute must be informed of the decisions taken at the general chapter. The regional chapter is also an important moment in the life of communion and participation (Rule of Life 227 – 231). It meets every three years: the session prior to the general chapter is to prepare the general chapter, but the session which takes place between two general chapters is the only chance there is of examining the life and mission of the Region, as it appears in the lives of the vicariates which compose it. Here too the Rule of Life has reduced the number of ex officio delegates: the superior, the Vicars and the regional treasurer plus the master of novices and scholastics. So that

which are taken are a sign of the life and mission of the Church, and also because it is something inspired by the Holy Spirit through a method which is dear to Him, namely spiritual discernment. It is a great moment of spirituality, prayer, fraternity, discernment and spiritual joy, Another aspect of the general chapter is the fact that all the religious are represented at the chapter. "A sign of unity and charity among all the religious of our Institute" (No 180). In the new Rule of Life the number of ex officio members has been reduced to eight: the Superior general and Regional superiors together with the general councillors. It is the responsibility of the electors at the regional chapters to designate the other delegates to the chapter according to the following criteria: the vicariates must all have a representative (and not necessarily the Vicar himself) in the pro rata of one



*In 1868, Fr. Auguste Etchecopar was summoned to the Bishop's house of Bayonne for a delicate mission ; he was only 38.*

APRIL	16	Happy birthday	Fr. Chanchai Temarroonung
	17	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Mario Sosa
	19	50 años de profesión	P. Bruno Ierullo
	20	Feliz cumpleaños	P. Gaspar Fernández P. José Rovegno
	21	Buon compleanno	P. Pietro Villa
	23	Buon compleanno	P. Simone Panzeri
MAY	1	25 anni di sacerdozio	PP. Aldo Camesasca, Damiano Colleoni, Emilio Manzolini
	2	Happy birthday	Br. Thinakom Damrongusasin
	3	Buon compleanno 5 ans de sacerdoce	P. Ernesto Colli P. Raoul Thibaut Ségla
	4	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Elie Kurzum
	5	Buon compleanno	P. Antonio Canavesi
	7	Happy birthday	Br. Jose Kumar Johnrose
	10	Feliz aniversario Buon compleanno Happy birthday	P. José Mirande P. Guido Pradella Fr. Shaju Kalappurackal
	11	Feliz cumpleaños 10 years of profession	P. Guido Eugenio García Fr. John Britto Irudhayam
	12	Joyeux anniversaire	P. Pierre Leborgne
	14	10 years of profession	Br. Andrew Athit Nyomtham
	14	Joyeux anniversaire Buon compleanno Joyeux anniversaire	P. Paul Baradat P. Antonio Riva F. Gilbert Napetien Coulibaly

the proportion and representation is adequately addressed in each Vicariate there should be one delegate per 5 superiors (or fraction of 5) and one delegate per 10 religious (or fraction of 10) among the other religious. A new element allows the Regional superior to nominate as many as three religious, including a brother if one has not been already elected and who have the right to vote in the regional chapter. He can

also invite someone representing the temporary professed but without active or passive voice in the chapter (Rule of Life 228). According to the present Rule of Life the Vicariate assemblies (273) are very important moments in being faithful to communion and participation because of their freedom of composition without canonical demands; it is possible to have a whole range of activities: prayer, retreat, ongoing formation, reflection on the charism, on the construction of a project for the Vicariate, an analysis and evaluation of the different mission activities, or else a time of discernment on new mission activities for the future. It would be a good idea if all the religious of a Vicariate could meet three or four times a year and take a look at one or other of these questions.



*...(here in 2011) does not collegiality strenghten the family bonds in a friendly and... joyful... context?*

The most appropriate place of communion and participation is the community, with a well defined project which has been drawn up with the help of all and realised with the commitment and sense of responsibility of each member. The community is the space where it is possible to experience God, life, the mission and where we help each other, both humanly and spiritually to be faithful to our vocation with all the goodness we gain from the charism. The community meeting programmed on a regular basis, and prepared by a different member of the community each time, makes way for an exchange of ideas and experiments, a deepening of certain themes and the clarification of certain questions.

Gaspar Fernández Pérez, scj

## TOWARDS THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY...

### Programme of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*THE BEGINNING OF THE CELEBRATIONS MARKING THE 150 YEARS SINCE THE DEATH OF ST MICHAEL GARICOITS, OUR FOUNDER, IS CLOSE AT HAND. THE RECENT COUNCIL OF CONGREGATION STUDIED THE PLANS AND REMINDED US OF THE DIFFERENT DATES AT CONGREGATIONAL, REGIONAL, VICARIATE AND COMMUNITY LEVEL, UNDERLINING THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING THEM KNOWN AT EVERY LEVEL WHERE OUR CONGREGATION IS MISSIONED.*

Here therefore are the dates retained for these rendez-vous :



#### INITIATIVES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>14 MAY 2013</b>	<b>Bétharram</b>	opening of the year in honour of St Michael Garicoits: Solemn con-celebration of Mass at Betharram presided by His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux, in presence of the Superior General, Father Gaspar Fernandez Perez, and of the Vicar General and co-ordinator of the 150 celebrations, Father Enrico Frigerio.
<b>SATURDAY</b> <b>22 JUNE 2013</b>	<b>Rome</b>	at the Sanctuary of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Rome, a prayer session animated by the St Michael Petit Choeur from Pau.
<b>SUNDAY</b> <b>23 JUNE 2013</b>	<b>Rome</b>	Mass celebrated in the church St Louis des Francais, Rome.
<b>19 - 22 JULY 2013</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	Meeting of the young people in Brazil, marking the 150 anniversary.
<b>23 - 28 JULY 2013</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	Participation of the youth at the WYD.
<b>APRIL - MAY 2014</b>	<b>Bétharram</b>	International session of preparation for final profession.
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>14 MAY 2014</b>	<b>Bétharram</b>	Closure of the St Michael Year.

could be of such power that it was breathtaking, uplifting and totally awesome.

Our joy comes as a gift from the Holy Spirit and can be expressed by love for our neighbours, thanksgiving to a loving God and it is nourished in the sharing of the Eucharist. We are

totally blessed in our Faith.

"May God, the source of hope, fill you with joy and peace in the faith, so that your hope may increase by the power of the Holy Spirit". (Rom. 15.13)

Carol Foster

#### Pope Benedict XVI

*"Caritas Christi urget nos" (2 Cor 5:14): it is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and impels us to evangelize. Today as in the past, he sends us through the highways of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all the peoples of the earth (cf. Mt 28:19). Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation: in every age he convokes the Church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new. Today too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelization in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith. In rediscovering his love day by day, the missionary commitment of believers attains force and vigour that can never fade away. Faith grows when it is lived as an experience of love received and when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy. It makes us fruitful, because it expands our hearts in hope and enables us to bear life-giving witness: indeed, it opens the hearts and minds of those who listen to respond to the Lord's invitation to adhere to his word and become his disciples.*

Porta Fidei, nr. 7



*I urge you with the whole of my heart to live in the joy of the Lord. In your conduct, your relations with God, with your neighbor, and in yourself, let your joy shine forth as it did in Mary. God is looking down upon you to purify you, to protect you and to fill you with His gifts. Under the loving regard of your protector and your Saviour should you not be bursting with joy, you above all, whom this loving regard has chosen, and led so visibly in your vocation right up to this day? Say without ceasing, My soul glorifies the Lord because this great God, this good Father, looks upon me always... Let the Magnificat be your chosen canticle, the faithful expression of your feelings.*

From a letter of St Michael Garicoits to a religious Sister, 1845

St Michael Garicoits

## Give me Joy in My Heart

**ON SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH, ABOUT 30 PEOPLE, FROM 13 TO 82 YEARS OF AGE, GATHERED FOR A DAY OF RECOLLECTION NEAR SOLIHULL (ENGLAND). THIS DAY OF REFLECTION TOOK PLACE IN A FAMILY ATMOSPHERE. APART FROM THE LAY ASSOCIATES, SOME BETHARRAM RELIGIOUS AND ONE SISTER WERE ALSO PRESENT. FR ENRICO CAME FROM ROME FOR THE OCCASION TO LEAD THE REFLECTION. ALL THE PARTICIPANTS WERE ALL SMILES RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING BUT THEY WERE WILLING TO GO DEEPER INTO THE ROOTS OF THEIR JOY AND TO KNOW HOW TO KEEP IT ALIVE IN MOMENTS OF TRIALS. QUITE NATURALLY FR ENRICO RESORTED TO THE HELP OF SAINT MICHAEL GARICOITS AND BENEDICT XVI.**

This was the theme of the retreat day which was beautifully led by Fr. Enrico. We were asked to reflect themes such as renew the enthusiasm, revive the joy of walking and rediscover the joy of faith found in the Apostolic letter of Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*. By trying to discern the source of our own joy, as opposed to happiness how we are able to express our joy and whether it is rooted in our faith and love of God.

Michael Garicoits' spirituality was founded on a deep and personal joy in the faith of the abiding love of God for him and a desire to pass that love on to all with his 'Here I am Lord, to do Thy Will'. In the text of the manifesto of St. Michael we see he speaks of 'to bring to others the same joy'. He faithfully shared with others the Joy that he experienced in his mission and vocation. We discovered that the theme of joy runs as a thread from root to bud to flower through the Old Testament to the New Testament.

We had time for quiet reflection and shared discussion and ended our day together with a beautiful Eucharist. It was clear that all present were able to discern (though sometimes not easily) the difference between a light hearted and superficial happiness and the deep seated joy experienced by the realisation of how much and unconditionally we are loved by God. Sometimes this was experienced at a subconscious level, but on a conscious level it



*Scj religious Fathers & Brothers, religious sisters and lay people gathered for a commun retreat at Widney Manor*

## INITIATIVES OF THE REGIONS & THE VICARIATES

**SUNDAY  
12 MAY 2013**

Ivory Coast -  
Thailand

In Ivory Coast and in Thailand two important events will signal the official opening of the year in honour of St Michael Garicoits. In Ivory Coast at Adiapodoume, in the St Bernard Parish, a con-celebrated Mass is programmed, presided by Mgr Vincent Landel. In Thailand in Chiang Mai Cathedral, the St Michael Year will open with a solemn Mass, presided by the Bishop, Mgr Francis Xavier Veera Arponradra, during which two young Betharramites will make their final Profession.

**14 MAY 2013**

All  
Regions

The official opening of the year in honour of St Michael Garicoits will be marked by a number of initiatives: in each community the day will be marked by involving the different groups: the parishioners and the different pastoral realities entrusted to us by inviting the respective Bishops to preside the celebration.

**7 JUNE 2013**

France-Spain-England

As well as for the feast of the Sacred Heart there will be many propositions. At Betharram there will be a day for religious Life in the presence of Mgr Pierre Molerès, emeritus bishop of Bayonne. In Birmingham there will be a solemn con-celebration in the presence of the Archbishop of Birmingham, Mgr Bernard Longley. On this occasion the Betharramite laity and the "Companions of Betharram" will be especially invited.

**21 - 27  
& 28 JULY 2013**

St Michael Region  
France-Spain

At Betharram, the Superior General, Fr Gaspar Fernandez Perez, will accompany the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius to which all the religious of the St Michael Garicoits Region are invited. This rendez-vous will end on 28 July 2013 with a solemn con-celebration in honour of Our Lady of Betharram, presided by the Superior General himself.

**28 AUGUST 2013**

France-Spain

The traditional pilgrimage to Ibarre (birthplace of St Michael) will be presided by Mgr Marc Aillet, Bishop of Bayonne.

**9 - 14 SEPTEMBER  
2013**

St Michael  
B<sup>d</sup> Miriam  
Regions

Session on spirituality and an inter-regional pilgrimage for the Brothers; it will finish with the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September) in presence of Mgr Vincent Landel.

**14 MAY 2014**

All Regions

The closing celebration of the 150 anniversary presided by Mgr Marc Aillet, Bishop of Bayonne, with the Superior General, Fr Gaspar Fernandez Perez, and the young present in Betharram for the International Session.

Furthermore of great importance will be the different vocation animations which will take place in the different Vicariates for priestly ordinations, e.g. in Brazil, in the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region, or for Final Vows.

For the laity, several initiatives are already under way and there will certainly be others to follow. We must remember the involvement of groups of singers who, in several of our missions are already getting ready for important meetings by their singing: the initiatives of Betharramite groups (for example the Fraternity "Me Voici", the traditional rendez-vous for 28 July – Feast of Our Lady of Betharram – will be particularly celebrated this year for the 150 anniversary of St Michael.)

Pilgrimages to Betharram and Ibarre are already programmed from Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. They are open to anyone wishing to participate. In the Fr Auguste Etchecopar Region a meeting of laity at Regional level will be held.

Finally and of considerable importance there will be publications on the life and letters of St Michael, as well as a few CDs and some new songs in his honour.

As you can see there is no lack of initiatives! Let this jubilee year begin and may it be a year of grace for the renewal of hearts!

Graziano Sala, scj



*Saint Michael Garicoits wrote...*

What is the most dangerous temptation with which the enemy of our salvation can attack us? It is despondency because it attacks all the virtues and lies hidden.

Despondency goes against Hope which is required of us as much as Faith or Charity. It must be considered to be a temptation and even a most dangerous temptation because the Christian soul runs the risk of abandoning all works of piety. In their ordinary everyday life what is it that motivates the people, what is it that supports them in their problems, what is it that helps them surmount all the obstacles? The hope of success; take away their hope and immediately they fall into idleness. (M 402)

cises, celebrations, accompaniment; we see for ourselves how important such breathing spaces are for personal reflection and meeting with Jesus.

**Another service of the community in the sector is the "Casa de los niños". What is its mission?** - The "Casa de los niños" is a crèche receiving children aged 2–4 years on working days from 8 am to 5 pm. This service exists for the past 40 years and was founded by Frs Ierullo and Daleoso in close collaboration with the laity. They wanted to respond to a real need: the mothers of poor families had to go out to work and had nobody to whom they could entrust their children too young to be at school. To respond to this need an institution was created and is still functioning today. Besides being a reception class the House gives them a good start in education and is ideal for the work of evangelisation among the children. Little by little the children get to know Jesus.

**What is the community project for the celebration of the Jubilee of the death of Saint Michael Garicoits which is about to start?** - **Leandro:** It will be a simple celebration with the chapel community; we shall prepare the celebration of the Jubilee with the Vicariate. As an addition to the congregation celebrations we have composed a song to be the song of the year: "From the Heart of Jesus to the Heart of the World". (Visit the website [www.betharram.net/images/doc/150/del\\_corazon\\_de\\_jesus.mp3](http://www.betharram.net/images/doc/150/del_corazon_de_jesus.mp3)).

**One inescapable question: What do you think of the election of Pope Francis?** - **Guido:** In actual fact we haven't yet recovered from

the shock! We are full of joy at the unexpected surprise of the election of Pope Francis. When the



white smoke appeared above the Vatican we were actually saying the Rosary. Immediately we set the bells ringing to be united in the joy of having a new Pope without even knowing who had been elected! We assembled in front of our computer to follow events on the Internet. As soon as we heard the name "Georgium Marium" we knew that the first Latin-American Pope from Argentina had been elected. Soon we could hear the church bells ringing; people came rushing to see us and share their surprise and their joy. People made for the Buenos Aires Cathedral and at 19h00 we had a thanksgiving Mass for the new Pope. I think it is still very difficult for us to say what it means for us to see Cardinal Bergoglio bishop of Rome. In the night of 18 March prayers were organised by the teenagers in all the Cathedrals. Each prayer session ended with a retransmission of the Pontifical Mass for Francis. It was a joy!

For us the election of Bergoglio is a sign of hope. The vigour and strength of the Latin-American church is more apparent than ever. Through Pope Francis a Church close to the poor is visible – "a poor Church for the poor" – where all the baptised, disciples and missionaries are partners for service, dialogue and sharing, proposing a renewal like a return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His action of bowing to receive a blessing from the people didn't go unnoticed and shows us his own style of carrying out his ministry.

**5 minutes with...**

groups, ie groups of young people who make use of our chapel for times of reflection on our Betharramite identity. The St Vincent de Paul Society which for the last 40 years has been looking after the needs of the most deprived families in our sector. The Liturgical team. The financial council which keeps an eye on the good works attached to the chapel. A group of "FALABE" – a group sharing our charism. The missionary group which visits the families in our sector. The Legion of Mary ("Legio Mariae").

*The religious community is involved in the missionary and social activities of the 'Capilla' community on the sector. How does this function?* - **Leandro:** First of all thanks to the ministry of listening and availability of the priests for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation and the visit of the sick and the needy. There is also the "St Vincent de Paul Society" – a group of lay persons who receive donations and manage them. The young in formation participate in the catechism course and in the "Jubilee groups" where they receive and accompany teenagers of the sector. There is also the "Children's House" where there is a day care centre and a crèche. Of course we play our part in the different missions which the laity realise during the important liturgical seasons by visiting our neighbours. As you can see, there is lots of life!!!

*The community priority is to accompany the young in formation; how do they feel the challenge with the number of children and teenagers in the sector?* - **Mariano:** We try to show them Jesus as a young man when they come on Saturdays for catechism, likewise the groups of teenagers. We employ the same method when we visit the sector for activities and sharing. With them we organise Stations of the Cross, live cribs at Christmas; like that we celebrate the Christian festivities.

*"Villa Betharram" is a big house. What do you do with the part of the house which is not used by the community?* - **Daniel:** For the past few years that part of the house is called "Casa de Encuentro del Corazón de Jesús"; we hand it over to a group of the laity for 1) groups of young people or adults looking for a comfortable, quiet and peaceful environment for retreats, 2) as peaceful places for formation, retreats, Spiritual Exer-



At the "Casa de los niños"

## The virtues of the Sacred Heart: charity

*IN HIS BOOK, NINETEENTH CENTURY MASTER OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, PIERRE DUVIGNAU SCJ WRITES QUITE STRAIGHTFORWARDLY: "SHOULD ONE EXPRESS IN ONE WORD THE SPIRITUALITY OF SAINT MICHAEL GARICOÏTS, THIS WORD CANNOT BE OTHER THAN 'LOVE' "!" SAINT MICHAEL DEVOTED HIMSELF WITH PASSION TO INSTILL IN THE HEARTS THIS CHARITY, THIS PERFECT VIRTUE COMING FROM GOD AND HAVING GOD AS HIS OBJECT, THIS BOND OF DEEP UNITY BETWEEN GOD AND HIS CREATURES.*

To speak of the heart is to speak about love. That is exactly what St Michael reveals for us. He let himself be captivated by the love of God the Father for mankind which Jesus had come to show: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son... God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved" (John 3. 16, 17). In the Manifesto we feel the amazement of St Michael when he declares "That's how God loved us". For him the summit of this love lies in the moment of the Incarnation. God became man through love, to teach us how to love! It was his only motive. Our Founder was particularly gripped by this love of God for mankind at Christmas time. "That was how God loved the world (John 3,16) knowing full well that all his efforts would be nearly useless. God is a God dissolved in charity: he begs us, he urges us, he lays down his life, seeing that we don't surrender to his heart" (DS 110). For him Bethlehem is the perfect image of God proposing his love without ever imposing it. "To bring men back to the memory and love of their Creator, Our Lord Jesus Christ shows them the divinity visible and palpable in his humanity. Behold him in

the crib and hidden under the Eucharist. What power and what gentleness in the lessons to be learnt from the crib! What attractions to win the greatest number of sinners! (DS 109). Love alone can explain such a move on the part of God towards mankind to the point of becoming one of them. "He is in the crib, suffering cold, humiliation, worries, and distaste for love of us. What is more likely to inflame us with love for him and make us generous?" (DS 108)

**Today,** we can but allow ourselves to be changed as we contemplate the Heart of Jesus. We are invited to pour out from our hearts what is deepest and truthful. "Love is what motivates man; therein lies the secret spring to be discovered. There lies the divine embryo to be developed in our hearts. If it is lacking, there is nothing we can do". (DS 112). Other than a duty to be accomplished so as to be in order, a good example to follow so as to be admitted into the group, and rules and regulations to be respected, one has only to act "through love rather than for any other motive". So instead of being tempted to accept half measures, the bare minimum, or mediocrity, we shall be filled with a



*Members of the Ne Me Fraternity at Fr Laurent Bacho's conference at Adiapodoumé*

surge of love: "If only our entire being, our body and soul, had but one movement, a generous uplifting to be under the spirit of love, and constantly saying: Here I am!" (DS 146). There would be no more fear, for "love drives out fear". (1 John 4, 18). Our sole fear would be the danger of not loving enough, gratuitously and faithfully; then our fear isn't about God but about ourselves, knowing as we do all our weaknesses. The love of which we are speaking isn't some vague sentiment but the renewal of our heart where we leave place for the heart of Jesus: "My poor old heart, move over and leave place for the heart of Jesus". (DS 48). So prayer is no longer an obligation but becomes a gush of love even when we are praying with well known expressions. It is rather interesting to reread Saint Michael's commen-

tary on the opening words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father! My God, you could easily have begun this prayer with words which are more impressive, for example Creator or Lord. No, you avoid anything that could cause us to fear; you choose an expression which draws the trust and love of those who are in your debt. Is there anything gentler than this name which means love and tenderness?" (DS 58) We are advised to speak to God using such expressions full of affection: "Try to revive your spirit of prayer; try to revive the habit you had of turning to God, like a child, all the time and almost mechanically; God is so close to you, he is in you! You have him there in the depths of your heart, longing to listen to you, to give himself to you, to support you, to share his divine nature with you!" (1 Cor. 103).

form disciples having the missionary spirit through fraternal meetings in the context within which we are called to live.

*Adroque is the community of the regional novitiate. What elements do you consider to have priority in the formation of postulants and novices?* - **Guido:** The formation of postulants and novices comes under the congregation project for formation (the Ratio Formationis); I think that in view of all the work realised these last few years our priority is to see to it that the young members get the best formation so that they enjoy a genuine and profound experience of God and of their choice for Jesus Christ as the centre of our lives. Little by little this option becomes the ultimate and fundamental motor for the choice of a vocation. To guar-

antee the quality of this work we can rely on the teaching methods which the Ratio puts within our reach, particularly personal accompaniment, the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius as well as the atmosphere of life in the community, the lessons etc.

*The "Betharram chapel" isn't a parish but is more like a really dynamic little Christian community. Give us some idea of the life of this community.* - **Guido:** In fact, here in Adroque we have a lively Christian community. Right from the start the presence of the Formation House was extended towards the mission to the sector and towards a fruitful insertion in the life of the diocese. Actually there are several events taking place in the chapel: Preparation for First Communion and Confirmation. Jubilee



*Fr. Badie, Mariano, Leandro, Fr. Guido, Fr. Daniel*

... the community of Adrogué

*AFTER BANGALORE - LAST MONTH - HERE WE ARE NOW IN ANOTHER FORMATION COMMUNITY OF THE CONGREGATION: ADROGUÉ, LOCATED IN THE GREAT SUBURBS OF BUENOS AIRES. IN THE BEAUTIFUL "VILLA BÉTHARRAM", SURROUNDED BY A LUXURIANT PARK, THE FIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SPEND THE DAILY LIFE LIKE AN ORDINARY ARGENTINIAN FAMILY: THEY LIKE FOOTBALL MATCHES AND QUITE EASILY OPEN THE DOOR TO THEIR NEIGHBOURS. LIVING IN A WORKING-CLASS AREA WITH ACTIVE AND ENERGETIC PEOPLE, THEIR DAILY LIFE IS FAR FROM BEING LIKE A LONG SLOW-MOVING AND PLACID RIVER.*

*Nef: Betharram in Argentina has already a long history. It was during the lifetime of St Michael that the first missionaries set foot there in 1856. Where is the Adrogué community in this story? - Guido:* Indeed the presence of Betharram in the Rio de la Plata goes back to the days of the foundation of the congregation. But the Adrogué community, as such, is much more recent. At the end of the 1930s, due to World War II and in view of the forthcoming organisation of the congregation in Provinces (1947), it was decided to open in Argentina a Formation Centre for the reception of novices and scholastics not only from Argentina but also from Uruguay and Paraguay as well as from Brazil where Betharram had recently made a foundation. With this in mind a piece of land of 17 hectares was bought in the region of Adrogué, 22 km to the south of Buenos Aires. The area was geared to activities for the young in formation and was only 30 minutes by train from the capital. Finally it was decided to build a religious house with a nice chapel; the whole thing was blessed and inaugurated 28 June 1945.

*Now, the community consists of three priests-religious, a novice and a postulant: five individuals and three generations. How do you manage to integrate such a diversity of situations? - Mariano:* We are just like a present day normal family. Leandro 32, Mariano 26, and Fr Guido 33, count as one generation just like brothers in the same family. Then there is Fr Daniel 42, who would be the generation before; we have certain common tastes, for example playing football or watching matches on TV. From that angle we aren't so far removed from each other. Finally there is Fr Badie who will soon be 88 and who could be the grandfather. We take care of him; we accompany him if he has any papers to fill out. His is the voice of wisdom in the community through his life history. Furthermore he is very nice and everybody loves him.

*What are the most important elements of your community project for you? - Mariano:* To be able to consolidate the community for by its very nature as a formation community, it is not very stable, and by shaping it in the image of the Heart of Jesus so as to

We are a long way from the stiff religious education which as a child he received, under the influence of Jansenism more inclined to underscore the God of severity of Mount Sinai than the Master of happiness of the Beatitudes. It was another perspective which opened up for the Founder and which was to become his guiding light and which can be noticed in the Manifesto: "It so pleased God to be loved" which can be rendered thus: "God is delighted to accept our love".



*An example of prayer as a "gush of love"  
by Charles de Foucauld*

The Incarnation of the Son of God is to be found here:  
"The attraction whereby we are won over to the love of God.  
The model which shows us the rules for loving.  
The means to reach the love of God."

QUESTIONS:

1) "Prayer a gush of love" but there are times when our spiritual life is also made up of dryness. What aids are at our disposal to help us persevere? How can we get through such aridity?

2) We don't always notice God's love for us. As the Apostolic letter "The Doorway to Faith" puts it: we feel "God's silence" instead of "listening to his consoling voice". How can love be for us the "spring" which is missing?

3) Our new Holy Father, Pope Francis, has already spoken to us about goodness and love (homily 19 March). We find the same insistence in the Rule of Life (9); how are we to be witnesses to love and mercy in our families, our communities and our place of mission?

Laurent Bacho, scj

**Note from the General Council**

On March 21st, the Superior general, with the consent of his Council, approved the presentation to the **priesthood ministry** of Brs **George Mathew Korandakkatte** and **Antony Joseph Livin Fernando** from the Vicariate of India (Blessed Miriam Region).

On April 9th, the Superior general, with the consent of his Council, approved the presentation to the **priesthood ministry** of Brs **Élisée Mambo Sika** and **Marius Angui Huberson**, and to the **diaconate ministry** of **Br. Hyacinthe Ali Konan** (Vicariate of the Ivory Coast / St Michael Region).

## Vicariate of Holy Land

### On the road to Emmaus

► As per tradition on Easter Monday (April 1), a Holy Eucharist was celebrated at Emmaus Nicopolis. Preceded by a pilgrimage, it was presided over by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Fouad Twal.

The pilgrims (about 50 people) moved from Jerusalem at 6 am and reached Emmaus Nicopolis at 4.30 pm. It took 6 hours (not counting the break) to cover 30 kms.

The novice Abib was one of the pilgrims: «The first half of the pilgrimage was interesting but difficult, the second half was much quieter. I am tired ... I feel a bit of pain, but I am pleased to have walked with the Lord Jesus and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.»

After this encounter with the Risen Lord, we must return to Jerusalem to announce this good news to all .... this is the road we all must go along.

## Vicariate of the Ivory Coast

**First Profession** ► Monday, March 25, Br Marie-Paulin Yarkai (Central African Republic) made his temporary vows in the chapel of the Betharramite community of formation at Adiapodoumé. He was surrounded by the brothers of the community and by some members of the Fraternity «Nè Mè» who came for this

occasion to make Marie-Paulin feel their brotherhood and friendship. All the Betharramite family throughout the world sends their best wishes to Br Marie-Paulin.



## Vicariate of Central Africa

### Hard times for people and missionaries

► The situation in Central African Republic has been deteriorating during these last days and the population is severely tried by a political upheaval. We have just received this letter from Fr Beniamino Gusmeroli scj, the Parish Priest of Fatima, Bouar (entrusted to the Betharram Religious). He writes about the present situation...

«In Bangui, the Leader of the rebels, after coming to power, gave the people the "freedom" to help themselves. But now he has declared that the looting is over. He has ordered that all the commercial and the administrative activities should be resumed. But the offices are still closed for fear or for lack of staff. All have fled ...

He has declared that the Constitution is not in force anymore and he is ruling the Country by decrees. Everywhere, in cities and villages, the scenario is the same: all the services have come to a standstill. The most thorny aspect seems to be the military one. Bouar is a town 150 kms away from the border and so far it has not been involved in these events; most of the soldiers, from the eastern part of the Country, have come here. They have taken their uniform off, but not their arms. So far no major incidents have been recorded, but the panic is

spreading among the population. A great number of soldiers, wearing plain clothes have taken to the streets and are trying to flee to Cameroon. A few days ago exchanges of shots took place close to the border. The Cameroon has closed the frontier to people carrying arms. Some military people have stolen cars belonging to NGO's, to mission posts or to shopkeepers and they sold them in Cameroon. Some incidents took place: some soldiers, after selling a car, stolen from an NGO, could not find an agreement among themselves while sharing out the proceeds of the sale; a quarrel broke out and one of them was killed. The body was brought to Bouar.

Last night some soldiers tried to enter into a religious convent; since the gate was locked, they went away only after firing a few shots.

Night time things get worse because these stragglers take to looting.

Now they are reaching the inner brousse: just now a schoolmaster from one of my villages has just told me that a group of disbanded soldiers has reached that village. People are afraid because they remembering the hardships suffered during the previous coup d'état.

A lorry loaded with seleka, coming from Bangui, reached Bouar this morning. They were travelling very cautiously: they took 5 hours to cover 60 kms. At Baoro they entered the mission post of the Carmelites. They stole a jeep and a certain amount of money. They gave the jeep back, but not the money. Once in Bouar, they reached the military camp, they laid the arms down and they went to the city centre reassuring the people, telling them not to be afraid because it was a pre-planned official inspection of the military camp.

In fact, they are asking the military personnel (disbanded and going around freely) to reach the camp, to identify themselves and be at the superiors' orders.

Many remain suspicious and go into hiding. Another group of seleka reached Bozum (180 kms from Bouar) and took over the police station. They went to the petrol station, they filled up with petrol and started selling petrol at a lower cost. This is how things are here in Bouar. Daytime there seem to be no risk at all. Night time is a different kettle of fish altogether: we feel a sense of insecurity because the risk of raids is very high, mainly for mission posts, warehouses and car dealers».

The Superior regional, Fr. Jean-Luc Morin, is currently making his visitation to the Vicariate.

## Vicariat d'Argentine-Uruguay

### Beginning of the Paschal Triduum

► On Holy Thursday, the third edition of "Young Passover" took place in San Juan Bautista, Buenos Aires. More than one hundred young people coming from Barracas, Martín Coronado and San José de Bs. As joined the celebration. They spent the night in front of the Blessed Sacrament with dances and songs and with faith sharing sessions. During the Eucharistic Celebration they washed each other's feet. It was a privileged occasion for knowing each other and for discovering the young face of Bétharram; all felt encouraged to a deeper commitment in expressing faith in Jesus Christ.

