

## In the Foot Steps of St. Michael

Michael Garicoits was a Basque, from the French region of the Pyrenees. He was born on the 15th April 1797 in the hamlet of Ibarre. Michael was ordained a priest on the 20 December 1823 and was appointed curate at Cambo not far from Bayonne.

It is interesting to note that while Michael was still studying for the priesthood the Bishop asked him to teach at the junior Seminary at Larressore. Here St. Michael was very much loved by the pupils and staff at the seminary. So it was not surprising that after two years as curate at Cambo Fr. Michael was sent to Betharram to teach Philosophy. Betharram situated at the foothills of the Pyrenees, is an ancient shrine of Our Lady.

When in 1833 the Bishop closed his seminary at Betharram Fr. Michael was left to care for the shrine and its many pilgrims. This all owed Michael to fulfill his dream, to start a congregation of Priests and Brothers. The task of this congregation, which was dedicated to the Sacred Heart, was to evangelize the people through missions and to teach the young a Christian way of life. The ideal Fr. Michael placed before his Congregation was the very programme of the Sacred Heart: 'When entering this world, He said "Here I am, Oh God to do Your will"'. (Heb. 10:5-7)

Betharram is eight miles from Lourdes and is situated on the same river. "When Fr. Michael learnt the details of the apparitions from Bdrnadette he immediately recognized their reality. This is in contrast to most Bishops and priests of the area who did not recognize the apparitions for long time. Despite his personal certainty Fr. Michael remained discreet and prudent. He did not go on pilgrimage to Lourdes until the Bishop recognized the apparitions on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1862.

Did Michael's understanding of Our Blessed Lady's designs at Lourdes come from his great love and devotion to Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother? Many times during the day Fr. Michael could be seen saying a decade or so of the rosary. St. Michael died on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1863 at 30'clock in the morning. This was the time he used to start his day by saying the whole rosary of Our Blessed Lady.

**For Contact:**  
The Vocation Promoter  
Maria Kripa, Mary Hill  
Konchady P.O M' Lore - 575 008  
Ph. 0824-2211536  
mariakripa@hotmail.com



Societas Presbyterorum  
Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu  
BETHARRAM

The Superior  
Shobhana Shakha  
Bosco Nagar, K.R. Puram.  
B'lore - 36  
Ph. 080- 25614134, 25612612



Word From the  
Regional Superior

St. Michael Information Link

# SMILE

smilescj@rediffmail.com

Face 1

1.11.2009

Smile 1



NEWS BULLETIN OF

SACRED HEART VICARIATE OF INDIA

## BORN TO SERVE

A deacon is someone who serves. He fulfils in a special way the example of Jesus who said that 'the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve'. At the last supper Jesus gave compelling witness to this by washing the feet of his disciples.

It is not fashionable among people today to want to be called a servant; they would much rather be called 'boss' or 'leader'. But it is in service that we find our true destiny, and realize our calling. God put us on this earth to serve our brothers and sisters, with all our talents and all our energy. In doing this we build up his kingdom here on earth.

A deacon does this by serving God's people with his attentiveness to the poor and the weak, by making it easier for them to know god's love and mercy. He serves with his explanation of the scriptures, with his attention to the sick and with his liturgical ministry.

But in the family of Betharram there is an additional dimension. It is part of our family spirit or charism to be close to the needy, however defined. And a deacon in the family of Betharram will always remember this. St. Michael our founder never stopped being a servant of those on the edges, right to the end of his life, and even if one of our deacons were one day to become a pope he would never cease to be a servant.

May god fill our new deacons with a true spirit of service.

Fr Austin SCJ

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Benedict XVI