



AN APOSTOLATE THAT DREAMS

A new year is approaching. Some Christian communities are already preparing for Christmas. October has been (as always) intense: Claretian, missionary, Marian. And in 2022, it has included two relevant anniversaries: the sixtieth anniversary of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council and the thirtieth anniversary of the beatification of our brothers of Barbastro. Two references full of roots and audacity, of life and hope.

The Major Superiors and the General Government took advantage of their time in Nairobi. They reread together the Dream of God discerned by the XXVI General Chapter and addressed essential issues: the spiritual and financial health of the Congregation; vocation discernment and formation processes; the apostolic life, deployed on so many fronts (youth ministry, biblical animation, communications, parish ministry, solidarity, and mission...). The two-week meeting, with its careful daily times of prayer, served to take the pulse of the Congregation, to detect seeds of life and signs of death, and to ask once again

for the help of the Spirit and the Heart of Mary. The sixth paragraph of the congregational dream forms a harmonious whole with others, but it includes some peculiarities. It is the only one in which the Constitutions are expressly cited, specifically number 46, the one most cited by the XXVI General Chapter. In it, which opens the chapter on 'Our Mission', the Congregation affirms that it intends to "offer close collaboration to all those who seek the transformation of the world according to God's plan." It does not say 'to be ready to', 'not to refuse to', but 'to claim to offer'. And not just any collaboration, but 'close collaboration'.



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QC 79 also cites two encyclicals: *Fratelli Tutti* and *Laudato Si'*. Not at the foot of the page but in the text. The Congregation has discerned that God the Father wants it to be committed to universal fraternity, justice, peace, and care for the common home. And not with just any type of commitment, but with that which this magisterium insinuates. The design (QC 80) brings light. The Chapter understood that the Spirit desires a community of missionaries characterized by their respect and defense of every human being, an image of God. A community that gratefully contemplates the Trinitarian presence in all creation and, therefore, cares for the earth and denounces all destructive exploitation. Missionaries whose spirituality, formation, and mission integrate as distinctive features the struggle for justice, care for the common good, and the construction of peace to the point of allowing their lifestyle (consumption, investments, use of time, housing, customs...) to be substantially transformed.

A Spanish Cardinal, V. E. Tarancon, invited young people to be demanding of the Church: “*Do not be afraid; you will never ask more of us than Jesus Christ.*” Something like this can be said of *Querida Congregation*. Its calls and proposals are born from the heart of the Gospel. The Congregation has already come a long way, even if it is very young in some regions. But its response is new each time the Spirit, Lord, and Giver of Life knocks at its door. The General Prefecture of the Apostolate wants to help all of us to respond better to the Dream of God; to continue to proclaim with passion the integral mystery of Christ, to recreate bonds of ecclesiality and shared mission; and to walk with those who seek (whether they know it or not) that the Kingdom become life, history, justice, and daily life.

May the Spirit help us to renew from the Word the dedication that so many communities live in a thousand corners of the world, in broad daylight and total discretion, in solitude and networks full of people, with voices and in silence, in schools, parishes, radio stations, chaplaincies, personal meetings, offices, social and formation centers, neighborhoods, monumental temples and churches without roofs or walls... Undoubtedly our Mother will continue to accompany us, full of joy, on our journey.

Pedro Belderrain, cmf

General Prefect of Apostolate

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEATIFICATION OF THE MARTYRS OF BARBASTRO

Barbastro, Spain. Though thirty years have passed since 1992, the events of that October 25 are still very much alive in the memory of many people. Rome seemed to dress up to welcome the beatification of the fifty-one missionary martyrs of Barbastro (Huesca, Spain). They had embraced death by giving clear testimonies of faith, forgiveness, joy, and love for their vocation.

Thousands of people have since visited the Museum of the Martyrs, located in the same house where the blessed missionaries were imprisoned. Their testimony continues to impact many young people and adults of all latitudes.

The community of Barbastro, composed today of three priests and a missionary brother, celebrated with the faithful and the local Church the anniversary of the Beatification. On October 22, a solemn Mass commemorated the event, followed by the presentation of the new era of the Archconfraternity of the Heart of Mary in the City.

The Diocese of Barbastro-Monzon, marked by its martyrdom experience, already has 78 blessed martyrs and has just initiated the process of beatification of another 250 witnesses to the faith. All of them are notable, as their bishop (D. Ángel Pérez) recalled at the beginning of this pastoral year, for their spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness, a trait very present also in the Blessed Claretians.

CLARETIAN BISHOPS

FERNANDO PRADO AYUSO, CMF, MISSIONARY BISHOP OF SAN SEBASTIAN

Vatican City. Pope Francis appointed Fr. Fernando Prado Ayuso, CMF as Bishop of San Sebastian. The Holy See released the news on October 31. God willing, his episcopal ordination will take place in the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in San Sebastian (Spain) on December 17.

Fernando Prado Ayuso was born in Bilbao in 1969, the middle of three brothers. His pre-university formation was accompanied by the Augustinian Fathers in the Andrés de Urdaneta School (Loiu-Bizkaia). During his adolescence and youth, he came to know the Claretians in his town's parish, Las Arenas (Getxo). Together with them, he discovered his vocation and matured the faith that his parents, Ramiro (+) and Gloria, had sown in the family. Before beginning the Novitiate at the age of 22, he obtained a degree in Information Sciences (Journalism) at the University of the Basque Country. He made his first profession in Vitoria on August 27, 1994.

The years of theological, Claretian, and priestly formation were carried out in the Claretian Theologate of Bilbao, where he obtained the Licentiate in Ecclesiastical Studies at the

University of Deusto. During those years, he combined his formation with the study of the Basque language, besides collaborating closely in the youth ministry of the Claretian centers, and with a work centered on the development and human promotion among the marginalized.

Having concluded his theological-priestly studies and having made his perpetual profession on September 27, 1998, he was assigned to Donostia-San Sebastián, where he joined the educative-parochial team of Mariaren Bihotza Ikastola-Parrokia. There he served as a Primary and Secondary Education teacher and coadjutor of the parish. He was ordained on May 7, 2000 by Bishop Juan María Uriarte, DD, Titular of the Diocese, who entrusted him with coordinating the youth ministry in the Gros neighborhood pastoral unit. After some years of intense teaching and pastoral work, mainly related to children and youth, the then Superior General, Fr. Aquilino Bocos Merino, CMF, assigned him to Madrid to join the general community of Buen Suceso, dedicated to serving the consecrated life. Being already incorporated into that community, he completed in 2003 a Master's degree in Publishing at the University of Salamanca in collaboration with Grupo Santillana. He then became the Director of

Publicaciones Claretianas, a task he has been carrying out since then and combined with teaching, being an ordinary professor of “Theology of the mission” in the Theological Biennium of the Theological Institute of Religious Life of Madrid, since 2012. Fernando also teaches “Media” and “Theology of the Mission” in the Novitiate and in other formative programs at the Regina Apostolorum School (ITVR-ERA). In 2012, he defended his Licentiate Thesis in Theology of Religious Life under the title “*The Ordained Ministry of Religious in the Church*”, obtaining the corresponding degree (ITVR-Univ. Pontificia de Salamanca).

On the other hand, he has been dedicating his summertime to an intense pastoral ministry in mostly Hispanic parishes in the United States (Los Angeles, CA and Chicago, IL) for years. During the rest of the year, he collaborates as a volunteer priest in the Church of San Antón in Madrid (Mensajeros de la Paz) and as chaplain of the community of the Religiosas Misioneras Concepcionistas de la Enseñanza, (Princesa).

As a journalist, he is a regular contributor to various media, including the program La Linterna de la Iglesia, on Cadena COPE and Trece TV. As an author, he has published many specialized articles and several books, among them the book-interview with Pope Francis, *La fuerza de la vocación*, translated into seventeen languages and published by twenty-two international publishers. His latest book-interview with Card. Rodríguez Maradiaga, *Praedicatem Evangelium*, on a new curia for a new time has been published.

SPIRITUALITY & COMMUNITY LIFE

RETURN TO THE ORIGINS: FORGE 06

Colmenar Viejo, Spain. After a 3-year hiatus due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Forge English edition began on October 9 in Colmenar Viejo with a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Anthony Obikonu Igbokwe, CMF, Santiago Province Prefect of Formation and Spirituality, together with Fr. Adolfo Lamata Muyo, CMF, the Provincial Superior.

Batch 6 consists of 19 members from 15 Major Organisms (Bangalore, Cameroun, St. Charles Lwanga, Chennai, East Asia, Fr. Rhoel Gallardo, Kolkata, Korea, West Nigeria, Northeast India, Perú-Bolivia, Poland, St. Joseph Vaz, St. Thomas, and USA-Canada), representing citizens from nine countries (Cameroon, Canada, India, Ivory Coast, Korea, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, and Sri Lanka). Frs. Paulson Veliyannoor and Félix Kouame Ketoglo, CMFF, are the facilitators for this edition.

The Forge, born in Colmenar three decades ago, has returned to its birthplace due to the “new normal”

brought on by the pandemic. The current edition, as always, unfolds within the three-pronged nuclei of Forge – *Patris Mei*, *Caritas Christi*, and *Spiritus Domini* – enriched by the insights and invitations of the last two General Chapters that have invited us to embrace the three processes of transformation and God’s Dream for the Congregation. The three phases are preceded by a week of intense experience of *Quid Prodest*.

A core experience marks each phase: 9-day spiritual exercises on spiritual infirmities and their cure at the 12th century monastery of Buenafuente (*Patris Mei*), walking the footsteps of the apostles and the early Church in Rome (*Caritas Christi*), and walking the footsteps of Father Claret and Brother Martyrs in Spain-France (*Spiritus Domini*). The Forge encounter will end on December 20 with a concluding retreat, an experiential audit, and a “Missionary Sending-Forth” Eucharist.

INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE

INAUGURATION OF THE 51ST ACADEMIC YEAR OF CLARETIANUM



Rome, Italy. On October 22, the Institute of Theology of Consecrated Life (Claretianum) in Rome officially inaugurated its Academic Year 2022-2023, the 51st of the Institute. It started with a Holy Mass by Cardinal Aquilino Bocos Merino, CMF, at the nearby parish church of Our Lady of Guadalupe. A short inaugural program followed at the academic building of the Institute. Fr. Mathew Vattamattam, CMF, and the Rector of the Pontifical Lateran University, Mr. Vincenzo Buonomo, gave their respective welcome addresses, followed by reading the previous Academic Year report. Finally, Fr. Carlos Sánchez, CMF, General Prefect of Spirituality and Community Life and Delegate Superior of Claretianum, delivered a prologue on Claret’s service to consecrated life through weaving a vast network of relationships at many levels.

EXPERIENCE OF SYNODALITY IN THE AFRICAN CHURCH

Abuja, Nigeria. The 5th International Theologian Conference of the Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa could not have come at a better time, considering the growing concern raised by the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on the need for a Synod on Synodality in the universal Church, a two-year process that the Holy Father initiated, officially known as “*Synod 2021 – 2023: For a Synodal Church*”. It became imperative to align with this vision and initiative of the Holy Father to avail the African Church the opportunity for reflections on this all-important theme: “*Experience of Synodality in the African Church*” as viewed from a pastoral perspective, women and youth participation in the Church and a Canonical perspective.



Speakers were invited to tackle different aspects of this question. Rev. Fr. Dr. Bonaventure Ugwu, CSSP, opined that all-inclusive participation in the pastoral life of the Church is basic to the principle of Synodality. Construction of a system that would integrate the laity fittingly into the church's government as a relevant organ of the church with a voice that should not be neglected should be the concern of every pastoral unit. Sr. Dr. Josephine Nwaogwugwu, HFSN, presented an examination of the role and place of women in the life of the church. Mr. Peter Ikponmwosa Agbontaen, on the other hand, focused on Youth participation in the life of the African Church. The church's future lies in the hands of young people, and for their

effective participation in the church, programs and activities must be prioritized, and listening to them is necessary. Lastly, Fr. Dr. Peter Okonkwo, CMF, the Canonical Perspective of Synodality.

The Conference was enriched through further discussions, group work, and activities where participants had the chance to contribute to the presented paper. Again, the Keynote Address rendered by Fr. Wenceslaus Madu, CMF, provided the needed traction for the Conference to take off. He emphasized the importance and centrality of walking together as a people of God, sharing our charisms and gifts in our journey as fellow pilgrims.

Finally, an element of discussion in the conference underlined that the success of Synodality in the African Church demands a connection with the Holy Spirit. The elements of togetherness, communion, fellowship, sharing, and participation that define the principle of Synodality are gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that the dialogue between God, creation, and humanity takes place. While human beings have vital roles to play in establishing Synodality as a way of being and acting in the church, ultimately, it will be actualized, “*Not by might nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord.*” (Zechariah 4:6).

GENERAL HOUSES

FEAST OF CLARET IN ROME

Rome, Italy. The Claretians of Rome decided to anticipate the Feast of the Founder to Sunday afternoon to take advantage of all the possibilities offered by this day of the week. A significant number of members of the Claretian Family, together with the parishioners, gathered in the Basilica of the Heart of Mary. Cardinal Aquilino Bocas, CMF, presided the Mass and, during his homily, exalted the figure of St. Anthony Mary Claret, emphasizing that: “*we do not celebrate the feast of a hero, of a great man, of a great preacher, of an indefatigable propagandist..., but of a saint. And not just any saint, but one whom the Holy Spirit wanted to place in his Church as a mediating instrument to bring together communities that would live the Gospel and work generously to win new brothers and sisters for Christ, according to a particular apostolic lifestyle.*”



He did not forget that *“the situation of our world, our society, our Church, and our consecrated life offers many lights and not a few shadows. Technical progress, advances in communications, interculturality, the many gestures of solidarity, etc., are worthy of recognition. But we are suffering a strong breakdown in the scale of Christian values: faith is darkening, and unbelief is increasing; we are entering the post-truth era, and information no longer enjoys credibility. We have lost confidence in our relationships and fidelity does not seem to be a virtue in our time. We have many fears and insecurities in the face of pandemics, wars, the ambition of a few, and the marginalization and discarding of the vast majority.”*

After the celebration, the guests, the Claretian family, the representatives of the chaplaincies, and the staff of General Curia had the opportunity to share moments of great fraternity and joy around a family dinner.

On the 24th, the community, with the absence of students, was summoned by the Pope at the Vatican to remember the anniversary of the beginning of Vatican II. They gathered in the Museum-Chapel of the General Curia to share the Eucharist in a more intimate atmosphere, together with the memories of the Founder preserved in Rome.

ACLA

NIGERIAN CLARETIANS BEGIN JUBILEE YEAR



New Owerri, Nigeria. El Fr. Christian Mary Ihedoro, the “Nigerian Claretians Founder”, usually recounted with some feeling of nostalgia how he carried all the members of the Congregation in Nigeria in a Peugeot 404 wagon. Today, one would require more than six luxury buses to transport the Nigerian Claretians. After his ordination, Fr. Ihedoro, who spent the early part of his priesthood in Spain, England, and Equatorial Guinea, returned to Nigeria in July of 1970 after the Nigeria-Biafra War. During that visit, he lost his travel documents, and could not return to Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. This became the *“felix culpa”* that birthed the Nigerian Claretians in 1973.

October 30 marked the celebration of the Claretian Family Day and the kick-off of the Golden Jubilee Year celebrations of the Claretians in Nigeria. The day’s celebration began with a Eucharistic Celebration presided over by the Provincial Superior of East Nigeria Province, Fr. Nathaniel Eke, CMF, at the St. Anthony Mary Claret Parish, Area ‘A’, New Owerri, Imo State. In his homily, the Provincial Superior thanked God for the presence of the Claretians in Nigeria for close to Fifty Years. The visible presence of the Claretian students, the Religious of Mary Immaculate, Missionary Sisters of Mary Immaculate, the Lay Claretians and the parishioners of St. Anthony Mary Claret Parish and other nearby parishes where the Claretians work, and the students of Claretian schools gave a colorful blend to the celebration.



The high points of the inaugural celebration were the historical excursus of the Claretians in Nigeria narrated by one of the first fruits of the Claretians in Nigeria, Very Rev. Fr. (Prof.) Izu Marcel Onyeocha, CMF. He recounted with mixed feelings of nostalgia and gratitude the Claretian Story in Nigeria from 1973 till date. The Provincial Superior unveiled the Jubilee Logo, designed by a Claretian student, Paschal Meke, CMF. He then declared the Jubilee Year open with the theme: *“Fifty years of Claretian Presence in Nigeria: Rooted and Audacious.”* The Jubilee Prayer was said, and the choir of St. Anthony Mary Claret Parish gave a beautiful rendition of the Jubilee Anthem – *“See, Lord I Have Come”* composed by Rev. Fr. Rowland Onyenali, CMF.

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, the Claretians and their collaborators were entertained with a wide range of social activities.

The commencement of the Jubilee celebrations was simultaneously held in the mission positions of the Nigerian Claretians in Chad, Ghana, Enugu, Lagos, Abuja, and Northern Nigeria.

ASCLA East

CARING NOT ONLY FOR THE BLIND BUT ALSO FOR THOSE WHO LEAD THEM

Bengaluru, India. On 21st October, Bangalore Provincial, Fr. Sabu Koottarppallil, CMF, inaugurated two new shelters of the Project Vision Rural Campus in Gauribidanur, a one-family accommodation meant for volunteers to render services on the campus.

The Project Vision Rural campus started in 2016 with the objective of bringing sight and care for visually challenged persons in the rural areas beyond Bangalore City. Today, the campus has an Eye-Care clinic, a Daycare center for Children with disabilities, and a Village health outreach program. More than 300 children with various disabilities are covered under the disability project.

ECLA

ENCOUNTER ON THE WAY – CARVALHOS



Carvalhos, Portugal. From October 28 to 30, Claret Way Europe gathered together in Carvalhos, with approximately 60 of its members from Spain and Portugal.

With different activities and dynamics, accompanied by significant moments of personal and community prayer, they worked on the proposed objectives for the next Claret Way WYD that will take place in Porto and Lisbon, Portugal, in July-August 2023. At the same time, the commission of the Claretian Family that organizes the event shared details of the planned program.

At the end of the encounter, all the participants received the symbols of the WYD at the Seminary of Porto. They celebrated the Eucharist with the Bishop of Porto, D. Manuel da Silva Rodrigues Linda.

SANTIAGO: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH HOPE AND GRATITUDE



Colmenar Viejo, Spain. After three years without being able to do it in person, the superiors of the Claretian communities of the Province of Santiago gathered in Colmenar Viejo to review with the Provincial Government some fundamental questions about the missionary life of the Province. The meeting had an especially festive tone. The assembly celebrated with five confreres of the Province their fifty years of priesthood and enjoyed the meeting with the seventeen missionaries who have come to Colmenar Viejo from America, Asia, and Africa to dedicate a few months to their spiritual renewal in the Forge project. Several of them had their formation, years ago, in Spanish communities.

The superiors also expressed their gratitude to the generosity of young missionaries born in other regions of the world (Equatorial Guinea, Philippines, Paraguay, Colombia, Congo, Nigeria, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia), who have committed themselves to the projects of the province in recent years. The participants reviewed all kinds of questions (apostolic, community, economic, formative, etc.), where they informed each other of the situations of the more than thirty communities spread throughout France, Switzerland, Russia, and Spain.

MICLA

CLARET IN SPOTIFY

Medellín, Colombia. In response to number 43 of Querida Congregation, Fr. Victor Armando Gómez, CMF, in cooperation with the Communication Department of Colombia-Venezuela, launched a series in October a podcast on Spotify called "*History of an apostle of the Word, Anthony Mary Claret.*" This is to make the life of our Father Founder known to Spotify listeners of today's generation.

They produced short audios, no longer than 5 minutes to reach more people and make Claret more known as a prayerful man, hardworking, in love with the Virgin Mary, concerned about the poorest, and who proposed to make known the Gospel of Jesus by all possible means.

CLARETIAN FAMILY



JOINING FORCES, WEAVING NETWORKS

Ten Claretian educators (four lay and six missionaries) from Africa, America, Asia and Europe participated in the seminar on the Global Education Pact organized by the Union of Superiors General (UISG-USG). In its 2022 edition, the experience brought together about four hundred educators from seventy nations linked to 68 religious families.

Adding hours of work to the many hours that already characterize their days, the participants once again demonstrated their conviction of the value of education as a contribution to building a better world and transformed societies, and shared experiences in applying the principles of the Educational Pact encouraged by Pope Francis. Connected from Argentina, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, India and Peru, they reviewed and formulated criteria and shared good practices and experiences, reinforcing what is already being promoted locally in many places.

The seminar has coincided with several meetings of representatives of the various institutions of the Claretian Family, who have also reflected on the Pact and are preparing a joint proposal that will invite the educational communities to deepen its contents.

PERPETUAL PROFESSIONS

Cameroun **09/02/2022**

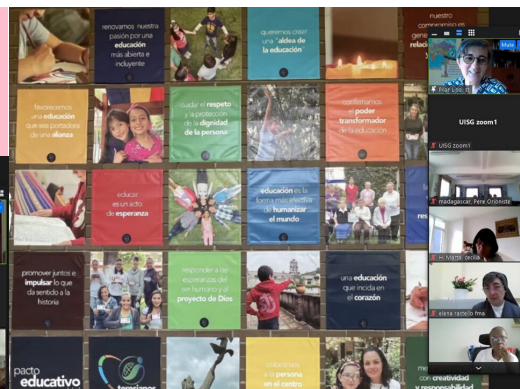
Mbah Essomba, Ulrich
Mboudou, Martin Joël
Mevoungou, Casimir
Ndomo, Stève Rodrigue
Ngwakongnwi Neba, Melvin
Tedongmo, Cédric Raoul

Fátima **10/1/2022**

Marín Mena, José Manuel

Polska **09/02/2022**

Yao, Jean Marc Kouakou



CALLED TO THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER

SEPTEMBER 2022

02 FR. FÉLIX MANJÓN VAQUERO

at 85 yrs. old in Lima, Perú
Perú-Bolivia Province

06 BR. PASCUAL HERNANDO CALVO

at 89 yrs. old in Madrid, Spain
Santiago Province

13 FR. JOSÉ NIETO GONZALO

at 82 yrs. old in Bayamón, P.R.
Antillas Ind. Delegation

OCTOBER 2022

04 FR. EMETERIO RUIZ RECIO

at 88 yrs. old in Granada, Spain
Fátima Province

06 FR. FELIPE ECHUBE OKI

at 48 yrs. old in Niefang,
Equatorial Guinea
Padre Xifré Ind. Delegation

08 FR. JAMES CURRAN

at 80 yrs. old in
Rancho Dominguez, USA
USA-Canada Province

14 FR. PEDRO FUERTES COMBARROS

at 90 yrs. old in Las Palmas, Spain
Fátima Province

29 FR. JOSÉ MARÍA MANZANO CRESPO

at 61 yrs. old in Madrid, Spain
Santiago Province