

# The Forge

in our daily life

SPIRITUS DOMINI

Ordinary Time III

6

IN THE STYLE  
OF CLARET

# SPIRITUS DOMINI - 2014

**T**

he arrow forged on the anvil is not saved in a

museum. Its destiny is to be launched, although nicked with the passage of time. We are called to be missionary arrows: "The ministry of the Word, through which we communicate the total mystery of Christ to humanity, is our special calling to the People of God. For we have been sent to proclaim the Lord's life, death, and resurrection, until he comes, so that all who believe in him may be saved. (CC 46).

## GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To help individuals, communities, Provinces and Delegations to be consciously aware of their present reality, rekindling their experience of Fire and missionary zeal following the methodology of the Forge.



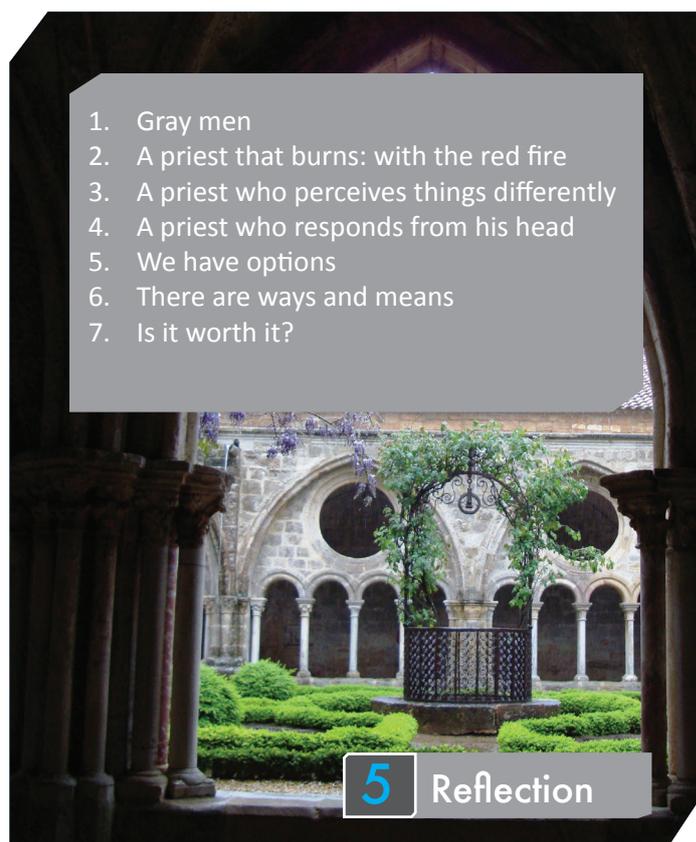
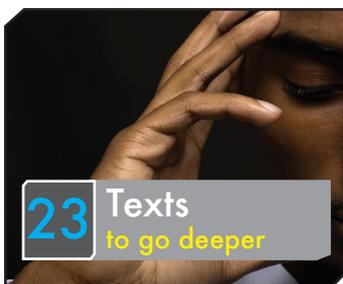
## OBJECTIVES

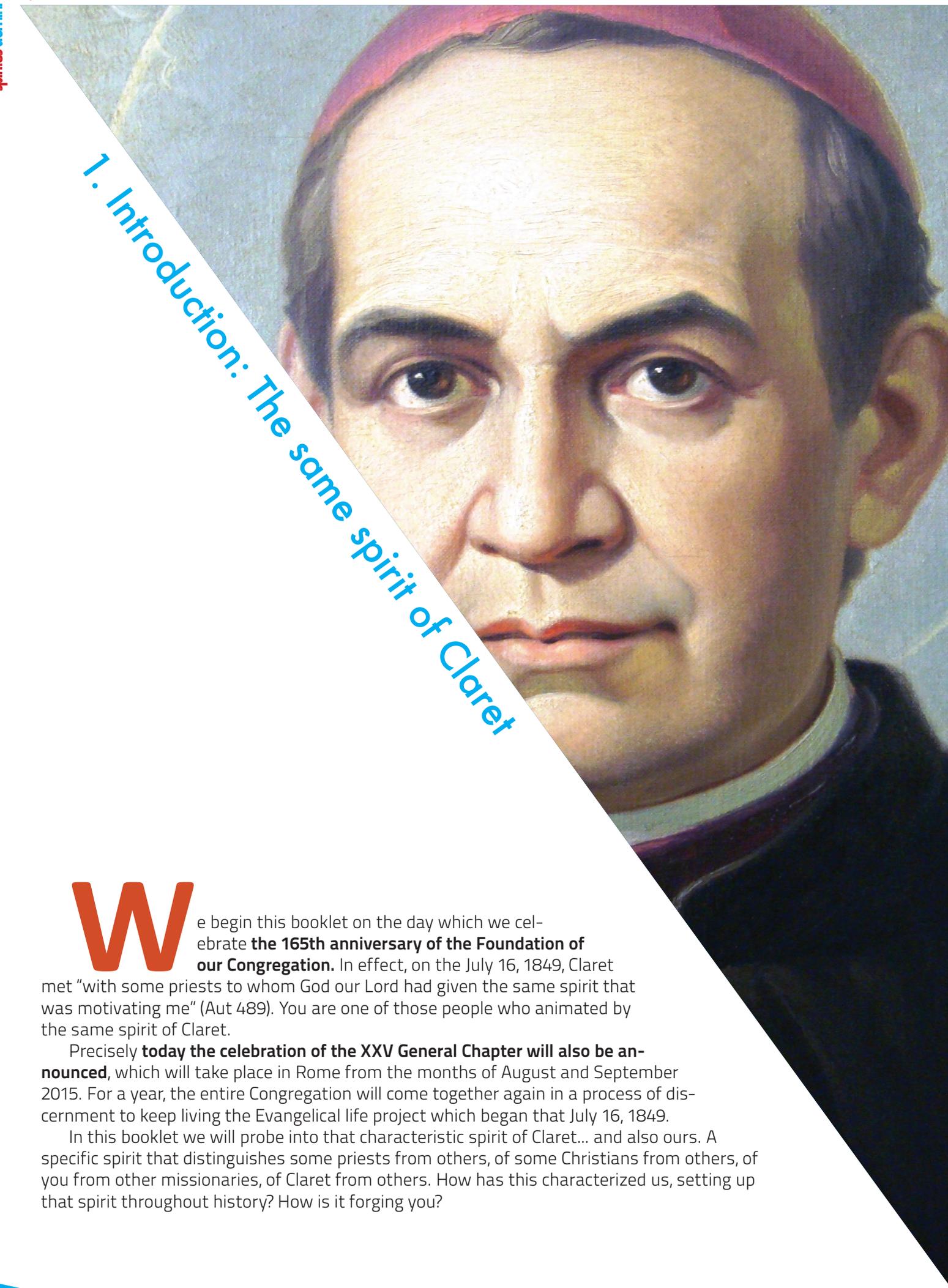
- To pass from passive attitudes to creative attitudes.
  - To believe in the experience of the Spirit who anoints us to be ministers of the Word in the prophetic mission of the Church.
    - To deepen in the Cordimarian dimension of our missionary spirituality.
      - To personalize the significance of our belonging to the Congregation today and to value its charismatic diversity and universal mission.
      - To recapture the experience lived throughout the Forge Project to continue progressing in the missionary life.

## BOOKLETS

1. The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Us (Advent-Christmas)
2. We Have Been Anointed to Evangelize (Ordinary Time I)
3. In the "Today" of the World and the Church (Lent)
4. As Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Easter)
5. Servants of the Word in the Church (Ordinary Time II)
6. In the Style of Claret (Ordinary Time III)
7. In the Missionary Congregation (Ordinary Time IV)
8. Open to the Whole World (Ordinary Time V)
9. Progressing in the Missionary Life (Ordinary Time VI)

# contents





## 1. Introduction: The same spirit of Claret

**W**e begin this booklet on the day which we celebrate **the 165th anniversary of the Foundation of our Congregation**. In effect, on the July 16, 1849, Claret met "with some priests to whom God our Lord had given the same spirit that was motivating me" (Aut 489). You are one of those people who animated by the same spirit of Claret.

Precisely **today the celebration of the XXV General Chapter will also be announced**, which will take place in Rome from the months of August and September 2015. For a year, the entire Congregation will come together again in a process of discernment to keep living the Evangelical life project which began that July 16, 1849.

In this booklet we will probe into that characteristic spirit of Claret... and also ours. A specific spirit that distinguishes some priests from others, of some Christians from others, of you from other missionaries, of Claret from others. How has this characterized us, setting up that spirit throughout history? How is it forging you?

## Exercise 1: If Claret calls you...

Imagine you approaching a person, a priest. You know, he is famous; he brings together crowds with his preaching. He has returned from a mission in the Canary Islands, and the news coming about he is fabulous. He wants to talk to you for a project that he has: "form a congregation of priests who were and are call sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary". And he has thought of you. Tells you that he also knows you, and you notice that you have the same spirit as he.

- How does Claret describe to you this spirit that encourages both of you?
- How do you respond to him?

## 2. Reflection

### 2.1. Gray men

"I am a Christian without much." "I am a run of the mill Christian" "I am a Christian without a title" "I am not a Christian 'with a mark'".

These expressions, and others like that you listen to, seek to claim back a unique yet equal Church, where we are all Church, without forming "private zones" with its own brand of "Jesuit", "Salesian", "Claretian"; "Christians with their titles", defending their interests, who form "sections", rather than being with everyone, to be one more, and work for the common end. **Have you ever felt affected by this way of considering the Church, the diocese and even the parish?**

It is a tempting, captivating approach that seems to show some benefits which deny those which are expressed in the Claretian identity. And it is not uncommon that a Claretian missionary has been seduced by its tentacles, and fallen into their network. The Claretian would cautiously open this booklet entitled: "In the style of Claret". To read the title one might have thought: "In the style of Jesus", that is what it should be!

It is not easy to avoid that temptation; it seems convincing. As a result, what is specific is relegated to the background, as special features that make it difficult for the ecclesial communion.

On the other hand, when Claret - who was a diocesan priest without specific ascription - moves beyond with a "particular" project joined by a few canons of the Diocese and the same Bishop, they applauded the idea. And when he proposes to some priests, who are also diocesans, that to be involved

in this new and unique work, these priests feel called not only by Mosén Claret, but also by God to embark in this "great work".

They all understood the Church as the Spirit, and not the ideologies, that had been configured. A Church is not formed by gray people, uniformed, but by a multiplicity of colors, which, far from dividing it, makes it the only white light which fully expresses the diversity of the rainbow.

And the spirit that inspired Anthony, Stephen, Joseph, Domingo, Manuel, Jaime, in whom we continue their steps, we are painted with a "red fire": that is our contribution to the rich Arch of the Church.

And you, would you also feel encouraged, "colored" by this red fire spirit, or have you let yourself be carried away by the theory of the grey men and you've lost your color, the spirit of God our Lord had given you, like that of Claret and its five first companions?

Color is also lost through abandonment. We are losing our color when the fire of the Spirit, the fire of the Forge, puts us in the bright red fire, and then we will be cooling down, returning to a metallic gray. This same Congregation cannot escape this process, and

needs a certain time of to rekindle the fire and bring to a living red, to retrieve the splendor of our color. Some congregational documents are expressions achieved this inner renewal. Have you experienced it on a personal level? Or, rather, are you no longer working against neglect and laziness that helps you to lose your color?

Sometimes, our works tends to turn us into "one more", gray like so many people: one more parish of the diocese, one more school of Catholic education, one more Catholic publishing house... and our work in these assignments continue the criteria of the others, without being colored by this spirit that had managed to be overlooked from our best documents, leaving aside its criteria and options.

**In this booklet we invite you to retrieve the vividness, to validate with sympathy the formulations that the Congregation has succeeded in making the "style of Claret", to take them as good friends and counselors, to "keep them in the heart" so that they inform and configure your activity each day. Those called to be part of a "great work". Welcome.**





## 2.2. A priest that burns: with the red fire

Anthony Claret was not just a priest, a “normal” priest, or run of the mill. He wasn’t a gray priest. He could not feel it. He felt “inspired” by a specific “spirit”, whose unimaginable features were in other priests, with those who founded our Congregation.

What did Antony see in Stephen, in Joseph, in Domingo, in Manuel, in Jaime, with these that he initiated in that “common perfect life”, that he saw as something that was happening in himself? What distinguishes this “spirit” in him and in these persons, the same spirit that encourages you?

This is asked of the Congregation after the Second Vatican Council, among other questions. And this was clearly responded to in the extraordinary

Chapter of 1967, in a tormented time, full of both fears and hopes. Then a few words of introduction were said that come well in this process of renewal that is the Forge and that you are concluding: “Before the renewal a interior decision needs to be made. This decision - Paul VI teaches - has two ways of expressing itself, two directions to follow. The first is the idea of abandonment. It is often said: to renew one needs to leave many things ... There is a second direction, which is the just direction. The Holy Father defined it as a solution of “discoveries”. To discover and find reasons to justify and explain the specific ways in which it can and should be the life of the Church and the Congregation in the world today, according to the spirit of the Founder. To find a way to adapt ... the germinal idea of the Founder in his Congregation”.

Further on he adds: “The seasoned fruit of the study and of the discussions that were had, after consultation proved abundantly positive for the whole Congregation... it clarifies the question of the charism of St Anthony Mary Claret, as the Founder of the Congregation”. And it dares to surmise: “We believe that Father founder would have received these documents with a supernatural and ecclesial spirit, with an open and ecumenical mind and that he would have read it with steely determination and with spontaneous holy pride by seeing reflected in them his apostolic and spiritual physiognomy”. Here is “the discovery and reward” of that “spirit which animates us”, that has so decisively influenced us in the last half century. Have you discovered and found it too?

### Exercise 2: Personal meditation before a picture of Fr. Claret

1. What does this strange image suggest?
2. What vivid experiences resonate in you as you contemplate it?
3. Try to get into the mind of the artist: our brother José Beruete. What do you think he wanted to express?
4. Take hold of the image and pray from it. What has the Spirit of God given and is expressed in this “portrait of Claret”, that is at the same time, now your photo. Calculate what the Spirit tells you.



## 2.3. A priest who perceives things differently

When Claret was regent priest in Viladrau, he did an analysis of the parish pastoral use. Admittedly, "I did my best to care for the spiritual welfare of the people" (Aut 170), but he was compelled to respond to a most pressing reality: "I started giving missions in the parish of Viladrau on August 15, 1840, while I was conducting a novena in honor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Next I gave another in the parish of Espinelvas, an hour away from Viladrau. Then I went to the parish of Seva. The mission here was more sensational than the others. A large number of people underwent conversions and made general confessions. This was the start of my fame as a missionary" (Aut 172).

So that he "remained in Viladrau for eight months going out on missions and returning" (Aut 173). An image far removed from that of any priest as a parochial priest.

Claret gives himself a perfect account of which "this forced me to ask my superior to relieve me of my duty as regent, and free me from any parish obligations. I asked him to let me know his decision soon, so that I could go and preach missions wherever he chose" (Aut 174).

**Claret was feeling in himself a spirit that was moving him to answer to the environment in a typical way.** "This vocation was given to our Father to

answer immediately to a some circumstances in the Church and that of the world; the same Saint went so far as to discover it entirely through his own ambience, and of the signs of its time to interpret what God had prepared him" (DC 67: Charism 13). Do you feel that your vocation moves you to answer to your environment in a typical way? Because "the depth with which he lived the Christian Mystery allowed him to arrive at an answer that... having been recognized by the hierarchy and by the same experience as capable of being experienced by others and to contribute to the good of the Church and the world, incarnate in distinct cultures and tailored to the needs of different environments" (Ibd). Or if you could feel what Claret surely felt, is it not so?

Claret saw that people were hungry for the Word; this is why he strove to announce it: "societies have become weak and are starving because they have ceased to receive the daily bread of God's Word" (Aut 450). He did not behave like any priest, but as a missionary.

It was difficult for Claret to believe sometimes that God had given him a particular gift, and could not explain why other priests were not feeling the same ardor in their heart: "I simply can't understand how other priests who believe the same truths that I do, and as we all should, do not preach and exhort people to save themselves from falling into hell" (Aut 13).

Today we continue the exercise of interpretation from the "signs of the times". Our General and Provincial Chapters seek to listen to calls that impact our mission from the reality of the Church and the world.

### Exercise 3: To let oneself be impact by the calls of reality

This exercise is designed to let yourself be impacted by the calls that the reality makes to your missionary spirit, to be a Claretian. You already have paved the way: the Chapters; also the brothers of your own community have already been challenged by the reality and have written down what has impacted them. Read what they say, and emphasizes what echos where you are now:

1. Since the last General Chapter (cf. MFL 1-2).
2. Since the last Chapter or Assembly of your Organism.
3. In your locality (perhaps reflected in the programming of your community).



## 2.4. A priest who responds from his head

Claret was not comfortable with what he saw: “the thought of the ease with which people sin – as if it were like taking a glass of water, as if it were something funny or amusing – the thought of the crowds that stay continuously in mortal sin,...this thought robs me of rest, and I feel like running and crying out”(Aut 11).

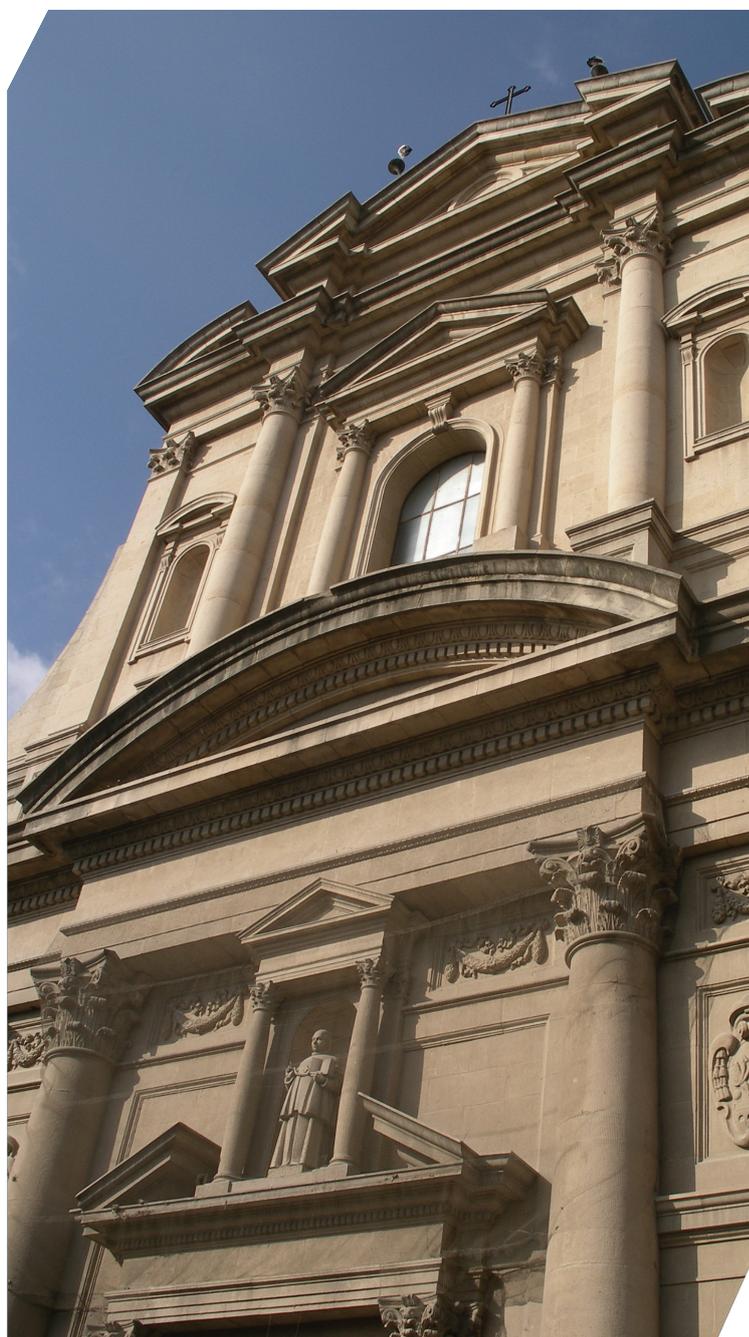
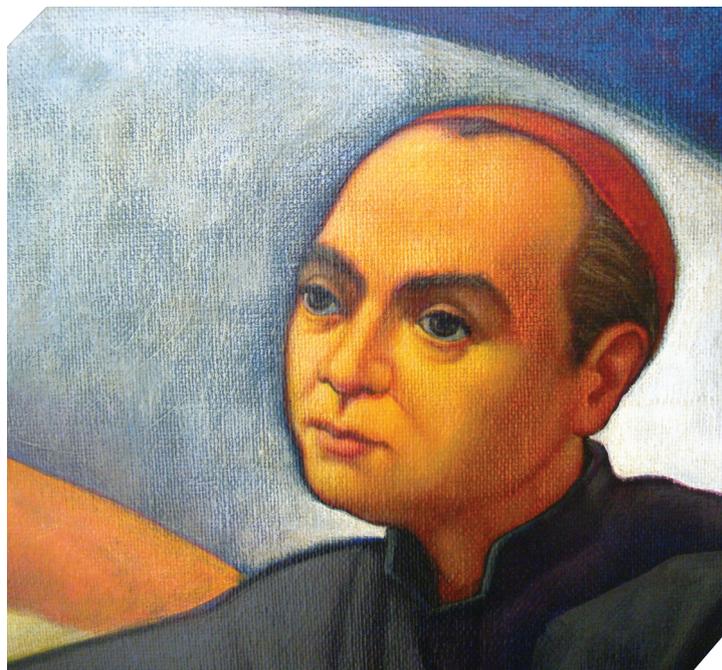
“I tell you quite frankly that whenever I see sinners, I grow restless, I cannot quiet down, I cannot be consoled, my heart goes out to them. To give you an idea of how I feel, I’ll draw a comparison” (Aut 211). “Charity urges and impels me; it makes me run from town to town shouting” (Aut 212).

And how does Claret respond? Sometimes we can ingenuously believe that given his ardor, he moved by impulses, like a spring without much circumspection. This is not to know his long hours of prayer, study, and his reflection that is reflected in the same Autobiography.

Claret was totally involved before the calls that he perceived in the world. He showed his spirituality in the response, as we saw for example in obedience by the way he lived: “it was my inflexible rule never to preach in any church or diocese except at the express command of my bishop” (Aut 194). He kept his choices, as we saw for example, in his refusal to dedicate himself to the healing of the sick in Viladrau in spite of his success: “All the sick of the town, as well as those who were brought there from other places were cured (Aut 180)” And how his fame was spread from here. He had his pastoral strategies and also his methods, many of which he explains in his autobiography: “I was driven to work for God’s greater glory and the salvation of souls, I shall now say something of the means that the Lord showed me were the best and most fitting to attain that goal” (Aut 264). He was a missionary who used his head.

**Today, the Congregation continues to respond in a missionary style to the reality with some options and criteria.**

Already with the renewal of the Council, the Chapter of 1967, set up our “fundamental direction” or “general orientation”, in the “service of the Word”, considered as a “ministry characteristic”; it also established the “criteria” for choosing the “forms of service of the Word and the means of our expression and implementation” -stating expressly that “our Institute does not feel tied to any historical form or to any particular method”. In addition, it reiterates “in the planning of the apostolic work that it does not lose sight of the order of preferences required by our spirit” (Gen Chap, 1967 47-54).



The great reflection about our mission (the "effort to clarify the doctrine on the Claretian mission and points out a few lines of the program for the same", MCT 2) was conducted by the Chapter of 1979 and reflected in the programmatic letter "The Mission of the Claretian Today" (MCT), the result of an itinerary with a "particularly significant participation", where "emerged the purpose of studying the topic of "The Mission of the Claretian today": A study with projective direction that should be carried out by the whole Congregation, of which the Chapter would be in its time the natural interpreter" (Presentation MCT). It was "to awaken missionaries and evangelizers in the Church" at that time what was raised "also among us was the desire to rediscover and experience our missionary vocation and apostolate" (MCT 2).

The greatest value of MCT is its "rereading of the Claretian mission" (cf. 2nd part of the Chapter Document): "an approximation of the historical and doctrinal sources ... which will enable us to discern today our missionary charism". Do you feel that your current missionary charism has value? Can you feel it yearning through you, to rediscover now your missionary vocation?

Subsequently, other General Chapters continued to develop in some dimension this rediscovered Claretian mission, such as "Servants of the Word" (1991), due to the fact that "the Claretians, for having been called charismatically to proclaim the Good News, we were especially challenged by the urgency of a new evangelization noted by John Paul II", or "In Prophetic Mission" (1997), which reflect the universal proposal of the Synod of Bishops in 1994, "we believe that the prophetic aspect is a dimension of our missionary life".

Yes. When we look at the environment with our heart burning, we cannot sit back and act with our head, having pondered and prayed as God wants us working together with the Spirit at this time. For us to be missionary is to be a Claretian, alive, attentive, updated, restless, hopeful, active...

## Exercise 4: Your way of responding to the calls of the reality

*In the previous exercise you looked at the calls of reality that impressed you.*

1. Read what you wrote. Are you giving an answer to these questions? Or have you blocked them from your mind? Maybe you have taken on a sense of "futility" before a task that seems overwhelming?
2. Do you respond to impulses? Are you meeting the "demand" for what happens to you, or do you "stumble" from one task to another? Do you move along the lines of the personal reflection that you've done, from a personal project?
3. Think of what you've been reflecting about lately on being as a missionary.

### 2.5. We have options

**W**e are a Congregation with options. They were elaborated as it should be at the General Chapter on "The Mission of the Claretian Today" (1979), and successively have been reaffirmed by the following Chapters, influencing some peculiarities according to the demands of the times. The recent Directory of 2011 includes them in the Chapter on our mission (cf. Dir 110 and ss).

"Our apostolate and the selection of our works should be developed from some options that express our fundamental commitment to mission, by using all the means and following the criterion of what is most urgent, timely and effective. Such choices are constant apostolic attitudes that must guide and articulate our entire missionary action".

We are speaking in the first place of "our fundamental commitment to mission", then the continuation of the "criteria" and finally the "options".

The "criteria" was expressed in that line by the Chapter of 1967, which viewed Claret as "driven by an acute sensitivity to what is most urgent, timely and effective" (n. 12) and characterized us by our "sensitivity to the most urgent, timely and effective in every time and place, without binding in methods or structures of apostolate" (n. 24); and explained in detail in the MCT (nn. 164-166).

We want to know how to understand options, because we see them as "constant attitudes" for much of the Congregation as our own attitude, further that this "should guide all" our missionary activities, as well as that of the Institute. Do you live these attitudes? Do they guide you in your activities? This is fundamental as it has been said "we understand our mission as collaborators in the mission that the Spirit carries forward in history", i.e. what are the attitudes one needs to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, as a Claretian?

Don't be surprised that we have to dwell on this point. The General Chapter (1985) which reflected on the "Claretian in the process of Congregational Renewal" (CPR), in the No. 77, saw it necessary to insist on two things:

First: with these options we make "a serious attempt of coherence of our missionary being and the realism to the challenges of our world".

Second: that these options are not a passing phenomenon, but "an attitude, a style of life which evangelically rejects everything that hinders our service to the Kingdom of God, as Claretians".

"These options are:

- A missionary evangelization
- An inculturated evangelization
- A prophetic and liberating evangelization
- An evangelization in "shared mission"
- An evangelization multiplier of evangelizers".

## Exercise 5: Confronting the missionary options

The CPR 77 understands that the Claretian mission options help to overcome difficulties so that you can live as a Claretian in your service to the Kingdom. That is achieved when you live in a constant Apostolic attitude, guiding and articulating all your missionary activities, as it says in the directory.

- Check whether these attitudes help your missionary service.
- Below you will find some indicators from the Directory (nn. 111-115) on each option-attitude.
- What weight do these options have in your missionary life and the life of your community? Review one by one these questions if you live your missionary activity with these attitudes.

### **A missionary evangelization**

Do you live "committed to be instruments of the Spirit to carry to men and communities the message of conversion; to constantly invite them to experience the fervor of the first conversion and finally, to help the churches retain the missionary openness to the universal Church" (Dir 111)?

### **An inculturated evangelization**

Do you intergrate as "criteria and key to all your ministries the "dialogue of life "which always takes into account others and doesn't exclude anyone... in perfect fidelity to the content of the Gospel and in total communion with the universal Church" (Dir 112)?

### **A prophetic and liberating evangelization**

Do you help to "remove all classes of alienation and oppression, such as the loss of a sense of transcendence, the subhuman situations of poverty and injustice, the lack of religious freedom ... and following the example of the Founder, by reaching out to all with the message of salvation proclaimed from the perspective of the poor and needy" (Dir 113)?

### **An evangelization in "Shared Mission"**

How do you implement the "Shared Mission" as your "normal mode of mission" (Dir 114)?

### **An evangelization multiplier of evangelizing leaders**

In keeping with the spirit of the Founder do you think you feel urged to "make the missionary proclamation of the Gospel a forceful multiplier of evangelizers according to the various vocations in the Church" (Dir 115)?

## 2.6. There are ways and means

When he said it, Claret portrayed himself: "a son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary... using all means turn world in the fire of divine love" (Aut 494). By "all means", he wrote.

It was clear in his vocation to preach the Word, and so we assume that our ministry is the service of the Word. It has cost us more to assume the variety of forms of this service.

And it is more than once we have endorsed it in the Congregation, as in the General Chapter of 1991 (cf. SP 19), which expands our "privileged service of the Word" in a cluster of different expressions: "itinerant missionary preaching, the Ministry of the written word in its various forms, and its artistic expression (the word sung, visual, dance, etc.)."

**Claret was devoted to popular missions when he founded the Congregation;** and it was -included with the spiritual exercises - the main occupation of the fledgling Institute. In his Autobiography, Claret was bothered to minimize the practical things that gave results in the missions, so that the Claretian Missionaries would take advantage of his experience. Later in 1868, Fr. Xifre published "The Spirit of the Congregation", where he devotes two of the three parts to the missions: one with practical issues and another on its contents.

Although one is bound to notice that Fr. Claret in his apostolic journeys, and the first community of missionaries were also dedicated to giving spiritual exercises. The same publication of Xifré gives advice and offers materials for that purpose. He responded to the strategy of Claret to care for those who had to sustain with their work the fruits that he had achieved his mission, particularly with his pastoral work to inflame the priests to care for the parishes that they were to mission: "In every town I preached in, I spoke not only to the laity,... I regularly preached to the Priests morning and evening ... and directed them in the Spiritual Exercises... The exercises of St. Ignatius are one of the most powerful tools I have

used for the conversion of the priests, which is without doubt one of the most difficult of undertakings. Nevertheless, I have seen the most gratifying results in a great number of priest who have been truly converted, and not a few of them have turned out to be very zealous and fervent preachers" (Aut 305, 474, 308).

But the strategy of the mission of Claret had already taken him much further: "As I traveled from town to town, I would think about some means for making the results of the mission or retreat more lasting. It occurred to me that one very effective means might be to give the people in writing what I have given them in preaching.... In order to distribute them more widely, I hit upon the idea of founding the Religious Publishing House.... In order to be able to give away or to sell them as cheaply as possible, I planned on setting up a Religious Press" (Aut 475.476.329). This way, Claret not only strengthens the fruit of the Mission with the Priests and other stable agents those to who were given Exercises during the Mission, but to leave them with sheets and printed books that "were making the above mentioned fruit permanent", and search for a the way for the printing and Religious Bookstore. It was a total plan that completes its missionary service of the Word with diverse ways and means.

In any case, everything was related to the preaching and therefore it was also understood as an apostolate "proper" to the Congregation. Until ...

**The first crisis came when Fr. Claret proposes that we have schools.** The Founder was well aware of the "shock" that it can cause in his missionaries with a new apostolate. Therefore, it proves to be healthy. (You can find a testimony in the Charter of Claret to Fr. Xifré in **Appendix 1**).

The proposal went forward and the Congregation was opened to a new "means" of the service of the Word, to the extent that today it is one of the strongest of the Congregation.

But even he had to take steps that appeared to contradict the original itinerary. Claret request to leave the Regency of parishes to dedicate himself to preaching, and the Institute continued in the same line of "freedom" of movement, without taking any parish ... until 1900, the year in which the Congregation accepts the first parish in Andacollo, Chile. Chile had been, in effect, the first Claretian mission in the American continent, of which the Founder said: "I am pleased by the acceptance of the foundation in Chile ... I am already old ... if it wasn't for this I would fly over there" (Letter to Xifré dated November 16, 1869, a month before that foundation).

This new direction would pick up much later in the Chapter of 1967: "The Congregation, which was born in the Church with a supra-parroquial mission, but in the course of its history was accepting parishes in strength of its same apostolic adaptability, with the intent of service to the Church..." (No. 61).



The most important thing is, on the one hand the reason that justifies it, and on the other hand the ways of implementing it. The reason: "in response to the urgent needs and possibilities of the Ministry of the Word in the local parish", namely the criteria for what is most urgent, timely and effective. This indicates the means: "To keep faithful to its own charisma within this ministry, the Institute asks its missionaries for an open attitude towards new perspectives and specific nature of today's Parish Mission, in order that each of our parishes are authentic "missionary community".

The questions of the forms of "apostolic adaptability" about which the Chapter delegates speak are extended to other ministries, to other "possible means" as they say the "form of the missionary".

## 2.7. Is it worth it?

**B**ut... "will we be giving too much priority to the pastoral service in stable structures, to the detriment of mediations that better express the itinerate missionary and perhaps could answer in a more creative way to today needs? Why do we still have so few specialized pastoral teams and is it difficult to work in a team? Is it possible

that we emphasized the apostolic initiatives without enough community discernment?" (MFL 22).

These have been "some concerns which emerged forcefully in the Chapter process" and collected in MFL 22.

This distinguishes: "a rich apostolic diversity; the dispersion, a danger, especially if it gives primacy to personal interest over common projects, becoming to comfortable, lacking creativity or daring missionary" (MFL 22).

And from here we are "ready to enliven the intuition, availability, and catholicity that the Constitutions encourage (cf. CC 48), we are called to discern which styles, ministries, positions and commitments we must prioritize and that the projects we carry out are able to be done together".

That is to say, we may have come to confuse "by all means possible" with an "anything goes" and as we have done throughout our history, we feel impelled to examine ourselves to be faithful to what is originally ours.

The same General Chapter already spoke of the multiplicity of the service of the Word (cf. SP 19) warning seriously: "provided that we respond to the fundamental characteristics of our charism and the signs of the times"... and it seems that we have overlooked this part at times.



### Exercise 6: Arrangement of your apostolic services

1. Write down all your apostolic works, personal and of the community.
2. Arrange them according to what should be first, following the criteria of "the most urgent, opportune and effective". Then look at those which are at the end: are they coherent with our mission?
3. Look at the time dedicated to the first and what you dedicate to the last. Is it balanced, taking care of them according to their priority?
4. Now, look at the way you deal with each of them. For each one respond to this question: does it respond to the style of our mission? Is the Claretian eagerness lost and is it more a task, missing our Claretian seal?



### 3. Suggestions for the community meeting

**A**fter a brief prayer and motivational comment start sharing in community those contributions from the community project which have helped us through the work of this booklet (particularly the exercises 3, 5 and 6).

What specific contribution to the Mission of the diocese (or, if not applicable, the universal Church) is the community carrying out?

It might be also worthwhile to review the missionary history of the Community. In this case you will have prepared some documents before the meeting supporting your apostolic work. During the community gathering all should have the opportunity to dialogue. This way we seek to highlight those most significant landmarks that the Community has been actualizing in its mission to the signs of the time, in fidelity to the charism.

### A time of silence to let God speak

Make sure that the place of the *lectio divina* and the hour of the day give you an opportunity for external silence, a necessary preliminary to internal silence.

**The Master is here and calls you (cf. John 11,28), and to hear his voice you must shut out all the other voices;** to listen to the Word, you must

lower the volume of the other voices. The best times for silence are the night, the early morning, the evening...., see for yourself which suits you best according to your schedule of work, but stick faithfully to the time, and choose it once and for all. It is not serious to go and meet the Lord only at intervals between occupations, almost as if the Lord were just a stopgap. Never say: "I am busy, I have no time", because you would declare yourself an idolater: the day's time must be at your service and not you a slave of time!

**Be then enveloped in silence and let the time for *lectio divina* give the rhythm of your life.** You know that you must pray always, untiringly (cf. Luke 18,1-8 and Tess. 5,17), but you also know that to do this explicitly and visibly, precise and specific times are needed to sustain the *memoria Dei* throughout the day. Are you in love with the Lord or are you aiming to be? Then do not be reluctant to consecrate to him that time that you normally give daily and joyfully to your wife, to your husband, to your siblings, to your friends. Nor do you forget that this time for *lectio divina* must be sufficiently long, not a hurried odd moment. For the *lectio divina* – the Fathers say – at least an hour is required.

How many words you hear in a day! That the words may not smother the Word: also in this you must be on the alert. If worldly words are abundant, what concrete primacy may the Word have over them? To do your daily *lectio divina* punctually does not exempt you from verifying the relationship between the Word and words. These, by their quantity and quality, may stifle the divine voice and not allow it to grow and yield its fruit (cf. Mc 4,13-20). Does it make any sense to read everything and anything, getting absorbed in a world of mundane information, indulging in readings that carve deep furrows of impurity in your heart, and then expect to live of the Word that comes from the mouth of God? If you don't keep an open eye on the relationship Word-words in your life, you are condemned to remain an amateur, a shallow person, paralyzed in the face of a true journey of initiation.

## 4. Tips for the "lectio divina"



Wednesday, July 16, 2014. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. 165th Anniversary of the Foundation (Cal CMF, 217-224)

- Zac 2: 14-19
- Psalm 22
- Eph 1: 3-6, 11-12
- Mt 12: 46-50

165 years ago, the Spirit initiated in the Church “a new family” (HAC 37), founded on the fulfillment of the Word. When one reads Psalm 23 as Claret did on that day: “your rod and your staff give me courage”, the Cross and Mary supported the “new family”. The whole psalm applies to your Claretian life (cf. Aut 490). “You have been chosen in Christ”, “you have been destined in the person in Christ”, to acquire “the form of Christ”, “to be his son”.

Thursday, July 17, 2014

- Is 26: 7-9, 12, 16-19
- Psalm 102
- Mt 11: 28-30

To be a true Claretian missionary is to “begin with humility” (Aut 341). “Humility is like the root of a tree and meekness is its fruit” (Aut 372). So “we learn” from Jesus, to help us become transformed with Him, to take His shape, so that the Father “who begins to hammer away at me with humiliation” and I too am forged every day of my life (Aut 342).

Friday, July 18, 2014

- Is 38: 1-6, 21 22:7-8
- Psalm 38
- Mt 12: 1-8

“Formed in the furnace of your mercy and love” (Aut 270), you’ve “learned” to be merciful as the Lord of the Sabbath. You are called to “shower your mercies on poor sinners” (Aut 322) until they come to sing the everlasting mercies of the Lord” and you’re “blessed by those who have been merciful to the Lord” (Aut 213).

Saturday, July 19, 2014

- Mic 2: 1-5
- Psalm 10
- Mt 12: 14-21

You are called to take the form of Christ, prophesized by Isaiah, as Claret: “there were passages that impressed me so deeply that I seem to hear a voice telling me the message I was reading. There were many such passages, but the following stand out: “you whom I brought out from the confines of the earth and called from the ends of the world.” By these words I understood how the Lord had called me without any merit on the part of my birthplace, my parents or myself. “You are whom I said, You are my servant, I have chosen you, not rejected you” (Aut 114).

## SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2014. XVI SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Wis 12: 13, 16-19
- Psalm 85
- Rom 8: 26-27
- Mt 13: 24-43

You are called to sow the good seed, like the Son of Man, in the field of the world, to form citizens of the Kingdom. The dream of “apathy” makes you sleep and while the one group has slept “the other has sown tares in this lovely field” (Aut 717). You have to cultivate the ability to discern like Claret, the tares in the midst of the wheat, “it broke my heart and I wanted to go there to preach” and to grow in the desire to evangelize and to send more missionaries to the field of the world (Aut 728).

## Monday, July 21, 2014

- Mic 6: 1-4, 6-8
- Psalm 50
- Mt 12: 38-42

The only sign for your missionary life is Jesus Christ. You are called to imitate Him, to be like Him. “He was a sign of contradiction, persecuted for His teaching, His works, and His very person. Finally, they took His life amid affronts, torments, and insults, making Him suffer the most shameful and painful death imaginable” (Aut 222).

## Tuesday, July 22, 2014. Memorial of St. Mary Magdalene

- Cant 3: 1-4 (or 2 Cor 5: 14-17)
- Psalm 63
- Jn 20: 1, 11-18

Mary Magdalene is the first to announce the good news of the Risen Lord: “Go and tell my brothers ...” She was the first missionary that experiences the Risen Lord: “I have seen the Lord”. Overcoming your own tears in the encounter with the Lord in prayer, you’re called to proclaim the Word received from the experience of the living God.

## Wednesday, July 23, 2014. Memorial of St. Bridget, Patroness of Europe

- Jer 1: 1, 4-10
- Psalm 71
- Mt 13: 1-9

The Word of God is fulfilled in your life, as in that of Claret: “My life at this time was an embodiment of what the Gospel says about the thorns choking the good grain. My ceaseless preoccupation with machines, looms, and creations had so obsessed me that I could think of nothing else” (Aut 65). You are called to bear abundant fruit, centering your life on the reception of the seed of the Word, overcoming the temptation of activities or the absence of it which neither suffocates nor burns the call to the mission.

## Thursday, July 24, 2014

- Jer 2: 1-3, 7-8, 12-13
- Psalm 36
- Mt 13: 10-17

If you let it dull your heart you lose the ability to see and hear and the process of the Forge and the proposals from the lectio divina cannot heal or help you move forward in your conversion. You can find happiness if your heart is like a sponge, because you see and hear the call of the Lord and the cries of our world, that leads you to the mission: “Seeing that the Lord, out of sheer good will and no merit on my part, was calling me to stem the torrent of corruption and cure the ills of a moribund society...” (Aut 357).

## Friday, July 25, 2014. St. James, Apostle and Co-Patron (Cal CMF. 225-230)

- 2 Cor 4:7-15
- Psalm 126
- 2 Cor 4:7-15
- Mt 20: 20-28

You are called to drink from the cup of the Lord, like James, to give your life for the salvation of the world: “here come the sons of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It says seven, but seven is an indefinite number here, meaning all. They are called thunders because they will shout like thunder and make their voices heard.” And the Lord wants me and my colleagues to imitate the Apostles James and St. John in zeal, in chastity and love of Jesus and Mary” (Aut 686). The treasure of the call to ministry is that you realize the fragility and weakness of your condition.

## Saturday, July 26, 2014. Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, parents of the Virgin Mary

- Jer 7: 1-11
- Psalm 84
- Mt 13: 24-30

You are called to sow the good seed, as the Son of Man, in the field of the world, to become citizens of the Kingdom. The dream of “apathy” makes you sleep and others take good advantage of the opportunity to “sow the tares in this lovely field” (Aut 717). You have to cultivate the gaze to discern, as Claret, the tares in the midst of the wheat. “It broke my heart and I wanted to go there to preach” and grow in the desire to evangelize and they will send more missionaries to the field of the world (Aut 728).

**SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2014. XVII SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME.**

- 1 Kg 3: 5, 7-12
- Psalm 118
- Rom 8: 28-30
- Mt 13: 44-52

By the treasure of the ministry, which you take in the fragilness of your vessel of clay, you have sold everything. In every stage you are called to study this treasure; what are you ready to give today for being a good missionary?: “Thoroughly convinced that to be a good missionary it is both useful and essential to have love, I have searched for this hidden treasure and would sell everything in order to find it” (Aut 442). Fr José M<sup>a</sup> Ruiz “sold” himself so as to take this treasure to the mission that had been entrusted to him. It is the Spirit that helps us in our weakness to be faithful to the mission.

**Monday, July 28, 2014. Blessed Thomas Cordero and Companions, martyrs of Fernán Caballero (Cal CMF, 237-241)**

- Jer 13: 1-11
- Deut 32
- Mt 13: 31-35

It is the Spirit who promotes the growth of the seed of ones vocation for the mission, and even though they may not be fully formed they are capable of carrying birds in their young branches, as the young Claretians from Zafra (Spain) who were martyred in Fernán-Caballero. You are called to become the yeast of God that ferments the dough in the world, opening your mouth to announce the secret, imitating the Lord, who ferments the heart.

**Tuesday, July 29, 2014. St. Martha, Fr. Cándido Casals and Companions, martyrs (Cal CMF, 243-248)**

- 1 Jn 4: 7-16
- Psalm 34
- Jn 11: 19-27

The Claretian Martyrs of Barcelona will also be resurrected, because they were faithful to the call of the one who had to come into the world for the love of us. You also have been sent by God to the world, like Jesus, to bring it to life with the Spirit that has been given to you, because you grow in his love, as the martyrs.

**Wednesday, July 30, 2014**

- Jer 15: 10, 16-21
- Psalm 59
- Mt 13: 44-46

By the ministry of the treasury that you carry in the fragilness of your vessel of clay, you’ve sold everything. At each stage you are called to probe deeper into this treasure; today what are you willing to give to be a good missionary: “I have searched for this hidden treasure and would sell everything in order to find it” (Aut 442).

**Thursday, July 31, 2014. St. Ignatius of Loyola, priest and co-patron (Cal CMF 249-253)**

- Jer 18: 1-6
- Psalm 146
- Mt 13: 47-53

You are in the hands of the Lord as clay in the hands of the Potter. In the Kingdom of heaven, He has called you to be “Fisher of men”, thus “from now on you will be catching men” (Aut 196). To make you fisherman, you have entered a “new family” (MFL 37) which has a vessel that is 165 years old and you have to remove the new from the old. This will give you wisdom to know where to throw the net. “Thus, no matter how evil and demoralized the towns I was sent to, great fruits were always obtained, because it was God who sent me to them and prepared them and predisposed them for me” (Aut 198).

**Friday, August 1, 2014. St. Alphonsus Mary Liguori, bishop, doctor and co-patron (Cal CMF, 257-262).**

- Jer 26: 1-9
- Psalm 69
- Mt 13: 54-58

From the vessel of the “new family” comes wisdom. Claret learned from the wisdom of St. Alphonsus M<sup>a</sup> de’ Liguori to preach (Aut 300). Jesus is the gift of the Spirit that enables us to receive the wisdom of the Kingdom. This treasure that you carry in the bowl that is you is the “son of a carpenter”, you may not always be accepted. The strength of the mission is made perfect in weakness. Allows the action of the Holy Spirit to be realized through your limitations and those of your “new family”.

**Saturday, August 2, 2014**

- Jer 26: 11-16, 24
- Psalm 69
- Mt 14: 1-12

For you, like Jeremiah “have certainly been sent by the Lord to preach”. And like him, like the Baptist, like Jesus, the accomplishment of the mission involves troubles and setbacks. But the Spirit comes to aid you in your weakness, manifested like the power Herod perceived in Jesus. The Lord hear the groans of the Spirit of Him whom he sends; “your heart will revive”.

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2014. XVIII SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Is 55: 1-3
- Psalm 144
- Rom 8: 35, 37-39
- Mt 14: 13-21

No mishap of the mission “will be able to separate you from Christ”, “you will succeed because of the one” that sent you. You will be able to move enormous structures thanks to the Spirit of Jesus: “You give them something to eat”. Moved by divine compassion with little you will multiply the fruits of the mission. “Societies have become weak and are starving because they have ceased to receive the daily bread of God’s Word” (Aut 450).

## Monday, August 4, 2014. St. John Mary Vianney, patron of priests

- Jer 28: 1-17
- Psalm 119
- Mt 14: 22-36

You don’t work on your own account or are supported by your own strength, as Ananias. You like Jeremiah, the Lord has sent. For this reason you can carry out large feats, thanks to the Spirit of Jesus: “Give them to eat”. Moved by divine compassion, with little you will multiply the fruits of the mission. “Societies have become weak and are starving because they have ceased to receive the daily bread of God’s Word” (Aut 450).

## Tuesday, August 5, 2014

- Jer 30: 1-2, 12-15, 18-22
- Psalm 102
- Mt 14: 22-36

The misfortunes of the mission rage against the boat. You’re not alone but with your “new family” (MFL 37). You’re not alone, but with Jesus: his Word gives you courage and your community. The people on the shore are waiting to be healed. Don’t be deceived by fear, you will not sink in the difficulties, do not hesitate because the power of the Spirit lives within you and will lead you to heal as Jesus.

## Wednesday, August 6, 2014. Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

- Dan 7: 9-10, 13-14
- Psalm 97
- 2 Peter 1: 16-19
- Mt 17: 1-9

You “have seen” the “greatness” of the Lord. You have “heard the voice” of the Lord. Your proclamation is not based on theories, but that you are a “witness”, because “you are with Jesus” in the “mountain” of prayer. You know that people “are attentive” to the Word that is proclaimed, which is the “lamp that shines in the darkness”. You have been sent to “give life to this light in the hearts” of the people.

## Thursday, August 7, 2014

- Jer 31: 31-34
- Psalm 51
- Mt 16: 13-23

By illuminating “hearts”, you bring forth in the people faith in “the Messiah, the Son of the living God”. And the Lord “sealed an alliance with them”, and “marks in their hearts His will”. It is the work of the Spirit of the Father in you. Learning from Jesus, the humble of heart, knows that it is not your results which come from “your flesh and bone”, but from God that sends you. And, far from “thinking like men”, you have the mind of Christ.

## Friday, August 8, 2014. St. Domingo of Guzman

- Neh 1: 15, 2: 2-3, 3: 1-3,6-7
- Deut 32
- Mt 16: 24-28

“In the midst of this hubbub of things, while hearing mass, I remembered having read as a child those words of the Gospel: what profit a man to gain the whole world if he loses his soul?” This phrase impressed me deeply ... and went like an arrow to my heart; I tried to think and reason what to do, but to no avail” (Aut 68) What will you do? Far from surrendering to the “hordes of things” of “flesh and blood”, God expects that you will “fulfill your vows” as a missionary, “carrying your cross” on the mission, because you are His “herald that proclaims peace”, as Jesus, the one who was Sent, to whom you follow, and you will find the sweetness of life.

## Saturday, August 9, 2014. St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Virgin and Martyr. Patroness of Europe

- Hab 1: 12 – 2: 4
- Psalm 9
- Mt. 17: 14-20

With little, the Spirit realizes in you enormous feats. The mission is not based on the power of your “flesh and blood”, but on the force of God, who “gives life to the just person”. You cannot heal because you are another Savior; but He who sends you and by your faith in Him nothing is impossible. You are God’s herald, “stay awake to listen to what He says to you”.

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2014. XIX SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- 1 Rev 19: 9a, 11-13a
- Psalm 84
- Rom 9: 1-5
- Mt 14: 22-33

The misfortunes of the mission rage against the boat. You're not alone but with your "new family" (HAC 37). You're not alone, but with Jesus: his Word gives you courage and your community. The people on the shore are waiting to be healed. Don't be deceived by fear, you will not sink in the difficulties, do not hesitate because the power of the Spirit lives within you and will lead you to heal as Jesus.

## Monday, August 11, 2014. Memorial of St. Clare, Virgin

- Ez 1: 2-5, 24 – 2: 1<sup>a</sup>
- Psalm 148
- Mt 17: 21-26

"The Word of the Lord came" over you, "the hand of the Lord rests upon you", you are His herald, His missionary. As being sent, discerning, like Jesus, what must you avoid so as "not to give bad example" to those you were sent to. And you learn from the good example of the brothers of your "new family" of missionaries (MFL 37): "I had something to learn from all of them because they gave me such a good example of all virtues, especially humility, obedience, fervor, and a constant readiness to work"(Aut 607).

## Tuesday, August 12, 2014

- Ez 2: 8-3: 4
- Psalm 119
- Mt 18: 1-5, 10, 12-14

The Lord "feeds you and satisfies you" with His Word, and sends you "to speak His words". And the Lord does not want to lose even one to those to whom you have been sent. "One of the things that have impelled me to teach the Children has been the example of Jesus Christ and of the Saints. Jesus Christ says: Let the children come to me and do not hinder them. It is to just such as these that the kingdom of God belongs (Mk. 10: 14)" (Aut 276).

## Wednesday, August 13, 2014. Bl. Felipe de Jesús Munárriz & Companions , Martyrs (Cal CMF, 263-270)

- Ez 9: 1-7, 10, 18-22
- Psalm 113
- Mt 18: 15-20

The young Claretians martyred in Barbastro offered themselves for the salvation of the world, even for their executioners who they forgave. It is the same Spirit that drives you to get closer to your brother to save him. "Tell me, if you had a very dear brother who was so sick that he was delirious and in his fever insulted you and said every foul thing in the world to you, would you abandon him? I'm sure you wouldn't. You'd feel all the more sorry for him and do everything you could for his recovery. Well, that's the way I feel about sinners. That makes them all the more deserving of compassion. I can't abandon them, I have to work for their salvation and pray to God for them" (Aut 208).

## Thursday, August 14, 2014. St. Maximilian Kolbe, Martyr [H. Saperas & others] (Cal CMF, 271-282)

- Ez 12: 1-12
- Psalm 78
- Mt 18: 21-19:1

"The Word of the Lord has come upon you". "You are a sign" for this world, reflecting the "forgiveness of heart" of God, sent to announce the "mercy of God" to all. You live in a "new family" of those who have been forgiven that "forgive your brothers", founded in the "compassion of the Lord". "The would- be assassin was caught in the act and sent to jail. He was tried and sentenced to death by the judge, notwithstanding the deposition I had made, stating that I forge him as a Christian, a priest, and an Archbishop" (Aut 583).

## Friday, August 15, 2014. Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- Rev 11: 19<sup>a</sup>, 12: 1, 3-6<sup>a</sup>, 10
- Psalm 44
- 1 Cor 15: 20-27<sup>a</sup>
- Lk 1: 39-56

You have a "new name: Missionary Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary" (MFL 34). "Our charismatic name expresses the mission to which we have been called: to be the "arms" of the Woman who keeps defeating the dragon (cf. Rev 11:19 – 12:18) through the Word of God of which we are listeners and servers" (MFL 34) The Spirit "does great works for you", as in Mary, to "extend your mercy to the faithful".

## Saturday, August 16, 2014

- Ez 18: 1-10, 13b, 30-32
- Psalm 51
- Mt 19: 13-15

The missionary is a fragile person like a pot of clay, in need of forgiveness. You also need to "repent and change", need to "form a new heart and a new spirit", "a broken heart and humiliated". "Surely these could not pass God scrutiny. For this reason I have never meddled in this business of soliciting canonries. Would to God that all the priests sought to be the last and the least among their brothers, as our Divine Master taught us! The best canonry is to love God deeply and save souls" (Aut 631). You need to be "strengthened with the Spirit", being that you are small, throws yourself into the mission. "In the meantime I spoke with some priests to whom God our Lord had given the same spirit that inspired me. I, the negligible of all; and, to the truth, they are more educated and more virtuous than I, and I was very happy and blessed to be accepted by all of them." (Aut 498).

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2014. XX SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Is 56: 1, 6-7
- Psalm 66
- Rom 11: 13-15, 29-32
- Mt 15: 21-28

The charismatic gift and the call to the mission that God has made for you” is irrevocable”. You’ve been “constituted an apostle”, apostolic missionary, for “the lost sheep” of the world. Your spirit is for the entire world. “He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set the whole world on fire with God’s love” (Aut 494).

## Monday, August 18, 2014. Fr. Peter Schweiger, Superior General (Cal CMF, 289-294)

- Ez 24: 15-24
- Deut 32
- Mt 19: 16-22

You’ve already left everything to follow Jesus Christ as a Claretian Missionary. Therefore, the Spirit of the Lord sends you to be a sign, it enables you to “get the Word of the Lord that you have to announce. “What more is lacking? “. “I knew that people were deeply impressed by this detachment, and for that reason I was determined to maintain the position I had taken. To encourage myself, I would recall Christ’s teaching on the matter and meditate on it constantly, especially those words, ... If you would be perfect, go, sell what you have, give it to the poor and come, follow me...” (Aut 362).

## Tuesday, August 19, 2014

- Ez 28: 1-10
- Dtr 32
- Mt 19: 23-30

You have already received hundred times more than you have for devoting yourself as a Claretian Missionary: “a new name, new family, new life style, new way, new sending” (MFL 34 and ss) and you will receive eternal life. “There can be no doubt that it will stand a priest in better stead to have been a missionary than not to have been a canon. Let him choose now what he would prefer to have chosen at the hour of his death” (Aut 631).

## Wednesday, August 20, 2014. Memorial of St. Bernardo, Abbot and Doctor

- Ez 34: 1-11
- Psalm 23
- Mt 20: 1-16

The Lord “in person” tends his sheep, “seeks them and follows their trail”. He is the Good Shepherd who sends you to look after them, to “work” with them in His vineyard. Far from “feeding only yourself”, you “strive constantly and single-minded for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls” (Aut 494), souls belonging to Jesus Christ, “the beloved sheep for whom He, their Good Shepherd, gave His life (Aut 436).

## Thursday, August 21, 2014

- Ez 36: 23-28
- Psalm 51
- Mt 22: 1-14

The Lord “has brought forth in you His Spirit”, you “strengthened by His generous Spirit, teaching the wicked their ways”. The Lord sends you to “go to the crossroads and invite anyone you find” to “return to the Lord”. “I beseech you, the grace of conversion, for without it we can do nothing; then send me and you shall see how they will be converted” (Aut 160).

## Friday, August 22, 2014. Memorial of the Queenship of Mary

- Ez 37: 1-14
- Psalm 107
- Mt 22: 34-40

“The hand of the Lord has rested upon you and, with His Spirit, the Lord has called you” from your home “and has placed you on your way” for His People so that you will be “His prophet”, and make others “listen to the Word of the Lord”. For “to be a missionary, the virtue that you most need is love”. “You must love God, Jesus Christ, Holy Mary and your neighbors. If you lack this love, all His talents are for nothing; but, if together with his natural endowments, he has much love he has everything”. You need this virtue because “Love in a man who preaches the Word of God is like fire in a musket” (Aut 438-439).

## Saturday, August 23, 2014. St. Rose of Lima, Virgin (Cal CMF, 295-299)

- Ez 43: 1-7<sup>a</sup>
- Psalm 85
- Mt 23: 1-12

God has called you “to be the servant” of all, being available for the mission, as Claret (“I loved and served everyone equally, rich or poor, relatives or strangers, townsmen or outsiders – and there were man of the latter ... I was quick to serve them all” (Aut 111), is as Santa Rosa de Lima said, “Consider that the greater service men can render God is the conversion of souls, and this is the proper work of the Apostles” (Aut 239).

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 2014. XXI SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Is 22: 19-22
- Psalm 137
- Rom 11: 33-36
- Mt 16: 13-20

“What unfathomable are decisions of the Lord!”. He is “your steward” because “He recognizes the humble,” to be like “a father to the people”, making new life in the faith in “the Messiah, the Son of the living God”. “What abyss of generosity, wisdom and knowledge of God!”. It is the work of the Spirit of the Lord in you. It is not yours, “your flesh and blood”, but the God who sends you.

## Monday, August 25, 2014. Foundation of Claretian Missionary Sisters (Cal CMF, 305-310)

- 2 Tess 1: 1-5, 11b-12
- Psalm 96
- Mt 23: 13-22

“You, like” Paul, Silvano and Timothy”, are willing to “travel by land and sea to win one proselyte”, but far from “clenches of the Kingdom of heaven” those of whom you are entrusted” let those who want to enter”, and “give continuous thanks God” seeing that their faith grows vigorously and remains constant”. Antonia París, called by Claret, crossed the sea to join in the work of “a new order” of missionary (Aut 561). You are today called “by the same Spirit that encourages you” like Claret (Aut 489).

## Tuesday, August 26, 2014. Eucharistic Grace of Claret (Cal CMF, 311-317)

- 2 Thess 2: 1-3<sup>a</sup>, 14-17
- Psalm 96
- Mt 23: 23-26

“God calls many through the Gospel that you proclaim”. Far from “overflowing with abandonment in your deepest self”, “God blesses you internally with an everlasting consolation”, as Claret was blest with the gift of his sacramental presence; “because of this I must always be recollected and inwardly devout. Furthermore I must pray and confront all the evils...” (Aut 694).

## Wednesday, August 27, 2014. Memorial of St. Monica

- 2 Thess 3: 6-10, 16-18
- Psalm 128
- Mt. 23: 27-32

It is not “rotteness that you have on the inside”, but “the fear of the Lord”. You are not a “son of the one who killed prophets”, but son of the Prophet Claret, whom “beside my unflinching love for poor sinners, another force that has driven me to work for their salvation is the example of the prophets, of Christ himself” (Aut 214). That’s why “you do not chose an idle life”, but “your only concern is how he can best follow Jesus Christ and imitate Him in working, suffering, and striving constantly and single-mindedly for the greater glory of God” (Aut 494).

## Thursday, August 28, 2014. Memorial of St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor

- 1 Cor 1: 1-9
- Psalm 145
- Mt. 24: 42-51

You “have been called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus for God’s design”. You are a “faithful and careful servant”, that “you a light” for the mission, “prepared” “to narrate the great actions of the Lord” and “to spread the memory of His immense kindness”. “I should be the same: so faithful and constant in serving and loving God that I might say with the Apostle that neither death nor life nor anything else can ever separate me from Him” (Aut 670).

## Friday, August 29, 2014. Memorial of Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist

- Jer 1: 17-19
- Psalm 71
- Mk 6: 17-29

The Lord “orders you” to denounce “what is not licit”, as that of John the Baptist. The Lord “has converted you” like a “polished arrow”, and encouraged you “not to be afraid” because although “they fight against you, they you will not be able, since the Lord is with you to free you”. Allow yourself to shoot: “I am like an arrow poised in your mighty hand. Release me my Mother, with the full force of your arm, against Satan, prince of this world” (Aut 270).

## Saturday, August 30, 2014

- 1 Cor 1: 26-31
- Psalm 33
- Mt 25: 14-30

“God has chosen you”, “in your folly, in your weakness”, in which there are “low and despicableness” in you, because He has searched in you “a faithful and conscientious worker”, who is “is faithful in little thing”, in everyday life, “may you be blessed by God for enriching me with this gift, for it is yours, not mine. I know that of my own initiative I cannot say a word or have a single good thought! May it all be to your greater glory” (Aut 299). “My object was always to seek God’s greater glory and the salvation of souls” (Aut 325).

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2014. XXII SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

- Jer 20: 7-9
- Psalm 62
- Rom 12: 1-2
- Mt 16: 21-27

“The Lord has seduced you, He has been able”. His “Word is placed within you like an ardent fire”, that “you cannot contain”. It has turned you in “a man who burns in charity and who burns where it passes” (Aut 494). That’s why “you submit yourself”, “you glory in the cross of Jesus Christ” (EC II, 349-352) and “you follow him” “offering yourself like living host”: “What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? This phrase impressed me deeply and went like an arrow to my heart. I tried to think and reason what to do but with no avail” (Aut 68). What will you do?

## Appendix 1: Letter of Fr. Claret to Fr. Xifré

To Fr. José Xifré. Rome, 16 July 1869.

J.M.J.

Lord Don José Xifré, Superior General of the Congregation, etc.

Dear Sir with all my consideration and appreciation:

Today it has been 20 years since Jesus and Mary began the holy Congregation; and it has succeeded so far, in that the Lord has allowed this persecution that we are suffering, not to extinguish it, but to increase it and to broaden it...

You have before you number 63, Chapter 16 of the same, and if you would reflect on these words: "catechizare parvulos, pauperes et ignaros ..."

You, as Superior General when circumstances permit and you considers it opportune, you may appoint one or two who have good writing skills, etc., to open a school for children, like the Brothers of Christian Schools (sic), that so numerous in France, Italy, etc., and they do so much good... I don't want to say that everyone should become involved in these schools; Yes I just want to say to start with a few and very few that you will take care to name as you recognize his zeal, or that he ask.

These schools will grow according to the fidelity which corresponds to the grace. God and the Blessed Virgin will bring subject to learn; so that, without losing sight of its primary objective, we will engage in this other branch: "haec oportet facere et illa non omittere".

... But, if you find someone repugnant, I beg you not leave them at their leisure, so that they will fail in neither sadness nor rodent worm, as it happens to some apples...

With these schools they will welcome God and people...

5. Texts to go deeper

## Appendix 2: “I must confront all the evil of Spain” (Aut 694). The response of Claret to the evangelizing needs of his time. (Jesus Bermejo, CMF)

The historical context in which the mission of Fr. Claret develops should be understood in the universal history of his time. Before we deal with the evangelizing response that he provides, remember some traits of this period of ecclesial and social history in Spain.

### 1. Social and ecclesial context for the evangelizing mission of Claret.

St. Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870) lived in Spain during the nineteenth century “with thirty governing offices; nine Constitutions; three dethronements; five civil wars; dozens of interim regimes and an almost incalculable number of revolutions that we can provisionally calculate to be around two thousand”. On average, every 17 days there was a revolution “better said, that is, attempts to organize, arm and an awareness to overthrow the government”.

As in the rest of Europe, the Spanish revolutionary movement changed the political and social situation of the nation; so much so, that everything in the beginning of the 19th century constituted the most nuclear of Spain, at the end of the century there remained only the Church; and this, indeed very battered.

“If we wanted to synthesize in very few words the new conception of the world struggling to carve out a place in the 19th century, it could be argued that the men of this century advocated a move from a pre-scientific world to a scientific-technical world; from an absolutist to a democratic world; from an ideologically monolithic world to one that was ideologically plural”

Culmination of the religious persecution of the Church

With the death of Fernando VII (1833), the nation was divided between supporters of Isabel II and D. Carlos, daughter and brother of the dead King, which resulted in the three Carlist Wars that occurred throughout the century.

Due to the youthful age of Isabel II, her mother, Queen María Cristina assumed the Regency; and later General Espartero. With a Regent, the Liberals controlled the Government. In 1834 the Government began burning the convents, the Friars were persecuted in the main cities throughout the country. Aware of authors of these actions, no one was arrested. In 1835 the Nuncio left Spain and Pope Gregorio XVI broke relations with Madrid.

The anti-ecclesiastical dispositions of Prime Minister Martínez de la Rosa (1834-5) point of view concerning the goods of the Church and religious orders: confiscation of goods that were associated with the ecclesiastical Carlists; suppression of the convents with Carlists members; obligatory military service for the novices; transfer of the religious from one suppressed convent to the other was under the watch of the Government; Constitution of a “Royal and Ecclesiastical Meeting” with ten liberal Bishops who were marginal to the Holy See.

The situation worsened when D. Juan Alvarez Mendizábal was appointed Prime Minister (1835): the Jesuits were expelled and their property confiscated; suppression of all the convents with less than 12 religious, except the Schools of Missionaries for the Philippines and the Holy Land, and the Colleges of the Pious Schools.

In 1836 all the existing male convents are suppressed in Spain, and the consequent seizure and sale of its goods. All female religious communities were also suppressed with

less than 20 religious; they prohibited the admission of new novices and the profession of those already admitted. The secularization affected 23,935 religious. Those tolerated constituted 750 in all of Spain.

On January 10, 1839, 25 bishops signed a letter to the Pope “distressed by the innumerable evils of the Catholic Kingdom and the Church”. It is the first collective document by Spanish bishops (only 15 bishops signed the document).

During the Regency of General Espartero (1841-1843), what continued: the clergy were obligated to sign the oath of fidelity to the Government; and by a decree of the Minister of Grace and Justice the Church was organized according to purely political principles.

The Spanish government did some negotiations with the English Chancery, to see the possibilities of creating a Spanish National Church, in the style of the Anglican.

Only during the moderate era (1844-1854) changes began happening. The Holy See recognized Queen Isabel II of Spain, to which it had opposed; resumed diplomatic relations; and signed the Concordat of 1851.

Shortly after, with the Revolution of 1868, all of this came down; although for a short time, there was the restoration of the monarchy of King Alfonso XII (1875).

Destruction of the structures of evangelization

Virtually all structures which encourage the faith of the people disappeared. Charities, supported with the goods of the Church had to disappear for lack of financial means after the Governments took possession of all Church goods.

The suppression of the religious orders, the main agents of specialized evangelization resulted in the annihilation of all the evangelization centers and support for the spirituality of the faithful and the almost total dismantling of traditional forms of evangelization: such as specialized preaching of the Word of God (popular missions, spiritual exercises...); the promotion of popular devotions; charitable health care in its many facets; the animation of lay movements (third orders...); etc.

### 2. Claret responses to the evangelizing needs of his time

Fr. Claret’s missionary vocation was born out of a profound experience of God, above all through God’s Word, with a strong experience of the world. He knew he was chosen by God to be an Apostolic missionary, an evangelizer of peoples in the style of Jesus and the Apostles. He experienced himself as a prophet and companion of the mission with the great evangelizing Saints. “His missionary vocation was the organizing principle of his existence and the deep motivation that guided his life and apostolic activity”. From here he responds to the evangelizing challenges of his time.

#### 2.1. Knowledge and analysis of reality

The evangelizing charism of the Spirit trained Claret to discover the challenges and the needs of the times and the historical circumstances in which he lived. With a prophetic eye, he knew how to analyze the root of the evils which afflict the Church and Spanish society. The analysis of reality and discernment of the signs of his time were realized as a requirement of his evangelizing vocation:

“Seeing that the Lord, out of sheer good will and no merit on my part, was calling me to stem the torrent of corruption and cure the ills of a moribund society, I thought that I should

dedicate myself to studying and gaining a thorough knowledge of the maladies of this social body, I did so, in fact..." (Aut 357. Cf.685).

He counseled anyone who would like to engage in evangelism.

As we move closer to the writings of Fr. Claret we can perceive a lucid and detailed description of the reality of his time. Moved by his evangelical zeal, he was very attentive to the realities of life, in such a way that each problem that he detected concerning the People of God, he invented some timely apostolic action, or, at least, he would write a specific booklet. "It can be said that each booklet reflects a very specific aspect of the social reality or church of his time"

St. Anthony M<sup>a</sup> Claret does not remain in lamentation or contemplation of the evil that threaten his time, but he feels called to challenge them and delivers his body and soul to give an answer from his multiform evangelizing activity. He was saying to himself yes same: "I must challenge all the evil of Spain" (Aut 694).

## 2.2. Response of Claret to each historic moment and their circumstances.

In the 30 years of service to the Gospel (since 1841), he moved through various historical circumstances but he was always attentive to discover the most urgent needs and use the means that were more timely and effective.

Jesus Bermejo, a Claretian, distinguishes an evolutionary process with three stages in which Claret clarifies his mission and the answers to be given to the needs of his time through evangelization: to begin with he feels moved to save man, and then focuses his attention on saving society and in the final stage of his life, to save the Church.

### *To save man*

During the first stage of his missionary life, Claret meets men divided by the civil war and their flagging faith:

- by liberalism, which persecutes the Church and suppresses religious orders, thus reduced the number and quality of evangelizers;
- by Jansenism, which terrifies the minds and weakens the faith;
- by the indifference and sectarianism, which prevent the testimony of religious life and the preaching of the Gospel;
- by pantheism, which "depersonalized" God, and mechanization, which depersonalizes man, turning him into a worker and machine.
- The man is losing his religious roots and pride in his conquests; thus losing his understanding of God and will fall into a state of atheism.

The townspeople remain believers (Claret always presupposes faith in the audience), but they live in ignorance and fear. The preachers, if they preach leave the people disconcerted or because they preach about themselves rather than preach the Word of God, or because they are impregnated of Jansenism, they terrorized the people or lead the people into a sentimental sterile and harmful state.

Faced with this disturbing situation, Claret undertakes an evangelizing offense. His ideal is to save man. To do this, it takes three major means: by preaching so as to lead and convert, the spiritual exercises to raise evangelizers and the press to maintain the faith. To evangelize the people he uses the language of the people: a clear and simple language, full of comparisons and similarities and fully Gospel: "minimal fear, softness in everything. Never using examples that

lend themselves to ridicule. The examples in general come from the Scripture. Secular historical facts. Never opposition but a similarity of points. To speak of hell, but it is limited to what Scripture says. The same thing about purgatory. There is no need to exasperate or make one crazy. There is always a part which includes catechesis (EA 423) ". His word converts and transforms because they are sustained by a tireless zeal and the witness of a pure and transparent life.

In the meantime, with his publications he is giving rules of sanctification for all states of life, seeking to arouse also agents to evangelize. By 1845, the heavenly Father worthily called "other very courageous evangelical workers, ready to follow the same tenor of life and apostolic labors" and with a desire to travel "in other provinces of Spain and impart in them the Word of God". Toward the end of this period (1847) we see the need for the laity to join in the task of evangelization and he begins to outline the first associations of lay apostolates. Thus was born the idea of the "Brotherhood of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary and Lovers of Humanity", which did not prosper due to the lack of authorization from the Archbishop of Tarragona.

In 1849, after a long mission experience, Claret defines his spirit creating a Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries fully devoted to evangelization, "that what was for the Church, the Prelates and the souls is what the heart is to the body". Thus, his spirit was for everyone, to be incarnated and extended throughout space and time, because "I wanted to extend throughout the world" the voice of the Gospel and "long vehemently that until the end of time would be preached and catechized everywhere". For he was moved by several reasons, all apostolic in nature:

- the lack of Evangelical and Apostolic preachers
- the wishes that the people had to hear the divine word
- the many instances that he received to go to preach the Gospel
- the desire to be able to do with others what alone he could not.

It is clear that the Congregation was not born only of "thought" (cf. Aut 488-489) from the Founder, but from divine inspiration. Thus was formed the first group of completely freed missionaries for universal, itinerant, uninterrupted evangelizing and in a truly poor and apostolic common lifestyle which has as its end "the salvation of all the world's inhabitants".

### *To save society*

The Cuban stage is very significant in the apostolic and personal experience of Fr. Claret. First of all, it presents a violent stumbling block to his apostolic ideals. Elevation to the Episcopate changed "all apostolic plans", because it tied and contained him to a single Archbishopric, when his spirit was for the whole world.

To be a residential Archbishop, contrasted with his vocation of itinerant apostle. But deviating from his vocation was to be only apparent because in this new situation he would remain faithful to his essential Apostolic missionary vocation.

In Cuba it accentuates his experience of God and the Church as a community, and it sharpens his prophetic vision of reality, because of three important facts that give rise to a profound transformation and widening of his apostolic perspectives: the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (December 8, 1854), the vision of the angel of the Apocalypse (February 9, 1855) and the bombing in the

city of Holguin (January 2, 1856).

From his apostolic vocation this gave an eminently missionary interpretation to his Episcopate. He could not be satisfied with an ordinary government; it needed to be reformed, establish and above all evangelize. So this was added to the environment which he had to face.

The religious and social panorama was not comforting at all. There he could feel the social consequences of the personal sins: man was exploited by man, who destroys the faith. Fr. Claret saw the situation this way: "There are a few principles of destruction, corruption and provocation of divine justice... They are three classes: abogadillos or known as children of the country, whose owners are blacks and Spanish. The blacks' owners are enemies of missions, religion and morality. The Europeans do not appreciate any god other than ones' own interest, living in indifference and concubines." And he writes to the Queen: "Fortunately in general the people, I do not believe that there are many errors that need to be combated, but there are many vices to root out. The morality here is very corrupt. The Religion is not know very well and is practiced even less. (The clergy) which is very limited, not very prepared".

Faced with this situation Claret tried to save society. His work would be directed toward a two-pronged: promoting

similar to that in Catalonia inspired by divine goodness and mercy. The evangelization was accompanied by the creation of new parishes, the dissemination of good press and the training and promotion of a clergy wise and holy. He worked for the social support of the people, always with a religious perspective; he wrote books on agriculture, he founded the Credit Union and fought for the promotion of youth and family, creating the social programs in Port au Prince and ensuring that the prison would operate a school of arts and crafts for the advancement of prisoners.

It is true that the episcopate of Cuba for Claret was "a very heavy burden and bitter"; but it was also a fruitful experience for him and very positive for the people that the Lord had entrusted to him.

#### *To Save the Church*

At the end of his time in Cuba and in the final years of Madrid, Claret acquires a new experience of Christ and the Church. It is the Christ who now lives that is not only Christ the evangelizer but Christ the Redeemer who with your sacrifice creates and saves His Church. It is now he fully understands the mystery of the Church as a community of salvation and the body of Christ. At the same time he discovers the profound mystery of the vision at Vich and the words that he



religious and social promotion.

His prophetic vision of reality impelled him to continue to be apostolic missionary, in such a way that the six years he stayed in the island were a continuous mission of preaching,

hear in his diaconal ordination: the reading of Ephesians 6:12 says "for it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the Sovereignities and the Powers who originate the darkness of the world ... (Aut 101). Sees that

the princes, the powers and the champions of darkness have been embodied in modern ideologies: the German idealism, which gives origin to the pantheistic Hegelian; rationalism of Renan; positivism of Comte; the scientism and historical materialism of Marx. These are the “shadowy powers” against which the Church must fight.

Reading with a special prophetic light concerning these signs of his time, Claret proposes to save the Church and from her, society. To answer these challenges, he designs an apostolic strategy at the level of the universal Church. He writes the “Notes of a Plan to preserve the beauty of the Church”: an ambitious program of reforms that foresees the celebration of Ecumenical Councils and Assemblies of Bishops, inculcating the common life of the clergy, the independence of the Church with regard to political powers and especially that of poverty.

Personally, from the privileged position that he has he becomes involved in an offensive of reforms ranging from the election of bishops to the renewal of structures in society by means of the “Academia de San Miguel” and “Parish libraries”, through the formation of youth and of priests. To do this with a great sense of opportunity, he takes charge of El Escorial making it alive with new reforms and a renewal Christian Centre.

Later, during the preparation and development of Vatican Council I, he continued with this same task as a reformer.

The prophetic vision of Claret is also, in his day and age revealing the future. He sees that God is going to ask the Church of the future some important options; among them, the total apolitical state of the clergy, the assumption of the laity in the apostolate, the need to hold Councils, the creation of Secular Institutes, the return of the clergy to a more evangelical and simpler life and the influence of the Virgin in the life of the Church.

At this time, he writes the “Rules of the Secular Clergy living in the community” (1864); this operates a new openness with respect to the presence and action of the laity in the apostolate. Here he contemplates the agents of evangelization in a unitive vision as an organizations composed of priests and lay people united in the same gift of grace

linked in the charity of the Heart of Mary and distributed into three orders, without hierarchical dependency, but destined for the same mission of evangelization complementarity of charisms and functions: Prophetic priesthood and religious life, ministerial priesthood sacramentalizing and its systems, and lay apostolate with or without consecration in the world. The Congregation of Missionaries was to be the core driving force of this great movement of evangelizers. The revolution of 1868 truncated this plan but the intuition of Claret remains valid, because he was convinced “in these final days it seems that God wants the laypeople to have a large part in the salvation of souls”.

In recent years, the Fr. Founder was opening up to new apostolic channels. It was above all to make the final wording of the Constitutions of the Claretian Missionaries when he warned of the need to expand the fields and the means of evangelization. Still in 1864, he said that the aim of the Congregation consisted of “doing missions throughout the world and give exercises for all kinds of people, with specialty to priests, nuns and students”. On the other hand, in the Constitutions of 1865, he said that they will avail themselves of all possible means, pointing out some major areas: catechesis, preaching, exercises, confession and conducting seminars. In 1869, he advised especially education. And he also makes this reference in a note written in 1869 or 1870: “Also it would be desirable that in each house of the Mission to have some missionary that are devoted to teaching, mostly if you have a desire”.

The press had entered directly in the apostolic means of Claret from his involvement in his Catalan period, and he stayed faithful to this which was so important up to his death.

Two elements define Claret attitude toward the apostolic ministry: the universal openness and the preference to those that are definitely missionary. The balance was giving prophetic vision in every concrete circumstance of time and place.



"The life of St. Anthony M. Claret had a focal point: Christ. He felt loved by Him. He felt accompanied by Him. He felt also sent by Him. All human life needs a centre of gravity which gradually fills each of the episodes that make up its history with meaning. For Claret this unifying and dynamic centre of his life was his relationship with Christ" (Josep M. Abella, *Missionaries*)

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