



# THE FORGE IN OUR DAILY LIFE

Quid Prodest

Ordinary Time V

9

LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD



# The Forge in Our Daily Life

## GENERAL OBJETIVE

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.

### QUID PRODEST - 2011

PATRIS MEI - 2012

CARITAS CHRISTI - 2013

SPIRITUS DOMINI - 2014

### OBJECTIVES OF *QUID PRODEST* STAGE

- To stir up an attitude of authenticity and of seeking God's Will in one's own life, keeping in mind one's present experience of life.
- To calmly reread one's personal history, discerning it in the light of the Word of God.
- To learn to identify one's wounds in order to experience a process of healing.
- To recapture one's happiness in being a Claretian.
- To ground the search for a new response to God's Call, in a spirit of conversion in the light of the Claretian *Quid Prodest*.

- 1 The urgent thing is to wait (Advent)
- 2 And He dwelt among us (Christmas)
- 3 Called to be sons (Ordinary Time I)
- 4 On the road to Easter (Lent)
- 5 The new life in Christ (Easter)
- 6 Followers of Christ like Claret (Ordinary Time II)
- 7 Witnesses in the midst of the world (Ordinary Time III)
- 8 Born to love (Ordinary Time IV)
- 9 **Looking back to look forward (Ordinary Time V)**



## 1. Introduction

**W**ith this booklet we begin the final phase of the *Quid Prodest* stage of our Forge experience, while in the Church's liturgy we find ourselves being invited to focus upon the final things as we approach the end of the liturgical year. This month provides us with the opportunity to review our experience, during the last twelve months in which we have been invited to get in touch with our life experience. The *Quid Prodest* perspective of this year's experience has repeatedly invited us to get in touch with those moments in which we have been challenged to find a congruence or integrity between that which we most deeply value and the choices or behaviours that give form to our daily lives. It is an experience which has the objective of preparing us for the growth and development which will arise from the encounter with the God who is Father, Son and Spirit which will be the focus of our experience during the coming years. As the final ele-



ment of this year of *The forge in our daily life* this booklet aims to offer you reflections and exercises that you can use to review your life and your goals, the growth and developments that have taken place, while also help you identify those areas which you desire and need to continue to explore and develop as you enter into the second phase of this experience.



### To benefit from this material you need to...

#### make time for personal reflection...

Create opportunities for spaces in your life where you can take time to read and enter into the exercises that are suggested in these pages. You may find it helpful to have with you the notebook or journal in which you have captured your reflections throughout the year. It can be helpful to return to these to identify patterns and themes that are present in your life.

#### make time to share your thoughts...

For most of the important parts of our life that we struggle with there are no right or wrong answers. It can be helpful to share this experience of trying to make sense of our experience with others because the act of communicating helps us further clarify our thoughts and understanding. The act of sharing with others also not only provides us with a wider context for understanding our experience it also serves to remind us that we are not alone in trying to make sense of our experience. Participants are invited to share the material of their reflections not only to the person they have chosen to accompany them, but also where and when appropriate with members of the congregation, especially in their local community.

**4** Looking back to look forward.

#### make time because you are worth it.

It can be a common trait amongst apostolic religious that our work becomes the propriety in our lives. In responding continually to the needs of others we can lose sight of our own personal needs. We can lose balance and perspective in our lives and fail to provide space for the things we really need. That failure to value and respect our own deepest needs can result in us developing coping mechanisms (e.g. unhealthy relationships with alcohol, TV, internet, people etc) which are often not only addictive but also have the consequence of making us feel worse about ourselves.

Making the time in our busy lives to participate in this process this month gives us the opportunity to respond to that element of the primary commandments that we can so easily over look in our efforts to love God and neighbour: the need to love ourselves.



## 2. Reflection

### Goals that have motivated my life

The *Quid Prodest* dimension of our Forge experience invites us to get in touch with the deeper drives and motivations that can lie at the heart of our lives. Often our deepest motivations are unconscious and can remain hidden from us, despite the fact that they can sometimes go back to our earliest childhood. Often the stories that were important to us as children hold the themes and values that have motivated us throughout our lives. Try the following exercise to see if you gain any insights into your own dreams and motivations.



### Exercise 1: My favourite stories

- Think back to your childhood when you were about 7 years of age and **call to mind your favourite story or fairytale.**
- Remind yourself of the story and each of the characters in it.
- Now **take some time to reflect on how the values and experiences of each of the characters relate to your own life experience.**

Regardless of the way our childhood experiences can be influencing our later lives we all experience situations in which we are aware of mixed motives being present both in our own personal lives as well as the lives of others. In extreme cases a person acting out of a conflicting set of motives might even be described as two-faced. To be described as two faced in the Anglo Saxon world is considered an insult but for the purpose of this reflection you are asked to accept this description as we explore the following reflection which invites us to get in touch with our motives.

The first of these two faces is that of the FACE that we try to save, the face of the 'neurotic ego'. In situations in which we feel uncomfortable or our sense of identity feels threatened the natural response is that we try to save face. Think of a time when you were facing a problem or when you were upset, ask yourself these questions and see which of them help you understand why you felt the way that you did:

- What was I afraid of?
- What was I trying to hold on to?
- How was I insisting I be in control?
- What was it that I believed that I was entitled to?

From a Christian perspective our task in life with respect to the face of our ego is to go against our natural inclination of saving face to instead consciously work on losing this face. To lose this 'face' is a practice leading to the development of the virtue of humility, the ability to accept reality as it is. It involves having to consciously work to transform our lives so that our sense of fear, attachment, being in control or entitlement ceases to be the unconscious motivation that is the source of our choices and actions.

The following are some suggestions of how we might transform the face of the ego so that it ceases to exert a neurotic control on our lives.





The F.A.C.E. of EGO	
<b>F</b>	<p><b>Fear</b></p> <p>Our fears can be transformed if we:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admit we are afraid (to ourselves and to someone we trust)</li> <li>• Allow ourselves to feel the fear fully</li> <li>• Act as if –or so that- fear does not stop or drive us.</li> </ul> <p>Thus we change from being trapped in our fears to moving through our fear.</p>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>Attachment</b></p> <p>Can be transformed by letting go of our desire for, or expectation, of a particular outcome. We drop our rigid positioning and our possessiveness. This is how we relate to a person or situation rather than become possessed or obsessed by them.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p><b>Control</b></p> <p>Can be transformed by allowing others full freedom and by letting the chips fall where they may i.e. letting be. This is how neurotic control becomes healthy power, a power for, not over others.</p>
<b>E</b>	<p><b>Entitlement</b></p> <p>Means that we are exempt from the ordinary conditions of existence that affect all humans: things change and end; things are not always fair; suffering is part of growth; sometimes people hurt us, betray us or cheat us. None of that can direct us to retaliation. We go on loving. We plan or hope for the transformation of others, not their punishment. This is how neurotic entitlement becomes self-respect and we become more self-protective and more compassionate too.</p>



Our second face, the FACE of our true self, we want to strengthen and share by allowing the healing powerful force at our centre to emerge within us and the world. Through wrestling with the shadow of sufficiency we learn to have enough humility to say 'It is no longer I, but Christ within me'. The ego must be still as we ask ourselves the following:

- How free do I really want to be?
- What happens when I accept reality?
- How much suffering can I hold if I'm compassionate?
- How do I channel this energy in my life?

The following points highlight the qualities and values which we need to develop and cultivate in order that this FACE of the true self be strengthened and developed.

	<b>The F.A.C.E. of the TRUE SELF</b>
<b>F</b>	<p><b>Freedom</b></p> <p>Can be accepted as a life style by letting go of addictions, by being open and trusting God, by letting go of false identity.</p>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>Acceptance</b></p> <p>Is being in the flow of life, and being detached from the outcomes, letting God be God.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p><b>Compassion</b></p> <p>Is allowed by learning from our suffering and allowing others to have their own journeys and individuation. We no longer have to fit people into our images.</p>
<b>E</b>	<p><b>Energy</b></p> <p>Is meaning and power. To allow the power of the Christ-self to flow from a soul is to release healing and transformation. The person becomes a servant of the 'Other' and is obedient in that service.</p>

When looking at our lives as apostolic missionaries it is not always easy to discern which FACE it is that drives our actions and behaviour. It can be difficult to distinguish between what is a passion for mission and what is an expression of workaholicism. The following lists are offered as suggestions to help you discern which FACE may drive your apostolic life.

**8** Looking back to look forward.



<p><b>A life driven by the FACE of the neurotic Ego runs the risk of being a form of Workaholism</b></p>	<p><b>A life driven by the FACE of our true (Christ) self finds expression in a Passion for Mission</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Threatened by free time</li> <li>2. Need to compare your work performance</li> <li>3. Never emotionally satisfied</li> <li>4. Demands quantity of involvement</li> <li>5. Worth is dependent on work</li> <li>6. External success is not felt</li> <li>7. Anger at not having enough time or money to do what they want.</li> <li>8. Secretly envy the lazy</li> <li>9. Denies their body</li> <li>10. Overly sensitive to criticism</li> <li>11. Resentment of authority</li> <li>12. Excessive responsibility</li> <li>13. Can get lost in details</li> <li>14. Uses work to cover other addictions</li> <li>15. Can manipulate power</li> <li>16. Feels a void without work</li> <li>17. Needs to be ill to take time off</li> <li>18. Even play can become work</li> <li>19. Resists intimacy, no time for relationships</li> <li>20. Low level sadness</li> <li>21. Others begin to resent them</li> <li>22. Creates illusion of being indispensable</li> <li>23. Fear of risk taking</li> <li>24. God demands perfection</li> <li>25. Has a hard time saying 'No'</li> <li>26. Identity and job are one</li> <li>27. My personal goodness is dependent upon job appreciation</li> <li>28. The inner and emotional world seem frightening</li> <li>29. Aging and retirement are a threat</li> <li>30. The 'should' voice is loudest</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Balance of time for God</li> <li>2. Non-competitive</li> <li>3. Emotionally fulfilled</li> <li>4. Quality of presence and work</li> <li>5. Worth in being a creature of God</li> <li>6. Feel success and failure</li> <li>7. Detached from outcome</li> <li>8. Challenges those around them</li> <li>9. Integrates the needs of the body</li> <li>10. Can hear both gifts and limits of perspective</li> <li>11. Works with appropriate leadership</li> <li>12. Appropriately responsible</li> <li>13. Holds vision and accomplishments</li> <li>14. Has a spirituality which supports</li> <li>15. Uses power to empower</li> <li>16. Can enjoy Sabbath</li> <li>17. Protects health in a balanced way</li> <li>18. Recreation hobbies are part of their life</li> <li>19. Has significant relationships</li> <li>20. Spectrum of emotions is available</li> <li>21. Empowers others</li> <li>22. Has appropriate relationship to institution</li> <li>23. Can be creative and risk taker</li> <li>24. God asks authenticity of life</li> <li>25. Can create boundaries</li> <li>26. Job is part of larger identity</li> <li>27. Goodness is inherent in being</li> <li>28. Has a connection with the source within</li> <li>29. Aging and retirement a part of life</li> <li>30. Grateful toward all life.</li> </ol>

## Reflection point

In reading this reflection what have you become aware of with respect to your own motivations.

## Achievements and difficulties

As will be explored in the scripture section of this booklet the liturgy at this time of the year challenges us to reflect on the final things, death and the promise of eternity. We know how powerful the impact of reflecting on eternity can be for ordering one's life by recognising the effect it had on the young Claret. While some people can feel it morbid to think about one's death and what is to follow, it actually provides a very useful way of evaluating one's life and clarifying one's priorities. It also is a clear reminder to us that we ultimately are not in control of our lives and need to place our trust in the one who created us. In taking stock of our lives through the lens of our death it is impor-

tant that we don't forget that it is not an exercise in trying to identify what we need to do to save ourselves. We are not in this alone Christ has already saved us. Rather the exercise prompts us to identify our own level of comfort with our present situation and whether or not we need to make adjustments that we've desired for some time but just never got around to. After all have you ever met anyone who, given the news that they only have a limited time to live, regrets that they hadn't spent more time working? The following to exercises are offered to provoke a moment of assessment, a taking stock of our lives both to help one clarify one's priorities but also to recognise one's achievements. You may also find the exercises prompt you to take time to reflect on your own feelings and faith around your death and what will follow.

**Imagine that you are informed by your doctor that you have only got six more months to live.**

- How are you going to use your time?
- What are your most urgent priorities?
- What are the things you want to leave behind?

**Imagine that you were to die today.**

- ¿What would people say about you?
- What would they identify as your achievements in life?
- What would be the unfinished bits of business in work and in your relationships that you would leave undone?

People's priorities in the face of knowing their time is limited often turns to that which they have taken for granted; the relationships that are important in their life. Called to be 'Men on fire with love' relationships are at the heart of our lives. Relationship with God, with our brothers in community, with the people we serve. Our lives are at the service of the building of relationships which bring people to know, love and serve God. Should this not then be the criteria we use in our lives for evaluating our successes and failures, the quality of the relationships we have experienced and supported rather than the quantity of things we have done or completed. The difficulty is that the fruits of this labour are so much harder to identify and evaluate. Popularity does not necessarily mean that we have been faithful to the preaching of the Gospel, it may just be an indication that we have colluded in maintaining peoples addictions to comfortable lives that inhibit them fulfilling their lives as children as God. So how do we evaluate our lives as religious from the perspective of relationship?

One way of understanding our vows is that they are an invitation to live in the world in right relationship: right relationship with God, my neighbour and myself. The rightness of these relationships is expressed through the way we behave and the values that motivate our actions. In a world which often sees people as objects open to all forms of exploitation (e.g. sexual, financial, emotional) how do you treat people? In a world where resources are limited, how careful are you to not waste and misuse the things that you have? In a world where everyone seems to be out for themselves often at the expense of others, how do you go about making decisions? It is our answers to these types of questions that may help us measure the success of our lives as religious. Do I always value and treat other people with respect? Do I always make an effort to take account of the needs and thoughts of others before making decisions? What do I mean and understand by 'doing God's will'? Are gospel values such as love, service and respect the values that people see expressed in my life through the way I behave?

Another tool to use in trying to take stock of our life as a Claretian is **the Founder's definition**. As an ideal it offers each of us something to aspire to and as such provides us with another focus to help us evaluate our experience. Periodically it is good to return to this text with which we are so familiar

and ask yourself 'is this me?' It is doubtful that anyone finds themselves able to give a resounding yes to all of the elements. It is those areas where we find ourselves saying 'no!' or, 'yes but!' that show us where we have to try harder.

“A Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a man on fire with love, who spreads its flames wherever he goes. He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set everyone on fire with God's love. Nothing daunts him: he delights in privations, welcomes work, embraces sacrifices, smiles at slander, rejoices in all the torments and sorrows he suffers, and glories in the cross of Jesus Christ. His only concern is how he may follow Christ and imitate him in praying, working, enduring and striving constantly and solely for the greater glory of God and the salvation of humankind.”

As a final exercise in reflecting upon your achievements and difficulties you are invited to use Claret's definition of a Claretian as the criteria for evaluating your life.

Be honest with yourself.....

- How successful have you been in living up to this vision?
- Which are the elements that you have struggled with the most in your life?
- What needs to change in your life to enable you to better express this ideal for our missionary life?
- How committed and motivated are you to make the necessary change?
- What help and support do you need?
- What do you need to do to get the help and support you need?

#### And one final point for reflection...

Given our experience of community life and our training, sometimes the biggest difficulty we have, or the thing that is hardest to change, is simply that of taking the risk of letting someone else know that we need help and support.

## Conversion and Ongoing Formation

The following is a personal reflection which is offered in the hope that it will stimulate you to get in touch with your own personal experience of study, formation, and ongoing personal renewal. You are invited to read it critically noting the parts which resonate with your own personal experience and also noting those elements that invoke a strong reaction or confusion in you. What might it be in your own experience that lies behind your reactions to one Claretian's thoughts about ... Conversion and Ongoing formation.

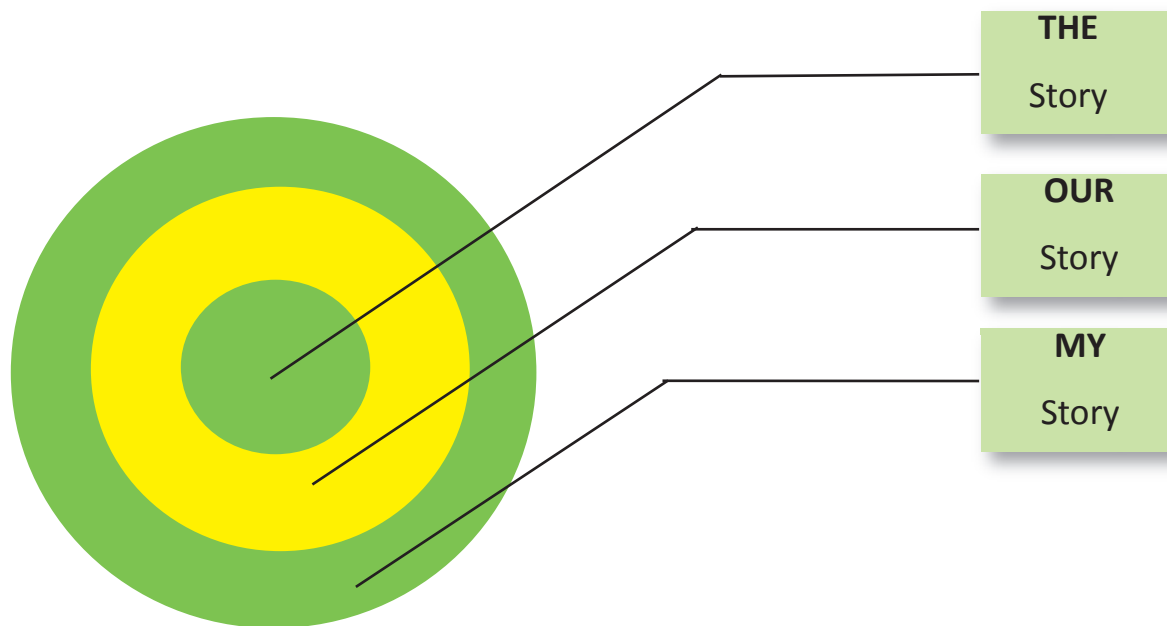
At the heart of this theme is our attitude to learning and what we understand by formation. There are a number of ways of understanding going formation which are not concerned with just periodically doing courses (though courses are certainly one way of accessing new information). If our understanding of formation is limited to the amassing of content from attending a series of classes or courses, negative experiences of studying during initial formation experiences can result in an attitude of mind where claretians avoid





attending courses or even reading the documents that the congregation has produced. It is possible to look at conversion and ongoing formation from a different perspective. As a dynamic process that is part of the life of any individual who is continually trying to balance three dimensions of their life and identity, relationship with God, neighbour and self. In effect this dynamic process lies at the heart of the Christian life being the material of the primary two commandments.

As a Claretian one can see one's identity created by and arising out of three dimensions of one's life. Or, to put it another way, one's identity is formed out of the dynamic interaction of three stories in which we are an active participant: the story of one's own personal life (My Story), the life of our congregation and the Church (Our Story) and THE (GOD) STORY, the overarching story that we are all engaged in whether or not we realise it. Visually this *identity* can be depicted as three concentric circles.



It is the interplay between these three dimensions of life that gives rise to the dynamic we experience for conversion and ongoing formation. The challenge is to find a balance between these different dimensions of our identity in which we experience a sense of integrity and coherence in the values that motivate our behaviour. The following points to examples of the material that makes up the different dimensions.

#### Material of MY Story

- History of my personal relationships, family, friends, congregation.
- Attitudes to world, creation, material processes, learning and decision making.
- My personal apostolic experience.
- Values that motivate my life and behaviour.
- Things I do to fill my time.
- Personal life goals.

#### Material of OUR story

- The Church and its history
- The life of the Founder
- The ongoing history and experience of the International Congregation
  - The Charism
  - The vows
  - The history and experience of one's own Province or Delegation.

#### Material of THE God story

- God's Plan of salvation.
- The Bible and the teaching of Jesus
- Death and resurrection, slavery and liberation motifs.

Each of these stories is continuing to unfold which creates in us a continual need to find a balance between the three dimensions. It is in this dynamic creative tension we are invited to be converted and to develop the knowledge and skills required to respond to our present circumstances.

If we allow one dimension to dominate because we cease trying to balance these three dimensions of our life there are different possible attitudes that we might find ourselves falling into.

#### **If the God Story dominates ...**

we run the risk of falling into a spiritualisation or fundamentalism that is out of touch with our day to day experience.

#### **If Our Story dominates ...**

there is the danger of an institutionalism that loses touch not only with our everyday experience but also with the God experience which called us into being as a congregation.

#### **If My story comes to dominate...**

one risks an individualism that is selfish and self centred, that puts oneself as the ultimate arbitrator in the events of not just of one's own life but also of the life of others.

If we embrace this ongoing dynamic relationship, that gives rise to our identity, we will constantly be challenged to open our thinking to new ways of making sense of our experience of God and the World. This in turn will challenge us to explore new areas of knowledge and keep up to date with what is important in our lives. It will also challenge us to be open to developing new skills and abilities in an ever changing world.





## So in the light of these reflections...

- What are your reactions?
- How would you evaluate the balance between My Story, Our Story and The Story in your own life?
- What is your own history of conversion and ongoing formation?
- What attitudes in you does this history reveal?
- In which areas of your life do you need to experience conversion and ongoing formation?







## What have you learnt from the experience?

Throughout the last twelve months of this *Quid Prodest* experience you have been offered the opportunity to review your life, to get in touch with your own personal vocation story and to share the fruits of your reflections with others. On the inner front cover of each of the books this year have been outlines the objectives for this part of the process. The desire behind the invitation you received to take part in this experience is that entering into the 'furnace' which lies at the heart of the forge each of us be energised to shake off the ashes of routine comfortable lives to connect us with renewed energy so that we truly might be 'men on fire with love'.

To help you to begin to identify what you have learnt from this experience you are invited to take some time to look back over the last twelve months and remember:

- Remember the different moments of the year...

- Remember the conversations you have had with ...

the person accompanying you

other claretians.

- Remember and review any notes you have kept or made throughout the year.

After taking time to remember you are invited to take some time to do the following exercise.



## Exercise 2: Stream of Consciousness writing

### Part 1

#### An exercise in Stream of Consciousness Writing.

Often when we write to stop and censor the ideas that come to mind, rewriting a sentence over and over before we get it correct. It is as if we have a 'little judge' constantly sitting on our shoulder telling us what is good enough. For this exercise you are invited to send the 'little judge' away. Below there are four questions each followed by an introductory phrase. For this exercise you are required to answer each question by beginning with the introductory phrase and then to just keep writing for five minutes without stopping to review what you are writing.

- **Who are you now?**

I am now ...

- **What is emerging as your potential?**

I see that my potential is ...

- **What is holding you back?**

I am being held back by ...

- **What do you need in order to fulfil your potential?**

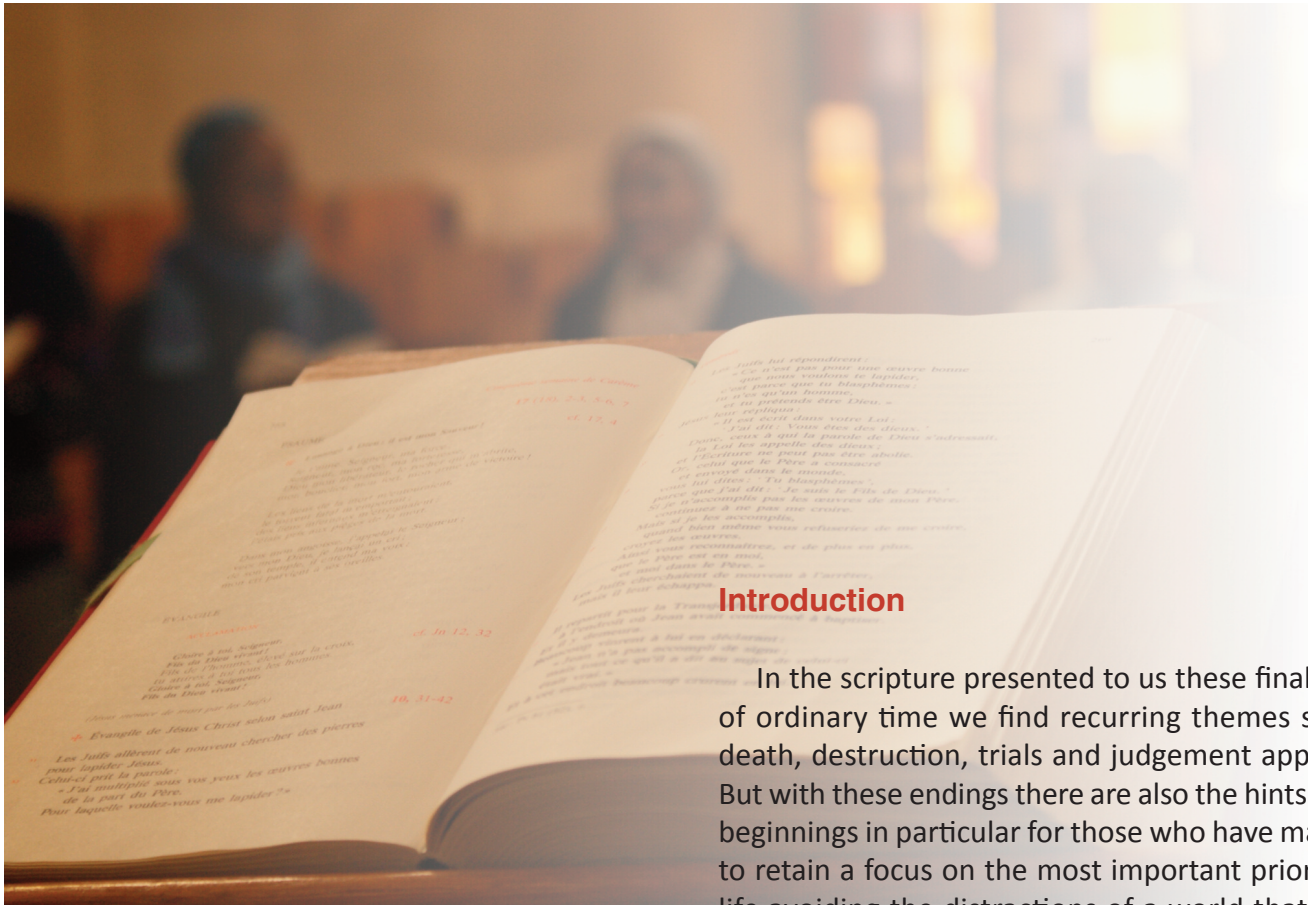
In order to fulfil my potential I need ...

### Part 2

Once the exercise is completed take a day or two and then return to the material that you have written. Prayerfully read what you have written and use its impact on you to lead you to pray about your life and what the Lord is calling you to at the present time.



### 3. Suggestions for *lectio divina*



#### Introduction

In the scripture presented to us these final weeks of ordinary time we find recurring themes such as death, destruction, trials and judgement appearing. But with these endings there are also the hints of new beginnings in particular for those who have managed to retain a focus on the most important priorities in life avoiding the distractions of a world that places value on passing ultimately unimportant matters such as power and wealth. In both the Old Testament texts and the New Testament texts the climate is created for us to pass through this transition from Year A to Year B asking ourselves to reflect on the deeper values that motivate our lives. How faithful are we to what we believe when attempts are made to actively stamp out what we believe? How faithful are we to our values and beliefs when the world while apparently accommodating subtly invites us to live in ways that ultimately undermine the values that lie at the heart of the Gospel?

In essence the tone of the liturgy challenges us. What does it profit us to live a happy comfortable life if as a consequence we have lost sight of the bigger picture and lost our sense of responsibility to do something about the suffering of others? What does it profit us if our short term needs (personal comfort, security, life of luxury, etc.) have blinded us to the long term consequences of our actions on the environment, society and our relationship with God?

The following reflection points are offered as a suggestion for you to use in your daily scripture reading.

Tuesday, 1st November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev 7.2-4</li> <li>• 1 Jn 3.1-3</li> <li>• Mt 5.1-12</li> </ul>	All Saints	Today is a good day to look back over your life and remember those who have inspired you to be faithful to the gospel. Not only those who have been officially recognised as saints, but also those outstanding holy men and women who have been significant on your journey.
Wednesday 2nd November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 3.1-9 o Rom 5.5-11 o 6,3-9</li> <li>• Jn 6.37-40</li> </ul>	All Souls	It is the will of the Father that all believers will have eternal life. Take time to remember those you have known that have died. What did their lives reveal to you about God's love?
Thursday 3rd November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rom 14.7-12</li> <li>• Lk 15.1-10</li> </ul>	St Martin de Porres [Fr. José Xifré co-founder and superior general ( <i>Calendario</i> , pp. 431-436)]	Reminded of God's unconditional love and that we are not masters of our own destiny what account of our own life would we give?
Friday 4th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rom 15.14-21</li> <li>• Lk16.1-8</li> </ul>	Memorial of St Charles Borromeo, bishop	Take some time to reflect on the initiatives that you take to preach the gospel of Christ in your day today interactions with others.
Sábado 5th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rom 16.3-9, 22-27</li> <li>• Lk 16.9-15</li> </ul>	Deceased of the Congregation, relatives and benefactors ( <i>Calendario</i> , pp. 437-441)	Following Paul's example it is good to recognise and affirm the support we receive in our ministry as God acts through those around us. Taking those who support us for granted and overlooking their contribution to our lives may be a sign to us of the things that have 'real' give value and importance to in our lives; our own personal self importance!
<b>Sunday 6th November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 6.12-16</li> <li>• 1Thes 4.13-18 or 4.13-14</li> <li>• Mt 25.1-13</li> </ul>	<b>XXXII Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	There can be so many things we put off dealing with because we think there is going to be time. Death, especially unexpected deaths reminds us that it is not always true that we will have a future opportunity to deal with the past. What are the things you need to put right in your life?

Monday 7th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 1.1-7</li> <li>• Lk 17.1-6</li> </ul>		What has been your own experience of forgiveness? having been forgiven by others? forgiving others? forgiving yourself? Sometimes the biggest challenge to our faith in a God of Unconditional Love and forgiveness is our inability to forgive ourselves and let go of our own shame and guilt.
Tuesday 8th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 2.23.3.9</li> <li>• Lk 17.7-10</li> </ul>		How easy it is to forget that our lives are a response to the God of love who has poured out his life for us. Instead we feel that we have a right to be treated as 'special' with an entitlement to privileges because of an opportunity of service that has been entrusted to us. In what ways can my sense of privilege and entitlement undermine the service I am called to provide?
Wednesday 9th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 6.2-11</li> <li>• Lk 17.11-19</li> </ul>	Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome	It is one thing to recognise what we receive from God through our family, friends and community. It is another thing to affirm and acknowledge the importance others have played in our lives. Who among your Claretian brothers might need to receive a word of affirmation for what they have given to you. Or is it easier to be like the nine lepers who just got on with their lives?
Jueves 10th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 7.22-8.1</li> <li>• Lk 17.20-25</li> </ul>	Memorial of St Leo, the Great, pope	The wisdom of Jesus is that suffering can be the path to a fuller life. How open are you to that truth? Can the fear of rejection or not being popular trap you in a situation which may appear to be comfortable but in fact is prevents you from being fully alive?
Friday 11th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 13.1-9</li> <li>• Lk 17.26-37</li> </ul>	Memorial of-Saint Martin of Tours [Fr. Federico Vila and companions, martyrs( <i>Calendario</i> , pp. 443-447)]	What does it profit me us to be comfortable and satisfied when there is so much suffering in the world around us? On my day of judgement what account will I be able to give for the way I am treating people and the choices I am making about the way I use my time and energy?
Saturday 12th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wis 18.14-16</li> <li>19.6-9</li> <li>• Lk 18.1-8</li> </ul>	Memorial of St Josaphat, bishop and martyr	Which of the characters in the parable is a closer representation of my present attitude; the tenacious widow or the unconcerned Judge? How has the <i>Quid Prodest</i> experience impacted on my prayer life this year?
<b>Sunday 13th November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prv 31.10-13, 19-20, 30-31</li> <li>• 1 Thes 5.1-6</li> <li>• Mt 25.14-30 or 25.14-15, 19-21</li> </ul>	<b>XXXIII Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	Each of us has received through the grace of God, gifts and abilities. How we have used and shared them with be the criteria by which we are judges. Avoiding taking risks can mean we fail to grow and develop our full potential. How does your attitude to risk impact on the judgement you think you deserve for the use you have made of the gifts you have received?

Monday 14th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Mc 1.10-15,41-43,54-57,62-63</li> <li>• Lk 18.35-43</li> </ul>		Am I prepared to take the risk of asking for the gift of sight; to see my life as God sees it? Do I really want to see the world as it is? Or am I more comfortable remaining in the dark for fear of being overwhelmed by what I will discover in the light?
Tuesday 15th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Mc 6.18-31</li> <li>• Lk 19.1-10</li> </ul>	Memorial of St Albert, the Great	We all meet challenges and obstacles in life. We may not have face death like Eleazar, but we certainly come up against our own human limitations like Zacchaeus. In those moments do we give up or stretch ourselves to transcend who we have been?
Wednesday 16th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Mc 7.1.20-31</li> <li>• Lk 19.11-28</li> </ul>		How do I think the 'King' will judge my use of the gifts I have received? What are the fruits of my life so far? What unfulfilled potential remains?
Jueves 17th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Mc 2.15-29</li> <li>• Lk 19.41-44</li> </ul>		What is it that blinds me to recognising where my true peace and happiness lie? What are my experiences and fears that led me to build 'walls' in my life that separate me from others and what really matters?
Friday 18th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Mc 4.36-37, 52-59</li> <li>• Lk 19,45-48</li> </ul>		In my own life are there moments when I realise that I and those around me have transformed that which I most highly valued into a way of life that is mediocre and empty. How did I respond to those moments of realisation?
Saturday 19th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lk 20.27-40</li> </ul>		Death and resurrection; endings and beginnings, the ongoing cycle of an ever changing life. What does your way of dealing with change reveal about your attitudes towards the future and what is to come?
<b>Sunday 20th November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ez 34,11-12, 15-17</li> <li>• 1Cor 15.20-26, 28</li> <li>• Mt 25.31-46</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solemnity of Christ the King</b></p> <p><b>[Blessed Andrés Solá, martyr, (Calendario, pp. 449-453)]</b></p>	Whatever you do to the least of my brothers or sisters you do to me is both a challenge and a word of consolation. A challenge to recognise Christ present in all who seek help and are in need. A consolation to remember that when I am struggling feeling alone, forgotten and not valued, Christ has identified himself with me and so my loneliness is an illusion.



Monday 21st November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dn 1.1-6, 8-20</li> <li>• Lk 21.1-4</li> </ul>	Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	It is the quality of our offering rather than the quantity that can be most revealing about the depth of our generosity. How would you describe the offering that you make each day of your life in your service of the Gospel?
Tuesday 22nd November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dn 2.31-45</li> <li>• Lk 21.5-11</li> </ul>	Memorial of St Cecilia, virgin and martyr	Conflict; a sign of something gone wrong or a sign that people are trying to put something right? What are your own thoughts about being involved in conflict?
Wednesday 23rd November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dn 5.1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28</li> <li>• Lk 21.12-19</li> </ul>		If we make popularity our yardstick for identifying the right thing to do we will never need fear persecution. We may however need to fear judgement. A judgement that we failed to alert others to the consequences of their actions that could with other choices have been life giving both to themselves and to others.
Thursday 24th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dn 6.12-28</li> <li>• Lk 21.21-20</li> </ul>		The destruction of the city of God, Jerusalem is of course not the end of the story of God's presence among his people. In our own life we have to let go of that which is familiar and secure in order to allow ourselves to meet God in new ways.
Friday 25th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dn 7.2-14</li> <li>• Lk 21.29-33</li> </ul>		Reading the signs of the times requires us to be open to the experiences of life in the world around us. Recognising the obstacles and resistances to life challenges us to make a response.
Saturday 26th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dn 7.15-27</li> <li>• Lk 21.34-36</li> </ul>		Our final gospel this year warns us to guard against indulgence, drunkenness and worldly cares. What does it profit us to have worldly authority and popularity, wealth and processions if we cannot stand secure before the Son of Man?



## 4. Suggestions for accompaniment

### a. With Director

It is recommended that you make an appointment to speak with your director towards the end of this final period of the first year. Before speaking with him you are recommended to review the materials or journal that you have used throughout this experience and reflect upon the following points which could be used to frame the conversation you have with your director. **You may find it helpful to remind yourself about of the objectives that were established for this year and which are presented on the first page.**

- a. What have you learnt about yourself through participating in this process?
- b. What have you learnt about your Claretian brethren?
- c. What have been for you the areas of your life where you have experienced growth and development?
- d. In which areas of your life as a Claretian have you experienced frustration and a personal resistance to growth?
- e. In the light of this, what are your personal goals for growth and development during the coming year?
- f. What will you need to put in place to achieve them?

### b. With other Claretians

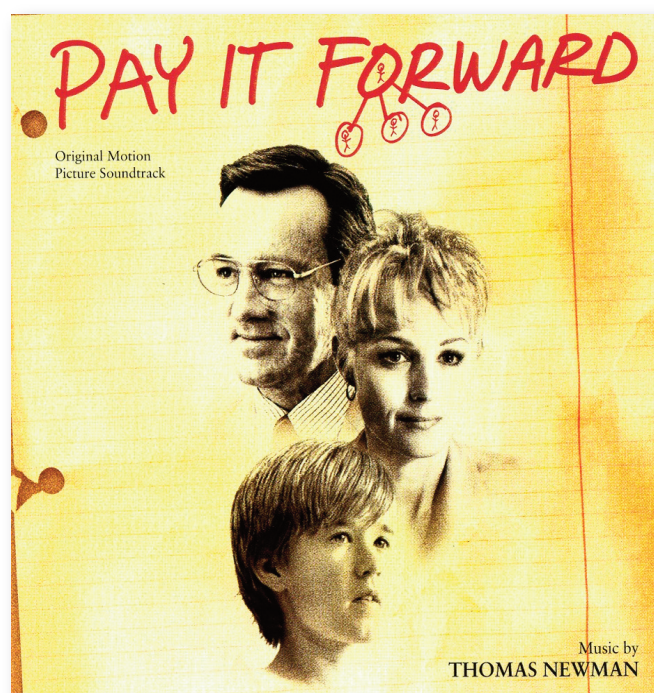
A film that could be watched together in community followed by a discussion about ....

In what ways does this film relate to the *Quid Prodest* dimension of our Forge experience'?

### PAY IT FORWARD

Like some other kids, 12-year-old Trevor McKinney believed in the goodness of human nature. Like many other kids, he was determined to change the world for the better. Unlike most other kids, he succeeded.

A film which reveals that in the midst of human suffering, healing and hope can triumph if we take the risk of being selfless and doing good to others without looking for something in return.



The **following exercise** has been designed for you to complete and then at a community meeting or provincial gathering share using the responses to stimulate discussion among members.

In sharing the information it can be done either openly with each person explaining their personal responses or someone can be designated to collect the sheets, collate the results and distribute them to the group. The objective is to get people reflecting and sharing together their thoughts and experiences not only about the Forge experience but also the impact it is having on our lifestyle.



## Sense of Urgency for Change and renewal

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	Don't know
In our congregation we must change the way we have been living and working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
In my organism we must change the way we are living and working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I must change the way I am living and working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The leadership team of our congregation seem committed to a process of personal and congregational renewal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The leadership team of my organism seem committed to a process of personal and congregational renewal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
To remain true to our vocation we need to engage with the renewal process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
It is my experience this year that people have felt motivated to participate in this initiative.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
In my experience, Leadership at all levels (congregation, organism and community) has gotten involved in this renewal process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
We will not be effective if we continue to live and work exactly as we were prior beginning this process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Leadership has shown us compelling evidence as to why we need this process of renewal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Leadership understands my own personal situation well enough to challenge and support me in my own personal need for renewal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree		Don't know
Members of my community understand my own personal situation well enough to challenge and support me in my own personal need for renewal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	□
In the past our congregation has done a good job of engaging its members in the process of renewal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	□
Changes in our congregation usually have a positive outcome for members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	□
I see a positive outcome for myself as a result of this renewal process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	□

### (Take some time to reflect on why you have felt the way you did)

Having had the opportunity to review together the questionnaire results the following are offered as some discussion points for use at the community meeting.

1. In the light of the experience of *Quid Prodest* do you feel there is a **sense of urgency for renewal and change** in the congregation and your community? why? why not?
2. What would **motivate you (personally and as a community) to continue to take part in this Forge experience?**
3. In the light of this year's experience of the process how will this renewal process **benefit the congregation and your community?**
4. What **risks** do you see in this process?
5. What should leadership be doing to demonstrate that this renewal process is **critical to the long term strength** of the congregation?
6. What would **interfere with your desire/ability** to continue to take part in this renewal process?

Please consider sending your reflections on the experience this year to the webpage that has been created for this process: [www.lafraguacmf.org](http://www.lafraguacmf.org). Any feedback you are able to give will be greatly appreciated by those involved in future planning

## 5. To go deeper

### Appendix I: CONVERSION AND FORMATION. A FEW THOUGHTS ON LEARNING

#### A Humanistic Perspective

Carl Rogers and others have developed the theory of facilitative learning. The basic premise of this theory is that learning will occur by the educator acting as a facilitator, that is by establishing an atmosphere in which learners feel comfortable to consider new ideas and are not threatened by external factors.

Other characteristics of this theory include:

- a belief that human beings have a natural eagerness to learn,
- there is some resistance to, and unpleasant consequences of, giving up what is currently held to be true,
- the most significant learning involves changing one's concept of oneself.

*Facilitative teachers are:*

- less protective of their constructs and beliefs than other teachers,
- more able to listen to learners, especially to their feelings,
- inclined to pay as much attention to their relationship with learners as to the content of the course,
- apt to accept feedback, both positive and negative and to use it as constructive insight into themselves and their behaviour.

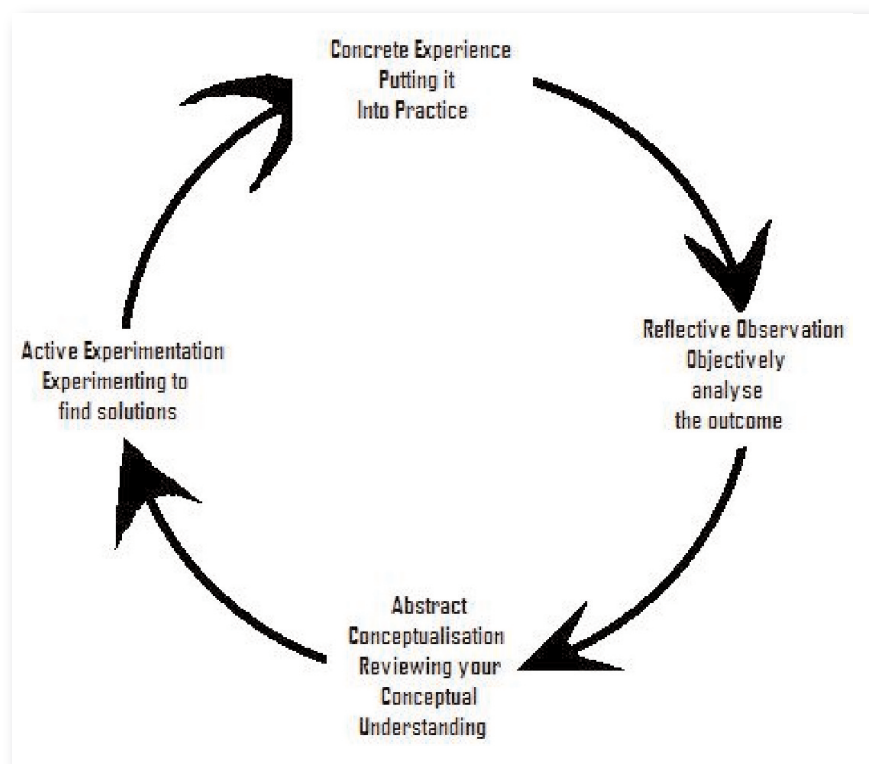
*Learners:*

- are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning,
- provide much of the input for the learning which occurs through their insights and experiences,
- are encouraged to consider that the most valuable evaluation is self-evaluation and that learning needs to focus on factors that contribute to solving significant problems or achieving significant results.

#### Experiential learning

Kolb proposed a four-stage learning process with a model that is often referred to in describing experiential learning. The process can begin at any of the stages and is continuous, i.e. there is no limit to the number of cycles you can make in a learning situation. This theory asserts that without reflection we would simply continue to repeat our mistakes.

The experiential learning cycle:



Kolb's research found that people learn in four ways with the likelihood of developing one mode of learning more than another. As shown in the 'experiential learning cycle' model above, learning is:

- through concrete experience
- through observation and reflection
- through abstract conceptualization
- through active experimentation

The idea that people learn in different ways has been explored over the last few decades by educational researchers. Kolb, one of the most influential of these, found that individuals begin with their preferred style in the experiential learning cycle.

**Honey and Mumford** building on Kolb's work, identified four learning styles:

- Activist (enjoys the experience itself),
- Reflector (spends a great deal of time and effort reflecting)
- Theorist (good at making connections and abstracting ideas from experience)
- Pragmatist (enjoys the planning stage)

There are strengths and weaknesses in each of these styles. Honey and Mumford argue that learning is enhanced when we think about our learning style so that we can build on strengths and work towards minimizing weaknesses to improve the quality of learning.

## Appendix II: A LIVED PERSPECTIVE: THE WISDOM OF AGE

Many of the following statements are attributed to a 90 year old woman reflecting on what life has taught her? What do you agree with? What else have you learnt?

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
5. By doing less, you can accomplish more.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. God gave us two ears and one mouth to listen twice as much as we speak.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let others know you need their help.
13. Don't compare your life to others'. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye. But don't worry; God never blinks.
16. Life is too short for long pity parties. Get busy living, or get busy dying.
17. You can get through anything if you stay put in today.
18. A writer writes. If you want to be a writer, write.
19. It's never too late to have a happy childhood. But the second one is up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. If someone matters to you today, don't put off telling them until tomorrow; it may never come.
22. Overprepare, then go with the flow.
23. Your doubts can be gateways to new knowledge if you don't run away from them.
24. Anger can destroy your life; forgive them for your sake, not theirs.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words: "In five years, will this matter?"
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive everyone everything.
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.

35. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
36. Growing old beats the alternative - dying young.
37. You're never old enough to be that dog that can't learn new tricks.
38. Read the Psalms. They cover every human emotion.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
42. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
43. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
44. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
45. The best is yet to come.
46. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
47. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
48. If you don't ask, you don't get.
49. Yield.
50. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.





**The nine booklets of this *Quid Prodest* stage (2011) have been written by a group of Claretians from different Provinces:**

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# The Forge in our daily life

*Quid Prodest - 2011*

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claretian missionaries